

Proceedings before the
General Investigating Committee on
The July 2025 Flooding Events
House of Representatives
Austin, Texas

PUBLIC HEARING

UPDATE FROM COMMITTEE INVESTIGATORS
IN CONNECTION WITH COMMITTEE INQUIRY
AUTHORIZED BY HOUSE RESOLUTION 177,
89TH LEGISLATURE, 2D CALLED SESSION

APRIL 27, 2026

The committee met pursuant to notice at 10:01 a.m.
in Room E2.016, Capitol Extension, Hon. Morgan Meyer,
chairman, presiding. The proceedings were transcribed
by Dalia F. Inman, Certified Shorthand Reporter in and
for the State of Texas, Kennedy Reporting Service.

Present: Representatives Meyer, Moody, Darby,
Dyson, and Gámez.

[The committee met concurrently with the Senate
General Investigating Committee on The July 2025
Flooding Events.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROCEEDINGS, APRIL 27, 2026	3
CALL TO ORDER	3
ROLL CALL	3
OPENING STATEMENTS	3
SENATE CHAIRMAN FLORES	
CHAIRMAN MEYER	
VICE CHAIR MOODY	
PRESENTATION BY INVESTIGATORS	9
CASEY GARRETT	
JUDGE MICHAEL MASSENGALE	
QUESTIONING BY COMMITTEE	108
PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED	220
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE	221

1 CHAIRMAN MEYER: The House General
2 Investigating Committee on the July 2025 Flooding Events
3 will now come to order. The clerk will call the roll.

4 THE CLERK: Chair Meyer?

5 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Here.

6 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Moody?

7 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Present.

8 THE CLERK: Representative Darby?

9 REP. DARBY: Present.

10 THE CLERK: Representative Dyson?

11 REP. DYSON: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Representative Gamez?

13 REP. GAMEZ: Here.

14 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Quorum is present. I
15 believe Chair Flores has an opening statement.

16 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Thank you, Chairman.

17 Good morning. Members, we are here today
18 to examine in detail an unimaginable tragedy that
19 occurred in the Texas Hill Country on July the 4th,
20 2025.

21 Among the many lives lost were 27 vibrant
22 young girls from one camp: Camp Mystic. This marks the
23 single largest loss of children's lives in Texas due to
24 a natural disaster since the great Galveston hurricane
25 of 1900.

1 Texas's grief is deep and enduring. Ten
2 months later, as investigations continue and
3 recommendations are pursued, this event remains etched
4 into our collective conscience. One truth stands above
5 all: We cannot change what happened, but we can change
6 how we prepare for and respond to the next emergency.

7 For the families who lost loved ones, for
8 a community that lost its sense of safety, and for those
9 who feel a profound loss of innocence, the questions
10 about what should happen next are many. But, for me,
11 one thing is clear: This tragedy could've been
12 prevented.

13 Our goal with this investigative committee
14 is to examine the facts, understand where failures
15 occurred, and determine what must be done to ensure that
16 it never happens again.

17 Finally, I want to express my appreciation
18 to Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Burrows,
19 Chairman Meyer, and the committee investigators and the
20 members of both committees.

21 The work required here is difficult, it's
22 serious, and deeply important. It is being undertaken
23 with the gravity and the diligence it deserves.

24 Chairman Meyer.

25 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Thank you, Chairman

1 Flores.

2 Good morning. And thank you for being
3 here. Whether in this room or watching from home, we
4 know that for many of you this is not an easy day.

5 First, I want to thank Speaker Burrows and
6 Lieutenant Governor Patrick for their leadership in
7 ensuring that this committee was established and given
8 the authority necessary to carry out a thorough and
9 independent review.

10 I also want to recognize Governor Abbott
11 for his commitment to ensuring this investigation moves
12 forward with urgency and transparency.

13 We are here today because of the lives
14 lost and families forever changed by the devastating
15 flooding that struck Central Texas in July of 2025 and,
16 in particular, because of the tragedy at Camp Mystic.
17 Those children and the families who entrusted them to
18 that place deserve answers.

19 Our responsibility is clear: To determine
20 what happened. That means building a complete, accurate
21 account of the events, the decisions made, and the
22 timeline of what unfolded. The facts must be
23 established with clarity and without omission.

24 Next our job is to assess preparedness and
25 response. We will examine whether the systems,

1 protocols, and personnel in place were adequate and
2 whether they functioned as they should when lives were
3 on the line. That includes the actions of agencies,
4 officials, and individuals at every level.

5 This committee will follow the facts
6 wherever they may lead, including examining decisions
7 made before, during, and after the flooding to
8 understand whether more could've been done and what must
9 be improved moving forward.

10 I want to express my appreciation for the
11 investigators chosen to assist this committee. Casey
12 Garrett and Judge Michael Massengale bring a high level
13 of professionalism, integrity, and experience to this
14 process. And we are grateful for their service and
15 dedication to uncovering the facts.

16 To Chairman Flores and his committee,
17 thank you for your leadership and collaboration as we
18 work across chambers to get answers for the people of
19 Texas.

20 And to my fellow committee members, I am
21 grateful for your willingness to serve in this capacity.
22 The gravity of this work is real, and I believe each of
23 you feels it. It will continue to demand diligence,
24 fairness, and an unwavering commitment to getting this
25 right.

1 Finally, to the families who lost loved
2 ones and the communities that are still healing, we
3 understand no proceeding can undo what has been lost.
4 The grief you carry is immeasurable, and the courage it
5 takes to be here or to watch from home is not lost on
6 us. This moment carries real weight, and we do not take
7 it lightly.

8 What we can offer and are committed to is
9 a process grounded in accountability, transparency, and
10 a full examination of the facts. You deserve to know
11 exactly what happened and why. This committee will not
12 rest. I guarantee you we will not rest until we have
13 done everything in our power to provide that.

14 Thank you.

15 Members, does anyone wish to say anything?

16 Speaker Moody?

17 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Thank you, Chairman
18 Meyer, Chairman Flores. And echo everything that y'all
19 said.

20 The -- the -- the amount of trauma and
21 tragedy that -- that came down -- in -- in the Hill
22 Country last year is something that is still very hard
23 to comprehend. And there's nothing -- and y'all have
24 said this. There's nothing that legislators can do to
25 change that, and that does, I think, at times make us

1 feel very helpless. But I think the goal is what the
2 chairmen have both stated is what we're here to do. And
3 I know we're going to hear from some folks that have
4 suffered the largest loss that we could ever imagine.

5 But our task in front of us is what we can
6 do to prepare better to make sure that in crisis the
7 response is adequate and that in the aftermath of a
8 crisis we are caring for people and not retraumatizing
9 them.

10 I also know and I want to -- and I
11 appreciate everybody mentioning our investigators and
12 the team that went out there, because the painful
13 stories that we have heard and will hear have all been
14 channeled through this team. And it was four years ago
15 almost to the day here when I first met Casey, Mike, and
16 their team when we went down to Uvalde.

17 Casey, when I saw you last week, all of
18 that rushed back, I know, for you and -- and for me.

19 So as we hear from Casey today, just
20 understand she's asked to do this work because she is
21 brilliant, and she is hardworking, and she knows how to
22 get to the truth of the matter. But she is a human
23 being who is absorbing a lot of very difficult
24 information, seeing things and hearing things that no
25 one should have to.

1 And I want to thank you for your work and
2 your team for your work because it is incredibly
3 difficult, what you do. But I want to say thank you.
4 And just -- as we go through today, just know that we
5 are here to support you in all the work that you're
6 doing.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Thank you, Speaker Moody.
9 Members, any other?

10 (No response)

11 CHAIRMAN MEYER: All right. Thank you.

12 Today we will hear from the investigators
13 tasked to examine the 2025 flooding event and to produce
14 the briefing that we will see today.

15 Members of the public can leave comments
16 through the comment portal linked on both meeting
17 notices online and posted outside the committee room.

18 Members, I would ask that you limit
19 questions, if possible, during the investigators'
20 presentation. There will be an opportunity for
21 extensive questions and answers afterwards. And many of
22 your questions may be addressed in the presentation
23 itself.

24 With that, the chair calls the
25 investigators, Casey Garret and Judge Michael

1 Massengale, to present their findings.

2 MS. GARRETT: Chairman Meyer, Chairman
3 Flores, members of the committee, it's good to see
4 you-all again. And good morning.

5 Thank you, Representative Moody, for those
6 incredibly kind words. I -- I -- it means a lot to me.
7 We did get quite close four years ago in Uvalde in very
8 unfortunate circumstances. But I cannot thank you
9 enough for those very, very kind words.

10 As you know, my name is Casey Garrett.
11 This is Michael Massengale. You guys have asked us to
12 do a factual and objective investigation into the
13 July 4th, 2025, flooding event. You specifically
14 charged us with limiting our scope to the events at Camp
15 Mystic with some context leading up to and shortly after
16 those critical hours at Camp Mystic.

17 Obviously, I don't have to tell you that
18 there's a lot of people that want the investigation to
19 be more wide-ranging. Obviously, I leave that up to the
20 legislature to take care of. I just want to make clear
21 that our marching orders were to focus on the scope that
22 you gave us, and we have done that.

23 As Representative Moody pointed out, the
24 way I got involved in this investigation was that four
25 years ago I got a call from now-Speaker Burrows to help

1 with the House Legislative Investigative Committee into
2 the Robb Elementary Shooting in Uvalde. Judge
3 Massengale was also asked to participate in that, and
4 that's where we became, actually, really good friends
5 and -- and colleagues. And I'm thankful for -- I'm
6 thankful for that experience. It was difficult. And I
7 never dreamed -- I never dreamed that there would be
8 another mass casualty of children bigger than what
9 happened in Uvalde, but here we are.

10 I'd also like to introduce Heather
11 McFarlane and Kim Parks, also members of our team. Kim
12 and I met at the District Attorney's office in Houston
13 many, many years ago, 33 years ago. We were both
14 longtime prosecutors, and we're both criminal trial
15 attorneys now.

16 Judge Massengale spent ten years at Baker
17 Botts, became a partner, then became a Justice on the
18 Texas Court of Appeals for ten years and is currently in
19 private arbitration practice.

20 Heather has also been an attorney, a civil
21 trial attorney, for almost 30 years and is also involved
22 in mediation and arbitration.

23 Essentially, in a very small but mighty
24 team, you're getting about 120 years of legal
25 experience. All of us, as -- you know, as a living,

1 investigate cases, interview witnesses, and write
2 conclusions and findings, and that's what -- that's what
3 you're getting from us.

4 This has been a very aggressive timeline,
5 as you know, and we have dedicated, really, our entire
6 practices to this project over the last few months.
7 And, I will say, completely honored, just absolutely
8 honored when Speaker Burrows called me in the fall to
9 see if we were interested in doing this. It was -- it
10 was -- well, it was a hard answer, of course, but it was
11 an easy answer.

12 I'm excited that we have been able to be a
13 part of this public service. So thank you for that
14 opportunity.

15 I do want to point out -- I know that you
16 guys are well aware of this, but it bears commenting on.
17 Our presentation today is intended to be strictly
18 factual. Sometimes it's a little bit hard to not bleed
19 over into opinions, but we have tried really hard to
20 keep this as objective and as factual as we possibly
21 can.

22 Unlike the litigation, right, you've --
23 Chairman Flores, you said it so well. This is not about
24 judgment; it's about change. And every single person,
25 including myself, is hungry for you guys to -- to take

1 the call to action and make some change that -- that
2 can -- that can make this tragedy, at least, I mean,
3 make a modicum of sense. So I just wanted to point that
4 out before we get started.

5 But I'll just start with some of our
6 source material. That 120 witness interviews is closer
7 to 140 or 150 now. We will continue to interview
8 witnesses as we lead into May and getting the final
9 report written. I have personally interviewed every
10 single family that was impacted by this. I have
11 interviewed every single member of the Eastland family.
12 I have interviewed parents of children that survived
13 from the -- from the relevant cabins that children died
14 in. I have interviewed campers. Although, I didn't
15 solicit talking to children, some of them wanted to talk
16 to me, and some of their parents wanted them to talk to
17 me. I have spoken with counselors. I have interviewed
18 witnesses in Houston, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio,
19 Bellville. I've been on Zoom calls with witnesses from
20 Poland, Maine, Tennessee, Colorado, Alabama. We have
21 spent the last few months interviewing witnesses. And
22 that's the only way to get the information that we need;
23 so we've done that.

24 We have been to Camp Mystic multiple
25 times. And let me back up for one second on the

1 witnesses.

2 I would like to say that everybody, for
3 the most part, with a few -- a few very minor
4 exceptions, has been completely cooperative, completely
5 cooperative. We have had access to, again, all of the
6 family members. We've had access to all of the
7 Eastlands. All of the lawyers that have been involved
8 have been tremendously cooperative. We've received
9 information from the civil lawyers on both sides. We
10 have really not faced any significant impediments, other
11 than people's trauma and -- and -- and not wanting to
12 talk so much about -- about that. So I do want to point
13 out how cooperative everybody has been.

14 We have been to Camp Mystic multiple
15 times. We have done site tours. We were given
16 unfettered access. We did walk-throughs with members of
17 the Eastland family. We -- we didn't -- we didn't feel
18 like we were impeded at all on that.

19 Transcripts of all the hard work that you
20 and some of your colleagues did last summer -- that was
21 a lot of really important information. 9-1-1 calls,
22 audio witness statements, all the media reporting,
23 newspaper articles, lots of information from the civil
24 suits. Again, the lawyers have all been really helpful
25 with this process.

1 Reviewing information from both sides.
2 We've attended as many court hearings as we can, and
3 we've reviewed transcripts from those court hearings,
4 which, again, have been provided to us by -- by the
5 lawyers.

6 And then, of course, you guys know -- and
7 you know from the Uvalde experience -- what a brilliant
8 writer Judge Massengale is. He's been working on a
9 preliminary report as we have been giving him
10 information for this entire time. So you're going to
11 see a really well-written report.

12 Let's talk about Camp Mystic because, to
13 understand some of this story, you have to understand
14 Camp Mystic. And I think one of the things that helped
15 me in this process is that I didn't know anything. I
16 didn't know much about -- I mean, obviously, I know
17 about the Hill Country, but I didn't know much about,
18 like, the topography and that kind of thing. And I
19 really knew nothing about Camp Mystic. Everything I
20 know about Camp Mystic now I learned from people in this
21 room. But it's important, right, because it's
22 actually -- what I learned is it's a culture. It's a --
23 it's a -- it's a thing. It's a -- it's a very big part
24 of people's lives.

25 It is a Christian -- private Christian

1 camp for girls located on approximately 720 acres.
2 Again, having been out there, it's absolutely beautiful.
3 It's just absolutely beautiful property. I can see why
4 people have loved it for a hundred years. It's --
5 it's -- it's just -- it's absolutely beautiful.

6 It was formed in 1926. Again, a hundred
7 years ago. It was bought in 1939 by the Eastland
8 family. It was run for many years by a beloved couple
9 named Iney and Frank Harrison.

10 When Dick and Tweety Eastland graduated
11 from college, they moved to Camp Mystic to begin
12 learning how to run it. They worked under the --
13 Mrs. Eastland explained to us that they worked under the
14 tutelage of Iney and Frank Harrison until they began to
15 take over the camp in, approximately, 1987.

16 It is currently separated into two
17 campuses: The Cypress Lake Campus and the Guadalupe
18 River Campus. The Cypress Lake Campus is newer. I
19 believe it was built in, approximately, 2019 and opened
20 in 2020. And the Guadalupe River Campus, of course, has
21 existed since 1926.

22 Some important things about Mystic.
23 Right? It's touted as rustic. It is rustic. It's --
24 it's absolutely beautiful. It's -- it's -- it's
25 completely communing with nature when they're out there.

1 There's no air-conditioning. There's no cell phones.
2 These are long sessions that these girls go. They go
3 for a month. They have very limited contact with
4 parents. It's deeply religious. And it's definitely --
5 what I've learned is -- what I would call, sort of, an
6 obedience-encouraged culture.

7 These aren't bad things. Right? It's --
8 it's not bad or good. It's wonderful for your child to
9 be able to disconnect from cell phones. Right? And,
10 really, everybody I talked to, including the counselors,
11 said, "We loved not having cell phones. We loved having
12 an excuse to disconnect." So it's not a criticism that
13 they didn't have cell phones; it's just a fact.

14 So, regarding the obedience culture,
15 again, that's not a bad thing. We want to teach our
16 children to follow rules. We want to teach them to
17 learn how to win or lose. We want to teach them to be
18 part of teams and tribes. And that was very encouraged
19 at Camp Mystic. But it was a play-by-the-rules
20 situation. And, again, I say that factually, from
21 multiple interviews of people that said things like, "I
22 would've gotten in trouble if. I knew I couldn't do
23 that because it broke the rules." I mean, they -- it
24 was a very rule-oriented obedience culture. And I think
25 that, also, you'll see played out a little bit as well

1 with the Eastland family and the way the family was run
2 by the patriarch, Dick Eastland.

3 Multigenerational. I mean, there are
4 people in this room whose grandmothers went to Camp
5 Mystic, whose mothers went to Camp Mystic, their aunts,
6 their cousins, their sisters. This is a acceptance
7 letter that -- that Missy Peck received regarding her
8 daughter Lulu. "Since she's a relative of a former
9 Mystic girl, she'll be considered a Mystic Grandchild."
10 It was an honor.

11 "Almost one-third of girls are Mystic
12 Grandchildren, and it is great your daughter will be
13 coming to continue the tradition."

14 It was about tradition. It was about
15 legacy. It's not to say that there weren't girls there
16 that -- that went and their mothers didn't go; that --
17 that certainly did happen. But -- but, for sure, the
18 lion's share of the situation was a multigenerational,
19 you know, put your daughter on the waitlist at birth.
20 This was, you know, wives telling their -- their -- you
21 know, their new husbands that if we have a daughter,
22 she'll go to Mystic. It was -- it was a known thing.
23 It was a very traditional culture.

24 So we talked a little bit about the two
25 different campuses. Cypress Lake --

1 And I'm so glad that you members were out
2 there last week so you could get some perspective about
3 how -- what the layout is like.

4 The -- the relevant portion of our
5 investigation is the Guadalupe River Campus. So the
6 Guadalupe River Campus is -- this cursor is, kind of,
7 sensitive. There we go -- this area right here. It's
8 separated into these two -- basically, these two major
9 areas: The Flats and Senior Hill. Up -- up this hill
10 is the campus Cypress Lake Campus that was unaffected,
11 for the most part, by the floods.

12 So let's talk a little bit about the
13 hierarchy at Camp Mystic. What you're seeing here are
14 the members of Mystic's year-round, full-time staff.
15 The Executive Directors, of course, were Dick Eastland
16 and Tweety Eastland. And the two campuses each have
17 their own directors. Britt Eastland and Catie Eastland
18 were the directors of the Cypress Lake Campus. And
19 Edward and Mary Liz Eastland were the directors of the
20 Guadalupe River Campus.

21 Mary Liz Eastland is also a Registered
22 Nurse and was listed as the Medical Director of camp --
23 for camp -- the Guadalupe Campus for Camp Mystic.

24 Richard Eastland, the eldest brother --
25 and I should mention that Dick and Tweety Eastland had

1 four sons: Richard, James, Britt, and Edward. In a --
2 in a -- in a terrible tragedy, James Eastland, who was
3 married with young children and working at the camp
4 under the tutelage of his parents, unexpectedly and
5 tragically died in his thirties of an unknown heart
6 condition, and that, sort of, brought the family all
7 back to the camp.

8 We were told by the Eastlands that when
9 James very unexpectedly and tragically died, Britt
10 Eastland, who was working as an attorney in San Antonio,
11 and Catie, who was working as a teacher, came -- came
12 back to assist the family in the wake of James's death.

13 Richard Eastland is the Head Chef and
14 Kitchen Supervisor. He's responsible for feeding
15 hundreds and hundreds of girls three times a day over
16 the period of the summer.

17 Craig Althaus and Betsy Althaus were
18 longtime personal friends of Dick and Tweety. Their
19 kids grew up together. Dick and Tweety asked Craig and
20 Betsy to come live on the property and work on the
21 property many, many years ago, 25 years ago, I believe.
22 And they became -- Craig became Director of Operations,
23 in charge of all the maintenance and the grounds. And
24 Betsy became an Assistant Director working in the
25 office.

1 So this is -- makes up the sum total of
2 the full-time, year-round personnel for Camp Mystic.

3 We learned, of course, that, naturally,
4 when camp was in session, they had seasonal staff. So
5 during camp seasons, you had Glenn Juenke and Lee Pool
6 acting as night watchmen. Glenn Juenke tells us that
7 he -- he's a retired HPD officer who moved back to the
8 area with his wife and in, approximately, 2021 began
9 working as a night watchman during the summertime,
10 during summer camp sessions, working 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
11 patrolling the campus. Another -- another local man
12 named Lee Pool, I believe, shared that responsibility
13 with Glenn Juenke.

14 Francis Blackwell-Loper is a full-time
15 teacher in Lubbock, Texas. And in 2022, I believe, she
16 started working in the summers as the gatekeeper.
17 Francis's mother went to Mystic. Francis went to
18 Mystic. Francis's daughter went to Mystic. And Francis
19 very much -- she tells me -- wanted her granddaughter to
20 go to Mystic, and she knew that if she was there working
21 in the summer, that that -- that might -- might work out
22 well. So Francis was a -- a beloved employee that
23 worked in the summer at the front gate.

24 Every summer, Mary Liz would hire a
25 nursing staff. We are aware of three nurses that were

1 living on-site for the summer. They are listed here.

2 Support crews. Britt is in charge of
3 hiring grounds crew. They obtain J-1 visas for a group
4 of people from Mexico, a group of men, that have also
5 become a little bit of a generational cycle through
6 Mystic. Fathers and sons and uncles and nephews
7 continue to come back year after year to work the summer
8 session as grounds crew.

9 The kitchen workers. Richard Eastland is
10 in charge of getting J-1 visas for kitchen workers. And
11 over the years he has found that what has worked best is
12 that there is a group of people from Poland that -- they
13 go through a group called Camp for America. They're
14 young. They're college-age kids, typically, who come
15 over for the summer on a J-1 visa to work at the camp as
16 kitchen staff, and then they can also travel in the
17 summer before they go back to Poland. So there were a
18 number of groundskeepers -- more than ten -- and kitchen
19 workers from Poland.

20 As far as summer leadership positions,
21 they have a group of people called the Big Three. Now,
22 to be clear, these are -- these are college -- these are
23 college girls. These are sophomores and juniors,
24 roughly, in college. They are people that have been,
25 typically, lifetime campers and have had at least a --

1 you know, at least a term as a -- as a counselor. So
2 they're called the Big Three: Program Director, Tribe
3 Director, and Activities Director. Sort of, the
4 supervisor of the younger -- supervisors of the younger
5 counselors but still college-age girls.

6 Additional staff include college-age
7 photographers and office workers.

8 So this is, essentially, the sum total of
9 seasonal staff not including the counselors of each
10 cabin, which we'll -- we'll get to shortly.

11 Okay. What's important to really know
12 about the dynamic at -- at Mystic was the role that Dick
13 Eastland played as the patriarch of the family. There's
14 no question he was considered the leader of this family
15 and the leader of this camp. By "no question," I mean
16 literally everybody describes him in a similar manner,
17 including members of the family. Right?

18 "He ruled," Tweety told us. He was large
19 and in charge. He was not stepping back. Mrs. Eastland
20 had already begun, kind of, pulling back a little bit,
21 turning over a lot of her responsibility to Mary Liz and
22 Catie and others. But Dick was -- was still very much
23 the Executive Director of the camp. Edward described,
24 you know, "If there was an evacuation plan, it was known
25 only to my dad." Richard talks a little bit about --

1 and this may seem silly or minor, but I think it really
2 reflects the deep culture of this. Right?

3 They had traditions. There was tradition
4 that you had vanilla ice cream and fried chicken on
5 Sundays. And if Richard, you know, wanted to change
6 that tradition, that was -- he was going to hear from
7 his dad is what he tells us. So a lot of micromanaging.
8 And a lot -- I mean, and -- and to be fair, he was
9 the -- he was the leader, and it was his way or the
10 highway.

11 Britt told us -- when we asked about --
12 about the -- the camp joining the American Camp
13 Association, Britt said, "I think my dad is just old
14 school. If you have too much regulation, no one is
15 going to want to do this anymore. He would typically
16 win those arguments."

17 Craig described him as "Mr. Veto." And
18 they talked about him as "The Eagle" and described
19 him -- when he was on a -- on a tear, "The Eagle was
20 swooping." Again, just a factual point that he was
21 running the show over there.

22 And in terms of that, sort of, obedience
23 culture -- I know that's a strong word. Okay? But you
24 just really didn't -- you just didn't -- really didn't
25 cross him. I mean, it was -- it was his word. He

1 ruled, as Mrs. Eastland said. It was -- it was -- he
2 won those arguments.

3 Heard a lot from counselors about being
4 very afraid of acting. And, as you know, that's an
5 issue, right, that -- that we're seeing here -- is why
6 certain people took action and certain people didn't.
7 Well, they knew -- you know, they said things like, "I
8 knew I would be in trouble if I tried to take those
9 girls up on that hill. I knew I would be in trouble if
10 I tried to take those girls out in the lightning. I
11 knew I would be in trouble if I ran to the front office
12 in the dark in the pouring rain." Right?

13 And, again, to be fair, we want to teach
14 our children to be obedient and respect authority.
15 Right? But we want to also, of course, give them the
16 tools to feel like they can take action when they --
17 when they need to.

18 Glenn Juenke describes Dick as "The
19 General." The Polish kitchen workers that we
20 interviewed were really crippled, crippled with fear
21 of -- of interfering with campers. Naturally, it's no
22 surprise that the male grounds crew were told to stay
23 away from these campers. Of course. They were to have
24 no contact with campers, and that makes perfect sense.

25 But the same with the kitchen workers.

1 They had limited contact with the -- with -- with the
2 girls, and they were -- they were -- they were afraid
3 they would get in trouble if they interfered.

4 But I also really want to point out -- and
5 I -- that the things I'm saying are not an indictment of
6 him. It just describes what was going on there.

7 Because he was deeply loved and respected. I mean,
8 people have been very conflicted about their feelings
9 about this family. He -- he taught a generation of
10 girls how to fish. You know, he took them on raids of
11 the kitchen. People -- people adored and loved and
12 respected Dick Eastland.

13 Something that's obviously critically
14 important to this scenario is the communication
15 situation. The way the camp was set up for
16 communications was that certain people had radios.
17 Certain people had the walkie-talkies. Dick and Tweety
18 Eastland had a walkie-talkie. Edward and Mary Liz
19 Eastland had one. Britt and Catie had one. Glenn
20 Juenke, the night watchman, had one. Francis
21 Blackwell-Loper had one in the -- in the front -- with
22 her -- with her in the front gatehouse. The Big Three
23 had a radio where they stayed. They stayed in a cabin
24 called Cozy Cabin, which I'll show you. They had a
25 radio. And then there was a radio locked in a cabinet

1 on the riflery range. And the riflery range is on
2 Senior Hill, which that'll make sense in a second when I
3 get to one of these maps.

4 There were a few landlines. There was a
5 landline in the Infirmary. There was a landline in the
6 front office. And there were landlines in each of the
7 homes that the Eastlands live on.

8 When you guys were out there with me last
9 week, you saw that they -- they live -- they all lived
10 on the property, and -- and -- and I'll show you that as
11 well in a moment.

12 Cell phones. There were no cell phones
13 for campers or counselors. There were -- there was WiFi
14 in a limited number of areas. There -- the -- the camp
15 is set up with broadband and fiber.

16 The PA system, the loudspeaker system.
17 There's one by the office, and there's one on Senior
18 Hill. And I believe there's one closer to the pavilion
19 and the Twins cabins that we saw when we were -- when we
20 were out there last week.

21 So, as I said earlier, I had to learn a
22 lot about, sort of, the makeup of the area. And I think
23 that's really important in this equation as well. And
24 one of the ways that I think we're best educated about
25 that is a really good video that was put out by the

1 Upper Guadalupe River Authority in 2017. It's about ten
2 minutes long. We're going to watch just a portion of it
3 here in a second. But this slide shows that Dick
4 Eastland also thought it was a really informative video,
5 and he sent it to his family and some others, asking
6 them to please watch this video.

7 The video is called "Be Flood Aware." And
8 I'm going to play just a relevant portion here for you.

9 (Video being played)

10 MS. GARRETT: So I think that does a
11 really good job of explaining why flooding -- why it is
12 an area so well-known for flooding and so prone to it.
13 And that leads us to the flood history of the area,
14 which I think is really relevant in just discussing,
15 sort of, what -- what -- what was known about the area
16 for many, many years.

17 This is a -- this is a e-mail from Dick
18 Eastland to members of his family and others, talking
19 about -- talking about some of the flood issues. He
20 says in the bottom of the e-mail, "We've been here for
21 some critical big floods, including 1978, 1984, 2000,
22 and many others."

23 And, of course, this just reflects a
24 knowledge by the Eastlands of how flood-prone this area
25 is. And attached to that e-mail at the very bottom

1 there is a link to a summary flood history of Kerr
2 County. And the next few slides are taken from that
3 document that Dick Eastland references in this e-mail
4 about a flood history of that area. It goes way back.
5 And -- and in every one of these slides, we hear about,
6 you know, an astonishing amount of rain, an astonishing
7 amount of damage, an astonishing amount of river rise, a
8 30-foot rise in the Upper Guadalupe, threatening to
9 annihilate the village of Ingram. We're back in the
10 early 1900s.

11 In the '20s, a 15-foot rise on Cypress
12 Creek, massive damage. Two people lose their lives. In
13 the '30s -- of course, there's been much talk about the
14 1932 flood, the catastrophe of -- it was a record stage.
15 What they would've called in 1932 "an unprecedented
16 flood." 36-foot rise, four lives lost, countless
17 buildings washed away, massive financial impact. Most
18 notably is it's one of the earliest and first times that
19 we see Camp Mystic affected by the -- by the flooding.
20 Three cabins -- the highlighted portion right here talks
21 about how three cabins were washed away in the 1932
22 flood. Three cabins that were closer to the waterfront.

23 1940s and '50s, torrential cloudburst,
24 millions of dollars in damages, eight lives lost.
25 Termed "the worst flood in 24 years." I mean, we're

1 back in the '40s and '50s. Right? That was an
2 unprecedented flood. The worst flood we've had.
3 Millions of dollars in damage.

4 We get to the '60s and '70s. Kerr County
5 experienced major rises almost annually. Flooding
6 ceased to be a generational anomaly and became a
7 persistent logistical crisis. This is back in the '60s
8 and '70s.

9 We have known that flooding and flash
10 flooding has been a persistent problem, an impactful
11 problem, a problem that involves the loss of life and
12 massive property damage.

13 1978 was a massive flood. Dick references
14 it in -- in -- in his e-mail. Camp Mystic was the most
15 severely damaged. Just, again, unprecedented rises
16 in -- in the river, massive damage to the area, and
17 specifically damage to Camp Mystic.

18 1984, "Congratulations to Dick and Tweety.
19 I'm sure they will never forget this flood, as Tweety
20 had to be airlifted by helicopter to the hospital, an
21 experience never to be forgotten."

22 1987, another major flood in the area that
23 impacted Camp Mystic greatly. That was the year, I
24 believe, that they lost horses in that flood. And --
25 and girls were evacuated from cabins into Rec Hall in

1 1987. I have spoken with two women who were campers in
2 one of those cabins in 1987, and she remembers -- or
3 they both remember a very similar process that occurred
4 last year where Dick showed up in their cabins in the
5 middle of the night, loaded them up into cars, and took
6 them to Rec Hall. So as early as 1987, Bug House and
7 Look Inn were evacuated to Rec Hall. And two campers in
8 Look Inn -- obviously, grown women now -- interviewed
9 with me.

10 Part of the camp lore. Right? Many
11 people in this room told me about being on Senior Hill
12 when it would -- when the land bridge would flood, and
13 "We liked it because we could stay in our cabins and
14 have flood delivered to us by boat." It was novel. It
15 was part of camp lore.

16 This Instagram post: "A little flooding
17 on the bridge today. Rain days at camp are the best."

18 Again, this is not -- I'm not trying to be
19 negative about this. I'm just saying that it became a
20 very complacent, sort of, flood culture at Camp Mystic.
21 It was just, kind of, part of life there.

22 So this is where we have learned a lot
23 about, sort of, how the camp is situated with respect
24 to -- to waterways.

25 I'm going to get my cursor here.

1 So this is Camp Mystic. Right? Right in
2 the middle of this little area. This is the Guadalupe
3 River Campus where I'm circling with my cursor. As you
4 go up past these tennis courts and up here, this is the
5 Cypress Lake Campus. Okay?

6 This is the South Fork of the Guadalupe
7 River flowing in this direction. This is a little dam
8 right here to, sort of, dam up the waterfront area where
9 the girls swim. Right here is the waterfront area. The
10 river goes over that dam and flows in this direction.

11 This is Cypress Creek, okay, and it flows
12 in this direction and flows into the Guadalupe right
13 here. It goes out that direction.

14 This is a little bit harder to see.
15 This -- but you guys were out there; so you have some
16 perspective now.

17 This is Edmunson Creek, also known as
18 Bubble Gum Creek. It was nicknamed Bubble Gum Creek by
19 the campers. But it's technically known as Edmunson
20 Creek. So you have -- it's, typically, either a dry
21 creek bed or just a very small trickle of water. So you
22 have Edmunson Creek flanking the camp. The Guadalupe
23 Campus right here. You have Cypress Creek flanking the
24 Guadalupe River Campus right here. You have the
25 Guadalupe River right here.

1 And then this -- which it's hard to tell
2 because it's not three-dimensional -- is a bluff. This
3 is a -- a hill. But I would say "hill" is, kind of, a
4 mild description for what it is. It is a rocky bluff
5 that goes up to, at the very peak, what they call --
6 what Camp Mystic calls "Sky High" where that, sort of,
7 iconic Mystic sign is at the very top of Sky High. So
8 this is a steep hill. And you can, obviously, see that
9 if all of these waterways are flooding, this is -- I
10 mean, I don't know. You could come up with a lot of
11 words for it. It's a choke point. It's a funnel. It's
12 a river canyon. It's called the Flats.

13 So that gives you some perspective of what
14 the waterways are for Camp Mystic.

15 So now we're going to, kind of, start to
16 move into the relevant timelines that we've been talking
17 about. It was a really big challenge putting this
18 presentation together because there were so many
19 different areas of the camp that were affected that I
20 think are relevant for your purposes. But we, kind of,
21 had to split them up into different topics because they
22 were all affected so differently. Each part of the
23 camp, each camper, each cabin had a bit of a different
24 experience.

25 But as far as the common timeline leading

1 into July 3rd and 4th, we're going to start with
2 June 27th to June 29th for the second term. They had
3 already had one term. This was the second summer term
4 for Camp Mystic, and it's when the counselors began to
5 arrive for orientation.

6 One thing that I think is really important
7 to know that I've learned from witness interviews is how
8 things have changed a little bit about counselors.

9 And just a reminder -- I'm sure you guys
10 know this. These are -- these are very -- these are
11 young girls. These are -- you're eligible to be a
12 counselor the summer after your senior year of high
13 school. So most of them are 18, but some of them are
14 17. And we -- we have an example of one of the
15 counselors in one of the relevant cabins being -- being
16 17. So that was okay to be 17 if you had proper
17 supervision.

18 So there's been this move, according to
19 witnesses, from what used to be -- I mean, I can just
20 tell you so many people have said, "We always had three
21 counselors per cabin. We always had -- it was rare --
22 it was rare to see two counselors per cabin. We always
23 had three." And I think what has happened as Cypress
24 Lake opened up and they were, you know, spread thin,
25 they had more cabins to man. As young college students,

1 their lives are changing in modern times. Many of them
2 do study abroad now or they have internships; so they
3 have reasons why they can't spend the summer as a -- as
4 a counselor.

5 So I think that -- I don't know this. It
6 seems like hiring of counselors became a challenge,
7 based on what witnesses have told me, because many of
8 the counselors -- many of the cabins on July 4th, 2025,
9 had two counselors. Now, there were several that had
10 three, but many of them had only two.

11 And another really important factor that I
12 believe plays into this factually is that those
13 counselors that are eligible to be counselors the summer
14 after their senior year of high school, they -- they are
15 nicknamed "Ettes," short for "counselorette." That is a
16 junior, first-year counselor.

17 A second-year counselor is considered a
18 little bit more senior. Right? And you might even have
19 a counselor that's done it for two or three summers.

20 And then, of course, you have the Big
21 Three, as I mentioned, that are still college-age girls,
22 but they -- they are senior counselors.

23 I'm told that it has always been a habit
24 or -- a policy might be, kind of, strong, but certainly
25 a habit to have a senior counselor with an Ette assigned

1 to a cabin. You weren't going to have two Ettes alone
2 in a cabin in the past. You were always going to have a
3 senior counselor matched with an Ette.

4 Another factor is that in this case, last
5 summer, in the youngest cabins -- in Twins I and II and
6 Bubble, where they were eight years old, they were
7 first-year campers -- they -- those cabins were all
8 manned by Ettes. They were all -- they were all being
9 supervised by first-year counselors. And one of the
10 significant things that I was told that really
11 resonated, obviously, as a mother, is that the
12 eight-year-olds can -- can hardly even wash their own
13 hair. Right? They're really high maintenance. They --
14 they are the most homesick because this is their first
15 year away. Some of them still have, you know,
16 bedwetting issues. They need a lot of supervision in
17 the shower and brushing their teeth. They're very high
18 maintenance.

19 I spoke to a senior counselor, who was a
20 counselor on Senior Hill, who had a little baby cousin
21 in one of the Twins cabins. And she came down every
22 night to tuck her cousin in. And she saw with her own
23 eyes these counselors struggling, struggling with these
24 little babies and saying, "Oh, my gosh, this is so
25 much."

1 Because when the counselors have their
2 nights off, which they all have a schedule of nights
3 off, then an Ette will be left alone for several hours
4 with the eight-year-old girls that are very high
5 maintenance.

6 And so this counselor expressed to
7 leadership, "Hey, I think these counselors are
8 struggling with these babies. They need -- they need
9 some help."

10 Chloe Childress and Katherine Ferruzzo,
11 two of the counselors that died in this flood, both
12 expressed concern to their parents in the weeks leading
13 up to camp that they were -- they were worried. They
14 had some anxiety about having the littlest campers and
15 not having three counselors. There was actually
16 conversations that -- that they had with their folks
17 about, you know, "Gosh, this is going to be a lot of
18 work. I'm scared. I'm -- I'm nervous about being
19 alone."

20 And I know many of you or all of you,
21 probably, are parents. And I -- you know, my kids are
22 college age. That -- that one year -- I mean, you know
23 this. Right? That one year away from home makes such a
24 huge difference. Right? The development and growth
25 between a high school graduate and a freshman in college

1 that comes home that next summer is a tremendous amount
2 of development. Which makes sense about how they always
3 did it that way where there was a senior counselor with
4 an Ette, but not last year, unfortunately.

5 Every single person that I've spoken with
6 that are former counselors, current counselors -- there
7 were -- there was never any real training. There were
8 never drills. No drills of any kind. And -- and you've
9 solved that with some legislation that you passed last
10 year. But it's something to really keep an eye on in
11 terms of -- of what -- what you guys are looking to do.
12 Because there was just not a single person that said
13 they were given any information about -- and you look at
14 what we do in schools and have been doing for years with
15 tornado drills and fire drills and active-shooter
16 drills. I mean, that's just unthinkable that these --
17 that these -- that these girls would have no -- no -- no
18 training.

19 And, again, just the real lack of
20 equipment. No -- no radios. No walkie-talkies. No
21 phones. Which we can agree is -- you know, that they
22 needed radios. No tool kits. No ladders. No life
23 jackets. No real -- no real tools to -- to accomplish
24 any kind of emergency preparedness.

25 So there was some things in the counselor

1 binders that reflect that in the past there were three
2 counselors. This information is in the counselor
3 binders. It says, for floods, "Stay in your cabins.
4 You will be informed of proper procedures over the PA
5 system. When in doubt, get help."

6 And then it says, "At least one counselor
7 should be in the cabin at all times."

8 There was no way for counselors to comply
9 with these rules if there was only two counselors in a
10 cabin because very often, one counselor was on her night
11 off, one counselor was alone with the cabin. And so I
12 had counselors describe to me, "If a girl had thrown up
13 at 2 o'clock in the morning, I -- I can't send another
14 eight-year-old to the Infirmary at 2 o'clock in the
15 morning. I can't leave to go get help. I have no
16 radio." So even the simplest things require three
17 counselors. Right? Even the simplest things.

18 Even a child that's -- and -- and there
19 were some. I heard stories about girls that were
20 inconsolable about, you know, seemingly small things.
21 Right? But if you have an inconsolable camper and you
22 need help, if your co-counselor's on her night off, you
23 really are -- you really are, kind of, stuck with
24 limited options. And leaving a group of eight-year-olds
25 in the middle of the night to get help is -- is -- you

1 know, difficult.

2 This is another indication that there used
3 to -- that there was a trend towards having three. In
4 the fire drill -- this is -- this is in the binder, in
5 the fire drills. One counselor should be in front of
6 the cabin as they go to the muster site and two behind.
7 And, of course, that makes perfect sense. That's good
8 advice. That is how we make sure that we've rounded up
9 12, 13, 14, 15 little girls. Right? One in front.

10 Everybody in line. Two behind. We've accounted for
11 everybody. You know, buddy system. Whatever. But, of
12 course, that requires three. And, again, many of these
13 cabins -- all of the younger cabins had only two Ettes.

14 So let's talk a little bit about what they
15 were given in the emergency plan that was provided to
16 counselors.

17 "In the case of flood, all campers on
18 Senior Hill must stay in their cabins."

19 And we talked about Senior Hill when we
20 were at the site, and I'll talk a little bit more about
21 it. The reason why Senior Hill seems to have its own
22 part of this paragraph is that Senior Hill was often
23 the -- the area of camp that was cut off from the dining
24 services and the front office because that land bridge
25 where Cypress Creek and Edmunson Creek converge into the

1 Guadalupe would often have too much water over it for
2 them to safely walk over for meals. Right?

3 So "Senior Hill must stay in their cabins.
4 They will be given instructions through the loud
5 speaker." The PA system that we've talked about.

6 "If the electricity is off, a
7 walkie-talkie will be used." Part of the problem with
8 that is that they did not have a walkie-talkie. They
9 had a walkie-talkie locked in the riflery range cabinet.

10 "Food and other supplies will be delivered
11 to Senior Hill by boat or truck. Campers and counselors
12 never wander away from your cabin."

13 "Those on the flats" -- so now we -- now
14 we have this one line about the Flats portion -- "must
15 also stay in their cabins unless told otherwise by the
16 office. All cabins are constructed on high, safe
17 locations."

18 Regarding training for last year, in the
19 orientation for last year --

20 (Audio being played)

21 MS. GARRETT: And that's not the only
22 counselor that indicated that to me; that there was,
23 sort of a, "Don't worry, that's not going to happen."

24 So I do want to talk a little bit about
25 what you guys are, obviously, very familiar with now --

1 is the relevant portion of the Texas Administrative Code
2 regarding what was required last year. I know you guys
3 made some important changes to that code. But we're
4 talking about what happened last year. And this is the
5 code as it -- as it was last year.

6 A written plan of procedures shall be
7 formulated and posted in each permanent and
8 semi-permanent occupied building. So plans shall be
9 written and posted in all buildings. They did have that
10 one-page plan, and it was posted in buildings.

11 The plan must cover four areas: Disaster,
12 serious accident, epidemic, or fatality.

13 As you'll see when we get to one of the
14 next slides, their emergency plan covered disaster and
15 serious accident but failed cover epidemics and
16 fatalities as required by the administrative code.

17 The plan shall include procedures for
18 emergency shelter and for evacuation of each occupied
19 building.

20 And so right here I want to point out that
21 sheltering in place is a plan. That is a fair
22 statement. Sheltering in place is the right thing to do
23 under certain circumstances -- we can all agree on
24 that -- until it's not. Right? And that's why the law
25 requires also a plan for evacuation of each occupied

1 building.

2 So there was a shelter-in-place plan.
3 There was not an evacuation plan for when sheltering in
4 place was no longer viable.

5 Campers shall be instructed as to their
6 actions in the event of fire, disaster, or the need to
7 evacuate. So camper -- and I would put counselors in
8 that category, but the law does say campers. Last year,
9 should -- at all these camps, at all camps all over the
10 state of Texas, campers should have been drilling. The
11 law required campers at all camps to be instructed as to
12 their actions in the event of fire, disaster, and the
13 need to evacuate. This is not, you know, something
14 that's -- that's -- that's new to people. You know, I
15 was doing tornado drills in 1970. Campers shall be
16 instructed on their actions.

17 Specific assignments must be made to each
18 staff member and counselor. This is so critical.
19 Right? People need to know what to do. It can't be one
20 person who holds everything in their brain. Campers
21 and -- or counselors -- excuse me -- and staff have to
22 have specific assignments to know what to do in the
23 event of a fire, to know what to do in the event of a
24 flood, to know what to do if an entire cabin gets the
25 flu.

1 Documentation of this training shall be
2 kept at the camp's administrative on-site office or
3 location. So the plan has to be posted in every
4 building. But proof of the training of counselors,
5 staff members, and campers shall be kept at the camp's
6 administrative on-site office.

7 So this is the one-page sheet that you
8 guys have all seen. This is the emergency instructions
9 plan. This is the one that the -- you know, the
10 inspector verified was posted in every occupied
11 building. So that portion of the administrative code
12 was -- was complied with. The plan was written, and it
13 was posted.

14 The plan should address disasters,
15 accidents, epidemics, and -- and fatalities. This plan
16 covers the two that I mentioned.

17 The plan should address emergency shelter
18 and evacuation. It does not address evacuation.

19 Campers were not structured.

20 No specific assignments were given to
21 staff or counselors.

22 And no documentation of training because
23 inadequate training was given.

24 All right. So June 29th, 2025, 557
25 campers arrive at Camp Mystic. 386 of them arrive to

1 attend the second session on the Guadalupe River Campus.

2 This is a picture of Missy Peck and her
3 little girl Lulu Peck. And standing next to them is
4 Katherine Ferruzzo and Chloe Childress.

5 In the second picture it's Chloe and
6 Katherine greeting Lulu Peck. The reason why Missy Peck
7 is outside of her car -- because that's not exactly how
8 the procedure was -- was supposed to go. You drive up
9 and you -- your camper hops out, or they take the bus
10 from the town that you live in. But Missy was concerned
11 about Lulu because Lulu was anxious. This was her first
12 time to go to camp. This was their first child to go to
13 camp. And so Missy really wanted to encourage Lulu to
14 not be scared, and there were Katherine and Chloe doing
15 the same thing.

16 What's important about this drop-off
17 procedure is that Dick had a good eye for parents that
18 were anxious and children that were anxious. And he
19 would come over to them and say, "I got your girl.
20 She's safe here. She's safe with us. Mystic is the
21 safest place on Earth." I had multiple parents tell me.

22 You'll hear from a father of a girl that
23 survived who had some anxiety of his own. He had begun
24 having nightmares two weeks before sending his daughter
25 to camp, and all of the nightmares involved water. And

1 so he got out of his car to comfort his child and to
2 give her some instructions about swimming in the river,
3 and Dick came over and said much the same thing. And,
4 again, that's because he -- he was the patriarch of the
5 camp. He -- he -- he comforted these families and these
6 children.

7 Moving forward in our timeline. We're now
8 to July 2nd. This was the day that a representative
9 inspector from DSHS came to the camp property to do an
10 inspection, an annual inspection. This is done every
11 year. The inspections are done during camp -- operating
12 camp season. The DSHS inspector has a -- you know, a
13 checklist. We have that whole checklist, if -- if you
14 want to look at it.

15 It's important to note that this
16 inspector -- and most of these inspectors at the time
17 last year -- she was a -- she was a sanitation
18 specialist. Her expertise was, you know, food safety
19 and that type of thing. She -- she was -- I want to --
20 I want to -- I definitely want to be fair to her.

21 She had a checklist and a job to do. She
22 was not a safety consultant. She was not a safety
23 expert. She was not a risk assessment person. She was
24 a sanitation officer that, basically, checked for did
25 you do background checks on your employees. Check. Did

1 everybody do the youth protection against sexual
2 molestation? Check. Do you have those tests? Check.
3 Do you have a plan? Check. Is it posted in every
4 building? Yes. Right?

5 And then the plan gets sent to DSHS, to
6 another -- you know, another person to evaluate. So it
7 wasn't her job out there on-site to evaluate the
8 efficacy of their safety plan. She, you know, was
9 measuring food temperature. In, you know, one of the
10 big -- she -- we interviewed her. She was very
11 cooperative. And she said one of the biggest problems
12 that camps have is food poisoning, right, and food
13 issues. And so they really want to make sure that the
14 kitchen and the food is safe.

15 But you will notice that in their
16 inspection report -- is there a written plan that
17 addresses the four areas? Yes. That's not quite right.

18 Are all camp and volunteers made aware of
19 the plan to be implemented during the staff training
20 program? Yes. I believe they are made aware of the
21 plan, but they're not trained in it.

22 Is there documentation of training? Yes.
23 And I think that's probably no because there is no real
24 training.

25 July 2nd to the 4th, TDEM starts to get

1 involved in -- in getting information out about upcoming
2 weather. On July 2nd, on their website, TDEM activates
3 state emergency response resources. This is a little
4 bit broader, right, because it's just July 2nd. They're
5 just, kind of, at this point figuring out what's
6 happening with the weather. It's not super specific
7 to -- to Kerr County, but it does involve the Hill
8 Country. But it's -- it's the beginning of their
9 warnings. Right? We are -- we are watching this rain,
10 and flooding threatens parts of Texas including the Hill
11 Country.

12 It gives, you know, some -- some warnings.
13 According to the National Weather Service, heavy
14 rainfall with the potential to cause flash flooding. So
15 this is the first, sort of, alert -- that's not quite
16 the right word -- the first communication given by TDEM
17 on their website on July 2nd.

18 On July 3rd, you'll notice we're now,
19 like, in all caps. Right? We're a little bit more
20 urgent. We've increased our readiness. We know a
21 little bit more about what's coming here. We're ramping
22 this up a little bit. "Texas responders remain ready to
23 support local officials as flooding threatens the state
24 over the next couple of days. Texans are urged to keep
25 personal preparedness as their number one priority."

1 The National Weather Service states heavy rainfall and
2 flash flooding will continue to threaten the --

3 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Ms. Garrett, could you
4 please continue to speak into the microphone so those
5 online can hear your remarks?

6 MS. GARRETT: You bet. Thank you for the
7 reminder.

8 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Thank you, ma'am.
9 Appreciate it.

10 MS. GARRETT: I have a tendency to wander.
11 Thank you.

12 Heavy rainfall and flash flooding will
13 continue to threaten the Hill Country over the next
14 couple of days. Again, just an increased communication
15 by TDEM of what's coming.

16 And on July 3rd, TDEM hosted, as usual,
17 their daily -- 8 a.m. daily weather call. They had an
18 additional call at 10 a.m., which was the statewide
19 weather call as well, with the National Weather Service.
20 In a somewhat unusual interest level, 468 entities did
21 dial in to the Zoom call.

22 At 11:37 a.m., the National Weather
23 Service predicts greater severity. TDEM deploys
24 resources -- you know, we're talking about, you know,
25 national -- as you-all well know, National Guard

1 resources, state resources -- to 160 square miles. By
2 1 p.m., resources are fully deployed.

3 And at 1:18 p.m., the National Weather
4 Service issues a flood watch. The relevant language in
5 the flood watch is -- I do have to get a little closer
6 for one second. Sorry -- "Excessive runoff may result
7 in flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, and other
8 low-lying and flood-prone locations." Monitor
9 forecasts. Be alert for possible flood warnings.
10 "Those living in areas prone to flooding should be
11 prepared to take action should flooding develop."

12 So, obviously, you know, a watch is not as
13 urgent as a warning. But at 1:18 p.m. on July 3rd,
14 there's actually a flood watch issued by the National
15 Weather Service.

16 One thing that's important to note here
17 that we learned in the testimony from last summer is
18 that people responded differently to these messages from
19 TDEM. You had Kendall County testify last year that
20 their emergency management coordinator took action.
21 He -- this was noted by him. He called people in his
22 community. He called RV parks and campgrounds. He
23 started notifying people. Contacted camps. Went to bed
24 uneasy and on alert and -- and -- and ready. Okay?

25 Unfortunately, in Kerr County it was a

1 little bit different of a response. You had most of the
2 county officials either on vacation without a -- a
3 delegate in their place or sick and -- and asleep. So
4 you just had different responses to the same
5 information.

6 You also had different responses to the
7 same information by some of the local camps. You had --
8 you know, the director at Mo-Ranch interviewed with me,
9 which I appreciated, and he helped me understand some of
10 the things that they were doing, which was very
11 different. They were aware of a lot of this
12 information. They -- they -- they were on alert.

13 And then you had other camps that were
14 unaware. We know from testimony in the -- in the court
15 hearings that -- that the TDEM information did not --
16 was not accessed, as far as we know, based on testimony
17 by the Eastlands.

18 So now we're moving to the -- to the
19 timeline regarding July 3rd and July 4th. As I said,
20 every responded a little bit differently. Everybody
21 related to Mystic told me that it was, kind of, business
22 as usual on the evening of July 3rd. It wasn't really
23 raining. It had been raining. But nobody was on high
24 alert at this point.

25 They went to dinner. They had Vespers,

1 which is a church service normally held on a Sunday, but
2 it was held on a Thursday for that week. And then they
3 went to Rec Hall where they had counselor skits. So
4 everything was being, sort of, treated as a normal
5 evening at Camp Mystic on the evening of July 3rd.

6 After counselor skits, at approximately
7 9:45 p.m., Glenn Juenke arrives for his 10 p.m. to
8 2 a.m. shift.

9 I think it should be noted that -- that we
10 were told that after 2 a.m., there was no adult awake,
11 necessarily, on the campus of the -- of Camp Mystic
12 as -- as security. Glenn Juenke and Lee Pool's shift
13 was from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. each night.

14 One family member, that I believe that is
15 present here, told us that she was concerned about camp
16 security before they sent their eldest daughter. She
17 called to ask about security and was told that an
18 ex-Marine patrols the camp 24/7. And that -- that was
19 not, you know, obviously, a true statement. Glenn
20 Juenke and Lee Poole patrolled from 10:00 to 2:00.

21 At 10 a.m., it was, go to your cabins.
22 Get cleaned up. Get ready for bed. Go to bed. Lights
23 out. And it's their tradition to play Taps on the
24 loudspeaker, the PA system that we've been referencing,
25 at 10 p.m.

1 (Audio being played)

2 MS. GARRETT: 12:45 in our timeline,
3 counselors who had had the night off that had gone in to
4 Kerrville for their night off arrived back at camp.
5 They report dangerous conditions, water on the roads to
6 Francis Blackwell-Loper, the gatekeeper. And they also
7 report that to the Big Three when they turn in their
8 cell phones. They're told that if they had felt unsafe,
9 they could have stayed in Kerrville. But, thank
10 goodness, they didn't because they were -- they were
11 needed at camp.

12 Counselors in that group told me that one
13 of the counselors was a local girl and had indicated --
14 you know, and so had some -- some knowledge of driving
15 in -- in -- in rainy -- in the rainy season, and -- and
16 she was alarmed at -- at the -- at the -- at the rain
17 that evening when they got home at 12:45 a.m.

18 At 1:14 a.m., obviously, the
19 much-talked-about National Weather Service Flash Flood
20 Warning comes in. The flash flood warning, of course,
21 is a whole different ball game than the flash flood
22 watch. It's a lot stronger language. Life threatening
23 flash flooding. Thunderstorms producing flash flooding.
24 Again, life threatening flash flooding of creeks and
25 streams. Some locations that will experience flash

1 flooding include Kerrville, Ingram, Hunt. It's a very
2 strongly worded flash flood warning given at 1:14 a.m.

3 A lot of folks that I have spoken with
4 talk about alert fatigue. I've spoken to many people
5 that live in the area. Local homeowners and then, of
6 course, other -- other witnesses talk about ignoring --
7 ignoring warnings and ignoring alerts. I think you've
8 addressed that in some of the legislation from -- from
9 last summer. But, to be clear, people received the
10 alert.

11 And -- and one thing I want to point out
12 about alert fatigue is that one of the Eastlands'
13 lawyers provided us with some data that in the last 25
14 years -- there have been 91 flash flood warnings in 25
15 years. We did some -- 91.

16 We did some of our own research. I want
17 to be clear that it was not a deep dive, but we did some
18 pretty good research on how many of those flash flood
19 warnings were during camp season, and we could only find
20 three since 2009 of those, potentially, 91 were during
21 camp season.

22 A counselor who had a disabled phone
23 received the flash. They were allowed to bring disabled
24 phones to camp for music. She received the alert on her
25 disabled phone. A counselor who was spending her night

1 off in Byrd -- which I showed you on our site tour --
2 which is the counselor lounge -- she received the flash
3 flood warning. A member of the Big Three received the
4 flash flood warning. Glenn Juenke received it and noted
5 that he and Dick had discussed it.

6 Dick's phone data that we were given shows
7 that he went to the National Weather Service website
8 shortly after the alert. He was really, as you'll see
9 in a moment, very obsessively checking weather apps and
10 weather services, including the National Weather
11 Service.

12 CodeRED called Edward Eastland's phone,
13 and he also received the text alert for the flash flood
14 warning at 1:51 a.m.

15 (Audio being played)

16 MS. GARRETT: Again, 1:51. This is the
17 CodeRED weather warning sent to Edward Eastland's phone.
18 "The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood
19 warning for your Highway 39 location from 1:14 a.m.
20 July 4 until 4:15 a.m. July 4." That was read, as -- as
21 Edward also told us, at approximately 1:51 a.m.

22 This is a prophetic statement, a quote
23 from Dick Eastland from 1990. "I'm sure there will be
24 other drownings. People don't heed the warnings."

25 This is -- we received some phone data, as

1 I mentioned. Dick was monitoring the weather pretty
2 much all night. This portion of his phone records --
3 our cell phone expert tells us this is where he's
4 actually launching weather apps. Okay? So, actually,
5 physically launching some type of -- of weather app.
6 And you'll see that he was actively monitoring AcuRite,
7 National Weather Service, NOAA, and other radar and
8 weather apps. We have countless pages of the updates
9 that he was receiving on his phone. Hundreds of pages
10 of the -- of the -- of the radar -- of the radar updates
11 between 12:42 and 3:23.

12 All right. So now we're getting into the
13 critical timeline.

14 At 1:45 a.m., Dick Eastland summons Edward
15 Eastland to the front office. Now, Dick has been at the
16 front office. Pretty much everybody else, for the most
17 part, except for Glenn Juenke, the night watchman, went
18 to bed that -- you know, as -- as normal, that evening.

19 But Dick was, apparently, worried about
20 the weather. He stayed up. We're not sure exactly what
21 time he made his way from his home with -- with
22 Mrs. Eastland to the front office. But he was
23 monitoring the weather from the front office. And he
24 radios at 1:45 a.m. to Edward Eastland, who's asleep in
25 bed, but they have a radio in their room. "We've gotten

1 two inches of rain in the last hour. We need to get the
2 ground crew to move waterfront equipment."

3 Edward tells us, "He called the grounds
4 crew right after he called me."

5 So at 1:45, Dick is now concerned that
6 there's going to be a rise in the river. When we did
7 our walk-through, they showed us that -- that the canoes
8 are on a rack, kind of, closer down to the waterfront
9 where you saw. And when the river begins to rise, it's
10 not uncommon for them to move that equipment higher up
11 in case there's a -- any rise in the river.

12 I'm told by local homeowners that that is
13 a common thing to do. Anytime there is a rise in the
14 river, especially over July 4th where people had a lot
15 of equipment down and near the water, it's common to
16 move property. Obviously, moving property is one of the
17 first alerts that the water might rise.

18 So it's important to know, in terms of
19 staffing, the only non-counselor adults on the Flats --
20 and, obviously, the counselors at 18 would be considered
21 an adult. But I'm making the distinction that the only
22 non-counselor adults in the Flats in the early morning
23 hours of July 4th were Dick Eastland, Edward Eastland,
24 and Glenn Juenke.

25 Glenn tells us that at some point -- you

1 know, 1:30, 1:45, his shift's, obviously, going to end
2 at 2:00 -- Dick Eastland tells him to go home; that he
3 doesn't want him, basically, to get trapped at the camp
4 if the low water crossings flood.

5 Thankfully, Glenn says, "No. I'm not
6 going to go home. I think I should stay here." And
7 it's -- it's a good thing he did because they -- they
8 needed as much help as they could get.

9 1:47 a.m., Edward says he gets radioed at
10 1:45. He, basically, gets up and immediately leaves his
11 home. He --

12 As you know from our tour, this is called
13 Ranch House. This is where Edward and Mary Liz were
14 living at the time last year.

15 He gets in his truck. He goes down that
16 little road that you saw that turns onto that road right
17 in front of the front office. It's a very short
18 distance. He did have to cross over Edmunson Creek.
19 You've got Bubble Gum Creek right here. He crossed over
20 that little turn and went to the front office. And he
21 tells us, "As I was going, there was, maybe, an inch of
22 water on the bridge right here." So he is able to make
23 his way over to the Flats side of the campus.

24 At 2:01 a.m., Edward texts a video to Mary
25 Liz. And on the video he says, "I'm not coming home

1 tonight to my wife." Mary Liz responds, "I knew that
2 would happen. There's a bed in Byrd."

3 So, basically, what we're talking about
4 here -- and I'll show you a video here in a second --
5 is, as you were there, at Bubble Gum Creek, he sent her
6 a video. It had gotten too high to cross. Okay? And
7 she says, well -- or, you know, she, obviously, realizes
8 he's going to be sleeping on the Flats side that night.
9 So there's a bed in the Byrd lounge, she tells him.

10 At 2:11 a.m., Glenn Juenke notifies
11 retired Fire Chief Stephen Hayes about the flooding. He
12 says, "You wouldn't believe the flooding here. Wish I
13 could get a photo of the creek by the golf course."

14 At 2:14 a.m., Glenn Juenke takes a video
15 of Bubble Gum Creek, similar to Edward, to document the
16 flooding. The picture on the right we took on one of
17 our site visits. And we all stood there last week, and
18 you saw how -- how little water is in Bubble Gum Creek.
19 But on the night at 2:14, on this video from Glenn
20 Juenke, you can see, if you look towards the background,
21 how high the creek is.

22 (Video being played)

23 MS. GARRETT: Also at 2:14, a photograph
24 is taken by Edward Eastland and texted to his wife, Mary
25 Liz. This is -- this is Dick Eastland. And these are

1 nine men in the garage -- which we pointed out to you on
2 our tour, and I'll show you again on the map. After
3 moving -- they -- the retreated back over to the garage
4 after moving the canoes and kayaks. This is the grounds
5 crew that I've told you about.

6 The reason those videos are important of
7 Bubble Gum Creek is that, as we have pointed out
8 already, once Bubble Gum Creek became impassable, the
9 Flats was isolated from Senior Hill and from the homes
10 and from Cypress Lake. Okay? So effectively at this
11 point, whatever adults are on the Flats side are the
12 only adults that are going to be on the Flats side for
13 the rest of that night because it was impassable by
14 2:14 a.m.

15 At 2:30 a.m., critical to our timeline,
16 two counselors run to the front office from Bug House
17 cabin, which is the cabin closest to the river, and one
18 from Look Inn. They had come -- and you saw how close
19 those cabins were. They had both come out onto their
20 porches, concerned because each cabin was taking in a
21 little bit of water. And so they consulted with one
22 another, and they decided to run to the front office.

23 Now, let me remind you. This is 2:30 a.m.
24 It is pitch black. It is pouring rain. These girls are
25 in their pajamas, and they make the decision to run to

1 the front office. And so that was a significant
2 decision. They were, obviously, very concerned about
3 what was going on. And so they run to the front office,
4 down the road, into the front office to ask for
5 assistance and to tell Dick and Edward that water was
6 coming into their cabins.

7 At 2:33 a.m., Dick texts his wife, "So far
8 over four inches. Bubble Gum Creek up. Stay put. I am
9 at the office."

10 (Audio being played)

11 MS. GARRETT: That's where our
12 meteorologist said, if you get three or four inches,
13 that could be a real serious problem.

14 And Dick, obviously, knows this is a real
15 serious problem because he's texting that there's over
16 four inches of rain.

17 We know from cell phone data that at
18 2:37 a.m., Dick's phone connects to his Tahoe as he
19 drives the counselors back to their cabins. These are
20 the two counselors that come from Bug House and Look
21 Inn. They go into their cabins. They determine that
22 the water is coming into the cabin from the hill. It's
23 water that is sheeting off from the hill into -- and you
24 saw how that cabin is, sort of, built into the hill.
25 And water was coming into the cabins. Dick and Edward

1 assess the water in the cabins. They tell them to put
2 down towels and to stay put; that they'll come back and
3 check on them.

4 At 2:42, Dick's phone connects to his
5 Tahoe as he drives back to the front office.

6 Now things are starting to ramp up a
7 little bit, because at 2:55 a.m., Francis
8 Blackwell-Loper, who is in the gatehouse -- the
9 gatehouse is living quarters. It's a bedroom, a sitting
10 room, and a little kitchen. She has gone to bed. She
11 wakes up in the middle of the night and puts her -- puts
12 her feet down in -- in quite a bit of water. And things
13 go south very fast for Francis. I mean, the water rises
14 very quickly. She gets on the radio and frantically
15 radios to Edward and to whoever is listening, "My cabin
16 is flooding."

17 Edward says, "Get to higher ground. Get
18 out, Francis. Get to higher ground." And then
19 Francis's walkie-talkie goes -- goes dead. And they
20 spend a few minutes trying to raise Francis on the
21 walkie-talkie, which they cannot do. There are also
22 phone records indicating that they tried to call her.
23 And so things are much more serious now that they know
24 that Francis Blackwell's cabin has filled with water.

25 And you remember, I pointed out to you on

1 our site visit, the -- the gatehouse and Bug House,
2 right, are, you know, kind of, on that -- that same
3 linear distance, so to speak, from -- from the Guadalupe
4 River.

5 So now -- now things are -- have gotten a
6 lot more -- a lot more high alert. Dick radios, "We
7 need to start getting the girls out of Bug House," as
8 he -- he had been checking the waterfront. He had been
9 walking around. He -- he radios, "We need to get the
10 girls out of Bug House."

11 Edward tells us, at approximately 3 a.m.
12 or shortly after when they start that process, the
13 road -- the road leading down to that end cabin was
14 completely dry. And the soccer field -- which is that
15 grass field right in front of all those cabins that you
16 saw -- had not taken on water yet.

17 At 3:10 a.m., Tweety Eastland texts her
18 husband, Dick, "Our house is flooded." So, of course,
19 he's getting in information from multiple sources.
20 Francis Blackwell has frantically radioed. He -- he
21 already knows, from the counselors, water has started
22 coming in. Now Mrs. Eastland has said, "Our house is
23 flooded."

24 So he begins what we are describing as the
25 three evacuation attempts made by Dick, Edward, and

1 Glenn.

2 The first evacuation attempt, we believe
3 based on our -- our time stamps, start at approximately
4 3:10, 3:11.

5 The first three cabins in order are Bug
6 House, Look Inn, and Hang Out.

7 Again, this is the area where the cabins
8 are located. You've got Bug House. You can see the
9 water line on Bug House. That cabin was completely
10 filled with water.

11 Look Inn, completely filled with water.
12 Hang Out, the water line is not as high on Hang Out.
13 Those are the first three cabins closest to the
14 Guadalupe River.

15 Dick gets in his Tahoe. Edward gets in
16 his truck. And Glenn gets in his truck. And the three
17 of them drive from the front office, where they had been
18 congregating, and they drive down that road that -- that
19 you and I walked. And they -- and they drive all the
20 way down to Look Inn. They go into Bug House, Look Inn,
21 and Hang Out and tell all of the girls to come out of
22 their cabins and start getting in their vehicles.

23 It's, according to witnesses that I
24 interviewed, far from orderly. It is girls jumping into
25 the Tahoe, jumping into the bed of the trucks, jumping

1 into the cabs of the trucks. But, also, girls walking.
2 There are also girls -- counselors that told me that,
3 even in that first evacuation attempt, some were walking
4 down the road.

5 Now, again, at that point, it was safe to
6 walk down the road. There was no standing water yet,
7 according -- according to -- to most of the people.

8 So they turn around the three vehicles,
9 and they drive back to the front office where the girls
10 get out of the vehicles. And the girls that were
11 walking catch up, and they walk to Rec Hall. Where that
12 little building -- where that little arrow ends, that's
13 Rec Hall, which, of course, you saw.

14 This is a photograph taken from Cozy Cabin
15 by one of the Big Three or one of the photographers,
16 time stamped 3:23 a.m. You can see that these are the
17 girls walking from the front office to Rec Hall, which
18 is a very short distance. You can see that there's
19 really no standing water on the grassy portion. There,
20 obviously, begins to be a little bit of pooling water
21 here as they get closer to Cozy Cabin.

22 Evacuation attempt number two. So they're
23 going to just repeat what they just did to get Bug
24 House, Look Inn, and Hang Out out. And now they are
25 driving their three vehicles down to Tumble Inn I and

1 II. As you saw when we were out there, that is two
2 cabins but one big cabin. Okay?

3 Jumble House. They drive exactly the same
4 way that they did for the first evacuation attempt.
5 They stop in front of Tumble Inn I and II. The water is
6 starting to get a little bit higher at this point. It's
7 starting to come up on the wheel well, according to
8 witnesses. Again, it's a -- you know, get in the car.
9 It's madness. It's mayhem. It's jumping into cars and
10 trucks. And, again, it's some campers and counselors
11 walking.

12 As they are retreating from evacuation
13 attempt number two, the water is higher. Edward
14 describes to us that there are now canoes and kayaks
15 floating. He had to get out to move some debris out of
16 his way as they were driving back to the front office
17 for the second time.

18 As they were moving past Jumble House, the
19 counselors were out on the porch, and they screamed to
20 Edward, "Should we just walk?" And he said, "Yes.
21 Walk."

22 So Jumble House -- the reason they are in
23 blue is that they walked to Rec Hall. They did not get
24 into vehicles. They began walking to Rec Hall.

25 One of the, you know, famous photos

1 that -- that's been widely circulated is time stamped
2 3:26 a.m. These are some of the girls from Tumble and
3 Jumble walking into Rec Hall at 3:26 a.m.

4 Edward recalls to us, "The water at that
5 point on the road was maybe ankle-deep. I remember some
6 of the canoes and kayaks were floating. At this point,
7 the water was an all-time record. It had never gotten
8 that high in history. It felt surreal. This can't be
9 happening. This water had never touched these cabins.
10 It had never been on the grass of the soccer field. You
11 wish it was a dream. It was wild."

12 Again, Jumble House counselors, "Should we
13 walk?" "Yes." And they do begin to walk.

14 The unfortunate thing about the haphazard
15 nature of getting the girls to walk from Jumble House on
16 their own and the unfortunate circumstance that
17 counselors were not trained in how to move a group of
18 ten-year-old girls from one point to another in rain and
19 water, there was no system. And this is not the fault
20 of the counselors at all. But there was no system for
21 getting those girls from Jumble House to Rec Hall.

22 And we're not totally clear exactly who
23 went where. But the counselors for Jumble House did not
24 end up in Rec Hall. They ended up in Cozy Cabin. And,
25 unfortunately, that is when little Greta Toranzo decided

1 that she needed to backtrack to get her sheet. And, as
2 she backtracked, she got away from the group. And one
3 of the little campers told me, "I saw her, and then I
4 didn't."

5 Evacuation attempt number three: Nut Hut,
6 Chatter Box, and Giggle Box. At this point, the water,
7 again, is rising. Glenn Juenke knows there's no more
8 driving in this. He tells Dick Eastland, "We can't
9 drive in this." He says he's not sure if Dick hears
10 him. We know that Dick Eastland doesn't really need to
11 be told that. Dick Eastland knows how dangerous it is
12 to drive in this rising water.

13 Because Glenn knows there's no more
14 driving in this, he parks his car down by Byrd House and
15 gets out of his car, on foot, to assist the evacuation
16 on foot. There was a comment made about him protecting
17 his -- protecting his truck. That's -- that's -- I
18 don't think that's fair. He parked where he could park
19 safely, and he got out on foot to continue to help
20 evacuate -- evacuate people.

21 For reasons unknown to us, knowing he --
22 yes?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- Chatter Box
24 timeline?

25 MS. GARRETT: The Chatter Box timeline,

1 yes, is 3:20 --

2 The reason we're using that time stamp is
3 because Jumble House was walking into Rec Hall between,
4 you know, 3:23 and 3:26. Okay? Again, these are
5 approximate. We're piecing them together as best we can
6 from all of the records. But that's -- that's about
7 what we think is going on at this point.

8 So we don't know why Dick continued to
9 drive in the -- in this level of water. But we do know
10 that he parks -- drives back down on the third attempt
11 and parks his vehicle on that little side road that you
12 saw that is extremely close to the entrance -- the porch
13 and the entrance to bubble -- to Bubble Inn. He parks
14 right here.

15 Edward gets as far as he can and parks
16 right here. Glenn parks his truck by Byrd House --
17 yeah, Byrd House.

18 Glenn and Edward walk towards Giggle Box,
19 and they converge at Giggle Box. And Glenn assists the
20 counselors and campers in Giggle Box to walk over to
21 Cricket's Corner. I'll show you that path in one
22 second.

23 At the same time that Glenn is helping
24 Giggle Box get across that road to Cricket's Corner --
25 remember the little, small pavilion that you saw -- and

1 he tells those girls, "If the water continues to rise
2 here at Cricket Corner, go up the hill." Which is
3 ultimately what happens. The water does continue to
4 rise, and they do go up that portion of the hill. I'll
5 show you their path in one second.

6 But, meanwhile, while that's going on, the
7 counselors in Nut Hut and Chatter Box, they express to
8 us that they know nobody's coming. "Nobody's coming for
9 us." We know that that's done. The driving around is
10 over. These counselors realize, we've got to take
11 action. And that's what they do.

12 The counselors in Nut Hut and Chatter Box
13 go out the back of their cabins, onto the hillside to
14 evacuate their girls up the hill.

15 Now, I want to be clear about the way they
16 described what was going on here. It was, again, pitch
17 black, sheeting rain, aggressive lightning. Every
18 single person that describes this night to us talks
19 about the aggressive lightning strikes and -- and
20 thunder.

21 There is now water rushing behind those
22 cabins. They all describe water is rushing behind those
23 cabins. And so they are taking the girls out of
24 windows, passing a girl through the window to one
25 counselor. The counselor, basically, piggybacks or

1 assists them across the water rushing behind the cabins.
2 Gets them up on the hill. Goes back for another camper.
3 Back and forth back and forth until they get all the
4 girls out of Nut Hut and Chatter Box and the counselors
5 too.

6 Now, heroic actions on the part of these
7 counselors. Okay? But also not a safe evacuation plan.
8 We heard stories about three little girls getting
9 completely separated on that hill from their counselors.
10 And, thank God, they hung on to a tree, the three of
11 them, and a counselor came back down and was able to
12 find them. But that was a harrowing process.

13 We also heard descriptions of campers
14 trying to get over that rushing water behind the cabins
15 to get onto the hill, you know, losing the hand of their
16 counselor and getting swept down but, thankfully,
17 grabbed and brought back.

18 So this was -- this was heroic. No
19 question about it. I mean, and they needed to get to
20 higher ground. But it wasn't a plan. It wasn't a safe
21 plan. It was an option that was taken that, thank God,
22 nobody died. But it was very ad hoc.

23 All right. And then I mentioned that
24 while those girls are getting their campers out and onto
25 the hill, Giggle Box is being escorted over to Cricket's

1 Corner. That's the blue line. They go up halfway up
2 the hill. They stay halfway up the hill, the steep,
3 rocky hillside, for two -- you know, for two hours until
4 the water goes down. Nut Hut and Chatter Box actually
5 go all the way up to Sky High where there's a pavilion
6 up there that they hunker down under the pavilion for --
7 for two hours.

8 The reason why the girls from Giggle Box
9 stay in the middle of the mountain is they -- they
10 couldn't really access -- there's, like -- when -- when
11 you go back there, you can see that there's, sort of,
12 a -- a bluff little area that they -- they couldn't have
13 gotten past.

14 At this point, obviously, things are
15 getting really, really serious. Dick radios
16 frantically, "We have to get Bubble and Twins out. We
17 have to get Bubble and Twins out."

18 He has, remember, parked his car right
19 next to the entrance of Bubble. That's Bubble Inn.
20 That's where Dick was parked.

21 These are the occupants of Bubble Inn.
22 Every single person in this photograph died in the river
23 that evening. Chloe Childress, Margaret Bellows, Lila
24 Bonner, Molly DeWitt, Ellen Getten, Janie Hunt, Lainey
25 Landry, Katherine Ferruzzo, Sarah Marsh, Linnie McCown,

1 Wynne Naylor, Eloise Peck, Abby Pohl, Renee Smajstrla,
2 Mary Barrett Stevens. Every one of these children died
3 in the river that night.

4 That's the water line that got to Bubble
5 Inn. The reason why that is really significant is
6 that -- as you can see from the interior of Bubble
7 Inn -- that it was a flat ceiling. They were either
8 going to drown in Bubble Inn or in the river.

9 So Dick, obviously, knew that he had to
10 get them out of the cabin. We know so little about
11 Bubble Inn because we weren't able to interview any
12 survivors, and we weren't able to interview any parents
13 of survivors. And so there's a lot of mystery that
14 surrounds Bubble Inn that we just don't, at this point,
15 have answers to.

16 What I -- what I can say is what we know
17 from the radio transmissions. Dick starts with, "We
18 need to get Twins and Bubble Out." Okay?

19 And then the next radio transmission from
20 Dick is, "I have Bubble Inn cabin in my car. I'm stuck
21 against a tree. I need help."

22 Edward, "Dad, I'm sorry. I can't get to
23 you. I'm staying here with Twins."

24 Britt Eastland hears all of these radio
25 transmissions from Cypress Lake Campus. And we know

1 from those radio transmissions or what we -- one
2 hypothesis is that Dick put all of those girls into the
3 Tahoe, and the Tahoe began to float away and ultimately
4 surged down the river and crashed. That's one
5 hypothesis.

6 Another hypothesis is that he was in the
7 process of loading them all into the car, and some of
8 them had -- could've been swept away the way Greta
9 Toranzo was swept away. Again, that's a mystery.

10 We do know that Dick Eastland loved every
11 little girl that came to Camp Mystic. He was a loving
12 man. And I -- I -- I can't believe that he was sitting
13 in the driver's seat of that car with, you know, little
14 girls -- I mean, un -- untended to.

15 So those are some of the mysteries that
16 surround Bubble Inn. What we do know is that Dick's
17 Tahoe crashed into a tree a couple of hundred yards
18 downriver from Bug House.

19 What we also know is that Renee Smajstrla,
20 Janie Hunt, and Mary Barrett Stevens were found in the
21 vehicle, dead, with Dick Eastland. All of the other
22 girls and counselors were recovered downriver.

23 Wiggle Inn. After Glenn assisted the
24 girls from Giggle Box over to Cricket's Corner so that
25 they could safely go up the hill, he then makes his way

1 to Wiggle Inn.

2 At Wiggle Inn, when he arrived there, all
3 of the campers and counselors were on the porch,
4 frantically trying to figure out what to do. Glenn
5 recognizes we have limited options here. We can't send
6 these girls out into the water at the level it was at
7 this point. Going to Rec Hall is no longer an option.
8 Sheltering in place is really the only option. It's --
9 he determines, rightfully, I'm sure, that it's no longer
10 an option to move them across the road the way he did
11 Giggle Box. I'm sure that was probably his intention.
12 That was no longer an option because of the level of the
13 water. It was not an option to go to Rec Hall. The
14 only option left to them was to shelter in place, which
15 they did.

16 While they were in the cabin -- you can
17 see right here. That is Glenn's truck that had been
18 washed from its place near Byrd House, down the road,
19 and, basically, kind of, crashes into that telephone
20 pole that's right across from Wiggle Inn.

21 His hazard lights are going off that whole
22 time, which they all, sort of, described as helpful
23 because it was some amount of light other than the
24 lightning.

25 The counselor -- one of the -- one of

1 the -- one of the first counselors that was willing to
2 talk to me -- and I would like to give her some credit
3 for that. She was very brave, because these girls are
4 deeply, deeply traumatized. But she talked to me. And
5 she -- when Glenn ushered all of those girls back into
6 Wiggle Inn, knowing that was their only option, she
7 wasn't about to go back in that cabin. So she stood on
8 this windowsill. The water is clear up here. She put
9 her feet on that windowsill. Stood on that window,
10 holding on to the -- to the -- to the roof eave for two
11 hours.

12 She helped Glenn move trunks out of that
13 window. He would push trunks out through that window to
14 try to get -- the trunks -- everybody described the
15 trunks as a -- as a real hazard. Okay? And so getting
16 them out of the cabin was one of his first -- first
17 tasks.

18 Glenn did a walk-through with us. There's
19 no question that he comforted those girls. There's no
20 question that he was guarding those girls. He describes
21 a really interesting phenomenon that was, obviously,
22 going on with the water just going in such, sort of,
23 bizarre directions. He describes being in Wiggle Inn
24 and trying to set himself up at a place, based on the
25 water flow, that would keep a girl from rushing past him

1 and out a window. And he said that suddenly the water
2 direction changed. And he said, I had to shift all the
3 girls and myself a different direction to -- to keep
4 that, sort of -- you know, him as a barrier. So that
5 was some -- that was some interesting insight.

6 The reason why the girls and Glenn and the
7 counselors in Wiggle Inn survived is that Wiggle Inn had
8 vaulted ceilings. Unlike Twins I and II and Bubble Inn,
9 Wiggle had vaulted ceilings. And water -- and -- and
10 they needed it. They -- they needed that --

11 Excuse me. I'm so sorry.

12 They needed that extra space that the
13 vaulted ceilings provided them. And they described that
14 the water was rising and rising and rising, and then it
15 just stopped. And a lot of people describe it that way.
16 It just suddenly stopped and began to recede. So that's
17 what was happening in Wiggle Inn.

18 Now we move to Twins I and II. So you
19 remember that Edward briefly stopped at Giggle Box, saw
20 that Glenn was handling Giggle Box, and he starts --
21 and, again, he did a walk-through with us, which we
22 really appreciated.

23 He starts wading -- if you remember that
24 little grassy area between Giggle, walking towards
25 Bubble and Twins. He starts wading through that -- that

1 area in thigh-high to -- to waist-high water, making his
2 way to the porch of Twins I and II.

3 We have a broader circle here because here
4 are the Twins I and II cabins. Right out -- you -- you
5 guys and I were standing right on the edge of that porch
6 right there when we noted the PA system that was between
7 the tennis courts and the -- and the Twins cabins.

8 This building right here is important.
9 It's the commissary building. And on top of the
10 commissary building is Polar Palace where some of the
11 Polish kitchen workers were staying. We'll talk about
12 that in a little bit more in detail in a second. But it
13 does relate to Twins I.

14 So Edward makes his way to those cabins.
15 You look at the water line. Significant. The water
16 line is -- there is -- you can see that with the flat
17 ceiling in Twins I and II, the water completely,
18 completely filled the cabin.

19 At 3:26, this is video taken from Polar
20 Palace, taken by some of the Polish kitchen workers,
21 who, again, are college-age girls. In the distance is
22 Rec Hall. Right? This is the same time, 3:26 a.m., as
23 you see girls walking to Rec Hall.

24 If you focus in the -- in the back of the
25 video, you'll see those same girls walking into Rec

1 Hall. You'll notice that the power is still on. Lights
2 are still on. And you'll get a feel for what was going
3 on in -- in Twins -- Twins I and II.

4 (Video being played)

5 MS. GARRETT: 3:50, you can see activity
6 inside Twins. You can see the lights are on. You have
7 to study it, but you can see. I think you can see,
8 possibly, Edward and -- and/or counselors. They're
9 trying to figure out what's going on.

10 (Video being played)

11 MS. GARRETT: We know, from Edward's
12 iPhone data, that at 4:09 a.m., he is submerged
13 underwater. But what happens is that he walks to that
14 porch that we were standing on. He -- he -- he gets
15 through the water to that first porch. One of the
16 counselors from Twins I comes out onto the porch to talk
17 to him, leaving the 17-year-old counselor alone in
18 Twins I with -- with her girls.

19 The counselor that came out and Edward
20 cannot open the door at that point to Twins I. They
21 cannot get back into Twins I. They both describe trying
22 really hard to get back into Twins I. They can't; so
23 they walk down that little porch and go into Twins II
24 where there are two Ettles in there with their campers.

25 There are vents between -- in the

1 adjoining wall. They begin to talk to the 17-year-old
2 counselor through the vents, trying to give her some
3 guidance, telling her what to do. Edward describes, you
4 know, frantically looking for options. He's trying to
5 figure out how to get a vent out of the ceiling.
6 There's no tools. He's looking around for options.
7 They're trying to figure out what to do.

8 Again, the problem that they had that
9 Glenn didn't have was the flat ceilings. They know that
10 they're running out of options sooner than was happening
11 in cabins that had vaulted ceilings.

12 And so we know from statements and from
13 Edward that the 17-year-old counselor made the critical
14 decision -- because it did save some girls -- to start
15 getting them out of the cabin. They were running out
16 of -- they were just running out of airspace.

17 One survivor -- one parent of a survivor
18 said her daughter described having her chin, you know,
19 inches from the ceiling. And so there was only one
20 option, and it was for those girls to get out of that
21 cabin.

22 And so the little counselor starts moving
23 them out of the cabin. Apparently, something in the
24 pressure changed, because she -- the accounts describe
25 that she was getting them out of the door of that and

1 was able to open the door.

2 They described the -- having to push the
3 girls under the water to get out of the door and back
4 above the water.

5 Mary Grace Baker drowned in the river.

6 Lucy Dillon drowned inside Twins I. She
7 was found inside Twins I the next day.

8 Mary Kate Jacobe drowned in the river.

9 Hanna Lawrence, who's a twin, drowned in
10 the river.

11 Kellyanne Lytal, Blakely McCrory. They
12 all drowned in the river.

13 The other girls that I have labeled "Bug
14 House tree," which are four girls -- as I showed you at
15 the site visit, there was that little grove of trees
16 right past the Bug House cabin. And, because of the
17 direction of -- of the water at whatever point, these
18 girls were thrust into that direction. And, you know,
19 it's not, obviously, like some cartoon where they just
20 landed in the tree. No. They were grasping at limbs.
21 They were grasping and trying to get into this grove of
22 trees to safety. And these four little girls were
23 able -- were able to do that, along with the 17-year-old
24 counselor that was with them. They all ended out --
25 ended up in the Bug House tree.

1 This little girl right here where I have,
2 "clung to column," she was thrust, also, in that same
3 direction but landed a little earlier at Tumble Inn, we
4 believe. We believe she was at Tumble Inn on one of
5 those limestone columns. She was able to grab on to one
6 of those limestone columns. And, as the water continued
7 to rush violently past her, she clung to that column and
8 moved up, said she was neck-high in water and clung
9 to -- like a little -- I mean, just clung to that column
10 for two hours and lived.

11 This little girl right here -- I'm going
12 to bookmark her. She and another little girl from
13 Twins II were found alive down the river, and I'll tell
14 you that story in one second.

15 This is the Twins II cabin photo.

16 Hadley Hanna died in the river.

17 Virginia Hollis made it to the Bug House
18 tree but couldn't hold on. She dropped out of the tree
19 and died in the river.

20 Rebecca Lawrence, twin to Hanna, died in
21 the river.

22 Margaret Sheedy and Cile Steward all died
23 in the river. And as, you know, Cile Steward's remains
24 have still not been found.

25 Four little girls ended up in the Bug

1 House tree. And one counselor ended up in the Bug House
2 tree. The other counselor ended up alone in a different
3 tree.

4 So, again, they were all, sort of, thrust
5 in that -- I guess, if they got in that one flow, they
6 all got shoved into that Bug House tree.

7 This little girl right here and this
8 little girl right here -- I'll tell those stories in a
9 minute -- they were found alive down the river.

10 This is what we're referring to as the Bug
11 House tree. But this is after it has, sort of, fallen
12 over, after people were rescued from the Bug House tree.
13 But you can see, this is Bug House right here. So just
14 beyond, but up on the hill, is this grove of trees that
15 the three -- three counselors, eight campers, and then
16 Edward Eastland was also pushed over to the Bug House
17 tree and -- and survived, along with those other people,
18 in the Bug House tree.

19 This is just to give you some scale. This
20 was on one of our trips. The Bug House tree has been
21 removed because it did fall down. This is where the
22 base of the Bug House tree was. So that, kind of, gives
23 you some perspective about how high the water -- how
24 high the water was.

25 This little girl -- oh, my goodness. This

1 little girl is alive. She traveled six and a half miles
2 down the river from Camp Mystic and was found near Camp
3 La Junta. Six and a half miles that little girl fought
4 with debris. Described to her parents that she was
5 submerged multiple times. These parents of these
6 survivors have all -- every single one of them described
7 the most surreal moment when their daughters so calmly
8 told them, "That was the point, Daddy, when I knew I was
9 going to die. I just knew I was going to die."

10 Up and down, submerged and up, under
11 debris, covered in ant bites. This little girl gets
12 thrust upon a debris pile and stays there. Actually, I
13 think, falls asleep. You can imagine why. And when the
14 water recedes, two young women, two sisters that were
15 living in their grandparents' house come out at daybreak
16 to, sort of, assess what's going on, and they hear,
17 "Help, help". And they search and search. It takes a
18 while. I mean, this is a debris pile that's out in,
19 kind of, the middle of the river, sort of, out in the
20 water. And they can't find her, but they can hear her.

21 And then they describe this little head
22 pops up. This little girl's head pops up. And they get
23 over to the debris pile, and they get this little baby
24 girl off of the debris pile, and they -- they take her,
25 actually, to the La Junta camp infirmary. And La Junta

1 takes custody of this little girl.

2 These two little girls didn't make it to
3 the Bug House tree, but they're alive. They were also
4 thrust downriver. They traveled approximately a mile
5 down the river. Also were thrown on -- they weren't
6 together, so to speak. I mean, they didn't realize each
7 other was -- you know, they -- they each got thrust down
8 the river and landed on this big debris pile some
9 distance apart.

10 This was approximately four -- you know,
11 4 a.m. We know -- we know Edward was submerged at
12 4:09 and swept off the porch around 4:09. So that's,
13 kind of, the time frame. So in that, you know, 4:09 to
14 4:19 period of time, they are on a debris pile near the
15 home of the Griffin family.

16 The Griffins, Lori and Grant Griffin, grew
17 up there. They've lived there their whole lives. He's
18 a home builder in that area. Their house was flooding.
19 It was flooding significantly. Their power was out.
20 They were moving things to the second floor. They had
21 their windows open. And the same type of thing happened
22 with them. In the midst of this loud storm, this raging
23 noise from the river, they hear, "Help, help."

24 Again, it's pitch black. It's pouring
25 rain. It's storming like crazy. The river is rushing

1 down -- downriver. It's flooding the -- the Griffins'
2 home. And they rush out into the dark of night --
3 Mr. Griffin and his young adult daughter's boyfriend --
4 and they rescue these two little girls off of the debris
5 pile.

6 (Audio being played)

7 MS. GARRETT: Okay. As I mentioned to you
8 earlier, so much is going on in so many of the other
9 areas of camp while all of this is going on.

10 All of the girls that were initially
11 evacuated in those first two attempts, 95 campers and 13
12 counselors, end up in Rec Hall, which you guys walked
13 into. And you saw that there was a -- a balcony that
14 measures about five feet wide that goes across, you
15 know, three sides of the building. There is one way to
16 get to the balcony. That's this staircase, which is
17 this staircase here. There's one area to get up. And
18 then the balcony goes around the top of that building.

19 This is a counselor in Rec Hall.

20 (Audio being played)

21 MS. GARRETT: The audio slightly cut off.
22 This is a counselor saying that there was no authority
23 figure in Rec Hall. It was counselors and campers.

24 And what was happening is Rec Hall --
25 counselors are the ones that got the girls up onto the

1 balcony because Rec Hall was completely filling up with
2 water. And every single person I interviewed said that
3 they could've reached down through the slats in the
4 balcony and touched water.

5 Counselors described to me that they
6 were -- they were thinking through exit plans. They
7 weren't sure if the water was going to keep rising and
8 if they were going to have to get out.

9 Cozy Cabin. Now, Cozy Cabin -- I showed
10 you on our site tour -- is attached to the front office.
11 Cozy Cabin are the living quarters for the Big Three and
12 the photographers. Again, they're all college-age
13 girls. It is located right there at the front office.
14 It's just separated by that pavilion. These are the
15 members of the Big Three and the -- the other office
16 workers and photographers that were housed in Cozy
17 Cabin.

18 Three of the Big Three posted on social
19 media that they were awakened at 3:15 to evacuate
20 campers. So reminder: They have a walkie-talkie. They
21 were -- we're not sure who woke them up, but they were
22 awakened at 3:11 to help evacuate campers.

23 This is what was going on in Cozy Cabin at
24 3:43 a.m. on the left.

25 (Video being played)

1 MS. GARRETT: And you can see the trunks
2 floating at 3:46 a.m.

3 Notable from these photos in the front
4 office is that the power is still on. Front office is
5 where the PA system is accessible to be used.

6 You can see that this is the pavilion. At
7 3:50 a.m., right outside of that area, power is still
8 on. You can see the light's still on in the background.

9 On -- at 4:22 a.m., these are members of
10 the Big Three on the roof of Cozy Cabin. They certainly
11 had their own, sort of, harrowing experience. One of
12 the Big Three was almost rushed down the river but was
13 able to grab on to, I believe, like, a volleyball net or
14 something and, sort of, miraculously make it back over
15 to the roof. So they -- they sat on the roof.

16 All right. Remember the guard house? I'm
17 not going to spend too much time on this. But it is
18 significant. This is where Francis Loper was living.
19 This is where she made her frantic call that the guard
20 house is taking on water at about 2:55. You'll notice
21 that -- the proximity of the guard house to the
22 Guadalupe River up here at the top.

23 Bug House is down here. This was her
24 quarters before the flood. This was her quarters after
25 the flood. It was one of the buildings that was

1 completely washed off of its foundation.

2 This is Francis Blackwell-Loper's car
3 found eight miles down the -- down the river that was
4 parked near the gatehouse.

5 And let me point out. Francis had --
6 Francis is lucky to be alive. I mean, she had a
7 harrowing, harrowing experience. She was pushed out
8 onto the porch of her cabin. Clung to a -- a column
9 there. Water's rising very quickly. She is -- is -- is
10 thrust down the river. She also believes that she's
11 drowning and going to die. She eventually makes it to a
12 tree, like so many people, and she -- she clings to the
13 tree. She spends a week in the hospital. She ends up
14 climbing her way up to Senior Hill where some of the
15 counselors on Senior Hill help her, and then she's
16 evacuated.

17 So Senior Hill. Senior Hill is that area
18 right there. It is -- and you guys saw it from our --
19 from our vantage point. It's elevated. Senior Hill
20 doesn't typically flood. They just usually -- they just
21 are commonly cut off from the rest of the camp by the
22 flooding of the land bridge. But the flood was so bad
23 this time that two cabins on Senior Hill also flooded.

24 Counselors on Senior Hill were completely
25 cut off from communication. A counselor on Senior Hill

1 uses a phone that somebody actually kept to call 9-1-1
2 at 3:56 and 3:57 a.m. Some of the main points that she
3 makes in her 9-1-1 call is what do we do? We're
4 completely cut off from the main office. We're
5 completely cut off from communications, and we don't
6 know what to do.

7 They evacuated from their cabins. Went,
8 kind of, higher up the -- the -- to the back where --
9 where it's a little bit higher to those cabins. They --
10 somebody broke into the riflery range cabinet and got a
11 walkie-talkie out. They made numerous calls on the
12 walkie-talkie that apparently went unheard.

13 Okay. Now, moving towards some of the
14 other areas of the camp that are relevant. We pointed
15 out to you what's called the Uptight Garage area. That
16 is this area right here. We were standing right by it
17 over there on that road and up on that little grassy
18 hill. So this is the Uptight Garage.

19 Okay. These are the adults that were on
20 the Flats side of the camp when all of this was
21 happening.

22 Remember, this is Edmunson Creek. So
23 these are the adults that are not isolated from the
24 Flats portion. These are the adults that are on the --
25 the -- the Flats side of -- of the camp.

1 In Uptight Garage we know there's at least
2 nine groundkeepers because we saw them in that photo.
3 We know that the groundskeepers were cut off from going
4 farther up that road up the hill to -- to where they --
5 their quarters were. So we know that they were -- that
6 they were down here.

7 We also know that some of the Polish male
8 kitchen workers were in this Uptight and Garage area.

9 We know that there were three nurses in
10 this building right here called Heaven Can Wait, the
11 Infirmary.

12 We know that Craig and Betsy Althaus were
13 living in this house right here called Sugar Shack.

14 We know that Richard Eastland, the -- the
15 camp chef, was staying in Granny's Cabin.

16 Richard and his wife, Leslie, were living
17 in this house right here, Pop Inn. But at the time of
18 the flood last year, Pop Inn was being renovated. So
19 they were not living in Pop Inn last year. It was under
20 construction. Leslie was living in a house in town, in
21 Ingram, and was by herself with her dogs in a home in
22 Ingram. And Richard -- because it was camp season and
23 he kept very odd hours since he had to always get up in
24 the middle of the night to prep for breakfast, he was
25 staying in Granny's Cabin.

1 Tweety Eastland's brother, Frank
2 Albritton, was staying in Squeeze Inn; this building
3 right here.

4 And so these are the adults that are on
5 the Flats side of Edmunson Creek at the time of all of
6 this flooding.

7 Richard Eastland describes to us that he
8 wakes up, kind of, in the middle of the night. I think
9 something like 2:00, 2:30. He -- it's raining, but he
10 is not aware of anything, you know, crazy going on. He
11 begins to do some of his work, which is typical for him.
12 It's typical for him to leave his radio off or not have
13 the radio because of his unusual hours. Because he's up
14 at all different hours, he -- he stays off the radio.
15 So he was cut off from communication, was not monitoring
16 the radio the way Britt Eastland was able to do from the
17 Cypress Lake Campus.

18 Betsy Althaus looks out her window and
19 starts seeing headlights. She sees cars moving around.
20 She realizes something odd is going on. She wakes up
21 Craig and says, "Hey, we need to get up. Something's
22 going on out there."

23 Eventually what happens is Craig and Betsy
24 come outside. Craig describes that he drives a
25 four-wheeler or a four-by-four-type vehicle, kind of,

1 around that corner on the road, realizes the water's way
2 too high. So he comes back.

3 So at some point you have all of these
4 adults out of their respective cabins and homes all,
5 sort of, congregating right here, right off the edge of
6 Uptight Garage. They're standing on this just slightly
7 elevated grassy area.

8 Richard and some of the -- maybe the
9 grounds crew. I'm not sure. But somebody goes over to
10 the Infirmary and gets the three nurses out and brings
11 them back over here to where they're all, sort of,
12 standing.

13 Now, it's important to know that Richard
14 has two daughters in cabins on the Flats. He's got a
15 daughter in Bug House, and he's got a daughter in Nut
16 Hut. So one daughter gets evacuated to Rec Hall. One
17 daughter is taken up the hill by her counselor.

18 It's -- it's pretty hard to understand why
19 all these adults were here and lacked so -- just truly
20 lacked information. They had no idea what was going on.
21 I think that is most profoundly illustrated by the fact
22 that Richard had girls in those cabins. If he had known
23 what was going on, I'm sure he wouldn't have been
24 standing with all of these adults on that little grassy
25 area right outside of Uptight Garage.

1 These people were completely deprived of
2 information. It appears, from all of the witness
3 interviews, that they were completely starved of
4 information. They -- they -- they didn't have specific
5 assignments. They weren't told where to go. They
6 weren't delegated. They weren't given any information
7 on where to go. And, essentially, they stayed over in
8 this area and did not take action. And it's a bit of a
9 mystery why.

10 But once the -- once the water receded and
11 it became more apparent what was going on, you'll hear
12 in a minute that the grounds crew and Richard and Craig
13 end up walking behind the cabins and come all the way
14 down and start rescuing people out of the Bug House
15 tree.

16 So I quickly want to touch on, very
17 quickly, what's going on on the Cypress Lake camp side
18 of things. On the other side of the Bubble Gum Creek
19 that you've seen, Ranch House and Cypress Hollow are the
20 residences occupied by Edward and Mary Liz in Ranch
21 House; Tweety and Dick in Cypress Hollow. These are the
22 adults that are on the other side of Edmunson Creek.

23 Mary Liz Eastland is in Ranch House with
24 her four sons ranging in age from 6 to 16.

25 Meredith Martin is in Bee Hive.

1 Tweety Eastland is in her home in
2 Cypress -- Cypress Hollow.

3 And Britt and Catie Eastland are over on
4 the Cypress Lake Campus.

5 There's been much made of what these
6 people were doing at the time of all of this. The
7 reality is -- is they were cut off from -- at 2:14. I
8 mean, obviously, there was a period between the
9 1:14 a.m. alert and the 2:01 or 2:14 cutoff of the
10 Edmunson Creek. You know, arguably, there was action to
11 be taken between those minutes. But, again, at 2:01 and
12 2:14, there -- there was just nothing to be done.

13 And it's important to know that they were
14 flooding significantly on their -- you know, on their
15 own.

16 I should mention that Leslie Eastland
17 almost died in the house that she was in, in Ingram.
18 She woke up to a massive amount of water, was swept out
19 of her house, and was actually, sort of, rescued and
20 helped by a lot of those people that ended up on the
21 roof of River Inn. And she -- you know, she rode out
22 the storm there and narrowly escaped drowning herself.

23 Mary Liz and her four sons were in Ranch
24 House. They were taking on a significant amount of
25 water.

1 Meredith Martin walks over to Tweety's
2 house because she's terrified and scared and flooding.

3 Mary Liz and her four sons walk over to
4 where Meredith and Tweety are at Cypress Hollow. They
5 go inside Cypress Hollow, thinking it might be, I think,
6 a little bit safer at that point. They -- water is
7 rushing in. They start making plans to go up into the
8 attic to get higher when doors burst open and water just
9 floods in the house.

10 So they evacuate from Cypress Hollow, and
11 they begin walking up that hill that you saw past those
12 chicken coops up towards Cypress Lake. So, there again,
13 middle of the night, you know, pitch black. They have
14 flashlights, it's raining, and they're walking up the
15 hill: Mary Liz, her four sons, Meredith Martin, and
16 Tweety.

17 As they -- as they begin walking up the
18 hill, Britt and Catie Eastland are making their way --
19 Britt and Catie describe that during these hours, they
20 are patrolling Cypress Lake. They are, you know, in
21 their vehicle, making rounds of Cypress Lake, trying to
22 make sure their campers are all safe. They begin
23 driving down that road when they hear car alarms, and
24 they see a bunch of lights. And what they realize is
25 that right here is a counselor parking lot where

1 multiple cars were parked. Those cars were all floating
2 around, and car alarms were going off, and headlights
3 were going off.

4 So, obviously, Britt and Catie -- you
5 know, that gets their attention. They start driving
6 down the road, and then they start seeing flashlights.
7 And they approached this group of Mary Liz, four sons,
8 Meredith, and Tweety.

9 Mary Liz says, "Take your mother."

10 Tweety gets into Britt's vehicle. They
11 drive her back to their home, called Big Rock. Right
12 there.

13 And Mary Liz's boys did not want to get
14 into a vehicle. And so Mary Liz, her four boys, and
15 Meredith Martin walk all the way up the hill up to
16 Cypress Lake where they remain until they -- they come
17 back down to deal with what's going on on the Flats.

18 Daylight and beyond. The aftermath.
19 We're almost -- we're getting there.

20 Richard and the grounds crew and Craig
21 Althaus make their way behind all of the cabins to the
22 Bug House tree. The water has started to recede. Of
23 course, it's not completely receded. But they are able
24 to use ladders and ropes, and they are able to get
25 Edward, the little girls, the counselors, and then the

1 other counselor that was alone in a different tree.
2 They are able to evacuate everybody from the Bug House
3 tree.

4 Sometime later, a few hundred yards down,
5 the river has to recede even more, and that's when they
6 find Dick's Tahoe with Dick and the three little girls
7 in it. Also, at some point on July 4th, we're told
8 approximately between, like, noon and 3:00, Lucy Dillon
9 is found in the Twins I cabin.

10 So those are the -- the deaths -- the
11 bodies that are found, you know, on -- on or near Mystic
12 property.

13 They begin an -- an elaborate evacuation
14 process. You know, thank God, there had been
15 pre-deployed resources. There were helicopters that had
16 been, you know, pre-deployed. There were National Guard
17 trucks. All the girls from Cypress Lake were evacuated
18 via trucks. But all the girls from the Guadalupe River
19 Campus were helicoptered out.

20 This is where we move into a period of
21 time that I think is important -- should be important to
22 this committee. And, you know, not going too far
23 outside of the scope of what happened at Mystic, but
24 the -- the hours right after this event were significant
25 and harrowing for a number of reasons.

1 One of the things we learned in Uvalde, of
2 course, was the importance of incident command.
3 Obviously, incident command is critical in the middle of
4 an event like an active shooter or a disaster. But --
5 but we learned a lot about the fact that there's
6 incident command in the post-event response. And there
7 must be. There must be incident command in the
8 post-event response because there's so much going on,
9 and -- and -- and things could be handled so much -- so
10 much better.

11 Part of the problem with an absolute lack
12 of incident command in those minutes and hours after
13 this event is that there was -- there was no -- there
14 was no rhyme or reason to picking a place for these
15 people to go. I mean, you got to remember now, these
16 people are all getting flooded with text messages and
17 phone calls and trying to figure out what the heck is
18 happening. Right? They're waking up in their homes or
19 on vacation or whatever, and they're trying to figure
20 out what's happening.

21 And they all start to make their way to
22 Hunt, right, to -- to -- to be there. They -- they are
23 not really told where to go. They're told to go one
24 place, and then it turns out to be five different
25 places. There's no -- there's no information. There's

1 no good information.

2 Then, when there's no information -- you
3 guys know what happens when there's no information.
4 Then people fill it with bad information. And that was
5 done in spades. There was just false -- just the
6 telephone game. You know, just false information to
7 fill the void of no information. And there was no
8 information because there was no unified incident
9 command. There was nobody truly setting up command post
10 and -- and making decisions about how to handle the
11 reunification process and how to handle the notification
12 process and how to handle getting information to these
13 parents who had children at that point that were
14 unaccounted for.

15 So it was dreadful misinformation. You
16 know, county officials, you know, sending out messages
17 that all of the girls were accounted for. People saying
18 that, you know, Dick and some girls were on an island or
19 that somebody was in a tree. The misinformation added
20 so much torment and despair to these parents during
21 these hours, and it could've been avoided with proper
22 post-event response.

23 There was a shocking delay of resources
24 that were available being deployed. I had conversations
25 with two people involved with the Cajun Navy that were,

1 sort of, stiff-armed at the very, very beginning and --
2 and told to stand down, told that they weren't needed.

3 There were other jurisdictions in that
4 area that were eager for them to come, and so they did
5 deploy to those areas. But in the first 24 hours, they
6 were denied access into this area.

7 We -- you're going to hear testimony
8 tomorrow from one of the dads, Michael McCown, who, sort
9 of, self-deployed to the camp in the early morning hours
10 of July 5th and was shocked to get there and see not a
11 single search-and-rescue person searching.

12 I think the most telling lack of search
13 and rescue is that Michael actually found a child's
14 body, and he was completely alone and had no idea what
15 to do. And so that was clearly the job of search and
16 rescue, and it was clearly not being done.

17 Meanwhile, Hunter Burns and Josh Gill of
18 the Cajun Navy have thermal drones, helicopters,
19 hundreds of off-duty firefighters, off-duty policemen,
20 certified search-and-rescue people that are ready to go
21 out there that were -- that were, sort of, pushed back.
22 And a proper incident commander would have accepted
23 their resources. They described being in center point
24 where there was an incident commander, one of the fire
25 department officials, and they were, like, "Come on,

1 come on. We need you." Right? And that was not done
2 here, and that was really unfortunate.

3 One of the things that -- it -- as a
4 33-year criminal lawyer, it's, sort of, hard to shock me
5 with human behavior. But I was so shocked and so
6 devastated when these parents, each and every one of
7 them, told me that because they had made a decision to
8 put their daughter's picture and their personal cell
9 phones on social media because they were so hopeful that
10 some Grant Griffin had plucked their daughter off of a
11 debris pile or some sister six miles downriver had
12 plucked their daughter off of a debris pile -- they were
13 so desperate. "Here's my daughter. If you've seen her,
14 please call me," prank calls all night long. All night
15 long. And they had to answer their phone because they
16 didn't know if it was somebody legitimate.

17 I'm talking about people going, "I've got
18 your daughter. Here she is. Mommy, mommy."

19 The most cruel human behavior that you can
20 imagine.

21 Now, is there anything that you can do
22 about cruel human behavior? No. Okay?

23 But incident command could have. They
24 could've said, "No, guys. Don't put your phone numbers
25 out there. We're going to set up a tip line. We'll

1 monitor the tip line. That's our job, not yours."

2 Those prank phone calls have gone on for a
3 year. Parents have told me they've gotten them as
4 recently as two weeks ago. Okay?

5 Again, you can't manage the cruelty of the
6 world, but you can make a difference on how we respond
7 in crisis management to avoid that kind of utter
8 torture.

9 Parents described to me that there was an
10 element of relief to finding their daughters' bodies
11 just so that they knew. Just so that they knew.

12 A huge disaster with autopsies. One JP
13 saying that there's mandatory autopsies; the other JP
14 saying not.

15 Girls' bodies being transferred to ME's
16 offices without parents being told. A disaster. An
17 absolute disaster.

18 Parents not wanting autopsies that were
19 performed. A total lack of incident command.

20 The death -- and, you know, I do want to
21 point out here, in any crisis, people are doing the best
22 they can. I mean, there were volunteers. There were
23 people trying so hard.

24 The same thing happened in Uvalde. People
25 meant so well. They wanted to take action, but they

1 weren't told what to do. And same thing here. People
2 meant well. Volunteers meant well. They cared. But
3 you can't self-deploy as a volunteer. You have to have
4 somebody telling you what to do, and that was absent.
5 And it added to human despair. It added to torment.

6 There was no getting those babies back.
7 They were -- they were gone. But they could have -- it
8 could have helped somewhat in this -- in this process.

9 The death notification process was -- was
10 a disaster in the first few hours. You had parents
11 showing up to Grimes Funeral Home, identifying their
12 daughter, recognizing another girl, and being told,
13 "Hey, can you call them?" I mean, no.

14 Yeah. I mean, we can do better. But we
15 can't do better unless we dispatch people that know what
16 they're doing. Right? Unless we get an incident
17 commander down there, what -- whoever it is. That's --
18 that's -- that's what -- you guys are the experts on
19 that. Is it a ranger? Is it -- is it -- is it a strike
20 force that's on call that can go anywhere in the state
21 of Texas and set up incident command and mass
22 casualties? I don't know. That's -- that's -- you
23 know, that's what we're looking to you for. But
24 something's got to happen. And it was just as bad in
25 Uvalde.

1 This is a picture of the reunification
2 center. It was complete chaos. I think I've -- I think
3 I've made my point on that.

4 Now we get to the really hard part. What
5 I've been -- what I've been calling The Impact Crater,
6 which is so deep and so wide and so incomprehensible. I
7 mean, the palpable grief of these families that are
8 sitting in this courtroom, the absolute grief of the
9 Eastland family, which is very, very real. We left our
10 interviews with them extremely empathetic towards them
11 as well. They're a highly traumatized family.

12 But, I mean, the stories I've heard
13 about -- I mean, the siblings, the brothers at home that
14 can't -- can't stand it. The sisters that were there.
15 The sister that walked her little sister from the
16 Infirmary and tucked her into her cabin and hours later
17 she was gone. The cousin from Senior Hill that tucked
18 her little baby cousin in and hours later she was gone.

19 I mean, just -- I cannot -- I cannot
20 describe to you what is going on. Grandparents who are
21 trying to deal with their child's pain but also their
22 own grief of losing a grandchild. I mean, it's just so
23 pervasive.

24 The -- the relationships that have been
25 destroyed. The generational relationships that have

1 been destroyed here. The Impact Crater is unbelievable.
2 Okay? It's just shattering.

3 But that emotion needs to be commented on,
4 but it's certainly not what -- the emotion gives us the
5 passion to have a call to action. But it's really logic
6 and common sense and reason that gets the job done,
7 right, that's going to be what you guys do after these
8 hearings.

9 And I'm going to -- I'm going to give you
10 a quote from -- I was sitting in the Hollis's farmhouse
11 in Bellville. And after hearing their heart-wrenching
12 story, Lacey Hollis said something so logical and so
13 reasonable and so common sense. And it's really the
14 call to action for this committee. And that is, she
15 tearfully told me, "I just want parents to look at their
16 child after camp and know that they were kept safe and
17 not lucky."

18 And it wasn't just Mystic. Guys, it was
19 not just Mystic. You have a big job to do, because it
20 was -- it was all those camps where kids were just
21 lucky. They were either lucky that they weren't in
22 session. They were lucky that their session hadn't
23 started. They were lucky that the cabin they were in
24 floating down the river -- they just didn't die. Taking
25 nothing away from God's miracles. They were God's

1 miracles. But it wasn't camp safety.

2 So that's a wrap for me. I welcome your
3 questions. I will say one last thing.

4 Along with all of the people in this room
5 from both sides and our amazing team and all the
6 lawyers, we are hungry. We are hungry for this
7 committee to -- to -- to do -- to do your thing. I
8 mean, you're -- you're powerful people that can answer
9 this call to action. And every single one of the people
10 in this room and listening are hungry for that action.
11 So thank you.

12 Thank you so much for the opportunity to
13 present this to you.

14 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Thank you, Mrs. Garrett.
15 Thank you for that very impactful, meaningful
16 presentation to our committee.

17 MS. GARRETT: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN MEYER: It is the committee's
19 intention to recess for one hour and return for a
20 question-and-answer period with the investigators.

21 Without objection, the committee will
22 recess until 1:36. The committee stands recessed.

23 (Recess)

24 CHAIRMAN FLORES: The Senate General
25 Investigating Committee on the July 2025 Flooding Events

1 will come to order.

2 Chairman Meyer.

3 CHAIRMAN MEYER: The House General
4 Investigating Committee on the July 2025 Flooding Events
5 will now come to order. The clerk will call the roll.

6 THE CLERK: Chair Meyer?

7 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Present.

8 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Moody?

9 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Present.

10 THE CLERK: Representative Darby?

11 REP. DARBY: Present.

12 THE CLERK: Representative Dyson?

13 REP. DYSON: Here.

14 THE CLERK: Representative Gamez?

15 REP. GAMEZ: Present.

16 CHAIRMAN MEYER: A quorum is present.

17 At this time, the investigators will be
18 available for any questions the committee may have.

19 Members, please, any questions you may
20 have.

21 The chair recognizes Representative Gamez.

22 REP. GAMEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 Thank you, Ms. Garrett, for your -- all of
24 the work that you put into this, on behalf of the
25 families, on behalf of the State of Texas. It truly

1 shows your passion and your commitment to seeking out
2 the facts and finding justice. So thank you for that.

3 MS. GARRETT: Thank you.

4 REP. GAMEZ: I want to start off by asking
5 you to elaborate a little bit more when you said there
6 was a lack of -- lack of unified incident command. When
7 you say that, we know in the state of Texas, at least,
8 heavily, we rely on the -- the strategy, the locality of
9 the judges and the mayor in -- in particular. So in
10 this instance, you stated each county responded
11 differently, unfortunately.

12 So when you say, "lack of unified
13 command," what -- what can we do, as far as the state,
14 in responding to that and -- and tightening the code?
15 What are your suggestions?

16 MS. GARRETT: Well, that's a great
17 question. I -- it's a bit outside my expertise. I
18 think it's excellent questions for TDEM. I think it's
19 excellent questions for some of those local officials.

20 What I do know is there was a deep
21 failure, a profound failure. There was no -- there was
22 nobody directing where resources needed to go in that --
23 in those early hours. There was nobody saying, "This is
24 where reunification is going to be. This is where --
25 this is who's going to handle notification." The JPs

1 weren't on the same page with the autopsies.

2 I mean, I don't want to just regurgitate
3 everything I said. There needed to be someone in charge
4 of -- and, again, there were other agencies that did
5 designate the local fire captain or, you know, whatever
6 his role was, and he was the one take -- you know -- you
7 know, having people come to him -- where do I need to
8 go? -- and dispatching people to different locations.

9 REP. GAMEZ: Is there any evidence in --
10 in -- in your investigation that you found -- aside from
11 the alerts that the adults at the camps were receiving,
12 is there any evidence that there was outreach on behalf
13 of the county or the local mayor to the camp or to
14 anyone in that locality?

15 MS. GARRETT: Not that I know of. I mean,
16 in the testimony from last -- last summer, I -- I think
17 the answer to that is highly likely, no; that nobody
18 reached out to Camp Mystic from the county level. They
19 were on vacation. They were sick, in bed. And I don't
20 think there's any indication that there was support for
21 Camp Mystic from that -- yeah, from that forum.

22 REP. GAMEZ: And -- and now, from the camp
23 towards the families, is there any evidence that there
24 was some sort of mass family notification system set up?
25 Anything that we could've let the parents know, "By the

1 way, there's been a flash flooding warning. This is
2 what we're doing." Any sort of notification to calm the
3 nerves.

4 MS. GARRETT: I think that's a matter of
5 perspective. I mean, there were -- Camp Mystic was
6 sending out communications. I think one thing that
7 really, really complicated things has to do with what I
8 was telling you guys about, how unique this culture was.
9 Because many of these parents were the same age as, or
10 close in age as, Mary Liz and Edward Eastland. They --
11 they had their -- you know, some of them had their cell
12 numbers. Some of them were reaching out directly to
13 Mary Liz. Naturally, she was going to want to respond.
14 Text groups were going amongst the parents. "Hey, you
15 need to contact Mary Liz and ask about your daughter."

16 So that was -- you know, that was natural
17 because of the nature of these relationships. They --
18 they knew each other. But it was a failure. It -- it
19 was -- it should have been much more coordinated.

20 In fact, you raise a point that we have
21 discussed, and that is the poor post-event communication
22 is, kind of, a reflection on the lack of an emergency
23 preparedness plan. There is a page in a binder that
24 says, in terms of notifying parents -- of course, it --
25 it envisioned much less serious notifications. But it,

1 basically, all came back to Dick. Dick will handle all
2 notifications. You know, information to the parents
3 will go through Dick.

4 We certainly have heard a lot of
5 discussions about keeping parents, kind of, at arm's
6 length. And, again, like I said earlier, there's a
7 benefit to helping girls become independent, helping
8 them work through their own homesickness without having,
9 you know, parents, you know, descending all the time,
10 right, or calling all the time. There's -- there's
11 definitely a -- a value to that. But there also was a
12 real culture of protecting -- kind of, protecting the
13 bubble. Don't -- don't tell the parents that somebody
14 had lice. Don't tell the parents that an entire cabin
15 had the flu. Don't -- you know, like, we'll handle it.
16 And that one little page in the binder really was, all
17 things go through Dick.

18 And so there just was not a post-event
19 system set up. It was very ad hoc. It became -- and,
20 again, I want to be very humane about the fact that --
21 that one of Mary Liz's very best friend's, you know,
22 daughter died, and she notified that -- that woman. And
23 that -- that shouldn't have happened. Right? It
24 should've been through official -- through official
25 sources.

1 But there's been a lot of pain about what
2 did they know. Why did they deprive us of this
3 information? When did they know that so-and-so was
4 found? Why -- why didn't they tell us?

5 But that was -- that was part of the
6 post-event failure that there wasn't somebody in charge
7 of -- of -- and working with the camp and some
8 designated person with the camp to notify -- to notify
9 parents.

10 So that was a long answer. They were
11 sending out communications. They weren't effective.

12 REP. GAMEZ: All right. Thank you. And,
13 I guess, I know that's going to be our focus moving
14 forward -- is to find out the communication that the
15 residents of Kerr County deserved from the county and
16 the locality to them. And then the notification that
17 the parents deserved from these private entities to them
18 across the board. So thank you for that. We'll
19 certainly move some of those questions forward to the
20 entities tomorrow. And thank you for your insight.

21 CHAIRMAN FLORES: All right. Members, do
22 you have any questions?

23 Senator Menendez, you're recognized.

24 SEN. MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Ms. Garrett, thank you very, very much,

1 Judge, for both of -- you and your team for tremendous
2 work on this investigation.

3 Early in your slides you mentioned -- you
4 showed a slide of an e-mail that Dick Eastland sent
5 promoting that flood awareness video. Do we know what
6 date that was when it was sent? I think I see someone
7 nodding here.

8 MS. GARRETT: I know Heather can find that
9 for us.

10 The video was made in 2017. I'm not sure
11 exactly when he sent that to the members of his family.

12 JUDGE MASSENGALE: I think it's a
13 contemporaneous e-mail. So it was -- it was certainly
14 well before these flood events.

15 SEN. MENENDEZ: Right. So it was well
16 before the flood events. Sends it to all the members of
17 the family.

18 MS. GARRETT: Indicates that it's a
19 helpful and informative video and to take a look at it.

20 SEN. MENENDEZ: Uh-huh. Okay.

21 Yet when we -- if I'm not mistaken, later
22 you show -- when the camp counselors -- camp counselors
23 arrived on June the 27th for training, in the slide that
24 you showed, you said, Camp Mystic moved from three to
25 two counselors in some cabins.

1 Do we know if that was recent phenomena,
2 when it occurred, how long had it been in place? Have
3 we asked the questions of when did that occur just to
4 get -- just to get --

5 MS. GARRETT: No. I think that's -- yeah.
6 That's a -- that's a good question. It might be a
7 question that the -- that the Eastlands can -- can --
8 can answer a little bit more specifically.

9 I will tell you that the many, many
10 mothers and aunts that I interviewed that attended camp
11 many years ago just said it was unheard of, and they
12 always had three counselors.

13 We have access to these memory books. I
14 went through quite a number of them. We have access to
15 some from -- throughout the years from 1992. And you
16 could tell from the cabin photos and from these -- all
17 these old cabin pictures that there were three
18 counselors per cabin.

19 I suspect that when they opened Cypress
20 Lake Campus, they just had a lot more cabins to man.
21 They had a lot of -- they just had a lot more cabins to
22 get counselors for, and I think they were probably
23 having some issues -- and, again, this might be
24 questions for them tomorrow -- but some issues with
25 hiring. And I think, as I mentioned, young people are,

1 you know, starting to do a lot -- different things with
2 their summers. They're working. They're doing
3 internships. They're studying abroad, and they can't
4 commit a whole month to -- to being a counselor.

5 I do have anecdotal data from witness
6 interviews, from talking to witnesses, that one
7 counselor I met with was hired, like, three or four days
8 before the session started. So --

9 SEN. MENENDEZ: That's interesting.

10 MS. GARRETT: -- they were scrambling at
11 the last minute.

12 I know Chloe Childress's folks told me
13 that Chloe had -- had -- Chloe had recruited a -- a
14 friend to become a counselor, like, a week before.

15 So they were scrambling, you know, to get
16 some of these positions filled. And I think they -- I
17 think they probably, you know, ideally wanted three
18 counselors per cabin, but I think they were having
19 trouble.

20 So I don't know when exactly that started,
21 but --

22 SEN. MENENDEZ: So you go -- you -- thank
23 you for that.

24 Your testimony leads me to -- you put up a
25 slide with the Texas Administrative Code 265, if I'm not

1 mistaken, where the law clearly states that campers have
2 to be instructed, right, on the -- on the plan. Yet
3 we -- in the prior slide, you showed there was no drill,
4 no plan, no procedures. There were no radios, no
5 walkies, no phones, no tool kits, no ladders, no life
6 jackets. And now you're telling me that they were
7 filling counselor slots at the last minute. Whereas, if
8 you go on to the website, you'll see that they have this
9 very long application to be a counselor where you even
10 have to send a picture of yourself, social security, all
11 these questions that some I'm not sure how -- how
12 pertinent they are to someone who's going to be taking
13 care of kids.

14 How about training? Did they get training
15 in just basics of taking care of eight-year-olds? I
16 mean, did they have any, kind of, like, what you would
17 expect for a day care facility?

18 MS. GARRETT: They definitely described
19 being encouraged to understand specific camper issues.
20 Right? They were told, you know, little so-and-so might
21 have this issue. Little so-and-so is afraid of this
22 or -- or whatever. They were -- I think they were
23 given -- part of the orientation -- in fact, I think a
24 large part of it was dealing with individual camper
25 issues and being instructed on what some of the

1 individual girls' issues might be. But there was no --
2 not -- not a single person said they were instructed
3 sufficiently on what to do in any kind of emergency.

4 SEN. MENENDEZ: What's the minimum amount
5 of time a camper spends at a camp like Camp Mystic?
6 What's the minimum? A week? Two weeks?

7 MS. GARRETT: Oh, I think their sessions
8 are all -- well, no, that's -- most of -- they have
9 three main one-month sessions, I believe. And then
10 they -- I think they have a truncated session at the end
11 of the summer. Maybe a two-week session. I'd have to
12 double-check that.

13 SEN. MENENDEZ: I guess the reason I ask
14 is if -- if we're allowing eight-year-olds to be in the
15 custody of adults who are being paid to take care of
16 them, do -- I wonder if we're holding them to the same
17 level of accountability that we hold day care
18 facilities. I'm not sure that we do. Because day care
19 facilities get -- get held to a very high standard in
20 this state.

21 Moving on. On your -- July 2nd, you said
22 the inspection by the Texas Department of Health and
23 Humans Services -- the sanitation food inspector, I
24 guess, is what you mentioned. My question was -- and
25 you answered it, but I'm still wondering.

1 There was a question about drills. Do
2 they have an evacuation plan? And it said, yes. And
3 then there was have -- have they drilled this evacuation
4 plan. And the answer, apparently, said, yes.

5 When you interviewed this person, did
6 they -- did you ask them why they said, yes?

7 MS. GARRETT: I -- no, I didn't. What I
8 learned from her was that she doesn't evaluate the
9 efficacy of -- that's my word, not hers -- of the safety
10 plan.

11 The safety plan is sent to the youth
12 safety coordinator within their department -- if I'm
13 getting the title correct -- and that -- their job was
14 to evaluate the plan. Her job was simply to ascertain
15 that there was a plan and that it was posted.

16 SEN. MENENDEZ: Okay. I'm so sorry. But
17 wait. If she checks off yes, is she checking off yes
18 because she made the judgment or because someone
19 answered yes? Because, then the question is who's
20 lying. Was she lying, or was someone lying to her?

21 MS. GARRETT: Well, I think she was
22 provided that one-page emergency form. And so she -- I
23 don't believe -- and DSHS can answer this tomorrow. I
24 don't believe that she -- well, I know she didn't
25 evaluate it for an actual safety plan. And she clearly

1 didn't determine that there was an evacuation plan,
2 because there was not one.

3 SEN. MENENDEZ: Right.

4 MS. GARRETT: Again, I think it's a great
5 question for tomorrow: Where was the youth camp -- camp
6 safety coordinator in this process? Did they look at
7 that one-page sheet and determine that it was
8 insufficient? Because it was on its face, on its face,
9 insufficient.

10 SEN. MENENDEZ: So one of the improvements
11 we could do is we could schedule the inspection to be on
12 the same day as campers arrive, and then they practice
13 drills -- muster drills, as they do on many places where
14 you have large populations of people. My understanding
15 is cruise ships do this when people board them, and
16 they -- they do -- they practice a muster drill. They
17 could do that and, therefore, the inspector could
18 actually witness the drill. That could be one.

19 MS. GARRETT: You're also going to hear
20 somebody tomorrow that has started a nonprofit called
21 The Safety Navigator, and they're working on working
22 with youth camps to implement some of the changes that
23 you guys put into place last -- last summer. And
24 they've -- they've hit the ground running. They're
25 already working with -- camps are very receptive to it.

1 And one of the things that she -- she will talk about,
2 that she's told me, is that they are working with these
3 camps on how to effectively drill campers and
4 counselors.

5 SEN. MENENDEZ: And that's awesome. But
6 that doesn't relieve us of our duty to make sure --

7 MS. GARRETT: Fair enough.

8 SEN. MENENDEZ: -- that all camps are --
9 and that's great. I'm glad there are people out there.
10 But I want to make sure that we are -- if we're going to
11 be issuing licenses to people to make money to take care
12 of kids, that they need to be abiding by minimum
13 standards.

14 MS. GARRETT: Completely agree with that.

15 SEN. MENENDEZ: My last question. Thank
16 you.

17 It is heartbreaking to listen and to hear
18 and to watch the timeline especially when you start to
19 see the timeline when it's too late to save the kids,
20 and there's only three adults working to do so.

21 My question is how many able-bodied adults
22 that could've helped were on the flat side of the
23 flooding at the time of the flooding.

24 MS. GARRETT: Sure. If properly informed
25 and if properly delegated and if given the information

1 and assignments that the law required and that would've
2 helped them, you had at least nine grounds crew that we
3 know from that photo. We know that they were,
4 essentially, trapped on that side of the Flats at that
5 point.

6 You had, potentially, an unknown number of
7 Polish kitchen workers that were living in the dorms
8 above the garage. That's unknown to me who was in
9 there.

10 You had Tweety's brother, who, obviously,
11 is approximately, you know, 70 or in that range. So
12 that's, you know --

13 SEN. MENENDEZ: Let's take him out.

14 MS. GARRETT: Okay. You had Richard
15 Eastland in Granny's Cabin. You had Craig and Betsy
16 Althaus in Sugar Shack. You had three nurses in the
17 Infirmary.

18 The -- there were Polish workers in the --
19 the Polar Palace. Again, these were young women that
20 would not have acted without delegation and information.

21 SEN. MENENDEZ: I'm sorry to interrupt.
22 But they were on the second story off the building which
23 they could've -- they were about 20 yards from Twins I
24 and II. Were they not?

25 MS. GARRETT: That's exactly right. They

1 were very close.

2 In interviewing them, in between them
3 sobbing over this event, they described to us that they
4 conferred about whether or not they could go over and
5 help those counselors, and they just were absolutely
6 terrified to interact with the counselors in a way that
7 they were told not to.

8 And they also said, by the time we
9 discussed it, it had -- it had become impassable. It
10 happened so quickly.

11 So -- and, again, these are young women
12 from a foreign country that were deprived and starved of
13 information and were not delegated. So, again, I'm not
14 defending that. You know, there's all kinds of moral
15 obligations, of course, that people might have.

16 But, to answer your question, I believe I
17 told you --

18 JUDGE MASSENGALE: But you're not
19 including counselors who --

20 MS. GARRETT: Right.

21 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Right. So you've got
22 the senior counselors, or the Big Three.

23 SEN. MENENDEZ: Right.

24 JUDGE MASSENGALE: And then the other
25 counselors who are mostly --

1 CHAIRMAN MEYER: If you could move the
2 mic. Thank you, sir.

3 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Right. So I was just
4 mentioning that you also had the counselors. You have
5 the Big Three, who are senior counselors. Other
6 counselors, who are mostly 18 and older. They're,
7 obviously, young women. But they're adults who are
8 supposed to be instructed and trained and assigned
9 responsibility in an emergency situation.

10 SEN. MENENDEZ: And I know I said it was
11 the last question, but this is just to close the loop on
12 this.

13 So is it your opinion, had there been a
14 plan in place that said, "If you hear the sirens go off,
15 evacuate everyone, make sure -- you're in charge of
16 these cabins, and make sure all children are at the
17 highest point on the Flats," would that have saved those
18 children?

19 MS. GARRETT: Yes.

20 SEN. MENENDEZ: Thank you.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN MEYER: The chair recognizes
23 Speaker Moody.

24 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman.

1 Casey, Mike, thank you, again, for
2 everything.

3 I'm struggling with competing emotions of
4 sadness and anger right now. But I want to drill down
5 into a couple of things that you talked about.

6 At the very beginning, you mentioned that
7 you conducted -- how many interviews total?

8 MS. GARRETT: We've, kind of, lost count.
9 Upwards of 140, 150.

10 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Okay. And you
11 mentioned unfettered access, people participated.

12 Now, you mentioned, "with slight
13 exception." Who didn't talk to you?

14 MS. GARRETT: So that's -- that's a good
15 question, and it's a little bit complicated.

16 One of the challenges for me has been the
17 counselors. They are young. They are highly
18 traumatized. They left a month after this event to go
19 to college. Many of them have suffered greatly in
20 college. Some have withdrawn. Some have come home.
21 Some are struggling in their own individual ways in
22 school. As you can imagine, their parents are very
23 protective, which I understand as a parent of children
24 that age.

25 It has been frustrating because I have

1 very much wanted to hear their eyewitness -- material
2 eyewitness accounts. And they are of age. I have
3 several that are willing to talk to me but want to get
4 through final exams next week, which I can respect and
5 understand in the sense that they emotionally want to
6 make it through exams. Not, I need to take my exams
7 before I talk to you. Meaning, I don't want to fall
8 apart.

9 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Yeah.

10 MS. GARRETT: Okay?

11 So I -- I really want to be respectful of
12 how difficult that's been. But, you know, as an
13 investigator, I -- I want to talk to them. And several
14 of them have agreed to -- several have. I've spoken to
15 several. And -- and several have agreed to talk. So
16 we're hoping in the next couple of weeks that will
17 happen.

18 But it -- I would say that the Big Three
19 has been --

20 VICE CHAIR MOODY: These are the senior
21 counselors?

22 MS. GARRETT: Correct. And, you know,
23 several of them have hired lawyers. Several of them --
24 part of my problem is some of my information is coming
25 from highly credible and high reliable -- highly

1 reliable intermediaries that are being told that they
2 won't talk to me. And so that -- I have been met with
3 some frustration over that.

4 VICE CHAIR MOODY: So of the Big Three,
5 have any of them visited with you?

6 MS. GARRETT: No.

7 VICE CHAIR MOODY: And -- but you've
8 reached out to each one of them?

9 MS. GARRETT: That's what's complicated --
10 is I don't have phone numbers for them. I got a phone
11 number for one of them. I spent almost an hour on the
12 phone with her mother. Her mother felt comforted by my
13 description of how it was going to go down. She said
14 she would discuss it with her daughter, and then she
15 informed me, politely, that her daughter was not going
16 to speak with me because -- because of trauma. I do
17 want to be fair about that. Because of trauma. But
18 that -- you know, that has frustrated my ability to
19 speak with her.

20 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Yeah. And I don't want
21 my questions to be taken as someone's purposefully
22 avoiding talking to you. I think these are very
23 difficult things to talk about.

24 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

25 VICE CHAIR MOODY: But I just wanted to

1 get a sense of, you know, some of the folks that maybe
2 you hadn't had the opportunity to -- to visit with.

3 Were any of those -- is that
4 information -- contact information was not provided to
5 you by their employer?

6 MS. GARRETT: I -- I -- I did not ask the
7 Eastlands to provide me with cell phone numbers of the
8 Big Three. I received some of that information from a
9 variety of different sources. But I -- I -- I don't
10 have -- I don't have all of their phone numbers.

11 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Okay.

12 MS. GARRETT: Some of them were
13 extensively interviewed in the media.

14 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Uh-huh.

15 MS. GARRETT: Or at least one of them. So
16 we used her statement from that.

17 VICE CHAIR MOODY: You looked at stuff --
18 third-party sources of --

19 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

20 VICE CHAIR MOODY: -- comments that have
21 been made.

22 MS. GARRETT: Yes. And audio statements
23 that -- that were taken of them.

24 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Were any of them
25 interviewed by law enforcement?

1 MS. GARRETT: Not to my knowledge. I
2 think the only law enforcement is -- is just getting
3 started with the Ranger investigation. I don't -- I
4 don't know of any law enforcement investigation of any
5 kind that was conducted locally.

6 VICE CHAIR MOODY: Okay. You -- going
7 back to the number of -- the sheer number of interviews
8 you've done. Obviously, you've gotten various opinions
9 about what went wrong, why, who. All these things.

10 In your conversations -- and, obviously,
11 we can get into greater detail on this outside of
12 committee as well.

13 But in terms of those folks that you
14 interviewed or those folks that you visited with, did
15 any of them highlight interaction with DPS, Rangers,
16 TDEM, DSHS that was -- that they conveyed to you was
17 unsatisfactory or as compounding some of the problems
18 that they encountered?

19 MS. GARRETT: I would just say what I said
20 earlier about the mayhem in those early hours. Many of
21 these families described that the first legitimate
22 interactions came on Sunday morning when the Rangers did
23 show up to assist with DNA collection. There was a
24 sense that that was a little bit more organized, and
25 they were a little bit more professional.

1 The families described really poor
2 interactions with people at Ingram partly because the
3 people at Ingram Elementary were so ill-informed, they
4 didn't even know that they were dealing with a grieving
5 family. Right? So they're, like, you know, ma'am, you
6 need to move over here or whatever. Right? And -- and
7 it was very upsetting, obviously. And it took hours for
8 somebody to finally get the idea to separate those
9 families outside of the massive chaos of girls showing
10 up by truckload and girls showing up by, you know,
11 helicopter -- busload and being, you know, joyously
12 reunited with their families. Right? It took way too
13 long for a local official to recognize that we needed to
14 move these people into a separate -- a separate area.

15 And I think part of the despair was local
16 officials and officials in general refusing to give them
17 even -- even bad information. Right? There was a -- a
18 high point -- you know, a high emotion point where,
19 finally, the sister of -- of Cici Steward finally said,
20 "Have you recovered anyone today?" And, finally, the
21 person told them, no.

22 Okay. They were hungry for any
23 information, and they were deprived of information. And
24 I think it was just because there was no organization.
25 There -- it was chaos. There was nobody -- there was

1 nobody in charge.

2 VICE CHAIR MOODY: I think that's -- I
3 mean, I think the thing that's really striking is the
4 chaos continues to compound, right, without a plan, with
5 complacency, with whatever you want to call it. That
6 leads to chaos in crisis, lack of communication, lack of
7 incident command both at the city, county level and when
8 we get down, you know, into the camp levels. And then
9 by the time you're in post-event, you're already in the
10 throes of chaos at all those levels, and it's going to
11 take -- you know, it does take a massive coordination,
12 then, to get that ship steered in the right direction.

13 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

14 VICE CHAIR MOODY: And I think that's one
15 of the big questions we have to -- we have to answer
16 here.

17 And to your point, look, I think people
18 try to do the best they can given the circumstances.
19 But, you know, we like to talk about how great this
20 state is, how amazing we can do. And if it's not being
21 done at this level, at the local level, then it is our
22 job to make sure that this doesn't happen. Because --
23 and talking with Chairman Meyer earlier, this loss of
24 life was preventable. And it is -- it -- it's -- I
25 don't know how to process that. I can't even imagine

1 how these families wake up every day.

2 MS. GARRETT: It's impossible to
3 understand.

4 VICE CHAIR MOODY: And we have to demand
5 better of -- of ourselves. And -- sorry.

6 You mentioned the Cajun Navy. I know that
7 we -- I think we visited with some of those folks last
8 summer, and they expressed some of the same concerns,
9 this stiff arm that took place.

10 Now, you mentioned they've got assets
11 available. These are people that have deployed to
12 hurricane relief. I mean, so this isn't a ragtag group
13 of folks. These are folks that know how to do this
14 work. Correct?

15 MS. GARRETT: That's exactly right. In
16 talking to Hunter Burns, I mean, they -- Katrina,
17 Harvey, Ike, Rita, North Carolina. They are just
18 welcomed with open arms everywhere they go because --
19 like, for example, when the river was still high and you
20 couldn't get anywhere, they had thermal drones that they
21 were ready to use. They had hundreds of assets. Again,
22 all vetted, certified search-and-rescue people, off-duty
23 police officers, off-duty fire department, off-duty
24 emergency personnel, boats, the -- the -- the low -- you
25 know, the low-profile boats, the helicopter. I mean,

1 you name it. It's -- it's actually so impressive.

2 And when Hunter Burns told me that he
3 called the local agencies and was told, "Stand down. We
4 don't need you," I asked him, "What did you make of
5 that?" And he said, "One, I was taken aback based on
6 what I was seeing on the news. And, two, I was hopeful
7 that that was accurate information and that it wasn't as
8 bad as I thought it was." And it wasn't until Michael
9 McCown called him saying, "I'm standing here next to a
10 child's body" that he said, "I'm getting in my car. I'm
11 self-deploying these assets. I'm getting them down
12 there. And we'll just see where it goes."

13 And eventually they were let in. But
14 critical hours that -- the Stewards, I'm sure, have
15 profound questions as to why the -- the odds of finding
16 their daughter's remains in those first 24 hours were
17 critical, and those resources and those assets
18 weren't -- weren't just, you know, welcomed in
19 immediately.

20 VICE CHAIR MOODY: That's exactly the
21 point in terms of deploying resources quickly and
22 efficiently. Because recovery and the peace of mind --

23 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

24 VICE CHAIR MOODY: -- that a family could
25 have in recovering their baby, when someone is

1 stiff-armed from deploying that help, the likelihood
2 goes down.

3 And you answered my question. Those
4 are -- those were local decisions that were being made.
5 And if you could -- and if you don't have it handy --
6 when you talk about local entity, I want to know who
7 that was.

8 MS. GARRETT: I'll have to get that
9 information. I -- I -- I drilled down on that --

10 VICE CHAIR MOODY: -- we'll know who they
11 called.

12 MS. GARRETT: -- with both of these guys,
13 and they have it all documented.

14 VICE CHAIR MOODY: I think that's
15 something that we do need to know.

16 Again, Casey, Mike, and your whole team, I
17 appreciate everything y'all are doing. And -- and thank
18 you for -- for the presentation today and for answering
19 the questions.

20 MS. GARRETT: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN FLORES: The chair recognizes
22 Senator Perry.

23 VICE CHAIR PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

24 And I'll just ditto. Thank you for your
25 work. You've closed a loop. You've brought clarity to

1 a magic window of 1:14 to, say, 3:30.

2 Up until today, the public and us -- until
3 last week when we toured the facility -- didn't have
4 that clarity. That clarity brings a whole lot of
5 frustration, anger, and -- and -- and rely, kind of,
6 highlights, I think, where I'm landing on this issue but
7 to -- clearly so.

8 I want to speak real quick. You brought
9 it up right off the first of the bat. Your scope. It
10 is not the scope to go to the other 119, but we saw the
11 signs and things. We did that. And I want to mention
12 it to the representatives that -- those that did not
13 serve on that committee that day, a 14-hour hearing, go
14 back. And then from there, go back and look at the
15 legislation that was filed but not passed. SB1 in the
16 first session, SB2 in the second session handled a large
17 part of the incident control, handled a large part of
18 the environment in which we train our emergency man
19 coordinators and the hierarchy of who those are if one's
20 out of place and the next guy and the next guy so
21 there's clarity.

22 There's a theme here with this and Robb,
23 unfortunately. The State can only do what the locals
24 ask or will let them do to a point. In -- in drafting
25 those two, SB1 and 2s, we crossed that conversation of

1 do we just demand the State to take over.

2 Well, clearly, you made a comment that
3 some counties reacted differently than others. And it's
4 that local flavor. It's those guys with the knowledge
5 of the boots on the ground that we gave credit to that
6 actually, at the end of the day, we figured out that
7 none of those guys, with the exception of a few isolated
8 heroes doing the best they can -- most of them had no
9 clue on the local level.

10 So your -- your frustration with the
11 incident control and -- all of the things that that
12 involves was real, but it was real because there was
13 nobody taking this seriously. That's just the hard
14 truth. They didn't have anybody willing to take charge
15 and do what they're -- nor were they trained in it nor
16 did they want anybody to know. And so when we showed up
17 to do something, TDEM, DPS, Rangers, et cetera, and the
18 Cajun -- those guys were, like, almost to a point, I
19 think, of let's not show what we don't know by just
20 saying, no.

21 So -- so, anyway, I'm just saying a large
22 part of these conversations we're having today were
23 actually addressed. We've got a few tweaks coming down
24 the pike after we've had some of these hearings and some
25 stuff. So we will refile that. And I welcome any input

1 back towards some of the things that I may not see or
2 hear today.

3 Specifically, I want to make this for the
4 record for clear -- I think I understand it.

5 The Big Three did not have radios. Is
6 that correct or not correct? Or did they have radios?

7 MS. GARRETT: Yeah. That's not correct.
8 They did have a radio.

9 VICE CHAIR PERRY: They did have radios.
10 So they could've been in the walkie-talkie chain, but
11 they weren't.

12 MS. GARRETT: Correct. Somebody could
13 have radioed to them to get on the PA, because the PA is
14 in the front office.

15 VICE CHAIR PERRY: So -- so, to be clear,
16 I'm -- I'm -- I guess, they're just different channels.

17 So when I'm talking on a walkie -- if I'm
18 Dick Eastland, and I'm on the walkie-talkie, that's not
19 going out to a universe of walkie-talkies. That's
20 specific to a -- a -- one individual.

21 MS. GARRETT: No -- well, no. There --
22 there -- there are two channels.

23 You might be better answering this one.

24 VICE CHAIR PERRY: Okay.

25 MS. GARRETT: There are two channels. One

1 that goes to everybody that has a walkie-talkie but --

2 Go ahead.

3 JUDGE MASSENGALE: So, Senator, my
4 understanding, from our interviews at Camp Mystic --

5 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Judge, if you can say
6 your name for the record, please.

7 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Yeah. Sure. Michael
8 Massengale. And it's an honor to be a part of this
9 process.

10 So we asked a lot of questions when we
11 were at Camp Mystic about the communications out there.
12 There's a big radio tower at the top of the hill near
13 the camp that's used to facilitate radio communication
14 at the camp. And the primary use of the walkie-talkies
15 is, on one channel where when one person speaks into it,
16 everybody who has their walkie-talkie on hears the same
17 thing. It turns out that that's -- ended up being a
18 reason why there was some reluctance at times to use the
19 walkie-talkie particularly in the middle of the night,
20 because if somebody says something, it's going to
21 everybody.

22 So when -- when Dick Eastland radioed to
23 get Edward Eastland at 1:45 in the morning, that was
24 heard by anybody else who had the radio on. So Britt
25 and Catie Eastland heard that at the Cypress Creek camp.

1 And -- but -- but some others did not hear it even
2 though they had the radio.

3 So I think Tweety told us that she did not
4 hear it even though she had a radio.

5 Mary Liz heard it because she was with
6 Edward, and they had a radio that was available to them
7 both.

8 So if the Big Three had their radio on,
9 they should've heard it. And it should've been heard,
10 as well, by Glenn Juenke and by -- by the guard at the
11 gate.

12 There was another channel available on the
13 walkie-talkie. I think that was -- that was a different
14 channel that was, kind of, a back-up method of
15 communication on the camp.

16 So I hope I've answered your question,
17 but --

18 VICE CHAIR PERRY: Yeah. I get it. I
19 think I hear what you're saying.

20 So something as simply as a -- a meeting
21 with the counselors -- because I -- so here's one thing
22 I -- I think I make the distinction of. If you're a
23 counselor, you have responsibility at some level.
24 You're the boots. You're the eyes. You're the
25 frontline. You're in those cabins. You see things.

1 You hear things. And if -- not even for a flood
2 purpose, that -- that ability to walkie-talkie, I've
3 got -- I've got a kid here, I can't leave, the other
4 counselor is dealing with another kid. I mean, that
5 two-way communication just makes sense to me.

6 But I just wanted to make sure,
7 specifically, that they did have the walkie-talkie.

8 MS. GARRETT: They did.

9 VICE CHAIR PERRY: We were out at site,
10 you made a comment, because -- the Polish girls, I think
11 some of the counselors -- that they have phone access
12 when they're off duty, which would mean, by virtue, when
13 they're on duty, they would still have access to the
14 phone. They were just -- that was just a rule you
15 didn't use it. Correct?

16 So the WiFi piece, though. Y'all made a
17 comment. I said, so they had their phones. They
18 couldn't communicate. But the family was communicating
19 on a closed-loop WiFi system. Correct?

20 MS. GARRETT: That's our understanding.

21 VICE CHAIR PERRY: And those counselors
22 would not have had the code to the WiFi network, I
23 assume. Or they could've logged into it?

24 MS. GARRETT: They did have access to WiFi
25 in Byrd. Their -- their counselor lounge that they

1 could use if they didn't want to go to town on their
2 nights off or their days off. They could get on their
3 computer to do college work and -- and, you know --

4 VICE CHAIR PERRY: But if I'm a Polish
5 cook at the second level, looking out, and I had my
6 phone -- they, obviously, did.

7 MS. GARRETT: They did.

8 VICE CHAIR PERRY: If I had had that WiFi
9 access and could've made commentary -- in other words,
10 this isolation of "I'm going to make all the decisions"
11 clearly is -- is part of the problem. So -- but the
12 bottom line is there was other communication forms that,
13 either by rule or by lack of education or lack of
14 delegation, of ability to do it, did not get used for
15 whatever reason.

16 MS. GARRETT: That's correct.

17 VICE CHAIR PERRY: Okay.

18 JUDGE MASSENGALE: If I could amplify one
19 thing that I think is important about communication at
20 the camp, we hear a lot about spotty cell phone service
21 in that part of the state, and -- and that is an issue
22 at Camp Mystic. However, as Ms. Garrett mentioned, they
23 do have fiber broadband Internet access at Camp Mystic.
24 That is connected to the WiFi network that you
25 mentioned, Senator.

1 And so for -- particularly the adult
2 staff, the evidence shows that they routinely relied on
3 text messaging to communicate with each other, and
4 they're able to do that, you know, in substantial part
5 because there's WiFi that fills in for gaps in the cell
6 phone coverage.

7 VICE CHAIR PERRY: That's where I was
8 going with the question based on the -- because you said
9 that when we were out there the other day.

10 So, again, training, communication plan,
11 WiFi is accessed, WiFi's available because of fiber.
12 And I know I've gotten a lot of pushback about requiring
13 fiber. We're going to, hopefully, have some funding for
14 that. But the point being is fiber is ultimately still
15 the most dependable, reliable connection for people.
16 Period.

17 Mr. Chair, I'm going to get out -- outside
18 of my box real quick and -- because we're going to
19 continue to have this conversation. We're going to get
20 into the weeds. But here's the bottom line, and it's
21 just, kind of, after today and the trip the other day.

22 You know, the fate of those girls was set
23 before any first drop of rain ever fell. I want to be
24 clear. Mystic just happened to be the unlucky one.
25 Because I think every camp, every camp has fallen into

1 this human nature of complacency and will check the
2 boxes. And I would say that DSHS has a contributory
3 role in that, and I think that as we go through this
4 process.

5 But the things that were common sense and
6 the things that should've been done didn't get done.

7 But I also want to be cautious of the narrative that I
8 sense is feeling and building here; that it was because
9 of a strong-willed, strong-fisted patriarchal individual
10 that controlled the whole operations, and that's no
11 excuse. Period.

12 So our task will be what our tasks is and
13 when we come to a consensus of what that looks like.
14 But at the end of the day, especially if I'm a relative
15 of that patriarch and I see things that don't feel
16 right, I have a responsibility to say, "This isn't
17 right, Dad." But this is falling into a -- a weird
18 space that let's just put it on someone that can't
19 defend themselves. Well, no. The whole -- the whole
20 thing is indefensible, and the whole problem with it is
21 indefensible.

22 So we now have hindsight 20/20 on things
23 they didn't do and should've been done. We, kind of,
24 had that perspective back in a way about your clarity
25 for that timeline of what got missed in that window of

1 opportunity. And then I'll save the rest for tomorrow
2 because there's a secondary level to the DSHS process
3 here that -- that's going to come under pretty hard
4 scrutiny tomorrow, because this is painful. And the
5 amount of pain and how long this pain goes is directly
6 related to how much one side of this equation wants to
7 push it. But it's -- it's just sad that these kids
8 didn't have a chance with -- with that leadership and
9 with the processes in place.

10 CHAIRMAN MEYER: The chair recognizes
11 Chair Darby.

12 REP. DARBY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 To both of you, we give our sincere
14 gratitude and appreciation for what you've done to -- in
15 your work to bring clarity to some very disturbing
16 facts. I know how hard you've worked on this, and we're
17 grateful for it.

18 Over the last ten months, we've all been
19 hearing phrases like "once-in-a-lifetime event." How
20 would you -- no one could ever plan for such an event.
21 Operators were doing the best they could under
22 extraordinary circumstances.

23 I'd like to drill down and give you a
24 chance to restate and summarize the three windows of
25 opportunity. Because that is why this committee is

1 here. We're trying to learn from it.

2 But there were three opportunities that
3 could've been -- three roads that were -- could've been
4 traveled that would have saved these children. To Joe's
5 phrase, "The loss of life was preventable."

6 So would you restate and, kind of,
7 summarize again for the benefit of the committee and the
8 folks gathered here and those online what you two
9 consider to be three -- those three avenues that we
10 could've saved all of these children?

11 MS. GARRETT: Sure. One thing I want to
12 comment on is your first remarks.

13 I deeply disagree. I know it's out there.
14 I know I will offend some people. But I deeply disagree
15 that this was unpredictable.

16 REP. DARBY: Well, I think your slides
17 showed -- demonstrated --

18 MS. GARRETT: Yeah. I can't -- I can't --

19 REP. DARBY: It happened plenty of times
20 before. So --

21 MS. GARRETT: I can't live with that --

22 REP. DARBY: You know, I just get tired of
23 arguing about that. I get tired of arguing that --

24 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

25 REP. DARBY: -- this -- this is a

1 once-in-a-lifetime event. I know darn well that's not
2 the case. But I -- I want to get beyond that. I mean,
3 there's some people that are never going to be convinced
4 that this was any more than an act of God. But what --
5 what I'm trying to drill down to is these opportunities
6 that -- that were had --

7 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

8 REP. DARBY: -- that were placed in front
9 of people of responsibility that were charged with the
10 safety of these children's lives, and they weren't
11 taken.

12 MS. GARRETT: Okay. I can -- I can give
13 you some thoughts on that.

14 I think that a -- an entity that takes
15 custody of nearly 600 children has a duty to be plugged
16 in to what TDEM is saying. They have a duty to be
17 plugged in to what the National Weather Service is
18 saying. They have a duty -- I mean, in -- in -- Senator
19 Kolkhorst said something at the break. You know, in
20 1987, there were -- there were no cell phones. There
21 were no -- no radar apps. There were -- you know, we've
22 got all that now. We -- we -- we have access to so much
23 information.

24 And on -- I mean, the opportunities
25 were -- were limitless. Just, even on July 3rd, instead

1 of counselor skits and Taps, it's, we're going to have a
2 big ole slumber party in James Hall because we've been
3 watching the TDEM website. We've been all over social
4 media, seeing all these watches and warnings come in.
5 We don't have the benefit of succumbing to alert
6 fatigue. Every homeowner down there can make their own
7 decision.

8 You know, I live in Houston, Texas. I can
9 make my own decision about what hurricane watches and
10 warnings I want to disregard or pay attention to. My
11 husband and I can make those decisions for our family.
12 Those homeowners down there can make those decisions for
13 their families and did and had to and -- and had to.
14 Tragically and -- and -- and frighteningly, those were
15 their decisions to make.

16 But when you have kids at your house --
17 even just when you have -- your children have a slumber
18 party or whatever, you have friends over, your -- your
19 duties just completely change.

20 And so -- so the access that people had to
21 this information was really, you know, pretty endless or
22 pretty substantial.

23 And so, you know, there were missed
24 opportunities from -- from way early on. You get to the
25 1:14 mark, flash flood warning. Again, this is not

1 about a river -- you know, a river rising. This is
2 about the flash flood danger. You -- you know, you
3 ignore -- again, a homeowner can choose to -- a camper,
4 you know, somebody in their RV park or whatever, they
5 can choose to ignore warnings and information. They can
6 make those decisions for their families.

7 When you're -- when you have the
8 custody -- I know I'm preaching to the choir here. But,
9 you know, at 1:14 --

10 REP. DARBY: I think -- I think it needs
11 to be stated.

12 MS. GARRETT: Okay.

13 REP. DARBY: We're -- this is being
14 broadcast to a lot of people, and this needs to be
15 stated.

16 MS. GARRETT: At 1:14, there was a missed
17 opportunity to take everybody over to Cypress Lake. At
18 1:14, there was a missed opportunity to put people in
19 upstairs quarters. I do not think that Rec Hall was a
20 reasonable muster site for 386 campers. I don't think
21 that would've worked. I think it barely worked for the
22 95 campers and 13 counselors that were in there.

23 So once Bubble Gum Creek became
24 impassable, we no longer have James Hall as an
25 appropriate muster site or anything over on Cypress Lake

1 as an appropriate muster site. But we have the upstairs
2 commissary over -- Polar Palace over the commissary. We
3 have Uptight over the garage. We have Rec Hall. There
4 are places where these girls -- they could go up the
5 hill. There's a pavilion up on Sky High. There was --
6 there was higher ground, okay, after 2 a.m. when Bubble
7 Gum Creek became impassable.

8 From 2 a.m., when you're no longer able to
9 go to Cypress Lake, all the way up until our
10 time-stamped photo at 3:26, you still had the
11 opportunity to get on the PA, to go around on -- knock
12 on every door, to round up the grounds crew that was in
13 the garage, to round up Craig and Betsy, to round up
14 Richard, to give out the information, to delegate the
15 information that needed to be delegated. You had so
16 much time to get all of those girls somewhere other than
17 those deadly cabins.

18 REP. DARBY: Do you have any reason to
19 believe that the PA system wasn't working?

20 MS. GARRETT: We have no reason to believe
21 that. We cannot say that for certain in those hours.

22 What we can say is that every -- most of
23 the witnesses that have testified to us have indicated
24 that Taps was played at its regular time. I don't have
25 any reason to believe that -- with the power still on

1 that it wasn't working. But, no, we can't say for sure
2 whether or not it was operational. But I haven't heard
3 a single person say that there was an attempt to use it.

4 JUDGE MASSENGALE: If I can restate it in
5 what I'm going to try to use as completely objective and
6 fact-based terms. Up to 3:25, 3:26 a.m. --

7 REP. DARBY: Two hours after the flood
8 alert. Two hours.

9 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Over two hours after
10 the flash flood --

11 REP. DARBY: Warning.

12 JUDGE MASSENGALE: -- warning and all of
13 the other events along the timeline that you heard about
14 this morning, at 3:26 a.m., when three adults were
15 making their second evacuation trip to load campers onto
16 vehicles to drive them back to Rec Hall, they had the
17 opportunity to save every camper had they made the
18 decision to instead go cabin to cabin to tell the girls
19 to move to higher ground, whether that was Rec Hall or
20 going up a hill or going to Polar Palace or any other
21 higher ground.

22 You can tell from the video evidence that
23 that was possible for a child as young as eight years
24 old up to that point on the timeline. And -- and there
25 were other adults available to help as well.

1 So had the adult staff been empowered with
2 a written evacuation plan, training about a written
3 evacuation plan, assigned responsibilities as part of an
4 evacuation plan, knowledge of where the evacuation would
5 go to, all of those adult staff members, all of those
6 adult counselors would've had some idea of what to do up
7 to and including 3:26 a.m., when they all safely
8 could've gotten to higher ground.

9 REP. DARBY: I think each one of us -- I
10 mean, all of us experienced the setting of standing
11 outside in the rain of the Twins I and II cabin. And as
12 we were facing the cabin, we looked up to our right, on
13 a pole not a few yards away was the PA speaker. And
14 then we looked to our left, and we see the stairway
15 leading to the commissary. At any time, at any time,
16 your information is that the PA system was working and
17 functioning. There's no indication after the event that
18 it was not functioning. Correct?

19 MS. GARRETT: And there's been no
20 testimony to that effect in any of the court hearings
21 that the PA system was not operational. But I have -- I
22 have stated that we don't -- we can't answer that. But
23 there's been no contrary evidence.

24 JUDGE MASSENGALE: We know there was no
25 power.

1 I don't know where that equipment was
2 stored. So I don't know if it was underwater or at what
3 point in time it might've become unusable. That's the
4 kind of question that some people might be able to
5 answer for us that we haven't been able to speak to yet,
6 because that equipment was in the front office and
7 accessible by the -- by the Big Three counselors.

8 REP. DARBY: Maybe we'll ask that question
9 tomorrow.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Senator Kolkhorst, you're
12 recognized.

13 SEN. KOLKHORST: Thank you so much.

14 Echo the comments of my colleagues with
15 gratitude and how difficult this must have been for all
16 of you in the interviews but how grateful we are to
17 have, really, a third party, clean and fresh eyes on the
18 whole situation.

19 I'm going to follow up with some questions
20 from my colleagues that have made great points and just,
21 kind of, walking through this timeline, again, to
22 reiterate.

23 When I say this, I want to speak to camp
24 owners across the state of Texas. And I'm looking -- I
25 don't know what camera it is.

1 Listen. Listen closely. Because lives
2 could've been saved without changes and statute. And I
3 want everyone to listen.

4 I have been trying to wrap my mind around
5 it, Senator Perry, since you chaired those hearings this
6 summer.

7 To my colleague -- to my constituents, the
8 Hollis family, I love you.

9 Thank you for your courage to all the
10 families.

11 To you, camp owners, listen. Listen.

12 So let's walk through this real quickly.
13 Follow up with Chairman Darby, Chairman Moody, Senator,
14 Senator.

15 We know the culture. We understand that.
16 We respect it. But on your timeline, there's a couple
17 of things.

18 Senator Menendez, you asked, some had
19 three counselors but not Bubbles Inn or Twins I and II.
20 Is that correct?

21 MS. GARRETT: That's correct. And one of
22 the counselors in Twins I was 17.

23 SEN. KOLKHORST: I'm going to say this
24 again. The youngest on that campsite, traditionally,
25 they would have three. They had two.

1 MS. GARRETT: The ones that required the
2 most care.

3 SEN. KOLKHORST: I heard you say that the
4 junior counselors were called Ettes, E-T-T-E-S.

5 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

6 SEN. KOLKHORST: Were all of the
7 counselors in Bubbles Inn and Twins I and II Ettes?

8 MS. GARRETT: Yes. Chloe and Katherine
9 were Ettes. The two counselors in Twins II and the two
10 counselors in Twins I.

11 SEN. KOLKHORST: Bug House and Look Inn,
12 the first to be evacuated in an official capacity, were
13 they Ettes?

14 MS. GARRETT: I -- I have lists, and I'd
15 have to check those. But I -- I don't think they all
16 were.

17 I know -- I know in Bug House one of the
18 three -- there were three counselors in Bug House. One
19 of the three is the one that I described as start --
20 getting hired three or four days before the start of
21 that session.

22 SEN. KOLKHORST: I'm going on your
23 testimony today, your timeline.

24 To -- to Chairman Darby's point and
25 Senator Perry, on July the 2nd, inspection by DSHS is

1 what you've said. I want to make sure, and tomorrow
2 we'll ask more questions.

3 Sanitation specialist. Correct?

4 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

5 SEN. KOLKHORST: Not a safety consultant?

6 MS. GARRETT: Not to my knowledge. She
7 has multiple camps. She lives in Uvalde. She has a big
8 job. And I have no reason to believe she has any
9 training in being a safety expert.

10 SEN. KOLKHORST: She did ask the questions
11 and checked the boxes?

12 MS. GARRETT: She -- yes. She filled out
13 an -- a lengthy inspection report, which we have a copy
14 of, if you'd like to look at it.

15 SEN. KOLKHORST: We will want to look at
16 that, and -- and -- and we'll follow up with more
17 questions tomorrow.

18 To Senator -- I mean, to Chairman Darby,
19 on July the 3rd, TDEM ramps up communication, activates
20 more protocol awareness for floods.

21 10 a.m., TDEM has a phone conversation
22 with 468 on a Zoom call, dial-in. I have been a part of
23 many of those through the years. No one from Kerr
24 County on that. Correct?

25 MS. GARRETT: That's --

1 JUDGE MASSENGALE: We do not believe
2 anybody from Kerr County was on it. This was explored
3 at the hearings that were conducted last summer. And
4 Kerr County received the notifications. The -- the
5 people who received them and ordinarily would have acted
6 on them in Kerr County were unavailable, one due to
7 illness and -- and previously scheduled time off. The
8 county judge was away from the county. And we have no
9 information that Kerr County participated in that call.

10 There was follow-up information provided
11 by TDEM that -- that summarized the call, and that was
12 mentioned in the -- in the hearing last summer. But we
13 have no information that -- that anybody in Kerr County
14 acted on that information.

15 And I thought for -- I thought that panel
16 was compelling that included the Kerr County and Kendall
17 County representative last summer because of the stark
18 contrast of --

19 SEN. KOLKHORST: Of loss of life in those
20 two counties --

21 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Well, of reaction.
22 Because in Kerr -- in Kerr County, the evidence is
23 that -- we do not see evidence of action taken on the
24 TDEM warnings and alerts to share information locally,
25 such as to a camp like Camp Mystic. And there's not

1 evidence that -- that the leadership on the evening of
2 July 3 understood that there was a possibility of severe
3 weather that camps and RV parks and other citizens might
4 need to be prepared for.

5 But in Kendall County, acting on the same
6 information that was made available from TDEM, there was
7 that kind of outreach. And the county judge said he
8 went to bed on the night of July 3 with a sense of dread
9 about what might happen. And that contrasts greatly
10 both with what we know about what the emergency
11 coordinators in Kerr County were not doing, and it also
12 contrasts with what we heard from people at Camp Mystic
13 about how they went to bed on July 3 with no sense that
14 there was a risk of severe weather overnight and that
15 they -- they thought it was like any other day.

16 SEN. KOLKHORST: So at 1:18 p.m., flood
17 watch from the National Weather Service on July the 3rd.

18 At 12:45 a.m., I heard y'all say that
19 counselors that had the night off -- did they literally
20 call in to Camp Mystic? Or where did they call to say
21 that there is trouble on the highway? Which we all know
22 about River Road and its proximity -- proximity to the
23 river but, more importantly, how much water was on the
24 road, and it was really from the sheets of rain coming
25 down at that point.

1 MS. GARRETT: What we know about that is
2 not that they called the camp. They had taken their
3 night off --

4 SEN. KOLKHORST: Who did they call at the
5 camp?

6 MS. GARRETT: No, no. We don't have any
7 information --

8 SEN. KOLKHORST: Okay.

9 MS. GARRETT: -- that they called anybody
10 at the camp. They had taken their night off. They'd
11 gone to Walmart. They went to a couple of different
12 places. They were hanging out. And when they came
13 back, they were very troubled by the drive and how
14 dangerous it was. And they -- they said something when
15 they got back to Francis Blackwell-Loper and to the Big
16 Three when they went to turn their phones in.

17 SEN. KOLKHORST: Okay.

18 MS. GARRETT: And they were told -- and
19 one of the girls was a local. And so she said it was
20 some of the worst that she had seen. And they were
21 told, "Well, next time call us if you feel like it's
22 safer to stay back."

23 So they were -- so they had already come
24 back and orally reported it.

25 SEN. KOLKHORST: Thank you.

1 MS. GARRETT: Yes, ma'am.

2 SEN. KOLKHORST: 1:14 a.m., flash flood
3 warning. We know that Dick Eastland received that on
4 his phone. Correct?

5 MS. GARRETT: We know that he received it
6 in some form because it -- we believe it was on his
7 phone, but we don't know that because it doesn't show on
8 his phone. It shows on Edward's phone.

9 And we know that Glenn has indicated
10 receiving it. Glenn has indicated discussing it with
11 Dick.

12 We know that Dick almost immediately went
13 to the National Weather Service website -- or app on his
14 phone, those records that we showed that were actual
15 launches of an app. So we do know that the evidence
16 points --

17 SEN. KOLKHORST: Now, I have y'all at
18 12:42 a.m. to 3:23 a.m., Dick Eastland constantly
19 monitoring weather apps. Is that correct?

20 MS. GARRETT: Absolutely. And right
21 around the time of the 1:14 app, he goes to the National
22 Weather Service app and the NOAA.

23 SEN. KOLKHORST: At 1:45, Dick summons
24 Edward.

25 Then we move on to, at 2:01, Edward sends

1 video of Bubble -- at Gum Creek being out and says he's
2 not coming back. And I want to move to a couple of
3 other things.

4 And this was a part that I starred. At
5 2:33 a.m., Dick texts Tweety, four inches have already
6 fallen.

7 Now, back to the history of what you gave
8 on this camp and how long the Eastlands have been a part
9 of this camp and the -- to your answer of when that
10 e-mail was sent about the video from 2017, that e-mail
11 was actually from 2017, as I saw on the screen.
12 Correct?

13 MS. GARRETT: We verified it was March --
14 Heather verified it was March of 2017.

15 SEN. KOLKHORST: In 2018, he sends another
16 e-mail about flood -- flood history to his family and
17 others that work there. Right?

18 So he clearly knows. At -- at -- at
19 2:33 a.m., after receiving a 1:40 -- 1:14 warning,
20 warning, not a watch any longer. This is a warning.

21 We should all know. We should all know.
22 And if you're listening to this and you don't, look up
23 what warning means. It means it is imminent. Am I
24 correct?

25 MS. GARRETT: Yes, ma'am.

1 SEN. KOLKHORST: At 2:37 -- and, again,
2 this is such a troubling moment -- two counselors -- we
3 walked those grounds -- had -- as you described, they
4 had met outside of Bug Hut and Look Inn. There's a
5 little sidewalk that connects those two. And they had
6 met outside to discuss what should we do. And they made
7 the decision in a torrential downpour to go find --

8 MS. GARRETT: Help.

9 SEN. KOLKHORST: -- an adult, a help.

10 At 2:33, he had already told his wife it's
11 four inches. And at 2:37, he drives them -- drives
12 them. Did I hear you say that correctly?

13 MS. GARRETT: That's correct.

14 SEN. KOLKHORST: -- drives them and tells
15 them -- and looks and says, put down towels and wipe up
16 the water that is coming off of the cliff.

17 For those of you that don't understand, it
18 is a cliff behind these. And so water is -- it's -- I
19 think in the testimony this summer, it was -- it was a
20 half an inch every 30 seconds, if I remember correctly.
21 That's from my memory. And I have really good notes
22 that I can go back. So -- extrapolate. An inch a
23 minute. Right?

24 MS. GARRETT: I should mention --

25 SEN. KOLKHORST: At --

1 MS. GARRETT: I should mention, Senator,
2 to your point, just on the knowledge, I mean, I don't
3 think anybody -- nobody in the family or anybody
4 questions that Dick was a weather expert. He was -- he
5 was -- he was committed to safety regarding the weather.
6 He -- he was obsessed with weather. They will all
7 describe that to you.

8 He did also serve for many years
9 throughout the decades on the Upper Guadalupe River
10 Authority Board. And he was currently on that board,
11 since 2022, at the time of this event. So he was
12 knowledgeable about the impact that four inches would've
13 had.

14 SEN. KOLKHORST: At 2:55, Francis, from
15 the gatehouse, radios, and they lose contact.

16 At 3 a.m., Dick radios, "Need to get girls
17 out of Bug House."

18 At 3:10, Tweety texts that their house is
19 flooding.

20 Pages of notes here.

21 I want to focus in on just one other
22 thing.

23 MS. GARRETT: Yes, ma'am.

24 SEN. KOLKHORST: You had a slide that
25 said, "Adults at Uptight Garage area," which is the

1 Flats side of the Edmunson Creek.

2 MS. GARRETT: That's correct.

3 SEN. KOLKHORST: So if everyone doesn't
4 understand, it's near Pop Inn. And it's over here, and
5 it's a little higher ground.

6 MS. GARRETT: I would say that's accurate.

7 SEN. KOLKHORST: A little?

8 MS. GARRETT: Yes. Water had not gotten
9 into the garage.

10 SEN. KOLKHORST: All of the adults that
11 were standing there -- so you had grounds people.

12 Who else did you describe in that group?

13 MS. GARRETT: So you have the grounds guys
14 in the garage, which was just mere feet away.

15 You had three nurses that had been
16 evacuated from the Infirmary.

17 You had Richard Eastland, Craig Althaus,
18 Betsy Althaus, Frank Albritton. And, yes, quite a --
19 quite a number.

20 SEN. KOLKHORST: And they stood there --
21 you described it last Monday. They stood there for how
22 long? How long were they gathered there?

23 MS. GARRETT: Well, we believe that, you
24 know, Betsy Althaus had seen headlights moving around,
25 had seen the vehicles moving around. We know that was

1 happening around the 3 a.m. hour. You know, around that
2 3 a.m. point. That concerned her. She knew something
3 was going on. She wakes up Craig. That's when they all
4 start to, kind of, come out around that time.

5 SEN. KOLKHORST: Representative Darby
6 established with you on his line of questioning that the
7 PA system was working.

8 MS. GARRETT: Well, as we pointed out,
9 we -- we don't have any evidence to the contrary, but
10 we, obviously, can't say that it --

11 SEN. KOLKHORST: Electricity was still
12 working?

13 MS. GARRETT: Power was still on.

14 SEN. KOLKHORST: At 1:14, just at
15 1:14 a.m., like Representative Darby asked, if you
16 just -- even if you delayed -- even if they'd gone --
17 and sometime --

18 What's the time stamp on when they moved
19 the canoes? Do you know?

20 MS. GARRETT: Edward was summoned to come
21 help move the canoes at 1:45. He describes that Dick
22 called the grounds crew immediately after radioing him.
23 So we're talking about 1:45 to 2 a.m.

24 SEN. KOLKHORST: Yeah. 1:47, I think I
25 wrote down.

1 Even after they moved the canoes, Judge,
2 you said that they could have literally gone door to
3 door and just knocked. Could the girls at that point
4 have walked to safety?

5 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Yes. Yes. And -- and
6 the reason I emphasize that they literally could've
7 walked door to door to each cabin is because we don't
8 know a hundred percent certainly that the PA was
9 available. But -- and it's hindsight.

10 But if they had gone to each cabin and
11 told the girls to move to higher ground, they had time
12 then. And by the time they came back the third time,
13 they had lost -- they had lost the opportunity.

14 MS. GARRETT: And I should point out that
15 I -- I became aware, from witnesses, that at least one,
16 possibly two counselors from Bug House, actually, I
17 think, assisted in the evacuations by knocking on the
18 doors of Look Inn and Tumble I and II to make sure
19 everybody was up. Because, believe it or not, there
20 were little girls -- I've heard testimony.

21 Senator Perry, I mean, some kids can sleep
22 through literally anything, and some of them were.

23 And so it definitely assisted in the
24 evacuation that some -- that these Bug House counselors
25 were said to have, at least, pounded on a couple of

1 those doors to make sure they were up, which made them
2 more readily available to jump into -- to those -- to
3 those vehicles --

4 SEN. KOLKHORST: How far would they walk
5 to safety? I mean, like, if you just measure it.

6 MS. GARRETT: Well, it just depends on
7 what the walk --

8 SEN. KOLKHORST: Behind the hill -- it
9 could've been just go up the hill. Right? Which some
10 did.

11 MS. GARRETT: Sure. Right. And that's
12 what I mean. It just depends on what your "walk to
13 safety" definition is.

14 For Twins, obviously, it was 20 feet to
15 the staircase out the commissary.

16 For Bubble, you -- you said there, they
17 could've walked to Rec Hall. You know, people could've
18 gone -- just -- just like we saw with Giggle Box, Glenn
19 getting those girls over to Cricket's Corner and up the
20 hill. We could've gotten Bubble and Twin across that
21 street and up the hill.

22 So -- so there were numerous different
23 distances, if you will, on what "to safety" meant.

24 And I do want to reiterate. I'm not sure
25 Rec Hall was safety for everybody. There's no way 386

1 girls could've been there. But they could've gone
2 different directions, and -- and some of those distances
3 would be quite short.

4 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Senator, I might real
5 quick -- I think what could be helpful, because I was
6 thinking the exact same thing you are thinking.

7 Is it possible to get that map back up
8 there onto the screen so we can see what I would call
9 the distance to safety? And you guys can go from Bubble
10 Inn to the hill, from Twins to the commissary.

11 Can we do that so we could all have a
12 visual?

13 We were out there; so we were able to see
14 it. Because when -- before I went to tour, in my mind's
15 eye, all of this was really, really, really spread out.
16 It is not. How far it was from those adults to those
17 cabins, can we get those distances?

18 SEN. KOLKHORST: Yeah. Chairman, that's
19 an excellent point. Because I think that my mind's eye
20 was very different than when we all toured last Monday
21 to understand how truly clustered this area is on the
22 Flats.

23 JUDGE MASSENGALE: So we've -- we've
24 prepared a few distances that are relevant. So from
25 Bubble Inn -- to get from Bubble Inn across the road to

1 Nut Hut, which is one of the cabins from which the
2 campers evacuated up the hill, it's about a hundred
3 feet. A child could walk it in 30 seconds. It's about
4 the length of a basketball court.

5 To get from Bubble Inn to Polar Palace,
6 above the commissary where the Polish kitchen workers
7 were, it's about 142 feet --

8 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Hold on, Judge. If you
9 don't mind just waiting until we get that map up. I
10 think it just gives folks a better idea about the
11 distance to safety.

12 MS. GARRETT: And I can follow along with
13 the cursor.

14 CHAIRMAN MEYER: That would be great.
15 Thank you, Mrs. Garrett.

16 MS. GARRETT: Can we get the -- the
17 zoomed-out one. Thank you.

18 There we go. That's perfect.

19 Okay. So, Michael, you said from Bubble
20 Inn across the --

21 CHAIRMAN MEYER: I'm sorry, Judge. Can
22 you start from the beginning, please?

23 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Sure.

24 So from Bubble Inn across the road to Nut
25 Hut, which is a cabin. It's directly across the road.

1 And from that cabin, the girls were able to evacuate up
2 the hill. It's about a hundred feet. A child could
3 walk it in under 30 seconds. It's the length of a
4 basketball court.

5 To go from Bubble Inn to Polar Palace,
6 which was above the commissary and where the Polish
7 kitchen workers were, it's just under 50 yards. A child
8 could walk it in 40 seconds. It's the length of a
9 bowling lane plus a basketball court.

10 To get from Bubble Inn to Rec Hall, that's
11 a little over a hundred yards. It's closer to
12 120 yards. A child could walk it in under two minutes.
13 It's about the length of a city block.

14 But I think -- and it's helpful to
15 understand the relatively short distances to all of
16 those places of safety. But I would emphasize, again,
17 that, you know, up until 3:25 a.m., when we've seen
18 campers walking in ankle-deep water to Rec Hall, we know
19 that these campers safely could've evacuated to any of
20 those locations. Or, for that matter, they could've
21 headed towards -- towards the Cypress Lake camp or -- or
22 anyplace else that was -- was safer. I guess, they
23 couldn't cross the creek at that point. But -- but the
24 point is they could get anywhere.

25 SEN. KOLKHORST: So stay with me there.

1 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Sure.

2 SEN. KOLKHORST: That's an important
3 point. Because the Polish worker's video is from
4 3:26 a.m. Correct?

5 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

6 SEN. KOLKHORST: And they were in
7 ankle-deep water, the girls walking to Rec Hall.
8 Correct?

9 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

10 SEN. KOLKHORST: I have at 3:51 a.m., Dick
11 Eastland submerged. Correct?

12 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

13 SEN. KOLKHORST: He went to Bubbles Inn at
14 approximately -- this was rescue attempt number three
15 between 3:24 and 3:40 a.m.

16 MS. GARRETT: That's what we -- that's
17 what we believe.

18 SEN. KOLKHORST: So from the time -- if I
19 go all the way back of him being awake -- and this is
20 where I want all of the camp owners and directors -- of
21 knowing something's not right, because he was pinging
22 lots -- and, as I told you while we took a break, in the
23 previous floods, I mean, we didn't have the technology
24 we have today. From -- from even -- you get the warning
25 at 1:14. You're not quite as panicked as when you text

1 your wife at three -- at -- at two -- 2:37 -- 2:33 that
2 it's four inches.

3 And, Judge, as you describe it, we're
4 talking a bowling alley and a basketball court walk.

5 Am I missing anything here?

6 MS. GARRETT: The only thing that I would
7 point out, in the interest of fairness and in the
8 interest of hindsight -- and I said this earlier --
9 there is a point at which sheltering in place is an
10 appropriate response to certain -- to this. Right?
11 In -- until it's not. Right?

12 And -- and Senator Perry pointed out that
13 the -- that the legislation from last year has taken --
14 we were talking about this at the site visit -- that
15 that trigger point that Dick was looking for, like, he's
16 thinking, these girls weigh 50 pounds, they're eight
17 years old -- I don't know what he was thinking but we
18 can assume. Sending them out even into a little bit of
19 water is dangerous.

20 So sheltering in place is not outrageous
21 until it's not. Right? Until it's no longer safe in
22 which case you need an evacuation plan that didn't
23 exist. You need delegation, which didn't exist. You
24 need training, which didn't exist.

25 However, as Senator Perry and I were

1 discussing, he was trying to figure out when to hit the
2 big red button. Right? When was that moment? And the
3 new law has taken away that dreadful decision-making
4 process. Right? That -- that -- that it -- now we know
5 that the trigger point is decided for you when there's a
6 flash flood warning. And had that happened, they
7 could've been in Cypress Lake or some of those other
8 muster sites.

9 SEN. KOLKHORST: And -- and that's --
10 that's a question: Was there a true muster site? Was
11 there really a true muster site for a flood?

12 JUDGE MASSENGALE: So I think the answer
13 to that, Senator, is it wasn't in writing. It wasn't
14 part of the training either for the permanent staff or
15 for the seasonal staff, including counselors.

16 And so even if it's the case that Dick
17 Eastland had an evacuation plan in his mind that
18 involved evacuating campers to Rec Hall if and when in
19 his judgment that became necessary, number one, that
20 didn't satisfy the requirements of the Texas
21 Administrative Code that applied at the time. But, more
22 importantly, it didn't empower anybody else at that camp
23 to participate and help in the evacuation of the
24 campers. And I think that contributes to a
25 difficult-to-understand fact such as adults standing and

1 not doing anything.

2 If -- if there's not been a written plan,
3 if there's not been an advanced assignment of
4 responsibility, if there's not been advanced drills,
5 then they're reacting to information as they receive it,
6 and -- and they're trying to figure out what, if
7 anything, they should be doing rather than acting upon
8 something that's been planned for in advance.

9 SEN. KOLKHORST: And so to wrap this up,
10 obviously, Dick Eastland died trying to save these
11 girls.

12 Ms. Garrett, you and I stood for probably
13 longer than you wanted to in the rain with me last week
14 answering my numerous, numerous questions.

15 Y'all had left.

16 I think, Mr. Chairman, you had waited
17 because you had a few more.

18 But I kept -- I know you wanted to almost
19 escape my many questions.

20 MS. GARRETT: No. No, that's not true.
21 You were very thoughtful.

22 SEN. KOLKHORST: But you said something so
23 important to me and to the Eastland family. You said,
24 "You're caring people." Did you say something like
25 that? That they were caring people?

1 MS. GARRETT: Absolutely. I mean,
2 absolutely. They didn't want this to happen. Nobody --
3 I don't -- I don't see how anybody could -- could posit
4 that. I mean, they -- they are loving, Christian
5 people. Unfortunately, they were running a
6 multimillion-dollar, for-profit business like a -- like
7 a -- something from 1965. It hadn't changed. And
8 that's part of your complacency argument.

9 Yeah. I mean, these people did not want
10 this to happen. They are good people that cared about
11 these girls and these families. But -- but nothing had
12 changed in decades. And, as one of you -- Senator Perry
13 pointed out, you know, you put the word "director"
14 behind your name, you can't rest on the fact that --
15 that -- that, you know, "I can't cross my dad or Dad's
16 in charge." You have to -- there had to be -- there had
17 to be some change. And it's the complacency that
18 you've -- you've brought up many, many times that was
19 the problem. It was not -- certainly not a lack of
20 caring or loving. It was a lack of change.

21 SEN. KOLKHORST: And so to my friends and
22 colleagues on this dais, in the audience watching, we've
23 all tried to wrap our heads around this. A disaster.

24 We've been through a few, Senator Hughes.

25 But on this one -- and this is why I'm

1 speaking directly to people who are licensed, who are in
2 care of children who cannot make their own decisions,
3 who were obedient that night. Complacency had set in.

4 I know, Ms. Garrett, I said that to you so
5 many times.

6 In driving home over four and a half hours
7 last Monday and walking into my home and trying to
8 explain it to myself, to God, trying to figure out why,
9 trying to explain it to my spouse, Mother Nature doesn't
10 blink. We must heed those warnings. And we must
11 always, always err on the side of more caution.

12 There is nothing that is lost if you act
13 on your gut. And that night Dick Eastland, obviously,
14 knew something was wrong. He would not have pinged
15 weather sites that much.

16 And I just feel like -- and even talking
17 to some of the people up and down the river --

18 Which, Senator Perry, you have pointed out
19 Senate Bill 1 of the first-called session, Senate Bill 2
20 of the second-called session has some great things in it
21 that are going to prevent natural disasters from
22 potentially taking the lives of others.

23 But we must all, all of us in our personal
24 lives, not become complacent, not to give into that's
25 how we've always done it, not to look inwardly, to get

1 better every day, especially when you're in the care of
2 other people.

3 And people up and down in that county of
4 that river -- we drove down River Road, and we saw the
5 signs of how many people died.

6 Senator Flores, your -- your home county
7 or one of your counties that you represent.

8 A lady that testified, Senator Perry, in
9 Kerrville, when she sat there and she said, "I've lived
10 in this valley for 60-something years, and complacency
11 had set in." To everyone there, we will do better.
12 We'll drill down more. I got your warnings --

13 MS. GARRETT: I hope so.

14 SEN. KOLKHORST: -- I took many -- the
15 post-takeaway. I'm just so sorry for all of the loss.

16 CHAIRMAN MEYER: The chair recognizes
17 Representative Dyson for some questions. No questions?

18 REP. DYSON: No questions.

19 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay. Very good.

20 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Do you have anything?

21 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Yeah, I do. I just, kind
22 of, want to finish this map scenario, Judge, if you
23 don't mind.

24 So -- because you did Bubble Inn. Now
25 let's do the same scenario for Twins I and II.

1 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Sure. So -- so Twins,
2 of course, is right next to Bubble Inn. So it's very
3 similar.

4 Get my numbers back in front of me.

5 So for Twins, to walk across the road to
6 Nut Hut, it's a little farther away. Just over
7 50 yards, about a 45-second walk for child, the length
8 of an Olympic swimming pool.

9 For Twins, to get to Rec Hall, which is a
10 little closer from -- from Twins than from Bubble Inn,
11 there's just over a hundred yards, 106 yards, about a
12 90-second walk for a child. Again, about the length of
13 a city block.

14 The distance to Polar Palace is about the
15 same. They're, kind of, equally situated. So it's just
16 under 50 yards, about a 40-second walk for a child.

17 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay. And then where --
18 we, obviously, discussed quite a bit. The adults, the
19 15 to 20 adults, where were they in proximity to those
20 cabins?

21 MS. GARRETT: Right here. Down here.

22 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay. How far is that?
23 Approximately.

24 JUDGE MASSENGALE: So I have a measurement
25 from --

1 MS. GARRETT: Handy Hut?

2 JUDGE MASSENGALE: From -- yeah. But to
3 Bug House.

4 MS. GARRETT: This is Handy Hut. Right
5 here where the cursor is.

6 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay.

7 MS. GARRETT: That's Handy Hut. So it's
8 very close.

9 JUDGE MASSENGALE: I -- I don't have that
10 measurement ready for you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRMAN MEYER: If you could provide
12 that, that would be great.

13 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Yeah. Sure.

14 CHAIRMAN MEYER: I think it just gives us
15 a sense, again --

16 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Yeah. No, no, no.
17 We -- we can include these -- these measurements in the
18 report. I think it's a good idea.

19 CHAIRMAN MEYER: That would be great. And
20 also the length of that drive, as well, to Bug --
21 from -- from Wiggle to Bug. It appears long on the map.
22 But, again, getting back to the Senator's point --

23 JUDGE MASSENGALE: I do have from Handy
24 Hut to Bug House.

25 MS. GARRETT: All right. So Handy Hut's

1 right here.

2 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay.

3 MS. GARRETT: All the way to Bug House.

4 JUDGE MASSENGALE: That's 286 yards. So
5 it's about a four-minute walk, about two to three city
6 blocks.

7 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay.

8 Okay. And what -- something that struck
9 me earlier today -- which, honestly, I know we had
10 numerous phone calls and meetings, and we have been
11 going over this for months and months and months. But
12 it struck me today. And I can certainly ask him
13 tomorrow.

14 But what time did Edward tell Jumble House
15 to walk?

16 MS. GARRETT: Sure. That would've been
17 the second evacuation attempt.

18 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay.

19 MS. GARRETT: We know that Jumble House
20 was walking into Rec Hall at approximately 3:26, because
21 some of them were in that picture. So it would've been
22 just moments before 3:26.

23 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay. So did he tell
24 you -- and I will ask him tomorrow for sure.

25 So he told Jumble House to walk. Did he

1 then hit Nut Hut and tell them to walk?

2 MS. GARRETT: No.

3 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Did he then hit Chatter
4 Box and tell them to walk?

5 Did he then hit Bubble Inn and tell them
6 to walk?

7 Did he hit Giggle Box, tell them to walk?
8 Wiggle Inn to walk? Or Twins I and II to walk?

9 MS. GARRETT: No. Not to my knowledge.

10 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Although -- although, he
11 did specifically tell Jumble House, it's time to walk.
12 It's time to move.

13 MS. GARRETT: Yes, he did -- counselors
14 inquired, Should we walk? And he said, yes.

15 We don't have any evidence that he told
16 the others. What we do have is, in fact, evidence of
17 telling the counselors in Twins I and II and Bubble to
18 stay put. During the -- the -- the back and forth, they
19 were told to stay put because they were going to come
20 back and get them. Obviously, it wasn't, like,
21 nefarious that they told them to stay put. They
22 intended to come back and get them.

23 But, no, they did not tell them to -- to
24 walk.

25 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Right.

1 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN MEYER: So we did tell Jumble to
3 walk, but we didn't tell the other ones to walk?

4 MS. GARRETT: Not to my knowledge.

5 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Okay. And then is there
6 anything -- obviously, we've all been aware that
7 there's, you know, court cases going on and media
8 coverage.

9 Is there anything about what you have
10 presented this morning that you believe is different
11 from what we see, kind of, on the outside narrative?

12 MS. GARRETT: Go ahead.

13 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Yeah. I think it's an
14 important question, Mr. Chairman. Because, as -- as
15 Ms. Garret said, we -- we are paying very close
16 attention to what's happening, the news reporting,
17 what's happening in these lawsuits, what's being said in
18 the courtrooms. And the presentation that was made this
19 morning by Ms. Garrett, obviously, a ton of work has
20 gone into this. Nobody else has had the access that we
21 have had and the opportunity that we have had to speak
22 to the people at Camp Mystic, the families who are
23 grieving, all of -- all of the people that we've been
24 speaking to. We have not been encumbered by working
25 through the process of -- of ongoing litigation.

1 And, as has been said repeatedly and
2 accurately, we've gotten a lot of great cooperation from
3 everybody we've spoken to. True candor, vulnerability,
4 honesty in -- in our assessment. I think it's fair to
5 say.

6 MS. GARRETT: Uh-huh.

7 JUDGE MASSENGALE: And so what we have
8 strived to do, and what I think everybody had a chance
9 to see this morning, was an objective and balanced
10 presentation of facts not filtered through any agenda of
11 trying to place blame or even, necessarily, to impose
12 conclusions.

13 But what today's presentation was about
14 was presenting facts to you that we have learned, and --
15 and it's -- it's a telling of those facts that is, I
16 think, materially different than any other report that's
17 out there until today.

18 So I think it's been important. I hope
19 it's -- it's therapeutic in some sense. I suspect that
20 there's a lot of people who learned things today, had
21 questions that have been on their minds for a while, and
22 have -- have learned answers.

23 But primarily today the -- the narrative
24 we've presented today has been about objectivity and
25 balance and precision.

1 MS. GARRETT: I agree with all of that for
2 sure. I would just add one slight comment about the --
3 you know, we were there all day Monday for the
4 testimony. Nothing that was testified on Monday was a
5 surprise to us based on our interviews, our lengthy
6 interviews with the Eastlands. So nothing out of that
7 day of testimony was a surprise.

8 Obviously, you know where we were on
9 Tuesday, which was with you in a -- in a briefing. And
10 I was -- I've received -- you know, I'd received
11 information during those days, and we have since seen
12 the transcripts. And, again, there's really nothing
13 that came in that testimony that hasn't been
14 consistently, you know, described in our -- in our
15 interviews. It's -- in other words, they've -- the
16 Eastlands have been consistent for -- in terms of our
17 interviews and what was said on the stand.

18 And I -- but I completely echo Michael's
19 comments that, obviously, we had a different aim than --
20 we weren't -- we weren't involved in -- in,
21 understandably, advocating -- you know, it was -- it's
22 advocacy in the courtrooms; and, for us, it was
23 interviews. And so they've been consistent.

24 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Right. And so your
25 entire goal throughout this process has been objectivity

1 and transparency. Is that accurate to say?

2 MS. GARRETT: Well, I'd -- I'd -- I
3 definitely would like to say that. That's what we
4 have -- we've strived to do at every -- at every angle.
5 Yes, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Yeah. I wouldn't just
7 say to say it. I say that you have shown it here today.
8 And I know we as a committee -- all of us up here --
9 appreciate it.

10 MS. GARRETT: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Senator Hughes.

13 SEN. HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 And, again, thank you. Thank our
15 investigators for your continued work.

16 A couple of things I want to make sure I'm
17 clear on. We've learned a lot today. Everyone has
18 learned a lot today.

19 The elevation -- so the -- the map is --
20 is helpful here. We -- those of us who have been
21 there -- many in this room have been here a lot more
22 than we have. We realize that.

23 But those who have been there recognize
24 this is a generally flat area. Obviously, that's the
25 nickname.

1 Do we know the relative elevation, say,
2 from one end to the other and where the -- which cabins
3 are higher or lower than the others? If, you know, I
4 would like to know that. And was that information
5 available? Tell us about that. That would obviously
6 inform who's at the greatest risk, how we might
7 prioritize in a situation like this.

8 And I've asked a question that I don't
9 know the answer to, which is not a good policy. But
10 I -- I'd like to know.

11 JUDGE MASSENGALE: I'm going to take a
12 stab at this, Senator.

13 So the short answer is, yes, we have the
14 information. I'm not prepared to -- to give you a lot
15 of detailed data, you know, from this seat about, you
16 know, the relative elevations of the different
17 structures on the camp. We have all that information.
18 And it's -- it is a topic that is -- is discussed in
19 some ways in connection with this incident, and -- and
20 it's come up in the context of the civil litigation.
21 It's -- it's related to the flood maps that are in
22 existence and so the definition of what's a hundred-year
23 floodplain, a five-hundred-year floodplain, other things
24 like that.

25 It's, obviously, a complex topic that --

1 you know, none of us are -- are experts on this.

2 SEN. HUGHES: Right.

3 JUDGE MASSENGALE: And it's -- it's
4 fundamentally our judgment that we didn't have to become
5 experts about it because it wasn't necessary to tell the
6 story we told this morning. I can see how that
7 information could come into play in the kind of
8 questions that would be posed in a court of law or to an
9 arbitrator or a jury, however a civil lawsuit ends up
10 getting resolved. But we really didn't have to resolve
11 any of those kinds of questions to tell you the
12 timeline.

13 Is that helpful?

14 SEN. HUGHES: It is. That makes sense.

15 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Okay.

16 SEN. HUGHES: That makes sense.

17 In media coverage and previous hearings,
18 even in testimony today, we hear the term -- is it
19 "alert fatigue"? And -- and whenever that's said,
20 everybody nods their head because we think about things
21 that we get on our cell phones as -- as regular -- as
22 regular, everyday people. And so we know that's a
23 factor.

24 I do want to focus on Mr. Dick -- Dick
25 Eastland, Mr. Eastland. Based on what you've told us,

1 looking at all those different weather apps and -- and
2 websites, it doesn't sound like he was -- it doesn't
3 sound like it was an alert fatigue situation with him.
4 Or does it? Tell us about that.

5 MS. GARRETT: Yeah. No. I agree with
6 you, Senator. I -- everybody would describe him as
7 vigilant about weather. Everybody would describe him as
8 vigilant about safety.

9 It all comes back to that trigger point.
10 It really does. I don't necessarily have any evidence
11 to believe that Dick Eastland had alert fatigue. I just
12 think it became an assessment, a moment-by-moment,
13 ad-hoc assessment on his part that ended up being a
14 failure for obvious reasons.

15 And to Senator Perry's point, I think that
16 many other people were engaging in that same type of
17 behavior in the care of children in youth camps.

18 So I do think he was vigilant. I don't
19 think he was suffering from alert fatigue. I just don't
20 think he pulled the trigger at the right moment.

21 SEN. HUGHES: That's -- that's pretty
22 clear. Thank you.

23 We were talking about the ground crew and
24 the other adults who were on the scene on -- at -- I
25 guess, at the bottom of the map we're looking at here,

1 whatever your perspective is, and how frustrating to us
2 now that they were not aware, not engaged. We might not
3 know the answer to this question.

4 But after the equipment was moved, there's
5 a photograph of -- of Dick with some of those ground
6 crew members --

7 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

8 SEN. HUGHES: -- inside that garage. The
9 first -- the first floor. And even the first floor of
10 that building did not get any water. Is that right?

11 MS. GARRETT: That's correct.

12 SEN. HUGHES: And then there was the
13 second floor, obviously, super safe, completely
14 available.

15 Do we -- do we have a sense for what
16 happened between the time he was gathered with all those
17 other adults and the time he was in his vehicle, toward
18 the end, trying to -- trying to rescue when it was too
19 late? Do we have a sense for what the communication was
20 between them, if there was any?

21 MS. GARRETT: Well, we know that that
22 picture was taken at 2:14 a.m.

23 We know that they went back -- "they"
24 meaning Dick and Edward and -- and Glenn -- went back to
25 the front office where that was, kind of, their -- their

1 gathering area.

2 I can only assume -- so I don't want to
3 over assume -- but that the grounds crew -- I do know
4 that they were cut off from their quarters, which were
5 farther up that hill. It's called, like, Heartbreak
6 Hotel. But you had to pass over Edmunson Creek up at
7 the top of that hill.

8 So they were, kind of, stuck over where
9 they were. I assume they stayed in the garage. We know
10 that that's probable because they were part of that
11 group. They actually helped Frank Albritton get out of
12 Squeeze Inn. So we know that they were there. They
13 helped Richard get the Infirmary nurses out. Again, not
14 that they were in danger, but they -- that the water was
15 coming up, and they brought them up. And we know that
16 the grounds crew was then available at daybreak to go
17 down to help rescue people.

18 SEN. HUGHES: So no reason to believe
19 that, with the information, they couldn't have gotten
20 down to the office and down to those cabins to help?

21 MS. GARRETT: Correct. Absolutely.
22 There's absolutely no evidence that there was radio
23 communications going on, like, hey, guys, I need you
24 back over here. Come back over where you just were
25 and -- and help with this.

1 There was really very little -- or no
2 evidence of -- of radio communications at that point.

3 JUDGE MASSENGALE: And I would just say,
4 Senator, remember that around 3 a.m., 3:05 a.m., at Bug
5 House, which is the cabin closest to the river, Edward
6 told us there's about an inch of water on the road just
7 after 3 a.m.

8 So, you know, up to that point, you know,
9 there's no reason to think there was any obstacle to
10 those adults being able to get to the other parts of the
11 Guadalupe River camp that were, you know, on that side
12 of Edmunson Creek.

13 MS. GARRETT: Definitely not.

14 SEN. HUGHES: It's so hard to talk about
15 these things. And let me, again, thank everyone
16 who's -- who's having to listen to this and -- and
17 relive for many people in this room.

18 But as I asked that, you talked to us
19 about one little girl who was -- who was caught up in
20 the current, but then rather than ending up in that
21 grove of trees, she was able to grasp one of those
22 columns on the porch of one of those cabins along the
23 bottom of that ridge.

24 Would you tell us a little bit more about
25 how she told us she was able to stay there for that

1 long? I think that's worth remembering.

2 MS. GARRETT: It's a sweet story.

3 Her parents describe that, like, a little
4 monkey, right, she had her legs wrapped around the
5 column. She had her arms wrapped around the column.
6 And she described to her parents that she was digging
7 her chin into that limestone and using -- using her chin
8 too, right, and gripping in that column and had to climb
9 up a little to keep her head above water.

10 And she described to her mother how she
11 would grip with her legs so she could relax her arms to
12 rest them. And then she would grip with her arms so she
13 could relax her legs. And then she would use her chin,
14 you know, to help so that she could alternately relax
15 her body to survive on that column.

16 She's a deeply traumatized little child.
17 The parents have said she's really been struggling since
18 this. Obviously, that's, you know, the thing of horror
19 movies. But she -- but she did it.

20 SEN. HUGHES: And then -- and then you
21 told us -- for those campers and -- and those who were
22 taken by the current back into that grove of trees, and
23 there was that one tree you showed us, and you gave us
24 an idea of how high it was, how high the base of it was.
25 You mentioned that the tree -- you mentioned what

1 happened to the tree.

2 Would you walk us through that. After
3 the -- the water has receded some and folks are able to
4 get in, and -- and they've got ladders, they're getting
5 those little girls out of that tree, tell us again what
6 happened there and what happened after everyone was off
7 the tree.

8 MS. GARRETT: Sure. That was something
9 that -- that Edward described, as well as Richard.

10 After they got all of the girls out of the
11 tree -- which was, of course, no small task -- they held
12 them to -- they used ropes to hold them together so that
13 they could walk behind Bug House. Apparently, they
14 believed it was still safer for them to walk behind the
15 cabins to safety.

16 But, as they got the last people out of
17 that tree, the tree just fell over. So it lasted as
18 long as it needed to.

19 SEN. HUGHES: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Members, any other
22 questions?

23 Yes. The chair recognizes Chair Darby.

24 REP. DARBY: Thank you.

25 Thank you, Senator Hughes, for your

1 questions.

2 I did have, kind of, a follow-up.

3 One of the things that has been troubling
4 to me is the Eastlands went down to the end of the line.
5 What's the difference in elevation between Bug House and
6 Twins or Bubble Inn?

7 MS. GARRETT: That's a great question.
8 We're going to get that information to you. And -- and
9 that was something that somebody told me early on --
10 somebody that's really familiar with the area -- that
11 Bug House, you know, linear distance, obviously, from
12 the river, it's the closest to the river. And if the
13 river is rising, it's the cabin that's going to take on
14 water from the river.

15 And so it's always been the first -- all
16 throughout those -- those flood slides and, you know, in
17 '87, when those girls were evacuated -- it's always been
18 the first cabin to be thought of to be evacuated from a
19 rise in the river.

20 But, to your point, this wasn't just a
21 rise in the river. It was a flash flood. It was the
22 confluence of Cypress Creek and Edmunson Creek and the
23 Guadalupe and the stalled rain system that was making
24 water sheet off of the hill. So -- so now it doesn't
25 matter what the linear distance to the river is anymore.

1 Now it matters what the -- what the lowest cabins are.
2 Right? And those affected cabins were, of course,
3 literally in the worst possible point.

4 I mean, Bug House took water in all the
5 way. You saw the water line. But it was Bubble and
6 Twins that were completely subsumed with -- with water.

7 And, again, your point is well made. It
8 wasn't just the rise of the river. It was everything,
9 and that elevation mattered.

10 REP. DARBY: Don't you think that the
11 Eastlands' response was conditioned upon what had
12 happened in '87? That those cabins flooded first. And
13 so, in their minds, they were thinking, let's evacuate
14 those cabins first. Because everyone on this dais, and
15 I'm sure everyone in the audience, the first reaction
16 would be, get the youngest out first.

17 MS. GARRETT: Sure. And --

18 REP. DARBY: Get -- get the youngest that
19 are least capable of protecting themselves out first.
20 Not that the girls in Bug House and all the other cabins
21 shouldn't be saved. But -- but it -- I was just
22 wondering about the elevation between those two.
23 Because I -- I think I recall you saying that, maybe,
24 Twins -- the Twins and Bubble Inn may be at a lower
25 elevation.

1 MS. GARRETT: We can definitely get that
2 information to you. We've been -- we've been provided
3 that information.

4 But, again, yeah, it was -- you know, it
5 was -- history always pointed to water coming into Bug
6 House. That was the -- that was the only cabin -- as --
7 as Edward was quoted as saying and told us, no other --
8 you know, none of these other cabins, other than Look
9 Inn and Bug House, have ever taken on water. And,
10 again, that's from a rise from the Guadalupe. This was
11 just something completely, you know, different from --

12 REP. DARBY: One final question --

13 Or did you have something, Michael?

14 JUDGE MASSENGALE: I just wanted to add,
15 it requires speculation to -- to think about what was in
16 the mind of Dick Eastland, but I think we can draw some
17 reasonable inferences about it and -- and combined with
18 what we learned from Edward Eastland. I don't think
19 that their behavior makes sense if they thought that it
20 was possible that this water could go where it went.

21 I -- I'm inclined to think the evidence
22 supports the idea that they believed that the water
23 would not go higher. You have to believe they would've
24 done something different, right, if -- if they took
25 seriously the risk that -- that the water would go

1 higher.

2 What I think was likely a problem is that
3 the flash flood was a different category of risk from
4 the risk of flooding that is reflected in a 100-year
5 floodplain line or a 500-year floodplain line. Their
6 actions on that Monday of July 4 don't reflect
7 recognition that -- even as the water rose to a point
8 that they had not seen before and that they thought was
9 as high as it ever could come, that they still were
10 exposed to a risk of a flash flood, that wall of water
11 that was described in the video, which, unfortunately,
12 is -- is what happened.

13 REP. DARBY: One final question. We -- we
14 know about teacher-student ratios.

15 As we look at things to improve what we've
16 already done and what we need to do, should there be a
17 counselor-camper ratio?

18 MS. GARRETT: There is a camper-counselor
19 ratio in the administrative code. And I don't
20 necessarily have a problem with the way it's structured,
21 necessarily. But I do believe that it's impossible to
22 only have two counselors when counselors get nights off.
23 It's just -- to me, it just feels simply impossible even
24 from a minor standpoint, like the examples I gave, if a
25 child was inconsolable or a child threw up or -- or --

1 or just any number of scenarios.

2 So it's not so much the ratios that --
3 that -- and, of course, let me be clear. I'm certainly
4 not an expert in that. Right?

5 But that's not what jumps out at me. What
6 jumps out at me is the understaffing.

7 REP. DARBY: And the age?

8 MS. GARRETT: And the age.

9 And just strength in numbers. Right?
10 Three people can make a better decision. And if
11 something weird happens in the middle of the night, you
12 have somebody that you can dispatch to get the help that
13 you need. And now with walkie-talkies, they'll be able
14 to -- to ask for the help they need.

15 REP. DARBY: Thank you again.

16 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

17 REP. DARBY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Senator Perry.

19 VICE CHAIR PERRY: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman.

21 Real quick, a couple of things. The map
22 up there, flood play -- flood wane -- and I've gotten
23 more pushback than you can imagine of not wanting to
24 comply, or that's going to cost me money, or I'm going
25 to lose cabins, et cetera. All of those would meet

1 those criterias pretty much. I think Twins was, kind
2 of, right there on the edge. But under the new law,
3 there would not be kids sleeping there. But the
4 industry has not been happy about that, just to say.

5 The trigger point. Let me give you the
6 other trigger-point conversations. It's the biggest
7 weekend of our community. It's the time when
8 everybody's here. We don't want to sound a false alarm.
9 So that's -- that's -- that's the conversations. Right?

10 I can tell you there was changes or things
11 not done because -- not this particular instance, but
12 this culture, this industry has lots of political
13 pressure put on it. Right? If something doesn't go
14 well for a kid, then phone calls are made and things are
15 changed, or if things are not done or if things don't
16 want to get done. So it's bigger than just the
17 Eastlands. It's a whole mindset. And these families
18 got caught up in some of those histories of -- of, we
19 don't want you to do that. That's -- that's not
20 something a kid wants to do. You know, I can -- I can
21 hear it now. We all can.

22 So -- so there's that element to it. You
23 said it to -- you -- you articulate really, really well.
24 I'm a CPA. I'm not supposed to talk well. I just do
25 numbers.

1 MS. GARRETT: I don't know. My husband
2 might disagree with you.

3 VICE CHAIR PERRY: I would say the other
4 thing too -- and I don't think this happens with intent
5 or with awareness. But competence can breed subtle
6 arrogance that's inherent that -- that you just take it
7 on. I've got this. Right?

8 But to your all's conversation, Chairman
9 Darby and -- and the judge headed out there right off
10 the bat when we started back on the questions, and he
11 was spot-on.

12 Because of that particular, I got this,
13 I'm the -- I'm going to run this, or not, they had no
14 plan for a flood -- a flash flood.

15 MS. GARRETT: Correct.

16 VICE CHAIR PERRY: They had none. And the
17 reason they didn't have one that was effective is
18 because they'd never planned for it. And if they had
19 planned for it, they would not have trained for it under
20 the current leadership. So it would've done no good to
21 even have the flash flood plan because the very
22 frontline people charged with getting out of it would
23 never have been made a part of it.

24 You know, I -- I used to do cruises. I
25 don't like to do cruises anymore. But the muster drill.

1 I gripe. The first thing you do, you get on the boat.
2 You get settled in. All of a sudden, you're called out
3 in the hallways, and you're throwing your life jackets
4 on and doing the whole thing. And you're, like, really?
5 Why bother?

6 You know, and I think -- I'm not sure --
7 and I'll be corrected. I don't think they do them
8 anymore on some cruise lines because people push back.
9 I think they -- the last one I did, I don't think we did
10 one, and I asked about it. And I think they just, kind
11 of, gave a general speaker of evacuation plans.

12 So there's enough change that needs to
13 happen to go around for all parties involved. But this
14 one, because of that -- that -- that -- I did this in
15 '87, so it's going to work in 2025. By the way, I'm no
16 smarter than everybody, collected minds together. My
17 mind's going to beat everybody as a group. Those kind
18 of attitudes and arrogance that comes through with that,
19 whether it was -- it -- it just is deadly --

20 MS. GARRETT: Senator Perry --

21 VICE CHAIR PERRY: -- because they had no
22 plan.

23 MS. GARRETT: I could not agree more. And
24 I just want to point out something you're saying that --
25 that this pushback -- this pushback that you're getting

1 is just -- it's deadly.

2 Because one thing that I forgot to say in
3 the 1987 flood is, of course, that ten campers died.
4 And so I was in college in 1987 in Austin. So I was an
5 adult when ten campers died. And I'm an adult now, 38
6 years later, when 27 campers died and Dick Eastland.
7 And am I going to be 70 when boys at La Junta die or
8 Camp Stewart or Rio Vista or any of those?

9 I mean, when -- when is the complacency of
10 building sleeping cabins on a river going to -- when --
11 when are we going to zoom out and look at every couple
12 of decades? Are we prepared to sacrifice campers on the
13 altar of having cabins on the waterfront instead of up
14 on the bluff?

15 I mean, I understand that there are people
16 listening to this saying, I don't understand and -- and,
17 you know, et cetera. But, I mean, that's -- that's why
18 you're here.

19 VICE CHAIR PERRY: I'll make the one point
20 too that's been made clearly, and it's -- it's the sad
21 irony of it.

22 The obedience factor. If you would have
23 had a plan that was practiced and mustered and taught,
24 the obedience, the culture of obedience and of
25 submission to authority in that culture with those

1 counselors and those people that would've been dedicated
2 that responsibility to actually do the plan would've
3 been a hundred percent successful. And that's --
4 that's -- that's what -- the irony in my mind I keep --
5 these kids would've done anything you asked them or told
6 them or taught them or asked them to do. But for lack
7 of just a whole host of things we've talked about, they
8 didn't get an option to be obedient for the one thing
9 that could've happened that night.

10 When I picked the trigger point, what I
11 was told is you have somewhere between two and three
12 hours before a flash flood occurs or does not. And I
13 made a comment. There may be a lot of checkers playing
14 in the rec halls, but that's a cost I'm willing to take.

15 But the point, I guess, is it -- it just
16 shouldn't have been here -- this way. But the obedience
17 of those kids, if properly instructed and trained and
18 shown and walked the path when they got there the first
19 30 minutes -- we're going to take an evacuation route.
20 This one's not good; take this one -- it just solves a
21 whole host of issues --

22 MS. GARRETT: They would've done it and
23 done it well.

24 VICE CHAIR PERRY: -- not -- they'd have
25 known immediately the chaos.

1 When you said those kids and that one
2 little girl turned back to get her blanket when she
3 was -- you know, to your point, there was no rope with a
4 line and kids staying in it or -- you know, fire drills.
5 You go out in the hall. Tornado drills -- and you stick
6 your head in the knees, and you -- and you don't say a
7 word. You just -- it's automatic. No excuse.

8 But I want to keep going back. It's not
9 just Camp Mystic.

10 MS. GARRETT: No, it's not.

11 VICE CHAIR PERRY: And when DSHS comes
12 tomorrow, I'm interested to see what the new form has on
13 it and what detail it goes into and how depth and how
14 check the boxes isn't an option. I'll see where they're
15 at.

16 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Members, any more
17 questions?

18 (No response)

19 CHAIRMAN MEYER: None.

20 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Senator Menendez.

21 SEN. MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chairman Perry covered a lot of the ground
23 I wanted to go over. One of the things that I think
24 that we -- as policymakers, I think the theme for today
25 is we need to take out the human factor. Because, may

1 he rest in peace, but Mr. Eastland, whatever his
2 intentions --

3 Or, Judge, you said it. We cannot get
4 into his mind and -- and know what his mindset was or
5 wasn't at the time.

6 In my opinion, that's -- at this point,
7 it's irrelevant. At this point, what do we do in the
8 future? And -- and we've heard there must be a plan.
9 There must be practice. There must be -- you know,
10 there must be these things in place that would take the
11 human factor out for error.

12 But one of the concerns that I see -- and
13 I was reading an article about how when FEMA, in 2011,
14 had a lot of their buildings -- the Camp Mystic
15 buildings in the floodplain and flood zone, that there
16 was an appeal that, in 2013, FEMA then went out and
17 pulled some of those buildings out and then back -- they
18 went again and did it again in 2019 and '20.

19 Did y'all go over that at all? Did y'all
20 review those?

21 JUDGE MASSENGALE: We're aware of it.

22 SEN. MENENDEZ: Okay.

23 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Again, this has been
24 raised as part of the allegations in some of the
25 lawsuits. I think there's nothing inherently sinister

1 about people seeking a review of how a floodplain line
2 is drawn on a map if it affects your property.

3 I think it's a complex question that, you
4 know, may or may not end up being the subject of
5 litigation as to, you know, all of the factors that went
6 into that, how it occurred, whether it was justified,
7 whether it has any impact on, you know, anything that
8 happened.

9 I will reiterate, I don't think that had
10 an impact on the -- the story that we felt like we had
11 been primarily charged to investigate and report to you
12 about and, as I said, a complex question that, you know,
13 was -- was not part of what we've tried to resolve
14 ourselves.

15 SEN. MENENDEZ: Okay, Judge. Thank you,
16 Judge.

17 One of the other questions -- I think
18 that -- Chairman Perry talks about the two hours from
19 the flood warning. One of the things that's different
20 that -- I'm not sure if you visited with any
21 metrologists or experts in the topography or the -- you
22 know, the geology of the region.

23 If you have the confluence of the Edmunson
24 Creek and the -- the Cypress Creek and you're at the
25 headwaters, and then you've got cliffs on both sides, it

1 seems to me, based on the timeline, that that flash
2 flood -- where it went from, I guess, wherever it was to
3 29 feet, that was about a 45-minute window -- is what it
4 seems like to me.

5 I see one of your teammates nodding.

6 Did -- so did you meet with anybody?
7 Because, I mean, that means they -- that's how much less
8 time they have.

9 Has anybody testified, or have you talked
10 to anybody about that?

11 MS. GARRETT: We have not. We -- we have
12 not.

13 SEN. MENENDEZ: Okay.

14 MS. GARRETT: No, sir.

15 SEN. MENENDEZ: All right. Well, that
16 just makes that flash flood warning trigger that much
17 more.

18 MS. GARRETT: Yeah. More imminent.

19 SEN. MENENDEZ: Yeah, more imminent.
20 Yeah. Thank you.

21 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

22 SEN. MENENDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 SEN. KOLKHORST: I have one more question.

24 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Senator Kolthorst.

25 SEN. KOLKHORST: Thank you. One

1 follow-up.

2 Senator Hughes mentioned alert fatigue,
3 and I want to get a clarification on a statement y'all
4 made.

5 You were going through your timelines on
6 July the 3rd, and you said 91 flash flood warnings in
7 the last 25 years. Was that for Kerr County, or was --
8 what was that specific to?

9 MS. GARRETT: So that was information that
10 was given to us by one of the attorneys for the
11 Eastlands. It was a data point that there were 91 flash
12 flood warnings. My understanding was that that
13 encompassed the Camp Mystic area. You know, relevant to
14 that area.

15 Our research -- which I do want to be very
16 clear, we -- we -- we did some solid research, but we
17 need to really drill down on it. We could only find,
18 since 2009, three during camp sessions.

19 SEN. KOLKHORST: And that's what I wrote.

20 MS. GARRETT: -- 17 years.

21 SEN. KOLKHORST: Only three, since 2009,
22 during camp sessions, per our investigators.

23 I would love to have clarification where
24 those 91 -- and I -- I want to make sure they were
25 warnings and not watches.

1 And -- and one of the things that we found
2 through our summer -- for those of us that served -- I
3 see there's probably about four of us that served in the
4 special sessions. We -- we heard that, and we heard
5 that from a lot of people that were caught up, whether
6 it was near San Angelo or whether it was in -- you know,
7 Kendall County or Kerr County. And -- and I -- I think
8 it's real important that -- for -- for safety that we
9 start to really, you know, get better about this.

10 MS. GARRETT: We can firm up those numbers
11 for you.

12 SEN. KOLKHORST: I really do.

13 MS. GARRETT: Yes, ma'am.

14 SEN. KOLKHORST: Because I also want to
15 say that during the special session we all, kind of,
16 forget about all those things, or maybe the public
17 didn't even know all the things we did during special
18 session. But we have set aside, you know, obviously,
19 about 50 million for river warning gauges. I think
20 Mr. Chairman and -- specifically going to be deployed --
21 and -- and that was what I was going to get to. And
22 I -- I have personally inquired recently that I would
23 like to see those installed moving forward by the time
24 we get to camp season or summer season.

25 Number two, we're spending roughly 25 to

1 30 million on weather deployment that we're going to get
2 even better at so that we can gauge what we call these
3 rain bursts or these microbursts of things.

4 And so, as we -- as y'all get that to us,
5 I want to know is that a watch. Is that a warning?

6 MS. GARRETT: Sure.

7 SEN. KOLKHORST: And -- and drill down
8 into that because --

9 MS. GARRETT: I'm pretty sure they were
10 warnings, but I will clarify that.

11 SEN. KOLKHORST: Yeah. That -- that's
12 super important.

13 Again, if you're listening, take these
14 things seriously. Your life truly depends on it.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. GARRETT: For sure.

17 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Senator Hughes.

18 SEN. HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 I thank everyone for their indulgence.

20 Thank you.

21 Truly in the nature of cleanup to make
22 sure I haven't missed anything. We've, rightly, talked
23 a lot about the ages and the experience of the
24 counselors and about the number of counselors per cabin
25 and what it was historically. And we'll be able to talk

1 about that tomorrow.

2 Do we know -- in the course of your
3 research, have you discovered are there any industry
4 standards? We know there are not -- we know what the
5 regs are. But do we know if there are industry
6 standards or -- or how this is done in camps generally?

7 MS. GARRETT: Well, the -- the
8 administrative code does require age requirements. It's
9 a little bit vague. It's, frankly, something that we've
10 thought could be cleaned up a little bit. There are two
11 definitions in there. One is adult supervisor has to be
12 18.

13 So -- so there is a law regarding the age.
14 It's not perfectly written. There -- and then there are
15 the ratios in that same admin code. So the -- the
16 ratios are set up already. The age requirements are set
17 up.

18 The admin code doesn't say there needs to
19 be three; it says there needs to be this ratio. But
20 then when you have the situation where somebody's gone
21 for four hours for their evening off or gone during the
22 day for whatever amount of time, then -- then you have
23 that -- that skewed number.

24 SEN. HUGHES: Thank you.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Thank you.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 First of all, thank you-all very much for
5 your objective and factual investigation and your
6 presentation, which I believe is very important for all
7 of us to hear but especially for the -- the people of
8 Texas that are listening, everyone who's been deeply,
9 deeply affected by this July 4th flood.

10 You know, there's -- there's no one, I
11 believe, no matter whether -- whether you call
12 yourself -- to me, there's no sides. There's -- the
13 only side we're on -- I believe everybody is on is that
14 there's no one who wants a place that takes our babies
15 to -- that we knowingly allow them to operate -- that --
16 that we knowingly allow a -- as -- as was quote --

17 I'll use your quote, Ms. Garrett.

18 -- "a complacent flood culture to
19 operate."

20 There's no one, I believe, that would say
21 we should allow that. And, you know, I've handled a lot
22 of -- a lot of events in my career, hurricanes and
23 incident command and -- and emergency management. I
24 understand it very deeply.

25 And in that, you know, you -- you

1 prepare -- you don't -- it's not about preparing for
2 what may happen. You prepare for what will happen. In
3 hurricanes, you prepare for a 5; you don't prepare for a
4 1.

5 And if you know that this is -- we have a
6 history of this -- this type of disaster, you're in a
7 grassland or tornado alley or wherever you're at, that
8 you -- it is incumbent upon all of us -- as Chairman
9 Meyer and I have spoken about -- at all layers to be
10 prepared and for industry to also be prepared and be
11 responsible.

12 And so I think that's clearly a -- a -- an
13 objective -- a objective of ours -- is to continue to
14 ensure through legislation and policy that we make sure
15 that when our children are sent to camps and entrusted
16 there at that -- and -- and the camp -- and the camp
17 culture is very important to Texas. It's very important
18 to the families. It's generations. But you have an
19 expectation that when they are there, they are safe, and
20 the industry is prepared to take care of them and take
21 all measures to -- to -- to work with at all layers to
22 ensure the safety, especially with known hazards.

23 I -- I think that it should be a -- it
24 should be a place where your children go to have the
25 time of their life but not go there to have a high

1 probability of losing your life because you're not
2 prepared to -- for your responsibility, no matter who
3 you are.

4 At the same time, we want to be able to
5 make sure that all of our Texas citizens -- no matter
6 where they're at, in river basins, all over, hurricane
7 alley, that they are -- we do everything we can to make
8 sure that the agencies that are working there to ensure
9 their safety, that we're working lockstep to make sure
10 our Texans are safe.

11 I just wanted to just follow up with the
12 tour that we made and some -- some comments of yours,
13 especially Ms. Garrett.

14 The 21 steps. So when the -- when the --
15 the young ladies -- and correct me if I'm wrong here --
16 but they went from Chatter Box and Nut Hut, and they
17 were told to walk, and they were asked to walk, they
18 walked right by Twin and Bubble. So their younger
19 sisters -- the babies were there. They walked right by
20 them and -- and to Rec Hall. So at that point, am I
21 correct or incorrect to -- to state that at that point,
22 as the older girls were walking right by their -- their
23 sisters and the babies, could've said, let's go, and
24 they would be alive today?

25 MS. GARRETT: Had the counselors been

1 told, in Twins I and Twins II and Bubble, to join Jumble
2 House and the others walking to Rec Hall, they certainly
3 were able to do that then.

4 And you -- you touched on one of The
5 Impact Crater things -- is that there are several
6 families sitting behind me whose daughters did walk by
7 their younger sisters and did ask, can I get my sister?
8 And they were told, they're -- they're okay. They're
9 with their -- you know, they're going to be fine.

10 Right?

11 And -- and it's -- it's -- it's -- it's --
12 I mean, it's just an incomprehensible concept that
13 children could walk by these cabins and -- and not
14 follow along, like you said, and not be told by an
15 authority figure to -- instead of to stay put, to -- to
16 go with their sisters.

17 CHAIRMAN FLORES: So the planning across
18 the board through all layers, as we move forward to take
19 action on the facts that you-all have presented, the
20 ultimate goal, I believe, is to ensure that we're ready
21 for when this happens again. Texas is better prepared.
22 Would that be an accurate statement?

23 MS. GARRETT: Absolutely. I mean, it's
24 not a matter of if it'll happen again; it's a matter of
25 when it will happen. We've seen that. We know that.

1 The history is clear.

2 We can't have an attitude that something
3 is unprecedented or can't possibly be this bad. I mean,
4 it's just -- it's just such flawed thinking. So
5 absolutely. We have to be prepared, and there cannot be
6 a slip back into complacency. We can't -- we can't
7 allow that.

8 CHAIRMAN FLORES: So would you agree that
9 complacency kills?

10 MS. GARRETT: For sure. Unquestionably.

11 CHAIRMAN FLORES: So it's incumbent upon
12 us all, those -- those of us doing policy and those out
13 in the industry and throughout the state, that we take
14 away this, as you said -- your quote "complacency
15 culture" -- would be the big step in the right
16 direction. I think we've done that with a lot of
17 legislation that we've had.

18 But I want to, again, thank you-all for
19 the facts, objective facts. That's what we wanted and
20 we wanted our fellow Texans to hear. And so, as we move
21 forward to tomorrow, we'll be hearing more from -- from
22 DSHS and TDEM and -- and the families and the Eastlands.
23 And then we'll be able to go on with this -- this
24 conversation.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Just one more thing.

2 Ms. Garret and Judge Massengale, thank you, again.

3 Obviously, we appreciate all the hard work and effort.

4 I was wondering if you each had a moment,
5 if you wanted to provide any closing thoughts on this as
6 a whole. I would like -- I know we all here would like
7 to provide you the opportunity, as you've been digging
8 in for months and months and months and 140 interviews
9 and all the -- I would just like to hear any closing
10 thoughts that you may have before we adjourn for today.

11 MS. GARRETT: Sure. Want to go ahead, and
12 then I'll take over?

13 JUDGE MASSENGALE: Sure.

14 While our process is continuing, we are
15 looking forward to hearing what will be said here
16 tomorrow. And I think that there's an opportunity for
17 some follow-up questions.

18 I think today's discussion has -- has
19 highlighted some things that you may want to ask of all
20 the different people that will be appearing before you,
21 and -- and I hope that -- that they're all having an
22 opportunity to hear what we're discussing today, be
23 prepared.

24 I'm hoping that -- you know, that the
25 Eastlands will take advantage of an opportunity to -- to

1 speak to you but also to these families. I think this
2 is an important opportunity.

3 And, I guess, I just want to emphasize
4 that we -- we're going to be listening to that to take
5 it into account into the report that you've asked us to
6 work on. And so, you know, all of -- all of the
7 information that we've shared with you today is -- is
8 based on, you know, our best understanding of the facts
9 of -- as we've learned them so far, and -- and we'll
10 continue to try to refine and improve all of those
11 understandings for that report.

12 And I think it's an important thing you've
13 asked us to do. So we appreciate the trust that you've
14 placed in us.

15 MS. GARRETT: Yes, sir. And I would just
16 say that I think I -- I think I summed it up at the end
17 of my remarks already. So -- but, you know, give a
18 lawyer a microphone, right, and they will say it as many
19 times as people will listen.

20 One of the things that has made Michael
21 and I so effective together and Heather and Kim, but --
22 is that we have been a real yin and yang in Uvalde and
23 here. Right? You can see that I'm a little bit more
24 emotional about things. He's always very deliberate.

25 But it is true that I have absorbed a lot

1 of grief. I'm thankful for it. I thank God that He
2 prepared me for this job and that I could help bear the
3 burdens of these people on both sides.

4 I'm thankful to them for opening up their
5 hearts and their vulnerability and their family stories.
6 Some of the things they told me were deeply personal
7 that I would never share in public but that I will
8 always hold very, very close in my heart, okay, and my
9 soul.

10 And, again, everybody, everybody in this
11 room, both sides, as -- for lack of a better word --

12 Chairman Flores, you pointed that out. It
13 doesn't have to be sides.

14 I -- I -- I hold these stories with just,
15 you know, great deference and gratitude that they shared
16 them with us. And, as I said in my closing remarks
17 earlier -- I'll just reiterate -- I am so trusting of
18 you guys to do something with these stories. Let it not
19 just end after the report is finished being written
20 and -- and adopted.

21 I remain, even after 58 years on this
22 planet, hopeful in our system and hopeful that this
23 profound call to action will not fall on dead ears. And
24 it's not. It's clearly not. And I just really look
25 forward to seeing where you guys take this pain and this

1 grief and this -- and this event and -- and all the good
2 that you're going to do.

3 So thank you for the opportunity to -- to
4 work for you.

5 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Very good. Thank you
6 both. We appreciate you. The State of Texas
7 appreciates you.

8 CHAIRMAN FLORES: Thank you. Thank
9 you-all for your testimony.

10 Members, Senators, we will meet tomorrow,
11 April the 28th, at 10 a.m. in this same room to hear
12 from invited witnesses.

13 With that, is there any other business to
14 come before the committee?

15 (No response)

16 CHAIRMAN FLORES: The Senate General
17 Investigating Committee on the July 2025 Flooding Events
18 stands at recess subject to the call of the chair.

19 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Members, is there any
20 other business to be discussed before we adjourn?

21 (No response)

22 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Seeing none, the chair
23 moves to adjourn. Is there objection?

24 (No response)

25 CHAIRMAN MEYER: Hearing none, the House

1 General Investigating Committee on the July 2025
2 Flooding Events stands adjourned subject to the call of
3 the chair.

4 (Proceedings adjourned)
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF TEXAS)

COUNTY OF WILLIAMSON)

I, Dalia F. Inman, Certified Shorthand Reporter
in and for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that
the foregoing is a correct transcription, to the best of
my ability, from the audio recording of the proceedings
in the above-mentioned matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I am neither counsel
for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to
the action in which this proceeding was taken, and
further that I am not financially or otherwise
interested in the outcome of the action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
and seal this 7th day of May 2026.



Dalia F. Inman, CSR
Texas CSR No. 7423
Method: Machine Shorthand
Expiration Date: 04/30/2028

Kennedy Reporting Service, Inc.
Firm Registration No. 276
100 E. Whitestone Boulevard
Suite 148
Cedar Park, Texas 78613
Phone: 512-474-2233
Email: order@kennedyreporting.com