Q. So we'll leave those. As to the tape, is it correct?
A. I understand so, yes.

Q. Given in relation to your work in relation to the oil cans?
A. We had pieces of can, oil can, that were recovered from — — there was a single piece from the arena, some pieces from Elsmore Road, and other pieces from Granby House. So the purpose was to determine whether or not there was any association between these pieces of metal, either through being able to reconstruct barrels or the drums and/or any tool mark correspondences between them to indicate that they'd all been cut by the same tool.

Q. Was the principal significance of that because it was plain that part of an oil can was used in the device?
A. That's right, yes.

Q. And finding examples which may amount to experimentation with the oil cans, designed at working towards prototype, was also evidentially significant?
A. That is what's believed, yes.

Q. Let's deal, given that you have mentioned them, with tools. Was a pair of tin snips, as they're referred to, recovered from the Nissan Micra?
A. Yes.
Q. And is that a tool which can be used to cut thin sheet metal?
A. Yes.
Q. Was there also a pair of pliers seized from 21 Elsmore Road?
A. Yes.
Q. And are both of those tools capable of being used in the cutting and manipulation of thin sheet metal?
A. They are, yes.
Q. Were you given any other tools that were, in your view relevant to your assessment of the oil cans?
A. I was provided with, I think it was two pairs of scissors, but those were readily eliminated because they weren’t capable of cutting the metal that we were considering.
Q. In terms of the can, what we do is we make an assessment in relation to the pieces of can that were also provided to you?
A. We believe that the cuts to the side walls of the cans weren’t capable of cutting the metal that we were considering.
Q. What technique did you use to establish whether or not the tools that you’d been given had been used?”
A. All the tools that we’d been provided with were excluded.
Q. So does that mean therefore that one or more tools that were not recovered by the investigation must have been used?
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. We were able to identify how many tools were used?
A. That’s right, yes.
Q. So that means that one or more tools that were not recovered by the investigation must have been used and then compare the detail and the marks that we created at the laboratory with the detail in the marks on the pieces of metal that we’d been provided with.
Q. At the end of that examination and experimentation, did you reach a conclusion about whether or not a tool has made a particular mark.
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. Did that lead you to conclude that there were two types of tool that’s been used and from examination under a microscope we could determine that 21 of the type of tool that’s been used and from a comparison with the actual tools, we then create test impressions with the actual tools and then compare the detail and the marks that we created at the laboratory with the detail in the marks on the pieces of metal that we’d been provided with.
Q. At the end of the process, had you reconstructed oil cans, to a greater or lesser degree, A through to G?
A. That’s correct.
Q. Of those oil cans, and we’ll look at the reconstructions for each, was oil can F the most significant?
A. That’s correct.
Q. Of those oil cans, and we’ll look at the reconstructions for each, was oil can F the most significant?
A. That’s correct.
Q. And is that a tool which can be used to cut thin sheet metal?
A. Yes.
Q. And is that a tool which can be used to cut thin sheet metal?
A. You can, yes.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it’s like a fingerprint?
A. Effectively. There are features imparted on to a tool as a result of the manufacturing, which will be unique to the tool at the point that it is new in some cases. And as a tool is used it will become damaged and worn and that will add additional character to it, so if you get sufficient correspondence you can say conclusively that a tool has made a particular mark.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
MR DE LA POER: So in addition to that careful and detailed work, did you also look to reconstruct, so far as you were able, the pieces of can with a view to determining which cans those pieces came from?
A. That’s effectively what it was, yes.
Q. Did that lead you to conclude that there were two types of oil can that you had pieces for?
A. That’s correct.
Q. One of the types being a branded KTC?
A. Yes.
Q. And one type being branded Consumer Pride?
Q. I can see you smiling. Is that because it was an extremely technical task undertaken by someone with expertise that you don’t have?
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. You have reviewed those animations and you are satisfied that they accurately represent the work that you did?
A. Yes.
Q. So what we’re going to do now is consider three of those animations, each of them relatively short, and we’ll begin with the oil drum F animation. (CPS000166/1).

MR DE LA POER: Pause it there, please, Mr Lopez.
A. That of F did, sir.
MR DE LA POER: That part of F did, sir.
A. The blue ones, yes.
Q. The blue highlighted ones, yes, but I think we’re to come to pieces that were recovered from two other locations.
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. So we’ll just, as part of the sequence of your evidence, being investigated; is that right?
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. So we’ll just, as part of the sequence of your evidence, albeit it’s outside your expertise, just play that, please. (CPS000167/1).

MR DE LA POER: We see now the state in which those pieces of metal were recovered in?
A. That’s right, yes.
Q. Namely as tubes?
A. Yes.
(Mr Lopez places tube-shaped metal pieces on table)
Q. And that was the state it was found in?
A. Yes.
(Mr Lopez places tube-shaped metal pieces on table)
Q. And the other smaller pieces, Granby Row?
A. That’s correct, yes.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, thank you.
MR DE LA POER: We see now the state in which those pieces of metal were recovered in?
A. That’s right, yes.
Q. Namely as tubes?
A. Yes.
(Mr Lopez places tube-shaped metal pieces on table)
Q. So what we’re going to do now is consider three of those animations, each of them relatively short, and we’ll begin with the oil drum F animation. (CPS000166/1).

MR DE LA POER: We will confirm this in a moment with the senior investigating officer when he returns, but my

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So they’re all pieces with Hashem Abedi’s fingerprints on them?
MR DE LA POER: Indeed, sir.
(Mr Lopez places tube-shaped metal pieces on table)
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So a reasonable inference, we’re looking at experiments of making a bomb or something like that?
A. That would be outside my area of expertise, but it’s forming some sort of parcel with it.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We’ve seen a great many of Hashem Abedi’s fingerprints and of course this was prepared for his trial.
MR DE LA POER: Yes.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does that mean that there weren’t Salman Abedi’s fingerprints on the cans at all or simply they’re not there because this was the trial of Hashem Abedi and not Salman Abedi?
MR DE LA POER: We will confirm this in a moment with the senior investigating officer when he returns, but my
understanding is that Salman Abedi's scientific trace
evidence was included where found — —
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
MR DE LA POER: — — so that it wasn't excluded and we saw, in
fact, on that last piece from the arena, it was his DNA,
but we'll confirm that with Mr Barraclough.
The final animation is oil drums 8E and G, please.
{INQ033894/1}. These were all recovered from
21 Elsmore Road, weren't they?
A. Yes.
Q. But, as we've touched on already, the state they were in
reveals that one explanation is that they were being
used in experiments?
A. That's what I understand, yes.
(Question played to the inquiry)
Q. It seems with drum A nothing more was done to it than to
open it, presumably for the purpose of removing its
content?
A. Part of the lid was removed, but for what purpose
I don't know.
(Video playing continued)
Q. I think here we have a good example of what you were
referring to about the fingerprints, that without
cutting into the can, it's not possible to put
a fingerprint on the inside where it was found?
A. That's correct, yes.
(Question played to the inquiry)
Q. In other words, it must be the case that that
fingerprint was left after the can had been cut?
A. Yes.
(Sir, I'm at page 50, paragraph 212, of that witness
statement, which addresses the investigation of
Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi in further detail.
What I'm going to ask is that you just delay giving us
answers to the questions that were posed by Sir John.
Sir, I'm at page 50, paragraph 212, of that witness
statement.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
MR GREANEY: So that everyone knows what's coming, in this
part you address 10 separate, albeit to some extent
connected, topics. First of all, the family of
Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi and their personal
history.
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. Secondly, the movements of, in particular, Salman Abedi.
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. Thirdly, the travel of the Abedi family.
A. Yes.
Q. Fourthly, the neighbours of the Abedis.
A. Yes.
Q. Fifthly, you deal with the topic of radicalisation, which of course we're parking until chapter 13.
A. I understand.
Q. Sixthly, you deal very briefly indeed with Prevent, which, as we know, is one of the strands of CONTEST, but
again you do so only very briefly because you defer to
your colleague Dominic Scaly in relation to that issue.
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Seventhly, you deal with the convictions and cautions of
the Abedi family.
A. Yes.
Q. Eighthly, reconnaissance, by which I mean hostile
reconnaissance.
A. Yes.
1 Q. Ninth, you deal with the topic of work for G4S, or at any rate Salman Abedi’s application to work for that organisation.
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. And tenthly, you deal with the extradition of Hashem Abedi from Libya to the United Kingdom.
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. Let’s deal with those in turn. The first topic — — you’re just about to be handed a folder. Thank you.
6 Q. The first topic is the family of Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi and their personal history.
7 A. Yes.
8 Q. Did the identification of members of Salman Abedi’s family, once he had been identified, come from three principal sources?
9 A. Yes, it did.
10 Q. First of all, was a source the research of police systems?
11 A. Yes, it was.
12 Q. Because, as we’re going to hear, Salman Abedi and other members of the Abedi family had previously had what I’ll describe at this stage as interactions with the police?
13 A. That’s correct, yes.
14 Q. The second source, checks with relevant public authorities?
15 A. Yes, that’s right.
16 Q. Within an hour of Salman Abedi being identified, had his home address been confirmed?
17 A. Yes, it had.
18 Q. Did that enable in turn other occupants of that address to be identified and then investigated?
19 A. Yes, that’s correct.
20 Q. In the hours and days of the investigation that followed, were very many enquiries conducted, including checks with local and Central Government departments?
21 A. Yes, comprehensive checks.
22 Q. Did those include, simply by way of example, checking council tax records and making enquiries of the Department for Work and Pensions?
23 A. That’s right, yes.
24 Q. Did those checks, among others, discover details of Salman Abedi’s parents?
25 A. Yes.
26 Q. His siblings?
27 A. Yes.
28 Q. Other addresses linked to his home address?
29 A. Yes.
30 Q. Some of his travel history?
31 A. Yes.
32 Q. And also financial information?
33 A. Yes, that’s correct.
34 Q. So really, from a very early stage did you start to develop a picture about this man, Salman Abedi?
35 A. Yes, that’s correct.
36 Q. By 29 May had your team been able to pull together something that is referred to as an intelligence subject profile?
37 A. Yes, that’s right.
38 Q. I believe there’s nothing sensitive about this document and it is worth just looking at a couple of passages to seek your further assistance, if you can provide assistance at this stage. If you can’t, just say, because you’ll remain in the witness box for certainly the rest of today and tomorrow.
39 Q. The INQ reference for the intelligence subject profile is (INQ030643/1). Next page, please.
40 Q. Y ou’ll be able to confirm now, or if not now in due course, that 3458 is a number that is of importance, is it not?
41 A. Yes, it does.
42 Q. It doesn’t look like the photo on his return — —
43 A. No it doesn’t, no.
44 Q. The only detail I wanted to draw attention to was that you had by this stage, 29 May, already identified a number of telephone numbers that were associated with him?
45 A. That’s correct, although these are quite historic, I think.
46 Q. Yes. One of the numbers, indeed it is given as current telephone number, is a number that ends 3458?
47 A. Yes, that’s right.
48 Q. You’ll be able to confirm now, or if not now in due course, that 3458 is a number that is of importance, is it not?
49 A. I think so, but I’d have to refer to...
50 Q. There are a lot of numbers, I fully appreciate that. Let me remind you because I have been able to do the check. 3458 is an important number and will become...
increasingly important as we proceed into chapter 13, 
radicalisation, because 3458 is a number that was 
established to have been in contact extensively with 
a man called Abdalraouf Abdallah.
5. A. Yes.
6. Q. You don’t need me to tell you that there are concerns 
about the extent to which that convicted terrorist 
played a role in the radicalisation of Salman Abedi; 
am I correct?
7. A. Yes, it forms part of the concern and picture, yes.
8. Q. We’re going to need to look at 3458 in that connection.
9. While we’re dealing with it, 3458, let me remind 
you, was also in contact —— so 3458, Salman Abedi’s 
number, was also in contact with a name that you’ll be 
familiar with, Abdul Rahman Benhammedi; does that name 
ring a bell?
10. A. Yes, it does.
11. Q. Who, at the time at which Abedi was in contact with him, 
was charged with an offence under the Terrorism Act, 
namely possession of an article for a purpose connected 
with terrorism. And you will remember, he was 
discovered at the airport with a sniper manual. Do you 
recall that?
12. A. I do recall. I’d have to check the detail of the phone 
and the actual date.
13. Q. And no doubt you will do that, but for the time being, 
I am sure you will take it from me ——
14. A. Yes, I will.
15. Q. —— that 3458 was in touch with each of those persons, 
but out of fairness I ought to indicate that while 
Abdalraouf Abdallah is a convicted terrorist, Abdul 
Rahman Benhammedi was in fact acquitted of the offence 
with which he was charged.
16. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Again, When we deal with telephone 
numbers, we will just use the last four numbers as is 
conventional in court?
17. MR GREANEY: That is my plan, yes, sir, unless there is some 
good reason for not doing so.
18. In relation to relatives and friends who were 
identified, from some of them you were able to obtain an 
account about the family history; is that correct?
19. A. Yes, that’s right.
20. Q. Some of those accounts were obtained voluntarily from 
the witnesses and some of them were obtained during 
interviews under caution?
21. A. Yes, they were, that’s correct.
22. Q. One of the relatives from whom you obtained an 
account —— and I’m now at paragraph 219 of your 
statement —— was a person named Rabaa Abedi; is that 
correct?
23. A. Yes, that’s right.
24. Q. Is Rabaa Abedi the aunt of Salman and Hashem Abedi?
25. A. She is, yes.
26. Q. And the sister of the father of those brothers, Ramadan 
Abedi?
27. A. Yes, that’s correct.
28. Q. She, I think, is resident in Canada?
29. A. She is, yes.
30. Q. Did she explain that her brother, Ramadan, had joined 
the Libyan police?
31. A. Yes.
32. Q. In the early 1990s, he had entered into an arranged 
marriage with Samia, the mother of Salman Abedi and 
Hashem Abedi?
33. A. Yes, that’s what she said.
34. Q. Did she explain that a year after their wedding, Ramadan 
and Samia had fled Libya?
35. A. Yes.
36. Q. Ramadan having been interrogated by the authorities amid 
accusations that his wife, Samia, was practising 
religion?
37. A. Yes.
38. Q. And did Rabaa explain to you that fearing for their 
safety, the couple had left Libya and travelled first to 
Tunisia and then to Saudi Arabia and then to the
1 Q. That the claimed nature of his departure from Libya was not credible?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. That there were, it was thought, numerous inconsistencies in his application?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. That he had produced a forged medical letter in relation to his wife?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. And that he had failed to claim asylum in Tunisia, which was one of his points on his journey to the United Kingdom?
8 A. Yes, that’s correct.
9 Q. By virtue of their marriage, was Samia granted that same status as refugee status on 28 November 1997?
10 A. Yes, that’s correct.
11 Q. Did the records further reveal that Ramadan appealed that decision on 11 May 1995, but again that appeal was refused?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. But that he persisted with several further appeals and, in the end, he was granted what you describe in your statement as refugee status on 28 November 1997?
14 A. Yes, that’s correct.
15 Q. By virtue of their marriage, was Samia granted that same status at around the same time?
16 A. Yes, she was.
17 Q. Just completing the picture in relation to the parents’ immigration status, following a further application was Ramadan granted indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom on 26 September 2002?
18 A. Yes, he was.
19 Q. Did he go on to apply for British citizenship, but that was refused on 6 September 2004?
20 A. That’s correct, yes.
21 Q. With, as you established, that refusal having occurred on character grounds as a result of his previous convictions to which we’ll turn?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. From July 1993 to September 1993, was Ramadan Abedi providing an address in London?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. But from the latter of those dates, September 1993, was he shown as resident in Manchester?
26 A. He was.
27 Q. The position, I believe, is that Ramadan was finally naturalised following his second citizenship application on 9 May 2007?
28 A. Yes, that’s correct.
29 Q. That deals with information provided by Rabaa Abedi, the aunt, and your confirmatory investigations with the Home Office. Still dealing with what other family members were able to tell you about the family circumstances, as I believe you have told us already, Ismail Abedi, the elder brother of Salman and Hashem Abedi, was arrested on 23 May and interviewed extensively?
30 A. Yes, that’s correct.
31 Q. In interview, did he explain that he had recently, that’s to say recently to May 2017, asked for help from his parents in relation to both Salman and Hashem Abedi?
32 A. He said that, yes.
33 Q. Did he explain that his parents had been residing in Libya with the younger children at the time?
34 A. Yes.
35 Q. And that he, Ismail, had developed a concern that Hashem and Salman were behind with their studies?
36 A. Yes.
37 Q. He had found out that they’d dropped out of education and members of the community had approached him, Ismail, to let him know that Hashem was taking illegal drugs?
38 A. Yes.
39 Q. And did he also explain that he himself held suspicions that both Hashem and Salman were involved in fraud?
40 A. Yes, that’s correct.
41 Q. Did Ismail go on to say that the fact that he contacted his parents to deal with these issues had caused a degree of friction between himself and his two brothers?
42 A. Yes, that’s correct.
43 Q. And that he felt he lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
44 A. Yes.
45 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
46 A. Yes.
47 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
48 A. Yes.
49 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
50 A. Yes.
51 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
52 A. Yes.
53 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
54 A. Yes.
55 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
56 A. Yes.
57 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
58 A. Yes.
59 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
60 A. Yes.
61 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
62 A. Yes.
63 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
64 A. Yes.
65 Q. And that he had lacked parental control over Salman and Hashem, who resided at a different address from him?
Q. Was he able to provide you with a deal of information —

A. Yes.

Q. —— about the family circumstances? Indeed, in due course, he was to provide you with a signed statement dated 31 May 2017?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Did he explain that the Abedi family was deeply religious?

A. Yes.

Q. And that members would visit the mosque for nearly all of the five prayers each day?

A. Yes.

Q. And that when he did contact them, they would hang up?

A. Yes.

Q. And importantly for our purposes, and we’ll see more of this in due course, did Abderahman explain that he had been shown by Salman Abedi photographs of military vehicles, weapons and rocket launchers?

A. He did, yes.

Q. And when Salman returned to the United Kingdom after about 9 months, did Abderahman explain that he had been told to stay away from Salman?

A. Yes, he did.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: By whom?

A. By his family, sir, by his parents.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: The account of Abderahman didn’t end there. He explained, I think, that after the summer of 2012, Salman returned to the United Kingdom to start at Manchester College.

A. Yes.
1. Q. That he was still taking tramadol and that his “party ing
got worse like he was on a bender for quite a long
time”.
2. A. Yes.
3. Q. And he, Salman, had mentioned suicidal thoughts, dizziness and feeling weak when he tried to come off tramadol?
4. A. Yes, that’s correct.
5. Q. Pausing for a moment, we’re going to come on very shortly to deal with the medical records of Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi, but in short there was nothing to indicate any history of mental illness, was there?
6. A. No, there was not.
7. Q. On 8 July 2014, as Abderahman explained to you, Salman had travelled from Manchester to Tripoli?
8. A. Yes.
9. Q. Since the uprising, the situation in Libya had been at times chaotic, violent and unpredictable?
10. A. Yes, that’s right.
11. Q. As a result of which, on 4 August 2014, Salman and Hashem Abedi had been evacuated to the United Kingdom aboard HMS Enterprise via Malta?
12. A. Yes, that’s correct.
13. Q. And as we’ll adduce from you when you return in chapter 13, Abderahman thereafter gave you a lot of information about the circumstances in which Salman Abedi had changed?
14. A. That’s correct.
15. Q. Including the fact that Abderahman was to explain that he had seen Salman Abedi in the company of Abdalraouf Abdallah?
16. A. Yes, that’s correct.
17. Q. Other members of the Forjani family also gave you accounts; is that correct?
18. A. Yes, that’s right.
19. Q. And in those accounts, they confirmed the changes in Salman Abedi and indeed Hashem Abedi to which Abderahman had referred?
20. A. That’s correct, yes.
21. Q. You also spoke to a witness that we are calling Trial Witness 3; this is paragraph 234 of your statement.
22. A. Yes.
23. Q. The principal importance of that witness is that he was to corroborate the change in Salman Abedi’s lifestyle?
24. A. Yes.
25. Q. But there’s just one other aspect that I would like you to confirm from his account: did Trial Witness 3 explain that, in 2016, an associate of Salman Abedi had been murdered?
26. A. Yes, he did.
27. Q. Was the name of that associate Abdul Wahab Hafidah?
28. A. Yes, it was.
29. Q. And had he been murdered in a gang—related incident in this city?
30. A. Yes.
31. Q. In very simple terms, and this is information that’s available from open sources, he was murdered in May 2016?
32. A. Yes.
33. Q. It was claimed during the course of the prosecution case that he was part of a gang called the Rusholme Crips?
34. A. Yes.
35. Q. And he was killed, as convictions at trial established, by members of a Moss Side gang?
36. A. Yes.
37. Q. Known as Active Only or AO?
38. A. Yes, that’s correct.
39. Q. Did your investigation —— and if there is any sensitivity about this, I know you’ll tell me, I don’t believe there is —— reveal any connection between Salman and/or Hashem Abedi and the Rusholme Crips criminal gang?
40. A. No, it did not.
41. Q. In any event, you conducted some investigations into what Trial Witness 3 told you in this regard and the investigation identified that the New York Times was reported to have spoken to Ramadan Abedi, the father of the brothers, on the telephone after the attack?
42. A. Yes.
43. Q. And that he had, according to that newspaper, stated that Salman had been distressed by the death of Hafidah?
44. A. Yes, apparently.
45. Q. A number of family members and associates, you will confirm, commented about recreational drug use by both Salman and Hashem Abedi.
46. A. Yes.
47. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I’m really sorry, just so we don’t get any confusion about... We are talking about the New York Times spoke to Ramadan after the murders of the 22?
48. MR GREANEY: We are talking about a conversation after the arena attack, yes.
49. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. It’s just possible that it could be ambiguous which one we are talking about.
50. MR GREANEY: We are not talking about a conversation after the attack on Hafidah, we’re talking about a conversation after 22 May 2017. So thank you, sir, for that clarification.
51. As you confirmed, I think, a number of family members and associates to whom the investigators spoke referred to recreational drug use by both of the
MR GREANEY: It is, as Mr de la Poer put it, an information–dense environment. If I'm going too quickly, not something I'm often accused of...

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And we can all read back through the transcript.

MR GREANEY: Next, the treatment of family members as suspects.

As we know already, the parents of the brothers travelled from the United Kingdom to Libya on 15 April 2017.

A. Yes.

Q. Are both believed still to be in Libya?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. With no indication that either has returned to the United Kingdom since the arena attack?

A. They have not, no.

Q. Has it been possible to deploy officers to Libya to attempt to speak to them?

A. No, it's completely out of the question.

Q. I think your voice is dropping now.

A. Sorry. It is completely out of the question.

Q. Why is that out of the question?

A. For a number of reasons. Clearly, it's a significantly hostile environment for UK officials to operate in. But also, there are clearly issues around law and order and policing in that country that aren't necessarily at the standards that we would operate at.

Q. So to put it very simply, they've shown no signs of coming back here to be interviewed?

A. No.

Q. And, for reasons that all will understand, I suspect, it is not feasible to deploy officers to attempt to interview them?

A. No, it's not.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The New York Times rang him up and he spoke to them. Is that possible for you to do that or would that just not be something that you could do? It might require a caution and things like that which couldn't be done over the phone.

A. I don't think we could be confident in any way, sir, that that would conform to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. It wouldn't conform to any part of it and of course we could never be sure who we were talking to.

MR GREANEY: Indeed, this is an issue that you faced not just in relation to the parents but also in relation to others who have, to put it neutrally, left the jurisdiction, such as Soliman to whom we'll turn.

A. Yes.

Q. In terms of the parents, did you decide that Ramadan Abedi should be given the status of suspect?
A. Yes.

Q. Did that occur on 18 August 2017?

A. Yes, it did.

Q. And suspected of what?

A. So this is in relation to the overarching suspicion of commission, preparation and instigation. So this is an involvement in this process. Whether that --- and I know we’re going to come to talk about radicalisation later, so that’s not appropriate.

Q. I quite understand.

A. But there are pieces of evidence that we need to talk to Ramadan Abedi about. Some of that is forensic and some of that is about his account in relation to coming to the UK to collect Hashem and Salman and return them to Libya.

Q. No doubt some of it is mindset?

A. Some of it is mindset, but again that comes back to radicalisation.

Q. The offence that is suspected is really the offence that was suspected of all or almost all of those who were arrested?

A. Yes.

Q. Samia Tabbal, the mother of the brothers, was she also determined to be a suspect by you?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

23. Q. Has that included checks with the Home Office, the Passport Office and the DVLA?

A. Yes.

Q. Have travel, financial and communications data all been investigated?

A. Yes.

Q. And also have social media enquiries taken place?

A. Yes.

Q. I’m going to ask you again about his immigration status, but is it the position that Ramadan Abedi is known to have changed his name?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he change his name on 25 March 2002 to

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Have you been able to identify definitively why he did so? This is 245, sir.

A. No, we have not. There is an explanation as to why the name from his sister, Rabaa, but...

Q. What did Rabaa have to say about this issue?

A. I think she said it was an old school friend whose name he decided to adopt, but why he did that we don’t know.

Q. Did you receive information that Ramadan Abedi had returned to, and that’s the name I’ll use, Libya in 2008 under a scheme for returning exiles?

A. Yes.

Q. And had worked with the Libyan government security force?

A. Yes.

1. Q. On 14 November 2018?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. We know that there is the benefit claim issue in relation to her, but is she also suspected of the same terrorism offence as her husband?

A. Yes, that is correct. Again, the grounds are slightly different in relation to that. So with regard to that, clearly we have the financial aspect of this investigation, so there are enquiries that need to be put to her around terrorism financing, and there are again issues about the removal of the two Abedis to Libya and then clearly Salman Abedi’s return on 18 May.

Q. I’m going to take your statement slightly out of order because it suits my purposes and ask you a little more at this stage about Ramadan Abedi because there is a crossover between chapter 8, planning and preparation, and chapter 13, radicalisation. It’s convenient to receive your evidence about him at this stage. I’m now at paragraph 243.

To say the least, have extensive investigations into Ramadan Abedi been made by your team?

A. Yes.

Q. Has that included checks with the Home Office, the Passport Office and the DVLA?

A. Yes.

1. Q. Have travel, financial and communications data all been investigated?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you also receive extensive information that Ramadan had associated with many exiled Libyans, linked to an organisation known as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group or LIFG?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Indeed, did various open source reporting state that Ramadan had been an active member of the LIFG?

A. Yes.

Q. At one stage was the LIFG a proscribed organisation under UK terrorism legislation?

A. Yes, it was, until very recently.

Q. Whether for this reason or partly for this reason, was the LIFG said to be associated with Al Qaeda?

A. It was, yes.

Q. Since being able to return to Libya under that scheme, has Ramadan Abedi travelled extensively between Libya and the United Kingdom?

A. He has.

Q. Indeed, does the data available to the investigation suggest that he has spent, since 2015, only 102 days in the United Kingdom?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Has Rabaa, the sister of Ramadan, explained that so far as she understands it, Ramadan Abedi’s marital status is
1. currently unclear?
2. A. It is.
3. Q. That Ramadan and Samia may have split up, with Ramadan
4. marrying another woman?
5. A. Yes.
6. Q. But that in turn, that relationship may also have ended
7. with Ramadan being back in a relationship with Samia?
8. A. Yes.
9. Q. Did you establish that media reporting suggested that
10. the Abedi family were friends with the family of and
11. with a man called Anas al–Libi?
12. A. Yes, that’s correct.
13. Q. We’re going to hear a little more about him in due
14. course. In very simple terms, in a few sentences, who
15. is al–Libi?
16. A. Al–Libi is a man who spent some time living in
17. Manchester, but was heavily linked to Al Qaeda and
18. indeed, I believe, Osama Bin Laden, and became wanted by
19. the FBI in 2013. I think it was — no, I’m sorry, became
20. wanted by the FBI in relation to an attack on
21. United States embassy buildings in Nairobi and Dar Es
22. Salaam. I think that was 1998.
23. Q. Indeed. And so the relevant information is digested in
24. your statement very helpfully.
25. In 1995, he was in exile in Manchester?

1. A. Yes, that’s correct.
2. Q. When, as we know, Ramadan Abedi was also resident in
3. Manchester. He was at one stage, al–Libi, on the FBI
4. most wanted list for terrorism offences?
5. A. Yes.
6. Q. Linked to the US embassy bombings in 1998. As you have
7. mentioned, one is Nairobi, in which 213 people were
8. killed?
9. A. Yes, that’s right.
10. Q. And the second in Dar Es Salaam in which 11 people were
11. killed?
12. A. Yes.
13. Q. He was captured in Tripoli in October 2013 by US forces?
14. A. Yes.
15. Q. But died of natural causes before he could be brought to
16. trial?
17. A. Yes, that’s right.
18. Q. On his Facebook profile, did Ramadan Abedi have a
19. picture of al–Libi, along with the words:
20. “The Prophet knows how many have a picture of this
21. lion in their profiles, the weak are forbidden from
22. sharing it”?
23. A. Yes, that’s right.
24. Q. And while we’re dealing with al–Libi, I can simply
25. invite you to confirm — sir, for your note, this is

1. paragraphs 272 to 277 of the statement, we don’t need to
2. turn these up. In connection with Abu Anas al–Libi, did
3. you become aware of a report in the Times of
4. an interview between Times reporter David Collins and
5. one of the Forjanis, Abdallah Forjani?
6. A. Yes.
7. Q. In which it was reported that Forjani had suggested that
8. Salman and Hashem Abedi had been radicalised by the
9. children of al–Libi?
10. A. Yes, that’s correct.
11. Q. And I think you drilled into that but couldn’t obtain
12. anything that tended to confirm that? Would that be
13. fair?
14. A. No, that’s right. With regard to the interview, yes.
15. Q. Yes, you obtained the rushes of the interview, but
16. really that was a suggestion by Abdullah Forjani that
17. went nowhere?
18. A. Yes.
19. Q. Still dealing with Ramadan, and I’m now back at
20. paragraph 248, was Ramadan described by a number of
21. witnesses as being a mosque official who summoned the
22. faithful to prayer?
23. A. Yes, he was.
24. Q. And who would recite the call to prayer for the
25. Manchester community and Didsbury Mosque?
government. Ramadan claimed that whilst working in the
Libyan police in the early 1990s, he'd passed
information on persons being watched to his
brother—law and he became a member of a group which
would distribute leaflets against the Gaddafi regime.

At this time, Ramadan denied being a member of LIFG.

Q. Just to complete the picture at this stage in relation
to Ramadan, and in the context of his denial of being
an LIFG member, one of the pieces of information that
the sister, Rabaa, provided you with was that in 2011
Ramadan Abedi had returned to Libya in order to fight
against the Gaddafi regime?

A. Yes.

Q. And indeed he had received a shrapnel wound in his back?

A. Yes.

Q. Which he stated had stopped him from fighting?

A. Yes.

Q. You will remember that we were dealing with the
 treatment of family members as suspects. I am now going
back to paragraph 239 of your statement. I am sorry to
jump around, but I hope that the structure of this will
make more sense on the transcript and to those who are
viewing.

Next, Ismail Abedi. As we know, he was named as
a suspect and within 12 hours of the attack had been
arrested under section 41(1) of the Terrorism Act.

A. Yes.

Q. Was taken into custody and interviewed before being
released on 5 June 2017?

A. Yes.

Q. For reasons that we're going to look at shortly, I'm
confident that you will agree that he has relevant
evidence to give to this inquiry?

A. Yes, I agree.

Q. Both generally and on the topic of radicalisation?

A. Yes.

Q. And as you will know, we have a commitment to obtaining
that evidence from him.

A. Yes.

Q. Hashem Abedi, of course, the brother of Salman Abedi
and, very quickly, you designated him a suspect?

A. Yes.

Q. He was known to be detained in Libya from 23 May?

A. Yes.

Q. Based on the evidence that you had, a warrant in the
first instance was obtained from the Magistrates' Court,
indeed within this very building, on 23 October 2017?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. And his extradition from Libya to the United Kingdom
applied for at Westminster Magistrates' Court on
24 October 2017?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. We'll turn to deal with extradition later in your
evidence. And tomorrow it may well be the case that
we'll deal in a little further detail with his
confession to Mr de la Poer and Mr Suter on 22 October
of this year.

So far as the youngest siblings of Ramadan and Samia
are concerned, I don't believe we even need to name
them. Nothing linking the younger siblings to the
attack has been identified; is that correct?

A. That’s correct, yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And their ages are?


SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So they are aged?


SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Certainly nothing should be done to
identify the 13–year–old.

MR GREANEY: No. Sir, you're quite right. There is frankly
no reason for anyone to name any of them, given what the
SIO has just confirmed.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: We can take the next section very briefly. We
know in terms of other members of the family that you
spoke to, either as volunteers or in custody, that you
spoke to Rabaa, a number of members of the Forjani
family, and others including people we’ll describe as
Relative C and Trial Witness 3; is that correct?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Next, under this first heading of personal circumstances
of the Abedi family, as I indicated – and when I say
you, I generally mean your team – you obtained the
medical records of Salman and Hashem Abedi. Is that
correct?

A. That’s right.

Q. They were obtained at a very early stage of the
investigation?

A. Yes.

Q. And neither set of medical records shows any evidence of
mental health issues; is that correct?

A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. Or any other relevant condition?

A. No.

Q. Subject only to the very small point you’ve made about
the mother’s visit to the GP?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Next, still dealing with personal circumstances, did you
make investigations into the education of Salman and
Hashem Abedi?

A. Yes, we did.
Q. As you’ll appreciate, this is a topic that we’ll address in chapter 13, but there are perhaps a couple of points to pick up on in dealing with planning and preparation.

Your investigation, I believe — — I’m at paragraph 253 — — established that Salman Abedi had attended the following establishments: the Burnage High School for Boys from 2009 to 2011?

A. Yes.

Q. Where in his GCSEs he received one A star, subject not specified, a C, four Ds, three Es and an F?

A. Yes.

Q. Then the Manchester College, leaving in 2013, with a BTEC level 2 in information technology?

A. Yes.

Q. Then Trafford College, leaving in 2015 with a BTEC level 3 in business, GCSE English, and two A levels in Arabic?

A. Yes.

Q. And then Salford University from 2015, where he began studies in business and management?

A. Yes.

Q. Effectively dropping out with, as I indicated with Mr de la Poer yesterday, his last attendance seeming to have been on 13 January 2017?

A. Yes.

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A. Yes.

Q. And then Salford University from 2015, where he began studies in business and management?

A. Yes.
Q. Really that’s what I wanted your assistance in relation to. That was his view based upon his experience of Salman Abedi, who was at that school between 2009 and 2011. What would your comment be of the headteacher’s view that he needed extensive support and guidance?

A. Generally, with respect to Mr Fenn, he’s never had the opportunity to assess either of the Abedi brothers in their bomb—building capabilities.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Or seen the video to see whether that would actually provide the instruction and support that would be necessary?

A. Indeed, absolutely.

MR GREANEY: And the observation you make in your statement is that that was made in the context of a historical relationship?

A. Yes.

Q. And obviously with the benefit of hindsight?

A. Yes, or a mixture of hindsight and foresight. I’m not sure which.

Q. The next topic, which we can deal with briefly, social media use.

A. Yes, generally with respect to Mr Fenn, he’s never had the opportunity to assess either of the Abedi brothers in their bomb—building capabilities. We’re going to deal with that in further detail when we reach part 5, so we’ll park that for now. You then deal with three issues which we’ve either addressed or which are really, frankly, not particularly relevant any longer.

So I’m going to turn next to paragraph 278, page 67 of your statement, and an issue which is or may be of some significance to planning and preparation. It’s Operation Traverso, the February 17th Martyrs Brigade. Mr Barracough, you were asked by the inquiry to address any links that the investigation had found between Salman Abedi and the February 17 Martyrs Brigade?

A. Yes.

Q. And to identify the background to a police operation called Operation Traverso?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. First the basics then. Is the February 17th Martyrs Brigade known to be an Islamist militia in Libya, originally formed at the time of the revolution that led to the overthrow of the former ruler, General Gaddafi?

A. Yes, that’s correct, hence the name.

Q. Was Operation Traverso a police operation designed to examine the extremist activities of a man called Akila Hafiane?

A. Yes, Akila and her family, yes.

Q. So both Akila and other members of her family?

A. Yes.

Q. And there is further information available to the inquiry, but we just need to deal with the basics. Did Akila Hafiane have an eldest son?

A. Yes.

Q. Was his name Ibrahim Almozawi?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he killed in Syria in February 2013 whilst fighting for an Al Qaeda affiliated militia?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Furthermore, when considering any terrorist connections of Akila Hafiane, is it known that two of her daughters also travelled to Syria and are believed to have co-located with Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. The two daughters having left the United Kingdom in 2013 and 2014 are it known that two of her daughters also travelled to Syria and are believed to have co-located with Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups?

A. Yes.

Q. Furthermore, on 2 January 2017, was Akila Hafiane, together with two of her other children, stopped whilst attempting to board a flight for Istanbul?

A. Yes.

Q. And the flight she was attempting to board was at Heathrow; is that correct?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. At that point this time, was Akila Hafiane and one of her children subject to a schedule 7 port stop?
Q. Just to get to the point, did one of the 65 photographs?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. With a logo, thought to be of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade, believed to be visible in some of the 15 recordings and 65 photographs which appeared to have been made during the Libyan civil war of 2011?
A. Yes.

Q. Did many of those files show Akila Hafiane’s estranged husband and their deceased son in camouflage uniforms holding weapons?
A. Yes.

Q. With a logo, thought to be of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade, believed to be visible in some of the photographs?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Just to get to the point, did one of the 65 photographs show a male, apparently in his late teens, carrying a rifle?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Did that male with the rifle have a strong resemblance to Salman Abedi?
A. Yes, he did.

Q. We’re going to look in a moment at other evidence that supports the proposition it was Abedi. The view that you now hold that the person has a strong resemblance to Salman Abedi, was that a view that has been formed since 22 May or was it a view that was formed back at the time of the search of Akila Hafiane’s home or can’t you say?
A. I would say it’s certainly beyond 22 May. There’s absolutely no reason for that to be identified prior to that. If memory serves me right, we were notified about this some time afterwards as well.

Q. So you’ll understand why —
A. Yes, of course, yes.

Q. — (overspeaking) and we need to establish whether that was known at the time.
A. Yes.

Q. The image that I have just referred to, thought to be that of Salman Abedi, was reviewed by the SO15 photographic identification cell; is that correct?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. The way that you put it is that:

“Due to the poor quality of the image, they were unable to confirm whether the male in the photograph was definitely Salman Abedi. However, the likeness is startling.”

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Is there an insignia on the wall behind the person believed to be Salman Abedi, which has been assessed as being the insignia of the February 17th Martyrs Brigade?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. In fact, your statement also answers the question I posed because paragraph 284 confirms that North—west CTU was provided with the image for the first time on 14 November 2018.
A. Sorry, yes. But the link between the identification also was post, so even though it had only been provided in November...

Q. I’m sorry, you’re quite right, that is the important issue so far as chapter 14 is concerned, whether the identification had been made before the bombing, and your clear evidence is that that identification had not been made.
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Thank you for that clarity.
In terms of other information that tends to support...
the view that you plainly hold that that photograph does
show Salman Abedi, was the metadata of the image
investigated?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. No, that’s not the case.
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Furthermore, did travel analysis further support the
proposition that Abedi was in Libya prior to
the view that you plainly hold that that photograph does

Q. Did a digital forensic examination of that hard drive
directly evidence of that hard drive

Q. And the way in which you put it in your statement,
paragraph 288, no doubt being appropriately cautious, is
this:
Q. As I indicated, your evidence in part 4 is divided into
a series of sections. We have now dealt with the first
section, which is, I can reassure everyone, the longest
section.
A. The next section is movements. We can deal with
this relatively briefly because either at the end of
this week, by which I mean Thursday, or the beginning of
next week, Detective Sergeant Hazelwood will come and
talk us through the sequence of events chart that deals
with Abedi’s movements between 18 and 22 May.
A. That’s correct.
A. Yes, correct.
Q. As we are going to see when we look at another section
of part 4, at one stage it was possible to travel direct
from the UK to Libya?
A. Yes. That’s right.
Q. But the situation in Libya became so volatile that such
direct travel became impossible at some point in time?
A. Yes, correct, yes.
Q. CCTV recovered from Manchester Airport shows
Salman Abedi arriving at passport control in Terminal 2
on 18 May at 11.13 hours; is that correct?
A. Yes.
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. Which in your judgement indicates that he was part of an
organised group?
A. Yes.
Q. And the way in which you put it in your statement,
paragraph 288, no doubt being appropriately cautious, is
this:
“Therefore it is not unreasonable to suggest that
Salman Abedi may have either fought with the
February 17th Martyrs Brigade during the Libyan uprising
of 2011 or attended a training camp or both.”
A. Yes.
A. Yes.
Q. We’ll check that, but that’s my recollection.
A. Yes, I believe so. I can always check that.
Q. Which in your judgement indicates that he was part of an
organised group?
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A. Yes, I believe so. I can always check that.
Q. Which in your judgement indicates that he was part of an
organised group?
A. Yes.
On 29 April, at 11.59 hours, was a male identified
him whilst he’s actually on the bus or boarding.

Q. In terms of what he did in WH Smith’s, as I recall
Mr de la Poer established yesterday, he acquires
a SIM card?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. The Nissan Micra, as Mr de la Poer also established
yesterday, had made a journey from Somerton Court to
Devell House before the travel of the Abedi brothers to
Libya?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. Next we’re going to look at what happened to the Micra
between 15 April and 19 May. Was CCTV footage recovered
from Devell House?
A. Yes, it was.
Q. Did that occur on 2 June, which was the date upon which
the investigation became aware of the significance of
the Nissan Micra?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. Did the footage at that stage — — and this is something
that you were dealing with yesterday — — go back not to
15 April but to 20 April?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. No doubt that was because, as everyone knows, CCTV
systems generally override footage after a period of
time?
A. Yes, and that’s what happened in this case.
Q. So you had the footage, however, from 20 April. Did
that footage establish that the Nissan Micra remained in
the same position, namely parked in bay 30 of the car
park between 20 April and 2 June, when you recovered the
vehicle?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. On 23 April, and this is obviously information that you
obtained from the footage, did two vehicles drive into
the car park at Devell House and park near to the Micra?
A. Yes.
Q. Did the drivers of those vehicles leave their own cars
and appear to look at the Micra?
A. Yes.
Q. In your statement you were able to give the names of at
least some of those who appeared to look into the Micra.
A. Yes.
Q. I’m not going to name them because my understanding is,
but tell me if I’ve got this wrong, that their actions
were thought to be entirely non-sinister and irrelevant?
A. Completely, yes.
Q. So let’s just pass over them.
On 29 April, at 11.59 hours, was a male identified
as Anas Abuhdaima seen standing to the rear offside of
the vehicle with his left hand to his ear?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. Walking away some 7 seconds later?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. On 7 May at 18.25 hours, was a male identified as
Ahmed Alzilitni seen to walk towards the Nissan Micra,
looking in the passenger door of the vehicle, and then
walking away?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Have both of those two men, whose names I won’t repeat
again, been subject to the TIE process?
A. Yes, they have.
Q. Were they asked, each of them, about their interactions
with the Micra?
A. Yes, they were, although Mr Abuhdaima was extremely
recent.
Q. And what did the two of them have to say?
A. They don’t recall having done this, is my recollection.
Q. Really, that would be consistent with what your
investigation became aware of the significance of
the Micra?
A. Yes, they were, although Mr Abuhdaima was extremely
recent.
Q. They were asked about their interactions with the Micra?
A. Yes, and that’s what happened in this case.
Q. Really, that would be consistent with what your
investigation established was actually going on in the
car park?
A. Yes.
Q. You mustn’t apologise; there is a huge amount of
information in here.

Mr Alzilitni was asked about his interactions with
the Micra during an interview he attended voluntarily.
He said he didn’t recognise the car and thought it was
being used to store drugs, which is why he looked into
it.
A. I beg your pardon, Mr Greaney, that’s correct, yes.
Q. Really, that would be consistent with what your
investigation established was actually going on in the
car park?
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I’m quite concerned that a man’s name
has been mentioned. Nothing has been said in this
inquiry to indicate that he has committed any sort of
offence.
A. No, sir.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He’s not been convicted of any offence,
in any way — — or has he?
A. No, sir, not in relation to anything that we’re dealing
with here.
MR GREANEY: Sir, that’s a perfectly fair point.

In relation to the other gentleman, he was wanted,
I think, a the time by the police in connection with
something unconnected. At the time of your statement
he had not been traced; has he yet been traced?
A. Yes, he has.
Q. Is it thought that there is anything sinister about his actions in relation to the vehicle on 7 May?
A. No, he has no recollection of it.

Q. The movements of Salman Abedi between his return to the United Kingdom and 22 May. Were vast amounts of CCTV footage recovered covering that period by the investigation?
A. Yes, huge amounts.

Q. Was something called a full strategy document prepared, addressing how that material was to be dealt with?
A. Yes, it was.

Q. We don’t need to go to it, but you deal with that at paragraphs 306 to 310 of your statement.
A. Yes.

Q. As we know from evidence given in answer to Mr de la Poer’s questions yesterday, something called a video compilation produced for Salman Abedi’s movements on each day following his return to the United Kingdom?
A. Yes, it was.

Q. And then it all needs to be put together to provide a coherent whole showing what a particular person’s been doing at a particular time.
A. No.

Q. So you need to show what time it’s actually showing.
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. As I say, Detective Sergeant Hazelwood will deal with you have to obtain the CCTV?
A. Yes.

Q. So locating a mobile telephone within certain parameters, not to a precise spot but within a particular area?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. And was cell site analysis conducted in relation to telephones where you were aware of telephones that were being used?
A. Yes, that’s right.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I’m sure it’s not.

MR GREANEY: So in relation to the chairman’s question, is that a CCTV loss or is that an occasion upon which you know the general area to which he goes, but haven’t been able to identify exactly ——
A. I think that’s actually the distinction, sir. So there have been momentarily or momentary losses but we know where he is, whereas this is a period of time, an extended period of time, where we —— again, we know roughly where he is, but not what he’s done over that 30-minute or so period.

Q. Obviously you don’t have CCTV footage of him for the whole of that period. For example, there is no footage from within the flat at Granby.
A. No, that’s very true. But obviously, what we do know is he’s not left the building, so having examined all of the CCTV ——

Q. So we’ve understood what you mean by CCTV loss. And the single loss, applying the definition that you’ve given describe as a CCTV loss of Salman Abedi so that it is not known where he is or where he goes?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that the one that coincides with getting rid of the suitcase or is that another one?
A. No, this is on 20 May, in the morning of the 20th. So it’s …

MR GREANEY: Yes. It stands for visual evidence retrieval and the people who work in the VERA Unit are specialists in regard to the recovery of CCTV. On the face of it, that would seem quite a simple task, but depending ———
A. Yes.

MR GREANEY: In relation to the chairman’s question, is that a CCTV loss or is that an occasion upon which you know the general area to which he goes, but haven’t been able to identify exactly ——
A. I think that’s actually the distinction, sir. So there have been momentarily or momentary losses but we know where he is, whereas this is a period of time, an extended period of time, where we —— again, we know roughly where he is, but not what he’s done over that 30-minute or so period.

Q. Obviously you don’t have CCTV footage of him for the whole of that period. For example, there is no footage from within the flat at Granby.
A. No, that’s very true. But obviously, what we do know is he’s not left the building, so having examined all of the CCTV ——

Q. So we’ve understood what you mean by CCTV loss. And the single loss, applying the definition that you’ve given
Q. Sir, we are going to come on to telephones in more detail later on, although probably not today. Was that a number that he had brought back into the UK or the number that he had obtained from WH Smith?

A. No, this is from WH Smith.

MR GREANEY: The four particular individuals, most of whom were connected with a money transfer I believe were Adel Abuzeid.

A. Yes.

Q. Mosbah Zargon?

A. Yes.

Q. Mahsoud Chilby?

A. Yes.

Q. And Alaedeen Sicri?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. And each of them was released without charge?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. And each of them was released without charge?

A. Yes.

Q. What follows from that, just to pick up on the chairman’s point, is that it was considered that there was no sufficient evidential basis to suggest that they had any connection with the plot of the Abedi brothers?

A. I’m sorry, there may be actually an inaccuracy here. If
I may just check. I need to check that Mr Chilby was actually arrested.

Q. We’re going to get to Mr Chilby in part 5 and if you would check that over lunch, that would be extremely helpful.
A. Yes.

Q. At any rate, those four people I have named, whether arrested or spoken to voluntarily, there was no basis upon which it was considered they could be charged with any offence?
A. Yes. They were released without charge. The evidence in relation to how we approach this from a charging decision perspective is, I presume, later.

Q. It’s a point you have made already a number of times that obviously the exact nature of the discussion that you had with the CPS and with leading counsel must remain confidential for an extremely good reason. But we’ve been assured by you and, certainly so far as CTI is concerned, accept that careful consideration was given by the police, CPS and counsel to the charging decisions that were made.
A. Yes, in relation to the evidence that was presented.

Q. Yes. Are you making the point that the evidence might always change from now on?
A. I think I’m making the point that there is a difference between that ongoing process and effectively a full code test application for a charging decision. I understand that’s semantics —

Q. It isn’t semantics.
A. —— and something of a nicety.

Q. I do understand the point you’re making, which is that the evidence has to reach a particular point before a formal decision is called for from the Crown Prosecution Service.
A. Yes, and that’s a very formal process.

Q. But there will be many of these individuals that never even reach the point of that ——
A. Yes, exactly.

Q. So I have understood your point, which is one, if I may say, that is properly made. The next topic, whilst we’re dealing in part 4 with the family, is travel.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I check on this? We’ve heard some evidence that Salman Abedi was actually going round with two mobile phones.
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The other one that he was going round with was?
A. The Alcatel is the one that he comes to the UK with and then he buys the single SIM card from WH Smith.
1 Q. And to provide a chronology of that travel?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. Had you established that there was a significant amount
4 of travel, both into and out of the UK by the Abedi
5 family?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. But at the stage before you were asked by the inquiry to
8 deal with what had been revealed, had you identified
9 that only specific flights were of relevance to your
10 investigation?
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. With the result that only those flights were the subject
13 of evidential recovery?
14 A. Yes, that’s right.
15 Q. Does that mean that further enquiries were only
16 conducted on flights assessed as being relevant to the
17 prosecution case?
18 A. Yes, that’s right.
19 Q. Has nonetheless a chronology been prepared on that basis
20 of travel by the Abedi family?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. Mr Lopez, we’re going to ask for this to be placed on
23 the screen. I am going to give you the INQ reference,
24 but please don’t put it on the screen until I have given
25 you the page number as well, please.

85

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It is only significant travel we’re
2 going to deal with?
3 MR GREANEY: Only significant travel. Really what I’m going
4 to do is put it on the screen so it’s available for you
5 and for anyone else to ask about, then I’ll just pick
6 out a very small number of details, in fact only two,
7 from it.
8 Q. The INQ reference is [INQ034649/139].
9 It would take the rest of the day to go through that
10 line by line, which isn’t proportionate. What we can
11 say by way of summary, before looking at a few
12 individual details, is that there were many flights
13 between the UK and Libya, direct until 2014 and
14 thereafter indirect, taken by the Abedi family?
15 A. Yes. That’s right.
16 Q. We can see that Hashem Abedi spent some time in Germany
17 in 2016?
18 A. Yes, that’s correct.
19 Q. Which is or may be relevant for reasons to which we’ll
20 turn.
21 Just a few other details. First of all, as we know,
22 on 4 August 2014, the Abedi brothers, Hashem and Salman,
23 were evacuated from Libya by the Royal Navy on board
24 HMS Enterprise; is that correct?
25 A. Yes, that’s correct.

86

1 Q. They were taken to Malta, from where they subsequently
2 took a connecting flight to Manchester on 6 August?
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. In 2015, and this will be relevant when we come to
5 radicalisation because some witnesses will describe it,
6 did both Hashem and Salman Abedi fly to Saudi Arabia via
7 Jordan?
8 A. Yes, they did.
9 Q. Did they travel for the purposes of Hajj?
10 A. Yes, that’s the account yes.
11 Q. As part of a group of pilgrims?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. I mentioned the trip by Hashem to Germany. Have you
14 been able to obtain some payment details in relation to
15 that trip?
16 A. Yes, we have, yes.
17 Q. And what did those investigations reveal?
18 A. The payment details were either by Hashem, Salman or by
19 an associate, and we have one payment in the name of H
20 Nassrat, and this is Hajer Nassrat.
21 Q. You’re right to draw the distinction between the name
22 that you haven’t given and the name you have.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. So Hajer Nassrat is the sister of someone we have heard
25 about, because he was involved in the acquisition of

87

1 precursor materials?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. Hajer Nassrat is the sister of Zuhir Nassrat, is that
4 correct?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. An associate of the Abedi brothers?
7 A. Yes.
8 Q. We mentioned port stops earlier and I am now at
9 paragraph 322. Is it the position that unless Border
10 Agency staff or police port officers have cause to stop
11 and speak to travellers, then the intention and purpose
12 of their travel will not be known?
13 A. That’s correct, yes.
14 Q. Can you confirm that neither Salman Abedi nor
15 Hashem Abedi were subject to a port stop under
16 schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 between 2010 and
17 2017?
18 A. I can.
19 Q. And that no requests were made to carry out a port stop?
20 A. I can confirm that, yes.
21 Q. As you’ll appreciate, that is an issue that will be the
22 subject of investigation in chapter 14.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. Does it come to this, in the absence of a port stop
25 being conducted, Greater Manchester Police and/or
1. North—west CTU have no knowledge of the purpose or
2. intention of any travel undertaken by the Abedi family
3. with one exception?
4. A. That’s correct, yes.
5. Q. And is that exception when Ramadan Abedi was spoken to
6. by port officers at Dover on 17 November 2011?
7. A. Yes, that’s correct.
8. Q. When, as you told us earlier today, he declared that
9. he was travelling to Libya as part of an aid convey?
10. A. Yes.
11. MR JAMIESON: Sir, I have just had an indication that the
12. families are struggling to hear.
13. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: To hear both?
14. MR JAMIESON: Principally the witness.
15. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry. Just speak up a bit, would you
16. mind? Could we turn the microphone up if necessary?
17. MR JAMIESON: Yes.
18. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: T o hear both?
19. MR JAMIESON: Yes, they were.
20. Q. As part of the investigation, were house
21. to house—t o—house
22. enquiries conducted in the area around the Abedi family
23. home address?
24. A. Yes, they were. home address. 25. Q. There’s detail about the outcome in your statement, but
26. in summary, is the position that nothing of evidential
27. value arose from that aspect of the investigation?
28. A. That’s accurate, yes, nothing of evidential value was
29. recovered.
30. Q. Although lines of enquiry were followed up to their
31. conclusion, leading to what you describe as anecdotal
32. knowledge of the Abedi family?
33. A. Yes, that’s correct.
34. Q. Next in your statement, from paragraph 336, you go into
35. considerable detail about the issue of radicalisation, do you not?
36. A. I do.
37. Q. As I’ve said now a number of times, that is an issue
38. that we’re going to investigate with you, not now but in
39. chapter 13, and so I’m going to deal with none of that
40. save for a short passage at page 96.
41. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I was just slightly concerned about what
42. you said about port stops with the family. You
43. mentioned Ramadan had and there is also one for Ismail?
44. MR GREANEY: There is also one for Ismail on his return from
45. his honeymoon, you’re quite right, sir. In fact that’s
46. the very issue that I’m going to turn to — —
47. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. I thought I remembered it, but
48. then when you took us to page 96, of course that’s where
49. it is.
50. MR GREANEY: You’re quite right. I did encourage the
51. witness to say that there was a single exception and in
52. fact there are two exceptions. There’s the Ramadan and
53. Ismail Abedi. I was about to remind myself, but
54. thank you for getting in first
55. So we’re dealing with Ismail Abedi. In the whole of
56. the section dealing with radicalisation, which is
57. lengthy, there is one section which is relevant to
58. chapter 8 and it relates to Ismail Abedi. Was he, as
59. the chairman has pointed out, subject to a port stop at
60. Heathrow Airport on 3 September 2015?
61. A. Yes, he was.
62. Q. And as part of that process, were electrical and storage
63. items of his downloaded and examined?
64. A. Yes, they were. 65. Q. We’ll go through the detail of all of that in due course
66. in chapter 13, but was a further device — — I’m now at
67. page 97 — — recovered from an address associated with
68. Ismail Abedi, exhibit KLS/9?
69. A. Yes, that’s right.
70. Q. Was that recovered at about the same time as a result of
71. what had been revealed by the port stop?
72. A. I’m sorry, could you repeat that?
73. Q. Of course, yes. I’m just trying to make sure
74. I understand the chronology. 3 September 2015 is the
75. port stop of Ismail Abedi.
76. A. Yes. 77. Q. His devices are downloaded and examined, and to put it
78. very neutrally at the moment, that work indicated that
79. Ismail Abedi had an interest in Islamic State?
80. A. Yes, that’s true.
81. Q. There was then, if we turn over the page, recovered from
82. an address that I won’t give, an exhibit KLS/9. So the
83. first question is: the port stop has occurred, a concern
84. has developed about Ismail Abedi. Was his home address
85. then the subject of search, revealing exhibit KLS/9 or
86. did KLS/9 come into the possession of the police in
87. a different way?
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And he will be given the opportunity to give further details or explanations of this material.

MR GREANEY: It is, sir, yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So in relation to Ismail Abedi, it is the intention to call him to the inquiry?

MR GREANEY: Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And he will be given the opportunity to give further details or explanations of this material before the inquiry?

MR GREANEY: Yes. Your recollection is correct.

I identified in opening that we fully intend to call him to give evidence to the inquiry and he will be able to give his explanations.

Some of the images shown Salman Abedi armed in camouflage clothing alone, whilst others had him standing with other males and some with his brother, Hashem Abedi?

A. Yes.

Q. Other images on that device of Ismail Abedi holding various weapons?

A. Yes.

Q. Again assessed as being taken outside the UK. Then a video file showing Salman Abedi and other males firing weapons?

A. Yes.

Q. Which appears to have been loaded to the device between 2009 and 2012?

A. Yes.

Q. There were, we won’t go through all of it now, other images of Salman Abedi and Ismail Abedi showing them holding weapons; is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. We’ll come back to deal with this in due course in

Q. He is now dead, but was a senior recruiter for Al Qaeda;

A. Yes.

Anwar Al Awlaki? I’m at (ix), page 97.

Q. Video lectures by the, you describe him as a preacher,

A. Yes.

Q. An image of Ismail Abedi himself holding a firearm?

A. Yes.

Q. In some respects [you added] it also appears that
detail, but on page 99, at ( xii ), your view was:

“There are indications that Ismail Abedi may have been aware of the radicalisation or changing opinions of Salman Abedi.”

A. Yes.

Q. “In some respects [you added] it also appears that Ismail was sympathetic to the ideals of ISIS, as evidenced by the material discovered on his devices which were seized from his home address when he was arrested.”

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So that is subject to any explanation he may give?

MR GREANEY: It is, sir, yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So in relation to Ismail Abedi, it is the intention to call him to the inquiry?

MR GREANEY: It is.

As I indicated at the very beginning of today, or near the beginning, your statement also deals briefly with the issue of Prevent. But essentially, you defer to the evidence of Detective Chief Superintendent Dominic Scally, who is the head of CT Policing North—west?

A. Yes.

Q. And there’s nothing that you feel you’d need to address?

A. No.

Q. Were you also asked to address the criminal convictions and criminal conduct of Salman Abedi, Hashem Abedi and

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their associates, including family members?

A. Yes.

Q. In relation to the criminal convictions of the many associates of Salman and Hashem Abedi, did your work reveal that many of them had been involved in not only various levels of criminality but also gang—related activity?

A. Yes.

Q. I’m now at page 103 ——

A. Yes, I understand.

Q. —— and paragraph 391.

So far as Salman Abedi, Hashem Abedi and other members of the Abedi family are concerned, did you identify that, first of all, Salman Abedi had been involved in what is properly described as minor criminality, dating from about 2010 when he was 15 years of age?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. On 14 October, was Salman Abedi, together with another man that we are going to be asking further questions about, called Elyas Elmehdi, suspected of stealing a mobile telephone at Burnage Media College?

A. Yes.

Q. But the phone, I think, was recovered and the victim did not wish to support a prosecution?

A. Yes.

Q. I’m now at page 103 ——

A. Yes.

Q. Where the offender has fully admitted the offence and, moreover, demonstrated remorse?

A. Yes.

Q. And perhaps the main significance of those events, it was on that occasion that his fingerprints were taken from his left hand which were used to aid in his identification after the attack?

A. Yes, that’s correct, and his DNA was sampled as well.

Q. So, as it’s sometimes described, Salman Abedi was lightly convicted?

A. Yes.

Q. So far as Hashem Abedi is concerned, just one matter to draw attention to ——

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How necessary is it? I’m sorry, I’ve read it, it ended up with there being insufficient evidence to proceed with the prosecution.

MR GREANEY: Sir, I don’t wish to adduce evidence that you’re not going to find helpful.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, is it helpful?

MR GREANEY: It’s for you to decide whether it’s helpful.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It doesn’t help me at the moment, I don’t think.

MR GREANEY: All I will do then is identify that within this statement, which can be available for your use if necessary, there is information about what is frankly limited or alleged criminality by Hashem Abedi, Ismail Abedi and, at page 106, Ramadan Abedi.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In relation to Hashem, let me explain: the reason why there’s no prosecution is there was insufficient identification evidence to identify him as
being the perpetrator and in those circumstances, to
read that out in a way that alleges that he did commit
that offence, would seem to me to be undesirable.

MR GREANEY: Sir, I’m entirely in your hands. The extent to
which it’s necessary to go into what’s been described in
different contexts as granular detail about the
background of these people is a matter for you. It
perhaps is important to establish that Salman Abedi is
lightly convicted, Hashem Abedi had no convictions,
there was simply one incident in his background which
didn’t result in a prosecution. Ismail Abedi, again,
lightly convicted, and Ramadan Abedi lightly convicted,
and Samia Abedi, the mother, no previous convictions.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: I won’t go into those matters in any further
detail.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If any core participant wants to
persuade me that it is desirable or relevant to my
considerations then of course I will listen to those
arguments in due course.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we’re going to turn next, Mr Barraclough, to
reconnaissance. We can deal with this efficiently
because, as you know, we already know and have received
evidence about the hostile reconnaissance by
Salman Abedi in the period leading up to 22 May and
indeed on 22 May itself at 6.30.

A. Yes.

Q. Within Greater Manchester Police — — I’m now at
paragraph 404, page 108 — — is there a system for
recording any incident that is detected of hostile
reconnaissance?

A. Yes, there is.

Q. In very general terms, what is that system, please?

A. Sorry, I’m trying to find myself…

Q. I’m at page 108, paragraph 404.

It might suffice simply for me to state that you
observe:

“In every case there is a system for recording these
reporting streams and if the hostile reconnaissance was
related to, or suspected to be related to, terrorism,
the information would always be sent through to CTPNW,
where we further maintain our own database of recorded
or reported incidents.”

So perhaps it’s not important for us to know any
more than that there are established systems in place.

A. Sorry, that’s what I was being careful about, whether to
go any further on that. Thank you.

Q. Your care is probably well—placed. The point we come to
this is: in the case of the Manchester Arena attack,
have all available police systems been interrogated — —
A. Yes. That's correct, yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Then whatever useful information there may have been may have been recorded on the SIM card rather than on the device?

A. It could have been, yes.

MR GREANEY: You're quite right to focus my question into an issue, which is paragraphs 409 and 410 where you observe:

"When dealing with suspects and in some cases witnesses, digital media devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets have been seized in order that the data they hold be interrogated — including data associated to social media activity ... "

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. And you observe that one of the things that they were interrogated for was evidence of hostile reconnaissance?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. In the final two lines on page 410, you state:

"No evidence of hostile reconnaissance was recovered from any of the devices subjected to this process."

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Despite initial concern that existed in relation to one piece of footage?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. That was a piece of footage that was recovered from a mobile telephone seized following the arrests of Yahya and Mohammed Werfalli?

A. Yes. That's correct, yes.

Q. There were some images that were, put it very simply, initially thought capable of being evidence of hostile reconnaissance?

A. Yes.
Q. And that second part completed, made in December 2013?
A. Yes.

Q. And that as a result, they held a file on Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.

Q. Did they undertake to forward that file to your investigation?
A. Yes.

Q. And indeed did you receive it within a matter of 15 minutes?
A. Yes.

Q. When analysed, did the file consist of two incomplete application forms?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Was the first application made in October 2013?
A. Yes.

Q. For the position of safety steward?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. And the second part completed, made in December 2013?
A. Yes.

Q. Page 114?
A. The information actually came from G4S.

Q. And indeed was raised by them with you on the afternoon of 25 May?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Did they tell you that Salman Abedi had applied to G4S for a job?
A. Yes.

Q. And that as a result, they held a file on Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.

Q. Did they undertake to forward that file to your investigation?
A. Yes.

Q. And indeed did you receive it within a matter of 15 minutes?
A. Yes.

Q. When analysed, did the file consist of two incomplete application forms?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Was the first application made in October 2013?
A. Yes.

Q. For the position of safety steward?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. And the second part completed, made in December 2013?
A. Yes.

Q. For the position of Manchester customer care steward?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. In the upshot, was Salman Abedi unsuccessful in both applications?
A. He was unsuccessful, yes.

Q. Is it the position, moreover, that he did not work at any stage for G4S in any capacity?
A. He did not.

Q. Obviously, Salman Abedi, given what he did on 22 May, applying to work as a safety steward, is bound to raise concern, but this occurred in 2013, did it not?
A. It did.

Q. And that may well have been at a stage on the evidence before he became radicalised?
A. It may.

Q. In any event, is it the position that there is no evidence as to where Salman Abedi hoped to work in the event that his applications had been successful?
A. Yes, that’s absolutely certain.

Q. Both of the applications were, can you confirm this, for generic steward vacancies?
A. Yes.

Q. So that if successful, Salman Abedi would have been part of a pool in the north—west supporting any events work that was available?
A. No.
Mr Greaney: Yes. You're quite right, that's something we all need to bear in mind, notwithstanding that V Day, as I understand it’s to be called, has now arrived.

Sir John Saunders: Yes.

MR GREANEY: We're dealing with the extradition and trial of Hashem Abedi. On 23 May 2017, was it learned that Hashem Abedi had been detained in Libya by the authorities there and was being held for his part in the attack?

A: Yes. It was.

Q. In order to reach that point and bring Hashem Abedi from Libya to the UK and to a courtroom in London, was it necessary for you and the Crown Prosecution Service to lead to Hashem Abedi's conviction at the Central Criminal Court on 17 March of this year?

A: Yes.

Q. And was being held for his part in the attack in Manchester?

A: Yes, that's correct.

Q. What I know you will be aware of is the following, and really you just need to say yes or no, if you don't mind, in answer to these questions.

First of all, it has been claimed by counsel who represented Hashem Abedi in the criminal proceedings against him that he was subject to mistreatment in Libya.

A: Yes.

Q. Secondly, it has been maintained by counsel on his behalf that as a result of that treatment whilst in Libya he made a confession to involvement in the arena attack?

A: Yes.

MR GREANEY: Just to bring you up to date, sir, I have had a discussion with Mr Weatherby over lunch, who raised an issue in relation to the purported Libyan confession some time ago now. What we have agreed between ourselves is that at this stage I will not ask Mr Barraclough any further questions in relation to the purported Libyan confession and Mr Weatherby, pending instructions from his lay clients, equally will ask no questions on this particular topic, but that the senior investigating officer will return next week if it proves necessary for questions to be asked and I have had an opportunity to discuss that with counsel representing

other bereaved families and they are content with it.

I haven’t discussed it with Mr Horwell, I’m sorry, but I’m sure that he will be content enough.

Does that make sense to you, Mr Barraclough?

A. It does make sense, yes.

MR GREANEY: Sir, are you content with that approach?

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: Let’s just deal with some of the very basic facts in relation to the extradition.

As your investigation developed, did it become clear that an evidential case was being made out implicating Hashem Abedi in the preparation of the attack carried out by his brother?

A: Yes.

Q. And in due course was it that evidential case that was to lead to Hashem Abedi’s conviction at the Central Criminal Court on 17 March of this year?

A: Yes, it was.

Q. In order to reach that point and bring Hashem Abedi from Libya to the UK and to a courtroom in London, was it necessary for you and the Crown Prosecution Service to follow a particular process?

A: Yes, it was.

Q. I don’t believe we need to go into it because what we know is that process was negotiated successfully by you.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just say this without, I hope, treading on anything I shouldn’t. I don’t believe the whole extradition procedure was that simple and all those involved in it are to be congratulated, in my view, on achieving their aim in getting Hashem Abedi back, facing justice, and in the end a jury deciding, as we now know correctly, that he was guilty of those crimes.

Q. And other persons of interest known as TIE subjects?
A. Yes.

Q. During the time steps were being taken to secure the extradition of Hashem Abedi, did your team continue to investigate the attack?
A. Yes, they did.

Q. And as part of the preparation for that trial, did a number of consultations take place between police, the Crown Prosecution Service and leading counsel for the prosecution?
A. Yes.

Q. On those occasions, with highly experienced leading counsel and highly experienced CPS lawyers, were the TIE subjects in general discussed?
A. Yes.

Q. Focusing on the investigation into those who had previously been arrested?
A. Yes.

Q. We’re going to look in part 5 at what that term means.
A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. That was the point I was trying to express. The responsibility of the entire investigation, but the people who were involved in this were appropriately trained to the level they needed to be.
A. Yes. So when you say “team”, this was the responsibility of the entire investigation, but the people who were involved in this were appropriately trained to the level they needed to be.

Q. That was the point I was trying to express. The interview strategies for each individual had been prepared by specialist officers?
A. Yes.

Q. Did you establish a strategy in relation to all persons, and we’ll look at most but not all of those in due course, but first of all it might assist if you were to help us with the framework of your responsibilities as counter-terrorism senior investigating officer with reference to the associates of the bomber.
A. Yes.

Q. Did the inquiry identify for you a series of questions relating to associates of Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.

Q. I’m now at paragraph 448. What was your policy decision?
A. The policy decision is recorded as:

“Identify any further offenders who present an immediate threat or have assisted the commission of this attack by any means, to arrest such individuals, and secure evidence where available”.

Q. And a team of specialist officers, is this correct, was established to carry out interviews with such persons?
A. Yes. That’s correct. yes.

Q. At the conclusion of that trial, he was found guilty on 18 all counts and whilst at the time you made your statement he awaited sentence, as we all now know, he was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 55 years?
A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. That brings my questions about part 4 of your statement to a conclusion. I’m going on next to ask you about part 5.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just say this without, I hope,
1. A. Yes.
2. Q. To establish their involvement, if any, in the arena attack?
3. A. Yes.
4. Q. In its commission, preparation or instigation?
5. A. Yes.
6. Q. To explore and identify any evidence of extremist ideology or motivation, sympathy or support for such ideology?
7. A. Yes.
8. Q. And that’s an indication, is it not, of what you told us about yesterday, namely that you identified, really from the outset, that the motivation for this terrible attack was ideological?
9. A. Yes.
10. Q. Other objectives were to establish links and association to other suspects in the investigation?
11. A. Yes.
12. Q. So for any individual, there may be many different references to that individual and how they live their lives or who they are. So for example, there might be criminal records, there might be descriptions, there might be a vehicle used, there might be home premises, there might be premises they are associated to, and all of these different things go into lists.
13. A. As I indicated, some people were designated for arrest, were they not, such as Ismail Abedi?
14. Q. But others were designated a different status, namely TIE.
15. A. It may help if I just give reference to HOLMES, which is the Home Office Large Major Enquiries System that we use. Q. If it would help by all means do. A. TIE.
16. Q. What is TIE, please?
17. A. It’s actually very difficult in an investigation such as this to actually apply criteria because there is no effective elimination criteria. The way of describing elimination criteria in the simplest form is if, for example, at a murder scene you have a fingerprint, say a fingerprint in the victim’s blood, then the presence of that fingerprint would indicate that a person, the person who’s responsible, and obviously this depends on the circumstances, but the person responsible has left that fingerprint in blood, so in a sealed environment.
18. Q. So that’s a simple example?
19. A. That’s a simple example. But there are many forms of elimination criteria. So another example might be an alibi. So if we know that an offence has been committed at a particular time, then if somebody has an alibi for that time on a particular date, so for example they are responsible for designating a particular individual as either a TI or a TIE or a suspect?
20. A. That was my sole responsibility.
21. Q. Did you have criteria that you applied to the making of those decisions?
22. A. In order to categorise them, we therefore declare them as a TIE, which is traditionally it was a trace, interview and eliminate process and of course then it became a trace, interview, eliminate or implicate process.
23. Q. As I indicated, some people were designated for arrest, not suspected of the commission of the offence but have done something or contributed in some way that may mean that they are of interest in relation to that offence. Q. I see.
24. A. Yes. In this investigation, it is described as a trace, interview and evaluate process. That is purely to evaluate their status within the investigation and to understand what part they may have played in the actual story of the offence. Q. Who during this investigation, Operation Manteline, was involved?
25. A. Yes. So it makes the whole system very searchable. In the same way then we categorise people within that system, so the simplest term for anybody who we would wish to speak to in the course of an investigation is a TI, which is a person who we would wish to trace and interview. A TI is effectively, at the most basic level, a witness or a potential witness.
A. It might be helpful. So people may wonder why you have a different category for suspect and suspect under review.

Q. Indeed.

A. Similarly, a TIE under review or a TIE who’s evaluated.

Q. Yes.

A. A TIE under review or a suspect under review will be at the stage where we have investigated probably as far as we can go, but we need to continually review their status in respect of any further information that might come in. In other words, we’ve not finished, and if there’s new information, that’s something that we would want to consider as we move forward in the investigation.

Q. Yes.

A. I don’t know whether that’s helpful.

Q. It is helpful and it makes sense.

A. Yes.

Q. We don’t need to go into the detail of what each status meant, but I’ll simply identify what they are. They are of course applied to Salman Abedi; charged; convicted; suspect; suspect under review; TIE under review; TIE evaluated; is that correct?

Q. Those being associates who were arrested? I’m at paragraph 457.

A. Yes.

Q. Those being associates who were arrested?

A. Yes.

Q. Associates who were not arrested?

A. Yes.

Q. Other individuals who were arrested?

A. Yes.

Q. Who would give them the status?

A. Yes.

Q. Who would give them the status?

A. They would.

Q. Who would give them the status?

A. The process that we worked under was clearly each of the TIE subjects had a team around them who would be responsible for that investigation. They were then responsible for preparing all the material that sat within that investigation and any conclusions that they could draw from that. That would then go to my detective inspector, who headed up investigations. It would then pass to my deputy and then finally it would pass to me and I would make the decision as to where that status sat.

Q. We don’t need to go into the detail of what each status meant, but I’ll simply identify what they are. They are at paragraph 456 of your statement: deceased, which of course applied to Salman Abedi; charged; convicted; suspect; suspect under review; TIE under review; TIE evaluated; is that correct?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. So with all of that in mind, that helpful introduction, let’s move on to the individuals whose positions you felt it necessary to address.

Q. Could I just add one further explanation if I may?

A. Yes.

Q. If.

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Q. As we know from evidence that’s been given on a number of occasions, on 18 January he was involved in the purchase of sulphuric acid, was he not?
A. Yes.
Q. And was he also, as your investigation revealed, in regular contact with Hashem and Salman Abedi prior to their return to Libya on 15 April?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. As a result of those matters, was he arrested at 05.45 hours on Wednesday, 24 May?
A. Yes.
Q. On suspicion of the offence we’ve identified?
A. Yes.
Q. Was he detained between 24 May and 6 June?
A. Yes.
Q. And interviewed during that period on 13 occasions as a suspect?
A. Yes.
Q. During interview, did he produce a prepared statement — —
involving a denial of any wrongdoing or involvement in the arena bombing?
A. Yes.
Q. At that stage I believe he was released, but that was not an end of the investigation into him?
A. No.

Q. As a result, was he interviewed again?
A. Yes.
Q. And on 27 March had been used either by Salman Abedi or perhaps by himself to contact one of the Werfallis?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. As a result, was he interviewed again?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. And again denied any wrongdoing?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. I’m at the bottom of page 124. Because the purchase of the acid and the contact with the Abedi brothers had to be further investigated; is that right?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. There’s considerable detail in your witness statement, but I think that what then happened can be summarised in this way: it was established, following his release in June that his, Alharth Forjani’s, mobile telephone had been used to contact Hashem Abedi on 25 March?
A. Yes.
Q. On suspicion of the offence we’ve identified?
A. Yes.
Q. And interviewed during that period on 13 occasions as a suspect?
A. Yes.
Q. During interview, did he produce a prepared statement — —
involving a denial of any wrongdoing or involvement in the arena bombing?
A. Yes.
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A. No.

Q. Second is Alharth Forjani, who is a cousin of Hashem and Salman Abedi. Their mothers are sisters; is that correct?
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A. Yes.
MR GREANEY: And we do have a transcript of his evidence.

You’re quite right, sir, to identify that fact.

(3). Another cousin of Salman and Hashem Abedi, Abdalla Adel Forjani; is that correct?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Also sometimes known as Isaac; is that right?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Was he arrested at 1.30 on the morning of 24 May, along with his brother Abderahman Forjani?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Were the two of them at that stage in a vehicle?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. And were they arrested for the same offence as the others that we’ve mentioned?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Was he, bearing in mind his relationship with Salman Abedi, which had given rise to his arrest, interviewed while in custody on a total of 11 occasions?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Between 24 and 30 May?

A. Yes.

Q. And after consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service, was a decision made that the evidence in relation to him did not meet the charging criteria for any offence?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. And were they arrested for the same offence as the others that we’ve mentioned?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Was the background to his arrest that Salman Abedi had been in contact with him on 22 May, just hours before the arena attack?

A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. Was he arrested at 1.30 on the morning of 24 May, along with his brother Abderahman Forjani?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Was Zreba held in custody for 13 days and interviewed on 13 occasions?

A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. Which, insofar as it dealt with anything relevant, described witnessing a conversation between his mother and Salman Abedi’s mother and then being informed that the brothers were going to Libya?

A. That’s correct.

Q. By that stage, is it also correct that it had been established by the investigation that the first telephone contact was a call from Salman Abedi, using his 3230 number, to Zreba at 5.11 pm on the day of the attack?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. With that call lasting for 1 minute and 21 seconds?

A. Yes.

Q. By that stage, is it also correct that it had been established by the investigation that the first telephone contact was a call from Salman Abedi, using his 3230 number, to Zreba at 5.11 pm on the day of the attack?

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Q. With that call lasting for 1 minute and 21 seconds?

A. Yes.
1. Was he interviewed as a suspect seven times during the 30th May, did he remain in custody?
2. A. Yes.
3. Q. I see. During the course of the period from the 25th to the police station.
4. A. Not for that purpose, but he had voluntarily attended purpose?
5. Q. Had he voluntarily attended the police station for that purpose?
6. A. Yes.
7. Q. Against that background, was Aimen Elwafi arrested at 2.41 hours on Thursday 25 May?
8. A. Yes.
9. Q. Salman Abedi, I believe he explained, had contacted Mr Elwafi on 17 April and said that he’d left some things at the flat, and if he didn’t return to retrieve them, then Mr Elwafi could have them?
10. A. Yes, that’s right.
11. Q. As Mr de la Poer identified yesterday with the forensic scientist who gave evidence, did he go on to explain that once he moved back to the flat, he had noticed a distinct smell?
12. A. Yes.
13. Q. Namely a strong smell similar, as he put it, to petrol or diesel in the flat?
14. A. Yes, that’s right.
15. Q. Did he insist that he had no knowledge of or involvement in the bombing?
16. A. He did.
17. Q. So he has not been charged, in common with the other four people we’ve mentioned, with any offences against that period?
18. A. Yes, that’s correct.
19. Q. Did he explain to officers that he had sublet his flat to Salman Abedi?
20. A. Yes.
21. Q. And that after returning to the flat, he had discovered items there that caused him concern because, by that stage, the arena attack had occurred?
22. A. Yes, that’s right.
23. Q. Did he insist that he had no knowledge of or involvement in the bombing?
24. A. Yes, correct.
25. Q. And he too provided witness statements to the investigation?
1. That’s correct, yes.
2. Q. And did Mr Zarkun explain that that contact had been in connection with the sending of money to Libya?
3. A. Yes.
4. Q. And that as a result of that contact, did he explain he had given Mr Zreba’s details to Salman Abedi?
5. A. Yes, that’s right.
6. Q. Would it be reasonable to say that all lines of further enquiry were exhausted with no evidence uncovered that met the charging standards?
7. A. Yes, that’s correct.
8. Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence relating to the bombing?
9. A. Yes, that’s right.
10. Q. Next, and I’m now at page 134, where we have an example in the final three paragraphs on that page, I don’t propose to adduce it unless it seems to be of relevance to
11. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
12. MR GREANEY: Next person, Adel Mohamed Abuzeid. Was it established that he had had telephone contact with
13. Salman Abedi on or near to the day of the bombing?
14. A. Yes, that’s right.
15. Q. Did his arrest then occur at 18.50 hours on Friday, 26 May?
16. A. Yes.
17. Q. Did he remain in custody from that date until 8 June?
18. A. Yes, he did.
19. Q. Did he, during those interviews, deny any involvement in or knowledge of the attack?
20. A. Yes.
21. Q. And, moreover, deny any knowledge of Salman or Hashem Abedi?
22. A. Yes.
23. Q. Did he account for the telephone contact between himself and Salman Abedi on 22 May by stating that he had received a telephone call from a man who called himself Ahmed?
24. A. Yes, that’s right.
25. Q. Who you believe to be Salman Abedi?
26. A. Yes.
27. Q. And did Mr Abuzeid explain that the subject matter of the call had been a desire on the part of Abedi to transfer money to Libya?
28. A. Yes.
29. Q. Did he explain that, ultimately, he declined to make
Q. So therefore information that supported his account.
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Forgive me for summarising it to get it
Q. So that you judged it necessary that he should be
A. Yes.

Q. And whether he knew anything about and had been involved
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It just perhaps explains why we have
Q. And therefore ultimately he declined to provide any
A. Yes.

A. No.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, that’s right.
Q. And therefore ultimately he declined to provide any
A. Yes.

Q. And what he then referred Abedi to a man called
Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. A.

Q. And whether he knew anything about and had been involved
A. Yes.

Mr Sicri?  
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who, if anyone, said they had sent
Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

A. Yes.

MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. No.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It just perhaps explains why we have
Q. And therefore ultimately he declined to provide any
A. Yes.

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. That he became suspicious of the caller?
A. Yes.

Q. Next, someone that we’ve heard about already
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Forgive me for summarising it to get it
Q. That he became suspicious of the caller?
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Sir, your analysis, I’m quite sure, is correct.
A. Yes.

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, that’s right.
Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

MR GREANEY: Sir, your analysis, I’m quite sure, is correct.
Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

Q. And had he been involved in the attack of whom actually did that.
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Forgive me for summarising it to get it
Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

A. Yes.

A. Yes.

MR GREANEY: Yes.
A. Yes.

Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

Q. Lines of enquiry were identified, is that correct?
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you.
3. MR GREANEY: Yes, I believe that’s correct, sir.
A. Yes.
I don't know, but Mr Zreba had agreed that he would effect the transfer.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: As I've said, sir, we're expecting evidence to be received by you from him next week.

Next, Mr Yahya Werfalli. Was he arrested because information had been received, as we have heard, regarding the purchase of hydrogen peroxide in the name of Yahya Werfalli?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. As a result, did you judge that it was necessary for him to be arrested?

A. I did.

Q. And did that arrest occur at 2.55 hours on 27 May?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Was he held in custody between that date and 6 June?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. And interviewed as an aspect on a total of nine occasions?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. And interviewed as an aspect on a total of nine occasions?

A. Yes.

Q. During those interviews did he answer questions regarding his dealings with Salman and Hashem Abedi?

A. Yes.

Q. And that in common with others that we’ve looked at, the fraud; is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. That's correct.

Q. I said yesterday that we have a transcript of the account given by Werfalli in interview?

A. Yes.

Q. As a result, did you judge that it was necessary for him to be arrested?

A. Yes.

Q. And denied any involvement in the arena attack?

A. Yes. I think so and I think it was that whole process that caused by the actions of the Abedi brothers, but indeed, it seems you thought they might be buying mobile phones and you had no idea they were plotting mass murder.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It seems quite a long time after the charge. There may well be a very good reason for that, so I'm not asking for anyone to tell me that.

MR GREANEY: I'm sure we can find out, but you're quite right, this is a long time down the line.

Was it your team that dealt with the prosecution or did you leave this to other officers?

A. There was some delay in this. It was referred to the City of Manchester division.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don’t need to explain it. There’s often a good explanation, but it takes time to arrive at it maybe.

A. I think so and I think it was that whole process that took time.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think that was Judge Field’s job, if anybody’s, not mine.

MR GREANEY: At paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 on that page, Judge Field explained in straightforward terms, if I may say so, what form the fraud had taken. We perhaps don’t need to go into that and said:

“Were you quite candid when interviewed by the police, telling them that you had done this, namely the fraud, before and had got away with it, relying on the bank not to raise questions over small transactions on your statement. The bank, however, was suspicious and no refund was ever made.”

Then over the page (INQ039188/3), the second full paragraph down:

“What is clear, however, is that you in March and April 2017 had no idea of what the Abedi brothers were up to, you had no idea what they intended to purchase. Indeed, it seems you thought they might be buying mobile phones and you had no idea they were plotting mass murder.”

The judge goes on to recognise the appalling tragedy caused by the actions of the Abedi brothers, but identifies that he needed to focus upon the culpability of Mr Werfalli.

If we go to (INQ039188/5), the final page, we can see that the judge concluded that the appropriate sentence was a community order of 12 months’ duration with two requirements.

We can take that from the screen. Thank you.

In relation to Yahya Werfalli, the only other issue to mention is one we've touched on already. During his time in custody, images of Manchester Arena were
1. Q. And this is what you told us about earlier today gave rise to a suspicion of hostile reconnaissance?
2. A. Yes, it did initially.
3. Q. But in the result, as a result of investigations, was it established that this was the kind of photograph that the sister tended to take on her mobile phone as she was interested in photography?
4. A. Yes, and the images don’t —— they would not be useful as hostile reconnaissance.

5. Q. And moreover had never been disseminated?
6. A. Yes.

7. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You’re beginning to drop your voice a little?
8. A. Sorry, sir.

9. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, it’s just that we’ll be having calls through.
10. A. Sorry, I said the images would not be useful.

11. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I heard it; its just that it is getting a bit quiet, if you don’t mind. I know it is a long time, so I do understand.
12. A. Yes, that’s correct.

13. MR GREANEY: Just to answer directly the question that the chairman asked yesterday, the offences with which Werfalli had been charged and to which he pleaded guilty were two charges of fraud by false representation.

14. Q. During which period he was interviewed as a suspect on a total of 13 occasions?
15. A. Yes, that’s correct.

16. Q. During the interviews was it established that Mr Taghdi knew the Abedi family because, as he described it, they were all part of the Libyan community in Manchester?
17. A. Yes.

18. Q. And as a result, was a decision made that the evidence involved in terrorist offences?
19. A. Yes, that’s correct.

20. Q. And as a result, was a decision made that the evidence didn’t meet the charging standard?
21. A. Yes.

22. Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence relating to the arena attack?
23. A. Yes.

24. Q. Next, Ahmed Taghdi, who is a witness, sir, again, that we expect to hear from next Tuesday or Wednesday.
25. A. Yes.

26. Q. And detained in custody until Sunday, 11 June?
27. A. Yes.
A. Yes.
Q. And did he say that the two males selling the vehicle were Nathan Grice and James Keighron?
A. Yes.
Q. Who we’ll come on to deal with, but your investigation was to establish that they were wholly without blame?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Did Tāghdi deny any knowledge of the bombing or being involved in any way?
A. Yes.
Q. At that stage was a decision made that the charging standard was not met?
A. Yes.
Q. So that he was not charged with any offence relating to the bombing?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. And indeed was released from custody?
A. Yes.
Q. That being on 11 June.
A. Yes.
Q. Because in his case, following analysis of CCTV evidence, was it discovered that Mr Tāghdi had visited Devell House at 3.16 pm on 23 May?
A. Yes.
Q. And that he’d looked in the car park?
A. Yes.
Q. That being on 11 June.
A. Yes.
Q. As you’ve explained to us, investigations continued even after people had been released from custody?
A. Yes.
Q. And indeed I have no doubt continue to this day. In Mr Tāghdi’s case do we see an example of that occurring?
A. Yes, we do.

Q. Because in his case, following analysis of CCTV evidence, was it discovered that Mr Tāghdi had visited Devell House at 3.16 pm on 23 May?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. And that he’d looked in the car park?
A. Yes.
Q. Had it also been established that Mr Tāghdi had used a mobile phone with a number ending 876 to contact a number of other individuals who were of interest to you?
A. Yes.
Q. Including a man called Elyes Bliđi and Elyes Elmehdi?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. And such contact had occurred at key times?
A. Yes.
Q. And was assessed to have been to hide his involvement in the case?
A. Yes.
Q. And was it further assessed that Mr Tāghdi’s primary phone number had been, as you put it, deliberately left sterile from that contact?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. And what do you mean by that?
A. Well, it hadn’t been used so it could not be effectively recovered in evidence. So in other words, he had used other people’s contacts to do so or other people’s phones. Sorry, does that make sense?
Q. It does make sense, yes. Essentially trying to put distance between himself and that contact?
A. Yes, precisely.
Q. Had you also, in the course of the further investigations following his release from custody, established that Mr Tāghdi had been in WhatsApp contact with a Libyan number associated with the Abedi family?
A. Yes.
Q. And that that contact had occurred between 15 April 2017 and 1 May 2017 when, of course, the Abedi brothers were in Libya?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. Did you establish that the last message from Libya to Mr Tāghdi was an instruction to delete the number, so the Libyan number, and “all old chats”?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Furthermore, was it established that Mr Tāghdi had used his mobile telephone to take a photo of Mohammed Alzoubare’s mobile telephone which was displaying the Abedi Libyan mobile number and that he’d done so on 16 May 2017?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. Which photograph had been deleted from Mr Tāghdi’s phone but had been recovered from his MacBook?
A. Yes.
Q. Armed with all of that information, which was fresh to you following his release from custody, was Mr Tāghdi interviewed again?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. Did that interview take place on Monday, 15 April of last year, 2019?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he, by way of a witness statement, assert that everything he’d said in the interview process was true, essentially denying any knowing involvement in the plot?
A. Yes, he did.
Q. Sir, as I’ve indicated, we expect to receive evidence from him next week.
A. So next, Zuhir Nassrat. Did the investigation reveal that he was linked to IP addresses that had been used to attempt to purchase hydrogen peroxide on 19 and 20 March?
Q. Was it also discovered that he had links to Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you decide therefore that he should be arrested?
A. Yes.
1 Q. Did that occur on 28 May 2017?
2 A. Yes, it did.
3 Q. Was he held in custody until 10 June?
4 A. Yes, that’s correct.
5 Q. And during that period, was he interviewed a total of
6 13 times?
7 A. He was.
8 Q. During those interviews did he deny any involvement
9 in the arena attack?
10 A. He did.
11 Q. And did he give what you describe in your statement as
12 an open account of his relationship with Salman and
13 Hashem Abedi?
14 A. Yes.
15 Q. And acknowledge that he had given Hashem Abedi his debit
16 card details?
17 A. He said that, yes.
18 Q. Did enquiries that were then carried out show that the
19 telephone numbers and email addresses and delivery
20 addresses used in the attempted purchases were connected
21 with Salman and Hashem Abedi rather than with
22 Zuhir Nassrat?
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. On 10 June 2017 was he released from custody?
25 A. Yes, he was.

161

1 Q. With a decision having been made that the evidence didn’t meet the charging standard?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. So that he was not charged with any offence at that
4 stage relating to the arena bombing?
5 A. No.
6 Q. In his case, also, following his release, was further
7 information discovered by the investigation?
8 A. Yes, it was.
9 Q. Was that information that on the afternoon of
10 17 April 2017, a red Vauxhall Corsa had been recovered
11 following a fail to stop following a road traffic
12 accident in Manchester?
13 A. Yes, that was the information.
14 Q. And had Mr Nassrat reported that vehicle stolen about
15 12 hours after the accident?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. Were two mobile telephones recovered from the vehicle?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. One of which was an iPhone belonging to Mr Nassrat?
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. The other belonging to a man called Illyas Abudaber?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. Did the investigations further identify that the
24 recovered phone of Mr Nassrat had been used to search
25 for sulphuric acid?
26 A. That’s correct.
27 Q. So that by this stage, following his release, was he
28 therefore associated with two of the chemicals required
29 to manufacture TATP, namely hydrogen peroxide and now
30 sulphuric acid?
31 A. Yes, that’s correct.
32 Q. To put it in very simple terms, did the timing of that
33 search appear to be significant in relation to the
34 timing of an order for sulphuric acid by a person that
35 we won’t name?
36 A. Yes, that’s correct.
37 Q. Was Mr Nassrat further interviewed as a voluntary
38 attendant, albeit under caution, on Friday, 16 August of
39 last year?
40 A. Yes, he was.
41 Q. Did he answer all questions and reiterate that he was
42 not involved in the bombing in any way?
43 A. He did.
44 Q. In his case, on the basis of the evidence that was
45 available at that stage, was a decision made that the
46 charging standard was not met?
47 A. Yes.
48 Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence
49 relating to the arena attack?
50 A. Yes, that’s correct.

163

1 Q. Sir, as you will recall, he is a witness that the
2 inquiry would have wished to call, but without
3 identifying where he is, he is not within the
4 jurisdiction.
5 A. Thank you.
6 MR GREANEY: Next, Elyes Blidi, a person to whom we’ve made
7 reference already. Did he come to the attention of the
8 inquiry because of the receipt of intelligence
9 indicating that he may have had knowledge of the Micra
10 being parked at Devell House whilst Salman Abedi was out
11 of the country?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. Indeed, had he approached the police on 2 June when the
14 Micra was found parked at Devell House?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. Did you judge therefore that he ought to be arrested?
17 A. Yes, I did.
18 Q. Did that occur at 20.15 hours on Friday, 2 June?
19 A. Yes, that’s right.
20 Q. Was he held in custody until his release on 8 June?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. And interviewed on a total of four occasions during that
23 period?
24 A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Did he give an account in interview in which he stated that it was a friend of his, Elyes Elmehdi, who had given Salman Abedi permission to park the Micra at Devell House?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Did he say he knew Salman Abedi, although only through playing football?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. And maintained that he had no knowledge of the car or of the attack?

A. Yes, that’s true.

Q. In his case, was a decision made also that the evidence didn’t meet the charging standard?

A. Yes.

Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence relating to the arena attack?

A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. There is an issue relating to criminality separate from the arena attack that I need to ask you about.

A. Yes.

Q. So cash in the house and drugs in the vehicle?

A. Yes, in the vehicle and a large amount of cash, I think, was in the flat.

Q. So cash in the house and drugs in the vehicle?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. It’s important to be clear about these things. Was that investigation handled by the appropriate unit of Greater Manchester Police?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Did a prosecution ensue?

A. Yes.

Q. And Mr Blidi, I think, had been charged in connection with that offending but was found not guilty of conspiracy to supply class A and class B drugs.

A. He was, yes.

Q. And Mr Blidi, I think, had been charged in connection with that offending but was found not guilty of conspiracy to supply class A and class B drugs.

A. He was, yes.

MR GREANEY: I’m about to come on to someone else who was charged, sir, which is why I have given that context. The next person, Elyes Elmehdi. Was intelligence received, and in any event had suspicion been generated, that Mr Elmehdi had knowledge of the Micra being parked at Devell House?

A. Yes.

Q. And did that lead to his arrest?

A. Yes, it did.

Q. At 21.31 hours on Saturday, 3 June?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Was he held in custody until 8 June?

A. Yes.

Q. And interviewed on five occasions during that period?

A. Yes.

Q. During the course of those interviews did he deny any involvement in the arena bombing?

A. Yes.

Q. And I think I’ve understood this from your statement, but you’ll confirm whether I’ve got this right or wrong. Did he say that he had allowed Salman Abedi to park the Micra at Devell House as a favour?

A. Yes, he did, and effectively that was on behalf of the previous (overspeaking) —

Q. Mr Blidi?

A. So he gave permission on behalf of Blidi, yes.

Q. And interviewed on five occasions during that period?

A. Yes.

Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence relating to the arena bombing?

A. Yes.

Q. During the course of those interviews did he deny any involvement in the arena bombing?

A. Yes.

Q. And he maintained that he had no knowledge of the car or of the attack?

A. Yes.

Q. In his case, also, following his release, did further information come to light?

A. Yes, it did.

Q. And did that lead to his arrest?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. In his case, also, following his release, did further information come to light?

A. Yes, it has.

Q. Was that information that Elmehdi had had a lengthy telephone conversation with Salman Abedi on 15 May?

A. Yes, that’s correct.
1. Q. So only 3 days before Abedi’s return to the United Kingdom?
2. A. Yes.
3. Q. And just a week before the arena attack?
4. A. Yes.
5. Q. And furthermore, by that stage, had the CCTV material been examined and revealed that Elmehdi had approached the Micra and appeared to look in the passenger window on 21 May?
6. A. That’s correct, yes.
7. Q. Which conflicted with the account that he gave when first interviewed?
8. A. Yes, that’s right.
9. Q. As a result, was a decision made that he should be further interviewed?
10. A. Yes.
11. Q. However, in the result, before that interview could happen, and indeed prior to a trial we’re going to come on to, did Elyes Elmehdi leave the country?
12. A. Yes, he did.
13. Q. Is it the position that he has, so far as you know, not returned?
14. A. He has not returned.
15. Q. But you continue to want to pose questions to him about that call, just 7 days before the attack?
16. A. Yes, that’s correct.
17. Q. And about what he was doing in relation to the Micra the day before the attack?
18. A. Yes.
19. Q. As a result, was he indeed arrested on 6 June 2017?
20. A. Yes.
21. Q. Held in custody until 8 June?
22. A. Yes.
23. Q. And interviewed during that period on three occasions?
24. A. Yes, that’s correct.
25. Q. Did he acknowledge that 44 Lindum Street was his home address?
26. A. Yes.
27. Q. Did he deny any involvement in or knowledge of the arena attack?
28. A. Yes, he did.
29. Q. Did he state that he had allowed Salman and Hashem Abedi to stay at 44 Lindum Street because they had told him that family were visiting so that they needed somewhere to stay?
30. A. Yes, that’s correct.
31. Q. And he, Mr Hamad, been out of the country at the time?
32. A. Yes.
33. Q. And his friend, Mr Ahmed Dughman, had been the keyholder while he was away?
34. A. Yes, that’s right.
35. Q. Did enquiries that were then carried out by your investigation tend to support the account given by Mr Hamad?
A. Yes.
Q. So that a decision was made that the evidence in his case didn’t reach the charging standard?
A. Yes.
Q. And so he has not been charged with any offence relating to the bombing?
A. No.
Q. Next, the next two individuals that you identify we’ll deal with very quickly. Nathan Grice and James Keighron. The investigation revealed that they had been involved in selling the Micra?
A. Yes.
Q. The Micra, of course, was of a high degree of importance because it had been used to store the TATP whilst Salman Abedi was out of the country.
A. Yes.
Q. As a result, did you conclude that it was necessary to arrest Nathan Grice and James Keighron?
A. Yes.
Q. Was Nathan Grice arrested on 6 June and released on 8 June, having been interviewed four times?
A. Yes.
Q. And was James Keighron arrested on 8 June and released on 9 June, having been interviewed during that period on two occasions?
A. That’s correct, yes.
Q. In short, was the view formed that they were simply two men who had sold a car?
A. They were.
Q. As a result, did you conclude that it was necessary to arrest Nathan Grice and James Keighron?
A. Yes.
Q. Was Nathan Grice arrested on 6 June and released on 8 June, having been interviewed four times?
A. Yes.
Q. And was James Keighron arrested on 8 June and released on 9 June, having been interviewed during that period on two occasions?
Q. That’s correct, yes.
MR GREANEY: Sir, we’re moving next to the second sub-category, associates who were not arrested.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We’ll break. Is he under the age of 18?
MR GREANEY: Relative C, and I’ll check, is one of those, if we identified Relative C, would lead to the identification of one of the section 46 witnesses.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Thank you. Is a quarter of an hour long enough or would you like longer?
MR GREANEY: A quarter of an hour is fine, sir.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: 3.20. Thank you very much.
(A short break)
(3.20 pm)
MR GREANEY: We are turning next to associates who were not, for one reason or another, arrested. First of all, Mohammed Younis Eisa Soliman. Is he a suspect within of the investigation of the arena attack.
A. Yes, he is.
Q. Is that because of the enquiries that have been carried out into the purchase of precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of TATP?
A. Yes.
Q. And information received that he had ordered sulphuric acid and that he was an associate of Hashem Abedi?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. In view of this, did it become important in your judgement for your investigation to speak to him?
A. Yes.
Q. Has that proved possible?
A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. Because he is not in the jurisdiction.
Q. I’ll ask you a little bit more about that in a moment. So he isn’t in the jurisdiction at the moment. If he were to be in the jurisdiction, would he be interviewed?
A. He would be interviewed, yes.
Q. As a suspect?
A. Yes.
Q. Just to look a little more at the evidence that relates to him, did the investigation reveal that on Thursday, 23 February, a telephone that you attribute to Mr Soliman was used to search for sulphuric acid?

A. Yes.

Q. And that a purchase was then made on 15 March of sulphuric acid and delivered to Mr Soliman at his home address on 21 March?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Furthermore, was it established that he had been in contact with both Hashem and Salman Abedi over that period?

A. Yes.

Q. And indeed, over an earlier period?

A. Yes.

Q. So from billing data for the period from 29 January 2017 to 7 April 2017, were there a total of 339 outgoing communications from Mr Soliman to numbers used and attributed to Salman and Hashem Abedi?

A. Yes.

Q. And looking at it from the other direction, between 22 January of that year and 28 March, were there a total of 122 incoming communications ——

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. —— to Soliman from numbers used and attributed to Salman and Hashem Abedi?

A. Yes.

Mr Soliman?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. In other words, 461 contacts over a period of not much more than 3 months?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. I’m at the top of page 153 of your statement, (vii).

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. How would you describe the position in relation to Mr Soliman?

A. I have said in my statement the evidence that has been collected with regards to Mohammed Soliman would point to him being complicit in and having knowledge of the Manchester Arena bombing. He’s the only purchaser of material linked to the device yet to be spoken to by the investigation team and, as I say, he therefore remains a suspect.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to say something about this. It is to be hoped that Mr Soliman will at some stage be available for interview by you?

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You will then be looking to see whether he has an explanation for the matters which you’ve just set out?

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which is what you did with all the other suspects?

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In the event no one else within the same position as him was charged, but that was dependent on what explanation could be given and the view which was taken of it. If he is interviewed and were it to be decided that there was evidence to charge him, of course it is essential that he has a fair trial. Therefore I am quite concerned, or I am concerned, that any reporting should not make the eventual fair trial of him impossible if it were to take place.

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I hope that’s a reasonable stance to take. I am well aware that often there’s adverse publicity and that a trial takes place despite that on the basis that a jury can deal with it. But the true position is that he is in the same position as a number of others who, because of the explanations they were able to give, were not actually charged.

MR GREANEY: Sir, I won’t express a view about that last remark, but you are certainly right to invite the press to exercise caution. Mr Gardham is here today in the adjacent courtroom. I’m certain that he will have heard and will report responsibly. Equally, I know that there will be explored with Mr Barraclough tomorrow, on behalf of the bereaved families, the position in relation to a number of other individuals and the same type of issue is likely to arise in relation to them.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And I’m sure that will be borne in mind by everyone who is doing it. I’m probably wrong to say he’s in the same position, Mr Soliman. Each one has their own position and they are each independent and different. I don’t want anything to happen here which may prejudice a fair trial in the future or lead to a trial being stayed on that basis.

MR GREANEY: Sir, with those remarks we are entirely sympathetic and we are sure that they are correct and equally sure the press will exercise restraint, both in relation to their reporting, if there is any, about Mr Soliman and their reporting about others in respect of whom Mr Barraclough ——

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have no doubt they will and can I invite counsel as well to have similar restraint because if there were a possibility of these people facing trial, I’m sure the last thing anybody would want to happen was for that trial not to be able to take place because of prejudice arising out of this inquiry.

MR GREANEY: I know Mr Weatherby is taking the lead in relation to this issue on behalf of the bereaved families. I know that he will be watching these proceedings, he will have heard what you have to say,
but equally I know that he will want to press
1 in relation to some of these people and, we consider,
2 will be entitled to do so and we know, sir, that you are
3 unlikely to disagree with that.
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.
5 MR GREANEY: At all events, we’ll see what happens tomorrow.
6 Mr Soliman, you have expressed your firm view about
7 him.
8 A. Sorry, Mr Greaney, there was a final sentence to that
9 paragraph, which actually accords to this. It does say:
10 "Until such time he is interviewed, his status in
11 this investigation cannot be evaluated."
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, I’m sorry to have cut you off,
13 Mr Barraclough. It would have been sensible if I’d
14 waited somewhat.
15 MR GREANEY: The point is we shouldn’t think that you have
16 formed a final view about Mr Soliman and his role?
17 A. That’s absolutely correct, Mr Greaney.
18 Q. And you would welcome the opportunity to seek from him
19 his explanation in relation to these matters?
20 A. Indeed.
21 Q. And perhaps in relation to others.
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Horwell, not only are the families
23 here to investigate, but you are here too, also on
24 behalf of GMP, who clearly have an interest in what is
25 said in this inquiry, and I’m sure you’ll pay close
1 attention to what has been said as well.
3 MR HORWELL: I have indeed sir, of course, thank you.
4 MR GREANEY: So he isn’t in the UK so you can’t seek the
5 explanation from him as matters stand. It may be that
6 I’ll ask you a little bit more about this tomorrow, but
7 is it the position that he left the United Kingdom in
8 April 2017?
9 A. Yes, that’s correct.
10 Q. I am not going to ask you if he know where he is and if
11 you do, where he is, but let’s just assume for the
12 moment that you did know where he is and had a means of
13 communicating with him. In your view, and you touched
14 on this earlier, would it be appropriate for you to seek
15 explanations from him in the location he is, namely not
16 in the UK?
17 A. No, it would not.
18 Q. Why is that?
19 A. Again, this is for — — particularly in relation to an
20 individual who’s suspected of an offence, it’s very
21 important that any evidence through the process of an
22 interview is captured in an evidential format and to do
23 that it needs to comply with — — well, effectively it
24 needs to comply with the Police and Criminal Evidence
25 Act here. Overseas, with him being overseas, it would
1 have to comply with the relevant legislation within that
country. I’m not entirely sure that would work in this
case.
2 Q. That’s all I want to ask you about Mr Soliman, although
3 I dare say you’ll be asked more about him tomorrow.
4 Next, page 154. Mr Ahmed Alzilitni. Did he first
5 become a person of interest and then a suspect
6 in relation to the attack as a result of intelligence
7 received and on being identified as a male who had
8 approached on several occasions the Nissan Micra whilst
9 parked at Devell House?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Was he interviewed as a voluntary attender, albeit under
12 caution, on Thursday, 8 August of last year?
13 A. Yes.
14 Q. Did he give an explanation that I’ll turn to in a moment
15 about the Micra and did he also describe his knowledge
16 of Salman Abedi and the changes he had noticed in him
17 over the 12 months prior to the bombing?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. At that time in August of 2019, when you interviewed
20 Mr Alzilitni, had he been charged with and was he due to
21 stand trial for drugs offences?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. Was he alleged to be part of the Devell House conspiracy
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Q. What did you learn about Salman Abedi’s vehicle in the intervening period?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he tell you that the vehicle was a silver car?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he say that a few days after the bombing, Elyas Elmehdi had told him that:
"The guy’s car was downstairs."
A. Yes.
Q. But when questioned, Mr Alzilitni denied knowing what was stored in the Micra?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Is it the position that, as matters then stood, it was concluded that the evidence didn’t satisfy the charging standard?
A. Yes.
Q. So that he has not been charged with any offence relating to the bombing?
A. No.
Q. However, was he convicted of the conspiracy to supply class A and class B drugs?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. Which we know Mr Elyas Elmehdi was also convicted of?
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. Next, Mr Muhammed Benjama. Did he first come to the notice of your investigation because he was an alibi witness for Ismail Abedi?
A. Yes.
Q. What decision did you make in relation to him?
A. I decided that his status should be that of a TIE, so trace, interview and evaluate. If I may explain, that was part of the process of checking that alibi and making sure that that was a truthful account.
Q. So in the result, was he interviewed as a voluntary attender on 5 February of last year?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. Did he provide an account of his relationship with the Abedi family?
A. Yes.
Q. And did he confirm what you knew, namely that he had spoken to Salman Abedi in the period before the arena attack?
A. Yes.
Q. And did he confirm what you knew, namely that he had spoken to Salman Abedi in the period before the arena attack?
A. Yes.

Q. Next, someone who’s going to take a little longer to deal with: Mr Mohammed Alzoubare. Was he arrested for unrelated matters on 25 May 2017?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he say to officers that Salman Abedi had contacted him a week prior to the attack and that they knew each other?
A. Yes.
Q. Did it become known through research that was carried out that Mr Alzoubare was an associate of the Abedi family?
A. Yes.
Q. And that he and Salman Abedi had planned to visit Abdalraouf Abdallah in prison on 6 March 2017?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
Q. Was he moreover shown on CCTV at Devell House in the days after the bombing?
A. Yes.
Q. Did telecommunications data also confirm the contact between Mr Alzoubare and Salman Abedi prior to the bombing on 15 May 2017?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. As a result of receiving all of that information, what decision did you make about Mr Alzoubare?
A. I sanctioned an approach to Alzoubare to obtain an account from him so that his role, if any, around events in the attack could be assessed.
Q. As a result, was he interviewed as a witness on 13 May of last year?
A. Yes, he was.
Q. Did he provide an account of his relationship with the Abedi family?
A. Yes.
Q. And did he confirm what you knew, namely that he had spoken to Salman Abedi in the period before the arena attack?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he state that Salman Abedi had contacted him from Libya about a week before the attack?
A. Yes.
Q. And indeed we know it was exactly a week before the attack. But he said that he couldn’t recall the exact date?
A. No.
Q. But he had known it was Salman Abedi and knew that it was a Libyan number calling him due to the code that came up on his phone?
A. Yes.
Q. And as we know, on that date, 15 May, Salman Abedi was...
1. still in Libya, it was 3 days prior to his travel?
2. A. Yes.
3. Q. In the account that he gave, did Mr Alzoubare state as follows:
4. "The call I received was from a Libyan number.
5. I recognised it due to the code. I can confirm it was
6. Salman Abedi who contacted me. The call was out of the
7. blue as I had not really heard much from him. The call
8. was quite general in nature. I was aware that Salman
9. was in Libya. When I received the call I was surprised
10. as I have the number stored and I thought it was maybe
11. family calling. As I said, previously looking back, the
12. call could have been his farewell call. Although
13. I stress that nothing in the conversation was or gave
14. concern of what happened. I was shocked when I heard
15. and read it was Salman who was responsible for the
16. attack as I thought he was still in Libya. I didn’t
17. realise he had come back to the UK."
18. Did he also account for his presence at Devell House
19. in the period after the attack?
20. A. Yes.
21. Q. Is there anything more to be said about Mr Alzoubare at
22. this stage?
23. A. No, there is not.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There is an obvious loose end that

1. I will ask about, but if for any reason it shouldn’t be
2. done now or is sensitive, then please do tell me. He
3. planned, apparently, to visit Abdallah with Salman Abedi
4. on 6 March, but that visit never took place?
5. A. I think that was the visit that was cancelled, yes.
6. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just wondered whether Mr Alzoubare was
7. asked about this and whether he said what the purpose of
8. the visit was, which is what I wish to ask. Is that
9. a problem?
10. MR GREANEY: That isn’t a problem, but may I suggest the
11. best way of dealing with that is when Mr Barracough
12. returns tomorrow morning, as undoubtedly he will, he can
13. have checked that, we can have checked it on our side,
14. and he can give the answer at that stage if you’re happy
15. with that, sir.
16. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I’m absolutely happy with that, yes.
17. MR GREANEY: The plan is to go on until about 4.15 or 4.30
18. today if that suits you.
19. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A normal day.
20. MR GREANEY: A normal day.
21. SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A normal court day.
22. MR GREANEY: Not quite, because we started at 9.30. Apart
23. from that, yes.
24. Next Mr Illyas Abudaber. Why did he become of
25. interest to Operation Manteline?
A. Yes.

Q. But without success?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. But there was no evidence of any further contact between the pair?

A. No.

Q. Was the information that had been received that the vital photograph had been on his telephone?

A. Yes.

Q. But Mr Al Ghiryani denied that was so?

A. He did deny that was so, yes.

Q. The phone in his possession, was that examined?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. And no image of importance was detected upon it; is that the position?

A. No, that’s the position.

Q. In addition, he denied any knowledge of the Manchester Arena bombing and who had carried out until someone had told him?

A. That’s correct, yes.

Q. In short, therefore, no evidence has been obtained by the investigation to suggest that Mr Al Ghiryani had any involvement in or knowledge of the attack?

A. No.

Q. And on the basis that you’ve dealt with a number of times, has therefore been charged with no offence?

A. No.

Q. Next, Mr Anas Abuhdaima. Why did he become of interest to the investigation through telecommunications data?

A. Yes.

Q. Did data from his phone reveal that he was in contact with Salman Abedi on 21 May 2017?

A. Yes.

Q. Had Abedi initiated that contact on that day?

A. Yes.

Q. Making 12 attempted calls to Mr Chilby between 9.17 in the morning and 8.52 in the evening?

A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. In the result, of those 12 calls, was only one a successful contact?

A. Yes.

Q. And that, a call lasting for 56 seconds?

A. Yes.

Q. During that period had Mr Chilby sent one text message to Salman Abedi and received two messages from him?

A. Yes.

Q. Was Mr Chilby treated as a TIE or suspect?

A. As a TIE.

Q. Was he spoken to by your officers?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Did he outline his dealings with the Abedi family and Salman in particular?

A. Yes.

Q. Stating that he knew the family through the father, Ramadan?

A. Yes.

Q. And that he, Mr Chilby, was well known in the community?

A. Yes.

Q. That he had seen or would see Hashem and Salman Abedi at the mosque, but as they were younger than him, he didn’t have any particular reason to interact with them?

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. So far as the telephone contact on 21 May was concerned, did he say that he didn’t recall the number that had contacted and attempted to contact him and did not recall speaking to Salman Abedi?

A. That is correct, yes.

Q. Did he add that through his links within the community he had become aware that Salman Abedi had arranged to send money back to Libya through Rabie Zreba?

A. Yes.

Q. And his personal suspicion therefore was that the reason Salman Abedi had attempted to contact him on the 21st was in order to seek to move money?

A. Yes, that’s right, and that would accord with the business that Mr Chilby was in.

Q. So in short, was he another of those in respect of whom
Q. And Trial Witness 4 provided a witness statement?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. He, I think, again was at all stages treated as a witness, not as a suspect?
A. Yes.

Q. He was, as you said, a close associate of Hashem Abedi.
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. And furthermore, had avoided further contact with Hashem Abedi?
A. Yes.

Q. At all stages, was Trial Witness 1 therefore treated as a witness, not as a suspect?
A. Absolutely, yes.

Q. Next, a witness that we will be calling Trial Witness 4.
A. Yes.

Q. Did he deal with the fact that he had had contact with Hashem Abedi in Germany?
A. Yes.

Q. He, I think, again was at all stages treated as a witness?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. And Trial Witness 4 provided a witness statement?
A. Yes, that’s right, to Salman Abedi.
Q. Would the investigation like to speak to Mr Benhammedi?
A. Yes, I think we would speak to Mr Benhammedi again if he were in the UK.
Q. You might have answered this question already in what you just said, but why have you not yet spoken to Mr Benhammedi?
A. I think the process around this is in relation to the benefit that you would actually get from an individual witness. In order to engage in obtaining a statement I think that would involve a legal process to actually travel to Germany and obtain that statement and to add value to the prosecution that has already occurred. It wouldn’t necessarily do that.
Q. Is the point you’re making that bearing in mind the cost and effort that would have had to have gone into speaking to Mr Benhammedi before the trial, it was not thought proportionate to go to Germany?
A. Yes, and I think also we have to make an assessment from proportionate?
Q. Is the point you’re making that bearing in mind the cost wouldn’t necessarily do that.
A. Yes, that’s right, to Salman Abedi.
Q. And it wouldn’t seem important to name that person.
A. That’s correct.
Q. No need to name them.
A. Yes.
Q. So again, we won’t name that person.
A. Correct.
Q. So again, we won’t name that person.
A. Person 37. An anonymous letter was received by the Metropolitan Police in July 2018 about this person, who resides outside of the United Kingdom. Again, enquiries were undertaken to locate this person and they were traced and, frankly, it came to nothing at all; do you agree?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Witness 38, we will deal with. This is Ebrahim Sadigh.
A. I can assure you we haven’t spoken to him before, sorry.
Q. The reality was that you had an abundance of evidence that Hashem Abedi had been involved in the acquisition and attempted acquisition of precursor materials, his fingerprints and DNA were all over relevant items?
A. That’s correct.
Q. And I would have thought most people, if not all people, could understand why sending officers to Germany to speak to Mr Benhammedi, given the contribution that he was capable of making was not thought to be proportionate?
A. Sorry, sir, that’s my fault.
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A. Sorry, sir, that’s my fault.
A. Yes, that’s correct.

Q. What status did he have, a suspect or a TIE individual?
A. He was a TIE.

Q. Are you able to tell us how that resulted?
A. He provided a statement, so he was spoken to, gave an account, and made the decision that he should provide a statement as to what had happened.

Q. We can check this if necessary if you don’t have an immediate recollection, but did he provide an explanation of the role, if any, that he had played?
A. Well, he got to a stage on, I think, beyond Friday, 2 June --- I’d have to check the dates --- where he no longer engaged with us and wouldn’t cooperate.

Q. ‘We’ll look in case it is relevant to see what he did say when he gave his statement, but the position is that several further attempts after 2 June were made to speak to him to obtain an account as to his knowledge of the situation around Zuhir Nassrat, who actually said that he visited him in prison with Salman Abedi on that date to see Abdallah, he has told SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So apart from telling you he went with Salman Abedi on that date to see Abdallah, he has told you nothing about what was talked about?’

A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. Next is Majdi Alamari. I believe that he came to the attention of the investigation for two reasons; is that correct?
A. Yes.

Q. What appeared to be so that an electronic transaction could be conducted in order to purchase that welding equipment from China?
A. Yes.

Q. First of all, his involvement in purchasing welding accessories from China in circumstances in which financial enquiries showed that the funds for the purchases came from the bank accounts of Salman Abedi and Relative C?
A. Yes.

Q. Which appeared to be so that an electronic transaction could be conducted in order to purchase that welding equipment from China?
A. Yes.

Q. What was thought to be the significance of that purchase?
A. Of the welding equipment?

Q. Yes.
A. We don’t know. So this is equipment that may have gone back to Libya, but it does not appear to have any significance to our investigation.

Q. But was something that was occurring during the currency of the plot because it occurred in February 2017?
A. Yes, that’s right.

Q. So the first reason that this person became of interest to you may or may not be significant, you think probably...
1. Q. Is it known that he, Abdal Raouf Ali, has visited his brother-in-law in prison on several occasions?
2. A. Yes, that’s right.
3. Q. Has he been treated as a suspect?
4. A. No.
5. Q. Has he been treated as a trace, interview, evaluate individual?
6. A. My understanding is he’s just provided a witness statement, but I can check that.
7. Q. And in any event, his significance really is his connection and visits to Abdallah?
8. A. It is. He may have technically been declared a TIE, but the purpose was to get that statement.
9. Q. Khawla Abdallah, someone to whom I have just made reference, individual 43, is the wife of Abdal Raouf Ali and the daughter of a person called Nagah Abdallah?
10. A. Yes.
11. Q. Did officers approach her seeking information — —
12. A. Yes.
13. Q. And as we’ve agreed, the sister of Abdalraouf Abdallah?
14. A. Yes.
15. Q. Did officers approach her seeking information — —
16. A. Yes.
17. Q. — — as a witness? With what outcome? First of all, what information did they seek and then what outcome?
18. A. Officers approached her as a witness as a telephone number attributed to Abdal Raouf Ali was registered to her. Officers attempted to obtain a witness statement from her on 14 June — — that’s 2019 — — but she would not engage with the police any further and no witness statement was obtained.
19. Q. And that number is one that we may need to look at again later in the oral evidence hearings. So the number that was registered to her in which your officers were interested was an 8305 number?
20. A. Yes, that’s right.
21. Q. Next, 44, Nagah Abdallah, another name that will feature later in the oral evidence hearings. He is the father of Abdalraouf Abdallah and Khawla Abdallah?
22. A. Yes.
23. Q. And the father-in-law of Abdal Raouf Ali?
24. A. Yes.
25. Q. What approach was decided in relation to him?
26. A. Again, the approach was in order to get his cooperation as a potential witness. That was to establish his link to the Abedi family and the purpose of any contact he had between him and Salman Abedi.
27. Q. As a result, did officers attend what was understood to be his home address on Wednesday, 11 September 2019?
28. A. Yes, that’s correct.
29. Q. Did they speak to his wife?
30. A. Yes.
Q. And what did she tell them?
A. That he had returned to Libya and she didn't know when he would be back.
Q. 45, and we're nearly at the end of this sub-category, we'll try to finish it, Mansoor al-Anezi. Is he a deceased male?
A. Yes, he is.
Q. Did he become a TIE individual within Operation Manteline because of contact between him and Salman and Hashem Abedi in the months prior to his death?
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. And the fact that Salman Abedi attended hospital to see him in the days prior to his death?
A. Yes.
Q. And attended his funeral in Manchester with Hashem Abedi on Tuesday, 17 January 2017?
A. Yes, that's what he said, yes.
Q. Was there established to be telecommunications data showing telephone contact between Salman Abedi, Hashem Abedi and Mr Al-Anezi?
A. Yes.
Q. Between October 2016 and January 2017?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. And what did she tell them?
A. He's a male who came into the investigation because he had been a religious figure in the south—west?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. And had been the last person to have contact with a person who attempted to become a suicide bomber in the south—west?
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. Did your investigations wish to understand what type of connection there was between Mr Al-Anezi and the Abedi brothers?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. Were they able to do so?
A. No. Whatever connection there was, clearly Mr Al-Anezi is dead and Salman Abedi is dead as well, but there was clearly a connection of significance.
Q. Next, 46, Ismail Ibrahim Kamoka. Mr Kamoka, who open source material demonstrates to be both a Libyan diplomat, is that right, or to work at the embassy at any rate?
A. Yes.
Q. And who is believed to have or is reported to have had links to the LIFG; is that correct?
A. I'm not entirely sure because, sorry, I'm reading from 173.
Q. You're at 173. We can, I'm sure, confirm those
details in due course. Can you tell us why Ismail Kamoka came to the attention of your investigation?
A. This was in relation to a boarding pass that was recovered at 21 Elsmore Road during our search of those premises. On the boarding pass there was a mobile number actually written on the pass. It's the mobile number that is attributed to Mr Kamoka.
Q. I believe the position is that your investigators approached Mr Kamoka?
A. Yes.
Q. And the upshot was that he could not account for why a mobile telephone number attributed to him should be on a boarding pass at 21 Elsmore Road, or I think perhaps within a shed there, but he added he was well—known within the Libyan community?
A. Yes, that's what he said, yes.
Q. And his position, right?
A. Yes, that's correct.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The boarding pass, do we know the date of it, do we know whose it was?
A. We do have those details. I do know it doesn't really add any value to our investigation.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.
A. But we've certainly got as much detail as we could get from it.
MR GREANEY: Sir, for your note, and I'm not going to adduce what is a lot of detail, it's paragraphs 529 and following, page 199, of the statement.
Mr Kamoka is someone that we will be considering further when we reach chapter 13, at least to some extent.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
MR GREANEY: 47, Abdulrahman Gheith. Why did he come to the attention of the investigation?
A. He's a male who came into the investigation because a letter was found in a cell search of Abdalraouf Abdallah's cell, where he has actually named three individuals as friends. So this particular letter was postmarked on 3 January from an unnamed sister.
Q. So this is a letter from a sister, it would appear to be, of Abdalraouf Abdallah?
A. Yes.
Q. To him, naming three particular individuals as friends.
A. That's right.
Q. Abdulrahman Gheith was another?
A. Yes.
Q. And the third was Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.
Q. Had all three of those persons visited Abdalraouf Abdallah in prison?
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. As a result, did your investigation wish to obtain from Mr Gheith an explanation of what this was all about?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. With what result?
A. He would not provide a statement and would not engage with the police.
Q. Finally under this heading, Aoub Oun, individual 48. What were the circumstances in which he came to the attention of the investigation?
A. He came to the attention of the investigation on Wednesday, 24 May 2017, when a Manchester University student card in his name was recovered from Ismail Abedi’s home address. Our enquiries revealed that he had been a student at the university.
Q. So he had attended, I think, Manchester College between 2012 and 2014?
A. Yes.
Q. At the same time as Ismail, Hashem and Salman Abedi?
A. Yes.
Q. So he had an association with the subjects of your investigation?
A. Yes.
Q. The item pertaining to him had been recovered from Ismail Abedi’s home address and indeed had items relating to him also been recovered from Mr Blidi’s flat at Devell House?
A. Yes. That’s not actually in this statement, I don’t think.
Q. I think it is.
A. I’m so sorry, yes.
Q. There’s no need to apologise. We’re very near finishing now:
   “As a result of his associations with subjects of Operation Manteline and items pertaining to him recovered from Ismail Abedi’s home address as well as [and then Mr Blidi’s home at Devell House is given], this man [Mr Oun] was made the subject of trace and investigate action”: is that right?
A. Yes, “trace and interview” that should read.
Q. Trace and interview.
A. But you’re quite right and I do apologise, yes.
Q. With what result?
A. So attempts were made to contact him between 8 and 27 August 2019, and again to no avail. I think the reason to do so became less important because of this explanation of his association with Ahmed Alzilitni and also the commission of other criminality which I’m sure you’re going to come on to.
Q. I was going to come on to that very thing just finally for today, because was he one of those who was charged, along with Mr Alzilitni and Mr Elmehdi and indeed Mr Blidi with conspiracy to supply class A and B drugs?
A. Yes, that’s right.
Q. So the Devell House conspiracy. Was he convicted?
A. He was convicted, yes.
Q. So what this part of your statement explains to us is that there were five individuals who were charged with that conspiracy?
A. Yes.
Q. Mr Oun, Mr Alzilitni and Mr Elmehdi, who were convicted?
A. Yes.
Q. Mr Blidi, who was acquitted, as we know, and another individual that we don’t need to name, who was also acquitted?
A. Yes, that’s correct.
MR GREANEY: Mr Barraclough, that concludes your analysis of the associates of Salman Abedi and Hashem Abedi who were not arrested.
SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It’s quite an effort, I know, for both of you, so thank you very much. Getting through this at this rate requires considerable consideration and there are a large number of people you have had to deal with.
MR GREANEY: Could we now break until 9:30 tomorrow morning?
INDEX

MR PAUL RYDER (sworn) ................................1
Questions from MR DE LA POER .................1
DCS SIMON BARRACLOUGH (continued) ..........15
Questions from MR GREANEY (continued) ........15

221

222