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Transcript of Valerie Branyon

Date: July 24, 2024

Case: Caster, et al. -v- Allen, et al.

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Transcript of Valerie Branyon
Conducted on July 24, 2024

1 (1 to 4)

<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT</p> <p>2 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA</p> <p>3 -----x</p> <p>4 MARCUS CASTER, et al., :</p> <p>5 Plaintiffs, :</p> <p>6 v : Civil Action No.:</p> <p>7 WES ALLEN, et al., : 2:21-cv-1536-AMM</p> <p>8 Defendants. :</p> <p>9 -----x</p> <p>10</p> <p>11 Deposition of</p> <p>12 VALERIE BRANYON</p> <p>13 Fayette, Alabama</p> <p>14 Wednesday, July 24, 2024</p> <p>15 1:39 p.m.</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23 Job No: 546001</p> <p>24 Pages: 127</p> <p>25 Transcribed by: Suja Nair</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>1 Deposition of VALERIE BRANYON, held</p> <p>2 at the offices of:</p> <p>3</p> <p>4 ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</p> <p>5 399 25th Street NE</p> <p>6 Fayette, Alabama 35555</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11 Pursuant to Notice, before Isaiah</p> <p>12 Sheridan, AAERT CER and Notary Public in and</p> <p>13 for the State of Alabama.</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>1 A P P E A R A N C E</p> <p>2 ON BEHALF OF THE CASTER PLAINTIFFS:</p> <p>3 JYOTI JASRASARIA, ESQUIRE</p> <p>4 MAKEBA RUTAHINDURWA, ESQUIRE</p> <p>5 ELIAS LAW GROUP, LLP</p> <p>6 250 Massachusetts Avenue, NW</p> <p>7 Suite 400</p> <p>8 Washington, DC 20001</p> <p>9 (202) 968-4490</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12 ON BEHALF OF THE MILLIGAN PLAINTIFFS:</p> <p>13 ASHLEY BURRELL, ESQUIRE</p> <p>14 KATHRYN SADASIVAN, ESQUIRE</p> <p>15 NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND</p> <p>16 40 Rector Street</p> <p>17 5th Floor</p> <p>18 New York, New York 10006</p> <p>19 (332) 600-9546</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>1 A P P E A R A N C E C O N T I N U E D</p> <p>2 ON BEHALF OF THE SINGLETON PLAINTIFFS:</p> <p>3 JAMES BLACKSHER, ESQUIRE</p> <p>4 JAMES BLACKSHER, ATTORNEY AT LAW</p> <p>5 825 Linwood Road</p> <p>6 Birmingham, Alabama 35222</p> <p>7 (205) 612-3752</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10 ON BEHALF OF DEFENDANT SECRETARY ALLEN:</p> <p>11 MISTY S. FAIRBANKS MESSICK, ESQUIRE</p> <p>12 RICHARD MINK, ESQUIRE</p> <p>13 TONY HIGGINS, ESQUIRE</p> <p>14 OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL</p> <p>15 501 Washington Avenue</p> <p>16 P.O. Box 300152</p> <p>17 Montgomery, Alabama 36130</p> <p>18 (334) 242-7300</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>
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2 (5 to 8)

<p>5</p> <p>1 A P P E A R A N C E C O N T I N U E D</p> <p>2 O N B E H A L F O F S E N A T O R L I V I N G S T O N A N D</p> <p>3 R E P R E S E N T A T I V E P R I N G L E :</p> <p>4 M I C H A E L P . T A U N T O N , E S Q U I R E</p> <p>5 B A L C H & B I N G H A M , L L P</p> <p>6 1 9 0 1 S i x t h A v e n u e N o r t h</p> <p>7 S u i t e 1 5 0 0</p> <p>8 B i r m i n g h a m , A l a b a m a 3 5 2 0 3</p> <p>9 (2 0 5) 2 2 6 - 3 4 5 1</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14 A L S O P R E S E N T :</p> <p>15 M r . M a t t h e w B e i h o f f</p> <p>16 M s . N a t a l i e W a l l s</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1 P R O C E E D I N G S</p> <p>2 T H E D I G I T A L R E P O R T E R : I a m a n o t a r y</p> <p>3 a u t h o r i z e d t o a d m i n i s t e r o a t h , a n d t h i s</p> <p>4 d e p o s i t i o n w i l l b e r e c o r d e d b y e l e c t r o n i c</p> <p>5 m e a n s . A l l p a r t i e s u n d e r s t a n d a n d a g r e e t h a t</p> <p>6 a n y c e r t i f i e d t r a n s c r i p t p r o d u c e d f r o m t h e</p> <p>7 r e c o r d i n g o f t h i s p r o c e e d i n g i s i n t e n d e d f o r</p> <p>8 a l l u s e a s p e r m i t t e d u n d e r a p p l i c a b l e</p> <p>9 p r o c e d u r a l a n d e v i d e n t i a r y r u l e s a n d l a w s a n d</p> <p>10 s h a l l c o n s t i t u t e w r i t t e n s t i p u l a t i o n . T h e</p> <p>11 p a r t i e s s t i p u l a t e t o t h e u s e a n d c e r t i f i c a t i o n</p> <p>12 o f t h i s t e s t i m o n y c o n s i s t e n t w i t h a p p l i c a b l e</p> <p>13 l a w o f s u c h .</p> <p>14 H e a r i n g n o o b j e c t i o n , I w i l l n o w</p> <p>15 s w e a r i n t h e w i t n e s s .</p> <p>16 W h e r e u p o n ,</p> <p>17 V A L E R I E B R A N Y O N ,</p> <p>18 w a s c a l l e d f o r e x a m i n a t i o n b y c o u n s e l a n d ,</p> <p>19 a f t e r h a v i n g b e e n d u l y s w o r n , w a s e x a m i n e d a n d</p> <p>20 t e s t i f i e d a s f o l l o w s :</p> <p>21 T H E D I G I T A L R E P O R T E R : Y o u m a y</p> <p>22 p r o c e e d .</p> <p>23 M S . J A S R A S A R I A : A n d w e c a n a g r e e t o</p> <p>24 t h e u s u a l s t i p u l a t i o n s ?</p> <p>25 M S . M E S S I C K : Y e s , p l e a s e , e x c e p t t h e</p>
<p>6</p> <p>1 C O N T E N T S</p> <p>2 E X A M I N A T I O N O F V A L E R I E B R A N Y O N P A G E</p> <p>3 B y M s . J a s r a s a r i a 8</p> <p>4 B y M s . M e s s i c k 1 0 7</p> <p>5 B y M s . J a s r a s a r i a 1 2 0</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16 E X H I B I T S</p> <p>17 (A t t a c h e d t o t r a n s c r i p t)</p> <p>18 B R A N Y O N D E P O S I T I O N E X H I B I T P A G E</p> <p>19 E x h i b i t 1 S u b p o e n a 1 5</p> <p>20 E x h i b i t 2 S e c o n d S u p p l e m e n t t o</p> <p>21 D i s c l o s u r e s 8 5</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1 w i t n e s s m a y w i s h t o r e a d a n d s i g n .</p> <p>2 T h a t m e a n s y o u h a v e t h e o p p o r t u n i t y ,</p> <p>3 w h e n t h e t r a n s c r i p t i s c o m p l e t e d , t o r e a d i t</p> <p>4 a n d m a k e a n y c o r r e c t i o n s t h a t y o u f e e l a r e</p> <p>5 n e c e s s a r y .</p> <p>6 T H E W I T N E S S : O k a y .</p> <p>7 M S . M E S S I C K : A n d s o w e w o u l d</p> <p>8 e n c o u r a g e y o u t o -- t o d o -- t o r e s e r v e t h a t</p> <p>9 r i g h t .</p> <p>10 T H E W I T N E S S : O k a y . I d o .</p> <p>11 M S . M E S S I C K : A n d , t h e n , w e a l s o h a v e</p> <p>12 b e e n a g r e e i n g t h a t o b j e c t i o n s f o r a n y D e f e n d a n t</p> <p>13 a r e o b j e c t i o n s f o r a l l D e f e n d a n t s .</p> <p>14 M S . J A S R A S A R I A : C o r r e c t .</p> <p>15 M S . M E S S I C K : T h a n k y o u .</p> <p>16 M S . J A S R A S A R I A : T h a n k y o u .</p> <p>17 D I R E C T E X A M I N A T I O N</p> <p>18 B Y M S . J A S R A S A R I A :</p> <p>19 Q . W o n d e r f u l .</p> <p>20 W e l l , M s . B r a n y o n , m y n a m e i s J y o t i</p> <p>21 J a s r a s a r i a . I r e p r e s e n t t h e C a s t e r P l a i n t i f f s</p> <p>22 i n t h i s m a t t e r .</p> <p>23 C o u l d y o u p l e a s e s t a t e y o u r f u l l n a m e</p> <p>24 f o r t h e r e c o r d ?</p> <p>25 A . I t ' s V a l e r i e B r a n y o n .</p>

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3 (9 to 12)

<p>9</p> <p>1 Q. Did you bring anything with you to 2 today's deposition, Ms. Branyon?</p> <p>3 A. You mean such as --</p> <p>4 Q. Documents or anything.</p> <p>5 A. Oh, no. No. Just me. I have my 6 cell phone, but that's it.</p> <p>7 Q. No problem.</p> <p>8 A. Okay.</p> <p>9 Q. And have you ever been deposed 10 before?</p> <p>11 A. Maybe once, I believe.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. Do you recall when that was?</p> <p>13 A. It's when I was in Florida. I don't 14 necessarily remember the year, but it was 15 before 1998. That's all I can say.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. So at least 25 years ago?</p> <p>17 A. Yeah. Yeah.</p> <p>18 Q. And do you recall what case that 19 deposition pertained to?</p> <p>20 A. I had forgotten about it, but it's 21 probably something -- maybe I filed a complaint 22 against the Florida DOT or something.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay. And what was the -- what was 24 the nature of that complaint?</p> <p>25 A. It was discrimination.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>1 it's just everything was made -- I used to 2 supervise some people, and, then, all of a 3 sudden, they got taken away from me. And my 4 boss would come to my office every morning to 5 try to just intimidate me.</p> <p>6 And it was just very -- just a very 7 unpleasant situation, but I had not really done 8 anything to them or whatever. It was just 9 something that started all at once.</p> <p>10 Q. I hate to make you re-explain any of 11 that, but I'm just curious.</p> <p>12 When you say, Intimidation, what do 13 you mean by that?</p> <p>14 A. Like, let's say I was working on a -- 15 I was a geotechnical engineer at the time, and 16 let's say I would be working on a geotechnical 17 report, which is a lengthy process. He would 18 just come to my office every morning; Why 19 haven't you gotten this done, and that -- you 20 know, that type of situation.</p> <p>21 And I'm, like, I haven't had time to 22 do that. It was just -- I mean, it started all 23 at once. Before, I'd never had any problems, 24 but with this particular guy, he seemed to 25 start having problems with -- everything I did</p>
<p>10</p> <p>1 Q. What type of discrimination?</p> <p>2 A. Well, I just felt like they were 3 discriminating against me at my workplace. So 4 they were making it, like, very hard for me to 5 go in and just do my job. It was, like, trying 6 to intimidate me every day and just making it 7 really, like, an unpleasant workplace.</p> <p>8 Q. I'm sorry to hear that.</p> <p>9 A. Yeah.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you recall what claim you brought 11 in that case?</p> <p>12 A. When you say -- I don't understand. 13 Like, in what sense? It's just discrimination. 14 I don't know what you mean, like --</p> <p>15 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>16 So do you recall whether it was, 17 like, a gender discrimination or race 18 discrimination?</p> <p>19 A. Well, I -- I'm sure I claimed race, 20 but it was probably gender, in reality. But I 21 thought it was race at the time.</p> <p>22 Q. And what made you think it was race 23 at the time?</p> <p>24 A. Probably because I was the only black 25 engineer in the section, and it was just --</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1 was maybe a problem or whatever. And it was 2 after I had made a recommendation to terminate 3 a white man that all of it started.</p> <p>4 Q. Was that white man that you 5 recommended, was he terminated?</p> <p>6 A. No, he wasn't, but he -- well, he 7 ended up being terminated because he got put in 8 jail. So Florida DOT had no problem -- no 9 other choice but to terminate him.</p> <p>10 Q. And what was the outcome of your 11 lawsuit that you filed?</p> <p>12 A. Basically, it didn't go any further 13 than the complaint, but it did get to a 14 deposition-type phase. But after that, it was 15 kind of maybe dropped or whatever and --</p> <p>16 Q. And did you choose to drop the 17 lawsuit?</p> <p>18 A. I'm sure -- I mean, this has been a 19 while ago.</p> <p>20 Q. Of course. To the best of your 21 knowledge and recollection.</p> <p>22 A. I don't think I did. I think it was 23 maybe ruled that it wasn't a good lawsuit or 24 whatever. But I just wanted to be left alone 25 so I could work in peace.</p>

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4 (13 to 16)

<p>13</p> <p>1 Q. Did you continue working at the 2 Florida Department of Education -- of -- of 3 Transportation? 4 A. I did, for several -- for, I'd say, 5 maybe at least a year or two after that, and I 6 ended up getting a job with ALDOT, so I 7 resigned. I made sure I got my ten years in, 8 so I was vested or whatever, but, yeah, I 9 eventually left. 10 Q. And did the intimidation stop after 11 the lawsuit was filed? 12 A. It -- it reduced it a great deal. 13 It -- there were still a few things that went 14 on, but it -- it reduced it a tremendous 15 amount. 16 Q. Okay. Well, we can -- we can go back 17 to this if we need to, but I appreciate -- 18 A. Okay. 19 Q. -- that information. 20 So I wanted to go over some ground 21 rules for today's deposition, since I know that 22 the last time was, you know, 25 years ago. 23 A. Okay. 24 Q. So as you know, there's a court 25 reporter here who's taking down everything that</p>	<p>15</p> <p>1 question, but that doesn't mean that you can't 2 answer. 3 Of course, if you are specifically 4 instructed by, you know, the -- your attorney 5 from the DOT or anything like that not to 6 answer, then, of course, you can choose to take 7 that instruction. 8 A. Okay. 9 Q. And, finally, if you need to take a 10 break at any time for any reason, please let me 11 know. The only thing I'll ask is that if I've 12 already asked you a question, that you answer 13 that question before we break. 14 A. Okay. 15 Q. So I'm going to start by just showing 16 you a document that I am going to mark as 17 Exhibit 1. 18 (Deposition Exhibit 1 was marked for 19 identification.) 20 Q. This is a subpoena for you to appear 21 at today's deposition. Have you seen this 22 document before? 23 A. I believe. Maybe I didn't look at 24 it. I was probably sent it. 25 Q. Fair enough.</p>
<p>14</p> <p>1 we're saying, and it's -- and so, therefore, 2 it's important for us not to interrupt each 3 other, just to make sure that we're getting a 4 clean record of -- of this conversation. So I 5 will certainly wait, and -- I will try my best 6 to wait until your answers are complete before 7 I ask you a question, and I would ask that you 8 do the same. 9 A. Okay. 10 Q. We would also want to ensure that all 11 of our answers are verbal, just as you've been 12 doing so far. Instead of nodding or shaking 13 your head, just actually say yes or no. 14 A. Okay. 15 Q. And if my question is unclear to you, 16 I'll just ask that you let me know, and I can 17 certainly clarify or rephrase the question. If 18 you do answer a question, though, I'll assume 19 that you understood that question. 20 Does that make sense? 21 A. Okay. 22 Q. And as Ms. Messick mentioned, there 23 may be some objections from the other attorneys 24 who are here, and that probably just means that 25 they don't like the way I'm phrasing a</p>	<p>16</p> <p>1 And do you understand that you're 2 here pursuant to a subpoena? 3 A. Right. 4 Q. And the subpoena was issued by the 5 Caster Plaintiffs in the lawsuit Caster versus 6 Allen. That's who I represent. And as we 7 mentioned before this got started, there are 8 two other Plaintiff groups representing the 9 Milligan Plaintiffs and the Singleton 10 Plaintiffs who are also on the Zoom, and they 11 may want to ask you questions after I'm 12 finished. Your testimony is being provided in 13 all three cases. 14 A. Okay. 15 Q. Do you understand that? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. Your testimony today is under oath. 18 Is there any reason that you cannot provide 19 complete and truthful testimony today? 20 A. No, not that I know of. 21 Q. Perfect. Thank you. So we can get 22 started. 23 So I'd like you to start by going 24 over some of your background and professional 25 history. Where do you currently live?</p>

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5 (17 to 20)

<p>17</p> <p>1 A. I live in Fayette, Alabama.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. So you live in --</p> <p>3 A. Yeah.</p> <p>4 Q. -- Fayette City?</p> <p>5 A. Yeah. Well, not the city, but --</p> <p>6 Q. The county?</p> <p>7 A. The county.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. What's your address?</p> <p>9 A. It's [REDACTED], Fayette,</p> <p>10 Alabama, 35555.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. That's a nice zip code.</p> <p>12 A. Yeah. I know. It's easy to</p> <p>13 remember.</p> <p>14 Q. And how long have you lived at that</p> <p>15 address?</p> <p>16 A. Well --</p> <p>17 Q. About how long?</p> <p>18 A. About at least since August of '99 or</p> <p>19 so. I lived there before I graduated college</p> <p>20 for a short while. We -- I grew up maybe at</p> <p>21 another location just down the road, but before</p> <p>22 I went to college, I lived there for a while --</p> <p>23 or finished college. Yeah.</p> <p>24 Q. Where were you born?</p> <p>25 A. Fayette, Alabama.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1 because I -- I co-oped, and I'd go to school a</p> <p>2 semester and work in Florida a semester.</p> <p>3 Q. And what -- where did you go after</p> <p>4 Florida?</p> <p>5 A. I -- I moved to Montgomery. And</p> <p>6 while I was -- well, I worked in Montgomery, so</p> <p>7 I lived in Montgomery for several months in</p> <p>8 Wetumpka.</p> <p>9 Q. How do you spell Wetumpka?</p> <p>10 A. I'm not a good speller.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 MS. MESSICK: Can I answer that one</p> <p>13 for you? It's W-E-T-U-M-P-K-A.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. I'm glad I got that spelled.</p> <p>15 I had no idea.</p> <p>16 And where is that?</p> <p>17 A. It's -- I don't know if it's north or</p> <p>18 east or west. I'm not sure which direction it</p> <p>19 is. It's just outside of Montgomery.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay. And how long were you living</p> <p>21 in the Montgomery area, including Wetumpka?</p> <p>22 A. For about a year and a half.</p> <p>23 Q. Okay. And --</p> <p>24 A. Or maybe -- wait. 1998?</p> <p>25 Yeah, about a year and a half.</p>
<p>18</p> <p>1 Q. Okay. And what's your date of birth?</p> <p>2 A. [REDACTED] 1964.</p> <p>3 Q. And based on what you said, it sounds</p> <p>4 like you lived in Fayette from when you were</p> <p>5 born through graduating college; is that right?</p> <p>6 A. Through graduating high school. I --</p> <p>7 I moved to Tuscaloosa to go to college, but I'd</p> <p>8 be back and forth to Fayette and Tuscaloosa</p> <p>9 during that time period.</p> <p>10 Q. And where did you live after</p> <p>11 graduating from college?</p> <p>12 A. I lived in a -- a town called Deland,</p> <p>13 Florida, for several years and a few years in</p> <p>14 Deltona, Florida, which is really the same</p> <p>15 area, but just little different towns or</p> <p>16 whatever; that area.</p> <p>17 Q. And that's in central Florida,</p> <p>18 correct?</p> <p>19 A. Yes. It's between Orlando and</p> <p>20 Daytona Beach, kind of somewhere in that area,</p> <p>21 kind of like.</p> <p>22 Q. And how long did you live in Florida?</p> <p>23 A. For ten years. I lived there --</p> <p>24 that's after college. But I lived there --</p> <p>25 maybe every other semester, I lived in Orlando</p>	<p>20</p> <p>1 Q. Okay. And you said this is around</p> <p>2 1998?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. And so you were there until about</p> <p>5 1999 or so?</p> <p>6 A. About August of '99.</p> <p>7 Q. And where did you go next?</p> <p>8 A. I got a job in -- with ALDOT, which I</p> <p>9 worked with ALDOT when I was in Montgomery, but</p> <p>10 I got a promotion to Tuscaloosa. And I worked</p> <p>11 there, but I still lived in Fayette.</p> <p>12 Q. So fair to say that you moved back to</p> <p>13 Fayette around 1999?</p> <p>14 A. Yes. About August or so.</p> <p>15 Q. And you've been there ever -- you've</p> <p>16 been here ever since?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Have you lived in any other states</p> <p>19 besides Alabama and Florida?</p> <p>20 A. I don't think I've actually lived in</p> <p>21 any other state, just -- just those two.</p> <p>22 Q. And have you ever lived anywhere in</p> <p>23 Alabama besides Fayette, Tuscaloosa,</p> <p>24 Montgomery, and Wetumpka?</p> <p>25 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p>

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6 (21 to 24)

<p>21</p> <p>1 A. (No verbal response.)</p> <p>2 MS. MESSICK: You can answer the</p> <p>3 question. I just wanted to state an objection.</p> <p>4 A. Oh, okay. Not that I can remember.</p> <p>5 That's -- yeah.</p> <p>6 Q. Where did you go to high school?</p> <p>7 A. Oh. Did you mention Tuscaloosa?</p> <p>8 Q. I did.</p> <p>9 A. Okay. Okay. I just wanted to make</p> <p>10 sure.</p> <p>11 Q. Perfect. Good. Good to be</p> <p>12 double-checked.</p> <p>13 Where did you go to high school,</p> <p>14 Ms. Branyon?</p> <p>15 A. Fayette County High.</p> <p>16 Q. And did you attend college after that</p> <p>17 in Tuscaloosa, you said?</p> <p>18 A. Yeah, at the University of Alabama.</p> <p>19 Q. What did you study there?</p> <p>20 A. Civil engineering.</p> <p>21 Q. And did you graduate?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. What degree did you graduate with?</p> <p>24 A. A Bachelor's degree in -- a BS in</p> <p>25 civil engineering; Bachelor's of Science.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>1 Tuscaloosa. It was a district office at -- at</p> <p>2 the time, and they changed over to the area</p> <p>3 system, so --</p> <p>4 Q. What are your general</p> <p>5 responsibilities in your current job?</p> <p>6 A. I supervise the materials section,</p> <p>7 and, basically, we test any materials that go</p> <p>8 into the construction of roadways and bridges.</p> <p>9 If there's a material that we don't test, we</p> <p>10 see to it that it gets certified through</p> <p>11 Montgomery Materials and Tests Bureau.</p> <p>12 And we also -- we have a design side,</p> <p>13 so any project that -- a resurfacing project,</p> <p>14 we'll go out and test the roadway and decide</p> <p>15 what kind of buildup should be put on during</p> <p>16 the resurfacing. And if there's a new roadway,</p> <p>17 we'll go out, and we have people that do, like,</p> <p>18 test the soils. And we'll decide what --</p> <p>19 depending on the traffic, what type of buildup</p> <p>20 a new roadway should have. And that would</p> <p>21 start from, do we need to improve the soils;</p> <p>22 what kind of base it might have; and the</p> <p>23 thickness of asphalt -- of the asphalt or</p> <p>24 concrete, if we're able to use concrete. Yeah.</p> <p>25 So --</p>
<p>22</p> <p>1 Q. What year was that, that you</p> <p>2 graduated?</p> <p>3 A. Let's see. It'll be December of</p> <p>4 eighty -- 1987.</p> <p>5 Q. Do you have any other educational</p> <p>6 degrees or certificates?</p> <p>7 A. No. I didn't like school that well,</p> <p>8 so it's good to get me through that.</p> <p>9 Q. Yes. And it sounds like you were</p> <p>10 working while you were in school, so you found</p> <p>11 a way to do that.</p> <p>12 A. Yeah.</p> <p>13 Q. And you said you're currently</p> <p>14 employed with the Alabama Department of</p> <p>15 Transportation?</p> <p>16 A. That's correct.</p> <p>17 Q. What's your current position?</p> <p>18 A. I'm the Fayette area materials</p> <p>19 engineer.</p> <p>20 Q. And how long have you held that role?</p> <p>21 A. In Fayette, since maybe -- it was</p> <p>22 probably the end of 2014 or early 2015.</p> <p>23 Q. And what was your previous role with</p> <p>24 the -- with ALDOT?</p> <p>25 A. I was the materials engineer in</p>	<p>24</p> <p>1 Q. Do you have a lot of family here in</p> <p>2 Alabama?</p> <p>3 A. Not that much.</p> <p>4 You mean, like, immediate or --</p> <p>5 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>6 I guess, let's start with immediate</p> <p>7 family.</p> <p>8 A. Okay.</p> <p>9 Q. Where is your immediate family?</p> <p>10 A. Well, I don't have a family of my</p> <p>11 own, but I -- I live with my mother, and I have</p> <p>12 a brother that lives in Huntsville.</p> <p>13 Q. And do you also have extended family</p> <p>14 in the state?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Whereabouts?</p> <p>17 A. I have some in Fayette, some in</p> <p>18 Dothan, some in Birmingham. Of course, my</p> <p>19 brother is in Huntsville. That's about the</p> <p>20 extent of the ones I know.</p> <p>21 Q. Can you remind me where Dothan is?</p> <p>22 A. It's south of Montgomery. You go</p> <p>23 through Troy and keep going south, and you'll</p> <p>24 hit -- Dothan is the next largest town.</p> <p>25 Q. That's what I thought. I was, like,</p>

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7 (25 to 28)

<p>25</p> <p>1 I know I've heard it. I can't quite place it.</p> <p>2 Are you currently running for office</p> <p>3 in Alabama, Ms. Branyon?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Which office?</p> <p>6 A. District Six County Commission here</p> <p>7 in Fayette County.</p> <p>8 Q. And is that a partisan election?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Which party are you affiliated with</p> <p>11 in that election?</p> <p>12 A. The Republican.</p> <p>13 Q. How would you describe District Six</p> <p>14 in Fayette County?</p> <p>15 A. You mean, like, demographics? What</p> <p>16 is --</p> <p>17 Q. Yeah, demographics.</p> <p>18 A. It's -- it used to be -- they created</p> <p>19 it to be, like, a majority African American</p> <p>20 district early on, but I think maybe the</p> <p>21 demographics have changed a little bit. So it</p> <p>22 may be about even, African American, whites.</p> <p>23 Q. Do you recall when it was changed</p> <p>24 to -- or when it was created as a</p> <p>25 majority-minority district?</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1 Q. And is Mr. Underwood a Democrat?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. And is Mr. Underwood black?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Based on your experience campaigning,</p> <p>6 do your supporters in this election tend to</p> <p>7 belong to any particular group or</p> <p>8 organizations?</p> <p>9 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>10 A. Okay. I really haven't started</p> <p>11 campaigning, per se. A lot of people know I'm</p> <p>12 running for office, but I haven't started</p> <p>13 campaigning. So I don't know if I could really</p> <p>14 answer that.</p> <p>15 Q. When do you intend to start</p> <p>16 campaigning?</p> <p>17 A. Probably maybe some time in August or</p> <p>18 early September.</p> <p>19 Q. And what does campaigning for a</p> <p>20 county commission seat look like here?</p> <p>21 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>22 A. Okay. I ran for the office last</p> <p>23 term, and, mostly, I just knocked on the doors</p> <p>24 and introduced myself, and I had signs out. I</p> <p>25 put some -- a few ads in the newspaper, but it</p>
<p>26</p> <p>1 A. I just remember I was a kid, maybe</p> <p>2 elementary and high school. I'm not sure</p> <p>3 exactly. I mean, I didn't really pay much</p> <p>4 attention to politics.</p> <p>5 Q. When did you start paying attention</p> <p>6 to politics?</p> <p>7 A. Maybe when I moved back to Fayette,</p> <p>8 I -- I started getting a little more involved.</p> <p>9 Q. Why do you think that is?</p> <p>10 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>11 A. I didn't see things being done for</p> <p>12 the people like I thought they should be. I</p> <p>13 just thought it was a little stagnant there.</p> <p>14 Q. Do you know what the partisan makeup</p> <p>15 of District Six is currently?</p> <p>16 A. You mean, how many Democrats and how</p> <p>17 many Republicans? I'd say maybe it could be</p> <p>18 just slightly more Democrats or about even.</p> <p>19 Q. Did you have a primary election for</p> <p>20 your current race?</p> <p>21 A. No.</p> <p>22 Q. Who -- who are your competitors in</p> <p>23 the general election?</p> <p>24 A. A gentleman named John Underwood.</p> <p>25 He's been in office for a good long time.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>1 was mostly the door knocking.</p> <p>2 Q. And when you say you ran last time,</p> <p>3 was that in 2022?</p> <p>4 A. 2020, I believe it was, but -- yeah.</p> <p>5 I'm pretty sure, because it was -- the virus</p> <p>6 was still around pretty good.</p> <p>7 Q. Is the term for county commission</p> <p>8 four years?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. What was the reception like at the</p> <p>11 doors in 2020 when you were campaigning?</p> <p>12 A. You mean as to whether I thought -- I</p> <p>13 mean, in what way? Like, did I think they were</p> <p>14 supporting me? That type of way?</p> <p>15 Q. Yes.</p> <p>16 A. I couldn't tell. I lost the</p> <p>17 election, so -- but it was about even. I mean,</p> <p>18 I only lost by 30-something votes, so -- he was</p> <p>19 an incumbent. I didn't realize how popular he</p> <p>20 was, so I would say I did pretty good,</p> <p>21 actually.</p> <p>22 Q. Sounds like it. Thirty votes is very</p> <p>23 slim.</p> <p>24 How many people vote in the District</p> <p>25 Six election; about how many?</p>

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8 (29 to 32)

<p>29</p> <p>1 A. I would say last time around -- I 2 don't know the exact numbers, but somewhere 3 around twelve, thirteen hundred maybe. 4 Q. Do you know -- so thinking about last 5 election, did your supporters tend to care 6 about any particular issues? 7 A. I don't -- I don't think there was 8 any particular issues they really cared about 9 last time around. I can't -- I mean, I would 10 tell them what I thought I would try to do, but 11 I don't remember anybody, like, telling me what 12 they wanted to see done or anything. 13 Q. Are there any particular issues that 14 you are advocating for in your current 15 election? 16 A. One thing is transportation system 17 for the county, is one thing that I'd like to 18 try to make happen if I was elected. 19 Q. Any other issues? 20 A. I can't think of any particular -- 21 well, there's probably something, but I 22 don't -- I don't think I would -- I don't think 23 I can campaign on that issue. So I'd probably 24 just say the transportation system. 25 Q. What's the issue that you're not able</p>	<p>31</p> <p>1 It's in the -- it's near the project 2 area, but I want it to serve all of Fayette 3 County. It's -- it's, like, a historic 4 building, so I'm pretty sure I could get 5 funding to restore it. 6 Q. Do you know the general demographics 7 of your supporters in this campaign or in the 8 last one? 9 A. When you say -- you mean like, 10 personally, or are you just -- I -- I thought I 11 answered that, but you mean, like, 12 percentage-wise, African American? 13 Q. Yeah. 14 Of the people that supported you as 15 opposed to the whole district. 16 A. Oh. The last time around or this 17 time around? 18 Q. Let's start with this time, if you 19 know. 20 A. I don't. I just feel like it's more 21 even this time of Republican and Democrats than 22 it was maybe last time or whatever. It started 23 out, it was a very Democratic district or 24 whatever. 25 Q. And would you say that most of your</p>
<p>30</p> <p>1 to campaign about? 2 A. Well, I recently got a non-profit, 3 and I can't use that to campaign on. There's a 4 -- a school -- an African American school that 5 was built in the early '60s, and it's -- it's 6 no longer used for anything. And I would like 7 to make a recreational center out of it, but 8 that's something I can't campaign on, so -- 9 Q. And when you said that you have a 10 non-profit -- 11 A. Yeah. 12 Q. -- that's a non-profit that you're 13 working on in order to advocate for the school 14 to be turned into a rec center? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. And is that something that you're 17 doing on your own? 18 A. Yes. Of course, with any non-profit, 19 you have to have officers and that type of 20 thing. So I'm working with other individuals, 21 but -- so I can't legally use that as a 22 campaign tool. 23 Q. Do you have a particular vision for 24 who the recreation center would serve? 25 A. Fayette County.</p>	<p>32</p> <p>1 support comes from Republicans? 2 A. I don't know this time around. I 3 know last time around, it appeared that there 4 was less Democrats. But this time around, 5 Democrats have come to me and asked me to run 6 because they don't feel like they're getting 7 their fair share of things being done in their 8 district. 9 So -- and I haven't been out, like, 10 knocking doors, really, this time yet, but I do 11 know that people have come to me that -- from 12 the Democratic side that's asked me to -- to go 13 ahead and run for office. 14 Q. And have those people who have asked 15 you to run for office this time, have those 16 Democrats been black? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. In your last election, do you have a 19 sense of whether your supporters were primarily 20 white or black? 21 A. I felt like they were primarily 22 white. And even last time around, blacks said 23 they were going to support me until it came 24 time to vote, and it didn't quite go the way 25 they said they were going to vote. So I just</p>

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9 (33 to 36)

<p>33</p> <p>1 have to see.</p> <p>2 Q. Do you have a sense of why they did</p> <p>3 not end up voting -- the black voters did not</p> <p>4 end up voting for you last time?</p> <p>5 A. Because Fayette used to be more of a</p> <p>6 Democratic County, and it slowly moved to a</p> <p>7 majority Republican. And I know that my</p> <p>8 opponent, he went to most of the blacks and</p> <p>9 said, Well, if you vote for Valerie, then we</p> <p>10 won't have any Democratic -- hold any</p> <p>11 Democratic offices in Fayette. So they decided</p> <p>12 they wanted some Democrats in Fayette. So</p> <p>13 they -- they flipped on me, I guess, people</p> <p>14 that said they would and they didn't. So --</p> <p>15 Q. In your experience, do black voters,</p> <p>16 then, typically vote with the Democratic Party</p> <p>17 in Fayette?</p> <p>18 A. Yes. I would say a good majority,</p> <p>19 they do.</p> <p>20 Q. Why do you think that is?</p> <p>21 A. I've never understood it myself. I</p> <p>22 -- I don't know, because I don't understand</p> <p>23 just sticking with one party. I feel like you</p> <p>24 ought to go with whatever is best for you</p> <p>25 and -- but there have been more Democrats.</p>	<p>35</p> <p>1 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>2 Let's start with the last time</p> <p>3 around.</p> <p>4 A. Okay. You mean, like, publicly or</p> <p>5 whatever?</p> <p>6 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>7 A. Well, at the meetings they did, but I</p> <p>8 don't know, you know, like, a newspaper article</p> <p>9 or anything like that. I don't remember any of</p> <p>10 that. But I did run -- try to run a previous</p> <p>11 time, and I couldn't because of the Hatch Act.</p> <p>12 I had to drop out. But that time, they did put</p> <p>13 out a newspaper article on me. So they did,</p> <p>14 say, support me in some kind of ways</p> <p>15 financially.</p> <p>16 Q. And was that also for the county</p> <p>17 commission, District Six?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. What year was that?</p> <p>20 A. Well, I couldn't tell you the exact</p> <p>21 year on that. I just know it was -- it was</p> <p>22 probably, let's see -- 2000, 1996 -- maybe '92.</p> <p>23 I'm not sure the exact year, but I just know</p> <p>24 that I tried before, and I couldn't run.</p> <p>25 Q. And was this after you moved back to</p>
<p>34</p> <p>1 Q. In your current election, have you</p> <p>2 received support or endorsements from any</p> <p>3 organizations?</p> <p>4 A. No.</p> <p>5 Q. What about in your last election?</p> <p>6 A. I can't say that I have. No.</p> <p>7 Q. Have you received any support from</p> <p>8 the Fayette County Republican Party?</p> <p>9 A. In what sense? You mean, like, we're</p> <p>10 rooting for you, kind of thing or in the sense</p> <p>11 of financial or what?</p> <p>12 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>13 So let's start with financial.</p> <p>14 A. Okay. To this point, no.</p> <p>15 Q. What about volunteer support?</p> <p>16 A. I would say, at that time, I didn't</p> <p>17 know most of the people in the Democratic -- I</p> <p>18 mean, the Republican Party. So I mean, I</p> <p>19 pretty much campaigned on my own. I didn't</p> <p>20 really receive any financial support last time</p> <p>21 around.</p> <p>22 Q. And has the local Republican Party</p> <p>23 ever endorsed you formally?</p> <p>24 A. You mean as to say, Hey, we support</p> <p>25 her? And you said the last time around or --</p>	<p>36</p> <p>1 Fayette in 1999?</p> <p>2 A. Yeah.</p> <p>3 Wait. I may have had that year</p> <p>4 wrong. It was 2000-something.</p> <p>5 Yes, it was after I moved back to</p> <p>6 Fayette.</p> <p>7 Q. Have you ever received any kind of</p> <p>8 financial or volunteer support from the state</p> <p>9 Republican Party in your elections?</p> <p>10 A. Well, they contacted me this time</p> <p>11 around. I haven't received any money or</p> <p>12 anything, but they did contact me, and they</p> <p>13 asked me to come down to Montgomery to a</p> <p>14 training that they had. So that's the bulk of</p> <p>15 the support that I had.</p> <p>16 Q. Have you attended the training?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. When was that?</p> <p>19 A. Oh, Lord. It was after the First of</p> <p>20 the year. That's all I can say. I can't maybe</p> <p>21 tell you the exact month or whatever.</p> <p>22 Q. That's fine.</p> <p>23 A. I'm sorry.</p> <p>24 Q. What was the training about?</p> <p>25 A. Just basically how to campaign and</p>

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10 (37 to 40)

<p>37</p> <p>1 all the different things that was out there 2 they had to offer and stuff, so --</p> <p>3 Q. Who were the other participants in 4 the training?</p> <p>5 A. I just remember it was held in maybe 6 the Alpha Building or something. It was some 7 people from the state party. I can't remember 8 the guy's name that had invited me down, but it 9 was people from other areas of Alabama had come 10 to the training.</p> <p>11 Q. And were all of those people who had 12 come to the training candidates for office?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, they were.</p> <p>14 Q. And they're -- were they mostly for 15 local office, from what you remember?</p> <p>16 A. I think maybe one may have been a -- 17 a legislative position, but most of them were 18 from -- for local offices in their area.</p> <p>19 Q. From all over the state?</p> <p>20 A. From -- I'm -- I'm -- I'm guessing it 21 was from all over the state, but I -- I feel 22 like it was more south of -- of Fayette, toward 23 maybe Mobile -- not maybe Mobile, but toward 24 that area. I remember a few people from that 25 area.</p>	<p>39</p> <p>1 A. I believe about two years, but -- 2 maybe three. Two to three years.</p> <p>3 Q. Do you serve on -- in any other 4 organizations?</p> <p>5 A. I've served on a few committees with 6 the City of Fayette. One is a marketing 7 committee, one was the transportation 8 committee, which we were successful to get the 9 transportation city -- system in the City of 10 Fayette. And there may have been one other, 11 too, that I served on. I can't maybe remember 12 what that was, but --</p> <p>13 Q. And are those committees appointed by 14 officials?</p> <p>15 A. Well, they -- they want citizens to 16 serve on those committees so -- so they -- they 17 get a broader variety of ideas. So I don't 18 know if you have to say you're appointed, but 19 maybe just asking for volunteers to serve on 20 it.</p> <p>21 Q. How long have you been involved with 22 the marketing committee?</p> <p>23 A. It's a newer one. It used to -- 24 housing was one. It was the old committee that 25 was the housing committee. The marketing</p>
<p>38</p> <p>1 Q. And were the candidates any 2 particular race?</p> <p>3 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>4 A. There was some whites there, but a 5 few blacks. I wasn't the only black there, 6 basically.</p> <p>7 Q. But it wasn't, like, all black 8 candidates?</p> <p>9 A. No, it wasn't all blacks.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you belong to any professional 11 organizations yourself?</p> <p>12 A. I'd say -- well, maybe not 13 organizations, but appointed to a -- a board -- 14 a professional -- a board, I guess.</p> <p>15 Q. Which board is that?</p> <p>16 A. It's called the C3 Board. It's, 17 like, three counties, Fayette, Lamar, Marion 18 County. And their goal is to get industry in 19 those three counties to come to the area.</p> <p>20 Q. How did you get involved in that 21 board?</p> <p>22 A. I was appointed to the board by the 23 mayor of Fayette.</p> <p>24 Q. And how long have you served on that 25 board?</p>	<p>40</p> <p>1 started this year, so maybe -- and I'm not 2 exact on time.</p> <p>3 Q. That's fine. Estimates are fine.</p> <p>4 A. Okay. Maybe three, four months.</p> <p>5 Q. And did you serve on the housing 6 committee before that?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, I served on the housing 8 committee before that.</p> <p>9 Q. For about how long?</p> <p>10 A. I'd say maybe two years. And this is 11 just an estimate. I -- it's not hard, fast 12 that I'm right on that time period.</p> <p>13 Q. What are the issues that the housing 14 committee discussed?</p> <p>15 A. We were trying to get contractors to 16 build houses in the city -- in Fayette to bring 17 more people here, increase the population. So 18 it was, like, when I was little, there was a 19 lot of contractors that built houses and stuff 20 in Fayette, but I guess since the population 21 has diminished some, we haven't been able to 22 get contractors interested in building houses 23 here. But we do have one now, so --</p> <p>24 Q. You said the population has 25 diminished in Fayette; is that right?</p>

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11 (41 to 44)

<p>41</p> <p>1 A. Yeah. It's diminished a little bit 2 over the years. 3 Q. Do you have any understanding of why 4 it's diminished? 5 A. Maybe a little bit to do with the 6 economy. At one time, the industry kind of 7 went down a little bit in Fayette. Fayette is 8 a small town. It doesn't have a lot of, say, 9 activities to offer. So when kids grow up, 10 they just want to move away. So trying to 11 retain citizens when they grow up are probably 12 some of the reasons the population has 13 diminished some. 14 Q. What kinds of issues does the 15 transportation committee work on? 16 A. We wanted to get a bus system in the 17 City of Fayette. That was one of the things I 18 wanted to do when I ran last time, but -- I 19 thought it was a good idea. So I tried to work 20 with John to try to get a bus system 21 countywide, but the county commission, they 22 weren't very open to the idea. 23 So when they refused us, I started 24 working with the city to try to make it happen. 25 And they -- there's a lot of elderly citizens</p>	<p>43</p> <p>1 Q. And did it -- does it affect any 2 particular region within the county? 3 A. Well, we didn't get it county-wise, 4 but the city. I would say -- I wouldn't say it 5 was any particular area. Of course, the poor 6 people were from the projects, and there's 7 another area in Fayette where you find poor 8 people. But there's elderly, too, so it was 9 both of those. And they were all over in the 10 city, so the elderly, at least. 11 Q. In your experience living in Fayette, 12 do the poor people in the city and the county 13 tend to be black? 14 A. I'd say it's a mixture. 15 Q. When you talk about, The project, is 16 that a mixture of black and white residents? 17 A. It's a mixture, yeah, also. But it 18 could be more black, but it's -- it's a 19 mixture. 20 Q. So you spoke to me a little bit about 21 this earlier, but how have black voters in 22 Fayette generally reacted to your candidacy for 23 office? 24 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 25 A. Well, as I said earlier, some blacks</p>
<p>42</p> <p>1 and a lot of poor people that live here. And 2 there's people that were paying, like, 25, 30 3 dollars to get a ride from the project to 4 Walmart just to get their grocery, and it just 5 didn't make sense. 6 They couldn't get to medical 7 appointments, and I just felt it was a good 8 idea to try to help people be mobile so that 9 they could, you know, take care of themselves. 10 And I was thinking about maybe being able to 11 get to their jobs and being able to work, also. 12 So that's kind of what I was hoping 13 for. But the city was receptive, and they 14 created a committee. And the problem was, you 15 know, like, there's federal funds that run 16 through ALDOT for this transportation system, 17 but the local government has to pay a certain 18 portion, and they couldn't really afford it. 19 So our goal of the committee was to 20 find a way to make the transportation system 21 affordable for a small town. 22 Q. Who do the transportation issues that 23 you mentioned affect most? 24 A. It affected the elderly and the poor, 25 I'd say.</p>	<p>44</p> <p>1 have come to me and asked me to run this time, 2 but I haven't really campaigned. So I don't 3 really know, overall, what -- how everybody 4 feels yet, so -- 5 Q. Have you received support from any 6 women's organizations? 7 A. You mean, like, Hey, we support you, 8 or financial, or what? 9 Q. Yeah. 10 Any kind of support. 11 A. No, not that I can remember. 12 Q. Have you faced any challenges in 13 gaining support for your campaign? 14 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 15 A. Today, I can't say I have faced any 16 challenges because, again, I haven't really 17 fully started to campaign. 18 Q. Did you face any challenges gaining 19 support when you ran in 2020? 20 A. From -- not that I know of. I mean, 21 I didn't win, so I didn't get the support that 22 I hoped for. But I don't know that I faced any 23 challenges or whatever, but just a loss. 24 Q. When you ran for office in 2020, that 25 was also for county commission, right, District</p>

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12 (45 to 48)

<p>45</p> <p>1 Six?</p> <p>2 A. Correct. Yeah.</p> <p>3 Q. And did you face any competition in</p> <p>4 the primary that year?</p> <p>5 A. Yes, I did.</p> <p>6 Q. Who were your competitors in the</p> <p>7 primary?</p> <p>8 A. It was a -- a gentleman that pretty</p> <p>9 much, he lived down the road for me -- from me</p> <p>10 he was running against me, also. I think he,</p> <p>11 at the time, may have worked for the sheriff's</p> <p>12 department or whatever.</p> <p>13 Q. And he was also a Republican,</p> <p>14 correct?</p> <p>15 A. He was a Republican. I had to face</p> <p>16 him in the primary.</p> <p>17 Q. Was he white or black?</p> <p>18 A. He was white.</p> <p>19 Q. And was he your only other competitor</p> <p>20 in the primary?</p> <p>21 A. He was my only other competitor.</p> <p>22 Q. And you won that primary, correct?</p> <p>23 A. I won it. Yeah.</p> <p>24 Q. And have you ever run for office</p> <p>25 besides this year and 2020?</p>	<p>47</p> <p>1 probate judge -- at the time, I worked in</p> <p>2 Tuscaloosa, and he went to visit my boss and,</p> <p>3 you know, to tell him I was running for office,</p> <p>4 so -- to try to get me out of the race, so I</p> <p>5 guess it worked.</p> <p>6 Q. Were you running as a Republican</p> <p>7 in -- in that election cycle?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. And you said that you don't recall</p> <p>10 having a primary competitor?</p> <p>11 A. I don't recall having that.</p> <p>12 Q. Have you ever won an election,</p> <p>13 Ms. Branyon?</p> <p>14 A. Not the election. Well, just the</p> <p>15 primary, not the election, no.</p> <p>16 Q. And why do you think that you've</p> <p>17 never won an election, to the extent you know?</p> <p>18 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>19 A. I don't know. I guess they didn't</p> <p>20 like my ideas or whatever, or they didn't</p> <p>21 believe that I would deliver on the things that</p> <p>22 I was -- I said I would deliver on. But</p> <p>23 this -- from the last time to this time, I --</p> <p>24 that's why I was happy to work on those</p> <p>25 committees with the city to help prove that I</p>
<p>46</p> <p>1 A. Just --</p> <p>2 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>3 A. Oh, sorry.</p> <p>4 Just that other time, which was maybe</p> <p>5 two or three times before that.</p> <p>6 Q. And that was also for the same</p> <p>7 District Six, correct?</p> <p>8 A. I guess I had my eye on that county</p> <p>9 commission thing.</p> <p>10 Q. And you had to drop out of that race?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. And why was that?</p> <p>13 A. The Hatch Act. At that time, if you</p> <p>14 worked for an organization or anything that</p> <p>15 accepted federal dollars, then you couldn't run</p> <p>16 for office. But they later on changed the</p> <p>17 Hatch Act, that if you didn't necessarily work</p> <p>18 for the federal government, but if, say, you</p> <p>19 work for someone that accepted federal dollars,</p> <p>20 you can run for an office. So I tried it.</p> <p>21 Q. Do you recall at what point in the</p> <p>22 cycle you dropped out of that race?</p> <p>23 A. It was -- I feel like I didn't have</p> <p>24 anybody running against me in the primary. It</p> <p>25 was before the general election. The -- the</p>	<p>48</p> <p>1 am sincere about this; if you elect me, I'm</p> <p>2 going to make sure we get some things done.</p> <p>3 Q. So all of your campaigns have been</p> <p>4 here in Fayette County, correct?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. What's the size of Fayette County?</p> <p>7 A. I would say maybe around 16,000 or</p> <p>8 so.</p> <p>9 Q. And there are six districts for the</p> <p>10 county commission, correct?</p> <p>11 A. Correct.</p> <p>12 Q. And you mentioned to me earlier that</p> <p>13 District Six is probably about half-half, black</p> <p>14 and white?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Do you know what the racial</p> <p>17 demographics of the entire county are?</p> <p>18 A. I would guess maybe 27 to 30 percent</p> <p>19 black, maybe.</p> <p>20 Q. And do you know what the partisan</p> <p>21 makeup of the county is?</p> <p>22 A. I would have to say, at this time,</p> <p>23 it's more Republican.</p> <p>24 Q. Do you have a sense of what the,</p> <p>25 like, income level or economics of the --</p>

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13 (49 to 52)

<p>49</p> <p>1 A. The county is?</p> <p>2 Q. Yes.</p> <p>3 A. I couldn't tell you exactly, but I --</p> <p>4 I would say it's more a poor county.</p> <p>5 You looking for, like, median income</p> <p>6 or what are you looking for?</p> <p>7 Q. If you have it, but, otherwise, I</p> <p>8 think I was just curious if it was a more</p> <p>9 affluent or poorer county, in your view.</p> <p>10 A. I'd say it's -- the majority are more</p> <p>11 middle class, lower class, but there are some</p> <p>12 wealthy folks that live here.</p> <p>13 Q. And are there any particular</p> <p>14 industries that people who live in Fayette</p> <p>15 County tend to work in, in your experience?</p> <p>16 A. Yes. There's a few different</p> <p>17 industries here. We have Ox Bodies and Phifer</p> <p>18 wire. There's a -- a tile plant, a glove</p> <p>19 plant, and there's some other kind of welding</p> <p>20 kind of plant. I don't know what they make,</p> <p>21 but it makes something that you have to weld</p> <p>22 together.</p> <p>23 Q. What's the partisan breakdown of the</p> <p>24 current county commission?</p> <p>25 A. You mean, like, race-wise or --</p>	<p>51</p> <p>1 Q. Okay. Is he a Republican?</p> <p>2 A. He is a Republican.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. And is he white?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. The probate judge, that's also an</p> <p>6 elected position, correct?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. It's partisan?</p> <p>9 A. Yeah. I believe. I'm pretty sure</p> <p>10 that's partisan.</p> <p>11 Q. Do you know who that is?</p> <p>12 A. Maybe if you hadn't asked me his</p> <p>13 name. He owns the Ford dealership.</p> <p>14 Q. It's fine if you don't know his name.</p> <p>15 A. I -- I can't think of his name right</p> <p>16 now.</p> <p>17 Q. That's fine.</p> <p>18 Is he a Republican?</p> <p>19 A. He's a Republican.</p> <p>20 Q. And is he white?</p> <p>21 A. He's white.</p> <p>22 Q. And the circuit judge, is that person</p> <p>23 a Republican, if you know?</p> <p>24 A. I don't know. I don't know who --</p> <p>25 Q. That's fine.</p>
<p>50</p> <p>1 Q. Party-wise.</p> <p>2 A. Party-wise?</p> <p>3 Probably five Republicans and one</p> <p>4 Democrat.</p> <p>5 Q. And what's the racial breakdown?</p> <p>6 A. The racial is five white men to one</p> <p>7 white man --</p> <p>8 Q. And is --</p> <p>9 A. -- I mean, one black man.</p> <p>10 Q. And is the one black man the one</p> <p>11 Democrat?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. And that's Mr. Underwood?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Who's the mayor of Fayette?</p> <p>16 A. Rod Northam.</p> <p>17 Q. And that's a non-partisan?</p> <p>18 A. It's non-partisan.</p> <p>19 Q. And is he white?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. Who's the sheriff of the county?</p> <p>22 A. (No verbal response.)</p> <p>23 Q. Not meant to be a test. If you don't</p> <p>24 know, that's fine.</p> <p>25 A. I don't -- I don't know his name.</p>	<p>52</p> <p>1 Do you know who the district judge</p> <p>2 is?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. And turning to the city council, how</p> <p>5 many members are there on the city council in</p> <p>6 Fayette?</p> <p>7 A. Let me see.</p> <p>8 It's five or six, I believe.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. Do you know what the, like,</p> <p>10 party breakdown is?</p> <p>11 A. Well, it's -- it's non-partisan, so</p> <p>12 --</p> <p>13 Q. Right.</p> <p>14 A. -- I don't really know what they -- I</p> <p>15 don't know the party. I can tell you</p> <p>16 race-wise.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay.</p> <p>18 A. There's two white women, and I</p> <p>19 believe four white men. Wait.</p> <p>20 Two black women and four white men, I</p> <p>21 believe.</p> <p>22 Q. Have black candidates typically been</p> <p>23 successful in Fayette County?</p> <p>24 A. In District Six they have. But on</p> <p>25 the last city election, blacks decided to run</p>

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14 (53 to 56)

<p>53</p> <p>1 in the other -- I don't know if you call theirs 2 districts or what they call them, but in other 3 areas. And it was three blacks that ran, and 4 two got into office. The other one that lost, 5 I think he lost by -- it may have been less 6 than five votes or something.</p> <p>7 Q. Wow.</p> <p>8 So this is a city council?</p> <p>9 A. This is for the city council. Yeah.</p> <p>10 Q. And so you're saying that city -- in 11 the city council, black candidates have been 12 successful even outside of the kind of 13 traditionally majority black districts?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. But that's not true of the county 16 commission?</p> <p>17 A. Okay. Not for the county commission, 18 but the Board of Education, blacks have been 19 successful outside the black district.</p> <p>20 Q. And do you know --</p> <p>21 A. At least one has.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. And who's that one?</p> <p>23 A. Tierre. His name is Tierre. I can't 24 think of his last name, but --</p> <p>25 Q. And do you know if he's a Republican</p>	<p>55</p> <p>1 first one that's tried, are you the first 2 Republican candidate that's ever tried or the 3 first black Republican candidate?</p> <p>4 A. Now, see, I told you I ran against a 5 white candidate in the primary last time. I 6 don't know that I remember anyone else. I 7 can't remember anyone else trying in the -- in 8 District Six. I'm not saying that they 9 haven't, but I -- since I've been keeping up 10 with it, I don't think I remember.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. So in your experience, 12 typically, District Six does not have a 13 Republican candidate running in the general 14 election?</p> <p>15 A. No, not other than, say, the times I 16 tried. I think that that guy that ran -- that 17 I ran against in the primary, I feel like -- 18 and I may have it wrong, but I feel like he ran 19 on the Democratic ticket one time, and he 20 didn't -- he didn't do well, but --</p> <p>21 Q. Have you always voted in Fayette 22 County?</p> <p>23 A. No. I voted in Florida when I lived 24 down there, and when I lived in Montgomery, I 25 voted there, and, yeah, then Fayette.</p>
<p>54</p> <p>1 or a Democrat?</p> <p>2 A. He -- he had ran for sheriff a few 3 times before. He ran Democrat, but when he ran 4 for the Board of Education, he ran Republican.</p> <p>5 His last name is Agnew. Tierre 6 Agnew.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>8 Do you recall when the last time a 9 white candidate represented District Six was, 10 if ever?</p> <p>11 A. Probably before they made it a black 12 district. I'm sure it was a white candidate.</p> <p>13 Q. And has a Republican candidate ever 14 been successful in District Six?</p> <p>15 A. Since it's been a black district, I 16 don't know. I don't think so.</p> <p>17 Q. Why do you think that is?</p> <p>18 A. Maybe part -- there hasn't been that 19 many that's run for office. I'm probably the 20 first one that's ever tried, but maybe -- I 21 think so. I'm probably the first one that's 22 maybe -- there may have been another one that 23 tried, but I don't think there's been very 24 many.</p> <p>25 Q. And when you say that you're the</p>	<p>56</p> <p>1 Q. When was the first time that you 2 registered to vote?</p> <p>3 A. When I was -- when I turned 18, I 4 did.</p> <p>5 Q. And that was in Fayette?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. And have you ever had any challenges 8 registering to vote?</p> <p>9 A. No. I think it was something that 10 was encouraged when you were in high school, so 11 as soon as I could, I -- I did.</p> <p>12 Q. Have you ever had any challenges or 13 trouble updating your registration?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Have you ever faced any challenges in 16 actually casting a ballot?</p> <p>17 A. No.</p> <p>18 Q. And where do you typically vote? 19 Like, where's your polling location?</p> <p>20 A. Newtonville. It was another location 21 earlier on, off 171, heading to Tuscaloosa, but 22 now it's -- it's Newtonville.</p> <p>23 Q. And how far is that from your house?</p> <p>24 A. Less than ten miles, I guess.</p> <p>25 Q. Have you ever had any trouble, like,</p>

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15 (57 to 60)

<p>57</p> <p>1 reaching your polling place?</p> <p>2 A. Well, getting there on time, I've had</p> <p>3 trouble, maybe a little, but --</p> <p>4 Q. And why is that?</p> <p>5 A. Just working and just maybe</p> <p>6 forgetting about it, and then remembering and</p> <p>7 then trying to rush there before the polls</p> <p>8 closed.</p> <p>9 Q. Are the polls only open during, like,</p> <p>10 business hours?</p> <p>11 A. I think it's 7:00 to 7:00 or</p> <p>12 something like that.</p> <p>13 Q. Are you aware of other people in your</p> <p>14 community facing any barriers to voter</p> <p>15 registration?</p> <p>16 A. I don't think so.</p> <p>17 Q. What about to voting?</p> <p>18 A. No. I mean, maybe in the old days,</p> <p>19 but not since I can remember.</p> <p>20 And what was the second question?</p> <p>21 Q. Any barriers to voting?</p> <p>22 A. Not that I know of.</p> <p>23 Q. How would you describe race relations</p> <p>24 in Fayette County?</p> <p>25 A. I think they're okay, but, you know,</p>	<p>59</p> <p>1 A. Okay. He was born late '39, '40 --</p> <p>2 in the '40s or something, so it would have to</p> <p>3 be late '40s or '50s, '60s timeframe.</p> <p>4 And we had to have a black school and</p> <p>5 a white school, so it must have been something</p> <p>6 going on with race relations to cause that, you</p> <p>7 know.</p> <p>8 Q. When you were growing up in Fayette,</p> <p>9 were the schools integrated?</p> <p>10 A. They were. My grade was the first</p> <p>11 class that was integrated from the first grade.</p> <p>12 Yeah.</p> <p>13 Q. And did you ever experience any kind</p> <p>14 of racial discrimination when you were younger</p> <p>15 in Fayette County?</p> <p>16 A. Maybe just a -- a little, but not to</p> <p>17 the extent I experienced down in Florida. I</p> <p>18 mean -- and what I experienced when I was</p> <p>19 really little, I don't know if you could put</p> <p>20 that on race relations. It was more bullying,</p> <p>21 I guess you'd say. But I may have seen a thing</p> <p>22 or two that -- maybe something small in high</p> <p>23 school or something --</p> <p>24 Q. Do you recall --</p> <p>25 A. -- but nothing big.</p>
<p>58</p> <p>1 I -- I stay out to myself. I don't -- I'm</p> <p>2 assuming they're okay. Yeah.</p> <p>3 Q. And what do you mean by, Okay?</p> <p>4 A. I don't think there are any problems</p> <p>5 or anything that I know of.</p> <p>6 Q. In your experience, have race</p> <p>7 relations in Fayette changed over time?</p> <p>8 A. Probably so. I don't know that I</p> <p>9 would recollect anything myself. I know what</p> <p>10 things my father's told me over the years. So</p> <p>11 from listening to what he's told me, I'd say</p> <p>12 race relations have changed.</p> <p>13 Q. What kinds of things has he told you</p> <p>14 about?</p> <p>15 A. Well, one of them was, like, I guess</p> <p>16 people used to walk a lot to get to places they</p> <p>17 wanted to go to, and there was these guys that</p> <p>18 would shoot at black people's feet as they're</p> <p>19 trying to walk through. And so I don't think</p> <p>20 that was a very good race relations there.</p> <p>21 I heard the KKK used to be here. I</p> <p>22 don't think that's too good of a race relation,</p> <p>23 and just -- just things like that.</p> <p>24 Q. What time period do you think your</p> <p>25 father was describing?</p>	<p>60</p> <p>1 Q. Do you recall which examples you're</p> <p>2 thinking about?</p> <p>3 A. I don't know. There's something that</p> <p>4 I didn't feel too good about in National Honor</p> <p>5 Society. It was something. I can't remember</p> <p>6 exactly what it was, but I just remember they</p> <p>7 took the pictures of the officers, and I wasn't</p> <p>8 too happy about something. And I'm sure it was</p> <p>9 something race relation-like.</p> <p>10 Q. And when you mentioned the race</p> <p>11 discrimination you faced in Florida, are you</p> <p>12 talking about the lawsuit?</p> <p>13 A. Yeah. That -- that little situation</p> <p>14 of when I asked the -- for that white man that</p> <p>15 worked under me to be terminated. That's, more</p> <p>16 or less, what I'm talking about. And things</p> <p>17 went south after that, so --</p> <p>18 Q. Did you face any kind of racial</p> <p>19 discrimination outside of the workplace when</p> <p>20 you lived in Florida?</p> <p>21 A. I may have heard about something, but</p> <p>22 I didn't really, say, see those things myself.</p> <p>23 And I don't know that I can remember, outside</p> <p>24 of work, anything happening to me.</p> <p>25 Q. And have you ever faced any racial</p>

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16 (61 to 64)

<p>61</p> <p>1 discrimination since moving back to Alabama in 2 1999 -- or 1998?</p> <p>3 A. Well, I feel like the atmosphere 4 wasn't so great when I first started with 5 ALDOT. You could hear a few people talking 6 about, like, my license wasn't as good as their 7 license or something like that. And I've seen 8 a few things, but -- and maybe I felt like I 9 didn't get promoted a time or two when I felt 10 like I should. But outside of that, maybe not 11 anything else.</p> <p>12 Q. So nothing outside of the workplace?</p> <p>13 A. Outside of the workplace, since I've 14 been back? Not that I can maybe recollect.</p> <p>15 Q. Have your family members ever faced 16 racial discrimination in Alabama? And let's 17 limit this to the past 25 years, I guess, since 18 you moved back.</p> <p>19 A. No. We kind of stay to ourselves. 20 We go to work and come home. Maybe not me 21 directly, but maybe a cousin has felt like she 22 had been discriminated against in her 23 workplace. That's all that I can remember 24 right now.</p> <p>25 Q. Does she work for the state or what,</p>	<p>63</p> <p>1 calling around, checking on her, and he kind of 2 had a -- it was like he was already against her 3 before she even sat down to interview. To me, 4 she interviewed really well, but he didn't want 5 to consider her. I'm -- I'm pretty sure I 6 brought that to some peoples' attention.</p> <p>7 And there was another situation where 8 some people have come to me about they didn't 9 feel like it was fair, promotion-wise, and 10 even, like -- we have a district office in 11 Fayette -- about, you know, blacks being able 12 to get on. Like, he had sent somebody to put 13 in an application, and, like, they didn't -- 14 just didn't even want -- it sounded like they 15 didn't want to accept his application or 16 something like that. And I think those are the 17 extent that I've seen or whatever.</p> <p>18 Q. And have these instances been since 19 you started working in this Fayette office?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. And that was about eight years ago, 22 you said?</p> <p>23 A. I think it started in 2015, somewhere 24 around there.</p> <p>25 Q. Have you ever seen candidates, black</p>
<p>62</p> <p>1 like --</p> <p>2 A. At the time, she worked for 3M in -- 3 in -- I guess it's in Guin or wherever.</p> <p>4 Q. How long ago was this experience, 5 to -- if -- to the extent you can recall?</p> <p>6 A. How long ago? Fifteen, 20 years or 7 so.</p> <p>8 Q. Are you familiar with any other 9 instances of racial discrimination in Alabama?</p> <p>10 A. Well --</p> <p>11 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>12 A. -- I may have seen something around 13 here that may have appeared to be race-relate 14 -- you know, a problem with race. But outside 15 ALDOT, no, I don't -- I don't know that I know 16 of anything other than, you know, the situation 17 with my cousin that I can think of.</p> <p>18 Q. What's the other situation here that 19 you were just thinking about?</p> <p>20 A. Well, when we first started the 21 office, there was a -- an interview that I was 22 involved in. And there was an African American 23 woman that was going to be interviewed, and 24 it's, like, the -- one of the guys that was 25 interviewing with me, he'd done some kind of</p>	<p>64</p> <p>1 or white, use race as an issue in their 2 campaigns to attract voters?</p> <p>3 A. You mean, in a local -- could you 4 repeat that?</p> <p>5 Q. Yeah. Sure.</p> <p>6 Have you ever seen candidates use 7 race in their campaigns, like, as an issue?</p> <p>8 A. I don't know that I could say that I 9 have, at least maybe in the local elections or 10 whatever.</p> <p>11 Q. What about at the state level?</p> <p>12 A. Well, I don't know that I've paid 13 that much attention on the bigger stages.</p> <p>14 MS. MESSICK: Before you change 15 topics again --</p> <p>16 MS. JASRASARIA: Yeah. I was going 17 to say we should take a break.</p> <p>18 MS. MESSICK: Yes.</p> <p>19 MS. JASRASARIA: I was about to 20 suggest that, as well. I was, like, I'm at a 21 stopping point.</p> <p>22 MS. MESSICK: Okay. That'd be great.</p> <p>23 MS. JASRASARIA: Okay. Let's go off 24 the record.</p> <p>25 (A recess was taken.)</p>

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17 (65 to 68)

<p>65</p> <p>1 BY MS. JASRASARIA:</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Welcome back, Ms. Branyon.</p> <p>3 A. Thank you.</p> <p>4 Q. How was your break?</p> <p>5 A. It was nice.</p> <p>6 Q. So you mentioned earlier that you</p> <p>7 identify with the Republican Party, correct?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Are you involved in the Fayette</p> <p>10 County Republican Party?</p> <p>11 A. Yes. I've been on and off, wow, for</p> <p>12 maybe since -- I don't know -- mid-2000s or</p> <p>13 somewhere in there. 2012, '08, somewhere in</p> <p>14 there.</p> <p>15 Q. And have you ever held any, like,</p> <p>16 officer roles with the local party?</p> <p>17 A. No. I haven't wanted to be that</p> <p>18 involved.</p> <p>19 Q. So what does your involvement in the</p> <p>20 local party look like?</p> <p>21 A. Attend the meetings type thing, but</p> <p>22 not, like, every meeting. I used to attend</p> <p>23 them much more regular than I do now, but I</p> <p>24 have other things that may prevent me from</p> <p>25 attending them all the time now.</p>	<p>67</p> <p>1 A. Yeah. Yeah.</p> <p>2 Q. When did you start identifying as a</p> <p>3 Republican?</p> <p>4 A. Somewhere around that time period.</p> <p>5 I remember Bill McCollum, he had run</p> <p>6 for sheriff, and my mom and I wanted to support</p> <p>7 him, and he ran Republican. I can't remember</p> <p>8 exactly what year that was, but that's when we</p> <p>9 really started getting involved in the</p> <p>10 Republican Party.</p> <p>11 Q. And why did you want to support Bill</p> <p>12 McCollum?</p> <p>13 A. It was an African American being</p> <p>14 Sheriff in Fayette County. That was one of the</p> <p>15 reasons I wanted to support him.</p> <p>16 Q. And did you know Mr. McCollum</p> <p>17 personally?</p> <p>18 A. He had -- maybe he recently moved</p> <p>19 back to Fayette. We might be a little kin,</p> <p>20 but, I mean, he didn't live here, so I didn't</p> <p>21 really know-know, know him personally.</p> <p>22 Q. Before you became involved with the</p> <p>23 Republican Party, had you been affiliated with</p> <p>24 the Democratic Party?</p> <p>25 A. Yes. I was, you know, all blacks are</p>
<p>66</p> <p>1 Q. Other commitments?</p> <p>2 A. Well, my mom has dementia, so more or</p> <p>3 less having to kind of see after her.</p> <p>4 Q. Of course.</p> <p>5 Have you ever been involved with the</p> <p>6 state Republican Party?</p> <p>7 A. No.</p> <p>8 Q. Have you ever attended a meeting of</p> <p>9 the state Republican Party?</p> <p>10 A. No, only that training I went to.</p> <p>11 Q. Do you vote in Republican primaries?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Regularly?</p> <p>14 A. Pretty regular. I -- I can't say</p> <p>15 there hasn't been one I -- well, there was one</p> <p>16 I missed, but -- for, like, the state</p> <p>17 representative, but pretty much all of them.</p> <p>18 Q. Have you ever voted in a Democratic</p> <p>19 primary?</p> <p>20 A. Yes, I have.</p> <p>21 Q. When was that?</p> <p>22 A. Maybe before I got involved with the</p> <p>23 Republican Party so much.</p> <p>24 Q. So that would be some time before,</p> <p>25 like, 2008 or so?</p>	<p>68</p> <p>1 supposed to be Democrat thing. I didn't know</p> <p>2 why, but -- but yeah.</p> <p>3 Q. What do you mean by, All blacks are</p> <p>4 supposed to be Democrat?</p> <p>5 A. That's just the thing. I mean --</p> <p>6 Q. And where did you learn that?</p> <p>7 A. Maybe growing up, my parents,</p> <p>8 everybody around me, church or whatever.</p> <p>9 Q. Did you vote in Democratic primaries</p> <p>10 then?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>13 A. Oh, I'm sorry.</p> <p>14 Yes, I did.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you ever attend Democratic Party</p> <p>16 meetings?</p> <p>17 A. Maybe for a short period, I did.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you know when that would have</p> <p>19 been?</p> <p>20 A. I just know it was before I got</p> <p>21 involved in the Republican Party, and it was</p> <p>22 before Fayette was really more Republican than</p> <p>23 Democrat.</p> <p>24 Q. Were you ever involved in politics</p> <p>25 when you lived in Florida?</p>

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18 (69 to 72)

<p>69</p> <p>1 A. Just voting, not really, say, been 2 part of anybody's campaign or anything like 3 that or attending any party's meetings. 4 Q. And were you a registered Democrat 5 when you lived in Florida? 6 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 7 A. Yeah. When you say, Registered, you 8 mean, I voted in -- I don't know if I know what 9 that means. I voted in the Democratic 10 primaries and even in the general election, but 11 I'm not sure what you mean by, Registered. I'm 12 not sure I understand. 13 Q. Yeah. That's a good question. I 14 guess I'm not sure whether people register with 15 a party in Florida or not. 16 A. Okay. 17 Q. I know they don't in Alabama, and -- 18 A. Okay. 19 Q. -- I thought they might in Florida, 20 but I might be mistaken. 21 A. I'm not sure -- 22 Q. That's fine. 23 A. -- I had to. 24 Q. So is it fair to say that the first 25 time that you affiliated with the Republican</p>	<p>71</p> <p>1 a maybe. I don't like the stance that 2 Democrats -- Democrats take on, like, abortion. 3 To me, that's kind of murder, and why you going 4 to pick on a little bitty baby. I mean, I feel 5 like everybody should have a right to be born 6 without being killed. I mean, it's a baby. So 7 I don't like their stance on that. 8 Q. Are there any other issues besides 9 abortion? 10 A. Well, they've gone rogue on, like, 11 gay marriages. That -- that don't sit well, 12 too -- too well with me, either, so -- 13 Q. Any other issues? 14 A. It was mainly those two. 15 Q. And where did you form your views on 16 abortion and gay marriage? 17 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 18 A. From my religious background, what I 19 understand of the scriptures and what I've been 20 taught. It's more or less how I formed my 21 views on them. 22 Q. And did you grow up attending church? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Here in Fayette? 25 A. Yes.</p>
<p>70</p> <p>1 Party was around some time in the mid-2000s? 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. And one of the reasons was to support 4 Bill McCollum for mayor? 5 A. Yes. 6 MS. MESSICK: Object. Object to the 7 form. 8 THE WITNESS: Oh. 9 MS. MESSICK: Did you say -- 10 MS. JASRASARIA: Oh. Sorry. For -- 11 MS. MESSICK: -- for mayor? 12 MS. JASRASARIA: For Sheriff. Thank 13 you. 14 Q. For Sheriff. 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Were there any other reasons that you 17 chose to affiliate with the Republican Party? 18 A. Well, back then, I didn't really know 19 too much what they stood for, so back then, no, 20 there was no other reason. 21 Q. Are there other reasons that you 22 choose to affiliate as a Republican now? 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. And what are those reasons? 25 A. Maybe I don't -- or, really, it's not</p>	<p>72</p> <p>1 Q. Do you still attend the same church 2 that you attended growing up? 3 A. No. I attend a different church now. 4 Q. The church that you used to attend 5 when you were growing up, was that a 6 predominantly black church? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. And what about the church that you 9 attend now? 10 A. It's predominantly white. 11 Q. And have your views on abortion 12 changed over the course of your lifetime? 13 A. No. I've never thought it was good 14 to kill a baby. I mean, you look at some of 15 the Bible stories and, you know, where they 16 were killing all the babies to try to get rid 17 of Jesus. And there's a situation, I guess, in 18 the Old Testament about Moses or -- it just -- 19 it just didn't sit well. 20 And -- and here we are today thinking 21 it's commonplace to kill a little baby. I just 22 -- it just didn't make sense. 23 Q. When did you start attending your 24 current church? 25 A. It was, I believe, August of 2000.</p>

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19 (73 to 76)

<p>73</p> <p>1 Wait. Wait. I got my years -- I think that 2 was -- that's pretty close to where it was. 3 Yeah. 4 Q. So shortly after you moved back to 5 Fayette? 6 A. Yeah. 7 Q. And how did you choose which church 8 to attend? 9 A. I was kind of introduced to this 10 church when I went on a -- a business trip with 11 ALDOT, and the -- the principles suited what I 12 grew up believing in and -- well, a lot of 13 churches, it's more pretend. It was, like, it 14 followed the scriptures of what I understood, 15 so that's what appealed to me. Those was -- 16 that was what was appealing to me about the 17 church that I attend now. 18 Q. Do you have family members that 19 attend church with you? 20 A. No. 21 Q. Do your family members still attend 22 the old church that you used to attend? 23 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 24 A. My brother, probably. Maybe not that 25 specific church, but that -- he's still</p>	<p>75</p> <p>1 Q. Do you feel welcomed by the 2 Republican Party? 3 A. Yes, I do. 4 Q. In what ways? 5 A. I mean, they don't shun me or 6 anything when I go to the meetings. They're 7 very cordial. I mean, they voted for me in my 8 district. I guess in those ways. 9 Q. Are there any ways in which you 10 haven't felt welcomed by the Republican Party? 11 A. No, not that I can think of. 12 Q. Have all members of the Republican 13 Party in Fayette County been welcoming to you? 14 A. Yes, they have. But I would say 15 maybe a little more this time around. 16 Q. What do you mean by that? 17 A. I don't know. You know, you can kind 18 of tell when people really trust you or 19 whatever. I just felt like -- I feel like 20 maybe this time running for office, just a 21 little more supported than before. That could 22 be because they know me a little better. 23 Q. What's the racial composition of the 24 Republican Party in Fayette County? 25 A. Now, I don't know, like -- I just</p>
<p>74</p> <p>1 Baptist. But my mom, she attends now -- she 2 used to attend the church -- I mean, the 3 Baptist Church. Now she attends Church of 4 Christ. 5 Q. And what's the denomination that your 6 current church is affiliated with? 7 A. You talking about me? 8 The Church of Jesus Christ of 9 Latter-day Saints. 10 Q. Have you ever been recruited to join 11 the Republican Party or run as a Republican? 12 A. No. As I mentioned earlier, my mom 13 and I started getting involved with the 14 Republican Party when Bill McCollum ran for 15 sheriff, and I -- I guess over the years, just 16 learning more about them and what they actually 17 stand for has made me be, like, really sincere 18 about being a Republican. 19 Q. Is your mother still affiliated with 20 the Republican Party, as well? 21 A. As I mentioned earlier, she has 22 dementia now. So I mean, she's not even too 23 interested in even voting, really. She's -- 24 she's really not the same lady that I remember 25 growing up.</p>	<p>76</p> <p>1 know what I see at the meetings or whatever. I 2 see maybe -- maybe three blacks or whatever. 3 The rest are whites. But at times, there must 4 have been more because Tierre really didn't go 5 to the meetings now, but -- so it's more about 6 maybe three blacks there. 7 Q. And about how many people attend 8 these meetings total? 9 A. I've never counted them, but 30, 40 10 or so. 11 Q. So fair to say that the -- at the 12 meetings, about ten percent of people attending 13 are black? 14 A. Yeah, maybe so. 15 Q. Why do you think that is? 16 A. I don't know. You know, blacks have 17 been more, if you're black, you're a Democrat 18 type thing. That's probably the reason. Maybe 19 they don't understand the Republican Party that 20 well. I mean, maybe they haven't really 21 researched the history of the party -- of the 22 Republican Party versus the history of the 23 Democratic Party or whatever. 24 Q. Is it fair to say that most black 25 citizens in Fayette County affiliate with the</p>

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20 (77 to 80)

<p>77</p> <p>1 Democratic Party?</p> <p>2 A. I would say that's probably fair to</p> <p>3 say.</p> <p>4 Q. And you mentioned that part of that</p> <p>5 is just the general sense that all black people</p> <p>6 are -- are supporting Democrats?</p> <p>7 A. Yeah. They probably don't know for</p> <p>8 what reason, but yeah.</p> <p>9 Q. Are there organizations or</p> <p>10 individuals that are kind of pushing that</p> <p>11 message?</p> <p>12 A. Of which message?</p> <p>13 Q. The message about, like, black people</p> <p>14 are supposed -- black people are supposed to</p> <p>15 support Democrats.</p> <p>16 A. I don't -- I don't think so. Maybe</p> <p>17 the Democratic Party, but I don't think so.</p> <p>18 Q. And you said that you've attended</p> <p>19 Democratic Party meetings --</p> <p>20 A. Right.</p> <p>21 Q. -- you know, 20 years ago or so?</p> <p>22 A. Yeah.</p> <p>23 Q. Did you feel welcomed by the</p> <p>24 Democratic Party?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>	<p>79</p> <p>1 call?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 Q. What did you and Ms. Messick speak</p> <p>4 about?</p> <p>5 A. That I should tell the truth,</p> <p>6 basically, and I shouldn't, like, if you're</p> <p>7 asking a question, try to answer it while</p> <p>8 you're asking; if she want to give -- when you</p> <p>9 ask the question, maybe give her a little time</p> <p>10 if she wanted to, I don't know, object to the</p> <p>11 form or whatever you call it.</p> <p>12 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>13 A. Just basic stuff like that. But it</p> <p>14 was just to tell the truth.</p> <p>15 Q. Did Ms. Messick ask you to testify to</p> <p>16 anything specific today?</p> <p>17 A. Not that I remember, no.</p> <p>18 Q. Had you ever met with Ms. Messick</p> <p>19 before last week's call?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. And when was that?</p> <p>22 A. I can't give you --</p> <p>23 Q. That's fine.</p> <p>24 A. -- an exact date. Maybe a couple of</p> <p>25 months ago or so.</p>
<p>78</p> <p>1 Q. Any reason that you didn't feel</p> <p>2 welcome?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. What did you do to prepare for</p> <p>5 today's deposition?</p> <p>6 A. You mean myself?</p> <p>7 I was just told I should tell the</p> <p>8 truth. That's all.</p> <p>9 Q. Did you review any documents?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. Did you speak with anyone to prepare</p> <p>12 for today's deposition?</p> <p>13 A. I mean, yes. I guess you could say.</p> <p>14 Q. You spoke to Ms. Messick?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. When was that?</p> <p>17 A. Was it Thursday or -- one day last</p> <p>18 week.</p> <p>19 Q. For about how long did you speak to</p> <p>20 Ms. Messick?</p> <p>21 A. I didn't time it, but maybe 30</p> <p>22 minutes or 45 minutes or so.</p> <p>23 Q. And that was on the phone?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Was anyone else present on that phone</p>	<p>80</p> <p>1 Q. And was that meeting in person?</p> <p>2 A. Yes. There was a in-person meeting.</p> <p>3 Q. Was anyone else present?</p> <p>4 A. I feel like there was another man or</p> <p>5 something that came with her.</p> <p>6 Q. Also from Ms. Messick's office at the</p> <p>7 attorney general?</p> <p>8 A. I'm assuming so. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. And what did you speak about in that</p> <p>10 meeting?</p> <p>11 A. I think she just asked me about some</p> <p>12 things in my past. They were probably things I</p> <p>13 forgot about. And that was it.</p> <p>14 Q. And how did she reach out to you the</p> <p>15 first time?</p> <p>16 A. A phone call.</p> <p>17 Q. And do you recall what you discussed</p> <p>18 during that phone call?</p> <p>19 A. She mentioned about -- maybe about</p> <p>20 this case and maybe she wanted to talk to me</p> <p>21 about maybe being a witness or something like</p> <p>22 that.</p> <p>23 Q. Have you met with or spoken with</p> <p>24 Ms. Messick any time outside of the three</p> <p>25 instances we've just talked about, so the first</p>

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21 (81 to 84)

<p>81</p> <p>1 time she reached out to you, then the in-person 2 meeting, and then last week on the phone? 3 A. Yeah. And I think maybe the week 4 before or something like that to tell me about 5 the deposition and about what dates I'm 6 available for the deposition. 7 Q. Okay. Any other meetings with 8 Ms. Messick outside of those four that we just 9 discussed? 10 A. That was it. 11 Q. Did you ever meet with any -- anyone 12 else from the Alabama Attorney General's office 13 without Ms. Messick? 14 A. No. 15 Q. And is there anything else that you 16 did to prepare for today's deposition? 17 A. Well, with the idea that all I had to 18 do was tell the truth, I just thought I'd just 19 come and try to tell the truth. That's it. I 20 didn't, like, review anything. And that could 21 be why I don't have all these dates memorized. 22 Q. All good. 23 So are you aware that Secretary of 24 State Allen has disclosed you as a fact witness 25 in this litigation?</p>	<p>83</p> <p>1 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 2 A. Whatever they ask me. I mean, if 3 they ask me a question, I'll -- I'll answer it 4 to the best of my ability. 5 Q. When you first spoke with Ms. Messick 6 about participating in this lawsuit, did she 7 provide any information about what you would be 8 asked to testify about? 9 A. I'm sorry, but my memory might not be 10 the best. I just know it has something to do 11 with me being black and Republican. That's 12 all. 13 Q. Have you ever testified for the state 14 in a lawsuit before? 15 A. No. 16 Q. And when was the first phone call 17 that you had with Ms. Messick, about? 18 A. Two, three months. I -- I can't 19 remember, but it was a few months ago. 20 Q. And -- 21 A. I probably have a email to give me 22 that exact date, but I -- I guess I could have 23 looked at that to prepare better on that 24 question, but -- 25 Q. And have you ever spoken to anyone</p>
<p>82</p> <p>1 A. I didn't know what kind of a witness, 2 but Ms. Messick was telling me I was going to 3 be a witness or whatever. 4 Q. Okay. And are you aware that State 5 Senator Livingston and State Representative 6 Pringle are also Defendants in this lawsuit who 7 have included your name on their joint 8 disclosures? 9 A. Maybe I don't know the detail -- 10 details, but -- okay. Yeah. 11 Q. Do you know why the secretary and the 12 legislators have disclosed you as a witness in 13 this case? 14 A. It could be because I'm Republican 15 and I'm Black. 16 Q. Is that your understanding of why 17 they reached out to you? 18 A. I'm assuming so. Yeah, maybe. 19 Q. Any other reason they may have 20 disclosed you as a witness? 21 A. I'm running for office, maybe. I'm 22 -- I don't maybe know exactly what they're 23 thinking. 24 Q. What testimony do you intend to 25 provide in this case?</p>	<p>84</p> <p>1 about this litigation that's -- that works in 2 the secretary of state's office? 3 A. No. 4 Q. What about -- 5 A. Well, I guess she works -- 6 Q. Right. Besides Ms. Messick. 7 A. Okay. No. 8 Q. And what about anyone from the 9 legislature? 10 A. No. 11 Q. Did you take any notes during your 12 conversations with Ms. Messick? 13 A. No. 14 Q. And were you provided any information 15 about this lawsuit? 16 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 17 A. All I remember is she indicated she 18 had talked to the attorney's office with ALDOT 19 to make sure it was okay for me to talk to her, 20 and -- and they said I could, and I could 21 use -- I could use this room. That's -- that's 22 all I remember. 23 Q. Were you provided any documents or 24 materials from the Caster case or the Milligan 25 case or the Singleton case?</p>

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22 (85 to 88)

<p>85</p> <p>1 A. The subpoena. No. That's all I -- I 2 know of, is the subpoena. 3 Q. Okay. I'm going to show you 4 what's -- what I'm going to mark as Exhibit 2. 5 (Deposition Exhibit 2 was marked for 6 identification.) 7 Q. Have you seen this document before? 8 A. If I have, I probably didn't read it, 9 but no. 10 Q. Okay. So you'll see on the first 11 page it has three case headers. 12 A. Okay. 13 Q. These are the three cases that 14 we've -- that we're taking this deposition in. 15 And, then, on the second page you'll 16 see the title is, State Defendants' Second 17 Supplement to their Initial Disclosures, 18 correct? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. And then you'll see that there's a 21 subheading with an, I, bolded that says, The 22 name and, if known, the address and telephone 23 number of each individual likely to have 24 discoverable information, along with the 25 subjects of that information that the</p>	<p>87</p> <p>1 your understanding of what you are expected to 2 testify about, if you're asked? 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. And we've already talked a bit about 5 the fact that you're campaigning to serve on 6 the Fayette County Commission. 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. Is there anything else that you think 9 you would testify about that experience that we 10 haven't discussed? 11 A. Repeat that again. 12 Q. Yeah. 13 If you're called to testify in the 14 case, is there anything that you would intend 15 to speak about and share with the Court that we 16 haven't discussed about your experience serving 17 on the -- or sorry -- campaigning to serve on 18 the county commission? 19 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 20 A. Okay. I guess this sums up a lot 21 of -- pretty much, maybe everything. I mean, 22 I'm not really sure what questions I might be 23 asked or whatever. 24 Q. Of course. 25 So there's nothing that you are</p>
<p>86</p> <p>1 disclosing party may use to support its claims 2 or defenses, unless the use would be solely for 3 impeachment. 4 Do you see that? 5 A. Hm-mmm. 6 Q. So let's just flip to page 3, which 7 is the next page. 8 A. Okay. 9 Q. And you'll see there towards the 10 bottom, your name and address; is that right? 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. And in the subject matter of the 13 information, it says, Ms. Branyon is a black 14 Republican, once again, campaigning to serve on 15 the Fayette County Commission, right? 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. She has information about her choice 18 to affiliate with the Republican Party, her 19 experiences campaigning, the doors that opened 20 for her after her last election in 2020, and 21 her relationship, interactions with the Alabama 22 Republican Party at the state and/or local 23 level. 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. Okay. Does this accurately reflect</p>	<p>88</p> <p>1 currently thinking about that you would plan to 2 share with the Court that we haven't already 3 talked about? 4 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 5 A. I'm not really sure. I don't think 6 so. 7 Q. Okay. It says that you have 8 information about your choice to affiliate with 9 the Republican Party. 10 And we've already discussed that 11 choice, correct? 12 A. Hm-mmm. 13 Q. Is there anything else about your 14 choice to affiliate with the Republican Party 15 that we haven't discussed? 16 A. No. 17 Q. And we've talked about your 18 experiences campaigning in 2020, correct? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Do you have other experiences 21 campaigning that we have not discussed? 22 A. I don't think so. 23 Q. Okay. Do you recall campaigning the 24 last time that you ran for -- in the early 25 2000s when you ran for Fayette County</p>

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23 (89 to 92)

<p>89</p> <p>1 Commission?</p> <p>2 A. Okay. I don't really think I got</p> <p>3 really to the campaign stage before the 2020</p> <p>4 election. I went to one meeting where that was</p> <p>5 more, This is how you campaign, kind of like</p> <p>6 the one in Montgomery, but it was more on a --</p> <p>7 maybe not local Fayette, but I think they held</p> <p>8 it in Jasper or whatever. But after that,</p> <p>9 that's when the good old probate judge had to</p> <p>10 come visit my workplace, and I kind of had to</p> <p>11 bow out.</p> <p>12 Q. Have you ever campaigned for other</p> <p>13 candidates in Fayette County besides yourself?</p> <p>14 A. No, not really.</p> <p>15 Q. It also talks here about, The doors</p> <p>16 that opened for her after her last election in</p> <p>17 2020.</p> <p>18 A. Hm-mmm.</p> <p>19 Q. Could you explain that to me? What</p> <p>20 does that mean?</p> <p>21 A. That's more or less maybe the mayor</p> <p>22 taking notice to me. And I mean, I think I met</p> <p>23 him at one of the Republican rallies or</p> <p>24 something and maybe shook hands with him, but</p> <p>25 that was the extent. And maybe he took notice</p>	<p>91</p> <p>1 understanding of what this litigation that</p> <p>2 you're being deposed in is about?</p> <p>3 A. My understanding is that about --</p> <p>4 it's about districts -- districting is maybe</p> <p>5 the extent of what I know.</p> <p>6 Q. And do you know what the term,</p> <p>7 Districting, means?</p> <p>8 A. It's how they draw the districts,</p> <p>9 like they did for District Six, to try to gain</p> <p>10 a -- a black district back years ago, like we</p> <p>11 do in Fayette -- have in Fayette now.</p> <p>12 Q. And are you aware of whether this</p> <p>13 litigation is about redistricting in Fayette or</p> <p>14 in the state? Do you have a sense of where</p> <p>15 it's focused?</p> <p>16 A. It's more in -- I guess, not even in</p> <p>17 Fayette. Maybe more in the state.</p> <p>18 Q. How did you first become aware of</p> <p>19 this litigation?</p> <p>20 A. Through Ms. Messick.</p> <p>21 Q. And have you read any of the</p> <p>22 documents or court orders in this case?</p> <p>23 A. No. I haven't taken time to do that.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you ever hear about this case in</p> <p>25 the news?</p>
<p>90</p> <p>1 to me, and he's the one that appointed me to</p> <p>2 C3. He's the one that allowed me to sit on the</p> <p>3 different committees in Fayette.</p> <p>4 I probably wouldn't have had that</p> <p>5 opportunity to do that type of thing. And I've</p> <p>6 learned so much from C3. I wouldn't have known</p> <p>7 anything about being able to maybe save the</p> <p>8 historic black high school in Fayette if it</p> <p>9 wasn't for C3 and some of the training I've</p> <p>10 gotten there.</p> <p>11 So I feel like being able -- running</p> <p>12 in that last election probably opened some</p> <p>13 doors for me that wouldn't have been open if I</p> <p>14 hadn't run.</p> <p>15 Q. And, then, the last piece it says</p> <p>16 here is, Her relationship and interactions with</p> <p>17 the Alabama Republican Party at the state</p> <p>18 and/or local level.</p> <p>19 And we've talked about your</p> <p>20 interactions with the Republican Party. Is</p> <p>21 there anything else about those interactions or</p> <p>22 your relationship with the party that we</p> <p>23 haven't discussed?</p> <p>24 A. I don't -- I don't think so.</p> <p>25 Q. What is your -- what is your</p>	<p>92</p> <p>1 A. Maybe I've heard about the</p> <p>2 redistricting in the news, but, I mean, I don't</p> <p>3 know that I really paid that much attention to</p> <p>4 it.</p> <p>5 Q. Are you familiar with the Voting</p> <p>6 Rights Act?</p> <p>7 A. Is that where blacks can vote or</p> <p>8 women and all of that is -- maybe?</p> <p>9 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>10 No. It's definitely related to, you</p> <p>11 know, black voters having equal opportunity to</p> <p>12 vote.</p> <p>13 Do you know why your testimony would</p> <p>14 be relevant to a case of -- a Voting Rights</p> <p>15 Act-related case?</p> <p>16 A. Is it really Voting Rights Act or is</p> <p>17 it redistricting?</p> <p>18 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>19 So just for some background, this</p> <p>20 case is bringing of -- so the Voting Rights Act</p> <p>21 applies to redistricting, as well as to kind of</p> <p>22 the mechanics of actually voting in an</p> <p>23 election.</p> <p>24 So the claim that the Plaintiffs have</p> <p>25 brought in this case, one of the claims, is</p>

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24 (93 to 96)

<p>93</p> <p>1 under the Voting Rights Act.</p> <p>2 A. Okay.</p> <p>3 Q. And are you aware that the case that</p> <p>4 you're being deposed in currently is about</p> <p>5 congressional redistricting in Alabama?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Are you familiar with congressional</p> <p>8 redistricting in Alabama?</p> <p>9 A. Maybe -- maybe not really.</p> <p>10 Q. Do you have any views about how</p> <p>11 congressional districts should be drawn in</p> <p>12 Alabama?</p> <p>13 A. No, I don't, to tell you the truth.</p> <p>14 Q. Did you follow the congressional</p> <p>15 redistricting process in the state this -- in</p> <p>16 the past three years?</p> <p>17 A. Like I said, just hearing a little</p> <p>18 bit about it in the news.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you remember what you've heard in</p> <p>20 the news?</p> <p>21 A. Just about they were drawing the</p> <p>22 districts or whatever, and -- I mean, I'm not</p> <p>23 really a big news buff, but that's it.</p> <p>24 Q. Have you ever been to a legislative</p> <p>25 hearing about redistricting?</p>	<p>95</p> <p>1 mean, you want me to testify or whatever.</p> <p>2 Q. And have you seen the new</p> <p>3 congressional map?</p> <p>4 A. I haven't seen -- let's say, maybe it</p> <p>5 hasn't been, like, something that I was really,</p> <p>6 really interested in or whatever.</p> <p>7 Q. Do you know which congressional</p> <p>8 district you reside in?</p> <p>9 A. No.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. Do you know who your</p> <p>11 congressperson is in the U.S. Congress?</p> <p>12 A. The U.S. Congress? I probably do.</p> <p>13 You're going to ask me what his name is?</p> <p>14 Q. If you know.</p> <p>15 A. (No verbal response.)</p> <p>16 Q. And it's okay if you don't.</p> <p>17 A. I'm pretty sure I met him at the last</p> <p>18 time I ran, but I'm not sure I know his name --</p> <p>19 Q. Okay.</p> <p>20 A. -- right off the bat.</p> <p>21 Q. Do you recall voting in the primary</p> <p>22 for your congressperson this year?</p> <p>23 A. I'm sure I do, but I mean, I'm more</p> <p>24 of a local person, but -- and maybe my state</p> <p>25 representative. But I voted for this lady last</p>
<p>94</p> <p>1 A. No.</p> <p>2 Q. Provided any kind of testimony?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. Submitted any maps?</p> <p>5 A. No, I haven't submitted any maps.</p> <p>6 Q. Do you understand what relief the</p> <p>7 Plaintiffs in this case are seeking?</p> <p>8 A. To tell you the truth, no.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. Any ideas about that based on</p> <p>10 what you've heard about the litigation?</p> <p>11 A. Could you maybe tell me, or no?</p> <p>12 Q. I cannot -- well, for now, I'm just</p> <p>13 asking you the question, so --</p> <p>14 A. Okay.</p> <p>15 Q. -- I will refrain from -- from</p> <p>16 telling you, but I can certainly tell you</p> <p>17 after.</p> <p>18 A. Okay.</p> <p>19 Q. And are you aware that the -- the</p> <p>20 Court imposed a new congressional district map</p> <p>21 for the 2024 election?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. And how are you aware of that?</p> <p>24 A. Well, just because -- I mean, I kind</p> <p>25 of gathered that from the news and from what, I</p>	<p>96</p> <p>1 time around for the senate, but I can't</p> <p>2 remember the guy in the --</p> <p>3 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>4 A. -- the legislature.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. Do you have any views about</p> <p>6 the congressional map?</p> <p>7 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>8 A. Like, I'm supposed to oppose it or</p> <p>9 something or --</p> <p>10 Q. I'm just curious if you have any</p> <p>11 views on whether you like or dislike the</p> <p>12 current congressional map.</p> <p>13 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>14 A. No. I don't -- really don't feel</p> <p>15 like it really matters to me.</p> <p>16 Q. Why do you say that?</p> <p>17 A. I just feel like if it's a good</p> <p>18 candidate, it doesn't matter whether it's --</p> <p>19 has to be, we got it for the blacks, you know,</p> <p>20 whatever. If it's a good candidate, they're</p> <p>21 going to make it no matter what their color is,</p> <p>22 so --</p> <p>23 Q. And what do you mean by, It doesn't</p> <p>24 matter if we, like, have the candidate for the</p> <p>25 blacks?</p>

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25 (97 to 100)

<p>97</p> <p>1 A. Well, in --</p> <p>2 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>3 A. Okay. Well, in the early years, we</p> <p>4 had to draw out District Six so that a black</p> <p>5 could be represented in the county commission.</p> <p>6 Here, lately, we've been able to elect blacks</p> <p>7 that aren't in that, say, district to offices.</p> <p>8 I just feel like maybe we're moving on to be</p> <p>9 a -- a little fairer society. So maybe your</p> <p>10 views can get you elected these days, no matter</p> <p>11 what color you are.</p> <p>12 Obama got elected for president. I</p> <p>13 mean, that's a national election, and it wasn't</p> <p>14 just based on blacks' vote or whatever.</p> <p>15 Q. Do you know what the term, Racial</p> <p>16 polarization, means?</p> <p>17 A. I can't say that I do.</p> <p>18 Q. Would you agree that in general,</p> <p>19 black voters tend to vote for different</p> <p>20 candidates than white voters in Alabama?</p> <p>21 A. I would -- I would maybe say, yeah.</p> <p>22 In the past, yeah.</p> <p>23 Q. And you say, In the past?</p> <p>24 A. Hm-mmm.</p> <p>25 Q. Is that no longer the case?</p>	<p>99</p> <p>1 A. Well, as I said, blacks have been</p> <p>2 able to be elected that aren't in a particular</p> <p>3 district. I've seen that happen in, say --</p> <p>4 say, the last election cycle, the city council</p> <p>5 election. The blacks that was -- one black</p> <p>6 that was elected, she wasn't in a black</p> <p>7 district. Another black ran, but he barely</p> <p>8 lost. I mean, he wasn't in a black district.</p> <p>9 Tierre Agnew that ran Republican is -- it</p> <p>10 wasn't a black district.</p> <p>11 So I don't know. If you're running</p> <p>12 on a -- a good forum, does it have to be a</p> <p>13 black district to be elected? I mean, maybe</p> <p>14 things are changing a little bit; that people</p> <p>15 just want a good candidate.</p> <p>16 Q. And have you seen that happen outside</p> <p>17 of Fayette County?</p> <p>18 A. Yeah. I saw it happen in a</p> <p>19 presidential election, Obama.</p> <p>20 Q. Have you seen it happen in Alabama,</p> <p>21 outside of Fayette?</p> <p>22 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>23 A. I don't know that I pay that much</p> <p>24 attention. I feel like I met a representative</p> <p>25 or something when I visited Montgomery, but I</p>
<p>98</p> <p>1 A. Well, let me just say I feel like</p> <p>2 times are changing. In the far past, you'd</p> <p>3 probably never see me as being Republican.</p> <p>4 It's more and more blacks are becoming</p> <p>5 Republicans. So are we drawing a district just</p> <p>6 for Democrats or for any drawing -- I -- I</p> <p>7 don't really know the reason.</p> <p>8 Q. Are you familiar with the concept of</p> <p>9 a black opportunity to elect district?</p> <p>10 A. Repeat that again.</p> <p>11 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>12 A black opportunity to elect</p> <p>13 district.</p> <p>14 A. Am I --</p> <p>15 Q. Familiar with that concept.</p> <p>16 A. Well, I don't know if I'm familiar</p> <p>17 with the legal concept or whatever you mean by</p> <p>18 it, but I could probably kind of guess.</p> <p>19 Q. What's your guess?</p> <p>20 A. That blacks would have an opportunity</p> <p>21 to be elected in a certain area.</p> <p>22 Q. And do you have any views about</p> <p>23 districts where black voters would have --</p> <p>24 black candidates would be able to be elected?</p> <p>25 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p>	<p>100</p> <p>1 don't think it was a black district. I'm not</p> <p>2 sure, but I don't -- I didn't get the feel that</p> <p>3 it was in a black district.</p> <p>4 Q. And was that a, like, state</p> <p>5 representative?</p> <p>6 A. Yeah, it was a state representative.</p> <p>7 Q. Are you familiar with what it means</p> <p>8 -- like -- or sorry. Let me start over.</p> <p>9 What's a minority -- a</p> <p>10 majority-minority district?</p> <p>11 A. You got more of a -- a particular</p> <p>12 minority than non-minorities in that district.</p> <p>13 It depends on what the minority is. I mean, it</p> <p>14 could be anything, I mean, Spanish or black,</p> <p>15 maybe.</p> <p>16 Q. And you said that District Six in</p> <p>17 Fayette County used to be at least a</p> <p>18 majority-minority district?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. And now it may no longer be?</p> <p>21 A. It may no longer be. Yeah.</p> <p>22 Q. Do you have views about whether</p> <p>23 minority -- whether majority-minority districts</p> <p>24 are effective or helpful to black voters?</p> <p>25 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p>

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26 (101 to 104)

<p>101</p> <p>1 A. Well, if you look at my District Six, 2 I'd say it wasn't helpful. They're getting 3 paid, but they're not doing anything, the 4 minorities that have been elected to office. 5 So in that sense, it's not helpful to have a 6 minority if they're not going to do anything to 7 make a difference to people's lives. 8 Q. And what do you mean by, They haven't 9 done anything? 10 A. The ones that are in office now. I 11 mean, this is a few years back when my mom and 12 I were just sitting down talking, and, like, 13 the people that are in office now in District 14 Six, we couldn't come up with one thing, one 15 single little thing that the -- the gentleman 16 holding the office has done. 17 We didn't talk about the Board of 18 Education. It was more about the commission. 19 But I don't know that I could think of anything 20 that the black from District Six has really 21 done on the commission, either, for the blacks 22 or whites. I mean, collecting the paycheck, 23 but we couldn't think of anything. 24 Now, the one before him, we could 25 think of something that he had done to help the</p>	<p>103</p> <p>1 A. Yeah. He was a black Democrat. 2 Q. Do you know where most black people 3 in Alabama live, like, which regions of 4 Alabama? 5 A. I know you have a lot down in the 6 Wilcox area, maybe south on the west side of 7 the state. You have some in Birmingham. 8 That's maybe a majority of what I can think of. 9 Q. And have you ever lived in any of 10 those areas? 11 A. Let's see. 12 Lowndes County is one, too. I do own 13 a piece of land in Lowndes County. It's just a 14 little bitty piece, but -- 15 Q. Have you spent any significant time 16 there? 17 A. No. I was just living in the 18 Montgomery area and wanted to build a house, so 19 I just bought a little piece of land out there. 20 Q. And have you ever spent significant 21 time in Mobile? 22 A. No, just a weekend here and there; a 23 few days during the week. That's all. 24 Q. Have you ever spent any significant 25 time in the Black Belt?</p>
<p>102</p> <p>1 people in District Six, but we couldn't come up 2 with anything. So is that really helping the 3 blacks, I don't know, if you're not doing 4 anything in office for them? 5 Q. What are some of the things that you 6 came up with for the previous representative of 7 District Six that had been helpful? 8 A. He had gotten water to District Six. 9 There was a time -- and it's not, like, so much 10 like that in Fayette now. There was a time in 11 Fayette that the outer areas would have water 12 problems, like, couldn't -- not enough water 13 for them to drink and use. 14 But the guy that represented the -- 15 represented us before John, he had had a little 16 forethought and gotten a water system down in 17 our area, which is very helpful. So we could 18 think of at least that, that he had done. 19 Q. Do you remember his name? 20 A. Oh. I -- I'm sorry. I can't think 21 of it right now. 22 Q. That's okay. 23 A. Yeah. 24 Q. And he was also a black Democrat; is 25 that right?</p>	<p>104</p> <p>1 A. Just, say, passing through there, but 2 no, just -- 3 Q. Are you familiar with communities in 4 those parts of the state? 5 A. As I said, Lowndes County. I forgot 6 Selma. That's -- that's about -- and, then, 7 what you see on TV. 8 Q. Is there anything else that you 9 expect to testify about that we did not talk 10 about today? 11 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 12 A. No, not that I know of. 13 Q. And is there any other -- other 14 information that you have that you think is 15 relevant to the redistricting case? 16 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form. 17 A. I don't think so. 18 MS. JASRASARIA: Can we just take, 19 like, a five-minute break? 20 MS. MESSICK: Yeah. 21 (A recess was taken.) 22 BY MS. JASRASARIA: 23 Q. Ms. Branyon, you mentioned that you 24 had started affiliating with the Republican 25 Party around the mid-2000s, correct?</p>

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27 (105 to 108)

<p>105</p> <p>1 A. Somewhere, yeah, in there.</p> <p>2 Q. And have you voted for any Democratic</p> <p>3 candidates since then?</p> <p>4 A. I'm pretty sure I voted for Obama.</p> <p>5 Q. Did you vote for President Obama in</p> <p>6 2008?</p> <p>7 A. Was that the first time he ran?</p> <p>8 Q. Yes.</p> <p>9 A. I'm sure I voted for him both times.</p> <p>10 Okay.</p> <p>11 Q. And why is that?</p> <p>12 A. Because I liked him, and I liked his</p> <p>13 views. I liked -- I don't know. He seemed to</p> <p>14 be a good candidate to me.</p> <p>15 Q. Any particular views that you liked</p> <p>16 of his that you can remember?</p> <p>17 A. What did he run on, hope or what --</p> <p>18 something like that? Yeah.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you recall voting for any other</p> <p>20 Democrats since then?</p> <p>21 MS. MESSICK: Object to the form.</p> <p>22 A. I can't say there's been any other</p> <p>23 that's impressed me or whatever.</p> <p>24 Q. And have you been following this</p> <p>25 current presidential election?</p>	<p>107</p> <p>1 her. Maybe I don't feel about her like I do --</p> <p>2 did Obama or -- or whatever.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. No further questions from me.</p> <p>4 Thank you so much, Ms. Branyon.</p> <p>5 A. Thank you.</p> <p>6 Q. There may be some questions from</p> <p>7 others on the Zoom.</p> <p>8 MS. JASRASARIA: Milligan Plaintiffs?</p> <p>9 MS. SADASIVAN: Thank you,</p> <p>10 Ms. Branyon. We don't have any further</p> <p>11 questions for you. Thanks so much for your</p> <p>12 time, though.</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>14 MS. JASRASARIA: Is anyone on for the</p> <p>15 Singleton Plaintiffs?</p> <p>16 Okay. Hearing none, I'll turn it</p> <p>17 over to Ms. Messick and the Defendants.</p> <p>18 MS. MESSICK: Yeah. Can we take just</p> <p>19 two minutes?</p> <p>20 MS. JASRASARIA: Sure.</p> <p>21 (A recess was taken.)</p> <p>22 CROSS-EXAMINATION</p> <p>23 BY MS. MESSICK:</p> <p>24 Q. Ms. Branyon, thank you so much for</p> <p>25 being here today. I do have a few questions</p>
<p>106</p> <p>1 A. I have, yes. I have. Yeah.</p> <p>2 Q. Do you think that Kamala Harris being</p> <p>3 nominated as the Democrat will -- how do you</p> <p>4 think voters in Alabama will react to that?</p> <p>5 A. Oh. They're going -- they're Trump</p> <p>6 all the way. Well, not -- not blacks, I don't</p> <p>7 think, in Alabama.</p> <p>8 But how -- how would Blacks react to</p> <p>9 it?</p> <p>10 Q. Sure.</p> <p>11 A. Is that the question?</p> <p>12 Well, what was the question?</p> <p>13 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>14 The question was, voters in Alabama,</p> <p>15 so I think you --</p> <p>16 A. Oh. Voters in Alabama?</p> <p>17 Q. So you answered that.</p> <p>18 A. Okay. Yeah. Okay.</p> <p>19 Q. And what about Black voters,</p> <p>20 specifically?</p> <p>21 A. I'm sure they're going to be for</p> <p>22 Ms. Harris or whatever.</p> <p>23 Q. Do you have any views about</p> <p>24 Ms. Harris's candidacy?</p> <p>25 A. I, personally, don't know much about</p>	<p>108</p> <p>1 for you.</p> <p>2 A. Okay.</p> <p>3 Q. First of all, have you testified here</p> <p>4 today to the best of your knowledge and</p> <p>5 recollection as -- as you're able to remember,</p> <p>6 sitting here today?</p> <p>7 A. To the best of my knowledge, yes.</p> <p>8 Q. And you've testified to things as you</p> <p>9 remember them, sitting here today?</p> <p>10 A. As I remember them today --</p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 A. -- which may not be the best memory</p> <p>13 on the earth.</p> <p>14 Q. Well, some of the things we're</p> <p>15 talking about are a while ago.</p> <p>16 A. Okay.</p> <p>17 Q. You mentioned the situation in</p> <p>18 Florida --</p> <p>19 A. Right.</p> <p>20 Q. -- involved an employee who you</p> <p>21 wanted terminated. And I felt like I heard you</p> <p>22 say one time that he was white and another time</p> <p>23 he was black.</p> <p>24 A. No. He was white.</p> <p>25 Q. That employee was white?</p>

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28 (109 to 112)

<p>109</p> <p>1 A. He was white.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. You mentioned a couple of</p> <p>3 times the probate judge in the Hatch Act</p> <p>4 situation.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember that?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Who was the probate judge?</p> <p>9 A. It was Oswald.</p> <p>10 Q. How do you spell that?</p> <p>11 A. O-S-W-A-R -- W-A-L-T, I believe.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. And is that a man or a woman?</p> <p>13 A. It's a man.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. And do you know whether he was</p> <p>15 a Republican or a Democrat?</p> <p>16 A. He was Democrat.</p> <p>17 Q. And at the time, was the -- was the</p> <p>18 county Democrat or was the county more</p> <p>19 Republican or was it in transition?</p> <p>20 A. I think it was more in transition.</p> <p>21 Q. Do you know why probate Judge Oswald</p> <p>22 came to your office and told somebody here --</p> <p>23 at your office that you were running in</p> <p>24 apparent violation of the Hatch Act?</p> <p>25 A. I understood -- understand that he</p>	<p>111</p> <p>1 A. -- get me out of the race, but --</p> <p>2 Q. How did you come to have that</p> <p>3 feeling?</p> <p>4 A. Maybe some people told me or</p> <p>5 whatever.</p> <p>6 Q. Did you ever talk to Judge Oswald</p> <p>7 about it?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. Do you know what would have happened</p> <p>10 if you had gone forward with the race and that</p> <p>11 was in violation of the Hatch Act?</p> <p>12 A. Well, it's probably good that it was</p> <p>13 brought to my attention because it's never good</p> <p>14 to break a law or whatever, but -- what was the</p> <p>15 question again?</p> <p>16 Q. Did you know what would have happened</p> <p>17 if you had gone forward with the race in</p> <p>18 violation of federal law?</p> <p>19 A. To me?</p> <p>20 Q. Yeah.</p> <p>21 A. No, I don't.</p> <p>22 Q. Were you aware of the Hatch Act when</p> <p>23 you had decided to run or --</p> <p>24 A. No. I knew nothing about it --</p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p>
<p>110</p> <p>1 felt like me running against John may have</p> <p>2 pulled some votes away from him because he was</p> <p>3 Democrat, and I was running Republican. I -- I</p> <p>4 don't know why he felt that way, but he did.</p> <p>5 Q. And when you say, John, you're</p> <p>6 referring to John --</p> <p>7 A. John Underwood, the -- the guy I was</p> <p>8 running against.</p> <p>9 Q. Every time you've run for county</p> <p>10 commission District Six has it been against</p> <p>11 John Underwood?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. And that's the current situation,</p> <p>14 too?</p> <p>15 A. That's the current situation, also.</p> <p>16 Q. And -- but you're saying that you</p> <p>17 think that the probate judge was worried that</p> <p>18 you would draw votes away from the probate</p> <p>19 judge?</p> <p>20 A. Yeah. Like I said, I don't</p> <p>21 understand. Nobody was ever really able to</p> <p>22 beat him. I mean, he had the office, you know,</p> <p>23 locked up, but I feel like that's the reason he</p> <p>24 felt like he needed to --</p> <p>25 Q. Did --</p>	<p>112</p> <p>1 A. -- when I decided to run.</p> <p>2 Q. Do you remember at what point in the</p> <p>3 race the Hatch Act issue came up?</p> <p>4 A. It was very early on. I -- I never</p> <p>5 really got out there to start campaigning or</p> <p>6 anything.</p> <p>7 Q. And was there ever any kind of follow</p> <p>8 up? Was there any kind of prosecution or</p> <p>9 lawsuit or anything about the fact -- about the</p> <p>10 Hatch Act?</p> <p>11 A. About me running?</p> <p>12 Q. Right.</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. You said a couple of things</p> <p>15 earlier at different times, but I'm having a</p> <p>16 hard time reconciling.</p> <p>17 A. Okay.</p> <p>18 Q. And so I want you to help me with</p> <p>19 this.</p> <p>20 You were asked if there was anyone</p> <p>21 pushing the message that blacks are supposed to</p> <p>22 be Democrats, and my memory of your answer was</p> <p>23 something along the lines of, Well, not that I</p> <p>24 know of; maybe the Democratic Party.</p> <p>25 But earlier you had said that you,</p>

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29 (113 to 116)

<p>113</p> <p>1 personally, had always received the message</p> <p>2 from everyone around you, including your</p> <p>3 parents and church, that blacks were supposed</p> <p>4 to be Democrats.</p> <p>5 A. Right.</p> <p>6 Q. So I'm having a hard time</p> <p>7 understanding how both of those things are</p> <p>8 true.</p> <p>9 Do you -- are you saying that you</p> <p>10 don't think that everybody is continuing to</p> <p>11 press that message, but they did when you were</p> <p>12 a child or have I misunderstood something?</p> <p>13 MS. JASRASARIA: Objection. Form.</p> <p>14 A. Well, I still feel like that's</p> <p>15 probably the case. I mean, there's been blacks</p> <p>16 ask me, Well, why are you running Republican;</p> <p>17 You know, you're supposed to be Democrat. So I</p> <p>18 still think that's out there, I mean, that</p> <p>19 we're supposed to be.</p> <p>20 Q. Do you feel like people are getting</p> <p>21 the message, even if you don't know where it's</p> <p>22 coming from?</p> <p>23 A. When you say, Getting the message --</p> <p>24 I feel like probably people still feel that</p> <p>25 way.</p>	<p>115</p> <p>1 to me and said that they support me.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. When you ran last time in</p> <p>3 2020, did you ask the Fayette County Republican</p> <p>4 Party for support of any kind?</p> <p>5 A. No. I -- I don't -- I guess you</p> <p>6 could say I'm too shy to ask people for, well,</p> <p>7 at least financial support. That -- that's a</p> <p>8 very hard thing for me to maybe do. Now, some</p> <p>9 people came to me and asked me to run last time</p> <p>10 and said that they would pay for my campaign,</p> <p>11 but I told them I could pay for my own</p> <p>12 campaign. But at least -- I know at least</p> <p>13 one -- I did accept money from at least one</p> <p>14 person, though, last time around.</p> <p>15 Q. Who was it that asked you to run and</p> <p>16 offered to help pay for it?</p> <p>17 A. His name is Joe Acker.</p> <p>18 Q. And who is Mr. Acker?</p> <p>19 A. Well, he's -- he's been a county</p> <p>20 commissioner before. I think he -- at one</p> <p>21 point, he owned the West Alabama Cable Company.</p> <p>22 Q. Is he black or white?</p> <p>23 A. He's white.</p> <p>24 Q. Is he a Republican?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>
<p>114</p> <p>1 Q. Do you get -- do younger people ask</p> <p>2 you about why it is you're Republican when</p> <p>3 you're supposed to be a Democrat or is that</p> <p>4 from older people?</p> <p>5 A. Well, there's been younger people,</p> <p>6 but younger people are a little more open --</p> <p>7 open to, say, both parties. But I've been</p> <p>8 asked that by younger people, at least one or</p> <p>9 two.</p> <p>10 Q. Have you asked the Fayette County</p> <p>11 Republican Party for any support in this</p> <p>12 current election that you haven't received?</p> <p>13 A. Ask them for support that I haven't</p> <p>14 received?</p> <p>15 Q. Right.</p> <p>16 A. I haven't asked anybody for support.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay.</p> <p>18 A. Now, people have come to me and</p> <p>19 mentioned support, but I haven't received any</p> <p>20 support.</p> <p>21 You mean financially or --</p> <p>22 Q. Anything that would be beneficial to</p> <p>23 your campaign, which would certainly include</p> <p>24 money.</p> <p>25 A. Well, no money, but people have come</p>	<p>116</p> <p>1 Q. Do you know what his motivations were</p> <p>2 in asking you to run?</p> <p>3 A. He just maybe wanted John off because</p> <p>4 he didn't feel John was doing anything.</p> <p>5 Q. It sounded like there was more than</p> <p>6 one person who had encouraged you to run and</p> <p>7 offered --</p> <p>8 A. Yeah. Bill --</p> <p>9 Q. -- to contribute.</p> <p>10 A. Yeah. Him and Bill McCollum, but</p> <p>11 Bill didn't say he would pay for my election.</p> <p>12 Q. So he encouraged you to run, but</p> <p>13 didn't offer to fund it?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. How much did you spend on your</p> <p>16 election in 2020, if you remember?</p> <p>17 A. Oh. I probably spent maybe -- and</p> <p>18 there's a record of some of this, but I know at</p> <p>19 least maybe 3,500 to 4,000 range.</p> <p>20 Q. Do you know how much John Underwood</p> <p>21 spent on his campaign?</p> <p>22 A. Well, he's able to recycle his signs</p> <p>23 from previous elections, so he probably didn't</p> <p>24 have to spend hardly anything.</p> <p>25 Q. How long has he been on the county</p>

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30 (117 to 120)

<p>117</p> <p>1 commission?</p> <p>2 A. I can't give you an exact time, but I</p> <p>3 would put it at maybe 20 years or so.</p> <p>4 Q. Have you spoken to Joe Acker about</p> <p>5 your campaign this -- this year?</p> <p>6 A. No. Joe, he doesn't really come to</p> <p>7 the meetings anymore.</p> <p>8 Q. Are you going to the meetings of the</p> <p>9 Republican Party here in Fayette County?</p> <p>10 A. Yes. I've been going here lately.</p> <p>11 Like I said before, I've been on and off over</p> <p>12 -- over the years.</p> <p>13 Q. Have you gotten any pushback from</p> <p>14 anybody at the Fayette County Republican Party</p> <p>15 at the idea that you only come around when</p> <p>16 you're running for office?</p> <p>17 A. Well, no. Nobody said anything about</p> <p>18 that. Originally, I wasn't running for office</p> <p>19 when I started going to the meetings, but</p> <p>20 nobody has really said anything like that.</p> <p>21 Q. Okay. Have you started making plans</p> <p>22 for your current campaign for what you're going</p> <p>23 to do?</p> <p>24 A. Maybe last Saturday I was supposed to</p> <p>25 maybe start coming up with slogans and ordering</p>	<p>119</p> <p>1 very long. I believe it's maybe a month or so</p> <p>2 it's been operating.</p> <p>3 Q. So you've just now gotten it off the</p> <p>4 ground.</p> <p>5 A. We -- we've just gotten it off the</p> <p>6 ground.</p> <p>7 Q. How's it been received so far? Do</p> <p>8 people know about it yet?</p> <p>9 A. Yes. I've seen the bus out there</p> <p>10 dropping people off and stuff.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay.</p> <p>12 A. I -- I heard that -- and this is</p> <p>13 through the ACE coordinator -- that when they</p> <p>14 kind of first announced that we're about to get</p> <p>15 started, the phones were ringing off the hook</p> <p>16 for it. I don't -- I haven't, like, asked here</p> <p>17 lately in the last week or two.</p> <p>18 Q. What is an ACE coordinator?</p> <p>19 A. See, I know that these small towns</p> <p>20 have one. I can't tell you what it stands for,</p> <p>21 though, but he's the guy that's over these</p> <p>22 different civilian committees. He's the ACE</p> <p>23 coordinator.</p> <p>24 Q. Okay.</p> <p>25 A. They're supposed to help the -- the</p>
<p>118</p> <p>1 stuff, but I didn't get around to it, so --</p> <p>2 Q. And what is the transportation issue</p> <p>3 that you're focused on this year? If I</p> <p>4 understood you right, you previously wanted to</p> <p>5 get some sort of transportation system for the</p> <p>6 county --</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. -- but you ended up settling for the</p> <p>9 city?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Are you now trying to expand that to</p> <p>12 the county?</p> <p>13 A. Well, that was going to be something</p> <p>14 that I was going to run on.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay.</p> <p>16 A. But if elected, I was going to try to</p> <p>17 get a county-wide transit system.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. What does the system for the</p> <p>19 city look like at this point?</p> <p>20 A. It just runs within the city limits,</p> <p>21 and they only have one bus. Well, they have</p> <p>22 two buses, but they only run one. The other</p> <p>23 one is, like, for backup. In case there's a</p> <p>24 mechanical problem one day, they don't have to</p> <p>25 shut it down. And it hasn't been operating</p>	<p>120</p> <p>1 city move along and, you know, progress or</p> <p>2 whatever.</p> <p>3 Q. And are you saying A-C-E?</p> <p>4 A. Yeah, ACE.</p> <p>5 Q. Like all capital?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 A. It stands for something.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. All right. I don't have any</p> <p>10 further questions.</p> <p>11 MS. JASRASARIA: I have just a couple</p> <p>12 of follow-up questions, but should we see if</p> <p>13 the legislative Defendants have any questions?</p> <p>14 MS. MESSICK: Yes. We certainly</p> <p>15 should.</p> <p>16 MR. TAUNTON: No questions from the</p> <p>17 legislators. Thanks.</p> <p>18 MS. JASRASARIA: Thank you.</p> <p>19 RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION</p> <p>20 BY MS. JASRASARIA:</p> <p>21 Q. I just have a couple of quick</p> <p>22 questions.</p> <p>23 Ms. Branyon, you mentioned probate</p> <p>24 Judge Oswalt.</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p>

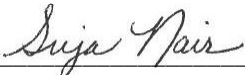
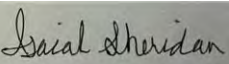
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31 (121 to 124)

<p>121</p> <p>1 Q. Is he a Democrat?</p> <p>2 A. He's a Democrat.</p> <p>3 Q. Is he black?</p> <p>4 A. He's white.</p> <p>5 Q. And you mentioned Joe Acker?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Did he offer support for your 2020</p> <p>8 campaign?</p> <p>9 A. Before I ran, yes, he was -- he</p> <p>10 offered to help fund it.</p> <p>11 Q. And how did you meet him?</p> <p>12 A. I've known him -- I met him through</p> <p>13 the Republican Party and known him, I guess,</p> <p>14 ever since I've started going to the Republican</p> <p>15 meetings. I guess him and Bill McCollum may</p> <p>16 have been friends or something.</p> <p>17 Q. And you mentioned the training that</p> <p>18 you went to with the state party.</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. What were the services that they were</p> <p>21 offering you?</p> <p>22 A. Like, they had this app, and I'm not</p> <p>23 sure if I can remember the name of it, but</p> <p>24 maybe the WalkUp App, I think they called it.</p> <p>25 And it just had, like, the neighborhoods and</p>	<p>123</p> <p>1 additional information, and I haven't really</p> <p>2 gotten that additional information concerning</p> <p>3 that WalkUp app.</p> <p>4 Q. And have you reached out to anyone to</p> <p>5 get additional information?</p> <p>6 A. No, I haven't. Because I haven't</p> <p>7 really started campaigning, and so I was just</p> <p>8 kind of waiting until I got ready to do that.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. No further questions. Thank</p> <p>10 you.</p> <p>11 A. Okay.</p> <p>12 MS. MESSICK: None from me.</p> <p>13 Anybody else?</p> <p>14 MS. SADASIVAN: Nothing further for</p> <p>15 the Milligan Plaintiffs, either.</p> <p>16 MS. MESSICK: Michael, are you guys</p> <p>17 good?</p> <p>18 MR. TAUNTON: Yep. We're all good.</p> <p>19 Nothing further.</p> <p>20 MS. JASRASARIA: Okay. Thank you so</p> <p>21 much for your time, Ms. Branyon.</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>23 MS. JASRASARIA: We really appreciate</p> <p>24 it. I know it's been a long afternoon. Thank</p> <p>25 you.</p>
<p>122</p> <p>1 the people. You could pretty much use it to go</p> <p>2 knock on doors and stuff.</p> <p>3 Q. Any other services they offered?</p> <p>4 A. They mentioned some things about</p> <p>5 advertising. Those are the two major ones.</p> <p>6 There was maybe -- there was maybe something</p> <p>7 else to do, I think, with the internet or</p> <p>8 something, but it was more the WalkUp app, the</p> <p>9 advertising. And these are all things you have</p> <p>10 to pay for.</p> <p>11 Those are the major ones that I</p> <p>12 remember. The WalkUp app is supposed to be</p> <p>13 free, except there are certain portions of it</p> <p>14 that you can pay for that -- if you want those</p> <p>15 portions.</p> <p>16 Q. And have you taken them up on using</p> <p>17 any of these services?</p> <p>18 A. I wanted to use the WalkUp app, but I</p> <p>19 haven't been able to get it. Like, you're</p> <p>20 supposed to sign up for it. I did that, but</p> <p>21 it's confusing to me as to how you actually use</p> <p>22 it or whatever. And they said they'll provide</p> <p>23 help with it, but I don't know that -- I</p> <p>24 thought I did what I needed to do to get</p> <p>25 connected. But I thought I was supposed to get</p>	<p>124</p> <p>1 (Off the record at 4:40 p.m.)</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>

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32 (125 to 128)

<p style="text-align: right;">125</p> <p>1 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DEPONENT</p> <p>2 I, VALERIE BRANYON, do hereby acknowledge</p> <p>3 that I have read and examined the foregoing</p> <p>4 testimony, and the same is a true, correct, and</p> <p>5 complete transcription of the testimony given</p> <p>6 by me, and any corrections appear on the</p> <p>7 attached Errata sheet signed by me.</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24 _____</p> <p>25 DATE SIGNATURE CERTIFICATE</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">127</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER</p> <p>2 I, SUJA NAIR, do hereby certify that</p> <p>3 the foregoing transcript is a true and correct</p> <p>4 record of the recorded proceedings; that said</p> <p>5 proceedings were transcribed to the best of my</p> <p>6 ability from the audio recording and supporting</p> <p>7 information; and that I am neither counsel for,</p> <p>8 related to, nor employed by any of the parties</p> <p>9 to this case and have no interest, financial or</p> <p>10 otherwise, in its outcome.</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14 </p> <p>15 _____</p> <p>16 Suja Nair</p> <p>17 July 24, 2024</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">126</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE OF DIGITAL REPORTER - NOTARY PUBLIC</p> <p>2 I, ISALIAH SHERIDAN, the officer</p> <p>3 before whom the foregoing deposition was taken,</p> <p>4 do hereby certify that said proceedings were</p> <p>5 electronically recorded by me; and that I am</p> <p>6 neither counsel for, related to, nor employed</p> <p>7 by any of the parties to this case and have no</p> <p>8 interest, financial or otherwise, in its</p> <p>9 outcome.</p> <p>10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto</p> <p>11 set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this</p> <p>12 24th day of JULY, 2024.</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22 </p> <p>23 _____</p> <p>24 Isaiiah Sheridan, AAERT CER</p> <p>25 7/25/2024</p>	

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