

RPTR HUMISTON

EDTR SECKMAN

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI,  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: [REDACTED]

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-205,  
Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 10:08 a.m.

Appearances:

For the SELECT COMMITTEE ON BENGHAZI:

DANA CHIPMAN, CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

SHARON JACKSON, DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

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For the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE:

AUSTIN EVERS, SENIOR ADVISOR

Ms. Jackson. This is the transcribed interview of [REDACTED] conducted by the House Select Committee on Benghazi. This interview is being conducted voluntarily as part of the committee's investigation into the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and related matters, pursuant to House Resolution 567 of the 113th Congress and House Resolution 5 of the 114th Congress.

Mr. [REDACTED], could you give us your full name for the record, please?

Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Ms. Jackson. Okay. We appreciate your appearance today for this interview. My name is Sharon Jackson. I am one of the counsels with the majority staff. To my left is Sara Barrineau, one of our investigators on the staff. And she is going to ask the bulk of your questions today. I may interject a little bit later or at various points just to do a follow-up question, but Sara will be doing the bulk of your questioning.

I just want to spend a few minutes and talk about the ground rules that we have for committee interviews. The questioning before a congressional committee, or before this congressional committee, is that the majority staff will ask questions for up to 1 hour, at which point we'll turn it over to the minority staff that is here today, and they will have a like hour to ask you questions. And we'll go back and forth until each side has asked all the questions that they want. My best guess is maybe we'll be out of here, like, shortly after the noon hour or something. I don't anticipate that it will go all day,

but we'll ask until we're done asking questions.

So questions can only be asked by a member of the committee, a Member of Congress that's on this committee, or one of the staff members. And unlike testimony or a deposition that you may have given in Federal court, there are no rules of evidence. The only evidentiary privilege that we -- the only evidentiary objection we recognize is one of privilege, and that is up to the chair of the committee to determine whether to grant that privilege objection or not. So you and your counsel can raise that privilege objection in the context of this hearing. Members or staff alike, we are not permitted to raise objections to any questions. So we don't deal with hearsay or anything like that. It's pretty much a free-for-all.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Mr. Evers. You said it, not me.

Ms. Jackson. It's generally -- the issue of privilege is generally not something that we encounter, but I just put it out there because it is the one that we do.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. This session is also going to begin unclassified. If any -- and I'm sure Mr. Evers has talked to you about this. If any question calls for a classified answer, just please let us know, and we will either withdraw the question or reserve it until we can go into a classified setting.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay? You're welcome to confer with Mr. Evers or

any counsel of your choosing whenever you choose. And if you would like to have a private consultation, just let us know. We'll have you step out, or we'll step out. And we'll allow you to have as many private consultations as you would like.

We do understand that Mr. Evers is here as the State Department's attorney, not your personal attorney, and I'm sure that he's explained those distinctions and nuances to you before coming in here today.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. We'll also take a break whenever it's convenient for you. This could be after every hour of questioning or after the first 2 hours. I tend to need a break after the first hour, because I've consumed a lot of liquid this morning and will continue to do so. But let us know, even if in the middle of an hour, you'd like to take a break just to stretch your legs. We've got water. We have coffee. Just let us know. We're going to try and make this process as easy as possible.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. As you can see, we have an official reporter taking down everything that I say, you say and everyone else says here. And as I'm sure you've been told before -- you've testified in court before -- we need verbal answers to everything, no nodding or shaking of the head.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. And we also have to do our best not to talk over each other, that we let questions finish before answers and that we

don't start questions before answers are given. And that's really hard to do when you get into a conversation, but we have to give it our best shot, or it will be another time when a reporter has yelled at me --

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. -- which has happened in my career.

If at any time you don't understand a question, missed part of it, or need it clarified just to figure out what we're asking, please, please, just let us know, we'll repeat the question, and we'll ask it in a different way, because it's very important that we make sure that you understand what we're asking so that your answer will be of the best benefit to us.

We ask that you also give us your best recollection to anything that we ask. We understand that we're asking about things that happened almost 4 years ago and that memories fade over time, but we ask that you reach into the back of your memory and give us your best recollection. If you honestly can't remember something, again, that's -- the perfectly acceptable truthful answer too, is, "I don't remember." We may ask -- if you don't remember something, we may ask a follow up and say, Can you tell us someone else was there who might know the answer to that question? Okay?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. I'm sure you understand that you are required to answer all questions truthfully because these are questions being asked of you by Congress. Do you understand that?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And whether it's asked by a member of this staff as opposed to a Member of Congress, the same requirement applies; you have to answer truthfully.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. And because you are a Federal law enforcement officer, I'm sure you're well familiar with providing material false answers to a congressional inquiry could subject you to a prosecution for perjury or making a false statement.

Ms. Jackson. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. That lovely 1001 violation.

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Yes. As you sit here today, is there any reason that you believe that you would not be able to give truthful answers to the questions that will be asked of you?

Mr. [REDACTED] No, ma'am.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. Well, that's the end of my preamble. I'll ask, anything from you all?

Ms. Sawyer. We are all set.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

The clock now reads 11 -- or 10:14. So we'll go to 11:14. And I'll turn the questioning over to Sara Barrineau.

#### EXAMINATION

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Good morning again.

A Hi.

Q Thank you, Agent [REDACTED], for your -- for coming today and for your service to your country. Let's just start with when -- when did you join Diplomatic Security?

A As an agent, I joined in -- [REDACTED] 2010.  
[REDACTED] 2010.

Q And did you have any prior military or law enforcement background before that?

A No.

Q So what have your assignments been since you joined DS?

A Since I came on as an agent, I did 2 years in the [REDACTED] field office. I completed basic agent training, did 2 years in the [REDACTED] field office, and I'm into my third year as a member of the [REDACTED] protective detail.

Q Did you work for DS before you were an agent?

A Yes.

Q As?

A I ran the CST, CAG, SSM program for approximately 8 months at DSTC. And then, after that, for 2 and a half years, I ran the FACT program.

Ms. Jackson. I'm going to interject.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q How did you end up in Benghazi? Did you recruit -- were you recruited? Did you volunteer? How did you find out about it?

A I volunteered. I was at the [REDACTED] field office, and an

email went out asking for people that -- requests for volunteers to staff an assignment. And I volunteered and was selected.

Q How long were you told that you would be gone or what were you told the mission was?

A It was to serve on the Special Envoy's protective detail, and I was to serve for, I believe, 30 to 45 days. I think 30 days was the original, and they asked for extensions. And there was back and forth, but it was -- 30 to 45 days was the original intent.

Q Had you completed the high-threat training --

A Yes.

Q -- before you went?

A Yes.

Q Do you know, was that at the time required for all agents who were going into Benghazi with the Special Envoy?

A Yes. I believe it was either that or being -- serving with them, the Mobile Security Deployment Office.

Q Gotcha. Because you actually had a couple of MSD agents --

A Correct.

Q -- with you that were serving as part of the detail, not as part of MSD teams, right?

A Correct.

Q Got it. So you -- did you go in with the initial team, or did you go in after?

A After.

Q With another agent?

A Yes.

Q Take the numbers from 8 to 10?

A Correct.

Q Do you know why they took the numbers from 8 to 10?

A Specifically, no. It was passed to me we were going into be -- added to the detail for Senator McCain's visit, and then we were staying on.

Q So is that how you got into Benghazi? Did you go in with Senator McCain?

A Yes.

Q Gotcha. So once you got on the ground in Benghazi, what was your job?

A It varied from day to day. For the initial part, I was part of the movement team and did advances, and then toward the later half of my time, I was nominally in charge of our operations center, which was a hotel room that had a computer and satellite phones.

Q Got it. Okay. Let's start with the advances. Did you do -- I know we've learned about that there were some site surveys done --

A Yes.

Q -- of sites in Benghazi. Did you actually write any of the site surveys while you were there?

A Yes.

Q What did you write site surveys for?

A There was a radio station that we visited that we thought

that -- I believe it was USAID, one of the DART team members went to, and there was a thought that we might have to go back there. So while we were there, I took down the details of a site survey and created one afterwards. I may have done one other, but the radio station is the one -- radio-TV station media something was the one I remembered.

Q Were they stored somewhere in a central format -- "they," the site surveys? Like, was there a library of them, for lack of a better word?

A Yeah. On the computer, there was -- I believe they had the GPS coordinates and all the other data was a folder that had the various surveys that had been done.

Q And those were the State Department laptops that the State Department sent to Benghazi? It wasn't, like, your laptop?

A No. I did not have any -- I did not -- I did have my personal laptop with me, but, no, this was all the State Department equipment that was in our operations center.

Q Gotcha. When you got to Benghazi -- and I'm going to tread lightly on this and ask it as a very specific yes-or-no question -- were you aware of any other security personnel or government personnel that were also in Benghazi that were not with you guys?

Mr. Evers. And just -- [REDACTED], just before you answer, I just want to caution you if you have to give a classified answer, the committee is willing to take you into a classified setting --

Ms. Barrineau. Right.

Mr. Evers. -- to give details if you need to give a more full

answer.

Mr. [REDACTED] I'm -- I was aware of them. Anything further, I'd prefer to discuss --

Ms. Barrineau. Understood.

Mr. [REDACTED] -- in another setting.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Understood. When you got to Benghazi, what was your understanding of the security situation on the ground?

A We were staying in a hotel room -- or a hotel suite. And we were liaising with a couple of different militias. In general, we did not move with the militias. We only added them as sort of an exterior part of the detail when we had -- for example, when the Senator came in, we had -- we used some of them. But we didn't, you know, liaison with them at the hotel and things like that.

Can you be more specific <sup>what about</sup> ~~about what~~ the security situation you're looking for?

Q Well, I guess let's start with before you got there. Did Diplomatic Security or the State Department give you a security brief on Libya or on Benghazi?

A Just a quick, You're going in, these are the amount of people we have, they'll talk to you on the ground about the sort of specific situation, but they're, you know, they're not isolated, they're not -- you know, they're able to go out and do things in the city. There were some no-go zones --

Q Right.

A -- if I remember correctly, but it was -- prior to going in, it was mainly, you know, they did -- it was passed to me that, I think a couple of -- about a week before I got in there, Qadhafi had gotten within about 50 miles of Benghazi, and so there was that consideration, but a lot of it they said that they would -- the team on the ground would sort of bring me up to speed.

Q Gotcha. So then you got to Benghazi, and you were staying in the hotel.

A Yes.

Q Did you guys on the detail do the liaison work with the militia yourselves, or did you have a point of contact? How did you -- if you needed extra security, how did you get it?

A There was a gentleman there, and I, for the life of me, cannot remember his name. I can picture his face, and I remember he liked to wear gray suits, but he was -- I believe he worked with the Embassy before the Embassy had closed.

Q Okay.

A And I was told that he had assisted with the recovery of the downed pilot, and he was the liaison when we needed to get -- we worked with him when we needed to get more additional security assets.

Q Did they --

A I personally didn't -- the AIC of the detail was the main liaison with him.

Q We're going to play a trivia game. Do you think you would recognize his name if I told it to you? Does the name ████████████████████

sound familiar to you?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So the militias at the hotel, were they -- I know for movements, you only really added them with VIPs, but did they provide any security for you at the hotel?

A Specifically for us, I'm -- don't know. I know that they were there for the hotel.

Q Okay.

A And we liaised with them, but in terms of the hotel specifically, we went a lot of times through the hotel to make sure we had our parking and we, you know, made sure we had entry when we need to when -- where we were going.

Q So the militia was providing security at the hotel, but it was because of the hotel, not specifically because of you?

A I don't know if it was specifically because of us or specifically for the hotel.

Q Fair enough.

A I know that at the hotel, we generally dealt with the hotel, who dealt with the militia unless there was something egregious that we needed to address directly.

Q Understood. Did you take any special gear or equipment with you --

A Yes.

Q -- into Benghazi? What did you take with you?

A I was told -- I think I actually brought all of my

high-threat gear, because at the time, they weren't sure if we were running high profile or low profile. And I never wore my high-profile vests.

Q Okay.

A It was -- that was -- I was -- so -- brought body armor, plates, clothing to kind of conceal it. We -- I believe we had gotten certified, [REDACTED] and I had gotten certified as non-pro couriers, and [REDACTED] ended up being the one that actually carried the equipment in.

Q Okay.

A And radio standard protection equipment. I had my laptop because I was told that there was very little, if any, entertainment, so it was bring movies and things like that to do.

Q So [REDACTED] -- oh, okay. So that's [REDACTED], right?

A Yes.

Q Can you explain to us what a courier is?

A A courier is someone who is charged with the protection of whatever is in the pouch, sealed in within the pouch. And there's a whole cadre of them that do it on a daily basis, pouch -- protecting the pouches and escorting the pouches back and forth, big orange containers that get sealed and then unsealed and under very specific circumstances.

Q But in the pouch was some additional equipment that you brought in?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So you had the pouches, you had your high-threat

gear. What else did the detail have when you got there?

A In terms of additional equipment?

Q Right.

A Additional equipment, they had -- let's see. They had satellite phones; the computer; various larger firearms, not crew served; all M4s or ARs or -- I'm not quite sure which; and two shotguns, I believe.

Q And that's about it?

A Yes.

Q While you were in Benghazi, do you know how -- how was the Special Envoy communicating back with D.C.?

A I know he would get on the satellite phone from time to time. And then, other than that, I think he had a fob that he used. I know he had a computer in his room, but other than that, I don't know specifically how --

Q Was --

A -- he was communicating.

Q I'm sorry. Was the connectivity pretty good for the satellite phone and the Internet? Did you have good phones?

A Decent, given the -- since it was not possible to have, you know, normal embassy communications --

Q Okay.

A -- it was decent for what it was. We were able to, you know, send personal emails back and forth. Most of us did not have a fob, so access to our State Department emails was extremely rare.

Q So how were you -- how were you communicating back with D.C., then, if you couldn't get into your State Department through your fob?

A We -- I didn't -- I --

Q Not you specifically.

A Okay.

Q So I'm sorry. Detail -- agents as a whole.

A Some of the people did have fobs --

Q Okay.

A -- but the connectivity was not good, so oftentimes the connectivity would not be good enough for the fob. So we would use the satellite phone very often to communicate back when we needed to. And that was what we used the most often to communicate back home.

Q How were you guys as agents reporting back to D.C., for lack of a better word? Were you checking in once a day or --

A To D.C.?

Mr. Evers. If you know.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Yeah, if you know.

A I know that -- I would say I don't know specifically.

Q Okay.

A I know that there were phone calls.

Q But you didn't necessarily have to make --

A I made phone calls to the MEU --

Q Okay.

A -- on a daily basis. We had a morning check-in with the MEU. I'm trying to remember. I -- we may have checked in with the command center also, but I honestly don't know. The MEU was the one that was mainly providing us information --

Q Right.

A -- because they were on the ground, and they had an intel section.

Q Okay.

A So when they could provide us with information, they would. So they were the ones -- and they were also the ones that were going to come get us if we needed it, so they were the ones that we were -- I was making sure to be -- we had a daily contact with them via the satellite phone.

Q And that was kind of one of your roles, was you were the one doing that?

A Toward the second half of the time, I was -- as part of running, nominally running the operations center, yes.

Q Understood. So is that where you were getting most of your intelligence and kind of on-the-ground knowledge aside from what you guys were getting yourselves?

A Yeah. They -- I wouldn't necessarily say -- specifically say intelligence.

Q Okay.

A A lot of times, the MEU would essentially be able to tell us if we had things to worry about, but, I mean, it was a satellite

phone; they could not get into specifics at all. So we did not get -- they were not able to give us specific things till much -- very close to the end of my time, when they were able to set up better communications.

Q Understood. So the MEU was, you said, who was going to come get you if you had -- if someone needed to come get you.

A Yes.

Q What was the plan for that, for lack of a better phrase?

A There were essentially two plans, with a couple of different offshoots. If there was -- if there was time and we knew with some buildup time, and it depended on if it was under fire or not, how long it would take, we were to drive to some predetermined spots along the coast and the MEU was going to come get us. And then if there was not time, it was jump in the cars, drive to Egypt, throw the -- mile short of Egypt, throw the guns in the water and drive to the Egyptian border with our diplomatic visa -- diplomatic books -- or diplomatic passports.

Q And then what were you going to do when you got to the border --

A We would have -- we had already talked to Embassy Egypt, and they had had the contacts to try and make sure we were allowed into Egypt.

Q So Embassy Cairo knew that that was one of the --

A My under --

Q -- options?

A I was told that there were -- there had been a setup with Embassy Cairo that if we had to go that route, they would be able to assist us in getting into Egypt from the Egyptian border.

Q So during your time there, did the MEU ever tell you that you had things to worry about? I mean, I know they couldn't go into specifics.

Mr. Evers. Again, if you know.

Mr. [REDACTED] I don't -- I don't specifically remember any instance that the MEU said that there was -- the <sup>MEU'S</sup> ~~MEU'S~~ main concern, from my understanding, was dealing with how Qadhafi's forces, and while I was there, I don't remember any specific circumstances that the MEU said, you know, Qadhafi's getting close type thing.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Understood. Did anything that they told you, that the MEU told you, cause you specifically on the detail, if you know, to request any additional assets from D.C.?

A No.

Q Okay. What was a normal day like for you guys in Benghazi in terms of movements with the Envoy?

A In general, we would know 5 or 6 o'clock the night before what the next day's schedule nominally was. Occasionally things came up. And if you weren't on fire watch overnight, get up anywhere between 6:00 and 7:00 usually. And it depends on if you were on the movement team or not. And -- I mean, because the detail was so small, you pretty much could only have one team out. It was very rare that we would have

more than one team out at a time. So if the Envoy was moving, USAID couldn't really move or -- the Envoy took precedence, so if the Envoy was -- USAID would have to reschedule.

Q Understood.

A But they also would talk to the Envoy about trying to sort of synchronize their schedules. And then there was sort of a main movement team that dealt with the Envoy's movements. And then, depending on what was going on, everyone would be involved. It just depended on the role that the shift leader decided that day you'd be in.

Q How -- how many times -- did he move a lot, or did he do most of his meetings in the hotel? How many movements --

A I mean, it depended on the day. It could be anywhere from one -- I would say two moves a day was average; sometimes one. It was very rare that it would go into three or four moves a day, because a lot of his meetings tended to take a couple hours, and you -- out and back and things like that. And then, obviously, if, you know, we knew that there were events going on, we would structure -- we had requested to not have the movements during the annual 5 p.m. parade in front of the hotel, things like that.

Q So let's talk about the 5 p.m. parade in front of the hotel. What is the 5 p.m. parade in front of the hotel?

A Every -- in -- almost every day, at about 5 o'clock, there was a parade in front of the hotel with people who were happy to have us there but very noisy about being against Qadhafi. A lot

of -- we -- the one thing that we did talk to the hotel about and talk to -- I'm not even sure how we got -- the word was just to tell them not to fire the guns toward the hotel. So they pointed it over the -- like, toward the other hotel, which was --

Q But they were fairly cooperative?

A Yeah. No. I mean, it was just -- it was -- our big concern was not necessarily that they were uncooperative; it was just there were so many people at times. I mean, there were times where it was a couple hundred people, and there were times where it was thousands of people.

Q So can I assume, since we're calling it the 5 p.m. parade, that it was fairly predictable and about the same time --

A Yes.

Q -- every day?

A Yes.

Q Were they usually there until all hours of the night, or as the sun was going down, would they kind of be done?

A It was -- it was usually half an hour-ish, maybe, depending on -- I remember the day that Osama Bin Laden was killed, it was a much bigger parade --

Q I would imagine.

A -- but other than that, it -- it would die -- I mean, you could go out in the evenings with no problem. There was just sort of an afternoon time frame that we tried not to move, or if a team was out, we told them to stay out until the parade was done because it

severely limited access to the hotel.

Q So not really violent, just a sheer number of people?

A Yes. I mean, there were weapons, but our big concern was more the sheer number of people as opposed to their intent toward us.

Q So you said you asked the Envoy and USAID officers to not do movements during that time as much as possible. Was the Envoy fairly cooperative when you asked him --

A I --

Q -- to not do --

A I didn't ask him.

Q Okay.

A The AIC --

Q Fair enough.

A -- was in discussions with him. And I know that there was an ongoing discussion about when we could move and things along those lines. I wasn't involved in them. I just was, "Hey, we're now not going to do this," type thing. Yet my understanding was he was fairly cooperative; he understood the situation, and he would try to schedule things, you know, at other times when he needed to move.

Q What kind of a profile did you guys move with when you took him out?

A Generally two vehicles. Occasionally, when it was -- when he was attending certain other things, we would add a third vehicle, depending on where we were going, if we were going for longer movements, but generally two vehicles, a limo and a follow.

Q And I assume you guys were armed.

A Yes.

Q Do you -- what do you know about your status while you were in Benghazi in terms of your official or diplomatic status? Were you ever told?

A No.

Q Other than the afternoon rallies, parades, whatever we want to call them, did you learn about any other security incidents at or near the hotel or anywhere else that you guys might have been while you were there?

A The -- we heard that the <sup>Frenchmen</sup>~~Frenchmen~~ got rolled up at the checkpoint. We heard about that. We heard a couple times where it -- I was told that it was suggested we stay -- avoid certain areas because the -- whoever was in charge of Benghazi was doing raids, but --

Q How would you get information like that?

A I was just -- the AIC was passed -- I don't know who it came from. I just --

Q That --

A -- was told that we're not doing things in certain areas today type thing.

Q Understood. But you don't know how he was getting that information?

A No.

Q Did the detail ever consider leaving Benghazi while you were there?

A No. Not to my knowledge.

Q Let's go back to Mr. [REDACTED] in the gray suits for a minute. What was his role while you were there?

A My understanding of his role was he was one of our main interlocutors with the militias. I don't know -- and, again, I was told that he had helped --

Q Right.

A -- with the pilot and that he used to work at the Embassy.

Q But he -- was he around a lot? Was he moving with you guys to sites?

A The only time he moved with us was when we had VIP visits. For example, he assisted with the militia on -- when the Senator came in. And that was his main -- it was that type of thing. It was -- he was around, and he may have gone on other movements --

Q Right.

A -- but I can't specifically remember what he -- what his role was in that regard.

Q Understood.

Mr. Evers. Can I just interject for just a second? I didn't want to interrupt your answer. I'm not aware that this subject is classified, but we are discussing the name of an individual who may or may not still be on the ground in Libya. And just out of respect for his safety and, you know, the people who are still probably trying to work in Libya, I'd ask the committee to take care with how this information is kept, consistent with the agreement that we have between

the State Department and the committee on sensitive information that doesn't rise to the level of classified.

Ms. Jackson. We'll note your concern.

Mr. Evers. Thank you very much.

Ms. Jackson. Yes.

Mr. Evers. Thanks for letting me interrupt.

Ms. Barrineau. Oh, it is no problem.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Okay. Let's talk about tripwires for a minute. Do you -- were you aware when you were in Benghazi of specific Benghazi tripwires?

A Yes.

Q Were they -- how -- well, let's go back a step. Did you know about them before you got there, or when you got on the ground, you found out about them?

A I believe it was on the ground. I don't remember about -- hearing about any of them prior. I may have, but I just don't remember.

Q Understood. So there was a specific list of tripwires?

A There were a couple general tripwires. The biggest one I remember of is -- was the distance of Qadhafi's forces to the city.

Q Was there any discussion early on about what would happen if a tripwire was crossed, meaning, were we going to talk about it, were we automatically going to pack up, were we going to do something in the middle, if you know?

A I don't remember. Like I said, the only one I remember was there was a certain if Qadhafi got within a certain distance, we were getting out of here, but my -- that's all I specifically remember.

Q So, to your knowledge, since you obviously were still there, to your knowledge, no official tripwire was crossed while you were in Benghazi?

A To my knowledge, no.

Q Understood?

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Back to [REDACTED], who was the liaison, did he -- you stated that he did not travel with you unless perhaps a VIP was there, such as Senator McCain. Did he have one-on-one meetings with the Envoy, if you know?

A I know he spoke with the Envoy. I don't know if he had one-on-one with the Envoy.

Q Okay. Was he a daily presence that you would see, or was it more sporadic, or can you give us an estimate of how often he would either be in some type of communication with the Envoy?

A With the Envoy specifically, I -- I have -- I can't speak to that.

Q Okay. What about other members of the detail?

A We saw him more than weekly but less than daily.

Q Okay.

A I mean, it would -- there were weeks -- or there were -- there was time where we would see him throughout the day for

a couple of days and then we wouldn't see him for a little while. It just -- I don't even know what it depended on. It was just circumstances of what was going on.

Q Okay. You also mentioned that there were USAID workers --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- there in addition to the Envoy.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay. Other than 10 diplomatic security agents there --

A Yeah.

Q -- what was -- who comprised the U -- the State Department group?

A There was the Special Envoy and then [REDACTED], who was his pretty much everything else. And then there was the USAID DART team, which had four people: There was the team leader; there was the public affairs persons; a governance person; and a logistics person, I think.

Q Was it your understanding that these four had come in with the Envoy?

A No.

Q Okay.

A They -- they came in -- there were -- let's see if I -- two were on the -- there were two USAID people on the ground that came in either with the Envoy or shortly thereafter. I don't remember specifically. They left shortly after -- if not the day I got there, the next day. And the four -- I had actually been -- I was -- there

was some logistic question of how I was getting to Benghazi. And I originally was scheduled to actually go in with them, and then they weren't going in until after McCain went in, so I had to get shifted around while in Europe to meet up with the Senator and go in with him. And they came in either the day McCain did but later in the day or the next day. I can't remember specifically.

Q Okay. And then did the initial two --

A Left.

Q -- had they already left?

A They -- I can't remember if there was overlap there or not.

Q Okay. We've had -- there has been some acronyms. Do you know what DART stands for?

A Disaster Assistance Response Team, I think.

Q Okay. And what was their general role?

A They were there to do a lot of liaison with various -- civil society and to assess the need for USAID assistance for Benghazi. I remember the governance guy was doing a lot of meetings to try and build up civil society and local government and things along those lines.

Q Okay. And there was a whole slew of alphabet letters when you were describing your State Department work prior to becoming an agent --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- and I didn't understand a single one of them.

A Yes, ma'am. Okay.

Q So could you go over that again and --

A Okay.

Q -- and the non-State Department people, could you educate us as to --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- what you did?

A So when I was originally hired, I was hired to be -- to be the admin behind the CST, CAG, SSM --

Q CST?

A CST, CAG, SSM program, which is Construction Surveillance Technician, Cleared American Guard, and Site Security Manager.

Q Now, that's a mouthful.

A Which those are three different people. It was just one training program. Those three people are responsible for the security when built -- embassies are being built or renovated. The CST is responsible for handling -- monitoring installation of things in sensitive areas and -- you know, is the concrete right and things along those lines; not necessarily the -- is it -- you know, is the tensile strength right, but making sure there's not something in the concrete type thing. CAG is Cleared American Guard, which is essentially for construction sites, somewhat akin to a Marine security guard. In fact, we get a lot of -- they had a lot of prior Marine security guards who went through that training. They would handle access control to the site and escort to the -- with on the construction site. And then the SSM was akin to the RSO for the site, managing those two programs and liaising with Overseas Building Operations on building the venue.

Q Okay. And was there any other letters of the alphabet that you talked about --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- prior to been coming a DS agent?

A Yes, ma'am. After I moved from that, I went to the FACT program, which is Foreign Affairs Counter Threat, which was the program that all personnel that were going to high-threat areas at the time -- it started with Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. We had people that were going to Mexico go through there. Yemen, all -- it essentially became kind of anybody who was going to a place that wanted some additional training. It was about a week of training, and we gave a firearms familiarization, a little driving information, some countersurveillance stuff, some medical stuff, how to put on body armor, a little orientation toward -- to people that were going to go to these places.

Q But these people were non-agents, generally?

A Agents -- agents did go through it as well, but 99 percent of them were non-agents. And it included actually agents of other agencies that were going to embassies located in these areas.

Q Okay.

A It was my understanding it was a requirement for anyone going to these areas to go through the course.

Q Would you liken it to a very condensed version of your high-threat course?

A No.

Q Okay.

A The -- it was very much an orientation and just to get people familiar with, you're going to see body armor, here's how you put it on; you're going to see a gun, guns. A familiarity -- essentially the way I remember the way I described it was we're not teaching you how to -- we're not -- and we're not teaching you or expecting you to pick up a gun and fight, but if something happens and you see a weapon and decide to do something, here's how you can do something.

Q Okay.

A Along those lines.

Q Okay. A couple other --

A Okay.

Q -- alphabets out there. You talked about the MEU, and I just --

A Yes.

Q I think I know what the MEU is --

A Yes.

Q -- but I want to make sure, so we'll have it in your --

A It's Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Q Okay.

A It's a Marine unit that's afloat to --

Q You mean literally floating in the water?

A My -- yeah. They were on a ship in the Mediterranean somewhere.

Q Okay. And they were your lifeline, if it were?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And you said that when you were running the TOC, that you talked with them every morning?

A We -- yeah. We generally had -- it was either 9 or 10 o'clock we tried to check in with them, and they would tell us if, you know, we had things to worry about. I do now also remember we did check in occasionally with AFRICOM back in Stuttgart.

Q Okay. Would you have an afternoon check-in or was it just the once daily check-in?

A It was generally once daily if they said we had things to worry about. We did occasionally call back if we had questions, but it was daily check-in mainly.

Q And now for the non-agent person in the room, you talked about something called high profile versus low profile?

A Yes.

Q What does that mean?

A The high-profile kit is -- I guess the best way to describe it would be what you see a SWAT team would wear, where it's very visible, body armor, pouches, kind of big and bulky, it's what the Army would generally wear when they're out on patrol, weapons exposed, things along those lines. So it's very big and bulky. And low profile is generally just body armor and maybe things you can cover on your belt, but you can cover up with your shirt so that when you're walking around, it's not immediately apparent that you're carrying weapons or have other gear or body armor or things on.

Q Okay. So when you talk about a "kit," you mean gear?

A Gear, yes.

Q Okay.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q I actually have one more question about the MEU. What did you understand, if you had a specific answer, to be their response time, or did you?

A There was a response time. I know it was on the order of hours, I just don't remember specifically what it was. And I remember it had to do with how much lead time there was, if it was under -- if it was under fire, where exactly it was, and there was also -- I do -- I do remember that under a couple of the circumstances, they couldn't take all of us at once, so there was an additional plan of the Envoy, the DART team and every non-DS -- and all the non-DS people go and some of the DS people go, and then the rest of the DS people drive a little farther down the road to another spot, and they would come back later to get us. I just don't remember -- I --

Q But safe to say hours, not days?

A Yes.

Q Understood.

Ms. Jackson. And would you guesstimate over or under 12 hours?

Mr. [REDACTED] Under.

Ms. Jackson. Under? Okay.

Ms. Barrineau. Way to read my mind.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Okay. If I could go back to the communications that you talked about, you talked about having satellite phones and State Department computers there. Is that correct?

A There were State Department computers, but we didn't have access to State Department anything. It was essentially the hotel Internet, which was not reliable.

Q Okay. So if you --

A And it also would run through the satellite phone occasionally, which was one of the reasons would -- it would not be extremely reliable.

Q Okay. So you weren't able to use your State Department email addresses. Is that correct?

A Occasionally. If someone had a fob or we would -- people would fob in, and then you could then log in to using the open net on Internet Explorer, within the fob, you could then log into your email and check your email that way.

Q And by "fob," you mean some sort of remote access --

A Yes.

Q -- device?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so how would you communicate if you needed to talk to another agent if you needed to use email?

A On -- in terms of the -- like, the agents in -- we didn't use email to talk -- to the agents in Benghazi?

Q Yes. First.

A We didn't use email.

Q How did you communicate with each other if you weren't --

A Radios.

Q Radios?

A In general, yes.

Ms. Barrineau. Were the radio comms pretty good in Benghazi?

Mr. [REDACTED] Within and around the hotel, yes. And then, once you got beyond a certain point, the vehicle radios, the initial vehicle radios were on a different system because my understanding is they were USAID vehicles. So we had a USAID radio system that we used. And then the other vehicles that came in came in without radios. So we were using our handhelds. So there were distance limitations. And then there was -- at that point, there were phones. We had local phones.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q If you needed to send an email back to your supervisor in the [REDACTED] field office --

A Yes.

Q -- or someone there, how would you communicate with them?

A The easiest was via Gmail, via -- over -- we tried to limit that, because the satellite phone, the data was extremely expensive, was my understanding, so we tried to limit -- I mean, we worked on -- I remember working on my EER while I was there.

Q And what's an EER?

A Employee Evaluation Report.

Q Okay.

A I remember working on that there via email, but it was via G -- via personal Gmail a lot of the times back and forth.

Q Did the agents have an email address that they used for communications back with main State, if you recall?

A We had a -- we established a Gmail address that we used.

Q Do you recall what that was?

A I want to say [REDACTED]@gmail.com.

Q Okay.

A I created it. I just don't remember specifically what it was.

Q Would an email address of [REDACTED]@gmail.com --

A That sounds about right, yeah.

Q Okay. And you think you're the one that created it?

A I'm pretty sure I did. I honestly -- I know it wasn't there when I got there, and I'm pretty sure I did it, but I don't remember specifically. It came about during the transition between when [REDACTED] left, who was running the TOC, and when I sort of took over. I just don't remember specifically when it was created.

Q And it was used to communicate back with other -- back with main State or --

A It -- yeah. It was an easier way when we didn't need to get on open net.

Q Okay.

A Because it was just the Gmail, we didn't have to worry about

fobbing in and things like that.

Q Okay. And what would you use that email address for?

A Very generic, checking in a lot of the time; just we'd use it to communicate -- everybody carried personal tracking locators when they were not out -- when they were out and about. So it was like who had what number locator and things like that and updates, things along those lines. And we tried do that on the open net when we could, but when that wasn't available, we'd use that.

Q Okay. Would you also use it to communicate either to the DS command center or to other components of Diplomatic Security regarding, you know, who was there, who was coming in, who was leaving, things like that?

A I don't know -- it may have been used to communicate with the command center. I don't know specifically what -- I can't -- I can't remember specifically if it was -- if those types of details were communicated with, you know, who's coming in and things like that. It's -- it's entirely possible. I just don't remember specifically.

Q Was there any type of daily reporting that was required while you were there, either by the Envoy or by Diplomatic Security, such as, you know, what's happening in Benghazi, what's the security situation, what are the planned movements for the next day? Was there any type of daily reporting?

A Other than the daily check-in that I did with the MEU, I don't -- I don't know of any other requirements.

Q Okay. Were there specialized reports, such as if an

incident occurred or after Senator McCain visited or some sort of high-profile event?

A I know that there were phone calls that, you know, when -- you know, when McCain left, they called via the sat phone and things like that, but I don't know of any other specific -- I don't know.

Q Okay. Okay.

Ms. Jackson. Do you have questions on mine or some additional ones?

Ms. Barrineau. No. I'm good with that.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Ms. Barrineau. But I have a couple others --

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Ms. Barrineau. -- unless you want to go down some other route.

Ms. Jackson. Okay. I would, but I'll turn it back over to you.

Ms. Barrineau. Okay. Then you can go.

Ms. Jackson. No.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q Were the agents, were you guys able to build host nation law enforcement relationships yourselves, or were you having to kind of depend on the couple of liaisons you had? Does that make sense?

A I would say there was no host nation law enforcement to build a liaison with, but no. We mainly just dealt with a couple of the different militias.

Q But you're not even really -- or do you know exactly which

militias you were dealing with, or was it just kind of a hodgepodge?

A I -- February 17 is the only one I remember specifically. There may have been a couple others, but that's the one I remember specifically.

Q Is -- was there a way to distinguish -- if you walked up and it was obviously a militia, were you able to distinguish this is February 17 and this is some other militia or --

A I don't know. I mean, I don't remember any specific uniform or anything -- uniform requirements that they had or anything like that.

Q Did you -- did you yourself work with February 17 any?

A Other than on a couple of movements they were around, no direct liaison, no.

Q What did you think of them on the movements when they were around in terms of the degree of security they were capable of providing?

A They -- I mean, we were happy to have them, because they knew the area and they knew who -- when -- it was very obvious when they were not comfortable with someone. And it sort of brought our attention to that person when someone didn't -- and it -- someone sort of stood out or didn't appear to be -- appear to need to be where they were.

I was comfortable with them inasmuch as they were a militia that, you know, we were working with and they were happy to have us there. They wanted to keep us -- they were doing their best to keep us as safe

as they could.

Q Were they reliable, and by that I mean if you asked them to do something and they agreed, did they usually provide whatever service they had said they would provide?

A I never asked them specifically, but if the detail asked for help --

Q Right.

A -- I can't remember an instance that they weren't able to help.

Q Okay. Go head.

Ms. Jackson. Okay.

Ms. Barrineau. Actually, while she's looking, I have one more.

BY MS. BARRINEAU:

Q When you -- when you left Benghazi --

A Yes.

Q -- were you ever debriefed by DS, by the State Department, by anyone about your experiences while you were there?

A No.

Q And you didn't provide any sort of written report or anything about why you were there?

A Other than the one I did in my EER, no.

Q Got it.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q After the attack in Benghazi in 2012, did anyone come to you and ask you about your experience in Benghazi?

A Other than the requests that came down for all emails, that was it.

Q Okay. That was an internal State Department request for documents or emails regarding Benghazi?

A It came to me as an internal. I don't know who generated it, but it was an everybody who's been in Benghazi, get all your emails that you can find, and if, you know, you remember an email you deleted, talk to the computer guys about getting it back, anything along those lines, and compile them and send them -- send them up.

Q Do you recall about when you got that request?

A I mean, specifically? No. I'd say fall of 2012. I don't know -- it could have been before I came to SD. It could have been after. I honestly don't know.

Q Okay. Some time after the attack and before the end of the year?

A Yes, ma'am.

Q Okay.

A It's possible it may have been into January, but it was in that general time frame.

Q Okay. And did you do that?

A Yes.

Q Did you -- okay. And what documents did you gather?

A The couple emails I had from prior to going about volunteering and then the couple from afterwards about the -- mainly about my voucher, if I remember correctly.

Q Okay. Did you bring to anybody's attention that there had been this Gmail account that was being used?

A I don't remember specifically mentioning it to anybody, no.

Q Okay. Was that something that you had the capability of searching for at that time?

A I conceivably could have tried to log into it again, yes, but I didn't even think about it.

Q To your knowledge, is it still active?

A I have absolutely no idea.

Q Was there a password?

A Yes.

Q What was the password?

Mr. Evers. I'm going to object. I'm not sure that you guys need to be able to -- you have the email address and the password. If -- I don't think you guys need to be able to log into it. I think that's perfectly fair. We can talk about the account if you want to, but I don't think we need on the record an email address and password.

Ms. Sawyer. Yeah. I mean, I would agree. I just think if we have a request, we should make it --

Mr. Evers. If you ask me for mine, I would, you know, my State login, I wouldn't give it to you on the record.

Ms. Jackson. Well, we're not asking for a personal email address. We're asking for one that we have woefully little record about.

Mr. Evers. Sure. I just don't --

Ms. Jackson. Yeah.

Mr. Evers. My objection is just putting the password on the record in connection with a particular account, I don't think, is appropriate.

Ms. Jackson. Well --

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q When were you notified that this committee wanted to talk with you?

A Maybe a month ago or so when Assistant Secretary Starr sent me an email.

Q Okay. Were you one of many names on the email or do you know if it was --

A Yes.

Q Okay. So there was a slew of people?

A Ten, 12 maybe. I honestly don't remember specifically.

Q Okay. You said about a month ago. Would that, then, have been after the first of the year?

A Probably. I honestly don't remember the specific time frame. I would guess after the first of the year.

Q Okay.

A Yeah. I would -- I think I was in [REDACTED] at the time. I think after the first of the year.

Q Okay. And what, if anything, were you told?

A Just that it -- they -- I was requested to appear and that some lawyers would be -- to provide my contact information to some State

Department folks to set up -- start working toward the appearance.

Q Okay. All right. And have you had any meetings prior -- after that notification, have you had any meetings regarding your testimony here today?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And how many?

A Two.

Q Two.

A Well, this morning and then one previous.

Q Previous? Okay. Were either of them a prep session in any way?

A It was just a discussion about what I remembered.

Q Okay. And who was present for that interview?

A This gentleman. And I cannot remember the lady's name who was there the first time, but I think [REDACTED] was there this morning. And I cannot, for the life of me, remember who was there the first time.

Q Okay.

A There was another woman present, another lawyer, I just can't remember who it was.

Q Okay. But nobody you had met before?

A No. No, no, no.

Q No supervisor or anything like that?

A No, no, no.

Q Okay. And did you review any documents?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And what documents did you review?

A There were two emails that I had -- one I had sent and received a response from, and one that I had been sent.

Q While you were in Benghazi?

A No. Nothing -- I reviewed no documents related -- from when I was in Benghazi. It was all from after I had left.

Q After you had left where?

A Benghazi.

Q Okay.

A I had some friends who were on the ground, and one was an email I had sent to him and his response, and one was an email he had sent to me, as a group.

Q And who was that individual?

A [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And he was in Benghazi after you were?

A Yes.

Q But he was not there during the attack?

A No.

Q Okay. And what was the nature of those emails?

A The first was an email after the compound had -- the wall had been broken, and I was, hey -- it was an email of, Hey, everything okay? And he responded with, They blew a hole in the wall. And then the second one was an email he had forwarded that -- it had to do with a rise of Islam -- it was a compilation of news -- I can't remember exactly what it was. It was a compilation of points, and one of them

was talking about the rise of Islamists in Benghazi. And his comment was something along the lines of, Uh-oh, or something like that. And my thought was, Well, that's new, because they weren't there when I was there, or they weren't apparent when I was there. Everybody seemed to like us when I was there.

Q Okay.

Mr. Evers. And just for the record, I want to make sure it's clear, because you didn't ask, those are documents from the production that we -- that -- the documents that you're discussing with him right now came from the production, so you have them, in case you have some follow up you want to do.

Ms. Jackson. So all right. I think those are my follow-up questions.

Ms. Barrineau. I think my only follow up would be with what you just said. So while you were there, aside from Qadhafi's forces, which you weren't dealing with, everyone that you were dealing with and that the detail was dealing with kind of on a daily basis seemed happy to have you there?

Mr. [REDACTED] Yes.

Ms. Barrineau. All right. We're doing good.

Ms. Jackson. I think we'll waive the remaining time on our hour and turn it over to the minority staff.

Ms. Barrineau. We'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

RPTR ZAMORA

EDTR SECKMAN

[11:13 a.m.]

EXAMINATION

BY MR. WOOLFORK:

Q So we're back on the record.

Mr. [REDACTED], on behalf of the minority staff, I would just like to welcome you and thank you again for your service. My name is Brent Woolfork, and I'm joined by my colleagues, Heather Sawyer, Kendal Robinson. And we understand this can be a daunting task. We're going to try to make our part as simple and straightforward as possible.

And, first, I wanted to touch upon something you talked about at the outset in terms of your time when you joined DS. If you could just tell us why you joined DS because you had previously mentioned it was before you were even an agent.

A When I initially joined DS, it was -- I had been a manager at a movie theater and I was trying to get to a more 9-to-5 job. And a friend of mine was able to get my application in to take over as the admin. I had looked at joining DS previously as an agent prior to that. I love to travel, wanted to serve my country, and, you know, the idea of sort of living overseas and traveling a lot was -- sounded exciting.

Q And why did you make the change to an agent?

A I mean, the admin was just sort of, at the time, it was -- I had wanted to get to a more 9-to-5 job, weekends off, that type of thing. It was never something to do -- that I wanted to do for a career. I

had applied to a couple local law enforcement and -- but DS was kind of, sort of always what I wanted to get to eventually.

Q Before we get into Benghazi-specific questions, I want to ask you kind of broadly about the threat environment in which the State Department, yourself, operates. You know, there's 275 posts around the world, a lot of those in dangerous places. Could you kind of walk us through the some of the dangers and threats that we're currently facing?

A In the world or --

Q Just generally in terms of terrorism, whether it's crime.

A I mean, every post is different. There's a specific -- which we can discuss in another setting -- specific to each post. There's different ratings for a variety of things, crime, terrorism, political violence, et cetera. And then based on that and based on the individual circumstances of each post, there is, you know, best practices.

The one that I've always told people and the one that has always served me well, is treat -- when you're overseas, treat it like you're in the middle of New York City, you know, 15 years ago and just, you know, pay attention and, you know, you'll -- paying attention is the biggest thing you can do. If you sort of just let yourself get lost, it's not a good way to operate.

Q Okay. And how does your training, which you're very familiar with, prepare you for those risks and threats?

A The biggest thing is just, you know,

having -- learning -- you know, building up your capabilities and ability to respond and to handle different situations and to sort of recognize common situations and uncommon situations and to try and be able to pick things that stand out and try and figure out why they stand out and, you know, what doesn't fit with its surroundings.

Q And does your training show you how to eliminate risk, if that's even possible?

A I don't think it's possible to eliminate risk. So, I mean, I think you -- in personal opinion, I think you take risk and you try and do what you can to minimize it, but I don't think it's possible to eliminate risk completely.

Q Okay. Now, just turning to Benghazi. I know we talked about this earlier, but I want to re-cover it again. When did you arrive in country?

A I want to say, it was either -- and I always get the dates mixed up -- it was either March or April of 2011. I just, I can't remember specifically, exactly when.

Q And then when did you leave?

A Early May, I think.

Q And, again, you arrived with Senator McCain's --

A Yes.

Q -- delegation?

A It was the Senator. I believe there were two air crew, it was myself, Agent [REDACTED]. And he had -- I know he had a press person, and I think he had one other staffer, but I don't remember specifically.

Q And aside from your work with the Senator's delegation, you had talked about your work on movement security and then the latter half of your time you were in charge of the operations center; is that right?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And during those periods when you were carrying each of those different responsibilities, who did you report to on a daily basis.

A The shift leader and the agent in charge.

Q Who was the shift leader?

A The first half of the time it was [REDACTED]. And then for a little while, it was [REDACTED]. And then -- I can picture him. He was [REDACTED] -- he -- it was another guy out of the Atlanta office at the time. I just, I can't remember his name right now. [REDACTED] got sick and had to leave, so --

Q Okay. And then there was the agent in charge?

A Yes.

Q And did that change --

A Yes.

Q -- while you were there as well?

A Yes.

Q And do you remember, do you recall those names?

A [REDACTED] was the first one, and then [REDACTED] was the second one.

Q And then, during your time, were there points where you

advised your superiors within the team against particular activities due to security reasons?

A No. It was never my role to advise on a go/no-go of a movement.

Q Okay. And in terms of your time either on movement detail or when you were in charge of operations center, did you ever raise concerns about lack of resources that limited your ability to carry out your job?

A No.

Q Okay. So, in that case, would you say that you had the ~~research~~ <sup>resources</sup> that you needed to carry out your mission?

A Yeah. I mean, given where we were, yes, we were able to move comfortably. I mean, there's always -- you're always on the lookout for things, but we felt comfortable in our operating posture, yes.

Q And so overall, based on what you just said, it seems that mission of the Special Envoy was able to reach its objectives while you were in country?

A I don't -- I can't speak to the objectives. I don't know. Other than engaging with the anti-Qadhafi forces, I don't know what his objectives were. I can't speak to them.

Q Okay. And previously, you had talked about Senator McCain's delegation.

A Yes.

Q And did you provide any security for the delegation while

he was in Benghazi?

A Yes.

Q And what kind of security was your role?

A When we get off the plane, I was riding in the staff vehicle, and then I was part of the diamond when he was walking around, mainly just in the square that he visited.

Q And prior to his arrival, did you -- were you involved in any of his security planning?

A No.

Q Okay. And when did you become aware that the Senator was traveling to Benghazi?

A I think I was told after I had been assigned to go out there. And when I came to D.C., I was told that they were trying to get me out there either with the Senator or before the Senator got there. And there was conflicting information about when and how and all the other logistics of how that was going to occur.

Q And do you recall any or some of the logistical challenges that arose?

A I remember when [REDACTED] and I first arrived in D.C., we were going to have to travel on our personal passports, but he didn't have his. So he got sent home, and then I was going to go out myself. And then I linked up with the DART team in Europe, in France. And then [REDACTED] ended up coming back and was going to actually -- then he met up with us -- sorry, he met up with the Senator.

And then there was this ongoing discussion of when the DART team

was going to go in. They had their own transport set up through USAID. And there was a big concern that they wouldn't get there before the Senator, so I flew -- I went back in to Paris, flew to Cyprus, and met up with the Senator there, and went on his plane with [REDACTED].

Q Okay. And then you had said that you were involved in several movements with the Senator. What were some of the places that he visited, if you can remember that far back?

A I remember he went to the square, the Martyrs' Square. I don't remember specifically what it was called, but it was where they had all the photos and stuff for the people who were killed during the initial uprising. And then he -- I think he went to some local governance places. I don't know specific -- I couldn't tell you specifically. And then he had, at the hotel, he had meetings, and he went to -- he had a press conference.

Q Okay. You mentioned you were part of the diamond. Could you explain what that is?

A Essentially, the protective diamond, which is our sort of standard operating protective detail. It varies in size, depending on a wide variety of circumstances. And the standard positions are there's an advance, a left or a right rear, an AIC, and a shift lead, and, again, depending, you can scale up that and down.

Q And do you recall, as part of that detail, do you recall any kind of the specifics of meetings or more generally what the atmosphere was like during those meetings?

A Everybody was happy that we were there. The biggest issue

we ran into at the press conference was they were late. And we were told by the Senator's press person not to let anybody else in because it was packed and some people were not pleased about not getting let in, including one of the, I remember one of the U.S. press had like gone outside for a smoke or something and missed it and was not pleased. But we were like, sorry. But -- so that was the biggest in just the sheer amount of people, but in general, everybody was very happy that we were there.

Q And aside from Senator McCain's delegation, did you also travel in similar form with then-Special Envoy Stevens?

A Different setup, but yes, I was involved in his movement a couple of times.

Q And then, during those movements, do you recall what types of meetings that took place? You had previously mentioned a radio station.

A The radio station was with the USAID -- one of the USAID teams, or it was a couple of the team members. Local governance. We went to the Swedish Embassy a couple of times. I know we went to the Greek Embassy. I'm trying to think of what else. Just a couple other -- I mean, I don't remember specifically what it was. I know that, I mean, during my second half of the time, I did not -- I very rarely went out with the Envoy. I handled some of the ~~aid~~<sup>AID</sup> moves but that was about it.

Q And, in terms of your movements, were they generally easy to move, or do you find the environment difficult to move in?

A It was an environment that, I mean, operating in any other country poses, you know, different challenges, but it was -- there was nothing hard about it other than, you know, traffic and, you know, people don't know how to drive sometimes and things like that. But there was nothing -- nothing about movement had me worried except for the sheer -- the parade, just making sure that we were out of the way of the people.

Q And that was like the 5 p.m. --

A The 5 p.m.

Q -- daily parade?

A Yeah.

Q Okay. I wanted to shift towards the tripwires, which was also raised in the past hour. And just taking a step back, if you can kind of just talk what tripwires are and how they -- what the role is in terms of making decisions at a post.

A I can't speak to at a post. I have not -- other than some temporary assignments, I have not served as a regional security officer. In general, there are conditions that, if met, necessitate reaction in one way or another. If, you know, Qadhafi's forces got within a certain distance of Benghazi, we then act, we do "X" to respond type thing.

Q And during your time in Benghazi, was the threat of Qadhafi's forces the most predominant threat? Or were there other threats that were more predominant at the time?

A From my understanding, it was the most predominant threat.

Q Okay. And then, in terms of the tripwires, that was the primary tripwire that you're aware of, was the --

A That was the biggest one that I remember being discussed.

Q Okay. And does this tripwire, was it a written tripwire? Do you recall?

A I don't remember if it was written, not written, how it was passed.

Q But did you have a sense that there was a plan in place which you previously had spoken to about what would happen if the vicinity of Qadhafi's forces got too close?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And could you just talk a little bit again in terms of what those procedures were?

A Essentially, there was a -- everyone -- it depended on the exact circumstances. It was, you know -- we weren't -- there was no way we would've been able to move everybody and everybody's luggage. So it was, all right, you know, everybody gets a bag, maybe two or, you know, in, you know, with gear and everything else that sort of had to come out, the computers and the sat phones and things like that, and load up into three or four vehicles -- I don't remember specifically the setup -- and drive, -- let's see, that would've been west -- east along the beach. And there were certain points that we had already worked out with the Marine Expeditionary Unit to come pick us up.

Q And so that Marine Expeditionary Unit would be the primary extracting force?

A That was my understanding, yes.

Q Okay. Now, you were there April to May of 2011, right?

A That --

Q Or March?

A Yes, that timeframe, yeah.

Q And so, during that time period, were you aware of a NATO-led operation that was conducting air strikes?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And so do you know if the Marine Expeditionary Unit that you cited for the extraction was there due to your presence or due to the larger operation that was taking place?

A I don't know.

Q And do you know if it's common for a force of that size, in terms of size but also capabilities, to be available for evacuations for --

A I can't speak to that.

Q Okay. I want to talk just a few moments about the Tibesti Hotel and the setup there.

A Uh-huh.

Q When you arrived, Special Envoy was staying at the Tibesti Hotel. Is that correct?

A Correct.

Q And you had a -- where did you stay in the hotel?

A There was -- fifth floor maybe. I don't remember exactly what floor it was. There was sort of an office suite on one end, glass

doors that we chained at night, the Envoy stayed there, the AIC, the shift leader, [REDACTED], those were -- the offices were -- had two staircase -- main staircase on one side. And then right outside the glass doors, there was another staircase, elevators, and then we tried to get everybody else on that same hallway. There were a couple times when people had to stay above or below, but in general, as people moved off the floor, we tried to take those rooms. And then that's essentially the setup of the offices and the rooms.

Q Were you aware of any discussions that examined other possible locations for the mission to stay while you were there?

A While I was there?

Q While you were there.

A There -- I don't know of any discussions that would have affected while I was there, that would've had us move while I was there, no.

Q And based on your experience in Benghazi, were you aware of other locations? Were there other places where other countries' delegations were staying?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A Other hotels and, you know, a couple of embassies that we visited and things like that.

Q And any sense why the Tibesti was chosen over perhaps these other venues?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

A I know that the press was there, but --

Q And so in terms of the, I guess, the number of people that were at the hotel, was that seen as advantageous in terms of the guest list that was --

A I don't know. I just know that the Tibesti was one of the main places that the press stayed. I have no idea what role that played in any decisionmaking.

Q All right. Fair enough.

Now, in terms of your time, you left Benghazi at some point.

A Beginning May.

Q May, okay. And then, in the 16 months after you left Benghazi, the Qadhafi regime was overthrown; the Embassy Tripoli was reopened; and in July of 2012, the Libyan people had elections. And so would it be fair to say that a lot had changed since you were in Benghazi?

A I mean, I can't speak to what the situation on the ground was. I mean, from an outsider's perspective from, you know, an ocean away, yes, but I don't know the specifics on the ground so I couldn't tell you contrast and compare.

Q Okay. So I'm just going to run through a few questions. This is basically trying to get a sense of your firsthand knowledge about some of these topics, and so I'll just go through a few of them quickly.

Do you have any firsthand knowledge, after May 2011, about the

security resources staffing or equipment in Benghazi?

A Through May 2011, I mean, other than knowing that some of any friends were serving there, no.

Q Okay. Do you have any firsthand knowledge about the means of communication in Benghazi after May 2011?

A No.

Q Any knowledge about the tripwires in Benghazi after May 2011?

A No.

Q Any information about the intelligence of Benghazi, whether any was received, reviewed, or collected after May 2011?

A Nothing.

Q Okay. And any firsthand knowledge of the militias on the ground or local security arrangements in Benghazi after May 2011?

A No.

Q Okay. And then I wanted to ask you just quickly about the Accountability Review Board, which you had mentioned. You had said that you had received an email from the Department -- you weren't clear who -- that was requesting information. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And so that occurred during the fall of 2012, approximately?

A Correct.

Q And did you feel at the time that you did not have information that you wanted to provide to the ARB? Did you have

information that you would think would be helpful towards ARB's investigation at the time?

A No. When I went and looked at my emails, I was like, all right, if they want to find out about my vouchers, that's fine with me.

Q Okay.

BY MS. SAWYER:

Q I just had a couple questions for you --

A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- because you've mentioned a couple times that everyone was very happy to have the United States' presence in Benghazi during the time that you were there.

A Yes, ma'am.

Q And specifically that you came in with the Senator, you said he had a staffer and a press person, and you did do a little travel with them. To the extent you were able to get a sense, which you may not have, but to the extent you could get a sense, what was your sense of how Senator McCain felt about the U.S. presence in Benghazi?

A I never talked to him. He seemed happy. He seemed to be enjoying his time and happy to be there, but, I mean, other than I think him thanking me at the end, I don't think I said a single word to him.

Q And in terms of your assessment of when you say that everyone was happy for the U.S. to be there, how did that show itself? Like, how did you get that sense?

A Everyone was fairly friendly toward us. When we

would -- not just with the vehicle, not just driving around, when like we would go outside to, you know, walk around a little bit, everyone seemed very friendly toward us, interested, wanted to chat with us. "Hey," you know, "how's it going" type thing. The sense was everyone just sort of wanted to live their lives and, you know, didn't really have an issue with us specifically. It was, "Hey, you're here to help" type thing.

Q And one of the reasons that you talked about that there was some concern about security, obviously, you were going into a country where there was a revolution going on, and one of the concerns was how close or how far General Qadhafi was with his forces. Did you get a sense -- one of the reasons that you United States was concerned about Libya was its concern that general Qadhafi might pose a threat to his own citizens. Did you get a sense of that at all on the ground?

A That -- wait, huh?

Q That the general --

A Sorry.

Q -- might pose a threat to his own citizens, that he had --

A I mean, the only sense I got was that the people -- the anti-Qadhafi forces were concerned about, you know, there being infiltrators and things along those lines. But as to what threat they would pose, I can't -- I have no idea what, I mean, other than like reporting -- I can't speak to that. I don't know.

Q Understood. I am asking you to stretch big because I understand that your job on the ground was very security related.

So -- but having been there, I thought I would just explore with you what your sense of it was. But I understand --

A I don't know what they would be concerned about. Sorry.

Q Not a worry.

Ms. Sawyer. I think that was really all that I was curious about. So I don't know if you had some additional.

Do you guys have a lot more?

Ms. Jackson. Huh-uh.

Ms. Sawyer. So I would say, yeah, run through that and then we're just about done.

BY MR. WOOLFORK:

Q And so I wanted to just ask you a series of questions in a somewhat rapid pace regarding a number of public allegations that have been made about the attacks in Benghazi. And so these are not allegations that I or necessarily even the minority Members believe in, but the committee is investigating these allegations, and so we are asking these questions of all the people that appear before us.

And so I would just ask basically throughout the course of this whether or not you have any evidence or information to support any of these allegations. And so I'll try to make this as fast and easy as possible.

A Okay.

Q It's been alleged that Secretary of State Clinton intentionally blocked military action on the night of the attacks. One

Congressman has speculated that, quote, "Secretary Clinton told Leon [Panetta] to stand down," end quote, and this resulted in the Defense Department not seconding more assets to help in Benghazi.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton ordered Secretary of Defense Panetta to, quote, "stand down" on the night of the attacks?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that Secretary of State Clinton issued any kind of order to Secretary of Defense Panetta on the night of the attacks?

A I can't speak to any orders Secretary Clinton has mentioned or given in any regard, relation to anything.

Q So no evidence or information then?

A No evidence or information to that or any other anything.

Q Okay. No problem.

It has been alleged that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security to Libya. The Washington Post Fact Checker evaluated this claim and gave it, quote, "four Pinocchios," its highest award for false claims.

Again, do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton personally signed an April 2012 cable denying security resources to Libya?

A I have no recollection of anything Secretary Clinton -- nothing. No.

Q No, okay.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton was personally

involved in providing specific instruction on day-to-day security resources in Benghazi?

A No.

Q It's been alleged that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to his own people in order to garner support for the military operations in Libya in spring 2011.

Do you have any evidence that Secretary Clinton misrepresented or fabricated intelligence on the risk posed by Qadhafi to some people in order to garner support for military operations in Libya in spring 2011?

A No.

Q Okay. It's been alleged that the U.S. Mission in Benghazi included transferring weapons to Syrian rebels or to other countries. A bipartisan report issued by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence found that, quote, "The CIA was not collecting and shipping arms from Libya to Syria," end quote, and that they found, quote, "no support for this allegation," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee's bipartisan support finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were being used to facilitate weapons transfers from Libya to Syria or to any other foreign country?

A No.

Q A team of CIA security personnel was temporarily delayed from departing the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound. There have been a number of allegations about the cause and the appropriateness of that delay. The House Intelligence Committee issued a bipartisan report concluding that the team was not ordered to, quote, "stand down," but that instead there were tactical disagreements on the ground over how quick quickly to depart.

Do you have any evidence that would contradict House Intelligence Committee's finding that there was no standdown order to CIA personnel?

A I have no knowledge related to any CIA actions in Libya in regards to anything.

Q Okay. Putting aside whether you personally agree with the decision to delay temporarily or think it was a right decision, do you have any evidence that there was, quote, "bad," or improper reasoning behind the temporary delay of the CIA security personnel who departed the Annex to assist the Special Mission Compound?

A I can't speak to -- I don't know the circumstances. I can't speak to that.

Q Okay. A concern has been raised by one individual that in the course of producing documents to the Accountability Review Board, damaging documents may have been removed or scrubbed out of that production.

Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from materials that were

provided to ARB?

A I was never asked and have not been -- have no knowledge of anything along those lines.

Q Okay. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department directed anyone else at the State Department to remove or scrub damaging documents from materials that were provided to the ARB?

A No.

Q Let me ask these questions also for documents that were provided to Congress. Do you have any evidence that anyone at the State Department removed or scrubbed damaging documents from the materials that were provided to Congress?

A No.

Q Okay. It's been alleged that the CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell altered unclassified talking points about the Benghazi attacks for political reasons and that he then misrepresented his actions when he told Congress that the CIA, quote, "faithfully performed our duties in accordance with the highest standards of objectivity and nonpartisanship," close quote.

Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy <sup>Director</sup>~~Director~~ Mike Morell gave false or intentionally misleading testimony to Congress about the Benghazi talking points?

A No.

Q Do you have any evidence that CIA Deputy Director Morell altered the talking points provided to Congress for political reasons?

A I have no knowledge related to CIA anything.

Q Okay. A few more. Just bear with me.

A Okay.

Q It's been alleged that Ambassador Susan Rice made, quote, an "intentional misrepresentation" when she spoke on the Sunday talk shows about the Benghazi attacks.

Do you have any evidence that Ambassador Rice intentionally represented facts about the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows?

A No.

Q It has been alleged that the President of the United States was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief," close quote, on the night of the attacks and that he was, quote, "missing the action," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to support the allegation that the President was, quote, "virtually AWOL as Commander in Chief" or "missing in action" on the night of the attacks?

A I have no knowledge related to the President's whereabouts on that night.

Q Okay. It has been alleged that a team of four military personnel at Embassy Tripoli on the night of the attacks who were considering flying on the second plane of Benghazi were ordered by their superiors to stand down, meaning to cease all operations. Military officials have stated that those four individuals were instead ordered, quote, "to remain in place," end quote, in Tripoli to provide security and medical assistance in their current location.

A Republican staff report issued by the House Armed Services

Committee found that, quote, "There was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi," close quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict the conclusion of the House Armed Services Committee that, quote, "there was no standdown order issued to U.S. military personnel in Tripoli who sought to join the fight in Benghazi"?

A No.

Q The last one. It's been alleged that the military failed to deploy assets on the night of the attack that would have saved lives. However, former Republican Congressman Howard Buck McKeon, the former chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, conducted a review of the attacks, after which he stated, quote, "Given where the troops were, how quickly the thing all happened and how quickly it dissipated, we probably couldn't have done more than we did," end quote.

Do you have any evidence to contradict Congressman McKeon's conclusion?

A I mean, no.

Q Okay. Do you have any evidence that the Pentagon had military assets available to them on the night of the attacks that could have saved lives but that the Pentagon leadership intentionally decided not to deploy?

A I have no information related to Pentagon capabilities or what their leadership was discussing.

Q Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Woolfork. We'll go off the record.

[Recess.]

Ms. Jackson. Let's go back on the record. It's 11:45. It's Sharon Jackson.

BY MS. JACKSON:

Q Agent [REDACTED], you stated that there was some confusion over the logistics of your getting into Benghazi, you and Agent [REDACTED], and one of the issues that you raised was that Agent [REDACTED] did not have his personal passport with him?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So you were required to travel into Benghazi on personal passports?

A No.

Q Okay.

A It was --

Q Could you elaborate on that for us?

A When we were traveling, we were traveling through France, and we did not have Schengen visas in our diplomatic books, so --

Q I'm sorry, what was that?

A We did not have a Schengen visa.

Q And what was that visa?

A The eurozone visa, called the Schengen, for our diplomatic books. And I was told that France, for a diplomatic book, requires a Schengen but, for your personal book, does not. I always travel with my personal book no matter what, just in case, so I was able to travel

into France. But then, going into Benghazi, we used our -- we showed our diplomatic books, but unfortunately, they actually didn't even ~~stand behind~~ <sup>stamp them</sup>, which was unfortunate.

Q Disappointing?

A Disappointing, yes.

Q And then did Agent [REDACTED] follow the same route that you did?

A My understanding, he went back to Houston. They weren't even going to send him, and then they -- I couldn't speak specifically. All I know is he ended up meeting up with the gear -- he ended up couriering the gear and meeting up with us in Cyprus after he had gone back to Houston and gone back to D.C.

Q Let me ask you just a concluding question, and that is: As you sit here, before we end for the day, is there any question that we've asked that you feel that you need to elaborate on or clarify in any manner before we break?

A No.

Q Okay. Let me ask one last one then. Is there any area that you thought we would go in that we did not go in today?

A No.

Ms. Jackson. Then, with that, we are done.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing \_\_\_\_ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

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Witness Name

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Date

*Errata Sheet*

**Select Committee on Benghazi**

The witness reviewed the accompanying transcript and certified its accuracy by providing the following corrections. These corrections are reflected in the transcript as identified below.

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>LINE</u>	<u>ALL CORRECTIONS MADE BY WITNESS</u>
12	15	Replaced "about what" with "what about."
20	9	Replaced "MEW's" with "MEU's."
24	11	Replaced "Frenchman" with "Frenchmen."
52	11	Replaced "research" with "resources."
55	22	Replaced "aid" with "AID" in reference to the U.S. Agency for International Development.
68	19	Replaced "Directo" with "Director."
72	3	Replaced "stand behind" with "stamp them."