

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 88

April 15, 2021

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1 Thursday, 15 April 2021
 2 (10.00 am)
 3 MR NICHOLLS: Thank you, sir. This morning we are going to
 4 hear from Darron Coster. Could I please ask that
 5 Mr Coster is now sworn.
 6 MR DARRON COSTER (affirmed)
 7 Questions from MR NICHOLLS
 8 MR NICHOLLS: Mr Coster, you should have water there, so if
 9 you need it at any stage do take some. We've met
 10 outside court and you know that I'm one of the members
 11 of the inquiry legal team and I will be asking you
 12 questions this morning. Can you start by giving the
 13 court your full name, please?
 14 A. Darron Michael Coster.
 15 Q. Mr Coster, you have provided a witness statement about
 16 your experiences that night and I understand you have
 17 also given interviews to ITV and to The Sun newspaper,
 18 which we have records of as well.
 19 A. That's correct, yes.
 20 Q. So everyone is aware, we've spoken outside court and you
 21 have indicated that you won't be naming your family
 22 members who were present at the arena and also the
 23 casualties that you assisted where you know their names.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Just so you understand where I'll be heading with my

1

1 questions, I will be asking you questions under three
 2 main topics. The first is your career history, training
 3 and experience, because I understand you were previously
 4 a member of the Royal Military Police?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Second, your movements prior to the explosion on 22 May
 7 and your location at the time of the explosion and the
 8 steps you took when you heard the explosion take place.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And thirdly, to the extent that it's necessary to do so,
 11 your account of the aftermath of the explosion,
 12 including the aid that you offered to injured casualties
 13 and, of course, we will deal with that section
 14 sensitively and carefully in a way that we've also
 15 discussed, avoiding the details of injuries, unless
 16 that's specifically necessary, and not touching on any
 17 deceased persons.
 18 Can I start then by briefly asking you about your
 19 career history. I understand you were previously
 20 employed in the Royal Military Police and you worked
 21 mainly in a forensics role; is that right?
 22 A. At times in Northern Ireland, forensic, and at other
 23 times various roles within the Royal Military Police.
 24 Q. You worked for what I'm going to refer to as RMP for
 25 22 years?

2

1 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.
 2 Q. And you retired in 2008?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. You say in your statement that because of that
 5 experience, in particular the time that you had spent in
 6 Northern Ireland, you were sadly familiar with the
 7 aftermath of bomb explosions?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And you also explain that you felt that generally meant
 10 that you remained calm in a crisis of this sort?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. I understand from your statement that after leaving the
 13 RMP, you worked organising the planning and security for
 14 military events?
 15 A. It was prior to my leaving the military.
 16 Q. That's helpful. You say that due to your previous
 17 employment, you had "an element of first aid training".
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Can I ask you a little about that? Did you receive
 20 first aid training when you first started working for
 21 the RMP?
 22 A. That is correct, yes.
 23 Q. In general terms, can you describe what training you had
 24 and when you received it?
 25 A. In general terms, usually every year or, at the most,

3

1 4 years and it would be basic battlefield first aid.
 2 Q. So did that include things such as applying tourniquets
 3 to wounds?
 4 A. It did, up to a point and then the actual rules changed,
 5 I can't remember what time or what year it was, but they
 6 changed from applying tourniquets to not applying
 7 tourniquets.
 8 Q. And also general instruction on applying pressure to
 9 wounds --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- to assist in stopping the bleeding?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just help me understand that: does that
 14 mean the guidance at some stage when dealing with wounds
 15 was not to apply tourniquets but to apply pressure
 16 instead?
 17 A. That is correct, sir. I can't remember exactly what it
 18 was, but we used to apply direct pressure on
 19 tourniquets, and then they changed the guidance that
 20 we were given on where to apply them and how to apply
 21 them.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. I think we now know the
 23 guidance has changed yet again, I think.
 24 MR NICHOLLS: That first aid training, did you continue to
 25 have that refreshed up until the point at which you

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1 retired from RMP?
 2 A. Yes, I did.
 3 Q. So up until 2008?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And did you receive any further first aid training
 6 through the role that you described in organising events
 7 or in any other way after 2008?
 8 A. I have subsequent to 2017, but between 2008 and 2017
 9 I have not had any extra.
 10 Q. That's very clear.
 11 Can I now move on to your movements prior to the
 12 explosion on the 22nd. I understand you were at work
 13 during the day --
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. -- and you made your way to the arena that evening.
 16 Can you explain why you came to be going to the arena?
 17 A. I was collecting my son, his girlfriend and his friend
 18 who were attending the event at the arena on that
 19 evening.
 20 Q. And you'd arranged to pick them up at the end of the
 21 concert?
 22 A. I had, yes. I'd arranged to meet them at the place
 23 where I was standing, which was the bottom of the
 24 concourse steps.
 25 Q. Just so we're clear, the concourse steps you're

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1 referring to are the steps from inside the
 2 Victoria Station concourse that lead up to the
 3 footbridge --
 4 A. That is correct, yes.
 5 Q. -- and then into the City Room?
 6 A. That's correct, yes.
 7 Q. And that's when you would agreed to meet them in
 8 advance?
 9 A. I had, yes.
 10 Q. At what time had you planned to meet them at the end of
 11 the concert?
 12 A. 10.30.
 13 Q. I understand you left your home at about 9.30?
 14 A. That is correct.
 15 Q. And you travelled to the arena by car with your wife?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. And parked up just outside the main entrance and went
 18 into the concourse?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Can you describe what happened as you arrived at the
 21 foot of those steps that take you up to the footbridge?
 22 A. Almost immediately as I arrived at the foot of the steps
 23 I heard a small explosion, I saw a little flash of dust
 24 and light from above the concourse area, and I just
 25 started walking towards it.

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1 Q. In your statement, I think you say that you saw a cloud
 2 of dust coming out of the arena doors.
 3 A. That's correct, yes.
 4 Q. Just so we're clear, the doors you're referring to there
 5 are the doors from the footbridge into what we know as
 6 the City Room?
 7 A. Yes, that is correct.
 8 Q. Which you have described in your statement at times as
 9 "the foyer"?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You say a loud bang in your statement?
 12 A. I wouldn't say it was particularly loud, sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's just that's what's actually in the
 14 statement, but not particularly?
 15 A. In comparison to other explosions I've heard, yes.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 17 A. Sorry, sir.
 18 MR NICHOLLS: Pausing at the point at which you get to those
 19 doors into the City Room, and you'll understand why
 20 I say that, can you explain what you did after you heard
 21 that loud bang and saw the cloud of dust?
 22 A. I started to walk towards where I'd seen the explosion
 23 and the blast and as I got part-way up the stairs,
 24 people were evacuating quite rapidly, so I moved over to
 25 the left-hand side and held the handrail as I walked up

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1 to try and get myself past people coming out of the
 2 arena.
 3 Q. As you were making your way up those stairs and across
 4 the footbridge towards the arena doors, did you at that
 5 stage try to call your son?
 6 A. At various points during the night yes, I did try
 7 calling my son.
 8 Q. I understand initially there was no answer and you sent
 9 a message.
 10 A. That's correct, so I sent a text message.
 11 Q. And a short time later -- I think you time it at between
 12 10.32 and 10.34 -- you received a message back from your
 13 son saying he was okay and he had in fact left the
 14 City Room?
 15 A. He had, yes.
 16 Q. I'm now going to move on to what I was describing as
 17 topic 3, so the experience you had in the City Room and
 18 you assistance you provided. I want to make clear to
 19 those who are listening and watching that we have
 20 discussed the importance of giving that evidence but
 21 also doing so in a way that avoids distressing and
 22 graphic details --
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. -- and that's the approach that I'll be taking to the
 25 questions I ask.

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1 You entered the City Room through those doors from
 2 the footbridge and you describe the scene as one of
 3 carnage for reasons we do not need to go into.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: By the time you'd gone in had you
 6 received the text message from your son?
 7 A. No, I hadn't, sir.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 9 MR NICHOLLS: In your statement you describe that one of the
 10 first actions you took was shutting the City Room doors
 11 after you'd gone in. Can you explain why you did that?
 12 A. Possibly a number of reasons. The first one, I could
 13 see something through the doors. So I just thought
 14 nobody needs to see that, so I closed the doors. But
 15 also, it's part of the -- part of my military police
 16 work to preserve a scene and I also wanted to -- when
 17 you think about secondary shooters or explosions,
 18 I didn't want them to have line of sight of anybody in
 19 there, so the first thing I did was shut the doors so at
 20 least then nobody can see what's going on inside, so...
 21 Q. So really three reasons?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. So that people wouldn't see what was inside?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. You describe preserving the scene. Just so we're clear,

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1 what you mean is it may have been a crime scene and you
 2 wanted to preserve that?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And third, because of the concerns about a secondary
 5 explosion or further attack?
 6 A. That is correct, yes.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would that all be in accordance with the
 8 training you'd had?
 9 A. More or less, sir, yes.
 10 MR NICHOLLS: I realise the order of things may not be
 11 completely clear, but the reading I have of your
 12 statement is one of the first things you did when you
 13 went into the City Room after closing the doors was
 14 approaching several members of the public inside the
 15 City Room. You describe them in your statement as
 16 security staff.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. I think I understand you to say that first you
 19 approached people who appeared to be effectively
 20 teenagers wearing yellow tabards?
 21 A. That is correct, yes.
 22 Q. What were they doing when you first approached them to
 23 speak to them?
 24 A. Some were actually attending to people in the arena,
 25 others just stood around, quite... just didn't really

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1 know what they were doing, really.
 2 Q. I think you say in the interview that you gave to the
 3 100 Days documentary that those members of staff were in
 4 quite a state --
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. -- and you asked them, "Are you doing anything?", and
 7 a number of them said, "Well, we don't know what to do";
 8 is that accurate?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. You then go on to say in that interview for the 100 Days
 11 that you then spoke to people you thought were more
 12 managerial in role because they were wearing purple
 13 high-vis?
 14 A. That's correct, yes.
 15 Q. And you asked what they were doing and those people also
 16 said, "We don't know"?
 17 A. That is correct, yes.
 18 Q. Do you remember anything about the number of people
 19 wearing purple high-vis you asked or whether they were
 20 male, female?
 21 A. I believe the ones I spoke to were male. There may have
 22 been about three, possibly four, so not as many as the
 23 people wearing yellow.
 24 Q. You say in both your statement and your interview that
 25 you told those people you spoke to to get water for the

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1 injured --
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. -- because you thought there might be people who would
 4 need that and it might be of assistance?
 5 A. That's correct.
 6 Q. You also told them that if people weren't responsive,
 7 that they should then leave them and if people could
 8 communicate they should speak with them, stay with them
 9 and provide them with reassurance?
 10 A. Yes, that's correct.
 11 Q. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but are you
 12 describing some form of what we have heard of as triage
 13 in doing that?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Can I ask you why you were doing that?
 16 A. Because from my initial interaction with the people
 17 wearing yellow I believe they didn't have any sort of
 18 first aid training or, if they had, they weren't using
 19 it for whatever reason. I just thought the easiest
 20 thing for them to do is, rather than disappear anywhere,
 21 just to keep somebody -- if you keep somebody talking
 22 you've got more chance of them staying alive.
 23 Q. You explain in your statement that after those
 24 interactions with members of staff, you looked around
 25 the City Room to see what you could do to help.

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And you describe walking around the City Room to assist
 3 with the injured. In fact, I think you say that you
 4 completed several loops --
 5 A. I did.
 6 Q. -- and encountered a number of people as a result?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. For entirely understandable reasons, in your statement
 9 I think you're unsure of the correct order in which you
 10 came to individual people --
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. -- and I'm not going to take any time on that. But
 13 there are some interactions with people that you
 14 assisted that I'd like to take you through. If it's not
 15 clear who I'm referring to, we can go to your statement.
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. First, as I understand it, in your statement you
 18 describe approaching a man and a woman who were sat
 19 leaning against a wall who you say had suffered leg
 20 injuries.
 21 A. That is correct, yes.
 22 Q. Bearing in mind what we've already said about graphic
 23 and distressing details, can you explain what assistance
 24 you sought to provide them?
 25 A. Application of tourniquets. I believe the gentleman --

1 I used his belt on the first instance and used his belt
 2 to apply a tourniquet to his lower leg.
 3 Q. I think in the same section of your evidence you also
 4 describe using a handbag strap as a tourniquet for
 5 another injury?
 6 A. That is correct.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So these people are pretty badly
 8 injured? We are not going to go into the detail,
 9 obviously, but let's have some idea of the degree.
 10 A. In my mind, they looked survivable. So the application
 11 of a tourniquet, because they didn't appear to have
 12 abdominal injuries, they were just lower leg injuries,
 13 so it was the application of a tourniquet. I believe
 14 I spoke -- I can't remember exactly, but I had the same
 15 conversation with both parties, but at least one of them
 16 I sort of gave them: if you're going to be here for more
 17 than 10 minutes, slowly release the pressure on the
 18 tourniquet and then reapply it.
 19 MR NICHOLLS: The fact that you were saying that to them,
 20 does that tell us that they were conscious and able to
 21 communicate with you?
 22 A. Yes, they were.
 23 Q. You described using a belt and a handbag strap.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. I think it goes without saying that those are obviously

1 makeshift tourniquets.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Would it have been helpful to you in what you were doing
 4 if there had been access to more formal tourniquets
 5 at the scene for you to use?
 6 A. Possibly, yes.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But the ones you applied worked
 8 perfectly well?
 9 A. I hope so, sir, yes.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. You'll be aware we've heard
 11 some evidence about how to make do with what you
 12 actually find at the scene in order to apply
 13 tourniquets, or perhaps you're aware of that, but you
 14 seemed to have actually done that.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 17 MR NICHOLLS: I'm going to move on to the second interaction
 18 that you refer to in your statement that I have picked
 19 up on and that's the help you provided to a young man
 20 with long hair, who I think you initially thought was
 21 actually a young woman because of the long hair.
 22 A. I did, yes.
 23 Q. You describe that young man as having suffered quite
 24 severe facial injuries and also torso injuries?
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. I understand to a limited degree he was able to
 2 communicate with you?
 3 A. He made a noise, that was about it.
 4 Q. So conscious but obviously in serious difficulty?
 5 A. (Overspeaking).
 6 Q. Can you describe the help you offered to him?
 7 A. Initially, I observed what was wrong with him.
 8 I haven't really got the skill set to deal with it, so
 9 I hinted to him that he'd have to use his own hands to
 10 do it. He was pointing at his phone, kept going for his
 11 phone, I presume it was his phone, which was laid on the
 12 floor and it started to ring.
 13 Q. What did you do --
 14 A. There was a member of ShowSec, the yellow people, and
 15 I got them to sit next to him and keep him company, keep
 16 talking to him while I answered the phone.
 17 Q. What happened when you answered the phone?
 18 A. I spoke to -- I now know it to be his mother who asked
 19 me a number of questions, which I have written --
 20 I can't remember exactly what the conversation was but
 21 the gist of it was, "Do you know what's going on?", "I'm
 22 here with your daughter", "I haven't got a daughter",
 23 "Well, I'm here with your son", "He's got long hair",
 24 "He's been involved in the bombing at the arena, it
 25 looks like he will be okay of sorts", and she was,

1 "I don't know what to do". She was very calm. I said,
 2 "Just listen to the media, ring the police", and then --
 3 "Go round to his dad's", and that was basically it,
 4 I ended the call.
 5 Q. I think, for completeness, you have had subsequent
 6 contact with the man and his mother and they've thanked
 7 you for the help you gave.
 8 A. Yes, I have, yes.
 9 Q. I'm going to move on to a third casualty that you
 10 describe assisting. That was a woman who you saw was
 11 injured and had managed to get on to the table where the
 12 merchandise was kept.
 13 A. That's correct.
 14 Q. Do you recall who I'm describing?
 15 A. I do, yes.
 16 Q. My understanding of your interaction with her is that
 17 she could talk to a degree and was making noises?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And her phone also began to ring?
 20 A. That's correct, yes.
 21 Q. And you answered the phone call. Can you explain what
 22 you did when you answered that call?
 23 A. The lady who answered it -- again, I think it said
 24 "mother" or "mum" or... It was her mother, but
 25 I couldn't understand what she was saying. So I just

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1 repeated more or less what I'd already said, you know:
 2 whoever it is you're ringing has been involved in it,
 3 they are currently alive and they look like they would
 4 survive. I repeated that she just should ring the
 5 police or listen for the media announcements.
 6 Q. Was there any medical assistance that you felt you could
 7 or needed to provide to that casualty?
 8 A. At the time there were already one or two people dealing
 9 with that casualty.
 10 Q. By "people", who are you referring to there if you can
 11 recall?
 12 A. I think it was a police officer with blonde hair.
 13 Q. Male or female?
 14 A. Female. She had some of the T-shirts from the
 15 concession stand and they were using them to apply
 16 pressure to wounds.
 17 Q. So essentially, that person was already being helped and
 18 you weren't going to step in and offer further
 19 assistance?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. In your statement, you describe at this point,
 22 I think -- I appreciate the order may be somewhat
 23 confused -- hearing someone shouting an announcement.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. First, before we go on to the detail of that, can you

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1 recall who it was who shouted that?
 2 A. No, not at all.
 3 Q. Do you even recall if it was someone official in uniform
 4 or a member of the public?
 5 A. No, I can't recall.
 6 Q. What you describe in your statement is someone shouted,
 7 "If you can walk, please head out of the arena or assist
 8 with getting people out of the arena where you can get
 9 first aid".
 10 A. That is correct, yes.
 11 Q. So in layman's terms did you understand that to be an
 12 attempt to clear the City Room of walking wounded?
 13 A. Yes, to evacuate, yes.
 14 Q. After hearing that being shouted, you describe trying to
 15 assist a man and a woman who were asking if you'd seen
 16 their daughter?
 17 A. That is correct, yes.
 18 Q. Can you describe that interaction for us, please?
 19 A. The lady I was speaking to, she was stood up and didn't
 20 appear to be injured at all. The gentleman was on the
 21 floor, he had lower leg injuries --
 22 Q. I think you say they were quite serious.
 23 A. They did look quite serious --
 24 Q. But he was conscious?
 25 A. -- but he was conscious, quite conscious, quite calm.

19

1 He didn't appear to be under any sort of duress or
 2 stress. Then I just said that you can either stay here
 3 or we can attempt to lift you and carry you out of the
 4 arena where you can be treated. He said, "Just try and
 5 help me", so we both tried to lift him but he was quite
 6 a sizeable gentleman and when we got him sort of off his
 7 bottom, it was obvious that he couldn't -- he had no
 8 function lower down, so it was pointless trying. He
 9 then developed quite a lot of pain, so I just lowered
 10 him back down to where he was.
 11 Q. Was the reason that you were trying to move him because
 12 you had just heard an announcement saying take people
 13 out and they can get first aid?
 14 A. Exactly, yes.
 15 Q. But you weren't able to move him for the reasons
 16 you have described?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: During all this, had you received the
 19 text message from your son or was it after --
 20 A. I had, yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You had? What stage roughly? Early on?
 22 A. Quite early on, sir. It was about the time that I was
 23 doing the first tourniquet --
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 25 A. -- more or less.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you knew from that stage that your
2 family was safe?
3 A. I did, yes, sir.
4 MR NICHOLLS: Sir, if it assists your note, the statement
5 puts it at 10.32, the receipt of the text, so very early
6 on. In the interview I think you put it at 10.34
7 (overspeaking).
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the time on the text?
9 A. That's correct, sir.
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But it doesn't actually mean you saw it.
11 Did you see it immediately it came through, the text?
12 A. I did, yes.
13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
14 MR NICHOLLS: So you're aware, sir, there is body-worn video
15 footage of Mr Coster in the City Room throughout that
16 period until around 11.08.
17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you very much.
18 MR NICHOLLS: If we go back to this male with the leg
19 injuries --
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry to interrupt the flow.
21 A. No problem, sir.
22 MR NICHOLLS: -- that you were unable to lift. Is there
23 anything else that you think would have assisted you to
24 help lift that gentleman and get him first aid?
25 A. Another person of my sort of size would have -- we could

21

1 have lifted him then, but I think the pain that ... He
2 didn't appear to be in any pain whilst he was seated but
3 as soon as we started to move him, I think the pain
4 actually just became too much and it would have been too
5 much pain to move him.
6 Q. If you'd had access to a stretcher, might that have
7 helped or not?
8 A. No, again it's the getting from the ground on to the
9 stretcher, or if he laid down, but again I didn't know
10 what injuries he had internally whether he should be
11 laid down. So I just -- he seemed comfortable where
12 he was so I thought I'd leave him until somebody far
13 more professional than me can help.
14 Q. I think at this stage, again the order having been
15 something that is necessarily somewhat fluid, you
16 describe speaking with an officer who you believed
17 worked for BTP?
18 A. That's correct.
19 Q. Who you believed was a Bronze commander or at least
20 seemed to be the initial Bronze commander providing
21 direction to other officers?
22 A. I did ask him directly, "Are you the Bronze commander?",
23 and I'm almost sure he said yes. He had an other -- he
24 had either a constable or a sergeant with him who
25 appeared to be his scribe.

22

1 Q. Just so we are clear, this was in the City Room?
2 A. That is correct.
3 Q. Presumably you can't recall the time that that
4 interaction took place?
5 A. No. I saw him there -- I would say 10 minutes. At
6 least -- at the most 10 minutes.
7 Q. At the most 10 minutes, but after those interactions
8 with casualties that we've just described?
9 A. During.
10 Q. At the same time.
11 You say that it was, I think, in your statement, and
12 in your interview, a young male, this individual?
13 A. Yes, he wasn't particularly -- well, compared to me,
14 he wasn't old. I would say mid-30s.
15 Q. Hair colour, do you recall?
16 A. Dark.
17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it follows you were familiar with
18 terms like Bronze commander through your previous
19 military service?
20 A. Yes, for about 4 years I was the operational senior NCO
21 for the military police in London district and we dealt
22 with military events, so it was in the planning and
23 preparation.
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And they use the term Bronze commander
25 as well?

23

1 A. Yes, we have stages -- we ourselves have Bronze, Silver
2 and Gold -- never a Gold, but...
3 MR NICHOLLS: For completeness, you're clear at least in the
4 referral that was made to Lord Kerslake's review that
5 you were very complimentary about that officer, you felt
6 that person was taking charge and effective?
7 A. (Overspeaking) yes.
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And he's someone we will be able to
9 identify in due course?
10 MR NICHOLLS: Possibly, sir. Work is being done to do that.
11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
12 MR NICHOLLS: You describe your interaction with that
13 officer and I think what you say in your statement
14 is that you gave him your details and told him that if
15 you could be of any assistance he should shout for you.
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. And you then go on to say that you stayed in the
18 City Room for a little while longer and observed a medic
19 arrive, as well as four or five police officers, who
20 were using defibrillators on the wounded?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. Can I break that down a little. Do you have any sense
23 of the timing of that arrival, first of the police
24 officers?
25 A. I believe they were quite early on. I would say within

24

1 the first , again, 10 minutes or so.
 2 Q. And the medic that you have described, that was later?
 3 A. Not long afterwards.
 4 Q. So something in the region of a little after 10 minutes?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And that was one medic?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Were there others or just that one that you saw?
 9 A. I only saw one medic. He was wearing his ambulance
 10 uniform. He had three pips on his shoulder. I seem to
 11 remember three pips on his shoulder.
 12 Q. You say the medic had a large rucksack?
 13 A. That's correct.
 14 Q. And you assumed at that point, and this is what you say
 15 in your statement, that the cavalry had arrived at that
 16 point?
 17 A. That is correct , yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you would assume that more medics
 19 would come? That was your assumption?
 20 A. As I'd seen one, I presumed more would be coming, yes.
 21 MR NICHOLLS: Do you recall anything more about that medic?
 22 You said that the pips were there. Was it a woman, a
 23 man? Age?
 24 A. A male.
 25 Q. Age?

25

1 A. 30. He wasn't particularly old or particularly young.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think we're going to have that
 3 much trouble identifying him, but I could be wrong.
 4 MR NICHOLLS: I think that's true.
 5 Mr Coster, at that point you left the City Room?
 6 A. Not long after that point, yes.
 7 Q. And the reason for that, as you say in your statement,
 8 was because you realised you couldn't do much more with
 9 the training and skills that you had?
 10 A. That is correct , yes.
 11 Q. And I think I mentioned to the chairman already that
 12 we can see that you're in the City Room until at least
 13 11.08, you may have been there a little time after, but
 14 you say in your account that you think you were probably
 15 leaving around an hour after you'd arrived?
 16 A. That is correct .
 17 Q. That would put it some time between around 11.10 and
 18 about 11.30; is that right?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. You were then reunited with your wife and son and went
 21 home?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which way did you leave?
 24 A. I left more or less exactly the same way I entered, sir ,
 25 which was back across the concourse, down the stairs,

26

1 and rather than going down the entrance directly in
 2 front of me, I already had had a message from my wife
 3 telling me where she was so I went to the left and
 4 exited the single door at the end of the rail concourse
 5 and just walked out.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So at the time you went down, at the
 7 bottom of the stairs when you went down, were they
 8 already setting up or had they set up the casualty
 9 rescue centre?
 10 A. I didn't take note of the precise detail of what they
 11 were doing, sir . I did see police officers or people in
 12 high-vis (overspeaking).
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So medics or police officers were
 14 around?
 15 A. Yes, sir .
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you see police officers with guns?
 17 A. Initially , sir , within -- again, it's well within the
 18 10 minutes, I'd just closed the doors, and as I got to
 19 the last door, there were two armed officers there that
 20 appeared. They were still making communication with --
 21 establishing communications and I said something silly
 22 like , "If you need a mobile phone, I've got one",
 23 something like that. But as soon as I saw them, it sort
 24 of relaxed me.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you saw the armed officers?

27

1 A. Yes.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And when you went out on to the street,
 3 lots of ambulances around or not yet?
 4 A. There were ambulances to my right in front of the
 5 railway station .
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A number?
 7 A. Yes, a number, it was more than one or two.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 9 MR NICHOLLS: Mr Coster, I have in fact concluded my
 10 questions. I have no more questions to ask.
 11 The Rule 10 requests that we've had indicate,
 12 I think, that maybe Mr Weatherby has questions and,
 13 in the normal way, I'll just see if Mr Weatherby has any
 14 questions to ask.
 15 MR WEATHERBY: Again, I have no questions, but can I thank
 16 Mr Coster very much for the evidence that he's given.
 17 A. Thank you.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're a hero.
 19 A. Thank you very much.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You did an amazing job and I'm sure
 21 everyone is very grateful for what you did. Thank you.
 22 It just does show how useful it is for people to have
 23 some sort of training so they can generally give some
 24 help on these sort of occasions.
 25 A. Yes, sir .

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1 MR NICHOLLS: Sir, my understanding is that the plan now is,
2 with the time that we have, to read some further read
3 evidence from the survivors.
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So everybody understands, my intention
5 is to have read evidence going on until about
6 11 o'clock. I'm then going to finish because we are
7 in the process of reviewing the various documents which
8 have been sent to us, the criticisms, the responses to
9 criticisms, and we need to get on with that. So we'll
10 finish the hearings for today around 11 o'clock. I hope
11 everyone understands the reasons for that.

12 Shall I rise?

13 MR NICHOLLS: Yes, sir, so that Mr Coster can exit the
14 witness box.

15 (10.29 am)

(A short break)

17 (10.34 am)

18 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, as was indicated yesterday, I'm going
19 to continue reading extracts from witness statements,
20 but as we discussed yesterday, just for everyone that
21 wasn't observing yesterday, the extracts of the witness
22 statements that will be read will not detail injuries,
23 both of casualties that were assisted or of the
24 witnesses themselves. We appreciate that some of those
25 individuals have themselves put the information in the

29

1 public domain, but that's the approach that's been
2 adopted.

3 Witness statement of KIM DICK (read) (summarised)

4 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, I'm next going to read, please, the
5 statement of Kim Lorraine Dick. Her statement is dated
6 22 February 2018:

7 "This is my statement in relation to the terrorist
8 attack at the Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena
9 on Monday, 22 May 2017.

10 "I was present with my husband, Philip Dick, my
11 daughter and my granddaughter. Philip and I were taking
12 the girls to the concert, but not going to attend the
13 concert ourselves. We had purchased two tickets for the
14 concert for the girls, but I do not know where the
15 girls' seats were inside the auditorium, but Philip
16 knew.

17 "It would have been around 5.15 pm that evening when
18 we all left our home, getting a taxi to the train
19 station and then a train to Manchester Victoria Station
20 that arrived at approximately 6.45 pm. On our arrival
21 in Manchester, we went directly from the train station
22 into the Manchester Arena, using the stairs and walkway
23 from the station concourse leading into the arena's box
24 office foyer entrance.

25 "The girls went to the merchandise stall that was

30

1 set up in the foyer, which was on our left-hand side as
2 we entered through via the glass doors from the walkway.
3 At that time, the foyer did not appear full to me, only
4 about a third full. My girls were excited and there was
5 what I would describe as a happy atmosphere with a mix
6 of people, adults and children across the age range.
7 At the time I didn't have any concerns with regard to
8 our safety, nothing gave me any cause to be concerned.

9 "The girls bought a T-shirt each. I thought I would
10 withdraw some money later so we could buy some more
11 merchandise for the girls at the end of the concert.
12 I told the girls we would meet them by the merchandise
13 stall in the foyer at the end of the concert. We didn't
14 give them a time. We just asked them to be one of the
15 first out at the end so we could get away without having
16 to rely on the last train back home.

17 "The girls then queued up with others to have their
18 tickets checked by the arena security staff before going
19 through doors that led on to the arena's perimeter
20 concourse. Philip and I then left the foyer, going out
21 the same way we had entered, via the Victoria Station
22 exit. Once down on the train station concourse, we
23 exited the train station and walked up to the Printworks
24 complex, only a short distance away, and visited some of
25 the establishments in the vicinity of the Printworks

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1 where we had drinks and a meal while we waited for the
2 concert to end.

3 "Around 9.45 pm that evening, Philip and I returned
4 to the railway station and went into the railway bar in
5 the station. The bar was full and I commented to Philip
6 that there must have been a lot of parents who had done
7 what we had and were waiting for their children. I had
8 noticed a lot of people on the station's concourse with
9 the public seating benches being occupied.

10 "The access to the arena from the station's
11 concourse is open and unrestricted and when we left the
12 bar, we used the walkway, climbing the stairs to return
13 to the box office foyer of the arena. As we climbed the
14 stairs, I don't recall the walkway being crowded.
15 It would have been around 10.15 pm when we entered the
16 box office foyer and we went to stand in the vicinity of
17 the merchandise stall where we had been earlier.

18 "From inside the foyer, I sent my daughter a text,
19 telling her that we were in the foyer and reminding her
20 to leave the auditorium quickly once the concert had
21 ended. Inside the foyer, people were scattered all
22 around, but most appeared to be stood to the right of
23 the foyer, towards the box office.

24 "We stayed on the left side by the merchandise
25 stall, waiting for the girls. As we did, I could hear

32

1 the music coming from the auditorium. In passing the
 2 time, Philip and I spoke with stallholders and joked
 3 with them about the cost of their printed hoodie
 4 garments.
 5 "As we waited, I noticed that the foyer was getting
 6 busier, but again most people appeared to stay to the
 7 right of the foyer. The centre of the arena being more
 8 open, the atmosphere was still good and again nothing
 9 gave me any cause for concern.
 10 "While we waited, Philip kept on walking away from
 11 where we were standing towards the dividing doors
 12 between the foyer and the arena's concourse. Fearing
 13 that I would lose him in a rush of people coming through
 14 the doors once the concert finished, I told him to stay
 15 with me.
 16 "On the last occasion when he wandered off towards
 17 the doors, a few people walked into the foyer via the
 18 concourse doors. I told him again to come back. As he
 19 turned around to walk back to me and took two or three
 20 steps towards me, I was looking diagonally towards
 21 Philip and towards the arena's dividing doors, when
 22 there was a tremendously loud bang and flash that was
 23 a yellow bright light.
 24 "The noise and flash blocked everything out.
 25 I immediately thought to myself, 'Oh my God, it's

1 a bomb'. That was my first thought and reaction, but
 2 I thought the bomb had gone off in the arena's
 3 auditorium and concourse and I feared everyone inside
 4 had been killed."
 5 The statement then gives details of what the witness
 6 saw and heard:
 7 "Philip came over to me and I was trying to take in
 8 what had happened. We were facing each other. Behind
 9 Philip was the open foyer and to his left the doors and
 10 as I was looking I saw a little girl."
 11 The witness gives details about that girl and her
 12 age and her injuries:
 13 "I went to her and put my arms around her to support
 14 her and help to guide her out of the foyer to find help.
 15 I was aware of other people injured all about me.
 16 Philip told me that he was going to search for our girls
 17 and, as I walked towards the exit of the foyer that led
 18 out on to the walkway between the foyer and the train
 19 station concourse, he stayed in the foyer."
 20 Mrs Dick gives details of the help and assistance
 21 she continued to provide to that child:
 22 "People were running past us in a panic but no one
 23 stopped to help. I was shouting for help but people
 24 were in total panic as they ran out of the exit on to
 25 the walkway and down the staircase."

1 Again, Mrs Dick continues to give details of the
 2 assistance she was providing to the girl:
 3 "Within a few minutes, Philip appeared on the
 4 walkway and came to us. From what he told me,
 5 I believed a bomb had gone off in the foyer and not the
 6 arena. Philip had not been able to find our girls
 7 in the foyer. At the time I don't think I took in the
 8 significance of what he told me. Philip told me he was
 9 going to go back into the arena to find our girls. He
 10 had told me that he had been unable to get hold of our
 11 daughter on her mobile phone.
 12 "As I waited, reassuring the girl and still calling
 13 for help, there was a second young girl who came out of
 14 the foyer doors on to the walkway."
 15 Again, Mrs Dick gives details of that second young
 16 girl that she assisted:
 17 "I called to her and told her to sit down against a
 18 supporting pillar on the walkway. She was directly
 19 across the walkway from me, a distance of about 6 feet
 20 away. By this time, no other people were coming out of
 21 the foyer doors on to the walkway other than the odd
 22 person. I was still shouting for help, but there was
 23 nobody there."
 24 The witness then describes further assistance she
 25 was providing to the second child:

1 "At this time nobody was leaving or entering the
 2 foyer. Whilst I was supporting the first child [that
 3 she had described] and trying to reassure both girls,
 4 I began to hear the noise of police vehicle sirens.
 5 A short time after armed uniformed police officers and
 6 paramedics started coming up the stairs from the train
 7 station and heading towards the foyer of the arena.
 8 "I was still shouting for help and one of the police
 9 officers came over to me. I was shouting, 'We need help
 10 now, we need paramedics now!' I was starting to think
 11 we would never get help. The armed police officer
 12 approached me and crouched down by my head and whispered
 13 in my ear, telling me they were just checking there were
 14 no more bombs and the paramedics were downstairs. It
 15 seemed a long time without help.
 16 "I then received a call on my mobile phone from our
 17 daughter. She confirmed that she and our granddaughter
 18 were safe and had already been evacuated out of the
 19 arena via another exit and hadn't been near the box
 20 office foyer. I was so relieved to hear that my girls
 21 were safe, I thanked God, and was able to focus on the
 22 first child.
 23 "After the phone call, Philip returned to me. He
 24 hadn't been able to find the girls. I was able to tell
 25 him that they were safe and I'd spoken to our daughter.

1 "At this time, arena staff appeared on the walkway
 2 and approached us with a first aid box. Philip and
 3 I took some bandages."
 4 Mrs Dick then describes the use of the bandages.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Used on the girls that she was helping?
 6 Yes? Thank you.
 7 MS CARTWRIGHT: Certainly the first child, yes, sir:
 8 "Philip had at that time been able to contact the
 9 first child's father on his mobile phone as that child
 10 had been able to give us the number. The second child
 11 had her mobile phone and was trying to call her mother.
 12 She got through and was able to speak to her mother.
 13 I continued to reassure her with words. I was not able
 14 to get up and go over to child 2 because I was
 15 supporting child 1."
 16 The witness then describes waiting a further
 17 45 minutes for the first paramedic to come to us:
 18 "In the time we were waiting without medical
 19 assistance nobody came up the stairs to help. When
 20 police officers and arena staff came out of the foyer
 21 and attended to child 2, but then returned to the foyer
 22 leaving child 2 alone again."
 23 She then gives descriptions of further assistance
 24 she provided and what she saw and heard at that time:
 25 "I continued to call out for help. A man appeared

1 on the walkway but I could not say whether he had come
 2 out of the foyer or had come up the stairs. He
 3 approached me and asked me if I was okay and he stroked
 4 my head and arm to comfort me. He told him I was but
 5 I needed paramedics for the two children. I used their
 6 names as I spoke to him. He tried to reassure me that
 7 the paramedics were downstairs on the train station
 8 concourse, I suppose he must have come up the stairs
 9 from the station.
 10 "I told him we needed them now at that time. I took
 11 a tight grip of his arm as he was getting up as he had
 12 been crouched down by me. He told me he was going to
 13 get some help and left, running into the foyer."
 14 She then gives a description of that man:
 15 "A short time after this man left us, the man
 16 returned to us, accompanied by a uniformed police
 17 officer, not armed, and arena security staff. At this
 18 time Philip also returned. Together they all combined
 19 to help the two children. Philip and the police got
 20 a table from the foyer that had been used for the
 21 merchandise stand and, using it as a makeshift
 22 stretcher, they put the first child onto the table and
 23 carried her down the stairs to the railway station
 24 concourse.
 25 "I observed police officers lift child 2 in what

1 I would call a manual chair lift with the officers
 2 clasping their hands under child 2, forming a seat.
 3 I stayed with the first child: she was shivering and
 4 I asked for a blanket for her, which I was handed once
 5 we reached the concourse of the train station. On the
 6 concourse, I saw a lot of injured people who were being
 7 attended to by paramedics and other people. I didn't
 8 see child 2 once she'd been taken down the stairs by the
 9 police officers, but assumed she had received medical
 10 attention.
 11 "I remained with the first child, comforting her.
 12 I told her that I wasn't going to leave her until her
 13 father was there with her. I ensured she was wrapped up
 14 in a blanket. Philip was speaking with a female police
 15 officer and between them they were trying to guide the
 16 first child's father to locate us. After about
 17 10 minutes, they came back to me and child 1 with her
 18 father. Once the first child and her father were
 19 reunited, I just wanted to leave and find our girls.
 20 I was aware Philip had spoken to them since I had and he
 21 knew where they said they had been evacuated to, which
 22 I believed was Manchester Cathedral."
 23 She then describes what they saw as they left the
 24 station concourse:
 25 "By the time we left the train station, it was

1 midnight. We made our way on foot to the cathedral,
 2 passing the Printworks. When we got to the cathedral,
 3 there was nobody around and there was no sign of our
 4 daughter and granddaughter. We walked on by a parade of
 5 food takeaway outlets. I saw the girls stood on the
 6 street alone. I was relieved and glad they were safe.
 7 "Once we met up with our girls, we walked back to
 8 a nearby taxi rank. Philip and I had decided we were
 9 just going to get a taxi back to our home address, found
 10 a Hackney cab at the rank, and the taxi driver gave me
 11 a bottle of water so I could clean myself up and wash my
 12 hands.
 13 "On the way back, the taxi driver told us what he
 14 had heard. He spoke of finishing just before the bomb
 15 exploded but had come back out as he knew people would
 16 need lifts. We reached our home address at 1.20 am on
 17 Tuesday morning, 23 May 2017. Although the girls had
 18 not been injured, our granddaughter had lost a shoe and
 19 her coat in the stampede to get out of the arena."
 20 The witness then gives further details of assistance
 21 provided to her and her husband after the incident.
 22 She then goes on:
 23 "In relation to the first child that I assisted, the
 24 day following the attack that first child's father
 25 contacted and thanked me for what I had done. We have

1 remained in touch ever since. I was also contacted by
 2 the second child’s parents, who thanked me. Again,
 3 I have kept in touch with them.”
 4 She makes comments about the girls’ recovery and how
 5 pleased she is.
 6 Then she says:
 7 “But what I am not happy about is the length of time
 8 it took for the emergency services to get help to us.
 9 I am angry about this and so upset that it took in
 10 excess of an hour before any paramedic or medically
 11 trained person attended to the girls, checking on them.”
 12 She then indicates on a hard copy plan of the arena
 13 box office positions where she and other persons she’s
 14 mentioned were at various times of the explosion. Sir,
 15 that can be provided and uploaded if necessary.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What we need to understand is when she
 17 was helping the girls and waiting for the paramedics,
 18 she was outside the City Room on the walkway.
 19 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, yes, and her position is captured on
 20 the body-worn footage, so she is exactly positioned, as
 21 described, at the doorway into the City Room, herself
 22 and child 1, if you look on the walkway, to the left of
 23 the doors, and child 2 is opposite her in the way she’s
 24 described, but immediately by the doors as you enter
 25 into the arena of the walkway.

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 2 MS CARTWRIGHT: She then says:
 3 “I am now fully aware of what happened within the
 4 foyer on that evening. However, at no time did I see
 5 the alleged perpetrator in the foyer or in the vicinity
 6 of the arena at any time. Prior to the explosion, the
 7 event and the evening had a good-natured and joyful feel
 8 to it.”
 9 Sir, that concludes the statement of Kim Dick.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. When witnesses in a similar
 11 position have given evidence, and counsel on behalf of
 12 the families have thanked them for helping the people
 13 who were injured, perhaps the families would like me to
 14 do that on their behalf in relation to this witness too,
 15 and could I ask, just in case she is not listening, that
 16 the inquiry writes to her to convey that to her.
 17 MS CARTWRIGHT: Thank you.
 18 Sir, I can indicate next week, because I’m conscious
 19 of the time, we will continue with reading the
 20 statements and the accounts that have been provided by
 21 her husband, Mr Philip Dick. I won’t commence those now
 22 because they’re of a similar length to Mrs Dick’s
 23 statement.
 24 That then would conclude the evidence to be heard
 25 and read today. We’ll begin again on Monday, but

1 starting at 9.30.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that all right for everybody?
 3 MS CARTWRIGHT: Sir, I’m pleased that we are going to be
 4 able to start with the evidence of Mrs Senior on Monday,
 5 then her sister Mrs Howarth, and moving to the evidence
 6 of Mrs Bradbury.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 8 (10.55 am)
 9 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am
 10 on Monday, 19 April 2021)

I N D E X

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 3 MR DARRON COSTER (affirmed)1
 4 Questions from MR NICHOLLS1
 5
 6 Witness statement of KIM DICK (read)30
 7 (summarised)
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