

# OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 95

April 28, 2021

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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Wednesday, 28 April 2021

(10.00 am)

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Good morning.

MR DE LA POER: Sir, good morning. The only live witness today is with us in the witness box, he is Commander Gordon. May we begin, please, with him being sworn?

COMMANDER KYLE GORDON (sworn)
Questions from MR DE LA POER

MR DE LA POER: We'll begin, please, with your full name.

A. My name is Kyle Gordon.

Q. And your current rank and police force?

A. I am a commander with the Metropolitan Police Service.

Q. We're going to deal principally, you and I, with your activity on the 22nd into 23 May 2017. But before we get to that let's just introduce you. When did you first join the police service?

A. I commenced my service with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, latterly the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in 1994.

Q. I can immediately tell that you're going to need to speak up just a little bit. I hope you don't mind.

A. Sorry, not at all, I do apologise.

Q. Not at all. When did you join BTP?

A. I transferred across to the British Transport Police in

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September 2015, primarily to Glasgow, in D Division, Scotland, and then, in the late summer of 2016, down to Manchester.

Q. What was the rank that you left the police service in Northern Ireland as?

A. I left as a chief inspector on promotion to superintendent with the British Transport Police.

Q. So that was the rank that you held when you joined British Transport Police and it was your rank on 22 May 2017; is that correct?

A. It was, that is correct.

Q. By May of 2017, had you undertaken any training relevant to the role of a Bronze commander generally?

A. So yes, I had. I had, in 2009, undertaken the national Bronze command public order and public safety course run by the College of Policing.

Q. Was there any subsequent training after 2009 before 2017?

A. In relation to the Bronze role specifically, yes. I undertook annual refreshers in Northern Ireland in relation to the Bronze command role. I also latterly qualified as a Silver public order and public safety commander and then when I was with British Transport Police, in the summer of 2016, I then attended and passed the College of Policing's Gold public order and

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public safety commander course.

Q. Did you regard yourself in May 2017 as being qualified to undertake the role of a Bronze commander?

A. In general terms, yes, and if it helps the inquiry, perhaps I can expand on that slightly further. My training and my operational deployments were primarily within the Northern Ireland context. I had deployed numerous times as a public order Bronze and a public order Silver commanding incidents in Northern Ireland that were very specific to the context in which we policed. So in that sense, absolutely, I feel I was qualified around Bronze command.

I suppose upon reflection in, preparation for assisting this inquiry, what has become apparent to me is actually how transferable all of those skills were into the environment of a specialist railway policing service and in particular whether or not there would be any distinct differences between Bronze in Northern Ireland as I understood it and my experience as being and deploying as Bronze within the British Transport Police, and to that extent I feel I could have been better prepared.

Q. Did you receive any specific training when you joined British Transport Police relevant to the role of a Bronze commander within British Transport Police?

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A. No, I did not.

Q. We're going to come in a moment to the British Transport Police major incident manual, which is plainly relevant to this topic, but before we do, did your training that you had undertaken relevant to the role of Bronze commander include any JESIP element?

A. In relation to my initial training for Bronze, I don't believe it did because that was 2009. However, when I completed the Silver command course and absolutely when I did the Gold command course in 2016, the JESIP principles were a core element of that training.

Q. So in May 2017, do you think you had a clear understanding of JESIP?

A. I do, yes.

Q. I have mentioned the major incident manual already. We're going to look at some elements of that and they're going to come up on the screen in front of you. Mr Lopez, {INQ025700/14}, please.

At the top there, 2.4, is a section that we've looked at with a number of British Transport Police witnesses and I think you, commander, have had an opportunity to see at least some of the evidence of your former colleagues?

A. I have, yes, that's right.

Q. In particular, relevant to the role of Bronze, the final

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1 paragraph of 2.4:  
 2 "During a major incident, many of the responding  
 3 agencies will have their Silver commanders at the scene.  
 4 Where the BTP Silver commander is located away from the  
 5 scene, it is important to ensure that the BTP commander  
 6 on scene is aware of their responsibilities including  
 7 attending (and probably chairing) the Silver  
 8 coordinating group meetings."  
 9 We're going to focus on that, but let's just ask  
 10 a couple of general questions. Before 22 May 2017, had  
 11 you read or received any training on the British  
 12 Transport Police major incident manual?  
 13 A. I do not believe I had, no.  
 14 Q. Were you, do you think, aware of its existence?  
 15 A. I don't have any specific recollection of it. When you  
 16 join a new policing organisation and move between  
 17 divisions, as I had in quick succession, there is a lot  
 18 of information that is put into a pile that you may  
 19 attend to. I do not recall having been made  
 20 specifically aware of its existence.  
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would every police force have their own  
 22 major incident manual, so would you expect BTP to have  
 23 one?  
 24 A. It wouldn't have been my expectation at the time.  
 25 Following this, if I were to transfer again,

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1 I absolutely would be checking to see.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 3 MR DE LA POER: Given that this wasn't a document that you  
 4 believe you will have read before the attack, clearly  
 5 you hadn't read that paragraph, but is there anything  
 6 about that paragraph that doesn't align with your  
 7 expectations as you brought them with you from  
 8 Northern Ireland?  
 9 A. There is one key difference for me, and it goes to the  
 10 heart of the role of Bronze and chairing Silver  
 11 coordination group meetings on behalf of a Silver  
 12 commander who may not be at the scene. In all of my  
 13 experience as a Bronze, and latterly in Northern Ireland  
 14 as a Silver commander, the Silver commander's role is  
 15 absolutely in the Silver control room where they can  
 16 receive sufficient feeds of information and intelligence  
 17 that may not be available on the front line, chair their  
 18 meetings away from the scene, and therefore there has  
 19 never been a time in my experience, albeit in a very  
 20 specific public order environment, where there's been  
 21 any expectation for Bronze commanders to chair any joint  
 22 partner meetings.  
 23 And certainly on the night in question, it would not  
 24 have been at the forefront of my mind that that would  
 25 have been an expectation that Silver would have had of

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1 me.  
 2 Q. Obviously what the manual is talking about is a very  
 3 specific and defined event in the form of a Silver  
 4 coordinating group meeting. Informally, was it your  
 5 expectation that there would nonetheless be liaison by  
 6 you as Bronze commander with other commanders on the  
 7 scene?  
 8 A. Absolutely. So I was well used to what I think is now  
 9 referred to as a JESIP huddle, where we would have  
 10 partners over the bonnet of a vehicle and we would meet  
 11 and we would discuss how we were actually going to  
 12 deploy on the scene. Apologies if I'm reading this  
 13 wrong, that's very difficult to me than chairing  
 14 a formal meeting of partners.  
 15 Q. Your previous answers make clear that it was a familiar  
 16 scenario to you that the Silver commander would not be  
 17 present at the scene.  
 18 A. That's correct.  
 19 Q. Have I understood that correctly?  
 20 A. Yes.  
 21 Q. And you knew on the night, did you, that the Silver  
 22 commander for British Transport Police would not be  
 23 at the scene?  
 24 A. That is correct, yes.  
 25 Q. But presumably, given your previous experience, that was

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1 unfolding as you would expect it to?  
 2 A. It was, yes.  
 3 Q. {INQ025700/16}, please. At the bottom, please,  
 4 Mr Lopez.  
 5 Immediately above this, we don't need to scroll up  
 6 to it because we can see the bottom of the list —  
 7 thank you very much indeed, Mr Suter.  
 8 (Pause)  
 9 We're going to need to take this a little slower  
 10 because I'm not sure all of the technology is working.  
 11 That's not your fault. Rather than assuming people can  
 12 read everything on a screen, I will just take it  
 13 a little slower, commander. That's not you, that's the  
 14 technology. I thought you should be aware.  
 15 I was just asking you about — we can see from this  
 16 document the bottom of a long list of a variety of  
 17 Bronze—badged roles. Do you see that?  
 18 A. I do, yes.  
 19 Q. The role that we are looking at here is Bronze 1, which  
 20 we understand is effectively, as the name would suggest,  
 21 the lead Bronze commander and the person with the scene  
 22 command.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the one cut off at the top of our  
 24 document?  
 25 MR DE LA POER: In fact there are a number cut off, but it's

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1 one of a number and it's the first in the list and is  
 2 broken down here in detail.  
 3 So Bronze 1 commander says this:  
 4 "At the scene of a large incident there is  
 5 a requirement to have robust on-scene command  
 6 arrangements. When the Silver commander is not at the  
 7 scene, Bronze 1 will take on key at-scene command  
 8 responsibilities as directed by the Silver commander.  
 9 This may include ensuring that effective and timely  
 10 Silver coordinating group meetings are held. Many  
 11 organisations that attend the scene will have Silver  
 12 commanders at this location. Bronze 1 will be pivotal  
 13 to managing the Silver function at the scene and  
 14 reporting back to the Silver commander at regular  
 15 intervals. Some police forces may use the term 'police  
 16 incident commander' for that role."  
 17 One role, as we've seen, of the Silver commander is  
 18 to have a tactical plan. Was it your expectation that  
 19 the Silver commander for this incident would develop  
 20 a tactical plan?  
 21 A. It would have been, yes.  
 22 Q. Was it your expectation that that tactical plan would be  
 23 formulated at an early stage?  
 24 A. It would be a qualified answer with regards to that  
 25 because it would depend on the capacity of the tactical

1 commander. However, in order to translate the strategy  
 2 into meaningful tasks on the ground, it would have been  
 3 my expectation that in some form, at an appropriate  
 4 early juncture, there would have been a tactical plan.  
 5 Q. Whilst every scene will be different and the larger the  
 6 incident, the greater the number of tasks for a Silver  
 7 commander to manage. Let's try and put some numbers on  
 8 it if it is possible; tell me if it isn't. Do you  
 9 consider that a tactical plan should be in existence, if  
 10 not committed to writing, within 30 minutes of a Silver  
 11 commander taking over?  
 12 A. I would say certainly within the first hour I would  
 13 expect for there to be a tactical plan committed to some  
 14 form of writing. Certainly within the first period, as  
 15 soon as command is assumed, I would expect for actions  
 16 to be given in pursuance of that, which would fall  
 17 naturally on to the command and control log, and that  
 18 log in itself may reflect what later becomes elements of  
 19 the tactical plan. But yes it's absolutely essential in  
 20 my mind that there would be a tactical plan at an early  
 21 juncture.  
 22 Q. When we say "in the first hour", are we here referring  
 23 to the golden hour from the moment 1 of the start of the  
 24 incident through to 60 minutes later?  
 25 A. No, and I don't think policing doctrine would expect

1 that. I think what I'm speaking to is when you assume  
 2 command, because that may vary and would be difficult to  
 3 policy for in terms of location, et cetera. Certainly,  
 4 once you have assumed command, had sufficient  
 5 situational awareness and had an ability to understand  
 6 the resources and the strategic direction that the  
 7 operation was going in, I would expect within an hour of  
 8 that to be able to commit some of that to some sort of a  
 9 plan.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It must be ultimately just incredibly  
 11 variable? It may be very difficult to get situational  
 12 awareness depending on who's on the scene and which  
 13 information you're actually getting in. So if it's  
 14 a very large incident, it's going to take longer, if  
 15 it's a very small incident, you might be able to do it  
 16 in 10 minutes.  
 17 A. Absolutely, sir.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're being asked the question and  
 19 you're answering it. I'm just asking whether, at the  
 20 end of the day, it has to vary on the facts but you  
 21 would expect one?  
 22 A. I would, yes.  
 23 MR DE LA POER: Given what is said about Bronze 1 in the  
 24 major incident manual, in the context of your previous  
 25 training and experience, and setting aside the point

1 you have already made about a Silver coordinating group,  
 2 does this accord with the expectation that you would  
 3 have had of your role as Bronze commander on the night  
 4 or is there anything other than the Silver coordinating  
 5 group meeting that is different?  
 6 A. No, by and large, other than that, it is in keeping with  
 7 the expectations.  
 8 Q. Bearing in mind the phrase "taking on key at-scene  
 9 command responsibilities as directed by the Silver  
 10 commander", do you understand that to mean in effect  
 11 putting into effect the tactical plan?  
 12 A. That is correct.  
 13 Q. At any point in the period up until you arrived at the  
 14 arena, and we'll come to the specifics of the timing,  
 15 after you had been appointed as the person to take the  
 16 Bronze commander role, did you ask for the tactical  
 17 plan?  
 18 A. Up until my arrival at the arena, no, I had not.  
 19 Q. Bearing in mind that, although there were other things  
 20 that you were doing, the journey to the arena gave you  
 21 an opportunity to think about how you might put into  
 22 effect the tactical plan. Do you think you should have  
 23 asked for the tactical plan before you arrived?  
 24 A. I don't think so, no. The situation would have been  
 25 unfolding so quickly that I think, first of all, I may

1 not have had an expectation that it would have been  
 2 created during my journey, certainly not the early part  
 3 of it, and secondly, so as not to become, I suppose,  
 4 a burden on what I would know would be an incredibly  
 5 busy Silver command suite, to ask for information that  
 6 at that point in time I may not need. I would have  
 7 expected a handover from the commander on scene and then  
 8 at that stage to have asked what tactical plan we were  
 9 working to.

10 Q. We'll come to that in due course. {INQ025700/70},  
 11 please.

12 Again, just cropping in so that we can read that --  
 13 I have been told I don't need to take it quite as slow  
 14 as the technology has resumed its normal operation:  
 15 "Bronze 1 at--the--scene commander."

16 We can see the responsibilities there. Again,  
 17 setting aside the point you have already made about the  
 18 Silver coordinating group, if you could just read those  
 19 to yourself and tell us whether or not that accorded  
 20 with your expectation of your roll of Bronze commander  
 21 or whether there is anything different?

22 A. Setting aside the aforementioned point you have raised,  
 23 that would be in keeping with my expectation.

24 Q. Thank you, Mr Lopez, you can take that down. No doubt  
 25 we will explore elements of that as we work our way

1 through the chronology.

2 But before we get to that, we need to have a better  
 3 understanding of what your precise role are  
 4 responsibilities were as at 22 May 2017. We have  
 5 learned already from you that you were of superintendent  
 6 rank. What was your job title, please?

7 A. So my job was head of operations for C Division, which,  
 8 as I'm sure has been explained by now, included all of  
 9 England and Wales with the expectation of London and the  
 10 south--east.

11 Q. Where, if anywhere, within C Division were you based?

12 A. My main office was in Portland Street in Manchester.

13 Q. And does it follow from that that you had a very good  
 14 direct understanding of the Manchester railway stations?

15 A. It follows that I had an understanding, but one of the  
 16 things I was very keen to do for the rest of my teams  
 17 was not to spend a disproportionate amount of time in  
 18 Manchester. One of the complaints, if that's not  
 19 a pejorative term, that the different teams and officers  
 20 would make to me was that British Transport Police could  
 21 be London--centric, followed by Manchester--centric, and  
 22 Glasgow--centric. And I worked incredibly hard to make  
 23 sure I divided my time across as many of the teams as  
 24 I could.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you deliberately miss out

1 Birmingham? I'm just interested. They have a control  
 2 room in Birmingham.

3 A. So I didn't, no, but because Birmingham wasn't the  
 4 headquarters, that's not where they felt that the focus  
 5 was.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. So no one was complaining about  
 7 it being Birmingham--centric?

8 A. No, and actually I had teams in Birmingham and would  
 9 spend time in Birmingham as well.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

11 MR DE LA POER: What did your role in the operations  
 12 department require from you on a day--to--day basis?

13 A. I suppose the mundanity of a senior manager, managing  
 14 personnel issues, finances, and the various departments  
 15 that sat within it.

16 Q. Did it require you to have any understanding of  
 17 deployments to particular railway locations?

18 A. Yes. So the function of the operation support  
 19 department would be to provide additionality to local  
 20 policing teams or local policing command within BTP if  
 21 they felt that they needed assistance with any  
 22 particular deployment.

23 Q. And did that therefore require you to know what the  
 24 original deployment was so you could make a judgement  
 25 about what additional support you might give?

1 A. It would depend very much on the operation. So if  
 2 something was being run locally, we may have a cursory  
 3 awareness of it in terms of a list of things happening  
 4 across the division. If we were specifically deploying  
 5 support to it, I would be aware and sign off the  
 6 strength of the operation in terms of numbers. If I was  
 7 personally in the command structure then I would have  
 8 a detailed knowledge of it.

9 Q. Were you involved in any way in the policing deployment  
 10 on 22 May 2017 at Manchester Victoria railway station  
 11 and the connected buildings?

12 A. No.

13 Q. I think it is right, however, that you did have what  
 14 you have described as a vague awareness of the  
 15 Ariana Grande concert.

16 A. So, usually what would happen on a Monday morning is  
 17 I would be given a list of things that were happening  
 18 throughout the entire division just for my awareness.  
 19 I think I had -- if you'll forgive me, chair, it's  
 20 difficult at times to understand what I knew at the time  
 21 and what has been overwritten since, but I think at the  
 22 time I was aware that there was a concert on that  
 23 evening.

24 Q. I have used that phrase "vaguely aware" for a particular  
 25 reason. You gave an interview to the BBC as

1 I understand it; is that correct?  
 2 A. That's correct.  
 3 Q. That interview was subsequently formed part or parts of  
 4 it formed part of a documentary that was broadcast?  
 5 A. That's correct.  
 6 Q. Can you help us with when, relative to 22 May 2017, you  
 7 think it was that you gave that interview? A month  
 8 or... An approximation would be --  
 9 A. I think it was in the early part of... it was either the  
 10 latter part of 2017 or the early part of 2018.  
 11 Apologies. If it helps, I can find out at a later  
 12 stage.  
 13 Q. It isn't published on the transcript, but as you say,  
 14 sir, I'm sure if it becomes important -- the point  
 15 really is this, that it's within 6 to 8 months of the  
 16 attack?  
 17 A. Yes, it certainly would have been.  
 18 Q. Obviously that wasn't in the form of a formal witness  
 19 statement that is attested to, so I'll ask you this: was  
 20 the account you gave to the interviewer accurate to the  
 21 best of your knowledge and belief at the time?  
 22 A. So at the time it would have been. What I wouldn't have  
 23 had at the time was any preparation in the run-up to it  
 24 in terms of, I suppose, the greater detail that we would  
 25 have had in relation to the preparation for this

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1 inquiry.  
 2 Q. So I think by then, just to rehearse the chronology of  
 3 your formal statements, you had given a witness  
 4 statement which formed part of the Greater Manchester  
 5 Police materials on 26 June 2017; is that correct?  
 6 A. That's correct.  
 7 Q. Was that a self-drafted statement or was it taken by  
 8 someone from Greater Manchester Police?  
 9 A. That was self-drafted.  
 10 Q. You were then subsequently asked by the chairman to  
 11 provide a statement, which you did on 17 October 2019?  
 12 A. That is correct.  
 13 Q. And most recently, a third statement, 11 December 2020?  
 14 A. That's correct.  
 15 Q. So this interview falls after you had sat down and  
 16 written that first statement but before you had answered  
 17 the specific questions that the chairman had invited you  
 18 to do?  
 19 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 20 Q. What we're going to do is just -- given that that  
 21 interview was given much closer in time to the events  
 22 than we are now, we're going to see what you said at  
 23 that time to the interviewer about your awareness of the  
 24 Ariana Grande concert.  
 25 Mr Lopez, the --

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Have had you had an opportunity to look  
 2 at this before coming?  
 3 A. I have, yes.  
 4 MR DE LA POER: It forms part of the materials provided to  
 5 the witness, sir, yes.  
 6 {INQ025584T/16}. We can see you give the --  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just know: did this all appear on  
 8 the (inaudible: distorted) or does this include material  
 9 which was edited out?  
 10 MR DE LA POER: It did not all appear in the programme.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 12 MR DE LA POER: We can see you begin by giving an  
 13 introduction to yourself in which you say you have an  
 14 overview of the operational deployment. And then in the  
 15 second paragraph you say:  
 16 "I was potentially vaguely aware of who  
 17 Ariana Grande was, having young children myself, but  
 18 certainly nothing that would make me think that there  
 19 was an event that was of particular significance to  
 20 policing."  
 21 Then this:  
 22 "The sort of anti-social behaviour and crime element  
 23 that sometimes comes with some of these events isn't  
 24 maybe as prevalent in a concert that's going to attract  
 25 a lot of parents and children, so for us this was very

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1 much a low-key event, something that the arena was  
 2 running, and that we would have a policing presence at  
 3 purely for reassurance or maybe somebody has a missing  
 4 child or somebody wants to report lost property. That's  
 5 really, for me, what the concert on the night in  
 6 question was."  
 7 So we can take that down. The quotation that I have  
 8 just read to you includes the phrase:  
 9 "... so for us this was very much a low-key  
 10 event..."  
 11 Then you go on to expand on that. Does that answer  
 12 that you gave to the BBC interviewer 6 to 8 months after  
 13 the attack reflect your understanding of BTP  
 14 C Division's attitude towards the concert on the night?  
 15 A. I think what I'm doing there is generalising in terms of  
 16 a concert without any specific information and  
 17 intelligence, reflecting back to a question asked by an  
 18 interviewer for a programme that was being or  
 19 potentially being publicly broadcast. What I haven't  
 20 done in that is -- wanted to go into any detail in terms  
 21 of how we would actually identify, escalate and then  
 22 mark the risk around that.  
 23 I understand it may be unhelpful in terms of how it  
 24 was set out, but I didn't personally have any dealings  
 25 with identifying that concert. It hadn't come in front

20

1 of me, as I say, other than potentially from a morning  
 2 briefing on the Monday morning in terms of what was  
 3 carrying on across the division .  
 4 Q. I suppose what I'm seeking to explore with you is,  
 5 speaking as you did, using the phrase "so for us",  
 6 whether it was, as you understood it, the institutional  
 7 attitude that because this wasn't an event that involved  
 8 particular anti-social behaviour or crime elements, it  
 9 was, as you describe it , low-key and something that  
 10 would have a policing presence at purely for  
 11 reassurance, and you identify the possibility of  
 12 a missing child or lost property. Was that the  
 13 institutional approach to policing that event?  
 14 A. That would have been a risk-based approach to policing  
 15 events of that type. I appreciate the point that you're  
 16 making and perhaps in stating it in the way I have, it  
 17 can be interpreted as specifically around that  
 18 operation. I don't know what the British Transport  
 19 Police approach was to that particular one, as I say,  
 20 because I wasn't involved in the planning of it. What  
 21 I was trying to do was give a flavour of how BTP would  
 22 approach an event that wasn't being escalated up to the  
 23 operations team.  
 24 Q. So unless there was specific intelligence , which  
 25 obviously you weren't privy to, but absent that, that

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1 would be the institutional approach to how an event of  
 2 that nature would be policed?  
 3 A. Yes, by and large we would work with the intelligence  
 4 and information we had around it.  
 5 Q. Thank you very much.  
 6 I'm going to just turn to the events of 22 May as  
 7 they related to you, commander. In your second witness  
 8 statement, you can turn it up if you want, I'm going to  
 9 speak briefly to paragraph 5 -- we don't need to go into  
 10 your personal circumstances at the time, but you had  
 11 accommodation in Blackpool; is that right?  
 12 A. That is correct .  
 13 Q. What you say is you had travelled into the UK from  
 14 Northern Ireland that morning?  
 15 A. That is correct .  
 16 Q. Then you say:  
 17 "I was not on call on the night in question and, as  
 18 such, did not have my daybook, police radio, access to  
 19 a police vehicle or policy decision logbooks."  
 20 Had you in fact been at work in Manchester or  
 21 anywhere else that day?  
 22 A. I had, yes .  
 23 Q. So the sequence we should understand is you arrived that  
 24 morning from Northern Ireland, went to work presumably  
 25 as normal?

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1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. As you've told us, you were nothing to do with the  
 3 actual deployment to the concert, and then we can see  
 4 that by the time we get to the evening time, you're on  
 5 your own time, you're not on call, and you lack the  
 6 equipment that you've put in your statement?  
 7 A. That is correct .  
 8 Q. We can turn it up if we need to, but just taking it from  
 9 interview that you gave to the BBC, which was closer in  
 10 time to this statement, the way you have framed it is  
 11 this:  
 12 "I think the first phone calls I noticed and  
 13 returned must have been about 10.40 or 10.45, so very  
 14 soon after the incident had happened, the phone calls  
 15 started to come into me."  
 16 That was in the context of saying that you didn't  
 17 have your phone with you at the time that the phone  
 18 calls started to come in.  
 19 A. That is correct .  
 20 Q. Is that your recollection ?  
 21 A. It is, yes .  
 22 Q. So is that timing, 10.40, 10.45, about right?  
 23 A. I think it is, yes .  
 24 Q. With that in mind, commander, we're going to have a look  
 25 at the call schedule and it's going to require a little

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1 bit of introduction from me so everybody understands  
 2 what it does show and in particular what it doesn't.  
 3 Mr Lopez, {INQ041122/3}, please.  
 4 We've seen a schedule of this nature before for  
 5 previous witnesses, but I'll be told very quickly, I'm  
 6 sure, by Mr Gibbs, if I've got this wrong, but let's  
 7 just identify what this has and what this hasn't got on  
 8 it .  
 9 Firstly , as I understand it, this does not include  
 10 any telephone record, incoming, outgoing, or text  
 11 message-related, from your personal telephone; is that  
 12 your understanding?  
 13 A. It is, yes .  
 14 Q. The inquiry asked you for your telephone records and you  
 15 made an enquiry of your telephone company, as  
 16 I understand it, and because 12 months had elapsed from  
 17 22 May, in fact more than 12 months, you were informed  
 18 that those personal telephone records were not  
 19 available; is that right?  
 20 A. That is correct .  
 21 Q. So it doesn't contain that information. Next, as  
 22 I understand the person who created the schedule -- and  
 23 it wasn't you, was it, who assembled this?  
 24 A. No, it wasn't .  
 25 Q. As I understand what they have told us, this is

24

1 assembled principally from your outgoing call  
 2 information from your work mobile?  
 3 A. Correct.  
 4 Q. The incoming calls that we can see marked are available  
 5 because we have the outgoing call data for those other  
 6 phones. Is that your understanding as well, as I have  
 7 conveyed it to you previously?  
 8 A. It is, yes.  
 9 Q. I know you've had an opportunity to think about it.  
 10 A. Yes, it is.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You have told him and he's now telling  
 12 us?  
 13 MR DE LA POER: Not only have I told the commander that, but  
 14 in fact he's had a chance to think about what it shows  
 15 but it was important that I was transparent that I was,  
 16 I think, the first person to tell you that.  
 17 A. I think you may have been.  
 18 Q. I'm sure Mr Gibbs will tell me if I've got that wrong.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He told you and you'll tell me.  
 20 MR DE LA POER: I see that I didn't, so, so far so good.  
 21 We can also see there are a number of emails  
 22 identified on this schedule. Those were derived, as  
 23 I understand it, from your work email account; is that  
 24 right?  
 25 A. That is correct.

25

1 Q. Obviously, emails are stored separately in their  
 2 contents to the place where billing records are held,  
 3 which is generally with a telephone provider. Have you,  
 4 commander, checked your email account to make sure that  
 5 the inquiry has all relevant emails that relate to you?  
 6 A. I no longer have access to the BTP email account. I am  
 7 working on the assumption that anything that was  
 8 relevant has been flagged.  
 9 Q. We certainly do have some emails and we'll look at them  
 10 together and you'll help us with whether or not you  
 11 think there may be others.  
 12 So the first entry is marked here at 10.48. That is  
 13 a telephone call from Inspector Merchant to you and its  
 14 duration is not known and it may be that that's because  
 15 the source of that time is from somewhere other than  
 16 billing records, but it perhaps doesn't matter terribly  
 17 because that time broadly accords with your recollection  
 18 of when you first were contacted.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Except we should call it 22.48, shall  
 20 we, in order to be consistent with all the other times?  
 21 MR DE LA POER: We certainly should call it 22.48 and I will  
 22 endeavour to remember to do so. 22.48.  
 23 Just tell us, to the best of your recollection,  
 24 commander, what it was that Inspector Merchant said to  
 25 you in that first call?

26

1 A. To the best of my recollection, Inspector Merchant had  
 2 contacted me to say he was aware of an incident ongoing  
 3 at the arena. He felt there had been an explosion of  
 4 some description, we had a conversation around — a very  
 5 brief conversation around what it might be. He talked  
 6 about a speaker might have blown or fallen over.  
 7 I think there was talk about the possibility of gas or  
 8 some other means of explosion. He then said to me,  
 9 "I think this might be the real thing", which is  
 10 a sentence that stuck with me from that call and he  
 11 asked for my permission to deploy resources to the  
 12 scene, which I immediately gave.  
 13 Q. Can you recall any other aspects of that telephone call  
 14 with Inspector Merchant?  
 15 A. I can't off the top of my head, no.  
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What is his position?  
 17 A. Inspector Merchant was one of my operations inspectors,  
 18 which is why he has made contact with me.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 20 MR DE LA POER: In the course of the call, did you form an  
 21 understanding about where Inspector Merchant was at the  
 22 time that he was speaking to you?  
 23 A. I think he was in the Birmingham area.  
 24 Q. Certainly from that answer, it sounds like he was not  
 25 close to the arena?

27

1 A. No, that is correct.  
 2 Q. At the conclusion of that call, what, if anything, did  
 3 you do?  
 4 A. At the conclusion of that call, I reached out and  
 5 attempted to speak to Superintendent Eddie Wylie, who is  
 6 the geographic owner for that particular part of British  
 7 Transport Police. I also reached out — I believe  
 8 I reached out, although I know these records don't show  
 9 it, and spoke to my divisional commander,  
 10 Mr Allan Gregory.  
 11 Q. Well, we'll come to the other matters on the schedule.  
 12 I'm going to see if I can assist your recollection and  
 13 you can tell us whether this is as you remember it now  
 14 or not. If we go to page 10 of the interview with the  
 15 BBC {INQ025584T/10}.  
 16 We can see the interviewer's question and then it's  
 17 your answer. What you said at that time was:  
 18 "Yeah, so as soon as I'd finished the phone call  
 19 with Inspector Merchant I immediately came off and  
 20 started to make arrangements to travel back in towards  
 21 Manchester. I was aware that even if I wasn't  
 22 ultimately needed, at least with it being an hour and  
 23 a half travel from Blackpool into Manchester, at least  
 24 I would have some part of the journey done whilst that  
 25 decision was being made, so that allowed me to get to

28

1 the scene as quickly as possible."

2 Is it your recollection that concluding your call

3 with Inspector Merchant, you immediately started to make

4 arrangements to travel back to Manchester?

5 A. Yes, and thank you for the prompt. I believe I ... In

6 terms of the sequencing, I think I spoke or tried to

7 speak to Superintendent Wylie and the divisional

8 commander, but certainly in and around that time I made

9 a phone call to make arrangements to travel back.

10 Q. We'll come to that in a moment, but in fact, in fairness

11 to you in terms of the sequence, we can go over to

12 {INQ025584T/11}, and the top of the page, please,

13 Mr Lopez.

14 The way you recounted it to the BBC was:

15 "So once I made those arrangements for travel then

16 I immediately phoned Superintendent Wylie, as I say, who

17 is the subdivisional commander who owns the geographic

18 patch. And then I phoned the commander,

19 Chief Superintendent Allan Gregory, and he and I had

20 a conversation about what sort of command structure

21 we would put in place to ensure that we could provide

22 the most effective response."

23 Given that that was more proximate in time to where

24 we are now, if that's how you remembered it at the time,

25 is that sequence likely to be correct?

29

1 A. It was more proximate and therefore it is.

2 Q. Thank you, Mr Lopez, you can take that down.

3 Let's just look at the arrangements because, as you

4 describe it here, you immediately sought to make the

5 arrangements and, once you had made those arrangements,

6 you phoned Superintendent Wylie. So what arrangements

7 did you make following that call at about 22.48?

8 A. Yes, so because I was in temporary accommodation with my

9 permanent accommodation and my private vehicle in

10 Northern Ireland and because I was not on call and

11 therefore did not have access to a police vehicle, and

12 also because I had very, very recently just moved to the

13 temporary accommodation and didn't know anybody in the

14 area, at that stage I contacted a local taxi company to

15 convey me to the scene.

16 Q. So if we bring back up the call schedule, Mr Lopez

17 {INQ041122/3}, we can see that the contact between you

18 and Superintendent Wylie is row 9, 23.04. Does it

19 follow then that before 23.04, you had booked a taxi to

20 take you to Manchester?

21 A. That would be the logical conclusion, yes.

22 Q. When you booked that taxi, what were you told about when

23 the taxi driver would be outside your residence ready to

24 drive you to Manchester?

25 A. I believe I was told he would be there imminently. It

30

1 was a Monday evening, it wasn't particularly busy.

2 Q. So just help us to understand what you mean by

3 imminently: are we talking in the next 5 minutes, the

4 next 15 minutes? What was in your mind?

5 A. I think I believed he would be there within the next 5

6 or 10 minutes.

7 Q. So you then speak to Superintendent Wylie as we can see,

8 a call time of 36 seconds. What was the content of your

9 conversation with Superintendent Wylie, please?

10 A. I think I may have left a voice message. I do not think

11 I got to speak personally to Mr Wylie that evening.

12 Q. Did you know at that time where Superintendent Wylie

13 might be?

14 A. I assumed he would be at home.

15 Q. I don't want specifics, but is that in the Manchester

16 area as far as you understood it at the time?

17 A. No, I believe it to be in the Leeds area.

18 Q. But Superintendent Wylie then, closer or further away in

19 your expectation than you were in Blackpool?

20 A. That's a good question for a Northern Ireland witness

21 about geography. I think it's probably in and around

22 the same distance, maybe. Is it? I apologise if it's

23 not.

24 Q. It perhaps doesn't matter whether it is or isn't, it's

25 what you thought at the time.

31

1 A. So his proximity to the incident was not the reason

2 I contacted him at the time. It was because of his

3 geographical ownership. So I do apologise, but I wasn't

4 thinking of his proximity to the incident.

5 Q. Next on the call schedule we can see at 23.10, because

6 they are text messages, it's perhaps unsurprising that

7 there's no duration attributed to them, but there are

8 four texts said by the schedule to be from Peter Kooper

9 to you. That's how they appear to the schedule. Who

10 was Peter Kooper in terms of his role and your

11 relationship with him on 22 May 2017?

12 A. Peter Kooper was one of the inspectors in C Division and

13 he was one of our lead search inspectors.

14 Q. What were the messages from him saying? I certainly

15 don't want any graphic detail, if there was any, but if

16 you could summarise for us so we can understand their

17 content.

18 A. I'm going to have to apologise, with the passage of time

19 I can't ... I believe that the only contact I had had

20 with my team was Inspector Merchant prior to leaving for

21 the scene.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think you need to apologise. We

23 understand.

24 MR DE LA POER: We're going to see that you did in fact

25 manage to speak to Inspector Kooper later in the

32

1 evening. Again, because it might be important, did  
 2 you have a sense that night about where he was once the  
 3 bomb had gone off?  
 4 A. No, I didn't know where he was, but I understood him to  
 5 be heading to the scene.  
 6 Q. We'll come to him when we reach those telephone calls.  
 7 Next, we can see a text message from you to  
 8 Superintendent Wylie and then an incoming call, as it  
 9 appears on here, so far as your telephone was concerned.  
 10 23.12, from Chief Superintendent Gregory, 1 minute and  
 11 2 seconds. Having watched the inquiry, you will know  
 12 that this conversation is an important one, so please  
 13 take your time and tell us to the best of your  
 14 recollection how that conversation started.  
 15 A. So how the conversation started, I am not sure, but the  
 16 content of it, to the best of my recollection, was  
 17 a conversation between Mr Gregory and myself in terms of  
 18 me making my way to the scene and to assume the role of  
 19 Bronze once there.  
 20 Q. Did you know Chief Superintendent Gregory well before  
 21 the night of 22 May?  
 22 A. I did, yes.  
 23 Q. So you were able to speak to each other as two people  
 24 who knew each other well?  
 25 A. Absolutely, yes.

1 Q. Who raised the issue of the Bronze commander role?  
 2 A. It's hard from memory to recollect. I know that by that  
 3 stage I was planning to attend -- I may have  
 4 volunteered, he may have assigned me. It is hard to  
 5 recollect just who raised it.  
 6 Q. Once the topic of Bronze commander came up, did you ask  
 7 Chief Superintendent Gregory who the Bronze commander  
 8 was at that time?  
 9 A. No, I did not.  
 10 Q. Did he volunteer to you who he believed the  
 11 Bronze commander was at that time?  
 12 A. To the best of my knowledge, no, he did not.  
 13 Q. Given that you were being appointed to the role of  
 14 Bronze commander, which was not a role that you could  
 15 take up formally until you arrived on scene, and given  
 16 that there was going to be a delay between that phone  
 17 call and your arrival at scene, was it a relevant matter  
 18 for the two of you to discuss who the Bronze commander  
 19 was at that time?  
 20 A. No, I don't think it would have been. My understanding  
 21 of how spontaneous events occur, certainly throughout  
 22 the period of my career, is that the Bronze command  
 23 function is a transferable function to generally whoever  
 24 the most senior person at the scene is.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Wouldn't you want to know that? Let's

1 forget about calling him Bronze commander: wouldn't you  
 2 need to know who's actually running the show for BTP at  
 3 the moment to get some idea of the seniority of whoever  
 4 was doing it?  
 5 A. No, it's not generally something I would ask. I would  
 6 have expected at that stage for it to be a local  
 7 sergeant, a local inspector, and knowing that I had  
 8 a distance to travel, I would have expected that to have  
 9 changed long before I got there.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 11 MR DE LA POER: One of the things that knowing who it was  
 12 might have enabled you to do is to get early situational  
 13 awareness directly from the person who you were either  
 14 going to directly relieve or indirectly relieve. Might  
 15 that not have been helpful to you to improve your  
 16 planning about taking over?  
 17 A. I think it might have been ultimately helpful to my  
 18 planning. I think it would have been extremely  
 19 unhelpful to the Bronze commander on the scene.  
 20 Q. Explain to us why you say that.  
 21 A. I have been Bronze at the scene of spontaneous incidents  
 22 and one of the biggest challenges is the number of  
 23 people wanting information and getting in your way when  
 24 you are trying to do the job that you need to do. It  
 25 would never have crossed my mind at this early of

1 a stage to pick up a phone and speak to  
 2 a Bronze commander who at that stage would be in  
 3 constant liaison with a control room, with other  
 4 emergency services, and with teams on the ground.  
 5 I think, whilst your point is well made, that would have  
 6 been very helpful for Kyle Gordon, I think it would have  
 7 been really, really unhelpful to the Bronze on the  
 8 ground.  
 9 Q. At any point in your journey, did you attempt to contact  
 10 the on-scene commander?  
 11 A. When the--on scene commander was identified to me as  
 12 Andrea Graham and, yes, I did.  
 13 Q. We'll come to the conversation that you had with her in  
 14 due course.  
 15 Bearing in mind the reservations you had about  
 16 contacting the Bronze commander, did you at any stage  
 17 try to contact the force incident manager or the senior  
 18 duty officer in order to obtain that situational  
 19 awareness from them?  
 20 A. Not from them, no, I did not.  
 21 Q. We can see that the next telephone contact you have with  
 22 Chief Superintendent Gregory, who by then was formally  
 23 the Silver commander, was not until 01.23. Line 23,  
 24 I think, is the next telephone contact. We can see  
 25 there are emails and we'll come to them, but let's deal

1 with it in general terms. What efforts did you make  
 2 in the course of your journey to Manchester other than  
 3 the call that you've told us about to Andrea Graham to  
 4 obtain situational awareness?  
 5 A. My main contact in relation to obtaining situational  
 6 awareness would have been through my own team at the  
 7 scene. That would have been my quickest route in, so  
 8 I think I spoke to James Merchant, in fact I was sure  
 9 I spoke to James Merchant, but he does not appear in  
 10 this log on a regular basis, and it's clear from this  
 11 log I also spoke to Pete Kooper on my way to the scene.  
 12 Q. They are both members of your team, as you describe  
 13 them?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. When you spoke to Inspector Merchant did you understand  
 16 him to be at the scene and able to give you situational  
 17 awareness first—hand?  
 18 A. Not first—hand, no. In the early part of the  
 19 conversations I understood him to be relaying  
 20 information from people he was speaking to at the scene  
 21 and later on I believe he was at the scene when I spoke  
 22 to him. I certainly know Inspector Kooper was.  
 23 Q. We're going to look now at some contact involving, among  
 24 others, Inspector Kooper. Let's just work our way  
 25 through the schedule and you can help us, commander,

1 with what you can recollect.  
 2 At 23.16, we can see an 8—second call to somebody  
 3 identified as "John Phillips PC at Blackpool". Do you  
 4 know what the purpose of that contact was?  
 5 A. John Phillips was the only constable direct contact  
 6 I had at BTP Blackpool. Following, as it does,  
 7 immediately after the contact with Allan Gregory, my  
 8 assumption is that I having not yet received a taxi and  
 9 was in the process of asking was there anybody that  
 10 could take me to the scene.  
 11 Q. Do you have a recollection of having spoken to  
 12 John Phillips?  
 13 A. No, I think it went to voicemail.  
 14 Q. Did you try anyone else, in terms of via a central  
 15 contact number, at BTP? I take your point that that was  
 16 the only telephone number you had, but there are  
 17 publicly available telephone numbers that could put you  
 18 through to control. Did you make any attempt to contact  
 19 them?  
 20 A. No, and I fully accept your point. No, I didn't.  
 21 Q. Why is it, do you think, that having concluded that  
 22 a police vehicle would be a good way to transport you to  
 23 the scene that you made one call to one person and then,  
 24 certainly on the face of the schedule and what you've  
 25 told us so far, made no further follow—up?

1 A. From recollection, when I didn't get through, or either  
 2 prior to speaking to or trying to speak to  
 3 John Phillips, I contacted the taxi company again just  
 4 to try and get an update. I believed again they were  
 5 imminent, and not having been able to get through to  
 6 Constable Phillips, I think I took the decision that I  
 7 would await the taxi, believing it to be, as I'm sure we  
 8 all have from time to time, just around the corner.  
 9 Q. Let's just look at the taxi. Do you have a recollection  
 10 of having told Chief Superintendent Gregory that you  
 11 were going to use a taxi to get you to the scene?  
 12 A. I thought I had, but I understand that that's not his  
 13 recollection and I would not be in conflict around that  
 14 issue.  
 15 Q. You put in your third witness statement, which was made  
 16 just at the end of last year, at paragraph 5 — I'll  
 17 read it out so the terms in which you have expressed  
 18 yourself are clear:  
 19 "During my phone call with Chief Superintendent  
 20 Allan Gregory shortly after 23.00, I believe I mentioned  
 21 I would take a taxi to Manchester. He was aware of  
 22 where I was residing, I do not recall whether we  
 23 specifically discussed travelling times from Blackpool  
 24 to Manchester by taxi."  
 25 So that was your position in December of 2020. Do

1 we take it from your answer that you've reconsidered  
 2 that?  
 3 A. I have reconsidered it and, reflecting on what  
 4 Mr Gregory said, I have no reason to doubt that he would  
 5 have recalled that had I said that.  
 6 Q. Was that a relevant piece of information for you to give  
 7 him in that call?  
 8 A. So arguably, on reflection, knowing what we now know,  
 9 yes it was. However, I would have expected Mr Gregory  
 10 just to rely on my own experience to find my way to the  
 11 scene. It would not be normal for me to, I suppose,  
 12 speak to a Silver commander and discuss transport  
 13 arrangements.  
 14 Q. Those transport arrangements are, are they not, highly  
 15 relevant information for him as a commander to help him  
 16 to understand how long it might take for you to get  
 17 there?  
 18 A. And I absolutely take your point, and yes, with  
 19 hindsight I really should have.  
 20 Q. At this point of the evening, bearing in mind that you  
 21 made those arrangements immediately after that call at  
 22 10.48, and you had an expectation it would be there  
 23 within the next 5 to 10 minutes, the taxi was already  
 24 later than your expectation?  
 25 A. I absolutely take your point and it would have been

1 really helpful for me to have flagged that explicitly to  
 2 him at that stage.  
 3 Q. You've told us that you followed up with the taxi  
 4 company. Was that -- in fact maybe you didn't. I think  
 5 you mentioned that they were just around the corner.  
 6 Is that something you were told or something that you  
 7 thought you'd be told if you contacted them?  
 8 A. I think that's what I was told and that is why I held  
 9 off then, believing them still to be close.  
 10 Q. And how many more efforts -- we have one call to the  
 11 taxi company, we have a follow-up call after you'd  
 12 spoken or tried to speak to your colleague in Blackpool.  
 13 How many more efforts did you make to chase the taxi  
 14 company?  
 15 A. Unfortunately, I didn't make any other. The taxi  
 16 company arrived a short period after. I don't recall  
 17 how many I made. I know we had asked for the log from  
 18 the taxi company to try and jog my memory and we were  
 19 unable to get that. With everything else going on,  
 20 I just can't recall.  
 21 Q. Doing the best you can, bearing in mind that from 11.15  
 22 you were to be the Bronze commander for this incident,  
 23 approximately how long after your call with  
 24 Chief Superintendent Gregory do you think it was that  
 25 the taxi arrived?

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1 A. I think the taxi was there around half past.  
 2 Q. So that builds in 15 more minutes of delay than would  
 3 have been in your mind when speaking to  
 4 Chief Superintendent Gregory; is that correct?  
 5 A. That is correct.  
 6 Q. Did it occur to you that you might communicate the fact  
 7 that you had already been delayed by 15 minutes?  
 8 A. To Mr Gregory?  
 9 Q. To Mr Gregory.  
 10 A. No, I would have understood Mr Gregory to have been  
 11 incredibly busy. It was incumbent on me to make my way  
 12 to the scene, and at the point where I felt I wasn't  
 13 going to ultimately be able to discharge that role,  
 14 I would have made a contact at that stage. But my  
 15 understanding in terms of how, as I've said earlier on,  
 16 Bronze at the scene would step up and would transfer, it  
 17 would not have crossed my mind there was any sort of  
 18 command vacuum at the scene, and therefore whilst with  
 19 hindsight and whilst it's been pointed out, I understand  
 20 those 15 minutes appear an awfully long time. In and of  
 21 themselves, they would not have made me pick up the  
 22 phone to a busy Silver commander to say, "The taxi still  
 23 isn't here".  
 24 Q. You would not necessarily have needed to speak directly  
 25 to him. That could have been information you relayed to

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1 the SDO, for example, that could have gone on the log so  
 2 that eh could have seen it or to a radio operator. It  
 3 wouldn't necessarily involve disturbing him just to give  
 4 him an update as to how you, an important part of the  
 5 command structure that he had specifically chosen to  
 6 take scene command, was progressing.  
 7 A. Your point is fully accepted. There are decisions we  
 8 make in policing that, with retrospect, are easier to  
 9 justify than others. I do not know why I didn't update  
 10 him or make other arrangements. I fully accept that  
 11 point and it is a matter of some personal regret and  
 12 actual professional embarrassment that on the night in  
 13 question I didn't find another way to get to the scene.  
 14 Q. So at all events, by about 23.30, doing the best you  
 15 can, you were in a taxi leaving the vicinity of your  
 16 address?  
 17 A. That's correct.  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't wish to make your professional  
 19 embarrassment any worse, believe me, but did you make  
 20 any other attempts to get a police car there?  
 21 A. No, I didn't.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There are a number of advantages of  
 23 a police car: (a) they can travel on blue lights, which  
 24 no doubt would make it a much quicker journey.  
 25 Secondly, when you get there, it would be presumably

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1 much easier to get through any cordon if you're in  
 2 a police car and it would speed the thing up a great  
 3 deal. Would there have been a police car in the  
 4 Blackpool area?  
 5 A. There may have been a Lancashire local Home Office force  
 6 vehicle that could have taken me. I have to confess,  
 7 I didn't think of approaching the local force. Having  
 8 reached out to the local contact at the Blackpool BTP,  
 9 I hadn't cast my mind wider than that.  
 10 MR DE LA POER: If I may hazard a third advantage, being in  
 11 a police vehicle would have allowed you to hear radio  
 12 traffic --  
 13 A. That is of course true.  
 14 Q. -- which was not something you could do, because you  
 15 didn't have your police radio.  
 16 A. That's correct.  
 17 Q. So that would have wired you in to what was unfolding as  
 18 reported over the radio; do you agree?  
 19 A. That is correct.  
 20 Q. And that would have been highly relevant information for  
 21 you as you prepared yourself to discharge your duty as  
 22 Bronze commander; do you agree?  
 23 A. That's correct.  
 24 Q. So bearing in mind, and reminding ourselves of the  
 25 limitations of this schedule, I think that is

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1 an important point to keep in mind, we can see that you  
 2 had a 17-second contact between your phone and  
 3 Peter Kooper's at 23.38. Was that, to the best of your  
 4 recollection, a person-to-person speaking or did you  
 5 leave him a message?  
 6 A. In relation to that specific 17 seconds, I don't know.  
 7 It seems short but I would have been making frequent  
 8 phone calls at this stage just to try and keep linked in  
 9 with my team.  
 10 Q. 23.43. A person by the name of Sarah Harker, her mobile  
 11 telephone contacting yours for a period of 1 minute and  
 12 6 seconds. Sarah Harker, as I understand it, works  
 13 in the BTP media department or certainly did at the  
 14 time. What were you speaking to Sarah Harker about for  
 15 1 minute and 6 seconds?  
 16 A. I think it was a request -- sorry, just help me. Is  
 17 this a call incoming or outgoing?  
 18 Q. Incoming from her to your work mobile.  
 19 A. This, to the best of my recollection, was a request  
 20 around what, if anything, we should say around the  
 21 arena.  
 22 Q. Why was it important for you to speak to her, if it was  
 23 at all?  
 24 A. At this point in time, I think it would have been to  
 25 know whether or not there were any immediate lines that

1 we would have wanted to put out in terms of diversions  
 2 or contact points.  
 3 Q. How, bearing in mind that you were in the back of  
 4 a taxi, could you help with that?  
 5 A. I don't think I could have helped with that.  
 6 Q. So that was her trying to speak to you, presumably  
 7 having understood you to be Bronze commander, and you  
 8 not being able to help her?  
 9 A. I think so.  
 10 Q. Did you ask her why she was calling you?  
 11 A. I don't recall asking that, no.  
 12 Q. Because if it was the case that she was calling you  
 13 because you were the identified Bronze commander,  
 14 talking to her about that might have revealed who the  
 15 Bronze commander was at the scene, for example?  
 16 A. It may well have done.  
 17 Q. Or the fact that there was no record on the BTP system  
 18 at this time of any other Bronze commander other than  
 19 you?  
 20 A. I would have been surprised if either Sarah or I would  
 21 have been aware of what was on the BTP system at that  
 22 stage. Quite often, these contacts happen because  
 23 somebody makes a phone call, hears that somebody has  
 24 a certain role and reaches out. I would be surprised if  
 25 Sarah Harker at that time of night had access to a BTP

1 system to know who was or wasn't on as Bronze commander.  
 2 Q. I understand. The next entry we must, mentally at  
 3 least, given that it's appearing digitally, strike  
 4 through. Row 16 indicates an email from you to  
 5 Chief Superintendent Gregory at 23.54. In fact that is  
 6 an error. Were you aware of that?  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Aware of it being an error?  
 8 MR DE LA POER: Yes, aware of it being an error.  
 9 A. I have to say I wasn't.  
 10 Q. Well, it's been investigated and I have had that  
 11 confirmed to me. But we can, however, look at the next  
 12 entry, which is timed at the same time, and the error  
 13 is, if I may say so, understandable because  
 14 Chief Superintendent Gregory joins this thread later but  
 15 isn't in fact involved in this email.  
 16 Mr Lopez, {INQ025530/2}, please.  
 17 Commander, we can see there the email from a person  
 18 called Matthew Woodhouse, who has at the bottom "media  
 19 relations officer". He indicates:  
 20 "Didn't leave you my number."  
 21 Which implies that the two of you had spoken,  
 22 perhaps an example of where there is a call undoubtedly  
 23 that took place based on the contemporaneous  
 24 documentation but doesn't appear on the schedule.  
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Do you have a recollection of having spoken to  
 2 Matthew Woodhouse?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. And what was the subject matter of that conversation?  
 5 A. It was the same as the conversation with Sarah Harker  
 6 in relation to what, if anything, we should put out as  
 7 an organisation.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Why are you the person that they're  
 9 asking?  
 10 A. That is a very good question.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And the answer is?  
 12 A. Apologies.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, that's all right.  
 14 A. I assume it is because I was Bronze to scene, but even  
 15 on reflection now, understanding the roles of Gold,  
 16 Silver and Bronze, as I currently hold, once a Gold is  
 17 appointed, which I don't think I was aware of at this  
 18 stage, but certainly once a Silver is appointed that  
 19 would be the level of clearance for lines to go out.  
 20 MR DE LA POER: What appears to have happened is you've had  
 21 a conversation with Matthew Woodhouse and, as a result  
 22 of what was said in that conversation, he has clearly  
 23 concluded that you are the appropriate person to run  
 24 this by. Is that a fair interpretation of this?  
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So what, if anything, did you say in the conversation  
 2 with Matthew Woodhouse that might have led him to  
 3 believe that he should email you to ask you to approve  
 4 a statement?  
 5 A. The only thing, and it is purely supposition in terms of  
 6 trying to explain and be helpful to the inquiry, is he  
 7 may have said he was unable to get through to any more  
 8 senior clearance and therefore, having got through to  
 9 me, wanted to know what I thought of his lines.  
 10 Q. At all events we can see that the next email up, you do  
 11 include Silver in because they are on copy. Can we go  
 12 up, which is the next entry in our schedule, but we'll  
 13 stay with this document, Mr Lopez, so we move up to the  
 14 bottom of the page above {INQ025540/1-2}.  
 15 If we just crop into the bottom, we can see that at  
 16 2 minutes past midnight, you reply to his email and  
 17 Chief Superintendent Gregory is cc'd. {INQ025530/1}.  
 18 A. It would make sense to me that I was ensuring Silver was  
 19 aware of what was proposed to be said.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we go over the page again?  
 21 MR DE LA POER: Yes {INQ025530/1}. We can see it starts:  
 22 "Matt, as discussed..."  
 23 Before we come to this part, what was "Matt, as  
 24 discussed" a reference to?  
 25 A. So if he has asked me am I happy to clear the lines and

1 I've asked him to send them through to me, sending that  
 2 back would indicate to me that I am saying they seem to  
 3 be fine for now. It is simply shorthand for that.  
 4 Q. So "Matt, as discussed" means: yes, as far as I'm  
 5 concerned that statement to the public is acceptable?  
 6 A. Yes, my normal practice when I return a statement from  
 7 the press office has always been and continues to be  
 8 that I will put any alterations in a different coloured  
 9 font and then highlight that to them.  
 10 Q. On reflection, do you think you were well placed to be  
 11 approving press statements in the back of a taxi?  
 12 A. No, I really don't.  
 13 Q. Then, "Boss..." We understand from Chief Superintendent  
 14 Gregory that that would be a reference to him. Do you  
 15 agree?  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. "... I will take command of the scene when I arrive  
 18 unless otherwise directed. Have we any idea who has  
 19 command primacy? GMP, MPS or ourselves?"  
 20 I would like to deal with the question of primacy  
 21 towards the end of the questioning, so I'm intending to  
 22 park that, but can I give you this assurance, that  
 23 I will be coming back to it unless the chairman wants to  
 24 explore it now. I do intend to look at the picture more  
 25 globally and set this in its context. Sir, for the

1 moment, with your leave, I will just leave that  
 2 question.  
 3 If we go then up to the top, we'll see more that is  
 4 relevant to that issue. On the top of {INQ025530/1},  
 5 please, we will see the reply, which is timed just  
 6 at the bottom of our page there, 12.10:  
 7 "Take command on scene initially. Will call GMP  
 8 around command arrangements. Met inevitably will pick  
 9 it up."  
 10 Can I just understand from you -- we'll deal with  
 11 the first two sentences later -- what did you understand  
 12 Chief Superintendent Gregory to be saying when he said  
 13 "Met inevitably will pick it up"?  
 14 A. That ultimately, with it being a terrorism incident,  
 15 it would fall under the national remit of the  
 16 Counter-terrorism Policing.  
 17 Q. We can take that down for a moment, although we will  
 18 come back to it. If we can go back to our telephone  
 19 schedule, we've got to the point where it's 00.10, and  
 20 Chief Superintendent Gregory has sent you that message,  
 21 which we'll analyse in a little more detail shortly.  
 22 Line 22. Following that message at 00.11 you have  
 23 a substantial telephone contact with Peter Kooper,  
 24 2 minutes and 49 seconds; do you see that?  
 25 A. I do, yes.

1 Q. And do you recall, given that that was a rather longer  
 2 conversation, what it was, if anything, that you were  
 3 learning from Inspector Kooper?  
 4 A. Again, it would have been in relation to situational  
 5 awareness, resources deployed at the scene, and whatever  
 6 the current activity around my teams was.  
 7 Q. Did you understand Inspector Kooper to be at the scene  
 8 at that point?  
 9 A. I can't recall from memory at what point he arrived at  
 10 the scene.  
 11 Q. The next entry on our schedule is timed at 00.16, but  
 12 I think that that might be an error. We'll see. It  
 13 relates to an email from you to Chief Superintendent  
 14 Gregory. Can we go back to that email thread, please,  
 15 Mr Lopez? {INQ025530/1}.  
 16 We see, as it appears on this document, not at 00.16  
 17 at but 00.17, in that email, you reply:  
 18 "Roger that. What about our 'own' none injured in  
 19 the blast? Just in case we need to provide support to  
 20 police family too?"  
 21 So you are enquiring after your colleagues; is that  
 22 correct?  
 23 A. That's correct.  
 24 Q. My next question is not intended to imply that that was  
 25 not a legitimate thing for you to ask, but as the person

1 who is shortly to take over as operational commander,  
 2 might there also have been a relevant enquiry, given  
 3 that you have been told to take command on scene  
 4 initially , to ask what the tactical plan was given that  
 5 we are now at 17 minutes past midnight and it is over  
 6 an hour since you were instructed to take over the  
 7 Bronze command role?  
 8 A. Yes, that may well have been an opportune juncture to  
 9 ask that question.  
 10 Q. Do you have a recollection of having asked that question  
 11 at any point of Chief Superintendent Gregory before you  
 12 arrived at the scene?  
 13 A. My understanding was that I hadn't spoken to  
 14 Allan Gregory prior to arriving at the scene.  
 15 I understood what he wanted done. I don't recall  
 16 specifically ever asking for the tactical plan.  
 17 Q. Because having received the instruction, which is  
 18 subject to, of course, the fact that he's going to speak  
 19 to GMP to take command on scene initially, that requires  
 20 knowledge of a tactical plan, doesn't it, in order to be  
 21 able to do so effectively?  
 22 A. When I arrived at the scene, it would do, yes.  
 23 Q. When you arrived at the scene?  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. We're going to look at another email which is timed just

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1 2 minutes later. It sits in the same thread, but as is  
 2 commonly the case when you click reply to a previous  
 3 email, a new thread develops. {INQ041111/1}.  
 4 The top of page 1., if you scroll down so everyone  
 5 can see it, sits in the same earlier thread. We see  
 6 his:  
 7 "Take command on scene initially. Will call GMP  
 8 around command arrangement. Met inevitably will pick it  
 9 up."  
 10 You then say this and you can help us with whether  
 11 this is relevant to the questions I was just asking you  
 12 about the tactical plan:  
 13 "PS, any briefing I can get from anyone? I'm about  
 14 20 minutes out according to taxi but may be diversions  
 15 so want to arrive briefed if possible."  
 16 Is it fair to say that you did have in mind that you  
 17 needed more information?  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. But you weren't seeking that at that stage directly from  
 20 the Silver commander but whether or not he could give  
 21 you a name?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just get the timings? What time  
 24 do you think you left in the taxi?  
 25 A. About 23.30, half past 11 pm.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So by now, we're 19 minutes past  
 2 midnight. So you've been on the way for three-quarters  
 3 of an hour?  
 4 A. Yes, roughly about that.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you're 20 minutes out. Okay,  
 6 thank you.  
 7 MR DE LA POER: Thank you. That can come down, although  
 8 we'll need just to look at the top one when we get to  
 9 it.  
 10 Your telephone records on the schedule, which we  
 11 don't need to bring up at this point, don't reveal any  
 12 contact between you and Chief Inspector Andrea Graham.  
 13 They just don't appear in the schedule. But we know,  
 14 and I'll give everybody the reference but don't require  
 15 it to be put up, but people can check my workings,  
 16 {INQ002009/4}, that Chief Inspector Graham had a loggist  
 17 and in that loggist's pocket notebook, timed at 00.28,  
 18 is a record of her, that is to say Chief  
 19 Inspector Graham, contacting you at 00.28.  
 20 We know from the record that the next record is  
 21 00.30, so an inference from that is that the  
 22 conversation was no more than 2 minutes or so.  
 23 Do you have a recollection of having spoken to  
 24 Chief Inspector Graham before you arrived?  
 25 A. I do, yes.

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1 Q. Clearly this was shortly after, firstly, you had been  
 2 told by Chief Superintendent Gregory that you were to  
 3 take scene command initially, and, secondly, your query  
 4 of him of who you could get a briefing from. Was your  
 5 conversation with Chief Inspector Graham connected with  
 6 those two things?  
 7 A. I believe it would have been, yes.  
 8 Q. And to the best of your recollection, what was your  
 9 discussion with Chief Inspector Graham?  
 10 A. It would have been a very quick situational update  
 11 in relation to what was going on and I believe that is  
 12 the point in time where I had then said, "Well, you  
 13 appear to have this in hand, I'm currently in  
 14 inappropriate civilian clothing, I will divert from  
 15 directly to the scene to our offices in Manchester to  
 16 pick up my police uniform and an Airwave radio handset".  
 17 Q. Was there express discussion of scene command?  
 18 A. (Pause). I don't recall, and apologies for the pause,  
 19 I was trying to specifically think of whether or not  
 20 I raised the point of scene command. The implication  
 21 in the conversation from me was absolutely that the  
 22 scene was being commanded by Andrea, giving me the  
 23 satisfaction to understand that I could take a diversion  
 24 to get kitted up.  
 25 Q. So at the conclusion of that conversation, did you think

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1 that Chief Inspector Graham was acting as  
 2 Bronze commander or not?  
 3 A. Absolutely.  
 4 Q. She was?  
 5 A. She was, in my mind.  
 6 Q. With the Bronze commander role comes responsibilities,  
 7 is this right, particularly under JESIP?  
 8 A. That would be correct, yes.  
 9 Q. We don't need to bring it up, you have given evidence to  
 10 this effect already. What you told the BBC was:  
 11 "And as a result of that, after having had  
 12 a conversation with the commander, I went to my own  
 13 office to effectively pick up my uniform and my kit."  
 14 I'm sorry, I should have read that whole quotation:  
 15 "So my arrival at the arena was slightly stalled.  
 16 I had a conversation with Chief Inspector Andrea Graham  
 17 by telephone, was aware that she was now on scene and  
 18 had that initial command of the response, and as  
 19 a result of that, after having had a conversation with  
 20 the commander, I went to my own office to effectively  
 21 pick up my uniform and my kit."  
 22 So two people being referred to there. We can put  
 23 it up on screen if you need.  
 24 A. That's fine.  
 25 Q. Do you sitting there now have a recollection of having

1 spoken to the commander?  
 2 A. Perhaps I do need to see it because commander -- sorry,  
 3 from how I read that was as in Andrea commanding the  
 4 scene.  
 5 Q. Let's bring it up so there's no confusion.  
 6 Mr Lopez, we're going to go back to the transcript  
 7 {INQ025584T/17}.  
 8 Let's be very clear about whether you're talking  
 9 about one person or two people. I entirely  
 10 understand -- cropping in just to the bottom so that  
 11 we can see that bottom answer, which begins:  
 12 "Okay, yeah. So my arrival at the arena was  
 13 slightly stalled. I'd had a conversation with  
 14 Chief Inspector Andrea Graham by telephone and was aware  
 15 she was now on scene and had that initial command of the  
 16 response. And as a result of that, after having had  
 17 a conversation with the commander, I went to my own  
 18 office to effectively pick up my uniform and kit."  
 19 You tell us: is the word "commander" a reference to  
 20 Andrea Graham or someone different?  
 21 A. No, it would appear to be a reference to Andrea Graham.  
 22 Q. I understand. So was it essential for you to change  
 23 into uniform and pick up the equipment that you did?  
 24 A. That would have depended on what I was told when I spoke  
 25 to Andrea. Had there still been a real pressing need

1 for command resilience or simply for greater support to  
 2 Andrea at the scene, then it would not have been  
 3 a pressing need. Of course I could have attended -- so  
 4 of course I could have attended in civilian clothing.  
 5 It would have been unhelpful and at some point in time  
 6 I would have had to extract from the scene to go get  
 7 into uniform or have it brought to me. So given the  
 8 briefing that she had given me, I was content that that  
 9 was an appropriate juncture now, having made it to the  
 10 Manchester area, to go and get into uniform and have  
 11 access to a police radio.  
 12 Q. You've told us that you have left that conversation  
 13 understanding that she is in the Bronze commander role.  
 14 Reflecting back on it, was there any room for  
 15 misunderstanding between you so far as whether she would  
 16 have thought that she was the Bronze commander?  
 17 A. From my recollection, no, but of course there's always  
 18 an opportunity for misunderstanding if something is not  
 19 explicitly stated. I go back to what I said previously  
 20 around my understanding of how Bronze moves to  
 21 invariably the more senior person from an organisation  
 22 on the scene, Andrea Graham has been identified to me,  
 23 I've had the conversation, nothing in what she has said  
 24 to me has indicated to me that she isn't Bronze, and  
 25 I certainly left the conversation clear that she was

1 fulfilling that role.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may be relative to the amount of what  
 3 the emergency was, but you are the Bronze commander  
 4 that is thought to be on the scene. You are a very  
 5 senior officer -- clearly, Chief Inspector Graham is  
 6 also a senior officer -- you're already -- how long  
 7 would this be after you'd been asked to be  
 8 Bronze commander? Over an hour and a half?  
 9 MR DE LA POER: An hour and 15 minutes, sir, 00.28.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A hour and 15 minutes. To go to your  
 11 office and get your uniform and presumably put it on, it  
 12 is going to take roughly how long?  
 13 A. Another 10 minutes or so of a diversion.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You could have gone straight to the  
 15 scene. Presumably you want some sort of identifying bib  
 16 that you could presumably have got from someone at the  
 17 scene, if necessary.  
 18 A. Yes. Also what's in my mind is I'm not sure what the  
 19 entire nature of the scene is and how appropriate the  
 20 clothing I would wear would be to attend all of the  
 21 scene if that was required of me. So I know you're not  
 22 interested in my dress habits, but broken glass,  
 23 et cetera, would not be something I was suitably kitted  
 24 out to go to.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's protective uniform that you're

1 getting, is it?  
 2 A. Well, the boots that we wear are protective boots, yes.  
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So that's why you needed it  
 4 rather than in order to be identified?  
 5 A. It's a combination of all those things. A combination  
 6 of that where my radio was, that's where my uniform was  
 7 to be readily identifiable. The clothing I was wearing  
 8 on the night in question was certainly not commensurate  
 9 with attending a scene of this nature.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. And your impression from  
 11 Chief Inspector Graham of this conversation is  
 12 essentially, "I'm coping all right"?  
 13 A. Yes, absolutely.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 15 MR DE LA POER: Sir, I note the time, but I think within  
 16 about 10 minutes I'll be able to complete the chronology  
 17 and that would be a convenient moment, or we can take  
 18 a break now.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm fine obviously, but I don't know --  
 20 the stenographers are the people who have to suffer our  
 21 extended sessions.  
 22 MR DE LA POER: I will do my very best to keep to that  
 23 10 minutes, but we will not rush this.  
 24 Having spoken to Chief Inspector Graham, we can see  
 25 that there are a cluster of calls between you and --

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do we want the call register up again?  
 2 MR DE LA POER: Yes, Inspector Kooper. Can we have that  
 3 schedule of calls up? It's row 26 {INQ041122/3}.  
 4 We can see at 00.38, a 1-minute and 4-second call  
 5 with Inspector Kooper; 00.48, a 12-second call; and  
 6 00.57, a 1-minute and 36-second call. All with  
 7 Inspector Kooper.  
 8 By this stage we are approaching 1 o'clock. To the  
 9 best of your recollection, was Inspector Kooper on the  
 10 scene at that stage?  
 11 A. I think he was.  
 12 Q. What was the purpose of those three calls collectively?  
 13 A. Exactly the same as before, just to continue to get  
 14 updates from the teams on what was unfolding.  
 15 Q. The inquiry has had provided a taxi receipt. Have you  
 16 seen that?  
 17 A. I have, yes.  
 18 Q. It may be you who provided it, but whether or not it  
 19 was, you've had a chance to see it. I don't propose to  
 20 bring it up on screen, but can you agree, commander,  
 21 it is timed at 01.03.17?  
 22 A. I can, yes.  
 23 Q. That is the point at which you pay for your taxi and so  
 24 do we infer that from that moment on, you were no longer  
 25 travelling in the taxi?

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1 A. That is correct.  
 2 Q. By the time you had paid for the taxi, had you taken  
 3 that diversion you've told us about to go and get your  
 4 uniform and other equipment?  
 5 A. Yes, I had.  
 6 Q. So by 01.03.17, you are prepared, insofar as your attire  
 7 is concerned, to attend the scene?  
 8 A. At that time I'm at the outer cordon -- what I defined  
 9 to be the outer cordon of the scene, yes.  
 10 Q. We'll come to that. I think the best --  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, the taxi is taking you to the  
 12 office, waited while you got changed, and then taken you  
 13 back to the outer cordon?  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 MR DE LA POER: We will identify exactly where the outer  
 16 cordon is in a moment, but before we do, I just want to  
 17 remind you of some evidence that we received yesterday  
 18 from Chief Officer Smith, ACC Smith, as he was on the  
 19 night. He has a note timed at 01.05 in relation to  
 20 a conversation with you. His note indicates that you  
 21 were at that time at the outer cordon. Obviously that's  
 22 highly proximate at the time you're paying for the taxi.  
 23 Does that all accord with your recollection?  
 24 A. It does, yes.  
 25 Q. What was the conversation you had with ACC Smith, as he

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1 was then?  
 2 A. I think he had asked me was I on scene yet and for a  
 3 sitrep, and I think I have -- sorry, a situation report,  
 4 an update. I think I've asked him if he could just hold  
 5 fire until I actually get into the scene and speak to  
 6 Andrea.  
 7 Q. Which brings us to the outer cordon. Where were you at  
 8 this point geographically relative to the arena?  
 9 A. I'm at one of the police-operated road blocks that sits  
 10 off from the arena. Apologies, I can not recall the  
 11 exact street name, but as we had left Manchester  
 12 Portland Street, the taxi driver had tried to take me  
 13 the shortest route by turning right. We had met with,  
 14 I think it was, two road blocks, it was certainly more  
 15 than one, and again, because I wasn't aware of what else  
 16 might be going on for the first couple of times, I'd  
 17 said, "Try another route, try another route", and then  
 18 on the third occasion he turned right, there was another  
 19 roadblock and I said, "Just drive up to it and let me  
 20 speak to them at the scene".  
 21 Q. Did you do that?  
 22 A. Yes.  
 23 Q. Approximately how far, in either walking time or  
 24 distance as the crow flies, were you from the Victoria  
 25 Railway Station complex?

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1 A. A few minutes by car because it was a sergeant from the  
 2 outer cordon that was the one who took me to the scene.  
 3 Q. This is a sergeant from Greater Manchester Police?  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. So you spoke to the officers at the outer cordon, you  
 6 were told one of them could give you a lift, and they  
 7 drove you to the arena?  
 8 A. They did.  
 9 Q. We can see on the call schedule that at 01.10, there is  
 10 a call from you to Peter Kooper, 1 minute and  
 11 16 seconds. Then at 01.18, a 58-minute (sic) contact  
 12 back from him. And then at 01.19, a 6-second contact.  
 13 People don't generally phone each other when they're  
 14 standing in each other's company. Does it follow from  
 15 these that we can infer safely that you didn't meet up  
 16 with Inspector Kooper until a point after 01.19?  
 17 A. That is correct.  
 18 Q. Just three more items for us to deal with to complete  
 19 the chronology. So it occurs in the right place let's  
 20 go back to Chief Superintendent Gregory's email thread.  
 21 {INQ041111/1}, the top of the page. We will see that  
 22 this is a reply to an email that you had sent at 00.20  
 23 or thereabouts, 00.19. That reply is:  
 24 "Speak to Andrea Graham, K."  
 25 By this point were you within the Manchester Arena

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1 complex, that is to say the railway complex and  
 2 associated buildings?  
 3 A. I think I was, yes. I think I was arriving at that  
 4 time.  
 5 Q. Perhaps it was information you didn't need by this stage  
 6 of the evening as you were, were you, determined to  
 7 speak to Chief Inspector Graham in any event?  
 8 A. Yes, I think so.  
 9 Q. Penultimately, so far as the detailed timings --  
 10 Mr Lopez, can we take that down? We can look at this  
 11 if we need to, but I'm sure you will accept it from me,  
 12 that within the Control Works log there is a record that  
 13 at 01.23.56, for anyone who wishes to check it's page 95  
 14 {INQ002000/95}, that you are recorded as being on scene.  
 15 Again, does that timing accord with your recollection?  
 16 A. It does, yes.  
 17 Q. The final item derived from Chief Inspector Graham's  
 18 loggist's record of her activity, there is a record at  
 19 01.27 of her, identified as PM20, and you, identified as  
 20 CA02, exchanging briefings.  
 21 A. Yes, that is correct.  
 22 Q. So is that likely to be the most accurate time to  
 23 reflect when you were speaking to Chief Inspector  
 24 Graham?  
 25 A. For the first time face to face, yes.

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1 Q. And once that conversation had concluded, were you in  
 2 a position to take over Bronze command?  
 3 A. I was, yes.  
 4 MR DE LA POER: We'll come back after the break to deal with  
 5 whether that is what you did and what you did afterwards  
 6 in summary, and then I'll just have a few more  
 7 questions. Thank you very much indeed, commander, for  
 8 now.  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Quarter of an hour, 11.50. Thank you.  
 10 (11.37 am)  
 11 (A short break)  
 12 (11.52 am)  
 13 MR DE LA POER: Commander, we'd reached the point where you  
 14 had exchanged briefings with Chief Inspector Graham.  
 15 Did you then assume the role of Bronze commander?  
 16 A. I did, yes.  
 17 Q. For BTP?  
 18 A. Yes, I did.  
 19 Q. We're not going to look in detail, given the time of the  
 20 evening that we have reached, but there are just  
 21 a couple of key events once you have taken that role,  
 22 perhaps just one, really, for us to focus on.  
 23 We can see on the schedule, Mr Lopez, if you could  
 24 bring it up, that at line 40 {INQ041122/3}, about  
 25 20 minutes or so after you assumed that role, there

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1 is a 5-minute and 14-second conversation with ACC Smith.  
 2 That conversation will take us to around 01.56/01.57,  
 3 depending on precisely when it started. Do you agree?  
 4 A. Yes, that's right.  
 5 Q. Do you recall speaking to ACC Smith?  
 6 A. I do, yes.  
 7 Q. I want to see whether part of your statement is accurate  
 8 or not and I don't mean that in a critical way. In your  
 9 first statement, page 2, what you say is:  
 10 "Following this briefing at approximately 01.57,  
 11 I supplied a situation report to BTP Silver. I was  
 12 advised at this time that Greater Manchester Police had  
 13 assumed primacy for command of the overall scene and  
 14 that my role had been redefined to coordinate BTP  
 15 assistance to GMP at the scene."  
 16 We can see that there are earlier calls than that  
 17 with Chief Superintendent Gregory, notably at rows 36  
 18 and 37, at around 01.40 and 01.44. I have drawn your  
 19 attention to both sets of calls and what you say in your  
 20 witness statement. Who do you recall discussing the  
 21 question of primacy with, please?  
 22 A. I cannot specifically recall who advised me with regard  
 23 to primacy. I'm trying, but I just can't.  
 24 Q. Whether it was Chief Superintendent Gregory or  
 25 ACC Smith, is what you say in your statement, drafted

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1 shortly after events, namely that at about that time of  
 2 the evening you were advised that at this time Greater  
 3 Manchester Police had assumed primacy for command of the  
 4 overall scene and that your role had been redefined to  
 5 coordinate the BTP assistance to GMP at the scene, that  
 6 the substance of the message you were receiving at that  
 7 time is correctly recalled by you?  
 8 A. Yes, that is correct.  
 9 Q. So does it follow from that that before that moment --  
 10 well, let's frame that question in a different way.  
 11 Before that moment, who did you think had primacy for  
 12 the scene?  
 13 A. So my understanding is that GMP would have primacy,  
 14 purely by the fact -- sorry, I need to backtrack. We  
 15 use terms in policing, and I'm as guilty of this as  
 16 anybody, as using terms like primacy and I know from  
 17 previous evidence there's been conversations around  
 18 jurisdiction. When I'm referring to primacy here, it's  
 19 probably inaccurate and shorthand for me to talk about  
 20 who's in charge of the scene. My understanding is that  
 21 the operation would be owned by GMP and would have been  
 22 owned by GMP as soon as it was declared a terrorist  
 23 incident and therefore they would have control.  
 24 What I was recording in this was just when I was  
 25 formally advised that we are now a support function, if

1 you like a transport sub--Bronze to the Gold, Silver and  
 2 Bronze structure that GMP would have in place.  
 3 Q. What you say on page 1 of that statement, drafted as it  
 4 was on 26 June 2017, the bottom paragraph:  
 5 "My role upon arrival was to assume command of the  
 6 scene as Bronze commander until it was confirmed if the  
 7 incident was being commanded by BTP or GMP."  
 8 So when phrased as you did in this self--drafted  
 9 statement like that, tell me if I'm wrong about this, it  
 10 rather sounds like you regarded yourself as in charge of  
 11 the scene until you were told otherwise.  
 12 A. It's perhaps clumsy language. I certainly would have  
 13 carried on as if I was in charge of the scene so as not  
 14 to leave a command vacuum until I was advised otherwise.  
 15 Q. That just brings us to your debrief and what you say  
 16 about the observations you have following the incident.  
 17 {INQ002001/1}.  
 18 We can see the thread appears to start at the  
 19 bottom, somebody called Samantha Collins, on 25 May,  
 20 12.47. Subject line:  
 21 "Respondents to Manchester attack and implementation  
 22 of 'go critical' plans: request for quick--time lessons  
 23 learned and good practice."  
 24 That's what comes to you.  
 25 If we scroll up, we'll see what you say, dated

1 25 May 2017, as it appears from the header:  
 2 "Sam, thanks for this. As you might imagine, there  
 3 will be a lot coming out of this. Quick time from me as  
 4 the BTP scene commander on the ground on the night and  
 5 divisional Silver night shift since are:  
 6 "TRIM of some of the teams that travelled a distance  
 7 seem to have been a little less focused compared to  
 8 those who were Manchester--based -- Sue Peters has  
 9 details of how GMP triaged and accounted for everyone we  
 10 might borrow?"  
 11 Just help us with that and introduce us to the TRIM  
 12 concept.  
 13 A. So it's trauma and risk management. It's a peer--to--peer  
 14 support system following an incident. BTP have it in  
 15 place and there seemed to be some challenge -- on the  
 16 night in question, much later on in the evening, as  
 17 people left and returned home, I was seeking assurance  
 18 that we knew who they all were, how we had triaged and  
 19 logged them, and I was led to believe that GMP had  
 20 a better system in place.  
 21 Q. Next:  
 22 "Briefings next morning to officers coming on,  
 23 especially supervisors, seems to have been disjointed  
 24 and ineffective."  
 25 I don't need you to amplify that particularly,

1 others may ask you about it, but we're talking about  
 2 some time into the 23rd?  
 3 A. That's correct.  
 4 Q. Which is outside, certainly, my focus.  
 5 Then next:  
 6 "Command of the actual scene -- uncertainty as to  
 7 who initially had primacy of the 'uniform' resources  
 8 whilst GMP took the lead on the CT investigation."  
 9 This is your view 48 hours or so on?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 Q. Matters very fresh in your mind?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before you answer the question, can  
 14 I understand that you're using primacy there in terms of  
 15 who's in charge, who's running that particular part of  
 16 the show?  
 17 A. Absolutely. I'm interested in --  
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think that's how we all understand  
 19 primacy, I hope -- unless I'm wrong and someone will  
 20 correct me.  
 21 MR DE LA POER: So you've obviously -- this is, as you've  
 22 prefaced, it quick time.  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. So these are, do you agree, your headlines which are the  
 25 main points you want to convey?

1 A. Absolutely.  
 2 Q. And this is one of just four that you have listed. I'm  
 3 not criticising the number, but so that we understand,  
 4 this was in your top four?  
 5 A. It was, yes.  
 6 Q. What do you mean by:  
 7 "Command of the actual scene — uncertainty as to  
 8 who initially had primacy of the 'uniform' resources  
 9 while GMP took the lead on the CT investigation"?  
 10 A. This relates to a specific set of conversations we had  
 11 on the night in question with GMP and BTP search leads  
 12 of the area. My concern at the time was understanding,  
 13 as I did following the conversations with either the ACC  
 14 or the chief superintendent, that GMP had lead. There  
 15 was for me a potential rubbing point with the search  
 16 teams from GMP and the search teams from BTP who were  
 17 moving in, once initial searches had been done, then to  
 18 search further beyond the platforms into the rolling  
 19 stock and to make decisions about just ensuring that  
 20 there had been nothing missed.  
 21 There is a specific conversation I recall that I was  
 22 asked to link in around in terms of — I won't use the  
 23 word primacy again, but searching on the trackside.  
 24 There are unique dangers, as I'm sure are appreciated,  
 25 in terms of working trackside. BTP officers all have to

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1 undergo training to be allowed to go trackside, and the  
 2 GMP officers on the night in question didn't have that,  
 3 but there seemed to be a point of friction with GMP in  
 4 terms of who led how we would do that searching, and on  
 5 the night in question I had a little frustration around,  
 6 even as BTP lead on the scene, being able to say,  
 7 "Actually this is our environment, these are the risks,  
 8 for this portion of the operation you're going to have  
 9 to become subordinate to us to make sure this is done  
 10 safely".  
 11 Q. Do you agree the words you have chosen to use make it  
 12 sound more general than the very specific rubbing point  
 13 that you're speaking about?  
 14 A. Absolutely, the wording does suggest that.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's the wording "initially", isn't it?  
 16 MR DE LA POER: Yes, it is specifically the word  
 17 "initially". Because the rubbing point that you are  
 18 speaking about, commander, presumably happened some way,  
 19 some time after 22.31 on 22 May?  
 20 A. Oh, that's a good question, because I would have been in  
 21 contact with Pete Kooper, who was our inspector for the  
 22 search at the scene, and for me the one thing that came  
 23 out of this was the issue around search teams and the  
 24 uniformed resources that were down doing that. I do  
 25 take your point around "initially".

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's very difficult to know how and why  
 2 you'd put that in. What does "initially" mean at that  
 3 stage?  
 4 A. I think I might be referring to the initial few hours.  
 5 I suppose you've got to bear in mind, as we have  
 6 uncovered in my timeline, I arrived on the scene much  
 7 later than the golden hour in the initial period so this  
 8 is my initiality, when I arrived on scene, just trying  
 9 to get to grips with who owns what at what stage.  
 10 MR DE LA POER: I don't want to dwell overly on it, but I do  
 11 want to give you the opportunity to think whether or not  
 12 it was just the search team given the language you are  
 13 using in that email.  
 14 A. I don't recall having any other rubbing point with GMP  
 15 uniformed resources on the night in question.  
 16 Q. Or being informed by anyone else whether there was  
 17 a rubbing point?  
 18 A. No, I don't think so.  
 19 Q. Or whether there was just simply uncertainty in your  
 20 mind as you were approaching the scene, for example?  
 21 A. No, I don't think so, because as I was approaching the  
 22 scene I was still waiting to be formally told where that  
 23 primacy sat.  
 24 Q. There are just two matters arising out of what you have  
 25 said. Firstly in your witness statement, can I invite

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1 you, please, to turn to your second witness statement,  
 2 paragraph 15.  
 3 I'm asking this as somebody who doesn't use  
 4 a Blackberry device, for what it's worth, so you help us  
 5 with what you mean here. You say:  
 6 "During the journey my BT Mobile Blackberry device  
 7 became depleted of power before I arrived in Manchester  
 8 due to use and with it I lost access to any email  
 9 communications."  
 10 Are you speaking about your work Blackberry?  
 11 A. I am and I'm aware from the call log that there are  
 12 other calls. I have obviously charged the Blackberry at  
 13 some point during the evening. The reason this was in  
 14 my mind was — and I recall this explicitly — in part  
 15 of the kit and equipment feedback I gave to BTP I had  
 16 complained about the Blackberry and very shortly  
 17 thereafter they changed me to another handset. So  
 18 I knew that this had been an issue for me on the night  
 19 in question. The Blackberry had been on since probably  
 20 04.30 when I woke in the morning, the battery just had  
 21 not lasted through the evening. But as I say, I have  
 22 seen the schedule of calls and there are certainly calls  
 23 after that which clearly indicates that I had recharged  
 24 the battery somewhere.  
 25 Q. Did the fact that the phone at some point ran out of

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1 power in fact impede your ability to carry out your  
 2 duties that night?  
 3 A. Yes, it potentially would have.  
 4 Q. In what way, with the benefit of hindsight, do you think  
 5 it did?  
 6 A. You'll tell from the call list there are people I called  
 7 from my Blackberry and people I called from my personal  
 8 mobile depending on where the numbers would be saved.  
 9 And once the Blackberry would have lost power the  
 10 ability even to port those numbers on to my personal  
 11 phone would not have been there and I would have lost  
 12 access to them.  
 13 Q. As I understand it from you, given that it did impede  
 14 your ability to carry out your duties, was that  
 15 something you ought to have had in mind when you took  
 16 over the Bronze commander role, to make sure that that  
 17 situation didn't arise?  
 18 A. So the short answer is, yes, of course, it is something  
 19 I should have had in mind. I was conscious I had  
 20 a back-up of a personal telephone but I absolutely take  
 21 your point that, in the absence of a radio, a fully  
 22 charged work Blackberry would have been much better.  
 23 Q. The other matter that I want to ask you arising out of  
 24 things that have been said before we come to the  
 25 conclusion section of my questions is -- Mr Lopez, can

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1 we please bring up {INQ025584T/13}.  
 2 We can look back at the context of the part I'm  
 3 going to ask you about, but it's right at the very top  
 4 of page 13. For the context of this answer, you begin  
 5 on the preceding page and you say:  
 6 "I was getting that information from a number of  
 7 sources, so Inspector Merchant, some of the other senior  
 8 officers at the scene."  
 9 So we seem to be talking about your journey in the  
 10 taxi.  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. The line in question was this:  
 13 "I was in constant liaison with the press office."  
 14 Do you see that on the second line?  
 15 A. I do, yes.  
 16 Q. Is it your recollection that in the taxi you were in  
 17 constant liaison with the press office?  
 18 A. No, again, apologies, that's clumsy language. I was in  
 19 contact with the press office a couple of times but it  
 20 was not constant liaison.  
 21 Q. Thank you. Finally, as I've been giving other witnesses  
 22 the opportunity to, I'm just going to invite you to  
 23 consider what the policing experts have said. Have you  
 24 had an opportunity to consider at least part of their  
 25 report as it relates to you?

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1 A. As it relates to me, I have, yes.  
 2 Q. So firstly, the policing experts noted that you did not  
 3 have any knowledge of the GMP arena contingency plan.  
 4 We'll start with this. As a matter of fact, did you, by  
 5 22 May 2017, have any knowledge of the GMP arena  
 6 contingency plan?  
 7 A. No, I don't believe I did.  
 8 Q. Given your role within BTP at that time, was that  
 9 a document that you should at least have known about?  
 10 A. I would have imagined in the fullness of time in that  
 11 role, it would have been something that would have come  
 12 to my attention. Probably at the point whenever  
 13 I commanded an incident at the arena. Up until that  
 14 point in time I hadn't commanded any such incident.  
 15 Q. Well, within your patch that you had responsibility for,  
 16 was there anywhere else quite like the arena in terms of  
 17 the challenges that might be posed in the event of an  
 18 attack? I don't want a location, I just want a yes or  
 19 no at this stage.  
 20 A. Yes, there would be.  
 21 Q. And numbering them, more or less than five?  
 22 A. So arguably, given the extent of our patch, and we run  
 23 through many force areas in England, including Wales,  
 24 I would have to say it would be more than five. Not  
 25 arena-esque in terms of the specifics of what that was,

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1 but certainly in terms of crowded places.  
 2 Q. In terms of in excess of 20,000 people disgorging all at  
 3 the same time?  
 4 A. No, I don't think so, but the number alone would not be  
 5 the thing that would raise it into my awareness.  
 6 Q. Because that number of people all at the same time  
 7 presents particular challenges for policing and  
 8 particular opportunities for terrorists?  
 9 A. Absolutely.  
 10 Q. But even with that particular feature being, as  
 11 I understand your evidence, unique on your patch to  
 12 Manchester Arena, you don't think that that was a plan  
 13 that you should have known about?  
 14 A. Yes, with hindsight it absolutely is a plan I should  
 15 have known about. Apologies, it was not one I think  
 16 I had knowledge of at the time.  
 17 Q. Finally, and here I'll quote from them and give you an  
 18 opportunity to comment upon it, the policing experts say  
 19 based on their review of the documentation:  
 20 "There is little evidence that you were able to  
 21 influence BTP actions or operational decisions during  
 22 your journey."  
 23 A. They would be absolutely correct.  
 24 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much indeed, commander. That  
 25 concludes my questioning of you. We do have some

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1 requests --  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before we go to requests, I don't  
 3 want a lot of detail about what you did when you became  
 4 Bronze commander because I'm sure we'd have gone through  
 5 it if it was particularly relevant, but I just do want  
 6 to know, the start, as it were. So as you arrived  
 7 you're being told, "Right, your job is to provide  
 8 support for GMP", and so you would need to know as soon  
 9 as possible what support they wanted?  
 10 A. Yes.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you speak to a GMP commander pretty  
 12 well straightaway.  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who?  
 15 A. I spoke to the detective superintendent from GMP who was  
 16 at the top of the stairs.  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What was the conversation?  
 18 A. I said: I've just had a phone call from the assistant  
 19 chief constable, he's advised me we're now in support of  
 20 you, you're the most senior GMP officer I can locate,  
 21 what do you need?  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And he said?  
 23 A. It was a she, apologies. She said, "We don't need  
 24 anything at this time". We exchanged -- I think we  
 25 either exchanged contact numbers or advised where to

1 find each other and I left it at that and then I made  
 2 contact shortly thereafter with Sue Peters,  
 3 a chief inspector who was in the GMP Silver room and  
 4 again made the same offer.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 6 MR DE LA POER: Sir, the first Rule 10 request that has been  
 7 granted, and I don't know whether there will be any  
 8 questions, but I'll give him the opportunity, Mr Butt  
 9 Queen's Counsel on behalf of Counter-terrorism Policing  
 10 Headquarters.  
 11 (Pause)  
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But answer came there none. Unless he  
 13 comes back later, we'll carry on.  
 14 MR DE LA POER: I'm sure he'll let us know.  
 15 Can I turn next, please, to Mr Atkinson Queen's  
 16 Counsel who's taking the lead on behalf of the bereaved  
 17 families.  
 18 Questions from MR ATKINSON  
 19 MR ATKINSON: Commander Gordon, in relation to your  
 20 training, do we understand that effectively you arrived  
 21 at BTP with a host of training elsewhere and received  
 22 very little additionally that would apply to a major  
 23 incident thereafter?  
 24 A. That is correct.  
 25 Q. So your JESIP training pre-dated your arrival at BTP?

1 A. No, not exactly. So when I did the Gold public order  
 2 course in the summer of 2016, that would have had JESIP  
 3 principles within it.  
 4 Q. It is one thing, would you agree, to learn what the  
 5 JESIP principles are, it is quite another thing to  
 6 understand how you apply them to a major incident when  
 7 you're there working with other forces and other  
 8 agencies?  
 9 A. I think there is some bleed-across from learning how to  
 10 do that and actually doing it but, yes, I accept the  
 11 point you're making.  
 12 Q. How much multi-agency training had you done in relation  
 13 to JESIP?  
 14 A. Other than the inputs on the Gold command course,  
 15 I don't think I had done any specific multi-agency  
 16 training in relation to JESIP prior to the incident.  
 17 Q. One of the things that you said to the BBC -- and I will  
 18 just check if it is something we can put up on...  
 19 (Pause)  
 20 Yes. Mr Lopez, if we could go to {INQ025584T/26}.  
 21 If you could, before you put it on the screen, crop down  
 22 to the last paragraph on the page.  
 23 In the course of your chat with the BBC, you said  
 24 this:  
 25 "On the night in question, the way the situation

1 unfolded, some of the usual protocols that would happen  
 2 between emergency services didn't happen according to  
 3 the textbook. And that's understandable, this wasn't  
 4 a textbook scenario."  
 5 What aspects of JESIP did you have in mind when you  
 6 said that?  
 7 A. I'm wondering... I think I understand, but I'm  
 8 wondering, would it be possible to see the following  
 9 paragraph or section of it? I think it relates to it.  
 10 Q. Can I just double-check that that's not going to... yes.  
 11 Mr Lopez, if you could do the same exercise. It's  
 12 the first paragraph at the top of the next page and if  
 13 you could crop into that {INQ025584T/27}. If this isn't  
 14 enough for your purposes, Mr Gordon, you must say so.  
 15 A. Yes, that confirms for me and I really appreciate your  
 16 latitude in trying to clarify that. That first  
 17 paragraph on the top of the page outlines exactly what  
 18 I meant in context, which is that British Transport  
 19 Police officers and other officers responded directly to  
 20 the scene. I'm thinking particularly in response of  
 21 going to any sort of a forward control point or lie-up  
 22 point, waiting on the area being sufficiently cleared  
 23 and then moving in.  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I need to understand that: a rendezvous  
 25 point or a forward control point, which is the layoff

1 point?  
 2 A. Apologies, part of my difficulty in moving through four  
 3 separate forces is --  
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, that's fine.  
 5 A. What I mean by that is, in the simplest way, I was aware  
 6 that BTP officers and other officers had just rushed  
 7 into the scene.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.  
 9 A. They hadn't went through any other control point.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we'd normally be talking about  
 11 a rendezvous point, wouldn't we? That's been the  
 12 equivalent. Thank you.  
 13 MR ATKINSON: Just to make sure I understand this, which  
 14 I appreciate is much less important than others do, but  
 15 there are accepted practices within major incident  
 16 plans, within JESIP protocols, for how people should  
 17 deploy and that they should go to rendezvous points  
 18 before they go in so that they can be briefed and so  
 19 there can be control over what people do before they  
 20 start doing it?  
 21 A. Yes, exactly.  
 22 Q. That's particularly important if it's multi-agency in  
 23 terms of its response so that there can be  
 24 a coordination between what the different people are  
 25 doing?

1 A. You're absolutely correct.  
 2 Q. Both so they can help each other and, equally  
 3 importantly, so they don't get in each other's way?  
 4 A. I think you're absolutely correct.  
 5 Q. At what stage did you become aware that that aspect of  
 6 JESIP had not happened here?  
 7 A. I think I became aware of this from the initial phone  
 8 call from Inspector Merchant when he said, "There are  
 9 people on the scene and I have additional resources to  
 10 go".  
 11 Q. So it had become clear to you, effectively from that,  
 12 that BTP officers were self-deploying to this scene  
 13 without any kind of structure having been put in place  
 14 for how they should do it?  
 15 A. In terms of any formalised JESIP structure, yes, you're  
 16 absolutely correct. I just need to be careful so I am  
 17 not unfair to the control room, who act as a spontaneous  
 18 Silver and have a structure, and therefore whilst it is  
 19 not formalised JESIP structure and whilst there was no  
 20 RVP, I just want to be really careful I am not unfair to  
 21 those who put a structure in place around it.  
 22 Q. The other acronym that you mentioned was the forward  
 23 command post, the FCP. Did you understand there to be  
 24 one by the time you eventually reached the arena?  
 25 A. No, I had never had a conversation about a forward

1 command point.  
 2 Q. Clearly, in an application of JESIP, co-location is  
 3 important, so having the people who are on scene in  
 4 command in a place where they can speak to each other is  
 5 important?  
 6 A. You're absolutely correct.  
 7 Q. But your understanding was that there wasn't one?  
 8 A. No, sorry, I need to be exact. That isn't my  
 9 understanding that there wasn't one. I didn't  
 10 specifically ask was there one.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, you have told me that in order to  
 12 find out what you could do to help, you found the  
 13 detective superintendent, who was from GMP.  
 14 A. That's correct, sir.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How did you know where to find her or  
 16 didn't you know where to find her and just come across  
 17 her?  
 18 A. No, I asked some of my team, whether it was  
 19 Chief Inspector Graham or Inspector Koooper, I asked  
 20 where can I locate and they had said she was at the very  
 21 inner cordon.  
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 23 MR ATKINSON: Just perhaps on that point, and it's another  
 24 part of your interview with the BBC, so Mr Lopez,  
 25 {INQ025584T/35}. It's really the last four lines of

1 page 35 that we're going to start with and then we'll go  
 2 over to page 36.  
 3 To put this in context for you, Mr Gordon, you're  
 4 talking here about the natural desire of someone who has  
 5 chosen to work in the emergency services to want to help  
 6 people and to get in there and do that. What you then  
 7 go on to say here is:  
 8 "It was really, really challenging for me that night  
 9 almost not to do that, to have confidence and faith in  
 10 the teams that were there that they were doing what they  
 11 needed to do and actually somebody needed to take a step  
 12 back and just be that liaison point between the varying  
 13 emergency services and between the investigators and  
 14 also to coordinate the response and make sure that we  
 15 had sufficient people in the right areas to give the  
 16 best response to it, which is why, I suppose, part of  
 17 you wants almost to go to the scene to the very point  
 18 where it happened and to start and try to help as best  
 19 you can."  
 20 We can take that down, please.  
 21 It was you speaking, so you'll speak for yourself,  
 22 but on the face of it, you're saying there that there  
 23 was that identification by you of the difference between  
 24 people getting in and doing and the people who needed to  
 25 be stepping back and liaising?

1 A. Yes, correct.  
 2 Q. Did you have an appreciation on the night that there had  
 3 been more getting stuck in and less liaising than there  
 4 should have been?  
 5 A. So I'm aware that, if I can coin your phrase, not  
 6 pejoratively, there had been more getting stuck in.  
 7 Whether or not I was aware that there had been more than  
 8 liaising -- when I spoke to Inspector Graham, I was  
 9 certainly clear at that stage that there had been  
 10 conversations with other agencies at the scene. To the  
 11 extent of that, whether or not that put the balance more  
 12 on the side of more getting stuck in than there should  
 13 have been liaison. It's difficult for me not to  
 14 override it with what I subsequently know, but it is  
 15 clear that -- it's really, really clear that JESIP was  
 16 not invoked in the way that it could have been and  
 17 should have been.  
 18 Q. In your conversation with Chief Superintendent Graham,  
 19 by way of example, because you told us that you had this  
 20 conversation with her which gave you the confidence that  
 21 everything was under control, that you could go off and  
 22 fetch your uniform, your radio, your logbook, whatever  
 23 else it was you had in your office, rather than going  
 24 straight to the scene, what was it that you understood  
 25 from her in terms of how JESIP was working as a result

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1 of that conversation?  
 2 A. So simply the co-location and the communication element  
 3 of what I picked up from her was conversations around  
 4 how the Ambulance Service were now tending to people.  
 5 So that was the element that -- there was nothing  
 6 further that came out of the conversation she and I had,  
 7 nor subsequently in the briefing that we had when  
 8 I arrived on scene, that indicated to me at that stage  
 9 that, looking forward from that point, there was  
 10 anything else I needed to do to close the gap.  
 11 Q. One thing that you talked to the BBC about in that  
 12 context was you explained to them -- and this is  
 13 difficult for me to show to you because of what it's  
 14 about -- concerns that you had as you were travelling to  
 15 the scene about the risks of secondary devices and the  
 16 risks that your colleagues who were already there might  
 17 be facing and you wanting to know more about that. You  
 18 go on to say that when you did reach the scene, you had  
 19 a conversation with, I think, Chief Inspector Graham  
 20 about that, about secondary devices.  
 21 Does it follow from that that in your taxi journey  
 22 you had not received information as to what had been  
 23 done in relation to secondary devices so that you still  
 24 needed to ask the questions once you got there?  
 25 A. It certainly stands that I was unclear to the degree of

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1 clarity that I would have wanted to discharge my  
 2 Article 3 obligations to my officers. Even when  
 3 I arrived at the scene, I asked the question again to  
 4 get the level of clarity. I believe I tasked  
 5 Inspector Kooper to again go and speak to the army EOD  
 6 to confirm for me and only at that stage did I get  
 7 confirmation.  
 8 There had been conversations -- sorry, that's  
 9 incorrect. There had been radio transmissions and a bit  
 10 of a conversation in the very short journey with the GMP  
 11 sergeant in the car to the scene where there still  
 12 seemed to be ongoing threats. Because of all of that  
 13 in the round, I just wanted to be absolutely clear.  
 14 Q. You've been asked by Mr de la Poer about the series of  
 15 conversations you had with a series of people and that  
 16 issue of whether it was safe for people to be there at  
 17 all didn't really feature in your recounting to him.  
 18 But refreshing your memory from that BBC interview, does  
 19 it appear that that was something you were talking to  
 20 anyone and everyone about as you were travelling to the  
 21 scene?  
 22 A. Not anyone and everyone. I think the main conversation  
 23 on that, from memory, was with Inspector Kooper, who was  
 24 our search coordinator at the scene, just trying to get  
 25 that clarity.

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1 Q. At any point in conversation where safety was coming up,  
 2 did anyone tell you about the armed police, GMP police,  
 3 that had been deployed to the scene?  
 4 A. I want to say yes, but I'm really struggling to  
 5 understand at what point in the time frame I knew that.  
 6 Q. Because presumably if they did, with safety in mind, you  
 7 would want to know why they were there and how what they  
 8 were doing was being coordinated with what your  
 9 colleagues were doing?  
 10 A. In terms of your second point, absolutely, I take that  
 11 unreservedly and I would want to know how they  
 12 interacted with our colleagues at the scene. In terms  
 13 of why they were there, I suppose the challenge in me  
 14 coming from a routinely armed service is I'm routinely  
 15 used to seeing armed police at the scene of something as  
 16 a contingency. I wouldn't, and apologies, automatically  
 17 make the assumption that they were there to deal with  
 18 a specific threat, in fact probably quite the opposite.  
 19 If there was a specific threat that they were dealing  
 20 with, I would have expected the unarmed officers to have  
 21 been sufficiently briefed and removed until that threat  
 22 had disappeared. So for me, that would just be  
 23 a contingency at the scene.  
 24 Q. Shall we deal with each of those points in turn?  
 25 A. Absolutely.

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1 Q. You would have expected there to have been liaison and  
 2 coordination between the GMP and the BTP, given that  
 3 they both had officers on the scene at the time, that  
 4 armed officers were being deployed so that everybody  
 5 understood how that was going to work?  
 6 A. That's correct.  
 7 Q. And that would, had you been there, have been a role  
 8 that a Bronze commander would have undertaken in terms  
 9 of that being an important point of liaison?  
 10 A. I would absolutely have expected that to have taken  
 11 place.  
 12 Q. We appreciate you're doing your best with your memory  
 13 but do you have any recollection of discussing that  
 14 topic with Chief Inspector Graham?  
 15 A. Only to the extent when I arrived that I confirmed the  
 16 outer cordons were being staffed up by GMP, and that  
 17 included the armed policing contingent, and the internal  
 18 cordons were being staffed up by British Transport  
 19 Police and it was only to the extent of me understanding  
 20 that actually they at that stage had their resources  
 21 around the outside, if you like, creating a sterile area  
 22 for the inner cordon and for the rest of the work to  
 23 take place.  
 24 Q. Going back to the other point you raised, we understand  
 25 that given where you had been policing before this, that

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1 deploying an armed response as a contingency might have  
 2 been more common, I suppose. But clearly, there would  
 3 be reason for an armed deployment connected with  
 4 a perceived threat of an armed terrorist that you and  
 5 BTP would need to know about?  
 6 A. So again, I think there are two distinct parts of that,  
 7 if you'll forgive me.  
 8 Q. Not at all.  
 9 A. Would there be a specific reason? The deployment of  
 10 armed policing in the United Kingdom — one of the  
 11 criteria can be as a contingency, as an operational  
 12 contingency. The Authorised Policing Practice  
 13 in relation to the deployment of armed officers gives  
 14 that as one of the specific legs(?) of deployment. So  
 15 there would not necessarily be in my mind have had to  
 16 have been a specific threat around that.  
 17 If I haven't misunderstood this, and please correct  
 18 me, the second part of that I think you asked me was  
 19 would I then have expected that we would have got  
 20 briefed on it and only to the extent that it would not  
 21 have compromised the operational safety and  
 22 effectiveness of what those armed police officers were  
 23 doing.  
 24 I frequently run armed operations through my command  
 25 in London through areas of unarmed policing where the

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1 officers are not routinely briefed. In fact, it would  
 2 be detrimental to do so.  
 3 Q. Just to understand that, if Operation Plato had been  
 4 declared and armed police were being sent in because  
 5 Operation Plato had been declared, would you have  
 6 expected BTP on scene to be told that?  
 7 A. Sorry, yes, in that format, yes I would.  
 8 Q. And again, that would be very much something that the  
 9 BTP Bronze on scene would have been needed to have been  
 10 told to make decisions about what they did with the BTP  
 11 officers who were there?  
 12 A. Yes, I think I unnecessarily overcomplicated that. Yes,  
 13 you're absolutely right.  
 14 Q. In your second witness statement, which I think you have  
 15 there, at paragraph 10, {INQ025616/2}, paragraph 10.  
 16 I'm not asking for this to be brought up.  
 17 This is, to put it in context for those who don't  
 18 have it in front of them, part of your explaining how  
 19 earlier training gave you an understanding of the Bronze  
 20 role even though, as you've explained to us, you had not  
 21 seen, in the sense that you remember seeing it, the BTP  
 22 major incident manual, which had a definition of what  
 23 the Bronze role is.  
 24 A. That's correct, thank you.  
 25 Q. You say this:

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1 "Whilst I was attending the scene to assume Bronze  
 2 command, I was aware that the Authorised Police  
 3 Practice, the APP, outlines when a commander would be  
 4 able to effectively assume command and perform their  
 5 role. In short, I know this as being when a commander  
 6 is both situationally aware and in a location to be able  
 7 to command."  
 8 Pausing there, would you accept that until you had  
 9 reached the scene, you were not in that position?  
 10 A. Yes, I would.  
 11 Q. You go on:  
 12 "In APP firearms, this is identified as knowledge of  
 13 the circumstances and available intelligence, the  
 14 ability to communicate, appropriate tactical advice  
 15 available, a suitable environment in which to exercise  
 16 the command function. As such, I did not assume Bronze  
 17 at the material time and relied on both the senior duty  
 18 officer in BTP and colleagues on scene to operate within  
 19 the normal spontaneous incident command structures until  
 20 such time as I arrived on scene."  
 21 Just following those points through, those are the  
 22 things that you identified, or more particularly the  
 23 Authorised Police Practices had identified, and you were  
 24 applying, that you needed to have in order to do the  
 25 Bronze job effectively?

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1 A. That's correct.  
 2 Q. "Knowledge of the circumstances and available  
 3 intelligence."  
 4 You had some information, even before you had  
 5 started phoning the taxis, as to the situation and you  
 6 were developing more knowledge that this was a bomb from  
 7 an early stage. Would it be fair to say that that would  
 8 not be sufficient information for you to have carried  
 9 out such a Bronze job just based on that?  
 10 A. This is difficult. A combination of that and my  
 11 location would have meant that. However, had I been  
 12 at the scene with just that information, we would still  
 13 be expected to command with whatever limited information  
 14 we would have.  
 15 Q. So it was the locational difficulty in relation to that  
 16 one rather than not having enough information to work  
 17 on?  
 18 A. I know these are listed in the Authorised Policing  
 19 Practice as a series of bullet points to make it easy to  
 20 convey and understand. However, I would take them  
 21 holistically and, on a balance of probabilities, for me,  
 22 where — at which point in time do I now have enough of  
 23 these things to be able to command, if that helps.  
 24 Q. "Ability to communicate."  
 25 Clearly, you had, whilst it still had power, your

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1 Blackberry and your own phone. But that did not give  
 2 you instant contact with those on the scene which you  
 3 would have had if you'd had your radio?  
 4 A. That's exactly correct.  
 5 Q. To what extent did it give you contact with other  
 6 emergency services?  
 7 A. It didn't give me any contact with other emergency  
 8 services and I would have relied heavily on my contact  
 9 back in through Silver or the contact I had at the scene  
 10 to advise if I needed to speak to any other emergency  
 11 services prior to my arrival.  
 12 Q. Third one:  
 13 "Appropriate tactical advice available."  
 14 As you've accepted in answer to Mr de la Poer, what  
 15 should happen is that the Silver commander draws up  
 16 a tactical plan which is communicated to you as the  
 17 Bronze commander that you put into operation?  
 18 A. Yes, that's correct.  
 19 Q. Does it follow that what the APP guidance is saying  
 20 is that to do your job properly you need that?  
 21 A. That's not what I read that bullet point to be, but yes  
 22 I would need that, I will accept that point without  
 23 debating the bullet point.  
 24 What that bullet point means is — for example, we  
 25 spoke about the search teams at the scene. I am no

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1 longer a qualified police search adviser, et cetera, so  
 2 I would need tactical advice around search. We would  
 3 look to the real industry partners to give us advice on  
 4 the rolling stock, we would look to structural engineers  
 5 to give us advice on the issue we had with the glass  
 6 over the arena, et cetera. That for me is what that  
 7 tactical advice means in relation to the element of the  
 8 operation I would try and deliver.  
 9 Q. But you would need tactical advice from your tactical  
 10 commander as to what the tactical plan was, wouldn't  
 11 you?  
 12 A. I take your point, but let me be really clear on the  
 13 language: a tactical commander does not give the  
 14 tactical advice; the tactical commander gives me the  
 15 tactical plan. That point I absolutely accept.  
 16 Tactical advice — we have a specific role in  
 17 policing called a tac ad, which is a tactical adviser,  
 18 and they are specific people who are trained to provide  
 19 advice to commanders to allow them to take it into  
 20 consideration on their decisions.  
 21 I know that may seem like I'm splitting hairs but,  
 22 if I understood your question correctly, the second part  
 23 of what was asked me was if the tactical commander would  
 24 give me that advice. No, I would expect a tactical  
 25 plan, but not tactical advice.

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1 Q. You didn't get the plan anyway?  
 2 A. I didn't.  
 3 Q. If we just could on that front go back to an email that  
 4 Mr de la Poer has taken you to but I think, absolutely  
 5 no criticism of him, not this part of it.  
 6 {INQ002001/1}. If we could focus in on the bullet  
 7 points. This, you'll remember, commander, is your  
 8 response to being asked for lessons learned input.  
 9 The last bullet point is:  
 10 "Actual 'tactics' once we went CRITICAL didn't seem  
 11 to consist of anything other than an uplift in officer  
 12 numbers — TACTICS seemed limited/briefings to officers  
 13 on the 'what' had to do when tested seemed ineffective."  
 14 Were you there saying that there was a lack of  
 15 tactical plan as to what you and the others were meant  
 16 to be doing?  
 17 A. I will need to seek guidance on this. The contents of  
 18 me explaining that, I believe, would be operationally  
 19 sensitive. I'm happy to explain that but —  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, please don't say anything which may  
 21 be sensitive without us checking beforehand whether  
 22 it is going to be.  
 23 MR ATKINSON: I'm very content to park that, but I'm equally  
 24 — I see Mr Gibbs is on his feet —  
 25 MR GIBBS: I suggest I speak very briefly with Mr Atkinson

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1 and I think he will then be able to pursue the question.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you'll have to do it from at  
 3 least whatever the appropriate distance is.  
 4 (Pause)  
 5 MR ATKINSON: You're being cautious, and you're right to be,  
 6 but it may be that actually you can answer this with  
 7 a yes or no. Are you there talking about the lack of  
 8 a tactical plan issued by the Silver commander or are  
 9 you talking about something else?  
 10 A. I'm speaking about something else.  
 11 Q. Then I will leave it there. Thank you very much.  
 12 Thank you, Mr Gibbs.  
 13 Just I think two other topics briefly, Mr Gordon,  
 14 and then I'm done.  
 15 In terms of your conversations with Chief Inspector  
 16 Graham, had you been told by others that she was the  
 17 on-scene Bronze before you spoke to her?  
 18 A. So I had... I am absolutely clear I had been told she  
 19 was the on-scene commander. What I'm less clear about  
 20 is whether or not I had been informed that she was the  
 21 on-scene Bronze. Again, if it's unhelpful, I do  
 22 apologise, but my assumption around the Bronze role is,  
 23 unless otherwise dictated, this senior officer from that  
 24 service is the Bronze.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I was about to ask you whether there's

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1 any difference in reality: the senior officer, in  
 2 default of anyone else being appointed, is the Bronze?  
 3 A. That's my understanding.  
 4 MR ATKINSON: With this possible caveat for your comment,  
 5 which is: if you're in the position of being the senior  
 6 officer who is there, but you know that someone else has  
 7 been given the Bronze role and is on their way but isn't  
 8 there yet, would it be your assumption that you were  
 9 carrying on effectively in the Bronze role until they  
 10 got there or would you be having to defer all decisions  
 11 to the person in the taxi?  
 12 A. No, so --- and again so that I am fair and clear in this,  
 13 I will caveat this by saying I am basing this on  
 14 7/8 years of deploying regularly to both pre-planned and  
 15 spontaneous incidents in the Northern Ireland context  
 16 around Bronze. But my understanding is that I would  
 17 know I was Bronze regardless of who has been appointed  
 18 to come to the scene until such times as they arrive on  
 19 scene and I hand over.  
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure there could be exceptions, but  
 21 in reality 99.9% of the time, in order to be an  
 22 effective Bronze, you've actually got to be there,  
 23 haven't you?  
 24 A. That would be my working assumption, yes.  
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

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1 MR ATKINSON: That would be both in terms of performing your  
 2 Bronze role in relation to your own force but also  
 3 in relation to the JESIP part of it, the  
 4 interoperability between the different forces and  
 5 different agencies?  
 6 A. Absolutely.  
 7 Q. And if the Silver command is not on scene, then the  
 8 Bronze becomes all the more important in terms of that  
 9 co-location and interoperability?  
 10 A. That's my understanding.  
 11 Q. Final topic. "Manchester: the Night of the Bomb", the  
 12 BBC documentary that you were interviewed for. Whose  
 13 idea was it that you spoke to the BBC?  
 14 A. My understanding was that it had been organised through  
 15 either direct contact from the company that made the  
 16 documentary, with BTP directly, or through our media  
 17 department. I understood it at the time to have been  
 18 something that was accepted that we would assist with.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Atkinson, I am aware about the  
 20 concerns about this programme and people being  
 21 interviewed about it, but I'm not sure it's really  
 22 particularly relevant to the themes of this inquiry.  
 23 I think there may be discussions after the witness has  
 24 finished his evidence about it. Would that satisfy you  
 25 and everybody or is it something you think I should be

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1 involved in within the terms of my inquiry?  
 2 MR ATKINSON: In terms of learning points from how the  
 3 emergency services do or do not become involved in such  
 4 programmes and whether there ought to be more liaison  
 5 with the families of those affected before they do so,  
 6 that is, we would submit, something that would be open  
 7 to you within the terms of reference to express a view  
 8 on. It's with that in mind that I ---  
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's perfectly fair enough. BTP  
 10 apparently organised it. BTP are now aware, if they  
 11 weren't before, that there are concerns among the  
 12 families because of the effect on them of that broadcast  
 13 taking place and what was said. It may be something  
 14 that people can generally take on board in the future.  
 15 Do we need to go further than that at the moment? I'm  
 16 quite happy for you to ask further questions if you wish  
 17 to.  
 18 MR ATKINSON: If I can, very briefly.  
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, do.  
 20 MR ATKINSON: As you rightly say, sir, this is something of  
 21 very great concern and questions are expected. You'll  
 22 understand, sir.  
 23 What did you understand the purpose of BTP being  
 24 involved in this was?  
 25 A. My understanding was we had been asked, as one of

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1 a number of responding agencies, if we would provide  
 2 people who would be willing to take part. The explicit  
 3 purpose of this I don't think I was ever given. I was  
 4 asked if I'd be willing to take part.  
 5 I'm going to answer this as an individual because  
 6 I am aware, Mr Chairman, that I wear one uniform but  
 7 represented another organisation at the time, so if  
 8 I may, if that's permissible, in the view of  
 9 Kyle Gordon.  
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.  
 11 A. With hindsight, I should never have been involved. You  
 12 talk about learning going forward and it was an error of  
 13 judgement on my part, regardless of how it came about,  
 14 that I took part. I would not do so again.  
 15 MR ATKINSON: In terms of a learning point beyond you,  
 16 commander, would you accept that there does need to be  
 17 more thought by emergency services when approached for  
 18 such programmes to think about what impact it may have  
 19 on people who will watch it and have already suffered  
 20 enough?  
 21 A. I absolutely take your point. This incident -- and  
 22 I hope you'll forgive me for saying this -- I come from  
 23 a community that understands some -- I am not drawing  
 24 parallels, but some of what it is like to suffer at the  
 25 hands of those that would do us harm. And I know from

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1 both growing up and policing that environment, that long  
 2 after this inquiry has finished and the court cases are  
 3 done, there are individuals who will have to live with  
 4 the most... Forgive me.  
 5 (Pause)  
 6 I didn't mean to cause any harm.  
 7 MR ATKINSON: I will leave it there, sir.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think so. Can I say this for the  
 9 future: it is now known what the consequences are and  
 10 thank you very much for the evidence that you have given  
 11 about it. There will clearly be another side to this  
 12 issue. I am not particularly at the moment persuaded to  
 13 get involved in that other side, therefore to get  
 14 someone like the production company to come along to  
 15 explain their side of why they thought it was in the  
 16 public interest or anything like that.  
 17 So if everybody knows that are concerns about it,  
 18 that it can have unintended effects on people which  
 19 people just didn't realise because they just didn't  
 20 think about it, no doubt, then I hope that anyone making  
 21 decisions in the future will take that into account.  
 22 I'm not sure that it's going to be necessary for me  
 23 to investigate further, but of course I'm open to  
 24 persuasion if that's thought about, just as I have  
 25 allowed to ask you those questions now.

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1 MR ATKINSON: Yes. We will consider that, sir, if we may,  
 2 but we very grateful for being allowed to ask those  
 3 questions and I am grateful to you, commander, for  
 4 having answered them.  
 5 MR DE LA POER: Sir, although Mr Atkinson has taken the  
 6 lead, Mr Cooper Queen's Counsel has permission to ask  
 7 questions around a very specific topic area that he's  
 8 given us advance notice of, so I expect we'll be joined  
 9 now by Mr Cooper.  
 10 Questions from MR COOPER  
 11 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir. I'm grateful for the  
 12 opportunity.  
 13 Can I say, commander, I'll be very short with you.  
 14 There's just a defined area that certainly those we  
 15 represent would be interested in me asking you about.  
 16 The activity logs of calls and emails show, we've  
 17 seen, that various officers of different ranks were  
 18 engaging with the media in that first important critical  
 19 hour. Bronze, Silver and Gold all had calls with the  
 20 media in that first hour, as did the senior duty  
 21 officer.  
 22 Do you know in short what sort of enquiries were  
 23 being made in that first hour?  
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, I'm going to stop you for  
 25 a moment. I think we need to make a distinction between

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1 the media representatives of BTP who are actually  
 2 answering maybe the calls coming in and members of the  
 3 press actually directly contacting BTP.  
 4 I don't think the superintendent had any direct  
 5 contact with the outside media, if I can call them that,  
 6 just internal media. On the basis that that's the  
 7 question, please continue, Mr Cooper. I just wanted to  
 8 make it clear.  
 9 MR COOPER: I'm grateful, sir, for that. For you,  
 10 commander, that question is predicated upon those facts.  
 11 You were contacted by the press or by your media  
 12 department, can you just clarify that?  
 13 A. By my media department.  
 14 Q. And that was during the first hour or such --  
 15 A. That is correct.  
 16 Q. That was also, can I be clear, whilst you were in the  
 17 car, the taxi, on the way to the scene?  
 18 A. That is correct.  
 19 Q. Were those calls made to you by the media department on  
 20 your own Blackberry, for instance?  
 21 A. Yes, I believe they were.  
 22 Q. Approximately how many calls did you get during this  
 23 critical first hour from your media department?  
 24 A. I think the log shows three, plus an email. There may  
 25 have been some clarification on those issues. For me,

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1 the purpose of that was to ensure that anything that we  
 2 could do to further the safety of people at the scene  
 3 would be exploited and, whether that was on social media  
 4 or otherwise, that was the purpose of the conversation.  
 5 Q. Were any of those conversations concerning approaches  
 6 being made by media organisations to speak to you or any  
 7 of your senior colleagues, which were being put to you  
 8 (overspeaking) by your media department?  
 9 A. Certainly not to me and that would have been highly  
 10 inappropriate.  
 11 Q. The reason I'm asking you these questions is to see how  
 12 much of your important time, given we know that other  
 13 officers of seniority were also dealing with media  
 14 issues, either through their own department or through  
 15 media contact, how distracting was this for you during  
 16 this important critical first hour?  
 17 A. It's not distracting at all. It is part and parcel of  
 18 the command training we get to understand that actually  
 19 going proactive with media and social media may help you  
 20 achieve some of the aims of your operation. So what was  
 21 of primary concern in my mind when I had the  
 22 conversation was that, had I family at the arena on the  
 23 night in question and heard on social media something  
 24 had happened, I would be inclined to be drawn towards  
 25 the scene. Not knowing the wider risk around this, if

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1 there's anything that we could have done with media to  
 2 try and attenuate that, I think not only are we  
 3 obligated to, but as part of what you're taught as  
 4 a public order and public safety commander.  
 5 Q. So you would say then --  
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Following up on that, is it important  
 7 that you actually, if you have a number of agencies  
 8 involved -- we know that GMP for example were getting  
 9 phone calls too -- is it important that you coordinate  
 10 it in some way and someone takes lead of it and says,  
 11 "Right, this is all being done by GMP, ring their press  
 12 office"?  
 13 A. Absolutely. The conversation I'd had with  
 14 Matt Woodhouse that follows on the back of that  
 15 discussion was me saying, "Look, I can sign this off for  
 16 us but you need to find out what is being said".  
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Sorry, Mr Cooper.  
 18 MR COOPER: Not at all. Thank you, sir.  
 19 All the concerns certainly we have on behalf of  
 20 those we represent is that these media contacts, be it  
 21 through your own department, media department or direct  
 22 contacts from the media were not just being made to you  
 23 during this critical first hour, they were beings made  
 24 to Silver, Gold and indeed the senior duty officer. Is  
 25 there some way perhaps that there is a way of not, as it

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1 were, having this saturation contact between all levels  
 2 and one person perhaps could be responsible for dealing  
 3 with your media office, leaving other senior officers  
 4 deploying their immense skills where they really should  
 5 be deployed?  
 6 A. The point you make is, apart from it containing new  
 7 information to me that there was that many, but it is  
 8 absolutely correct and actually within the policing  
 9 doctrine it is really clear that it is usually Silver  
 10 who takes the lead on media releases, but signed off by  
 11 Gold in terms of overall authority, and that should be  
 12 the only points of contact. That is the reason  
 13 I explicitly copied Mr Allan Gregory back into my email,  
 14 understanding that this couldn't simply be the view of,  
 15 at the time, Superintendent Gordon in the back of  
 16 a taxi.  
 17 Q. Thank you. Because, of course, during the course of  
 18 this important first hour you have, and indeed your  
 19 senior colleagues particularly have, many other things  
 20 to think about, thinking of tactics, implementation of  
 21 strategy, communicating with other blue light partners.  
 22 These are all matters that in the first hour are very  
 23 critical, aren't they?  
 24 A. So they are, but in case I wasn't clear on the point,  
 25 because I think it is an important point around whether

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1 or not contacting media proactively in the first hour is  
 2 of importance. If by that contact you can achieve one  
 3 of your strategic aims, the protection of life and  
 4 preventing any further harm, then it is not just  
 5 important but it is incumbent on you to do so but  
 6 I absolutely fully take your point that once it becomes  
 7 a distraction that needs better managed.  
 8 Q. Would that management, and this is my final question  
 9 essentially, and would that management looking forward  
 10 be the responsibility perhaps of your media team, your  
 11 media department, to filter and sieve material that they  
 12 give to senior officers like you with a lot on your  
 13 plate at the time?  
 14 A. Without being unkind to the media department, who are  
 15 not here to speak for themselves, and understandably  
 16 a vast lack of knowledge that I would have about  
 17 what was going on behind the scenes, the process is  
 18 exactly that. In any operation I have ever run or  
 19 commanded there has been a dedicated point of contact  
 20 with the media, who clear the lines with either the  
 21 Silver commander, if appointed, or the most appropriate  
 22 senior person for ratification by Gold. That should be  
 23 how this happens.  
 24 MR COOPER: I'm grateful to you, and thank you, sir, for  
 25 allowing me to ask those short questions.

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1 MR DE LA POER: Sir, finally, Mr Gibbs. We are at  
 2 1 o'clock. I wonder whether he would regard it as  
 3 impertinent if I query with him whether he thinks that  
 4 this is achievable; 5 minutes is his estimate.  
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are you happy to go on?  
 6 A. Of course I am, sir.  
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Gibbs says 5 minutes.  
 8 Questions from MR GIBBS  
 9 MR GIBBS: Yes. They're simply points of clarification.  
 10 The first is arising from my learned friend  
 11 Mr Cooper's questions and the reference to the first  
 12 hour. Do you remember when it was that you first  
 13 received contact from your media department?  
 14 A. It would be proximate to the calls and the emails on the  
 15 call schedule.  
 16 Q. If we could have a look at that, it is {INQ041122/3}.  
 17 Are we looking for the name Harker?  
 18 A. Harker and Woodhouse, yes.  
 19 Q. Line 15, entry 7, has Sarah Harker at 23.43 making  
 20 contact with you. And then Woodhouse, I think we've got  
 21 at 23.54, and we've looked at that email. Do you  
 22 remember whether you had any earlier contact with media?  
 23 A. I don't, no. I think that was the first.  
 24 Q. Different topic. When you arrived at the arena, can we  
 25 just identify, as it were, the headline things that you

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1 did? Did you speak to Chief Inspector Graham?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. And for how long did you do that roughly?  
 4 A. So whatever length is captured in the log, around that  
 5 briefing, but it can't have been any more than  
 6 15 minutes because I then went into a series of other  
 7 phone calls.  
 8 Q. That's what I was going to ask you. From  
 9 Chief Inspector Graham did you get a full situation  
 10 report?  
 11 A. As full as she knew and then I moved to update the  
 12 Silver commander.  
 13 Q. And we have -- and I won't bring it up because  
 14 Mr de la Poer has done it -- at 01.40 and 01.44 calls  
 15 that in combination come to about 8 minutes, I think.  
 16 You speaking to Mr Gregory, the Silver, so it is that  
 17 your update to Silver?  
 18 A. It is, yes.  
 19 Q. And then at 01.51, we've got your update to Gold.  
 20 A. That's correct.  
 21 Q. You're speaking to Superintendent Worth from GMP?  
 22 A. That's correct.  
 23 Q. Where in that chronology did that sit, do you think?  
 24 A. Following the conversation -- to the best of my  
 25 knowledge, following the conversation with Assistant

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1 Chief Constable Smith, I then moved to find the most  
 2 senior GMP officer.  
 3 Q. You've also mentioned EOD, I think you said, at one  
 4 point --  
 5 A. That's correct.  
 6 Q. -- and speaking to Inspector Kooper about that. Can you  
 7 say when what happened and what that was about?  
 8 A. During the briefing I was getting, the issue of the  
 9 threat awareness was raised again and at that point in  
 10 time I will have posed the question, "Are we satisfied?"  
 11 From memory I recall -- this may sound pejorative,  
 12 I don't mean it to -- inconsistencies in terms of the  
 13 various reports I was getting from those in the briefing  
 14 that prompted me at that stage to say, "Look, we just  
 15 need to find out, go and speak directly to the source  
 16 and come back".  
 17 Q. Is this the question of searching for potential  
 18 secondary devices or some other issue?  
 19 A. Secondary devices -- well, sorry, secondary devices or  
 20 potentially anything else that may have been discarded,  
 21 hadn't yet detonated, or become another threat.  
 22 Secondary has a very clear connotation in mind that is  
 23 deliberately placed as a follow-on. This may simply  
 24 have been working with an accomplice, that there was  
 25 something --

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Anything that is going to cause danger  
 2 to your staff, basically?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 MR GIBBS: You were asked questions about -- you have told  
 5 us that in the lessons learned that you raised very  
 6 shortly afterwards that's something that you flagged up.  
 7 Secondary devices in Ulster, is that something you were  
 8 very familiar with the threat of?  
 9 A. Yes. It was -- and again there's nothing operationally  
 10 sensitive about this, this is widely known. It was an  
 11 actual tactic used to bring police officers into an  
 12 area, so therefore from the very first day of my  
 13 policing it was drilled into me that that was one of the  
 14 dangers you'd be aware of.  
 15 Q. Lastly for me, welfare, the welfare of your officers.  
 16 Is that something that you discussed upon arrival at the  
 17 scene?  
 18 A. So it was one of the questions that the deputy  
 19 chief constable had asked me to ensure that in slower  
 20 time we were sighted on and it was one of the  
 21 conversations we had -- I can't remember if it was  
 22 during the briefing, but certainly in and around that  
 23 time -- just to start stepping up what we might need to  
 24 do.  
 25 Q. You have been taken to by others parts of the record of

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1 the BBC interview that you gave. At the time that  
 2 you were asked questions by the journalist, did you have  
 3 your telephone records to have access to specific times  
 4 for instance?  
 5 A. No, I did not.  
 6 Q. Did you have access to the log, the Control Works log,  
 7 do you remember?  
 8 A. No, I did not.  
 9 Q. So you were just working from memory without the actual  
 10 documents, were you?  
 11 A. Yes, my understanding of that was they were more  
 12 interested in a narrative of what the night looked and  
 13 felt like than any exactitude around specifics.  
 14 MR GIBBS: Thank you, sir, those are my questions.  
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to deal with a bit more the  
 16 situation when you arrived on the scene. You remember  
 17 in the interview you're talking about the desire to get  
 18 stuck in but actually the need to stand back. By  
 19 the time you were actually on the scene, I am not in any  
 20 way suggesting that there was nothing to be done, so  
 21 please don't take this the wrong way, but by that time  
 22 the casualties had been removed from the City Room and  
 23 they were in the process of being removed by the  
 24 Ambulance Service and getting what help they needed. So  
 25 that, which immediately the constables from BTP have

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1 been doing all the time, helping with that, that had  
 2 finished. You had a number of very distressed police  
 3 officers to deal with and then no doubt there was going  
 4 to be a great deal of searching being done thereafter.  
 5 There was nothing actually to get stuck into at that  
 6 time of an emergency situation, was there, or was there?  
 7 A. No, you're correct.  
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.  
 9 Further questions from MR DE LA POER  
 10 MR DE LA POER: Finally from me, if I may, particularly  
 11 as -- I think I can do better than the information  
 12 I gave the commander, although he'll just have to accept  
 13 it from me and we'll have it in evidence tomorrow. The  
 14 telephone call involving Chief Inspector Graham I had  
 15 previously given an indication of what her loggist had  
 16 recorded in terms of the time of that call and the time  
 17 of the subsequent action. In fact, I have since  
 18 identified a more accurate record so I will just give it  
 19 to you now. It would appear that her telephone records  
 20 indicated that that started at 00.26, so within  
 21 2 minutes of the time I gave you, and the call lasted  
 22 4 minutes and 43 seconds.  
 23 A. That would actually be helpful and sounds more -- it  
 24 seemed compacted for the 2-minute time you had given me.  
 25 MR DE LA POER: There we are. I've done better than I did

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1 and I'm sorry for my earlier error.  
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much for your evidence.  
 3 We're very grateful for the information you've been able  
 4 to give the inquiry.  
 5 MR DE LA POER: Sir, as to what is next, there's good reason  
 6 why we can't start again until 2.45 pm, which means  
 7 a slightly longer than usual lunch break. That session  
 8 will be predominantly, if not entirely, in restricted  
 9 session for good reason with you, but that will be  
 10 explained by Mr Greaney Queen's Counsel when we resume.  
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we're coming back at 2.45 for very  
 12 good reasons?  
 13 MR DE LA POER: Indeed.  
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.  
 15 (1.11 pm)  
 16 (The lunch adjournment)  
 17 (2.45 pm)  
 18 (The inquiry sat in a restricted session)  
 19 (5.34 pm)  
 20 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
 21 on Thursday, 29 April 2021)  
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