

# OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 70

March 3, 2021

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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Wednesday, 3 March 2021

2 (9.30 am)

3 MR GREANEY: Sir, good morning. The gentleman in the  
4 witness box is Nicholas Mottram and he will now be  
5 sworn.

6 MR NICHOLAS MOTTRAM (affirmed)  
7 Questions from MR GREANEY

8 MR GREANEY: Mr Mottram, in one moment I will ask you to  
9 identify yourself, but as you will be aware, there are  
10 members of the families of the deceased present within  
11 the courtroom to whom I have spoken before we started  
12 today and they were keen that I should say to you, and  
13 indeed to other firefighters who were present on the  
14 ground, as it were, on the night, that in no way do the  
15 families who are present at court blame you and your  
16 colleagues. They would wish you to know that as you  
17 give your evidence today.

18 A. Thank you.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure Mr Mottram is grateful for that  
20 and I'm grateful too for that indication. Thank you all  
21 very much.

22 MR GREANEY: Would you begin by telling us your full name,  
23 please?

24 A. Nicholas Paul Mottram.

25 Q. In May of 2017 were you a firefighter with Greater

1

1 Manchester Fire and Rescue Service?

2 A. Yes, that's correct.

3 Q. Had you joined the Fire and Rescue Service in 1998?

4 A. I had, yes.

5 Q. So at the time of the attack, it follows that you had  
6 over 19 years' service?

7 A. Correct, yes.

8 Q. At the time of the attack, were you a crew manager?

9 A. I was, yes.

10 Q. And had you performed that role on a temporary basis  
11 between 2007 and 2014?

12 A. As far as I'm aware, yes.

13 Q. And substantively since 2014?

14 A. Yes, that's correct.

15 Q. Next, the training that you had received as  
16 a firefighter. Had you been trained extensively in the  
17 treatment of trauma?

18 A. I am a trauma technician, so we have trauma training,  
19 yes.

20 Q. I believe it's the position that you had not received  
21 training in how to respond in the event of a terrorist  
22 attack.

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. But you had completed something you describe in your  
25 witness statement as a JESIP learning package?

2

1 A. That's correct, yes.

2 Q. What form did that take?

3 A. It's like a PowerPoint e-learning presentation. So it's  
4 basically, you watch the presentation and then you  
5 answer questions on it afterwards.

6 Q. We heard from Mr Simister yesterday about some  
7 e-learning that he carried out himself alone on the  
8 computer; are you talking about something similar?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. So you would read through it and then at the end answer  
11 questions, that kind of thing?

12 A. To check your understanding, yes.

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you get them wrong or don't  
14 understand them, what happens then?

15 A. You can retake it, go back to it and look at the  
16 training package again.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you won't have passed it until you  
18 get the answers right?

19 A. I think that's how it works, yes.

20 MR GREANEY: You can't, I think, recall the precise date on  
21 which you did that training, but it was early in 2017  
22 and therefore a relatively short time before the attack?

23 A. From memory, yes.

24 Q. Could you tell us in a few sentences what you learned  
25 from that learning package?

3

1 A. Basically it's about the emergency services working  
2 together, not all individually, and it's about sharing  
3 information, locating at the same place, so they can  
4 share the information, share situational awareness.

5 Basically all work together at a major incident.

6 Q. Is that what happened on the night of the 22nd?

7 A. No.

8 Q. In May 2017, were you based at Stockport Fire Station?

9 A. Yes, I was.

10 Q. But on the 22nd were you deployed instead to Gorton  
11 Fire Station to be the officer in charge of appliance  
12 G19P2?

13 A. That's correct, yes.

14 Q. I think you probably call it Golf 19 Papa 2?

15 A. Golf 19 Papa 2 we call it, yes.

16 Q. And Gorton Fire Station, is that about 3 miles to the  
17 south-east of Manchester Central Station?

18 A. Yes, I'd say so.

19 Q. The appliance that you were to be in charge of, did it,  
20 in common with other fire engines, have on board  
21 equipment for the treatment of injuries?

22 A. Yes, that's correct.

23 Q. You list what was on board at paragraph 9. I'm not to  
24 go through all of it. In summary you had on board  
25 oxygen and masks?

4

1 A. That's correct, yes.  
 2 Q. Airways?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. A CAT—type tourniquet?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. Which I understand to stand for combat application  
 7 tourniquet.  
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 9 Q. Dressings?  
 10 A. We had some Melolin dressings and some bandages.  
 11 Q. And also a spine board?  
 12 A. That's correct.  
 13 Q. I understand that the main purpose of that is to  
 14 stabilise someone's spine in the event they may have  
 15 injured —  
 16 A. Yes, it's an extrication implement for taking casualties  
 17 out of cars or different scenarios without causing  
 18 further damage.  
 19 Q. I think you've answered what was my main question. Is  
 20 the spine board something on which you might transport  
 21 a patient?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. So it's a form of stretcher?  
 24 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 25 Q. On that day, 22 May, were you working a night shift?

5

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. Did that mean that you would be on duty between 7 pm and  
 3 8.30 am on the 23rd?  
 4 A. Yes, it did.  
 5 Q. Was your line manager that night the Gorton watch  
 6 manager, a man called Robert or Bob Walker?  
 7 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 8 Q. At 10.30 that night, were you at Gorton Fire Station?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. Shortly after that time, did you receive a telephone  
 11 call on your personal mobile from your wife?  
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 13 Q. And her name is Helen, is that correct?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. What's her occupation?  
 16 A. She's a paramedic for NNAS.  
 17 Q. Do you recall what she said to you in that call?  
 18 A. She asked me if we'd heard anything about a bomb going  
 19 off at the arena, that they had just been mobilised and  
 20 they were heading down towards the arena.  
 21 Q. So she was on duty as well that night?  
 22 A. That's correct, yes.  
 23 Q. She wanted to know if you'd heard about a bomb at the  
 24 arena?  
 25 A. Yes.

6

1 Q. And she said that essentially she was on her way from  
 2 where she was to somewhere else?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. In your statement what you record was that she was  
 5 proceeding at that stage — and I appreciate you had  
 6 more than one call with her, but I'm at paragraph 12 —  
 7 to Manchester Central Fire Station?  
 8 A. I think on the initial call, I think she was actually  
 9 proceeding to the arena.  
 10 Q. I see.  
 11 A. And then I think she received a rendezvous point later  
 12 on, on the journey there.  
 13 Q. Was she also concerned to know whether you and your  
 14 colleagues had also been mobilised to the bomb?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. And had you been by that stage?  
 17 A. No. That was the first we'd heard of it.  
 18 Q. On receiving that call from your wife, which  
 19 self—evidently, given her role, was a call that  
 20 contained apparently reliable information about a major  
 21 event —  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. — what did you do?  
 24 A. I went and approached Bob Walker in the watch office and  
 25 told him about the phone call and then he looked on the

7

1 mobilising system to see if anything was going on around  
 2 the city centre.  
 3 Q. So is that a GMFRS system?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. That will inform a person of where particular appliances  
 6 are and/or are going to?  
 7 A. Yes. You can bring up a map on the screen. Not  
 8 everybody had — was available to see it, but I think  
 9 certain watch managers could see it. A map came up on  
 10 the screen and it showed appliances and their locations.  
 11 Q. At that time, shortly after the bomb had been detonated,  
 12 is it the position that that system showed that there  
 13 was no movement of appliances around the city centre?  
 14 A. That's correct.  
 15 Q. Whilst you were present in the watch office at that  
 16 stage, did Bob Walker make a call to anybody?  
 17 A. Yes, he phoned Manchester Central Fire Station.  
 18 Q. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but was that  
 19 because it was apparent to him, and indeed to you, that  
 20 that was the station that was nearest to the arena?  
 21 A. That's correct.  
 22 Q. Did he have a conversation with someone?  
 23 A. He did, Firefighter Nicky Bradbury, I believe.  
 24 Q. Did you know that because Mr Walker subsequently told  
 25 you that that was to whom he'd spoken?

8

1 A. That's correct.  
 2 Q. What did you gather from the conversation?  
 3 A. Firefighter Bradbury explained that they'd heard a loud  
 4 bang.  
 5 Q. Could you hear his side of the conversation as well?  
 6 A. I couldn't hear it at the time. I could hear bits of it  
 7 but not everything.  
 8 Q. Did Mr Walker --  
 9 A. He relayed --  
 10 Q. He relayed it. Just tell us what you understood  
 11 happened in the conversation.  
 12 A. They'd heard a loud bang from Manchester Central  
 13 Fire Station and then, shortly afterwards, they'd  
 14 received two pre-alerts.  
 15 Q. We know what pre-alerts are. Did you come to understand  
 16 that Bob Walker had been told that there had been two  
 17 pre-alerts to the NCP car park at the arena?  
 18 A. That's correct.  
 19 Q. But in the result, there had been no mobilisation to the  
 20 scene of the attack?  
 21 A. That's correct.  
 22 Q. You were to be in charge that night of G19P2. And at  
 23 about 22.50 hours, was your appliance mobilised?  
 24 A. It was, yes.  
 25 Q. Was it mobilised by the station turnout system?

9

1 A. I believe so.  
 2 Q. And to where was your appliance mobilised?  
 3 A. Golf 18, Philips Park Fire Station.  
 4 Q. At that stage, why did you understand your appliance was  
 5 being deployed to Philips Park Fire Station?  
 6 A. It was the rendezvous point for an explosion at the  
 7 arena.  
 8 Q. I know that you were, before you prepared your  
 9 statement, able to consult the Fire and Rescue Service  
 10 incident log; is that correct?  
 11 A. That's correct, yes.  
 12 Q. And for the transcript, the log number is 1705009078.  
 13 I'm at paragraph 15, sir. We don't need it on the  
 14 screen. The reference is {INQ004284/1}.  
 15 From {INQ004284/4}, you were able to confirm that  
 16 your appliance arrived at Philips Park, or G18, at  
 17 22.54 hours and 14 seconds?  
 18 A. That's correct, yes.  
 19 Q. 22.54.14. In terms of the geography, you were  
 20 effectively moving about 2 miles due north; is that  
 21 correct?  
 22 A. That's correct, yes.  
 23 Q. Therefore not in the direction of the arena?  
 24 A. It can go -- we can go that way towards the arena  
 25 because we could go down that way and then past

10

1 Manchester Central Fire Station, so it is a route that  
 2 we could take.  
 3 Q. But just looking at the geography of Manchester, you'd  
 4 be going north with the arena to the west?  
 5 A. Correct. I think.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And it would be more direct to go via  
 7 Central Station anyway?  
 8 A. Yes, probably.  
 9 MR GREANEY: I'm probably overcomplicating this: you were  
 10 not being deployed to the arena itself, were you?  
 11 A. No, no.  
 12 Q. That's the point. You arrived at Philips Park shortly  
 13 before 10.55. Did you arrive there at a similar time to  
 14 two other appliances, G16P1 and G16P2?  
 15 A. That's correct.  
 16 Q. Which, as I'm certain you will know and did know and we  
 17 know, are the two appliances from Manchester Central  
 18 Fire Station?  
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 20 Q. When you arrived did you go into the mess area at  
 21 Philips Park?  
 22 A. I did, yes.  
 23 Q. Were other members of staff there?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. How did they react to your arrival?

11

1 A. I think they said, "What are you doing here?"  
 2 Q. Did you seek to obtain information about the incident  
 3 at the arena?  
 4 A. We asked if they'd heard anything about an explosion  
 5 at the arena and they weren't really aware of it at that  
 6 time.  
 7 Q. Around the time that you were arriving at Philips Park,  
 8 or shortly afterwards, did you receive a further call on  
 9 your personal mobile from Helen, your wife?  
 10 A. I did, yes.  
 11 Q. At that stage what did she say to you?  
 12 A. She said it had been confirmed that it's some form of  
 13 nail bomb, there was several fatalities and at least  
 14 60 casualties, and that they were proceeding to the  
 15 scene. I believe she also said the injuries seem to be  
 16 shrapnel injuries.  
 17 Q. Pause for a moment and take stock. You're there at  
 18 Philips Park, you're about 3.5 miles away from the  
 19 arena, and your wife is on her way to the scene of what  
 20 is now confirmed, so far as she knows, to be a bomb  
 21 which has caused many, many casualties.  
 22 A. That's correct.  
 23 Q. How were you feeling at that stage at Philips Park?  
 24 A. Very frustrated that we weren't there as well. We  
 25 seemed to have a lack of information and we seemed to be

12

1 in the wrong location.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney, I just want to check  
 3 something. Would you first of all tell me whether this  
 4 is something which I shouldn't be asking. I was  
 5 interested to know how many fire appliances were at the  
 6 various stations that we have heard about. Is that  
 7 something I shouldn't be asking?  
 8 MR GREANEY: I don't know whether there is operational  
 9 sensitivity .  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'll leave it for now. I'll get the  
 11 information either for myself, or if it can be made  
 12 public, then we will make it public.  
 13 MR GREANEY: We will, sir. I would have thought we can do  
 14 that at some stage today. What I do know is the  
 15 location or the stationing of certain resources is  
 16 operationally sensitive .  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that, yes. I'm only  
 18 talking about ordinary appliances.  
 19 MR GREANEY: I entirely understand and we'll get the answer  
 20 to that.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure you could give the answer, but  
 22 we're not going to ask you to at the moment.  
 23 A. Okay.  
 24 MR GREANEY: We did hear in fact yesterday, sir, that at  
 25 Manchester Central there were two that night.

13

1 We heard yesterday afternoon, Mr Mottram, from  
 2 Manchester Central Watch Manager Andrew Simister. Did  
 3 you see him at Philips Park that night?  
 4 A. I did, yes.  
 5 Q. Indeed, it seems from what you've said that he probably  
 6 arrived around the same time as you.  
 7 A. That's correct, yes.  
 8 Q. We know that he made a call to North West Fire Control  
 9 seeking information at 11.06.  
 10 A. That's correct, yes.  
 11 Q. Were you present when he made that call?  
 12 A. I was, yes.  
 13 Q. Did you therefore understand, as he did, that you were  
 14 waiting at Philips Park for a NILO to arrive?  
 15 A. That's correct.  
 16 Q. And for the Special Response Team to arrive?  
 17 A. Also correct, yes.  
 18 Q. What you've also been able to assist with from the log  
 19 is the arrival time of various other units or persons.  
 20 I'll just list those. An SRT appliance arrived at  
 21 23.22 hours at Philips Park?  
 22 A. Correct.  
 23 Q. NILO Meakin arrived at 23.25?  
 24 A. Correct, yes.  
 25 Q. A second SRT vehicle arrived at 23.31?

14

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. NILO Levy arrived at 23.34?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. And although you couldn't ascertain it from your log,  
 5 we were told from North West Fire Control records it had  
 6 been confirmed that NILO Berry arrived at 23.41 hours.  
 7 So that's the chronology for the arrival of people.  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. Once the NILOs were present, were you given any further  
 10 information about what was happening at the arena?  
 11 A. Not immediately, no.  
 12 Q. Do you recall that you were told that there wasn't much  
 13 information coming back?  
 14 A. That's correct, yes.  
 15 Q. Who was it that told you that?  
 16 A. I think it was NILO Ben Levy.  
 17 Q. You, of course, did know something about what was  
 18 happening at the arena because you had spoken to Helen.  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And did you say anything about that to any of the NILOs  
 21 or any other person?  
 22 A. I did, yes. I told the NILOs the information I'd been  
 23 given and I told everybody I spoke to the information  
 24 I'd been given.  
 25 Q. In your statement, at paragraph 22, you observe:

15

1 "I tried to approach Carlos Meakin when he arrived  
 2 as the first NILO in attendance, but he held his hand up  
 3 and said, 'Not now, I'm busy'."  
 4 A. That's correct, yes.  
 5 Q. We know that at a slightly earlier stage, once you'd  
 6 been deployed to Philips Park, not the arena, you were  
 7 feeling frustrated. By now, with the NILOs in  
 8 attendance and one of them saying, "Not now, I'm busy",  
 9 had those feelings of frustration abated at all or were  
 10 they worse?  
 11 A. Worse.  
 12 Q. Was it just you that was feeling that way or was that  
 13 your perception of a general feeling?  
 14 A. The general feeling of everybody.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When Meakin arrived, who would have been  
 16 the senior officer present at where you all were, the  
 17 senior firefighter ?  
 18 A. That would have been Andrew Simister and Neil Helmrich,  
 19 and when Carlos Meakin arrived, he would have been the  
 20 senior officer .  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A natural reaction when you arrive is to  
 22 talk to whoever is senior there. Did they know the  
 23 information you were trying to give Mr Meakin?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 MR GREANEY: The sense from your statement is that at

16

1 Philips Park, as this information was coming to you, you  
 2 were really communicating it to anyone and everyone who  
 3 was there?  
 4 A. That's correct, yes.  
 5 Q. Again, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but is  
 6 the sense that you were saying to them, "This is what my  
 7 wife is saying to me, the Ambulance Service have  
 8 deployed. What are we doing still here?"  
 9 A. That's correct.  
 10 Q. At about 23.50 hours, were you told by the NILOs to  
 11 leave Philips Park and proceed to G16 Manchester  
 12 Central?  
 13 A. That's correct, yes.  
 14 Q. And to await further instruction there?  
 15 A. Correct.  
 16 Q. The records demonstrate that your appliance, G19P2,  
 17 arrived at Manchester Central at 00.02 on the 23rd.  
 18 A. That's correct, yes.  
 19 Q. Do you remember that whilst you were in the yard at  
 20 Manchester Central, Carlos Meakin, who was also there by  
 21 that stage, approached you?  
 22 A. Correct, yes.  
 23 Q. What did he say to you?  
 24 A. He asked me what my wife's name was and he'd try and get  
 25 some information for me.

17

1 Q. Did you understand why he was doing that?  
 2 A. I wasn't sure whether it was about her welfare or  
 3 whether it was to clarify the information.  
 4 Q. Again from the log, you've been able to confirm, this is  
 5 page 16 of the log, which is {INQ004284/16}, you were  
 6 able to confirm that at 00.21 hours, appliances G16P1,  
 7 G16P2 and your unit, G18P1 —  
 8 A. Sorry, I was Golf 19 Papa 2.  
 9 Q. Of course you were, forgive me. The two units from G16  
 10 and G18 Papa 1 — remind me, where that unit was from?  
 11 A. Philips Park.  
 12 Q. They were mobilised with a NILO to Corporation Street?  
 13 A. That's correct.  
 14 Q. I've rather confused it. The two appliances from  
 15 Manchester Central and one appliance from Philips Park  
 16 at 00.21 are being mobilised with a NILO to  
 17 Corporation Street?  
 18 A. That's correct.  
 19 Q. And I think we know that NILO was Andy Berry?  
 20 A. That's correct.  
 21 Q. And Corporation Street, again to get the geography —  
 22 this is paragraph 24, sir — is just to the east of  
 23 Victoria Railway Station?  
 24 A. I believe so, yes.  
 25 Q. Very near to the railway station in any event. So they

18

1 are being deployed to the general area of the arena in  
 2 any event at that stage?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. Did other appliances then arrive at Manchester Central,  
 5 essentially to backfill the three appliances that had  
 6 been sent to the arena?  
 7 A. That's correct, yes.  
 8 Q. Next, at 01.14 hours — bear with me for one moment.  
 9 (Pause)  
 10 Sir, I'm told that the information that you sought  
 11 is not sensitive. So you'll be able to confirm, maybe,  
 12 that at Gorton there were two appliances, at  
 13 Manchester Central, as we know, there were two  
 14 appliances, and at Philips Park there were two  
 15 appliances.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Would you like to confirm  
 17 that?  
 18 A. I'm not sure if there was two appliances at Philips Park  
 19 at the time. I think there was one. There used to be  
 20 two at Philips Park but I think they'd removed one from  
 21 Philips Park at that stage.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We're talking about the initial stages  
 23 of — you came from Gorton Park (sic) but the other one  
 24 didn't?  
 25 A. We came from Gorton to Philips Park and I think there

19

1 was one appliance by this stage.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 3 MR GREANEY: Sir, the witness is quite right and I was quite  
 4 wrong: two at Gorton, two at Manchester Central, and one  
 5 at Philips Park.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And of the two at Gorton, one went?  
 7 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 9 MR GREANEY: At 01.14 hours, did you become aware that two  
 10 other appliances were mobilised to Victoria Station with  
 11 another NILO?  
 12 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 13 Q. Those appliances being G58P1 and G58P2?  
 14 A. I believe so, yes.  
 15 Q. We know that around that time, two appliances from  
 16 Salford turned up. Is G58 Salford?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. A short time later, were you yourself — were you still  
 19 at G16, Manchester Central?  
 20 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 21 Q. So by now it's going on for 3 hours after the explosion?  
 22 A. Correct, yes.  
 23 Q. And a short time after 1.15, were you spoken to?  
 24 A. I was asked to mount the appliance as we were going to  
 25 be the next appliance that went down.

20

1 Q. Who was it that told you to get ready to go down to the  
 2 arena?  
 3 A. I think it was Station Manager Topping.  
 4 Q. Were you told to get your crew and to get the first aid  
 5 equipment ready?  
 6 A. I told the crew to get the first aid equipment ready.  
 7 Q. About 10 minutes later, were you told something  
 8 different?  
 9 A. We were told that we weren't going, as I think at that  
 10 stage I think they'd found a suspect package.  
 11 Q. As a result, notwithstanding your obviously clear wish  
 12 to have attended the scene, was it the position that you  
 13 did not attend Manchester Arena at any stage that night?  
 14 A. That's correct, yes.  
 15 Q. At the time, so what I'm talking about is the early  
 16 hours of the 23rd, did you feel very angry?  
 17 A. Of course, yes.  
 18 Q. And to whom was that anger directed?  
 19 A. I'd say it was more towards the NILOs because they  
 20 didn't appear to be very active at progressing us to the  
 21 scene.  
 22 Q. Did you feel embarrassed?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. And have a sense that you had let people and the other  
 25 emergency services down?

21

1 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 2 Q. Was it your sense that the pump crews generally shared  
 3 your feelings?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. At some stage after that, but still in the early hours  
 6 of that morning, were you told by Station  
 7 Manager Topping that the appliances that had previously  
 8 been sent forward to the arena were coming back to  
 9 Manchester Central station?  
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 11 Q. Were you told that the county fire officer was coming to  
 12 speak to you at G16?  
 13 A. Yes, I was.  
 14 Q. The county fire officer being?  
 15 A. Peter O'Reilly.  
 16 Q. In the event did he not come?  
 17 A. No, he didn't.  
 18 Q. But did Assistant Chief Fire Officer Harris come in his  
 19 stead?  
 20 A. He did, yes.  
 21 Q. We heard yesterday that Mr Harris didn't really have any  
 22 answers to the questions that were posed.  
 23 A. He didn't.  
 24 Q. And that there was a lot of anger directed towards him  
 25 from crews?

22

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. And there was a sense, do you agree, that there had been  
 3 a lack of leadership?  
 4 A. Correct, yes.  
 5 Q. Within a month or so of the events at the arena, did you  
 6 complete a debrief questionnaire?  
 7 A. Yes, I did, yes.  
 8 Q. Who was it that asked you to do that?  
 9 A. To be honest, I can't remember who asked me to complete  
 10 it.  
 11 Q. But at all events you were asked to complete it and you  
 12 did complete it, did you not?  
 13 A. I did, yes.  
 14 Q. I'm not going to put it on the screen, for reasons that  
 15 will become apparent, but anyone that wants to follow  
 16 this, who has access to Magnum, can do so. The  
 17 reference is {INQ004252/1}.  
 18 I'm going to seek the assistance of Mr Suter just to  
 19 hand a copy of this to you, please.  
 20 One for the chairman as well.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: While that is happening, you may have  
 22 told me, what is the date of this document?  
 23 MR GREANEY: It isn't dated actually and I have tried, when  
 24 speaking to Mr Mottram this morning, to ascertain  
 25 a date. The best we can do, Mr Mottram, is to say it's

23

1 probably June or July --  
 2 A. We've got a date on the front of 12 July 2017.  
 3 Q. There we are.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I've just seen that. Whether that's you  
 5 generally or whenever everyone's has come in, I don't  
 6 know, but anyway around that time.  
 7 MR GREANEY: The one of Mr Simister was dated 20 July 2017.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we're talking about 2 months later?  
 9 MR GREANEY: We are, yes.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's just of some interest then to see  
 11 the reaction and the anger that was felt -- that that's  
 12 still there in that period of time, as we're no doubt  
 13 going to see.  
 14 MR GREANEY: I think we are going to see, sir.  
 15 Mr Mottram, I think you will agree that what we're  
 16 going to see on the printed page is a lot of anger still  
 17 from you, directed towards, effectively, command within  
 18 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And a continuing sense of embarrassment and that the  
 21 Fire and Rescue Service had let people down?  
 22 A. Yes, correct.  
 23 Q. And as we're going to read on the page, but not read out  
 24 loud, you expressed yourself in parts in highly  
 25 emotional terms, did you not?

24

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. I'm not suggesting you ought to be embarrassed for  
 3 a moment about that, but you did.  
 4 So the page reference within this document that I'm  
 5 going to take you to, first of all, is {INQ004252/6},  
 6 please -- forgive me, {INQ004252/3}, first of all. The  
 7 heading is:  
 8 "From your own role perspective, what aspects of  
 9 Operation Newtown did not go well?"  
 10 Really what I propose to do is just read these out  
 11 and ask you to confirm that this is how you felt at the  
 12 time and perhaps to indicate whether you feel any  
 13 differently now.  
 14 You begin by saying:  
 15 "I can honestly say that I can't think of any aspect  
 16 of the incident that went well."  
 17 A. Correct, yes.  
 18 Q. Do you still feel that way now?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. "(1). The delay in different response times between  
 21 different emergency services. I'm aware from my wife  
 22 that NAWAS personnel were mobilised to the RVP at G16  
 23 approximately 15 to 20 minutes before we were informed  
 24 and told [to] proceed to rendezvous at G18. She was at  
 25 Wythenshawe Hospital and phoned me upon being mobilised

25

1 to the RVP to ask me if we were going."  
 2 Does that remain something that is a matter of  
 3 concern for you?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. "(2). Our RVP being at a different location to the  
 6 other emergency services."  
 7 A. Correct.  
 8 Q. Again, does that remain something that you are concerned  
 9 about and would like answers in respect of?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. No doubt because, as you indicated earlier, that doesn't  
 12 appear to be consistent with JESIP principles?  
 13 A. Correct.  
 14 Q. "(3). The NILO not proceeding to the incident or other  
 15 location where other services were located to gather  
 16 information or liaison."  
 17 Does that remain a concern?  
 18 A. Correct, yes.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just ask you to expand on that  
 20 a bit? When you talk about the NILO, obviously the  
 21 NILO, as eventually happened, could go with appliances  
 22 to the scene. Another suggested method yesterday was he  
 23 could actually have gone on his own in some sort of  
 24 smaller vehicle. Which are you actually talking about  
 25 there?

26

1 A. With there being three NILOs, I don't think there was  
 2 a necessity for three NILOs. One of them could have  
 3 gone to the scene. To be honest, I would think --  
 4 I would have thought the appliances should have gone to  
 5 the scene immediately.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So your reference there is to the NILO  
 7 going with the appliances, but it would have been  
 8 a possibility for him to have gone on his own?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 MR GREANEY: And the advantage of being at the scene being,  
 11 of course, that's how you gain situational awareness?  
 12 A. Correct.  
 13 Q. Number 4 I am not going to read out. This was, by you,  
 14 a very strongly worded and an emotional expression of  
 15 what you feared the consequences might have been of the  
 16 Fire and Rescue Services not deploying to the scene.  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 MR GREANEY: Sir, as I have said, I don't propose to read  
 19 that out. You have read what Mr Mottram said there.  
 20 I dare say you wouldn't feel it was helpful or sensitive  
 21 for anyone to read that particular line out.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have read it so far as is relevant to  
 23 my considerations. The last thing I want to do is cause  
 24 more distress than is necessary and I think reading that  
 25 out would do so.

27

1 MR GREANEY: Exactly, thank you.  
 2 "(5). The delay at G18 waiting for the NILOs and  
 3 SRT."  
 4 Does that remain a concern?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. "(6). The lack of information."  
 7 Still a concern?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. "(7). Thompson Street being open to the public whilst  
 10 all the emergency services were stood by there."  
 11 Thompson Street is Manchester Central?  
 12 A. That's correct, yes.  
 13 Q. Could you explain what you mean by that concern?  
 14 A. Well, we were parked on the forecourt, on the front  
 15 apron of the station, and all the public were driving  
 16 past, taking photographs. If it was a marauding  
 17 terrorist incident, which it wasn't, anyone could have  
 18 drove up.  
 19 Q. So you mean that if this was a coordinated attack by  
 20 multiple terrorists --  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. -- they would have known where the Fire and Rescue  
 23 Service was massing?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Or perhaps, if it wasn't necessary

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1 because of the possibility of a marauding attack taking  
 2 place, it wasn't necessary for the public not to be  
 3 there, you could certainly have been closer to the scene  
 4 as well as the public were.  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 7 MR GREANEY: Then at (8), you were drawing the strands  
 8 together:  
 9 "Clear lack of leadership when it was needed for the  
 10 biggest terror attack that Manchester has ever had."  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Do you still have that view?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Section 3. This is {INQ004252/6}:  
 15 "What would be your key recommendations for future  
 16 similar events?"  
 17 Do you have page 6, Mr Mottram?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. "Always send a PDA to all incidents and trust the watch  
 20 managers to make decisions as I feel this would have  
 21 changed the role of the Fire Service that evening and  
 22 we would now feel valued instead of totally embarrassed  
 23 and ashamed of ourselves."  
 24 A. Correct.  
 25 Q. What do you mean by that?

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Tell me what a PDA is, first. I'm  
 2 afraid I forget these things.  
 3 A. Predetermined attendance. So on most incidents they  
 4 send a PDA, which is a predetermined attendance, to the  
 5 scene, and then straightaway you've got situational  
 6 awareness, and then they can build on that by bringing  
 7 further appliances and a further command structure. At  
 8 least we're on scene, we've got information, and the  
 9 command structure has already started with the watch  
 10 managers in charge.  
 11 MR GREANEY: Second:  
 12 "Stop being so risk averse as most of us joined the  
 13 service to take risks and save lives and not stand back  
 14 and let people suffer or die."  
 15 Is that a view you still hold?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. "(3). If a NILO is mobilised, make sure they are  
 18 mobilised to the incident, not an RVP where there is no  
 19 other service to liaise with. How is JESIP supposed to  
 20 work if the police and ambulance are on scene and our  
 21 NILO is several miles away?"  
 22 Do you still hold to that view?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. "(4). Make sure that somebody is in charge of the  
 25 incident that is able to make decisions."

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. "(5). Don't wait for an hour and 50 minutes before  
 3 sending appliances to the scene."  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. "(6). Act on information given by other services. One  
 6 paramedic approached a firefighter, nearly in tears,  
 7 asking for help as she had had an 18-year-old die in the  
 8 back of her ambulance and they needed our help."  
 9 A. That's correct.  
 10 Q. Was that something that was reported to you or did you  
 11 experience that yourself?  
 12 A. It was reported to me.  
 13 Q. "(7). Make use of the SRT as they have trained for  
 14 5 years for this scenario and have ballistic clothing."  
 15 A. Correct.  
 16 Q. "(8). Think of our moral obligation, not just policy  
 17 and procedure (ops discretion)."  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. What did you mean by that?  
 20 A. We have standard operating procedures, but obviously if  
 21 you follow them you can't resolve all incidents. So  
 22 we have what's called ops discretion, where you have to  
 23 log it that you've stepped outside standard operating  
 24 procedures to get the job done.  
 25 Q. "(9). There may be a secondary device, but how long do

1 we wait?"  
 2 You added:  
 3 "If the police and ambulance had waited as long as  
 4 the Fire and Rescue Service did [then there may have  
 5 been a greater number of deaths]."  
 6 A. Yes, correct.  
 7 Q. 10, I will not read because there may be an element of  
 8 operational sensitivity in that:  
 9 "(11). RVP with the other services as this would  
 10 help JESIP work."  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. At 12 you make an observation about the risk of  
 13 a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. Do you  
 14 continue to hold the views expressed in that section of  
 15 your debrief?  
 16 A. I do, yes.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you help me on one of them?  
 18 "Make sure someone's in charge of the incident  
 19 that is able to make decisions."  
 20 Does it concern you particularly as to where that  
 21 person is located?  
 22 A. Well, I think to have proper situational awareness, you  
 23 need to be at the incident, not at an RVP point.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That is where you would like your  
 25 incident commander to be, actually located at the

1 incident?  
 2 A. At the scene, yes.  
 3 MR GREANEY: I have nearly finished. I just want, out of  
 4 fairness to you, to read to you and ask you to confirm  
 5 the final sentences of your witness statement. At  
 6 paragraph 31 you say:  
 7 "My feeling was and is that many firefighters joined  
 8 the service to take risks to help save lives where  
 9 possible."  
 10 A. Correct, yes.  
 11 Q. "The risk-averse approach demonstrated on the night  
 12 does not reflect this and I feel our moral obligation to  
 13 the public should be considered and not just policy and  
 14 procedure."  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 MR GREANEY: Mr Mottram, those are my questions.  
 17 I'm going to, unless the chairman has any  
 18 questions --  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have one at this stage. You're  
 20 a trauma-trained firefighter?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That means you have more training in  
 23 dealing with trauma than most other firefighters?  
 24 A. To a degree, yes, but every firefighter that comes off  
 25 our training centre is trained in trauma and they're

1 able to apply CAT tourniquets, do CPR, stem basic  
 2 bleeding. Everybody is trained.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think I understand that, but we hear  
 4 they try and have one person on each appliance who has  
 5 additional training, and that's you, is it?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry to cut across you.  
 8 A. That's okay.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: On your appliance you had one CAT  
 10 tourniquet?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that true of -- it's standard  
 13 equipment on every appliance?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Has that changed now?  
 16 A. No, we still carry one CAT tourniquet.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We heard the day before yesterday very  
 18 interesting and helpful evidence from someone who helps  
 19 the public cope with these sort of incidents, if they  
 20 happen to find themselves in the middle of it. And one  
 21 particularly interesting, perhaps, part of his evidence  
 22 was that he trained people to provide improvised  
 23 tourniquets, so if the public hadn't got them. Have you  
 24 had that sort of training? Because you only have one  
 25 tourniquet and you might need more. Making an

1 improvised one?  
 2 A. I think basically if you have a knowledge of how the  
 3 tourniquet works, you can use a belt, a piece of rope --  
 4 there's a number of things you could use as a CAT  
 5 tourniquet.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And on an improvised basis you would  
 7 know about the tightening it up and things like that?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does your training include or the  
 10 training you follow include loosening it off or is that  
 11 something you don't do any more?  
 12 A. No, not once we apply it. It stays on.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you think most of your colleagues  
 14 would have similar sort of training in improvised  
 15 tourniquets? They just seem to be a useful thing for  
 16 people to know.  
 17 A. I think that most people who now how a CAT tourniquet  
 18 works, it doesn't take a lot of knowledge  
 19 (overspeaking).  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: (Overspeaking) how you could improvise  
 21 one?  
 22 A. Yes, there's lots of things you could use.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's very helpful, thank you very much  
 24 for that.  
 25 MR GREANEY: Sir, you're quite right. We heard from the

1 brigadier that in relation to one patient, you might  
 2 need more than one tourniquet, so just one on an  
 3 appliance might be thought not to be enough.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And there may be more patients that need  
 5 them.  
 6 MR GREANEY: Yes.  
 7 Those are my questions. I'm going to ask Mr Smith  
 8 who represents North West Fire Control whether he has  
 9 any questions he wishes to pose.  
 10 Questions from MR SMITH  
 11 MR SMITH: Yes, just a few, if I may.  
 12 Mr Mottram, the records provided by North West  
 13 Ambulance Service demonstrate that Mrs Mottram was  
 14 at the incident scene at 23.09.  
 15 A. Correct.  
 16 Q. Were you present when Mr Simister made the call at  
 17 23.06, his first call, to North West Fire Control?  
 18 A. I was, yes.  
 19 Q. So does it follow that you would then learn very shortly  
 20 after that call that your wife was by now at the  
 21 incident?  
 22 A. She was actually at Manchester Central when I spoke to  
 23 her and she was leaving as she'd finished the phone call  
 24 to go to the incident.  
 25 Q. Thank you. Is there any doubt in your mind that once

1 you had received this information from your wife, you  
 2 made it very clear when Mr Meakin arrived of the  
 3 situation as you understood it from your wife?  
 4 A. We made it very clear. We were asked to gather round  
 5 for a briefing by the NILOs and I made it clear then.  
 6 I tried to tell Carlos Meakin, but he sort of waved me  
 7 off and said he was busy.  
 8 Q. Were you therefore present when the second call was made  
 9 by Mr Simister to North West Fire Control at 23.59?  
 10 A. No, I don't recall that.  
 11 Q. Very well.  
 12 You've described the feeling of anger concerning the  
 13 NILOs.  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Was that feeling of anger still in place at  
 16 Manchester Central by the time everybody got there?  
 17 A. I think everyone was just frustrated and angry at the  
 18 fact that by the time we even got to Manchester Central,  
 19 it's already too late, in our opinion.  
 20 Q. But is the position this, that you did not know what  
 21 orders and instructions were being received by the NILOs  
 22 from the command support room? Is that correct?  
 23 A. That's correct, yes. None of the information was  
 24 shared.  
 25 Q. So it may be that although your frustration was being

1 directed towards the NILOs, the NILOs were receiving  
 2 information from the command support room that was  
 3 frustrating them?  
 4 A. Every possibility .  
 5 Q. Finally this, please. As far as the predetermined  
 6 attendance is concerned that you've made reference to,  
 7 is your view therefore that if provision was made for  
 8 appliances to go direct to the incident, the Fire  
 9 Service should trust the officers with the appliances to  
 10 make the right decisions when they arrive there?  
 11 A. Of course, that's why they're on fire appliances. They  
 12 make decisions all the time.  
 13 Q. One of the decisions that the officers could be trusted  
 14 to make is to comply with requirements imposed by  
 15 Greater Manchester Police, for example, armed police  
 16 officers ?  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. But nonetheless, on your reasoning, is this the  
 19 position, that the Fire Service would have situational  
 20 awareness if they were deployed immediately to the  
 21 incident?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 MR SMITH: Thank you, that's all I wanted to ask you.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Smith.  
 25 MR GREANEY: Sir, for your note the second call of

1 Mr Simister to North West Fire Control was 23.25.  
 2 Next I'm going to invite Mr Cooper, who is leading  
 3 on the fire witnesses on behalf of the families, to ask  
 4 his questions.  
 5 Questions from MR COOPER  
 6 MR COOPER: Mr Mottram, as you've heard, I ask questions on  
 7 behalf of the families today. Again, as is always the  
 8 case, much of what I wished to ask has already been  
 9 asked so I can be relatively short with you.  
 10 The first aspect I want to ask you about is going  
 11 back to your training. It's in your statement where you  
 12 deal with JESIP training in your paragraph 7. You  
 13 explain as part of your evidence on training that you  
 14 had no training on responding to mass casualty and  
 15 terrorist attacks and no training in treating bomb-type  
 16 injuries; is that correct?  
 17 A. That's correct. I think we did an MTFA awareness  
 18 package prior to that time. So that is, I suppose,  
 19 terrorist-related.  
 20 Q. Could you briefly develop what that MTFA awareness  
 21 package was, please?  
 22 A. Again it's very similar to the JESIP one. It will be an  
 23 e-learning package and basically you read through or  
 24 listen to the package and then you answer questions and  
 25 it's just to give you -- we weren't an MTFA team, but

1 the majority of people would have had basic MTFA  
 2 knowledge of what the teams would be doing. That  
 3 again -- the MTFA response was removed from the Fire  
 4 Service shortly after the arena.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, would you mind coming back to  
 6 that? I understand you need to follow that up, but just  
 7 so I understand something you said before. You said you  
 8 had no training in responding to mass casualties.  
 9 Is that generally mass casualties? Because you could  
 10 get a lot of casualties at a fire .  
 11 A. You could, but it's rare that you get casualties like  
 12 you would at a bomb scenario.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it's really dealing with mass  
 14 casualties at a bomb-type incident we're talking about?  
 15 A. We'd not had training on that.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Mr Cooper, do go back to  
 17 where you were.  
 18 MR COOPER: At the time, of course, as we've heard from your  
 19 colleagues, Manchester and all places throughout the  
 20 country were on severe risk alert, weren't they, so far  
 21 as a terrorist outrage is concerned?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. Are you surprised from your own perspective that perhaps  
 24 you hadn't had such training to deal with mass  
 25 casualties following a terrorist bomb atrocity?

1 A. Yes, probably, yes.  
 2 Q. The country was in a very perilous state at the time?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. And this is no criticism of you, and the families  
 5 rightly highlighted that at the start and I really must  
 6 put your mind at rest, but we need to dig down into the  
 7 detail if we may. So effectively, at a time when there  
 8 was a very severe risk, a very severe warning, for want  
 9 of a better expression, of a terrorist atrocity in  
 10 Manchester, you certainly had not been given the benefit  
 11 of any training in dealing with mass casualties  
 12 in relation to terrorist bomb outrages such as happened  
 13 on the 22nd?  
 14 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 15 Q. Would that apply, from your knowledge, in relation to  
 16 other colleagues? Was that a similar situation for  
 17 them, that there was little training provided for them  
 18 on that particular issue?  
 19 A. I would think so, yes, because when they do training for  
 20 terrorist incidents, it tends to be more — it tended to  
 21 be more with the SRT and the HART side of the  
 22 Ambulance Service. They're the specialist teams.  
 23 Q. The reality is when atrocities such as this happen,  
 24 obviously the important services they provide are vital,  
 25 but also services others within your profession provide

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1 are equally vital, are they not?  
 2 A. Correct, yes.  
 3 Q. And thereby cutting you and your colleagues out of such  
 4 training, would you expect was a little short-sighted?  
 5 A. Yes, you could say that.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, I interrupted a line of  
 7 questions which I want to go back to now.  
 8 You said you did have an MTFA package, but you said  
 9 something about it being withdrawn.  
 10 A. Yes. We used to have the SRT, which is for marauding  
 11 terrorist incidents, and that was withdrawn from the  
 12 service. There were certain things going on in the  
 13 service that were called workstreams that they were sort  
 14 of trialling. One was cardiac arrests, responding to  
 15 cardiac arrests with NWAS. Two was the marauding  
 16 terrorist. So there were certain themes at the time  
 17 that the service was involved with. And then the  
 18 workstreams all disappeared. So we now don't turn out  
 19 to cardiac arrests with NWAS and we didn't do the MTFA,  
 20 but that has just been reintroduced back into the  
 21 service.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 23 MR COOPER: When was that reintroduced?  
 24 A. The MTFA response?  
 25 Q. Yes.

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1 A. It has been reintroduced, I'd say, in the last couple of  
 2 months.  
 3 Q. I'm going to ask, if it assists you, sir, if they're not  
 4 covered, some significant questions of Mr Dark next week  
 5 on the issue within the service of the MTFA and its  
 6 withdrawal and, as it were, the chronology of that.  
 7 But what I would like to put to you, please,  
 8 Mr Mottram, on that point is: there was a lot of  
 9 controversy, was there not, over the deployment of  
 10 firefighters on MTFA within the Fire Service?  
 11 A. I believe so.  
 12 Q. Indeed, again, we'll assist the inquiry on the matter in  
 13 due course. But a lot of very, very firm correspondence  
 14 was exchanged between management and unions on it?  
 15 A. I believe that was the case.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll hear about that in the future,  
 17 thank you.  
 18 A. I can't confirm that. It's not something I was involved  
 19 with.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We are going to hear about that in the  
 21 future.  
 22 MR COOPER: I'm simply putting it in context for you, sir,  
 23 and I'll refer to it on another occasion. I won't deal  
 24 with it further on this occasion.  
 25 So far as you're concerned, Mr Mottram, you

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1 received, would you accept, rudimentary training on the  
 2 issue of MTFA?  
 3 A. Yes, I'd say that.  
 4 Q. You received rudimentary training, if indeed you can  
 5 call it training, on MTFA at the time of the arena  
 6 atrocity? Would you agree with that?  
 7 A. I would, yes. It was an e-learning package, but we  
 8 didn't get involved in any practical training.  
 9 Q. Just to clear this up now, has that been resolved now?  
 10 A. Not really, because the SRT response was withdrawn and  
 11 now it has been reintroduced again, so it may come in  
 12 the future.  
 13 Q. Do you know why the SRT response was withdrawn?  
 14 A. Only that it was part of a workstream that was sort of  
 15 on trial at the time.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper —  
 17 A. I think it's a bit above my level.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what I was about to say. I think  
 19 the witness is perhaps feeling — could you leave this  
 20 to the people who actually know about it and ask them  
 21 the questions and help me at that stage?  
 22 MR COOPER: I will do, I will move on.  
 23 Let me then move on to, again, the night in question  
 24 and just go over a few matters with you, if I can,  
 25 Mr Mottram, on that.

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1 When your wife informed you of what was happening  
 2 at the arena, no one else seemed to know as far as  
 3 you are concerned in the Fire Service, to put it  
 4 shortly, what had happened? Would that be right?  
 5 A. That's right, yes.  
 6 Q. You had a phone call from your wife, I won't take you to  
 7 every reference, but it might be useful for the inquiry  
 8 to have this document available to them because I want  
 9 to make a number of references to it. It's  
 10 {INQ030902/1}, which is a debrief, a debrief which you  
 11 were involved in.  
 12 Would you agree, these are your words, that when you  
 13 had a phone call from your wife, and you have told us it  
 14 was around about 22.30, it seemed like an age, was your  
 15 feeling, it seemed like an age before we were mobilised?  
 16 A. That's correct, yes. Yes.  
 17 Q. At 22.30 -- it can be taken off the screen for the time  
 18 being, thank you.  
 19 At 22.30, your wife indeed had already been directed  
 20 by NWS to proceed to Manchester Central Fire Station?  
 21 A. It was actually -- I think it was 22.37 that she was  
 22 actually mobilised.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure it was after 22.30.  
 24 A. Yes, because the bomb hadn't gone off at that time.  
 25 MR COOPER: My time is a few minutes out, forgive me. And

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1 effectively you were mobilised about 20 minutes later?  
 2 A. I think it was 22.50, around that time, that we were  
 3 mobilised to Philips Park.  
 4 Q. And we've established with other witnesses, and I'm sure  
 5 you will agree, that as far as Manchester Central  
 6 Fire Station is concerned, it's about 3 minutes away  
 7 from the arena, so we can put all this in perspective?  
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 9 Q. You're sent to Philips Park and the route has already  
 10 been dealt with by Mr Greaney. You're sent to  
 11 Philips Park. When you were directed to go to  
 12 Philips Park, did you immediately have queries as to why  
 13 you were being sent to Philips Park?  
 14 A. Yes. We were aware we were being sent as a rendezvous  
 15 point, but that wouldn't have been the location I'd have  
 16 chosen.  
 17 Q. For reasons which have already been dealt with. Did you  
 18 express that view to anyone at any time, the moment for  
 19 instance you heard that you were being mobilised to  
 20 Philips Park?  
 21 A. I think I expressed it to the crew that was on the  
 22 appliance with me.  
 23 Q. What did you say?  
 24 A. I said, "Why are we going to Philips Park? We should be  
 25 going to the arena or to Manchester Central as

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1 a rendezvous point, not Philips Park, in my opinion".  
 2 Q. Mr Mottram, are you a local man to Manchester at the  
 3 time or did you live outside Manchester?  
 4 A. I live in High Peak.  
 5 Q. Help me. Is that near Manchester? I'm showing my  
 6 ignorance.  
 7 A. It's just outside Manchester.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He's a long way away in London on the  
 9 video screen.  
 10 A. Right. It's outside of Manchester.  
 11 MR COOPER: So the point is this, you had a relatively  
 12 detailed knowledge of Manchester and Manchester city  
 13 centre?  
 14 A. I have worked at Manchester Central Fire Station for  
 15 a period prior to being at Stockport.  
 16 Q. All right.  
 17 A. So I did have a slight knowledge of the area.  
 18 Q. I'll move on. Perhaps you can be directed to the  
 19 document now, {INQ030902/1}. I'll take you to page 5 of  
 20 that document, please {INQ030902/5}. It's halfway down,  
 21 where John Fletcher says this:  
 22 "Just to get in context; it is terrorist related.  
 23 We would not cover that at this point, we have put this  
 24 in place specifically for terrorist incidents and it's  
 25 not about being risk averse."

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1 Then there's reference to Nick. Is that you,  
 2 Mr Mottram?  
 3 A. No. I don't think so. Um...  
 4 (Pause)  
 5 Yeah, it sounds like it's a reference to me.  
 6 Q. And Nick says:  
 7 "But we are."  
 8 I want to ask you a little about that. So when  
 9 Mr Fletcher says it's not about being risk averse and  
 10 you say, "But we are", was it your view at the time of  
 11 this atrocity that the Fire Brigade were risk averse?  
 12 A. I'd say we're more risk averse than we used to be when  
 13 I joined the service.  
 14 Q. What did you mean by risk averse when you said, "But  
 15 we are"?  
 16 A. I mean that we should have gone to the arena. We  
 17 shouldn't be going to Philips Park because that was  
 18 totally the wrong place. It felt like we'd been sent  
 19 there to be away and to reduce the risk to personnel.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, again, do you mind me just  
 21 asking something?  
 22 This appears to be on the same date as the written  
 23 debrief that we had.  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It looks like you had a general meeting

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1 of people.  
 2 A. We did. We had a meeting -- what was called a debrief  
 3 at -- I think it was Lever Street --  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that before you compiled this  
 5 document or did you --  
 6 A. I think I had compiled that and then we went for the  
 7 debrief, I think. I'm not 100% sure. It was a while  
 8 ago.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's just for me to get the idea whether  
 10 you're having the discussion after they've got your  
 11 debrief document or whether it is before.  
 12 A. It was possibly a discussion while we were there. I'm  
 13 not sure.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 15 Thank you, Mr Cooper.  
 16 MR COOPER: Can I take you to the top of {INQ030902/6},  
 17 please, the following page, please, which starts with  
 18 "Peter". Remind me, who's Peter?  
 19 A. That is the chief fire officer.  
 20 Q. Thank you. The chief fire officer says:  
 21 "Because of the concert that was on at the arena  
 22 we wouldn't have had anyone there as a matter of course,  
 23 but the others did."  
 24 I want to ask you a little bit about that sentence  
 25 because you are there and he's effectively addressing

1 you at the time. Do you know what he meant by that?  
 2 "Because of the concert that was on at the arena,  
 3 we wouldn't have had anyone there as a matter of course,  
 4 but the others did."  
 5 What did he mean about that, do you know?  
 6 A. I think he means that there was obviously -- because of  
 7 security reasons for the concert and being  
 8 Victoria Station, there would have been possibly British  
 9 Transport Police, possibly normal police in the area,  
 10 and they would have probably had maybe some paramedics  
 11 as first aid on duty. I don't know to be honest. But  
 12 that's all I can think it will be, that they would have  
 13 had people there for the concert perhaps.  
 14 Q. I won't press you any further on that because I know I'm  
 15 probably asking you questions which you find difficult  
 16 for good reason. I'll move on.  
 17 He goes on to say:  
 18 "All control rooms had the information but we  
 19 didn't. For me, the critical bit is do we have the same  
 20 information as GMP and NWAS? I don't think we did.  
 21 I agree with you, Nick. I said the decision we make...  
 22 the decision on the information available."  
 23 And then you say this:  
 24 "Those guys have all the gear and we are better  
 25 protected."

1 And then others join in as well. Let me break that  
 2 down into just a couple of questions. When Peter, I'll  
 3 call him Peter, says:  
 4 "The critical bit is do we have the information,  
 5 same information as GMP and NWAS? I don't think we did.  
 6 I agree with you, Nick", et cetera, et cetera.  
 7 Was that your view as well, Mr Mottram, that the  
 8 Fire Service did not have the same information as GMP  
 9 and NWAS?  
 10 A. Well, yes, because GMP and NWAS were on scene where the  
 11 Fire Service wasn't, so we wouldn't have the information  
 12 they had.  
 13 Q. In short, in your view, in a nutshell, why didn't the  
 14 Fire Service have the same information as GMP and NWAS?  
 15 A. Because we didn't attend the scene.  
 16 Q. You go on to say:  
 17 "Those guys have all the gear and we are better  
 18 protected."  
 19 What point were you trying to make there, please,  
 20 Mr Mottram?  
 21 A. It's a long time ago, so I'm not sure, but it was  
 22 possibly that we had the SRT and NILOs dressed in  
 23 ballistic clothing and none of obviously NWAS staff,  
 24 apart from the HART team, they possibly have ballistic  
 25 clothing, I'm not sure, but the normal paramedics

1 certainly don't have ballistic clothing and they ran to  
 2 the scene.  
 3 Q. That's the point I was going to put to you in  
 4 a question. So effectively, you're saying there were  
 5 people there with no protection or little protection  
 6 doing their service, as it were, but the Fire Brigade  
 7 generally, who had all the protective equipment to  
 8 protect themselves, were still not attending? Is that  
 9 the essence of what you were saying?  
 10 A. Yes. That's the bit where I'm saying we're risk averse.  
 11 Q. Thank you. In short, you're saying, are you, that of  
 12 all the services, the Fire Service could have been  
 13 better protected personally and been on the scene than  
 14 any of the other services?  
 15 A. Possibly. Certainly the SRT, because they have the  
 16 ballistic clothing.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You know how your wife dresses when she  
 18 goes on duty. Were you better protected generally than  
 19 she is?  
 20 A. We have better clothing than paramedics. Paramedics are  
 21 just in shirt and pants really. They might have a high  
 22 viz jacket or a lightweight jacket, but they don't have  
 23 any sort of ballistic clothing.  
 24 MR COOPER: Let me take you, on another matter, please, to  
 25 {INQ030902/17-18} of this document. On a different

1 matter. {INQ030902/18}, please. On that page, you say:  
 2 "We had the skills and HART will have the specialist  
 3 triages."  
 4 Do you remember saying that?  
 5 A. To be honest, no. It's a long time ago.  
 6 Q. All right. The point on it, I'm trying to locate it  
 7 in the document, the point that I extracted from that to  
 8 ask you is: what would your service's contribution have  
 9 been when on the scene specifically? Given that the  
 10 paramedics were on the scene, what specific services  
 11 would your colleagues have supplied?  
 12 A. We could have set up an incident command—style system.  
 13 We could have also assisted paramedics with evacuation  
 14 of casualties from the hot zone down to the triage area  
 15 with proper equipment rather than hoardings and things.  
 16 Q. And on that latter point, if I can just delve a little  
 17 into that, you mention that a number of individuals were  
 18 carried on hoardings, as you have put, and we know  
 19 railings as well. How would your presence, and I don't  
 20 mean you personally, your service's presence, have  
 21 stopped that or at least ameliorated that, lessened that  
 22 impact?  
 23 A. The fact that every appliance carries a spinal board, so  
 24 the casualties could be strapped to the board. Most of  
 25 our firefighters are au fait with NWAS scoop stretchers,

1 so it may be that they could have utilised some of the  
 2 stretchers that NWAS had. Without being there,  
 3 I couldn't honestly tell you.  
 4 Q. The bottom of {INQ030902/18}, you deal with yourself —  
 5 you ask a question:  
 6 "Should we have someone on the scene?"  
 7 You ask rhetorically, perhaps. And then Pete — who  
 8 is Pete, please? Is that Peter or a different person?  
 9 A. I think that will be Peter O'Reilly.  
 10 Q. He says:  
 11 "Do I expect to be told about a major incident?  
 12 Yes. It's been corrected? Yes."  
 13 Then Pete makes some bullet point references there.  
 14 I just want you to look at them and see whether there's  
 15 any you want to elaborate on that you haven't already  
 16 dealt with:  
 17 "When GMP told us about the RVP, did they tell us it  
 18 was a clear RVP? This wasn't cleared."  
 19 Is there anything you'd like to add to that or  
 20 express agreement or disagreement —  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They are Mr O'Reilly's comments, aren't  
 22 they?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 MR COOPER: I realise that. I wonder whether this witness  
 25 would like to endorse them or develop them, very briefly

1 of course.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I am not sure he would know about GMP  
 3 telling them the RVP, that's the only thing that worries  
 4 me.  
 5 A. The only thing I heard about the RVP was in the initial  
 6 stages of the inquiry. I didn't know that Andy Berry  
 7 had been given the cathedral.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is not something you knew at the  
 9 time?  
 10 A. That was not something I knew.  
 11 MR COOPER: We'll just look at the bullet points at the top  
 12 of the next page. I won't read them all out. The chair  
 13 can see them. It doesn't help just for me to read them  
 14 out aloud. Have a look at those bullet points,  
 15 Mr Mottram, and see if there are any of those that you  
 16 wish to speak to that you haven't already given evidence  
 17 about. Take a moment.  
 18 (Pause)  
 19 A. Not really. The fact that it says about no  
 20 communication of Plato, I didn't even hear that Plato  
 21 had been declared until well after the event.  
 22 Q. By well after the event —  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm going to go back on something if  
 24 that's all right, just before we go on.  
 25 MR COOPER: Of course, yes.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you were saying what you could have  
 2 done, telling Mr Cooper how you could have assisted, one  
 3 of the things you said was.  
 4 "We would have assisted with evacuation from the hot  
 5 zone."  
 6 What I have been told so far is that no one can go  
 7 in and do anything in the hot zone. Do you know that?  
 8 Is it something you would have just ignored if you'd  
 9 been there at the scene?  
 10 A. I think if an appliance had been mobilised at the point  
 11 of the other services being mobilised, I think  
 12 Andrew Simister would have been there probably before  
 13 NWAS and he would have made the right decision on the  
 14 day. So zones wouldn't have been set up at that stage  
 15 and I think Andrew Simister, being a very experienced  
 16 watch manager, I think he'd have made the right call in  
 17 my opinion.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. That's fine.  
 19 MR COOPER: If I may follow on from the chair's question on  
 20 that precise point, what you mean, is it, Mr Mottram,  
 21 is that many fire officers, members of the Fire Brigade,  
 22 would have been into that hot zone, administering care  
 23 and attention to the stricken people?  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not sure he does mean that. I would  
 25 be interested to know whether you do. What I gather

1 from you is to say you'd have been there first on the  
 2 scene, there wouldn't have been any such thing as a hot  
 3 zone.  
 4 A. No.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you'd just go in and help the  
 6 casualties.  
 7 A. Correct.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think that's what you are saying.  
 9 A. Yes. If Golf 16 had been mobilised straightaway, they'd  
 10 probably have been one of the first people in  
 11 attendance, by which time I wouldn't have thought there  
 12 would be zones set up by that stage.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just like at the time the first  
 14 paramedics got in there, I don't think there was a hot  
 15 zone set up.  
 16 A. No.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Is that all right,  
 18 Mr Cooper? I wanted to clarify that.  
 19 MR COOPER: I'll take it one step further if I can and leave  
 20 if there.  
 21 Even if a hot zone had been declared, and  
 22 I understand protocols and I understand the ethos of  
 23 a uniformed service, of course. We heard a lot about  
 24 that yesterday, perfectly properly. But even if a hot  
 25 zone had been declared, is it possible that you or your

1 colleagues would have ignored that and gone in to  
 2 administer service to stricken people?  
 3 A. I'd say it's possible. We have a moral obligation, so  
 4 if we saw people injured, I would imagine we'd have  
 5 gone.  
 6 Q. Of course you never, for no fault of your own,  
 7 I emphasise, you never actually got to the arena, did  
 8 you?  
 9 A. No.  
 10 Q. And there are a number of your colleagues, despite  
 11 wanting to administer service, and I have no doubt you  
 12 did, but despite that there are a number of your  
 13 colleagues who were in equally the same position as you,  
 14 weren't there?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. Colleagues who had the skill and ability to help  
 17 stricken people?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Colleagues who had the equipment to assist and apply  
 20 with other emergency services to help stricken people?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. And colleagues who had the bravery and courage to get in  
 23 there and do their job; is that right?  
 24 A. Of course, yes.  
 25 Q. And they were held back by the leadership?

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, just hang on for a moment about  
 2 this. We're now talking about going into the hot zone,  
 3 Mr Cooper. At the particular time in any event, as far  
 4 as the leadership were concerned, a hot zone had to be  
 5 observed on its rules. Whether that's right or not is  
 6 something that I can come to later. The fact that fire  
 7 officers would have disobeyed those rules because  
 8 they're very brave people -- and I obviously accept  
 9 that -- I don't think should be something that we should  
 10 be holding against -- I'll consider it -- those people  
 11 who are in charge of the operation.  
 12 MR COOPER: I accept that, sir. Perhaps my question should  
 13 change one word: they were held back by protocols and  
 14 procedures.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fair enough. Thank you.  
 16 A. That's how it appeared, yes.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 18 MR COOPER: In fact, Mr Fletcher, at one stage during this  
 19 debrief, said this of the Fire Service. This is his  
 20 view. It's a matter for the inquiry:  
 21 "We did the right things with the wrong outcome and  
 22 other agencies did the wrong things with the right  
 23 outcome."  
 24 Do you --  
 25 A. That's somebody's opinion and everyone's opinion may be

1 different.  
 2 Q. All right.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you don't know, except through your  
 4 wife, you don't actually know the details of what other  
 5 agencies did in any event?  
 6 A. No. I believe my wife was asked -- told that the scene  
 7 couldn't be declared safe, but they wanted volunteers  
 8 and I believe she put her hand up.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 10 MR COOPER: Was that before the hot zone was declared?  
 11 A. I'm not sure whether any zones had been declared when  
 12 she arrived. I couldn't tell you that.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. I've got the picture.  
 14 MR COOPER: You were asked questions by Mr Smith for  
 15 a period of time about the NILOs and one matter that was  
 16 put to you was that perhaps the directions being given  
 17 from the command support room were equally frustrating  
 18 to NILOs. Do you remember that passage of questions  
 19 from Mr Smith?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Did the NILOs at any stage while you were with them  
 22 express any frustration with material coming from the  
 23 command support room?  
 24 A. The NILOs didn't appear to share any information with me  
 25 certainly, so I didn't really speak much to the NILOs

1 after we left Philips Park, apart from when  
 2 Carlos Meakin asked me my wife's name. I was busy.  
 3 I phoned my wife on several occasions to see if we could  
 4 gather any more information.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did he know you were trying to get hold  
 6 of your wife?  
 7 A. I don't know. I just sort of wandered off, kept trying  
 8 to phone, but no answer because she was very busy.  
 9 MR COOPER: So far as you're concerned from your  
 10 observations, the NILOs said nothing one way or the  
 11 other about whether they were frustrated about material  
 12 coming from the command support room?  
 13 A. Not to me, no.  
 14 Q. In fact, at {INQ030902/21} of the document we have  
 15 before us, you make one observation, that the NILOs live  
 16 a long way away. Was the point you were expressing  
 17 there that perhaps it would have been more helpful to  
 18 have NILOs who live closer, for obvious reasons?  
 19 A. Yes. I thought it was appalling that we had to wait  
 20 approximately 30 minutes from our arrival at  
 21 Philips Park for the first NILO to arrive. As far as  
 22 I'm concerned, the incident is already well underway by  
 23 the time they arrive.  
 24 Q. Was that as a result of, in your view, so far as you can  
 25 say -- we'll look into this a little deeper with

1 others -- partly because they lived, as you put it,  
 2 a long way away?  
 3 A. I assume that's the only reason they could have taken so  
 4 long to get there, but I can't say for definite.  
 5 Q. We'll deal with that. I have a few short questions,  
 6 just a few now, on the debrief. Much of it is covered.  
 7 You told us that the county fire officer did not  
 8 attend, Mr O'Reilly. Do you know why he didn't attend?  
 9 A. No.  
 10 Q. Was there ever a reason given you at any later stage as  
 11 to why he didn't attend?  
 12 A. Not that I am aware of.  
 13 Q. Did it look like Mr Harris had been thrown in at the  
 14 deep end?  
 15 A. I can't say.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think he can answer that. We'll  
 17 look into it with various witnesses. I think it would  
 18 be speculation.  
 19 MR COOPER: Then on that low point, I'll have no further  
 20 questions.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you very much, Mr Cooper.  
 22 I hope mine was a proper observation.  
 23 MR COOPER: Absolutely, sir, forgive me. It can be dealt  
 24 with on another occasion.  
 25 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm keen that it shouldn't be understood

1 publicly from the questions that have been posed that  
 2 it is necessarily certain that there was ever a formal  
 3 declaration that the City Room was a hot zone. That is  
 4 an issue that will need to be investigated in the  
 5 evidence.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely, yes.  
 7 MR GREANEY: I'm next and finally going to ask Mr Warnock  
 8 whether he has any questions of Mr Mottram -- sorry,  
 9 it's Ms Johnson.  
 10 Questions from MS JOHNSON  
 11 MS JOHNSON: Thank you. Just two topics.  
 12 The first one is training. You have been asked  
 13 about the training that you received and you have  
 14 mentioned training in MTFA. Can I ask, please, to have  
 15 on the screen {INQ040457/1}.  
 16 This is one of a number of training records that  
 17 relate to you and this is the "Training for MTFA:  
 18 maintenance of skills" record. You told the inquiry  
 19 that you had some training in MTFA. Can I ask you to  
 20 have a look at this. We can see that there are three  
 21 topics: incident dangers, operational procedures and ILO  
 22 role, incident criteria categories. For each of those,  
 23 the records show dates of April 2014, April 2015,  
 24 November 2015 and November 2016. Does this jog your  
 25 memory about training that you received in MTFA?

1 A. It will be an annual training theme that we have to  
 2 complete on an annual basis.  
 3 Q. Thank you, Mr Lopez, that can come down from the screen  
 4 now.  
 5 In that training, Mr Mottram, it's right, isn't it,  
 6 that you were taught about the difference between cold,  
 7 warm and hot zones?  
 8 A. I would imagine so. I cannot remember. It's a long  
 9 time ago since we completed that training.  
 10 Q. Can you help me with this, and if you can't remember,  
 11 obviously do say: you were also taught, weren't you,  
 12 what you should do if you came across an MTFA event?  
 13 A. I think the basics were you run, hide and tell or  
 14 something on them lines. Gather information and pass it  
 15 to the relevant people, from what I can remember. But  
 16 I wouldn't say that was definite.  
 17 Q. The second issue I wanted to ask you about was some  
 18 timings in relation to the telephone calls with your  
 19 wife. Could I ask, please, to have on the screen  
 20 {INQ040368/1}.  
 21 Perhaps if we could focus into the second name  
 22 down -- Mr Lopez is ahead of me. We can see there,  
 23 alongside line 17, "Helen Mottram, paramedic".  
 24 Do you see that?  
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. This is a document that's been produced by North West  
2 Ambulance Service, which, as I understand it, is  
3 an analysis of the movement of the various paramedic  
4 crews that were on duty on the night of the incident.  
5 We can see at line 17, your wife's name.  
6 A. Yes.  
7 Q. And if you look along to the right of that line, you can  
8 see that it says:  
9 "Wythenshawe Hospital Greater Manchester."  
10 Do you have that?  
11 A. It's slightly blurred to be honest. Yes, I can see  
12 that, yes.  
13 Q. You told the inquiry that at the time that you spoke to  
14 your wife, the first time, she was at  
15 Wythenshawe Hospital, but about to leave to head  
16 initially towards the arena; is that right?  
17 A. I believe that's about right, yes.  
18 Q. So if we look to the sixth column along from the left,  
19 we can see it's "Event time".  
20 A. Yes.  
21 Q. We can see that your wife is showing as clear at  
22 Wythenshawe Hospital at 22.37. Next line, "Allocated  
23 22.37.57". And then the line below that, "Mobile at  
24 22.38".  
25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Do you see that?  
2 A. Yes.  
3 Q. So that looks as though she was allocated to the arena  
4 incident at 22.37, and she left towards where she'd been  
5 directed at 22.38?  
6 A. Yes.  
7 Q. In terms of the second conversation, you told the  
8 inquiry that your wife told you that she was leaving to  
9 go to the arena as she finished the phone call to go to  
10 the incident; do you remember that?  
11 A. Yes.  
12 Q. If we continue looking at the same column we can see  
13 that your wife arrived at the NWS RVP, which would be  
14 Manchester Central, at 22.53?  
15 A. Yes.  
16 Q. And the line below, she left the RVP at 23.06?  
17 A. Yes.  
18 Q. So she told you, as you were finishing the second  
19 telephone call, that she was leaving to go to the  
20 incident?  
21 A. She was about to go, yes.  
22 Q. So it looks as though that was some time just before  
23 23.06; does that sound right?  
24 A. Yes. That sounds about right, yes, whilst I was at  
25 Philips Park.

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1 Q. Thank you, Mr Lopez. You can take that from the screen.  
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we leave it just for a moment?  
3 Sorry, Ms Johnson, to interrupt.  
4 Just looking at what your wife did for a moment, she  
5 arrives first at the scene at 23.09. She is then going  
6 back and forth to the scene and she last leaves the  
7 hospital at 2.31 and then goes back to the RVP where she  
8 remains for about an hour. So she clearly was going  
9 backwards and forwards, helping people for a very long  
10 time that night.  
11 A. Well, she ended up as a triage officer, so she went to  
12 the arena and then I think she was in Victoria  
13 somewhere, from what I -- I've not had a big  
14 conversation with her about it. She wasn't relaying  
15 patients until --  
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Later on, having done the triage?  
17 A. Yes.  
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much. We can remove it  
19 now.  
20 MS JOHNSON: Thank you, sir, those are my questions.  
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.  
22 MR GREANEY: Sir, subject to any questions you have, that  
23 concludes the evidence of Mr Mottram.  
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm very grateful. Thank you very much  
25 for coming and giving us help with what happened that

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1 night.  
2 MR GREANEY: Could we have a break until no later than  
3 11.15?  
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, 11.15.  
5 Can I just make clear to everybody we are going to  
6 do our absolute utmost -- we can't provide for  
7 everything -- to finish the next witness by the end of  
8 the morning. I will -- I am prepared to go on to 1.30.  
9 After that it affects a lot of people's arrangements if  
10 we go on later than that, so I hope and see no reason  
11 why we shouldn't finish the next witness by 1.30.  
12 MR GREANEY: Given the efficiency of the questioning by CPs  
13 this morning, there's no reason why we should not  
14 complete the next witness before and well before 1.30.  
15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you very much.  
16 (11.04 am)  
17 (A short break)  
18 (11.16 am)  
19 MS CARTWRIGHT: The next witness is Mr Neil Helmrich. He's  
20 joining us via a live link and I'm going to ask him,  
21 please, to turn on his camera and he can then be sworn.  
22 MR NEIL HELMRICH (sworn)  
23 Questions from MS CARTWRIGHT  
24 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Helmrich, can I begin by checking that  
25 you're able to both see and hear me?

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1 A. I can, yes, ma'am.  
 2 Q. Thank you. As you'll appreciate, it's more difficult to  
 3 ask questions by this format rather than if you were  
 4 in the room, so I'm going to ask you to bear with me as  
 5 we go along. Can you give us your full name, please?  
 6 A. Yes. My name is Neil William Helmrich.  
 7 Q. In May 2017, were you watch manager at Philips Park  
 8 Fire Station in Manchester?  
 9 A. That's correct.  
 10 Q. It's right, isn't it, that you have provided a witness  
 11 statement dated 28 November 2017?  
 12 A. Correct.  
 13 Q. And for that statement you used a self-administered  
 14 interview that you had conducted on 1 July 2017 to  
 15 assist in the compilation of that witness statement?  
 16 A. That's correct.  
 17 Q. What I'm going to do now is just identify the four  
 18 topics I'm going to deal with this morning with you.  
 19 The first topic that we'll cover together is your career  
 20 history, roles, training and qualifications. Then  
 21 secondly, we will look at your involvement on the night  
 22 of 22 May into 23 May. We will then move for the third  
 23 topic to look at your involvement in the hot debrief on  
 24 23 May and then the debrief that took place on  
 25 12 July 2017. And finally the fourth area will be an

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1 opportunity for you to express any views you have in  
 2 respect of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service's  
 3 response to the arena attack.  
 4 Having identified those four areas, can I ask you,  
 5 first of all, to give us an overview as to your  
 6 background as a firefighter with Greater Manchester Fire  
 7 and Rescue Service, please?  
 8 A. Yes. I joined Greater Manchester Fire Service on  
 9 29 April 1991. I was posted after my recruit course to  
 10 Blue Watch at Chadderton as a firefighter. Towards the  
 11 end of the 90s, I was promoted to leading firefighter at  
 12 Hollins Fire Station. Subsequently in the early 2000s  
 13 I was promoted to sub-officer at White Watch in  
 14 Rochdale. And at the commencement of 2006, in the  
 15 five-watch system, I was promoted to Philips Park on  
 16 Amber Watch as watch manager.  
 17 Q. Thank you. You've already confirmed that in May 2017,  
 18 you continued to be the watch manager at Philips Park?  
 19 A. I have since removed myself from operational duties.  
 20 I now fulfil a role as a fire safety enforcement officer  
 21 for (inaudible: distorted) borough.  
 22 Q. Can you confirm when you took on that role as the fire  
 23 safety officer, please?  
 24 A. November 2017.  
 25 Q. Thank you. Can we then -- knowing that you were the

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1 watch manager at Philips Park in May 2017, we've already  
 2 had identified to us that that station is known as  
 3 G18 --  
 4 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 5 Q. -- can I ask you to confirm at the relevant time is it  
 6 right that there was only one pump or fire appliance  
 7 that was based at Philips Park Fire Station?  
 8 A. That is correct.  
 9 Q. Thank you. Can we then briefly look, please, at your  
 10 training.  
 11 Mr Lopez, please could we display {INQ039939/1}.  
 12 Mr Helmrich, we can see there detailed information  
 13 as to medical training that you had received. Can you  
 14 just assist, before we look at the detail of the Fire  
 15 Service training, and give an overview as to the first  
 16 aid training that you'd received with Greater Manchester  
 17 Fire and Rescue Service, please?  
 18 A. Yes. The trauma training that was watch-based generally  
 19 was very irregular training. It was to be done on  
 20 a bi-monthly basis, therefore the whole of the watch  
 21 would train together using PowerPoint presentations and  
 22 some assimilation with our trauma technician on the  
 23 watch. And on top of that, of course, we had responding  
 24 to cardiac arrest and Red 1s, so we were almost at the  
 25 top of our game at that particular time.

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1 Q. Thank you. In identifying that you were almost at the  
 2 top of your game at that time in respect of first aid  
 3 and training that you'd had, we can see that you'd also  
 4 had specifically training on 25 April 2017, shortly  
 5 before the incident, that dealt with a number of matters  
 6 relating to medical matters. But in particular, that  
 7 you'd also had training in how to respond to cardiac  
 8 arrest and then update training in that in October 2016.  
 9 A. That's correct.  
 10 Q. You've mentioned, I think -- is it right that at that  
 11 time in 2017 there was an initiative in place within  
 12 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service with North  
 13 West Ambulance Service that firefighters would respond  
 14 to cardiac arrest calls?  
 15 A. That's correct. It was brought into place, a bit  
 16 helter-skelter, but at the end of the day we did start  
 17 responding to cardiac arrests. I probably attended,  
 18 within a 12-month period, about 22 cardiac arrests,  
 19 maybe a touch more, that probably all ended in  
 20 life-ending experience for the casualty.  
 21 Q. Thank you. Can we then briefly please look at your  
 22 wider training with the fire service. {INQ039931/1}.  
 23 We have displayed your wider training with the Fire  
 24 Service, Mr Helmrich. I just want to ask you one  
 25 question, first of all, about your training in respect

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1 of incident command. We can see by reference to the  
 2 date of 19 September 2012 that you had had level 1  
 3 incident command. Could you give us an overview of what  
 4 your training was about incident command, please?  
 5 A. Well, it was basically an assessment that was supposed  
 6 to be done by every 2 years, I think was the prescribed  
 7 time, but of course it is very difficult to achieve  
 8 that, in which case you were placed in charge of  
 9 a scenario, which was computer-run, by the incident  
 10 command suite, and you were tested on your overall  
 11 knowledge, ability, your level.  
 12 Q. Thank you. We've looked yesterday at some training that  
 13 appeared on Mr Topping's training list and we saw that  
 14 he had training in respect of joint emergency services  
 15 interoperability. We don't see evidence of that on your  
 16 general training record. Can you assist as to whether  
 17 you had had any joint emergency services  
 18 interoperability training, please?  
 19 A. I think that once again would be watch-based JESIP  
 20 training using e-learning packages that were available  
 21 at the time so we would have gone through that as  
 22 a watch, watched the associated videos, questionnaire,  
 23 and then completed that as a group. I personally didn't  
 24 like delivering any training on an individual basis.  
 25 Q. Perhaps then if we look at your MTFA maintenance of

1 skills records just to identify whether that's the  
 2 training you're talking about.  
 3 Mr Lopez, it's {INQ040456/1}.  
 4 Mr Helmrich, is this the record of that training  
 5 you have just told us about in respect of MTFA?  
 6 A. I would expect so, but I would have to say that most of  
 7 that is some considerable time ago, so it's difficult to  
 8 really comment accurately at this stage.  
 9 Q. If we look at what this record represents, would that be  
 10 the e-learning training that you've told us about rather  
 11 than something different?  
 12 A. Yes. I believe so, yes.  
 13 Q. So could I ask then at a high level, in May 2017,  
 14 can you assist with giving us some idea about the extent  
 15 of your knowledge in respect of JESIP and the JOPs,  
 16 please, the joint operating principles?  
 17 A. Yes. I think it was a basic idea that the emergency  
 18 responders would respond together, share information,  
 19 and work together in an efficient manner on the fire  
 20 ground.  
 21 Q. Thank you. Can I then, please, move just to 2017.  
 22 You've already told us that you were the watch manager,  
 23 and on that night you were the officer in charge at the  
 24 Philips Park Fire Station. Can you just explain what  
 25 that role is, please?

1 A. It is simply that I held complete responsibility for the  
 2 running of that watch, whether on or off the incident  
 3 ground.  
 4 Q. Thank you. At the relevant time in May 2017, we heard  
 5 from Mr Topping yesterday an understanding of the  
 6 hierarchy. Was there a station manager at Philips Park?  
 7 A. There was a station manager at Philips Park, but at that  
 8 evening he wasn't on duty, which left me as the officer  
 9 in charge of the station as well.  
 10 Q. Thank you. You have identified in your witness  
 11 statement that you were that night at G18 Philips Park  
 12 and commenced your shift at 7 o'clock in the evening.  
 13 A. That's correct.  
 14 Q. And that there were four firefighters including yourself  
 15 at Philips Park that evening?  
 16 A. That's correct.  
 17 Q. The other firefighters that were acting under you were  
 18 Firefighters Taylor, Hanley and Todd?  
 19 A. Correct.  
 20 Q. You tell us in the witness statement that just before  
 21 your involvement with this incident, your pump, G18  
 22 pump 1, had been off the run because of a technical  
 23 issue?  
 24 A. That's correct, yes.  
 25 Q. So we're moving now, Mr Helmrich, into the second area

1 I want to deal with, which is your involvement on the  
 2 night. In your witness statement you have given some  
 3 information as to times of calls that you had with  
 4 North West Fire Control that night. But would you  
 5 accept that, having now reviewed the two transcripts of  
 6 calls from North West Fire Control, that the timings  
 7 that you gave in that witness statement were not  
 8 accurate?  
 9 A. Yes, I would accept that, ma'am.  
 10 Q. Thank you. So perhaps, if it would assist, we're going  
 11 to play the first of the calls that you received from  
 12 North West Fire Control that evening. Would you accept,  
 13 and do you agree, that that call was received at 10.45?  
 14 A. Yes, I agree.  
 15 Q. Is it right to summarise that you had effectively gone  
 16 into the office to make the call to North West Fire  
 17 Control to indicate that the technical issue with your  
 18 pump had been corrected and to put the pump back on to  
 19 the run?  
 20 A. Yes, that's right, I picked up the receiver, but didn't  
 21 dial any number because the control operator was already  
 22 on the line.  
 23 Q. Thank you. And that then is the call we're now about to  
 24 play, please. We can also have the transcript.  
 25 Mr Lopez, could I ask, please -- I'm going to ask

1 for the call to be played but also for the transcript of  
 2 that call to be displayed on the screen. The call  
 3 itself is {INQ004412/1}. The transcript of that call is  
 4 {INQ001237/1}.

5 Mr Helmrich, rather than asking you to recall, it  
 6 seems easier to let the call play and then ask you about  
 7 what we hear on that call.

8 (Audio played to the inquiry)

9 Mr Helmrich, we heard on the call reference to the  
 10 duty NILO. Had there been any contact with you at that  
 11 point from any NILO?

12 A. None at all, ma'am.

13 Q. And had you seen in the media anything about the attack  
 14 at that point in time?

15 A. Not at that point, no.

16 Q. And so when you received that call, what was your  
 17 understanding about what you needed to do at that point  
 18 in time, please?

19 A. Well, I asked the watch to come down to the office.  
 20 I spoke to them, just to give them a brief overview of  
 21 the call I'd received and that we were expecting further  
 22 appliances to attend in due course.

23 Q. We heard on the call that there was reference to an  
 24 explosion and gunshot wounds. Did you have anything in  
 25 your mind at that time as to what sort of an incident

1 was taking place?

2 A. My first instinct was this was just a local issue --  
 3 gunshot wounds, it's not uncommon in Greater Manchester,  
 4 unfortunately, these days, and it's something that  
 5 wouldn't be uncommon for the fire service at this  
 6 particular time to perhaps put something in place, even  
 7 though predominantly previously that would have been  
 8 dealt with by the police.

9 Q. Thank you.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just ask one thing?  
 11 You were told that your fire station had been  
 12 selected, other fire engines were coming to you. Did  
 13 that surprise you, that you'd been chosen as the  
 14 location for something at the arena?

15 A. No, sir, I don't think it did at that stage. I knew an  
 16 incident commander must have been appointed, and that  
 17 incident commander has the knowledge.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

19 MS CARTWRIGHT: Just dealing with locations, we've heard  
 20 about the distance from Philips Park Fire Station to the  
 21 arena, but in your knowledge and experience as a watch  
 22 manager, if there was to be a fire appliance deployed  
 23 from your fire station at that time to the arena on blue  
 24 lights, what's your evidence about how long that would  
 25 have taken, please?

1 A. I wouldn't have thought it would have taken more than 5  
 2 to 7 minutes.

3 Q. Thank you. Did you have any knowledge -- because  
 4 there's reference to four pumps coming to your station  
 5 as a muster point or rendezvous point, did you have any  
 6 knowledge about where those pumps were coming from at  
 7 that time?

8 A. I don't think I can recall, ma'am, to be honest.

9 Q. Thank you. So can you give me an idea as to what the  
 10 feeling was between you and your three other  
 11 firefighters at Philips Park at that time, please?

12 A. We completed our very short meeting and at that time it  
 13 was, I don't know, approximately quarter to 11. We went  
 14 back upstairs. The ground floor is where the appliance  
 15 bay is at Philips Park and the first floor is where the  
 16 accommodation is effectively, where you sit down and  
 17 relax. And we sat down and just sat watching TV, but  
 18 whatever channel it was on, it had nothing to do with  
 19 anything that was going on at the arena at that point.

20 Q. You then tell us in your witness statement about the  
 21 arrival of the other crews at your station. But before  
 22 we deal with that, could I ask you -- first of all,  
 23 there's a further call that we know was received at  
 24 22.52. Could I ask, please, Mr Lopez, at this stage to  
 25 again play the call, which is {INQ029814/1}, and please

1 display the transcript of that call, which is  
 2 {INQ001202/1}.

3 This is the call at 22.52, Mr Helmrich.  
 4 (Audio played to the inquiry)

5 Mr Helmrich, can I ask you, first of all, do you  
 6 recall receiving that call on the night?

7 A. Well, I think I can clarify this call. I didn't think  
 8 I'd spoken to control twice that particular evening.  
 9 That voice was Firefighter Todd, not me.

10 Q. Thank you. So that's Firefighter Todd that received  
 11 that call at 22.52. Do you recall that he then relayed  
 12 the contents of that call to you?

13 A. Yes, I probably do, because I think we would have been  
 14 sat in the TV room at this point, so he's picked up the  
 15 phone in that area and then he's just given me a brief  
 16 resumé of what we were supposed to do and the reason we  
 17 had to close down on the incident, even though we were  
 18 on station, is an anomaly with the MDT where you have to  
 19 mobilise yourself to the incident and then close down on  
 20 the incident, otherwise it doesn't locate your appliance  
 21 in the correct place.

22 Q. Thank you. You go on to tell us in your witness  
 23 statement that those pumps that we can hear in the call  
 24 that had been despatched from G16, which was  
 25 Central Park or Thompson Street Fire Station, and the

1 G19 pump from Gorton in fact did then arrive at your  
 2 station?  
 3 A. That's correct.  
 4 Q. Prior to their arrival at Philips Park, had there been  
 5 any call to you as the officer in charge at the muster  
 6 point from any NILO?  
 7 A. No, there hadn't, ma'am, no.  
 8 Q. Thank you. You go on to tell us in your witness  
 9 statement that the three crews that arrived at your  
 10 station came into the recreation room and, unlike you  
 11 and your firefighters, they were dressed in full  
 12 personal protective equipment and you say this:  
 13 "They were clearly fully aware of the nature of the  
 14 incident unfolding in Manchester."  
 15 A. That is correct, ma'am, yes.  
 16 Q. So when those 12 other firefighters arrived, what were  
 17 they relaying to you at that stage in the recreation  
 18 room at Philips Park, please?  
 19 A. They started relaying what had happened at the  
 20 Manchester Arena. They had a much broader knowledge.  
 21 They already knew there had been casualties, so at that  
 22 point was the time when we switched over the TV channel  
 23 and of course breaking news is fairly quick these days,  
 24 and the screen started to show images and reporting of  
 25 the arena attack.

1 Q. Can I ask, because you were the watch manager and  
 2 officer in charge for Philips Park, but you now had  
 3 Watch Manager Simister that has arrived from  
 4 Central Park and also we've heard from a Mr Mottram, who  
 5 was I think the crew manager from Gorton. What then  
 6 happens from your perspective at this time as to who is  
 7 the person in charge of the firefighters based at  
 8 Philips Park, please?  
 9 A. Well, control had already given me the salient points.  
 10 Those were: there's an incident at the arena,  
 11 clarification yet to be ascertained. Four appliances  
 12 will be -- a rendezvous point at Philips Park and they  
 13 must have appointed an incident commander to clarify  
 14 that rendezvous point, therefore myself, Andy and Nick  
 15 are effectively the same, waiting for the  
 16 incident commander to attend his rendezvous point.  
 17 Q. That's essentially Mr Simister and Mr Mottram, when you  
 18 say Andy and Nick?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Thank you. At that point did you have knowledge of who  
 21 the incident commander was?  
 22 A. It was said in the transcripts that it was Andy Berry,  
 23 but I have to be honest and say I didn't particularly  
 24 pick up on that, it would just be through experience  
 25 that somebody must have been nominated to create

1 a rendezvous point.  
 2 Q. In May 2017, how well did you know Mr Berry? Was he  
 3 someone you were well familiar with?  
 4 A. I would say reasonably familiar with Mr Berry. He'd  
 5 previously been the station manager at Gorton, so  
 6 of course I've come into contact at fairly regular  
 7 times.  
 8 Q. You confirmed in your statement, and having looked at  
 9 the incident log, that those three other crews had  
 10 already arrived by 22.55. The chairman has the times  
 11 given as to the arrivals, I'm not going to go over that.  
 12 But I want to deal with when it's really just the four  
 13 crews in that recreation room. You say this in your  
 14 witness statement:  
 15 "The television channel was quickly changed to one  
 16 of the news channels. It was already reporting the  
 17 breaking news. Individual firefighters were scanning  
 18 social media and information was being updated at  
 19 a rapid pace. It was not long before I knew that there  
 20 had been 18 fatalities reported. At this point I felt  
 21 no impetus that we were to be mobilised to the  
 22 incident."  
 23 Can you just help us a little bit more by what you  
 24 mean by that description, that:  
 25 "At this point I felt no impetus that we were to be

1 mobilised to the incident?"  
 2 A. By the simple fact that we'd been declared a rendezvous  
 3 point and by the way that the incident command system  
 4 works, you just sit there and wait until the  
 5 incident commander arrives. That's when you are waiting  
 6 for your next move.  
 7 Q. Thank you. You then go on in the witness statement to  
 8 tell us about the next move. You say this:  
 9 "We had been given no further information or  
 10 direction from North West Fire Control and, as far as  
 11 I had officially been told, this was still a shooting  
 12 incident and therefore a police matter."  
 13 Is that correct?  
 14 A. Again, I agreed and that goes back to my initial thought  
 15 process that this really could be a local issue.  
 16 Q. You then go on to describe that, after a period of time,  
 17 Watch Manager Simister requested you via the station  
 18 tannoy system to attend at the appliance bay. Could you  
 19 tell us about that, please?  
 20 A. Yes, ma'am. Andy had a lot more impetus than I did,  
 21 a lot more urgency in his manner. He was downstairs,  
 22 back into the appliance bay where -- the remainder of  
 23 the crews were probably there as well, and then he  
 24 called me down to the appliance bay.  
 25 Q. Can I just stop you for one minute? Just to be clear,

1 were you about to tell me about other fire equipment and  
 2 appliances? We're not going to reveal the location of  
 3 where those fire appliances came from, so we can  
 4 describe them by the terms, but please don't describe  
 5 their locations. I apologise that I interrupted you.  
 6 You were called into the appliance bay by  
 7 Mr Simister. Please could you describe then what  
 8 happened?  
 9 A. Yes. There were further resources that had turned up at  
 10 Philips Park at that stage.  
 11 Q. We can identify the resources. Can you confirm that  
 12 that was the TRU vehicle?  
 13 A. Correct, ma'am.  
 14 Q. And the SRT?  
 15 A. That's correct, yes.  
 16 Q. Prior to seeing them in your appliance bay, had anyone  
 17 communicated to you that those additional appliances and  
 18 the specialist appliances were coming to rendezvous at  
 19 your fire station?  
 20 A. No, ma'am, I was unaware.  
 21 Q. You say this in your witness statement:  
 22 "I was surprised because I was not aware they had  
 23 even been despatched."  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. And would you have expected for someone to have told you

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1 that the SRT and the TRU were coming to your station?  
 2 A. Not necessarily. Again, the incident commander is in  
 3 charge. Once they have declared a rendezvous point, if  
 4 they've asked other resources to attend, it's not my job  
 5 to question it. It's my job to wait for the  
 6 incident commander to turn up and implement their plan.  
 7 Q. You also say at that time, when you arrived in the  
 8 appliance bay, that there were three NILOs also present,  
 9 Group Manager Levy, Group Manager Meakin and Station  
 10 Manager Berry.  
 11 A. That's correct, yes.  
 12 Q. The chairman's been given this morning the arrival time  
 13 of those three NILOs at Philips Park. Had you expected  
 14 to see the NILOs at that point?  
 15 A. Yes, I thought we would have been there -- I expected  
 16 the incident commander to be there a lot quicker, that's  
 17 for sure.  
 18 Q. Thank you. Just to be clear, why had you expected the  
 19 incident commander to be there a lot quicker?  
 20 A. You'd have thought if he'd been putting a rendezvous  
 21 point and put it at Philips Park, then it can't have  
 22 been that far away or within a reasonable distance of  
 23 attending the incident. The longer away or further away  
 24 he is, how can he be implementing his plan? The longer  
 25 he takes to get there, he can't move anything forward.

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1 Q. Can you assist us with what the instructions were given  
 2 at that time, please, by any of the NILOs to you and  
 3 your team?  
 4 A. At this stage Watch Manager Simister was still fairly  
 5 agitated, I would say. Crew Manager Mottram was  
 6 similar, and their crews to a certain point. They'd  
 7 already confronted the NILOs and been told to back off.  
 8 In my understanding of the autocratic organisation,  
 9 they're quite happy to give your opinion, if it's  
 10 accepted that's fine, but if they say thanks but no  
 11 thanks, you don't go any further because you're then  
 12 hindering their own plan yourself.  
 13 Q. Can I just explore a little further the answer you've  
 14 just given? Had any of the NILOs -- had you approached  
 15 any of the NILOs and been told to back off?  
 16 A. No, ma'am, that was Watch Manager Simister.  
 17 Q. Thank you. You then used a word, autocratic. Can you  
 18 be a bit clearer as to what you're describing as this  
 19 autocratic encounter, please, so we can understand  
 20 a little more? Was there a cultural issue?  
 21 A. That's not a culture, ma'am; we're a hierarchical  
 22 organisation which is --  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: (Overspeaking).  
 24 A. Yes, it's within that as well. It's hierarchical is the  
 25 organisation, but within that we are autocratic on the

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1 fire ground and democratic on the fire station.  
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Say that again for me, I missed that.  
 4 A. We're a hierarchical organisation, but when it comes to  
 5 the fire ground, we are autocratic, and when we're on  
 6 the fire station, we are democratic.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 8 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.  
 9 You go on to tell us that instructions were given by  
 10 Group Manager Levy that the crews were to dress in their  
 11 PPE, mount the appliances, and await further  
 12 instruction. You have checked the incident log and you  
 13 indicate that that occurred at 23.35?  
 14 A. I would agree with that, ma'am, yes.  
 15 Q. And so just to understand, is that what you did at that  
 16 time, you put on your PPE and climbed on to your pump 1?  
 17 A. I wouldn't automatically say I put my PPE on at that  
 18 point because, as the officer in charge of the pump, to  
 19 get on the appliance -- it would take me less than  
 20 2 minutes to put on my PPE, so I probably would have  
 21 waited until we were actually ready to move out of the  
 22 appliance bay.  
 23 Q. Can I just be clear as to the personal protective  
 24 equipment that you had available to you on G18 pump 1,  
 25 please.

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1 A. Yes. That would be your fire boots, overtrousers,  
 2 orange tunic, helmet, gloves.  
 3 Q. Thank you. You say this by reference to this time after  
 4 those instructions at 23.35:  
 5 "Some of the firefighters were becoming increasingly  
 6 frustrated with the lack of response from the Fire  
 7 Service. I still personally felt no impetus at this  
 8 stage as we had not officially been given any further  
 9 information or deployed to the incident."  
 10 A. Correct, ma'am, yes.  
 11 Q. If we can just perhaps look at the incident log, the  
 12 North West Fire Control incident log for this time  
 13 around 23.35, please, just to capture what is recorded  
 14 on the control log.  
 15 Mr Lopez, please can we display {INQ008375/34}.  
 16 The entry at the bottom of the page, please, for  
 17 23.34.47. You indicated a moment ago that the  
 18 instruction from Mr Levy to dress in PPE and mount the  
 19 appliances came at 23.35. We can see at 23.34.47,  
 20 a comment that:  
 21 "Can we notify all NILOs and advise to monitor pager  
 22 and responders but do not respond until required."  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. So does that fit with what you checked in terms of the  
 25 instruction to be ready but actually you weren't being

1 despatched at that time, at 23.35?  
 2 A. Yes, that's correct. We were told to dress in PPE,  
 3 which I probably didn't do because of how I explained  
 4 previously, but we still didn't move out of the  
 5 appliance bay at that stage.  
 6 Q. Thank you. If we then, please, keep that document for  
 7 the minute. The next page we'll be going to is  
 8 {INQ008375/32} of that document. If I can ask the  
 9 question, Mr Helmrich, and then we'll look at the log  
 10 together.  
 11 The next timing where you indicate there was action  
 12 was -- you say this in your witness statement:  
 13 "At 00.02, the appliances that had gathered at  
 14 [your] fire station, G18, were sent to G16, which is  
 15 Manchester Central Fire Station, also known as  
 16 Thompson Street, and this was to co-locate with the NWS  
 17 [North West Ambulance Service] who were using it as  
 18 their rendezvous point."  
 19 So effectively, from 11.35 to 00.02, would it be  
 20 fair to say that nothing further was happening at  
 21 Philips Park from your perspective?  
 22 A. That is correct, ma'am, yes.  
 23 Q. Thank you, and if we then just look, please, at the log  
 24 for 00.02 at {INQ008375/32}. If we could perhaps start  
 25 at 23.53.53. We can see a comment:

1 "Awaiting response from police so contacted  
 2 ambulance to see if they know what the co-locate point  
 3 is. They don't know at this time as they have  
 4 appliances everywhere. They advise their appliances not  
 5 at the incident are rendezvousing at Thompson Street  
 6 Station."  
 7 We can see by reference to...  
 8 "Informative: following liaison with chief fire  
 9 officer O'Reilly and in the absence of forward control  
 10 point being declared by GMP, crews have moved forward to  
 11 G16 Thompson Street to co-locate with ambulance  
 12 standby."  
 13 A. That's correct, yes, that fits.  
 14 Q. Thank you.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is North West Fire Control's log?  
 16 MS CARTWRIGHT: It is, sir.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 18 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Helmrich, you obviously used the incident  
 19 log to inform your timings in your self-administered  
 20 interview and then your witness statement, but can you  
 21 just assist us then, being based at Philips Park, it's  
 22 00.02, what in fact do you recall was being said to you  
 23 and your crew?  
 24 A. Nothing was being said to me and my crew. As I have  
 25 stated prior, the only person who had urgency was

1 basically Watch Manager Simister, Crew Manager Mottram  
 2 was feeling the same way, but really it was only -- Andy  
 3 was the only driving force saying we should be on the  
 4 incident ground.  
 5 Q. At that point, because we know in fact it was yourself  
 6 and the two crews that had come from Manchester Central  
 7 that ultimately then were the three that went from  
 8 Philips Park to Manchester Central. Did Mr Simister say  
 9 anything at that point about the fact that he'd come  
 10 from there and was now being sent back?  
 11 A. Yes, he would have probably orated that to everyone who  
 12 would listen to him at that point I would have thought.  
 13 Q. At 00.02, you then, with Mr Berry, were requested to  
 14 proceed to Manchester Central. Can I just ask, how did  
 15 Mr Berry travel from Philips Park? Was he on one of the  
 16 pumps or did he travel separately? Can you assist us  
 17 with that?  
 18 A. I can, yes. Every single flex duty officer has their  
 19 own vehicle, private vehicle, which is also in use for  
 20 their work purposes. They all have their own vehicle.  
 21 Q. So just dealing with the journey after 00.02 from  
 22 Philips Park to Thompson Street Fire Station, can you  
 23 give us some idea, how did you proceed from your  
 24 rendezvous point to the new rendezvous point at  
 25 Central Station? Was that under blue lights?

1 A. I can't remember, ma'am, whether it was blue lights or  
 2 at normal road speed.  
 3 Q. Can you give us some idea as to how long it would take  
 4 to travel from Philips Park to Thompson Street  
 5 Fire Station, please?  
 6 A. On blue lights, 5 minutes. On non-blue lights, normal  
 7 road speed, 5 to 10.  
 8 Q. Thank you. When you arrived at Thompson Street  
 9 Fire Station, did you get off your appliance?  
 10 A. I did, yes.  
 11 Q. Can you give us some idea of what the mood was and any  
 12 information you received when you arrived at  
 13 Thompson Street Fire Station, please?  
 14 A. I certainly remember seeing lots of ambulances parked  
 15 up. I think there may have been some police vehicles  
 16 parked up as well. I'm not sure about other appliances  
 17 at that stage outside of the four that were the original  
 18 rendezvous point at Philips Park. But it was a fairly  
 19 muted atmosphere. There wasn't any shouting and bawling  
 20 that I could perceive at that point. But you have to  
 21 remember that we are an hour and a half down the track  
 22 now. By my experience, if you don't turn up at these  
 23 things fairly sharpish, you're not going to be rescuing  
 24 many people an hour and a half later.  
 25 Q. In terms of the next significant time you say in your

1 witness statement:  
 2 "At 00.21 [your] pump but also the pumps from  
 3 Thompson Street, G16P1 and G16P2, along with Mr Berry,  
 4 were requested to proceed to a new rendezvous point at  
 5 Corporation Street."  
 6 When you were asked to then move from  
 7 Thompson Street Fire Station to Corporation Street, why  
 8 were you told -- what were you told the reason for that  
 9 next move was, please?  
 10 A. I don't think we were told more than a specific reason  
 11 that we were going to go to the forward control point  
 12 for the incident. I don't think it was really put in  
 13 any bigger terms than that that I can recall.  
 14 Q. Perhaps then if we could just look again at the incident  
 15 log where you've already confirmed you got timings.  
 16 Mr Lopez, could we move, please, to {INQ008375/29}  
 17 of that document?  
 18 We can see, Mr Helmrich, at 00.21.44, we have the  
 19 "Comment by radio form":  
 20 "Station Manager Berry proceed to RVP at  
 21 Corporation Street with appliances G16P1, G16P2, G161.  
 22 All other resources remaining standby at  
 23 Thompson Street."  
 24 Then the next entry at 00.22.08:  
 25 "Comment by phone from GM Nankivell. G16P1, G16P2,

1 G18P1 are proceeding to Victoria Station to meet HART.  
 2 They are proceeding Corporation Street and Miller Street  
 3 with Station Manager Berry -- can control then mobilise  
 4 three appliances into G16 so pool of appliances is back  
 5 to four appliances."  
 6 So can I ask then in terms of that direction to meet  
 7 the HART, did you have experience of working with the  
 8 HART team from NWAS?  
 9 A. Minimal experience. I had been mobilised with them to  
 10 road traffic collisions, but the incidents that  
 11 I remember attending didn't necessarily require the HART  
 12 team to remain in attendance for any length of time. So  
 13 my experience of working alongside HART over an extended  
 14 period was limited.  
 15 Q. And can I ask, in terms of the HART, being the Hazardous  
 16 Area Response Team, did you have an understanding about  
 17 in what circumstances the HART team would be deployed  
 18 and used by North West Ambulance Service?  
 19 A. Obviously, for a major incident purpose, they could give  
 20 their extra skills and training to assist their other  
 21 colleagues.  
 22 Q. Thank you. Can you assist us as to how long it took to  
 23 travel from Thompson Street Fire Station to the new  
 24 rendezvous point at Corporation Street?  
 25 A. The roads would have been quiet. I think we went on

1 blue lights, so you're talking under 5 minutes to get to  
 2 the junction of Miller Street and Corporation Street,  
 3 I would have thought.  
 4 Q. When you arrived at Corporation Street and the junction  
 5 of Miller Street, can you assist with what you saw at  
 6 that time, please?  
 7 A. We were held back at the traffic lights right at the  
 8 junction. I think Golf 16 Papa 1 and Golf 16 Papa 2  
 9 were ahead of me in the queue. I remained behind those.  
 10 And I think Watch Manager Simister then spoke with  
 11 Station Manager Berry again before we moved forward  
 12 towards Victoria Station.  
 13 Q. Were you aware of what that conversation was? Was that  
 14 being communicated by radio to you?  
 15 A. I don't recall that. I think that Andy just spoke with  
 16 Station Manager Berry.  
 17 Q. Had you been given any other information at that point  
 18 about what the incident was that had been occurring at  
 19 the Manchester Arena?  
 20 A. Not from GMC resources. Clearly I knew exactly what had  
 21 gone on by this stage, but it was not really by any  
 22 incident commander or anything at that point?  
 23 Q. Mr Simister gave evidence yesterday about information  
 24 and knowledge about a declaration of Operation Plato.  
 25 Was there any information provided to you about

1 Operation Plato?  
 2 A. No, ma'am.  
 3 Q. You say this about the time when you were at  
 4 Corporation Street:  
 5 "The crew inside my appliance were quiet."  
 6 Can you give us some idea about the mood in your  
 7 pump at that time, please?  
 8 A. Yes. I think it was quiet because we'd effectively been  
 9 commenced to the incident around 10.45 and it was now  
 10 12.20. We'd witnessed all the atrocity of the  
 11 Manchester Arena attack via the television. Again it  
 12 was only now that we were actually being moved forward.  
 13 I think even Firefighter Taylor at that stage, even with  
 14 his limited experience and time in the fire service,  
 15 would have understood that we wouldn't be assisting many  
 16 people by that stage. I think that's why the crew were  
 17 quiet.  
 18 Q. You then tell us that eventually, at 26 minutes past  
 19 midnight, according to the log, the appliances were  
 20 moved forward to the incident ground at  
 21 Victoria Station.  
 22 A. That's correct.  
 23 Q. Can you assist to give us some idea as to how long that  
 24 journey from Corporation Street to Victoria Station  
 25 took, please?

1 A. That must only be 1 minute, 2 minutes maximum.  
 2 Q. For completeness, can we look at the log to which you  
 3 had reference to give us that timing. It's the same  
 4 INQ, {INQ008375/28}, please, Mr Lopez.  
 5 At 00.26.03, we see the comment:  
 6 "By phone from NWAS Vicky Worrell... Request from  
 7 the Gold commander -- 12 firefighters equivalent to  
 8 three pumps and one officer to support the movement of  
 9 casualties (if possible trauma technicians) and to  
 10 proceed to Victoria Station. They must take the route  
 11 of Corporation Street to Victoria Station."  
 12 Is that the entry you used?  
 13 A. That's right, yes.  
 14 Q. So you can assist in terms of -- was there anyone on  
 15 your pump that was a trauma technician?  
 16 A. Yes, Firefighter Todd.  
 17 Q. Thank you. Can you just assist as to what additional  
 18 training is received to become a trauma technician?  
 19 A. Yes. They apply, usually through me, to say that they  
 20 want to be considered to be a trauma technician.  
 21 They're given a nomination to attend a training course,  
 22 which is usually at the training and development centre.  
 23 They're then required to complete periodic updates and  
 24 new training, which then of course they deliver to the  
 25 remainder of the watch.

1 Q. We see from your witness statement that you then arrived  
 2 at Victoria Station. You describe being given  
 3 instruction by a senior paramedic when you arrived  
 4 at the Victoria Station. I think you weren't able to  
 5 identify who that senior paramedic was; is that correct?  
 6 A. That's correct, yes.  
 7 Q. Do you recall whether he had a tabard on?  
 8 A. I don't recall whether he had a tabard on.  
 9 Q. You say this:  
 10 "[You] could see ambulances queued down the middle  
 11 of the road, almost the full length of the station.  
 12 GM Meakin gave a short briefing to the three crews. We  
 13 then walked down the road past all of the ambulances ad  
 14 gathered at the main entrance to the station. This  
 15 entrance was the third entrance along the right-hand  
 16 side of the road, just before the road bends around to  
 17 the left. As we gathered at this entrance, I perceived  
 18 people stood against the wall on the opposite side of  
 19 the street."  
 20 Are you describing the opposite side, near Chetham's  
 21 School of Music?  
 22 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 23 Q. And you had the conversation with the senior paramedic  
 24 who you weren't able to identify, who briefed you:  
 25 "He told us to work in pairs. To get a bed off one

1 of the attending ambulances."  
 2 And you went to work alongside Firefighter Hanley?  
 3 A. That's correct, yes.  
 4 Q. I am not going to ask you to tell us about the  
 5 assistance you provided to casualties, and one casualty  
 6 in particular. The assistance you provided is contained  
 7 within your witness statement and the chairman has that.  
 8 I don't mean any discourtesy to you by not dealing with  
 9 your efforts once you arrived at the station.  
 10 A. That's fine, ma'am.  
 11 Q. Could you assist for clarity in terms of the equipment  
 12 that you and your crew had available to you at that  
 13 time, please, in terms of first aid?  
 14 A. Every appliance carries a trauma bag with oxygen  
 15 therapy, burns dressings, tourniquets, airway, other  
 16 bandages, and that probably about covers it, really.  
 17 Plenty of equipment for effectively maintaining airways  
 18 and keeping people breathing.  
 19 Q. You've already identified that Firefighter Todd was  
 20 a trauma technician. We've looked at your training  
 21 records for the training you'd had around first aid and  
 22 the ability to discharge emergency medical care. But  
 23 again, were you confident at delivering cardiac care to  
 24 those in cardiac arrest?  
 25 A. Absolutely confident, ma'am.

1 Q. Thank you. Were you confident and able to apply  
 2 a tourniquet?  
 3 A. I would say less so than CPR because I had not really  
 4 done it operationally, but I think I would have had  
 5 a pretty good idea what to do when the time came.  
 6 Q. Thank you.  
 7 Mr Helmrich, moving then to the next category I want  
 8 to deal with, with you, the topic is now the debrief.  
 9 We can see from your witness statement that there came  
 10 a time when your work was completed and that you moved  
 11 away from Victoria Station and went back to  
 12 Manchester Central, Thompson Street Fire Station.  
 13 Could you assist, please, in terms of the hot  
 14 debrief that occurred at 4 o'clock in the morning,  
 15 please, on 23 May at Thompson Street Fire Station,  
 16 please.  
 17 A. Yes, ma'am. I came back to the Manchester Central  
 18 Fire Station. Firefighter Todd left the fire engine on  
 19 the apron of the station, by Station Manager Topping and  
 20 Watch Manager Walker, and they opened the doors, still  
 21 sitting on the appliance, and they asked me how it had  
 22 gone. I just said that it was all over bar the shouting  
 23 well before we got there. It was quite calm down there  
 24 and relaxed because obviously the main number of  
 25 casualties, in fact all casualties before we left, had

1 been taken to hospital. I was informed by those two  
 2 officers that County Fire Officer O'Reilly was going to  
 3 attend and give a hot debrief.  
 4 Q. Did Mr O'Reilly attend?  
 5 A. He did not attend, ma'am.  
 6 Q. Were you told why he didn't come, having been initially  
 7 told he was coming and then he didn't arrive?  
 8 A. No, I was not informed, ma'am, no.  
 9 Q. You then tell us that a short time later, Assistant  
 10 Chief Officer Harris arrived, and attempted to carry out  
 11 a hot debrief, and you say this:  
 12 "The briefing quickly deteriorated into an  
 13 uncontrolled mess."  
 14 A. Yes, ma'am. It was a free-for-all.  
 15 Q. Can you be a bit clearer? I think we've got an idea why  
 16 it was a free-for-all, but in your words explain what  
 17 you experienced at that time, please.  
 18 A. Well, there was obviously a big circle around  
 19 ACFO Harris. It clearly became obvious that he didn't  
 20 either have any information or want to communicate any  
 21 information at that point, and with his lack of  
 22 information then, it just gave more opportunity for all  
 23 the firefighters and some paramedics, probably, to vent  
 24 their anger and frustration at the way that the incident  
 25 had been run. I personally stayed silent with my head

1 bowed and said nothing.  
 2 Q. Can I just be clear as to what you say in your witness  
 3 statement. You indicate this:  
 4 "ACO Harris was unable to give any clear answers as  
 5 he stated he had not been in the control room where the  
 6 decisions had been made."  
 7 Pausing there, are you clear that at that time  
 8 ACFO Harris told you he had not been in the control  
 9 room?  
 10 A. That is correct, ma'am, yes.  
 11 Q. You've described how you stood and listened with your  
 12 head bowed and again you in your witness statement use  
 13 the same phrase, effectively, for a third occasion:  
 14 "I still felt no impetus towards the events of the  
 15 whole evening."  
 16 So using that description again for the third time  
 17 for this moment what do you mean by that statement,  
 18 please, Mr Helmrich?  
 19 A. From start to finish, the only person who had any  
 20 urgency for this incident was Watch Manager Simister and  
 21 he held that throughout the evening. None of the  
 22 officers who had any other control of the incident  
 23 demonstrated that me that they were desperate to get  
 24 down to the incident. It left me with no impetus that  
 25 at any point I was going to be attending the incident,

1 and by the time we get back in the early hours of the  
 2 morning, just through fatigue, not much left to offer.  
 3 Q. Thank you. You also describe that --  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are you okay to carry on?  
 5 A. Yes, sir.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 7 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Helmrich, I just have one last question  
 8 for this 4 am debrief and then I'm moving on to the  
 9 debrief in July, and if you want a break at any point,  
 10 please just indicate and we can take a short break.  
 11 A. Okay, that's fine. Thank you.  
 12 Q. You finally say this about that hot debrief, that you  
 13 were approached by Mr Levy at that time, who stated to  
 14 you that he had tried his best.  
 15 A. That is correct, ma'am, yes.  
 16 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, I have two very short topics left.  
 17 I don't know whether Mr Helmrich would like a short  
 18 break.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think we will take a 10-minute break.  
 20 I understand your distress well. It's important that  
 21 you are able to listen to the questions and give proper  
 22 answers. If you have a 10-minute break, maybe that will  
 23 be easier to do.  
 24 A. Yes, that's fine, thank you very much.  
 25 MS CARTWRIGHT: If it assists, Mr Helmrich, I'm only briefly

1 now going to deal with the debrief on 12 July 2017 and  
 2 I suspect that will probably give Mr Helmrich's views as  
 3 to the incident — he's already dealt with it, so  
 4 I envisage I'll be no more than about 6 or 7 minutes  
 5 now.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll be back in 10 minutes.  
 7 (12.14 pm)  
 8 (A short break)  
 9 (12.27 pm)  
 10 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, sir.  
 11 Mr Helmrich, if you could put your camera on again,  
 12 please.  
 13 A. Okay, ma'am?  
 14 Q. I can't quite see at the moment. Thank you.  
 15 Are you all right to continue, Mr Helmrich?  
 16 A. I am, thank you.  
 17 Q. Thank you very much.  
 18 I'm going to take you now, please, to an email that  
 19 you sent on 28 May 2017.  
 20 Mr Lopez, if we could display {INQ004201/3}, please.  
 21 If you could perhaps expand it a little bit more so  
 22 we can see the email that's at 02.01 on 28 May 2017.  
 23 Mr Helmrich, have you had an opportunity to review  
 24 this email exchange before today?  
 25 A. I have, yes, ma'am.

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1 Q. I'm not going to go through the document to identify how  
 2 your email came about, but is it right that the day  
 3 before Assistant Fire Officer Keelan had contacted those  
 4 involved in the response to complete the AMS tool that  
 5 would feed into an operational debrief?  
 6 A. That's correct.  
 7 Q. Can you explain, what is the AMS tool, please?  
 8 A. It's a tool that you can use as part of the operational  
 9 system where you can put your viewpoint across, then  
 10 gather centrally for further dissemination.  
 11 Q. I think it was because of the request to use that sort  
 12 of online portal to give your feedback, which resulted  
 13 in you sending this email the day later; is that  
 14 correct?  
 15 A. That is correct, yes.  
 16 Q. Would it be fair to say what you wanted to say at that  
 17 time is captured in this email?  
 18 A. It would, yes.  
 19 Q. So I'm going to read it and then just ask you one  
 20 question, please. We can see who was included in that  
 21 email that you sent on 28 May, you say this:  
 22 "Hello, sir. I would like to reiterate that  
 23 I understand the requirement to complete an operational  
 24 debrief when all the necessary early information is  
 25 gathered. However, the firefighters are entitled to

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1 a hot debrief, as encouraged on all of us to take place,  
 2 to discuss what we went and what didn't go so well. The  
 3 information is still fresh in the mind and has nothing  
 4 to do with any other organisation at this stage.  
 5 "This particular incident, although the most  
 6 significant in our history as an organisation, is no  
 7 different than any other in terms of how we deal with  
 8 issues. The officers who were involved should all  
 9 attend and inform everybody of the decisions that were  
 10 made, why they were made, and who made them. Any  
 11 individual who takes a supervisory role must that the  
 12 responsibility which goes hand in hand.  
 13 "The AMS tool is irrelevant at this stage. We need  
 14 to talk face to face to move forward. I say again, this  
 15 is classed a hot debrief and I believe that honesty is  
 16 the best policy. For every day the firefighters are  
 17 left without resolution, you are not looking at our  
 18 welfare in the present moment or in the future.  
 19 "We have been here before, less than 4 years ago.  
 20 There is no reason that this cannot be achieved  
 21 immediately. Please give the firefighters clarity of  
 22 mind."  
 23 Mr Helmrich, can I ask just the one question, and  
 24 again I don't want to cause upset or distress to you,  
 25 but when you reference:

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1 "We have been here before, less than 4 years ago."  
 2 Mr Helmrich, were you referencing there the death of  
 3 one of your firefighters in 2013, a Mr Hunt?  
 4 A. That's correct, yes.  
 5 Q. And was that fresh in your mind at that time because his  
 6 inquest had taken place in 2016?  
 7 A. Yes, ma'am, but I would say it's always fresh in the  
 8 mind.  
 9 Q. And again, I don't mean to belittle that, Mr Helmrich,  
 10 but is it also right that following on from that  
 11 inquest, a prevention of future deaths report had been  
 12 issued by the coroner towards Greater Manchester Fire  
 13 and Rescue Service to inform areas that had been  
 14 identified as issues on that inquest?  
 15 A. That is correct, ma'am, yes.  
 16 Q. Thank you. So would you see yourself as pivotal to the  
 17 hot debrief that then took place on 12 July 2017 to  
 18 ensure that came about?  
 19 A. Yes, ma'am, yes.  
 20 Q. You'll have seen in this email exchange, and again I'm  
 21 not going to go through it —  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's hardly a hot debrief by 12 July.  
 23 MS CARTWRIGHT: Perhaps a structured debrief I should call  
 24 it rather than a hot debrief.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think that's the point being made by

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1 the witness.  
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: It is.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I also know the status of the people  
 4 to whom this document was addressed? I know it is  
 5 copied to lots of people, but the two people to whom  
 6 it's sent.  
 7 MS CARTWRIGHT: If you could confirm, is it correct that  
 8 Dave Keelan was the assistant chief fire officer at that  
 9 time?  
 10 A. He still continues in that role, ma'am, yes.  
 11 Q. But he was in that role as of the date of 28 May 2017?  
 12 A. Sorry, ma'am, yes, he was.  
 13 Q. And could you just assist the chairman in identifying  
 14 who Peter Lamb was, please?  
 15 A. Peter Lamb has since retired and is now working for the  
 16 organisation. He might have been the head of ops  
 17 assurance at that time.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It looks like they were the two people  
 19 who had something to do with the debrief which took  
 20 place in July --  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- or were running it? Thank you.  
 23 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Helmrich, you'll see that then following  
 24 on from your email, there's an email exchange between  
 25 others within the organisation. I don't want to go

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1 through the commentary because you weren't copied into  
 2 those. But Mr Argyle at page 1, please, of that same  
 3 document {INQ004201/1} -- it follows on from your  
 4 exchange, but in the email before there has also been  
 5 reference to the Mayor. Mr Argyle says this, and it is  
 6 part of the chain that follows on from your email:  
 7 "I don't think anyone will satisfy him currently.  
 8 He wants the five to seven senior officers he perceived  
 9 to have taken decisions to be lined up in front of the  
 10 five pump crews and to be grilled. He has said several  
 11 times it wouldn't be a kangaroo court (his words).  
 12 Nothing else meets his wishes."  
 13 I just want to clarify when we look at this email  
 14 because there has been reference to the Mayor in an  
 15 email before, did you at any point make reference to  
 16 a kangaroo court or requiring the five to seven senior  
 17 officers to be lined up in front of pump crews?  
 18 A. Mr Argyle visited the station a week after the arena and  
 19 we did discuss this matter. If that's a reference to  
 20 me, I'll probably accept it, to be honest. It wouldn't  
 21 be a kangaroo court, I just wanted the truth.  
 22 Q. I just wanted to clarify whether that was attributed to  
 23 you or someone else. That's helpful, thank you.  
 24 Can we then move to the minutes of that debrief, the  
 25 debrief on 12 July 2017, very briefly, please. It's

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1 {INQ030902/1}.  
 2 You will have seen that there is a structured  
 3 debrief report. I'm not going to take the witness to  
 4 that. Just for your note, sir, that is {INQ004498/1}.  
 5 You'll see there captured the formal report.  
 6 Mr Helmrich, if we look at the minutes at  
 7 {INQ030902/1}. Have you had an opportunity to review  
 8 these before today?  
 9 A. I have, yes.  
 10 Q. Thank you. Mr Lopez, if we could display page 1 of the  
 11 document, please {INQ030902/1}.  
 12 The chairman will see that there is reference to  
 13 a PowerPoint and, again, I think as part of your  
 14 evidence proposal, a PowerPoint timeline for the debrief  
 15 was provided, which is, sir, for your note,  
 16 {INQ004501/1}.  
 17 Was that presentation given then before essentially  
 18 the floor was opened up?  
 19 A. That's correct, yes.  
 20 Q. We can see then at page 1, almost the first contributor  
 21 to that debrief or the discussion that was taking place  
 22 at the Hive at Lever Street in Manchester was you. And  
 23 what you wanted to know in the first question that was  
 24 posed is:  
 25 "Who was the initial NILO?"

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1 And we can see later on in the document, perhaps  
 2 if we just move forward to that now, please, at  
 3 {INQ030902/4}. I'm not going to read it, but again we  
 4 can see on page 4 you were asking lots of questions  
 5 about who the NILO was and whether the NILO needed to go  
 6 to Bronze or to the rendezvous point.  
 7 Mr Helmrich, why was it important to you at that  
 8 time to understand what the role of the NILO was and  
 9 what the policy said about the role of the NILO?  
 10 A. What I was trying to do was clarify who the original  
 11 incident commander was and get them to admit it.  
 12 Q. Why was that?  
 13 A. Simply because the incident commander has overall  
 14 responsibility for how the incident runs at that  
 15 particular time until they are superseded by a different  
 16 incident commander. You have to take responsibility.  
 17 You can't just take the money and take the rank and the  
 18 role: you have to understand the responsibility that  
 19 goes with it. There's too many occasions, in my  
 20 opinion, that certain individuals do not like the  
 21 responsibility.  
 22 Q. Did you identify then that that individual was Mr Berry  
 23 during the meeting?  
 24 A. I wouldn't say that I did identify that Mr Berry was the  
 25 incident commander. It was only by really experience

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1 and gut instinct that he probably was the  
 2 incident commander. He didn't actually say in so many  
 3 words.  
 4 Q. Can I ask, as well, if we look at page 10 of that  
 5 document {INQ030902/10}, we can see that in advance of  
 6 that meeting you'd obviously interrogated a system  
 7 called Modas because you'd actually looked to see where  
 8 Mr Berry had been at a particular time and you'd  
 9 identified from looking at that that he'd been near to  
 10 Chester. Why had you checked that system to see where  
 11 Mr Berry had been on the night?  
 12 A. Initially it wasn't me who checked the system because  
 13 there are other firefighters who are sharper than me at  
 14 completing technological tasks. I was shown it and  
 15 I have a good understanding of Greater Manchester and  
 16 the surrounding area, so I was able to interpret the  
 17 route he took as the incident commander from his initial  
 18 point to his rendezvous point that he had chosen.  
 19 Q. Then we can move, please, to {INQ030902/21}.  
 20 Mr Helmrich, can I ask you this, because again this  
 21 feeds into the final topic, which I indicated at the  
 22 outset I was going to deal with in terms of what went  
 23 wrong or what the issues were. In your witness  
 24 statement you said this, and it seems to be captured  
 25 also by what was in the meeting on 12 July:

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1 "I believe that the mobilisation of crews by the  
 2 policy that night was correct, but the policy itself is  
 3 incorrect."  
 4 Pausing there, we see at page 21 of the meeting of  
 5 12 July, again it has not been accurately transcribed  
 6 but I think we get the flavour of what you said on  
 7 12 July:  
 8 "What is clear is we all start off at the bottom and  
 9 if [we] want to work our way up, we all take risks. We  
 10 have heard lots of policies and not one of us got  
 11 ourselves in there and helped regardless of [what the]  
 12 Plato incident command mantra is."  
 13 And it seems then to be a quote:  
 14 "'In a highly calculated way, firefighters will take  
 15 some risks to save saveable lives, may take some risks  
 16 to save saveable property, will not take any risk at all  
 17 to try to save lives or properties that are already  
 18 lost.'  
 19 "We are all commanded by policy and procedure. Not  
 20 one person in this room has taken charge of this  
 21 incident we see wearing a uniform..."  
 22 Is this almost reflecting what you were saying in  
 23 your witness statement to us, Mr Helmrich?  
 24 A. It is, ma'am, yes.  
 25 Q. In your own words now can you explain what your concern

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1 was, please?  
 2 A. Yes, ma'am. Whenever policies and procedures are  
 3 written down, the bottom line for all the emergency  
 4 responders, in my opinion, not just the Fire Service, is  
 5 the incident command philosophy and that was always  
 6 drummed into us. I have always known about it since the  
 7 day I joined the Fire Service and was taught the job, as  
 8 it is now written down in that format, and to me it's an  
 9 unambiguous three sentences that we will take some risk  
 10 to save saveable life, we may take some risk to save  
 11 saveable property, but we will not take any risk at all  
 12 to save life or property which is already lost.  
 13 So the bottom line is: if your policy or procedure  
 14 isn't working or communications break down or any other  
 15 reason, we have to be looking at each other to say,  
 16 holds on a sec, things aren't going well here, we're  
 17 going to have to get stuck in and take some risk on the  
 18 absolute basis that that is our job, that we have to  
 19 take some risks to save some saveable lives. And on  
 20 this occasion I don't recall any person putting that  
 21 plan into operation.  
 22 Q. Are you able to assist us from your perspective about  
 23 what caused that to happen?  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, I just want to say, I only want  
 25 you to answer this if you feel able to do that. Okay?

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1 A. I think I am able to do it, sir.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fine, you carry on, absolutely.  
 3 A. All our firefighters and incident commanders are totally  
 4 inundated with many policies and procedures, and  
 5 underneath those policies and procedures there is some  
 6 (inaudible: distorted) that is maintained on the  
 7 incident ground, that if you don't get things right by  
 8 the policy, then there is somebody in the background who  
 9 manages to pick a few holes to let you know about it,  
 10 whether it's by surreptitious emails or phone calls, and  
 11 I think this has been going on since 2006. I don't  
 12 think anyone's taken it on and it's left lots of  
 13 incident commanders in a position where they can't see  
 14 what's absolutely right in front of them.  
 15 So if you turn up to a road traffic collision, for  
 16 example, there is someone to do a snatch rescue on,  
 17 those with less experience or those who are desiring of  
 18 advancement, will start to put policies and procedures  
 19 in place and not do the snatch rescue.  
 20 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you. Sir, that concludes my questions  
 21 for this witness. Do you have anything you require  
 22 clarity on before we turn to the core participants?  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, thank you.  
 24 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Helmrich, there are a number of questions  
 25 that the core participants have indicated they may wish

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1 to deal with. I am going to turn to those now but it  
2 may be it will become slightly more difficult again also  
3 as they are also on the video link as well. So if you  
4 bear with us again, please.

5 I'm going to turn first of all to Mr Smith  
6 Queen's Counsel on behalf of North West Fire Control and  
7 ask that he now asks his questions, please.

8 Questions from MR SMITH

9 MR SMITH: Thank you.

10 Mr Helmrich, I would like to ask you about one  
11 matter only. That is the content of the call that you  
12 received from North West Fire Control at 22.45 on the  
13 night of 22 May.

14 When you made your statement to Greater Manchester  
15 Police, you said in your statement that North West Fire  
16 Control told you that three further appliances had been  
17 mobilised to G18 as there had been a shooting incident  
18 at the Manchester Arena. Do you remember saying that?

19 A. I do, sir, yes.

20 Q. It may be that there's a clear explanation for this, but  
21 having listened this morning to the audio of that call,  
22 do you accept that North West Fire Control informed you  
23 that there were reports of an explosion and gunshot  
24 wounds at the Manchester Evening News Arena?

25 A. Sir, could you clarify whether this is the first

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1 telephone call, because I've already had to state that  
2 I wasn't in receipt of the telephone call, the second  
3 one, which was received by Firefighter Todd.

4 Q. It's my understanding that you received the first  
5 telephone call and at that point you were about to call  
6 North West Fire Control to say that the appliance could  
7 be back on the run; is that correct?

8 A. That is correct, yes.

9 Q. So it's that call that I'm asking you about.

10 A. Okay, that's fine, sir, yes.

11 Q. May I just quote from the transcript so that we're all  
12 clear about it. 22.45.07, North West Fire Control said  
13 to you:

14 "We've got reports of an explosion and gunshot  
15 wounds in Manchester at the Manchester Evening News  
16 Arena."

17 And then went on to give you information about the  
18 duty NILO and the fact that pumps were being mobilised  
19 to Philips Park, to your station. Does that help you to  
20 remember where we are?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. My question to you is: when you made this statement to  
23 Greater Manchester Police, did you have an opportunity  
24 of seeing this transcript and listening to that audio at  
25 that time?

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1 A. I didn't, sir, no. I've only listened to the audio very  
2 recently.

3 Q. So do you accept that it's clear that North West Fire  
4 Control did inform you in the course of that call that  
5 there had been an explosion and gunshot wounds?

6 A. It's in the transcript, it's clear, sir, yes.

7 Q. The second call was taken or answered by  
8 Firefighter Todd; is that correct?

9 A. That's correct, yes.

10 Q. And you have explained that after you received the call  
11 from North West Fire Control, you summoned the crew to  
12 your office and gave them the information that you'd  
13 received; is that correct?

14 A. Incorrect, sir. I asked the crew to come down to the  
15 office after the first telephone call.

16 Q. So after that first call, the crew come to the office;  
17 is that correct?

18 A. Correct, sir, yes.

19 Q. And did you then say to the crew what you'd been told by  
20 North West Fire Control?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Was Mr Todd present in the office when you gave that  
23 information?

24 A. He was, yes.

25 Q. So are you able to help about why Mr Todd, when he

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1 received the second call from North West Fire Control,  
2 22.52, appeared to be unaware that there had been an  
3 explosion?

4 A. I think, sir, what's happened is I've just made a quick  
5 précis of the original call from control, perhaps  
6 ascertaining the salient points for my own mind and then  
7 passed those on to the crew. I accept that it was said  
8 in the original phone call, but, in my opinion, it was  
9 just a précis of that call.

10 MR SMITH: Mr Helmrich, that's all I wanted clarification  
11 in relation to. Thank you.

12 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, next can we ask Mr Cooper,  
13 Queen's Counsel, to ask his questions, please.

14 Questions from MR COOPER

15 MR COOPER: Thank you.

16 Mr Helmrich, as you have probably gathered, I ask  
17 questions on behalf of the bereaved families in this  
18 inquiry. I want to go back to one observation you made  
19 just at the end of questions from CTI when you were  
20 developing your opinion on incident commanders that  
21 can't see what's right in front of them. You made the  
22 reference:

23 "This could be through lack of experience or those  
24 that are desirous of advancement."

25 What did you mean by desirous of advancement?

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1 A. I would say, sir, that there is certain pressure placed  
 2 on individuals if they don't abide by the policy and  
 3 procedure as it's written down, they could come under  
 4 some scrutiny which may affect their long-term  
 5 ambitions. A more experienced incident commander may be  
 6 able to step outside the policy and deal with an  
 7 incident because they're not looking for that  
 8 opportunity.  
 9 Q. Who in your view puts that pressure on them?  
 10 A. I think that's been an organisational issue since 2006.  
 11 Q. Who drives that organisational position? If not a name,  
 12 give us some idea, if you can, so we can make further  
 13 enquiries on this issue, if the chair feels it's  
 14 appropriate, as to who it is who perhaps drives this  
 15 approach or what position drives this approach.  
 16 A. I would just say it's within the management  
 17 responsibility, sir.  
 18 Q. So your evidence is that management, as it were, can put  
 19 pressure upon incident commanders particularly to adhere  
 20 to policy and procedure and, if they don't, the  
 21 indication given to them is that it may affect their  
 22 advancement. Do I understand that correctly?  
 23 A. I think you do understand that correctly, yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, give me a moment while I just  
 25 explore that a bit more.

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1 Mr Helmrich, there are obviously going to be rules  
 2 and regulations and policies. You'd accept that that is  
 3 bound to happen?  
 4 A. Yes, sir.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The issue, and where you diverge from,  
 6 maybe we'll hear, the position of the organisation  
 7 is that in any situation where everything can be so  
 8 varied and things can happen so quickly, you say the  
 9 incident commander should have and be accepted to have  
 10 a measure of discretion so that he or she can act in  
 11 what he or she considers the appropriate way at the  
 12 time? Is that right?  
 13 A. That is what I'm saying, sir, yes.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Where you diverge, I think, is by saying  
 15 there are some people who are less willing than others  
 16 to exercise a discretion or think outside the box or  
 17 just do what they think is the right thing in that  
 18 particular emergency? Is that a correct summary of what  
 19 you're saying?  
 20 A. There's certainly something in individual personalities,  
 21 sir, but it's much more likely to occur for those with  
 22 less experience or those who will think that their  
 23 careers may be compromised by not taking operational  
 24 discretion, as it was called before by Crew Manager  
 25 Mottram.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. So your complaint is, and I'm  
 2 putting that -- that's not put in an offensive way or  
 3 anything like that -- your recommendation would be that  
 4 the administration, the organisation itself, the Fire  
 5 Service, should be much readier to accept that exercise  
 6 of discretion is something that should happen in an  
 7 emergency in appropriate circumstances?  
 8 A. Yes, sir. If the county fire officer, as the head of  
 9 our organisation and the top of the pyramid, is able to  
 10 reintroduce the incident command philosophy, that then  
 11 opens up that automatic discretion for  
 12 incident commanders. And on the back of that, I would  
 13 hope that he would be able to assist his firefighters  
 14 and incident commanders to understand that they will be  
 15 supported through their decision-making process, not  
 16 potentially hauled over the coals for not completing the  
 17 task within the policy.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. That's very helpful,  
 19 Mr Helmrich.  
 20 MR COOPER: Following on from that, you put it, as  
 21 I understand it, as a more positive position being taken  
 22 by management, that it is an indication implicitly or  
 23 explicitly given that if you do not adhere to policy and  
 24 procedure, your possibility of advancement will be  
 25 damaged. So my question isn't so much -- it develops

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1 the chair's question. My question takes it further: is  
 2 it your position that there is an ethos, effectively,  
 3 within management of the Fire Service, understood by  
 4 those at the ground level, that if they do not follow  
 5 policy and procedure then their position of advancement  
 6 will be damaged?  
 7 A. Ethos is the wrong word, sir. I don't think it's  
 8 something that's diverged from the top on purpose. It's  
 9 a personality issue so that there is some conscious  
 10 perception that if you don't do things in the correct  
 11 manner it could affect your long-term ambitions.  
 12 Q. And then perhaps then management should make it clearer  
 13 and be explicit that any such perception is wrong;  
 14 do you say that?  
 15 A. Absolutely, sir, and that's why I say the reintroduction  
 16 of the incident command philosophy, backed up by a clear  
 17 statement from the county fire officer, should allow all  
 18 his officers and incident commanders to be under less  
 19 pressure to perform their difficult tasks to the best of  
 20 their ability at any given time.  
 21 Q. You mentioned the year 2006, "All this was since 2006".  
 22 What happened in 2006, if you can just tell us what the  
 23 genesis of all this was?  
 24 A. In December 2005, I was a sub-officer at Rochdale  
 25 Fire Station on White Watch. In January 2006, I was

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1 then promoted to watch manager at Amber Watch at  
 2 Philips Park. It soon became clear that there were huge  
 3 changes in Greater Manchester Fire Service at that  
 4 particular time due to the modernisation programme post  
 5 industrial action. And I would say, in the intervening  
 6 years, particularly between 2006 and possibly 2010, we  
 7 had changed from being autocratic on the fire ground and  
 8 democratic on the fire station to being authoritarian on  
 9 the fire ground and authoritarian on the fire station.  
 10 Q. Is that a position that existed on 22 May 2017,  
 11 autocratic across the piece?  
 12 A. We are always autocratic on the fire ground, sir. I'm  
 13 saying authoritarian was the --  
 14 Q. Forgive me. What do you mean by authoritarian in the  
 15 fire station, as it were?  
 16 A. Everything was -- because of the modernisation programme  
 17 and the things that were being pushed through, there was  
 18 too much threat around the watches at that particular  
 19 time. It was a huge, steep learning curve for all the  
 20 watches at that particular time. They were very  
 21 difficult circumstances to work under.  
 22 Q. This modernisation programme, how did it come about,  
 23 very briefly? Was this as a result of the industrial  
 24 issues in 2006?  
 25 A. Yes, there was the initial industrial action around

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1 firefighter pay in the early 2000s. The conciliation  
 2 between the FBU and the Government was to implement an  
 3 improvement programme or a modernisation programme, and  
 4 within that we had to cope with massive change over  
 5 a very short period of time.  
 6 Q. I would like to take you on this same point, dealing  
 7 with operational issues, to the debrief of  
 8 {INQ030902/21}. It's something you said I just wanted  
 9 you to clarify.  
 10 A. Yes, sir.  
 11 Q. That's page 21, if it can be brought up.  
 12 Right in the middle of that page, you say this:  
 13 "We are expected to make a decision so I want you to  
 14 tell me to get stuck in if it results in something else.  
 15 Grenfell has just shown that we have to against (sic)  
 16 policy sometimes."  
 17 You say:  
 18 "We are expected to make a decision so I want you to  
 19 tell me to get stuck in if it results in something else.  
 20 Grenfell has just shown that we have to against policy  
 21 sometimes."  
 22 I presume you mean have to go against policy  
 23 sometimes?  
 24 A. Yes, sir. It just really reiterates those three  
 25 statements further up the page. If the policy goes

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1 wrong and communications fall, we have to have  
 2 a fallback and that is we will take some risk to save  
 3 saveable life. That's the bit I think we were missing  
 4 at the arena.  
 5 Q. Are you perhaps drawing the direct analogy between the  
 6 failings perhaps of the reaction of the Fire Service at  
 7 Grenfell to a similar sort of issue in Manchester?  
 8 A. Absolutely not, sir. Those are two totally separate  
 9 incidents and I cannot in any way, shape or form comment  
 10 on the Grenfell.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Unless I really have to, Mr Cooper,  
 12 I would prefer not to get into details about Grenfell as  
 13 well. I know very little about it and it is a huge  
 14 topic, I am aware.  
 15 MR COOPER: It is. The only reason I raised it was that  
 16 reference, sir, and I only wanted to explore it and  
 17 I have done so now.  
 18 I want to ask you about another matter now, a little  
 19 more about your training, Mr Helmrich. Did you receive  
 20 any JESIP training? I'm talking about prior to the  
 21 arena atrocity.  
 22 A. The only JESIP training I can recall is watch-based  
 23 training, which I did with my own watch. If there was  
 24 any other training, I'm unable to recall it, sir.  
 25 Q. Any MTF A training or learning?

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1 A. I can't recall at this stage, sir, no.  
 2 Q. Were you given any training, for instance, as to how to  
 3 apply tourniquets most effectively?  
 4 A. Yes, sir, by the trauma technician on my watch.  
 5 Q. When did you receive that training in relation to  
 6 22 May 2017 approximately?  
 7 A. Without looking at my training records, it'd probably be  
 8 fairly close because that particular topic was covered  
 9 on a bi-monthly basis.  
 10 Q. Thank you. Can I take you, please, still in the same  
 11 document, to {INQ030902/11}. What I want to ask you  
 12 about here on page 11 is this -- let's go towards the  
 13 middle of it. You see the reference there, Carlos makes  
 14 the reference to Modas, and you've been asked about that  
 15 by my learned friend from CTI.  
 16 I want to take you a little further down, because  
 17 this its the meeting you were at, where Todd asks:  
 18 "How many were in North West Fire Control that  
 19 night?"  
 20 And someone called Janine says:  
 21 "One new person, six operators, two team leader and  
 22 myself."  
 23 And Todd says:  
 24 "I'm asking and it's not really the time, I've asked  
 25 a number of times for the information to be informed and

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1 just to have these people seems to be wholly  
 2 understaffed. There are only so many phones and  
 3 computers. I can't help thinking it would be better  
 4 with more staff."  
 5 I'll read on for context. Peter says:  
 6 "How many calls did you take on the incident?"  
 7 And Janine says:  
 8 "Greater Manchester Police calls, NWAS calls, and  
 9 one call from a member of the public that should have  
 10 gone to NWAS. Wasn't that bad for this type of  
 11 incident. We did get stuff that didn't help, like  
 12 Scotland control ringing for information."  
 13 Did you get the impression yourself that  
 14 North West Fire Control was understaffed?  
 15 A. No, I did not, sir.  
 16 Q. So as far as that observation is concerned, it is not  
 17 something you can assist us with from your personal  
 18 knowledge?  
 19 A. No, it's not.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, he had two calls and I'm not  
 21 sure he'd be in a position to know either way. He had  
 22 one call, someone else took the other call. Perhaps  
 23 he is not the best man to ask that.  
 24 MR COOPER: I will move on.  
 25 You have used the word impetus on a number of

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1 occasions in the course of your evidence, Mr Helmrich.  
 2 I want you to explain to us what you mean by impetus.  
 3 We get the feel for what you're saying, that you had no  
 4 impetus, but explain what you meant by that. Are you  
 5 saying you had no sense of urgency, no sense of being  
 6 directed? What do you mean by impetus?  
 7 A. In normal circumstances, if you're mobilised to an  
 8 incident from your station, the lights go, the bells go,  
 9 the printer moves, you get on the fire engine, you know  
 10 what you're attending, you've got a lot of impetus,  
 11 a lot of urgency, and you're working out exactly how  
 12 you're going to deal with the incident, 99% of the time  
 13 before you even get there, just through experience  
 14 generally.  
 15 For this particular incident, we didn't get any  
 16 impetus or urgency from any of the officers that were in  
 17 attendance.  
 18 I state again that the only person who had real  
 19 impetus and urgency was Watch Manager Simister and  
 20 I would say that that's because he had actually  
 21 understood from early doors what the incident was about  
 22 and he had actually got his fire gear on and turned out  
 23 from his station. Unfortunately, in his opinion, not to  
 24 the arena but to Philips Park. From my perspective,  
 25 nobody told me: right, we're getting ready to go, get

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1 your gear on, we are going, we'll be there soon. That  
 2 was never, ever given.  
 3 Q. So when you tell us in your evidence:  
 4 "I still felt no impetus towards the events for the  
 5 whole evening."  
 6 The responsibility for giving you and your  
 7 colleagues that impetus, is that again the leadership  
 8 who should be actually instilling that there is an  
 9 impetus in this operation?  
 10 A. Correct, sir. If I was in charge of any incident, if  
 11 things weren't going my way and I wasn't getting any  
 12 resolution, my firefighters would be left in no  
 13 uncertain terms of what I required from them.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the impetus comes from someone  
 15 telling the firefighters, "We are going"?  
 16 A. Correct, sir.  
 17 MR COOPER: It's called leadership, would you agree?  
 18 A. Could you repeat that, please, sir?  
 19 Q. That's called leadership, isn't it, that sort of thing  
 20 that the chair refers to? Giving direction, giving  
 21 resolve, giving confidence? Leadership?  
 22 A. I would agree with that, yes.  
 23 Q. And that was sorely lacking on the night, wasn't it?  
 24 A. Yes, sir.  
 25 Q. I want to deal, if I can very shortly, with the debrief

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1 again, not going over old ground, I emphasise. I think  
 2 we've established that the debrief on the night lasted  
 3 only about 15 minutes. That's right, isn't it?  
 4 A. Yes, sir.  
 5 Q. Thank you. You've been asked about ACO Harris. There's  
 6 no need for me to go into that with you. But I do want  
 7 to take you back to those emails that my learned friend  
 8 took you to, please, but by a different route because  
 9 I want to follow through the thread of them. I would  
 10 like us, please, to go to {INQ004197/1}.  
 11 This document contains, if we scroll down to perhaps  
 12 page 5 {INQ004197/5} of your email. I think it's the  
 13 same email that we have just been referred to. You see  
 14 the document there from you, Mr Helmrich, an email sent  
 15 on 28 May. That is the email, I think, that my learned  
 16 friend has referred you to.  
 17 I want to take you on from that, please, so you can  
 18 see how matters developed, and although as my learned  
 19 friend says you were not — well, I'm just checking.  
 20 You were not party to that. I do want to ask you to  
 21 respond, please, now, because it was you actually who  
 22 initiated this thread that developed. You sent your  
 23 email, which my learned friend has referred to, and  
 24 let's see how it was dealt with.  
 25 There we have a response from someone called Mick,

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1 as we scroll up, if we can:  
 2 "I agree entirely with Neil, but to also include in  
 3 the hot debrief personnel and appliances, ie TRU, who  
 4 were available and not mobilised. I have completed  
 5 an AMS from TRU perspective and would appreciate any  
 6 inclusion in the debrief."  
 7 Do you agree with that response to your email?  
 8 A. I agree with it, yes.  
 9 Q. And Mick is who? Mick Bloomfield. Who is  
 10 Mick Bloomfield?  
 11 A. Watch Manager Bloomfield was in charge of the TRU  
 12 specialist unit at OS Station prior to his  
 13 retirement.  
 14 Q. Thank you. So we'll scroll up to {INQ004197/4} and  
 15 we have a Mr Ogden, crew manager --  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, sorry, can we just stop? I'm not  
 17 blaming you, Mr Helmrich, but we need to avoid saying  
 18 the location of the TRU units, please.  
 19 A. Sorry, sir.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, it's all right. You've just  
 21 inadvertently done that.  
 22 MR COOPER: I hope I didn't --  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no. This is no blame, so please,  
 24 it's just Mr Suter needs to be aware of it.  
 25 MR COOPER: I don't know it anyway because it's redacted

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1 from the document. We'll move on.  
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: The particular care we need to take is  
 3 in relation to the location of the SRT.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I thought the TRU as well. Anyway,  
 5 okay.  
 6 MR COOPER: The TRU is redacted anyway from the document  
 7 I have, sir, so I don't even know it. I'll move it.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may be that nothing wrong has been  
 9 done at all, but we'll check.  
 10 MR COOPER: John Ogden, again, developing that, 28 May:  
 11 "Hello, sir, I also agree with Neil. Crews are  
 12 suffering emotional distress from this incident and need  
 13 immediate answers to help deal with it. There are a lot  
 14 of questions that need to be answered for us all  
 15 individually and as a service to move forward. I think  
 16 the longer this takes to be resolved the harder it will  
 17 be for crews for closure."  
 18 Again you're getting a lot of support, are you not?  
 19 A. Yes, sir.  
 20 Q. And Mr Ogden is who, John Ogden?  
 21 A. It states there on the email under his name.  
 22 Q. Then Mr Simister, who we all know, comes in:  
 23 "Fully support and agree with Neil. Everyone from  
 24 watch manager and below knows what happened on that  
 25 night in terms of our response. The question is why

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1 only senior management and middle management can answer  
 2 that question. One week on and we're still hit with  
 3 a wall of silence or when the question is asked nobody  
 4 knows the answer. No one has spoken to the person or  
 5 persons who made them decisions. A hot debrief will  
 6 give some clarity and help with the process of what  
 7 happened and stop us turning ourselves inside out with  
 8 guilt. Then an operational debrief can follow."  
 9 So Mr Simister is supporting you as well; is that  
 10 correct?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. And now we get to Bob Walker, watch manager:  
 13 "I too throw my support behind all previous  
 14 correspondence in relation to this matter.  
 15 Unfortunately, with the passage of time, and with no  
 16 meaningful hot debrief taking place, people are becoming  
 17 more suspicious and frustrated with the leadership  
 18 stance in relation to this debrief taking place."  
 19 Is that right? More support for you?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. I'm doing this for a reason, when we get to the end  
 22 you'll see. Then we have Dave Keelan:  
 23 "Thanks for responding to the below emails from  
 24 those involved last Monday. Just to give you  
 25 a flavour."

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1 I should emphasise this is to someone called  
 2 Shelley Wright. Who is Shelley Wright, do you know?  
 3 A. I think at the time -- it says under her name what her  
 4 post was.  
 5 Q. You didn't know of her at the time, I presume?  
 6 A. Not personally, but I knew who she was.  
 7 Q. So you had all this support, so here is Dave Keelan,  
 8 assistant county fire officer, talking to Miss Wright.  
 9 He says this on 30 May:  
 10 "Hi. Thanks for responding to the other email.  
 11 Below emails from those involved last Monday just to  
 12 give you a flavour. We need to tell them something! In  
 13 hindsight we should have got them all together and  
 14 chatted with them on Saturday morning on their first day  
 15 back, but we didn't."  
 16 Do you see that?  
 17 A. Yes, sir.  
 18 Q. Thank you. And then this. This is where I wanted to  
 19 get to. This is the response from Shelley Wright:  
 20 "I still say if you want to do something, anything,  
 21 you have to clear it with Andy. Sarah K is up there.  
 22 She can help you with that."  
 23 So Shelley Wright, despite all the groundswell of  
 24 opinion coming from your email, says:  
 25 "I still say if you want to do something, anything,

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1 you have to clear it with Andy."  
 2 Is that Andy Berry?  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think he can possibly answer  
 4 that, can he?  
 5 MR COOPER: I don't know, sir. It may well be common  
 6 parlance that Andy in this context will be Andy Berry,  
 7 but maybe not.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It might or it might not.  
 9 A. I have no idea who that is. I have no idea, sir.  
 10 MR COOPER: All right then, thank you.  
 11 Then Shelley Wright then says this:  
 12 "A hot debrief is one thing. I think your email  
 13 suggests something more formal and akin to an  
 14 investigation. Just raise it, get cover. My best  
 15 advice."  
 16 She's director of communications and engagement,  
 17 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. She's  
 18 director of communications. Her conclusion as a result  
 19 of everything that you generated by your email is this:  
 20 "A hot debrief is one thing. I think your email  
 21 suggests something more formal and akin to an  
 22 investigation. Just raise it, get cover. My best  
 23 advice. Sarah is briefed."  
 24 I know that wasn't to you, but this was as a result  
 25 of what you said. So far as you can, do you know what

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1 she means by "Raise it, get cover"?  
 2 A. I'm afraid I don't. I wouldn't be able to interpret  
 3 what her three-line response is, sir.  
 4 Q. Is that the first time you've seen the director of  
 5 communications' response to your concerns?  
 6 A. I was only made aware of that email conversation  
 7 recently, yes.  
 8 Q. Would you accept that given the concern that you had  
 9 expressed and indeed supported by many of your  
 10 colleagues on that thread, that at the very least is  
 11 a very concerning response?  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Until we know what it means, and  
 13 Mr Helmrich said he can't help us with that, I think  
 14 it's difficult for him to make that comment. You can  
 15 make it if you like at a later stage when we know more  
 16 about it, if we need to.  
 17 MR COOPER: Sir, I shall take your lead on that.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We've all read it and we see what it  
 19 says.  
 20 MR COOPER: I have no further questions, thank you.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Cooper.  
 22 MS CARTWRIGHT: Finally, please, could I ask Ms Johnson to  
 23 ask her questions of Mr Helmrich?  
 24 MR WARNOCK: I'm sorry, sir, it's not Ms Johnson, it's me.  
 25 Sir, is I don't in fact have any questions, at least

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1 I think this is probably best dealt with by way of  
 2 clarification from me rather than a question to  
 3 Mr Helmrich. But Ms Cartwright put to Mr Helmrich that  
 4 following the Stephen Hunt inquest, the inquest into  
 5 Stephen Hunt's death, a prevention of future deaths  
 6 report was made to the Greater Manchester Fire and  
 7 Rescue Service. I don't think there will be any dispute  
 8 about this, that in fact -- and we have a copy of it,  
 9 which you can see if you'd like to. The PFD was made to  
 10 the Fire Service nationally, it was made to the Home  
 11 Secretary at the time, and to the Chief Fire Adviser  
 12 nationally but not a specific recommendation in relation  
 13 to GMFRS. I suspect Mr Helmrich probably wouldn't know  
 14 that, so I raise it by way of clarification directly to  
 15 you, sir.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'll leave you and Ms Cartwright to  
 17 argue about it, if necessary, in due course and I can be  
 18 told what the conclusion is. I think it's fair to say  
 19 from what Mr Helmrich has been saying to me, my  
 20 impression is that obviously that death was appalling  
 21 for him and others, and has obviously affected his  
 22 thinking, but it wasn't actually central to what he was  
 23 saying about what happened and what went wrong on this  
 24 particular night.  
 25 So at the moment, I don't particularly wish it to be

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1 pursued unless Mr Helmrich is going to tell me I've got  
 2 that all wrong and actually I should be taking much more  
 3 account of it.  
 4 A. No, sir, you've represented that fairly.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.  
 7 MR WARNOCK: I have no questions for Mr Helmrich.  
 8 Thank you.  
 9 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, can I thank Mr Warnock for making that  
 10 necessary clarification. What I said was that the PFD  
 11 had been issued by the coroner towards  
 12 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to inform  
 13 areas. My learned friend Mr Warnock is absolutely right  
 14 to indicate that the prevention of future deaths report  
 15 was issued against Theresa May and towards  
 16 Peter Holland, but it was provided to Greater Manchester  
 17 Fire and Rescue Service. The concerns that have been  
 18 identified that were being sent to those two people for  
 19 responses related to concerns for all fire and rescue  
 20 services, so I think perhaps I should have said  
 21 "provided" rather than "issued".  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No criticism of what you said. If you  
 23 two want to argue about it or what it actually means,  
 24 I will leave and leave it for you to do and you can tell  
 25 me the result.

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1 We're now going to adjourn until Monday morning?  
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: Yes. Could I thank Mr Helmrich, but ask  
 3 that he turns his camera off in a minute, when you have  
 4 spoken to him, but stay on the call, please, very  
 5 briefly .  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm extremely grateful to you. You have  
 7 been very clear in what you have said and you have  
 8 helped me a great deal in understanding what went on and  
 9 what may have gone wrong on this night, so thank you for  
 10 that.  
 11 A. Thank you, sir.  
 12 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, you are correct, we now ask, please, to  
 13 adjourn until 10 o'clock on Monday when we will continue  
 14 with evidence from the Fire Service and I understand the  
 15 first witness will be Mr Nolan on Monday.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just make clear to everyone we are  
 17 returning now to 4 days a week because the schools are  
 18 returning. We are in negotiations with Public Health  
 19 England to try and make a gradual increase in the  
 20 numbers and we are doing our very best to achieve that.  
 21 The meeting will not actually take place and can't take  
 22 place with Public Health England, I'm afraid, until  
 23 tomorrow.  
 24 We can't give, I'm afraid, any conclusion about  
 25 that, but you'll obviously be notified. I haven't

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1 regarded it as necessary to have another hearing about  
 2 it now. We are all aiming to get to the same place as  
 3 quickly as we can and are allowed to do that. We will  
 4 continue to do that. We all have the same interests, we  
 5 know what all of your views are, and I hope those that  
 6 have been able to come back have found it helpful to  
 7 have come back. We'll try to extend that to as many as  
 8 we can as soon as we can.  
 9 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, sir. Good afternoon.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 11 (1.21 pm)  
 12 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
 13 on Monday, 8 March 2021)  
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