

Tuesday, 15 December 2020

(9.30 am)

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Good morning.

MS CARTWRIGHT: Good morning, sir. The first witness we are to hear from today is over the video link. This witness is subject to a restriction order that was made by you, sir, and also that restriction order also applies to a relative of the witness. The terms of those restriction orders prohibit the identification of the person that we've ciphered as Trial Witness 1 and also the next witness, Relative A. So as a result of your restriction orders, sir, the witness's evidence is not being broadcast on YouTube. It is, however, being broadcast to the court annexes. After this hearing, a transcript will be prepared redacting any material that might tend to identify either Trial Witness 1 or Relative A, although, as we're now sitting in private session, we'll be able to identify both of those people by name as we start and perhaps now, if could now be sworn, please, sir.

TRIAL WITNESS 1 (affirmed)

Questions from MS CARTWRIGHT

MS CARTWRIGHT: Could you please give your full name?

A.                     Trial Witness 1                    .

Q.                     Trial Witness 1                    , as you know, we're referring to you in



1 Q. Had you had any dealings with Hashem Abedi before that  
2 time?

3 A. No, he was s.46 redaction friend (inaudible:  
4 distorted).

5 Q. I think you also mention that at that party there were  
6 a number of other males. I think you identify  
7 Zabir Nassrat?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And I think is he also known as Zuhir?

10 A. Yes,.

11 Q. And I think there was also Ahmed Benhammedi?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. And could you help us when from when you first met  
14 Hashem in May 2015, how you found him to be, what was  
15 your relationship like?

16 A. Normal, just we got on. He was from the same country as  
17 me. Just a normal lad, a normal relationship, a  
18 (inaudible: distorted) relationship.

19 Q. Could I ask you, please, maybe to move your hand away  
20 from your face because it seems to be interrupting -- we  
21 didn't hear all of your answer then. Thank you.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you said you just got on  
23 normally as friends; is that right?

24 A. Yes, just normal.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And did you say you came from the same

1 country as well?

2 A. Yes, the same background.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

4 MS CARTWRIGHT: That same country being Libya; is that

5 correct?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. How often, after when you met Hashem in May 2015, would

8 you meet with him, speak to him or socialise? Just to

9 get an idea of the nature of the friendship.

10 A. At the beginning we (inaudible: distorted) in the

11 summer. I met him in Libya. After May 2015, on the

12 summer, I met him in Libya and that's when we got close.

13 Q. Okay. I think we can see in the witness statement that

14 in July 2015, you were on holiday in Libya and that's

15 where you met with Hashem again?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Could you help us in terms of that time in Libya? What

18 sort of things did you do with Hashem?

19 A. Just go out, go to the beach, take drugs.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Just normal, what lads would do.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just stop for a moment. Can I say to

23 everyone, I'm sorry for the bad reception which there

24 is. We're having quite considerable difficulties in

25 making this contact. A lot of work has been done on it,

1           but we will do the best we can. I think we'll keep it  
2           as short as we can and we will lead as much as we can.

3 MR COOPER: I missed the last part.

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So did I.

5 MS CARTWRIGHT: I think he referenced that they did drugs.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what I thought, yes.

7 MS CARTWRIGHT: You next then go on to tell us that you were  
8           aware that Hashem went on a trip for the Hajj that year  
9           in 2015.

10 A. Yes, correct.

11 Q. I think you set out in your witness statement that you  
12       noticed a change in Hashem after he'd been on the  
13       pilgrimage. Could you tell us what you observed to be  
14       different in Hashem after he had been on the Hajj trip?

15 A. Yes, he was more into Islam and (inaudible: distorted)  
16       and whatnot and he just changed.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You said he was more what after the  
18       trip? More devout, more religious or what?

19 A. Yes. Very devout. Very religious.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Very what?

21 MS CARTWRIGHT: Religious.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

23 MS CARTWRIGHT: Can I ask you then, you reference in your  
24       witness statement that Hashem would try and cause you to  
25       try and change your behaviour? Could you tell us about





1           you have told us about when you would party with Hashem;  
2           would Salman party with you too?

3           A. Never.

4           Q. Did you experience what Salman's view was about Hashem's  
5           partying?

6           A. Yes.

7           Q. And what was that?

8           A. That it was very bad.

9           Q. That it was very bad?

10          A. Yes.

11          Q. I'm going to move forward now. I think you tell us  
12          in the witness statement that you were aware that Hashem  
13          went to work in Germany with Mr Benhammedi?

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. And I think you met him again in October of 2016 on  
16          a trip to Amsterdam?

17          A. Yes, that's correct.

18          Q. And can you tell us how Hashem was during that trip in  
19          Amsterdam, please?

20          A. That was the strangest I seen him. Something was up  
21          with him, but we didn't know what was wrong (inaudible:  
22          distorted) --

23          SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, stop again. Can you sit back  
24          a bit more? You've just come forward. Not too much,  
25          but try that now. You said it was the strangest you'd







1           happened remarkably few times so far, but I don't want  
2           to make a prediction for the future.

3       MS CARTWRIGHT: Perhaps if we could then connect back to  
4           Trial Witness 1, please.

5           Trial Witness 1, can you hear us and see us?

6       A. Yes, I can hear you fine and see you fine.

7       Q. Thank you. Can I thank you for being patient with us  
8           while we tried to rectify that.

9           Before we took a break, you mentioned the time when  
10          you were together in Amsterdam with Hashem. You were  
11          telling the chairman about how there was something weird  
12          about him and that he would smoke cannabis but then  
13          would go and pray and ask for forgiveness.

14       A. Yes, something was very strange. I couldn't work out  
15          what it was.

16       Q. Did you speak to Hashem about that?

17       A. No.

18       Q. Was there anything -- sorry, I interrupted you. What  
19          did you say then at the end? I interrupted your answer.

20       A. I just thought he'd get over whatever it was. He was  
21          just acting strange. He wasn't Hashem like I knew.

22       Q. I think then after that trip to Amsterdam, the next time  
23          you saw Hashem was in February 2017 when there was  
24          a party in London when you all stayed near Hyde Park?

25       A. Yes.

1 Q. And again, can you tell us how Hashem was at that time?

2 A. Strange, strange as well.

3 Q. Can you just again be clear about what you saw that was  
4 strange about Hashem in February of 2017 in London?

5 A. Again, he would just chill with us and then try to get  
6 us to pray with him. Something was up, you know.  
7 Something was up with him. He was acting strange. Not  
8 how he usually was.

9 Q. When you say something was up with him, did anyone ask  
10 or did you ask Hashem what was up with him and what was  
11 wrong?

12 A. No. I didn't ask him nothing.

13 Q. You tell us in the witness statement also that at that  
14 time Hashem had, at the end of 2016, resigned from his  
15 job with Mr Benhammedi in Germany?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Do you remember that? And did Hashem tell you anything  
18 about the reason why he'd resigned?

19 A. No, he just said, "I need to go back". There was no big  
20 reason, he wanted to go back home to Manchester.

21 Q. Okay. You also tell us in the witness statement that  
22 after you had been with Hashem partying in London, you  
23 then went to Manchester, I think you say about the week  
24 after, and you stayed with Hashem.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Is it right, was it 2 days that you stayed with Hashem  
2 in February of 2017 in Manchester?

3 A. I think so, yes. Yes, about 2 days.

4 Q. Can you help us how you spent the time with Hashem in  
5 Manchester in February of 2017? What did you do?

6 A. He was working at a takeaway place <sup>s.46 redaction</sup>. He was  
7 doing deliveries, food deliveries. He was doing that  
8 most of the time.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Could you tell me what he said?

10 MS CARTWRIGHT: He said he was doing work at a takeaway and  
11 he was doing that most of the time.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

13 MS CARTWRIGHT: Was the address that you stayed at with  
14 Hashem 21 Elsmore Road, which was his home at the time?  
15 Is that where you stayed?

16 A. Yes, I stayed at that house, in Fallowfield, I think.

17 Q. Was Salman there as well?

18 A. No, he was not there.

19 Q. How was Hashem when you were staying at his house? What  
20 did he seem like at that time?

21 A. It was odd because he went back to drug taking and  
22 he was still, like, very -- trying to be religious and  
23 pray on time.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I got he was back to drug taking and  
25 he was very religious.

1 MS CARTWRIGHT: Praying on time.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.

3 MS CARTWRIGHT: Did Hashem say anything to you about things  
4 that him and his brother Salman were doing at that time?  
5 Was there anything said about anything they were  
6 involved in together?

7 A. No. No, no.

8 Q. I'm going to --

9 A. They never gave any, like, clue of what they were doing  
10 and where they were going.

11 Q. I'm going to ask you in a little while about a request  
12 that Hashem made of you to purchase sulphuric acid.

13 Just to be clear, in February 2017, when you were  
14 staying with Hashem, was there any mention made to you  
15 about sulphuric acid or a purchase of sulphuric acid?

16 A. No. It wasn't until I went back to s.46 redaction and he  
17 asked me over the phone.

18 Q. How much drug taking was Hashem doing at that time  
19 in February 2017 when you stayed with him?

20 A. A lot.

21 Q. You gave a description about that at the trial. Can  
22 I just ask you about that, please. You gave an answer  
23 that you thought he was:

24 "... taking drugs to, like, forget what he knew what  
25 his brother was going to do, to try and forget that."

- 1                   Can you remember giving that answer?
- 2       A.   Yes, obviously after the arena thing happened, when you  
3           look at how things happened and putting stuff together,  
4           that's the thing I can only think of, he was taking  
5           drugs to not have a clear brain.
- 6       Q.   Can I then, please, ask you -- we can see that in your  
7           witness statement you tell us that you had a further  
8           visit and you stayed with Hashem in March of 2017.
- 9       A.   Yes.
- 10      Q.   What was the purpose of you going to stay with Hashem  
11           in March of 2017?
- 12      A.   Just to chill.  Get out of town and go over to  
13           Manchester and chill.
- 14      Q.   When you stayed with Hashem on that occasion, in March,  
15           how was Hashem?
- 16      A.   The same how I left him.
- 17      Q.   And during that trip in March of 2017, did you see  
18           Salman?
- 19      A.   I can't remember.  No, I can't remember.  I don't think  
20           I seen him that year.
- 21      Q.   Can I ask you, during the visit in March of 2017 did  
22           Hashem tell you anything about another flat or property  
23           he was using out in Blackley at Somerton Court?
- 24      A.   No.  I had no idea about it.  He never mentioned it,  
25           never gave a clue that there was another property.

- 1 Q. Can I ask you then, the property at Elsmore Road, was  
2 that where you stayed in March of 2017?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. What was that property like? What was the state of that  
5 house?
- 6 A. It was in a bit of a state, not the cleanest.
- 7 Q. Did you notice anything like oil cans about the place or  
8 anything else?
- 9 A. Yes. There was, like... Because he worked at the  
10 takeaway place, I assumed he was just getting them from  
11 there. I don't know what reason he was getting them  
12 for.
- 13 Q. And did you ask Hashem anything about those?
- 14 A. No. I never had any interest in it.
- 15 Q. Can I ask you, did you meet with Mr Nassrat during that  
16 trip in March of 2017?
- 17 A. I think I did once, yes. Yes, I did, I think in a car  
18 park, yes.
- 19 Q. Was there any discussion with Mr Nassrat about how  
20 Hashem was at that time?
- 21 A. No, no.
- 22 Q. Can I ask you then, please, about whether you made  
23 a trip to the mosque in March of 2017? I just want to  
24 ask you about that because in the statement you  
25 indicated that Salman was also present in the mosque



- 1           when you went with Hashem.
- 2       A.   Yes.
- 3       Q.   Do you remember that incident?
- 4       A.   Oh yes.
- 5       Q.   Can you tell us about that, please?
- 6       A.   Yes, he was leading the front row, praying.  He was
- 7           at the mosque praying.
- 8       Q.   Do you remember which mosque that was?
- 9       A.   I don't know the name of it, but I think it was the one
- 10           in Gooch.
- 11      Q.   Did something happen when the imam stuttered in Gooch?
- 12           Did something happen when the imam was reading the
- 13           prayers and then he stuttered and Salman took over
- 14           leading the prayer?
- 15      A.   Yes.
- 16      Q.   What did you think about that?
- 17      A.   Cheeky.
- 18      Q.   So other than seeing Salman at the mosque when you
- 19           attended in March of 2017 with Hashem, did you have any
- 20           other dealings with Salman in March of 2017?
- 21      A.   Never.  No, no.
- 22      Q.   I asked you the similar questions about your February
- 23           visit, but in March of 2017 when you were in Manchester,
- 24           did Hashem speak to you at all about sulphuric acid?
- 25      A.   Never.  He never spoke about anything like that in

1 person. It was until I went back to home and he rang me  
2 and asked for it over the phone.

3 Q. How long after you'd left Manchester did Hashem ring you  
4 and ask you over the telephone?

5 A. Roughly a week.

6 Q. Are you able to help us then with roughly when in March  
7 that call would have been?

8 A. When did I (inaudible: distorted) Manchester? March the  
9 what?

10 Q. I think you reference in one of your statements that you  
11 were there on 9 March of 2017. Then you tell us about  
12 a trip to s.46 redaction and then you came back via Manchester.

13 Is that likely to be about right, that date, 9 March?

14 A. It would have been about a week later than that.

15 Q. Okay. So tell us then what did Hashem say to you on the  
16 telephone, please?

17 A. He said to me that his brother tipped the generator, the  
18 electricity generator, and it's not working and he  
19 needed acid for it.

20 Q. Did he say where the electricity generator was?

21 A. Yes, it was in Libya.

22 Q. What did you think about that when he said that  
23 a generator had been tipped over?

24 A. I believed it. I didn't see anything wrong with it.

25 Q. What then did Hashem ask you about that generator that

- 1 had been tipped over in Libya?
- 2 A. He asked me that his parents need it to be working  
3 again, they needed acid for it, can you order me some  
4 acid. He sent me a link.
- 5 Q. Was that link -- tell us about the link he sent to you,  
6 please.
- 7 A. It was an Amazon link.
- 8 Q. What did you then do?
- 9 A. I then -- I had no money in my account so I went to ask  
10 <sup>s.46 redaction</sup> if he can lend me £70 and he asked me what for,  
11 so I had to show him what it was and <sup>s.46 redaction</sup> said no.
- 12 Q. Can I just check the details of this because within the  
13 witness statement that you gave originally, you  
14 indicated that you set up an account on Amazon as  
15 a guest and I think you actually went to place the order  
16 but it was only then when the order -- when you didn't  
17 have the funds in the account that the order failed;  
18 is that correct?
- 19 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.
- 20 Q. In terms of the value of this sulphuric acid that was in  
21 the link that you'd been sent, was that £76 worth of  
22 sulphuric acid?
- 23 A. Roughly £70, yes.
- 24 Q. At the time then when you attempted to make the purchase  
25 of sulphuric acid, was anything going through your mind

1 about that request and the reason he'd given for it for  
2 needing that purchase?

3 A. No, I didn't have any doubts about it, I thought that  
4 was the truth.

5 Q. So can I ask you at that stage, there was nothing in  
6 your mind, if I use the word that we're going to perhaps  
7 hear a little bit more, at this stage about this being  
8 a dodgy request?

9 A. Yes, nothing in my brain told me it was dodgy or  
10 anything like that.

11 Q. So can I ask then, so when you placed that order that  
12 then didn't go through, where was the sulphuric acid,  
13 had it gone through, going to be delivered to? Was that  
14 to your home address?

15 A. Yes, it would have been to my home address.

16 Q. And I don't want you to give me that, please. So  
17 you have told us that when the transaction didn't go  
18 through, you went and spoke to s.46 redaction ?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Can you explain what you said or showed s.46 redaction ,  
21 please?

22 A. I showed s.46 redaction the acid and he said, "No, I'm not  
23 buying that".

24 Q. I think you have said s.46 redaction actually said more  
25 than that, didn't he? Could you just --

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. We need to know everything that s.46 redaction said to you  
3 at that time, please.
- 4 A. s.46 redaction said it was dodgy and he didn't want to order  
5 something for someone like that.
- 6 Q. Was that you didn't need to order something like that  
7 for someone like that?
- 8 A. He said, "I'm not ordering something like that for  
9 someone else".
- 10 Q. Had you told him that you were placing the order for  
11 Hashem Abedi?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. How did s.46 redaction know Hashem Abedi?
- 14 A. He didn't really know him, but he just knew he was a lad  
15 I was meeting in Manchester.
- 16 Q. What was his concern, though, about you placing that  
17 order for Hashem Abedi?
- 18 A. Yes, s.46 redaction never liked the Manchester Libyans, because  
19 he always thought they were dodgy, so he thought their  
20 request was dodgy.
- 21 Q. Just to be clear: the request was dodgy, but also the  
22 Manchester Libyans were dodgy; is that what you're  
23 saying?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. And by that, did he mean Hashem Abedi was dodgy?

- 1 A. Hashem and --
- 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He meant all Manchester Libyans were  
3 dodgy, probably.
- 4 A. Not every one of them, but there's a reputation for that  
5 kind of stuff there.
- 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: In your witness statement, you've also  
7 indicated, and I think it was evidence that you gave  
8 at the trial, that s.46 redaction also said to you at that  
9 time, and I just want to check that's correct, that the  
10 sulphuric acid could be used to make home-made  
11 explosives; is that correct?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. When s.46 redaction said that to you, what was your  
14 reaction?
- 15 A. My reaction was, obviously, I don't want to do it,  
16 I don't want to be involved. I listened to s.46 redaction .
- 17 Q. I think you also mention -- in one of your statements,  
18 you reference the warning that you'd had from s.46 redaction  
19 s.46 redaction . Did s.46 redaction give you a warning at that  
20 time?
- 21 A. Not a formal warning. s.46 redaction -- the last thing he was  
22 thinking in his brain was a kid would do that, do you  
23 know what I mean? It was brief, "No, I know what these  
24 people get up to", and that was it.
- 25 Q. Did s.46 redaction have knowledge of the Abedi family?

- 1 I think you tell us a little bit about that in one of  
2 your witness statements.
- 3 A. Yes, he had knowledge of his father, that he was  
4 a freedom fighter or something like that, and there was  
5 an arrest warrant out on him in Libya before.
- 6 Q. Then after you'd spoken to s.46 redaction and he'd told you  
7 those things, did you go back to Hashem then and tell  
8 him that you wouldn't be making the purchase of  
9 sulphuric acid?
- 10 A. No, I just stopped answering the phone.
- 11 Q. Why, bearing in mind you'd known Hashem at this point  
12 for just shy of 2 years, did you not say to Hashem, "I'm  
13 just not going to do it for you, Hashem, I don't have  
14 money in my account", or, "Actually, I'm" --
- 15 A. I was embarrassed to tell him I'm not doing it for him.  
16 I thought the better option was, at that time, to just  
17 ignore him.
- 18 Q. Why were you embarrassed?
- 19 A. Because he'd done so many favours for me before and  
20 I didn't want to let him down.
- 21 Q. Did you have in your mind at that point that there was  
22 a potential unlawful purpose for what Hashem was asking  
23 you to do? Was that in your mind?
- 24 A. I was still adamant nothing like that was going to  
25 happen.

- 1 Q. And why do you say that?
- 2 A. Just knowing Hashem and I'd been with him for a long  
3 time and just having an emotional connection, I thought,  
4 no, it's not going to happen. Do you know what I mean?  
5 It's not something he'll do. At the time that's what  
6 I was thinking.
- 7 And then when <sup>s.46 redaction</sup> suggested it, I didn't plant it  
8 in my brain that that's what it was, you know what  
9 I mean? But in Libya, we do have electricity loss and  
10 something like that could be true.
- 11 Q. Then why didn't you just say that to Hashem on the  
12 phone?
- 13 A. I just... I don't know. I thought it was better to  
14 avoid him and not face the embarrassment of saying to  
15 him, "No, I haven't got money".
- 16 Q. I'm not going to take you through the phone records, but  
17 we can see after about 12 March, there's a number of  
18 attempts Hashem makes to contact you and we can see that  
19 the calls, broadly speaking, aren't answered by you. So  
20 when Hashem, over the days that followed, continued to  
21 try and contact you, did you not think it was easier  
22 just to answer the phone and tell him that you weren't  
23 going to buy the sulphuric acid?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Can I ask you, did you speak to Mr Nassrat at all about



1 the request that Hashem had made of you to buy sulphuric  
2 acid?

3 A. Never.

4 Q. And did Mr Nassrat at any point tell you that Hashem had  
5 made requests of him to buy items also?

6 A. No, never, no.

7 Q. Can I ask you, so there's absolute clarity, why didn't  
8 you contact the police when s.46 redaction made you aware  
9 that one of the things that sulphuric acid can be used  
10 for is within home explosives?

11 A. Like I said, I didn't -- when s.46 redaction said that,  
12 I didn't plant it in my brain, I didn't think it was  
13 going to happen. s.46 redaction just suggested things that  
14 weren't going to happen, that's what I was thinking.  
15 Like knowing the person, I thought, no, this... You  
16 know what I mean? It was not something he'd do.  
17 Obviously I'm wrong, but...

18 Q. Did you speak to s.46 redaction at all after that time  
19 about the fact that you were no longer in contact with  
20 Hashem?

21 A. No. The last thing I thought, we're 20 years old,  
22 19 years old, and the last thing I thought was this guy  
23 was going to do that, you know?

24 MS CARTWRIGHT: If you wait there, there will be other  
25 questions for you. I think Mr Atkinson is going to have



1           when you went up to Manchester or they came down to see  
2           you?

3           A. I just seen him when they were in Manchester.

4           Q. Right. When you first got to know Hashem, he would  
5           dress in western clothing?

6           A. Yes.

7           Q. He would smoke cannabis?

8           A. Yes.

9           Q. He would go out to parties?

10          A. Yes.

11          Q. He would at least try to meet girls?

12          A. Yes.

13          Q. Would he drink alcohol?

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. Did you understand at that time that his brother,  
16          Salman, was much more religious than him back then?

17          A. Yes.

18          Q. And did not approve of what Hashem was doing?

19          A. No, he didn't approve, no.

20          Q. Or the friends that he was spending time with?

21          A. No.

22          Q. You told the police that you thought that Salman thought  
23          you were a bad influence on his brother --

24          A. Yes.

25          Q. -- amongst other people?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. But then in late 2015, October -- I think, 2015 --  
3 Hashem and Salman went on the Hajj?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. How were they able to afford to do that, do you know?
- 6 A. I thought their parents maybe (inaudible: distorted)  
7 something.
- 8 Q. But when Hashem came back from the Hajj, he had changed?
- 9 A. Yes, he'd changed.
- 10 Q. And the way that you expressed it in your interview to  
11 the police was that you had known people before who had  
12 become more religious after they'd been on the Hajj?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. But Hashem was different to them in the way that he  
15 completely changed?
- 16 A. Yes, he took it the extra mile.
- 17 Q. And really didn't want to have anything to do with his  
18 old friends like you for a period of time unless you  
19 changed your ways too?
- 20 A. That's true.
- 21 Q. So he was starting to wear the kameez, he was not  
22 cutting his hair, and he was telling people like you  
23 that you ought to be praying more often?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Saying things to you in texts, for example, that you

- 1           needed to change because otherwise if the world ended  
2           tomorrow, God wouldn't forgive you?
- 3       A.   That's correct.
- 4       Q.   Then Hashem went out to work in Germany in 2016?
- 5       A.   Yes.
- 6       Q.   And was it through the period that he was working in  
7           Germany that you saw him in Amsterdam?
- 8       A.   Yes.
- 9       Q.   Which I think you told us was October 2016.
- 10      A.   Yes, October 2016, yes.
- 11      Q.   When you saw him then, he had changed again in some  
12           respects, hadn't he?
- 13      A.   Yes.
- 14      Q.   He was still much more religious than he had been when  
15           you'd first met him, but he was also now smoking  
16           cannabis a lot?
- 17      A.   Yes.
- 18      Q.   And was he drinking alcohol by this time?
- 19      A.   No, he wasn't, he was smoking a lot of cannabis.
- 20      Q.   So much that it was of concern to you that he was doing  
21           too much?
- 22      A.   Just the behaviour of him smoking and being religious  
23           doesn't add up.
- 24      Q.   It was, as you've put it, weird?
- 25      A.   Yes.

1 Q. Then moving into 2017, you met up with him and a number  
2 of others in London in February of 2017. Was Mr Nassrat  
3 part of the party on that occasion?

4 A. No.

5 Q. But Hashem was?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And he was still on the one hand very religious and, on  
8 the other hand, smoking cannabis a lot?

9 A. Even worse, taking MDMA.

10 Q. So taking other drugs as well?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Drinking alcohol by this time?

13 A. No, still no alcohol.

14 Q. But a range -- a whole cocktail of drugs?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And it seems to you it was like he was trying to forget  
17 reality?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. At that time, you didn't know what the reality was that  
20 he was trying to forget, but that was how it appeared to  
21 you?

22 A. Yes. I thought maybe his brother was abusing him or  
23 something.

24 Q. Just so we understand that, do you mean was putting  
25 pressure on him, was being violent to him, what do you

- 1 mean?
- 2 A. Obviously Hashem's parents were never there, so Salman  
3 was like the parent, but he was like an extreme parent.  
4 So maybe that's what we thought, maybe that's what  
5 it is, it's him and his brother, leave it.
- 6 Q. At this stage when he is in this worrying frame of mind,  
7 did you try to talk to him about what was going on?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. Or effectively, were you there to party and that's what  
10 you all did?
- 11 A. Yes. Everyone was there for a good time for themselves  
12 and not to worry about others.
- 13 Q. Did you ever really sit him down and ask him what was  
14 going on?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. And why he was behaving like this?
- 17 A. No.
- 18 Q. But it didn't stop you seeing him on occasions, either  
19 when he came down to London in February or when you went  
20 up to Manchester in March?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. And when you saw him in Manchester in March, was he  
23 still that contradiction of very religious on the one  
24 hand and smoking a lot of cannabis on the other?
- 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Whatever the reality was, he was trying to forget it  
2 still?

3 A. That's what I think, yes.

4 Q. When you went up to Manchester in March, you also saw  
5 Mr Nassrat, didn't you?

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind if I just interrupt you to  
7 go back on that?

8 When you have described him as seeming to try and  
9 forget reality, is this something you thought at the  
10 time or is this something you have thought since?

11 A. Something that I thought after the arena bombing.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

13 MR ATKINSON: We're going to try and look at the phone  
14 schedule. Whether this is going to work at your end  
15 remains to be seen, but I can describe to you what  
16 we will be looking at, which I hope will help.

17 {CPS000157/41}. It's the middle of the page.  
18 I don't know if you can see this on your screen.

19 A. It's very blurry.

20 Q. I get the sense from the way you're looking at the  
21 screen that you're having difficulty. What it shows  
22 is -- this is 9 March 2017, which is the day you told us  
23 that you were up in Manchester. It's a series of  
24 messages from you to Mr Nassrat. What happens is that  
25 you had been in contact with Hashem and then you're



1            sending a series of messages to Mr Nassrat and the  
2            messages you are sending are clearly you trying to get  
3            hold of Hashem through Mr Nassrat. Does that sound  
4            right, the kind of thing you'd have done?

5            A. Yes, maybe, yes.

6            Q. Is that because you would have expected Hashem and  
7            Mr Nassrat to be together and so if you couldn't get  
8            hold of Hashem, you might be able to get hold of him  
9            through his friend?

10          A. Or something like that, yes.

11          Q. If we go on to {CPS000157/43}, please. If we work on  
12          the basis that 9 March was when you were up in  
13          Manchester, a couple of days later, on 11 March, it's  
14          towards the bottom of the screen as we look at it,  
15          Hashem made a series of calls to you, the first of which  
16          lasted just under 3 minutes. Might that have been  
17          Hashem calling you after you'd met him in Manchester to  
18          ask for your help with the acid?

19          A. Yes.

20          Q. Because it was by phone that he did that?

21          A. Yes.

22          Q. Do we understand that the request he made did not seem  
23          to you to be a problem?

24          A. No.

25          Q. At the time, because your experience from Libya and with

- 1 the power problems they had there, it didn't seem odd  
2 that you might need to top up the acid on a power  
3 source?
- 4 A. Yes, it didn't seem odd.
- 5 Q. But it did seem odd to s.46 redaction ?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. I think it's right you told the police that s.46 redaction  
8 thought that the Libyan community in Manchester held  
9 very strong political views in relation to  
10 Colonel Gaddafi and the war there.
- 11 A. Mm-hm.
- 12 Q. But he also considered that the Abedi family had extreme  
13 religious views?
- 14 A. The Abedis and a lot of other families. That's what he  
15 thought.
- 16 Q. But certainly so far as --
- 17 A. I had, like, no idea about -- I didn't understand what  
18 the parties were, who was who. Do you understand?  
19 I was just meeting friends in Manchester. I didn't care  
20 what it was.
- 21 Q. You weren't concerned by the politics or the religious  
22 concerns, but s.46 redaction did?
- 23 A. I didn't understand what it was, I didn't understand  
24 what the whole thing was.
- 25 Q. So when you told s.46 redaction about this, he thought it was

- 1           dodgy because of who was asking --
- 2       A.   If someone wanted to buy acid, you can buy it there as
- 3           well.
- 4       Q.   So did <sup>s.46 redaction</sup> reaction not make you think there
- 5           might be a problem here?
- 6       A.   No.   I didn't believe it.
- 7       Q.   Because Hashem had changed over the period of time,
- 8           he was clearly very religious and very troubled.
- 9       A.   Put yourself in my position, 20 years old, yeah?
- 10           I don't have any political views or anything like that.
- 11           I'm not, what's it called, as wise as I am now.  I can't
- 12           read people -- you know, how they behave and body
- 13           language and whatnot.  It's the last thing I would
- 14           think.  Especially for me, that kind of stuff, I only
- 15           see it on the news and movies and stuff like that.
- 16       Q.   So did you just decide that the best way forward was
- 17           just to blank him, blank Hashem, going forward?
- 18       A.   Yes.  Yes, blank him, yes.
- 19       Q.   One more entry on the call schedule, {CPS000157/48},
- 20           please.  Can we go down?
- 21           Two days later, this is 13 March, it's row 2,498.
- 22           There is a call to your phone from Salman Abedi's phone,
- 23           lasting over 3.5 minutes.  Do you remember ever speaking
- 24           to Salman Abedi on the phone?
- 25       A.   No.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Perhaps I'm looking at the wrong one.

2 MR ATKINSON: Row 2,498.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm looking at the wrong one, you're  
4 quite right. I was looking at the lower down one,  
5 thank you.

6 MR ATKINSON: Not at all.

7 As the chair has rightly identified, there were some  
8 further calls from that number to your number, one of  
9 which lasted 2.5 minutes. Was that Salman on the phone  
10 to you or was that Hashem on the phone to you?

11 A. Hashem. I've never spoken to Salman on the phone.

12 Q. So would that be another possibility for when he was  
13 asking you to get the acid? If it wasn't the 11th, it  
14 might have been the 13th?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Did he ask you once or more than once?

17 A. Just the once.

18 Q. What the phone schedule then shows is a lack of phone  
19 contact from you to him on any of his numbers after  
20 that.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Was the reality that you thought that you were best not  
23 having anything more to do with him?

24 A. No, I didn't think that, I just didn't want to tell him  
25 I haven't got any money. That's literally the reason.

1           That was literally the reason. I didn't want to  
2           embarrass myself by telling him "I don't have any money  
3           to give you".

4       Q. You'd been friends for some time, a bit of embarrassment  
5           between friends, is that really why you would stop all  
6           contact with someone?

7       A. Yes, that is really why, yes.

8       Q. Or was it because you two thought this was dodgy?

9       A. No, that was really the -- I said it from the beginning  
10           that I was embarrassed to tell him that I don't have  
11           £70, and that's how it worked out. It worked out well  
12           for me.

13       MR ATKINSON: Thank you.

14       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

15       MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, I think Mr Cooper has some questions,  
16           please.

17                               Questions from MR COOPER

18       MR COOPER: Just on a very distinct area if I can. I'm  
19           mindful about not putting things on the screen in this  
20           session, so I'll be guided by the inquiry on this.  
21           I would like to put a page of the examination-in-chief  
22           from the trial to this witness. I'm just  
23           double-checking that it's permissible to put it on  
24           screen.

25           This is {INQ031181/16}. I apologise for the late

1 notice, but I was only given these instructions in the  
2 short adjournment we had a moment ago.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, well, thank you for your care in  
4 dealing with it this way.

5 MR COOPER: It's page 60 of the trial transcript. It deals  
6 with, if I can put it in short, the Manchester Libyans.

7 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, that seems to be okay.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

9 MR COOPER: I'm grateful.

10 Can I ask you, please, to look at {INQ031181/16},  
11 please, which should be page 60 of the transcript. If  
12 you look at page 60 and just re-familiarise with that,  
13 you'll recognise --

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you see it on the screen in front of  
15 you?

16 A. I can't see it very well, no.

17 MR COOPER: Don't worry, I'll read it to you.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just so he knows what it is, because he  
19 may not be following. This is evidence that you gave at  
20 Hashem's trial, all right? And you're being reminded of  
21 what you said then and then you're going to be asked  
22 some questions about it.

23 A. Yes.

24 MR COOPER: You'll recall that you were asked questions by  
25 Mr Penny, who prosecuted at Hashem Abedi's trial, and

1 this is just a very short section of the questions he  
2 asked you and I just want to familiarise yourself with  
3 it. It dealt with an area when he was asking you,  
4 Mr Penny was asking you about the battery and he was  
5 asking you about s.46 redaction reaction to obtaining the  
6 acid. Then we look at the top, please, of page 60:

7 "Question: What was his reaction?

8 "Answer: Straightaway refused it.

9 "Question: What did he say?

10 "Answer: He said: this is dodgy, I do not buy acid  
11 online.

12 "Question: Did he say why he thought it was dodgy?

13 "Answer: Yes.

14 "Question: Help us?

15 "Answer: And that -- because Hashem is from  
16 Manchester and that.

17 "Question: Did he say anything about acid?"

18 And then I'll read your answer which is what I want  
19 to ask you about. You say this:

20 "Answer: Yes, but this is the reason why s.46 redaction  
21 said no. Listen carefully: these guys in Manchester  
22 were Libyans in Manchester, he does not like them.

23 "Question: Be very careful here?

24 "Answer: Yes, if you listen..."

25 And then you move off the subject.

1           You've touched upon Libyans in Manchester so little  
2           in your evidence that you've given to this inquiry, but  
3           I want to ask you a little more about that. What was  
4           your knowledge about the Libyan community in Manchester?  
5           Did you have any knowledge of them?

6           A. At the time I used to go up there or after this thing  
7           happened?

8           Q. Let's deal with at the time before this atrocity, but  
9           when you were speaking to s.46 redaction  
10          brought to your attention the Libyan community and let  
11          me emphasise this for anyone listening to this in due  
12          course -- I know we're restricted -- but I'm in no way  
13          every single Libyan in Manchester is anything other than  
14          a decent individual and decent people. But I'm asking  
15          you: was there a thought about the Libyan community in  
16          Manchester, that certain sections of it may be worrying?

17          A. Yes, some of them, yes.

18          Q. Did you share that view at the time?

19          A. No, I didn't know, no.

20          Q. Well, have you since learned, for instance, I'll deal  
21          with it slowly, since learned that certainly within the  
22          Manchester community there are some troubling elements,  
23          I emphasise very carefully, some troubling elements  
24          within the Libyan community in Manchester?

25          A. Not just Libyans, the Muslim community in Manchester,



1           yes.

2           Q. I certainly do not want to and I certainly will not  
3           start doing broad sweeps on that --

4           SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I'm grateful, Mr Cooper. The other  
5           thing is I'm at the moment slightly pushed or troubled  
6           or finding difficult to understand what his view after  
7           the atrocity of this really has -- is it any better than  
8           just what he's read in the newspapers or heard from  
9           gossip?

10          MR COOPER: That's why I'm being very careful because  
11          I certainly not, and neither am I instructed to, taint  
12          every single generic community, and neither would I.  
13          But I know that -- and I have had recent interactions  
14          from those who instruct me. This passage of evidence  
15          troubled the families and they were concerned that  
16          perhaps the witness wanted to unburden himself in some  
17          way and I am giving him the opportunity.

18          SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you for that and I understand the  
19          concern. I'm just not sure that his knowledge or his  
20          beliefs about people after this atrocity took place is  
21          going to help me enormously. It's what he knew  
22          beforehand.

23          MR COOPER: I understand that and I am not going to pursue  
24          it. It might be a line, subject to the inquiry's view,  
25          to pursue with the police as to the present situation --

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, absolutely.

2 MR COOPER: -- but not now, I agree. I have no further  
3 questions.

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Cooper.

5 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, I am just checking whether there are  
6 questions from Mr Welch, and Mr Weatherby has confirmed  
7 he has no questions.

8 Sir, I have no further questions, unless you have,  
9 of this witness.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I don't.

11 Thank you very much for giving your evidence, I'm  
12 grateful. I'm sorry for the technical difficulties and  
13 I'm very grateful to the people who sorted it out,  
14 because in the end, with a little difficulty, I think we  
15 could all manage to hear what was being said. So  
16 thank you to them. And thank you for your attendance.

17 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you. You can disconnect the call now.  
18 I'm very grateful for your time.

19 (The video link was terminated)

20 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, could I just mention while that's being  
21 done, it seems that there are aspects of that evidence  
22 that will need to be restricted in terms of information  
23 that was provided as well as further redactions that  
24 will need to be made to one of the pages that was placed  
25 on the screen.



1 MR RABIE ZREBA (sworn) (interpreted)

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Zreba, you may speak some English.

3 But it is very important that you let the interpreter  
4 interpret the questions to you and then you will reply,  
5 please, in -- what is the language?

6 THE INTERPRETER: Arabic.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In Arabic please, and then it will be  
8 interpreted back to us. So everything must go through  
9 the interpreter.

10 Please don't ask the interpreter questions. Just  
11 keep looking at us and it'll all just go through the  
12 interpreter as an intermediary. Otherwise we get in  
13 a terrible muddle.

14 Just before we start, I'm very sorry for the delay  
15 which has taken place. I hope everyone knows what's  
16 been going on. We've been trying to contact a witness  
17 who's not within the jurisdiction and that has not  
18 proved possible and I'm sorry for that. Hopefully, you  
19 will have been kept informed as much as we can about  
20 what was going on.

21 MR COOPER: We have, sir. My learned friend has been  
22 extremely assiduous on that and the families are fully  
23 aware of the position.

24 Questions from MS CARTWRIGHT

25 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Zreba, you should have in front of you

1 a folder that contains the three witness statements  
2 you have provided as part of the investigation.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Can I ask you to confirm if have you had an opportunity  
5 to refresh your memory from those three witness  
6 statements before today?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Mr Zreba, I'm going to identify each one by date and  
9 then I am going to ask you to confirm if the contents  
10 are true to the best of your knowledge and belief.

11 The first is dated 15 June 2017.

12 Are the contents of that statement true to the best  
13 of your knowledge and belief?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. The second is dated 18 January 2018. Again, are the  
16 contents of that statement true to the best of your  
17 knowledge and belief?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Finally, the third statement is dated 12 December 2018.  
20 Are the contents of that statement true to the best of  
21 your knowledge and belief?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 Mr Zreba, if we could start, first of all, I think  
25 it's right that you came to live in the United Kingdom

1 from Libya?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. I'm going to be asking you questions this afternoon  
4 about a meeting that you had on 22 May 2017.

5 THE INTERPRETER: The date again, please.

6 MS CARTWRIGHT: 22 May 2017.

7 I think it's in respect of a financial transaction  
8 that you were involved with, with a man we now know to  
9 be Salman Abedi.

10 Could I ask you, first of all, just to explain what  
11 your work was at that time and how you came therefore to  
12 be in contact with Mr Abedi, please?

13 A. Can you repeat the first part of the question, please?

14 THE INTERPRETER: Shall I ask to repeat the first part of  
15 the question?

16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just repeat it again.

17 MS CARTWRIGHT: We know you met Mr Abedi on 22 May 2017 in  
18 respect of a financial transaction.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Could you explain then what the nature of your work or  
21 services was at that time, please?

22 A. I worked in trade then. I would sell some goods, and  
23 I had a page... I had a Facebook page, I put all my  
24 products, all the goods, I buy it here from the UK with  
25 budget prices, then I would ship it to Libya. That was

1 my only income, that's my livelihood, that was my  
2 livelihood.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Interpreter, feel free, if his answer  
4 is very long, just to stop him. So do it in bite-size  
5 bits so you make sure you get it all right.

6 THE INTERPRETER: Sure, I explain that to him when I put my  
7 hands up.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

9 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Zreba, we know that you weren't being  
10 asked to send goods back to Libya when you met the  
11 gentleman on 22 May, but to make a money transfer. Can  
12 you tell us about that service, please?

13 A. I needed money, some money to buy goods. I was  
14 well-known within the Libyan community, people know me,  
15 some people I don't know, they know about me, and some  
16 knew about that I needed some money to buy goods.

17 Q. Can I just then confirm, Mr Zreba, we know that the  
18 gentleman that rang you on 22 May wanted you to send  
19 money that he was giving you back to Libya. Can you  
20 tell us about that service that you offered, please?

21 A. In his first call with me, he told me I need to send  
22 some money to Libya and he didn't introduce himself to  
23 me. That was the first time to receive a phone call  
24 from him.

25 Q. We'll look at those phone calls together in a moment.

1           Perhaps then if I can ask you, you tell us in your  
2           witness statement about a man that would work with you  
3           on the ground in Libya, I think called Ashraf Ibrahim.

4           A. Yes, I know that, yes.

5           Q. So would the relationship be that individuals in the  
6           United Kingdom could give you money in the UK and then  
7           you would effectively use Mr Ibrahim on the ground in  
8           Tripoli or in Libya to deliver the money to people in  
9           Libya?

10          THE INTERPRETER: I have to repeat. Shall I repeat? He  
11          wants me to repeat what you said.

12          MS CARTWRIGHT: Okay.

13          A. That's right.

14          Q. Just to be clear, was it Ibrahim that that day assisted  
15          you with this transaction in Libya?

16          A. Yes, it was him who assisted me with this transaction.

17          Q. Thank you. Perhaps then, Mr Zreba, if we use the call  
18          logs we've got to deal with the dealings you had with  
19          Salman Abedi that day.

20                 Could I ask, please, Mr Lopez, if {CPS000157/100},  
21          could be placed on the screen?

22                 Mr Zreba, could I ask you, please, to look at what  
23          is line 4,813. The call, please, timed --

24          THE INTERPRETER: Just one second.

25          SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They're quite difficult to follow,



1           these. Can you tell him what the call says, do you  
2           think? They're quite difficult to follow.

3           MS CARTWRIGHT: We can see at 5.11, there's a telephone call  
4           from who we now know to be Salman Abedi to you that  
5           lasted 1 minute and 21 seconds. Can you see that?

6           A. Yes, I can see it.

7           Q. So when the individual called you, did you, first of  
8           all, know who that person was?

9           A. No, I didn't know who he was.

10          Q. What was asked of you on the telephone call, please,  
11          Mr Zreba?

12          A. He asked me to send some money to his family, to his mum  
13          in Libya.

14          Q. Mr Zreba, can I be clear? Was it definitely money to be  
15          sent to the individual's mother that was said on the  
16          phone?

17          A. He said to my family.

18          Q. At any point during that call did you get the name of  
19          the man?

20          A. No.

21          Q. Then we can see the next telephone call is at 17.58,  
22          which is a call lasting 1 minute and 16 seconds, again  
23          from the man we now know to be Salman Abedi to yourself.  
24          What was discussed in that call, please?

25          A. I think that was 40 minutes after the first phone call.

1           He asked to see me in person to give me the money,  
2           but I was not interested to see him, I didn't pay him  
3           any attention.

4           That was because I didn't get back to him in the  
5           first phone call, I told him I'll get back to you, but  
6           I didn't get back to him, I was with my friends.

7           Q. So in the second call then to this man, did he give you  
8           an indication of how much money he wanted to send to  
9           Libya?

10          A. Yes. £460 or £470, I'm not sure. I think it is in the  
11          text messages.

12          Q. Yes, we'll come on to those in a minute.

13                 So was there any discussion in this call that you  
14                 would meet with him to take the money from him?

15          A. Yes, when I told him, do you know where the city centre  
16          mosque is because I needed a toilet then and I told him  
17          I'd be going to the toilet in there.

18                 I asked him, do you know where the mosque is, and he  
19                 said, yes, I do.

20          Q. Mr Zreba, when you say "the mosque", we've also heard  
21          reference to the Muslim Youth Foundation. Is that what  
22          you're referring to?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. So at that point then, was there an agreement to meet at  
25          the mosque to have a money exchange?

- 1 A. Yes, we agreed to meet there.
- 2 Q. Thank you. I'll take you in a moment, very briefly,  
3 just to the slides that capture your meeting with the  
4 man. At this point, had he given you a name?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. Then perhaps just finally before we move away from these  
7 call logs, we can see that there are then -- there's  
8 a call from you at 6.10.11 lasting 39 seconds. Can you  
9 assist us with what the purpose of that call was,  
10 please, Mr Zreba?
- 11 A. I rang him or he rang me in this call?
- 12 Q. You rang him at this point and we will see in a minute  
13 from the CCTV you are actually outside the Muslim Youth  
14 Foundation at that point.
- 15 A. I wanted to check where he was because I don't know him.
- 16 Q. Then following on from that call, we can see that  
17 Salman Abedi then called you twice at 18.12.37 for  
18 4 seconds, and then at 18.13.06 for 37 seconds.
- 19 A. This phone call lasting 4 seconds, we didn't talk on it,  
20 maybe just something wrong went there. We didn't speak  
21 in this 4-second call.
- 22 Q. Okay. Perhaps then just very briefly, Mr Zreba, if  
23 I could take you just to look at the stills that have  
24 captured your meeting with Mr Abedi and then you can  
25 tell us about that encounter, please.

1           Could I ask, please, for {INQ020160/32} to be  
2           displayed.

3           We can see you on page 32, timed at 6.09, stood  
4           outside the Muslim Youth Foundation. Can you see that?

5           A. That's me.

6           Q. And then if we go down to the next page, please,  
7           {INQ020160/33}, we can see you again timed at 6.13.

8           Then if we scroll down to the next image, we see your  
9           meeting with Salman Abedi at 6.14.17 {INQ020160/34}.

10          A. Mm-hm. He was right behind me.

11          Q. Can I ask, when you saw the gentleman outside the Muslim  
12          Youth Foundation, is it a man that you'd ever seen  
13          before?

14          A. I'd never seen him before that.

15          Q. Mr Zreba, I'm going to take you through the rest of the  
16          slides we have that show all of your encounter and then  
17          I'm going to ask you to explain in your own words what  
18          took place at that time, please.

19                 So if you look at the screen, Mr Zreba, we'll just  
20                 scroll through the few slides we have and then I'll ask  
21                 you to tell us what was happening, please.

22                 We can see on the next page that you and Mr Abedi  
23                 are stood outside {INQ020160/35}.

24                 If we keep moving down, please {INQ020160/36}. We  
25                 see you entering the Muslim Youth Foundation at 6.16.36.

1           The next one, {INQ020160/37}. If we pause at this  
2 stage. Mr Zreba, can you just explain what's happened  
3 up to this point, please?

4       A. After he gave me the money I walked into the foundation  
5 to count the money because I didn't want to check it  
6 outside.

7       Q. Then if we keep going through the slides, please. We  
8 see you leave Mr Abedi, enter the Muslim Youth  
9 Foundation, and then go back outside to Mr Abedi  
10 {INQ020160/38}.

11      A. After I checked the money, I came out because it was  
12 less than what it was supposed to be.

13           I asked him, come on, check the money yourself,  
14 count the money yourself.

15      Q. Is that why you go into the mosque together, into the  
16 Muslim Youth Foundation?

17      A. I went downstairs. As I mentioned, I needed to go to  
18 the toilet.

19      Q. If we keep looking through these slides please, then.  
20 {INQ020160/39}. We can see you going downstairs.

21 {INQ020160/40}.

22           {INQ020160/41}. We can see on the top one, Mr Abedi  
23 is stood by himself. Is this when you describe -- where  
24 you just needed to use the facilities?

25      A. Yes, that's right.

1 Q. Then on the next slide along {INQ020160/42}, we can see,  
2 in the photograph below, you with your back to the  
3 camera, and you seem to be on your telephone. What was  
4 taking place at this point?

5 A. I was taking the details of the person, the receiver,  
6 who will receive the money. Usually I take the phone  
7 number and the details of the receiver.

8 Q. Why do you do that, please?

9 A. So I can send these details to Ashraf Ibrahim, then  
10 Ibrahim can contact this receiver.

11 Q. Thank you. Can I ask you then, during this time up to  
12 this point, did you have the gentleman's name at this  
13 point?

14 A. At this moment, I received the name, I got the name of  
15 the receiver, but I didn't get the name of the person  
16 who was with me.

17 Q. Did there come a time when the man that had given you  
18 the money gave you his name?

19 A. When we went outside the mosque before we went in our  
20 own directions, he gave it to me.

21 I asked him, I said, what's your name, I want to put  
22 it down in my record. Then he said -- he told me my  
23 name is Mohammed Arabi.

24 Q. He gave you that name effectively at the end of your  
25 time together?

- 1 A. Only when I asked him.
- 2 Q. Thank you. And then the name that he gave you as  
3 a recipient for the money in Libya, can you give details  
4 as to that name, please?
- 5 A. Muadh al-Tabbal.
- 6 Q. Did you give you any details as to who that individual  
7 was?
- 8 A. No, but he told me he's a family member.
- 9 Q. We can see that subsequently, you provided a Viber  
10 message to Ibrahim at 18.21 with the name Muadh  
11 al-Tabbal. You give a figure of 470 with a star next to  
12 it and an exchange rate of 9.80.
- 13 A. Right.
- 14 Q. Can you just confirm, how much money was it that you  
15 were handed by the man we now know to be Mr Abedi?
- 16 A. I can't remember how much exactly, but the right figure  
17 is what's printed in the text message because he was not  
18 straight with me, he was trying to play with me, with  
19 the figure. He wasn't straight with me.
- 20 Q. So does the 470 represent £470?
- 21 A. £470.
- 22 Q. And the exchange rate of 9.80, is that the rate you were  
23 giving him in dinar?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Can I ask you, please, Mr Zreba, at the time when you

1           were having this communication with the man we now know  
2           to be Salman Abedi, how did he seem?

3           A. He was as normal. I didn't notice anything not normal.

4           Q. Was there any sign of nervousness?

5           A. No. No, because I was in a hurry, my friend Tariq was  
6           waiting for me in Piccadilly Gardens, and even when  
7           I was with him, I received two to three phone calls as  
8           well. One of those calls was from my friend Tariq, who  
9           wanted to give me my phone charger.

10          Q. Okay. So then let's just use the slides to chart the  
11          end of your time with Mr Abedi, please.

12                 If we look to the next page, please {INQ020160/42},  
13          we can see as you appear at the top of the stairs,  
14          you're on your phone. Can you confirm what you were  
15          doing at that point, please, Mr Zreba?

16          A. Maybe I was checking on my Viber application because I'm  
17          always busy with my phone. This is the nature of my  
18          job.

19          Q. Okay. If we keep going, please, through the slides, we  
20          then see you both back outside the Muslim Youth  
21          Foundation at 6.21 {INQ020160/43}.

22                 If we keep running through the slides  
23          {INQ020160/44}, you're together there.

24                 Finally, we see at 18.21.53, {INQ020160/45}, you  
25          both going your separate ways.



1           Then finally, we see Mr Abedi walking forward at  
2           18.22 {INQ020160/46}.

3           A. That's right.

4           Q. Can I ask, other than what you've told us about the  
5           discussions about the financial transaction, was there  
6           any other conversation about anything else during the  
7           time you were with the man we now know to be Mr Abedi?

8           A. No. To be honest, I just came to see him to collect the  
9           money and went back to my friend.

10          Q. Perhaps then if we just complete the financial  
11          transaction, I've already referenced the Viber message  
12          to Ibrahim timed at 18.21 with the 470 figure.

13                 Then finally, we can see that you made a final call  
14          to Mr Abedi timed at 18.53.29 that lasted 37 seconds.  
15          Can you just tell us, please, the purpose of that call?

16          A. I wanted to double-check if they received the money or  
17          not and he said -- he confirmed they received the money.

18          Q. So by that telephone call at 18.53, the money had been  
19          transferred in Libya?

20          A. Yes.

21          Q. And Mr Abedi had confirmed that the family had the  
22          money?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. Thank you.

25                 Mr Zreba, that completes the questions I want to ask

1           you about the financial transaction, but I then want to  
2           ask you some questions just about the end of that  
3           evening, please.

4           It's right, isn't it, that you actually were at  
5           Victoria Station after the bomb had detonated?

6           A. I came back from Rusholme by then. Do you want details  
7           of the night?

8           Q. Please. Perhaps if you just give us a summary. Is it  
9           fair to say that after you'd met Mr Abedi, you'd been  
10          out and had something to eat in Rusholme?

11          A. I didn't go straightaway to Rusholme, I went to Tariq,  
12          I collected the charger.

13                 I spent some time in Costa: I met with two friends  
14          by coincidence.

15                 Then I took the bus to Rusholme.

16                 I dined there in a restaurant.

17                 Then I checked the train timetable, I realised that  
18          I wanted to be able to catch a train from Oxford and  
19          I carried on to Victoria because I knew that the last  
20          train set off from Victoria by 11.20.

21          Q. Then could I ask you, I think it's right, when you  
22          arrived though at Victoria, is it right that the bomb  
23          had detonated at that point?

24          A. Yes, that's right. I arrived there after 11. Because  
25          when I arrived to Victoria Station, the police were

1 already there and they asked me to move away, they told  
2 me the station is closed.

3 I was walking from the side of Shudehill then when  
4 I arrived to Victoria Station, I was to the left side of  
5 the station.

6 After the police officer asked me to move away,  
7 I walked to the left side. I noticed some people were  
8 standing outside.

9 I asked them "What's going on?" and they told me  
10 there was an explosion, a bomb exploded.

11 I was thinking how to make my way home and when  
12 I phoned, my mobile battery died and I was frightened  
13 and shocked at the same time.

14 Then I walked into a restaurant and I asked them if  
15 I can charge my mobile and he told me yes.

16 I charged my mobile.

17 Then I walked towards the next door, I spoke to  
18 a friend of mine, I told him "Can you come and collect  
19 me?"

20 He said, "Sorry, I can't", because he was with his  
21 girlfriend.

22 I was checking the news on the Libyan community page  
23 and they mentioned that an explosion took place. They  
24 were checking on each other if all are okay.

25 Then I made a short video clip. I videotaped the

1 police cordon and I put it on the page, I uploaded this  
2 video clip on the community page and I put it as  
3 a comment on the community page online.

4 Q. Can I ask you, please, Mr Zreba, just for a little bit  
5 more information? You tell us that the community page  
6 for Libyans was called The Eye of the Community.

7 A. The Eye of the Community, yes.

8 Q. Can you just give us an idea of what that site is and  
9 how it's used, please?

10 A. It's a page on Facebook, providing all sorts of services  
11 like solicitors, restaurants. You can post on it for  
12 free.

13 If any member of the community needs help, has an  
14 enquiry about education, health services, anything you  
15 need, you put it on the page.

16 Q. You tell us in your witness statement that on the Eye of  
17 the Community, it was asking if everyone was safe and  
18 you say this:

19 "... and posted a warning from the Libyan  
20 consulate."

21 What was that warning from the Libyan consulate,  
22 please?

23 A. I can't really remember what it was saying, but it said  
24 something like warning members of the community not to  
25 go out or to go close to the area.

1 Q. You then say this in your witness statement:

2 "[You] posted on that Facebook community page that  
3 [you were] going home, [you were] stuck in Manchester,  
4 but you were safe and that's where [you] posted the  
5 short video of the cordon."

6 A. That's right.

7 MS CARTWRIGHT: If you wait there, Mr Zreba, there will be  
8 some more questions for you.

9 Questions from MR WELCH

10 MR WELCH: Mr Zreba, you were living in Wigan, weren't you,  
11 on 22 May?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. What time did you come into central Manchester?

14 A. In the afternoon. I left Wigan by 4 o'clock.

15 Q. And why were you coming into central Manchester?

16 A. That was my weekly routine. I would come every week to  
17 check the prices because Wigan is a small city and shops  
18 close early there.

19 I would dine outside in a restaurant I would come to  
20 the mosque, to this Muslim Youth Foundation as well  
21 because they have ping-pong in there, I come to play  
22 there as well.

23 Q. You've described your business, which involved  
24 purchasing items to send to Libya. That's one part of  
25 it?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. The other part is a money transfer business, isn't it?
- 3 A. Because all the big names were closed, like Moneygram,  
4 Western Union, that was the only way to send money to  
5 Libya.
- 6 Q. It's a form of hawala banking, isn't it, that you're  
7 operating? You understand that term?
- 8 A. I needed cash so I can buy goods and I was well-known  
9 within the Libyan community that I provide this kind of  
10 service.
- 11 A. (Answer given, not interpreted).
- 12 Q. Yes, I understand that. It's the system that you're  
13 operating in terms of the money transfer, it is hawala  
14 banking, money in there, into the bank account, picked  
15 up in Libya? I'm not being critical of it.
- 16 A. Is that the name you give the service?
- 17 Q. It's a fairly common term. I think we're talking about  
18 the same thing. Whatever the name that's given to this  
19 service that you offer, it's based on trust, isn't it?
- 20 A. As I say, I was known within the community members,  
21 people know me more than I know them.
- 22 Then after a week in detention I found out that he  
23 got my phone number through two individuals.
- 24 Q. We'll come on to Mr Abedi in a moment.
- 25 In terms of the system you offer, someone gives you

- 1 money and it's taken out at the other end, effectively,  
2 in Libya using a single bank account. That is right,  
3 isn't it?
- 4 A. No, no bank in this transfer. It goes cash only.
- 5 Q. So cash there, cash taken out?
- 6 A. Because clients back there would pay 50% of the  
7 commodity, once they receive it they pay the next 50%.
- 8 Q. Were you offering this service to many people within the  
9 Libyan community in Manchester?
- 10 A. It depends, it was seasonal, because it was -- Ramadan  
11 was approaching.
- 12 Q. So how many people on average per week do you think you  
13 were offering this service to?
- 14 A. I can't give you a number, or a figure. When I need  
15 goods, I do it.
- 16 Q. I'll ask it another way then. When Mr Abedi approaches  
17 you to do this, was that the first time that week or  
18 month that someone had asked you to do that or was it  
19 more common than that?
- 20 A. I can't remember exactly, but I was preparing to send  
21 goods to Libya because it was Eid season and a lot of  
22 requests at that time.
- 23 Q. I'm just asking about the money transfer element at this  
24 time. Was this the first time you'd ever done this with  
25 Mr Abedi, just the money transfer?

- 1 A. As I mentioned, that was a routine service --
- 2 Q. A routine service?
- 3 A. If I had a need to buy goods, I ask if any people in  
4 here want to send to Libya and we use it to fund the  
5 goods.
- 6 Q. When you have done it in the past with other people, did  
7 they tend to engage you in any conversation when they  
8 were transferring the money?
- 9 A. No, just the deal and that's it.
- 10 Q. So they would typically come, just give you the money  
11 and not have any other conversation with you? Is that  
12 what happened?
- 13 A. That is right.
- 14 Q. We've seen the sequence of events and that shows that  
15 you were with Salman Abedi, from the first time you met  
16 him until he left at the Muslim Youth Foundation, for  
17 around about 8 minutes, bearing in mind that you weren't  
18 always speaking with him. Do you understand that?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. During the course of that time, is your evidence that  
21 you never spoke about anything other than the fact that  
22 he wanted to transfer this £450 to Libya?
- 23 A. I didn't talk with him in any other matter.
- 24 All what we spoke about, how to get the money and  
25 the details of the receipt.



- 1 Q. Did it strike you as unusual that he didn't try to  
2 engage you in any type of conversation?
- 3 A. No, as I mentioned, I was in a hurry, I just wanted to  
4 go --
- 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, stop.
- 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: I appreciate it's artificial, but could the  
7 interpreter please ensure he's speaking nearer to the  
8 microphone?
- 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think perfectly reasonably you turn  
10 round to Mr Welch when you're answering the questions,  
11 as it were. If you can keep facing forward we will have  
12 no trouble. I could hear you perfectly all right, but  
13 I can understand that the people who are making a note  
14 of this could find it difficult. So just keep facing  
15 forwards, if you don't mind.
- 16 THE INTERPRETER: Sure, fine.
- 17 MR WELCH: So 8 minutes, no conversation about anything else  
18 other than just this money transfer? That's your  
19 evidence?
- 20 A. We didn't speak on any other matter but the money  
21 transfer.
- 22 Q. You will appreciate, Mr Zreba, that you were one of the  
23 last people, it appears, to have any form of  
24 face-to-face contact with Salman Abedi. Do you  
25 understand that?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. So I'm just going to press you, if I can, on one matter,  
3 which is his demeanour, because that might be important  
4 to the families. Did he in any way seem nervous at all?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. Was he agitated in any way?
- 7 A. I didn't notice something like that.
- 8 Q. Was there anything unusual about his demeanour?
- 9 A. No, I didn't notice.
- 10 Q. Can I ask you about what you did after speaking to  
11 Mr Abedi and after he had given you the money?
- 12 A. I went back to Tariq, my friend, he was waiting for me  
13 to give me the charger.
- 14 Q. What time was that?
- 15 A. I can't remember exactly, but it was soon after. As  
16 soon as I left him, I walked to Piccadilly Gardens.
- 17 Q. So you're in Piccadilly Gardens, you see Tariq. How  
18 long did you spend with Tariq?
- 19 A. I can't really -- I can't remember exactly.
- 20 Q. Try and cast your mind back. Are we talking a couple of  
21 minutes, half an hour, an hour?
- 22 A. I can't really remember. Maybe 15 minutes.
- 23 Q. 15 minutes maybe, okay. After that, what did you do?
- 24 A. I can't really remember the sequence of events. Maybe  
25 I went to TK Maxx or maybe I went to Market Street, but

1 I saw a friend called Ridda sitting in Costa.

2 I walked in, I sat with him because I hadn't seen  
3 him for a while.

4 Then I took the bus to Rusholme.

5 Q. What time did you take the bus to Rusholme?

6 A. I can't really remember, but it was after I left Costa,  
7 maybe by 8.30.

8 Q. 8.30?

9 A. Roughly. I can't really remember when exactly.

10 Q. Which would mean that that's about 2 hours after you  
11 left Salman Abedi; is that right?

12 A. Mm-hm.

13 Q. Rusholme is in the south of the city, isn't it?

14 A. Mm-hm.

15 Q. It's about 3 miles from Piccadilly Gardens. You live in  
16 Wigan, which is in north-west Greater Manchester, isn't  
17 it?

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Why did you go to Rusholme?

20 A. Because I wanted to dine in a restaurant that's one of  
21 my favourite restaurants.

22 Q. You weren't meeting anyone there, were you?

23 A. I didn't meet anyone and I did my Maghreb prayers in one  
24 of the mosques in the area, I did my prayers in one of  
25 the mosques.

- 1 Q. The name of the restaurant, I believe, is  
2 Afghan Cuisine; is that right?
- 3 A. Yes, that's right.
- 4 Q. Did you speak to anyone in Afghan Cuisine that you knew?
- 5 A. No, I was alone. I made the order and I dined by  
6 myself.
- 7 Q. The mosque that you went to, did you go to that before  
8 or after dining at Afghan Cuisine?
- 9 A. I can't really remember exactly.
- 10 Q. Because of course there's many mosques in central  
11 Manchester, including the mosque that you had just been  
12 to, the Muslim Youth Foundation?
- 13 A. Mm-hm. What about them?
- 14 Q. You chose not to go there, you went to the one in  
15 Rusholme, 3 miles from the city?
- 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what he says.
- 17 A. Not a matter of choice, it is a matter when the prayers  
18 is timed for.
- 19 MR WELCH: I understand that.  
20 You appear to have lost track of time whilst you  
21 were at Afghan Cuisine; is that right?
- 22 A. Mm-hm.
- 23 Q. Because you missed the train back to Wigan?
- 24 A. I took the bus from Rusholme because the fastest train  
25 sets off from Oxford station.

1           Because when I came to Manchester, I arrived to  
2           Oxford station.

3           So when I was on the bus, I realised that I missed  
4           the train.

5           Q. What time was that at about, do you remember?

6           A. I can't really exactly remember. Something after 10.

7           Q. After 10. So then where did you go precisely?

8           A. I went to Piccadilly Gardens.

9           Q. And is that where you got off the bus?

10          A. Yes.

11          Q. And then you walked to Victoria Station?

12          A. Yes, I walked the area between the Arndale and Debenhams  
13          on the tram track.

14          Q. What time did you get to Victoria about?

15          A. I really can't remember when exactly, but something  
16          around 11-ish.

17                 But I remember the police officer told me, "Go back,  
18                 we closed the..."

19                 I can't remember the time because I was shocked with  
20                 what I had seen there and frightened.

21          Q. But you did take a picture and a video, which we have  
22                 information saying that was recorded at 11.40. So you  
23                 were remaining in the area for a while, weren't you?

24          A. As I mentioned, I had to charge my mobile phone and  
25                 I rang my friend in Wigan to give me a lift because

1 I was stranded there.

2 I was checking on my mobile, I have a transport  
3 application, there was a replacement coach from  
4 Piccadilly.

5 Q. Your telephone was seized by the police, wasn't it, your  
6 iPhone?

7 A. Yes, that's right.

8 Q. Mr Lopez, please could we have up {INQ037091/1}. This  
9 is a photograph taken from your iPhone, isn't it?

10 A. That's right.

11 Q. Do you recall when it was taken, this photograph?

12 A. This was taken when I was in the replacement bus because  
13 my brother was checking on me, he told me "Are you  
14 okay?"

15 I sent him this picture, telling him that I'm okay,  
16 and I told him, "I found a method of transportation to  
17 go home".

18 My brother was Mohammed.

19 Q. That looks like Piccadilly Station; is that right?

20 A. Yes, outside the front of Piccadilly Station.

21 Q. Why are you sending him a picture of Piccadilly Station?

22 A. There is no purpose to send it from Piccadilly, just to  
23 tell him I'm on a bus now, I found a bus.

24 Q. Can I ask you this, please, Mr Zreba, just finally: you  
25 spoke with Mr Abedi for 8 minutes and then you go to

1           Rusholme by yourself for a considerable period of time  
2           and then you find yourself at Victoria after the bomb  
3           has detonated.

4           Did he mention anything to you about "don't go near  
5           Victoria" during the course of the conversation with  
6           him?

7           A. No. Had he said something like that, I would have the  
8           honour to report him to save the lives of the victims.

9           MR WELCH: Thank you, Mr Zreba.

10                               Questions from MR COOPER

11           MR COOPER: You told my learned friend a moment ago or  
12           a short while ago that Mr Abedi had got your details  
13           from two other individuals; is that right?

14           A. Yes, that's right.

15           Q. Who are those two other individuals?

16           A. One is called Majdi.

17           Q. And surname?

18           A. I can't really remember, Mahzdu(?) or Majzu(?), and the  
19           other person, I don't know him.

20           Q. How do you know that Abedi got your details from these  
21           two individuals?

22           A. After I was released from custody -- when I was in  
23           custody after a week in custody, I found out.

24           Q. How did you find out?

25           A. Majdi give his witness statement in my matter and he

1           mentioned that he gave my details to Zarkun and Zarkun  
2           gave it to --

3       Q.   Thank you.

4           What actually is your job?  What's your job title?  
5           I'm asking for a reason.  What's your job title?

6       A.   It is small trade because I had to do some job because  
7           I was not entitled for any type of benefits and I had no  
8           work permit.  I had to find a way to make money.

9       Q.   And this is how you made your money, is it?

10      A.   To pay for my bills and to survive.

11      Q.   Did you do any other work to earn money?

12      A.   No.

13      Q.   Were you a refrigeration engineer?

14      A.   No, wrong details.  This is the guy I was renting from,  
15           Mohammed.

16      Q.   He was a refrigeration engineer?

17           And you were living in the same building as him?

18      A.   I rented the room from him.

19      Q.   Thank you.  That explains that, thank you.

20           Are you very active in the Libyan community in  
21           Manchester?

22      A.   Active member, what do you mean?

23      Q.   Do you get involved with community events within the  
24           Libyan community in Manchester?

25      A.   If there's any event, any occasion, yes, I would.



1 Q. It's a pretty large community, isn't it, the Libyan  
2 community in Manchester?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And is it centred in any particular part of Manchester  
5 or is it spread over Manchester?

6 A. As far as I'm aware, all over Manchester.

7 Q. I'm sure that -- and I mean this genuinely -- there are  
8 many, many genuine, good people within that Libyan  
9 community, but I want to ask you about something else.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, we make it absolutely clear, as  
11 you have done before, this is not in any way an attack  
12 on the Libyan community in Manchester.

13 MR COOPER: I'm trying to --

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know. I just want to make that  
15 absolutely clear.

16 MR COOPER: Let me triply make it clear again: it certainly  
17 is not an attack on the Libyan community in Manchester  
18 and I preface my question with I am absolutely sure that  
19 there are many, many right-minded members of the Libyan  
20 community in Manchester.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Please don't get annoyed, Mr Cooper.  
22 It's very easy for the wrong impression to be given and  
23 it was the -- not that you were intending to or anything  
24 like that but I just don't want it to be --

25 MR COOPER: Sir, I wasn't actually feeling annoyed, I must

1 check my expression sometimes.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I misjudged the body language.

3 MR COOPER: I'm absolutely with you, sir, on this, and  
4 emphasise that position.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

6 A. Thank you so much for that.

7 MR COOPER: But I'm asking you for specific reasons, so  
8 please understand this. The question is this: are there  
9 nonetheless elements of extremism within that Libyan  
10 community?

11 A. I don't know any of this nature.

12 Q. Then I won't press you on that. Just this, please: do  
13 you have any particular contact or association with the  
14 Libyan school in north Manchester?

15 A. No.

16 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir.

17 MS CARTWRIGHT: Finally, perhaps just to confirm whether  
18 Mr Hafezi has any questions.

19 Sir, unless you have any questions, that would  
20 conclude Mr Zreba's evidence, but I know he is anxious  
21 to say one thing. He made it clear at the beginning he  
22 wanted to say one matter to the families.

23 A. Yes. I would like to give my condolences to the  
24 families of the victims. My prayers to the victims.  
25 I'm sure that they are living in a better place at the

1 moment and I pray to God to give the families the  
2 strength and patience.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.

4 MR COOPER: Can I just say something because I am conscious  
5 of the juxtaposition of my last two question and I make  
6 it very clear indeed that there is no link whatsoever  
7 between my questions concerning the Libyan community and  
8 my question about the establishment right at the end  
9 there. They are totally separate questions and  
10 I wouldn't want any misleading impression to be given.

11 MS CARTWRIGHT: That concludes Mr Zreba's evidence. Could  
12 I add, finally, Mr Greaney wants to address you about  
13 tomorrow.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Shall we let the witness go?

15 MS CARTWRIGHT: Yes, if the witness can go and if we can go  
16 to the holding screen.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. And thank you very much to  
18 the interpreter too. It makes a great difference if  
19 we have a good interpreter, I can assure you.

20 (The witness withdrew)

21 (Pause)

22 Housekeeping

23 MR GREANEY: We can now remove the holding screen.

24 As Ms Cartwright indicated, I am going to deal with  
25 the plan for tomorrow, which I'm sorry to say will be

1 another frustrating day after two frustrating days.

2 Before I deal with that, can I hopefully answer  
3 a question that was posed by Mr Cooper, because, sir,  
4 you will remember evidence that we received last week  
5 that confirms one of the answers that the witness gave.  
6 The evidence was to this effect: that Salman Abedi was  
7 in contact with a man called Zarkun in relation to  
8 a money transfer and it had been confirmed that  
9 Mr Zarkun had indeed, as the witness said, given the  
10 witness's details to Salman Abedi.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Zreba's?

12 MR GREANEY: Indeed. That was the position.

13 Tomorrow. Sir, as you know, and indeed as all core  
14 participants know, a witness called Mr Taghdi is subject  
15 to a section 21 notice, requiring his attendance in  
16 order to give evidence here tomorrow. His counsel,  
17 Mr Richard Wright QC, has this afternoon served a note,  
18 which has been circulated to all core participants, but  
19 they may not have all had a chance to digest it yet.  
20 In that note he makes plain that Mr Taghdi will not be  
21 attending, at least voluntarily.

22 At 9.30 am tomorrow, Mr Wright will attend by link  
23 in order to explain publicly what the position is and,  
24 sir, to answer any questions that you have about  
25 Mr Taghdi's position, and you will thereafter be able to

1 consider what action to take, in particular whether you  
2 should invoke section 35 or section 36 of the Inquiries  
3 Act.

4 Sir, that will be the first matter we'll deal with  
5 tomorrow. Secondly, we will then deal with an  
6 application that has been made by Greater Manchester  
7 Police for the Rule 10 timetable to be varied for Deputy  
8 Chief Constable Pilling. There are different views  
9 in relation to that, sir, as you know, but nonetheless  
10 I don't anticipate that that argument will take very  
11 long at all.

12 Then thirdly, there is a witness whose name is  
13 Mr Balaam. He gives evidence that bears in fact on  
14 Mr Taghdi's evidence. It is still proposed to call him  
15 to give evidence tomorrow, notwithstanding the problem  
16 presented by Mr Taghdi. At the moment, as we understand  
17 it, he is saying that he cannot attend until 2 pm, which  
18 is the time at which he had initially been scheduled,  
19 but attempts are being made to see whether he can be  
20 brought forward. So sir, that is what tomorrow brings.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. So it's a bit of a stop and  
22 start tomorrow. I'm sorry about that, but we need  
23 obviously to get through what we can get done and we may  
24 be discussing the timetable tomorrow as well.

25 MR GREANEY: I also anticipate that I will be raising the

1           timetable and, sir, your plans for report writing  
2           tomorrow.

3           Sir, 9.30 tomorrow morning, please.

4       SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

5       (3.23 pm)

6                       (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am on  
7                       Wednesday, 16 December 2020)

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