

# OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 87

April 14, 2021

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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1 Wednesday, 14 April 2021  
 2 (10.00 am)  
 3 (Delay in proceedings)  
 4 (10.23 am)  
 5 MS CARTWRIGHT: Good morning, sir. Can I apologise to you  
 6 and anyone watching for the delayed start this morning.  
 7 The gentleman in the witness box is Mr Buckley. Could  
 8 I ask that he now be sworn, please.  
 9 MR DARREN BUCKLEY (affirmed)  
 10 Questions from MS CARTWRIGHT  
 11 MS CARTWRIGHT: Could you please tell us your full name?  
 12 A. Darren Stephen Buckley.  
 13 Q. Mr Buckley, there's three areas I'm going to deal with  
 14 you in evidence this morning: first of all, I want to  
 15 deal with your arrival at the arena and then attending  
 16 the concert; secondly, what you experienced as to the  
 17 explosion; then, in the third phase, we'll deal very  
 18 briefly with the assistance you provided.  
 19 So the first phase. We can see from the information  
 20 you provided in witness statements but also from the  
 21 work that Greater Manchester Police have done  
 22 interrogating the CCTV that we know that you attended  
 23 at the arena for the concert and at 6.42 in the evening  
 24 you and your son are captured having entered at  
 25 Hunts Bank on the concourse at the arena.

1

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. I think if we just confirm together first of all that  
 3 we're not going to name your son today.  
 4 A. Thank you.  
 5 Q. Can you just tell us how it came to be that you and your  
 6 son were going to be at that concert?  
 7 A. We basically -- we love music, my son loves his music,  
 8 so we got him tickets for Christmas. He just kept going  
 9 on and on and on about it, and then when we gave him his  
 10 tickets, he knew he was going to see Ariana Grande  
 11 because he has got a big poster on his walls and the  
 12 calendars and stuff. Basically so we knew and [REDACTED] --  
 13 sorry, he knew that we was going to see Ariana Grande.  
 14 Q. Thank you. So we can see, as I've already said, at 6.42  
 15 you're within the arena, travelling along Hunts Bank,  
 16 about to go into the arena itself.  
 17 A. Yes.  
 18 Q. So can I ask you next then, Mr Buckley, how did you and  
 19 your son find the concert that evening?  
 20 A. Noisy. My son enjoyed it, he was singing every word.  
 21 I was just sat there, more thinking about my ears and  
 22 just looking at my phone because I didn't even know who  
 23 she was. I mean, the only time I'd seen her was on  
 24 a Nickelodeon programme.  
 25 Q. But certainly what you are describing is your son very

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1 much enjoyed the concert?  
 2 A. Yes, definitely.  
 3 Q. We know that there came a time when the concert ended  
 4 and you and your son left the arena bowl, if I call it  
 5 that --  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. -- and went back out on to the concourse. Again, we  
 8 know from the work that GMP have done in interrogating  
 9 that CCTV that at 22.32.12, so after the bomb had been  
 10 detonated, you are captured on the CCTV on the concourse  
 11 area outside the City Room doors.  
 12 Mr Buckley, can I ask you, what did you experience,  
 13 as you left the concert, of the bomb being detonated,  
 14 please?  
 15 A. We had just come out of like the area that we was sat  
 16 at, block 105, and we was just about to walk towards the  
 17 foyer or City Room, as youse call it, and the next thing  
 18 there was just this huge flash and bang and the doors  
 19 sort of slammed towards us.  
 20 Q. Pause there. Which doors are you describing slamming  
 21 towards you?  
 22 A. The city doors into the foyer room.  
 23 Q. So you have described hearing a loud blast, seeing the  
 24 doors shut. Did you experience anything else?  
 25 A. Just like the heat, the heat from it, and a bit ... bits

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1 of blood and stuff.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. I obviously need to know what you  
 3 can tell me, which helps me with the inquiry. We also  
 4 have to be very concerned that if we get -- if the  
 5 description is too graphic, it will upset people who  
 6 have been terribly affected by what happened. So  
 7 obviously give me the information that I want to know,  
 8 but you don't need to be too graphic. I think we can  
 9 all appreciate --  
 10 A. Okay, sir, thank you.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 12 MS CARTWRIGHT: Again, in terms of the work that Greater  
 13 Manchester Police have done with interrogating the CCTV,  
 14 we are assisted by seeing you, in those minutes  
 15 afterwards, approaching the doors of the City Room,  
 16 going back again and forward until we know that you  
 17 entered the City Room from the concourse at 22.37.  
 18 So just very briefly, what were you doing as we see  
 19 you in the concourse going towards the doors, coming  
 20 away again, going towards the doors?  
 21 A. Trying to reassure my son because I didn't want to take  
 22 him -- I knew I was going to go in there. I was sort of  
 23 psyching myself up to go in there because I didn't know  
 24 what I was going into.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know we're not identifying your son,

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1 but just tell me his age at the time.  
 2 A. At the time he was 21.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 4 MS CARTWRIGHT: We know that when you entered the City Room  
 5 at 22.37, or a little after that, you didn't enter with  
 6 your son.  
 7 A. No.  
 8 Q. Can you tell us where you left your son when you entered  
 9 the City Room, please?  
 10 A. Where we were sat, at block 105.  
 11 Q. Who did you leave your son with at that time?  
 12 A. A member of staff and a couple of members of the public.  
 13 Q. Dealing with the next phase of evidence, in terms of  
 14 after the detonation, and perhaps if we take a breath  
 15 together now and if you allow me to summarise what we've  
 16 been able to piece together from the CCTV work again and  
 17 the body-worn footage that does capture your time in the  
 18 City Room.  
 19 So is it right to characterise that you spent  
 20 a portion of time, and I'm just going to be clear about  
 21 the time -- you, from the CCTV, were in the City Room  
 22 for 21 minutes and 29 seconds, offering assistance to  
 23 those within the City Room?  
 24 A. Correct, yes.  
 25 Q. But that there came a time where you were asked to

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1 leave?  
 2 A. Correct.  
 3 Q. So just very briefly, can you tell us what you were told  
 4 when you were asked to leave, please?  
 5 A. Basically, some officers came, armed police officers  
 6 came in and said, "You need to leave the area, you're in  
 7 a crime scene". We just said, "Well, we're treating  
 8 patients, we're trying to do all we can".  
 9 Q. When they said that to you then, did they say anything  
 10 else?  
 11 A. They just said, "You're in a crime scene", and I said,  
 12 "Yeah, it's obvious I'm in a crime scene", I said, "but  
 13 it's a case ... nobody's helping, so somebody's got to  
 14 help".  
 15 Q. So having offered the assistance in the way that we can  
 16 see on the CCTV and body-worn footage, and we're not  
 17 going to go into the detail of that because those at the  
 18 inquiry have been able to observe that, it's right,  
 19 isn't it, that you followed the instructions that were  
 20 given to you by the police officers --  
 21 A. Correct.  
 22 Q. -- and left the City Room?  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. And you then went and collected your son from the bowl  
 25 of the arena?

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1 A. Correct, yes.  
 2 Q. Mr Buckley, I'm just going to -- you have mentioned  
 3 a matter this morning and I'm going to ask you to deal  
 4 with it briefly in addition to the assistance we've  
 5 already summarised that you gave for those 21 minutes.  
 6 You have mentioned this morning that you want to  
 7 give evidence about a dog you saw in the City Room.  
 8 Very briefly can you just tell us what you saw about  
 9 that, please.  
 10 A. Just before -- well, just before the armed police came  
 11 into the foyer, there was a dog with a dog handler that  
 12 came round, through the doors from the footbridge, and  
 13 he walked round past the merchandise stall. A few  
 14 people had seen this dog come round, just sniffing  
 15 around, and the next time I knew anything about the dog,  
 16 it was on the TV saying this dog had been in. So I knew  
 17 I'd seen this dog when it came on the news.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is a police dog?  
 19 A. Yes, sir.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 21 MS CARTWRIGHT: Mr Buckley, having given those 21 minutes of  
 22 assistance in the City Room, we know you went and  
 23 collected your son. And in fact the route you and your  
 24 son took to leave the arena that night was back through  
 25 the City Room?

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1 A. Yes, because we got told it was the safest place to go,  
 2 back through, because the area had been checked.  
 3 Q. And I think it's right, isn't it, that you, as you led  
 4 your son through the City Room, covered his eyes to  
 5 protect him from what you had seen in the City Room?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. And we know you then walked down with your son, down  
 8 over the link bridge, down the staircase, and you left  
 9 through the station and went out on to  
 10 Victoria Approach?  
 11 A. Correct.  
 12 Q. I think it's right also, isn't it, that you are captured  
 13 then walking away from the area at about 11.07 that  
 14 evening?  
 15 A. Correct, yes.  
 16 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.  
 17 Mr Buckley, thank you, and thank you for those  
 18 21 minutes of assistance you provided in the City Room.  
 19 Sir, are there any questions?  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, but let me reiterate that: thank you  
 21 for what you tried to do and I hope you understand that  
 22 the armed police have a requirement to clear the area.  
 23 Just tell me this and without any great detail: for  
 24 most of us, trying to help people who are really badly  
 25 injured in those type of situations is difficult, indeed

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1 impossible, because we don't have the necessary  
 2 knowledge to do it. Do you have any special knowledge  
 3 to do it or are you like the rest of us?  
 4 A. Basic first aid, sir.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You have done first aid, have you?  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.  
 8 A. But that weren't a first aid thing to do.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, it wasn't a first aid situation, we  
 10 do understand that. Thank you.  
 11 MS CARTWRIGHT: There has been an indication that there may  
 12 be questions from the family representative. Could  
 13 I ask Mr Weatherby if he has any questions to ask those  
 14 questions now, please?  
 15 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, I have no questions. Thank you very  
 16 much. May I also thank Mr Buckley for the assistance  
 17 and also for giving evidence.  
 18 A. Thank you.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you for coming to give evidence.  
 20 I know it's not easy, so thank you very much for doing  
 21 that.  
 22 Do you want me to rise now?  
 23 MS CARTWRIGHT: Could I ask that we take a further break at  
 24 this time? Could I certainly ask for somewhere in the  
 25 order of 20 minutes or so? Then there will be an

1 intention to read a number of witness statements to use  
 2 some of the time this morning. If I could be permitted  
 3 the time now, I'd be very grateful.  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the live evidence we're going to  
 5 have, but there are statements which are going to be  
 6 read, or parts of statements. There will be other  
 7 statements which will be posted on the website so that  
 8 people can read them, and obviously I will take them  
 9 into account when making my decisions. Again, I'm sorry  
 10 if we're going to end up having a short day, but I hope  
 11 people do understand.  
 12 Can I just also indicate that there is an enormous  
 13 amount of work going on in the background in preparation  
 14 of the report on chapter 7, which we've heard. People  
 15 may know that the procedure is that anyone who we think  
 16 may be criticised in the report is sent notice of any  
 17 potential criticism and then can respond to that  
 18 criticism. So you should understand that that has  
 19 happened in this case and there is a lot of material  
 20 which we need to go through before finalising the report  
 21 and the number of things which have to go on before  
 22 a report is published has surprised me, not having  
 23 experience of it before, but believe me, there's a lot  
 24 that needs to be gone through.  
 25 So we will be doing a great deal and I hope people

1 do understand that we just don't go off to the pub now.  
 2 Thank you.  
 3 (10.36 am)  
 4 (A short break)  
 5 (11.13 am)  
 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, thank you for the additional time this  
 7 morning again. We are next going to move to read  
 8 extracts of witness statements that have been indicated  
 9 would be read within the chapter 9 section of evidence.  
 10 In setting that out, can I also indicate that the  
 11 approach that has been taken to what will be read from  
 12 witness statements does not include details of injuries  
 13 and the inquiry appreciates a number of those  
 14 individuals whose witness statements will be summarised  
 15 today have given details of their injuries in the public  
 16 domain, but I hope you understand why we have taken that  
 17 approach.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, thank you.  
 19 Witness statement of JOHN CLARKSON (read) (summarised)  
 20 MS CARTWRIGHT: I'm going to first of all read, please, the  
 21 statement of John Richard Clarkson, senior event  
 22 technician, dated 25 September 2017. We heard some  
 23 reference to him yesterday from the evidence of  
 24 Lucy Jarvis.  
 25 His statement reads as follows:

1 "On Monday 22 May 2017, I was scheduled to work  
 2 a 3.30 to 2 in the morning shift in my role of senior  
 3 event technician for SMG at the Manchester Arena for the  
 4 Ariana Grande concert."  
 5 Mr Clarkson then gives details of his role and,  
 6 essentially, building stages. He then says:  
 7 "I had built the stage and I was in the office near  
 8 the back gate entrance whilst the show was on. At 22.20  
 9 I received a radio call off Rik Weightman from  
 10 Live Nation telling me to meet him at stage left, which  
 11 is at the bottom of block 115. I went there and was  
 12 waiting for Rik when I heard a loud bang. It was  
 13 a large thud, like a speaker blowing. I looked at the  
 14 back of the floor towards block 109 and saw pandemonium.  
 15 There was people screaming and running around. I ran  
 16 towards block 109.  
 17 "I proceeded at the back of the floor towards  
 18 block 106 where the front of house position is. There  
 19 was nothing there and I could see the American  
 20 production team packing up, but I knew something was not  
 21 right. My colleague, Paul Worsley, came running on to  
 22 the floor where I was and said, 'There's been a bomb',  
 23 although it didn't sink in what he had just said to me.  
 24 I heard Miriam Stone shout me over the radio, 'Clarkie,  
 25 can you assist some medics on the concourse at

1 City Rooms'. I started walking up but had blanked out  
 2 what Paul had said to me.  
 3 "I was approximately three-quarters of the way up  
 4 and was told, 'You don't have to do it, it's going to  
 5 ruin your life'. I paused and took 10 to 20 seconds to  
 6 think about what Paul had said to me and at this point  
 7 I thought it's real, but I carried on walking.  
 8 "I came out of the doors at block 106 on to the  
 9 concourse. The first person I saw was a girl. I marked  
 10 her position as A on exhibit. She looked at me and  
 11 said, 'Am I going to die?' I replied, 'Unfortunately  
 12 you've got me looking after you but I won't let that  
 13 happen'.  
 14 "I did not have any first aid equipment with me so  
 15 I radioed up to Callum Murphy and asked him to come up  
 16 with as many bandages as he could and a stretcher, if he  
 17 could find one. Callum and Dean Williams arrived. They  
 18 put the bandages and stretchers down and said, 'I can't  
 19 do this'. I told them to go and wait in the control  
 20 room so that I knew where they were. I treated the girl  
 21 as best I could.  
 22 "I put a bandage tight on her bicep and the blood  
 23 soaked through. I put another two bandages on. I used  
 24 up all of the bandages up that I had apart from eye  
 25 bandages, which I used on her other wounds. She told me

1 that her feet were hurting and when I looked I could see  
 2 the blood.  
 3 "It was approximately 22.45 at this time. I rang my  
 4 wife and told her that there had been a bomb, I was  
 5 okay, and I would speak to her later before ending the  
 6 call. I was treating and reassuring the girl and during  
 7 the conversation I identified that this girl was Lucy,  
 8 who was 17.  
 9 "Liz Woodcock kept coming and checking on us to make  
 10 sure we were okay and managing. Two armed police  
 11 officers came in and shouted at us to get out and  
 12 [Mr Clarkson] told them that [he] was going nowhere  
 13 until they helped put Lucy on the stretcher.  
 14 "They assisted us with getting her on the stretcher  
 15 which Callum and Dean had brought up. We did a flat  
 16 lift and the officer told us to get Lucy out into the  
 17 City Rooms."  
 18 Mr Clarkson's statement then describes carrying Lucy  
 19 on the wheeled stretcher and where they stopped and  
 20 describes that they had to remain there for 30 to  
 21 40 minutes. He wasn't sure why:  
 22 "Around me the medics and ShowSec staff were all  
 23 busy and Ian Parry and Liz Woodcock were checking on  
 24 everyone."  
 25 Mr Clarkson's statement then describes taking Lucy

1 out and down into the triage area and he then indicates  
 2 in respect of that time:  
 3 "A male called Dan came and put a yellow band on  
 4 Lucy which meant she would not be leaving straightaway.  
 5 Red bands meant that they would be leaving immediately.  
 6 My phone was going mad with family and friends trying to  
 7 contact me. I spoke with Rob Hinten and told him to put  
 8 it on social media that I was fine and busy to try and  
 9 stop further calls coming to me."  
 10 Mr Clarkson's statement then indicates staying with  
 11 Lucy as he had promised, a doctor coming over and  
 12 looking at Lucy's wounds, and that doctor telling  
 13 Mr Clarkson to stay with her and that she would come  
 14 back but didn't return. He describes members of ShowSec  
 15 and police bringing people down the stairs on anything  
 16 flat they could find. He also describes that there were  
 17 at least 20 people in the triage area.  
 18 He then goes on to say that Lucy then began to tell  
 19 him that she wanted to go to sleep and Mr Clarkson sets  
 20 out that he made a deal with her that she could close  
 21 her eyes as long as she kept pinching his hand so he  
 22 knew she was still with him:  
 23 "She did this and woke up every now and then and at  
 24 one point was sick."  
 25 He then describes that the paramedics came and

1 checked Lucy and told her to get on the red tarpaulin.  
 2 Mr Clarkson said goodbye to Lucy and she was taken away.  
 3 At approximately 1.00 to 1.30 in the morning  
 4 Mr Clarkson walked down Hunts Bank with Paul, he  
 5 describes it as pandemonium behind him:  
 6 "There were blue flashing lights, the helicopter  
 7 above us, the police were lifting a cordon. It was  
 8 surreal, like a movie."  
 9 Sir, those are the extracts of Mr Clarkson's  
 10 statement that are to be read.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Lucy, as I recall it, spoke about the  
 12 stretcher which she was moved on being broken. Does he  
 13 say anything about that?  
 14 MS CARTWRIGHT: He gives details of difficulties of movement  
 15 of the stretcher, sir.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The other thing is this: witnesses who  
 17 have given evidence and been here have been thanked by  
 18 the families and by me for the assistance that they did  
 19 give. I would like to reiterate that, and I'm sure the  
 20 families would too, to all those whose evidence is read  
 21 who were people who were assisting people in the  
 22 City Room.  
 23 Witness statement of MIRIAM STONE (read) (summarised)  
 24 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, sir.  
 25 The next statement to be read is aspects of the

1 evidence of Miriam Stone. You'll appreciate that  
 2 Miriam Stone has already given detailed evidence to the  
 3 inquiry within chapter 7 over 4 and 5 November of last  
 4 year.  
 5 Sir, I'm going to deal with the aspect of her  
 6 statement of 8 November 2017 that deals with her  
 7 involvement in the night. I'm not going to give the  
 8 detail that's already known to you about Miriam Stone's  
 9 roles and responsibilities at the arena.  
 10 The statement of Miriam Stone from 8 November 2017  
 11 says this:  
 12 "On the night of 22 May, I was also the duty manager  
 13 in charge at the venue. This is a role that is rotated  
 14 between me and two others."  
 15 She gives details of those injuries (sic):  
 16 "I was working with a team of people in a management  
 17 structure with specific people having responsibility for  
 18 specific aspects of the operation."  
 19 And she gives details of those individuals within  
 20 her statement.  
 21 She describes working with Sarah Hodson, who was the  
 22 executive on duty, who was working from her own office  
 23 initially, and within Sierra Control with her was  
 24 Tom Rigby, head of security, Jade Duxbury, who was the  
 25 medic controller, and Michelle Ramsbottom, who was the

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1 radio controller.  
 2 Ms Stone's statement then gives details of the  
 3 various security and radio channels for the different  
 4 aspects of the operation at the arena:  
 5 "Prior to the event all the senior supervisors do  
 6 a channel radio check, including Medic 1, who carries  
 7 both, I think. Our radio system has the facility to  
 8 record and store all radio communication. We have since  
 9 this incident discovered that it wasn't working  
 10 properly. Lee Sinnott is the senior facilities support  
 11 manager who oversees this area within the venue.  
 12 "There was a supervisor's briefing an hour before  
 13 doors given by the head of security, Tom Rigby. At the  
 14 briefing would be all senior supervisors, the EOD, and  
 15 me as the event manager."  
 16 Then she goes on to give details about what took  
 17 place before the concert. She said:  
 18 "There were no serious issues throughout the evening  
 19 until the actual incident. The show was due to finish  
 20 at 10.20 pm but overran by about 10 minutes. 15 minutes  
 21 prior to the planned conclusion of the show, staff had  
 22 deployed to their egress positions to assist members of  
 23 the public exiting the arena safely and in a controlled  
 24 manner. We achieved this with the use of divers and only  
 25 using certain doors to control the flow of people to

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1 specific exits to prevent congestion and queueing as  
 2 much as possible.  
 3 "As the audience profile was predominantly young,  
 4 I ensured all the staff had been re-briefed to implement  
 5 a soft divert only. This ensured that customers can go  
 6 to whatever exit they wish as we realised a lot of the  
 7 children were unaccompanied and had arranged to meet  
 8 their parents at pre-decided locations."  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Could I stop you for a minute?  
 10 Could you slow the pace down a bit? I would imagine the  
 11 transcribers are having some difficulty keeping up.  
 12 It's also actually -- I'm not reading it, so it's  
 13 actually quite difficult to follow at that speed.  
 14 I understand the reasons for doing it quickly perfectly  
 15 well.  
 16 MS CARTWRIGHT: I hear what you say, sir.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But if you could slow down a bit.  
 18 I don't know whether anyone else is having the same  
 19 problem, but it's easier to take in a bit slower.  
 20 MS CARTWRIGHT: Ms Stone's statement goes on:  
 21 "We also have an authority to close New Bridge  
 22 Street outside of the venue as part of our customer  
 23 safety risk assessment."  
 24 She then gives details about the closure of the  
 25 road.

19

1 She then says this:  
 2 "The CCTV cameras are all focused on the exits and  
 3 egress points so we can identify and monitor any  
 4 problems from the control room. Suddenly, I heard  
 5 a loud noise and the vibrations from it could be  
 6 physically felt. It was difficult to work out from  
 7 where the noise originated, but I thought it was from  
 8 the left of the room. Someone within the room said,  
 9 'What the fuck was that?' It was not the sort of noise  
 10 that could be placed as normal at the venue, especially  
 11 after a show had concluded. Our initial thought was  
 12 that perhaps a speaker has blown.  
 13 "I was looking at the CCTV monitors and the ones  
 14 relating to the City Rooms suddenly went white. This  
 15 wasn't the white of static when there is no signal, but  
 16 it was obvious that something was obscuring the cameras.  
 17 After a few seconds, the screens started to clear and  
 18 I realised it was white smoke that was within the  
 19 rooms."  
 20 She then goes on to say it was obvious that an  
 21 explosion had taken place. She describes:  
 22 "Jade was behind me and I recall her saying 'Oh my  
 23 God, oh my God' repeatedly. I realised what had  
 24 happened and that there had been a bomb detonation.  
 25 I recall thinking to myself, 'This is it'. At some

20

1 point in the following minute, we moved on to the  
2 emergency channel to communicate but to ensure that  
3 everybody was getting the relevant radio transmissions.  
4 We also float between other channels..."

5 And she then gives details about that:  
6 "Michelle, as a radio controller, keeps a typed log  
7 of radio traffic and questions asked and decisions made  
8 as well as who made those decisions. I am aware that  
9 because there was so much radio traffic after the  
10 explosion, she ceased typing and began handwriting the  
11 log as it was a quicker way of trying to capture all the  
12 information. I have not seen the handwritten notes, but  
13 do have access to the typed computerised log. I also  
14 produced a duty manager's report that relates to the  
15 event. I was producing this up to the point of the  
16 explosion."

17 Ms Stone's statement then sets out:

18 "My recollection of the order that things happened  
19 might be slightly confused. There was so much going on  
20 and I was obviously shocked by what had just happened.  
21 I called Sarah Hodson, who was in her office, and told  
22 her I needed my EOD to come down to Sierra Control.  
23 I think I told her a bomb had gone off. From our  
24 position in Sierra Control, we have a view of the arena  
25 floor and there were people panicking and rushing away

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1 from the City Room direction. I could see the stewards  
2 assisting people to exit via the normal exits and also  
3 the emergency exits to the side of the stage obviously,  
4 there were other emergency exits within the venue that  
5 would now be in use.

6 "From what I could see on the monitors, the scene  
7 was very graphic and there looked to be multiple  
8 casualties and possible fatalities. I didn't want  
9 members of the public, who were largely children, to  
10 enter that area. I told Tom to close the City Rooms.  
11 He did this by moving his staff to a divert line."

12 And sir, you have heard evidence about that:

13 "I considered securing all the exits and keeping  
14 people in the building as I was obviously unaware at  
15 that point if there were other devices or additional  
16 threats, but quickly decided that this would cause more  
17 panic, and as people had already started leaving without  
18 issue, it was best to try and manage their egress  
19 safely. I phoned the promoter and said, 'You need to  
20 get your artist out, I'm really sorry, but we've had  
21 a bomb'. I recall he said, 'Shit'. I told him to get  
22 everybody out, meaning the artist, dancers and all their  
23 tour staff. They have their own exit point from the  
24 backstage area, which gives access to the rear yard."

25 She describes their tour coach vehicles are in that

22

1 area also:

2 "It was a minute after this that I actually heard  
3 someone from the tour promotion team on the stage  
4 microphone asking the crowds to remain calm and trying  
5 to reassure them that it was just a technical equipment  
6 problem. I called Ian Parry, who was Medic 1 on the  
7 relevant channel, and told him we needed medics to go to  
8 the City Rooms. I knew from previously run tabletop  
9 exercises and police input that the emergency service  
10 can implement a stand-off procedure until the situation  
11 is assessed and the risks of entering considered,  
12 especially with a terrorist-type incident.

13 "I wanted to ensure that we had as many people  
14 helping casualties as possible. Medic 1 wanted to know  
15 if it was safe to enter. I told him that from my view  
16 on CCTV, there was no obvious visible threat and very  
17 little movement in the area, and it appeared to be safe  
18 visually. He said he was happy to deploy his staff."

19 She then describes going back on to a different  
20 channel and asking if there was any first aid trained  
21 staff and John Clarkson responded:

22 "I asked him if he had any first aid trained staff  
23 that were prepared to go into the City Rooms and help.  
24 I stressed to him that it was horrific and not to force  
25 or pressure anyone into going if they were reluctant.

23

1 From my position in Sierra Control, I could actually see  
2 John walking across the arena floor and up the steps  
3 while I was talking to him on the radio and I said to  
4 him, 'You don't have to go'. He replied to me very  
5 determinedly, 'I'm going'.

6 "Tom Rigby also wanted to go and help but I told him  
7 he couldn't and he had to stay in the Sierra Control  
8 Room and continue to manage and direct staff. He had  
9 placed some staff on one side of the arena to prevent  
10 any members of the public being able to go through the  
11 doors towards the City Rooms. I think it was at this  
12 point that I called James Allen, who is my immediate  
13 boss and the general manager of the building. I had  
14 asked Sarah to get hold of him but she hadn't managed to  
15 get through. I got his voicemail and left a message  
16 telling him to call me urgently and, no sooner had  
17 I hung up, he called me back.

18 "I told him we'd had a bomb I even think I said it  
19 was a suicide bomb attack but I'm not sure how or if  
20 I really knew this at that point. He was obviously  
21 shocked and asked if people were injured to which  
22 I replied yes. He also asked if individuals were dead  
23 and [she] also confirmed yes."

24 She gave her estimate of the number of dead at that  
25 time also:

24

1 "Mr Allen indicated he was on his way and some time  
 2 later , having been allowed through the police cordon,  
 3 arrived ."  
 4 She then goes on:  
 5 "I recall calling Whiskey Control and  
 6 double-checking that the emergency services had been  
 7 notified , and I was told that everybody had been calling  
 8 999 but he didn't give me a ETA.  
 9 "At some point within all this , I recall  
 10 Rik Weightman who's the promoter's rep arriving and  
 11 I asked him where he'd been. He told me he'd been up to  
 12 have a look. I asked him what on earth he'd done that  
 13 for and he just shook his head."  
 14 She then goes on to set out contacting other  
 15 individuals . She goes on:  
 16 "I was aware that there would be a lot of concerned  
 17 family members wanting to know what was going on so we  
 18 needed to get information released in the general  
 19 media."  
 20 Her statement then sets out who she contacted within  
 21 emails to social media companies to provide that  
 22 information.  
 23 She goes on to say by reference to a time at around  
 24 11.06 when the story had broken on Sky News:  
 25 "By this point the audience had gone and the floor

25

1 was clear. I was trying to think of other departments  
 2 that needed to be contacted."  
 3 And she describes those she contacted. She goes on:  
 4 "At some point while there, there was a call on the  
 5 radio from someone who was located at the Irish doors  
 6 asking for a medic to be sent to them."  
 7 And she gives details of an injured member of the  
 8 public. She describes a medic being directed to them  
 9 and assisting the individual and taking them to the  
 10 medical room at the arena.  
 11 She then describes the CCTV monitors still being  
 12 focused on the City Room and seeing the BTP entering  
 13 from Victoria Train Station and she could see the medics  
 14 wearing green tops and ShowSec staff in their yellow  
 15 uniforms helping the injured persons in the area. She  
 16 describes seeing the metal barriers and advertising  
 17 hoardings being used as stretchers to move injured  
 18 people out of the room.  
 19 She then sets out:  
 20 "At some point while all this was going on, we got  
 21 a call from someone saying that the police were asking  
 22 for the announcements to be turned off. I passed this  
 23 on to Whiskey Control, but as far as I am aware there  
 24 were no automatic announcements from within the arena.  
 25 I think these must have been coming from the Victoria

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1 Railway Station and couldn't be heard from our position  
 2 in Sierra Control. I think 15 or 20 minutes had passed  
 3 when someone came in to Sierra Control and said that the  
 4 police had said that we all needed to leave. I packed  
 5 up my laptop and, along with Tom, Sarah, Michelle and  
 6 Jade, we left Sierra Control to make our way to  
 7 Whiskey Control.  
 8 "As we stepped out of the room, there was an armed  
 9 police officer there, who just said, 'You need to go'.  
 10 By the time we got to Whiskey Control, it was just Tom,  
 11 Sarah and I as Michelle and Jade had disappeared  
 12 elsewhere. I also texted the other two event managers  
 13 who weren't on duty, Tim Chambers and Susie Allott. The  
 14 text said, 'Suicide bomb in City Rooms, staff okay, in  
 15 case you see the news'. This is timed at 23.04.  
 16 "It's while we were in Whiskey Control that  
 17 James Allen, the general manager, arrived having been  
 18 allowed through the police cordon. I am unsure of the  
 19 time but I do have a text to Tim and Susie timed at  
 20 11.22 pm saying that James had arrived."  
 21 She then describes discussions she had with Mr Allen  
 22 on his arrival :  
 23 "The area of Whiskey Control had been cleared by the  
 24 police and was a safe space within the arena, but we  
 25 didn't really have a full picture of what was going on

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1 outside. I recall this armed police officer actually  
 2 came down to Whiskey Control and spoke in person with  
 3 James. There were now some police officers in  
 4 attendance in Whiskey Control who wanted the access to  
 5 the CCTV."  
 6 And she gives details about that:  
 7 "Shortly afterwards, a lot more police officers  
 8 arrived. They were, I assumed, detectives in suits and  
 9 plain clothes and not uniformed officers or obviously  
 10 armed."  
 11 She then gives details of the information she  
 12 provided to those officers :  
 13 "When I got down to Whiskey Control, I found out  
 14 that John Clarkson had asked Callum Murphy, who was  
 15 a casual technician, to scour the building and collect  
 16 all the first aid kits and medical supplies and take  
 17 them to the City Room.  
 18 "At some point I was aware that there were a couple  
 19 of medics exiting the rear gates to go home. They had  
 20 personal belongings and the medical room to collect so  
 21 I went in there to help collect bits and pieces there."  
 22 Her statement then continues to record John Clarkson  
 23 coming back into Whiskey Control, having assisted  
 24 Lucy Jarvis and having left her with the paramedics.  
 25 She describes Mr Clarkson as visibly upset and angry

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1 at the entire situation :  
 2 "As more time passed, we were somewhat unsure of the  
 3 situation upstairs. The police were now in control of  
 4 the building. The police had asked me to make a list of  
 5 all the staff members who were still in Whiskey Control,  
 6 which [she] did and handed it to the police before  
 7 anyone was allowed to leave. People then started to  
 8 leave."

9 Sir, that concludes the summary of Miriam Stone's  
 10 statement to be read to you.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Perfect speed, thank you.

12 Witness statement of JANET CAPPER (read) (summarised)

13 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.

14 The next statement to be summarised to you is that  
 15 of Janet Capper. Her statement is dated  
 16 19 January 2018. She provides the statement to the  
 17 police in relation to her being present at the arena on  
 18 the night of 22 May 2017:

19 "I had travelled over to Manchester with my daughter  
 20 Lyn so I could keep her company while her daughter, my  
 21 granddaughter, attended the Ariana Grande concert with  
 22 a friend of hers. It was actually my birthday that day  
 23 so I was looking forward to going for a meal with Lyn.  
 24 Lyn drove us all in her car and parked in the  
 25 multi-storey car park attached to the arena. I'm aware

1 that Lyn has already spoken to the police and provided  
 2 a statement."

3 She adds that she was with Lyn throughout the  
 4 evening:

5 "The girls both went into the arena while Lyn and  
 6 I walked a short distance to an area that I think is  
 7 called the Printworks, where we got some food and spent  
 8 some time chatting until it was time to go and collect  
 9 the girls. We got back to the arena early and went back  
 10 up to the foyer, using the lift from Victoria Station.  
 11 On entering the foyer, it was quite busy and we had to  
 12 wait a little while for the concert to finish. I think  
 13 it was about 10 pm when we got back and initially we  
 14 waited quite close to the main set of doors that afford  
 15 access into what I have heard referred to as the  
 16 concourse. These doors were staffed by stewards from  
 17 the venue to prevent people going through to the actual  
 18 concert area."

19 She describes several people coming through those  
 20 doors having left the concert slightly early to beat the  
 21 crowds:

22 "We were quite close to the main area where they  
 23 were selling T-shirts and other official merchandise and  
 24 this area was becoming increasingly busy as more and  
 25 more people arrived into the foyer. Both Lyn and

1 I moved away together from here and stood back at the  
 2 bottom of a set of steps that I recall Lyn saying was  
 3 where a McDonald's restaurant used to be."

4 The witness has marked a plan on the foyer as to  
 5 where they were.

6 "In between chatting, I was looking around the area,  
 7 mainly focusing on the doors where I expected my  
 8 granddaughter to emerge from. I recall looking to my  
 9 right-hand side towards the car park area when I saw  
 10 a male at a position I have marked with the number 2 on  
 11 the plan. He had a backpack on his back that looked  
 12 heavy, judging by the stooped-forward way he was  
 13 walking. Initially, I thought it was an old man because  
 14 of his stoop, and then I saw that the backpack looked  
 15 full. I wondered if he was a traveller. I think he had  
 16 dark clothing and I'm sure he was wearing a cap. He  
 17 looked out of place and I watched him as he walked  
 18 through the room, passing only 4 or 5 metres in front of  
 19 us from right to left.

20 "I didn't see his face and I can't give  
 21 a description of him as his head was down. I have  
 22 marked on the plan the route he walked and I lost sight  
 23 of him at the position I have marked with the number 3  
 24 because of all the people in the room. I looked back to  
 25 the main doors, waiting for [her] granddaughter.

1 I could still hear the music playing and the staff had  
 2 opened the doors as there were people leaving.

3 I vividly recall seeing how happy all the children  
 4 looked as they were leaving.

5 "I didn't notice the male again and it was no longer  
 6 than 5 minutes later that there was a massive explosion  
 7 from the point I have marked on the plan with the  
 8 number 4. I estimate this was 20 to 25 yards away from  
 9 where we were stood. Everything was a blur for a few  
 10 seconds. I didn't know what had happened."

11 The witness gives further details in her witness  
 12 statement. She continues:

13 "We walked from our position at the base of the  
 14 steps. We made our way to the centre of the multiple  
 15 double doors that lead into the concourse, following the  
 16 line of our route on the plan."

17 She describes following her daughter Lyn back into  
 18 the foyer and then heading towards the disabled ramp and  
 19 down towards the car:

20 "Both girls were there waiting for us and obviously  
 21 were very upset. Thankfully, they hadn't been exposed  
 22 to the sights in the foyer and neither of them was  
 23 physically hurt at all."

24 She then describes them driving away from the arena.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it possible to have the plan that she

1 talked of on the screen?  
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: Certainly, sir, at a later -- we'll  
 3 certainly ensure tomorrow, when the witness is called,  
 4 that that plan is displayed.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: She was not injured?  
 6 MS CARTWRIGHT: No, there was some injury.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There was some injury?  
 8 MS CARTWRIGHT: Yes.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Bad? I don't want it all described, but  
 10 was she seriously injured?  
 11 MS CARTWRIGHT: Before chapter 9 is concluded there is  
 12 evidence that exists to the extent of injuries and  
 13 a summary of the number of casualties and where they  
 14 sat, and should you still need that information, we can  
 15 identify where the injuries of Ms Capper sit.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 17 Witness statement of MARTIN HIBBERT (read) (summarised)  
 18 MS CARTWRIGHT: I'm next going to summarise the statement of  
 19 Martin Hibbert. Martin Hibbert has provided a witness  
 20 statement dated 19 July 2017. Sir, extracts of that  
 21 witness statement will now be read:  
 22 "On Monday 22 May 2017, around midday,  
 23 Martin Hibbert was with his mother. She had driven over  
 24 to his house to pick him up and take him back to her  
 25 house. On the way back, they went to his daughter's

1 school to collect her."  
 2 Mr Hibbert tells us that he had purchased concert  
 3 tickets to go to see Ariana Grande for his daughter's  
 4 Christmas present and this was the day of the concert:  
 5 "We spent the day just having a chilled afternoon at  
 6 my mum's and then, when it was time, I drove my mum's  
 7 car to the concert."  
 8 He then gives further details and then describes  
 9 arriving at the arena:  
 10 "When we arrived, I bought my daughter a tour  
 11 T-shirt and she changed into that. She may have been  
 12 wearing her jacket over the top of the tour T-shirt when  
 13 we left. The tour T-shirt was black and pink and had  
 14 Ariana's picture on the front and the tour dates on the  
 15 back."  
 16 He describes that his daughter was only carrying her  
 17 phone:  
 18 "Because it was her Christmas present, it was like  
 19 a treat. I had purchased a VIP package so I knew that  
 20 we would have a parking space at the arena there, so  
 21 there was no rush. I thought that we could go there,  
 22 park up, and then go and have a nice meal, so we drove  
 23 into Manchester.  
 24 "As we drove into Manchester, we were listening to  
 25 Ariana. His daughter was giving him a quick lesson on

1 Ariana's new songs and words."  
 2 Mr Hibbert confirms he didn't know any of them:  
 3 "It was a beautiful day, really chilled. It was  
 4 manic outside as people were trying to get in, but we  
 5 had a space and a box, so we were okay. We were shown  
 6 to our space by a car park attendant. I drove into the  
 7 car park and it was a right and then a right turn again.  
 8 We had got there quite early. There were people  
 9 finishing work, commuters, people going to the concert.  
 10 It all seemed like a normal Manchester working day.  
 11 "It was a beautiful day. We then walked through the  
 12 station and out near the Football Museum and walked over  
 13 to the San Carlo restaurant for a meal near the back of  
 14 the House of Fraser. It was about half 5 to 6 o'clock.  
 15 I recall thinking how grown-up my daughter was. We  
 16 ordered food and had a beautiful meal. In total we were  
 17 there around an hour and a half.  
 18 "We then walked back to the MEN. As we had a box we  
 19 had to walk back through the opposite side, so we walked  
 20 up through Victoria Station and up the big flights of  
 21 stairs that led into the main auditorium.  
 22 "There must be two VIP bits and ours was to the  
 23 left. There was a queue for the boxes, then our tickets  
 24 were scanned, and then the chaperone took us to our box,  
 25 which was box 4. Neither of us left the box the entire

1 time. We were one of about ten in the box. There were  
 2 two rows of six seats. Me and my daughter were on the  
 3 back row on the first two seats. We were really close  
 4 to the stage. We had cracking seats."  
 5 And Mr Hibbert describes being impressed:  
 6 "Then we were just having a boogie and singing.  
 7 Because we were in a box we could get drinks and stuff.  
 8 We had a couple of Cokes. It was a good concert.  
 9 "When I said about leaving, I said, because we had  
 10 VIP parking, that's what we'll do, rather than walk.  
 11 When she's doing the encore, so we'll have a bit before  
 12 just so we can get out. There was one family of four  
 13 that had already left 10 minutes before us and the rest  
 14 remained in the box.  
 15 "The concert finished. That's why I keep wondering  
 16 if I had waited just another 5 or 10 minutes, if  
 17 I weren't in such a rush. But I wasn't in a rush,  
 18 I just didn't want to be stuck in traffic. I just  
 19 remember that when the concert finished, we just ran and  
 20 then that's when the blast happened.  
 21 "We left the box and turned left and then through  
 22 the doors into the main auditorium where the other doors  
 23 are, then to my right side. It was like a free-for-all  
 24 and that's when it, the bomb, had gone off. I was  
 25 holding my daughter's hand and she was on my left as

1 we were running straight through to go towards the steps  
 2 to the car park. There wasn't really a lot of people  
 3 there in the auditorium, because she was still doing her  
 4 encore, the concert hadn't actually finished.  
 5 "There were a few people that were getting out, but  
 6 I don't recall seeing a lot of people. There were no  
 7 signs or indications that something wasn't right.  
 8 I didn't see or notice anything. We probably got  
 9 halfway through and that's when I remember the blast  
 10 happening. People were screaming, so I knew that  
 11 something bad had happened."  
 12 Mr Hibbert then gives further details, including  
 13 knowing that a bomb had gone off:  
 14 "I just remember, it was like when you're watching  
 15 a family, like a war film when a bomb goes off and it  
 16 just goes silent. It was like that, so I knew something  
 17 bad had happened."  
 18 He then goes on to say:  
 19 "Everyone was running around. It seemed like it  
 20 took ages for the paramedics to arrive. Everyone was  
 21 saying the paramedics are on the way. People were  
 22 panicking, they were confused and shouting, 'What do we  
 23 do?' I don't think people could believe what had  
 24 happened. There was a bit of shock. People kept coming  
 25 over to reassure us, asking us if we were okay, and

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1 telling us that the paramedics were on their way. It  
 2 seemed like forever.  
 3 "I think they were going to move me but I said,  
 4 'Don't worry about me, look after my daughter as I don't  
 5 think that I'm going to make it.'"  
 6 Sir, that concludes the extract of Mr Hibbert's  
 7 statement to be read to you.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. For perfectly good reason,  
 9 we are not enumerating or setting out in detail the  
 10 injuries which individuals had. I just want to reassure  
 11 everyone that I am well aware how people suffered  
 12 terrible injuries --  
 13 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you, sir.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- among the survivors.  
 15 MS CARTWRIGHT: I'm conscious that reading the statements is  
 16 taking a little longer than perhaps we thought.  
 17 Mr Greaney wishes to give an update to you in respect of  
 18 an update to everyone about future progress. I'm  
 19 wondering whether now would be an appropriate moment to  
 20 allow Mr Greaney perhaps to break for 5 minutes and  
 21 allow Mr Greaney to give that update to you.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it's a good idea and I think we  
 23 should space these readings of statements out because  
 24 some of them are quite difficult to listen to and I am  
 25 sure they are quite difficult to read too. We'll do

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1 that. Perhaps, rather than having a 5-minute break --  
 2 I'm sure Mr Greaney will be listening to what's going  
 3 on, so if we can wait here for him to come.  
 4 MS CARTWRIGHT: Can I ask then, while we wait for Mr Greaney  
 5 to arrive, for the holding screen to be displayed and  
 6 for the feed to be cut, and then when Mr Greaney  
 7 arrives, he could address you, sir.  
 8 (Pause)  
 9 Timetable update  
 10 MR GREANEY: Sir, as Ms Cartwright indicated, we consider  
 11 that providing a general update... I can see the  
 12 holding screen is coming and going.  
 13 (Pause)  
 14 MR GREANEY: As I was saying, and as Ms Cartwright  
 15 indicated, we consider that providing a general update  
 16 on the intended future progress of the inquiry would be  
 17 a good use of time today.  
 18 Chapter 9 will continue tomorrow, when we will hear  
 19 from Darron Coster and tomorrow, sir, will be a short  
 20 day.  
 21 On Monday, we'll hear from Andrea Bradbury and that  
 22 will conclude the chapter 9 evidence for now. But at  
 23 some stage it will be necessary to resume in order that  
 24 we can hear from Janet Senior and Josephine Howarth, who  
 25 for very good reason were not able to give evidence

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1 today.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And from time to time we will need to  
 3 read some other evidence which is going to be  
 4 incorporated in chapter 9.  
 5 MR GREANEY: Sir, I anticipate we will read some further  
 6 chapter 9 evidence tomorrow and we may read the balance  
 7 on Monday. One way or another, it will be managed.  
 8 Chapter 10 will resume on Tuesday at the latest next  
 9 week, if not Monday, and will run until 22 July, when  
 10 we will break for summer. But we do not expect to  
 11 conclude chapter 10 before that break.  
 12 A running order for the period up to and including  
 13 the week of 3 May has been circulated already, a little  
 14 while ago, to core participants, and we expect to  
 15 circulate a running order for the balance of the period  
 16 to 22 July within the next 2 weeks.  
 17 The schedule, sir, will accommodate a break from  
 18 sitting in the week of 31 May, so the half-term week in  
 19 other words.  
 20 We anticipate resuming the oral evidence hearings  
 21 after the summer break on 6 September, and that may  
 22 sound like a long break, but as you yourself have  
 23 indicated today, there is much work of preparation that  
 24 the inquiry is doing and will be doing during that  
 25 period.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And indeed the core participants.  
 2 MR GREANEY: And indeed, sir, the core participants.  
 3 When we resume on 6 September, it will be our aim to  
 4 conclude chapter 10 within 2 weeks.  
 5 Chapter 11, of course, will follow. As we explained  
 6 when first we opened the inquiry in September last year,  
 7 that will involve calling expert evidence to explain  
 8 what happens when a bomb is detonated, the blast wave  
 9 that is created, and the types of injuries that may be  
 10 caused. At that stage, so that is to say chapter 11,  
 11 the experts will be dealing with the issues in general  
 12 terms and will not be dealing with any individual  
 13 deceased.  
 14 As for chapter 12, it is anticipated that within the  
 15 next 14 days the core participants will receive a note  
 16 from the inquiry legal team setting out the way in which  
 17 it is envisaged that this highly sensitive and important  
 18 area of the evidence is to be dealt with.  
 19 In the run-up to the start of the oral evidence  
 20 hearings last year, each of the bereaved families  
 21 received an outline of the structure and preliminary  
 22 witness list in relation to the evidence relating to  
 23 their loved one. Each family group was invited to  
 24 comment on the outline and constructive and highly  
 25 informative responses were received and these have been

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1 considered by the inquiry legal team.  
 2 The purpose of the outlines was to give each of the  
 3 bereaved families an early opportunity to see how the  
 4 inquiry legal team was considering this part of the  
 5 hearings and to allow them the chance to give their  
 6 preliminary views in response.  
 7 At the centre of the ongoing preparation for  
 8 chapter 12 is a very substantial and challenging piece  
 9 of work, which is being undertaken by Detective  
 10 Superintendent Lamb and her team at Operation Manteline.  
 11 That piece of work involves the gathering of further  
 12 evidence from witnesses who interacted with each of  
 13 those who died after the detonation, based on the  
 14 extremely sensitive CCTV and body-worn footage material.  
 15 The inquiry legal team hopes, and indeed intends,  
 16 that this work will allow these witnesses to provide  
 17 their perspective on their actions as they are captured  
 18 in the sequence of events timelines which have been  
 19 created for each of those who died. For many, if not  
 20 all of those witnesses, it will be difficult and  
 21 upsetting information to provide. Of that we have no  
 22 doubt.  
 23 Moreover, we have no doubt when this work is  
 24 complete, it will be difficult and upsetting evidence to  
 25 read, particularly, of course, for those most deeply

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1 affected.  
 2 Sir, as we indicated, the note which core  
 3 participants will receive within the next 14 days will  
 4 set out in more detail the approach the inquiry legal  
 5 team has taken to date and it will set out the work that  
 6 remains to be done.  
 7 Chapter 13 involves, of course, an examination of  
 8 the background and radicalisation of Salman Abedi.  
 9 We'll take the opportunity today to say a little more  
 10 about that chapter.  
 11 The oral evidence hearings in chapter 13 will take  
 12 place in, we expect, October of this year. We are  
 13 grateful to the core participants for their observations  
 14 on the second report of Dr Wilkinson, the expert  
 15 instructed to report on chapter 13 issues, and we are  
 16 also grateful to other organisations and individuals who  
 17 are not core participants for providing us with their  
 18 views also upon that report.  
 19 The inquiry legal team is currently reviewing these  
 20 and will circulate a note setting out which matters  
 21 arising from his report we will ask Dr Wilkinson to  
 22 clarify or address further, the format of his response,  
 23 and a timescale for him to provide it.  
 24 Sir, we're also drawing up a provisional witness  
 25 list for the chapter 13 hearings and both of these two

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1 documents that I have just mentioned will, we aim, be  
 2 provided to core participants within the next 28 days.  
 3 In dealing today with chapter 13, we ought to  
 4 mention three particular witnesses for that chapter.  
 5 Those witnesses being Abdalraouf Abdallah, Ahmed Taghdi  
 6 and Ismail Abedi. As we think everyone knows,  
 7 Abdalraouf Abdallah is currently in prison, having been  
 8 recalled there for the breach of his licence conditions.  
 9 He was a long-standing associate of Salman Abedi and he  
 10 may have information which is relevant to paragraphs 1  
 11 and 2 of the terms of reference, which concern the  
 12 killer's radicalisation, his relationships with relevant  
 13 associates, and the build-up to the attack.  
 14 On 10 June of last year, following extensive  
 15 correspondence with Mr Abdallah's solicitor, notice was  
 16 served by you, sir, upon him under section 21(1)(a) of  
 17 the Inquiries Act 2006 and that notice required him to  
 18 attend an interview in order to provide a written  
 19 statement to the inquiry.  
 20 That interview in due course was conducted by  
 21 members of the inquiry legal team, Mr Suter and  
 22 Mr de la Poer, in prison on 26 June. In that interview,  
 23 Mr Abdallah produced a prepared statement, saying that  
 24 he relied upon the privilege against self-incrimination  
 25 and that he would not answer any of the inquiry's

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1 questions. He then remained entirely silent in answer  
2 to the questions.

3 Sir, you did not accept that blanket claim to the  
4 privilege. On 12 October, the inquiry served notice on  
5 Mr Abdallah under section 21(1)(a) of the Act. That  
6 notice required him to attend the hearing in order to  
7 give oral evidence on 19 November. However, on  
8 27 October, an application to revoke that notice was  
9 served by Mr Abdallah under section 21(4).

10 In summary, it was argued on his behalf that there  
11 exist two reasons why he should not give oral evidence.  
12 First, because it is said he is unfit to do so and  
13 calling him to give evidence would give rise to a risk  
14 of self-harm or suicide. And second, because he has  
15 indicated that he will not answer questions as he relies  
16 upon his right to privilege against self-incrimination  
17 and therefore he should not, it is argued, be required  
18 to attend the inquiry simply to refuse to answer  
19 questions.

20 Sir, you resolved to obtain a psychiatric report or  
21 reports in order to assess the first of those reasons.  
22 The time taken to do that meant it was necessary to  
23 vacate Mr Abdallah's call date of 19 November. Reports  
24 were then obtained from Dr Richard Latham and  
25 Dr John Kent, each a consultant forensic psychiatrist.

1 You then wished to disclose those reports to the core  
2 participants, in particular the bereaved families, in  
3 order that they could make informed submissions on the  
4 proper approach to Mr Abdallah and the calling of him.

5 However, Mr Abdallah refused his consent to that  
6 disclosure, so a hearing was necessitated, at which  
7 Mr Abdallah was represented by counsel. On 23 February  
8 of this year, sir, you ruled that the expert reports  
9 should be disclosed to the core participants and that  
10 has now occurred. The ruling made plain, more  
11 generally, that Mr Abdallah's cooperation with the  
12 processes of the inquiry was expected.

13 As a postscript to your ruling you said this:

14 "Mr Abdallah's lawyers have stated more than once  
15 that he had nothing to do with Salman Abedi's suicide  
16 bombing, but they say they are strongly advising him not  
17 to give any evidence to the inquiry. The justification,  
18 they say, for not giving evidence is that the inquiry  
19 will not treat him fairly.

20 "If the advice of his lawyers is based on that  
21 suggestion, then it is a matter [sir, you said] of great  
22 regret. I am bound by statute to conduct this inquiry  
23 fairly. I will do that and would do so without that  
24 statutory duty. If Mr Abdallah is concerned that he  
25 will be treated as a scapegoat, I can assure all

1 concerned that he will not be dealt with in that way by  
2 the inquiry. He will be treated with fairness in order  
3 to discover the truth and to discharge the inquiry's  
4 terms of reference."

5 Sir, a section 21 notice requiring the attendance of  
6 Mr Abdallah to give evidence in chapter 13 will be  
7 issued by the inquiry at the appropriate time.

8 Next, Ahmed Taghdi. On 7 December last year, the  
9 inquiry served a section 21 notice on Ahmed Taghdi,  
10 requiring him to give evidence on 16 December.  
11 Mr Taghdi did not formally apply to set aside that  
12 notice.

13 Instead, on 15 December, so the day before his  
14 evidence was due, Mr Taghdi, through his legal  
15 representative, indicated that he would not be attending  
16 the inquiry on the 16th. He refused to attend on the  
17 purported grounds that: (1), giving evidence publicly  
18 would put himself and his family at risk; (2), he was at  
19 risk of being questioned on the basis that he bore some  
20 responsibility for the arena bombing and that such  
21 questioning, he maintained, would be unfair and outwith  
22 the ambit of the inquiry; (3), he did not consider  
23 himself well enough to attend the inquiry without, as he  
24 describes it, a significant adverse impact upon his  
25 health.

1 On 9 March of this year, Mr Taghdi's lawyers  
2 provided a medical report to the inquiry and an  
3 accompanying note of his lawyers. The note stated that:

4 "It is plainly in the interests of the inquiry and  
5 all participants if Mr Taghdi does in fact provide live  
6 evidence and is able to give his best evidence in what  
7 is an inquisitorial process."

8 And that, may we say, was a realistic concession.

9 In the note, Mr Taghdi went on to apply for special  
10 measures based upon the medical report. These measures  
11 included questioning by counsel to the inquiry only,  
12 that Mr Taghdi's evidence should be obtained by pre  
13 recorded video only and that his evidence should not be  
14 live streamed. It was made plain in the note that  
15 Mr Taghdi's personal view is that he did not wish to  
16 attend to give evidence and felt that his witness  
17 statement was sufficient. However, Mr Taghdi accepted,  
18 and we quote, that:

19 "His refusal to attend may result in the chairman  
20 invoking other procedures to secure his attendance."

21 The inquiry has disclosed the medical report to  
22 which we have just made reference to the core  
23 participants, invited their observations, and sought  
24 a risk assessment from Greater Manchester Police.  
25 Having considered those documents and the responses from

1 the family core participants , we know, sir, that your  
2 provisional view is that Mr Taghdi should be called to  
3 give evidence, that's to say live evidence, during  
4 chapter 13 of the oral evidence hearings in the autumn  
5 of this year.

6 Furthermore, sir, we know that your current view  
7 is that Mr Taghdi should give evidence in person, with  
8 his evidence live streamed, and with some limited  
9 special measures in place, including advance notice of  
10 topics of questioning, regular breaks and access to  
11 appropriate support during his evidence.

12 The inquiry has notified Mr Taghdi of, sir, your  
13 provisional view and has indicated that a section 21  
14 notice will be served, requiring Mr Taghdi to attend the  
15 inquiry in order to give oral evidence.

16 Finally, Ismail Abedi. The inquiry has made  
17 significant efforts to obtain a statement from  
18 Ismail Abedi prior to him being required to give  
19 evidence at the inquiry. On 28 May last year, the  
20 inquiry legal team sent a letter to Ismail Abedi  
21 requesting a witness statement from him pursuant to  
22 Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. He was provided at  
23 that time with a list of questions that he should  
24 answer.

25 On 20 July, Ismail Abedi replied to the inquiry ,

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1 stating :

2 "After giving consideration, I am not able to  
3 provide you with a witness statement because I am  
4 concerned about the risk of self –incrimination. I was  
5 arrested as a suspect in the immediate aftermath of the  
6 bombing and questioned for 14 days and asked questions  
7 of a similar nature."

8 Which would seem to be a reference to the questions  
9 posed in the Rule 9 request.

10 On 23 July, sir, you served a section 21(2)(a)  
11 notice on Ismail Abedi, requiring him to attend  
12 a designated location for interview in order to provide  
13 evidence for a witness statement to your inquiry. The  
14 email from the inquiry stated the following :

15 "The inquiry considers that you [in other words  
16 Ismail Abedi] have important evidence to provide and  
17 that you must therefore be required to provide a witness  
18 statement."

19 On 12 August, Ismail Abedi provided a short, indeed  
20 seven –paragraph, written statement to the inquiry. This  
21 statement was disclosed to the core participants , but in  
22 summary the statement indicated that Ismail Abedi did  
23 not wish to answer the questions that had been posed on  
24 grounds of privilege against self –incrimination. The  
25 statement was not signed by him.

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1 On 21 August, the inquiry wrote to Ismail Abedi,  
2 indicating that his assertion of privilege was not  
3 accepted and issuing a section 21 notice requiring that  
4 he provide a statement.

5 On 4 September, Ismail Abedi's solicitor wrote to  
6 the inquiry, inviting you, sir, to reconsider your  
7 position on Ismail Abedi's claim to privilege and asking  
8 that you withdraw the section 21 notice that had been  
9 issued.

10 Five days later , on 9 September, the inquiry replied  
11 to Ismail Abedi's solicitor . It was made plain, sir,  
12 that you refused to withdraw the section 21 notice and  
13 the email from the inquiry observed the following :

14 "There are legitimate and important questions for  
15 Ismail Abedi to answer about the involvement of his  
16 brothers in the murder of 22 people and he has been  
17 given an opportunity to do so in writing now."

18 It is noted that Mr Abedi was willing to be  
19 interviewed by Sky News after his brother's sentencing  
20 hearing and the general assertion of privilege against  
21 self –incrimination is undermined by and runs contrary to  
22 that willingness to give media interviews.

23 The email continued:

24 "As you will be well aware, it is not for the  
25 chairman to establish why the privilege does not apply,

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1 but rather any claim for privilege against  
2 self –incrimination is for the person making the claim to  
3 assert against each question on which a statement is  
4 requested. We ask you again to provide a signed  
5 statement from Mr Abedi answering the questions posed on  
6 behalf of the chairman to assist him with his search for  
7 the truth and to answer the matters under investigation  
8 by the inquiry. The statement is to be served by 4 pm  
9 on Friday, 18 September."

10 The email went on to say:

11 "A failure to provide a statement in response to the  
12 existing section 21 notice is likely to result in the  
13 chairman issuing a further section 21 notice to compel  
14 Mr Abedi to attend the inquiry to give evidence in  
15 person before him. As such, it is very much in  
16 Mr Abedi's interests that he provides a written  
17 statement. If this eventuates, he will be required to  
18 explain in person the basis of any claim for privilege  
19 against self –incrimination for each question asked."

20 Four days later , on 13 September, Ismail Abedi's  
21 solicitor replied , stating that no further statement  
22 would be provided by Ismail Abedi.

23 As a result , on 16 September, the inquiry wrote  
24 again to Ismail Abedi and did so in the following terms:  
25 "No detailed reasons have been given for the

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1 assertion of privilege against self—incrimination or how  
2 that privilege is maintained against each question he is  
3 being asked to provide evidence about.”

4 Which again was a reference back to the Rule 9  
5 request.

6 The letter continued:

7 “In the circumstances, it would appear the  
8 section 21 notice will not be complied with and I would  
9 urge your client to reconsider and provide a witness  
10 statement by the required deadline. Please also ensure  
11 your client is aware that due to his apparent current  
12 non-compliance with a statutory notice, it is  
13 anticipated that he will now be summonsed to appear  
14 before the chairman to give evidence in person during  
15 the course of the inquiry. This will include being  
16 asked questions on which he has so far declined to  
17 provide a written witness statement.”

18 Neither Ismail Abedi nor his solicitor has provided  
19 any reply, at least as I understand it, to that letter  
20 of 16 September.

21 On 9 October, the inquiry wrote to Ismail Abedi’s  
22 solicitor following the broadcast of footage of a BBC  
23 journalist seeking to question Ismail Abedi. The  
24 inquiry’s email stated as follows:

25 “We have seen yesterday’s BBC interview approaching

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1 Ismail Abedi. In light of that I wish to make contact  
2 again to ask for Mr Abedi’s assistance with providing  
3 a statement to the inquiry on the matters he has been  
4 asked to address. He has potentially important and  
5 significant evidence to give to the inquiry, which will  
6 help with its search for the truth. We wish to ensure  
7 that Mr Abedi has every opportunity to provide an  
8 account to assist the inquiry and I look forward [the  
9 email concluded] to your response.”

10 But in the result, neither Ismail Abedi nor his  
11 solicitor did respond.

12 On 9 April, now 2021, the inquiry again wrote to  
13 Ismail Abedi’s solicitor and, on this occasion, the  
14 following was said:

15 “I am writing to you further to my previous emails  
16 to repeat the request on behalf of the chairman for your  
17 client, Ismail Abedi, to assist the inquiry with  
18 a statement with information about his brothers, how  
19 they came to be radicalised, and the circumstances of  
20 the arena attack. As you will be aware, since our last  
21 correspondence, we have interviewed Hashem Abedi and he  
22 has confirmed his participation in the planning and  
23 preparation for the arena attack. The chairman is also  
24 now in possession of an expert report from  
25 Dr Matthew Wilkinson that considers the factors which

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1 led to the radicalisation of Salman Abedi. There are  
2 matters within the report, in particular about the  
3 background and family life of Salman and Hashem Abedi,  
4 where the chairman will be assisted with comments from  
5 your client. The inquiry is a search for the truth and  
6 Ismail Abedi is in a unique position to assist with the  
7 investigation.

8 “As a matter of fairness, we wish to ensure that  
9 Ismail Abedi has a further opportunity to cooperate and  
10 provide the chairman with an account about his knowledge  
11 of how his brothers came to be radicalised and carry out  
12 the terrible attack on 22 May 2017.”

13 The letter continued in the following terms:

14 “I anticipate, even absent the provision of  
15 a witness statement, that the chairman will wish to call  
16 Ismail Abedi to give oral evidence to the inquiry later  
17 this year. It will plainly be of assistance to Mr Abedi  
18 and the inquiry if he has provided a written statement  
19 that sets out his knowledge of the matters raised in the  
20 letter I sent last year and on anything arising from the  
21 report of Dr Wilkinson. A further copy of my letter of  
22 28 May 2020, which set out the matters on which  
23 a statement was requested, is attached for ease of  
24 reference.”

25 Again, that was a reference back to the Rule 9

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1 request. The letter continued:

2 “You will be aware from our previous correspondence  
3 that the chairman has legal powers available to him  
4 pursuant to section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005 to  
5 require a witness to attend the inquiry to give evidence  
6 before him. These powers will be used to ensure that  
7 the inquiry hears all relevant evidence that falls  
8 within its terms of reference, including for the  
9 evidence of Ismail Abedi.”

10 Sir, having heard that chronology of events in  
11 relation to Ismail Abedi, many will feel that he has  
12 been given every chance to provide his written statement  
13 and the inquiry will, we expect, now be fixing a date  
14 for Ismail Abedi’s attendance at the inquiry and serving  
15 a notice under section 21(1)(a) and accordingly, sir,  
16 what we anticipate is that you will be using your powers  
17 to require the attendance here of Ismail Abedi to give  
18 evidence.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney, that last email was sent,  
20 you said, on 9 April?

21 MR GREANEY: I did, sir, yes.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So perhaps a little early to get  
23 a response to that at the moment, particularly if  
24 instructions are being taken. But there are two former  
25 emails which have not been responded to, either by

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1 Mr Abedi or his solicitor ?  
 2 MR GREANEY: There are.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I would be grateful for a response from  
 4 the solicitor giving some degree of update as to what  
 5 the present position is and what Mr Abedi's present  
 6 attitude is.  
 7 MR GREANEY: Quite so, sir. That is all we wish to say by  
 8 way of an update at this stage. As you know, that's as  
 9 far as we can take the evidence today, but there is much  
 10 to be done behind the scenes.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you very much for that.  
 12 We are starting at 10 o'clock tomorrow?  
 13 MR GREANEY: We are, sir.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Again, I forewarn people: a short day in  
 15 terms of evidence in court.  
 16 MR GREANEY: It will be.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 18 (12.22 pm)  
 19 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
 20 on Thursday, 15 April 2021)  
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