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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN

MARK ZWONITZER

PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

File: \_carved\_000246

Date of Interview: October 10, 2016

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.  
Court Reporting Transcription  
D.C. Area 301-261-1902



[REDACTED]

R E C O R D I N G

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2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- their whole class and they came  
3 to the White House and, and the President came down I believe  
4 and spent some time with them. And just like last year, at  
5 the end of the year, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

14 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

24 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

25 [REDACTED] --

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[0:02:23.8]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: --

MR. ZWONITZER:

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER:

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

I think some of the other things that were --  
there was a lot of stuff going on at the same time in  
foreign policy. You said -- they said you didn't want --

1 [0:03:59.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to, you didn't want to go  
3 into it, but I have extensive notes --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Great. Okay.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- over this period of time.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, that's in -- oh, you actually  
7 have those here.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Now, there's a lot of  
9 other notes too.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But I mean --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- these -- this is my -- they  
14 didn't even know I had this.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Some of this stuff, I'm not, you  
17 know, going to -- so I go back, you know what I mean? I  
18 have stuff on, you know, five -- here we go. I mean, it's  
19 like --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: So that ( [REDACTED]

21 0:04:41.3) --

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I have stuff on all the way up  
23 to 5/19.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay. 5/19. So that would be --

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: May '19.

1 [0:04:58.3]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:04:58.4).

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then it skips in my notes to  
4 -- this is '15. 6/16 is the next entry.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, I -- what I'd like to do  
6 maybe on the next visit is maybe, yeah, go through that  
7 particular foreign policy stuff because it strikes me that  
8 there were three big things going on, I think. I mean,  
9 there are a lot of things, but I think Iraq, Central  
10 America, and Ukraine seem to be the things that were chewing  
11 up a lot of your, a lot of your time.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Because -- all right.  
13 Here's February 13th -- February '11 (verbatim) situation  
14 where I think we can get a -- POTUS at lunch. I think we  
15 can get a deal -- turn that off a sec.

16 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, yeah.

17 (Audio cuts)

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You know, I don't know

19 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:06:57.9) but I -- it --

20 (End of recording.)

21

22

23

24

25

[REDACTED]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript, to the best of my ability, of the above pages, of the RECORDED INTERVIEW provided to me by the Special Counsel's Office.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this recording was taken, and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

January 11, 2024  
Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Transcriber

Within this transcript of proceedings, some of the names and/or technical terms are spelled phonetically, inasmuch as exhibits, files and supporting documentation were not made available to us for reference.



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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN

MARK ZWONITZER

PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

File: \_carved\_000248

Date of Interview: November 3, 2016

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.  
Court Reporting Transcription  
D.C. Area 301-261-1902



  
R E C O R D I N G

1  
2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- what their national strategy  
3 was. And we talked about, you know, a number of things,  
4 from Mosul Dam to Syria. But then I -- on the 2nd, I, I was  
5 supposed to call -- it was Kevin McCarthy. I was supposed  
6 to get in touch with him because -- this was after the 14th  
7 election and he won -- you know, they won.

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I wanted to talk to him  
10 about how we proceed --

11 MR. ZWONITZER: It looked like he was going to  
12 Speaker at that -- or --

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Well, no.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: -- not Speaker.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But he was going to be the  
16 number two guy.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yes, he was.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and but he wanted to talk  
21 to me about what we could get done; where, where could we  
22 cooperate.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And he came over to the house.  
25 Then there was a Bono event and I was supposed to come up --

1 [0:01:08.4]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to New York, and he wanted me  
3 to speak at, but he had that bicycle accident. And remember  
4 he was badly injured?

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Bono. And so it got put off.  
7 And, and then I was working on energy infrastructure with  
8 the Department of Defense, as well as with Department of  
9 Energy, because we were putting together a program where  
10 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:01:39.4) needed me to spearhead with him a  
11 major initiative on rebuilding the energy infrastructure  
12 because it was so vulnerable because a lot of it was along  
13 the shoreline, a lot of it was -- there were -- we talked  
14 about -- there were several billion dollars' worth of  
15 outages a year that cost consumers a lot and how we could be  
16 -- we should -- we could be -- our grid could be vulnerable  
17 to being shut down.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Not by cyber, but by natural  
20 disaster.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. Hurricane. Right.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Global warming, hurricanes and  
23 Sandy-type storms.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Is there any discussion of -- does  
25 he ever talk about decentralizing -- I mean, uncoupling --

1 [0:02:41.9]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: -- from that grid and having  
3 small --

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. He talks about basically  
5 a new grid. What he talks about is -- for example, he  
6 points out that there are -- I don't have the numbers.  
7 They're easy to find out. The -- you know, several hundred  
8 thousand miles of gas pipeline --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- most of it laid in the '50s,  
11 a lot of it leaking. He talks about how what a clear and  
12 present danger it is, particularly in New England. He talks  
13 about some of our water infrastructure being, being wooden  
14 pipes that are still --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Still wooden pipes?

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- wooden, wooden. Wooden.

17 Talks about how they've some -- there's methane  
18 leaking from some of these pipes and the number of jobs we'd  
19 create. We can get all this information easy enough.

20 And I ended up going up - I can't remember when -  
21 going up to Philadelphia to talk to the PENG (phonetic)  
22 about all the stuff that they, they could and should be  
23 doing to, to significantly increase the, the safety --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- of the system, and how --

1 [0:04:01.8]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- many hundreds of thousands of  
3 jobs we'd create, et cetera.

4 And so I was, I was the guy who was -- you know,  
5 lead that effort for -- and which we, which we started to  
6 do. And --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: I got the sense that the Secretary  
8 of Energy is a guy who is pretty optimistic about, like,  
9 just what was going on with, with energy --

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, no, no. He was --

11 MR. ZWONITZER: -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:04:33.6)  
12 energy in general.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- optimistic and he talked  
14 about the great chances, and he thinks that I'm the only one  
15 who really understands it and he needed me to be the face of  
16 this effort, which for the better part of that year that I  
17 was.

18 We also talked about, at that same thing -- we  
19 talked about vets projects that had to take place, had to be  
20 -- to deal with the plight of veterans.

21 I talked about -- talked with Congressman Tim  
22 Murphy of Connecticut. He had a bill to, to --

23 (Phone ringing.)

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- focus on mental health.

25 Hello?. No, she's not here yet. Let's wait --

1 [0:05:32.5]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- 'til she gets here, okay?  
3 I'll call you ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:05:34.5).

4 And -- so I talked about that, and gun safety and  
5 mental health was a -- was the -- that was the connection.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: He was a --

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: He's a congressman --

8 MR. ZWONITZER: He was in the --

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- in Connecticut.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: -- from near Newtown?

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Well, maybe not -- I don't think  
14 he's -- represents Newtown, but near.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then talked with National  
17 Security Advisor Susan about following up with Brazil and  
18 Dilma, which I was getting back on track. I was working her  
19 really hard. I --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: You had been there New Years,  
21 right? To Brazil?

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Remember, though, she was  
23 -- she -- I was one that rebuilt the relationship with her.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. After the --

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: After the WikiLeaks stuff and --

1 [0:06:31.5]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- all that. And so I spent a  
4 lot of time putting that relationship back and then she gets  
5 impeached, but --

6 I spent a lot of time, Tony and I, talking about  
7 Ukraine and it unfolding. And I talked -- I called Jim  
8 Inhofe, talking about energy infrastructure. He's from  
9 Oklahoma, and, you know, talk about why this could work for  
10 both the energy producing guys, as well as the environmental  
11 guys, to, you know, get funding for, you know, digging up a  
12 bad pipe --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- or, you know, connectors and  
15 all that.

16 And then I -- the Delaware River project was all  
17 about deepening the Delaware River with a corps of  
18 engineers. I was fighting to get money for that. So I  
19 called Carper, Coons, Carney (phonetic), Senator Casey, and  
20 Bill -- Bob Brady, the congressman.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I had to call Eliot Engel in  
23 the Foreign Relations Committee who was fighting the Iran  
24 deal to try to, you know, reign him in, which I was able to  
25 do. And I had to talk about Carper supporting the Iran --

1 [0:07:54.2]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- deal and help. We got --  
3 plus Carper was very engaged in helping me get funding for  
4 Central American and the Northern Triangle.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So I talked to him about that.  
7 And, and then --

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Was this all literally in one --  
9 in that one day?

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, yeah.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: My God.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Man.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then I -- we had a very  
15 brief staff discussion about -- well, I called  
16 President Anastasiades of Cyprus because -- inquiring about  
17 his health. [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) I think he was  
18 still in the hospital here in New York. It came to an  
19 operation.

20 And I talked about the University of Delaware  
21 Biden Center, you know, and what my Senate legacy was going  
22 to be as it related to Delaware.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: That was already happening?

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That was -- well, it was an  
25 early discussion.

1 [0:09:03.6]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But I think it was already  
4 happening.

5 And then the non-, the non-, the non-classified  
6 part of what -- part of my discussion with POTUS that day  
7 was -- we're talking about ready for Joe. I told him about  
8 the -- he told me about this -- you know, those bumper  
9 stickers that people would be getting spontaneously to, you  
10 know --

11 MR. ZWONITZER: And he had seen those?

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: He had, he had raised them. I  
13 don't know whether he saw them or not, but he knew there was  
14 a spontaneous effort --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: So -- right.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to try to draft Joe Biden.  
17 And, and we -- so we -- and then POTUS was talking about you  
18 got to avoid the -- I can't remember what he meant by it.  
19 Avoid the Mitt Romney, John Kerry situation, which is where  
20 they got -- I assume he means they got pulled into start  
21 earlier than they --

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- were supposed to. And he  
24 said -- his comment to me was, I'm very protective of your  
25 legacy and your image. So before you do anything in --

1 [0:10:42.2]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- responding to this effort to  
3 get you in, why don't you wait 'til you get -- I told him  
4 that Mike Donilon was doing memos for me as to how to run if  
5 I ran. And he said, then decide, because you can always  
6 change your mind, you know, in three minutes here. You  
7 don't have to go on this. Why don't you wait 'til you get a  
8 more hard-ass (verbatim) read about your chances.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And he said, you ought to  
11 talk to Plouffe, Simas, and me. He said, I'll be blunt  
12 with you and so are they. You know we'll tell you the  
13 truth based on what the numbers are. And he said, he said  
14 that -- after that, if in a week and -- after that -- oh,  
15 after that, within a week that we have this discussion  
16 with you, me, Simas, et cetera, then you can decide or  
17 not decide whether or not you should let ready for Joe  
18 go.

19 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]  
20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
21 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I told him  
23 about, about, about great roll-out. What was I talking  
24 about there. I guess I must've been talking about the  
25 roll-out of our -- of the State of the Union.

1 [0:12:54.3]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum. Would this be sort of  
3 maybe like the --

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: -- agenda going forward --

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: -- for the next two years?

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: He wonders how -- he -- I should  
9 -- I'm guessing that he was wondering how the Republicans  
10 were going to get out of the, the cuts on the -- on the  
11 border and Coast Guard and how they're going to explain  
12 that. What are Republicans going to do? He talked about  
13 the hypocrisy -- we both talked about the hypocrisy of the  
14 Prayer Breakfast. Because we had talked about that earlier.  
15 That was -- it either had just happened or was about to  
16 happen.

17 He told me what he's going to do or what, or what  
18 his plans are for -- we're going to do the last year. He  
19 wants to help the poor. He said, you know, I don't know if  
20 these guys read the same Bible. I don't know what Bible  
21 they're reading. I, I don't know what Bible these guys are  
22 reading.

23 We talked about the Central America strategy. He  
24 really liked my op-ed that I did on Central America. He  
25 said the situation -- we have to detail how you're going --

1 [0:14:40.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to layout this is the  
3 Northern Triangle ([REDACTED] 0:14:42.0). I told him of  
4 the tentative plan for me to visit the Triangle before  
5 heading to Panama.

6 And Ash's confirmation. Ash Carter is -- this was  
7 Ash Carter's confirmation. We talked about that I guess for  
8 a minute.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: So can I ask you two things about  
10 that lunch? One is that when he said, I'm very protective  
11 of your legacy and your image and --

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: He was worried that I would get  
13 into -- I think it was all about him trying to talk me into  
14 not running.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And he was worried that if I got  
17 started with this, this, this draft Biden thing, I let it  
18 get out of hand, couldn't go anywhere --

19 MR. ZWONITZER: ([REDACTED] 0:15:49.3).

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- it would tarnish my image,  
21 tarnish my legacy.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so he wanted to make it  
24 clear that he was, quote, very protective of my legacy, very  
25 protective of my image. And so wait until you have more --

1 [0:16:07.3]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- data, wait until you see if  
3 you can really win this thing.

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Don't get caught up in, you  
6 know, this idea of everybody wanting to draft you and, you  
7 know -- just make sure it's something that you can actually,  
8 actually get done, you know. Is it doable? And, and, and,  
9 and the -- and the fact is that he didn't think it was  
10 doable at that time, that I could, that I could actually go  
11 out and get the nomination.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Do you -- was that your read at  
13 the time, or are you --

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That, that was my read at the  
15 time.

16 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, he probably, at some  
18 point, said at a minimum it would be a really uphill battle.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And she's -- you know, she's  
21 already really well, like, organized. So -- and then, you  
22 know, a few days later, I have notes from a Ron Klain  
23 meeting. Well, he, he said -- you know, Ron was pushing,  
24 and he says that you really shouldn't decide -- you need,  
25 you need a group to put together -- to hold the terrain --

1 [0:17:45.2]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- you have, and you have to  
3 develop a narrative as to, you know, how we're -- how I'm  
4 going to decide. So the narrative you tell the press, you  
5 know.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I am thinking about it, but this  
8 is my decision process. And you, you need to explain the  
9 decision criteria for people. Oh, and what you don't want  
10 to do is you don't want a -- I can't remember any -- you  
11 don't want to go the Mario Cuomo (phonetic) route of, you  
12 know, constantly --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Hamlet (phonetic).

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: The, the Hamlet piece. You --  
17 what you got to -- you got to say, here are the things that  
18 I believe in. You got to make sure I'm always up and  
19 positive. No burning desire to run. This is a personal  
20 decision. I won't make it before May or June, just like  
21 we've talked about. It's not like I have a burning desire  
22 to run. And he said, you got to make it your choice. How,  
23 how I'll make the choice, what will trigger the choice, and  
24 when I'll make the choice.

25 Oh, he said it's my decision to run or not run.

1 [0:19:48.6]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: It doesn't have to do with the  
3 field. I'm not out testing the message. Remember when she  
4 was testing messages. Avoid the whole idea of looking like  
5 you're testing.

6 And, and then -- and then the next thing I have  
7 here is -- this is classified. It's all -- it goes through  
8 the 17th.

9 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Well, I think we have that pretty  
11 well covered in that -- from the earlier -- from the notebooks  
12 you had the last few times. Well, so what I want to --

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I spent a lot of time this month  
14 on Ukraine and Brazil, and --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: So how, how did you bring Dilma  
16 back in the, in the boat, so to speak?

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I really wooed her. And I spent  
18 a lot of time talking to her, I spent a lot of time  
19 convincing her that it was in U.S. interest to have a  
20 relationship with them. She used the phrase at a press  
21 conference that Vice President Biden is seductive.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: I, I remember you --

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You know, we're not married yet,  
24 but he is seductive. I got her to believe that we weren't  
25 deliberately, you know, trying to undermine her and we --

[0:23:22.2]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- weren't listening to all her conversations, and that she had to understand that it was, it was not in her interest at all to, to cut ties with us. And that -- I had talked to her about how I made a commitment of what we weren't going to be doing in the future in terms of dealing with her and her government.

And the bottom line is that she, she began this -- she said, okay, and she wasn't going to come to the United States. I worked out a ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:24:04.1) where she would be able to come and, and basically patched everything up between the two. But I just worked really hard.

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I was honest with her, didn't in any way mislead her.

MR. ZWONITZER: How, how strongly did she register her anger with you?

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Very strongly. And she didn't trust anything America was doing, what -- you know, I said, you can trust me, I'll level with you. You -- and then I'd talk with her about tell me what your greatest political problems are. Maybe you can use me as an excuse to why you, you know, have to do what you have to do. I just went -- I had multiple, multiple phone calls with her. Went down and visited her. Talked about, you know, how we could work --

1 [0:25:01.4]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- together, how we could help.

3 So I just -- I mean, it took months, but I, I  
4 really, really worked the relationship on a personal basis.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: You -- was that -- was her visit  
6 here sort of the moment where you felt like it was put back  
7 together or --

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, that was -- she, she had  
11 refused to come and I had talked her into, to, to coming and  
12 have the equivalent of a state dinner and -- to show our  
13 respect for her, because she was getting the living hell  
14 beat out of her at home for dealing with this at all. You  
15 know, it was, like, cut-off relationships, et cetera.

16 MR. ZWONITZER: Didn't you have a -- like, a  
17 personal connection, like a -- somebody -- like a nephew or  
18 something that she had?

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, but I paid a lot of  
20 attention to -- I'd have to go back and -- I'm sure I've got  
21 a lot of material on, on the Dilma relationship. I mean,  
22 there's a lot of stuff that I, that I did.

23 I, I'm sure I can get us a lot on that.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and then -- and I was --

1 [0:26:56.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- working -- the same thing, I  
3 was working really hard on -- in Ukraine.

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: As well as the Northern  
6 Triangle. And I also was meeting with, with the Qataris  
7 and -- you know, in the Middle East about Iraq and Iran.  
8 I --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Abadi (phonetic) really needed  
10 help at this point, didn't he?

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: This was the time when I was  
14 making the case to the whole administration the instability  
15 coming out of the Arab spring was not going to go away  
16 anytime soon. There was a, a real lack of opportunity. I  
17 argued the state media in the region was hurting us, the  
18 Sunni and Shia refusal to adjust, and the --

19 (Pause)

20 MR. ZWONITZER: Was there any one of those Iraq,  
21 the Northern Triangle, Ukraine, and Brazil, that really  
22 stood apart as, you know, man, we got to get this right and  
23 -- or is it just you've got to keep all these balls in the  
24 air all the time?

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: It was about trying to manage.

1 [0:30:09.2]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I never thought we could do -- I  
3 thought we could get Brazil right and repair that  
4 relationship out of our own interest. But I thought that,  
5 that there was -- and all this time, we're working on the --  
6 we had done the Iran deal, I think, by this time, and --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: It was, it was -- the framework  
8 was being worked on.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: I think the framework happened in  
11 April.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. And so I was of the view  
13 that, that, you know -- that, that the -- that all we could  
14 do is really manage what was going on. And I was making the  
15 case that Al Nusra was a terrorist organization at the time,  
16 and the argument was were they, weren't they. And I was  
17 making the argument they were. And I was talking about we  
18 just have to figure out how to manage this.

19 At the same time, I was --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: Where was Al Nusra operating?

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: In Iran.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Iran.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, excuse me --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: In, in Iraq?

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: In Syria.

1 [0:32:16.1]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, Syria, okay.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: The Al Nusra.

4 And then, at the same time, I was making the case  
5 on the phone constantly with Poroshenko about help, help  
6 them against the Russians. Because as of the 26th of, of  
7 February, there were -- they really were looking for  
8 counter radars to defend themselves. They were looking to  
9 anti-tank weapons. And, you know, they wanted the Global  
10 Hawk, which was a -- able to look down capability  
11 (verbatim).

12 And also I was working -- still working on Brazil  
13 and a potential state dinner at the same time. And, and --

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Were you kind of a lonely voice on  
15 Ukraine --

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: -- at this point of the  
18 administration?

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I've been a lonely voice the  
20 whole fucking time.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yes, I was. Making the case --  
23 I kept making the pace (sic), we pay now or pay later.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: We either help them now or --

1 [0:33:34.3]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- it's going to get much, much  
3 worse later, and what will fall -- what'll happen.

4 Also, I -- during this period, I think this is  
5 when Schultz was trying to get me to run. Howard Schultz  
6 was calling me. And I got a call from Joe Donnelly that he  
7 wanted me to call -- it was something about Father Hesburgh.  
8 Did he die?

9 MR. ZWONITZER: At Notre Dame?

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: At Notre Dame on, on the 27th of  
11 February. And, and I was meeting with Bill Bradley, who was  
12 talking about me wanting -- wanting me to run. And, and,  
13 and then --

14 (Pause)

15 MR. ZWONITZER: And when people like Schultz and  
16 Bradley are calling, you can't tell them what's going on in  
17 your --

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: -- life?

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, I didn't. Told them I was  
21 thinking about it.

22 And the Central America piece, I was pushing for  
23 civil service reform and professional -- professionalize the  
24 police force. Talking about the need to get in light  
25 manufacturing and tourism. Talked about -- in Honduras --

[0:35:48.6]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- about the gas pipeline needs to be completed. The use of military forces for police force had to transition to police power. They had to finish the gas pipeline for Mexico or get, get it underway. But the regulatory changes in the, the utility industry were needed to get, to get anything done.

MR. ZWONITZER: Like, to get investment in there, they needed to --

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, but they also -- in order to get it built, yeah. In order to get investment, they had to get it built.

MR. ZWONITZER: Did -- wasn't there also a mechanism that they had to sign off on, like it was almost a UN policing mechanism?

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yes. They -- I insisted that -- this was before that. I'm trying to think the timeframe. That's why we got to have somebody sit down with me when we do this. The timeframe was that --

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

1 [0:37:36.1]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Thank you.

3 And --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: That's something I can -- that's a  
5 matter of public record, that UN thing. I can, I can check.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then I spoke to the --  
7 Northern Triangle guys were in town I think on the 3rd of  
8 March, and I talked about an ambitious agenda we have, this  
9 is a moment of opportunity. The millennial challenge was an  
10 example of how we can organize our effort. There had to be  
11 transparency. We needed to -- they needed to lobby Congress  
12 and mitigate or solve a lot of the problems. There need to  
13 be structural changes.

14 It wasn't just about giving them money. We had to  
15 -- it would require know-how, technical assistance,  
16 educational assistance, and bureaucratic -- you had to build  
17 bureaucracies. And we -- I -- we had to lobby behind the  
18 government. We had a civil society, religious society, the  
19 business community, and the detail of what they were going  
20 to do was absolutely necessary. This was -- this must've  
21 been -- was I down in -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:39:39.2). I may  
22 have been down ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:39:45.3).

23 MR. ZWONITZER: I have March 2 I think you were  
24 going to Guatemala City.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. So, so I was down in --

1 [0:39:57.4]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: These were compliments -- these  
3 were the comments I made --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- in Guatemala City --

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to the leaders of the  
8 Northern Triangle.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Is there some fun when you're on  
10 these trips?

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Down there?

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Nope, never.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

15

16 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

17

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

19 --

20 Yeah, I (audio skip 0:40:42.5) Guatemala.

21 Hernandez (phonetic) of Honduras, and Sanchez Ceren of El  
22 Salvador. I met with the -- and leaders of the -- other  
23 leaders of the communities. And so that, that was in --  
24 what was that? In --

25 MR. ZWONITZER: March the 2nd, I have.

1 [0:41:11.1]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, March the 2nd. It was --  
3 came back from the --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: And what's --

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That was on the 3rd too. I met  
6 with multi-national government organizations. I met with --  
7 went to a state visit on a modern police precinct. And then  
8 I hit the Guatemala airport and came home. So --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: You know what's interesting about  
10 that day? It looks like you had a call with Abadi while you  
11 were there.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I'm sure I did, yeah.

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Wow.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Because I was the, the  
15 guy who, you know, everybody -- the only guy Abadi really  
16 trusts is me. The Northern Triangle guys, Dilma --

17 MR. ZWONITZER: ([REDACTED] 0:42:25.7) --

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- as well as --

19 MR. ZWONITZER: -- Ukraine, yeah, Poroshenko --

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- Ukraine, Poroshenko, the  
21 whole -- you know, all those guys. And then --

22 (End of recording.)

23

24

25

## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript, to the best of my ability, of the above pages, of the RECORDED INTERVIEW provided to me by the Special Counsel's Office.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this recording was taken, and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

January 11, 2024  
Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Transcriber

Within this transcript of proceedings, some of the names and/or technical terms are spelled phonetically, inasmuch as exhibits, files and supporting documentation were not made available to us for reference.

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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN

MARK ZWONITZER

PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

File: \_carved\_000556

Date of Interview: February 16, 2017

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R E C O R D I N G

1  
2           PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- remember, remember having a  
3 series of debates with the nuclear scientists to help  
4 develop the atom bomb -- the hydrogen bomb. Professor  
5 Teller.

6           MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

7           PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so during the debate on arms  
8 control, I agreed to do a series of five debates with him  
9 around the country. And, and there were really pretty --

10           I should make a note of that, [REDACTED] because I think  
11 that's a memoir book.

12           They were really, really significant debates. And  
13 we did one out in California and we're televised.

14           (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)      (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
15 [REDACTED]

16           PRESIDENT BIDEN: And it was during the Reagan era  
17 and Star Wars and, you know. And --

18           (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)      [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

19           PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- there was an opposition to  
20 arms control. And Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen  
21 bomb. He was Hungarian, who lived under communism. And the  
22 argument he made was that in a nuclear exchange, we would  
23 lose -- the Russians would lose at least 20 million -- up to  
24 35 million people, and we would lose as many as 12 million  
25 in the retaliation. And he said, but --

1 [0:01:45.6]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- the Russians will still  
3 strike first because they don't care about their people.  
4 They'll absorb 20 million to 30 -- 50 million -- 20 to 30  
5 million loss, and -- because that's -- they lost in World  
6 War II 20 million people. They don't value life. And  
7 because they lost 20 million, they're prepared to lose it  
8 again.

9 And I remember saying to him - I don't know what  
10 made me do it - I said, you know, Professor -- I mean, he  
11 would never stand next to me when we debated. We'd be on  
12 the stage and there were, you know, always -- there were  
13 over 1,000 people every time we debated. And the podium  
14 would have to be at opposite ends of the stage. He would  
15 not do it in the middle. He wanted to make a point.

16 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED]  
17 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED]  
19 [REDACTED]  
20 [REDACTED]  
21 [REDACTED]  
22 [REDACTED]  
23 [REDACTED]  
24 [REDACTED]  
25 [REDACTED] --

1 [0:03:32.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

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MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

10

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

11

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Pardon me?

12

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

13

14

15

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and it's interesting.

16

After that diary entry, the next one, between that and the

17

7th of July --

18

MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

19

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- was a long meeting on the

20

Security Council on -- and part of it's classified. Between

21

me, General Austin, General Dunford, Sandy Winnefeld, the

22

admiral, Tony Blinken, the President, Ash Carter, and, and

23

the argument -- oh, as well as John Brennan, the head of the

24

CIA, and our ambassador to United Nations. And it concludes

25

by saying -- I say in --

1 [0:06:26.1]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1) per DOD

3 [REDACTED]  
4 [REDACTED]  
5 [REDACTED]  
6 [REDACTED]  
7 [REDACTED]  
8 [REDACTED]  
9 [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED]  
11 [REDACTED]  
12 [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED]

15 So this was -- I, early on, in '09 -- I just found  
16 all the classified stuff downstairs. I wrote the President  
17 a handwritten 40-page memorandum arguing against deploying  
18 additional troops to Iraq -- I mean, to Afghanistan on the  
19 grounds that it wouldn't matter, that the day we left would  
20 be like the day before we arrived.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: This was --

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Even if we ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

23 0:08:43.9) --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: -- when McChrystal was, was  
25 pushing.

1 [0:08:45.5]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah. For the --

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I made the same argument  
5 relative the -- for example, it starts off with General  
6 Austin saying, quote, I don't know if we can have a unified  
7 Iraq. I don't mean we have to decide that now, him saying.  
8 I made that -- I wrote that piece now 11 years ago, 12 years  
9 ago. Need to think about the future of Iraq if just the  
10 Kurds are different. How do we get after the  
11 people's original objective. It is different than  
12 their --

13 Anyway, the point is I have this fairly profound  
14 meeting within -- at least within five days after that diary  
15 entry because we're making the decision, what do we do? Do  
16 we double down in Iraq, do we move toward what I argued five  
17 years earlier, that we should have in Iraq and Afghanistan  
18 -- we should have a counter, a counterterrorism strategy  
19 rather than a counterinsurgency strategy of occupying and  
20 changing hearts and minds.

21 I wrote -- Brennan is talking about Iraq, and I  
22 wrote John saying, (b)(1), (b)(3) NatSecAct

23 That's what Biden said.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Wait. Who was saying -- John --  
25 you said --

1 [0:10:53.5]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: John Brennan.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Brennan. CIA, yeah.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And the chief of operations and  
5 chief of staff and -- general joint chiefs of staff. But we  
6 got to get it about right. Iraq's historic conflict is  
7 historic conflict that will take a long, long time to sort  
8 out. We have to keep -- we must keep Daesh or - that's what  
9 the Arabs call ISIS - in perspective.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: You know, I think about that  
11 hearing you held in the run-up to the Iraq war in probably  
12 2002. I mean, you had people testifying laid out. This --  
13 we're talking about 15 years, we're -- you know, everything  
14 that's come to pass was there for everybody to see.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Then on the 7th, I had a meeting  
16 with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), Ted, Steve, Mike Donilon, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) -- on, on the  
17 7th of July. Consensus is it's no longer a question about  
18 is the race doable; it is. The question was when would I  
19 need to show my hand to be plausible. Mike thought  
20 exploratory in mid-August was necessary to announce early in  
21 mid-September. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) thought we could wait for things to  
22 play out a little more (audio skip 0:13:06.5) discuss the  
23 July 17th candidate event in Iowa, which I was invited to.  
24 I said it was too early. Others were less certain. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

25 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

[0:13:20.4]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Later, 5:30. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (phonetic) with, with Terry Goodman (phonetic) came by. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

(Crosstalk 0:13:55.5)

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Told them we were discussing how I should handle my schedule and deal with requests re: 216 (verbatim) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

said, wait. The momentum will come to you, making a 1968 analogy, Terry said. That was, you know, Kennedy.

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And it's -- and lots of interest in Iowa. While there is some enthusiasm for -- and there's a question whether there's enthusiasm for Hillary there, or anywhere for that matter. We basically left at that because I had to go back to the White House for a reception of democratic senators. During Q&A, Barack said, best decision I've made was asking Joe Biden to join me. Several of --

1 [0:15:14.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- the senators stood up and  
3 gave a standing ovation. He said, even then, it'll go down  
4 in history as one of the best vice presidents in all of  
5 history. He has been with me in every decision I've made,  
6 and he's always had my back, even when I've been wrong.

7 And I wrote here, generous comment.

8 Then I -- and then on the 8th of July --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: That, that was all on the 7th of  
10 July that that --

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That was the 7th of July.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: -- reception happened?

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then on the 8th of July,  
16 Steve, Mike and Ted. Mike said clean announcement -- clear  
17 announcement -- clear assessment of negative attacks that  
18 were ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:16:03.5) start from Hillary. State my  
19 position on money. Exploratory committee in August.  
20 Polling in August on 30 persons. Find a lawyer and digital  
21 director, a press person. Let what happens come to you.  
22 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:16:42.1). Ted, not a draft, but there's an  
23 opening. JRB -- I said what are the negatives of timing and  
24 what would POTUS do. Ron Klain, you, you, you lose, you  
25 lose. A sitting Vice President. Not like in 2008. No --

1 [0:17:17.3]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Oh, if you lose, you lose as a  
3 sitting Vice President. It's like not like in '08, meaning,  
4 you know, when I lost the nomination of everybody. He said,  
5 there's no, there's no romantic dignity in losing.  
6 Understand that if you lose, it'll be a big loss.

7 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:17:38.0), there is an end-point to  
8 mourning. You know, classic Ron Klain, just, you know, like  
9 the neurosurgeon.

10 This turns on, this turns on the, the thinking  
11 about it. One and only exercise is write your announcement  
12 speech now. The theory of your candidacy. I'm running for  
13 this reason, and I'm willing to lose for this reason. If  
14 you can't write a good announcement speech, you shouldn't  
15 run.

16 And then on the 10th with Steve. He said, there  
17 is some momentum. You have to provide your folks for your  
18 case versus theirs. They need some reassurance. If it  
19 shows promise, go to POTUS and ask for his support.

20 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:19:21.1) M.C., best advocate. Strong  
21 desire for -- oh, this is, this is about the middle class.  
22 You are the best advocate. That's what -- the race about  
23 the middle class, you're the best advocate. There's a  
24 strong desire for the real versus the phony. Intense  
25 dysfunction. Oh, there's intense dissatisfaction with --

1 [0:19:52.2]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- tying it to money. Like, you  
3 know, they kept saying we can't --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Race.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- run because of the money.  
6 It's candidate performance. Claimed, claimed to a record --  
7 claim to a record in the party that they're not claiming to  
8 (verbatim). Closeness with the President. Be his best  
9 defender. Change within a month. People see great strength  
10 and resilience in your character. Least appreciated as --  
11 it's the least appreciated aspect about the President, who  
12 is a truly decent guy. You have the ability to be a  
13 unifier, a reassuring skill. Hillary is divisive and, and,  
14 and Bernie is too angry. You'd be brought into focus as the  
15 depth of your character, and understanding just how tough  
16 life can be, and your connection to those people.

17 Steve, lay out a big, bold picture of what we can  
18 do for the country in the future.

19 Mike, Hillary Clinton incapable of being  
20 forthright. Tied to Wall Street. Fundamentals. The, the  
21 speech I can give -- I can give the speech. Advice  
22 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:22:03.4) what I say. Let's see. JRB,  
23 middle class is being out of shape. We're the richest  
24 country -- oh, the richest people in the country can't buy  
25 this election. Literally eight years ago we went to --

1 [0:22:30.0]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- work, we did it together.  
3 Now, best decision ever made was to join him. Brought the  
4 country back. ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:22:47.5) portion. Oh,  
5 unlike George H.W. Bush, suffrage and ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
6 0:23:03.6) factory, but then when he saw them being fished  
7 out of the ocean.

8 Here's about how to deal with my downside.  
9 Remember the ad they had of him being fished out of the  
10 ocean when his plane was in the ocean in World War II? That  
11 ended the win factor.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Flipside, they won't give you an  
14 inch. They expect you to screw up. You can't raise the  
15 money. Comparison to you, Hillary Clinton dynasty on the  
16 left. You, though, have an 80 percent rating. An honest  
17 assessment of that issue, the gaffe issue -- there's, like,  
18 a virus that's dormant. When you make a mistake again,  
19 they'll bring it up. If you enter, understand the odds.  
20 Challenges are great. No one can work around the -- no one  
21 can look around this country as well as you can.

22 Oh. Yeah. It's -- all this is a matter of  
23 principle. It's happening in front of us. Freedom is being  
24 bought by people with powerful interests. Just as this  
25 party has stood for, civil rights. This is where we are.

[0:24:56.7]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: The future of the middle class is at stake. I'm committed to the middle class. They don't believe anymore. Here's what I'm going to do to start. I'm going to start by lowering your taxes and free college education. No one gets to the point in life I've gotten to without -- I can't read my own writing.

Enormous progress Pres and I have done. I'm not going to stand by and see it undone. And then -

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C): (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Anyway.

MR. ZWONITZER: Well, I think we should call, call it a night.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(Audio skip 0:26:06.2)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (

0:26:08.2) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER:

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

1 [0:26:28.0]

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

3

4

5 MR. ZWONITZER:

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

7

8 MR. ZWONITZER:

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

10

11 MR. ZWONITZER: --

12 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

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14 MR. ZWONITZER: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

15 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:

16 MR. ZWONITZER: -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:26:44.7) .

17 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

18 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

19 MR. ZWONITZER:

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

21 (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

24 . ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:26:51.9) --

25 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

1 [0:26:49.6]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6) --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) ?

5 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED] --

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

11 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C))

12 0:27:11.2) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED] --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

17 MR. ZWONITZER: [REDACTED].

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 MR. ZWONITZER: [REDACTED]

21 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C))

22 0:27:23.2) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

23 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: [REDACTED].

25 MR. ZWONITZER: [REDACTED].

[0:27:23.6]

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: --

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

very --

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

MR. ZWONITZER: -- .

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: .

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) . (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) . (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) . (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

(End of recording.)

## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript, to the best of my ability, of the above pages, of the RECORDED INTERVIEW provided to me by the Special Counsel's Office.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this recording was taken, and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

January 11, 2024  
Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Transcriber

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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN  
MARK ZWONITZER  
PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

File: \_carved\_000571

Date of Interview: April 10, 2017



[REDACTED]

R E C O R D I N G

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- [REDACTED]

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]. And the next day I have briefing at -- so this had to be another day. The 15th I had -- then the 17th, and now I have 2:30 p.m. meeting with General Austin. ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:02:28.5) this was a big meeting with the CIA and everyone on -- it was --

MR. ZWONITZER: Was that a July meeting?

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I don't know. It looks like it is. It says -- I changed pens so it's gotta be after the 17th of June. And then it's a long meeting where DoD brief at DoD POTUS Air Force Two 2:30 p.m. I may be on Air Force Two at 2:30 p.m. [REDACTED] (b)(1) per DOD

[0:03:31.0]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Don't mean we have to decide that now, question mark, need to think about the future of Syria if just Kurds. It's different, oil, water and extortion. How do we get after these people, original objective. This different those in Iraq won't want suppression of Sunnis. Only way to speed it up, we need to accompany JTAC and 2 SOF forces, we're pretty good at penetrating or protecting our soldiers. Tony last few weeks, fits and starts. This is all about Iraq. And then I have written here, which can't be right, 7-7-15, 3 p.m., NAVOPS re: 2016. Oh, it's about running.

MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I got it, I got it, I got it. Okay, that threw me off. And then -- oh, I remember. So this is, so this is between -- this meeting occurred between the 17th of June --

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and the 17th of -- and the 7th of July.

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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1 [0:06:07.6]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (5)

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8 (b) (5)

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John at the

10 CIA said (b)(1), (b)(3) NatSecAct

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MR. ZWONITZER: John Brennan?

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: John Brennan.

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MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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1 [0:08:16.4]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (5)

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12 MR. ZWONITZER: I'm sorry, but that's basically --

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5) --

14 MR. ZWONITZER: -- you?

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- me.

16 MR. ZWONITZER: That's -- yeah.

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5) that's

18 MR. ZWONITZER: He's -- but he's --

19 his mouth now?

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, now, yeah.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Right, right.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN:

23

24

25

[0:09:24.1]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (5)

MR. ZWONITZER: Well, I was just gonna check and see if I have in the schedule when that might have -- that meeting might have been. That's sort of like a --

PRESIDENT BIDEN: It was a big meeting down in the situation room, it would have been. While you're doing that, give me a second here. I can't remember where he made that famous comment if you don't like Joe Biden there's something wrong with you or something like that.

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, he did that in a car --

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. ZWONITZER: -- interview, yeah, while he was running, yes.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

MR. ZWONITZER: And this was right -- I was right around that time I had that clip.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And --

MR. ZWONITZER: I wonder if you think this might be a moment -- I mean, you -- we've talked about this a lot but you spoke very eloquently about this the other day at --

1 [0:10:50.1]

2 MR. ZWONITZER: -- one of the meetings about how  
3 you have to know people across the aisle. If you don't know  
4 them --

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: -- and you doubt -- you question  
7 their motivations --

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: -- and I wondered if this might --  
10 it might be an opportunity to stop and do that thing about  
11 Lindsey and sort of widen that and explain --

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, Lindsey Graham, when he  
13 came to the Senate, he -- I'm trying to remember how, how  
14 the relationship --

15 (End of recording.)

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[REDACTED]

C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
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12  
13 January 26, 2024  
14 Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Transcriber

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[REDACTED]

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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN

MARK ZWONITZER

PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (Telephonically)

File: \_carved\_000599

Date of Interview: April 26, 2017

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.  
Court Reporting Transcription  
D.C. Area 301-261-1902

[REDACTED]

RECORDING

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- speak to, you know, during this period. We're, we're reconstructing the period of February 2015, and there's, on the schedule, a -- I'm in Munich, but after Angela Merkel, President's working lunch with -- I mean, hang on a second. It's confusing me. Wait. This is February the 8th. Was this Munich. Yeah.

It says -- did I get -- let me see, I'm still trying to -- okay.

MR. ZWONITZER: I see flew back.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I, I flew back. So -- okay. And I think I went to the President's working lunch with Merkel, and, and the President's meeting with her the 9th. And then the meeting with Cecilia Munoz at 3 to 4 on immigration policy. Okay.

And then breakfast with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (phonetic) and march to Able Act event. I can't remember what that was.

And then I met with the congressional black caucus. This was about -- was this the period where this congressman from South Carolina was trying to get me to -- that we'd focus on underserved black areas in terms of the budget? But I can't remember. We might ask Don Graves that question, okay?

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C): ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:01:48.9).

PRESIDENT BIDEN: 2015. February the 10th 2015.

1 [0:01:50.1]

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then I met with the  
3 Venezuelan civil -- human rights activists, the women. It  
4 was this group of women that came to see me. And then --  
5 remember [REDACTED] (phonetic)?

6 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED] 0:02:09.4).

7 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay. Do, do you remember what  
9 it was?

10 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]  
11 [REDACTED]

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. It was to get an  
13 agreement that we would focus on underserved areas --

14 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C): [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and it was some formula. You  
16 might ask Don Graves what that was, okay?

17 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C): [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED].

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I think that's when I met with  
19 the caucus about it. I don't know why it'd be meeting --

20 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C): [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED].

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and then now -- I'm told by  
22 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) -- I guess he checked with you. In order for me to  
23 get my -- get all those presidential notes I had from lunch  
24 -- the luncheon meetings --

25 [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED] (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

[0:03:03.1]

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I'd have to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay. See if you can get me  
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) on line while I have you now, okay? And stay on,  
okay?

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C):

MR. ZWONITZER: This is probably something that  
goes to the presidential papers.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: I don't think so. It was in  
between. But I didn't want to turn them in.

MR. ZWONITZER: All right. All right. So it's a  
-- it's the gray area.

(Audio skip 0:03:41.5)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

1 [0:04:01.6]

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)?

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

4 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED] (b) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED] --

7 (End of recording.)

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[REDACTED]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

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RECORDED INTERVIEW BETWEEN

MARK ZWONITZNER

PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

File: 170424\_0091

Date of Interview: April 24, 2017

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.  
Court Reporting Transcription  
D.C. Area 301-261-1902



  
R E C O R D I N G

1  
2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: In the meantime, what was  
3 happening, I got a call from Dilma Rousseff that she wanted  
4 me to come to her inauguration. And this is before she  
5 imploded. I know we're not going to write a lot about  
6 her --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, yeah.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- but it's context.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: You were in St. Croix, right, when  
10 you went for --

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so -- but I got the  
14 invitation earlier.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so I had been working like  
17 hell to overcome this Snowden stuff.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And we started to actually make  
20 some real comments. If you would make a note -- I'll go get  
21 my book. If you'll make a note, I will too, where -- when  
22 did she use the phrase, we're not married yet but we're  
23 dating, or he's, he's --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, yeah.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- seductive.

1 (0:00:57.7)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Seductive, yeah.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I -- it relates to timing on  
4 this.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay. I actually have that clip  
6 in my laptop.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay. Well, I'm trying to  
8 remember when it was, you know what I mean?

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay. Yeah.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So -- because it, you know, sort  
11 of gave me a point -- counterpoint piece of what was going  
12 on. And -- so we were -- so I had been working that hard --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: I can't believe you made that trip  
14 -- and I didn't realize until I looked at the schedule. You  
15 made that trip in a day.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

17

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: So she made the comment at a  
21 dinner just before the World Cup last year. So that  
22 would've been in -- World Cup, probably summer of --

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: '14.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: -- 2014. So she's already said  
25 that.

1 (0:02:48.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So I'd been working it real  
5 hard. And the other thing, I was, during the month of, of  
6 November, working real hard on the -- had we passed ACA? We  
7 had, hadn't we? Yeah.

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah. That looks like '13, 2013.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. This is, is '13.  
10 1/10/14. Okay.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: So that's still a year early --  
12 too early for it.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Oh, that's -- we're at '15 --

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- right, so what am I thinking  
16 of here. Well, actually, here's '15.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: There's 1/1/15.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Okay. This is November  
19 of '14. I'm just getting my --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I was working a lot with Ukraine  
22 and with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum. He was --

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- on energy.

25 MR. ZWONITZER: -- the energy guy, right?

1 (0:05:05.3)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Energy. And, and it was about  
3 whether or not they were going to cut off oil, and about  
4 what -- how Ukraine had to change their oil subsidy into a  
5 market system.

6 Here's what I meant in my card. I still do it.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, you still ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C))

8 0:05:33.2).

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so in order to get IMF  
10 loans, they had to move more to a market economy, because  
11 they were way, way off. And it had to do with corruption in  
12 the energy sector. So -- and they owed Russia about 3.6  
13 billion dollars and -- in back energy cost.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Natural -- it was natural gas that  
15 Russia --

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Natural gas.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: -- was selling into there, right.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: There was some oil too.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And some coal. But it was  
21 mainly gas.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And what I was working really  
24 hard on was getting other countries to engage in reverse  
25 flow of their pipelines --

1 (0:06:27.2)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- so they could flow to  
4 Ukraine. And, and the IMF was the subsidy. They were  
5 subsidizing the cost of energy 81 percent.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: This is over and above the loans?

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Back up. The Ukrainian  
8 government was having Ukrainian people pay so little for the  
9 gas they were getting, they were subsidizing to the tune of  
10 81 percent, the people.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Not the government, the people.  
13 And so, for example, you'd ride through rural parts of  
14 Ukraine, and it'd be 12, 15, 20 degrees and the windows are  
15 wide open in their homes. For real. So IMF said they had  
16 to, they had to phase in a government tariff. But the gas  
17 deal they had, they had no real European assistance,  
18 assurances, that they would -- they'd part of the deal.

19 And, and then on the 26th in '14, we're talking  
20 about -- back in talking about ISIL, increasing pressure  
21 on Assad. And we -- I had a discussion with the Turkish  
22 John Allen. General Allen was going to go see them on the  
23 19th. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:08:15.3) detail's not that  
24 important.

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

(0:08:17.6)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1) per DOD

MR. ZWONITZER: (b)(1) per DOD

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1) per DOD

MR. ZWONITZER: (b)(1) per DOD

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1) per DOD

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I had Devatolo (phonetic), who was then the Prime Minister, and I -- and President Erdogan -- I tried to expand on the eight points. What were the eight points. I can't remember.

(b) (5)

1 (0:10:25.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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(b) (5)

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MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (5)

10 (b) (5)

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And Clapper --

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MR. ZWONITZER: Having, having been burned by

15

Libya, right?

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Um-hum.

17

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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(0:12:03.9)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- opposition is (b)(1), (b)(3) NatSecAct

(b)(1), (b)(3) CIAAct, (b)(3) NatSecAct, (b)(6)

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(5)

MR. ZWONITZER:

PRESIDENT BIDEN: With -- yeah, with --

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b)(5)

(0:13:45.8)

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (5)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

(b) (5)

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1), (b)(3) NatSecAct

(b)(1), (b)(3) NatSecAct

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

1 (0:15:10.1)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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MR. ZWONITZER: Austin?

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

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(b) (5)

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MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

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PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b)(1) per DOD

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1 (0:17:18.5)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (5)

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. As -- so as they started  
4 grabbing --

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and --

6 MR. ZWONITZER: -- land, they were grabbing oil  
7 fields.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That, that was a big argument --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (5)

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19 (b) (5)

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(0:18:58.1)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C): (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay, all right.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: What was I going to ask you?

Something else, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (phonetic). Oh, gosh. I, I can't think of what it is.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay, thanks.

(b) (5)

MR. ZWONITZER: Something -- number something quality.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

MR. ZWONITZER: I can't.

1 (0:20:09.7)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Some of this may be classified,  
3 so be careful --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- with it. I'm not sure. It's  
6 not marked classified, but --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

9 [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED]  
11 [REDACTED]  
12 [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED]

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5)

17 [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED]  
19 [REDACTED]  
20 [REDACTED]  
21 [REDACTED]  
22 [REDACTED]  
23 [REDACTED]

24 MR. ZWONITZER: It's interesting, that date is  
25 11/26/14.

1 (0:21:24.0)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: And that's a day you were in  
4 Nantucket. So do you, do you get, like, fed into a  
5 Situation Room meeting?

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: They set up a secure --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay, okay. So actually, in the  
10 Thanksgiving trip, you were actually ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C))  
11 0:21:40.2) --

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. And by the way, on the  
13 26th, I had a long call with Arseniy Yatsenyuk. He told me  
14 they had formed a government. They had agreed on a new  
15 Speaker and an agenda. He said I'm, quote, keeping my  
16 commitment to you that you asked me to do on our ride to the  
17 airport. Remember I talked about the ride to the airport?

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I thanked him for following  
20 through.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: And that was about --

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That was --

23 MR. ZWONITZER: -- corruption and --

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That was about -- no. That was  
25 specifically about sticking with Poroshenko.

1 (0:22:18.6)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And not calling for elections  
4 and not campaigning separately.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Campaigning together.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. So they had, so they had  
8 formed this, essentially --

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: They, they formed --

10 MR. ZWONITZER: -- coalition government?

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, okay.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and then on the --

14 MR. ZWONITZER: And that's the day -- and that was  
15 also reported the day after that that's when they announced  
16 they were doing away with that -- the old neutral policy and  
17 heading toward EU.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, that could be. That  
19 wasn't what I asked them, but that's what they were --

20 MR. ZWONITZER: But that's --

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then on the 2nd of December,  
22 we had this discussion about Turkey and a Russian pipeline  
23 with Hochstein at 11:45.

24 What was going on was the Russians were now --  
25 they, they were -- kind of bribed the Turks with what --

1 (0:23:16.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- they call south streaming.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That all the, all the oil coming  
5 out of Russia would come down through the Caspian and into  
6 Turkey and use that as a hub. And it would come from the  
7 eastern -- it would come from Azerbaijan. I almost called  
8 the Turkish minister to, to see if this was the deal,  
9 because it would have real impact on whether or not we could  
10 get a deal with Cyprus.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Cyprus and Israel had found  
13 these caches of oil.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, gas. Natural gas. What  
16 I was trying to work is an agreement whereby they -- the --  
17 Hochstein and I were trying to work with the Turks to say,  
18 okay, why don't you make a deal with Cyprus.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Get a unity government there in  
21 Cyprus and the end result will be you'll have access to all  
22 that gas. They'll -- the gas will go to you, you'll be  
23 secure, and you'll be a conduit into Greece and --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- the rest of the world.

1 (0:24:33.3)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That's what was being discussed.

3 Now --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Was that -- this completely  
5 separate from the question of Ukraine's natural gas?

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yes, completely separate.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But they all are tied.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, because it's -- there's one  
10 market.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: There's on market.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so what happens is -- what  
14 they're worried about is if Russia, instead of going through  
15 Ukraine, came down through Turkey, through Azerbaijan, it  
16 would cost the, the Ukrainians \$10 billion a year in lost  
17 revenue. Okay?

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And a secure access to gas. And  
20 -- but the Turks had to get -- I mean, the Russians had to  
21 get their gas east, so they came up with south stream to go  
22 below Ukraine, cut them out.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: At the same time, this -- that's  
25 all energy is fungible. At the same time, what was going --

(0:25:31.2)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- on is that Russia -- I mean Israel had found these new gas supplies in their territory, as had Greece. Now, Greece -- Turkey was arguing that Greece -- I mean, excuse me, as did Cyprus. Turkey was arguing that it wasn't Cyprian gas, but under the U.N. resolution, it is within Cyprus' geographic boundaries and border and, and so -- and they were threatening to send ships in to block the exploration of the rest.

So what I had underway, it looked promising until the Russians came along and tried to fuck it up was to say, look, work out a deal, let the Turks and the Greeks and Cyprus work out a deal, which you end up pulling out -- off the island over time, a unified government, bi-communal, bi-zonal. They can then cut a deal with you because they're part of the EU. They can cut a deal with you to get all the gas you want because it's illogical to go up north to supply Europe through Turkey.

MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay? And so -- and along -- and, and the, and the -- so for the Turks, that was like, God, that's great. Fuck me, you know. We're, we're going to be a major player again, we'll have energy.

MR. ZWONITZER: Right, right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then the Russians come --

1 (0:27:04.9)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- along and say no, no, no, no,  
3 no, no. We'll, we'll make you the hub. All the Russian  
4 gas, instead of going through Ukraine, will come down  
5 through you. It was called south stream.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay. And, and the Russian  
7 reserves, the Russian gases, much more than what they were  
8 going to be able to pull out of Cyprus likely, right?

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, not really.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Oh, really?

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: There's a lot of gas.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Wow.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But -- it would be plenty from  
14 Cyprus. But what it was was Russia had no other way to get  
15 their gas --

16 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to Europe. So -- and so I  
18 and [REDACTED] call the Turkish minister and say, hey, have you  
19 guys made a deal. They rope-a-doped and said not yet,  
20 they haven't, and I put -- then Jordan -- if we allowed the  
21 deal to go through in the Eastern Mediterranean, that'd be  
22 \$4.8 billion would go forward with Israel. The meetings  
23 went well. This is a case where Jordan is looking to  
24 Israel now and saying, hey, look, we, we need gas, we need  
25 oil.

1 (0:28:24.8)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And it's really easy to connect  
4 a pipeline right through Israel. The cost of that pipeline  
5 would be \$4.8 billion. And in 2012, the Sinai pipeline to  
6 Israel and Jordan was bombed and it's been out. Ten months  
7 -- there had been -- let me see. It's about the timing. A  
8 final deal, \$14 billion over the next 10 years of offshore  
9 Israeli gas.

10 So -- and, and this would also -- I remember this.  
11 There was a big discussion earlier that there would be oil  
12 in the Dead Sea. And, and so -- and Syria was trying to get  
13 in the game too. And so the question was whether or not  
14 this had been an Arab pipeline, whether or not the Israeli  
15 gas had gone in Arab pipeline, which included -- here's what  
16 we need to do. Which included Egypt.

17 So there was an Arab pipeline that had been  
18 envisioned.

19 (Long pause.)

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and so what -- this whole  
21 idea was -- so the Arab pipeline was -- this was the idea  
22 that there was talk of going -- instead of the -- the option  
23 was that the Greeks would sell the oil, would -- I mean,  
24 excuse me, the Cyprians would build a pipeline down to  
25 Egypt.

1 (0:32:03.0)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And Egypt would go under the Red  
4 Sea, tie into existing pipelines, and tie Syria, Lebanon,  
5 Jordan and Egypt together in what they call -- they were  
6 going to call the Arab pipeline.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And, and at the same time this  
9 was going on, on the 2nd -- was I back in the 2nd?

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, back in Washington.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (5) [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED] (b) (5)

19 [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 (b) (5) [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED]

24 [REDACTED]

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

1 (0:34:00.7)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I didn't think they were doing  
3 nearly enough, and they should've been able to put in all --  
4 we've been through this.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: We know how to handle domestic  
7 violence.

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But it's like universities.  
10 They all start like we hadn't learned anything, but we  
11 hadn't set anything up.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. So it's a whole new  
13 institution and they won't --

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: A whole new institution --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: They have to -- right.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and I argued that they should  
17 be able to go beyond the command. In other words, the  
18 commanding general should be -- but I lost that.

19 Then, then we went back to Brazil and there was  
20 this whole focus, a report by Jack Lou (phonetic) about  
21 Brazil's economy. Pritzker (phonetic) had just been down  
22 there. And, again, you don't want to get into it, but this  
23 whole big thing about what was going to happen to Brazil's  
24 economy and Brazil's exports. And the basic problems in  
25 Brazil, weak education. Reform it --

1 (0:35:02.3)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- through views, TTP.  
3 Dialogues and working group. We had set up -- this was --  
4 now, I have 1/1/15 written for this.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: This was my brief to -- going  
7 down to -- with -- and I brought Lou and company with me.  
8 To set up a working group with -- after her -- what I did  
9 was I, I argued that we should -- before her inauguration  
10 and after we did meet. We should set up working groups on  
11 the economy and education, and a whole range of other  
12 things.

13 And so Pritzker was with me, so was Jack Lou, and  
14 we talked about why we should become better trade partners.  
15 We talked about macroeconomic policy to discuss structural,  
16 structural and financial sector measures, trade and  
17 investment, et cetera. And so Pritzker set up a U.S./Brazil  
18 CEO forum to talk about TPP and TTIP and work beyond  
19 Mercosur, M-e-r-c-o-s-u-r. That is the economic -- that's  
20 like the EU for southern --

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: We talked about commercial  
23 relationships, and we talked about foreign direct investment  
24 and all these issues. Education. And then we set up  
25 dialogues and a working group on the economy and --

1 (0:37:06.8)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- commercial relations with the  
3 Secretary of Treasury. Science and technology innovation  
4 with the Secretary of Energy. Bilateral and regional and  
5 global issues with Secretary of State. Defense and security  
6 with the Secretary of Defense. People to People, the State  
7 Department, public diplomacy and other exchanges.

8 And then we discussed they want to become part of  
9 TPP.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Reas- -- remaining focus is  
12 inner -- oh, for, for them to become part of it, they had to  
13 deal with international -- intellectual property,  
14 environment, state-owned enterprises and investment, and  
15 financial services. Bilaterally, they wanted, you know, to  
16 talk about market access and -- between us and agricultural  
17 in terms of government procurement.

18 The next round would be in the U.S. on the 26th to  
19 the 1st of February. 26th of January, January. The finest  
20 -- the final ministerial meeting for us to decide whether we  
21 would -- they would be part of TP (sic) was going to be  
22 March 6th to 8th with Japan. Yeah. They were hardening  
23 their position on automobiles and we were, we were prepared  
24 to spin a new, a new proposal on autos. Brazil one of the  
25 most protective markets in the world.

1 (0:38:56.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: High tariffs. Complex  
3 tax system. Regulatory regime. Reliance on  
4 localization measures, meaning you got to buy and sell local  
5 market.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Industrial policy, et cetera.  
8 And I went through all the problems. Objective was restart  
9 all the dialogues, including the CEO dialogue and the  
10 presidential dialogues and the CEO dialogue.

11 Reason she is meeting with me and doing this, it  
12 helps her politics with the business community. And, and  
13 until now, their deliverable was her, her just showing up.  
14 The lingering issues were the defense cooperation agreement,  
15 more interaction between our militaries; general secretary  
16 of the military -- information -- there needed to be shared  
17 technical classified information; open skies for civil  
18 aviation; and peaceful use of space. They're all being  
19 discussed.

20 Now, on the 6th, I'm opening up the Mexico --  
21 where am I on the 6th? This is a really busy time. Okay.  
22 This is when I opened the Mexico high-level dialogue.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Met with Pena Nieto. This is in  
25 Washington. And I broke off at 11:45 because I --

1 (0:40:39.0)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- had to swear in the new  
3 Senate --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

5 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- on the 6th. And then I also,  
6 that day, I went to -- it was a big deal to him. I went to  
7 the unveiling of the portrait of Representative Conyers in  
8 the -- so that's what I did.

9 The next day, the next day the thing -- I did a  
10 whole lot, but it was basically a -- there was a Principals  
11 Committee Meeting, meaning the SEC, but I did -- I swore in  
12 Mark Gilbert, who had been helpful in our campaign. He's  
13 the ambassador to Australia. I mean to New Zealand, New  
14 Zealand. And I did some other swearing ins.

15 The next day -- now, there's a new Congress, and I  
16 was also the point man with the Congress. So Kevin McCarthy  
17 wanted to meet with me privately and, and we did that  
18 afternoon. I believe we got -- at the Naval Observatory.

19 And, and then I drop by later that night at a  
20 United -- the UFCW commercial workers -- food commercial  
21 workers. Joe Hansen. I dropped by a reception they had.

22 And, again, now, the next day, I went to -- I went  
23 down to San Antonio. I went to Knoxville, Tennessee and  
24 Clinton, Tennessee and San Antonio, Texas. And what was I  
25 doing. I spoke at a community college and -- to 450 --

1 (0:43:09.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- people. And -- Pellissippi  
3 State Community College. Then --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: That wasn't the Techmer trip was  
5 it?

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: It may have been. Wheels up and  
7 -- I then was at -- went to San Diego. From 6:40 to 7:40  
8 remarks at the Student Veterans of America Convention I  
9 spoke. So, again, back to the large picture.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Can we --

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: During this period, I was doing  
12 a lot of stuff on Mexico --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Yep.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and, and with the high-level  
15 dialogues and trying to work out energy and, and  
16 connectivity --

17 And then --

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Can, can we back up for a  
19 second --

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: -- to the 5th of January and --  
22 yeah, and can we spend some time on that, that lunch.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:44:43.8) lunch  
24 now.

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

1 (0:44:45.7)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I had all those presidential  
3 notes.

4 MR. ZWONITZER: I -- we have -- I know you gave me  
5 this much from the diaries ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) 0:45:01.0) --

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, but I actually --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: -- separate from presidential --

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I don't know where those --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Do you have separate notebooks of  
10 the --

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

12 MR. ZWONITZER: -- of the presidential

13 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) 0:45:16.4)?

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: What I would do, every -- after  
15 every lunch, I would dictate to, I would dictate to -- I'd  
16 call in ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) and I'd dictate to her what the lunch was  
17 about, and -- I need to call her. No, I had all those at  
18 the house in a safe. I don't know what we -- they made me  
19 do with them.

20 But what I'd do, I'd make up a card, one of those  
21 little cards of mine, before I'd have lunch. I'd meet with  
22 Steve and anything anybody thought I should be bringing up  
23 on our agenda. And then -- and I'd come back and I'd  
24 dictate notes to ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) --

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

1 (0:46:23.3)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- as to what actually  
3 transpired at the lunch. So this is -- I must've met with  
4 Klain.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: The only thing I saw possible that  
6 day was the -- maybe the early morning at the, at NavObs or  
7 something.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Oh, did I?

9 At -- on the 4th, at 2 o'clock, I think I spoke at  
10 -- I went to (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

11 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

13 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

15 [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED]  
19 [REDACTED]  
20 [REDACTED]  
21 [REDACTED]  
22 [REDACTED]

23 MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

25 [REDACTED]

(0:48:55.0)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

So I think I went to that memorial service in  
Wilmington. It says (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) December the  
4th, but I don't -- I know what this means. Memorial  
service -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) gets  
names really fucked up. So it says memorial service for  
(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) I don't think her name was (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) Or I  
forget (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: So I got to make a note of that  
too.

But at any rate, back to -- there was -- I had a  
meeting with Ron Klain, and I don't know when.

1 (0:50:11.5)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: During this period, remember, we  
3 talked about it earlier. We're focusing on what we're doing  
4 substantively, but during this period we -- there was a lot  
5 of discussion and mounting pressure from my own team that I  
6 announce --

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and that I couldn't -- (b) (6)

9 [REDACTED] But I couldn't delay it much  
10 longer. And Ron Klain was making the case how I would run  
11 because I was arguing that, and it was true, that there was  
12 disappointment on the part of democrats in Barack's not  
13 being more aggressive about --

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- a lot of things. And Hillary  
16 was criticizing him. She was out by now. And others were  
17 criticizing him. And this is where this came in. Ron's  
18 advice was that I should actually do a speech to put all  
19 them -- he said scatter tacks in their path by talking about  
20 what we've done, being much more aggressive about -- while  
21 they're talking about how much they'd change their approach  
22 to the economy from Obama, he said here's why they're wrong.  
23 He said the speech topics, suggest -- he said aggressively  
24 defend the President, throw thumbtacks in their path, frame  
25 the box for the others who are running, one they can't --

(0:52:06.4)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- get out of. This will allow me to find the middle class -- define the middle class. So challenge, without naming, Hillary or others.

MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: And -- well, challenge the democratic critics of Hillary -- oh, that should be critics including Hillary. In other words, make the case for Obama. Look, make the case that basically says, I'll take the blame for every mistake we made as long as you give me all the credit too and we did a great job. Challenge democratic critics, including Hillary.

The other piece of that was we had decided, and Mike's idea was, and Ron was still loyal in those days, was, was to say -- because he came in to see me, and I took extensive notes. I don't know where the hell they are. The -- that Mike's idea was, look, this is what we've done and I'm proud of it. I'll take credit for it if you -- I'll take blame and credit. But this is what I'm going to do from here.

MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: Instead of going after what he -- we didn't do --

MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and what they were doing.

1 (0:53:21.2)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: The others said, well, you know,  
3 I were Barack, I would've done more on the econ- -- well, I  
4 was a really lonely voice on housing, I was a lonely voice  
5 on the middle class. I mean, I thought we should be much  
6 more aggressive than putting these guys in jail and the  
7 bankers.

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, for real. It wasn't  
10 idle. I mean, he used to really get pissed at me. And I  
11 try -- I stopped --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: He -- Barack used to get pissed at  
13 you?

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Oh, yeah, really pissed.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Because -- I think the reason he  
17 didn't do it was I think he does by this argument of the  
18 moral hazard. You know, like, you and I took a risk.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I remember getting a briefing  
21 from, from his economic team saying to me that -- well, I  
22 didn't understand. This is not, this is not the middle  
23 class of World War -- post-World War II. These are all  
24 greedy bastards. They all went out and borrowed money --

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

1 (0:54:10.7)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- on these, on these crazy --

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- cacamamie loans because they  
5 wanted a fifth bedroom, they wanted a swimming pool, they  
6 wanted a place at the beach.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Bullshit. You know, that's what  
9 the new middle class was. That -- and they're part of it.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: The millennials. That's what  
12 they -- anyway. That was the constant fight with me. Klain  
13 was on my side when he was there. And my whole team was  
14 always -- I had the team that said -- including the two guys  
15 who I think were with me, were -- oh, God. The guy at  
16 Princeton now. Economist. Good guy. Was our, our Chief  
17 Economic Advisor. Not Kaufman. I'll think of his name.  
18 And the guy back at the University of Chicago with the funny  
19 name. I'll think of it in a second. I'll think of both of

20 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) 0:55:01.9) --

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Goolsby is one.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Goolsby.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah, Goolsby is in Chicago.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Goolsby in Chicago. And the  
25 other guy is at Princeton.

1 (0:55:07.4)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I should write the names down  
4 because I keep forgetting them.

5 (Long pause)

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Is it Alan Krueger?

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Alan Krueger. Great guy by the  
8 way. I'm a big fan, a big supporter.

9 So, so we, we were on the same team, along with,  
10 you know, my team, my internal staff. But it was constant.  
11 I think the reason why we didn't do more, by the way, is  
12 because I think that -- this is a harsh thing to say. But I  
13 think subconsciously, at least, Barack and his guys were  
14 beholden to the Silicon Valley.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And the valley guys didn't want  
17 the shit that I -- you know, I wanted.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You know?

20 MR. ZWONITZER: They want free money out there.

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And -- yeah. And the other  
22 thing was that there was a, a guy who was a big Barack  
23 supporter early on is Jamie Dimon.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And Jamie Dimon was -- he's --

1 (0:56:58.3)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- part of the people that  
3 should've been out of jail, but --

4 MR. ZWONITZER: Well, Jamie Dimon is the architect  
5 of the Clinton -- you know, let's end --

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Glass-Steagall.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: He's the whole ball game.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Right, yeah. And so, so  
11 there was Jamie Dimon and --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: And he was, and he was always part  
13 of that team, right, of advisors that --

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: -- the outside advisors that  
16 Barack had?

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, yeah.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so, you know, even though we  
20 weren't, quote, tied to Wall Street bankers, we were pretty  
21 well tied to Wall Street bankers.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Right, right.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: And Summers was always in  
25 there.

1 (0:57:34.0)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Summers --

3 MR. ZWONITZER: ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 0:57:34.6), right?

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Summers came to me and said he  
5 was wrong --

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Really?

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- after we got -- yeah. He  
8 came to me and says, I was wrong about the housing piece. I  
9 should've been more -- much more aggressive, we should've  
10 given more leeway, we should've -- which was really  
11 something else. When he, when he came to me -- and I'll get  
12 the date. Remind me when did Summers come to me to have  
13 lunch to -- it was when I was thinking about running.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay. Because Summers is not a  
15 guy who is known for --

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, no.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: -- admitting to mistakes.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, no.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Well, is that also the --

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Here's what happened, before I  
21 forget. Don't mind my train of thought. He also pledged to  
22 support me in 2016.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Summers did?

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. Now, part of the reason  
25 for that was Barack had promised him the Fed, and I --

1 (0:58:33.4)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- thought he should've  
3 appointed him to the Fed. And Barack backed off the  
4 agreement, backed off that promise with Larry (phonetic).  
5 And it really, really pissed Larry off. He was going to be  
6 appointed to the Fed.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Because Larry was not -- was  
8 too --

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: -- too much of a --

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: A liability and --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- he was, you know, Harvard and  
14 women and --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But it was just -- he just  
17 didn't -- so anyway.

18 So the context --

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]?

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No. Tell them another 10  
22 minutes.

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED].

24 (Crosstalk 0:59:13.0.)

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Okay?

1 (0:59:15.1)

2 MR. ZWONITZNER: Okay.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Tell them 15 minutes so I'll  
4 have a chance to read. So -- and tell them I'm in meetings,  
5 okay, still?

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) .

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So -- anyway. So the issue was  
8 -- this is all -- you know, all this is -- happened  
9 simultaneously. The issue was about running for President,  
10 which is still very present in everything we're doing, you  
11 know. I mean, it was that we -- how would I handle the fact  
12 that I disagreed with him?

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Well, the -- and Ron was -- he's  
15 very good. I'm so disappointed he was so disloyal. That  
16 was such a -- it really hurt my -- I mean, it just -- it  
17 disappointed me about him.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I don't think he's happy.

20 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I know he knows better.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I know he -- you know, like,  
24 even that email that got exposed, remember?

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah. I -- it didn't -- I --

1 (1:00:21.1)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: -- couldn't quite understand what  
3 he was saying, to tell you the truth.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: What he was saying was I can't  
5 continue to play this double role.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: 'Cause he had, he had -- he's --  
8 now he's talking me out of running. He went from go, go,  
9 go, go, go. He's still being invited to our meetings. He's  
10 going I don't know, I don't know, may be a little late.  
11 While, at the same time --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: He was prepping --

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- he already is talking to  
14 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 1:00:41.7) debate.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: -- Clinton's Hillary debate.  
16 Yeah, yeah.

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And -- now, here's what I think  
18 happened. I think what happened was I think Ron, knowing  
19 me, concluded that I wouldn't go, and that if he stayed with  
20 me, that he would lose his chance --

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to be part of this new  
23 administration, which he wanted. And -- but I still think  
24 he thought I would have been better, but he knew that I'd  
25 ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and would probably end up --

1 (1:01:12.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- not doing it and he's be left  
3 hanging. So instead of having the nerve to come to me and  
4 say, look, I want to be involved, I'm loyal to you, but I  
5 don't think you're going to do it. If you can tell me  
6 you're going to do it now, I'll stay.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But if you can't, I have to take  
9 advantage of this opportunity. Which is what I would've  
10 done, you would've done to me.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: He didn't have the courage to do  
13 it.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
17 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED]

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Steve had the same  
21 opportunities.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Mike had the similar  
24 opportunities. You know, but they didn't do that.

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

1 (1:01:55.5)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: They stayed.

3 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

4 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So I get no -- I don't try to  
5 sell them on giving -- cutting him any slack, you know? I  
6 mean, he's -- they stuck it out.

7 So anyway, that was the context of this how would  
8 I run, and, and so the discussions that revolved around what  
9 the strategy would be if I didn't run. You with me?

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Yep.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And it was less, at that point,  
12 was I going to announce that time. It was more, at that  
13 point, how was I going to run.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So what I was saying to these  
16 guys -- looking back on it, what I was saying to them was,  
17 look, guys, I don't know that I'm going to go, but let's  
18 move like you're going to go.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Put together the plan that, that  
21 -- this is a really important point. Put together the plan  
22 that would allow me to win the nomination and be elected  
23 President, but don't -- what I'm not prepared to do -- I'm  
24 not prepared to ask other people to commit.

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

1 (1:02:58.0)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And then box themselves in.  
3 Now, I shouldn't have thought that way. I should've  
4 thought, fuck him, but I was worried -- I didn't want, as a  
5 matter of honor, to have people do what Ron ended up doing.

6 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

7 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Do you know what I mean?

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I, I didn't want to get them  
10 locked in and then deciding, you know, if I didn't go, then,  
11 well, God damn it, I could've --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I could've been a champ. You  
14 know, I could've been a contender.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: But the people you were talking to  
16 most closely, Steve and Mike --

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. They --

18 MR. ZWONITZER: -- basically knew your situation.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, they knew, and I think they  
20 -- you know, they just did -- and by the way, you know, they  
21 also knew (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) --

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and, and so it was -- and --

1 (1:03:45.7)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- they -- I -- Steve, by the  
3 way, for all his gregariousness and, hey, how you doing,  
4 pretty smart guy, pretty insightful guy.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And I think he knew. But, but  
7 the context, again, throughout this whole period was, okay,  
8 my decision in my head was you want -- you know, what was I  
9 thinking in January? (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED] --

11 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [REDACTED].

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But so, you know, we may be able  
15 to do this. But I don't want to get out too far because I  
16 put people out on a limb and then it gets sawed off and  
17 they're in trouble. But the guys who are willing, who don't  
18 have that as their objection, just being in the  
19 administration, and let's go ahead and decide how we will  
20 run.

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You know, and all during this  
23 period, Mike's strongest argument for why we are -- would  
24 run and win -- it turned everything he wrote -- have you  
25 read some of this stuff? It's pretty --

1 (1:04:52.9)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: He's talked to me about it.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: All right. Well, I got to show  
4 -- we got to get the memos. It's pretty (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
5 1:04:58.6). Turned out to be what it was, including her  
6 weaknesses and my strengths.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. The care, but also the  
8 authenticity, the --

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: -- looking for something real.

11 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And -- but he said, look -- he  
12 kept coming back to this one thing. This race, no matter  
13 how you cut it, is going to be about the middle class. You  
14 are the single most authentic person in the United States of  
15 America in American politics that authentically can speak to  
16 the middle class. No one doubts that it's anything other  
17 than who you are. No one doubts that it's something that  
18 you have been focused on from the day you ran for office.  
19 And you are, you are the embodiment of that. And the middle  
20 class gets it. You know, all those folks out there, they  
21 look at you and say, yes, he knows my problem.

22 And so, so how did you deal with the middle class,  
23 who are the ones being -- who are the ones still being hurt  
24 and not abandon Barack?

25 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

1 (1:06:07.2)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Well, the way you do that was to  
3 say, look what we did now, man. Let's understand. That's  
4 where I came up with the phrase spontaneously when, you  
5 know, I said, everything is landing on this man's desk  
6 except locusts.

7 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

8 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And it's true.

9 MR. ZWONITZER: And it is true.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, it's true.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: I mean, from what you guys walked  
12 into the first day --

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: It was astounding.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: And so -- and look what we did.  
16 Now, granted, now we have to go back and from square one  
17 begin to build back the middle class. All we did was save  
18 you, basically, from depression.

19 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Save you from being all knocked  
21 out ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)) 1:06:44.6) -- everything go.

22 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

23 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Now, admittedly, what I wasn't  
24 focusing on then, I wasn't focusing on while we were trying  
25 to save the economy how rapidly the economy was changing.

(1:06:57.4)

PRESIDENT BIDEN: The digitalization --

MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- issue, the fourth industrial revolution. What was going -- I wasn't focused on robots and artificial intelligence and, and digitalization and Moore's law. I mean, it was all about -- and I really believed that, and I still believe it, that we could bring back the manufacturing in America. I didn't think that was lost. And, and I wasn't so big on globalization. I mean, I, I, I, I wasn't -- I thought TPP -- the reason I felt -- first of all, I think we did not negotiate tough enough on TPP.

MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

PRESIDENT BIDEN: But secondly, what I thought was -- I thought with TPP we -- it was more of a foreign policy document than it was -- as much a foreign policy document as an economic document. And that we could've been tougher in terms of protecting -- you know, getting a better deal for American workers. And I was -- for example, even the foreign policy piece, as recently as the last four months we were in office, I was arguing when it comes to China and the South China Sea and air identification zones and the islands they're building in the South China Sea -- I argued that we had much more leverage than China had --

1 (1:08:38.6)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- in terms of the need for  
4 economic cooperation. And that we should be prepared to  
5 threaten economic cooperation. It's cheaper than war, and  
6 it hurts us, but it kills them.

7 My argument, and one of the themes I want to get  
8 through here in this, in this book --

9 MR. ZWONITZER: Okay.

10 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- as it relates to the foreign  
11 policy domestic side of this is that I think we always  
12 underestimate our power as a nation.

13 MR. ZWONITZER: Um-hum.

14 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I think we always underestimate  
15 our power. And --

16 MR. ZWONITZER: You mean non-military power?

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Non-military power.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

19 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I think we always underestimate  
20 our leverage, including, including the back-up possibility  
21 of military power. In other words, that's not the reason.  
22 If we didn't have the military power --

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- to back it up, then all these  
25 other things would have less consequence. They would --

1 (1:09:28.6)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But for -- so, for example --  
4 and I finally convinced -- I thought I convinced Barack that  
5 in a situation where we were -- if, if we decided that we  
6 were going to really come down on them on steel, which I  
7 thought we should've, that it would have a dramatically  
8 negative impact on their economy. And if we were -- decided  
9 that we would come down on intellectual property -- like,  
10 for example, we nailed them. They, they literally stole not  
11 only a -- the solar market from us, they stole the  
12 technology, the technology that this company had that  
13 allowed them to produce a more profitable -- I mean, a  
14 more --

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Efficient, right?

16 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, efficient solar power.

17 MR. ZWONITZER: So, yeah.

18 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, they fucking stole it.  
19 And I thought we should've sanctioned them and made no --  
20 and everything I'd meet with Shi -- I don't want to get off  
21 on this, but every time I'd meet with him, my argument would  
22 be, look, man, you play by the rules, no problem. If you  
23 don't want to play by the rules, we, we impose, you know,  
24 the consequences of not playing by the rules. We're going  
25 to compete. If you want to compete, fair. You, you want --

1 (1:11:01.6)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- a different relationship, we  
3 got it. It can be new and -- but it's got to be by the  
4 rules.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: So if you don't -- it's okay.  
7 If you don't want to play by the rules. We're going --  
8 we'll force the sanctions. Well, we never -- there was  
9 always a reluctance.

10 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. There's -- you couldn't  
11 put any teeth behind that.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah, but there was a lot --  
13 there were a lot of teeth.

14 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

15 PRESIDENT BIDEN: But there was worry that we  
16 would get hurt more than -- because what would happen is  
17 we'd say, we're going to come down on solar energy, and  
18 they'd say, oh, shit, you know what they're going to do,  
19 they're going to retaliate against business machines, you  
20 know, and God damn it, then we're going to be in a war.  
21 Okay. Well, so, they lose the market in China for business  
22 machines. No problem. Let them go somewhere else. Fuck  
23 them -- you know, they need us, they need our market.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Right, right.

25 PRESIDENT BIDEN: They need us. And -- but --

1 (1:11:45.1)

2 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- we're never able to -- it's a  
3 little bit like how it's always harder to do the right thing  
4 because it always costs you something.

5 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

6 PRESIDENT BIDEN: It costs something. And there's  
7 always the reluctance to, you know, take the pain now, even  
8 though the pain is -- you know, it's hard. Two things.  
9 It's hard to prove that if I don't do this, things are going  
10 to get worse.

11 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

12 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You do it, things get worse, and  
13 then they get better, but it's hard to prove if I had not  
14 done that they would have not gotten better.

15 MR. ZWONITZER: Right. Yeah, nobody's shown us  
16 the alternative --

17 PRESIDENT BIDEN: No, no.

18 MR. ZWONITZER: -- ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 1:12:26.9).  
19 Yeah.

20 PRESIDENT BIDEN: We didn't have the -- so --

21 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

22 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- but that's leadership.

23 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

24 PRESIDENT BIDEN: That's what leadership is. Make  
25 a --

1 (1:12:33.6)

2 MR. ZWONITZER: But you also have to make a case.

3 PRESIDENT BIDEN: Yeah. We make the case, but  
4 lots of times the case doesn't matter. If ((b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
5 1:12:37.9) goes down, the case I made, you work at a widget  
6 factory and, you know, I impose sanctions and they stop  
7 buying widgets. Well, you don't want to hear this bullshit.

8 MR. ZWONITZER: Right.

9 PRESIDENT BIDEN: You know, I made the case, you  
10 know. But it's the only thing -- I mean, that's leadership  
11 --

12 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

13 PRESIDENT BIDEN: -- and that's what -- that was  
14 what Barack was always -- I guess every President. Maybe if  
15 I were President I would've not had the nerve to do it too,  
16 but that's -- you know, it was always on the margins, but it  
17 was, you know -- we -- you know, like I said, and between  
18 you and me, I mean, Barack was -- always got to the right  
19 spot but a day late and a dollar short.

20 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

21 PRESIDENT BIDEN: I mean, you know, it's -- not  
22 all the time, but he got -- anyway. I, I should take this  
23 call.

24 MR. ZWONITZER: Yeah.

25 (End of recording.)

## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript, to the best of my ability, of the above pages, of the RECORDED INTERVIEW provided to me by the Special Counsel's Office.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this recording was taken, and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

January 17, 2024  
Date

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Transcriber

Within this transcript of proceedings, some of the names and/or technical terms are spelled phonetically, inasmuch as exhibits, files and supporting documentation were not made available to us for reference.