

# OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 46

December 9, 2020

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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Wednesday, 9 December 2020

1 (9.30 am)

(Delay in proceedings)

2 (9.36 am)

DCS SIMON BARRACLOUGH (continued)

Questions from MR GREANEY (continued)

MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm sorry about the short delay in starting. There were some discussions that needed to take place before we began.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

MR GREANEY: Mr Barraclough, we're going to resume part 5 of your witness statement and we're now moving to the third sub-category of individuals with whom you were concerned, that is to say other individuals who were arrested. We can deal with this part of your evidence swiftly.

First of all, this is individual 49, page 175 of your witness statement. Did you identify an individual that I will not name who attempted to leave the area of the arena and the cordon in place in his vehicle?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. Moreover, had he originally been seen running towards the arena with a rucksack on his back, returning to his vehicle and leaving?

A. That's correct, yes.

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Q. As will be obvious, those were a concerning set of circumstances, but did it turn out that he had a perfectly legitimate reason for having behaved as he did?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. Because he had worked as part of the staff for the Ariana Grande concert?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. So as a result, we don't need to name him.

The same applies, at least in terms of naming, to individual 50. Did your team arrest a person who lived in the vicinity of 74 Somerton Court?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. In the result, was it identified that there was nothing concerning about that person?

A. Again, that's correct.

Q. Or to link them to the bombing?

A. No.

Q. Individual 51, so the third individual in this third sub-category. Was a relative of Mohammed Soliman also arrested?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. Did that turn out in the result to be, to put it simply, a case of mistaken identity?

A. It was, yes.

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Q. Again, we don't need to name that person.

That addresses the third sub-category of persons.

The fourth you describe as other witnesses and I'm now at page 176 of your witness statement.

A. Yes.

Q. Obviously, as it turned out and at trial, there were many, many prosecution witnesses, were there not?

A. There were, yes.

Q. In this part of your witness statement you have most certainly not named all of them, have you?

A. No.

Q. Why have you chosen to identify the particular witnesses in this section that you have? Is it because they are connected in some way with the context that we've been discussing?

A. Yes, that's right. The statement is produced in an attempt to be helpful around those individuals in that if there are any questions relating to how they fitted into the investigation, then (overspeaking).

Q. What you have not done is list every witness; we would be here for weeks if you had done so. You have listed witnesses who in some way have a connection with the issues we were addressing yesterday?

A. That's correct, yes.

Q. Let's deal with these witnesses in turn; there are not

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very many of them.

Individual 52 is a person to whom reference was made yesterday, namely Ahmed Dughman; is that correct?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. The connection in which we heard of him yesterday was that he is a friend of Ahmed Hamad?

A. Yes.

Q. Ahmed Hamad is the resident of 44 Lindum Street, which was a drop address?

A. That's correct, yes.

Q. Hamad was in Libya at the time that we are particularly concerned with?

A. Yes.

Q. Mr Dughman was the keyholder of that address?

A. Yes.

Q. The address that the brothers used, as I have said, as an address for delivery.

Is it the position that Mr Dughman was at no stage considered a suspect?

A. No, that's correct.

Q. He was approached as a witness?

A. Yes.

Q. And he provided witness statements to the investigation, outlining his dealings with Salman and Hashem Abedi in relation to the renting of 44 Lindum Street?

4

1 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 2 Q. Individual 53, again, is a person that I don't believe  
 3 we need to name. Was that person someone who worked in  
 4 a financial institution?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. In the days after the arena attack, did he mention to  
 7 his line manager that he had lived with the Abedi family  
 8 for a period of time?  
 9 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 10 Q. As a result, did your officers speak to him as  
 11 a witness?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Did he provide a number of statements in which he  
 14 outlined his relationship with the Abedi family?  
 15 A. Yes, he did.  
 16 Q. Then finally an individual -- thank you, Mr de la Poer.  
 17 Individual 54, who is Trial Witness 3. We'll need  
 18 to take care not to identify that person, even by jigsaw  
 19 identification.  
 20 We can deal with this briefly. Was Trial Witness 3  
 21 interviewed as a witness by your team on a number of  
 22 occasions?  
 23 A. He was.  
 24 Q. Did that person indicate that they did not wish to  
 25 provide a formal statement?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. At least initially?  
 3 A. Initially, yes.  
 4 Q. But did they provide to the investigation information  
 5 about Salman and Hashem Abedi?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And their knowledge of the Abedi family and the purchase  
 8 of sulphuric acid made by someone known to Trial  
 9 Witness 3?  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. That deals with -- I ought to say, did Trial Witness 3  
 12 in the end provide a witness statement?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. And was called at the trial?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. That concludes the fourth sub-category of persons that  
 17 you dealt with in your witness statement. I'm going to  
 18 return briefly to two individuals that you have  
 19 mentioned already just to ensure that certain details  
 20 are clarified.  
 21 First, you mentioned yesterday a man called  
 22 Ahmed Benhammedi, and as we will all remember perhaps,  
 23 he was a person who was resident in Germany and worked  
 24 in investment and property.  
 25 A. Yes, that's correct.

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1 Q. It's page 163, sir, of the witness statement.  
 2 There was an issue about his relationship with  
 3 a person called Abdul Rahman Benhammedi, who had been  
 4 charged with but acquitted of terrorism offences?  
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 6 Q. The significance of Abdul Rahman Benhammedi was, as  
 7 you will know, Mr Barraclough, that the 3458 number of  
 8 Salman Abedi, that's a number that we will certainly  
 9 become most familiar with during chapter 13, had been in  
 10 contact with Abdul Rahman Benhammedi, had it not?  
 11 A. Again, I would have to check that because that, I don't  
 12 believe, forms part of the statement, does it?  
 13 Q. It doesn't form part of the statement, but you'll maybe  
 14 take that relevant context from me. If I've got it  
 15 wrong, please do tell me about that tomorrow, but I'm  
 16 pretty sure I'm right about that.  
 17 So I think we can say now by reference to this part  
 18 of your statement -- I'm at paragraph 458 -- that Abdul  
 19 Rahman Benhammedi was found not guilty of the offences  
 20 of possession of an article for the purpose of terrorism  
 21 and possession of a record of information useful to  
 22 terrorism on 12 March 2015 at Woolwich Crown Court; is  
 23 that correct?  
 24 A. That's correct, yes.  
 25 Q. Is he related to the Ahmed Benhammedi who was resident

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1 in Germany?  
 2 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 3 Q. What is their relationship?  
 4 A. They're brothers. There was a point of slight confusion  
 5 yesterday and it's probably worth just pointing out that  
 6 Ahmed Benhammedi also goes by the name of Abdullah  
 7 Benhammedi.  
 8 Q. At the risk of causing further confusion, we've got two  
 9 Benhammedis?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. We've got Ahmed who is the man in Germany and we have  
 12 Abdul Rahman Benhammedi, who is the man who was  
 13 acquitted of terrorism offences, as I have said to you?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. And you will check. My belief is that the 3458 number  
 16 was in contact with him. Those two men, Ahmed, who has  
 17 another name, and Abdul Rahman Benhammedi are brothers.  
 18 Did the investigation receive information that  
 19 Salman Abedi and Abdul Rahman Benhammedi were good  
 20 friends?  
 21 A. Yes, that's right.  
 22 Q. As a result, did you wish your officers to speak to  
 23 Abdul Rahman Benhammedi?  
 24 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 25 Q. Was he approached on 19 December of last year, when he

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1 returned to the United Kingdom from Turkey?  
 2 A. Yes, he was.  
 3 Q. Did he indicate that he was not prepared to provide  
 4 a witness statement?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. And was the judgement that there was not a sufficient  
 7 basis to arrest him for any offences in relation to  
 8 Operation Manteline?  
 9 A. There was not.  
 10 Q. I'm going to jump ahead in your statement just to finish  
 11 off the position in relation to particular individuals  
 12 before we move into social media and telecommunications.  
 13 I'm going to move to page 188 and paragraph 495 of your  
 14 statement, please where you consider at length, do you  
 15 not, a man to whom much reference has been made in your  
 16 evidence and more generally in the case, namely  
 17 Abdalraouf Abdallah?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. When you return to give your evidence in chapter 13,  
 20 we'll go through the detail of all of this. It is not  
 21 necessary to do so at this stage because he is  
 22 principally relevant, I'm certain you'll agree,  
 23 in relation to the radicalisation in particular of  
 24 Salman Abedi?  
 25 A. I agree.

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1 Q. But what we will do at this stage is just to identify  
 2 what offences he was convicted of and which resulted in  
 3 his imprisonment until recently. We discover that from  
 4 paragraph 506, page 192 of your statement.  
 5 On 11 May 2016, was he found guilty of two  
 6 Terrorism Act offences?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Count 1, so it's a reference to what was on the  
 9 indictment that he was tried upon:  
 10 "Preparation of terrorist acts contrary to  
 11 section 5.1 of the Terrorism Act 2006"; is that correct?  
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 13 Q. "It being alleged that on or before 31 July 2014, with  
 14 the intention of assisting others in committing acts of  
 15 terrorism, he had engaged in conduct in preparation for  
 16 giving effect to his intention"; is that right?  
 17 A. Yes, that's right.  
 18 Q. Count 2 being concerned in a funding arrangement  
 19 contrary to section 17 of the Terrorism Act 2000?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Having been convicted of those offences, was he  
 22 sentenced to a nine—and—a-half year extended sentence?  
 23 A. Yes, he was.  
 24 Q. Comprising a custodial term of 5.5 years and an  
 25 extension period of 4 years?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 2 Q. And as we are going to hear in due course, he initially  
 3 served that sentence at HMP Belmarsh before transfer to  
 4 HMP Altcourse on 6 December 2016?  
 5 A. Yes, that's right.  
 6 Q. Would you go back to page 180 of your statement, please,  
 7 paragraph 466 and following.  
 8 The question that was posed for your consideration  
 9 and answer, if possible —  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Tell me the paragraph again, I'm really  
 11 sorry.  
 12 MR GREANEY: I'm now at paragraph 467, page 180.  
 13 You had been asked to consider by the inquiry the  
 14 position of a large number of individuals and over the  
 15 course of more than 100 pages of your statement you had  
 16 done so; is that correct?  
 17 A. Yes, that's right.  
 18 Q. At the end of all of that, the question that was posed  
 19 for you, to put it very simply, was whether the  
 20 investigation had concluded that any other person than  
 21 Hashem Abedi had assisted and/or encouraged  
 22 Salman Abedi?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. I don't want you at this stage to name any particular  
 25 individuals who may remain suspects, but what was your

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1 response to the posing of that question, please?  
 2 A. It may be helpful if I just read these sentences.  
 3 Q. Yes, apart from the very final seven lines, which I will  
 4 summarise for you.  
 5 A. Yes:  
 6 "The investigation of a large criminal conspiracy in  
 7 respect of the Manchester Arena attack gave rise to  
 8 reasonable suspicion falling on a number of individuals  
 9 as highlighted throughout my statement. I believe that  
 10 where this was the case, and where it was possible,  
 11 appropriate action was taken by way of arrest or  
 12 interview under caution. Operation Manteline is an  
 13 enormous investigation which has spanned 3 years, using  
 14 substantial investigative resources. The police are  
 15 required to investigate without fear or favour, which is  
 16 why ultimate value is always placed on evidence rather  
 17 than mere suspicion. In conducting what the public  
 18 rightly expect on an open-minded and ethical  
 19 investigation, it is inappropriate for the police to  
 20 reach conclusions based on anything other than  
 21 evidence."  
 22 Q. And you paused at precisely the right point. The  
 23 position is that that is the approach that has been  
 24 adopted and the answer that you give to that question,  
 25 but it would be right to point out that there do remain

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1 suspects; is that correct?  
 2 A. That's correct, yes.  
 3 Q. I'm next going to turn -- and sir, I am now at  
 4 page 181 -- to paragraph 471 of the statement.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you also made clear that there  
 6 are suspects and you will continue investigating them?  
 7 A. Yes, that's correct, sir.  
 8 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, sir.  
 9 We'll turn next, Mr Barraclough, to social media and  
 10 network activity, as you describe it. I'm at  
 11 paragraph 471 at page 181 of your statement.  
 12 At this point in your statement, do you describe the  
 13 work that was undertaken to identify the social media  
 14 and network activity of Salman and Hashem Abedi, their  
 15 family and associates?  
 16 A. Yes, that's right.  
 17 Q. In summary, was a very substantial amount of work  
 18 conducted in relation to those issues?  
 19 A. Yes, it was.  
 20 Q. But in the result, would it be reasonable to say that  
 21 relatively little has been recovered certainly  
 22 in relation to either brother?  
 23 A. That's correct, yes.  
 24 Q. What I don't want to do is to go into the detail of the  
 25 work that was undertaken, although I should say it's

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1 quite clear that it was extensive. We'll just deal with  
 2 the results.  
 3 I'm now at paragraph 477. In relation to  
 4 Salman Abedi, is it the position that only a historical  
 5 Facebook account was discovered relating to him?  
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 7 Q. Did that have just one post relevant to the  
 8 investigation dating back to 18 March 2013?  
 9 A. Yes, that's right.  
 10 Q. Was there no evidence of extremism or criminal activity  
 11 on that account?  
 12 A. No, there was not.  
 13 Q. He had just two friends, namely his mother, Samia, and  
 14 his brother, Hashem?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. Did you acquire the private messaging that had been  
 17 engaged in on that account?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. But again was that historical and just family-related  
 20 material of no relevance to or, frankly, interest to the  
 21 investigation?  
 22 A. Yes, that's right.  
 23 Q. Indeed, was the last log-in to that account  
 24 23 November 2014?  
 25 A. Yes, it was.

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1 Q. Which may, depending on the evidence we receive in  
 2 chapter 13, have been before he became radicalised?  
 3 A. Yes, possibly.  
 4 Q. Was another Facebook account, believed to be  
 5 attributable to Salman Abedi, discovered following the  
 6 examination of digital devices?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. But was that account found to have been deleted when  
 9 checks were completed by your investigators?  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. So nothing is known about that account; is that correct?  
 12 A. No, it's impossible.  
 13 Q. So there really is, so far as the investigation  
 14 revealed, a distinct lack of social media material  
 15 relating to Salman Abedi?  
 16 A. Yes, that's right.  
 17 Q. In relation to Hashem Abedi, the position, I believe,  
 18 was a little different; would that be fair?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Did he have a Facebook account?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. And indeed, was some of the material on that account  
 23 referred to within the case summary for his prosecution?  
 24 A. It was, yes.  
 25 Q. Did that account, Hashem's account, have high privacy

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1 settings, publicly visible data was very limited?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. I'm just going to identify with you some of the content  
 4 that was discovered on his Facebook account. What I'm  
 5 not going to do is to put a lot of images on the screen  
 6 because that would risk simply glorifying his conduct,  
 7 but we'll just identify in narrative form some examples.  
 8 On the Facebook page was there an image of a man  
 9 called Reyaad Khan, who hails from Cardiff?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. Is he within counter-terrorism circles a well-known  
 12 individual who travelled from the United Kingdom to join  
 13 Islamic State?  
 14 A. Yes, he is.  
 15 Q. Did he become well-known because he often appeared via  
 16 the internet inciting other people to leave the  
 17 United Kingdom to fight for Islamic State?  
 18 A. Yes, he did.  
 19 Q. Did you discover a conversation that appeared to show  
 20 that Hashem Abedi knew Reyaad Khan?  
 21 A. Yes, that's correct. I'm sorry, he knew Reyaad Khan by  
 22 the name of Sultan.  
 23 Q. As most will know, Reyaad Khan is now dead?  
 24 A. Yes -- I'm not sure if it was established that he knew  
 25 Reyaad Khan.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, just knew of him --  
 2 A. (Overspeaking).  
 3 MR GREANEY: I probably overstated it. Thank you very much  
 4 for putting me right.  
 5 Also on the Facebook account, were there images of  
 6 Hashem Abedi, at various stages in his life, holding  
 7 firearms?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. Not listed in your statement, but apparent from one of  
 10 the appendices to your statement, there were also images  
 11 of Abdul Waheed Hafidah, the member of the  
 12 Rusholme Crips who was murdered?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Was there an image showing a convoy of pick-up trucks  
 15 carrying armed militants, raising Islamic State flags?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. Was there a post quoting "Only happening in Libya"  
 18 posted on 21 February 2014?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Featuring a group of Islamic State militants around  
 21 a table?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. One of whom uses a sword to chop the right hand from  
 24 a blindfolded male?  
 25 A. Yes, that's right.

17

1 Q. With further comments referring to this as a punishment?  
 2 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 3 Q. With a comment from Hashem Abedi appearing to agree with  
 4 the action taking place in that image?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. Was there also an image depicting a passenger plane  
 7 heading for a building, clearly meant to be one of the  
 8 Twin Towers?  
 9 A. Yes, there was.  
 10 Q. Along with the words "For Allah"?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Had that image been posted by a person you were able to  
 13 identify as Zuhir Nassrat?  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 15 Q. And had Hashem Abedi liked that image?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. You also, I believe -- I'm now at paragraph 483 --  
 18 identified an active Facebook account for Samia Abedi.  
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 20 Q. The mother of Hashem and Salman. Had that account made  
 21 only a very small number of posts?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. About Islamic religious matters?  
 24 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 25 Q. Were there likes for various different armed groups on

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1 opposing sides of the Libyan conflict?  
 2 A. Yes, that's true.  
 3 Q. But including the organisation that we heard of  
 4 yesterday, the February 17th Martyrs Brigade of Libya?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. Was there a like for Libya Shield Force?  
 7 A. Yes, that's right.  
 8 Q. Which is reported to have links to Al Qaeda?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. Did you also identify social media accounts relating to  
 11 Ramadan Abedi?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Which contained many posts relating to current affairs,  
 14 both in Libya and the Middle East?  
 15 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 16 Q. Did messaging suggest that he had access to a firearm in  
 17 Libya?  
 18 A. Yes, it did.  
 19 Q. Did the investigation reveal that Ismail Abedi, the  
 20 brother of Salman and Hashem -- paragraph 487, sir --  
 21 had a Facebook account?  
 22 A. Yes, it did.  
 23 Q. After the attack, was that assessed by the  
 24 investigation?  
 25 A. The Facebook account was viewed and assessed in

19

1 July 2015.  
 2 Q. So this would be --  
 3 A. So this was in relation to a port stop that was  
 4 conducted.  
 5 Q. This is the port stop when he returns to the country  
 6 following his honeymoon, I think?  
 7 A. Yes, that's right.  
 8 Q. I see, thank you very much.  
 9 The Facebook account that was assessed at that  
 10 stage, as you rightly point out, nearly 2 years prior to  
 11 the attack, did it contain numerous images and videos of  
 12 males in camouflage clothing with military weapons?  
 13 A. Yes, it did.  
 14 Q. Does Ismail Abedi himself appear in numerous images  
 15 holding a firearm?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. Holding an RPG launcher?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Holding what appears to be an artillery piece?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Sitting on an anti-aircraft gun?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. Holding a machine gun?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. And in camouflage clothing holding a machine gun and

20

1 with what appears to be an Islamic State logo in flames  
 2 behind him?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. There is, is there not, a very well-known incident which  
 5 involved a Jordanian pilot whose plane had gone down  
 6 being captured by Islamic State militants?  
 7 A. That's correct.  
 8 Q. To put it in very simple, although shocking terms, that  
 9 pilot was burned alive?  
 10 A. Yes, he was.  
 11 Q. On Ismail Abedi's Facebook account, had he posted an  
 12 image of that Jordanian pilot just prior to him being  
 13 set on fire?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. With Ismail posting the caption "Looking for seasoned  
 16 firewood?" with the image?  
 17 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 18 Q. Were there on his Facebook page a large number of images  
 19 relating to conflict and war?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Including images of dead bodies, a decapitated body, and  
 22 another image of a person being burned?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. Yesterday I referred to a man called Anas al-Libi. He,  
 25 as we will recall, was the Al Qaeda operative who was

21

1 captured and died before he could be tried?  
 2 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 3 Q. On the Facebook page of Ismail Abedi, is there an image  
 4 of Ismail Abedi sitting beside the son of Anas al-Libi?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. With the son, I think, you'll correct me if I'm wrong,  
 7 holding a pistol?  
 8 A. You're right, yes.  
 9 Q. Is there also an image of Ismail Abedi holding a rifle  
 10 with the February 17th Martyrs Brigade flags behind him?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Which I think is similar to the image that you described  
 13 yesterday, which is believed to be an image of  
 14 Salman Abedi with the same flags behind him that was  
 15 obtained during Operation Traverso?  
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 17 Q. Still dealing with Ismail Abedi's Facebook account, is  
 18 there an image of Salman Abedi dressed in camouflage  
 19 clothing?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Does an image show him, by which I think you mean  
 22 Salman Abedi, with his left index finger held aloft  
 23 pointing to the sky?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Which when used outside a mosque is generally regarded

22

1 as being a sign of adherence to Islamic State; would  
 2 that be fair?  
 3 A. It has come to mean that, yes.  
 4 Q. Is Hashem Abedi also shown in images on Ismail's  
 5 Facebook account?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And in one image, shown to be holding what you describe  
 8 as a MANPAD?  
 9 A. Yes, that's right.  
 10 Q. What is a MANPAD?  
 11 A. It's a handheld air defence system. It's effectively  
 12 the same as something that might be described as  
 13 a Stinger. It's used by the military to shoot down  
 14 aircraft.  
 15 Q. And that, I think, is an image which has been circulated  
 16 widely within the media in the periods since the attack?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. Finally in relation to social media, obviously one of  
 19 the roles, as I said yesterday, I think, of the inquiry  
 20 is to dispel false rumours. As you observe in your  
 21 statement, there have been, have there not, rumours of  
 22 social media postings which foretold of a terrorist  
 23 attack in Manchester?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Did your investigation consider those rumours?

23

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. Is it the position that at no stage has evidence of  
 3 a social media post or electronic signal having been  
 4 published which foretold of such an attack been  
 5 identified?  
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 7 Q. More generally, but connectedly, is it the position that  
 8 no information was received by the police via social  
 9 media or otherwise that there was a specific threat  
 10 posed to Manchester?  
 11 A. That's correct, yes.  
 12 Q. I think there was an issue which is vaguely connected  
 13 with this that you wanted to raise relating to British  
 14 Transport Police, sir?  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, I was going to at that at some  
 16 stage. This relates to hostile reconnaissance and you  
 17 told us yesterday that if GMP got to know about an  
 18 incident of hostile reconnaissance which might relate to  
 19 terrorism, that would inevitably find its way to CT  
 20 police.  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would the same apply if a report of  
 23 hostile reconnaissance in a possibly terrorist context  
 24 had been made to BTP?  
 25 A. Yes, it would, sir.

24

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So they would report that to you as  
2 well?  
3 A. Yes, it would come through our systems to  
4 Counter—terrorism Policing north—west.  
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
6 MR GREANEY: The penultimate issue that I want to ask you  
7 about before Mr de la Poer deals with part 7 of your  
8 witness statement, because you'll recall that we are not  
9 going to deal with part 6, that's going to be addressed  
10 probably by others, possibly by you in chapter 12, is  
11 electronic devices. This, therefore, takes us to  
12 page 205 and paragraph 548 and following of your  
13 statement.  
14 In some cases, telecommunications evidence and  
15 evidence deriving from electronic devices will be of  
16 a very high degree of significance, will it not?  
17 A. Yes, it will.  
18 Q. Indeed, in some cases it will be the principal portion  
19 of a prosecution case?  
20 A. It can be, yes.  
21 Q. But would it be reasonable to say that in  
22 Operation Manteline and the subsequent prosecution of  
23 Hashem Abedi, the telecommunications evidence was not of  
24 the greatest significance, or am I overstating it?  
25 A. I think that's probably an overstatement. I think it

25

1 was of considerable significance. It was of  
2 significance within the actual prosecution, but it was  
3 of huge significance in relation to the overall  
4 investigation.  
5 Q. That is fair, I probably have overstated it. Probably  
6 what I meant to suggest was that there was no confession  
7 in a message, there was no acknowledgement --  
8 A. I see, no.  
9 Q. -- there was no what's sometimes described as a smoking  
10 gun.  
11 A. Yes.  
12 Q. There was material from which inferences could be drawn?  
13 A. Yes. Effectively the information that we used would be  
14 described very much as passive data, so in other words,  
15 things like contacts, times of contacts, the fact that  
16 somebody has been in contact with another person rather  
17 than the content of the actual conversation itself.  
18 Q. That is a very good way of putting it. So what we had  
19 was a situation in which you could see contact between  
20 particular individuals?  
21 A. Yes.  
22 Q. For example, when you knew a plan was being made to  
23 acquire a precursor material?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. That would obviously be important?

26

1 A. Yes.  
2 Q. You had communications that tended to support your case  
3 that the Micra had been acquired by way of example?  
4 A. Yes.  
5 Q. You had communications relating to taxis being ordered  
6 and that sort of thing?  
7 A. Yes.  
8 Q. So there were communications that really related to the  
9 mechanics of the plot that was underway?  
10 A. Yes.  
11 Q. So that was one side of it. On the other side of it,  
12 from the telecommunications data and the electronic  
13 devices, you also obtained a considerable volume of what  
14 might be described as mindset material?  
15 A. Actually, I probably wouldn't necessarily agree with  
16 that. I think in the context of counter—terrorism  
17 policing, within this investigation, and with all  
18 respect to the long list that you've gone through, and  
19 the material is horrific, in this investigation there  
20 was actually a lot less mindset material than we'd have  
21 certainly expected. That may, of course, be because  
22 we've not recovered the right devices or because those  
23 devices have effectively been wiped so there's no  
24 information on them.  
25 Q. I understand. The point you're making is that you and

27

1 I, and certainly the chairman, have seen cases where  
2 there's a huge volume of mindset material?  
3 A. Yes, and that's the issue here. So quite often, even in  
4 very straightforward counter—terrorism investigations,  
5 there is a massive volume of this, and that hasn't been  
6 found in this case.  
7 Q. Would it be fair to say that whilst the vast volume  
8 that is sometimes seen of mindset material has not been  
9 recovered, for which there may be a number of reasons  
10 that you've given, where you did recover mindset  
11 material, it all pointed in one direction?  
12 A. Yes. It's certainly fair to make an assumption around  
13 that mindset -- well, a view anyway.  
14 Q. The mindset material was all indicative of, or at any  
15 rate consistent with, to put it very neutrally, a  
16 sympathy with the aims and objectives of Islamic State?  
17 A. I think that's entirely fair, yes.  
18 Q. I'm going to try to move through the telecommunications  
19 evidence as swiftly as we can because this is not a jury  
20 trial and this material will all be available for the  
21 chairman, but it's important that the public knows what  
22 you did have and what you didn't have.  
23 Let's deal first of all with Salman Abedi. We know  
24 from what you told us yesterday and perhaps the day  
25 before that a telephone was found near to the body of

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1 Salman Abedi within the City Room.  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Was that the Alcatel mobile telephone to which you've  
 4 referred?  
 5 A. Yes, it was.  
 6 Q. We know from what you told us yesterday that having  
 7 obtained the IMEI number you were able to establish what  
 8 SIM cards had been used within that phone?  
 9 A. That's correct, yes.  
 10 Q. There were three numbers, I believe, that had been used  
 11 within it?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Sir, this is paragraph 552: the 3230 number that we know  
 14 about, an 0850 number, and a 9263 number; is that  
 15 correct?  
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 17 Q. The 3230 number related to a card that had been  
 18 purchased, as we know, from WH Smith's shortly after  
 19 Salman Abedi's return to the United Kingdom on 18 May?  
 20 A. Yes, that's right.  
 21 Q. Let's just establish a little more about that 3230  
 22 number that was acquired on 18 May. Were you able to  
 23 establish that the SIM card, so drawing this distinction  
 24 between handset and SIM card, that the 3230 SIM card had  
 25 been used in two separate handsets?

29

1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 Q. The Alcatel handset that had been brought back into the  
 3 country from Libya?  
 4 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 5 Q. And a Samsung handset, the origin of which I'm going to  
 6 establish with you in a moment?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Did you establish with which numbers the 3230 number had  
 9 been in contact?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. And those, I think, are the numbers that you explained  
 12 to us yesterday, which included the numbers of four  
 13 individuals who were contacted on 21 or 22 May in  
 14 connection with the transfer of money back to Libya?  
 15 A. That's right, yes.  
 16 Q. If we needed it, there is, is there not, a full  
 17 assessment report available -- we don't need this on  
 18 screen, Mr Lopez -- at {INQ033945/1}, prepared by an  
 19 analyst, Karen Williams?  
 20 A. Yes, it's an extremely comprehensive SoE.  
 21 Q. That will be available to the chairman and indeed to any  
 22 core participant who wants it, but you have summarised  
 23 already those with whom that number was in contact: car  
 24 dealers, letting agents and so on?  
 25 A. Yes.

30

1 Q. We know that you did recover the Alcatel handset that  
 2 returned to the United Kingdom with Salman Abedi.  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. But is it the position that that handset had sustained  
 5 very extensive damage as a result of the detonation of  
 6 the bomb?  
 7 A. Yes, that's true.  
 8 Q. And was in a number of pieces?  
 9 A. Yes, it was.  
 10 Q. And indeed we saw, I'm not sure if you were in court,  
 11 some of those pieces when Mr Gallagher, the bomb scene  
 12 manager, gave evidence the day before yesterday.  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. As we saw at that stage, was one of the pieces  
 15 a microchip from the telephone that stores call records,  
 16 SMS messages and contacts?  
 17 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 18 Q. Was that microchip the subject of, again, a full  
 19 assessment report, this time by a different analyst,  
 20 Laura Larkin, {INQ034525/1}?  
 21 A. Yes, that's right.  
 22 Q. The download of that Alcatel telephone, did it highlight  
 23 significant contact with a number of, as you describe  
 24 them, key nominals?  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Did it reveal, the download, that there were a number of  
 2 SMS messages that had been deleted?  
 3 A. Yes, that's true.  
 4 Q. Were you able to retrieve at least some of those deleted  
 5 messages?  
 6 A. Only one, which effectively is ... it would almost appear  
 7 to be a shopping list.  
 8 Q. I hadn't quite understood that. One message was  
 9 retrieved?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. And as you put it in the statement, it contained a list  
 12 of items, relevant purchases made by Abedi, including  
 13 tin, wire and nuts?  
 14 A. Yes, that's true, and I'm not sure the whole message was  
 15 recovered, so it was a fragment of that message.  
 16 Q. So it was effectively a shopping list for someone  
 17 constructing an IED?  
 18 A. Yes, I think so, yes.  
 19 Q. Was it apparent from the work that was done to retrieve  
 20 that message whether it had been sent to Salman Abedi or  
 21 from Salman Abedi?  
 22 A. No, I don't think so. I think this was... The work  
 23 that was done around this microchip was highly  
 24 specialised and with reference to -- and I know it's  
 25 been mentioned before about jigsaws, this was literally

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1 a tiny, tiny piece of the entire jigsaw.  
 2 Q. That deals with the Alcatel handset. I mentioned the  
 3 second-hand set, the Samsung handset. Were you able to  
 4 establish how Salman Abedi came about that handset?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. What were the circumstances?  
 7 A. It was purchased between 13.15 hours and 13.22 hours on  
 8 18 May, so this, I think, forms part of the sequence of  
 9 events that will be dealt with tomorrow.  
 10 Q. That Mr Hazelwood is going to deal with tomorrow, quite  
 11 right. And was it acquired by Salman Abedi?  
 12 A. Yes, it was.  
 13 Q. I believe you explained to us yesterday that the Alcatel  
 14 handset was a very simple handset that did not have  
 15 internet connectivity?  
 16 A. That's true, yes.  
 17 Q. Was the Samsung handset a similar handset or different?  
 18 A. No, it was an enabled smartphone, so it would do  
 19 everything that any smartphone would do.  
 20 Q. Did your work and investigation reveal that that handset  
 21 was connected to the internet on a regular basis?  
 22 A. Yes, it was.  
 23 Q. Was the last time that it can be demonstrated  
 24 Salman Abedi used that phone at 17.35 hours on 22 May?  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Because that is a time at which the call records for the  
 2 3230 number indicate that that handset was in the device  
 3 and used?  
 4 A. Yes, that's right.  
 5 Q. Did Operation Manteline recover the Samsung handset?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Were the circumstances that a member of the public had  
 8 found it?  
 9 A. Yes, that's right.  
 10 Q. When had that member of the public found it?  
 11 A. 4 o'clock on 4 June. This member of the public found  
 12 the telephone quite near to Granby House and then  
 13 subsequently provided that telephone to us as part of  
 14 the investigation.  
 15 Q. The member of the public, I don't believe we need to  
 16 name him, explained to your officers that he had found  
 17 the phone off Wyre Street close to the Macdonald hotel?  
 18 A. Yes, that's right.  
 19 Q. And that when he had found it, it was in three separate  
 20 parts?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. The front, back and battery, and that he had put it back  
 23 together again?  
 24 A. Yes, that's right.  
 25 Q. Was it the member of the public who contacted the police

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1 to explain that he'd found this?  
 2 A. I'm not sure. I would have to check that, if it's  
 3 relevant.  
 4 Q. It probably isn't relevant, or not highly relevant,  
 5 because the point is that the handset, having been found  
 6 on 4 June, came into the possession of the police the  
 7 following day?  
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it likely that it remained in the  
 10 place where it was found between 22 May and 4 June or  
 11 was it an area the police had already looked at?  
 12 A. I think it's likely.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That it had been there all the time?  
 14 A. Yes. Clearly we are reliant on the account of the  
 15 individual who found it.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just wondered if you'd actually  
 17 happened to have looked in that area beforehand and  
 18 therefore could say it wasn't there on 23 May or  
 19 anything like that.  
 20 A. I'm not sure specifically whether we looked in that  
 21 area, but it would make sense that we did.  
 22 MR GREANEY: You did tell me yesterday, and I'm afraid I've  
 23 forgotten, but far away from the Timberland bag and the  
 24 passport and all of rest of it this was found by the  
 25 member of the public.

35

1 A. This is all within a very short walk of Devell House.  
 2 Q. The area where the member of the public found it, if it  
 3 was just on the pavement, for example, beside a busy  
 4 road, that might suggest it hadn't been there for long.  
 5 If it had been on waste ground, it might have been there  
 6 all the time. Can you help us?  
 7 A. It's waste ground. We're not talking about on the  
 8 pavement. And then again, in relation to, although it's  
 9 not far from Devell House, even with the best searching  
 10 regime in the world it would take a considerable time to  
 11 work out from Devell House.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It wasn't meant as a criticism in any  
 13 way.  
 14 A. And I don't know whether that happened or not.  
 15 MR GREANEY: I'm certain there will be somewhere within your  
 16 investigation a map which shows these various locations  
 17 and perhaps you could check there is one and let us have  
 18 it in due course.  
 19 A. Of course.  
 20 Q. It would be just helpful to understand the geography.  
 21 In any event, this phone from wasteland, which had  
 22 probably been there since 22 May, was it the subject of  
 23 a thorough examination by members of your team?  
 24 A. Yes, it was.  
 25 Q. Did DC Murphy, who carried out that work, establish that

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1 there was no evidence of any usage prior to 22 May?  
 2 A. That's correct, yes.  
 3 Q. But that it was entirely possible that the telephone had  
 4 been the subject of what is known as a factory reset?  
 5 A. Yes, that's right.  
 6 Q. Which of course would remove all existing user data?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. As a senior investigating officer, bearing in mind that  
 9 we do know from the 3230 call data that the Samsung had  
 10 been used to access the internet, does it seem highly  
 11 likely, if not a certainty, that the phone had been  
 12 factory reset before being dumped?  
 13 A. I would say certain, yes.  
 14 Q. It's the obvious explanation, is it not?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. But at all events you were not able to discover what  
 17 Salman Abedi had been up to with that phone between the  
 18 18th when he acquired it and the 22nd when he dumped it?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just so I understand that, it is likely  
 21 that between the time -- did he acquire it new or?  
 22 MR GREANEY: He acquired it new, I think.  
 23 A. Yes, he did, sir.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you're saying between the time he  
 25 acquired it and the time he dumped it --

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1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- presumably at a time fairly close to  
 3 when he went off to set off the bomb?  
 4 MR GREANEY: It must have been after 17.35 hours on 22 May  
 5 because we know it was used at that time.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So he then reset it?  
 7 MR GREANEY: He reset it, so the data was deleted, no doubt  
 8 intentionally, and dumped it.  
 9 A. Almost certainly. As an item of evidence, it would have  
 10 inevitably been something that could be used to  
 11 incriminate other people.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I do understand that. I was just making  
 13 sure I hadn't misunderstood in any way.  
 14 MR GREANEY: That's the point, isn't it, that it could very  
 15 easily, without expressing any concluded view, have  
 16 contained communications with Hashem Abedi, his brother  
 17 and co-conspirator?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. You also deal in your statement at page 209,  
 20 paragraph 565, with an SD card. I'm probably expressing  
 21 it too simply, but this is a memory card?  
 22 A. That's right.  
 23 Q. I'm not giving any of these exhibit references. That  
 24 will be obvious to everyone. Was that SD card a card  
 25 that you could establish had been used in the Samsung

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1 handset?  
 2 A. Yes, that's right, it came with the Samsung handset.  
 3 Q. So it actually came with it?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. Was that examined by a member of your team within the  
 6 Digital Investigations Unit?  
 7 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 8 Q. But as a result of damage, was that person unable to  
 9 extract any data from it?  
 10 A. Yes, that's right.  
 11 Q. Was it possible to establish how that damage had  
 12 occurred, whether it had been done deliberately or  
 13 accidentally or happened through wear and tear?  
 14 A. I've always assumed that that was deliberate, but I will  
 15 check.  
 16 Q. Well, again, that would seem a sensible explanation?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. That having deleted the data from his handset, he would  
 19 damage the SD card. Natalie Shields, the member of the  
 20 Digital Investigations Unit who carried out that work,  
 21 having not been able to extract data from the card, did  
 22 she take further steps to see whether anyone more expert  
 23 in the area could obtain data?  
 24 A. Yes, when we have particularly damaged items like this,  
 25 we refer to the most professional people we can get, and

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1 in this case this was a senior lecturer in forensics and  
 2 security at the University of South Wales.  
 3 Q. But he confirmed that, notwithstanding his greater level  
 4 of expertise, he too was unable to obtain any data from  
 5 the card?  
 6 A. Yes, that's right. And effectively, he's an extremely  
 7 experienced advanced data recovery consultant.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do we have any idea whether the SD card  
 9 was bought at the same time as the Samsung or acquired  
 10 or was it brought with him?  
 11 A. It was bought at the same time. So it came with the  
 12 Samsung phone.  
 13 MR GREANEY: Do you recall where he had bought those items  
 14 from?  
 15 A. We have those details. The exact shop and location  
 16 we have...  
 17 Q. But it was bought from a shop as opposed to from an  
 18 individual?  
 19 A. Yes. When you go into the sequence of events for that  
 20 day --  
 21 Q. When Mr de la Poer deals with that tomorrow --  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And something like that would store an  
 23 enormous amount of material?  
 24 A. An SD card?  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.

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1 A. It could do. It could store a huge amount of  
2 information. This Samsung is effectively the size of  
3 a computer, what you can put into it.  
4 MR GREANEY: Just two further aspects of Salman Abedi and  
5 his telephones. First of all, just to formally refer to  
6 it, there has been produced a table containing a list of  
7 mobile telephone numbers and handsets used by  
8 Salman Abedi during key dates of the investigation; is  
9 that correct?  
10 A. Yes, that's right.  
11 Q. That is appendix 7 to your statement. I will give the  
12 INQ reference, although we don't need it on the screen.  
13 {INQ034649/168}.  
14 Secondly, before we turn to deal with Hashem Abedi,  
15 did you receive evidence of an attempt or attempts by  
16 Salman Abedi to sell a mobile telephone?  
17 A. Yes, that's right.  
18 Q. What were the circumstances of that?  
19 A. This was on his return to the UK on 18 May. He's made  
20 his way to the bus station at Wythenshawe and he books  
21 a taxi, if you recall.  
22 Q. Yes.  
23 A. At 11.38, so that's from Wythenshawe bus station to  
24 Oxney Road in Manchester.  
25 Q. And the driver who drove him on that journey has been

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1 traced?  
2 A. Yes.  
3 Q. Is this the position: he has stated that during the  
4 journey Salman Abedi said that he had a Samsung mobile  
5 telephone that he wanted to sell?  
6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
7 Q. But the driver told him that he didn't want to buy the  
8 telephone?  
9 A. That's correct, yes.  
10 Q. Did the driver comment that during the journey,  
11 Salman Abedi was using another mobile telephone that was  
12 not a Samsung?  
13 A. Yes, that's right.  
14 Q. Which would seem to accord with billing data which  
15 showed that the recently acquired 3230 SIM card was  
16 first used in the Alcatel phone?  
17 A. Yes, that's right.  
18 Q. That person dropped Abedi off at Oxney Road.  
19 A. Yes.  
20 Q. And we know that he then made his way to Devell House?  
21 A. Yes, that's right.  
22 Q. At 12.47, did Salman Abedi book another taxi?  
23 A. Yes, that's right.  
24 Q. I'm at paragraph 570 now.  
25 A. Yes, I see.

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1 Q. And was then driven by another taxi driver on that  
2 journey?  
3 A. Yes.  
4 Q. Was that driver also identified?  
5 A. Yes.  
6 Q. What did Salman Abedi say to him, paragraph 570?  
7 A. He told the driver that he wanted to buy a smartphone  
8 and asked where to go. So then we move on to, clearly,  
9 the new Samsung.  
10 Q. That driver advised him to go to Bury New Road; is that  
11 correct?  
12 A. Yes, that's right.  
13 Q. Salman Abedi asked him if he could buy his phone, so the  
14 taxi driver's phone, but he declined?  
15 A. Yes.  
16 Q. And then Salman Abedi was taken to, I'm not sure I'm  
17 going to get this pronunciation right, Crumpsall?  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. Where he did purchase the Samsung that we've been  
20 talking about during the course of your evidence?  
21 A. Yes, that's right.  
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So he tries to sell a Samsung  
23 apparently?  
24 A. Yes.  
25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Then he buys one?

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1 A. Yes.  
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And we don't know what happened to the  
3 original one that he tried to sell?  
4 A. We don't know what happened.  
5 MR GREANEY: So Hashem Abedi and mobile phones next. Did  
6 your team identify several telephone numbers and  
7 handsets linked to Hashem Abedi?  
8 A. Yes.  
9 Q. Was the first number that you identified a 6514 number?  
10 A. Yes, that's right.  
11 Q. Just to fit that number into the chronology, that was  
12 a number that was used by Hashem Abedi to contact  
13 Alharth Forjani in relation to the January purchase of  
14 sulphuric acid?  
15 A. Yes, I believe so.  
16 Q. It is not dealt with in your statement, but I have  
17 picked that up from the evidence more generally.  
18 A. I'm sure that's right.  
19 Q. A number of other numbers and handsets have been  
20 identified. We don't need to deal with the detail of  
21 them because, insofar as the chairman needs to draw upon  
22 them for the purposes of his report, there has been  
23 prepared, has there not, a table that sets out the  
24 numbers, handsets and significance of numbers and  
25 handsets?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 2 Q. That is appendix 8 to your statement. The reference is  
 3 {INQ034649/171}.  
 4 Another handset that was considered relevant to  
 5 Hashem Abedi was a phone that was examined by police  
 6 following the port stop of Ismail Abedi following his  
 7 return from honeymoon?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. At paragraph 575 of your statement, you give the date of  
 10 that as 3 September 2015. We saw an earlier reference  
 11 today of July 2015, so we might just check that date.  
 12 A. I will check that. That will be my mistake in the  
 13 statement.  
 14 Q. I think the September date is in fact the correct one,  
 15 but we can check.  
 16 Did the examination of that phone, so we're now back  
 17 in 2015, reveal that Ismail Abedi, who had the handset,  
 18 was the principal user of it?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. But was there some evidence that Hashem Abedi had also  
 21 used that telephone?  
 22 A. Yes, that's correct, in July of 2016.  
 23 Q. So that was some time after the port stop?  
 24 A. Yes, it was.  
 25 Q. So it's believed that certainly during that time, and

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1 potentially other times, Hashem Abedi had access to that  
 2 phone?  
 3 A. Yes, that's right. Yes.  
 4 Q. When that phone was examined in 2015 — I'm sorry to go  
 5 forwards and then backwards in time — was a body of  
 6 what might be described as mindset material obtained?  
 7 A. I'm sorry, could you just remind me where we are?  
 8 Q. Of course, that's my fault. I'm at paragraph 577. What  
 9 I don't want to do is to identify the name of any  
 10 particular documents —  
 11 A. Yes, I understand.  
 12 Q. — in this part. I know you won't want to either.  
 13 I believe that in September 2015 — and we did look  
 14 at this to some extent yesterday — when Ismail Abedi's  
 15 mobile phone, to which we later discovered Hashem Abedi  
 16 had access, was analysed, there was discovered mindset  
 17 material?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Which demonstrated at the very least an interest in  
 20 Islamic State ideology?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. There were numerous jihadi nasheeds?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. These are chants, encouraging the killing of infidels  
 25 and also encouraging suicide missions?

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1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 Q. There were Islamic State recruitment videos?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. Along with images of battlefields, fighters, weapons and  
 5 casualties?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And numerous files showing images of, for example, the  
 8 Islamic State logos and Islamic State literature?  
 9 A. That's correct.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not entirely sure that chant is the  
 11 correct meaning of nasheed. Maybe we can check that.  
 12 MR GREANEY: That is my shorthand.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, that's all right.  
 14 MR GREANEY: You will have come across thousands of  
 15 nasheeds; what would your description of them be?  
 16 A. My understanding is they can be a verse or a song and  
 17 quite often they're quite repetitive.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And they are certainly not all radical?  
 19 A. No, not at all.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: These particular ones were, as  
 21 I understand it.  
 22 A. Yes, in the context of a jihadi nasheed, that would be,  
 23 yes.  
 24 MR GREANEY: That deals with that handset.  
 25 I'm now at paragraph 579. Were a number of other

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1 electronic devices associated with Hashem Abedi and  
 2 Salman Abedi seized and subsequently interrogated and  
 3 reviewed by your team?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. Has a table been prepared listing all of those devices  
 6 and whether they had relevance to the issues that you  
 7 were investigating?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind me going back?  
 10 MR GREANEY: I don't at all, sir.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: At the risk of me receiving a lot of  
 12 information about what is meant by nasheed in relation  
 13 to my question, we will have an expert giving evidence  
 14 to the inquiry in due course who will be able to give us  
 15 definitive answers, so I will wait until then.  
 16 MR GREANEY: We will, sir. My reference to a chant was  
 17 probably inapt.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not criticising at all; we will have  
 19 the official meaning in due course.  
 20 MR GREANEY: We will. My reference was certainly not the  
 21 official reference, it was intended to be a shorthand.  
 22 So in relation to the other electronic devices  
 23 associated with Hashem and Salman Abedi, have your team  
 24 prepared a table listing those devices and identifying  
 25 the relevance they had, if any, to the issues you were

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1 investigating?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. That is, I believe, appendix 9 to your witness  
 4 statement?  
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 6 Q. I'll give the INQ reference: {INQ034649/176}.  
 7 Was it the position that the devices all pre-dated  
 8 the key period in 2017 with which you were concerned?  
 9 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 10 Q. But nonetheless, did they contain or did the majority of  
 11 the devices contain material that was indicative of an  
 12 extremist pro-Islamic State mindset?  
 13 A. Yes, they did.  
 14 Q. Including images and a video of Salman Abedi in  
 15 possession of weapons, including firearms?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. An image of Hashem Abedi in possession of a firearm?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Images of Ismail Abedi in possession of various firearms  
 20 and weapons?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. Home-made videos of what potentially were training  
 23 camps?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Jihadi nasheeds, so the point the chairman has made, not

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1 all nasheeds are violent or inappropriate, but there  
 2 were violent nasheeds on those devices?  
 3 A. Just to give some reassurance around that, the  
 4 description of a jihadi nasheed is a recognised  
 5 description that will be ascribed to a known nasheed.  
 6 So where it appears as described in my statement, it  
 7 will have been a recognised jihadi nasheed.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We will pass on and we will come back to  
 9 it in due course. I've diverted us unnecessarily,  
 10 I think. Sorry about that.  
 11 MR GREANEY: We've probably finished all that needs to be  
 12 said about those other devices.  
 13 In common with other devices relating to the  
 14 brothers that you looked at, there was extremist  
 15 material upon them?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. Did you also seize, among, I am sure, very many  
 18 electronic devices, devices associated with relatives of  
 19 Salman and Hashem Abedi?  
 20 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 21 Q. I'm now at paragraph 582. That, I believe, did not  
 22 include any devices from Ramadan Abedi, Samia Tabbal or  
 23 their other children, save for Ismail?  
 24 A. That's correct, yes.  
 25 Q. We'll just deal with a small number of these.

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1 First of all, so far as Ismail Abedi is concerned,  
 2 and we've probably dealt with most of these, but when he  
 3 was arrested following the attack on 23 May,  
 4 paragraph 584, was he in possession of a rucksack that  
 5 contained a number of electronic devices?  
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 7 Q. Namely an iPhone, an Apple MacBook, so a laptop,  
 8 a second iPhone, a USB lanyard, and a USB stick and four  
 9 keys?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. I believe details of all of those are set out in your  
 12 appendix 10?  
 13 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 14 Q. For which the INQ reference is {INQ034049/193}. We can  
 15 just summarise it in this way. There was a body of  
 16 mindset material on those devices?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. You also conducted a search of Ismail Abedi's home  
 19 address and seized a number of further electronic  
 20 devices; is that correct?  
 21 A. Yes, that's right.  
 22 Q. The details of those are summarised in your appendix 11?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. {INQ034049/195}. Again, in summary, those devices,  
 25 according to the appendix, contained mindset material?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. Photographs of weapons and beheadings?  
 3 A. I don't have the appendix in front of me, but if it says  
 4 that in there ...  
 5 Q. It does. A photograph of Osama Bin Laden and  
 6 a photograph of Salman Abedi with a firearm. I have  
 7 taken that directly from --  
 8 A. I understand, yes, and I agree.  
 9 Q. And of course we have the devices that were seized from  
 10 Ismail Abedi on 3 September, which are set out in your  
 11 appendix 12, so {INQ034049/233}. Again, containing  
 12 mindset material?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Then just finally in relation to devices, yesterday we  
 15 heard of Ramadan Abedi's sister, Rabaa. This is  
 16 paragraph 585, page 215. We know that she resides in  
 17 Canada. Were you nonetheless, no doubt through  
 18 cooperation with the Canadian authorities, able to  
 19 obtain a hard drive containing downloads of devices  
 20 obtained from Rabaa Abedi?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. The only issue that was of relevance, I believe, was  
 23 a chat that she had had with her brother Ramadan between  
 24 19.24 hours and 19.45 hours on 23 May?  
 25 A. That's correct, yes.

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1 Q. Did that chat start with Ramadan informing his sister  
2 that Salman Abedi had blown himself up, as it was put,  
3 in the arena?  
4 A. Yes, that's true.  
5 Q. And at 19.30 hours, did Ramadan send the following  
6 message to his sister :  
7 "Allah is the predominant. I did my best. One  
8 month ago I went and returned them back when I found out  
9 their thinking is wrong. She then went and gave him the  
10 passports. She told me he's going to Umrah. I did not  
11 know anything about him until he travelled 4 days ago."  
12 A. Yes, that's correct. It's correct that that's the  
13 message, yes.  
14 Q. Finally, just to give some idea, finally on this topic,  
15 to give some idea of the scale of the task that was  
16 undertaken in relation to electronic devices. During  
17 the course of Operation Manteline were in excess of  
18 1,000 electronic devices seized from suspects and TIE  
19 subjects?  
20 A. Yes, that's correct, considerably more than 1,000.  
21 Q. Was the amount of information contained in those devices  
22 in excess of 16 terabytes, which is a huge amount?  
23 A. Yes, it was.  
24 Q. And over the page, paragraph 591, again just to give an  
25 idea of the scale of the task that was undertaken, were

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1 over 7 million files reviewed by the team on what is  
2 called RETINA?  
3 A. Yes, that's right.  
4 Q. I am going in a moment just to adduce from you some  
5 further details of what Hashem Abedi said to  
6 Mr de la Poer in October of this year, so I say that at  
7 this stage, 5 minutes before we reach the point, so if  
8 anyone doesn't want to hear it, they can switch off  
9 their television set or leave the room that they are in.  
10 First, I'm just going to draw your attention to  
11 page 217, paragraph 597 of your statement, where you  
12 deal, do you not, in detail with the way in which you,  
13 that's to say the investigators, worked in partnership  
14 with the Crown Prosecution Service during the course of  
15 the investigation and prosecution?  
16 A. Yes, that's correct.  
17 Q. You draw attention to the different roles that the  
18 investigators and Crown Prosecution Service have, do you  
19 not?  
20 A. Yes, I do.  
21 Q. In the sense that the police gather the evidence and the  
22 CPS then assess it in order to see whether the Code for  
23 Crown Prosecutors is satisfied such that there should be  
24 a prosecution?  
25 A. Yes. Again, I know this is a distinction, but this

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1 doesn't quite describe the relationship between CPS and  
2 counter-terrorism.  
3 Q. I'm very keen that I shouldn't give the evidence but you  
4 should, so you tell me what you mean.  
5 A. That relationship starts from the very start of an  
6 investigation, so when we talk about a full code test, a  
7 full code test is a very official point in that  
8 relationship.  
9 Q. You're quite right. This is a point you made yesterday.  
10 A. So I would describe it as much more of an ongoing review  
11 of all that evidence and information in order to make  
12 a decision as to whether the full code test should be  
13 applied.  
14 Q. So I've oversimplified it, sorry about that.  
15 The position is, as you explained yesterday, you had  
16 CPS lawyers who were embedded with your team?  
17 A. Yes.  
18 Q. From a very, very early stage, so they would be  
19 reviewing the evidence that you had obtained on an  
20 ongoing basis to see whether, in relation to any  
21 individual, a point was reached at which the full code  
22 test should be applied?  
23 A. Yes, and of course the full code test is very much about  
24 a charging standard with, effectively, the investigation  
25 pretty much complete. Whereas when you talk about

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1 23 people in custody, there would be discussions  
2 in relation to a potential threshold test. That is very  
3 much as to whether the charging decision should be made  
4 or the individual should be released.  
5 Q. I understand. As you'll appreciate, I'm keen not to get  
6 into too much technical analysis. I think the real  
7 point that I should perhaps have got to a little earlier  
8 is that you would wish to emphasise that the  
9 relationship between the CPS and the police  
10 investigation in Operation Manteline was collaborative  
11 throughout?  
12 A. Yes, that's correct.  
13 Q. And the way in which you put it is that it was  
14 constructively challenging throughout also?  
15 A. Yes. By that, I'm being extremely positive because  
16 I think in order to have a very good working  
17 relationship in this respect, we have to be able to  
18 discuss and sometimes discuss with passion what the  
19 material is in front of us.  
20 Q. Yes.  
21 A. And obviously I can't go into what that was --  
22 Q. No.  
23 A. -- throughout this whole process, but it was an  
24 extremely good working relationship.  
25 Q. And I think that's the message you want to leave us

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1 with, it was an extremely good relationship?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. As I indicated, finally so far as my questions are  
 4 concerned, because I've reached the end of part 5 of  
 5 your statement, and that just leaves part 7 for  
 6 Mr de la Poer to deal with, and it's not going to take  
 7 nearly as long, everyone will be pleased to hear, as  
 8 either chapter 4 or chapter 5. But finally, I want to  
 9 return to the confession, as it was, made by  
 10 Hashem Abedi to Mr de la Poer and Mr Suter in October of  
 11 this year.  
 12 The date of that confession, I think I gave as  
 13 22 October, in fact it's 23 October. What I am going to  
 14 do is to set out what seemed to counsel to the inquiry  
 15 to be the key elements of that confession and I believe  
 16 you will simply be able to agree that I have accurately  
 17 summarised the position. What I'm not going to do is  
 18 read out every word, let alone play any part of the  
 19 video recording of it.  
 20 First, Hashem Abedi said that he was a supporter of  
 21 violent jihad in the sense that he supported the  
 22 institution of Sharia Law through violence. And he said  
 23 that he considered that violence was justified to bring  
 24 about change in society. He said that he was  
 25 a supporter of Islamic State and his position was

1 exposed very starkly by this question and answer.  
 2 "Question: What actions have you taken to support  
 3 Islamic State?  
 4 "Answer: The Manchester attack."  
 5 He also handed over a statement in writing that he  
 6 had prepared before the interview that was conducted by  
 7 Mr de la Poer. It sets out his motivations for having  
 8 engaged in the attack at Manchester and, to put it in  
 9 very simple terms, it represents pro-Islamic State  
 10 propaganda.  
 11 Mr Barraclough, have I accurately summarised his  
 12 confession?  
 13 A. You have, Mr Greaney, thank you.  
 14 Q. Mr Barraclough, the final issue I want to address is  
 15 connected. It's this: you have, as you described to us  
 16 earlier this week, lengthy experience at a senior level  
 17 within Counter-terrorism Policing?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. And it's my word, not yours, but you could properly be  
 20 regarded as an expert in that field. You're nodding  
 21 your head.  
 22 A. I understand.  
 23 Q. I want to ask you two direct questions, please. If the  
 24 video recording of the interview conducted by  
 25 Mr de la Poer and Mr Suter with Hashem Abedi were to be

1 made public, is it likely in your judgement that  
 2 it would encourage people with a mindset similar to  
 3 Hashem Abedi to carry out terrorist attacks?  
 4 A. Yes, it is.  
 5 Q. If the prepared statement of Hashem Abedi were to be  
 6 made public, is it likely also that that would encourage  
 7 people with a mindset similar to Hashem Abedi to carry  
 8 out terrorist attacks?  
 9 A. I have no doubt that it would.  
 10 MR GREANEY: Mr Barraclough, thank you very much indeed.  
 11 Those are my questions based upon your witness  
 12 statement. As you know, there are some further  
 13 questions from Mr de la Poer, but, sir, that would be  
 14 a convenient moment for a break. May we have half  
 15 an hour on this occasion, please?  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Just before 11.30.  
 17 (10.58 am)  
 18 (A short break)  
 19 (11.28 am)  
 20 Questions from MR DE LA POER (continued)  
 21 MR DE LA POER: Mr Barraclough, we are going to start by  
 22 picking up on some matters that have arisen in your  
 23 evidence over the course of yesterday and today before  
 24 we turn to your part 7, which, as Mr Greaney says, will  
 25 be substantially shorter than other parts.

1 Firstly, in relation to the Galaxy mobile telephone,  
 2 I think that you've taken the opportunity to consult  
 3 with your team over the break and you may have a little  
 4 more information in relation to the digital information  
 5 extracted from it.  
 6 A. Yes, sir. It was regarding your query about whether the  
 7 phone was factory reset or rather when the phone might  
 8 have been factory reset. We can't actually say for  
 9 certain, but something happens to it at 18.31 hours on  
 10 22 May that would suggest there is a reprogramme and the  
 11 phone is very briefly being switched off and then  
 12 switched on again. That's consistent with -- I know  
 13 we're going to go into the CCTV -- the SoE for that day  
 14 for Salman Abedi. That's consistent with the rucksack  
 15 being thrown away at 19.47 hours, which is shortly  
 16 afterwards.  
 17 Q. Perhaps we can trace the chronology through. We know  
 18 that at 17.35, we have the final positive activity,  
 19 phone related activity, don't we, for that Galaxy?  
 20 A. Yes, that's right.  
 21 Q. We know that Salman Abedi went on his final hostile  
 22 reconnaissance trip to the arena area at 18.31. You can  
 23 take that from me and I have taken that from the SoE.  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Which means that the activity that you're describing is



1 when he is in very close proximity to the City Room?  
 2 A. Yes, that's right.  
 3 Q. We then have, as we will see with DS Hazelwood tomorrow,  
 4 a journey from Granby House, which starts at 19.24,  
 5 again take that from me, we'll look at it tomorrow in  
 6 detail, which goes via the area of the Macdonald hotel  
 7 and Wyre Street and it's some time around 19.50, isn't  
 8 it, that that phone and other items must have been  
 9 dumped?  
 10 A. I think so, yes.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 12 A. Sir, in my evidence, and it was my mistake earlier,  
 13 I think I kept on referring to it being near  
 14 Devell House as opposed to Granby. I apologise for  
 15 that.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You have a lot of material to keep in  
 17 your head.  
 18 MR DE LA POER: We are going to see that in the clearest  
 19 possible terms now, I hope, because there is a map that  
 20 your team has already provided. {CPS000221/6}, please.  
 21 There's a lot of information on this, so we'll just take  
 22 our time with it.  
 23 At that macro scale, we'll pick out some important  
 24 locations which will be relevant for tomorrow.  
 25 A. I'm sorry, my screen's not working.

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1 (Pause)  
 2 Q. Can you see that map?  
 3 A. I can.  
 4 Q. Right at the top of the map we can see B&Q, can't we?  
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 6 Q. That's the place identified there, which is one of the  
 7 places that Salman Abedi buys equipment relevant to his  
 8 bomb making between 18 and 22 May?  
 9 A. Yes, that's right.  
 10 Q. Then if we go all the way to the bottom, these being the  
 11 easiest to identify initially, we can see other areas of  
 12 relevance. Devell House, as you say, is one of the four  
 13 in the cluster right at the bottom of the page?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. If we go at about 2 o'clock on the clock face from that,  
 16 up a bit, we can see B&M Home Bargains, which is another  
 17 place visited to buy equipment by Salman Abedi?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. We'll look at the order at that tomorrow. If we crop  
 20 into the centre area, we'll pick out the extremities.  
 21 Again, starting at the top, we can see in the north-west  
 22 corner, "Galaxy mobiles". That is the location that  
 23 Salman Abedi visited on the 18th at 1.15, isn't it?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. It is from there that the Galaxy mobile telephone was

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1 purchased?  
 2 A. Yes, that's right.  
 3 Q. Just to the right of that is Manchester Merchant,  
 4 another location, it's where the money tin was purchased  
 5 from during the period 18 to 22 May; is that correct?  
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 7 Q. Beneath that, we can see the Manchester Arena and  
 8 Victoria Station, and if we keep going down, the  
 9 Arndale Centre is picked out as that large orange,  
 10 almost square, near the very centre of our image.  
 11 If we go from the Arndale Centre at approximately  
 12 5 o'clock on the clock face, we will come to  
 13 Minshull Street South, Wyre Street and Granby House?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. So starting with Granby House, first, please, Mr Lopez.  
 16 That's the location where the bomb was assembled?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. And we know, don't we, that as you have just indicated  
 19 by reference to the timings, Salman Abedi went for  
 20 a walk, leaving at 19.24, and it's during that walk that  
 21 he can initially be seen with that Kangol suitcase and  
 22 a small rucksack. The Kangol suitcase disappears in the  
 23 course of that journey?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. And your officers have been able to identify the

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1 approximate location but not the instance of its  
 2 disposal; is that correct?  
 3 A. That's correct.  
 4 Q. And led to all of the effort and the 10,000 tonnes of  
 5 waste that were searched?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. As we'll hear from DS Hazelwood tomorrow, when in the  
 8 vicinity of Minshull Street and Wyre Street, the  
 9 rucksack disappears --  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. -- from his back? It is that rucksack containing the  
 12 two passports, one Libyan, one United Kingdom, that is  
 13 recovered in the vicinity of Wyre Street from the area  
 14 of waste ground near the Macdonald hotel?  
 15 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 16 Q. And close by that, as you've told us, is the Galaxy  
 17 mobile phone as described by the member of the public  
 18 who says they found it?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. So having dealt with that, we can take that down,  
 21 thank you very much indeed, Mr Lopez.  
 22 We'll pick up one further matter arising before  
 23 turning to part 7. That is in relation to the cash  
 24 deposits into the bank accounts, which is something you  
 25 and your team have investigated since it was raised in

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1 your evidence; is that correct?  
 2 A. That's right.  
 3 Q. Let's bring up the relevant document, {INQ033890/1}.  
 4 I don't know the detail of your research,  
 5 Mr Barraclough, so is there any particular entry that  
 6 you have been able to find out any further information  
 7 in relation to or shall we just work through this?  
 8 A. No, it was very straightforward, actually, just to  
 9 confirm, as we thought, that the cash deposits into  
 10 Hashem Abedi's account -- we don't know the origin of  
 11 the cash.  
 12 Q. Mr Lopez, if you go forward to the next page  
 13 {INQ033890/2}. We're talking about Hashem Abedi's  
 14 account. Is that a reference to the money change that  
 15 we can see marked in blue on 2 January or is that  
 16 a different deposit?  
 17 A. That's the first of the three cash injections.  
 18 Q. So you're speaking about all three of them?  
 19 A. Yes, so we are unable to confirm without speculation as  
 20 to where that money came from.  
 21 Q. So where we see an input into Hashem Abedi's account in  
 22 this schedule, no information has been able to be  
 23 established as to its origin?  
 24 A. That's right.  
 25 Q. In terms of the Salman Abedi deposits, other than from

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1 the Student Loan Company, is the position the same?  
 2 A. I don't think that was the chair's question, but  
 3 I believe that's the same. Again, we can speculate, but  
 4 I'm not sure that's helpful.  
 5 Q. No. Fundamentally, the position is that we are dealing  
 6 with cash, and unless we have a witness who says they  
 7 handed over the cash or unless we have a cash withdrawal  
 8 that can be identified at a time highly proximate to  
 9 that, it's very difficult to say where it's come from?  
 10 A. Yes, of course.  
 11 Q. Thank you, Mr Barraclough. We're going to turn now to  
 12 part 7 of your statement.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you for making those enquiries for  
 14 me.  
 15 MR DE LA POER: Starting at page 231, paragraph 647, there  
 16 are three sections to this, you can take it from me.  
 17 The first deals with the detail of how you and your  
 18 officers went about obtaining evidence and the approach  
 19 that you took. We'll look at that. Next, you deal  
 20 shortly with what you describe as attribution, in other  
 21 words whether a broader organisation beyond Salman Abedi  
 22 and Hashem Abedi had claimed responsibility.  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. And finally, you deal with a section under the heading  
 25 "Failings", which is a term that the inquiry legal team

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1 invited you to consider. Can I reassure you now and  
 2 everybody watching that that final section, which  
 3 principally deals with the anti-terrorism hotline, is  
 4 a matter which we take the view is better dealt with  
 5 under chapters 13 and 14.  
 6 A. I understand.  
 7 Q. It goes more to the question of preventability than  
 8 anything else, so we will not be dealing with that;  
 9 we will be dealing just with the first two that arise in  
 10 part 7.  
 11 So let's turn to the first of those. Here I'm  
 12 looking at paragraph 648, just to assist the members of  
 13 the public who may be watching.  
 14 Did you identify as part of the Operation Manteline  
 15 investigation a number of steps, all of which were  
 16 targeted at obtaining as much information as possible?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. We'll go through them. I will read out the list and  
 19 perhaps you can confirm at the end. Was one the review  
 20 and assessment of: direct reporting from members of the  
 21 public including through telephone contact, face-to-face  
 22 reporting, reporting to the anti-terrorist hotline and  
 23 reporting to Crimestoppers; next, the review and  
 24 assessment of police incident log entries; also the  
 25 review and assessment of casualty bureau reporting; the

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1 canvassing of regional hospitals to identify victims and  
 2 witnesses; also the identification of persons working at  
 3 Manchester Arena on the night of the attack; the  
 4 identification and seizure of relevant witness accounts  
 5 that had already been obtained; penultimately, the  
 6 review of social media; and the review of records from  
 7 Manchester Arena?  
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 9 Q. What you go on to say in your statement is to provide  
 10 detail about each of those; is that correct?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. We don't need to go into all of the detail that you have  
 13 provided, but perhaps we can pick out some which people  
 14 may be less familiar. The first of those you identify  
 15 is one that everyone will be very familiar with, namely  
 16 where members of the public come forward, either through  
 17 telephone lines or approaching police officers or police  
 18 stations, saying, "I've got information to give"?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. The next perhaps needs a little more explanation because  
 21 you refer to the police incident log entries. Is that  
 22 essentially 999?  
 23 A. Yes, or indeed 101.  
 24 Q. The casualty bureau is the third in your list. We're  
 25 going to be looking to a degree at the casualty bureau

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1 in terms of the response to the incident, but for  
 2 present purposes can we just summarise it in this way,  
 3 that the casualty bureau provides a single point of  
 4 contact for members of the public to provide information  
 5 concerning a specific incident, it operates in the  
 6 capacity of dealing with the management of victims,  
 7 witnesses and concerned friends and family?  
 8 A. Yes, that's right.  
 9 Q. Was the casualty bureau set up in response to the  
 10 attack?  
 11 A. Yes, it was.  
 12 Q. It was managed, I think, principally by a person by the  
 13 name of Helen Palfrey?  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 15 Q. Who has provided a statement to the inquiry. Did that  
 16 give an opportunity for those who had reason to interact  
 17 with the casualty bureau for information to be  
 18 collected, collated and considered?  
 19 A. Yes, that's right.  
 20 Q. Did that also involve officers being tasked to regional  
 21 hospitals in order to speak to victims and their loved  
 22 ones?  
 23 A. Yes. But not just regional hospitals, clearly there  
 24 were people who had gone straight home as well.  
 25 Q. Yes. The casualty bureau operated as a single umbrella

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1 organisation whose purpose was to assist with the  
 2 management of those people's needs?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. Next, CCTV. We don't need to deal with this in any  
 5 detail, we've heard about the highly respected GMP VERA  
 6 Unit. There was a lot of CCTV to analyse, wasn't there?  
 7 A. There was an awful lot, yes.  
 8 Q. But it has borne very substantial fruit, as we have seen  
 9 throughout our process so far, hasn't it?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. Was there a media appeal website, ukpoliceappeal.co.uk,  
 12 put in place on 23 May?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. So that was another opportunity for members of the  
 15 public, those who were affected or those who had  
 16 information, to provide information to the police?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. Of course, there were also known to be a number of  
 19 people working at the arena as part of their jobs before  
 20 the attack happened.  
 21 A. That's right, yes.  
 22 Q. So were steps taken to contact ShowSec, as the provider  
 23 of crowd management and security, with a view to  
 24 ensuring that all information that their staff had to  
 25 provide filtered into the investigation?

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1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 Q. As a result of that process, was your investigation  
 3 informed by ShowSec on 31 May about Kyle Lawler and  
 4 Mohammed Agha in particular?  
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 6 Q. In fact, the investigation was aware of Mr Lawler prior  
 7 to that; is that correct?  
 8 A. Yes, that's right.  
 9 Q. Prior to that date because in fact there had been  
 10 telephone contact made by his mother to the police?  
 11 A. Yes, that's correct. And also Agha, so I think it was  
 12 both of them.  
 13 Q. Yes, I was going to come to Mr Agha. He was also known  
 14 to the investigation before ShowSec had notified on  
 15 31 May because in fact Mr Lavery, from whom the inquiry  
 16 has heard, notified the Operation Manteline team about  
 17 Mohammed Agha as part of his work on behalf of ShowSec.  
 18 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 19 Q. So in a sense, you had information coming from ShowSec  
 20 employees as part of the system that they had set up?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. That was happening in almost real time?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. But at the end of that process, ShowSec also provided  
 25 a report to Operation Manteline on 31 May?

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1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 Q. Did the inquiry also become aware of information that  
 3 Christopher Wild had to give in the early hours of  
 4 23 May?  
 5 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 6 Q. So from a very early stage that was information feeding  
 7 into your investigation?  
 8 A. Yes, it was.  
 9 Q. We've touched on CCTV a number of times. Let's just  
 10 deal with it formally in the sense that, given the scale  
 11 of the task, on 23 May, under your direction, did  
 12 the process begin of identifying what strategy needed to  
 13 be adopted in order to manage it effectively?  
 14 A. Yes, that's right.  
 15 Q. And did you sign off on that strategy once the scale of  
 16 the task had been scoped on 6 July 2017?  
 17 A. Yes, but obviously the strategy was in place long before  
 18 that.  
 19 Q. Yes.  
 20 A. That was from the 23rd.  
 21 Q. But that was the formal sign-off of the strategy?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. And plainly that cannot be done until you know exactly  
 24 what you're dealing with?  
 25 A. Yes, and due to the circumstances that you're confronted

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1 with immediately after the attack, the strategy tends to  
 2 be a little bit more verbal.  
 3 Q. Yes. As a result of work that was being done by your  
 4 officers on the CCTV, was Robert Atkinson's interaction  
 5 with Salman Abedi identified on 29 May?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And that led to a statement being obtained from him?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. Finally, did the review work of your team identify  
 10 a potential interaction between Salman Abedi and  
 11 a member of ShowSec staff on 18 May?  
 12 A. Yes, that's right.  
 13 Q. We're going to have a look at that. We haven't focused  
 14 on it, but it's important just to bring it to mind, if  
 15 only to deal with it and close off what might otherwise  
 16 be a loose end in some people's minds.  
 17 Mr Lopez, {INQ031298/1}. I appreciate it may take  
 18 a moment or two for you to bring this up. It's a very  
 19 short piece of footage and I'm sure you know what it's  
 20 going to show, Mr Barraclough. Are we going to see  
 21 a CCTV of the Hunts Bank entrance on 18 May 2017?  
 22 A. Yes, that's right.  
 23 Q. For the chair's note and anyone else's, the time is  
 24 18.20 hours. Perhaps take that from me. It's not in  
 25 your statement, but I'm satisfied that that is correct.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It is in the statement, actually,  
 2 helpfully.  
 3 A. 667, I think.  
 4 MR DE LA POER: Quite right, sir, it is.  
 5 If we just pause it there, please, and identify the  
 6 relevant people.  
 7 Almost precisely in the centre of the image we can  
 8 see the shoulders and head of somebody wearing a yellow  
 9 jacket.  
 10 A. Yes, that's right.  
 11 Q. That's the ShowSec employee that we are concerned with  
 12 here.  
 13 Over on the furthest left of the image we see  
 14 Salman Abedi, who is wearing black with white trainers?  
 15 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 16 Q. And what we are going to see is that he will walk from  
 17 the left-hand side to the right-hand side and stop  
 18 briefly near the person wearing yellow.  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Let's play that, please.  
 21 (Video played to the inquiry)  
 22 Stop it there, thank you very much indeed. That's  
 23 all we need to see.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you mind doing it again?  
 25 MR DE LA POER: Of course, sir.

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1 (Video played to the inquiry)  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. I was looking at the wrong  
 3 person in the yellow top, but I've looked at the right  
 4 person now.  
 5 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much, Mr Lopez, we can take  
 6 that down.  
 7 Mr Barraclough, plainly a relevant line of inquiry  
 8 for your officers once this had been identified. We  
 9 don't need to name the individual publicly given the  
 10 outcome of the investigation, but firstly, it's  
 11 impossible to make any identification of that person,  
 12 purely from that footage, isn't it?  
 13 A. It is, yes.  
 14 Q. But with the cooperation, no doubt, of ShowSec was an  
 15 individual who that may have been identified?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. Was that person spoken to and shown this imagery?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. And were they not able to say from the imagery whether  
 20 that was in fact themselves that they were looking at?  
 21 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.  
 22 Q. Did they go on to say that if it had been them, the  
 23 interaction would have been one of many during a shift?  
 24 In other words if that was them, they had no  
 25 recollection of what it had been about?

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1 A. Yes, that's true.  
 2 Q. And certainly not an incident that had stuck in their  
 3 mind as being unusual or worthy of note?  
 4 A. Yes, that's right.  
 5 Q. So was that one of perhaps a relatively small number of  
 6 dead ends for the investigation?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Thank you very much indeed.  
 9 I'm just going to deal with the organisations.  
 10 Plainly, once the attack had occurred, a number of  
 11 additional organisations were drawn into events.  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Those organisations including NWS and  
 14 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. Also BTP as an emergency responder?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. As well as in its capacity that we know about, providing  
 19 the policing it did that night before the attack?  
 20 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 21 Q. So was a strategy developed to ensure that all relevant  
 22 information was captured from those organisations?  
 23 A. Yes, it was.  
 24 Q. In broad summary, did that involve identifying  
 25 particular points of contact so that information could

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1 be channelled efficiently and nothing lost?  
 2 A. Yes, that's right.  
 3 Q. As we consider the investigation into what occurred  
 4 afterwards, is it important for us to remember that your  
 5 team, Operation Manteline, in addition to investigating  
 6 the criminal offences also took on the mantle of  
 7 assisting the imminent coronial investigation?  
 8 A. Yes, that's absolutely correct.  
 9 Q. So it is important, isn't it, for people to remember  
 10 when talking about GMP that in fact Greater Manchester  
 11 Police had a role as the investigator of the criminal  
 12 offence, that's Operation Manteline?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. It has a role in assisting the chairman to understand  
 15 what happened?  
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 17 Q. And that's in what I've described as that coronial  
 18 function?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And then of course it has a freestanding role as the  
 21 provider of the emergency response on the night?  
 22 A. Yes, that's true.  
 23 Q. It's those first two that are principally vested in your  
 24 Operation Manteline team?  
 25 A. Yes, absolutely.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The immediate concern presumably is  
 2 investigating the offence, finding out if there are  
 3 other people out there about to do the same thing?  
 4 A. It was, sir.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did the coronial investigation start  
 6 with it?  
 7 A. Yes. All of these strands of the investigation were  
 8 commenced within the first 24 hours of the actual  
 9 investigation. So there was an immediate recognition  
 10 that because of the loss of life, that this would result  
 11 in at least a coronial enquiry and inquest and we have  
 12 a clear responsibility to investigate on behalf of the  
 13 coroner. So that formed a priority on the very first  
 14 day. But it goes back to the principal objective of  
 15 Operation Manteline, which is a little bit  
 16 all-encompassing, in that it is actually to establish  
 17 all of the relevant evidence, I suppose ultimately for  
 18 this process, so people can get the answers they need.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is unusual in a way because you're  
 20 not only looking at the perpetrator, the cause of the  
 21 death, but actually how people were treated when they  
 22 were injured, which may have been prior to death in some  
 23 cases but not in others.  
 24 A. Yes, and this was principally an evidence-gathering  
 25 operation. So again, it was not to come to any

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1 conclusions, it was purely to gather the evidence  
 2 ultimately for this process. Some of that would impact  
 3 clearly on the criminal investigation itself, but in the  
 4 event of the trial, actually very little of that was  
 5 ever used, for obvious reasons.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely. Thank you.  
 7 MR DE LA POER: Just before we leave the approach to  
 8 organisations, and your statement contains a lot more  
 9 detail about the mechanics of that, which we don't need  
 10 to go into, we ought to identify other organisations  
 11 that your team became aware of and sought to engage.  
 12 Firstly, in that additional list, Emergency Training  
 13 UK. I'm looking at your paragraph 273. That is  
 14 a company that is no longer trading and the principal of  
 15 that company, as you identified it, as Ian Parry?  
 16 A. Yes, that's right.  
 17 Q. As we have heard and as we'll hear in very substantial  
 18 detail in due course, it was employees and agents of  
 19 that organisation that went into the City Room to  
 20 provide assistance?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. We've touched on ShowSec already to the degree that we  
 23 need to. SMG was also identified; is that correct?  
 24 A. Yes, that's right.  
 25 Q. Travel Safe officers?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 2 Q. Those are staff employed by the rail company, no doubt  
 3 any regular rail traveller will be familiar with them,  
 4 and a number of those are significant to the immediate  
 5 response, aren't they?  
 6 A. Yes, that's right.  
 7 Q. And in particular, a very important source of evidence  
 8 for what occurred is derived from the body-worn video of  
 9 one of those officers?  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. Next, Northern Rail staff?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. They too were spoken to?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. And indeed we've already heard evidence from one of  
 16 those people.  
 17 In the approach to all of this, was it governed by  
 18 agreement with you as to what strategies needed to take  
 19 place?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. The only one that we need to touch on is, can you  
 22 confirm that the welfare of those that you were speaking  
 23 to formed part of that strategy?  
 24 A. Yes. A vast proportion of that strategy was dealing  
 25 with welfare.

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1 Q. Was that overseen by one of your colleagues, Detective  
2 Chief Inspector Theresa Lamb?  
3 A. Yes, that's right.  
4 Q. Finally, because the core participants will have seen  
5 that information has reached its final form in a number  
6 of ways, were decisions taken by those who were  
7 interviewing people about whether or not it was  
8 appropriate to conduct a video interview, to conduct an  
9 audio interview, or simply to take a statement?  
10 A. Yes, but that would have been in consultation with the  
11 individual as well. So clearly, as police officers, if  
12 people do not want to be video-interviewed or  
13 audio-interviewed, then that is absolutely their right.  
14 So very much we work at the discretion of the person  
15 we're speaking to, with advice about achieving the best  
16 evidence.  
17 Q. But if anyone, having looked at the material, were  
18 wondering why there seems to be different techniques,  
19 that was by reason of the process you've described,  
20 namely achieving best evidence in consultation and with  
21 the consent of the person being spoken to?  
22 A. Yes, absolutely.  
23 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Barraclough.  
24 That concludes the questions that I have. Before I turn  
25 to core participants, I will see if the chair has

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1 anything arising from my questions.  
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No.  
3 MR DE LA POER: Thank you, sir.  
4 The only notification that we have of questions  
5 arises from the families of the bereaved and  
6 Mr Weatherby is taking the lead, although he will not be  
7 the only advocate asking questions. I wonder if I can  
8 invite him to adjust his technology so he can ask those  
9 questions.  
10 Questions from MR WEATHERBY  
11 MR WEATHERBY: Can I just mention, I'm getting an echo?  
12 I wonder whether those behind the scenes might be able  
13 to try to deal with that.  
14 Mr Barraclough, I want to make a few things clear  
15 at the outset of my questions. I'm sure they'll be very  
16 obvious, but I think it needs to be said. As has been  
17 said by Mr Greaney, it's not the role of the inquiry to  
18 review the decisions taken in the police investigation  
19 or by the CPS and neither is it mine. However, it is  
20 the role of the inquiry to determine an official  
21 definitive factual narrative, as you will understand, of  
22 what did and did not happen relevant to the terms of  
23 reference. And obviously, the families have an interest  
24 in the facts and where they lead, and that will be the  
25 purpose of my questions. I hope that's clear.

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1 A. Yes, Mr Weatherby, that's clear, thank you.  
2 Q. Thank you very much.  
3 So in asking questions, I'm seeking, really, your  
4 assistance to help build the mosaic or the jigsaw, as  
5 Mr Greaney termed it, of evidence and I'm going to try,  
6 with your help, to connect often seemingly unimportant  
7 facts to build an overall picture which is more  
8 meaningful. I'm certainly less interested in my  
9 questions than you and the investigation had to be in  
10 evidential tests for prosecution. I'm more interested  
11 in understanding and establishing the overall picture.  
12 Is that okay?  
13 A. Yes, that's okay. I understand.  
14 Q. Having said that, we've heard that there remain a number  
15 of persons of interest whom the investigation wish to  
16 speak with and that part of the investigation will  
17 remain open until it can do so if at all possible, isn't  
18 that right?  
19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
20 Q. Can I seek your reassurance to the families, and I'm  
21 sure you'll readily give it, that any new lead will be  
22 vigorously pursued?  
23 A. You have my complete assurance.  
24 Q. Also, it's well-established in many other inquiries and  
25 inquests that the police and the CPS keep matters under

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1 review, in particular where matters arise during those  
2 processes, and again that will be the case here, won't  
3 it?  
4 A. Yes, absolutely the case.  
5 Q. From my side, can I hopefully provide you with a little  
6 reassurance that I don't think I have any difficult  
7 questions in terms of challenge for you at all. The  
8 real challenge for you, and for me as well, will be to  
9 navigate the detail in an intelligible way. So I'm  
10 hopefully going to try to do that with your assistance,  
11 as I say.  
12 A. Yes.  
13 Q. I am going to refer, obviously, to facts which are  
14 beyond your actual knowledge and I'm going to provide  
15 references and on the occasion, where it's  
16 straightforward fact, I'll ask you to accept what I say.  
17 If you're happy to do that, if I'm wrong, one of the  
18 legion of lawyers and others present will correct me.  
19 Is that okay?  
20 A. I understand, Mr Weatherby, I've also got a team  
21 checking what I say to make sure that --  
22 Q. We're on the same page there.  
23 Also, before I get going with the real questions,  
24 can I indicate to you that I have well in mind the  
25 comments of the chair with respect to future proceedings

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1 and also not being unfair to individuals .  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Weatherby.  
 3 MR WEATHERBY: However, it is imperative, of course, to get  
 4 the full facts into the open and I will go into a little  
 5 more detail about a small number of the persons already  
 6 named by Mr Greaney about whom there's evidence. One of  
 7 those persons is going to come to give evidence, others  
 8 have frankly made themselves scarce, but of course the  
 9 persons that I name can be invited, if the inquiry were  
 10 to decide it was appropriate, to come to give evidence  
 11 themselves. Is that clear?  
 12 A. Yes, that's clear .  
 13 Q. Thanks very much.  
 14 I want to start my proper questions, if I can put it  
 15 that way, by dealing with a number of discrete matters  
 16 that have arisen during the course of Mr Greaney's  
 17 questions and then I'll go on to something, I hope,  
 18 a little more organised.  
 19 You were asked whether the attack was ideologically  
 20 driven and you gave a number of reasons and we don't  
 21 need to repeat those about why that was so. It's right,  
 22 also, isn't it, that at the start of your involvement,  
 23 right from the get-go, you would have liaised with the  
 24 security services because of the obvious strong view  
 25 that this was a terrorist attack?

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1 A. Yes, of course.  
 2 Q. And as soon as you had the bank card, you'd have  
 3 supplied the name of Salman Abedi and no doubt they  
 4 would have come back to you and said that he was on  
 5 their books, and that would have been a further factor  
 6 in your thinking about it being ideologically motivated?  
 7 A. I think as time progressed, that was the case. I can  
 8 give you some assurance, actually, that that  
 9 identification was absent of any of that information.  
 10 Q. Yes, okay. Moving on, dealing with the Micra, and I'll  
 11 be referring heavily to the Micra of course throughout  
 12 my questioning, but dealing with the Micra and the bomb  
 13 components and the movement from Somerton Court to  
 14 Devell House on the 14th and 15th, around midnight. You  
 15 referred to operational security as a reason the  
 16 brothers travelled separately in the taxi and the Micra.  
 17 A. Yes, that's right .  
 18 Q. I'm sure you're right about that, but can I perhaps cast  
 19 it in a slightly more mundane fashion. Salman Abedi and  
 20 the explosives probably were in the taxi, probably  
 21 because there was no MOT or insurance on the Micra;  
 22 would you agree with that?  
 23 A. I agree. That is part, I think, of the operational  
 24 security .  
 25 Q. Yes, indeed. Of course these days, in this day and age,

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1 some police cars pick up other cars on the road which  
 2 don't have MOT and insurance and pull them over quite  
 3 readily, don't they?  
 4 A. Yes, they do. It's very fair, that.  
 5 Q. The taxi that Salman Abedi was in drops him off on  
 6 Banff Road in Rusholme; that's right, isn't it? We  
 7 established that from the animation that you went  
 8 through carefully .  
 9 A. Yes, that's right .  
 10 Q. And that of course is off Oxney Road, just round the  
 11 corner from Devell House.  
 12 A. Yes, that's right .  
 13 Q. Banff Road is mentioned in other despatches, isn't it?  
 14 There are other pick-ups from Banff Road?  
 15 A. I think you'd have to be more specific about that, but  
 16 maybe I can help you with regard to this, because  
 17 Banff Road was identified as something of interest to us  
 18 because of the taxi journey --  
 19 Q. Yes.  
 20 A. -- before we actually recovered the vehicle.  
 21 Q. Yes, of course.  
 22 A. So before we knew about Devell House. That then led to,  
 23 if my recollection serves me right, police action trying  
 24 to understand what that was before we actually had  
 25 a full picture of the information.

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1 Q. Thank you, that's very helpful. It's only a small point  
 2 coming here, but it's one that I specifically have been  
 3 asked to try to make clear.  
 4 A. I completely understand and that actually led to  
 5 a search which actually was unrelated, to be honest.  
 6 Q. Right. We'll probably get to that in a moment and end  
 7 the point there.  
 8 Banff Road is identified as a point of interest, but  
 9 actually what the Abedis were doing proved to be quite  
 10 successful in that regard because you didn't immediately  
 11 connect it to Devell House. Why should you?  
 12 A. I agree, yes.  
 13 Q. So that was obviously operational security or  
 14 anti-surveillance in operation by the Abedis?  
 15 A. Potentially, yes.  
 16 Q. Yes. On 18 May, when Salman Abedi returned to go to  
 17 Devell House, he went to the car, as we know, in the  
 18 Devell House car park, and then he called a taxi and the  
 19 pick-up point was a particular address. I'm not going  
 20 to give the number, but he gave a particular number of  
 21 a house on Banff Road, didn't he?  
 22 A. Yes, I believe he did.  
 23 Q. In fact --  
 24 A. -- I don't actually have that information immediately to  
 25 hand, but I'm working from memory.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If it becomes a problem, obviously  
 2 people are checking, that's fine, but do give us the  
 3 caveat that you're doing it from memory, and if there is  
 4 a bit in your statement which helps, o doubt  
 5 Mr Weatherby will refer you to that in the statement.  
 6 At the moment we'll assume these things are correct  
 7 until we hear otherwise.

8 MR WEATHERBY: Mr Greaney and Mr de la Poer have been  
 9 through your statement very comprehensively, so I'm not  
 10 in fact going to return to that.  
 11 This is probably a very small point. Was there  
 12 a particular address on Banff Road to which the inquiry  
 13 made investigations?

14 A. Yes, that's right. Again, going from memory, that  
 15 address was the subject of a terrorism search.

16 Q. Right. In fact, just to complete the picture, the taxi  
 17 driver that picked up identified Salman Abedi as coming  
 18 out of that address, rightly or wrongly?

19 A. That's absolutely correct, yes.

20 Q. Are you able to tell us whether that address was an  
 21 address of interest? Was it associates of the Abedis?

22 A. No, it was completely unconnected. I think the taxi  
 23 driver was mistaken, actually.

24 Q. I'll move swiftly on then.  
 25 You mentioned the gating system at Devell House.

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1 Again, a small point. You suggested that it may not  
 2 have been working.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. I'm going to refer in a little more detail later to some  
 5 of the evidence from Devell House, but there's  
 6 a particular image you may recall, if not I'll put it to  
 7 you later, where Mr Alzoubare uses a bin, apparently to  
 8 open the gating of Devell House on 23 May, to let a car  
 9 in. Do you recall that?

10 A. I don't, but I'm sure you're right.

11 Q. Will you take it from me that that does apparently  
 12 happen?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And that would suggest, certainly on 23 May, the gating  
 15 system was working.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Also, in the early hours of 15 April, again I'm going to  
 18 come back to this and deal with the detail if you don't  
 19 recall it, but the evidence suggests that the Abedis  
 20 hung about and contacted some of the others involved  
 21 before parking up the Micra.

22 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.

23 Q. Again, I suggest that either they needed help getting  
 24 through the gate or at least direction as to where to  
 25 park.

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1 A. Mr Weatherby, I wouldn't disagree with you. I'm sorry  
 2 if I gave the impression that I thought the gating  
 3 wasn't working all through this period. I'm not  
 4 suggesting that for one minute.

5 Q. No, it's a very small point.

6 A. There are certainly periods where it is supposedly  
 7 working and I understand there are periods when it has  
 8 not been reliable. That was the point I was trying to  
 9 make.

10 Q. Again, I'll move swiftly on. It's only a small point,  
 11 but I was asked to raise it.

12 A. Yes, I understand.

13 Q. Salman Abedi returns to the UK on 18 May using his own  
 14 passport or perhaps passports, plural, to be completely  
 15 correct. So we know that — or he would know that if  
 16 anybody was watching him, any official body, police body  
 17 or security services were watching him, then it was  
 18 likely that he would have been spotted returning. Do  
 19 you agree that's a reasonable inference?

20 A. Yes, an obvious inference, yes.

21 Q. And obviously, it's common sense really, but there are  
 22 taxis at the airport, aren't there?

23 A. There are, yes.

24 Q. We know that he didn't get a taxi from the airport, he  
 25 got a bus, the number 43, to Wythenshawe bus station,

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1 which I think — you're a Manchester person and so am I,  
 2 but others aren't. The distance from the airport to  
 3 Wythenshawe isn't very far, is it?

4 A. No, it's not far.

5 Q. So he gets a short bus ride to Wythenshawe bus station,  
 6 then he gets a taxi and he goes straight to the area at  
 7 Devell House, although I think we don't know  
 8 specifically where he was dropped off, but it was  
 9 probably in that Oxney Road/Banff Road area.

10 A. Yes, that's right, I think.

11 Q. He then goes to the car. There's no evidence that your  
 12 investigation has turned up, I think, that he contacted  
 13 anybody at the flat or anybody associated with it at  
 14 that point.

15 A. No, I think that's true, yes.

16 Q. And we know also, from the CCTV, that he didn't go to  
 17 the flat?

18 A. No, he didn't go to the flat.

19 Q. Or meet anybody in the car park at any time on that  
 20 visit or indeed on the next day, the 19th?

21 A. No.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which flat are we talking about?

23 MR WEATHERBY: Sorry, the flat in Devell House; Mr Greaney  
 24 didn't give the number.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I don't want the number.

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1 MR WEATHERBY: I should have been more clear because I am in  
 2 fact just about to ask a question about the other flat.  
 3 Can you help me? The working theory for  
 4 Salman Abedi renting the Granby House apartment rather  
 5 than staying, for example, at Elsmore Road?  
 6 A. Again, I think this is the -- the working theory is that  
 7 this is to ... This is all about his operational  
 8 effectiveness. So this is about a man who has returned  
 9 from Libya with a very clear intention of what he's  
 10 going to do and he is not going to take any chances  
 11 in relation to being identified in relation to having  
 12 his movements followed, in relation to being discovered  
 13 in his venture.  
 14 Q. So we're going to come on later to whether in fact he  
 15 was working with confederates during this period, but  
 16 it's clear that he was trying to stay as invisible as  
 17 possible; is that right?  
 18 A. I think that's true, yes.  
 19 Q. It's right, isn't it, that in fact the investigation has  
 20 turned up no actual evidence of him meeting any  
 21 associate or family member?  
 22 A. No known associate, no, that's right.  
 23 Q. I'm just about to come to the one exception. There's no  
 24 evidence of him actually meeting any associate or family  
 25 member or in fact visiting any place he was known, other

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1 than perhaps Devell House, other than that meeting with  
 2 Mr Zreba?  
 3 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 4 Q. So it's a good inference that he's trying to distance  
 5 himself and the plot evidentially from associates and  
 6 family?  
 7 A. I think that's very true, yes.  
 8 Q. And at least leave the impression that he did the  
 9 bombing alone?  
 10 A. Yes, that's true -- well, either leave the impression  
 11 that he did the bombing alone or in fact did the bombing  
 12 alone.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is there any evidence that he knew  
 14 Mr Zreba before this occasion? I simply can't remember,  
 15 I'm afraid.  
 16 A. None whatsoever, sir.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So again it wouldn't be a known  
 18 associate, it was a new associate?  
 19 MR WEATHERBY: (Inaudible: distorted).  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 MR WEATHERBY: I stand corrected.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just couldn't remember and I wondered  
 23 whether I remembered incorrectly, not to correct you.  
 24 MR WEATHERBY: Thank you.  
 25 We know the phone call -- I'm moving on to phones

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1 for a moment here. We know the phone call on the  
 2 evening of 22 May to the Abedi Libyan phone was on the  
 3 Alcatel phone, don't we?  
 4 A. Yes, I believe so, yes.  
 5 Q. Because by that point, he had ditched the Samsung?  
 6 A. Yes, that's right.  
 7 Q. I suppose in theory there could have been a third phone,  
 8 but I think that the contact was through the Alcatel  
 9 phone on the evidence, wasn't it?  
 10 A. Yes. There is no evidence of a third phone and the work  
 11 around it has been extensive.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Could you remind me of the time of that,  
 13 Mr Weatherby, to help me, that call?  
 14 MR WEATHERBY: I haven't got the time immediately in front  
 15 of me. (Overspeaking).  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll get it. Thank you.  
 17 MR WEATHERBY: So the SIM that's bought at the airport, as  
 18 you've told us, is used in the Alcatel phone?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. So he has used it in his existing phone which he brought  
 21 back from Libya?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. But he has not used that existing phone with any  
 24 previous or existing number or SIM?  
 25 A. No, he hasn't -- although clearly he has, not since the

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1 18th but prior to the 18th he has.  
 2 Q. Thank you.  
 3 A. So there records that relate to the Alcatel before his  
 4 travel to Libya.  
 5 Q. Of course, yes. But the distinction I'm drawing is one  
 6 of numbers that he uses in the Alcatel prior to going to  
 7 Libya is used in the Alcatel from when he returns?  
 8 A. Yes, that's right.  
 9 Q. So he's starting a new slate, if I can put it that way,  
 10 with the --  
 11 A. He is. As you know, these phones are often referred to  
 12 as burner phones when they're used in criminality.  
 13 Q. Yes, indeed. You have just given evidence earlier this  
 14 morning about the Samsung and how that was discarded.  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. The investigation hasn't traced any other number that  
 17 was used by Salman Abedi in that period from 18 May  
 18 other than the WH Smith SIM card.  
 19 A. No, and I'm as satisfied as I can be that there could  
 20 not be a third phone. From all of the many, many tens  
 21 of thousands of contacts that have been examined through  
 22 this, there's just no evidence of a third phone.  
 23 Q. Are you able to understand or is there an investigation  
 24 theory about why he would have used that SIM card in the  
 25 Samsung and the Alcatel, why he would have chopped and

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1 changed?

2 A. I think this was standard practice. So we've seen

3 throughout this investigation evidence of SIM—swapping

4 between handsets. And at the end of the day, if you

5 only need one SIM card but you do need two phones — so

6 you've got, as we would say, this phone that's very

7 simple, very easy to use, this Alcatel, but you also

8 need some internet—enabled smartphone facility, it would

9 make sense to get one SIM and then just swap.

10 Q. Yes. Frankly, to me, it would make more sense to put

11 the SIM in the Samsung and stop using the Alcatel. My

12 real question is: is there any reason that I haven't

13 thought of why he simply didn't put the SIM into the

14 Samsung and discard the Alcatel?

15 A. I don't know the answer to that, Mr Weatherby.

16 Q. No doubt your investigation would have shown the same

17 curiosity, so there may simply not be an answer to it.

18 A. There may be something around he has in his head

19 operational reasons why he is doing that, but we don't

20 know.

21 Q. But the number is what would be most traceable and what

22 he'd be most concerned about, wouldn't he?

23 A. Potentially, yes.

24 Q. The telephone evidence regarding the number 3230, the

25 WH Smith SIM card, I'm not going to go into any detail

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1 here, so I think you can probably help me with this.

2 You know, because you've already discussed it, I think

3 this morning, that there were a number of calls made to

4 car sellers on 18 May from that number; yes?

5 A. Again, from memory, yes.

6 Q. And quite a lot of Gumtree calls, Gumtree being an

7 online marketplace?

8 A. Yes, from memory, yes.

9 Q. Again, it may not matter, it may just be an oddity, but

10 does the investigation have a theory about why

11 Salman Abedi on 18 May appears to be interested in

12 buying a car?

13 A. I guess the issue around this — the thing that makes

14 sense to us goes back to this: was the Micra actually

15 serviceable and usable and whether that was for a —

16 again, going back to the operational security issue or

17 whether that was because of a mechanical issue, we don't

18 know. But certainly we know the first thing that

19 Salman Abedi — well, virtually the first thing he's

20 done is to go to the Micra, check it, that's what he's

21 done. His first action is to check that vehicle.

22 So whether that then threw up doubts in his own mind

23 as to whether he needed a replacement car or whatever,

24 I simply don't know.

25 Q. Right (overspeaking) matter.

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1 A. We have no real information on that.

2 Q. Did the investigation actually determine whether the

3 Micra was in a serviceable condition?

4 A. We couldn't really tell because we didn't have the keys,

5 so it was impossible to tell whether at that time

6 it would be, and you'll understand it was recovered some

7 time afterwards.

8 Q. Yes, of course.

9 A. So it was sat there for quite a period of time.

10 Q. It was recovered about a fortnight after Abedi returned,

11 wasn't it?

12 A. Yes, that's right. Of course, it had been sat there for

13 over a month whilst he was in Libya.

14 Q. Yes, sure.

15 A. It was a question that we asked, but I don't think we

16 could answer it properly, to be honest.

17 Q. Okay. Just back to the phones for a minute, there were

18 a number of unattributed calls made, and I think

19 received, on the phone in that period from the 18th,

20 weren't there?

21 A. I am sorry, could you repeat that?

22 Q. Yes. The investigation team, the specialists,

23 interrogated the 3230 number?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. So we have the records of all outgoing and incoming

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1 calls to that number in the period from when it was

2 operational.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. It's right, isn't it, there are a number of unknown

5 numbers and unattributed calls made and received?

6 A. I think that's probably true, yes. Specifically I would

7 have to look at those, but yes.

8 Q. Okay. I may ask you to do that later, but I think I can

9 just deal with this short point now. Some of the

10 unknown calls are made through what is termed a spoofing

11 service, aren't they?

12 A. Again, I would probably have to look at that,

13 Mr Weatherby, but if you say that that's on the

14 document, I will take your word for it.

15 Q. I'll give a reference now and then I'll indicate what

16 I'm interested in and perhaps we can pick it up later.

17 It's a very small point again. Your investigation

18 produced a report, and I don't want this on the screen,

19 but I will give the reference, {INQ032578/1}, and

20 in that report your investigation gives an explanation

21 of spoofing, and in short it means —

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, can you hang on for a minute? I'm

23 sure you will know much better than I do. I'm afraid

24 I'm not personally familiar with this term or whether

25 it's well-known, whether it is something which is used

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1 by criminals, whether it's something which may assist  
 2 potential criminals to get to know about it. I have no  
 3 idea. Mr Weatherby, no doubt you have considered that,  
 4 have you?  
 5 MR WEATHERBY: I think it's a fairly well-known system, but  
 6 I'll hesitate. I'm happy to discuss it with the inquiry  
 7 over lunch if that would be easier.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind? It's no doubt my ignorance  
 9 and everybody else in the world knows about it, but I'm  
 10 afraid I don't happen to and we do have counsel here for  
 11 GMP. So would you mind doing that over lunch?  
 12 MR WEATHERBY: Absolutely no problem.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry to be difficult about it.  
 14 MR WEATHERBY: I'm sorry and maybe I should have not been  
 15 so --  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No criticism at all. Sorry to interrupt  
 17 you.  
 18 MR WEATHERBY: The car space at Granby House, again a small  
 19 point, but it's right, as we have heard, that he didn't  
 20 ask for a car space until he was actually offered it and  
 21 then he paid extra for a car space at Granby House?  
 22 A. If that's in the witness statement, yes.  
 23 Q. Obviously, he had the Micra and obviously these calls to  
 24 the car sellers, which we've already discussed. Did the  
 25 investigation have evidence that Salman Abedi actually

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1 ever did drive? From the evidence we've seen it appears  
 2 that Hashem is the driver. Are you able to say? You  
 3 may not be able to say one way or the other.  
 4 A. If I can be helpful, that's always been my assumption,  
 5 that it was... Given the choice, it would be Hashem who  
 6 would be the driver. Of course, that's not to say that  
 7 Salman didn't. From memory, again, I don't believe  
 8 Salman had a driving licence.  
 9 Q. That may not stop him driving, of course.  
 10 A. No, of course not.  
 11 Q. You have raised a query in passing, I think, about  
 12 whether in fact he had the key to the Micra, and it's  
 13 right, isn't it, that the investigation didn't find the  
 14 key?  
 15 A. No, if we had found it, we would have actually tried it.  
 16 Q. Of course. Would you agree it's rather unlikely that  
 17 the car would have been left unlocked from 15 April to  
 18 19 May, bearing in mind its contents?  
 19 A. Yes, completely unlikely.  
 20 Q. Yes. Of course it would have been vulnerable to car  
 21 thieves and kids, even in a relatively secure car park,  
 22 wouldn't it?  
 23 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 24 Q. And of course at least one of the men who were observed  
 25 on the CCTV, and again I'm going to return to him later,

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1 Mr Alzilitni, he appears on the CCTV to check the front  
 2 passenger door, doesn't he?  
 3 A. Again, I will take your word for that, yes, I'm sure.  
 4 Q. Are you aware on 1 June when the police discovered the  
 5 Micra whether it was locked then at that point?  
 6 A. My understanding is it was locked, yes.  
 7 Q. So inferentially, it does appear that Salman Abedi had  
 8 the key on both 18 and 19 May; is that right?  
 9 A. Yes, that's my understanding, yes.  
 10 Q. Given that he appears to have gone straight from the  
 11 airport, it would be a reasonable supposition that he  
 12 had the key with him when he returned from Libya?  
 13 A. Possibly.  
 14 Q. Although it is conceivable, for example, the key was  
 15 left on a wheel arch or something like that?  
 16 A. Yes, possibly. We don't have any information around  
 17 that (overspeaking).  
 18 Q. No. I'm just trying to fill some gaps. Some of them  
 19 are more important than others.  
 20 A. Of course. What he brought in, for example, into the  
 21 airport in the rucksack, I am sure that we don't know  
 22 the contents of that.  
 23 Q. He simply wasn't stopped, there was no search, therefore  
 24 we don't know what was in the rucksack?  
 25 A. No.

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1 Q. Can I just turn to the scientific links to the Micra?  
 2 You've carefully, with Mr de la Poer, taken us through  
 3 the presentation. We don't need to go back to that.  
 4 You have shown us the scientific links to Salman Abedi  
 5 and Hashem Abedi.  
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 7 Q. We know also that there were scientific links to Ismail  
 8 and Ramadan Abedi.  
 9 A. I don't know whether you'd find this helpful,  
 10 Mr Weatherby, but if I might explain those. I think  
 11 that would be more helpful, actually. When we say  
 12 scientific links, we are talking about evidence relating  
 13 to DNA.  
 14 Q. Yes.  
 15 A. In these circumstances, so with the two individuals that  
 16 you've mentioned, that is a very complex picture. So as  
 17 you will understand from criminal prosecutions, and  
 18 you'll probably be better versed than me, there are  
 19 mixtures of DNA profiles and we are talking about  
 20 individuals who are very closely related.  
 21 Q. Right.  
 22 A. In relation to the investigation of those DNA samples,  
 23 there would inevitably be further work to do.  
 24 Q. Okay.  
 25 A. That would be predicated, obviously, on some of your

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1 very first comments around how we would proceed  
 2 in relation to other suspects, were we to be in  
 3 a position to make those arrests.  
 4 Q. And this has been subject to some legal discussion and  
 5 ruling by the chair, so I think I'm on good ground to  
 6 press on a little .  
 7 A. Okay.  
 8 Q. I think we're at the kind of interface between evidence  
 9 that's necessary for a criminal prosecution and I think  
 10 you're saying that, if it were ever to get there, the  
 11 evidence would have to be considered further.  
 12 A. Yes, it would, and scientifically further as well.  
 13 Q. But the position has been stated, again in the course of  
 14 legal discussion, that the DNA of both Ismail and  
 15 Ramadan was found on the Micra?  
 16 A. Also very true. However, again, and it's moving into  
 17 evidential niceties around this, but the position of  
 18 that would be potentially relevant or not relevant.  
 19 Q. Yes.  
 20 A. As you will understand, some things might be more  
 21 incriminating than other things within the Micra and  
 22 indeed there may be explanations as to why that DNA may  
 23 be in the position that it's in.  
 24 Q. Yes. That's where I'm headed really. With Ismail,  
 25 am I right that the links merely suggest that he has

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1 been in the Micra?  
 2 A. Actually, not necessarily, no. It doesn't necessarily  
 3 suggest that. Again, you'll be familiar with the term  
 4 "movable items" within the Micra. So again, this is  
 5 something that we would present in relation to an  
 6 interview process and indeed has been presented,  
 7 I understand, to Mr Abedi, but it might be something you  
 8 might want to discuss with him in due course.  
 9 Q. Yes, well, in order to do so, I'd quite like to  
 10 understand a bit more from you, if I may.  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Can you help us then with where the links of  
 13 Ismail Abedi on the Micra were?  
 14 A. So we're talking about a movable item within the Micra,  
 15 so this is one of the tools that was in the Micra.  
 16 Q. Which tool?  
 17 A. This was a hammer.  
 18 Q. Right. Okay. Moving on to Ramadan, my understanding is  
 19 that his DNA was found on the indicator on the left-hand  
 20 side of the steering column.  
 21 A. Yes, that's my recollection too.  
 22 Q. And on the driver's door handle?  
 23 A. Yes, that's right.  
 24 Q. And that would lead to an available inference that  
 25 Ramadan Abedi had sat in the driver's seat?

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1 A. Potentially yes. I think there's a further item as  
 2 well.  
 3 Q. There is.  
 4 A. Again these are quite complex mixes that would require  
 5 an evidential DNA sample from Ramadan Abedi.  
 6 Q. Yes. So the current understanding is that that other  
 7 item is one of the blue drums?  
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 9 Q. The current understanding of the investigation is that  
 10 Ramadan Abedi's DNA is on the handles of one of the blue  
 11 drums in the Micra?  
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 13 Q. Again, there's an available inference that he's moved  
 14 it?  
 15 A. Potentially.  
 16 Q. Now, Somerton Court. Is there any evidence that Salman  
 17 and Hashem Abedi, when they went to empty the flat, is  
 18 there any evidence that they were with anybody else?  
 19 A. No.  
 20 Q. Equally, is there any evidence that they were not with  
 21 anybody else?  
 22 A. I'm almost trying to understand that, Mr Weatherby.  
 23 I don't... In what respect?  
 24 Q. There's no evidence of a third person, but there's no  
 25 evidence that there wasn't a third person or indeed

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1 a fourth person; am I right about that?  
 2 A. I'm not entirely sure I would describe it as such  
 3 because in the absence of the first, I wouldn't  
 4 necessarily look for the second. Does that make sense?  
 5 Q. Let me put it a different way. It's possible, isn't it,  
 6 that somebody else was there or some other people were  
 7 there helping them?  
 8 A. There's no evidence to suggest that. The flat has been  
 9 extensively examined forensically and I would certainly  
 10 look for the evidence rather than make an assumption on  
 11 the absence of evidence.  
 12 Q. Yes. I'm not (overspeaking) — I missed that.  
 13 A. Anything is possible.  
 14 Q. Okay. Let me put it this way: the Micra is bought very  
 15 late on the 13th?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. It's taken to Devell House, effectively very late on the  
 18 14th?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. It appears that Ramadan and Ismail's DNA has got on not  
 21 only to the Micra and its driving seat but also on to  
 22 items within it?  
 23 A. Not Ismail's, sorry, Ramadan's, yes.  
 24 Q. Yes. Well, you mentioned Ismail's DNA being on a tool.  
 25 A. Yes, that's right.

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1 Q. So given the timescale, it's certainly possible that  
 2 Salman and Hashem were assisted by them in moving the  
 3 stuff from Somerton Court, isn't it?  
 4 A. From an investigator's perspective, I would rephrase  
 5 that. I would say that we have potential evidence that  
 6 they have a connection with the car and there of course  
 7 may be an explanation for that.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we have a potential explanation that  
 9 Ramadan is connected with the car. We have a potential  
 10 explanation that Ismail is connected with one of the  
 11 objects in the car?  
 12 A. Yes, that's right, sir.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So anything is possible, which is  
 14 consistent with those facts, assuming they are right,  
 15 bearing in mind what may be complexities of DNA.  
 16 Can you actually take it any further than that?  
 17 A. I don't think we can, accepting that we have no evidence  
 18 of either of those individuals at 74 Somerton Court.  
 19 That's the issue for me.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you looked at the forensic evidence,  
 21 DNA and fingerprints at that place as well?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 MR WEATHERBY: I take it no further. It's simply the  
 24 timescale and the items that are linked. Again, a very  
 25 small point on the Micra and what was in it. It is

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1 clear from the helpful animation that there were a lot  
 2 of screws and nails left in the Micra, yet Salman Abedi  
 3 went and bought further hardware to use as part of the  
 4 bomb.  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. Is there a theory as to why he did that?  
 7 MR DE LA POER: Sir, I'm just a little concerned knowing  
 8 what one theory might be. I'm sorry to interrupt.  
 9 MR WEATHERBY: I understand.  
 10 MR DE LA POER: Do you have my point?  
 11 MR WEATHERBY: I understand and I'll move on.  
 12 Finally on these preliminary points arising from  
 13 Mr Greaney's questions, I just want to ask you about  
 14 Ramadan's links, and as you'll recall, he took you  
 15 through his links to Mr al-Libi and various other  
 16 points. There's just one more point I want to see if  
 17 we can look at. Again, you may not be able to help, but  
 18 I want to see if you can.  
 19 I raised in my opening statement a Financial Times  
 20 article which referred to Ramadan Abedi caring for  
 21 Abdalraouf Abdallah in Tripoli after he was shot in  
 22 2012. Are you aware of that report either from my  
 23 opening or generally?  
 24 A. I have had a chance to quickly glance through that.  
 25 I don't know the answer to that question. So if I were

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1 to say to you, Mr Weatherby, this is news to me, I don't  
 2 know that that's -- if that has happened, I don't know  
 3 that.  
 4 Q. Yes. We know, I think, from your evidence yesterday  
 5 that Rabaa, the sister, has reported that Ramadan  
 6 himself appears to have been injured at around the time  
 7 of the uprising against Gaddafi.  
 8 A. Yes. That's right.  
 9 Q. I think she referred to him having a shrapnel wound.  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. This is around the same time, it's the same uprising,  
 12 when Abdalraouf Abdallah was shot and injured.  
 13 Am I right, you're telling me there is no evidence  
 14 you have seen which either supports or undermines what's  
 15 in the Financial Times report?  
 16 A. I am not aware of anything that supports or undermines  
 17 it, but of course that doesn't say it doesn't exist.  
 18 I just don't know.  
 19 Q. Absolutely. That's very helpful.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can neither confirm nor deny it, but  
 21 you know nothing about it as well?  
 22 A. I genuinely know nothing about it.  
 23 MR WEATHERBY: All right. That's helpful that we know that.  
 24 Moving on then to perhaps the substantial section of  
 25 the questions I want it ask you about.

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1 Any police investigation has a number of facets. It  
 2 looks at what happened, it looks at who did what and it  
 3 looks at with what purpose; is that right?  
 4 A. Yes, I think that's true.  
 5 Q. As we've heard, and Mr Greaney went through it in  
 6 summary, some of the procurers of the precursor  
 7 chemicals and catalyst, they've given innocent  
 8 explanations for their involvement; that's right, isn't  
 9 it?  
 10 A. Yes, that's right.  
 11 Q. Some of the storers, or people connected with  
 12 Devell House, have given explanations, less innocent  
 13 ones, but ones which are designed to distance themselves  
 14 from this plot, including drug dealing?  
 15 A. Yes, and that's the added complication that I would  
 16 put --  
 17 Q. We'll come on to that in due course, but of course the  
 18 drug dealing issue was a complicating factor for you,  
 19 wasn't it?  
 20 A. Yes, it was.  
 21 Q. So for the investigation, faced with an innocent or at  
 22 least an exculpatory explanation, even if it wasn't  
 23 innocent, part of the investigation is looking for  
 24 evidence that would undermine that explanation or  
 25 corroborate positively actual involvement in this plot;

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1 yes?  
 2 A. Yes, that's absolutely true. That was extensive, yes.  
 3 Q. Two very key parts of the investigation were the  
 4 procurement and also the storage and the group around  
 5 Devell House?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Am I right that evidentially, there is not much of an  
 8 overlap between those two groups beyond of course the  
 9 Abedis themselves? So you've got the procurers and  
 10 you've got the storers?  
 11 A. There is an overlap, yes. We go back to the added  
 12 complication of drug dealing. I'm not entirely sure how  
 13 much we can probably discuss about that, but there is  
 14 the added complication, and yes, there is an overlap.  
 15 Q. Okay, right. I'm hesitating because I'm just  
 16 wondering...  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Hang on for a minute. There's obviously  
 18 something that you're reluctant to say. It may be that  
 19 that can be supplied to you, Mr Weatherby, over lunch  
 20 and between counsel they can actually decide whether or  
 21 not it is something which is better not said. I'm just  
 22 being cautious.  
 23 MR WEATHERBY: I entirely understand.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Perhaps we could arrange for that to  
 25 happen over lunch.

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1 MR WEATHERBY: Absolutely and I will move on from that.  
 2 Putting aside the fact that there may be some  
 3 overlap, they are still quite distinct groups. You have  
 4 a group of people that the Abedis have identified to  
 5 use, to procure, either involved in the plot or not, and  
 6 then you have a group of people who are based round  
 7 Devell House. I fully understand your caveat that there  
 8 may be some overlap, but they are quite distinct groups,  
 9 aren't they?  
 10 A. I'm not sure, Mr Weatherby, I agree with that.  
 11 Q. I will move on then.  
 12 A. I think there is -- so the two groups, there are  
 13 distinct factions of those groups, but I think there is  
 14 some overlap. This is about a wide circle of fairly  
 15 young Libyan associates within the Libyan community.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you're not talking about overlap in  
 17 terms of common people being in each group, you're maybe  
 18 talking about how they come from the same circle of  
 19 people generally?  
 20 A. Yes, but also when we talk about them being distinct  
 21 groups, they will know each other.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Maybe one knows one who knows the other  
 23 but they wouldn't --  
 24 A. Absolutely. And if they don't know each other, they  
 25 will know of each other.

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1 (Overspeaking)  
 2 A. There is some mixing between that process. From  
 3 a police perspective, I would say that there is a degree  
 4 of commonality within that.  
 5 Q. Okay.  
 6 A. So I don't think there has been any sort of selection of  
 7 these two groups of people by virtue of who they are to  
 8 separate them out. I think there has been direct  
 9 approach to individuals to do things on the basis of  
 10 a relationship between the Abedis and that individual.  
 11 Q. Okay.  
 12 A. I think it's more about that than the group, if you'll  
 13 forgive me for saying so.  
 14 Q. Okay. I may come back to that, but we'll consider it  
 15 over lunch if we may.  
 16 Sticking with the Devell House individuals, the key  
 17 individuals who are associated to Devell House, looking  
 18 at evidence beyond the Micra itself, taking my general  
 19 proposition that an investigation here sees  
 20 an association with Devell House and potentially to the  
 21 Micra --  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. -- but considers it may be innocent, so it looks for  
 24 other corroborative evidence; yes?  
 25 A. I would say keeps an open mind about it and --

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You look for evidence which points one  
 2 way or the other?  
 3 A. One way or the other.  
 4 MR WEATHERBY: Sorry, I wasn't suggesting otherwise. I'm  
 5 sorry if I didn't put it very elegantly.  
 6 I'm going to deal with this in overview and then it  
 7 might be time for the lunch break. Before we stop  
 8 I want to deal with this very broadly and I'll come back  
 9 to the detail this afternoon.  
 10 Would you agree that three of the young men who are  
 11 evidentially connected to Devell House, and they've been  
 12 named and I'll name them in a second again, but three of  
 13 the young men evidentially connected to Devell House  
 14 were cell sited close to and/or were seen close to  
 15 Granby House between 19 and 22 May?  
 16 A. I would have to check that carefully, Mr Weatherby.  
 17 Q. I will take you through the evidence. But the three  
 18 individuals are Elyas Bliidi, who lived at Devell House,  
 19 and he's both seen and cell sited very close indeed to  
 20 Granby House.  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. Ahmed Taghdi, of course, who was involved in the Micra  
 23 and Devell House, who's also cell sited close to  
 24 Granby House.  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And there's Ahmed Alzilitni, again connected to  
 2 Devell House, and he is cell sited again in the vicinity  
 3 of Granby House, although before you answer that, can  
 4 I just make clear that I'm less interested in the cell  
 5 siting of Mr Alzilitni than I am with the other two.  
 6 A. Just on a broader issue, and of course I'll check that  
 7 over lunch, if I may, but on a broader issue there are  
 8 some difficulties around cell siting in the city centre.  
 9 Q. Yes.  
 10 A. And sometimes it is hard to reach an evidential  
 11 conclusion on that because of the nature of the cell  
 12 siting. So it's a very popular area and my  
 13 understanding, my recollection of that cell siting  
 14 process, is that it can be less than provative in its --  
 15 Q. Cell siting puts you in the vicinity, it doesn't put you  
 16 in a particular spot?  
 17 A. It does and because it's so very busy in the city  
 18 centre, automatically you will get bounce-off from cell  
 19 sites to other cell sites because it is so busy. And  
 20 all of that is not uncommon. I will check for you.  
 21 Q. You're being very cautious, if I may say so, and that's  
 22 quite proper. I'm not suggesting anything more than  
 23 that, but I am putting at the moment that there is  
 24 a connection which raises suspicions by close  
 25 association of these three individuals with both

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1 Devell House and the Micra, but also proximity to  
 2 Granby House at the time Salman Abedi was living there;  
 3 yes?  
 4 A. Mr Weatherby, we've had suspicions all the way through  
 5 this process of a whole number of people, so I don't  
 6 agree with a level of suspicion, but it's the evidential  
 7 outcome that we've got. But if I may check, I'll check.  
 8 Q. May I make clear, I'm not going back on what I said  
 9 at the start of my questions to you. I'm not  
 10 questioning the investigation or the CPS decision at  
 11 all. I'm just trying to build up the picture, with your  
 12 assistance, of what evidence there was.  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. So you would agree, I think, that the proximity of these  
 15 three individuals to Granby House raises a suspicion?  
 16 A. Yes, in terms of in the overall picture of suspicion,  
 17 yes.  
 18 Q. Absolutely.  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. I'll come back to that, but I'll move on now just before  
 21 we stop for lunch, just to deal with a couple of other  
 22 quick points as overview.  
 23 During his time in Libya, the last time in Libya  
 24 before he returned, Salman Abedi was in contact with  
 25 a number of individuals connected to Devell House,

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1 including Mr Taghdi, Mr Elmehdi and Mr Alzoubare. And  
 2 there's a fourth one who I don't think I need to name at  
 3 this point. That's right, isn't it?  
 4 A. Again, I'd specifically have to check. I'm aware of  
 5 some contact, yes.  
 6 Q. Again, I will come back to it this afternoon, but again  
 7 a connection between Abedi and Libya --  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. -- in that period and individuals connected to  
 10 Devell House and the Micra by extension?  
 11 A. I completely agree. And those contacts are key and were  
 12 treated clearly as part --  
 13 Q. Absolutely.  
 14 A. -- of the picture of suspicion.  
 15 Q. Plainly they were and that's why I know about them and  
 16 how I can ask you questions about them. And it's right,  
 17 also, isn't it, that a number of those connected to  
 18 Devell House visited Abdalraouf Abdallah in prison?  
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 20 Q. And a number of those connected to Devell House were  
 21 seen in close proximity to the Micra, including  
 22 Mr Elmehdi and Mr Alzilitni?  
 23 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 24 Q. And Mr Taghdi and Mr Alzilitni after the attack?  
 25 A. Yes, that's right.

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1 Q. And indeed, I'll take you to the image this afternoon,  
 2 but it's right, isn't it, that Mr Alzilitni is seen to  
 3 do an action which has been construed by your  
 4 investigation as wiping the car or a part of it above  
 5 the front passenger door frame?  
 6 A. Yes, from recollection, Mr Alzilitni does do that, yes.  
 7 Q. Although in fact he denies it in interview.  
 8 I think that's probably a convenient moment, sir, to  
 9 stop. Before I do, this is a very complicated mosaic of  
 10 evidence, isn't it?  
 11 A. Yes, it is.  
 12 MR WEATHERBY: With your assistance, I'll try and make some  
 13 bits of it slightly less complicated this afternoon, but  
 14 I'm not sure I'll be able to fulfil that promise.  
 15 Would that be a convenient moment, sir?  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It would, after I have just asked  
 17 a couple of questions.  
 18 Mr Weatherby, what I'm about to say is not in any  
 19 way to underline what you're asking or have done, it's  
 20 just so that people get things, I hope, in the proper  
 21 context and see how investigating officers have to see  
 22 things.  
 23 MR WEATHERBY: Yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So any investigation presumably may well  
 25 produce a number of people who you are suspicious about?

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1 A. Yes, that's right, sir.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Some of those, when you investigate

3 further, those suspicions may prove to be well-founded

4 and you charge, and the jury will either convict or

5 acquit depending on their view of the matter when they

6 have heard it. Otherwise, you may have a case where,

7 when you look into it, those suspicions are then proved

8 to be unfounded, an explanation can be given for them,

9 in which case you don't do anything further, or

10 presumably you can be left in a case sometimes where

11 there are suspicions but you can't actually confirm them

12 or deny them but there's nothing sufficient to bring

13 someone to court?

14 A. Exactly.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And they remain innocent because they're

16 not proven to be guilty?

17 A. Yes.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Secondly, dealing with questions like

19 DNA, it may be that people, when they read things in the

20 press, will think if someone's DNA is linked with

21 anything which is linked with any crime, they must be

22 guilty. It's an inference that you find some people

23 draw?

24 A. We don't do that.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I wasn't suggesting the police do.

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1 A. You're probably right though.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: DNA is actually quite a complicated

3 topic.

4 A. It is.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Not only interpreting the DNA

6 particularly when you have mixtures of DNA and people

7 who are related?

8 A. Yes.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But also there are complicated

10 procedures in which DNA can actually get from one place

11 to another without actually being transferred by the

12 person whose DNA it is?

13 A. Exactly.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So these are all things that you need to

15 look at, but sometimes perhaps those finer details don't

16 get reported in the press?

17 A. Yes.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Similarly, in relation to looking at

19 cell sites, as you have already, I think, explained,

20 that is really not always a straightforward subject?

21 A. No.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Any cell site will cover an area and no

23 cell site can actually pin someone down exactly to where

24 they are; is that right?

25 A. That's right.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And as you've already explained, if

2 you're in somewhere like a city centre you can overload

3 the closest cell site because there are so many people

4 making phone calls, and it bounces off to one which is

5 further away, which may be further away than the actual

6 normal vicinity?

7 A. Yes.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: All I'm trying to say is there are quite

9 a lot of complications if and when you need to look at

10 these things in detail, and I'm sure that everyone will

11 bear that in mind when considering the way you

12 investigated those matters.

13 Having said that rather at great length, we'll break

14 off for an hour now, so 2.05.

15 (1.07 pm)

16 (The lunch adjournment)

17 (2.05 pm)

18 MR GREANEY: I will just make sure that Mr Weatherby knows

19 we're in a position resume his questioning.

20 MR WEATHERBY: Thank you.

21 Mr Barraclough, I am now going to turn to some of

22 the detail and I'm going to start with two meetings, and

23 I use the term fairly loosely, that occurred after the

24 bombing. We know the bombing was at 22.31. At about

25 23.55, Mr Blidi, Mr Oun and Mr Sadigh are seen exiting

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1 from Devell House. I want to put up some images of

2 this.

3 Mr Lopez, could we have up on the screen, please,

4 {INQ035397/269}.

5 Within an hour and a half of the detonation of the

6 bomb?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. I can't see on my screen, but has the image come up?

9 A. Yes, they have, Mr Weatherby, they're up.

10 Q. You can see on that image Mr Blidi in the front and then

11 Mr Oun and Mr Sadigh. If we go forward a page, please.

12 {INQ035397/270}. The image at the bottom of the page

13 we've just seen and the image on the top of this page —

14 MR GREANEY: We have on the screen the top image timed at

15 23.55.09. Is that the one you intend to be on the

16 screen?

17 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, that's correct.

18 MR GREANEY: Sorry.

19 MR WEATHERBY: It's the legend really I'm after. The reason

20 I put the previous page up was because it shows the

21 three of them, then this shows the three of them again,

22 and the legend indicates that your officers who are

23 observing this noted that they appear to have their

24 heads down and hands around their faces. Yes?

25 A. They have noted that yes.

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1 Q. I'm not suggesting this is very strong evidence on its  
2 own, I'm back to the mosaic. There is some evidence  
3 here that your officers, not me, but your officers have  
4 noted that it shows them putting their heads down and  
5 their hands over their faces; yes?  
6 A. They have. This is meant to be -- and I think you'll  
7 have observed it in all of the SoEs, it's a very literal  
8 description.  
9 Q. Yes. Not much turns on this, I can reassure you of  
10 that, but it's just the start of a picture.  
11 A. Okay.  
12 Q. What happens then, and it's on this record, I don't need  
13 to take you through it all, it'll take much longer if  
14 I do. But what happens then is the three of them leave  
15 the building, get into a hatchback and leave?  
16 A. Yes.  
17 Q. They then return fairly shortly thereafter and they go  
18 back into the building and presumably up to the flat.  
19 I make the clear point that when they do so, they don't  
20 then seem to be obviously hiding their faces, so I am  
21 not making a big point of that.  
22 Then moving on, could we have {INQ035397/278},  
23 please, Mr Lopez.  
24 The bottom image is in fact Mr Blidi, although  
25 I have to take your officers' word for it. That's

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1 Mr Blidi exiting the lift at 00.49. He's obviously got  
2 his hood up and he's carrying some bags.  
3 A. Yes.  
4 Q. He's followed by the other two and they get into two  
5 cars. Mr Blidi, with the bags, drives off in the  
6 Mercedes, which he uses, with Mr Oun. And then he  
7 returns at 01.18 and parks next to a dark hatchback,  
8 which contains Mr Sadigh, who had come down with them,  
9 and then Mr Blidi and Mr Oun get in. So all three are  
10 in the hatchback. We can look through that if you want,  
11 but that's what your officers have recorded.  
12 A. I'm happy to take your summaries.  
13 Q. Then a few minutes later, Mohammed Alzoubare arrives,  
14 and he's seen on foot using the large bin to activate  
15 the gate, which I referred to this morning.  
16 A. Yes.  
17 Q. In doing so, he allows a dark-coloured Ford Focus to  
18 enter the car park, and that parks next to the car now  
19 containing Mr Blidi, Mr Oun and Mr Sadigh.  
20 A. Yes.  
21 Q. Perhaps we can look at image, {INQ035397/291}, please.  
22 That's what happens, that's what I've just described at  
23 the end of that passage.  
24 A. Yes.  
25 Q. The driver of the Focus is Mr Elmehdi who, I think, is

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1 often seen driving the Focus, and Mr Alzoubare walks  
2 across the car park and joins them and moves between the  
3 two cars.  
4 Then at around 1.45 in the morning, the meeting  
5 breaks up and the cars leave; okay?  
6 A. Yes.  
7 Q. So what we have there is we have a meeting of a number  
8 of the men that have been mentioned. Again I stress,  
9 I am not putting any more names than have already been  
10 mentioned by Mr Greaney. So there is movement, there is  
11 some evidence of hiding of identity, movement of bags,  
12 and then a meeting in the car park quite shortly after  
13 the bombing has occurred.  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. And very long before any public mention of the  
16 involvement of Salman Abedi.  
17 A. Yes.  
18 Q. In looking at that, I stress that of course we must bear  
19 in mind that this flat is also a centre of a drug  
20 dealing operation.  
21 A. That's true.  
22 Q. Two of those people, Mr Elmehdi in the Ford Focus and  
23 Mr Oun, were convicted and Mr Blidi was acquitted.  
24 Also we should bear in mind, shouldn't we, that  
25 Mr Elmehdi and Mr Sadigh were visitors to

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1 Abdalraouf Abdallah with Salman Abedi in January 2017  
2 and Mr Elmehdi and Mr Sadigh visited him on other  
3 occasions?  
4 A. Yes.  
5 Q. So it's not clear what the items were, but they could of  
6 course have been linked to the plot. They could have  
7 been linked to drug dealing or they could have been  
8 something completely different; yes?  
9 A. They could have been. When you say "linked to the  
10 plot"?  
11 Q. We simply don't know, do we, what they were? All we can  
12 say is within a short period after the detonation of the  
13 bomb, bags are being moved from that flat --  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. -- by people connected to Salman Abedi and  
16 Abdalraouf Abdallah and also connected to the Micra?  
17 A. Yes, and we don't know what's in the bags.  
18 Q. We don't know what's in them, but it's at least an  
19 available inference that the removal of whatever those  
20 objects were and the hiding of identity, particularly by  
21 Mr Blidi, is connected to the bomb? It's an available  
22 inference, isn't it?  
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It depends on what you define an  
24 inference as, doesn't it?  
25 MR WEATHERBY: Well, okay, this is the small --

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you are saying, would you ask a jury  
2 to conclude from that that they're pieces of a bomb, I'm  
3 not sure a judge would say it's a possible inference on  
4 what you have just seen.

5 MR WEATHERBY: I'm at pains to move from the criminal  
6 jurisdiction here. Of course, one role of the inquiry  
7 is to come up with a narrative of what happened.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, but still one does need some  
9 proper factual basis to draw an inference. It can be  
10 consistent with something because there's nothing to  
11 disprove it.

12 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, okay. Bearing in mind the relationships  
13 here and the importance of Devell House to what we're  
14 considering, it's consistent with the fact that those  
15 involved in these images have knowledge that the bomb  
16 has detonated and they are clearing stuff out of the  
17 flat; is that fair?

18 A. No, and I would say so from a number of different -- for  
19 a number of different reasons, really. So Devell House,  
20 the flat at Devell House, has been extensively searched,  
21 forensically searched, and there is nothing there to  
22 suggest that it's played any part in this process  
23 whatsoever. So that would be the first thing that would  
24 make me question that.

25 The second thing, Mr Weatherby, is what are we

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1 saying they have in those bags that is linked to the  
2 plot? It's what are we saying is missing. We can  
3 speculate about any number of different things that  
4 might have been there, but from an evidential point of  
5 view, what are we saying that's actually missing, in a  
6 physical evidence perspective, from the construction of  
7 this device?

8 Q. I'm sure it's my fault for putting the question  
9 inelegantly. I'm putting to you that we don't know  
10 what's in those bags. Those bags are being moved in the  
11 small hours of Tuesday morning.

12 A. The final point that I'd make around this is we do know  
13 that there is drug dealing from those premises and  
14 that's proven. Moreover, we know that that has  
15 continued, so despite the detonation of the bomb, that  
16 has continued because we found evidence of drug dealing  
17 when we recovered the Micra in June.

18 So you may say -- there may be a presumption that if  
19 the bomb went off and they were drug dealing, they would  
20 stop drug dealing from those premises, but that actually  
21 hasn't happened, the drug dealing has continued. The  
22 material that you're referring to and the material that  
23 came about as a result of the specific analysis of these  
24 individuals was some of the evidence that was relied on  
25 in relation to that drug dealing.

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1 For example, some of the congregation of these  
2 individuals as a group and the contact that goes on is  
3 the very substance of the evidence that's been used  
4 in --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I'm sorry, not only in the drug dealing conviction but  
7 in other drug dealing investigations as well, which are  
8 current.

9 Q. Yes, okay. Thank you.

10 A. So I return to my position of, I must follow the  
11 evidence, and we have had any number of theories about  
12 all of these individuals and we've tried our best to try  
13 and investigate those out, but at the end of the day we  
14 return to the position of what is the evidence that  
15 we have. As the police investigation, we have to rely  
16 on that.

17 Q. Yes. I'm not disagreeing with you or trying to disagree  
18 with you at all about that. I put my question on the  
19 basis that it could have been material relating to the  
20 plot or it could have been material relating to drug  
21 dealing or something completely different. The point  
22 that I'm putting to you is that this is in the small  
23 hours of Tuesday morning and it's within a very short  
24 period of time of the bomb being detonated by people who  
25 are linked to Salman Abedi and people who are linked to

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1 extremism and people who are linked to the Micra. I'm  
2 suggesting to you it's consistent with knowledge that  
3 the bomb is potentially coming back to them and that's  
4 why they are moving whatever they are moving there.  
5 That's all I'm putting to you.

6 A. So that could be a possible theory. To agree with you,  
7 that is certainly a theory that we would have explored  
8 in the course of our investigation.

9 Q. I'm sure you did, I'm sure you did.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Well, thank you for agreeing with that.

12 Moving on to a second meeting that same day, so  
13 that's the early hours of 23 May, now I want to take you  
14 to a meeting in the afternoon. I'm going to take some  
15 care with this because it relates to another police  
16 operation. I'm not going to identify the specific road,  
17 I'm simply going to be careful with it.

18 It's correct, isn't it, that as a result of  
19 a totally unrelated police operation, nothing to do with  
20 this case or counter-terrorism, a group of individuals  
21 were observed on a street in the middle of an estate in  
22 Moss Side on the afternoon of 23 May? Are you aware of  
23 what I'm alluding to?

24 A. Yes, I think so, Mr Weatherby, yes.

25 Q. I'm being careful. The exact time doesn't matter, but

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1 it's around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The  
 2 significance of this is that one of the officers who's  
 3 coincidentally involved in this other police operation  
 4 overhears one of the men involved in a meeting on this  
 5 street saying, "Our boy did good at the arena".  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Could you just repeat that? I missed  
 7 it.  
 8 MR WEATHERBY: "Our boy did good at the arena."  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 10 MR WEATHERBY: So you know what I'm talking about, officer?  
 11 A. Yes, I do. I have helpfully got -- I'm just reading the  
 12 report that refers to it.  
 13 Q. Yes.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Take your time.  
 15 A. Thank you, sir.  
 16 (Pause)  
 17 MR WEATHERBY: I'm only going to ask you some fairly bare  
 18 details about this, Mr Barraclough.  
 19 A. Sorry, I was just checking the accuracy of that, only  
 20 that -- clearly, that statement is -- there's a degree  
 21 of doubt cast on that, on what was said, I believe.  
 22 Is that your understanding of that, Mr Weatherby?  
 23 Q. It wasn't my understanding of it, no. Can you help us  
 24 with that, why there's a degree of doubt about it?  
 25 A. Again, I would have to probably check specifically, but

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1 I think when there is ...  
 2 (Pause)  
 3 I'm sorry, can I just read this?  
 4 Q. Absolutely, take your time. I'm not going to take this  
 5 much further. I'm going to identify the individuals  
 6 that I'm interested in who were there, and then I'm  
 7 going to move swiftly on.  
 8 A. My understanding was that this was captured on CCTV and  
 9 it's actually a witness who has been experiencing  
 10 nuisance in the neighbourhood, who repeats this line  
 11 initially and then, later, it isn't quite as ...  
 12 It isn't in that form in any shape or form, actually.  
 13 Q. Okay.  
 14 A. There is a degree of misunderstanding in this, or if  
 15 I can put it in its mildest form.  
 16 Q. Right.  
 17 A. But that's not necessarily -- that is certainly,  
 18 I think, the police assessment in that report.  
 19 Q. I can only put to you what I've got. I'm not aware of  
 20 anything other than this and the document with the  
 21 sequence of events on it. I'd be grateful if you'd  
 22 perhaps look at that at more leisure and if we can be  
 23 provided with anything else, that would be helpful.  
 24 A. Of course.  
 25 Q. There is a mass of documents, so it is conceivable I've

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1 missed it, but I don't think I have. But it is  
 2 certainly possible.  
 3 Just before we move on, just so the point isn't  
 4 lost, this is a report which indicates that the words  
 5 that I've just referred to were spoken, and this is by  
 6 somebody -- I thought it was a police officer that the  
 7 comment was heard by. The person is --  
 8 A. That's not my understanding.  
 9 Q. -- certainly named in that report.  
 10 A. I'll check for you, Mr Weatherby. Obviously it's  
 11 a very, very brief read of this, so ...  
 12 Q. Okay. I'm anxious not to get too bogged down in this.  
 13 I'll make my point and move on, and if you can check it,  
 14 that would be helpful.  
 15 This meeting is preceded by Ahmed Taghdi, who is the  
 16 man who's connected to the purchase of the Micra, who  
 17 has just been to Devell House to look and apparently  
 18 check on the Micra. Then he drives over to this meeting  
 19 in Moss Side; yes?  
 20 A. I will take your word for that, yes.  
 21 Q. Well, okay. It says so in the report that you just  
 22 read. I know it's very difficult here, but it does say  
 23 that in this report, doesn't it?  
 24 A. I can recheck. You must understand that there are  
 25 hundreds of reports that sit behind this statement.

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1 I would find it impossible to retain that information.  
 2 Q. Believe me, I'm not asking you to. If there's a mistake  
 3 in this or there's some further information that I have  
 4 overlooked or whatever, then of course you must, when  
 5 you have time, come back to us with it. But the  
 6 passage, the second main paragraph on that page, refers  
 7 to Mr Taghdi --  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. -- arriving at this meeting? And it says in terms that  
 10 he'd been to Devell House --  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. -- and was assessed to be checking on the Micra? So  
 13 that's not in dispute, is it?  
 14 A. No, it's not, no.  
 15 Q. Thank you very much.  
 16 A. Sorry, we're not in dispute, I'm just --  
 17 Q. I don't think I'm in dispute over anything at all with  
 18 you, Mr Barraclough, I'm just trying to get this right,  
 19 as indeed you are.  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. So Mr Taghdi checks on the Micra at about 3.30 and then  
 22 he drives across, which is approximately a mile, maybe  
 23 slightly more but not much more than that, to this  
 24 meeting in a street. There are quite a number of people  
 25 there, but true to what I said earlier, I'm only going

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1 to name the ones that have already been named that are  
 2 relevant to us.  
 3 So others at this meeting in the street are  
 4 Elyas Blidi, resident at the Devell House flat.  
 5 Elyas Elmehdi and Mohammed Alzoubare and Abdalraouf Ali,  
 6 the brother-in-law of the other Abdalraouf, and  
 7 Ayoub Sadigh. Those are all there as indeed are others;  
 8 yes?  
 9 A. I don't think that -- hang on a second. It doesn't  
 10 actually provide me with a list of that, but that will  
 11 be right.  
 12 Q. Thank you very much. That's very helpful indeed. Just  
 13 before I leave this subject and move on, can you remind  
 14 us when the identity of Salman Abedi went public, the  
 15 involvement of Salman Abedi went public? My  
 16 recollection is you gave evidence yesterday, I think, it  
 17 was about 5.30.  
 18 A. That was when the chief constable announced it. I think  
 19 there's some suggestion it was reported in the papers  
 20 earlier. I'm not suggesting that --  
 21 Q. Sure, okay. Thank you very much.  
 22 Moving on from that, but if there is anything that  
 23 can help us with that meeting that you can provide us,  
 24 I'm sure the chair would be assisted by that.  
 25 Let me move on.

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1 A. Specifically, I think the idea with that meeting was  
 2 that it was supposed to have been recorded and I think  
 3 that was probably by means of the CCTV with a recording  
 4 device so it had a recording facility on it  
 5 (overspeaking) conversation.  
 6 Q. Okay. Again, the report that you've just --  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Carry on with your sentence, that was  
 8 listened to and?  
 9 A. And that phrase -- it was virtually -- everything on  
 10 that recording was indistinguishable.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 12 MR WEATHERBY: Okay.  
 13 A. I'm not for 1 minute saying that -- it could possibly  
 14 have happened, but our position is, reflecting back on  
 15 what is the evidence, what's the proof, if you like.  
 16 Q. Okay. Again, if there is something else then I look  
 17 forward to seeing it. But just going back to the  
 18 document you have just refreshed your memory from, it  
 19 says:  
 20 "The CCTV has no sound and the comment has been  
 21 overheard by [and then it gives the name]."  
 22 So that doesn't seem to accord with what you've just  
 23 said?  
 24 A. Maybe I need to check this and read it properly and  
 25 speak to my people and then get back to you.

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1 Q. All I'm trying to draw from this is that, after the  
 2 fact, people that the inquiry are interested in have  
 3 a meeting at which there is this comment made --  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can check that.  
 5 MR WEATHERBY: -- before Salman Abedi's name has been  
 6 connected publicly with it.  
 7 Moving swiftly on, I want to turn to a number of  
 8 individuals and I want to deal with two people very  
 9 swiftly, because Mr Greaney has brought out most of the  
 10 evidence about these that I'm interested in under the  
 11 heading of "procurers". I want to draw some threads  
 12 together here, so again I'm not trying to do anything  
 13 other than bring the full evidence out.  
 14 As a proposition that we've already been to, people  
 15 who did acts that furthered this plot or conspiracy,  
 16 some of them appear to have acted innocently; that's  
 17 right, isn't it?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. So in terms of the procurers, doing your best and  
 20 putting enormous time and resources into it, with  
 21 a number of the procurers you found nothing to indicate  
 22 that they were involved in the plot, even though they  
 23 did objectively assist it? Is that fair?  
 24 A. Yes, it is fair, but, again, I go back to the evidence.  
 25 My issue with this is if the evidence is sufficient to

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1 charge somebody, and that's agreed by the CPS, then they  
 2 will stand trial for that. Otherwise, we investigate  
 3 matters and it is not really for me to say whether  
 4 somebody is acting innocently or not because it's  
 5 a pejorative term based on my view.  
 6 Q. Okay. Some of those involved in the procuring --  
 7 A. I'm sorry, I'm not being awkward with that. It's my  
 8 position as a police investigator.  
 9 Q. Yes, indeed. No problem with that.  
 10 With respect to some of the people who procured the  
 11 chemicals, when they were interviewed, they agreed that  
 12 they had provided details to Hashem Abedi, for example,  
 13 which is the reason why you arrested them. But they  
 14 indicated that they didn't do so with any intent to  
 15 support anything like this plot.  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. And you in some cases didn't find any evidence to  
 18 dispute that?  
 19 A. Yes, that's true, yes.  
 20 Q. In the case of two -- I just want to mention two of them  
 21 and I don't really want to go much further than  
 22 Mr Greaney.  
 23 Zuhir Nassrat, in summary, as I understand the  
 24 evidence that you have given so far and the papers, the  
 25 key points in respect of Mr Nassrat are that he

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1 undertook searches for sulphuric acid and then deleted  
 2 those searches?  
 3 A. When you say he, he would say that he gave — sorry, my  
 4 evidence is that he said he gave his mobile to Hashem,  
 5 didn't he?  
 6 Q. Right, okay. The sulphuric acid searches were  
 7 undertaken on his device and then they were deleted?  
 8 A. Sorry, I'm just saying what he said.  
 9 Q. Yes. So they were undertaken on his device and they  
 10 were deleted?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. And then he was involved with the purchase of hydrogen  
 13 peroxide?  
 14 A. Yes, and of course the extent of his involvement is as  
 15 described in the evidence.  
 16 Q. Yes, indeed, and then we've had further evidence today  
 17 about mindset, so the context is that he has been  
 18 involved in posting rather offensive posts on Facebook  
 19 about the Twin Towers attack and that's why he may —  
 20 and I put it no higher than may — be somebody who did  
 21 have an involvement with the plot?  
 22 A. Well, again, I refer you back — Mr Nassrat has been  
 23 a suspect, he's been arrested, he has been a TIE, and he  
 24 remains a TIE.  
 25 Q. Yes.

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1 A. I can't describe it in any other way, really.  
 2 Q. Okay. Have I got it wrong that in fact he's somebody  
 3 that you want to speak to again?  
 4 A. No.  
 5 Q. Okay. Well, let me move on then.  
 6 A. Sorry, not at the moment. I'm kind of in slightly  
 7 difficult territory here.  
 8 Q. I don't want to put you in difficult territory.  
 9 A. From this investigation's perspective, there is at the  
 10 moment no requirement to speak to him.  
 11 Q. Yes. The interest in Mr Nassrat is that the evidence  
 12 points to involvement with both the catalyst and one of  
 13 the precursor chemicals. I fully understand your point  
 14 about what he says, but the interest in him is that he's  
 15 involved in two strands which potentially undermine an  
 16 innocent explanation.  
 17 A. Yes, and that's precisely why his status in the  
 18 investigation is as it is.  
 19 Q. And then we add in the context of the mindset evidence.  
 20 Let me move on to Mohammed Soliman, if I may, and  
 21 again I want to deal with this swiftly to use the time  
 22 as efficiently as I can.  
 23 The evidence is, and I hope I don't need to take you  
 24 to any documents, but I can if I need to, but I think  
 25 this isn't going to take it much further than Mr Greaney

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1 took it, that on 23 February Mohammed Soliman made  
 2 searches on his phone or perhaps, more carefully,  
 3 searches were made on Mohammed Soliman's phone for  
 4 a volume of sulphuric acid, concentrated sulphuric acid;  
 5 is that right?  
 6 A. Yes, I think that's right, yes.  
 7 Q. And cell site data suggests that Hashem Abedi was at  
 8 Mohammed Soliman's address at the time those searches  
 9 were made.  
 10 A. I'd have to check on that, but that may well be the  
 11 case.  
 12 Q. It's in the paperwork. Will you accept it from me and  
 13 I'll be corrected if I'm wrong?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Then on 15 March, again from cell site and call  
 16 analysis, it appears that Hashem Abedi and  
 17 Mohammed Soliman are together when money is deposited  
 18 into Mr Soliman's account that's relevant to the  
 19 purchases; yes?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Again, later that same day, sulphuric acid was purchased  
 22 from an Amazon account with the name Mohammed Yunis.  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. Which isn't Mohammed Soliman, but in fact he is called  
 25 Mohammed Yunis Soliman?

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1 A. That's correct.  
 2 Q. And it's right also, I think, that the account from  
 3 which the acid was purchased was registered on  
 4 Mr Soliman's phone 10 minutes before the order was  
 5 placed.  
 6 A. I would suggest that's right, yes.  
 7 Q. Using an email address that Mr Greaney referred to,  
 8 hamodayounis702. That email address. And his own  
 9 address as the delivery address?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. The cell site evidence suggests that he and Hashem Abedi  
 12 were together when the purchase was made and it is  
 13 possible, but less clear, that Salman Abedi was there as  
 14 well; is that right?  
 15 A. Yes, the former. Not entirely sure about the second  
 16 comment.  
 17 Q. It doesn't matter. Then the acid was delivered on  
 18 21 March to Mr Soliman's address and picked up the next  
 19 day on 22 March following a text from Mr Soliman:  
 20 "Tomorrow in the evening I am out. Come to take  
 21 your oil in the morning."  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. So your investigation would have drawn from that that  
 24 there is evidence connecting Mohammed Soliman from  
 25 beginning to end of that process of buying sulphuric

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1 acid in the company of Hashem Abedi?  
 2 A. Indeed.  
 3 Q. And the reference to oil would be evidence which would  
 4 undermine an innocent explanation?  
 5 A. That would be my view, which is why Soliman remains  
 6 a suspect and why, should he return to the jurisdiction,  
 7 he'd be arrested.  
 8 Q. Absolutely. I just wanted to make the full picture  
 9 clear. He left 8 days after the — well, he left some  
 10 days after the purchase.  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Or he tried to leave the country but he was subject to  
 13 a schedule 7 stop, I think, at the airport.  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. He was Istanbul-bound with no return flight, with three  
 16 mobile phones, some camouflage clothing and  
 17 a significant amount of money; yes?  
 18 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 19 Q. On the schedule 7, his phones were downloaded and you  
 20 subsequently, after the bomb of course, in your  
 21 investigation, discovered that there were references to  
 22 the purchase of the sulphuric acid on one of his  
 23 devices?  
 24 A. Yes, that's true.  
 25 Q. There was also a degree of mindset material, military

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1 images and an Instagram picture, I think, with ISIS  
 2 supporters on it, on those devices?  
 3 A. Yes, I'm sure that's true, yes.  
 4 Q. I don't know whether you can answer this, if you can't  
 5 of course you must say, but the downloads, I think, were  
 6 on 23 March —  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. — on the schedule 7. Are you able to say whether the  
 9 references to sulphuric acid were picked up as a result  
 10 of that schedule 7?  
 11 A. Yes, I believe so. I don't know the detail of this and  
 12 I think that comes into probably another area of the  
 13 inquiry.  
 14 Q. Right.  
 15 A. But obviously I can't —  
 16 Q. No, if you can't, that's fine.  
 17 A. — reference what happened at the time, I have no idea.  
 18 Q. That's the point of downloading, if you're on  
 19 a schedule 7 stop, isn't it, to search for stuff which  
 20 might trigger other things?  
 21 A. It is, it is.  
 22 Q. And you're saying we shouldn't deal with that now, it  
 23 should be dealt with on another occasion?  
 24 A. I don't know the answer to that.  
 25 Q. I won't press that.

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1 To round this off, he left the UK on 10 April, so  
 2 there was no stop put on him, but he left the  
 3 jurisdiction before the Abedis went to Libya?  
 4 A. Mr Weatherby, that's my understanding, but again, the  
 5 explanation of that sits outwith my —  
 6 Q. Okay, fine.  
 7 Again, just to round it off, after the bomb,  
 8 searches were made variously, including of premises  
 9 connected to him, and there were further devices  
 10 recovered upon which there were further military images;  
 11 is that fair?  
 12 A. I'm not sure of the answer to that, but if that has come  
 13 out of your researches —  
 14 Q. I want to move on swiftly. I can give the reference and  
 15 anyone who wants to check it can check it. I don't want  
 16 it up on the screen, thank you. It's {INQ034649/256}.  
 17 That's all I want to say about the procurement and  
 18 the procurers.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that Mohammed Soliman?  
 20 MR WEATHERBY: That's all I want to ask.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So he's out of the country?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If he comes back he will be arrested and  
 24 interviewed?  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And if there's evidence to charge him,  
 2 he will be charged, depending on the evidence that's  
 3 found?  
 4 A. He is circulated as wanted.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 6 MR WEATHERBY: Can I turn now to some of the individuals at  
 7 Devell House. Firstly, Mr Taghdi, Ahmed Taghdi.  
 8 Mr Greaney has dealt with some of this. Mr Taghdi  
 9 is the Abedi associate who bought the Micra with them on  
 10 13 April.  
 11 A. Yes?  
 12 Q. He sourced the Micra on Gumtree on his device. He drove  
 13 the brothers up to get it; yes?  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 15 Q. When he was spoken to by your team, he indicated that  
 16 Salman Abedi had told him that he was going to Libya and  
 17 he questioned why he needed to buy a car a couple of  
 18 days before leaving; yes?  
 19 A. I believe so, yes.  
 20 Q. Would you agree that's a rather strange account?  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A strange account by Salman Abedi or  
 22 Mr Taghdi?  
 23 MR WEATHERBY: A strange account to be given by Mr Taghdi.  
 24 A. For me, yes, but I do suppose it's what a group of  
 25 people are doing because I know there are other

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1 references to this vehicle, about it being potentially  
2 believed to be a "stash car".  
3 Q. Yes.  
4 A. But I don't know because that is the —  
5 Q. I'm probably asking you to comment on it, so let me move  
6 on then.  
7 It's right that not only did he play the part that  
8 we've already heard about in terms of purchasing the  
9 Micra, but it's right that also he made a series of  
10 calls to Mr Blidi, including at the time of purchase of  
11 the car; is that right?  
12 A. You may well be right. I'd have to check that.  
13 Q. It's actually in the bundle before you, but if you'll  
14 accept it from me, then we don't need to go to it.  
15 A. I will accept it. Could you just refer me to it though?  
16 Q. It's your tab 3. It's page 3 of that document. If you  
17 go to just over halfway down, there's a series of calls.  
18 It starts Ahmed Taghdi and the legend from one of your  
19 officers:  
20 "23.08. Approximate time the Micra is purchased."  
21 A. Sorry, I might have a different tab 3. I have "Trip to  
22 Macclesfield". I don't think it's that one, is it?  
23 Q. I don't want this on the screen, but the INQ  
24 reference —  
25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We have another bundle down here,

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1 Mr Weatherby.  
2 MR WEATHERBY: {INQ030735/3}.  
3 MR GREANEY: The second bundle that you were provided with,  
4 Mr Barraclough.  
5 A. I'm sorry, yes.  
6 MR WEATHERBY: It's very difficult, I know. I'm sorry that  
7 we're doing it in this way.  
8 A. I think I've got it now, Mr Weatherby. Halfway down  
9 you have Taghdi, yes.  
10 Q. Yes, and it refers to calls that he makes to Mr Blidi  
11 and your officer lists those calls, including one at  
12 23.08 with the legend:  
13 "Approximate time the Micra is purchased."  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. So not only is he assisting the Abedis purchasing the  
16 Micra, he's also calling Mr Blidi, the resident of the  
17 Devell House flat around the same time?  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. We're not sure of the exact time, are we, I don't think  
20 anyone's suggesting that? Then he makes further calls  
21 over the next few days, but we don't need to deal with  
22 those.  
23 Mr Taghdi then had contact with the Abedis or  
24 Salman Abedi in Libya. Mr Greaney has taken you through  
25 that. That, just to remind everybody, is a series of

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1 messages which end on 1 May with Salman Abedi telling  
2 Mr Taghdi to delete the number and the old chat.  
3 A. Yes.  
4 Q. And it's quite suspicious, isn't it, because there's no  
5 fall out here, that he's telling him to delete the  
6 number? Is that fair?  
7 A. Sorry, what do you mean fall out?  
8 Q. It's not as if the messages are an argument where they  
9 fall out and he says, "Delete my number"?  
10 A. No.  
11 Q. It's more simple than that. Believe me, Mr Barraclough,  
12 it's my inelegant questions. I'm not trying to catch  
13 you out here.  
14 A. No, it may be my misunderstanding. I think that's more  
15 likely.  
16 Q. Then one of Mr Taghdi's phones — I think he has at  
17 least two — then cell sites to Devell House  
18 eight times, cell sites to the environs of Devell House  
19 eight times after the Abedis have gone to Libya,  
20 although he appears not to have been picked up on CCTV  
21 until Salman Abedi is back; is that right?  
22 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.  
23 Q. Then a point I raised earlier, and I think you've looked  
24 at over the lunch break, Mr Taghdi is then cell sited  
25 close to the Granby Row apartment on 21 May. That's put

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1 to him by your officers and the time of that was between  
2 18.27 and 18.33 on 21 May; yes?  
3 A. So we are doing some work on the cell site. I'm sure  
4 you're right. If you're referring to the interview,  
5 that was put by the officers, yes.  
6 Q. Right, I am, and of course if that wasn't right then  
7 that should be corrected, but I can only work on what  
8 we have.  
9 A. Yes.  
10 Q. It's put in terms to him that there was phone activity  
11 by Mr Taghdi between those very specific times:  
12 "That is relevant we say because it is very close to  
13 Granby House"; yes?  
14 A. Yes.  
15 Q. In fact, Mr Lopez, if we can put up {INQ020163/42}.  
16 A. This was the interview when Taghdi was under arrest  
17 at the time for CPI?  
18 Q. It's an interview on 6 June of 2017.  
19 A. Yes.  
20 Q. By DC Gregory and DC Whittaker.  
21 A. Yes. This is whilst in custody and under arrest.  
22 Q. Yes. On the screen I hope there's an image of  
23 {INQ020163/42}. I put that on screen simply to show  
24 that in fact, at almost exactly the time that Mr Taghdi  
25 is being put — it's being put to Mr Taghdi that he cell

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1 sited very close to Granby House — and I fully  
2 understand the caveats on cell siting, believe me — but  
3 at that time Salman Abedi is leaving the flat.

4 Of course, that may be entirely coincidental and  
5 there is no evidence, is there, direct evidence, of them  
6 meeting?

7 A. No, there's not.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Just help me. When you say "cell  
9 sited very close", do you mean that the site itself is  
10 very close, ie the site which picks up his phone, is  
11 very close to Granby House, and therefore it's in an  
12 area covered by a site close to Granby House?

13 MR WEATHERBY: Yes. I can give the reference to the  
14 interview.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's fine. It's just sometimes it's  
16 misleading when someone says the phone is cell sited as  
17 being close to Granby House, because the cell site can  
18 be close, but as you probably know better than I do,  
19 that just means that the phone is in an area around that  
20 particular cell site.

21 MR WEATHERBY: Yes. What was put to him by the officers —  
22 the actual term is "very close to Granby House" but  
23 I entirely agree. All it does is evidences that  
24 Mr Taghdi's phone is in proximity and without having  
25 a cell siting expert, we can't be much clearer than

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1 that. But he's in close proximity to where Salman Abedi  
2 is as Salman Abedi is leaving that flat. That's right,  
3 isn't it?

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's not your phrase, it was the police  
5 officer's phrase in the course of the interview?

6 MR WEATHERBY: Yes.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

8 MR WEATHERBY: Then, as we've already adverted to, on 23 May  
9 he is seen on CCTV. I don't think we need to go to it,  
10 but he is seen on CCTV at 3.16 in the afternoon at the  
11 flats, apparently checking on the Micra. We can look at  
12 it if you want, but I think you'll accept that from me.

13 A. I'm sorry, what was the time and date again?

14 Q. 23 May.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. I've moved on from the cell siting. 23 May.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In the afternoon was what you said,  
18 wasn't it?

19 MR WEATHERBY: 3.16 in the afternoon.

20 (Overspeaking)

21 Sorry, the feed cut out slightly there.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's not your fault. It's gone pretty  
23 well most of the time.

24 MR WEATHERBY: Very well indeed and I have been very much  
25 assisted by the people behind the scenes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The net result is the officer agrees he  
2 is seen apparently checking on the Micra at 3.16 in the  
3 afternoon on that day.

4 MR WEATHERBY: Then he travels to the meeting, which we  
5 don't need to go back to, but the one which I was asking  
6 you about earlier; yes?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So that sequence of facts is a slightly fuller version  
9 than the one that was put into evidence earlier about  
10 Mr Taghdi?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And it puts him close to the plot, doesn't it? I'm not  
13 asking — I'm not suggesting that that should have led  
14 to anything other than you've already done,  
15 Mr Barraclough. Believe me, it's not critical. I'm  
16 just simply trying to adduce the facts to assist the  
17 inquiry to create a narrative.

18 A. So, no — and I understand that. I want to try and be  
19 as fair as I possibly can with this in answering your  
20 questions. When you say it puts him closer to the plot,  
21 it is suspicious behaviour in all respects.

22 Q. Yes. Thank you.

23 A. And that clearly places an onus on us to investigate.

24 Q. And you did.

25 A. I know you're not asking that. But the problem is

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1 I still can't say that puts them closer to a plot. All  
2 I can say is I remain suspicious about that activity and  
3 there is a potential explanation, there's an explanation  
4 around other criminal activity, which we discussed.

5 There is a clear explanation around post-attack guilty  
6 knowledge. So the fact that there has been this  
7 atrocity, and nobody's said this, but maybe people did  
8 put two and two together and came up with four, and  
9 maybe that has created some of the actions.

10 So as a police officer I know that people do  
11 suspicious things all the time that aren't necessarily  
12 connected to the actual offence itself.

13 Q. Yes. And objectively —

14 A. And at any moment in time we could all be guilty of  
15 doing suspicious things.

16 Q. Objectively, he does actions which assist the plot,  
17 doesn't he?

18 A. Without necessary mens rea, yes.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He bought the Micra, that's the actual  
20 thing that he did.

21 A. Yes.

22 MR WEATHERBY: And he is suspiciously involved with other  
23 people and the Micra after it's bought?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. But you can't go further than that and I'm not

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1 suggesting you should.  
 2 A. No, I can't.  
 3 Q. Just by way of context with Mr Taghdi, again from the  
 4 police interviews, it was put to Mr Taghdi that he was  
 5 in Libya in, I think, 2011 and he had military training  
 6 there; yes?  
 7 A. Again, I must take your word for this. Yes, that's  
 8 probably true.  
 9 Q. He visited Abdalraouf Abdallah in Belmarsh on  
 10 26 February 2015 together with Salman Abedi?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just ascertain, please, I think  
 13 the February 2015 visit is a confirmed fact, the visit  
 14 to Belmarsh. I think we probably all agree on that.  
 15 When you said it was put to him about being in Libya  
 16 having training, have you got the evidence to support  
 17 that objectively and did he agree with it when it was  
 18 put to him or did he disagree with it? We have to be  
 19 careful of what is evidence and what is not.  
 20 A. I'm presuming Mr Weatherby's referring to the police  
 21 interview again.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it was apparently put in the police  
 23 interview?  
 24 A. I haven't got it in front of me, so I don't know.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure they weren't guessing, the

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1 police, but I just needed to know where that was coming  
 2 from because, as you well know, they may have different  
 3 sources.  
 4 A. It may have been just a straightforward question, sir.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Weatherby, I can put down, I believe,  
 6 the February visit to Abdallah as being a fact as I have  
 7 seen it elsewhere in the documentation. The training of  
 8 Taghdi or potentially, anyway, I don't think I have seen  
 9 elsewhere. We may need to check that.  
 10 MR WEATHERBY: I can give the reference. The interview is  
 11 no comment, so it is not confirmed by Mr Taghdi, but  
 12 there is evidence that he was in Libya and it was put to  
 13 him — I'm looking for the exact reference. The officer  
 14 says:  
 15 "I am aware that you went to Libya in 2011 and had  
 16 some military training out there. Can you describe to  
 17 me the nature of your military training in Libya?"  
 18 The reference is {INQ035341/10}. I'm not asking for  
 19 that to go up.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. If you wouldn't mind checking on  
 21 that, I'd be grateful. It's one of those great  
 22 questions where you go from assuming the answer to one  
 23 question is yes to going on to the next one, so the  
 24 question doesn't help me much even if he had answered  
 25 it.

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1 MR WEATHERBY: I'm aware of what I'm doing here and the  
 2 unease about it.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: (Overspeaking) I just need to know from  
 4 the way the question comes what's an established fact  
 5 and what isn't. That's all.  
 6 MR WEATHERBY: Absolutely, yes. I'm trying to be careful.  
 7 I will be more careful.  
 8 So he goes with Salman Abedi in 2015, so  
 9 a considerable time before, to Belmarsh to see  
 10 Abdalraouf Abdallah whilst he's on remand.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's certainly in the documentation,  
 12 so perhaps you could take that from me as well. I'm  
 13 sure that will be contradicted if not. He was actually  
 14 on remand at the time and was later bailed, I think.  
 15 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, indeed.  
 16 We know again from your investigation that Mr Taghdi  
 17 is connected to two phones, one of which, and a laptop  
 18 which was connected to him, contained Islamic State  
 19 related material, flags, soldiers and searches relevant  
 20 to IS. It was quite extensive, taking several pages for  
 21 the officers who interrogated those devices to list.  
 22 Can you confirm that?  
 23 A. Yes, I'm sure that's true.  
 24 Q. That's all I want to say about Mr Taghdi, but moving on  
 25 to Elyas Elmehdi.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Weatherby, please don't think that  
 2 I'm accusing you of being slapdash in the questions you  
 3 ask. I'm not. You'll understand from my point of view  
 4 I need to know exactly what conclusions I can properly  
 5 draw at the moment.  
 6 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, indeed. I'm acutely aware of the  
 7 difficulties with this.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That we all have, yes.  
 9 MR WEATHERBY: Yes.  
 10 Elyas Elmehdi. The investigation has established,  
 11 and you have given evidence about it, that the Micra is  
 12 parked up at Devell House after midnight on 14/15 April.  
 13 We watched the animation.  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 15 Q. At 01.13, so a little time after we left the animation,  
 16 Salman Abedi is cell sited in that area, calling  
 17 Mr Elmehdi. Are you aware of that? Can you confirm  
 18 that?  
 19 A. Again, I'm sure that's right. I don't have that  
 20 information, but I'm sure you're right.  
 21 Q. I'm trying to move quickly, so if I give the reference  
 22 then again I will be corrected if I'm wrong. We don't  
 23 need to spend time on it. But the reference is  
 24 {INQ030322/9}.  
 25 From that cell siting document, it appears that

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1 Mr Blidi and Mr Elmehdi had travelled to Sheffield on  
 2 that evening and the cell siting puts Mr Blidi back at  
 3 Devell House at about 1.39. So would you agree, from  
 4 what you know about that evening that you have given  
 5 evidence about before and the cell siting you have  
 6 accepted from me, it appears that Salman Abedi is  
 7 calling Mr Elmehdi to say, "We're here, let us in, where  
 8 shall we park the Micra"?

9 A. So I'm sorry, you're going to have to repeat those  
 10 times.

11 Q. Okay, 1.13, just after we left it with the animation,  
 12 Salman Abedi is cell sited in the vicinity of  
 13 Devell House, at that area, calling Mr Elmehdi.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Mr Elmehdi and Mr Blidi have been to Sheffield that  
 16 evening, but we can put Mr Blidi back in the environment  
 17 of Devell House by 1.39 at the latest.

18 A. So I really would have to look at the evidence again to  
 19 understand what that picture was. Please don't think  
 20 I'm being awkward.

21 Q. No.

22 A. But it's what has been said about that and what the  
 23 sequence of events actually shows. I would rather look  
 24 at that before I --

25 Q. Okay. At this point we have no CCTV, do we, because

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1 it's before the available CCTV?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. So I'm trying to use the available evidence here, which  
 4 is the evidence you gave yesterday about the movement of  
 5 the Micra and the cell siting and the telephone  
 6 evidence.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just say, the effect of what  
 8 you're saying is that on the night that the Micra is  
 9 moved, presumably with the parts of the bomb in it, and  
 10 when it's moved to Devell House where it is stored while  
 11 Salman Abedi goes away, that waiting for him at  
 12 Devell House to let him in or arriving soon at  
 13 Devell House to let him in, you're saying the inference  
 14 is that he is let in by Elmehdi and Blidi?

15 MR WEATHERBY: Yes.

16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you like to check that?

17 A. I would, sir, yes.

18 MR WEATHERBY: I think I have a given you the reference.  
 19 It's {INQ030322/9}. It shows, doesn't it, that  
 20 Mr Abedi, from around Devell House, is calling  
 21 Mr Elmehdi at a time when the Micra is parked up there?

22 A. If I may just check that.

23 Q. Yes, of course.

24 In interview, Mr Elmehdi indicates that he had not  
 25 seen Mr Abedi for 2 months prior to the interview, so

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1 that would probably correctly put that in the middle  
 2 of April. He said that Mr Abedi had asked him a few  
 3 days before whether he could park the car in  
 4 Devell House and that he had agreed, even though it was  
 5 actually Mr Blidi's spot. Yes?

6 A. That's right, yes.

7 Q. He also said in interview that he wasn't there when it  
 8 was parked and that he only saw it a couple of days  
 9 later when he went to tell Mr Blidi; is that right?

10 A. Yes, I think that's what he said.

11 Q. Okay. However, when Mr Blidi is interviewed, he told  
 12 the police that Mr Elmehdi had only informed him of the  
 13 Micra after the bombing. He told the police that  
 14 Mr Elmehdi had told him that he was worried he would be  
 15 seen on CCTV assisting Salman Abedi with access and  
 16 parking the car. Yes? I can take you to the interview  
 17 if you want.

18 A. Unfortunately, I don't have that detail in front of me.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Elmehdi apparently gave different  
 20 accounts of what happened in relation to the car and  
 21 parking it there.

22 A. Yes.

23 MR WEATHERBY: Yes. Well, it's divider 1 of the bundle that  
 24 you just were looking at. {INQ030796/6}. I don't want  
 25 that on screen, Mr Lopez.

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1 Mr Barraclough, if you could look at that. It's the  
 2 bottom part of that document where your officers are  
 3 referring to the inconsistencies between them.  
 4 Do you see the part that I'm referring to? I know it's  
 5 difficult looking at this in the hearing.

6 A. Yes, it is in the report, you're quite right, yes.

7 Q. So I put the cell siting and you're going to check that  
 8 but you'll now see the reason I did that. The cell  
 9 siting does seem to indicate that Salman Abedi is  
 10 contacting him at the time he wants to park the Micra up  
 11 and then we have this inconsistency between the accounts  
 12 given by Mr Elmehdi and Mr Blidi to the police.

13 A. But there's no mention of the cell siting -- hang on  
 14 a second.

15 Q. I'm not asking you about the cell siting, I have put  
 16 that from different documents. I'm just adducing  
 17 through you --

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This must have been considered by part  
 19 of your team at some stage, all these things. Can  
 20 you have a look at it?

21 A. Of course.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

23 A. In respect of my answers, that's...

24 MR WEATHERBY: You're being very helpful, Mr Barraclough.  
 25 Any problems are created by me. I am just trying to get

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1 the evidence out and it is extremely difficult , I know,  
2 to follow.

3 So that deals with the evidence that I want to bring  
4 out about Mr Elmehdi and the parking up of the car and  
5 what Mr Blidi says about his expressed concerns about  
6 being seen assisting Salman Abedi.

7 A. Mr Weatherby, it may be helpful, and again once again,  
8 Mr Elmehdi remains a suspect in this inquiry.

9 Q. Yes, indeed. Absolutely. Perhaps with good reason.

10 The next point, just a quick point, is then —  
11 that's in the early morning on 15 April, of course.

12 Then on 19 April, again it's a matter of record,  
13 Mr Elmehdi, Mr Alzoubare and Ayoub Sadigh visit  
14 Abdalraouf Abdallah at HMP Altcourse on that day.

15 Then Mr Taghdi and Mr Elmehdi are then in  
16 significant phone contact on 25 April. Mr Taghdi  
17 messages Salman Abedi in Libya, referring to having  
18 "seen Caps" the day before — I have not put that very  
19 clearly. Let me start again.

20 Mr Taghdi sends a message to Salman Abedi on  
21 26 April, indicating that he saw "Caps" the day before.  
22 Am I right that your investigation has assessed  
23 Mr Elmehdi's nickname as being "Caps" or "capo"?

24 A. Yes, I believe that's correct.

25 Q. And in fact, the evidence shows that on 25 April

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1 Mr Taghdi and Mr Elmehdi were in significant telephone  
2 contact. The point that I'm making is that Mr Taghdi  
3 and Mr Elmehdi are meeting up and the significance of  
4 it is that the meeting is referred back to Salman Abedi  
5 at a time he is in Libya; yes?

6 A. I'm not sure what the significance is, but if you're  
7 referring to those calls and that's the matter of  
8 record, then yes. But whether that is significant ...

9 Q. Yes. I'm not sure what the significance is either,  
10 Mr Barraclough. I'm just suggesting that the meeting  
11 between the two, the procurer of the car and the parker  
12 of the car, there was some significance in that it was  
13 reported back to Salman Abedi whilst he was in Libya on  
14 25 April.

15 A. Yes, but again it's what that means. It goes back to  
16 your point of distinct groups or not. I'm not sure you  
17 can make that distinction. That's probably one of the  
18 issues here, that you have quite a homogeneous group of  
19 young Libyan men who do all know each other very well.

20 Q. Of course. And we have to bear that in mind.

21 A. In a way, I'm finding myself arguing a counterargument  
22 to — well, not arguing, but in a way trying to ...

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're putting what are the alternative  
24 options that you would have to bear in mind as well as  
25 the inference, which, rightly or wrongly, Mr Weatherby

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1 is saying could be properly drawn.

2 A. Yes.

3 MR WEATHERBY: Well, with respect, I'm more than happy that  
4 Mr Barraclough is raising the caveats and cautions  
5 because we're all just trying to establish what the  
6 narrative was. So I'm in no way —

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I didn't suggest you weren't happy with  
8 what he was doing.

9 MR WEATHERBY: No, indeed.

10 On 7 May, Mr Elmehdi makes numerous attempts to  
11 contact Mr Alzilitni, and that includes a series of nine  
12 text messages. The significance of that is that this is  
13 a day that Mr Alzilitni is seen to go to the Micra and  
14 check the passenger door.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. If we could have that up so we can all see that. That's  
17 {INQ035397/122}.

18 That is Mr Alzilitni and he's, on 7 May, checking,  
19 apparently, the door handle of the front passenger door  
20 of the Micra, and the significance in respect of  
21 Mr Elmehdi is that earlier or around that time, there's  
22 a series of nine texts and then there are two voice  
23 calls, within about a minute of him checking the door,  
24 between Mr Elmehdi and Mr Alzilitni. Are you able to  
25 confirm that?

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1 A. Again, I'm sure that's right. As I say, that formed  
2 part of our —

3 Q. I got it from your material. I'll just give the  
4 reference. {INQ030794/7}. I don't want that up,  
5 thank you, Mr Lopez.

6 So there's the text contacts and then there's the  
7 voice calls at the same time, effectively, that he's  
8 checking the door. So there appears to be a request  
9 from Mr Elmehdi to check the car and a report back from  
10 Mr Alzilitni, or the evidence is consistent with that,  
11 perhaps is the better way of putting it.

12 A. That could certainly be the suspicion.

13 Q. Yes, and to add fuel to the suspicion, in fact the texts  
14 are then deleted.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. The reference for that is {INQ030794/16} of the same  
17 document for anybody who wants to check that.

18 Again, suspicious activity, suspicious connection  
19 between Elmehdi and Alzilitni while Salman Abedi is in  
20 Libya and then deleting evidence of the contact.

21 Then moving on from that, 15 May, the Abedi  
22 Libyan phone calls Elmehdi for about 6 minutes.  
23 Mr Elmehdi's phone is cell sited at the end of that call  
24 to within about 200 metres of Mr Alzilitni's home. I'll  
25 give you a reference for this when I've finished the

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1 passage.  
 2 A. I know that call took place.  
 3 Q. That's very helpful indeed.  
 4 Later that evening, Mr Elmehdi had a 13-minute call  
 5 with Mr Alzilitni, who's cell sited in the environment  
 6 of Devell House.  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. And that same night, Mr Alzilitni is seen with Mr Blidi  
 9 and a third man who I think has been named,  
 10 Mr Abuhdaima, and they go to the Micra. In fact, the  
 11 latter of those men goes to the Micra. Can you confirm  
 12 that or accept that?  
 13 A. Yes, Mr Abuhdaima does go to the Micra, yes.  
 14 Q. And with Mr Alzilitni and Mr Blidi in close proximity?  
 15 A. Yes, but he is on his own when he does that.  
 16 Q. He's on his own when he goes to the Micra, but the three  
 17 of them are together and then he goes to the Micra.  
 18 The point, again, consistent with the evidence,  
 19 would be that Salman Abedi calls Mr Elmehdi, Mr Elmehdi  
 20 calls Mr Alzilitni, and Mr Alzilitni and Mr Blidi and  
 21 Mr Abuhdaima then go and the latter is the one who  
 22 actually checks on the Micra. 15 May.  
 23 A. I'm not sure. Are you saying that is demonstrated  
 24 in the evidence?  
 25 Q. Yes. I can give you the reference. It's {INQ030795/4}.

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1 I don't think we need to go there. But by all means,  
 2 please check. If I've got that wrong, come back to us.  
 3 I'm simply building up the evidence here that it's  
 4 consistent with Mr Abedi calling Mr Elmehdi and  
 5 Mr Elmehdi then calling Mr Alzilitni and the check on  
 6 the Micra taking place.  
 7 On 17 May, Mr Elmehdi is arrested at Altcourse with  
 8 Ayoub and Mohammed Sadigh trying to visit  
 9 Abdalraouf Abdallah and they're arrested because they've  
 10 got tramadol on them.  
 11 A. That's correct, yes.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They've got what, sorry?  
 13 MR WEATHERBY: Tramadol.  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Again, the significance to the question I'm putting to  
 16 you isn't the tramadol, it's the fact that Mr Elmehdi  
 17 is, at a time shortly before the bombing, visiting  
 18 Mr Abdallah.  
 19 Then on 21 May --  
 20 A. I'm sorry, that is one -- you're right, but that is one  
 21 significance, so the significance is also that he's  
 22 attempting to give tramadol to Abdalraouf Abdallah.  
 23 Q. Yes. I think that's certainly apparent.  
 24 A. Because that is significant in relation to the  
 25 investigation around drug dealing and --

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1 Q. Yes. It could be entirely irrelevant and entirely  
 2 innocent. I'm adducing this evidence --  
 3 A. I don't suggest it's innocent, I'm sorry. I'm just  
 4 saying that ... The problem with this throughout is that  
 5 you have probably a significant level of drug dealing  
 6 here and that seems to be part of their --  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you are saying that could be the  
 8 reason for the visit, it could be argued --  
 9 A. Exactly.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- rather than something to do with the  
 11 explosion, the bomb?  
 12 A. That results in their arrest because they have  
 13 specifically taken tramadol to give to  
 14 Abdalraouf Abdallah. So I accept it's not necessarily  
 15 the only purpose of the visit, but it is a purpose of  
 16 the visit, and I think that's the one that can be  
 17 evidenced.  
 18 MR WEATHERBY: Yes. Well, I'm entirely in agreement with  
 19 you. What I'm doing here is I'm adducing evidence to  
 20 build a mosaic. On its own, the attempt to supply  
 21 tramadol, which this patently was, to Mr Abdallah,  
 22 because there's other evidence that he had a liking for  
 23 tramadol, on its own it means very little. I'm putting  
 24 this into evidence to build up the mosaic of evidence.  
 25 At this point I'm doing it for the purpose of the

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1 evidence that's relevant to Mr Elmehdi. Some of that  
 2 may be entirely innocent --  
 3 MR GREANEY: Mr Weatherby, I'm sorry to interrupt: we're  
 4 90 minutes into the session and I was going to invite  
 5 you to pick a convenient moment for our break.  
 6 MR WEATHERBY: That's very helpful, indeed.  
 7 I think I probably have 10 or 15 minutes of this  
 8 section left. I don't know whether Mr Barraclough and  
 9 the --  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are you happy to go on for 10 or  
 11 15 minutes?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Please could the shorthand writers  
 14 indicate if they can't do that?  
 15 (Pause)  
 16 MR WEATHERBY: I'll move on as quickly as I can.  
 17 21 May. Mr Elmehdi and this time  
 18 Abderahman Forjani, so Salman Abedi's cousin, are seen  
 19 near to the Micra at about 8.30 in the evening. Can you  
 20 confirm that? I'll ask Mr Lopez to put it up.  
 21 {INQ035397/208}, please.  
 22 A. Yes, please, if you wouldn't mind. I'm sure you're  
 23 right, Mr Weatherby, it's just to refresh my memory.  
 24 Q. Absolutely, no problem at all as far as I'm concerned.  
 25 You've got there Mr Elmehdi in the top image walking

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1 across towards the Micra, he walks to the side door, and  
 2 then he walks under the building line, and the second  
 3 male comes out, who is Abderahman Forjani. Yes?  
 4 A. Thank you, yes.  
 5 Q. Then in interview, it's right, I think, that Mr Elmehdi  
 6 denied going anywhere near the car? Is that within your  
 7 knowledge or will you accept that from me?  
 8 A. I'm happy to accept it. Without the material in front  
 9 of me, I can't ...  
 10 Q. Okay. Again, I'll be corrected if I'm wrong. I'll give  
 11 the reference to anyone who wants to look at it:  
 12 {INQ030141/14}.  
 13 Then we've already looked at, and I won't return to,  
 14 the arrival of Mr Elmehdi in his Ford Focus in what  
 15 I have described as the meeting in the small hours of  
 16 the 23rd, immediately after the bombing. That's it as  
 17 far as the evidence with Mr Elmehdi and his connection  
 18 to these events.  
 19 So just rounding it up, he has objectively assisted  
 20 the plot by, at the very least, facilitating the storage  
 21 of the car, and there are multiple evidential  
 22 connections linking him to it, aren't there?  
 23 A. I agree, he has objectively contributed by helping to  
 24 store the vehicle.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just look at, while we still have

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1 this picture up here — I have no doubt if your officers  
 2 put that in as the caption they had a good basis for  
 3 doing it. If I was just looking at recognising  
 4 Mr Elmehdi from that picture I might have a problem, but  
 5 it may well be that they have better pictures or other  
 6 evidence to say it is him.  
 7 A. There is a mass of work that sits behind this, sir.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 9 A. That means that on each of these individuals, there are  
 10 subject matter experts who will have followed them from  
 11 all over. It will not be a positive identification  
 12 unless it's confirmed.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I obviously accept that from you.  
 14 Thank you.  
 15 MR WEATHERBY: As with most of those who were spoken to by  
 16 the investigation, of course the evidence wasn't all  
 17 available at any particular point, was it? That's one  
 18 of the complications of a big investigation like this.  
 19 And of course, as you've mentioned a number of times,  
 20 the Devell House end of these matters was complicated by  
 21 the drugs conspiracy that Mr Elmehdi was involved in.  
 22 Can I just ask you, and I want to ask you very  
 23 briefly about this because I don't want to get off the  
 24 track, but Mr Elmehdi was released and managed to leave  
 25 the country prior in fact to the prosecution on the

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1 drugs matters.  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Was he in fact bailed when he was released on the  
 4 bombing matters?  
 5 A. There are probably a couple of points worth making.  
 6 With counter-terrorism legislation, there's no bail;  
 7 it's release or charge.  
 8 Q. Yes.  
 9 A. So the Bail Act doesn't apply to anyone who's arrested  
 10 under TACT, under terrorism legislation. The second  
 11 point with Mr Elmehdi is that he was on unconditional  
 12 bail from the court at the time.  
 13 Q. Yes, that's very helpful. In terms of the terrorism  
 14 side of this, is it possible to bail people on other  
 15 charges, for example murder, with respect to an  
 16 investigation like this?  
 17 A. I suppose it depends what you arrest them for in the  
 18 first place.  
 19 Q. Indeed.  
 20 A. All 22 of our arrestees, obviously barring Hashem Abedi,  
 21 were arrested under section 41 of TACT, so commission,  
 22 preparation, instigation of terrorism.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The advantage of that from your point of  
 24 view is you can keep them for up to 14 days —  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: — which is longer than the period —  
 2 but it sounds from what you're saying that the  
 3 disadvantage is — whereas on most charges you have to  
 4 release them on bail earlier than 14 days, but you can  
 5 have them bailed, so they have to come back to the  
 6 police station, you don't have to release them  
 7 unconditionally?  
 8 A. You could bail under PACE, but this was TACT  
 9 legislation.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. There's the  
 11 difference. You can keep them for longer under TACT but  
 12 you can't release them on bail at the end. It's got to  
 13 be absolute release or charge?  
 14 A. It's release or charge. It's more than that. So for me  
 15 as an investigator, if I'm investigating a terrorism  
 16 offence, we recognise, especially at this scale of  
 17 conspiracy, the seriousness of those arrests and the  
 18 Terrorism Act allows us to engage in judicial oversight  
 19 throughout the process. I think that's very important.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not suggesting there aren't  
 21 advantages. It's my lack of knowledge, I was not aware  
 22 of the disadvantage relating to it as well. Thank you,  
 23 Mr Weatherby.  
 24 MR WEATHERBY: One further question and then I'll leave  
 25 this.

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1           Once Mr Elmehdi and indeed the others were released,  
 2           not on bail, were they put on watch lists so they would  
 3           be seen if they were trying to leave the country?  
 4       A. I would need to just take some advice about what I can  
 5           say around that.  
 6       Q. Yes, okay.  
 7       A. To give you some assurance, we didn't just leave it at  
 8           that. We had a duty clearly to protect the community.  
 9       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can take some advice about it if  
 10           you're going to tell us about it later.  
 11       MR WEATHERBY: I said final question on that subject. I'm  
 12           afraid that's prompted another. Perhaps you might like  
 13           to answer this yes or no. Do we know how he left the  
 14           country?  
 15       A. He flew, I think.  
 16       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 17       MR WEATHERBY: I'll move on very quickly then.  
 18       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We know where he is.  
 19       A. He's out of the jurisdiction.  
 20       MR WEATHERBY: Indeed.  
 21           Just to finish on Mr Elmehdi, in terms of the  
 22           context, so I've dealt with the evidence relating him to  
 23           the surrounding of the bombing, but the context is  
 24           he was clearly a trusted friend of Salman Abedi, wasn't  
 25           he?

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1       A. Probably, yes.  
 2       Q. And he was close to Abdalraouf Abdallah for a long  
 3           period of time?  
 4       A. Yes, I think probably.  
 5       Q. Yes, there's evidence within the papers that you've  
 6           helpfully disclosed, which shows texting between  
 7           Salman Abedi, Abdalraouf Abdallah and Elyas Elmehdi in  
 8           2014 at a time when Elmehdi is about to travel to Libya  
 9           to fight; yes?  
 10       A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11       Q. Just on that, there's a difference between 2014 and  
 12           2011, isn't there? Many people of Libyan heritage went  
 13           to fight Gaddafi for all sorts of reasons. In 2014, the  
 14           context was rather different, with the caliphate  
 15           being --  
 16       A. You're right. Sorry to go back, I'm not entirely sure  
 17           that says Libya. Wherever that was, I'd have to check  
 18           that.  
 19       Q. Right. Please check it, but from the context of the  
 20           documents I'm suggesting to you that it very much was  
 21           Libya.  
 22       A. Okay.  
 23       Q. And that in fact there's correspondence from  
 24           Abdalraouf Abdallah, and I'll give you the reference but  
 25           I'm not asking for it to be put up, whilst he was in

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1           Belmarsh, writing to Elmehdi, and I quote:  
 2           "I know you had a hard time in Libya."  
 3           And that related to Mr Abdallah's role in Mr Elmehdi  
 4           going to Libya, I think.  
 5       A. Sure, and that is what is said, but it's what is ...  
 6       Q. Indeed. Just for the reference, so that can be checked,  
 7           {INQ033831/2}.  
 8           Finally, and sticking with Abdalraouf Abdallah,  
 9           there's a lot of documentary records about his visits  
 10           and that he visited Mr Abdallah in Altcourse in April  
 11           and May whilst Salman Abedi was in Libya. But he'd also  
 12           visited him on 18 January with Salman Abedi and  
 13           Ayoub Sadigh, he booked a visit with Ayoub Sadigh and  
 14           another person I won't name on 2 February but didn't  
 15           attend. He attended another visit on 15 March with  
 16           Ayoub Sadigh.  
 17       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A number of visits anyway.  
 18       A. Yes. It was whether this was going to be in this  
 19           particular chapter or whether that was going to be --  
 20       MR WEATHERBY: I'm just putting context to the evidence that  
 21           we've looked at around the Micra, so there are  
 22           effectively five visits and one not booked within 2017  
 23           to Abdalraouf Abdallah.  
 24       A. Yes.  
 25       MR WEATHERBY: That's all I'm going to ask you about

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1           Mr Elmehdi specifically. Would that be convenient to  
 2           have a break now, sir?  
 3       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Sorry, I thought 10 minutes to  
 4           quarter of an hour was an end.  
 5       MR GREANEY: I think Mr Weatherby said the end of that  
 6           section.  
 7       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, my fault, Mr Weatherby.  
 8       MR WEATHERBY: Sorry, I am going rather slowly here.  
 9       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We're asking how long you think you  
 10           might be.  
 11       MR WEATHERBY: I'm afraid I will be the rest of the  
 12           afternoon.  
 13       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the problem, when the afternoon  
 14           goes to. That's what we're trying to find out. Give us  
 15           a rough idea how long and then we'll decide whether  
 16           we're going to sit that long, if you don't mind.  
 17       MR WEATHERBY: I will be more than an hour, probably an hour  
 18           and a half.  
 19       MR GREANEY: Perhaps we can resume at 10 past or quarter  
 20           past, however long Mr Barraclough thinks he needs for  
 21           a rest and to obtain some information, and then we will  
 22           sit until about 5 o'clock, and then Mr Weatherby will  
 23           then complete his questioning tomorrow morning.  
 24       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Will 10 past be all right for  
 25           you?

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1 A. That's fine by me, sir.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.  
 3 (3.48 pm)  
 4 (A short break)  
 5 (4.10 pm)  
 6 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'll just make sure that Mr Weatherby  
 7 knows that we are now sitting and that he is able to  
 8 join us.  
 9 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, I'm here. Can you see me?  
 10 MR GREANEY: We can, thank you.  
 11 MR WEATHERBY: Mr Barraclough, moving swiftly on,  
 12 Elyas Blidi. We've dealt with some of the evidence  
 13 in relation to Mr Taghdi and Mr Elmehdi, so I will  
 14 simply refer to that and then move swiftly on.  
 15 When I was asking you about Ahmed Taghdi and the  
 16 purchase of the Micra, we referred to a document which  
 17 contained phone calls and we noted together that  
 18 Mr Taghdi had called Mr Blidi five times on the day the  
 19 Micra had been bought, including around about the time,  
 20 we think, that the purchase took place.  
 21 I then dealt with evidence in respect of Mr Elmehdi  
 22 regarding the arrival of the Micra on basically the  
 23 following night and the discrepancy between Mr Blidi's  
 24 interview explanation and Mr Elmehdi's explanation, so  
 25 I don't need to go over any of those points with you.

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1 But those also are part of the tapestry of the evidence  
 2 with respect to Mr Blidi.  
 3 On 18 and 19 May, Salman Abedi went to the Micra at  
 4 Devell House and at that time Mr Blidi was cell sited to  
 5 that area, there being an inference that he was in his  
 6 flat, although of course not necessarily so. But  
 7 am I right that there is no evidence that the two met at  
 8 Devell House on either of those two occasions?  
 9 A. Yes, you're right, there is no evidence that they met.  
 10 Q. The CCTV would indicate whether, if they were on the car  
 11 park, any meeting would have been shown on the CCTV, and  
 12 if Mr Abedi had gone up to the flat or Mr Blidi had come  
 13 down from the flat, assuming he was there, then we'd see  
 14 that on the CCTV as well?  
 15 A. Yes, I believe that's correct.  
 16 Q. I want to move on from 19 May when Mr Abedi goes to the  
 17 Micra to later in the day, because I referred earlier to  
 18 Mr Blidi being cell sited near to Granby House and  
 19 indeed he was. But more particularly, he is picked up  
 20 on CCTV around Granby House, isn't he?  
 21 A. Yes, that is actually correct.  
 22 Q. In your little bundle it would be helpful if you could  
 23 refer to, I think it's the third tab — the reference,  
 24 but I don't want it on the screen, is {INQ030735/3}.  
 25 It's the very last line of page 3, and it's really

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1 {INQ030735/4} I am interested in.  
 2 I think you had the opportunity to cast your eye  
 3 over this at lunchtime; is that right?  
 4 A. When you say casting my eye, I literally referenced that  
 5 there are some documents in this folder.  
 6 Q. Okay (inaudible: distorted).  
 7 A. It's extremely closely typed, sir.  
 8 Q. Can I take you through it and then, if I miss something  
 9 important out, somebody else will pick it up, but I'm  
 10 not going to take you through all of it, just key parts  
 11 of it.  
 12 A. I think it might be worth just saying that we will check  
 13 all this information.  
 14 Q. That's very helpful.  
 15 A. But the important thing with this is it is — we can  
 16 pick bits out of these documents, but I would not be  
 17 able to read the whole document, and moreover I'm not  
 18 necessarily able to put any context around it.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let's just see how we go, shall we? If  
 20 you can't really help about it, just say so, except that  
 21 it's in the document.  
 22 A. Yes, but of course we can do that later.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 24 MR WEATHERBY: That's very helpful indeed.  
 25 If I can put the points that I want from this. If

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1 I don't do it appropriately, you can point that out  
 2 later.  
 3 This document is the TIE report for Mr Blidi  
 4 prepared by your officers, very helpfully, and the  
 5 passages that I'm referring to here show that on 19 May,  
 6 so that's the day when the evidence shows that  
 7 Salman Abedi took the bomb components to Granby House,  
 8 on that day, at 13.05, five past 1, and for some time  
 9 after, Mr Blidi is seen on CCTV in the vicinity of  
 10 Granby House. That's right, isn't it?  
 11 A. Yes, that's right. So again, I just have to check the  
 12 exact location, but it's very close to Granby House.  
 13 Q. Let me help and then you can check it later. 13.06. We  
 14 don't have the problem that we've already agreed about  
 15 the cell siting here because we know from the CCTV that  
 16 the Mercedes that Mr Blidi uses is parked directly  
 17 opposite the entrance to the Granby House apartments and  
 18 it remains there for 14 minutes.  
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 20 Q. He then drives off but parks up nearby and he returns on  
 21 foot, passing the entrance to Granby House, either on  
 22 the same side or the opposite side of the road, on three  
 23 occasions. He talks to a motorcyclist parked opposite  
 24 and he is seen looking at a mobile in his hand at a time  
 25 which your officer records is not exactly the time but

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1 around about the time that Salman Abedi makes a call to  
 2 an unknown number, 13.23.23.  
 3 A. Yes, that's right.  
 4 Q. I don't know what was in your officer's mind and I'm  
 5 sure you don't, but there's no evidence that  
 6 Salman Abedi called an unknown phone in Mr Blidi's hand  
 7 at about that time, is there?  
 8 A. No, there isn't.  
 9 Q. But it may be that the officer was considering that as  
 10 a possible option?  
 11 A. I think all options were considered here.  
 12 Q. Yes, absolutely, and quite properly. Then he returns to  
 13 his car and throughout this period Salman Abedi has not  
 14 been at the apartment, has he? He's away from the  
 15 apartment at this time?  
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 17 Q. Then Mr Abedi is seen to return just after 2 o'clock and  
 18 he goes into the front entrance. Then, 36 seconds after  
 19 that, Mr Blidi walks past the front entrance on the  
 20 opposite side of the road?  
 21 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 22 Q. And in fact he meets a delivery driver on a scooter and  
 23 then he walks again past the entrance to Granby House,  
 24 gets in his car and drives off.  
 25 A. Again, he's carrying a plastic bag.

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1 Q. Yes.  
 2 A. A Deliveroo scooter driver.  
 3 Q. I'm guessing you are probably familiar in general terms  
 4 with this --  
 5 A. In general terms, yes.  
 6 Q. Absolutely. Would it be right that the investigation  
 7 never really got its head round what was happening here?  
 8 A. So when you say that, we don't know for sure, do we? We  
 9 just don't know. So we can hypothesise, but certainly  
 10 the officer's assessment of that whole process is that  
 11 this is consistent with other criminal activity.  
 12 Q. Yes. Well --  
 13 A. So when you're looking at meeting a Deliveroo scooter  
 14 driver -- and this is relevant when it comes to some of  
 15 the other investigations that have been undertaken  
 16 around this in relation to drug dealing and particularly  
 17 the prosecution that was undergone.  
 18 Q. Yes.  
 19 A. So the coincidence here is that this is very near to  
 20 Granby House, which obviously makes it extremely  
 21 interesting.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have never seen this before, so let me  
 23 get my head round it. We know the white Mercedes,  
 24 Mr Blidi's, is parked across from Granby House at a time  
 25 when Salman Abedi is not actually there.

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1 A. Yes, that's right.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There may or may not be any contact, we  
 3 simply can't tell. Salman Abedi arrives in a taxi and  
 4 he goes into Granby House.  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There is -- the officer suggests it's  
 7 not coincidental, but there's actually no direct or  
 8 indirect contact that can be demonstrated between the  
 9 two of them on that particular occasion?  
 10 A. No, there is not.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just wanted to summarise it.  
 12 MR WEATHERBY: That's very helpful. I have been at pains to  
 13 deal with it in a little detail because I don't want to  
 14 suggest any more than it actually says, but the reality  
 15 is that this could be Mr Blidi engaging in drug dealing?  
 16 A. It could be. But clearly, our interest around this was  
 17 not that.  
 18 Q. No, no.  
 19 A. Our interest was around the fact that he was very near  
 20 Granby House.  
 21 Q. On any view, if there wasn't any purpose or contact with  
 22 Salman Abedi, this is a massive coincidence, isn't it?  
 23 A. It is a coincidence.  
 24 Q. Yes.  
 25 A. And that is obviously why it was a very interesting part

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1 of the investigation. But regrettably, we don't know  
 2 for sure.  
 3 Q. Yes. I agree, regrettably. I'm not inferring any  
 4 criticism in the questions I ask. I am going to return  
 5 to cell siting a bit later when I deal with  
 6 Mr Alzilitni, because there may be a crossover with  
 7 Mr Blidi, but I want to just park that. I'm not using  
 8 a pun there in respect of the Mercedes.  
 9 Back to the chronology, the day after, on 20 May,  
 10 the same document refers to Mr Blidi being seen on CCTV  
 11 in the car park outside the home address of Ismail Abedi  
 12 together with Mr Elmehdi, Aoub Oun and Mr Alzoubare;  
 13 that's right, isn't it?  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.  
 15 Q. I think I am right in saying that at interview Mr Blidi  
 16 denied knowing other members of the family. I stand to  
 17 be corrected on that; I don't have the reference to  
 18 hand.  
 19 A. I'm not --  
 20 Q. Okay, well, I'll leave that.  
 21 I want to turn to a different topic and it's tickets  
 22 and the Ariana Grande concert. It's right, isn't it,  
 23 that I think the investigation came by some information  
 24 that somebody close to Mr Blidi had had tickets for the  
 25 concert itself and that those tickets had been lost;

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1 is that right?  
 2 A. Yes, it is. It is right, yes.  
 3 Q. Then when Mr Blidi was interviewed, he confirmed the  
 4 gist of the information but said it was another relative  
 5 of the person close to him who had had the tickets and  
 6 a further relative had in fact lost them. Yes? I want  
 7 to be fair to all sides here, so I'm putting the full  
 8 information.  
 9 A. Again, this is another thing, we check context and the  
 10 full interview process because there's a one—page  
 11 section of the interview here.  
 12 Q. Yes, indeed. No problem with that. I am very happy for  
 13 you to check and, if I've got something wrong, to be  
 14 corrected. But on the face of it, he wasn't sure  
 15 whether it was two or three tickets, no one had  
 16 contacted Ticketmaster to see if they could be replaced;  
 17 is that right?  
 18 A. Again, I'd need to check.  
 19 Q. I think for completeness, your investigation did some  
 20 work on this and there was some support for his account  
 21 from connected family members?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. Again it's, at the very least, a coincidence, isn't it,  
 24 that somebody close to Mr Blidi had tickets for this  
 25 concert and didn't in fact go?

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1 A. I don't know. Again, in fairness —  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's an unusual fact which bears looking  
 3 at, which you obviously did.  
 4 A. It was looked at, but I'm sorry, again, to sort of  
 5 counter that a little bit, it was a big concert, a lot  
 6 of people had young people who attended that concert.  
 7 So it is a coincidence, but what relevance that has,  
 8 I don't know.  
 9 MR WEATHERBY: I should know this and you may not. Do you  
 10 know how much the tickets cost for the concert?  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure you can get instructions about  
 12 that, but we will find out if you're interested.  
 13 MR WEATHERBY: All right. That's as far as I want to take  
 14 that part of it, and I've already dealt with the  
 15 evidence of the early morning meeting, as I put it,  
 16 in the car park on the 23rd.  
 17 Finally in terms of the evidence connecting Mr Blidi  
 18 to these matters, I'm going to turn to Mr Alzilitni in  
 19 a moment, but in the small hours of 25 May,  
 20 Mr Alzilitni, as we've adverted to before, goes to the  
 21 Micra and appears to be wiping the top of the nearside  
 22 door. The relevance to Mr Blidi is that at the same  
 23 time he's in telephone contact with Mr Blidi; yes?  
 24 A. Again, Mr Weatherby, I need to check that because there  
 25 is context to this and some of that context is around

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1 drug dealing activities. So for example, some of these  
 2 calls are interspersed with actually people going to the  
 3 Honda Jazz, which is parked up in the car park and  
 4 contains drugs.  
 5 Q. Okay. I'm very happy for you to have a look at that,  
 6 that would be very helpful. The reference is  
 7 {INQ030794/10}.  
 8 It refers to Mr — again, this is a TIE for  
 9 Mr Alzilitni so it's one of your investigation  
 10 documents. It refers to Mr Alzilitni wiping the  
 11 nearside front door of the vehicle, and during this  
 12 period whilst at the vehicle, Mr Alzilitni is in  
 13 telephone contact, six SMS and four voice calls, with  
 14 Elyas Blidi. So it seems to be very connected, the  
 15 calls seem to be very connected in time with  
 16 Mr Alzilitni wiping that car, don't they?  
 17 A. Forgive me, but we will have to — I will have to check  
 18 all that for context.  
 19 Q. Absolutely, yes. Just for completeness, the very next  
 20 day, Mr Blidi, Mr Alzilitni and Mr Oun travel together  
 21 to London; is that right?  
 22 A. Again, I'm going to have to check that, sorry.  
 23 Q. Okay. Perhaps you'll accept that from me and correct me  
 24 if not.  
 25 Then the context in respect of Mr Blidi is that his

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1 laptop and iPad were seized and examined and IS flags  
 2 and other extremist material was recovered from those  
 3 items. Can you either accept that from me or agree  
 4 that is what was found?  
 5 A. Again, I'd check, but if you're saying that's in the  
 6 documentation.  
 7 Q. {INQ034649/347}.  
 8 That's all I want to deal with with Mr Blidi, so on  
 9 to Mr Alzilitni. Again, I have dealt with quite a bit  
 10 of this.  
 11 First of all, Mr Alzilitni is quite heavily  
 12 associated with Devell House and in fact in interview he  
 13 accepted that on occasion he would sleep there; is that  
 14 right?  
 15 A. I believe that is correct, yes.  
 16 Q. In fact, he referred to seeing Salman Abedi at the flat  
 17 together with Mr Elmehdi on 13 April. Can you confirm  
 18 that?  
 19 A. Again, I would have to check. These are very detailed  
 20 TIE reports, so it would need checking.  
 21 Q. Yes, indeed. In fact, my reference — I've got  
 22 a reference I was about to give you, but I'm afraid it's  
 23 not the right one.  
 24 I think the reference is — yes, the reference is,  
 25 again just for the record, {INQ030794/13}. So by all

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1 means check that, but he refers to being at Devell House  
2 and Salman Abedi called by on the 13th. He and  
3 Mr Elmehdi were there and Salman Abedi came and then  
4 left.

5 On 7 May, I dealt with this under the topic of  
6 Mr Elmehdi, the telephone evidence is that Mr Elmehdi  
7 contacted Mr Alzilitni and it appears as a consequence  
8 that Mr Alzilitni went and checked the Micra, including  
9 the door handle, and then called Mr Elmehdi back.  
10 That's the day when the texts are deleted, so that deals  
11 with 7 May.

12 Then on 15 May, something similar occurs, and again  
13 I dealt with this under Mr Elmehdi, that he spoke to  
14 Salman Abedi in Libya on 15 May, didn't he?

15 A. There was a phone call from Salman Abedi to --  
16 Q. And then later there was a call between Elmehdi and  
17 Alzilitni and Mr Alzilitni and the other two men went  
18 and checked on the Micra or, more accurately, one of  
19 them checked on the Micra and the other two were in the  
20 general vicinity.  
21 A. So this was the example of context, Mr Weatherby.  
22 I think there is a further element to that. This is  
23 when there is -- the individuals go to the Honda Jazz.  
24 This is why some of this needs to be put in the  
25 context --

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1 Q. I'm very happy for you to correct me, but I'm taking  
2 this from the investigation document --  
3 MR GREANEY: The reason why Mr Weatherby is putting this is  
4 entirely understandable because it does derive from the  
5 document, but I think there may be a typographical error  
6 in one of the documents and whereas the call was on the  
7 15th, the visit to the Micra I believe in fact was the  
8 following day, the 16th. I can send Mr Weatherby the  
9 references for that.  
10 MR WEATHERBY: That's very helpful indeed. Obviously we  
11 need the accuracy. I'm not sure that will change the  
12 point, the point being that there seems to be  
13 communication from Mr Abedi in Libya through Mr Elmehdi  
14 to Mr Alzilitni, who then attends at the Micra with  
15 Mr Blidi and Mr Abuhdaima (overspeaking).  
16 A. Before you move on to the Honda Jazz.  
17 Q. Right --  
18 A. I would say that the telephone call from Salman Abedi on  
19 15 May to Elmehdi is significant and it is very  
20 important that we find out what the content of that  
21 telephone call was. I do not know how far then  
22 activities extend beyond that that are not connected to  
23 some form of extensive drug dealing.  
24 Q. Okay. I follow what you're saying there, but in fact  
25 the Micra wasn't related to the drug dealing, was it?

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1 A. The Micra was not, no.

2 Q. And the approach by Mr Abuhdaima was to the Micra?

3 A. He would say that he doesn't remember ever doing that,  
4 so...

5 Q. Indeed.

6 A. Again, what was the significance of that act? I'm  
7 not -- please don't think I'm trying to minimise the  
8 suspicion, the suspicion exists, but from an  
9 investigative perspective it is what conclusions we can  
10 reach from that.

11 Q. Yes, that's very fair. I'm just looking to see whether  
12 I can find the image of the approach to it.  
13 {INQ035397/157}.

14 That shows that Mr Abuhdaima walking from under the  
15 building line across in the direction of the  
16 Nissan Micra.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And where the scooter was earlier left,  
18 it looks like he might be dressed for a scooter, I don't  
19 know.

20 MR WEATHERBY: Yes.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't know who is who, I'm afraid.

22 A. I haven't got his full account to hand, but this is why  
23 he claims he's at Devell House and it's in relation to  
24 having a scooter there and it not working very well.

25 MR WEATHERBY: Okay. I have put my point about that, I'll

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1 move swiftly on.

2 On 21 May, in the early hours of the morning,  
3 Mr Alzilitni is caught on CCTV going back to the Micra  
4 again and he walks around it several times. The same  
5 document, please, Mr Lopez, {INQ035397/183}.

6 That's Mr Alzilitni going to the Micra as I have  
7 just described.

8 {INQ035397/184}. Just reading through the legend  
9 there, your officers have identified he spends some  
10 little time looking round it. Is that fair? He  
11 leans -- the bottom image of {INQ035397/185} might help  
12 us -- he leans forward into the front passenger seat, so  
13 he appears to be peering into it.

14 A. Yes, I think that is fair, yes.

15 Q. The next page, he goes to the rear of it {INQ035397/186}  
16 and he's walked round the Micra. So he's obviously  
17 paying pretty close attention to it; yes?

18 A. Yes, I agree, I think he is, yes.

19 Q. Just for completeness while we're in the document,  
20 {INQ035397/314}, please.

21 This is what I referred to earlier with him going to  
22 the car and wiping it on the 25th. It's just showing  
23 pictures of that.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. In fact, when asked in interview about the wiping of the

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1 car, he flatly denied it; is that right?  
 2 A. I would have to check that, but I think from  
 3 recollection you're right.  
 4 Q. Again, the reference, just so it can be checked, is  
 5 {INQ032529/46}.  
 6 So ---  
 7 A. I think he does provide an explanation though, doesn't  
 8 he? The interview passage you've ---  
 9 Q. That's very helpful. I was just coming on to that. In  
 10 fact, in the same reference I have just given you,  
 11 {INQ032529/5}, I don't need it up, but when asked about  
 12 repeated trips to the Micra, he denied knowing it  
 13 belonged to Salman Abedi until after the attack and said  
 14 he was just curious and looked inside it. It doesn't  
 15 appear to have been a truthful account, does it,  
 16 Mr Barraclough?  
 17 A. It's difficult to say whether he's being truthful or  
 18 whether he's lying or ...  
 19 Q. Well, I'm not going to take this much further, but  
 20 I have put a series of references to you where his trips  
 21 to the car appear to be under request from others to do  
 22 it, so he's not just curious, is he, he's going to the  
 23 car because he's being asked to do it and then he's  
 24 wiping the car?  
 25 A. Possibly. What element of this is the truth or not,

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1 I don't know, but possibly.  
 2 Q. Okay.  
 3 A. Possibly, again, it's about drug dealing. Possibly,  
 4 it's about, as you say, removing what he thinks might be  
 5 any trace evidence that relates to him. Again, it's the  
 6 context of that within the whole --- this whole wider  
 7 contact group.  
 8 Q. Yes. Can I move on to 22 May and some evidence, and  
 9 I'll preface this by saying this may be a curiosity, but  
 10 I want to put it in again because it is a piece of  
 11 a jigsaw, but it's not clear --- I accept you'll agree  
 12 it's not clear --- what it actually amounts to.  
 13 On 22 May, Mr Alzilitni is in fact cell sited near  
 14 to the arena at 7.06 in the evening, about 30 minutes  
 15 after Salman Abedi has been there. Is that something  
 16 that you can recall?  
 17 A. Again, Mr Weatherby, I'd have to check that and what  
 18 that cell siting means actually as well. We're back  
 19 to ---  
 20 Q. It's tab 2 of the little bundle that I've given you, and  
 21 for the record it's {INQ030794/9}. So he's cell sited  
 22 at that point. Tab 2, the last page. It's the entry at  
 23 19.06.  
 24 A. I'm sorry, did you say page 9?  
 25 Q. Yes. I can put this and you can check it later if it's

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1 easier. I am aware I'm putting you rather on the spot  
 2 with this exercise. Would it be easier if I put it to  
 3 you and we can move swiftly on?  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He's picked up by a mast somewhere close  
 5 to the arena 30 minutes after Salman Abedi has been  
 6 there on his hostile reconnaissance.  
 7 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, which obviously on its own means very  
 8 little indeed, but then between 18.57 and 19.30,  
 9 Mr Alzilitni is making five phone calls to Mr Blidi.  
 10 The cell site sees him go away from the arena up towards  
 11 the Cheetham Hill area, but then he's returned back to  
 12 the Moss Side area, so he's gone up towards the  
 13 Cheetham Hill area but returned across the city, or  
 14 around the city, to the Moss Side area by 19.30, where  
 15 he's again cell sited travelling towards Devell House,  
 16 where Mr Blidi resides. And then at 20.06, he is cell  
 17 sited in the vicinity of Granby House. Again,  
 18 I acknowledge the caveats we have about what that  
 19 actually means; yes?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. So again, I emphasise, this is the least clear of the  
 22 three cell siting pieces of evidence I put to you but he  
 23 is ---  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There is quite a lot of CCTV of  
 25 Salman Abedi as he sets off back from Granby House ---

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1 I don't know if we see him coming out --- no doubt that's  
 2 been looked at to see if Mr Alzilitni can be seen  
 3 anywhere.  
 4 A. Sir, I think that's the point ---  
 5 MR WEATHERBY: Mr Alzilitni, there's no evidence at all that  
 6 they meet up, is there?  
 7 A. No.  
 8 Q. Again, it's something of a coincidence that he is cell  
 9 sited in proximity to Granby House at a very pertinent  
 10 time?  
 11 A. I think there are lots of coincidences in this enquiry  
 12 and I fully accept what you say and they give rise to  
 13 suspicion. There's no doubt about that.  
 14 Q. Then he leaves with Mr Blidi and Mr Oun for London the  
 15 day after the incident where he wipes the side of the  
 16 Micra and then, on 5 June, the police --- a few days  
 17 after the Micra had been found, Mr Alzilitni is stopped  
 18 attempting to leave the country with Mr Oun; is that  
 19 right?  
 20 A. Again, I'll have to check that, Mr Weatherby. I'm  
 21 sorry.  
 22 Q. A reference for you to check, page {INQ030794/16} of  
 23 that same document.  
 24 A. It's 10 pages of very close --- well, dense ---  
 25 information.

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1 Q. No problem. 1  
 2 A. 20 pages, sorry. 2  
 3 Q. Of course he's not necessarily leaving the country for 3  
 4 any particular reason, but if it was for a nefarious 4  
 5 reason it could be to do with the drug dealing. He was 5  
 6 indicted on drug matters as well, wasn't he? 6  
 7 A. Yes. 7  
 8 Q. So the evidence includes close connection with the 8  
 9 Micra, deleting texts apparently relating to visiting 9  
 10 the Micra, wiping the Micra, repeat visits to it, and 10  
 11 this what may be only a curiosity of cell siting close 11  
 12 to Granby House. That's all I want to deal with on 12  
 13 Mr Elmehdi. 13  
 14 I'm going to move on to deal with the relationship 14  
 15 between Mr Alzoubare and Abdalraouf Ali. 15  
 16 MR GREANEY: Mr Weatherby, I don't think you can see me, but 16  
 17 given that you're moving on, I'm going to invite for the 17  
 18 chairman to consider whether this might be a good time 18  
 19 to break for the day and for Mr Weatherby to resume 19  
 20 tomorrow morning. 20  
 21 MR WEATHERBY: I know this is what counsel does say very 21  
 22 often, but if that was the case, then I would be much 22  
 23 shorter in the morning. I doubt I have more than about 23  
 24 40 minutes left. 24  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you very much. I think 25

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1 everyone's had quite a long day and you've been having 1  
 2 to ask questions for a very long time, and you've had to 2  
 3 answer them for a very long time, so back at 9.30 3  
 4 tomorrow, please. 4  
 5 Thank you all very much. 5  
 6 (4.50 pm) 6  
 7 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am on 7  
 8 Thursday, 10 December 2020) 8  
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