

# OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 97

May 5, 2021

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Wednesday, 5 May 2021

(9.30 am)

(Delay in proceedings)

(9.39 am)

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney.

MR GREANEY: Sir, good morning. The witness for today and indeed for much of, if not all of, tomorrow is Chief Inspector Dale Sexton of Greater Manchester Police. May he be sworn, please?

CHIEF INSPECTOR DALE SEXTON (sworn)

Questions from MR GREANEY

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

A. Dale John Sexton.

Q. Are you a chief inspector with Greater Manchester Police?

A. I am a chief inspector, yes, that's correct.

Q. Do you currently work as a force critical incident manager within specialist operations?

A. That's correct.

Q. Based at the force headquarters?

A. Yes.

Q. On 22 May 2017, the night of the arena attack, were you an inspector?

A. I was.

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Q. Were you the force duty officer or FDO for Greater Manchester Police that night?

A. I was.

Q. Mr Sexton, as you'll appreciate, you have important and extensive evidence to give about the inquiry's investigation into the emergency response and that, as the chairman says, is going to take some time. So what I'm going to begin by doing, for your benefit and for others who are watching, is to set out the structure that I'll adopt in relation to your evidence just so that you and everyone else knows where I'm going.

First of all, I'm going to ask you to help us with two general points that will provide context for the balance of your evidence. Secondly, I'll ask you about your history and your experience as a police officer. Third and connectedly, I'll ask you about your training. Fourth, about the FDO role in more detail. And, fifth, I'll seek your assistance in relation to the plans and policies held by GMP in relation to a number of issues, but particularly in relation to MTFAs or Operation Plato-type situations.

All of that, I expect, will take much of if not all of the morning.

Sixth, after lunch, we'll deal with the events of 22 May, and obviously that will take considerable time.

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Seventh, probably I expect tomorrow, I'll seek your views on what went well on the night of the 22nd from your perspective as FDO and also what went not well during the course of those events.

Just one final piece of information before we embark upon your evidence proper. When we deal with the events of 22 May, we will play the recording from your dictaphone for the period from its start, which is 10.46 pm that night, until the point at which Superintendent Thompson indicates that he is taking over your role as tactical firearms commander, which he announces at 12.17 am. So we're going to listen to just over an hour and a half of that recording.

That, may I say at this stage, sir, is capable of being distressing to anyone, but particularly to the families, because there is, for example, at one stage a description by PC Richardson, the operational firearms commander, of the bomber. But in our view it is necessary to play that recording because it is the only way to make a fair judgement about the degree of pressure that you were under that night and about how you handled it. Does that make sense?

A. Yes, it does.

Q. First then, those two general points. Do you recall completing a debrief document as part of

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Operation Newtown?

A. I do, yes.

Q. In simple terms, did Operation Newtown concern the GMP initial response to the arena attack?

A. It was.

Q. I'm going to ask, please, that we have on screen the first page of that debrief questionnaire because at that point, you give a helpful description of the role of an FDO.

Mr Lopez, {INQ000781/1}.

At various stages during your evidence, I'm going to take you to this document, particularly at the very end of your evidence tomorrow, when I'll ask you to explain a number of things. Under the heading "Deployment" here, chief inspector, you have stated:

"As the force duty officer (FDO) I have responsibility for initial command and control of major critical incidents. This includes initial tactical firearms commander role with authority to deploy firearms officers to spontaneous FI type incidents."

FI being?

A. Firearms.

Q. "I am also responsible for managing day-to-day business across the force."

As you sit here now, a number of years later, does

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1 that seem to you to be an accurate description of the  
 2 role of an FDO?  
 3 A. It does to the extent in relation to command and control  
 4 of the major incident, critical incidents of firearms,  
 5 I think it's a little bit light on the day-to-day  
 6 business across the force, but it's accurate.  
 7 Q. I think what you're referring to, and we'll come on to  
 8 this in more detail in a moment, is that as the FDO, if  
 9 there is a major or critical incident, in the first  
 10 instance you will be the commander for it?  
 11 A. Mm-hm.  
 12 Q. But at the same time you are expected to manage  
 13 alongside that responsibility the other day-to-day  
 14 business of Greater Manchester Police?  
 15 A. Yes, which can be excessive -- extensive, I should say,  
 16 sorry.  
 17 Q. So I do want to ask you more about that in a moment, but  
 18 before that, do you agree that the FDO's role includes  
 19 but is certainly not, for the reason you just gave,  
 20 limited to responding to spontaneous incidents such as  
 21 the arena attack?  
 22 A. It is, yes.  
 23 Q. Do you agree that the FDO has significant authority, as  
 24 I'll describe it, to activate, deploy and command  
 25 multiple GMP resources, including armed police assets?

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1 A. That's correct, yes.  
 2 Q. And do you agree that the FDO has authority to activate  
 3 GMP's emergency plans as appropriate?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. Those plans will include the Operation Plato plan?  
 6 A. Correct.  
 7 Q. And will include the GMP major incident plan?  
 8 A. Yes. Just to qualify on that one, the major incident  
 9 plan would also be ratified by the Gold commander for  
 10 the day.  
 11 Q. So I just need at this very early stage to try and get  
 12 a clear picture of what we are here dealing with. Is it  
 13 this: in the early stages of an incident, such as the  
 14 arena attack, there will be a point at which not all of  
 15 the command structure is staffed by individuals or  
 16 where, even if they are staffed, those individuals are  
 17 not in the locations they need to be?  
 18 A. Exactly. It can take some time to get that structure in  
 19 place.  
 20 Q. So unless there's someone like the FDO in position,  
 21 there's liable to be a void?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. And into that void steps the FDO; is that a fair way of  
 24 putting it?  
 25 A. That's correct, yes.

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1 Q. Is it also reasonable to suggest that during that period  
 2 the FDO will be making decisions at a strategic level?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. At a tactical level?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. And also at an operational level?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. And where necessary, that would include decisions as to  
 9 the deployment of firearms?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. And as you'll appreciate, we're going to get into the  
 12 detail of all of this in due course, but in those  
 13 circumstances is it accurate to describe the FDO role as  
 14 demanding?  
 15 A. Yes, it is, or it can be, but it's balanced against  
 16 periods where there is more manageable demand.  
 17 Q. So there will be an ebb and flow to it?  
 18 A. Yes, very much so.  
 19 Q. But where there is a critical or major incident --  
 20 I have chosen the description "demanding" -- would  
 21 a better way of putting it be to say that it's highly  
 22 demanding in some situations?  
 23 A. Yes, it can be.  
 24 Q. Let's be entirely frank about it at this early stage:  
 25 in May 2017, was it too demanding a role in the event of

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1 an incident such as the arena attack?  
 2 A. In my opinion, when you look at the responsibilities of  
 3 the ITFC role and the force duty officer working  
 4 alongside each other, then yes, it was.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Help me about this, I missed it a bit at  
 6 the beginning: in addition to that, there's everything  
 7 else going on as well that you're still having to deal  
 8 with?  
 9 A. Yes, business as usual, sir.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can't just say, "You handle the rest  
 11 of this"?  
 12 A. No, the force is -- any incident of that type would just  
 13 involve a small area of the force. The force still goes  
 14 on as business as usual and it's difficult to then --  
 15 there is no one to hand over the FDO responsibility.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Have you been able to listen through the  
 17 recording?  
 18 A. I have.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Will we see examples of that when we  
 20 come to listen to it when you're dealing with things  
 21 which are not actually directly connected to the arena  
 22 attack or is it difficult for you to remember?  
 23 A. It's difficult to remember, sir. The majority of the  
 24 audio will be specifically around the attack. Very  
 25 quickly, certainly for an incident of this magnitude,

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1 word gets around and very quickly people around the  
 2 force realise actually we're not going to --  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You've got better things to do?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. But if there are occasions  
 6 when you are listening top them, perhaps you'll make  
 7 a note of them mentally anyway.  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 MR GREANEY: We'll come to them. I have listened to the  
 10 recording recently all the way through twice. I can't  
 11 immediately bring to mind anything that isn't specific  
 12 to the arena attack. But do we also need to bear in  
 13 mind that even though you might receive a call about the  
 14 arena attack or about the message, a message about the  
 15 attack, some of the calls and messages are about things  
 16 that we as members of the public might find surprising?  
 17 Let me give you an example: certainly at an early stage  
 18 you were repeatedly receiving calls in your FDO role  
 19 from the media.  
 20 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 21 Q. Was that something you could have done without?  
 22 A. Very much so. The format is from 6 pm until around  
 23 about 6 am, the force duty officer is the contact for  
 24 all media enquiries, that single point of contact. So  
 25 anything the media want an update on will come through

1 to the FDO. But yes, at times of major critical  
 2 incidents, and certainly the attack, then I think I make  
 3 it quite evident through the audio recordings that  
 4 I could have done without those.  
 5 Q. As you say, we're going to hear that you make it crystal  
 6 clear that you could do without that kind of  
 7 communication.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Has that changed now?  
 9 A. I don't believe it has, although I will stand corrected.  
 10 Certainly my last understanding was that that hadn't  
 11 changed. There is a duty media officer who's on duty  
 12 from 6 o'clock to 6 o'clock, but it's about being able  
 13 to contact them and getting them to either divert the  
 14 phones, because I think it's an automatic divert  
 15 possibly on the telephone system, which all takes time.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 17 MR GREANEY: We're going to hear -- and I appreciate, as  
 18 often happens, I'm getting ahead of myself -- you were  
 19 taking steps to find out where the press officer was and  
 20 get that person in position --  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. -- so that responsibility could be removed from you?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. Where I'd left you was you'd agreed that in the event of  
 25 a major incident such as the arena attack, the role of

1 the FDO was too demanding. And when you expressed that  
 2 view, should we bear in mind that in 2017, you were  
 3 a highly experienced inspector?  
 4 A. I was, yes.  
 5 Q. You were trained and experienced in the role of the FDO?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. You would have liked to have thought that you knew what  
 8 you were doing?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. In due course, as you will appreciate, what I'm going to  
 11 want to do is to consider with you whether the fact that  
 12 the role was too demanding was one that should have been  
 13 obvious to GMP long before May of 2017. In any event,  
 14 for now that's the first general point.  
 15 The second general point is your overview  
 16 in relation to the reasons for your actions on the night  
 17 of 22 May. I appreciate we haven't looked at those  
 18 actions yet, but it's important just to fix in our minds  
 19 what you were seeking to achieve. I'm in your first  
 20 witness statement and I'm at paragraph 3.  
 21 You state:  
 22 "My overall priority during this unprecedented  
 23 attack was to save life, both the lives of those already  
 24 at the arena and the lives of the emergency responders  
 25 attending."

1 Is that correct?  
 2 A. That's correct, yes.  
 3 Q. You add:  
 4 "I was very aware of the real possibility of  
 5 secondary attacks..."  
 6 And it is "attacks" in the plural:  
 7 "... and therefore my command and control throughout  
 8 the incident was based upon this risk."  
 9 Again, is that correct?  
 10 A. That's correct, yes.  
 11 Q. What type or types of secondary attacks did you have in  
 12 mind when you wrote that sentence?  
 13 A. Two clear ones: a secondary explosive device left at the  
 14 scene and also an MTFA, so marauding terrorist firearms  
 15 attack, was a strong possibility.  
 16 Q. So those two types of attack. Were you concerned about  
 17 either/or both of them throughout, let's take the first  
 18 hour and a half, or only for some of that period?  
 19 A. For the majority of that period. Certainly the firearms  
 20 risk was continuous.  
 21 Q. The paragraph to which I have drawn your attention  
 22 continues:  
 23 "To me, the constant change in information indicated  
 24 a continued high risk of further attack."  
 25 Again, is that correct?

1 A. That's correct, yes.  
 2 Q. "In reality, there was only one horrific incident, the  
 3 explosion. However, the developing picture on the night  
 4 indicated a continued high risk further attacks."  
 5 A. That's correct.  
 6 Q. When you wrote that sentence, what did you have in mind?  
 7 A. As the picture was starting to unravel, I was very much  
 8 in mind of the 2015 attacks in Paris, at the stadium and  
 9 in Bataclan, where explosions took place, and then MTFA  
 10 firearms attacks took place as well, so it was very much  
 11 part of my thinking.  
 12 The information that was coming in on the night was  
 13 very bitty, it did allude to explosions, and through  
 14 previous training courses it's an acceptable  
 15 understanding that if you have one explosion there's  
 16 always potential for a secondary device to catch  
 17 emergency responders at the scene or further people.  
 18 Plus the fact that there'd been reports of injuries,  
 19 which were consistent with gunshot wounds.  
 20 Q. When you wrote that sentence, did you also have in mind  
 21 that there was on occasion information that came in to  
 22 you of other potential suspects?  
 23 A. Yes, there was.  
 24 Q. So when we listen to the recording, should we be careful  
 25 to keep an ear open for occasions upon which you

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1 received information either about other individuals or  
 2 about other packages that were regarded as suspicious?  
 3 A. Yes, it's a thread that runs through the audio tape.  
 4 Q. The paragraph concludes:  
 5 "This significantly changed my threat assessment and  
 6 therefore my response from a post-event assessment to  
 7 a continuing dynamic threat."  
 8 What did you mean by that phrase, "to a continuing  
 9 dynamic threat"?  
 10 A. I think that the two are quite clear, that if everything  
 11 pointed to one incident, then we're post-incident, so we  
 12 then set up a major incident plan and start working  
 13 towards that, JESIP, et cetera. The dynamic side of it  
 14 was the fact that there was still an unknown threat,  
 15 supported by evidence suggesting gunshot wounds, the  
 16 offender location was not known, there were still 14,000  
 17 people inside the arena. Therefore, as far as I was  
 18 concerned, I was treating this as an ongoing incident as  
 19 far as the ongoing threat was concerned.  
 20 Q. In terms of deciding what the force's response to the  
 21 threat should be, obviously you need to establish, so  
 22 far as you can, what that threat is; is that correct?  
 23 A. That's right.  
 24 Q. And to establish the extent of the threat?  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Does it mean therefore that it's important that you  
 2 should obtain as much accurate information about the  
 3 threat as possible?  
 4 A. It does, yes.  
 5 Q. And from as many reliable sources as possible?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And obviously, those sources may be police officers.  
 8 Would it be fair to say that they may also be  
 9 representatives of other emergency services?  
 10 A. Yes, and also the public.  
 11 Q. And also the public. That deals with the second general  
 12 point that I wanted to ask you about and I hope those  
 13 two points give you some context about what you're going  
 14 to tell us about in due course.  
 15 The second topic, as I indicated, was your history  
 16 and experience. Did you join Greater Manchester Police  
 17 on 14 January 1991?  
 18 A. I did.  
 19 Q. So that you now have 30 years of service?  
 20 A. Just over, yes.  
 21 Q. During the course of your service, did you mainly work  
 22 as a uniformed officer on shifts?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. Predominantly working from within the Rochdale division?  
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. In 1998 were you promoted to the rank of sergeant?  
 2 A. I was.  
 3 Q. At that time, did you move to a particular location?  
 4 A. I did.  
 5 Q. Where did you move to?  
 6 A. Into the city centre, A Division, as it was known back  
 7 then, which was working from Grey Mare Lane, Collyhurst,  
 8 Bootle Street --  
 9 Q. Did you undertake your inspector's promotion exams in  
 10 2001?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. And shortly afterwards, were you promoted to the rank of  
 13 inspector?  
 14 A. I was.  
 15 Q. On promotion, to where did you move?  
 16 A. Back to Rochdale, Middleton specifically.  
 17 Q. Into what role?  
 18 A. Into a response inspector role, which is 24/7.  
 19 Q. Did you undertake that role for about 12 months,  
 20 becoming the neighbourhood inspector for the Pennines  
 21 district of GMP?  
 22 A. Yes, I did.  
 23 Q. Did you then undertake that role for about 3 years?  
 24 A. That's correct.  
 25 Q. We've heard a number of times about the concept of

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1 neighbourhood policing, but at the time that you took on  
 2 that role, was neighbourhood policing in its early  
 3 stages?  
 4 A. Very much its infancy, yes.  
 5 Q. In that role, for what were you responsible?  
 6 A. Pretty much running a small part of the Rochdale  
 7 division as its own mini subdivision. I had  
 8 responsibility for response officers, neighbourhood  
 9 officers or area officers as they were called then,  
 10 traffic, dogs, CID, all within the area of the Pennines.  
 11 Q. So would it be fair to describe you as a sort of  
 12 sub-commander for a subdivision?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Thereafter, did you take up the role of demand  
 15 management inspector?  
 16 A. I did.  
 17 Q. What did that involve?  
 18 A. That was working directly to the divisional SLT, senior  
 19 leadership team, providing data on performance around  
 20 crime and also a secondary role to that was the staff  
 21 officer to the chief superintendent for the division.  
 22 Q. So was this something of a strategic role requiring you  
 23 to have an overview of demand across the division, not  
 24 just for a specific geographical area?  
 25 A. That's correct, yes.

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1 Q. As a result, did you gain a good insight into the  
 2 direction of the force at that time?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. The overall performance of the force?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. And how the division that you were in, Rochdale  
 7 division, featured in the overall picture?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. In 2006 or 2007, were you appointed a temporary  
 10 operational chief inspector?  
 11 A. I was, yes.  
 12 Q. Again, was that within the Rochdale division?  
 13 A. It was, yes.  
 14 Q. In that role, what were your responsibilities?  
 15 A. On the operational side, it was responsibility for all  
 16 uniformed staff within the division: from welfare,  
 17 staffing resources, performance, the list goes on.  
 18 Q. In that role, were you responsible for the planning for  
 19 the policing of any events?  
 20 A. Yes. Certainly local events such as the — any football  
 21 matches at Rochdale, responsible for that, and any  
 22 larger-scale gatherings.  
 23 Q. So without wanting to offend any fans of Rochdale  
 24 football club, they weren't at that stage a terribly  
 25 successful team, were they?

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1 A. No, but they have a very loyal following.  
 2 Q. I was going to ask you, what do you think during that  
 3 period was the biggest event that you planned to police?  
 4 A. It was actually an event between Rochdale and Bury, who  
 5 have history between fans.  
 6 Q. In late 2008, did you move to a different role?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. To what role did you move at that stage?  
 9 A. It was the operational management unit, so the operation  
 10 policing unit, OPU, manager, inspector role. The role  
 11 was responsible for having an oversight of offender  
 12 management within the division, budgeting for any  
 13 policing operations, an oversight of operations. Again,  
 14 it was similar to the management, however it was very  
 15 much more hands-on.  
 16 Q. In the course of that work, did you work as part of  
 17 a small team to the then ACC, Ian Hopkins, who in due  
 18 course became, and was until recently, chief constable?  
 19 A. Sorry, that was the next role that I took, towards the  
 20 end of 2008/2009, which was a project manager, if that's  
 21 what we're referring to, for restructure in relation to  
 22 the austerity that was hitting GMP in 2008/2009.  
 23 Q. So by now, we've reached 2008/2009 and you've had  
 24 a number of roles. Did you consider that those roles  
 25 had given you a good strategic overview of the force?

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1 A. It did, yes.  
 2 Q. In terms of demands, resources, strengths and  
 3 weaknesses?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. In particular, in relation to the management of  
 6 resources?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Would it also be right to say that up until that point  
 9 in time you had not had any or certainly any particular  
 10 experience of firearms operations?  
 11 A. None at all.  
 12 Q. Or of counter-terrorism policing?  
 13 A. No.  
 14 Q. Moving things along a number of years, in 2014 did you  
 15 apply for a particular role?  
 16 A. Yes, I applied for a vacancy that was coming up within  
 17 the force duty officer cohort.  
 18 Q. What was it that interested you about that role?  
 19 A. It was a role which carried quite a bit of  
 20 responsibility, critical decisions needed to be made,  
 21 and I believe that I was the right type of temperament  
 22 to undertake that role. I was able to build on the  
 23 experience I gained from a strategic perspective around  
 24 the force, I had a very good understanding of the way  
 25 the force worked, and it just seemed like an ideal

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1 posting for me at that time.  
 2 Q. What is the right kind of temperament for an FDO in your  
 3 view?  
 4 A. Calm and considered.  
 5 Q. In your first witness statement, and I'm now at  
 6 paragraph 12, you state this:  
 7 "As an FDO, you are regarded as someone who knows  
 8 everything, someone who knows every single policy, and  
 9 can command all force resources, something of a go—to  
 10 for the force."  
 11 What did you mean by that?  
 12 A. Regardless of what role people take within the force,  
 13 there is an understanding that if you don't have an  
 14 understanding of the force approach to something then  
 15 the force duty officer is the person to go to, not that  
 16 the force duty officer knows actually every plan,  
 17 because it's impossible because of the number of  
 18 operational plans we have.  
 19 Q. This is what I wanted to ask you about.  
 20 A. Yes, but we certainly have a very good idea of where to  
 21 get the answer from.  
 22 Q. Did you commence your role as an FDO in June of 2014?  
 23 A. I did, yes.  
 24 Q. And were you a particular type of FDO at that stage and  
 25 indeed in May of 2017?

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1 A. Yes. The FDO cohort consists of seven FDOs, five of  
 2 which are attached to —  
 3 Q. Can I just be clear that we're dealing with the position  
 4 back in 2017. What I'm not concerned to explore is the  
 5 position now for reasons that you'll understand.  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. So there are a number of FDOs, some of them fall into  
 8 a particular category, which is what?  
 9 A. Yes, some fall into — are attached to reliefs, so  
 10 they're actually allocated to a specific relief and work  
 11 with the same team all the time. And the other category  
 12 is what we class as a support FDO or floating FDO, for  
 13 want of a better term, which was myself and another  
 14 officer. Part of that role was to fill in for any  
 15 absences within the FDO duty plan.  
 16 Q. In practice, bearing in mind that you were floating and  
 17 not attached to a relief, did that mean that you  
 18 performed less shifts as an FDO and therefore became  
 19 less experienced in the role?  
 20 A. Absolutely not. The amount of shifts that the support  
 21 FDO did was equal to that of the ones that were attached  
 22 to a specific shift.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does that mean you would always or often  
 24 be working with different people?  
 25 A. Across, yes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did that apply to the rest of the team  
 2 you were working with, would they all support as well,  
 3 so could be working with different people, or did you  
 4 come in, as it were, on top of a team, an established  
 5 team?  
 6 A. The team themselves would be established and would work  
 7 all the time. It would really only be the FDO that  
 8 essentially would change if the allocated FDO to that  
 9 team was absent for whatever reason.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 11 MR GREANEY: So the simple point is that you became as  
 12 experienced as any other FDO notwithstanding your  
 13 floating role?  
 14 A. Very much so, yes.  
 15 Q. And that's why, at the very beginning of my questions,  
 16 you agreed with me that by May of 2017 you were highly  
 17 experienced in that role?  
 18 A. I was.  
 19 Q. Against that background, let's move on to the third  
 20 topic, which is your training. Is becoming an FDO  
 21 a straightforward process or not?  
 22 A. It isn't, no.  
 23 Q. Are there two key aspects which are necessary in order  
 24 to become an FDO?  
 25 A. There are, yes.

23

1 Q. What is the first of those?  
 2 A. They are as equally important. There is the day—to—day  
 3 running of the force, sir, which includes having  
 4 knowledge of where information is held, how to obtain  
 5 information, what the various units do, so what I would  
 6 class as the business as usual, the day—to—day roles,  
 7 which is very extensive, the requirements within that.  
 8 That is obviously very, very key and the bulk of the FDO  
 9 role.  
 10 Q. Just before you come on to the second aspect of the role  
 11 and the training, what does that actually mean from  
 12 practical point of view, the day—to—day business? What  
 13 kind of incidents or events would you be expected to  
 14 deal with as an FDO doing business as usual?  
 15 A. It is a huge gambit (sic) of roles and responsibilities.  
 16 It's managing force resources, making decisions on  
 17 providing those additional resources to the different  
 18 divisions that might be asking for support. It's about  
 19 liaising with the Fire Service, very much so, on  
 20 a day—to—day basis, liaising with NAWAS, making decisions  
 21 on where deployments of the aircraft, the helicopters,  
 22 should go, all the specialist resources within the  
 23 force. How to turn out mountain rescue for high—risk  
 24 missing from homes. To authorise various telephone  
 25 enquiries at a very early stage in the golden hour for

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1 high-risk missing persons.  
 2 Q. I think we probably get the idea, it could be anything.  
 3 A. It goes on and on and on.  
 4 Q. How is it that an FDO becomes trained in order to deal  
 5 with that significant variety of situations during  
 6 day-to-day business?  
 7 A. It's the only role as a -- certainly as manager within  
 8 GMP that I thought the training was absolutely -- I say  
 9 the only role -- it was really crucial in that you were  
 10 mentored for a long period of time, anything up to  
 11 6 months is not unheard of, by an experienced FDO, who  
 12 would sit beside you on literally every single tour of  
 13 duty and make sure that you were basically a safe pair  
 14 of hands to look after the force.  
 15 Q. So you would, whilst being mentored, perform the role of  
 16 an FDO, but there would be someone more experienced than  
 17 you alongside you checking that you were doing it  
 18 properly?  
 19 A. Yes, ready to step in should a poor decision be made.  
 20 Q. And you seem to be contrasting that training with  
 21 perhaps other training that you received whilst a police  
 22 officer. Were you making the point that this was  
 23 training of a better quality than other training that  
 24 you received?  
 25 A. Yes. It was very much in-house training, it's not

1 a national course for force duty officers. If I relate  
 2 to in the past when I have moved from one posting to  
 3 another, you finish on Friday, start the new post on  
 4 Monday, and you're into it straightaway. The force duty  
 5 officer role is not like that: if you do not prove  
 6 yourself, then your mentor will not sign you off to go  
 7 solo as such.  
 8 Q. We're still dealing with the day-to-day business role of  
 9 the FDO; we are going to come on to the second aspect of  
 10 it in due course. But for how long were you mentored?  
 11 A. I think I was mentored for 2.5 months. I think...  
 12 That's quite quick, but I had evidenced and experienced  
 13 a lot during that period of time. What tends to drag  
 14 a mentoring period along is the firearms aspect of it  
 15 and obtaining sufficient information or sufficient  
 16 evidence.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you say drags on, do you mean  
 18 extends it?  
 19 A. Sorry, extends it. It is having the firearms evidence  
 20 to be signed off as a firearms commander, I think that  
 21 is the other aspect.  
 22 MR GREANEY: That's the other aspect that I'm going to come  
 23 on to in one moment.  
 24 At the end of that 2.5-month period of training, did  
 25 you consider that you were adequately trained for

1 dealing with the day-to-day business aspects of the  
 2 responsibilities of an FDO?  
 3 A. Yes. The FDO role, though, is one which is a learning  
 4 day every day. You will never fully understand what's  
 5 required, but yes, as a safe pair and hands and  
 6 confident in my ability then very much so.  
 7 Q. You said there were two key aspects which are necessary  
 8 to become an FDO and you've given away already that the  
 9 second aspect involves something to do with firearms, so  
 10 tell us about that, please.  
 11 A. Yes. As the FDO you are what we call the initial  
 12 tactical firearms commander for any spontaneous firearms  
 13 incidents across the force.  
 14 Q. So the ITFC as it's been described by some witnesses?  
 15 A. Yes. Part of that is to initially attend -- for me, it  
 16 was a week's office, for an ITFC course.  
 17 Q. It's a little longer, I think, now as you understand it.  
 18 A. Yes, I think it's extended to 8 days now, if not  
 19 slightly longer. That is a national course which is  
 20 a pass or fail, there's no in between, so I passed that  
 21 in June. Once you've passed the occupational --  
 22 Q. June 2014?  
 23 A. Sorry, June 2014. So there's two aspects of it, there's  
 24 occupationally competent, which is passing the course,  
 25 and operationally competent, which is being able to

1 display the correct decision-making and management of  
 2 firearms incidents in a real-life situation.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you have any experience of firearms  
 4 before that or --  
 5 A. Very limited, sir. The only experience I had was  
 6 working as an unarmed Bronze for firearms incidents as  
 7 a response inspector.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you go straight from really having  
 9 very little experience of firearms to commanding the  
 10 initial firearms response?  
 11 A. You do. However, it's not -- that sounds very  
 12 simplistic.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It no doubt is.  
 14 A. It isn't and there is a lot of evidence that you've got  
 15 to provide to show that you are a competent firearms  
 16 commander before you're actually signed off to be able  
 17 to do that without someone sat beside you. Usually what  
 18 would tend to happen is that, again, the mentor, who  
 19 would be a qualified ITFC, would be over your shoulder  
 20 all the time guiding you until they were confident.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 22 MR GREANEY: Between June 2014 and May 2017, had you been  
 23 the ITFC for live firearms incidents?  
 24 A. Yes, a large number.  
 25 Q. Just back to the course for a moment, is it the position



1 that the course was not terrorist –related?  
 2 A. No, it wasn't.  
 3 Q. But was built to enable you to assess properly any  
 4 firearms risk and to make a decision on the deployment  
 5 of unarmed or armed staff, or I suppose both, to an  
 6 incident?  
 7 A. Yes, that's correct and very much the model that was  
 8 used, known as the national decision-making model.  
 9 Q. I was going to ask you about that next. What in your  
 10 view is the national decision model?  
 11 A. For me, it is quite simply a commonsense approach to  
 12 dealing with an ongoing threat. I can take you through  
 13 it, which is looking at information and intelligence  
 14 around the location, the victim, the offenders, the  
 15 subject. Looking at what ongoing threats you are  
 16 dealing with and risks. Deciding what your working  
 17 strategy wants to be. This is all very, very quick  
 18 because with the spontaneous, you don't have very much  
 19 time to think.  
 20 Q. Yes.  
 21 A. Moving on from that, what police powers you have in  
 22 relation to what you're dealing with. Then moving to  
 23 what your options are and your contingencies, and then  
 24 constantly putting those into action and then review.  
 25 So that's pretty much NDM in a nutshell.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is this written down somewhere?  
 2 A. Yes, yes, it is.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
 4 MR GREANEY: It is, sir, and we actually have looked at it  
 5 and we can look at it again --  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You just said what it was for you and  
 7 that is why I was asking that, really.  
 8 A. I think as a police officer, there is nothing new  
 9 in that approach, I think we do it automatically when  
 10 we're considering an incident, certainly whether or not  
 11 you are a PC attending something that you're not fully  
 12 aware of, all this goes through your head. It's just  
 13 verbalising it and it's been written down.  
 14 MR GREANEY: There was one word that used in giving that  
 15 helpful explanation, which was "review". When we look  
 16 at the diagram, as we will after the break, or at some  
 17 stage today, we'll see that the arrows circle around,  
 18 don't they, effectively?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Does that to your mind, and did it in May 2017, indicate  
 21 that this was a constant process?  
 22 A. Very much so, yes.  
 23 Q. That one doesn't just make a decision at the outset and  
 24 run with it, but instead is constantly testing it and  
 25 retaking the decision?

1 A. Absolutely. Every time a new piece of information comes  
 2 in, then you go through that process, and you should  
 3 continue going through the process once you think the  
 4 threat has diminished.  
 5 Q. We're jumping ahead for a moment, but do you think you  
 6 did that or did it accurately on the night of the 22nd?  
 7 A. I believe that under the pressure that I was under,  
 8 I did, yes.  
 9 Q. In dealing with your training, I was going to take you  
 10 to what I thought was your most accurate training record  
 11 ad suggest to you that you had not received  
 12 Plato-specific training before the arena attack. But  
 13 you have been good enough to tell me that you think your  
 14 training record is not complete; is that right?  
 15 A. That's right. Not so much in dedicated Plato training,  
 16 but certainly where Plato featured in our workshops and  
 17 inputs that we have to maintain our firearms  
 18 accreditation.  
 19 Q. I just want to make sure I've understood this because  
 20 I plainly misunderstood it when I looked at the record.  
 21 There was no course that you attended before the arena  
 22 attack that was dedicated to Operation Plato; is that  
 23 correct?  
 24 A. I believe there wasn't, yes.  
 25 Q. But that during the regular accreditation that you

1 required to maintain your position as an ITFC, there  
 2 would be a component of that that involved Plato?  
 3 A. Yes, I believe there was.  
 4 Q. When you talk about the accreditation, are you talking  
 5 about what we will see in your record, when I have got  
 6 to the bottom of this, that every year you would have to  
 7 have an annual accreditation as a firearms commander?  
 8 A. Yes, to maintain your authority.  
 9 Q. What I think I do know from the record is that after the  
 10 arena attack, you did attend a course that was dedicated  
 11 to Operation Plato; is that correct?  
 12 A. I believe I did, yes.  
 13 Q. Did what you learnt in the course of that course make  
 14 you think that your understanding on the night of the  
 15 22nd in relation to Plato was lacking in any way?  
 16 A. I don't believe it was lacking when looking specifically  
 17 at the ITFC command of a Plato incident.  
 18 Q. Let me ask you a very direct question and we'll come  
 19 back to it in due course: at various stages during the  
 20 recording you seem to equate Operation Plato with  
 21 a terrorist attack, by which I mean any terrorist  
 22 attack, which is not a correct interpretation of Plato;  
 23 do you agree?  
 24 A. I agree, yes.  
 25 Q. Was that your understanding on the night of the 22nd,

1 that Operation Plato was the operation to deploy in  
 2 circumstances of any terrorist attack?  
 3 A. Absolutely not. I was quite clear on the night that it  
 4 was in relation to MTFA, as it was then, marauding  
 5 terrorist firearms attack.  
 6 Q. Yes, and we know it's changed to MTA since. I just want  
 7 to be very clear about this, again it will provide  
 8 context when we listen to the recording: you knew that  
 9 Operation Plato was specific to a situation in which one  
 10 had or thought there was a real prospect of having  
 11 a marauding terrorist with a firearm?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. An active shooter?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. And you knew that it was not appropriate to call  
 16 Operation Plato in a situation where what one had was an  
 17 explosion, a bomb explosion, but no marauding terrorist?  
 18 A. Absolutely.  
 19 Q. Indeed, did you know on the night of the 22nd that if  
 20 one had a situation in which at point A declaration of  
 21 Plato was appropriate because there was a proper basis  
 22 for believing there might be an active shooter but at  
 23 point B, later, it was clear that there was no active  
 24 shooter, in that situation Plato should no longer be  
 25 applied?

1 A. Yes, it would need to be reviewed. I think it would be  
 2 fair to say that once I'd declared Operation Plato,  
 3 I was more concerned about the ongoing threat rather  
 4 than the review of Plato thereafter. For me, Op Plato  
 5 was justified for quite an excessive length of time or  
 6 extensive length of time, but the withdrawal of Plato at  
 7 that point -- and again this could be down to a lack of  
 8 understanding by me, would then be a decision for Silver  
 9 command.  
 10 Q. So Mr Nawaz and subsequently Mr Hill?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Let's just be clear about it: you declared  
 13 Operation Plato and we're going to look at the timing of  
 14 that in due course. You took the decision to declare  
 15 Operation Plato?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. I'm not going to criticise that decision.  
 18 Self-evidently, that decision needed to be reviewed at  
 19 various stages, did it not?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Is what you're saying that you acknowledge that but that  
 22 you considered it was the responsibility of the Silver  
 23 commander to carry out that review, not you?  
 24 A. My understanding was that once that Op Plato had been  
 25 declared, because it was such a significant

1 declaration --  
 2 Q. Certainly.  
 3 A. -- that any withdrawal of that would be done at a higher  
 4 rank than me. However, I do have to say that bearing in  
 5 mind the information/intelligence as it was coming in  
 6 was changing was always supporting for me the  
 7 application of Plato and the necessity was still there  
 8 to have it in place.  
 9 Q. I'm going to look at that and test that proposition, as  
 10 you perhaps will appreciate. Whilst understanding that  
 11 (a) you thought it was the responsibility of someone at  
 12 a higher level, so Silver or Gold, to carry out the  
 13 review, and whilst (b) acknowledging that you've just  
 14 told us that you thought that sustaining Operation Plato  
 15 was appropriate for a prolonged period of time, can we  
 16 just be clear, at any stage that night, after having  
 17 declared Operation Plato, did you personally review that  
 18 decision and its appropriateness or did you just leave  
 19 it to others?  
 20 A. No, I believe, although it most probably wasn't  
 21 verbalised, it was certainly a consideration as part of  
 22 the NDM model as I was reviewing information and  
 23 intelligence. I would be -- to be honest, I would say  
 24 that as we passed through the hour, I became less  
 25 concerned about the review of Plato, if that makes

1 sense.  
 2 Q. It doesn't, but that may just be me. Could you explain  
 3 what you mean? So we're at the point, it's been called  
 4 the golden hour by some, the point at which an hour has  
 5 passed, so it's 23.31 now. What was your state of mind  
 6 in relation to a review?  
 7 A. I think that it'd be fair to say that I certainly for  
 8 the first hour was very mindful of Plato and I think  
 9 that after that I was so tied up with other  
 10 responsibilities and knowing that Silver command had  
 11 been set up that I really didn't give it much more  
 12 thought after that, if I'm being honest.  
 13 Q. That's very fair. Before that, during that first hour,  
 14 did you review Plato and, if you did, did you do it in  
 15 any formal way?  
 16 A. No formal way, no. It was an ongoing assessment.  
 17 Q. So would this be a fair way of putting it: you had  
 18 declared Plato and to your mind information that was  
 19 coming in supported its continuation --  
 20 A. Mm--hm.  
 21 Q. -- as opposed to undermining its continuation and  
 22 therefore there was never an occasion for a formal  
 23 review?  
 24 A. Yes. Best practice would be to have regular reviews of  
 25 Plato. However, in the heat of the moment, I was just

1 satisfied that the threat was still there, the need for  
 2 Plato was still there, and therefore I didn't carry out  
 3 a formal review, no.  
 4 Q. We are going to hear about the pressures you were under,  
 5 but I think we can agree about some basics. As you  
 6 yourself have said, the declaration of Plato is a matter  
 7 of high significance, is it not?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. Indeed, I think it was probably the first occasion on  
 10 which Operation Plato had ever been declared.  
 11 A. I believe that to be the case. I think that there was  
 12 actually an occasion prior to that, but I don't have the  
 13 details.  
 14 Q. It was either the first or the second.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are we talking about just in Manchester  
 16 or across the country?  
 17 A. Nationally, sir.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 19 MR GREANEY: So that gives us an idea of how big a deal the  
 20 declaration of Plato was?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. Obviously, do you agree it was important that there  
 23 should be regular reviews of that declaration?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Let's be frank about it: one of the reasons, perhaps the

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1 most important reason, why the declaration needed to be  
 2 reviewed was because this is not a declaration for the  
 3 sake of it, this declaration has or should have real  
 4 world consequences?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. The main one being — obviously we're going to look at  
 7 whether this did apply on the night, although we all  
 8 know it didn't, the main one is if Plato is declared and  
 9 that is communicated then those who can help the injured  
 10 are not going into the hot zone, are they?  
 11 A. No, not at all.  
 12 Q. There are people who need help who aren't going to get  
 13 that help whilst Plato is in force and whilst they are  
 14 in what is described as a hot zone?  
 15 A. Yes. At this point I'd like to say that I was certainly  
 16 conflicted in, once I'd declared Op Plato, knowing what  
 17 the potential outcome was in relation to ongoing  
 18 treatment of casualties, whether I should do it,  
 19 shouldn't do it, should notify, shouldn't notify. It  
 20 was one of the hardest decisions I've made in the  
 21 26 years of my career at that point. It was really  
 22 difficult.  
 23 Q. I really don't want to interrupt you because it is very  
 24 important that we should understand entirely your  
 25 decision-making, and I do promise that I'm going to give

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1 you a full opportunity to give your explanation.  
 2 I don't want you to think that I'm being critical,  
 3 I just want to establish some basics so that we can test  
 4 what happened —  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. — and, if different things should have happened, judge  
 7 whether that was your responsibility or whether it  
 8 represents a systemic failing by GMP in placing too much  
 9 of a burden on one person.  
 10 So where we'd reached is a declaration of Plato is  
 11 important.  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. (2), the review of Plato is important —  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. — for all of the reasons that we have just given.  
 16 (3), do you agree that Plato ought to be reviewed  
 17 not just, say, every 10 or 15 minutes or whatever, but  
 18 also ought to be reviewed if there is any significant  
 19 development in what is happening at the scene, so  
 20 a significant development in situational awareness?  
 21 A. Yes, I think it has to be reviewed in light of any new  
 22 information and intelligence that comes in.  
 23 Q. For example, if there was concern about an active  
 24 shooter in the City Room, at the point at which that  
 25 room is locked down by armed officers from GMP and

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1 possibly also elsewhere, that's a point at which  
 2 Operation Plato ought to be reviewed, surely?  
 3 A. Yes. If you follow the policy then that's exactly what  
 4 should happen. Real life is slightly different than  
 5 that in that because — I know this isn't the question  
 6 you've asked me, but because the location of the  
 7 potential active shooter wasn't known and there were  
 8 still 14,000 people inside the arena, for me the hot  
 9 zone was a lot larger than just the City Room.  
 10 Q. We are going to look at this and this is entirely my  
 11 fault for jumping ahead. But there comes a time,  
 12 doesn't there, when it is obvious that the City Room  
 13 isn't a hot zone because there are many GMP firearms  
 14 officers there with their guns, saying there isn't  
 15 a problem, and able to shoot a problem if it's there?  
 16 A. Yes, that's right, if we're looking at the active  
 17 shooter aspect of it. There was still the possibility  
 18 of a secondary device.  
 19 Q. But that doesn't make it Plato.  
 20 A. No, no, it doesn't, it refers to an active shooter,  
 21 you're correct.  
 22 Q. We're going to come back to all of this, as you'll  
 23 understand, and it's my fault for jumping ahead.  
 24 I was dealing with your training and again we're  
 25 going to come back to that.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Dealing with your training and your  
 2 Plato training in particular, bearing in mind how rare  
 3 this event was, did the training you had been given  
 4 actually prepare you for what it was like on the night?  
 5 A. Absolutely not. I think it was delivered at a -- and  
 6 knowledge was given -- at a level which was acceptable  
 7 at the time. I know we were at severe, as the threat  
 8 assessment was, and I think that it would be fair to say  
 9 that any inputs or any knowledge I had at that point was  
 10 based on an overview of Op Plato rather than any  
 11 detailed forensic look at Op Plato.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And had it been emphasised in the  
 13 training just how important it was to keep Plato under  
 14 review on a regular basis because of the consequences?  
 15 A. I can't remember specifically that being said. However,  
 16 because it was that input or that knowledge of Plato was  
 17 as part of my firearms accreditation, we know that  
 18 absolutely any firearms deployment has to be reviewed  
 19 constantly, so it's almost a given that it should have  
 20 been reviewed.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's just slightly different, a Plato  
 22 declaration and dealing with firearms?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Anyway, if you can't remember, please  
 25 say so.

1 You got the impression that a decision to remove  
 2 Plato, which is an incredibly difficult decision to  
 3 make, I'm sure we can understand that, you were under  
 4 the impression that it would be taken by Silver?  
 5 A. That was the impression I was under, sir. I know that  
 6 that's now changed.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Where did you get that  
 8 impression from?  
 9 A. I think just the overview of input that I've had,  
 10 potentially looking through the various Op Plato  
 11 documents prior to the 22nd, which led me to my  
 12 aide--memoire. I think it was an assessment that I made.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does it appear in your aide--memoire?  
 14 A. I don't believe it does.  
 15 MR GREANEY: We are going to look, sir, at the aide--memoire.  
 16 I want to be clear to you: if ultimately the  
 17 decision is that Plato ought to have been reviewed and  
 18 removed much earlier than in fact occurred, I am not  
 19 going to be suggesting that that was all down to you.  
 20 I entirely accept that others in the chain of command  
 21 had their own responsibility to make decisions about  
 22 what was going on and you can rest assured that  
 23 Superintendent Nawaz will also be pressed in relation to  
 24 this issue.  
 25 But we have, I think, identified, have we not,

1 a potential problem already with Plato, which is that  
 2 you seem to have been in a frame of mind at some stage  
 3 that even if you could exclude the possibility of an  
 4 armed terrorist in the City Room, the potential presence  
 5 of a secondary device was capable of justifying the  
 6 continuation of that operation?  
 7 A. I don't think that that by itself would have. I think  
 8 it was the whole as a package, the active shooter and  
 9 the potential for a secondary device, which supported  
 10 that decision to keep Plato in place. If there'd been  
 11 no suggestion of an active shooter, would I have  
 12 declared Plato? No, I don't believe I would have.  
 13 Q. But equally, on it becoming apparent that there is no  
 14 active shooter, at least in the City Room, the zoning of  
 15 that area as hot -- and I am going to get on to what  
 16 really happened -- but the zoning of that area of hot  
 17 would surely need to come to an end, would it not?  
 18 A. Yes, but you can't put a time on it, how long that's  
 19 going to be. I would say that for me the fact that  
 20 I believed that there was still an ongoing threat  
 21 justified the hot zone or the City Room remaining within  
 22 the hot zone. I accept that that should have been more  
 23 robustly reviewed by me initially. I'm not putting the  
 24 blame on Silver at all. I think that --  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let's forget about blame, let's just

1 think what happened and why it happened, and we'll look  
 2 at blame later, if that's appropriate. But I think  
 3 don't worry about that, just tell us what you actually  
 4 thought at the time.  
 5 MR GREANEY: Exactly.  
 6 A. Yes. I think that for me, because I'd gone against  
 7 national policy quite considerably in my approach, that  
 8 having the City Room remain in the hot zone gave me that  
 9 extra degree of protection and security. But you're  
 10 right, Mr Greaney, that actually, yes, at some point the  
 11 hot zone -- and it's made very clear in the new  
 12 policy -- should be as small as possible and constantly  
 13 reviewed for numerous reasons.  
 14 Q. So what I've understood, and you must tell me if I've  
 15 got this wrong, is that with Operation Plato come rules,  
 16 and one rule is in the hot zone you only have armed  
 17 officers whose job is not to treat anyone but is to  
 18 neutralise the threat. So no one is getting treated  
 19 in the hot zone until that's happened?  
 20 A. If there was... Under Plato no one is getting treated  
 21 whilst that area is being treated as a hot zone because  
 22 the only people you have there are firearms officers who  
 23 are there to neutralise the threat, not to provide  
 24 trauma treatment. That was why it was one of the  
 25 biggest decisions that I had to make in relation to

1 leaving people there, in relation to dealing with  
 2 casualties but still up against a potential firearms  
 3 offender.  
 4 Q. I do understand, but the distinction I'm trying to draw  
 5 is between Operation Plato on the one hand, which  
 6 carries with it this rule about who goes in and  
 7 therefore what happens within that area, and a different  
 8 situation, which is also a challenging situation, which  
 9 is one in which in that area there is no active shooter  
 10 but there may be a secondary device. What I've  
 11 understood is that in that situation, there isn't  
 12 Operation Plato, there isn't that strict rule about who  
 13 can and cannot go in there, instead what happens is the  
 14 Silver commanders of each of the emergency services  
 15 jointly make a decision about who should and should not  
 16 go in there, so there is more flexibility.  
 17 A. If it was classed as a warm zone, then yes, more  
 18 specialist responders would go into that area.  
 19 Q. But do you agree that in a non-Plato but still  
 20 challenging situation, there is greater flexibility for  
 21 commanders to decide who does and does not go into  
 22 areas?  
 23 A. Absolutely. If it's a non-Plato incident then the hot,  
 24 warm and cold zones don't come into play officially.  
 25 Q. That was all I wanted to ask you about training,

1 although we've spent rather more time dealing with  
 2 non-training issues.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm very sorry, but just picking up on  
 4 something, I'm sure we're going to come back to it: it  
 5 seems to have been part of your decision, when reviewing  
 6 Plato, the fact that you were getting reports of an  
 7 active shooter elsewhere; yes?  
 8 A. Not quite, sir.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. You tell me.  
 10 A. I didn't know where the active shooter may be other than  
 11 potentially somewhere within the arena, whether they  
 12 were still in the City Room, I didn't know. The  
 13 information I was getting was that injuries were  
 14 consistent with gunshot wounds.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.  
 16 A. Those gunshot wounds would have been sustained within  
 17 the City Room. So I didn't know where the threat was,  
 18 where the threat had gone, whether or not they were  
 19 still there.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you knew that the threat wasn't in  
 21 the City Room once the armed police had done their  
 22 sweep?  
 23 A. Yes, I would say that it was clear. However,  
 24 I didn't -- I couldn't negate the fact of an active  
 25 shooter trying to come back into the City Room.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 2 MR GREANEY: If an active shooter did try to come back into  
 3 the City Room with that number of armed officers there,  
 4 there was only going to be one outcome, wasn't there?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. I will just tell you, just before we move on, the  
 7 first -- and Mr Suter has put me right --  
 8 Operation Plato declaration was during the course of the  
 9 Westminster Bridge attack on 22 March 2017. The second  
 10 Operation Plato declaration was yours on 22 May. The  
 11 third was during the course of the London Bridge attack  
 12 on 3 June 2017.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. You may have known about the  
 14 Westminster Plato declaration. Had there been an  
 15 opportunity for any lessons learned or anything like  
 16 that, any experience to have been gained from that as  
 17 far as you were concerned?  
 18 A. Sir, I wasn't aware that Operation Plato had been  
 19 declared on Westminster. I at the time thought that  
 20 I was the first.  
 21 MR GREANEY: Fourthly, I'm going to ask you, and we'll try  
 22 and get through this and then take a break, ask you  
 23 about the role of the FDO in more detail. So I'm asking  
 24 in general terms now, not specifically about the night  
 25 of the attack. I'm now at paragraph 21 of your first

1 witness statement.  
 2 You observe that:  
 3 "The demands when performing the role of FDO can be  
 4 very intense."  
 5 You have made this point:  
 6 "There are times when demand is light, but in a busy  
 7 metropolitan force, such as GMP, it's always the case  
 8 that the demands of the role are fairly high."  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. You make a point about whether the work is more  
 11 challenging out of hours or not out of hours; what is  
 12 the position?  
 13 A. It's certainly more challenging because the FDO is  
 14 almost the single point of contact for a lot of  
 15 enquiries, whether it's internal enquiries or external  
 16 enquiries. I'm not talking about through to the call  
 17 handlers, the telephone switchboard, but certainly other  
 18 forces would ring the FDO, the FDO would make decisions  
 19 on requests coming direct from internal divisions.  
 20 Q. Can I ask you to pause there for one moment because I'm  
 21 sure we get the picture. Is the position, in very  
 22 simple terms -- and we don't need to know what there is  
 23 less of out of hours -- but out of hours the demands on  
 24 an FDO are likely to be greater than at other times  
 25 because there is less availability of certain things

1 that you might need?  
 2 A. Again, potentially very simplistic , because again if  
 3 it 's usually Monday to Thursday and if you're on out of  
 4 hours, afternoons are always busy, if you're on nights,  
 5 midweek, obviously some demand does drop off  
 6 significantly . But certainly if there is an ongoing  
 7 incident, then that is when the demand on the FDO would  
 8 be significantly high.  
 9 Q. We know that this night, there was a duty Silver  
 10 commander, Superintendent Nawaz. Just as there would be  
 11 an FDO every night of the week, would there also be, and  
 12 I'm talking about May 2017, a duty Silver commander  
 13 working each night?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Is that role generally somebody of a superintendent  
 16 rank?  
 17 A. It is , yes.  
 18 Q. What does that role involve?  
 19 A. There are certain legislative duties that they have to  
 20 carry out, certainly around prisoners held in custody,  
 21 and reviews. I'd say one of the biggest issues is to be  
 22 in a position to take a command overview of any major or  
 23 critical incidents that go on.  
 24 Q. So the FDO, who, as we're going to hear, is in the OCR,  
 25 does the FDO have to refer decisions to the duty Silver

1 commander or is that very contrary to what is expected  
 2 of him or her?  
 3 A. At the point of a significant spontaneous type  
 4 incident — now, that could cover a whole different  
 5 magnitude of types of incidents — then the force duty  
 6 officer has the authority to make those decisions. If  
 7 there is more slow—time decisions that need to be made,  
 8 then the force duty officer would contact Silver and  
 9 have that discussion with them.  
 10 Q. Is it left to the discretion of the FDO to decide  
 11 whether or not to make contact with duty Silver?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. So the FDO has the authority, if he or she considers it  
 14 appropriate, to make decisions without referring them to  
 15 the Silver commander?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. On this night, as we've said a number of times,  
 18 Superintendent Nawaz was duty Silver. Did that mean  
 19 that he was not just on duty but located in police  
 20 premises?  
 21 A. He would have been within force, yes.  
 22 Q. Did you know Superintendent Nawaz before that night?  
 23 A. I did, yes.  
 24 Q. In general terms, did you have a particular view of him  
 25 or not?

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. What was your view of him?  
 3 A. A capable and competent superintendent.  
 4 Q. Would you have expected him, and indeed any duty Silver  
 5 commander, to have known what Operation Plato was?  
 6 A. I would want to say yes. However, I believe that  
 7 Op Plato is certainly more recognised within the  
 8 firearms world than it is in the unarmed world. But  
 9 yes, it would be something that he possibly should have  
 10 known about. But having said that, there are so many  
 11 operational names that it's impossible to be up to speed  
 12 with every single one. But yes, that type is  
 13 potentially an operation that should have been known.  
 14 Q. Let me be clear because Superintendent Nawaz isn't here,  
 15 but will be giving evidence in due course and this may  
 16 well not be a criticism of him but be a criticism of  
 17 those who had responsibility to train him. Let's be  
 18 clear about this: in the event of Operation Plato being  
 19 declared, duty Silver is going to have a very important  
 20 role; do you agree?  
 21 A. Very much so, yes.  
 22 Q. Because they're going to have the responsibility for the  
 23 tactical plan?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you said they would be the person

1 you'd expect to be, as well as you, the person looking  
 2 at whether Plato should be removed or not?  
 3 A. Yes. I mean, it's... This is where it's slightly  
 4 confusing because Plato is very much around the firearms  
 5 world. Would I expect an unarmed or someone who's not  
 6 trained in firearms command to understand their  
 7 responsibility and be able to review effectively  
 8 Op Plato? I'd say possibly not. I think it should have  
 9 been left, that consideration of removing it, to the TFC  
 10 and the SFC.  
 11 MR GREANEY: This is a problem I'm going to invite you to  
 12 agree: operation Plato is a very significant  
 13 declaration?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Duty Silver is going to have a very important role in  
 16 devising the tactical plan and in terms of reviewing  
 17 Operation Plato, and the problem I'm going to suggest is  
 18 it 's quite difficult to see how he is going to do that  
 19 properly if he doesn't know what Operation Plato is.  
 20 A. Yes, my understanding is he wouldn't be expected to  
 21 review Plato as someone who is not a firearms commander.  
 22 His responsibility would very much come around the  
 23 implementation of a major incident plan and the unarmed  
 24 aspect of that rather than the firearms aspect. So to  
 25 be fair to Mr Nawaz, I think his — I don't think that

1 he should be reviewing Op Plato in relation to that  
 2 ongoing firearms threat as such unless it was in  
 3 conjunction with the TFC.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it's quite difficult to do one  
 5 without the other.  
 6 A. Yes, sir .  
 7 MR GREANEY: Indeed, he was the person that you expected to  
 8 carry out the review?  
 9 A. Yes, certainly Silver .  
 10 Q. If he didn't have an understanding of Operation Plato,  
 11 I'm certain we can agree about this, in the midst of an  
 12 Operation Plato situation, in the immediate aftermath of  
 13 a terrorist attack, that isn't the time to be trying to  
 14 educate oneself about what Operation Plato is?  
 15 A. No.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just be clear, because you said  
 17 something then -- we are talking about the duty Silver  
 18 as the person who you would expect to review Plato,  
 19 not ...  
 20 A. Yes, I'm suggesting Silver as in Silver command. Once  
 21 the Silver command module had been set up, you have  
 22 a number of Silvers within that role who work directly  
 23 with the duty Gold, who would also potentially be the  
 24 SFC, who was ACC Ford on the night. So that's who I'm  
 25 referring to. I think Silver as far as the

1 implementation of the non-firearms aspect of a major  
 2 incident is Mr Nawaz and they do play a major part  
 3 in that initial command and control.  
 4 MR GREANEY: So in the command structure that actually was  
 5 in place on the night of the 22nd, what is the name of  
 6 the person who you consider should have reviewed the  
 7 declaration of Operation Plato?  
 8 A. I don't know who took over and when they took over.  
 9 I think that it would be fair to say that it is  
 10 potentially something that Mr Nawaz could have done, but  
 11 not by himself. He would have to have done that,  
 12 I would have thought, in consultation with the TFC and  
 13 the duty Gold, the SFC.  
 14 Q. Ad the SFC, as you have said, was ACC Ford that night?  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. Let's just be clear: if the responsibility for the  
 17 review wasn't yours or wasn't yours alone, there should  
 18 have been clarity in the command structure about whose  
 19 job that was; do you agree?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. We'll just get to the end of this section on the FDO  
 22 role. I'll check with Mr Suter that we are fine to  
 23 continue and then we will take a break.  
 24 You mentioned earlier the fact that there are within  
 25 GMP very many policies in existence, are there not?

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. We're talking about probably hundreds, do you agree?  
 3 A. Yes, definitely .  
 4 Q. And is it possible for FDOs to keep all of those plans  
 5 and policies at their fingertips whilst on duty?  
 6 A. Absolutely not.  
 7 Q. So how in practice as a cohort do the FDOs manage that  
 8 situation?  
 9 A. Over the years, almost a spreadsheet with hyperlinks has  
 10 been developed by the FDO cohort, so if a policy comes  
 11 to -- usually any new policies will be sent through to  
 12 the FDO email anyway. That will be reviewed and if it's  
 13 deemed that actually that policy is one of those  
 14 critical and significant policies -- as you can imagine  
 15 we get some policies on a day-to-day basis which we're  
 16 not that interested in, then they will be saved within  
 17 that spreadsheet.  
 18 Q. So that spreadsheet will still be a substantial  
 19 database; is that correct?  
 20 A. At the last count, I think it was in excess of 1,500  
 21 documents.  
 22 Q. Again, that doesn't sound like something which is very  
 23 readily usable in a situation such as the immediate  
 24 aftermath of a terrorist attack.  
 25 A. No, it isn't, but it's simpler than the system that --

1 the official system that GMP utilises.  
 2 Q. Let's bring it a bit closer to our facts and then I'll  
 3 ask you about where your aide-memoire fits into all of  
 4 this.  
 5 If you had actually wanted to access the GMP Plato  
 6 policy that night, assuming you knew which policy was in  
 7 force, how straightforward would it have been for you to  
 8 do that and how quickly could you have done it?  
 9 A. It's not a quick process. Usually, the documents are  
 10 stored within the GMP document store, which is one area  
 11 you can look at. Failing that, there is the -- I can't  
 12 remember what the name was at the time, but basically  
 13 the force hub, the operations hub, where they managed  
 14 the policies and procedures, they have a store as well.  
 15 So that could have been checked but it's not a simple  
 16 process, it's not quick and it's not that accurate, in  
 17 my opinion.  
 18 Q. Indeed, we're going to hear in the recording that even  
 19 at quite a late stage in the events, you are asked by  
 20 the ACC staff officer to source the Plato policy and you  
 21 did not regard that as something that was  
 22 straightforward to achieve, did you?  
 23 A. No.  
 24 Q. To try and deal with the situation before May of 2017,  
 25 had you given consideration to which policies you needed

1 to have at your fingertips?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Had you taken a view about the policy or policies  
 4 in relation to Operation Plato?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. What view did you come to?  
 7 A. There was far too much information in numerous documents  
 8 that would have to be read in conjunction with each  
 9 other to be effective during a significant incident such  
 10 as we had on the 22nd. It would be a physical  
 11 impossibility to make sound, quick, decisive decisions  
 12 if you had to read through in excess of potentially  
 13 200 pages of documents.  
 14 Q. As a result, did you do anything to try to mitigate that  
 15 state of affairs?  
 16 A. Yes, I went through the majority of what I believed  
 17 at the time were the key documents in relation to  
 18 Op Plato and pulled out the salient points that were  
 19 more specific to the FDO role.  
 20 Q. Did that result in the creation of what has been termed  
 21 your aide-memoire?  
 22 A. It did, yes.  
 23 Q. We're going to look at the actual document in the next  
 24 phase of my questions. So that I've understood, was  
 25 that a document, your aide-memoire, that went through

1 a number of iterations or versions?  
 2 A. Yes, it did. I need to stress that the initial document  
 3 was started, devised by me, it wasn't something that was  
 4 an official document at that time --  
 5 Q. No, I understand.  
 6 A. -- therefore it was only for me. I could have just  
 7 written in the back of my book, but I provided it in a  
 8 document form for my colleagues who -- for the cohort.  
 9 Q. In the result, the version that we're going to look at  
 10 was one that you circulated to your FDO colleagues on  
 11 6 June 2016?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Indeed, have I correctly understood that it took into  
 14 account the views of Inspector Marcus Williams, who had  
 15 been the person in the FDO role during Exercise  
 16 Winchester Accord?  
 17 A. It does, yes.  
 18 Q. On the night of the attack, what part did your  
 19 aide-memoire play in your decision-making?  
 20 A. For me, it was crucial. When I wrote it, it was almost  
 21 a list of -- a to-do list that on paper was achievable.  
 22 But under the unique circumstances of the night, I used  
 23 it as a way of picking what I wanted to do rather than  
 24 going through it one by one and ticking off every bullet  
 25 point.

1 Q. I am, when we come to it, going to ask you which of the  
 2 things on your aide-memoire you did and which you didn't  
 3 do. As an FDO, did you have contact ever with  
 4 representatives of either the Fire and Rescue Service or  
 5 the Ambulance Service?  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind if I just ask something  
 7 about the aide-memoire?  
 8 We've been hearing a lot about policies, going  
 9 through various stages, being signed off, being checked,  
 10 being changed, all the rest of it. In fact, the one  
 11 that was used on the night when it actually came to it,  
 12 ie your aide-memoire, had that ever been checked, signed  
 13 off? I'm not suggesting it's not absolutely correct or  
 14 anything like that.  
 15 A. Because it was never an official document -- I know that  
 16 I provided a copy to my chief inspector, Chief  
 17 Inspector Booth at the time.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You did?  
 19 A. I did, yes, I did. But I never at that point expected  
 20 it to be an official document that needed to be signed  
 21 off. I was aware, I think, that Mr Booth was looking at  
 22 this area of business, but for me it was never an  
 23 official document and therefore I never gave it  
 24 consideration should it have been signed off.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not suggesting you necessarily

1 should have done, but the reality is that these official  
 2 plans are created, which are meant to guide you on the  
 3 night. In fact, as you'd explained, they're actually  
 4 too big to use, it takes too long to get them. So  
 5 there's the official document, all signed off, whatever,  
 6 and actually what's being used, not only by you but no  
 7 doubt others, is a document, an unofficial document,  
 8 which you've prepared -- of course having read the  
 9 official document, I do understand that -- and tried no  
 10 doubt to encompass within it the important parts of  
 11 that.  
 12 A. I think, just to extend on that, the problem with  
 13 documents and policies is they are written by someone  
 14 who is within a department, a unit, who has  
 15 understanding, but might not have the practical  
 16 application ability, actually how it looks like in real  
 17 life. So documents, yes, are very, very useful, but not  
 18 in the time of a critical and major incident where  
 19 something has to be made -- a decision has to be made  
 20 very quickly --  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, that's actually when they're meant  
 22 to be useful, isn't it?  
 23 A. They can't be.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, I do understand.  
 25 A. If you start bringing them out as an incident progresses



1 and you always lose — you can have an hour or so, which  
 2 is very, very critical, very demanding, real critical  
 3 decisions having to be made, but there is a natural  
 4 slowdown and I think that's where the policies tend to  
 5 come in to play more when you have the natural slow  
 6 down.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 8 MR GREANEY: Potentially two problems with plans: (1), too  
 9 big to be of use in a true emergency; and, (2), they may  
 10 have been devised by people who don't have the practical  
 11 knowledge that is actually required or at least  
 12 desirable?  
 13 A. I think I'm being a bit unfair if that's the impression  
 14 I gave.  
 15 Q. I'm not sure you are being unfair because we have heard  
 16 evidence, I think, that the creation of both SOP 47 v5  
 17 and the Whittle plan did not involve any consultation  
 18 with an FDO, notwithstanding they dealt extensively with  
 19 the responsibilities of an FDO.  
 20 A. Yes. I think to be fair, the majority — certainly  
 21 in relation to the firearms policies in-house, they were  
 22 devised by very experienced firearms officers who do  
 23 have that ability to understand how that might look on  
 24 the ground. However, in a policy, my view — and it's  
 25 only my personal view — is they try to cover absolutely

1 everything rather than just the key points. So  
 2 a policy, as you've already identified, is not much use  
 3 if it's 50 or 100 pages long or whatever —  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It looks good, but it's impractical?  
 5 A. Very much so.  
 6 MR GREANEY: What we are going to do is to get on to action  
 7 cards in due course, I know I keep saying that, because  
 8 what I know and the chairman may not know at the moment  
 9 is that you do have a view to offer in relation to  
 10 action cards more generally.  
 11 I did say I was going to try to get to the end of  
 12 this particular section. I think this probably is  
 13 a time at which it's necessary to take a short break.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Probably my fault. Quarter of an hour,  
 15 is that long enough for you to have a break?  
 16 A. Absolutely, sir.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 18 (11.07 am)  
 19 (A short break)  
 20 (11.25 am)  
 21 MR GREANEY: Chief inspector, we were still dealing with my  
 22 fourth topic, which is the FDO role in more detail, and  
 23 I was beginning to ask you whether you, in your role as  
 24 FDO, ever had contact with the Fire and Rescue Service  
 25 or with the Ambulance Service.

1 A. Yes, routinely.  
 2 Q. By routinely, just give us a bit more of an idea. Do  
 3 you mean daily, weekly, monthly?  
 4 A. There would always be contact at 9 o'clock in the  
 5 morning where the GMFRS NILO would ring the FDO.  
 6 Q. Pause for one moment. Are you talking about the  
 7 position in May 2017?  
 8 A. I am, yes.  
 9 Q. Right. So at 9 o'clock in the morning, the NILO for the  
 10 Fire and Rescue Service would?  
 11 A. Would contact the force duty officer, obviously on days,  
 12 give them their information to say that they're on cover  
 13 for the next 24 hours or whatever the period is.  
 14 We would update a list to show that contact. So that  
 15 was a daily contact.  
 16 Q. That's with the NILO for GMFRS?  
 17 A. It is, yes. But there would usually be regular contact  
 18 throughout a tour of duty, depending on what was  
 19 happening across the force, with the NILO. We did have  
 20 or we do have very good regular contact with them.  
 21 Q. By what means would that contact be made?  
 22 A. That would usually be on the FDO line, so the NILO would  
 23 ring through from their mobile direct to the FDO.  
 24 Q. I asked you also in relation to the Ambulance Service.  
 25 The same level and type of contact with that

1 organisation or not?  
 2 A. No, that was more in relation to issues with any ongoing  
 3 incidents that might happen, whether it's support that  
 4 they might need from the police to gain entry to  
 5 addresses, they would contact us and, likewise,  
 6 if we needed their assistance and we were struggling,  
 7 then I'd contact — or the FDO would contact the ILO.  
 8 But that contact was certainly not on the same level as  
 9 GMFRS.  
 10 Q. So regular organised contact with the Fire and Rescue  
 11 Service, but it sounds like there was something more  
 12 like ad hoc and when type contact with —  
 13 A. Yes, a more ad hoc approach.  
 14 Q. What about contact with BTP? How regularly would you as  
 15 an FDO have contact with them?  
 16 A. Only if there was an incident that had occurred within  
 17 BTP jurisdiction. Other than that, very rarely. They  
 18 may contact us to utilise some of our specialist  
 19 resources, such as force negotiators or whatever, but it  
 20 was very limited contact.  
 21 Q. I'm going to ask you in a moment whether the position in  
 22 terms of the formality of contact has changed since the  
 23 attack. But first of all, there will be many who will  
 24 be keen to understand by what means the various  
 25 emergency services might make contact with the FDO

1 during a major incident.  
 2 So first of all, the Fire and Rescue Service.  
 3 During the course of a major incident, what means would  
 4 be available to them to make contact with the FDO?  
 5 A. Certainly initially, with NILO, it would have been — or  
 6 the regular or the accepted process was through the  
 7 direct FDO telephone line. That was to me, up to  
 8 22 May, the recognised contact or whether or not it was  
 9 via a message that was put on to an incident log to ask  
 10 the FDO to contact the NILO. That was predominantly the  
 11 way that we would contact each other.  
 12 Q. Pause there for one moment. I'm going to ask you  
 13 shortly whether predominantly means there was another  
 14 way. But in terms of making contact with you through  
 15 the FDO line, it might be thought that that carries with  
 16 it disadvantages during a major incident because that is  
 17 a number that is available to any number of people,  
 18 including, to give the example we gave earlier, the  
 19 media.  
 20 A. Mm—hm.  
 21 Q. And as we are going to see very, very quickly during  
 22 a major incident, does that line become busy?  
 23 A. Extremely, yes.  
 24 Q. And do the Fire and Rescue Service have any way in which  
 25 they can gain priority over, for example, the newspaper

1 to get access to the FDO on the FDO line?  
 2 A. No.  
 3 Q. Looking back now, and I'm not for a moment suggesting  
 4 this is your responsibility, was that a weakness in the  
 5 system of communication?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. You did mention along the way of your answer, and  
 8 I didn't entirely follow it, which will be my fault,  
 9 something about putting a note on — and I think you  
 10 were talking about the incident log or the FWIN?  
 11 A. The FWIN, yes.  
 12 Q. We will see shortly an example of a FWIN, but I have  
 13 used the term incident log and that is a recent  
 14 description of it.  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. How might the Fire and Rescue Service put or cause to be  
 17 placed upon the FWIN a message that the FDO should call  
 18 them?  
 19 A. If, and it has happened in the past prior to the 22nd,  
 20 if the FDO is unavailable to take a call from the NILO  
 21 for whatever reason, whether or not they can get  
 22 through, then the common practice would be for them to  
 23 contact their control room, their control room to  
 24 contact our control room over the air, as in the  
 25 division or the area that is dealing with the specific

1 incident, and for them to put a note on to say, "Can the  
 2 FDO ring the NILO?" That FWIN would then be sent  
 3 through to the screen of the FDO, the FDO would pick  
 4 that up, and then know that the NILO needs to speak to  
 5 them. It's convoluted but it's ...  
 6 Q. Just to make sure I've understood this, so as might be  
 7 expected, the Fire and Rescue Service can't type  
 8 directly into a FWIN?  
 9 A. No.  
 10 Q. But what they can do is get their control room to make  
 11 contact with the GMP control room — and by that do you  
 12 mean the OCR where you would be?  
 13 A. Yes, but it would be specifically the radio operator  
 14 covering the area that they had interest in, so it's  
 15 usually because of an ongoing incident or an incident  
 16 that it refers to. So wherever that incident sits  
 17 within GMP would be the radio operator who would take  
 18 that.  
 19 Q. So it would be expected to be one of the radio operators  
 20 in the OCR where you were?  
 21 A. Either them or a call handler.  
 22 Q. They would do that by radio?  
 23 A. It could be done by radio or... it was mainly done via  
 24 a telephone. So the communications — the Fire Service  
 25 could ring through to GMP comms. The exact mechanics of

1 it, I'm not sure about, but —  
 2 Q. Mr Randall may be able to help us with that a little  
 3 more, I don't know.  
 4 Would they then be calling on a number different  
 5 from the FDO number?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Again, might a weakness with that be that in the event  
 8 of an incident such as the Manchester Arena attack, all  
 9 of the phones within the OCR might be extremely busy?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. And again, would the Fire and Rescue Service control  
 12 room have any way of gaining priority over anyone else  
 13 dialling into the number that you're talking about?  
 14 A. Not necessarily, only if they had a direct line to, say,  
 15 a supervisor within the room, another supervisor within  
 16 the room. Then that is the only other possible way.  
 17 Q. Which sounds like chance?  
 18 A. Very much so.  
 19 Q. I just want to make sure that there isn't another  
 20 weakness in that mechanism. When we look at the FWIN —  
 21 I'm going to call it the incident log — when we look at  
 22 the incident log for the arena attack, which runs to  
 23 over 100 pages, sometimes many messages are coming in,  
 24 it would appear, within a very short period of time.  
 25 You're nodding your head.

1 A. Mm—hm.  
 2 Q. If I were to be looking at a screen as that is  
 3 happening, are messages disappearing off the screen?  
 4 A. No. If, say, for example, I was looking at a particular  
 5 part of an incident log, a FWIN, that would stay there  
 6 and it'd be up to me to keep on going down to the next  
 7 page. So it could be keep on getting updated, but that  
 8 wouldn't affect me reading it. Where it would affect  
 9 is — within the OCB, the FDO has a small screen at the  
 10 bottom or a portion of the screen at the bottom of the  
 11 computer screen which highlights incidents which have  
 12 been switched to them, which are classed as high.  
 13 There's only about four or five lines available there,  
 14 so if you have more than five incidents coming through  
 15 which are high, you lose the bottom ones. It's only the  
 16 most recent one that goes on top, so you have to have an  
 17 idea when you are reading through a FWIN of almost where  
 18 you are within that FWIN to make sure you are not  
 19 missing anything.  
 20 Q. So I'm still not entirely clear. The question,  
 21 I suppose, is this: is there any risk that if a message  
 22 does get through by that route, and a note does go on  
 23 the FWIN, that in the moment or the aftermath of an  
 24 attack, that may be missed by the FDO because there are  
 25 so many entries coming in?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And if you're scrolling down, because  
 3 you're looking for what's coming in, would you lose that  
 4 if you hadn't noticed it? Do you understand what  
 5 I mean?  
 6 A. Yes. It would always be there, but because it's such  
 7 a fast—moving event, you wouldn't tend to go back and  
 8 read something. Unless you knew something was there and  
 9 you wanted to remind yourself of a contact number or  
 10 whatever, you wouldn't then go back further into the  
 11 screen. You'd always start off from where you last left  
 12 off. So there is a chance —  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So if you missed it, you missed it?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 MR GREANEY: Also, even if you as the FDO have seen it or  
 16 it's been drawn to your attention, whether you act upon  
 17 it will depend upon all of the other responsibilities  
 18 that you have in that fast—moving situation?  
 19 A. It would be prioritised, yes.  
 20 Q. It would be prioritised?  
 21 A. It would be prioritised by the FDO. If it was me,  
 22 I would decide whether or not that contact was necessary  
 23 at that moment in time, bearing in mind what else was  
 24 required.  
 25 Q. Whilst appreciating that you may not be the expert in

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1 this topic, still dealing with the Fire and Rescue  
 2 Service, were there any other ways in which in the event  
 3 of a major incident they would be, using that term in  
 4 a non—technical way for the time being, able to make  
 5 contact with you?  
 6 A. Officially, there was a number of channels, additional  
 7 channels, which could be used, but initially it would  
 8 need to be an agreement which channel we were all going  
 9 to go on to. However, that was not common practice.  
 10 Those additional channels tended to get used once Silver  
 11 had been set up, Silver command had been set up.  
 12 Q. Which takes some time?  
 13 A. Which takes some time. So from a practical perspective,  
 14 we didn't use those additional channels.  
 15 Q. It is very wise that you haven't indicated what those  
 16 channels are. We're not going to be using any channel  
 17 numbers. But it sounds that a problem with that is if  
 18 those channels are going to be used at an early stage,  
 19 contact needs to be made between the Fire and Rescue  
 20 Service and GMP to arrange that and you then hit the  
 21 problem of how you're going to do that if you can't get  
 22 through to the FDO on his number and you can't get  
 23 something on the FWIN that he'll look at.  
 24 A. That was certainly the case prior to 22 May. However,  
 25 that process has significantly changed.

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1 Q. And as you'll appreciate, whilst it's important we  
 2 should know it has changed, and I'm sure you would say  
 3 also improved, we don't want to go into the details of  
 4 what has altered.  
 5 That deals with the Fire and Rescue Service. The  
 6 Ambulance Service, do they have the same and only the  
 7 same mechanisms for making contact with the FDO or are  
 8 there other or different ways?  
 9 A. They're exactly the same.  
 10 Q. And carry with them therefore exactly the same  
 11 weaknesses?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. I did say my question was restricted to the Fire and  
 14 Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service. Given that  
 15 we're dealing with it, British Transport Police. If  
 16 they wanted to make contact with the OCR during such an  
 17 event, what mechanisms were available to them, the same  
 18 or different as the ones you've mentioned?  
 19 A. Pretty much the same. That would be the expected or  
 20 understood system that would be used. They had a direct  
 21 line to the FDO but would still encounter the same  
 22 problems as GMFRS or NWAS.  
 23 Q. So it may be Mr Randall has an additional perspective on  
 24 this, but it's important that we should hear from you  
 25 what you understood in May 2017 the position to be.

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1 We talked about the regularity of contact a little  
 2 time ago. Is it the position that since the arena  
 3 attack, not only the mechanisms have changed but the  
 4 regularity of contact has changed so that contact is now  
 5 made between the three services, three times a day via  
 6 a particular radio channel?  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. And this involves an FDO picking up a dedicated radio at  
 9 any time within a shift and calling both the  
 10 Ambulance Service and the Fire and Rescue Service  
 11 control rooms to ensure that they are monitoring the  
 12 channel?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Who is it that instigates that check?  
 15 A. Force duty officer, the FDO.  
 16 Q. But is there anything to prevent either of the other  
 17 agencies from using this mechanism of communication at  
 18 any time?  
 19 A. No, the radio is always turned on, always beside the  
 20 terminal for the FDO.  
 21 Q. So is it possible for all three agencies to listen to  
 22 that channel at the same time?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. Does that mark a substantial improvement on the position  
 25 that existed in May 2017?

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1 A. Absolutely significant because it has now become part of  
 2 muscle memory as well, so it's not something that you'd  
 3 really need to think about.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know we're all benefiting from  
 5 hindsight, but why wasn't this done before? It doesn't  
 6 seem rocket science.  
 7 A. No, it isn't, sir. I can't answer that question.  
 8 MR GREANEY: As we're going to hear a little from you and  
 9 from others in due course, that did have real  
 10 consequences on the night, did it not, because in the  
 11 result Mr Berry, the Fire and Rescue Service NILO,  
 12 wanted to speak to you and was not able to do so?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. Do you want to qualify that? I'll let you do so.  
 15 A. I think it's fair to Mr Berry that I was aware that  
 16 he had managed to get through to, later on in the night,  
 17 to someone I had identified to field my calls.  
 18 Q. Mr Myerscough?  
 19 A. Yes. But at that time I was assessing a new piece of  
 20 intelligence with a risk attached to it, so was unable  
 21 to take his call. I think he did get through, or  
 22 certainly a NILO did, but I was not in a position to  
 23 take that call.  
 24 Q. He got through to Mr Myerscough, that's right, and we'll  
 25 hear that in the recording in due course. Have you

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1 heard that recording of the conversation between  
 2 Mr Berry and Mr Myerscough?  
 3 A. I haven't, no.  
 4 Q. Are you aware of the content of it?  
 5 A. Other than beyond... No, I'd have to say no.  
 6 Q. That's very fair. We will either hear it or look at it,  
 7 I can't remember which, in due course. But I don't  
 8 think I'm being unfair by saying it was an  
 9 unsatisfactory telephone conversation and not a good  
 10 example of JESIP working, but we'll get to that in due  
 11 course.  
 12 Next, and we're nearly at the end of this particular  
 13 topic, I am not going to ask you about where the OCR was  
 14 located on 22 May. I understand there may be some  
 15 operational sensitivity around that. I am going to ask  
 16 you to help us with what the OCR looked like, where  
 17 people were positioned, the height at which they were  
 18 positioned and so on.  
 19 First of all, in May 2017, did the FDO sit alongside  
 20 and at the same level as other people within the room?  
 21 A. No, there's an area that was called the FDO podium,  
 22 which was a podium similar to the one you're sat on, the  
 23 one we're on now, which was possibly raised by  
 24 18 inches, which gave the FDO a very good view  
 25 throughout and across the room.

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1 Q. Was that deliberate, as you understood it?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. The purpose of it being to provide the FDO with  
 4 oversight of the entire room?  
 5 A. Yes, where they were located, at the middle and towards  
 6 the back of the room, gave very good position for  
 7 hearing what was going on in the room. So if an  
 8 incident started developing on one radio channel before  
 9 the FDO had been made aware of it, you could usually  
 10 hear the increased chatter and start then looking into  
 11 that radio and seeing what jobs were on that list before  
 12 it was actually switched through.  
 13 Q. So you can pick up serious incidents fairly quickly?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. That's the purpose of it. And other people who are  
 16 within the room, there would be radio operators?  
 17 A. Yes, radio operators who had responsibility for the  
 18 various divisions within GMP. Some of those may have an  
 19 assistant who would make phone calls on their behalf.  
 20 Directly in front of the FDO there was another team,  
 21 which dealt specifically with force resources,  
 22 specialist resources, who face the FDO, because the type  
 23 of incidents that they deal with — or the FDO would  
 24 tend to get involved with, so that was much more of  
 25 a face-to-face positioning.

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1 Q. I just missed the title of those people.  
 2 A. That was a team known as team 3, which deal with what we  
 3 call the CK channels.  
 4 Q. We would also have call handlers within the OCR, is that  
 5 correct, or would they be elsewhere?  
 6 A. No, the call handlers would be at another location.  
 7 There was another support wing, called the IMU, the  
 8 Information Management Unit --  
 9 Q. And you refer to them in the recording, in fact?  
 10 A. I think so, yes.  
 11 Q. I think in fact what you do is you want somebody from  
 12 the IMU to ultimately come and answer your telephone, do  
 13 you not?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Another role within that room that is, I'm going to  
 16 invite you to agree, important is the role of force duty  
 17 supervisor or FDS?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. And am I correct that that is an important role?  
 20 A. Very important, yes.  
 21 Q. Why?  
 22 A. It's very important to the FDO. The FDS is the support  
 23 to the FDO during increased demand. They're usually  
 24 very experienced supervisors, not police officers, they  
 25 don't tend to be police officers, although police

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1 officers do take on that role. But they're certainly  
 2 experienced and they can usually almost second-guess  
 3 what the FDO is going to ask them as a job starts  
 4 developing. They are a very good source of support and  
 5 they're very knowledgeable about the mechanics of the  
 6 room.  
 7 Q. And the FDS on this particular night, at least to begin,  
 8 with, was Ian Randall?  
 9 A. It was, yes.  
 10 Q. Was he someone that you knew?  
 11 A. Yes, I had worked with him many times.  
 12 Q. Was he an experienced FDS?  
 13 A. Very capable.  
 14 Q. And indeed we're going to hear, aren't we, that he  
 15 appears to have known what he was doing?  
 16 A. Very much so, yes.  
 17 Q. There came a stage at which you lost him from the OCR.  
 18 A. Mm-hm.  
 19 Q. Did that have consequences?  
 20 A. No, I don't believe it did. He was replaced by  
 21 PC Andrew Core -- sorry, PS Andrew Core, who I'd worked  
 22 with on a number of occasions where he had been my FDS,  
 23 so I knew his capabilities. He hadn't been in the OCR  
 24 as long as Ian had been, so there was obviously a slight  
 25 lack or reduced understanding, but he was certainly

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1 capable.  
 2 Q. I'm genuinely not criticising him, but I haven't been  
 3 able, in listening to the recording, to hear the same  
 4 level of interaction between you and him as there  
 5 undoubtedly was between you and Ian Randall. Does that,  
 6 bearing in mind you're listening to it, seem like a fair  
 7 observation?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. So your view looking back is that there weren't  
 10 consequences, but putting it a different way, was it  
 11 undesirable that you lost Ian Randall at the stage at  
 12 which you did?  
 13 A. There are two ways you can look at it: would I have  
 14 preferred to have kept him? Most probably. However,  
 15 did I understand the importance of the activation of  
 16 Silver command? Yes, I did. And did that outweigh any  
 17 issues I may have, not that I can think of any, by  
 18 replacing him with PS Core? No, it didn't. I think his  
 19 skill in being able to set up Silver was much more  
 20 beneficial to the incident progression than having him  
 21 sat with me.  
 22 Q. So he had two particular capabilities: one was as  
 23 an FDS?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. The other was in setting up Silver?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. And in the end, the decision was it was better that he  
 3 got involved in setting up Silver than remain with you?  
 4 A. Yes. Again, the difference in ability between Andrew  
 5 and Ian would not affect, and I don't believe affected,  
 6 the way that we managed the incident that night.  
 7 Q. What isn't apparent to me from the recording is whose  
 8 decision it was that he should leave the OCR and go to  
 9 become involved in setting up Silver.  
 10 A. It was my decision. Ian, I think, had suggested it or  
 11 brought it up that we'd need to be looking at setting up  
 12 Silver, which is what he is expected to do, he's  
 13 expected to be looking at the stuff that's on the  
 14 periphery while I'm in the middle of making crucial and  
 15 critical decisions, for him to remind me, "Actually,  
 16 boss, you might want to think about doing this". It was  
 17 my decision and my responsibility to release him. If I  
 18 had said to him, "No, Ian, get someone else to do it,  
 19 you're staying here", that's what would have happened.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was there an alternative?  
 21 A. I don't believe so. He was the most experienced  
 22 supervisor and for me at that point, it sounds really  
 23 selfish, but the quicker I got Silver set up, the  
 24 quicker command would have been taken away from me.  
 25 MR GREANEY: You do make that plain during the course of the

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1 recording.  
 2 One of the things that happens, as we are going to  
 3 hear, is that a gentleman called Dave Myerscough take  
 4 over responsibility for answering the FDO line.  
 5 A. Mm—hm.  
 6 Q. And what was his particular position within the OCR?  
 7 A. I believe he was working that night within the IMU.  
 8 Q. You certainly called upon the IMU to take over answering  
 9 the calls. If Ian Randall had remained in post as FDS,  
 10 would Mr Myerscough still have taken over that  
 11 responsibility?  
 12 A. Most definitely. I would not have given the  
 13 responsibility to answer my phone to Ian. The FDS would  
 14 have had sufficient work and demand on them that  
 15 wouldn't have warranted me wanting him to answer my  
 16 phone.  
 17 Q. Did you know anything about the background, experience  
 18 and capabilities of Mr Myerscough?  
 19 A. No. I'd not knowingly worked with him before or since.  
 20 Q. Was it desirable that someone that you didn't really  
 21 know should be given, ultimately, the important  
 22 responsibility of answering the FDO line?  
 23 A. I think it was a reasonable assumption for me to believe  
 24 that he or anyone who was within the IMU, who  
 25 potentially has been a call handler or even a radio

1 operator as well, would certainly be in a position to  
 2 field telephone calls. I was not asking him to do  
 3 anything other than answer the phone calls. If he  
 4 thought that I needed to be made aware of that call,  
 5 then that's all I was asking him to do. So I don't  
 6 think it was unrealistic of me to believe that he was  
 7 capable of doing that.  
 8 Q. In any event, as the situation developed, did you feel  
 9 that you had any choice save to call on someone from the  
 10 IMU to take on that responsibility?  
 11 A. I had absolutely no other option. The IMU is a part of  
 12 the room which could have been depleted to deal with the  
 13 demand that was coming into the room. I wouldn't have  
 14 thought of taking away a radio operator or even an  
 15 assistant from any of the other channels, and ultimately  
 16 I think I'd asked Ian or one of the supervisors to find  
 17 me someone to answer the phone. I think I might have  
 18 just shouted across to IMU, "One of you, come up here".  
 19 Q. You do.  
 20 Next topic, but still dealing with the FDO. As  
 21 an FDO, if a particular event was taking place within  
 22 the force area on a particular day or night, would you  
 23 expect to be aware of it?  
 24 A. Large-scale events within GMP that GMP were policing,  
 25 yes.

1 Q. So football matches at Old Trafford or the Etihad?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Any kind of protest or carnival that was taking place?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. And if there is a policing requirement, by which I mean  
 6 a GMP policing requirement for an event, is a FWIN or  
 7 incident log created?  
 8 A. It is, yes.  
 9 Q. Is that the way in which you become aware of it?  
 10 A. Not necessarily. There is also a weekly report that's  
 11 sent through or was — I think that's still the case —  
 12 which highlights the up—and—coming events for that week.  
 13 Q. The Manchester Arena is obviously a location at which  
 14 significant events take place. We know at the  
 15 Ariana Grande concert more than 14,000 young people and  
 16 others attended. Would you as the FDO in May of 2017  
 17 expect to have been made aware of such an event at the  
 18 arena?  
 19 A. Not necessarily, no.  
 20 Q. Why not?  
 21 A. Unless we were policing it, which we wouldn't routinely  
 22 police, if it had been something like a boxing match,  
 23 which might bring large-scale disorder, yes, the FDO  
 24 would most probably be aware of that. However, that's  
 25 the impact it has outside the arena. For a low ... No,

1 I need to be careful how I word this.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think you do. Just tell us how  
 3 it would have struck you at the time.  
 4 A. There was no real threat to that type of gathering, that  
 5 type of concert, and we would predominantly look from —  
 6 MR GREANEY: When you say that type of —  
 7 A. Sorry, the force.  
 8 Q. When you say "that type of concert", do you mean an  
 9 Ariana Grande type concert?  
 10 A. Ariana Grande. There's going to be families there,  
 11 there's going to be young people there. It doesn't have  
 12 the demographic for causing us large-scale disorder.  
 13 Q. So they're not going to fight amongst themselves?  
 14 A. We would hope not, no. I understand the issue around —  
 15 well, about what other threats that having a large crowd  
 16 would bring.  
 17 Q. Or threats to them?  
 18 A. Yes, exactly, threats to them. But I think from a GMP  
 19 perspective, there was an event which was being run on  
 20 BTP land, for want of a better term. It didn't, as far  
 21 as — that type of concert wouldn't bring that type of  
 22 higher-level policing response because there wouldn't be  
 23 anticipated any disorder, and that is the approach that  
 24 I believe — well, certainly I would have looked at it,  
 25 discounting what actually happened.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Your original answer was:  
 2 "I would not necessarily have been made aware of the  
 3 Ariana Grande concert."  
 4 It sounds from the extended answer that you  
 5 certainly wouldn't have been made aware of it.  
 6 A. No.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 8 MR GREANEY: Was it really as simple as this, that because  
 9 the concert was taking place in an area for which BTP  
 10 would generally have responsibility, the policing of it  
 11 was their business, not yours?  
 12 A. Yes, in short.  
 13 Q. The way in which you put it in your witness statement,  
 14 at paragraph 33 — Mr de la Poer can prick up his ears:  
 15 "Strictly, as the arena comes within the footprint  
 16 of Victoria Railway Station, it is under the policing  
 17 jurisdiction of British Transport Police and they take  
 18 primacy for any incidents that occur there."  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And you added:  
 21 "BTP would, however, need support from GMP resources  
 22 until they were able to deploy sufficient resources to  
 23 the scene. This approach has developed as something of  
 24 a local understanding with BTP."  
 25 I don't want to go into it in any more detail than

1 that, but obviously on the night what happened did  
 2 happen in an area in respect of which BTP had  
 3 a jurisdiction; the issue of primacy being different.  
 4 A. Mm—hm.  
 5 Q. So how on the night did that feature in your thinking  
 6 about who was going to do what?  
 7 A. It was quite simple for me. It was a commonsense  
 8 approach. Yes, if it had been a, I don't know,  
 9 a low-level incident then we would have left it to BTP  
 10 to sort out. But because of the seriousness of what  
 11 happened, it doesn't take a genius to realise that BTP  
 12 aren't going to be able to manage this and actually it's  
 13 going to be all GMP resources. It's certainly going to  
 14 be my firearms resources that were going to be deployed  
 15 and taking control of the arena.  
 16 So yes, I was aware that technically it came on  
 17 BTP's responsibility. As we'd approached other  
 18 incidents in the past, it was common practice, but  
 19 because of the serious nature of this one, it wasn't  
 20 a question that I needed to ask: GMP took control.  
 21 Q. Yes, and that's obvious. And no one's suggesting you  
 22 didn't do the right thing. But it might be thought that  
 23 leaving the decision to common sense is rather less  
 24 satisfactory than having some formalised plan between  
 25 BTP and GMP about how a particular situation is going to

1 be policed.  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. What you say, just before we move on, is this:  
 4 "As the attack unfolded, despite feeling a deep  
 5 sense of trepidation of needing to take responsibility  
 6 and make sense of the enormity of the situation, it was  
 7 apparent I needed to take command and control from the  
 8 outset and I never considered anything other than that."  
 9 Is that correct?  
 10 A. Yes, that's right.  
 11 Q. Next, topic 5, plans. And really we're talking here  
 12 about the Operation Plato plans and we will look at your  
 13 own aide-memoire and the issue of action cards.  
 14 The inquiry has looked at the history of the GMP  
 15 Plato plan in some detail. Have you been able to follow  
 16 that to any extent?  
 17 A. Yes, I have.  
 18 Q. Where we seem to have landed — and this is my  
 19 description, no one else's — is that in May of 2017,  
 20 two different plans seem to have been in the thoughts of  
 21 different people. And by two different plans, what I'm  
 22 talking about is, first, SOP 47 v5, which has been  
 23 updated from earlier iterations by Superintendent Giladi  
 24 for the purposes of an HMIC visit. When I say SOP 47  
 25 v5, do you know what I am talking about?

1 A. I do now. At the time would I have known? No, there  
 2 was a policy.  
 3 Q. This is really what I'm keen to understand but I don't  
 4 want to get there too quickly, we need to understand the  
 5 detail. So that was the first one. The second was what  
 6 we've been describing as the Whittle plan, because its  
 7 actual title is much longer, authored by  
 8 Sergeant Whittle, dated 4 May 2017, and prepared in an  
 9 attempt to implement the refreshed CTPHQ guidance.  
 10 I think from the answer you gave a moment ago you will  
 11 have been aware at the time of the arena attack of the  
 12 existence of a plan but not much more than that?  
 13 A. No, but in relation to Dave Whittle's, I very much  
 14 doubt, looking at my duties from the beginning of May to  
 15 when he circulated the policy, that I would have been  
 16 aware of that one.  
 17 Q. So this is exactly where we need to get to in due  
 18 course. As I think you'll know, Mr Giladi thought that  
 19 his version 5 was the relevant plan on 22 May, but  
 20 Mr Whittle and Mr Booth thought that it was the Whittle  
 21 plan. So once we've looked at the documents, I will  
 22 just return to the question of which you thought was in  
 23 force at the relevant time. But even before that, can  
 24 we agree that a situation in which different officers  
 25 thought that different plans were in place for something

1 as important as Operation Plato is unsatisfactory?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. First of all, v5. Mr Lopez, I'm going to give you the  
 4 INQ reference, it's {INQ039970/1}.  
 5 Have you looked at these documents ahead of giving  
 6 evidence?  
 7 A. I have, yes.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Had you ever looked at them before?  
 9 A. Not knowingly, sir.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, all right. Not knowing them by  
 11 the name, as it were?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 14 MR GREANEY: This is SOP 47. Originally authored by  
 15 Inspector Fitton and reviewed by Superintendent Giladi,  
 16 as I indicated, for the purposes of the HMIC visit.  
 17 Could we go next, please, to {INQ039970/6}.  
 18 Can you see the section at the bottom, "Force duty  
 19 officer actions"?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. I'm just going to take you through these and ask you  
 22 which did you and didn't do on the night:  
 23 "Declaration of Operation Plato. Personnel from any  
 24 service may report a suspected marauding terrorist  
 25 firearms attack. However, it is the FDO's

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1 responsibility to formally declare such an attack and  
 2 initiate the multi-agency response."  
 3 So certainly you did declare Operation Plato, did  
 4 you not?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. Did you initiate the multi-agency response?  
 7 A. No.  
 8 Q. As I promised, we will come on to why you didn't in due  
 9 course.  
 10 "Set the initial working strategy".  
 11 Did you do that?  
 12 A. Yes. The initial working strategy was specific to the  
 13 firearms aspect and firearms teams as opposed to any  
 14 JESIP.  
 15 Q. As we're going to see very quickly, you do deploy  
 16 firearms assets to the scene and you grant firearms  
 17 authority?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Next page, the top of that page, Mr Lopez {INQ039970/7}:  
 20 "Authorisation of immediate deployment of armed  
 21 resources to the scene to achieve the working strategy."  
 22 You did that, did you not?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. "Ensure that an operational firearms commander is  
 25 identified and deployed to command the firearms assets."

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1 Did you do that?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Did Constable Edward Richardson become the OFC,  
 4 operational firearms commander?  
 5 A. He was, yes.  
 6 Q. We're going to hear his voice repeatedly in the  
 7 recording:  
 8 "Brief the responding firearms assets in line with  
 9 the national decision model."  
 10 Did you do that?  
 11 A. Yes, I did that in accordance with the APP.  
 12 Q. "Contact a firearms tactical adviser."  
 13 Did you do that?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Was that Mr Lawton?  
 16 A. Yes, PS Lawton.  
 17 Q. We're going to see that happens at a very early stage.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just go back:  
 19 "Brief the responding firearms assets in line with  
 20 the national decision model."  
 21 What does that actually mean?  
 22 A. APP for armed policing allows a deployment of firearms  
 23 officers and ideally you should give them the best  
 24 briefing you possibly can. However, it accepts that --  
 25 and certainly within GMP where we have a very good

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1 coverage of firearms officers -- that it might only be  
 2 a couple of minutes, if that, and sometimes around the  
 3 corner, before you can have a firearms officer at the  
 4 scene. So in those circumstances, the briefing would be  
 5 extremely short, so you give the key information --  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I can understand the briefing part.  
 7 It's just "in line with the national decision model".  
 8 I understand the decision model as well, but I just  
 9 don't understand putting them together.  
 10 A. Yes. It's basically the fact that actually for me to  
 11 deploy firearms officers I have got to quickly spin the  
 12 NDM model to make sure that, first of all, it's legal,  
 13 we can do it, that the threat is significant enough for  
 14 the deployment of firearms officers, and what do I want  
 15 them to do. In short, that's basically what it means.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 17 MR GREANEY: "Contact tactical firearms commander from the  
 18 force's cadre to achieve handover of command as soon as  
 19 is practicable."  
 20 As we know, as the FDO, where there is a firearms  
 21 incident, you are the initial firearms commander --  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. -- the initial tactical firearms commander? What is  
 24 this requiring you to do and did you do it?  
 25 A. Yes. The cadre -- GMP always has a tactical firearms

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1 commander, one on days, one on nights. I believe  
 2 Chief Inspector Buckle was the duty cadre TFC. So in  
 3 practical terms, when a firearms incident starts, as  
 4 a spontaneous one, then when I have time to do so,  
 5 I should hand over to the TFC, inform them of what we  
 6 are dealing with, what I have authorised, and then they  
 7 should get themselves into a position where they can  
 8 take command and control off me at the earliest  
 9 opportunity.  
 10 Q. So Chief Inspector Rachel Buckle is, what, the on-call  
 11 cadre TFC?  
 12 A. Yes. I very much doubt -- she may have been actually on  
 13 duty, I'm not sure if she was, or whether or not she was  
 14 called out from her home.  
 15 Q. My recollection is she's called out from home, but we'll  
 16 pick that up from the recording. You do speak to her,  
 17 do you not?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. In the result, is it the position that she did not take  
 20 up the role as tactical firearms commander?  
 21 A. No, she didn't.  
 22 Q. But instead Superintendent Hill assumed that  
 23 responsibility?  
 24 A. No, Superintendent Thompson.  
 25 Q. You're quite right, forgive me. That, as we've

1 understood it, occurred at shortly after quarter past  
 2 midnight. You're nodding your head. Would we be right  
 3 to conclude that an hour and 45 minutes, or a little  
 4 longer, from the explosion to the TFC taking over from  
 5 the ITFC is a long time?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. How quickly you would have expected the TFC to take over  
 8 from you as the ITFC?  
 9 A. I wouldn't have expected her to have taken over until  
 10 she was in a position where she felt she could take  
 11 command and control. So that might be a question you  
 12 need to ask her. However, for an incident of this  
 13 magnitude, and the demands placed on the FDO, I would  
 14 have expected that that it would certainly have been  
 15 a lot shorter than an hour and a half.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We need to know when you actually got  
 17 hold of her and got her to take over. I'm sure we do  
 18 know that.  
 19 MR GREANEY: It will become apparent once we listen to the  
 20 recording.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's fine, it's just you're saying  
 22 an hour and 45 minutes is a long time, which of course  
 23 it is, but the relevant time is between notifying her  
 24 and it starting. That's all I was thinking.  
 25 MR GREANEY: I'm sorry I do not have that timing in mind at

1 the moment.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it something you did pretty quickly?  
 3 A. Yes, I believe it was certainly within the first  
 4 20 minutes or so. It's one of those things we would do  
 5 very quickly.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.  
 7 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Suter, that's  
 8 very helpful.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Instant answers.  
 10 MR GREANEY: They are almost instant answers, certainly as  
 11 quickly as could be expected. It seems that she became  
 12 aware of it following a conversation with the FDS at  
 13 22.44 hours.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. So that's the relevant time?  
 15 MR GREANEY: We will check that as we go through the  
 16 recording.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Anyway, you'd expect it quicker than  
 18 that?  
 19 A. Ideally, yes, sir.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 21 MR GREANEY: If we were to listen to the whole of the  
 22 recording from your dictaphone, which is 2 hours and  
 23 49 minutes long and not just up until the point at which  
 24 the TFC does take over from you, would it be reasonable  
 25 to suggest that what we would experience is a -- you

1 still have a lot to do, but a significant drop-off  
 2 in the pressure upon you from the point that the TFC  
 3 takes over?  
 4 A. Significantly. I could breathe.  
 5 Q. "Contact the on-call force strategic firearms  
 6 commander."  
 7 Did you do that?  
 8 A. No, I didn't, but that would have been ACC Ford. But  
 9 I believe that she was informed by Superintendent Nawaz  
 10 after our conversation. Ideally, under normal  
 11 circumstances, that phone call is quite crucial that  
 12 I make to her, either in person or via the TFC. The TFC  
 13 can also do it once they've been briefed, but obviously  
 14 I was not in a position to brief either of them.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you know Nawaz was going to do it?  
 16 You said you believed he did do it.  
 17 A. No, I believe that was a conversation he would have with  
 18 her anyway, I knew he was going to speak to her because  
 19 that's the way it works. If a significant incident  
 20 happens --  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You didn't tell the strategic firearms  
 22 commander. Did you assume that was going to be done by  
 23 Superintendent Nawaz?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

1 MR GREANEY: Is it the position that, as we look through  
2 this list, these are all things that you as the FDO  
3 would personally be expected to do or is there an extent  
4 to which you can delegate some of these responsibilities  
5 as you understood it in May 2017?  
6 A. Short of contacting the cadre TFC, who would still need  
7 briefing at some point, all those would have to be done  
8 by the ITFC, so the FDO.  
9 Q. The next bullet point involves contact with a person or  
10 organisation that is operationally sensitive. But  
11 we can agree that you did do that, did you not?  
12 A. Yes.  
13 Q. Indeed, it took up quite a lot of your time?  
14 A. I didn't realise how much time it did take up until  
15 I re-listened to it.  
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm just checking, we are certain that  
17 that is operationally sensitive, are we? And for good  
18 reason?  
19 MR GREANEY: It is definitely operationally sensitive.  
20 Whether it's for a good reason I'm not in a position to  
21 say, but it's definitely operationally sensitive.  
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Being told it takes a long time doesn't  
23 make it terribly helpful. Never mind, don't worry.  
24 MR GREANEY: When you listen to the recording, sir, I know  
25 you have listened to substantial portions of it, but

1 you will get a clear impression of how much time because  
2 those parts are bleeped out.  
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
4 A. Could I just say, sir, that under normal circumstances  
5 I wouldn't have anticipated it took that long. It  
6 should have been quicker.  
7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
8 MR GREANEY: "Request additional firearms assets in line  
9 with the NPCC Force Leads Letter from ACC Chris Shead,  
10 mobilisation of neighbouring forces' armed assets to  
11 support MTF A deployments and national police firearms  
12 mobilisation plan."  
13 We don't need to go into the detail of that, but you  
14 did do that?  
15 A. I did, yes.  
16 Q. Would you agree that when we listen to the recording,  
17 you don't have really any difficulty getting in contact  
18 with your FDO equivalent in other forces?  
19 A. No.  
20 Q. And they don't seem to have much difficulty in getting  
21 in touch with you?  
22 A. I don't know how times they tried, but it would appear  
23 not.  
24 Q. And in the result, firearms assets from other forces  
25 were mobilised to Manchester swiftly, were they not?

1 A. They were, yes.  
2 Q. "Inform emergency service partners [this is the next one  
3 and an important one to ask you about] once  
4 Operation Plato has been declared to enable emergency  
5 service contingency plans to be put into effect in line  
6 with the nationally agreed document, 'Responding to  
7 a Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack Operation Plato  
8 Joint Operating Principles for the Emergency Services,  
9 edition 2'."  
10 Did you do that?  
11 A. I didn't, no.  
12 Q. "Commence the protocols for setting up and establishing  
13 a joint command facility."  
14 Is that a reference to a forward command point or --  
15 A. It is, yes.  
16 Q. Did you do that?  
17 A. I believe that I did cover that because of the RVP.  
18 I don't know if you want me to go into my explanation  
19 for why at this point or whether that's going to be  
20 examined later.  
21 Q. It's certainly going to be examined later, but perhaps  
22 no time like the present. An RVP and a forward command  
23 point are two different things, are they not?  
24 A. They can be and usually are, yes.  
25 Q. And this is my simplification, but the rendezvous point,

1 the RVP, is effectively a muster point for the services  
2 that are going to be deployed on to the ground?  
3 A. Yes, although there are holding areas, which we would  
4 class as muster points beyond that but, yes, an RVP is  
5 the first point where officers attending the scene  
6 should go to.  
7 Q. And the forward command point is the location at which  
8 you would expect the Silver commanders to meet?  
9 A. Yes.  
10 Q. So that they can put into effect JESIP?  
11 A. Yes.  
12 Q. So the identification of a forward command point is, as  
13 we're going to get to shortly, an important part of what  
14 should happen, not just in response to an  
15 Operation Plato situation, but in response to any  
16 situation where more than the police are required to  
17 provide assistance?  
18 A. Yes.  
19 Q. So having just established those basics, please do give  
20 us your explanation.  
21 A. The common approach was always, in my experience of  
22 dealing with major incidents, and I have dealt with  
23 numerous through my career -- is that the RVP would be  
24 the point where the Silvers would initially meet. The  
25 FCP is a point where, once they're at the RVP, they can

1 then decide, so the RVP and the FCP at that point are  
 2 one and the same in my experience. It makes much more  
 3 sense, once you've got people with better situational  
 4 awareness on the ground at the scene, to then dictate  
 5 how far forward they can go for an FCP. And that for me  
 6 makes more common sense or makes more sense for someone  
 7 on the ground to do that than me who's sat miles away in  
 8 a room not fully understanding the layout of the room,  
 9 the exact location potentially of the incident, what  
 10 hazards might be there. So all this has to be taken  
 11 into account once an FCP is decided upon. And I think  
 12 the best people to do that are those commanders on the  
 13 ground.

14 So for me, initially and from experience, the RVP  
 15 and the FCP have always been one and the same.

16 Q. We're going to have to unpick that in due course, but  
 17 I will ask you: do you think that you communicated  
 18 adequately to anyone that night that your decision was  
 19 "I'm going to identify an RVP and others at the RVP  
 20 should identify where the FCP is"?

21 A. No, my expectation would be that the commanders on the  
 22 ground would do that, but, no, I didn't communicate it.

23 Q. Does it follow from the explanation you have given that  
 24 your expectation was that Silver, by which I mean  
 25 Superintendent Nawaz, would have gone not to

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1 headquarters but to the scene, and by the scene I mean  
 2 the RVP or FCP?  
 3 A. Again, I don't think there's any yes or no answer to it  
 4 in that ideally, as Silver, he would be better placed,  
 5 initially in the early stages of an incident, to be  
 6 at the incident. However, it was very much common  
 7 practice within GMP, when running a Silver control room,  
 8 for the Silver to be in that control room. So I can  
 9 understand why he went to the control room. However,  
 10 from my perspective, he would have been better placed to  
 11 go to the scene.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The actual question was, I'm not  
 13 complaining about your answer, but the actual question  
 14 was: what was your expectation? Was your expectation  
 15 that he would go to the scene?

16 A. Yes.

17 MR GREANEY: Let's carry on:

18 "If an attack occurs at any rail infrastructure  
 19 location, share information with BTP partners and engage  
 20 in the decision-making process. GMP would retain  
 21 primacy in any armed response to attacks at premises  
 22 within its boundaries."

23 Do you think that you achieved that?

24 A. No, I didn't, but I was aware that BTP officers were on  
 25 the ground.

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1 Q. "Commence arrangements" --

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm really sorry, just looking at that,  
 3 just looking literally at that, it talks about a divided  
 4 primacy almost, doesn't it? Talking about you have  
 5 primacy for firearms but otherwise primacy for BTP or  
 6 maybe for BTP? It may not make any sense to you and  
 7 I could understand that. But it does seem to be  
 8 prefaced on that basis.

9 A. My understanding on the night would have been that  
 10 almost an amalgamation of GMP and BTP officers and  
 11 almost an amalgamation of the command structure they're  
 12 in for the unarmed resources would be in place because  
 13 BTP, yes, technically it's their area of responsibility,  
 14 notwithstanding obviously the primacy issue, and the  
 15 jurisdiction issue, we have jurisdiction anyway there,  
 16 but almost out of courtesy there would be an involvement  
 17 in their command on the ground for unarmed officers. So  
 18 this is where it's a little bit confusing.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In reality, they're all police officers  
 20 together and whoever is the senior rank there takes  
 21 control?

22 A. Yes.

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Whether it's GMP or BTP?

24 A. Absolutely.

25 MR GREANEY: Thank you, sir.

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1 "Commence arrangements (via TFU..."  
 2 TFU being?

3 A. Tactical firearms unit.

4 Q. "... (via TFU supervision) to backfill to minimum force  
 5 cover levels for attending GMP resources."

6 Does that mean, to deal with it in very general  
 7 terms, I've probably got this wrong, that firearms  
 8 resources may in substantial numbers have been sent to  
 9 a particular location, here the arena, that doesn't mean  
 10 that other firearms incidents aren't going to occur  
 11 elsewhere in Greater Manchester Police and you need to  
 12 make sure that you have a contingency in place for that?

13 A. That and along with -- certainly on the protracted  
 14 incidents, having an understanding that you can't bring  
 15 all your firearms resources in on that one incident  
 16 because tomorrow still needs to be filled for the  
 17 day-to-day stuff. But yes, in simple terms that's what  
 18 it means.

19 Q. Did do you that?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Was part of achieving that, part of managing it,  
 22 bringing in resources, firearms assets, from other  
 23 locations?

24 A. Yes, I had numerous conversations with neighbouring  
 25 forces.

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1 Q. And:  
 2 "Consider the activation of Operation Temperer."  
 3 I think we have been told what that is. Unless it's  
 4 operationally sensitive, would you tell us what  
 5 Operation Temperer is?  
 6 A. Is it operationally sensitive? (Pause). It is  
 7 a response to a potential ... I don't know if it is  
 8 operationally sensitive.  
 9 Q. If you're in two minds, then you won't press you at the  
 10 moment and we can find out in the break. Did you do it?  
 11 A. No.  
 12 Q. I won't ask you why not at the moment. So we've  
 13 identified what from this list you did and didn't do.  
 14 The striking omission, do you agree, is that you did not  
 15 take steps to communicate the declaration of  
 16 Operation Plato to your emergency service partners?  
 17 A. Correct.  
 18 Q. We will try and take this rather more quickly. Second,  
 19 the Whittle plan. We can take that from the screen,  
 20 Mr Lopez, thank you.  
 21 This plan followed the refreshed CTPHQ guidance. Do  
 22 you think that you were aware at the time that CTPHQ had  
 23 issued new guidance in respect of MTFAs?  
 24 A. I honestly can't say yes or no. I'm certainly not aware  
 25 of it.

1 Q. But have you taken steps to make yourself aware of it as  
 2 part of preparing to give evidence?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. We'll just remind ourselves of this document, it's quite  
 5 a long time since we've seen it. {INQ016688/1}.  
 6 We will be able to see that the date of it --  
 7 I don't think we can see, but the date of it in fact was  
 8 March of 2017, I believe.  
 9 Can we go to {INQ016688/5}, please, and  
 10 paragraph 3.8:  
 11 "Indications that an MTFA is underway could include  
 12 the following."  
 13 We don't have all of them, some are irrelevant and  
 14 sensitive:  
 15 "Multiple subjects. Subjects working cohesively in  
 16 pairs or groups. Multiple sites of attack  
 17 simultaneously or in close succession. Indiscriminate  
 18 attacks designed to cause mass casualties. Targeting  
 19 soft targets and particularly crowded public areas or  
 20 events. Targeting of iconic sites. Willingness of  
 21 subjects to confront and attack initial responders,  
 22 including armed responders."  
 23 We'll go to the top of the following page,  
 24 {INQ016688/8}.  
 25 Mr Suter is telling me that the date is March 2018

1 but on this occasion I think he's wrong because that is  
 2 the review date --  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the review date?  
 4 MR GREANEY: Yes:  
 5 "Use of improvised explosive devices. Subjects  
 6 shouting religious or ideological slogans or remarks.  
 7 High volume of calls into the emergency services from  
 8 the public."  
 9 Do you think that at the time you were aware that  
 10 those were or might be the hallmarks of an MTFA?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Next, please, {INQ016688/7}, paragraph 4:  
 13 "Operation Plato. Meaning, identification and  
 14 declaration."  
 15 4.1:  
 16 "Plato is the multi-agency response to the incident,  
 17 whilst the term MTFA describes the type of incident."  
 18 You'll understand why I will emphasise that Plato is  
 19 the multi-agency response, not just the police response,  
 20 and you were aware of that at the time, no doubt?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. 4.2:  
 23 "The identification of a Plato incident is likely to  
 24 be based upon the identification indicators listed  
 25 above."

1 We have just looked at those.  
 2 4.3:  
 3 "The declaration of an Operation Plato incident  
 4 triggers a multi-agency response designed to rapidly  
 5 inform, mobilise and operationally deploy the most  
 6 appropriate resources in order to identify, locate,  
 7 confront and neutralise the threat and save life. In  
 8 order to support an effective response, it is important  
 9 that the relevant partner agencies and specialist  
 10 national assets are informed as a priority."  
 11 And certainly in relation to partner agencies, as  
 12 you've agreed, that did not happen?  
 13 A. No.  
 14 Q. 4.4:  
 15 "There are a number of key generic principles to  
 16 a Plato response which should form part of all forces'  
 17 initial response and guide their immediate actions."  
 18 The fact that the approach must be multi-agency is  
 19 emphasised. Could we go down to the bottom of that  
 20 page, please?  
 21 "An MTFA incident will initiate a large volume of  
 22 calls/contact from the public into all three emergency  
 23 services. It is essential that all police staff  
 24 receiving incoming calls have an awareness of the  
 25 potential indicators that an MTFA may be taking place."

1 4.6 emphasises something we've seen already that  
 2 only the police can declare Plato. And then this, 4.7:  
 3 "If an Operation Plato is declared and it  
 4 subsequently becomes apparent that the incident is not  
 5 an MTFA, then the officer who is undertaking the role of  
 6 the TFC must redefine the incident immediately and  
 7 ensure that all relevant personnel and agencies are  
 8 informed. This would also require a full review of the  
 9 operation utilising the national decision model (NDM)  
 10 and may lead to a revised strategy and overall  
 11 response."

12 So this emphasises, do you agree, something we  
 13 discussed earlier, namely the need, having declared  
 14 Operation Plato, not just to let it run but for someone  
 15 to carry out the review?

- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. The review, it seems, from this, and this may make sense
- 18 in any event, is one that should be carried out by the
- 19 tactical firearms commander?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. In the result, whether you wanted it or not for such
- 22 a long period, you were the tactical firearms commander
- 23 until 12.17?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. And whilst I have no doubt that others had

1 a responsibility to inform any decision or review, it  
 2 rather looks from this policy as if the responsibility  
 3 to review was yours; do you agree?

- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. {INQ016688/8}, please, paragraph 5.10:
- 6 "The initial TFC should utilise the NDM in order to
- 7 respond appropriately to the threat. Their
- 8 decision-making and rationale should be recorded within
- 9 a command log/incident log to provide a suitable audit
- 10 trail of their key decisions and rationale."
- 11 5.11:
- 12 "It is acknowledged that due to the dynamic nature
- 13 and demands of an Operation Plato incident, the
- 14 recording of detailed written command logs may be
- 15 difficult to achieve."
- 16 That no doubt is correct:
- 17 "Forces should consider the use of audio recording
- 18 devices for commanders and, in particular, the initial
- 19 TFC within the police control room."
- 20 And you did have a dictaphone, did you not?
- 21 A. Yes, I did.
- 22 Q. Do you think that you used it satisfactorily to record
- 23 the reasons for your decisions?
- 24 A. The intention was that it would be used for that.
- 25 I don't think I verbalised every decision I made and

1 that was purely down to the demands of the night. When  
 2 I remembered, I tried to, and I think there's one or two  
 3 parts where I've tried to make clear what I think I'm  
 4 dealing with. Is it what I would call a detailed  
 5 decision log? No, it's not. Again, I think in such  
 6 a fast-moving, dynamic and high-risk incident, it's  
 7 unrealistic to expect that.

- 8 Q. I understand and, as I said right at the outset, we are
- 9 going to listen to that recording so we can all
- 10 understand the demands, and I will say to you, so that
- 11 everyone can hear it, I don't believe anyone ought to
- 12 criticise your decision-making or conduct unless they
- 13 have heard that recording. But there is, I'm going to
- 14 suggest to you, a glaring omission from that recording,
- 15 which is that you're going to tell us in due course you
- 16 made a deliberate decision not to communicate the
- 17 declaration of Plato to partners. There is not the
- 18 slightest hint of that decision-making in that
- 19 dictaphone recording; do you agree?
- 20 A. I do, yes.
- 21 Q. Why not?
- 22 A. I think the decision for Op Plato, as in declaring it
- 23 and then quickly realising the implications that had for
- 24 the treatment of those injured at the City Room, and the
- 25 fact that potentially there may have been further

1 deaths, I quickly realised that the declaration was  
 2 right, however the communication of that to anyone would  
 3 have been wrong, specifically for the Fire Service and  
 4 NWAS and for the unarmed staff at the scene because  
 5 experience taught me, and policy says, that they would  
 6 have been withdrawn from that scene, leaving critically  
 7 injured people there.

- 8 So it was a really difficult decision, but it was
- 9 a deliberate decision not to verbalise it. I knew why
- 10 I had done it, I can remember it going through my head
- 11 now, but I do not need to -- I didn't verbalise it for
- 12 the purpose of the recording.
- 13 Q. Why not?
- 14 A. Because I didn't want anyone else to know, almost. It
- 15 was a case of: yes, I've done it, I know my firearms
- 16 teams know that this is an Op Plato, because that gives
- 17 them an understanding of what they're dealing with, but
- 18 I really didn't want partner agencies to find out. I've
- 19 already given the rationale for that because Article 2
- 20 of the Human Rights Act covers it and that takes
- 21 precedence over everything.
- 22 Q. The right to life?
- 23 A. Yes, the right to life. I know it was a fundamental
- 24 deviation from policy, guidance, whatever, in relation
- 25 to JESIP, in relation to Op Plato, but it was the right

1 thing to do, in my opinion, to save lives. The only  
 2 thing that, again, is a difficult one, I had to keep it  
 3 as much as I could to myself. That is why it was never  
 4 verbalised.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you just help me? You're in a room  
 6 with a number of other people who are answering phones  
 7 to people as they're coming in. You're also in  
 8 communication with firearms officers who are at the  
 9 scene, yes --  
 10 A. Mm--hm.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- when they will be interrelating with  
 12 other services who are there?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mustn't it have seemed inevitable to you  
 15 that they, who knew about Operation Plato, who had  
 16 certainly not been told, "This is Operation Plato, but  
 17 keep it to yourselves", didn't it seem inevitable to you  
 18 that it would get out?  
 19 A. I honestly didn't give it that much thought, sir. Those  
 20 early minutes, half hour, hour, were so demanding,  
 21 confusing, there was so much pressure, that I was just  
 22 dealing with what I had there and then. I know that  
 23 Op Plato had been put on to the FWIN, so I knew it was  
 24 there. I knew that I'd told firearms officers about  
 25 Op Plato. I was so conflicted --

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1 MR GREANEY: You told Superintendent Nawaz.  
 2 A. I told Superintendent Nawaz that it was Operation Plato  
 3 and I even attempted to contact NWS and inform them or  
 4 tell them what we were dealing with, which inevitably  
 5 would have meant telling them that it was Op Plato. But  
 6 that phone call was a conflicting phone call for myself.  
 7 I knew I should do it but I didn't want to do it.  
 8 I didn't want them to know, obviously for the very  
 9 reason I've explained.  
 10 Q. Because you thought, if they know they'll have to pull  
 11 out their staff from the City Room?  
 12 A. I thought it was a given, from what experience I'd had,  
 13 through my understanding of the policies, from speaking  
 14 to NWS ILOs and, sorry, NIOs from GMFRS on various  
 15 inputs that we'd had, joint inputs, where the  
 16 conversation had come up prior to this that if you  
 17 declare an Operation Plato and it's a hot zone, we will  
 18 remove our staff. So I knew. It wasn't something  
 19 I thought might just happen.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, but your firearms officers who are  
 21 going into the hot zone also know: it's Operation Plato,  
 22 this is a hot zone, no one can be in here.  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So aren't they going to try and move  
 25 them out, as indeed I think some of them did?

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1 A. This is where -- very possibly, very possibly. I was  
 2 paying close attention to what was happening on the  
 3 ground via the radio and I knew they'd pushed through  
 4 the City Room and were making towards the arena itself.  
 5 It was almost -- I declared Op Plato and I did that --  
 6 the first Op Plato declaration was over the air, so it  
 7 had gone out, it has been recorded, it's there, there's  
 8 nothing I can do about it, but it wasn't until I did  
 9 that, that I thought, "Hang on, the implications of this  
 10 can be significant". I couldn't stop firearms officers  
 11 telling partner agencies or other people, other unarmed  
 12 staff, that there was Op Plato and they'd have to  
 13 withdraw. To an extent, that would have been their  
 14 decision. But what I didn't want to do was to -- for  
 15 any of my decisions to have a direct impact on the  
 16 potential survivability of injured people at the scene  
 17 and I knew that it was going against national guidance,  
 18 I knew it was going against policy, I knew it could come  
 19 back to bite me big style, as far as my career, if not  
 20 worse, and all of this was going through my head very,  
 21 very quickly and that's why I was conflicted in the  
 22 decision I was making.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 24 MR GREANEY: Do you have an actual recollection as you sit  
 25 there now of that thought process?

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1 A. Very much so, yes.  
 2 Q. Because one of the things I was going to explore with  
 3 you, and there might not be any point given the very  
 4 clear and full answer you have given, was this -- and  
 5 I want to preface the question by making clear that I am  
 6 not for a moment suggesting that you've come here to  
 7 give anything other than straightforward and honest  
 8 evidence. But I was going to ask you, and I will ask  
 9 you, whether given the stress that you must have been  
 10 under at the time, and given that people sometimes do  
 11 persuade themselves of things, whether the reality  
 12 is that with everything else that was going on, you just  
 13 didn't get around to telling partner agencies that you'd  
 14 declared Operation Plato?  
 15 A. I can see exactly why you would say that. I can say  
 16 with my hand on my heart and in all conscience that what  
 17 I've said is what I was thinking at the time. I would  
 18 agree that as time progressed, then it may have been --  
 19 there may have been an appropriate time to start  
 20 informing partners that I'd declared Op Plato. But in  
 21 the initial half an hour or so, that was never going to  
 22 be the case. But it was a deliberate decision.  
 23 It would be much easier for me to sit here and say, "You  
 24 know what, I was under too much pressure and I just  
 25 forgot to do it, there was just too much for me to do".

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1 That's not the case. It was a deliberate decision.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's also an impossible question to  
 3 answer, whether you have convinced yourself of  
 4 something.  
 5 MR GREANEY: It certainly is.  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It is right that you should be given the  
 7 opportunity.  
 8 MR GREANEY: I hope it was fair to give the chief inspector  
 9 the opportunity and he's given a very clear answer to  
 10 that.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.  
 12 MR GREANEY: Does this reveal that the position you were put  
 13 in of having declared Plato and not wanting to tell  
 14 anyone because you knew what would happen in terms of  
 15 those who were in injured and in need of help, does it  
 16 reveal, do you think, that Operation Plato is too  
 17 inflexible in that there ought to be some discretion  
 18 given to commanders, if their staff are prepared to go  
 19 in, to allow them to do so?  
 20 A. It was certainly the case on the night of the 22nd. It  
 21 was too rigid, it was too formal. We knew exactly what  
 22 each partner would have to do. I'm glad to say that the  
 23 new Plato policy covers that for MTAs.  
 24 Q. We don't need to go into the details of that, but you're  
 25 satisfied there has been an improvement in the

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1 situation?  
 2 A. Yes, there is a lot more flexibility built in there.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You made this conscious decision, "I've  
 4 declared Plato, but I'm going to let as few people know  
 5 as I can to stop any interference with the process of  
 6 assisting those who are injured and dying". May this  
 7 have affected whether you then were thinking enough  
 8 about removing the Plato that you hadn't told anybody  
 9 about, so the constant review we're talking about saying  
 10 as soon as you can, "Right, it's over, we have had the  
 11 firearms through there, there is no marauding firearms  
 12 person in there, let's get them back"? Do you think  
 13 that may have led to a delay in that review?  
 14 A. I think I was reviewing it all the way through. What  
 15 I now understand from the night and from my own ability  
 16 and understanding of Plato, which was based on what  
 17 I pulled together from documents and my aide-memoire,  
 18 that is very much an overskirting of the key  
 19 requirements for an FDO. I didn't have the confidence  
 20 to withdraw Plato.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 22 MR GREANEY: There were some other aspects of the refreshed  
 23 guidance I was going to ask you about, but we've  
 24 probably covered them in the evidence you've just given.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don't know whether you ever saw

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1 that, as I understand it, that refreshed guidance?  
 2 A. I would highly... I may have been aware that the  
 3 guidance was -- there'd been new guidance sent out.  
 4 I wouldn't have read it and I can explain why if --  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it's important if guidance comes  
 6 out and you haven't read it.  
 7 A. So the guidance in relation to Dave Whittle's -- is that  
 8 what we're talking about?  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, what you have just seen.  
 10 MR GREANEY: The guidance that came from CTPHQ that we've  
 11 just been through that talks about recording decisions  
 12 and so on.  
 13 A. Sorry, I don't know if I'd been aware of that, sorry.  
 14 Q. It seems from what you've said that you at least in  
 15 general terms were aware of what it provided.  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but is that  
 18 a fair thing to say?  
 19 A. I think so. Whether or not I'd actually read it to any  
 20 degree of understanding...  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I assume that refreshed guidance means  
 22 there were changes from the old guidance.  
 23 MR GREANEY: There were changes from the old guidance, yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If there were changes, would you have  
 25 been aware of what those changes were?

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1 A. What tended to happen, sir, was if the guidance was sent  
 2 or when the guidance is sent out, new guidance is sent  
 3 out from the firearms training unit and the compliance  
 4 unit, they would send the guidance out as an attachment  
 5 or a hyperlink or whatever, and they would tend to give  
 6 you bullet points of the key changes. So that's  
 7 potentially what would have happened rather than reading  
 8 the whole lot, because if the policy remains the same,  
 9 but there's only a few points, it's those few points  
 10 that are key, and that's how they tended to do it, which  
 11 was certainly an acceptable approach as --  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you think you will have seen  
 13 those --  
 14 A. Yes, I can't remember, but if it was sent to me and  
 15 those bullet points were sent, I would have checked  
 16 those bullet points.  
 17 MR GREANEY: We can check that, sir, but what you may recall  
 18 is that once it had gone out to forces, seminars were  
 19 arranged and Inspector Nutter was one of those who  
 20 provided the seminar. My recollection is that on 8 May,  
 21 Inspector Lear and Sergeant Whittle, and perhaps others,  
 22 attended the seminar but certainly not this officer.  
 23 Had you received any training in the refreshed  
 24 guidance prior to May?  
 25 A. No.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you for reminding me of that.  
 2 MR GREANEY: In terms of the Whittle plan, which I was just  
 3 coming on to. We'll put it on the screen. I'm not  
 4 going to go through every line of the FDO's  
 5 responsibilities, but there is just one thing I need to  
 6 draw to your attention. It's {INQ029178/4}.  
 7 The thing to draw to your attention is, as may have  
 8 struck you when you read this in preparation for giving  
 9 evidence, that this plan actually placed greater  
 10 responsibilities upon the FDO than  
 11 Superintendent Giladi's SOP 47 v5 did.  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. As I have said, we won't go through every bullet point  
 14 as what you did and didn't do will be perfectly apparent  
 15 to us from the evidence you have given already.  
 16 The Whittle plan was, I think, sent to you and other  
 17 FDOs on 12 May 2017, so just before the time of the  
 18 arena attack.  
 19 Mr Lopez, I'm hoping that the INQ reference for the  
 20 email is {INQ039966/1}.  
 21 There was some debate, sir, during Inspector Lear's  
 22 evidence about whether the Whittle plan was attached to  
 23 this. Mr Suter was able to show us that it was attached  
 24 to this.  
 25 This is sent by Inspector Lear on 12 May 2017 and

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1 the first group listed as recipients are "OCR duty  
 2 inspectors". Does that mean that you would have  
 3 received this email?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. You probably did tell us much earlier in your evidence,  
 6 but as of 22 May 2017, did you believe that  
 7 Superintendent Giladi's version 5 or the Whittle plan  
 8 was in force or did you not know?  
 9 A. Considering the way I worked, I very much doubt I would  
 10 have been fully aware of Dave Whittle's plan and  
 11 therefore I presume I was working from -- I can't say  
 12 for definite because I didn't know the title, but  
 13 certainly I would have been working from an older  
 14 document. I wouldn't have had an opportunity to have  
 15 read this one.  
 16 Q. And you did say to us that that was because you'd looked  
 17 at your duties between 12 May and 22 May?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Would you like to develop that answer you gave?  
 20 A. Yes, certainly. Because of the role of the FDO,  
 21 literally you are sat at a desk for your full tour of  
 22 duty. You can't leave. You certainly can't leave to  
 23 have anything to eat or anything. It's one of those  
 24 roles where you're there from start to finish. There is  
 25 no time to go elsewhere and start looking at other

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1 stuff. So any new document that would come through,  
 2 there wouldn't really be an opportunity to actually read  
 3 those documents. What I tended to do was, because  
 4 nights during the week tended to be quieter, that did  
 5 afford time to start looking at various documents and  
 6 changes, et cetera, in any kind of depth.  
 7 So this came up on 12 May. I was off for a few days  
 8 after that, so I would not have received it when it came  
 9 in, so it would have been a few days after. I was then  
 10 covering earlies, which is a very busy period,  
 11 afternoons, which is a very busy period, over a weekend  
 12 of afternoons as well, which is extremely busy, and  
 13 I would have planned, knowing the way I approached these  
 14 things, to have looked at it on Monday night, 22 May,  
 15 during that week, the week commencing. That's how  
 16 I intended to update myself, so I didn't have an  
 17 opportunity, a proper opportunity, to look at it.  
 18 I do not recall this document specifically, but  
 19 looking at the way I tended to appraise myself of  
 20 changes, then that is a reasonable assumption.  
 21 Q. Out of fairness to you, the point perhaps ought to be  
 22 made that as of 22 May, you had not received any  
 23 training in this new plan?  
 24 A. No.  
 25 Q. And I think the email does indicate that the training

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1 was planned for later that year.  
 2 I'm going to move on to action cards shortly and  
 3 hopefully deal with that before we break for lunch. As  
 4 of 22 May 2017, were you aware of the learning points  
 5 from Exercise Winchester Accord?  
 6 A. The learning points only in that that was provided by  
 7 Inspector Williams.  
 8 Q. In fact, you were to incorporate Inspector Marcus  
 9 Williams' comment upon Winchester Accord in your  
 10 aide-memoire, were you not?  
 11 A. Yes, it was a direct lift.  
 12 Q. And he had been the FDO during Exercise  
 13 Winchester Accord, so were you aware that albeit that  
 14 Winchester Accord was testing a different FDO  
 15 environment, that the FDO had become overburdened during  
 16 the course of that exercise?  
 17 A. I think just through conversation with Marcus Williams,  
 18 but I wasn't aware that the exercise was testing the  
 19 relocation of the FDO.  
 20 Q. You weren't aware of that?  
 21 A. I wasn't aware of that.  
 22 Q. So as of 22 May, what did you understand Exercise  
 23 Winchester Accord had revealed about the role of an FDO  
 24 during the course of an incident such as the arena  
 25 attack?

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1 A. Under extreme pressure, massive demand.  
 2 Q. And had failed? I don't mean that critically, but had  
 3 come under so much pressure that it just hadn't worked  
 4 properly?  
 5 A. I don't know if "failed" is right, a term that I could  
 6 use. I think through the very conversation I would have  
 7 had, we all would have had as FDOs with Marcus, he would  
 8 have made it clear of the demands placed on him.  
 9 Whether or not he had been informed of aspects of the  
 10 role in which he had failed, I don't know.  
 11 Q. The inquiry has heard from Mr Buchan --  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, were you aware that he had less  
 13 support than he would normally have got when he was  
 14 doing that in Winchester Accord? I think that is  
 15 correct, isn't it?  
 16 MR GREANEY: That is certainly the effect of what former  
 17 inspector --  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The reason was said to be because in  
 19 real life there would be far more back-up staff who can  
 20 help and therefore maybe it wasn't taken as being as  
 21 serious as it might have been.  
 22 MR GREANEY: That's how I understand it.  
 23 A. As far as I was aware, he had the support of someone in  
 24 an FDS part or an FDS role. The fact that he was not  
 25 located within the control room would have meant that he

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1 would have had less access to staff. However, staff are  
 2 only greatly useful in a critical situation as we dealt  
 3 with on the 22nd if they understand what they need to  
 4 do. I think that, yes, the opportunity to have more  
 5 support was available to me than it would have been to  
 6 Marcus and that, to an extent, was why I identified  
 7 a loggist or a call-taker, I should say, in  
 8 Dave Myerscough answering my phone.  
 9 But beyond that, I don't think that there is the  
 10 support -- at that point in time there was the support  
 11 available in that I do not believe that any training had  
 12 been given around what's required with Op Plato, within  
 13 the OCR.  
 14 So yes, a long-winded answer: yes, there was more  
 15 support for me, but not significantly more support.  
 16 Q. Really, I'm driving to a simple point, perhaps I'm doing  
 17 it in too long-winded a way, but I've started so I'll  
 18 finish.  
 19 The inquiry has heard evidence from Mr Buchan, who  
 20 worked for Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary  
 21 and Fire and Rescue Services. He described HMIC, during  
 22 their inspection in late 2016, becoming well aware that  
 23 the FDO in the event of such an event was going to  
 24 become or was liable to become overburdened and in part  
 25 that conclusion had been reached through speaking to

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1 FDOs. And Mr Buchan explained, although we understand  
 2 ACC Hankinson may dispute this, that he had communicated  
 3 this concern about the FDO to GMP in November 2016.  
 4 Were you ever made aware before May 2017 that HMIC  
 5 had concerns about the overburdening of the FDO?  
 6 A. I don't believe I was.  
 7 Q. But nonetheless, as of May 2017, did you realise that  
 8 in the event of a Plato-type event, there was a real  
 9 prospect that the FDO would become overburdened?  
 10 A. Yes, and I think ourselves as the FDO cohort have to  
 11 accept that we would have known and realised that there  
 12 was too much work going to be placed on and demand  
 13 placed on that role. Did we do anything about it? No,  
 14 other than me producing an aide-memoire. So I think  
 15 we have to take a degree of responsibility as well, that  
 16 we knew it was a potential but we really didn't push it.  
 17 Q. Maybe you do have to take a degree of responsibility as  
 18 a group, but if, as appears to be the case, GMP at  
 19 a corporate level knew about it, they surely had their  
 20 own responsibility, did they not?  
 21 A. Most definitely.  
 22 MR GREANEY: Sir, I can see the time. I'm going to check  
 23 with Mr Suter for how long we've been going.  
 24 (Pause)  
 25 I indicated I was going to try to deal with action

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1 cards before lunch if that was possible. I said we'd  
 2 deal with action cards and we'll try to deal with that  
 3 in 10 minutes.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you're all right to carry on for  
 5 another 10 minutes?  
 6 A. Yes, sir.  
 7 MR GREANEY: So we'll deal with action cards now. In the  
 8 Operation Newtown debrief, you did express a view about  
 9 action cards, did you not?  
 10 A. I believe I did.  
 11 Q. I'm going to ask that be put on the screen again,  
 12 {INQ000781/2}.  
 13 It's bullet point 8 at the bottom, I think:  
 14 "The FDO role during this type of incident should be  
 15 broken down and looked at to see if any of the demands  
 16 could reasonably be picked up by other  
 17 roles/individuals."  
 18 So first of all, were you making the point there  
 19 that there is just too much expected of an FDO during an  
 20 event such as -- an incident such as you'd experienced  
 21 on 22 May?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. And that consideration needed to be given to splitting  
 24 off some of the responsibility of the FDO to others  
 25 within the OCR?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. You continued:  
 3 "I would suggest a number of different aide—memoires  
 4 could be developed for key personnel within the OCR  
 5 sharing out the key tasks."  
 6 What did you mean by that?  
 7 A. I think in the cold light of day, when you look at all  
 8 the responsibilities and actions that need to be carried  
 9 out in relation to not only a Plato but even a major  
 10 incident, if you can bullet point those various tasks  
 11 and some of them will fit neatly into certain roles or  
 12 certain roles would be able to pick those up, that just  
 13 takes away the pressure from one individual to perform  
 14 them. And if people are trained and understand that  
 15 in the event of a Plato or a major incident that that is  
 16 what's required of them, and it's not come as a shock,  
 17 it's not given them on the night to do, then actually as  
 18 commander I can reasonably assume that that's going to  
 19 be done and it just significantly reduces the demand on  
 20 one individual, and in this case the FDO, which meant  
 21 that, actually, as things progressed, that may have  
 22 released more time for me, for me to think slightly  
 23 wider of what I was dealing with and what needed to be  
 24 done that hadn't already been done, assess the less  
 25 critical things that needed to be done that hadn't been

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1 done.  
 2 I think it goes -- I think it's self-explanatory,  
 3 personally, that you dish out or you share out that  
 4 workload between numerous hands rather than one pair of  
 5 hands.  
 6 Q. Chief Inspector Booth has given evidence to the inquiry.  
 7 Did you have a chance to see his evidence?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. Was he someone you knew in May 2017 and in the period  
 10 before that?  
 11 A. Yes, he'd actually been my mentor for a period of time.  
 12 Q. In fact, a year before the arena attack, he had devised  
 13 a set of action cards. I'm going to ask that they be  
 14 put on the screen. We'll look at a couple but not every  
 15 single one of them.  
 16 This is {INQ040622/1}.  
 17 I think he told us what we're looking at was part of  
 18 what was intended to be a training package, the very  
 19 kind of training you've spoken about, terrorist incident  
 20 action cards for OCB.  
 21 {INQ040622/2}. Let's just carry on until we get to  
 22 the actual action cards. I'm using the term action  
 23 cards, you've used the term aide—memoire. We're talking  
 24 about very much the same thing, do you agree?  
 25 A. Yes, we are. I think that the terminology -- in this

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1 position where the workload is shared out between people  
 2 I think it is more accurate to say action cards, but  
 3 yes, mine was very much an aide—memoire.  
 4 Q. Whether these were ideal or fitted the bill is  
 5 a different question and, to be fair to Chief  
 6 Inspector Booth, these were a first draft, but as of  
 7 22 May 2017, had you ever seen these action cards that  
 8 you recall?  
 9 A. Not that I recall, no.  
 10 Q. My next question therefore may be redundant. Are you  
 11 aware of why they were not in use -- were they in use on  
 12 the night of the arena attack?  
 13 A. On the night of the attack, I certainly wasn't aware  
 14 that any action cards had been agreed. I wasn't aware  
 15 that... Whether or not I was aware that action cards  
 16 were being developed, I'm not too sure, but certainly  
 17 I was aware that there had been nothing official  
 18 delivered, there was certainly no training that I was  
 19 aware of. No, I don't believe that I was aware that  
 20 those action cards were in existence.  
 21 Q. And they certainly weren't used on the night?  
 22 A. They weren't, no.  
 23 Q. If my recollection is right and they had been devised by  
 24 Chief Inspector Booth a year earlier, would you agree  
 25 it's unsatisfactory that action cards were not available

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1 to your staff on the night of the attack?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may be a bit surprising that you  
 4 hadn't been consulted about them because you'd done your  
 5 own aide—memoire, hadn't you, to help everyone?  
 6 A. Yes. There'd been a number of pieces of work, I think,  
 7 that Chief Inspector Booth had given me in 2016,  
 8 which -- I would imagine we would have had  
 9 a conversation as to why this work was being done. He  
 10 may have mentioned that he was looking to develop action  
 11 cards, but I certainly was not aware of how far along  
 12 the line he was with it. But yes, I think for the  
 13 cohort of FDOs, I would have been the obvious person  
 14 because of the aide—memoire I'd pulled together.  
 15 MR GREANEY: Sir, would that be a convenient moment for  
 16 lunch?  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. How long was your shift on this  
 18 night?  
 19 A. It started at officially 21.00 hours, 9 o'clock, I was  
 20 in around about 8.40 until 7 o'clock the next morning.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A 10-hour shift?  
 22 A. A 10-hour shift.  
 23 MR GREANEY: Can I indicate, just before you rise, I'm  
 24 a little behind where I'd hoped to be but not that far  
 25 behind. I am anxious that we should have at least

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1 reached the point of playing the recording before the  
 2 end of today and I hope, sir, you'd be content to sit  
 3 a little later than 4.30 and that everyone else will not  
 4 find that too great an inconvenience.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Will you be happy with that?  
 6 A. Absolutely, yes.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you are to say. It's not an easy  
 8 thing sitting being asked questions all the time with  
 9 them coming from different directions, so you are to say  
 10 if you get tired and don't feel able to do yourself  
 11 justice.  
 12 A. Yes, sir, I would, but I want to progress with the  
 13 inquiry.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 15 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, chief inspector.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much. An hour.  
 17 (1.08 pm)  
 18 (The lunch adjournment)  
 19 (2.08 pm)  
 20 (Delay in proceedings)  
 21 (2.20 pm)  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, Mr Greaney.  
 23 MR GREANEY: Thank you, sir.  
 24 Chief inspector, before we conclude your evidence in  
 25 part 5 of my questions by dealing with your

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1 aide-memoire, we're going to go back to a document.  
 2 We're going to SOP 47 v5, so Superintendent Giladi's  
 3 Plato plan. There were two things you may remember that  
 4 we didn't deal with because of sensitivity or potential  
 5 sensitivity. We can now deal with them.  
 6 The relevant INQ number is {INQ039970/6}.  
 7 Sorry, it's over the page, {INQ039970/7}.  
 8 The seventh bullet point down:  
 9 "Contact..."  
 10 And the next word or words are irrelevant and  
 11 sensitive:  
 12 "... to inform them of the incident."  
 13 So what we can confirm, although we can say no more  
 14 than this, is that that is a requirement that the FDO  
 15 contact military assets to inform them of the incident.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 17 MR GREANEY: Simply by saying yes or no, can you confirm  
 18 that that's your understanding?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Then at the bottom of the list:  
 21 "Consider the activation of Operation Tempered."  
 22 Sir, I can tell you that in the immediate aftermath  
 23 of the arena attack, as we will all recall, JTAC  
 24 increased the threat level from severe to critical, and  
 25 in light of that, Theresa May, as Prime Minister, made

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1 the following statement, so this is open. She said:  
 2 "The change in the threat level means that there  
 3 will be additional resources and support made available  
 4 to the police as they work to keep us all safe. As  
 5 a result of JTAC's decision, the police have asked for  
 6 authorisation from the Secretary of State for Defence to  
 7 deploy a number of armed military personnel in support  
 8 of their armed officers. This request is part of  
 9 a well-established plan known as Operation Tempered, in  
 10 which both the armed forces and the police officers  
 11 involved are well trained and well prepared to work in  
 12 this kind of environment."  
 13 Sir, unless you have any questions you want to pose  
 14 about those matters, I'm going to move on and ask about  
 15 the aide-memoire, chief inspector.  
 16 Can we have on the screen, please, the most recent,  
 17 at least prior to 22 May, iteration of your  
 18 aide-memoire. {INQ040955/1}. We'll look at a couple of  
 19 passages of this in a moment.  
 20 When did you first prepare an aide-memoire?  
 21 A. January 2016.  
 22 Q. As you explained to us earlier, that was because the  
 23 source material relating to Operation Plato was too  
 24 voluminous for you to refer to it in the event of  
 25 a Plato situation?

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1 A. Yes, I think it's because I'd only been in post for  
 2 18 months or so and I remember thinking, "If I'm in the  
 3 seat when something like this happens, there's too much  
 4 information to be looking for".  
 5 Q. When you prepared your first version of this document,  
 6 was this something that you were told to do, encouraged  
 7 to do by someone else, or something that just you  
 8 decided was necessary?  
 9 A. It was my decision.  
 10 Q. Then about 6 months later, you prepared the version  
 11 which was the relevant version as of the day of the  
 12 attack. What was it that provoked you to prepare that  
 13 further version?  
 14 A. Chief Inspector Booth was aware of the first version.  
 15 I don't know if he had a copy or not provided to him,  
 16 but he certainly was aware of it, and with the outcome  
 17 of Winchester Accord, the findings and the feedback from  
 18 Inspector Marcus Williams was available, and he asked me  
 19 to incorporate that into the aide-memoire.  
 20 Q. And it was against that background that you incorporated  
 21 it and then, on 6 June 2016, circulated it to your FDO  
 22 colleagues?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. I'm going to look at what you incorporated from  
 25 Inspector Williams in a moment. I don't want to read

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1 through every line of this, and indeed some parts of it  
 2 are redacted for good reason.  
 3 But there is a heading:  
 4 "JESIP -- GMFRS/NWAS."  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. As of June 2016, were you familiar with the principles  
 7 known as JESIP?  
 8 A. I was, yes.  
 9 Q. Had you received training in them?  
 10 A. I had.  
 11 Q. It reads:  
 12 "In line with JESIP, to manage communication between  
 13 each partner, one of the [operationally sensitive] will  
 14 be nominated by the FDO when contacting each ILO. Once  
 15 nominated, a member of Team 3 on a CK position [you told  
 16 us about that team earlier] should be tasked to monitor  
 17 this Talk Group and relay information from the FDO and  
 18 listen in for any requests. This facility will allow  
 19 for some degree of situational awareness between each  
 20 agency until a ground-assigned commander from each  
 21 agency meet at the forward control point to undertake  
 22 a joint risk assessment."  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The operationally sensitive part is  
 25 necessary, is it? It seems to be quite indicative by

1 what comes later.  
 2 MR GREANEY: Again, I will check to make sure I don't say  
 3 something I shouldn't do, but I quite take your point,  
 4 sir.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 6 MR GREANEY: Is what you had in mind -- situational  
 7 awareness is of vital importance to the JESIP  
 8 principles, is it not?  
 9 A. Very much so.  
 10 Q. And the sharing of situational awareness between  
 11 different emergency services is also vital?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. Because that will inform the decisions that are made.  
 14 So is what you had in mind when you prepared this  
 15 document that situational awareness would be achieved in  
 16 different phases? First of all, by members of the  
 17 different emergency services talking to each other and  
 18 monitoring a single Talk Group?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. And that that would give some degree of situational  
 21 awareness until the commanders from each emergency  
 22 service were able to meet at the forward control point?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. And this really is again one of the fundamental  
 25 principles of JESIP: co-locate. And everything flows

1 from that, does it not?  
 2 A. It does, yes -- sorry, I don't want to mislead the  
 3 inquiry: when you talk about all the emergency services  
 4 going to this one channel, you know that's not the case,  
 5 it's the commanders that go on to that channel.  
 6 Q. So it would be the commanders of each agency who would  
 7 seek to gain situational awareness at that stage before  
 8 they've reached the FCP by monitoring that Talk Group?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. That was my misunderstanding. But at all events, this  
 11 is all directed towards shared situational awareness?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. As I think you're agreeing, critical to an effective  
 14 JESIP operation is that the commanders should  
 15 co-locate --  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. -- at a forward control point?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. And that they should each of them know what they are  
 20 dealing with?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. We've all understood why you made the decision that you  
 23 made that night, or should have done, should have  
 24 understood, but do you agree that the consequence of the  
 25 decision that you made was to strip away that shared

1 situational awareness, both in terms of monitoring the  
 2 Talk Group and in terms of meeting at the forward  
 3 control point?  
 4 A. Yes. Again, I do believe that that decision was  
 5 justified though.  
 6 Q. And obviously that will be a matter for the chairman to  
 7 consider, but I have correctly identified --  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. -- what at least one of the consequences of that was?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. Mr Lopez, over the page to {INQ040955/2}, please:  
 12 "Other considerations -- Learnings from Op  
 13 Winchester Accord."  
 14 We heard earlier in the oral evidence hearings  
 15 essentially what you'd done is cut and paste from an  
 16 email that Inspector Williams had sent in the aftermath  
 17 of Exercise Winchester Accord?  
 18 A. He had, yes.  
 19 Q. And before you incorporated this, did you consider it  
 20 and reflect upon it?  
 21 A. Yes, to the extent that I looked at the relevant points  
 22 and every point he was making was relevant, I believe.  
 23 Q. So you could see what he was getting at?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. We'll read through these:

1 "You have to know your limits. What can you  
 2 realistically achieve before you become overloaded?  
 3 [ Prioritise ] your actions. Get support from other  
 4 supervisors and then another FDO if possible."  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. As the chairman observed earlier in the inquiry, that is  
 7 or might be thought to be a rather pessimistic sentiment  
 8 because it proceeds on the basis that the FDO will  
 9 become overloaded at some point in time.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's defeatist rather than pessimistic.  
 11 A. I think, sir, that the mentality of the FDO is that  
 12 we can manage everything and I think it doesn't harm  
 13 putting it down on paper to say, "Actually, know your  
 14 limits". So I agree with that sentiment and I think  
 15 it's about self-reflection and understanding where  
 16 you are likely to start failing if that failure point is  
 17 going to arrive.  
 18 MR GREANEY: But it is not just saying, "Know your limits",  
 19 which is obviously a very sensible idea for any person  
 20 in any walk of life, it's going on to say, "Know your  
 21 limits and there's going to come a point at which you as  
 22 FDO will be overloaded". Is that how you saw it before  
 23 22 May?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: "Getting support from other supervisors

1 and then another FDO if possible."  
 2 Is that designed to prevent you becoming overloaded?  
 3 A. Yes. It would be in relation to, as we discussed with  
 4 the action cards, sharing out the workload, things that  
 5 needed to be done, and the FDO issue there is more  
 6 around whilst dealing with this one major incident,  
 7 there's still a force to run. There's still other areas  
 8 that still have the same day-to-day business as usual  
 9 that still needs to be addressed by the FDO. You can't  
 10 just turn off. That's how crucial the role is. So it's  
 11 about trying to understand that and put that support  
 12 there for you. So that's what that point refers to.  
 13 MR GREANEY: The checklist does in fact come back to this  
 14 point. Sixth bullet point down:  
 15 "Consider another FDO coming in would be helpful.  
 16 Potentially by the time they arrive, a cadre might have  
 17 taken over, but the reality is the FDO will be frazzled  
 18 and no doubt a principal officer anyway."  
 19 What did you understand that to mean?  
 20 A. That, as I found on the night, because the demand is so  
 21 pressurised, decisions having to be made, that no matter  
 22 how good you are or think you are, you just, at the end  
 23 of it, when you're able to breathe, it is just hard to  
 24 continue to function. That's what I believe he was  
 25 referring to by saying frazzled as in at some point

1 you will need to take a breath and take a stand back.  
 2 And for the principal officer, that's more in relation  
 3 to potential for if a firearm or if a suspect had been  
 4 neutralised, then we go into what is called the PIP  
 5 process and the force duty officer would be a key player  
 6 in that.  
 7 Q. So this is raising the possibility that another FDO  
 8 comes in and is given some responsibilities that you  
 9 have as the, let's say, the principal FDO at the time?  
 10 This acknowledges that that might be overtaken by  
 11 events, the event being that the cadre TFC has been  
 12 appointed in the meantime. We know that in the  
 13 circumstances you were presented with, that took some  
 14 considerable time to achieve, did it not?  
 15 A. Yes, it did.  
 16 Q. Did you consider during that period asking for another  
 17 FDO?  
 18 A. Yes, we had a WhatsApp group just between ourselves and  
 19 I sent a message out on that. That tended to get an  
 20 immediate response in the past. Obviously it was  
 21 slightly more difficult at this time of night to get  
 22 a response, but I did get a couple of responses, but  
 23 they were not in a position to come in to assist.  
 24 Q. I'm sure I'll find a reference to that somewhere in your  
 25 statement, but I can't immediately bring it to mind.

1 Can you recall at or about what time you sent that  
 2 message to the WhatsApp group?  
 3 A. I can't, unfortunately. I can't remember what time  
 4 I did that.  
 5 Q. I am sure we can -- any idea?  
 6 A. I would have thought it was well within the first hour,  
 7 once the pressures were obviously clear that I was  
 8 under.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that an informal WhatsApp group which  
 10 is set up amongst yourselves?  
 11 A. Yes, very much so.  
 12 MR GREANEY: So that would seem to be an indication of an  
 13 actual recognition by you at the time that you were  
 14 under an intolerable degree of pressure?  
 15 A. It was very clear to me I was under a lot of pressure,  
 16 yes.  
 17 Q. The way in which you put it when you were interviewed as  
 18 part of Lord Kerslake's review was that you were  
 19 swamped.  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Is that how it felt?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. But in the result having sent out the message on  
 24 WhatsApp, no one was in a position to step in and help?  
 25 A. No.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Should there be a more formal method for  
2 doing that than a WhatsApp group, ie that you may have  
3 another one on standby so you can summon someone in? It  
4 seems a rather informal way of doing something quite  
5 important.  
6 A. It could be more formalised. I think the way we work  
7 together as a team, if someone was available they would  
8 have come in most definitely, without a shadow of  
9 a doubt. The FDOs aren't on any kind of standby list or  
10 duty cover list. You're on duty and when you leave, you  
11 leave. That's pretty much as it is.  
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It just seems such a critical person  
13 every night. You only need one to go ill in the middle  
14 of the night and you are wanting another one, so --  
15 A. Yes.  
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- some sort of formal having one on  
17 standby?  
18 A. I think so. I don't think in the history of the FDO, as  
19 I know it, and certainly from speaking to some of my  
20 colleagues who have spent much longer in the role,  
21 there's never been an issue which hasn't been able to be  
22 resolved.  
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Don't tempt providence.  
24 A. I know. This night was one of the first we could have  
25 done with it.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.  
2 MR GREANEY: The position seems to be, and this is no fault  
3 of yours, that in Exercise Winchester Accord  
4 Inspector Williams had realised that there might be real  
5 value in a second FDO coming in. But that exercise had  
6 taken place in May of 2016, in June you'd produced this  
7 document which replicated that, but it sounds as if  
8 nothing had been done to achieve a situation in which  
9 a second FDO could readily be made available in the year  
10 that followed.  
11 A. That's correct, yes.  
12 Q. Which, when it's put in those terms, sounds  
13 unsatisfactory, do you agree?  
14 A. Very much so.  
15 Q. Chief inspector, those are all the questions that I want  
16 to ask you about your aide--memoire, although it might be  
17 thought fair to observe that it's clear that you had  
18 been taking some steps personally to achieve a situation  
19 in which you would have some help available during the  
20 course of an Operation Plato --  
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just one question before you move on.  
22 I don't know whether -- I'm not suggesting you should  
23 have listened to the whole of this inquiry, but we did  
24 hear from BTP, who do have a slightly different system  
25 in that as well as having your equivalent, they also

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1 have a senior duty officer. Is that the right title?  
2 MR GREANEY: Certainly the SDO, sir, yes.  
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He took over various jobs, which in your  
4 way of doing it, you would still be doing. So any other  
5 ongoing things that arose across the network for them,  
6 he, the SDO, would take it over. He would deal with  
7 phone calls coming in from senior officers who want to  
8 know what's happening. Did you get those?  
9 A. No, not at the time, not on the night of the 22nd.  
10 However, the process has significantly changed within  
11 GMP where that support is now there.  
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
13 MR GREANEY: Again, you say things have changed -- and I am  
14 sure you mean improved -- since the night of the attack.  
15 A. Yes.  
16 Q. And if what had happened on 22 May was something  
17 completely unforeseeable and remarkable, then one could  
18 have some sympathy with a change being provoked by that.  
19 But I think where we have reached in what has passed  
20 between the two of us is that there was widespread  
21 knowledge for a long period before 22 May that the very  
22 thing that occurred was liable to occur?  
23 A. It would appear so, yes.  
24 Q. Chief inspector, I'm moving on next to deal with the  
25 events of 22 May. I'm going to take it in the following

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1 three stages. First of all, I'm going to deal with the  
2 events between 10.31 and 10.46, which is the period, as  
3 you know, in respect of which we don't have a dictaphone  
4 recording, but we do know about much of what was  
5 happening.  
6 Secondly, we'll listen to the recording from the  
7 dictaphone for the period between 10.46 and 12.17. Sir,  
8 before I play that, I will pause for a short period but  
9 not invite you to rise because I know some of those  
10 present in the room and probably elsewhere will want to  
11 reflect on whether they want to listen to it.  
12 Thirdly, tomorrow, I'll ask you some questions about  
13 that period, 10.46 to 12.17, and indeed about the  
14 subsequent period. Does that make sense as an approach?  
15 A. Yes.  
16 Q. So let's deal, first of all, with the early events, so  
17 10.31 to 10.46. I'm now at paragraph 35 of your first  
18 witness statement.  
19 To begin with, that night, were things relatively  
20 quiet from an FDO point of view?  
21 A. Yes. There was nothing out of the ordinary happening.  
22 I think we'd dealt with one pursuit of a potentially  
23 stolen car. Other than that, it was normal.  
24 Q. But what, sadly, we all know is that that was to change  
25 markedly shortly after 10.30 pm. So I'm going to just

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1 list a series of times at which particular things  
2 occurred, some of them you won't have known about at the  
3 time, but it provides some context for the decisions  
4 that you were making.

5 As we know, at 10.31 the bomber detonated his  
6 device. At 10.31.52, the first 999 call received by GMP  
7 began, and that was the call by Ronald Blake, who was  
8 with Mr Atkinson.

9 At 22.32.03, the first 999 call to NWS was made to  
10 inform that emergency service that a bomb had gone off  
11 and that there were multiple casualties, although I dare  
12 say you weren't aware of that 999 call at the time --

13 A. No.

14 Q. -- or indeed until some time afterwards.

15 On hearing the explosion, PC Bullough and colleagues  
16 from BTP had begun to run towards the City Room. At  
17 22.32.12, she, PC Bullough, made a call to the  
18 BTP controller, and whilst on the radio she entered the  
19 City Room and passed a message saying, "It's definitely  
20 a bomb, people injured, at least 20 casualties".

21 At 22.32.40, GMP received a further 999 call in  
22 which an explosion and gunshots were reported. I know  
23 that to your thinking and decision-making, that  
24 reference to gunshots was to become an important one,  
25 was it not?

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1 A. It was, yes.

2 Q. At 22.32.44, so we're still not even 3 minutes from the  
3 explosion, GMP called North West Fire Control to make an  
4 unconnected report and, during that call, the GMP  
5 operator became aware of the explosion and made NWFC  
6 aware of it, including its location. So just to pull  
7 these strands together, within 3 minutes or so of the  
8 explosion, BTP, GMP, NWS and GMFRS, or at any rate  
9 North West Fire Control, were all aware that an  
10 explosion had occurred.

11 Now to events that you will know about personally.  
12 At 22.34.00, an incident log was created and, as I've  
13 understood it, at that stage you took command; is that  
14 correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. In a moment, we'll look at the incident log, but I would  
17 just like you to describe in your own words what your  
18 feelings were and what your view was as events started  
19 to unfold in front of you on that incident log.

20 A. I remember, obviously, reading the log itself and it's  
21 not unusual for hoax calls to be made, which can range  
22 from all sorts, reporting all sorts of things. Because  
23 of the nature of the incident that was being reported,  
24 I quickly looked at the list of incidents coming through  
25 on the city centre subdivision incidents and I don't

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1 recall seeing any other report. So first of all, I was  
2 thinking, "Okay, this has been reported, I would have  
3 expected more reports to come through, this is  
4 potentially -- could be a hoax call", and I think, as  
5 I said in my statement, one of the jobs of the FDO is  
6 not just to jump to conclusions and have a knee-jerk  
7 reaction, but to actually consider the information  
8 that's in front of them to make an informed decision.

9 So initially, that's what I'm looking at. I think  
10 very, very shortly after that, I shouted up on the  
11 firearms channel to ask our ARVs who were in the  
12 location to start making their way towards the arena,  
13 but that was purely at that moment in time based on if  
14 there had been some form of explosion or infrastructure,  
15 which is what I wasn't ruling out, an infrastructure  
16 failure, then the ARVs would be in a position to provide  
17 trauma care because they all have trauma kits within  
18 their vehicles.

19 Q. Pause for a moment because I want to come on to your  
20 engagement with the ARVs just in one moment.

21 Before that, I am going to ask that we put on the  
22 screen the incident log so that we can see what it looks  
23 like as a document and so we can see the nature of the  
24 information that started to come in.

25 Mr Lopez, this is INQ007124/8 (sic), please.

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(Pause)

1 Unless I've taken down the reference incorrectly,  
2 that certainly was on Magnum over the weekend. No, you  
3 don't have that? Well, it isn't critical, we can come  
4 back to that in due course, Chief inspector.

5 Where we'll pick things up is at 22.36.16. I'm  
6 going to ask that there is passed to you a sequence of  
7 events document. (Handed)

8 Thank you very much indeed, we can look at it;  
9 I transposed two digits. Mr Lopez, it's {INQ007214/8}.

10 So we can see, timed at 22.34.09, so this is the  
11 final column on the right-hand side, about  
12 three-quarters of the way down the page, as we are  
13 looking at it, "Switched to FDO FDS". What does that  
14 mean?  
15

16 A. The call handler, when they've put sufficient  
17 information on that they think it's understandable  
18 what's happening, they will send it via a switch system,  
19 which will bring that incident on to the bottom of my  
20 screen. If you remember, I referred to the five lines  
21 at the bottom of the FDO screen, the FDS screen,  
22 it would appear there. I can't tell from there whether  
23 it has been switched high, I would imagine it would  
24 have, it would appear in the top of my list initially  
25 and the top of the FDS list, who's got a similar list.

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1 Q. So both of you will have been made aware in that way?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. Does it follow that it was at or shortly after 22.34.09  
 4 that you'll first have become aware that something was  
 5 occurring at the arena?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Mr Lopez, if we then scroll down, and indeed scroll on  
 8 to the following page, {INQ007214/8}.  
 9 We can see that there start to arrive on the  
 10 incident log at 10.34 and into 10.35, and over the page  
 11 {INQ007214/9}, please, many, many references to an  
 12 explosion at the arena.  
 13 So are we seeing here the product of people making  
 14 999 calls and an entry being made?  
 15 A. Yes. At that point, what tends to happen is numerous  
 16 FWINs are created for each call that comes in until  
 17 there's an understanding within call handling that  
 18 actually they're all talking about the same incident,  
 19 and then a master FWIN would be identified, which this  
 20 would be. So this would have been transferred on to the  
 21 master FWIN, starting to report the same stuff. But as  
 22 you read it, it just looks like it's the initial report  
 23 that's being made.  
 24 Q. I see. So as we know, the first notice probably that  
 25 GMP had was at 22.31.52; that will have generated its

1 own FWIN. As other calls were made, probably other  
 2 FWINs separate from that would have been created?  
 3 A. That's the usual course, yes.  
 4 Q. But at some point before that time at 22.34, those have  
 5 been combined together into the master FWIN that then  
 6 comes to your attention?  
 7 A. Yes. The original FWIN will still exist, but key  
 8 information will have been transferred on to the master  
 9 FWIN.  
 10 Q. I had begun to say that I hoped you'd been provided with  
 11 a schedule that deals with the many events that you were  
 12 concerned with over the course of that night and you've  
 13 shown me that you do have a copy of that.  
 14 Sir, do you also have a copy? I can see that you  
 15 do.  
 16 Yours has been printed off to --  
 17 MR COOPER: Sir, I wonder if that could be taken down, if  
 18 Mr Greaney's finished.  
 19 MR GREANEY: Yes, of course. Thank you very much indeed,  
 20 Mr Cooper. I am sorry if there was something  
 21 distressing on there.  
 22 Mine has printed out at 41 pages, yours has printed  
 23 out at more than 60 pages, so I hope this is going to  
 24 work. If it doesn't then we might need to have a short  
 25 break.

1 Is it the position that at -- and this is  
 2 entry 1507 -- I'm looking at the column on the far  
 3 left --hand side -- at 22.36.16, you appear to have had  
 4 a conversation with someone called Paul Lawton. Do you  
 5 remember that?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Was Paul Lawton then an acting police sergeant?  
 8 A. He was, yes.  
 9 Q. And the duty sergeant in respect of GMP's ARV teams that  
 10 night?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Was he also something called the or a force tactical  
 13 adviser?  
 14 A. Yes, he was the firearms tactical adviser for the TFC.  
 15 Q. Firearms tactical adviser?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. What did that role involve him doing?  
 18 A. He is a specialist in understanding various available  
 19 tactics that ARVs can utilise. He would have read the  
 20 FWIN and the normal situation is that I brief him on  
 21 what I had as far as risk and what my aim was.  
 22 Q. Is this the NDM briefing?  
 23 A. Yes. It's not done in an NDM style, and then we will  
 24 discuss what options are available as far as tactics.  
 25 Q. So this is a phone call and, unfortunately, we can't put

1 this on the screen because this document does contain  
 2 operationally sensitive material. But if you're looking  
 3 at that entry, we can see that it reads as follows. You  
 4 say:  
 5 "Force duty officer."  
 6 And Sergeant Lawton says:  
 7 "Hiya boss, it's Paul Lawton."  
 8 Do you see that?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. It looks as if he has placed a call in to you; is that  
 11 the right way of reading it?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. How would he know to call you?  
 14 A. He would have listened to the deployment -- he monitors  
 15 the firearms channel and if I deployed the firearms  
 16 teams to the arena, as I did, he would have picked up on  
 17 that.  
 18 Q. It continues. You greeting him and saying:  
 19 "It's looking legit, this one."  
 20 What did you mean by that?  
 21 A. That there's obviously something happening at the arena.  
 22 Q. Sergeant Lawton asks you:  
 23 "What is it, an explosion or gunshots?"  
 24 And you replied, and this may be an important reply  
 25 in terms of your decision-making:



1 "An explosion reported and reports of gunshots."  
 2 Is that correct?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. And you continued:  
 5 "I'm not too sure about the gunshots, but it's been  
 6 reported as gunshots being reported so I'm looking --  
 7 obviously we're going to have to get there and get in as  
 8 quickly as possible."  
 9 And Mr Lawton agreed with you, saying:  
 10 "Straight to the scene?"  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. So it seems that at that stage, you were not too sure  
 13 about the reports of gunshots; is that correct?  
 14 A. That's correct, yes.  
 15 Q. But were you having to proceed on the basis that that  
 16 was a material possibility?  
 17 A. Very much so. If I couldn't negate the fact that there  
 18 hadn't been gunshots, then I treated it as gunshots.  
 19 Q. You confirm:  
 20 "Straight to the scene."  
 21 And Mr Lawton asks:  
 22 "Emergency search?"  
 23 A. Yes, that's a tactic.  
 24 Q. You reply:  
 25 "Yeah."

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1 Steps were taken to obtain information by Mr Lawton  
 2 about which building it was that they needed to go to  
 3 and then quickly that conversation came to an end.  
 4 So in simple terms, what had happened during the  
 5 course of that conversation?  
 6 A. We'd agreed on a tactic, which was a high-level tactic,  
 7 and that would be something that, although a firearms  
 8 authority hadn't been given at that time, because I was  
 9 still reviewing the intelligence and information coming  
 10 in, if it transpired that the report was accurate then  
 11 that's the tactic that I would have employed on his  
 12 advice.  
 13 Q. So there are just a couple of things to unwrap from that  
 14 answer. You'd obviously spoken to just one firearms  
 15 officer, Sergeant Lawton. Did you anticipate that you  
 16 were going to have to speak to other firearms officers  
 17 to ensure their attendance at the arena or did you think  
 18 that he would achieve that for you?  
 19 A. No, I'd be briefing and deploying the ARVs over the  
 20 firearms radio channel.  
 21 Q. You mentioned firearms authority; what is that?  
 22 A. That is a... It's a log or a number which is given to  
 23 each firearms deployment. So once a firearms deployment  
 24 has been authorised, then that obviously sets numerous  
 25 things in motion and because deploying a firearm or ARV

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1 on to an incident is a high-level tactic, whichever way  
 2 you look at it, because you're deploying lethal force,  
 3 it has to be very closely monitored, so it's just a  
 4 number given to the incident.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just to get the sequence of events,  
 6 Mr Lawton would have picked up you talking to ARVs on  
 7 a channel, sending them to the scene, but not at that  
 8 time authorising them; is that right?  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So he then talks to you and any  
 11 authority comes afterwards?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 MR GREANEY: Did there come a stage at which you granted  
 14 firearms authority and, if there did, was that before  
 15 firearms officers arrived at the scene?  
 16 A. I think, because -- this is where I'm slightly confused.  
 17 By that time, as things were progressing towards  
 18 22.38/39, I think there was more and more reports coming  
 19 in, so that's when I was satisfied that actually it is  
 20 a proper report. I cannot remember the first officer  
 21 at the scene. I remember there was a first firearms  
 22 officer at the scene.  
 23 Q. We're going to look at some entries shortly.  
 24 A. All right. But I would think that I did give the  
 25 firearms authority before the first officer arrived.

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1 Q. I think I asked you a rather open question when I knew  
 2 the answer. I think the position is that at 22.40 hours  
 3 you granted firearms authority, as you had sufficient  
 4 concern regarding a potential gunman at that location.  
 5 And it was very shortly after that that the first  
 6 firearms officer entered the building, so that would  
 7 seem to accord with your recollection.  
 8 A. Very much so.  
 9 Q. And moreover, your understanding of how things ought to  
 10 operate?  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. Further down the page of the log, entry 1551, timed at  
 13 22.36.59; do you see that?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. Which may well be whilst you are still on the telephone  
 16 to Mr Lawton. We don't need to go through all of this,  
 17 but towards the bottom, can you see there is an entry  
 18 that is attributed to Mr Bromley? Do you see that?  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. Do you know who Mr Bromley is, Christopher Bromley?  
 21 A. I don't.  
 22 Q. "Can you pass to the FDO, we've got -- there's four dogs  
 23 on duty tonight and a firearms support dog if we can  
 24 assist with public order."  
 25 So that does not seem to be a reference to an

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1 explosives dog; is that correct?  
 2 A. That's correct, yes.  
 3 Q. The impression from the recording was that it took some  
 4 time for an explosives dog to reach the scene; is that  
 5 how it seemed to you at the time?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. We'll come back to that.  
 8 Mr Carter then says:  
 9 "Yep, received. He's [that I think is a reference  
 10 to the FDO, so to you] is on the phone at the moment,  
 11 but if you want to make the general area and the  
 12 other ... Once we have got the RV point for the  
 13 non-armed officers we will obviously update you."  
 14 So is Mr Carter someone within the OCR?  
 15 A. Yes. He works on the CK radios, Team 3.  
 16 Q. Mr Bromley, "Received". And someone else comes in to  
 17 the radio message and says among other things:  
 18 "Now they're saying RV is the cathedral."  
 19 So should we understand from that that at this stage  
 20 there was an understanding, certainly on the part of  
 21 that officer, that the RVP was the cathedral?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. Had you by that stage nominated a rendezvous point?  
 24 A. I don't think I had by that stage. I'm not too sure  
 25 what time I did that.

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1 Q. So do you know where that reference to the cathedral as  
 2 the RVP had come from?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. Where had it come from?  
 5 A. This is after the events I've obviously looked at it.  
 6 I think Inspector Mike Smith had identified the  
 7 Cathedral car park as an RVP and that... I can presume  
 8 that Schott is an officer who works within the spec ops,  
 9 so potentially a dog handler or a traffic officer.  
 10 Q. So your understanding, or your working out, is that that  
 11 RVP had been identified by Inspector Michael Smith, who  
 12 was to become the Bronze commander at the scene?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And who was where at the time?  
 15 A. At the early stages, I wouldn't expect him to be at the  
 16 scene.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 18 MR GREANEY: He arrived at 22.44.31, so he was probably on  
 19 his way there --  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. -- at the time.  
 22 At various stages, you've indicated that you made  
 23 the declaration of Operation Plato at 10.47, and it is  
 24 certainly correct that you make an express reference to  
 25 Plato at 10.47. But I just need to explore with you now

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1 whether in fact you had made a decision to declare  
 2 Operation Plato and communicated it at some earlier  
 3 stage.  
 4 At 22.37.47 -- sir, this isn't in our schedule -- so  
 5 only about 3 minutes or so after the events had come to  
 6 your attention through the incident log, someone called  
 7 Helen Jackson passed a radio message over the GMP  
 8 system. Do you know who she is?  
 9 A. No. I can presume she's either a radio operator or  
 10 assistant.  
 11 Q. I hope this reference is the correct one, Mr Lopez.  
 12 {INQ018367/1}.  
 13 I don't have the page of this, so we'll just have to  
 14 scroll through. That isn't the correct reference. Let  
 15 me tell you what the content of the radio message was.  
 16 At 10.37 she passed a message:  
 17 "The FDO's just given it as an Operation Plato."  
 18 Okay? And the FDO in context can only have been  
 19 you, do you agree?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. Does that fit with your recollection that you made the  
 22 declaration as early as that?  
 23 A. No, the declaration was made at 22.47. I do remember  
 24 suggesting, and I can't remember who it was to, that  
 25 I was considering Operation Plato based on the

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1 intelligence information, but I hadn't declared it at  
 2 that point.  
 3 Q. Right.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would that have gone out to all GMP  
 5 officers, the radio message?  
 6 A. No, just to the firearms teams.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm talking about what Helen Jackson  
 8 said.  
 9 A. Sorry, I don't know.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You wouldn't know where that went?  
 11 A. No. If she was a radio operator it would have gone out  
 12 to potentially those on that radio channel for the area  
 13 covering the arena.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Her particular area, whatever that might  
 15 be?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 MR GREANEY: We will come back to this once we have the  
 18 transcript, but what you're saying to us is that what  
 19 you had indicated by this stage, about 3 minutes or so  
 20 after becoming aware of the events at the arena, was  
 21 that you had under consideration declaring  
 22 Operation Plato?  
 23 A. Very much so.  
 24 Q. But had not formally declared it at that stage?  
 25 A. I don't believe I had, no.

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1 Q. At 22.39.21 —  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm really sorry. I'm just wondering  
 3 how she got this information. Is it something she could  
 4 overhear?  
 5 A. Yes. It could have been a conversation that I was  
 6 having within the room to Ian or to any of the other  
 7 supervisors who may have been coming up at that point.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And just misinterpreted it a bit?  
 9 A. I do remember making reference to Op Plato prior to the  
 10 initial notification. But as far as I was aware or  
 11 concerned, it was a consideration because of the  
 12 reporting of the gunshots.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 14 MR GREANEY: This may not be the most important point in the  
 15 case. I'm going to give the correct INQ reference, it  
 16 was in fact the correct one but I missed a T from the  
 17 end: {INQ018367T/1}.  
 18 It's on this page, {INQ018367T/2}. We can see PO,  
 19 so this is Helen Jackson, as I indicated, and as we  
 20 understand it:  
 21 "If the message hasn't been passed yet, the FDO is  
 22 just currently declaring an Op Plato or incident in the  
 23 city centre."  
 24 Then a little further down, next entry:  
 25 "Received, Puma. To all patrols: the FDO's just

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1 given us an Op Plato. That's at Manchester Arena, sound  
 2 of gunshots and explosions."  
 3 The way in which that reads, and as I indicated,  
 4 this is at 22.37, is that there is an understanding that  
 5 consideration is being given to Operation Plato and it's  
 6 about to be declared and then, "The FDO's just given us  
 7 an Operation Plato".  
 8 A. I would suggest that's a breakdown in communication,  
 9 a misunderstanding.  
 10 Q. And the position remained that it was just under  
 11 consideration at that stage?  
 12 A. Very much so, yes.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you expect all patrols to  
 14 understand what was meant by Operation Plato?  
 15 A. Honestly, unarmed officers, most probably not. No, not  
 16 at all. Firearms world, definitely.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 18 MR GREANEY: What about an unarmed officer who hears  
 19 a declaration of Operation Plato over the radio, doesn't  
 20 know what it is? How could that officer find out what  
 21 is going on?  
 22 A. Send the question back to the radio operator: what's  
 23 Operation Plato? Who, if they didn't know, would then  
 24 get their supervisor to ask me, "What's  
 25 Operation Plato?" If the supervisor didn't know — but

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1 I would expect the supervisor to have known.  
 2 Q. We're going to move ahead just a short time to 22.39.21.  
 3 It was at that point that the FDS, Ian Randall, made  
 4 contact with Night Silver, Superintendent Nawaz, by  
 5 phone in order to inform him of the explosion. So  
 6 22.39.21.  
 7 Again, this isn't on our schedule, but we do have  
 8 a transcript. Mr Lopez, this is {INQ018839T/5}.  
 9 We can see that it starts about a quarter of the way  
 10 down the page. Ian Randall:  
 11 "Hiya boss, it's Ian, one of the force duty  
 12 supervisors — well, you know, the FDO's bagman."  
 13 Superintendent Nawaz recognises that:  
 14 "Oh yes, yes."  
 15 The FDS:  
 16 "We've had an explosion at Manchester Arena — bear  
 17 with me."  
 18 "Yes."  
 19 "Boss, are you near a box?"  
 20 "I'm not."  
 21 A box being what, some form of computer system?  
 22 A. Just the computer with access to the incident log.  
 23 Q. Ian Randall then provides some further information:  
 24 "We've just — we have had reports of an explosion  
 25 in the foyer at Manchester Arena where the old

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1 McDonald's was, you know at the main concourse?"  
 2 Superintendent Nawaz indicates that he does know.  
 3 The FDS:  
 4 "Everyone and his mam are going down there. We're  
 5 waiting for an update as soon as possible but it says  
 6 at the minute about 20 to 30 people injured."  
 7 "Right, okay."  
 8 "There is a concert on at the arena and all, would  
 9 you believe?"  
 10 "Okay. Are BTP there?"  
 11 The FDS replies:  
 12 "Well, it has been sent to them and all, so we're  
 13 just waiting for them, and we're going to try and get  
 14 them on the Hailing group or speak to them."  
 15 Do you see that?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. What did you understand, if you understood anything, the  
 18 Hailing group to be?  
 19 A. The Hailing group is a radio channel that other forces  
 20 can access to shout up GMP, likewise we can do it for  
 21 other forces, and it's just a way on the radio system to  
 22 make direct contact with the control room of certain  
 23 police forces.  
 24 Q. As you'll recall, we were discussing communications  
 25 between different emergency services earlier. Does it

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1 follow from that answer that the Hailing group was  
 2 a means by which GMP could get in touch with — the GMP  
 3 control room could get in touch with a BTP control room?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. And by the same token, was a way in which the BTP  
 6 control room could get in touch with the GMP control  
 7 room?  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is there any sensitivity about how it  
 10 operates, the Hailing group?  
 11 MR GREANEY: I look to Mr Horwell to see.  
 12 MR HORWELL: Not that I am aware of, sir.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. It sounds a bit like you're  
 14 saying they shout up for them. Does that mean it's  
 15 always open and you shout out "GMP" and you hope GMP  
 16 hear it?  
 17 A. Yes. The Hailing group should be, not always is, but  
 18 should be always turned on. And that is usually  
 19 monitored by a Team 3 radio operator. It should always  
 20 be live, but because there's no transmissions going out  
 21 it's almost like a dead channel until someone shouts up  
 22 on it. Potentially, during a period of real demand,  
 23 it would be quite easy to hear someone shout up but not  
 24 realise that they're on the Hailing channel and just  
 25 think they're on one of the other channels you are

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1 listening to at the time. But that is the official way  
 2 for a visiting force to speak to GMP.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. It's spelt here as H-A-Y, I'd  
 4 rather assumed it was Hailing, as in hailing someone.  
 5 A. Yes, Hailing group.  
 6 MR GREANEY: Sir, Mr Randall, when he gives evidence, we had  
 7 hoped tomorrow, but it's looking more likely the day  
 8 after, will be able to add to our understanding of the  
 9 Hailing group.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.  
 11 MR GREANEY: Then Superintendent Nawaz replies:  
 12 "Right, okay. What's the FWIN?"  
 13 And the FDS gives him the FWIN number. Over the  
 14 page. Superintendent Nawaz:  
 15 "Okay, and where's the information come from?"  
 16 "Several calls have been coming in, boss, and it's  
 17 just like a couple of people have been just ringing in."  
 18 Question from Night Silver:  
 19 "Right, okay. Any indication — do we think it's  
 20 a bomb or is it ..."  
 21 Answer from the FDS:  
 22 "We don't know yet. The boss is still trying  
 23 coordinate with firearms to get down there anyway."  
 24 And would the reference to "the boss" there be  
 25 a reference to you?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. Was that accurate, were at that stage coordinating with  
 3 firearms to get them down to the arena?  
 4 A. I think I was preparing for the briefing over the radio  
 5 channel.  
 6 Q. Superintendent Nawaz:  
 7 "Right okay."  
 8 FDS:  
 9 "If it does get bigger, so to speak, we've got —  
 10 we'll have a Silver opened if that's okay with you. But  
 11 we will come back to you on that anyway, if you know  
 12 what I mean."  
 13 What is the reference to "have a Silver opened if it  
 14 gets bigger"?  
 15 A. That's a Silver command module, so where Silver — all  
 16 the Silvers from the various forces and commanders could  
 17 go — sorry, partners would go to the location, same  
 18 location, and start managing the incident from there.  
 19 Q. This again is the idea of commanders at the same level,  
 20 whether they be Gold, Silver or Bronze, co-locating to  
 21 gain situational awareness?  
 22 A. Very much so, yes.  
 23 Q. Superintendent Nawaz replies:  
 24 "Right, okay. So I'll have a look at the FWIN.  
 25 Once I've got a bit more detail, I might give [and then

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1 it is inaudible] a ring."  
 2 We might have another listen to that. One rather  
 3 suspects in context that's a reference to Gold and  
 4 therefore ACC Ford. Does that seem sensible?  
 5 A. Yes.  
 6 Q. FDS:  
 7 "Right, no worries, boss, I will get — as soon as  
 8 the boss gets free, I will ..."  
 9 Night Silver:  
 10 "Get him to bell me."  
 11 "I will do, sir."  
 12 "Thanks."  
 13 "All right, see you later, boss."  
 14 "Cheers."  
 15 That's the end of that particular conversation and  
 16 we can take it from the screen.  
 17 First of all, were you aware of that conversation  
 18 at the time so far as you can recall?  
 19 A. I was certainly aware most probably after the event that  
 20 Ian had spoken to Superintendent Nawaz.  
 21 Q. So you knew that at that stage, 22.39, Night Silver had  
 22 been made aware that there was an incident?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. And having read what the FDS said to  
 25 Superintendent Nawaz, do you consider that that was an

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1 adequate communication of the information that was  
 2 available at the time?  
 3 A. I think from Ian's perspective, yes. Ian would have  
 4 expected me to give slightly more detail, but yes  
 5 I think that was adequate at the time.  
 6 Q. Let's just pick up on other things that were happening  
 7 in the seconds that followed. At 22.39.50, so just  
 8 a small number of seconds short of 9 minutes after the  
 9 explosion, PC Edward Richardson, who became firearms  
 10 Bronze, as we know, the OFC, called over the radio to  
 11 say that he and his team were outside the arena.  
 12 I must say, elsewhere the time of that call is given  
 13 as slightly later, but at that stage he indicated that  
 14 there was nothing much to report; do you remember that?  
 15 A. Very much so, yes.  
 16 Q. What effect did that have on your thinking?  
 17 A. I was able to make — well, have a sigh of relief to  
 18 a certain extent, thinking that my first assessment of  
 19 it being potentially a hoax call and possibly not as  
 20 serious ... That actually we weren't dealing with  
 21 anything too significant and therefore it was almost as  
 22 though the pressure's off a little bit.  
 23 Q. To pick it up, the next relevant time is 22.41.27, so  
 24 we are not far away, everyone will be relieved to hear,  
 25 from the time you switched your dictaphone on. At that

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1 time, 22.41.27, CCTV on Station Approach captures an ARV  
 2 travelling towards and onto Hunts Bank.  
 3 Mr Lopez, we can have that image on the screen.  
 4 It's INQ035612, but please don't put the page on the  
 5 screen until I give it, {INQ035612/67}.  
 6 There is that armed response vehicle at 22.41.27,  
 7 seen on Station Approach. We don't need to look at the  
 8 image, but a second armed response vehicle arrived on  
 9 Station Approach just 25 seconds later. So just leaving  
 10 PC Richardson wherever he was for the moment, do you  
 11 agree it's clear that armed officers were arriving  
 12 at the scene just over 10 minutes after the explosion?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. I'm not suggesting you will have been aware of this but  
 15 it will be relevant to some questions I have tomorrow,  
 16 in a telephone conversation between BTP and NWS at  
 17 22.41.42, the BTP operator indicated that BTP had  
 18 declared a major incident. Okay? I think it's the  
 19 position that at no stage did you declare a major  
 20 incident, did you, on behalf of GMP?  
 21 A. No, I didn't.  
 22 Q. Tomorrow, once we've listened to the recording, I will  
 23 want to understand from you why that was.  
 24 At 22.41.43, there was a GMP radio message in which  
 25 you took part, and an officer called Lee Moore was also

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1 a participant in that conversation. Who is Lee Moore?  
 2 A. Sorry, was that on the radio channel, the firearms radio  
 3 channel?  
 4 Q. It just reads, this is entry 1788 on our schedule,  
 5 22.41.43 — do you have that, "Lee Moore and Dale  
 6 Sexton".  
 7 A. Yes, that will be a firearms officer.  
 8 Q. We can see, can't we, that your hope is in this  
 9 conversation thwarted. Lee Moore, the firearms officer  
 10 says:  
 11 "It's become a different story now. There's still  
 12 members of the public coming out, nobody..."  
 13 "Yes, received, the last obviously still."  
 14 You ask him to clarify what's happening and you're  
 15 told by him that he's going to the upper floor of the  
 16 MEN:  
 17 "Basically they've got major casualties".  
 18 Was this the first time you knew from someone who  
 19 was at the scene and able to speak to people in the know  
 20 that there were "major casualties"?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. You say:  
 23 "Yes, received. Definitely casualties."  
 24 And Lee Moore then makes a reference to  
 25 Operation Plato.

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. Do you remember that?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. What was Lee Moore saying about Operation Plato?  
 5 A. I think basically that it met the criteria for  
 6 a potential MTFA. That would have been his  
 7 understanding at the time. And supporting my — if  
 8 he was aware that I was considering Operation Plato,  
 9 that actually it was an Operation Plato incident.  
 10 Q. The same INQ reference, Mr Lopez, INQ035612. We are  
 11 going to have a series of pages from this. At 22.41.52,  
 12 we're going to see another armed response vehicle is  
 13 arriving at the scene. {INQ035612/69}, please. This is  
 14 just under 11 minutes after the explosion.  
 15 Then at 22.42.44, so just under 12 minutes after the  
 16 explosion, two armed officers of GMP are caught on CCTV  
 17 within the arena itself, having entered via the lower  
 18 Trinity Way exit doors. So this is {INQ035612/75}.  
 19 This is PCs Tyldesley and Dalton, armed and within the  
 20 building.  
 21 So we can see, and you'll agree, chief inspector,  
 22 that just under 12 minutes after the explosion armed  
 23 assets are actually within the building itself?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. At 22.43.05, you participated in a call with

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1 PC Richardson and Lee Moore.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is this on the schedule?  
 3 MR GREANEY: Yes, sir, 1856.  
 4 Edward Richardson, the OFC:  
 5 "Just confirm what you've heard, please."  
 6 It appears that he is not with Mr Moore. Mr Moore  
 7 says:  
 8 "I'm with a BTP officer now. We're going up to the  
 9 upper floor of the MEN. It's stated that they've got  
 10 major casualties upstairs in the MEN and they believe  
 11 it's a ball bearing device. Stand by further."  
 12 You say:  
 13 "Yeah, received."  
 14 Mr Moore:  
 15 "Boss, I can confirm there's definitely casualties."  
 16 You:  
 17 "Yeah, received, definitely casualties."  
 18 David Downes, a GMP officer:  
 19 "We still have ARVs making to the scene. Can  
 20 we have the correct place to go, please? So, entry into  
 21 that location."  
 22 And then Mr Moore says:  
 23 "Boss, confirmed. Yes, yes, Operation Plato,  
 24 Operation Plato."  
 25 You had not made your formal declaration, as you've

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1 explained to us by that stage, it was to come about  
 2 4 minutes later, just under, and Lee Moore was not  
 3 someone with the authority to declare Operation Plato  
 4 was he?  
 5 A. No.  
 6 Q. So what was happening in this conversation?  
 7 A. I suppose it's a very, very quick way of saying, "Boss,  
 8 the circumstances justify Operation Plato". It's not  
 9 his decision, but it's a quick way for him to inform me  
 10 of his concerns because my understanding of the firearms  
 11 teams, the firearms officers, is their understanding of  
 12 Operation Plato would have been as good as mine was  
 13 at the time. So that was part of the rationale and the  
 14 information and intelligence that I was basing the  
 15 official declaration on.  
 16 Q. What you don't say to him is, "You've said twice now  
 17 this is an Operation Plato situation, are you saying to  
 18 me that there is an active shooter," or even, "Where is  
 19 the active shooter"? Why not?  
 20 A. I have no... I don't know. I don't know. I was  
 21 getting what I believed was a clear picture from the  
 22 information that was coming in and from the officers  
 23 at the scene. I don't think that I needed to prolong  
 24 that conversation on the air to establish the exact  
 25 circumstances surrounding it. In hindsight, I should

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1 have, but I don't believe it hindered the response.  
 2 Q. In a sense, this is really the critical feature of what  
 3 you're being told. Obviously, there has been an  
 4 explosion and there are casualties and that is a most  
 5 terrible state of affairs. But Operation Plato means  
 6 that you've got or may have someone with a gun intent  
 7 upon killing as many people as possible --  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. -- and that is a situation that needs to be dealt with.  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. And I believe what you're saying is it would have been  
 12 rather better if you'd taken steps to ascertain from  
 13 Lee Moore why it was Operation Plato?  
 14 A. I understood clearly in my mind why he was saying  
 15 Operation Plato, because I'd already formed that  
 16 decision with the explosion and the report of gunshots.  
 17 What he was doing was almost confirming that. What  
 18 I didn't do was establish exactly where the threat may  
 19 be. My assumption was that the threat was still within  
 20 the arena, and as he was making his way up to the arena,  
 21 as opposed to -- or to the City Room as opposed to  
 22 having spent any time there to assess it, I don't think  
 23 he would have been able to give me much more on that  
 24 anyway. As I say, with hindsight, and without the  
 25 pressure and demands that were on me, yes, I should have

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1 asked, I should have clarified, and I didn't.  
 2 Q. At 22.43.20, a further ARV arrived on Hunts Bank, so  
 3 what you had wished to occur, namely armed officers in  
 4 substantial numbers attending, is happening really very  
 5 quickly indeed. Do you agree?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. At 22.43.21, Edward Richardson, the OFC, and another  
 8 officer are captured on the arena CCTV, but they are  
 9 entering the arena and they are entering the arena via  
 10 the lower Trinity Way exit. We'll have that image on  
 11 screen: {INQ035612/82}.  
 12 So yet further armed officers actually now deployed  
 13 within the building itself; do you agree?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. {INQ035612/85} next, please.  
 16 Here we have different armed officers at 22.43.35.  
 17 They're approaching the City Room from essentially the  
 18 opposite direction from the officers that we've seen  
 19 because they're approaching it via the overbridge. Do  
 20 you understand that?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. We don't need to look at the image but by 22.44.37 they  
 23 have been all the way through the City Room and, by that  
 24 time, they're in the arena. So have you followed what  
 25 I've suggested to you?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. By 22.44.37, so within 14 minutes of the explosion,  
 3 there have actually been armed officers within that  
 4 City Room — and not just within it, they've been  
 5 through it.  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Would it be fair to say, or suggest, that if by that  
 8 stage there had been an active shooter within the  
 9 City Room, you would have expected them to have noticed  
 10 or for some other person within the City Room to have  
 11 drawn it to their attention?  
 12 A. That is something that I didn't think about. I would  
 13 say that, no, that would not necessarily be the case.  
 14 It would not be unreasonable for me to think that if  
 15 there had been an active shooter who had initially  
 16 discharged a firearm, for them then to go to ground to  
 17 a certain extent, go into the arena, and we could be  
 18 talking minutes before they then open fire again. I'd  
 19 never been in a position where I was having to assess  
 20 this real-life situation, but I do not think that the  
 21 fact that ARVs had gone through the City Room and into  
 22 the arena meant that that whole area was now safe.  
 23 Q. I completely understand that I'm approaching this with  
 24 the benefit of hindsight and you were there in the  
 25 middle of all of this, but I just want to take a moment

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1 to step back and reflect on what you think about this  
 2 now.  
 3 We've got armed officers about to enter the  
 4 City Room coming from one direction via the Trinity Way  
 5 exit. We've got two officers who have been into that  
 6 City Room, they've been through it, and they're in the  
 7 arena. Do you not think the fact that they've been  
 8 through that room without stopping, without making  
 9 a report of anything concerning, provides the clearest  
 10 indication that there was no active shooter, at least  
 11 in that area, the City Room?  
 12 A. I don't believe I was aware that they'd actually —  
 13 where they were within the arena, that they'd actually  
 14 got as far in as they actually had at that point.  
 15 You've got to remember that I'm taking information from  
 16 the radio, so if they're not transmitting on the radio,  
 17 I'm not getting that situational awareness. It's not  
 18 being updated on the FWIN, so any new information that  
 19 they may have is not being put directly on to the FWIN.  
 20 So I'm still going from the information that's initially  
 21 reported to me.  
 22 So if they did inform me that the area was clear and  
 23 they've been through, I've potentially missed it or  
 24 I heard it and it just didn't register.  
 25 Q. Should you have been informed, really at quite an early

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1 stage, that officers had been into the City Room and  
 2 there was no active shooter in there?  
 3 A. That would be a call for the OFC. The OFC is my eyes  
 4 and ears on the ground. But with such a dynamic  
 5 deployment with the emergency search, then I would  
 6 suggest it's not uncommon for them to progress until  
 7 they thought that they'd reached a point where there  
 8 wasn't that immediate threat that they were satisfied  
 9 with. Ideally, yes, I should have been informed, but  
 10 can I understand why I wasn't informed? Yes.  
 11 Q. What people, firearms officers, at the scene knew was  
 12 that you were considering declaring Operation Plato?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. You hadn't by this stage actually declared  
 15 Operation Plato, had you?  
 16 A. Not officially, no.  
 17 Q. And is it not reasonable to suggest that you should have  
 18 been told on an ongoing basis of which areas armed  
 19 officers had been into and whether there was an active  
 20 shooter in those areas because that was the defining  
 21 feature which was going to or should have defined  
 22 whether there was or wasn't Operation Plato declared?  
 23 A. I think the early stages of the incident — with  
 24 hindsight, most definitely yes. But in reality, in the  
 25 early stages of that incident, it is extremely

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1 confusing, it's confusing for me, it's confusing for the  
 2 officers on the ground who wouldn't have full  
 3 situational awareness, they'd only be aware of what's  
 4 happening in their immediate vicinity. So until they  
 5 are comfortable, I would not expect them to feed back to  
 6 me, certainly with the deployment of such a high-end  
 7 tactic that I'd given them.  
 8 Q. I genuinely don't wish to be unfair either to you or to  
 9 the officers at the scene and I recognise the risk of  
 10 hindsight in these questions.  
 11 Now, at 22.44.23, the FDS spoke to Chief Inspector  
 12 Rachel Buckle, who was the cadre TFC, telling her about  
 13 the fact of the explosion and saying that you had asked  
 14 him to give her a ring. This is entry 1934 on the  
 15 schedule.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Where it says here on the schedule that  
 17 Mr Sexton was in some way a party to the call, it  
 18 doesn't mean that?  
 19 MR GREANEY: You're quite right. It's confusing. Nor does  
 20 black or red seem to match up particularly with  
 21 anything. I think that Mr Sexton's name is there  
 22 because he is either referenced or because this is of  
 23 a degree of relevance to him, which plainly it was.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not complaining, I just wanted to  
 25 understand, that was all.

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1 MR GREANEY: I believe it's clear, chief inspector, that  
 2 you were not a participant in this conversation with  
 3 Chief Inspector Rachel Buckle at this stage.  
 4 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 5 Q. So it's a call that's made by the FDS. The TFC:  
 6 "Hello, Rachel Buckle."  
 7 FDS:  
 8 "Ma'am, it's Ian Randall."  
 9 There are some pleasantries. She confirms that  
 10 she's at home but wishes to know what he has to say, and  
 11 the FDS says:  
 12 "We've had an explosion in the city centre at the  
 13 MEN Arena."  
 14 And she says:  
 15 "Really?"  
 16 He apologises:  
 17 "Yeah, I'm sorry to put this on you at this time of  
 18 night."  
 19 She says:  
 20 "No, that's fine."  
 21 And then this from the FDS:  
 22 "The Night Silver's aware [which we know is  
 23 correct], the FDO's absolutely mad busy at the moment,  
 24 he's asked me to give you a ring."  
 25 And the log number is then given. Is that a fair

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1 assessment in his own words of how you were at the time,  
 2 "absolutely mad busy?"  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. The TFC asks:  
 5 "And anybody injured?"  
 6 FDS:  
 7 "We've got several casualties injured at the minute.  
 8 We're just trying to find out what's going on and that  
 9 at the minute."  
 10 And then there's some discussion about who had been  
 11 playing that night. And the chief inspector says:  
 12 "Right, okay. I'll make my way in then."  
 13 When you read that, "I'll make my way in then", how  
 14 do you understand it, in where?  
 15 A. That she'd be coming back in to Force — not necessarily  
 16 to my location but to a location where she could take  
 17 command and control.  
 18 Q. As that conversation was taking place, at 22.44.31,  
 19 Inspector Michael Smith, who becomes GMP  
 20 Bronze commander, arrives on Station Approach. This is  
 21 page 89, Mr Lopez, {INQ035612/89}.  
 22 At the same time another ARV is arriving. At  
 23 22.45.55 — and then this isn't something you'll have  
 24 been aware of at the time, but it will be relevant to  
 25 questions tomorrow — the Regional Occupational

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1 Communications Centre, which is, as I have understood it  
 2 at any rate, part of NNAS, called NNAS Control to ask  
 3 whether a major incident had been declared and in the  
 4 course of that call a major incident was declared at  
 5 22.46. That's 22.45.55.  
 6 Then at 22.46, you switched your dictaphone on. Why  
 7 was it that you switched the dictaphone on at that stage  
 8 as opposed to any earlier stage?  
 9 A. It was... I think it was apparent that this was  
 10 a significant incident which was going to be  
 11 fast-moving. I knew I wouldn't have time to make any  
 12 notes whatsoever and the best way to do it is to have  
 13 that ambient listening in the background. Also we'd  
 14 only had the dictaphone for most probably 4 weeks, so it  
 15 was a new device, we'd not used it before. It was  
 16 something new to the FDO, and for this very reason,  
 17 Mr Booth had identified that it would be beneficial to  
 18 have that on the desk. So it had never been used  
 19 before, I'd never used it before, so it was a new piece  
 20 of — a way of monitoring or managing the information  
 21 that was coming in so you could go back later and  
 22 understand more clearly.  
 23 MR GREANEY: As I indicated earlier, we have a recording for  
 24 2 hours and 49 minutes. But what we're going to do is  
 25 to listen to about an hour and a half.

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1 Sir, I think we will need to have a break at this  
 2 stage.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because I won't get a chance to ask you  
 4 this while we're listening to the recording: having made  
 5 a decision to declare Operation Plato but not tell the  
 6 other rescue services, were you expecting them to  
 7 continue to keep going into the City Room because they  
 8 wouldn't be aware of Operation Plato?  
 9 A. I knew that having a Bronze on the ground would give  
 10 some control to the scene — and a Bronze will manage  
 11 unnecessary footfall into the scene.  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which Bronze for which organisation?  
 13 A. Sorry, Inspector Smith.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, GMP Bronze?  
 15 A. GMP Bronze. So I was satisfied that the resources we  
 16 had there were most probably going to stay there and  
 17 assist, but with the implementation of cordons that  
 18 should stop any other staff coming in or members of the  
 19 public coming in. So that negated a bit of the risk  
 20 that I was taking.  
 21 NNAS, as I believed it, already had resources at the  
 22 scene and were dealing with that and they're the best  
 23 people to provide that immediate trauma care. GMFRS,  
 24 I knew, weren't there or I believed they weren't there  
 25 and I really didn't want them there at that time. If

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1 I'd wanted more resources there to deal with the trauma,  
2 then I would have preferred to have had more paramedics  
3 at the scene rather than the Fire Service.

4 Like I say, with having the cordons in place and  
5 having the ground Bronze, I believed there was a degree  
6 of control over that area and that was sufficient for me  
7 to warrant balancing the risk against staff and members  
8 of the public there against any potential returning  
9 threat or threat at scene. But again that wouldn't have  
10 prevented further casualties if there'd been a secondary  
11 device at that location as well. But it was  
12 a calculated risk which was based on experience and the  
13 information that was coming in at the time. It  
14 certainly wasn't an easy decision.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you very much.

16 MR GREANEY: Could I ask two things arising from that?  
17 They're both short.

18 When you made your decision effectively to seek to  
19 keep the declaration of Operation Plato a secret, was  
20 part of your consideration that you thought that with  
21 the number of armed officers who were at the scene you  
22 could keep the other emergency service workers safe?  
23 A. Yes. I couldn't provide a 100% definite guarantee that  
24 they would be safe because I didn't know the form of any  
25 potential secondary attack, but I believed that I could

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1 provide a very good level of protection around those  
2 that were left at the scene.

3 Q. Was that an indication, as you look back, that this was  
4 not truly a Plato situation?

5 A. No, not at all.

6 Q. And the second point: you referred to the fact that you  
7 didn't want the Fire and Rescue Service there. In your  
8 answer, you referred to the Fire Service; as we know,  
9 they are a Fire and Rescue Service. Do you think that  
10 you misunderstood or underestimated the assistance that  
11 the Fire and Rescue Service could give at that scene?

12 A. Absolutely not. I knew the capability of their response  
13 teams, the specialist response teams, as I knew the  
14 capability of the HART teams for NWS because of regular  
15 contact with the NILO. So it certainly wasn't a lack of  
16 understanding of their capability, it was a decision --  
17 and again, yes, they could have potentially assisted  
18 with the removal of casualties, but I didn't --

19 Q. I think no potentially: they could have assisted with  
20 the removal of casualties.

21 A. Yes, they could have, but I didn't believe that...  
22 I didn't want to put additional unarmed personnel into  
23 that area whilst I still believed there was an ongoing  
24 threat.

25 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much indeed.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Ten minutes, is that long enough?

2 MR GREANEY: Sir, yes, it is.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that long enough for you?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

6 (3.48 pm)

(A short break)

8 (4.07 pm)

9 MR GREANEY: Sir, although I did consult a number of people  
10 about sitting on until 17.30, and they all indicated  
11 they were prepared to do so, but I did not consult  
12 Deborah and Kay, our ushers.

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I have asked Deborah. I hope lots of  
14 the people who are required to do not mind. I'm sorry  
15 they haven't been consulted beforehand and I appreciate  
16 their help.

17 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, sir.

18 What we are going to do now is to listen to the  
19 audio that I set out earlier and also we will have on  
20 the screen a transcript of what we are going to listen  
21 to. You, sir, I know have a hard copy as well.

22 I'll give the transcript reference first of all so  
23 that Mr Weatherby in particular can get this up on his  
24 screen where he is if he wishes to. It is  
25 {INQ024325/1}. The audio that we're going to be playing is

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1 {INQ024326A/1}.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we understand, we're picking up what  
3 is received on a dictaphone, which is with  
4 Inspector Sexton?

5 MR GREANEY: Yes.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And it will be things actually in the  
7 room and it'll be people speaking over radios and over  
8 telephones?

9 MR GREANEY: That's a very good point. Sometimes we can  
10 only hear half of a conversation that is taking place,  
11 although generally we do have the other half from  
12 a different source. So I'll pick all of that up  
13 tomorrow.

14 The quality of this, certainly as I listened to it,  
15 was good, but that is what we are going to be hearing  
16 and from 10.46.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

18 (4.09 pm)

(Audio recording played to the inquiry)

20 (5.35 pm)

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How much longer is there to go?

22 MR GREANEY: There's about 5 minutes left to go.

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll save those 5 minutes for tomorrow,  
24 I think.

25 MR GREANEY: Thank you.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This transcript has been done by Greater  
2 Manchester Police, has it?  
3 MR GREANEY: No, this transcript has been prepared by your  
4 team, sir, and I'm particularly grateful to --  
5 MR COOPER: Sir, I for one am finding it difficult to hear  
6 what you're saying because there's a bit of air  
7 conditioning noise going on.  
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: All I'm saying is whoever did this  
9 transcript, it seems to me, seems to have done  
10 a remarkable job and it must take forever and a day, so  
11 whoever contributed to that, I'm really grateful.  
12 MR GREANEY: GMP have made a significant contribution to it  
13 but the initial work was done by people on behalf of  
14 your team, sir.  
15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: To all those who have contributed,  
16 thank you very much indeed.  
17 Are we starting at 9.30 tomorrow?  
18 MR GREANEY: We are, sir, please.  
19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's been a long day, I'm really sorry,  
20 but listening to a lot of it at one time, it's probably  
21 quite a good thing.  
22 I'm sorry to you too, but 9.30, if that's all right.  
23 A. Sir, yes.  
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
25 (5.36 pm)

I N D E X

CHIEF INSPECTOR DALE SEXTON (sworn) .....1  
Questions from MR GREANEY .....1

1 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am  
2 on Thursday, 6 May 2021)

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