

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND  
FOR SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 2022 CA 1128 SC

JOSEPH PETITO and NICHOLE  
SCHMIDT,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

CHRISTOPHER LAUNDRIE, ROBERTA  
LAUNDRIE, and STEVEN BERTOLINO,

Defendants.

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**DEFENDANT STEVEN BERTOLINO'S NOTICE OF  
FILING DEPOSITION OF PLAINTIFF NICHOLE SCHMIDT**

COMES NOW, this Defendant, STEVEN BERTOLINO, through counsel, pursuant to the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, and hereby gives notice of filing the transcript of the August 15, 2023 deposition of Plaintiff NICHOLE SCHMIDT in support of Defendant Steven Bertolino's Motion for Summary Judgment, filed on February 12, 2024. This Notice is given in accordance with Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 1.510(c). The transcript is also filed for use at trial and any other purposes as provided for by the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on February 12, 2024, the foregoing was electronically filed with the Court, which will give electronic notice to: **Patrick J. Reilly, Esquire** at [eservice@snyderandreilly.com](mailto:eservice@snyderandreilly.com), [pat@snyderandreilly.com](mailto:pat@snyderandreilly.com), [valerie@snyderandreilly.com](mailto:valerie@snyderandreilly.com) [counsel for Plaintiffs]; and **Ryan L. Gilbert, Esquire** at [ryan@ryangilbertlaw.com](mailto:ryan@ryangilbertlaw.com), [office@ryangilbertlaw.com](mailto:office@ryangilbertlaw.com) [counsel for Christopher and Roberta Landrie].

*/s/ Laura M. Kelly*

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14606/3349

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1 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,  
 2 IN AND FOR SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
 3 CASE NUMBER: 2022-CA-1128-SC  
 4 JOSEPH PETITO and NICHOLE SCHMIDT,  
 5  
 6 Plaintiffs,  
 7  
 8 vs.  
 9  
 10 CHRISTOPHER LAUNDRIE, ROBERTA  
 11 LAUNDRIE, and STEVEN BERTOLINO,  
 12  
 13 Defendants.  
 14  
 15 DEPOSITION OF NICHOLE SCHMIDT  
 16 Taken at the Instance of the Defendant/Steven Bertolino  
 17  
 18 DATE: Tuesday, August 15, 2023  
 19 TIME: 9:35 a.m. until 3:49 p.m.  
 20 PLACE: Snyder & Reilly  
 21 355 West Venice Avenue  
 22 Venice, Florida  
 23  
 24 STENOGRAPHICALLY  
 25 REPORTED BY: LISA L. TAYLOR, RPR, FPR-C,  
 Registered Professional Reporter,  
 Florida Professional Reporter-Certified  
 Court Reporter and Notary Public

Page 2

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 On Behalf of the Defendant/  
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 ALSO PRESENT:  
 Steven Bertolino

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I N D E X

1 TESTIMONY OF NICHOLE SCHMIDT  
 2 Direct Examination By Mr. Meltz 5  
 3 Cross-Examination By Mr. Luka 144  
 4  
 5 CERTIFICATE OF OATH 214  
 6 CERTIFICATE OF STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER 215  
 7 ERRATA SHEET 216  
 8  
 9 STIPULATION  
 10 It is hereby stipulated and agreed by and between  
 11 counsel present at this deposition and by the deponent  
 12 that the witness review of this deposition would be  
 13 reserved.  
 14  
 15 (This transcript is the product of the court  
 16 reporter and should not be reproduced and given free of  
 17 charge to any party unless under the direction, control  
 18 and/or supervision of the certifying court reporter.)  
 19  
 20  
 21  
 22  
 23  
 24  
 25

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1 MARKED BY THE DEFENDANT/BERTOLINO:  
 2 Exhibit 1 101  
 3 (Composite of Photocopies of Text Messages)  
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 5 Exhibit 2 113  
 6 (Second Amended Complaint)  
 7 MARKED BY THE DEFENDANTS/LAUNDRIE:  
 8 Exhibit 3 171  
 9 (Statement to Christopher and Roberta Laundrie)  
 10  
 11 Exhibit 4 173  
 12 (Statement 9/14/21)  
 13 Exhibit 5 177  
 14 (Statement, dated 03-11-22)  
 15  
 16 Exhibit 6 179  
 17 (Composite of Photocopies of Text Messages)  
 18 Exhibit 7 180  
 19 (Gabby's Call Log)  
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1 (Whereupon, the witness was sworn in by the  
2 court reporter and responded "Yes, I do" to the oath.)  
3 WHEREUPON,  
4 NICHOLE SCHMIDT,  
5 having first been duly sworn, was called as  
6 a witness and testified as follows:  
7 DIRECT EXAMINATION  
8 BY MR. MELTZ:  
9 Q Ms. Schmidt, my name's Chuck Meltz, and I  
10 represent Steve Bertolino, who is currently a party in a  
11 lawsuit that's been brought by you and your former  
12 husband, Joe Petito. I'm here today to ask you questions  
13 about that.  
14 A Can I just correct you? We were never married.  
15 Q Oh, I'm so sorry.  
16 A That's okay.  
17 Q I'm so sorry.  
18 A Just for --  
19 Q No, no.  
20 A -- reasons of...  
21 Q Totally understand.  
22 I'm here today to ask you questions related to  
23 that lawsuit. I'm going to ask you some questions about  
24 yourself, your background, the events that have brought  
25 us here today.

Page 6

1 If I ask you anything that you're not clear  
2 about or uncertain, it's not my intent.  
3 A Okay.  
4 Q So if you hear something from me and you're  
5 just not quite sure what I'm looking for, let me know and  
6 I will retry to rephrase the question hopefully in a more  
7 understandable way.  
8 A Okay.  
9 Q Assuming you understand my questions, I need  
10 you to answer out loud using words.  
11 Now, if you shake your head or shrug your  
12 shoulders --  
13 A I gotcha.  
14 Q -- I'll say, Is that a "yes" or is that a "no"?  
15 And it's not to be impolite. It's just to make sure that  
16 we have an accurate record of what your responses are.  
17 Another way to have a good record is that only  
18 one of us speak at one time, so please do your best to be  
19 patient. Let me finish my questions before you start to  
20 answer. I'll do my best to let you finish your answers  
21 before I start my next question. That way we're both not  
22 speaking over one another.  
23 And then, finally, if you need a break for any  
24 reason -- and, you know, the subject matter is such that  
25 we may need some breaks -- or even if it's lunch or the

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1 bathroom or anything else, it's not meant to be an  
2 uncomfortable process. So I'll be taking breaks, you  
3 know, somewhat regularly, but if you need one before me,  
4 let me know. We'll take a break. Pick right back up  
5 where we left off. All right?  
6 A Yes, sir.  
7 Q Can you please state your full name?  
8 A Nichole, N-I-C-H-O-L-E, Schmidt, S-C-H-M-I-D-T.  
9 Q Ms. Schmidt, what's your date of birth?  
10 A [REDACTED]-78.  
11 Q Where do you currently live?  
12 A Riverview, Florida.  
13 Q What's your address?  
14 A [REDACTED] That's in Riverview.  
15 33579.  
16 Q Who lives there with you?  
17 A My husband, James Schmidt.  
18 Q Does he go by "Jim"?  
19 A Jim, yes.  
20 Q And does anyone else live with you at that  
21 address?  
22 A Yes. My son, [REDACTED] Schmidt. And my daughter  
23 [REDACTED]. And [REDACTED].  
24 Q How old is [REDACTED]?  
25 A He's 20.

Page 8

1 Q What about M [REDACTED]?  
2 A She's 14.  
3 Q And C [REDACTED]?  
4 A Is 10.  
5 Q When did you and Jim get married?  
6 A We got married April 16th, 2005.  
7 Q When did you come to Florida?  
8 A He came down in April of 2022. I came down in  
9 June. I don't remember the exact day. It was the end of  
10 June, 2022.  
11 Q And when we're talking about coming down,  
12 that's when you relocated to Florida?  
13 A Yes.  
14 Q Where were you living before relocating to  
15 Florida?  
16 A Blue Point, New York.  
17 Q What was your address in Blue Point?  
18 A It was [REDACTED].  
19 Q How -- I'm sorry?  
20 A No. Go ahead. Do you want the ZIP code?  
21 Q Sure.  
22 A 11715.  
23 Q From when to when did you live in Blue Point,  
24 New York?  
25 A We -- oh, gosh. 2006 to 2022.

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1 Q Are you currently employed?

2 A I just got a job, actually.

3 Q What are you doing?

4 A I am the donor engagement manager at The Spring  
5 of Tampa. It's a domestic violence agency.

6 Q When did you start there?

7 A I am starting there in two weeks.

8 Q Two weeks?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Is that a volunteer or a paid position?

11 A Paid.

12 Q Full-time?

13 A Yes.

14 Q When were you last employed?

15 A I was working for Bayport-Blue Point School  
16 District, and the last time I worked was September of  
17 2021, the very beginning.

18 Q You were a teacher's aide?

19 A Teaching assistant.

20 Q Teaching assistant?

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q And you worked with developmentally challenged  
23 students?

24 A Yes.

25 Q How long did you do that?

Page 10

1 A Seven years.

2 Q What's your highest level of completed  
3 education?

4 A Associate's degree.

5 Q What did you get that in? Like, general  
6 studies or was it in --

7 A Graphic design.

8 Q Graphic design?

9 A Uh-huh.

10 Q What drew you to the job at the domestic  
11 violence agency?

12 A Since we moved to the Tampa area, I've gotten  
13 to know a lot of the people and -- that work for the  
14 agency, and they did have a job opening and I was very  
15 interested in being part of that. So...

16 Q What will your specific job be?

17 A I will be working with fundraising and donors.

18 Q Does the center itself offer support and  
19 counseling?

20 A Yes. They have a shelter and a school.

21 Q Is that something you have any interest in  
22 doing as well or just more of the fundraising side?

23 A I do want to work in prevention, domestic  
24 violence prevention.

25 Q And you were kind enough to clear it up at the

Page 11

1 start of the deposition, but in the past, you did have a  
2 relationship with a gentleman by the name of Joe Petito;  
3 correct?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And his name's Joseph, but does he go by "Joe"?

6 A He goes by "Joe," yeah.

7 Q The two of you were never married?

8 A No.

9 Q Did you live together for some period of time?

10 A Not technically, but, you know, we would sleep  
11 at each other's homes and stuff.

12 Q What period of time did that occur?

13 A Now you're taking me way back.

14 Q Yes.

15 A Okay. So it must have been 1990 -- late 1997.  
16 And we were together for a couple years. We had Gabby in  
17 1999. And when Gabby was about six months old was when  
18 our relationship ended.

19 Q "Gabby" is what you call Gabrielle?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Is it okay if I call her "Gabby," or would you  
22 like me to refer to her --

23 A You can call her "Gabby," yeah.

24 Q And Gabby's last name was --

25 A Petito.

Page 12

1 Q -- Petito?

2 A Uh-huh.

3 Q When you and Mr. Petito ended your  
4 relationship, where did Gabby go live?

5 A I was her custodial parent, but she would visit  
6 him on weekends.

7 Q Where were you and Mr. Petito living at the  
8 time?

9 A I was still living at home with my parents, my  
10 mother and my stepfather.

11 Q What -- where were you living then?

12 A Patchogue, New York.

13 Q Can you spell that?

14 A P-A-T-C-H-O-G-U-E.

15 Q I would not have guessed, so thank you.  
16 And where was Mr. Petito living?

17 A Selden, S-E-L-D-E-N.

18 Q With respect to the living arrangements and the  
19 visitation schedules, was that just something that you  
20 and Mr. Petito worked out together, or did you have to  
21 get, like, an order or --

22 A We did it together, but we also did it through  
23 the courts, so -- we just wanted everything to be on  
24 paper.

25 Q What was or what is Gabby's date of birth?

Page 13

1 A [REDACTED]-99.

2 Q When you and Jim got married, did Jim adopt

3 Gabby or did she --

4 A No.

5 Q And, then, as Gabby grew up and started going

6 to school, did you remain the primary residence, for lack

7 of a better term, for her?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Was that always the case?

10 A No. We -- do you want me to offer more

11 information?

12 Q I'll make it easy for you, just so Mr. Reilly

13 isn't like, Don't volunteer information.

14 Can you describe for me kind of how Gabby grew

15 up and which parent she might be -- at what period of

16 time?

17 A She was with me 99 percent of the time;

18 however, we lost our home in Superstorm Sandy. So we

19 just decided that she would go to that school for a

20 little while with her dad and go live with her dad

21 because it was a little bit more stable than where we

22 were staying. We were staying in a rental. And then she

23 came back home.

24 And during high school -- I forget what grade

25 it was -- she did go live with her dad another -- maybe

Page 14

1 for a period of four months or so and then came back home

2 again. She was just with both of us, I would say, most

3 of the time. But I was technically the custodial parent.

4 Q In terms of the shared parental arrangement,

5 did that generally go fairly smoothly between you and

6 Mr. Petito?

7 A Yeah.

8 Q Did you--all ever have to do, like, parent

9 counseling or anything like that?

10 A No.

11 Q Where did Gabby go to high school?

12 A Bayport-Blue Point High School.

13 Q Was she living with you and Jim at the time?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q Yes?

16 A Yes. I'm sorry.

17 Q That's okay. There'll be more of those.

18 Did Gabby graduate?

19 A Yes.

20 Q When did she graduate?

21 A 2017.

22 Q So following Gabby's high school graduation,

23 then, what did she do next?

24 A She moved to North Carolina.

25 Q Why did she do that as far as you understood

Page 15

1 it?

2 A She couldn't wait to travel, but she met

3 friends that were moving down there and decided to go

4 down there.

5 Q Was it a particular group of friends or, like,

6 a boyfriend or --

7 A Yeah. I think she was dating one of them, but,

8 then, when she got to North Carolina, they didn't stay

9 together. It was just more of a -- I think she just

10 wanted to get out of New York and go to North Carolina.

11 Q So was this still in 2017, or are we into 2018

12 now?

13 A 2017 into 2018, she was there, yeah.

14 Q Where did Gabby go next after spending some

15 time in North Carolina?

16 A She came back home.

17 Q Back to Blue Point?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And then was she home for a period of time

20 before moving on to somewhere else?

21 A Yes. Now, please, I don't remember all the

22 exact dates, but when she came back home after a little

23 while is when she started to hang out with Brian and then

24 moved to Florida after that.

25 Q So are we 2018, '19, maybe, around this time?

Page 16

1 A Yeah.

2 Q I would assume Gabby had a number of friends

3 that you would become aware of. At some point in time,

4 did you become aware that she had a friend who was

5 Brian Laundrie and, in particular, that he might be more

6 than just a casual friend?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And how did you become aware of that?

9 A He started coming over to the house, and I

10 remembered him because she would talk about him in high

11 school. They were friends. They were in the same friend

12 group. And I thought he was nice.

13 Q As far as you understood it, Gabby and Brian

14 started dating while Gabby was still in Blue Point?

15 A So when they went on their first road trip

16 together -- again, I cannot remember the dates, but it

17 was that summer. I guess it was -- had to be 2019. I

18 could be off. But they went on a first road trip and

19 that's when they came back and I knew they were dating at

20 that point. She tried to play it off as they were

21 friends, but...

22 Q What kind of road trip are you talking about?

23 A They went in her small Nissan car all the way

24 to California, up to Portland, Oregon, and back. They

25 stayed in Airbnbs along the way.

Page 17

1 Q You had mentioned a few minutes ago that when  
 2 Gabby graduated, she was excited about leaving New York  
 3 and going to North Carolina. You're talking about this  
 4 trip to California where she drove there and back.  
 5 Was traveling something that Gabby liked to do?  
 6 A Yes.  
 7 Q I take it Gabby had a cell phone?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q Was that part of your account or Jim's account,  
 10 or did she have her own cell phone account?  
 11 A It was -- I'm trying to think before it  
 12 switched over. I think it was ours. I think it was ours  
 13 at the time.  
 14 Q Did that switch at some point?  
 15 A Yes. It was under her grandfather's, after a  
 16 certain amount of time, to save money. It was cheaper.  
 17 Stanley.  
 18 Q Stanley's her grandfather's name?  
 19 A Yeah. My stepdad.  
 20 Q And what's his last name?  
 21 A Houlik, H-O-U-L-I-K.  
 22 Q Do you recall what type of phone Gabby had?  
 23 And by that I mean, was it an Apple iPhone?  
 24 A It was an iPhone. It might have been an 11 at  
 25 the time.

Page 18

1 Q Do you remember who she had service with under  
 2 Stanley's plan?  
 3 A Yes. It was Sprint, slash, T-Mobile, because  
 4 they turned over to T-Mobile.  
 5 Q Did Gabby have her own Apple account, or did  
 6 she share that with any family member?  
 7 A Like an Apple iCloud account?  
 8 Q Like your Apple ID?  
 9 A Yes, she had her own.  
 10 Q She had her own.  
 11 Did you and Gabby have, like, a "share your  
 12 friends," "share your location" feature between your two  
 13 phones?  
 14 A Location. Not all the time. It wasn't on all  
 15 the time, but, yeah, I asked her to put it on.  
 16 Q So when she started traveling -- not that you  
 17 would do it all the time, but when she started traveling,  
 18 would you have the ability from time to time to kind of  
 19 pull up on your phone, whether it's Find My Friends or  
 20 Find My iPhone, and see generally where she was?  
 21 A Yes.  
 22 Q Did your ability to do that ever change? Did  
 23 she ever disable that or switch that or anything else?  
 24 A I don't remember.  
 25 Q When Gabby would travel -- and this is when

Page 19

1 she's sort of just meeting Brian -- did you have, like, a  
 2 routine with her when she was gone? Would you check in  
 3 with her or she would check in with you? text? call?  
 4 A She was good about texting me constantly or  
 5 calling, FaceTiming, all of it, and sending lots of  
 6 photos.  
 7 Q Okay. Maybe if you didn't even get a call, you  
 8 might get a photo?  
 9 A Correct.  
 10 Q Was it sort of an everyday-type thing? Would  
 11 you generally try to touch base with Gabby once a day?  
 12 A Yes.  
 13 Q And then, I take it, Gabby sometimes may travel  
 14 to locations that didn't have great cell service, whether  
 15 it was more remote or a national park or something like  
 16 that; would that be fair?  
 17 A Probably.  
 18 Q Okay.  
 19 A Yes.  
 20 Q If she was doing that, would she kind of let  
 21 you know in advance, Hey, I may not be able to text you  
 22 or call you for a day or two or...  
 23 A I don't remember.  
 24 Q You mentioned having Brian at the house.  
 25 Did -- was there ever a period of time that Brian lived

Page 20

1 with you and Jim?  
 2 A No. He might have stayed over a couple of  
 3 times, but he didn't live there.  
 4 Q At some point after you became aware or  
 5 suspected that Brian and Gabby were dating, even if she  
 6 said they were just friends, did you ever meet Brian's  
 7 parents?  
 8 A Not right away, no.  
 9 Q Did there ever come a time where you met  
 10 Brian's parents?  
 11 A Yes.  
 12 Q And when was that? When do you think you met  
 13 them for the first time?  
 14 A It was before they were moving to Florida.  
 15 They came over and were picking up some things for Gabby.  
 16 And we spoke in the driveway. I think it was -- they  
 17 wanted to stay at a distance because of COVID. She was  
 18 very leery of COVID, so we just kind of talked in the  
 19 driveway and that was that.  
 20 Q Who was moving to Florida?  
 21 A Roberta and Chris.  
 22 Q Okay. So sometime when the COVID pandemic was  
 23 chugging along --  
 24 A Like, at the end -- it was towards the end -- I  
 25 don't know, really, when it was, to be honest. COVID was

Page 21

1 when? 2019 or '20?  
2 Q Like, March of '20, for some period of time  
3 there.  
4 A Yeah. So, yeah, then they were -- that's why.  
5 It was during the COVID pandemic, yeah.  
6 Q Was Gabby also moving to Florida?  
7 A Gabby had already went down when I met them.  
8 Q Was Gabby home when you met the Laundrie  
9 parents?  
10 A No.  
11 Q Gabby had already moved to Florida?  
12 A Yes, with Brian.  
13 Q With Brian?  
14 A Uh-huh.  
15 Q Do you remember when she did that?  
16 A I don't recall the dates, no.  
17 Q Was it pre-COVID?  
18 A Yes. I believe so.  
19 Q Where did Gabby and Brian move to when they  
20 came to Florida, if you know?  
21 A I think it was [REDACTED], in North Port,  
22 was the first place.  
23 Q Was that a house that the Laundries owned?  
24 A Correct.  
25 Q And I probably -- this is my fault for kind of

Page 22

1 jumping ahead the way I did, but --  
2 A That's okay.  
3 Q -- at some point in time, did Gabby have a  
4 discussion with you, or you and Jim, where she said, I  
5 think I'm going to move to Florida with Brian?  
6 A Yes.  
7 Q Did Gabby have a plan on what she was going to  
8 do when she got to Florida, or was it just a new place  
9 for her to go?  
10 A She wanted to move here and get a job and try  
11 it out.  
12 Q How long had Gabby and Brian been dating at  
13 that point?  
14 A I don't remember. It was probably a few  
15 months.  
16 Q In terms of geography -- and, again, this is  
17 just me not knowing New York maybe as well as I should --  
18 but did you know where Brian's parents lived? And, if  
19 so, how far was that from Blue Point?  
20 A I believed -- up in New York? When they lived  
21 up in New York?  
22 Q Yes.  
23 A I believed it was about 10 minutes from me  
24 where they lived. I don't remember the exact town. I  
25 want to say -- no. I don't know. I'm not sure. But it

Page 23

1 was about 10 minutes away.  
2 Q When Brian's parents came by and everyone's  
3 keeping their social distance in the driveway --  
4 A Uh-huh.  
5 Q -- had Brian's parents already moved to  
6 Florida, do you know, or were they still living in New  
7 York?  
8 A I think they were still living in New York at  
9 the time.  
10 Q Was their coming over to your house planned?  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q And in terms of the items they were picking up  
13 for Gabby, were those sort of already ready to go so it  
14 was easy for them to load up?  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q Did they have to even come in the house?  
17 A They did not want to come in the house. That's  
18 why we spoke in the driveway.  
19 Q Got it.  
20 Was it just general, Hey, how are you? Or was  
21 there --  
22 A We spoke a lot about Brian and Gabby being  
23 together.  
24 Q What do you recall about any of those  
25 conversations?

Page 24

1 A I remember her talking about how happy Brian  
2 was and how she felt they were good for each other. Just  
3 general, like, relationship -- he seems happy.  
4 Q And that would be Ms. Laundrie?  
5 A Yes.  
6 Q Is that -- is her name Roberta?  
7 A Yes.  
8 Q Did you have any conversation with  
9 Mr. Laundrie, Chris or Christopher?  
10 A A little bit. He kind of stood in the  
11 background and was chitchatting a little bit with us. My  
12 husband came out as well. All four of us were talking.  
13 Q How long a conversation do you think that was?  
14 A I would say about 20 minutes or so.  
15 Q After that conversation, did you ever see the  
16 Laundries again in person?  
17 A No, I don't think so.  
18 Q At least not before Gabby passed; right?  
19 A No.  
20 Q Correct?  
21 A Correct.  
22 Q Sorry. That sometimes -- sometimes when we do  
23 double negatives, it --  
24 A I got you.  
25 Q So then I follow up.

Page 25

1 Did you have -- when Gabby was leaving to go to  
 2 Florida or even at this time where she had already left  
 3 and we're having this kind of moving conversation in the  
 4 driveway of where you and Jim live, did you have the  
 5 phone numbers for Chris and Roberta Laundrie?  
 6 A I believe I had Roberta's at the time or had --  
 7 I don't remember when I got Roberta's, but I know I had  
 8 it once Gabby moved. I just don't remember when.  
 9 Q Prior to the events of, like, August and  
 10 September of 2021, had you ever called Chris or Roberta  
 11 for any reason?  
 12 A No. I believe there was some communications on  
 13 Facebook and -- what's the other one? -- Pinterest. We  
 14 shared a Pinterest board because we were looking at  
 15 wedding stuff because, you know, Gabby and Brian got  
 16 engaged at some point. So we were just friendly that way  
 17 but not on the phone or anything -- conversations.  
 18 Q Got it.  
 19 When did Gabby and Brian get engaged?  
 20 A Oh, man. That, I do not remember. Sorry. My  
 21 brain is just...  
 22 Q No worries.  
 23 Did Gabby have an engagement ring?  
 24 A No, actually, because I remember saying, Oh,  
 25 you don't have a ring?

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1 Yes. So, no, she did not have an engagement  
 2 ring.  
 3 Q And then either before or when you found out  
 4 that Gabby and Brian were engaged, lack of ring  
 5 notwithstanding, how did you feel about that?  
 6 A I thought it was a little bit soon. I was  
 7 like, Are you sure? I remember saying, Are you sure?  
 8 You haven't really lived there that long. Are you sure?  
 9 Yeah.  
 10 Q I take it Gabby's response was she was sure at  
 11 least then?  
 12 A At the time, yes --  
 13 Q Yeah.  
 14 A -- she was sure.  
 15 Q Was there any type of engagement party at all?  
 16 A No, but she did want to plan one.  
 17 Q And kind of what time frame are we talking  
 18 about now?  
 19 A I know it was during COVID. I don't know the  
 20 specific time frame, but we couldn't really do anything  
 21 because of COVID. I remember I couldn't fly down, and I  
 22 was supposed to come visit in 2020 at some point.  
 23 Q When you found out that they were engaged, did  
 24 you have any either direct conversations with Brian's  
 25 parents or maybe, like, a group call or Facebook or

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1 FaceTime or anything like that?  
 2 A No.  
 3 Q Did you ever come visit Gabby and Brian when  
 4 they were living in Florida?  
 5 A No, because of COVID.  
 6 Q At this point in Gabby's life, where she's out  
 7 of high school and she's in this relationship with Brian,  
 8 do you have much interaction with Joe, or Mr. Petito,  
 9 about Gabby for any particular reason? Do the two of you  
 10 check in regularly with one another, or since she's now  
 11 out of high school, is it more -- each have your own  
 12 families?  
 13 A It's like when -- if she needed something,  
 14 something important was going on, we would talk about it  
 15 because we were still coparenting even though she was an  
 16 adult at the time. So, yeah, we kept in touch.  
 17 Q Did you talk about Gabby getting engaged to  
 18 Brian with Joe?  
 19 A Probably, but I honestly don't remember.  
 20 Q Okay. Prior to the, kind of, late summer of  
 21 2021, did you and Joe ever have a conversation that  
 22 sticks out in your mind about Brian? Either you called  
 23 because there was something you wanted to say about Brian  
 24 or Joe called you for that reason?  
 25 A I don't remember.

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1 Q Were there any major coparenting decisions that  
 2 you and Joe had to make after high school? Was there  
 3 like, Hey, we'd like to kind of pay for school or start a  
 4 career or buy a house?  
 5 A We had to -- he had bought her a car. I was  
 6 insuring it. We had to make her sell her car because she  
 7 got in three accidents. So I said I would no longer  
 8 insure her. And then that was that. That was probably  
 9 the big decision that we made.  
 10 We didn't like that she was moving out of  
 11 state, of course. That was another decision we talked  
 12 about, but it was her decision and she was an adult,  
 13 so...  
 14 Q Did you tell Gabby you weren't thrilled about  
 15 her moving out of state?  
 16 A I did and I didn't. I was like, I don't like  
 17 it as your mom, but if you feel like you're doing the  
 18 right thing, go with your gut.  
 19 Q You mentioned a little bit ago about Facebook.  
 20 A Uh-huh.  
 21 Q When you were talking about kind of interacting  
 22 on Facebook, who do you remember kind of in this group  
 23 having Facebook accounts? Did you have your own Facebook  
 24 account?  
 25 A Yes.



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1 Q Did Jim have his own Facebook account?  
2 A Yes.  
3 Q Did Gabby have her own Facebook account?  
4 A She did, but she really didn't use it very  
5 much. She said it was for old people.  
6 Q Did Brian or Brian's parents have their own  
7 Facebook accounts?  
8 A I don't think Christopher did -- I don't  
9 know -- but I was friends with Roberta on Facebook.  
10 Q Did Gabby, instead of Facebook, have her own  
11 social media account? And, if so, did you follow it?  
12 Like Instagram?  
13 A Instagram, yes.  
14 Q Did you have your own Instagram account?  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q Did you mainly have your own Instagram account  
17 so you could follow Gabby's Instagram account?  
18 A I just had one, but, yeah, that's the best way  
19 to see her photos and such, too. And she would post  
20 things before sending them to me, so...  
21 Q Would Gabby ever reach out to you and say, you  
22 know, Hey, I'm thinking about posting this on Instagram?  
23 Do you like this one or that one?  
24 A Yes, actually. I was her editor.  
25 Q That was just a good guess on my part.

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1 A Uh-huh.  
2 Q And then what types of things -- particularly,  
3 like, this post-high school -- Gabby's move to Florida,  
4 what types of things is she interested in and what's she  
5 posting on Instagram at that time?  
6 A Well, she's an artist. She loved art. She had  
7 some just beautiful pictures of herself in nice places,  
8 places that she's traveled to. A lot of selfies. But,  
9 yeah, just art and travel, I would say, were her two main  
10 interests.  
11 Q At some point in time, did Gabby and you have a  
12 conversation about whether those interests, art and  
13 travel, could somehow turn into a profession or career?  
14 A Yeah. We probably had conversations about  
15 that.  
16 Q Did Gabby ever come up with kind of like a plan  
17 or, you know, Hey, this is what I think I'd like to do or  
18 try to, you know, foster my love of art and travel?  
19 A I think it evolved. Once she was in Florida,  
20 she was like, I want to get a van and I want to travel.  
21 And we talked about tattooing. She actually  
22 got a tattoo then. And just a plan to kind of travel and  
23 blog, so she could make -- maybe make a career out of it.  
24 Q Did you help her get the van?  
25 A I did not, no.

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1 Q Did Joe?  
2 A I don't think so.  
3 Q Okay. Did Gabby actually work for some time in  
4 Florida?  
5 A Yes.  
6 Q What was she doing?  
7 A She -- her first job was at Taco Bell, and then  
8 she got a job at Publix as a pharmacy tech.  
9 Q Was Brian working in Florida, as far as you  
10 know?  
11 A I believe he was working at Publix. I don't  
12 know if he was a manager or not. I just know he was  
13 working at Publix.  
14 Q And then once Gabby and Brian had been living  
15 in Florida for some period of time, did you get a sense  
16 of how that was going? Did you talk about that with  
17 Gabby?  
18 A It seemed pretty typical. They had arguments.  
19 She would call me, be mad at Brian or vice versa, Brian's  
20 mad at me, but it was just your typical  
21 20-something-year-old drama. Nothing out of the  
22 ordinary.  
23 Q While they were living in Florida, was there  
24 ever any incident that you were aware of that escalated  
25 to the point that the police had to be called or someone

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1 had to go to the hospital or anything like that?  
2 A No.  
3 Q When you would have a conversation with Gabby  
4 about, you know, someone might be mad at the other person  
5 for that period of time, was it over fairly normal stuff,  
6 or did anything stand out in your mind as, Gosh, that  
7 seems a little problematic?  
8 A I didn't look at it that way at the time. It  
9 seemed pretty normal.  
10 Q Do you know if Brian helped buy the van?  
11 A I don't know.  
12 Q Oh, okay.  
13 A Yeah.  
14 Q But at some point in time, the van gets bought?  
15 A Uh-huh.  
16 Q Yes?  
17 A Yes.  
18 Q And the plan was for Gabby to travel in the van  
19 and record and post her travels?  
20 A With Brian.  
21 Q With Brian?  
22 A Yes. Uh-huh.  
23 Q Did Gabby have, like, an itinerary or a  
24 schedule that she had laid out in terms of, you know,  
25 Here's where we're going to go first, second, third?

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1 A Yes. She was very much a planner with that  
2 trip.

3 Q And did she take multiple trips in the van or  
4 was there just the one?

5 A I don't know if they used it before the big  
6 trip, but as far as I know, it was just the one.

7 Q Did you know about the big trip before Gabby  
8 and Brian started on it?

9 A Yes. Uh-huh.

10 Q I take it because Gabby shared information  
11 about the big trip with you?

12 A Yes.

13 Q What information about the big trip did Gabby  
14 share?

15 A That it would take a couple of months and that  
16 she wanted to camp at all the national parks out West and  
17 that she would also be videoing and trying to start a  
18 YouTube channel.

19 Q At that time was Gabby's primary social media  
20 still Instagram?

21 A I would say so, yes.

22 Q Did she start her own YouTube channel?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Did you start to follow Gabby's YouTube  
25 travel -- or channel?

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1 A Yes, of course.

2 Q And was the big trip supposed to take a couple  
3 of months, or was it somewhat flexible?

4 A I think it was going to be approximately three  
5 months.

6 Q Did you generally have an understanding of  
7 where Gabby was going from place to place or would -- or  
8 was at least expected to be at a certain point in time?

9 A I had a general idea.

10 Q When Gabby was planning to leave on the big  
11 trip, did you and Gabby have any type of plan about, Hey,  
12 we'll kind of check in every morning, or was it just  
13 more, When you have time, give me a call; let me know  
14 you're okay?

15 A It was pretty regular. I asked her to keep in  
16 touch because I was concerned that she was going to be on  
17 a road trip with just Brian and her. Yeah. I was just a  
18 concerned parent. I -- I knew it would be fun and the  
19 trip of a lifetime, so I didn't want to deter her from  
20 going, but...

21 Q Was Gabby an experienced camper at that time?

22 A I wouldn't say "experienced," but she was with  
23 Brian, who seemed to be a lot more experienced.

24 Q Why do you say that?

25 A After, you know, just hanging out with him and

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1 talking to him, he -- he knew a lot about camping. He  
2 seemed to go on a lot of hiking trips and such.

3 Q When you would go on either the Instagram  
4 account or when the YouTube channel first started, would  
5 you either post comments or indicate somehow that you  
6 were on the site?

7 A I probably did post comments. I don't remember  
8 specifically.

9 Q Do you know if Joe similarly followed Gabby's  
10 social media accounts at that time?

11 A I'm sure he did, yeah.

12 Q Did you and Joe have any conversations about  
13 Gabby going on the big trip?

14 A I don't remember specifically. We may have. I  
15 just don't remember.

16 Q Do you actually remember the big trip starting?  
17 Like -- like, this is the day she's leaving, and it  
18 sticks out in your mind?

19 A Yes. It was in June of 2021. And I only know  
20 that I was excited because she was stopping at her  
21 godmother's house in Charleston, South Carolina, which is  
22 my best friend.

23 Q Who is that?

24 A Flora, F-L-O-R-A, Rocco, R-O-C-C-O.  
25 And I believe they stayed there for a night or

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1 two before leaving and stopped at a couple of places  
2 before heading to New York, yeah.

3 Q Did they meet up with Joe in New York?

4 A I believe -- she -- they were there for a  
5 couple of weeks in New York, so I -- I'm sure they saw  
6 her dad.

7 Q Where does Joe live now?

8 A He lives in Vero Beach, Florida.

9 Q Do you remember when he moved from New York?

10 A I believe it was maybe May of 2021.

11 Q We talked a little bit earlier about you and  
12 Joe staying in touch as coparents even after Gabby  
13 graduated high school.

14 Would you actually see Joe in person during  
15 this time as well, or would it just be phone calls or  
16 texts?

17 A Mostly texts, I would say. Some phone calls.

18 Q When Gabby and Brian started on the big trip,  
19 when do you think you may have last seen Joe Petito in  
20 person?

21 A I don't remember.

22 Q Would it have been sometime?

23 A Possibly, yeah.

24 Q Were you both at Gabby's high school  
25 graduation?

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1 A Yes.

2 Q Do you believe you had seen Joe Petito since

3 Gabby's high school graduation when we're getting into,

4 like, June of 2021?

5 A I think I may have. I just don't remember

6 specifically.

7 Q Would that have been for any reason or event

8 or...

9 A I just don't remember.

10 Q Joe had gotten married at some point in time;

11 correct?

12 A Uh-huh. Yes.

13 Q Yes?

14 Was that to Tara?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Would you and Jim ever socialize with Joe and

17 Tara?

18 A I'm trying to think if we did. I don't think

19 we actually physically did, but we were always inviting

20 each other to -- to things. If we were having a birthday

21 party or something, if it was for Gabby, even, we would

22 say, Do you guys want to do it together? It just never

23 worked out that we did it together, but yeah.

24 Q I got it. You -- you would --

25 A We tried.

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1 Q You would extend the invitation --

2 A Yes.

3 Q -- but it never actually all came together?

4 A Yes. Yes. And the same from their side as

5 well.

6 Q All right. When Brian and Gabby leave to go on

7 the big trip --

8 A Uh-huh.

9 Q -- particularly at the beginning of it, with

10 what degree of regularity were you either getting a

11 direct outreach to her, from Gabby, or you were seeing

12 something posted on Instagram or YouTube?

13 A I would say a couple times a day.

14 Q And then did she actually go see Flora in

15 South Carolina?

16 A Yes.

17 Q To your knowledge, did she get to New York?

18 A Yes.

19 Q At some point in time, did the trip then head

20 out West?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Do you remember about when that was?

23 A It was the end of June. It was after her

24 brother's graduation. They were there for a few more

25 days. I don't know the specific date, but they left the

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1 end of June.

2 Q Where were they going first out West?

3 A I believe they were making stops on the way. I

4 think they might have camped in, like, a midwestern state

5 and then headed down to Colorado, if I'm remembering

6 correctly.

7 Q You're doing great.

8 And was there -- was there some, like, big

9 destination? Like, Hey, we may make some stops along the

10 way, but what we're really looking to go do is get here?

11 A I would say Yellowstone was probably like that

12 last big -- big stop.

13 Q In your conversations with Gabby -- and were

14 these phone calls, texts, or a combination?

15 A Both.

16 Q Mostly texts? Mostly phone calls?

17 A Mostly texts.

18 Q In your communications with Gabby by phone or

19 by text, particularly as the westward trek started, what

20 was your sense from interacting with Gabby as to how

21 things were going?

22 A She was excited and happy and having a great

23 time.

24 Q How long had the road trip been going on at

25 that point?

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1 A Oh, I don't -- it was probably -- let's see --

2 June -- maybe a month into it, July.

3 Q As the trip progressed west, did you still have

4 that same level of hearing from Gabby maybe twice a day

5 and things seemed to be going good?

6 A Yes, for the most part.

7 Q "For the most part," meaning what?

8 A For the most part, she mostly kept in touch.

9 Q Okay.

10 A But I -- when I was camping, I actually lost

11 service and she was trying to get in touch with me and

12 couldn't. So once I got service, she was like, Why isn't

13 anybody calling me? So, yeah, she was always trying to

14 get me.

15 Q Was there ever a day -- kind of prior to August

16 of 2021, was there ever a day in this road trip where you

17 just couldn't get in touch with Gabby?

18 A It was that end of August. It was probably

19 around the 28th, 29th.

20 Q Okay. But -- but -- and that's when you -- you

21 know, there was this extended period of not being able to

22 get in touch. But before then, were there ever, like --

23 did you ever go a day where you didn't hear from her?

24 A I don't think so.

25 Q At some point in time, did you have some

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1 communication with Gabby that made you believe the trip  
2 was not going as well as it had previously gone?  
3 A Yes.  
4 Q And when was this?  
5 A August 12th.  
6 Q Okay. That's a date that stands out to you?  
7 A Yes.  
8 Q What happened on August 12th?  
9 A Apparently, her and Brian had an altercation  
10 and somebody called the police.  
11 Q Where -- where did this altercation take place?  
12 A Moab, Utah.  
13 Q How did you become aware that there had been  
14 some altercation in Moab, Utah?  
15 A Gabby contacted me.  
16 Q How?  
17 A She sent me a text message with a photograph  
18 with what looked like blood smeared on her face, and then  
19 she called me.  
20 Q What did she say?  
21 A She was crying. So -- she was actually so  
22 upset that I couldn't understand what she was saying. I  
23 asked her to send me her location. So she sent me her  
24 location.  
25 I proceeded to call the police department where

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1 that location is, and they said that somebody had already  
2 called.  
3 Q When you were talking with Gabby --  
4 A Uh-huh.  
5 Q -- and confirming her location, was she by  
6 herself? Was she with Brian? Was she with law  
7 enforcement? Do you know?  
8 A I believe she was with Brian. I feel like I  
9 heard him in the background.  
10 Q When you were speaking with Gabby, had she  
11 already interacted with law enforcement or they had not  
12 yet arrived?  
13 A They had not yet.  
14 Q Did Gabby explain what happened?  
15 A Not at that time.  
16 Q At some time later that day or some days later?  
17 A It was that -- later that evening.  
18 Q Okay. So just kind of focusing on this call  
19 where she's calling and she's upset and you're trying  
20 to -- I assume you're trying to kind of calm her down and  
21 figure out what happened?  
22 A Yeah.  
23 Q And is she okay?  
24 A Yes.  
25 Q Is she able to give you any understanding of

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1 what happened during that first phone call?  
2 A I just saw the picture and heard her crying, so  
3 I assumed something bad happened.  
4 Q How long did you stay on with her?  
5 A Oh, it was probably less than a minute because  
6 I wanted her to send me her location, and I told her to  
7 hang up and call the police.  
8 Q Had she already called the police at that  
9 point?  
10 A She did not. It was -- a different person had  
11 called.  
12 Q Do you have any idea who?  
13 A I don't remember his name. It was a witness  
14 that saw everything. I'm sure it's in the report.  
15 Q Okay. And then, at some point in time, do you  
16 become aware that the police have arrived?  
17 A Yes. I believe Joe had been on the phone with  
18 her while she was speaking to the police. So I think him  
19 and I were communicating, and I was waiting for her to  
20 call me back. And she called me back later on after the  
21 call -- after the police had left.  
22 Q How much later was that?  
23 A I would say, from the first time I spoke to  
24 her, it was probably more than two hours.  
25 Q So after the -- there's the photograph, and

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1 then does the call come pretty soon after the photograph,  
2 or you called her?  
3 A I can't remember if I called her or if she  
4 called me. But it was -- right after the photograph, we  
5 spoke.  
6 Q Got it.  
7 A Uh-huh.  
8 Q And that's a short call and then you called the  
9 police --  
10 A Uh-huh.  
11 Q -- once you figured out --  
12 A Yes. Yes. Sorry.  
13 Q -- once you figured out the geographic area;  
14 correct?  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q Do you then call or text Joe?  
17 A Yes, right away.  
18 Q Had Gabby already contacted Joe?  
19 A No.  
20 Q What do you tell Joe?  
21 A I send him the picture.  
22 Q Do you and Joe then talk about or text about  
23 what, if anything, Joe might do next? Is he going to  
24 make calls or --  
25 A I believe he called her and spoke to her. I

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1 know both of us at that point were saying, Let's end the  
2 trip now. Figure it out. A lot of texting back and  
3 forth. But he did speak to her on the phone about it.  
4 Q Did Joe tell you about that call?  
5 A I think so.  
6 Q What do you remember Joe saying about speaking  
7 to Gabby on August 12th?  
8 A That he said he would fly out, get -- and drive  
9 the van back with her and they could talk about what  
10 happened and...  
11 Q Do you call or text anyone other than Joe once  
12 Gabby calls and sends you the picture?  
13 A I don't believe so because my husband was home,  
14 so I told him in person. So it was just Joe.  
15 Q Either at that kind of same time frame or later  
16 that day, did you ever try to contact Roberta Landrie  
17 about what happened on August 12th?  
18 A No.  
19 Q Or Christopher Landrie?  
20 A No.  
21 Q At any point in time between August 12th and  
22 the end of August, did you ever try to contact  
23 Roberta Landrie for the purpose of telling her about the  
24 August 12th incident?  
25 A I -- I don't remember. I don't think so.

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1 Q The same question for Christopher Landrie?  
2 A No.  
3 Q You mentioned Gabby called -- did Gabby call  
4 you later that night, or did you call to check in on her?  
5 A She called me.  
6 Q So this is now the evening of August 12th?  
7 A Yeah.  
8 Q What do you remember about the phone call with  
9 Gabby on the evening of August 12th?  
10 A She was much more calm. She stated that it was  
11 just a stupid fight. They had a really bad day. She was  
12 having a lot of stress, and her and Brian were both  
13 stressed out. And, you know, just all kinds of excuses  
14 as to why it happened. And she said everything was fine.  
15 She said that the police wanted them to spend  
16 the night apart. And I didn't like that they -- they  
17 took him and put him in a hotel and told her to go off in  
18 her van. She told me that that's what they wanted her to  
19 do.  
20 Q The conversation you were having with Gabby,  
21 I'm sure part of it was just letting her vent or say what  
22 she wanted to say; would that be fair?  
23 A Yes.  
24 Q And was part of it you -- did you ask her some  
25 questions to see if maybe if you asked a specific

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1 question, you'd get a little different version of the  
2 story, or were you letting her just kind of say it at  
3 face value?  
4 A I think really all I asked was, Are you sure  
5 everything's okay? Are you -- I think I also asked, Have  
6 you guys been fighting like this a lot?  
7 And she said, No.  
8 Q Had you ever had -- whether it was a photograph  
9 or text or conversation with Gabby before August 12th  
10 where she indicated that any sort of physical contact,  
11 kind of, violent physical contact had happened with her  
12 and Brian?  
13 A No.  
14 Q In this call on August 12th, did Gabby explain  
15 or share what they were both stressed about that had led  
16 to the tension?  
17 A She said because she's been working on the  
18 YouTube channel so much, it was stressing her out and it  
19 also stressed Brian out.  
20 Q Did you point-blank ask her, How did you get a  
21 bloody face?  
22 A Yes.  
23 Q What did she say?  
24 A She said -- I believe she said -- I'm not  
25 100 percent sure how the exact words went, but I believe

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1 she said that when she was going to get her keys, that  
2 she scratched Brian with her ring or something and that  
3 he wiped it on her face. I believe that's what she told  
4 me.  
5 Q So she told you it was Brian's blood?  
6 A Yes.  
7 Q Did you ask Gabby at all in this evening call  
8 on August 12th, What did law enforcement talk to you  
9 about, or, What did they say, or, What did they do?  
10 A Yes. She told me that they wanted to give her  
11 a citation, but they didn't, and that they just think  
12 they should spend the night apart, cool off.  
13 Q Did you say, because this would sound like a  
14 logical question, Why did they want to give you a  
15 citation?  
16 A Yes. I did say that, yes.  
17 Q Okay. And what was Gabby's answer to that?  
18 A I don't remember her specific answer. She just  
19 said she didn't know.  
20 Q After Gabby described her interaction with law  
21 enforcement in Moab on August 12th, did you call the  
22 police department or do anything to try and check on what  
23 they actually did or didn't do at that time?  
24 A No. Not after the fact, no.  
25 Q Do you know -- did -- whoever the responding

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1 officer was, did he give Gabby a card, like, Hey, if  
2 something else happens, call me or let me know or --  
3 A I don't believe so. I'm not sure, though.  
4 Q Did Gabby express any concern the evening of  
5 August 12th about, after Brian spent the night at a hotel  
6 and she spent the evening in the van, that there would be  
7 any tension the next day?  
8 A No, she did not.  
9 Q Currently, do you and Joe have a lawsuit  
10 pending against the responding law enforcement agency in  
11 Moab?  
12 A Yes.  
13 Q Do you remember when that was filed?  
14 A No. I don't know the date.  
15 Q Okay. And before we started, I had asked you  
16 if you'd ever given a deposition before, and you said,  
17 No. And by the way, you're doing great. So, so far, so  
18 good.  
19 But you've obviously never given a deposition  
20 in that case; correct?  
21 A No.  
22 Q Do you know if any depositions have been taken  
23 in the Moab litigation?  
24 A I don't know.  
25 Q And we're not going to spend much time on it,

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1 but the Moab lawsuit is against the law enforcement  
2 agency and the responding law enforcement officer, if you  
3 know?  
4 A Yes, but it's -- it's the agency. You can't  
5 sue a police officer.  
6 Q And is the gist of the Moab lawsuit that if the  
7 law enforcement agency had properly done their job, then  
8 Gabby's death could have been prevented?  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q And without telling me anything that you and  
11 your attorneys spoke about, whether it's Mr. Reilly or  
12 your Utah lawyers, because I don't want to know that --  
13 MR. REILLY: Yes, you do.  
14 MR. MELTZ: Not really. I really don't. I  
15 really don't.  
16 BY MR. MELTZ:  
17 Q Kind of what's your -- what's your -- whether  
18 it's an understanding or thought or belief, but what's  
19 the basis of the claims against law enforcement in Utah?  
20 In other words, what is it that you think they did wrong  
21 or should have done that -- that would have changed all  
22 of this?  
23 A Yeah, I don't know the legal terminology.  
24 Q I don't want the legal terminology.  
25 A But what you basically said is if -- if they

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1 had done things properly, if they had followed their own  
2 code, that she could still be alive today.  
3 Q When did you first form that feeling or belief  
4 that, if only they had done something different or better  
5 in Utah, my daughter would still be alive?  
6 A I think the first time I got to see the video.  
7 Q The officer cam or dash cam video?  
8 A Yes.  
9 Q When did you first get to see that?  
10 A I know it was released in September. It could  
11 have been September 13th or 14th, somewhere around there.  
12 I'm -- I'm not sure.  
13 Q Okay. So while Gabby was still missing, that's  
14 when you believe you first saw the -- the footage or the  
15 video of the encounter?  
16 A Yes. It was while she was missing, yes.  
17 Q What was it about seeing that video that made  
18 you think to yourself, I can't believe they didn't do  
19 more?  
20 A Everything about it.  
21 Q Okay. As best you can, tell me.  
22 A Gabby looked frightened, and they were  
23 fist-pumping Brian. So it just wasn't fair.  
24 Q How did you get to see that video?  
25 A It was released on the news.

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1 Q So was it, like, you're watching TV when the  
2 news is on, or was this something you found from, like,  
3 the Internet?  
4 A Oh, I was -- I was on the Internet 24 hours a  
5 day, so it -- it had popped up at some point.  
6 Q Do you remember what site you might have seen  
7 it on?  
8 A Most likely Twitter.  
9 Q In this September 13-14 time frame, you're on  
10 the Internet a fair amount?  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q And is it really mostly what you're doing when  
13 you're awake?  
14 A I'm awake 24 hours a day, yes.  
15 Q Okay. In terms of where you were going to look  
16 for news or information or anything online, you mentioned  
17 Twitter. Were there other websites that you would more  
18 frequently log onto or look at as well?  
19 A It was mostly social media, Facebook and  
20 Twitter, but -- because the news stories would pop up on  
21 those first. But I would just Google things too.  
22 Q Do you remember any of the Google terms you  
23 were using?  
24 A Gabby Petito. Brian Laundrie.  
25 Q Were those coming back with a number of hits?

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1 A Thousands and thousands, uh-huh.

2 Q When you saw the video, however you saw it,

3 around the 13th or the 14th, did you reach out to Joe

4 about it?

5 A Oh, we definitely spoke about it. He wouldn't

6 watch it. I watched the whole thing.

7 Q Did you watch it more than once?

8 A Yes.

9 Q When you saw it, while your daughter was

10 missing, how did it make you feel?

11 A Sorry.

12 Q That's okay.

13 And, by the way, you're welcome to always take

14 a tissue break. And if you think you need longer -- and

15 we're going to take a break soon anyway -- it's totally

16 up to you, but --

17 A I'm good. I'm good.

18 Q I get it.

19 A It was just really sad because she looked so

20 scared. And the officers just didn't -- I didn't think

21 they did a good job.

22 Q Whatever the photo was that Gabby sent you, the

23 video was significantly more concerning; is that fair?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Did seeing the video make you even more

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1 concerned or frightened about the explanation for Gabby's

2 disappearance?

3 MR. REILLY: Objection to form.

4 BY MR. MELTZ:

5 Q You -- you could still answer the question.

6 A Yeah. I guess, yeah, because I saw how scared

7 she was.

8 Q In some ways, when you saw the video around the

9 13th or the 14th, did it also make you angry at the Moab

10 law enforcement agency?

11 A Yes.

12 Q In what way? What -- what -- what about it?

13 A I just thought it was unfair treatment.

14 Q Unfair favoring Brian?

15 A Uh-huh.

16 Q Yes?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Were you ever able to have any direct

19 communications with the responding officer or anyone at

20 the Moab law enforcement agency?

21 A No.

22 Q Did you ever ask anyone at the Moab law

23 enforcement agency for more information or more

24 explanation or kind of how -- how could this have

25 happened?

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1 A No.

2 Q And, again, just kind of focusing on what your

3 personal motivations are, is part of the reason for the

4 Moab lawsuit to find out the answer to some of those

5 questions?

6 A Yes.

7 MR. MELTZ: All right. We've been going about

8 an hour. Let's take a break, and we'll come back

9 and pick right back up. Okay?

10 THE WITNESS: Okay.

11 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken at 10:40

12 a.m., and the deposition resumed at 10:48 a.m.)

13 BY MR. MELTZ:

14 Q All right. So we had been talking about the

15 events of August 12th, 2021.

16 At some point in time, do you become aware that

17 Gabby and Brian intend to continue the big trip after

18 that?

19 A Yes.

20 Q You had mentioned a moment ago that both you

21 and Joe had talked about bringing Gabby home. Did you

22 directly talk about that with Gabby?

23 A Yes.

24 Q What was her response?

25 A That she was okay, everything was fine, and she

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1 wanted to finish the trip.

2 Q In terms of you checking in with her, which was

3 already fairly regular up to that point in time, did --

4 did you have a conversation with Gabby about, Listen,

5 just, you know, let me know every morning or let me know

6 every night things are okay, or --

7 A Yes. I told her that.

8 Q Did she basically agree to something like that?

9 Yep, I'll check in with you every day?

10 A I think it was more like, Uhh, Mom, I'm fine.

11 Q Got it.

12 A Yes.

13 Q Did you know where they were going after Moab?

14 A Yes. She was heading up to northern Utah. I

15 know that, after Moab, I found out that Brian was going

16 to be flying home for a few days, so she was going to be

17 staying in Salt Lake City.

18 Q To your knowledge, did Brian actually fly home

19 for a few days?

20 A Yes.

21 Q You got that information from Gabby?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Did you have Brian's cell phone number too?

24 A Yes.

25 Q When the events of August 12th happened, did

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1 you try to contact Brian directly?  
2 A No.  
3 Q Do you know if Joe tried?  
4 A I don't know.  
5 Q Why -- or what reason did Gabby give for Brian  
6 going home for a few days?  
7 A To empty their storage. They had their stuff  
8 in storage, and they said they would save money by  
9 putting it back at the parents' house.  
10 Q Did you know Brian had gone back to his  
11 parents' house after he had already done it or while he  
12 was doing it?  
13 A Doing what?  
14 Q Putting the stuff back at his parents' house?  
15 A I think he was there the whole time to --  
16 before and after. He -- he went there, emptied the  
17 storage locker, and stayed there for a day or two, I  
18 believe.  
19 Q I got it.  
20 During that time, did you attempt to call  
21 Brian's parents to -- since Brian presumably was there?  
22 A No.  
23 Q Whatever conversations you had with Gabby about  
24 continuing the big trip, did she say something that made  
25 you feel better about it, or no matter what she said, you

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1 were still pretty concerned about what could happen next,  
2 given the photo and what happened in Moab?  
3 A Oh, yeah, I was concerned, but she really made  
4 me feel like she was completely fine and everything was  
5 good. Of course I was still going to be concerned.  
6 Q Did you have an understanding of when Brian  
7 came back from the storage move to go back on the van  
8 trip with Gabby? About when in August was that?  
9 A Let me get my dates right. I want to say it  
10 was maybe around the 21st, around there. August.  
11 Q Did you text or speak with Gabby where she told  
12 you Brian's back?  
13 A Yeah. Yes.  
14 Q You're doing fine. Between me and Mr. Reilly,  
15 we'll make sure we've got it covered.  
16 When you found out Brian was back with Gabby to  
17 continue the trip in the van, did Gabby say that there  
18 were any issues or problems when Brian got back?  
19 A No.  
20 Q Did you know then when the -- when or where --  
21 sorry.  
22 When Brian got back from the trip to move the  
23 storage stuff, did you know where they were going next in  
24 the van?  
25 A She told me they were heading to Jackson, which

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1 I had never heard of.  
2 Q What state?  
3 A Wyoming.  
4 Q Did she have a particular destination that she  
5 told you they were headed towards?  
6 A I don't remember the names of things, but  
7 there's campgrounds up there they were trying to get to.  
8 Q To your knowledge, did they get to any of those  
9 campgrounds near or in Jackson?  
10 A Yes. They made it to -- I mean, at the time I  
11 didn't know that it was Spread Creek.  
12 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry?  
13 THE WITNESS: Spread Creek.  
14 BY MR. MELTZ:  
15 Q When Brian gets back from the storage move and  
16 you speak or text with Gabby to confirm he's back on the  
17 trip --  
18 A Uh-huh.  
19 Q -- how many more times do you have direct  
20 communications with Gabby after that? Did it go on for a  
21 number of days, or did it stop around the time Brian gets  
22 back?  
23 A I would say it was almost daily, just check-in  
24 texts and stuff. Where are you? You know.  
25 Q And this is August 21 moving forward-ish?

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1 A "Ish," yes.  
2 Q And you're still getting almost daily texts  
3 or -- are you still getting phone calls or just texts?  
4 A I feel like it was mostly texts because I had  
5 been getting ready to go back to work and stuff.  
6 Q When you say "getting ready to go back to  
7 work" --  
8 A I was -- because I was in school, so we were  
9 off for the summer. So it was the end of August. We  
10 were getting ready to go back to work.  
11 Q When you mean you were in school, you were  
12 working at the school?  
13 A Yes.  
14 Q As opposed to, like, taking a class in school?  
15 A Correct.  
16 Q Got it.  
17 In these daily or almost-daily follow-ups with  
18 Gabby after, you know, roughly August 21st, does she ever  
19 indicate that problems with Brian have come back or are  
20 worse or that anything unusual is going on?  
21 A No.  
22 Q As far as she's interacting with you, it all  
23 seems fine?  
24 A Yes.  
25 Q And, then, at some point in time, do you stop



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1 hearing from Gabby?  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q Roughly when was that?  
 4 A August 28th.  
 5 Q To go way back for a second, in connection with  
 6 this lawsuit, you were kind enough to look through your  
 7 phone, I believe, or at least have someone do it for you  
 8 to pull text messages with Gabby and Joe and -- and other  
 9 people; correct?  
 10 A I believe so, yes.  
 11 Q Okay. Did you look at those again in  
 12 preparation for your deposition?  
 13 A No.  
 14 Q Did you -- did you look at any videos,  
 15 documents, news clips, anything like that to prepare for  
 16 your deposition today?  
 17 A No.  
 18 Q Did you discuss your upcoming deposition with  
 19 Joe?  
 20 A Yes.  
 21 Q Okay. And let me give you another kind of --  
 22 A Okay.  
 23 Q -- to be clear about.  
 24 Any conversation you had with Joe Petito where  
 25 Mr. Reilly was also present, I don't want to know about

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1 that.  
 2 A Okay.  
 3 Q So did you have a conversation with Joe,  
 4 outside of Mr. Reilly's presence, about your upcoming  
 5 deposition?  
 6 A Just saying, you know, Good luck.  
 7 Q Okay.  
 8 A Yeah.  
 9 Q We've got to go through this?  
 10 A Nothing -- no details, yeah. Yeah.  
 11 Q Was August 28th the first day you didn't hear  
 12 from Gabby or the last day you heard from Gabby?  
 13 A I didn't hear from her.  
 14 Q Okay. Did you speak with Gabby on the 27th?  
 15 A I don't remember if I spoke to her, but I know  
 16 there's -- there was text messages on the 27th.  
 17 Q Did you have an understanding from those text  
 18 messages where Gabby was on August 27th?  
 19 A Yes.  
 20 Q What was your understanding?  
 21 A That she was in a place called Jackson Hole,  
 22 Wyoming. I believe she called it a "dispersed  
 23 campground."  
 24 Q Did you have any idea what that meant?  
 25 A No.

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1 Q Now, at that time, was Gabby still sharing her  
 2 location with you in any way?  
 3 A She probably was, but I don't remember.  
 4 Q Do you recall if she either sent you, you know,  
 5 like, a notification -- this person's sharing a  
 6 location -- or did you look at your phone to check?  
 7 A I don't remember.  
 8 Q In late August of 2021, did you have the  
 9 ability through your phone or computer or iPad or  
 10 anything like that to identify the whereabouts of Gabby's  
 11 phone at that time?  
 12 A I don't remember because I think I tried and I  
 13 couldn't. I couldn't do it.  
 14 Q Did it give you a last known, or it just  
 15 wouldn't show it?  
 16 A I feel like it didn't show anything.  
 17 Q Separate and apart from whenever your last text  
 18 may have been, do you remember your last conversation  
 19 with Gabby?  
 20 A Sort of, yes.  
 21 Q Okay.  
 22 A It was a FaceTime call.  
 23 Like, face-to-face conversation, not texting,  
 24 you mean?  
 25 Q Well, it doesn't have to be face-to-face. It

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1 could just be phone.  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q Whether it was phone, video, but, yeah,  
 4 something other than a text?  
 5 A I believe it was when we FaceTimed. I think it  
 6 was the 25th of August. It wasn't on my phone, though.  
 7 I believe it was Flora's phone because she was visiting  
 8 me. And we just all said, Hi, Gabby. It could have been  
 9 one of my kids' iPads, too. I honestly don't remember.  
 10 But --  
 11 Q That's okay.  
 12 A -- we did speak to her, and she was having a  
 13 great time and told us that she was, you know, visiting  
 14 all the parks. And she was just having a good time.  
 15 Q Did you have an understanding as to what the  
 16 upcoming itinerary was at that point, where she was going  
 17 to be or going?  
 18 A She said she was going to be heading up to  
 19 Yellowstone.  
 20 Q Then you don't hear from her on the 28th;  
 21 correct?  
 22 A Correct.  
 23 Q And is there anything about not hearing from  
 24 her, like, that one day that caused you any concern, or  
 25 did that sometimes happen?

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1 A I wasn't overly concerned on the 28th, but I  
 2 did shoot a text without a response and every day after  
 3 that without a response, so yeah.  
 4 Q When you don't hear from Gabby on the 29th --  
 5 A Uh-huh.  
 6 Q -- is that still along the lines of, well, you  
 7 know, that happens from time to time, or do you start  
 8 having a little more concern on the 29th?  
 9 A I think it was more of maybe she has no signal  
 10 right now.  
 11 Q As we move forward from the 28th and the 29th,  
 12 at what point do you start having a greater concern that  
 13 I'm -- you know, As her mom, I'm worried that she hasn't  
 14 called or texted me back?  
 15 A After probably five or six days of getting no  
 16 response and checking social media and seeing nothing  
 17 posted, I started to worry. And I don't remember what  
 18 day I texted Joe and I said, Have you heard from Gabby?  
 19 And he responded back with, Only if she wants  
 20 something is when she texts me. Some joke.  
 21 But, yeah, I was still concerned. And then it  
 22 wasn't until the 8th that I started making phone calls to  
 23 national parks.  
 24 Oh, and I'll backtrack. I got a text from her  
 25 phone on the 30th that said, We are in Yosemite, so --

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1 and we have no signal, so that prolonged my worry a  
 2 little bit, too. I thought, Oh, okay. They don't have a  
 3 signal. But then they weren't supposed to go to  
 4 Yosemite, so I questioned it. A couple of days later, I  
 5 was like, Wait a second.  
 6 Q When you said around the 8th -- and I think  
 7 we're talking September 8th, 2021?  
 8 A Uh-huh.  
 9 Q Yes?  
 10 A Yes.  
 11 Q You started making some phone calls?  
 12 A Yes.  
 13 Q And who exactly were you calling?  
 14 A Myself and my friend Jackie was helping me.  
 15 We --  
 16 Q What's Jackie's last name?  
 17 A Jackie Campagna, C-A-M-P-A-G-N-A.  
 18 Q Does she live nearby?  
 19 A She's in Blue Point. And her husband, Craig,  
 20 who's a police officer in Suffolk County, he was helping  
 21 make phone calls as well.  
 22 We were calling parks police, park rangers out  
 23 in all the different parks, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and  
 24 whatever parks are in Utah. We were calling all those.  
 25 And they were saying there was no reservations;

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1 you know, they haven't -- they don't have her in the  
 2 system. So that's when I started really getting  
 3 concerned because I know she would make reservations for  
 4 parks.  
 5 Q Were you able to identify the last park that  
 6 Gabby had made a reservation for?  
 7 A I don't remember. I can't remember if they  
 8 found a cancelation in the system. I think something was  
 9 canceled. I just don't remember what park it was for.  
 10 Q At any point in time prior to the 8th of  
 11 September, 2021, had you tried to contact Chris or  
 12 Roberta Laundrie --  
 13 A No.  
 14 Q -- to see if they had heard from someone?  
 15 A No.  
 16 Q At any point in time prior to September 8th,  
 17 2021, had you tried to contact Brian directly?  
 18 A I believe I texted his phone number, and it  
 19 went through green. And I thought he had an iPhone,  
 20 which is usually blue, so I don't -- I didn't know if he  
 21 had changed his number, because I had two numbers in my  
 22 phone for him. When I looked back recently, I had two  
 23 numbers in there. So I might have texted the wrong  
 24 number.  
 25 So, just backtracking, I had a phone that I

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1 lost in a lake in late August --  
 2 Q Okay.  
 3 A -- of 2021. So I did lose a lot of  
 4 information. So it was a new phone that I had when I was  
 5 text- -- doing all this text messaging and stuff.  
 6 Q Did you lose one iPhone and replace it with  
 7 another?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q When you got your new iPhone, did you go to,  
 10 like, the cloud backup to load the stuff back in?  
 11 A I did what I did, but it didn't save  
 12 everything.  
 13 Q Do you know when your phone had last backed up  
 14 before it went in the lake?  
 15 A No. No.  
 16 Q Do I want to know how it went in the lake? Is  
 17 there a story there?  
 18 A We were on a pedal boat and it fell out of my  
 19 pocket, so yeah.  
 20 Q So, on the 8th of September, is it -- is it  
 21 still mostly you and Jackie just making phone calls and  
 22 seeing what you could find out?  
 23 A Yes.  
 24 Q Is Joe doing anything at this point, to your  
 25 knowledge?

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1 A I'm not sure about the 8th. I believe on the  
 2 9th and the 10th was when we really started making more  
 3 phone calls. And he might have made some on the 9th.  
 4 I'm not sure, though.  
 5 Q At some point, do the phone calls shift from  
 6 calling the parks and places like that to law  
 7 enforcement?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q When was that?  
 10 A I believe that was the 10th was when I  
 11 called -- I called North Port first. Because the park  
 12 ranger said, In order to report somebody missing, it  
 13 needs to be either a place of residence, and then I  
 14 called them and they -- they didn't want to take the  
 15 report.  
 16 Q So this would be North Port, Florida?  
 17 A Yes.  
 18 Q Did they explain, whoever you spoke with, why  
 19 they did not want to take the report?  
 20 A Because it didn't happen in North Port.  
 21 Q Did they give you any guidance on what you  
 22 should do if you didn't know --  
 23 A They said we should probably try the park  
 24 rangers. And I said, I already did that, and they said  
 25 it needs to be done where she lives. It was a

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1 back-and-forth.  
 2 Q Did you ultimately find a law enforcement or  
 3 governmental agency that seemed willing to take the  
 4 report?  
 5 A Yes. On 9-11, I walked into Patchogue -- you  
 6 spelled that earlier.  
 7 Q You're going to have to spell it again.  
 8 A P-A-T-C-H-O-G-U-E.  
 9 Q Where is that?  
 10 A It's in New York.  
 11 Q Okay.  
 12 A So on Long Island. And I walked into the Fifth  
 13 Precinct and Detective Tracey Barry, her name was, she  
 14 spoke to me for a good hour and decided that she -- she  
 15 asked me for Roberta's number, and she tried to call and  
 16 there was no answer. So she said, I'll take the report.  
 17 And we did.  
 18 Q When you spoke -- and how do you spell Barry?  
 19 Do you know?  
 20 A I believe it's B-A-R-R-Y.  
 21 Q When you spoke to Detective Barry, did you tell  
 22 Detective Barry about what had happened in Moab?  
 23 A I don't -- no, I didn't -- I don't remember.  
 24 Q What do you remember about your conversation  
 25 with Detective Barry?

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1 A I walked into the precinct with my friend  
 2 Jackie, and we were basically speaking to the girl at the  
 3 desk first, the officer sitting at -- taking the  
 4 information. And she said, Okay. Let me get the  
 5 detective.  
 6 The detective came out. And I just explained  
 7 to her that I haven't heard from my daughter or seen any  
 8 social media posts for a while and I can't get ahold of  
 9 anybody. And we can't report her missing because nobody  
 10 will take the report, and I was just frustrated and  
 11 upset.  
 12 I don't remember if I told her at that time  
 13 about the incident in Moab. I think I was just, at that  
 14 time, looking for her. I just wanted to know where she  
 15 was.  
 16 Q This may sound like a weird question. I just  
 17 don't know any other way to ask it.  
 18 Were you looking for her and Brian? And by  
 19 that I mean, were you concerned that both of them were  
 20 missing?  
 21 A Yes.  
 22 Q Or were you -- were you looking really just for  
 23 Gabby?  
 24 A I -- well, okay. I was looking for Gabby, but  
 25 I was also concerned about both of them because I hadn't

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1 heard from either one.  
 2 I texted Roberta's phone saying, Have you heard  
 3 from the kids? I'm worried about them.  
 4 Q And you did not get a response from Roberta?  
 5 A No.  
 6 Q Did some amount of time pass where you started  
 7 thinking to yourself, I -- I haven't heard back from  
 8 Roberta; that's concerning?  
 9 A Yes.  
 10 Q When did that thought first enter your mind?  
 11 A That day I texted her. I said, This is weird.  
 12 She's not -- she's not concerned about the kids?  
 13 Q Did Detective Barry -- and you mentioned  
 14 Detective Barry tried to call Roberta Laundrie while you  
 15 were still sitting there.  
 16 A Yes.  
 17 Q I presume you gave her her number?  
 18 A Yes.  
 19 Q Did you also give her the address for the  
 20 Laundrie parents?  
 21 A I don't remember. I might have. It might have  
 22 been in the report too.  
 23 Q Did Detective Barry tell you what she was going  
 24 to do with the information that you gave her?  
 25 A She said she was going to call North Port and

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1 try to get some more information. And even though it  
 2 didn't happen in New York, she was going to do what she  
 3 could.  
 4 Q Did she explain what that could be?  
 5 A I don't remember.  
 6 Q Did Detective Barry tell you that if she didn't  
 7 hear back from the Laundries, she would either herself or  
 8 have someone go to their house?  
 9 A Yes. I believe she said she'll call North Port  
 10 and give them the information and see if they'll go do a  
 11 check. I don't know if it was a well check or what but  
 12 just some kind of check.  
 13 Q At that point in time, were the Laundries  
 14 living in North Port?  
 15 A Yes.  
 16 Q Did Detective Barry give you contact  
 17 information from anyone she was interacting with at  
 18 North Port?  
 19 A I don't think so.  
 20 Q Did Detective Barry at this initial meeting  
 21 talk about getting any other law enforcement agencies  
 22 involved, whether it was state or federal?  
 23 A I don't believe at that first meeting, no.  
 24 Q Did you have any understanding at this first  
 25 meeting -- and this is September 11th?

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1 A Yes.  
 2 Q -- what the time frame was for something next  
 3 to happen? In other words, was Detective Barry going to  
 4 reach out right away? Was North Port going to go by the  
 5 Laundrie house that same day?  
 6 A I had no idea.  
 7 Q Do you contact Joe to tell him about your  
 8 meeting with Detective Barry?  
 9 A Yes.  
 10 Q To your knowledge, at that time, had Joe  
 11 similarly reached out to any law enforcement agencies?  
 12 A Yes. He called North Port a few times. I  
 13 think he had started at Moab and called all around out  
 14 West. The same thing I was doing.  
 15 Q Now, at the time you meet with Detective Barry,  
 16 as best you were kind of understanding the situation, had  
 17 there been any publicity or public interest at all yet?  
 18 A No.  
 19 Q When did that start?  
 20 A So Detective Barry came to my door that night  
 21 on the 11th.  
 22 Q In Blue Point?  
 23 A Yes. It was, I believe, around 10:30, almost  
 24 11:00 at night. And I have dogs, so I had to walk  
 25 outside and talk to her on the front porch. And she was

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1 with another detective. I don't know his name.  
 2 And they explained to me that the North -- she  
 3 called North Port. They went to the house and that the  
 4 van was there and Brian was supposedly home. And that  
 5 they handed them a card and said that they had an  
 6 attorney and that was all the information they had but  
 7 that they could take the van.  
 8 Q Did you ask Detective Barry if she had tried to  
 9 speak with the Laundries about what had happened?  
 10 A I didn't ask her that specifically, no.  
 11 Q Did she volunteer that to you?  
 12 A No. It was just the earlier phone call and she  
 13 didn't get an answer. I don't know anything else.  
 14 Q Okay. But when -- when -- I'm so sorry. I  
 15 understand --  
 16 A That's okay.  
 17 Q -- why you answered the question that way.  
 18 Did Detective Barry tell you that the  
 19 North Port police --  
 20 A Okay.  
 21 Q -- had tried to speak with the Laundrie  
 22 parents?  
 23 A Yes.  
 24 Q And what did she say was the result of that  
 25 conversation?

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1 A That they handed them a card and said, This is  
 2 our attorney.  
 3 Q Did Detective Barry offer you her thoughts or  
 4 comments on that response from the Laundrie parents?  
 5 A No.  
 6 Q Did -- did you ask a question, like, Is that  
 7 normal?  
 8 A I started to freak out, and I said, Well,  
 9 where's my daughter?  
 10 Q And, again, please, take whatever time you  
 11 need.  
 12 A She had a look on her face.  
 13 Q Detective Barry?  
 14 A Yes.  
 15 Q A look of there was --  
 16 A She knew something's wrong, yeah.  
 17 But she said -- I think she mentioned that the  
 18 FBI would probably get involved that night. I think she  
 19 said it's because it's so many states.  
 20 Q Did Detective Barry tell you that she would  
 21 reach out to the FBI?  
 22 A I don't remember.  
 23 Q However she worded it, though, your  
 24 understanding was the FBI was likely going to get  
 25 involved at some point?

Page 77

1 A Yes.

2 Q And did you understand the FBI was likely to

3 get involved at some point to investigate whether there

4 was some criminal activity involved?

5 A I'm assuming, yeah.

6 Q Did Detective Barry give you the information

7 that was on the card for the attorney that the Laundries

8 had given to North Port?

9 A No.

10 Q Did Detective Barry, in describing what had

11 happened between the North Port police and the Laundrie

12 parents, indicate to you that the Laundrie parents were

13 unwilling to talk about anything?

14 A She didn't say those words. She just said, if

15 they needed information, to contact their attorney.

16 Q Did Detective Barry tell you whether she was

17 going to contact the attorney?

18 A No.

19 Q Did you ask Detective Barry for the name of the

20 Laundrie parents' attorney?

21 A No.

22 Q Do you remember what time of night that was

23 that the conversation occurred?

24 A Somewhere between 10:30 and 11 p.m.

25 Q Would it be fair, Ms. Schmidt, that whatever

Page 78

1 worry had been building over this period of time, when

2 you found out that the North Point [sic] police had

3 reached out to the Laundrie parents and the Laundrie

4 parents refused to say anything -- did that escalate your

5 concern over what may have happened with Gabby?

6 A Yes.

7 Q Why was that?

8 A Because I'm her mom and I felt like

9 something -- something bad had to have happened for him

10 to be at home without her.

11 Q Was it as basic as, if the Laundrie parents had

12 something positive to say, I'm sure we would hear it, so

13 the fact they're refusing to talk can't be good?

14 A I felt concerned that they were being quiet,

15 yes.

16 Q When you found out that North Point thought

17 Brian was home, did you try to call or reach out to Brian

18 directly again?

19 A I don't think so.

20 Q When you found out --

21 MR. REILLY: It's North Port.

22 MR. MELTZ: North Port.

23 MR. REILLY: Yes.

24 THE WITNESS: North Port, not Point.

25 MR. MELTZ: Oh, I keep saying "point." I'm so

Page 79

1 sorry.

2 BY MR. MELTZ:

3 Q When you found out from the North Port police,

4 through Detective Barry, that they thought Brian was

5 home, did you attempt to reach out to Roberta or Chris

6 Laundrie at that time?

7 A No.

8 Q What was the next interaction with law

9 enforcement after that evening visit from

10 Detective Barry?

11 A God, I don't remember. So I was obviously on

12 my computer all night making flyers and sending them out

13 to Facebook, blasting, and -- you know, at that point, it

14 was just Gabby because I knew Brian was home safe.

15 I don't remember when the FBI contacted me.

16 I -- I don't remember if it was that -- late that -- I

17 think it was the next night. I think it was the 12th

18 into the 13th because I remember it was, like, 3:00 in

19 the morning I heard from an FBI agent. They actually

20 called me at 3:00 in the morning. So I can't remember

21 what date, but --

22 Q Do you remember who it was?

23 A I don't remember his name, but he was from New

24 York City. But only a couple of days later, it

25 transferred out to the Long Island office.

Page 80

1 Q Who was your FBI liaison at the Long Island --

2 A Brian Gee.

3 Q G-E-E?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Did the FBI explain why they were calling at 3

6 in the morning?

7 A Yes. They said they were taking over the

8 investigation.

9 Q Did they describe what the investigation was or

10 who was being investigated?

11 A No. I mean, they just asked a lot of questions

12 about Gabby and where -- her whereabouts and kind of the

13 similar questions to what you're asking today.

14 Q Sure.

15 Did the FBI at that time, the 3 a.m. call, tell

16 you whether or not they had attempted to reach out to

17 Brian's parents?

18 A I don't remember.

19 Q During that 3 a.m. phone call, did the FBI tell

20 you that their plan was to reach out to Brian's parents?

21 A I don't remember.

22 Q Okay. During that -- we're going to have a

23 repeat here.

24 A That's okay.

25 Q No worries.

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1 During the 3 a.m. phone call with the FBI, did  
2 they indicate that they would try to find Brian?  
3 A I -- I really don't remember. I just remember  
4 talking about finding Gabby and, you know, as a missing  
5 person, what the steps are and what they're going to be  
6 doing and...  
7 Q During that phone call with the FBI at 3 in the  
8 morning, did you talk about the Moab incident?  
9 A I don't believe so.  
10 Q I think this is the last one. During the phone  
11 call with the FBI at 3 in the morning, was the  
12 conversation more along the lines of, you know, Hey,  
13 Gabby may be missing because, you know, she's hiking  
14 somewhere remote, or was it more, Something may have  
15 happened here and we're concerned?  
16 A Something may have happened and we're  
17 concerned.  
18 Q When you became aware that Brian had returned  
19 home with the van and without Gabby, what, if any,  
20 thoughts or conclusions did you draw from that?  
21 A I didn't want to think the worst, but,  
22 obviously, as a mother, I thought, Oh, my God, something  
23 bad happened. He did something to her. But hopefully  
24 we're wrong and she ran off with some other camping group  
25 or something. Or they had an argument and he left her

Page 82

1 there. Who knows? I just was hoping that it wasn't my  
2 worst fear.  
3 Q Around this point in time where the FBI's  
4 getting involved, are you still having -- let me ask it  
5 differently.  
6 Around the time that the FBI gets involved, are  
7 you starting to notice more social media or public  
8 interest in Gabby missing?  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q You mentioned kind of sending out flyers on  
11 Facebook.  
12 A Uh-huh.  
13 Q Yes?  
14 A Yes.  
15 Q Were -- were you engaged in trying to basically  
16 get the word out around this time that, My daughter's  
17 missing; does anyone have any information? Has anyone  
18 seen her?  
19 A Yes.  
20 Q Was Joe also doing that?  
21 A Yes.  
22 Q What were the -- the different platforms or  
23 social media accounts? How were you getting the word out  
24 around this September 12th time frame or September 11th  
25 time frame?

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1 A I would say at that time it was mostly  
2 Facebook, maybe some Instagram. I didn't have a Twitter  
3 yet, so I don't remember when I created one.  
4 Q Did you create a Twitter while Gabby was still  
5 missing?  
6 A I might have to try and get more people to see  
7 her missing flyer.  
8 Q Were you starting to get responses to some of  
9 the social media posts you were putting out there?  
10 A Yes. Thousands of people were sharing and  
11 commenting. And I know some people were offering tips.  
12 They thought they had seen her. They were always  
13 redirected to the FBI to let them know.  
14 Q And it may have changed over time as you  
15 learned more information, but in any of the flyers or  
16 postings that you put on a social media platform, did any  
17 of them include Brian's image at first and then you  
18 stopped, or was it always just Gabby?  
19 A It was just Gabby because it was after I had  
20 found out Brian was home. I believe the van was in one  
21 of the images as well, so just to see if people had seen  
22 the van, her in the van.  
23 I'm sorry. I -- let me backtrack.  
24 Q Okay.  
25 A There was a picture with Brian because we were

Page 84

1 asking if people had seen them. So, yes, there was a  
2 picture with Brian at first.  
3 Q When you found out that Brian was home at some  
4 point with the van, did you update the social media  
5 postings you were doing to say, Hey, the van's been  
6 found; has anyone seen Brian or --  
7 A I believe I did, yeah.  
8 Q What do you recall updating at that time?  
9 A I don't remember specifically. It was  
10 something along the lines of, Brian and the van are --  
11 are safe, or, The van is home, but Gabby's still missing.  
12 Q In your conversations with the FBI -- I thought  
13 I was done -- at 3 in the morning, did you ask them, Are  
14 you guys going to talk to Brian and -- and see what he  
15 says about all of this?  
16 A I don't remember.  
17 Q In terms of who might have the most information  
18 about where Gabby was at that time, whether she was okay  
19 or not, were you thinking that Brian was the person who  
20 would know the answer to that?  
21 A I assumed Brian was probably the one person  
22 that knew what happened. It's always the last person  
23 that was with the person; right?  
24 Q Sure.  
25 And in your mind, did Brian seem like the

Page 85

1 logical first person for any law enforcement agency to  
 2 start with in terms of trying to piece together where  
 3 Gabby may be?  
 4 A Yes.  
 5 Q And was that something that you did speak about  
 6 with law enforcement in kind of this early phase of -- of  
 7 them taking the case and starting to do their  
 8 investigation?  
 9 A I'm sure we spoke about that, yeah.  
 10 Q Were you ever told by anyone at the FBI or  
 11 Detective Barry or anyone at North Port that they had  
 12 attempted to speak with Brian and that Brian had refused  
 13 to have that conversation?  
 14 A I think they just mentioned that the parents --  
 15 they only saw -- spoke to the -- his parents and that  
 16 they handed over the card for the attorney.  
 17 Q That was at the well-visit check on --  
 18 A Yes.  
 19 Q -- September 11th by the North Port police?  
 20 A Uh-huh.  
 21 Q Yes?  
 22 A Yes.  
 23 Q In -- in terms of your -- your firsthand  
 24 knowledge of things -- and by that I mean, like, you  
 25 know, you had the conversation yourself or you saw the

Page 86

1 person or you were at the place, as opposed to someone in  
 2 law enforcement telling you about it later -- is it true  
 3 that you had no idea that Brian had come home until this  
 4 conversation with Detective Barry about the North Port  
 5 police, where they said -- "they" being the North Port  
 6 police -- thought he was home at least on September 11th?  
 7 A Correct.  
 8 Q As we're getting into the 12th and you're  
 9 talking with the FBI, do you have some expectation that  
 10 someone in law enforcement is going to have some type of  
 11 conversation with Brian or his parents to get more  
 12 information about what happened?  
 13 A Yes.  
 14 Q Is someone in law enforcement telling you that  
 15 they're going to do that?  
 16 A Probably North Port was telling us they were  
 17 going to attempt to talk to the parents or Brian. I  
 18 think it was Brian before the parents.  
 19 Q After Detective Barry sharing the encounter  
 20 where the parents hand an attorney card to the North Port  
 21 police, are you ever made aware that there was another  
 22 attempt to speak with the parents by law enforcement and  
 23 the parents refused again?  
 24 A No.  
 25 Q At some point in time in this process, are you

Page 87

1 contacted about taking the public presence beyond just  
 2 posting on Facebook to -- whether it's an interview or  
 3 print or --  
 4 A Yes.  
 5 Q -- television? How does that start?  
 6 A I don't remember which media outlet contacted  
 7 us first, but they said they would like to have a press  
 8 conference where we could hold up Gabby's poster and talk  
 9 about her and -- just so the public could see -- more  
 10 public could see what was going on and look for her.  
 11 And I don't remember what day that was. It  
 12 could have been -- it could have been, like, Monday or  
 13 Tuesday, the 13th or 14th. I am not a hundred percent  
 14 sure.  
 15 Q Does the news organization contact you or Joe  
 16 or both of you?  
 17 A They -- they were contacting both of us but  
 18 through our attorney Rick.  
 19 Q Who's Rick?  
 20 A Rick Stafford. He's a family friend but was  
 21 just helping us out in the beginning.  
 22 Q Prior to Rick becoming involved with your  
 23 daughter's -- being missing, had you ever used Rick as a  
 24 lawyer before?  
 25 A No.

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1 Q And how -- who was he friendly with in the  
 2 family?  
 3 A So our daughters are best friends.  
 4 Q Where is Rick's law practice located?  
 5 A He just moved his office. I'm not a hundred  
 6 percent sure where his new office is. It was in Bohemia,  
 7 New York. It's in New York, though.  
 8 Q At some point in time, do you reach out to  
 9 basically engage Mr. Stafford to provide legal services  
 10 relating to Gabby's disappearance?  
 11 A I believe I called him to ask him some  
 12 questions and he asked if we needed help and he came over  
 13 and just kind of really helped us a lot.  
 14 Q In terms of how he helped, were any news  
 15 outlets or people who were interested in wanting to  
 16 interview you or speak with you or your husband about  
 17 Gabby's disappearance -- were they directed to go through  
 18 Rick?  
 19 A Yes.  
 20 Q To your knowledge, was law enforcement also  
 21 interacting with Rick?  
 22 A I don't think so.  
 23 Q To your knowledge, was Rick made aware that the  
 24 Laundries had this attorney whose card was given to the  
 25 North Port police?

Page 89

1 A Yes.

2 Q At what point in time did you first learn who

3 the Laundries' attorney was?

4 A I don't remember. I believe it was, like, when

5 he was on TV or he made a statement.

6 Q Do you remember which one that was, whether you

7 saw the Laundries' attorney on TV versus you --

8 A It had to be -- September 14th was the

9 statement about them offering -- you know, We hope that,

10 you know, they get reunited and such.

11 So September 14th was probably the first time I

12 learned about who he was.

13 Q At that time did you come to find out that

14 Mr. Bertolino was the Laundries' attorney?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Had you ever known or met or interacted with

17 Mr. Bertolino before that time?

18 A No.

19 Q To your knowledge, had Joe Petito had any prior

20 history or involvement with Mr. Bertolino before

21 September 14, 2021?

22 A No.

23 Q No, he did not?

24 A No, he did not.

25 Q Had you already engaged Mr. Stafford before you

Page 90

1 learned about Mr. Bertolino?

2 A We -- he was helping us, yes, but not -- we

3 didn't have, like, a contract signed or anything like

4 that.

5 Q I'm going to rephrase it.

6 A Okay.

7 Q Had you already enlisted the help and services

8 of Mr. Stafford before you found out who Mr. Bertolino

9 was?

10 A I guess, yes.

11 Q In any of the interviews that you had with the

12 media on the 12th or the 13th of September, 2021, did any

13 part of those interviews ever involve that neither Brian

14 nor his parents were talking about what may have

15 happened?

16 A I believe so. I think we mentioned that.

17 Q Were those questions that you might receive

18 from the interviewer, saying, Have you spoken to the

19 parents? Have you spoken to Brian?

20 A Probably.

21 Q As we get to the 12th and the 13th of

22 September, 2021, are you -- are you becoming frustrated,

23 for lack of a better word, that you cannot get

24 information from either Brian or his parents?

25 A Of course.

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1 Q Through that time, was your general belief

2 that, if anyone knew what had happened or where Gabby

3 was, it would be Brian or at least he would be the best

4 starting point for that?

5 A Yes. Agreed.

6 Q Were, to your knowledge, Brian's parents on the

7 big road trip at all at any point in time?

8 A No.

9 Q As we're at September 12th or September 13th,

10 2021, was it your belief that, whatever had happened,

11 Brian had likely shared some or all of what occurred with

12 his parents?

13 A I believed that, yes.

14 Q Why did you think that?

15 A Because they weren't speaking.

16 Q Was it literally that their silence gave you

17 the belief that Brian must have told them something?

18 A Yes.

19 Q To your knowledge, as part of giving the

20 interviews with the news media, do you know if the news

21 media was reaching out directly to Brian or his parents

22 for comment?

23 A I don't know.

24 Q In any of your interviews, did any of the news

25 people you interacted with say, Hey, we've -- we've tried

Page 92

1 to call them or ask them for a comment and they --

2 they're not responding to us either?

3 A They may have. I honestly don't -- I -- I

4 don't know the specifics, so I'm not going to say

5 something I don't remember. So...

6 Q To your knowledge, did Mr. Stafford ever give

7 any of the news media Mr. Bertolino's contact information

8 so that, if they had questions, they could direct them to

9 Mr. Bertolino?

10 A Oh, I'm not sure.

11 Q Did you ever share any of Mr. Bertolino's

12 contact information either online or with the media or

13 anything else?

14 A No.

15 Q As we're going through the 12th and the 13th of

16 September, 2021, are you having any follow-up with

17 Detective Barry or North Port or someone not at the FBI?

18 A I do remember speaking to North Port a couple

19 of times. I don't remember the specific dates.

20 Q Did Detective Barry ever tell you that she had

21 spoken with Mr. Bertolino?

22 A No.

23 Q What do you recall, if at all, of any

24 conversations with North Port around the 12th or the 13th

25 of September?



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1 A I just know they asked us to be careful with  
2 the media, not to put too much out there. I think it was  
3 because they were talking to the media every second.  
4 They just reiterated that they had no contact  
5 with Brian and that they were keeping an eye on things,  
6 stuff like that.  
7 Q On the 12th or the 13th of September of 2021,  
8 did you have a sense from talking with the North Port  
9 police that they were actively investigating what may  
10 have happened to Gabby?  
11 A Sort of. It was like they were -- they were  
12 trying to figure out what was going on. So yeah.  
13 Q In your conversations with the North Port  
14 police on September 12th or 13th, did you discuss with  
15 them that, Gabby's not contacting me at this point for,  
16 now, a couple weeks-plus, Brian coming back home with the  
17 van and no one's able to find or hear from Gabby -- it  
18 made Brian look very suspicious, that he may have been  
19 involved with something with Gabby that was the reason  
20 why she couldn't be found?  
21 A I'm sure we talked about him being a suspect,  
22 but I don't remember specific words.  
23 Q Did you get some -- some assurance, for lack of  
24 a better term, from the North Port police that they were  
25 looking into Brian as a potential suspect or cause of

Page 94

1 Gabby's disappearance?  
2 A They said they were, but I didn't see it in  
3 their actions as much.  
4 Q By the 12th and the 13th, did you get the sense  
5 that the FBI was looking into Brian as a potential  
6 suspect or cause of Gabby's disappearance?  
7 A Yes.  
8 Q What about your interactions with the FBI gave  
9 you that impression?  
10 A Just -- I guess they asked a lot of questions  
11 about the phone records and stuff. It just seemed like  
12 they were trying to dig a little deeper than the  
13 North Port police.  
14 Q With respect to the phone records, did you get  
15 a sense that the FBI was trying to actually go out and  
16 get evidence or clues as to what may have happened to  
17 Gabby?  
18 A Correct. Yes.  
19 Q In your communications with the FBI on the 12th  
20 and the 13th, did you get a sense that that involved  
21 looking at phone records involving Brian or his parents?  
22 A I don't remember specifically. I don't recall.  
23 Q Do you recall what phone records the FBI were  
24 talking about?  
25 A They definitely wanted to see Gabby's phone

Page 95

1 records and hers -- probably the interactions with Brian  
2 and us, you know, just her family and friends.  
3 Q Either with the North Port police or  
4 Detective Barry or the FBI -- and now we're basically  
5 through September 13th, 2021 -- did you ever ask any of  
6 them, How is it that Brian could just not say anything?  
7 Like, how -- how could that be?  
8 A I'm sure I did. I don't remember specifically,  
9 but...  
10 Q Did you ever get an explanation for that?  
11 A I don't remember.  
12 Q Do you recall ever having a conversation with  
13 someone in law enforcement around this time frame, the  
14 12th or the 13th of September, where you asked, Can you  
15 arrest him? Can you bring him in for questioning? Did  
16 you ever use those terms?  
17 A I probably did, yes.  
18 Q Do you recall what the response was?  
19 A Not specifically. Probably something along the  
20 lines of they needed to investigate it first. They  
21 didn't have enough evidence.  
22 Q Was your general impression or understanding,  
23 though, from those exchanges that the FBI and law  
24 enforcement were investigating Brian to see if they could  
25 develop that evidence?

Page 96

1 A Yes.  
2 Q As we're at this point in time, September 12th  
3 and 13th, understanding that you were told by law  
4 enforcement that Brian had returned home, knowing that,  
5 when law enforcement attempted to speak with Brian's  
6 parents, they handed law enforcement a card for their  
7 lawyer, had you formed the belief that if Brian had done  
8 something wrong, his parents were either protecting him  
9 or helping him in some way?  
10 A Yes. I believed that.  
11 Q Why did you believe that?  
12 A Well, I -- as a parent, I would have been  
13 concerned about my future daughter-in-law, so I would  
14 have probably tried to help rather than stay quiet.  
15 Q It was that lack of help and the silence from  
16 Brian's parents that made you feel they either knew  
17 something or were part of whatever was happening now,  
18 covering it up or hiding Brian or something?  
19 A Of course. I didn't know specifically, but,  
20 yeah, I was concerned that they knew something had  
21 happened or information that they didn't want to share.  
22 Q As we're at September 12th and 13th, had you  
23 formed some belief that you may not see Gabby again?  
24 A Of course my mind went there, but I tried to  
25 believe that I was wrong. I had a feeling something bad

Page 97

1 happened.

2 Q The feeling that something bad happened, was it

3 a combination of how much time had passed since you had

4 last heard from Gabby and Brian and his parents were not

5 saying anything about it?

6 A Yes.

7 Q As the days passed, did your frustration with

8 Brian's parents not saying anything about what they may

9 have known -- did it grow or was it already at its peak

10 when you found out that Brian came home and they weren't

11 talking?

12 A I don't think you can measure frustration. So

13 I was just -- I was just angry, and it was pretty

14 continuous.

15 Q Did you have any conversations with law

16 enforcement about -- separate and apart from when -- or

17 whether they may bring in Brian to question him -- were

18 they going to have an opportunity or planning on

19 questioning the parents?

20 A I don't remember the conversations. I remember

21 somebody maybe from North Port saying they wanted to try

22 and question Brian, but they just -- they just couldn't.

23 Q Did you have any conversations with the FBI or

24 Detective Barry or North Port at this time frame -- this

25 is, like, the September 12th and 13th time frame -- Hey,

Page 98

1 if his -- if he's staying at his parents', if they're

2 harboring him, for lack of a better term, and they're not

3 saying anything, you know, isn't that a problem for them?

4 Did you ask those types of questions?

5 A I'm sure I did, yeah.

6 Q Did you suggest to law enforcement on the -- on

7 the 12th or the 13th that Brian's parents may be hiding

8 something or helping him hide what happened?

9 A I definitely had those conversations. I just

10 don't remember specifically with whom or about...

11 Q But you definitely would have had those

12 conversations with someone in law enforcement?

13 A Yeah. I think I used the words, Somebody knows

14 something, or, Why are they not talking? They have to

15 know something.

16 Q So as we -- we kind of roll into

17 September 14th, 2021, the FBI's giving you indication

18 that they're performing an investigation; is that fair?

19 A Yes.

20 Q North Port is telling you they're performing an

21 investigation, although you're not necessarily seeing a

22 lot of what they're doing; is that right?

23 A Correct. Uh-huh.

24 Q And was Detective Barry still involved?

25 A I'm not a hundred percent sure. I think she

Page 99

1 was probably being told information along the way, but

2 she wasn't on the forefront of the investigation.

3 Q As we get into September 14th, 2021, are you

4 and/or with Joe or on your own continuing to get media

5 inquiries passed through Mr. Stafford about interviews

6 and how can we get Gabby's name out there?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Do you recall ever having an interview with a

9 media person around this time in which they didn't bring

10 up Brian or Brian's parents?

11 A I don't remember.

12 Q And I ask that because, in telling the story,

13 kind of, definitionally, we have to say, She went on this

14 road trip with Brian, and then when you're giving media

15 interviews on, like, the 13th or the 14th, we know the

16 van's back at the parents' house.

17 A Yes.

18 Q And --

19 A I'm sure that most of them asked about the

20 parents and stuff, but I just don't remember.

21 Q To the extent you would have been asked about

22 the parents in interviews on the 13th or the 14th of

23 September, do you recall, first off, whether or not part

24 of that discussion was, We've tried to reach out for them

25 and they're not telling us anything? Was that discussed

Page 100

1 during interviews?

2 A We always said, with the text, that we reached

3 out. I texted and I got no response. And it looked like

4 I was blocked because you can tell on an iPhone, so

5 that's the same thing I told all of them.

6 Q Did you also tell all the media outlets that

7 the van was found at the parents' house?

8 A I think they all knew at that point. I don't

9 remember when that information became public, but...

10 Q And still through the 14th, had you had any

11 direct communications with Brian's parents?

12 A No.

13 Q You mentioned a short time ago that, at some

14 point in time on September 14th, you became aware of

15 Mr. Bertolino because of a statement that he had issued;

16 is that fair?

17 A Yes.

18 Q How did you learn of that statement?

19 A I probably -- I don't remember if I'd seen it

20 first or if somebody texted me, Hey, check it out. Like,

21 I just -- I remember seeing it that day, like, on my

22 computer.

23 Q Okay. What I'll do --

24 A Like, reading it.

25 I think the only text I sent out was, Hey, the

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1 lawyer put out a statement to my friend Flora. I think  
 2 the lawyer put out a statement.  
 3 Q Hang on one second while I look for my stickers  
 4 that I think I just buried under this pile of paper.  
 5 What we're going to do, Ms. Schmidt, there's,  
 6 like, a collection of texts. I promise you we're not  
 7 going to look at every single one. We might look at a  
 8 half dozen or so.  
 9 It's going to be Exhibit 1 to your deposition.  
 10 (Composite of Photocopies of Text Messages were  
 11 marked Defendant/Bertolino's Exhibit 1 for  
 12 identification.)  
 13 BY MR. MELTZ:  
 14 Q And if you turn to Page 99.  
 15 MR. REILLY: We're going to have to take some  
 16 time because my pages aren't numbered.  
 17 MR. MELTZ: Yeah, I know. We hand-numbered  
 18 these this morning. But there's about 130 in total,  
 19 so --  
 20 THE WITNESS: Oh, Jesus.  
 21 MR. MELTZ: -- go about 70 percent in there and  
 22 you'll find it.  
 23 MR. REILLY: Can I see it?  
 24 THE WITNESS: Is that from Joe?  
 25 MR. REILLY: Just hold on.

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1 MR. MELTZ: Oh, and, actually, Mr. Reilly --  
 2 MR. REILLY: Don't answer questions yet. Hold  
 3 on.  
 4 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 5 MR. MELTZ: Mr. Reilly, if you'd like, we could  
 6 take a short break. You could photocopy the  
 7 numbered set and then you'd have a numbered copy to  
 8 look along.  
 9 MR. REILLY: Sure. Let's do that.  
 10 MR. MELTZ: Okay.  
 11 MR. REILLY: Excuse me.  
 12 MR. MELTZ: And while we take a short break,  
 13 we're definitely going to need to have a lunch break  
 14 at some point, so -- it won't be long. I promise.  
 15 THE WITNESS: But how -- how long -- like, how  
 16 long after that?  
 17 MR. MELTZ: I'm -- I don't know what Mr. Luka  
 18 has. Like, if I was going to -- I'm at least  
 19 halfway through, maybe even more than that.  
 20 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 21 MR. MELTZ: You know, in terms of kind of our  
 22 story. So --  
 23 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 24 MR. MELTZ: And then I don't know if you  
 25 have -- like, if you have a suggestion --

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1 MR. LUKA: I mean, Chuck is covering a lot. So  
 2 I'm sure that I probably won't have --  
 3 THE WITNESS: Are you kind of, like -- are you  
 4 backing off of it?  
 5 MR. LUKA: Yeah. Yeah.  
 6 THE WITNESS: Okay. Good.  
 7 MR. LUKA: So I won't -- we won't re- -- re-go  
 8 over most of this stuff, but I'll probably have some  
 9 additional questions.  
 10 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 11 MR. MELTZ: If he asks the same questions that  
 12 I did, I'll object.  
 13 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 14 MR. LUKA: Yeah. We will not go through all of  
 15 this again. Trust me.  
 16 MR. MELTZ: But what we can do -- and this is  
 17 really kind of your preference -- we can --  
 18 MS. KELLY: Do you want to go off the record?  
 19 MR. MELTZ: Yeah. Go off the record.  
 20 (Whereupon, an off-the-record discussion was  
 21 held.) you.  
 22 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken at 11:54  
 23 a.m., and the deposition resumed at 12:48 p.m.)  
 24 MR. MELTZ: Let's go back on.  
 25

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1 BY MR. MELTZ:  
 2 Q So, Ms. Schmidt, where we left off, before we  
 3 took the lunch break, we were talking about how you first  
 4 became aware that Mr. Bertolino made some type of  
 5 statement or press release on September 14th.  
 6 And what we then did is I marked, as Exhibit 1,  
 7 a composite grouping of various text messages. And, in  
 8 particular, I'd like to turn your attention to Page 100.  
 9 A Uh-huh.  
 10 Q So can you, first of all, tell me, Page 100,  
 11 who's texting whom, if you can tell, on Page 100 of  
 12 Exhibit 1?  
 13 A It looks like I am texting Joe. I would be on  
 14 the left side. His texts would be on the right side.  
 15 Q And it's hard to tell from the quality of the  
 16 image --  
 17 A Uh-huh.  
 18 Q -- but it appears that there is some typed  
 19 words in the middle of the text and then, right  
 20 underneath, it says, "Lawyers statement."  
 21 Do you see that?  
 22 A Yeah. It's a photo of the statement probably  
 23 taken on the computer or something.  
 24 And then I said, "Lawyers statement," yes.  
 25 Q Okay. And then we can sort of make out the

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1 time and date stamp. It looks like it's September 14,  
 2 2021, at 2:26 p.m. Does that seem right?  
 3 A Yes.  
 4 Q Are you the one who took the photo of the  
 5 lawyer's statement?  
 6 A I may have. I don't know. I don't know if  
 7 someone sent that to me or if I took the photo. So I can  
 8 tell you I don't remember.  
 9 Q In this text, though, on Page 100, are you  
 10 sending the photo to Joe Petito?  
 11 A Yes.  
 12 Q And then it says "Lawyers statement." And then  
 13 in the next block, is that your text?  
 14 A Yes.  
 15 Q What do you say there?  
 16 A "Would you like to issue a written response  
 17 statement to their statement?"  
 18 Q Why did you ask that question?  
 19 A Because we would always communicate whether or  
 20 not we wanted to come out with a response, and then we  
 21 would consult Rick.  
 22 Q Getting back to enlisting Rick Stafford to  
 23 help.  
 24 A Uh-huh.  
 25 Q Were you getting such a volume of media

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1 inquiries and requests for comment and interviews and  
 2 things like that that you needed Rick to sort of filter  
 3 all of that to then present it to you? Was that what he  
 4 was doing?  
 5 A Yes. Some of them had my number. I don't know  
 6 how they got it. I may have communicated with a couple  
 7 of them. But we started to tell them at some point,  
 8 Please call this number.  
 9 Q "This number" being Rick?  
 10 A Rick, yes.  
 11 Q Or Mr. Stafford?  
 12 A Mr. Stafford.  
 13 Q Did you have a sense, around September 13th and  
 14 September 14th, the volume of requests that Mr. Stafford  
 15 was fielding on your behalf?  
 16 A I don't know specifically but a lot.  
 17 Q By September 14th, were you spending a  
 18 significant portion of your day participating in some  
 19 form of interview or effort to get the word of Gabby's  
 20 disappearance out there?  
 21 A Yes.  
 22 Q Do you have a sense, either in terms of number,  
 23 like, how many interviews you may have been doing a day  
 24 back then or how many hours you were spending doing them?  
 25 A I would probably say two to three a day.

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1 Q Two to three interviews a day?  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q That would be broadcast interviews?  
 4 A Yes. Or some was written, so they would, like,  
 5 talk to me and -- and then it would be a written  
 6 interview, so it wasn't, like, video.  
 7 Q Do you know if you received the typed statement  
 8 in Exhibit 1, Page 100, from Mr. Stafford?  
 9 A That's a possibility.  
 10 Q Did you -- well, when you got it, did you read  
 11 it?  
 12 A Yes.  
 13 Q Did you read it by the text picture or did you  
 14 go find it somewhere else online?  
 15 A I don't remember.  
 16 Q Separate and apart from texting the typed  
 17 statement to Joe Petito, did you call him after you sent  
 18 it to talk about it?  
 19 A I don't remember.  
 20 Q When you say in the text message "Lawyers  
 21 statement," you understood at the time that the statement  
 22 was being issued by a lawyer for the Laundrie family?  
 23 A Yes.  
 24 Q How did you have that understanding?  
 25 A Probably from Rick -- Richard Stafford.

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1 Q Do you recall where you were when you read the  
 2 statement for the first time?  
 3 A I believe I was home.  
 4 Q Did you hear about the statement first and then  
 5 read it, or did you become fully aware of it when you  
 6 read it?  
 7 A I don't remember.  
 8 Q After reading the statement for the first time,  
 9 what was your -- or what were your thoughts or  
 10 impressions after reading it?  
 11 A It was upsetting to me.  
 12 Q In what way?  
 13 A In my mind, they had more information to give  
 14 and all they chose to say was this.  
 15 Q Was the thought process that Brian was with  
 16 Gabby at some point; he's now back; we don't know where  
 17 she is; surely someone at the Laundries' knows something  
 18 about what happened?  
 19 A Yes.  
 20 Q And the statement that's set forth in  
 21 Exhibit 1, Page 100, doesn't answer any of those  
 22 questions?  
 23 A Correct.  
 24 Q The fact that it didn't answer any of those  
 25 questions -- where did you last see Gabby, how was she,

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1 why are you home, why do you have the van, all of those  
 2 types of questions -- the lack of any explanation in the  
 3 statement, did -- did you find that upsetting?  
 4 A Of course.  
 5 Q At the time, while you were receiving, either  
 6 directly or through Mr. Stafford, various media  
 7 inquiries, did you have a sense as to whether the  
 8 Laundrie family was receiving similar media inquiries?  
 9 A I didn't know if they were or not.  
 10 Q And I asked this earlier about an earlier day,  
 11 but by the time we get to the 14th, when you're talking  
 12 with media or -- or people like that, are any of those  
 13 media people telling you, We've tried to reach out to the  
 14 Laundries for comment and they're not giving us anything?  
 15 A I don't remember.  
 16 Q As we get to September 14th, separate and apart  
 17 from the interviews that you're doing, are you still kind  
 18 of active on social media, whether it's Facebook or  
 19 Instagram or if you signed up for anything else at that  
 20 point, Twitter?  
 21 A Yes.  
 22 Q Do you see that people -- or did you see -- let  
 23 me ask it more open-ended.  
 24 When would you look at social media, at this  
 25 point in time through September 14th, are you seeing

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1 people posting comments about the Laundrie family and  
 2 their reluctance to share information?  
 3 A I believe I was, yes.  
 4 Q In terms of how you were reading the public  
 5 sentiment around the time of September 14th, 2021, if you  
 6 saw comments about the Laundrie family, did you come  
 7 across any that were positive, or were they all  
 8 basically, you know, I can't believe they're not saying  
 9 anything; they need to know -- share what they know?  
 10 A They were mostly that, that they don't know  
 11 anything. Why aren't they saying anything?  
 12 Q Do you recall ever seeing, while Gabby was  
 13 missing, any social media post that was supportive or  
 14 complimentary of the Laundrie family at all?  
 15 A Yeah. There was a couple.  
 16 Q Few and far between?  
 17 A Yes.  
 18 Q Where we see, on Page 100, where it says:  
 19 "Would you like to issue a written response statement to  
 20 that statement" --  
 21 A Uh-huh.  
 22 Q -- and then there's a box that starts --  
 23 A Yep.  
 24 Q I think if you turn to the next page -- is this  
 25 Joe's response?

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1 A That's still me.  
 2 Q That's still you talking?  
 3 A Yes. Uh-huh.  
 4 Q Got it.  
 5 And what do you say?  
 6 A "I would like to say something along the lines  
 7 of...if you understand there's searching, then why aren't  
 8 you helping?"  
 9 Q What kind of help were you looking for?  
 10 A Just information that could lead us to where  
 11 she is, knowing if she's alive or not.  
 12 Q Did that desire to -- to ask for help -- did  
 13 that then lead to a statement or a letter that was issued  
 14 by Mr. Stafford?  
 15 A I don't know. I believe so. I can't remember  
 16 specifically.  
 17 Q The reason I ask is, the thing we see next,  
 18 after the "I would like to say something" box, is -- it  
 19 looks like the contact information for Rick Stafford?  
 20 A Yes. I was giving that to Joe.  
 21 Q Did Joe ever text you back with his thoughts on  
 22 the statement that you forwarded him?  
 23 A I wouldn't remember that.  
 24 Q Okay. I -- I didn't --  
 25 A It's a long time ago.

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1 Q I -- I -- I didn't notice it right away. Do  
 2 you recall speaking with Joe about the statement for the  
 3 first time?  
 4 A We spoke a lot, so -- probably did, yes.  
 5 Q Got it.  
 6 And so what I'm trying to find out -- and you  
 7 may have no recollection of it, but after texting Joe the  
 8 statement, do you have a recollection of having your  
 9 first conversation with Joe Petito about the statement  
 10 that you just sent him?  
 11 A I don't remember.  
 12 Q If you -- do you assume you had a conversation  
 13 with Joe Petito about the statement that you sent over?  
 14 A I mean, it's hard to assume; right? I don't  
 15 remember.  
 16 I know that I talked to quite a few people  
 17 about that statement because it was the first statement  
 18 and it was upsetting.  
 19 Q Did you talk with law enforcement about the  
 20 statement?  
 21 A I don't remember.  
 22 Q Once you read the statement that's included in  
 23 the texts on Page 100 to Exhibit 1, was there some  
 24 specific course of action that you took next? In other  
 25 words, you've now read the statement that Mr. Bertolino

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1 issued on September 14, 2021. After reading it, you then  
2 did something specific because you had just read the  
3 statement?  
4 A I know my blood was boiling, so I -- I can't  
5 remember specifically what I did. But I do remember  
6 being super upset. I can't forget my emotions. Okay.  
7 So I'm thinking back. I don't remember times; I don't  
8 remember dates. But I remember my emotions. That pissed  
9 me off.  
10 Q In terms of -- of what pissed you off about the  
11 statement, was it after not saying anything for -- for  
12 some period of time, now the Laundries, through their  
13 attorney, said something, but the thing they said didn't  
14 answer any of your questions?  
15 A Correct. It almost felt like, you know, Oh,  
16 good luck to you. Like, they were just brushing her off  
17 as if she never existed.  
18 Q I'm going to hand you, Ms. Schmidt, what we're  
19 going to mark as Exhibit 2, which is the Second Amended  
20 Complaint in the matter.  
21 (Second Amended Complaint was marked  
22 Defendant/Bertolino's Exhibit 2 for identification.)  
23 BY MR. MELTZ:  
24 Q And I'm going to draw your attention to a  
25 particular section. If you turn to Page 5, you should

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1 see a Paragraph 35.  
2 A Uh-huh.  
3 Q And this talks about a letter that Attorney  
4 Richard Stafford issued on behalf of Gabrielle Petito's  
5 family.  
6 Do you see that?  
7 A Yes.  
8 Q This is the same Rick Stafford who we've been  
9 talking about earlier --  
10 A Yes.  
11 Q -- who was giving assistance to you and Joe  
12 when Gabby went missing?  
13 A Correct.  
14 Q What was the purpose of having Mr. Stafford  
15 issue a letter on September 16, 2021?  
16 A I guess we were just trying to beg for  
17 information based on the fact that that previous  
18 statement didn't give us anything.  
19 Q Do you know how the letter from Mr. Stafford  
20 was delivered or published?  
21 A I'm not sure. I know there was a press  
22 conference. I just don't know if it was for this  
23 particular statement. I think he had a press conference  
24 for the statement.  
25 Q Do you recall if Mr. Stafford read the

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1 statement out loud at the press conference?  
2 A I believe so.  
3 Q Were you physically present for that press  
4 conference?  
5 A No.  
6 Q Did you attend by remote means?  
7 A Yes. I watched it from home.  
8 Q In terms of the statement that's described in  
9 Paragraph 35 of Exhibit 2, did you participate in writing  
10 it?  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q Did Joe participate in writing it?  
13 A Yes.  
14 Q Was there a reason that the letter, which is  
15 the statement Mr. Stafford puts together on September 16,  
16 2021, was not sent directly to the Laundries but rather  
17 shared at a press conference?  
18 A I don't know that reason.  
19 Q Do you recall if the -- the general thought you  
20 had at the time was, They've been ignoring my calls; if  
21 we send them a letter, why would they read that? So why  
22 don't we just put it out there in the press so that  
23 there's more of an urgency for the Laundries to respond?  
24 A Honestly, I don't remember what I was thinking  
25 at the time. I was just very upset. I can't be

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1 specific -- my memory.  
2 Q The letter that Mr. Stafford issued on your  
3 behalf and Joe's behalf on September 16, 2021, as it gets  
4 near the end, it says: "Please, if you or your family  
5 have any decency left, please tell us where Gabby is  
6 located."  
7 A Uh-huh.  
8 Q Do you see that?  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q As of September 16, 2021, was Gabby's location  
11 still unknown to you?  
12 A Correct.  
13 Q As of September 16th, 2021, were you even sure  
14 where the search for Gabby should be conducted?  
15 A We believed it was in Wyoming, in her last  
16 known location.  
17 Q Why did you believe that?  
18 A Because the FBI was there, I guess. That's  
19 where they were looking.  
20 Q When did you learn that the FBI was looking for  
21 Gabby in Wyoming?  
22 A I don't remember.  
23 Q Was that something you knew at least by  
24 September 14th?  
25 A I don't remember the date.

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1 Q The next line is: "Tell us if we are even  
 2 looking in the right place." Correct?  
 3 A Yes.  
 4 Q Again, because you weren't sure?  
 5 A Correct.  
 6 Q Finally, it says: "All we want is Gabby to  
 7 come home. Please help us make that happen." Right?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q What did you mean by "come home"?  
 10 A Just -- I just wanted her back. Whether she  
 11 was alive or not, we just wanted her back.  
 12 Q To take a total left turn on you, I notice you  
 13 have a -- a bracelet with Gabby's name on it.  
 14 A Uh-huh.  
 15 Q What is that?  
 16 A That's the foundation.  
 17 Q What's the name of the foundation?  
 18 A Gabby Petito Foundation.  
 19 Q When was that created?  
 20 A In October of 2021.  
 21 Q Does it still exist?  
 22 A Yes.  
 23 Q What does the Gabby Petito Foundation do?  
 24 A We work with domestic violence agencies and  
 25 missing persons organizations and search and rescue and

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1 stuff like that.  
 2 Q I noticed from some of the information that I  
 3 think we got from -- from you and Mr. Petito in this  
 4 case, that there was a lot of frustration about Gabby  
 5 being over the age of 18 and that making the whole  
 6 reporting and starting the search process harder.  
 7 Was that what you generally encountered?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q Have you and Mr. Petito spent time working with  
 10 groups and agencies to try to change that rule or law?  
 11 A Yes.  
 12 Q How is that going?  
 13 A It's going pretty well.  
 14 Q The activism that you've been undertaking with  
 15 domestic violence and people who are missing, has that --  
 16 has that helped make dealing with Gabby's loss, in some  
 17 way, slightly better?  
 18 A I don't know what the right wording is. It's,  
 19 like, making a difference in her name, sort of, yes.  
 20 Q Jumping ahead a little bit, at some point in  
 21 time, did you start some counseling to help deal with the  
 22 issues involving Gabby's disappearance and death?  
 23 A Yes.  
 24 Q Who is your counselor?  
 25 A Georgia -- I cannot pronounce her last name.

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1 Q Does it begin with a K?  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q We'll call her "Georgia K." for right now.  
 4 A Georgia K. is fine.  
 5 Q Do you still see Georgia K.?  
 6 A On an as-needed basis, yes. We Zoom because  
 7 she's up in New York.  
 8 Q Other than Georgia K., since Gabby first  
 9 disappeared, have you sought out any other mental health  
 10 support or counseling?  
 11 A No.  
 12 Q Do you currently take any prescription  
 13 medications for stress, anxiety, depression, anything  
 14 like that?  
 15 A Just, like, vitamins, like antistress vitamins  
 16 such as magnesium and stuff like that.  
 17 Q Has that been true for the last couple of  
 18 years, or, for some period of time, were you on any type  
 19 of prescription medications?  
 20 A I was never on any prescription meds.  
 21 Q Getting back to September 16, 2021, did the  
 22 letter published at the press conference by Mr. Stafford  
 23 result in any new information being provided by the  
 24 Laundrie family?  
 25 A No.

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1 Q At some point in time before Gabby was  
 2 discovered, did you ever learn that Brian Laundrie was no  
 3 longer at his parents' home, prospectively, while this  
 4 was all going on?  
 5 A Yes, and I don't remember the date. I don't  
 6 remember the date, but yes.  
 7 Q Do you remember how you learned it?  
 8 A Yes. Specifically because my husband was doing  
 9 an interview on -- with Chris Cuomo, and they had to  
 10 report it live that moment while he was doing his  
 11 interview. And Chris Cuomo apologized and said, I'm  
 12 sorry; we just found out that, you know, Brian is  
 13 actually missing. That's how we found out that he was no  
 14 longer home.  
 15 Q Did you ever have a conversation, before Gabby  
 16 was found, with law enforcement where either you  
 17 discussed with law enforcement that Brian was no longer  
 18 home or someone in law enforcement told you that?  
 19 A I don't think so. I don't remember.  
 20 Q When you found out that Brian was no longer at  
 21 home, what thoughts or feelings did you have about that?  
 22 A I thought that he was sent somewhere. I  
 23 thought they protected him, that he was at another  
 24 country. Like, I thought he left.  
 25 Q To paraphrase that, when you -- when you found

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1 out that Brian was no longer at home, was your first  
 2 thought, His parents are helping him hide or get away?  
 3 A I thought it was a possibility, yes.  
 4 Q At some point in time, do you learn that Brian  
 5 is dead?  
 6 A After Gabby.  
 7 Q Yes?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q Do you remember how you learned that Brian was  
 10 dead?  
 11 A Probably the media, but I don't remember.  
 12 Q When you learned that Brian had died, did you  
 13 reach out to his parents at all for any reason?  
 14 A No.  
 15 Q Did you make any statement about Brian's death  
 16 either directly or through Mr. Stafford?  
 17 A I don't remember.  
 18 Q Do you recall if Joe Petito made any statements  
 19 about Brian's death either directly or through the media?  
 20 A I'm not sure.  
 21 Q When you found out that Brian was dead, what  
 22 were your immediate thoughts and feelings about that?  
 23 A This answer might seem strange, but I was sad  
 24 because I knew Brian. I was angry because of what he  
 25 did, and I was also angry that he took the coward's way

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1 out.  
 2 Q "Taking the coward's way out," meaning he never  
 3 took responsibility for his actions?  
 4 A Correct.  
 5 Q Did you ever have any car- -- sorry.  
 6 Did you ever have any conversations or  
 7 correspondence with anyone in law enforcement in which  
 8 you asked the question or they volunteered to you whether  
 9 Brian's parents had assisted him in trying to evade  
 10 responsibility or flee or anything like that?  
 11 A I don't remember.  
 12 Q At some point in time, did you have a meeting  
 13 with the representatives of the FBI in Tampa?  
 14 A Yes.  
 15 Q How did that come to get set up?  
 16 A They offered to set it up, so...  
 17 Q At what point in time? Is this -- this is  
 18 after Gabby has been found; correct?  
 19 A Uh-huh.  
 20 Q Yes?  
 21 A Yes, and after Brian as well.  
 22 I don't remember when it was. I want to say it  
 23 was in late November of 2021, but it could have been  
 24 later than that. Sorry about my memory.  
 25 Q No worries.

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1 What -- what do you remember, though, was the  
 2 purpose of the meeting?  
 3 A They wanted to just go over the whole case from  
 4 how they -- all the evidence that they had had and what  
 5 they had figured out.  
 6 Q You were still living in Blue Point at the  
 7 time?  
 8 A Yes.  
 9 Q Did they actually fly you in to Tampa for the  
 10 meeting?  
 11 A They -- they -- they refunded some of it. They  
 12 didn't pay for the whole thing.  
 13 Q Did the meeting occur?  
 14 A Yes.  
 15 Q Who did you meet with at the FBI's Tampa  
 16 office?  
 17 A Oh, God. You make me remember names.  
 18 Brian Gee was there, whoever the head guy was at the  
 19 time, but I think he retired, and a woman -- she was the  
 20 lead on the case at the time. And I -- my brain is  
 21 blank. Loretta. I don't remember her last name. Her  
 22 name's Loretta.  
 23 And there was a bunch of other people there.  
 24 Our advocates were there. Rita, Sarah. I think there  
 25 was somebody else there, but names are not there.

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1 Q It was a big group?  
 2 A It was a big group, yes.  
 3 Q Was there someone who seemed to be in charge of  
 4 the meeting on the side of the FBI?  
 5 A Loretta.  
 6 Q How long did that meeting last?  
 7 A I would say approximately three hours.  
 8 Q Was it a combination of people in the FBI  
 9 telling you things and showing you things, or was it all  
 10 just a discussion?  
 11 A It was a packet and they were going through the  
 12 timeline.  
 13 Q Was the packet a timeline of the investigation  
 14 that the FBI performed, as best you understood it?  
 15 A Yes.  
 16 Q Did the packet mention Brian's parents?  
 17 A Yes. I'm trying to think of what else was in  
 18 there. The letter that Roberta wrote was in there.  
 19 There was an email. They mentioned phone -- phone call  
 20 timestamps and the back-and-forth phone calls between the  
 21 parents and Brian.  
 22 Q So at the three-hour-or-so meeting in Tampa,  
 23 after the fact, after Gabby had been discovered, after  
 24 Brian had been discovered, in going through the  
 25 information with the FBI, within that information they



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1 told you about phone records they had obtained between  
 2 Brian and his parents?  
 3 A Not really the records, but they were talking  
 4 about the amount of times the phone calls were. Like --  
 5 like, it was an hour-long phone call or -- and how many  
 6 phone calls there were, yeah.  
 7 Q The point being, though, it was clear to you  
 8 that someone at the FBI had actually looked up and  
 9 investigated calls between Brian and his parents?  
 10 A Correct.  
 11 Q Did they explain to you how they did that?  
 12 A I -- they probably did. I don't know.  
 13 Q That's okay.  
 14 A With their technology, yeah.  
 15 Q Did the FBI talk about their efforts to  
 16 interview Brian's parents?  
 17 A I don't remember.  
 18 Q Did the FBI talk about their search of the van?  
 19 A Yes. A little bit.  
 20 Q As part of the timeline, did the FBI  
 21 reconstruct or try to reconstruct where Brian's  
 22 whereabouts or location was at any particular point in  
 23 time?  
 24 A Yes. They tracked him from Wyoming to Florida.  
 25 Q Did that include tracking Brian from Wyoming to

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1 his parents' house in Florida?  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q And then leaving his parents' house in Florida?  
 4 A No. That wasn't part of the tracking.  
 5 Q Okay.  
 6 A The leaving -- the leaving part wasn't part of  
 7 the tracking.  
 8 Q Were you given information by the FBI as to  
 9 when they believed Brian left his parents' house?  
 10 A Yes.  
 11 Q Was the FBI able to share with you the content  
 12 of any communication? So, in other words, they -- they  
 13 told you, We -- we can see there was an hour-long call  
 14 between Brian and his mom on a particular date. Could  
 15 they tell you what they talked about?  
 16 A No.  
 17 Q To this day, have you ever heard any phone call  
 18 between Brian and his mother between August 27th, 2021,  
 19 and the time that Gabby was found?  
 20 A No.  
 21 Q The same question except between Brian and his  
 22 father. Have you ever heard any phone calls or  
 23 communications, oral communications, involving those two  
 24 individuals?  
 25 A No.

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1 Q In your conversations with the FBI in Tampa  
 2 after the fact, did the FBI ever share with you their  
 3 belief about information that may have been exchanged  
 4 between Brian and his parents?  
 5 A No.  
 6 Q Did you ask that question?  
 7 A No, because I know you can't get information  
 8 from phone calls. Like, you don't know what they talked  
 9 about, you know.  
 10 Q At the meeting in Tampa with the FBI --  
 11 A Yeah.  
 12 Q -- did you ask anyone at the FBI a question  
 13 along the lines of, Do you think Brian's parents knew?  
 14 A I don't remember.  
 15 Q Do you remember if anyone at the FBI  
 16 proactively brought that subject up and then shared what  
 17 they thought?  
 18 A No. I don't remember.  
 19 Q At the meeting with the FBI in Tampa, after the  
 20 events, did you discuss at all with anyone at the FBI the  
 21 August 12th situation in Moab?  
 22 A I don't recall.  
 23 Q All right. We -- we backed up -- or I jumped  
 24 ahead a lot, actually, because we were talking about  
 25 September 16 and Mr. Stafford's statement.

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1 A Uh-huh.  
 2 Q Between September 16, 2021, and September 19,  
 3 2021, did you receive, review, or come across any other  
 4 written statements from Mr. Bertolino on behalf of the  
 5 Laundrie family?  
 6 A I'm sorry. Between what dates?  
 7 Q Between -- well, let me go with September 14  
 8 through September 18.  
 9 A I don't specifically remember because I know  
 10 that there were other ones. I just don't remember the  
 11 dates of them.  
 12 Q Do any of them stand out in your mind today?  
 13 A The -- the 14th one is the only one I really --  
 14 that stands out.  
 15 Q As we get into September 17, which is the day  
 16 after Mr. Stafford's press conference, and then into the  
 17 18th, are you and Joe still doing interviews?  
 18 A Probably, yes.  
 19 Q Do you ever remember the media interest  
 20 subsiding before Gabby was found, or was it -- once it  
 21 started, while she was still missing, was it pretty firm?  
 22 A It seemed to keep going on through after they  
 23 found Brian and started to die down after that.  
 24 Q Even through that point?  
 25 A Yeah. Yes.

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1 Q Do you remember when Brian was found?

2 A October -- I forgot the date.

3 Q How did you find out that Gabby had been

4 located?

5 A So I was sitting with Rick Stafford in my

6 kitchen because Jim, my husband, had called from Wyoming

7 and said, Are you -- I need to have a phone call with you

8 all. And we made sure that it was all of us, Joe, Tara,

9 myself, Jim, and Rick. And --

10 Q Were you all physically together?

11 A No. It was just --

12 Q It was like a conference call?

13 A Yes. Me, Rick, Jim was in Wyoming, and Joe and

14 Tara were in Florida. And he told us that they -- they

15 located her, and it was the Teton County Search and

16 Rescue that located her.

17 Q Had Jim gone out to Wyoming to try and help

18 with the search?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Did you have any other friends or family that

21 went out to Wyoming with Jim or met Jim there?

22 A Yeah. His friend Gary went with him.

23 Q What's Gary's last name?

24 A Rider, R-I-D-E-R.

25 Q Do you recall -- when Jim went to Wyoming, was

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1 he going to a specific location, or was he going to meet

2 with people and then maybe get directed to a specific

3 location?

4 A They were going to Jackson Hole. I guess they

5 were trying to figure out where she was going to be

6 located. He did speak to law enforcement out there.

7 They were helping.

8 Q Where she was ultimately found, was that a

9 place that you knew she either had visited or would be

10 visiting on the itinerary?

11 A No.

12 Q When you received the news from Jim that Gabby

13 had been located but she was not alive -- and I'm trying

14 to find a different word than "surprised" because that's

15 a terrible word to use here -- but were you -- were you

16 surprised that she had been found and was no longer

17 alive?

18 A I wouldn't say surprised.

19 Q I didn't like that word either.

20 A It's just shock.

21 Q The reality of it?

22 A Yes.

23 Q It -- it went from something that was

24 conceptual to something that was real?

25 A Correct.

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1 Q When you received the call from Jim, did you

2 receive any information as part of that call that

3 convinced you that whatever had happened to Gabby, Brian

4 did it?

5 A That's a specific question. So, no, it wasn't

6 like he knew how she passed. So no.

7 Q Okay. Did there come to be a point in time in

8 which you did receive information from some source,

9 whether it's the medical examiner or law enforcement or

10 anyone else, where someone told you, This is how we

11 believe the cause of death occurred?

12 A Yes.

13 Q How long after the 19th did you get that

14 information?

15 A Maybe a week, week and a half.

16 Q How did you get that information?

17 A I believe it was the FBI. They let us know

18 preemptively before their press conference what had

19 happened.

20 Q Do you recall who you spoke with at the FBI

21 about the cause of Gabby's death?

22 A Yes. I don't remember his name. He was out in

23 Wyoming. I can't -- I'm sorry. I just don't remember

24 his name.

25 Q That's all right.

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1 A Yeah.

2 Q What do you remember that FBI agent from

3 Wyoming telling you about Gabby's death?

4 A That the cause of death was strangulation.

5 Q Did the FBI agent at that time tell you they

6 had any suspects?

7 A I don't remember.

8 Q In terms of whatever conclusions you were

9 drawing in your own mind, were you thinking that anyone

10 other than Brian was the cause of Gabby's death at that

11 time?

12 A No.

13 Q Based on everything you knew, it had to be

14 Brian?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Was your -- was that basically the same thought

17 you had when you found out Gabby was dead on the 19th?

18 A Yes.

19 Q It was Brian?

20 A Yes.

21 Q In terms of your sense of sadness and loss, did

22 finding Gabby make that any better at all or did it just

23 change it from being sad and upset about the uncertainty

24 to being sad and upset about the outcome?

25 A My emotions didn't change much. I was

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1 consistently in shock, upset, angry.

2 Q In terms of what you were angry about or who

3 you were angry with, help me understand that, when

4 Gabby's body is discovered. What -- what -- when you're

5 feeling this anger, is it anger at the situation? Is it

6 anger at the unfairness? Is it anger at Brian?

7 A All of it, plus I would say my anger was more

8 geared towards Brian and his -- it's funny because I -- I

9 always tell people this. I was actually more angry at

10 his parents than him, even though he did it, because I

11 felt like why didn't they help.

12 And it's hard, because he's sitting here, but

13 obviously I was really angry that he was helping them as

14 well.

15 Q Mr. Bertolino?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And when you say you were angry at

18 Mr. Bertolino for helping them, what do you mean by that?

19 A I mean, he's acting as their attorney, so he's

20 obviously guiding them. And I felt like if they know,

21 then he knows and everybody knows, and they're just

22 working together at that point. So that upset me.

23 Q If -- if -- if time could be turned back and --

24 not back far enough where Gabby's death could be

25 prevented but now we're in this time frame where it's

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1 September 14, 2021, and the Laundries had said something

2 different, what is it that you would have wanted them to

3 say?

4 A That's hard. That's hard to answer because I

5 don't -- I don't know. Whatever information they had, it

6 would have been nice if they shared it.

7 Q Have you -- have you tried to imagine or

8 envision how things could have been different if Gabby's

9 parents would have shared more information -- sorry -- if

10 Brian's parents would have shared more information?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And what is the information that -- when you

13 think about it, what is the information that you wanted

14 to hear from them?

15 A Well, I would want them to turn him in, first

16 of all, and share whatever he told them.

17 So the 14th was past that point, although he

18 just -- it would have been nice for them to just help.

19 She was supposed to be their daughter-in-law, so...

20 Q And I'm not suggesting that there was any

21 requirement for you to do what I'm about to say or -- or

22 that it was right or needed in any way, but while this

23 was going on, did you ever try to put yourself in the

24 mindset of Brian's parents and try to imagine what it was

25 like to be in their position during all of this?

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1 A Yes. That's why I couldn't figure out how they

2 weren't talking because, in my mind, that's what I would

3 do.

4 Q If Brian's parents would have reached out to

5 you and said, Nichole, he's not talking to us, we don't

6 know what happened, would you have believed them?

7 A I don't know.

8 Q When you say "turn Brian in," at some point in

9 time, law enforcement knew Brian was home at the house

10 from what you were told; correct?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Do you know why they just didn't arrest him?

13 A Well, they didn't have a crime.

14 Q Would you agree with me that, if Brian didn't

15 tell his parents he committed a crime, they didn't have a

16 crime to turn him in for either?

17 A I agree with that.

18 Q Is the premise, though, you just cannot believe

19 he didn't tell him?

20 A It just doesn't make sense, correct. Why not

21 ask him to talk if he didn't -- if they didn't know

22 anything, why not ask?

23 Q And what I'm trying to do is -- and tell me if

24 I'm off base on this -- from your perspective, Brian

25 leaves with Gabby. They're on this trip. You know about

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1 the August 12th incident at a minimum. Gabby can't be

2 found. Brian's back with her van and isn't saying

3 anything.

4 And when you put all of those things together,

5 you say to yourself, There's no good explanation for

6 this; is that fair?

7 A I don't know if "there's no good explanation"

8 is the right wording.

9 Q Okay. What's a better description?

10 A It was -- none of it made sense, but if you

11 look at the big picture of him being home with the van

12 without her, that makes sense. It's obvious.

13 Q All right.

14 A Yeah.

15 Q It was obvious to you?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay.

18 A And everybody else.

19 Q Right. And so I guess my question is -- I

20 don't guess my question -- my question is: Law

21 enforcement knows that exact same set of facts?

22 A Yes.

23 Q They know where Brian is; right? At least for

24 some period of time?

25 A Supposedly.

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1 Q But they don't arrest him?

2 A Right.

3 Q And from your perspective, even if Brian hadn't

4 said anything to his mom and dad directly, they knew that

5 same set of facts and they should have turned him in?

6 A I think that they would have questioned things.

7 It didn't make any sense. If I'm them, where is Gabby?

8 My future daughter-in-law, where is she? So...

9 Q And I'm still with you.

10 A Uh-huh.

11 Q And if -- and this is a big if. If Brian

12 doesn't answer, changes the subject, says "I don't want

13 to talk about that," what is it you think Brian's parents

14 should have then done?

15 A I don't know.

16 Q Another, kind of, hypothetical, because we're

17 just asking those types of questions, if Brian's parents

18 did have a conversation with Brian and said, Brian, I

19 don't know what happened, you're not talking to us, but

20 you need to go turn yourself in and tell law enforcement

21 what you know, and Brian says, I'll do it but I need a

22 few days, would that be understandable to you?

23 A No.

24 Q Just because the few days --

25 A There's a person missing.

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1 Q Have you ever had a situation with a close

2 friend or family member where they confided in you that

3 they had done something wrong and you turned them in for

4 something?

5 A No.

6 Q Just knowing yourself, if presented with that,

7 do you believe your first course of action would be to

8 try to get that person to do the right thing?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Getting back to the meeting with the FBI in

11 Tampa, at that meeting did they share with you any

12 evidence which led them to conclusively identify Brian is

13 the one who did this?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What was that?

16 A It was -- I can't remember how they explained

17 it all.

18 With their -- their cell phone tracking and

19 their pings and all that stuff and social media and all

20 the other evidence, that they watched him drive home and

21 he was texting, pretending that she was alive on his

22 phone; it just all added up that they believed he was the

23 main suspect.

24 Q Okay. And is that what they told you?

25 A Yes.

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1 Q Did Joe Petito attend that meeting as well?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Getting back to September 19th, on that date,

4 Mr. Bertolino issued another statement. And if you still

5 have Exhibit 2 --

6 A Yes.

7 Q -- it's Page 6, Paragraph 38, where the Second

8 Amended Complaint identifies it as, quote: "The news

9 about Gabby Petito is heartbreaking. The Laundrie family

10 prays for Gabby and her family," end quote.

11 Do you see that?

12 A Uh-huh. Yes.

13 Q Yes?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Did you actually know of that statement on

16 September 19, 2021?

17 A I don't remember.

18 Q Do you remember when you either heard it or saw

19 it for the first time?

20 A I don't remember when, but I did -- I did see

21 it and hear of it.

22 Q At some point?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Do you know how close in time it was to

25 September 19th? Was it that day or the next day or

Page 140

1 sometime later?

2 A I think it was either the day of or the day

3 after.

4 Q When you either read it or heard it or saw it

5 for the first time, what was your -- or what were your

6 thoughts and feelings in response to the statement: "The

7 news about Gabby Petito is heartbreaking. The Laundrie

8 family prays for Gabby and her family"?

9 A It just felt like it was just words. Not

10 sincere.

11 Q Was there any statement that you think

12 Mr. Bertolino could have issued at that time that would

13 have felt more sincere to you?

14 A No.

15 MR. MELTZ: All right. Let's take a short

16 break, and I'm probably getting really near the end,

17 too, just so you know.

18 THE WITNESS: Okay.

19 MR. MELTZ: But we're -- we're covering a lot

20 of ground, so thank you.

21 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken at

22 1:47 p.m., and the deposition resumed at 2:02 p.m.)

23 BY MR. MELTZ:

24 Q All right. Ms. Schmidt, I really just have a

25 couple questions just to make sure I've tied it all up.

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1 Getting back to the meeting with the FBI in  
2 Tampa, after both Brian and Gabby had been discovered,  
3 did the FBI share any information with you that suggested  
4 that Brian's parents had been trying to assist him to  
5 flee the area, flee the country, conceal the crime? Did  
6 the FBI share any of that type of information with you?  
7 A What they shared with us was the information  
8 that they had, which was the emails, phone calls, the  
9 letter that was written.  
10 And when they spoke to them, when he went  
11 missing, they shared that -- I'm trying to get the  
12 wording right. Hold on a second. The conversations they  
13 had with them were strange, that Christopher seemed very  
14 nervous, Roberta was very calm. They didn't really seem  
15 forthcoming about the information. They didn't seem  
16 concerned that he was missing.  
17 But, no, they didn't -- they didn't come out  
18 and say, The parents, they're looking, like, pretty  
19 guilty here. They didn't come out and say those words.  
20 Q Okay.  
21 A Yeah.  
22 Q And did you have some conversation with the FBI  
23 about what -- whether the FBI thought the parents had  
24 committed or aided and abetted some type of crime?  
25 A I don't remember. I don't believe so, but I

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1 don't remember. That -- that day was a lot.  
2 Q Understand.  
3 The FBI interview with the parents, Brian's  
4 parents --  
5 A Yes.  
6 Q -- that they described to you, was that before  
7 or after Gabby had been found?  
8 A It was after Gabby, before Brian.  
9 Q And, then, getting back to communications  
10 involving Mr. Bertolino, we talked about the  
11 September 14th one and we talked about the September 19th  
12 one.  
13 Was there ever a communication that  
14 Mr. Bertolino issued that was directed to you? In other  
15 words, not a statement for the public or a press release  
16 or news, but it was a statement directed specifically  
17 towards you?  
18 MR. REILLY: Objection to form.  
19 You can answer.  
20 THE WITNESS: I don't know. I don't -- I don't  
21 remember.  
22 BY MR. MELTZ:  
23 Q It's okay. Let me ask -- let me ask a  
24 different way.  
25 A Okay.

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1 Q Did Mr. Bertolino ever, to your knowledge,  
2 contact you directly?  
3 A No.  
4 Q The September 14th statement that we described,  
5 and the texts, was that emailed to you or forwarded to  
6 you directly by Mr. Bertolino or someone in his office?  
7 A No.  
8 MR. MELTZ: Ms. Schmidt, that's all the  
9 questions that I have for you. Mr. Luka will have  
10 some.  
11 On a personal note, given the subject matter we  
12 had to talk about, I really appreciate your time  
13 through the process, and your first deposition ever  
14 is now almost over.  
15 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
16 MR. MELTZ: And there's no way it was an  
17 enjoyable experience, I'm assuming, but I hope it  
18 was, in some ways, a positive one. So thank you for  
19 your time with it.  
20 MR. LUKA: Hi. Good afternoon, Ms. Schmidt.  
21 THE WITNESS: Hi.  
22 MR. LUKA: I'm Matt Luka. I represent the  
23 Laundries.  
24 (Whereupon, an off-the-record discussion was  
25 held.)

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1 CROSS-EXAMINATION  
2 BY MR. LUKA:  
3 Q So, Mrs. Schmidt, thank you for being here. I  
4 know, just like Mr. Meltz said, these topics are very  
5 difficult for you. I want you to know that I have a lot  
6 of sympathy for you. I have a family too. I can't  
7 imagine the range of emotions that you've gone through.  
8 Now, as you know, I haven't come into this case  
9 until this lawsuit was filed and so I wasn't -- had no  
10 knowledge of everything that kind of preceded that.  
11 I don't know you and, really, the only thing I  
12 know about Gabby is what I've seen in the news.  
13 So is there anything that you would want me to  
14 know about Gabby?  
15 Please take your time. I know this is hard.  
16 I'm sorry.  
17 A Just she was strong-headed and wanted to -- she  
18 wanted to be successful. Whatever she did, she did it  
19 perfectly.  
20 She's helped a lot of people in her passing, so  
21 I'm proud of her.  
22 Q I appreciate you sharing that. Thank you. It  
23 does -- it does help.  
24 Now, we've already gone through a lot today,  
25 and I'm going to go through some more questions with you.

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1 And I do want to apologize in advance if any of my  
 2 questions seem like they're insensitive.  
 3 A Okay.  
 4 Q I don't intend that in any way. It's just a  
 5 very difficult subject matter, and, obviously, we're --  
 6 have a lawsuit here, so we kind of have to go through  
 7 this stuff.  
 8 And I -- I also know that you have strong  
 9 feelings about my clients. You may have strong feelings  
 10 about me.  
 11 Is there anything that you would just like to  
 12 say to me before we get started?  
 13 A No. I just think you're very nice.  
 14 Q I appreciate that.  
 15 MR. MELTZ: Hey, hey, hey.  
 16 MR. LUKA: Yeah. Yeah. Not as nice as  
 17 Mr. Meltz, but yeah.  
 18 THE WITNESS: But I get you guys are doing your  
 19 job.  
 20 BY MR. LUKA:  
 21 Q Yes. And, honestly, you are very nice as well,  
 22 and you've been very nice with us today, which we -- we  
 23 very much appreciate it because this could have been much  
 24 more difficult if you weren't such a nice person, so I  
 25 really appreciate that.

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1 MR. REILLY: I'm anxious to see if you say that  
 2 tomorrow.  
 3 THE WITNESS: You'd be surprised. You'd be  
 4 surprised.  
 5 MR. LUKA: Yeah. Tomorrow might be different.  
 6 BY MR. LUKA:  
 7 Q So when we left off with Mr. Meltz, he asked  
 8 you about an FBI meeting that occurred, after Gabby was  
 9 found but before Brian was found, where you discussed  
 10 some emails, phone calls.  
 11 A It was after Brian was found as well.  
 12 Q It was after?  
 13 A Yes.  
 14 Q Okay. I apologize.  
 15 A Just to correct you.  
 16 Q So -- and Mr. Meltz was asking you about  
 17 evidence of the possibility that Brian's parents may have  
 18 helped him flee.  
 19 And you mentioned that they showed you some  
 20 emails. What were those emails?  
 21 A I remember -- I don't know if it was more than  
 22 one. I remember a specific one. It was very cryptic.  
 23 It said something about how to get a stain out of a  
 24 shirt, and it was sent, I feel, like, maybe  
 25 September 28th or 29th, one of those days -- I'm sorry --

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1 August 28th or 29th, her email was sent to Brian. So...  
 2 But just that, the phone calls, they were kind  
 3 of alluding to "let's look at what's going on here,"  
 4 so...  
 5 Q Right. And I know you mentioned earlier that,  
 6 with regard to the phone calls, all you had was the --  
 7 the fact that a phone call occurred; there was actually  
 8 no substance that they had?  
 9 A Correct.  
 10 Q And they had -- you mentioned the one email  
 11 about removing the stain. Were there any other emails  
 12 that you -- that stick out in your mind?  
 13 A I don't remember.  
 14 Q About how many emails were there, if you  
 15 recall?  
 16 A It may have only been the one, to be honest.  
 17 I -- I don't remember.  
 18 Q And how about text messages? Were there any  
 19 text messages that were discussed?  
 20 A They did not show us text messages.  
 21 Q And did they indicate that they weren't showing  
 22 you text messages because there were no text messages or  
 23 they just didn't feel like they were of evidentiary  
 24 value?  
 25 A I don't know why. They just didn't -- didn't

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1 have them.  
 2 Q Now, I know you mentioned earlier that your --  
 3 your first contact with the media was somebody reaching  
 4 out to you to have a press conference where you could  
 5 promote the fact that Gabby was missing to try to get the  
 6 word out; is that right?  
 7 A Yes.  
 8 Q And that was September 11th or 12th?  
 9 A That was probably around the 12th or 13th.  
 10 Q And was that a local media outlet or was it a  
 11 national media outlet?  
 12 A It was New York national news.  
 13 Q And do you know if law enforcement had any role  
 14 in contacting the media?  
 15 A I don't believe so.  
 16 Q So when -- when you first discussed this case  
 17 with Detective Barry, Detective Barry didn't -- didn't  
 18 say to you that it might be helpful if the media was  
 19 aware of your story?  
 20 A No, she didn't.  
 21 Q Did she offer any assistance in trying to get  
 22 the word out about Gabby's disappearance, either through  
 23 the media or any other way?  
 24 A I don't believe so.  
 25 Q Did she make any recommendations to you about

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1 ways that you could -- that you could get the word out?  
 2 A I don't remember.  
 3 Q And I know you mentioned that your friend -- I  
 4 think her name was Jackie -- her husband was a police  
 5 officer --  
 6 A Right.  
 7 Q -- with the Suffolk County police.  
 8 A Uh-huh.  
 9 Q Is the Suffolk County police different than  
 10 the -- I'm going to pronounce this incorrectly -- Pat- --  
 11 Pat- --  
 12 A It was Pat- -- the Patchogue precinct is part  
 13 of the Suffolk County Police Department, yes.  
 14 Q And so then did Jackie's husband help you set  
 15 up the meeting with Detective Barry?  
 16 A He didn't set it up, but he told me to go. He  
 17 said, Just go there. Instead of calling, he said, Go.  
 18 Q Now, in that -- in that time frame of  
 19 September 11th, September 12th, did the -- did the  
 20 police -- whoever you talked to, whether it was Suffolk  
 21 County, FBI, did they give you any indication that Brian  
 22 was the primary suspect at that time?  
 23 A No. They didn't use those words because they  
 24 can't do that unless they have evidence.  
 25 Q So if they -- but putting aside the -- the sort

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1 of legal baggage that the term "suspect" carries, did  
 2 they say that he was the person of interest or use any  
 3 other terms to describe that he was going to be the focus  
 4 of their investigation?  
 5 A They were talking about him a lot, asking a lot  
 6 of questions about him. And I don't remember when it was  
 7 when he became a person of interest with her -- because  
 8 he used her -- her bank card or something. So he, at  
 9 that time, became -- I think there was a warrant out for  
 10 his arrest. I just don't remember the dates.  
 11 Q Okay. So when you say that "there was a  
 12 warrant out for his arrest," that -- that would have been  
 13 after September 12th-13th time frame; is that correct?  
 14 A Yes. It was -- I don't even remember if it was  
 15 after when she was found. I -- I'm just forgetting.  
 16 Q And the warrant -- like you said, the warrant  
 17 did not relate to Gabby's death; it related to the use of  
 18 the credit card?  
 19 A Correct.  
 20 Q And by the time -- if you recall, by the time  
 21 that warrant came out, had Brian already been missing?  
 22 A I believe so.  
 23 Q Now, I think you also said that, on your first  
 24 contact with the FBI, they discussed phone calls with  
 25 you?

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1 A No, not the first contact.  
 2 Q Okay. Not the first contact?  
 3 A That was at the meeting.  
 4 Q Okay. So that would have been actually weeks  
 5 later --  
 6 A Yes.  
 7 Q -- than your first contact.  
 8 So I -- so you don't know whether at the --  
 9 within the September 12th-13th time frame, whether the  
 10 FBI was in possession of anyone's phone records, whether  
 11 they be Brian's, the Laundrie parents', Gabby's, anybody?  
 12 A Correct.  
 13 Q Now, did the FBI ever discuss with you any  
 14 searches they conducted? And when I say "searches," I  
 15 don't mean necessarily the search for Gabby, but searches  
 16 for evidence, like searches of the van, searches of  
 17 property, things like that?  
 18 A They let us know that the van was searched and  
 19 that it was very clean. I don't remember when they went  
 20 to the house to get the items, but that was the only  
 21 other time they went with a warrant, to retrieve the  
 22 items from the house that came out of the van and that  
 23 belonged to Gabby and Brian.  
 24 Q So in terms -- in terms of search warrants,  
 25 they did execute a search warrant at the Laundries' --

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1 parents' house?  
 2 A Yes.  
 3 Q And did they execute a search warrant for the  
 4 van, or was the van already in their possession?  
 5 A They -- the night of the 11th, the van -- they  
 6 told the police they could take the van. They willingly  
 7 let the van go to the North Port police.  
 8 Q Okay. So the police did take possession of the  
 9 van that first contact with the Laundries on  
 10 September 11th?  
 11 A Yes.  
 12 Q Now, were there any other -- any other search  
 13 warrants, as far as you know, for any other areas,  
 14 what- -- whatever they might be, anything in Wyoming, any  
 15 place in New York, anything like that?  
 16 A I am not sure.  
 17 Q So, obviously, you've said today that you were  
 18 hoping that the Laundries or Brian would come forward  
 19 with information. And you said that you were unsure  
 20 whether the authorities were trying to contact Brian or  
 21 the Laundries in order to do that. At least you were --  
 22 you -- I think you said that you weren't sure if they  
 23 were doing that.  
 24 A I just don't remember.  
 25 Q Okay.

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1 A No.

2 Q How about -- do you know if the media was

3 putting pressure on the Laundries to make a statement?

4 A I -- I don't know. I was focusing on our side

5 of things.

6 Q What -- on your side of things, were you

7 hopeful that -- whether it be law enforcement or the

8 media, that outside forces would put pressure on the

9 Laundries to make some kind of statement?

10 A I think I would have been -- I was hopeful that

11 the police were doing their job. I didn't care if the

12 media were doing anything. I just wanted the police to

13 do their job.

14 Q Now, you did seem to mention earlier that you

15 were not satisfied with what the North Port police had

16 done, that you felt like the FBI had done a better job;

17 is that correct?

18 A For the most part, yes.

19 Q Okay. What -- what is it that the North Port

20 police did not do that you wish they had done?

21 A They never actually physically saw Brian. So

22 it would have been nice if they just knew that he was

23 actually there. Because they didn't even know he went

24 missing. They would have seen him leave, apparently.

25 They told us they were watching the house, but they

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1 didn't see him leave, so...

2 Q And did -- when Brian left the house, did he

3 leave in a car?

4 A That was the story that was told.

5 Q And, now, at -- in that time frame of, let's

6 say, you know, September 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, there

7 were news vans parked outside the Laundries' property; is

8 that correct?

9 A Probably.

10 Q I know -- were you -- were you following the

11 news very closely?

12 A Yes. Yes, I was.

13 And WFLA, which, I guess, is the local news

14 station around here, was the one that I would watch the

15 most. And just to put it out there, I did not agree that

16 they were standing in front of their house screaming at

17 them.

18 Q But there were protesters outside --

19 A Yes.

20 Q -- of the house?

21 A Yeah.

22 Q Do you -- do you know how those protesters were

23 organized?

24 A No.

25 Q But the -- the news coverage that you were

Page 155

1 watching appeared to be a 24-hour news feed of outside

2 their house in their neighborhood?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Now, within the discovery, within the

5 interrogatories, you referenced a tweet by the North Port

6 police chief.

7 Do you remember what that tweet said?

8 A Oh, Chief Garrison said something about -- I

9 think he was asking the Laundries to -- to please speak

10 or something like -- along those lines.

11 Q So along the lines of requesting that the

12 Laundries either make a public statement or a private

13 statement to them?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Were there -- were there any other, I guess,

16 inquires, whether public or private, by law enforcement

17 prior to September -- prior to the September 14th

18 statement other than that tweet?

19 A I don't -- I don't know. I don't think so.

20 Q Now, during that -- during that time frame,

21 were -- was law enforcement in daily contact with you?

22 A For the most part, yes.

23 Q How many -- how many times a day do you think

24 you talked to somebody from law enforcement?

25 A I would say at least once.

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1 Q And were they providing you with information

2 about their investigation?

3 A I can't remember. Like, it's updates that was

4 going on. Questions they had for us. You know, the FBI

5 was mostly who we talked to, and they just needed more

6 information.

7 Q So do you -- do you recall any of those

8 conversations providing any particularly interesting

9 information, at least to you, at the time?

10 A God, I don't remember. I'm sure there was. I

11 just don't remember.

12 Q It's okay if you don't remember.

13 A Yeah.

14 Q Now, when -- at the time that the North Port

15 police chief made the tweet, you really wanted the

16 Laundries to make a statement; is that right?

17 A Not necessarily a statement but just somebody

18 to talk to somebody, the police, whoever.

19 Q So you were --

20 A Whatever they knew.

21 Q -- you were -- you were hoping they would say

22 anything?

23 A Yes. Anything --

24 Q Anything to --

25 A -- to help.



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1 Q Anything to anybody?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Now, what -- what -- specifically, like, what

4 were you hoping to get from them?

5 A Any information they had that could lead to my

6 daughter and what happened.

7 Q And was it frustrating when they didn't speak?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Did the -- did the FBI or any of the other law

10 enforcement agencies advise you that it was unlikely that

11 they would speak?

12 A I don't believe so.

13 Q So when -- when -- when they let you know that

14 they had an attorney and that they wanted to speak

15 through their attorney, they didn't have a conversation

16 with you about that it was likely -- unlikely that either

17 Brian or the Laundrie parents would provide a statement?

18 A I don't remember.

19 Q Did the FBI or any other law enforcement agency

20 prepare you in any way for a potential statement?

21 A No.

22 Q Were you prepared for them to say nothing?

23 A To say nothing?

24 Q To say nothing?

25 A At the time, I was used to them saying nothing

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1 up to that point, yes.

2 Q So is it fair to say that you were hoping that

3 they would speak, but you were expecting they probably

4 wouldn't?

5 A Yes. That's fair.

6 Q Now, I'm sorry to jump back. You mentioned

7 earlier that Brian and Gabby had gone on a cross-country

8 trip to California and Oregon?

9 A Yes.

10 Q How long was that trip?

11 A Maybe two months. Maybe a little less than two

12 months.

13 Q And did they leave from New York and return to

14 New York?

15 A Yes.

16 Q And did -- as far as you know, were there any

17 problems on that trip?

18 A No.

19 Q Sorry. I've got a lot of notes here, and I

20 just want to -- I don't want to ask you the same

21 questions that we've already gone through.

22 With regard to the incident that occurred in

23 Moab, Utah, did the lawsuit that you filed against the

24 police in Moab -- was that filed before this lawsuit or

25 after this lawsuit?

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1 A After. I believe it was after.

2 Q And do you know -- do you know who first

3 obtained the video of the traffic stop in Moab?

4 A I don't know who that was.

5 Q Did the -- did the FBI obtain that and share it

6 with you?

7 A They did not share it with me.

8 Q So the first time you saw it was when the

9 public saw it?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And prior to that, nobody had given you any

12 indication that that video existed?

13 A Correct.

14 Q And then you also said that Brian went home for

15 a few days following that trip.

16 A Yes.

17 Q During that time that Brian was gone, did you

18 have any conversations with Gabby about coming home?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And what was her response?

21 A That she wanted to finish the trip.

22 Q Did you -- did you have any conversations with

23 her about whether it would be a good idea for Brian to

24 even come back?

25 A I don't remember.

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1 Q Did you encourage her to tell Brian just to

2 stay in Florida?

3 A I don't remember.

4 Q Now, with regard to the criminal investigation,

5 I know you've probably -- since you've attended all the

6 motion hearings, you've probably heard us talk about that

7 there's nothing in the complaint that alleges a criminal

8 investigation.

9 Do you dispute that there was a criminal

10 investigation?

11 A I don't -- I need some help. I don't

12 understand. When was -- when -- like, when there was a

13 criminal investigation against --

14 Q Well, that there --

15 A -- Brian?

16 Q Yes. Against Brian? Against anybody?

17 A I don't believe there was technically

18 criminal -- other than the --

19 Q Well --

20 A -- credit card.

21 Q Well, the -- obviously, the FBI was

22 investigating your daughter's disappearance.

23 A Yes.

24 Q As was the North Port Police Department.

25 Yes? They were as well?

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1 A I believe it was, yes, but because he -- he  
2 passed, I guess it was no longer a criminal investigation  
3 at that point, so it's confusing to me.  
4 Q And I understand.  
5 Maybe -- maybe using the word  
6 "investigation" -- so there were law enforcement agencies  
7 involved investigating --  
8 A Yes.  
9 Q -- the disappearance of Gabby?  
10 A Yes.  
11 Q And they were investigating whether there was  
12 foul play?  
13 A Yes.  
14 Q They were investigating whether or not Brian or  
15 perhaps somebody else may have been responsible for her  
16 disappearance and ultimate death?  
17 A I'm assuming, yes.  
18 Q Did they -- other than Brian, did they ever  
19 have any theories about what might have happened to her?  
20 A No.  
21 Q So just so -- just so I -- we have it all  
22 correct, so the -- the law enforcement agencies that you  
23 interacted with were in Suffolk County, in North Port,  
24 Florida, the FBI, and then police in Wyoming?  
25 A Yes.

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1 Q And were there any other law enforcement  
2 agencies that you had contact with?  
3 A It's possible the parks police were helping out  
4 that way as well. There were so many involved. So...  
5 Q Now, I know in your meeting with the FBI they  
6 at least provided you with some information that  
7 indicated they were -- they looked into whether  
8 Chris Laundrie and Roberta Laundrie had anything to do  
9 with any -- any part of this situation, whether that be  
10 Brian's disappearance, anything like that; is that  
11 correct?  
12 A Did they come out and -- you're asking me if  
13 they came out and said, We are investigating Chris and  
14 Roberta?  
15 Q Yes.  
16 A I don't -- I don't believe they said those  
17 words, no.  
18 Q Did you, though, form an opinion as to whether  
19 or not the Laundrie parents should be part of the  
20 investigation?  
21 A Yes.  
22 Q And did you communicate that to anybody?  
23 A Probably -- probably the FBI, yes. Yes.  
24 Q Did your attorney have any conversations with  
25 any law enforcement agencies about the Laundrie parents?

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1 A No. I don't believe so.  
2 Q Do you think that if the Laundrie parents were  
3 not within the scope of the law enforcement inquiry, that  
4 they may have been more likely to speak?  
5 A I don't know.  
6 Q Did either you or your attorney or Joe or  
7 anybody connected with you ever ask law enforcement to  
8 give the Laundries immunity or some other assurance that  
9 they were not -- would not be charged with any kind of  
10 crime?  
11 A I don't remember. I don't think so.  
12 Q Did -- did the FBI or any law enforcement  
13 agency ever discuss with you the possibility of giving  
14 them immunity?  
15 A No.  
16 Q Did the -- did the FBI or any other law  
17 enforcement agency discuss with you any other strategies  
18 for trying to get the Laundries to provide information?  
19 A No. No.  
20 Q Do you know if any of those law enforcement  
21 agencies had any discussions with Mr. Bertolino to try to  
22 convince them -- to try to convince him to get the  
23 Laundries to speak?  
24 A No. I don't -- I don't know.  
25 Q And, now, earlier, Mr. Meltz gave you a few

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1 hypotheticals about, you know, what -- about what the  
2 Laundries could have done in certain situations.  
3 In your mind, if Brian either was unwilling or  
4 unable to communicate with his parents about Gabby's  
5 disappearance, what do you think they should have done to  
6 make him talk about that?  
7 A I think, if he didn't communicate with them,  
8 that when it came out in the news that she was missing,  
9 that they would have tried to help in some way publicly.  
10 Q Now -- so let -- let me understand if I have  
11 this timeline of events and if this is consistent with  
12 your memory -- is that Brian went missing on  
13 September 13th, 2021?  
14 A Which was reported, I believe, on the 17th,  
15 which they said was the 13th, yes.  
16 Q Okay. So on the 17th, it was reported that, as  
17 of the 13th, he had been missing?  
18 A Correct.  
19 Q And, then, on September 14th, the North Port  
20 police found Brian's car at the Myakkahatchee preserve?  
21 A That's what I heard, uh-huh.  
22 Q And did -- and on September 14th, did somebody  
23 from law enforcement inform you of that -- of that  
24 evidence?  
25 A The car?

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1 Q The car?  
2 A Oh, I don't remember.  
3 Q Or -- or do you recall if you found out --  
4 found that out through the news or...  
5 A I don't remember.  
6 Q And did -- did they conduct a search of that  
7 car?  
8 A I believe they did. Yes. I think they took  
9 the car and searched it or -- yeah. I don't know.  
10 Q And did they reveal any evidence that they  
11 discovered in that car?  
12 A No.  
13 Q Now, I know you discussed that the first time  
14 you met Chris and Roberta was in your driveway when they  
15 came over to pick up some of Gabby's items to transport  
16 them to Florida.  
17 A Yes.  
18 Q But that you really -- that was -- that's the  
19 only time you've ever met them?  
20 A Yes.  
21 Q And, then, after that, you really didn't have  
22 any contact with them either in person or by phone or  
23 text or anything like that?  
24 A No, other than being friends on social media.  
25 Q Now, I believe in your -- let me see if I can

Page 166

1 find it here. Now, in your -- in your responses to the  
2 interrogatories -- and I have them, too, if you want me  
3 to -- if you need to refresh your memory, if I -- or if  
4 you just recall -- you use a lot of strong terms to  
5 describe your feelings toward the Laundries.  
6 A Uh-huh. Yes.  
7 Q And you would agree that you have a lot of  
8 animosity toward the Laundries?  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q Do you believe that if Brian were still alive,  
11 that your animosity would be directed toward him?  
12 A I don't like hypothetical questions.  
13 Just because I don't know how the situation  
14 would have turned out, I can't really answer that.  
15 Q Now, when you -- when you found out that Brian  
16 was dead, did -- I think earlier you said that you felt  
17 like he took the easy way out. Like, when you found out  
18 that he was dead, did you feel like there was going --  
19 not going to be justice for you?  
20 A I wouldn't -- I wouldn't say it that way. I  
21 felt like he wasn't going to do the time for the crime.  
22 He just got to, like, take out -- take himself out on his  
23 own terms.  
24 Q So you feel like it would -- you would -- you  
25 would at least feel better if there had been some closure

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1 in Brian being convicted of the crime?  
2 A I think it would have been helpful, yes.  
3 Q Do you feel like your animosity toward the  
4 Laundries has anything to do with Brian not being here?  
5 A No.  
6 Q What do you want to have happen to the  
7 Laundries?  
8 A I think -- thinking that they knew everything  
9 that happened, based on all the evidence that we have and  
10 we believe they knew, that they just need to be  
11 accountable for that. So...  
12 Q And in your mind, what does accountability  
13 include?  
14 A I don't know. I really don't. I just -- just  
15 don't think you should be allowed to hide information and  
16 get away with it.  
17 Q So do you feel like they should be punished  
18 because of what Brian did?  
19 A No.  
20 Q So you feel it's more about them not sharing  
21 information; that's really what they did?  
22 A Yes.  
23 Q So, obviously, they did make that -- make this  
24 statement through Mr. Bertolino, which we've discussed.  
25 If they had just not said anything, that still

Page 168

1 would have been bad; right?  
2 A Yes. That was frustrating, not speaking.  
3 Q It would have probably made you angry if they  
4 just said nothing?  
5 A It did make me angry that they said nothing,  
6 yes.  
7 Q So, really, for you, the only thing that would  
8 have provided any relief to your anger and distress would  
9 have been if they told you everything they knew?  
10 MR. REILLY: Objection to form.  
11 THE WITNESS: What's that mean?  
12 MR. REILLY: You can answer it. I just  
13 objected to the form of the question.  
14 THE WITNESS: Oh.  
15 Can you reword it?  
16 BY MR. LUKA:  
17 Q Sure.  
18 So in your -- in your thinking at the time,  
19 really the only thing that would have provided any relief  
20 for the stress, anger, sadness, whatever the emotions you  
21 were experiencing at the time -- the only thing that  
22 would have provided any relief for that would have been  
23 if they had just told you everything that they knew?  
24 MR. REILLY: I'll still object to the form, but  
25 you can answer.

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1 THE WITNESS: I -- it would have been nice to  
2 have them speak on what they knew, yes.  
3 BY MR. LUKA:  
4 Q And, really, anything short of that would have  
5 still been inadequate in your mind?  
6 A It depends on the context and what it is. It's  
7 just words. When they just say words and then they're  
8 meaningless, it's -- it makes it worse.  
9 Q So -- so, again, your opinion was that the  
10 words that were used were essentially meaningless?  
11 A They were hurtful.  
12 Are you speaking on the September 14th  
13 statement specifically?  
14 Q The statement that was made, yes.  
15 A It was -- it was hurtful in the way that it --  
16 it sounded like this wasn't their daughter-in-law that  
17 they were talking about -- future daughter-in-law. It  
18 sounded like, Oh, good luck to that family looking for  
19 their -- their missing loved one. That's what it sounded  
20 like. And it gave us nothing.  
21 Q Now, you -- there's an allegation in the  
22 complaint that the -- that the Laundries went on a  
23 camping trip.  
24 A Yes.  
25 Q Were you aware that they went on that trip at

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1 the time that it occurred?  
2 A No.  
3 Q Do you remember when you found out that they  
4 went on that trip?  
5 A I don't remember when I found out.  
6 Q Was it after Gabby was found?  
7 A I don't remember.  
8 Q Would it have -- would it have been during the  
9 meeting with the FBI?  
10 A No. It was before that.  
11 Q And do you know what -- what, if anything,  
12 happened on that trip?  
13 A All I know is that I believe I heard they made  
14 s'mores, and I think that came from Cassie. And the  
15 three of them were there with -- Cassie came to visit and  
16 Cassie's two boys. And that's pretty much all I knew  
17 about that trip.  
18 Q And just so it's clear on the record, Cassie is  
19 Brian Laundrie's sister, Chris and Roberta Laundrie's  
20 daughter; is that right?  
21 A Yes.  
22 Q How did -- when you say Cassie said that, how  
23 do you know that Cassie said that?  
24 A She said some things on the news.  
25 Q So let me show you -- I know that we've

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1 discussed this, but I -- I'm going to put the full  
2 statement as an exhibit.  
3 MR. LUKA: So this will be Exhibit 3.  
4 (Statement to Christopher and Roberta Laundrie  
5 was marked Defendants/Laundries' Exhibit 3 for  
6 identification.)  
7 BY MR. LUKA:  
8 Q So this is the -- this is the statement that  
9 your attorney, Richard Stafford, put out on  
10 September 16th; is that right?  
11 A Yes.  
12 MR. LUKA: And this is Exhibit 3, for the  
13 record.  
14 BY MR. LUKA:  
15 Q And I think you said before that he read this  
16 statement at a press conference?  
17 A Yes.  
18 Q Did you have any part in writing this  
19 statement?  
20 A Yes. We did it together.  
21 Q Now, when you say you "did it together," were  
22 you together in the same room writing it?  
23 A I don't remember.  
24 Q And who else had input on this statement?  
25 A I believe it was Joe and I talking to Rich --

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1 Rick Stafford.  
2 Q And what was the -- what was the goal of this  
3 statement?  
4 A I think we were hoping, if we said a little  
5 more and asked for a little more, that they might want to  
6 give a little more information to us.  
7 Q Now, at the time that Mr. Stafford wrote this  
8 letter, do you know if it was his belief that Brian had  
9 killed Gabby?  
10 A I -- I can't answer that for him because I  
11 don't know.  
12 Q Do you know what Joe's belief -- whether Joe  
13 believed -- and when I say "Joe," I mean Joe Petito --  
14 whether he believed that Brian had killed Gabby?  
15 A I -- I think we all felt the same way. We  
16 believed something bad happened but hoped that we were  
17 wrong.  
18 Q So, now, in the -- in the first paragraph  
19 there, it says: "We understand you are going through a  
20 difficult time and your instinct to protect your son is  
21 strong."  
22 What did you mean by that?  
23 A Well, we figured they knew information but, of  
24 course, they want to protect their son because -- that  
25 they're parents, and whatever they knew, they wanted to

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1 help protect him from wherever it's coming from.

2 Q And was that something that you had discussed

3 with -- with Joe Petito as well?

4 A I'm assuming we discussed this whole letter

5 together, yes.

6 Q Now, within this letter -- or this statement,

7 you don't discuss whether Gabby is alive or not; is that

8 correct?

9 A Correct.

10 Q And at the time that this statement was made,

11 were there already searches underway?

12 A Yes. I believe, in Wyoming, they had already

13 started to search in the area.

14 Q And is the area that they were searching in

15 Wyoming, at this time, the area where Gabby was

16 ultimately found?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Okay. I'm going to show you another statement

19 here.

20 MR. LUKA: And this will be Exhibit 4.

21 (Statement 9/14/21 was marked

22 Defendants/Laundries' Exhibit 4 for identification.)

23 BY MR. LUKA:

24 Q And this also appears to be a statement that

25 was issued by either Mr. Stafford or somebody -- somebody

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1 with -- within your -- I'll just -- for lack of a better

2 word, I'll say group; is that correct?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And it looks like this statement was issued on

5 September 14th, 2021; is that -- is that your

6 recollection?

7 A If it says that, I'm sure it is. I don't

8 remember the exact dates.

9 Q And do you remember if this statement was

10 published or announced at a press conference, or how was

11 it disseminated to the public?

12 A I feel like this one was put out through the

13 media, so probably published.

14 Q And did Mr. Stafford write this statement, or

15 did somebody else write it?

16 A He helped us.

17 Q Now, it looks like that statement was issued in

18 response to Mr. Bertolino's September 14th statement.

19 And the reason -- the reason why I say that is

20 if you see, in quotation marks, it says: "The Schmidt

21 and Petito family beg the Laundrie family not to 'remain

22 in the background.'"

23 A Yes.

24 Q So that -- that phrase "not to remain in the

25 background" appears in Mr. Bertolino's September 14th --

Page 175

1 A Yes.

2 Q -- statement?

3 A Yes.

4 Q So would you -- would you agree that this

5 statement is in response to Mr. Bertolino's --

6 A A direct response, yes.

7 Q Now, this statement, as opposed to the

8 September 16th statement, only discusses Brian coming

9 forward.

10 A Yes.

11 Q It doesn't say anything about his parents

12 providing any information; is that correct?

13 A Correct.

14 Q And -- and the last line reads: "The Schmidt

15 and Petito family implore Brian to come forward and at

16 least tell us if we are looking in the right area."

17 MR. REILLY: I'm going to object to your prior

18 question because it says: "The Schmidt and Petito

19 family beg the Laundrie family to not 'remain in the

20 background.'"

21 MR. LUKA: Understood. Objection noted.

22 BY MR. LUKA:

23 Q So other -- other than that --

24 A Yes.

25 Q -- reference to the Laundrie family, the

Page 176

1 overall gist seems to be directed toward Brian as opposed

2 to the parents; would you agree with that?

3 A The overall gist of this, yes.

4 Q Whereas the September 16th statement seems to

5 more address the parents as opposed to Brian; is that --

6 A Yes.

7 Q So, now, in -- let me see if I can find it

8 here. Sorry.

9 Okay. So it says, in the -- in the second

10 sentence of the paragraph that says "remain in the

11 background," it says: "How does Brian stay in the

12 background when he is the one person who knows where

13 Gabby is located?"

14 Do you see that?

15 A Yes.

16 Q So at that -- at this point, did you believe

17 that Brian was the one and only person that knew where

18 Gabby was located?

19 A We knew for sure that he did. We felt that it

20 was definitely him. That didn't mean we didn't think

21 somebody else might have known, but we definitely knew he

22 did.

23 Q So the focus of this statement was to try to

24 get Brian to come forward?

25 A Correct.

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1 Q And he obviously did not?

2 A Correct.

3 Q So then what -- what changed between this

4 statement and then the statement that was issued on

5 September 16th?

6 A I think -- I don't really remember too much

7 between those couple of days.

8 Q Did -- did you learn that Brian had gone

9 missing between this statement and then the

10 September 16th statement?

11 A I don't believe so because I don't think he was

12 reported missing until the 17th, if my dates are correct.

13 I think we were just getting more frustrated with them

14 not talking, so it was just really another ploy for us

15 to -- for them to come forward with information.

16 Q And then -- sorry -- finally, this will be

17 Exhibit 5.

18 (Statement, dated 03-11-22, was marked

19 Defendants/Laundries' Exhibit 5 for identification.)

20 BY MR. LUKA:

21 Q And this, again, is a -- appears to be a

22 statement by Richard Stafford on March 11th, 2022.

23 A Okay.

24 Q And in this -- in this statement, it appears

25 to -- it appears to address this lawsuit -- is that

Page 178

1 right? -- that was -- it was ultimately filed?

2 A I would say so, yes.

3 Q So was there anything about this -- this

4 particular timing of why you felt like the -- March of

5 2022 was the time to hold Chris and Roberta accountable?

6 A Well, I know we wanted to as soon as possible.

7 I remember wanting to hold them accountable. I don't

8 know why the specific date of March 11th, but probably

9 because things had to be filed by a certain time. But we

10 were definitely doing it either way.

11 Q Now, we've obviously discussed some statements

12 by Mr. Bertolino. We've discussed these statements by

13 your attorney. You discussed that you made many public

14 statements.

15 Do you know whether Chris Laundrie,

16 Roberta Laundrie, or Brian Laundrie ever made any public

17 statements?

18 A Through --

19 Q Just on their own? Not through an attorney --

20 A No.

21 Q -- or anybody else? On their own?

22 A I don't believe so, no.

23 MR. LUKA: And then this is more of a

24 housekeeping issue, but -- and we'll make this

25 Exhibit 6.

Page 179

1 (Composite of Photocopies of Text Messages were

2 marked Defendants/Laundries' Exhibit 6 for

3 identification.)

4 BY MR. LUKA:

5 Q You produced these text messages in discovery,

6 and it appeared -- if you look kind -- if you closely at

7 some of the gray bubbles --

8 A Yes.

9 Q -- they don't appear to have any writing in

10 them.

11 A Yes.

12 Q Do you know why that is?

13 A Yes. It happens when -- I can't remember the

14 specific time. There's a reason why that happens on an

15 iPhone, and I can't remember why but it -- it is

16 something that -- that happens.

17 Q So -- and if you were to look at your phone

18 right now, there would be no text in those bubbles?

19 A Correct. Yes. Oh, yes. These are actual

20 photos, yes.

21 Q And are the -- the bubbles where there's no

22 text, are those messages from you to Gabby?

23 A Those would have been mine, yes. No. Wait.

24 Yes, that's my side.

25 MR. REILLY: Is that what you were referring

Page 180

1 to?

2 THE WITNESS: "When storage is low, attachments

3 get deleted."

4 So I guess an attachment that gets deleted just

5 turns into a blank bubble.

6 BY MR. LUKA:

7 Q Okay. So those attachments would have been

8 something other than texts? They would have been photos?

9 Some other --

10 A Possibly, yes. Yes. Or links or something,

11 yeah.

12 MR. LUKA: And then we'll make this Exhibit 7.

13 (Gabby's Call Log was marked

14 Defendants/Laundries' Exhibit 7 for identification.)

15 BY MR. LUKA:

16 Q This is a document titled "Gabby's Call Log,"

17 which was produced in discovery.

18 A Yes.

19 Q Who -- who created this document?

20 A I got this off -- is this the one I got? Yeah,

21 this is the one I got off of the T-Mobile website back in

22 September of 2021.

23 Q So this is a -- this is a document that's

24 generated by T-Mobile?

25 A Yes.

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1 Q So this isn't something that you created  
 2 yourself?  
 3 A No. I added the names on top of the phone  
 4 numbers. That part I -- I added.  
 5 Q Okay. So you did add that part?  
 6 A Yes.  
 7 Q So the numbers on the top?  
 8 A Uh-huh.  
 9 Q Okay. So then did you, like, cut and paste the  
 10 spreadsheet part onto this sheet, or how did that -- how  
 11 did you make this?  
 12 A No. I -- I think I put it into possibly a dox  
 13 and then just -- so I could add this information on the  
 14 top. I was able to download this right from the website,  
 15 and then I just copied and pasted it over.  
 16 Q Now, you discussed a little earlier about  
 17 your -- your social media accounts.  
 18 So, within the September 11th, September 12th,  
 19 September 13th time frame, how would you describe the  
 20 nature of your posts?  
 21 A Mostly talking about Gabby, continue to look  
 22 for her, keep spreading the word about her missing,  
 23 updating people on whatever might have been going on at  
 24 the time.  
 25 Q And did your posts, like, change over time at

Page 182

1 all?  
 2 A I don't remember.  
 3 Q Did you ever post anything about -- I'm sure  
 4 you probably posted things about Brian Laundrie, but did  
 5 you ever post anything about the Laundrie parents?  
 6 A I don't remember, but I don't think so.  
 7 Q Were there any posts either by you or any  
 8 responsive posts or messages that stick out to you as  
 9 being particularly important?  
 10 A I don't remember.  
 11 Q Were there any that had a particular -- where  
 12 you had a particular emotional reaction to it?  
 13 A Like a post or response to a post?  
 14 Q Yeah. Either your own post or, you know,  
 15 somebody responded to one of your posts that --  
 16 A I would have a reaction if somebody was, like,  
 17 you know, Brian didn't -- didn't do it, Gabby -- Gabby's  
 18 the one that did it, or something like that. They would  
 19 say something awful.  
 20 Q So people would really --  
 21 A Yeah.  
 22 Q -- say stuff like that?  
 23 A Yes.  
 24 Q Did you ever post anything on your social media  
 25 about Mr. Bertolino's September 14th statement?

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1 A I remember the only thing I posted in response  
 2 to him was that I said: "Your words are garbage; keep  
 3 talking."  
 4 I don't remember if it was in response to that  
 5 one. I think it was, but -- because there was a -- there  
 6 was quite a few statements, so...  
 7 Q And did anybody, again, post anything in  
 8 response about the statement?  
 9 A I don't remember, but, yeah, I'm sure.  
 10 Q Now, you do have an allegation in the complaint  
 11 that Roberta Laundrie blocked you on her cell phone and  
 12 Facebook; is that --  
 13 A That's what it appeared to be, yeah.  
 14 Q Okay. And so how do you -- how do you know  
 15 that she blocked you?  
 16 A Well, we were friends on Facebook and then  
 17 there was no page at all to be found. So usually when  
 18 somebody blocks you, you cannot see them, any of their  
 19 comments, any of their "likes." They just disappear.  
 20 And as far as the iPhone goes, it goes through  
 21 blue. And when it goes through green, either their phone  
 22 is dead or they blocked you. I assumed that she blocked  
 23 me.  
 24 Q So but do you know if Roberta Laundrie either  
 25 entirely removed her Facebook page or blocked any public

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1 view of her Facebook page?  
 2 A I don't know for sure.  
 3 Q And do you know if she did anything with her  
 4 cell phone so that she could not -- no longer receive  
 5 outside messages or calls?  
 6 A I don't know that for sure.  
 7 Q Now, I know you mentioned earlier that you saw  
 8 Georgia K. as your mental health counselor?  
 9 A Yes.  
 10 MR. LUKA: And just so we have it in the  
 11 record, I'm going to -- I'm going to spell her name  
 12 for the court reporter. Her last name is spelled  
 13 K-O-U-T-O-U-Z-I-S. So it's Georgia Koutouzis.  
 14 And, then, as Exhibit 8, I'm going to mark the  
 15 records -- her records that were produced to us.  
 16 THE WITNESS: Okay.  
 17 BY MR. LUKA:  
 18 Q Now, it looks like the way that these records  
 19 were produced, they -- essentially, the -- the earlier  
 20 appointments are in the back and they kind of move  
 21 forward.  
 22 A Okay.  
 23 Q So we'll probably start in the back. Let me  
 24 see if I can find it here.  
 25 MR. MELTZ: Before you go further, can we --

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1 with respect to making it an exhibit --

2 MR. LUKA: Oh, that -- that's actually a good

3 idea. Maybe we won't make this an exhibit just

4 because it's mental health information. We probably

5 don't want it to be in a deposition in case anybody

6 were to get a copy.

7 THE WITNESS: Okay.

8 MR. LUKA: So let's -- let's cancel Exhibit 8.

9 Striking Exhibit 8.

10 MR. REILLY: Thank you. I'm not awake,

11 apparently.

12 MR. LUKA: Thanks, Chuck. I didn't -- I didn't

13 even think about that.

14 MR. MELTZ: I was thinking about it getting

15 inadvertently filed.

16 MR. LUKA: So we'll just -- I'll just describe

17 the pages that we're -- that we're talking about so

18 it's clear for the record.

19 THE WITNESS: Okay.

20 BY MR. LUKA:

21 Q So the first one that I want to draw your

22 attention to is -- it's the progress notes. It's on

23 Page 38. It's progress notes for your 10-21-21

24 session --

25 A Okay.

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1 Q -- which I believe may have been your first

2 session after your initial intake visit.

3 Does that sound about right?

4 A It might have been, yes.

5 Q So within the -- within the "Progress Notes"

6 section, you -- you make a comment that -- and I'll give

7 you a minute to read it if you need it.

8 A Am I looking here, in this big paragraph?

9 Q So, yeah, sort of in the -- in the thick body

10 part --

11 A Okay.

12 Q -- of the -- of the document, under the

13 "Content/Topics" section.

14 A Yes.

15 Q So you make a comment in here that you -- that

16 you essentially wanted closure by Brian being captured.

17 A Okay.

18 Q Now, so when Brian was found dead, did you feel

19 like you didn't achieve closure?

20 A I don't think I'll ever have closure. I don't

21 like that I used that word.

22 That's -- that's hard to articulate. I was

23 upset that he was allowed to do that and that the people

24 who I felt helped him do that, at the time, are his

25 parents, yeah.

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1 MR. REILLY: Can you tell me where it says --

2 you said that it says in here that she couldn't get

3 closure.

4 MR. LUKA: Let me -- let me read through here.

5 Hang on, Pat.

6 MS. KELLY: It's in the very middle of the

7 "Content/Topics," probably nine lines down. It's a

8 progress note, not the intake sheet.

9 MR. REILLY: For the 21st?

10 MS. KELLY: October 12th.

11 MR. REILLY: I'm sorry.

12 MR. LUKA: Oh --

13 MR. REILLY: I thought you said the 21st.

14 THE WITNESS: Page 38; right?

15 MR. LUKA: Wait. Are we --

16 THE WITNESS: Oh.

17 MR. LUKA: Do I have the wrong --

18 THE WITNESS: Page 39?

19 MR. LUKA: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes.

20 THE WITNESS: That's okay.

21 MR. LUKA: I had the wrong line. I'm so sorry

22 about that.

23 THE WITNESS: No worries.

24 MR. LUKA: I'm so sorry about that. Yes, the

25 12th. I apologize. The 12th.

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1 Thank you, Laura.

2 BY MR. LUKA:

3 Q It also says in here that you -- you shared

4 your perceptions about the crime.

5 What were those perceptions at this time?

6 A I'm trying to read it.

7 MR. REILLY: Are you on -- right here.

8 THE WITNESS: Perceptions about the -- about

9 how they -- we thought they were hiding --

10 BY MR. LUKA:

11 Q Uh-huh.

12 A -- Brian and information, yes.

13 Q So what -- what were those perceptions?

14 A That Brian called them from Wyoming, told them

15 what he had done, and that they helped him figure out

16 what to do next and kind of led all that. Had him come

17 home and let him kind of just figure it out -- what he

18 wanted to do -- without him getting caught by law

19 enforcement, and "you go do what you need to do" type of

20 thing.

21 Q And, now, you also say -- it also says in here:

22 "And as to why the perpetrator's parents have been

23 hiding."

24 So I assume that you mean Chris and

25 Roberta Laudrie?



Page 189

1 A Yes.

2 Q What -- what do you mean by "why the

3 perpetrator's parents have been hiding"?

4 A Hiding as in not speaking, just hiding

5 everything that they know.

6 Q So -- okay. So when you say "hiding," you

7 don't mean physically hiding?

8 A No.

9 Q You mean more just in not sharing information?

10 A Yes.

11 Q And would you say that them not sharing

12 information was really the most disturbing part of this

13 to you?

14 A No. I wouldn't say not sharing was the most

15 disturbing. I think even when they did share information

16 through their attorney, it became even worse because it

17 was like they were saying nothing, but -- yes, they were

18 saying words, but they were saying nothing.

19 Q And it also says in here that you speak to

20 authorities -- I assume law enforcement authorities --

21 and the media on a daily basis.

22 Around that time, was that true?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Like, in October of 2021?

25 A Yes. I'm trying to think of when Brian was

Page 190

1 found. Because they were still --

2 Q So I actually think I have that date.

3 A They were still chatting with us a lot about

4 everything.

5 Q So my -- my understanding is that Brian's

6 remains are found on October 20th, 2021. So this would

7 have been --

8 A Yeah. So --

9 Q -- maybe just before that?

10 A Yeah. So the media was still contacting us

11 quite a bit.

12 Q So then what -- would you say that prior to

13 Brian's remains being found, you -- you did have daily

14 contact with law enforcement and the media?

15 A Maybe not daily but a lot, yeah.

16 Q And what would you typically speak about with

17 the media?

18 A At this time, probably -- well, they were

19 looking for Brian. So I was just like, I really just

20 want them to find Brian so we can find out what happened.

21 Q There's also a note in here that says you

22 were -- that you feel confused about the Laundries'

23 silence.

24 What did -- what did you mean by that?

25 A Because I'm thinking in my own perception of --

Page 191

1 if it was my son, if I knew anything, that I would have

2 turned him in or made him turn himself in.

3 Q Now, did you -- did you -- do you think that

4 that was a difficult decision for the Laundries in that

5 situation?

6 A I don't know. I don't know them that well.

7 Q If -- if something happened with one of your

8 children, you would want to protect them; is that right?

9 A If they committed a crime, no.

10 Q Now, let's turn to the 10-21-21, which was the

11 one I mistakenly identified before on Page 38.

12 A That's okay.

13 Q Sorry about that.

14 You say in here that you have constant

15 disturbing thoughts about the Laundries' lack of

16 cooperation during the investigation.

17 So that lack of cooperation or silence was --

18 was really bothering you?

19 MR. REILLY: Where -- where are you reading

20 from?

21 THE WITNESS: Right here. It's the second

22 sentence. Constant --

23 MR. REILLY: Then I object to the form of the

24 question.

25 THE WITNESS: It's basically a reiteration of

Page 192

1 not understanding how they -- how they didn't want

2 to come forward with any information.

3 BY MR. LUKA:

4 Q Now, you've mentioned elsewhere that -- like,

5 that you -- that it at least crossed your mind that they

6 may have had some role in the crime. Not -- I'm not

7 saying you mentioned it in this note. I'm just saying

8 you've mentioned it --

9 A Not the crime itself. The crime of him telling

10 them and them knowing information of what happened.

11 Q So, again, let me just try to -- try to

12 specify. So -- so do you think them -- if they -- if

13 they knew information and didn't tell it, that that is a

14 crime?

15 A Yes.

16 Q So if that -- if that is a crime, that they

17 have information and they don't tell it, do you think

18 that it would make sense then for them to not -- not

19 share any information about that so as -- as to escape

20 any criminal liability?

21 A Yes. That's fair to say. Uh-huh.

22 Q And so -- so you wouldn't expect somebody to

23 cooperate -- necessarily cooperate in an investigation if

24 they were being accused of a crime?

25 A Not being accused, but if they weren't sure --

Page 193

1 if -- if they knew that they could be, like, prosecuted  
 2 or -- yeah, they would hide that. Yes, that's fair.  
 3 Q Now, you -- I think you said before that, as of  
 4 at least September 11th of 2021, you were aware that they  
 5 were not going to cooperate in the investigation?  
 6 A It seemed that way, yes.  
 7 Q Because the North Port police went to their  
 8 house, they refused to provide any information and gave  
 9 them the -- the card of their attorney?  
 10 A Yes.  
 11 Q So you learned that at about 11:00 that night?  
 12 A Yes.  
 13 Q And what was your -- what was your reaction  
 14 upon hearing that news?  
 15 A Shock. Physical, mental shock.  
 16 Q And did that feeling change at all?  
 17 A No. Honestly, it went on for weeks.  
 18 Q Were there any other events that -- when --  
 19 when did it change? Did it change when Gabby was found?  
 20 A It got worse, I would say, when she was found.  
 21 Different emotions came into play. Anger, sadness,  
 22 during different times, during statements that came out  
 23 publicly, during when they found her, when Brian went  
 24 missing. I mean, these emotions are like a roller  
 25 coaster, so...

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1 Q And I think you mentioned earlier that -- that  
 2 your animosity is probably more directed at the Laundrie  
 3 parents than it is actually at Brian?  
 4 A Yes.  
 5 Q During your discussions with Georgia K., did  
 6 you ever discuss why you would have so much animosity  
 7 toward the parents as opposed to the actual perpetrator?  
 8 A Yeah. I mean, we talked about forgiveness and  
 9 how I felt like I could come to a place to forgive Brian,  
 10 especially with him not being here anymore.  
 11 But I just still didn't understand, even after  
 12 he was gone that -- how they could not tell us anything.  
 13 Q And then -- and then you also make a comment in  
 14 here. You say that -- the comment is: "She described  
 15 how her painful thoughts bring her to the site where her  
 16 daughter was killed and replays the scenario of potential  
 17 ways she may have been strangled and that injustice  
 18 complicates her acceptance of her death."  
 19 What do you mean by "injustice" there?  
 20 A I don't know. I think she might have used that  
 21 word for me.  
 22 Q And that -- and that's fair. If that's not a  
 23 word that you used, then --  
 24 A Yeah. I mean, I would constantly, in bed, at  
 25 night, think about her last moments. That's basically

Page 195

1 what I was saying.  
 2 Q So do you feel that it's an injustice that  
 3 Brian was never prosecuted and that he's not in prison  
 4 right now?  
 5 A Yeah. That's fair to say.  
 6 Q Now, I'm going to fast-forward to Page 36,  
 7 which is the progress note for November 12th, 2021.  
 8 A Did you say 46 or --  
 9 Q Page 36.  
 10 And in this note, you mentioned being on the  
 11 Dr. Oz show?  
 12 A Yes.  
 13 Q What other shows like that have you done?  
 14 A The only other talk show like that was  
 15 Dr. Phil.  
 16 Q And then you mentioned that your husband was on  
 17 Chris Cuomo; is that right?  
 18 A Yeah. That was a regular media interview.  
 19 Q So when you say "a regular media interview,"  
 20 like a daily media interview?  
 21 A Yeah. It was, like, one of his nightly shows  
 22 where Jim came on for a few minute, chitchatted, and got  
 23 off.  
 24 Q So he would go on it -- Jim would go on every  
 25 night?

Page 196

1 A Not every night, no.  
 2 Q Any other, you know, news programs like that  
 3 where anybody, you know, associated with you made a  
 4 regular appearance?  
 5 A It was just really me, Joe, and Jim and  
 6 sometimes Tara would join Joe on interviews. We would do  
 7 a lot of Zoom interviews for news.  
 8 Q Now, do you -- do you feel like those media  
 9 appearances have helped you or hurt you?  
 10 A I was just trying -- I guess I was just trying  
 11 to get Gabby's story out there. And at that point, I was  
 12 already trying to help others. I didn't want to see this  
 13 happen to another -- another person. So I think I -- for  
 14 me talking, it also helped heal -- getting the story out.  
 15 Q Do you feel like the media attention had any  
 16 negative consequences?  
 17 A Yeah. Media can always be negative. I think  
 18 with our situation, though, it overall was very positive.  
 19 Q Okay. I'm going to -- I'm going to turn now to  
 20 Page 35, which is the 12-1-2021 progress note.  
 21 A Yeah.  
 22 Q And in the middle of the page, just before the  
 23 blacked-out section --  
 24 A Uh-huh.  
 25 Q -- it says you often feel emotionally drained

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1 with the current turmoil that you're living daily and the  
2 ongoing rumination about not having found justice for  
3 what was done to your daughter.  
4 When you say that you have not "found justice,"  
5 is that because Brian never gave you the opportunity for  
6 justice?  
7 A Yes. There -- that means there can't be  
8 justice because he's no longer -- he's no longer here,  
9 so...  
10 Q So, with Brian's death, are you trying to find  
11 justice in other ways?  
12 A No.  
13 Q Are -- are you looking for anybody else to  
14 blame?  
15 A No.  
16 Q No.  
17 So do you -- do you think you'll ever find  
18 justice in that regard?  
19 A That's impossible because the one person that  
20 murdered her will not be able to go to jail ever and pay  
21 for what he did.  
22 But justice in the sense that there was people  
23 that had this information -- I believe there is some  
24 justice to be had there.  
25 Q Now, I'm going to draw your attention down to

Page 198

1 the section where it says "Significant/Recent Events."  
2 A Yeah.  
3 Q And in there there's a comment that says that  
4 you have obsessive thoughts about the murderer, which was  
5 Brian, obsessive thoughts -- so I'll just use his name  
6 there -- obsessive thoughts about Brian's parents'  
7 silence.  
8 What do you mean by "obsessive thoughts"?  
9 A I think that's the therapist's terms, but I  
10 would tell her I'm always trying to figure out why -- why  
11 they were not talking. It's -- it's kind of like -- it  
12 just kept bothering me.  
13 Q Uh-huh.  
14 A Like, as a parent, why -- I would talk. Why  
15 weren't they talking?  
16 Q Okay. So let's fast-forward to the  
17 January 5th, 2022, note.  
18 And you say --  
19 MR. REILLY: What page is that?  
20 MR. LUKA: It's -- I'm sorry -- it's Page 32.  
21 THE WITNESS: 32.  
22 BY MR. LUKA:  
23 Q So, in this note, you said that you're  
24 frustrated with the Laundries, who are getting away with  
25 trying to cover up the murder.

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1 In what ways did you think they were trying to  
2 cover up the murder?  
3 A I don't know if that's worded right. Cover up  
4 the information they had about the murder would be a  
5 better way to say that. Cover up their son's murder.  
6 So, basically, he told -- he tells them everything and  
7 they're just not going to say anything, so...  
8 Q So you don't -- you don't allege that they took  
9 any affirmative steps to destroy evidence or anything  
10 like that?  
11 A I -- I don't know the answer to that.  
12 Q Really, when you say "cover up," you're just  
13 talking about them not sharing information they may or  
14 may not have had?  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q Now, you also say that: No further evidence  
17 was found in the investigation.  
18 What evidence were you hoping would be found?  
19 A This was in January. I don't know. I mean,  
20 something -- something more solid, I guess, would be a  
21 good answer, that -- something that showed us all the  
22 specific -- this is what it was, you know.  
23 Q And so, along that regard, you say that: The  
24 criminal case is about to close with questions left  
25 unanswered.

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1 So what were those -- what were those  
2 unanswered questions that you had?  
3 A I didn't have questions about specifically how  
4 Gabby died, because I knew that. There were certain  
5 questions about the exact timing of it. There were  
6 certain questions about where physically it was. And  
7 then there were questions, obviously, about what did he  
8 say? How much do they know? Did he tell them  
9 everything? Just all those unanswered questions.  
10 Q And are you hoping to get answers to those  
11 questions through this case?  
12 A I mean, I -- I would like that, yes.  
13 Q And do you feel like that the facts that were  
14 uncovered in the investigation were different than your  
15 expectations?  
16 A I guess, yeah. I guess, yes, that's fair.  
17 Q Okay. Let's go to the 1-26-22 progress note,  
18 which is on Page 30.  
19 And in this note, you -- you discuss the FBI  
20 meeting in Tampa.  
21 A Okay.  
22 Q So that must have happened fairly -- within  
23 this time frame?  
24 A Then it was in probably -- yes -- January, I  
25 guess.

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1 Q And you -- and you also expressed in here  
2 that -- your disappointment that the -- that Brian's  
3 parents are getting away with their involvement in  
4 covering their son's crime as evidence indicated that the  
5 mother assisted in his disappearance.  
6 A Yes. That's -- I went over that before.  
7 Basically, everything the FBI showed us kind of  
8 led you to speculate that there was involvement and  
9 knowing on her part, yes.  
10 Q Okay. So you -- you feel there -- there was  
11 evidence that showed Mrs. Laundrie assisted in Brian's  
12 disappearance?  
13 A Oh, the disappearance?  
14 I -- I don't remember the exact wording I used.  
15 I guess I was saying that it was weird, the whole story  
16 about the car being at the park and stuff. So I guess  
17 that sounded like evidence to -- to Georgia.  
18 Q Now --  
19 A I think we did express -- I'll keep going. We  
20 did express that we felt like -- because they knew he was  
21 going there to do something specific, that we...  
22 Q So the FBI's opinion in that meeting was that  
23 the Laundrie parents knew that Brian was leaving and  
24 likely to commit suicide?  
25 MR. REILLY: Well, let -- let me interrupt for

Page 202

1 a second. I think you're confusing this meeting  
2 with a different meeting with the FBI.  
3 MR. LUKA: Okay.  
4 MR. REILLY: If I'm correct, this is the  
5 meeting Attorney Bertolino and I went to.  
6 It's not?  
7 MR. BERTOLINO: No.  
8 MR. REILLY: Oh, yeah. We went in May, the  
9 summer -- or June. That's right.  
10 Okay. My -- I'm wrong. Sorry.  
11 MR. LUKA: No problem. No problem. I  
12 wasn't -- I wouldn't know one from the other because  
13 I wasn't at any of them, so...  
14 MR. REILLY: My mistake. Sorry.  
15 THE WITNESS: Right. No. Because you saw  
16 Gabby's belongings. I did go through stuff at that  
17 meeting as well, yes.  
18 Sorry. Go ahead.  
19 BY MR. LUKA:  
20 Q That's okay.  
21 Okay. So, really, other than sort of it being  
22 weird with the car being parked in the -- the preserve,  
23 like, there wasn't any other evidence that Mrs. Laundrie  
24 somehow assisted in Brian's disappearance?  
25 A Yeah. I -- I don't remember all of that.

Page 203

1 Q And it says that you were disappointed with  
2 Brian's parents getting away with their involvement in  
3 covering their son's crime.  
4 Again, so by "covering their son's crime," you  
5 just mean that they didn't say anything about it?  
6 A Knowing about it and not doing anything, yes.  
7 Q And, again, I think you did say this before,  
8 but that you felt like they should be criminally -- that  
9 they -- that's a crime; that they should be criminally  
10 prosecuted for that?  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q And you also say in here that you feel hopeful  
13 to find clues about the parents' involvement and their  
14 silence.  
15 And I know you said before, you don't think  
16 that the parents had anything to do with Gabby's death?  
17 That's not what you're talking about here?  
18 A No.  
19 Q What -- what sort of clues, then, were you  
20 looking for?  
21 A At the time I was thinking, you know, what --  
22 like I was CSI. Like, what can we find?  
23 Just -- just hoping that there was something  
24 specific, maybe find something through -- I don't know.  
25 The FBI had already showed us everything, so I don't know

Page 204

1 what I was saying, to be honest.  
2 Q And do you -- do you still hope that they're  
3 criminally prosecuted?  
4 A I -- yes and -- yes and no. I'm going to be  
5 honest there.  
6 Q And are you -- are you hoping that this lawsuit  
7 would uncover clues that could be used to prosecute them?  
8 I'm sorry. I'll ask it again.  
9 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry?  
10 BY MR. LUKA:  
11 Q Do you hope that this lawsuit will help you  
12 uncover clues that you can use to criminally prosecute  
13 them?  
14 A Well, I wouldn't criminally prosecute them, but  
15 yes.  
16 Q That -- that you could give to law enforcement?  
17 A Yes. Only because it would open up what they  
18 knew, yes.  
19 Q Let me see here.  
20 Okay. So go to the 2-9- -- February 9th, 2022,  
21 note, Page 29.  
22 In this note you express overwhelming feelings  
23 triggered by this case. The -- I assume that means  
24 this -- this lawsuit that we're here for today. Do -- do  
25 you --

Page 205

1 A Which one?

2 Q Let me see where -- if I can find that

3 specifically.

4 Yeah. So it says in the -- under the

5 "Significant/Recent Events" --

6 A Oh.

7 Q -- it says --

8 A Yes.

9 Q So is that -- when you say "the civil case," do

10 you mean this case --

11 A Yes.

12 Q -- that we're here for today?

13 What were the -- what are the overwhelming

14 feelings that this case has triggered for you?

15 A All -- just doing all this. Going through,

16 talking about it over and over again, going back to that

17 place.

18 Q And let me go to -- okay. So I'm going to

19 fast-forward to 5-19-22, which is on Page 22.

20 A Sorry. It's stuck together.

21 Q No. That's okay. No problem. Take your time.

22 So, again, this -- in this note, it looks like

23 you're discussing an upcoming judicial decision in this

24 case?

25 A Yeah.

Page 206

1 Q But you also say in there, you -- you say

2 that -- that your -- that your therapist helped you

3 process your emotions about upcoming life changes and

4 frustration towards Brian's parents.

5 At this time, what were your frustrations

6 toward the Laundries?

7 A The same as before. Just mad that they acted

8 like nothing happened and Gabby didn't exist and all that

9 stuff.

10 Q So, along that regard, let's go to the note --

11 the 6-15-2022 note, which is on Page 20.

12 And -- and in this note, you express your

13 impressions that the Laundries are indifferent.

14 Is there anything other than their silence that

15 gives you the impression that they're indifferent?

16 A I think their --

17 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry?

18 THE WITNESS: -- lack of emotion. I don't

19 know. They just seem like they don't want to talk

20 at all about anything.

21 BY MR. LUKA:

22 Q So when you say that "they don't want to talk

23 at all," like, have you had any contact with them where

24 they've --

25 A No.

Page 207

1 Q So your feeling that they're indifferent, is

2 that -- is that based on something specific or just your

3 overall feeling --

4 A It's --

5 Q -- toward them?

6 A It's overall.

7 Q So on Page 18 is the 8-11-2022 note.

8 And this note seems to indicate your belief

9 that your -- your emotional distress could have been

10 alleviated if the Laundries had come forward with all of

11 the information they knew about Brian's whereabouts.

12 It's right -- it's right in the -- in the middle.

13 A Yeah. I mean, I -- looking back, I might have

14 been -- we wouldn't have been at this point, so it would

15 have been better that everything came out.

16 Q So do you think that you would have been

17 entirely alleviated simply by knowing Brian's

18 whereabouts?

19 A No.

20 Q So, you know, we've gone through -- we've gone

21 through these records. And you -- and you certainly

22 share a lot of information about the struggles that

23 you've gone through and certainly a lot of stuff about

24 the Laundries and their silence. That does seem to be

25 something that you discuss.

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1 But I didn't see any discussion in here about

2 Mr. Bertolino's September 14th statement.

3 Did you ever discuss that with your therapist?

4 A Probably not. It would have been in there.

5 Q I also didn't see any mention in -- in the

6 records about Roberta Landrie blocking you on Facebook

7 or blocking you on text.

8 Is that something you ever discussed with the

9 therapist?

10 A Oh, I don't remember.

11 Q Also the -- I didn't see anything about the

12 camping trip.

13 Did you ever discuss the camping trip with

14 the -- I'll just refer to it as the camping trip that

15 Cassie wrote about. Did you ever discuss what with the

16 therapist?

17 A I -- I feel like I did, but I guess I don't

18 specifically remember.

19 Q Okay. All right. So that's it for those

20 notes.

21 Now, with -- with regard to the -- the letter,

22 the Roberta Landrie letter, the one that was produced in

23 discovery that we had the hearing about --

24 A Yes.

25 Q -- when was that letter presented to you by the

Page 209

1 FBI?  
2 A At the meeting with the FBI when they briefed  
3 us on the whole case.  
4 Q So was that the -- was that the Tampa meeting?  
5 A Yes.  
6 Q And at that -- at that meeting, did they -- did  
7 they show you the physical letter?  
8 A No. They showed us on a screen, like, an image  
9 of the letter.  
10 Q Okay. Did they ever show you the physical  
11 letter?  
12 A Yes. We seen it when Pat and I were there with  
13 Mr. Bertolino. We physically saw it.  
14 Q And that was the meeting that was in the  
15 summer, June time frame?  
16 A Yes.  
17 Q Did the FBI ever tell you where they discovered  
18 the letter?  
19 A I have mixed memories on that, so I'm not a  
20 hundred percent sure. I believe it came out of the van,  
21 but it was in the house with the stuff from the van that  
22 the FBI removed from the home.  
23 Q So I -- wait. I -- I didn't quite follow that.  
24 A Sorry. Yes. So it came out of the house,  
25 but -- with the items that they -- they believe were in

Page 210

1 the van, so anything that was in the van that was in the  
2 house.  
3 Q Okay.  
4 A But I thought -- I thought they had told --  
5 they had said that it was found in the van, but the van  
6 was already cleaned out. So...  
7 Q So their belief was it was in the van at some  
8 point?  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q And had been moved from the van into the house  
11 when items were removed from the van?  
12 A Correct.  
13 Q Likely by Brian?  
14 A Yes.  
15 Q And after Brian returned from Wyoming on -- in  
16 early September?  
17 A I'm assuming that's when he took the stuff out  
18 of the van, yes.  
19 Q Okay. So this -- it wouldn't have been when he  
20 returned home from Salt Lake City when he made that --  
21 that one trip? This was after he brought the van back to  
22 Florida?  
23 A Nobody knows, yes.  
24 Q All right. But then the -- the FBI did find  
25 the letter in the Laundrie house?

Page 211

1 A Yes.  
2 Q Along with other items that may have been in  
3 the van?  
4 A Yes.  
5 MR. LUKA: If you'd just give me one second to  
6 look through my notes, then --  
7 THE WITNESS: Sure.  
8 MR. LUKA: -- we can finish up, make sure I  
9 didn't miss anything.  
10 MR. MELTZ: I'm going to run to the restroom.  
11 MR. LUKA: Oh, sorry. We can go off the record  
12 for just a minute.  
13 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken at  
14 3:44 p.m., and the deposition resumed at 3:47 p.m.)  
15 BY MR. LUKA:  
16 Q I do have a few more questions.  
17 So when you had the meeting with the FBI where  
18 they sort of summed up all the evidence for you --  
19 A Yes.  
20 Q -- did they reveal any information at that  
21 meeting that they had previously not revealed to you?  
22 A Yes.  
23 Q Do you -- do you --  
24 A Don't ask me to --  
25 Q Okay.


Page 212

1 A -- remember all of it.  
2 Q All right. I won't ask you to remember.  
3 Now, do you recall early on in the  
4 investigation -- I'm talking about, like, that early  
5 September time period -- was the FBI able to track either  
6 Gabby's phone or Brian's phone?  
7 A Yes. They were able to track both phones, and  
8 they had all the text messages and everything.  
9 Q So did they know -- would -- did they know  
10 Brian's location going back, you know, several weeks --  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q -- at that point?  
13 A Yes.  
14 Q Very early on, they knew that?  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q And how about Gabby's phone, did they know her  
17 location from -- for wherever the phone ended up?  
18 A Until it stopped, yes.  
19 Q And did they use that information to conduct  
20 their searches?  
21 A I believe so.  
22 Q How -- how did -- do you know how they knew to  
23 search in the area in Wyoming where they did?  
24 A Yes. I believe there was a location ping, I  
25 want to say a Snapchat, and that was Gabby's last one.


Page 213

1 Q Okay. So there -- there was something about  
 2 her -- there were location -- there was location  
 3 information on her social media that they were able to  
 4 use?  
 5 A Yes.  
 6 MR. LUKA: Okay. I think that's all I've got.  
 7 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.  
 8 MR. LUKA: Thank you so much for your time.  
 9 MR. REILLY: I have no questions.  
 10 MR. MELTZ: Would you like -- do you want to  
 11 give her the read, or do you want me to?  
 12 MR. REILLY: Yeah, she'll read.  
 13 MR. MELTZ: Off the record.  
 14 (Whereupon, the testimony of NICHOLE SCHMIDT  
 15 was concluded at 3:49 p.m.)  
 16  
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1 CERTIFICATE OF STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER  
 2 STATE OF FLORIDA)  
 3 COUNTY OF VOLUSIA)  
 4 I, Lisa L. Taylor, Registered Professional Reporter,  
 5 Florida Professional Reporter-Certified, certify that I  
 6 was authorized to and did stenographically report the  
 7 foregoing proceedings, Pages 1 through 213; that a review  
 8 of the transcript was requested; and that the transcript  
 9 is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.  
 10 I further certify that I am not a relative,  
 11 employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor  
 12 am I a relative or employee of any of the attorneys or  
 13 counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially  
 14 interested in the action.  
 15 DATED this 11th day of September, 2023.  
 16   
 17  
 18 \_\_\_\_\_  
 19 LISA L. TAYLOR, RPR, FPR-C,  
 20 Registered Professional Reporter  
 21 Florida Professional Reporter-Certified  
 22  
 23 Verified Digital Certificate  
 24  
 25 (This transcript is the product of the court  
 reporter and should not be reproduced and given free of  
 charge to any party unless under the direction, control  
 and/or supervision of the certifying court reporter.)  
 24  
 25

Page 214

1 CERTIFICATE OF OATH  
 2  
 3 STATE OF FLORIDA)  
 4 COUNTY OF SARASOTA)  
 5  
 6 I, Lisa L. Taylor, Registered Professional Reporter,  
 7 Florida Professional Reporter-Certified, and Notary  
 8 Public, State of Florida, certify that NICHOLE SCHMIDT,  
 9 who is personally known to me or produced identification  
 10 in the form of a Florida Driver's License, appeared  
 11 before me and was duly sworn on the 15th day of August,  
 12 2023.  
 13  
 14 WITNESS my hand and official seal this 11th day of  
 15 September, 2023.  
 16  
 17  
 18   
 19  
 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
 21 LISA L. TAYLOR, RPR, FPR-C,  
 22 Notary Public - State of Florida  
 23 My Commission No.: GG 918546  
 24 Expires: November 1, 2023  
 25 Verified Digital Certificate

Page 216

1 ERRATA SHEET  
 2 IN RE: JOSEPH PETITO AND NICHOLE SCHMIDT V.  
 3 CHRISTOPHER LAUNDRIE, ROBERTA LAUNDRIE, AND STEVEN  
 4 BERTOLINO  
 5 Case No.: 2022-CA-1128-SC  
 6  
 7 Deposition of NICHOLE SCHMIDT, taken August 15,  
 8 2023/LT.  
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 21  
 22 Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read  
 23 the foregoing document and that the facts stated in it  
 24 are true.  
 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Signature