

BEFORE THE HUNTSVILLE POLICE CITIZENS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

VIDEO-CONFERENCE INTERVIEW

OF

JORDAN STEELMAN

FEBRUARY 4, 2021

9:00 A.M.

COURT REPORTER: Diana B. Williams, CCR

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A P P E A R A N C E S

[ALL APPEARING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE]

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL:

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A P P E A R A N C E S

(CONTINUED)

MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Ms. Victoria Guerrieri, Chair

Mr. W.J. Love, Co-Chair

Ms. Shelly McCulley

Mr. David Little

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms. Susan Harper, White-Collar

Specialist Paralegal with Lightfoot,

Franklin & White

Ms. Diana Williams, Court Reporter

with Birmingham Reporting

1 I, Diana B. Williams, a Certified
2 Shorthand Reporter of Birmingham, Alabama,
3 and a Notary Public for the State of
4 Alabama at Large, acting as Commissioner,
5 certify that on this date, there came
6 before me VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE, commencing
7 at approximately 9:00 a.m. on February 4,
8 2021, JORDAN STEELMAN, for oral
9 examination, whereupon the following
10 proceedings were had:

11

12 MS. GUERRIERI: We will go ahead
13 and call this to order.

14 Thank you for attending today,
15 Mr. Steelman. We appreciate your
16 willingness to speak with us.

17 MR. STEELMAN: No problem.

18 MS. GUERRIERI: At this time I
19 don't know how many members were able to
20 make this during work hours, but I will
21 call role to see who is here.

22 I know Jonathan was not going to
23 be able to make it due to work.

1 Willie Love, I know you are
2 here.
3 John Olshefski?
4 (No response.)
5 MS. GUERRIERI: John Reitzell?
6 (No response.)
7 MS. GUERRIERI: Rubin Flores?
8 (No response.)
9 MS. GUERRIERI: David Little?
10 MR. LITTLE: Here.
11 MS. GUERRIERI: Gregory Bentley?
12 (No response.)
13 MS. GUERRIERI: Jonathan is at
14 work.
15 Shelly McCulley?
16 (No response.)
17 MS. GUERRIERI: She had texted
18 me. She's probably trying to get in.
19 And Wiley Day?
20 (No response.)
21 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. That's
22 it.
23 Again, we appreciate you coming

1 in, Mr. Steelman, by Zoom and speaking with
2 us this morning. And at this point, I will
3 hand it over to our counsel, Jack Sharman
4 and Liz Huntley. Thank you.

5 MR. STEELMAN: Okay.

6 MR. SHARMAN: Thank you, Vicki.

7 Mr. Steelman, can you see and
8 hear us okay?

9 MR. STEELMAN: Absolutely. Yes.

10 MR. SHARMAN: All right. Well,
11 good morning. As the chairman said, my
12 name is Jack Sharman. And along with Liz
13 Huntley, who hopefully you can see over
14 my --

15 MS. GUERRIERI: Oh, there she
16 is. Hey, Liz.

17 MS. HUNTLEY: Hello.

18 MR. SHARMAN: We are independent
19 counsel to the CAC to help them discharge
20 this mission that's been given to them by
21 the Huntsville City Council. And we know
22 that many people, including yourself, spoke
23 at the public meetings, but we wanted to

1 follow up individually with some witnesses
2 to have a little bit more complete
3 conversation than the relatively limited
4 time slots that the public hearings had.

5 And just like those, this
6 conversation is being transcribed. You can
7 see the court reporter there. It's not a
8 test. It's not a -- it's not a deposition.
9 It's more like a conversation.

10 Speaking of the court reporter,
11 one tip, if we can avoid speaking over each
12 other, that would be very helpful to her.
13 It's hard for her to take down things if
14 multiple people are talking. So even
15 though it takes a little bit more time,
16 sort of let us get our question all of the
17 way out, and then you get your answer all
18 of the way out. Does that make sense?

19 MR. STEELMAN: Sure. Yes.

20 MR. SHARMAN: And then to the --
21 to the extent you can, it's helpful to us
22 if you keep confidential the actual
23 substance of our discussion. If you are

1 telling people you met with us, that's
2 great. But what happens sometimes is that,
3 as we interview witness after witness after
4 witness, and we ask them something, they
5 will think, wait a minute, did I know that
6 because I know it or did I know it because
7 Mr. Steelman told it to me after I got out
8 of the interview. And so it kind of
9 contaminates everybody's mind. So to the
10 extent we can avoid kind of the watercooler
11 talk, that's always -- that's always a
12 great help.

13 And just so you kind of know
14 what is going on, we are going to spend
15 just a little bit of time on sort of kind
16 of who you are. That's helpful to us.
17 Just kind of assess, you know, what folks
18 are saying. And then we will move right
19 into the lead-up to and the events
20 themselves. We can talk about anything you
21 want to. Primarily our charge is to two
22 days, the 1st and the 3rd. But we are
23 not -- we are not sort of inviolately

1 constrained to those two days.

2 MR. STEELMAN: Okay.

3 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So why
4 don't we just kind of start with the
5 90,000-foot view of Jordan Steelman. Did
6 you grow up in Huntsville?

7 MR. STEELMAN: I didn't. I grew
8 up in Mobile.

9 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And when
10 did you move to Huntsville?

11 MR. STEELMAN: 2008 for college
12 at UAH.

13 MR. SHARMAN: And that was going
14 to be my next question. You went to UAH?

15 MR. STEELMAN: Yes, sir.

16 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. Did you
17 graduate?

18 MR. STEELMAN: I did, yes, with
19 an aerospace engineering degree.

20 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. Any other,
21 at least, formal schooling after that?

22 MR. STEELMAN: I did about half
23 of a master's program, but work took over,

1 and I just didn't have time to finish it
2 so -- but other than that, no.

3 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. Was that
4 the same subject or a different subject?

5 MR. STEELMAN: It was in -- it
6 was in the same subject.

7 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And then
8 did you go to work right after school or --

9 MR. STEELMAN: I did, yes. I
10 had an internship with Sikorsky my junior
11 and senior year, Sikorsky Aircraft
12 Corporation. And then I worked for them
13 for seven years. And now I'm at [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED].

15 MR. SHARMAN: And what do you do
16 [REDACTED]?

17 MR. STEELMAN: I'm a structural
18 engineer. I'm in the missile and aerospace
19 systems division, so R&D work, basically.

20 MR. SHARMAN: Have you or your
21 family ever been employed by law
22 enforcement?

23 MR. STEELMAN: No.

1 MR. SHARMAN: Have -- and I'm
2 not trying to be -- have you ever been
3 arrested?

4 MR. STEELMAN: No.

5 MR. SHARMAN: Do you belong to
6 any sorts of organizations or clubs? And I
7 mean anything from the Elks and Masons to,
8 you know, country clubs and athletic
9 workout facilities? Do you belong to
10 anything?

11 MR. STEELMAN: There is, like, a
12 couple of engineering societies. I'm in,
13 like, an experimental aircraft aviation
14 society. And then I'm in ENUF, obviously,
15 which was who I presented to the HPCAC on
16 behalf of. But I don't know if that
17 technically counts as an organization.
18 There are no, like, official articles.
19 It's just more like a group of community
20 members so -- young community members.

21 MR. SHARMAN: And for the court
22 reporter's benefit, ENUF, in this instance,
23 is E-N-U-F; right?

1 MR. STEELMAN: Right. Yes.

2 MR. SHARMAN: And remind us what
3 that stands for.

4 MR. STEELMAN: Essential
5 Nonviolent Uprising Force.

6 MR. SHARMAN: And you mentioned
7 some engineering societies. I should have
8 asked you, and I apologize, do you have any
9 additional sort of professional
10 certifications, licenses, that sort of
11 thing?

12 MR. STEELMAN: I have one for
13 structural engineering. It's a practical
14 stress analysis certificate. But other
15 than that, no. It's from -- it's just like
16 an online, one-year-long certificate course
17 so --

18 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And we
19 talked about organizations and clubs. What
20 about churches, synagogues, houses of
21 worship? Any of those that you attend?

22 MR. STEELMAN: Yes. I attend
23 [REDACTED] Church over on [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED].

2 MR. SHARMAN: And, then,
3 obviously, what's brought us together here
4 is sort of these protests and the response
5 to them.

6 But before the events that we
7 are about to sort of dive into, had you
8 ever been to or participated in a political
9 protest before?

10 MR. STEELMAN: Not in a
11 political protest. I have -- I have
12 participated in some other, like, causes,
13 rallies, or whatever, but not -- not
14 anything political. And I don't know, I
15 wouldn't characterize what happened on the
16 1st and the 3rd as political, just for the
17 record, but that's all.

18 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And then
19 what about -- what about after last summer,
20 you know, after last June, have you
21 participated in any, like I said, protests,
22 rallies, other sort of activities like
23 that?

1 MR. STEELMAN: Not protests or
2 rallies. I mean, there have been some,
3 like -- well, I shouldn't say that. There
4 have been protests that I have participated
5 in following June 1st and 3rd that revolved
6 around the same things, but they were much
7 smaller in magnitude. And I don't think we
8 have been to any of those in the past two
9 or three months due to COVID. So since the
10 rates have been going up so highly, we've
11 been trying to hold back a little.

12 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. All right.
13 So let's move to the -- some of the events
14 of last summer. And, again, you can, you
15 know, throw in other things that you think
16 are appropriate.

17 But, first, for the -- for the
18 June 1st event -- and I tend to think kind
19 of chronologically. So if it's -- bear
20 with me being a little plodding.

21 So when or under what
22 circumstances did -- did the June 1st event
23 first enter your consciousness? When did

1 you first hear about it or start thinking
2 about it?

3 MR. STEELMAN: So my wife and I
4 actually heard about it kind of late. We
5 actually -- she actually told me about it
6 the day of, early in the day, if I recall
7 correctly, and was, like, asking if we
8 should go to this.

9 We had obviously been following
10 the news, but we hadn't seen any organized
11 stuff. And I'm not quite sure even to this
12 point how she found out about it, but she
13 was the one that informed me, basically,
14 the day of.

15 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. There
16 seemed to have been some, you know, social
17 media discussions, social media activity.
18 Were you aware of any of that or involved
19 in any of that?

20 MR. STEELMAN: At the -- at the
21 immediate time of the 1st and the 3rd, no,
22 I wasn't involved at all. And we got
23 involved, not with social media, but just,

1 like, in the ENUF organization following
2 those protests.

3 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So before
4 the fact, you weren't -- like, there was a
5 Facebook group and different things. But
6 that really wasn't on your radar screen at
7 the time anyway, it sounds like?

8 MR. STEELMAN: Correct. Yeah.
9 Yeah.

10 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So
11 your wife -- and I'm sorry, what is her
12 name?

13 MR. STEELMAN: Emma.

14 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So Emma
15 says, Hey, there is this event. You
16 learned of it a little bit late, the day
17 of. And y'all say, Hey, we should -- we
18 should go?

19 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

20 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And then so
21 what happens next?

22 MR. STEELMAN: So I get off of
23 work around, I think, 4 or 4:30. She's

1 already gone down there. We live in fairly
2 close proximity to downtown. And she had
3 already walked down there. And I drove
4 down there, parked, and just basically
5 hopped in the march when I -- when I found
6 them so --

7 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So when you
8 say "hopped in the march," we are not
9 talking -- we are not talking about the --
10 the earlier event because, presumably, you
11 were -- you were too late for that; you
12 probably -- you probably missed that?

13 MR. STEELMAN: Yes, I did.

14 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So --

15 MR. STEELMAN: She was there for
16 that, and I was not, yeah.

17 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So by the
18 time you got there, there was -- there
19 were -- we are talking about kind of
20 marching in the courthouse area, basically;
21 is that right?

22 MR. STEELMAN: Correct. Yes.
23 Marching around -- I think it was between

1 the Square and Clinton, if I am remembering
2 correctly. I think they moved over there
3 at one point so --

4 MR. SHARMAN: And just kind of
5 for the time line, about what -- we won't
6 hold you to it, to the second, but about
7 what time do you think you were -- you put
8 yourself kind of in the -- in the Square
9 area there?

10 MR. STEELMAN: Oh, man, 4:45,
11 4:50. I don't -- I don't honestly
12 remember. It's been a minute. I can check
13 my -- I have some notes here that I took.

14 MR. SHARMAN: Like I said, we
15 are not going to -- we are not going to
16 hold you to the stroke of the second. I'm
17 just trying to get a sense of kind of time
18 of day here.

19 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah, it's
20 definitely around -- I'd say around five,
21 roughly, 15 -- plus or minus 15 minutes.

22 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So what --
23 so you get there. Folks are marching.

1 Kind of what -- from your perspective, kind
2 of what happens -- what happens next,
3 basically?

4 MR. STEELMAN: So we marched
5 around. The group stops eventually in
6 front of the -- where the statue used to be
7 on the courthouse steps. A lot of
8 chanting. A lot of, you know,
9 understandably upset folks.

10 But for the most part, it's just
11 standing around chanting, airing
12 frustrations, I'd say. But I don't know.
13 Like, that's pretty much it. Like, it
14 really wasn't very -- there wasn't very
15 much action other than people, you know,
16 protesting. Like, it's -- I don't know.

17 MR. SHARMAN: Was there -- was
18 there -- and this -- I realize this sounds
19 like a simplistic question. But was it an
20 environment where you perceived there to be
21 a leader or leaders sort of organizing, or
22 did you perceive it more as essentially a
23 group of people sort of just, you know,

1 acting and moving and doing what they, you
2 know, were doing?

3 MR. STEELMAN: My perception was
4 never that there was a centralized group
5 leading it, that it was always just a
6 group. The mass of people were concerned
7 about the same thing, and it just happened.
8 It was not an organized effort in my mind
9 that I could ever perceive so --

10 MR. SHARMAN: So people have
11 been marching, chanting, you know, stopping
12 where the statue used to be. And then
13 presumably some folks kind of standing
14 around, some folks were probably milling
15 around and still chanting and so on and so
16 forth.

17 And then kind of, again, from
18 your memory, from where you are, kind of
19 what is the next thing that really sticks
20 out? What is the next thing that sort of
21 happened?

22 MR. STEELMAN: So, I guess,
23 like, the -- the things that take note in

1 my mind were, when I got there, there were
2 not a tremendous amount of police. And
3 then by the time we had sat around for
4 maybe 30 or 45 minutes, there were
5 significantly more police.

6 And then I remember at one point
7 the steps that would be to our left that
8 not as many people were at, a couple of
9 officers came off those steps and ended up
10 arresting someone from, like, the edge of
11 the crowd.

12 After -- there was a little
13 commotion with that, obviously. But no --
14 again, no violence, nothing -- nothing
15 crazy.

16 And then we never really heard
17 anything or saw anything weird. We didn't
18 hear any orders to leave. We saw -- I
19 think we saw -- if I remember, Dexter
20 Strong spoke real quick. But we -- I was
21 so far back, I actually couldn't hear him
22 very well. And I think Devyn spoke really
23 quick, too, Devyn Keith. Gosh, this is so

1 hard to remember.

2 MR. SHARMAN: That's fine. And
3 we have -- we have your statement. And so
4 there is -- you know, you were able to --

5 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

6 MR. SHARMAN: -- articulate some
7 of that in a little bit closer to the
8 events.

9 Let me -- let me interrupt you
10 and back up just a little bit. So you said
11 at arrival -- so, again, you know, we are
12 probably about -- very late in the
13 afternoon, about 5 p.m. or so. And you
14 said there were not lots of law
15 enforcement.

16 Kind of ballpark that. When you
17 say "not lots," I mean, are we talking
18 about a dozen, 50, 100?

19 MR. STEELMAN: What I could see
20 on the steps were maybe half a dozen maybe.

21 MR. SHARMAN: Okay.

22 MR. STEELMAN: And then I think
23 by the time I really started noticing,

1 there were at least probably 20. So it
2 tripled essentially. And I don't know --
3 again, I can't speak for all around the
4 Square. I could only see what I could see
5 so --

6 MR. SHARMAN: And your -- we are
7 not going to hold you to be an expert in
8 law enforcement uniform and gear, but the
9 officers that you saw, were they Huntsville
10 officers or sheriff's deputies or some
11 other entity?

12 MR. STEELMAN: So initially
13 there were sheriff's deputies and I think a
14 very -- like, maybe, like, one or two HPD.
15 As time went on, it was harder to tell who
16 was who because some people were actually
17 just showing up and, like -- I think there
18 were a couple of people just in Polos that
19 had, like, tactical vests on over them.

20 Then you had -- I think, by the
21 end of the night, by the end of what --
22 well, before we left, you could see that
23 there were some -- it looked like HPD SWAT.

1 They were in black uniforms with the SWAT
2 gear.

3 And I think there were a couple
4 more uniformed sheriff's officers that
5 showed up in a little heavier gear. But,
6 again, I don't -- I don't know what
7 sheriff's, like, heavy gear exactly
8 entails. But it was weird. It was a mix.

9 Yeah, I couldn't tell with some
10 people, and then some people it was very
11 obvious.

12 MR. SHARMAN: The plain-clothes
13 officers, for lack of a better term --

14 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

15 MR. SHARMAN: -- did you have
16 any -- did you have any sense from what
17 agency they were?

18 MR. STEELMAN: No, not at all.
19 No.

20 MR. SHARMAN: And then you
21 mentioned an arrest sort of at the steps.
22 That's the steps of the courthouse?

23 MR. STEELMAN: Yes. I guess, if

1 you are looking where the statue is, like,
2 if you are looking at it from the park
3 side, it would be to the left. So I think
4 that's northwest, if I am correct.

5 MR. SHARMAN: And you said there
6 was a bit of a commotion. Do you know --
7 do you know what the -- do you know what
8 the circumstances of the arrest were?

9 MR. STEELMAN: Not at all, no.
10 I just saw a young man get arrested, a
11 young black male get arrested.

12 And then some people, obviously,
13 followed and were, you know, mad that he
14 was getting arrested and yelling. But,
15 again, nothing -- given the situation, I
16 can understand why they were upset so --

17 MR. SHARMAN: And then you
18 said -- you said you were fairly far back
19 in the crowd. To the extent you can, about
20 how far do you recollect being back as far
21 as either percentage of the crowd or feet
22 or yards or --

23 MR. STEELMAN: So I can tell you

1 where it was exactly. So there was a large
2 mass of people in front of the -- the
3 statue. Then there were people -- a couple
4 of people -- or not a couple of people.
5 There were less people that were farther
6 back from that crowd, actually, in the
7 road. And I was on the edge of the road on
8 the other side of the street, if that makes
9 sense, so, like, where the parking spots
10 would be across from the statue -- where
11 the statue used to be.

12 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So would
13 that be more than a hundred feet or less
14 than a hundred feet, you think?

15 MR. STEELMAN: It would have to
16 be less than a hundred feet from the --
17 from the statue. Because, I mean, the road
18 is only, what, 20 feet wide, 24 feet wide,
19 something like that. So --

20 MR. SHARMAN: And you said you
21 didn't hear any sort of dispersion orders.
22 And I want to spend just a moment on that
23 because I think there may be some

1 controversy about -- about that.

2 Do you recall hearing no -- no
3 instructions at all, in other words, no --
4 no sound or attempt at an instruction; or
5 do you have any recollection of hearing,
6 you know, a sound or an attempt, but it
7 wasn't intelligible? You couldn't -- you
8 couldn't make out what was being said?

9 MR. STEELMAN: I never heard on
10 the 1st any attempt to order a dispersal or
11 any -- any commands from the police, to be
12 honest. So I don't -- I don't recall
13 hearing any even garbled messages,
14 anything. Like, there was no -- there was
15 no one with a loudspeaker.

16 MR. SHARMAN: All right. That
17 was going to be my next question. No bull
18 horns, no loudspeakers, at least that you
19 saw?

20 MR. STEELMAN: No, not that I
21 saw or heard, no.

22 MR. SHARMAN: Yes, maybe --
23 actually, we may pull up a map, and you

1 might -- it might be helpful to everybody
2 if we pull that up. And it might -- it
3 might also jog your memory. Give Jay just
4 a moment here.

5 All right. You might have to --
6 well, let me see. All right. So -- so
7 were you -- where it says, like, West Side
8 Square, North Side Square, Eastside, about
9 where were you at the moment that we are
10 talking about here?

11 MR. STEELMAN: Do you see where
12 the "U" in West Side Square is on the
13 middle of the street? Yeah, right there.
14 Push me -- push me to the left side of that
15 street. That's exactly where I was.

16 MR. SHARMAN: Close to the
17 stairs?

18 MR. STEELMAN: Not exactly even
19 with the stairs. Like, maybe six or seven
20 feet to the right of the stairs. Somewhere
21 around there, ballpark, around there.

22 I was -- I was -- I was in the
23 street, but I was on the edge of the

1 street. I was, like, in the gutter or in
2 the parking spots there.

3 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And,
4 obviously, you don't -- you don't have, you
5 know -- you know, laser vision. But at
6 least from where you were standing there at
7 that -- roughly that "U" in the Square on
8 West Side Square, about how many people
9 were in your line of vision? I mean, kind
10 of what kind of -- what kind of -- at that
11 point about how many people would you guess
12 were around you?

13 MR. STEELMAN: Maybe a couple
14 hundred, if that, maybe 150 to 200.

15 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. All right.
16 So you were at that -- at that -- the "U"
17 there in the Square. So what is the next
18 thing that sticks out in your mind that
19 happened?

20 MR. STEELMAN: Let's see. We
21 have the arrest. There was -- there was
22 someone that burned a flag at one point.
23 And then they -- like, the crowd kind of --

1 was, like, Cut that out. Stop that.

2 And then, you know, people
3 started kneeling, laying down in protest.
4 Yeah, it just kind of went on like that for
5 a while. Like, the people were, you know,
6 look at -- it's like the people were just
7 looking for some show of sympathy or
8 something like that or support; right?

9 And then we actually -- after
10 that -- I think that's gone on for a while
11 now. We actually had to leave because we
12 had -- we had a meeting we had to attend,
13 me and my wife.

14 And then so we started down the
15 Big Spring Park stairs, roughly, oh, man,
16 6:35 or something, 6:40. I need to -- I
17 need to double-check that. I actually have
18 that in a file somewhere, what time we left
19 because that was important. But I will get
20 through my -- I will get through the point
21 of why it's important when we left.

22 So we left before the actual
23 tear gas and stuff started. But we walked

1 down the stairs through Big Spring Park. I
2 had parked across from the -- catty-corner
3 to the -- I'm going to pull up the map and
4 just give you the business.

5 MR. SHARMAN: You want -- Jay,
6 can you pull that map back up, please?

7 MR. SEWELL: Sure.

8 MR. SHARMAN: Hang on. Jay will
9 get the map back up so we can all be on
10 the --

11 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah. Sorry. I
12 just want to tell you my path because it
13 was interesting what we saw on the way.

14 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So you
15 were there on the kind of the "U" on the
16 West --

17 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

18 MR. SHARMAN: -- West Side?

19 And then -- and then there is
20 Big Spring Park right below. So did you
21 kind of go down there?

22 MR. STEELMAN: Go down -- yeah,
23 we went down, and then we went through the

1 park to Church Street and hung a left so we
2 would be going southeast now. Yeah, BB&T.

3 So as we passed City Council and
4 the empty lot next to it, we saw the
5 Huntsville HPD SWAT truck drive into the
6 BB&T building. And we noticed that there
7 was a large presence of officers there
8 staging already for whatever reason. I
9 mean, we obviously know now.

10 But we were -- we were concerned
11 by that given that the nature of the
12 protest had been pretty peaceful. Like,
13 there's been no violence or anything.
14 There's been an arrest for whatever reason
15 and then, you know, one flag burned. We
16 didn't think that kind of warranted SWAT.

17 So we took some video or
18 pictures of them driving in and staging.
19 And then we continued on down Church and
20 hopped in our car in the parking lot across
21 from Church and then went to our -- went to
22 our meeting.

23 And then, obviously, we saw what

1 happened on social medias after -- social
2 media after.

3 MR. SHARMAN: And on the -- on
4 the staging of the SWAT team, as best you
5 could see, was that solely HPD or were
6 there other agencies that were -- that were
7 at that spot?

8 MR. STEELMAN: The only -- the
9 only officers that we saw were HPD. And I
10 would have to guess, there were maybe ten
11 officers already in the BB&T parking lot.
12 And then SWAT -- I don't know how many were
13 in that SWAT car that pulled up, but there
14 were more, obviously, when --

15 MR. SHARMAN: I don't -- I don't
16 know that lot. Is that -- is that a
17 parking deck or a flat lot, open lot?

18 MR. STEELMAN: It's a deck.
19 It's got a big entryway. It's completely
20 covered though. So, like, you -- you drive
21 into a tunnel, essentially. And there is
22 an exit on the south -- southeast and
23 northwest side. So we were at the

1 northwest side.

2 And as we -- as we walked around
3 to go across the street -- we crossed on
4 the crosswalks -- we saw, you know, cop
5 cars even on the northeast side of that lot
6 as well. You could see them through the
7 other exit. So there were -- there were
8 quite a few police in there already.

9 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So you
10 and Emma go on to your meeting. And then
11 after your meeting -- or maybe during the
12 meeting, I don't know, you see events
13 unfolding on social media?

14 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah. Yeah.
15 Facebook lives and stuff going up and not
16 even -- not even really from people that we
17 know. It's just getting pushed to us at
18 this point because it's so -- I guess,
19 like, viral, I guess, in their algorithm.
20 I don't know how it actually got to us
21 but --

22 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. All right.
23 Still sticking with -- so you got done with

1 your meeting. You are consuming, you know,
2 some news.

3 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

4 MR. SHARMAN: And then did
5 anything else important happen from your
6 perspective as far as the 1st goes?

7 MR. STEELMAN: I'm trying to --
8 let me think. Sorry. I'm looking through
9 my notes real quick.

10 I don't remember anything off of
11 the top of my head that was extremely
12 important regarding the 1st.

13 Obviously, I saw the news that,
14 you know, Tommy Battle had showed up and
15 spoke as well. I think that was all
16 happening while we were walking -- while we
17 were walking to the car and seeing SWAT
18 show up, if I'm getting my time line
19 correct.

20 But, yeah, I think that's mainly
21 it, just seeing the -- the aftermath of it
22 so --

23 MR. SHARMAN: Let me ask you a

1 couple of questions about the statement you
2 sent to the -- the CAC's input form. I
3 don't know if you have it with you but --

4 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah, I actually
5 -- I actually just pulled it up. That's
6 what I was checking. Sorry.

7 MR. SHARMAN: Because there were
8 a couple of things there I think we wanted
9 to go back on.

10 In the second paragraph, you
11 said -- consistent with what you just said,
12 you arrived at about five. And you said, I
13 was -- I was nervous because of the crowd
14 size.

15 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah.

16 MR. SHARMAN: What did you mean
17 by that?

18 MR. STEELMAN: So I'm -- I'm
19 just generally not a fan of large crowds of
20 people. That's just me, I guess. There
21 were -- there were more than the 150 to
22 200 that were there while I was just
23 standing there in front of the monument.

1 But it was maybe double that, 3 to 400 when
2 it started, and it had been petering out
3 over the course of us just standing there
4 in front of the monument by the time we
5 left.

6 So it actually had been kind of
7 dispersing kind of naturally. So that --
8 that's it. It's just -- it's just a
9 general nervousness of large crowds. It's
10 not --

11 MR. SHARMAN: Other -- other
12 than you not being a huge fan of huge
13 crowds, there wasn't anything at that
14 moment peculiar about that crowd or those
15 people that made you nervous?

16 MR. STEELMAN: No, absolutely
17 not.

18 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And, also,
19 you mentioned in that same paragraph about
20 what you considered to be disrespect shown
21 by law enforcement officers.

22 Flesh that out a little bit.
23 What did you mean by that?

1 MR. STEELMAN: Yes, so some of
2 the officers would respond to some of the
3 chants by laughing, jeering, just
4 snickering, those kinds of things.

5 Like, again, like you -- like
6 you said earlier, I don't have eagle eyes,
7 but I could -- I could see what they were
8 doing, that it was not a -- it was not a
9 situation where it seemed like respect was
10 being shown.

11 And, obviously, like, I've been
12 invested in this process and been trying to
13 discover more information and stuff about
14 what was actually going on up there.

15 And I have friends now that I've
16 met after the protest that have told me,
17 you know, they were trying to talk with the
18 officers, and the officers were saying some
19 disrespectful things back to them. And I
20 don't have the specifics of that. And I
21 don't think it's right for me to conjecture
22 what they were saying. I just have to take
23 them at face value that it was

1 disrespectful so --

2 MR. SHARMAN: So, basically, it
3 was -- I mean, to kind of lump it -- to
4 kind of put it in a bucket, sort of
5 unprofessional behavior, that that's not --

6 MR. STEELMAN: Absolutely. I
7 mean, there were officers up there taking
8 selfies with -- with each other, with the
9 crowd in the back, you know, like -- it
10 just seems like a kind of disrespectful,
11 unprofessional thing to do when the topic
12 of the rally -- which you know that the
13 officers had to know that this was about
14 George Floyd and police brutality. It just
15 seemed kind of disrespectful to be smiling,
16 laughing, running around taking selfies
17 with your other officers right next to you
18 in such a serious moment when you are the
19 target of the criticism being -- being
20 talked about so --

21 MR. SHARMAN: And then over on
22 the next page of your statement that you
23 submitted, you said that the officers, in

1 your view, were looking to escalate the
2 actions of the evening.

3 What did you mean by that?

4 MR. STEELMAN: So as -- as the
5 time went on, the -- again, I told you the
6 number of officers changed and also the
7 equipment that they were handling changed.
8 The first couple of officers just looked
9 like normal officers that you would see at
10 the courthouse doing security or just
11 walking around, so, like, normal sheriff's
12 department.

13 As time went on, you had guys
14 show up in, you know, more military style
15 looking gear. Still some in plain clothes
16 with it just, you know, thrown over the
17 top. But then you had, like, SWAT show up.
18 And to me, it just -- it's a provocation
19 when there is no necessity for it.

20 You know, the crowd had been
21 civil. They had been -- they had been mad,
22 but they had been civil to that point. And
23 you respond to a discussion about police

1 brutality and overreach and being
2 overbearing by doing exactly that, by
3 bringing increasingly more firepower or
4 more intimidating presence.

5 And I think -- you know, one of
6 the -- one of the best things that I
7 learned from listening to Chief McMurray
8 talk about these events is the police
9 presence and their presentation has a force
10 all by itself; right?

11 So if you respond to that
12 criticism with more force, it's kind of
13 validating the point of the criticism.
14 Does that make sense?

15 It's reinforcing that the police
16 are overbearing. So that's kind of what --
17 that's kind of what I, and I think a lot of
18 people, just speaking broadly, in the crowd
19 perceived is we were not welcome anymore,
20 that there was going to be an end to this
21 because now more police officers with more
22 gear and more guns and more things to
23 disperse us showed up.

1 So, again, I left before the
2 dispersal. So I was trying to give the
3 benefit of the doubt to law enforcement
4 that there was some valid security threat
5 there that needed it. But I don't -- I
6 don't give that same benefit of the doubt
7 after the fact.

8 MR. SHARMAN: So at least one
9 aspect of the escalation, if I hear you
10 right, is the -- is the display of force --

11 MR. STEELMAN: Correct.

12 MR. SHARMAN: -- or display of
13 enhanced or increased force?

14 MR. STEELMAN: Correct. I
15 agree.

16 MR. SHARMAN: Anything else when
17 you -- when you -- when you talk about, you
18 know, escalation, anything else, I mean,
19 you know, agent -- agent provocateurs,
20 people stirring -- I mean, other action --
21 I mean, anything in addition to display of
22 force?

23 MR. STEELMAN: I mean, my

1 personal opinion of arresting someone in
2 the middle of a protest about police
3 brutality is probably a provocation. You
4 probably could have waited to arrest that
5 guy later unless he was a grave danger in
6 that moment.

7 Again, I still don't know why he
8 was arrested, so I can't -- if there was a
9 grave danger, I will, you know, obviously
10 give a pass on that. I'm rational enough
11 to say, hey, if there was an immediate
12 threat to life, yeah, get him -- get him
13 out of there.

14 But nothing that was happening
15 was indicating that at all. So the
16 decision to do that was, in my opinion,
17 ill-advised unless there was some
18 extenuating circumstance. That -- again,
19 that's a provocation in my mind.

20 But, no, I didn't see police,
21 like, you know, down there, like, pushing
22 people or hurting people or anything.

23 But, I mean, there was -- there

1 were people at the steps, obviously, that
2 were getting pushed back, but they were
3 getting pushed back, I think, appropriately
4 because they aren't allowed to be there at
5 that particular moment, right, so on the --
6 on the actual steps wherever the county
7 property begins.

8 But other than that, not that I
9 am aware of. Just, again, the egging on
10 with the unprofessional behavior and then
11 the increasing display of force would be
12 the most provocative things in my mind.

13 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So
14 let's move just kind of chronologically, if
15 we can, to June 3rd. And, again, I'm not
16 cutting you off about anything else. But
17 kind of start -- start in at -- well,
18 actually, let me start in.

19 So you said that before June
20 1st -- you kind of learned about it late.
21 No real participation about, you know,
22 social media or news or anything. It was
23 just, like, oh, hey, we want to go down to

1 this thing.

2 Was it on -- on June 3rd, was it
3 the same kind of situation, kind of, you
4 know, spontaneous or, you know, were you
5 more aware of social media chatter, more
6 planning, that sort of thing?

7 MR. STEELMAN: Yes. So June 3rd
8 was a little different. The NAACP had
9 actually organized a rally in the park
10 beforehand. And we had heard about that on
11 Tuesday or Monday night. I can't remember
12 which -- which day exactly. But it was --
13 it was before the day of this time.

14 And we had tried to find --
15 since there was so much controversy about,
16 you know, the permit or the lack of
17 existence of a permit for June 1st, we
18 tried to find the actual permit.

19 We couldn't find the permit
20 because we don't know how to work through
21 the probate court system apparently or
22 whatever -- whatever licensing organization
23 gives that.

1 But we -- we found the event on
2 NAACP's Facebook, I believe. And it said
3 it was from, like, whatever -- I can't
4 remember the start time because, again, I
5 was at work and I had showed up during the
6 middle of the rally. But it was -- it
7 ended at eight. That was the -- that was
8 the initial info we got.

9 MR. SHARMAN: And that was --
10 excuse me. That was what was on the NAACP
11 website?

12 MR. STEELMAN: That was on their
13 Facebook or one of the --

14 MR. SHARMAN: Facebook. Yes.

15 MR. STEELMAN: One of the social
16 medias, yeah, we saw it through that.

17 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. That was
18 coming from them as opposed to the City or
19 the Court or any other place?

20 MR. STEELMAN: Correct.

21 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. Okay.
22 So -- so y'all saw -- saw that. Any other
23 kind of run-up preparation, discussion,

1 planning anything, or just kind of go on
2 and show up same way as last time?

3 MR. STEELMAN: Kind of the same
4 thing. We -- we called one of our friends
5 this time, and they ended up taking Emma.
6 We only -- we have one car. I should have
7 mentioned that. So she either has to walk
8 or get a ride.

9 So she got a ride from our
10 friends who live nearby to go down there.
11 But other than that, there was no real
12 other planning or anything. That was about
13 all we did was conscript some friends so --

14 MR. SHARMAN: Did you have any
15 sense of either the -- either the level or
16 the tone or the content of the social media
17 discussion before the June 3rd event?

18 MR. STEELMAN: So in light of
19 what I know now, I know there is a lot of,
20 apparently, controversial social media.
21 But I will speak for what I saw because I
22 think that is what you are asking.

23 I didn't see anything that

1 indicated there was going to be anything
2 violent or bad happening. Obviously, I saw
3 people joking about, you know, being
4 teargassed and stuff on Monday. They said,
5 Well, they are just going to do it again,
6 and now it's -- you know, it's going to
7 look even worse because you are doing it at
8 an NAACP event.

9 But, no, I didn't -- I didn't
10 see anything out of the ordinary for
11 standard social media chatter about
12 something of this magnitude, nothing --
13 nothing organizing violence or anything
14 like that, just normal --

15 MR. SHARMAN: And bear in mind,
16 just because we ask a question that has an
17 assumption in it, we don't necessarily
18 believe the assumption. We are just --

19 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

20 MR. SHARMAN: -- asking the
21 question; right?

22 MR. STEELMAN: Sure. Yeah. I
23 just -- I am -- I am going to speak to

1 whatever I can speak for. So if I hear an
2 assumption, I will speak to it.

3 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So I'm
4 sorry I interrupted you. So you
5 were -- you were at work. And so you went
6 after work, I'm guessing?

7 MR. STEELMAN: Correct. I got
8 off a little earlier on Wednesday. I took
9 some PPO to go a little earlier. And I
10 think I got there at 4:15 this time,
11 roughly, 4:30, just a half-hour or so
12 earlier.

13 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So when you
14 got there at about 4:15 or so, kind of what
15 was the -- what was the situation that you
16 saw when you got there?

17 MR. STEELMAN: So I showed up
18 while we were still down in the park having
19 the NAACP rally. I brought some water,
20 like a case of water in a wagon, for just
21 people at the rally because it was kind of
22 hot that day, obviously, the middle of
23 summer.

1 But I showed up with a wagon of
2 water. I think I wheeled it to the front,
3 actually. Someone -- someone said they
4 needed water at the front. So I took it up
5 to the speakers while they were speaking.
6 I came back down and rejoined my wife in
7 the crowd, listened to all of the speakers.
8 I don't remember how many I heard, maybe
9 four or five. And then I think -- yeah,
10 that ended, and then we went and marched,
11 went up the stairs and marched.

12 MR. SHARMAN: What was the
13 general tenor of the crowd and the speakers
14 in the -- in the park? And by "tenor" I
15 mean quiet, loud, angry, calm, happy,
16 confused. Kind of what was the vibe at
17 that point?

18 MR. STEELMAN: I mean, it was a
19 very serious topic that they were
20 discussing. So it was -- it was pretty
21 resolute -- I would say resolute conviction
22 that what they were doing was right and not
23 fearful, just we've got to -- we've got to

1 tackle this issue and -- and really keep
2 fighting for what's right. It was kind of,
3 you know, hopeful in a way.

4 I wouldn't say happy, but I
5 wouldn't say, like, that they were angry
6 trying to, like, stir up anything. You
7 know, it's -- it's more just we are going
8 to -- we are going to make change, you
9 know, we are going to make positive change.

10 MR. SHARMAN: Towards the --
11 towards the end of the event, did any of
12 the speakers or anybody give the crowd any
13 directions or guidance about where to go or
14 movement or anything.

15 MR. STEELMAN: Not that I
16 recall.

17 MR. SHARMAN: Again, I'm not
18 saying they should have. I'm just trying
19 to figure out if they were essentially, you
20 know, thank you -- thank you very much for
21 coming, you know, you can exit here and
22 here or anything like that.

23 MR. STEELMAN: I remember a

1 thank you, but I don't remember -- I don't
2 remember if they told us to go up the
3 stairs or if that was just kind of the
4 assumption.

5 MR. SHARMAN: Okay.

6 MR. STEELMAN: Again, we had
7 seen -- or I had seen when I was coming
8 in -- I came into the rally through
9 Spragins because I went down the big hill
10 on Spragins to the little cul-de-sac that
11 butts into the park to drop off the water
12 and the little wagon that we were carrying
13 the water with. And then I went and
14 parked -- where did I park that day? I
15 don't remember where I parked that day,
16 actually. I'm trying to recall that.

17 But, anyway, the point of me
18 saying that was I had seen that the Square
19 was blocked off completely by police
20 cruisers. So I kind of assumed there was a
21 march after. Plus, it wasn't anywhere
22 close to 8 p.m. So I was assuming that
23 there was -- that there was something going

1 on after based on that.

2 So when people started going up,
3 I just followed. But I honestly don't
4 remember if the speakers told us to go
5 march.

6 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And do you
7 remember the speakers or organizers or
8 anybody in charge saying anything about the
9 permit, permit times, anything like that?

10 MR. STEELMAN: No. They didn't
11 mention it.

12 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So --
13 so you and others just sort of head, I
14 guess, up the stairs --

15 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

16 MR. SHARMAN: -- to the Square?

17 MR. STEELMAN: Up the stairs or
18 they doubled back around Spragins --
19 doubled back through that little cul-de-sac
20 I was talking about and then up Spragins.

21 That's what we did. We didn't
22 want to get caught up in the stairs so --

23 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And so when

1 you -- when y'all got there, what did you
2 see when you -- or what was the situation
3 when you got there in the Square?

4 MR. STEELMAN: Well, we didn't
5 stop in the Square immediately. We --
6 we marched for a while. But, yeah, there
7 were significantly more police than Monday,
8 sheriff and HPD. There were -- there
9 were -- I'm sure you guys have heard this
10 already, but there were guys on the roof
11 with long rifles scoping in on people.
12 There were cop cars blocking off a whole
13 bunch of intersections around the Square.

14 All of the cops were in, like,
15 pretty heavy gear. The sheriff was in
16 heavy gear. Like, all of them had helmets,
17 and some of them had -- I think it was a
18 sheriff that had the riot shields.

19 And I know it was a lot more --
20 in talking about display of force, it was
21 very forceful right from the beginning, and
22 it didn't get much better as the night went
23 on.

1 MR. SHARMAN: And you mentioned
2 the -- the officers that seemed to be
3 stationed on the roof. Let me -- and let
4 me kind of press on that a little bit --

5 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

6 MR. SHARMAN: -- because, I mean,
7 that's -- I mean -- I mean, you are -- you
8 are a young man. You've probably got good
9 eyesight.

10 But, I mean, somebody up on the
11 roof, I mean, that's a good ways away. I
12 mean, were you able to see them well, or
13 you just kind of see -- see figures,
14 basically?

15 MR. STEELMAN: Oh, no, I could
16 see them. I couldn't see what organization
17 they were with. They were wearing, you
18 know, just like -- they were wearing
19 probably the least amount of gear, but they
20 were, you know, not in the middle of it.
21 So I'm assuming that's why.

22 But I could -- I could tell that
23 they were wearing, like, kind of army --

1 dark army green. Yeah, I could see the --
2 the -- the rifle. I could see the scope.
3 I could see them looking in on it.

4 They had -- and it wasn't just
5 that. They had -- they had officers on
6 every level, like, there, like, little
7 mezzanine levels. There were officers
8 there that were, like, looking over
9 everything, using binoculars and stuff like
10 that.

11 MR. SHARMAN: Do you recall
12 seeing any -- any of the officers
13 stationed, you know, on the roof aiming or
14 seeming to try to aim at a particular
15 person as supposed to, you know, panning --
16 panning the crowd?

17 MR. STEELMAN: I couldn't
18 discern if they were picking out a
19 particular person, but I definitely did
20 see them, you know, put the scope to their
21 eye -- or put their eye to the scope,
22 rather, and it was in the direction of the
23 crowd. So, again, I don't know.

1 MR. SHARMAN: But you couldn't
2 -- it sounds like if somebody was aiming at
3 a stop sign versus a person, you weren't --
4 you just couldn't tell from your -- from
5 the ground; right?

6 MR. STEELMAN: Correct. Yeah,
7 yeah, I definitely could not tell but --
8 exactly what they were looking at. But it
9 did -- it was in the direction -- in the
10 general vicinity of this crowd of, you
11 know, a couple thousand people.

12 So I would presume they wouldn't
13 be looking at, like, a building or a stop
14 sign or something but -- based on that, but
15 I don't know.

16 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. All right.
17 So -- and I'm sorry, I kind of interrupted
18 you. So you were there. And now we are
19 probably -- about what time are we now
20 probably? Probably six -- six-ish or so
21 maybe?

22 MR. STEELMAN: When the marching
23 started?

1 MR. SHARMAN: Yes. Yes. When
2 you were up there. You see the heavy --
3 you see the increased display of force.
4 You are seeing folks on the roof. You are
5 thinking, wow, this is a lot more than at
6 first.

7 MR. STEELMAN: I think, yeah,
8 six -- six-ish sounds right, again, plus or
9 minus 15 maybe. I definitely think it
10 was -- yeah, it would have to be. I'm just
11 trying to think back. It would have to be
12 around six, yes.

13 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So
14 what's the -- what's the next thing that
15 kind of sticks in your -- in your memory or
16 the next important thing that happens or
17 noticeable thing that happens?

18 MR. STEELMAN: We marched. We
19 marched for a while. I don't know how long
20 exactly, maybe 30 -- 30 minutes, maybe.

21 MR. SHARMAN: And during --
22 excuse me for interrupting you, but during
23 that phase, just the marching, in general,

1 what was the conduct of law enforcement
2 during that piece of it?

3 MR. STEELMAN: The conduct I
4 think there from what I could see was --
5 was different depending on where you were,
6 but not egregious or -- well, I shouldn't
7 say that -- not -- not illegal.

8 There were officers that were
9 blocking traffic, obviously, that were
10 doing a great job, that were letting us go
11 through and there were no problems.

12 But then, like, the officers
13 that were stationed around the courthouse
14 were doing the same kind of, you know,
15 jeering and sneering that they were doing
16 on Monday, the kind of, you know -- we'd
17 chant something at them. Whether it was a
18 positive or a negative chant or anything,
19 and they would laugh or -- you know, I
20 think I saw one officer flip someone off at
21 one point. Again, I don't know if that was
22 HPD or sheriff. I couldn't -- I don't know
23 all of their gear so I couldn't tell you.

1 But, you know, it's stuff like that.

2 It was a mixed bag. You know,
3 it was, like, you had officers that were
4 doing their job and we had no problems with
5 and officers that were being
6 unprofessional.

7 MR. SHARMAN: All right. So the
8 marching and then what is the next kind of
9 important thing that, from your
10 perspective, kind of sticks out?

11 MR. STEELMAN: So we marched,
12 and then we got back to the steps again in
13 front of the courthouse, like we did on
14 Monday. A lot of the same chanting, just
15 way more people this time.

16 Chanting, you know, kind of --
17 either-ish kind of things, like laying down
18 and kneeling, all of those kinds of things
19 to evoke a response, I guess, from the
20 police. I think they wanted some sort
21 of -- or we wanted some sort of dialogue.
22 Obviously, not -- in retrospect, it's not
23 going to happen in a protest.

1 But there were drones overhead
2 this time. You just started noticing how
3 much surveillance was going on and how
4 much -- how many -- how many police there
5 were this time. It was just a lot
6 different.

7 Yeah, more of the same in that
8 regard. I noticed -- I think it was over
9 by Cotton Row there were officers that had,
10 like, AR15 style rifles and special MP5
11 kind of looking platform machine guns.
12 Assuming they were SWAT. I'm not really
13 sure. They were in all black uniform,
14 helmets on.

15 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So you are
16 there -- so you are back at the courthouse.
17 We've got noticeably enhanced, you know,
18 displays of both, you know, power and
19 surveillance, drones and so forth.

20 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

21 MR. SHARMAN: Kind of then what
22 happened, or was it just more of the
23 same -- or what was the next important

1 thing to you that happened?

2 MR. STEELMAN: I'm trying to
3 think. We -- we ended up staying in that
4 crowd for a while. We were by the same --
5 I was at, roughly, the same position that I
6 was on Monday in the street.

7 We went -- at some point me, my
8 wife, and my wife's -- or sorry -- my
9 friend -- my friend and her husband went
10 with us. And during the march, we lost her
11 husband somewhere. So we were having
12 trouble with our phones. Like, they
13 weren't really connecting calls for some
14 reason. But everyone was having trouble
15 with it, apparently. I don't really know
16 why.

17 But we went back to the car.
18 And I think the car was on Greene, if I am
19 remembering correctly, Greene Street. So
20 we went -- what would that be -- northeast
21 to get to Greene. And we didn't find him.
22 We thought he'd come back to the car since
23 we couldn't contact him. We didn't find

1 him.

2 So then we walked back again
3 into the crowd, and we ended up finding
4 him, roughly, back where we were. And he
5 had apparently been -- he told us what he
6 had been doing while we were marching,
7 because he lost us.

8 So what he did, instead of
9 marching around, he actually sat on the
10 corner of the Square next to some officers
11 and was listening to them talk and was
12 telling us what kind of things they said.
13 So we got that story from him.

14 MR. SHARMAN: What did he report
15 to y'all?

16 MR. STEELMAN: So he was
17 reporting that they were saying some
18 interesting things, like, they were calling
19 out people that they wanted to arrest by,
20 you know, age, race, what they were
21 wearing, those kinds of things, just
22 targets, if you will; and then saying that,
23 you know, it's almost time or something

1 like that -- or it's about to get real was
2 the one that stuck out in my mind.

3 You know, that's kind of weird,
4 in my opinion. But, yeah, he -- he sat
5 there and listened to them until he saw
6 most of the crowd come back, and then he
7 made his way back into the crowd to try
8 and find us, but we had gone and come back
9 so --

10 MR. SHARMAN: Same question
11 about communication, orders to disperse we
12 talked about on the 1st, did you ever hear
13 any, you know, instructions to the crowd,
14 orders to disperse, anything like that?

15 MR. STEELMAN: We did not.
16 There were people there that night that
17 said they did hear something, but they
18 couldn't understand it. But we never heard
19 anything. And, I mean, again, we were,
20 like you pointed out, less than a hundred
21 feet from where most of the stuff was
22 actually happening.

23 MR. SHARMAN: Okay.

1 MR. STEELMAN: My friend who was
2 sitting there listening to the officers did
3 say that they tried to make some
4 announcement while the crowd was out
5 marching, which we still don't really know
6 what they said. He said he couldn't make
7 out what they were telling them to do. But
8 he did -- he did hear a loudspeaker. So I
9 think there was a loudspeaker there that
10 night, but we never heard it. He did.
11 Again, I'm going off his word for that.

12 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. So marching
13 back to the Square. And then kind of what
14 happened -- what happened then from your
15 perspective?

16 MR. STEELMAN: So we -- we
17 decided that we needed to go because we
18 didn't like what the police were saying
19 that our friend had heard. I think it was
20 about 7:15 when we made the call to leave.
21 Me and my -- my friend have security
22 clearances, obviously, and we don't want to
23 get arrested or caught up in any of that

1 kind of stuff. So we -- we decided to --
2 to head out. And our wives, obviously,
3 went with us.

4 So we hopped in the car. We
5 went to their house. They live in Five
6 Points, close to downtown. And then we
7 turned on social media and started watching
8 a couple of different live streams from the
9 news and live streams from people that were
10 there that we knew.

11 Let me think if there was
12 anything interesting that happened. I
13 don't know. We just saw police everywhere.
14 That was the weirdest thing to us. It was
15 just cop cars everywhere and cops
16 everywhere so --

17 MR. SHARMAN: You mentioned in
18 your statement about an event -- or maybe
19 you got a call from a friend with a
20 daughter who was --

21 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah.

22 MR. SHARMAN: -- kind of stuck
23 or stranded?

1 MR. STEELMAN: Yes. So we -- me
2 and my wife are helpers with the youth
3 group at our church. And we had seen --
4 while we were standing in the initial rally
5 crowd during the speaking portion, we had
6 seen one of our kids from youth there. She
7 didn't see us, but we saw her. And we
8 were, like, okay, cool, you know, she's
9 here.

10 So at some point, Emma had been
11 posting photos on Facebook, I think, of the
12 crowd. And I guess her mom had seen those.
13 Because we got back to their house -- our
14 friends' house -- around 7:20. We started
15 watching things go down on social media,
16 including, you know, the state troopers
17 coming in and all of that kind of stuff,
18 and then the tear gas starting.

19 And we got a call from her mom
20 and was, like, are you guys still down
21 there? And we said, no, we left, you know,
22 maybe 30 minutes ago. And she was, like,
23 well, my daughter is still down there, and

1 she's supposedly with friends, but I can't
2 get ahold of her.

3 Again, no one's phones were
4 working. So I don't know how that happened
5 still. It's kind of weird. But our phone
6 worked as soon as we got out of downtown,
7 which we thought was a little suspicious.
8 But we decided to go back to find her and
9 get her out.

10 So she had been in a parking
11 garage was the only message that she could
12 get out to her mom. And this was, again,
13 after it had all started. So there is, you
14 know, tear gas everywhere, cops everywhere,
15 and people trying to get out of downtown
16 now. And we are coming back in.

17 So we came down -- what did we
18 come down -- Holmes or Clinton -- no, no.
19 It was -- it was Clinton. We came down --
20 is it Clinton? It's the one that has the
21 Goodyear on it because that's --

22 MR. SHARMAN: That's all right.
23 We trust you. You just --

1 MR. STEELMAN: I'm trying to
2 remember. I think it was Clinton because
3 we had -- we had decided to check all of
4 the parking garages downtown, and we were
5 going to start with the Clinton garage
6 because it was the closest one. But we
7 couldn't actually get into downtown. We
8 had to park outside of downtown.

9 So I dropped off Emma at Clinton
10 and Greene. And there were officers
11 blocking her way to get back into downtown.
12 She -- and I was, like, circling trying to
13 get to the next parking garage. But,
14 again, a ton of streets were blocked, so it
15 was hard to get around.

16 She called me at that point, but
17 I was -- it was, like, reception was
18 terrible. Couldn't get anything through to
19 her, so I came back to her. And she had --
20 apparently during that ten minutes I was
21 gone, she had talked to a couple of
22 officers. They wouldn't let her go back
23 in. Then they said -- she explained the

1 situation. They said that they would go
2 get her. She said she didn't think that
3 was a good idea. And eventually she
4 convinced one of the officers to let her go
5 check the Clinton garage.

6 Meanwhile, you know, they are
7 choking on tear gas this whole time because
8 it's just -- the whole downtown was tear
9 gas at that point. Her and the officer
10 were choking on tear gas.

11 So she ends up finding the girl
12 in the Clinton garage and stays with her
13 until they reopened the streets and, like,
14 tended to her and her friends that were
15 still there. I think one of them had
16 gotten hit with a rubber bullet. And, I
17 mean, these are, like, high schoolers. One
18 of them got hit with a rubber bullet, and
19 one of them -- or sorry --- and they'd all
20 been tear-gassed. So she was just kind of
21 hanging out there with them.

22 Then we drove back in -- or I
23 drove back in, went into the parking

1 garage. We finally could call her mom.
2 The phone started working. And then we,
3 like, helped them get out of the garage,
4 basically, and went home so --

5 MR. SHARMAN: All right. On the
6 subject of injuries, and you had some
7 photos, I think, of -- of some injuries --

8 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

9 MR. SHARMAN: -- do you -- and
10 you submitted those. Do you know -- do you
11 know the names of anybody who was actually,
12 you know, injured by a rubber bullet, a
13 beanbag or --

14 MR. STEELMAN: Some -- some of
15 them, yeah, yeah. A lot of them, no, I
16 don't. But, yes, some of them I do.

17 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. I mean,
18 because we, you know, potentially would
19 like to talk to them, or at least know who
20 they are.

21 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

22 MR. SHARMAN: Do you know
23 anybody now?

1 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah. Let me go
2 through my -- let me go through my list
3 here. The one that -- that always sticks
4 out in my mind is Josh Roberts. He got hit
5 in the stomach, and he had a welt that was
6 probably like -- a bruise and welt that was
7 probably like, I don't know, six to seven
8 inches around. He was -- he was wearing a
9 layer or two of clothing in anticipation of
10 something bad happening as well, and he
11 still got injured pretty bad.

12 Let me -- let me try and pull
13 this up really quick, and I will see if I
14 can find them. But I definitely -- I
15 definitely know someone who has a list of
16 people that were hurt, and I could probably
17 send you that after the fact. I will have
18 to --

19 MR. SHARMAN: So we don't, you
20 know -- you know, use up too much of
21 everybody's time, just make a note of it.
22 And if you will -- she's off camera, but if
23 you could send that list back to Susan

1 Harper who reached out to you in the first
2 instance about the interview --

3 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

4 MR. SHARMAN: -- when you get
5 that, if you could just send it to Susan,
6 that -- that might be helpful.

7 I'm sorry?

8 And Jay is saying, also, it may
9 be difficult to do, but if -- when you send
10 the list, if you can link the name to a
11 photo. You may not be able to do that, but
12 if you can, that would probably be helpful,
13 too, because obviously some may be more
14 necessary or pertinent, you know, than
15 others.

16 MR. STEELMAN: Yes, I will try.
17 I think within the ENUF group, someone has
18 done that at one point, but I've got to
19 figure out who did it. And I will ask
20 them. There's been a lot of talk about the
21 injuries, and, obviously, people are
22 considering suits and stuff like that in
23 certain cases. And I don't want to --

1 MR. SHARMAN: Right. And they
2 may not -- and for that reason, they may
3 not want to or their lawyers may tell them
4 not to --

5 MR. STEELMAN: Right. Yes.

6 MR. SHARMAN: -- speak with us,
7 and that's certainly their right. That's
8 fine.

9 MR. STEELMAN: Sure. Yes. I
10 will try to get you guys that list, though,
11 if they are willing to put their names with
12 the photos so --

13 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. And I
14 apologize for sort of jumping around --

15 MR. STEELMAN: That's fine.

16 MR. SHARMAN: -- but I'm trying
17 to get everything here.

18 You mentioned in your statement
19 about the permit change. This is on
20 page 3.

21 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

22 MR. SHARMAN: You said -- you
23 said: The NAACP changed the time at the

1 police's request through the permitting
2 process. This seemed like a tactic by
3 police to prevent people from protesting
4 again.

5 Flesh that out a little bit.
6 Why is the time change a police tactic to
7 prevent protests?

8 MR. STEELMAN: So it created a
9 little bit of confusion about what we were
10 actually supposed to do. So the -- the --
11 if you look on the day after the June 3rd
12 protest, I believe Jerry Burnet, who is the
13 local president of the NAACP chapter, did a
14 Facebook live interview where he talks
15 about how the police were saying, Well, no,
16 you guys can go until eight, and that's
17 fine. And, you know, he -- they were --
18 the NAACP was basically in control of the
19 march and all that stuff.

20 And then at the very last
21 minute, they had the permit changed. The
22 police were, like, no, you can't do this
23 anymore. And it changed the expectations

1 of all the people that were already bought
2 into the original time slot.

3 But the NAACP did not have time
4 to reorganize their event, and they felt
5 like it was kind of a confusing tactic and
6 a detriment to their ability to organize.

7 And so I say -- I say it's a
8 tactic by the police because it could have
9 been done sooner. There was no reason.
10 That permit had been in place for a couple
11 of days, to my understanding, already. And
12 they had ample time to talk through issues
13 like that.

14 And my understanding is Mark
15 McMurray and Jerry Burnet have a great
16 relationship. So, again, I don't
17 understand why that would happen at the
18 last minute and cause such mass confusion.

19 I think Jerry Burnet even said
20 himself that he could have told people, you
21 know, we are not marching. We are just
22 going to go home if he had done it -- if he
23 had been able to plan the event

1 appropriately without any last-minute
2 changes, so to speak.

3 MR. SHARMAN: Do you -- do you
4 believe that was an intentional act by HPD
5 or just bad -- bad management in handling a
6 communication that then resulted in a lot
7 of confusion that then resulted in
8 undesirable outcomes?

9 MR. STEELMAN: So, again, I'm
10 not privy to the conversations that allowed
11 that permit change and necessitated it. So
12 I don't know if it was intentional or if it
13 was just a bad result, so to speak.

14 But I can go with what Jerry
15 Burnet said, and he seemed it sounded -- he
16 sounded like it was somewhat intentional.
17 I would -- I would -- you know, if you have
18 further questions about that, I would
19 recommend you talk to him because he's the
20 one that has the insider information on
21 that conversation.

22 But from a public standpoint, it
23 was really confusing to not know that the

1 permit time had changed. And it was really
2 confusing to see all of the indications
3 that there would be a march, that the
4 permit was 5:30 to eight or five to eight,
5 whenever it was, to see that there was an
6 infrastructure for it to exist already in
7 the way that we were expecting it to exist
8 and then to be told, well, no, now,
9 actually, the permit had been neutered.

10 And we had no -- just -- sorry.
11 To add on to that, we, me and my wife, had
12 no indication of that. It was not
13 reflected on the Facebook event. It was
14 not reflected on any press briefings or
15 anything like that. We did not know that
16 the permit had been changed until days
17 later.

18 So that's -- you know, if you
19 are trying to be a law-abiding citizen and
20 you, you know, strictly adhere to permits,
21 which I have a whole -- I could go on a
22 whole diatribe about that and First
23 Amendment rights, but we will just ignore

1 that for the moment. It's extremely
2 confusing if you are planning on being
3 there for the duration of an event and then
4 it's changed, you know, two hours before
5 the event, and there is no mention of it to
6 the public so --

7 MR. SHARMAN: Okay. I was kind
8 of looking at my list here. Do you have
9 any insight or -- or knowledge -- and I'm
10 not saying you should or shouldn't -- into
11 law enforcement's use or, you know, misuse
12 of intelligence gathering before these
13 events?

14 MR. STEELMAN: Do you -- do you
15 want the short version or the long version?

16 MR. SHARMAN: Well, let's start
17 with the short and see how that goes.

18 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah, we've
19 done -- people within ENUF have done a
20 tremendous amount of digging through social
21 media to essentially refute just about
22 every piece of intelligence that Mark
23 McMurray presented on the June 18th

1 special -- June 18th City Council special
2 session. We have basically shot down I
3 would say 95 percent of the -- of this
4 stuff that he presented as intelligence
5 and --

6 MR. SHARMAN: Is that material
7 -- we've looked at so much stuff, forgive
8 me. Is that material in part of what you
9 submitted, or is that -- is that somewhere
10 else?

11 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah, so it's --
12 the majority of it, the lion's share of it
13 is in the presentation that I gave --

14 MR. SHARMAN: Okay.

15 MR. STEELMAN: -- for ENUF.

16 MR. SHARMAN: Okay.

17 MR. STEELMAN: But it wasn't
18 orally presented because of time
19 constraints. It's actually an addendum.
20 So, like, the first -- let me tell you.
21 The first 16 slides were what I presented
22 orally, and then slides 17 through 74 are
23 the actual whole story in its entirety as

1 we see it, including there is a whole
2 section about the intelligence that was
3 presented on the 18th that was used to
4 justify what's going on. And a lot of it
5 was just completely miscontextualized, made
6 up, just -- a lot of it was just normal
7 human behavior. And it's sad that it was
8 presented in a way that it was credible
9 evidence to what happened on the 1st and
10 the 3rd so --

11 MR. SHARMAN: Let me -- let
12 me -- let me -- let me hypothesize a
13 response and see what your assessment of it
14 is. And I'm not -- I'm not -- I'm not
15 ascribing this response to any -- any
16 particular person or -- or witness.

17 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

18 MR. SHARMAN: But if -- if
19 somebody said, look, yeah, we've got a
20 lot -- we've got a lot of intelligence, and
21 it was wrong; or, you know, it was
22 accurate, but it got misinterpreted.

23 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

1 MR. SHARMAN: And it got
2 misinterpreted, in part, because of the
3 environment, that is, obviously, this
4 was -- this was quite soon after, you know,
5 the George Floyd event. There was some
6 serious unrest in many cities across the
7 country. That was -- that was coloring
8 perceptions of what was being consumed
9 here.

10 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah. Sure.

11 MR. SHARMAN: So -- so, yeah, a
12 lot of it ended up being just -- just
13 wrong, as intelligence often is. But --
14 but there was no -- there was no -- there
15 was no willful effort to -- to twist it or
16 intentional effort to -- to misuse it. If
17 somebody said that, what would be your view
18 or response to that?

19 MR. STEELMAN: So in reference
20 to just any gathering of intel or in
21 reference to law enforcement --

22 MR. SHARMAN: These events, in
23 particular. Yeah, these events, in

1 particular, yes.

2 MR. STEELMAN: So in reference
3 to law enforcement, there is an expectation
4 from my perspective of law enforcement to
5 be able to gather intel; one, discern
6 whether it's credible or not -- and
7 sometimes it's difficult. I understand
8 that -- to determine that, credibility --
9 but then furthering that idea of how
10 information affects decision-making. You
11 have to verify that that intelligence is
12 happening or is leading you to the correct
13 assumption or plan in the moment as well.

14 And in the moment, you know, you
15 didn't see Antifa with backpacks and
16 skateboards breaking into stores and
17 causing anarchy. You saw people
18 protesting.

19 You didn't see Mr. 27 doing
20 criminal activity on June 1st. And by the
21 way, that was the only credible,
22 quote/unquote, credible piece of intel that
23 was really presented to justify what

1 happened on June 1st by McMurray, and --
2 and it had no bearing on what actually
3 happened that day.

4 Mr. 27 -- I actually -- I know
5 Mr. 27 now after the fact. I found out who
6 he was. And I'm going to refrain from
7 saying his name. But he did nothing that
8 day. He was just there. And now he's been
9 demonized as a person -- as a person who
10 was there.

11 So to say that in the moment
12 that piece of information was not relevant
13 at all and now two weeks later, on June --
14 or the 18th special session, it was
15 presented as a smoking gun; right? To me,
16 that's dishonesty. To me, that's misusing
17 intel or it's either fabricating intel
18 after the fact.

19 So I guess my point is there is
20 a duty in making any decision to understand
21 your inputs, and then your outputs flow
22 from those inputs. If your inputs are bad,
23 you are going to have bad outputs. But

1 there is a step in the middle where you
2 actually execute. And part of execution
3 should be validating your inputs.

4 And my assessment of the 1st and
5 the 3rd and then the information that was
6 given on the 18th was that there was no
7 change in plan based on what was actually
8 happening in the moment on the 1st and the
9 3rd. It's a -- it's a concept called
10 planned continuation bias. And we actually
11 have a slide about cognitive biases and
12 decision-making in our presentation. So I
13 will -- I will defer to that.

14 But, yeah, it's -- it's -- none
15 of the intel that was presented turned out
16 to be credible. And in the moment, I
17 understand that's hard to put aside that
18 intel, but there was no -- there was no
19 reason to escalate in those moments even
20 based on that intel -- or sorry -- based on
21 that intel or even based on any other
22 extenuating circumstances, in my opinion
23 so --

1 MR. SHARMAN: On the escalation
2 point, let me ask you another provocative
3 question. So -- and ascribing it to my
4 hypothetical unnamed witness.

5 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

6 MR. SHARMAN: So this person
7 says, Look, we get it that -- that a
8 display of force may after the fact with
9 the benefit of hindsight be -- be more than
10 would have been necessary or even over the
11 top --

12 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

13 MR. SHARMAN: -- but -- but from
14 a law enforcement officer's perspective,
15 you know, I can't really say should real
16 violence break out, should a riot genuinely
17 start to form, I don't have the ability to
18 say, Hang on, give me 20 minutes, let me go
19 get my gear, I will be -- I will be right
20 back, and then we can have a fair fight.

21 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

22 MR. SHARMAN: You know, the --
23 you know, I've got to -- if I have concerns

1 or if my boss has concerns or my captain
2 has concerns or whatever, well, if I'm
3 supposed to -- if I'm supposed to be ready
4 to do that, I've got to have the gear on,
5 and I've got to be there because I'm not
6 going to be catching a break if something
7 bad happens.

8 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

9 MR. SHARMAN: What is your
10 response to that?

11 MR. STEELMAN: I would -- I
12 would understand that, that you need to be
13 prepared for the worst. I'm a structural
14 engineer. Like, I get that. I deal in
15 conservative risk-taking and what is the
16 worst possible outcome.

17 I used to work on helicopters,
18 and people died if I made a bad mistake.
19 But there is also an extreme incentive
20 to -- and I will use my helicopter analogy
21 again -- to save weight, to do the most
22 with the minimum.

23 So in this analogy, it would be,

1 be prepared for the worst, but you don't
2 have to act as if the worst is happening.
3 And that's -- that's my whole point about
4 plan continuation bias is, you can be
5 prepared for the worst and not actually do
6 anything if you see that there is nothing
7 warranting that.

8 I'm not saying, you know, send
9 all SWAT home, don't be ready. But there
10 was no violence. And we were -- we were
11 dispersed as if we were a riot.

12 I mean, there are -- there are
13 other cities in this -- in this -- in our
14 nation that had orders of magnitude more
15 people show up at riots, orders of
16 magnitude more police officers show up at
17 riots, and they dispersed peacefully even
18 when there was some violence. Those
19 particular actors were dealt with
20 individually.

21 So to infringe on the rights of
22 people to -- to protest peacefully by
23 assuming that the group is going to act in

1 the worst possible way without actually
2 having any credible intel that they are
3 going to, and without actually seeing it
4 occur, to me, that's -- to me, that's
5 overbearing. It's exactly what we are
6 protesting against. It's -- you are not
7 treating people with the respect and the
8 dignity that they deserve.

9 And if they violate your
10 assumption that they have respect and
11 dignity, that's when you act. If they are
12 violent, that's when you act. Be prepared
13 for them to act, but don't act unless there
14 is some reason to act. That's -- I guess
15 that would be my -- my stance on that.

16 MR. SHARMAN: All right. Well,
17 that's very helpful. Let me -- let me
18 consult with my co-counsel.

19 Liz, do you have any follow-up,
20 or do you have anything that you want to
21 add?

22 MS. HUNTLEY: Yes.

23 So, Mr. Steelman, I'm trying to

1 see if there is a way we can --

2 MR. SHARMAN: I'm going to
3 trade -- do you want to trade?

4 MS. HUNTLEY: Sure.

5 So I'll introduce myself. I'm
6 Liz Huntley, a partner in crime here with
7 Jack.

8 So I wanted to -- I know we've
9 sort of climaxed to this really strong
10 point you are making about your opinion of
11 what happened and the steps that law
12 enforcement took or should have taken. And
13 I want to step back just to one other
14 thing.

15 The friend that you had that was
16 sitting there observing the conversation or
17 listening to the conversation between the
18 officers on the corner --

19 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

20 MS. HUNTLEY: -- do you -- do
21 you recall what corner that was?

22 MR. STEELMAN: No, but I could
23 actually text him right now and ask him, if

1 you want. Actually, I can just message him
2 on my computer. One second. I've got to
3 adjust my --

4 MS. HUNTLEY: And do you have a
5 time frame of when that would have been?

6 MR. STEELMAN: That's a tougher
7 question. I don't remember exactly when we
8 marched, but it wasn't far after the crowd
9 moved up to the steps. So it would have
10 been between whenever the crowd went up to
11 the steps probably around 6:15 before we
12 left, obviously. We left maybe 15 minutes
13 after that, so between 6:15 and seven, I
14 guess. That would be my guess.

15 Let me -- let me ask him real
16 quick. Let's see if he answers. If not, I
17 will be sure to get you that question
18 answered in a follow-up email. But I will
19 let you know what he says.

20 MS. HUNTLEY: And just so I can
21 kind of understand a little bit more
22 about -- and I'm sorry if I am jumping back
23 to things. Jack has done a great job of

1 getting us to sort of the end. And I'm
2 sure he will -- when I pass back, he will
3 ask you if there is anything else you want
4 to add.

5 But jumping back to the -- the
6 march around the Square at that point --
7 and I'm pretty much going to ask you
8 questions about June 3rd.

9 MR. STEELMAN: Okay.

10 MS. HUNTLEY: So that's where my
11 follow-up is. So when you were up there,
12 were there any pockets of people that were
13 maybe leading chants or continuing to speak
14 like they had done at the NAACP portion
15 before to discuss anything about the events
16 of what was happening at the time?

17 MR. STEELMAN: Yes. So during
18 the actual marching, there were people,
19 like, every so many -- I don't know --
20 maybe 75, 100 feet that were chanting, that
21 were leading chants. But, I mean, that's,
22 like, a pretty typical protest thing. My
23 understanding is you just -- you chant

1 while you march.

2 As far as when we stopped, there
3 were -- there were some people talking, but
4 it wasn't like an organized -- never seemed
5 like an organized speech or anything like
6 that.

7 MS. HUNTLEY: Were there any
8 individuals trying to encourage people to
9 leave and disperse, like, after you-all had
10 sort of made your rounds in doing the
11 march?

12 MR. STEELMAN: Not that I
13 remember. I mean, there were people that
14 were dispersing and leaving. But I don't
15 think I remember being encouraged by anyone
16 or hearing that happen so --

17 MS. HUNTLEY: And when you
18 talked about the sort of exchange that was
19 going on between law enforcement and the
20 protesters --

21 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

22 MS. HUNTLEY: -- and you said
23 that they were making remarks to them where

1 maybe they might laugh back at them or
2 something along those lines --

3 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

4 MS. HUNTLEY: -- that you
5 characterized as unprofessional, what were
6 some of the remarks being made? Were any
7 of those remarks threatening towards law
8 enforcement?

9 MR. STEELMAN: The remarks being
10 made to law enforcement?

11 MS. HUNTLEY: Yes.

12 MR. STEELMAN: I wouldn't say
13 they were threatening. They were
14 definitely, you know, criticizing police,
15 though. The chants, I mean, are --
16 don't get me wrong, like, I'm not trying to
17 paint -- paint protesters, like, we weren't
18 criticizing the police, that we were just
19 receiving, you know, bad feedback from the
20 police for no reason. They were being
21 criticized 100 percent by angry people who
22 were yelling.

23 But to that extent, I would

1 expect a law enforcement officer to be able
2 to respond professionally in a situation
3 that is, one, high stress; two, they are
4 being criticized.

5 If you can't respond without
6 professionalism in those situations, how
7 are you going to respond professionally
8 when someone on a traffic stop gives you
9 some lip, you know? Like, there is no --
10 there is no -- what am I trying to say?
11 There is -- there is no reason for them to
12 act unprofessionally. They had control of
13 the situation. There was no violence
14 occurring. We were just expressing our
15 First Amendment rights.

16 And I think it's bad on the
17 police department if they are going to come
18 back by flipping people off and making
19 light of the situation that's very serious.

20 I'm not saying they have to
21 agree with us by any means. But you -- you
22 can't act like a belligerent child if you
23 want to -- even if someone is being a

1 belligerent child to you. I think you have
2 to hold yourself to a higher standard
3 because you have a higher authority and
4 responsibility.

5 MS. HUNTLEY: Now, did you
6 witness any of the protesters throwing
7 anything at the police or getting really
8 close to the proximity of the police to
9 express their anger?

10 MR. STEELMAN: I saw -- okay.
11 So I will handle that as two questions. I
12 saw two things being thrown the entire
13 night. One were packets of food being
14 thrown forward for people to eat because
15 they were hungry or thirsty. And I think
16 there were some water bottles tossed
17 forward, nothing at police.

18 The other thing I saw thrown,
19 and this was on a live feed, was one water
20 bottle at a state trooper car. And that
21 was it. That's all I saw the entirety of
22 both evenings, June 1st and 3rd.

23 And then the other question was

1 did I see people actually, like, coming
2 forward to clash with police? Yes, I did
3 see that at one point. But they weren't
4 coming with the intent to fight the police
5 or anything like that. They had just moved
6 forward as a crowd. And the police held
7 their line and pushed them back. That's
8 what I saw, not a -- not a concerted effort
9 to overrun the courthouse steps as it was
10 characterized by McMurray in the 18th
11 session.

12 By the way, I got the answer on
13 that corner question. It was the corner
14 with Jimmy John's on it. So that would be
15 the north corner, I believe.

16 MS. HUNTLEY: Okay. And did you
17 ask him in that same message whether he
18 remembered or recalled the time frame?

19 MR. STEELMAN: I did. He
20 doesn't remember the time frame.

21 MS. HUNTLEY: Okay.

22 MR. STEELMAN: I'm sorry.

23 MS. HUNTLEY: But you believe it

1 was sometime between 6-ish, 6:15-ish,
2 something along those lines?

3 MR. STEELMAN: I would say
4 between 6:15 and seven. That would -- that
5 would be when it would have to be. Again,
6 I would have to -- I could go consult my
7 notes and probably figure it out, but I
8 will try to make a note to do that.

9 MS. HUNTLEY: And did you
10 observe anyone, protester, that is, that
11 appeared to be armed with weapons?

12 MR. STEELMAN: No, not with
13 weapons. I mean, people had, like -- I saw
14 some people with, like, umbrellas. I mean,
15 heck, we had -- me and my wife had her
16 respirators in the back in case they -- in
17 our backpack in case they did try to do --
18 gas us again before we could get out.

19 She's a -- she's a goldsmith.
20 That's why we have respirators.

21 MS. HUNTLEY: All right.

22 MR. STEELMAN: But, no, I didn't
23 see any weapons at all. I just saw some

1 signs and umbrellas and that's about it.

2 MS. HUNTLEY: What about sticks?

3 MR. STEELMAN: I didn't see
4 anyone with just a stick. I saw an old man
5 with a cane. I don't know if I would
6 characterize that as a stick, though. It's
7 probably just a cane for him to walk.

8 MS. HUNTLEY: Yes, well, this is
9 helpful because we -- you know, yes, there
10 are lots of video and things out there.
11 But it is interesting to see what you
12 observed being in the crowd because it
13 doesn't always capture everything when
14 there is such a close proximity of people.

15 MR. STEELMAN: Sure. Yes. And
16 I know that there were weapons in the
17 crowd. Obviously, you know, there were --
18 there were videos of that from the 18th
19 that the police showed, the 18th special
20 session that said, you know, they --
21 they -- they saw firearms in the crowd.
22 They took firearms from the crowd. They
23 arrested a man on the 1st.

1 You know, like, I'm not -- I'm
2 not ignorant to the fact that there were
3 weapons there. But, I guess, my -- my
4 perception of that is it's a large crowd of
5 people. In Alabama, like, it's kind of
6 inevitable.

7 Like -- so in the way that there
8 were weapons, like, you could characterize
9 just about any object as a weapon if you
10 really want to victimize yourself enough.
11 Like, there were real weapons there that
12 was illegal. Deal with those people, not
13 with the crowd. And they did in some
14 cases, and then they didn't in other cases
15 so --

16 MS. HUNTLEY: Well, you have
17 been so helpful. I do want to also ask you
18 specifically about what you started to
19 learn from Mr. Burnet and what he reported
20 with regard to the change in the permit.

21 Do you recall that specifically?
22 Like, where did you learn that information?
23 Was it -- did he do a press conference?

1 Did they post something on the NAACP
2 website?

3 MR. STEELMAN: It was in a video
4 that I think was posted to their Facebook.
5 And I know who to ask, who would have the
6 link to it. I don't have the link handy.
7 But it was definitely, like, a -- it was,
8 like, a sit-down interview that -- that he
9 gave I think the day after the 3rd, so the
10 4th.

11 MS. HUNTLEY: Was it to a media
12 station, or was it just something they did
13 to be able to communicate to people on
14 Facebook?

15 MR. STEELMAN: I want to say it
16 was an internal kind of press conference
17 that they give -- that they gave. And then
18 I think we saw it through, like, a WHNT
19 link or something like that.

20 So it did make its way to the
21 media, but I don't know if it was
22 intentional for that to happen.

23 MS. HUNTLEY: Okay. And what do

1 you recall Mr. Burnet saying in that
2 interview?

3 MR. STEELMAN: Oh, man. That
4 there was -- the main takeaway I got -- I
5 think it's like a 20-minute interview, and
6 I haven't watched it in months.

7 So the main way that my brain
8 has condensed it is there was a lot of
9 confusion regarding why the permit was
10 being changed and concern that they
11 wouldn't be able to organize as effectively
12 and get the crowd to do what -- what was
13 initially intended or -- or deviate from
14 that because there just wasn't enough time
15 to organize.

16 So I will -- I will try and find
17 you that article and let you hear it
18 yourself. It's been so long since I have
19 listened to that.

20 MS. HUNTLEY: Well, I will pass
21 it back to -- unless you want me to go
22 ahead and --

23 MR. SHARMAN: I don't have

1 anything further, Mr. Steelman. Thank you
2 for your time.

3 Vicki, do you -- do you want
4 to -- either for yourself or to call on
5 other members of the CAC with any other
6 potential questions?

7 MS. GUERRIERI: Yes, Jack.
8 Thank you.

9 Do any members in attendance
10 have any questions for Mr. Steelman? If
11 you do, proceed at this point, but please
12 be careful not to overtalk one another so
13 that Mr. Steelman can hear the question;
14 okay?

15 Does anyone have a question?

16 MR. LOVE: I don't have
17 anything, Vicki. I think it was very
18 thorough.

19 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. Anyone
20 else with us that has a question?

21 MS. MCCULLEY: I don't have
22 anything, but I want to thank Mr. Steelman
23 for his time.

1 MR. STEELMAN: Yes, no problem.

2 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 David, do you have a question?

5 (No response.)

6 MS. GUERRIERI: Anyone else?

7 (No response.)

8 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. Some of
9 them may have had to drop off because of
10 work.

11 Okay. Mr. Steelman, I have just
12 one question here, one or two.

13 MR. STEELMAN: Okay.

14 MS. GUERRIERI: I believe the
15 press conference you are referring to is
16 the one that Mr. Burnet gave with the --
17 there was another gentleman with NAACP at
18 the same press conference?

19 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

20 MS. GUERRIERI: Is that the one
21 you are referring to?

22 MR. STEELMAN: I believe so,
23 yeah.

1 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. I
2 remember seeing that. And at that time
3 there was discussion about the change on
4 that.

5 MR. STEELMAN: Correct.

6 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. And my
7 second question is you had mentioned
8 chanters leading chants for the crowd. Did
9 you recognize any of those chanters as
10 being local citizens, or do you know who
11 they are or --

12 MR. STEELMAN: Yes.

13 MS. GUERRIERI: -- seen them
14 before at other rallies and things?

15 MR. STEELMAN: So I didn't know
16 any of them previous to the June 1st and
17 the June 3rd rallies, but I do know that
18 they are Huntsville citizens because I know
19 them now because of this.

20 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay.

21 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah. No,
22 it's -- a couple of them had been, you
23 know, civic activists for a while in

1 Huntsville. Then a couple of them were
2 just normal everyday citizens.

3 I have a friend -- I don't
4 think -- yeah, you guys probably are aware
5 of who he is, Don Trayon Calvert. He's
6 come and spoken at City Council a couple of
7 times. I believe he spoke to the CAC as
8 well. So he was one of them leading
9 chants.

10 There were, I mean, a couple of
11 people from ENUF who were leading chants.
12 I don't know. I could try to find you a
13 list, if that helps. I don't think they
14 would mind. I know Tray won't care. But
15 if that helps you in any way, I can try to
16 do it.

17 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay.

18 MR. STEELMAN: They are
19 definitely Huntsville citizens.

20 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay.

21 MR. STEELMAN: They are not --

22 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay. Okay.

23 That was my question, if they were part

1 of -- part of the Huntsville -- living
2 here.

3 I think that the questions have
4 been very detailed. Mr. Steelman, thank
5 you so much --

6 MR. STEELMAN: Of course.

7 MS. GUERRIERI: -- for the time
8 that you have spent with us today. And
9 your attention to detail has been very
10 helpful with this.

11 MR. STEELMAN: Yeah, no problem
12 at all. I'm glad I could -- glad I could
13 help you guys out.

14 And, again, I don't know if any
15 of you guys have looked at that full report
16 that we gave, all 76 slides of it, but it's
17 got a lot more even than what we've -- what
18 we've talked about here today. So I would
19 encourage you to look at that.

20 MS. GUERRIERI: Okay.

21 MR. STEELMAN: We had four or
22 five -- four or five people work on that
23 and put a lot of time into it so --

1 MS. GUERRIERI: I believe that
2 we have looked at that --

3 MR. STEELMAN: Okay.

4 MS. GUERRIERI: -- when you sent
5 it in. And we will definitely maybe
6 revisit those slides and take a second
7 look --

8 MR. STEELMAN: Sure.

9 MS. GUERRIERI: -- after today's
10 testimony.

11 MR. STEELMAN: Awesome. Thank
12 you, guys.

13 MS. GUERRIERI: Thank you.

14 MS. HUNTLEY: Thank you,
15 Mr. Steelman.

16 (Whereupon, the interview ended
17 at 10:45 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA)
JEFFERSON COUNTY)

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing interview was taken down by me in stenotype, and the questions and answers thereto were reduced to computer print under my supervision, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of the testimony given by said witness upon said interview.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action, nor am I anywise interested in the results of said cause.

Signed the 4th day of February, 2021.

/s/ Diana B. Williams, CCR
DIANA B. WILLIAMS, CCR
Alabama CCR No. 104, Expires 09/30/2021
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at
Large, Commission expires 04/11/2023