

**Interview of Ruchit Agrawal
March 25, 2015**

1 Scott Gast: All right this is Investigative Counsel Scott Gast with the Office of
2 Congressional Ethics, here with my colleague Paul Solis, Deputy Chief
3 Counsel. It is Wednesday, March 25th, 2015, and we are here with Ruchit
4 Agrawal - am I saying that correctly?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: You are.

6 Scott Gast: For an interview regarding matter 15-2070. We appreciate you being
7 here with us today and taking the time to talk to answer our questions.

8 Ruchit Agrawal: What was that number?

9 Scott Gast: 15-2070. We'd like to start out with a little bit of background. If you
10 could just give us your current employment situation.

11 Ruchit Agrawal: I'm an LLM student right now at Golden Gate Law School. I'm getting my
12 LLM in taxation.

13 Scott Gast: If you could just keep your voice up a little so we make sure we get it on
14 the recording.

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

16 Scott Gast: And you said that was an LLM student at Golden Gate University?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, San Francisco.

18 Scott Gast: And when did you start there?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: January of this year. I got my bar results in November and then
20 transitioned to that.

21 Scott Gast: Okay, are you doing anything else or are you a full time student?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

23 Scott Gast: Full time. And what did you do prior to starting as a full time student?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: I was studying for the bar.

25 Scott Gast: And I assume you took the bar exam?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I took it July of 2014

1 Scott Gast: July of 2014. And prior to studying for the bar what ...?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: I graduated law school 2012, worked for the Congressman until February
3 2013, when I resigned for the reason that we're here. Then I was studying
4 for the bar. Took it July 2013, failed, and then took it July 2014, was able
5 to pass.

6 Scott Gast: Okay. So you graduated from undergraduate in the Spring of 2012, is that
7 correct?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: No, law school.

9 Scott Gast: From law school in the spring of 2012.

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I went to UCLA.

11 Scott Gast: Okay.

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I do have my resume here if that makes it easier.

13 Scott Gast: This should be good. And right after graduating law school did you begin
14 working for Representative Honda at that time?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: There was some little time gap, but yeah.

16 Scott Gast: That was your first employment position after graduating?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

18 Scott Gast: What was your position when you were hired?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Congressional Aide. I think I gave you a job description.

20 Scott Gast: You did. We like to just get this all on the record for keeping it in one
21 place. So Congressional Aide. Was that the same position you had during
22 your entire ...?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, it was the same title.

24 Scott Gast: Okay. What were your general duties as a Congressional Aide?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: The primary duty ... Nominally or actually? Should we do both?

1 Scott Gast: Why don't we start with nominally? What do you mean by nominally
2 first?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I mean, what was communicated to me or how did it actually play out?

4 Scott Gast: Let's start with what the responsibilities for that position were
5 communicated to you.

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Okay. During the interview process it was communicated to me that
7 there would be two roles in the position. Consistent with the job
8 description, those two roles were field representative, which was
9 basically you take a segment of the Congressman's issues -- the main one
10 was education for me -- and serve as a liaison with stake holders and
11 pimp his policies in the district.

12 Then the second thing would be a case worker, which is, someone comes
13 in with a concern with a federal agency and you try to work with the
14 relevant Congressional liaison on those issues. That was the entirety of
15 what was communicated to me in the interview process.

16 Scott Gast: Now let's talk about what your actual duties were when you started.

17 Ruchit Agrawal: I think the best example that documents what I'm saying is, there's an
18 email from January of 2013, which has Meri Maben, my supervisor,
19 showing that the IT role is the number one priority. The last month and a
20 half that was the only thing I was given to do. Case work and field work
21 was given to other people. The number one priority was this sort of, for
22 lack of a better term, personal servant, IT guy for the Congressman's
23 home, Meri Maben's home and the Congressional office.

24 This is despite, if you look at my resume, I have no background in that
25 area. I was an econ major, went to law school, I bought my first smart
26 phone in 2012. In California there's a case called Lazar v. Superior Court,
27 which is a case of promissory estoppel. I think this is sort of a textbook
28 case of pre-employment fraud. That was the number one priority.

29 The number two thing was to do field work. The interesting aspect of that
30 for me was the lack of communication that you would have to use your
31 personal car to drive the congressman around. You get compensated but
32 there was no compensation for buying the car. If you're hiring new
33 graduates with no money I don't know where I'm supposed to get the
34 money to buy that car. That was never communicated that there was an
35 expectation that the Congressman would use your car, which was in my

1 case my parents' car. My parents are Republicans. They don't really
2 appreciate that.

3 Scott Gast: Sure.

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Also, going to events and talking about standard field work.

5 The third thing was case work. Case work is help with a federal agency.
6 The interesting aspect of that is the prioritization of so called "Friends of
7 M.H." That's not to say that if it wasn't a Friend of M.H. you weren't told
8 to do the work, or that even Friends of M.H. you were told to work more
9 time on, but those were the only cases that people up the hierarchy
10 would ever ask about. The designation in and of itself is problematic
11 because if you were starting off in an employment situation you're
12 naturally going to want to impress your boss. There's no reason to
13 communicate that designation.

14 Paul Solis: Just to be clear, when you say Friends of M.H. is that the Congressman's
15 Congressional campaign committee?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: No, Friends of M.H. is just sort of designation for Friends of Mike Honda.
17 Not formally, the campaign ...

18 Scott Gast: You mean like an informal designation?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: This is a Friend of MH.

20 Scott Gast: Like a VIP request that comes in?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Exactly. I can remember there was an Indian restaurant was one of the
22 cases that I had. If we go through my IQ notes I can go to case work
23 specific but ...

24 Scott Gast: How would one get designated informally as a Friend of M.H.?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: I didn't have enough background. I was too low on the totem pole to
26 know that. I don't want to speculate.

27 Scott Gast: You were just told ...

28 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

29 Scott Gast: When a request was given to you to work on, that this person was an
30 FOMH and you should take extra care or ...

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Just that hey, this is a Friend of M.H. That was all that was said.

2 Scott Gast: Okay.

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I think we're all reasonably intelligent people.

4 Scott Gast: When you say reasonably intelligent people, what do you mean by that?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: I think, at least for me, the way I interpret that and I guess I can only
6 speak for that, I can't speak for the way ... I interpret that being this is a
7 case that if I do well on, it would be better for me. It would help me more
8 than another case.

9 Scott Gast: Did you ever ...

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Help me in the sense that it would be more impressive for my boss and
11 subjectively that's always ...

12 Scott Gast: Sure. Was it ever communicated to you that campaign contributors were
13 designated FOMH?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: That was never ... No, it was not like ... It's not that.

15 Paul Solis: Ruchit, can I just ask you, when Scott asks you a question can you just
16 make sure that he finishes his question first?

17 Scott Gast: Yeah, just so it's clear on the tape.

18 No one ever told you that campaign contributors were given the
19 designation of Friends of Mike?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I think it was just more prominent people.

21 Scott Gast: Okay.

22 Ruchit Agrawal: They don't have to be contributors, they could be potential ... Not even
23 just potential contributors, prominent people in district are prominent
24 people.

25 Scott Gast: Sure. I want to go back to one of the things that you said. We'll probably
26 talk about a couple other things that you laid out. You said that when
27 your primary role was IT, you said something about being the personal
28 servant/ IT guy for the Member and for Meri Maben.

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Charlene Loomis kept a copy of the key to the Congressman's house in
2 the keyboard drawer of her desk. I had a copy of that key if I needed to
3 do work at the Congressman ... The best example I would give of that is
4 this trip that Robert Lucas made in a weekend in January 2013. I was at
5 his house, organizing in his living room, stuff unrelated. You could ...

6 Scott Gast: Let me stop you for one second just to make sure we're on the same
7 page. Did you have a copy of the Congressman's house key?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: No, if there was something designated ...

9 Scott Gast: You would get it from Charlene Loomis.

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I didn't have a copy myself.

11 Scott Gast: You said Robert Lucas came from the Washington DC office ...

12 Ruchit Agrawal: DC office to the district.

13 Scott Gast: To the district. That was in January 2013?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, a weekend.

15 Scott Gast: What was Robert's role?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: He was systems administrator.

17 Scott Gast: He came from DC to the district. Go on from there.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: He came. There was an initial expectation that my parents would put him
19 up at our house, which was interesting. Not going to happen. He came
20 over. We were switching offices because of redistricting, you had to set
21 up the internet at the district office. Additional to that, we also organized
22 the Congressman's personal house. Robert felt it was really disorganized
23 and was just organizing things in the house. He was higher than me on
24 the hierarchy so there was nothing I could do to not go along with that. I
25 did very little, I actually just kind of sat there and watched football. He
26 did most of it.

27 Scott Gast: Who ...

28 Ruchit Agrawal: I could have been studying for the bar at that time.

29 Scott Gast: Who asked you to do that? Who asked you to help?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Meri Maben, as you can see in that email, who is the District Director,
2 says that this is the number one priority that weekend. That's where it
3 starts.

4 Scott Gast: That was an email from Meri to both you and Robert?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: It was also an indication of coordination. There's a person in Fremont,
6 Sheryl something-something, who is somebody who participates in local
7 politics. She's a teacher at a high school and she has a "We the People"
8 class. Lamar wanted someone from official staff to come with him to
9 judge the "We the People" event to curry favor with this person. She
10 ended up endorsing the challenger. You could see in that email Meri
11 Maben says whatever Robert's doing, that's the priority. That's the only
12 point I'm making. That was the priority that weekend.

13 Scott Gast: When you say whatever Robert was doing, what was he doing?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: He was coming over to help out, work on the district and then I think also
15 to organize the Congressman's house. I don't know why we were there
16 otherwise.

17 Scott Gast: When you say organize the congressman's house, was that just related to
18 IT?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: No, we were in the living room. We were doing that, too. You go into his
20 hallway, to the right there's the computer room. We were also in the
21 living room.

22 Scott Gast: What were you organizing in the living room?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: It's not the cleanest house.

24 Scott Gast: Were you doing cleaning?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

26 Scott Gast: Vacuuming?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: No. Specifically I remember there was just messes and Robert just
28 wanted to organize them. Try to throw stuff away, etc. Spring cleaning.

29 Scott Gast: He was organizing the computer room ...

30 Ruchit Agrawal: Not just the computer room, also in the living room and in the kitchen.

1 Scott Gast: Both. In the computer room he was helping to set up the Congressman's
2 personal computer system?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. I think it's also linked to the house IT network. It could also be an
4 official thing. There was also work related aspect to the visit to the house.

5 Scott Gast: Okay.

6 Ruchit Agrawal: It's not exclusively a ...

7 Scott Gast: What was the non-work related aspect?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: In the living room, organizing somebody's personal mess.

9 Scott Gast: Piles of ...

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Crap.

11 Scott Gast: Stuff?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

13 Scott Gast: Did you work on his cable, internet, Netflix, Apple TV?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: Netflix, yes.

15 Scott Gast: Was that during this trip?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: That was in August. That was the older systems administrator.

17 Scott Gast: Well, let's stick with this January one first. Did you have to do anything to
18 his Apple or Netflix or cable?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: None of that stuff at the time.

20 Scott Gast: Just kind of tidying up the living room.

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

22 Scott Gast: Fixing up the computer in the computer room.

23 Paul Solis: Just to be clear, there was actually on this instance a work-related
24 component to it?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: There definitely was, I want to make clear about that.

2 Paul Solis: Okay.

3 Ruchit Agrawal: In the computer room, that computer is, as far as I know, a house
4 computer which is completely reasonable.

5 Scott Gast: All right ...

6 Ruchit Agrawal: I also don't know whether that was Robert's personal initiative or who
7 directed Robert to do that. That was not communicated to me.

8 Scott Gast: Okay, let's put aside the Netflix thing for now. We'll get to that. I just
9 want to ask you, can you just tell us for the record the circumstances of
10 what prompted you to leave the congressional office in February of
11 2013?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I resigned. My date of separation, I just got my retirement, my federal
13 TSP thing. My date of separation is 2/10/2013.

14 Scott Gast: Okay.

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Which is right around when the email that was in the press. I resigned,
16 sort of, as a result of that.

17 Scott Gast: Can you explain that for the record, what that is?

18 Ruchit Agrawal: There was an email which, to my perception, indicated an improper
19 linking of ... A state department event can only be an official event. State
20 department can never come to a campaign event. Linking any
21 information exchange should not be occurring between campaign
22 officials on what can only be an official event. On top of that, directly
23 linking ...

24 Number one, making sure that our donors are going to a state
25 department event is, to my mind, not proper. Then also saying that while
26 we can't do outreach right now, we can't do straight asks, we should sort
27 of use what we gather from the state department event to do outreach
28 and build a relationship where we then later do a straight ask for money.
29 This is actually process, this isn't just speculation. There was an article
30 where a prominent venture capitalist from Silicon Valley came forward,
31 who was invited to the event, had never been solicited for a donation
32 before and then was solicited after the event.

1 Scott Gast: Right.

2 Ruchit Agrawal: The exact process that's laid out in the email occurred, if you believe this
3 person.

4 Scott Gast: Who did you have the conversation with when you resigned?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: I sent an email where I cited health reasons.

6 Scott Gast: Who was that email sent to?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: Meri Maben and Jennifer Van der Heide.

8 Scott Gast: Okay.

9 Ruchit Agrawal: As far as I recall.

10 Scott Gast: Did you cite this?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

12 Scott Gast: You did not cite the state department event as a reason for your
13 resignation?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: I didn't give any indication. Afterwards we met, Meri and I, had coffee, I
15 gave a notification of my real reason for leaving. The reason was just
16 career oriented. If you want to ask for a reference, it's kind of hard to ask
17 for a reference after you tell someone that they did something illegal.

18 Scott Gast: Sure.

19 Ruchit Agrawal: It's a little bit awkward.

20 Paul Solis: But in your mind that was the sole reason you decided to resign?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: That was the sole reason I decided to resign. In my mind the health
22 concerns were a direct result of the stress induced by knowing that either
23 I do something illegal or I go into a rather challenging job market for
24 newly minted lawyers.

25 Scott Gast: Okay. Now we understand that you submitted some information to the
26 Committee on Ethics about your time in Representative Honda's office.
27 When was that?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: That was in December of 2013.

2 Scott Gast: Okay.

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I have the email thread. I don't have it on me. Do you have wireless?

4 Scott Gast: I don't know if we do or not. We don't probably need to get into it now.
5 Given our limited time we'll just kind of work through everything and
6 then follow up. December 2013, what prompted you to make the
7 submission?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know, I just thought it was important to deal with. I had waited
9 until, it was a volunteer position, but I got a volunteer clerkship with a
10 bankruptcy judge here in San Jose.

11 Scott Gast: Okay.

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I wanted to have another relationship before I initiated that process.
13 That's why I waited until then.

14 Scott Gast: When did you get that volunteer position with the judge?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: In December 2013. Right around when I started.

16 Scott Gast: What did you say in the submission, what was the substance?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: There's a letter. Basically, I just submitted that Netflix email. That Netflix
18 email was an indication of doing personal work. There are services like
19 Geek Squad that do that, which you can hire for.

20 Scott Gast: Let me, now that you referenced that...

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, definitely.

22 Scott Gast: Let me show you this, what's been marked, for the record as Bates
23 number THMH1816. Is this a copy of the submission you made to the
24 Committee on Ethics, as well as the attachments?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, and I say in there, honestly in an abundance of caution I waited
26 until I secured a new job before sending this letter.

27 Paul Solis: Did they get back to you at all?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I called Wendy Smith, who was at the time one of the counsels. She gave
2 me her email. This I submitted directly to her. She didn't get back to me
3 then, but then I submitted later, I want to say Spring of 2014. I submitted
4 just the State Department email thread that was in the first thing that
5 was in the press, to her and she got back to me with a one line email
6 saying thank you and that's it. There was no substantive.

7 Scott Gast: In December 2013 you made this submission, which we just looked at.
8 Then you followed up with a second submission in the Spring of 2014.
9 Those were both to Wendy Smith?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. I have the email thread here.

11 Scott Gast: Okay, and did they ever interview you about either of the submissions?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: No, nothing.

13 Scott Gast: Nothing, okay. Going back to this initial submission, who assigned you to
14 do the work on the Netflix/ Apple?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: It's good that I have it actually. Nadir Vissanjy, who was the DC-based
16 system administrator, sent me this email.

17 Scott Gast: Did you report to him?

18 Ruchit Agrawal: Not directly but in the context of the IT segment he was my direct
19 supervisor.

20 Scott Gast: Did you ever discuss that request with Meri Maben?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember.

22 Scott Gast: Did you ever discuss the request with Mike Nguyen?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember.

24 Scott Gast: What about Jennifer Van der Heide?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember.

26 Scott Gast: I think Robert Lucas is on that email as well, is that right?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: He is on that email, that's correct.

1 Scott Gast: Did Robert succeed Nadir as systems administrator?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: Exactly.

3 Scott Gast: Was this about the time that that transition took place?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't recall that.

5 Scott Gast: Would that have been why both Nadir and Robert were on the email?
6 Just because they're both IT?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: That makes sense. The IT world was Nadir and Robert and myself.

8 Scott Gast: Okay. I want to ask you, in this cover letter in this submission you talk
9 about, in January 2013, you were asked to use your own car to transport
10 Representative Honda's computer from his home in San Jose to the
11 district office to do some updates during work hours and then take it
12 back.

13 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

14 Scott Gast: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: That exact thing ... It happened after the trip that Robert came for, that
16 we've been talking about.

17 Scott Gast: Okay.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

19 Scott Gast: Was Robert involved with this updating the personal computer?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: He was the one who told me to put it in my car and drive it to the district
21 office. Yeah, he was directing.

22 Scott Gast: He was in DC at the time?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: No, this was happening when he was here.

24 Scott Gast: This was when he did the trip, okay. This was Representative Honda's
25 personal computer?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: It was his computer that was in home. I guess I don't know if it was his
2 personal computer. I guess the reason I used the word personal because
3 it was in his house.

4 Scott Gast: Sure.

5 Ruchit Agrawal: It could possibly have been provided by the House, I don't know that. I
6 was not there for the...

7 Scott Gast: Sure. What were the software updates that you did on the computer?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember, honestly.

9 Scott Gast: Was it something officially related, something personal, do you recall
10 that?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: What I remember is that, and this is the problem because I also don't
12 know what these words mean because I don't have any background in IT,
13 Robert didn't want to support a certain operating system, an older one,
14 and he wanted to update because a lot of people were running the older
15 operating system.

16 Scott Gast: Okay. You also mention in here that Deputy District Director Mike
17 Nguyen asked you to do updates and fixes on Mike Honda's personal
18 technology. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, sure. Anything the congressman had that was technology related I
20 would just do. The example that's come to my head is actually Meri
21 Maben, not Mike Honda. She had a car and she wanted to hook her
22 bluetooth, which I guess is her work bluetooth up to her car and she just
23 called me down to her car to help with it. It turned out I couldn't help
24 because, again, I don't know anything about IT. Mike Nguyen came down
25 and did it in the end. That was the example. There was examples like that
26 with Mike Honda, I just don't remember specifics enough to...

27 Scott Gast: Can you think of any specifics about Mr. Nguyen asking you to do updates
28 or fixes on his personal technology?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: For his own personal technology?

30 Scott Gast: For the Representative's.

31 Ruchit Agrawal: No, besides the Netflix. It's so long ago. That's a big question with a lot of
32 implications. I don't want to say that unless I have a document for it.

1 Scott Gast: Do you recall what you had in mind when you wrote this?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: I do, but I don't have a document for it.

3 Scott Gast: Well that's fine, if you have examples that you had in mind when you
4 wrote this.

5 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I guess. I just don't have a document. I think it's an important
6 question, right? I don't want to get creamed if I say something that's
7 incorrect.

8 Scott Gast: Well, to your recollection?

9 Paul Solis: Yeah, it's not incorrect if it's just something you remember. If it's what
10 you remember, it's a true statement to the best of your recollection.

11 Ruchit Agrawal: So his iPad for example.

12 Scott Gast: And this is the Member's iPad?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: The Congressman's iPad. I remember one instance where the word
14 Netgear kept coming up, which is the way wireless networks work. It kept
15 coming up. I think at the time maybe the Congressman's home wireless
16 network was Netgear, too. When he was going elsewhere and seeing
17 Netgear he was thinking that that was his home network.

18 Scott Gast: Okay.

19 Ruchit Agrawal: I remember sitting there having to explain to him that Netgear is a
20 company . When wireless routers are installed, if people don't set up
21 their own personal name for the wireless network then the company's
22 pre-installed name comes up. So don't make the assumption ... Which is
23 completely reasonable to have because you see Netgear that ...

24 Paul Solis: It's your home.

25 Ruchit Agrawal: Netgear may not be the wireless company, too. I just remember him
26 saying this is my home network. I was like no, that's not your home
27 network. Which is completely reasonable to misunderstanding.

28 Scott Gast: Was this an iPad that was an official iPad or ...?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know. I always use the word personal, it was his. I didn't mean
2 personal in the distinction between ... Because I didn't ever do the
3 purchasing so I don't know the chain of ...

4 Scott Gast: So obviously you wrote this to the Ethics Committee for something for
5 them to look at because they were violations of ethical rules potentially.
6 We want to make sure we have the right examples where we can go back
7 and research, so if you have them...

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I think what I was speaking to was just the Netflix thing. That's what
9 I was talking about.

10 Scott Gast: Any other examples that you have, that you can give to us that we might
11 be interested in taking a look at?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I just don't remember any.

13 Scott Gast: Okay.

14 Ruchit Agrawal: It's so long ago.

15 Scott Gast: In any of your submissions to the Committee on Ethics did you ever
16 mention official staff or official resources being used for campaign work?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: I submitted that email.

18 Scott Gast: In 2014?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, the Spring one. I don't know if I characterize it, I just submitted the
20 email.

21 Scott Gast: Okay, I don't think we have a copy of that. If you can maybe look and see.

22 Ruchit Agrawal: What, the emails to Wendy Smith?

23 Scott Gast: The spring 2014 submission.

24 Ruchit Agrawal: I can forward it to you.

25 Scott Gast: Okay, that would be great. Switching gears a little, I want to talk about
26 Representative Honda's campaigns. Have you ever worked on any of his
27 campaigns?

28 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

1 Scott Gast: Did you ever volunteer on any of the campaigns?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: No, my relationship with the office was sort of disgruntled enough that I
3 would never have volunteered to do anything.

4 Scott Gast: Did anybody ever ask you to work on the campaign?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes.

6 Scott Gast: Who was that?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: Jennifer Van der Heide. These February 2013 emails. Working with Lamar
8 Heystek, that's got to be campaign even though it's planning a State
9 Department event.

10 Scott Gast: Any other examples?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: Sure, we can go from the trivial up. Being required to read Ro Khanna's
12 book. The email characterized it as beyond any electoral purpose, which
13 means that in part there is an electoral purpose to being required to read
14 this book. Even if there is also value to learning about some expert's
15 views on manufacturing economics.

16 Scott Gast: Who assigned you to read Ro Khanna's book?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: I think I sent you these emails.

18 Scott Gast: Yeah, I think we do have that email but just to ...

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I think it's Jennifer. The subject line is required and it's the title of
20 the challenger's book.

21 Scott Gast: We'll take a look at that right now. This is number RA-33. Is this the email
22 you were referring to?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Exactly.

24 Scott Gast: The subject is "Required reading: Entrepreneurial National," which I think
25 should be Entrepreneurial Nation, by Ro Khanna. Did you have any
26 conversations with either Jennifer, who sent the email, or anybody else
27 on that list about this assignment?

28 Ruchit Agrawal: We talked about it in the district office. I remember that people were
29 reading copies of the book in the district office. I remember me and Mark

1 and Ashley joked that it's hardly original to write a book about bringing
2 manufacturing back to the USA. We've heard that story for the last forty
3 years. Just kind of joking about, why is this book even written?

4 Scott Gast: That would have been, just for the record, Mark would be Mark
5 Nakamoto?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Mark Nakamoto.

7 Scott Gast: And Ashley would be Ashley Roybal?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

9 Scott Gast: Okay. You said people were reading it in the district office?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, people were reading it in the district office.

11 Scott Gast: Who was that?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I remember Mark Nakamoto sitting in the Congressman's office and
13 reading the book.

14 Paul Solis: Beyond the subject nature of the book, what other discussions did you
15 have with some of the staff members about it? Specifically the request
16 that you read it.

17 Ruchit Agrawal: It was clearly required.

18 Paul Solis: Was there any discussion amongst the staff bringing up the question of
19 why we have to do this? This is something we don't want to do.

20 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I think it was very obvious that dealing with Ro Khanna was the
21 number one priority. It was very obvious why we were reading this
22 person's book.

23 Paul Solis: Did anybody bring up that topic, that this is a campaign purpose?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I think sort of the working assumption is when you're working for the
25 Congressman you want to keep your job so you're going to support his
26 campaigns. There's no sort of... of course I want the congressman to win.
27 Most of these people, it's very hard for them to get jobs outside of the
28 Congressman's office so it's their vested interest to keep the job.

1 Paul Solis: I'm asking specifically was there a discussion about the appropriateness
2 of reading that book?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: No. There was such an intermingling of official and campaign so the
4 notion that we would sort of get surprised that we were doing this such a
5 ... We were having coffee breaks in the district office where we were
6 talking about who's endorsing and how the endorsement's working out.
7 Nobody's going to be shocked that we're going to read the book.

8 Scott Gast: I want to talk to you about that stuff but let's just, back to the book. Was
9 there any followup after everybody had read it?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: No. There was no follow up by the time I left. We just kind of read it. I
11 also wasn't on the policy side of things. I was very low on the totem pole.
12 I don't know what's going on. When she said "legislative staff will be
13 discussing" I don't even really know what those discussions would be.

14 Scott Gast: Was there any meeting where people got together to discuss the book
15 after it was read?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: No, there was no formal meeting that we're going to sit down and break
17 down the book that I was part of.

18 Scott Gast: Did you have any discussions with Jennifer after reading the book?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I did not.

20 Scott Gast: How about Meri Maben?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

22 Scott Gast: Why do you think you were on this list as somebody assigned to read the
23 book?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: I just assumed it was everybody but it's not actually. My assumption is
25 that Ro Khanna is South Asian, I'm South Asian, so what I noticed was
26 that I suddenly became more important when Ro Khanna came in the
27 picture.

28 Scott Gast: So just to walk through these folks on the recipient list.

29 Ruchit Agrawal: These are people who were way above my, quote unquote, pay grade
30 before this.

1 Scott Gast: So Eric Werwa, who is he?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: He was Legislative Director at the time.

3 Scott Gast: In DC?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. He might be a Deputy Chief of Staff now, or something like that.

5 Scott Gast: AJ Bhadelia?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: He was a Senior Advisor, DC based.

7 Scott Gast: Laura Hatalsky?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: DC based, don't know the title.

9 Scott Gast: Michael Shank?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: DC based, I think Communication Director but not sure.

11 Scott Gast: Mark Nakamoto?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: He was Senior Congressional Aide in the district office.

13 Scott Gast: Meri Maben, obviously the District Director. Lamar Heystek?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know what his official title would be but he was campaign
15 something.

16 Scott Gast: Full time campaign?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: As far as I know, yeah.

18 Scott Gast: Mike Nguyen?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Deputy District Director, and then myself. That's what I'm saying, that
20 everybody was quite senior and in a normal circumstance before Ro
21 Khanna came in the picture, and I think if Ro Khanna's name was Richard
22 Johnson, I would not have been in this email.

23 Scott Gast: Everybody on that list with the exception of Lamar was employed by the
24 Congressional office. Is that correct?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, except that if you note that Mark Nakamoto's email was
2 mark@mikehonda.com, which is the campaign designation. He also
3 would have a Mark@mail.house.gov email at the time.

4 Scott Gast: He was working half time ...

5 Ruchit Agrawal: I thought he stopped after November 2012, but this email was December
6 and he's on that email. I don't know if he still had access or again, emails
7 were, maybe Jennifer sent it to the wrong email ID, maybe he still didn't
8 have that access.

9 Scott Gast: Now let me ask you, despite this being everybody working for the
10 Congressional office except for Lamar, this is all sent to personal emails.

11 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. That's an interesting point. For example, it wasn't that I would have
12 gotten up from my house provided IT -- House was paying for my internet
13 service -- and gone and taken out my personal laptop and gone to
14 Starbucks and opened up my personal email to read these emails. I would
15 have read them on my work email.

16 Scott Gast: On your work computer?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. On my work computer, which is provided ...

18 Scott Gast: In the district office.

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

20 Paul Solis: For example this is time stamped at 8:38 AM. If 9 AM is when people
21 started reporting to work ...

22 Scott Gast: Then later Jennifer does at ten.

23 Paul Solis: She would respond at ten. But that's around the time people started
24 getting into work. Is it a safe assumption that the district people who you
25 worked with, Mike ...

26 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know where they were. I can't make any assumptions about
27 where they were.

28 Paul Solis: Right, but so you would go into the office, you would open up your work
29 computer and then you would see this Gmail, right?

30 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

1 Paul Solis: That would be in the district office?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

3 Paul Solis: Okay.

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Also, if you look at the job description it says required weekends and off
5 time so there's no off time. I didn't punch a time card.

6 Scott Gast: Let me ask you this. How did Jennifer get your personal email?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I think when I applied for the job I must have put on my resume ...

8 Scott Gast: Why would she pick that then? To send this to your personal email, just
9 pick it off your resume?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: As you can see through the whole emails, there was a standard process
11 of communicating content that was in the campaign bucket over Gmail
12 and were official bucket in mail.house.gov.

13 Scott Gast: Were you required to turn over a personal email so the others in the
14 office could communicate with you about campaign issues?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: No. You had your email. You emailed back and forth informally. It gets on
16 to your smart phone. There was no sort of formalized process. Because
17 there was no differentiation between official and campaign.

18 Scott Gast: Was official business ever discussed over personal email?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I do. There's an example where we're planning to have the
20 Congressman speak on an event involving nuclear weapons at a
21 retirement home in this area. I have an email that I'm now remembering
22 that has Jennifer saying it'll be a challenge for Congressman Honda to
23 discuss this issue. He needs to know about new policy stuff that's going
24 on in DC. That's legislative work. That email was happening on my Gmail.

25 Scott Gast: Any idea why the Gmail was used for that official work?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: I had two phones. I was expected that my personal phone, the
27 Congressman would make phone calls on. My Blackberry didn't have
28 phone service. My personal phone was my work phone also. The
29 Congressman called me on my personal cell phone that I paid the bill for.
30 There was no differentiation of devices.

1 Scott Gast: You mentioned that there was this effort to keep official on the
2 mail.house.gov, campaign on the Gmail.

3 Ruchit Agrawal: There was an effort to avoid the recording that would happen if you put
4 it on mail.house.gov. If it's your personal email you can control that flow
5 of information better.

6 Paul Solis: What do you mean by an effort to?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: That was why we were doing it on Gmail, so it didn't go into the official
8 server, which has a little more memory.

9 Paul Solis: And Jennifer would say that? Somebody would say this is why we're
10 doing this?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: That was clearly. I asked Mike Nguyen, why are we doing this? I asked
12 him like, this is a smart move. We should do it this way so it doesn't stay
13 there. Mike said that's why we do that.

14 Paul Solis: I just want to be very clear on this part. You wanted to know, why are we
15 putting officially related discussions on your personal email? Or you
16 wanted to know, why you were putting campaign related discussions on
17 ...

18 Ruchit Agrawal: I asked in the context of the State Department email. I should be more
19 clear. I asked why are we having a conversation about a State
20 Department event, which is an official event as far as I can tell, on my
21 Gmail?

22 Scott Gast: Who did you ask?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Mike Nguyen.

24 Scott Gast: What was his response?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: His response was yeah, you're right. That's a smart move. We want to
26 make sure it doesn't stay saved.

27 Scott Gast: That it doesn't stay saved?

28 Ruchit Agrawal: As far as I know, and I don't know enough, is that it's easier for
29 investigators to access the mail.house.gov email than it is a Gmail.

1 Paul Solis: Did Mike express to you that he felt that these discussions were
2 somehow ...

3 Scott Gast: Shouldn't be saved?

4 Paul Solis: Improper or shouldn't be saved?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I just said to him hey, it's a smart move we're doing this over Gmail.
6 He said yeah, that's why, so we avoid them getting ...

7 Scott Gast: Why would you want to avoid them getting saved?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: It's improper to be linking campaign and donations. You want to avoid a
9 paper trail.

10 Paul Solis: Was there anybody else besides Mike who expressed this to you?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: Nobody besides that. I don't know if it was just him saying that in his own
12 mind, nobody besides that ever expressed.

13 Paul Solis: Did he express that to you in person, over phone...?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: In person. I prompted it so he didn't come and say ...

15 Scott Gast: All right I want to go back, just to go through this campaign. The
16 relationship between the Congressional office and the campaign. You
17 said that you never volunteered for the campaign.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

19 Scott Gast: Were you asked to help with campaign events?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, before I even started working there I got an email from Mark
21 Nakamoto saying we're doing a fundraiser. Then I asked hey, it's my first
22 time going, tell me what's going on. Ashley Roybal communicated you
23 wouldn't be going as official staff, you would be going as a volunteer.
24 That was the first time that I even got aware of that distinction. In the
25 initial prompting that I received from Mark, and I didn't provide you that
26 email. There was no communication that you'd be volunteering. It was
27 just hey, we have this thing going on.

28 Scott Gast: Do you want to come?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, can you help out?

1 Scott Gast: Okay, any requests to help with phone banking or going door to door or
2 any of those kinds of activities?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes, I think I provided some documentation of that too. If you have that
4 ...

5 Scott Gast: I don't think I do with me, but I remember that.

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, there was some request to do a language based, so if we have
7 specific language skills.

8 Scott Gast: Who would come to you with those requests?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: They would be done over email. Lamar would send them out usually.

10 Scott Gast: Did Meri Maben ever ask you to do campaign activities?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: Nothing like phone banking, walking, no.

12 Scott Gast: What about Mike Nguyen?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

14 Scott Gast: Jennifer Van der Heide?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes, if you look at those State Department emails ...

16 Scott Gast: Aside from the State Department, was there anything?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: The emails that I documented, I have to say yes.

18 Scott Gast: Do you recall any other paid full-time campaign staff beyond Lamar?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: At this time no, I don't recall anyone else.

20 Scott Gast: In the 2012 or the 2014 cycles?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: I left before the 2014 cycle got professionalized, and got the full staff.

22 Scott Gast: Okay. So for the 2012 election...

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Lamar and Mark were the only two.

24 Scott Gast: Okay.

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Mark, who I think was – no, I know was also official at the time.

2 Scott Gast: Right. Did any other district office staff work on Representative Honda's
3 campaign?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: I didn't pay attention to what other people were doing.

5 Scott Gast: Nobody that often went over to volunteer or attend campaign events on
6 behalf of the Member?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember.

8 Scott Gast: How involved was Representative Honda in his campaign?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: He was involved. I can give an example. Lamar's wife at the time worked
10 at the Dutch consulate in San Francisco. I drove the Congressman up for
11 an event at a hotel in San Francisco. Me, Lamar and the Congressman
12 met at this office space that his wife had secured for us in the Dutch
13 consulate in San Francisco. This was before the 2012 Democratic
14 Convention because the Congressman was speaking to a Representative
15 in Minnesota, Allison, on the phone and me and Lamar were there. The
16 binder for what's thousand crane club was on the table. Mike also took a
17 phone call from a journalist. We were doing, in the same office. That's an
18 example. I think the Congressman was involved.

19 Scott Gast: When you joined the congressional office, or any time during your service
20 in the congressional office, was there ever any training about campaign
21 activity?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: What do you mean by training about campaign activity?

23 Scott Gast: Did anybody give you a presentation or sit down with you and speak to
24 you about the rules that govern campaign activity by official staff?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: The line drawing?

26 Scott Gast: About the line, yeah.

27 Ruchit Agrawal: When we would talk about coffee break, Meri indicated the reason we
28 use the euphemism, Meri Maben, was because of this line. That was one
29 indication that there was a line that existed. We were purposefully
30 dancing around the line with the euphemism. Other than that not really.

1 I went to ethics training after the November 2012 election. I think that's
2 just how it works, nothing would happen in DC before the election if I
3 started in the summer. The ethics training in December, that was the
4 formal ethics training that we [inaudible].

5 Scott Gast: Nothing office specific though? Saying listen, we're in the middle of
6 campaign season, we want to give you an idea of what is permissible to
7 do and what is not permissible?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Not that I recall.

9 Scott Gast: Were you given any policies specifically? Any written policies specifically
10 on campaign versus official?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: Not that I recall.

12 Scott Gast: Okay. Were you, or are you aware of anyone else in a congressional
13 office, ever asked to provide anything or prepare anything for the
14 campaign? Issue papers, issue comparisons, anything like that?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

16 Scott Gast: I want to ask you about these coffee breaks with Meri Maben.

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Sure.

18 Scott Gast: Who organized the coffee breaks?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: We had staff meetings periodically, once a week.

20 Scott Gast: When you say we had staff meetings ...

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Sorry, the district office staff, excuse me. Should I go through the names
22 or ...

23 Scott Gast: No, just was it the congressional staff in the district?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: In the district office. We'd have weekly staff meetings. There would be
25 the normal official work and then there would be a coffee break portion.

26 Scott Gast: This was all the district staff would attend these or most of the district
27 staff?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, sometimes the staff assistant may not have been there but
2 everybody else was there.

3 Scott Gast: Were these mandatory meetings?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, staff, yeah.

5 Scott Gast: Who led those meetings?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Meri Maben.

7 Scott Gast: Okay. Did Representative Honda ever attend your staff meetings?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Not that I recall.

9 Scott Gast: And where were these meetings held?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: In the Campbell office they were held in the Representative Honda's
11 office, in the Campbell office.

12 Scott Gast: Were you in the new office, the Santa Clara office?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: When the Santa Clara office ... It was actually in San Jose.

14 Scott Gast: The new office, that you moved into.

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, and I think Santa Clara is now recent. The district office that we
16 moved into was in San Jose, near the airport.

17 Scott Gast: Okay, were the district staff meetings always held in the district office,
18 wherever it was?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes.

20 Scott Gast: Okay. Did the campaign staff ever attend any of your district staff
21 meetings?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: I remember Lamar dropping by for one of them. The reason I remember
23 is because that's when he became aware of the Ethiopian American
24 event.

25 Scott Gast: Was that just a situation where he just happened to be stopping by and
26 sat in or was he kind of scheduled to be there?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know his schedule.

2 Scott Gast: Did it look like he had a formal role in the staff meeting, was he
3 presenting something?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

5 Scott Gast: During these district office staff meetings there would be a coffee break.
6 Can you tell us about that?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, coffee break was a time when campaign related information would
8 be discussed, such as what's going on, what endorsements are we
9 seeking, sort of generally what's going on politically, locally. Just to focus
10 on sort of local politics, not DC legislative posturing. Local.

11 Scott Gast: Was Representative Honda's campaign discussed?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes.

13 Scott Gast: How would you know you were in a coffee break?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: We would just start talking. But we wouldn't say coffee break is starting.
15 You're done with the work related event then you transition to the next
16 item on the agenda.

17 Scott Gast: Were the things you discussed on the agenda?

18 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember that. Not usually.

19 Scott Gast: I think there was some stuff in the newspaper about Meri Maben would
20 say okay, coffee break time.

21 Ruchit Agrawal: That might have been the other source. I don't ...

22 Scott Gast: Does that accurately characterize how that would happen?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: It's not like she would say it's coffee break time. I don't think that's a fair
24 characterization. We just transitioned from one to the other. There was
25 no line. There was no need to ...

26 Paul Solis: During a meeting there would be discussion of something official? An
27 official meeting the Congressman was going to take, something like that,
28 and then the next line, item on the agenda would be specifically
29 campaign related.

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, for example I remember one staff meeting where we discussed
2 whatever we were doing that week and then Mark Nakamoto talked
3 about how one of the interns had done a really great job in bringing his
4 friends or family members in to do phone banking. He knew one of the
5 languages that we were talking at the time.

6 Scott Gast: Where does this term coffee break come from?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I think it comes from Meri Maben.

8 Paul Solis: You never heard the phrase coffee break?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I definitely did. There's actually even a video of Meri Maben talking
10 about coffee break. So there was some middle eastern students who
11 came over on a visit. There was a documentary done on their visit. They
12 met with us in the Congressman's office and took video of what we were
13 saying. Meri Maben says in there we have coffee breaks to show the line.
14 There's video of it if you can track that down.

15 Scott Gast: You don't have that video?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

17 Paul Solis: Do you know about what time, what dates that was?

18 Ruchit Agrawal: Like I said, it was while we were in the Campbell office.

19 Paul Solis: Would the coffee breaks happen during specific times? Where there was
20 a campaign event occurring? Closer to an election period? Or did they
21 just happen every time you had a staff meeting?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Pretty much every time we had a staff meeting. There may have been
23 staff meetings where it didn't happen. It was pretty consistent.

24 Scott Gast: Okay. I want to ask you about Google Drives. Are you familiar with
25 Google Drives?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

27 Scott Gast: Generally, can you explain what a Google Drive is? Simply.

28 Ruchit Agrawal: It's a way to share documents.

29 Scott Gast: How does one set up a Google Drive?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: You go into your Google Apps. There's something called Google
2 Documents for creating a word processing document, Google Sheets if
3 you're doing a spread sheet. The way you collaborate using Google Drive
4 is you share whatever you're working on between you and whoever
5 you're trying to collaborate with.

6 Scott Gast: Do you then grant access to who can view that document?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes, I think so. Yeah, there's an access granting. You say yeah, share. You
8 say share, it's not grant access. I guess it's the same thing, yeah.

9 Scott Gast: Were Google Drives used as part of Honda World?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

11 Scott Gast: What were they generally used for?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: To sort of keep ...To collaborate on lists of people who outreach,
13 campaign or official, campaign/ official wanted to go register.

14 Scott Gast: Were they official docs uploaded to these Google Drives? Were campaign
15 docs uploaded?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: Both. I don't know how to differentiate between those. I'm putting
17 official information in for cam ... I don't know how you characterize that.

18 Scott Gast: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

19 Ruchit Agrawal: I'm an official staff. I've never been a campaign staff. Anything I work on,
20 even if it's campaign, becomes official.

21 Scott Gast: There was no separate Google Drive for official stuff and a separate for
22 campaign?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: We only used the Google Drives system for official stuff.

24 Scott Gast: Official stuff.

25 Ruchit Agrawal: To store the constituents' information, IQ has the data base.

26 Scott Gast: What's IQ?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: IQ is some acronym for the constituent data ... Basically customer
28 relations management software.

1 Scott Gast: For the congressional office?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

3 Scott Gast: Okay. I want to talk to you about these notes from the district office staff
4 retreat.

5 Ruchit Agrawal: Sure.

6 Scott Gast: This looks to be the cover email. You were sending these notes that were
7 attached. Is that correct?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

9 Scott Gast: You sent it from your official house email to Meri Maben.

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

11 Scott Gast: Looks like her official account. Also to "CA-15 District Internal."

12 Ruchit Agrawal: That ... Sorry, I should let you finish questions.

13 Scott Gast: Is that "CA-15 District Internal" an email group that included everyone in
14 the district office?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: As far as I recall, yes.

16 Scott Gast: I believe we had talked that the district office retreat, in this instance,
17 happened about September 13th, 2012, according to the title of the
18 document.

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

20 Scott Gast: Then about a week later, on September 20th you forwarded these notes
21 to Meri and the entire district staff. Is that right?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. Then we turned those notes into action plans. I didn't provide you
23 those emails.

24 Scott Gast: If you had the action plans, that would be great.

25 Ruchit Agrawal: I had an email called "Action Plan" or something like that. I don't have
26 the actual action plans. Again, this stuff never matters. At this time we

1 were planning, Ro Khanna's not in the picture. Pete Stark hasn't lost. This
2 stuff in the end all goes out the wayside.

3 Scott Gast: This is roughly maybe a month and a half before the election in 2012, is
4 that about right?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. Exactly. This was processing, or communicating the primary results,
6 which was the first election the Congressman had in the new district.

7 Scott Gast: Okay. What was the purpose of this specific event?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: It was a district office retreat to set priorities and have a conversation
9 with the campaign and try to collaborate. Make sure everyone's on the
10 same page.

11 Scott Gast: Was this an official event? Was this a campaign event?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: It was definitely an official event. I was going as district staff.

13 Scott Gast: Were all district staff required to attend?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes.

15 Scott Gast: Where was the retreat held?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: Meri Maben's, she has a second home in Aptos, California. Beach house.
17 It's not actually by the beach.

18 Scott Gast: How long was the event?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: It was full day.

20 Scott Gast: Full day. From 9-5ish?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

22 Scott Gast: Okay. You said all district staff attended. Anyone from the Washington
23 office attend?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

25 Scott Gast: Jennifer Ven der Heide, was she there?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

1 Scott Gast: What about anybody from campaign staff?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: Lamar was there. Mark Nakamoto was wearing both hats. In his capacity
3 as campaign he was presenting.

4 Scott Gast: Okay. Did Representative Honda participate in this retreat?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: No, he did not.

6 Scott Gast: What was generally discussed at the retreat?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: We first talked about the results, analyzed the results. Set priorities for
8 the office.

9 Scott Gast: Want to kind of walk through some of these notes. Just ask you about it.
10 If you look at Roman Numeral II on the first page of the notes, under
11 "Overview of CA17, (Lamar/Mark Nakamoto)", does that mean Lamar
12 Heystek and Mark Nakamoto presented at this point?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

14 Scott Gast: Was this Mark in his campaign capacity?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes.

16 Scott Gast: That first bullet says "New cities. How to transition info from campaign to
17 do," or it might be "campaign to D.O." meaning district office.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, it's D.O.

19 Scott Gast: It's D.O. "(ethically and practically)". Do you recall what you meant when
20 you put that note in there?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: What I was trying to say was I was taking notes on what Lamar and Mark
22 were saying. Someone, I don't know who, I didn't...so Lamar or Mark, said
23 the purpose of this is to think about how to use what we learn from
24 campaign to help the district office achieve its objectives and vice versa.

25 Scott Gast: What kind of info would be transitioned?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: The big thing if you go to the bottom, if you go to page two, somewhere
27 Mark says, "What's the important stuff?" I can find it for you.

28 Scott Gast: Is it at the bottom of page two? Transitioning data?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. The important information was bottom of page two. The really
2 important information is the anecdotal information that this important
3 person felt this way when we supported this issue and didn't feel this way
4 when we supported this. I think everybody is very intuitive with data
5 analysis or demographics. The important thing, is this specific person. For
6 example, if you go to the next page, Carl Guardino was very important in
7 this area.

8 Scott Gast: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

9 Ruchit Agrawal: That kind of thing. How does he feel actually about the Congressman?
10 How does the Congressman feel about him? How can we be sure that the
11 Congressman understands that Carl's doing a favor to him? And so the
12 Congressman changes the way he speaks to this person. That kind of stuff
13 is really valuable, understanding the interpersonal dynamic.

14 Scott Gast: I want to also go onto on page 2, kind of the middle of the page, right
15 above, "thousand crane." That last bullet says "D.O.? Chinese Language
16 Outreach in Cupertino." That comes after an analysis of the Chinese vote
17 in the district.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

19 Scott Gast: What was meant by "D.O. Chinese Language Outreach in Cupertino"?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember. Generally, it was can we get pamphlets, can we
21 translate our information? Think about Chinese.

22 Scott Gast: That coupled with transitioning intel from the campaign to the district
23 office, was this an effort to use the district office to support
24 Representative Honda's campaign?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. The district office was ... Yes, one of the purposes of the district
26 office was clearly to help the Congressman's campaign, which I think is
27 pretty standard practice.

28 Scott Gast: These were campaign considerations driving official actions?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes. The priority of high tech is a campaign consideration. Also it's
30 important in the district, but that's a campaign consideration. I don't
31 know. It's also an official consideration. It's an important consideration in
32 the industry as well.

33 Scott Gast: Okay. Can you tell us about this thousand crane idea that's on the ...

1 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. As far as I know, it's the Congressman's idea. It's a thousand people
2 give a thousand dollars that's a million dollars. A social network to
3 provide a club for the cranes. Also to provide an ability for them to do the
4 transactional work that's necessary. Hey, my relative needs a visa, I'm
5 interested in this public policy. It's a place to keep the donors, they can
6 talk. I don't know if formalized or not, if it was just an idea, but there
7 definitely was a binder for it I saw.

8 Scott Gast: When you say there was a binder, who kept that binder?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: Lamar had a binder.

10 Scott Gast: Was that a binder of who was in the club?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know. It was just "a thousand cranes" on the top of it.

12 Scott Gast: Okay. When you say this was a place where there would be this
13 transactional nature, can you talk a little bit more about that? What that
14 meant?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: I think exactly what I said in these notes. The idea was a crane could say
16 hey, I need this help.

17 Scott Gast: Was this a special level of care given to the members of this thousand
18 cranes club?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, but not really. I never got a casework from anyone. I never received
20 any like, "this is a crane." The only designation I ever received was
21 Friends of MH.

22 Scott Gast: Could it have been the same thing?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

24 Scott Gast: A Friend of MH being a crane? Could that have been a possibility?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know either way. I can't say no, either.

26 Paul Solis: Did Jennifer or Meri ever discuss the cranes in terms of, as you put it,
27 something they might need? Constituent help? Did they ever discuss the
28 cranes and their contributions in connection with official work?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

1 Scott Gast: What about under this “transitioning data” heading. It talks about a
2 Google Doc of stakeholders for CA17, what is that?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember that, actually.

4 Scott Gast: Was there some kind of list of stakeholders?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: There were stakeholders lists on Google Drives.

6 Scott Gast: Who maintained those lists?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know that.

8 Scott Gast: You know who put them together?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: No. Official and campaign staff. I don't know who specifically. I know
10 Lamar would have worked on them and official staff would have worked
11 on them. I think I provided one of those examples. The State Department
12 thing and also the Sikh, the list of people.

13 Scott Gast: What does that mean to be a stakeholder?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: It's a constituent, but a constituent who is a little more active.

15 Scott Gast: You said both the ...

16 Ruchit Agrawal: Not necessarily in the district, it could just be someone who was active
17 locally and could have a house.

18 Scott Gast: Both the campaign and the official office would have access to those
19 documents, to those lists?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: When it was relevant. I didn't look it up every day. If I got a casework, it
21 wasn't like I looked up in there. It wasn't anything like that.

22 Scott Gast: Okay. I want to talk briefly about the State Department round table. I
23 think we ...

24 Ruchit Agrawal: Beat that like a dead horse.

25 Scott Gast: Yes. I've got a lot of documents and that helps spell things out. This is
26 kind of a compilation of a bunch of different documents stapled together.
27 These are RA-49, THMH1895-96, RA-39-43. Three different docs. Take a
28 minute to look through that.

1 Can you tell us, again for the record, what was the purpose of this event?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: The context of the event was the Congressman had written a letter
3 indicating that he didn't support Narendra Modi getting a visa to come to
4 the United States. As a result of that, there was some backlash in the
5 Hindu community. The segment of the Hindu community that supports
6 the BJP. Jennifer Van der Heide, this is based on a phone conversation I
7 had with her. There was a concern that the relationship with that
8 community wasn't as strong as it needed to be. Especially given that was
9 a key political base for the challenger, we needed to do outreach.

10 I'm not indicating that I don't think this was the silver bullet that was
11 going to fix all the problems of the South Asian community, as I think it
12 came out. I didn't raise any money from any of the people I invited to
13 that.

14 Scott Gast: You did not?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: That's as far as I know. That's the funny part. It's okay to be corrupt, but
16 it's kind of sad to be corrupt and bad at it.

17 Scott Gast: Was your conversation with Jennifer, was that kind of the initial idea for
18 this event?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

20 Scott Gast: Did she propose having the event?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I wouldn't have. It was not my idea. She was the one who was
22 driving the bus.

23 Scott Gast: Did she call you to talk about putting this together?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: She and Ahmed, AJ is what he went by.

25 Scott Gast: AJ Bhadelia?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

27 Scott Gast: In your initial call with Jennifer that you mentioned, did she discuss with
28 you this was a key political base for the challenger?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: You don't have to say it. Yeah. We had talked about ... When I went over
30 in December, when I referenced we had lunch together. We talked about

1 how there were challenges. I remember specifically saying that my family
2 friends and my parents would donate to the challenger before they
3 donated to the Congressman, even though I worked for the
4 Congressman. We'd definitely talk about, this was a concern.

5 Scott Gast: You said you had lunch with Jennifer at some point?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I went over for the new staff ethics training.

7 Scott Gast: You went over to DC?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: DC, sorry.

9 Scott Gast: Okay.

10 Ruchit Agrawal: That was paid for by the...out of the MRA.

11 Scott Gast: Sure.

12 Ruchit Agrawal: We had a lunch in the downstairs cafeteria of the House office building or
13 whatever. We talked about Ro Khanna issues. Also just other stuff, too.

14 Scott Gast: Anybody else with you at lunch?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: No, just me and her.

16 Scott Gast: Roughly when was this?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: December timeline. You can see when the new house ethics training
18 happened that time.

19 Scott Gast: December of 2012?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: 2012.

21 Scott Gast: She called you and said it would be a good idea to put together this event
22 with this group because they were so ...

23 Ruchit Agrawal: She didn't like putting together stuff.

24 Scott Gast: Putting this group together. Who else did you work with on this event?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: AJ, Ahmed I said his name was, I never communicated with but I was on
2 emails with Lamar and that's it, actually. I never communicated with
3 Madeline Mielke or Meri Maben about this event.

4 Scott Gast: You did not?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

6 Scott Gast: No conversations with Meri?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: No, Meri didn't ... This wasn't ...

8 Scott Gast: Even though she was District Director?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: We had conversations about the backlash with Narendra Modi issue, but
10 the State Department planning, that was Jennifer doing that.

11 Scott Gast: What about Mark Nakamoto? Did you work with him on the event?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I didn't. It was communicated to me afterwards by Ashley Roybal that he
13 took over when I quit.

14 Scott Gast: What about Mike Nguyen?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Not that I remember.

16 Scott Gast: Did you work with Representative Honda at all?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Not at all.

18 Scott Gast: Is this the same event as the SV Gujarat?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: I think so. It started as a Gujarat. Narendra Modi used to be the
20 equivalent of Governor over in India.

21 Scott Gast: The Gujarat? I just saw references to ...

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, he is Gujarat. His electoral premise is the Gujarat. Meri knew all
23 that stuff.

24 Scott Gast: There was just one event?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: What are you ... Sorry?

1 Scott Gast: When I saw references to the State Department event and to the Gujarat
2 ...

3 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, that was one event.

4 Scott Gast: Okay.

5 Paul Solis: Should I go see if [REDACTED] is outside just to let [REDACTED] know?

6 Scott Gast: I think we have some time.

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I'm sorry. I ran long.

8 Scott Gast: Yeah, let's just try to get through this to make sure we can. How were the
9 invitees to this event selected?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Prominent South Asians in the tech investment world.

11 Scott Gast: How were those picked out?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: I think Jennifer's network, our donors if there were any, there was sort of
13 a limited number as Lamar indicates. Just prominent people in the South
14 Asian community.

15 Scott Gast: Who put the list together? Who was responsible for putting the list of
16 invitees?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: As far as I know, Lamar put together the suggested South Asian invites
18 that's referenced in this email.

19 Scott Gast: The email you're referring to ...

20 Ruchit Agrawal: The one I was just looking through, the February 8th, 2013, the Google
21 Drive document that says suggested South Asian invites.

22 Scott Gast: Was that the first list you saw of proposed invites?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I believe I showed there was documents that the list was being
24 shared before that by Jennifer, if I remember correctly.

25 Scott Gast: Okay. Jennifer apparently had a list she was sharing with you, Lamar sent
26 his own list?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: I think it's the same list.

1 Scott Gast: Who initiated the list? As far as you know.

2 Ruchit Agrawal: Lamar.

3 Scott Gast: Jennifer took that list and made edits, changes, additions, subtractions?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, Lamar initiated it, and then she went through and culled it.

5 Scott Gast: Okay. How did it come to you?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: I mean I was on it I think the whole time.

7 Scott Gast: Okay. Let me show you this document. This is a little tricky of a
8 document. It's such a long ... This would be page one of this spread sheet.
9 Does this spread sheet look familiar to you?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

11 Scott Gast: What is this spread sheet?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: This is the suggested South Asian invitees spread sheet I'm pretty sure.
13 Yeah.

14 Scott Gast: Was this the one Lamar sent to Jennifer?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know which version. There were so many versions that went
16 around.

17 Scott Gast: It went through several iterations.

18 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know which print out this is.

19 Scott Gast: This is the list that you, Jennifer, and Lamar worked on?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: I never worked on this list. I never did anything with this list.

21 Scott Gast: You were just the recipient?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. I was asked to work on it and I refused.

23 Scott Gast: Okay. Can you tell me why there is a column for giving history 2014?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: The purpose of the event was donors, or potential donors, and one of the
2 ways to indicate potential donors is that they donate to other politicians,
3 to prioritize them to do outreach to this event.

4 Scott Gast: Was that a specifically discussed purpose of the event? To seek out
5 potential donors of potential?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, it's laid out in the email.

7 Scott Gast: Who talked about that?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: Jennifer Van der Heide.

9 Scott Gast: Anybody else?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Lamar Heystek.

11 Scott Gast: Okay.

12 Paul Solis: Again, you didn't create this chart, but when Scott asked you about giving
13 history that doesn't necessarily mean giving history to Representative
14 Honda, it could mean giving history to any Member of Congress.

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Also, giving history to the challenger. For example, Carl, this person was
16 specifically, he had giving history to the challenger. We had to try to
17 convert him.

18 Paul Solis: You're assumption could be completely correct, it's just I don't see
19 anything in this chart ...

20 Ruchit Agrawal: You don't see Carl Matha?

21 Paul Solis: That would reflect the challenger receiving any ...

22 Ruchit Agrawal: Carl Matha? I have that.

23 Scott Gast: Page through it, but ...

24 Ruchit Agrawal: You want me to do it? His number is 40 something.

25 Paul Solis: That would reference the giving history to the challenger?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: Yes. I can pull it up on my computer. It's there.

1 Paul Solis: Okay.

2 Scott Gast: All right, let's go back to these emails real quick. You want to pull your
3 copy up so we can walk through. This initial one is dated February 7th,
4 2013 from Jennifer to Lamar, copied to you.

5 Ruchit Agrawal: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

6 Scott Gast: She asked, "Do you have the list of proposed invitees to the Indian round
7 table with state ready? We need to start sending out." It appears as if
8 she's asking Lamar to put together a list of people that they're going to
9 invite.

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Also me. I was also asked to contribute to that list somehow with the
11 constituent information that we have.

12 Scott Gast: Okay. Were you asked to put together a list from the official files and
13 Lamar asked to ...

14 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I was asked to take whatever official information we had and put it
15 into the Google Drive that Lamar had started.

16 Scott Gast: Okay. He got that from campaign?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, I think he lays out how exactly he generated the list.

18 Scott Gast: Okay. If you look at the next email, THMH-1896 ...

19 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, right here he lays out how he did it.

20 Scott Gast: Let's go back to THMH-1896 real quick.

21 Ruchit Agrawal: Where's that?

22 Scott Gast: On the bottom right corner. THMH-1896.

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Oh, I see. I got that email. Okay.

24 Scott Gast: Flip that one more page. This looks also like on February 7th you sent an
25 email to Jennifer regarding this round table event: "Here is the list with
26 16 people in organizations. Please tell me if I should drop this law firm.
27 Any ideas who we can contact?" Can you tell me about this list of 16
28 people, how that came about?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember, actually.

2 Scott Gast: Do you remember Jennifer asking you to put together a list of potential
3 invitees to this event?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

5 Scott Gast: Could that have been what this is?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: I think so.

7 Scott Gast: Where would you have gotten that information?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: That's what I don't remember.

9 Scott Gast: Then it looks like she replies to you that she'll keep randomly sending
10 names as she thinks of them, asks if you've searched through the IQ and
11 stakeholder lists, looks like she has a couple other names.

12 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, it looks like she asked me. I wouldn't have done that. To go through
13 the official list.

14 Scott Gast: She also copies Meri Maben on this email. Did you have any discussions
15 with Meri on this?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: Not that I recall.

17 Scott Gast: Okay. Then she emails again to you, herself, cc to Meri that she asked
18 Lamar for a list which was due tonight. Is that the list we have been
19 talking about?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: I see what you see. I don't remember, but based on the documents it
21 seems correct.

22 Scott Gast: Okay. Then we see, like we've discussed, on February 8th at 9:25am,
23 Lamar shares his list as a Google Doc with you and Jennifer.

24 Ruchit Agrawal: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

25 Scott Gast: Jennifer responds on Saturday February 9th: "Great lists. How are we
26 doing outreach to them for \$? Can we at least collect emails and send
27 newsletters or something if we can't do straight asks electronically now?
28 Also, do you have a lists of the South Asians now endorsing/ supporting

1 MH? Want to make sure we are including all of them. Invites going out
2 first thing Monday morning." You remember that email?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

4 Scott Gast: Can you give us a little context of that email and what she was talking
5 about?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: She's talking about the list we've been discussing, then talking about how
7 to build relationships for fundraising.

8 Scott Gast: Did you have any discussions with Jennifer about that?

9 Ruchit Agrawal: The fund raising aspect? No, I just had discussions with her about hey,
10 there's sort of this backlash that's happening around Narendra Modi.

11 Paul Solis: That's another question. If you're not helping to develop the list and
12 you're not volunteering for the campaign, why is she sending this to you?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: Because I was putting together the official event.

14 Paul Solis: The official event.

15 Ruchit Agrawal: The booking, where it happened, speaking points for the Congressman if I
16 had stayed on for that event, biographies for people who'd be coming.
17 That sort of stuff.

18 Scott Gast: Did you and Lamar ever discuss the fundraising aspect?

19 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

20 Scott Gast: Okay. You and Meri?

21 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

22 Scott Gast: Who is Madeline Meilke?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: Consultant.

24 Scott Gast: Okay. Beyond Jennifer and beyond Lamar, any other conversations you
25 had with anyone about the potential for getting contributions out of
26 these folks?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: No. Not at all.

1 Scott Gast: Okay. I'm going to this Ethiopian event, which we talked about. You had
2 said this was a September 2012 event. It was kind of an Ethiopian award
3 ceremony held at the Los Gatos town hall. Is that correct?

4 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

5 Scott Gast: Did you work on this with Mr. Nguyen?

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah, exactly.

7 Scott Gast: In this email, Lamar Heystek forwards to you and Mr. Nguyen a name,
8 "Perhaps you would like to invite him to MH's Ethiopian event." Do you
9 recall that?

10 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

11 Scott Gast: Was Lamar and the campaign involved in selecting invitees for this event?

12 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

13 Scott Gast: Where did this email come from?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: I think I discussed earlier, Lamar at some point had dropped by the office
15 and was talking about what was going on in the office.

16 Scott Gast: Did he say this was somebody that they wanted to recruit to the
17 campaign, to seek money from, to seek an endorsement?

18 Ruchit Agrawal: No, it was also a prominent person who was Ethiopian and has invented
19 an interesting item. It also could be completely innocuous.

20 Scott Gast: Okay. I want to ask you about this Sikh stakeholders list you briefly
21 mentioned as well. We talked about this list of stakeholders, that there
22 were various lists maintained, on the G Drives, with access by the official
23 and the campaign.

24 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

25 Scott Gast: Given that context, can you tell us about this email from Lamar?

26 Ruchit Agrawal: Sure. So what happened this time, there was a shooting tragedy in,
27 somewhere in the Midwest at the time.

28 Scott Gast: Okay.

1 Ruchit Agrawal: So here in the county, they had a rally in the county government office
2 that we went to. There was sort of a, how do these things happen? For a
3 couple weeks, everybody got very interested in the Sikhs, before they
4 moved on to something else.

5 Scott Gast: Sure.

6 Ruchit Agrawal: Jennifer then communicated to me that, "Hey, we're trying to develop of
7 a list of stakeholders in the community." I was like okay, yeah, we have
8 some lists. Do you have any ideas of where we can go elsewhere? She's
9 like of course, make sure you reach out to Lamar. Is there anything else?

10 I wouldn't have known about, for example, the recent fundraiser. It
11 wasn't on my calendar. She communicated that to me. She said hey, let's
12 try to get this done by the end of the day.

13 Scott Gast: It appears from the email, you did reach out to Lamar.

14 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. At her direction.

15 Scott Gast: At her direction. And he gave you some names?

16 Ruchit Agrawal: If I sent Lamar an email saying, "Get this done by the end of the day,"
17 Lamar would not...that would not go well.

18 Scott Gast: Right. Were you ultimately the one who developed a stakeholder list for
19 the Sikh?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: No, I didn't. I was in training, but this didn't sit right with me. What I
21 did...I just forwarded it on at some point.

22 Scott Gast: Who did you forward it on to?

23 Ruchit Agrawal: To the district; to DC.

24 Scott Gast: You recall who you did DC?

25 Ruchit Agrawal: No. Actually, this one I might have just not done anything with. I might
26 have just sat on it. I don't actually remember what happened after this.

27 Scott Gast: Do you recall what you did with the names that ...

28 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't actually. I remember I was weirded out by this.

1 Scott Gast: Why were you weirded out?

2 Ruchit Agrawal: It's kind of strange to use the ... There's a line between campaign and
3 official. I would never have personally, unless someone had prompted me
4 to, if I was planning invites, reach out to Lamar for that. That doesn't
5 make sense to me.

6 Scott Gast: Okay. We talked about the Netflix account. We have about 10 minutes
7 before we need to end. I just briefly want to go over the emails. You said
8 this was an email request from Nadir, who is the IT guy in DC.

9 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

10 Scott Gast: Robert Lucas was included because he also did IT work based in DC. You
11 had the IT responsibilities put on you. In the initial email from Nadir he
12 says, "Yes. That's a request boarding personal, but such is life." Did you
13 ever discuss that little thought at the time he sent the email?

14 Ruchit Agrawal: No. It's kind of weird and unprompted. I had never, at that point
15 complained or anything. It was kind of weird and just unprompted.

16 Scott Gast: Did that strike you as odd?

17 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah. Just the such is life. It's bullying language. It's not necessary, also.

18 Scott Gast: Did you discuss it with anybody? Discuss it with Meri? Or discuss it with
19 Mike Nguyen?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: I discussed it with Mike Nguyen. This is kind of an odd tone. Mike Nguyen
21 said this is how it is. Take it or leave it. I had a similar complaint about the
22 car. I shared my car with my sister at the time. I was like I would have
23 liked to have known because my older sister gets priority. I would have
24 liked to have known. He was like just figure out a way to fix it. That's how
25 it is.

26 Scott Gast: Speak to anybody else besides Mike? Did you speak to Jennifer?

27 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

28 Scott Gast: Not about that. Speak to Representative Honda?

29 Ruchit Agrawal: I did.

30 Scott Gast: You did?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I did.

2 Scott Gast: What was that conversation?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I did. I said, "hey, Congressman...", I told him I never would have joined
4 working for you if I would have been doing tech support. I have a law
5 degree. I had a great opportunity at a ... Otherwise. I definitely would not
6 have been doing stuff like this for you.

7 Scott Gast: What did he say to you?

8 Ruchit Agrawal: He said it's just early. It's important. You're just getting started. Be
9 patient. Which is understandable, too.

10 Scott Gast: Did you discuss this ...

11 Ruchit Agrawal: It was August, I think I started in July.

12 Scott Gast: Was that the time you spoke to the Member? Was around this email?

13 Ruchit Agrawal: Yeah.

14 Scott Gast: Did you specifically raise the Apple TV/ Netflix issue, or just the IT issue?

15 Ruchit Agrawal: Just the IT in general.

16 Scott Gast: Okay.

17 Ruchit Agrawal: I didn't want to accuse him personally. Didn't seem like it would make
18 him more receptive if I accused him personally.

19 Scott Gast: After you got this email, what happened?

20 Ruchit Agrawal: I never did anything with it.

21 Scott Gast: You never did anything?

22 Ruchit Agrawal: No.

23 Scott Gast: Did anybody else?

24 Ruchit Agrawal: I'm not going to do crap like that.

25 Scott Gast: Did anybody else fix the Apple TV and the Netflix?

1 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know.

2 Scott Gast: Did Robert?

3 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know.

4 Scott Gast: I'm sorry?

5 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't know.

6 Scott Gast: Do you recall Robert being in the district around the time of this?

7 Ruchit Agrawal: I don't remember. Nadir was in the district around this time. Towards the
8 end of his tenure, he came to the district.

9 Scott Gast: Okay. Were there any other instances when you were asked or directed
10 to help with personal...?

11 Ruchit Agrawal: I gave the instance with Meri Maben's Lexus... inside her car. Everybody's
12 personal phone was used for official work. All the lower level staff didn't
13 get their phone service paid for by the office. All that stuff would have
14 been under my jurisdiction.

15 Scott Gast: Okay. I have one other topic to go through briefly. Do you have any other
16 questions at all? Obviously, there have been news reports about
17 protective orders and threats. I just want to give you an opportunity to, if
18 you would like, give us your version of the events surrounding that.

19 Ruchit Agrawal: It's not relevant to this.

20 Scott Gast: There are some who say this might be prompted or inspired by those
21 events, that you might see this as a way to get back at folks.

22 Ruchit Agrawal: The letter to the House Ethics Committee pre-dates the events.

23 Scott Gast: Okay.

24 Ruchit Agrawal: Unless I was Nostradamus, how could I be inspired by something that
25 hadn't happened?

26 Scott Gast: Okay. I just wanted to give you a chance to address that if you wanted.

27 Ruchit Agrawal: I just don't think it's relevant. I don't see the relevance at all.

1 Scott Gast: Okay. I think those were all the questions we had for you. We really do
2 appreciate you taking the time to go through this with us.