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P.L.  
86-36

Transcribed by

DDR Office, 968-6565s

TAPE I of II - SIDE 1

Oral History Interview

NSA-OH-07-84

with

Lieutenant General Gordon A. Blake, U.S. Air Force, Retired

19 April 1984

Lt Gen Blake's residence in Universal City, Texas

By Robert D. Farley

*NSA* *A* Today is 19 April 1984. Our interviewee is Lieutenant General Gordon A. Blake, United States Air Force, Retired.

General ~~Gen~~ Blake held the position of Director, National Security Agency, from July 1962 to May 1965, which was his last assignment before retirement from the Air Force. After graduating from West Point in 1931, he served as a Communications Officer with the Army Air Corps Unit in Hawaii. He set up the Army Airways Communications Office in Alaska, entered the Research and Development field at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and served in various additional command

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Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 11-01-2005 pursuant to E.O. 12958, as amended

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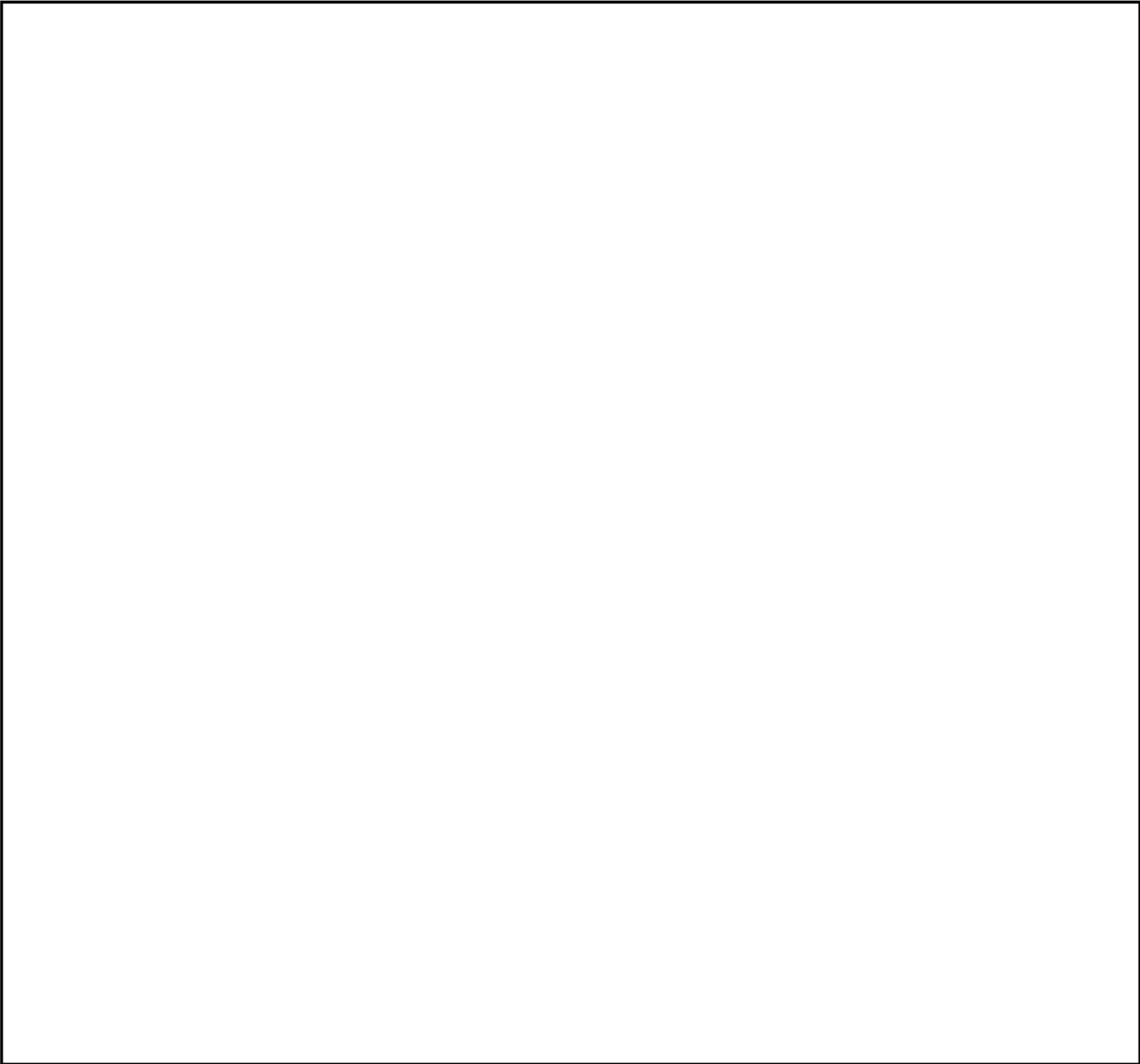


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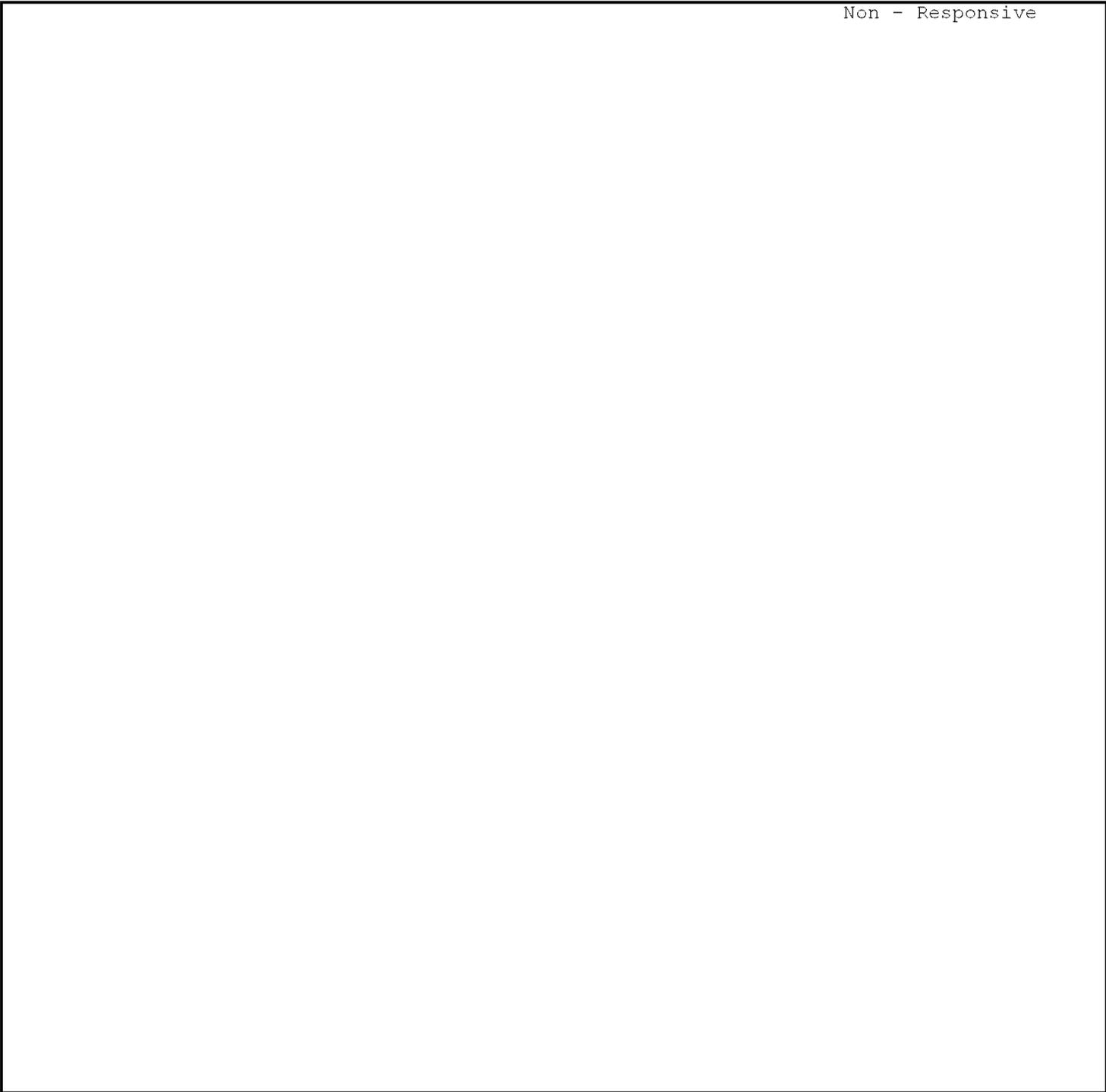
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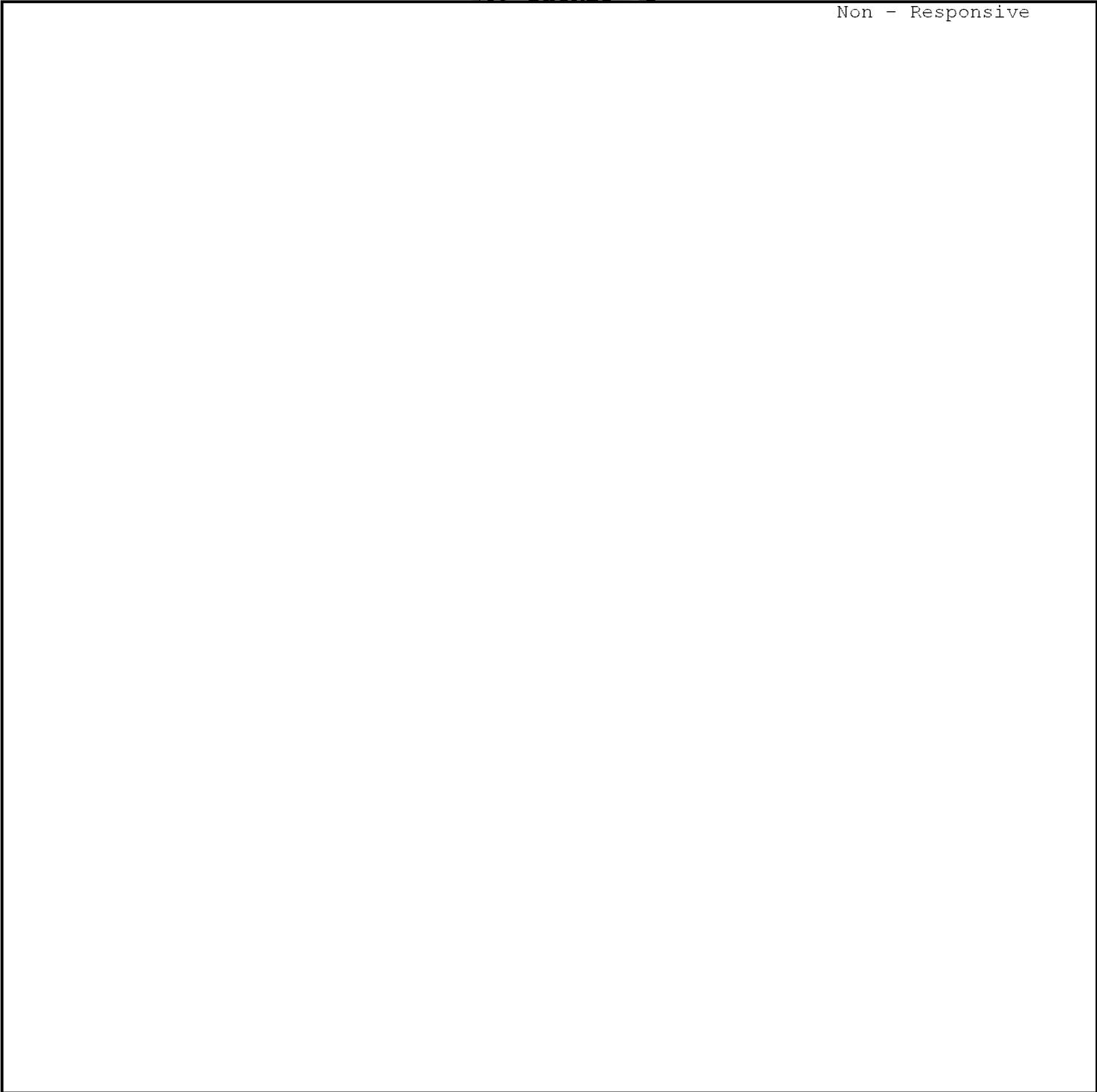
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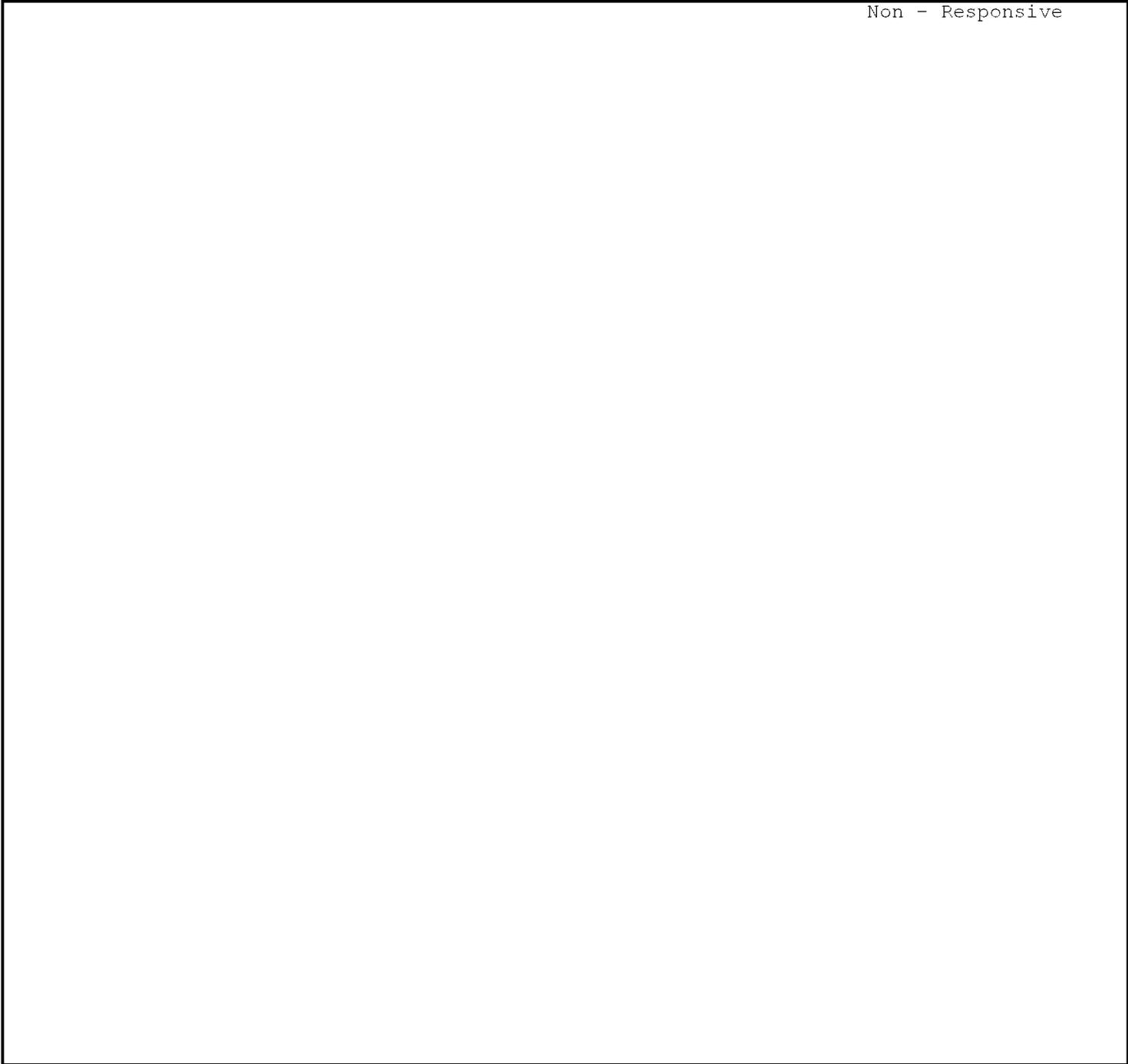
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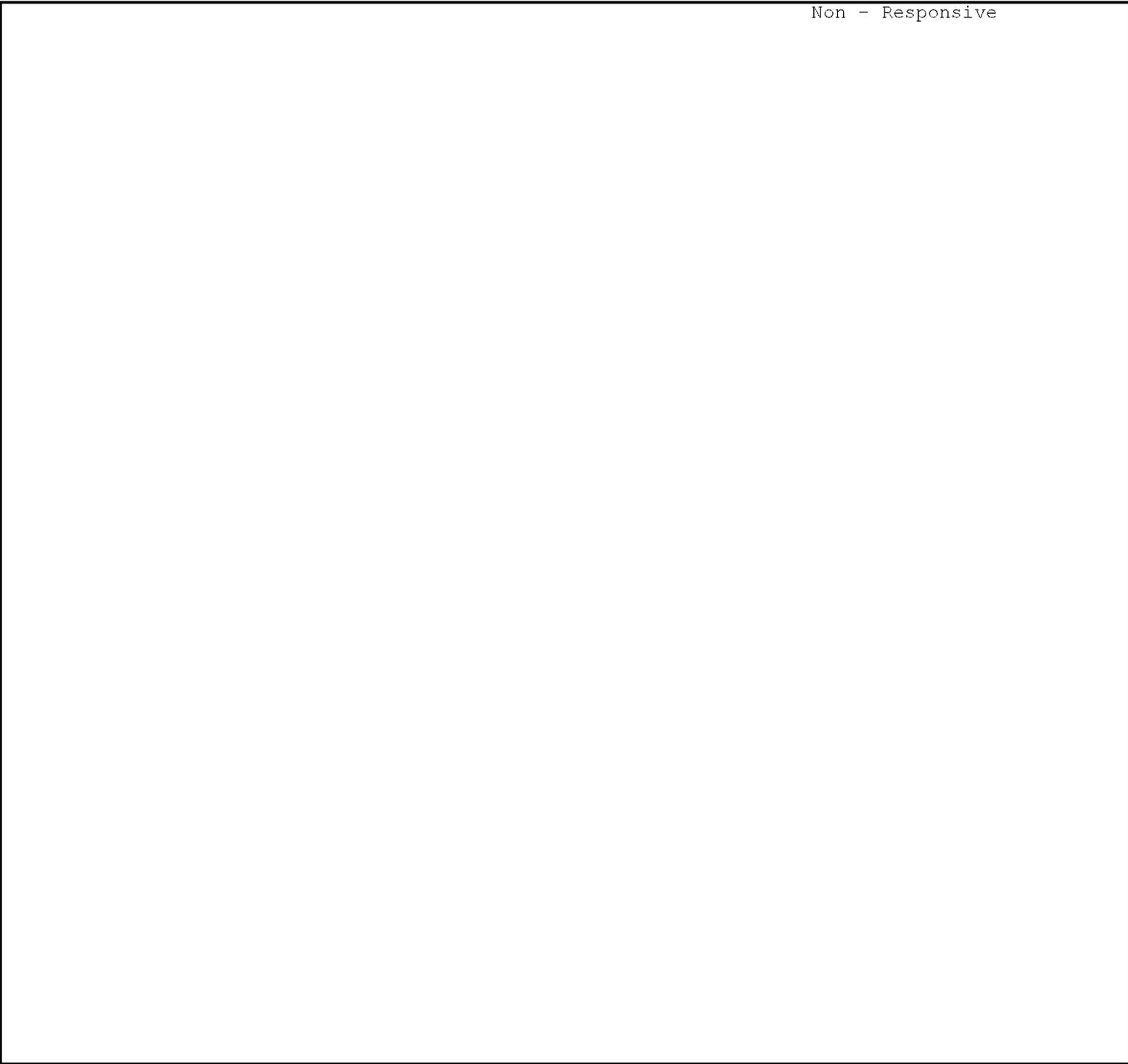
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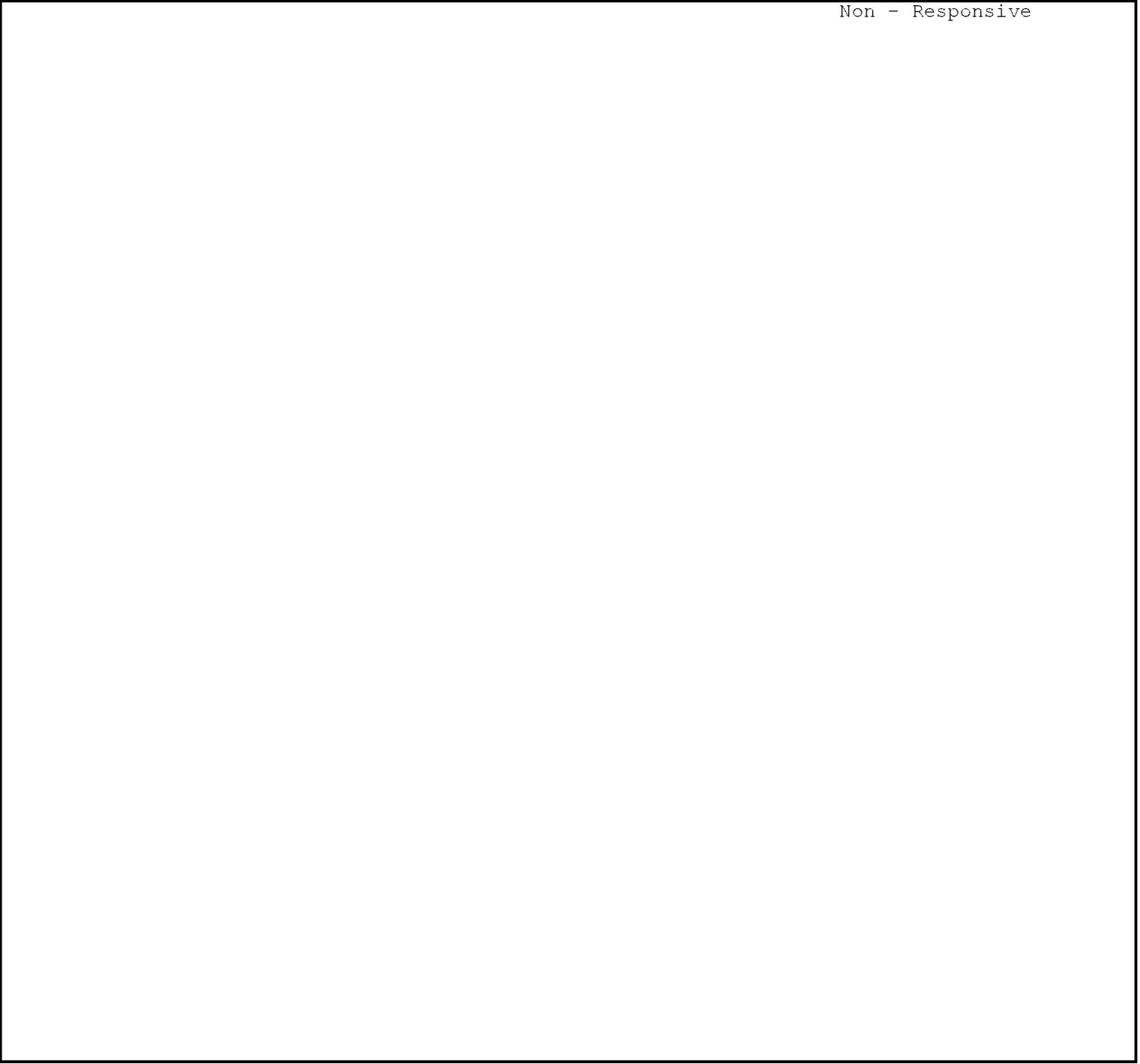
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FARLEY

Absolutely. Sir, do you have any comments on the controversial subject that has been plaguing NSA and its predecessor Agency for years, that the Agency is a producer of raw material rather than finished

intelligence, and we got this from DIA later?

BLAKE

No, no, that I treated when I became involved in it from time to time as an interesting, intellectually philosophical argument. Obviously, if we are reading their mail to the extent that you get a message that is absolutely incontrovertible and you hand that to somebody that needs that information, you handed him finished intelligence. If he prefers to call it "raw" and put his own stamp, I believe, on it, that's his privilege, that's his job really. If he starts, and of course he does with great glee and gusto, if they ever started which I never recall a case, by saying, "Well, we're not too sure that these guys know what they are talking about," because we were usually the first. <sup>This</sup> one thing that I always admired and certainly supported, that to the extent that it is raw and requires some analysis, and has got some holes in it, and I recall a famous message having to do with the Tonkin Gulf and the single word, I don't know what that word was now, but I recall being briefed on this particular subject, <sup>what</sup> ~~what~~ was that word, was it "key"

and it cast some shadow on the Tonkin Gulf message that I guess still exists.

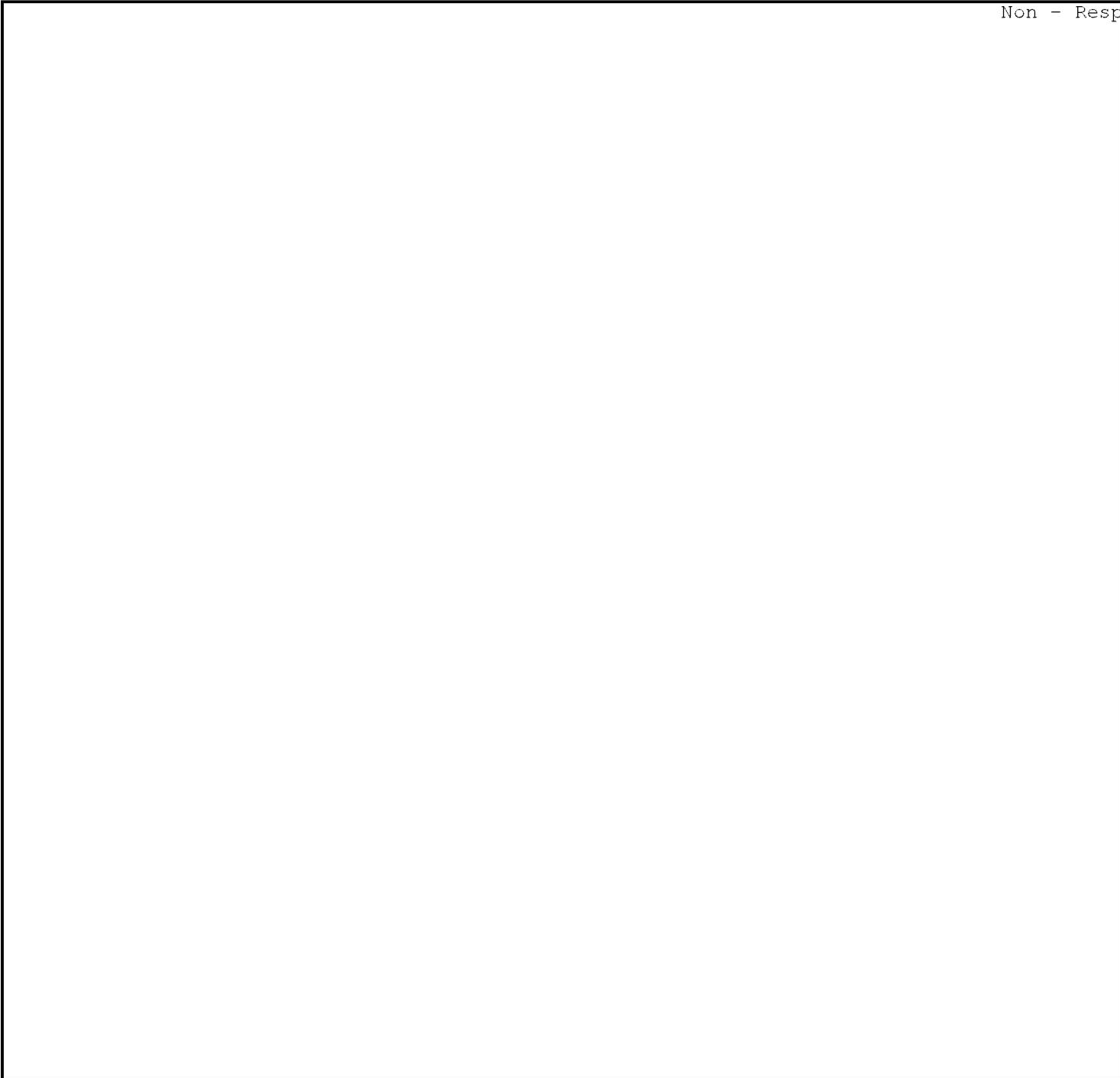
FARLEY Yes.

BLAKE But I never fought about that. I dismissed it. ~~It~~ It depends, it may be raw as can be, and it may be finished, or maybe somewhere in between, and I expect the customer to receive what we give them with whatever analysis we may tack on tending to validate or say, "Wait a minute, now don't put \$100 on this one, the odds are a bit long," and as long as we were honest, I never worried about that, because we produced a lot of finished intelligence.

FARLEY I know, call it what you will. Sir, you may have answered this, how deeply were you personally involved in the Bross Committee, '63, '64, in their discussions and decisions and actions?

BLAKE Well, I remember the Committee and I don't really remember how much I met with them. Don't even remember how it turned out.

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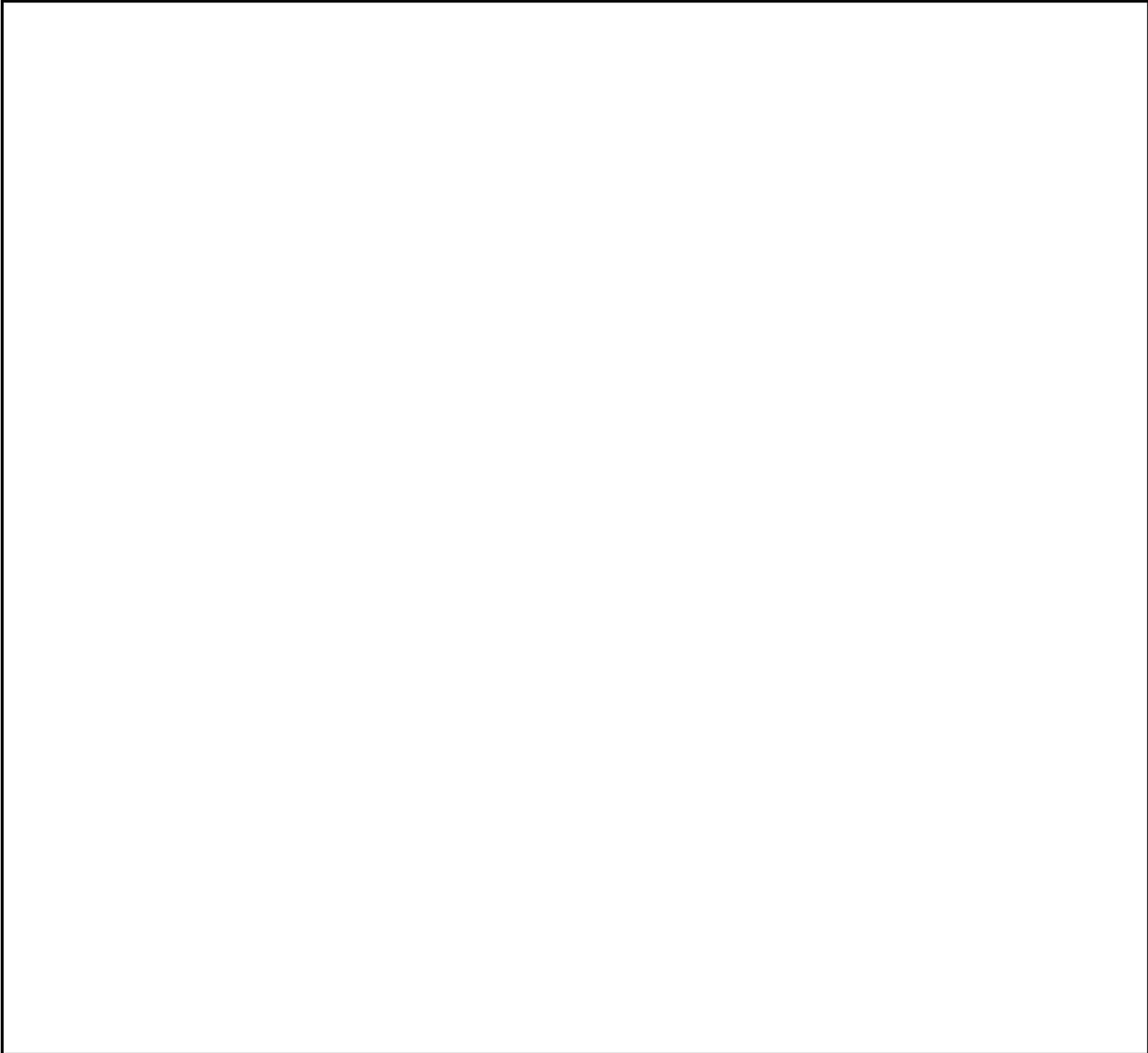
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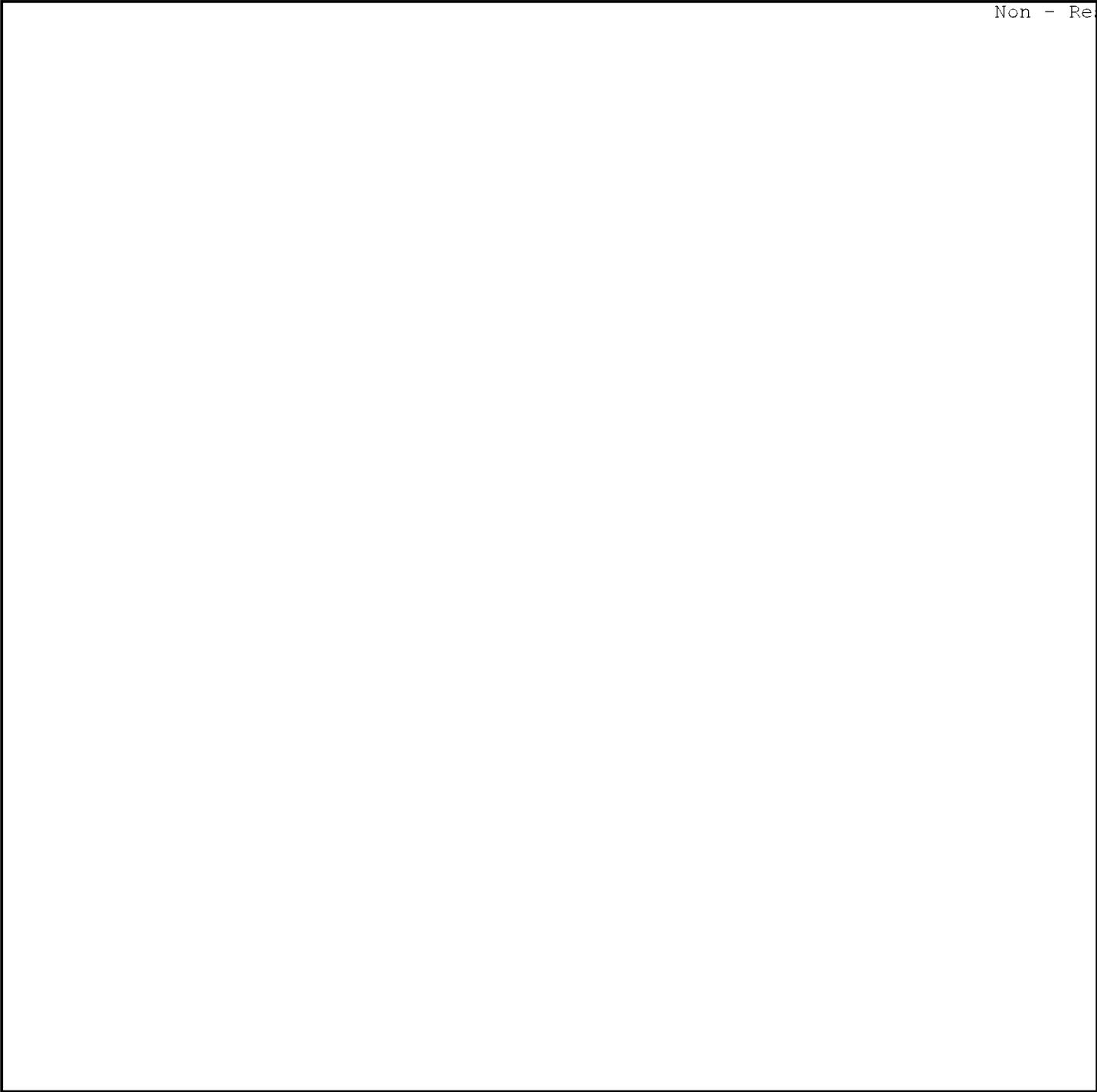
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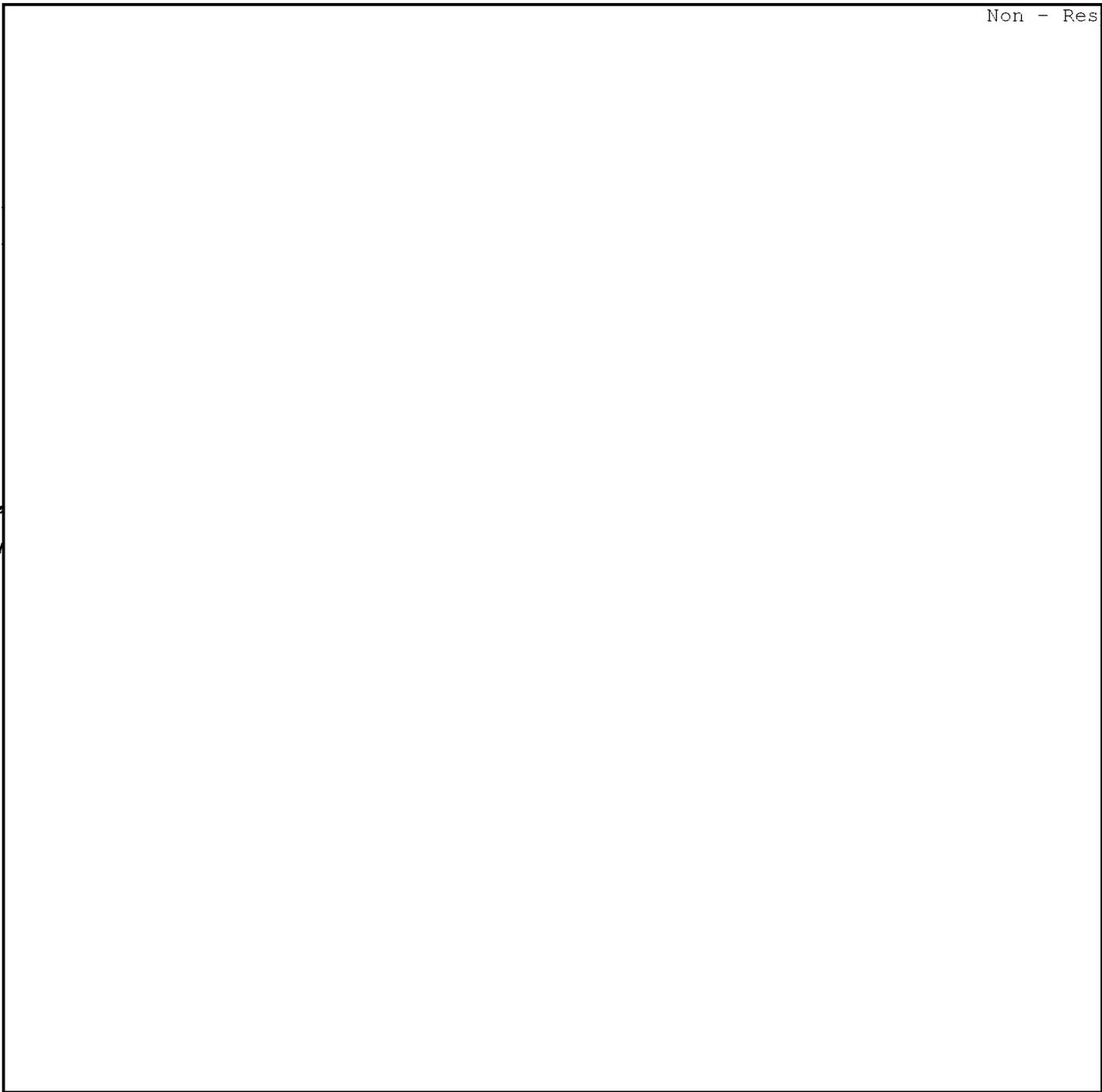
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FARLEY

*All right, All right,*  
~~Alright, Alright,~~ maybe this one -- the Gulf of Tonkin  
incident occurred in August '64. What actions did you  
take? Did you establish a Task Group, a SIGINT alert,  
any adjustment of tasking? You talked about the  
message, the question on one word. *pc*

BLAKE

The only thing I recall there was when SIGINT became so  
crucially important to whether the Tonkin Gulf incident

was exactly as it was portrayed. That was one of the few cases that I remember being briefed on very specific detail of that particular input, and I suppose the reason for that was that sometimes the Director had to be in a position to say, "Yes, I know all about that, I have gone into every last detail of it, and I believe what we say." That was probably the reason that I wanted to be on top of that particular one, but ~~I recall~~ I wish I could remember that word. It had different meanings. ~~W~~

~~FARLEY~~

~~Oh, I see.~~

~~BLAKE~~

~~S.~~ depending on exactly how the thing was used.

FARLEY

I should dig it out of the Archives and send you a copy, if I can. (Laughter) No?

BLAKE

Don't worry about it.

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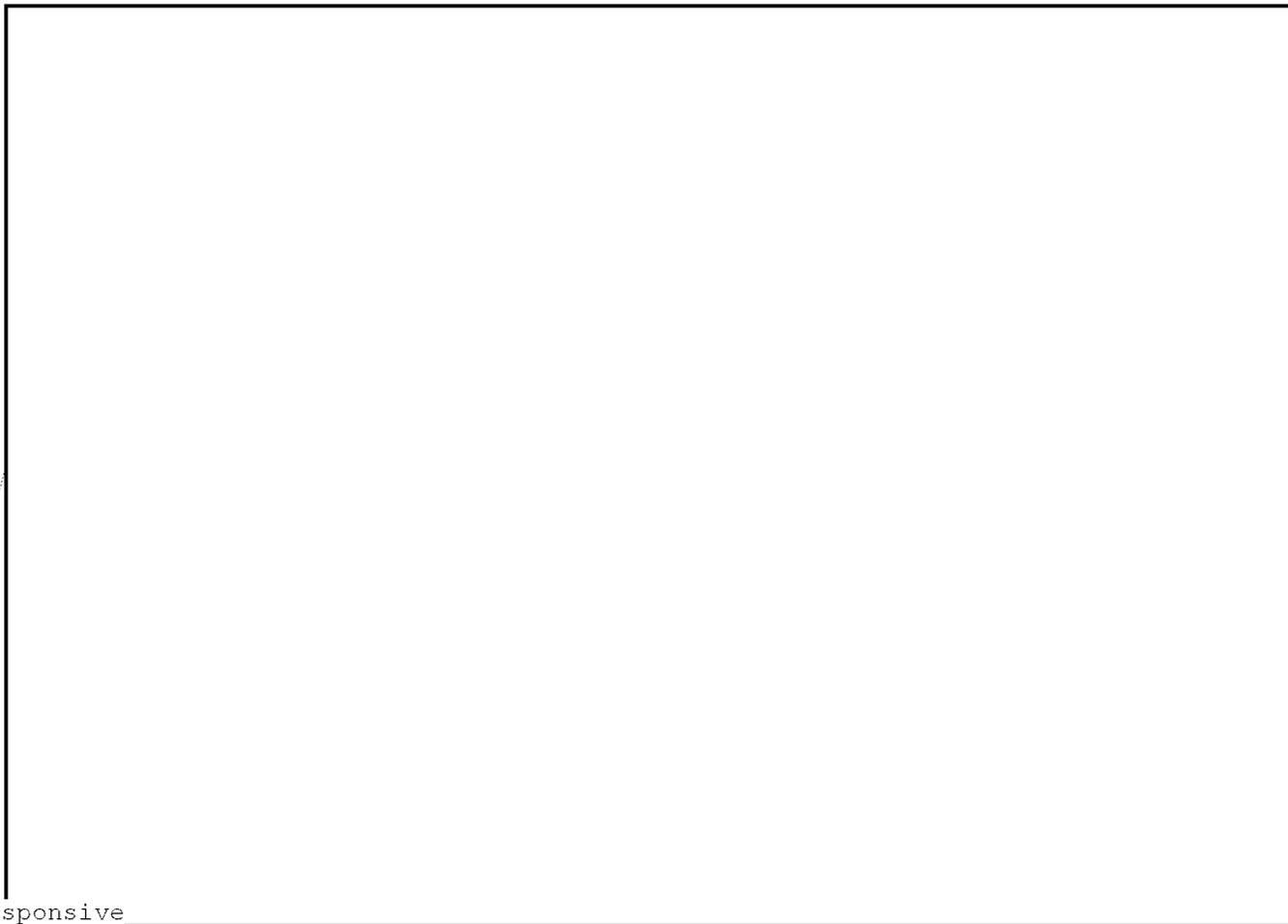
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IPLACE: SAB 2, T453

IVIEWER: FARLEY/JOHNSON

Farley

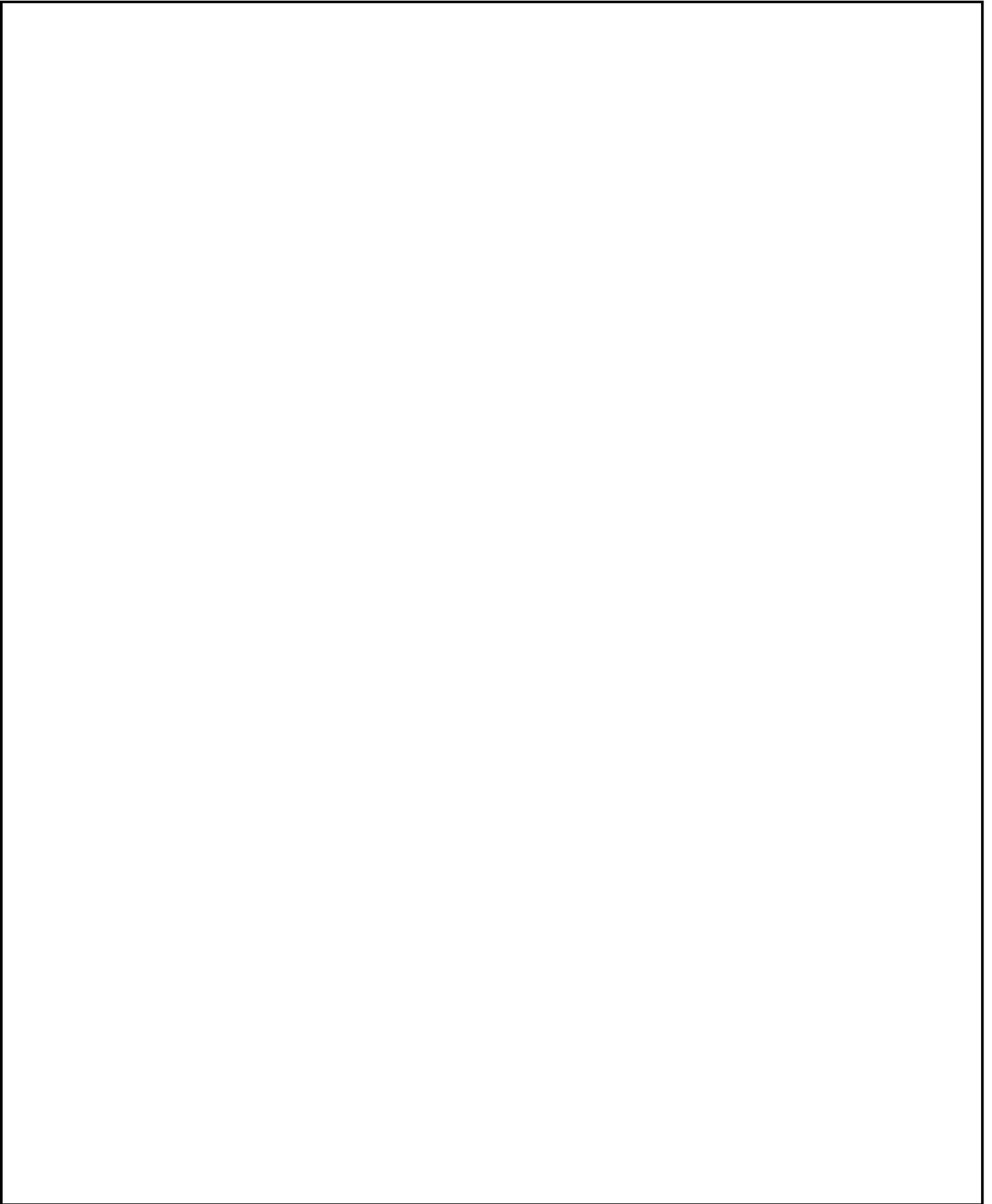
Today is 22 December, 1986. Our interviewee Mr. [Redacted] after service in the U.S. Navy Security Group in the early 1960's joined NSA as a Vietnamese linguist. He served in a variety of analytical elements as a linguist and was actively involved in translating intercept during the Gulf of Tonkin incident when the USS Maddox was allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in August of 1964. Mr. [Redacted] continued working in the intelligence target area throughout the North Vietnam war. Interview is taking place in the T453 interview room, SAB 2, NSA at Fort Meade. Interviewers, Bob Farley and Tom Johnson. Mr. [Redacted] desires that the classification of this single cassette be TOP SECRET codeword and this is NSA Oral History interview number 33-87.



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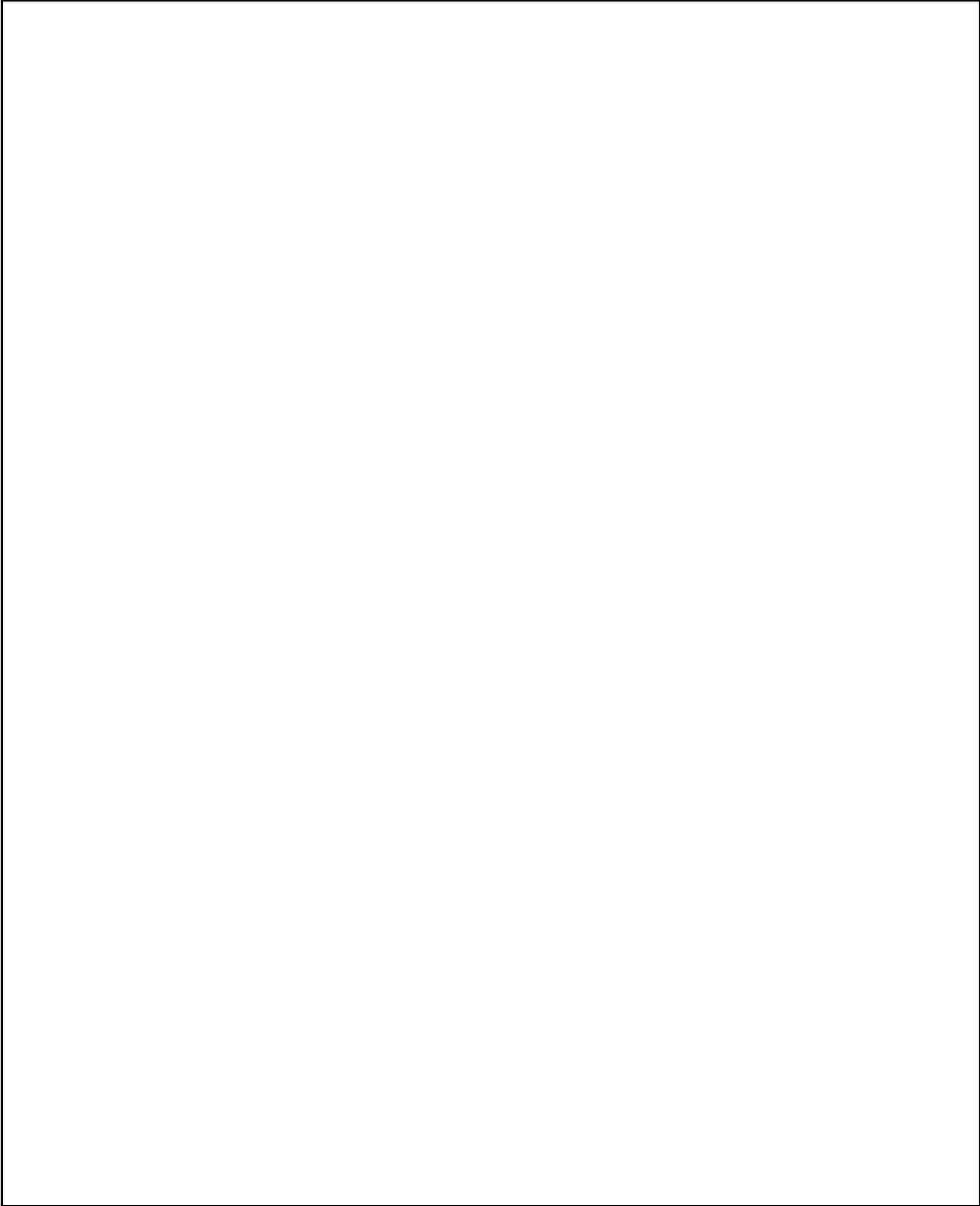
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Farley

[redacted] What role did [redacted] have? Did they have any part of the mission at all?

[redacted] They had, if they had any, I'm not aware of it. Most of that was the [redacted] P.L. 86-36 [redacted] side of the house. Most of our mission was done at USN-27 at Subic or USN-9, and the intercept sites in country. The ironic part was that some of the units that were in country...like USM-626 was in Saigon...(1G)...they were the senior Army people. USM-808, USN-27J were collocated up there in those other sites up and down the country. The Group 125 infiltration, they had that assigned to the Army. The Army was the CMA for it even though Phu Bai was collecting most of it. So, anything that Phu Bai collected from the Army side, they had it wired down to Saigon, and they would publish it...that was all going on about the time of this incident. They were just getting into it.

Farley

[redacted] Good. Bill, did you know about this Desoto Patrol?

[redacted] Yes, sir. We were aware of that, plus I was aware of another; it was called OPLAN 34A. It had just like all the other nicknames, it was a KITKAT operations. And we were supporting that, it was a very close-hold information, and how we supported it, in fact it was MAC VSOG at MAC V headquarters at CHOLON was the focal point for that. They had their detachment up at Da Nang and they were, basically, most of the operations for the seaborne operations and stuff were operated out on the swift boats, and things. They would go out and run the missions up north and they'd...it was different, they were trying to either parachute or infiltrate agents and I don't think that, from what I recall, I don't think they were really having a successful implant of agents up north, either parachuting them in or dropping them in, they were mostly captured, they never got anything back from them. What the swift boat operation was, it was just harassment. And that was going on with the Desoto patrols, we started the Desoto patrols earlier on in '64. And that put a box about the size of this room here, on the back of a "tin can" or a destroyer. And with a couple of NSG linguists/operators onboard, and they were, would be plying the waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, they had set tracks that they would do. They were going after mainly, the naval communications, the coastal defense communications, the maritime patrols and things, and as this so happened, we had this Desoto patrol, they were aware of the KITKAT operation and we had...they would operate either in two's or three's or maybe more. But they had a specific mission that Saturday night that all this happened, was going up and harassing a radar facility on, I think Hon May island, there was Hon May and Hon Mot off the coast there between Vinh and Thanh Hoa. And they had shelled that area did some things against that, and they were on their way back, and in fact, the Desoto patrols spotted the swift boats going past them, at a high rate of speed and then the whole thing kind of gelled down into the first incident on the 2nd.

Farley

Yeah. Bill, did the elements onboard the Maddox and the Turner Joy, did they do their

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processing, did they have plain language? Is that all they were concerned with? Or was it low-level cipher?

[redacted]

Farley

At the time, the Turner Joy was not there.

Okay.

[redacted]

Farley

It was only the Maddox.

Alright.

[redacted]

Farley

The Maddox was the one that had the Desoto patrol...the "box" onboard. The Turner Joy came on after that incident.

Without any intercept people onboard?

[redacted]

Johnson

I'm not sure. All I know...

No they didn't have any

[redacted]

Farley

The box was only on the Maddox, but the Maddox was by itself that night. When all this happened.

Do you want any preliminary questions to this, Tom?

Johnson

What I think we should do is just keep going the way we are and have Bill go through the thing. If he misses anything, we'll come back to it.

[redacted]

Like I say, I'm still very foggy on some of this stuff. I remember Sunday morning, I got up, we were on our way to church and a news bulletin came on that North Vietnamese torpedo boats had attacked a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin. And I commented to them, I said "Well, it looks like it will be a short church service today and I'll (be getting) very little sleep for a while." And that's exactly what happened, I get back home and we were called in. I started out with, I had three people working with me [redacted] was acting section chief at the time. I had a Marine sergeant [redacted] who went on to get his mustang commission, and last I hear of him, he was a captain. And an army specialist fourth class [redacted] who I guess about a year after all this happened ended up being assigned to then one of the tactical units out of Bien-hoa with a PRC-25 on his back going out on patrols. Here's a kid who had sat working all the traffic in support of the destroyers and had a CAT III clearance and was out doing patrols out in the boonies. But we all got called in, like I say there was Lt Col., Air Force, Dell Lang, [redacted]

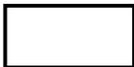
[redacted] I think Gaddy, Milt Zaslow and General Davidson, we kind of set up a little 24-hr watch. And the traffic was coming in and we were decrypting and putting out reports and doing the follow-up. The background of things before that, they had prior knowledge that was issued by either Subic or out of Phu Bai. And I'm not sure which one. I know at the time there was a gunnery sergeant [redacted] was involved along with two or three other marines. Very good linguists. They issued a heads up like, that was an indication that the North Vietnamese were going to attack a U.S. vessel, or U.S. forces in the gulf. They put the word out and there were some people I guess on Friday or Saturday that were a little skeptical of that. The next thing they were getting, they got a like a CRITIC in from the Maddox saying they were under attack from the North Vietnamese PT boats...and all that information was subsequently forwarded in and we reviewed it and along with all the other activity that was going on, we were issuing fol-

low-ups and trying to advise the different people of what was happening. Fortunately, I guess the Maddox skipper and all took some very really evasive action because they did launch a number of torpedoes. They got within range that they could...when they made their made their high speed runs, it was PT squadron 333, 336 and 339 were the ones that made the attack. I think they came out of Thanh Hoa, area. They had a SWA-TOW squadron the 1-4 series. 142, 46 were like the support craft for that. We were reading their communications and most of it was Manual Morse. And they used the R607. They also had voice. Voice being line of sight, the R609 I think is what they were using. Its got like a 20 kilometer line of sight range, the Morse radio was like 500 kilometers. So, the bulk of our traffic then was HF Manual Morse, those vessels. We had them pretty well pinned down, we knew where Northern Fleet headquarters like K1 was at Bai Chai and K2 at Thanh Hoa, and it came on down the coast, the main headquarters being at Haiphong. There were some conversations between the major high speed runs and it was apparent they probably took all their Manual Morse radio equipment, so they could...they knew they had a long run to make, and it was, the weight I think of the equipment was a few hundred kilograms, so they took that off and loaded up and went on, so they had basically the Swatows doing radio relay along the coastal areas out...until they hit a point where they went out of range of the radios. So, basically the PT boats were on their own. After they got out near them, the Maddox. They made their runs, launched, they got air support in, the Maddox reported the thing, they took some rounds, they got torpedoes and machine guns, and that's all they had on board.

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Johnson

In your view did the North Vietnamese feel that this was related to the KITKAT stuff and somehow...



In hindsight, they just needed to show a lesson, because it was U.S. supported, U.S. operated, U.S. run, and the KITKAT operations had been going on and they were losing sites up and down the coast and these KITKAT operations became more frequent and more, I'd say, more daring. They were going closer in and shell and they'd run between some of the islands and they'd end up getting a cross-fire going between the islands and I think it was, they knew it wasn't the guy that did the operation, but since he was up doing the patrols, there could have been a feeling that he was command and control or something...

Johnson

Some sort of a support vessel.



Right. Since he warning off of his larger vessels, this was, "Hey guys, we're tired of it, so let's...". There may have been some second thoughts, but this is purely my own feeling of some of the messages that we were reading. And the longer you work the problem, the more that you see the hindsight. There was one message that the SWATOWS answered back to Haiphong, it was like "We were not able to call them in time." Like maybe the word came down from naval headquarters not to go out and do what they were planning, and since they did not have the Morse radios on board, they were not able to get in touch with them via the line of sight voice. That's my feeling. I never got published that way, I'm sure, you know I've looked at some of the things, that went back down to Congress and it kept coming up and kept coming up and kept coming up and that was the 2nd of August, there was no questions that that didn't happen. We got the communications, they've got the vessels that were out there, they hit one of them dead

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in the water, on its way back in, it was limping back, it sank. A couple of the others got shot up. This was done by close air support, I don't know whether they came off the Ticonderoga, or which of the, there was a couple of others out there.

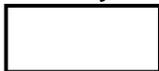
**Johnson**



The Constellation I think was out there.

The Constellation was out there. That was, and we saw communications back and forth, talking about it. It was days later they ended up salvaging the PT boat that got hit and sank. One of these ocean going tugs BTB-2 or 2 came out of Haiphong with the equipment and all and salvaged it and towed it back in, because it went back into service later. The 4th of August which is what President Johnson got his Gulf of Tonkin resolution passed, and from what I recall we had nothing to indicate in SIGINT that an order had come out from anyone to go out and take on the vessels again. By then the Maddox was joined by the C. Turner Joy.

**Farley**



Okay.

The C. Turner Joy's sonar man was the one who started picking up the echoes that torpedoes were coming, and that they had high speed runs happening. I don't whether it was later, and they've interviewed I don't know whether it was Jeremiah Denton was one of the POWs that made admiral, he was one of the ones who was up flying CAP dropping flare and said they saw nothing. We had nothing in our communications system, but they swore up and down that they were under attack. For the amount of torpedoes they had, that he said was in the water, there's no way either one of the vessels could have taken evasive action. A lot of this is hindsight but at the time, we weren't getting anything, this was reports coming from the vessel that they were under attack. And the reports went on up the chain of command. I had said something Tom, about one of the messages about I guess 146 was talking about...

**Johnson**

Yeah, 146 was apparently in communications pretty much. Sporadically, throughout the evening and, as I recall, we picked up either from Phu Bai or San Miguel...not San Miguel...Subic Bay, a message that they were gonna go out on another operation and it was basically a TACREP to the Maddox saying, "Heads up." It looks like the same vessels involved in the previous attack are gonna go out again, didn't directly state that they were gonna go out after them, but we all know that what the reporting criteria stated, if we were not sure, you send it out to them anyway. So, that kind of gave the Maddox a heads up. I assume they passed that to the skipper of the Turner Joy, also, so people were looking for things. After the attack then, they picked some more communications from 146 and again these were also field reported. That they had fired at aircraft, that they had lost two vessels, and these are the messages that I was interested in because there was some controversy over whether the 146 was referring to the attack on the 2nd or maybe a post action report for an engagement on the 4th. As I recall from discussing it over the phone with you, you thought it must have been the 2nd.



Right, because the 146-class PGs they were using, had machine guns and they had deck guns, no higher than 40mm or 37. No torpedo capabilities. The one I remember, they did not go that far or venture that far out. The support, there was two vessels hit. One was sunk, one was damaged very badly, by PT boats. I think (XB) that 14-series

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the SWATOW-class PGMs or PGs or whatever were acting as a communications relay and as the kind of the honchos for what the PT boats were doing. They had no Morse communications from the PT boats, so there very well could have been an after action report there was some aircraft shot at, they did shoot up the PT boats that had machine guns onboard, the aircraft that came in, in support of the Maddox did receive fire. That was all looked like, related back to the 2nd. But we had no activity that we could directly relate that they went out, and we had no PT boat squadrons active on the night of the 4th when all this was going down.

**Johnson**

In terms of SIGINT, we had no SIGINT activity on those squadrons. In your review then, just recapping, that action would have had to included PT boats to have been any kind of effective action.

[Redacted]

Yes sir, affirmative action. For what the guy on the C. Turner Joy was picking up, he was getting screws and propellers in the water and torpedoes and there would have to be the PTs out in the area and there was none that we were aware of.

**Johnson**

Well, you know that the reports from 146 went to the president and actually, physically, they went to McNamara, and McNamara decided this was the clinching evidence that would allow them to launch the strikes on North Vietnam. Once had you had got this traffic back to NSA because these TACREPS originally weren't going to NSA, as I understand looking at the file, once you got ahold of these, what did you think about them?

[Redacted]

Looking at hindsight, there was a lot of even controversy within the building here. When it came in, we were saying "Was this, or was this not?" You had to take them into the context they were. Hindsight, now, would probably, cooler heads, more of the cryp system recovered which that did happen, after that we would probably say that was the 2nd of August that they were referring to. At the time, you were working, and we worked for very long strained hours. People were, they put bunks in the area that we were working in. People would sack out. I know that like [Redacted] and Lt Col. Lang spent time about mid part of the week when all this stuff was going down, at the Pentagon. They actually brought a fan in because Lang was briefing the JCS people actually put a fan blowing on him, away those people because he hadn't had a change of clothes in a while. We had a very small work force, they brought in more cryppies, like I said it was like three or four linguists mainly [Redacted] myself [Redacted] we were it (1G). So, we were working 24 hours a day, and we were 12 and 16 hours and break back and forth and we were getting stuff in. It was late, it wasn't as timely as we can now. They realized we had set up more procedures and forwarding quicker, and getting field support decrypts turning around and that all did materialize. But at the time the decision were made, you know, you flipped a coin and they said, "Okay" . It was the timeframe from when the Turner Joy went, so the feeling was, "You can't say it wasn't related to that" but you can't say really, definitely that it was. And I think it was as much feeling that that was in hindsight, that it was all related to the 2nd. But I remember getting in to you know, 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning after being there all day, getting into an argument with Uncle Milt. 2:30 in the morning about what we were putting out. Looking back, it was dumb, but youknow, a couple of people (b% pulled me aside) and said "Don't argue with the man." But he backed off realizing I guess we were all under a lot

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of pressure and I guess, you know from what he was saying "You're not putting it into good enough English for the people". What we were trying to do, was put it...exactly what was being said...in the best way we could interpret it. Knowing what was going on down in the high levels of the U.S. government. Not knowing what 10 years later would still be going.

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**Johnson**

Did he want to change any of the substance of it?

[Redacted]

No, it was just, it wasn't a substance thing, it was just that my rendering of and other people's, we took it out of the dictionary knowing what the Vietnamese, and how they were referring to some of the things, he wanted another English word that smooth it out a little bit (sic).

**Johnson**

As I recall the NSA wrap up on that while not saying it didn't happen, was very equivocal. It seemed to lean in the direction of maybe that wasn't quite the way it happened.

[Redacted]

Yeah, and that was looking you know, at a couple of more days of traffic afterwards and taking the context of the 146 report, and looking at exactly what did happen on the 2nd, because, like I say, one of the three I think went with only a few rounds in it. One of them was badly enough damaged that it did sink, and was returned. The third one did get hit pretty hard too. It was still functional. So, there was the two vessels lost.

**Johnson**

Based on what you know about SWATOWS and their mission were there any possibilities that 146 was out there in the general area shadowing them on the night of the 4th or was also kind of a far out idea? This is one that the State Department came up with at one point.

[Redacted]

Anything is possible. At the time, we didn't have the tracking that the North Vietnamese what they were tracking, were unfriendly vessels. And I don't recall that we had tracks of placing, or of their vessels out near that area.

**Johnson**

It may have been too far out for their radar, I don't know.

[Redacted]

The radar as I recall was able to pick up...they, the vessels out there. They had the CROSS SPOT radars, if I'm not mistaken. The Chinese radars. And they could go out at least a hundred kilometers.

**Johnson**

Okay.

[Redacted]

Some of those points where they had these radars were promontories. So, they were higher up like cliff areas and things that were already detailed, on one of the islands there, so they could look out a little more extended than if they were just at sea level.

**Johnson**

Okay.

**Farley**

Bill Golden in his book made the statement that somebody supposedly in the communications van had intercepted a message ordering the North Vietnam patrol boats to attack [TR NOTE: Cut stops abruptly in the middle of this segment. NIL HEARD for 1 minute, then resumes.]...and then later on, they also supposedly intercepted a North Vietnam damage report. Is that (accurate)?

[Redacted]

This is the 2nd...

**Farley**

Oh this is on the 2nd?

[Redacted]

Yeah.

**Farley**

Rather than on the 4th.

[Redacted]

Yes sir. They gave them the word for that on the 2nd.

**Farley**

Okay.

**Johnson**

On the 4th. Maybe Golden said that, I can't remember, but we queried the Maddox and they said they couldn't hear any VHF voice because of the ship's (own) comms. Constantly blocking them out, I guess the Maddox was sending status reports all the time. When that was on, they couldn't hear a thing.

[Redacted]

Well, then that the phenomenon on the 4th, that was everyone was thinking. It was a real...it wasn't a good environment for anything. They said, "it was just one of those phenomenons at sea that all the elements were there...that everything that they were using...that they were "coming" went to ground." Basically went into the sea, because of the...it was just like one of those Twilight Zone-type things. I guess that's the way you could really describe it. That's what they were saying and it has...something that happens more often than not, is that you get a return echo from your own screws and I think they were looking, and some of the things that happened on the 4th after they looked at it again, was that every time the Turner Joy would make its turn to evade, these runs would also make their turns, so whoever they were getting were also making the same kinds of turns, and basically at the same times that they were doing...so, but it...you know...the guy at the time, I mean, if you know what happened two nights before, yeah, they did see torpedoes. They've got the boats that shot them up. Two nights later, you get another destroyer in there...

**Farley**

Again, Golden made the comment about the chaos, the confusion, the mix up whereby somebody by the name of Parks almost shot up the Turner Joy. There was such confusion and then he said that he had something in the crosshairs and they demanded to know where the Turner Joy was before he fired, and directed that the Turner Joy turn on their lights, and he said there it was big as life, right in the crosshairs.

[Redacted]

Yeah, you know, there were things that were happening that night...and I want to say it's Denton and I've read some of his articles since then. You know he's swearing up and down they flew in the direction of where the guy said that the screws and stuff...to the azimuth that they were coming (from), and they dropped flare after flare after flare and there was nothing there. So, personally I can say, you know, we had the 2 August incident happened. And we know what PT boats were involved and the Swatow boats were involved...the 4th, I cannot say anything took place. Other than maybe you got the sonar guy on the Turner Joy was getting feedback. And that does happen.

**Farley**

I'm gonna switch (tapes) (TR NOTE: Cuts out here, NIL HEARD for four minutes.)

[Redacted]

I mean you know, if you've got questions and stuff, I'll try to recall some of the things I did. Since the (B% college you paid) you know, and thinking back and there was so many things that went on. I look back and it's what 23 years?

**Johnson**

Yeah.

[Redacted]

23 years, and hopefully I've matured a little bit since then, when you look, you know you

don't fight two-star people and you don't fight...

Johnson

Uncle Milty.

[redacted]

Yeah, is he on as a consultant or anything?

Johnson

I don't know what his situation is.

Farley

I don't think so. I see him in the hallway occasionally.

Johnson

He's on (1G) but I don't know what status he is.

[redacted]

Maybe some time when you get a chance you to get his recollection's of...

Johnson

Yeah, we need to get Zaslow in here for a lot of different things.

Farley

[redacted] is another name that I just read in this...

[redacted]

[redacted] was our NCR Vietnam rep at the time. '64, '65. I never had the pleasure of meeting the gentleman, but I had the pleasure of using his orders getting on some aircraft in '65 when I was in Vietnam. He had orders cut, courier orders, for people...they were used very extensively.

Johnson

What about the linguists aboard the Maddox? Did you have any feeling that this was another Pueblo situation where you had guys out there who could not...who never actually used line when you didn't know what was going on, or did you have any feel at all?

[redacted]

I had feel at all. I had no idea the people where who went on the Maddox. The one who would know, retired here this summer; that's [redacted] He...I don't whether you could get him back to...

Johnson

Oh, yeah.

Farley

Is he in the area?

[redacted]

Yes, he lives over in Odenton. And he was the one, in fact was the one who put the "heads up" out. That the attack was going to take place and issued a lot of those TACREPS during that period of time.

Johnson

Did you have, do you have any comments about what was going on downtown? I know that you weren't personally doing that, but did you feel that Lang and Zaslow were being pressured to put out one story versus another kind of story?

[redacted]

No, I don't think they were pressured on because having worked with these gentleman...they were telling us...as we knew to the best of our abilities and they were not going to swayed to be, you know, "here's what we're seeing happening or at least from the State Department or from the Defense Department side. Can you verify this?" Or whatever... and whatever we had is what they were giving them. From what I recall, from what [redacted] was saying when they came back, things got testy at times, in the meetings (TR NOTE: cut ends abruptly here). Colonel Lang would be up briefing and then you'd have a one or two-star there starting to question "Why don't you have this, and why don't you have that?" and very matter of factly tell them, "If it was on the air, we intercepted it. You have it." and we did not have that.

Farley

I guess McNamara was really on the pan. They were demanding that he produce those messages, those two messages that said that the patrol boats were ordered to attack

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and then the battle damage report.

[Redacted]

And like I say, you know, that...they became subject of a number of congressional hearings and that was I guess why I gave you [Redacted] name, you know he was involved in the hearings later on. Just by virtue of he being a branch chief at that time, in that area. He and [Redacted] - they all went down to these hearings and you know, those folders and stuff, I don't know what you have here, I'd be interested to take a look and see what you do have in the folder. A lot of those things made a lot of trips back and forth down that parkway over a period of time

**Farley**

And you suggested that some of that material might have been destroyed after the hearings?

[Redacted]

I heard rumor to that effect. Maybe that's...

**Johnson**

We have very little dealing with the hearings until, the hearings in '64 were the cake-walk because very few questions were asked. In '68 were the tough times and we just do not have any files that I have found yet. That are in detail.

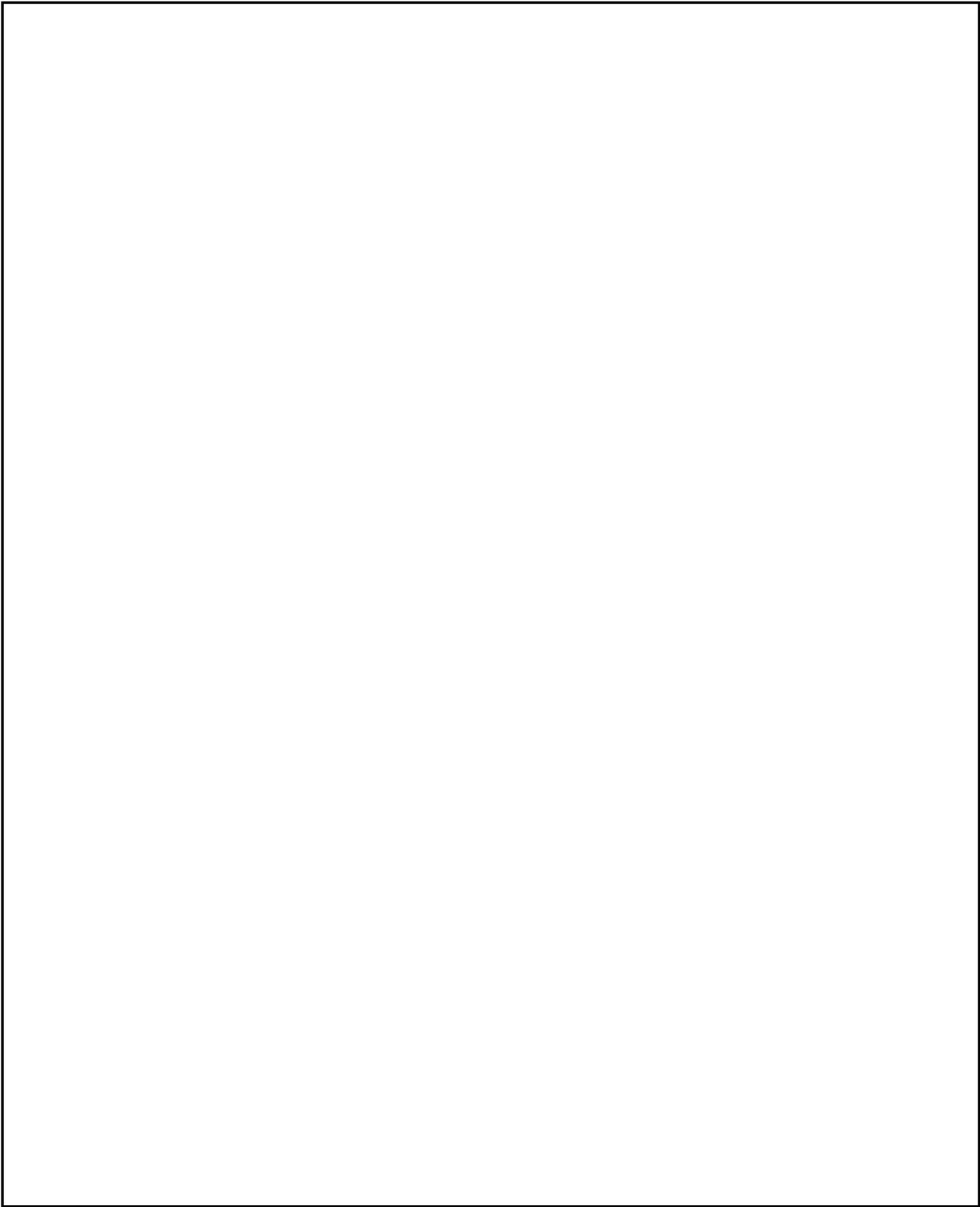
[Redacted]

In '67 I went back to language school, I spent a year down at Captain University learning Thai and Lao and then when I came back in '68, I was in the (2-3G) forces, Laos. And that's what we were working then. So, I was out of the area where all the activity was going on. Because eventually they had, you know, we were able to read up to a certain point and they had some, I'm not sure if we had a defector, but we had a lot of the cryp stuff, charts and stuff and all of a sudden the North Vietnamese navy became unreadable after a period of time. But I never got involved in the congressional hearings at all. In fact I'm not sure that any of the ones of the names that I gave you were involved in it. were working the problem at the time. I made a mistake, I know for a fact that [Redacted] were involved. And some of the more senior people.

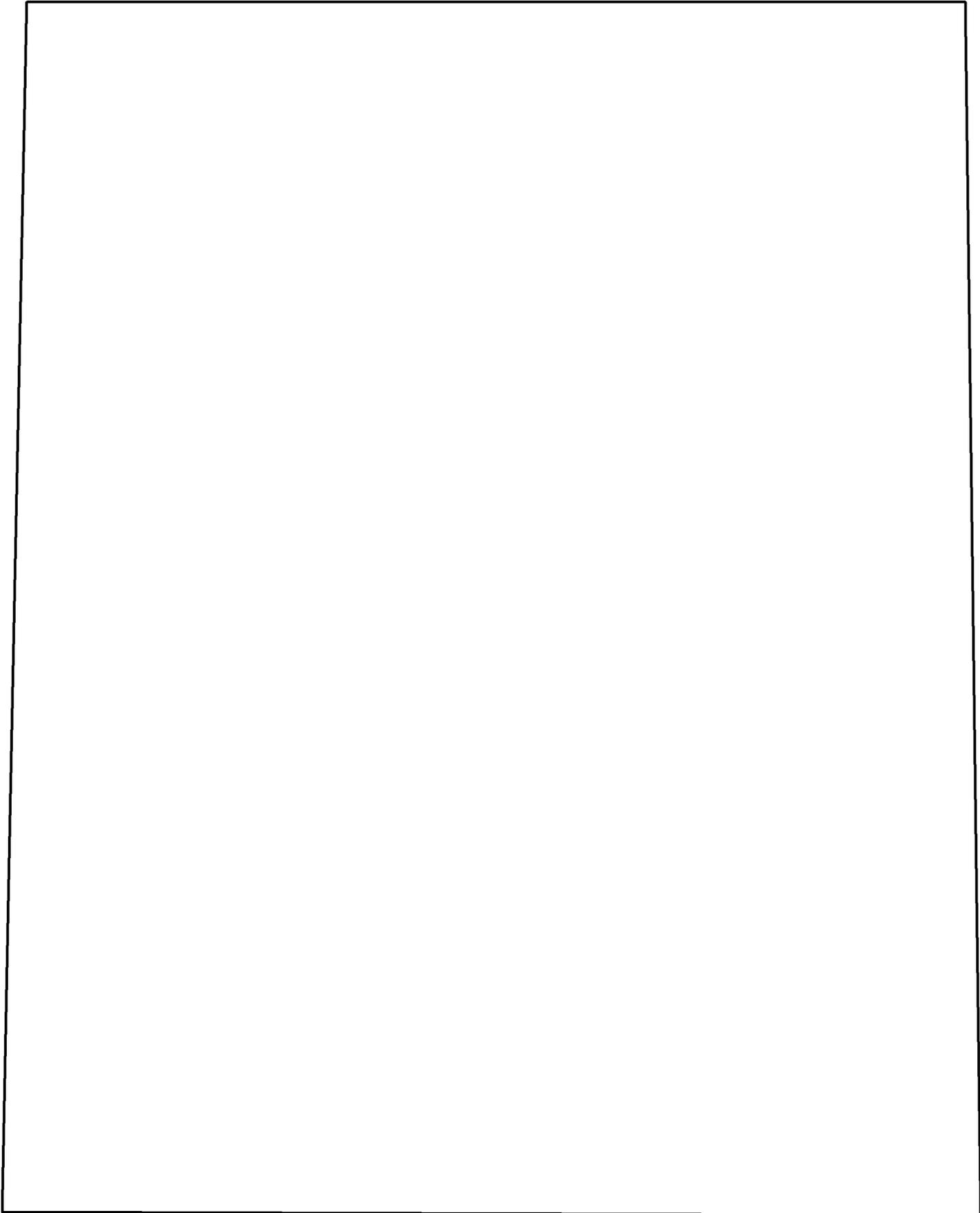


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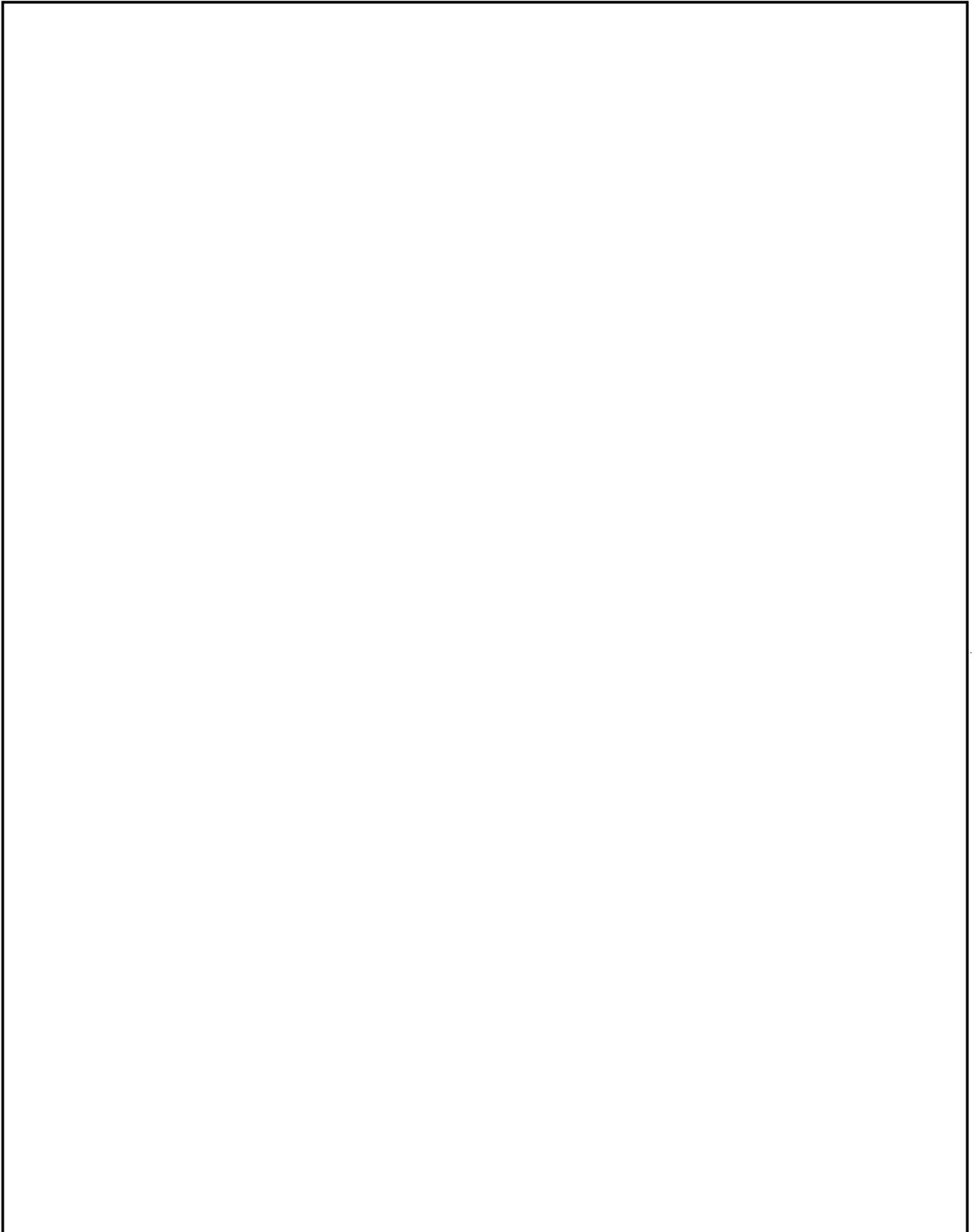




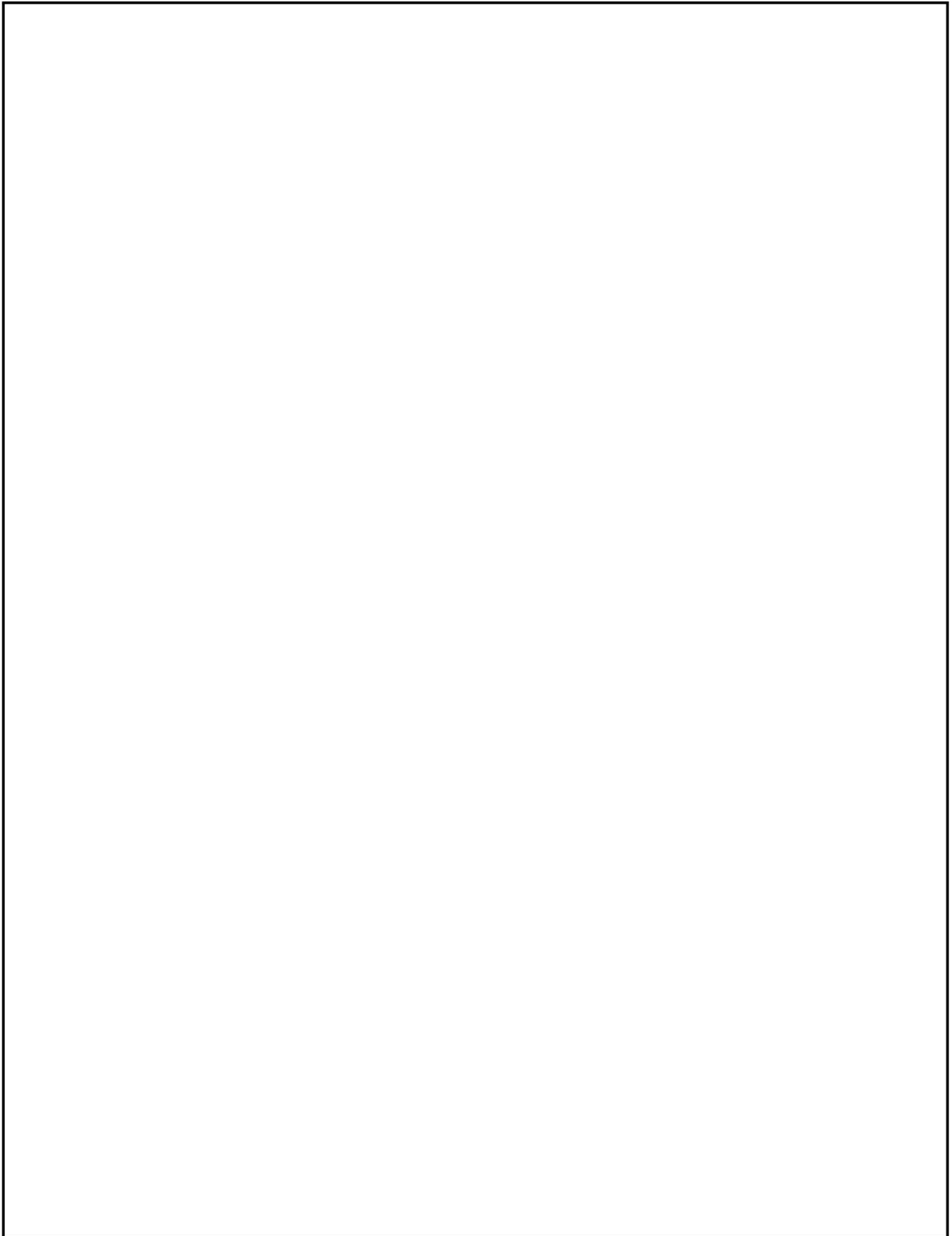
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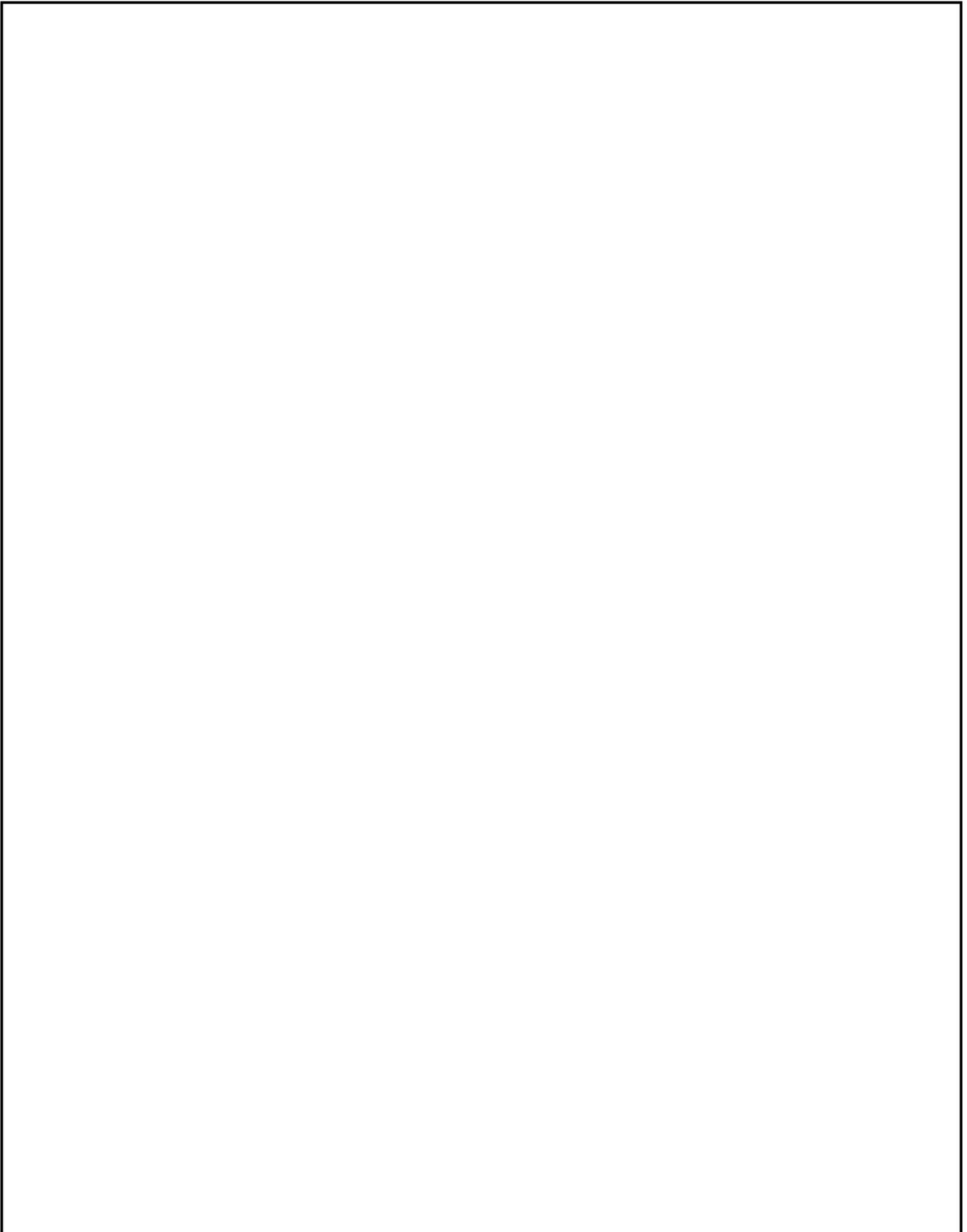
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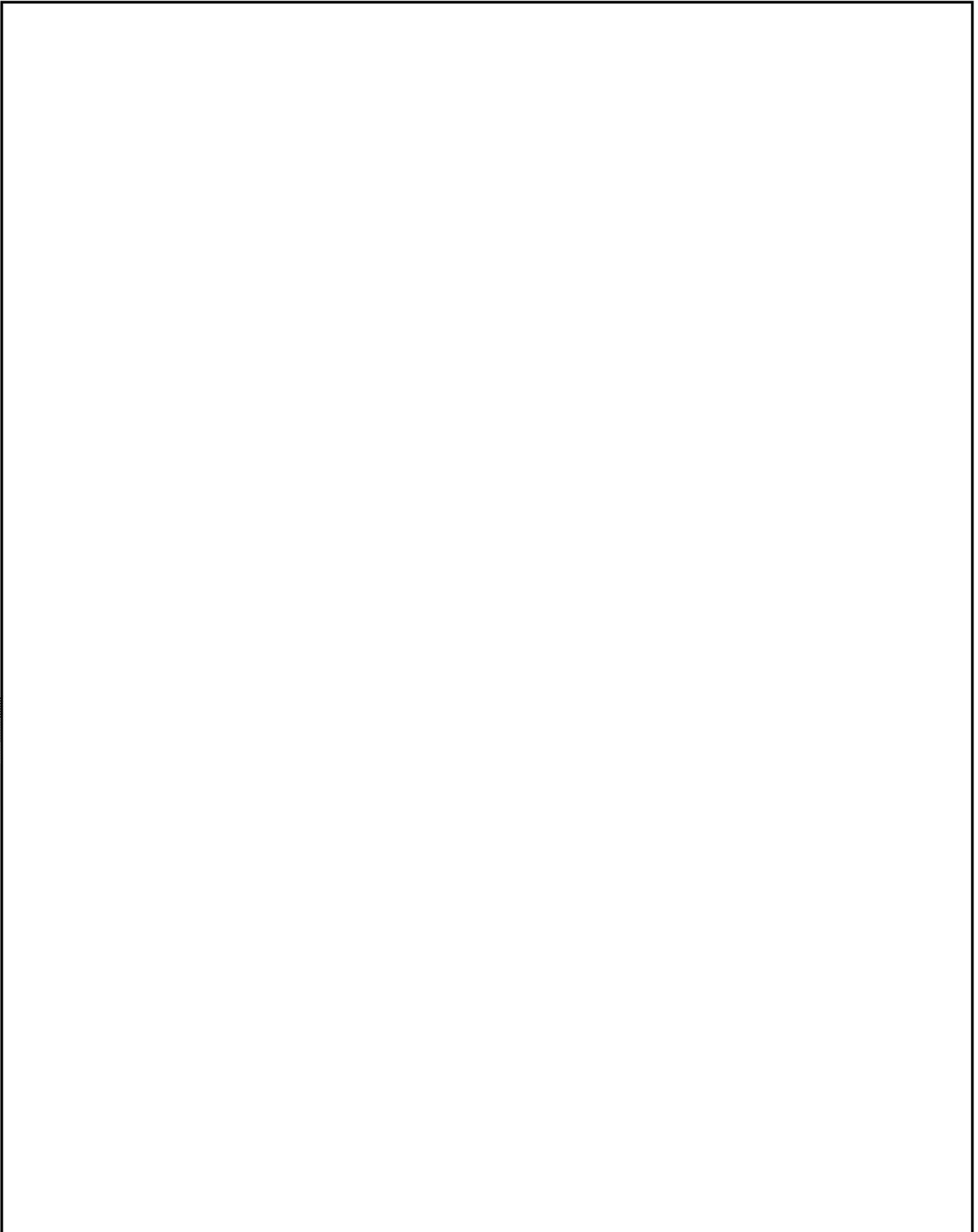
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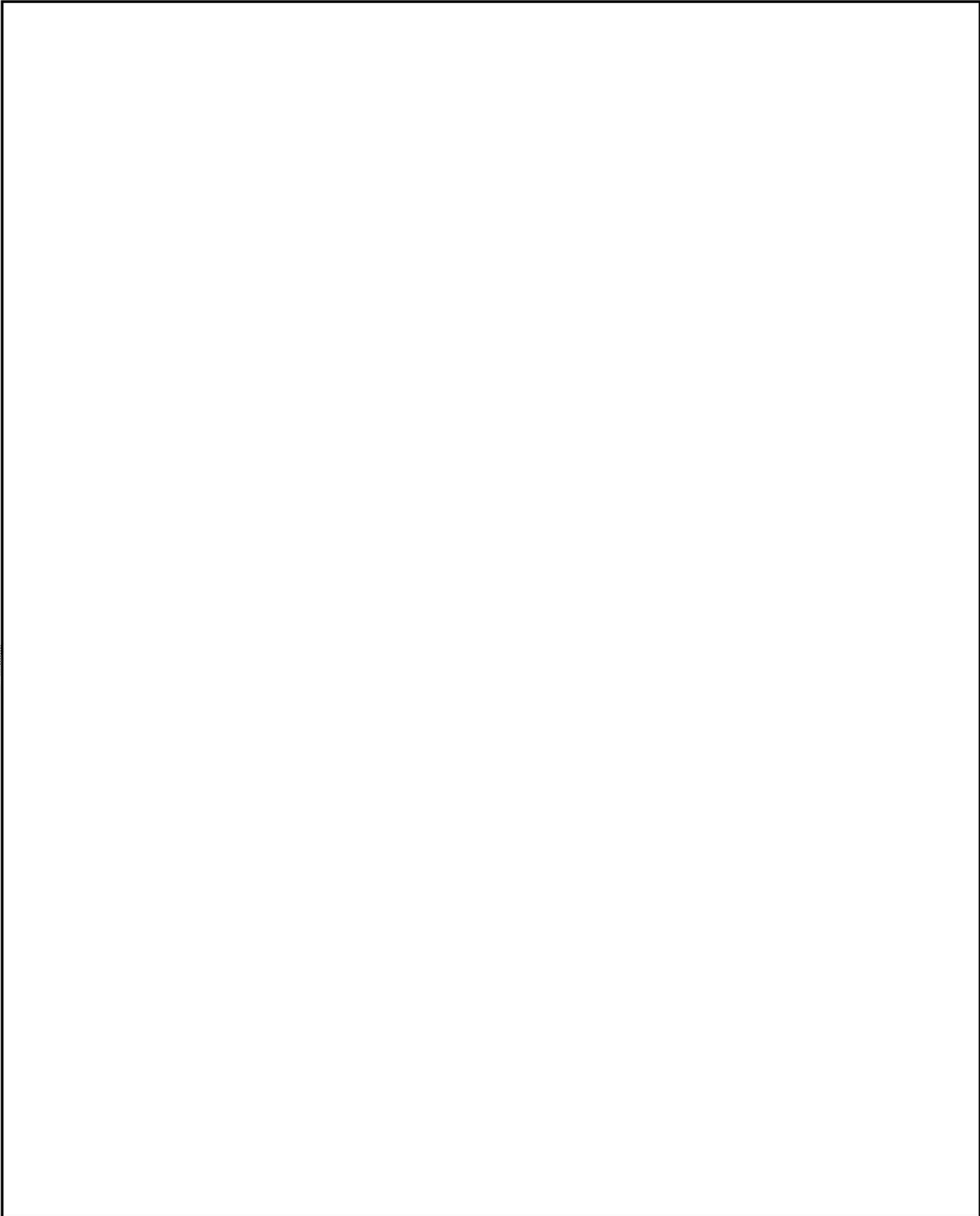
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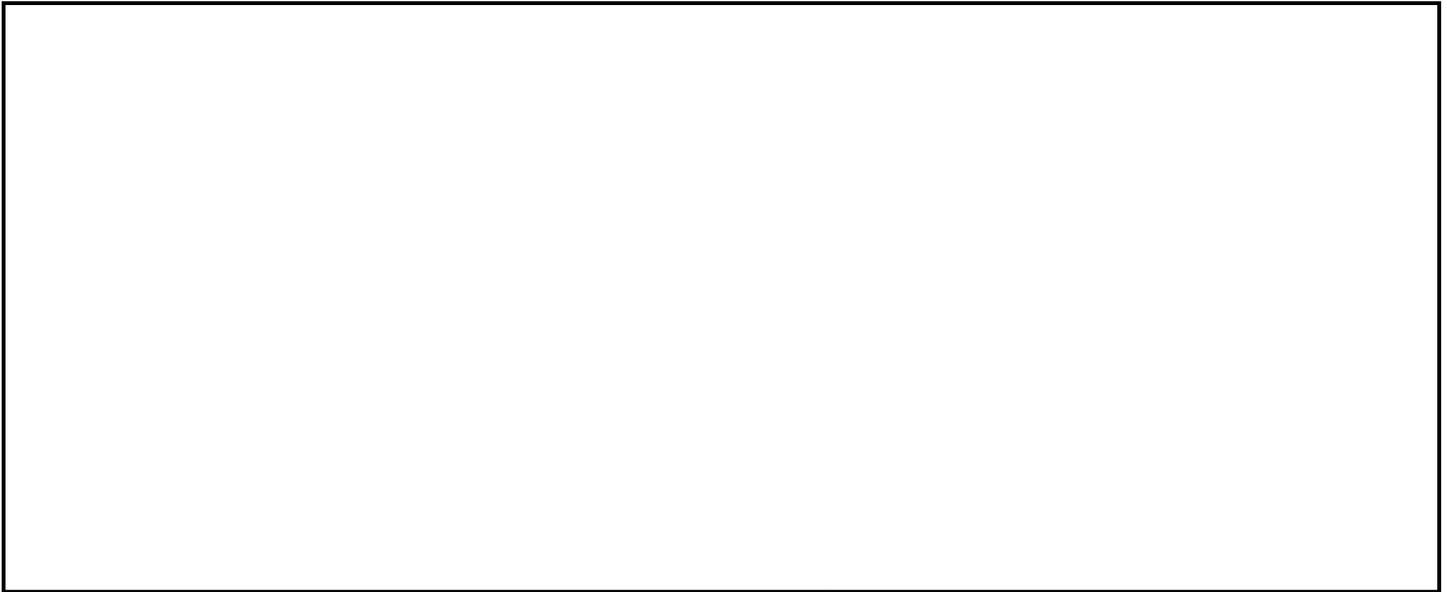
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**OHNR:  
880719**

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P.L. 86-36

TRSID:ragentiDTR: 971117

QCSID:

INAME: Lang, Delmar C.

IPLACE: Lang residence, Wheaton, Maryland

VIEWER: Farley, R.D.

NSA25X3

**Farley**

Today is 19 July 1988. Our interviewee: Mr. Delmar C. Lang. Mr. Lang is a former United States Air Force officer, who later became a civilian employee of the NSA. Early in his career--in the late 1940's--Mr. Lang studied Chinese at the Army Language School and eventually joined the United States Air Force Security Service. He had an overseas tour with the Security Service and later, with NSA in [redacted] [redacted] Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. He served as Chief of NCR [redacted] and NCR [redacted] in later years. The bulk of Mr. Lang's career was in the Far East target area in operational, staff, and management positions. He was assigned to staff officer in the Office of [redacted] for the Far East intelligence target. Mr. Lang discusses at length his experiences during his military and civilian career. He retired from the Agency in 1980. This interview is taking place at Mr. Lang's residence in Wheaton, Maryland. Interviewer: Bob Farley. Mr. Lang desires that the classification of these four cassettes be SECRET HANDLE VIA COMINT CHANNELS ONLY. And this is NSA Oral History # 9-88.

(TR NOTE: After approximately 30 seconds of silence on tape, interview begins as follows:)

**Farley**

...check it out and see. Yeah, it looks good. The level is fine. Del, thanks very much. What I'll do is put a heading on this and explain who you are and all of that. And, then it'll be complete. I'll assign a number.

**Lang**

O.K. (pauses) Go ahead.

**Farley**

And, as I say, we can talk as much as you like and as long as you like.

**Lang**

All right.

**Farley**

First of all, thanks a lot for your time.

Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 01-19-2006 pursuant to E.O. 12958, as amended

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**Farley** Did we have SIGINT units in Vietnam at that time? South Vietnam?

**Lang** Yes.

**Farley** Security Service and Army? In Saigon or thereabouts?

**Lang** The Army was there.

**Farley** I think so.

**Lang** I don't think, Bob, that the Air Force Security Service had gone in quite that early.

**Farley** Probably not.

**Lang** When they did, of course, they went in at Da Nang. I think it came a little after.

**Farley** But they had the platforms, too. They were flying the platforms, weren't they?

**Lang** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They were...Was that  NSA25X3

**Farley** Yeah. There were so many other bloody things. Yeah.

**Lang** I think they were called  in those days. Well, anyhow. The first big crisis that hit us, of course, was the Gulf of Tonkin. The Tonkin hootenanny. And as the 05 for Milt Zaslow in B3, I just kind of became...I don't remember anybody telling me to. I just did. Zaslow, of course, was backing me. We set up a little crisis management shop in the B3 conference room. And worked that thing. I think I spent at least five days in the building without ever going home. But that's all right. I was having a ball.

**Farley** Right.

**Lang** And we put out messages with regards to the imminence...what appeared to be the imminence of an attack--at flash precedence--that certainly must have alerted Naval authorities down to the vessels themselves. I don't think that the alerts ever probably got out to the boats that we had in the Gulf...the ships we had in the Gulf of Tonkin.

**Farley** The *Turner Joy* and...

**Lang**  
Yeah.

**Farley**  
...the other one.

**Lang**  
Yeah. And so, we reported the living "be-jesus" out of that. And then a couple of days later, there was a second attack. And there was another flap. In the initial go-around, we did put out some messages that cautioned against precipitous action. Because, you know, the evidence was suggestive, but it wasn't firm. And I had--me and the guys had--some reservations at the time about whether that attack had really occurred. And then there was no question that the second attack a couple of days later was not an attack. But, anyhow. As you know, General...President Johnson chose to retaliate with air strikes. And Congress gave him the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which said, "Hey, man! Run!" And away we went in what turned out, of course, to be probably the biggest tragedy of our country ever got involved in.

**Farley**  
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Lang**  
Needlessly involved in.

**Farley**  
Yeah.

**Lang**  
And then the next big event that occurred in May of '65: the U.S.S *Ranger* was out there south of Hainan Island. And one day, they sent a flight up to Haiphong. It was to go to Haiphong. Flight of four aircraft. And they took off from the *Ranger* and headed north...northwest toward Haiphong. And they overflew Hainan Island. And of course, the Chinese didn't like that. [redacted] And the airborne collector--and I'm almost certain it was called [redacted] in those days...Oh no. Wait a minute. Will this (microphone wire) carry me over that far?

**Farley**  
No. Let me just...Let me pull that...(TR NOTE: Farley can be heard removing the microphone attached to Lang's shirt.) I don't want to ruin your shirt. O.K. (TR NOTE: Lang apparently rises and walks across the room to place a phone call. Farley resumes speaking:) (Are you going to) check it out and...?

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**Lang**

(TR NOTE: Lang is apparently speaking from across the room. His voice sounds distant.) I called Doyle Larson. It wasn't the [redacted] He said it was called [redacted]

**Farley**

O.K.

**Lang**

(TR NOTE: Lang apparently returns to where Farley is located. His voice becomes louder.) I'm sorry. You got it? Right?

**Farley**

Yep [redacted]

**Lang**

See? I questioned... about that [redacted]

NSA25X3

**Farley**

O.K.

**Lang**

And...

**Farley**

There were so many of those bloody things. It's hard to keep them in sequence.

**Lang**

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I forget when we had [redacted] But it was obviously before... But, anyhow. They had done their orbit over the gulf. And they were heading back up to [redacted] They were going past Hainan Island when the senior sergeant aboard the aircraft recognized that there was something unusual happening. And he told the pilot to go into orbit off the east coast of Hainan. And they collected everything. The whole nine yards. And it was, of course, beautiful intercept because they were right there. And the Chinese scrambled aircraft in reaction to these U.S. Navy aircraft coming over the island.

[redacted] Well, one of those four aircraft got shot down. And it was evident from what we had--and we had it all--that another... He had been shot down by one of his own aircraft.

**Farley**

Oh.

**Lang**

There was a mistake. A hassle. And he got shot down. Well of course, the roof came off the Pentagon and the White House and every place in the world. And I had worked the night all night long, using the Opscomm circuit. And gathering in all the information. And by the next morning--around eight o'clock--I had a pretty full story that I could tell to the Director. And of course, I was required to come up and do that.

**Farley**

Right.

**Lang**

So, while I was doing that-- guess maybe it was after I had finished and we were just kind of getting ready to break up--he (TR NOTE: i.e., the Director) got a phone call from General (B% Buzz) Wheeler, who was the Chairman of the JCS at the time. And General Blake--who was standing there--he said, "Yes. Yes, Sir." He said, "I have a lieutenant colonel standing here right now that can tell you 'book, chapter and verse'." So, he (TR NOTE: i.e., the Director) tried to get a helicopter to take me down. Because we were wanted NOW, of course. But he couldn't pry a helicopter out of the Army there at Fort Meade. So, he sent me down in his staff car. And I was ushered into General Wheeler's office. Well, the walls...The two side walls and the wall behind General Wheeler's desk were lined with generals, admirals...I mean, boy, there was a mess of them. And you could have cut the hostility that was evident with a knife. I mean, boy! They were some kind of unhappy...Not the Army guys. The Navy guys. And there were a bunch of them. So, I had my little flip chart. And we put that up. And I took them through what had happened as we saw it. And...There was no way you could question, since that was what, indeed, had happened. But the Navy wasn't about to accept that. I mean, (according to them,) we were lying. The [redacted] were lying. Somebody was lying. But that never happened. They never could have overflowed Hainan Island. It just was impossible. Let alone shoot down one of their own airplanes. So, after I had finished making my presentation, why, there were a lot of questions coming from these admirals and one thing or another. And they were vicious. Oh, they were vicious. And General Wheeler listened to it for longer than I would have thought he would have put up with that. Longer than I would have wished that he put up with that. And finally he said, "Now, wait a minute." He said, "I happen to believe what Colonel Lang is telling us. You guys get off his back." That took care of that. Well...

NSA25X3

**Farley**

They never quizzed any of the pilots, themselves, to ask whether they were overflying or not?

**Lang**

Oh, I suppose they did. But I don't know if the pilots told them the truth or not.

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**OHNR: oh1793**

**DOI: 930914**

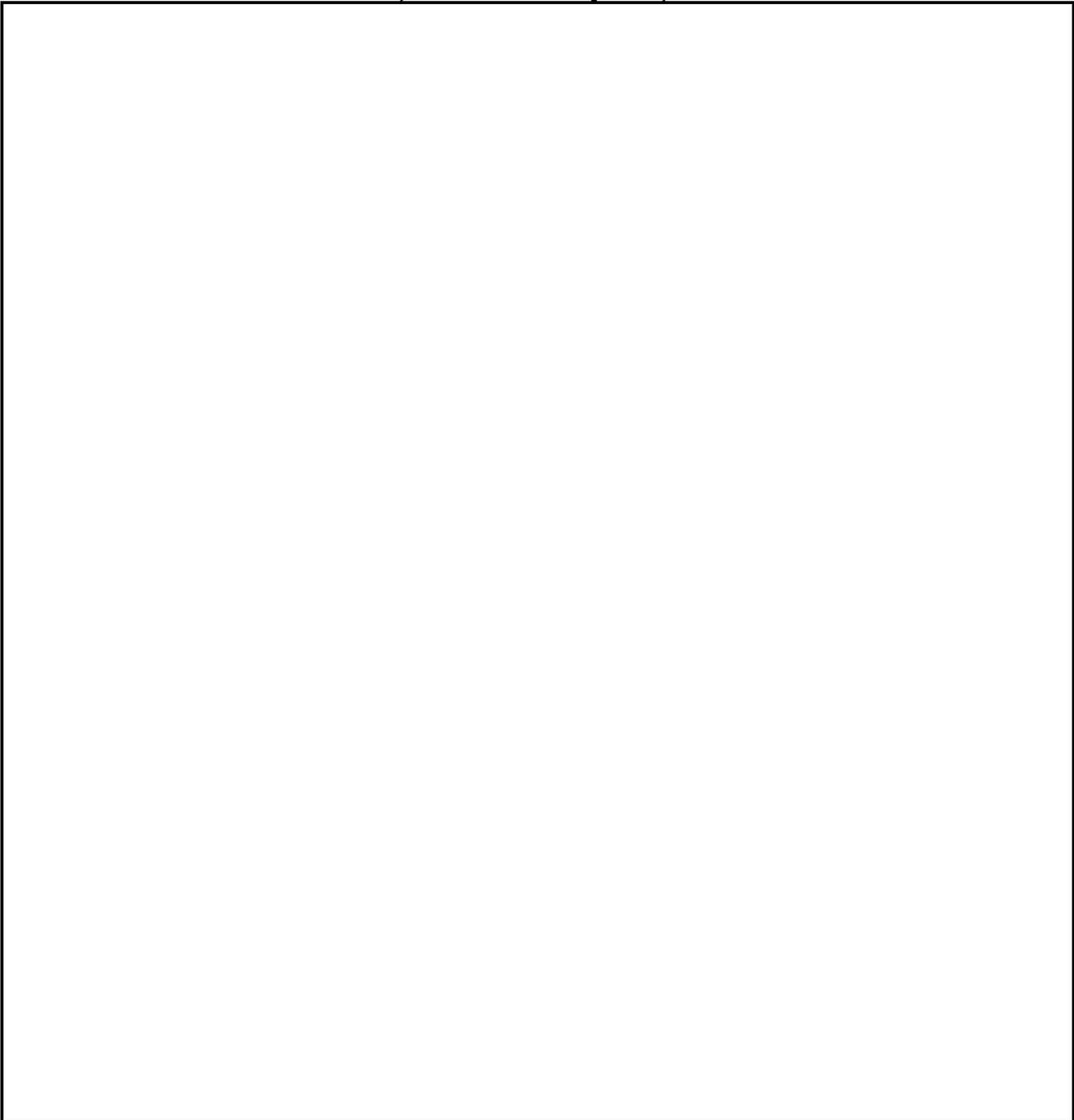
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**DTR: 980105**

**INAME: Milton Zaslow**

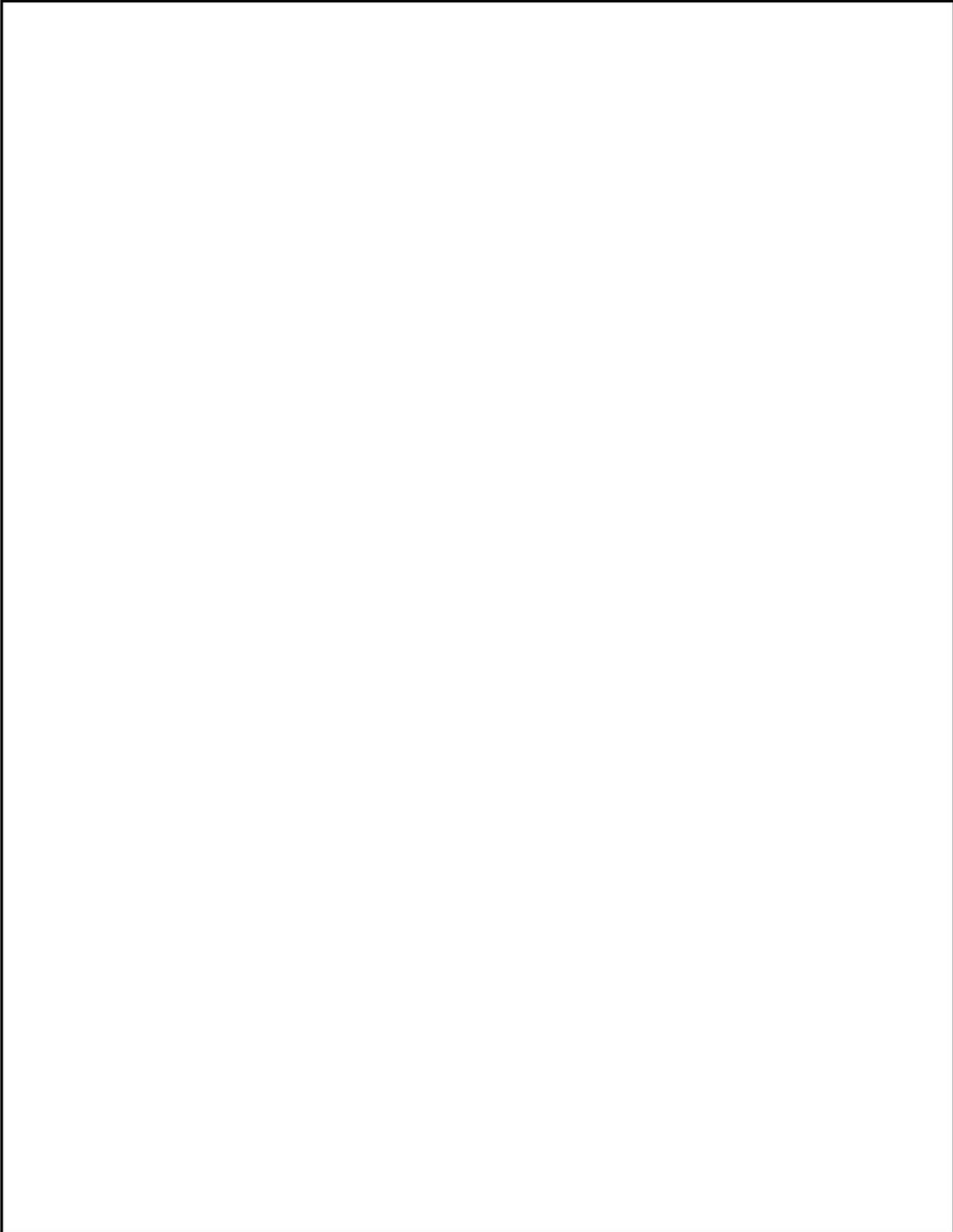
**IPLACE: Center for Cryptologic History Conf Rm., Fanx 3**

**IVIEWER: C. Baker, G. Vanderpool, T. Johnson**

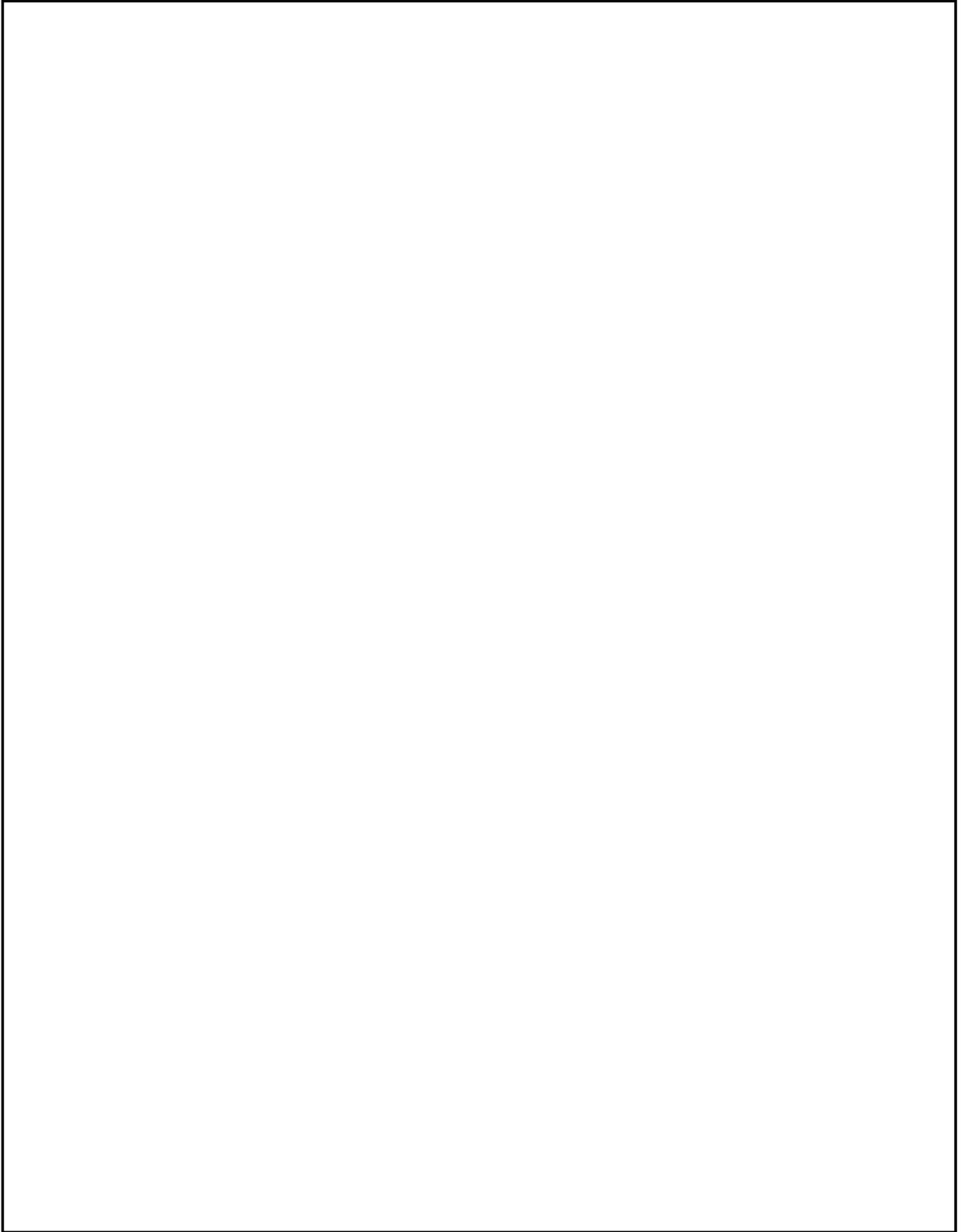


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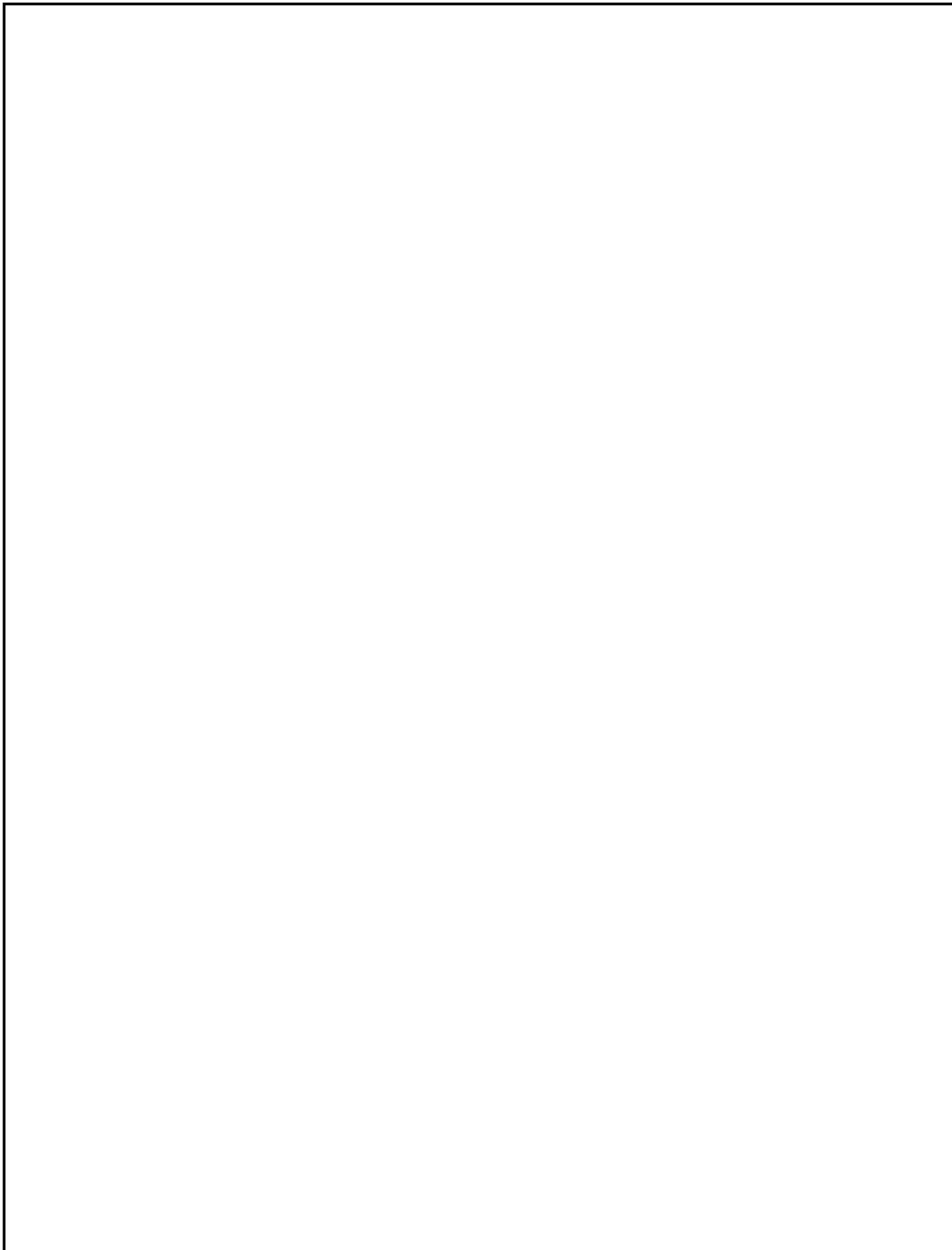
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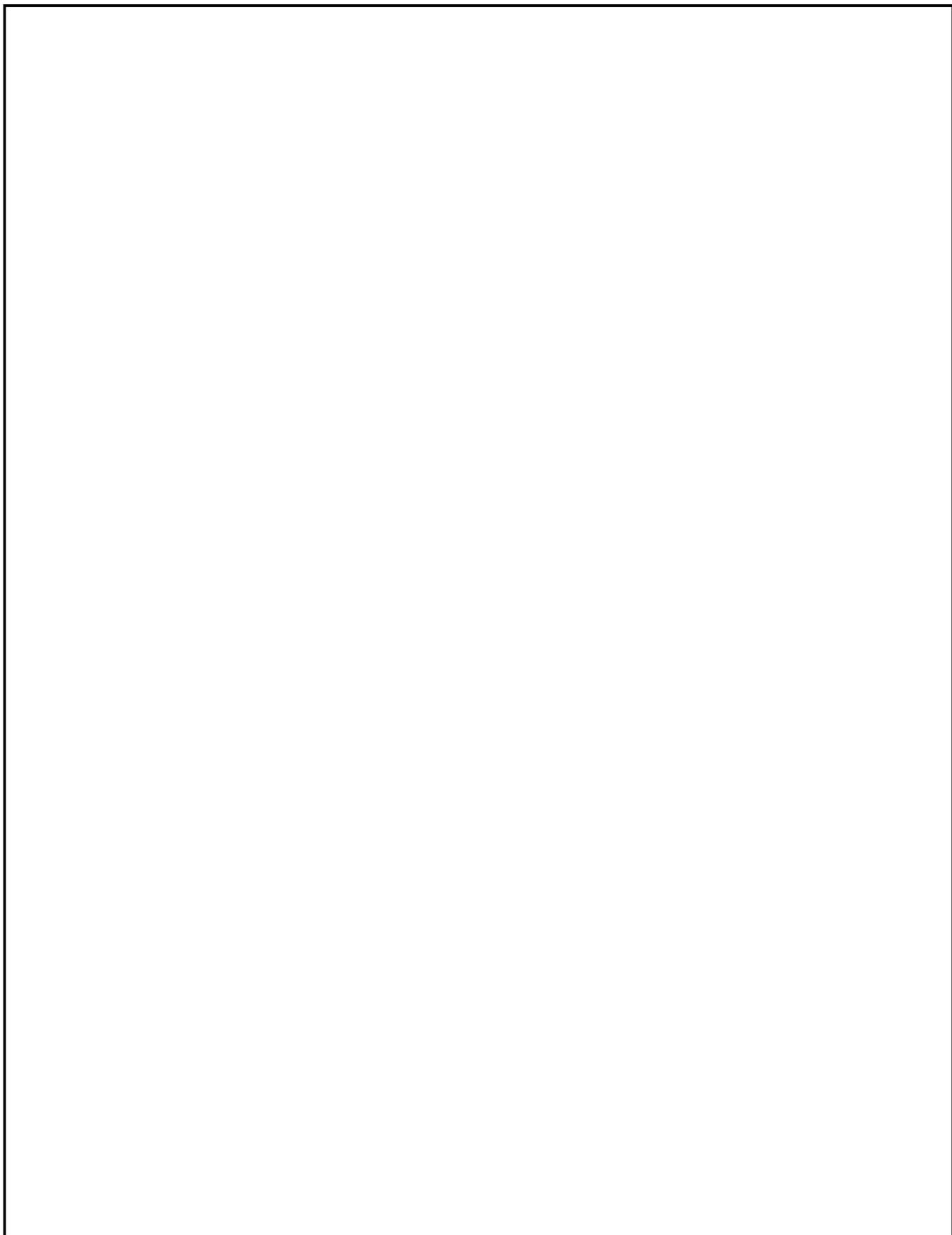
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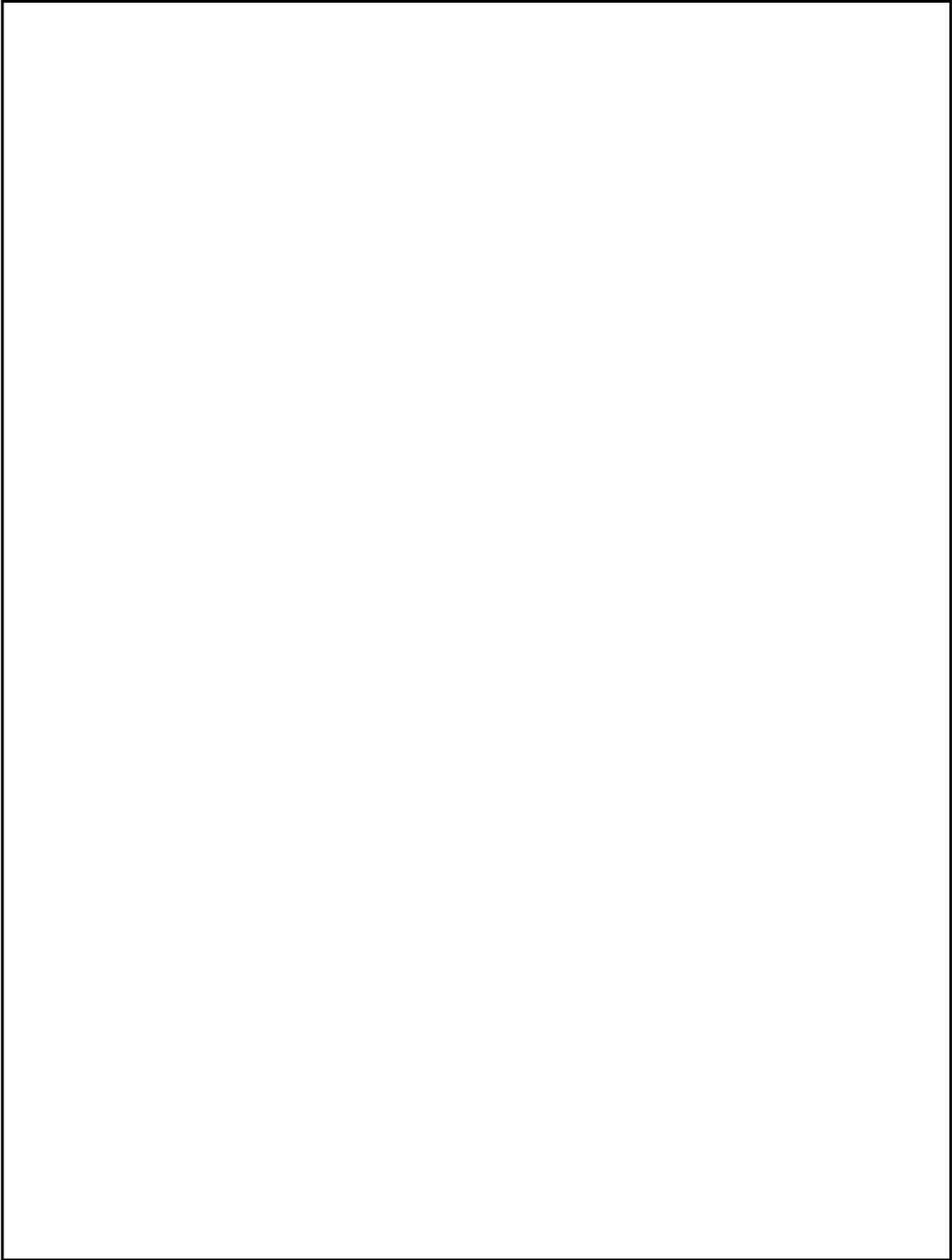
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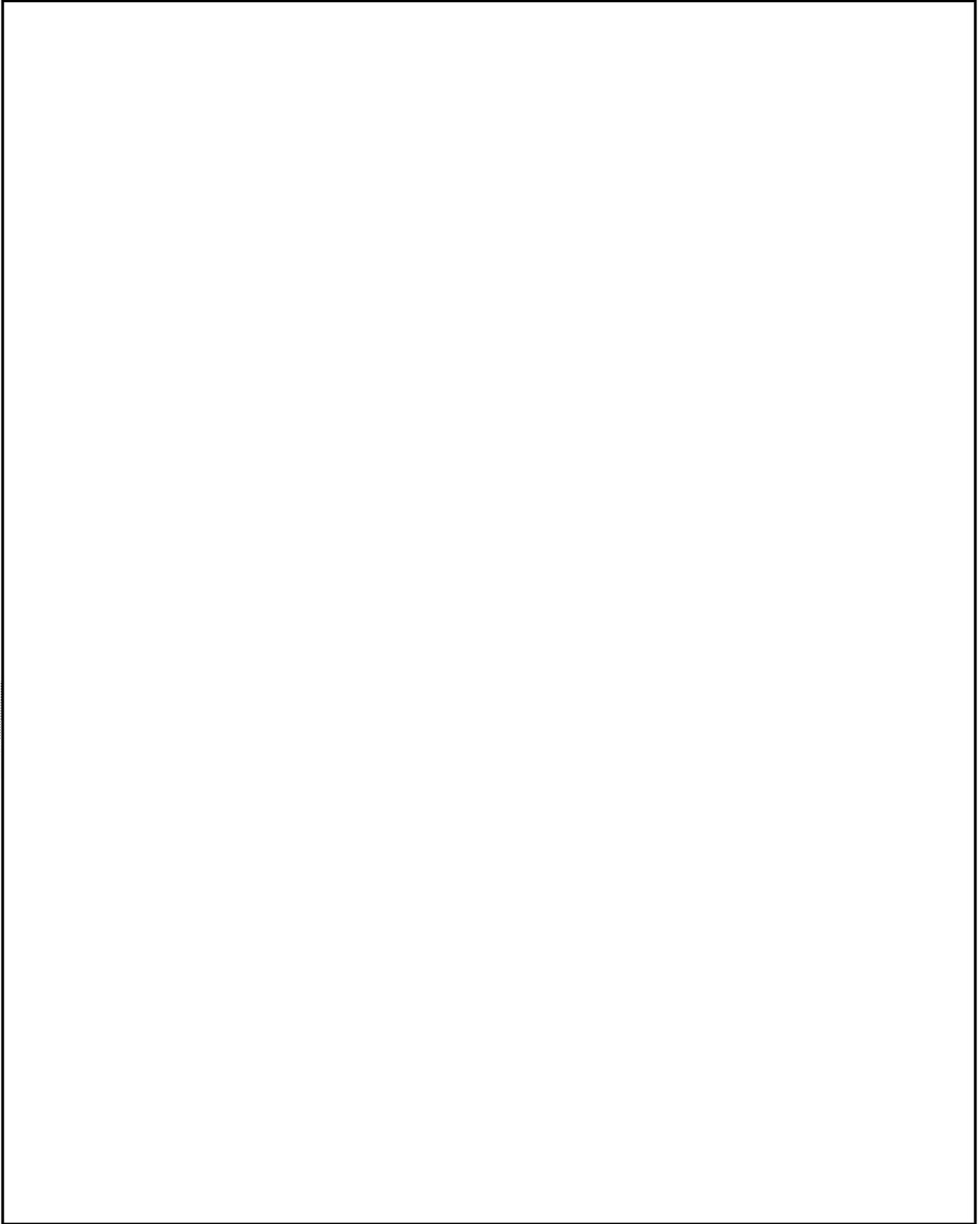


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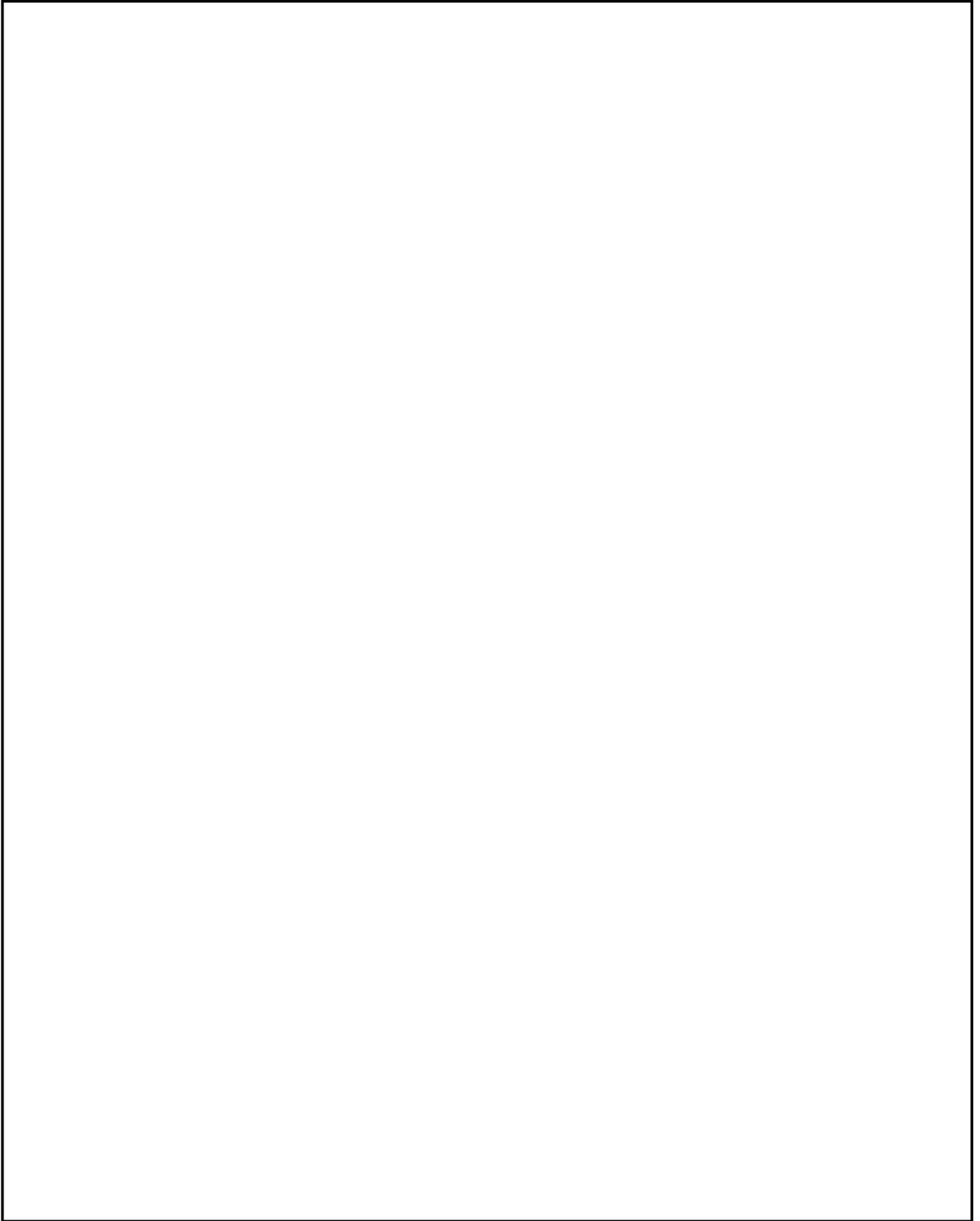


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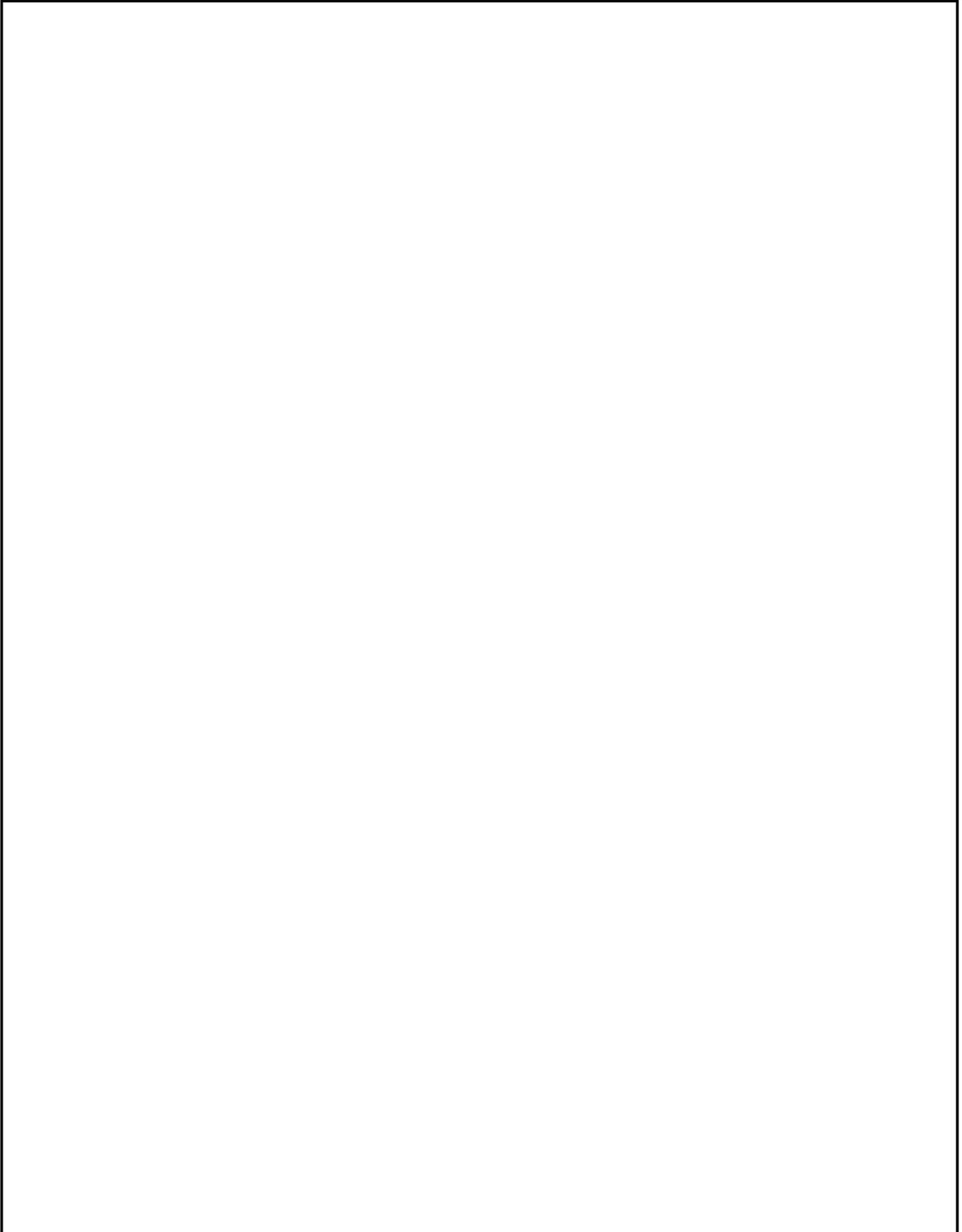
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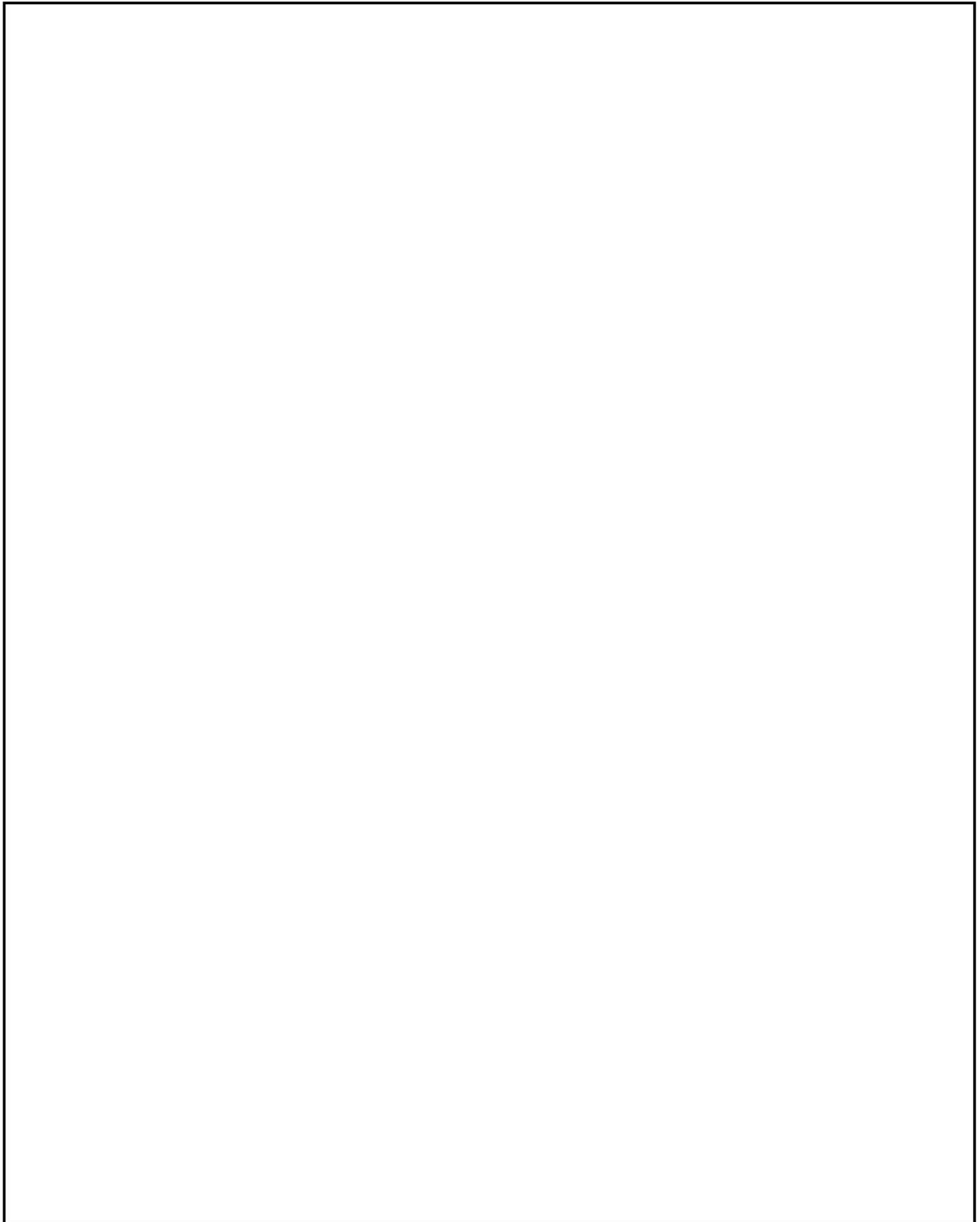
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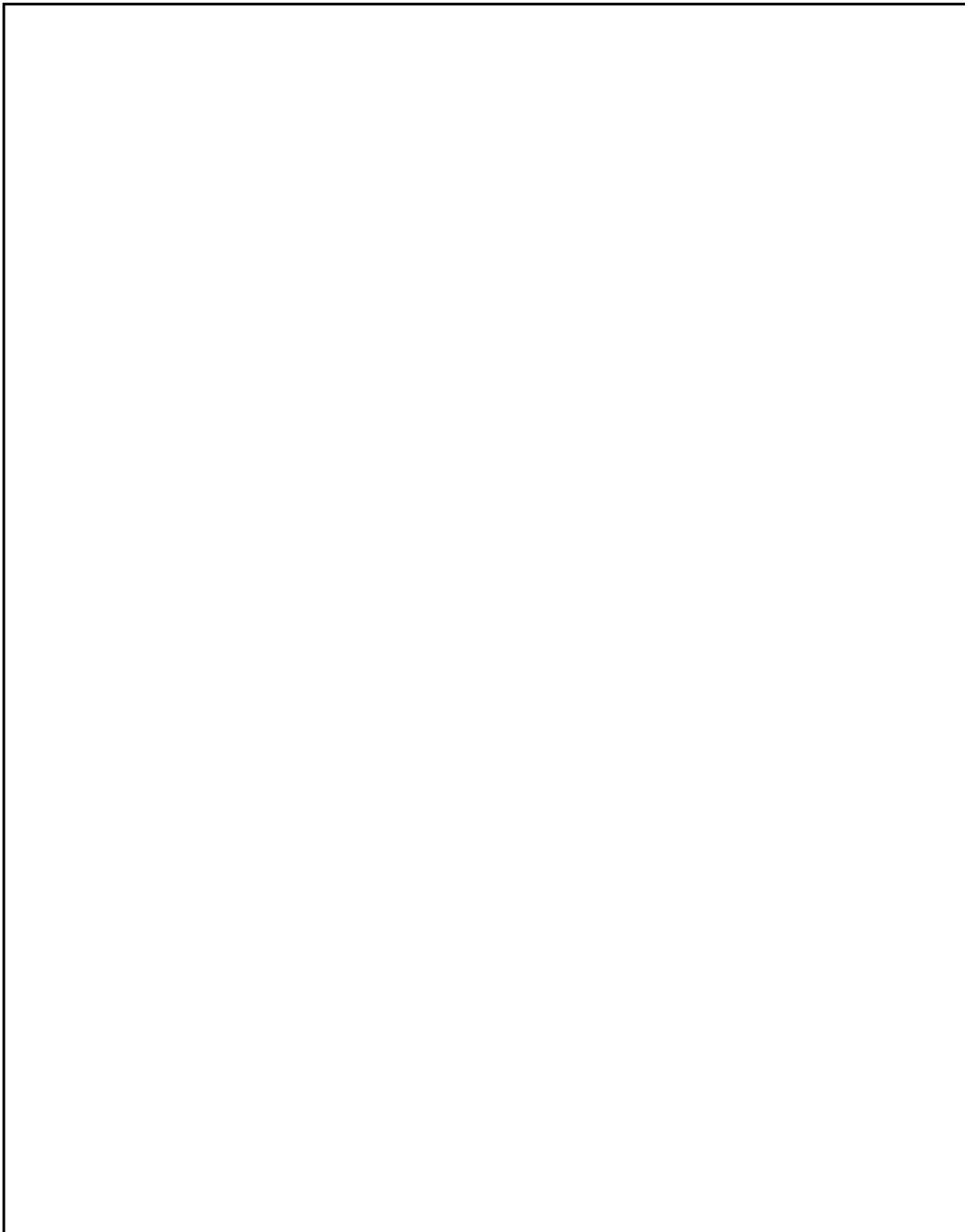
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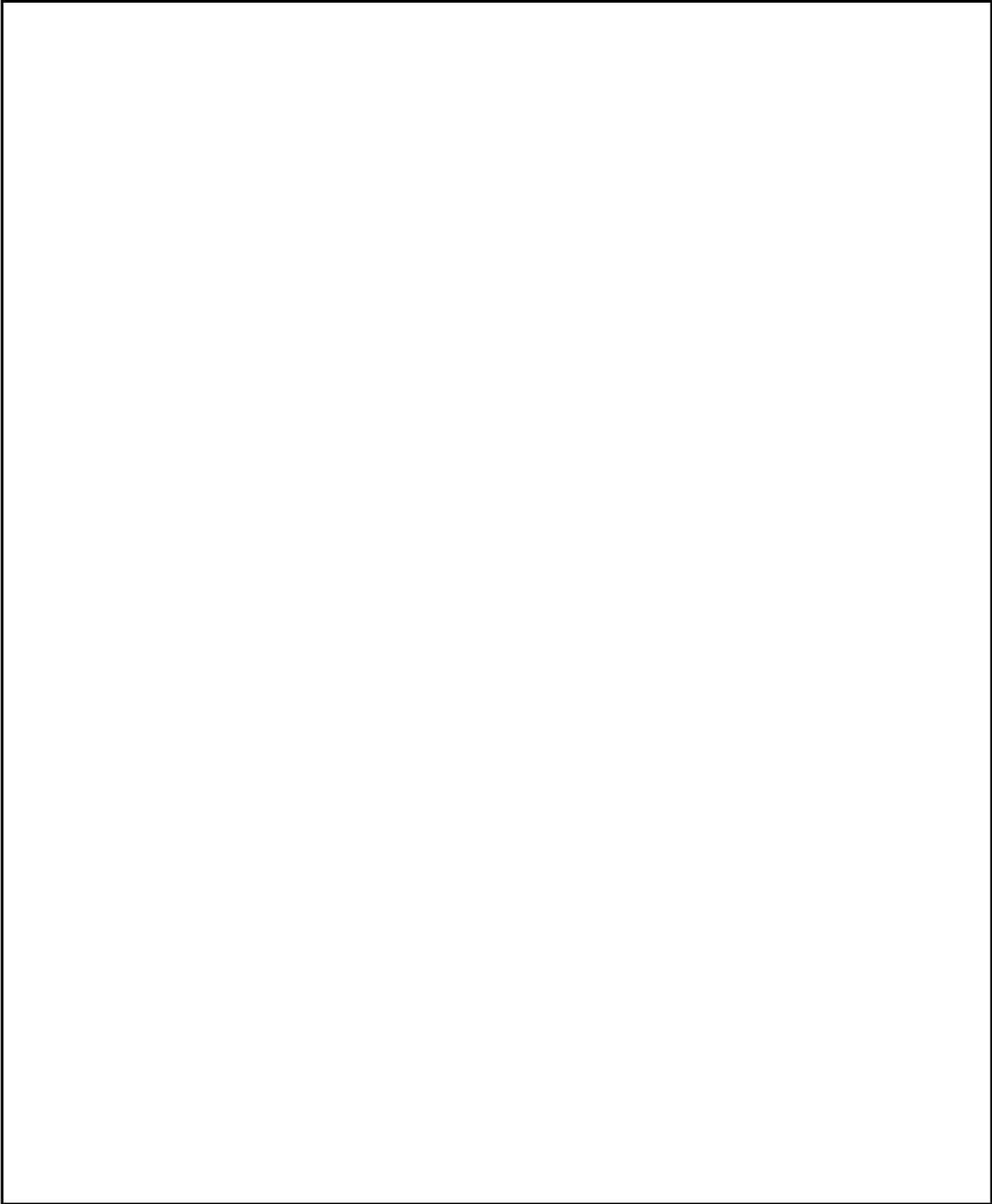
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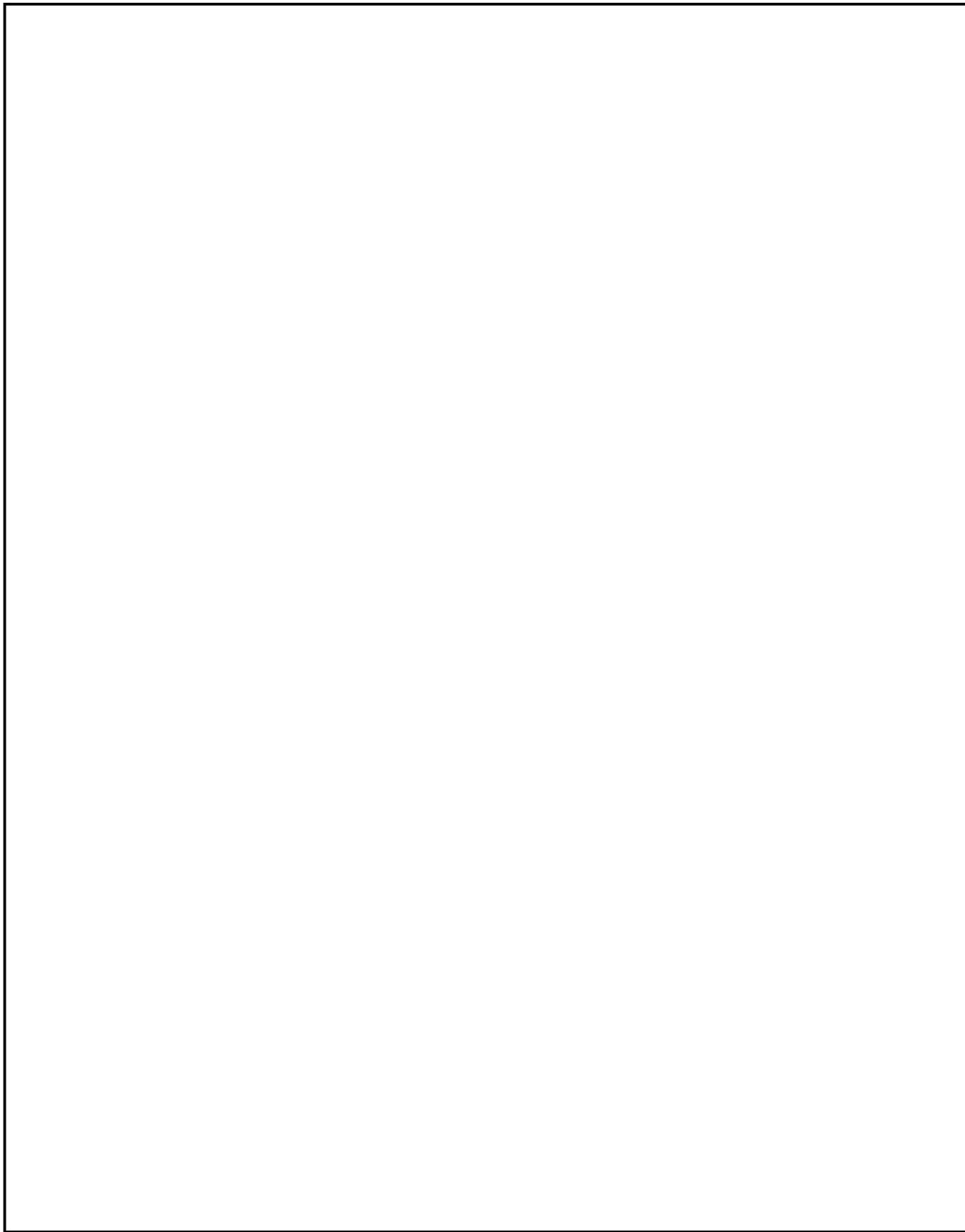
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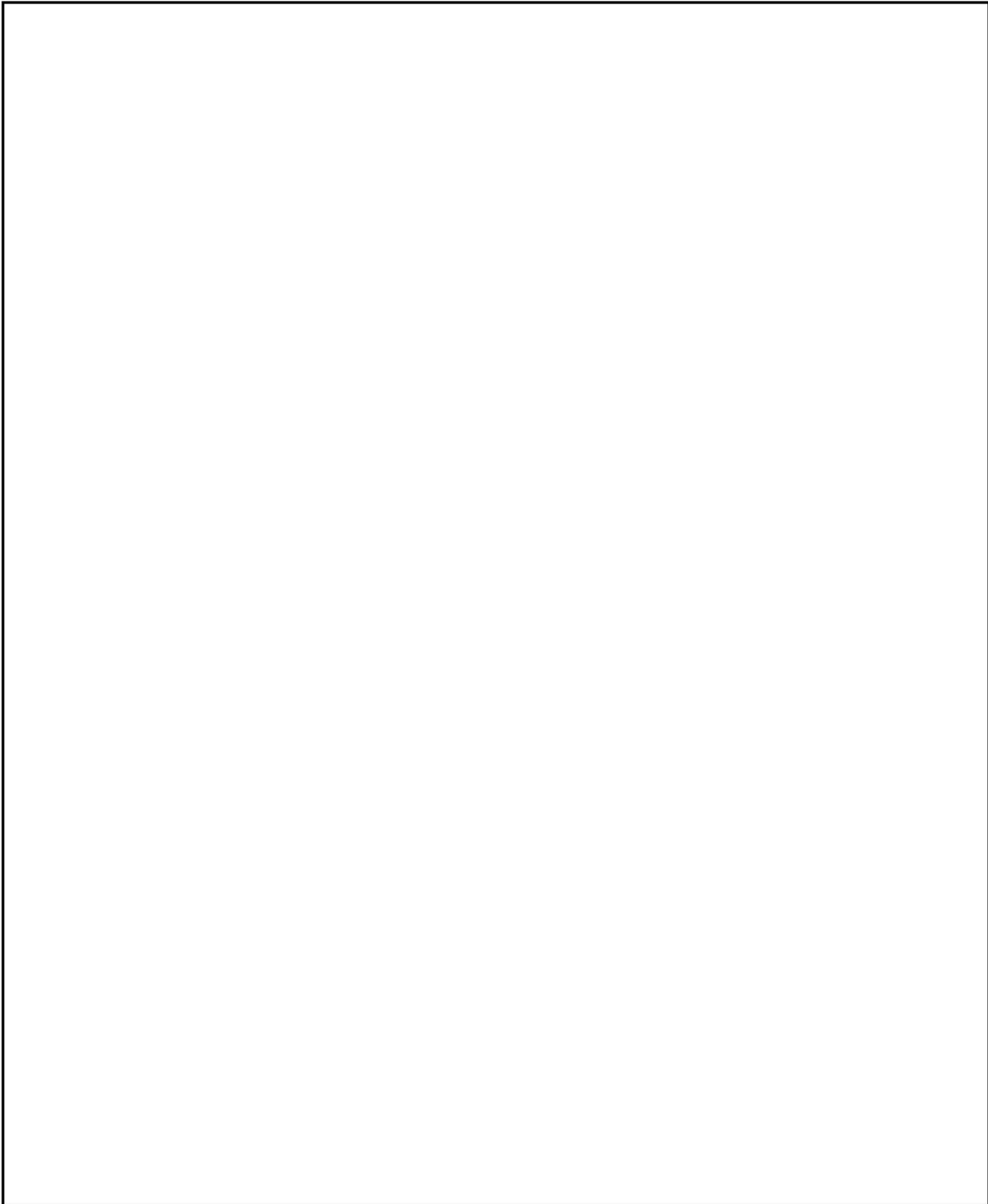
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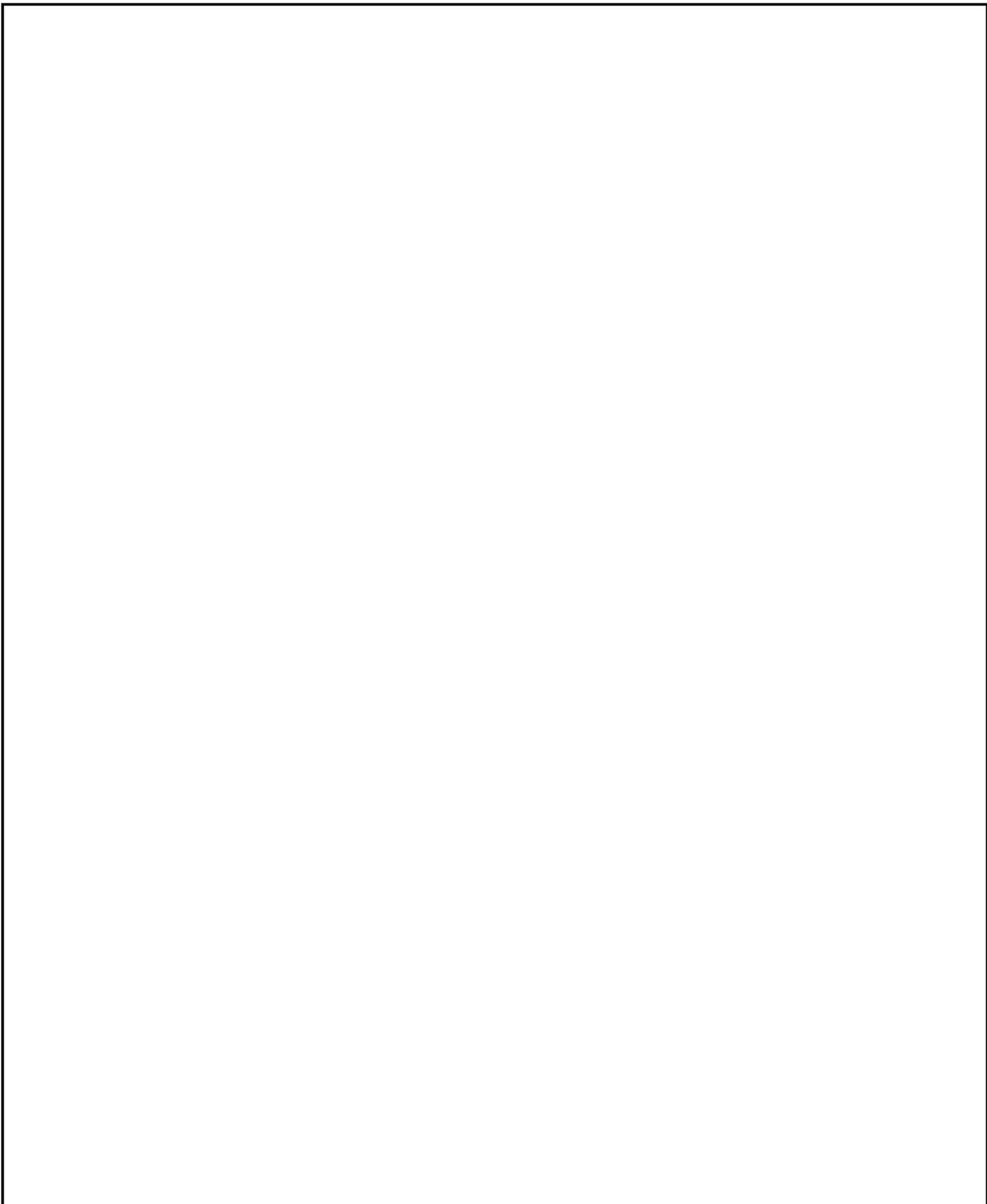
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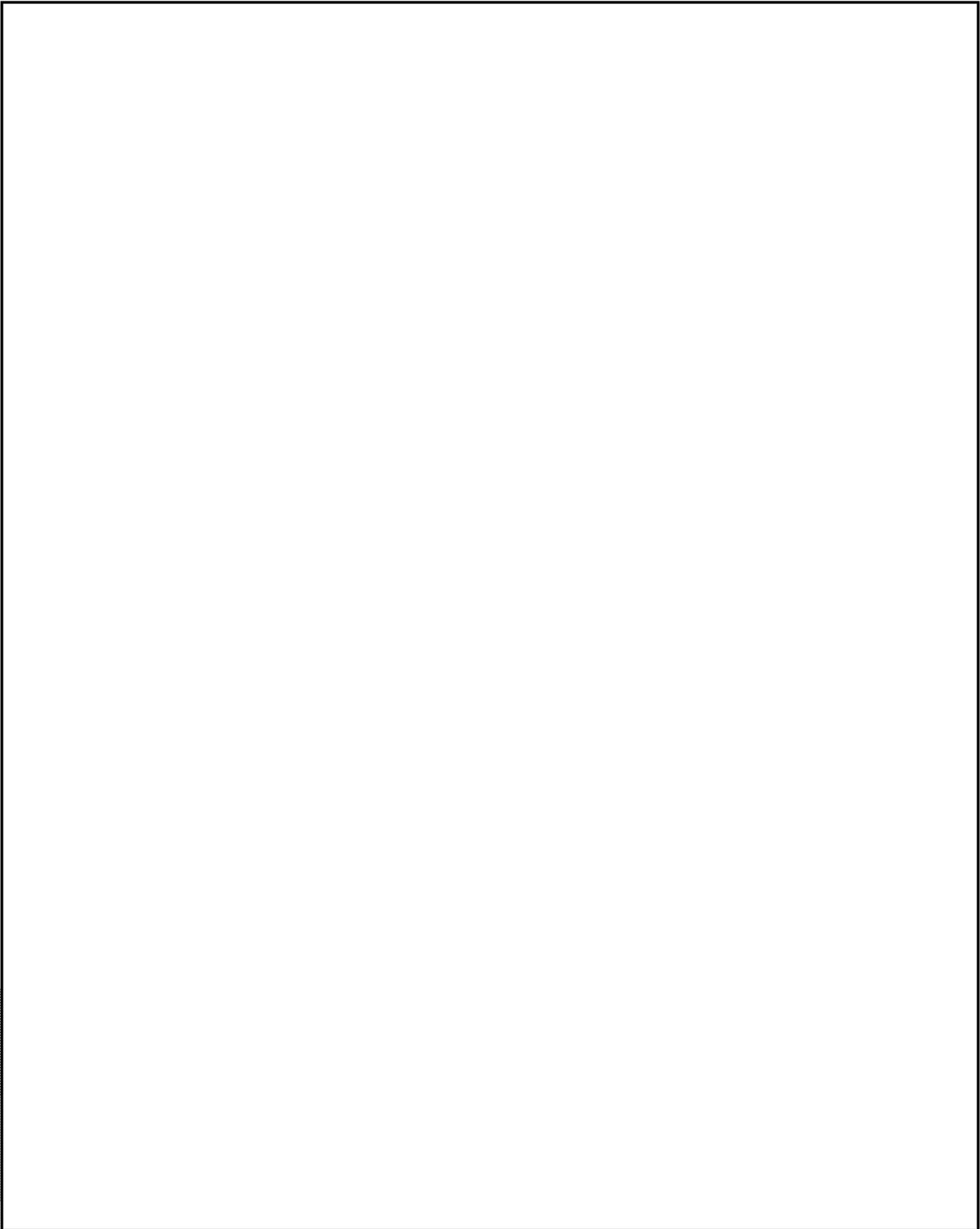
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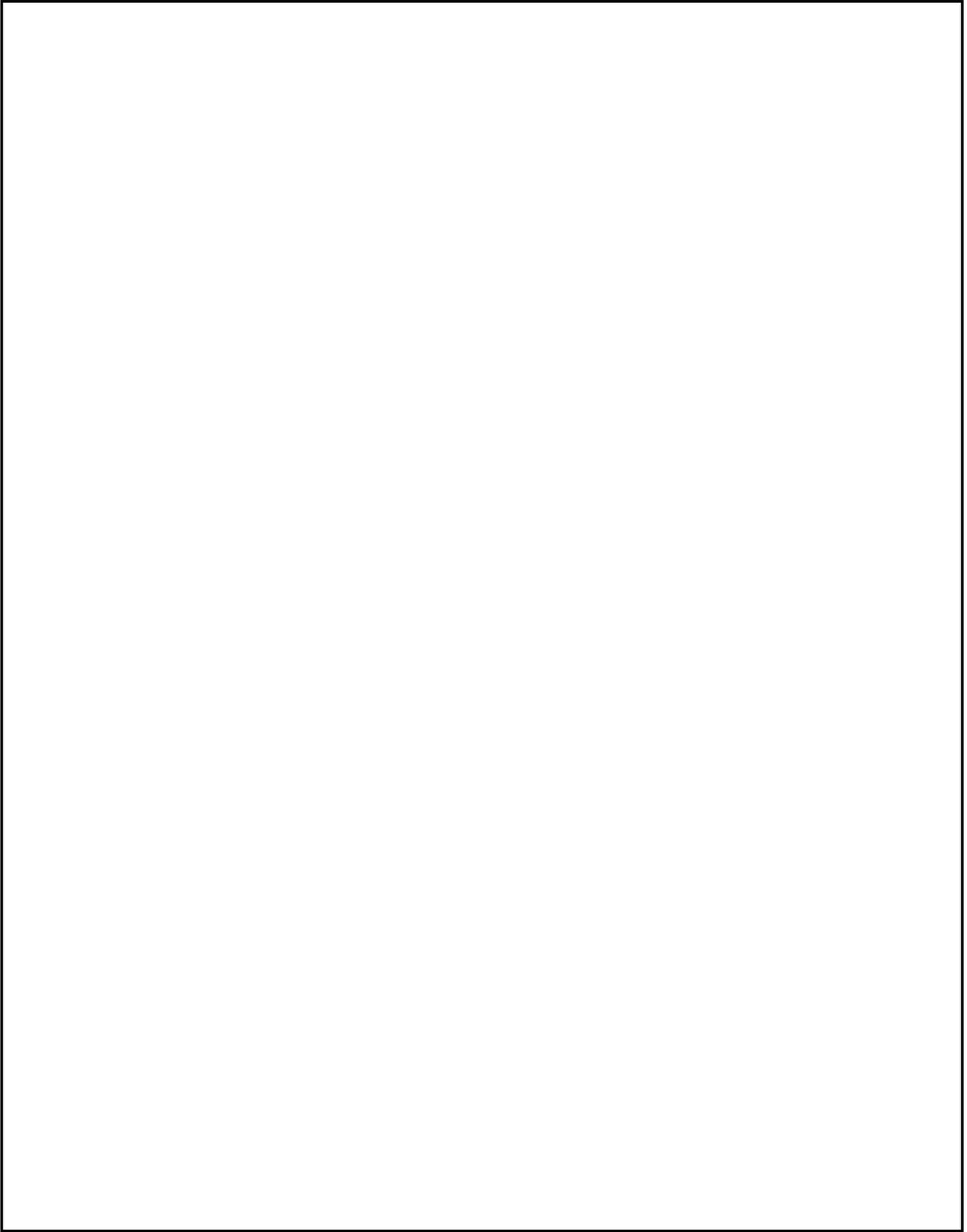
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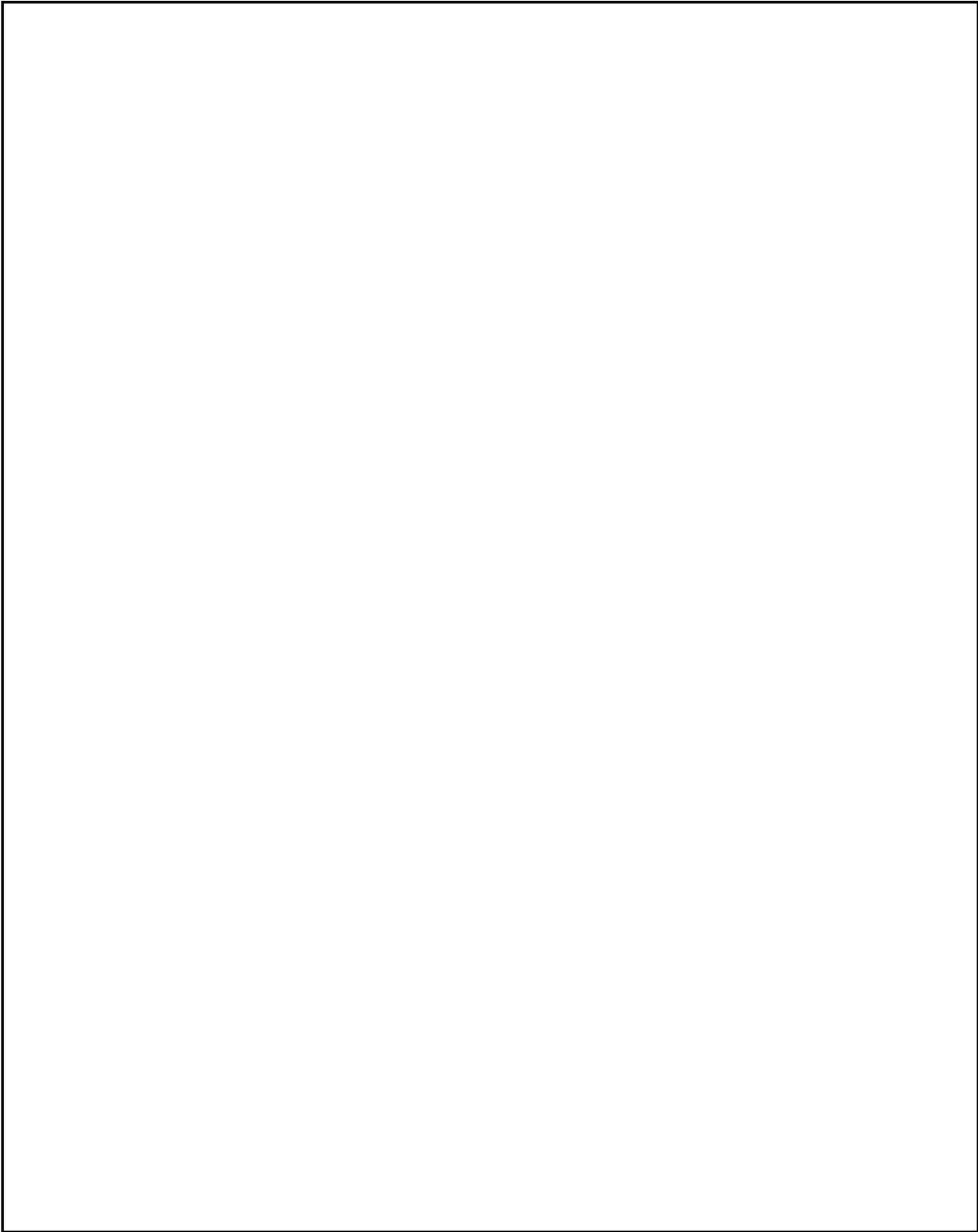
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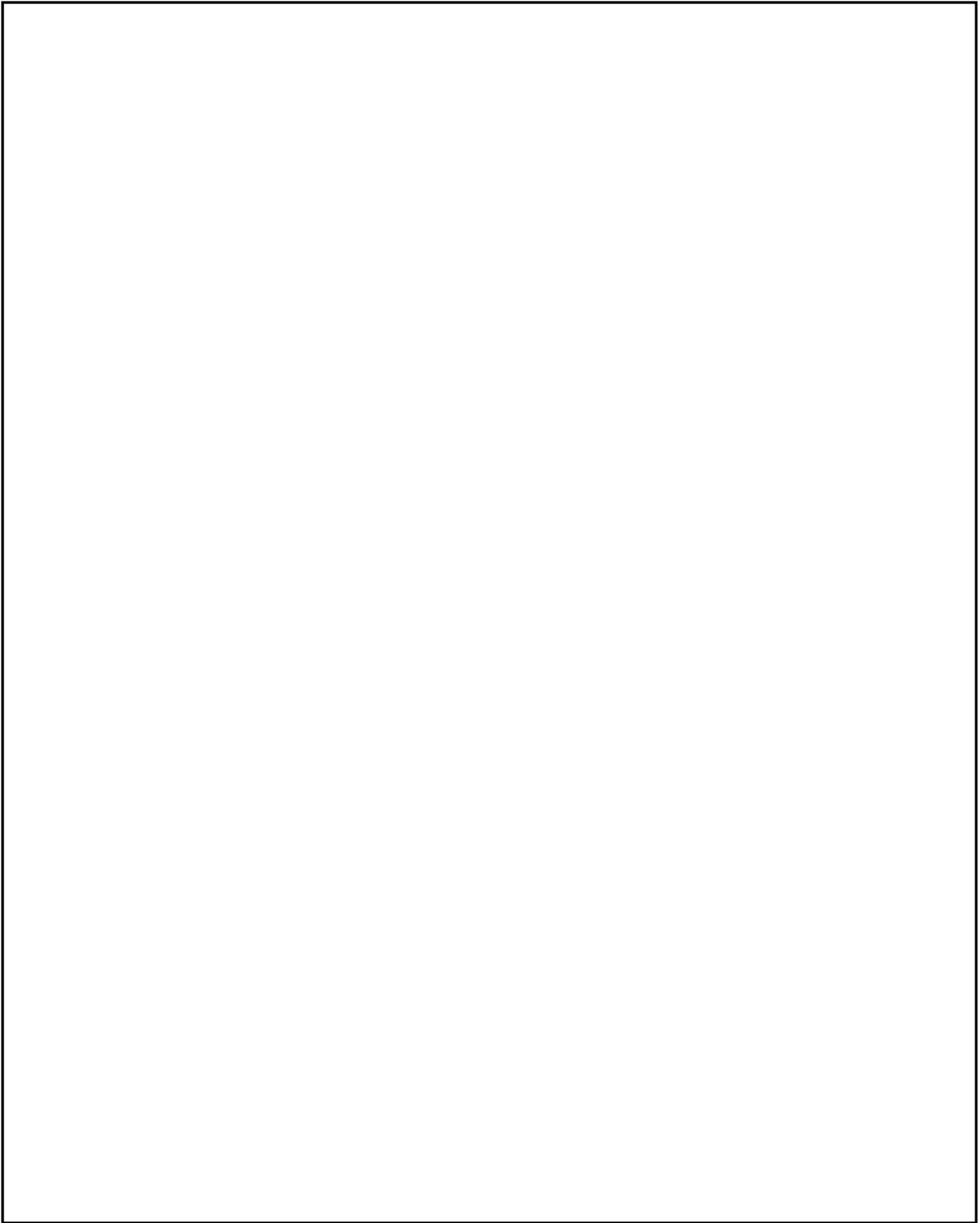
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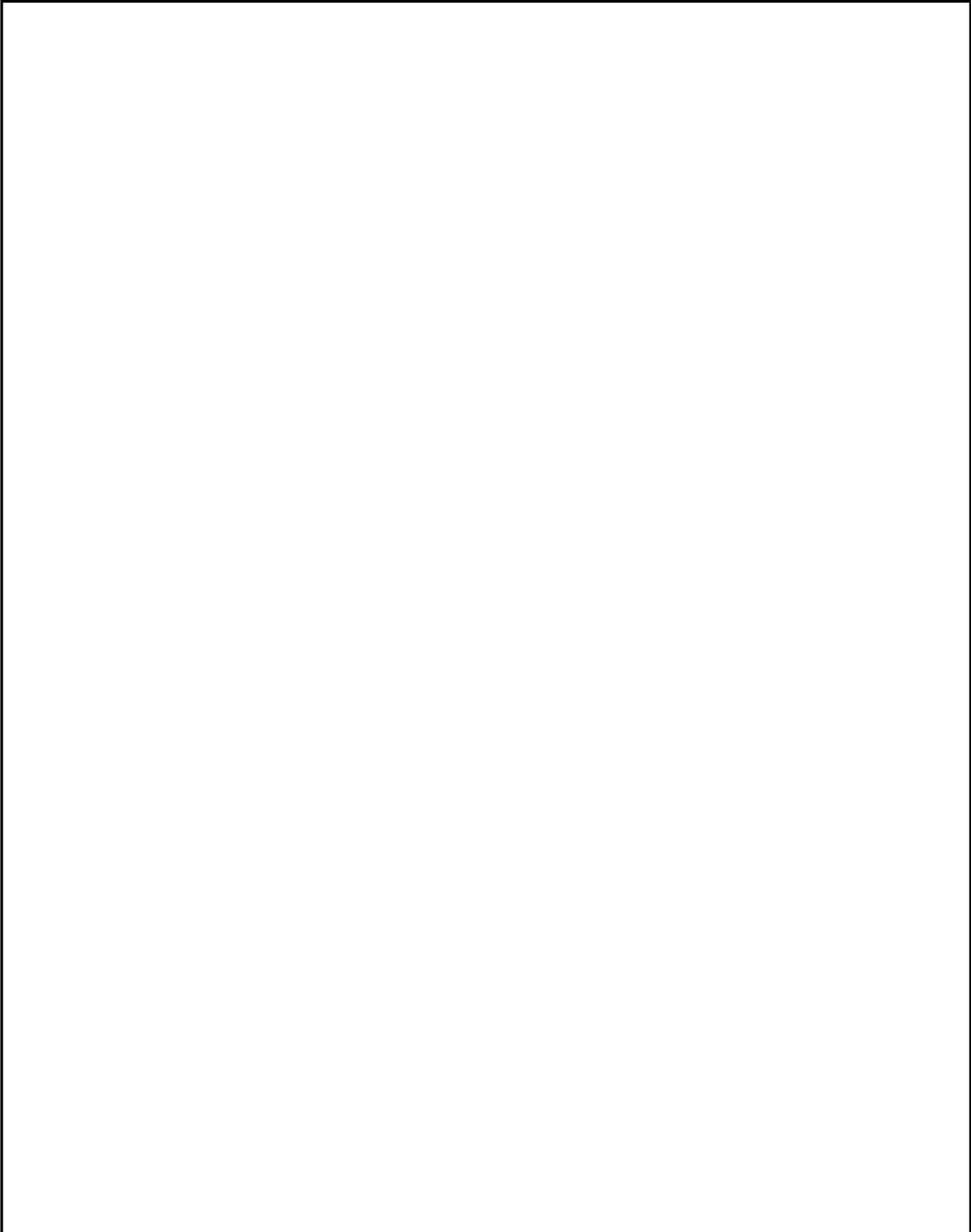
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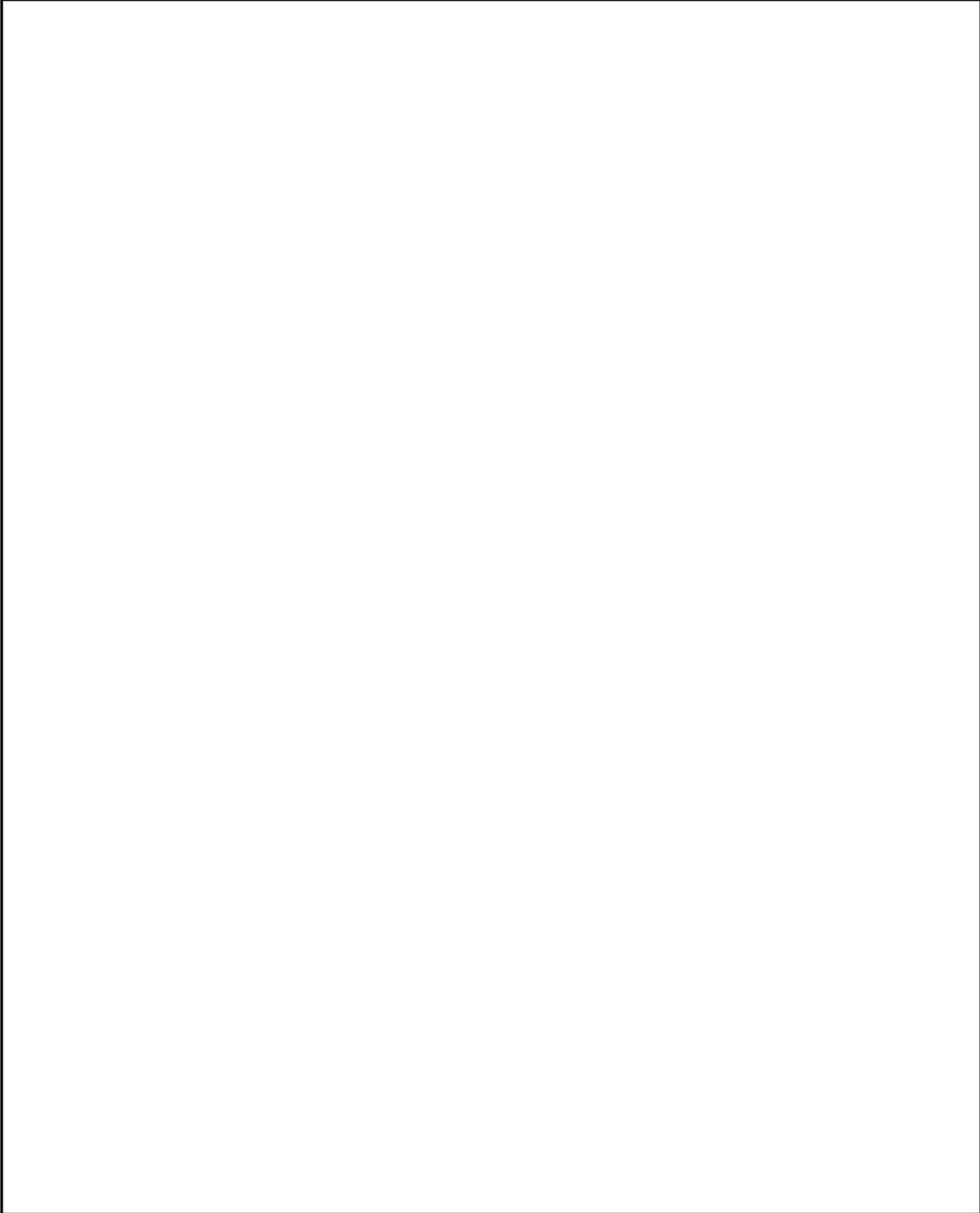
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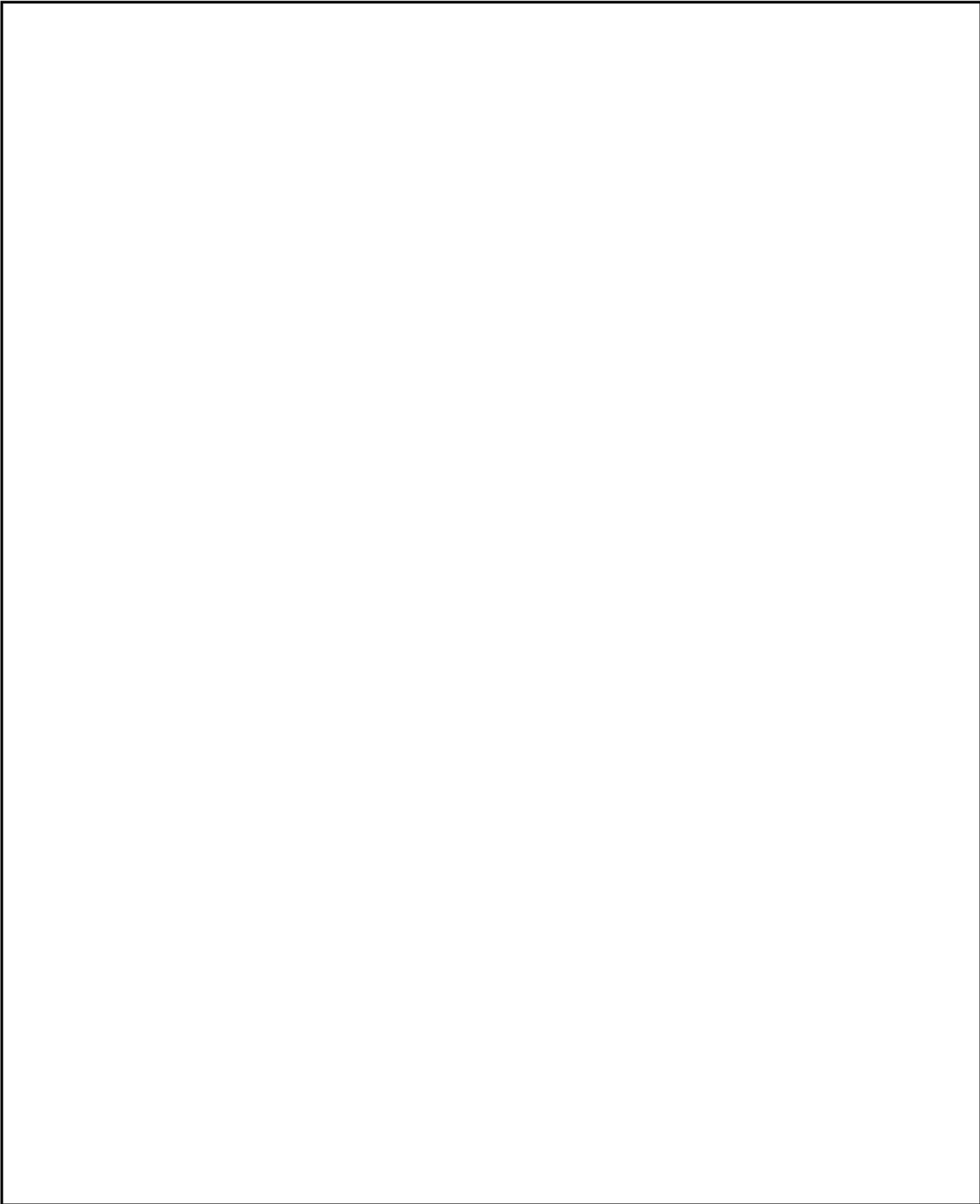
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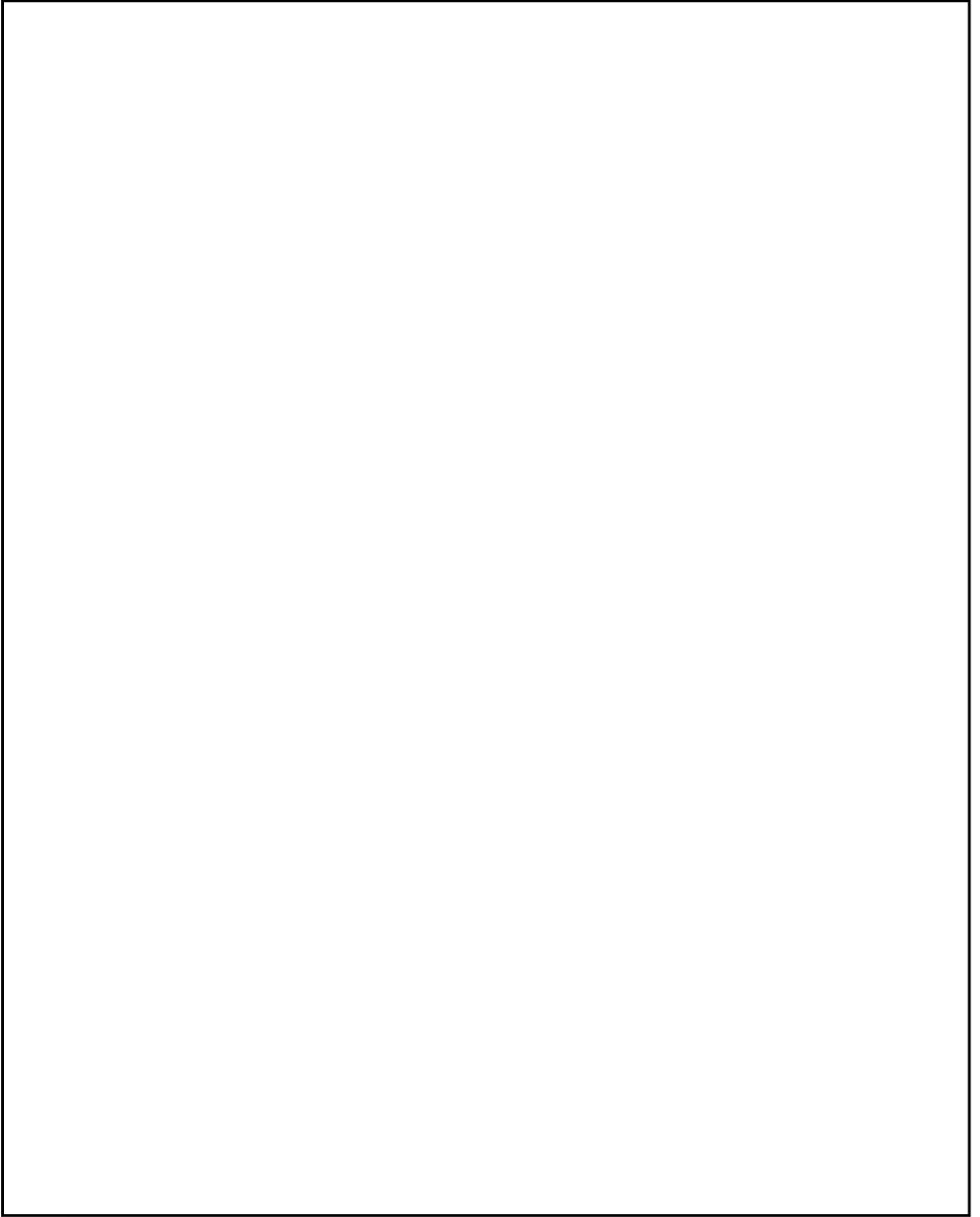
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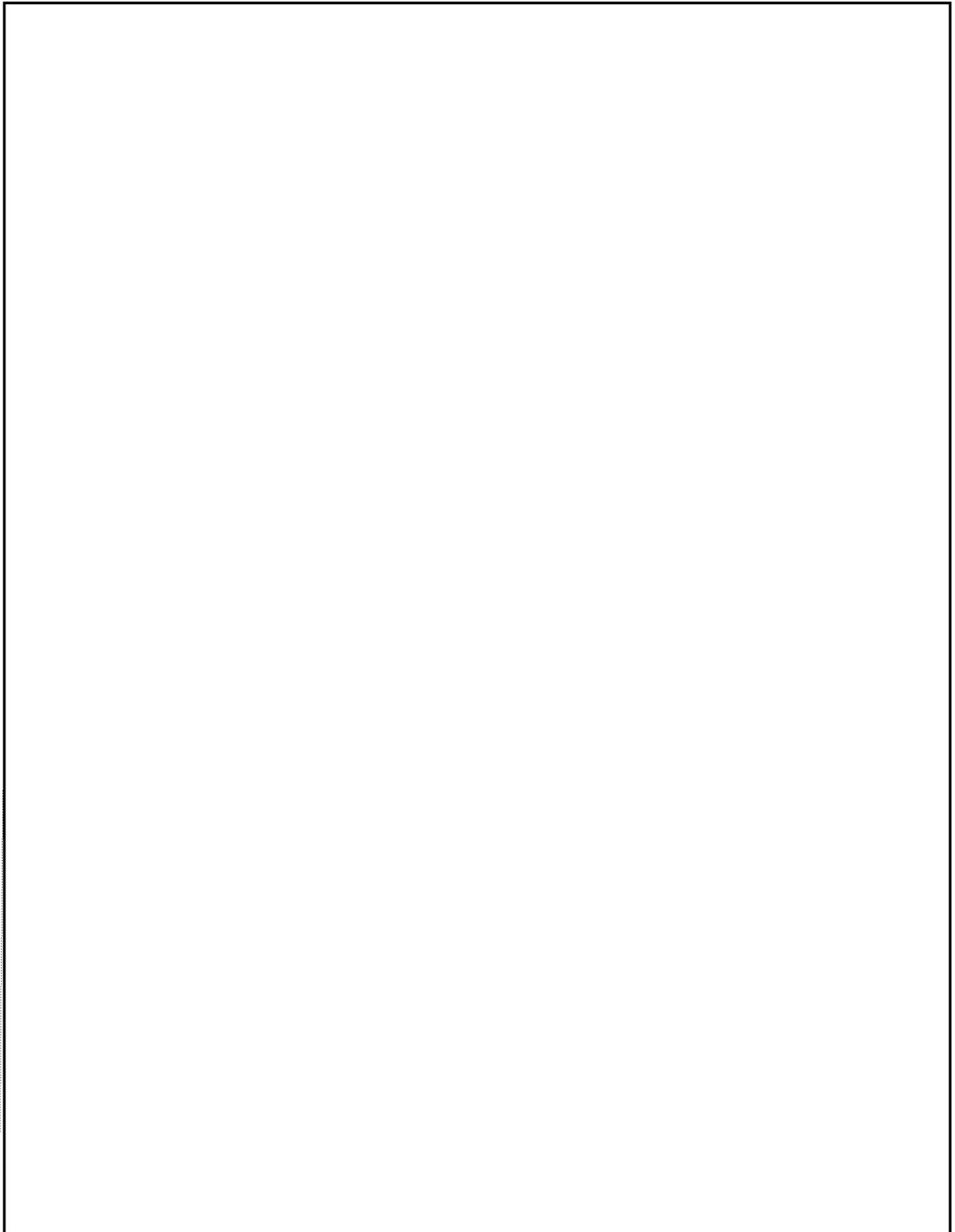
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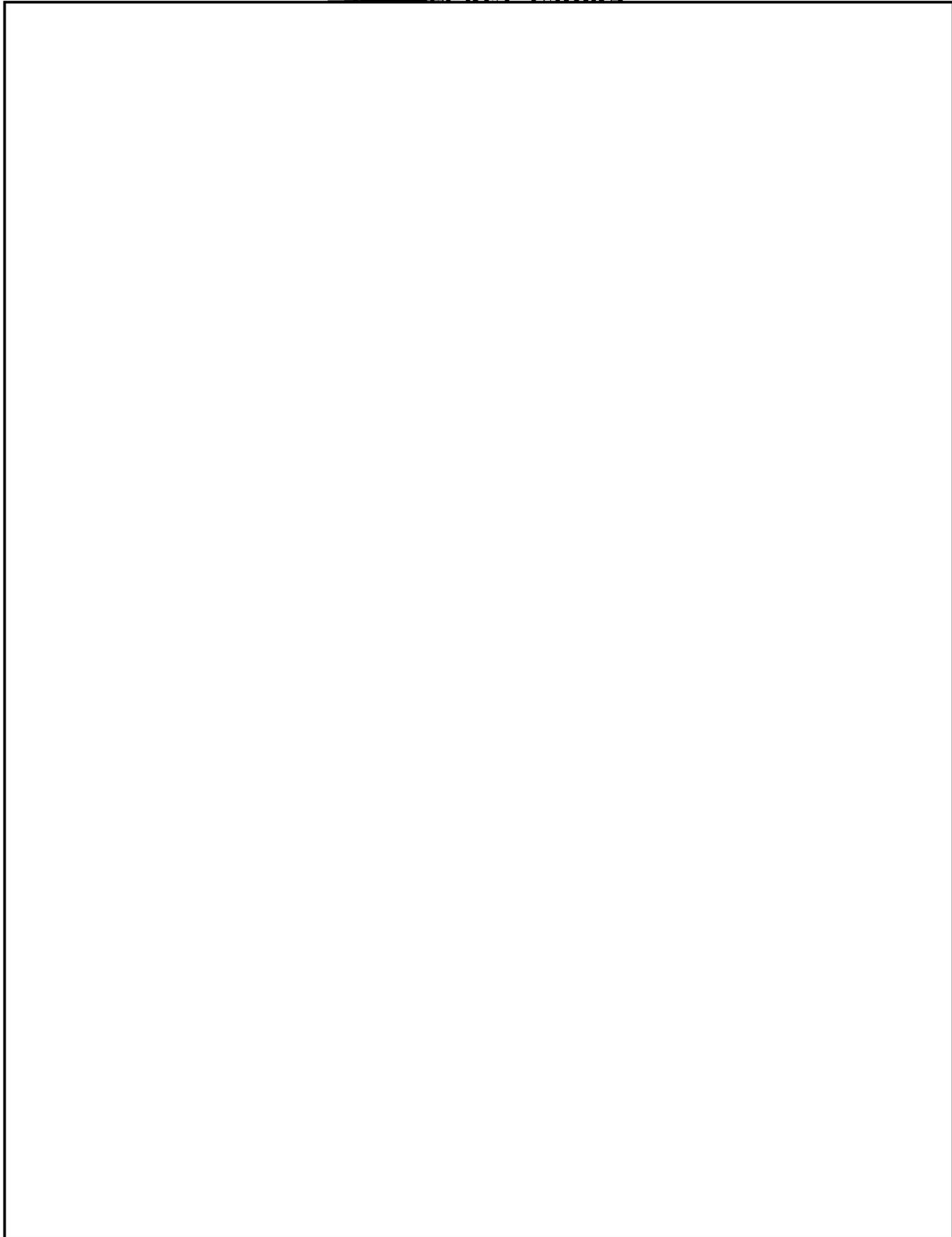


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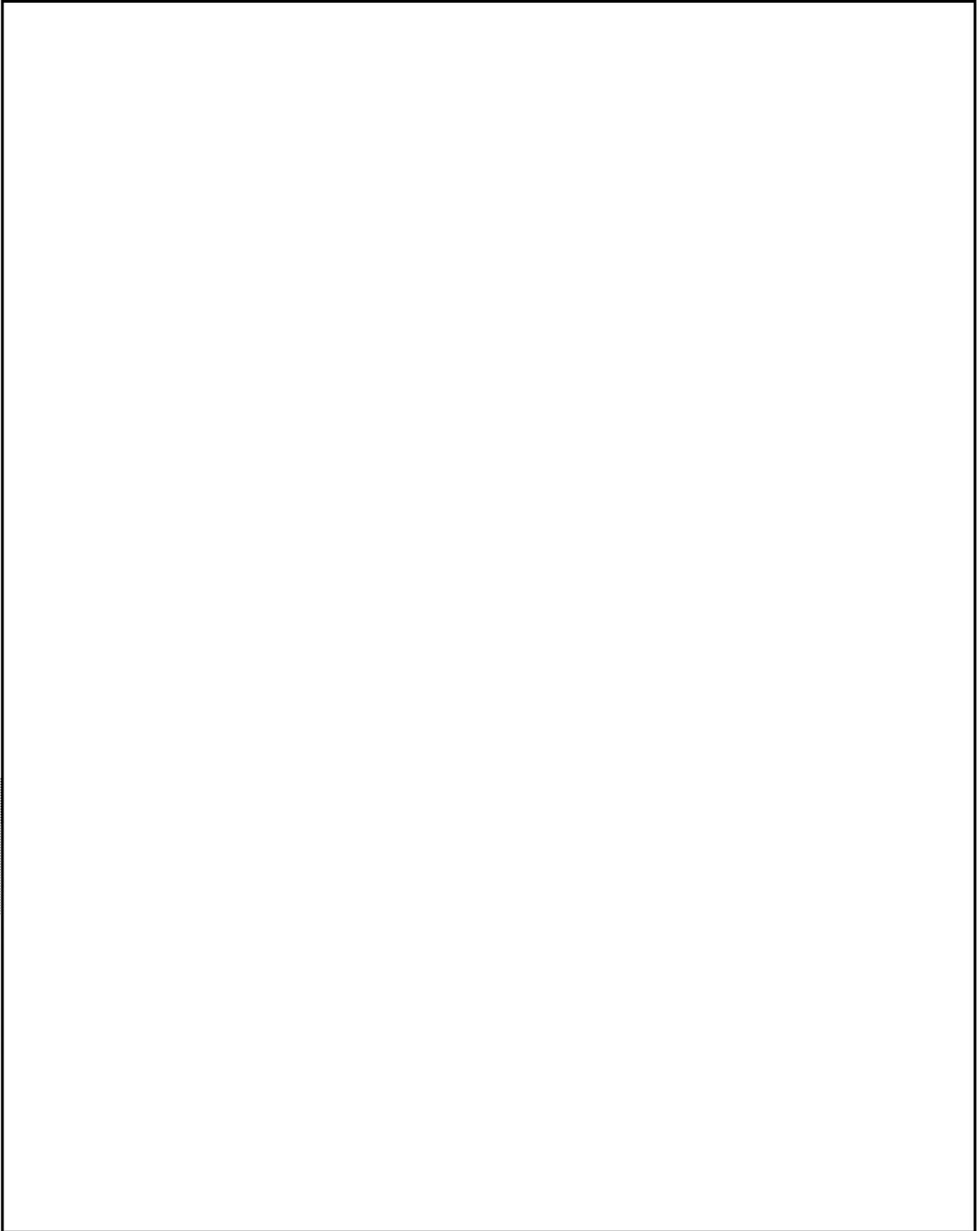


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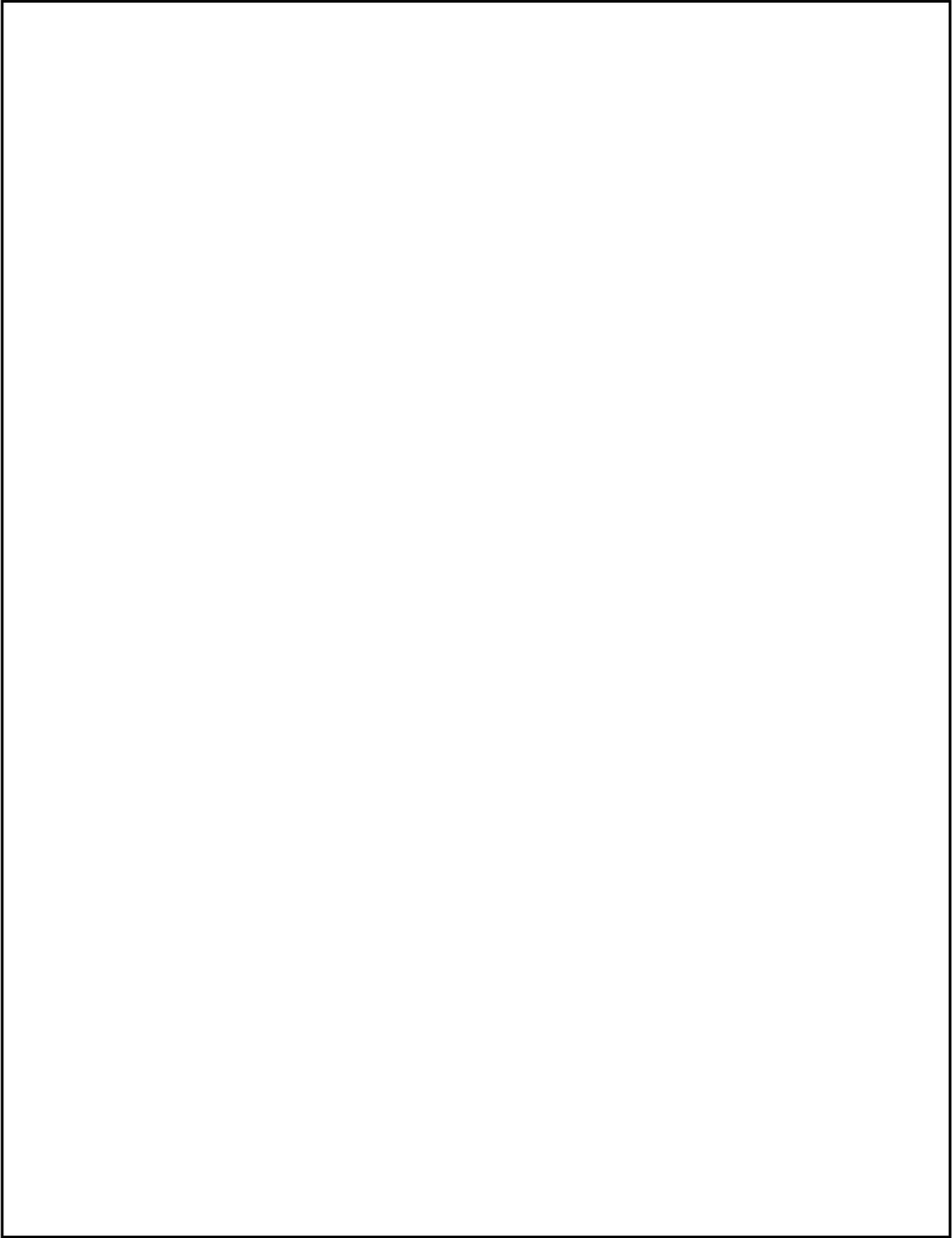
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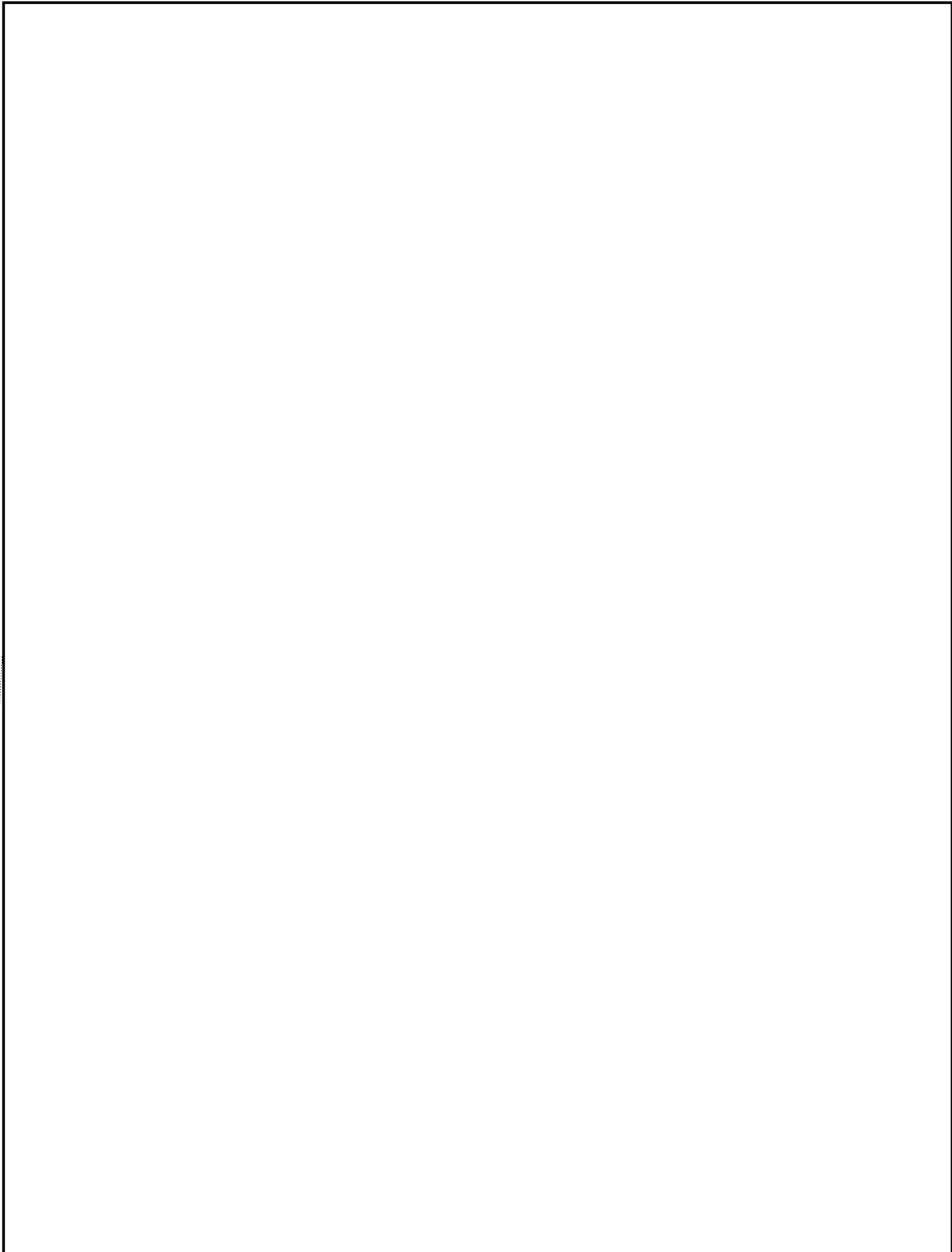
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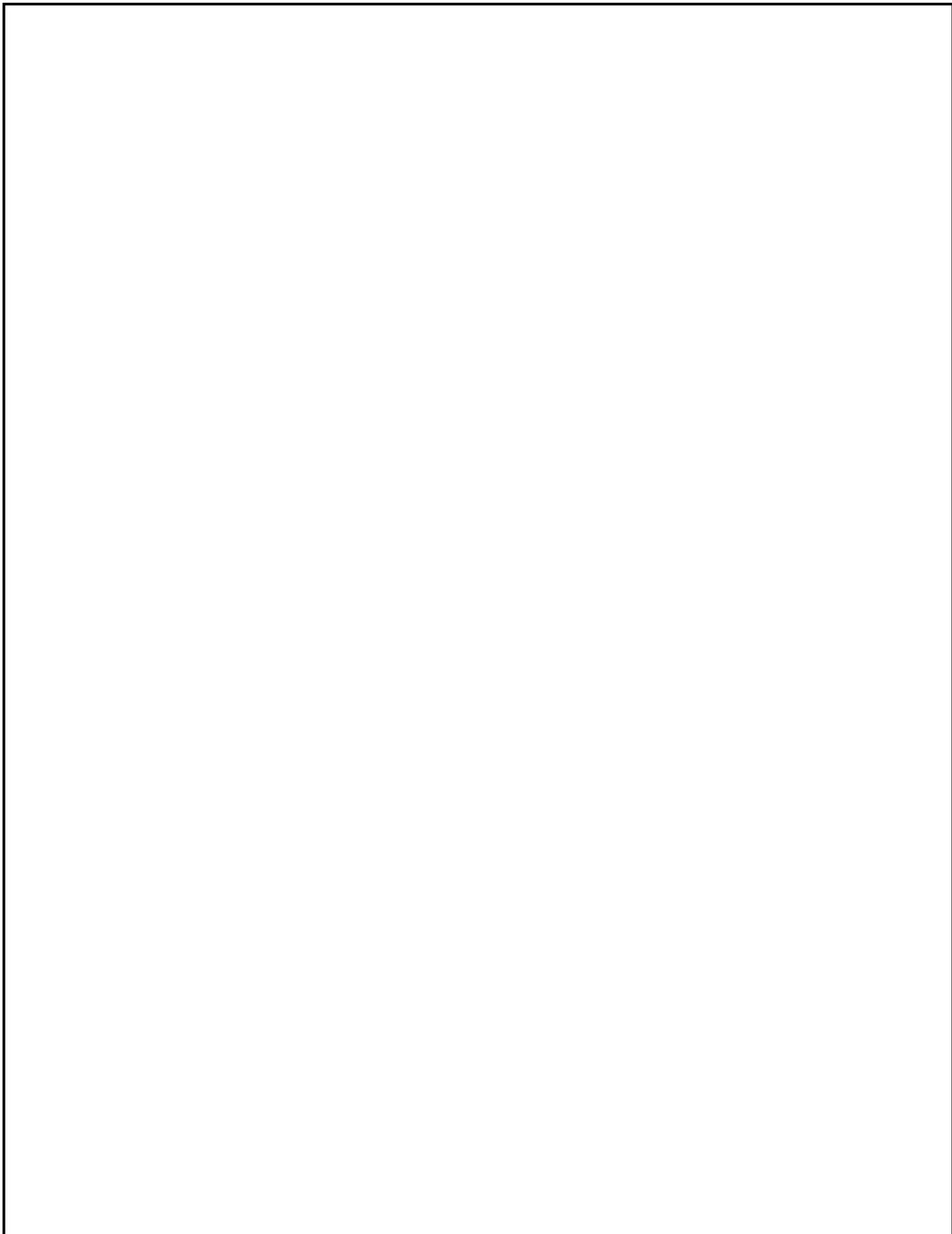
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~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~**Johnson**

We're still on the "B" Group problem. How about the (1-2G)? You could get into a series of crises that were once (1-2G). We certainly would need to talk about the Gulf of Tonkin crisis and your (1-2blkd)..and maybe that should come first..

**Zaslow**

Let's talk about the Gulf of Tonkin. And, here again, Del Lang features. We were watching what was going on in the area. We saw the beginnings of Vietnamese actions. We reported them. And we reported the hostile actions on two occasions..the first incident and the second incident..in both cases, before the event took place. We reported it electrically, and the ships in the Gulf were on electrical distribution. We believe they received a warning before the attack took place. What we did not know, was that it was a Vietnamese reaction to U.S. operations..34A. None of us had been

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

cleared for 34A, and we did not know that there were actions underway, to which this was a reaction. But it didn't affect the reporting..the reporting went out, and essentially told in advance of the raid that the raid would take place. Now, there have been many arguments since then that there was a spurious raid that never took place. That's not what we felt we saw. And I had the foresight to have Del Lang stop what he was doing after it was over and write an account of what happened in the Gulf of Tonkin incident. So, whatever that says is accurate.

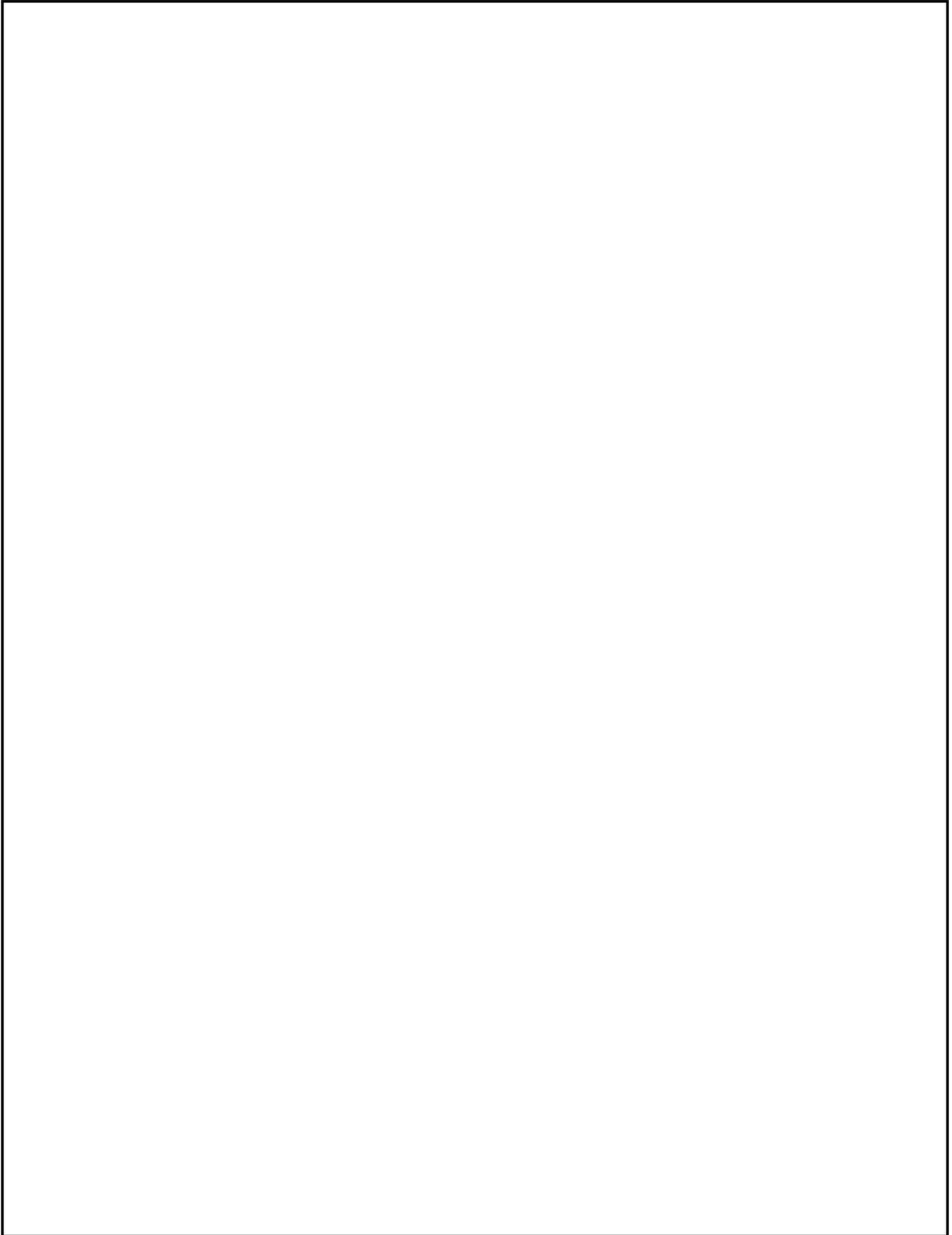
**Baker** So, from a SIGINT point of view, regardless of the provocation, the attack was real?

**Zaslow** We thought it was..absolutely. We had no reason to believe it wasn't.

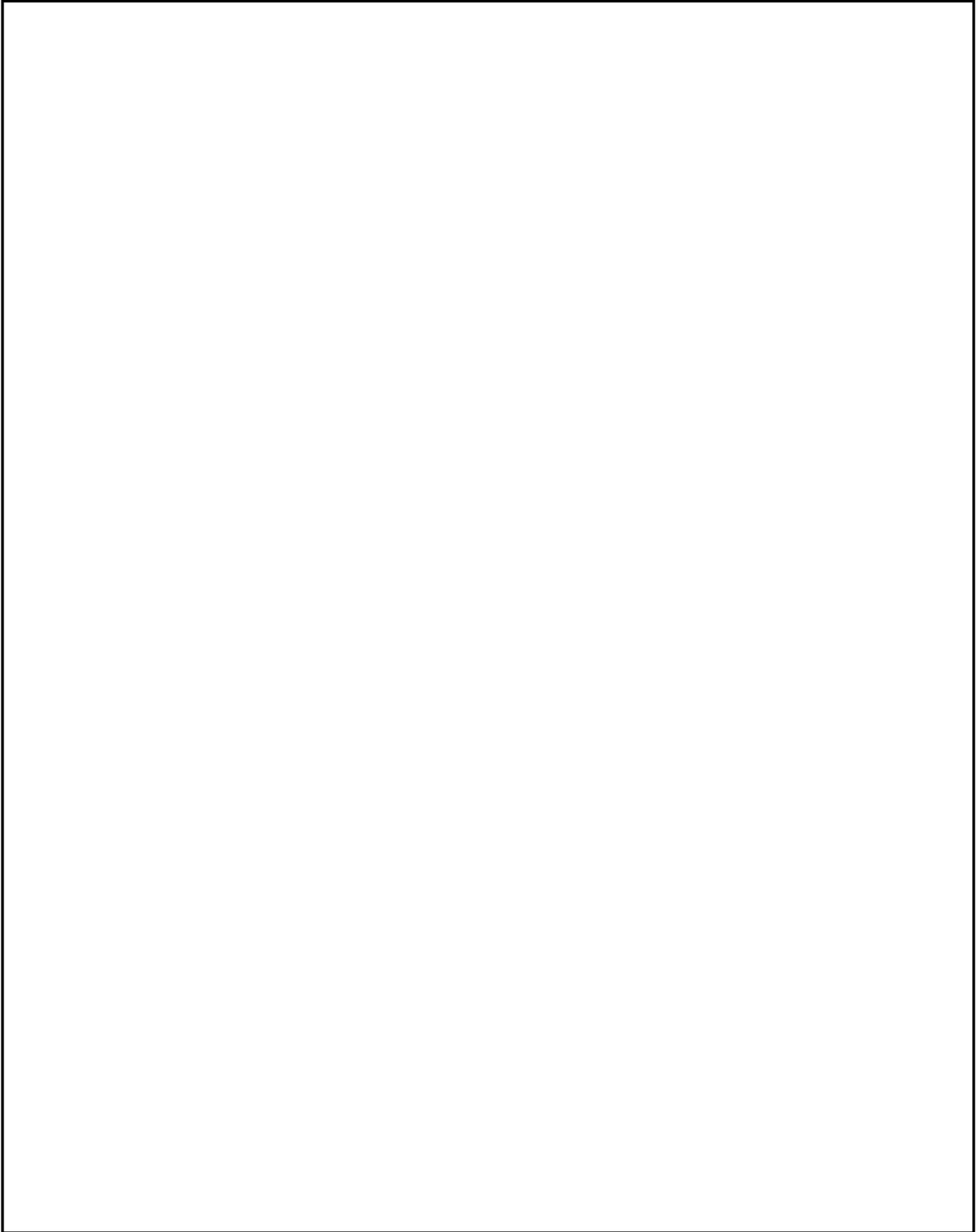
**Johnson** Did you have to go "downtown" later on and talk about that? Did you have to go down and talk to the Fulbright investigation?

**Zaslow** No.

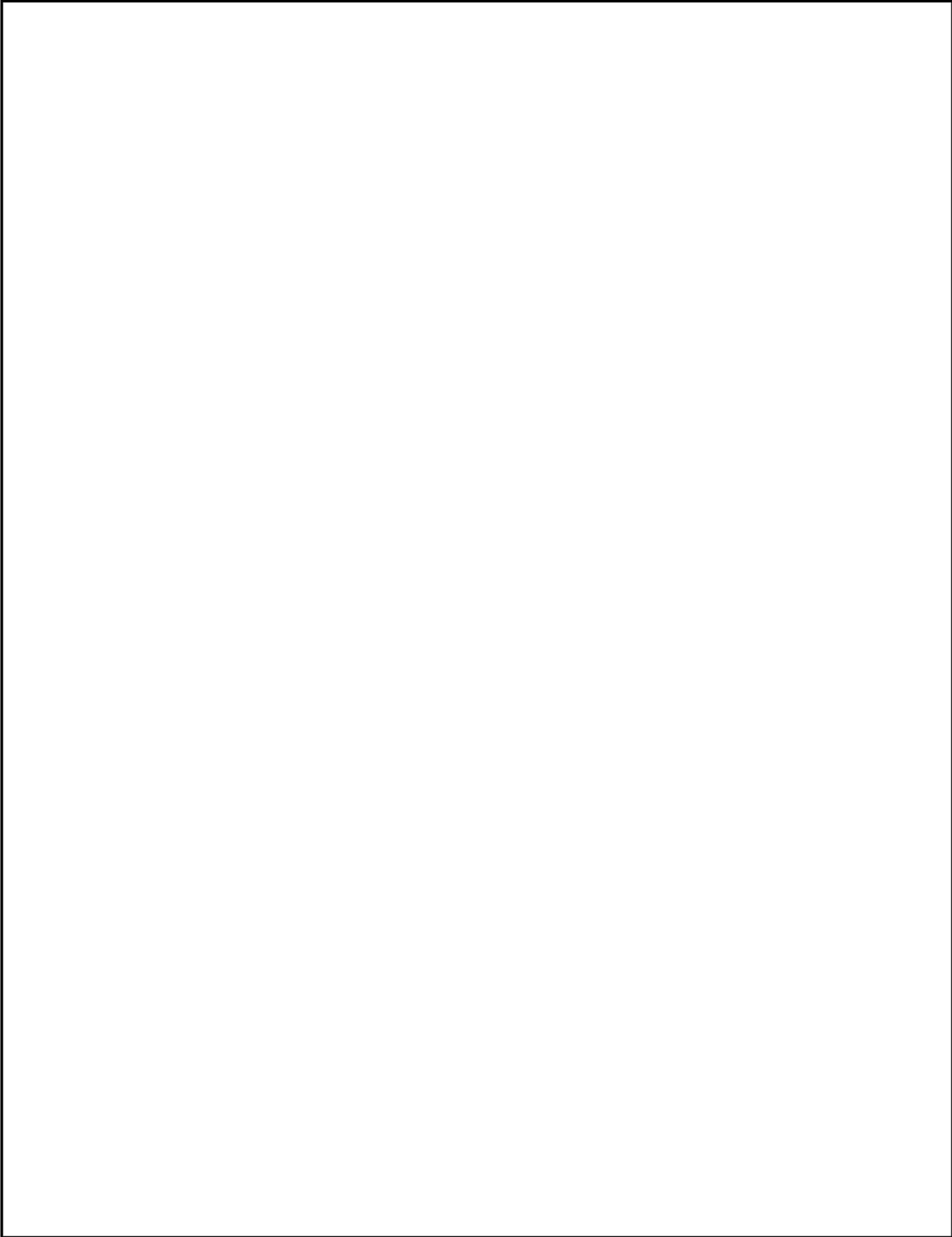
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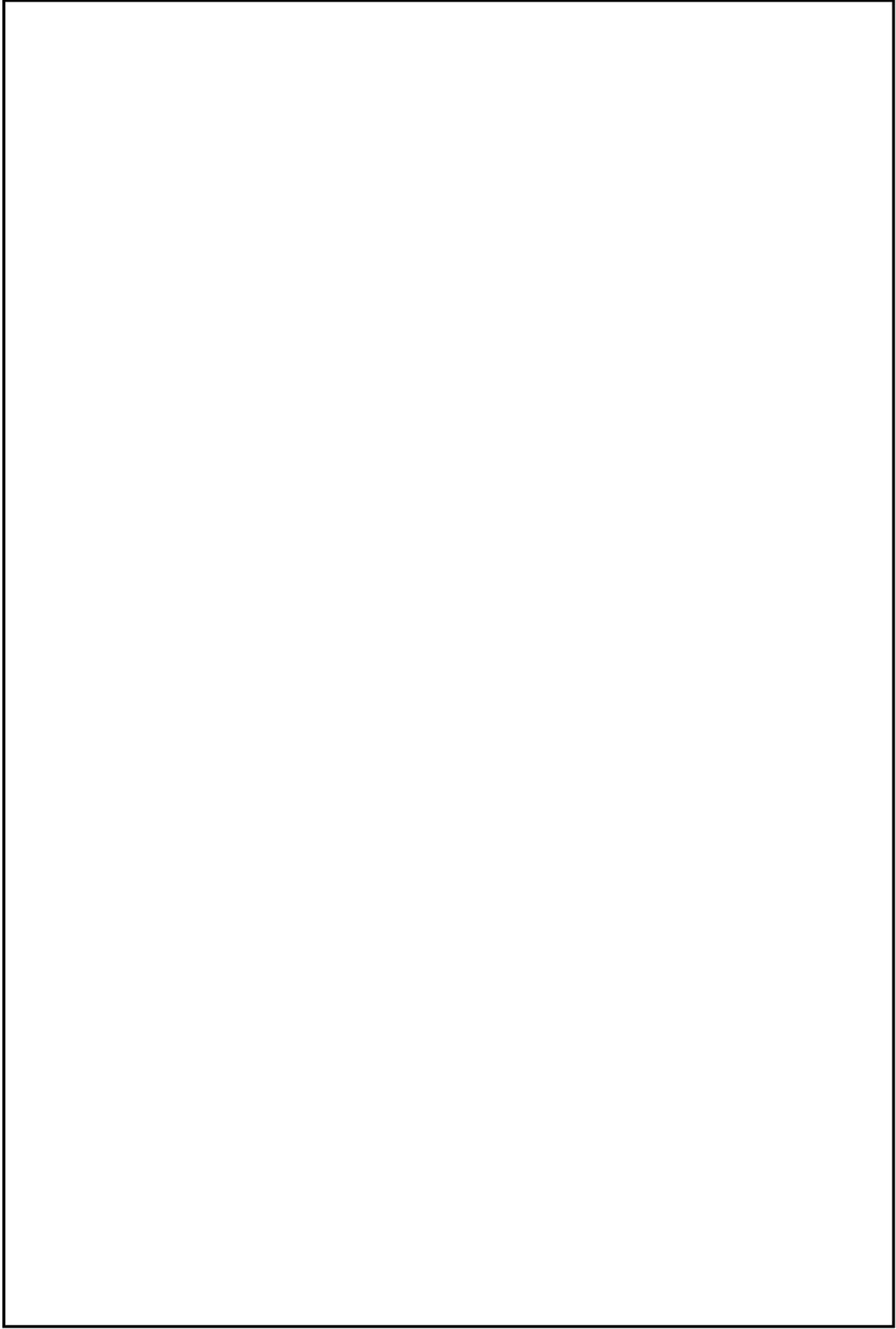


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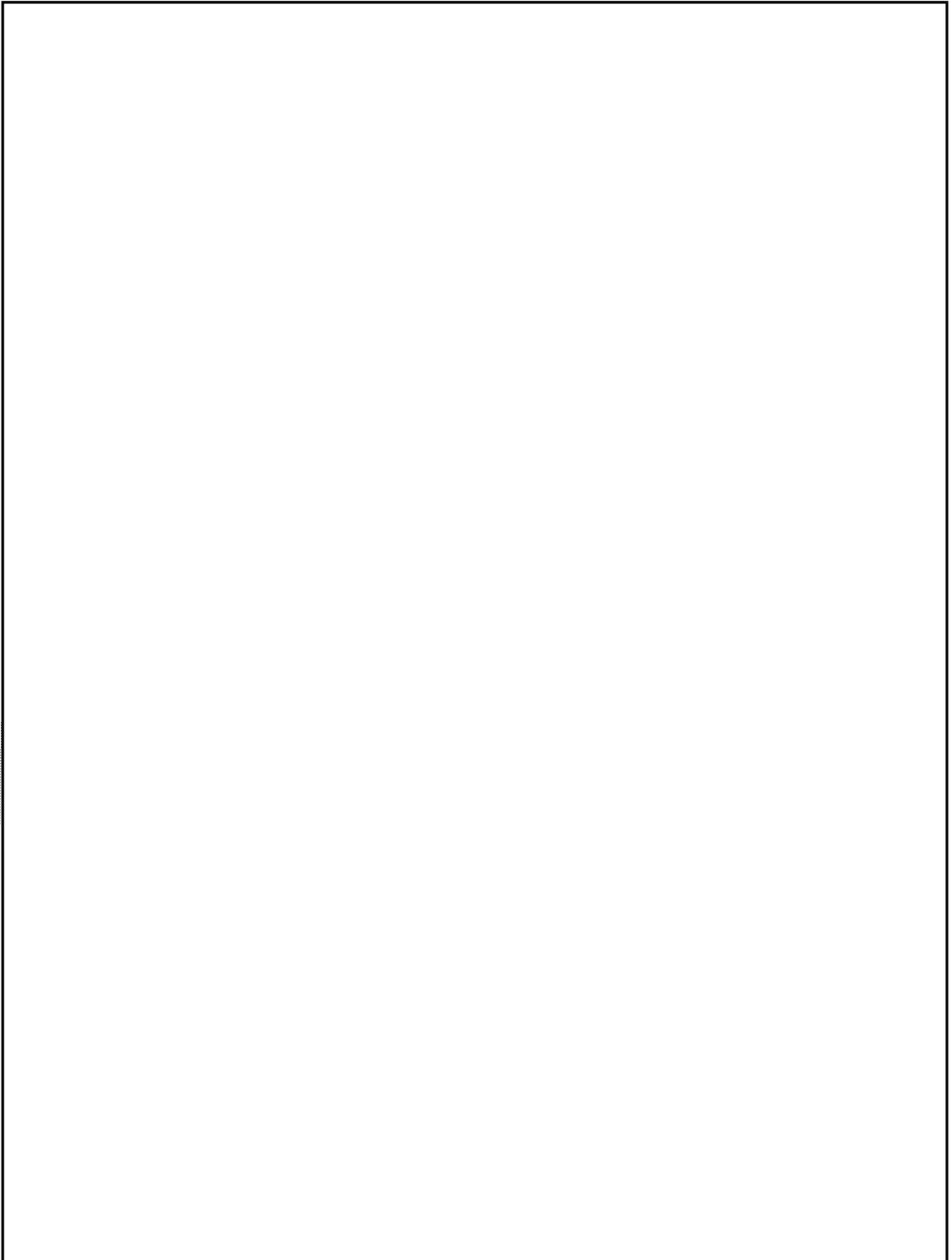
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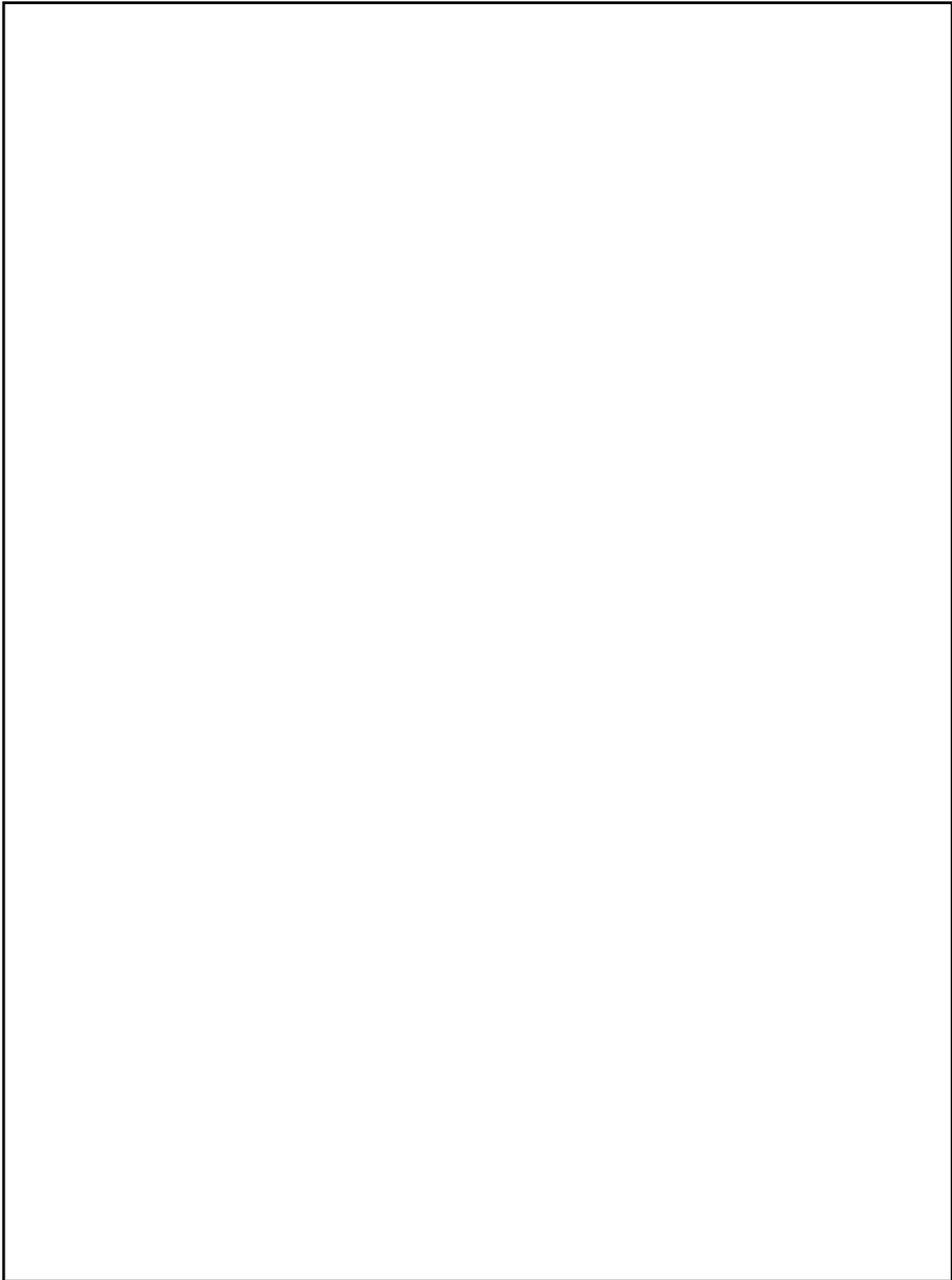
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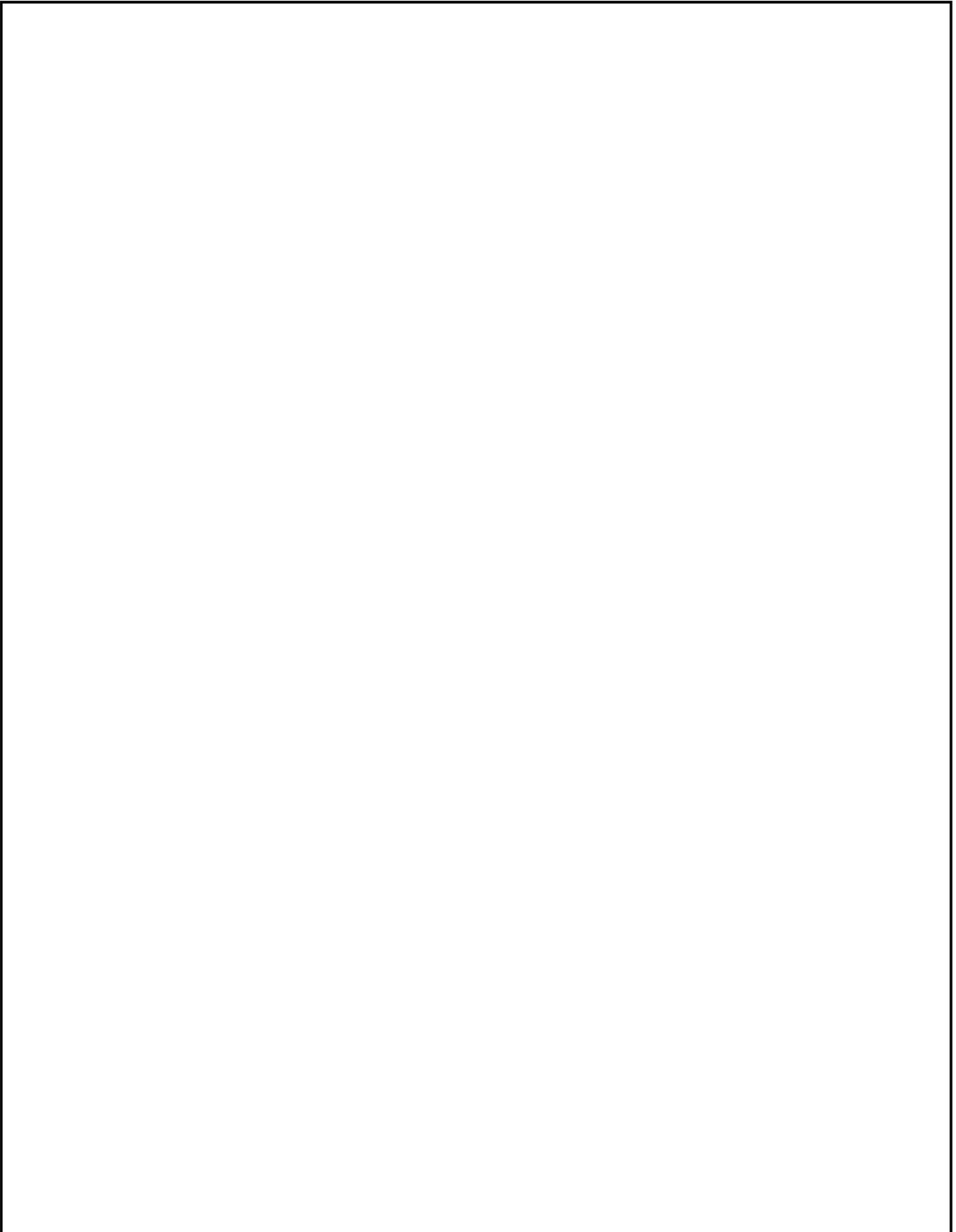


**Baker**

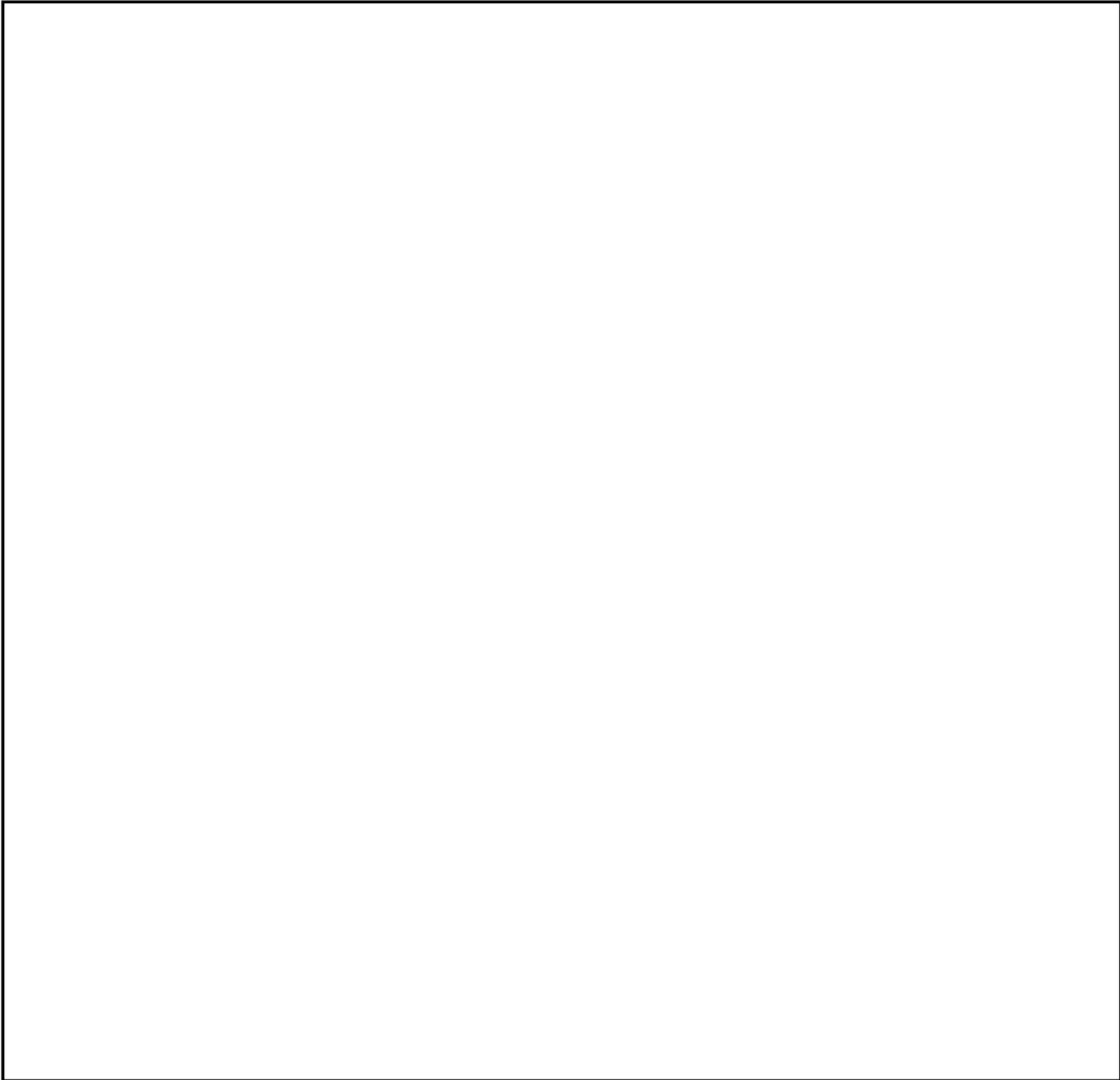
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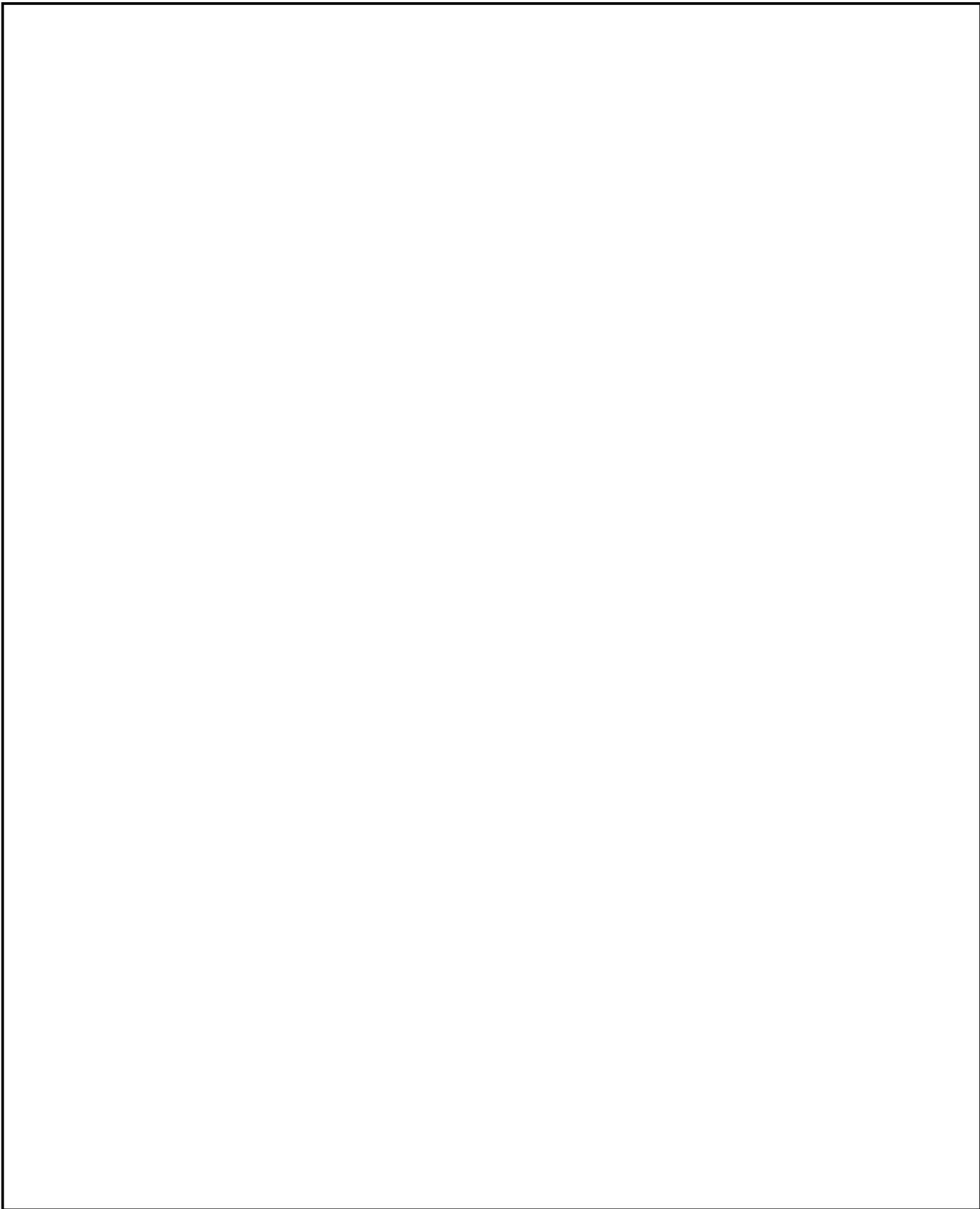
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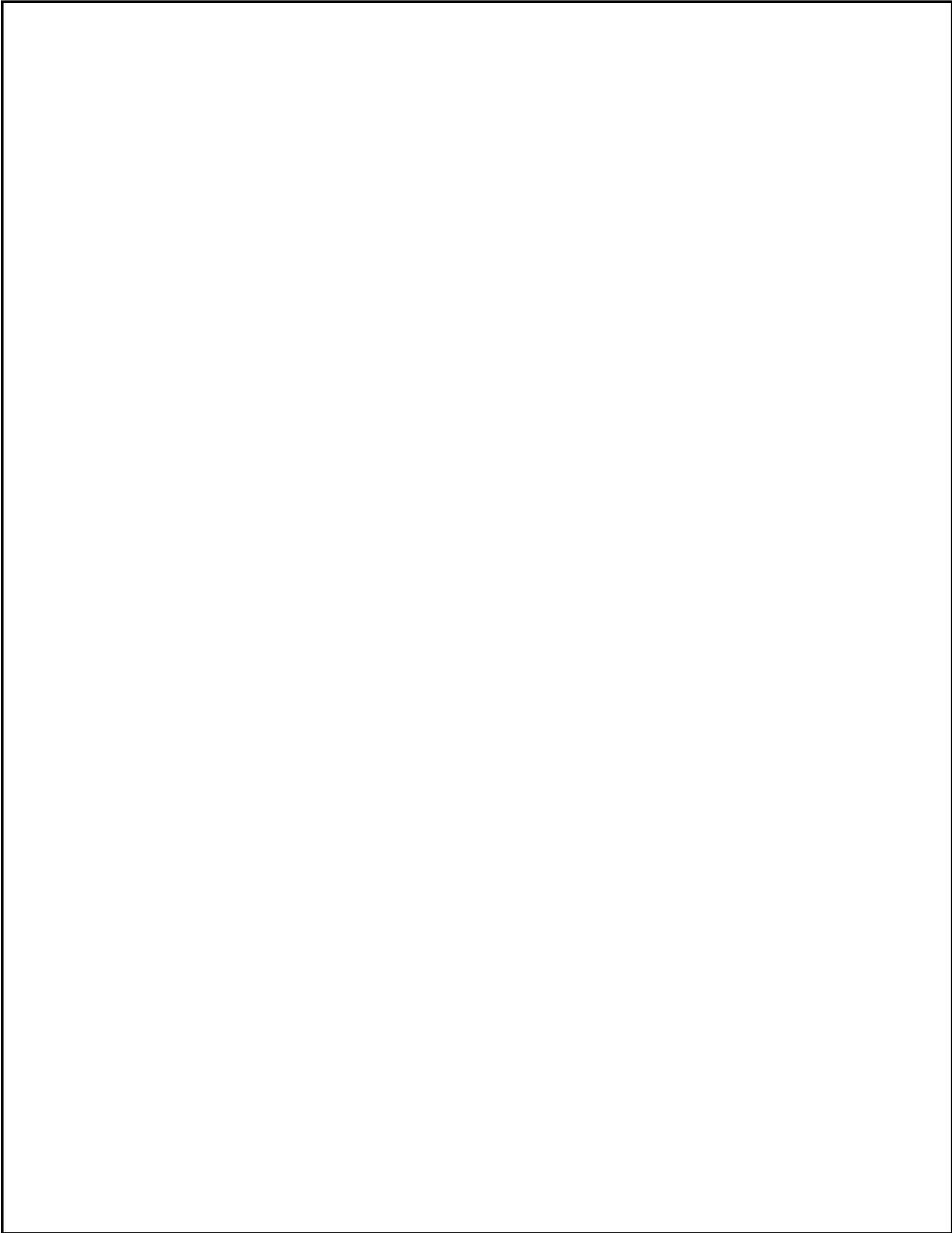
**Johnson** Well, I wanted to talk about the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. This has been a very difficult one for me to write, because..

**Zaslow** Well, all I would say is, you should have the greatest confidence in writing that because of the paper that Del Lang wrote. He wrote it at the time it occurred, not after it happened. And he knew he was writing for history, and it was based totally on the facts. So, you should be very comfortable with that.

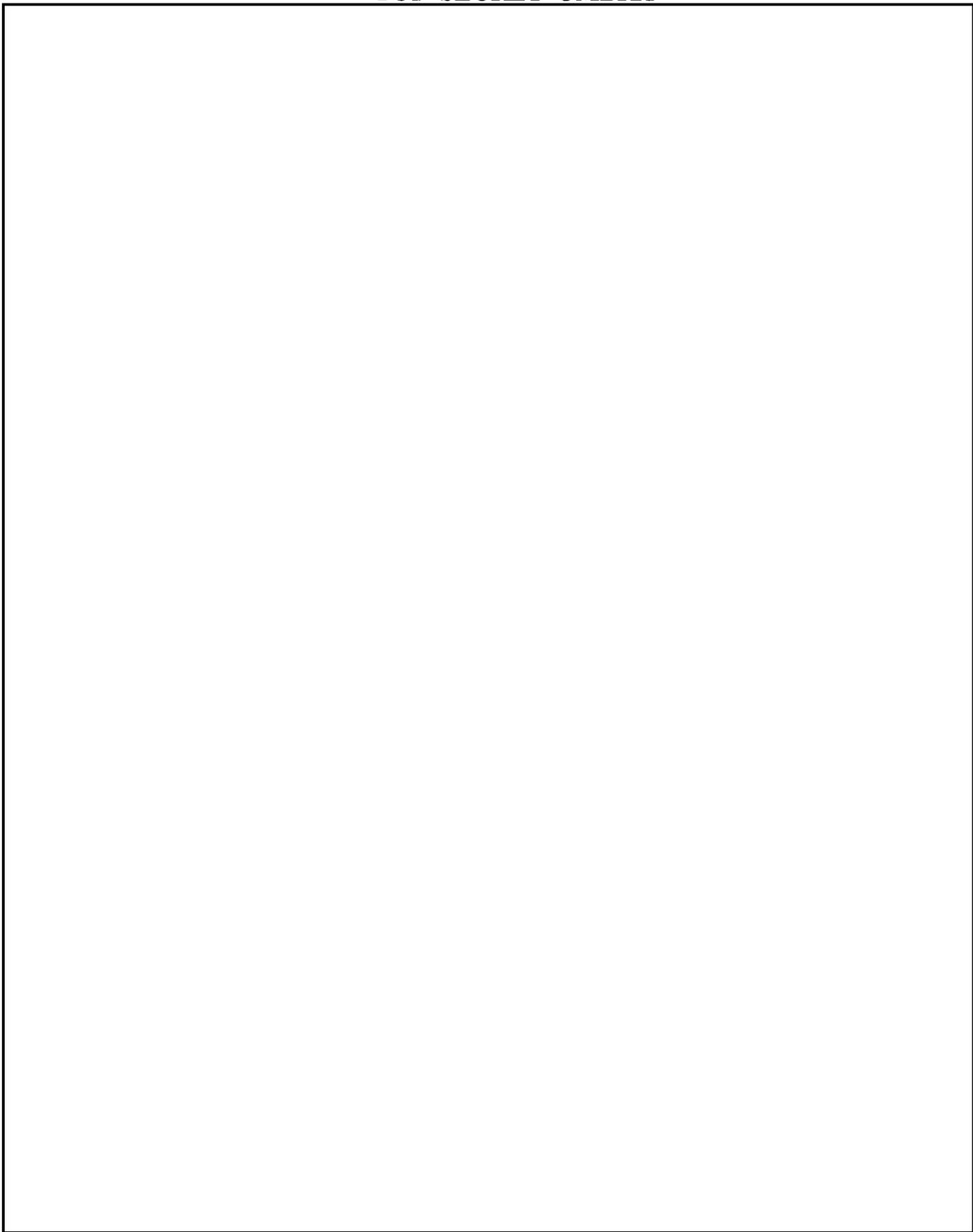




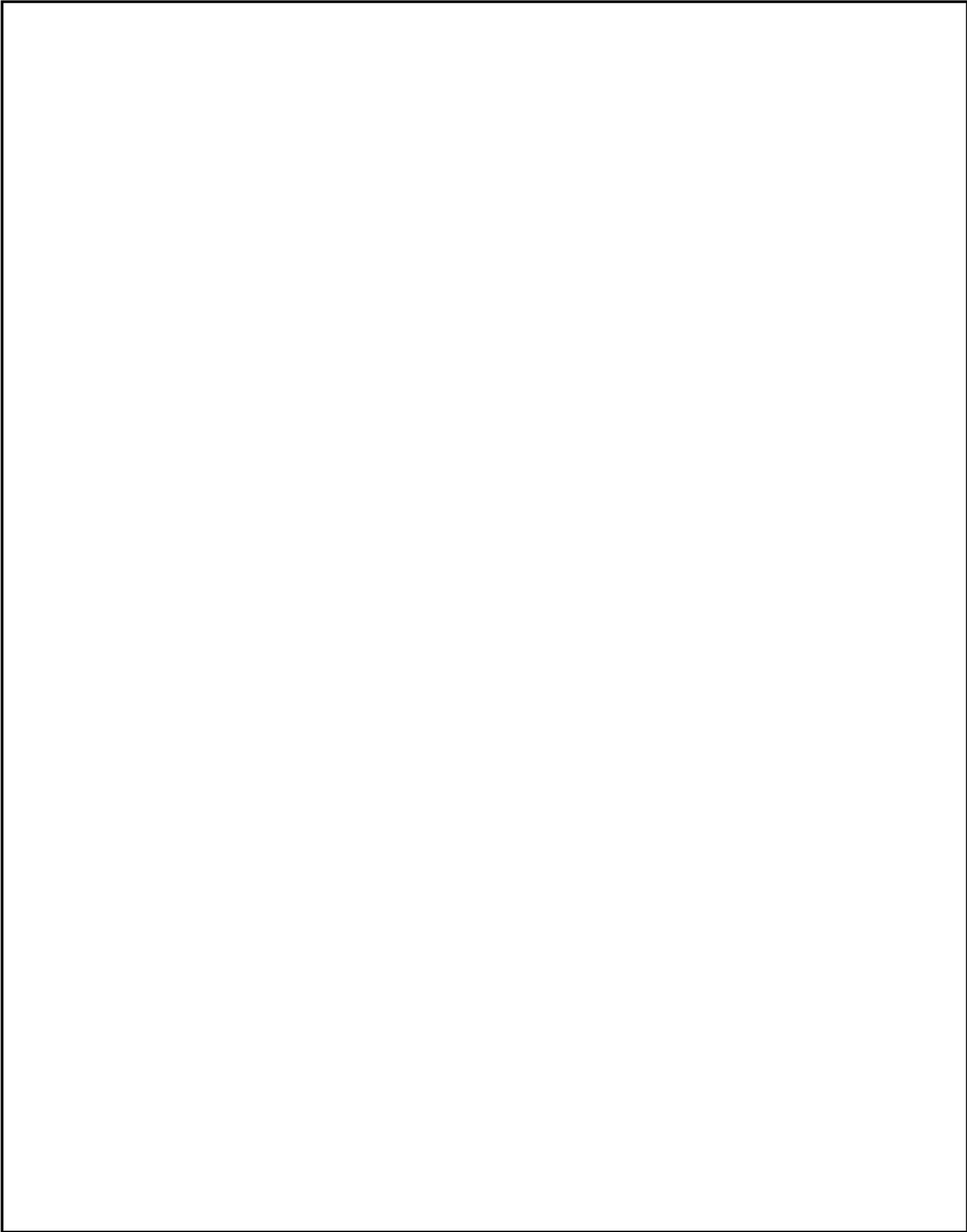
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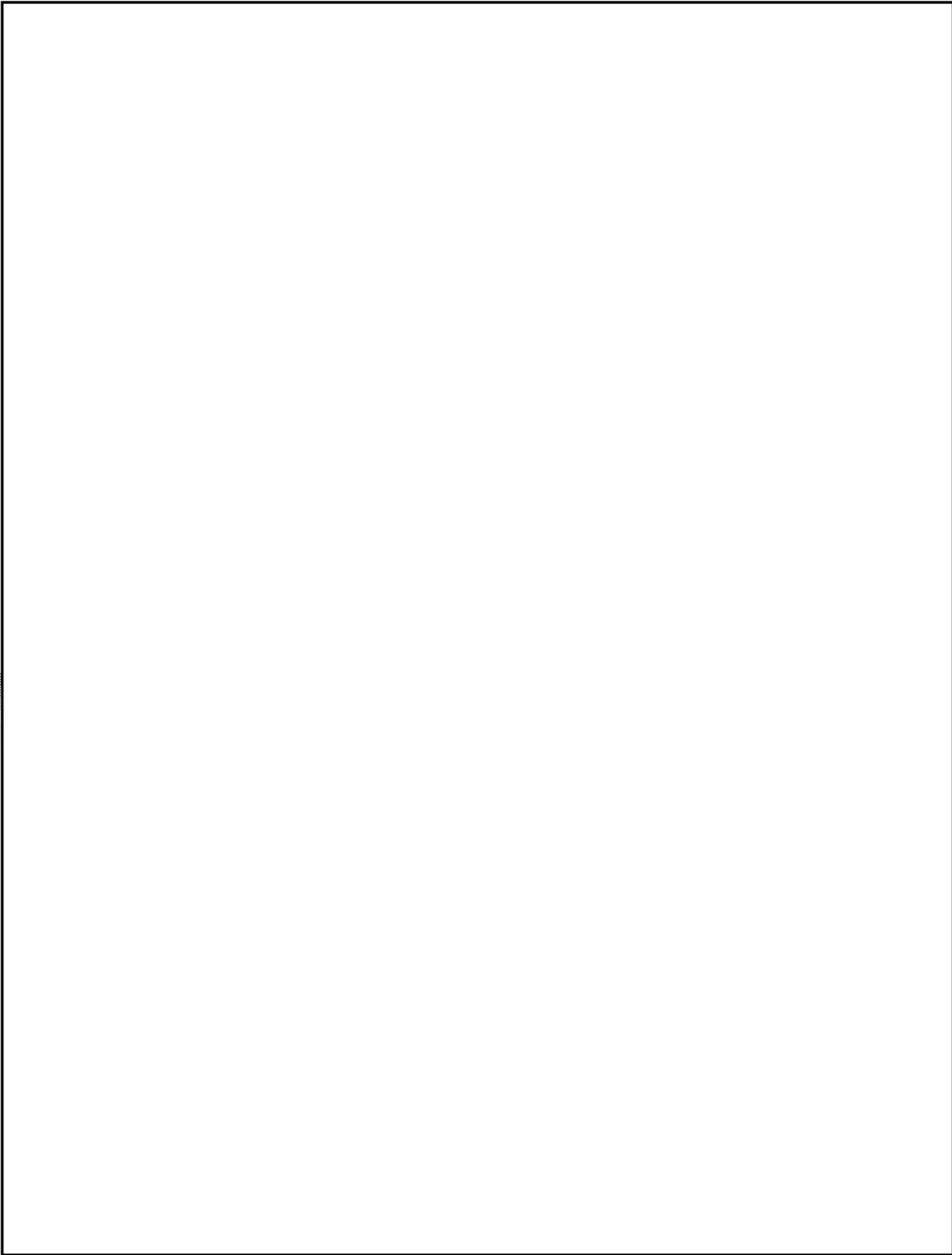
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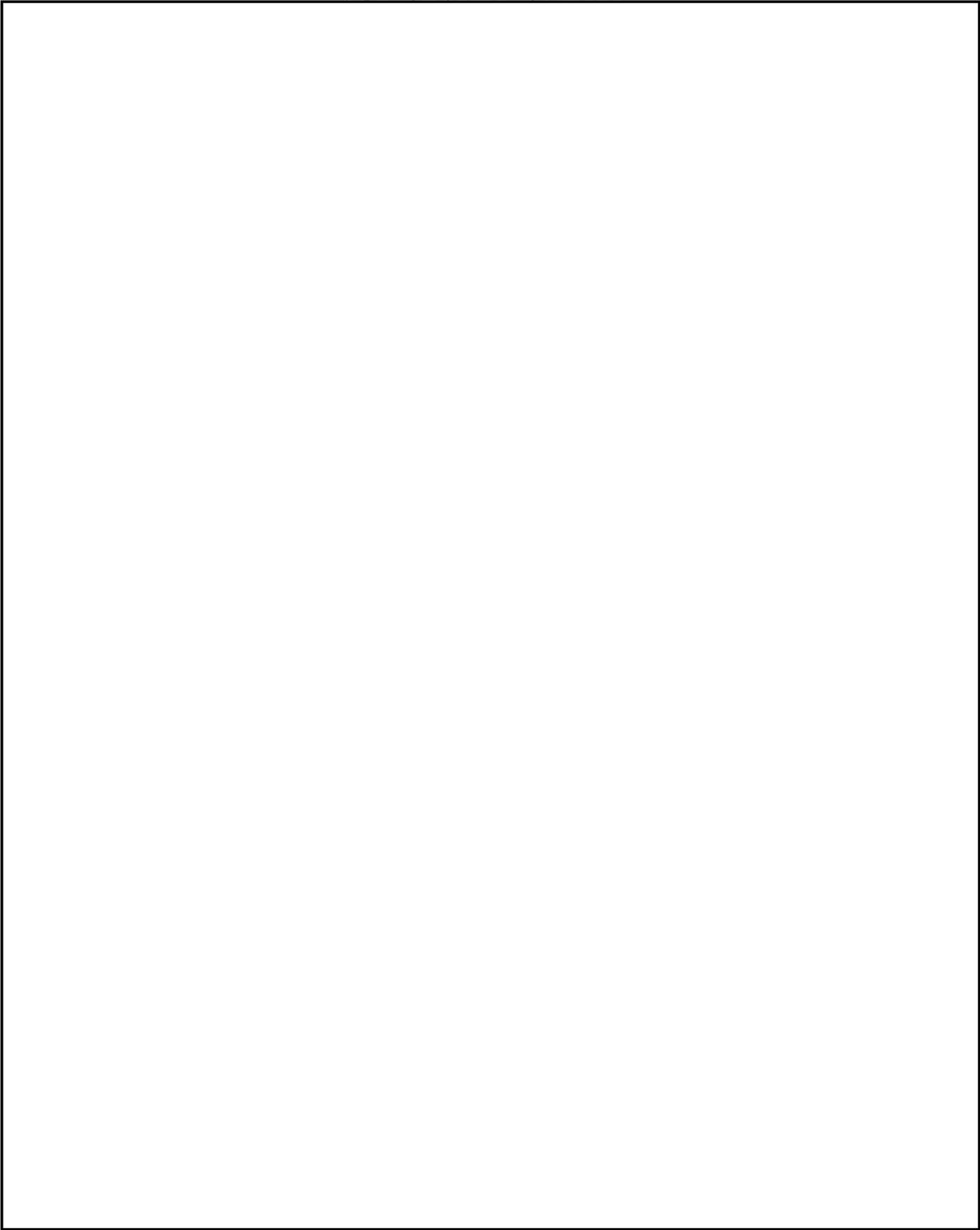
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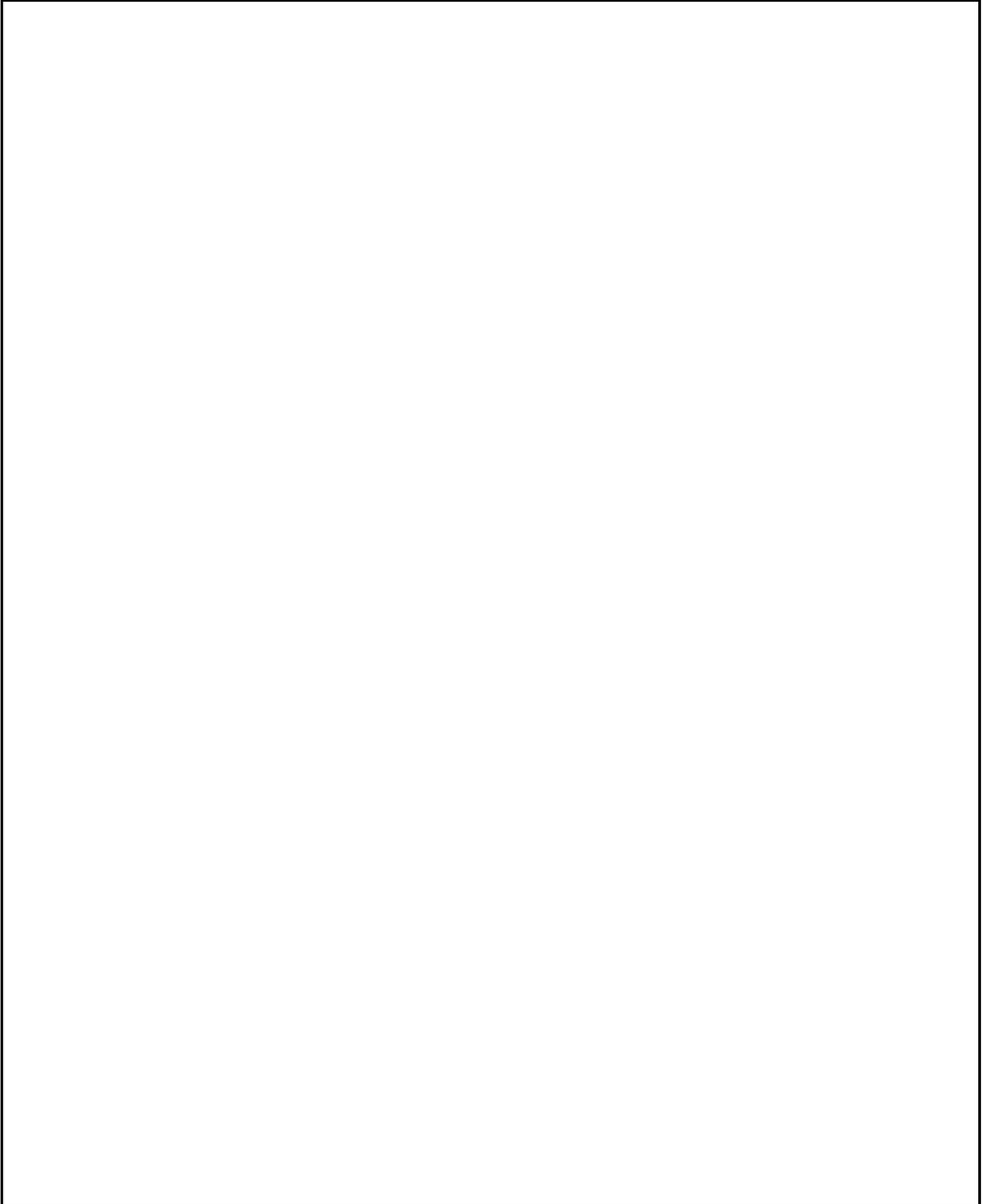
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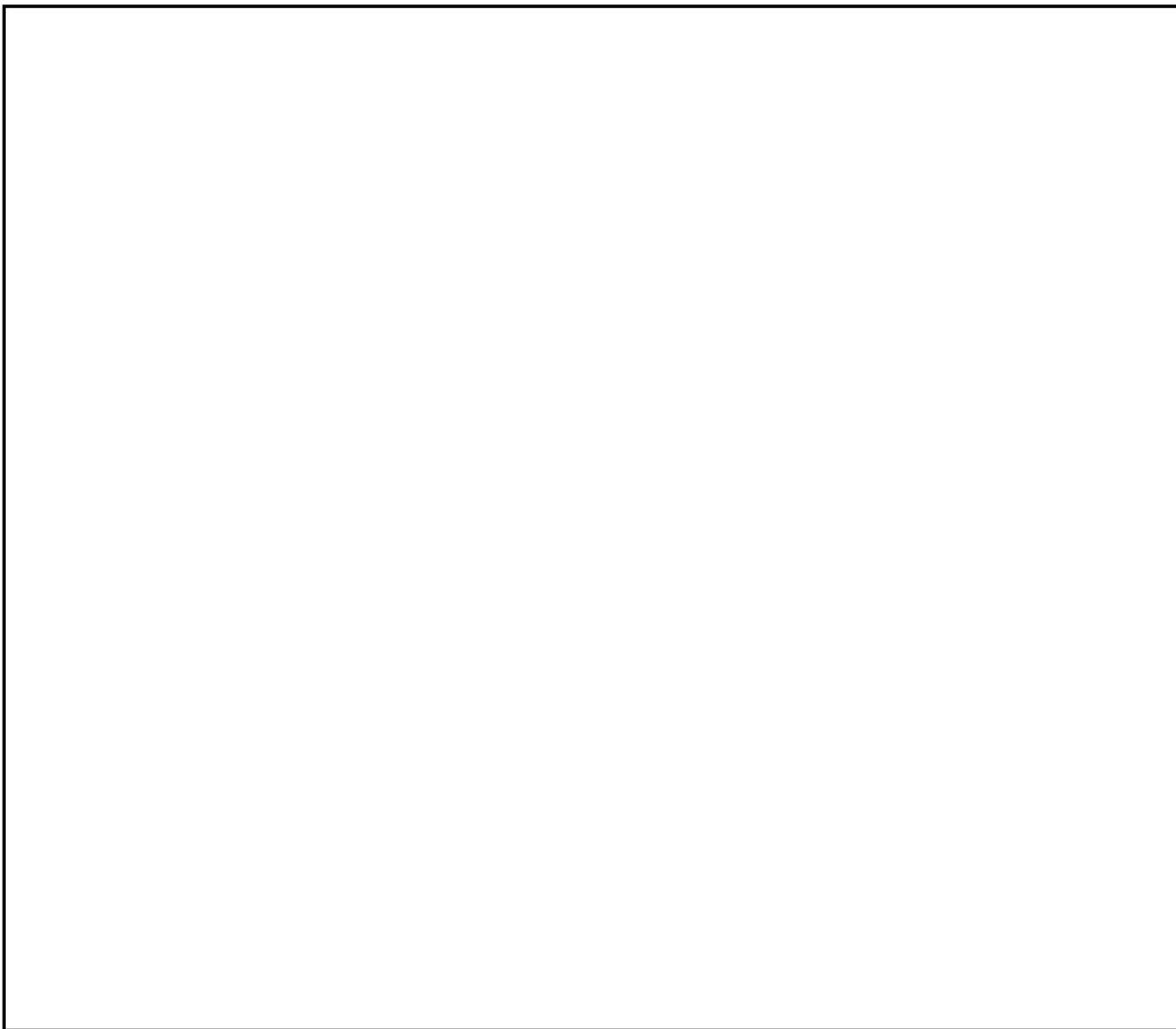
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**OHNR:**  
**JAN 2000**

**2000-04 DOI: 12**

TRSID: mhmerceDTR: 29 OCT 2004

QCSID:

INAME: [REDACTED]

IPLACE: Not specified

IVIEWER: HANYOK, Robert J.

P.L.  
86-36

**Hanyok**

Joe, why don't you tell us how you got into the SIGINT business?

[REDACTED]

I enlisted in the Army in 1960, I guess it was. I went to the language school for Chinese and got assigned to the Philippines. I ended up as the chief of the reporting shop in the Philippines -- USM-9. The main mission in those days was North Vietnam ground forces. USN-27, which was down the road from us, did the Navy.

**Hanyok**

You were in Vietnam when the Gulf of Tonkin incident happened?

[REDACTED]

No. I went over to Phu Bai in early 1964, probably, to set up the reporting shop that was initially USM-626J; then it became USM-808. I was only there for a month.

**Hanyok**

You left when?

[REDACTED]

February, and went back to the Philippines. I left the Philippines probably in July of 1964.

**Hanyok**

Okay. So you were basically in transit when the Gulf of Tonkin happened? When you got back to NSA, where did you go?

NSA25X3

[REDACTED] A14 to do [REDACTED] An old Air Force colonel said, "That's a weird assignment for you." ((TR NOTE: Laughter.)) I said, "I couldn't agree with you more." He said, "I'm going to do something about that." So somewhere probably around the latter part of October or November, I got assigned over to B26. One of the first things Dave Gaddy -- who was the chief of B261, I think it was -- asked me to do was to do an independent study of the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

**Hanyok**

That would have been roughly September or October?

[REDACTED]

Give or take.

**Hanyok**

Was it just you?

[redacted]

Just me.

**Hanyok**

What did he ask you to do? To look at everything?

[redacted]

He told me to go do a review and come to my own conclusions about what happened.

**Hanyok**

What did you use when you did that?

[redacted]

That's one of the things I'm having a hard time remembering. I looked through all the intercept that they had in the division, or the branch. I guess it was a branch. I had most of it retranslated with one or two of the best linguists, and I don't remember who they were. I remember [redacted] was involved. I don't remember who else. I had them go over all of that stuff with me. I know I worked with a lot of Navy guys.

**Hanyok**

[redacted] would have been the primary linguist because he was the primary linguist during the incident.

[redacted]

I worked with a lot of guys who were working like the [redacted] and a lot of guys who were in the Navy liaison office. I don't remember what it was called in those days. Those are the guys who got me all the operational traffic. They had piles of operational traffic that I was able to go through. There was a lot of stuff coming just from the ship itself during all of that.

**Hanyok**

Yes, the Desoto reports. A lot of them are in there. I've seen them. But it was quite a bit of material then that you were looking at?

[redacted]

Yes. I went through a lot of stuff, and then I talked to people about, like, torpedo boat tactics and whether these guys were using something conventional or unconventional. I was told that basically what they were using was the Russian model -- two on one side, one on the other.

**Hanyok**

Let's talk about the famous after-action report. Let's see if we can find it -- Tab 52. Let's see if you recall this. ((TR NOTE: Sound of pages turning.)) Everything sort of hinges on this. Do you recall that? It's NSA translation 2/O/VHEVHNT10-64. Do you recall this translation? It's become very famous inasmuch as it's even mentioned in LBJ's memoirs about the incident. He talks about this translation -- the loss, the sacrifice of two boats and so on. Do you recall looking at this?

[redacted]

That was the tally, right? Didn't we lose two planes?

**Hanyok**

My first question is, do you recall seeing this?

[redacted]

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No. I think that the stuff that I had in my article that I wrote -- two pilots, one killed, one captured -- that all came from operational reporting.

NSA25X3

### Hanyok

The incidents of the aircrafts, I think, was actually on August 5th, when the strikes occurred, and the aircraft got shot down. But the issue here is... This was intercepted on 4 August, and the time here -- 1542 Zulu -- puts it about an hour and 10 minutes into the supposed engagement that night. This has always been interpreted as an after-action report, and there have always been difficulties with this by people who have looked at it because of the way the message reads and the fact that, how can it be an after-action report if it's only an hour into the event? And who are these people talking to one another? And what exactly is the time frame? This was I believe initially used by McNamara for two points in his justification for the bombings, which happened the next day. Unfortunately, the problem with this translation is we can't find the original Vietnamese anywhere. That's the problem.

[redacted]

I'm wondering if this is actually an after-action report for the earlier...

### Hanyok

Well, that's been the interpretation, and the reason why was that USN-27 at 1550 Zulu intercepted a short message apparently from one of the Swatow boats that had been involved in the attacks on the 2nd to a coastal facility. At least that's the way they interpreted it. It read originally that they had lost two comrades and that everybody was okay. Then five minutes later, USN-27 sent in another message that talked about, down here, seeing planes, they said, sink or fall into the sea and that the American boat might have been damaged. Two separate reports came in. If you hook them together, you get this translation. The problem is, of course, the original from 27 says two comrades. The NSA version says they lost two boats. I'm not a Vietnamese linguist, but I did look up in the code charts for this system - [redacted] - and I did look in dictionaries.

(B% Dongchi), which means comrade, is a noun used specifically only in a personal context. In other words, when you talk about a comrade, I'm talking about people. I'm not doing some sort of metaphorical or poetic license thing saying comrade-boat. I'm saying comrade. The word for boat is (B% tao), which is often abbreviated to "t" when you see it in messages -- you'll see a "t" followed by a number, which basically means boat so-and-so. They're not even close to each other in the code charts. They can't be Morse garbles. One begins with a 4 and the other begins with a 5, and the numbers aren't even close to get a Morse garble. So the question has remained in my mind and those of people who have looked at it -- and we may have to go back and talk to [redacted] and so on. One, how did you get from comrades to boats? Two, what happened to all the original Vietnamese?

[redacted]

Could there have been more than one intercept of that message? USN-27J was operating at the Phu Bai in those days.

**Hanyok**

I checked the records. 27-J doesn't have anything. 27 is the one that intercepts this stuff.

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86-36

[redacted]  
I also recall that a lot of this intercept wasn't very clean.

**Hanyok**

No, it wasn't. There were a lot of gaps and garbles and so on. But the problem is that the reporting by 27 is pretty straightforward, you know, "We sacrificed two comrades." The NSA says, "We sacrificed two boats." LBJ mentions this in his memoirs. "Our experts," and he doesn't identify who they are, "said that the Vietnamese commander could have been referring to two comrades or two boats in his unit, but we believed it was the boats." Obviously this got all the way up to the White House. The question is, how did they do it? Unfortunately, we don't have the paper record. That's the problem that we have latched onto. How did we get from comrades to boats? If 27 is saying comrades, and NSA is saying boats, we've got a real distinct problem here. Without the Vietnamese text, we have to really wonder how they got there. Who's telling the truth?

[redacted]  
The inclination would be to believe the NSA version because we didn't have the same pressure of time on us that they did in the field.

**Hanyok**

Well, yes. But it was going...

[redacted]  
I harken back to another episode we had where the field put out a thing talking about 50,000 Chinese (1-2G) through Laos. It turned out to be a Coca-Cola truck that was stuck.

**Hanyok**

Yes. I've had millions of stories. When I was in NSOC, every time the field would come in with a CRITIC, everybody would just cover their ears and eyes. "Oh, no. Here we go again." When you did your review, do you recall seeing anything like this?

[redacted]  
I don't recall it specifically.

**Hanyok**

What was your conclusion, when you went back to talk to Dave Gaddy after you had looked at everything?

[redacted]  
That the incident never happened.

**Hanyok**

The second incident never happened?

[redacted]  
I think most of the Navy guys that I talked to believed that, as well.

**Hanyok**

This was November, December?

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Probably December 1964. I don't think there was much doubt about the first incident.

**Hanyok**

No. That happened in daytime and they could see them. The problem with the second incident...

The second incident was at night. It was not a clear night.

**Hanyok**

It turned out that there were heavy swells, and the scenario...If you look at the scenario claimed by the Navy. For those who claimed an attack, the scenario becomes impossible once you start adding everything together.

Right. The number of torpedoes fired...

**Hanyok**

The original boats were coming in from the east, so if the Maddox and the Turner Joy are 80 miles out at sea, and they don't detect the North Vietnamese boats until they're to the east, that meant the North Vietnamese boats had to sail all the way around the destroyers and come in from the east without being detected and without their radars being on either, which is even more fantastic.

Because they were not good sailors.

**Hanyok**

No, no.

They used to drive into the banks when they were trying to get up the Red River.

**Hanyok**

Yes. They had a hard time even getting the first attack together. I've gone back and looked at some of the intercept, and they had conflicting orders and didn't know quite what to do, so there seemed to be a lot of confusion. Had you heard afterwards -- I guess we get back into 1967, 1968 time frame when the Fulbright foreign relations committee is talking about the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, and McNamara comes in and gives a talk on it, a deposition, and then answers questions about it. Do you recall NSA's involvement in that? Did we pass information to him for that?

By 1967, I was in Hawaii.

**Hanyok**

When you did the report for Dave, was it just a verbal report back to him?

No, it was what I later published in the *Cryptolog*.

**Hanyok**

Okay.

[redacted]  
Nothing happened with that. I didn't know what Dave was going to do with it, and it was several years later when I came across it in my stack of junk. I figured it was a shame to let it all lie fallow, so I gave it to the *Cryptolog*, and it published it.

**Hanyok**

They have to go talk to Dave again. [redacted]

(b) (6)

[redacted]  
Oh, no!

**Hanyok**

Yes. Several months ago, maybe a year ago he [redacted]

[redacted] I talk to him occasionally on email. That's interesting. But you're not aware of this Del Lang thing?

[redacted]  
No. I don't think I ever did see his.

**Hanyok**

Del was B205, I think, at the time.

[redacted]  
At the time I would not have questioned this because I was a lieutenant and he was a lieutenant colonel.

**Hanyok**

Yes. The genesis of this is apparently DIA and NSA were asked to produce a chronology some time afterwards, probably by mid to late August. This was what came out. The problem with this is that there are enormous gaps, and in this case, when you look at material from 2 August and the so-called CRITIC from 4 August, which was what they interpreted were military operations being an attack on the Desoto, what you find is some of the intercepts with the original Vietnamese text, like here. ((TR NOTE: Sound of pages rustling.)) That's in there. They have it in every case, yet when you get to this, which is so critical...I mean, McNamara talks about it in his book. He doesn't specifically mention the report, but the issues are in here about who's in boats, and planes being shot down and so on. He mentions it in his book. LBJ mentions it in his book. Yet this is included only as a sample, and we can't find the original Vietnamese text, the intercept, or anything. That's what has got us...We thought, "Why wouldn't they have saved this if it was so critical?" That's the issue that comes to mind. It's really difficult. It's entirely possible that if McNamara didn't have that translation in hand or had been briefed about the translation, it's possible that the attacks the next day would never have gone off because they would have felt that they didn't have enough evidence.

[redacted]  
I sort of think the attacks would have taken place the next day no matter what else

existed just because of the initial attack and our desire to preserve our rights on the high seas.

**Hanyok**

There were a lot of problems that afternoon.

[REDACTED]

We were pretty much in a war-like state anyway.

**Hanyok**

They were just ready to go. CINCPAC was ready to go.

[REDACTED]

It was about time we went out and killed someone. ((TR NOTE: Laughter.))

**Hanyok**

That answers some questions. Too bad Del Lang is not around. I'll probably have to talk to [REDACTED] Other people who were involved during that period. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

is one.

**Hanyok**

Lou Grant. Does that name pop up?

[REDACTED]

Yes. Is he still around?

**Hanyok**

I don't know. Dave Gaddy. I think Dave was actually not in country when this happened. I think he told me he was in Phu Bai at the time. He and [REDACTED] were there, and he said he got back and wanted to see the material. Milt Zaslow. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I can't remember who else was in that shop in those days. There were just a handful of linguists. There weren't many.

**Hanyok**

Let's turn the clock up to 1972. Do you remember the story about Tordella talking to an intelligence committee or congress about this incident?

[REDACTED]

No.

**Hanyok**

That got reported in newspapers and so on, but I can't find who he was talking to at the time. Dr. T said that essentially what was reported to have happened on the 4th actually was talking about the 2nd. They were not certain where he got that from.

[REDACTED]

This says that the flares may have been mistaken for aircraft.

**Hanyok**

P. L.  
86-36

That's probably what happened. As it turns out, the aircraft were dropping flares, and the Turner Joy and the Maddox were firing starshells. It's entirely possible that the North Vietnamese on the shore were observing this and may have felt they had a hit. In fact, Turner Joy and Maddox fired close to 300 rounds that night, so there was a lot of ordnance being dumped.

P.L. 86-36

[redacted] From the shore, that would have looked like a major attack.

**Hanyok**

Yes. That's probably the source of their look at it. That's interesting that you've never seen that before.

[redacted] I don't recall seeing it. I think what they wanted me to do was, without any kind of bias at any time, look at this stuff.

**Hanyok**

Why don't we end that here, then?

//////////////////end of interview//////////////////