

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 136

July 20, 2021

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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Tuesday, 20 July 2021

1
2 (9.30 am)
3 (Delay in proceedings)
4 (9.42 am)
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr de la Poer.
6 MR DE LA POER: Sir, good morning. We are joined by
7 Ms Fallon. May we begin, please, by her being sworn.
8 MS ROCHELLE FALLON (affirmed)
9 Questions from MR DE LA POER
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Have a seat. Would you like to pull
11 your seat up as close as you can to the microphones?
12 Then I won't keep saying to you, "Would you speak up",
13 or anything like that, which I know is very distracting
14 for witnesses.
15 You look very nervous to me. I would say there is
16 absolutely nothing to be nervous about, I find that
17 normally doesn't help, but there really is nothing to be
18 nervous about. We are all just here to find out what
19 happened and no one is here to criticise you. All
20 right?
21 A. Thank you.
22 MR DE LA POER: Could you please state your full name?
23 A. Rochelle Fallon.
24 Q. I'm going to do exactly what the chairman just said,
25 people find it distracting, I'm so sorry to do so.

1

1 Could I ask you to keep your voice up to the absolute
2 maximum level you're able to?
3 A. Sorry.
4 Q. You have no need to apologise to me at all.
5 Ms Fallon, did you join North West Fire Control in
6 June 2014?
7 A. I did.
8 Q. Did you undertake the phase 1 of the training over a
9 4-week period?
10 A. I did.
11 Q. And did that teach you, among other things, how to use
12 the systems and how to follow action plans?
13 A. That's right.
14 Q. Did you complete the phase 2 training in early 2016?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. And were you signed off as having successfully completed
17 that in May 2016?
18 A. Yes, I think so.
19 Q. By May 2017, had you completed the phase 3 training?
20 A. I had completed my workbook, but it hadn't been fully
21 signed off by an ops manager.
22 Q. I think it had been signed off by a team leader; is that
23 right?
24 A. Yes.
25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you all hear at the back all right?

2

1 Thank you very much.
2 MR DE LA POER: And you were awaiting a sign-off by an
3 operations manager?
4 A. That's right.
5 Q. At that stage of your career development, were you
6 permitted to mentor those who were on phase 1?
7 A. Yes, because I'd completed the phase book.
8 Q. Were you permitted to supervise people during their very
9 initial period of training?
10 A. During the phase 1 for training?
11 Q. I think we probably need to be clear about our language
12 here. We had heard that there was a period of time when
13 control room operators needed to have someone sitting
14 beside them listening in to their calls.
15 A. Yes, I was able to do that.
16 Q. You were able to do that?
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. Is that the entirety of the 4 weeks of phase 1 or just
19 for a period of it?
20 A. No, the 4 weeks of phase 1 is training in a classroom
21 and that's done by a trainer. After they've completed
22 the 4 weeks in the classroom, they go on to the control
23 room floor where they sit with a member of staff who
24 mentors them for another four tours or four lots of
25 shifts.

3

1 Q. So for those that had completed that classroom training
2 who were now in the control room but under direct
3 supervision, you were able to be one of those
4 supervisors?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. We'll come back to that in just a moment, but let's just
7 speak about JESIP for a moment. Did you undertake JESIP
8 training in March 2015?
9 A. I don't remember the dates.
10 Q. I've taken that from your statements.
11 A. That's right then.
12 Q. I'm sure I'm correct about that. I think what you say
13 in your witness statement is that you believed that it
14 was in a PowerPoint format?
15 A. I think so, yes.
16 Q. And that you had reached that conclusion because you
17 weren't signed off directly by Tessa Tracey?
18 A. That's right.
19 Q. But your position as at when you gave your statement,
20 which is very recently, was that you can't remember much
21 now about the content of that training?
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you want to see your statement --
23 A. I do have it.
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll refer you to the paragraph if need
25 be because obviously it's very important that you are

4

1 verifying what's in there. Sometimes there can be
 2 mistakes in statements. All right? If you want to see
 3 it we'll tell you where it is.
 4 MR DE LA POER: What you also tell us in the statement,
 5 again we can turn it up if you want, is that you did
 6 JESIP e-learning in both 2016 and 2017.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. One matter that I want to ask you about in particular is
 9 you said that, following the Westminster Bridge attack
 10 in March of 2017, you did refresher training.
 11 A. I just re-read the PowerPoint myself. I didn't actually
 12 have any refresher training, I just re-read it.
 13 Q. You refreshed your own memory from it?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that suggested to you that you
 16 should do it or was it something you did off your own
 17 bat?
 18 A. No, it was just --
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You just decided to do it?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 22 MR DE LA POER: You thought to yourself: it would be useful
 23 to me to look back on that training just to remind
 24 myself of the principles?
 25 A. Yes.

5

1 Q. Can you turn up paragraph 4 of your witness statement?
 2 We're going to read this along together. I think it's
 3 about halfway down the paragraph. The part that begins:
 4 "At the time of the Manchester attack..."
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. We'll read along and you can confirm that this is what
 7 you said and then I'll ask you a couple of questions
 8 about it:
 9 "At the time of the Manchester attack I believe my
 10 knowledge of JESIP was good with sharing information
 11 being at the heart of it as I understood it. Looking
 12 back at the training now for JESIP, it is far better
 13 than it was before the attack with protected time to
 14 complete it and more in-depth content. Prior to the
 15 attack, I hadn't had any previous scenario-based
 16 training but I am in the process of writing some bespoke
 17 scenario-based training for NWFC for future roll out."
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's specifically JESIP training,
 19 isn't it --
 20 A. Yes, it is.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- that you're writing it for?
 22 Thank you.
 23 MR DE LA POER: I want to unpack a little bit of that.
 24 I think you'll say this generally later about the
 25 training, but at the time of the arena attack, you felt

6

1 that you had been well trained?
 2 A. Yes, I felt I understood the PowerPoint.
 3 Q. But that having received further training and having had
 4 the experience of being involved in the control room as
 5 the response to the attack unfolded, you have identified
 6 that you feel that there were improvements that could be
 7 made?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And you are part of the process of improvement in the
 10 sense that you are writing some of the training
 11 materials; is that correct?
 12 A. That's right.
 13 Q. Just so far as that is concerned, what support or
 14 training have you been given by North West Fire Control
 15 that equips you to be the author of training materials?
 16 A. This year in the refresher training, which I think was
 17 January or February -- we have refresher training each
 18 year but this year it was solely sort of focused on
 19 JESIP -- it went into a lot more detail and it was just
 20 much better. That is the only additional information
 21 that I've received sort of thing, but I had a discussion
 22 with Sarah Wilson and obviously it's something that's
 23 quite interesting following the MEN. I said that
 24 I would like to get involved in writing some training,
 25 so I'm in the middle of doing two -- I don't know...

7

1 It's technically not published or anything so it
 2 wouldn't really be operationally sensitive, but
 3 Greater Manchester and Lancashire, as they're the two
 4 biggest sort of brigades that we cover, and it's
 5 basically just what I would perceive as quite realistic
 6 ways that we would receive that information through to
 7 the control room and what we would do in an MTFA-type
 8 attack. But I haven't finished it yet, there's quite
 9 a lot involved in it.
 10 Q. Do you think you have been adequately supported by North
 11 West Fire Control in terms of ensuring that your
 12 knowledge was sufficient to be able to write a scenario
 13 that your colleagues will learn from?
 14 A. I think my knowledge is sufficient for that, but
 15 I expect that somebody will definitely look over it and
 16 make amendments as they see fit.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So someone will have to approve what you
 18 did no doubt and look at it?
 19 A. Absolutely.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So when do you think you'll get your
 21 first draft finished so someone else can have a look at
 22 it?
 23 A. I don't know. The delay -- I had some unpaid time off
 24 from work and I needed to use the system because they've
 25 asked me to incorporate some of the new rendezvous

8

1 points —

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, okay.

3 A. — and things into the training and because I wasn't in

4 work to do that and I've just been doing it at home,

5 I've sort of not done that part to it. So I will get it

6 done, but it's just been sort of in my own time when

7 I've had chance.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

9 MR DE LA POER: What you also say is that since the attack,

10 you have completed multi-agency training exercises but

11 you had not done so before; is that correct?

12 A. Yes, that's right.

13 Q. Did you find participation in multi-agency training

14 exercises to be helpful?

15 A. Somewhat.

16 Q. Can I just ask you to explain what you mean by

17 "somewhat"?

18 A. I believe that we know what we're doing with the

19 information and we've done some cascade exercises, but

20 when you cascade the information, other services don't

21 know what we're talking about. For example, when we've

22 passed a METHANE message to the gas board, for

23 example —

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: To, sorry?

25 A. The gas board. They've asked us where the gas is coming

9

1 from. It's like, no, it's a type of message that we're

2 sending, and they've really thought we were talking

3 about methane —

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you call it a METHANE message, they

5 think there's actually methane gas around?

6 A. Yes.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, okay.

8 MR DE LA POER: So not a complete success in terms of

9 improving your understanding but some use to you?

10 A. Yes.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Presumably you do it with the police and

12 NWAS as well, do you?

13 A. We do.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And hopefully they do understand what

15 a METHANE message is.

16 A. Yes. I think there might have been just the odd

17 operator that's perhaps not — been quite new or

18 something, but that was the feedback from operators that

19 were doing it at the time, that they didn't know what we

20 was talking about.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. So it's still not

22 universally known, you think, across control rooms

23 what's meant by a METHANE message?

24 A. Yes. I don't know whether they just didn't know about

25 the exercising — it wasn't a no-notice exercise as far

10

1 as I'm aware, so I would have expected them to, but the

2 feedback was that people just didn't know what we were

3 talking about — and it wasn't just gas, it was police

4 and ambulance. Not every time.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How long ago is this?

6 A. Probably in the last 12 months. I couldn't really give

7 you a date, if I'm honest. I can't remember.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

9 MR DE LA POER: Can I just ask you, please, about

10 Operation Plato and MTFAs. Do you think you knew what

11 Operation Plato was on 22 May 2017?

12 A. I recall asking what it meant that night. It's not to

13 say that I wouldn't have heard it in my training, but

14 there are a lot of code words and some of them are

15 classified and I recall asking what it was because

16 I wasn't sure.

17 Q. What about the initialism MTFAs? Did you know what that

18 was?

19 A. I knew what that stood for, yes.

20 Q. You knew what that stood for and did you know that

21 either Operation Plato or MTFAs might have a relevant

22 action plan associated with it?

23 A. I don't know if I knew that at the time or whether I've

24 just learnt that since, if I'm honest.

25 Q. Had you received any training in using an action plan

11

1 relevant to an Operation Plato or MTFAs scenario?

2 A. I don't think I had, no.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just help me: we know there's an

4 "Operation Plato — standby" card, which it doesn't

5 sound like you'd come across before that —

6 A. At that time, no.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that's good because Platos are

8 inevitably, hopefully, going to be rare. So is this the

9 situation, that you could come across in your work on

10 a daily basis an action card, which comes up as a result

11 of the information supplied to you, that you have never

12 been aware of before?

13 A. It does happen. You do get into the habit of — if

14 somebody says something on a radio message and you

15 think, I've not heard of that before, normally you would

16 ask or just search for an action plan for it using the

17 keywords, and quite often find it.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you would search for, if you're given

19 the appropriate information, a "Plato — standby"

20 card — so if you'd heard, say, that Plato had been

21 declared, you'd look it up, but you wouldn't necessarily

22 know actually what it was, you would just follow the

23 instructions on the card?

24 A. Yes.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

12

1 MR DE LA POER: Bringing all this together in terms of your
 2 training, and here I'm just lifting it from your
 3 statement, but I'm sure you won't need to look it up --
 4 say if do you -- that at the time, generally speaking,
 5 you thought that you were adequately trained for what
 6 you needed to do, but you now believe that you needed
 7 more practical experience in dealing with incidents of
 8 the scale and type you were confronted with?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Can you just explain what you mean by that?
 11 A. I think in this -- well, I think the only way to really
 12 learn the job of a control room operator is to actually
 13 do it and to experience different incident types and
 14 work through them. So if we'd had some practical
 15 training, I think that would have probably been much,
 16 much better.
 17 That's not to say -- I mean, we still knew what to
 18 do, like any information sharing, but in that situation,
 19 I don't know, it just ... It just didn't happen, really.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The more practice you've had at
 21 something, the better you'll get, won't you, hopefully?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 MR DE LA POER: We're going to have a look at some
 24 individual examples, as you know, and we'll see if
 25 we can understand what was going through your mind at

13

1 a particular time to help the chairman understand your
 2 point of view about it.
 3 Can we turn now to the events of 22 May 2017. We
 4 know from other evidence that Michelle Gregson was in
 5 a side office, off the control room, at the time that
 6 Mr Ellis was talking the call from GMP.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Were you in there with Michelle Gregson?
 9 A. Yes, I was.
 10 Q. Was Vanessa Ennis also in there?
 11 A. That's right, yes.
 12 Q. Why were the three of you together in that room, please?
 13 A. It was Vanessa's last shift of being uncounted and we
 14 was in the office to basically go through her sign-off.
 15 Q. When you say uncounted, what we've heard from
 16 Michelle Gregson and other people is that for the
 17 purpose of meeting the minimum staffing level on that
 18 shift, Vanessa Ennis didn't count because of the stage
 19 she was at in her training; is that correct?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. But is what you're telling us that this was the last
 22 occasion, subject to being successfully signed off, that
 23 she would be in that position and that she would be able
 24 to be somebody who was operating without direct
 25 supervision in the following shift?

14

1 A. That's right.
 2 Q. Had the discussion with Michelle Gregson reached a point
 3 where Vanessa Ennis had been signed off?
 4 A. No, I'd had a discussion with Michelle beforehand
 5 because she'd asked me, obviously, to provide feedback
 6 about how Vanessa had performed and taken instructions
 7 and things like that, but I think we'd only been in the
 8 room for about 5 or 10 minutes before Lisa came in.
 9 Q. Just before you came in today, I showed you a document
 10 which is dated 19 May 2017. We're very grateful to
 11 North West Fire Control for providing it as part of
 12 their disclosure duties. So that everybody can
 13 understand what this document is, it's headed "Notes of
 14 informal meeting". The attendees are recorded as
 15 Michelle Gregson and Alison Harrison and it's dated
 16 19 May 2017. I make clear, there's no suggestion that
 17 you were present at this meeting. I'm just going to
 18 read the text that I showed you beforehand so that
 19 everybody knows what I'm asking you about and then just
 20 ask you a couple of questions about it.
 21 Under the heading "Key discussion points", it reads:
 22 "Vanessa Ennis: Michelle feels she's doing okay
 23 based on what she has witnessed, however does not have
 24 the opportunities that she should have to observe her
 25 and write up her end of tour document reviews. Michelle

15

1 is worried about putting the control room in a [it says
 2 'venerable' but I'm sure it means 'vulnerable']
 3 situation due to counting her based on not being able to
 4 assess her."
 5 That's dated 3 days before. As I said before,
 6 there's no indication that you were present at that
 7 meeting.
 8 Did you know that Michelle Gregson held the views
 9 that are recorded there?
 10 A. No. No, I don't remember her ever saying anything about
 11 that. She just asked me how I felt that she was
 12 performing.
 13 Q. Was it your view that Ms Ennis could be signed off that
 14 night?
 15 A. Yes -- well, it would have been from the tour after,
 16 just because of how it worked. We already had the staff
 17 in and if she would have been counted that night,
 18 technically we would have been one over which meant
 19 someone could take leave so it would always be from the
 20 next tour.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You just felt she was good enough to do
 22 the job on her own unsupervised?
 23 A. She was, yes.
 24 MR DE LA POER: Sorry, when I said from that night I didn't
 25 mean that night but subsequently.

16

1 A. Sorry.
 2 Q. It was my poor question.
 3 We'll come back to Vanessa Ennis at the relevant
 4 moment, but the meeting that you had, which you have
 5 told us was only 5 minutes in, was interrupted by
 6 Lisa Owen; is that correct?
 7 A. That's right.
 8 Q. Did you hear any conversation between Lisa Owen and
 9 Michelle Gregson in relation to what they were going to
 10 do?
 11 A. No. When Lisa came in, she said that there'd been --
 12 I can't remember exactly the word she said -- an
 13 incident at the Manchester Evening News Arena and we all
 14 just left the office, so there wasn't any further
 15 discussion there. Michelle went back to the top desk
 16 and Vanessa and I went back to the Cheshire/Cumbria pod.
 17 Q. You tell us in your witness statement, and we can see it
 18 for ourselves on the log if we wish to, that you viewed
 19 the log 9074 that Mr Ellis had created in the course of
 20 his conversation with GMP at 22.40.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Why did you do that?
 23 A. To look at what the incident was.
 24 Q. My question wasn't in any way intended to be
 25 a suggestion you'd done anything wrong, it was just for

17

1 interest. So even though you weren't participating in
 2 the call, you'd heard that something serious was going
 3 on and presumably you thought to yourself, "I need to
 4 find out what's being said"?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You would need to because you may be
 7 answering further calls, so the more you knew about it
 8 presumably the better.
 9 A. That would be how -- everybody should have looked in the
 10 log to know what was happening.
 11 MR DE LA POER: That's really what I was going to ask you:
 12 had you been trained that in the event that you became
 13 aware that something very significant was happening,
 14 that if you were free to do so you should acquaint
 15 yourself with as much information as possible about that
 16 in case you took a call? Is that part of your training
 17 or was that just your instinct on the night?
 18 A. No, that is part of the training. You tend to stick to
 19 the brigade that you're looking after, but for something
 20 like what Lisa had come in and said it was about, you
 21 would look in that because you were inevitably going to
 22 get calls about it.
 23 Q. That is in fact exactly what happened, because within
 24 120 seconds of you looking at the log, you received
 25 a call from GMP, didn't you?

18

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. What we're going to do is we're just going to listen to
 3 that and follow along on the transcript. It's a short
 4 call. We've not heard it before. Mr Lopez, the audio
 5 is {INQ004346/1} and the transcript is {INQ001136/1}.
 6 (Audio played)
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you tell me why they need to know
 8 your log number and you need to know theirs? Is that
 9 just routine?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 12 MR DE LA POER: If we now have a look at the log entry that
 13 you created, {INQ008376/4}.
 14 Your operator number was 50074; is that correct?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. If we look at the third from the bottom, we can see at
 17 22.42.06 you have entered much of the information that
 18 you received in that call; do you agree?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. I know because you dealt with this in your witness
 21 statement -- we'll just leave that on screen for the
 22 moment -- that one of the comments that was made to you
 23 by the GMP operator in the course of that call was to
 24 indicate that the supervisors were, from what it looks
 25 like, going to the RVP. That appears to be what they

19

1 were telling you, although we can look back at it, and
 2 also:
 3 "All our officers going as well."
 4 Do you recall hearing that as we played it across
 5 there?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. There is no criticism implied by my question, but just
 8 to try and understand it, do you agree that that
 9 information about what the police were doing and where
 10 they were going wasn't entered into the log by you?
 11 A. That's right, it wasn't.
 12 Q. Having had a chance to think about it, look back on it,
 13 remind yourself of that call, the log entry, why do you
 14 think you didn't include that information in the log?
 15 A. It just mustn't have registered because there's things
 16 that I've put on that log that, just in that bit there,
 17 that are really not relevant, like flats reporting loud
 18 noises. I just mustn't have registered it.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just understand physically how
 20 you're doing this? Are you typing at the same time as
 21 you're getting the call and putting it down?
 22 A. Yes, that's right.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is not meant to be a rude question,
 24 but how good a typist are you?
 25 A. Usually quite good.

20

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just from a speed point of view.
 2 A. Speed, good. Spelling can be --
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that part of your training too, that
 4 you need to be good at speed typing?
 5 A. Yes, you do.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Actually if you had heard it, getting it
 7 down in the time wouldn't have been a problem --
 8 A. No.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- if it had registered with you? Is it
 10 something which would have seemed to you at the time to
 11 have been important, "All our officers are going there"?
 12 A. Now I hear it, yes, but I can't -- I mustn't have...
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's all right. But it would have
 14 been something that you would have regarded
 15 (overspeaking)?
 16 A. It would be significant information, absolutely, yes.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 18 MR DE LA POER: Thank you, Mr Lopez, you can take that down.
 19 We know that following that call and the entry that
 20 you made there, which is almost precisely
 21 contemporaneous to the call, you spoke to Watch Manager
 22 Waterhouse; is that right?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Was he part of the special response team?
 25 A. Yes.

21

1 Q. Was the purpose of his call, as he explained it to you,
 2 he wanted to be released from the incident he was on so
 3 that he would be available to be deployed to the arena?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. So he'd clearly heard from another source about the
 6 incident at the arena and he was communicating to you,
 7 "I want to be part of that response but at the moment
 8 I'm committed to another incident"?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And do you have the authority as a control room operator
 11 to revoke somebody's mobilisation to one incident in
 12 order to mobilise them to a different incident?
 13 A. Not if they're in attendance, no. We can redirect
 14 a resource to a higher priority incident if they are
 15 mobile to it, but, no, I think that would have to come
 16 from an operational officer.
 17 Q. Did you in fact try to transfer Watch Manager Waterhouse
 18 to Station Manager Berry?
 19 A. I did, but it didn't go through, I believe.
 20 Q. Was your intention, when trying to transfer him, so that
 21 somebody with the necessary authority could make the
 22 decision about where he should be deployed?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Just help us with how you were trying to deal with that
 25 situation. You tried to transfer the watch manager to

22

1 Station Manager Berry: did the phone go dead, could you
 2 just not get through to Station Manager Berry's
 3 telephone? What were the mechanics of what was going
 4 on?
 5 A. I can't really remember. I think it just disappeared on
 6 my ICCS, so it didn't appear to have gone through. So
 7 that's when I just rang him instead.
 8 Q. Your call with the watch manager dropped, did it?
 9 A. Yes. When you transfer it, it goes in a different sort
 10 of way and then it'll flash behind another tab and it
 11 wasn't flashing, so I figured that it had just
 12 disconnected.
 13 Q. Having been unsuccessful, did you follow that up with an
 14 attempt to speak directly with Station Manager Berry?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Let's have a look at some of the detail of what you said
 17 on that call. {INQ041473/12}. This is the sequence of
 18 communications kindly prepared by North West Fire
 19 Control.
 20 We can see the entry, 22.44. Mr Berry didn't answer
 21 your call and you were diverted to his answerphone; is
 22 that correct?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. There, we can see that you told him that you had
 25 Andy Waterhouse on the telephone, asking if they can be

23

1 released from this incident due to the incident at the
 2 Manchester MEN:
 3 "We've just literally had a call from ambulance now
 4 stating that people are being shot. Can you contact
 5 with control or [operationally sensitive] just as soon
 6 as you get this so we can make arrangements?"
 7 A. Yes.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: At some stage, and I'm not asking anyone
 9 to do this now, can I be informed what the operationally
 10 sensitive word is there?
 11 MR DE LA POER: The first one I think is a reference to the
 12 fire station that Mr Waterhouse is based at.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It was the other one I had in mind,
 14 really. If someone can give me a note, so I can be
 15 reminded of that, that would be good.
 16 MR DE LA POER: We can certainly do that.
 17 If we look at the time, 22.44, we know by this stage
 18 that your colleague, Joanne Haslam, had taken a call
 19 from NWS Control.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Had you looked on the log in order to see information
 22 which had been passed to her by NWS that she'd
 23 recorded?
 24 A. I would have looked on the log, whether it had have
 25 shown up on mine without me refreshing it, I don't know.

24

1 Q. What you said there is:
 2 "We've just literally had a call from ambulance
 3 now..."
 4 Which appears to be a reference to Ms Haslam's call,
 5 because, so far as we know, that was the only call NWSA
 6 made into North West Fire Control during this period.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. So that appears to be the explanation, and obviously
 9 you have passed on one piece of information which is
 10 potentially highly significant, the fact that it was
 11 recorded that people are being shot?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Can I just ask you about other information. Is it
 14 right, because you were giving Mr Berry that
 15 information, that you had in mind that he needed to be
 16 brought up to date with information as part of your
 17 message to him?
 18 A. Yes. There's obviously that information and the
 19 information from Andy Waterhouse as well. But when you
 20 leave a message, they don't listen to them, they just
 21 ring you back, usually, so it was just — I just asked
 22 him to ring back, really.
 23 Q. We'll deal with that answer in two parts, if we can.
 24 Firstly, obviously the purpose of your call was because
 25 of Mr Waterhouse, so you were trying to fix that problem

25

1 that Mr Waterhouse had telephoned you about, namely
 2 could he be reallocated. But clearly, part of what you
 3 found yourself doing was giving Mr Berry an update.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. On what basis did you select what information you would
 6 give him by way of an update? Was it literally the
 7 latest entry on the log or was there some other process
 8 you went through to decide what information you would
 9 include?
 10 A. It would have just been what I'd seen and what
 11 information I thought was important.
 12 Q. The second part is what you said about the fact that
 13 they don't listen to them anyway. Is that information
 14 that has been fed back to you as part of your time as
 15 a control room operator that answerphone messages are
 16 not generally listened to but rather that GMFRS officers
 17 will call you back?
 18 A. It is not just Manchester officers. If you leave
 19 a voicemail message with any officer from the four
 20 brigades we cover and they just generally tend to ring
 21 you back, so I try to put the really relevant things on,
 22 but it was more just: call us back and we can update you
 23 then.
 24 Q. We can see on the next entry on the page that we are
 25 looking at that whilst you are or at least about the

26

1 time you are calling Mr Berry, Ms Ennis is on the
 2 telephone to BTP. Do you see that?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Plainly, if you are dialling Mr Berry, thinking about
 5 what you're going to say, looking at the log, leaving
 6 your message, whilst you are doing that you're not in
 7 a position to directly supervise Ms Ennis; is that fair?
 8 A. That's right, yes.
 9 Q. So bearing in mind that up to the point before the first
 10 call came in you were supervising her, and I appreciate
 11 there was a pause then when you went in to speak to
 12 Michelle Gregson, why was it that you were not
 13 supervising her at this stage of the evening?
 14 A. When we came out of the office, Michelle and Lisa went
 15 straight to the top desk and we went back to our
 16 positions and I just said, "I'm not going to be able to
 17 listen to your calls, I'm going to have to take calls
 18 myself", and I just said, "If anybody tells you
 19 anything, just tell everybody".
 20 Q. Are you aware of the evidence Michelle Gregson has given
 21 that she instructed Vanessa Ennis not to take calls?
 22 A. Yes, that's something I've learned through the inquiry.
 23 Q. So at the time in the control room, were you aware of
 24 there being any instruction for Ms Ennis to stay out of
 25 taking calls?

27

1 A. No.
 2 Q. Your instruction to her as her supervisor, or at least
 3 her supervisor earlier in the evening, was: you can take
 4 calls, just make sure you tell everybody?
 5 A. I didn't specifically say to take calls, but I just
 6 assumed that she would and I just said, "If anyone tells
 7 you anything, just tell everybody". It never... It
 8 didn't really occur to me to ask Michelle and Lisa if
 9 they wanted Vanessa to take calls or sit back or if they
 10 wanted me to mentor her. It just seemed stupid, really,
 11 to me to have somebody that could take calls listening
 12 to somebody that was very inexperienced.
 13 Q. A difficult question because obviously hindsight is what
 14 it is, but trying to strip that out and ignoring for
 15 a moment how she dealt with those calls, I'm sure you've
 16 followed some of the evidence in relation to how she
 17 dealt with those calls, was it your view that night that
 18 she was capable of competently dealing with calls?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: She was going to be signed off that
 21 night, was she, so she could do it on the next shift?
 22 A. Yes. That's why I didn't really think it would be
 23 an issue at all. It never entered my head that it would
 24 be. Up until that point, she'd been — she was really
 25 good, she had previous Fire Service experience, and she

28

1 was very receptive to feedback and she was really quite
 2 good.
 3 MR DE LA POER: Let's continue through our chronology. We
 4 do not need to look at the detail of it, but we can
 5 acknowledge at that 22.48, you were in touch with the
 6 Air Unit; is that right?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we have the next page, sorry?
 9 MR DE LA POER: I wasn't going to turn it up, in fact, sir.
 10 Just to acknowledge that. We can go to page 21, please,
 11 Mr Lopez {INQ041473/21}.
 12 22.52, the call between Vanessa Ennis and Station
 13 Manager Berry. Again, she was sitting near you. Were
 14 you aware of her speaking to the duty NILO that night?
 15 A. No.
 16 Q. Bearing in mind her level of experience, I appreciate
 17 that you felt she was competent to deal with calls, but
 18 the duty NILO had a very special position that night.
 19 Do you recognise that as a description of his position
 20 that night, that it --
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. It was a particularly important position. Do you think
 23 it was appropriate for her to be speaking to him, in
 24 other words she was competent for one call, she was
 25 competent for all of them, or given his particular

29

1 special role on the night, do you think that her
 2 inexperience meant that she should have passed that on?
 3 A. If she was competent to take a call, a fire call or an
 4 admin call, it's all the same. It doesn't always come
 5 up with the call signs, it depends on what number they
 6 ring through on, so you don't always know who you're
 7 going to speak to. But she obviously should have passed
 8 that information on, but she was obviously very nervous
 9 as well. But I didn't know that she was on that call,
 10 I don't... Also, where we were sat as well in the room,
 11 on CROPs 13 and 14, there's a being PDU behind us --
 12 it's been boxed in now, but it was very, very noisy.
 13 Q. PDU, sorry?
 14 A. That's what it was called on it. It was some computer
 15 thing and it was just -- it made a lot of noise. It is
 16 difficult -- well, it was difficult to hear from that
 17 part of the room anyway over the PDU. Like I say, it's
 18 been boxed in in the last couple of months now because
 19 it was so noisy.
 20 Q. But that meant that even though you were sitting close
 21 to each other, you weren't necessarily aware of the
 22 detail of what she was saying on the telephone call?
 23 A. That's right.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we go back to your previous call and
 25 Mr Waterhouse saying he wanted to be released and you

30

1 spoke to Mr Berry about that.
 2 MR DE LA POER: Answerphone message, sir, {INQ041472/12}.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Don't let's bother to look at it,
 4 but I have now been told what the missing word is and it
 5 is the same as the other one which deal with the
 6 location where the SRT was based. You got no response
 7 or as far as you know on the log there was no response
 8 from Mr Berry about that. Would you just assume that he
 9 would have got in touch with the station?
 10 A. No, that's why I tried to ring him.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know you tried to ring him, but after
 12 that, after you rang him, tried to ring him once, you
 13 didn't actually carry on. Did you just assume that he
 14 would have got to the station?
 15 A. I think I just assumed that he would have spoken to
 16 a different officer. It wouldn't necessarily have had
 17 to have been Andy Berry. Usually they would just ring
 18 the duty GM or another officer.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. The problem with that in a way
 20 is responses are not going through the control room,
 21 they can go directly between officers, so actually the
 22 control room, you don't know what response there has
 23 been to the request. That's a very convoluted way of
 24 putting it, I'm sorry.
 25 A. Yes, that is definitely a problem that could arise from

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1 it, but usually what would happen is they would then
 2 tell us what they were doing, they would inform us of
 3 whether they had been allowed to or --
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 5 MR DE LA POER: You envisaged that Station Manager Berry
 6 would speak to Watch Manager Waterhouse, he would say,
 7 "Right, you're released to the MEN Arena incident", at
 8 which point Watch Manager Waterhouse would phone in to
 9 say, "I've been released, please attach me to that job"?
 10 A. Yes, exactly.
 11 Q. Thank you. Page 26, please {INQ041473/26}. We're going
 12 to deal with it in this way. I don't want to go into
 13 the detail of who the caller was or who it was about,
 14 I am sure you understand my reasons for doing so. Did
 15 you receive a call from a Lancashire Fire and Rescue
 16 Service officer, and that that person said what we can
 17 see recorded at 22.55, that they'd received information
 18 directly from the arena and that paramedics were needed
 19 there sharpish? You see the salient parts captured
 20 there. Did that then lead you to contact NWS?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. So you get the phone call in, there's a direct and
 23 explicit request for paramedics, and you then contacted
 24 the paramedics?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Can I just give people a warning about this one, that
2 there is a description of injury. It is not very
3 graphic, but I just give everybody a warning about that
4 so that if anyone wants to leave the room or turn off
5 their feed, they can do so. The total call length is
6 somewhere in the region of 2 minutes. So I will pause
7 while that is done.

8 Mr Lopez, can I just ask you to identify these at
9 this stage but not bring them up. It's the audio at
10 {INQ029808/1} and the transcript at {INQ001178/1}.
11 I stress this is a call between control rooms, sir, so
12 we're not going to hear sounds in the background, but
13 nonetheless having read it, I thought that people ought
14 to have a warning before it was played.

15 Mr Lopez, I hope I've given sufficient time. Can
16 I ask you, please, to bring up that transcript and play
17 the audio?

18 (Audio played)

19 We can see from the transcript that you just
20 exchange log numbers and the call finishes there.

21 One of the pieces of information that you conveyed
22 to NWAS was that you had recorded that the ambulances
23 were directed to the booking office.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You heard yourself saying that. So if we just look at

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1 what your information was at this time and not to
2 underestimate the fact that this is a fast-moving
3 incident and things are being updated: you'd spoken to
4 GMP and they had say officers going to the scene, but
5 that hadn't registered with you and you have a degree of
6 confidence about that because you hadn't put it on the
7 log. But you did know by 22.57 that ambulances were
8 being sent to the booking office because you'd seen that
9 on the log and you were able to tell NWAS that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Is that fair?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Again, from the process of being in the position you
14 were in as a control room operator, is that information
15 that you would have held in your mind as significant or
16 was it something that simply registered in the moment of
17 that call and then you just moved on to other things?
18 That may seem like a --

19 A. No, I understand your question and it's something that
20 I've thought about. At the time I really couldn't tell
21 you. I don't remember. I don't think it's really
22 registered that much. I think... I think I was sort of
23 just in shock from the whole incident that was
24 happening. But somebody's put that on the log and I've
25 read it, so that's -- it's -- I thought to say it then.

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1 Q. From the point of view of how things might be done
2 better in the future, you're in that highly stressful
3 situation, you've taken the time and the trouble to read
4 the log, you've seen what is said there, you have made
5 a selection of what you want from other information
6 because you're not reading everything on the log, and
7 you have said it out loud. So you have been through all
8 of those steps and yet, as we'll see in later
9 conversations, that's not something that was in your
10 mind to pass on?

11 A. No. With the ambulances going to the booking office,
12 somebody else had put that on. Whoever adds that
13 information on to the log should be informing people of
14 it. But because I happened to be on the call to
15 ambulance, I've passed that on.

16 Q. Perhaps we'll just come back to that because there is
17 one more call in this sequence from Lancashire, your
18 call to NWAS, and then if we go, please, Mr Lopez, to
19 {INQ041473/32}, back to the sequence of communications,
20 we can see that you then call GMP.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. That's quite shortly after your call with NWAS ends.
23 Was that part of a sequence that you had decided,
24 following the information that you'd got in from
25 Lancashire, or was there some other reason why you

35

1 phoned GMP at that point?

2 A. I was informing them where the casualties were located.

3 Q. So information comes in from Lancashire, first call to
4 NWAS to tell them that, and then you were passing that
5 information on, sharing it with the GMP control room as
6 well?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Is that sequence a good example, would you say, of your
9 training in action, that you'd been given some
10 information and you were sharing it immediately with
11 partner agencies?

12 A. Yes. But I think I've... I think on a lot of my calls
13 that night, I think I got hung up on the information
14 that I was dealing with specifically at that moment.

15 Q. I was going to ask you exactly about that, because
16 we can see that extract of the call there, the relevant
17 part. What is apparent from that transcript is you
18 don't ask them, "Are there police on scene?", you don't
19 say, "Do you have an FCP?", you don't say, "Do you have
20 commanders on the scene?", things like that you aren't
21 recorded as having said. Had you been trained that when
22 you were speaking to other control rooms, passing on
23 information, that you should also be seeking
24 information?

25 A. Yes. And generally, you would. I honestly don't know

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1 why I didn't.

2 Q. So although would you say that it's a good example of

3 you passing on the information that you have been given,

4 there were perhaps other aspects of these calls,

5 particularly the GMP call, where it wasn't in your mind

6 to do what you thought you would otherwise do?

7 A. Yes. I don't know why.

8 Q. Let's move forward to the call with Group Manager

9 Meakin, {INQ041473/37}.

10 Again, I know that you've had an opportunity to

11 review this and North West Fire Control have added

12 in the right-hand column information that was available

13 on the log that wasn't passed on, so we can go over the

14 page {INQ041473/38}. We've been through this call with

15 Group Manager Meakin and I'm sure you that you readily

16 accept that the information identified by North West

17 Fire Control, firstly, was available to you on the log?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And secondly didn't feature in your call with Group

20 Manager Meakin. I suppose the question really is:

21 looking back on it, and the position you were in, why do

22 you think you didn't pass that information on to Group

23 Manager Meakin?

24 A. When I've listened back to my calls and then followed

25 what I've written -- well, what was written on the log

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1 and what I've read out, I can tell that I'm reading the

2 log. But there's things on the log that I've missed

3 out. The way that you see the logs, how it's written

4 there, it doesn't display like that, it's on a screen

5 about that big (indicating).

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you just hold it up so people can

7 see the dimensions.

8 A. It's about that big (indicating). You can open the page

9 up to go into a bigger page, but it often takes a long

10 time loading. You can use a filter to search for things

11 like "informative". So I'm just -- I don't use it

12 because everything that was put on the log wasn't put on

13 as an informative, it was just free type, so there would

14 have been no filtering. But there's a lot of irrelevant

15 information on it, it's all system-generated nonsense,

16 really. So I think when I've been reading it, I've not

17 seen everything. It's easy to miss --

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The log is not easy as an operator to

19 use in effect to do what you want, to read it and get

20 out the information you need to pass on?

21 A. No, it's not at all.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Has that been changed?

23 A. It's been raised.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's been raised. But has it been

25 changed?

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1 A. No.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you still find them difficult to

3 read?

4 A. It can be. I mean...

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's obviously not every call that's

6 going to be difficult. When you've got this sort of

7 emergency going on with lots of things going on the log,

8 is that when it becomes difficult?

9 A. It does in incidents like this because a lot of

10 information on the logs is because people were going

11 into the log that much, it stamps it every time someone

12 goes into it, then information gets lost and it flicks

13 up and down when you try to scroll through it.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: From reading your statement,

15 I understand when you're trying to read through it and

16 you're scrolling down in it, if someone enters something

17 on the log it flicks to the bottom?

18 A. Yes, but it doesn't always update -- like a brown banner

19 will appear at the top and I think it will be say about

20 it being updated but it's tiny and you don't always

21 notice it and you do have to refresh the log to get that

22 information.

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.

24 A. So I don't...

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So not ideal as far as you're concerned?

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1 A. No, it's not. You can open it up to the bigger page,

2 like I say, so it does have that feature. It's just --

3 to be fair, I still don't really use it now unless I'm

4 searching for an informative or if a stop message has

5 gone on it and it's not --

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because it takes time to load up?

7 A. Yes.

8 MR DE LA POER: Of course we shouldn't, should we, lose

9 sight of the fact that there's a specific purpose -- if

10 we go back to the previous page, Mr Lopez,

11 {INQ041473/37}, there's a specific purpose to your call,

12 isn't there, to Mr Meakin?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. That purpose wasn't necessarily to give him a complete

15 update about the log?

16 A. No, it was to ask him if he'd rang and just give him the

17 overview of what was happening, and because he was

18 mobilised as a NILO, so he is going to be liaising with

19 Andy Berry and the other NILO.

20 Q. Mr Levy?

21 A. Ben Levy, yes.

22 Q. The reason I raise that is just to see what your comment

23 is about how, when you're in a position where you're

24 calling someone for a specific purpose, whether you are

25 in fact taking the necessary steps to expand the log on

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1 to the more easy—to—read screen or whether in the middle
 2 of the conversation, if he says, "What information have
 3 you got?", you're put in the position where you have to
 4 just turn to the less accessible version. Does that
 5 make sense?
 6 A. Yes, but I should have taken my time with it and not...
 7 I should have given him that information and I haven't.
 8 I can't just — I'm not just going to blame the system
 9 for that. The information was there. If I'd taken the
 10 time to read through it ... I'm also conscious that he's
 11 getting into his car and going to be driving.
 12 Q. I was going to ask you about that because you do comment
 13 in your statement about — I hope this is the right
 14 word — the atmosphere of a conversation in that sort of
 15 situation. Do you understand what I mean by that?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. In terms of what the call recipient expects from you and
 18 how much pressure there is to provide information.
 19 Can you speak to that a little bit in terms of what your
 20 experience is about speaking to fire officers who are
 21 obviously in the process of mentally preparing and
 22 moving at speed to get to incidents?
 23 A. Yes. It's very rushed. It's like that with a lot of
 24 incidents though, like it just at the time felt like it
 25 — "Give me this information as quick as you can", and

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1 also trying to keep lines open because we were still
 2 operating as a control room for other incidents and
 3 things, so you're trying not to stay on the phone for
 4 very long. But yes, it's just rushed. We are trained,
 5 you know, in complete fairness, to take control of the
 6 calls and to take the time that you need, and obviously
 7 I should have done that.
 8 Q. If we can take that down, please, Mr Lopez, and just
 9 have a look at a call at 23.11, {INQ034353T/1}.
 10 This is a call at 23.11, so just shortly after your
 11 call with Mr Meakin. And it has a T on the end.
 12 This is a call with Area Manager Etches. It appears
 13 that he's called in and I just want to direct your
 14 attention, please, to 23.13 where he says, and I asked
 15 him about this:
 16 "All right. I ... We... had anything back from
 17 anywhere? I've just spoke to Dean Nankivell and
 18 obviously I think at the moment we've just got standbys
 19 at Philips Park."
 20 Doing the best you can, what did you understand him
 21 to be meaning when he said had we had anything back from
 22 anywhere? As he accepted, he doesn't in fact pause to
 23 let you answer that question, but he then goes on to say
 24 something else.
 25 A. Yes. Again, I don't remember that part of the call.

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1 I don't remember the call, to be honest, it was only
 2 when I've listened back to it ... But I would... That
 3 would be: give me an update about what's happening.
 4 Q. Do you think that that registered with you at the time?
 5 A. No, I think I've just moved on to the second part of his
 6 question where he's asked me about the rendezvous, where
 7 I've told him about the rendezvous point, rather.
 8 Q. Certainly that is following on from his comment about
 9 Philips Park, isn't it?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. We can take that down, thank you, Mr Lopez.
 12 You then open, don't you, the third log, as we're
 13 describing it, the CSR log, at 23.13.50?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. The evidence so far, and I just seek your comment on it,
 16 is to the effect that when the CSR is opened, it was
 17 standard practice at the time to open a separate log so
 18 that you could allocate officers to that location.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. We don't need to look at it, but it was potentially
 21 an important call, so I'll just ask you about it. At
 22 23.17, Vanessa Ennis speaks to BTP again and provides
 23 them with the Philips Park rendezvous point, saying
 24 that's where fire's going. Did you hear her on that
 25 call or have any recollection that she was making it?

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1 A. I don't have a recollection of any of Vanessa's calls
 2 that evening. I don't think we really spoke very much.
 3 It was just, like, full on.
 4 Q. Next, 23.25. We'll look at the call with Watch Manager
 5 Simister, {INQ041473/47}.
 6 We can see the call is summarised there and the
 7 salient piece of information I'm sure you will
 8 understand now is the fact that he's relaying that,
 9 although not by name, Nick Mottram's wife,
 10 Helen Mottram, is on scene.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. When he told you that, and we can see the language he
 13 uses, did that strike you as in any way surprising or
 14 significant, bearing in mind that minutes earlier you
 15 had been talking to Area Manager Etches about the fact
 16 that the Fire and Rescue Service were going to
 17 Philips Park, whereas you're being told here by Watch
 18 Manager Simister that there is a paramedic on the scene?
 19 A. At the time I think it was — I was more concentrating
 20 on the fact that he'd just said, "Can we have an update
 21 from a NILO?" We had information that the ambulances
 22 were at the scene anyway, so I don't think it would have
 23 struck me as particularly significant because I believed
 24 that the officers knew that. But I just — yeah, he
 25 just wanted an update from a NILO and I had a look where

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1 they were because I knew they were all en route to
 2 Philips Park.
 3 Q. We know from the log that you didn't make any entry
 4 which corresponds with that particular piece of
 5 information from Mr Simister. Again, doing the best you
 6 can looking back on it, why do you think you didn't add
 7 that fact to the log?
 8 A. There were things that I did add to the log that night
 9 that didn't appear. I did kind of go into it in my
 10 witness statement, but just to help you understand that,
 11 when you write on the incident log, if you then click
 12 off the text box to go on to the screen where it has the
 13 officers' call signs, because there was a lot of them,
 14 and I don't know the officers' call signs, all of them,
 15 off by heart, when you click back on to your message, it
 16 will allow you to continue typing on it, but it doesn't
 17 stamp the log. There were a few occasions when that
 18 happened that night because I remember being annoyed
 19 about it. But I couldn't tell you which messages it was
 20 because I didn't make any notes after this incident, so
 21 I don't know. That -- I would have put:
 22 "Call from Golf 16, asking for an update off
 23 a NILO."
 24 Q. The issue about you making an entry but it not loading
 25 on to the log or being stamped on to the log, is that

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1 something that you have raised?
 2 A. Yes, it's something that a lot of people have raised.
 3 I tend to work round it now where after every single
 4 message -- because if you notice it at the time, you
 5 just simply rewrite your message, but if you don't
 6 notice it, then you're not really supposed to listen to
 7 your calls again. You can do, there's a feature there
 8 for it, but I wouldn't have -- I've not rewritten any
 9 messages on, so I wouldn't have re-listened to
 10 anything. Now I just make sure control+A/control+C
 11 every message and if it doesn't go on, I've got it
 12 already on my clipboard to paste on to the log again.
 13 Q. But there hasn't been any effort to correct the system,
 14 despite the fact it has been raised, to avoid the
 15 problem happening in the first place?
 16 A. No. There's been a lot of system updates and, to be
 17 fair to NWFC, the system has massively improved since
 18 when I first started there. But there are still
 19 problems with it. I believe they have to go through --
 20 it's the company that built it and it takes time and
 21 they raise issues. I don't know enough about the
 22 background of it, but it's still a problem, yes.
 23 Q. In your experience, the effect of it, on the night, was
 24 that potentially important information that you were
 25 entering in accordance with your training had been given

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1 to you didn't end up on the log because of this glitch?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Moving at greater pace now through the chronology and
 4 not many more to do.
 5 At 23.44, we don't need to bring it up, did you get
 6 a call from Greater Manchester Police about the fact
 7 they were setting up the Silver room and they wanted
 8 a representative from the Fire and Rescue Service
 9 present?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Then we come to a sequence of calls involving Mr Levy
 12 {INQ041473/58}. Just dealing with it in summary form.
 13 I've given page 58, I think it must be {INQ041473/57}
 14 and we see the end of the call. We can see that at
 15 23.46, it involved Mr Berry as well, so he and Mr Levy
 16 are by this stage together.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. If you go over the page to {INQ041473/58} now we've got
 19 the context, we can see that Station Manager Berry
 20 asked:
 21 "Is there anything else? Have we got any further
 22 information at all? Anything confirmed so far?"
 23 And you reply about the fatalities. Again, as
 24 we have seen there's information that you haven't passed
 25 on, would you agree, in that call?

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1 A. Yes, before I could even look through the log, though,
 2 Ben Levy came on to the phone.
 3 Q. So before you could begin to answer that question,
 4 Mr Levy came on?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. He then gives you a specific direction, doesn't he,
 7 about speaking to GMP?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. So on this occasion, was it the case that the telephone
 10 call just took a different direction almost immediately
 11 after you'd been asked that question, meaning that you
 12 didn't provide any information from the log because you
 13 hadn't brought it up?
 14 A. I would have had the log in front of me, but I would
 15 have needed time to go through what was on there. But
 16 he asked the question -- Ben came to the phone
 17 straightaway and he asked a question and I just went and
 18 did what he asked me to do.
 19 Q. We see that you did indeed call GMP at 23.47. We saw
 20 there that Mr Levy asked for you to obtain an FCP. Do
 21 you think you knew what an FCP was on the night?
 22 A. No.
 23 Q. In fact, I think that we see in the course of one of
 24 your calls that when you're speaking about an FCP, you
 25 describe it as a sort of rendezvous point.

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1 A. That's what I assumed it was, yes.
 2 Q. The last call for us to consider any detail of is at
 3 23.50 and it's part of the sequence where Mr Levy gives
 4 you the instruction about, "Get me an FCP", you phone
 5 GMP at 23.47, and then you phone NNAS at 23.50.
 6 Can we please have that, Mr Lopez? {INQ004334/1}
 7 for the audio, and the transcript {INQ001158/1}.
 8 (Audio played)
 9 Doing the best you can, do you think by the time of
 10 this call you had received training on what an FCP was
 11 and you had just not been able to bring it to mind or do
 12 you think you had not had it explained to you?
 13 A. No, I hadn't. There was a few words that night that
 14 I hadn't heard, like the muster point. I just assumed
 15 they were old money, as they say, what they used to use
 16 in the brigades before they transferred. But no,
 17 I mean, I'm assuming it is a rendezvous point even now,
 18 but I've never had training on that.
 19 Q. The other part of this conversation for me to ask you
 20 about is you asked the question, as we can see at
 21 23.50.49:
 22 "So have you got ambulances on scene?"
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And the operative answers:
 25 "We've got everybody there, yeah."

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1 Then you go on to say:
 2 "I'm sure they're all over the place."
 3 What did you mean by "ambulances on scene"?
 4 A. We're talking about Thompson Street Fire Station and
 5 I've said — I had to listen to this because when I saw
 6 it in the inquiry, I was like, I've not said that. But
 7 yeah, I think it's obvious — it was obvious to me
 8 at the time that we were referring to Thompson Street
 9 Fire Station, and by the ambulance operator's response
 10 I believe he thought we was talking about
 11 Thompson Street Fire Station.
 12 Q. We can see that three lines above NNAS have told you:
 13 "A lot of our vehicles are going to Thompson Street
 14 Fire Station."
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So that's the context, so you're using the phrase "on
 17 scene" to refer to what's just been said?
 18 A. Yeah, he said they were going to Thompson Street
 19 Fire Station and I was asking him, "Are you already?",
 20 there but I have said the word "scene" and I understand
 21 why that looks like that. But it never even entered my
 22 head until I heard this in the inquiry that that would
 23 be misunderstood as that. I can understand why it was,
 24 I've said the word "scene", but I meant the
 25 fire station.

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1 Q. Thank you very much. We can take that down.
 2 Then we know that you called Group Manager Levy
 3 back. This whole sequence had started with his
 4 intervention on that call asking for the FCP, and you
 5 told him, didn't you, that there were ambulances at
 6 Thompson Street?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. You've already covered, so I won't return to it, your
 9 general observations you make at the conclusion of your
 10 statement about the nature of these calls and the fact
 11 that they can feel pressured or rushed. I just have two
 12 very short topics to ask you about, please. The first
 13 is this: it has been drawn to your attention that it was
 14 suggested that you had told people you didn't know what
 15 was going on on the night. You have seen that
 16 suggestion made about you?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. I think your position is, in summary, that wasn't what
 19 you were saying and in fact, in fairness to you, we
 20 haven't seen you saying that or anything like it in any
 21 of the calls that we've looked at?
 22 A. Yes. I was just asked to comment on an email someone
 23 had sent.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think we heard that evidence
 25 either — or did we?

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1 MR DE LA POER: Yes, we did. It appeared on a document that
 2 was shown on screen and I thought in fairness to the
 3 witness that she ought to have the opportunity to answer
 4 it —
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I had forgotten that email, I'm afraid.
 6 MR DE LA POER: I have dealt with that.
 7 The final topic is that at the end of your witness
 8 statement you very kindly provide the chairman with some
 9 recommendations that you have that you would like him to
 10 consider. Do you want to turn that up now and just move
 11 through them?
 12 It starts at paragraph 28 and I'll try and headline
 13 them with you, it may be that we've covered some
 14 already, but please don't feel rushed, Ms Fallon. We
 15 need to hear what you have to say about this.
 16 The first point you make is that you think that
 17 training could be improved for incidents of this type.
 18 I think you have given us some flavour of that, is that
 19 right, about what you think the training should —
 20 I wonder if you could in a nutshell tell us how the
 21 training could be improved to better equip people to
 22 deal with this sort of situation.
 23 A. Yes. I think specifically scenario-based training.
 24 I know we have JESIP but I also think we need to add on
 25 to that something more specific to a control room, so

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1 I think we need to have a role in the control room where
 2 somebody is going back and constantly assessing the
 3 information that's on there, checking what supersedes
 4 previous information, and making sure that everybody is
 5 aware of it and doing periodic updates on the
 6 interoperability radio channels to make sure that
 7 police, ambulance, fire all have the same information
 8 and are completely up to date.

9 Q. As at today's date, is that training in place or is that
 10 what you are in the process of developing?

11 A. That's what I am trying to develop, yes.

12 Q. You have commented upon having somebody with operational
 13 experience, potentially a NILO, in the control room as
 14 being potentially helpful. Again, would you just mind
 15 speaking to your thoughts on that?

16 A. Yes, because one of the things that night is obviously
 17 when all this is ongoing, there is general chatter
 18 in the control room and people asking questions and the
 19 assumption was made that the NILOs will have this
 20 information because they're privy to information that
 21 we're not because of their clearance or whatever it
 22 might be. So if we had somebody that had — it might
 23 not be somebody from control, but perhaps a NILO that
 24 could come in and liaise with whoever they need to
 25 liaise with and give us the information there and then

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1 that we might need on the log and distribute it out.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And we do know, don't we, that when
 3 there are nights where something is going to happen,
 4 like Bonfire Night, you do actually have someone there
 5 in the control room?

6 A. We do, we get officers from each of the brigades coming
 7 in.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it's really a way of trying to mirror
 9 that on a spontaneous incident such as this?

10 A. Yes.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.

12 MR DE LA POER: You mention a single fire ops channel as
 13 being potentially helpful. Obviously we're not going to
 14 identify any Airwave Talk Group, but can you just
 15 explain to us what you mean by a single fire ops
 16 channel?

17 A. When we create an incident and when we assign resources
 18 to it, it will automatically allocate the next channel,
 19 which means they're all on different channels if we've
 20 got multiple incidents or logs, I should say, for the
 21 same incident. So if we put everything on a single
 22 channel, I think that we should be relaying information
 23 to not just the officers — I know on this night we
 24 tended to do everything via the phone. I know since
 25 that attack we've got the — we had it anyway, but we

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1 use the interoperability channels. You are sort of
 2 discouraged from doing things over like — I won't name
 3 channels, but like the general brigade channel, because
 4 anybody can hear it that's on that channel. So I think
 5 we should have specifically one set up that we pass all
 6 information on and that officers should be monitoring it
 7 as well, so when we're passing information to an officer
 8 as well, the crews would need to know the majority of it
 9 anyway, so at least that way — it would also
 10 discourage — I think one of the things was they were
 11 quite frustrated that night because they weren't doing
 12 anything or they — and they were ringing control for
 13 updates and things.

14 If we were passing that information on, I think that
 15 the crews would understand as well what is happening and
 16 I think it would run a lot smoother, they would be able
 17 to get their kit on that they need and things like that.

18 Q. Can I just understand how that works in practice? We
 19 know that Mr Ellis created the 9074 log. Is it your
 20 understanding that by creating that log the system
 21 automatically identified a specific channel that would
 22 be associated with that log?

23 A. Only once an appliance or an officer was attached to it,
 24 it would generate a channel for it.

25 Q. As we understand it, the Philips Park log, which was

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1 created a little later, was the log that was used for
 2 the purpose of appliances because that avoided the risk
 3 of sending them to the wrong place by reason of what was
 4 recorded on Mr Ellis' log. So that log would have
 5 generated a channel number?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And then we know that there was an additional log
 8 created by you on instruction following a conversation
 9 with Mr Etches for the CSR. Did that also have
 10 a channel attached to it?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Obviously, people going to the CSR were all going in
 13 order to meet together, so was there any need for them
 14 to have their own particular channel based around the
 15 CSR?

16 A. It just generates one on the system, whether they would
 17 utilise it — they'd tend to ring up, but I just mean in
 18 general, if there were multiple logs, but even if there
 19 weren't, I think we should be relaying information via
 20 the radio rather than phones. That way, everybody would
 21 hear it at the same time, there would be no delays, and
 22 everybody's getting the exact same information, and then
 23 you'd just be able to say — you'd confirm you
 24 acknowledge it.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We have had other complaints about radio

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1 channels that there's just too much information going on
 2 it, so too many people calling in, so that people who
 3 really have urgent information can't get through, so you
 4 may be curing one problem and creating another.
 5 A. Yes, I think I recall that in the evidence from the
 6 police --
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.
 8 A. With fire --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You have less people, do you?
 10 A. There wouldn't be that many people using it and there
 11 are things that boost the signal as well if they did.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 13 A. I just mean for passing vital information rather than
 14 ringing round all the NILOs. On the night, because they
 15 do have iNet viewer, I think an assumption was made that
 16 they would be viewing the log through their computers.
 17 There was three of them and you'd be able to just pass
 18 that information on the channel once and make sure that
 19 everybody's acknowledged it, rather than making three
 20 separate phone calls.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 22 MR DE LA POER: You identified a whiteboard for key
 23 information.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Obviously, one of the matters I explored with Ms Wilson

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1 yesterday was the idea that the system would capture
 2 JESIP information and would be capable of being
 3 populated and would therefore act as a prompt for people
 4 to seek that information and it would all be in one
 5 place so that everybody could see that key multi-agency
 6 information. Is that what you have in mind in terms of
 7 the whiteboard and the key information or did you have
 8 something different in mind?
 9 A. No, exactly that. When we go into fallback, if the
 10 system fails, for example, and we go on to whiteboards,
 11 everybody always says it runs smoother without the
 12 system, back on pen and paper, and I do think if
 13 you have something on a whiteboard in front of you, you
 14 are inclined to look at it to get that most up to date
 15 information rather than scrolling through a log, so
 16 I think that it would cause less mistakes.
 17 Q. Would you have in mind that perhaps a team leader or
 18 someone who was particularly trained in that would be
 19 monitoring a log and they would be the one who would be
 20 extracting the key information because they'd have
 21 training in it and they'd have the time to think about
 22 what's important and what's not?
 23 A. Yes. One of the things that night that -- I don't think
 24 anybody really stopped to read through anything until
 25 really late on in the evening, whereas if there was

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1 a designated person assigned to that to make sure that
 2 they were going through the log and everything was being
 3 put on that whiteboard and you'd look up and go, "Right,
 4 the information so far is this". I think that would
 5 eliminate a lot of mistakes.
 6 Q. Three final short points that you make which, in
 7 fairness to you, given that you have raised them,
 8 I would like to ask you about. You say that:
 9 "The most important recommendation [you] have is
 10 regular training with Fire and Rescue Services and other
 11 services."
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Are you envisaging there scenario-based training?
 14 A. Absolutely, yes. We need to practice this. I think it
 15 needs to be practised all the time because obviously all
 16 the services will have changes in staff and it needs to
 17 be done regularly, not specifically MTFA or, you know...
 18 It should be -- I think it would ... I think it would
 19 stick in your mind a lot better what information is
 20 really relevant and what's not. Part of the training
 21 that I'm trying to -- that I'm writing at the moment...
 22 I've put on, like, what information you would receive on
 23 this call, but it wouldn't all be fed through, you'd
 24 have to ask for some of that information because it
 25 wouldn't always be volunteered because -- I mean, it is

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1 clearly shown through some of my own calls, I haven't
 2 done that. I think in situations like that, you think
 3 a little bit differently or don't think at all.
 4 Q. Is part of that regular training that you envisage joint
 5 emergency control room training?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. So here we're talking about NWS, the OCR for GMP, and
 8 North West Fire Control, the control room operatives
 9 getting together to train together?
 10 A. They don't need to necessarily get together to train, we
 11 could do it like in the most realistic way possible,
 12 which would be through our own control rooms contacting
 13 each other using the correct methods and making sure
 14 that we are sharing all information and training, like
 15 how it would be in a realistic scenario.
 16 Q. The final suggestion that you make is that there should
 17 be a series of predetermined RVP prompts to help people
 18 identify the best locations for an RVP when they are
 19 suddenly confronted with a spontaneous incident.
 20 A. Yes. We already have a feature on the system that can
 21 measure distances on it, so if an officer said, "I need
 22 something 500 metres away", we would be able to measure
 23 that distance out for them and tell them of a suitable
 24 location rather than overestimating it and sending fire
 25 engines really far away or whatever it might be. We'd

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1 be able to assist with that. We can create hazard zones
 2 and things like that. There are system features -- it
 3 does have a lot of really good features on the system
 4 that I think, if they knew about them, they might want
 5 to utilise them a little bit more for something like
 6 this.

7 Q. Is "they" the Fire and Rescue Services that make up
 8 North West Fire Control?

9 A. Yes.

10 MR DE LA POER: Ms Fallon, thank you very much indeed for
 11 answering my questions.

12 Sir, I've been going a minute over 90 --

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll have a quarter of an hour break.
 14 Is that enough for you? Okay, thank you.

15 (11.14 am)

16 (A short break)

17 (11.35 am)

18 MR DE LA POER: Sir, Mr Cooper QC, please, on behalf of the
 19 bereaved families.

20 Questions from MR COOPER

21 MR COOPER: Ms Fallon, I only have a few questions for you,
 22 just to clarify a few things for us if you can.

23 When you first started on your job, that's the first
 24 job you'd had in emergency services, isn't it?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And no doubt then, like all of us if we start in a new
 2 job which we have not done before, you'd have been
 3 really grateful for any training or assistance that you
 4 could get to bring you up to speed with the culture and
 5 the ways of working in the emergency services?

6 A. Yes, of course.

7 Q. Did you get that straightaway when you first joined?
 8 Was there a sort of induction process to get you
 9 involved with the way emergency services think and how
 10 they operate?

11 A. There was the phase 1 training course. The training was
 12 more how to use the system. There was a lot of emphasis
 13 on there's action plans to tell you what to do. It was
 14 also -- it had only just sort of opened, I was on the
 15 second course that started at North West Fire Control,
 16 and there was still a lot of, you know, coming together.
 17 There was people from three different brigades, nobody
 18 from Cumbria came, I believe, and they all had different
 19 ways of working.

20 So to be fair, at the beginning, I found it very
 21 difficult to understand the ways of working. There
 22 wasn't as much guidance as I would have liked.

23 Q. The sort of training which -- I'm not at this stage
 24 talking about JESIP or Plato or all those words, I'm
 25 just talking to you, asking you questions about just

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1 generally integrating you into how the emergency
 2 services work, and I don't mean what they do directly,
 3 because we know what the Fire Service generally does,
 4 but just an idea about what the Fire Service is about so
 5 that you could feel immersed in that world. None of
 6 that was given to you at the time?

7 A. No. I think it's a job where you just kind of learn it
 8 as you go. You obviously have training so you can
 9 perform the role, but, for example, learning what best
 10 questions to ask, like say if it was a car fire,
 11 you weren't taught what questions you should ask, just
 12 like what's on fire and an address, but then as you sort
 13 of progress, it's like, okay, what kind of fuel is it,
 14 because that can impact it, and other hazards and things
 15 like that. You just sort of learnt that as you went
 16 along.

17 Q. How soon after you started were you actually literally
 18 thrown in at the deep end to be dealing with calls and
 19 to be thinking on your feet, for want of a better
 20 expression?

21 A. When I first started they didn't have any mentors or
 22 anything like that, so after you finished your 4-week
 23 training you were thrown in at the deep end.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you tell me when the mentoring
 25 system started?

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1 A. I honestly couldn't tell you. I don't remember.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fair enough. We can find that out.
 3 Don't worry.

4 MR COOPER: Because it's not just about knowledge, it's
 5 about confidence, isn't it?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And perhaps a little more training at the beginning into
 8 the general way of working within the emergency
 9 services, particularly for someone who's just come into
 10 it, would perhaps have given you more confidence to do
 11 your job; would that be a fair observation?

12 A. I strongly agree with you, actually, in terms of I think
 13 that most of this kind of job is feeling confident about
 14 what you're doing.

15 Q. And confidence comes, obviously, with experience, but if
 16 you're thrown in at the deep end, confidence always
 17 comes with a comfort in knowing the world you work in
 18 and the people you're working with?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. It's on your statement, but you can be quicker than
 21 I can, how long had you been working in your job when
 22 this atrocity occurred on 22 May?

23 A. Almost 3 years.

24 Q. About 3 years. Had you developed that degree of
 25 confidence over that period of time or, again, maybe was

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1 a degree of confidence lacking at the time?
 2 A. I definitely had grown in my confidence --
 3 Q. Of course.
 4 A. -- a lot from when I first started. I ... I would say
 5 I felt fairly confident to deal with most incident types
 6 because you just use the same kind of -- you just apply
 7 the same way of dealing with something. But I don't
 8 think you can fully be confident about something unless
 9 you've actually gone through it.
 10 Q. And to be fair, this was a very unusual event, wasn't
 11 it, that you'd probably say that no one can really
 12 properly prepare for?
 13 A. Not properly, but I think you can prepare.
 14 Q. That's not a criticism, that's simply acknowledging the
 15 position you were in at the time.
 16 A. I agree with you, you can't ever properly prepare for
 17 something like that, but I think you can make some
 18 preparations.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did those events having happened, did
 20 that sap your confidence? Did you find you had -- no
 21 doubt, hopefully, you'll have recovered it by now, but
 22 did it affect your confidence, do you think? I'm not
 23 trying to upset you.
 24 A. Yes. I think more so since this inquiry began. At the
 25 time I felt like we'd done okay, I didn't feel ...

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You'd done what you could?
 2 A. Yes. But obviously, now, I don't feel that I did my
 3 job.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Let's just understand this -- and
 5 I'm sure Mr Cooper would agree with this: we're not
 6 looking for individual faults by you; we're looking
 7 at the system and whether, with a better system maybe,
 8 these sort of faults can be eradicated. You've helped
 9 me a lot so far on what you have told me you think could
 10 be improved in the system. That's why we need to go
 11 through it.
 12 A. I understand. It does make you think about what you
 13 know and what you don't know. It's something I've
 14 always said in this job, like, I don't know that I don't
 15 know something until it comes up.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's true of all of us in any job
 17 we're doing, but yours is quite critical.
 18 A. Yes, that's the problem.
 19 MR COOPER: May I say to you, the fact that you're thinking
 20 that way brings you out as a caring person, so please
 21 don't feel upset. The fact that you're thinking back
 22 over what may or may not or could have been done better,
 23 it only displays you as a caring person, so please be as
 24 strong as you can.
 25 So again in terms of -- last question on this issue.

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1 In terms of the recovery of your confidence, so that you
 2 can give as much as you have to give, did your
 3 confidence recover? Put this inquiry to one side, which
 4 brings things back obviously. Did your confidence
 5 generally recover to be able to do your job and, if not,
 6 were you given help or assistance?
 7 A. It did, it did at the time -- well, after the events.
 8 But I believe that some of the things that I've not done
 9 rather than done have contributed to -- somebody that
 10 I knew that could have perhaps survived...
 11 Q. Please don't beat yourself up over this.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you want a break or are you happy to
 13 carry on?
 14 A. I'm okay.
 15 MR COOPER: I can be very swift --
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Having intended not to upset you,
 17 I think we've managed to do that satisfactorily. It's
 18 entirely my fault, I was the one who started this off.
 19 Do you want a moment? Of course you can have a moment
 20 if you'd like it.
 21 A. No, I'm all right.
 22 MR COOPER: Let me get swiftly on, sir, and then I'll sit
 23 down. Nothing I have to say, please understand this, is
 24 meant as a criticism of you. All right?
 25 The JESIP training, you've told us, was PowerPoint

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1 training?
 2 A. I think so, yes.
 3 Q. I think I can encapsulate your evidence on JESIP, that
 4 certainly before this atrocity you'd have liked more and
 5 liked more detailed training on JESIP. Would that be
 6 the top and bottom of it?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Had you had it before this outrage, you think, sensibly
 9 so, if I may say so, that that would have helped your
 10 performance on the night? Would that be fair?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. In the training that you were receiving, and it's your
 13 paragraph 4 again, you tell us there was no multi-agency
 14 training before the exercise. In the training that
 15 you were getting, did GMFRS get involved with that
 16 training with NWFC or was it a siloed sort of training
 17 with NWFC giving it? Do you understand what I mean?
 18 A. It was just control room.
 19 Q. So Greater Manchester Fire Service weren't involved at
 20 all with helping with the training that the control room
 21 was giving to you and your colleagues?
 22 A. Not the cascade exercises, as far as I'm aware.
 23 Q. Would it have helped, do you think -- and I'm just
 24 talking general training exercises now, if only popping
 25 in, say, for a couple of hours and giving a seminar or

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1 something — would it have helped if GMFRS had taken
 2 more of a proactive approach to training and teaching
 3 the control room?
 4 A. Yes, I think that the training really should be with all
 5 the brigades and control. I don't know the logistics of
 6 that from where each service stands with making that
 7 possible, but it would definitely be beneficial.
 8 There's no way that would be a hindrance to anything at
 9 all.
 10 Q. Did there perhaps feel — I'm asking before the
 11 atrocity — a little bit of a them—and—us situation
 12 between GMFRS and the control room?
 13 A. Yes, from my very first day at North West Fire Control,
 14 there's always been, it seems, a them—and—us, I think.
 15 A lot of people didn't really want their control rooms
 16 to disband and to merge into one. I'd never known it
 17 any other way, so it never really bothered me. And it's
 18 still something that I think is — it does feel very
 19 separate and, yes, it's still very apparent that
 20 that is ...
 21 Q. Still?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to go back to JESIP for
 24 a minute. What I get from your evidence is that I don't
 25 think the principles of JESIP are very difficult, from

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1 your point of view, to grasp, are they? Each control
 2 room should share with each other the information they
 3 have, you should share with people who ring up who are
 4 having control of the thing to tell them what's going on
 5 so everybody knows everything's going on?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what JESIP means for control
 8 room, doesn't it? Isn't it rather more the
 9 practicalities of how to do it, which is why you're
 10 doing the sort of training that you're devising at the
 11 moment? It's all very well to say, "You have to tell
 12 everybody everything", and, "You have to do this", but
 13 actually when you're trying to do it in a control room,
 14 it's not that easy?
 15 A. Yes, that's exactly what I think the problem is with it.
 16 That's why I think if you do practical training with
 17 it — it's like one of the things that I would say in
 18 North West Fire Control, the best way — and well, it's
 19 not the best way, but one way that really makes you
 20 learn is when you make a mistake, because you don't do
 21 it again.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, okay. And it's best to do your
 23 mistake in practice rather than the real thing.
 24 A. Exactly, yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. It just seems to me

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1 concepts of JESIP as applied to control rooms don't seem
 2 to me to be that complicated, but I may be
 3 underestimating it. It's actually how you do it: do you
 4 check through the log, how do you make sure everybody
 5 gets it, who is to get it, do you have to check through
 6 the log every time, and the practical difficulties of
 7 doing that, as you've told us?
 8 A. Yes, in a live environment and you're trying to be quick
 9 and there's other things happening and there's
 10 conversation in the room and you're getting conflicting
 11 information and you start telling somebody something but
 12 then you can hear somebody else saying something else,
 13 it does make it difficult.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Obviously, events like this are very
 15 upsetting because when you're being told these things
 16 are happening, it's very upsetting. Can you sort of go
 17 on to autopilot so you don't let the upset affect you or
 18 will the fact of what's going on automatically affect
 19 your performance?
 20 A. I think you do go on to autopilot. That evening — my
 21 mum works on the railway and she's often out on the
 22 patch —
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I say, I know about the personal
 24 effect and influence, so it had a particular personalism
 25 for you. I don't want you to have to say it and upset

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1 yourself again unless you want to. You felt you might
 2 be personally affected by what was going on?
 3 A. Well, up until that point when I did message my mum
 4 under the desk —
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, okay.
 6 A. — and I knew she was okay.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And she works on the railway and for all
 8 you knew, she would be involved in what was going on?
 9 A. Yes. And then it was: right, okay, autopilot. I know
 10 another operator that night, I believe, had given his
 11 tickets to the concert his cousin and people were
 12 worried about him —
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: As I say, I really don't want you to
 14 upset yourself by —
 15 A. You do go into autopilot. To be honest, I think you
 16 just stop thinking about what is really happening.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And then go on with the job?
 18 A. Yes, and do it, it's only after the event it hits you,
 19 really.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure. Okay, thank you.
 21 MR COOPER: Just on the back of that, I'm sure I could work
 22 it out by looking up the log, but again you may be able
 23 to help me, how many hours were you working for that
 24 night?
 25 A. Twelve.

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1 Q. 12 hours. And when did you start work, what time?
 2 A. 7 pm.
 3 Q. Did you have a break during those 12 hours at all,
 4 particularly after 10.30 at night?
 5 A. I can't remember. We would have, probably later on
 6 in the — you know, like the morning.
 7 Q. I'm only asking —
 8 A. I don't know.
 9 Q. — (overspeaking) working that amount of time,
 10 particularly after 10.30, without a break, whether you
 11 can remember.
 12 A. You can go for a comfort break if you need the bathroom
 13 or anything like that.
 14 Q. That wasn't quite what I was thinking about, but you
 15 can't remember any even 15-minute or 20-minute break,
 16 just to sit quietly?
 17 A. We would have, I'm sure we would have, I just can't...
 18 I don't know.
 19 Q. The last thing I want to ask you about, just to go back
 20 to my earlier question, them and us, and you told the
 21 chair that there was a them—and—us feeling between the
 22 control room and GMFRS and you said it still continues
 23 to this day. Can you maybe give some examples to the
 24 chair of the them—and—us culture at the time of this
 25 atrocity?

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1 A. It's not something that I've ever personally felt that
 2 it was, but it's apparent that other people feel like
 3 that. I don't really get it myself because you can't
 4 have firefighters without control and there'd be no
 5 point in control if there were no firefighters. So
 6 I never really understood it, and because I didn't have
 7 a brigade to compare it to, it wasn't really a thing,
 8 but there's a lot of, "Oh, back in Manchester we used to
 9 do this, back in Lancs we used to do that". That still
 10 goes on. It's not as bad as it used to be, but yeah,
 11 it's still there.
 12 MR COOPER: Sir, thank you. I have no further questions.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Cooper.
 14 MR DE LA POER: Mr Smith QC, please.
 15 MR SMITH: Ms Gilmour was going to deal with this evidence,
 16 I don't know whether she has any questions for the
 17 witness.
 18 Questions from MS GILMOUR
 19 MS GILMOUR: Just one small matter for correction, please.
 20 Ms Fallon, you were asked about your phase 2
 21 competency training earlier on and I think you said to
 22 Mr de la Poer you think you completed that in early 2016
 23 certainly.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And certainly that's what paragraph 3 of your statement

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1 says. Can I just ask Mr Lopez, please, to put up
 2 {INQ041719/1}.
 3 Ms Fallon, can you see that document?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. This is a letter from North West Fire Control to you,
 6 the effect of it being that you have completed your
 7 phase 2 development programme. That's in the first
 8 paragraph. Do you see that?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And the date of that letter is 16 June 2015. Does that
 11 help with confirming when you first completed your
 12 phase 2?
 13 A. Yes. When I was asked to provide the statement 2 weeks
 14 ago, whenever it was, I didn't have this information, so
 15 I was just going off my best guess.
 16 MS GILMOUR: That's all right. It's simply a matter for
 17 correcting the record.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 19 MS GILMOUR: I have no further questions.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 21 MR DE LA POER: Sir, unless you have any questions.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just one thing. If Ms Gilmour needs to
 23 come back on this, then of course she may.
 24 This may be an inevitable thing of the process, but
 25 would I be right in thinking that immediately after

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1 these awful events, there was a lot of thinking of how
 2 to put things right and things would change and people
 3 looked into why things had gone wrong and things like
 4 that?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was there then a bit of a lull until the
 7 inquiry started up and did people start looking at it
 8 again and has there been another round of activity to
 9 look at things when they're looking at things again and
 10 seeing what's gone wrong?
 11 A. No. North West Fire Control, I believe — well, from
 12 what I've seen — have been very proactive with that.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 14 A. They've already made a lot of changes from — even
 15 actually before the Kerslake Report came out, there were
 16 changes in that... No, I don't think there was a lull,
 17 I think they've been really quite on it.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it still going on now?
 19 A. Absolutely, yes.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 21 A. Obviously, from a personal point of view, it's something
 22 that I've been following quite a lot and I've discussed
 23 it with Sarah and some of the senior management team
 24 that I feel very confident that they are taking it very
 25 seriously and that they have tried to put the changes in

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1 place that need to be put in place.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: To some people, 4 years might seem like
 3 quite a long time to still be doing it. Do you think
 4 it's taking a long time or do you think it is being done
 5 as quickly as it can reasonably be done?
 6 A. I do think it is taking a long time. It's one thing
 7 that I have asked personally anyway about: why do we
 8 have to wait for the brigades to send things through,
 9 why does it have to go through on action plan? Because
 10 I think we should have our own NWFC action plans,
 11 which -- we do have one for the major incidents, but
 12 I think that we could really take this a bit further and
 13 get things done. I don't know how that side of things
 14 works.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We have heard that all the different
 16 areas tend to have sort of different ways of working,
 17 which means different action plans. How difficult does
 18 that make life for you?
 19 A. Very. It's rather a running joke, really, because it's
 20 not just four different ways of working, because
 21 depending on who you ask here could be four different
 22 ways for each brigade sometimes. I mean, that has -- it
 23 has improved a little bit with the brigade side of
 24 things, but when you have a management team, you have
 25 people that are ex-Manchester, ex-Lancashire and

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1 ex-Cheshire that had different ways of doing things, you
 2 would ask as question and you would get -- depending on
 3 who you asked, you'd get a different answer. That is
 4 getting much better, but the brigades still are very --
 5 they do work very differently, which is why I think it's
 6 difficult to try and memorise action plans. You do to
 7 an extent, but they're so different.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We're hearing the divergences are
 9 actually getting more between these four different areas
 10 rather than coming together; is that fair or not?
 11 A. It is, it is a fair assessment, I think that is right.
 12 I mean... When Janine was there, for example, like, if
 13 you wanted something done, you'd go to Janine. She got
 14 it done. Like, Manchester, for example, she would bite
 15 back at them and say, "No, you can't have it done that
 16 way, this needs to be control friendly", and she'd get
 17 things done. As I say, she doesn't work there any more.
 18 I'm not saying anything to her replacement.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you miss her?
 20 A. She had a way with the brigade.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The differences between the brigades'
 22 way of working, do they all appear logical to you and
 23 understandable, bearing in mind all the geographical
 24 areas we're talking about?
 25 A. No, not always. I think there's an awful lot of things

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1 in action plans that really could be removed that are
 2 just not necessary. Some of them, like for one incident
 3 type you might have one action for Greater Manchester
 4 and you'll have 10 for Cheshire, and because of that as
 5 well, it does mean that you kind of are more prone to,
 6 I suppose, making mistakes on it. There should really
 7 only be --
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you get confused by the differences
 9 or do you just get out the right action card and follow
 10 it?
 11 A. You should be reading the action plans, but you know,
 12 sometimes you can be in the middle of doing something,
 13 someone might ask you something, you get a bit
 14 distracted and then forget to tell an officer about
 15 something. It is obviously down to personal behaviour
 16 and sort of the way you are actually doing the job and
 17 you should be concentrating, but it happens.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: From your point of view working as
 19 a control room operator, it would be helpful to you if
 20 there was more conformity between the four areas?
 21 A. Without a doubt, absolutely.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you all feel that way or is it just
 23 you?
 24 A. No, I think everybody feels that way. Like you've got
 25 Cumbria, for example. Cumbria is a massive area but it

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1 has very few whole-time fire stations, for example.
 2 It's very rural.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I can understand there can be
 4 differences based on geography and the number of people,
 5 things like that. It's a question whether all the
 6 differences are justified or --
 7 A. I don't think they are all justified.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Ms Gilmour, do you want to come back on
 9 any of that? Thank you.
 10 I'm really grateful to you. You've obviously
 11 thought a great deal about it. I hope it hasn't been as
 12 bad an experience as you feared it was going to be when
 13 you started, but I'm grateful for your help. Thank you.
 14 MR DE LA POER: Can I just provide an update about the
 15 remainder of today? We have two firearms officers to
 16 hear from, from whom it has become necessary to hear
 17 because of evidence given earlier in chapter 10. I'm
 18 entirely in your hands, sir. I haven't spoken to either
 19 of them, I'll need to do that and just get my notes in
 20 order. I suspect that it won't be much before 12.30
 21 before I am in a position to start. Whether we take an
 22 early lunch now, it may be instructions will need to be
 23 taken, I am conscious that over at the family support
 24 centre, lunch may not be immediately available.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it might be a bit early for

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1 lunch. I know not everyone agrees with that, but for me
 2 personally, so if people don't mind, I think we won't
 3 have lunch at the moment and we will just have --
 4 obviously you need to prepare one of them. So of course
 5 have half an hour if you need, but if we can do it
 6 sooner and get started sooner -- shall we say at least
 7 20 minutes?
 8 MR DE LA POER: I think that would be safest, but I would
 9 endeavour to be ready at the end of that period.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. We'll try to be ready to start at
 11 20 past.
 12 Thank you very much.
 13 (12.03 pm)
 14 (A short break)
 15 (12.22 pm)
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I knew you could do it in 20 minutes,
 17 Mr de la Poer.
 18 MR DE LA POER: I have received the cooperation from
 19 everybody in achieving that, so I'm very grateful.
 20 Could PC Tyldesley please be sworn.
 21 PC TROY TYLDESLEY (affirmed)
 22 Questions from MR DE LA POER
 23 MR DE LA POER: Please state your full name and current
 24 rank.
 25 A. It's Troy Tyldesley, police constable.

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1 Q. Were you a police constable in May of 2017?
 2 A. That's correct.
 3 Q. Did you join Greater Manchester Police in 2003?
 4 A. I did.
 5 Q. And did you qualify as an authorised firearms officer in
 6 2009?
 7 A. That's correct.
 8 Q. So you had approximately 8 years of operational
 9 experience as an AFO?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. I'm going to move immediately to the events on 22 May
 12 and we'll, as we go through them, come back to your
 13 training.
 14 Were you deployed together with authorised firearms
 15 officer PC Dalton on Oxford Road when you became aware
 16 of the incident at the arena?
 17 A. That's correct.
 18 Q. So you were on duty, were you?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. You were armed?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And you were wearing police uniform?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Did you hear over the firearms channel that firearms
 25 authority had been granted by Inspector Sexton?

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1 A. We did. Initially it came over the divisional channel
 2 that there was an incident ongoing and then correctly,
 3 as you say, over the firearms channel, the authority.
 4 Q. Because it's been a while since we have heard evidence
 5 relating to firearms, what is the significance, please,
 6 of the grant of firearms authority?
 7 A. The grant of a firearms authority when there's an
 8 immediate threat to life for a firearms incident that's
 9 currently ongoing, which can be granted by the force
 10 duty officer, for us to deploy, locate, contain and
 11 neutralise the threat with an accompanying tactic given
 12 by the force duty officer.
 13 Q. We don't need to go into the details of the tactic, but
 14 were you also provided with that tactic?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So from that moment on, did you have at least the
 17 beginnings of an understanding about what you would need
 18 to do?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Did you and PC Dalton drive directly to the arena?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And did you stop your vehicle in the vicinity of
 23 Trinity Way?
 24 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. That gave you access to a number of entrances. I think

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1 the entrance that you used was one which is referred to
 2 as Trinity Glass; is that a descriptor that you are
 3 familiar with?
 4 A. I have heard that, I believe that that's correct, yes.
 5 Q. We'll come to some images in a moment, so whatever it's
 6 called, people can see where you entered. Before you
 7 entered the building, did you receive any briefing?
 8 A. By the force duty officer?
 9 Q. By anyone.
 10 A. We were met at that location outside the arena by
 11 another ARV patrol with two officers in, one being the
 12 OFC on that night.
 13 Q. That's PC Eddie Richardson?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. From whom the inquiry has heard. So was there a moment
 16 of pause before you entered the building for you to
 17 speak to PC Richardson?
 18 A. There was -- forgive me, a period of time's passed now.
 19 There was some mention that it possibly was balloons
 20 going off and so there was a pause, shall we hold or
 21 shall we go in. Me and my colleague, PC James Dalton,
 22 just went through the fire doors, which were open, as
 23 a quick recce and then we were quickly joined by the OFC
 24 and his colleague to progress into the arena.
 25 Q. What we see and what we'll see in a moment on the CCTV

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1 is that you and PC Dalton lead as a pair?
 2 A. That's right.
 3 Q. And following shortly behind you, we have Mr Richardson
 4 and the person he was paired with?
 5 A. That's correct.
 6 Q. Did you understand at that point that PC Richardson was
 7 the OFC?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. So you were on scene immediately answerable to him?
 10 A. Yes, so to speak, yes.
 11 Q. We'll bring up some images now, please. Mr Lopez,
 12 {INQ041618/1}, please.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Tell me how long it took you -- I'm
 14 afraid I don't know the geography that well -- how long
 15 from where you were to get to the arena?
 16 A. From Oxford Road when we heard the initial transmissions
 17 and we stopped short to prep our kit, so to speak. If
 18 you're going at normal road speed, however because the
 19 arena concert having finished, there was quite a volume
 20 of footfall getting out so it took longer normal to
 21 navigate through, but it was a few minutes.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 23 MR DE LA POER: We'll be able to get a timestamp for the
 24 first time you're captured on CCTV from which we can
 25 work out some of the timings perhaps.

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1 {INQ041618/2}, please. We see you and your
 2 colleague, PC Dalton, making your way up that staircase
 3 which leads to the arena concourse.
 4 A. That's correct, yes.
 5 Q. The timestamp, as corrected, is 22.42.44. So we are
 6 here talking about a period of just over 10 minutes
 7 since the detonation.
 8 Did you move from the position that we can see here
 9 on to the concourse?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. We'll move forward in time -- we're not going to look at
 12 every one of these slides. If we can move to
 13 {INQ041618/7}. We can see by this stage, which is some
 14 4 minutes or slightly less than that, 3.5 minutes, after
 15 the last image, that you, marked in red, and your
 16 colleague, PC Dalton, marked in purple, are moving
 17 through the concourse and almost immediately behind you
 18 are your two firearms colleagues; is that right?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. This image might be interpreted as Mr Dalton moving at
 21 speed, bearing in mind his body position. Do you recall
 22 the pace at which you moved through this area?
 23 A. Yes, it was fast -- just to clarify, because of the time
 24 difference when we've initially gone in, we've gone into
 25 what is classed as the bowl, the main arena, obviously

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1 it was quiet in there, they were all packing up, and
 2 we've gone round and back out. As we've moved round the
 3 concourse it's been apparent something's gone on and
 4 we've progressed at speed. That's why there's a delay.
 5 Q. That's an important detail which perhaps could be
 6 overlooked because we don't have any images of you
 7 inside the arena bowl.
 8 So the sequence was that you entered the concourse
 9 from that staircase, you went into the bowl?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. You could immediately see that there was no immediate
 12 threat there and in fact very little going on,
 13 presumably?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. And then you left that area and went back out on to the
 16 concourse and moved round the concourse?
 17 A. Yes, and then things have developed.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So people had been evacuated from the
 19 bowl itself by then?
 20 A. I think the concert had just finished, they were tidying
 21 up on the main stage.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There was no one there?
 23 A. No.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 25 MR DE LA POER: If we go over the page to {INQ041618/8},

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1 we will see you and PC Dalton outside the doors that
 2 lead through to the City Room.
 3 A. Yes, that's correct.
 4 Q. So we can see that, from point of entry, a period of
 5 just under 4 minutes has passed before you are
 6 immediately outside the area where the bomb had
 7 detonated?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. We can take that down.
 10 We don't need to look at every slide, but I know
 11 you've had an opportunity to go through this carefully
 12 and I know you'll take it from me that you remained
 13 in that position for just over a minute or so, until
 14 22.47.22, at which point you entered the City Room?
 15 A. Correct.
 16 Q. Just help us with what you and PC Dalton were doing for
 17 that minute before you went into the City Room?
 18 What was the purpose of that period?
 19 A. Yes. We were liaising with PC Moore -- obviously the
 20 concern about what had happened and what potential other
 21 threats there could be -- we made a decision to go
 22 through the City Room to the other side, officers
 23 staying on the side, on the concourse to create
 24 a sterile area, so to speak.
 25 Q. I wanted to ask about your perspective on that as

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1 a firearms officer and the level of protection that you
 2 were providing at that stage. We know from the evidence
 3 of PC Moore and indeed from PC Richardson that officers
 4 came from the railway station side, they came over the
 5 footbridge, they went straight through the City Room and
 6 they emerged to the area that you can be seen in there.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. You then, it seems from the sequence, moved back in the
 9 opposite direction --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- covering the ground that they'd just covered and that
 12 we know that PC Richardson entered the City Room where
 13 he remained for a very considerable period of time. So
 14 the effect of all of that, as we've understood the
 15 evidence, is that firearms officers crossed the
 16 City Room, albeit not at the same time, resulting in
 17 officers being stationed immediately outside the
 18 City Room; is that correct?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Officers, you and PC Dalton, covering the only entrance
 21 to the City Room from the station side?
 22 A. That's correct.
 23 Q. And your colleague PC Richardson, the operations
 24 firearms commander, in situ in the City Room?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. So is the effect of all of that that there was a high
 2 degree of protection being offered by you and your
 3 firearms colleagues by about 22.47?
 4 A. Yes, that's correct.
 5 Q. Although at that stage you could have no idea of what
 6 potential threat you faced, you had acted in
 7 a coordinated manner, would you agree --
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 Q. -- in order to offer the maximum level of protection
 10 that you could?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. You spent a short period of time in the City Room. Let
 13 me give you the timings. I've told you already that you
 14 entered at 22.47.22 and you have accepted that as being
 15 right. You leave just under a minute later at 22.48.16.
 16 Does that accord with your understanding?
 17 A. Yes, that's correct.
 18 Q. And you emerged on to the pedestrian overbridge where
 19 we are going to see you now at {INQ041618/19}, please,
 20 and it's important that you are precise about that,
 21 Mr Lopez.
 22 So you are marked there in red on the top and bottom
 23 of those photographs. What is the purpose in your mind
 24 at this stage of you and PC Dalton on that footbridge?
 25 A. We're offering protection for the City Room, we've got

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1 officers stationed on the concourse, we're obviously
 2 acting as a barrier. I think I say in my statement,
 3 unauthorised personnel -- obviously, it's a train
 4 station, to stop anybody wandering in who inadvertently
 5 might enter that room, but also for any further
 6 potential threats that may be posed that we're unaware
 7 of at this stage.
 8 Q. We're at 22.48. Can I just ask for your best
 9 recollection? You have mentioned two purposes being
 10 there. Potential people wandering in?
 11 A. Mm.
 12 Q. Non-hostiles, but people who nonetheless would not aid
 13 the rescue effort?
 14 A. That's correct.
 15 Q. And potential hostiles?
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. Was your focus on one more than the other at this stage,
 18 do you think, or was it an equal focus?
 19 A. I can't remember the timings, I'm afraid, but there was
 20 mention that there was another individual possibly
 21 involved, a later detailed description was given,
 22 whether it was at this stage or when we'd gone down on
 23 to the concourse at Victoria I can't recall. But it is
 24 fluid and it does shift. Obviously with the nature of
 25 what's happened, you can't rule out that there's not

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1 going to be another individual or individuals involved
 2 in the protection of the scene and staff going in,
 3 anybody helping, or any other of the other casualties in
 4 there. It's at the top of your working strategy, so to
 5 speak.
 6 Q. So your focus then in summary was on that principal
 7 protection?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. I'd like to pause now in our chronology, please.
 10 We have a good sense, I'm sure, about your movements and
 11 up to this point, which is for the timestamp 22.48.45,
 12 we know that Inspector Sexton, as he was, the force duty
 13 officer, declared Operation Plato at 22.47. Were you
 14 aware of that declaration at that time?
 15 A. I can't recall now, unfortunately, the time that's gone
 16 on. I may have done at the time, but sadly, I can't
 17 recall that.
 18 Q. We're going to just look at your understanding of Plato
 19 and the training that you'd had, but to do so what
 20 I would like to do is remind you of two things that you
 21 said in your first witness statement, please, which was
 22 given in January 2019.
 23 A. That's right.
 24 Q. Can I ask you just, please, to turn that up. We'll go
 25 to page 2 first, please, for anybody who wishes to

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1 follow on. If they haven't got it to hand it's
 2 {INQ022733/2}, but I'm not asking for it to be brought
 3 up on the screen, particularly given some of the
 4 content.
 5 Can you see, in what is the third paragraph, the
 6 third sentence? You describe reaching the foyer doors
 7 at the beginning of the paragraph and that's when you're
 8 on the concourse side; is that right?
 9 A. Yes, that's correct.
 10 Q. Then you say:
 11 "I can't remember if we had a quick briefing at this
 12 point or when we first arrived at the scene but we
 13 decided our intentions as the firearms response to the
 14 explosion was to make safe and secure the foyer area."
 15 A. Correct.
 16 Q. Then this:
 17 "This was what we classed as the hot zone, the
 18 location of where the explosion had occurred."
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. All right. We know that at the point you are out on the
 21 concourse side, Operation Plato has not formally been
 22 declared.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. So my first question then is: when you refer to classing
 25 the City Room as a hot zone, is that an Operation Plato

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1 hot zone or a different sort of hot zone?
 2 A. Obviously my perception — if you believe that there's
 3 a bomb that's gone off, an IED, you're obviously making
 4 your own assumptions before any command decision of
 5 Plato has been called. So it could have been that I was
 6 thinking in my own train of thought that it's going to
 7 be that kind of incident. But on the same terminology,
 8 we don't use it, but — we don't say it, but we use the
 9 hot, warm and cold zones on every firearms deployment we
 10 go to, where other emergency services hold up at an RV
 11 because there's a hot zone where a firearm has been
 12 discharged, albeit someone might be injured, and until
 13 we go and secure it and bring others in ...
 14 So yeah, it's ... It's a hot zone because of what's
 15 gone on. As you said, Plato has not been called, but
 16 have I made the assumption myself because of the nature
 17 of it? It probably would have been. Until we've
 18 gone — that's before we've gone through and got
 19 situational awareness of what's in the City Room.
 20 Q. Just trying to unpack all of that, and I very much
 21 appreciate that your thinking no doubt has developed and
 22 the joint operating principles have developed as well.
 23 But looking at the joint operating principles that were
 24 in place at the time, an Operation Plato hot zone has
 25 a very particular meaning, doesn't it?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. It has an actual definition of what it means and it is
 3 a place of active threat?
 4 A. That's correct.
 5 Q. So you've referred to the fact that the term hot zone is
 6 used at non-Plato incidents by firearms officers?
 7 A. It's not said as in a hot zone, but —
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think we need to know, does it always
 9 mean the same thing to you, a hot zone?
 10 A. Where the active threat is, yes.
 11 MR DE LA POER: Once you had been through the City Room, so
 12 whilst you're travelling through it would appear that
 13 the declaration is made, whether or not it registered,
 14 you've given your evidence about that. But by the time
 15 you emerge to the other side, you know your colleagues
 16 have remained on the concourse, you know that there is
 17 at least one officer with a firearm in the City Room.
 18 A. Mm—hm.
 19 Q. Did you regard the City Room as meeting the criteria of
 20 a hot zone?
 21 A. No. The risk assessment that you conduct yourself, it's
 22 very individual, but we've gone through, other officers
 23 have gone through, there's an officer in there, as per
 24 Plato or any other situation, you wouldn't class it as
 25 there's an immediate ongoing threat there, so it would

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1 be downgraded, so to speak, as not a hot zone.
 2 Q. So as soon as you had emerged out on the other side, in
 3 your mind at least, the City Room was a warm zone or
 4 a cold zone?
 5 A. It's a warm zone. I think the — going off on
 6 a tangent, the hard bit with zoning — at the time,
 7 Plato, it was an MTF, marauding terrorist firearms
 8 attack. In circumstances where an IED's gone off, it
 9 almost steps outside of the rational thinking of what
 10 we would say because you've got this mass casualty
 11 situation, you've got a threat that's occurred, but is
 12 not currently occurring. So it does fall between the
 13 lines, but I wouldn't class it as a hot zone. Is it
 14 a warm zone to more of a cold zone? It's hard to
 15 define. You have not got that ongoing threat, the
 16 threat's happened.
 17 Q. We can look at it another way, it's quite apparent from
 18 the sequence of events that we'll come to look at that
 19 you made no effort while you were on the bridge that is
 20 captured on CCTV to prevent any unprotected police
 21 officer from entering the City Room.
 22 A. That's correct.
 23 Q. Did you know in May of 2017 that in a warm zone, only
 24 specialist trained officers and other members of the
 25 emergency services with ballistic protection should

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1 enter a warm zone?
 2 A. I did, yes, that's correct.
 3 Q. So the fact that you weren't stopping people on that
 4 bridge from 22.48, does that tell us anything about how
 5 you were viewing the City Room or is that to make it
 6 overcomplicated with hindsight?
 7 A. No, there's casualties in there that need treating,
 8 there's no immediate ongoing threat, the threat's
 9 happened, the IED's been set off. The threat is
 10 potentially somewhere else. Is it a complete safe zone?
 11 It's not. As per the playbook for Plato, in a warm zone
 12 who should go in? It should be the tri—services with
 13 the relevant PPE which would be if you were progressing
 14 with whatever tactics we were looking for, another
 15 individual, they could accompany the officers and
 16 further move forward. The actual City Room for me was
 17 as safe as it is going to be at that time. We're not
 18 going to make it any safer, we need to get help in there
 19 for them people.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So whatever you call it, warm or cold,
 21 so far as you were concerned it was safe for people to
 22 go and make a necessary rescue?
 23 A. That's correct.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. It seems a good, pragmatic
 25 decision to me.

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1 MR DE LA POER: Do you have a recollection on the night of
 2 hearing any part of the Victoria Exchange complex within
 3 that first hour, perhaps slightly less than that, before
 4 Chief Inspector Dexter arrives, being designated hot,
 5 warm or cold?
 6 A. I can't recall.
 7 Q. Do you think that that would have been significant
 8 information to you and potentially affecting your
 9 thinking about what you need to do had it been said to
 10 you?
 11 A. The fact that I'd been through that situation and we've
 12 set it up, the best people placed to... the so-called
 13 hot and warm zone are the people on the ground. Unless
 14 there's another intel feed coming in, we were best
 15 placed to decide what — again, these zonings are quite
 16 tight, aren't they, on what they should be? But it was
 17 a call on the ground to get — to let people in or not
 18 let people in.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I well understand that one of the
 20 primary things is to go in and see if there's a gunman
 21 in there, which you might find after a bomb's gone off.
 22 The other thing is there might be another bomb in there,
 23 almost a booby—trap bomb, which is quite difficult for
 24 you to check on the sort of checks you're doing, which
 25 is really, as I understand it, to look to see if there's

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1 a gunman. So how do you deal with or treat the threat
 2 of another bomb there?
 3 A. It's a tough question because how do you discover any
 4 bombs?
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. That's why — again,
 6 you make a pragmatic decision, do you?
 7 A. I think you have to. You base it on your experience,
 8 you base it on other incidents that have happened where
 9 IEDs have gone off. You are thinking: okay, an IED has
 10 gone off in there, if there's a gunman or another bomb,
 11 it's going to be at an RVP, it's going to be where
 12 people are going to the mass exits. It's going to be
 13 somewhere other than where it's already occurred.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you make your own assessment of
 15 (overspeaking) —
 16 A. You make a tactical ground assessment, it's called.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Realistically, as I understand it, in
 18 a scene like the City Room, particularly where people
 19 have left bags around when they fled, until you have
 20 trained dogs in, you're never going to be sure there's
 21 not another bomb there.
 22 A. That's correct. Sometimes it's... It can't be written
 23 down on a piece of paper, you have to go with your gut
 24 instinct.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can make all the rules that you

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1 like, you can set out policies, but when it actually
 2 comes to it, it's got to be left to the people on the
 3 ground?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 MR DE LA POER: Before we leave the topic of Plato I just
 6 want to ask about how what happened on the night
 7 compared to your training at the time. Had you received
 8 training in Operation Plato responses?
 9 A. As per Plato, there's obviously — I can't recall the
 10 exact things, but we were aware of it and aware of —
 11 there was a command element, our training as a firearms
 12 team, without going into the tactics, it's quite
 13 a narrow field if it has been called and what we are
 14 looking for. At the time, due to the threats around the
 15 world, it was an active shooter terrorist with a firearm
 16 that was marauding.
 17 Q. So you had had some instruction in it?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And did that instruction include the name of the
 20 operation?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. The fact that there would be zoning, what those zones
 23 meant, those sort of things?
 24 A. Yes, that's correct.
 25 Q. You'd received training in all of that?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. The question then is: when you had trained for it, had
 3 the training anticipated that the zoning would be
 4 communicated both within the firearms team and to the
 5 other emergency responders or had the idea of
 6 communicating where the zones were not formed part of
 7 your training?
 8 A. From being an operative on the ground, so to speak,
 9 we were aware that it was going to be out of the
 10 tri-services, but other than a knowledge of that, we had
 11 no input on that as we're a very small part of a very
 12 big machine if Op Plato gets called. So there's an
 13 awareness that things would happen in the background,
 14 but as on the ground, we perform a tactic, if that's
 15 clear.
 16 Q. I understand what you're saying. But you have told us
 17 that the best people to determine the zoning are the
 18 people on the ground?
 19 A. So we could feed that back up the chain --
 20 Q. Absolutely, and presumably and via the OFC?
 21 A. OFC or straight to the force duty officer or the TFC,
 22 depending on how was --
 23 Q. Is that something that you recall doing on the night?
 24 A. Again, I feel like I'm copping out. Four years after,
 25 I can't remember. I'd be making it up if I was...

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1 Q. We know from other of the emergency services partners
 2 that knowing where the zones were was extremely
 3 important to their risk assessment, where commanders
 4 were prepared to send their personnel. Do you think
 5 that in May of 2017 you understood how important where
 6 the zones were was to your emergency service partners?
 7 A. To be honest, sir, you're asking me to comment on quite
 8 a broad range there. But --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let's look at it in a practical way, if
 10 you don't mind me saying this: there are casualties
 11 there, you needed to deal with casualties, first of all
 12 you need paramedics in there, and secondly the Fire
 13 Service, who do help with that sort of thing. So once
 14 you've cleared the immediate threat, who needs to know
 15 that the threat, the immediate threat, has gone?
 16 A. I think it would be -- you'd feed it up the chain. To
 17 call it a warm zone --
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It needs to go to the paramedics and the
 19 (overspeaking) --
 20 A. It'd go through the force duty officer and then he would
 21 designate or liaise that with other services. But
 22 without being restrictive, if we declared it a hot zone
 23 or a warm zone, I appreciate there's HART teams and
 24 others with PPE, the delay in getting them people there
 25 would of, could of been detrimented (sic) if you are

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1 going to stick completely to the rulebook as per Plato.
 2 I don't know how you -- you need something down, don't
 3 you, but how you get round it? So it has to be fed up
 4 from the ground -- calling it something that ties other
 5 people's hands, it doesn't sit well with me, but we
 6 needed people in there. I don't know what the answer
 7 is.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're the only person who knows whether
 9 it's safe for other people to go in there.
 10 A. And that's all it should be: we've secured it and we
 11 need paramedics in there or whoever.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the use of a warm zone and a cold
 13 zone to you is not that great a help?
 14 A. It's okay if you're looking for -- "hunting down" is the
 15 wrong word, if you're progressing towards a threat
 16 that's with a firearm and they're actively shooting and
 17 progressing through, then you can have that staged
 18 approach. But something so unique as this where an
 19 IED's gone off, it doesn't quite fit the playbook and
 20 I think that's where it could get lost in translation.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No one is criticising you, believe me,
 22 so please don't think that.
 23 MR DE LA POER: The final part on this topic is just to ask
 24 you to look at page 3 of your statement. By this stage,
 25 we've obviously moved through your narrative so I'm not

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1 suggesting this is contemporaneous to where we had got
 2 up to in our chronology. But if you look at the second
 3 paragraph, you say this:
 4 "We waited for other firearms units to arrive in
 5 order that a full sweep of the arena and station could
 6 be made to check for secondary devices and other
 7 potential assailants. I was conscious that we needed to
 8 ensure that there was what we call a warm zone, a safe
 9 area for casualties to be treated."
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Again, it's the use of warm zone there. I'm sure you
 12 understand what I'm going to ask you about.
 13 A. Yes. So this kind of fits in more to the book of Plato.
 14 There was a description -- we already got fed the
 15 information about this second individual, we were given
 16 quite a detailed description of this individual. One
 17 exit route would have been where myself and my colleague
 18 was. If we're having people brought into that, it would
 19 be a warm zone as there could be a potential threat
 20 there. There's only two of us, we're securing that
 21 area, we've not managed to search the concourse and
 22 Victoria, so as per it, it could be classed as a warm
 23 zone, but until we had more resources to search, which
 24 we did later, that's where it would be a warm zone, but
 25 again, you can't just turn away other emergency

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1 services. It's very dynamic and it has to be judged on
2 the ground, unfortunately.

3 Q. So your attitude was that although that area at the
4 bottom of the staircase where we know a casualty
5 clearing station was set up — that there came a point
6 where you were concerned that it could be a place of
7 threat, so there was a potential threat?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Therefore it meets the warm categorisation?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. But that nonetheless, you took a pragmatic decision on
12 the ground that, weighing everything up, the priority
13 needed to be given to people continuing to come in,
14 casualties continuing to be treated?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So in the period we've now got, I would like just to
17 move through the chronology. I'm going to do so,
18 I hope, with a minimum of commentary. We're just going
19 to look at a number of slides just to capture your
20 movements.

21 We can go to {INQ041618/23} to pick up where you are
22 at 22.51, which is still on the bridge. We can see that
23 Mr Ennis is starting to ascend the staircase in the
24 lower image.

25 Then {INQ041618/26}, please. We can see that you

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1 and your colleague PC Dalton encounter Mr Ennis;
2 do you see that?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. If we go over the page to {INQ041618/27}, I think we've
5 got a zoomed-in image. There's a gesture by PC Dalton
6 with his right arm, it appears, and then Mr Ennis and
7 PC Martin from BTP continue their journey towards the
8 City Room.

9 {INQ041618/28, please}. We have PC Dalton starting
10 to make his way down the staircase.

11 {INQ041618/29}. We can see that at this point
12 you have reached the position that we're going to focus
13 on for just a moment or two at the bottom of the
14 staircase.

15 And {INQ041618/30}, please. Here this may be
16 significant for what comes later. You and your
17 colleague PC Dalton, marked in red and purple
18 respectively, are at the foot of the staircase, do you
19 agree?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. The time is 22.52 and we can see that a police
22 colleague, PS Anwyl, has made his way up the staircase
23 past you?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Do you have any recollection when you were in that

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1 position — and I know this is going to be your answer
2 to cover the whole period — of being under an
3 instruction to stop anyone going up that staircase?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Do you have any recollection, and again this covers the
6 entire period that we're going to cover, of having
7 stopped anyone and told them that they can't go up?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Sitting there now, is it your belief that you did by any
10 word or action inform anybody who was wanting to go up
11 that staircase that they couldn't go up that staircase?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Let's just move forward, please. {INQ041618/31}. We're
14 just capturing really for the record other people coming
15 up the staircase.

16 {INQ041618/32}. We can see an interaction that
17 you're having and then PS Linney going up the staircase.
18 {INQ041618/33}, please. A BTP officer going up.
19 {INQ041618/34}. Here we've got a body cam. This is
20 from Sergeant Hare's body cam footage and we know that
21 he and his TAU team did go up the staircase and into the
22 City Room. The audio picks up you asking:
23 "Have you got any medic kit?"
24 And PS Hare says:
25 "Right we're just having a look, mate. Inspector's

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1 up there. We want to see what's happening up there.
2 Unconfirmed, possibly 12 dead already."

3 And we'll all remember the evidence of Sergeant Hare
4 that that's there, a snapshot at 22.53.52.

5 {INQ041618/36}, please. We see that collection of
6 officers there.

7 {INQ041618/37}. Somebody coming down the staircase,
8 in that case I think it's Station Manager Owen
9 Sanderson.

10 {INQ041618/38}. That TAU unit ready to go up the
11 stairs.

12 {INQ041618/39}. We can see some people whose names
13 have been redacted who were victims of this attack, who
14 are marked there as coming down the stairs.

15 {INQ041618/40}, please. There we can see
16 Constable Meaney and Constable Williams making their way
17 up, and by the time we get to 22.55 you have stepped
18 away from the base of the staircase and are now on
19 Station Approach. Do you see that?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So we've covered those, it's not all of the slides. I'm
22 going to move forward now to the critical period the
23 inquiry legal team asked you to make a further statement
24 about in the light of evidence the inquiry had received.
25 We're going to move forward to {INQ041618/47}, please.

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1 We can see the arrival at 22.59 of consultant
 2 paramedic Dan Smith and MERIT doctor Michael Daley.
 3 {INQ041618/48}. We'll track through the images
 4 we have for this. We can see them in the bottom still
 5 moving in the direction of the staircase.
 6 {INQ041618/49}. We can see coming together in the
 7 top image you are marked holding your right arm up and
 8 pointing up the staircase. Do you have any recollection
 9 of this encounter?
 10 A. No, I'm afraid I don't.
 11 Q. {INQ041618/50}. We can see at this point others are
 12 coming down the stairs, including a member of ShowSec
 13 staff in the distinctive yellow and black top.
 14 In the bottom still, the grouping of people appears
 15 to have remained the same, do you agree?
 16 {INQ041618/51}. We can see a cropped—in image. You
 17 appear to be standing with Dr Daley and a police
 18 constable and Mr Smith —
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. — as it's recorded there. We can see you are then
 21 moving away from that group —
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. — in the bottom image.
 24 {INQ041618/52}. We can see more people coming down
 25 in the lower image and Mr Smith in the top image

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1 apparently beginning to walk towards the foot of the
 2 staircase or certainly in that direction.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. {INQ041618/53}, please. Your movement is shown by the
 5 red box and arrow. In the bottom image we can see what
 6 appears to be Mr Smith and Dr Daley moving in the
 7 direction towards the war memorial entrance.
 8 To complete the sequence, {INQ041618/54}, please,
 9 and {INQ041618/55}.
 10 We can see in 55 that that encounter, if that's the
 11 correct word to describe it, is over. You are in
 12 position, together with PC Dalton, at the bottom of the
 13 staircase and in the top and indeed the bottom image
 14 we can see further personnel walking up the stairs?
 15 A. Yes, that's correct.
 16 Q. I would like just to look at five or six more slides,
 17 which are really by way of example.
 18 {INQ041618/58}, please. I think we've got an
 19 example of a BTP officer there and we can see a casualty
 20 coming down in the bottom image.
 21 {INQ041618/60}, please. In the bottom image there's
 22 identified an unknown female member of the public.
 23 I think you know, having scrutinised these, that that
 24 person is in fact identified in an earlier slide up on
 25 the footbridge; is that right?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.
 2 Q. If we go to {INQ041618/62}, we'll see, although they are
 3 redacted in the bottom image, that same member of the
 4 public has started to ascend the staircase again a few
 5 moments later?
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.
 7 Q. {INQ041618/78}, please. We see in that, in the bottom
 8 image, a member of ShowSec staff ascending the
 9 staircase. At this point, as the caption indicates, you
 10 and PC Dalton have stepped away from the base of the
 11 stairs and you are conducting a search of the public
 12 house on the concourse and indeed parts of the station
 13 concourse?
 14 A. That's correct.
 15 Q. Just pausing there for a moment, why is it, do you
 16 think, that you left that position at the bottom of the
 17 stairs and began the search that you did?
 18 A. I think we were joined by other firearms resources, so
 19 I was happy with sufficient numbers to carry out
 20 a search tactic safely or as safe as it could be.
 21 There's quite a lot established — quite a lot of
 22 free-flowing movement of people up to assist people at
 23 that time as well.
 24 Q. {INQ041618/81}. Again, you are conducting your search,
 25 but we can see a member of the public coming down there

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1 and two police officers making their way up.
 2 Then if we go to the final still I would like to
 3 show you, {INQ041618/84}, which captures you, and behind
 4 you, your colleague PC Dalton, at 23.27 stepping on to
 5 Station Approach.
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.
 7 Q. Is it right that from that position, having had a moment
 8 or two on Station Approach, you and PC Dalton made your
 9 way in the Hunts Bank direction?
 10 A. Yes, for further intelligence.
 11 Q. And you remained on duty for a considerable period;
 12 is that right?
 13 A. That's correct.
 14 Q. And although we won't examine the detail of it, you went
 15 where you were directed to go to continue to carry out
 16 your authorised firearms officer duties?
 17 A. Correct.
 18 MR DE LA POER: Sir, I don't have any more questions for
 19 this witness. Before I invite you to consider taking
 20 a break, I don't know whether you do.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You were at the bottom of the stairs to
 22 do what?
 23 A. To secure the area.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So to prevent any gunman or anyone like
 25 that coming back and going towards the City Room?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm just checking that. Were you doing
 3 that of your own initiative or were you under
 4 instructions?
 5 A. From a brief conversation prior to going into the
 6 City Room, it was decided that we would take up
 7 a position on the other side. As opposed to just doing
 8 it on the doors, you go to the pinch point, which was
 9 at the bottom of the stairs.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 11 MR DE LA POER: Sir, before I invite you to consider taking
 12 lunch, I'm conscious that we've got two requests in, it
 13 may be if they are very short that we can accommodate
 14 them now if you think that's a good idea, or we can
 15 adjourn until after lunch. I'm very much in your hands,
 16 sir.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let's enquire how short they are.
 18 MR DE LA POER: It's one of the BJC team asking questions,
 19 I'm not sure whether it's Mr Weatherby QC or Ms Morris.
 20 MR WEATHERBY: Can you see me?
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We can, thank you.
 22 MR WEATHERBY: We have no questions in the light of the
 23 questions that have been asked, thank you very much.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And finally Mr Horwell, the only other
 25 potential questioner.

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1 MR HORWELL: A minute or two.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fine. Thank you.
 3 Questions from MR HORWELL
 4 MR HORWELL: I'm not going to go through the very lengthy
 5 sequence of events with you, but looking at them, in
 6 terms of those who are not police officers, whilst you
 7 were at the foot of the stairs or close to the stairs,
 8 we know that Mr Ennis went up and walked past you.
 9 There's one photograph, I'm not going to ask for it to
 10 be put up, but it's at {INQ041618/39}. But whilst you
 11 were at the foot of the stairs, a member of the public
 12 you permit to go up the stairs having had a discussion
 13 with him.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Then the incident with Dan Smith and Dr Daley. And
 16 after that, Mr Ennis comes back down the stairs, he goes
 17 back up the stairs, the unknown female comes down the
 18 stairs helping a casualty, together with a police
 19 officer and then, after a very short time, she goes back
 20 up the stairs. You weren't interested in stopping any
 21 of those because they were there to help casualties,
 22 either on the bridge or in the City Room?
 23 A. Yes, that's correct.
 24 Q. And would you have prevented anyone, let alone a doctor,
 25 from going into the City Room to treat those who you had

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1 only seen a few minutes before, so severely injured?
 2 A. No, I can't think of any reason why.
 3 MR HORWELL: Thank you.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Horwell, the whole purpose of this
 5 and the next witness is to see whether Dr Daley's
 6 account of being stopped was in fact accurate. Unless
 7 someone is going to disabuse me, the only issue is
 8 whether he has an accurate memory of what happened.
 9 It's not in any way suggested that he wasn't doing his
 10 best to help the inquiry.
 11 MR HORWELL: And I'm certainly not suggesting otherwise,
 12 sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I didn't think you would, and obviously
 14 I would listen to that, but I thought it might be best
 15 to clear that up.
 16 MR HORWELL: Thank you, sir.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you both.
 18 MR DE LA POER: Sir, unless you have any further questions
 19 for this officer, we will hear from his colleague,
 20 PC Dalton, after lunch.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Tyldesley, and thank you
 22 for coming. I'm sorry you've been asked to come at the
 23 last minute, but this issue did arise. I have said to
 24 other firearms officers and I say to you too, you
 25 obviously all behaved with enormous courage on that

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1 night, going in to somewhere where you had no idea what
 2 you would find, so thank you for that.
 3 (1.10 pm)
 4 (The lunch adjournment)
 5 (2.10 pm)
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr de la Poer.
 7 MR DE LA POER: Sir, good afternoon. We are joined by
 8 Constable Dalton. May we begin, please, with him being
 9 sworn.
 10 PC JAMES DALTON (sworn)
 11 Questions from MR DE LA POER
 12 MR DE LA POER: Please can you state your full name and
 13 rank?
 14 A. James Alexander Dalton, police constable.
 15 Q. Did you joined the police in 2007?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Was that Greater Manchester Police?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And did you qualify as an authorised firearms officer in
 20 2016?
 21 A. Yes, that's right.
 22 Q. Meaning that you had approximately one year's
 23 experience, given the point at which you qualified,
 24 prior to the arena attack?
 25 A. Correct.

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1 Q. Did you have the opportunity to hear the evidence of
2 your colleague, PC Tyldesley?
3 A. Yes, I did.
4 Q. So you have heard how we took him through the sequence
5 of events and do you agree that on the occasions that
6 you're marked in that sequence of events, you are
7 correctly identified?
8 A. Yes, that's correct.
9 Q. I don't propose to rehearse all of that with you, in
10 fact very little of it with you, but before we come to
11 the chronology, I would just like to ask you about
12 Operation Plato. Obviously you were a relatively newly
13 qualified authorised firearms officer with substantially
14 less experience, would you agree, than your colleague
15 who you were paired with that night?
16 A. Yes, that's correct.
17 Q. You provided a witness statement in — it's dated
18 26 June 2018 — you don't need to turn it up, although
19 you may in a moment if you wish to — so just over
20 a year after the attack.
21 A. That's correct.
22 Q. That witness statement, which in its typed form
23 stretches just over on to a fourth page, doesn't
24 anywhere mention Operation Plato; do you agree?
25 A. Yes, I agree.

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1 Q. Nor does it anywhere mention zones, the word "hot", the
2 word "warm" or the word "cold"?
3 A. That's correct.
4 Q. No criticism implied by that, but that is the statement
5 as it appears?
6 Had you received training prior to May 2017 in
7 Operation Plato?
8 A. Yes, I had.
9 Q. And do you think you had at that time, namely May 2017,
10 a good understanding of what Operation Plato meant at
11 that time?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. Had you received training in what the different zones
14 meant according to the JOPs then in force?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. Had you received any training in relation to the
17 communication of those zones, firstly as between
18 firearms officers?
19 A. Yes.
20 Q. What was the effect of that training in terms of
21 communicating the zoning of any Operation Plato as
22 between firearms officers?
23 A. Obviously, we're the people on the ground, so I would
24 say we're the people in the best position at the time to
25 pass, I suppose, the situational awareness of what's

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1 going on on the ground up the chain of command, whether
2 it's through the OFC or the tactical firearms commander,
3 if he's at the scene, and then the decisions go up the
4 chain of command.
5 Q. In terms of that in practice, you and anyone you're
6 paired with will have a sense of the situation
7 immediately in front of you and any area that you've
8 passed through, but you might not have a complete sense
9 of all of the geography that you're dealing with,
10 is that fair, at any one time?
11 A. Yes, that's correct.
12 Q. So practically speaking, bearing in mind that firearms
13 officers on the ground are best placed, as you say, to
14 identify the zones, how is the line between zones
15 communicated up the chain of command?
16 A. Sorry, what do you mean by that, sorry?
17 Q. Well, if you are on the ground identifying where the
18 zones are and you want to communicate the fact that
19 you are standing in a warm zone or that the warm zone is
20 to be found in a particular area, how in practice do you
21 do that or had you been trained to do that?
22 A. We can describe what's going on on the ground at that
23 time, the casualties, whether there's an ongoing threat,
24 whether the threat's left the area, taking in all the
25 information and intelligence that's going on, and we'd

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1 feed that back through the radio channels.
2 Q. Would you expect to say something to the effect of, "I'm
3 standing in the concourse area, the hall", or whatever
4 word might be appropriate to describe the area, "There's
5 no active and immediate threat here, but I can't exclude
6 the fact that one might arise any minute, therefore
7 I think you should designate this warm"? Is that the
8 sort of language you use?
9 A. Yes, that's correct.
10 Q. And do you recall using any such language on the night?
11 A. I don't think I got on the radio channel on the night
12 because obviously it's very busy and it's best to have
13 one singer, one song and pass it through.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So do you actually make the
15 recommendation — I understand in the City Room you can
16 go through it and you can find there is no gunman,
17 there's no active gun threat there.
18 A. Yes.
19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The definition of a warm zone as
20 I understand it is there is no immediate threat but the
21 threat might return.
22 A. Yes, that's correct.
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are you actually in a position to say
24 the threat might return or does that require someone
25 who's got more of an overall view to be able to say

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1 that, to actually decide whether it's a warm or cold
 2 zone?
 3 A. I think unless we see something in front of us that
 4 would pose a threat then we are probably in a good
 5 position there, but obviously people away from it might
 6 have other information, other feeds coming in that they
 7 may --- at a different location there might be a further
 8 threat.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand you can say, "There's
 10 no one in the City Room with a gun" ---
 11 A. Yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: --- "and we've cleared the area, we have
 13 searched it, there's nobody there". Are you in
 14 a position to say anything about whether the threat
 15 might return, if there was one, or is that really ---
 16 someone has to take an overview of the situation?
 17 A. I think someone would have to take an overview of the
 18 situation because we can only see what's in front of us
 19 at that time.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So in reality you are saying the
 21 City Room is clear?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 24 MR DE LA POER: So we know that you and your colleague ended
 25 up at the foot of the staircase which led to the

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1 overbridge to the City Room. If you were giving that
 2 description over the radio, as I think you have told us
 3 you don't have a recollection of doing, to whom, if
 4 anyone, were you communicating the status in
 5 Operation Plato terms of where you were standing?
 6 A. Obviously we were speaking to one another and I think
 7 Troy's got on the radio at certain points and passed
 8 information back and obviously other people within other
 9 AFOs are passing information back of what they see.
 10 I think PC Moore had been through the City Room prior to
 11 us and I know he'd been passing information back. So
 12 it's --- I guess it's like a team effort, isn't it, of
 13 everyone passing relevant information but not everyone
 14 passing information because the radio channels are so
 15 busy at the time and it's not everyone need to say the
 16 same thing, if you understand.
 17 Q. There are obviously different types of threat you face
 18 and even in 2017 the possibility of a secondary device
 19 was recognised within the umbrella term of an MTFA.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. You can speak to the fact that you can't see a gunman.
 22 Would you also be trained to comment upon what the
 23 potential risk, in your assessment, of whether there was
 24 a secondary device in the area you were standing in?
 25 A. We can only have a visual check, ultimately, to have

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1 a look at anything that would stand out, that would
 2 alarm us, I guess, other than, you know, looking inside
 3 things, it is just a case of a visual check at that
 4 time.
 5 Q. So from your point of view standing at the foot of the
 6 stairs, just to try and put ourselves in that position
 7 you were in at around 22.50 or a just few minutes later
 8 than that, you can't see a gunman; is that right?
 9 A. Correct.
 10 Q. There are some bags round and about the place and some
 11 medical bags and patients are starting to accumulate,
 12 but it's not the same scene that you have seen in the
 13 City Room, for example?
 14 A. That's correct.
 15 Q. And so what did your training suggest you should be
 16 communicating about the level of risk in that area that
 17 you were standing?
 18 A. At that time, I would say it would be a warm zone
 19 because obviously we don't know whether that --- there's
 20 reports of gunshots and possibly a further, I think,
 21 a further terrorist. So obviously, there's nothing to
 22 say that person might come back so obviously I wouldn't
 23 like to say it's a cold zone. It would be a warm zone
 24 in my opinion because there could be someone who could
 25 come back, so ultimately we have to make that area as

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1 safe as possible with the numbers that we have at that
 2 time.
 3 Q. At that stage we have seen, with your colleague,
 4 numerous people, including unprotected civilians ---
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. --- walking in that area.
 7 A. Mm-hm.
 8 Q. Under a strict application of the joint operating
 9 principles at the time, would you agree that if that
 10 area was warm, those people ought not to be operating
 11 in that area?
 12 A. Yes, they should have PPE on ultimately, yes.
 13 Q. And in the case of civilians, they have absolutely no
 14 training so far as you can expect as to how to deal with
 15 any threat that might emerge?
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. So if it was your assessment, standing at the foot of
 18 the stairs, that it was a warm zone, what was your
 19 thinking, if any, about the fact that there were people
 20 who, under the terms of the joint operating principles,
 21 shouldn't be there, the fact that they're coming to and
 22 fro and some waiting in that area and so on and so
 23 forth?
 24 A. I think obviously the categories when it comes to zoning
 25 are very rigid, there's sort of no sort of scope for

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1 somewhere in between. I think at that moment in time we
 2 decided to try and put a bubble on so there's staff from
 3 the -- where the bomb had gone off upstairs at the door
 4 there putting sort of -- how I would describe as
 5 a protective bubble on. But obviously we're looking for
 6 any threat at that time, so in my opinion we've made
 7 that room as safe as possible for people to operate
 8 in that time.
 9 Q. That's the City Room?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. What about the concourse where you and your colleague
 12 are at just after 10 to?
 13 A. I would say the same there well: we've made that as safe
 14 as possible with the staff numbers we have at that time
 15 to allow people to sort of egress and ingress into it.
 16 Q. So we've identified where you might be expected to
 17 communicate information internally, so to speak, over
 18 the firearms channel and within GMP. What training had
 19 you had, if any, to communicate your risk assessment of
 20 the threat to other emergency service partners?
 21 A. I think obviously we're the people who do the job on the
 22 ground so that would be passed through the radios and
 23 it would be for obviously commanders in the control
 24 room, or whether they're on the ground, to pass that
 25 across to the other agencies.

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1 Q. So you wouldn't have seen it as part of your role,
 2 having been part of the pair who have said, "This is
 3 warm", to say to people who under JOPs ought not to be
 4 there, "Hang on a minute, firearms have assessed this as
 5 warm, you need to know that so you can decide whether
 6 you should be here", or even, "You need to leave"? That
 7 wasn't part of your training?
 8 A. I think in order to get those people there -- I think
 9 you know, it's a massive cog, isn't it? To get all the
 10 correct trained people there is -- obviously with the
 11 correct PPE and it has to go through the correct command
 12 channels to contact them and obviously that takes a lot
 13 of time and obviously time is precious in these
 14 situations. We have been into that room and we have
 15 seen the catastrophic injuries to these people and
 16 obviously, in my opinion, we've made that as safe as
 17 we can for those people to go in and operate and give
 18 those people the help they needed at that time.
 19 Unfortunately, every second kind of counts in that
 20 situation.
 21 Q. Had you received any training prior to May 22, which
 22 might have led you to conclude that at a command level,
 23 there may have been concern within emergency service
 24 partners -- I'm talking about the ambulance or the Fire
 25 Service -- about them sending people into areas that

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1 they weren't sufficiently protected to enter?
 2 A. Have I had any training on that?
 3 Q. Had you been told for example, as part of your training,
 4 NWAS and GMFRS will not send unprotected people into
 5 a warm zone?
 6 A. I was aware of obviously the people that could operate
 7 into a warm zone, which is the HART team, and obviously
 8 I think the Fire Service have their sort of capability
 9 as well, I'm not sure the name of them, but they also
 10 have a capability. I'm aware of that.
 11 Q. But in terms of whether there might be command
 12 decisions, not part of your training?
 13 A. I'm not aware of that, no.
 14 Q. All right. That's all I want to ask you about
 15 Operation Plato, unless, sir, you have any questions.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, thank you.
 17 MR DE LA POER: I would just like to turn to a handful of
 18 the images that we've already looked at just to focus on
 19 the issue that is the subject of your second statement.
 20 {INQ041618/47}. We're going to move through these
 21 at speed to, this time, focus on you and I'll ask you
 22 one or two questions about it.
 23 There we see the two people that we are focusing on
 24 arriving.
 25 {INQ041618/48}, please. You are marked in purple;

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1 is that right?
 2 A. Yes, that's correct.
 3 Q. We can bear that in mind as we look at the next images.
 4 {INQ041618/49}. {INQ041618/50}. {INQ041618/51}.
 5 {INQ041618/52}, please. {INQ041618/53}. And
 6 {INQ041618/54}, please.
 7 I am just showing those so that we can all have it
 8 well in mind. So I'll ask you these questions which
 9 apply to this period, but may also apply generally. Did
 10 anyone at any point give you an instruction, PC Dalton,
 11 to prevent any person other than a hostile from going up
 12 the stairs to the City Room?
 13 A. No.
 14 Q. Do you have any recollection of seeking to prevent
 15 anybody who was responding to the emergency in
 16 a positive way from going up those stairs?
 17 A. No.
 18 Q. Having seen those images, and this is not the first time
 19 that you've seen it, do you think that you said or did
 20 anything that stopped any emergency personnel in uniform
 21 from going up that staircase?
 22 A. No.
 23 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much indeed.
 24 Sir, do you have any questions?
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, thank you.

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1 MR DE LA POER: Can I then turn to what I anticipate is
 2 Mr Weatherby to see if he has any questions for this
 3 witness.
 4 MR WEATHERBY: No questions from me, thank you very much.
 5 MR DE LA POER: Finally, Mr Horwell.
 6 MR HORWELL: No, thank you.
 7 MR DE LA POER: Well, sir, unless you have any further
 8 questions for the police constable —
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't.
 10 I gather you saw the evidence of your colleague.
 11 A. Yes, I did.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And I said something about firearms
 13 officers at the end. You will appreciate it applies to
 14 you just as much as it did to him.
 15 A. Yes, thank you.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you for coming to give your
 17 evidence.
 18 MR DE LA POER: Sir, in what is almost an unprecedented
 19 situation, we have concluded the evidence that we had
 20 scheduled for today a considerable period of time before
 21 our usual finish time. The explanation, in short, for
 22 why we can't go any further is because the witnesses
 23 tomorrow both have good reasons why they can't be here
 24 today and, try as we might, we weren't able to schedule
 25 anyone to fulfil the rest of the afternoon. I'm sure

1 that everyone will have something to do, but we can't go
 2 any further with the live evidence.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: My real regret is that I may be forcing
 4 people to leave what is probably the coolest building in
 5 Manchester, which I do apologise for, and I'm sorry it's
 6 a shorter day, but these things, with the best schedule
 7 in the world — and I'm not suggesting we are the best
 8 schedule in the world — do happen, I'm afraid, in any
 9 court hearing. So sorry about that and I will see
 10 people at 9.30 tomorrow, no doubt.
 11 MR DE LA POER: Yes, please, when we will commence with the
 12 evidence of former Chief Constable Hopkins, which will
 13 be to return to his evidence, and then return to the
 14 evidence of Mr Parry.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Thank you.
 16 (2.30 pm)
 17 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am
 18 on Wednesday, 21 July 2021)
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1 I N D E X

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