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Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates

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• (0900)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order.

Committee members, we have Mr. Jaffer before us.

Mr. Jaffer, the committee was not very pleased with your no-show. It feels that you have shown contempt for the committee. As a previous member of Parliament, you should know that when summons are issued, you have to respond. I think I speak for all committee members in showing our displeasure. We hope that this time your testimony will be totally clear so that we do not have to go through this performance again.

With that, I know that you have some opening remarks. I will give you five to seven minutes to do your opening statements.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Green Power Generation Corporation): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to address your opening remarks right away. I regret that I was unable to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates yesterday. As I explained to the clerk of the committee, I meant no disrespect to the committee or its process.

Helena and I have been trying to have a child for some time, and she had just completed the first trimester of a high-risk pregnancy. It had not helped that she had been under considerable stress as a result of her treatment by the Prime Minister and others. Despite her doctor's order to stop work, Helena insisted on continuing with many of her duties as an elected member of Parliament. Yesterday I was with my wife, as I should have been, when tests were conducted to ascertain the health of our baby. I'm relieved to report that the test results were good and there are no significant concerns about our baby's health. Needless to say, Helena and I were both pleased by this medical news.

I know that there were other demands on my time yesterday, but I truly believed that the right place for me was beside my wife while she was undergoing these tests and when she received the results. I expect that my wife's colleagues in the House and on the government operations committee would have done the same thing.

With that being said, I know that my lawyer did consult with the clerk on a number of dates once we found out that the 16th was not available to us. I would like to thank the committee for their understanding by accommodating me today, with this special meeting.

I'd like to clarify some points arising from my April 21 appearance. Prior to accepting the committee's invitation to answer questions, I was advised by my lawyer to take some time to review e-mails, documents, and Green Power Generation files concerning the issues about which I had been invited. He encouraged me to do so, so that the information I provided would be complete and accurate.

I ignored the advice. I was so upset about the treatment of my wife by the Prime Minister and other opinion leaders that I felt I should fix the situation as soon as possible. I was certain that if I just came and answered questions, I could refute the unfair allegations against my wife.

I know now that I was wrong. I inadvertently ended up providing incomplete information to the committee about a couple of important things, and I really regret that. It has embarrassed me. I apologize to the committee.

Obviously I knew that there would be a paper trail and an e-mail trail of everything I did at GPG. My lawyer told me to take a couple of weeks to find that material and read it over before I came. But I was in a hurry to get to the committee and to help my wife by explaining that we weren't doing anything wrong. Unfortunately, that message got completely scrambled and lost because I didn't have my facts straight about several issues.

For example, I had forgotten what was on my personal website, since I didn't use it for GPG business. I ended up first denying, then admitting, that something was there that was actually there...or not there that was actually there. Had I just prepared a little more carefully for this appearance, I would not have made that or similar mistakes.

I also was unprepared for the aggressive and nasty tone of some of the questioning at the committee. I took no money, government or otherwise. I used no influence. I traded no favours and I breached no trust. I was stunned that I could be accused of all of that without a shred of evidence. I was appalled that it happened here at committee.

I think my answers reflected how confused and shocked I was by the content and tenor of the questioning. While I have made mistakes in my life, I've always taken responsibility for them. I'm appalled and upset that anyone would so casually attack my character.

On my last appearance, I was asked why my wife wrote a letter on behalf of Jim Wright. I acknowledged that she should not have been promoting Jim Wright's business in her personal capacity if GPG was still doing business with him. As you know, Jim Wright is one of my wife's constituents. He contacted her office and asked her for assistance.

At the time, she questioned me about the business relationship with him. I told her that we were not doing any business with him and had no prospect of doing so in the future. I was well aware of the difficulties it would cause my wife if there was any potential conflict of interest. I wouldn't have told her it was appropriate to send a routine letter if I thought there was a chance of it causing a problem for anyone.

I was unaware that Patrick was still trying to initiate something that would involve the use of Jim Wright's company's technology.

This was in September. As most people are aware, I had a personally challenging fall. I wasn't as involved in my business as I should have been for a number of months. My partner, Patrick, carried most of the business activities during this period. When I became more involved with the company business again, nothing was happening with Jim Wright. There was nothing that would have caused me to re-address the issue with my wife. Only in April of this year, when the *Toronto Star* series was published, did I turn my mind to the fact that my wife had written a letter regarding Jim Wright.

● (0905)

It was my responsibility to keep up to speed with Patrick's activity, in this case an e-mail exchange regarding Jim Wright's company during September. I should have checked more thoroughly before answering Helena's question and before assuring her that there was no impediment to her writing this letter of introduction on Jim Wright's behalf. I regret not doing so, but it was an inadvertent mistake. It was obviously not intended to engage Helena in wrongdoing, since I was keenly aware that my business relationships and her correspondence were presumptively public matters.

Although it is not clear to me why this committee is concerned with this issue, I want to respond to questions that have been raised concerning the use of a government BlackBerry after the 2008 election. As members of the committee know, every MP is issued four wireless devices for distribution at their discretion. Based on my experiences, many MPs distribute a wireless device to their spouse. Helena decided that I could keep my old MP's BlackBerry, transfer it to her account, enable it from her system, and assign it as one of her four on her operating budget. The reason she did this was to enable me to keep track of her schedule and communicate regularly with her staff. As a cabinet minister, she was very busy and her schedule was constantly in flux. By having a BlackBerry affiliated with her office system, I had her schedule accessible and automatically updated. There are dozens of MP and cabinet minister spouses who have had government-issued wireless devices for similar purposes.

Further, in the 14 months I have had this device from Helena's allocation, I've sent thousands and thousands of e-mails from my business account and personal account at home, but I acknowledge that there may have been a few occasions on which I sent e-mails others sent to me or I replied on this government-issued wireless. This would have been inadvertent.

In my last appearance before the committee I was asked about Helena's office for my personal business purposes. It is not true that I used her office for my personal business purposes. I did use her office briefly after the election, as I was moving my files and other material out of my Parliament Hill office. There was a very short window after the election, and I was unable to clean out my office before I needed to vacate it. In any case, after the cleanout was complete, which was about a month later, I used her office as a point to meet up with people a few times. I met a few people at her office so we could go for lunch; after we met there, we left. We conducted no business in the office.

I met Mr. Wenger once in relation to a personal matter, which he wanted to discuss with me. I believe that every other person I may have met in my wife's office would have been registered on the visitor's log through security, and this log is available should anyone wish to consult it. I had my own office for conducting business at that time and had no need to use my wife's office, and I did not use it for that purpose.

Madam Chair, that's really all I have to clarify at this point. I'd like to go straight to the questions so we can fully maximize on the opportunity.

● (0910)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Jaffer, just before I start the questioning, your lawyer stated that you had documents, and I want to clarify that it was only one document that you had sent to the clerk. Is that correct?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's correct.

The Chair: Okay. And it is in translation.

Thank you.

We'll start the first round of questions with Ms. Coady for eight minutes.

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you for appearing today. I guess congratulations are in order for the impending birth of your child.

I could spend probably all day reviewing the inaccuracies of your April testimony, but I'm not going to do that. I'm going to go straight to some questions, if I may, Mr. Jaffer, and I'd appreciate your fullness in your reply and your accuracy in your reply. We don't want to have to come back again, and we could during the summer, if need be.

It's clear that you had access to government, including several senior ministers in this government. When you came back here in April, you talked about being friends with a lot of your former colleagues. I guess it was because of your previous role as chair of caucus. You talked about being friends, and we've had some discussions about being friends, but do you think you had access because of your friendship or because of your wife's position as cabinet minister?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I appreciate the question, Madam Coady. I'm going to do my best, as I did try in April, to help the committee with its work. That's my intention in being here.

I think after almost 12 years of being an MP—and many of you will find this out after you've served a long period of time and you move on to new work, whatever that might be after you leave here—your social network is still based very much on the work you did while you were an MP. In particular because I was married to Helena—we got married the day after the election—and she was working out of Ottawa, and we made our home in Ottawa, it was very difficult to distance myself from this social network. If I had moved back to Alberta, I maybe wouldn't have kept in touch as regularly.

You're asking about special access?

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'm not asking about your social network at all actually. You did have access to government. We know that. That's an established fact. You had access to five different departments on various and sundry projects.

Would you say it was because of your friendships at the time that you felt you could call—and you're talking about having that social interaction, that friendship—or do you think it was because your wife was a cabinet minister? Or was it both?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: All the people I've ever talked to are people I knew on a personal basis.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: It was on the basis of friendship.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Absolutely.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Okay, great.

I guess my concern—and I've raised this in the media before—is that we know you had access to five different departments. You're talking about friendship. I think some of your colleagues talked about being your friend. As a matter of fact, one of the ministers even talked about a personal phone call on that.

My concern is that not every Canadian has that kind of access. Do you think every Canadian has that kind of access to government?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, yes, I would argue, Madam Coady, that although there were people I knew from the time I worked as an MP, or people who I had gotten to know in these various offices, I would access any department—you mentioned five different departments—just as any Canadian would, by picking up the phone and calling it.

• (0915)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: But not everyone can get a cabinet minister or his senior official to have a look at his proposal and move it through. I'm talking about that kind of access. Being able to call up a government department and going through the proper channels are two different things. You clearly had kind of a special relationship.

My concern is that Canadians in general.... I was in business before I became a member of Parliament, and I certainly didn't enjoy that kind of access.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, I think as I recollect, most of my relationships were personal. Any of the evidence that has been brought to the committee's attention based on any correspondence I may have had with ministers, in particular, was often just on a friendly basis. It was to gather information.

Often, when I was looking for more pertinent information, I would deal directly with people other than the ministers, people within the departments.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: They're pretty senior.

I'm going to move on. As you know, we have only eight minutes.

Your company signed a contract with Nazim Gillani. We know that. We've seen that. It stated that you had “valuable connections to and with...the government of Canada and various departments [and] ministries...for ...purposes of providing participatory and non-participatory government funding.”

The same contract stated that you would be compensated with a finder's or advisory fee, and if you recall, Mr. Glénaud, in his testimony, said that if the government had expressed any interest in any of these proposals, you would have gone back to your clients and discussed next steps. That was what he said during testimony.

We now know there was a signed contract with Mr. Gillani that talked about a finder's or advisory fee. How did you anticipate being compensated by your clients? We know about the finder's fee. So if the government had said this proposal looked good and you started negotiations, how would that have gone? Could you describe what you had anticipated as your business model?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I appreciate the question, and I'd be happy to.

Before I answer that specifically, I just have to back up in order to clarify this particular agreement. As you know, and as I said in my opening remarks, unfortunately, during most of September, October, and November, I was not actively involved with my business activity.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Mr. Jaffer, I don't want to go down that road of having to show you timelines and numerous pieces of correspondence between you and Mr. Gillani. I think we should acknowledge there was a contract between the two of you and move to next steps. We have lots of timelines that show your engagements, so we'd appreciate you going through—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I haven't reviewed the material that Mr. Gillani has sent in. If you would be so kind as to provide it for me, maybe I could review it and then respond to your question more fully.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'd appreciate your response to my question.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: It was an oversight on the part of my partner, during his last appearance, when he said there was no contract in place. Unfortunately, that was wrong information.

The contract was in place. It was one I was not involved in designing. During the time I was removed from the company, I trusted Mr. Glémaud, as a lawyer, to design the agreement on conducting our business operations according to the law. I believe it was Mr. Gillani in particular who, during the committee, explained that for any particular contract, any further business agreement that would come out it—and this is what I recollect—would have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: So it would be like a contingency fee. If this happened, then you would go back and say that you would take this on a contingency.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, that was not my understanding, because contingency fees—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: He did have a copy of that contract. We understood—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I understand, but my understanding of the intent was that it was going to be for us. That was for Mr. Gillani to collect finder's fees. It's not something we would be allowed to do on government funds.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Well, it's in your contract that you would: finder's advisory fees.

Anyway, I'm going to move on.

We now know that you discussed three multi-million dollar proposals with Brian Jean's office, and the particular \$290 million proposal was marked: "From Rahim. Submit to department." This was marked on that proposal.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Sure.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: What did Mr. Jean tell you, when you spoke with him, as to what would occur out of that proposal?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: He didn't tell us anything different from what was on the website for the green infrastructure fund. He basically said to us that if we had any potential proposals that we were thinking about, we would be free, like anybody, to submit them. They would go through a process that would be evaluated to see if they were even fitting with the particular fund; if they were, then we would be asked to submit an application.

• (0920)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Not everyone gets personal attention, I don't think, from—

The Chair: Your time is up, Ms. Coady. Thank you.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Jaffer, before I go to the next round, when you were responding to Ms. Coady you said you had thousands of e-mails on your personal account. We had a motion for the production of documents; we haven't received those.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That was relating to government business. Not everything in my e-mails is related to any government business.

The Chair: So whatever you have sent us, you are telling us that you have given us whatever was related to your GPG business?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Everything relating to government—that was what it asked for. I have a lot of other things that I would communicate on my own personal and business e-mail.

The Chair: No, we just wanted your business e-mails that are pertaining.... I'm just clarifying that you've given us everything we had asked for.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes, it's all the relevant documentation according to the production of papers.

The Chair: Mr. Gillani's testimony is in the blues, and as an MP you can always access the blues. So I think that excuse will not....

Yes, okay. Anybody can access the blues.

The next round is Monsieur Guimond's.

[Translation]

You have eight minutes.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jaffer, I hope that you plan to tell the truth today. In our view, you lied on several occasions when you appeared last April. I can tell you that there is a great deal of doubt about your credibility.

I will give you some examples. When you appeared before us, you denied having used your old business card to promote your personal business. You said: "Again, you're pulling these things out from a great source—your source—*The Toronto Star*." I am reading your testimony.

Do you still deny having used your old member's card to promote your personal business?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Thank you for the question and the opportunity to clarify, Mr. Guimond.

I can say to you very clearly that I did not make it a habit to give out my old business cards. I understand—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Systematically?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes, systematically I did not make it a habit to give out my old business cards.

I recall in that particular meeting.... This is where the clarification happened when some of the witnesses appeared. After being defeated and not working as an MP, I very rarely wore the clothes that I used to, especially business suits. When I went to this particular meeting, which I was invited to attend—I know I was ill-prepared—I reached into my pocket and found these old business cards. I remember qualifying it, and I think you had a witness also say that I crossed a lot of the information out, because it was all I had in my pocket, but I qualified it—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Harvey, who appeared before us, showed us a business card that you had given him in August 2009. Is that accurate?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes. I remember telling him—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Yes? Perfect.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Excuse me, Mr. Guimond. Let me just say, I did tell him and I qualified it that this was a collector's item. I don't know why I would take the time to advertise the fact that I was—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: On that card, which we have a copy of, your title is Member for Edmonton—Strathcona, I believe, and President of the Conservative National Caucus. By handing out your card to Mr. Harvey or anyone else, you are implying that you had privileged access to the government.

My Liberal colleague asked you a question. You said that you met with Brian Jean and that he told you to simply look at the Web site. You allegedly met with ministers simply so that they could tell you to go to the Web site for information? Come on! That doesn't hold water.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: There were a few questions there.

On the business card issue, I will just say that I only met Mr. Harvey once, at that meeting. I did qualify that I was no longer an MP. Nobody challenged that. They knew I wasn't an MP, but—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: No, don't go back to my question on your business card. You confirmed that Mr. Harvey had told the truth. I want to know about your privileged access to ministers in the Conservative government as a former Conservative member having held several positions over the years and as former President of the Conservative National Caucus. That's what I want to know.

• (0925)

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Everyone at that table who I met knew, to my understanding, that I was no longer involved with the government. They knew I was defeated; they knew that it was just an odd occurrence that I had these cards. I qualified that with them.

I think Mr. Harvey even said during his testimony that he didn't even know I was married to a cabinet minister. So I did not at all promote the fact that I was a defeated MP. I remember that in some discussions I said I had some understanding, obviously, of the way government works. But by no means did I ever try to say that I exerted any influence otherwise than anyone else, other than being able to advise based on my own experience of what I had done when I was an MP and what I had experienced during my term.

So I would disagree and say that there was never any perception that there was any undue influence on my part. However, Mr. Gillani did set up this meeting—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: I don't know if you want to run again, but for the time being, you are no longer a member of Parliament. It

would be less complicated for you to admit that you were involved in illegal lobbying. Do you believe that you lobbied illegally?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Absolutely not.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: No? Can you give me the complete list of ministers or parliamentary secretaries you met with as part of your duties?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: You mean according to my business, if I'm clear?

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Yes. In my book, it's about your role as an illegal lobbyist and the fact that you were given Web site addresses. Give me the list of ministers you met with. You will perhaps tell us that all you talked about was the weather. If the ministers you met with had the time to simply talk about the weather, that means they aren't busy enough, in my opinion. They should be in charge of two or three departments, but that is another issue.

Give me the list of ministers who gave you privileged access to the government.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, there is no list, Mr. Guimond. I—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Give us the names of the ministers you met with.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I mentioned to you earlier, I have met with ministers, I have met with MPs, I met with many people after being defeated—never for business; usually it was for pleasure. The odd one that I did—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Oh, it was for pleasure.

In its June 5 issue, *Le Quotidien* from the Saguenay published the following: “The minister admitted earlier this week that Mr. Jaffer had called him in August to discuss a project to install solar panels on top of government buildings.”

You called him to talk about that. Is that lobbying? Do all people involved in projects using solar panels have that kind of access to Christian Paradis?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, as I said, Mr. Paradis wanted to know what business I was involved with—he and I were friends, obviously, when I served as an MP. I did ask him about what process—

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Guimond, you have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Michel Guimond: I just want to tell you that if I have more time—

[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But there wasn't any lobbying done, Mr. Guimond. I wasn't paid on behalf of anybody to talk to him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: If that is not lobbying, I will move on to the following people, if I have any time left: Lynn Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification; Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment; John Baird, Minister of Transport; Brian Jean; Tony Clement, Minister of Industry; Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for Science and Technology.

The ministers were forced to admit that they had spoken to you over the phone or had contact with you. And you were trying to get us to believe that you weren't lobbying? That doesn't hold water. You had privileged access to the Conservative cabinet because you had served as the President of the Conservative National Caucus.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Guimond.

[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I don't know if there was a question there, Madam Chair, at the end.

I'd like, if I could, just to clarify one thing. As I mentioned, I'm being accused here of doing illegal lobbying. There is one person who will determine whether or not that's true and that's the Commissioner of Lobbying, who I understand is conducting a review of all our business activities. We've been very open to work with her and provide her with any documentation she may need to conclude her review. I don't take this lightly, these challenges he's saying, without any proof, that I've done illegal lobbying.

I look forward to seeing the report by the commissioner. She will determine that.

• (0930)

The Chair: Fair enough. Thank you.

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jaffer, the difficulty with our situation today is that you came before and gave testimony, and what has been consistent in the testimony we've heard subsequent is that almost everybody has had at least one thing to contradict the testimony you've provided.

In every case, or in many cases, there's been individual testimony that's either overtly saying something different from you or else saying it's not quite the way you clarified it or that you stated things before our committee. The difficulty is that when we find out on the little things that there are inconsistencies in the testimony, it's tough to believe any of the testimony. I guess that's the difficulty for committee members.

I don't want to get really frustrated at the moment because I think there are some things we need to go through. We need to go through the testimony you provided and the testimony that we heard from subsequent people. I don't know if there's any clarification that you

can bring to this committee before we move forward and finish the hearings.

We understand there's no money that came from the government and went to you or to other members. We have no evidence of that. That's the first point. I think it's clear.

But there are questions with regard to the testimony you provided our committee. You have a responsibility to give us the truth, the whole truth, and I believe nothing but the truth. The testimony you've provided up until this point I believe has broken the trust with your former colleagues and has broken the trust with your former constituents. I believe you've also generally broken trust with Canadians as a result of the testimony you've provided.

There have been issues of business cards where you have unequivocally said.... You castigated Mr. Martin for asking the question; you dismissed it as being simply a story that was written in *The Toronto Star*. Then we had provided to this committee the actual business card—your member of Parliament business card—with nothing scribbled out or nothing altered on the business card. So that was one demonstration.

We heard from Mr. Gillani. In fact, while you said that after a couple of meetings you felt the business relationship wouldn't go any further and that it had ended, we heard from him that there was a contract in place and that the relationship, as far as he understood, was continuing. As a matter of fact, he described for us plans you had with him to travel to China for business.

We continue to hear these things.

The last time you were here, Mr. Jaffer, I asked you what seemed to be an insignificant question, but it was something I felt was important to fully understand. According to news stories, you had described on your personal website that you could help secure government support for businesses. You denied that through the majority of that meeting. When I finally was able to get a copy of the website, a cached copy of the website, it was as clear as day that that in fact had happened.

As soon as the news story came out originally, I actually tried to find your website. I couldn't find it. It had been taken down.

Mr. Jaffer, in your letter you read today, which we got a couple of days ago, you said you had inadvertently said this, that you didn't know about this website. You dismissed it as simply being a long lost memory.

I guess my question would be, who took down the website the day after the news story ran?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I know you covered a number of issues there. Would you just like me to answer the last one?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Let's start with that one, and then we'll maybe go through the other ones systematically.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Okay. Just to be clear, you're asking me who... that personal website, the Rahim—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: The personal website that was described in the news story. The day after the news story ran I couldn't find that website. Obviously it had been taken down. Who took it down? Who instructed that to be taken down?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, it would have been me because that was my website.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You took it down. Okay.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: The reason was, if I could—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Well, that—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: You gave a huge preamble. If you'd let me just qualify...

As I mentioned during that testimony...it was a bit frazzled. As I said, I was ill-prepared. I don't think I wanted to mislead the committee; I wanted to try to be forthright.

I had forgotten, quite frankly, about that website because all of our business was being done from our GPG website. When it was brought to my attention, I pulled it down.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Jaffer, you took the time and effort to take the website down.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, not myself.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You didn't take it down?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No. There's usually a hosting company that deals with websites.

● (0935)

Mr. Chris Warkentin: But you instructed that it be removed?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So the news story runs in the midst of all these news stories that are running. You read the news story, you say that's inappropriate, "I've been found out", or something. You instruct the folks to take it down. So you go as far as that. And then when you come before our committee, you say, "I don't remember that website ever existing." I mean, that's not plausible. That's not plausible.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, let me clarify—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: And again today, in the letter and the testimony you provide, you repeat that.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But there's some information that you're not privy to from the Conservative Party. I was instructed by the Conservative Party.... On the same day that website came down.... Again, I wasn't paying attention. It was my fault and my responsibility to my website. That website was developed soon after the election, and then, as I said, I forgot about it. It was there as information for people to try to get a hold of me. The party did bring to my attention, on the day that this news broke, that I had the Conservative logo on that website. Immediately, I said, "I don't know. Sorry. I've forgotten. I'll take care of it." I phoned the web-hosting company. I said, "Could you please just take the website down. It will be the easiest. It's causing too much trouble." That's one of the reasons that happened. It was not because of.... I didn't look at the detail of the website.

Again, I take responsibility. It was just simply because of direction from the Conservative Party saying, "You have a Conservative logo. Please deal with this." So I thought the best way to deal with it was to remove the website.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Jaffer, you deny that you ever gave out your MP business cards to people you were meeting with regard to your current business.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Right.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Jaffer, we have heard testimony that has refuted that. We even had Ian Harvey from HD Retail Solutions here, who was very clear in terms of his testimony that you had given it to him. In his estimation, that was intended to give him a sense that you were well connected to the Conservative Party or the Conservative government. You had stated, matter of factly...you had dismissed Mr. Martin's question as simply being, I think you said, just a *Toronto Star* media story. You dismissed it. Now we have, clear as day, evidence that in fact you were handing out that business card.

Do you feel that you at least owe us an apology on that?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I don't know what I can say, Mr. Warkentin, other than what I did in my opening statement, that this was not a habit for me to do this. That's why when I heard the allegations I was a bit surprised. Nothing on that card is relevant other than my name. The only thing it would advertise and reinforce is that I was a loser after the last election. Why would I like to continue to promote that, I don't know. I did say—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Jaffer, I believe we're not going to get a clear answer on that. I have only 30 seconds left—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If I could just finish, I did qualify that it was—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I have 10 seconds left, Mr. Jaffer, and I need to ask you one thing. At the request of the Conservative Party, my understanding is that you took the logo down. Subsequently, you took down the website. Is that true?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No. I remember this directly because there was so much wildness at the time. I forget the president's name now, but when he called me or sent me an e-mail saying that there was a Conservative logo on my website, I went to it, I saw it, I said, "Oh, my goodness." I phoned the company that hosted my website and said, "Look, can you just take the website down? It's causing a lot of problems. I need to look at it closely in the future. Just remove it." He sent me a note subsequently saying thank you. The website was down after that and I never put it back up.

The Chair: Thank you.

We now go to Mr. Don Davies for eight minutes.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Jaffer, on April 21, this was the exchange with my colleague Pat Martin. It reads:

Mr. Pat Martin: I want you to clarify this.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I can tell you, sir, that none of these things—

Mr. Pat Martin: Have you ever circulated your MP's business card after you ceased to be an MP?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I don't even understand what good that would provide. It would—

Mr. Pat Martin: It would only imply that you still have some sort of relationship to Parliament, even though you're no longer a member of Parliament.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I said, I'll go back to my opening statement, because I think it's clear that—

Mr. Pat Martin: Can you answer that question first?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I told you I never did those things.

You opened up your comments by saying that you wanted to clarify. You ignored advice, inadvertently providing incomplete information. I put to you, sir, that this wasn't incomplete information; what you told this committee on April 21 was outright false. Is that right?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Davies, if there was a habit of this happening—

Mr. Don Davies: I didn't ask you if it's a habit. I asked you if it was false, or if you're saying that is an incomplete or a false statement you made at this committee. It's an easy question.

• (0940)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, it wasn't a fulsome statement, because I couldn't recall that this happened on one occasion.

Mr. Don Davies: It wasn't fulsome.

Okay. Well, I have before me here a photocopy of the cards you handed out on August 25, 2009, at La Castile restaurant in Mississauga, Ontario. Is that the occasion you're talking about, when you inadvertently—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's right.

Mr. Don Davies: I have two questions here. Do I hear testimony correctly? You just testified that after your election you had business suits and you had left cards in your business suits, which happened to be there. Is that what you said?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Obviously when you serve as an MP, as you do, you have a number of business suits that you use. I stopped using business suits; I wasn't doing much business right after the election. I didn't even go through my suits. I just hung them up.

Mr. Don Davies: Sorry, I just want to make sure I have your evidence correct. What I heard you say just a few minutes ago was that the reason you had cards was that you had business suits and that there were cards left over in your business suit. Is that what you said?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: There was an old card—a couple of old cards—when I showed up at this meeting. Unfortunately, I didn't have my current business cards—

Mr. Don Davies: These were from your suit when you were an MP?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes. There were a number of suits that I wore when I was an MP.

Mr. Don Davies: Here is my question then. This card was handed out on August 25, 2009, sir, and you lost your election on October 14, 2008. So you're telling me that this was a suit that you had cards in from the previous year. What's that—November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, and August—10 months earlier?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Absolutely. I told you. I don't wear suits. I'm sure, right now, if I tried to go through all of them after this whole incident.... I still did find old cards, even from days when I was in the Reform Party. I had cards in some suits that I'd stopped wearing. The point is that I showed up at this particular meeting. I was embarrassed. I made a joke about how—

Mr. Don Davies: I understand—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer:—this is a collector's item.

Just to qualify, I never met Mr. Harvey ever again. I've never had any discussions with him or—

Mr. Don Davies: I didn't ask you that, sir. Follow my questions.

Why do you think someone who is actually the principal of a company would use a parliamentary business card 10 months after he has lost office? Why would anyone pull that card out? Even if they pulled it out of their suit and noticed that it was a card from the office of the national Conservative caucus chair, why would anybody put that card across the table to someone 10 months after he left office?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I continue to say, it was done more in a joking manner. Everyone around the table knew I was a defeated MP. That was no secret. I was one of the more recognizable MPs after my almost 12 years of being here. It was big news when I lost the election; I was one of the few government MPs who lost the election. It was no secret that I was a defeated MP.

Pulling out this card and saying it's a collector's item and being embarrassed...I think you had a couple of witnesses who said I crossed out information. I said I qualified it by saying that.... Not this particular one—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, there is nothing crossed out on this card.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Not this particular one, but I understand Mr. Wright, who was at the same set of the meetings, said I crossed out information. I know that if this had happened, as you demonstrated that it had, it was qualified, because it was very unusual that I would ever hand out something—

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Jaffer, you're saying that there were multiple occasions that you used your—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, I said this was the only time.

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, let me ask the question. You're saying there were multiple occasions after you were defeated that you used your government business card.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Let me clarify: no.

Mr. Don Davies: Well, you just said there were times when you took it out and crossed out information, and here is one where you didn't.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: At this meeting, you have testimony from people who were there. I know you haven't been following this committee closely. There was a fellow, Mr. Wright, who appeared. He was at this same set of meetings. He made it clear that I qualified it, that I crossed out the information on that card. With this particular gentleman, as I have said, I know I would have qualified it. Everyone knew I was a defeated MP, so why I would be handing out an invalid card for any purpose of influence is beyond me—

Mr. Don Davies: I have been following it closely.

Mr. Jaffer, let me go on. I have other things to talk about here.

Now, you said that your access to the government was no different from any other Canadian's. Is that right? Is that what you said?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I would say so.

Mr. Don Davies: Now, you had the cell number of the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Christian Paradis. Is that correct?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I did. At one point, it was sent to me by his assistant.

Mr. Don Davies: And you phoned Mr. Paradis on his personal cell number. Is that right?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: At his request.

Mr. Don Davies: Is that the kind of access you think all Canadians have?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I was caucus chair before my defeat.

Mr. Don Davies: Did I ask you if you were caucus chair before your defeat, sir? I asked you if that was special access—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: All of the information that is privy to you when you are caucus chair is summarized for you by the House of Commons. When you're defeated as an MP, you're given all those records and all that information. It's not left behind; it's given to you.

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, you're dissembling. I'm asking you a specific question. Do you regard having the personal cell number of a minister of the crown as being the same access that every Canadian has? Yes or no?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Well, he's a friend as well. Why wouldn't I have his cellphone? But I made sure, as I've said, to separate business and personal meetings.

Mr. Don Davies: Okay. Well, let's talk business. I have an e-mail exchange from August 26, 2009, where you e-mailed Brian Jean. You said you weren't lobbying, but your e-mail says:

Have you had a chance to look at the proposal for our solar project and power systems. Our preference is for the solar if there needs to be a choice between the two. I would love to talk to you about it if you have some time. Thanks, Rahim.

Now, if that's not lobbying, why would you indicate a preference you had for one of the two proposals put before the minister?

• (0945)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I said in my opening remarks, the bulk of all my business activity was done on my personal account, a Rogers account—

Mr. Don Davies: Sir, this is from “Helena Guergis, Assistant 2”.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: —and also from my business account.

There is the odd e-mail that would have been inadvertent, because I think there's only one or two out there that have that “Assistant 2”.... I do take responsibility. I should have been more careful. I either had been e-mailed directly from their staff or the minister or the MP directly to that particular account. Many of them knew I had access to the account. I had e-mails from the Prime Minister's office and other people's offices who contacted me at that particular e-mail because they knew it was an accessible e-mail from—

The Chair: Mr. Davies, you have 45 seconds.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But they weren't for business.

Mr. Don Davies: I want to ask you about the BlackBerry. You said you had access to your wife's BlackBerry out of her four allotted MP.... Is that true?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: One of the allocations.

Mr. Don Davies: You said it was to keep track of her schedule.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's right.

Mr. Don Davies: Now, I know that on the MP's BlackBerry, none of the other BlackBerrys have access to the MP's schedule.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If the assistant updates the schedule and sends you an invitation, it's updated.

Mr. Don Davies: The non-MP BlackBerrys do not have access to the MP's calendar on the other BlackBerrys. Were you aware of that, sir?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: All I know is what I can tell you. I don't know anything else that you're referring to. All I know is that when an assistant in Helena's office would make a change to her schedule and send the invite to me, it was updated automatically if I accepted it.

Mr. Don Davies: You couldn't see her schedule on that BlackBerry, could you?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I couldn't see her schedule?

Mr. Don Davies: That's right.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, but if they were sending me all the pertinent information to my BlackBerry about her schedule and I accepted it, then it would update on mine.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davies.

We now go to the second round for five minutes.

Ms. Mendes.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Jaffer.

To follow up on Mr. Davies' questions, it appears that you had a close friendship with Minister Paradis. In fact, it seems that you met on several social occasions in Ottawa, including having some beers. He has described you as a friend. Would that be a fair characterization?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: It's fair, except we only ever talked once after the election. I haven't met him in a physical meeting other than this exchange we had on the cellphone. I would have liked to, but I just hadn't met him or talked to him other than that call.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: But you were supposed to have met to have beers?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I would have liked to, but we never had the opportunity.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: So you never did have that opportunity?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: It seems pretty clear that you did enjoy privileged access to this particular government, but you seem to say that there was nothing unusual in the fashion in which you approached the ministers or their departments, even the fact that you met with senior officials. Are you telling us that this is normal behaviour for the government?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Again, you have to put it in context. I didn't take any contracts from anyone to lobby anyone. I didn't ask for any government money, other than those initial summaries that went in. We never put any applications in for government money. My whole social network comes from almost 12 years of being an MP. Of course I'm going to have interactions with people, but because my wife was a cabinet minister and because I understood the laws, I wasn't going to break any confidence by trying to lobby people who would be put in an awkward situation. Finding out information during the process of when I was trying to establish a business is very different from being paid to get access or privilege.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: But it's still privileged access, which I would say a Canadian, generally speaking, would not have.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: You will have access to your party. Let's say the Liberal Party forms a government again. You will have access to those people after your time of service here. It won't change. But it's how you use that access. If you are planning to abuse it, which I doubt you will, you will do the same thing I did. You will talk to people. You will never take any money—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Oh absolutely, socializing is not what is in question here. But I go back to April 2009, when you met with Mr. Wenger, one of Minister Prentice's senior staffers, in an office assigned to your wife, to Ms. Guergis, to discuss a proposal on behalf of RLP. What did Mr. Wenger tell you to do?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: To clarify, that meeting we had in the office was not for any business. It was personal business at the request of Mr. Wenger.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Mr. Wenger says so.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, it wasn't to do with personal business. I can recount the whole story of what happened, because I remember. Maybe I should, if that's what the statement says. I haven't seen this, so if you could—

• (0950)

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: It's his letter to—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I haven't seen it.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I will read the sentence in his letter to the Commissioner of Lobbying:

In the course of this conversation Mr. Jaffer asked if I would be willing to speak with a company that he was working with (RLP Energy Inc.).

I agreed to speak with RLP Energy Inc and subsequently received an email (attached) from Mr. Jaffer wherein he outlined a project in Alberta that RLP Energy was pursuing.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If I can just clarify that meeting so you have some context, I had run into Mr. Wenger on the street earlier that day, around lunchtime. It was close to where my office was located. He said he would like to talk to me about something. I said, "Well, I would be happy to meet with you. My office is just around the corner." He said, "I'm busy until closer to the end of the day." So I said, "That's fine. At the end of the day, around 5 or 5:30, I'll be leaving my office, going to meet my wife, and soon after we'll go home." He said, "Well, Minister Prentice's office is in the Confederation Building as well, so why don't we just meet there?" I said, "Fine, how long do you want to meet?" He said, "Five or ten minutes".

He and I have been friends for a long time—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Mr. Jaffer, about the RLP—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I know, but I just want to give you the context.

At his request, when we met about a number of different issues that were related to personal things he wanted to discuss, he asked me, "What sort of business are you doing?" So I told him, "Well, I'm involved in this. This is the sort of work we're doing on green energy." He said, "If there's anything I can do to help you, please let me know." I said, "There is this company that we're working with. I'll send you the information."

That was the extent of it.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: That's fine, Mr. Jaffer. I have to give the last few seconds to my colleague.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you.

I want to just follow up on something you said to Mr. Davies, my colleague. You said that staff knew you had access to Madam Guergis' e-mail accounts, and that the PMO itself contacted you on that e-mail account. Can you tell me who from the Prime Minister's Office contacted you on that e-mail account, and what was it concerning?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: To clarify, I didn't have access to her e-mail accounts. Those are all her own personal info. The only—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: To the e-mail account that came from her office.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's right. It was "Assistant 2, GuergH8". That particular e-mail account was one that many people knew was assigned to me through her office after the election.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Who from the PMO contacted you and in what context?

The Chair: You can ask that question later on.

[Translation]

Mr. Nadeau, you have five minutes.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Mr. Jaffer. If you could start over, do you think it would be a good idea to register as a lobbyist before putting in place a process to meet with people who are currently federal ministers?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I mentioned, I did not do any lobbying according to the definition of the Lobbying Act. If I had, yes, I would have registered; I would have had no problem with it. Discussing issues, especially of a social nature, with some of my former colleagues I don't think constitutes lobbying, so no, I wouldn't have registered, as I haven't now.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Fine.

Having said that, when you called Mr. Paradis last August, as was reported in the *Le Quotidien* newspaper—it is now June 2010, so that is quite recent in human history—it was to discuss a project to install solar panels on federal government buildings. You did more than socialize. I understand that you are buddies, long-standing friends, and so on. However, you spoke to the minister about something directly connected to Green Power Generation Corporation. At the request of the minister, or at least as a result of a friendly agreement, you contacted him directly.

Do you see why we cannot believe everything you have told us? You say that you had contact with these people only because they were your colleagues when you worked in politics as a member of Parliament. You say that you discussed installing solar panels with Mr. Paradis. You addressed an area that affects the company in question, the one you represent. As for obtaining information, you are an intelligent man. You can find basic information on the government's Internet site. But you overstepped your bounds by asking for information from a minister who decides whether or not to approve projects.

It goes beyond friendship when you talk to a minister instead of simply reading about an issue like any other citizen would. You were dealing with a decision-maker. How can you say that you weren't lobbying a person in a position of authority?

• (0955)

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If I understand your question correctly, you're addressing the issue of lobbying by the fact that I was talking to a minister.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You were doing so on the subject in question.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes. First of all, I was never paid by GPG, being my own company, to do any lobbying.

Secondly, when it came to the minister, when we approached his assistant about how we go about.... This is a brand new area. There's no information available on how to pay the government to put solar panels on rooftops. We weren't asking for money; we wanted to pay the government to lease rooftop space.

The assistant we approached to point us in the right direction said, "You know what? Regardless, I'll look into it, but Minister Paradis would like to talk to you, just to see how you're doing." So that's how the whole evolution of that telephone call happened, where I called him, we caught up, and he asked me how I was doing. We talked about families. I knew his family quite well because I was the chair of caucus.

After that point he asked me, "So what are you doing now?" I said, "This is the work we're trying to do at my company, GPG. We're looking to try to...with the federal government there may be opportunities to lease rooftop space, to pay the government so we can lease the space to build power projects. Your assistant said he'd try to get the information for me. I appreciate it. That's what I'm involved in. Thanks for asking."

That was it.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You discussed similar topics with Ms. Ambrose, who had become Minister of Public Works.

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau, you may ask one final question.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You spoke with nine public office holders, ministers or parliamentary secretaries, to discuss specific issues relating to your business, issues directly involving Green Power Generation Corporation. You did not just socialize with these people, you also had business discussions with them.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I have never spoken to Minister Ambrose at all.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: You made arrangements with her office to obtain information and to plan meetings with people from her office.

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau, your time is up.

[English]

We'll now go to Mr. Calandra for five minutes.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I too congratulate you and your wife on the news of a child. I have two of my own, and it's certainly going to change your life—I suspect for the better.

I'll go in a bit of a different direction, if you'll bear with me. You must be aware that there are different passports available, such as diplomatic passports; special passports for government office holders, members of Parliament, senators, members of provincial cabinet, persons employed by the Government of Canada in a non-diplomatic capacity, and spouses of cabinet ministers travelling on government business.

I assume you're aware of such passports.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Are you aware of the rules surrounding the use of these special passports?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes. I appreciate your asking, Mr. Calandra. This was quite a point of debate with one of Helena's staff after the election—for me. One of the things you know as an MP...as I was an MP, I was issued a special passport. To my knowledge, I know that other colleagues at the time would use that special passport not only for government business but for personal travel. I don't think many MPs carry two passports. I was always told you couldn't carry two passports, so I only travelled on the special passport.

After—

Mr. Paul Calandra: Let me just ask you, then, because it seems you're aware of the rules. Did you use the special passport to travel to Cuba on private business?

• (1000)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: What I did was I asked this former chief of staff to my wife.... I didn't feel comfortable taking a diplomatic passport because I knew I would have personal travel. Who wouldn't on a passport that you're issued? So I told her that I was going to try to go through the process to get a normal passport because I didn't want to have any confusion. She insisted to me at the time—and I challenged her on this, and we talked about it a couple of times—she said, “No, you are going to be issued this passport, the same passport, a diplomatic passport, as your wife because you're a spouse.” She informed me that you could travel on it for your own personal use. This is what she told me. I was suspect, except that when I was an MP, I only had one passport and I only travelled on one passport. So even though I challenged her with it, she said, “No, you're only going to be able to use this passport.” In fact, she arranged for my own personal travel...at one point, she arranged a visa.

So you trust your advisers in the role they have. They're the ones to check these things, and in her case it was the chief of staff. When she gave me this advice, I trusted it. I didn't feel comfortable with it, but I trusted it.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Then, clearly, obviously you did travel to Cuba.

Was there also an instance, perhaps in Panama, where we're led to believe there might have been a...?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I travelled to Cuba on a personal trip. It was like a stag. It was for a friend. I read reports of something about Castro. I think the closest we came to Castro was a picture in the hotel of the president. Other than that, I was surprised to hear that story.

As I said, I qualified it with the chief of staff at the time and said, “I know that I won't only be travelling on this passport with my wife, so should I not obtain another passport?” She confirmed and basically validated to me, “No, you don't have to. You can just travel on this passport.”

Mr. Paul Calandra: So Panama and Belize?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, I never went to Panama.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Belize?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Belize, when I was elected.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra, you have one minute left. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Can you understand the difficulty we're having? You were a member of Parliament for 12 years. We have to assume you understand the seriousness of the committee. It's very difficult for some of us to understand how you could not have been prepared on April 21, or didn't take it seriously enough to prepare on April 21. There are a number of inconsistencies we have. We know that the business card was used, maybe once. E-mails were sent, maybe inadvertently, but they were sent. Meetings in office: personal, not business. You used passports, thought the rules were a bit different, but didn't check into them.

Can you understand the very difficult time we're having with all of this, with all the testimony you provided, the inconsistencies? And after so many years of government, previous governments where Canadians expected a higher standard, where we expected a higher standard, would you agree that you failed the test?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I think the party I'm seeing before me, the Conservative Party, isn't the same party I joined when I was a Reformer back in 1997. We stood for democracy, we stood for freedom. The way my wife has been treated by your party and your government doesn't represent anything I've ever seen and that I worked for during the time I was an MP. You want to talk about disappointment? That's disappointment. She isn't even allowed to run in her own nomination because the party has said she's kicked out. The Prime Minister—

The Chair: Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: —called a process to say that she could clear her name, and then proceeds to kick her out of the party. You call that democracy? I don't understand. I don't even recognize this party anymore.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

We now go to Ms. Siobhan Coady for five minutes.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you very much.

I want to go back to a question I ended off with earlier. It was about something you said to my colleague. You said, “I had an e-mail address as assistant to Helena Guergis. The staff knew that I had this address. They were e-mailing me on this address on occasion, including the Prime Minister's Office.” You said, “I received e-mails from the Prime Minister's Office.” Who did you receive e-mails from in the Prime Minister's Office and what was it pertaining to?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Usually it was personal. My cousin works as the advance for the Prime Minister, so she often contacts me on that e-mail address to ask how I'm doing.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: So these are personal e-mails to Helena Guergis' assistant's email.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's because they knew that was one they could use in order to either get in touch with me through Helena's office or directly.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Okay.

So who else was there in the Prime Minister's Office? You gave an example of your cousin. I'd like to know who else and what it was pertaining to.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I have friends. I have a former assistant who worked in my office during the time I was elected. His name is Renze Nauta. I don't know his function now; I haven't been in touch with him recently. He would sometimes send me a note on that address.

•(1005)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I'm going to be quite specific, Mr. Jaffer. Did you receive anything from the Prime Minister's Office concerning any of the proposals or any of the issues concerning them?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, absolutely not. I made that clear in my first testimony, that there was never any—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: In your first testimony there were a lot of “inconsistencies”, as you called them.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: There were, but this wasn't one of them.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: You have not supplied this committee with any of your e-mails from the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's because they weren't related to the mandate of the study of this committee; otherwise, I would.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: The mandate of this committee was to look at all the green funding. So far we've had to look at other things, because of the inconsistencies in your testimony.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: The mandate of this committee seems to be everything under the sun, but I think that—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: That's disrespectful, Mr. Jaffer. I've been quite respectful to you and I'd appreciate the response back.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I've served on committees, just as you have.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: So you're categorically telling this committee, and hopefully with fulsome truth, that the only e-mails you received from the Prime Minister's Office to Helena Guergis' assistant's e-mail were personal in nature.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Absolutely.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: I don't know why they wouldn't use your personal e-mail address.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I just said that it was common knowledge. To many of my former colleagues, it was common knowledge that they could get hold of me through Helena's office. Not everyone—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Last week the Prime Minister's lawyer was here, as you know, accusing you of attempting to defraud investors by trading on your connections with government, and that Madam Guergis assisted you in that enterprise. Is that true?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I found that completely outrageous. There's no proof of it. For him to continue to perpetuate that sort of statement, as a lawyer, is beyond me. The only reason I can find to explain it is that they have to justify the way they treated my wife, so they're trying to dig up all these allegations.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Based on that, has the RCMP or anyone else been in touch with you or Madam Guergis concerning these serious allegations?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No. You'll have to ask my wife—I can't speak for her—but they haven't contacted me. I think she has tried to contact the RCMP about their so-called investigation.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: The lawyer maintained that he informed Madam Guergis of the allegations against both of you. Is that true?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Again, you'll have to ask my wife; she had the discussion. From what I understood, it was not clear.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: We've called her to testify as well.

I'm going to change the tack of the questioning now.

What can you tell us about RLP Energy and whether the company received government money directly or indirectly?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Can you repeat the name of the company?

Ms. Siobhan Coady: It's RLP Energy; it's the one you met with Mr. Wenger, a member of Minister Prentice's staff.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I don't know, because I wasn't directly involved with that company. It was my partner—

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Well, you actually met with Mr. Wenger concerning this to discuss the proposal; you personally submitted the proposal. In May you participated in a conference call with two of Mr. Prentice's staff and the president of RLP. So you were involved.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But as I recollect...I can't answer your question about any funding, because I wasn't involved with any follow-up on the funding on that particular company.

I mentioned to you that when I met Mr. Wenger, the nature of the meeting was, on his request, for personal business. Then I followed up with an e-mail at a later date on this particular issue.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: But you followed up quite significantly. Mr. Wenger actually agreed to put you in touch with Western Economic Diversification.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, if I could clarify, he suggested I contact them. I had my own contact in Edmonton, which I had developed over the course of being a member of Parliament.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: And you know that the proposal you submitted to Minister Prentice on behalf of RLP states that the company wanted to develop clean energy technology at TransAlta's Keephills utility site. That was the actual project. As you may know, the Harper government awarded almost \$350 million to TransAlta for clean energy initiatives. That was last October. So in the spring you were dealing with this; you had several meetings and conference calls with the minister's office.

Did RLP end up working with TransAlta, and could they have benefited in any way from this funding?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Mr. Lauzon, you'll have five minutes.

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Thank you very much.

I guess I should begin, Mr. Jaffer, by congratulating you and your wife on the upcoming birth. It's a pretty exciting time. Unfortunately, this is intervening.

I've been sitting here listening to testimony, and I've listened to some previous testimony, and one of the things I keep thinking about is, did it ever occur to you, after you were elected and you started this business, that maybe you should register as a lobbyist, that maybe you should look into that.

Did it ever occur to you?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I appreciate the question, Mr. Lauzon. We did have a discussion, Patrick and I, about this. We were clear on the law that if we were to take any contract that would pay us to talk to any government official, we would then have to, by the law, register.

We didn't know the nature of what our business was going to be. We went through a process that took most of six months or more to find out what type of business we wanted to focus in on, how we were going to develop that business, and therefore we didn't want to take any contract from anyone as a result, because we just couldn't promise anything. We didn't want to promise anything.

Once we had gone and established that process, if we were going to take contracts to lobby on behalf of anybody, we would have registered, we would have gone through the process. That never happened.

I've maintained—and I said this in my remarks the last time—that when I met with the Prime Minister shortly after the election, when he met with me, one of the things that came up is he asked me what I was going to do. I wasn't clear on that at the time, but I did say to him, with my wife's involvement with government, all of my connections, I don't want to be in the lobbying business and I'm going to do my best to avoid it.

And that's one of the reasons we did not take any contracts during this whole process. There were people offering us money and saying, "Why don't you represent us?" But that was something we resisted.

•(1010)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: During that conversation, did he encourage you not to get involved in lobbying?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: He said it would be tough. He said, "I know as the chair of caucus you're exempt from the Lobbying Act, so you're one of those public officials who could lobby." This is when I volunteered the information, and I said, "I'm not comfortable with it." He said, "You're right to probably avoid it."

Mr. Guy Lauzon: His advice was not to do it?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: He agreed with me.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Did you get other advice as to whether you should register or not?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I said, Mr. Lauzon, we followed the spirit and the letter of the law. We didn't take...the Lobbying Act—

Mr. Guy Lauzon: But as per your interpretation of it, what you thought you should do.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Sorry, can you be...?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: You didn't seek other advice. You didn't seek the Ethics Commissioner's advice or a lawyer's advice, or anything like that; you just said, probably we don't need to lobby.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I said, my partner is a lawyer, and he knew the law. He advised that unless we take money for any activities or talking to government, there's no need to register.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: But wouldn't it have been prudent to register at that time?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But I just told you we never took any money to lobby, so why would we register?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Do you not agree that it would have been prudent even if you weren't planning to take money? For example, if you would have registered at that time, I think you'll agree we wouldn't be having this conversation. You would have saved yourself a heck of a lot of grief, you would have saved your wife a tremendous amount of grief, and you would have saved a heck of a lot of the committee's time, all of us, just by registering.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Lauzon, I have to disagree with you because what you're alleging is that I have lobbied, and I haven't.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: No, I didn't allege anything. What I'm saying is if you would have registered from the get-go, we would have had none of this. It would have been so simple.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: But that would have been dishonest, Mr. Lauzon. I wasn't a lobbyist. I didn't want to lobby. I didn't want to register as a lobbyist. That's why I didn't take any money from my business to lobby.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Now we're going back and forth here again. You said, if we come across a case where we're going to lobby, then we would have registered. Why the heck didn't you just register as soon as you started, and then there would be no more concerns? I don't even think it costs anything to register, does it, or very little?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Again, let me clarify, and I'm sorry if I've created confusion.

My intention was never to lobby. Therefore, we did not take any contracts for lobbying. We didn't register as a lobbyist. That hasn't changed.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: So with hindsight, with the benefit of hindsight, you don't think it would have been prudent to register?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I'm looking forward to the lobbying commissioner's report on that. I think she will clarify a number of factors that I think are confused by many people about what lobbying means. So I would refer to her expertise on that.

The Chair: Mr. Lauzon, you're done. Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Guimond, you have five minutes.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to ask a question about the use of Ms. Guergis' office on the Hill, in the Confederation Building. Of course because she was a minister, she had a ministerial suite. Is that correct?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: She had an office in Confederation. I've seen many ministerial offices. I wouldn't describe hers as a ministerial suite.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: On the door, it said: "Helena Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women)"? I suppose you are going to tell me that you went into her office without ever looking at what was on the nameplate on the door.

• (1015)

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I don't know. I can't tell you that. I know it had her name on it. I don't know whether it had the ministerial—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Keep lying. Your credibility won't get any better. Keep lying.

In your letter of June 15, you wrote: "At my last appearance before this committee, I was asked about my use of Helena's office for my personal business purposes. It is not true that I used her office for my personal business purposes."

One of the reasons you mentioned for working in Ms. Guergis' office was that you had not had enough time, after your defeat, to pick up your personal files. Do you still agree with that statement?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If I could, Mr. Guimond, again, I don't recollect that there was a sign on her door saying that she was the secretary of state. If you can show me that proof, then I will be obviously proven wrong, but all she had on her door was her MP name. It wasn't a secretary of state plaque on that door in her office.

You asked about the office?

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: How much time did you have after your defeat to empty your member's office?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I think I was spending time immediately after the closure of my office here in Centre Block, so probably at the beginning of November, for a few weeks. Other than that, I'd helped her in November-December with some of the work on her Christmas cards and other things that she was doing, and then that was it. I think in January I maybe attended a couple of scheduling meetings at her request, but by March we had our own office in the downtown core and I was working out of that office.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Oh, I see.

Nevertheless, you acknowledge having met there with Mr. Wenger, Mr. Prentice's assistant. Farther down in the paragraph, you say: "I believe that every other person I may have met when at my wife's office would be registered on the visitor's log through

security [...]" When you say "every other person I may have met", how many people do you mean? Answer with a figure.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, I understand. We went through this as there were these allegations that I was using my wife's office in an improper way, and as I've said, we've said that this is not true. I could recollect—

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: How many other people met you there?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I can recollect that maybe there were three or four people during the time that I would have met, and it would have been on a personal basis, to qualify either to meet for lunch at the cafeteria or to go off the Hill, but it was a central point because my office was close.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: You met those people at Minister Guergis's office because, in your capacity as an unregistered lobbyist, you were happy to meet people there so that they could see on the door that you were meeting with them in the office of a Conservative minister.

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, you're mistaken, Mr. Guimond—very mistaken, actually.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: That is the real reason.

The Chair: Mr. Guimond, you have one minute left.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Fine.

Earlier, in response to a question by Mr. Calandra, you said...

I am going to ask two quick questions. In the current Conservative government, you don't recognize the Reform Party, where the platform was based on greater democracy. You don't recognize that party. You are bitter because your wife was fired, of course, is that accurate?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Even if you don't recognize the party, led by Stephen Harper, you ran as a Conservative candidate in the 2008 election. Is that accurate?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes, I was.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: You just acknowledged that.

I will conclude with a direct question. Why did Stephen Harper fire your wife?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's still a question that has to be answered. I think many things have happened since the 2008 election that lead me to believe, as I said, that the Conservative Party of today is not the same party that I worked so hard to develop. The treatment of my wife, disregarding grassroots democracy—this was the pillar of the Reform Party and subsequent parties to respect grassroots democracy and their choice as to who they choose as their candidate and who they send to Ottawa at a subsequent election.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Do you know why she was fired?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Guimond, your time is up.

Mr. Michel Guimond: Why was she fired?

The Chair: Mr. Guimond, your time is up. Thank you.

[English]

Nathan—Mr. Cullen—for five minutes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thanks, Jasmin.

Hello, Rahim. So you used a diplomatic passport when you were no longer an MP—

• (1020)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: It was a spousal passport.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You handed out your business card that said you were the Conservative caucus chair when you no longer were that. You used your wife's office intermittently to conduct business.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Can you tell us whether you ever travelled for business on your MP's passport?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I'm happy to answer that question. I do have problems with the statements you made prior to your question because I would say they're misleading.

Nathan, you and I served a long time together. I think you know my character and you know the fact that I would not abuse any privileges that I had through my wife's office or through the process of learning how to be a good MP. I wouldn't have been returned after four elections if I had abused that process.

The fact of the matter is, as I clarified to Mr. Calandra, when I was in the process of changing my passport.... As you know, the special passport that's issued to all of us—to me as a former MP—was asked to be returned after the election. I made representations about what my options were then. I was told specifically, from my wife's chief of staff at the time, that I was only to have one passport and I could use it for personal use.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You didn't trust that advice, though.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I challenged it.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You said earlier you were suspicious of it, but you still followed it, correct?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: The reason I followed it was that when I was elected as an MP I only had one passport.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Of course you can't have two. My question was very specific. Did you ever use the green passport, the MP's passport, to travel on business?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: While I was elected?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: After you were unelected.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You never travelled to China. You never went to Cuba on business. You never travelled with that green passport.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Are you able to provide your passport? As we know, when this passport is used, stamps are placed in it from any of those countries you visited. Would you provide that to the committee?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I can provide...I can look to see. The one passport, unfortunately, throughout the whole process.... I don't know if this was made public. I was inquired about this by a journalist. When we came back from our trip—we were away during this whole episode when this *Toronto Star* article happened, when Helena was dismissed from caucus and cabinet. When we came back it was quite tumultuous. We tried to get legal representation. I lost both my citizenship card and my passport. Helena didn't.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You lost both. Okay, and you lost the green passport.

The point I want to get at, Rahim, is this: did you travel on this passport, which is given out to members of Parliament only, to do business? You're saying no. You will or will not provide it to committee to verify whether that's true?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I lost it, but I never did travel on that passport.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You don't have it as proof.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's unfortunate.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I lost both that and my citizenship card, but I did report that to both the—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You understand that if this committee finds your testimony was contradictory or misleading, you can be found in contempt of Parliament.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Of course, yes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You understand the significance of that.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes, of course.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You want to be clear with this committee that everything you say is true.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Absolutely.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You said you didn't hand out your business cards. In a question from my colleague, Mr. Martin, on April 21, you said you never circulated your MP's business card after you ceased to be an MP. Yet we know later that was not true.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Right. Let me go back. I don't think you were here at the committee when I addressed this particular issue.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: No, but I followed the testimony and I read Hansard.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, but just in today's appearance, one of the things that I said happened with that particular business card—and it was qualified to the people at that meeting that day, because this wasn't a habit. I would not hand out a business card that—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: So you put a caveat on it. You said, "Here's this card. Use it."

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I said, "Here's a collector's item that happens to be in my jacket." Why would I advertise I was a loser?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I want to get at this point: you said you never paid for lobbying. Was there a notion that if a contract had been successfully granted to any of the companies you spoke of, you would then receive payment afterwards?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No, we never even got to that stage because we never put in a formal application for any funding.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I don't understand, Rahim, why you don't think it's lobbying. We have the e-mail exchange between you and Brian Jean, the parliamentary secretary who was engaged in this fund, which was the fund some of the companies you represented were interested in. You said:

Have you had a chance to look at the proposal for our solar project and power systems. Our preference is for the solar if there needs to be a choice between the two.

In expressing the preference, in expressing the choice, in expressing the interest, do you not see that as lobbying for one project over another? I don't see how, as an experienced member of Parliament, you can't see talking to a parliamentary secretary in charge of the funding as lobbying.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Just so you're clear, Nathan—

The Chair: Mr. Cullen, last question.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: —I appreciate this question because there is some explanation. There is a process for the green fund where you submit proposals. It goes through the minister's office. It goes through the bureaucracy. If it has merit, it's considered to go forward. If it has merit, then you are supposed to put in a formal application for funding.

None of our projects ever made it that far, but I understood that in telling Mr. Jean, these are our projects, these are some things we're interested in.... I wasn't paid on behalf of anyone to find out which ones may or may not be of interest to the government; that would constitute lobbying. This is what I've always maintained.

You can find out information from any government department, any individual you know in government. Unless you're paid to change anything or to ask for anything, unless you're paid—

•(1025)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: But you did ask.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's not lobbying.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You're doing it for free, so you're a lobbyist for free.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's exactly what.... I wasn't a lobbyist. My business was trying to determine what sort of work we were going to do.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's blurring the lines.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's why I never took a contract from anybody to do any of this work before I determined what kind of business we would do.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before I go to Mr. Warkentin, I just want to read something, and I want a clarification because I think it deals with...that we are operating under a truthful model here. The committee had asked, and I'll read you the motion that was adopted by the committee:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(a) and in relation to the Committee's study of renewable energy project funding by the Government, Rahim Jaffer be ordered to provide the Committee with all papers and records, both electronic and hard copy, from 2008 until today, as they relate to Green Power Generation Corp.'s list of clients, as well as any companies that Rahim Jaffer had discussions with in relation to green technologies, and as they relate to Green Power Generation Corp. and its partners and any government officials, either elected or not, and to the business of Nazim Gillani and International Strategic Investments with respect to involvement with the Government, and that the said material be delivered to the Committee within five (5) business days.

Now Mr. Gillani has given us the back-and-forth communication between you and him. I understand from the clerk that we haven't received anything like that from you. Before the committee does anything that requires a report, I would ask you the question for clarification: why didn't you comply with that order?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I think I did, because I did submit anything that dealt with government or GPG, around the caveat of what the production of papers was—

The Chair: Maybe it's with Mr. Gillani that you have supplied—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's right. If it had anything to do with government, I sent it in. I did not send in any personal e-mails relating to other business, because Mr. Gillani has the choice, I guess, to divulge all the business e-mails or any correspondence we've ever had. But according to what you asked for in the production of papers, I produced everything that was related to the study.

The Chair: Fair enough. We'll take it under advisement in camera.

Mr. Warkentin for five minutes.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jaffer, it's me again.

This is so much like déjà vu to me. Earlier on, I was asking about the website. It seems like this is a replay of the last committee meeting. I asked you specifically why you took down the website. You must have known what was on the website. You said, "I took down the website because the Conservative Party asked me to remove the Conservative logo from it." You said there was one action, to remove that by shutting down the website.

Mr. Jaffer, again, I now have cached copies of your website from April 8. Earlier in the day there's a "C" next to your name—the conservative "C".

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Right.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Later in the day, the "C" is removed. So the logo came down; the website remained.

This speaks to the fact that you're not willing yet to tell us the truth. If we can't believe you on the small stuff, how can we believe you on the big stuff?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I recollect, that website came down that day. If it did not come down immediately after the "C" was taken off...I had advised the people who were hosting the website to take the website down. It's an issue of semantics whether it was an hour, two hours, or that evening, but it was taken down that day.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Well, Mr. Jaffer, that's not what you said earlier in your testimony to our committee.

The chair asked me when you came in, "Should we swear Mr. Jaffer in?" And I said "No, I think Mr. Jaffer should be prepared to tell us the truth today."

What we have seen is consistent with what we've seen demonstrated by you in this committee before. You come and you say, "Only if you have evidence will I admit to something." "Show me the evidence", you always say. When we ask you for the evidence, you say, "I only have one e-mail. Here it is."

We've asked you for more than that. We've asked you to rebuild your trust with your former colleagues, with your former constituents, and with Canadians. You have done nothing like that today. You've continued to break down your trust. I don't know that there's any trust left.

• (1030)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Is there a question there specifically?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Only if you can rectify in the last three minutes of this committee, and either take responsibility.... Take some responsibility, at least—I haven't heard you take any responsibility today. I think that's the least you owe Canadians.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Just on this point, I have apologized to Canadians for not being properly prepared the first time. I've apologized to this committee.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Well....

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I've also said, and it's an issue of semantics—you can laugh if you wish and make light of it—I think Canadians, given the drastic stress we were under during all the scrutiny that came about, would understand that I would have made some mistakes.

I was instructed, as I said, to take that website down. Initially the "C" came down, but it's an issue of semantics—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: But that's not what you said.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: —that same day; the website came down. If you want to make an issue of whether or not it was a few hours later or the end of the day, I can assure you the website came down. It was no longer there, and I just thought it would be less of a headache. Initially, I think the web host said he got a call as well to take the "C" off. He did so, but when I followed up with him and said "Please take the website down", he did so.

I apologize if I made a mistake of a couple hours, but it did come down that day.

I don't know why you would make such a big point of it.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Jaffer, do you know a gentleman by the name of Jaime Watt who works for Navigator?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Do I know him? Yes, very well.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Do you know that he contacted Mr. Hamilton after the conversation that your wife had with Mr. Hamilton, the same day she was given the information with regard to the allegations levelled against her?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I think you'll have to ask my wife about that. I don't know the details of what he would have said—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You were speaking very clearly that you had no understanding as to why your wife had been removed as a cabinet minister and from caucus. You said you had no idea.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Other than allegations....

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So you do know that allegations have been levelled against your wife?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Only what I've read in the media, and most of that has fallen—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So you have never heard about the details of the conversation your wife had with Mr. Hamilton, which took over 20 minutes, as well as a conversation with Mr. Jaime Watt, whom you claim you know well. You have no idea as to what they were told in those conversations.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Again, it's not for me to speak for my wife or my wife's actions during the time of her discussion with the Prime Minister.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Well, you've made a significant statement here today as it relates to the allegations that have been levelled against your wife and as to why she has been removed from the Conservative caucus as well as from cabinet.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I did, in relation to the fact that she is not under any formal investigation, other than the Ethics Commissioner—

Mr. Chris Warkentin: We have heard contrary testimony at this committee—

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: There are other MPs in your caucus who are under investigation and who sit in caucus. She has not had a chance to clear herself and she has been removed from caucus, which makes no sense to me or the democratic process. That's what I'm most upset about. There's no respect for that, obviously, from your caucus.

The Chair: Thank you.

This is going to be the last question, unless anybody has any burning questions.

Ms. Mendes is next, and then Monsieur Nadeau.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

I would like to discuss a Dr. Hai Chen. Do you know him?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Yes.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: According to reporters, according to what was in the news, Dr. Chen sent an e-mail outlining his attempts to set up a Canadian industrial park in China. Ms. Guergis was given credit for that and she made the official announcement.

Is that the business in China you alluded to when you appeared before the committee last April?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No.

I did not know, and I think Dr. Chen clarified that e-mail in the press. I think he was just brainstorming an idea to Mr. Gillani. That's the nature of that particular e-mail exchange. I didn't know about any plans or thoughts that he may have had about including my wife in any sort of industrial park. I think he said that; I think he said that he never discussed it with us. It was just an idea that he had.

The nature of the work that I did when I went to China was to try to see new opportunities for one particular technology that I was working with. I wanted to see if the Chinese government, through our contact of Dr. Chen, would be interested in developing this green technology there. That was the extent of my work when I went to China. Nothing has developed as a result, but that was my focus. Any other discussion that Dr. Chen may have had with Mr. Gillani I wasn't privy to.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: Do you know if Ms. Guergis had planned to travel to China in connection with that project?

•(1035)

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No. To my knowledge, no.

[Translation]

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I am going to state a principle. Mr. Jaffer, before being elected, I had to officially state my desire to run, and we know full well that neither my party nor Elections Canada would have allowed me to put my name on a ballot if everything had not been done according to the rules.

I think the same logic applies to lobbying. Even if you did not know whether you would be successful in your attempts to obtain information or access, it seems to me that it would have been logical, for both you and your friends in government, for you to be registered as a lobbyist. That's normal. You should have registered as a lobbyist before you took any steps, because you might have been asked questions about the nature of your relationship with your friends and your former colleagues.

Wouldn't you have found that normal and logical?

[English]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I recollect, in our discussions about this whole issue of registration for the Lobbying Act, Patrick and I went through a thorough discussion of whether this was an appropriate action. Because we didn't know the nature of our business at the time and we were not—and I qualify, we were not—taking any contracts at all until we determined what sort of business we would do, there was no need, as we interpreted the law, to register.

Now, if we've done something wrong, we made it clear to the Commissioner of Lobbying that we will be held accountable. This is the way we interpreted the law, and we behaved accordingly, we thought. She's conducting a review of our actions as we were developing our business, and if we have done something wrong, I'm sure we will be held accountable.

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: But it seems to me that it was your intent to do some lobbying, Mr. Jaffer.

I want to go back to your relationship with Mr. Gillani.

Mr. Glémaud testified that if the government showed interest in one of your proposals you would then approach the client to discuss next steps. That is lobbying, for all purposes and effects.

How would you have been compensated by your clients?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Again, you'd have to ask Mr. Glémaud, but the way I understood it was that in order for us to proceed, by putting any application in—because there wasn't even a guarantee that if we went through the process we would work with these companies—we were taking a risk in order to get some initial information, to do some research, to find out what was happening. And I understand that many lobbying firms in this city charge for that kind of work, but we didn't want to, because we didn't know what we were going to deliver—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: But how were you going to be compensated by Mr. Gillani for the services you were providing?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As Mr. Gillani said—and my understanding of the contract he tabled and the way it was explained to me—for any future business, whether he was raising money in the private sector or we were raising money from the private sector or any other source, we would have to sit down and draft the terms of an agreement with the parties who would be receiving the money. So there was a wide range of opportunities for compensation, but we never made it to any of those second stages to discuss it. Our business relations ended with—

Mrs. Alexandra Mendes: I have to agree with Mr. Lauzon that it would have saved a lot of trouble for everybody if you had started by registering.

The Chair: *Merci*, Madam.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I appreciate that.

I would just say, Madam Chair, that I'm willing to abide by the expert in this particular area, the Commissioner of Lobbying, and I will follow whatever she determines once she's done her review.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nadeau, you wanted two minutes, and then we'll end with two minutes from Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nadeau.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jaffer, here is some food for thought. You probably had some friends before coming here, but you probably have fewer today given what you have said about the Conservative Party.

Documents show that you were in contact with various departments. We have heard that Mr. Christian Paradis, former Minister of Public Works and Government Services, admitted earlier this week that Mr. Jaffer had called him in August to discuss a project to install solar panels on government buildings. That is fine, he is a friend, and so on, but he is also a minister. Ms. Rona Ambrose, the current Minister of Public Works and Government Services, wrote that following a request from Rahim Jaffer in August 2009, a meeting had been organized by the department to discuss a proposal. The meeting was finally held with Mr. Glémaud in October.

And then there was Ms. Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, and Ms. Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State for Seniors, two of Rahim Jaffer's former colleagues. An article in *La Presse* states: "These documents show that there was contact on several occasions with members of ministers' offices or departmental officials or federal organizations which had to that point been spared in this controversy, including the Office of the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of State for Seniors, and the Western Economic Diversification Agency of Canada."

So the issue is one of direct contact with former colleagues. I am not sure that you could get that today, because of what you have said.

As for Mr. Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment, he had to admit to the House of Commons that his employees had met Rahim Jaffer a year ago. Mr. John Baird, Minister of Transport,

Infrastructure and Communities, admitted the same thing after the Minister of the Environment. Earlier this week, John Baird had to concede that his department had considered three projects put forth by Rahim Jaffer's company.

Mr. Jaffer acknowledged approaching Mr. Brian Jean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, on three projects. As for Mr. Tony Clement, Minister of Industry, he confirmed that the former Conservative member of Parliament had also sent an e-mail to a member of his staff. And then there was Mr. Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of State responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

This information comes from press clippings or TV.

Reports say that federal ministers of the Environment and Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, respectively Jim Prentice and John Baird, as well as the Minister of State for Science and Technology, Gary Goodyear, also submitted documents to the committee and to the Commissioner of Lobbying. The documents deal with correspondence from Mr. Jaffer and his business partner, Mr. Glémaud.

All of these situations paint a picture of people who were lobbying others they knew well. Based on our understanding of this approach, one can say that the Conservative Party opened its doors to a former colleague, to one of its own, by greatly facilitating access as regards potential projects with Green Power Corporation.

The Chair: Mr. Nadeau, conclude your remarks please.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: That is all, thank you.

● (1040)

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Cullen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Rahim, I'm wondering, and it hasn't been brought up much, are you aware of the Criminal Code sanctions against influence peddling? Let me help you.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Sure, please.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: The Criminal Code prohibits influence peddling not only by government officials, but also by anyone who has or pretends to have influence with the government or with a minister.

It goes on to say:

The application of this provision is limited to those who have, or pretend to have, a significant enough connection to government so that they can affect a government decision, such as the awarding of a contract. Anyone convicted of influence peddling is liable to imprisonment for up to five years.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: I'm happy to exclaim, as proof shows, that I have no influence whatsoever in delivering anything, so I'm not going to be subject to that provision of the law.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Here's the thing. The problem is the code doesn't say if you are successful or not. The code says that if you pretend to have the influence, you are potentially guilty of influence peddling.

Giving out your MP card, using an MP's passport, and doing work out of a minister of the crown's office pretends to have influence in connections you don't have, does it not? I don't know how you can't see this.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: If those things were accurate—those things are not accurate.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Oh boy, Rahim. We've looked through this. You said you didn't give out cards, you didn't use your passport. We find out that you did. You were asked at the April 21 meeting, did you have any further contact with Mr. Gillani after September 10? You responded no. We now know you met with him after that to plan various trips. Some trips were cancelled, some weren't.

It's hard to believe when you say you didn't do any influence peddling, you didn't do any lobbying. When the committee asked you specifically about connections to very important people in this case, you said you had no more connection with them, and then we find out later that you did.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Are you asking me specifically about interactions I had with Mr. Gillani, or are you asking me about influence?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: We asked you very specifically, did you have any further contact with him after September 10? You said only to return material he had sent to you. We find out later in the timelines that you in fact met with him again and again after September 10. You came in front of this committee and you said you didn't have any more contact with this guy, and yet you knew you did.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: As I said, and let me go back to what—

The Chair: Mr. Cullen, your two minutes are up. Mr. Jaffer can answer, and then I'll give the last one to Ms. Coady, and then we'll cut it off.

Only two minutes.

•(1045)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Thank you.

What I wanted to say was with the period of time that was determined after I had my incident in the news last September, I had withdrawn from a lot of the activity of my business—almost all of it, for a period of about a month and a half to two months.

From that period, it was my understanding that we were not pursuing...even though a contract was signed, which I was not directly involved with, with Mr. Gillani, business relations with him were coming to a close. That was verified to me in November with the document you will see when it's translated. There was a contract that was trying to be put forward for compensation with Mr. Gillani. He refused to sign it. We realized that the business relationship was done at that point, as I had maintained.

My timing was off on this, obviously because of what had happened to me. But that did not mean we cut off all communications with Mr. Gillani. There was no business done afterward. There were a lot of overtures from Mr. Gillani, and they came very short of materializing, including this trip to China that he said he was involved with. He didn't deliver on anything that he was supposed to, and I made my own arrangements to go with Dr. Chen.

There were many things that were talked about by Mr. Gillani, but our business relationship ceased. I think I originally left the committee with the impression it was in September. I was mistaken. It was a little later. It was in November.

The Chair: I would like the clerk to confirm. Did you receive the contract dated November 21?

The Clerk: From Mr. Jaffer? Yes, yesterday evening.

The Chair: Okay, fine. It was received yesterday evening, so that's okay.

Ms. Coady, two minutes, and then we have to go in camera.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you very much.

Something keeps troubling me here. As we talked about before, you were new to business and you were trying to establish your business.

As a business person, I always look at the earnings, how you make money and how you make earnings. I know you have a lovely new home, so you had to have had some compensation during 2009 and 2010.

So if we were to look at your T4—pull it up from the Canada Revenue Agency—what were your earnings? Did you have retainers, compensation, in some manner? How did you make money in 2009 and 2010, and what comprised those earnings?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Obviously these are personal questions to do with my finances, but I will answer them because I've got nothing to hide.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Thank you.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: The bulk of my income during 2009 was my severance pay after my defeat here as an MP. With that—also, I sold my home that I used to have here in Ottawa—I had budgeted to make an investment into my company and to not have to worry about finances for most of 2009, even into 2010.

That pretty much has been depleted now, obviously, with all the work that we've done and some other issues that I had to deal with that I had to dip into my savings for.

I have no income currently. If you looked at my T4 from 2009, it would show you severance pay and very little other income that comes from some property I own in Edmonton.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: So no retainers—you weren't on retainer for any firm—and no compensation, per se, just your severance and so on.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: That's right.

As I said, our goal...because I know you asked about our business model. It is a bit confusing, because, let's face it, we were new at this. I was an MP for 11 years. We were trying to develop a new business. I had been out of practice. We thought we were going about things in a prudent manner, not to take any money before we established what kind of business we were going to be in. We didn't anticipate many of these problems and bumps along the way that we've had.

So I have not received any income from my company or from the work that I've done so far.

The Chair: Thank you.

The analyst has just instructed me that he heard you say that the type of work that you and Mr. Glémaud were doing, others would get paid for.

He says, "Well, those are lobbyists." So were you free lobbyists?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: No. I said that a lot of work that we were doing was research for our own benefit to determine what kind of business we would do. We didn't want to charge anyone for our own need for knowledge and our need for experience before we established our business.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Jaffer.

Thank you, committee.

We have to go in camera to discuss further issues.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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