FILED: NEW YORK COUNTY CLERK 04/06/2024 12:20 AM INDEX NO. 451625/2020

NYSCEF DOC. NO. 3234

RECEIVED NYSCEF: 04/06/2024

EXHIBIT 5

FILED: NEW YORK COUNTY CLERK 04/06/2024 12:20 AM

NYSCEF DOC. NO. 3234

DEGETTIED MIGGER 04/06/0004

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF NEW YORK - CIVIL TERM - PART 3

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, BY LETITIA

JAMES, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,

Plaintiff,

-against-

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THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, WAYNE LAPIERRE, WILSON PHILLIPS, JOHN FRAZER, and JOSHUA POWELL,

Defendants.

JURY TRIAL 60 Centre Street New York, New York February 8, 2024

BEFORE: HONORABLE JOEL M. COHEN,

Justice, and a jury

APPEARANCES:

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1 THE COURT: Good morning everyone. Just a head's 2 up, if there is something I need to read and it's coming in 3 really late at night, send it to the chamber's email also 4

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because I received those slides as I was walking downstairs because they weren't -- they didn't go to me.

So I don't know whether there are any continuing issues with the slides.

MR. CONLEY: Yes, your Honor, we do still have issues with the Mehta slides.

While the NRA did scrub references to Aronson from the slides that we discussed yesterday, the slides -specifically slides 11, 12 and 16, they are still describing work that Aronson and -- Aronson performed and that Mr. Mehta did not, and we have a concern that this is essentially vouching for work that Aronson -- Aronson completed.

And I also just want to note that the witness NRA intends to call after Mr. Mehta, Mr. Blacker, we have the same concerns about the demonstratives for him. There are a couple of slides that are just describing the procedures that Aronson performed.

22 MS. ROGERS: Your Honor, we definitely aren't 23 intending to use either of those experts to simply rehash what the Aronson fact witness already testified to nor would that be a valuable use of our time, but the idea that the

among a list of data points that he considered when he did his work opining on the NRA's internal controls.

THE COURT: What does that mean? Does that mean because they issued a clean opinion, he therefore opined that the internal controls were robust?

MS. ROGERS: So he looks into Aronson work papers. He will talk about if I was the auditor what kind of things would I have looked at. He disagrees with Aronson in a couple of places.

THE COURT: Is that in his expert report? MS. ROGERS: I don't think the disagreement is in his expert report.

He's obviously been listening to testimony so. But if we look at slide 9 of the demonstratives which I apologize that your Honor is just now receiving, there is a second bullet, and this is an example of the kind of testimony the jury will hear. Related-party transactions appear appropriately handled, an opinion I reached based on, and he lists a bunch of things, none of which are Aronson.

And then he also says at the end, Analyzing the outside auditor's work papers, I also noted procedures confirming, you know, what I saw. And again, you know, both of Plaintiff's experts touched on Aronson and what they thought about -- what they thought it could mean and what they thought it didn't.

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Plaintiff can offer two experts who opine on what the audit 1 doesn't mean, that just because they got clean audits, the 2 jury shouldn't credit reliance on those and that the 3 4 pretense that they can have experts refer to Aronson and how those findings can and can not be interpreted without us 5 6 offering experts touch on the same issues is unsupported by 7 law or common sense.

These are financial experts, and we had Mr. Sullivan an economist who is a user of this information testifying about how he would use it, but he was not permitted to testify about, you know, what an auditor could do or look at. The reason being the limits of his expertise and the fact that his report was prepared jointly with Mr. Blacker.

So now we have Mr. Blacker who -- that is the second expert he just referenced whose report was likewise not excluded. His testimony was likewise not excluded, and it wouldn't behoove us to just have the expert get up and say, well, you saw Aronson's documents and I saw them too. But we have a professional non-profit auditor with decades of experience auditing non-profits.

THE COURT: Tell me how the opinion -- how the Aronson work plays into his opinion. Is it the basis for his opinion? What is he --

MS. ROGERS: He mentioned the Aronson procedures

We heard Mr. Tenenbaum testify, you know, just because a non-profit gets clean audits doesn't mean that the directors can content themselves with the state of controls.

And here we have an auditor saying when I come in and look at a company, here's the kind of things I would look at to reach a clean audit. Here's the kind of documents and data that I looked at the NRA to form the view that as a auditor could rely on these controls, and I wouldn't be blind to what the other auditor did. I looked through all their work papers. That's something I would consider.

THE COURT: Well, looked through all their work papers and rendered an independent view or just is saying they did a good job?

MS. ROGERS: He is not just saying they did a good job. He is rendering an independent view as we tried to make clear in these slides, and I think part of the issues we had was just the demonstratives.

If you actually look at his report, he is saying here's what the professional standards require. Here's how I am applying them, and here's how Aronson applied them. And we have distilled the slides to focus on, you know, here's how I am applying them.

THE COURT: So offering an opinion as to what a clean audit opinion means?

Min-U-Script®

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MS. ROGERS: So I do intend to ask just as Plaintiff asked Mr. Tenenbaum and Mr. Hines, you know, what can you take and not take from a clean financial audit.

I do intend to ask our auditor and forensic accountant a couple of questions that are similar, but the meat of his opinion -- of Mr. Mehta's opinion is summarized on slide 3 titled, "Summary of Opinions." And it's basically -- it's core merits stuff, not sort of meta opinions about Aronson.

I think that talking about how you interpret financial audit findings is certainly within the scope of the expert testimony.

THE COURT: All right. Well, this has been cleaned up, it seems to me anyway, the summary of opinions.

I guess the question is whether the -- when you get to the basis for each one, is that his work or is it him saying to them, well, you've already heard that they did an audit. It sounds like you're on top of this.

Look, this is not one that's easy to micromanage nor is that typically my job in advance. I will see what it comes in like. I don't -- I think that the -- sort of the most obvious material has been removed, and you know, it's a combination of cross-examination material which is not something that would cause me to strike either the expert or all these things. So I don't see anything in the slides

yesterday.

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THE COURT: Yeah. I forgot about that.

MR. FARBER: I was told I would, but we didn't.

THE COURT: Do the best you can, and I told the jurors it was four trials. For me, it's one, and I have to give one set of instructions. And it's -- you know, it's in your own interests to make your filings easier for me to digest.

MR. FARBER: I agree with that, your Honor, and we are endeavoring to do that.

THE COURT: Yours were in the first round of 260 pages. Yours were the only ones that were relatively concise. So hopefully, they will listen to some of your ideas.

MR. CORRELL: Your Honor, may we -- may I have until tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. to get our comments to you because I can't do two things.

THE COURT: Well, with the following caveat. It means that I won't read them because I'm going to be in hearings every minute of tomorrow until 3:00.

MR. CORRELL: Is there a drop-dead time for you, your Honor? Because I'm happy to work all night if I need to, but if there is some -- it's going to be impossible for me to start until the end of the day.

THE COURT: Well, I mean, do the best you can.

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that jumps out at me, but I'll be listening. And you know, 1 the appropriate -- you know, I think it is -- if something 2 came up during trial that was not necessarily in the -- in 3 4 either expert's report but just part of the back and forth, I think your expert can comment on it, but as long as it's 5 6 not a new opinion.

MS. ROGERS: I understand.

MR. FARBER: With respect to the jury charge, I know your Honor in what you've sent called upon the Defense to submit a combined set of comments.

As you noted, there are four separate trials going on here. I have no ability to compel the NRA to work cooperatively. They said they would provide us with a draft yesterday which they haven't, so I'm going to need to prepare my own set of comments because I need to provide them to the Court. So I just wanted to alert your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, look, I'm hopeful that you can at a minimum fold them into a single document by whenever, you know, Thursday so that, you know, literally if it's just cutting and pasting to say here's Mr. Phillips on this and here's Mr. Phillips on that just to avoid the juggling process -- physical juggling of trying to figure out who is saying what.

MR. FARBER: I understand. I will provide that to the NRA -- today is Thursday which I had hoped to get this

I'll try to either read it on my commute or -- I don't know what it's going to look like. So I guess what you're saying is yours is also not going to be folded into whatever I get from the other defendants.

MR. CORRELL: I have sent my comments to the NRA and asked that they be included. I'm not sure if they will be, and if not, I will have to do a separate set.

THE COURT: Just so it's clear, that shouldn't happen in the sense that if there is something that you submit as your position it should just be inserted as you have done in the past as Mr. LaPierre's separate position.

I'm just trying to have a one document or two document that I can balance. Four is a little harder.

MR. CORRELL: I understand, your Honor, and our position is a little different from the NRA's.

THE COURT: I get it, but it can be in the same piece of paper. I didn't give you a page limit.

MS. ROGERS: We have no problem putting one party's position in different color text or something like that. We just weren't able to get a draft out yesterday.

THE COURT: Look, I didn't give you a lot of time. I tried as best I could, but I'm doing things during the week also. So do the best you can.

If -- I would appreciate it if it could be in a single document, even if it's maybe not coordinated as well

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NRA February 8, 2024 Proceedings Page 3738 Mehta - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3740 as we might if you had a few more days just so I can during I also spent a number of years at the firm 2 the commute, if that's where I'm reading it, I don't have to Pricewaterhouse, another one of the Big Four firms, and again, take an entire train car up with balancing them. Okay. specializing in non-profit organizations. 3 4 MR. CORRELL: Understood, your Honor. Thank you. 4 Since then I have joined a firm called Friedman, LLP to THE COURT: All right. All right. Let's get the 5 head up their not-for-profit practice. So fairly small mid-size 6 jury. firm, and it grew over the years. And in September of 2022, 7 I will have an hour in the morning to look at Friedman merged into the national firm of Marcum, LLP and that's 8 things. where I made my current role as the New York metro non-profit 9 MR. CORRELL: I would encourage everyone to get it 9 insurance leader. in earlier, but that's nice to have an escape belt if we So over my career, in addition to specializing in 10 10 11 need to. non-profit organizations, I have also taken on other special 11 THE COURT OFFICER: All rise. Jury entering. 12 12 projects. (Whereupon, at this time the jury entered the So one of the things that accounting firms have to do 13 13 is as part of being able to perform audits of any organization 14 courtroom.) THE COURT: Welcome back, everyone. Please have a 15 for that matter, they are subject to what's called the peer review by the American Institute of Certified Public 16 seat. Is the next witness for the Defense available? 17 Accountants, and that process takes place every three years. 18 MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. The NRA calls Amish And so what happens there is a firm -- similar size 18 Mehta. firm would go into another firm and obtain a sample of financial 19 20 THE COURT: Good morning. statement audits that they have issued, look at their work 21 A M I S H M E H T A, a witness called on behalf of papers and come to some conclusion is that firm complying with the Defendant, after having been first duly sworn, took the professional standards in rendering and performing their audits. 22 22 23 witness stand and testified as follows: 23 So I -- my firms over the years have participated in THE CLERK: State your name. that process where I have gone into other firms and performed 24 25 THE WITNESS: Amish Mehta, A-M-I-S-H; last name these peer reviews and been able to look at their work papers Mehta - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3739 Mehta - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3741 M-E-H-T-A. and to be able to draw conclusions as to did they perform the 1 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may be seated. 2 audits that I was looking at, and in my particular example, MS. ROGERS: Could I trouble the court officer to 3 performed their working in accordance with professional 3 give the witness the Power Point clicker. standards. 4 Q Please introduce yourself to the jury. 5 5 In addition to that, most of the firms have an internal A Sure. My name is Amish Mehta. I am an engagement inspection process that they typically go through as well. So 7 partner and the New York metro non-partner insurance leader for your colleagues would come in and look at the work that you have the accounting film Marcum, LLP. done, and that happens periodically. Similar fashion. 8 9 I graduated from New York University with a Bachelors 9 They would follow the AICPA checklist similar to a peer of Science in Accounting, and I have been a Certified Public review, but you are looking at your own firm's work that another 10 10 Accountant since 1993. 11 colleague of yours has performed. 12 So in my role at Marcum, I exclusively work with 12 So based on those, the experience that I have with

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non-profit organizations. I spend 100 percent of my time 13 working with different non-profit organizations. And over my 14

15 career, I have worked on organizations similar to the NRA. So I started my career in 1991 with the firm called

16 KPMG. It's one of the firms known as one of the Big Four firms. 17

I spent a number of years --18

MR. ROGERS: The witness is a native New Yorker. We 19 can tell. He talks fast, and it's his first time 20

testifying. So the court reporter has to write down 21

22 everything you say.

23 A So I graduated in '91, as I mentioned. I started my career at KPMG. That's where I grounded my fundamentals in

not-for-profit accounting.

What is that? 25

performing internal inspections as well as peer reviews, I am

able to review the work of other auditors and be able to draw conclusions based on the work that they have done. 15

In addition, over my career, I have also been a Board member of a --17

MR. CONLEY: Objection. Narrative.

THE COURT: It was kind of a long answer to please introduce yourself to the jury. Maybe we can do it more traditionally.

All right. We can break this up a little bit.

23 Mr. Mehta, you mentioned applying the standards of an organization called the AICPA. 24

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Sure. I have served on Boards of non-profit

Mehta - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers

- The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.
- 2 And before we get to your non-profit personal
- experience, I do want to ask about a couple of things you just
- mentioned in your introduction.

We have heard testimony, and you have been listening to testimony in this case the past couple of days; right? 6

- 7 Correct.
- 8 0 And you have reviewed transcripts and reports from
- 9 other experts; right?
- That's correct. 10
- We heard testimony from an accountant Ms. Cullen who 11
- works on the tax side, and we heard testimony from Mr. Plotts 12
- 13 who works on the audit side of the NRA engagement; right.
- 14 You are an engagement partner. Can you explain to the 15 jury how the engagement partner is situated vis a vis tax and
- audit? 16
- 17 A Certainly. So I am the engagement partner on the
- audits that I have relationships with. So I have overall
- responsibility for all services that are delivered to my 19
- 20 clients. That would include the audit service, the tax services
- 21 and any advisory services that the client has requested.
- So I would work with our tax directors similar to Ms. 22
- Cullen who would be responsible for preparing the Form 990, that
- individual and their team, but I would have ultimate
- responsibility for the tax services that are delivered to the

- organizations initially as a Board member, and then I spent two

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- years as the treasurer of a non-profit organization, so I am
- able to see, kind of wear two hats. And again, my testimony,
- one that is an auditor for financial statements, but also a
- Board member understanding my fiduciary responsibility as a
- Board member knowing the things that I requested from the
- accounting firm that, for example, worked on the audit of the
- organization that I was on the Board of, the questions that I
- would ask my fellow Board members and management, in fact, you
- know, to carry out my fiduciary obligations as a Board member.
- 12 What were you asked to do in this case?
 - So I was asked to provide expert witness testimony.
- 14 Q Is the clicker working? Okay. He is not an expert on
- 15 this, and it's not his fault either. There we go.
- So you were asked to give opinions and testimony on --16 17 sorry. Go ahead.
 - A Sorry. So yes, so I was asked to review the
- documentation from the -- review the first complaint, the
- amended complaint, second amended complaint, review the
- testimony, various documentation, policies and procedures and
- the like in order to provide my expert opinion on the financial
- reporting practices of the NRA, their internal controls and
- their commitment and then compliance with good corporate
- governance.

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- 1 client and would review the 990 prior to the issuance to the
- 3 Q But you don't work at Aprio or Aronson with Ms. Cullen
- and Mr. Plotts. 4
- That's correct. 5 Α
- 6 Q You are an expert witness, and you're being compensated
- 7 for your testimony; right?
- Α That's correct. 8
- 9 Q Are you being compensated based on what you say?
- Α No. 10
- 11 When the NRA hired you and agreed to pay you, did it
- know what conclusions you would come to as far as you're aware? 12
- Α It did not. 13
- As far as you're aware -- and is your firm being 14
- compensated for this work at the same rate it would be
- compensated if you were doing regular accounting work? 16
- That's correct. For similar work. 17
- MS. ROGERS: I offer Mr. Mehta as an expert in 18
- 19 non-profit accounting and auditing. MR. CONLEY: No objection. 20
- THE COURT: Okay. He is admitted for that purpose. 21
- 22 Q Mr. Mehta, you mentioned that you also served on
- 23 non-profit Boards.
- That's correct. 25 Q Tell the jury about that.

- - Q Yesterday you heard Greg Plotts testify about how auditors have to be independent. 2
 - Do you recall that? 3
 - A I do. 4
- Can you describe whether or to what extent that 5
- 6 standard applies to you?
- 7 A Certainly. So again, under the AICPA, we are bound to
- the independent standards of AICPA in fact and appearance.
- 9 So what does that mean?
- So we are prohibited from having any type of business 10
- relationships with the client that we audit. We can't have an ownership interest in any client that we audit. We can not have
- relationships -- for example, I can not have a spouse that's the
- CFO of an organization that we audit. So those are types of --
- and then when I mentioned appearance, if there is any doubt that
- someone could potentially say that you have an independence problem even though in reality there might not be one, we are
- really precluded from carrying out that particular transaction. 18 19 So even though the underlying foundation may not be
- 20 independence violation, but because the fact it might give the appearance that could be an independence violation, we would be
- prohibited from carrying out such a transaction. 23 Q Have you ever been an expert witness before?
- I have not. 24

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25 Can you summarize briefly for the jury and then we will

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1 walk through them, the opinions that you reached when you looked at these documents.

A So I was asked to -- one of the things I was asked to do is look at and evaluate the NRA's various policies and procedures. Specifically, a couple of key areas.

One is related-party transaction. One is whistle blowers, and the the third being their filings with the regulatory authorities of whether the Audit Committee of the NRA properly discharged their responsibilities and come to some conclusion of what my assessment was with -- related to those particular opinions.

So with respect to conflict of interest and 12 related-party transactions, I have worked on hundreds of 13 non-profit organizations over the years and looked at conflict 14 15 of interest, and related-party transactions is a key cornerstone of the work that we do. 16

So in any audit, we would ask for what is your conflict-of-interest policy. May I see a copy of it? What is the process that you utilize to, for example, circulate related-party questionnaires or conflict-of-interest 21 questionnaires on an annual basis to all Board members, officers and senior management. 22

23 THE COURT: Just are you now moving on from the summary to now -- I'm just trying to --24

25 I think -- why don't we talk -- before we get into the witnesses about a concept called "materiality," and you used

- that concept in your work; right?
- 3 A That's correct.
- 4 Q Can you tell the jury what that means from a financial perspective and in layman's terms?
- A Certainly. I recall Sonya Rowling testify in terms of 7 the size of the NRA.

When I looked at the financials from '15 to '21, and just to get an overview of the size and depth and breadth of the organization, you can see that the NRA's, you know, transactions run at hundreds of millions of dollars. And in addition, the NRA's a complicated organization in the sense that they have multiple entities; right. So they have separately incorporated entities that carry out different purposes.

15 You've heard the NRA being what's called a (c)(4) 16 organization which is the advocacy organization. You have heard that they have a (c)(3) organization which is the foundation that carries out different charitable activities. So they have multiple organizations that have been established to carry out 20 various purposes, and those organizations are consolidated from 21 a financial reporting purposes into what's called consolidated 22 financial statements.

So someone takes several or multiple different trial balances, ledgers and pulls out information together to give you an overall picture of the total organization.

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1 meat of your opinions, let's talk about what you're basing them on, and I think that should be your next slide.

- A So one of the key concepts that you may have heard --3
- I think we skipped a slide. 4
- THE COURT: He is back now. 5
- 6 Sorry. There we go.
- 7 A So the items that I looked at in coming and forming
- conclusions and my opinions are I looked at the allegations that
- the NYAG office has made with respect to the NRA. So I looked
- at the second amended verified complaint. I looked at the 10
- 11 various subpoenas that were produced by the various parties and
- the witnesses during the litigation. I reviewed policies and 12
- procedures, the conflict-of-interest policy, the whistleblower 13
- policy, the employee handbook, their corporate governance 14
- policies. 15

I looked at the -- Aronson's work papers, for example. 16 17 I looked at the depth and breadth that they did their work and the areas that they looked at specifically as it relates to what 18 the opinions that I'm forming. I looked at the Bylaws, the 19 20 employee handbooks. I looked at the compliance and governance refresher seminars. I looked at the Audit Committee, the 21 22 meeting -- the minutes of the Audit Committee meetings. So I

- looked at a whole -- in addition to also consulting
- professionally accounting guidelines in forming my opinions.
- 25 All right. We have heard from a few different

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So when you take an organization like the NRA, the concept of materiality is the under -- is the undertone of the work that we as auditors do. 3

4 So when we render an audit opinion, we are not saying that the financial statements are 100 percent accurate. What we are saying is that the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, that they are materially stated correctly.

So when we talk about that it's possible that you can -- you could have an error, for example, ranging in the hundreds of thousands, but that would not prevent an auditor from rendering what's called an unmodified opinion or a clean opinion on those financial statements.

So from a materiality standpoint, it's one of the concepts that you have to look at when you evaluate the 16 financial statements of any organization.

Q And if we move ahead. Now that we have talked about 17 how accountants calculate materiality, how would you think about it as a layman and how did you think about it when you were on a 20 not-profit Board?

> MR. CONLEY: Objection to leading, your Honor. THE COURT: Also, his -- he is testifying as an accounting expert, not as an expert in director's duties. MS. ROGERS: That's fair. I did also say as a

layman. I don't know if he is allowed to give lay testimony

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1 at the periphery of his expert testimony. 2

THE COURT: Materiality is an accounting principle which is that's what he is here for, but he can explain it to the jury in layman's terms.

Can you explain to the jury in layman's terms? 5

- Certainly. So in layman's terms, materiality as this 6 slide indicates, it's where are the financial statements
- misstated to the point where a user of a financial statement
- would come to a different conclusion, you know, had an error not
- been present. 10

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So if you talk about the NRA and you're talking about 12 revenues of three to \$400 million, if the revenues were off by let's say a million dollars, would that cause you to come to a different conclusion than if that error was not present.

14 15 You heard Mr. Plotts testify that, you know, we also look at materiality in a qualitative manner. So if that million 16 17 dollars would have changed the debt covenant in where there would have been default of their debt covenant, from a qualitative standpoint, yes, that would be material. So you 19 have got to take a look at materiality from a quantitative as 20 21 well as a qualitative standpoint.

Q Let's talk now about the specific opinions that you've 22 reached, and I'd like to direct you back to the discussion about related-party transactions. 24

Can you explain to the jury the opinion you reached

address those particular conflicts that may have been mentioned.

2 In addition, what type -- what does the organization do to communicate that policy and what do they do to insure that 3 individuals are following through on that policy.

So the NRA, for example, I looked at a number of these

governance and compliance seminars that I believe you have seen from different experts along the trial. And in those seminars, there is a constant focus on insuring that the Board members as well as members of senior management understand and know how -what a potential conflict could look like, how to identify, what is the reporting mechanism once you have identified such a conflict and then, you know, what's the protocol for handling those types of conflicts.

So I looked at all of those factors in determining that the NRA does have a robust conflict-of-interest policy process in place.

(Continued on the following page.)

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1 about the NRA's controls on related-party transactions and walk the jury through the basis for your opinion.

A Certainly. So as I mentioned earlier, when we look at 3 conflict of interest and related-party transactions, we ask for a number of items when we are performing a financial statement audit. So one being that does the organization have a 7 conflict-of-interest policy.

In my experience having served on audits of hundreds of 8 non-profit organizations, I'm familiar with -- I can distinguish between what's a fairly robust policy versus one that's lacking 11 in some key principles that I would expect to see in a policy. So that's one area that we looked at. 12

Also, do they obtain conflict-of-interest statements 13 from their Board members, officers and senior management 14 typically on an annual basis? So does that process take place? Who is in charge of that process? How are the results of those 17 questionnaires handled and disseminated to the Board and other 18 members of governance?

19 And then also how is that process documented. I would 20 expect to see that process documented in the minutes of the audit committee's meetings that, you know, conflict-of-interest 21 22 policy statements were circulated. These were the results that were -- that we obtained. These were the conflict -- potential conflicts that were reported to the -- within this particular case, the Office of General Counsel, and how are we going to

O Let's move ahead and talk a little bit about those seminars. 2

3 You said you've audited hundreds of not-for-profits in your career. How would you compare the NRA's seminar conflict education program to most of not-for-profits you've seen?

A It's certainly more robust than many of my existing clients. Most of my clients do have a conflict-of-interest policy in place -- I mean, all of my clients have a

conflict-of-interest policy in place. They do circulate conflict-of-interest questionnaires to board members, members of senior management and officers. They disseminate those results and discuss those within the board. 12

But I don't recall any of my existing clients doing these types of seminars or a constant training on a periodic basis to those constituents and ensure and reinforce that there's a policy in place and what is the protocol for adhering to the policy, and what happens if you have a potential conflict that you want to report.

19 So, certainly, the NRA has a more robust policy in 20 place.

Q Mr. Mehta, I want to situate your analysis on a 21 timeline. When you were analyzing NRA's conflict policies and its other documents and practices, did you look at the NRA before or after the attorney general's lawsuit? 24

A So, the years of my -- the focus of my analysis related

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to 2019 and 2020.

Q So before and after? 2

That's correct. 3

4 Let's talk about -- well, strike that.

You mentioned that a financial statement can be off by a million dollars and if it's a billion dollar company that might or might not be material. Separate from those kinds of misstatements, are auditors required to look -- are auditors like you required to look at related-party transactions

specifically? 10

11 A Yes. I mean, we're -- again, we're required to look at 12 related-party transactions. So, typically, what we'll do is obtain -- we'll we ask management for a listing of their related-party transactions. So, we'll say can you provide us 15 with a list of your related-party transactions, and we'll go through those and test those transactions to ensure that, one, 16 17 they were reviewed, they were approved. That they appear to be have been carried out as arms-length transactions similar to what the organization would obtain if they had gone out into the 19 20 marketplace for similar goods or services.

21 And then we would maintain a heightened level of professional skepticism so that as we're carrying out our work, 22 if we happen to notice a payment made to a vendor, for example, that we recall seeing it on a related-party questionnaire that was disclosed as a related-party, we want to make sure that

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Committee reports. I also looked at as I mentioned their

conflict-of-interest policies and procedures. I looked at the

questionnaires. I obtained a list of questionnaires for

particular years that were my areas of focus and emphasis. 5

I looked at the -- the auditor financial statements, so I think that's one area I want to talk about.

So, it's Generally Accepted Accounting Principles of 8 the Financial Accounting Standard Board is the body that promulgates accounting principles, so that's the FASB, F-A-S-B.

The American Certified Public Accountants promulgates 10 11 the audit standards for auditors when we carry out our procedures. It is the AICPA. It is the AICPA that promulgates the audit standards in terms of how the auditors carry out their procedures.

15 So, the disclosures that go into the financial statements are promulgated by the FASB under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and it's management that's responsible for the financial statements. The auditors are not responsible for the financial statement. The only thing that belongs to the 20 auditors is that one 2-to-3 page opinion at the beginning of the 21 financial statement that says we have audited.

That's the report that belongs to the auditors; but the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements belong to the management.

So, it's management that makes the disclosure of the

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1 particular transaction appeared on the related-party transaction list that we obtained from the client.

Q You talked about analyzing whether the company is getting the same terms from a related party that it would get if it went out into the marketplace.

6 Can you talk a little bit more about that analysis? Certainly. So, in looking at the related-party transactions, we would do an assessment to determine whether, again, those transactions were arm's length.

Again, drawing on our professional experience, if we see that there's a transaction that causes a cause for concern, we would certainly go out --

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor. This is outside the scope of his report. Mr. Mehta didn't perform the analysis.

MS. ROGERS: There's an entire section in his report.

THE COURT: Right now he's just talking about what he would do in an audit of a different company. We haven't really gotten to any of his opinions about whether he did any of this for the testimony about this case, yet.

22 Q Mr. Mehta, let's talk about what you looked at in this case in reaching your opinion of the NRA was robustly handling

related-party transactions, what items did you analyze? A So, again, I analyzed -- as I mentioned -- the Audit

related-party transactions in the financial statements. That's

one of the requirements if you have related-party transactions,

that you must disclose -- you must have some level of disclosure

about the related-party transactions. So, when I reviewed the

NRA's financial statements, it is clear that there is reference

to the fact that there are related-party transactions with board

members and other insiders.

8 So, when the Aronson firm looked at the financial statements, they concurred that, for example, and I felt that the related-parties disclosure were also appropriate in terms of 11 the NRA had put forth.

12 The other thing I also looked at was Form 990, and kind of backing up a little bit. So the reader knows that there are related-party transactions, they can always ask the NRA can we get more information on what those related-party transactions are. If you go to the Federal Form 990, the Form 990 goes into much, much more detail about related-party transactions. 17

So, if you take a look at the financial statements, that will cue you that there are related-party transactions with the organization; and if you go to the 990, it will give you a lot more detail as to what those related-party transactions are. 21

Thank you.

23 So, combination of all those documents.

> MR. CONLEY: Objection, narrative answer. THE COURT: Yeah, it might be better to do question

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1 and answer format.

MS. ROGERS: Okay. 2

Q Mr. Mehta, I'll try to ask slightly narrower questions. 3

4 Did you look at the tools and rules the NRA has in

place to make sure information about these transactions filters

- where it can be disclosed?
- I did. 7

NRA

- Let's talk about what you found narrowly. 8 0
- A Collectively, when I looked at the different tools that
- I described in my testimony, I formed the conclusion that the
- NRA in fact does have robust conflict-of-interest and
- 12 related-party transactions process where the transactions that
- it engages in that are deemed to be related party have been
- disclosed in their financial statements as well as their Federal 14
- 15 Form 990 and have been documented in their Audit Committee
- meeting minutes. 16
- 17 Q Do you have a few more slides on what you looked at at the accounting standards that you applied?
- A So, this is an example for a -- it's an example of 19 20 related party financial disclosure question, FDQ, that the NRA
- 21 circulates to board members and members of senior management.
- This is -- there's actually two pages missing. It is a 22
- five-page document. Most of my clients would typically have a
- two pager, for example, for their related-party transactions
- conflict-of-interest questionnaire. In NRA's case, it is a

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- A Certainly. So, as I mentioned we would obtain a
- listing of related-party transactions from management, and we
- would obtain those transactions and then we would pick a sample
- of those transactions and vouch them to the underlying
- transactions, supporting documentation, were there review and
- approval processes in place for the transaction and also look at
- the Audit Committee minutes to see if that transaction was
- discussed and deliberated in the minutes of the meeting.
- 9 Q Let's talk about whistleblowers. You also looked at the NRA's whistleblower controls; right? 10
- 11 That's correct.
- 12 And can you tell the jury what you found and tell the jury concisely, if you can, and then we'll go into each one, the basis for that opinion.
- 15 A Sure. So, when I looked at the NRA whistleblower policy, my first question was where can I find the policy. And it's outlined in a number of areas. 17

So, for example, it is in their policy manual. It is in their Employee Handbook. It is in their intranet, which is within the company itself. If you go to the NRA external website, you'll see a statement about whistleblower policy directly on their website; so anybody, anyone in the world, for example, can take a look at their whistleblower policy. It is also embodied in their statement of corporate ethics.

Another place you can find is also another part of

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- 1 five-page document. It is extremely robust in terms of the types of transactions that it inquires about.
- And, certainly, there's space on the forms to provide
- further detail if you answered yes to any of the questions that are asked on the questionnaire.
- All right, and let's talk a little more just briefly because I know you've already gotten into this somewhat about
- what accountants and auditors like you do when you dig into this 8
- 9 issue?
- A So, we -- we go through the process of evaluating the 10 11 client's related-party transactions. As I mentioned earlier, we
- look at the policy. We look at the process that they utilize to 12
- educate the board and members of the senior management about the 13
- policy. We also look at the results of the questionnaires. 14 15 We maintain a heightened level of skepticism and
- professionalism to the extent that we uncover any transactions 17 that have not been reported by the members of the board or
- members of senior management in order to come to conclusions, 18
- and should there be any issues or concerns we would certainly 19 20 communicate them in what we call a management letter to those
- with charge with governance indicating any issues we found in 21
- 22 performing our work.
- 23 You heard Mr. Plotts testify about doing something called testing, testing related-party transactions. 24
- 25 Can you tell the jury what that means?

- their compliance and governance refresher seminars that we've
- been talking about. So, that's a key point in that particular
- seminar where they reinforce what the policy is, and we'll go
- into more detail in terms of the points that they cover in that
- policy. But, again, it is embodied in those particular seminars
- that are given. And then the Audit Committee and the Office
- General Counsel, also what their role and responsibilities are
- that relates to the organization's whistleblower policy.
- Q You mentioned that your analysis covered both 2019 and 2020. Did you notice any revisions to whistleblower policy 10
- 11 during that time? 12
- A I do recall seeing a document where the NRA enhanced their whistleblower policy where they laid out more detail the anonymity clause, and we'll talk about how they've added that particular clause about how whistleblower claims can be made 16 anonymously.
 - Q Even before 2020, how did the NRA's whistleblower protections compare to those you've seen in other not-for-profits?

THE COURT: By "before" you mean 2019? MS. ROGERS: Well, yes, so in 2019 before 2020 because his analysis covered both years.

23 THE COURT: Right, but when you say before, that's a long period of time. You mean he looked at 2019? 24 25

MS. ROGERS: Right -- well, the

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1 whistleblower policy, yeah.

Q So for the whistleblower policy you saw in 2019, the one before they laid -- added more details to the anonymity clause, how did that 2019 policy compare to policies that other

not-for-profits you audited?

A I found the NRA's whistleblower policy robust. When I 6 look at a whistleblower policy, we look for a couple of 8 different factors.

One, is that one, obviously, they have to have a policy to begin with; but does their statement in there that says whistleblower policies can be made anonymously.

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor. This is factual narrative and doesn't discuss any analysis MR. Mehta did.

MS. ROGERS: He's comparing the policy to other policies he looked at in his capacity as an expert. THE COURT: Overruled.

By the way, we lost the real time completely. It is going to take awhile. It already crashed. So, we're just going to have to listen for awhile. Go ahead.

21 Q So, Mr. Mehta, in the documents you reviewed, did you form an understanding as to whether anonymous whistleblowers 22

even before the NRA revised its policy were coming forward at

the NRA? 24

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policy.

25 A That's my understanding.

policy, that gives us comfort that the risk of fraud or that

minimizes the risk of fraud. It's impossible to have an

environment where you'll never have any fraud, right? But

you're always trying to minimize the risk of fraud, so having

effective whistleblower policy does that.

6 So, when we look at the whistleblower policy, what is the policy, what is the reporting mechanism for the policy, what is the -- are there -- and one of the key cornerstones is to having making sure that you have anti-retaliation clauses so

that whistleblowers are not retaliated against if they bring 11 forward any complaints that they have.

12 And then what is a reporting mechanism? Is it -- there 13 should be a reporting mechanism directly to the Audit Committee, for example, the Office of General Counsel which is the case in the NRA's practices, that those matters are brought forward to the Office of General Counsel and, ultimately, to the Audit Committee. 17

18 The whistleblower matters were documented in the minutes of the Audit Committee meetings as to how they were addressed. So, my conclusion on the NRA's policies when I look 21 at the audit standards in terms of our response is that the NRA is meeting those standards. 22

23 O You mentioned looking for an anti-retaliation clause, and you also mentioned looking at both the 2019 and 2020 versions of the NRA's policy. Focussing on the 2019 policy, did

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All right, let's talk about --1

THE COURT: Okay, I -- you just asked him a factual 2 question about --3

Well, what was your understanding based on? 4

A So, again, looking at Audit Committee minutes in 2019,

I saw evidence that whistleblowers were coming forward on an 7 anonymous basis.

Q And let's talk more about the technical accounting 8 9 standards that govern whistleblowers and why and how an accountant would consider this. 10

So, are there any specific accounting standards you 11 consider in your practice that you brought to bear here on your 12 whistleblower policy analysis? 13

A Sure. So, the whistleblower policy is kind of part and 14 parcel with the auditor's responsibility for assessing fraud in a financial statement audit. So, as auditors, we're not --17 we're not performing a financial statement audit for the purpose of detecting fraud, but we have to be aware that the possibility 18 19 of fraud exists.

20 So, that's the guidance that we look at in performing with financial statement audits. So, a key cornerstone of 22 having -- a key cornerstone of minimizing the possibility of 23 fraud in an organization is having an effective whistleblower

25 So, if an organization has an effective whistleblower you form a view about the robustness of the NRA's anti-retaliation mechanism?

A I did. So, I mean, that particular anti-retaliation 3 clause is present in the 2019 policy. I can see from the

minutes, the Audit Committee meetings that those items were

discussed, that whistleblower protections were offered to those

individuals that came forward.

8 Certainly, that's a point that's emphasized in the governance and refresher seminars they offer periodically, and I was comfortable with the fact that those clauses were present.

The Audit Committee meetings aren't always very detailed about whistleblowers; are they? 12

Α That's correct.

Did that concern you?

What I look for is the fact that the item was 15 discussed. Sometimes, again, they could be very sensitive matters and discussions so many times those specifics of the whistleblower matters are discussed in executive session. There might be confidentiality issues at hand and that, therefore, 20 you would not see the details of what investigation was documented. 21

MR. CONLEY: Objection, to factual narrative, might occur.

MS. ROGERS: He's providing an expert view on whether as an auditor --

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THE COURT: Look, I've done this with each expert. Experts base their or have to base their opinion on their review of documents and the like. This is not a fact

witness. He doesn't have firsthand knowledge of what is going on at the NRA on a daily basis. He's basing it on the same kind of evidence that you're looking at.

So, at the end, as I said, you evaluate all the experts; and if you consider that the factual basis that they're using you disagree with or you think that's not really the way it worked, you can use that in considering with this expert or any of the experts.

So, some of the experts more frequently say explicitly that it is based on things that they have read or things that they have heard; but you should assume that unless you hear otherwise, Mr. Mehta is not a fact witness.

So, he's not testifying about facts, although it sometimes sounds like it. He's just giving you his understanding of the evidence.

Ultimately, it is up to you.

20 Q Thank you, Mr. Mehta. In the Audit Committee minutes 21 you read that the jury is going to see, too, did you have any concerns or opinions about the level of detail or lack of detail 22 23 concerning whistleblowers?

A I did not. 24

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25 Can you explain to the jury how you look at those

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itself, is a fairly simple form. It asks a bunch of

administrative questions. But the crux of that filing package,

if you will, is to submit the audited financial statements

and the copy of the Federal Form 990 that accompanies the CHAR500.

So, that forms the packet -- the reporting package 6 that's provided to the New York State Attorney General's 7 Charities bureau on an annual basis.

So, I reviewed that package, the reporting package. I found the financial statements to be complete. There was nothing when I reviewed those financials that caused me concern.

I, also, reviewed the Federal Form 990 for those particular years and found them to be complete.

I, also, consulted with other experts within my firm as a second look to see if there was anything that raised red flag concerns to them, and they communicated back to me that there was nothing that they saw out of the ordinary in the organization's 990 filings.

Q All right, I think we have a couple more screens on 19 this, including one discussing the C-Trac software that the NRA 20 21 used to prepare its 990.

In your experience, is that a robust way in preparing a 22 23 tax form?

24 A So, as part of our audit and tax preparation process we look to see what is the organization's process for preparing

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documents and how you form that opinion?

A So, as I stated earlier, I'm looking to see is there evidence in the Audit Committee minutes that whistleblower matters are discussed and deliberated.

That's certainly laid out in their policies and 5 procedures, so I'm certainly checking to see are they in fact carrying out what they have documented to be their policies and procedures. 8

9 So, I did see evidence in the Audit Committee minutes that their whistleblower matters were discussed. They, 10 11 certainly, may not have gotten into detail as far as the full extent of the investigation that was conducted; but, certainly, 12 there was evidence in the minutes that whistleblower matters are 13 being discussed. 14

Q All right, let's talk now about the completeness and 15 accuracy of the NRA's filings, and I want you to explain the 17 opinion you formed based on the evidence and the basis for that 18 opinion.

A So, as an auditor, I reviewed their financial 19 20 statements, again looking at the disclosures that were made in the financial statements. There was nothing that jumped out at 21 22 me that wouldn't cause me concern that there were significant 23 disclosures that were missing or inadequate.

Just taking a step back, in New York State what's 24 called it's called a CHAR500 filing. So, the CHAR500 form,

their financial statements as well as their Federal Form 990.

I would expect to see that there are sound, robust processes in place in terms of review by the management.

Once those documents are ultimately prepared, the Federal Form 990 is typically -- if we're engaged to prepare the 990, obviously, we'll do that; but in the NRA's case, they

utilized the C-Trac software to prepare their own Federal Form

990 and had utilized their external auditor in a consulting 8

9 fashion.

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So, I looked at the process that the NRA undertakes to prepare, for example, their Federal Form 990. Based on the documents that were provided to me and testimony that was provided by John Frazer, Sonya Rowling. I understand that that's a coordinated effort between the office of General Counsel, the CFO and the Financial Services Division. And they also used outside tax counsel to review the Form 990 for completeness. They also utilized their independent auditor, Aronson, who provides consulting advice so if they have questions, to answer a particular question --

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor, a narrative. The question was about C-Trac software.

MS. ROGERS: The question was completely appropriately framed, and the witness is providing the basis for his opinion.

THE COURT: Yeah, there's still a disconnect

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- between the scope of questions and the scope of answers.
- Direct there's a fair amount of leeway, but it's a little 2
- hard to follow. 3

NRA

- 4 Q Let's go back to the C-Trac software. You would agree
- with me that the C-Trac software doesn't prevent anyone from
- lying on their tax return; right?
- MR. CONLEY: Objection, leading. 7
- THE COURT: Overruled. 8
- 9 Q It wouldn't prevent you from lying, from intentionally concealing information; right? 10
- A No. The C-Trac software relies on inputs; and as 11
- 12 testimony was given, there are crosschecks within the software
- so if you answered a particular question -- I believe Ms. Cullen
- talked about the governance questions. So, if you answered yes
- on a particular question, it would prompt you that you must fill out a supplemental schedule. So if you failed to fill out a 16
- 17 supplemental schedule, the software would not let you validate
- the tax returns. 18
- So, by itself, it wouldn't allow any type of lying. 19
- 20 O Now, you had a slide earlier about how a form can be 21 inconsistent without being it from an audit perspective
- materially misleading. 22
- 23 Can you describe whether and to what extent that's the
- kind of thing the software would solve? 24
- 25 I'm sorry, repeat the question again?

- Committee has responsibility for the internal controls of the
- 2 organization. So, that's the responsibility that they're taxed
- with. 3

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- 4 They also are responsible ensuring that the
- organization complies with the various laws and regulations that
- it has to adhere to; and then, ultimately, it has -- as I
- mentioned -- overall responsibility for the external audit.
- 8 Q You heard Mr. Plotts testify yesterday that as part of
 - the special procedures he did after the attorney general's lawsuit, he looked at --
 - - MR. CONLEY: Objection, characterizing testimony. THE COURT: She can --
- MS. ROGERS: I can abbreviate the characterization 13 slightly, but I'm trying --14
 - THE COURT: You didn't get to it yet, so it is a premature objection.
- MS. ROGERS: I'm prematurely accommodating him. 17 THE COURT: You're just assuming. 18
- Q You heard Mr. Plotts testify yesterday about special 19 procedures done after they filed their lawsuit; right? 20
 - That's correct.
- And you heard him testify that one of those special 22
- 23 procedures involve looking at whether the Audit Committee was
- doing its job under its charter; right? 24
- 25 That's correct.

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- Q Sure. So, you had an earlier slide that talked about inconsistencies in a document. Can you describe whether that is
- the kind of thing the software would address?
- A Certainly. So, as I mentioned earlier that the
- software has built-in checks. So that the way you answer the questions or you fill out a particular number on a particular
- line item would force you to complete the other required
- schedules or line items so that would, itself, would prevent any
- 9 type of inconsistencies in the reporting within the document.
- Q Let's talk about the Audit Committee. 10
- 11 Can you describe for the jury the facts and documents that you analyze relating to the NRA Audit Committee and how it 12
- does its job? 13
- A Sure. So, as independent auditors, we have a direct 14
- line of reporting to the board and, typically, the Audit
- Committee. So, we work for the board and the Audit Committee 16
- 17 and not management.
- So, we have a collegial relationship with members of 18 management, but that's not who ultimately hires us to perform 19
- the audit of the financial statements. It is the Audit 20
- Committee of the board that hires us. 21
- 22 So, how does the Audit Committee carry out its
- responsibilities? Typically, there's an Audit Committee charter. So in that charter it outlines what responsibilities
- the Audit Committee has for financial reportings. The Audit

- Q Did you look at similar issues in forming your expert
- opinion? 3 A Yes. So, in reviewing the work that was done by
- Aronson, I looked at the extent that they performed their
- procedures and how that would compare to procedures that I would
- perform where I would perform an audit of an organization.
- So, I was comfortable with the -- by the way, what Aronson refers as special procedures are really just extended
- 9 procedures that they performed in light of --10
 - MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor.
- THE COURT: The witness is not here to give an 11 opinion about the quality of Aronson's work. He's here to 12 give you his opinion based on his own work. 13
- Q Let me ask this. I won't ask about the quality of 14
- Aronson's work; but we did hear cross-examination yesterday
- about the difference between a financial audit with special
- 17 procedures, which is what Aronson did, and an internal controls 18 audit.
- 19 Do you recall that?
- A I do. 20
- Q If you were advising the NRA, would you tell the NRA to 21 do an internal control audit? 22
- 23 MR. CONLEY: Objection.
- THE COURT: Overruled. 24
- 25 A So, the NRA complies -- currently complies with what

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they're required to do, which is performing a financial statement audit. Under New York State they're required to

perform a financial statement audit and also file a Federal Form

4 990.

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There is no requirement under New York State to perform 5 any type of an internal control audit. Organizations may elect to do that, should they wish to get an additional level of comfort, organizations may wish to incorporate an internal audit function within the organization, but there's certainly not a

requirement. 10

Given the -- given the robust policies of the 11 12 procedures that the NRA has placed, the different groups that work together during the NRA, for example, the Financial Services Division, the CFO, the treasurer, the office of General Counsel, use of outside consultants; it is my opinion the NRA has a robust internal control structure in place already that 17 would not necessitate them to perform a separate internal 18 control audit.

Q Let's talk about the NRA's commitment to corporate 19 governance. That's your opinion number 5. 20

You've audited hundreds of non-profits. Without revealing confidential details about any other client, where would you say the NRA ranks in its commitment to corporate governance among the non-profits you've looked at and I'll tell you to focus that ranking on the time period you looked at which

1 All right. Let's turn to Page 5 of this exhibit. 2 Did you review this management letter in forming your

opinion? 3 Α

> Q As part of the basis for your opinion?

I did. 6 A

I did.

7 You heard testimony yesterday about significant deficiencies, and I want to know if you disagree with Aronson on

9 any of these.

> A So when we think about a management letter, it's one of the documents that we issued.

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor. This isn't -this is beyond the scope of his report.

MS. ROGERS: He is responding directly to testimony he heard yesterday. 15

THE COURT: Well, you're asking him whether he disagrees with the conclusions in this document which he's had for his report, so sustained.

Q Okay. All right. Well, I can't ask that because 19 20 that's beyond the scope of your report, but in addition to management letters, did you review other communications issued by the auditors to the NRA? 22

23 A Yes. So in addition to the management letter, I reviewed their required communication with those charged with governance. So that's a letter that we typically issue in every

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started before their lawsuit in 2019 and into 2020?

A So in 2019, again, based on my experience having performed financial statement audits of hundreds of non-profits in my career and looking at the breadth and depth of the procedures and policies that the NRA has in place, in 2019 I 6 would probably put their governance structure in the top 7 25 percent.

Ones this litigation was brought on by the AG's office and the improvements that they made to their environment in 2020, I would say probably in the top 10 to 15 percent.

11 And then listening to the trial which has included testimony about improvements after 2020, would that ranking 12 change? 13

I would still put them in the top 10 to 20 percent. 14

15 You mentioned earlier that at the end of the audit you send a management letter if you want to communicate certain

issues to management; right? 17

18 That's correct.

19 Q And yesterday you saw Mr. Plotts cross-examined about a 20 management letter he issued, which was Plaintiff's Exhibit 48.

MS. ROGERS: Can you put that up. 21

22 (Displayed)

23 (Continued on next page)

24 25 audit, and what that letter does is outlines the auditor's responsibilities, you know, what we came across from the results

of the audit, whether we had disagreements with management,

whether there were any audit adjustments that we came across

5 that were either booked or passed upon by management.

We talked about our independence. We talked about the

7 accounting principles that the organization utilized and what are your thoughts on those accounting principles. So it's basically recap to the Audit Committee of the work that we have done and the results of our audit. 10

11 O And in your career as an auditor, you have delivered these communications hundreds of times; right? 12

13 Α That's correct.

14 Q In reviewing Aronson's communications to the Audit Committee and the Audit Committee's response, how would you rank the NRA's responsiveness to its auditors concerning relative to other non-profits that you have seen? 17

18 MR. CONLEY: Objection. Outside the scope of his 19 reports.

MS. ROGERS: It's not explicitly in his report. I would say it's within the general area that he's analyzing. The NRA's commitment to corporate governance, this is certainly one of the benefits of that.

Do you need me to ask it again? THE COURT: Overruled.

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- 1 A Yes.
- 2 You have hundreds of times at the end of your audit
- issued management letters and governance letters, and you have
- talked those over with management and audit committees; right?
- That's correct.
- 6 O And they respond to your concerns to some degree;
- right? 7
- 8 A That's right.
- 9 Q So looking at the documents, looking at what Aronson
- told the NRA and how the NRA responded, how would you rank the
- NRA's responsiveness, it's Audit Committee relative to other
- 12 non-profits you've seen? How would you rank their responsiveness to the concerns their auditors raised? 13
- A So the NRA has been responsive to recommendations and 14
- 15 suggestion by their audit firm.
- 16 Even when I compared 2019 to 2020, you can see the
- 17 volume of comments that the auditors provided to management come
- down. So the way the comments are phrased is that the auditors
- 19 provide a recommendation and then management is given an
- 20 opportunity to respond. How are they going to address those
- recommendations? And we typically like to give the client about
- 22 a year to address those hopefully for the following year that
- those comments have been addressed. And when I look at the
- NRA's management letters, I can see an effort by management to
- address the comments and implement the best practice

- A So when an auditor gives an unmodified or clean
- opinion, there is some level of comfort that the auditor -- the
- public can take that the financial statements were prepared in
- accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and
- thereby draw a conclusion that there is competency among the
- management group who prepared those financials.
- Q I can't recall if your testimony is that you were an 7
- auditor at some point. Were you? 8
- I am still an auditor. 9
- Q Okay. And do you derive comfort from a company's 10
- financial statements after an audit? 11
- 12 I do.
- Okay. Second question I have and last question, and 13 O
- I'm not sure if I got it right. But you said in 2019 the
- governance of the NRA you viewed was in the top 25 percent of
- companies. 16

18

20

23

- 17 In my opinion, yes.
 - And if the New York AG began its investigation in 2019,
- would that statement cover that period of time? 19
 - Yes.
- 21 MR. FLEMING: Thank you.
- THE COURT: Any cross-examination from the State? 22
 - MR. CONLEY: Yes, your Honor.
- **CROSS-EXAMINATION**
- BY MR. CONLEY:

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- recommendations by the auditors.
- 2 Q And how do those efforts compare like percentage-wise
- 3 to other non-profits?
- 4 Again, I would put them in the top 15 to 25 percent.
- MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Pass the witness. 5
- 6 THE COURT: Okay. Any other direct testimony?
- 7 MR. CORRELL: Not here, your Honor.
- MS. COUTU: No your Honor. 8
- MR. FLEMING: Just a couple of questions. 9
- **CROSS-EXAMINATION** 10
- BY MR. FLEMING: 11
- Q Mr. Mehta, good morning. I just wanted to see if I 12
- understood a couple of things. The financial statements you 13
- testified belong to management; is that right? 14
- 15 That's correct.
- All right. So the auditor doesn't create the financial 16 O
- statements? 17
- Α That's correct. 18
- 19 0 They just audit them.
- 20 Α That's correct.
- Okay. And when an auditor gives a clean opinion, is 21
- that in any way a commentary on the care and competence of the 22
- 23 NRA's professionals who put it together?
- MR. CONLEY: Objection. Leading. 24
- THE COURT: Let's -- overruled on this one. 25

- Good morning, Mr. Mehta. Can you hear me?
- Good morning. Yes. 2
- 3 Q You were retained by the NRA to testify in this action;
- 4 correct?
- That's correct. 5 Α
- 6 0 What's your hourly rate?
- 7 Α
- Q How much has Marcum billed the NRA to date for your 8
- 9 services?
- A I have billed -- my firm has billed approximately 10
- \$400,000 to date. 11
- Q Okay. If I understood your testimony, you are offering
- the opinion that the NRA's sufficiently robust policies and
- procedures in place detect and address conflicts of interest and
- 15 related-party transaction issues. Is that accurate?
- That's correct. 16
- 17 Q That opinion does not apply to policies in place of the
- NRA before January 1, 2019; correct? 18
- 19 That's correct.
- 20 And while you are saying that these policies are
- sufficiently robust, you aren't actually offering an opinion on
- whether the opinions were violated; correct? 22
- 23 Α That's correct.
- 24 So while you're telling the jury today that the NRA's
 - conflict of interest and related-party transaction policies are

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1 sufficiently robust, you're in no way refuting or contesting

- that there were persistent violations of these policies for
- years; are you?
- 4 A I'm not drawing that conclusion.
- And you are not offering any opinion whatsoever on
- whether any of the NRA's internal policies have been violated;
- correct? 7
- That's correct. Α 8
- 9 Q You also opined that the NRA established protocols for
- handling whistle blowing; correct? 10
- That's correct. Α 11
- 12 Q You are not offering an opinion today that the NRA's
- whistleblower program is actually operating effectively; 13
- correct? 14
- 15 A That's correct.
- And you admit that evaluating the effectiveness of a 16
- 17 whistleblower program is not within your expertise; correct?
- That's correct. 18
- Q You also stated a couple of opinions about the NRA's 19
- regulatory filings. 20
- You didn't perform any of our own testing to verify 21
- that any of the information the NRA reported in it's Form 990 22
- was accurate and complete.
- A I did not perform my own testing. 24
- You also offer an opinion that the Audit Committee 25

- Mehta by Defendant Cross/Mr. Conley
 - That's correct. 1
- Or in 2017? 2 Q
- That's correct. 3 Α
- 4 Q Or in 2016; right?
- 5 A That's correct.
- And isn't it true that in offering this opinion, you

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- 7 didn't actually apply any established standards or framework;
- 8 correct?
- 9 A Well, I consulted accounting guidance and relied on my
- skills, knowledge and experience, education and training, but I
- did consult accounting guidance in offering my opinion. 11
- 12 You were not actually applying any standards or framework. 13
- A That's not correct. I referred to accounting 14
- guidelines in offering my opinions. 15
- Do you recall being deposed in this action in 2022? 16
- 17 Α I do.
- 0 And you swore an oath to tell the truth? 18
- I did. 19
- 20 MS. ROGERS: Jesse, could you please pull up Page
- 21 375, Lines 12 to 25.
- 22 Q I draw your attention to question: "You opine that the
- NRA's demonstrated a commitment to corporate governance; is that
- correct?" 24

1

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8

25 "That's correct" is your answer.

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- 1 properly discharged its responsibilities with respect to the
- NRA's outside auditors; correct?
- 3 That's correct.
- Q At the time that you were deposed in 2022, you had 4
- never spoke with the Audit Committee members; correct?
- 6 That's correct.
- 7 Q You never attended any Audit Committee meetings?
- That's correct. 8
- 9 Q You couldn't name any of the members of the Audit
- Committee; right? 10
- No, I can name a member. 11
- In your deposition in 2022, you could not; correct? 12
- I couldn't remember. 13
- THE COURT: Little tiny bit slower on the 14 15 questions.
- Q And when you were deposed in 2022, you couldn't recall 16
- how many people served on the Audit Committee; correct? 17
- A At that time, I probably didn't know exact number. 18
- Q You're also offering the opinion that the NRA's 19
- 20 demonstrated a commitment to corporate governance and strong
- internal controls. 21
- 22 A Correct.
- 23 Q You are not saying that the NRA demonstrated commitment
- to corporate governance and strong internal controls in 2018;
- correct?

"Question: So what standards are you applying when 2 you make that statement?

I'm referring to the documentation that was 3 provided, the testimony that's been provided and my review 4 of the work papers that Aronson provided. 5

Question: Are there any standards or framework that you're applying?

Answer: No."

9 You would agree that without enforcement, even the best written policies are just words on paper; correct? 10

- 11 That's correct.
- 12 And you're opining that the NRA's demonstrated a
- commitment to corporate governance and strong internal controls
- without having conducted any independent evaluation of whether
- the NRA internal controls were actually followed; correct?
- That's correct. 16
- 17 You don't believe that misappropriating or misusing
- 18 funds is appropriate if it's below a certain monetary threshold;
- 19

- 20 Α I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question?
- I will ask it differently. 21
 - Diverting charitable assets is wrong; correct?
- 23 Α That's correct.
- Q And you aren't opining that misusing charitable funds 24
- is okay if it's below a certain amount; correct?

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NRA February 8, 2024 Mehta - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3786 Mehta - by Defendant - Recross/Mr. Conley Page 3788 That's correct. MS. ROGERS: You know what, that's okay. Pass the 1 MR. CONLEY: Pass the witness. Thank you. 2 2 witness. THE COURT: Anything further? 3 THE COURT: Okay. Anything further? 3 4 MS. ROGERS: Just a bit more. 4 MR. CONLEY: Briefly, your Honor. REDIRECT EXAMINATION **RECROSS-EXAMINATION** 5 5 BY MS. ROGERS: BY MR. CONLEY: 6 6 Q Mr. Mehta, you just testified that you didn't test Mr. Mehta, you are an auditor; correct? 7 That's correct. whether the NRA's good policies were actually being followed; 8 8 In this case you didn't perform an internal control 9 right? 9 A I didn't independently test them. audit: correct? 10 10 Q But in the course of your work as an auditor, do you 11 Α That's correct. 11 12 have to be alert for indications that the policies you look at 12 Q And you didn't perform a financial statement audit; are being followed or disobeyed? correct? 13 Α Yes. Α That's correct. 14 14 15 Q And in the documents that you looked at for the years 15 Q And you didn't test the work that the NRA's external you looked at, did you see indicia that the NRA was letting its auditor Aronson performed; correct? 16 policies be violated? I did not independently test the work. 17 17 18 MR. CONLEY: Objection. Leading. 18 THE COURT: Anything else? THE COURT: Well, it's not leading. MS. ROGERS: Nothing further. 19 19 20 I am happy to rephrase. THE COURT: All right, sir. You are free to step 20 THE COURT: I'm just trying to -- overruled. You 21 21 down. Thank you. So would now be a good time to break before the 22 22 23 Q In the document you looked at for the years you looked 23 next witness? at, did you see indicia that the NRA was letting its policies be MS. ROGERS: Yes, your Honor. I think so. 24 violated? THE COURT: Let's take a short break and then we'll 25 Mehta - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3787 Blacker - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3789 push on. 1 1 Q Irrespective of whether there is a formal framework you THE COURT OFFICER: All rise. Jury exiting. 2 2 use every time in the ordinary course of your work as an (Whereupon, at this time the jury exits 3 auditor, do you have to form opinions about companies' 4 the courtroom.) commitment to governance? (Whereupon at this time there was a recess taken.) 5 5 I'm sorry. Repeat the question. 6 6 THE COURT: Have a seat. Let's get the jury. Who Sure. In the ordinary course of your work as an 7 is the next witness so they can get them ready? 7 auditor, do you have to try to gauge whether or -- strike that. MS ROGERS: So he is also an expert. He is our 8 9 I'm sorry. 9 last one, so he's here. 10 In the ordinary course of your work as an auditor, do 10 THE COURT: Just remember to talk clearly and you have to try to gauge whether the company you're auditing is 11 slowly. committed to good governance? THE COURT OFFICER: All rise. Jury entering. 12 12 13 Α Yes. (Whereupon, at this time the jury entered the 13 Q Why? 14 14 courtroom.) A Again, you know, with -- one of the areas that we THE COURT: Okay. Have a seat, please. Next 15 15 looked, and I think we talked about COSO Framework with one of witness, Counsel. 16 MS. ROGERS: The NRA calls Bruce Blacker. 17 the expert witnesses, that one of the bases for sound internal 17 THE COURT: Good morning. control environment would be to assess the tone at the top. So, 18 you know, commitment to corporate governance would be a factor 19 BRUCE BLACKER, a witness called on 19 20 evaluating the tone at the top. 20 behalf of the Defendant, after having been first duly sworn, took the witness stand and testified as follows: Q And even if there is no formal framework you're citing 21 21 THE CLERK: State your name. 22 every time you make that judgment, can you describe for the jury 22 23 whether that judgment impacts your ability to audit the 23 THE WITNESS: Bruce Leon Blacker, B-L-A-C-K-E-R. 24 financials? THE CLERK: Thank you. You may be seated. 24 25 **DIRECT EXAMINATION** A I'm sorry. Again, repeat the question.

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Lerner and a forensic auditor a Mr. Hines who testified for the

A So this is where sometimes speaking generally can be

services, Are you an auditor. Because the general public, and I

think most people think of auditing as auditing the financial

statements, it wouldn't be uncommon for me to say, No, that's

not what I do. However, to an accountant, an audit means

different things. So as an accountant and as a consultant, I'm

often times asked do you conduct an audit of a contract, audit

be that there is an internal control audit or a financial

statement audit. There is also other types of audits.

healthcare industry as to what hospitals can charge insurance

compliance with regard to that contract or two companies may

You have done compliance audits; right?

For example, their are rules and regulations in the

So for example, I would go in and see if they were in

So I just caution you when you hear "audit," it may not

for compliance, audit for those things.

I have done compliance audits.

And forensic audits; right?

Often times I'm asked because I provide consulting

What kind of audits have you done?

Blacker - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers

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Government.

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Q

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- BY MS. ROGERS:
- Good morning, Mr. Blacker. 2
- Good morning. 3
- 4 Q Could you please introduce yourself briefly to the jury. 5
- 6 Yes. My name is Bruce Blacker. I'm a CPA. I'm
- certified in financial forensics. And generally what I do is
- provide consulting services to clients, and some of that
- in this case today. 10
- 12 credentials and experience in the fields of forensic accounting
- A I have a slide. Let me just briefly explain my 14

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- I received my Bachelors in Accounting in 1989 and a 16
- 17
- 18
- Big Eight accounting firms, KPMG. Today you will hear of the 19
- 20 Big Four accounting firms, and there was some consolidation. I

- the services that I provided there included an assessment of
- financial documents in bankruptcy and insolvencies.

- consulting services includes being an expert witness like I am
- Q Can you tell the jury about your professional 11
- and financial forensics? 13
- 15 background and why I'm here today.
 - Master Degree from Brigham Young University.
 - After that I began working at what was then one of the
- 21 worked in their tax department and prepared tax returns.
- After that I began working at Pricewaterhouse Coopers. 22
- I was in their dispute analysis and resolution group, and what
- - Page 3791

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A And forensic.

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- I did business valuations and forensic work, fraud 1
- investigations where we began to do expert witness testimony. 3 You heard a lot about independence and objectivity with
- accountants. Pricewaterhouse Coopers at the time, and I was a
- partner there was one of the largest, if not the largest
- accounting firm in the world. But as I said, I provided
- consulting services including litigation consulting services.
- And to maintain independence, it became very difficult for me to have the world largest accounting firm doing tax work and audit
- 10 work and then me maintain my independence and provide consulting
- work. So I had an opportunity to leave. And generally over the
- last 20 years, I have either worked at an economic consulting
- firm or a financial advisory firm, but I have continued to use 13
- my accounting to provide these consulting services. 14
- 15 Q Now, we have heard that Pricewaterhouse Coopers used to
- audit the NRA. 16
- 17 Just to be clear for the jury, you weren't part of the Pricewaterhouse Coopers team that worked on the NRA. 18
- 19 That's correct.
- 20 As I said, I was part of a consulting division. I
- wasn't part of the audit division or the tax division. There is 21
- others, but I will just divide it into those three categories 22
- 23 for this purpose.
- 24 Q We've heard about different kind of audits. We heard
- from an external auditor Mr. Mehta, an internal auditor Mr.

companies and how that's billed.

- enter into a licensing agreement where royalties are due one to another. I have audited those contracts to see if they are in 3 compliance with those contracts.
 - MS. ROGERS: I offer -- the NRA offers Mr. Blacker as an expert in forensic accounting and financial forensics.
 - MR. CONLEY: No objection, your Honor.
 - THE COURT: Okay. He is admitted for that purpose.
- Q We see a company on your screen Secretariat, and we 8 9 have heard testimony earlier this week from Ryan Sullivan, the economist. 10
- 11 You worked with Mr. Sullivan on your expert analysis; right? 12
- A He is my colleague. Dr. Sullivan is a stellar 13 economist. I come out with a different background being an accountant, CPA and certified in financial forensics.
- What were you asked to do in this case? 16
- A The task that we were given was to evaluate the NRA's 17 controls efforts using the tools that we have from our 18 19 experience, education and training.
- 20 So on the slide, you'll see that I have highlighted finance and accounting. You have heard from Dr. Sullivan already, so I will try to stick to the accounting piece of the 23 work that we did.
- 24 Now you were here listening to Dr. Sullivan testify; right? 25

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- A I came on Tuesday. I think he started Monday, but I
- have been in the courtroom since Tuesday. Q Well, did you hear him examined about what he was being
- paid and what you were being paid and what Secretariat was being paid?
- A Yes, I did. 6

NRA

- 0 7 And you're being compensated as an expert; right?
- 8 A To be specific, my employer pays me for the work that I 9 do, and the NRA is paying my employer.
- Q But you are not being paid -- your employer is the same 10 as Mr. Sullivan's. So you're covered by what the money that was 11 12 discussed with Dr. Sullivan; right? You are not additional.
- 13 A Exactly. My personal compensation is not tied to this 14 case because as an accountant, for one, I have to be independent 15 and objective.
- Q All right. What materials and information did you 16 17 consider in evaluating the NRA's control efforts from a finance and accounting perspective?
- A I mentioned that I provide consulting services and 19 sometimes it's in a litigation. 20
- Now, if it's not in a litigation, it's a little bit 21 different than in litigation. But in litigation, we are 22 provided the documents that are produced within the litigation itself. 24
- 25 So I reviewed the financial statements, the audit

- accountant, I sometimes too rely on the information that other
- professionals conduct.
- You have heard the phrase, you know, "Trust But 3 Verify." That's what accountants do.
- Great. And let's -- is your clicker working?
- A Yes. 6
- 7 Q And you did some work. You prepared a report; right?
- 8 A So I was retained in this case in 2022. I have issued
- two reports, hundreds of pages, hundreds of foot notes, reviewed the deposition testimony that I talked about. 10

Also in 2022 as part of litigation process, the 11 Attorney General's Office of New York is aware of the opinions that are in my report. They have not taken my deposition. I provided deposition testimony so that they would know what my

Q In addition to reviewing testimony by the Government's 16 17 expert Mr. Tenenbaum, you also reviewed testimony by Mr. Hines. He is a forensic accountant like you; right?

19 A He is.

15

8

opinions would be.

20 Q And did you form any opinions in response to Mr. Hines 21 that you want to share with the jury?

A You seen the slide maybe a couple of times. And as a 22 forensic accountant, one of the things that I want to point out

that he and I are totally in agreement on and that is that fraud

risk indicators are just that. They are only indicators of the

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- reports, the audit work papers, the policies and all the documents that you've heard about now.
- 3 I have had an opportunity to review those and to read
- deposition testimony and to sit here in court prior to arriving here. I was provided some transcripts. Its been a long trial.
- I think the transcripts were up to over 3,000 pages, so I got
- 7 through them the best that I could. But I take all of that
- information as an input into forming my independent opinion.
- 9 Q And what additional work did you do before arriving here today? 10
- 11 A I have assessed as I mentioned before how effective the 12 NRA has been in monitoring its controls. I have also looked at
- specifically the testimony both in reports and at trial of Mr. 13
- Tenenbaum and Mr. Hines. 14
- 15 Q Did you hear Mr. Tenenbaum say anything about accounting or auditing that you would like to comment on? 16
- Yes. Two quick points. Mr. Tenenbaum is not an 17 accountant. And when I heard his testimony that auditors simply 18
- test the numbers, I think after the testimony today and 19
- 20 yesterday, I think you know that auditors do a lot more than just test the numbers. So I took issue with that. 21
- 22 The testimony that he did give that I totally agree with is that companies in their attempt to be independent, to go through this cycle of monitoring, identifying, correcting and
- improving, they should rely on outside experts. As an

possibility of fraud. They do not in and of themselves mean that there was any misconduct or harm that was done because of

the internal controls.

I do have concerns about the way too that Mr. Hines said and tried to make it a distinction, if you will, between --6 MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor, to characterization of other testimony. 7

THE COURT: Overruled.

- 9 A That Mr. Hines made the distinction between what a financial audit is and what an internal audit is. They are different, but I think it's incomplete to not take it a step further. 12
- Please take it that step further for the jury. 13 How would you explain that? 14

15 A For example, again, I have taken only as an input into my analysis to form my own independent opinion the work of other professionals including the NRA's auditors. 17

18 When looking at the audit for December of 2019, the year 2019, you heard testimony from Mr. Plotts that the auditors begin somewhere in the Fall and begin the audit and then that audit takes about five months. So somewhere around March they are going to issue this audit.

23 Part of that was that they issued a management letter which you've heard about. That's the audit might be looking backwards, but the management letter is looking forward. I

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NRA Page 3798 think it's important on the slide here right above those highlighted, it says that it's done in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards are for audits. So the auditors have standards that they have to follow. They follow GAP, generally accepted accounting principles. That, as I forensic accountant gives me a lot of comfort in taking that piece of data, putting it into 7 my analysis and assessing that in forming an independent 9 analysis. (Continued on the following page.) 10 11 11 12 13 13 14 15 15 16 16 17 17 18 18 19 19 20 20 21 21 22 22 23 24 25 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3799 Q Now, you saw the Government's forensic accountant create some of his own data in that he took dollar amounts in a bunch of invoices and added them up. MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor, on 4 characterization of work done by an expert. 5 6 THE COURT: Overruled. Are you talking about the 7 compilations exhibits?

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MR. CONLEY: Objection. 1

THE COURT: Overruled. 2

O Why? 3

4 A I was asked to assess whether the internal controls and

specifically the corrective action of the NRA had been

effective.

So, on this slide I'm showing where Mr. Hines' analysis was about past transactions, and he went in and he summarized some of those past transactions. Again, those are transactions that possibly could be at issue because those were only fraud

indicators, not evidence of fraud. 12 So, as a forensic accountant, I would be concerned that that's not measuring the right thing as far as either the

internal control or --

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor, testifying to what's at issue here.

THE COURT: Overruled.

That that's not measuring the assets that are alleged to have been self-dealt or mismanaged.

Q And in your career as a forensic accountant, have you ever made a list of invoices that had fraud indicators without looking at whether assets were ever actually diverted?

A Not in the real world. All right, so I will do

consulting outside of litigation and that would be an incomplete

analysis. If I had a client who wanted to know if there were

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MS. ROGERS: Yes, yes.

9 Q Do you -- did you understand that that's what their expert was doing? 10

Yes, and I may have gotten a little ahead of the 11 slides. I'm going to go quickly through the slides. 12

This is again Aronson talking about the special 13 procedures. We don't need to talk about that anymore. 14

> MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor. There's no question pending.

17 Q Well, let's talk first about what Hines discussed, and then we'll hear more what you have to say about the special 18 19

20 But their forensic accountant made big lists on all of the flight invoices and what they totalled; right? 21

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Q You're a forensic accountant and you didn't do that; 23 24 right?

A I did not need to do that. 25

B. Blacker - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers

- fraud indicators, they would want to know, well, how much and
- what next.
- Q Would you ever look only at what the organization was paying for a contract and ignore what the organization was

5 getting?

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6 A No. This goes to the incomplete assessment of what Mr. Hines has done in my opinion.

Let's just take the vendors, for example. I'll give 8 two examples starting with the vendors. Some of the vendors I was able to see that there were issues with, and those were terminated and I went and looked at the general ledger and I could see if the payment stopped. So, I know the corrective action was taken there. 13

Other vendors were ratified and continued to move forward. They would fall in Mr. Hines' bucket of, Here's some invoices that I'm concerned -- concerned about, red flagged. What that doesn't tell you is did the NRA receive reasonable, fair services? So, that would be for the vendors.

19 Another example would be for an employee who had a business trip, but they took a black car service. The business trip was valid. They needed to have a travel expense, but there might be an incremental difference between following the NRA 23 policy and using, say, black car service.

Mr. Hines did not do that analysis. 24

What do you mean when you say "incremental?"

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The difference. If, if the allegation is that there was self-dealing and that there were mismanagement of assets,

what Mr. Hines does not do is provide that amount.

4 All he does is provide the entire universe where there's red flags where there should be further investigation. He doesn't complete the analysis to say here's what the amount

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8 Q You heard Mr. Mehta testify that accountants look at what kind of deal the company could have gotten if it went out into the market. 10

11 Do you recall that?

12 Α Yes.

13 Can you explain to the jury how, if at all, that plays 14 into what you've diagrammed here vis-a-vis alternative NRA

15 decisions?

A Again, bringing it back to what Mr. Hines did not do, 16 so we've -- he looked at what the real world -- what the 17 decision actually was.

What he doesn't do as Mr. Mehta had said is go out and 19 20 get a request for a proposal or see who else could provide the services. This chart indicates that it might have been more expensive or less expensive. 22

23 Mr. Hines didn't do that analysis, so, again, we're just left with a summation of expenses that aren't -- that don't get to the issue.

implications as when you take a client as to what that means in

As a consultant or an auditor, that also has

the marketplace. Are other people going to look at that

consultant and say, oh, you work for that entity or that entity? I don't want to be associated with you or I do want to be

associated with you.

Those things are business decisions that have to be made; but, also, because at the time they were looking at retaking the audit, the lawsuit had been filed and they knew it was going to be -- this is a public case with public issues --

11 MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor, to testifying 12 about what people knew or didn't know.

THE COURT: Overruled.

The case was filed in -- at the end of 2020, and 14 they're trying to make this assessment as to whether they want 15 to take the audit. And they went through those special procedures and determined that it was okay for them, professionally, to be able to do the work that they needed to and render the independent decision that they would, ultimately, 20 come up with.

> THE COURT: Just to repeat the instruction I've given now probably six times:

When the witness describes something like his understanding of what Aronson was facing, sometimes people use that words "it is my understanding that" and sometimes

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Q I apologize because I asked you a question earlier that was out of sync with your PowerPoint. 2

Were there aspects of the Aronson special procedures 3 that informed your opinions that you want to tell the jury 4 about? 5

6 Again, it's the Aronson documents were an input. Why do I think the basis for why it was important to me to be able to look at Aronson and to look at the financial statements and be able so see there were clear audits is knowing that not only was the normal, if you will -- auditing the NRA is not normal --10 11 there were additional steps that were taken and that was 12 important to me --

MR. CONLEY: Objection, your Honor. This is testimony about work that Mr. Blacker didn't perform. THE COURT: Overruled.

You can answer. 16

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17 A As I said, I'm taking that as an input into my analysis to know that the work that Aronson and other outside consultants 19 have done was thorough and rigorous.

20 Q You testified just now that auditing the NRA isn't normal. What do you mean by that? 21

22 A No client, I guess, is normal with an accountant; but it is no secret that the NRA has political implications. When you mention the NRA, people usually have a reaction to that one

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they leave that out. None of these statements of which sound like facts are of personal knowledge of this witness.

All of the basis for his opinion is based on what he read and heard from others, at least in terms of the factual basis. So, just repeating that same -- that same point. And I didn't sustain the objection because I believe by now that you understand that when the witness is talking about facts, he's saying that his understanding is based on what he has read in preparing for this is X, Y and Z.

If you conclude that those facts are not accurate, then you can take that into account.

Q Based on the resume of yours that we reviewed and your experience as an accountant, if you were vetting a new client engagement with a very controversial political adverse group that had just been targeted for a dissolution for corruption by a state regulator, would you vet that client more strictly or less strictly than other clients?

18 A That's not a hypothetical question. I had to make that 19 decision in accepting this engagement.

20 Q And did you scrutinize the NRA more strictly or less strictly than other companies? 21

A More strictly. We go through our conflict check, but 22 23 we also had to make a business decision.

> MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Pass the witness. THE COURT: Any other direct testimony?

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way or another.

NYSCEF DOC $_{NY}$ NG $_{v}$ 3234 RECEIVED NYSCEF: 04/06/2024

INDEX NO. 451625/2020 **NRA February 8, 2024** B. Blacker - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Conley Page 3806 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Conley Page 3808 1 MR. CORRELL: No. MR. CONLEY: Jesse, could you please pull up the 1 MR. FLEMING: Nothing for me. 2 2 pretrial order. THE COURT: Okay, from the State? 3 (Displayed) 3 4 CROSS-EXAMINATION 4 Q And this is a pretrial order in this DC action. Do you BY MR. CONLEY: see the highlighted language there, Mr. Blacker? 5 Good morning, Mr. Blacker. A I do see that. I don't know if I have actually seen 6 6 Good morning. 7 this document before. 7 What's your hourly rate in this case? 8 8 And you agree it says: A I think it was mentioned before that Secretariat has 9 "Upon review of Ryan Sullivan and Bruce Blacker's qualifications as identified in their June 21, 2023, expert charged \$795 an hour for my services, and beginning in 2024 that 10 rate may have increased. report, neither expert is qualified to testify about 11 11 not-for-profit governance." 12 Q Your colleague, Dr. Sullivan, testified he didn't know 12 how much your prior firm, Intensity, and your current firm, Do you see that? 13 13 Secretariat, has billed the NRA for this matter. Do you know A I see that's what it says, yes. 14 You are not an auditor, correct? 15 how much they have been billed? 15 A I do not. There are people at Secretariat that take THE COURT: Just so it is clear, I don't think -- I 16 16 care of the billing. 17 17 don't think he's been offered as an expert on not-for-profit Your deposition in 2022, you testified you billed governance here. 18 18 hundreds of hours on this engagement; correct? MS. ROGERS: He has not. He's a forensic 19 19 Yes, I've spent a lot of time to form my opinion. 20 20 accountant. And safe to assume you've billed more since then? Q You're not an auditor, correct, Mr. Black? 21 O 21 Yes, in preparation for today, certainly. A That's where I provided an explanation as what do you 22 22 23 Mr. Blacker, are you aware that this case concerns mean by auditor? Do you mean auditor of financial statements? Because to an accountant, there's a number of different types of questions about compliance with corporate governance standards for not-for-profits and their officers; right? audits. B. Blacker - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Conley Page 3807 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Conley Page 3809 Q Understood. You've never conducted a financial A As an accountant, that's my general understanding of the legal allegations in the case. statement audit; is that right? Q You were engaged by the NRA to be an expert in an That is correct. 3 action by the DC attorney general against the NRA and the NRA Q And you never conducted an internal control audit; is 4 Foundation; correct? that right? 5 6 To correct your question just a little bit, again, was 6 That is correct. 7 hired by outside counsel for the NRA, and then I can say yes. And in your analysis, you looked at transactions and Q Sure. And in that action there are also claims arrangements that the attorney general raised in the complaint 9 concerning corporate governance standards and not-for-profits; 9 in this action, right? Yes. correct? 10 A 10 A I believe so, but I've been focused on this case so I Q And you're not opining on the accuracy of those 11 11 don't want to speculate. allegations; right? 12 12

- Q And you were found unqualified to offer expert opinion 13 testimony on that topic, correct? 14
- MS. ROGERS: Objection. Misstates the ruling, I 15 think. 16
- THE COURT: That's not -- you can ask it. I'm 17 18 assuming you have some basis for asking that question the 19 way you did?
- 20 MR. CONLEY: Yes.
- A Can you repeat the question? I did not understand it. 21
- 22 Q You were found unqualified to offer expert testimony on
- 23 corporate governance in that case, correct?
- A I'm not an attorney. I don't believe that's a correct 24
- way to describe that in the question.

- A That would not be for me as an expert witness. I 13
- believe that decision will be left up to the trier of fact.
- 15 Q You testified a moment ago that the attorney general -about the attorney general's expert, Eric Hines; is that 16
- correct? 17
- 18 Yes, I spoke about Mr. Hines.
- 19 Q You are not opining that any of the arrangements and
- 20 transactions analyzed by Mr. Hines complied with the NRA policy; are you? 21
- A Mr. Hines is not providing that testimony and I am not 22 23 providing that testimony.
- Q It is your understanding Mr. Hines isn't providing testimony regarding the compliance of certain arrangements and

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NRA February 8, 2024 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3810 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3812 transactions with NRA policy? MICHAEL J. ERSTLING 1 called as a witness in behalf of the Defendant, A Correct. He said he's identified red flags that would 2 require further investigation. 3 and after having been first duly sworn by the Clerk of the 3 4 Q You have not evaluated whether the NRA's internal 4 Court, took the witness stand and testified as follows: controls are functioning currently, correct? THE CLERK: State your name. 5 A That's correct, and was not necessary in forming my THE WITNESS: Michael J. Erstling. 6 opinion. 7 THE CLERK: Spell your last name. 7 Q And you did not evaluate whether the NRA's THE WITNESS: E-R-S-T-L-I-N-G. 8 8 relationships with the vendors complied with internal policies 9 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may be seated. and procedures; correct? THE COURT: Counsel, you may proceed. 10 A Again, not necessarily for the work I did, no, I did 11 MS. EISENBERG: Good afternoon, your Honor. 11 12 not 12 THE COURT: Good afternoon. MR. CONLEY: Pass the witness. MS. EISENBERG: Good afternoon, members of the 13 13 THE COURT: Anything further? 14 14 jury. MS. ROGERS: Just a little bit. **DIRECT-EXAMINATION** 15 15 REDIRECT-EXAMINATION 16 BY MS. EISENBERG: 16 BY MS. ROGERS: 17 17 Q Welcome back, Mr. Erstling. Please remind us what your MS. ROGERS: I'm going to ask if the attorney position is at the NRA? 18 18 I am the director of finance at the NRA. general tech person would be so kind as to put back on the 19 19 20 How long have you worked at the NRA? screen the DC AG case ruling shown a moment ago, and scroll 20 Q I started at the NRA in 2001. 21 down to the two sentences that were left off the screen. 21 Α Q And while we're waiting for that, Mr. Blacker, to your Who is your supervisor at this point? 22 22 knowledge have you ever been offered as an expert on 23 Right now, I report to Sonya Rowling. not-for-profit corporate governance law? Q What are some of your responsibilities in your current 24 24 25 Α No. 25 position? B. Blacker - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3811 B. Blacker - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Rogers Page 3813 A I am responsible for accounting operations. I am Q Do you remember that you were offered as an expert in forensic accounting in the DC case? responsible for budgeting. I am responsible for the preparation 2 A Yes, I was. of the 990 and any other duties as a side. 3 3 Q Did you know that they moved to strike your opinion, MS. EISENBERG: Thank you. Your Honor, may I 4 4 approach the witness to hand him a bottle of water? and the court denied that motion and said that you could testify 5 about forensic accounting? 6 THE COURT: Sure. 7 MS. EISENBERG: Thank you. I meant to do this 7 A I have that understanding from counsel. I don't think before. I've reviewed this document, but that's my understanding, yes. 8 9 MS. ROGERS: All right, nothing further. 9 (Handed to the witness) THE WITNESS: Thank you. THE COURT: Okay. Anything further for anyone? 10 10 MR. CONLEY: Nothing further, your Honor. About how many people report to you? 11 11 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, sir, you can step Approximately, eight. 12 12 down. Let's talk a little bit about the period of in or 13 13 (Whereupon, at this time the witness was then around the summer of 2018. What was your position at the NRA at 14 14 that time? 15 excused.) 15 No clients are normal, that would be a good thing I was the director of budget and financial analysis. 16 16 for the business card. To whom did you report then? 17 17 Okay, next witness for the defense. I reported to Rick Tedrick. 18 18 Α MS. ROGERS: The NRA calls Michael Erstling. 19 19 Q Did there come a time in or around early 2018 when 20 He's a fact witness, so I think the court officer has to get 20 Mr. Spray joined the organization? Yes, I think it was in March of 2018. him. 21 21 THE COURT: Okay. 22 22 Q And he became the treasurer and the CFO over the course

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those.

of that year; is that fair?

A Over the course of the year, yes, he became both of

COURT OFFICER: Ready, your Honor?

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

THE COURT: Yes, sir. Welcome back, sir.

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Q In early 2018, did you have an opportunity to form an opinion about his leadership style? 2

A I did. 3

NRA

- 4 Q And how would you compare his leadership style to that of Mr. Phillips, his predecessor?
- A Craig was much more engaged in the day-to-day
- activities of the association. He was present. He was
- inquisitive. He asked tough questions. He made decisions. It
- was 180 degrees from Mr. Phillips.
- Q And in the five or so years prior to Mr. Phillips 10 departure in 2018, with what frequency did you personally meet 11
- 12 with Mr. Phillips?
- A Over the -- from 2015 to 2018, I don't think I ever met 13 with Mr. Phillips. Prior to that, it would be maybe two to 14
- 15 three times for budget purposes.
- Q Did there come a time when you and your colleagues 16 started to have regularly scheduled meetings in 2018? 17
- As soon as Craig started, we were having regular
- monthly meetings. It was myself, Sonya Rowling, Emily Cummins,
- Rick Tedrick, and Lisa George. 20
- Q What type of discussion did you have in those 21 meetings? 22
- A We -- we discussed the financial results. We discussed
- budgeting, insurance, risk, accounting, whatever the topic was
- of the day, of the month, we were all talking about it. So, we

- A Yes. We started to -- we started to compare notes.
- 2 We started to, you know, put the puzzle together to a
- certain degree where prior we were -- we may not have been 3
- sharing all information that we had. By sitting around a round
- table and sharing, we were able to start to put the puzzle together, to try to figure out what was going on.
- Q And as you started to do that, did you personally arrive at new realizations about the state of compliance at the
- 9 NRA?
- A Yeah, it was -- the -- the scope was getting larger 10 every time we met. 11

12 So, there was -- there were significant problems. I don't think any one of us knew individually how big the issue 13 was until all of us were sitting around talking about it.

(Continued on next page)

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were all sharing information.

- And prior to Mr. Spray's arrival, did you and the individuals you listed hold regularly scheduled meetings or
- randomly scheduled meetings?
- We definitely did not hold regularly scheduled 5
- meetings. We would definitely talk in the office, but it
- wouldn't be all of us together at one time. So, there was no
- group thing. It was just one or two of us meeting to talk about
- 9 an issue, but it wasn't a complete 360-degree view of the organization. 10
- 11 As you started to attend these meetings, these 12 regularly scheduled meetings that Mr. Spray organized, did there
- come a time when you expressed certain concerns about certain
- transactions, expenditures or the like? 14
- 15 A So, my personal experience was I was frustrated. I had seen a great deal of large transactions, large invoices, very
- 17 little detail. There were other concerns of transactions that,
- I mean, were being approved and, also, at that time concealed 18
- carried initiative was ramping up; and the invoices for that 19 20 were absolutely enormous.
- All they said was three letters, CCI, and they were 21
- 22 half a million dollars, three hundred thousand dollars. They
- 23 were big, and so that was troubling. 24
- Q Did you share this concern with Mr. Spray and others who attended those meetings?

- Q And at the time -- at the time what were the various
 - responsibilities of the various individuals in the meeting?
 - 3 A So at that time I was working on budget and financial
- forecasting and analytics. Sonya Rowling was accounting operations. Emily Cummins was risk and insurance and tax. Lisa
- 6 George was purchasing, and I think that names them.
 - Thank you, Mr. Erstling.
- Did there come a time when you and certain of your colleagues made a presentation about these concerns to the NRA's
- Audit Committee? 10
- So out of --11
 - Just yes or no. Q
- Yes. Sorry. 13
- And what role, if any, did Mr. Spray have in that 14 meeting in connection with that meeting?
- So Craig could see that we were frustrated and he 16 17 suggested that we come forward and bring these -- bring these issues up to the Audit Committee. 18
- Q Leading up to the meeting of the Audit Committee, did 19 20 you and others corroborate on preparing a list of top concerns to discuss with the committee? 21
- A Yes. So we -- we met -- we met off line off of the 22
- standard Craig meeting. We met in Sonya's office, and I
- provided my few items, and Lisa provided her couple of items,
- and Sonya provided her items. Portia Padilla who was our

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- 1 accounts payable manager provided some information about some of
- 2 these items, and then Emily sent a document of her concerns and
- 3 so Sonya consolidated all of those concerns on to the Top
- Concerns memo.
- Q Let's take a look at PX 2605 which is in evidence.
- Let's go to the second page of the exhibit.
- Mr. Erstling, is this the document that you were just
- testifying about? 8
- Yes, ma'am. 9
- Q Leading up to the meeting on July 30, 2018 with the 10
- Audit Committee, did you have any meetings with Mr. Frazer about 11
- 12 any of your concerns?
- A Yes. John was trying to understand some of the 13
- financial transactions that were presented in this list. 14
- 15 Q Please tell us what happened at the meeting.
- We -- we talked about specifically the Grassroots 16 Α
- 17 Behavioral item number 4B which dealt with some accounts payable
- for the National Rifle Association to PM Consulting that
- remained on the Association's books after PM Consulting was sold
- 20 to MMP and that those accounts payables were never written off.
- 21 They just remained there. And then accounting operations was
- instructed to slowly pay that accounts payable off over a period 22
- 23 of years at a think it was like 20,000 increments.
- Q Instructed by whom? 24
- 25 I believe it was Woody Phillips.

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- Q Yes. To the extent or someone had caused the NRA to
- make payments for Associated Television for the rental of the
- house before you brought this concern to the Audit Committee's
- attention, do you have firsthand knowledge regarding who
- authorized those payments?
- A I don't have -- I don't have knowledge of who 6 7 authorized them. I have knowledge who signed them.
 - MR. FARBER: Your Honor, that's the question.
- 9 O Do you have knowledge about whose name appeared on the approval portion of the paperwork? 10
- 11 A I do.

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12 And what was that?

> MR. FARBER: Again, your Honor. Just reading the document is not appropriate.

THE COURT: Is that a document that's in evidence? MS. EISENBERG: I don't have it handy, your Honor. Maybe.

MR. FARBER: It's not appropriate to ask a question what his knowledge is of a document. If it's in evidence, it's in evidence.

THE COURT: I disagree. I mean, if it's -- if the document is hearsay and not admissible, then you might be right; but the document has been admitted. So maybe at some point during this you can confirm that before the witness answers that.

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- Q Did you also share with the Audit Committee your
- concerns about payments to ATI or Associated Television for
- rental of a house?
- A Yeah. I saw those -- those invoices come through, and
- 5 I obviously did my own Google search of the address and found
- out who the property was owned by, and I -- I brought it up as
- an issue. You know, the invoice itself was not descriptive. So I mean, if it was truly the rental of that house, then we paid a
- lot of money for that rental. If it was for something else,
- then why wouldn't you have put what it was for. Why did you 10
- have to hide that it was for lights and cameras and stuff like 11
- 12 that. I don't understand.
- Q Do you have an understanding as to who had authorized 13 payments for this in the past? 14
- MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. And is it 15 firsthand knowledge or what he was told? 16
 - THE COURT: I mean, you're here as a fact witness, so it should be things that you observed or know. Not speculating.
- 20 MR. FARBER: Judge, I would object to know. People know things from hearsay. 21
- THE COURT: Well, that's a fair point. The -- in 22 23 the first instance, the question is whether you have personal knowledge. 24
- 25 A Can you ask the question one more time.

MS. EISENBERG: Certainly, your Honor.

- Q Let's take a look at item two, Mr. Erstling. It refers 2
- to senior management override of internal controls.
- Do you see that? 4
- Yes, ma'am. 5 Α
- Q And then there is a listing at the top of five
- different procedures or policies that you were telling the Audit
- Committee were being overridden. And let's just go through that
- list. What are they? Accounts payable procedures, IST
- purchasing policies. 10
 - What does "IST" refer to?
- A Information Technology or Information Services 12
- Technology. 13
- Q Okay. Travel and expense reporting policy, procurement 14 contract policy, HR policy.

And when Mr. Thompson asked you questions about this 16 document, the first time you testified in this trial, you 17 testified that item 2b as well as item 2c is something that you personally contributed to this list.

20 Do you recall that testimony?

- Yes, ma'am. 21
- 22 So let's focus on item 2b that talks about Lance
- 23 Olson's invoices.
- 24 To the extent you believe -- well, let me just confirm.
 - Did you believe that the payment of those invoices

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- constituted overrides by senior management of internal controls?
- 2 MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. His belief about whether something constitutes an override or not is
- 3 4 not proper testimony.
- 5
 - THE COURT: Overruled.
- 6 I believe that this -- this overrode internal controls.
- 7 Q And who is -- whom specifically, if you know, overrode
- those controls? 8
- 9 A Well, Josh Powell and Woody Phillips' signatures are on all of the documents associated with this purchase. 10
- Q Let's go to item 2c. It refers to Josh Powell's 11
- 12 purchases of computer assets.
- Do you see that? 13
- I do. 14 Α
- 15 Q Who was the senior manager who overrode internal
- controls with regard to item 2c? 16
- Josh Powell. 17
- Items 2a and 2d are not something that you previously 18
- testified you contributed to the list. But let me ask you about
- 20 2a, whether once it was added by one of your colleagues you
- 21 agreed that this particular transaction was an issue that should
- be reported. 22

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- 23 MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor.
- THE COURT: Overruled. 24
- 25 I agree that -- I was on the floor when this

1 transaction came down, and I witnessed it, and I agree that this

Q Who was the senior manager or senior managers who

A In this case, it was Woody Phillips and then also it

Q And what about item 2d that refers to hiring of staff

- When you presented the concerns with the Audit
- Committee, was that the first time you ever met with the Audit
- Committee about these concerns?
- 4 Α Yes.
- 5 Q And as far as you know, was it the first time the other
- individuals who came with you were meeting with the Audit
- Committee about their concerns?
- 8 A As far as I know, yes.
- 9 Q How would you characterize their reaction of the Board members at the meeting? 10
- 11 A I thought that the three that remained were engaged.
- 12 They asked questions. They were receptive to not only the list
- that was sent to them early but some additional items that we
- brought forward in that meeting specifically that weren't even
- on that list, and so we brought those as well. So they were 15
- asking questions. 16
- 17 They were -- you know, I know Curtis Jenkins seemed mad about it. They were -- they were interested. 18
- Q And when you say that Mr. Jenkins seemed mad, in what 19
- 20 respect did he seem mad? Was he mad at you or was he mad about 21 what you were reporting?
- A He was mad about what we were reporting. I mean, he 22
- 23 -- I think he was a bit flabbergasted.

Erstling - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Eisenberg

- Q You previously talked about how once you started to 24
- have meetings organized by Mr. Spray with Lisa George and Sonya

Erstling - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Eisenberg

was a total override of controls.

overrode internal controls?

without HR knowledge.

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- together, you pieced together certain things that previously you
- 3
- 4 So would it be fair to say that you began to have an
- understanding of sort of the magnitude of some of the issues?
- list. But then when you put the list together and you see its
- 9 In your opinion was that another instance of senior management overriding internal controls? 10 I mean, like one thing doesn't -- doesn't make you say 10

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A Yes, and that was Josh Powell hiring people left and 11 right. 12

Q Let's take a look at item three. It refers to 13

was handed down by Craig Spray as well.

- management's subordinating its judgment to vendors. It states 14 decisions are made in the best interest of vendors. 15
- When Mr. Thompson questioned you about this document, 16
- you didn't identify number 3 as a item that you personally 17
- contributed to the list. But the same question. Once it was added to the list, did you agree with your colleagues that this
- 19 was a concern? 20
- A Yes. 21
- 22 Q Which management subordinated its judgment to vendors?
- 23 A In the case that I'm thinking about, it would have been
- Wayne LaPierre and Woody Phillips. 24
- Q When you -- we can take down the document. 25

- 1 Rowling and others sort of knew things or things kind of came
- hadn't.
- A That's a very good, fair understanding. I mean, each
- 7 one of us brought, you know, two or three or four items to this
- 9 length and complexity, it sort of opens your eyes; right.
- oh, you know, that's horrific; right. But when you look at the totality of what was happening, it was bad.
- Q Who, if anyone, at the NRA prior to Craig Spray's 13 departure would have been in a position to understand the magnitude of these issues?

MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. 16 THE COURT: Sustained. 17

- Q Do you think that Mr. Phillips knew about these 18 19 concerns and these issues?
 - MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. He is asking for his opinion about his mental state, what was in his mind.
 - THE COURT: Yeah. If you can ask it just focusing on fact witness, what he knows on personal knowledge.
 - Q Do you know facts that would enable you to form a

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belief on whether or not Mr. Phillips knew about these issues and their magnitude? 2

MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. She can ask 3 4 specific questions about specific facts.

THE COURT: Sustained.

6 Who was the contact person at the -- or persons at the

7 NRA for the vendors that are listed in the Top Concerns memo?

A As far as Ackerman McQueen, it would have been Wayne

LaPierre and Woody Phillips. For ATI, it would have been Wayne

LaPierre and Woody Phillips. For PM Consulting, it would have

been Wayne LaPierre and Woody Phillips. 11

12 What about McKenna?

13 That would have been Josh Powell, and I don't know what

-- what the other two knew about McKenna. 14

15 Q In or around that time for a payment to go out, is it

fair to say that someone at the NRA had to approve the payment? 16

Yes. Over \$50,000 invoices, there has to be two 17 officers signatures. 18

Q And in your position at the time did you have occasion 19

20 to go review approvals to see who was approving payments to

these vendors? 21

A Yes. 22

5

23 0 Who were those individuals?

A Mostly Rick Tedrick for Wilson Phillips, John Frazer, 24

Josh Powell. On a rare occasion, Wayne LaPierre, but it wasn't

we ended the relationship. 2 We removed any type of out-of-pocket expense associated

3 with NRA travel and that no longer went through Ackerman McQueen

or an outside vendor, so we brought that in-house.

5 We started to move vendors out of EVP and out of public relations and put them where they belong. So if a particular

consultant or contractor was working on general operations work

or they were working on publications work or they were working

on advancements work, we took them out of the EVP office and we

put them in the area of responsibility for whatever work they

were doing. And what that does is it creates accountability,

right, so that the manager of that particular area is now

accountable for that contractor; what are they doing, are they

working, are they providing benefit to the association. And if

they are not, they were then eliminated. So those are some of

the things that occurred on the vendor side.

17 On the employee side, we started to dig in to expense reports and start to look for anything that might be personal in 18 19 nature. And if we found that, then we asked for reimbursement. 20 And if reimbursement wasn't made, they were terminated.

21 Then on to the systems side, there were three -- three systems that were instituted. One was a change in how we 22 23 reported monthly financials.

So prior to 2018 we would send out the monthly 24 financial statements in paper format. So we printed everything

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very often. 1

Q Let's go back to July 30, 2018. 2

3 After the meeting with the Audit Committee, did things

happen at the NRA that you considered to have improved its

efforts to comply with laws, regulations and internal policies?

6 There were a lot of things that changed after the 7 meeting.

Q And just before we get into those, how quickly did you 8

9 start to observe change?

A Within a week. 10

Please tell us about some of the changes. 11

So I would categorize the changes into sort of four 12

different groups. There were changes to vendors. There were 13

14 changes to employees. There were changes to systems, and there

15 were changes to what I will call education or compliance.

So the changes, and these happened -- these started 16 17 quickly. So the vendor one started immediately. The others over the -- over the period, you know, three, four, five years 18

these other things have been continuing to change. 19

20 So but starting with the vendors, within a week. We had sent out a letter to 200 of the top vendors at the NRA and 21 22 said hey our policy is that you have to have detail on your

invoice, and if you can't provide that, then we are not going to

be able to do business with you. So we allowed them to try to

correct the issue. If they weren't able to correct the issue,

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off. We, you know, collated it with the general ledger detail,

and we put it in an interoffice envelope and mailed it out

interoffice, but we were able to digitize that. So we were able

to add a component to our accounting system where it sent an

5 electronic picture of your income statement and all your detail

6 and you could drill down on that.

7 So each manager could look at their phone wherever they were and see their financial statements, and you could drill

down on a variance. And say, oh, why is this big or little or

what's going on with the variance there. Why is this going up 10

or down? 11

12 The next thing we instituted was PN3. So PN3 is a software that enables us to track invoices as they come in to the Association. So they come in to an email box. They get sort of imported into PN3, and PN3 then routes that invoice to the appropriate person and gets their approval so you can track 17 the approval process all the way along. No invoices get lost, and there is record within PN3 of exactly who approved whatever 18 19

20 And the last thing we instituted was purchasing KYX's C-Track. It's a software. Completes the 990. It's similar to a Turbo Tax, but it's for Associations, and what it does, it allows you when you input information on one schedule, it might bring it over to another schedule, wherever it's pertinent, but it also does a lot of cross checks to allow you to make sure

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that you have accuracy across different schedules.

And the final grouping is compliance and education. 2

MR. THOMPSON: Your Honor, just narrative. 3

4 THE COURT: Overruled.

5 Was the compliance software, the compliance presentation. 6

7 So we started to give compliance presentations to sort of teach everybody the stuff that they should have known; right. 8 So what are the rules? What are -- what are the policies?

Where do you need to be looking when you do a transaction, when you make a contract? What do you need to be doing for that 11

12 process to work?

13 I was part of giving those compliance seminars. I gave 14 the compliance seminar portion related to purchasing and related to what authority you needed, what signatures you needed on 15 purchases, and that's ongoing. Education is ongoing. You have 16 17 to keep teaching people over and over again. You can never stop. 18

And on top of that, we did -- the Board revised the 19 20 travel and reimbursement policy. We have new procedures for 21 travel and reimbursement policy.

22 The purchasing policy has been -- procedures have been updated, and we continue to educate people. What are the rules? 24 What do you have to follow?

25 Q Thank you very much, Mr. Erstling. Let's go back to PX

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the question.

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2 Q Please tell us about the nature of that concern.

3 A The budgeting process at a very high level starts in July. We -- we work towards a goal of getting a budget prepared

and approved by senior management in and around the week of

Thanksgiving. And so once that's been approved, we send that

budget -- that approved internal budget to the Finance Committee

for review at the December Finance Committee meeting.

9 And then that NRA budget is then -- you know, if there 10 are any changes, those changes occur, and we again, send it out in early January for the January 6 or 7 Finance Committee meeting. And then if they approve it, then it goes to the full Board for approval. On a parallel track, there are meetings taking place between the NRA and Ackerman McQueen where they also are figuring out what their budget is going to be for the next year. Next fiscal year.

17 That budget -- that Ackerman McQueen budget is then not incorporated into the NRA's budget so that -- that budget is taking the -- the Ackerman McQueen budget, the timing of that is late November, early December at the same time that our budget 21 is going on.

And so what happens is you get to January, and the 22 NRA's budget is being approved by the Board, but it doesn't have any of the adjustments or any of the projects or any of the work that Ac-Mac is going to be doing for the next year within our

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2605, the second page.

Directing your attention to the second item that refers to "Senior Management Override of Internal Controls."

Mr. Erstling, is it fair to say that you and your colleagues used this memo to communicate your concerns to the

6 Audit Committee on July 30, 2018?

7 A Yes.

Q And in so far as the words "Senior Management Override of Internal Controls" were used, to who were you referring when you used the word "senior management" there?

11 A That would be Wayne LaPierre, Woody Phillips and Josh 12 Powell.

13 Q Directing your attention to item three which refers --14 states that management has subordinated its judgment to vendors.

15 To the extent this was another concern that you communicated to the Audit Committee, when you used the word 16 "management" there, to whom were you referring? 17

Wayne LaPierre, Woody Phillips, Josh Powell. 18

19 Q Let's talk a little bit about the budgeting process 20 leading up to the July 30 presentation.

Did you have any concerns about the timing of the NRA's 21 22 budgeting process relative to the timing of the budgeting 23 process with Ackerman?

24 Yes. So --

25 MR. FARBER: Objection, your Honor. He's answered own budget. And so you get to January's actual results, and you

start to compare the NRA's budget to actual, and there are

because the budget's not the same. It's different.

(Continued on the following page.)

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1 Who at the NRA caused this issue?

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MR. FARBER: No foundation, your Honor? 2

3 Q When Ackerman and the NRA negotiated the budget, who at

4 the NRA participated in that process?

A There were two people that were the contacts for the

- Ackerman McQueen relationship, and that was Wayne LaPierre and
- Woody Phillips. I wasn't in the room. I don't know who was
- 8 sitting there.
- 9 Q And when the Finance Committee was presented with a 10 budget for its approval, who amongst management presented the
- budget for the Committee's approval? 11
- 12 A Woody would have initiated the meeting, and he would
- 13 have given an overview. Wayne would have spoken, and then each
- of the department heads would have spoken at that meeting. 14
- 15 Q Switching topics a little bit.
- What is your understanding as to the meaning of the 16
- term 501(c)(4) Organization? 17
- A A = 501(c)(4) is a social welfare organization that 18
- files -- that is a nonprofit, nontaxable, nonfederal taxable 19
- organization by IRS code. 20
- Is the NRA a 501(c)(4)? 21 O
- Yes, ma'am. 22 Α

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- 23 O What type of organization is the NRA Foundation?
- That's a 501(c) charitable organization. 24 Α

THE COURT: Overruled.

25 Did the NRA receive 501(c)(3) funds from the Foundation

MR. THOMPSON: Objection. Relevance, your Honor.

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- with this example right now, the NRA Museum, the cost center
- number is 40685; and so any expenses associated with the museum,
- whether that be salaries and benefits, whether it be supplies
- and materials, whether it be travel, we would code those
- expenses to 40685. And so when money comes over from the
- Foundation and it is restricted to a (c)(3) program, well, the
- museum counts as a (c)(3) program. If it was restricted to just
- museum, well, I could put it in museum.

9 And so each program within general operations that is a (c)(3) program, it's educational, it is for the public, they

- fall in a specific cost center and they have a specific cost
- center number, and that's how we keep each column separated from
- 13 the next.

19

14 And so when the money comes over from the Foundation,

- 15 when we request money from the Foundation, we request it in
- those particular buckets. So, I may request \$125,000 to cover
- the expenses and allocations to the museum from the Foundation,
- and the Foundation would send if they approved 125,000.
- 20 that we send out \$25,000 worth of material across the country.

I might request for the Eddie Eagle Gun Safe Program

- 21 I might request \$25,000 of Eddie Eagle money to be granted over
- to the NRA, and so I keep those things separate by their
- - accounting code on the ledger.

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- 24 Q Were there any other steps you took to ensure that
- (c)(3) funds coming from the Foundation were spent only for the

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Yes, ma'am.

in 2015 through present timeframe?

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- Victim, et cetera?

- this -- this model, this spreadsheet and it gives me a column
- used by the NRA? for each and everyone of those (c)(3) programs. There are different levels of restriction; but the
- overarching goal is that (c)(3) funds can only be used for

Q When the NRA received or is receiving funds from the

Foundation, how can the funds coming in from the Foundation be

- (c)(3) programs. Further restricting it could be money may be 10
- restricted to competitions, or money may be restricted to the
- Eddie Eagle Gun Safe Program, or it could be restricted to our 12
- Youth Hunter Education Challenge. 13
- So, those monies could be further restricted, but 14
- 15 they're still restricted to (c)(3) programs.
- 16 Q Who at the NRA has been responsible since at least 2015
- 17 for ensuring that (c)(3) funds coming in from the Foundation are
- accounted for appropriately and spent only for the types of 18
- 19 services that you just referenced?
- 20 A Me.
- Q How have you done that? 21
- 22 A (C)(3) accounting-wise, in the accounting system we set
- up cost centers. A cost center or a profit center, it's just a
- code. It is a series of numbers.
- 25 So, each-- each cost center has a five digit code. So,

- designated purposes like the museum, Eddie Eagle, Refuse to be a
- 3 A I mean, that's the analysis that I do on a monthly
- basis. So, I am pulling information directly from the general
- ledger, right from our accounting software. I place it into
- And so when I make my request to the Foundation, I 8
- provide -- I provide the Foundation with that spreadsheet and with the detail behind it showing the ledger and the expenses to 10
- 11 the Foundation to approve that request.
- MS. EISENBERG: Thank you, Mr. Erstling. No 12 further questions at this time. 13
- THE COURT: Any other direct testimony? 14
- 15 MR. CORRELL: I'll pass the witness, your Honor.
- MR. FARBER: No direct, your Honor. 16
- **DIRECT-EXAMINATION** 17
- BY MR. FLEMING: 18
- Hello, Mr. Erstling. How are you? 19
- 20 Α Good, thank you.
- Q So, I have some questions and you seem like the right 21 person to get granular with. 22
- 23 So, you testified about approving payments to vendors.
- A Yes. 25

Do you recall?

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their approval as well.

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Q Can you explain to the jury the process by which an invoice comes in and payments are approved ultimately?

A So, today we request that payments are e-mailed as aPDF into an e-mail box called AP Invoices.

THE COURT: You say payments, you mean invoices e-mailed?

THE WITNESS: Invoices. So, invoices are sent in to an e-mail box called AP Invoices.

From there, PN3 will import that PDF into the system and so that's step one.

Step 2 is the AP group will then take a look at that invoice and they will enter in whatever type of information they can as far as the vendor name and address and the like, and then they look on that invoice for who the owner is of that particular invoice.

Q That's where I want to stop you, if you don't mind to go through it.

18 A No worries.

19 Q When you say owner of an invoice, what do you mean?

20 A In some cases it's really simple because it might say

21 in the address, it might say Mike Erstling NRA; and so right

22 there they can say, oh, look, that belongs to Mike. Let me

23 route that to Mike for approval.

25 Toute that to write for approval.

Q Okay, but is owner of the invoice in any way related to the person who contracted for the services, for instance?

... =......g -, = =g...

Q Okay, and when they approve it -- let's assume they

3 approve it -- are they saying yes, I ordered this, and yes, I

4 received it?

5 A They should be, yes.

6 Q And are they also saying that yes, this is the price I

7 agreed to?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And then after they do that, where does it go?

10 A It depends on the size, right? So if -- if the size is

small, let's say under 50,000 -- we'll just go with that easy

12 one -- and the person approved it last had the authority to

approve up to that level, then it just returns back to AP for

4 payment.

Q Okay. So, if -- now, let's take a different level.

16 Let's say it is over a hundred thousand. Where does it go?

A So, let's say we have a show of exhibits. So they have a \$105,000 invoice, and so John Bailey goes ahead and he signs off on it; and he would send it to Lisa Supernaugh and Lisa

20 Supernaugh would go ahead and she would approve it. And then it

21 would go -- the next step would go to the treasurer's office,

22 and the treasurer would sign off on it because it is over

23 \$50,000.

And then once the treasurer signs off on it, she'll send it to John Frazer, and John Frazer will sign off on it

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1 A Not always, not always.

Q Okay. Is that person; that is, the person who

3 originated the contract or ordered -- asked for the services,

4 does that person get routed the invoice at all?

5 A Um, they should. At some point, at some point in the 6 routing if let's say -- let's say a junior, a manager, a manager

7 gets the invoice; they have the ability to route that to a more

8 senior manager in their own department for approval as well.

9 So, it tracks those steps all the way through. So, it 10 depends on what their authority is to sign off on a particular

11 invoice.

Q Okay, but if I worked at the NRA and I ordered 100

13 widgets and the invoice comes into AP invoices, would I expect

14 to see that invoice?

15 A You should.

16 Q Okay. And once the person in my position gets the

17 invoice, what input if you know do they then provide and who do

18 they provide it to?

A So, the invoice would pop up on their screen if they're

20 in the software, and they might be asked to code that invoice,

21 to provide that five digit cost-center code that we talked about

22 the GO a couple minutes ago; they might be asked to put that

code. In they might be asked to put an account in, office

24 supplies, fulfillment supplies and then they would be asked to

5 either approve it or approve and forward to the next person for

1 because it needs two -- two officers' signatures.

2 Q Let me stop you. I had understood that that process

3 you just described for invoices between 50 and 100, am I wrong

4 about that?

5 A It is over 50,000.

6 Q Over 50, okay. And when it goes to the treasurer's

7 office and then to Mr. Frazer for signature, do they usually

8 have any original or primary understanding of that invoice or

9 that service that was provided?

A I don't know what knowledge they would have. If it's a contract or any type of contract they would have seen a contract, right? Because through the contract process, the

approval of that has the signature of the treasurer and the OGC.

14 So, they would have known about it they way.

15 O Now by the time the tracerous and Mr. Essens

Q Now, by the time the treasurer and Mr. Frazer received this invoice, is it true that the originator of the service --

17 me in the example I asked you -- would they know that I have

18 already approved that, yes, I ordered those services; yes, I

received them; yes, that's the price I contracted for?

A It would show up in PN3 that you've signed off on it.

So, they would see that the trail of prior signatures going down

22 the list, yes.

Q Okay. Next topic and last topic: You talked about compliance and education being a critical function of the NRA

s now; is that right?

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NRA February 8, 2024 M. Erstling - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3842 **Proceedings** Page 3844 1 A Yes. 1 Q And you were talking in the sort of post-whistleblowing AFTERNOON SESSION 2 2 * * * Top Concerns Memo period; is that right? 3 4 Α That's correct. 4 THE COURT: The jury is ready. Are you all Now, is it true that the first compliance refresher 5 ready? seminar was given actually prior to July 30, 2018? MR. FLEMING: Just as a quick housekeeping matter 6 A It may have been. I just don't remember the timing of 7 really. I had spoken to the Attorney General about 8 the exact date. 8 stipulating to certain exhibits, primarily all 990s and also Okay, and then chronologically, last question. All of 9 secretary's reports; and I haven't heard back and I'm not that, the 2018 whistleblowing, the Top Concerns Memo, the pressing them for an answer, but I just wanted to raise the 10 compliance refresher and all of these reactions that took place 11 issue because I think at some point it would be very 12 according to your testimony within a week occurred prior to 12 effective to make sure that all these documents were in 2019; isn't that right? instead of rather than have belabor --13 13 A Not all of them, but a lot of them, yes. THE COURT: I'd be surprised if all 990s haven't 14 14 15 Q And that was prior to the New York Attorney General's 15 been put in already. investigation; isn't that right? MR. FLEMING: Well, 990s of importance go back to 16 16 I believe so, yes. 2008, at least for our case and I wanted to get all the '08 17 17 18 MR. FLEMING: Thanks so much. through '14. I think you're right, 15 through 22 are in. 18 THE COURT: All right, we're going to take our THE COURT: The '08 through '14 are relevant? 19 19 20 break, and we'll reconvene at 2:15. MR. FLEMING: Into the history and treatment of 20 COURT OFFICER: All rise, jury exiting. certain items that are in issue here. 21 21 (Whereupon, at this time the jury then left the THE COURT: Okay, and the 990s and the secretary's 22 22 23 courtroom.) 23 reports are presumptively admissible as either business THE COURT: Mr. Erstling, as last time, during the records or public filings, right? 24 24 25 break, you're still on the stand so you shouldn't discuss MR. FLEMING: Certainly, the 990s for sure. The 25 M. Erstling - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3843 Proceedings Page 3845 your testimony with anyone, the substance of your testimony, secretary's reports are internal business records. They're 1 1 including counsel. 2 2 traditionally done every year. They're part of the standard THE WITNESS: Thank you. 3 3 practice. (Whereupon, at this time the witness stepped down.) THE COURT: So, is there -- do you expect any 4 4 issues, issue about relevance or --5 (Whereupon, at this time a luncheon recess was then 5 MR. THOMPSON: Relevance, your Honor, but we are 6 taken.) 6 7 7 looking at it and we are going to respond to Mr. Fleming's (Continued on next page) e-mail. We just figured Mr. Frazer was not going to be on 8 8 9 9 the stand today, and we had a little more time to look at it. 10 10 THE COURT: And I had been generally been fairly 11 11 lenient with the before-and-after time period. In terms of 12 12 just broad relevance, as you probably saw in the 13 13 instructions, I'm going to tell them that the only thing 14 14 15 15 that ultimately matters are how things bear on the relevant period; but that sometimes you learn things from prior 16 16 periods that's relevant and some things. 17 17 So, hopefully, you won't have an issue because 18 18 19 19 they're admissible in terms of hearsay and other kinds of 20 20 things. Let's wait and see if we have an issue. I'm inclined to let them in, but --21 21 22 22 MR. FLEMING: Just to be fully clear, 2008 I forgot 23 23 to mention is in already and, actually, I used it in

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previous testimony. So you know for what it's worth.

THE COURT: And that was before your client was --

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Proceedings Page 3846 **Proceedings** Page 3848 1 was the GC, right? AG down to ninety minutes, that still doesn't work for one 1 2 MR. FLEMING: That's right. 2 day, right? 3 3

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THE COURT: Okay. All right, I don't want to waste any time on something that's probably not going to be an

So, let's get the jury.

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MR. THOMPSON: Just one more quick housekeeping item, your Honor.

THE COURT: Get the witness.

MR. THOMPSON: This is just about the closings. So we are -- we're still working with the NRA to sort of finalize the time allocation. There's just one discrepancy that we're working on; but as far as we calculated the time, we think the closings are probably going to need to start Wednesday afternoon in order to finish by the end of day Thursday.

We just want to see if that tracks with what the defendants are thinking as well?

THE COURT: Well, how long are you all thinking for closings? I mean, there's five hours in a court day, and so we have to have breaks. Mr. Phillips wants an hour.

What does the AG want?

MR. THOMPSON: I think we're thinking approximately two hours, your Honor.

THE COURT: That's your opening bid. I will accept

MR. FLEMING: Well, your Honor, just one other factor. By my understanding of the clock, before today the attorney general is at 43 and a half hours. Two hours for summation puts them at 45 and a half, doesn't include whatever they have done today.

If they have no cross next week, then maybe that quickens the day and frees up some time on Wednesday because right now, I have an expert witness, as well. Mr. Frazer may testify; and if we can eliminate cross so we know there's no cross, it's a lot quicker.

THE COURT: Well, I'm not going to anybody in advance. We'll just have to sort of see. I made a point at the beginning, it is not a mathematical test here.

It's got to be equitable, but I do want to make sure that especially the individual defendants who haven't really -- that they have time. The NRA has, obviously, been spending the time so far.

Well, look, my preference would be for all the closings to be together on Thursday. I realize now that would necessary -- require everybody to be much shorter to be able to get all four of you in in four hours. If nobody thinks that's reasonable, then it has to start Wednesday afternoon.

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that as --1

MR. CORRELL: Your Honor, Mr. LaPierre will require 2 3 an hour.

> THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Phillips, still an hour? MS. ROGERS: The NRA would be looking -- I'm sorry.

THE COURT: Mr. Phillips, an hour? 6

MR. FARBER: As of now, but we may be less.

THE COURT: Mr. Frazer? 8

MR. FLEMING: Tough to say, your Honor, so I will an hour. It could be less. It could trickle over.

THE COURT: And the NRA?

MS. ROGERS: We were thinking about ninety minutes and we think -- we're still resolving our time discrepancy; but if the AG takes two hours for closing, then we think cross is pretty much done.

MR. CORRELL: The other concern, your Honor, is Mr. LaPierre has not had an opportunity to present his case in chief yet, and he is planning -- I'm planning to call him on Tuesday. I have two experts and maybe one other witness, and we have time allotted to do that.

THE COURT: Yeah, so your assumption in your time allotments was that we would have through Wednesday for evidence; but nobody completely dialled in on how long closings would take.

So, I still want those done -- even if I back the

So, I'm going to let you all talk about it for now. But, yeah, the question is what I'd like you to be able to do is to get all the closings in in a total of four hours and to just be more efficient. The jury has heard six weeks of evidence, look, I get it. Summations are important, so I'm aware of the AG's time expenditure.

So, unless you can figure out a schedule that gets you down to four hours for closings, some closing is going to have to start and it will be a defendant closing on Wednesday afternoon.

MR. FARBER: Judge, I'll say for our part if the Court is going to do this in four hours, we'll conform our closing to do our portion of that. I mean, I would prefer to have these all be in one day, as would the Court.

THE COURT: I would certainly. There's a lot to summarize, but my experience watching you all is that time constraints has more often than not improved the quality of presentation. Not that the quality has been bad ever; but the shorter crosses, for example, are not a lot of wasted time, right to the point. Frankly, you have to sort of plan that out.

I don't want to do a dicta that says it has to be four hours and, basically, an hour a piece; but that's what I would prefer and that would give the AG some more flexibility on time for cross.

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Proceedings Page 3850 **Proceedings** Page 3852 1 And it may be a little too flip for me to say this; 1 to deal --2 but if you can't summarize it in an hour, that's a 2 THE COURT: Well, you're not getting squeezed by me 3 problem. 3 because I made this point already, that you should have as 4 MR. FARBER: Judge, what is the order of summations 4 much of the defense case as you feel like you need; and if you're not getting it, let me know. 5 going to be? 5 THE COURT: Well, I mean, the default is defense 6 MR. THOMPSON: Your Honor, just to note that we 6 7 first and it goes the opposite of the openings. So, the 7 have been building the two hours into our, like, how much time we have for cross. 8 defendants go first and then the plaintiff finishes, and the 8 9 default, at least for jury selection which I guess I would 9 THE COURT: Get the witness. apply is the caption, where normally the NRA is listed first Look, like I said, you all know the rules; but the 10 10 11 and the same order that you've been sitting in that we would 11 two hours doesn't work for us to have closings in one day. 12 do it in that order, and then the four defendants go and 12 And the Wednesday start for closings is not consistent, then the plaintiff. 13 13 maybe with how defendants are reasonably planning out when MR. CORRELL: Your Honor, actually, the CPLR 14 14 their witnesses are going to be allowed to be in and your 15 provides for closing in inverse order of opening. So --15 case did take into the fourth or maybe even the fifth week. 16 THE COURT: Inverse meaning the defendants first 16 So, I have to give them some deference in terms of and then plaintiff. 17 17 making sure they can put their primary witnesses in; and if 18 MR. CORRELL: Yes, so that would be Mr. Fleming 18 that's the expense of you going from two hours of a closing would go first, Mr. Farber --19 to an hour and a half to an hour and fifteen, that's just 19 20 THE COURT: I don't think it necessarily -- does it the way it is. 20 get as granular as that, that the opposite of the So, let's get the jury. 21 21 22 defendants? 22 (Whereupon at this time the witness, 23 MR. CORRELL: I think it does, your Honor. 23 MICHAEL ERSTLING, having been previously duly sworn/affirmed THE COURT: Really? by the Clerk of the Court resumed the witness stand and 24 24 25 MR. CORRELL: I've been planning my closing in that 25 testified as follows:) Proceedings Page 3851 M. Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Thompson Page 3853 1 order. 1 COURT OFFICER: All rise, jury entering. 2 MR. FARBER: The CPLR does say inverse. It does 2 (Whereupon, at this time the jury then entered the 3 not --3 THE COURT: I'm not going to --4 courtroom.) 4 MR. FARBER: -- anything beyond that. THE COURT: Welcome back. Please have a seat. 5 5 6 THE COURT: While we're worried about time, let's 6 All right, I think we left off just before 7 7 cross-examination, right? get the jury and get the witness, and we'll deal with the 8 rest of all this. Welcome back, Mr. Erstling. 8 9 I want you to work on a time. Again, if the AG 9 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 10 which has to do the entire case can do there's in an hour, 10 THE COURT: Mr. Thompson, you may proceed. MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, your Honor. 11 that suggests to me that maybe a little more than an hour 11 12 for them instead of just assuming a block of an hour. For **CROSS-EXAMINATION** 12 13 each individual defendant there should be like BY MR. THOMPSON: 13 forty-five minutes each and the NRA, which has a blank sort Q Good afternoon, Mr. Erstling. 14 14 of an overview, maybe a little bit more. 15 15 Good afternoon. I'm not going to micromanage it yet, but I think Q Just a few questions. Would you agree with me, 16 16 17 the AG who has to cover the entire case would likely have a Mr. Erstling, that all of the NRA funds must be used in 17 furtherance of the NRA's mission? 18 pretty good argument to have a little bit longer time than 18 19 the individual defendants who are only arguing part of the 19 A I would agree that the funds should be used in the NRA's mission. 20 case. 20 MR. THOMPSON: Your Honor --21 21 Q And before the break when you were being questioned by 22 MR. CORRELL: Your Honor, I respectfully disagree. Mr. Fleming, he was asking about the timing of the NYAG's 23 So far my client has had one hour to the AG's ten, and we 23 investigation. Do you recall that? 24 are feeling like we're getting squeezed already and to allow 24

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25

them more time in closings than Mr. LaPierre when he's had

A I recall there was an investigation, yes. I don't

23

24

25

going to an item in the Top Concerns Memo.

MR. THOMPSON: And if we could please bring up for

THE COURT: Overruled.

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NRA February 8, 2024 M. Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Thompson Page 3854 Page 3856 remember the exact dates. 1 the witness only, Plaintiff's Exhibit 2459. Q Did you ever receive a document preservation notice in 2 connection with that investigation? THE COURT: So, the witness and counsel? 3 4 Yes. 4 MR. THOMPSON: Witness and counsel, please. This was Tab 8 of the Erstling binder. I'm not Q And do you recall that being in approximately April of 5 5 2019? sure if there was a binder for Mr. Erstling today. And if 6 6 A I could agree with that. I don't know the -- again, I 7 there's no objection, I will move this into evidence. (Continued on next page) don't know the exact date, but I know there was a preservation 8 and I know we're following that. 9 Okay. And if I can just to refresh your recollection, 10 10 Mr. Erstling, if I could hand up a document very quickly. 11 11 MR. THOMPSON: And I have copies here, as well. 12 12 THE COURT: Marked for identification so we know 13 13 what it is? 14 14 MR. THOMPSON: It is marked for identification as 15 15 Plaintiff's Exhibit 3584. 16 16 THE COURT: And you're not admitting this. This is 17 17 just for refreshing recollection? 18 18 MR. THOMPSON: Correct, your Honor. 19 19 Q And my question, Mr. Erstling, when you have the 20 20 document, does this refresh your recollection as to the timing 21 21 of the document preservation notice? 22 22 23 Α Yes. 23 Q What does it refresh your recollection as to when the 24 24 preservation notice was issued? 25 M. Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Thompson Page 3855 Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3857 A It was according to the document, which I believe I've 1 seen, is April 26, 2019. Yes. It appears about the right timing, yes. 2 And you received this email; is that right? Q And you were testifying about the new invoice software. 3 3 Q That's PM3? Yes, I was on an earlier exchange. 4 A 4 A N as in Nancy. Q If you look at the topmost email. 5 5 Q N as in Nancy. When did the NRA begin using that 6 July 29. I see my name, yes. software, that program? 7 Okay. We can take that down. No further questions. 7 That was probably 2018 to 21. THE COURT: Okay. Anything further from the 8 8 9 Q Okay. And then you were talking with Ms. Eisenberg 9 Defense? about the Top Concerns Memo and sought of the pace of change THE COURT: Cross-examination, yes? This is cross? after you spoke with the Audit Committee. 11 MR. CORRELL: Yes. 12 Do you remember that? THE COURT: And cross next? Yes, sir. 13 MR. FARBER: Perhaps. Q And one of the items on the Top Concerns Memo concerns 14 THE COURT: Okay. Membership Marketing Partners; correct? **CROSS-EXAMINATION** A Yes. 16 KM 17 And the NRA renegotiated its agreement with Membership Marketing Partners and Allegiance Creative Group in 2022? MS. EISENBERG: Objection, outside the scope. 19 THE COURT: I can't remember. 20 MR. THOMPSON: Were discussing the Top Concerns 21 22 Memo and the timing things changed, your Honor, so this is

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Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3858 Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3860 BY MR. CORRELL: decisions were being made in the best interest of vendors? THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Correll, you can continue if A I did not. 2 you can talk over the construction. We will try to keep our Q And at the time this was written, did you have any 3 3 4 mikes high. personal knowledge as to whether management had subordinated its Q Good afternoon Mr. Erstling. I am Kent Correll. I judgment to vendors? A I did not. represent Wayne LaPierre. 6 A Good afternoon. 7 Q And as the time -- as of the time this was written, had 7 you ever spoken to Mr. LaPierre? 8 Q And would you please direct your attention to Tab 18 in A Not about this, no. 9 your notebook. 9 A I don't have a notebook. I'm sorry. Q And at the time this was written, did you go and talk 10 10 11 MR. CORRELL: Could we bring Tab 18 up on the to Mr. LaPierre about any of your concerns? 11 12 screen. 12 A I did not. THE COURT: Is that the notebook from last week? Okay. Did Mr. LaPierre ever hold any assets for 13 13 MR. CORRELL: This is the Top Concerns memo. charitable purposes pursuant to a will? 14 I have no idea what you're talking about. 15 THE COURT: But what notebook are we talking about? 15 Is there a notebook for this; Erstling exhibits? The one he Q Okay. You talked about charitable assets before. Do 16 16 just testified from. you remember testifying about that? 17 17 MS. EISENBERG: We identified a set we could have Α Yes. 18 18 used. Because I only used one document, I didn't bother 19 And you testified that there were restricted assets 19 bringing a binder. that would come under your management. 20 20 MR. CORRELL: It's PX 2605, Top Concerns memo. Do you remember that? 21 21 THE COURT: I think it would be helpful for the 22 22 23 witness to have a copy of the binder so he can have a hard 23 O Was Mr. LaPierre involved in that process of managing the funds from the (c)(3) corporations? copy to look at if he wants to. Okay. 24 25 But it's just the Top Concerns memo that we looked No. 25 Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3859 Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3861 at before. Q Did you know that Ackerman McQueen tried to fire Craig 1 2

MR. CORRELL: Yes, it is.

Q I would like to direct your attention if you would to 3

the third item on the list of Top Concerns for the Audit 4

Committee. 5

6 Next page, please. Third item.

7 Yes, sir.

Did you write that statement? Q 8

9 Α I did not.

Who did? 0 10

I believe Emily Cummins wrote that. 11

Q Did you have any personal knowledge at the time this 12

was written as to whether management had subordinated its 13

judgment to vendors? 14

A I believe that Emily -- during our conversations --15

MR. CORRELL: Objection, your Honor. Hearsay. 16

THE COURT: Well --17

MR. CORRELL: This is a former. 18

19 MR. FARBER: This is a yes or no question, your

20 Honor.

Q So my next question is did she also write the part that 21

22 says "Decisions are made in the best interest of vendors?"

23 A She would have written the whole thing.

Q Okay. As you sit here -- well, at the time this was 24

written, did you have any personal knowledge as to whether any

Spray shortly after he was hired?

A Only through this process. 3

Q Through which process? 4

A This lawsuit that's going on today. I have heard that 5

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6 information.

7 Q Okay. And that was before the Top Concerns memo was

composed; correct? 8

9 Do you have any personal knowledge as to when that

occurred? 10

A I do not. 11

12 Q And do you know -- do you have any knowledge as to

whether Mr. LaPierre pushed back on that and prevented that from

happening?

15 A Only through this process.

Q Was Mr. LaPierre supportive of your efforts to address 16

these issues in the Top Concerns memo? 17

18 Α He was.

19 Q And were those concerns ultimately addressed to your

20 satisfaction?

They were. 21

Q And could that have happened without Mr. LaPierre's

23 support?

24 A It probably would have been more difficult, yes, but he

was helpful.

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NR	A				February 8, 202
Erst	ling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber Page 3862	Erst	ling - by	/ Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber	Page 3864
1	Q But as you sit here today, you have no personal	1	speal	k to Mr. Phillips directly; is th	at correct?
2	knowledge of Mr. LaPierre doing anything to try to impede that	2	2 MS. EISENBERG: Mischaracterizes testimony.		
3	effort; correct?	3		THE COURT: He is just ask	ring a new question.
4	A No.	4	4 Overruled.		
5	Q And in fact, your personal knowledge is the opposite	5	A	I wasn't necessarily frustrated I	couldn't meet with
6	that to as far as you know, he was an ally in that process;	6	him.	It's just that we didn't meet w	ith him.
7	correct?	7	Q	But you didn't report directly to hi	m. You reported to
8	MR. THOMPSON: Objection. Leading.	8	Mr.	Fedrick; isn't that correct?	
9	THE COURT: This is cross. Overruled.	9	A	That's correct.	
10	MR. CORRELL: Thank you.	10	Q	Who is the treasurer now?	
11	THE COURT: Mr. Farber.	11	A	Sonya Rowling.	
12	MR. CORRELL: I don't see an answer to the last	12	Q	Okay. And how many people rou	ughly report to her?
13	question.	13	A	Got to be close to 50.	
14	THE COURT: The last question; And in fact your	14	Q	And what's the scope of her i	responsibilities as
15	personal knowledge is the opposite that as far as you know,	15	treasurer and CFO?		
16	he was an ally in that process; correct?	16	A	Financial aspects of the Association	n. That could range
17	And then there was an objection which I overruled.	17	from	IT work to Financial Services to	treasury to risk and
18	So you can answer.	18	insur	rance to tax.	
19	A Yes. He's been an ally.	19	Q	Interactions with the Board?	
20	MR. CORRELL: Thank you, your Honor.	20	A	Yes.	
21	MR. FARBER: May I proceed?	21	Q	Audit Committee?	
22	THE COURT: Yes.	22	A	Yes.	
23	Q Good afternoon. My name is Seth Farber. I represent	23	Q	Finance Committee?	

Fretling -	by Defendant -	. Crose/Mr	Farher

24

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1 Mr. LaPierre did anything to impede the reforms that were being
2 put into place at the NRA after you went to the Audit Committee
  with these concerns.
         Do you recall that question?
```

Mr. Correll just asked you some questions as to whether

- A I do. 5

Mr. Phillips.

24

25

- Q Okay. Mr. Phillips didn't do anything to impede those reforms either; did he? 7
- He wasn't here, so no. 8
- 9 O He was still a treasurer at the NRA at the time; wasn't he? 10
- 11 A I didn't see him so -- correct. I don't think he did anything, but I wouldn't know. He wasn't here. 12
- Q You wouldn't know? 13
- A I wouldn't know. 14
- Q At the time your position at the NRA was Director of 15
- Budget and Financial Analysis; is that correct? 16
- That's correct. 17
- Q How many people reported to you in that capacity? 18
- 19 Usually one to two.
- 20 Okay. Of and you did not report directly to Mr.
- Phillips at that time; did you? 21
- A I did not. 22
- 23 Q You reported to Mr. Tedrick?
- Correct. 24 Α
- 25 But you were frustrated because you did not get to

- Erstling by Defendant Cross/Mr. Farber

- Correct; yes.
- Fairly broad? 2

Yes.

- Α Yes. 3
- Q And is it correct -- is it a fair characterization to

Mr. LaPierre when he was EVP?

- say that you were not a fan of Mr. Phillips' management style?
- 6 A I was not a fan.
- 7 You preferred Mr. Spray's; isn't is that right?
- I do prefer Mr. Spray's. 8
- 9 And I think you testified that you at some point were
- frustrated that you were seeing a great deal of large
- transactions with very little detail. 11
 - Is that accurate?
- 13 Α Yes.

- Q And you were also frustrated -- you had concerns about
- transactions that you believe were lacking proper approvals. Is
- that correct as well?
- A I don't know if approvals was the right word, but it 17
- was lacking in detail. 18
- 19 0 Okay.
- 20 They always had approvals.
- And you have shared that with Mr. Spray you said in 21 Q
- 22 2018?
- 23 Α We did, yes.
- Well, I'm asking about you. 24 Q
- 25 Α I did, yes.

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Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

Q You did; correct.And if I recall correctly, you have been at the NRA

- 3 since about 2001; is that correct?
- 4 A Yes.
- 5 Q And so that was the first time that you shared those
- 6 concerns with someone at Mr. Spray's level; is that correct?
- A I would always bring them up to Rick, but I never had a
- 8 meeting with Woody to talk about stuff like that.
- 9 When Craig came, we had meetings. We were sitting
- 10 around the table on a month to month basis so as these things
- 11 were coming in, I was able to bring them up.
- Q Okay. So in -- from 2001 when you started to 2018, you
- 13 never saw Mr. Phillips in person?
- A I saw Woody three times a year during the budget
- 15 process.
- 16 Q And you never said anything to him about those concerns
- 17 at that time; right?
- 18 A The invoices, no.
- **19** Q When did you first meet Mr. Frazer over here?
- 20 A Probably when he became general counsel.
- Q Which was in 2015; correct?
- 22 A I guess, yes.
- Q Okay. And you testified on direct examination that
- 24 prior to the Audit Committee meeting in 2018, you talked with
- 25 him about the concerns that you had; correct?

Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

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- 1 Q Okay. What's your salary now, sir?
- 2 A 250,000.
- 3 Q And you have a higher position now; don't you?
- 4 A I do and more responsibility.
- 5 Q And Mr. Tedrick's job. Mr. Tedrick's job. You now
- 6 have the job that he used to have?
- 7 A No, sir, I do not. Mr. Tedrick is still there, and Mr.
- 8 Tedrick still does his job.
- 9 Q Are you above Mr. Tedrick?
- 10 A No.
- 11 Q You just have a higher salary?
- 12 A I have Sonya Rowling's old job.
- 13 Q I am mistaken. I apologize.
- So you have Sonya Rowling's old job. And do you know
- 15 what her salary was at the time when you were all sitting around
- 16 talking?
- 17 A I do not at the moment, no.
- 18 Q And by the way, you said that Mr. Phillips had not
- 19 held -- that there were never any formal regularly scheduled
- 20 meetings prior to Mr. Spray being there; is that correct?
- 21 A That's correct.
- 22 Q But you did testify you would have ad hoc random
- 23 meetings; isn't that right?
- A As it relates to the budget, yes.
- 25 Q There was nothing preventing you from talking to your

Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

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Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

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- 1 A Correct.
- 2 Q You've never had any doubts about Mr. Frazer's
- 3 integrity, I take it.
- 4 A No.
- 5 Q Okay. Has he ever refused to hear you out on an issue?
- 6 A No
- 7 Q You never went to him in 2015, 2016, 2017 about these
- 8 concerns that you say you had; isn't that correct?
- 9 A That's correct.
- 10 Q Okay. And you could have done that; right?
- 11 A I could have.
- 12 Q You could have sent him an email even if he wasn't
- 13 personally available; right?
- 14 A Yes.
- 15 Q But you didn't do that.
- 16 A I did not.
- Q I think you said that in 2018, you started to sort of
- 18 sit around the table with the group of other people in the
- 19 Finance Department that you described and sort of put things
- 20 together, engaged, and I think you used the word "group think."
- 21 Is that correct, sir?
- 22 A Yes, sir.
- Q Okay. So when you engaged in that group think with
- 24 your colleagues, what was your salary at the time?
- 25 A I think 180,000.

- colleagues about these concerns that you had during that period?
 A We did talk from time to time, but it was --
- 3 Q Nothing prevented you from doing this.
- 4 A Nothing prevented us from doing it.
- 5 Q Or take the concerns that emerged from those
- 6 discussions and going to Mr. Frazer as the general counsel of
- 7 the NRA and reporting to him that there was something that
- The TVICT and reporting to min that there was something th
- 8 bothered you; isn't that right?
- 9 A That's correct.
- 10 Q Okay. So now you're still employed by the NRA today?
- 11 A Yes, I am.
- 12 Q Making your higher salary?
- 13 A That's correct.
- 14 Q Okay. Now, you were deposed in this case; isn't that
- 15 right?
- 16 A I was
- 17 Q Okay. And you understand that Ms. Eisenberg who
- 18 questioned you earlier represents the NRA; right?
- 19 A That's correct.
- 20 Q Your employer.
- 21 A Correct.
- 22 A Yes.
- Q She represented you at that deposition too; isn't that
- 24 what right?
- 25 A I believe so.

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Q Okay. And you testified earlier in this trial. It

seems like a while ago. Several weeks ago. 2 Do you recall that, sir? 3

Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

- 4 Α I do.
- Q Okay. And between your testimony then and today, have
- you talked with Ms. Eisenberg at all?
- 7 I have.
- 8 Q And any other members of her firm?
- 9
- Q You talked to them about what you're going to testify 10
- about? 11
- 12 Α Whatever documents, yes.
- Well, you just went over documents? Is that all that 13
- happened? 14
- 15 A That's what happened.
- Q Did you talk about the subject that you were going to 16
- 17 testify about?
- A We talked about the documents which is the subject of 18
- the testimony that I'm doing today. 19
- Did she ask you any questions? 20
- Yes. 21 Α
- Q Okay. And you answered and went over what you were 22
- going to testify about today; isn't that right?
- Α Yes. 24
- 25 About how many times did you do that?

Erstling - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Eisenberg

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A Yes. 1

2 MR. FARBER: Okay. Nothing further your Honor.

THE COURT: Redirect. 3

4 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

- BY MS. EISENBERG:
- Q Mr. Erstling, when you and I met to prepare for your
- testimony today, I didn't tell you what answers to give. Is 7
- that fair? 8
- 9 Α That's fair.
 - I didn't script out your answers for you; right? Q
- No, ma'am, you did not. 11
- And neither did Ms. Dillon? 12
- No. she did not. 13 Α
- Nor Mr. Brewer right? 14 Q
- 15 A Correct.
- Q All the answers that you gave today are your answers; 16
- 17 fair?

10

- Α They are my answers. 18
- You mentioned the word "group think" in your testimony 19
- 20 when I asked questions and then Mr. Farber brought it up again.
- That tends to have different connotations. 21
- Can you please explain to the members of the jury in 22
- 23 what sense you meant it here.
- A I go to back to the puzzle. It's putting the pieces of 24
- the puzzle together. Nobody had all of the pieces of the puzzle

Erstling - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Farber

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Erstling - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Eisenberg

Page 3873

- 1
- Okay. And did you have any meetings like that before 2
- you testified the first time?
- Yes.
- 5 O Okay. With Ms. Eisenberg or with others from the
- 6 Brewer Firm?
- A Others from the firm. 7
- Which ones? Q 8
- 9 Α Susan Dillon.
- And what's Susan Dillon's role at the Brewer Firm? 10
- 11 A You have to ask the Brewer Firm. I don't know exactly
- what her role is. 12
- Q Well, I'm asking if you know. 13
- I don't know. 14
- Okay. Did you have any meeting with Mr. Brewer 15
- himself? 16
- Α Yes. 17
- Okay. And when were those? 18
- I had a meeting yesterday. 19 Α
- Oh, okay. 20 Q
- With Ms. Eisenberg? 21
- She was in the room, yes. 22 Α
- 23 Q Okay. And to talk about the documents?
- 24 Α
- That you testified about today. 25 Q

- and so by sitting around, everybody was putting their piece into
- this puzzle and you could start to see the picture that was
- taking place. 3
- It wasn't a, hey, let's all group together and pick one
- route. That wasn't the purpose. It was just to get a clear
- picture of what was going on.
- Q And did the meetings that Mr. Spray organized serve as
- a catalyst for being able to put those pieces of the puzzle
- together?

10

- A I would say yes, definitely.
- Mr. Farber asked you about your promotion. 11
- Congratulations. 12
- Α Thank you. 13
- Please tell us if you don't mind how your 14
- responsibilities have increased in connection with that promotion? 16
- 17 A So prior to the promotion, I was responsible for the
- budget and the annual budget and financial forecasting. 18 I am now responsible for all of accounting operations 19
- 20
- which includes accounts payable, accounts receivable, general
- ledger. I am also responsible for tax filings. So all of the 21
- state, sales and use tax filings, all U.S. census bureau filings 22
- 23 and 990 preparation.
- Q And by state filings, are you referring to filings in 24
 - pretty much every state in the United States?

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NYSCEF DOC $_{NY}$ AG $_{v}$ 3234 **NRA February 8, 2024** Erstling - by Defendant - Redirect/Ms. Eisenberg Page 3874 Page 3876 A All 50 states and some states have counties so you have My dad originally grew up in the Bronx, but he married to do those as well. 2 my mother from San Francisco, and when they came east to live, she didn't like the cold so we ended up moving back to 3 Q Mr. Thompson asked you about the timing of the PN3 software and you testified that that came in place in 2021. 4 California and that's where I was raised. Do you recall that testimony? 5 My dad growing up in New York, mom and dad came from 5 I do. 6 Α 6 Odessa, Russia, so it's kind of weird to be back here and seeing 7 a lot of places that I remember visiting as a child. 7 Q Is there anything wrong within the NRA continuing to 8 improve its processes? 8 I went to school in the Bay area, grade school, high A No. It should always improve its processes. 9 school, had an unremarkable but happy childhood and ended up Q I asked you about what changed after the July 30, 2018 going for my college to Stanford University, graduated with a 10 presentation, and you gave a fairly long answer. 11 degree in Economics. 11 12 If you recall, some of the items that you specified 12 (Continued on the following page.) what was the timing of the other items there. So for example, 13 13 you mentioned information and education, and you mentioned the 14 15 seminars. 15 16 A So the compliance seminars started in the Summer of 16 17 2018 and have been every year, sometimes twice a year since that 17 time. The updating of the policies happened during that time. 18 It may have taken more time than, you know, 2018. I can't 19 19 20 remember exactly when the travel and expense reimbursement 20 21 policy was finally updated, but it wasn't -- I don't think it 21 was in 2018. I think it was a little bit further out. 22 22 O What about the budgeting issue that you described in 23 connection with the NRA's own budget versus Ackerman's? Did 24 that stop being a problem at some point? 25 Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3875 Stroman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3877 A We no longer do business with Ackerman McQueen, so it's Q At Stanford, did you become involved in any student not a problem. activism or causes? 2 2 Fair to say that that happened in 2019? 3 Q 3 A I went to -- went as a volunteer to the Stanford radio 4 Α Yes. station, KZSU; and one of my assignments was to cover the 5 MS. EISENBERG: Thank you very much. No further Oakland draft riots in the late sixties. And I went there with 6 questions. a tape recorder trying to interview the police, trying to 7 THE COURT: Anything further from the Defense or interview the students. Ended up getting beat up and ended up

- from the Government? 8
- MR. THOMPSON: Nothing further, your Honor. 9 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. You're free to step 10
- 11 down. MS. ROGERS: The NRA calls Sandra Froman. 12
- SANDRA FROMAN, a witness called on 13 behalf of the Defendant, after having been first duly sworn, 14
- took the witness stand and testified as follows: 15
- THE CLERK: State your name. 16
- THE WITNESS: Sandra Froman, F-R-O-M-A-N. 17
- THE CLERK: Thank you. You may be seated. 18
- 19 DIRECT EXAMINATION
- BY MS. ROGERS: 20
- Good afternoon, Ms. Froman. 21
- 22 Can you tell the jury a little bit about your personal
- 23 background.
- A My name is Sandy Froman. I was born an raised in the 24
- San Francisco Bay area.

- in the infirmary at Stanford because it was a mess. It was a
- 9 free for all. That was the end of my radio career.
- Q After that, you decided to pick another adversarial 10 career and you went to law school; right? 11
 - That's correct.
- Tell the jury about that? 13 Q
- When I graduated from Stanford, I applied to a number of law schools. I got into Harvard, and the Dean of the Stanford Law School advised me that I should go somewhere 17 different than Stanford, I should have a different kind of 18 experience.
- 19 So, I went back east to Harvard Law School, graduated 20 from law school. That was a great experience. It was very different for me having grown up in California. Boston was a 21
- great city, and I really enjoyed spending time there and kind of 22
- 23 being on my own.
- 24 Q Did you get involved in any activism at Harvard or had you learned your lesson?

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A I hadn't learned my lesson. There were very few women

2 in my law school class. There were less than ten percent women,

and then there were no women bathrooms in Langdell Hall --

L-A-N-G-D-E-L-L. Sorry, my sister is a reporter.

So I, along with some other women, went to the law school and said you have to change some of the mens rooms into

ladies rooms because we were having to run, like, ten minutes

all the way back to the dorms in between class to use the

restroom. And that was I guess my most important activist

experience while at law school. 10

11 And I don't know if this is being an activist or not, 12 we didn't eat very well at law school. The food in the dorms wasn't very good. So a woman named Julia Child, the famous

French chef was on WGBH TV in Boston at the time, which was the 15 educational station and I wrote a letter asking her to come to

the law school and give a cooking demonstration. 16

17 And to my surprise, she did. She said yes, and she came and I didn't expect there to be great attendance because 18

there were so few women in school. In fact, it was a sold out 19 20 crowd. We had mostly men coming to watch her cook and give her

21 demonstration. That's the end of my activist career.

Q So, you were successful at your activism to teach the 22

23 lawyers to cook for themselves.

That's right. 24

25 What about the ladies bathrooms, did succeed at getting Q And how did your career at Loeb & Loeb progress?

2 A I did very well. I was made a partner in the shortest

amount of time and was, in fact, the first woman partner in the 4 50-year history of that firm.

5 Q Did they have a bathroom for you or did you have --

A Funny you ask, we had women's rooms on the even

7 numbered floors of the high rise and men's rooms on the odd

8 numbered floors.

9 A little better than Harvard.

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Α Definitely. 10

And after you made partner at Loeb & Loeb, did you 11

12 change careers at all?

13 A I took a leave of absence from Loeb & Loeb. I had tried five cases in four months and was pretty tired, and I had

an offer to teach law school at the University of Santa Clara,

which is also in the Bay area, Silicone Valley. So I wanted to

do something different, so I accepted that offer and I went and

I taught as a visiting assistant professor of law for two years

at Santa Clara. 19

Q What law classes did you teach? 20

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A I taught evidence. I taught criminal law. I taught 21 the civil side of the law clinic, which was about forty-five law

students who were actually practicing in the state court in

California representing clients, and I was, like, the advisor.

I used to joke it was like having forty-five lawyers 25

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under your supervision trying to commit malpractice on a daily

basis and my job was to keep them out of trouble.

THE COURT: A little pressure on me getting my 3

evidence rulings right. 4

5 Q Ms. Stroman, how long have you been a member of the 6 NRA?

7 Α Since the early eighties. I would say '82 or '83.

Q And how long have you been on the board of directors at 8

the NRA? 9

10 A Since 1992.

Why did you become a gun owner? 11

Practicing law in Los Angeles, living alone in my 12

house, I was going through a separation and divorce at the time;

and in the middle of the night someone tried to break into my

house, woke me up. I was very frightened. I pounded on the

inside of the door. I could see through the peephole that there

was somebody there and he would not go away.

17 18 So, I finally called the police and they came and took

19 them fifteen minutes; and it was one of those things that changes your life because I realized that I had to take

responsibility for my own safety and I went the next day to a

gun store and tried to buy a gun, and that's how I got involved

23 in the shooting sports.

25

Let's look at Tab 2 of your binder. 24

MS. ROGERS: These are the NRA's ByLaws, DX1-0754.

Harvard law school to create a bathroom for women?

Α 2

3 Q And after you graduated law school, you went to a law

firm; is that right? 4

That's correct. 5 Α

6 0 And what firm?

7 I went to a firm called Loeb & Loeb in Los Angeles. It

was at that time the third largest law firm in LA. My goal when

I left law school was to go to a major firm and do big time litigation. 10

11 What kind of work did you end up doing at Loeb & Loeb?

A Pretty much everything, everything in commercial 12 litigation. I did securities work. I did banking litigation.

I did real estate litigation, bankruptcy litigation. We advised 14

corporate clients in different business areas. I took whatever came to me. 16

17 I was really enthusiastic learning about every area of the law I could. 18

19 Q Did you work on any major bankruptcies?

20 A I did. I was one of the lawyers who worked on -- baby

lawyer is what I used to call myself because I had a lot of 21 22 people older and more experienced than me to learn from. But we

worked on what was then the Equity Funding Corporation of

America bankruptcy which at the time was the largest bankruptcy in the country.

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There are other versions of the Bylaws that are in evidence.

2 I would like to admit this one. Is there any 3 objection.

4 MR. WANG: No objection.

THE COURT: Admitted. 5

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(Whereupon, at this time Exhibit DX1-0754 was 6 7 admitted and received into evidence.)

8 Q Look at page 13 of the Bylaws, and I'm referring to the numbered page of the pamphlet, not the evidence -- yeah, the

numbered page of the pamphlet, not the exhibit page. 10

11 A I have it in front of me.

12 All right. And we see the Powers and Duties of the board of directors to formulate the policies and governing 13

14 association and exercise general oversight of the affairs and

15 property.

16 Do you see that?

Yes. 17 Α

Would you -- does that conform with your understanding 18

of your role and your job on the board? 19

Absolutely. 20

Q Have you served on other board of directors? 21

A 22

23 0 For profit and nonprofit?

Α Yes. 24

25 Let's look now at page 1 of the same Bylaws, and it is

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1 THE COURT: Overruled. She's a board member. She 2 can give her take on what she thinks her responsibilities

3

4 A My understanding as a board member of the NRA is that I

have a fiduciary duty to act in the best of the association, not

in my own best interest, not in the best interest of a third 7 party.

8 That I have an obligation to inform myself of the matters that are put before the board for us to decide and discuss. That I can't take advantage of that position for my own personal benefit, and I've tried very hard throughout my 11 12 time on the board to adhere to those obligations and responsibilities and to that duty. 13

Q Procedurally, how does the board make decisions? 14

15 Well, the board is a very large board. We have 76

board members. And like a state legislature or even like

Congress, we do most of our work through committees. We have over 30 committees, several more boards and trusts that are

affiliated with the NRA. And so we ask the committees to dig

20 deep into the subject matter of what they're being asked to look

at. It might be a rule change in an NRA competition. It might

be an outreach program that we have. It might be a training

program that we have. Let's say to train women in marksmanship

and the safe handling of firearms, whatever that subject matter

is we ask the committee whose responsibility is in that subject

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page 1 of the pamphlet. 1

Those are the Purposes and Objectives of the NRA.

3 Ms. Froman, in your capacity as a member of the NRA

board, do you feel you have a duty to advance these purposes and

these objectives? 5

6 A Yes.

2

And do you feel the NRA does that? 7 Q

Yes, absolutely. Α 8

9 Q Can any one member of the board speak for the NRA?

A No. 10

You all have the right to free speech; right? 11 0

Everyone on the board as an individual has a right to 12

free speech, but the NRA operates as a collective body. We make 13

decisions as a group. We debate issues before we make a 14

15 decision, before we vote on it; and then once we voted and we've

established a policy, every board member has a fiduciary duty to

17 carry out that policy and to abide by that policy that has been

18 reached through board discussion and deliberation.

19 Q I heard you use the word "fiduciary duty." You and I 20 are lawyers, but not everyone on the jury -- actually, I think

nobody on the jury is. 21

22 Can you explain in lay terms how you understand your 23 responsibilities as a board member?

It is a responsibility --24

25 MR. WANG: Object to providing a legal opinion. matter to take a look at it and dig deep, debate the issues within the committee and then bring any action items that they

might have, any motions that they might have to the entire board

of directors. 4

17

19

20

5 The committee chairman would stand up at the board meeting, give a report. Make a motion for any action item, and then the board would have an opportunity to debate that and,

ultimately, vote on whether to accept the recommendation of the

committee and put it into action.

Q You mentioned debate. Can you describe for the jury 10 11 the tenor and robustness of the debates that happen on the NRA board? 12

13 A Some things are pretty much everybody agrees to. We have rule committees that make up the rules and amend the rules for different competitions, and those are people who are experts in those competitions and I'm not.

So, if that committee makes a recommendation to me, unless on its face it looks like something's wrong, I would certainly object to it.

However, most of the other committees deal with issues

that many of us are as board members are familiar with and there's many, many different points of views. The NRA board is 23 lucky to have people from different walks of life, from different socioeconomic statuses, people with different experience in their lives who come together; and we all share a

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common purpose, which is to support the NRA and to support its

missions and objectives. 2 3

But when it comes to whether or not we should engage in a particular activity, we sometimes have debates and we talk about them at the board meetings. Very often those debates are contentious I would say even. I think we strive to be

respectful. We like one another. We're all part of the same

family in the sense that we agree with the missions and goals of

the NRA. Otherwise, we wouldn't be on the board; but when it comes to how to best carry out those missions and goals we 10

11 sometimes disagree, so we talk it out. And people who have

12 opposing views get a chance to express those and have those 13

views challenged.

14 O You've been on the board for decades so both before and 15 after the rise of social media; right?

A Decades, yes. 16

17 Q How has -- how, if at all, has social media affected the way that this vigorous contentious debate happens? 18

A When I first joined the NRA board, things were handled 19 20 and discussed mostly inside the board, at board meetings.

21 Sometimes during the social hour at dinnertime we would be

talking still in the restaurant about issues that had come up. 22

23 But now there's such a plethora of ways for people to talk about these issues, to get information on the issues that

we discussed. Social media has changed the way we do business

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book or I would ask someone in the secretary's office to tell me

if we had a particular policy on a matter we were being asked to

discuss at a board meeting.

4 Q As a director, do you expect the NRA executives and staff to comply with the rules that the board sets?

Absolutely. 6

Q And as a director, do you have a sense of whether those rules are freely available to be consulted by staff and 8

9

10 A They are freely available. And, in fact, a number of these policies have also been made available to employees at all

levels. We now have an NRA internal intranet so employees can

look up things that might affect their job, their position and rely on those policies.

Q Is there training not just for employees, but for board 15

members on compliance and policy? 16

17 Α Yes.

18

7

11

21

0 Can you describe what that's like?

We have -- training is given at least once a year on 19 20 compliance to board members that I know about. It's been more often when changes are made and how in our compliance policies

board members will be advised of those changes in, let's say, 23 the form that we have to report.

24 Employees are also given training. We, as a board, are advised that employees received training, and we can ask

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1 because people want to debate this in social media as opposed to

win the confines of a board meeting. 3

Q Is there a set of rules that the board issues to officers to direct the management of the NRA?

A Yes. We have -- we have elected volunteer officers and we have elected paid officers, and they have different 7 responsibilities.

As a board member, my boss, if you will, is the 8 president of the association, and the president of the association and the vice presidents and the board together then direct the activities, if you will. We have oversight responsibility over the activities of the paid elected officers, 12 including the executive vice president. 13

Q Is there a policy manual comprising the board's 14 15 director policies?

A Yes, a very thick policy manual. It was -- I don't 16 17 know exactly when it was started, but I know when I first came on the board in 1992 it contained all of the accumulated policies having been passed by the NRA directors, which one had 19 20 been amended, which one had been superseded by new policies.

It was sort of like a history of the policies, motions, 21 22 resolutions that the NRA had passed as a collective body; and those were available in the office of the secretary and you 23 could look at those anytime you wanted. Quite often, I would

either go up to the secretary's office and look at the policy

questions about that or what the training included.

So, it's done on an at least annual basis and sometimes more than once. I know -- I can't remember what year it was,

but maybe 2022, 2023. There were two compliance trainings for

5 board members. I missed one of them. I was absent for illness 6 during that meeting and attended the other one.

Let's turn to page 1 of your binder.

MS. ROGERS: This is DX1-0521. Do you have any 8 9 objection to this document? I think I received none. This is the NRA directory. 10

MR. WANG: No objection.

MS. ROGERS: I move to admit it. 12

THE COURT: Anyone? All right, it is admitted. 13 (Whereupon, at this time Exhibit DX1-0521 was 14

admitted and received into evidence.) 15

Ms. Froman, do you recognize this document? 16 Yes. It is the NRA official directory from September 17

18 of 2022.

19 Q I'd like you to turn to the page that's marked 19 in 20 the pamphlet. It is going to be exhibit page 20.

Do you recognize the list of committees?

22 Yes.

23 Can you describe -- and I know you touched on it a little bit, but describe to the jury the role that committees play with the governing of the NRA?

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A As I mentioned, the committees are made up of people

2 who have subject matter of expertise in the different areas.

The Black Powder Committee which is committee number 3 4 four --

5 Q Let's try to talk slower for the court reporter.

A I will. Thank you. The people who are appointed to 6

that committee are people who are black powder competitors who

are familiar with the rigor of black powder competitions.

Sports shooting have a lot of different ways that people

participate. You can be a shotgun shooter. You can be a pistol

shooter. You can be a long-range rifle shooter shooting at 11

12 targets like a thousand yards away. This is a precision sport,

much like archery, for example. 13

14 So, the people who are appointed to each of these 15 committees are people who can add value to the discussion of

those topics for NRA. 16

17 I've been on a number of these committees over the years. Some shooting committees, some legislative committees. 18

19 I'm currently chair of the Legal Affairs Committee, for example.

20 So, I've served on a lot of these different committees

21 over the years and I'm familiar with what most of them do.

Q Let's talk about the Grassroots Development Committee. 22

23 Have you served on that committee?

A I served on that committee for a very long time, and I 24

am currently chair of that committee. The purpose of that

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Have you served on the Nominating Committee? 1

2 Yes. Α

Q And we'll talk in more detail later about the mechanics 3

of NRA elections, but can you tell the jury what the Nominating

Committee is?

6 A Every year a nominating committee is elected by the NRA

board of directors as a whole, and the job of the Nominating

Committee is to consider applicants for nomination as possible

directors, for their names to be included on the ballot that is

sent out every year to NRA voting members to vote on members of

the board of directors. The Nominating Committee also nominates

12 officers for the next term.

13 I've served on the Nominating Committee maybe three or four times in my thirty years on the NRA board, and I chaired a nominating committee about three years ago.

What's the Committee on Hearings?

17 The Committee on Hearings hears complaints, often ethical complaints about members, members who are not -- who do things that are contrary to the NRA's purposes and objectives. 19

20 When a complaint is made, it usually comes in from 21 outside the NRA board, a complaint about a member doing something that's contrary to the interest of the NRA. It has a

process that is followed and the Committee on Hearings is often

asked to deliberate and make a decision on whether that person

who is complained about -- the defendant if you will -- retains

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1 committee is to deliver information about NRA's programs and

activities to the Grassroots. That is to our members in every

state, all across the country to let them know what's available

to them, what classes, activities, training are available to

5 them as NRA members and beyond.

6 We don't restrict our courses, our marksmanship courses 7 or our gun safety courses or our hunting safety courses to just members. It is anyone who wants to take them. We encourage 9 people, of course, to become members, but they're available to everyone. 10

11 Q What about the Legislative Policy Committee, were you 12 on that committee?

13 A Yes. I've been on the Legislative Policy Committee for 14 a number of years, and that deals with the legislative affairs of the NRA. Probably what most people think about when they hear NRA if they're not members, is they think about the 16 political part of the NRA, but it's -- the political part is 17 what we're known for. I think it's what we make the papers for, 19 but it's in many ways a relatively small part of what the 20 association does.

21 Our bigger general operations department and all of the 22 programs we have really account for the majority of employees at 23 NRA and for the majority of our budget.

Legislative Policy Committee deals with the political 24 and legislative aspects of the NRA.

their NRA membership.

Q Is that process different for different complaints or

is every NRA member entitled to file a complaint and have it

subjected to the same process?

5 A Every NRA member is entitled to file a complaint and

have it subjected to the same process.

Q And when a fellow NRA member is the target of an ethics

complaint, can you describe the due process that person

9 receives?

A I can't describe it in detail. It is prescribed in our 10 Bylaws, and I think due process is a big part of that because we want to make sure that everybody has a fair opportunity to tell their side of the story. There's an appeals process as well.

14 I served on that Hearings committee a very long time ago; and I remember it was a -- it was a confidential matter. I

don't remember the name of the person anyway, but it was a 17 matter of them speaking out and saying untrue things about the

NRA; and the committee heard it, that person had an opportunity

to have their side of the story told. They wrote many letters.

They were considered by the Hearings committee and a decision

was ultimately reached. 21

22 Q What about the Public Affairs Committee, have you been 23 on that one?

Yes, recently only. I have not served -- I did not 24 serve on the Public Affairs Committee for a long time; but in

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- the last three years, I've been a member of the Public Affairs Committee. The job of that committee is to represent to the
- outside world what the NRA is, what programs we provide, the
- positions that we take, why the association exists.
- You're chair of the Legal Affairs Committee; right?
- Α Yes. 6
- 7 0 What does that committee do?
- 8 The Legal Affairs Committee has oversight
- responsibility overall of the legal affairs of the association
- unless they have been sent to another body or deliberative body
- that is responsible for handling a particular legal affair. 11
- 12 But we meet three times a year at least, sometimes more
- 13 often and we will hear reports from our General Counsel. We
- 14 will hear reports from outside counsel. This is all done in
- 15 executive session and subject to the attorney-client privilege;
- and if we have questions, we have an opportunity as a committee 16
- 17 to ask those questions, to get answers to those questions and
- make sure that we feel as members of that committee that the
- legal affairs of the NRA are being properly handled. 19
- 20 What about the Committee on Elections?
- 21 A The Committee on Elections oversees the handling of NRA
- elections; and by that, I mean when the 76 board members who 22
- serve on the NRA board are elected and take office. We have a
- very large board. When you're elected, you serve for a
- three-year term usually, and the elections including the

- Well, the ballots, we vote by mail. That's in
- accordance with our Bylaws; and in order to be a voting member,
- you need to be a member of the NRA for five continuous years or
- more or to be a live member or above. And you get a ballot in
- your magazine. They usually come around February. The election
- results are usually available a week or two before our annual
- meeting, which is in the spring, April or May, let's say.
- 8 So, when the ballots start to come in, they are
- collected by the accounting firm. They are stored safely. They
- are counted by that firm. I do remember a little bit of issues about how quickly the accounting firm was actually counting the
- ballots. We had to announce the results in our upcoming
- meeting, and we needed to know what the count was.
- So, the accounting firm then certifies the results of that election, and the NRA secretary announces the results of 15
- that election at the annual meeting of members, which is akin to
- 17 a corporate shareholders meeting.
- Q Now, there's a 76th director that's elected at the 18 meeting; right? 19
- Yes. 20 Α
- Can you describe that process? 21 0
- The 76th director is elected at the annual meeting. 22
- The annual meeting moves around to different jurisdictions.
- we might meet one year in Dallas. We might meet one year in
- Indianapolis. We had a meeting in Tucson, Arizona, where I

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- counting of the ballots by a certified public accounting firm,
- that's the jurisdiction of the Committee on Elections.
- We want to make sure those are full and *** fair 3
- elections. The members vote by mail, so the ballots are
- collected by mail, counted. They're kept in a safe. It's the
- job of the Committee on Elections to supervise the election
- process and make sure that security measures are in place to
- make sure the election is fair. 8
- 9 Q You served on the Committee on Elections?
- Yes. Α 10
- 0 11 And what years did you serve on that committee?
- 12 Α I don't remember.
- Q More than one? 13
- Α I think I only served on that committee once. 14
- 15 Well, in your years of service on the board and
- including when you were on the Elections Committee, did you ever
- 17 observe anything you would characterize as election rigging?
- 18 Α No.
- 19 O You mentioned that security procedures are used for
- 20 elections; right?
- A Yes. 21
- And an accounting firm is involved; right? 22 Q
- 23 Α Yes.
- 24 Q Can you explain a little more about what that is and
- what that means and why the NRA does that?

- live. We had a meeting in Charlotte.
- Any NRA member who's present at the annual meeting,
- they don't have to be five-year continuous member or better.
- They can be any NRA member is entitled to vote for the 76th
- director, and that person is elected to serve for one year until
- 6 the next annual meeting when we elect a 76th director again.
- 7 The important thing about that is the people who are
- eligible to run for 76th director are those people who ran for
- the board in the last election, but didn't make the cut off.
- They didn't get elected to a spot, so they are the four or five 10
- or sometimes eight or ten people who did the work to apply for
- and run for the NRA board of directors, didn't get elected. Now
- they can -- they're names are on the ballot for the 76th. They
- don't have to do anything else. They're already on the ballot.
- 15 O We heard testimony about board meetings where there's
- about 76 people in the room, but the 76th director is elected by members at the members meeting; correct? 17
- 18 Α Correct.
- 19 Q Can you compare for the jury the size and scope of the
- 20 members meeting and who attends that versus the board meeting?
- A Well, the board meeting we have 76 members of the 21 board, but any NRA member can attend the board meeting and the 22
- 23 committee meetings of the board except for executive sessions.
- 24 So, I, being an enthusiast for NRA, I've always invited
- 25 NRA members come to the meetings, see what goes on. Remember,

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1 come to the committee meetings, come to the board meetings and

- I've encouraged many NRA members who have been to those meetings
- with me to run for the board of directors and many have gotten
- on the board that way.

NRA

- So, a board meeting is relatively small, especially the
- meetings that we have that aren't -- we have three meetings a
- year: One is in the winter, usually in January. One is at the
- annual meeting, which is in the spring or early summer, and one
- is in the fall, usually September.
- 10 The January and September meetings are held at a hotel
- in usually in either DC or we've had them in Dallas, Texas; but 11
- 12 the main meeting, the annual meeting of members is always in the
- spring or early summer and those meetings are very large because 13
- 14 we always have what we call the NRA annual meeting.
- 15 It is like a convention. We have different seminars
- for our members to attend. We invite them to come. There's 16
- 17 usually a show with exhibitors. We have training that actually
- occurs at that annual meeting. We have a lot of entertainment,
- a lot of country western singers come and perform at that
- 20 meeting. There are lots of speakers. There are celebratory
- events. There are fundraising events for NRA's programs. So we
- might have, you know, 20 to 40 or 50,000 people at those
- conventions, depending on what time of year it is and where
- they're held. 24
- 25 (Continued on next page)

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- A No. I -- I indicated we all get a chance as directors
- to fill out a form indicating which committees we want to serve
- on, but then it's up to the president to choose those people
- that he or she wants to have serve on the committee and I know
- I'm not going to always get what I pick.
- Q All right. So now let's go back to the nominating committee which you have served on.
 - Does Wayne LaPierre pick the nominating committee?
- A No. The nominating committed is elected by the NRA
- Board of Directors. 10

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- Q But isn't there some incentive to vote the way Wayne 11 12 wants you to vote?
 - A I don't know of any incentive.
- I will tell you that when I was -- as a director, my 14
- job is to pick the nine people I thought would best serve the 15
- NRA on the nominating committee. There are rules. You can only
- have six Board members on the nominating committee. Three
- people have to be outsiders, people who aren't on the Board.
- And most of the time because I have been on the Board so long, I
- 20 would know the six people who were being proposed.
- 21 We often had more than nine people nominated for the nominating committee. Then the Board has to vote. So some 22
- 23 people have to be excluded.
- When I didn't know one of the three people who was 24
- being proposed for the Non-Board member slots, I would ask

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- Q And all of those people, if they are an NRA member can vote for the 76th Director?
- Α Correct. 3
- Who chooses who is on each Board committee? 4
- Under our Bylaws, the president chooses the committee
- members and chooses the Chair and the Vice-Chair of these 7 committees.
- You have been president of the NRA; right? Q 8
- 9 Α Yes.
- As president, did that process for committee assignment 10
- 11 make sense to you?
- 12 A Yes. I had worked with -- when I became president in
- 13 2005, I had worked with a number of people already on the Board
- 14 who had been on the Board for a long time. I knew them. I knew
- the work they were capable of. I knew what their talents were,
- 16 and I wanted to make sure that the committees were staffed to
- 17 the best of my ability.
- I wanted people in charge who would help me pick the 18 19 right members for that committee so the committee could
- 20 discharge their responsibilities to the Board and to our
- members. 21
- 22 Q Have you ever wanted to be on a committee and not been
- 23 picked for it?
- Yes. 24
- 25 Q Did that upset you?

- questions. I would ask questions of the NRA president. I would
- ask questions of Wayne LaPierre. I would ask questions of my
- fellow Board members.
- For example, if someone gets nominated from the State
- of Delaware, we have a Delaware director on our Board, gentleman
- by the name of John Sigler. I would go to John. Delaware's a
- relatively small state. And I would say John, do you know this
- person. They claim to be an active NRA member in Delaware.
- They claim to have done all these things, put on these NRA
- programs in Delaware. Do you know this person? And I would
- trust that John would be honest with me and tell me I know this
- person. He is a great guy or I don't know her. I have never
- heard of her. She's not even a member of our State Association,
- and that would kind of raise heckles on the back of my neck, and
- I would ask more questions of more about why is this person being proposed. 16
- 17 So I sought input from as many people as I could until I was satisfied that this was someone that I could support.
- 19 Did anyone ever give you a crib sheet of who to vote for? 20
- I never heard that term. 21
- 22 Did anyone ever make suggestions as to who we think
- 23 would be great for the nominating committee?
- A Yes. I myself made suggestions when I was not on the nominating committee. I would go to the Vice-Chair of the
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nominating committee, and I would say, I think these people ought to be considered for the Board.

- Q When you received suggestions of who to vote for, did you always vote consistently with those suggestions?
- No.
- Q Now, when you vote for the nominating committee, do you
- 7 raise your hand or is it a secret ballot?
- A It's a secret ballot. 8
- Q So if you voted the way Wayne didn't want you to, he would never know. 10
- 11 A Correct.
- 12 Q What would you say to the allegation that some part of the Board is entrenched? 13
- A I don't think that's true. I think that we as Board 14 15 members, we all get elected every three years. You run for
- Board seat every three years. It's the members who vote for you 16
- by mail ballot. So I have been elected every three years since 17
- 18 I first came on the Board in 1992.
- We have a bio -- a little short bio in the magazine 19
- 20 next to the ballot. People read your bio. I have had hundreds of phone calls from people who didn't know me personally but
- called me up to say, I see you're running for the NRA Board, but
- what do you feel about this issue or that issue, and I would try
- to answer as many as I could. 24
- 25 The members elect the Board. Wayne doesn't elect the

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I think there were a lot of people on the Board from

- time to time who would purport to speak for Wayne LaPierre and
- maybe it wasn't really what Wayne LaPierre would have said if
- you asked him yourself. So I took a lot of that with a grain of
- salt. I tried to as I said gather information, make my own decision to the best of my ability. 6
 - How long have you known Mr. LaPierre?
 - Since I joined the Board in 1992.

THE COURT: Counsel, when we reach a time between subjects for a break.

MS. ROGERS: Now is a good time actually. THE COURT: We will take a short break, let the jury stretch for little bit.

Just the common instructions during a break. You are still on the stand, so you shouldn't discuss your testimony with anyone including counsel.

THE WITNESS: Certainly, your Honor.

(Whereupon, at this time the jury exits the courtroom.)

> (Whereupon at this time there was a recess taken.) (Witness resumed the witness stand.)

22 THE COURT OFFICER: All rise. Jury entering. 23 (Whereupon, at this time the jury entered the courtroom.) 24

CONTINUED DIRECT EXAMINATION

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- 1 Board. I don't think Wayne would want to elect the Board. He
- is busy doing other things and has been busy doing other things.
- 3 People who think that any one person runs the NRA, it's
- just not true. It's -- it has not been true in my 30 years of 4
- experience. 5
- 6 That doesn't mean that we don't ask one another for advice or recommendations for help. It's a matter of judgment
- how you vote for the Board of Directors, and I have had a lot of
- people come to me and say I don't like this person. I don't
- trust this person. I want to hear what they have to say. 10
- 11 I will ultimately make my own judgment to the best of my ability, but the more information, the better as far as I'm 12
- concerned. 13
- 14 Q Even though Wayne LaPierre can't control the nominating committee, would it be fair to say sometimes people have wanted
- to know his opinion about things? 16
- MR. WANG: Objection. Leading. 17
- 18 Α Of course.
- 19 I have asked -- when I didn't know someone myself
- personally and a name was floated and someone might say, well,
- Wayne thinks that's a good person for the nominating committee I 21
- 22 would go to Wayne and say who is this person. I don't know
- 23 them. Why do you think they would be good?
- 24 Sometimes he said it wasn't my idea. So people often said it was Wayne's idea when Wayne said no, it wasn't my idea.

- Froman by Defendant Direct/Ms. Rogers
 - BY MS. ROGERS: THE COURT: Thank very much. Please have a seat,
 - 3 everyone.
 - All right, Ms. Rogers. You may continue. 4
 - MS. ROGERS: Thank you.
 - 6 Welcome back, Ms. Froman.
 - So you described how the nominating committee is 7 picked. 8
 - Now, whom does the nominating committee pick?
- 10 A The nominating committee nominates people to run for 11 the Board of Directors.
- Q If a nominating committee doesn't pick you to be on 12 that slate, that ballot, are you prevented from getting elected
- to an officer position? 15 A No. Our Bylaws also provide that you can run by
- petition. You gather petition signatures to support your nomination, and you submit those petitions to the Office of the 17 Secretary, and if you meet the requirements of gathering enough 19 petition signatures, you are put on the ballot.
- 20 Q What are the leadership positions that -- the officer positions on the board? 21
- 22 A Okay. The unpaid officers are the president, the first 23 vice-president and the second vice-president.
- 24 Q You described the president before as your boss. But 25 we have also heard testimony that sometimes the presidency is

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ceremonial.

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What do you think about that? 2

The president certainly has a lot of ceremonial 3 4 functions appearing on behalf of the NRA as president. I remember going to many events when I was president being introduced in that capacity, but the president also has work to

do including the work of managing the committees and also work in sometimes reviewing management documents. 8

9 I remember I had to review a lot of business documents when I was president. 10

Q How did you become president? 11

12 A I came on the Board in 1992, and in approximately 1996, I was asked if I would be interested in coming in as second 13 vice-president which is the lowest level of volunteer elected 14 15 office, and I was very humbled and kind of flattered to be asked. And I said yes, I would be willing to do that, and I 16

17 would be willing to spend the time that was needed to serve in that office. So I said yes. 18 19

The nominating committee nominated me, and I was 20 elected at that 1992 annual meeting. I'm sorry. The -- the 199 -- see I was -- I think it was the 1997 or 8. It was 1998 annual meeting of members. So I had to run for it in '97. I 22 was elected in '98. I'm going back a long way now.

Q We have been clarifying all the witnesses' time period 24 focus, so if this has varied over time, let me know. And if

A The year I was elected as second vice-president, 1998,

2 Charlton Heston was elected as president of the NRA.

O Who is Charlton Heston? 3

4 A Charlton Heston was an incredibly well-known movie and television actor from the 1950's, 1960's. He was Moses in the

Ten Commandments. He was Ben-Hur in the movie of the same name.

My favorite Charlton Heston role is when he was in the 8 Planet of the Apes, but he was extremely well known. He was my mother's favorite actor of that time period, so I saw a lot of Charlton Heston on TV before I met him at NRA, but he came to 11 NRA first as the 76th Director.

12 The process of getting elected for that one-year term, 13 the way I described it, he came in in 1997, became the 76th Director and was elected as first vice-president in 1997 that same year. Then the following year in 1998 he was elected as 15 president. 16

17 Q Did you develop a view of his performance as president? Yes. He was extraordinary. He made the NRA a 18 household name. He brought a lot of positive attention to the NRA. He brought a lot of people who knew him as an actor and knew him as the president of the Screen Actors Guild, not an insignificant organization in and of itself.

He brought those people in the NRA and let them know that the NRA was more than a political organization, that we had a lot of good programs that we delivered to firearms owners and

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committee and whose compensation do they determine? A The compensation committee has changed over time. I believe it's the -- currently the three volunteer officers of

1 not, you can just answer. But what is the compensation

the NRA which would be the president, the first vice-president

and the second vice-president. They determine the compensation of the paid officers of the NRA which are the executive

vice-president, the secretary and the treasurer. 8

9 Q When you were president, how was compensation set?

Compensation of the president -- I'm sorry. 10

Compensation of the executive vice-president who is functionally 12 the CEO of NRA was set by looking at comparison studies of other CEO's of similarly sized non-profit organizations. 13

I asked for -- my time as president, I asked for 14 preparation of outside reports about what CEOs of similarly sized non-profits were making, and as I recall, the compensation 17 of the executive vice-president then and still Wayne LaPierre was set kind of in the middle. There were larger organizations 18 and smaller organizations, but -- and there were ones that paid 19

20 their CEOs more, and some paid their CEOs less, but ours was pretty much squarely in the middle. 21

22 Q Before you were president, you were second 23 vice-president of the NRA; right?

24 Yes.

25 Q Who was the president that you came up under? people who didn't own firearms all over the country.

Q Were the NRA's Bylaws changed to allow Mr. Heston to occupy an office for a particular period of time? 3

A Yes. So under our Bylaws, before Mr. Heston was elected president, you could serve as long as you wanted as 6 second vice-president if the Board continued to elect you.

7 You could serve as long as you wanted as first vice-president if you were reelected by the Board, but you could only serve as president for two one-year terms. You had to be elected each year. But after your second year of president, you 10 11 could no longer serve.

I think the Board realized pretty early on in Mr. Heston's presidency he was an extraordinary person and extraordinary value to the NRA and our mission, and the Board amended the Bylaws to allow him to be reelected to succeed himself for what ended up being a total of five years. So he was five years as president of the NRA from 1992 to 2003.

And why did Mr. Heston leave the Board?

19 A Mr. Heston announced in 2002 that he had Alzheimer's, and it was beginning to affect his ability to do his job as NRA president, and I think if it hadn't been for that, he would have continued to serve and would have continued to be reelected, but 22 23 that's why he ultimately did not run for any more terms as 24

Q Can you describe some of the ways the NRA responded

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when its prominent public advocate Charlton Heston became ill?

A It was tough because we got used to having a face and a

3 name out there that would draw attention to our organization and

speak for our organization, and we realized that we would lose

Mr. Heston's public appearance abilities, and we had to have our

executive vice-president Wayne LaPierre really step up and take

center stage. He had always been working. He had always been

out there often accompanying Mr. Heston in representing the NRA,

but now he was going to have to be that face, that name, and

those of us on the Board pushed him to do it and he was willing 10

11 to do it.

12 Q Did the public advocacy role of some other directors like you change too? 13

14 A Yes. Now that Mr. Heston was not able to stay and

15 Wayne LaPierre was doing more and more of the work that Mr.

Heston had done in the past, many of us, especially former

17 presidents who had been in the Chairs, we knew what the NRA

stood for. We were articulate about it. We were asked to do

19 more speaking on behalf of NRA, and I was asked to do more

20 speaking on behalf of NRA.

21 Q We talked about how you became president. But just very quickly, how did you get on the Board in the first place? 22

A I was a NRA member already from the early eighties when

I had that bad experience with the attempted break-in home

invasion. And I was speaking at a rally in Phoenix in 1991 and

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1 A Yes.

2 Q Did there come a time when Neal Knox who helped you get

on the Board was involved in one of those vigorous

4 disagreements?

Yes. 5 Α

6 O Can you describe that?

A Well, Neal was working his way up through the Chairs of

the NRA, and I'm talking about the volunteer positions now to

become president of the NRA, but it all became apparent over the

years from 1992 until 1997 when I was just a Board member that

he wanted to become executive vice-president of the NRA and to

receive a salary for that, and he was complaining I guess is the

best way to say it or telling people that the NRA was in

trouble, that Wayne LaPierre was mismanaging the finances, that

the NRA was about to go bankrupt and that we should all vote for

him as president and eventually he would get rid of Wayne

17 LaPierre.

I was fairly new on the Board even though I had been 18 there for several years. When you have that many people on a Board of Directors, it's hard to get to know everybody. It's just a lot of people to meet and to get to know them especially when you only meet three times a year.

23 So I went to Neal Knox who I considered a friend, and I said why are you saying this. Show me the paperwork that says

we are about to go bankrupt, we are in trouble financially, that

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Wayne's mismanaging the assets. And the response I got from

Neal at that time was, just do what you're told. Just vote for

me. You don't need to know anything else.

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So I did the same thing with Mr. LaPierre. I went to

him, and I said this is what Mr. Knox is saying. Tell me why he

is wrong. Explain to me why we are fine financially and that I

should continue to support the people whom were in office at the

8 time. 9 He said, I think you should go see the financial office

at NRA, and he told them in my presence, show her anything she wants to see. Explain to her what these documents are. The drawers are open. You can look at anything you want. And I

didn't understand perhaps every single document I looked at

because I'm not an accountant, but what I did understand was Mr.

LaPierre was not afraid for me to look at anything and Mr. Knox

was not giving me any access to the information that he was

17 using to make his argument, and that's how I made my decision to

18 support Mr. LaPierre and not Mr. Knox.

19 Q Now you testified that Mr. Knox disagreed with how Mr. 20 LaPierre was managing the Association's financial assets; right?

Yes. 21

22 Q Have you formed a view on whether if Mr. Knox had won,

23 the NRA would be financially better off?

24 I think --

25

MR. WANG: Objection. Calls for speculation.

1 was approached by a man by the name of Bob Corbin who was then the Attorney General of the State of Arizona where I lived at the time and he had been in office I think for 10 or 11 years. He was a very long-standing Attorney General, and he asked me after he heard me speak -- he said, have you ever thought of running for the NRA Board of Directors. And I said no. And he said, I think you should, and I would support you. And I was also approached by a gun rights activist who also lived in Arizona at the time, a man by the name of Neal Knox. I knew him from his writing in a newspaper that he published, and he asked 10 11 me if I would run for the NRA Board of Directors, and I said yes, I will, and he supported me also. 12

13 So I had these two pretty powerful activists urging me 14 to run for the Board. I talked to my husband at the time and he said I think you should do it. And so I did. I filled out a 16 very lengthy questionnaire that's required for new Board members 17 and submitted that to the Office of the Secretary and the nominating committee nominated me. 18

19 Mr. Knox also circulated petitions on my behalf to 20 enable me to run as a petition candidate in case the nominating committee chose not to nominate me. And so I ran both as a 21 22 petition candidate and a nominating committee for the Board, and 23 I was elected to the Board that year in 1992.

24 Q You testified earlier that Board members sometimes vigorously disagree with each other; right?

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1 THE COURT: I am asking for her judgment as a Board 2 member.

THE COURT: Sustained. 3

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4 Q Ms. Froman, what fight -- what did Mr. Knox disagree 5 about?

6 A Mr. Knox felt that we had to liquidate our assets including our entire stock portfolio and that's what he was urging. He was urging me to vote for him and put him in charge

so he could do that. This was in 1997.

Q And with the benefit of hindsight as a fiduciary of the 10 NRA, do you have a view on whether the NRA would have benefitted 11

12 from liquidating all its stock in 1997?

It would have been a disaster. MR. WANG: Objection. Same basis. 14

15 THE COURT: Overruled.

A It would be a disaster. Look as what's happened with 16 the stock since 1997. 17

Your term as president ended in spring of 2007; 18 correct? 19

My term as president ended in 2007, yes. 20 Α

21 And you mentioned that your role as an advocate publically for the NRA increased after Mr. Heston got sick; 22 23 right?

24 A Yes, and -- but when I -- when I was an officer, I was out there speaking on behalf of the NRA as an officer.

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present both sides of the issue. And so he asked me if I would

come talk at his -- at one of his classes. And then after I

did, he had me serve on a panel. And then he asked for my help

on finding people to speak both for and against some of the

issues, like individual rights to own a gun, like concealed

carry, things that like that were kind of hot topics at the time

7 on gun ownership.

About how many times per year did you speak? 8 O

9 At least a dozen times a year. Maybe more.

Were you paid for giving these speeches? Q

A No. 11

10

15

12 Q But you did receive some money; right?

I did, yes. 13 Α

Describe that arrangement. 14 Q

A Well, when I was asked by Wayne LaPierre and the head

of the advancement office if I would continue to speak about NRA

and about the Second Amendment and the importance of the Second

Amendment to our Constitution and our freedom in our country, I

19 said, well, I'm happy to volunteer. I don't want to charge my

20 hourly rate that I was charging my clients for my work, but I

needed some support to cover the overhead of my law office

because I couldn't be gone to be doing this and not be able to

keep my law office open because that's how I made my living. I

was practicing. I had a solo practice at the time, and it

was -- it was something that I needed in order to be able to do

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Page 3915 Q So after you left the presidency, you continued

speaking publically; right? 2

Α Yes. 3

13

Q Who asked you to do this? 4

Wayne LaPierre. The head of our fundraising department

asked me. Various members of the Board of Directors asked me.

NRA members out in the country who had met me at various functions would ask me to come back and speak to their Clubs,

their Associations. I loved speaking. I was very enthusiastic

about it, and people wanted me to continue, but I wasn't sure 10

11 that was something I was supposed to be doing now that I was no

longer president. 12

Q Can you describe the work that you did in that role? 13

A Wow. I probably in the period of time from 2008 to 14

about 2018, I spoke to at least 50 law schools around the

country to the law students who would become lawyers, judges,

17 justices and probably an equal number of service groups like

Rotary or the Kiwanis. I spoke to political clubs. I spoke to 18

groups of lawyers -- practicing lawyers for their legal 19

20 continuing legal education requirements, professional

requirements. 21

22 I spoke at and actually helped a gentleman who was putting together a 14-week course on guns in America for older

learners that was sponsored by the University of Arizona. He

was not a friend of guns, but he was somebody who wanted to

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what NRA wanted me to do. So I sat down with someone in the

treasurer's office, and I said this is what I think it will cost

to be able to support my speaking engagements, and they said

that's fine. Send us an invoice, and I did.

And this was probably sometime before 2015; right? 5

6

Was it closer to 2008 than 2015? 7 Q

Α 8 Yes.

9 0 Was there ever a written contract for the NRA's

supporting your speaking work? 10

11

12 Q Could that kind of arrangement be made today to the

13 NRA?

25

A No because now we have a requirement that every payment -- every arrangement like that has to be supported by a written contract approved in accordance with the new controls, 17 procedures and purchasing policies.

18 Q How do you know that the NRA has new controls 19 preventing non-verbal contracts or -- I'm sorry -- unwritten 20 contracts like yours?

21 A Because the Board has been informed at Board meetings that these new processes and procedures were being put in place over a period of several years, and we were updated periodically at Board meetings that we were changing the rules.

We were -- we were updating, strengthening the rules so

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NRA February 8, 2024 Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3918 S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3920 that we would not be in a position that frankly got us here And in 2021, the NRA filed for bankruptcy; right? 1 2 Yes. 2 A Q Did you report the speaking fees you received on your Q As a bankruptcy lawyer, what kind of considerations did 3 3 financial disclosure questionnaires to the NRA? 4 you evaluate when you decided to ratify that filing? Not at first because I understood them to be MR. WANG: Objection, your Honor. Calling for her 5 to make expert legal opinion on a bankruptcy. 6 reimbursement of expenses, but they were reported on the 990s. 6 7 Q Did anyone at the NRA monitor your speaking activity to 7 THE COURT: No, she's asking about her reaction as make sure you were doing what you were being paid for? 8 a board member. 8 A I don't know if they monitored, but I was constantly 9 MS. ROGERS: Yeah, I'll rephrase it. O So, you had been a lawyer working on sophisticated reporting to them this is where I went to speak, this is how big 10 10 the audience was, this was the subject that I talked about. bankruptcies at a big law firm; right? 11 11 12 I wanted feedback from the NRA as to whether I was 12 A I worked on a lot of things, including bankruptcies, very high level bankruptcies. doing what they thought would be most valuable to the 13 13 Association, so I probably talked more than I should have trying 14 14 Q Did that inform your judgment as a board member? to let people know what I was doing, and I was saying -- I would Of course. 15 In spring of 2021, you voted to ratify the NRA remember saying very often to Wayne LaPierre, if you think I'm 16 16 bankruptcy filing; right? 17 not doing what you want me to be doing for the NRA, let me know 17 and we will change it. A Yes. 18 18 Q Why? 19 Q You stopped giving these speeches around 2018; right? 19 20 Α Yes. 20 Because I thought it was the right thing to do. I, Why? 21 Q frankly, was not entirely pleased with how it came about, but I 22 A I was sort of powering down my speaking engagements. I was not part of that decision. I was, in fact, not in the room was getting ready to retire from my law practice which I did when the contract with Mr. LaPierre was ratified. I had recuse retire at the end of December 2019, and there were other people 24 myself for other reasons. out there speaking, and I just figured it was time to move on to 25 But once the bankruptcy was filed and it was something Page 3919 S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3921 other things. that I thought could help protect the association, I voted to 1 What was the atmosphere at the NRA like in 2017? 2 2 ratify it. A It was tumultuous. We were starting to learn of 3 3 Q You were friends with Ollie North; right? threats to the existence of the National Rifle Association. Professional colleagues, let's say. I mean, when 4 5 When I say "we," we as a Board of Directors. There was people say friends with, I think, you know, did they invite me 6 a lot of discussion about that, and we were starting to look at home to dinner with their family. No, I never got invited home 7 what we needed to do to protect the Association. 7 to dinner with Mr. North. (Continued on the following page.) Q Did you know he raised concerns he thought outside 8 8 9 9 counsel fees were too high? He did with me yes. 10 10 11 11 0 Did you examine that issue? Α I did. 12 12 Q What did you conclude? 13 13 14 14 Mr. North said to me -- I was in the building one day, in the building at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia, and 15 16 for a meeting having to do with something else. My plane wasn't 17 17 until the next day. So, I had time walking around the building, seeing who 18 18 was in their office that I could say hello to. And I happened 19 20 to find Mr. North and he called me in and he was complaining about the Brewer firm's fees being too high. I said, "What do 21 22 you mean too high?" He said, "Well, they're just too high."

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So I said, "Well, do you think they're billing for work that

they're not doing?" And he said, "Well, no, I don't know that." I said, "Well, litigation is very expensive." I had an

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NRA S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers Page 3922 S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Mr. Fleming 1 experience as a litigation attorney and it's very expensive, and 1 THE COURT: Any other direct testimony? MR. CORRELL: No, your Honor. he wasn't giving me any measurable way to evaluate his statement 2 that they were too high. MR. FARBER: No, your Honor. 3 4 And, he kept repeating the same sentence which kind of 4 MR. FLEMING: Very brief. **DIRECT-EXAMINATION** caused me to believe that somebody told him to say it. He was BY MR. FLEMING: repeating a part of a script, if you will, and I kept Hi, Ms. Froman? questioning him about it. And I said, "Well, are you reviewing 7 the fees?" And he said, "No. I said, "Well, who is reviewing 8 Hello. the fees?" He said, "John Frazer," the corporate secretary at 9 I'm William Fleming. I represent Mr. Frazer. Just a the time. I said, "Well, do you have a problem with his very quick question. 10 10 Have you had occasion to interact with Mr. Frazer 11 review?" He says, "well, I don't know. They're just too high." 11 12 He just kept saying that over and over again. So I did 12 during your time and his time at the NRA? Overwhelmingly yes, a lot. follow that conversation up with investigating who was reviewing 13 13 In what capacities does that happen? 14 the fees, the fact that the fees were being reviewed by the 14 appropriate people at NRA was what I was concerned about. 15 A He -- John Frazer was -- worked for the Institute for 15 Q You've reviewed the legal filings including this one 16 Legislative Action at NRA, which is the political arm of NRA

17

18

Page 3923

that have come out; right? Did you look at the attorney general's complaint? 18 A Yes. 19

Q And you've read some of the bankruptcy testimony; 20 right? 21

22

17

23 And you still voted for Wayne LaPierre the last year he

ran before his resignation; right? 24

S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Ms. Rogers

25 Yes.

S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Mr. Fleming

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Why? 1

2 A Because I thought he was in a position to help see us through this incredibly difficult time. He was the one who had

started the course correction that had led us to make changes

5 that were important to the future of the NRA.

6 He gave all of our employees, especially our Financial 7 Services Department full access to every piece of information that they needed to make sure we strengthened our policies,

strengthened our control processes and he did that knowing that

10 he was probably going to be one of the people who would be found

11 out to engaged in misconduct, financial misconduct that was not

in the best interest of the NRA. 12

13 I thought that was -- brave may not be the right word, 14 but he knew that he was going to be one of the people who was going to be told, You shouldn't be doing this and you're going to have to pay this back which, in fact, did occur. But he, I 17 remember saying to me, he said "I don't care if I lose every friend I have ever had, we will get to the bottom of this and we 18

19 will fix it and we will save the NRA."

20 And even though we went through a lot of issues from 2016 to the bankruptcy filing, I felt then and up until the time 21 he resigned or retired in January, I felt he was the person who 22 could help us steer the ship through the rough waters until we came to the destination which we needed to arrive at. 24 25 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Pass the witness.

committee to hold.

2 And as the General Counsel of the NRA, it was my responsibility as chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee to

when I first came to the board so I dealt with him there.

he was also working for the NRA; and I don't know at what point

he actually became our General Counsel and the corporate

secretary, but I dealt with him in both those capacities, both

as the secretary who deals with the NRA board of directors.

He's responsible for the preparation of all the minutes and

other documents, notices of meetings. As a committee chair I

would have to ask him to notice meetings that I wanted my

And then when he became -- he went to law school while

obtain reports from him several times a year on what the legal

5 matters were that the NRA was handling through the office of

6 General Counsel.

7 And he would brief the Legal Affairs Committee?

Α Yes. 8

10

9 0 And did you find his briefings helpful and informative?

Helpful, informative and very thorough.

11 Did you have any kind of exposure to his work on

related-party transactions? 12

A Yes. I would ask him questions. If I had questions 13 14 about myself, should I be reporting something or not reporting 15 something, and he would answer.

16 And I remember him coming up to me and telling me, "You need to be reporting this," so I started reporting it. He took 17

18 the initiative on that one.

19 Q And did you experience an expansion of the financial 20 disclosure questionnaire during Mr. Frazer's time in office?

Yes, it changed. 21

Q So, from your observations, do you have any views on

Mr. Frazer's integrity?

A I felt then when he first came into that role and I feel now that he has the highest integrity.

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NRA February 8, 2024 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang S. Froman - by Defendant - Direct/Mr. Fleming Page 3926 Page 3928 Q One last question for you. Do you have any view based 1 MR. WANG: Ms. Froman testified about her speaking on your observations of his professional competence? 2 2 engagements. A Not as much because I didn't actually work with him on THE COURT: Her own. 3 the underlying matters that were being handled by the office of 4 General Counsel; but I do know that when I went to him with a 5 within the testimony of the witness along with the fact that specific question about a specific matter, he would answer me 6 other individuals on the board were paid for speaking and he would say, Well, we've hired local counsel for that or 7 engagements, as well. we've done something else for this. THE COURT: That may be true, but it is still not 8 9 So, I felt like he knew his limitations based on his 9 within the scope of the direct. MR. WANG: I'll move on, your Honor. 10 experience. I mean, I'm a lot older than him and I had a lot 10 more opportunities for experience, but I felt he was -- he had a Q Ms. Froman, you received approximately \$45,000 a year 11 12 good handle on what he was capable of and that he would ask for 12 from the NRA from 2008 to 2018; correct? help from others if he felt he needed it. A I'm not sure about 2018. It might have been a little 13 13 Was he attentive to the NRA's issues? less than that, but the answer is yes as to the other years 14 Q Α 15 Yes, very attentive. you've mentioned. 15 Q Did he act in the NRA's best interest in your view? Q And that amount was paid by a flat fee; correct? 16 16 In my opinion, yes. 17 17 Correct. MR. FLEMING: Thanks so much. 18 But you thought that that amount was paid for the 18 reimbursement of expenses; correct? THE COURT: Okay, cross examination, Mr. Wang. 19 19 20 Correct. MR. WANG: Good afternoon. May I proceed your 20 Honor? 21 21 O But that would mean that you would have incurred the THE COURT: Yes, please. exact same amount of expenses every month for ten years if these 22 23 fees were actually for expenses; correct? A I wouldn't agree with that. I think that's an (Continued on next page) 24 24 25 incorrect statement. 25 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3927 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3929 CROSS-EXAMINATION You were paid a flat amount, correct? 0 1 BY MR. WANG: Α Correct. 2 Q Good afternoon, Ms. Froman. O And you created invoices; correct? 3 3 Good afternoon. And your name? My office did. 4 4 Α Q My name is William Wang, I'm an Assistant Attorney 5 O And those invoices weren't reimbursements of expenses; 6 General with the Attorney General's office. 6 correct? How are you? 7 7 A In my mind, yes, they were. Thank you, Mr. Wang. Were these invoices including airfare, hotel and Q 8 8 9 Q You are a past president of the NRA; correct? 9 meals? A Yes. Α No. 10 10 11 O And you're familiar with Ms. Marion Hammer; right? Q And these payments that you received, you never Α disclosed them on a financial disclosure form until 2019; 12 Q She was also a past president of the NRA; correct? correct? 13 13 Α 14 14

15 And Ms. Hammer receives money from the NRA as a

consultant or lobbyist; correct? 16

She has in the past. I don't know if she still does 17

now. 18

25

0 Mr. Keene is a past president of the NRA as well; 19

correct? 20

A Yes. 21

22 Q And Mr. Keene has received money from the NRA in the

23 past as well; correct?

MS. ROGERS: Objection, outside the scope. 24

THE COURT: Sustained.

MR. WANG: These payments go to show the bias

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A I don't remember the year that I first started

disclosing them; but that was the time when Mr. Frazer said to me "You need to start disclosing these."

They were disclosed in the 990. They were available 17

to all board members who reviewed the 990s from the time I started receiving them and, indeed, available to members of the 19 20 public.

Q Ms. Froman, I'm just asking you a yes or no question. 21 You didn't disclose these payments until 2019 on a 22

financial disclosure form: correct?

A I don't know. If you ask me that question that I didn't disclose them through 2017, I would say yes. I'm not

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NYSCEF DOC $_{NY}$ NG $_{v}$ 3234 **NRA February 8, 2024** S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3930 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3932 sure about '18 and '19. If you want to show them to me, that Q Nominating Committee members are elected by the board; 1 would be an easy way to find out. 2 correct? Q There was no written contract for these payments; 3 3 THE COURT: Do you want this exhibit to stay up? 4 right? 4 MR. WANG: We can take this down. A Correct. That's correct. 5 5 6 O You said you know who Marian Hammer is; correct? 6 Q And for the election of Nominating Committee members, you received a cheat sheet telling you who to vote for; 7 Α 7 Q And you've spoken with her about board elections, 8 correct? 8 A I don't know what you mean by "cheat sheet." 9 correct? 9 A Many times. MR. WANG: May I approach the witness with a 10 10 Q I'm going to show you a document that has been marked document, your Honor? 11 11 PX 1256 for identification. 12 12 THE COURT: You can with the court officer. MR. WANG: May I provide a document to the witness, (Handed to the witness) 13 13 your Honor? MR. WANG: I have multiples of this one. 14 14 15 (Handed to the witness) THE COURT: Thank you. 15 Q Ms. Froman, I'm showing you a four-page document. It (Handed up to the Court) 16 16 is dated January 15, 2018. 17 17 O This is a document that has been marked PX 6009 for Does this look familiar to you? identification. 18 18 A I see it, Mr. Wang. Vaguely. 19 19 Q There's a telephone number at the top of this document. 20 Q I'll represent to you this was -- where it says "Sandy 20 personal," this was how the document was produced to us and we 21 Obviously, that number will be redacted before it is have -- we're redacting any personally identifying information. shown publicly; but does that telephone number look familiar to 22 22 23 A Okay, thank you. 23 you? Q And you said you've had conversations with Ms. Hammer A It is my telephone number. 24 24 about board elections; correct? 25 And the number next to your telephone number, does that S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3931 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3933 number look familiar to you? A Many conversations with Ms. Hammer about board A No, but it says Millie Hallow. I have no reason not to elections over the last roughly thirty years. 2 MR. WANG: I move to admit PX 1256. believe that it is. 3 3 MS. ROGERS: No objection. Q And you texted with Ms. Hallow on a regular basis 4 THE COURT: It is admitted. during your time on the NRA board; correct? 5 6 (Whereupon, at this time Exhibit PX 1256 was 6 A I texted with Ms. Hallow many, many times during my 7 service on the NRA board. 7 admitted and received into evidence.) Q You replied to this e-mail and complimented Ms. Hammer Q About NRA matters; correct? 8 8 9 on her message entitled "The Enemy Within," correct? 9 Yes, and about her family. Yes. A MR. WANG: I move to admit PX 6009. 10 10 MS. ROGERS: No objection. 11 Q And this is a long message from Ms. Hammer; but at the 11 THE COURT: It is admitted. 12 end of the message starting at the bottom of page 3 and going on 12

- to page 4, Ms. Hammer provides her opinions on which directors
- she will be voting for; correct? 14
- That's right. It is an endorsement of that slate. 15
- Q And she's encouraging other people to vote for those 16
- same directors; correct? 17
- A Correct. 18
- Q You testified that you served on the Nominating 19
- 20 Committee; correct?
- A I served on the Nominating Committee on several 21
- occasions. 22
- Q And you've also testified that in fact you chaired the 23
- Nominating Committee; correct? 24
- A Once, yes. 25

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- (Whereupon, at this time Exhibit PX 6009 was 13
- admitted and received into evidence.) 14
- 15 Q The cellphone numbers have been redacted on the screen. (Displayed) 16
 - In April, on April 13, 2015, you sent a text message to
- Ms. Hallow; correct? 18
- 19 Apparently, yes.
- 20 And you said, "Millie, no one has given me a cheat
- sheet -- "your words -- "list for the Nominating Committee 21 election." 22
- 23
 - Do you recall that?
- I don't recall doing it, but I obviously did. 24
- And Ms. Hallow responds to you with nine names, 25

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third full paragraph of page 9.

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NRA February 8, 2024 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3934 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3936 correct? "The chair called for nominations for election to the 1 Nominating Committee." 2 Α Yes. 2 Do you see that? And then you thanked her; correct? 3 0 3 4 Α 4 A Yes, I do. Q And this all occurs the morning of April 13, 2015; 5 Q And nine names were submitted to the Nominating 5 Committee; correct? correct? 6 7 Correct. 7 Apparently, yes. What did you mean when you said "cheat sheet?" 8 8 Q Those are the same nine names you received from A A list of suggested names for election to the Ms. Hallow earlier that morning, correct? 9 Nominating Committee. I believe so. 10 10 Q But you didn't use the language "suggestions" here; Q And let me direct your attention to page 11 of WPX 51A. 11 11 12 correct? 12 The bottom paragraph beginning with "returning to the Α You're right. I used the words "cheat sheet." report of the Nominating Committee." 13 13 Cheat sheet correct. "Returning to the report of the Nominating 14 14 MR. WANG: Your Honor, may I hand the witness 15 Committee, the chair announced that the following 15 another document? individuals were elected to the 2015/2016 Nominating 16 16 (Handed to the witness) 17 17 Committee listed in order of the number of votes received." MR. WANG: And for the Judge. The same nine names appear here and have been 18 18 (Handed up to the Court) elected by the board to the Nominating Committee; correct? 19 19 MR. WANG: I'm handing the witness a document that 20 20 Correct. 21 has been marked for identification. It was actually on 21 0 There's no record in these minutes of a robust debate, Mr. Phillip's list, WPX 51. This document in its entirety correct? 22 22 23 is almost 300 pages. I've just excerpted the first 11 pages 23 A I have not looked at all of the minutes. and marked it WPX 51A. Q The minutes for the board meeting are in front of you. 24 24 MS. ROGERS: We have no objections so long as the 25 Can you show me where there's a robust debate? S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3935 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Wang Page 3937 version admitted ultimately is complete. MS. ROGERS: Objection. He put 7 pages from 300 1 1 THE COURT: Well, you're seeking to admit just this pages in front of her. 2 2 THE COURT: She didn't say there wasn't anything in 3 portion, yes? 3 MR. WANG: I have no objection to admitting the the minutes. She just said she hadn't read them. 4 4 entire set of minutes. Q There are 11 pages here, and do you want to look 5 5 6 THE COURT: Okay, it sounds good. It is admitted. 6 through them --7 (Whereupon, at this time Exhibit WPX 51 was A Mr. Wang, I don't know what your question is. 7 admitted and received into evidence.) Q My question is did a robust debate take place with 8 8 9 Q Ms. Froman, I'm going to direct your attention to WPX 9 respect to these nine names? 51, page 4. A I don't remember. It was very frequent that we had 10 10 A All right, I'm here, Mr. Wang. more than nine names up for election. 11 11 Do you know what these are? The meeting ended at the last line of this -- these 12 12 A These are the minutes of the meeting of the board of minutes indicate that the meeting ended at 2:17 p.m., April 13, 13 directors of the National Rifle Association for April of 2015. 2015; right? 14 A Yes. 15 Q And you were present on -- at this board meeting; 15 correct? Q A few hours after you asked for the cheat sheet from 16 16 Ms. Hallow and she provided it to you; correct? 17 A Give me a minute to look. I don't remember, honestly, 17 it was --18 A Yes. 18 Q Your a name appears five names down from the bottom of 19 MR. WANG: Pass the witness. 19 20 the first column. 20 MS. COUTU: Your Honor, a few questions, please? THE COURT: Sure. A Yes. I was present. I've only missed three meetings I 21 21 22 think the entire time on the board. 22 MR. CORRELL: Your Honor, we've gone out of order, 23 There was no question pending Ms. Froman. 23 but I'm happy to let Ms. Coutu go and then I'll go after. I'm going to direct your attention to page 9, and the MS. COUTU: Can everyone hear me? Okay, great. 24 24

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S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Coutu Page 3938

- **CROSS-EXAMINATION**
- BY MS. COUTU: 2
- 3 Q Good afternoon, Ms. Froman. My name is Lisa Coutu, and
- I represent Woody Phillips in this action. Just a couple of
- 6 Earlier when you were testifying with Ms. Rogers, you
- mentioned there were some questions regarding the NRA's finances
- raised in the mid 1990s. 8
- 9 Do you recall that?
- Yes. 10 Α
- Q And those questions were raised by Mr. Knox? 11
- 12 Α Yes.
- 13 And in order to answer those questions, you went to
- 14 the finance office of the NRA to get access information; right?
- A I don't know that I actually physically went to the 15
- finance office, but I certainly went to employees in the finance 16
- 17 office.
- 0 To employees in the finance office, and did those 18
- employees from the finance office provide you access to records? 19
- 20 Yes.
- 21 Q And were you able to then review those records?
- 22 Α
- And were there any records that you asked for from
- those finance employees that you weren't provided? 24
- 25 No.

- S. Froman by Defendant Cross/Mr. Coutu
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- Α Yes. 1
- 2 Q And Mr. Phillips, as the CFO and treasurer, was in
- charge of that stock portfolio; right? 3
- 4 A I believe so.
- Now, switching topics just very briefly. You also
- mentioned that you had an arrangement with the NRA where you
- would do speaking engagements. 7
- 8 Do you recall that testimony?
- 9 A Yes.
- Q And I know that there was not a written contract, but 10
- I think you also testified that you were constantly updating and
- reporting to the board regarding what was happening with your
- speaking engagements; right?
- 14 A I was reporting to NRA management what I was doing.
- Q And then I think you also said that the money that you 15
- were paid as a result of those speaking engagements showed up on
- 17 the Form 990s; right?
- Correct. 18
- And that those Form 990s were available to the board of 19 Q
- 20 directors?
- Yes. 21 Α
- Now, was your flat fee available to Mr. Cotton to see 22
- when he reviewed the 990s?

S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Coutu

- Α I believe so. 24
- Q 25 Now, even if there wasn't a written contract, do you

- S. Froman by Defendant Cross/Mr. Coutu
- Page 3939 Q Were you able to ask them questions regarding your --
- the questions raise about the NRA finances? 2
- Yes. 3 Α
- Q Did they answer them? 4
- Yes. 5 Α
- Q And based upon what you reviewed and their answers that
- 7 they provided, you felt comfortable with the NRA's finances in
- the mid 1990s; right? 8
- 9 Yes.
- And in the mid 1990s, Mr. Phillips was the CFO and 10
- treasurer at the time; correct? 11
- Α Yes. 12
- And the treasurer gets elected by the board of 13
- directors every single year; right? 14
- 15 That's correct.
- Q And from 1992 until currently, you've been on the board 16
- of directors; right? 17
- Α Yes. 18
- Q So, from 1992 until Mr. Phillips retired in 2018, you 19
- elected through the board Mr. Phillips as treasurer of the NRA;
- right? 21
- 22 A That's right.
- And, also, I believe you had mentioned that there was
- a stock portfolio that increased and was really beneficial for
- the NRA as well; right?

- believe those speaking engagements benefitted the NRA?
- 2 Yes.
- How? 3 Q
- 4 A I was speaking about the NRA's mission and objectives.
- I was speaking about the constitution of the United States,
- especially with respect to the 2nd Amendment. I was talking
- about training law enforcement members of the military and
- citizens of good character in the safe and responsible use of
- 9 firearms.
- 10 I was talking to people about the many programs that
- the NRA had, including the competitions programs. I mean, it
- covered the gamut. I was speaking to women groups about the
- importance of women being able to, if they wanted to choose to
- own a gun to choose to own a gun.
- 15 And all of these things were things that I felt were my duty as director of the association to do outreach about; and if
- the NRA was willing to help support -- pay my expenses to help
- support that speaking and the NRA wanted me to continue to do
- it, I was enthusiastic about doing it. I loved doing it. 19
- 20 Q And do you think your speaking engagements led to additional members joining the NRA? 21
- 22 A I know they did. I signed some of them up myself.
- 23 Fantastic. And do you think that those speaking
- 24 engagements also increased possible donations to the NRA?
- A I believe they did, yes. 25

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NRA February 8, 2024 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3942 S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3944 1 MS. COUTU: I pass the witness. Thank you. wardrobe if your employer has paid for that; if you're unaware THE COURT: Mr. Correll. of that rule, does that fall within the box of misconduct or 2 **CROSS-EXAMINATION** 3 mistake? 3 BY MR. CORRELL: 4 MR. WANG: Objection to the hypothetical. THE COURT: Sustained. Q Ms. Froman, I'm Kent Correll. I represent Mr. Wayne 5 LaPierre. Nice to see you. MR. CORRELL: I'll ask it a different way. 6 Yes, hello. 7 Q If there's a rule that if you're employer pays for In your mind is there a difference between a mistake 8 wardrobe for you, you should reimburse the employer for that; 8 and misconduct? 9 but you're not informed that your employer has paid for Yes, of course. wardrobe, does that fall within the category of mistake or 10 And if someone makes an innocent mistake, an honest misconduct? 11 11 12 mistake do you view that as misconduct? 12 MR. WANG: Same objection. No, not necessarily. THE COURT: Sustained, sustained. She's a fact 13 13 Q And mistakes can happen inadvertently; correct? witness. 14 14 15 Α Yes. MR. CORRELL: I understand. I'll ask a fact 15 question. And mistakes can happen because you've been provided 16 16 with information that is either incomplete or inaccurate; 17 17 Q As you sit here today, are you aware of the NRA having correct? paid for any wardrobe for Mr. LaPierre? 18 18 Α Yes. A I am not aware that NRA paid for any wardrobe for 19 19 20 MR. WANG: Objection to the leading. Mr. LaPierre. 20 THE COURT: I think this is --21 21 Q And are you aware of whether Mr. LaPierre has paid the MR. CORRELL: It's cross. NRA for any wardrobe? 22 22 23 THE COURT: Overruled. A I -- I am aware that Mr. LaPierre has paid a lot of money to the NRA to compensate the NRA for expenses paid for by Q For example, if you buy a car off a lease and you pay 24 the amount that you're asked to pay and you're unaware that the the NRA that Mr. LaPierre had the benefit of. S. Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3943 Page 3945 Q And are you aware that Mr. LaPierre went all the way 1 market has gone crazy for used cars, would that fall within the category of misconduct for you or mistake? back to the year 2000 looking for any indication of wardrobe A If you're unaware, that might be a mistake. that he received that the NRA might have been paid for and wrote 3 Q If you're unaware that there's a \$25 limit on gifts you a check for to cover that? can give to employees and you submit an expense report with a 5 A I'm not aware of the specific dates. I am aware that \$50 gift on it, unaware that there's a rule, is that misconduct a significant sum of money was repaid by Mr. LaPierre for or a mistake? 7 expenses that the NRA has since deemed should have been personal expenses of him and not paid for by the association. A I think that would depend on what your obligations were 8 to inform yourself of the rules and whether or not you acted 9 (Continued on next page) diligently in informing yourself of what the rule was. 10 10 And if this is a rule that was generally unknown to 11 11 people within an organization, would that inform your decision 12 12 on that? 13 13 A Of course. 14 14 And if the organization has General Counsel, but 15 15 General Counsel hasn't informed you that there's such a rule; 16 then would that fall into the category of a mistake or 17 17 18 misconduct? 18 19 A Again, it would depend upon whether I have an 19 20 independent obligation to learn the rules myself separate and 20 apart from what General Counsel might tell me. It's hard to 21 21 22 answer the question in the abstract. 22 23 Q If -- if you're unaware that there's a rule that if you 23

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are provided with wardrobe and you retain the wardrobe, that

wardrobe should be treated -- you should have to pay for that

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tomorrow.

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Froman - by Defendant - Cross/Mr. Correll Page 3946 Q And that's gone back all the way to the year 2000 for 1 2

that? 2

A I don't know how far back it went. 3

4 Q You eluded to a conversation you had with Mr. LaPierre where he said I don't care if -- in words or substance, I don't care if I lose every friend I've ever made, we are going to go down the principle path and look under every rock and find anything that needs to be fixing, and we are going to fix it, in words or substance; right?

MR. WANG: Object to the mischaracterization of the 10 testimony. 11

12 Would you please tell me in your own words --THE COURT: Objection is overruled. 13

O You testified earlier about a conversation you had with 14 Mr. LaPierre; correct? 15

A Yes. 16

17 Q Could you remind me of what, you know, the substance of that conversation was in terms of what he said about his 18 commitment or his losing friends if he had to? 19

20 A When the NRA Board of Directors and the Audit Committee 21 was actively looking into allegations of mismanagement of NRA's financial affairs and allegations that our vendors had stolen 22 from us, I remember Mr. LaPierre saying to me in a one on one conversation, if I lose every friend I've ever had, I will do what is right for the NRA and we will get to the bottom of this.

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And he has done that.

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2 MR. CORRELL: Thank you very much, Ms. Froman. I 3 appreciate it.

THE COURT: Thank you. Can we release Ms. Froman? 4 Any more questions? 5

MS. ROGERS: No redirect. She is free to go. THE COURT: Thank you very much. You're free to go. THE WITNESS: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right, folks. We are done for the day. I will next see you on Tuesday. Monday is a court holiday. So thank you very much for your attention. Please remember your instructions, and I will see you bright and early on Tuesday.

THE COURT OFFICER: All rise. Jury exiting. (Whereupon, at this time the jury exits the courtroom.)

THE COURT: All right. The hours's late. I just -- something to think about. I still believe that it would be extremely helpful to have closing arguments together on the last day without impinging on the days for testimony which I have made pretty clear throughout. A rough and ready way that I have looked at to do that would be 45 minutes for each of the defendants and 60 for the Government. That adds up to four hours. I am open to looking at ways to squeeze a few more minutes out of the day

maybe starting at 9:15, maybe going till closer to one and closer to five. But aside from that, I don't have a lot of flexibility. So I would ask you to -- it's not what anybody asked for or wanted in terms of their hours, but that's my going in budgeting of it, and I would ask you to think about it and start thinking about whether you can hone your

Yes, I will talk to you tomorrow.

MR. CORRELL: Could we get a time check, please? Would you ask for a time check just to see --

presentations down to that level. I will talk to you

THE COURT: Well, why don't we -- I rather have it be up to date. So why don't we do a report on the time check at 3:00 tomorrow when we meet to talk about jury instructions.

MR. CORRELL: Perfect.

THE COURT: That will be in Room 208.

(Whereupon at this time the trial was continued until February 9, 2024.)

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NRA

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