UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA (SOUTHERN DIVISION - SANTA ANA) JOHN C. EASTMAN,) CASE NO: 8:22-CV-00099-DOC-DFM Plaintiff, CIVIL))) Santa Ana, California vs.) BENNIE G. THOMPSON, ET AL.,) Monday, February 14, 2022 (1:11 p.m. to 1:41 p.m.) Defendants.) (1:51 p.m. to 1:58 p.m.) SCHEDULING CONFERENCE (VIA ZOOM) BEFORE THE HONORABLE DAVID O. CARTER, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE SEE PAGE 2 APPEARANCES: Court Reporter: Recorded; CourtSmart Courtroom Deputy: Karlen Dubon / Deborah Lewman Transcribed by: Exceptional Reporting Services, Inc. P.O. Box 8365 Corpus Christi, TX 78468 361 949-2988

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Also present: DR. JOHN C. EASTMAN

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make any sense. The subpoena was to Chapman.

not being -- we've asked for -- are there retainer agreements?

Are there common-interest agreements? Mr. Burnham has said,

well, those were not covered by the subpoena but that doesn't

The burden here is on Professor Eastman. If he's going to claim attorney-client or work product, he has a burden to demonstrate that the material was, indeed, covered by those privileges and that's not happening if you don't even know if there are any retainer agreements. There can be attorney-client relationships. It's not favored but there can be, that are oral but there's an enormous amount of material here.

We have suspicions about some of this because some of the dates when privileges are being claimed. We have other information that Professor Eastman was not part of the legal team for that period. So it's not who -- again, was he representing Mr. Trump, President Trump, Candidate Trump? What is the retainer agreement? What does it say?

And the main thing is there's a whole burden here that is on Professor Eastman to demonstrate that he's entitled to claim these privileges and as we pointed out, there are very serious issues with that because of his use of the Chapman University system that we think means that either -- nothing was protected or very little. And that -- I think it's a straight legal issue.

In addition, as you know, we have arguments that

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not covered.

1 because of Professor Eastman's prolific statements that were made on social media and in the public that there are all sorts 3 of waiver issues that would probably require in-camera review by Your Honor. But there seem to be whole subjects that are

And then in addition, there's the whole issue of House recognition. The House recognizes constitutional privileges. Other than that, for common-law privileges like work product and attorney-client, the House often will honor those but that's up to the House and the House, on some occasions, doesn't. And so that's an issue that is within the hands of the House.

So this process is playing out in a way that it began with, in essence, giving Professor Eastman a fairly lengthy injunction that's going to continue for quite a while. And we're -- the Committee is moving, as I've said before, at breakneck speed. We're getting cooperation from many, many people. We're finding out lots and lots of information.

And Professor Eastman appears to be a central player in the development of a legal strategy to justify a coup which is obviously extremely troubling and some of this, therefore, goes to the very heart of what the Committee is looking into and we're not getting that on the basis of privilege claims that have in no way been properly supported or demonstrated.

So that's why, Your Honor, we urge that the Court now

basically requesting is to litigate the various privilege

issues bit by bit week to week which we think is a tremendously inefficient way to go about it and conflicts with the law of the case and embodied in Your Honor's January 26th order.

I also think that the proposed briefing schedule is completely backwards. As Mr. Letter said several times just today, the burden is on Plaintiff to demonstrate the privilege. And so any briefing schedule should start with an initial brief by the Plaintiff to which the Congressional Defendants can respond and then we'll have an opportunity to reply as the holder of the burden. And that's what we'd ask the Court to do when the time comes for -- where briefing is ripe.

I'm not going to respond point by point to whether there was a coup or the various arguments the Congressional Defendants have made about work product, about the client.

We're prepared to respond to that at the appropriate time and we're confident that Your Honor will find our privilege claims to be solid. Thank you.

THE COURT: Concerning the privilege log details, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26, the party claiming privilege must describe documents "in a manner that, without revealing information itself privileged or protected, will enable other parties to assess the claim."

A party does not satisfy its burden by offering assertions of privilege that are functionally silent. For example, offering little information about the basis for the

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invocation of that privilege and doing so would wrongly encourage strategic manipulation of the discovery process by means of blanket assertions of privilege.
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The parties represented to the Court that they were meeting and conferring about the level of specificity required in Dr. Eastman's privilege logs. Now, previously, the Select Committee argued to the Court that, "Plaintiff has not provided sufficient information to determine the validity of Plaintiff's privilege assertions." That was noticed in the objections on Document 94 on February 10th.

So, for example, in Plaintiff's production on February 1st, Plaintiff asserted privilege over Bates Numbers Chapman 004539 and Chapman 004707 with only the notation, "Comm" -- which the Court assumes stands for "Committee" but C-o-m -- C-o-m-m -- "with Co-counsel" as the description.

Now, Plaintiff also asserted privilege over Chapman 004713 through 4719 with "Memo Re: Legal Theories" as the description. And similarly, Plaintiff only described Chapman 004556 through 004592 and Chapman 004594 through 004630 as "Attachment."

When you're filing on Friday, February 11th on behalf of the Select Committee and asking for expedited briefing, have you been able to resolve your concerns about these privilege logs details, Mr. Letter? And I think from your argument today, I can speculate that you have not but I want to ask

- 1 because there have been conversations apparently between you
- 2 and Dr. Eastman and Counsel Burnham concerning these matters.
- 3 So have you resolved your concerns?
- 4 MR. LETTER: No, we have not, Your Honor. We're no
- 5 even close to it because you have given examples of the kinds
- 6 of things we're facing. For instance, sometimes all we have is
- 7 | a correspondence email address which is provided with no name.
- 8 As you said, there are things like, "Comm to client and
- 9 counsel," what legislature correspondence impacting possible
- 10 | litigation.
- I repeat. We don't know who the client is in a lot
- 12 of instances. Client -- again, because Mr. Trump could have
- 13 been Mr. Trump, President Trump, Candidate Trump, et cetera.
- 14 We don't know whether they're -- one of the biggest things is
- 15 | we don't know whether there was any attorney-client
- 16 | relationship at all.
- 17 So I don't want to repeat myself but unless there's
- 18 | something showing that there was even an attorney-client
- 19 | relationship and when -- when did it start, when did it end,
- 20 | what did it cover. Even if there were more detail, that still
- 21 | wouldn't show that it was covered by the attorney-client
- 22 | relationship if there was no attorney-client relationship.
- 23 And when there are some messages that there are a
- 24 | fair number of recipients, who are those other people? Are
- 25 | they attorneys? Are they agents of attorneys? Are they just

other people who, therefore, would not be covered by any kind of attorney-client relationship or work product relationship?

So we're nowhere near what we need and as Mr. Burnham said a moment ago, it's their burden. So if this is it, they clearly have not met the burden at all because they haven't shown that there is an attorney-client relationship and with whom and when.

THE COURT: Mr. Burnham --

MR. SPEAKER: Your Honor, we -- sorry, Your Honor. I didn't mean to interrupt the Court.

THE COURT: Well, I was going to ask Mr. Burnham or Dr. Eastman. Are you satisfied in any of these conversations that the Court is not involved with prior to our hearing today with any resolution from this meeting and conferring with the Select Committee?

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I think the only way to address these questions regarding the sufficiency of this description or that description almost have to be taken on a document-by-document basis because for each document, there's different things that you can disclose or not disclose that won't endanger the privilege itself.

We've always been happy to answer specific questions from the Defendants. For example, we've explained to them that at certain times, both Donald Trump himself and the Committee were clients of Dr. Eastman and if they have specific questions

about one Bates number of another Bates number, we might be able to answer those questions. It's a little hard to address just generalized claims that the descriptions aren't sufficient enough because, as I said, we're constrained by protecting the privilege itself.

THE COURT: Concerning the attorney-client details,

Dr. Eastman's privilege logs list the senders and recipients

and the respective roles for each contested email. Now, these

roles include attorneys, consultants and staff members and

you'll see a summation of that at the bottom of the two-page

log.

The privilege log also does not specify which, if any, cases the consultants were authorized to work on and the scope of that authorization. The attorney-client privilege does not attach to all communications with any attorney. The communications must be between a client and the client's attorney or their agents.

And on Friday, February 11th, which is Docket 101, the Select Committee filed a notice seeking evidence of the relevant attorney-client relationships and any applicable joint defense or common interest agreements. In addition, the Select Committee stated that on February 3rd and February 8th, it asked Dr. Eastman for an engagement letter, retainer agreement or other writing clarifying the scope of his representation of Former President Trump or his campaign. And the document goes

- on to allege that Dr. Eastman has allegedly not responded to these requests.
- So Mr. Letter, on behalf of the Select Committee, what specific information regarding attorney-client relationships do you believe is lacking from the privilege logs, and why do you believe that the Select Committee is entitled to that information?
- MR. LETTER: Your Honor, as I say, the very first thing we need to know is, is there even any attorney-client relationship at all, what did it cover, the capacity of the person who was supposedly being represented.

For example, in a -- I believe there are some claims that have been made of attorney client or attorney work product or both in early November and there's -- it's publicly available, a deposition that Mr. Giuliani gave when he said, (quote), "At this point -- which was November 19 -- "Mr. Eastman is not a member of the team." I don't know exactly when he became a member of the team but my recollection -- best recollection would be sometime in December. So if Mr. Giuliana was right, then Mr. Eastman looks like had no attorney-client relationship with Mr. Trump at all at that point.

Now that may be wrong, I don't know, but that's the kind of thing. So fine, so show us an engagement letter, show us a common interest something that says that Mr. Trump

- 1 | retained Mr. Eastman to represent him, this, that, the other.
- 2 As I said, this is by far the most basic kind of information
- 3 | that if we don't have, it's very difficult to respond to.
- And I'll say it one more time, clearly then it means
- 5 | that Mr. Burnham can't be meeting the burden that he has if he
- 6 | can't even show there's a relationship, attorney-client
- 7 relationship.
- 8 MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I think there's a couple
- 9 things that --sorry, was the Court about to --
- 10 **THE COURT:** No, I just want to make certain that I'm
- 11 asking you or Dr. Eastman about objections that you might have
- 12 | to providing evidence of the attorney-client relationship to
- 13 | support these privilege assertions, and any objections to
- 14 | providing evidence of consultant or staff relationships to
- 15 | support these privilege associations -- assertions.
- 16 MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I think our first objection
- 17 is to the unstated priors that sort of underly the Committee's
- 18 | arguments.
- 19 The work product and privilege claims are not
- 20 | coextensive with whatever is spelled out in common interest
- 21 agreements or retainer letters or engagement letters or similar
- 22 documents. For example, privilege can attach to prospective
- 23 | client communications, to work product undertaken with the view
- 24 to representing a client later to be engaged, work product
- 25 discussions, and work product itself can be generated outside

- 1 the confines of some formally written common interest agreement
- 2 or similar document. The underlying assumptions of the
- 3 Committee's legal position they're asserting here just simply
- 4 | aren't correct. Certainly written documents are relevant to
- 5 | whether a prospective client, attorney-client relationship or
- 6 work-product situation existed; but as I said, they're by no
- 7 means coextensive with that.

support of that request.

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And secondly, I think Your Honor raised this issue

before. They simply have no authority they can cite to week by

week, status by status, demand various documents that they

think would be useful to them. They've cited no authority in

And our basic position is, when we make our filing before Your Honor -- whenever that date ends up being set -- well we're prepared to demonstrate to the Court's satisfaction where and when work product and attorney-client privilege and other privileges apply and to whom.

And I'll just note, finally, that another underlying assumption that underlies a lot of this, including in the Government's objection, is that anytime a non-attorney or non-expert is included in a work-product communication, the privilege doesn't apply, that's simply not true. So there are a number of problems with the positions that the Congressional Defendants are advancing here.

THE COURT: Based on the Select Committee's

- representation about which document it deemed priorities, this
 Court had ordered Dr. Eastman to begin his production with
- 3 communications from January 4th through January 7th of 2021.
- 4 Dr. Eastman produced those documents on February 1st and
- 5 February 2nd.
- Now given the importance and urgency of the
- 7 Committee's inquiry, the Court intends to expedite an in-camera
- 8 review of the challenged documents from those days. There are
- 9 | a total, according to my count -- and you can correct me --
- 10 | 130 challenged documents in that time period comprising
- 11 568 pages.
- The Select Committee has suggested the following
- 13 briefing schedule.
- The Select Committee's opening brief would be due
- 15 | Monday, February 21st. Dr. Eastman's response brief due
- 16 | Monday, February 28th. The Select Committee reply brief due
- 17 Thursday, March 3rd.
- 18 So to the Select Committee, how long do you believe
- 19 is necessary to fully brief your objections to these documents
- 20 and are you requesting the briefing schedule suggested in your
- 21 | notice from last Friday that I received -- which is
- 22 Document 101 -- and that briefing schedule is contained on page
- 23 4, lines 20 through 22.
- Mr. Letter?
- 25 MR. LETTER: I apologize, Your Honor. I wasn't sure

won't need very long to reply.

THE COURT: Given the volume of documents and the objections and responses, I would be inclined to allow oversized briefing in this matter.

And how many pages would each of the parties feel comfortable with in this briefing? In other words let's not waste --

MR. BURNHAM: Just offhand --

THE COURT: In other words, let's not waste time and start to brief and then come back to the Court and tell the Court that the page limitations are inadequate. Let's get that resolved right now and save some time.

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, would about 40 pages be -we might not need that but about 40 pages, I think, would be a
good number.

THE COURT: Mr. Letter?

MR. LETTER: Your Honor, that sounds fine to us. I guess we should get a little more if Mr. Burnham -- if we're in the middle and he's getting a reply, maybe we should get a little more than he does but on our briefing schedule we're happy to give him a little more if he's in the middle.

THE COURT: Well, to balance this out because of the opportunity to respond, would 60 pages total? In other words, whoever is the initial party that the Court directs to file the opening brief would have 40 and the reply would be 20, or whatever number you choose. But the other party who is not the

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    initial opening brief and is doing the responsive briefing
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    would have a total equal number of pages, 60 for instance.
    I don't care what that number is, I just care that each of you
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    have an equal opportunity in terms of the pages that you submit
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    to the Court. So I don't care if it's 40 and 15 -- which would
    be a total of 55. I don't care if it's 40 and 10 but I just
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    don't want to be bothered by a request that you're part way
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    through the briefing and we're wasting time on minutia like
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    this.
              MR. LETTER: Your Honor, that sounds --
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                          So do you want me to step off the bench
              THE COURT:
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    for just a moment because this is quite frankly what I call not
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    rocket science. You two can have a conversation and work that
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    out between the two of you. In fact, I feel a strong need for
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    a cup of coffee. I'll be back in five minutes, make your
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    decision, thank you.
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         (Brief recess taken from 1:41 p.m. to 1:51 p.m.)
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                          Mr. Burnham, I can't see you for some
              THE COURT:
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    reason. Can you hear me, sir? There you are. Thank you.
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              All right. I can see you, Mr. Letter, I can see
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    Mr. Burnham, I can see Mr. Plevin, I can see Dr. Eastman.
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    I think for our purposes, that's sufficient.
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              First of all, thank you for your courtesy.
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              Did you have time just to informally meet and confer,
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Mr. Letter or Mr. Burnham and Dr. Eastman?

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              MR. BURNHAM: We did, Your Honor.
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              THE COURT: And what would the pagination be -- the
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    number of pages, I'm sorry?
              MR. BURNHAM: We agreed of 60 per side so --
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              THE COURT: All right. Sixty per side, thank you.
              MR. BURNHAM: -- forty for the opening, 20 for the
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    reply and 60 in between.
              THE COURT: Mr. Burnham, you represented earlier that
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    Dr. Eastman was prepared to demonstrate to the Court's
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    satisfaction where, when, and to whom the privilege is applied.
    In determining when and how the privilege attaches is an
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    important part of challenging the privilege.
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              If the Court sets an expedited briefing schedule, is
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    Dr. Eastman prepared to provide evidence of attorney and agent
    relationships, not only to the Court but also to the Select
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    Committee?
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              MR. BURNHAM: To the extent the evidence is not
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    itself privileged, we'd be prepared to demonstrate that, to
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meet our burden, in other words.

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THE COURT: Well this would drive at the request by the Committee to show evidence of a actual attorney-client relationship and that might be in the form of an agreement or some other form. And so I apologize for not understanding the answer. I'm going to ask you that question again, sir. that is --

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                           The question is are we willing --
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              MR. BURNHAM:
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              THE COURT: It's twofold. And that is, are you
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    prepared to provide evidence of the attorney and agent
    relationship, not only to this Court but also to the Select
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    Committee?
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              MR. BURNHAM: We're prepared to provide it to this
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    Court and the Select Committee to the extent the evidence is
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    itself not privileged. If -- if some of the evidence
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    substantiating the attorney-client relationship is itself
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    privileged -- as is sometimes the case with engagement letters
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    and such -- not always -- there might be an issue there we
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    would have to deal with. But to the extent that issue can be
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    dealt with, yes, we can provide that.
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              THE COURT: What I --
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              MR. BURNHAM: And perhaps it could be dealt with with
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    a waiver or through redactions or through some method such as
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    that.
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              THE COURT: All right. Mr. Letter?
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              MR. LETTER: Your Honor, I guess I'm not fully
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    understanding Mr. Burnham's question. Obviously one of the key
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    things here is relationship with Mr. Trump.
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              It seems to me well at a minimum, everything has to
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    be provided to Your Honor. Obviously it's, as you know from
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    your years of experience better than I do, the attorney-client
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privileged claims are often resolved by courts through

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    in-camera inspection. But a question of -- since Mr. Eastman
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    has been saying, not just in this lawsuit but all over the
    place, that he was Mr. Trump's attorney, I don't know why there
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    would be any problem with it being provided to us and the
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    public, some sort of retainer agreement about -- and when, how,
    what -- covering what, et cetera, and for instance and that
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    does apply then also to the work product.
              We noticed that in a number of cases, Mr. Eastman is
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    asserting work product over emails written by others without
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    any evidence of a privileged relationship. So if he's going to
    claim work product over some (indisc.) somebody else, there
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    should be something evidencing a privileged relationship for
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    work product purposes.
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              So again, I would think that almost everything or
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    everything can be provided to us, as well as you, but at a
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    minimum, I don't know why it would be -- I would think
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    everything has to be provided to Your Honor to meet -- and if
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    it isn't, then Mr. Burnham has not met his burden.
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              MR. BURNHAM: I think that's right, Your Honor.
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To be clear, we're happy to provide everything to the Court, for sure.

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And I think that's a good reason why it makes sense for us to go first because we'll make our case that the privilege exists and then if the Committee doesn't believe there was an attorney-client relationship, that can be

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    something they can address in the response. And to the extent
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    possible, we'll try to provide the evidence in support of the
    attorney-client relationship, not only to Your Honor but to the
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    Defendants to the extent we can do so consistent with the
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    privilege itself.
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              MR. LETTER: In responding briefly to that, Your
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    Honor.
              Here, we're the ones who are challenging
    Mr. Burnham's assertion -- Professor Eastman's assertion of the
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    attorney-client privilege. We think it makes more sense for us
    to go first and last. We raise all these points and then
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    Mr. Burnham can provide all the information and then we'll get
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    a last page limited shot at explaining to you why that doesn't
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    meet it. So we think the way we proposed makes more sense.
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              THE COURT: All right. Any other comments by
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    Mr. Burnham or Mr. Letter or Dr. Eastman pursuant to this
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    hearing? And if not, then I'll turn to Mr. Plevin out of a
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    matter of courtesy and to see if he has any comments and then
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    we'll conclude the matter.
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              MR. LETTER: Your Honor, this is Mr. Letter. I don't
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    have anything further, thank you.
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              THE COURT: All right. Thank you for your courtesy.
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              Mr. Burnham?
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              MR. BURNHAM: Nothing further, Your Honor, thank you.
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Thank you.

THE COURT:

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

Join / Judan

February 15, 2022

Signed

Dated

TONI HUDSON, TRANSCRIBER