

1 Tuesday, 18 September 2018  
 2 (10.00 am)  
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone, and welcome  
 4 to today's hearing. We are going to hear another  
 5 firefighter witness today. Mr Welch, I think.  
 6 MR MILLETT: Yes. Good morning, Mr Chairman.  
 7 May I now please call Group Manager Richard Welch.  
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  
 9 RICHARD WELCH (sworn)  
 10 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY  
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Welch.  
 12 Yes, Mr Millett.  
 13 MR MILLETT: Mr Welch, good morning.  
 14 **A. Morning.**  
 15 Q. Could you please give the inquiry your full name.  
 16 **A. Richard Frederick Welch.**  
 17 Q. Can I start by saying thank you very much to you for  
 18 coming here and giving evidence to the inquiry and  
 19 helping us with our investigations. It's very much  
 20 appreciated.  
 21 If any of my questions are incomprehensible to you,  
 22 I'm very happy to put the question again or ask the  
 23 question in a different way, all you have to do is ask  
 24 me.  
 25 If you need a break at any time, just signal and we

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1 can take a break.  
 2 First of all, can I ask you to take your two  
 3 statements, please, which will either be in front of you  
 4 in a small bundle or, more conveniently, on the screen  
 5 on the desk to your right, which is where it's best to  
 6 look at them, or displayed on the screens at the back of  
 7 the room.  
 8 The first one is dated 5 July 2017, that is  
 9 MET00007525, and the second one is dated 30 March 2018,  
 10 and that is MET00013007.  
 11 Have you read both of those statements recently?  
 12 **A. Yes, I have.**  
 13 Q. Can you confirm for us that the contents are true and  
 14 accurate?  
 15 **A. There are actually two inaccuracies in the first  
 16 statement and one in the second statement.**  
 17 Q. If I don't pick those up, someone will remind me of  
 18 them. We may find that there are more than that.  
 19 **A. Okay.**  
 20 Q. Well, perhaps we can cover those now. If you want to  
 21 look at the first statement, which is the inaccuracy?  
 22 **A. The first one is in the statement where it says I was  
 23 informed of a 10-pump fire initially. I believe that to  
 24 be actually an eight-pump fire I was informed of.**  
 25 Q. We'll come to that, I think.

Page 2

1 **A. The second one was within my statement it says that the  
 2 Asian male was rescued at 0800 hours and I believe that  
 3 to be 0600 hours.**  
 4 Q. Again, thank you very much.  
 5 In the second statement?  
 6 **A. In the second statement, I state that I was informed of  
 7 the change of stay-put policy at 0800 and I believe that  
 8 to be 0300.**  
 9 Q. I was going to ask you about that, and that's clarified  
 10 that already. Thank you very much.  
 11 Subject to those corrections that you've very  
 12 helpfully just made, can you confirm again that the  
 13 contents are true and accurate?  
 14 **A. Yes, I can.**  
 15 Q. Have you discussed your statements or your evidence that  
 16 you are going to give to us with anybody today before  
 17 coming here?  
 18 **A. As a core participant, I have discussed with the legal  
 19 team appointed to me by the Fire Officers Association  
 20 the events of the night, but not the evidence I'm going  
 21 to give today.**  
 22 Q. Right.  
 23 Now, you are a borough commander for Lambeth?  
 24 **A. I was, no longer.**  
 25 Q. What are you now?

Page 3

1 **A. I'm now Deputy Assistant Commissioner.**  
 2 Q. When were you promoted?  
 3 **A. 1 November 2017.**  
 4 Q. As at 14 June 2017, you were borough commander for  
 5 Lambeth?  
 6 **A. That's correct.**  
 7 Q. Your call sign I think was E109.  
 8 **A. That's correct.**  
 9 Q. Is that still your call sign?  
 10 **A. No, it's now Echo 5.**  
 11 Q. E5, Echo 5, I see.  
 12 As at 14 June 2017, you had been, I think,  
 13 an employee of the LFB for some 22 years.  
 14 **A. That's correct.**  
 15 Q. Was all of that front-line service?  
 16 **A. Yes.**  
 17 Q. You explain in your first witness statement, in the  
 18 first main paragraph, that because of the areas you've  
 19 been based in -- I'm summarising -- as borough  
 20 commander, in particular Newham and Tower Hamlets in  
 21 London, you have had a lot of experience of high-rise  
 22 fires. Is that right?  
 23 **A. That's correct.**  
 24 Q. In terms of high-rise training that you've received or  
 25 delivered, can you tell us in general terms, first of

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<p>1 all, whether any of that has covered the specific</p> <p>2 subject of ignition of the facade of a building,</p> <p>3 a high-rise building?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, not that I'm aware of.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Has any of the training that you've received or</p> <p>6 delivered covered the ignition and fire spread over</p> <p>7 cladding on the exterior of a building?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Again, not that I recall, no.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Have you ever given or received training in strategies</p> <p>10 for either full or partial evacuation of a high-rise</p> <p>11 residential block?</p> <p>12 <b>A. As part of our high-rise policy, we do consider full</b></p> <p>13 <b>evacuation of a building, but that's usually of</b></p> <p>14 <b>a commercial building, not necessarily residential.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Let's start with a practical training exercise. Have</p> <p>16 you ever done a practical training exercise involving</p> <p>17 full or partial evacuation of a high-rise residential</p> <p>18 block?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Not that I recall.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Do you know of circumstances in which you would consider</p> <p>21 implementing an evacuation of a high-rise residential</p> <p>22 building which had a stay-put policy in place?</p> <p>23 <b>A. From operational knowledge, it would be if the stay-put</b></p> <p>24 <b>policy is no longer effective then we would move to</b></p> <p>25 <b>removing that and evacuate the building if possible.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 Does that mean that you are qualified to train</p> <p>2 firefighters on the use of both SDBA, standard, and</p> <p>3 EDDBA, extended, breathing apparatus?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. In general terms, are you able to tell us when you would</p> <p>6 need to use EDDBA specifically at an incident rather than</p> <p>7 SDBA?</p> <p>8 <b>A. EDDBA would normally be used when there's extensive</b></p> <p>9 <b>travel distances. So to summarise, it really would be</b></p> <p>10 <b>when someone's required to travel further and stay</b></p> <p>11 <b>longer at an incident, but not usually for firefighting.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Have you ever had an experience where you needed to</p> <p>13 deploy large numbers of EDDBA wearers into a tower block?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Is there any training available, or was there any</p> <p>16 training available as at June 2017, on that kind of</p> <p>17 activity, mass deployment of EDDBA wearers into a tower</p> <p>18 block?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Not to the extent that were used at Grenfell Tower, no.</b></p> <p>20 Q. I want to turn to your mobilisation and journey to</p> <p>21 Grenfell on the night of the fire.</p> <p>22 If you turn to page 2 of your statement, please,</p> <p>23 your first statement, I'd like you to go to 11 lines off</p> <p>24 the bottom of that page. It's not that easy to find.</p> <p>25 It's just below halfway down. You say:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 Q. Have you ever had an experience, as an operational</p> <p>2 front-line officer, of a time when the stay-put policy</p> <p>3 was, as you put it, no longer effective?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Apart from Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Apart from Grenfell Tower.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Do you ever recall seeing or receiving any training on</p> <p>8 something called a tall buildings facade slideshow?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I've become aware of it recently but I don't recall ever</b></p> <p>10 <b>receiving training on it.</b></p> <p>11 Q. We can put up the front page. It's tab 10 of the master</p> <p>12 documents bundle and it's LFB -- well, there it is.</p> <p>13 Paul got there first. "Tall buildings facade".</p> <p>14 Although it carries the date of 13 July 2016, that's</p> <p>15 I think a draft; the actual date we're told it was</p> <p>16 finalised and disseminated in the LFB was October 2016.</p> <p>17 <b>A. I don't recall that.</b></p> <p>18 Q. You've not seen that before?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right.</p> <p>21 If you look at the first paragraph on page 1 of your</p> <p>22 statement, and look at the last sentence on that</p> <p>23 paragraph, you say:</p> <p>24 "Other training of note is that I am a qualified</p> <p>25 Breathing Apparatus Instructor (BAI)."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 "I went to bed around midnight and then at 0118hrs</p> <p>2 on 14th June 2017 I received a pager message informing</p> <p>3 me of a fire at Flat 16, 4th Floor Grenfell Tower with 6</p> <p>4 pumps attending but also requesting an 'aerial' and</p> <p>5 making it 'persons reported'."</p> <p>6 You say you got that at 01.18 hours.</p> <p>7 When you did this statement, were you looking at</p> <p>8 a document in order to get that time?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No, that was a time that was recorded on my pager, but</b></p> <p>10 <b>it is possible that the time on the pager could be</b></p> <p>11 <b>inaccurate.</b></p> <p>12 Q. We have a recorded time for your pager message that was</p> <p>13 sent to you in the short incident log, and I wonder if</p> <p>14 I can just ask you to be shown that, please, at page 13.</p> <p>15 On that page, we see, just below halfway down, the</p> <p>16 list of officers attending the incident. We see your</p> <p>17 name about a third of the way down that list, E109,</p> <p>18 Welch, Richard, do you see that?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes, I can.</b></p> <p>20 Q. 14 June 2017, assigned at 01.19.27.</p> <p>21 Would that be the time that you were paged informing</p> <p>22 you of the incident at Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, I would say it is, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You say in your statement, just going back -- we'll come</p> <p>25 back to the short incident log a number of times,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

1 I think, during the course of today, but put that on one  
 2 side for the moment -- you say that you were told in the  
 3 request -- this is three-quarters of the way down the  
 4 page -- that you would "probably be needed to attend in  
 5 my role as Bulk Media Adviser (BMA)".  
 6 You say "probably"; that was your estimation or  
 7 understanding, was it?  
 8 **A. Yes. So when there's six appliances at an incident,**  
 9 **bulk media -- it is your call whether you think you're**  
 10 **needed depending on what the incident is. But once it**  
 11 **becomes eight appliances then your attendance is**  
 12 **compulsory.**  
 13 Q. If you go back to the short incident log at page 17, and  
 14 look, please, at the time stamp of 01.21.33, it says:  
 15 "Agency  
 16 "E109 GM WELCH PAGED AS TAB."  
 17 What does "TAB" stand for?  
 18 **A. That's the code used at control. It's tactical adviser**  
 19 **bulk.**  
 20 Q. Is that the same as bulk media adviser?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. You go on to say in your main statement at page 2,  
 23 halfway down the page -- I'm sorry, we're jumping around  
 24 because it jumps around a bit:  
 25 "As a Group Manager I carry [an] additional 'tag' to

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1 Borough Commander which is Bulk Media Adviser —  
 2 responsible for the large delivery/removal of water at  
 3 incidents; this means that I am notified of any incident  
 4 where 6 pumps are requested and I can choose whether  
 5 I need to attend, but if 8 or more pumps are requested  
 6 then I am required to attend."  
 7 Just focusing on what you say about responsible for  
 8 the large delivery or removal of water at incidents  
 9 there, Mr Welch, can you explain to us in layman's terms  
 10 what that means?  
 11 **A. So if there's lots of appliances there which are using**  
 12 **a large amount of water, or aerial appliances which use**  
 13 **a large amount of water, then the bulk media adviser's**  
 14 **role is to advise the incident commander on the best**  
 15 **configuration to get the most amount of water out of the**  
 16 **hydrant or whatever water source is available. But the**  
 17 **removal part relates to floodings. So if we need to**  
 18 **remove a lot of water from an area, we also get involved**  
 19 **to help the incident commander -- advise the incident**  
 20 **commander on how to do that.**  
 21 Q. Is one of the tasks to remove water which has been  
 22 applied by the Brigade?  
 23 **A. Only if it causes flooding. Usually, in most**  
 24 **circumstances, it'll run away naturally, but if it**  
 25 **causes flooding, we can assist with that.**

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1 Q. Would your role also cover dealing with any kind of  
 2 issues about water pressure --  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. -- at an incident?  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. So if there were water pressure issues at  
 7 Grenfell Tower, you would be the officer in charge of  
 8 sorting those issues out?  
 9 **A. We'd be advising the incident commander on the best**  
 10 **configuration of how to get the most amount out of the**  
 11 **water that is available from the hydrant, working with**  
 12 **the water board to increase the pressure if necessary or**  
 13 **finding larger hydrants further away where we can get**  
 14 **the water from.**  
 15 Q. So if there were generic water pressure issues at  
 16 Grenfell Tower, would you be the officer responsible for  
 17 liaising with the water board?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. And did you?  
 20 **A. No, but I didn't carry out that role on the night.**  
 21 Q. Did anybody else?  
 22 **A. There was another bulk media adviser that came later on,**  
 23 **Station Manager Chris Payton, I believe.**  
 24 Q. I am sorry, could you repeat the name again?  
 25 **A. Station Manager Chris Payton, I believe, came as a bulk**

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1 **media adviser later on.**  
 2 Q. In the same passage of your statement, in the next part  
 3 of the sentence, you say -- and I've read it out  
 4 already -- it means you're notified of any incident  
 5 where six pumps are requested. We've seen that on the  
 6 screen.  
 7 We know that by the time your pager message went at  
 8 01.19, as we've just seen, the incident at Grenfell had  
 9 been made up to an eight-pump fire, and by the time you  
 10 spoke to control at 01.24, as we'll come to see, it was  
 11 a 10-pump fire.  
 12 My question is: at that stage, by 01.24 when you  
 13 knew it was a 10-pump fire, did you know whether other  
 14 group managers had been told to attend?  
 15 **A. So our mobilising policy is once we make pumps six then**  
 16 **we require a station manager to take over that incident,**  
 17 **and a group manager is automatically mobilised to**  
 18 **monitor the station manager. So my assumption would be**  
 19 **yes, there would be a group manager attending.**  
 20 Q. Looking back at your statement, just below halfway down,  
 21 you say you received your pager message -- we've seen  
 22 this already:  
 23 "... informing me of a fire at Flat 16, 4th Floor  
 24 Grenfell Tower with 6 pumps attending ..."  
 25 Was that what your pager message told you, that it

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1 was on the 4th floor?  
 2 **A. I couldn't recall it word for word, but that's what**  
 3 **I seem to recall, yes.**  
 4 Q. Would a pager message normally tell you of the exact  
 5 address or location of the fire that --  
 6 **A. They will try and give you as much information as they**  
 7 **can on that pager message, yeah.**  
 8 Q. You also say -- it's still page 2 and it's eight lines  
 9 up from the bottom or so:  
 10 "This request told me that I would probably be  
 11 needed to attend in my role as Bulk Media Adviser (BMA)  
 12 and with persons reported as well I had already decided  
 13 to attend before I called into our Control Room in  
 14 Merton as required when my pager message is received."  
 15 Your reference there to persons reported, did you  
 16 get that on the pager, do you think?  
 17 **A. I believe so. What we'd normally get on the pager, it**  
 18 **would just give you the initial "PR".**  
 19 Q. Looking back at the short incident log, if I can just  
 20 take you back to that, the persons reported message  
 21 comes -- this is the top of page 18 in the short  
 22 incident log -- at 01.28.40, if you just look at the top  
 23 there. SAD sends a service request at 01.28.40, that's  
 24 Sharon Darby:  
 25 "Service Request Created: IUP G271 PERSONS

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1 REPORTED."  
 2 So just in terms of timings, Mr Welch, it looks as  
 3 if that request was created at that stage at least on  
 4 the Vision system.  
 5 Do you think that you could be wrong about the pager  
 6 message telling you that it was a persons reported fire?  
 7 **A. Clearly, yeah, I think I could be wrong there.**  
 8 Q. Going back to your statement, at page 3, you say:  
 9 "At 0125 hrs I was already in my ready to leave when  
 10 I received a second page informing me it was now a 10  
 11 pump fire and that an 'aerial' had been requested."  
 12 Was that the area of your statement you wanted to  
 13 correct?  
 14 **A. Well, no, because when I spoke to control, they would**  
 15 **tell you it's a 10-pump fire, but then as the incident**  
 16 **increases, they will keep paging you. So although**  
 17 **I'd spoken to them and they've told me it's 10 pumps,**  
 18 **they will still send me a pager message to let me know.**  
 19 Q. Look at page 17 of the the SIL, the short incident log,  
 20 if you would -- that's going back a page -- and look,  
 21 please, at the time mark of 01.24.34. You can see there  
 22 that Sharon Darby -- SAD is Sharon Darby, she's the  
 23 radio operator -- inserts into the system:  
 24 "Make Up  
 25 "IUP FROM G271 MAKE PUMPS TEN."

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1 So we have the timing of that.  
 2 Do you think you had left for the incident before or  
 3 after the make-up to 10?  
 4 **A. I think that was around the same kind of time**  
 5 **considering the time I was paged.**  
 6 Q. As you started your journey, what communications  
 7 equipment did you have with you?  
 8 **A. My Airwave radio.**  
 9 Q. Was it on?  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. Did you hear the make-ups as you drove?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. Do you think, therefore, it's possible that you heard  
 14 the persons reported radio message --  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. -- as you were driving?  
 17 **A. It would seem so.**  
 18 Q. Going back to page a 2 of your statement, we can see --  
 19 and I know this is going back in time a little bit --  
 20 that you'd called into the control room. This is  
 21 three-quarters of the way down page 2. You say at the  
 22 foot of the page you kept the call short.  
 23 Do you remember whether you were told during that  
 24 call to the control room that there were multiple calls  
 25 coming in from persons trapped in the tower?

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1 **A. I don't recall being told that at that time when I rang**  
 2 **in. I do recall being told that we had multiple calls,**  
 3 **but that wasn't involved in people from within the**  
 4 **tower. It's quite usual when we got a large fire we'll**  
 5 **get lots of calls from surrounding areas and people who**  
 6 **see it.**  
 7 Q. During that call, were you told or given the impression  
 8 that any of those calls were fire survival guidance  
 9 calls, even at that early stage?  
 10 **A. Not that I recall, no.**  
 11 Q. Going back to the top of page 3 of your statement, you  
 12 say:  
 13 "... I began my journey to the incident. By the  
 14 time I reached the A2, only a couple of miles from my  
 15 home, I heard on my vehicles Airwave radio that pumps  
 16 had been made 15. A few minutes later I heard pumps  
 17 made 20 and a few minutes after that they were made 25."  
 18 Did that rate of increase of make-ups of appliances  
 19 tell you anything at that stage about the nature of the  
 20 fire or its spread?  
 21 **A. It made it very clear that the incident commander at the**  
 22 **time had a very serious fire in front of him that was**  
 23 **growing quickly because of the quick make-ups.**  
 24 Q. Did you have any thoughts in that moment about what kind  
 25 of building it was, what sort of tactics should be

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1 adopted?

2 **A. Well, at that point, when I'm travelling there, I was**

3 **going there as a bulk media adviser, so my thoughts were**

4 **around what demands may be made on me to provide water**

5 **for an incident growing that quickly.**

6 Q. Did the rate of make-ups of appliances make you think

7 that your role at the incident would be rather more than

8 bulk media adviser, but actually perhaps be incident

9 commander when you arrived?

10 **A. That does happen and I was aware that that could happen,**

11 **but Grenfell Tower's quite a distance, the travel**

12 **distance to get there was quite extensive, so I didn't**

13 **think I would be the first group manager to arrive, no.**

14 Q. I follow.

15 You say in the next paragraph this:

16 "Around this time I heard Control inform officers at

17 the scene that they were receiving Fire Survival

18 Guidance (FSG) phone calls from people in flats within

19 Grenfell Tower, and providing flat numbers and number of

20 occupants."

21 You say "around this time"; that's en route?

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. Do you remember hearing actual floor numbers?

24 **A. I remember them being passed across the radio but**

25 **I don't remember any specific floor numbers or flats.**

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1 Q. You say you remember flat numbers; do you remember any

2 specific flat numbers?

3 **A. No.**

4 Q. Are you sure that flat numbers were actually being

5 passed across the radio?

6 **A. I seem to recall those flat numbers being passed across**

7 **the radio, but throughout most of my journey that**

8 **information was being given, but obviously concentrating**

9 **on driving on a blue light and trying to concentrate on**

10 **the satnav, I was aware they were coming in but I wasn't**

11 **going there as incident commander, so I wasn't trying to**

12 **recall those figures, those numbers.**

13 Q. Do you have a recollection of having any particular

14 impression of whether these calls were coming from

15 anywhere particular in the building, high up or low

16 down?

17 **A. I don't remember that at all.**

18 Q. We can just take a sample or two of these, and take

19 these very quickly. Go to page 18 of the short incident

20 log, just to make sure we have this clear. On page 18,

21 look at the time mark of 01.31.38. This is a service

22 request made by Pete Duddy:

23 "RT4 - G271 - FURTHER CALL TO SAY FIRE ON 20TH FLOOR

24 ALSO - PEOPLE TRAPPED."

25 I think you were en route at that point. Does that

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1 trigger a recollection in your mind?

2 **A. Only of general messages I was hearing, not the**

3 **specifics.**

4 Q. In terms of general messages you were hearing, did you

5 get the impression that there were repeated calls about

6 the same flats or same floors?

7 **A. I don't remember that.**

8 Q. Did you get the impression that there were people

9 trapped on higher floors even at that early stage?

10 **A. It was clear there were people trapped by the fact they**

11 **were making fire survival guidance, but I don't recall**

12 **what floors they were on.**

13 Q. If you go back to your statement, please, and look at

14 page 3, towards the bottom of the page, you say,

15 three-quarters of the way down:

16 "As I came off the A40 and onto the West Cross route

17 I started paying more attention to my Sat Nav to guide

18 me in."

19 The West Cross route, just help me?

20 **A. I believe that's as you come along the A40 and then you**

21 **turn left down towards round about Holland Park.**

22 **I believe that's the -- I could be wrong, but --**

23 Q. So where the Westfield is on the right?

24 **A. Yes, yes.**

25 Q. "Throughout the journey I had heard more and more FSG

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1 calls coming in and it made me feel horrible but also

2 focused my mind and got me to draw on my High-Rise

3 experience which is to focus on reading the locations of

4 the FSGs. There was minimal radio traffic back from the

5 scene which told me they were up against it."

6 When you say "to focus on reading the locations of

7 the FSGs", can you just explain what you mean by that?

8 **A. I think this is built into us as experienced fire**

9 **officers, that when you do start hearing FSGs coming in,**

10 **you try to remember what you can hear. Although you**

11 **know it's being recorded at the scene, but you're still**

12 **trying to recall some sort of information from it.**

13 Q. Did you?

14 **A. No, I couldn't remember the information. It's not**

15 **an area I'm familiar with. I was concentrating on -- as**

16 **I can hear the FSGs, the urgency of getting there and**

17 **trying to find my way into the area, I don't -- I may**

18 **have remembered at the time; I don't recall any of that**

19 **information now.**

20 Q. Because you say in your statement that you were prompted

21 to draw on your high-rise experience, which is to focus

22 on reading the locations of FSGs.

23 Let me ask a different question and I'll come back

24 to it: in your high-rise experience, have you ever

25 handled multiple FSGs from a single incident?

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1 **A. I would say probably no more than two or three at any**  
2 **incident.**  
3 Q. Was handling two or three a frequent experience as  
4 a front-line officer?  
5 **A. Not frequent, no.**  
6 Q. But no more than two or three, you say?  
7 **A. Yes.**  
8 Q. What was the most recent incident at which you had to  
9 handle multiple FSGs prior to Grenfell Tower, do you  
10 remember?  
11 **A. Probably more than two years ago.**  
12 Q. Right.  
13 **A. Prior to the incident.**  
14 Q. Was that a high-rise residential building?  
15 **A. It was, yeah, from what I can recall. It was**  
16 **a high-rise in East London.**  
17 Q. In East London?  
18 **A. Yes.**  
19 Q. Just going back to your statement, where you say you  
20 were drawing on your high-rise experience, which is to  
21 focus on reading the locations of the FSGs, en route,  
22 did you focus on reading the the locations of the FSGs?  
23 **A. I would've done naturally, so yes, I'm comfortable to**  
24 **say yes, but I was also aware that the information that**  
25 **was getting passed to the scene, it was being**

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1 **acknowledged by the people receiving it, so I was aware**  
2 **that, yeah, that is being recorded, so that's comforting**  
3 **for an officer to know that that's being received and**  
4 **acknowledged, so when you get there, there will be**  
5 **a list we can work from.**  
6 Q. You're hearing more and more FSGs or calls coming in.  
7 Do you remember having any thoughts at that time --  
8 you're still en route, quite near the incident -- about  
9 what these FSG calls meant in terms of fire spread or  
10 smoke spread?  
11 **A. Well, on my journey in, after hearing the number of**  
12 **these calls, I actually made a phone call to Station**  
13 **Manager Mick Mulholland, who was the ORT officer on the**  
14 **night, because I knew he was the ORT officer and**  
15 **I've worked closely with him in the past. We had**  
16 **a very, very brief discussion and it was around the**  
17 **shock of how many calls were coming in and we actually**  
18 **had a conversation: what have they got? What is it?**  
19 **Because it sounded quite strange.**  
20 Q. Well, you deal with that in your statement halfway down  
21 the page. Let's just look at that. You say:  
22 "When I heard about the FSG calls I phoned Mick  
23 MULHOLLAND, Station Manager ORT on my hands free mobile  
24 phone."  
25 Was that your Brigade mobile?

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1 **A. Yes.**  
2 Q. "He was also on route to the scene and we had a brief  
3 conversation about how we hoped it was just a Watch  
4 Manager who had panicked."  
5 Was that call before or after you'd heard the more  
6 and more FSGs coming in?  
7 **A. I think that was -- I think --**  
8 Q. Or during?  
9 **A. -- that was during that period, but within the first 5**  
10 **to 10 minutes of my journey.**  
11 Q. Did you at any stage during your journey have any  
12 thoughts about whether compartmentation in this block  
13 had been breached?  
14 **A. No.**  
15 Q. Did you have any thoughts about whether you needed to  
16 consider or assist in the consideration of a tactic  
17 involving evacuation at that stage?  
18 **A. No.**  
19 Q. You say, still on page 3 of your statement, in the third  
20 paragraph, just at the beginning:  
21 "As I drove along the A40 towards the scene I could  
22 see the glow from the building. My first thought was  
23 that the fire must have been from the netting used in  
24 scaffolded buildings — this burns very quickly but then  
25 dies down. However as I continued on the A40 west way,

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1 passing traffic which had pulled over to watch.  
2 I realised that there was no scaffolding on the  
3 building."  
4 So you were going east to west?  
5 **A. East to west yes.**  
6 Q. On the left-hand side of the carriageway, and you had  
7 the tower block --  
8 **A. On my left.**  
9 Q. -- on your left. Did you get a clear view of it from  
10 your car?  
11 **A. Only as I got quite close to it. I was initially**  
12 **shocked to see cars had actually stopped on the A40 and**  
13 **pulled over on the hard shoulder to look, and just**  
14 **before you turn off the A40, you get quite a good clear**  
15 **view of the building. That's when I realised there was**  
16 **no scaffolding on the building.**  
17 Q. Did you think at that stage -- I know you're still  
18 en route -- whether the calls from occupants higher up  
19 in the building reporting smoke and fire that you'd  
20 heard over your Airwave radio were consistent with this  
21 building a scaffolding fire or a netting fire?  
22 **A. It wouldn't be unusual for the public to make those**  
23 **calls because the netting on scaffolding burns quite**  
24 **spectacularly but for not very long. So I can**  
25 **understand that as a resident, that would be very**

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<p>1 <b>distressing and worrying and there would be a lot of</b>  2 <b>smoke coming off of it. So I wouldn't be shocked at</b>  3 <b>that.</b>  4 Q. Right. But you then say:  5 "... as I continued on the A40 west way ...  6 I realised that there was no scaffolding on the  7 building."  8 At that moment, when you realised there was no  9 scaffolding on the building, did you have any positive  10 thoughts about what it actually was that was on fire?  11 <b>A. No, I just felt chilled because I couldn't work out what</b>  12 <b>I was seeing. And, yeah, just a feeling of: oh, shit.</b>  13 Q. Right. That's very expressive. But --  14 <b>A. I don't know how to put it any other way, really. It</b>  15 <b>was a real feeling of: there's people in that building.</b>  16 Q. But just to press my question a little bit more, did you  17 actually have any thoughts about what it actually was  18 that was burning?  19 <b>A. No.</b>  20 Q. Or what it might be?  21 <b>A. At that point, when I was still driving, no, I didn't,</b>  22 <b>because that was quite a quick glimpse I saw of the</b>  23 <b>building. I think in the back of my mind I was thinking</b>  24 <b>it looked strange, it seemed to be outside, but I was</b>  25 <b>waiting to get nearer to try and assess what it was.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 Q. Was it on the right side of the road or the left side of  2 the road?  3 <b>A. If you turn in from Grenfell Road, it's on the left-hand</b>  4 <b>side.</b>  5 Q. Thank you. So that's CU8.  6 After you arrived at CU8, but before you checked in  7 there, as it were, did you take a good look at the fire?  8 <b>A. No, I didn't get a very good view of it, other than when</b>  9 <b>I'm going into Bomore Road, I caught a glimpse of it,</b>  10 <b>but it wasn't a clear view.</b>  11 Q. Even with that glimpse, could you tell us what you saw?  12 <b>A. Pretty much confirmed what I'd seen from the A40, which</b>  13 <b>appeared like the east side of the building was largely</b>  14 <b>alight.</b>  15 Q. Could you see, even in that glimpse, whether the fire  16 had penetrated from the exterior back into flats?  17 <b>A. No.</b>  18 Q. You couldn't?  19 <b>A. Not from there.</b>  20 Q. Did you know at that stage, before you checked in,  21 whether you were the most senior officer at the scene?  22 <b>A. No.</b>  23 Q. What assumptions did you make about who was the most  24 senior?  25 <b>A. I assumed that I was attending as bulk media adviser.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 Q. In rough terms, do you remember how long it took you to  2 drive to the incident?  3 <b>A. I would estimate around 20 minutes/25 minutes.</b>  4 Q. If you go to the short incident log at page 13, we have  5 a status 3 time for you of 01.57.21. If we can just see  6 that there against your name.  7 Does that sound about right to you?  8 <b>A. Yes, it does.</b>  9 Q. If you go back to your statement and turn to page 4, you  10 say at the very top:  11 "As I ran up GRENFELL ROAD I saw our COMMAND UNIT  12 (CU) in BOMORE ROAD and as it [was] protocol for Senior  13 Officers. I reported there first as it is where the  14 Incident Commander would usually be."  15 Just to be clear on which CU that was, there's a map  16 which I think we can use so that you can indicate to us  17 where that CU was parked, it's -- yes, that is the one.  18 MET00016854.  19 Could you just indicate for us where the CU that you  20 went to first was? We have Grenfell Road running down  21 to the south-east of the tower, and then where it says  22 "cycle hire station", that's Bomore Road.  23 <b>A. Yes, that's where it was, it was CU8.</b>  24 Q. CU8?  25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 <b>There had been very few messages coming back from the</b>  2 <b>scene because of the amount of pressure they were under,</b>  3 <b>but I assumed at that point it would be at least a group</b>  4 <b>manager in charge.</b>  5 Q. Did you then take a step back and work out what was in  6 front of you so that you could get a clear picture of  7 the task you had to perform?  8 <b>A. No, my priority was to get onto the command unit and let</b>  9 <b>the incident commander know I was there and ask what</b>  10 <b>help he needed, or she.</b>  11 Q. In your statement you go on to say -- it's the top of  12 page 4:  13 "I was followed into the CU by the ORT — Matthew  14 COOK, Mick MULHOLLAND and Steve WEST."  15 Did you all go in together as a group?  16 <b>A. I think that I was probably just about in front, but</b>  17 <b>they were seconds behind.</b>  18 Q. Where did you first see them?  19 <b>A. On the command unit.</b>  20 Q. You go on to say in the next line or next sentence:  21 "The only person in the CU was on[sic] operative  22 when I would usually expect a minimum of two (2)  23 preferable three (3)."  24 Do you know or do you remember who that operative on  25 the CU was?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 <b>A. I don't know who it was.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Are you familiar with a watch manager called Daniel</p> <p>3 Meyrick?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I'm familiar with the name, but I probably wouldn't</b></p> <p>5 <b>recognise him.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Do you recall a Watch Manager Kentfield?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you know a Watch Manager Kentfield?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Do you remember what the operative that was on the CU</p> <p>11 when you went in was doing?</p> <p>12 <b>A. He was sitting at the front end of the CU where they</b></p> <p>13 <b>would usually sit to use the radio channels.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Did you see what he was doing?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Not that I remember, no.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did you speak to him?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I did. I asked him who was in charge. He told me it</b></p> <p>18 <b>was Station Manager Brett Loft.</b></p> <p>19 Q. He said it was Brett Loft, okay.</p> <p>20 When you spoke to him, you don't remember what he</p> <p>21 was doing at the radio station?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I don't recall, no.</b></p> <p>23 Q. You say that it was Brett Loft that he told you was in</p> <p>24 charge.</p> <p>25 Now, I should just put this you: Watch Manager</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Well, I asked him who was in charge, he told me</b></p> <p>2 <b>Brett Loft. I explained to the operative because it was</b></p> <p>3 <b>a 25-pump fire, I was the most senior officer there,</b></p> <p>4 <b>I will be taking over, and during that conversation,</b></p> <p>5 <b>Station Manager Loft came onto the command unit.</b></p> <p>6 Q. So how long after you arrived, just following that last</p> <p>7 answer up, do you think Station Manager Loft came onto</p> <p>8 the command unit?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I would estimate it to be within a minute or two.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Do you know where he came from?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Did you ask him?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No. He came onto the command unit. I explained to him,</b></p> <p>14 <b>I said, "Brett, it's 25, I'm the first GM here so I will</b></p> <p>15 <b>be taking over. Tell me what you know."</b></p> <p>16 Q. We'll come to that because we're going to look at that</p> <p>17 in some detail in a moment.</p> <p>18 Before we do, can I ask you this. You say in your</p> <p>19 statement, six lines down from the top of page 4:</p> <p>20 "I was surprised because normal protocol is for a</p> <p>21 Watch Manager to be in charge up to 4 pumps, a Station</p> <p>22 Manager to 6 pumps, a Group Manager to 10 pumps, a</p> <p>23 Deputy Assistant Commissioner to 15 pumps and a Director</p> <p>24 above that."</p> <p>25 Just on director, what's a director? Is that an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 Meyrick has come to the inquiry and given us evidence,</p> <p>2 and he has told us -- I'm summarising -- that he didn't</p> <p>3 know anything about Station Manager Loft's involvement</p> <p>4 at the incident.</p> <p>5 So just to go back to your recollection, how sure</p> <p>6 are you that he told you that Station Manager Loft was</p> <p>7 in charge?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I have a clear recollection of asking him who is in</b></p> <p>9 <b>charge, because that's the first question as bulk media</b></p> <p>10 <b>adviser I want to know, and he said to me -- he may have</b></p> <p>11 <b>said "It is" or "I think", but he definitely said to me</b></p> <p>12 <b>Station Manager Brett Loft.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Do you know Station Manager Brett Loft?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes, I do.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You knew him before the incident?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So I think I know the answer to this next question, but</p> <p>18 did anybody tell you at that point that Mike Dowden</p> <p>19 remained in command and Brett Loft was actually in</p> <p>20 charge of FSG?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did anybody mention Andy Walton to you as somebody</p> <p>23 present?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you ask the operative where Brett Loft was?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 assistant commissioner?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Assistant commissioner and above, yeah.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So you say you were surprised; did you check with</p> <p>4 control whether any other more senior officers had</p> <p>5 booked in as status 3?</p> <p>6 <b>A. No, I didn't. I was surprised, because I had travelled</b></p> <p>7 <b>from South-east London to West London, that I was the</b></p> <p>8 <b>first one there. I knew I'd driven there quickly</b></p> <p>9 <b>because of the urgency, but other group managers started</b></p> <p>10 <b>arriving very quickly behind me.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Is this right: at the moment Station Manager Loft comes</p> <p>12 on board CU8 and you see him and discover that he's</p> <p>13 incident commander, did you assume that you were the</p> <p>14 first group manager on scene?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I asked the command unit operative, "Am I the first GM?"</b></p> <p>16 <b>and he said "Yes, guv".</b></p> <p>17 Q. Did you know that Pat Goulbourne was already there?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did you know about whether DAC O'Loughlin was already</p> <p>20 there?</p> <p>21 <b>A. At that point, I didn't know that.</b></p> <p>22 Q. So you took everything you knew about who was present</p> <p>23 and who was in command from Brett Loft in that short</p> <p>24 conversation?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes. I mean, the conversation was I asked Brett --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>



1 **I think my words were, "What do you know?" I think this**  
 2 **may be where the confusion may have come in, because**  
 3 **I told him it was 25-pump fire, I was taking over, "What**  
 4 **do you know?" He told me very little about what he knew**  
 5 **because what he knew was very little, actually. But at**  
 6 **no point was it made clear that he wasn't the incident**  
 7 **commander.**  
 8 Q. Did he tell you himself that he was incident commander?  
 9 **A. No.**  
 10 Q. So you got that from the operative?  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. But not from Brett Loft himself?  
 13 **A. Correct.**  
 14 Q. We'll come back to that.  
 15 What I want to do next is to focus on what you did  
 16 while incident commander.  
 17 You say on page 4 of your statement -- this is lines  
 18 9 to 10 down from the top:  
 19 "I told the CU Operative this [that you were taking  
 20 over] and requested that a message to that effect be  
 21 sent to control. I also requested messages be sent to  
 22 make pumps 40, declare a Major Incident, and make  
 23 CUs 4."  
 24 You go on to explain your thinking, which we'll come  
 25 back to it.

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1 I have a number of questions about those messages.  
 2 When you made those decisions to send those messages  
 3 or asked the CU operative to do so, had you yet taken  
 4 over or had a handover of incident command from  
 5 Brett Loft?  
 6 **A. No.**  
 7 Q. Let's just explore this a bit. Can I ask you to go,  
 8 please, to the PRC notes, which are at tab 24 of our  
 9 master documents bundle. We'll put those on the screen  
 10 for you.  
 11 I want you to look at the manuscript notes at what  
 12 we have as internal manuscript page 13. This is  
 13 LFB00003117.  
 14 I want to look at the manuscript notes at page 13  
 15 which is four on from that. So I think Relativity  
 16 reference page 17, Paul.  
 17 I should just explain what this document is. It's  
 18 some way into it. This is a record of a PRC meeting in  
 19 relation to Grenfell Tower which was held at 8 o'clock  
 20 in the morning on 3 July 2017.  
 21 I believe you were present at it, but can you just  
 22 confirm?  
 23 **A. I was.**  
 24 Q. There was a loggist taking a note and we have it in  
 25 manuscript here.

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1 On this page we can see your name at the top,  
 2 "Richard Welch", "Paged at 8PF as BMA", eight-pump fire,  
 3 BMA you've already explained.  
 4 Do you remember being at the meeting and speaking  
 5 about your role?  
 6 **A. Vaguely, but, yeah, I do remember being at the**  
 7 **performance review of command.**  
 8 Q. Do you remember that what you said was taken down by  
 9 somebody --  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. -- in handwriting?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. Did you ever get a chance to review these notes after  
 14 the meeting?  
 15 **A. Sometime afterwards, yes.**  
 16 Q. Did you make any corrections to them, do you think?  
 17 **A. Not that I recall, no.**  
 18 Q. Let's proceed and see how we go.  
 19 Four lines down, you say in that note:  
 20 "Got on CU -- asked who was IC."  
 21 "Told it was Brett Loft."  
 22 "Told I was first GM."  
 23 "Brett Loft got on CU."  
 24 "He told me about FSGs."  
 25 We'll come back to that.

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1 "I told him I was taking charge ..."  
 2 I can't read the next -- "accurate", I think it  
 3 says, "0204".  
 4 Then declared major incident, asked for main  
 5 control, Brett Loft.  
 6 It looks from this as if you took a handover of  
 7 incident command from Brett Loft before sending these  
 8 messages. Is that right?  
 9 **A. The way I recall it is that I asked the CU operative**  
 10 **to -- as one message -- or my request was one of make**  
 11 **pumps 40, me incident commander, major incident, make**  
 12 **CUs four. I believe that to be before I spoke to Brett,**  
 13 **but I could be incorrect.**  
 14 Q. When you were asking the operative to send these  
 15 messages, were you essentially assuming incident command  
 16 without yet having had a handover --  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. -- from the person you were told was the incident  
 19 commander?  
 20 **A. Yes.**  
 21 Q. In your statement, just to clarify and perhaps nail this  
 22 point down, you say on page 4, in the middle of the  
 23 page:  
 24 "Immediately after the messages were sent Brett LOFT  
 25 arrived back at the CU. I asked for a handover --"

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1 current situation, what he had done."  
 2 It looks from that that you sent the messages even  
 3 before Brett Loft arrived at the CU, which isn't what  
 4 the notes of the PRC meeting say.  
 5 Could you clarify for us?  
 6 **A. I think that I gave the instruction to the command unit**  
 7 **operative that that's what I want sent around the time**  
 8 **Brett came on. That's how I recall it.**  
 9 Q. So when we look at the notes of the meeting, I just  
 10 wonder which is right. The notes of the meeting we're  
 11 looking at say that Brett Loft got onto the CU, he told  
 12 you various things, you told him you were taking charge  
 13 and then you sent the messages, but in your statement  
 14 you sent the messages before he got on, you say.  
 15 Looking back on it now, which is correct? Did you  
 16 send the messages before he got on or after?  
 17 **A. I think I asked for the messages to be sent before Brett**  
 18 **got on.**  
 19 Q. Why would you send those messages before formally taking  
 20 a handover of incident command from the officer you  
 21 thought was incident commander?  
 22 **A. Because as a high-ranking officer, I could recognise**  
 23 **that this was a major incident, and actually at the**  
 24 **performance review of command, it was highlighted as a**  
 25 **positive action for me for actually recognising the**

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1 **major incident. That time of waiting for Brett, the**  
 2 **incident commander, to come on and talk to me, for me it**  
 3 **was more important to implement the major incident**  
 4 **procedure and get more resources on their way whilst**  
 5 **I can still get that handover, because they're not going**  
 6 **to arrive instantly.**  
 7 Q. I'm going to come back to the details of the handover in  
 8 due course, Mr Welch, but before I do, I want to ask you  
 9 some detailed questions about these messages.  
 10 Did you ask the operative -- we'll call him that --  
 11 to inform control you were taking over?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. And to make pumps 40?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. And to declare a major incident and make CUs -- at the  
 16 same time? Is that a single message?  
 17 **A. Within one statement to him I said, "This is what I want**  
 18 **you to send". It's quite usual that they would be sent**  
 19 **in two or three different messages, but I gave him the**  
 20 **whole lot at once.**  
 21 Q. Did he remain on the CU to do that?  
 22 **A. Yes, he did, because I specifically remember**  
 23 **a few minutes later turning to him and confirming, "Have**  
 24 **those messages been sent?" and he said yes.**  
 25 Q. Do you remember how long you'd been on the CU when the

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1 operative sent the message or messages?  
 2 **A. I don't. I would estimate 5 or 6 minutes, maybe, before**  
 3 **he confirmed to me that they'd been sent.**  
 4 Q. I want to look at the way in which each of these four  
 5 requests were actually recorded in the short incident  
 6 log. So we have taking command, make pumps 40, major  
 7 incident and make command units four.  
 8 Can I ask you to be shown the short incident log at  
 9 page 21.  
 10 First of all, we have at page 21 a time stamp of  
 11 02.03.41. It says make pumps 25, and I think we can all  
 12 recognise that should say 40, but could you just confirm  
 13 that for us?  
 14 **A. I believe that make pumps 25 I heard en route, so yes,**  
 15 **it would be before that.**  
 16 Q. I don't think anyone's said that there's any difficulty  
 17 about that.  
 18 The next message at 02.04.20, so some 39 seconds  
 19 later, this is a separate message:  
 20 "Informative  
 21 "CU7 GM WELCH NOW IC."  
 22 I just want to ask you to go back, first, to the  
 23 message -- because I want to compare them -- where pumps  
 24 are made 40 and hear the audio for that, first of all,  
 25 if we can, which is audio file 2946. I may have to play

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1 this a few times. It's very short, but what I'm looking  
 2 out for is who was the speaker. Okay?  
 3 So, Paul, if we could just play that audio file,  
 4 that's 2946.  
 5 (Audio played)  
 6 Just to make it perhaps slightly easier, can I have  
 7 on screen at the same time the second hour ORR at  
 8 page 127 with the time mark of 02.03.13.  
 9 I've played it to you once just to get the  
 10 impression of it.  
 11 If you look at the foot of the page, 02.03.13, it  
 12 says CU7 sends an assistance message to the radio  
 13 operator at Brigade control:  
 14 "FN from Charlie Uniform 7, make pumps 40, further  
 15 traffic, over."  
 16 So we have the text up there.  
 17 Paul, if you play the audio again.  
 18 (Audio played)  
 19 Do you recognise that voice?  
 20 **A. No.**  
 21 Q. Can you explain why that is said to be coming from CU7,  
 22 make pumps 40, when you were, as you say, on CU8?  
 23 **A. The only thing I can expect may have happened is one of**  
 24 **the other operatives from CU7 may have come to CU8 and**  
 25 **maybe, you know, he's like, "Can you send this message**

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1 **for me?" and he's sent that from CU7. I've no**  
 2 **explanation for that.**  
 3 Q. Well, let's look at the next message, which is where you  
 4 are now IC. On the short incident log it's 02.04.20.  
 5 Paul, if I can have up on the screen the ORR second  
 6 hour report which transcribes that radio message, and  
 7 that's page 128, at time mark 02.03.44, second from the  
 8 top, if we can just highlight that.  
 9 If we could also play the audio file, which is  
 10 LFB00002670.  
 11 (Audio played)  
 12 Again, can you tell us who the speaker was?  
 13 **A. No.**  
 14 (Audio played)  
 15 Q. Again, do you know why that message was sent from CU7?  
 16 **A. I can't explain it. You'd have to ask the CU staff, I'm**  
 17 **afraid.**  
 18 Q. You are sure that's not your voice?  
 19 **A. Could I hear it again?**  
 20 Q. Yes, absolutely.  
 21 (Audio played)  
 22 **A. That's not my voice.**  
 23 Q. Then going to the third of these four, making it a major  
 24 incident.  
 25 On the short incident log, it's page 21 with a time

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1 mark of 02.06.38.  
 2 If we can just nip back to that. Sharon Darby:  
 3 "Make Up  
 4 "IUP CU8 FROM GM WELCH THIS IS A MAJOR INCIDENT."  
 5 Do you see that there?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. We'll put up the text of the message -- so you've seen  
 8 that, got the time mark there. If we put the second  
 9 hour ORR up, at page 134, at 02.06.03, the text says:  
 10 "CU8 sends informative message to the Radio Operator  
 11 at Brigade Control.  
 12 "FN from Charlie Uniform 8, from Group Manager  
 13 Welch, err, declare this a major incident Charlie  
 14 Uniform 8."  
 15 If we can play the audio, please, Paul, 2507.  
 16 (Audio played)  
 17 Do you know who sent that message?  
 18 **A. No.**  
 19 Q. Do you recognise the voice?  
 20 **A. No.**  
 21 Q. Do you know why that message this time was sent from  
 22 CU8, whereas the first two have been sent from CU7?  
 23 **A. No. The request I made was to the staff on CU8. How**  
 24 **that was then communicated back to control, I don't**  
 25 **know.**

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1 Q. Well, we can take this last one quickly, which is the  
 2 make-up of the command units to four.  
 3 Just for the transcript, that's page 21 again of the  
 4 short incident log, at time mark 02.08.21, coming from  
 5 CU8.  
 6 It's on the ORR at 02.05 exactly, if we can put that  
 7 up there on the screen. It's page 129. There it is,  
 8 02.05:  
 9 "CU8 send an assistance message to the Radio  
 10 Operator at Brigade Control.  
 11 "FN from Charlie Uniform 8, err, make CUs four.  
 12 Charlie Uniform 8, over".  
 13 2697, if we can hear the audio file, Paul.  
 14 (Audio played)  
 15 Again, do you recognise the speaker in that?  
 16 **A. No.**  
 17 Q. I've played you the audio files and shown you the entry  
 18 on the ORR because it looks from that that two different  
 19 officers sent these four messages, two each, from two  
 20 different command units.  
 21 Can you explain, assuming that to be right, why that  
 22 is?  
 23 **A. I can't explain that. At that point, as I'm taking over**  
 24 **as the incident commander, my priority is to get that**  
 25 **information back to control. I wouldn't get involved in**

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1 **the detail of how that gets there. All I want to know**  
 2 **is the confirmation that that has been sent.**  
 3 Q. Were you aware at the time you sent the messages or had  
 4 the confirmation back from the operative on CU8 that  
 5 they had been sent that CU7 was also in attendance?  
 6 **A. I do have a vague recollection of seeing CU7.**  
 7 Q. Of seeing it?  
 8 **A. Seeing it on arrival, yeah.**  
 9 Q. But being told about it before you saw it, do you recall  
 10 that?  
 11 **A. No, I think I saw it first.**  
 12 Q. Do you remember where you saw it?  
 13 **A. Parked in Grenfell Road.**  
 14 Q. Do you remember whether that was closer to the tower?  
 15 **A. Closer to the tower.**  
 16 Q. So when you parked and went first to CU8, did you go  
 17 past CU7?  
 18 **A. No, no, no, because I came from the opposite direction,**  
 19 **the first command unit I come across was CU8.**  
 20 Q. But you say you stopped there, you didn't go further  
 21 past CU7, or did you?  
 22 **A. Not until later on, no. But as you're walking into**  
 23 **Bomere Road, you can see down Grenfell Road.**  
 24 Q. So when you went onto CU8, and then worked on CU8,  
 25 sending those messages, at that stage, did you know that

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1 CU7 was in attendance?  
 2 **A. I believe so. I couldn't be certain but I believe so.**  
 3 Q. How did you know that?  
 4 **A. I think I'd seen it on the way, walking towards CU8.**  
 5 Q. You could see it in the distance?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. Did you know it was CU7?  
 8 **A. Just another CU.**  
 9 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, it's 11 o'clock. We've been going  
 10 for an hour. I'm in the middle of a topic and I have  
 11 some way to go, so now is as good a time as any.  
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, you would probably like  
 13 a break now, wouldn't you, Mr Welch?  
 14 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.  
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll have a 10-minute break.  
 16 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence while  
 17 you're out of the room, and we'll resume at 11.10,  
 18 please, all right?  
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. If you would  
 21 like to go with the usher, she'll look after you.  
 22 11.10, please. Thank you.  
 23 (11.02 am)  
 24 (A short break)  
 25 (11.10 am)

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Welch? Ready to carry  
 2 on?  
 3 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.  
 4 MR MILLETT: We were on CU8, and we had just been discussing  
 5 the sending of messages.  
 6 At the point when you were deciding to send these  
 7 four messages which we've seen and heard, had you at  
 8 that stage, yet, stood back and taken a good look at the  
 9 tower and what was happening?  
 10 **A. No, only from -- all the information I'd had is what I'd**  
 11 **seen on the drive in and what I'd heard over the radio.**  
 12 Q. Can I just ask you why you did decide to send these  
 13 messages, including the major incident message, on the  
 14 basis of only what you'd seen -- I say "only" -- on the  
 15 basis of what you'd seen en route without going up to  
 16 the tower and having a good look at it first?  
 17 **A. If I can address that in two halves for the make pumps**  
 18 **40 and the major incident.**  
 19 **The make pumps 40, from what I could see, it was**  
 20 **certainly the majority if not all of one side was**  
 21 **alight. It was clear from the radio traffic that there**  
 22 **were persons involved and quite a large number of fire**  
 23 **survival guidance calls, so it was going to be a very**  
 24 **large firefighting operation and I felt maybe 25 pumps**  
 25 **wasn't enough. I always work on the basis of I'd rather**

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1 **order more than I need and send them back if necessary,**  
 2 **but let's get them here in the first place. So my**  
 3 **estimation was 40.**  
 4 **Because it was a populated residential block, the**  
 5 **major incident call was a discussion I had with**  
 6 **Matt Cook, the ORT officer, and Mick Mulholland. We**  
 7 **agreed actually we were going to need the help and**  
 8 **assistance from many other agencies. Therefore it**  
 9 **qualified for me as a major incident.**  
 10 Q. Just following up on two aspects of that last answer,  
 11 the first thing you say there is you could see that it  
 12 was certainly the majority if not all of one side that  
 13 was alight.  
 14 When you say that, which side are you talking about?  
 15 **A. The east side.**  
 16 Q. What about the rest of the building?  
 17 **A. All I remember very clearly is seeing how much fire was**  
 18 **on the east side. I don't really recall definitely**  
 19 **whether the south side had actually caught light by**  
 20 **then.**  
 21 Q. Could I ask you to look at your contemporaneous note,  
 22 which is FOA00000002, and go to page 1 in that document,  
 23 paragraph 8 on that first page.  
 24 The question is:  
 25 "8. Can you describe the scene on your arrival?"

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1 Your answer at the top of page 2 was:  
 2 "I could see a high rise tower block which looked  
 3 like it was fully engulfed in fire."  
 4 When you use the expression "fully engulfed in  
 5 fire", given what you've just told us, is that correct?  
 6 **A. I think that's a poor explanation. When I say "fully**  
 7 **engulfed", I mean from one side from what I could see.**  
 8 Q. You made these contemporaneous notes how soon after the  
 9 incident, do you remember?  
 10 **A. About two or three days after the incident.**  
 11 Q. So when you used the words "fully engulfed in fire", was  
 12 that a more accurate description of what you recall,  
 13 given it was closer to the time you made it, or not?  
 14 **A. I think when I wrote this, it's likely the fact that I'd**  
 15 **already seen the incident, I knew how it ended up. But**  
 16 **the "fully engulfed in fire" was fully engulfed of what**  
 17 **I could see, which was one side on the approach. It's**  
 18 **probably not correct to say it was fully engulfed in**  
 19 **fire; it was one side.**  
 20 Q. We'll come back to "fully engulfed" in due course when  
 21 we look at the question of penetration.  
 22 The second thing which follows on from that answer  
 23 you gave about making it up to 40 pumps is: what  
 24 specifically prompted you to decide to go from 25 to 40?  
 25 **A. At that point I was told that we believed it was about**

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<p>1 <b>20 floors, and from what I could see, certainly on one</b>  2 <b>side it was involving every floor pretty much and</b>  3 <b>I didn't feel that 25 was enough to deal with that fire</b>  4 <b>or the FSG calls alongside the fire as well. So</b>  5 <b>I thought 40 was more appropriate.</b></p> <p>6 Q. What were you going to do with the extra 15 pumps that  7 you were calling on?</p> <p>8 <b>A. It was clear it was going to be a majorly extensive</b>  9 <b>breathing apparatus incident, so it was largely for</b>  10 <b>breathing apparatus and firefighting from the outside if</b>  11 <b>we could.</b></p> <p>12 Q. So would it be right to summarise your evidence to say  13 that the extra 15 was going to be primarily -- is this  14 right? -- for search and rescue?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes. Life will always come first, so the priority was</b>  16 <b>to get the people.</b></p> <p>17 Q. You say in your witness statement on page 4, if we can  18 just go back to it, 15 lines or so down:  19 "I considered 50 pumps but decided to get 40 there  20 first as we needed a lot of Breathing Apparatus trained  21 personnel (each pump carries between 4-6 BA trained  22 personnel)."</p> <p>23 Can you explain why the need to get BA wearers there  24 as soon as possible stopped you from requesting 50  25 pumps?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I don't recall thinking that, but I'm aware -- I'm not</b>  2 <b>sure if it was a conversation between DAC O'Loughlin and</b>  3 <b>myself, but I do recall quite soon afterwards FRUs were</b>  4 <b>made six, but I don't believe that was my call, no.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Going back to the point about the extra 15 pumps, that  6 would bring you a lot of -- is this right? -- SDBA  7 wearers to the incident but no EDBA wearers?</p> <p>8 <b>A. It would bring a small -- I don't exactly know how many</b>  9 <b>FRUs come with the predetermined attendance of make</b>  10 <b>pumps 40, but we'd certainly have at least two or three</b>  11 <b>FRUs on their way anyway.</b></p> <p>12 Q. At the stage when you made up an extra 15, can you  13 explain why you didn't at the same time also call for  14 FRUs, given that you, as you told us, could see that at  15 least the east face of the tower was fully engulfed and  16 you were going to have to effect rescues from the  17 highest floors of the tower?</p> <p>18 <b>A. So we would usually not use EDBA for firefighting. We</b>  19 <b>can do but we'd usually not. And SDBA, in a building</b>  20 <b>that behaves in the way we expect a building to behave,</b>  21 <b>would usually would be sufficient for that. EDBA would</b>  22 <b>be a fallback.</b></p> <p>23 Q. In your experience prior to Grenfell Tower, had you ever  24 successfully sent SDBA wearers up some 67 metres?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Not without the bridgehead following up behind it. I've</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 <b>A. So I didn't have all the information I needed at the</b>  2 <b>time. I had a fleeting thought of: should I call 50?</b>  3 <b>Also aware that actually we still had the rest of London</b>  4 <b>to protect, so the more resources we take out, if we had</b>  5 <b>another large incident going on in London, it would</b>  6 <b>impact upon that. So I was comfortable that 40 was</b>  7 <b>going to be sufficient.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Did you at that stage give any consideration to whether  9 those resources needed to be EDBA specifically rather  10 than SDBA?</p> <p>11 <b>A. So when you ask for that number of appliances, you'll</b>  12 <b>get a certain number of fire and rescue units come</b>  13 <b>anyway as part of the predetermined attendance, so</b>  14 <b>I knew we'd have EDBA coming. Unfortunately, EDBA -- we</b>  15 <b>carry a whole lot more SDBA than we do EDBA. EDBA is</b>  16 <b>quite a limited resource. So I knew it would be on its</b>  17 <b>way and available to me.</b></p> <p>18 <b>So the answer is yes, I was aware that that would be</b>  19 <b>there.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Were you doing anything, even at that early stage, to  21 make sure you monitored the number of EDBA wearers that  22 you thought you might need?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Not at that point.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Did you think at that stage about requesting more FRUs  25 immediately?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 <b>never experienced anything like Grenfell Tower and</b>  2 <b>never -- I don't think any of us have. So there's a lot</b>  3 <b>that happened that night that we've never experienced</b>  4 <b>before in 22/23 years.</b></p> <p>5 Q. So that prompts my question, when you looked and saw  6 what you needed in terms of make-up, the question really  7 is: why didn't you also request further FRUs in order to  8 make sure you had enough EDBA wearers to get up to the  9 higher reaches of the tower?</p> <p>10 <b>A. So I was aware we would have some EDBA there and I think</b>  11 <b>that call would be made on, again, gathering further</b>  12 <b>information when I get to the tower. Because we only</b>  13 <b>have 15 appliances that carry EDBA, so even the initial</b>  14 <b>six that we'd asked for, we were conscious that only</b>  15 <b>leaves nine protecting the rest of London. So we have</b>  16 <b>to consider the balance between those and very early on</b>  17 <b>we realised we needed more and we asked for them.</b></p> <p>18 Q. What further information would you need from the tower  19 in order to make the decision that you needed to call in  20 FRUs to provide more EDBAs?</p> <p>21 <b>A. When I got into the tower and spoke to Watch Manager</b>  22 <b>O'Keeffe and got a much better situational awareness of</b>  23 <b>where we were, what the aims were, what our difficulties</b>  24 <b>were, then we could start making the calls for other</b>  25 <b>resources we may need.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

1 Q. But that was later on?  
 2 **A. That was when I got into the tower.**  
 3 Q. We'll come back to that.  
 4 Did you seek to establish how many FRUs had already  
 5 been requested, made up?  
 6 **A. No, I didn't.**  
 7 Q. In fact, it looks as if only two had arrived at the time  
 8 you sent your messages: Paddington A216 and Chelsea  
 9 G346. Does that ring a bell with you?  
 10 **A. I don't remember seeing them, but, you know, I know they**  
 11 **were there later in the evening.**  
 12 Q. In fact, if we look at the short incident log at  
 13 page 21, the request for an increased make-up for FRUs  
 14 wasn't actually made until 02.11 or so. If you go to  
 15 page 21 you can see at the very foot of that page,  
 16 02.11.46:  
 17 "Make Up  
 18 "IUP CU8 MAKE FRU X 6.  
 19 I think I'm right in saying -- and you've confirmed  
 20 this -- that wasn't your decision.  
 21 **A. No, I believe that was DAC O'Loughlin.**  
 22 Q. My question is: why didn't you make that decision  
 23 earlier?  
 24 **A. In the very short space of time that I had to have**  
 25 **a mind shift from becoming a bulk media adviser to**

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1 **an incident commander, that was literally a matter of**  
 2 **a few minutes. I ordered as many other resources**  
 3 **I thought I would need, but clearly didn't have time to**  
 4 **finish all of my resources requirements because I hadn't**  
 5 **gathered enough information about the incident at that**  
 6 **point.**  
 7 Q. Do you recall a conversation with Station Manager Egan  
 8 about EDDBA?  
 9 **A. No.**  
 10 Q. You don't remember him saying or anybody saying, "We  
 11 need all the EDDBA in London" and you saying, "Right,  
 12 I'll do it"?  
 13 **A. No, I remember having that conversation later on with**  
 14 **Brien O'Keefe.**  
 15 Q. At the PRC meeting after the incident, if we can go back  
 16 to the notes of that, LFB00003117, tab 24 of the master  
 17 documents bundle, you say, or it is recorded you  
 18 saying -- this is in relation to MP40 -- it's five lines  
 19 up from the bottom of the page -- perhaps I should give  
 20 you the full context, you say:  
 21 "Why didn't you MP50 ..."  
 22 This is next to the "Q" there, two-thirds of the way  
 23 down:  
 24 "Why didn't you MP50 -- don't know.  
 25 "Believe Andy and Richard handover was 0211 because

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1 Andy made FRUs 6 & CU 6 & FRU 10 -- all by Andy."  
 2 That's Andy O'Loughlin, I think?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Then you say:  
 5 "I considered what we'd do with the 40 -- thought 10  
 6 pumps per external sector & fight fire externally."  
 7 Then you say this:  
 8 "Still thought fire was just on external face."  
 9 Just pausing at that point, is that right, that at  
 10 that stage, when you called for 40 pumps, you still  
 11 thought the fire was on the external face?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. The exterior?  
 14 Does that mean that you didn't take a good look at  
 15 what was actually on fire even from outside when you  
 16 arrived?  
 17 **A. At that point, I'd only seen the east side on the way**  
 18 **in, so I hadn't managed to get any closer to the**  
 19 **building.**  
 20 Q. Did you ask yourself how you thought that was consistent  
 21 with what you'd heard over the radio about occupants  
 22 being trapped in the tower?  
 23 **A. Well, at that time of the year, it's June, it was warm,**  
 24 **you'd expect windows to be open, so I fully expect**  
 25 **residents would get smoke coming into the building and**

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1 **would panic over that.**  
 2 Q. Did you ever at that early stage hear a message being  
 3 sent from the control room to the incident ground that  
 4 there was a fire on the 12th floor?  
 5 **A. Not that I recall.**  
 6 Q. What about fire on the 22nd floor?  
 7 **A. I don't recall specific messages at all, no.**  
 8 Q. Before you sent these messages and made pumps 40, did  
 9 you yourself seek to find out what the conditions were  
 10 actually like inside the building?  
 11 **A. I hadn't at that point, no.**  
 12 Q. Why is that?  
 13 **A. Because, as I said, I arrived as a bulk media adviser**  
 14 **and very quickly had to change my thought process to**  
 15 **incident commander, and the make pumps 40 was around if**  
 16 **it has got into the building, then we're going to need**  
 17 **those people -- those firefighters in there. But at**  
 18 **that point I had no idea about any fire -- or I don't**  
 19 **recall any fire spread being made aware to me inside the**  
 20 **building.**  
 21 Q. At the time you arrived, you're arriving as bulk media  
 22 adviser, but you then were taking over or going to take  
 23 over as incident commander.  
 24 I know you say you did that after you sent the  
 25 messages, but in sending those messages, was it not

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1 important for you to establish what the conditions were  
 2 like inside the tower as well as what you could see on  
 3 the exterior?  
 4 **A. It is, but my priority was to get more resources and**  
 5 **more firefighters there, planning for a worst-case**  
 6 **scenario that, actually, we might need all these**  
 7 **firefighters in breathing apparatus to go and get**  
 8 **residents from the tower.**  
 9 Q. Did you seek to find out at that point whether crews  
 10 were actually already effecting rescues successfully?  
 11 **A. No.**  
 12 Q. Again, is there a reason why you didn't?  
 13 **A. It was around priority thinking, really, and our**  
 14 **priority was -- to gather all that information before**  
 15 **I asked for my resources would've delayed the resources**  
 16 **arriving. So initially it was to get what I thought the**  
 17 **bare minimum that we might need there and then start**  
 18 **doing my information-gathering.**  
 19 Q. Did you think to make contact with the bridgehead, the  
 20 commanders at the bridgehead, to find out what they were  
 21 actually doing before you sent these messages?  
 22 **A. No.**  
 23 Q. Again, why is that?  
 24 **A. Again, I'd go back to if I ordered the 40 pumps and got**  
 25 **information from the bridgehead and then decided we**

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1 **didn't need them, I would rather be in the position of**  
 2 **having to send them back than having to wait that extra**  
 3 **time before I ordered them.**  
 4 Q. But wasn't it important for you to match resources with  
 5 the actual need as dictated or understood by those who  
 6 were at the bridgehead and actually effecting  
 7 deployments inside the tower?  
 8 **A. Yes, it is. But I drew on my own experience of**  
 9 **a worst-case scenario, just to get the resources**  
 10 **en route. And all of this thoughts and decision-making**  
 11 **was in a very, very short space of time and there was**  
 12 **an awful lot of pressure, and my priority was: let's get**  
 13 **what I think we might need.**  
 14 Q. Would it follow that you also didn't seek to find out  
 15 whether crews were having any difficulties at that stage  
 16 getting to the higher floors?  
 17 **A. I didn't know that, no.**  
 18 Q. Again, is the reason the same, that you were focused  
 19 on --  
 20 **A. I just wouldn't have had the opportunity to get -- you**  
 21 **know, just to find out that piece of information would**  
 22 **probably take 2 or 3 minutes, and that was 2 or**  
 23 **3 minutes we were stopping the resources getting there.**  
 24 Q. I understand the circumstances.  
 25 Would it be fair to say -- tell me if this is not

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1 fair -- that you were bringing on resources without  
 2 regard to the actual needs you sought to establish  
 3 first?  
 4 **A. I was bringing on resources based on drawing upon my**  
 5 **experience of what I thought we may need. In an ideal**  
 6 **world, it would be much nicer to find that information**  
 7 **out first, and that would always normally happen at**  
 8 **an incident, but this was not a normal incident and that**  
 9 **was clear from very early on.**  
 10 Q. You say not a normal incident, but I think at that stage  
 11 you still think the fire's on the external face. Does  
 12 that mean at that stage you didn't think that fires had  
 13 penetrated into individual compartments?  
 14 **A. I would expect it to have done because of the size of**  
 15 **the fire, but just for the fact that it was the outside**  
 16 **of the building that was alight makes it not a normal**  
 17 **incident. That's something I've never seen before.**  
 18 Q. Going back to your statement at page 4 -- we'll come  
 19 back to the PRC notes in due course -- 10 lines up from  
 20 the bottom of page 4, you say that you asked Steve West  
 21 to compose a METHANE message to control because you had  
 22 declared a major incident.  
 23 You explain what METHANE is in the rest of that  
 24 paragraph.  
 25 I just want to put something that Steve West says in

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1 his witness statement that he's given to the inquiry.  
 2 He says he started to write the METHANE message on the  
 3 whiteboard in the CU, but before he could complete it,  
 4 he was tasked with setting up channel 2 as a command  
 5 channel. That's his recollection.  
 6 Is your recollection the same or --  
 7 **A. No, I have no recollection around channel 2 being set up**  
 8 **whilst I was on the command unit.**  
 9 Q. Do you recall Steve West starting to write the METHANE  
 10 message on the whiteboard in CU8?  
 11 **A. Yes.**  
 12 Q. Did he complete that job?  
 13 **A. I don't recall whether he completed it or not because**  
 14 **I then was relieved of command and took on another role.**  
 15 Q. We can't find any record of that METHANE message  
 16 actually ever being sent on the night. Do you know for  
 17 yourself whether it actually was?  
 18 **A. It wasn't sent whilst I was incident commander.**  
 19 Q. Do you know whether it was ever sent after that?  
 20 **A. No, I don't know.**  
 21 Q. Can you explain what effect the failure to send  
 22 a METHANE message would have had, on the assumption it  
 23 wasn't sent?  
 24 **A. So I think it's probably easier if I explain the benefit**  
 25 **of it, really, because it's a recognised message,**

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1 **recognised format of message, across emergency services**  
 2 **of the type of incident we've got and it really breaks**  
 3 **down and paints a picture that we all understand of what**  
 4 **the incident looks like. So it is important that that**  
 5 **information is transmitted so that can be shared with**  
 6 **other agencies as well.**  
 7 Q. If the message hadn't been sent, would that mean that  
 8 the other agencies would have to play catch-up?  
 9 **A. Or it can be sent in a different format. We can still**  
 10 **send an informative message which would paint the same**  
 11 **picture, but that's just an agreed format that we have.**  
 12 **So I think an informative message would do the same job,**  
 13 **but that's the agreed format we should use.**  
 14 Q. Did there come a time when you realised from what was  
 15 happening around you that that METHANE message hadn't  
 16 been sent?  
 17 **A. No, I was in the tower very quickly.**  
 18 Q. Can I ask you to go to your contemporaneous note and go  
 19 to page 2 of that and look at point 10.  
 20 You say half way through the paragraph -- and point  
 21 10 starts with the question:  
 22 "10. What were you tasked with doing on your  
 23 arrival?"  
 24 Halfway down that paragraph you say:  
 25 " I then asked SM Walton to identify a suitable RVP

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1 area for oncoming appliances and asked another Station  
 2 Manager to begin the process of establishing BA Main  
 3 Control."  
 4 Do you remember speaking with Station Manager Walton  
 5 at this point?  
 6 **A. I have a recollection of speaking to Station Manager**  
 7 **Walton. He came onto the command unit. I remember**  
 8 **asking him to find a suitable rendezvous point for the**  
 9 **oncoming appliances and I think I actually recommended**  
 10 **that maybe we should use Paddington fire station for**  
 11 **that.**  
 12 Q. I think you told us earlier you didn't recall the  
 13 involvement of Station Manager Walton.  
 14 **A. At the point I arrived at the command unit, I wasn't**  
 15 **aware Station Manager Walton was there.**  
 16 Q. Are you saying he came onto the command unit after you'd  
 17 been there?  
 18 **A. I believe so.**  
 19 Q. Was that before or after you sent the messages?  
 20 **A. After.**  
 21 Q. Was it before or after you took a handover from Station  
 22 Manager Loft?  
 23 **A. As I recall, it was after.**  
 24 Q. So was it therefore quite soon before you left the CU?  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. So you had a face-to-face discussion with Station  
 2 Manager Walton, did you?  
 3 **A. Very, very brief.**  
 4 Q. Did he say anything to you in that very brief  
 5 conversation about who was incident commander?  
 6 **A. Not that I recall, no.**  
 7 Q. He didn't say, "I'm incident commander"?  
 8 **A. No.**  
 9 Q. Do you remember whether he and Station Manager Loft had  
 10 a conversation together at that stage?  
 11 **A. Not that I noticed.**  
 12 Q. Can I turn, then, to the topic of the handover from  
 13 Brett Loft that we parked earlier on.  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. Looking again, if you would, please, at the PRC notes  
 16 which you were involved in. Again, page 17.  
 17 You say halfway down the page -- this is after  
 18 sending the messages:  
 19 "I asked for larger RVP ..."  
 20 Do you see that?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. Just there.  
 23 "... consider A21."  
 24 What is that a reference to?  
 25 **A. A21 is Paddington fire station.**

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1 Q. And RVP, does that mean you were considering Paddington  
 2 station geographically or physically as a rendezvous  
 3 point for something?  
 4 **A. For further oncoming appliances. Because of the small**  
 5 **roads around Grenfell, I was aware we would block up all**  
 6 **the roads and wouldn't be able to get near it, so maybe**  
 7 **they should convene there. Because quite often at an**  
 8 **incident like this, it's not actually the pumping**  
 9 **appliances we need, it's the personnel.**  
 10 Q. So that's not a reference, then, to the discussion with  
 11 Andy Walton about RVP for BA wearers?  
 12 **A. Sorry, the conversation with Andy Walton and the**  
 13 **conversation around Alpha 21 is the same, because the**  
 14 **RVP that I asked Andy Walton to identify wasn't for BA**  
 15 **wearers, it was for pumping appliances.**  
 16 Q. You are right, that is what you say in your  
 17 contemporaneous note. That's my mistake.  
 18 But the question I think remains the same: is the  
 19 reference here in the PRC a reference to the rendezvous  
 20 point for appliances which was the subject of your  
 21 discussion with Andy Walton?  
 22 **A. Yes, I believe so.**  
 23 Q. Moving on down to the next item, you then say:  
 24 "Andy O'Loughlin got on CU & told me he'd taken over  
 25 from another SM -- believe to be 0211."

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<p>1 Do you know who that SM was?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I've since known it to be Andy Walton.</b></p> <p>3 Q. On the night, did Andy O'Loughlin tell you who the SM</p> <p>4 was that he had taken over from?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No, he just said, "I've already taken over".</b></p> <p>6 Q. Did you ask him, "Well, how come you've taken command</p> <p>7 from an SM, I've just taken command from an SM?"</p> <p>8 <b>A. No, I think the confusion here -- what happened was we</b></p> <p>9 <b>must have arrived at a very similar time. I've gone to</b></p> <p>10 <b>the command unit as per we should and checked in there,</b></p> <p>11 <b>but for maybe the direction Andy approached from, he's</b></p> <p>12 <b>gone to the tower first. So he thinks he's taking over</b></p> <p>13 <b>there, I think I'm taking over at the command unit.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Did you seek to explore with Andy O'Loughlin how come he</p> <p>15 had taken incident command over from Andy Walton but you</p> <p>16 had taken incident command over from Brett Loft?</p> <p>17 <b>A. At that point, no.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you know whether Brett Loft was still on the command</p> <p>19 unit at the time when Andy O'Loughlin came on?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I don't recall, no.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Did you get a chance to ask Brett Loft how come he was</p> <p>22 incident commander when it looks as if Andy O'Loughlin</p> <p>23 had taken incident command from somebody completely</p> <p>24 different?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No, at that point, that wasn't a priority. We had this</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 <b>so maybe I didn't -- the words I should've used were</b></p> <p>2 <b>"Give me a formal handover", that might have identified</b></p> <p>3 <b>him to say, "Actually, I'm not in charge".</b></p> <p>4 Q. So were you assuming that he was incident commander and</p> <p>5 therefore assuming you were taking a formal handover?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yeah. I had no reason to not believe the information</b></p> <p>7 <b>I'd been given.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Can you just help me, why were the escalations of</p> <p>9 command not clearly known to you at the incident?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Sorry, I don't understand the question.</b></p> <p>11 Q. The escalations of command, the more senior officers</p> <p>12 taking over, why was that not crystal clear to everyone</p> <p>13 at the incident, including you?</p> <p>14 <b>A. So my only concern is the person I'm taking over from.</b></p> <p>15 <b>I'm told there's a station manager in charge, so I take</b></p> <p>16 <b>over from that station manager. I think there may have</b></p> <p>17 <b>been a bit of confusion from myself and Andy O'Loughlin.</b></p> <p>18 <b>We went to two different places; I went to the command</b></p> <p>19 <b>unit, Andy went to the tower. I think that's where the</b></p> <p>20 <b>confusion came.</b></p> <p>21 Q. So just to be clear, you didn't actually ask Station</p> <p>22 Manager Loft, "Are you incident commander?"</p> <p>23 <b>A. I didn't. I didn't. I said to him, "It's now a 25-pump</b></p> <p>24 <b>fire, I will be taking over, tell me what you know".</b></p> <p>25 <b>I just assumed that he was the incident commander</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 <b>conversation, it took seconds, and Andy O'Loughlin was</b></p> <p>2 <b>of a higher rank than I, so it was just: okay, right,</b></p> <p>3 <b>you know -- I told him the message I sent. He agreed</b></p> <p>4 <b>that actually he was going to send the same messages, so</b></p> <p>5 <b>we were on the same page, so then move on as quickly as</b></p> <p>6 <b>possible.</b></p> <p>7 Q. I appreciate that, but just at that moment, in that very</p> <p>8 short period, does it mean that there were two incident</p> <p>9 commanders operating in ignorance of each other's role,</p> <p>10 the Station Manager Walton from whom Andy O'Loughlin</p> <p>11 took incident command over from, and Brett Loft from</p> <p>12 whom you took incident command over from?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No, I think the information I was given that Brett Loft</b></p> <p>14 <b>was in charge was an assumption and it was incorrect.</b></p> <p>15 <b>So as far as I'm aware, Station Manager Loft never</b></p> <p>16 <b>actually thought he was in charge himself.</b></p> <p>17 <b>The two station managers didn't both think they were</b></p> <p>18 <b>in charge, because the command unit operative made</b></p> <p>19 <b>an assumption and that wasn't the case.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did you know at the time that Brett Loft didn't think he</p> <p>21 was incident commander?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No, I didn't and that was never communicated to me. It</b></p> <p>23 <b>was days later that I found out Brett wasn't in charge.</b></p> <p>24 Q. But you say you took a handover from him.</p> <p>25 <b>A. I think the words I used were "Tell me what you know",</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 <b>because I had no reason not to believe that.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Because you had been told that by the operator on CU8,</p> <p>3 you didn't ever explore whether that was right or not?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>5 Q. I think it would follow the answer is no, but let me</p> <p>6 just put this to you: it would follow, would it, that as</p> <p>7 far as you were concerned, you never knew that</p> <p>8 Brett Loft, although he was senior to Mike Dowden, who</p> <p>9 was the watch manager who had incident command from the</p> <p>10 start of the incident, never took command but left</p> <p>11 Mike Dowden in charge?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I wasn't aware of that.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Didn't know that -- is this right? -- Brett Loft had</p> <p>14 taken over the role of handling FSG calls?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I wasn't aware of that either.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did Brett Loft never tell you that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Not that I recall.</b></p> <p>18 Q. When Brett Loft came to give evidence to the inquiry, he</p> <p>19 said that the only conversation he had with you was when</p> <p>20 you tasked him with taking over BA main control. That</p> <p>21 was outside the tower on the south-east corner. That's</p> <p>22 his recollection.</p> <p>23 <b>A. I'm aware of that, I saw that evidence, and that's not</b></p> <p>24 <b>my recollection at all.</b></p> <p>25 Q. What's your recollection?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

1 **A. It's as I've said, that I was told Brett Loft was in**  
 2 **charge, he came on to the command unit, and we had the**  
 3 **conversation that I've just recalled and then I asked**  
 4 **him to start setting up BA main control for me.**  
 5 Q. Did you ever have a conversation with Brett Loft outside  
 6 the tower?  
 7 **A. Not that I remember, but that doesn't say it didn't**  
 8 **happen because there was a lot going on that night.**  
 9 Q. My question is really: do you think you could be  
 10 mistaken about meeting Brett Loft at the command unit?  
 11 **A. My memory's quite clear on that.**  
 12 Q. Do you think you could be mistaken about taking incident  
 13 command from him?  
 14 **A. No, my memory is very clear.**  
 15 Q. Do you agree that the standard LFB policy requirements  
 16 for carrying out a handover under incident command  
 17 policy 238 require the person taking over to use the  
 18 words "I am taking over" or "I am now taking over"?  
 19 **A. Yes, I am.**  
 20 Q. Did you use those words?  
 21 **A. Yes, I did.**  
 22 Q. Did he say anything in response to those words?  
 23 **A. No, because I remember saying, "I'm taking over, so tell**  
 24 **me what you know", and that's what he told me.**  
 25 Q. So I think where we've got to is that your discussion

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1 with Brett Loft you assume is a handover of command --  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. -- without actually establishing with him whether he was  
 4 operating on the same assumption.  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. So you could've been at cross-purposes, effectively.  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. In fact, it sounds like you were at cross-purposes.  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. Which I suppose would mean that although you thought you  
 11 were incident commander, you actually weren't?  
 12 **A. So formally I was incident commander because that's the**  
 13 **message that got sent to control, and --**  
 14 Q. By you?  
 15 **A. Not by me, by the command unit.**  
 16 Q. On your command?  
 17 **A. On my command. Thankfully Andy O'Loughlin, who also**  
 18 **thought he was in command, we both had made the same**  
 19 **assumption of resources we need, so it had no negative**  
 20 **impact on the incident.**  
 21 Q. In terms of the content of the handover -- I think I had  
 22 better put "handover" in inverted commas because of the  
 23 cross-purposes -- but in terms of the content of the  
 24 conversation you had with Brett Loft where he gave you  
 25 everything that he knew, can I just ask you to look at

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1 page 4 of your statement, 12 lines up from the bottom,  
 2 where you say:  
 3 "... it was really quick but I got everything he  
 4 knew. I told him I was taking over and assigned him to  
 5 set up a BA main control ..."  
 6 Just focusing on the words "it was really quick but  
 7 I got everything he knew", can you tell us what you  
 8 remember, standing here today, Brett Loft was able to  
 9 tell you?  
 10 **A. All I recall is him telling me they had numerous FSGs**  
 11 **going on and that the fire was up the outside of the**  
 12 **building, and that was pretty much -- oh, that they were**  
 13 **trying to fight the fire on the outside.**  
 14 **I got the feeling Brett hadn't been there very long**  
 15 **either.**  
 16 Q. That was it, was it?  
 17 **A. That's all I remember, yeah.**  
 18 Q. I just want to explore that a bit and ask you what  
 19 thoughts you had taking on the role, or you thought you  
 20 were taking on the role, of incident commander, about  
 21 tactical plans.  
 22 From what you'd seen so far at the incident, and  
 23 what you knew about the number and location of FSG calls  
 24 that you'd heard even in general terms over the Airwave  
 25 radio on your way to the incident, at that point, when

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1 you take over from Brett Loft, did you have any thoughts  
 2 about what strategies you were going to adopt to deal  
 3 with what you had seen?  
 4 **A. My strategy would be, as any professional fire officer's**  
 5 **would be, to reach those fire survival guidance calls as**  
 6 **quickly as possible and remove them from the building or**  
 7 **get them to a safe place.**  
 8 Q. Did you know what advice was being given by the control  
 9 room to FSG callers or any callers who were calling in  
 10 saying they were affected by smoke, heat or fire?  
 11 **A. So fully aware of the stay-put policy, and in**  
 12 **a residential building like that, the stay-put policy**  
 13 **would be the default position. I had no reason to**  
 14 **suspect that that would be changed at that point.**  
 15 Q. From what you had seen and what you'd been told by  
 16 Brett Loft, even though brief, did you have any thoughts  
 17 about whether that stay-put policy should be revoked and  
 18 changed to an all out?  
 19 **A. No, I didn't.**  
 20 Q. Is there a reason why that is?  
 21 **A. I had no reason to think that the building**  
 22 **compartmentation would be failing and that fire would be**  
 23 **spreading across that way because it's not something**  
 24 **that we see. The stay-put policy works time and time**  
 25 **and time again, so I believed in that policy.**

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1 Q. That last answer would rather suggest that you were  
 2 operating on the assumption that compartmentation was  
 3 holding up.  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. Did Brett Loft not tell you that there were lots of  
 6 people trapped in their flats by fire, heat or smoke?  
 7 **A. He told me they were taking a high number of FSGs, but**  
 8 **that was about all the information that he had at that**  
 9 **point.**  
 10 Q. At that stage, did you not think it right to ask  
 11 somebody who knew more about the conditions inside the  
 12 building in order to establish whether compartmentation  
 13 really had been breached or not?  
 14 **A. Brett was unable to give me that information. I don't**  
 15 **believe he had it and I wouldn't have been able to**  
 16 **receive that information until I actually got to speak**  
 17 **to BA crews that had come out or speak to the**  
 18 **bridgehead.**  
 19 Q. Did you consider a total or partial evacuation of the  
 20 building at that stage on the basis of what you knew?  
 21 **A. No. No, I had no reason to think that was necessary at**  
 22 **that point, and that can be quite a dangerous call if**  
 23 **the situation and the conditions aren't correct.**  
 24 Q. Did you seek to contact control or ask the operator on  
 25 CU8 to get hold of control and speak to the operations

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1 manager in the control room to find out more precisely  
 2 what the conditions were like inside the building?  
 3 **A. I had no opportunity to do that, just purely because of**  
 4 **timing -- of the time spent on the CU. A very short**  
 5 **space of time with a large number of big decisions made**  
 6 **in very quick succession, then I was off the CU.**  
 7 Q. Did you consider whether you had a sufficient  
 8 understanding at that stage of the layout of the  
 9 building?  
 10 **A. I didn't have that information at that point, no.**  
 11 Q. Did you ask for it?  
 12 **A. When I got to the building.**  
 13 Q. When you got to the building?  
 14 **A. (Nodded assent)**  
 15 Q. Did you consider looking at that stage, still on CU8,  
 16 for or finding out whether there was what they call  
 17 a PIP?  
 18 **A. There was no opportunity for me to be able to do that at**  
 19 **that time.**  
 20 Q. What about building plans?  
 21 **A. Again, there would've been no opportunity for me to do**  
 22 **that at that time.**  
 23 Q. Did you have any thoughts about how you were going to  
 24 evolve some sort of strategy on taking over without  
 25 knowing what the layout of the building presented you

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1 with?  
 2 **A. So I would expect people at the bridgehead to have that**  
 3 **information. If we haven't got the information**  
 4 **available to us at hand, we get that information from**  
 5 **residents coming out. But at that point, my pure**  
 6 **concern was to be able to resource it enough for us to**  
 7 **be able to rescue the people that needed rescuing.**  
 8 Q. Did you know at that stage even whether the exit route  
 9 was simply a single main staircase?  
 10 **A. No.**  
 11 Q. You didn't even know that?  
 12 **A. No.**  
 13 Q. So you assumed command -- is this right? -- which wasn't  
 14 actually command, from Brett Loft on the basis of that  
 15 very limited information?  
 16 **A. Yes, it was.**  
 17 Q. Did you think at the time that that was enough  
 18 information to be able to allow you to form a tactical  
 19 plan?  
 20 **A. It was enough information for me to draw on my**  
 21 **experience to call on the resources I thought we may**  
 22 **need as a minimum. But, yes, I certainly would've liked**  
 23 **more and more information.**  
 24 Q. I know you weren't there for long and clearly the  
 25 situation was what it was. Did you recall in that

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1 moment, though, or those moments, policy 341 "Decision  
 2 making model"?  
 3 **A. Yes, I mean, that is our natural way of making decisions**  
 4 **and it does give us a very clear breakdown of the things**  
 5 **we should consider before making decisions.**  
 6 Q. Can I ask you briefly to look at that. It's tab 13 of  
 7 our policy bundle, LFB00000238.  
 8 I just want to explore one or two things about it.  
 9 You say it was a natural way of making decisions.  
 10 Can I ask you, please, to go to paragraphs 3 and 4.  
 11 Paragraph 3 -- it's on page 5 -- says -- and perhaps  
 12 to be fair to you, actually, we should start with, 2.2,  
 13 "Gathering and thinking".  
 14 "The functions within the two main activities of the  
 15 Decision Making Model are explained as follows."  
 16 You've got "Gathering and thinking", and you've got  
 17 "Deciding" and "Acting" and a rather complicated flow  
 18 chart underneath it, which we can go through, but it  
 19 looks like you evaluate, then you inform on progress,  
 20 gather and think, objectives, plan, communicate,  
 21 control, outcome.  
 22 Under "Gathering and thinking", it says under  
 23 paragraph 2.3:  
 24 "2.3 It is often not possible to gather all of the  
 25 information about a task or event before it is necessary

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1 to take action.  
 2 "2.4 In seeking to achieve safe systems of work it  
 3 is vital that sufficient information is gathered upon  
 4 which a reasoned decision can be made.  
 5 "2.5 In order to achieve safe systems of work, a key  
 6 factor will be the nature of the task or event and the  
 7 time pressures that are associated with it."  
 8 So it gives you the context, but then I want to ask  
 9 you about "Information gathering" at 3.1:  
 10 "During the initial stages of any decision making  
 11 process it is necessary to gather relevant information.  
 12 There are four sources of information that should be  
 13 considered:  
 14 "• Information on the task/event.  
 15 "• Information on resources.  
 16 "• Information on risks and benefits.  
 17 "• Information on progress."  
 18 When you spoke to Brett Loft on the CU8, was he the  
 19 only source of information that would fit with the  
 20 information-gathering under this paragraph?  
 21 **A. He was the only source available to me at that time on**  
 22 **the command unit.**  
 23 Q. What information did you get out of him on the task or  
 24 event?  
 25 **A. So my only information-gathering before I even saw him**

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1 **was it was a high-rise fire, which carries its own**  
 2 **issues. The information I got from him was that there**  
 3 **was a high number of fire survival guidance calls and**  
 4 **the outside of the building appeared to be alight.**  
 5 Q. Did you think that was detailed enough to be able to be  
 6 sufficient information to lead you into the  
 7 decision-making model?  
 8 **A. No, I believe that's the only information that Brett had**  
 9 **at the time, and the decision-making model is**  
 10 **an excellent tool written into the policy, but policy is**  
 11 **a guidance and doesn't always fit every incident.**  
 12 Q. We know you had information on resources, but  
 13 information on risks and benefits, did you think  
 14 Brett Loft gave you enough information in that brief  
 15 handover to be able to allow you to assess risk and  
 16 benefits for the purposes of operating the dynamic risk  
 17 assessment?  
 18 **A. Yes, I believe it did, because the risks we had was**  
 19 **there was fire survival guidance and there was people in**  
 20 **there that needed us to help rescue them.**  
 21 Q. Right.  
 22 **A. That was the biggest risk to us.**  
 23 Q. In broad terms certainly, but what about some detailed  
 24 information on differences between callers in the tower  
 25 so that you could allocate resources accordingly, such

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1 as working out where the smoke was, where the fire was  
 2 and who was most at risk within the building?  
 3 **A. I don't believe Brett had that information to give me.**  
 4 Q. Would anybody else on the incident ground have that  
 5 information to give you, do you think?  
 6 **A. If that information had been passed from control to us,**  
 7 **then, yes, that would be given to the vehicle**  
 8 **co-ordinating the fire survival guidance.**  
 9 Q. My question then is: why didn't you call control in  
 10 order to supplement the information that Brett Loft had  
 11 given you so that you could gather the information in  
 12 order to be able to operate the dynamic decision-making  
 13 model?  
 14 **A. So I knew that information would be coming at some**  
 15 **point, because if it's been passed to us, then we're**  
 16 **going to get that. But I can't stress enough how**  
 17 **quickly all this happened on that command unit.**  
 18 **Within minutes, all these decisions were made, these**  
 19 **conversations were had, and then I was relieved of my**  
 20 **command.**  
 21 Q. Information on progress, again, same question: is there  
 22 a reason why you couldn't have called control or spoken  
 23 to the bridgehead about the progress of fire survival  
 24 guidance calls in general terms so that you could then  
 25 form at least an outline strategy based on what you knew

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1 up to date?  
 2 **A. Which is exactly what I did do when I managed to get to**  
 3 **the bridgehead and speak to the person in charge there.**  
 4 Q. 4.1, "Information about the task or event":  
 5 "41 The first stage in the process involves  
 6 gathering relevant information, whilst making the best  
 7 use of the time available. It must be recognised that  
 8 information gathering is the key to effective decision  
 9 making.  
 10 "4.2 The following are some examples of information  
 11 about the task/event that the person or persons  
 12 following the process should be considering.  
 13 "• What is the environment?  
 14 "• What is happening?  
 15 "• Is the situation static or developing?  
 16 "• What was it that led up to the event?  
 17 "• Who is involved?  
 18 "• Are there any immediate risks to anyone?"  
 19 In your interactions with Brett Loft and then  
 20 deciding what to do next, did you get enough information  
 21 about any of those bullet points there?  
 22 **A. I believe I got enough information about the majority of**  
 23 **those points there. Further information is always**  
 24 **a benefit, but I got enough to make the decisions that**  
 25 **I made.**

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1 Q. Did you get any detail about specific FSGs from  
 2 Brett Loft?  
 3 **A. No.**  
 4 Q. In the absence of detailed and specific information  
 5 about specific floors or even sections of the building,  
 6 how were you able to have enough information to be able  
 7 to make a decision even generally in accordance with the  
 8 decision-making model?  
 9 **A. Because my view was -- the decision I made was to ask**  
 10 **for more resources than I thought I may even need, but**  
 11 **it was to get the resources there so as that information**  
 12 **comes in -- if we get that information, we can't**  
 13 **actually deal with that information or do anything with**  
 14 **it if we haven't got the resources at the scene to be**  
 15 **able to help.**  
 16 Q. Did you ask Brett Loft: is the situation static or is it  
 17 developing?  
 18 **A. It was clearly developing, I didn't need to ask that.**  
 19 Q. Having got the information you got, what was the  
 20 decision that you made as a result of pushing the  
 21 information through the decision-making model that you  
 22 say you used naturally?  
 23 **A. I didn't have that opportunity. I was relieved of**  
 24 **command pretty much at that point.**  
 25 Q. So does it come to this: you had what you had but

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1 actually never got a chance to make any decision  
 2 output -- or there was no decision output that would've  
 3 been reached if in fact you got to the end of the  
 4 process?  
 5 **A. I didn't reach the end of the process to make the**  
 6 **decision output from the information that Brett had**  
 7 **given me. That section of the information I hadn't**  
 8 **reached a decision output.**  
 9 Q. I want to examine in a little bit of detail, if I may,  
 10 what information he gave you about FSG, if I can.  
 11 We can put the decision-making model policy away for  
 12 the moment.  
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, can I just ask you, we  
 14 haven't run for another hour yet, of course, but  
 15 I expect Mr Welch would like a break at some point.  
 16 Would you rather have one now before you start this  
 17 topic?  
 18 MR MILLETT: Yes, I think that's wise.  
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.  
 20 We'll have a short break, Mr Welch. 12.10. I am  
 21 going to give you 10 minutes to stretch your legs and  
 22 whatever, and come back at 12.10.  
 23 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence or  
 24 anything to do with it when you're out of the room.  
 25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? If you would like to go  
 2 with the usher.  
 3 12.10.  
 4 (12.00 pm)  
 5 (A short break)  
 6 (12.10 pm)  
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Happy to carry on,  
 8 Mr Welch?  
 9 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.  
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.  
 11 MR MILLETT: Mr Welch, thanks very much for coming back to  
 12 us.  
 13 Can I just pick up where I left off. I wanted to  
 14 explore with you what information Brett Loft gave you  
 15 about FSGs when you took over from him, as it were.  
 16 When he gave evidence, he said that the discussion  
 17 that you had with him, which he says took place at the  
 18 base of the tower -- I know that's not the same as your  
 19 recollection -- was about whether there were  
 20 firefighters in the tower who were above the level of  
 21 the fire without any firefighting media.  
 22 Do you remember that?  
 23 **A. No.**  
 24 Q. You don't remember any discussion about that at all; is  
 25 that right?

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1 **A. No.**  
 2 Q. So that was not part of his handover?  
 3 **A. I have no recollection of that conversation with Brett.**  
 4 Q. Just in general terms, were you aware that Station  
 5 Manager Loft had been, up until that point, dealing with  
 6 FSG calls?  
 7 **A. No.**  
 8 Q. You didn't even know that?  
 9 **A. No.**  
 10 Q. Can I ask you to go back to the PRC notes, then. Same  
 11 page as before, so page 17 of the Relativity reference,  
 12 page 13 internally.  
 13 A quarter of the way down the page, where you say:  
 14 "Told it was Brett Loft.  
 15 "...  
 16 "Brett Loft got on CU.  
 17 "He told me about FSGs."  
 18 Is that right?  
 19 **A. He told me they were taking a large number of FSGs.**  
 20 Q. Do you recall him saying anything else about FSG calls?  
 21 **A. I don't remember.**  
 22 Q. This is a description, "He told me about FSGs".  
 23 Do you remember any detail at all about what he told  
 24 you?  
 25 **A. All I remember is that he told me we were taking a large**

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1 **number of FSGs. He may have given me more information**  
2 **than that, but I don't recall it.**  
3 Q. Did you not interrogate me about, "Give me a bit more  
4 detail, where are they coming from, what kind of flats,  
5 how high in the tower"?

6 **A. I didn't.**  
7 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't explore the detail of  
8 the FSG calls that he had been handling with him?

9 **A. Again, if I'd remained as incident commander, that would**  
10 **be information that I would want, but at the time it was**  
11 **the bare minimum of information that he was able to give**  
12 **me, that they had a large number of FSGs. I believe he**  
13 **didn't have that information.**  
14 Q. You didn't know because you didn't give yourself  
15 a chance to ask him about it.

16 **A. I didn't ask, no.**  
17 Q. Given FSGs was, as I think you said earlier, the  
18 priority over firefighting, wasn't it important to you  
19 to extract from him as much information as you could  
20 about the FSG he had been handling in terms of volume,  
21 content, location in the building, conditions?

22 **A. So the initial priority for me was those FSGs were being**  
23 **addressed, and I believe they were -- I knew they were**  
24 **being addressed.**  
25 **I think if it had been a minute or two later and**

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1 **I kept the command, I'd have been asking him to write up**  
2 **on the whiteboard or gather that information from**  
3 **elsewhere all the FSGs we were getting. What I wanted**  
4 **to know at that point was: were we committing crews to**  
5 **go and get these people?**  
6 Q. Let's just explore a little bit more about the detail  
7 that you did get from him. If you look at the foot of  
8 the page in the PRC notes, it says:  
9 "I didn't know how many FSGs -- thought 10 or 15.  
10 "I [knew] original fire dealt with."  
11 You then go on to say in the last line on that page:  
12 "Thought FSGs would be dealt with quite quickly."  
13 First of all, do you remember saying that at this  
14 PRC meeting?

15 **A. I don't have a clear recollection of it, but it's likely**  
16 **it is what I said if that's what's recorded, yes.**  
17 Q. You have no reason to challenge the record?  
18 **A. No.**  
19 Q. Do you remember trying to find out from Brett Loft how  
20 many FSG calls had actually been taken?  
21 **A. Not that I recall. I remember him giving the**  
22 **information we were taking a large number, but I don't**  
23 **know if he said to me, "We've got about 10 or 15", but**  
24 **it was certainly a much bigger number than I was ever**  
25 **used to.**

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1 Q. You said here "thought 10 or 15". My question is: where  
2 does that come from?  
3 **A. I don't know if that's maybe what I heard on the radio**  
4 **on the way in or Brett actually told me that in that**  
5 **conversation.**  
6 Q. As at June 2017, how many FSGs had you actually  
7 experienced at a single incident?  
8 **A. Probably no more than two or three.**  
9 Q. You said earlier on. Therefore, 10 to 15 would  
10 represent, would it, a magnitude up to five times  
11 greater than your experience?  
12 **A. Yes.**  
13 Q. So even on 10 to 15, that would be something that would  
14 have an impact on you, would it?  
15 **A. It would stretch my experience of what I've dealt with**  
16 **before, yes.**  
17 Q. I've asked you this before, but in light of what we now  
18 see in the note -- I think you didn't seek to establish  
19 contact with Brigade control to get a feel for what was  
20 happening. You've told us that. On the basis of 10 to  
21 15, why did you not do that?  
22 **A. Brigade control were very busy trying to transmit the**  
23 **information to the command unit of those FSGs. The time**  
24 **that they had was they were trying -- they were doing**  
25 **an incredible job at a really challenging time, so I had**

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1 **absolute faith in control that they will give us all the**  
2 **information that they possibly can.**  
3 Q. On CU8, there was an operator doing something. Did you  
4 ask the operator on CU8 about what information he was  
5 receiving from the control room, if any?  
6 **A. No. I knew that he would be recording as much**  
7 **information as they were able to give him.**  
8 Q. Did you seek to find out what systems had been put in  
9 place to deal with these multiple FSG calls?  
10 **A. I sought that information as soon as I got into the**  
11 **tower and spoke with the bridgehead.**  
12 Q. But that was after you left CU8?  
13 **A. Yes.**  
14 Q. Is there any reason while you didn't do that while you  
15 were on CU8?  
16 **A. Time. Purely time.**  
17 Q. I think I'm right in saying that, so far, you hadn't got  
18 any details of any specific FSG calls --  
19 **A. No.**  
20 Q. -- from Brett Loft?  
21 **A. No.**  
22 Q. His evidence -- I'm summarising it -- is that he was  
23 given an A4 sheet on a clipboard which set out FSG  
24 calls. His recollection is that he brought those back  
25 to the command unit.

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1 Do you remember him having a piece of paper with FSG  
 2 calls in his hand?  
 3 **A. I have no recollection of that. Maybe that was before**  
 4 **or after, but I don't remember seeing that at all.**  
 5 **I couldn't say he didn't have it on him, but I don't**  
 6 **recall seeing it on him.**  
 7 Q. Do you remember seeing any pieces of paper with lists of  
 8 FSG calls on them at that point in CU8?  
 9 **A. Not at that point, no.**  
 10 Q. Do you remember seeing any control information forms or  
 11 other pieces of paper being written on by the operator  
 12 in CU8?  
 13 **A. No, because where they actually sit to use the radios**  
 14 **and receive the information from control is behind**  
 15 **a small partition wall that has a TV screen on it. So**  
 16 **I wouldn't be able to see what they're doing at their**  
 17 **desk.**  
 18 Q. Do you remember seeing any runners or firefighters  
 19 coming to CU8 and taking away pieces of paper?  
 20 **A. No.**  
 21 Q. Do you remember seeing anybody on CU8 using the radio to  
 22 communicate with the bridgehead or anybody else on the  
 23 incident ground?  
 24 **A. The command unit operative was using the radio, but**  
 25 **I don't know who he was talking to, I didn't record that**

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1 **information.**  
 2 Q. First of all, I should ask you, are you familiar with  
 3 policy 790, "Fire survival guidance calls"?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. Can I ask you to look at that. It's tab 5 of our  
 6 policies bundle. If you go, please, to paragraph 9.1,  
 7 which is on page 5, it says:  
 8 "It is vital that control is kept informed of the  
 9 actions being taken to resolve each FSG call. The fact  
 10 that control is aware of the actions being carried out  
 11 on the incident ground will greatly enhance the advice  
 12 given to FSG callers."  
 13 Was that principle alive in your mind when you were  
 14 on CU8 and taking over, or as you thought, command?  
 15 **A. I was aware of that principle, yes.**  
 16 Q. Did you do anything to comply with that policy and keep  
 17 control informed of what actions were being taken to  
 18 resolve each FSG call?  
 19 **A. My priority for getting information back to control was**  
 20 **the METHANE message, and I wasn't allowed the time to be**  
 21 **able to get to this part in the process of ensuring that**  
 22 **information was getting back to the CU and is that**  
 23 **information getting from the CU back to the control.**  
 24 Q. My question is: was it a priority to you on taking over  
 25 incident command, having been told by Brett Loft that

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1 there are or knowing that there are 10 to 15 FSG calls,  
 2 five times more than your previous experience, that the  
 3 first thing you do is to find out from the tower what  
 4 actions were being taken to resolve each FSG call?  
 5 **A. My priority would be to ensure we're committing crews to**  
 6 **try and reach those FSG calls.**  
 7 **As with many incidents, we trust in our officers.**  
 8 **I had no reason to believe -- the norm would be let me**  
 9 **know if we weren't reaching them. It would be**  
 10 **absolutely expected that if we're receiving FSGs, we**  
 11 **would be committing crews to those FSGs, as we were.**  
 12 Q. Were you working on an assumption that because -- well  
 13 let me try and unpick it.  
 14 What did you actually know in your own head at that  
 15 moment, at that time, about what steps were being taken  
 16 to resolve each FSG call?  
 17 **A. I knew that we were receiving them. I had absolute**  
 18 **faith in the officers on the incident ground that they**  
 19 **would be addressing that and trying to reach those**  
 20 **people. If they weren't, the first thing they would do**  
 21 **is let us know they were unable to do that.**  
 22 Q. So --  
 23 **A. Sorry, if I can clarify it a bit further. Yes, as time**  
 24 **went on, you would gather the information, what flats**  
 25 **have we been to, what haven't we been to, what are we**

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1 **doing about it? That's all the information you'll carry**  
 2 **on during your continual information-gathering. But in**  
 3 **those very short few minutes, I did as much as I could**  
 4 **for as many as I could, in the sense of: are we getting**  
 5 **in there? Have we got enough BA to be able to carry on**  
 6 **getting in there?**  
 7 Q. Were you working on an assumption that because the FSG  
 8 calls had been received, therefore they were being dealt  
 9 with by crews, effectively?  
 10 **A. Yes, I was, and in the same way that -- that comes down**  
 11 **to trust and belief in our officers, in that if we**  
 12 **attend a fire, we assume they're putting water on it to**  
 13 **put it out. If they're unable to do that, they would**  
 14 **tell us. So yes, I was.**  
 15 Q. What I am trying to get a feel for is why you trusted or  
 16 worked on that assumption in circumstances where you  
 17 were confronted with an incident you told us was outside  
 18 your experience and numbers of FSG calls that were  
 19 outside your experience.  
 20 Given those facts, my question is: why didn't you,  
 21 instead of working on an assumption, pick up the radio,  
 22 or get someone to do so, and get some actual, hard  
 23 information from the bridgehead about whether these  
 24 multiple FSG calls were actually successfully being  
 25 dealt with?

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1 **A. So that's exactly what I did do when time allowed;**  
 2 **I gathered the information from the best source I had,**  
 3 **which was the bridgehead. But I've got absolute**  
 4 **complete faith in our officers, and our officers are**  
 5 **very, very professional, and I know that they will do**  
 6 **everything they can to reach those people. If they**  
 7 **can't, they will tell me so. I was assuming that's what**  
 8 **they were doing because I know that's what they would be**  
 9 **trying to do.**  
 10 Q. That assumption -- is this right? -- held good even  
 11 though you and they, your officers, were confronted with  
 12 an extraordinary incident?  
 13 **A. It's absolutely true because no matter what we're**  
 14 **confronted with, we're never not going to try, so they**  
 15 **will always do what's trained in all of us, to rescue**  
 16 **people at whatever cost.**  
 17 Q. Trying is one thing, succeeding is another. Given the  
 18 extraordinary situation you were confronted with, my  
 19 question really is: given that, why didn't you actually  
 20 seek hard facts rather than relying on an assumption?  
 21 **A. It's absolutely right, trying is one thing, succeeding**  
 22 **is another. If they were unable to succeed, I know they**  
 23 **would've told us. I know they would've told us,**  
 24 **"Actually, we cannot get to this point or this point or**  
 25 **this point", as later on happened.**

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1 Q. I think the next thing you did was to task Station  
 2 Manager Loft with BA main control.  
 3 Are you all right?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. Okay.  
 6 Do you remember that, tasking SM Loft with BA main  
 7 control?  
 8 **A. Yes.**  
 9 Q. Do you remember tasking Station Manager Kipling with  
 10 that as well?  
 11 **A. No.**  
 12 Q. You don't?  
 13 **A. I don't recall that.**  
 14 Q. Do you know Station Manager Kipling?  
 15 **A. I do, yes.**  
 16 Q. Do you remember his involvement?  
 17 **A. I don't recall seeing him at that point of the incident.**  
 18 Q. Did you discuss with Brett Loft the importance of  
 19 marshalling EDBA wearers?  
 20 **A. No.**  
 21 Q. Did you discuss with him the importance of ensuring that  
 22 they were sent to the tower on arrival immediately as  
 23 a priority?  
 24 **A. No, at that point my priority for him was to establish**  
 25 **BA main control. That can take a period of time that**

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1 **far exceeded the time that I was in command.**  
 2 Q. Do you remember Station Manager Egan coming onto the  
 3 command unit while you were still there, CU8?  
 4 **A. I've since seen his evidence that he did, but I don't**  
 5 **recall seeing him there.**  
 6 Q. His evidence to the inquiry was he came onto CU8 when he  
 7 first arrived and then that you tasked him with taking  
 8 over management of FSGs.  
 9 Do you remember that?  
 10 **A. No.**  
 11 Q. You don't?  
 12 **A. Sorry, I recall giving somebody the task of managing**  
 13 **FSGs; I don't recall it being Station Manager Egan.**  
 14 Q. He also said you told him to go and set up FSGs in CU7.  
 15 **A. I recall telling somebody to do that, but I don't recall**  
 16 **it being Dan. It's a faceless character in my memory.**  
 17 Q. But you do remember telling somebody to go and set up  
 18 FSGs in CU7, do you?  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. Why did you do that? Why did you say that the FSGs  
 21 should be handled from CU7 and not continued to be  
 22 handled from CU8?  
 23 **A. Because it is our common practice that we would have**  
 24 **a dedicated command unit purely dealing with FSGs, and**  
 25 **the command unit that I was on was what I believed to be**

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1 **the incident command command unit.**  
 2 Q. Why not make CU7 the command unit?  
 3 **A. It would've been an option. But at that point, that's**  
 4 **where the hub of activity was around the whole incident.**  
 5 **And for the FSGs, it is vital to have absolute**  
 6 **100 per cent concentration. So a command unit that had**  
 7 **nobody else on it at that point, so far as I'm aware,**  
 8 **seemed like a perfect location for it.**  
 9 Q. We covered this earlier this morning, but just to go  
 10 back to it. At the stage when you told Dan or somebody  
 11 to go and set up CU7 as the FSG unit, were you aware by  
 12 that stage that FSG calls were coming in from control to  
 13 the incident ground to CU8?  
 14 **A. I wasn't consciously aware they were coming to CU8.**  
 15 **I knew they were coming to the incident ground.**  
 16 Q. Can you explain what information you were able to give  
 17 the person you tasked about the FSG calls that had come  
 18 in so far that they were going to go and set up at CU7?  
 19 **A. I don't recall giving that information. I clearly**  
 20 **remember asking someone to set up FSG in CU7, the CU**  
 21 **nearest the building, but I don't recall what other part**  
 22 **of that conversation we had.**  
 23 Q. Would it follow that you didn't and perhaps weren't able  
 24 to give them a briefing about what systems for handling  
 25 FSG calls were already in place?

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1 **A. I don't think it's fair to say that I didn't; I don't**  
 2 **recall what further conversation we had.**  
 3 Q. One of the operatives of CU7, Watch Manager Norman  
 4 Harrison, who ended up working on CU7 with Dan Egan, he  
 5 says that he recalls coming onto CU8 not long after his  
 6 arrival at the incident and there were three senior  
 7 officers on the CU, two station managers and one group  
 8 manager. Rather a lot of material to take on board.  
 9 My first question is: do you know or would you  
 10 recognise Watch Manager Norman Harrison?  
 11 **A. I would probably recognise him but the name doesn't mean**  
 12 **anything.**  
 13 Q. Do you remember whether he came onto CU8 when you were  
 14 there?  
 15 **A. Not that I recall.**  
 16 Q. Let me see if I can trigger a recollection in  
 17 a different way.  
 18 He says in his statement to the inquiry -- and this  
 19 may have to be explored with him -- that when he was on  
 20 CU8 he announced to everyone that he thought the advice  
 21 being given by the control room operators to tell people  
 22 to stay inside, stay put, ought to be changed, and that  
 23 there was then a discussion about that.  
 24 Do you have a recollection about that?  
 25 **A. I've got absolutely no recollection of that, and I think**

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1 **if I'd have heard that conversation, that is something**  
 2 **I would've been able to recall.**  
 3 Q. In your statement, if you go back to page 4, please,  
 4 four lines up from the bottom, you say:  
 5 "At this point DAC Andy O'Loughlin entered the CU."  
 6 And this has probably got garbled:  
 7 "At this point DAC Andy O'LOUGHLIN entered the CU  
 8 and I [became] aware that he had arrived before me but  
 9 gone direct to the block and had taken charge from  
 10 Station Manager Andy WALTON — although no messages had  
 11 been passed to Control about that."  
 12 To be clear, is this after you'd requested the four  
 13 messages that we've discussed to be sent?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. How long after those messages were sent do you think DAC  
 16 O'Loughlin came onto the CU?  
 17 **A. I would guess a minute or so.**  
 18 Q. Was that before or after you had your handover from  
 19 Brett Loft?  
 20 **A. After.**  
 21 Q. So that would mean, would it, that you sent the messages  
 22 and then had the handover from Brett Loft, and then DAC  
 23 O'Loughlin arrived --  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. -- all in the space of a few minutes?

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. Is that right?  
 3 **A. That's how I recall it, yes.**  
 4 Q. Okay.  
 5 In the PRC notes, just to go back to them -- this is  
 6 a timing question -- you say halfway down:  
 7 "Andy O'Loughlin got on CU & told me he'd taken over  
 8 from another SM -- believe to be 0211."  
 9 First of all, do you remember saying at this PRC  
 10 meeting, 3 July 2017, that you believed that that was at  
 11 02.11?  
 12 **A. No, I don't.**  
 13 Q. Do you know, if you did say it, what would've prompted  
 14 you to recall that being the time when Andy O'Loughlin  
 15 got on the CU?  
 16 **A. I would suspect that that's probably been recorded**  
 17 **following conversation at the PRC of trying to work out**  
 18 **where everyone was at what time.**  
 19 Q. Right.  
 20 **A. I think you'd have to ask the person who wrote these**  
 21 **notes whether that was from me or for their own record.**  
 22 Q. At 02.11, it's certainly after you had sent the four  
 23 messages.  
 24 Just to see if we can pin this down, can I ask you  
 25 to go to the short incident log -- tab 23, Paul -- at

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1 page 21. We might be able to work it out from this  
 2 together.  
 3 At 02.11.46, the foot of the page, we can see that  
 4 Sharon Darby inputs a make-up message:  
 5 "IUP CU8 MAKE FRU X 6."  
 6 Who made FRUs six?  
 7 **A. I believe that was DAC Andy O'Loughlin.**  
 8 Q. Does that give us a time mark for when he came on to  
 9 CU8?  
 10 **A. I would think that's quite likely, yes.**  
 11 Q. Don't speculate.  
 12 **A. I think it probably is.**  
 13 Q. To the best of your recollection.  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. Do you remember him giving the instruction to the  
 16 operator on CU8 to make FRUs six?  
 17 **A. I have a vague memory of the words being used, "Make**  
 18 **FRUs six".**  
 19 Q. Going back to your statement, you say -- I have just  
 20 shown you this -- he told you he had taken charge from  
 21 Station Manager Walton.  
 22 We've seen paragraph 10 of your contemporaneous  
 23 notes where you had a conversation with Station Manager  
 24 Walton about setting up a rendezvous point for incoming  
 25 appliances. We've seen that this morning.

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1 My question is: when you spoke to DAC O'Loughlin,  
 2 did you ask him who was incident commander at that  
 3 point?  
 4 **A. Not that I recall, no.**  
 5 Q. What assumptions did you make at that point when you  
 6 first saw him as to who the incident commander actually  
 7 was?  
 8 **A. As far as I was aware it had been Brett Loft and then**  
 9 **I'd taken over, until Andy O'Loughlin arrived and said,**  
 10 **actually, no, he had taken over at the block.**  
 11 Q. Four lines up from the bottom of the page, we just  
 12 looked at it, you say:  
 13 "... I [became] aware that he had arrived before  
 14 me ..."  
 15 How did you learn that DAC O'Loughlin had arrived  
 16 before you?  
 17 **A. Because the brief conversation we had was when I told**  
 18 **him I'd taken over, he said, "Well, I've already been to**  
 19 **the block and taken over". So from that I surmised it**  
 20 **was either at the same time as me or before me.**  
 21 Q. So you learnt it from him?  
 22 **A. Yes.**  
 23 Q. Not from anywhere else?  
 24 **A. No.**  
 25 Q. What briefing were you able to give DAC O'Loughlin?

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1 **A. Well, from the brief conversation we had, it was clear**  
 2 **that he had more information about the actual tower than**  
 3 **I did, so my addition to his information was what I'd**  
 4 **done at the command unit by requesting more resources**  
 5 **and declaring a major incident.**  
 6 Q. During that conversation, you clearly became aware, as  
 7 you say, that he had taken charge from Station Manager  
 8 Andy Walton. Did you have a conversation with  
 9 DAC O'Loughlin along the lines of, "How come, because  
 10 I've just taken command from Brett Loft?"  
 11 **A. No, because it became quite clear -- he made it clear to**  
 12 **me that he had gone straight to the tower and I'd gone**  
 13 **straight to the command unit, so it was clear where the**  
 14 **confusion happened.**  
 15 Q. Did it cause you concern to discover that there had been  
 16 some confusion in who people thought the incident  
 17 commander was?  
 18 **A. It's unusual and it's not the way we normally do things**  
 19 **by any means, but the important thing was to resource**  
 20 **the incident. That's something that can be dealt with**  
 21 **afterwards. So we can talk about that, as we did at the**  
 22 **PRC, how that confusion happened. But that had no**  
 23 **detrimental effect on the incident and, as I said**  
 24 **earlier, we were both on the same page. So whilst it**  
 25 **wasn't good practice, it hadn't caused any problems**

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1 **either.**  
 2 Q. How did you know that?  
 3 **A. Because our view on what we needed to resource that**  
 4 **incident was the same.**  
 5 Q. Okay.  
 6 **A. My decisions had no detrimental effect on his command**  
 7 **decision because all I had done was resource what he**  
 8 **thought he needed as well.**  
 9 Q. Right. Okay.  
 10 Did he give you an impression or an understanding  
 11 about what he had learnt so far about the incident?  
 12 **A. More so when he then detailed me as being a fire sector**  
 13 **commander and told me what the extent of the fire was**  
 14 **and therefore what the size of my sector would be.**  
 15 Q. We'll come to that shortly.  
 16 But in this conversation, were you able to talk to  
 17 him about the number and location of FSG calls?  
 18 **A. No, only that I told him I was aware that we had a high**  
 19 **number of FSG calls, he confirmed that, and then I told**  
 20 **him who I'd given each role to to set up FSG, to set up**  
 21 **BA main control, et cetera.**  
 22 Q. Did you have a discussion with him about how FSG  
 23 information was getting to the bridgehead?  
 24 **A. No.**  
 25 Q. Did you have a discussion with him about how many BA

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1 crews had been committed so far?  
 2 **A. No.**  
 3 Q. Did you have a conversation with him about how high BA  
 4 crews had been committed into the building?  
 5 **A. I don't believe I had that conversation with him. I did**  
 6 **have that conversation shortly after, but not with him,**  
 7 **I don't think.**  
 8 Q. Did you have a conversation with him about whether there  
 9 were any particular floors above which BA wearers were  
 10 not getting?  
 11 **A. No. All of that information was being held at the**  
 12 **bridgehead. It wasn't to say that Andy wasn't aware of**  
 13 **it, but that was my source of information that I needed**  
 14 **to -- that was the priority, for me to get there.**  
 15 Q. He had been into the tower; did he give you any kind of  
 16 impression as to what was actually happening at the  
 17 bridgehead?  
 18 **A. He didn't and I wasn't aware that he had been into the**  
 19 **tower at that point.**  
 20 Q. He didn't tell you, did he?  
 21 **A. Not that I recall.**  
 22 Q. I thought he did.  
 23 Did he tell you what the firefighting plan was?  
 24 **A. Not that I remember.**  
 25 Q. Did you discuss evacuation?

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1 **A. Not that I remember.**  
 2 Q. Did you discuss the wisdom of maintaining the stay-put  
 3 advice?  
 4 **A. No, again, I don't recall. And all of this, I can't say**  
 5 **it didn't happen; I don't remember having that.**  
 6 Q. What did he tell you?  
 7 **A. I told him what I'd done. He told me he had taken over**  
 8 **at the tower. Therefore, I knew that he had more**  
 9 **information about the incident at the tower than I had.**  
 10 **So in effect, really, all I did was add to his**  
 11 **information-gathering to assist him to make command**  
 12 **decisions.**  
 13 Q. What information did you give him?  
 14 **A. What I'd done on the CU around the increasing resources**  
 15 **and declaring a major incident.**  
 16 Q. That's all, is it?  
 17 **A. And I told him I knew we had a high number of FSG calls.**  
 18 **He confirmed, "Yes, we have", and so it was more me**  
 19 **feeding him information.**  
 20 Q. Did you have a conversation with DAC O'Loughlin about  
 21 the nature of the fire spread at that time?  
 22 **A. We may have done. I mean, we may have had**  
 23 **a conversation, it appears it would be on the outside,**  
 24 **but I couldn't recall for definite that conversation.**  
 25 Q. Just to follow up that last answer in a bit more detail,

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1 if I can ask you to go back to the PRC notes, same page,  
 2 page 17.  
 3 We've seen five lines up from the bottom already  
 4 this morning that you say, "Still thought fire was just  
 5 on external face". Then a line up from the bottom you  
 6 say, "I [knew] original fire dealt with."  
 7 Sorry, my mistake. Immediately underneath the line  
 8 where it says "Still thought fire was just external  
 9 face", you say, "I [knew] it was cladding alight".  
 10 Did you have a conversation with DAC O'Loughlin  
 11 about what you thought was alight, namely the cladding?  
 12 **A. No, and I think it's unfair and incorrect, my comment**  
 13 **there. I think that's in reaction to media coverage**  
 14 **following the fire.**  
 15 Q. At the time you didn't have any --  
 16 **A. I knew it was outside.**  
 17 Q. So you think the reference to cladding there is wrong?  
 18 **A. It's not fair to say that. That was reacting to media**  
 19 **coverage.**  
 20 Q. But then still focusing on "Still thought fire was just  
 21 on external face", were you in this meeting when Andy  
 22 O'Loughlin gave his version? Do you remember hearing  
 23 that?  
 24 **A. I would've been, yes.**  
 25 Q. If you turn to page 19 of the PRC note, you can see

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1 where he starts his report of his own recollection of  
 2 the incident there, and just below halfway down, it  
 3 says:  
 4 "I was surprised I was taking over from Andy --  
 5 a SM.  
 6 "Andy had only just taken over."  
 7 I think that's Andy Walton from what we've been able  
 8 to gather from you this morning.  
 9 Do you remember in your conversation with DAC  
 10 O'Loughlin when he came onto the CU him telling you that  
 11 he had been surprised to take over from Andy Walton, who  
 12 was a station manager?  
 13 **A. No, I don't.**  
 14 Q. Then it says:  
 15 "Was clear where fire started. Fire was in flats.  
 16 No clear indication of how many involved."  
 17 Do you remember having a discussion with DAC  
 18 O'Loughlin about whether the fire had penetrated from  
 19 the exterior into individual flats?  
 20 **A. No. Andy would've been given the same information as**  
 21 **I was, I suspect, that it was in a specific flat**  
 22 **initially. I would suspect that's probably what he's**  
 23 **referring to there.**  
 24 Q. Well, the note says:  
 25 "Fire was in flats. No clear indication of how many

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1 involved."  
 2 Obviously we'll have to ask DAC O'Loughlin about  
 3 what he meant by that. But my question, based on what  
 4 he said at this meeting, is: when you spoke to DAC  
 5 O'Loughlin when he came onto CU8, did you have  
 6 a discussion about whether the fire was still only on  
 7 the exterior, as it appears you thought from what you  
 8 were saying at the meeting, or had actually penetrated  
 9 into flats, plural?  
 10 **A. I don't recall that conversation.**  
 11 Q. Okay.  
 12 **A. I think, to put it in context, it's important to say**  
 13 **that it wouldn't be unexpected for it to be in flats.**  
 14 **Seeing as the fire started in a flat, and as the time of**  
 15 **year and everything else, windows open, it wouldn't be**  
 16 **that unusual to see the fire then spread to a flat**  
 17 **above, maybe even a flat above that, because the fire**  
 18 **will come out and get back in to search for fuel. But**  
 19 **what was completely different on this night was the**  
 20 **outside of the building was the fuel, where normally**  
 21 **a fire will only try to get back in to find more fuel.**  
 22 **That's the big difference between what we're used to and**  
 23 **what we saw on 14 June.**  
 24 Q. Right.  
 25 So that leads me to this question: at that stage --

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1 so we're on CU8 and you're talking to DAC O'Loughlin who  
 2 has just come on -- did you have any thoughts yourself  
 3 or any discussion with DAC O'Loughlin about whether the  
 4 fire, even if only on the exterior, had breached  
 5 compartmentation?  
 6 **A. No, I don't remember having that discussion. But as  
 7 I say, I wouldn't have been surprised to learn that it  
 8 would've got into flats, mainly because of the time of  
 9 year, windows open.**  
 10 Q. Summarising it, was your view at that stage that  
 11 compartmentation was still holding up or was your view  
 12 that compartmentation had begun to fail?  
 13 **A. So at that point I had no reason to doubt that  
 14 compartmentation was still holding up. As I say, it  
 15 would've got back into the flats, but then each flat was  
 16 its own compartment and I had no reason to believe it  
 17 was breaching outside of those compartments and  
 18 spreading internally.**  
 19 Q. We're going to come to look at that in a moment, about  
 20 what you saw on the outside when you go to the tower.  
 21 I appreciate at this stage you hadn't had a good look at  
 22 it. So we'll come back to that.  
 23 DAC O'Loughlin says in his witness statement --  
 24 again, we'll have to explore his recollection with  
 25 him -- he told you that he had requested FRUs so that

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1 the EDBA crews would be able to get to higher floors.  
 2 Do you remember yourself being told that by DAC  
 3 O'Loughlin?  
 4 **A. No, I have no recollection of that.**  
 5 Q. Do you remember DAC O'Loughlin telling you how many FRUs  
 6 he had requested prior to coming onto the CU?  
 7 **A. No. I seem to recall being present when the request was  
 8 made for make FRUs six.**  
 9 Q. At that time, was it clear to you that he was the  
 10 incident commander?  
 11 **A. Yes. We'd had that handover and he had taken control.**  
 12 Q. He therefore had two handovers: one from Andy Walton  
 13 earlier and now a supposed handover from you?  
 14 **A. Yes.**  
 15 Q. So in your mind, he is incident commander at or by 02.11  
 16 when he sends that FRUs six message?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Can I take you back to your statement, page 4, and over  
 19 to the top of page 5.  
 20 You say, bottom of the page:  
 21 "He told me he had made SM WALTON Fire Sector  
 22 Commander but he now wanted me in that role and told me  
 23 my parameters were the whole block."  
 24 What did you understand you were specifically being  
 25 asked to do in terms of an overall strategy?

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1 **A. So I was given the role of fire sector commander. As  
 2 fire sector commander, you would normally be given  
 3 an area which in a high-rise would be the fire floor,  
 4 one above, one below. He made clear to me that,  
 5 actually, because it involved the whole building, the  
 6 whole building was the fire sector.**  
 7 **We discussed -- I couldn't tell you details -- at  
 8 that time: this is where we've got to so far with it.  
 9 And then I made my way into the building to gather more  
 10 information.**  
 11 Q. Did he give you any indication of whether you needed to  
 12 be focusing on rescues or focusing on firefighting?  
 13 **A. He wouldn't need to give me that information. Our first  
 14 call is always life. Therefore, rescues would always  
 15 come first.**  
 16 Q. Did he give you any indication as to how you should be  
 17 deploying your BA resources, EDBA, SDBA, focusing on  
 18 which was more important?  
 19 **A. No, his role as incident commander would be to have  
 20 an overall plan. It would be the fire sector  
 21 commander's job to start looking at the detail of that  
 22 plan, the best way to carry that plan out.**  
 23 Q. Did he give you any impression as to what the conditions  
 24 were like inside the building at that stage?  
 25 **A. No, not that I recall.**

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1 Q. Did you ask him?  
 2 **A. I wasn't aware that he had been in the building.**  
 3 Q. We get to the point when you leave for the tower with  
 4 your brief from DAC O'Loughlin to run the fire sector.  
 5 We've gone through this morning this question of who  
 6 was incident commander and there being two or apparently  
 7 two at the same time. You said it didn't cause  
 8 a problem because you were still resourcing the  
 9 incident. I'm summarising your evidence.  
 10 Is it right that neither you nor DAC O'Loughlin knew  
 11 what the other was doing for a period of time before he  
 12 came onto the CU and you discovered that he was IC?  
 13 **A. Yes, that's true. But the reality of it is actually we  
 14 were both doing the same thing. We were both  
 15 recognising the need.**  
 16 Q. Does that mean that neither of you knew what the other  
 17 was thinking, seeing, in terms of how the fire was  
 18 behaving?  
 19 **A. DAC O'Loughlin was getting a better view of that than  
 20 I was. I took the steps of resourcing the incident as  
 21 quickly as possible, as quickly as I possibly could, but  
 22 it was actually DAC O'Loughlin who had probably more  
 23 information than I around how the fire was behaving and  
 24 what was happening in the tower.**  
 25 Q. When you discovered that he had effectively been

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<p>1 incident commander for a period of time before you saw 2 him on CU8, did it occur to you that that might have 3 caused a problem because you were resourcing the 4 incident knowing less than what he knew or perhaps 5 different things from what he knew? 6 <b>A. It had the potential to cause a problem, certainly, but 7 the very first part of the conversation we had was when 8 I told him the resources I'd asked for and he confirmed 9 that's exactly what he intended to do. So that 10 dismissed that concern because actually we were both 11 doing the same thing. In fact, it probably made it 12 quicker because I ordered it before he had the 13 opportunity to order it. So actually some time was 14 saved there because we were both ordering the same 15 thing, but I done it faster than he could get that 16 message back.</b> 17 Q. But you didn't know what his view was about whether 18 there was failure of compartmentation? 19 <b>A. No.</b> 20 Q. Nor his view about what the status of any individual 21 rescues or deployments was? 22 <b>A. No.</b> 23 Q. Or how he was reacting to the volume and content of the 24 FSG calls? 25 <b>A. I didn't, but once we shared that information, he was</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 <b>A. So it goes back to the fact I had faith in my officers 2 and I had faith that Brett Loft gave me as much 3 information as he had, and I then gave that on to Andy. 4 So as far as I was concerned, I trusted Brett he told me 5 everything he knew and I passed all the information 6 I had to Andy.</b> 7 Q. What did you tell Andy O'Loughlin about FSG calls, do 8 you remember? 9 <b>A. That we'd had a large number of them coming in. There 10 may have been more information that Brett gave me that 11 I passed on, but I don't recall it now.</b> 12 Q. Did you have a discussion with him about what the route 13 of FSG information was from control room into the 14 incident ground, from the incident ground up to the 15 bridgehead? 16 <b>A. Not that I recall, no.</b> 17 MR MILLETT: I am going to turn on to the next topic, which 18 is your move to the tower with Gareth Cook and Mick 19 Mulholland that you describe in your statement. 20 Mr Chairman, I might be able to get through this in 21 6 minutes, but I might not. 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well -- 23 MR MILLETT: It may be sensible to have a break now, or 24 I can try. 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: No, I suspect you're right, it would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 <b>reacting the same way that I did react, asking for the 2 same assistance.</b> 3 Q. Did you do anything to put Brett Loft and DAC O'Loughlin 4 together so that Brett Loft could give DAC O'Loughlin 5 a clear and detailed brief about FSG call handling and 6 content and detail? 7 <b>A. So I don't believe that Brett had that information at 8 that point. I believe he gave me as much information as 9 he'd received. But whilst setting up BA main control, 10 whilst waiting for further command units to arrive, his 11 role would be at the command unit doing that. So unlike 12 I, who was going to leave the command unit and head for 13 the tower, Brett was going to be at the command unit.</b> 14 Q. Right. 15 <b>A. So I didn't formally put them together, because that's 16 not the normal thing to do. You would normally take 17 your handover from the person you're taking over from, 18 which with Andy and I, initially it was Andy Walton for 19 him and then from me, but the opportunity was there if 20 necessary.</b> 21 Q. You say the opportunity was there; what did you do to 22 ensure that that opportunity was taken so that you were 23 satisfied in your own mind that DAC O'Loughlin had got 24 as much information about FSG call detail as you could 25 get from Brett Loft?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 be more sensible to have a break now, wouldn't it? 2 MR MILLETT: Yes. 3 Actually, can I make this point: about 3 minutes 4 into this line of questions or so I am going to be 5 showing a photograph to the witness which is of the 6 building on fire. I ought to give that as a trigger 7 warning so that if anybody is not comfortable about 8 seeing a photograph -- it is a still -- of the building 9 on fire, they perhaps ought to excuse themselves from 10 the first 10 minutes. 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, but I think you ought to repeat 12 that warning after the adjournment because people may 13 have come in who wouldn't have heard it now. 14 MR MILLETT: Yes. 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: How are you getting on? Can we say 16 2 o'clock or shall we say 1.55? 17 MR MILLETT: I think we can say 2 o'clock, treat ourselves 18 to an extra 5 minutes. 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 20 We are going to break, then, Mr Welch, and have some 21 lunch. 22 We'll resume at 2 o'clock, please, and don't talk to 23 anyone about your evidence while you're out of the room? 24 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. If you would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

1 like to go with the usher.  
 2 Right, 2 o'clock, then, please.  
 3 (12.56 pm)  
 4 (The short adjournment)  
 5 (2.00 pm)  
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Ready to carry on,  
 7 Mr Welch?  
 8 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.  
 9 MR MILLETT: Mr Welch, welcome back. Thank you for coming  
 10 back to us.  
 11 I was going to proceed to the tower with you, as it  
 12 were, and your recollection, and I should just repeat  
 13 for everybody present, before I do, that I am going to  
 14 be showing the witness a picture of the tower on fire in  
 15 about 10 minutes' time, so that if anybody doesn't want  
 16 to see it, or if anybody has joined the room or the live  
 17 stream since I gave the trigger warning at 12.55, now is  
 18 the time to absent yourselves if you think it's going to  
 19 be an upsetting sight.  
 20 Mr Welch, could I put something to you that DAC  
 21 O'Loughlin says in his statement. Obviously, as I say  
 22 to all witnesses when I do this, we'll have to explore  
 23 this with him. But his recollection of the meeting on  
 24 CU8 is that he told you he wanted you to take over  
 25 command of the fire sector from Andy Walton, and he

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1 says, and I'm quoting from his statement:  
 2 "I checked that he'd seen the fire himself and I  
 3 think he said that he had, but only at a distance  
 4 because of his route in."  
 5 Then he says this:  
 6 "I then explained what I had just seen in that the  
 7 fire was affecting most of the floors from the 3rd to  
 8 4th floors and up to the roof level and seemed to be on  
 9 the outside of the building at that time."  
 10 Do you remember having a discussion with DAC  
 11 O'Loughlin in which he told you that the fire was  
 12 affecting most of the floors from the 3rd and 4th floor  
 13 and up to the roof level and seemed to be on the outside  
 14 of the building?  
 15 **A. I have a vague recollection that that may have been part**  
 16 **of the brief that he gave me. I couldn't be specific to**  
 17 **the wording.**  
 18 Q. No. But just putting your recollection of the  
 19 discussion you did have with DAC O'Loughlin, do you have  
 20 your own recollection about talking about the fire being  
 21 on the outside of the building at that time?  
 22 **A. I couldn't be clear on that, no.**  
 23 Q. We'll obviously have to explore it with him.  
 24 We've seen from the PRC minutes that you thought the  
 25 fire was on the outside.

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1 If he thought the fire was on the outside and you  
 2 thought the fire was on the outside and neither of you  
 3 thought the fire had penetrated, is it the position that  
 4 neither person with command was working on the basis  
 5 that the fire had penetrated inside the flats at that  
 6 time?  
 7 **A. Certainly for myself -- I would expect Andy would be the**  
 8 **same -- we would've expected it to penetrate in some**  
 9 **kind of way, but not to the extent that we later became**  
 10 **aware of. At that point, that wasn't an issue in our**  
 11 **tactics, the fact that it was so deeply within the**  
 12 **building.**  
 13 Q. Can we summarise it this way: so far as you were  
 14 concerned, at the time of your conversation with DAC  
 15 O'Loughlin, you were of the view that to the extent that  
 16 there had been breach of compartmentation, it was  
 17 limited?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. And you can't recall a discussion on that topic with him  
 20 but you can't rule it out?  
 21 **A. Not clearly.**  
 22 Q. Going then to the topic which I was going to come to,  
 23 which was your journey to the tower, I think you say you  
 24 went to the tower with Station Manager Mulholland and  
 25 Group Manager Steve Cook?

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1 **A. No, that should be Station Manager Gareth Cook and Group**  
 2 **Manager Matthew Cook.**  
 3 Q. There were three Cooks, as it were?  
 4 **A. Two, I believe. Steve West was the one I think I'm**  
 5 **confusing it with.**  
 6 Q. So there's no Steve Cook then?  
 7 **A. No, I think that's an error.**  
 8 Q. Fine. And that was the first occasion, was it, that you  
 9 got a clear glimpse or clear look at the tower?  
 10 **A. That's the first time I got clear sighting of the tower**  
 11 **on foot, yes.**  
 12 Q. Can I take you to your statement where you say on  
 13 page 5 -- this is your first statement:  
 14 "I left the CU with SM MULHOLLAND, GM Steve COOK and  
 15 another Station Manager Gareth COOK."  
 16 You think that Steve Cook should be Steve West?  
 17 **A. No, I think that should be Matthew Cook.**  
 18 Q. "As we left I could see the block and it was clear that  
 19 it was the cladding on the outside of the block which  
 20 was alight."  
 21 I think in your second statement you corrected that,  
 22 and let's just look and see what you say. In your  
 23 second statement, page 3, if you could just go to that,  
 24 five lines down, you have said:  
 25 "On reflection, it's wrong to say in my original

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1 statement that 'it was clear that the cladding ... was  
 2 alight', as I did in my earlier statement. I was aware  
 3 that it was the outside of the building which was  
 4 alight. Normally when one looks at a fire in a building  
 5 one will see that windows have failed and flames escape  
 6 through the opening. In this case it was not the  
 7 windows that were aflame but the outer structure above  
 8 and below them."  
 9 To be clear, does this mean that the possibility of  
 10 a cladding fire specifically is not something that  
 11 occurred to you at that stage?  
 12 **A. It hadn't occurred to me that it was a cladding fire,**  
 13 **but it became clear that it was the outside of the**  
 14 **building.**  
 15 Q. When you say in your second witness statement that it  
 16 was the outer structure, as you do in the last line  
 17 there, what did you think was burning?  
 18 **A. Whatever the substance was on the outside of the**  
 19 **building. I wasn't aware exactly what that was at the**  
 20 **time, but whatever the building had on the exterior**  
 21 **appeared to be what was alight.**  
 22 Q. When you went to the tower, went up to it, and saw the  
 23 fire, could you see or get an impression of how far, if  
 24 at all, the fire had penetrated into individual flats?  
 25 **A. No, I don't recall seeing that until actually receiving**

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1 **that information from within the tower.**  
 2 Q. Can I show you a picture.  
 3 Before I do, I'm assuming you approached the tower  
 4 from the east or south-east.  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. So would it follow that the elevation that you got  
 7 a clear look at was the east elevation?  
 8 **A. And the south.**  
 9 Q. And the south, so both --  
 10 **A. As I entered into the tower, I obviously entered from**  
 11 **the south side.**  
 12 Q. Can I ask for you to be shown a picture which is  
 13 MET00012593, which is also figure 5.25 in Dr Lane's  
 14 first report.  
 15 On that page, there is a photograph at a time mark  
 16 of 02.08, which is at the bottom right-hand corner.  
 17 If that could be enlarged, please, and if it's  
 18 possible just to have that picture on the screen, Paul.  
 19 That is the east elevation and the south elevation,  
 20 a photograph taken at 02.08, so I think at that time you  
 21 were still on CU8.  
 22 Does that give us an impression of what you saw?  
 23 How similar was that to what you saw when you went to  
 24 the tower?  
 25 **A. Are we aware of where this photograph was taken from?**

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1 Q. It's the east side of Grenfell Tower.  
 2 **A. Yes, but it looks like it's quite a distance away, so**  
 3 **that wouldn't have been the same view that I'd have got.**  
 4 **Obviously being that much closer, I wouldn't have had**  
 5 **that overlooking perspective.**  
 6 Q. Can you see from this photograph individual flats on  
 7 fire on both elevations?  
 8 **A. On the east elevation, it's very difficult to try and**  
 9 **make that out because there's a large amount of flame.**  
 10 **From this angle on the south elevation, you can see the**  
 11 **fire has penetrated into the building.**  
 12 Q. So that's not what you saw; is this right?  
 13 **A. I don't think that's an accurate account of what**  
 14 **I would've seen, no. I think that's been taken from**  
 15 **some distance away.**  
 16 Q. So you got no impression at all on your visual  
 17 inspection that there were individual fires in  
 18 individual flats?  
 19 **A. I don't recall actually -- I think I would've done.**  
 20 **I don't recall thinking there are specific flats alight.**  
 21 **My overriding thought was it looks like the outside of**  
 22 **the building is alight. But secondary, I think**  
 23 **I would've expected it to get into the flats.**  
 24 **I would've been shocked if it hadn't.**  
 25 Q. You describe in your statement, going back to the first

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1 statement, a quarter of the way down page 5:  
 2 "As we reached the building I could see the East and  
 3 South side and was horrified as it all appeared to be  
 4 alight — certainly the east side."  
 5 To be clear, do you mean that the entirety of the  
 6 east face was on fire --  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. -- so far as you could see?  
 9 **A. That's the way it looked, yes.**  
 10 Q. You then say:  
 11 "We approached the main entrance at the south side  
 12 under a covered walkway but we could still see a lot of  
 13 falling debris and we had to run to avoid it."  
 14 You then go on to say, having asked the firefighter  
 15 where the bridgehead was:  
 16 "The Bridgehead is the BA Entry Control Point beyond  
 17 which no Fire Fighter should pass without BA. There was  
 18 a concrete staircase leading from the ground floor lobby  
 19 to the mezzanine ..."  
 20 These observations, were they made in your statement  
 21 trying to describe what you saw once you got inside the  
 22 tower?  
 23 **A. Yes.**  
 24 Q. So having seen the east and south side alight, did you  
 25 go straight in?

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. We have two CCTV images of you entering the tower, if  
 3 I can just show you those.  
 4 The first one is at INQ00000354.  
 5 This is taken on camera 4 at an adjusted time of  
 6 02.10. Just so you're clear in your own mind, camera 4  
 7 is one of two CCTV cameras which were operating on the  
 8 night in the lobby at Grenfell Tower; one looks towards  
 9 the front door and one looks away from it towards the  
 10 back of the lobby. This is camera 4 looking towards the  
 11 front door.  
 12 Just to identify yourself, can you identify yourself  
 13 in that picture?  
 14 **A. Yes, wearing the white helmet.**  
 15 Q. It shows you as coming in, as I say, at an adjusted time  
 16 of 02.10 exactly.  
 17 Can you confirm that time mark, do you think?  
 18 **A. I've got no reason to doubt that time.**  
 19 Q. That would mean you would have to have left the command  
 20 unit some minutes before that?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. Do you remember how long it took you to go from the  
 23 command unit to the base of the tower?  
 24 **A. Maybe a minute or 90 seconds.**  
 25 Q. Going to the next photograph, which is at INQ00000355,

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1 this is camera 4 as well at an adjusted time of  
 2 02.10.02, so 2 seconds later.  
 3 Can you identify yourself in that picture?  
 4 **A. Yes, I'm on the left, and Station Manager Gareth Cook is**  
 5 **on the right.**  
 6 Q. That was my next question. That's Gareth Cook, is it,  
 7 wearing the --  
 8 **A. Tabard.**  
 9 Q. What tabard is that?  
 10 **A. I'm not sure what tabard he's wearing there. I think he**  
 11 **may have come as a press officer, so that may be a press**  
 12 **liaison tabard.**  
 13 Q. What about ORT? Do they have special tabards?  
 14 **A. They do. That's not ORT.**  
 15 Q. What is an ORT tabard?  
 16 **A. It's slightly different, but mainly I know Gareth is**  
 17 **nothing to do with the ORT team.**  
 18 Q. In his witness statement, Station Manager Walton --  
 19 again, as I say, we'll have to explore this with him --  
 20 he describes a conversation that you had with him which  
 21 he says happened at the bottom of the staircase, during  
 22 which you told him that you were taking over from him as  
 23 fire sector commander. That's what he says. What's  
 24 your recollection?  
 25 **A. I recall seeing Andy in there but I don't -- yes, I have**

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1 **no reason to doubt that conversation, but I don't recall**  
 2 **it clearly, no.**  
 3 Q. Do you remember what, if any, information Station  
 4 Manager Walton was able to pass on to you?  
 5 **A. I don't have any recollection of that at all.**  
 6 Q. He also says that you instructed him to sort the balcony  
 7 out. Do you remember giving him that instruction?  
 8 **A. I do remember giving the instruction for someone to do**  
 9 **that because there was a large number of firefighters on**  
 10 **the mezzanine floor, and casualties were being brought**  
 11 **out and they were causing a bit of a bottleneck, so**  
 12 **I asked them to try and make some space up there so**  
 13 **casualties could be brought directly out without being**  
 14 **slowed down.**  
 15 Q. Did you make him BA resources officer?  
 16 **A. The answer is yes, I did, but I don't recall actually**  
 17 **having that conversation, but I know it's a job he**  
 18 **carried out for me.**  
 19 Q. You say you don't remember specifically that  
 20 conversation; does that mean if I asked you whether you  
 21 had given him any specific instructions about EDDBA  
 22 wearers and their deployment --  
 23 **A. I wouldn't remember.**  
 24 Q. -- you wouldn't remember?  
 25 **A. No.**

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1 Q. On page 5 of your statement, going back to it, halfway  
 2 down the page, you say, after the reference to the  
 3 concrete staircase:  
 4 "I was told the lifts were not working — including  
 5 the designated fire lift which should have had an  
 6 override allowing us to use it."  
 7 You say "including the designated fire lift"; did  
 8 you actually know whether Grenfell had a designated fire  
 9 lift?  
 10 **A. No, but it was my absolute expectation it would have on**  
 11 **a high-rise tower block.**  
 12 Q. You say your absolute expectation; can you enlarge on  
 13 that?  
 14 **A. I can't recall a time of having come across a building**  
 15 **like Grenfell Tower where there wasn't the provision for**  
 16 **a designated fire lift.**  
 17 Q. When you say "designated fire lift", do you mean  
 18 firefighters' lift, fireman's lift, or --  
 19 **A. Yes, yes, a lift that we can override that will come**  
 20 **under our control for the purpose of transporting**  
 21 **personnel and equipment up in the tower.**  
 22 Q. You say "I was told the lifts were not working"; do you  
 23 remember who told you that?  
 24 **A. I think it was Watch Manager Brien O'Keeffe told me.**  
 25 Q. Brien O'Keeffe?

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1 **A. Told me the lift wasn't working.**  
 2 Q. Would that be when you got to the bridgehead?  
 3 **A. At the 2nd floor, yes, which -- I wouldn't have used the**  
 4 **lifts anyway.**  
 5 Q. Did the fact that the lifts weren't working as a fire  
 6 lift, or firefighters' lift -- there may be a difference  
 7 between that, but so far as control is concerned, you  
 8 couldn't control it -- did that make a difference to  
 9 your approach to the fire sector job that you were going  
 10 to do?  
 11 **A. Absolutely not. Even if the firefighters' lift had been**  
 12 **working, I wouldn't have used it because we would always**  
 13 **use that lift to get within two floors below the fire,**  
 14 **and at no point in that building could I guarantee**  
 15 **I could send firefighters to a place where they would be**  
 16 **two floors below the fire because I had seen so much**  
 17 **outside. I discounted the lift before I was even**  
 18 **informed about it.**  
 19 Q. By that stage in the incident?  
 20 **A. Before even walking in the building, I was never going**  
 21 **to use that fire lift.**  
 22 Q. You then describe going up the staircase to the  
 23 bridgehead and seeing BA crews bringing casualties down.  
 24 That's the next few lines of your statement.  
 25 You say, just below halfway down the page:

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1 "We got stuck in straight away taking casualties  
 2 from the BA crews, moving them onto the mezzanine  
 3 level and calling for assistance from fire fighters on  
 4 the ground floor as it became crowded."  
 5 Do you see that?  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. How long do you think you were doing that for? How long  
 8 were you moving casualties down for?  
 9 **A. It felt like eternity, but I think realistically it was**  
 10 **probably -- it was sporadic. We'd get to a point where,**  
 11 **to coin a phrase, all hands were on deck, so we needed**  
 12 **as many people as we could to help take casualties. We**  
 13 **were running up the staircase to take casualties from**  
 14 **firefighters who were bringing people down, we were**  
 15 **running up the staircase to assist people who were**  
 16 **walking down, and then there may be a gap and then**  
 17 **a few minutes later it will happen again.**  
 18 **So the whole thing went on for probably I'm guessing**  
 19 **somewhere around 45 minutes.**  
 20 Q. So you were physically helping with assisting casualties  
 21 out?  
 22 **A. Yes.**  
 23 Q. Was that not a task that you could've delegated to  
 24 somebody more junior than the rank of group manager?  
 25 **A. In an ideal world, yes, but at that point we were using**

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1 **every resource available to us sending BA crews into the**  
 2 **building, that any help to assist them in bringing**  
 3 **casualties out -- the only people that weren't wearing**  
 4 **BA sets were the senior officers.**  
 5 Q. Given you were involved in bringing casualties down for  
 6 45 minutes or so, did that mean that your task that you  
 7 had been given by DAC O'Loughlin of taking over as fire  
 8 sector commander got delayed by 45 minutes?  
 9 **A. No. When I arrived, I spoke to Watch Manager O'Keeffe,**  
 10 **asked him who was carrying out -- he was co-ordinating**  
 11 **the search and rescue and firefighting at that point.**  
 12 **I asked him what he was doing, what his plan was, what**  
 13 **he was committing, what he needed for assistance, and**  
 14 **I was happy with his plans. I told him to continue with**  
 15 **his plan and "What do you need from me?"**  
 16 Q. This is not very clear from your statement. Is the  
 17 chronology this, I think from what you've just said,  
 18 just help me with this: you arrive in the building, you  
 19 go straight to the bridgehead -- is this right? -- and  
 20 talk to Brien O'Keeffe first?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. And then do your task of moving casualties?  
 23 **A. Yes. The task of moving casualties wasn't continuous.**  
 24 **It would be a few minutes, then there would be a gap.**  
 25 **So I could go back to assisting Brien, asking him what**

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1 **he needs, then somebody would shout out "Casualty" on**  
 2 **the staircase, and whoever was available would run and**  
 3 **get that casualty.**  
 4 Q. That's cleared that up.  
 5 In your statement, you explain on page 5 at the  
 6 bottom that there were two watch managers, and you say:  
 7 "... one of whom I now know was Brian O'KEEFE[sic] —  
 8 who had done a fantastic job but I told them that our BA  
 9 crews would never make the 24th floor from where we were  
 10 so we needed to move the Bridgehead up."  
 11 The way this appears in this statement makes it  
 12 sound as if this is the first thing you did when you got  
 13 to the bridgehead. Is that right?  
 14 **A. No. No, when we first got to the bridgehead, it was**  
 15 **an organised chaos, it was a chaotic area but it was**  
 16 **very clearly organised. Brien O'Keeffe and Louisa**  
 17 **De Silvo, who was the second watch manager, had done**  
 18 **a brilliant job. So my initial actions were assisting**  
 19 **them, because they had a good plan in place, and**  
 20 **assisting getting casualties out.**  
 21 **At some point during that time, I made the comment**  
 22 **to Brien that, actually, we're never going to be able to**  
 23 **get to the top of this. We need to keep moving the**  
 24 **bridgehead up. So my plan was, alongside the FSGs, to**  
 25 **fight the fire and keep moving the bridgehead higher and**

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1 **higher and higher to make the travel distance shorter.**  
 2 Q. When did you first conceive that plan?  
 3 **A. Within seconds of walking into the building. As my**  
 4 **experience of high-rise firefighting, that was the way**  
 5 **forward.**  
 6 Q. Do you remember how much time you actually spent at the  
 7 bridgehead while it was on the 2nd floor before it was  
 8 moved up to the 3rd floor?  
 9 **A. I would estimate around 20 minutes.**  
 10 Q. What led you to think that, as you say in your  
 11 statement, BA crews would never make the 24th floor from  
 12 where you were?  
 13 **A. Because I then found out the bridgehead was on the**  
 14 **2nd floor, so then knowing that they had -- at the time,**  
 15 **I didn't realise it was 24 floors, I thought it was 20,**  
 16 **so even then, whatever floors were left, they were never**  
 17 **going to make it there and back safely wearing SDBA, or**  
 18 **EDBA for that matter.**  
 19 Q. Watch Manager O'Keefe -- we touched on this earlier  
 20 today -- his recollection, as he told us, was that the  
 21 first discussion he had with you when you came up to the  
 22 bridgehead on the 2nd floor was about EDBA. He says  
 23 that he asked you to get him all the EDBA in London and  
 24 you said, "Right, I'm on it", or words to that effect.  
 25 Do you remember that?

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1 **A. I remember that conversation. I couldn't exactly place**  
 2 **it where in that very short first 5 minutes it was, but**  
 3 **I do remember that conversation.**  
 4 Q. What did you do in response?  
 5 **A. Ordered EDBA.**  
 6 Q. By doing what?  
 7 **A. I think I sent a runner back to -- maybe a runner, I'm**  
 8 **sure it was, it could have been by radio, asking for**  
 9 **EDBA.**  
 10 Q. Who did you speak to?  
 11 **A. I don't know.**  
 12 Q. Did you speak to someone in the command unit?  
 13 **A. It would've been to the command unit, yes.**  
 14 Q. Which command unit, do you remember?  
 15 **A. CU8.**  
 16 Q. How did you make that communication? By fire ground  
 17 radio or on your Airwave --  
 18 **A. Fire ground radio.**  
 19 Q. Did you have any difficulties getting through to CU8?  
 20 **A. I don't remember any difficulties at that point.**  
 21 **Difficulties were definitely experienced later on, but**  
 22 **at that point it was still usable.**  
 23 Q. What instruction or command or ordering did you tell CU8  
 24 to make or give in order to get as many EDBA to the  
 25 incident as possible?

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1 **A. I don't recall exactly what I asked for. I made it**  
 2 **clear we needed EDBA there.**  
 3 Q. At that stage, we had FRUs made 10, at 02.19. If I just  
 4 show you this. It's on page 22 of the short incident  
 5 log, just following this up. If you go to page 22 of  
 6 the short incident log, you can see that a quarter of  
 7 the way down the page at 02.19.11 we have DR, that's  
 8 Debbie Real in the control room, CU8:  
 9 "Make Up  
 10 "Make FIRE RESCUE UNIT 10 Requested."  
 11 **A. Sorry, I think it's actually before that. You can see**  
 12 **at the top of the page there from CU8 from 02.16.**  
 13 Q. Yes, that's DAC O'Loughlin, make FRUs 10.  
 14 Well, let me ask you about that then. Does that  
 15 bear any relationship, do you think, with your calling  
 16 CU8 and asking for all the EDBAs they can lay their  
 17 hands on?  
 18 **A. I don't remember exactly asking for all EDBA.**  
 19 **I remember having that conversation later on. But as**  
 20 **I said before, as a senior officer, we have to try and**  
 21 **balance the fact that we still -- by making them 10**  
 22 **leaves us with five others covering the rest of London,**  
 23 **so we have to try and make a balance of how much we**  
 24 **really need, and even if Brien said to me all the EDBA**  
 25 **we've got, it's my job as a more senior officer with**

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1 **further experience to make that call of: actually, do we**  
 2 **need everything or can we hold some back for the rest of**  
 3 **London?**  
 4 Q. Let me see if I can cut through this because we may be  
 5 at cross-purposes.  
 6 At 02.16.58 we see a make-up:  
 7 "CU8 FROM DAC OLOUGHLIN MAKE FRU X 10."  
 8 You can see at 02.19:  
 9 "Make FIRE RESCUE UNIT 10 Requested."  
 10 So we can see the radio message and the message  
 11 going back to CU8.  
 12 Was that in reaction to your message back to the CU  
 13 to increase EDBA?  
 14 **A. Those timings would seem correct, yes.**  
 15 Q. Or was this DAC O'Loughlin doing it off his own bat?  
 16 **A. I think that's from my request. That timing would be**  
 17 **about right as well.**  
 18 Q. Okay. So you're at the bridgehead, on the 2nd floor --  
 19 is this right? -- by the time or at the time, 02.16.58,  
 20 the message comes from DAC O'Loughlin to make FRUs 10?  
 21 **A. Yes, so looking at the previous photograph you showed**  
 22 **from the CCTV, I think it was 02.10, so that would be**  
 23 **about right, about 7 minutes between actually getting**  
 24 **that message then back to the CU that we need that.**  
 25 Q. How soon after arriving at the bridgehead -- which we

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1 can now see was around about 02.16, perhaps a little  
 2 before that -- did the bridgehead move up to the  
 3 3rd floor, to the best of your recollection?  
 4 **A. Quite soon, I think. I would guess probably within the**  
 5 **next 10 minutes of that, yes.**  
 6 Q. When you discussed the question of EDDBA with  
 7 Brien O'Keeffe, did you have a discussion or any  
 8 thoughts about the need to prioritise EDDBA over SDBA?  
 9 **A. Well, at that point, I think we only had two fire and**  
 10 **rescue units there. I think some EDDBA had already been**  
 11 **committed. And the golden rule around the use of EDDBA**  
 12 **is we don't commit EDDBA users unless we've got another**  
 13 **crew of the same size and protected to the same PPE**  
 14 **standing by and ready as an emergency crew. So once we**  
 15 **committed one crew, we couldn't actually then commit**  
 16 **a second crew without another crew being there.**  
 17 Q. So you need two for one at all times?  
 18 **A. Yes, yes.**  
 19 Q. Just going back to your statement and talking about the  
 20 need to move up a floor, you say -- we've just seen  
 21 this -- five lines up from the bottom of page 5:  
 22 "... we needed to move the Bridgehead up."  
 23 Do you see that?  
 24 **A. Yes.**  
 25 Q. Was the reason for that to help BA crews get higher up

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1 the tower?  
 2 **A. Yes, to shorten the travel distance for the BA crew.**  
 3 Q. That's because the closer to the fire you could make the  
 4 bridgehead entry control, the further up they could  
 5 travel under air; is that right?  
 6 **A. Yes, the entry control would always be in a place of**  
 7 **safe air, so the firefighters won't need to use their**  
 8 **breathing apparatus until they pass that. So,**  
 9 **naturally, the higher that is, the less travel distance**  
 10 **to get to the top.**  
 11 Q. While the bridgehead was on the 2nd floor, did you take  
 12 over command of the bridgehead?  
 13 **A. I took over immediately when I came to the bridgehead.**  
 14 Q. Did you get a handover from Brien O'Keeffe?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. A formal handover?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Did you say to him, "I am taking over"?  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 Q. All right.  
 21 In that handover, did Brien O'Keeffe explain to you  
 22 how fire survival guidance information was coming to the  
 23 bridgehead?  
 24 **A. I don't recall that. I remember him showing me how he**  
 25 **was recording the fire survival guidance information and**

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1 **then how he was dealing with those.**  
 2 Q. How had he recorded it?  
 3 **A. At the time, it was on a forward information board.**  
 4 Q. Any other way of recording it, do you remember?  
 5 **A. Not that I recall.**  
 6 Q. Do you remember seeing any writing on the wall at that  
 7 stage while the bridgehead was on the 2nd floor?  
 8 **A. I'm not sure if he did write on the wall, I think he may**  
 9 **have done, but there was definitely a point where I gave**  
 10 **the instruction to stop using the forward information**  
 11 **board and start using the wall when it became apparent**  
 12 **that the board wasn't big enough.**  
 13 Q. That was while the bridgehead was still on the 2nd  
 14 floor?  
 15 **A. I believe so.**  
 16 Q. When you first took over?  
 17 **A. Not immediately, no, it was within the first 10 minutes,**  
 18 **5 minutes.**  
 19 Q. Let me show you a picture. Can I ask the witness please  
 20 to be shown MET00018749.  
 21 What is that?  
 22 **A. Well, this is the forward information board being used**  
 23 **to record the FSGs.**  
 24 Q. Does the shape of what's written on there -- the box,  
 25 the manuscript -- trigger a recollection that that is

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1 what you saw when you were on the 2nd floor --  
 2 **A. I couldn't say for certain that's exactly what I saw**  
 3 **because I don't recall exact numbers and details, but**  
 4 **that would've been the outline of what I noticed, yeah.**  
 5 Q. Can I ask you to be shown MET00013071. This is  
 6 exhibit 11 to Firefighter Justin O'Beirne's witness  
 7 statement.  
 8 Does this look familiar to you from your memory of  
 9 the night?  
 10 **A. No.**  
 11 Q. Justin O'Beirne gave evidence that he had written this  
 12 information up on the wall, or at any rate this  
 13 information had been written up on the wall while the  
 14 bridgehead was at level 2.  
 15 Do you recall seeing this?  
 16 **A. No.**  
 17 Q. Right, you don't.  
 18 **A. I remember seeing writing on the wall but not this**  
 19 **particularly.**  
 20 Q. Leaving aside the methods of inscription, did you gain  
 21 any understanding of how FSG information was reaching  
 22 the bridgehead while it was on the 2nd floor? What was  
 23 the route?  
 24 **A. I can remember seeing Brien O'Keeffe on his radio and**  
 25 **receiving information like that. But as far as I was**

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<p>1 <b>aware, that was the only source we were getting, but</b>  2 <b>there may be others I was not aware of.</b>  3 Q. While the bridgehead was on the 2nd floor, did you see  4 anybody coming to the bridgehead with pieces of paper  5 with FSG details written on them?  6 <b>A. Not that I recall.</b>  7 Q. You didn't see any crews holding bits of paper?  8 <b>A. Not that I noticed, but that was an extremely, extremely</b>  9 <b>busy time.</b>  10 Q. Did you have any knowledge of a watch manager, name of  11 Sadler, collating FSG information outside the tower and  12 then sending it in to the bridgehead by radio?  13 <b>A. Not at all.</b>  14 Q. Did you have any information that he was collating FSG  15 outside the tower and sending it in by runner on pieces  16 of paper?  17 <b>A. No.</b>  18 Q. Did you note a watch manager name of Watson standing on  19 the balcony at the head of the BA crew when you went up  20 to the 2nd-floor bridgehead?  21 <b>A. I remember a watch manager. But I don't remember --</b>  22 <b>there were several watch managers around, but there were</b>  23 <b>some officers on the balcony.</b>  24 Q. Do you remember what you saw he was doing?  25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 <b>them being shouted up to a watch manager.</b>  2 Q. Did you see that watch manager in the lobby --  3 <b>A. Yes.</b>  4 Q. -- doing that?  5 Did you notice him doing anything?  6 <b>A. Writing on the wall.</b>  7 Q. He was writing on the wall?  8 <b>A. I believe so, yes.</b>  9 Q. Did you go down and ask him what he was doing and look  10 at it in detail?  11 <b>A. No, I think it was quite clear he was passing up FSG</b>  12 <b>information to the lobby so that information can get to</b>  13 <b>the bridgehead.</b>  14 Q. Did you see how he was receiving that information?  15 <b>A. No.</b>  16 Q. You didn't see runners coming to him or radio traffic?  17 <b>A. No.</b>  18 Q. Did you speak to him?  19 <b>A. Only by shouting up information to each other if I was</b>  20 <b>the only one there, but there was no formal</b>  21 <b>conversation, no.</b>  22 Q. Can you explain whether you'd established by this  23 point -- in other words, by the time you took command  24 from Brien O'Keeffe at the bridgehead while it was on  25 the 2nd floor -- how many of the lower floors you had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 Q. He has given evidence that he was standing at the head  2 of the crew, tasking BA wearers before they went through  3 the door into the 2nd-floor bridgehead. Does that  4 trigger a recollection?  5 <b>A. That is more than likely. I couldn't say for definite</b>  6 <b>but I do remember a watch manager standing at the front</b>  7 <b>of the crew, in the front of the awaiting crews, but</b>  8 <b>I couldn't tell you exactly what he was doing.</b>  9 Q. You didn't see what was he was doing?  10 <b>A. Sorry?</b>  11 Q. You didn't see what he was doing?  12 <b>A. No, not that I recall.</b>  13 Q. Did you speak to him?  14 <b>A. Yes, probably -- I mean, definitely, but I don't know</b>  15 <b>what the conversation was.</b>  16 Q. Did you observe a watch manager in the lobby on the  17 ground floor to the left of the door as you come in  18 shouting up flat and floor numbers to the watch manager  19 on the balcony on the 2nd floor?  20 <b>A. Yes.</b>  21 Q. You do?  22 <b>A. Yes.</b>  23 Q. You remember that?  24 <b>A. Yes. I didn't know that was being shouted up to the</b>  25 <b>same watch manager we just spoke of, but I do remember</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 cleared of fire?  2 <b>A. I don't recall that, no.</b>  3 Q. Okay.  4 Still on the subject of the watch managers and the  5 communication of FSG information, Watch Manager Williams  6 was the watch manager, so we've discovered, standing by  7 the wall on the left in the lobby by the entrance as you  8 come in.  9 He has given evidence to the inquiry, and he says  10 that it was you who tasked him with managing FSG  11 information. He says he came up to the bridgehead on  12 the 2nd floor and you told him to do that in the  13 ground-floor lobby. That's his recollection.  14 Is that the same as yours?  15 <b>A. That may well be true, but I don't remember that.</b>  16 Q. Is it that you remember it not happening or you can't  17 say one way or the other?  18 <b>A. I couldn't say it didn't happen, but I don't recollect</b>  19 <b>it.</b>  20 Q. We know that he started recording FSG information on the  21 lobby wall to the left of the main door at 02.15.  22 <b>A. Okay.</b>  23 Q. I say we know that; that is what he's told us and  24 there's a photograph of the wall which says FSG at  25 02.15.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

1 My question is: was he already running FSG in the  
 2 lobby, do you think, when he came up to speak to you or  
 3 can you remember?  
 4 **A. I don't know. I don't know.**  
 5 Q. Having seen him down there shouting up, did you have any  
 6 thoughts about why you needed to have a watch manager,  
 7 such as Watch Manager Williams, standing in the lobby as  
 8 an intermediary between the command unit and the  
 9 bridgehead?  
 10 **A. I think because at that point, the area where the**  
 11 **bridgehead was was very small, and we were committing**  
 12 **an awful lot of firefighters through the entry control**  
 13 **point. As I mentioned earlier, it's important to have**  
 14 **a quieter area with more space to collate the FSG**  
 15 **information.**  
 16 **We had several entry control boards running at the**  
 17 **bridgehead, and I felt Brien couldn't do both roles of**  
 18 **trying to oversee the boards and effectively gather**  
 19 **information.**  
 20 Q. Did you ask anyone -- whether it was Williams or Watson  
 21 or any of the watch managers you were dealing with at  
 22 the bridgehead or in the balcony or in the lobby -- to  
 23 report back the results of FSG deployments to the  
 24 command unit?  
 25 **A. I don't remember.**

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1 Q. Would it not be important to do that?  
 2 **A. Yeah. So when I say I don't remember, I would fully**  
 3 **expect that I would, because that's what we would expect**  
 4 **to do, but I couldn't honestly say I remember having**  
 5 **that conversation with him.**  
 6 Q. In general terms, and still focusing on the time when  
 7 the bridgehead was still on the 2nd floor, so when you  
 8 arrived there, 02.10, 02.15, 02.20, that sort of time,  
 9 did you think to yourself that it was important to make  
 10 sure that once crews came down from deployments, you got  
 11 a full debrief from them and then communicated that back  
 12 ultimately to control so that control could update  
 13 callers?  
 14 **A. So I could see that crews were getting a thorough brief**  
 15 **and debrief when they came down. Brien had a system in**  
 16 **place for collating that information and I had no reason**  
 17 **to believe that he would not communicate that back.**  
 18 Q. Did you observe any debriefs for yourself?  
 19 **A. Yes, throughout the night.**  
 20 Q. Were you satisfied that those debriefs were full and  
 21 satisfactory?  
 22 **A. So I didn't see every single one because that's a level**  
 23 **of detail I didn't need to be involved in, but from the**  
 24 **debriefs I did see, I was more than happy with the**  
 25 **information that was being collected.**

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1 **I think the important thing to say is we had a lot**  
 2 **of firefighters come down who were carrying casualties,**  
 3 **so that debrief might have been delayed somewhat while**  
 4 **they were dealing with the casualty. And we had**  
 5 **firefighters throughout the night who came down who were**  
 6 **just unable to speak because of their own illness from**  
 7 **the effects of the fire.**  
 8 Q. Did you observe any firefighters suffering from the  
 9 effects of metabolic heat stress?  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. Were they a large proportion, a small proportion, can  
 12 you give us an idea of --  
 13 **A. I would say --**  
 14 Q. -- what proportion they made up?  
 15 **A. It's really, really difficult to say, but it seemed --**  
 16 **certainly from my -- as fire sector commander, it was**  
 17 **too many. But maybe one in ten.**  
 18 Q. Given that a number or proportion at least of  
 19 firefighters were coming down suffering the effects of  
 20 metabolic heat stress and some were dealing with  
 21 casualties, did you really feel able to be satisfied in  
 22 your own mind that you got full and proper debriefs so  
 23 that you could get a clear picture on the success or  
 24 failure of deployments?  
 25 **A. Yes, I was, because despite having seen the condition**

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1 **some of them were in, they were still telling us the**  
 2 **horrendous conditions that were up there. It doesn't**  
 3 **mean we stop; we still keep committing.**  
 4 Q. I want to ask you about how the bridgehead was  
 5 functioning when it went up to the 3rd floor.  
 6 Before I do that, let me slot in a question about  
 7 Station Manager Egan.  
 8 You'd I think tasked him with managing FSG calls  
 9 from CU7.  
 10 How did you envisage that role fitting into what the  
 11 other watch managers were doing in the building that you  
 12 had seen?  
 13 **A. So collating the information on CU7, you've got the**  
 14 **room, the space and the environment to be able to**  
 15 **collate that information accurately, and then it would**  
 16 **be the role of the person overseeing that CU to make**  
 17 **sure that information is got into the building.**  
 18 **Primarily that would be by use of fire ground radio, but**  
 19 **I'm also aware that wasn't successful throughout the**  
 20 **night, and I was aware then that runners were being**  
 21 **used.**  
 22 Q. Runners being used where?  
 23 **A. To bring information into the building and out.**  
 24 Q. And out. Did you see runners taking information out of  
 25 the building?

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1 **A. I designated runners myself to take information out of**  
 2 **the building throughout the night.**  
 3 Q. Throughout the night?  
 4 **A. Yes.**  
 5 Q. Give us a clearer picture of that. Was that when you  
 6 were at the bridgehead on the 2nd floor, 3rd floor and  
 7 ground floor?  
 8 **A. Probably not the second floors, to be fair, when I**  
 9 **say -- that wasn't just around FSG information, that was**  
 10 **sending information back to the incident commander. As**  
 11 **the evening progressed, the fire ground radios became**  
 12 **less effective because of the amount of traffic, so**  
 13 **there were certain decisions and certain events that**  
 14 **happened that I made sure the information got out of the**  
 15 **building as well.**  
 16 Q. Was that information at any stage directed to the  
 17 results of particular deployments into the tower to  
 18 respond to specific FSG calls?  
 19 **A. Sorry, can I just make it clear, are you asking did**  
 20 **I send the result of FSG information back out the**  
 21 **building personally?**  
 22 Q. Yes.  
 23 **A. No, I didn't.**  
 24 Q. So the messages you used runners to send back were what?  
 25 **A. More around the actual operational side of it, how far**

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1 **we were getting, how we were getting on, what we needed.**  
 2 Q. Was anybody else sending messages back out of the tower,  
 3 whether by radio or runner with pieces of paper, showing  
 4 the outcome of deployments, successful or unsuccessful?  
 5 **A. Once the debriefs happened, the information is then**  
 6 **collated of the outcome, it would be my full expectation**  
 7 **that especially as a watch manager level would make sure**  
 8 **that information then got back to the CU. But, again,**  
 9 **that was the level of detail that I would not normally**  
 10 **have got involved in because I had no reason to think**  
 11 **that wouldn't happen.**  
 12 Q. Was it not quite an important level of detail for you as  
 13 officer in charge of the bridgehead, in command of the  
 14 bridgehead, to make sure that the results of particular  
 15 deployments, whether they were successful or, more  
 16 importantly, unsuccessful, were communicated back out of  
 17 the tower at least to the command unit?  
 18 **A. So the most important thing for me was getting crews to**  
 19 **those people that needed us. Yes, it was important that**  
 20 **that information got back, but that wasn't the number 1**  
 21 **priority. The priority was getting to those people. As**  
 22 **long as the information came into the building, I had**  
 23 **control over getting those people to the people that**  
 24 **needed the help.**  
 25 **It is important to get the information back, but**

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1 **it's also important for me to trust my officers that**  
 2 **that's being done. There were so many tasks under my**  
 3 **control at that point that to try and keep an eye on**  
 4 **every single one of them was impossible and I actually**  
 5 **had to allow some sort of level of trust which is quite**  
 6 **right and correct for a level of a watch manager.**  
 7 Q. A level of trust only works if in fact it's actually  
 8 working in practice.  
 9 Let me put the question this way: did you realise  
 10 that people in the control room were dependent upon  
 11 getting accurate information back from the fire ground  
 12 about where crews were in response to particular FSG  
 13 calls, so that when those callers called or called back  
 14 to ask, "Where are the crews?", the control room  
 15 operators could give them accurate, up-to-date,  
 16 fact-based information?  
 17 **A. So I personally did send people outside the building to**  
 18 **send the information back on our progress and where we**  
 19 **were getting to in the building, so that would answer**  
 20 **that information for those callers on the phone, where**  
 21 **in the building we can actually reach. But the actual**  
 22 **specific detail of what flats we got to and what we**  
 23 **hadn't got to was the responsibility of the person in**  
 24 **charge of that wall, and I would have no reason not to**  
 25 **trust my officers that would happen.**

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1 **The flip side of that is if that information wasn't**  
 2 **getting back to the command unit, then I have no doubt**  
 3 **I would've heard about it, that actually we're not**  
 4 **getting the information back from you.**  
 5 Q. But ultimately, would you accept that it was your  
 6 responsibility as the senior officer in charge of the  
 7 bridgehead to make sure you could do what you could do  
 8 to put the information coming out of the tower at least  
 9 into the system so that the next person, the link in the  
 10 chain, could receive it and then pass it on back up the  
 11 chain --  
 12 **A. I do accept that and you're correct there, I'll agree to**  
 13 **that, but at what point in that system do I stop**  
 14 **ensuring it's getting there other than, you know, I make**  
 15 **sure it gets back to the source that it came from within**  
 16 **the building, but I can't then physically make sure it**  
 17 **gets to the command unit. I've got to have faith in the**  
 18 **system and in the professional fire officers that are**  
 19 **working there that night that they're going to carry on**  
 20 **with that. And as is the norm in the fire service, if**  
 21 **it isn't working, they will let me know.**  
 22 Q. What did you do, though, in your role as commander at  
 23 the bridgehead at least to ensure that the information  
 24 about results of deployments was at least leaving the  
 25 bridgehead to go to its next point of destination on the

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1 chain back to the control room?  
 2 **A. We were told that the information that came off of the**  
 3 **wall on the ground floor, the results of the debrief,**  
 4 **that information was then passed back to the ground**  
 5 **floor.**  
 6 Q. Was it?  
 7 **A. That's absolutely what I saw happen.**  
 8 Q. How did it happen? What did you see?  
 9 **A. I saw firefighters coming through the bridgehead and**  
 10 **giving a debrief and actually being sent to the ground**  
 11 **floor, and I saw firefighters at the ground floor**  
 12 **talking to the people working on that wall.**  
 13 Q. The bridgehead then moves up to the 3rd floor.  
 14 In your statement, bottom of page 5 and then top of  
 15 page 6 -- then in the middle of page 6 you say:  
 16 "SM Cook and I returned to the 3rd floor ..."  
 17 Is that Gareth Cook?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. "... and re-drew the floor plan on a wall there. I  
 20 tasked a female Watch Manager and male Crew Manager as  
 21 'FSG' and had them write details of all the FSGs  
 22 received on the wall so I could task the BA rescue  
 23 crews."  
 24 So was it your idea to write FSG details on the  
 25 wall?

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1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. When it got up to the 3rd floor?  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. Did you yourself record any FSG information on the walls  
 5 personally?  
 6 **A. No.**  
 7 Q. Can I ask you to be shown a photograph, MET00015819.  
 8 Now, Louisa De Silvo gave evidence to us that that  
 9 was written there by her. Did you see that?  
 10 **A. Can I ask where this wall is in relation to the --**  
 11 Q. Yes. Well, let me see if I can show you a different  
 12 photograph which might assist you.  
 13 (Pause)  
 14 **A. I can see it there, that makes more sense.**  
 15 Q. MET00015625, which is a photograph taken at 03.08.  
 16 **A. Yes. I do recall Watch Manager De Silvo writing on that**  
 17 **wall.**  
 18 Q. That's taken at 03.08 when the bridgehead is moving down  
 19 from the 3rd floor to the ground floor. I'll come to  
 20 that in a moment. But you do remember that being  
 21 written on the wall?  
 22 **A. Yes.**  
 23 Q. Do you know where she was getting the information from  
 24 once on the 3rd floor?  
 25 **A. No.**

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1 Q. Do you know who was giving the BA crews their  
 2 instructions once the bridgehead got to the 3rd floor?  
 3 **A. So from what I recall, I do remember seeing Watch**  
 4 **Manager De Silvo on her fire ground radio. Now, I would**  
 5 **make the assumption that's where she was receiving the**  
 6 **information from, but I couldn't swear to that. And**  
 7 **then Brien O'Keeffe was working on one of the BA boards**  
 8 **and Station Manager Cook was there, and they were**  
 9 **dispatching the crews to the relevant floors. Watch**  
 10 **Manager De Silvo was gathering that information and then**  
 11 **Watch Manager O'Keeffe was committing crews to those**  
 12 **calls.**  
 13 Q. Who was actually giving the instructions, is that  
 14 Brien O'Keeffe or --  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. -- were the BA wearers going on the basis of information  
 17 they'd been previously given before they got to the  
 18 bridgehead?  
 19 **A. No, it was Brien O'Keeffe.**  
 20 Q. Did you see any BA wearers coming to the bridgehead with  
 21 pieces of paper in their hands?  
 22 **A. Not that I recall, no.**  
 23 Q. Right.  
 24 **A. Not at that point.**  
 25 Q. Did you have any system in place for determining which

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1 FSG calls would be responded to as a priority at that  
 2 point?  
 3 **A. We had a conversation around prioritising the young, the**  
 4 **elderly, we would naturally prioritise those with**  
 5 **mobility issues, but that is the standard practice.**  
 6 **But I remember having that conversation at the**  
 7 **bridgehead, and other than that, they were being**  
 8 **prioritised as we received them.**  
 9 Q. You say you would have had a conversation around  
 10 prioritising the young, the elderly, you would naturally  
 11 prioritise those with mobility issues, that's standard  
 12 practice.  
 13 Just breaking that up, who did you have that  
 14 conversation with?  
 15 **A. Louisa De Silvo and another crew manager who was**  
 16 **standing with her who I don't know.**  
 17 Q. Was that when the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor or did  
 18 you have that conversation before that?  
 19 **A. I think that was the 3rd floor, I think.**  
 20 Q. Did you think you were at that stage getting enough  
 21 information about the details of the occupants in the  
 22 flats from where FSG calls were coming to be able to  
 23 make an effective prioritisation along those lines?  
 24 **A. It was very difficult because the information we were**  
 25 **receiving were floors, flat numbers and numbers of**

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1 **people. If we got further information, which we did on**  
 2 **occasions, I do remember hearing and seeing information**  
 3 **where there were children involved, but if we got the**  
 4 **information then that's how we prioritised it.**  
 5 Q. Did you yourself proactively go out and ask anybody to  
 6 make sure that they handed to you details of the  
 7 occupants, such as age, any mobility issues, or any  
 8 other matters that might make them a priority?  
 9 **A. Sorry, I'm not quite sure I understand. Why would they**  
 10 **hand them to me?**  
 11 Q. If you have a system or prioritisation, my question  
 12 is: did you yourself go out and ask anybody so that you  
 13 made sure that you had all the details to hand, rather  
 14 than relying on the information you were getting?  
 15 **A. No, I didn't. I'm not quite sure -- maybe I'm missing**  
 16 **the point here -- why I needed those details to hand.**  
 17 Q. Maybe I posed the question slightly unclearly.  
 18 Were you satisfied that with all the FSG information  
 19 you were getting, you were getting a clear steer, clear  
 20 information, about people in flats who were young, who  
 21 were elderly, who had mobility issues or matters of that  
 22 nature?  
 23 **A. I was satisfied that Watch Manager De Silvo was**  
 24 **receiving as much information as control could pass and**  
 25 **that she was recording that information correctly, and**

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1 **I could see that for myself, and that she was then**  
 2 **prioritising from there. So, yes, I was satisfied with**  
 3 **the system that was working.**  
 4 Q. From what you could see, where was Louisa De Silvo  
 5 getting the information she was writing up from?  
 6 **A. I think it was coming over the fire ground radio.**  
 7 Q. Do you remember seeing any runners coming in to the  
 8 bridgehead with pieces of paper which they gave to  
 9 anybody at BA entry control, including Louisa?  
 10 **A. Not at that point.**  
 11 Q. You never saw that?  
 12 **A. Not at that point, no. I don't remember seeing that.**  
 13 Q. In terms of your strategy for deployment of BA crews  
 14 while the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor, were all  
 15 crews deployed in response to FSG calls and sent to  
 16 specific flats and floors or were crews committed purely  
 17 for firefighting?  
 18 **A. I think maybe initially -- certainly on the 2nd floor,**  
 19 **but then maybe the first 10 or 15 minutes on the**  
 20 **3rd floor, maybe not that long -- they were being sent**  
 21 **for both. So crews were being sent for FSG calls and**  
 22 **some for firefighting. The firefighting took a back**  
 23 **seat very quickly.**  
 24 Q. I was going to ask you that. That was my next question.  
 25 You say firefighting took a back seat very quickly.

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1 Before it took a back seat, how did you decide what  
 2 task to give the next BA wearer?  
 3 **A. They were trying to work their way up the building, as**  
 4 **we normally would, putting the fire out.**  
 5 Q. This is, in timeline terms, after the bridgehead had  
 6 gone to the 3rd floor, and we estimate that that was  
 7 around 02.20 or so.  
 8 At that time, do you remember any difficulties with  
 9 crews getting above the 15th floor?  
 10 **A. I remember crews having difficulties getting to the**  
 11 **upper floors, maybe the last -- yeah, from the 15th**  
 12 **upwards. I couldn't actually narrow it down to being**  
 13 **the 15th, but certainly the top floors.**  
 14 Q. Do you have any recollection at all, while the  
 15 bridgehead was on the 2nd floor, of there being  
 16 a particular problem with crews getting above the  
 17 15th floor?  
 18 **A. I don't remember at that point a particular issue with**  
 19 **the 15th.**  
 20 Q. You say that firefighting took a back seat very quickly.  
 21 I'm assuming the priority then became FSG calls and  
 22 search and rescue.  
 23 **A. Yes. I mean, the FSG were always going to be the**  
 24 **priority and search and rescue will always be**  
 25 **a priority, but there was also the hope initially that**

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1 **we might actually be able to put this fire out.**  
 2 Q. Was there an upper floor limit you would send an SDBA  
 3 crew to once search and rescue took over as the priority  
 4 and firefighting took a back seat?  
 5 **A. Not at that point. We were trying to reach all floors**  
 6 **at that point.**  
 7 Q. Did you have a system at that time, while the bridgehead  
 8 was on the 3rd floor, for sending EDBA to higher floors  
 9 and keeping SDBA on lower floors?  
 10 **A. I cannot remember exactly when we started using the EDBA**  
 11 **and we had enough. I know EDBA had been used before**  
 12 **I took over as fire sector commander and we started**  
 13 **using it again very quickly as soon as we got enough**  
 14 **resources, but I couldn't be sure when that was.**  
 15 Q. While the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor, did you use  
 16 EDBA wearers to prioritise the rescue of children,  
 17 elderly or immobile occupants?  
 18 **A. Yes, I can't remember when we started using the EDBA.**  
 19 **If it was available to me, then yes, I would've been**  
 20 **using it as soon as I could, but I don't remember**  
 21 **whether that was the 3rd floor or ground floor.**  
 22 Q. Did there come a time when the bridgehead was still on  
 23 the 3rd floor that you didn't have enough EDBA wearers  
 24 to respond to demand?  
 25 **A. I don't remember definitely using EDBA from the**

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1 **3rd floor. But if I did, then I certainly don't**  
 2 **remember running out of EDDBA.**  
 3 Q. To be fair to you, the most recently updated BA  
 4 telemetry data we have rather suggests that most EDDBA  
 5 crews that were committed during the incident tallied  
 6 out after 03.05, which is just before the bridgehead  
 7 appears to move down to the ground floor?  
 8 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 9 Q. Never mind the precise details, does that generally  
 10 accord with your recollection?  
 11 **A. That would seem about right, yes.**  
 12 Q. I want to pick out one or two who were deployed from the  
 13 2nd floor.  
 14 I would ask you to go to the BA timeline, the  
 15 telemetry data, if you would, which is in its updated  
 16 form, and go to "BA Time Line (4)" and look at 02.44,  
 17 where there is a crew, Reddington and Upton. 02.44, you  
 18 see Reddington and Upton, two from Chelsea, EDDBA wearers  
 19 who tally out at 02.44.07 and 02.44.39. Do you see  
 20 that?  
 21 **A. Yes.**  
 22 Q. According to their notes, they were briefed for  
 23 floor 21. So that's one example.  
 24 I'll put a couple of others to you so you have  
 25 a good group and I'll then ask you the question.

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1 They're sent to floor 21.  
 2 We have "BA Time Line (5)", if you just go to that,  
 3 please, Paul. There's a deployment at 03.03, Codd and  
 4 Joseph, Chelsea and Euston, EDDBA, who tally out at  
 5 03.03.24 and 03.05.41. They're briefed for floor 22, we  
 6 know that from their notes.  
 7 Then finally we have the Euston trio, which is "BA  
 8 Time Line (6)", at 03.05, Rawlings, Brooks and Morcos  
 9 tally out at 03.05 or so. Do you see those? 03.04 and  
 10 03.05, 03.05, and they are briefed to the 4th floor to  
 11 firefight and protect egress.  
 12 Given the proportion of FSGs, coming from the higher  
 13 floors that we've seen on the 3rd floor wall, which we  
 14 looked at before -- we can go back to it if you want to  
 15 see it -- where the vast majority of FSG calls come from  
 16 the 12th floor and above, and increasing generally as  
 17 you go towards the top of the building, my question is  
 18 this: did you consider whether this rate and volume of  
 19 deployment of EDDBA wearers at this point in the night,  
 20 prior to and around or up to 03.05, was sufficient to  
 21 respond to FSG calls from those higher floors?  
 22 **A. I would need to know how many resources of EDDBA I had**  
 23 **there at that point, because without that I couldn't**  
 24 **give an opinion of why I committed or didn't commit**  
 25 **without knowing the resources I had.**

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1 Q. Let me see if I can take it slightly more question.  
 2 I may have confused you with a long and fact-rich  
 3 question.  
 4 I've shown you three groups of deployments, two at  
 5 02.44 to floor 21, two at 03.03 for floor 22 and then  
 6 a trio to go to a lower floor.  
 7 Now, if you can go back to MET00015819, which is the  
 8 wall information, which was a photograph taken at about  
 9 03.08. We can see from that that by that time, as  
 10 I say, most of the FSG calls had come in from floor 12  
 11 and above and increased generally as you go up the  
 12 building. There seems to be a group around the 14th and  
 13 15th floors and a lot around 18 and 19 and up to the top  
 14 of the tower.  
 15 Given that distribution by 03.08 of FSG calls coming  
 16 from the top half, if you like, of the building, and  
 17 comparing that with the deployments of EDDBA wearers that  
 18 you had that we looked at, my question -- I'll put it  
 19 again -- did you think at the time that that rate and  
 20 volume of deployment of EDDBA wearers was enough to  
 21 respond to the FSG calls that you were getting from the  
 22 top half of the building?  
 23 **A. At that point, I would say yes, because looking at that**  
 24 **picture, the flats on the floors below 17, the ticks**  
 25 **would indicate we've reached those floors and it**

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1 **actually says at one point three rescues. So the EDDBA**  
 2 **that we were sending to the upper floors, as you've**  
 3 **shown, was being used as it should be just to reach the**  
 4 **absolute extreme, where I would assume the SDDBA was**  
 5 **being used at the floors below that and successfully**  
 6 **reaching those flats.**  
 7 Q. Do you know what those ticks represent?  
 8 **A. As far as I remember, they represent that that task had**  
 9 **been carried out.**  
 10 Q. That crews had been sent or actually effected rescues?  
 11 **A. Well, crews had effected rescues. As you see on**  
 12 **floor 14, it says three rescues. So yes, crews have**  
 13 **effected rescues. Or searched the flat and there's no**  
 14 **one there and therefore come back, but the FSG is**  
 15 **completed.**  
 16 Q. At the time, did you understand that that's what the  
 17 ticks represented?  
 18 **A. Yes.**  
 19 Q. Now, we looked at Rawlings, Brooks and Morcos and their  
 20 tally out at 03.04 and 03.05. I won't go back to that.  
 21 They were sent to the 4th floor to protect the exit.  
 22 Do you remember if it was you who sent them to go to  
 23 that floor?  
 24 **A. No.**  
 25 Q. Do you know who it was?

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1 **A. No.**  
 2 Q. Do you know why that EDDBA crew would be deployed to go  
 3 to a low floor and not to go to a high floor in response  
 4 to FSG calls from higher floors?  
 5 **A. I couldn't answer that, it would be a question for the**  
 6 **person who deployed them.**  
 7 Q. Might not have been a more sensible use of an EDDBA crew  
 8 to send them up the building rather than to a floor  
 9 immediately above the bridgehead?  
 10 **A. I couldn't answer that without knowing the reasoning**  
 11 **behind it and I wouldn't want to make that judgement on**  
 12 **somebody else's decisions.**  
 13 Q. But it wasn't you who made that decision?  
 14 **A. No.**  
 15 Q. Did you discover yourself that an EDDBA had been sent to  
 16 a floor immediately above the bridgehead?  
 17 **A. Not until you just told me now, no.**  
 18 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, I'm conscious we've been going for  
 19 more than an hour. I probably have five more minutes on  
 20 this point until we switch topics.  
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you remain for another  
 22 5 minutes?  
 23 THE WITNESS: I'm happy here, yes, thank you, sir.  
 24 MR MILLETT: Going on in your statement to page 7, if I can  
 25 just show you that, paragraph 2, which is halfway down

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1 the page, you say there that the bridgehead then came  
 2 down to the ground floor and, as I say, as a time mark,  
 3 Mr Welch, we have a rough time for after 03.08, because  
 4 that's the point in time at which the photograph was  
 5 taken of the BA entry control at the 3rd floor.  
 6 You say:  
 7 "On the ground floor we had three (3) BA Entry  
 8 Control Boards set up as we had thirty (3) ..."  
 9 There's a "3", I think it should be 3-0.  
 10 "... Fire Fighters deployed. We started to use EDDBA  
 11 personnel to answer FSG calls received from the higher  
 12 floors. We used BA crews with hoses to protect the  
 13 staircase for the ingress and egress of their  
 14 colleagues."  
 15 Can I just ask you, why was it only at the point  
 16 when the bridgehead moved down to the ground floor that  
 17 you started to use EDDBA personnel to answer FSG calls  
 18 coming from the higher floors?  
 19 **A. I would say that's clearly incorrect going on the**  
 20 **evidence you've just showed me earlier on that we were**  
 21 **already committing to the higher floors before that.**  
 22 Q. The number of EDDBA commitments to the higher floors,  
 23 though, was few. I've shown you just a handful,  
 24 three --  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. -- crews, only two of which were committed to higher  
 2 floors.  
 3 We can look back at the telemetry schedule if you  
 4 like and see how many EDDBA crews were actually committed  
 5 before 03.08.  
 6 **A. I remember a point in the night from the ground floor**  
 7 **where we made a clear and conscious decision that there**  
 8 **would be a point where only EDDBA would go above that and**  
 9 **SDBA would stay below that.**  
 10 Q. My question is: why was it only at the point when the  
 11 bridgehead moved down to the ground floor that you made  
 12 that decision and not before that?  
 13 **A. I think, from what I recall, that was a question of**  
 14 **resources. By that point, enough fire and rescue units**  
 15 **had arrived so we had a good pool of EDDBA wearers that**  
 16 **we could actually commit and have the backup if**  
 17 **necessary.**  
 18 Q. Tell me if this is not a fair summary of your  
 19 evidence: does that mean before the bridgehead moved  
 20 down to the ground floor, you didn't actually have  
 21 enough EDDBA wearers to send them up into the tower to  
 22 respond to FSG calls from higher floors?  
 23 **A. I don't think it's fair to say we didn't have enough; we**  
 24 **didn't have enough to be able to commit all of those and**  
 25 **have a safe system of work in place, emergency crews of**

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1 **the same size and quantity to go and get those if**  
 2 **anything went wrong. So I think we had enough there but**  
 3 **not enough to be able to complete the whole task.**  
 4 Q. That's your two for one again, is it?  
 5 **A. Yes, yes.**  
 6 Q. At what point did you have enough EDDBA wearers to, as it  
 7 were, have a two for one -- you were adequately  
 8 resourced?  
 9 **A. When we moved down to the ground floor and Station**  
 10 **Manager Myatt was given the task of maintaining 20 SDBA**  
 11 **and 30 EDDBA wearers. And certainly from the time we**  
 12 **moved to the ground floor, at no point did we ever run**  
 13 **out of EDDBA or SDBA or was we ever told -- Group Manager**  
 14 **Goulbourne and I were never told we're running short or**  
 15 **we need to be careful what we're using. So from the**  
 16 **ground floor we certainly had enough.**  
 17 Q. In terms of how high up in the building you were  
 18 reaching with BA crews, on page 7 you say:  
 19 "We were getting FSG calls from the very top floors  
 20 and we had only reached the 4th and 5th floors at that  
 21 point."  
 22 My first question is: when you say "at that point",  
 23 do you mean while the bridgehead was still on the  
 24 3rd floor or after it had moved down to the ground  
 25 floor?

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1 **A. Again, I think that's incorrect. I think we reached the**  
 2 **4th or 5th floors like firefighting at that point, but**  
 3 **the FSGs, we were clearly -- from the minute I got to**  
 4 **the bridgehead we were reaching much, much higher than**  
 5 **that.**  
 6 Q. That's when it was on the 3rd floor?  
 7 **A. From the minute I arrived on the 2nd floor we were**  
 8 **reaching higher than that.**  
 9 Q. We've covered this a minute ago, but let's go back to  
 10 it: while the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor, was there  
 11 any limit to the floors above which BA crews that you  
 12 had available couldn't go or couldn't reach?  
 13 **A. I do recall crews having great difficulty getting to the**  
 14 **very top floors. I don't recall at that point a point**  
 15 **where they said, "We can't get there".**  
 16 Q. Right.  
 17 **A. At that point.**  
 18 Q. Did you consider in relation to those upper floors  
 19 particularly whether you should tell control to abandon  
 20 stay-put advice for those callers at that stage?  
 21 **A. No.**  
 22 Q. Why is that?  
 23 **A. Because the conditions that I was being -- by the**  
 24 **debriefs received from the BA crews, the conditions that**  
 25 **were up there were unsurvivable. If people had come out**

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1 **into those hallways and communal areas where the fire --**  
 2 **the temperatures were unsurvivable to people without**  
 3 **protective clothing on.**  
 4 Q. If they were unsurvivable then that would mean that the  
 5 occupants of those upper floors were by then  
 6 unrescuable.  
 7 **A. We were still going to keep trying for them. At that**  
 8 **point we still had people on the phone, on the phone**  
 9 **lines, so we were still trying to get to them.**  
 10 Q. Sure. But if the conditions at that stage in the  
 11 hallways and communal areas where the fire was and the  
 12 temperatures were unsurvivable without protective  
 13 clothing on, that would mean that they couldn't escape;  
 14 is that right?  
 15 **A. That's correct, and by the nature of the fact they were**  
 16 **making fire survival guidance calls would tell us they**  
 17 **couldn't get out of their flats.**  
 18 Q. If they couldn't escape then how was any rescue crew  
 19 going to bring them down?  
 20 **A. Because their job was to make conditions better for**  
 21 **them. So firefighters could assist the conditions and,**  
 22 **if need be, try and put any fires out in the lobby areas**  
 23 **that might be there to try to improve the conditions to**  
 24 **bring them out their flats.**  
 25 Q. That would need water though, wouldn't it?

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1 **A. It would.**  
 2 Q. I think you say in your statement, page 6, three lines  
 3 up from the bottom:  
 4 "We were committing teams with no communication and  
 5 no water solely for snatch rescues -- sometimes above the  
 6 fire."  
 7 How high up in the building was that happening, at  
 8 any point?  
 9 **A. Specifically when I'm talking in that part of my**  
 10 **statement, I think I was talking about floors below**  
 11 **floor 10 or 11, but I'm confident that was happening at**  
 12 **all different areas of the block that night.**  
 13 Q. Did you ever think you were going to be able to get to  
 14 the upper floors, floor 20, 21, 22, 23, without water  
 15 and be able to effect rescues without water?  
 16 **A. There were times in the night when crews did get up to**  
 17 **the upper floors without water. Unfortunately the**  
 18 **conditions were getting worse and worse for us by the**  
 19 **minute.**  
 20 **There did reach a time when we knew we couldn't.**  
 21 MR MILLETT: We'll take a break, I think.  
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would that be a good point?  
 23 We'll have a break now, Mr Welch. We'll take  
 24 10 minutes. 3.25, please, and no talking to anyone  
 25 about your evidence, if you don't mind.

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1 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.  
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like to go with the usher.  
 3 All right, 3.25, please.  
 4 (3.15 pm)  
 5 (A short break)  
 6 (3.25 pm)  
 7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, Mr Welch, are you happy to  
 8 carry on?  
 9 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.  
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If you would like to stop at any  
 11 other point, just indicate.  
 12 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.  
 14 MR MILLETT: Thank you for coming back.  
 15 Now, in your statement on page 6, just below halfway  
 16 down, you say:  
 17 "Around this time Group Manager Pat GOULBOURNE  
 18 arrived to assist me and he worked with my designated  
 19 'FSG' team to brief the BA crews on safety issues and  
 20 where they would be going."  
 21 I think at that stage in your statement you are  
 22 still dealing with the bridgehead when it's on the  
 23 3rd floor.  
 24 **A. That's correct.**  
 25 Q. When he gave evidence, Group Manager Goulbourne said

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1 that he thought that he was on the bridgehead for 30 to  
 2 40 minutes or so, couldn't be exact, before it moved  
 3 down to the ground floor. Would that be your  
 4 recollection?  
 5 **A. Possibly, I really couldn't estimate the time on that.**  
 6 Q. If that's right, that means that he would have arrived  
 7 some time around 02.30 or perhaps a little bit after  
 8 that.  
 9 Does that sound about right to you, maybe 10 or  
 10 15 minutes after you arrived?  
 11 **A. Sounds about right, yes.**  
 12 Q. Do you remember what Group Manager Goulbourne was doing  
 13 when the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor in general  
 14 terms?  
 15 **A. So he was working alongside the fire survival guidance**  
 16 **wall on the 3rd floor and between them and then**  
 17 **detailing crews of where they should go, getting**  
 18 **debriefs off them and overseeing that whole process.**  
 19 Q. He was overseeing the process of what?  
 20 **A. Of the fire survival guidance co-ordination.**  
 21 Q. Would he have been able, to your way of thinking, to  
 22 observe how FSG information was coming into the  
 23 bridgehead?  
 24 **A. I think he would've had more chance of seeing it than I,**  
 25 **yes.**

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1 Q. Because his recollection on that was, to say the least,  
 2 hazy.  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 Q. To your way of thinking, were you satisfied that he was  
 5 observing fully what Louisa De Silvo was writing on the  
 6 wall and understanding what it meant?  
 7 **A. Yes. Pat is a very good officer and we've worked**  
 8 **together in the past. We've both done a lot of work in**  
 9 **East London, so he's very experienced in high-rise**  
 10 **firefighting as well. So I was comfortable that Pat had**  
 11 **a grip of that situation.**  
 12 Q. Let me break this down a bit.  
 13 When Group Manager Goulbourne arrived, what did he  
 14 do to start with, do you remember?  
 15 **A. He asked me what I needed, "What help do you need?"**  
 16 Q. What did you tell him?  
 17 **A. I asked him to work with the FSG, overseeing that,**  
 18 **making sure we're committing the crews to the right**  
 19 **floors at the right times, because there was a lot going**  
 20 **on between the FSG and the entry control boards, which**  
 21 **were no more than about a metre or so apart. So there**  
 22 **was a lot of noise and I felt we needed a greater level**  
 23 **of control.**  
 24 Q. His recollection was that he only started being involved  
 25 with FSGs only shortly before the bridgehead moved down

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1 to the ground floor and that before that he was  
 2 essentially running tasks with equipment and things like  
 3 that?  
 4 **A. That may be the case. I mean, I don't recall him**  
 5 **running tasks. I only really recall what I asked him to**  
 6 **do with the FSG wall.**  
 7 Q. When the bridgehead moved down to the ground floor, or  
 8 at the point just before it did so, do you remember  
 9 having a discussion with Group Manager Goulbourne about  
 10 FSG in general and how to manage those and how to manage  
 11 deployments to fit with FSGs?  
 12 **A. Is it possible to be more specific?**  
 13 **We were talking about the FSGs throughout the whole**  
 14 **time and how they were being processed, but other than**  
 15 **that, I don't know anything more specifically.**  
 16 Q. Group Manager Goulbourne gave evidence along the lines  
 17 of -- I'm summarising it -- that there was a discussion  
 18 about changing the system for deployments in response to  
 19 FSG calls, but that discussion was interrupted,  
 20 effectively, by the move down to the ground floor.  
 21 I summarise.  
 22 **A. I don't recall it. I've no doubt if that's what**  
 23 **Pat Goulbourne said then it's quite likely, but I don't**  
 24 **recall that conversation.**  
 25 Q. On page 7 of your statement, third line down, you say:

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1 "Our 3rd floor Bridgehead began to get compromised  
 2 by smoke. I was told that the fire was leaping about on  
 3 the outside of the block and there was now a fire on the  
 4 2nd floor/mezzanine level. I had to move the Bridgehead  
 5 to the ground floor but was concerned about the BA crews  
 6 already deployed from the 3rd floor because we had no  
 7 communications on which to tell them. Even the  
 8 Emergency Button on the BA Entry Control Board couldn't  
 9 send a signal to the BA."  
 10 A number of things there.  
 11 You say that it was for that reason, the fire  
 12 leaping about on the outside of the block and a fire on  
 13 the 2nd floor that the bridgehead was moved to the  
 14 ground floor. Is that how you recall it?  
 15 **A. Yes. When we moved the bridgehead up to the 3rd floor,**  
 16 **as far as I was concerned, there was no fire on the**  
 17 **floors below the 3rd, hence I felt it was safe to move**  
 18 **it up. At this point, an officer came to me -- I can't**  
 19 **remember who it was -- and told me, "There's a fire in**  
 20 **a flat on the floor below you".**  
 21 **The bridgehead was already becoming slightly**  
 22 **compromised by smoke, but once I knew there was a fire**  
 23 **underneath us, that was my immediate decision to move**  
 24 **the bridgehead.**  
 25 Q. Pat Goulbourne -- I should call him DAC Goulbourne

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1 now -- when he gave evidence said that he had  
 2 a conversation with you when the bridgehead was on the  
 3 3rd floor about moving it down because it itself was  
 4 becoming compromised with smoke.  
 5 Is that something you recall?  
 6 **A. Yes, we did have that conversation, but then shortly**  
 7 **after that -- I'm talking maybe seconds after that --**  
 8 **was when I was told there was a fire below us. The**  
 9 **bridgehead on the 3rd, and that becoming compromised**  
 10 **with smoke, we were always going to stay there as long**  
 11 **as we could because the last thing either of us wanted**  
 12 **to do was to move the bridgehead down and away from the**  
 13 **fire, we wanted to go in the opposite direction, but the**  
 14 **deciding factor was there was fire below us.**  
 15 Q. You said you couldn't remember who told you that the  
 16 fire was now below you on the 2nd floor. Let me see if  
 17 I can help.  
 18 Station Manager Gareth Cook gave evidence to us  
 19 in July and he recalls you telling everybody that the  
 20 bridgehead needed to move down because the fire had  
 21 spread below the bridgehead.  
 22 Is his recollection correct?  
 23 **A. He would've been at the bridgehead at that point as**  
 24 **well, yeah, so he would've heard that.**  
 25 Q. You say, as we've seen, that the emergency button on the

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1 BA entry control board couldn't send a signal to the BA.  
 2 Can you explain why not?  
 3 **A. Well, they were using the withdraw button on the entry**  
 4 **control board, which would send a signal to the BA sets**  
 5 **to inform the wearer they need to withdraw, and then the**  
 6 **wearer will acknowledge receipt of that message. It**  
 7 **appeared it was some issue with the transmission between**  
 8 **the board and the BA sets or back, that loop wasn't**  
 9 **being completed.**  
 10 Q. Was that a new thing or had that been happening for some  
 11 time --  
 12 **A. I think that was the start of when it started happening,**  
 13 **and we didn't know they were getting that message, which**  
 14 **is why when we did move the entry control point to the**  
 15 **ground floor, I remained at the 3rd floor waiting for**  
 16 **the BA wearers to come out, because as far as I was**  
 17 **aware, they hadn't got that signal, that message.**  
 18 Q. While on the subject of comms, three lines up from the  
 19 foot of page 6, you say:  
 20 "We were committing teams with no communication ..."  
 21 Is that while the bridgehead was on the 3rd floor or  
 22 after it had moved down to the ground floor?  
 23 **A. My recollection was that's the ground floor.**  
 24 Q. What was the problem with communications that you're  
 25 referring to there?

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1 **A. I think partly on the fire ground radios it was just**  
 2 **excessive use of radios, because the firefighters that**  
 3 **were working on the outside of the building all have**  
 4 **radios so they were trying to communicate with each**  
 5 **other and I think it was an overload on that system.**  
 6 **And then within the building, going vertically on the BA**  
 7 **channel, we were losing that signal as well, which**  
 8 **I would put down to some element of the structure of the**  
 9 **building.**  
 10 Q. Was that the first time you experienced that at this  
 11 incident?  
 12 **A. It's the first time I've experienced it to that extent.**  
 13 **It has happened, it does happen, but not to that extent.**  
 14 Q. Did you give immediate thought to calling for repeaters  
 15 to be put into the tower so you could bounce the signal  
 16 up?  
 17 **A. I did ask for repeaters and they were deployed but had**  
 18 **very little impact.**  
 19 Q. Moving on to the move down to the ground floor, halfway  
 20 down page 7, second paragraph, end of the third line,  
 21 you say:  
 22 "I was still acting as Fire Sector Commander, GM  
 23 GOULBOURNE was assisting as a Search Sector Commander  
 24 and Station Manager Pete WOLPENDEN[sic] was now  
 25 co-ordinating the FSG response."

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1 First of all, focusing on your role and  
 2 Pat Goulbourne's role, can you explain how they  
 3 differed? What was the difference between you being  
 4 fire sector commander and him being search sector  
 5 commander?  
 6 **A. This is the closest explanation I could give you, how**  
 7 **it's written there, because in effect there was no**  
 8 **search sector, because under the national incident**  
 9 **command systems, search sector would be everything above**  
 10 **the fire sector. Well, in this case, there was nothing**  
 11 **above the fire sector.**  
 12 Q. No, the whole building was the fire sector.  
 13 **A. So there was no search sector. So Group Manager**  
 14 **Goulbourne and I were working alongside each other,**  
 15 **which is unusual, but because there was so much to do**  
 16 **and so many tasks, it was far too much for one person to**  
 17 **try and be in charge of.**  
 18 Q. Is it right to say, therefore, that your role and  
 19 Pat Goulbourne's role completely overlap?  
 20 **A. They were very similar roles and we assisted each other,**  
 21 **but I think it's also fair to say that Group Manager**  
 22 **Goulbourne was more involved in the detailed deployment.**  
 23 **But we were both doing a bit of everything to try and**  
 24 **help each other out because there was just so much to**  
 25 **do.**

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1 Q. Can you explain what Station Manager Wolfenden's role  
 2 was regarding FSGs?  
 3 **A. He was working at the wall in the foyer on the left as**  
 4 **you walk through the door, the wall we talked about**  
 5 **earlier.**  
 6 Q. Would it be right to say that the search sector  
 7 commander and the FSG co-ordination would require very  
 8 closely liaison between those two roles, between  
 9 Goulbourne and Wolfenden?  
 10 **A. They would require a close liaison, but I think it's in**  
 11 **the context of -- maybe search sector commander is not**  
 12 **the right title because there was no search sector, but**  
 13 **there was communication between the FSG wall and the**  
 14 **bridgehead, that was the important link. And when we**  
 15 **moved the bridgehead down to the ground floor, we very**  
 16 **clearly placed the bridgehead in one area and the FSG**  
 17 **wall in a different area, so they weren't too close**  
 18 **together.**  
 19 Q. Let's stand back and examine with greater precision what  
 20 to your way of thinking search sector commander  
 21 involved.  
 22 What, in terms of functions, were you asking or  
 23 expecting Pat Goulbourne to carry out?  
 24 **A. So the main role that Pat did really in that area was**  
 25 **specific briefing and debriefing of crews. That was**

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1 **what he did a lot of.**  
 2 **But as I said, I think search sector commander is**  
 3 **probably not quite the right title. We were both**  
 4 **running that sector.**  
 5 Q. If his specific task was specific briefing and  
 6 debriefing of crews, would that not require very close  
 7 liaison -- almost call by call -- with Pete Wolfenden so  
 8 that specific briefings would match the FSG call  
 9 information Pete Wolfenden had, and specific debriefings  
 10 would go to Pete Wolfenden so he could then pass them  
 11 back up the communications chain ultimately to the  
 12 control room?  
 13 **A. Pete Wolfenden was receiving the information on that FSG**  
 14 **wall and he was giving that information to individual**  
 15 **crews initially and the crews were coming to the**  
 16 **bridgehead holding that information. So on that piece**  
 17 **of paper was the piece of paper that was written by the**  
 18 **person that took it at the FSG wall to the bridgehead.**  
 19 **So then Pat would brief them: this is where we know the**  
 20 **fire is, this is what we know is alight, this is what we**  
 21 **know isn't alight, all the information that Pete**  
 22 **Wolfenden wouldn't have had. And then as that crew came**  
 23 **out we would stop them, close them down safely, debrief**  
 24 **them and then send them to the wall to give that**  
 25 **information back to them.**

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1 Q. Right.  
 2 Following up on that last answer, why would Pat need  
 3 to brief the crews if they were already coming to the  
 4 bridgehead with pieces of paper with FSG information on  
 5 it which Pete Wolfenden had given them?  
 6 **A. Because they still wouldn't have the up-to-date**  
 7 **information on the condition of the fire. So if they're**  
 8 **going to a floor, we need to be able to tell them what**  
 9 **they might encounter getting to that floor. They were**  
 10 **given the FSG information, not being told what the**  
 11 **condition of the fire is and conditions in the building.**  
 12 Q. We'll come back to that in a moment.  
 13 Just standing back and looking at the system, once  
 14 the bridgehead came down to the ground floor and got  
 15 itself settled in, number of questions.  
 16 First of all, when that happened, did you know at  
 17 that stage how FSG information was coming to the  
 18 ground-floor lobby, what the means of communication was?  
 19 **A. I knew there was some papers being brought in by**  
 20 **runners, there was some radio traffic being brought in,**  
 21 **but I couldn't actually pinpoint I definitely knew how**  
 22 **that information was coming in, because the role of the**  
 23 **FSG command unit is to get that information to the**  
 24 **bridgehead. That's not my responsibility to get it**  
 25 **there. So as long as it's getting there, and it was**

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1 **coming in thick and fast, I had no reason to doubt that**  
 2 **there was any issue with the system in place.**  
 3 Q. When the bridgehead moved down, was Watch Manager  
 4 Williams still writing on the wall at that point?  
 5 **A. I believe so.**  
 6 Q. How was the FSG information then coming from him to you  
 7 at the bridgehead?  
 8 **A. Well, as I say, I remember seeing crews coming with**  
 9 **pieces of paper, but I don't know if they had another**  
 10 **comms link in between the bridgehead and him or not, but**  
 11 **crews were permanently coming in with that information**  
 12 **and being committed.**  
 13 Q. Can you describe the pieces of paper for us?  
 14 **A. All sorts. There were all sorts, from pieces of**  
 15 **a notebook to pieces of A4 paper. Whatever paper they**  
 16 **had available to them is what they were using to bring**  
 17 **that information. But most of it was on notepaper that**  
 18 **we carry as officers.**  
 19 Q. I'll show you possibly an example in a moment. Before  
 20 I do, did you see any A4 control information form sheets  
 21 coming to the bridgehead?  
 22 **A. Not that I recall.**  
 23 Q. Can I ask the witness please to be shown LFB00001929.  
 24 It's also an exhibit to Brien O'Keeffe's witness  
 25 statement.

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1 Here are some slips of paper, some of which I think  
 2 were written by Pete Wolfenden and two of them by  
 3 Station Manager Watson. That's why there are two  
 4 different handwritings.  
 5 Do these look familiar to you?  
 6 **A. The kind of information on them, yes, but I don't**  
 7 **remember the specific pieces of paper, no.**  
 8 Q. Some of them have time marks on them: 04.10 --  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. -- 04.30, 04.05, 04.20, 04.10.  
 11 Does that accord with your recollection of the sorts  
 12 of pieces of paper that you saw coming to the bridgehead  
 13 being brought in by crews?  
 14 **A. I think the two that are different writing would be more**  
 15 **so what I would've recognised rather than lists of flat**  
 16 **numbers.**  
 17 Q. Who was bringing those pieces of paper to the  
 18 bridgehead, was it crews or Pete Wolfenden or somebody  
 19 else?  
 20 **A. My recollection is it was crews.**  
 21 Q. Did Pete Wolfenden himself bring paper information about  
 22 FSG calls to the bridgehead at any time, do you think?  
 23 **A. I think he may well have done, yes, but I couldn't be**  
 24 **sure. We were in and out, so I would think so.**  
 25 Q. Once the bridgehead was set up on the ground floor, you

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1 explain in your first statement, paragraph 2 on  
 2 page 7 -- I have just shown you this already, you say:  
 3 "... We had three (3) BA Entry Control Boards set  
 4 up as we had thirty (3)[sic] Fire Fighters deployed. We  
 5 started to use EDDBA personnel to answer FSG calls  
 6 received from the higher floors."  
 7 Going back to our discussion that we had before the  
 8 break, does that mean that really prior to the move down  
 9 to the ground floor the use of EDDBA personnel to answer  
 10 higher floor FSG calls was not really happening but did  
 11 start to happen once you moved down to the ground floor?  
 12 **A. Yes, I think it's coming back to the conversation we had**  
 13 **before the break that the EDDBA crews were being**  
 14 **committed but not in great numbers until we moved down**  
 15 **to the ground floor.**  
 16 Q. Is that because of resourcing of EDDBA?  
 17 **A. I can't actually recall very clearly a definite reason**  
 18 **for that, but my assumption would be yes, that would be**  
 19 **for resourcing if it's --**  
 20 Q. Right.  
 21 We've seen a photograph before in evidence of the  
 22 wall in the lobby, on which there is a marking below 10  
 23 SDBA, above 10 EDDBA. I'll show you that. It's  
 24 MET00005774.  
 25 **A. Yes.**

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1 Q. You can see it there. "Above 10 EDDBA, Below 10 SDBA".  
 2 We're told Pete Wolfenden wrote that on the wall.  
 3 Pat Goulbourne's evidence about that is that that  
 4 was part of the tactical plan that you formed when you  
 5 were on the ground floor. That's what he told us.  
 6 Is that consistent with your recollection?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. At what point in the night do you think that that  
 9 decision was made only to commit EDDBA wearers above the  
 10 10th floor?  
 11 **A. Sometime after moving down to the ground floor.**  
 12 **I really couldn't be any more specific than that.**  
 13 Q. Long after or short after, even roughly?  
 14 **A. I would guess -- and it would be a guess -- maybe**  
 15 **an hour after.**  
 16 Q. Do you remember any discussion about committing only up  
 17 to the 11th and 12th floors?  
 18 **A. Yes, I do. That was I think later on, after that.**  
 19 Q. We'll come to that.  
 20 Do you know whose decision it was not to deploy SDBA  
 21 wearers above floor 10?  
 22 **A. Mine.**  
 23 Q. We also heard from Mr Goulbourne about the strategy of  
 24 systematic searching that you at the bridgehead started  
 25 while it was on the ground floor.

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1 Again, summarising his evidence very broadly, he  
 2 said that the bridgehead started out by committing SDBA  
 3 wearers for firefighting starting on the floor of the  
 4 fire and then pushing EDDBA wearers to get as high as  
 5 they could in the building.  
 6 That's a general --  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. -- pithy summary of his evidence.  
 9 Is that your general recollection?  
 10 **A. Yes.**  
 11 Q. Do you remember when you started this systematic  
 12 floor-by-floor approach?  
 13 **A. It feels like it was later on, after the FSG calls, the**  
 14 **lines have gone dead or the calls have stopped. That's**  
 15 **my recollection.**  
 16 Q. When was that?  
 17 **A. I'm guessing around 04.00ish.**  
 18 Q. Who made that decision, to start the systematic  
 19 floor-by-floor approach?  
 20 **A. I think that was a conversation between Pat and I and we**  
 21 **agreed that we'd start working our way up, clearing**  
 22 **every floor.**  
 23 Q. Was your concern to ensure the safety of your search  
 24 crews by making sure there was no fire below them?  
 25 **A. The short answer to that is yes, but that wasn't the**

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<p>1 case all night because, as we looked at earlier, there</p> <p>2 were points when I was sending crews above fire with no</p> <p>3 communications and no firefighting media. But we were</p> <p>4 stretching the boundaries of safety and, ultimately,</p> <p>5 I've got to look after the crews, because if we lose</p> <p>6 crews, there's no one to go and rescue people that need</p> <p>7 rescuing.</p> <p>8 Q. Did that decision to change to a systematic</p> <p>9 floor-by-floor approach change the way in which BA crews</p> <p>10 were thereafter deployed?</p> <p>11 A. No, because I think we were still deploying BA crews,</p> <p>12 but alongside that what we started is the systematic --</p> <p>13 so floors that we hadn't been able to get to, FSGs we</p> <p>14 hadn't been able to get to, we were still trying to and</p> <p>15 still trying to reach those FSGs, but behind that was</p> <p>16 a system of clearing each floor as we go.</p> <p>17 Q. Do you remember who was actually briefing crews at the</p> <p>18 bridgehead once the method was changed to change to</p> <p>19 a systematic floor-by-floor approach?</p> <p>20 A. I think Pat was doing some, I did some. And sometimes</p> <p>21 we delegated that down to the watch manager in charge of</p> <p>22 the entry control boards.</p> <p>23 Q. Who was in overall charge of briefing crews at the</p> <p>24 bridgehead once that system changed, was it you?</p> <p>25 A. As fire sector commander, that would be my</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 189</p>	<p>1 green wall -- did you leave that area and move into the</p> <p>2 lobby and have a conversation with Watch Manager</p> <p>3 Williams and Wolfenden about --</p> <p>4 A. Yes, it was continuous. We were all coming into the</p> <p>5 lobby and back under the staircase and vice versa. We</p> <p>6 weren't stuck in any one point.</p> <p>7 Q. We have a couple of pictures. I just want to see if</p> <p>8 this tallies with your recollection.</p> <p>9 If I can ask you, please, to go to INQ00000313.</p> <p>10 This is camera 3 with an adjusted time of 04.18.12,</p> <p>11 so this is after 4 o'clock when you roughly put the time</p> <p>12 of the change of strategy.</p> <p>13 We can see Watch Manager Williams on the very far</p> <p>14 left, looking like he's waving, and we can see Pete</p> <p>15 Wolfenden to his right just by the sign there,</p> <p>16 "Grenfell Tower Community Room". There is a white</p> <p>17 helmet to their right and then a white helmet in the</p> <p>18 middle.</p> <p>19 Do you recognise yourself in that picture?</p> <p>20 A. I recognise myself, the one that is about to be</p> <p>21 highlighted, yes.</p> <p>22 Q. The one further away from the hose or the one near the</p> <p>23 hose?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, the one further away.</p> <p>25 Q. In the middle of the picture?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 191</p>
<p>1 responsibility, yes.</p> <p>2 Q. But were you actually, functionally in charge as well as</p> <p>3 notionally?</p> <p>4 A. I was delegating that authority out to others, but I was</p> <p>5 also carrying out some briefing and debriefing myself,</p> <p>6 yes.</p> <p>7 Q. When you made that decision to change approach, do you</p> <p>8 recall telling the watch managers on the other side of</p> <p>9 the lobby, who were writing FSG information on the wall,</p> <p>10 that you were now deploying crews in a different way or</p> <p>11 that you changed your approach?</p> <p>12 A. I think we were deploying crews in an additional way.</p> <p>13 We didn't stop deploying crews to FSGs, we just started</p> <p>14 an additional arm of the operation, really, because we</p> <p>15 had the resources to be able to do it.</p> <p>16 Q. But coming back to my question, did you have</p> <p>17 a discussion with the watch managers -- so Pete</p> <p>18 Wolfenden and Watch Manager Williams -- about the change</p> <p>19 or additional approach that you were now adopting?</p> <p>20 A. I don't recall having that conversation. It didn't</p> <p>21 impact on their FSG work, so I wouldn't necessarily need</p> <p>22 to. It's nice to know, but I can't think of a way how</p> <p>23 it would impact on what they were doing.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you at any point leave the bridgehead -- we know</p> <p>25 where it was located, at the foot of the stairs by the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 190</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Turning to the next one, INQ00000314, this is CCTV</p> <p>3 camera 3 taken one second later, with an adjusted time</p> <p>4 of 04.18.13, where we can see that Watch Manager</p> <p>5 Williams's right arm is now down, Pete Wolfenden has got</p> <p>6 his back to us. Do we see you in that picture?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, looks like I'm holding something in my hand,</p> <p>8 talking to Pete Wolfenden.</p> <p>9 Q. You have something in your left hand. What might that</p> <p>10 be?</p> <p>11 A. It looks like a piece of paper.</p> <p>12 Q. What might be on that piece of paper?</p> <p>13 A. I've no idea.</p> <p>14 Q. INQ00000315, which is 5 seconds later, camera 3, so the</p> <p>15 other camera in the lobby, from the right we can see</p> <p>16 Watch Manager Watson, Watch Manager Williams, Station</p> <p>17 Manager Wolfenden, and then who is that white helmet?</p> <p>18 A. That looks like me having the same conversation.</p> <p>19 Q. Yes. Well, we can't see your face but -- do you have</p> <p>20 a recollection of having this discussion at this sort of</p> <p>21 time with these three officers?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. Then the next one, which is INQ00000356, which is</p> <p>24 14 seconds later, camera 4, adjusted time of 04.18.32,</p> <p>25 we can see you beginning to walk -- I think that's you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 192</p>



1 **A. Yes.**  
 2 Q. Walking away from Watch Manager Williams in the red  
 3 shirt by the wall and Pete Wolfenden and then there's  
 4 Watson to your right.  
 5 **A. Yes.**  
 6 Q. Holding something. Again, what might that be?  
 7 **A. It looks like a piece of paper from a notebook.**  
 8 Q. Do these photographs trigger a recollection of  
 9 discussions with the watch managers at the wall at  
 10 around this time?  
 11 **A. No. I mean, this is how I recall, you know -- this went**  
 12 **on throughout the evening, several people walking**  
 13 **backwards and forwards. I don't recall exactly what**  
 14 **this is.**  
 15 Q. This isn't a one-off; it's part of the continuous  
 16 activity, is it?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. Do you remember, when you started this new system, if  
 19 you gave consideration to where the outstanding live FSG  
 20 calls were coming from?  
 21 **A. I was aware of where there would be live FSGs, yes.**  
 22 Q. How high up the tower were they, do you think?  
 23 **A. No idea, can't remember.**  
 24 Q. Did you give consideration to whether you should start  
 25 your systematic searching from the higher floors, as

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1 high as you could get with EDDBA wearers and work down  
 2 rather than working up?  
 3 **A. Around that time was a time when we were finding it**  
 4 **impossible to get past the 11th floor.**  
 5 Q. So what time would that be?  
 6 **A. I couldn't tell you what time that was, but I know it**  
 7 **was around the same sort of time, so around 04.00ish, we**  
 8 **were finding it very difficult, and all we were getting**  
 9 **back from the crews is they couldn't get past the 11th.**  
 10 Q. The 11th floor, you say?  
 11 **A. As far as I recall, yes.**  
 12 Q. Do you remember whether that information was passed on  
 13 to the command unit at around that time?  
 14 **A. Not at that time. I've since become aware that it was**  
 15 **passed on to the command unit, yes. It was recorded on**  
 16 **the whiteboard in the command unit.**  
 17 Q. Well, exactly. Let's just see if I can identify that  
 18 with you.  
 19 If you could please be shown MET00015936.  
 20 I'll take this question slightly out of order  
 21 because we've come to it, but this is a whiteboard from  
 22 CU7, and we can see on it on the right-hand side in  
 23 black it says: "From SM Wolfenden @ 04.25 BA crews  
 24 committed to 15th floor", and then "@ 04.45 BA crews  
 25 only committed up to 11th floor not 15th".

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1 Does this help you time when crews were committed  
 2 only to the 15th floor and not above?  
 3 **A. I think those two times had two different meanings.**  
 4 **I think the crews committed to 15th floor is a statement**  
 5 **of that's how high we were getting at that point.**  
 6 **I think the second of BA crews only committed to**  
 7 **11th floor, not 15th, was that's as far as we could get**  
 8 **at 04.45 and ...**  
 9 Q. Given that those were the floor limits at those times,  
 10 as I think you're telling us, coming back to my  
 11 question, did you give consideration to starting your  
 12 systematic search as high as you could go and working  
 13 down --  
 14 **A. No, because --**  
 15 Q. -- rather than working up from the bottom?  
 16 **A. So this is around the time when we stopped putting**  
 17 **firefighters above the 11th floor at that point, because**  
 18 **we couldn't get past it, but it was also around the time**  
 19 **that I recall FSG calls had stopped. Or very, very**  
 20 **close to it. And to do it the other way around would be**  
 21 **leaving firefighters above the fire for long periods of**  
 22 **time, which for me was beyond the realms of safety.**  
 23 Q. Still on this theme about floor limits, do you  
 24 remember -- perhaps I can show you -- MET00005776.  
 25 We can see that this is the white wall on the left

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1 of the lobby as you come in, and you can see just behind  
 2 the yellow cables -- this photograph was taken during  
 3 daylight clearly, not on the night or in darkness  
 4 itself -- you can see someone has written: "04.30 no one  
 5 above 15th". That was Pete Wolfenden who wrote that on  
 6 the wall, then.  
 7 Do you have a recollection of that being the floor  
 8 limit at or around that time?  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. How did you know that that was the floor limit?  
 11 **A. Because --**  
 12 Q. Did you decide that that should be the floor limit?  
 13 **A. At that point -- this was following up -- I'm guessing**  
 14 **this was written on the wall after a conversation Pete**  
 15 **Wolfenden and I had that the evidence was told back last**  
 16 **week into the inquiry, but at that point we had crews**  
 17 **who were unable to get any higher than that, and I had**  
 18 **BA crews returning from trying to get past that in**  
 19 **a physical condition which I felt they were very close**  
 20 **to losing their own lives, and at some point -- probably**  
 21 **the hardest decision I've ever made in my life -- I had**  
 22 **to draw a line where they were still safe.**  
 23 Q. When you drew that line, did you take any steps to make  
 24 sure that the control room knew that you had drawn  
 25 a line, that crews were not going to be going above

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1 those floors, whether the 15th or the 11th?

2 **A. That information was sent back to the incident commander**

3 **via a runner, so AC Roe was made aware of that. But**

4 **I think it's important to put it into context. It**

5 **didn't mean we were just going to stop at the 15th. At**

6 **that point, we had to do something to deal with the heat**

7 **barrier at those floors, because otherwise firefighters**

8 **would push and push and push and get through that, but**

9 **in my opinion, if they got through that, they wouldn't**

10 **have come back. So we had to deal with the fire on**

11 **those floors before we could carry on.**

12 Q. Having explored that question of limits, going back to

13 the timing of your change in strategy, or your addition

14 to the strategy, as you've put it, to do a systematic

15 floor-by-floor approach, I'll come back to my question:

16 even though there may be limits, did you ever give any

17 thought to sending EDDBA wearers up to the highest they

18 could safely go, in your opinion, and then working down

19 the tower from there, rather than working from the lower

20 floors up?

21 **A. It was too dangerous.**

22 Q. Did you give any thought to it, is my question?

23 **A. I think I would've considered it, but I would've**

24 **discounted it straight away.**

25 Q. Why is that?

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1 **A. Because to put firefighters in that heat barrier --**

2 **they're experiencing that heat barrier when they're**

3 **answering FSGs and the pure task when they're doing FSGs**

4 **to try and get in, get the people and get out. To now**

5 **ask them to stay up there and potentially put what could**

6 **be six flats alight, put all of those out, the**

7 **punishment on their bodies and the heat for me was**

8 **beyond the line of safety of them returning back safely.**

9 Q. When you made this decision to change this approach,

10 I think you said earlier -- correct me if

11 I misunderstood your evidence, Mr Welch -- that it was

12 after the FSGs had tailed off.

13 **A. Yes.**

14 Q. I don't know whether you recall this, but the FSGs were

15 continuing to come in until about 06.30 am.

16 **A. Yes, so from what I recall, they had started to tail off**

17 **because I remember asking Pete Wolfenden for a list of**

18 **all FSGs below -- I can't remember clearly if it was the**

19 **11th or the 15th and what was above. So fair to say**

20 **they hadn't stopped, but they were certainly a lot less**

21 **than what they were earlier on in the night.**

22 Q. Were you aware when you made this decision to change the

23 approach if BA crews were still being allocated FSG

24 slips by Watch Manager Williams, Watson, Wolfenden, on

25 the other side of the lobby?

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1 **A. They were still getting given those slips and bringing**

2 **those to the bridgehead.**

3 Q. When they came to the bridgehead, were you giving them

4 sometimes a different brief?

5 **A. Sometimes they would be given a different brief, yes.**

6 Q. When you gave them a different brief, did you take any

7 steps to tell Watch Managers Williams, Watson and

8 Wolfenden that you changed the brief?

9 **A. My recollection is that they were told quite early about**

10 **the level of where we were getting to, and the agreement**

11 **was to still carry on giving them that information,**

12 **crews would come to the bridgehead, we would take that**

13 **information, if it was into an area we couldn't get to**

14 **at that point, we would retain that information, because**

15 **that is where it is best kept, and then give them**

16 **a different task.**

17 Q. Where would you retain the information?

18 **A. At the bridgehead.**

19 Q. In --

20 **A. It was written on a wall.**

21 Q. My question is: when you changed a particular deployment

22 so that a floor wouldn't be reached, did you tell the

23 watch managers in the lobby so that they could at least

24 inform the command unit who could in turn inform

25 control?

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1 **A. Yes, and the command unit was informed.**

2 Q. On each occasion?

3 **A. Yes -- well, I personally sent runners back to inform**

4 **the command unit of what our decisions were.**

5 Q. So let me just get that right. You personally sent

6 runners back from the ground-floor bridgehead directly

7 to the command unit to say, "Call from the 23rd floor

8 not being attended" --

9 **A. No, sorry, my misunderstanding, sorry. They were kept**

10 **informed of the floors we were reaching or not reaching.**

11 Q. Who was kept informed?

12 **A. The command unit.**

13 Q. In general terms?

14 **A. Yes. So when we said, "Right, we can't get above the**

15 **11th", that was immediately communicated back to the**

16 **command unit.**

17 Q. But my question was more specific. It was that if

18 a crew presented to the bridgehead with FSG information

19 relating to a call from, for example, the 20th floor,

20 but you then changed the brief so that you weren't going

21 to send EDDBA wearers to the 20th floor, did you inform

22 anybody, including the watch managers on the wall in the

23 lobby, that that crew was not going to be deployed in

24 response to that FSG call?

25 **A. My recollection is that that was communicated to the**

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1 bridgehead and back to the FSG wall very quickly.  
 2 Q. On each and every occasion?  
 3 A. I can't tell you each and every occasion because  
 4 I wouldn't have been aware of each and every occasion,  
 5 but that information was going back to them.  
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, I'm sorry to interrupt  
 7 you, could I try and clarify one thing with Mr Welch.  
 8 Mr Welch, you said you asked Pete Wolfenden for  
 9 a list of the FSGs above and below certain floors, and  
 10 did you receive that?  
 11 A. Yes, sir.  
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you remember in what form you  
 13 received it?  
 14 A. On a piece of paper.  
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: More than one piece of paper?  
 16 A. I only recall one piece of paper.  
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, the reason I ask is  
 18 because we've seen from time to time that sheet with  
 19 a lot of little leaves from firefighters' notebooks  
 20 which are written in a certain way which suggests that  
 21 they are lists or summaries, not individual FSG calls.  
 22 MR MILLETT: Yes.  
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I wonder whether it would be worth  
 24 asking --  
 25 MR MILLETT: Going back to that, yes. It's LFB00001929.

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1 A. Mr O'Keeffe's list.  
 2 Q. Well, scraps of paper that Mr O'Keeffe says he found in  
 3 his tunic at the end of the night. If we can just have  
 4 those up on the screen again, just in response to the  
 5 chairman's question.  
 6 Just taking up the chairman's question, do you think  
 7 that these were the lists that you asked Pete Wolfenden  
 8 to give you, or were these scraps of paper being brought  
 9 in by crews?  
 10 A. So the two that are in different handwriting is what  
 11 I would recognise as being brought in by crews.  
 12 Q. As you said before.  
 13 A. Yes. The others, I couldn't say I remember these  
 14 specific pieces of paper, but that would look very much  
 15 like the information I asked for.  
 16 Q. Right, I see.  
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.  
 18 MR MILLETT: Just going back to the point about deployments,  
 19 if I can.  
 20 I just want to put an example of a change of  
 21 approach or change in briefing to you.  
 22 If I can ask you to go to the BA Telemetry, Time  
 23 Line (5), we have a tally out time of 03.29 for two  
 24 firefighters, bright green, bottom of page, from  
 25 Battersea, EDDBA wearers, Mayne and Lundquist. Do you

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1 see that?  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. They tally out at 03.29.05 and 03.29.29.  
 4 They say in their evidence, their witness  
 5 statements, that they were originally given a specific  
 6 briefing to go to flat 113 on the 14th floor, but then  
 7 that was changed before they were committed and they  
 8 were asked instead to carry out firefighting on the 4th  
 9 floor.  
 10 Do you have a specific recollection of changing that  
 11 brief?  
 12 A. No.  
 13 Q. Is that an example, even though you don't remember that  
 14 specifically, of the kind of brief that you would give  
 15 firefighters who had come in to the bridgehead with  
 16 a brief to go to the 14th floor and you changing it to  
 17 firefighting on the 4th, for example?  
 18 A. I would find that unusual, and the timings wouldn't  
 19 correspond with that discussion around the limit of the  
 20 11th floor.  
 21 Q. Well, that brings me back to ask you whether given that  
 22 that is what they say, whether you're sure or confident,  
 23 perhaps, about the timing of when you changed or added  
 24 to the system?  
 25 A. I couldn't be sure about that timing, no.

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1 Q. Is it possible that in fact that change in strategy  
 2 happened really pretty soon after you came down to the  
 3 ground floor?  
 4 A. No, I don't think it did.  
 5 Q. You don't think it did?  
 6 A. No.  
 7 Q. Why do you not think it did?  
 8 A. I just don't recall it happening that quickly. It felt  
 9 like much later on to me.  
 10 Q. Let me push this a little bit more. There's a second  
 11 example of this, I think. Help me here. If you go to  
 12 Time Line (6), you can see a Wimbledon EDDBA crew,  
 13 Harrold, Peacock, Friend and Rice, all tallying out at  
 14 03.31 and 03.32. Rice may be an outlier because he  
 15 tallies out at 03.58, so I'm not sure we link him  
 16 necessarily, but sticking with Harrold, Peacock and  
 17 Friend from Wimbledon.  
 18 They say they were initially tasked with going to  
 19 flat 203 on the 23rd floor, and then the brief was  
 20 changed to search and rescue on the 4th and 5th floors  
 21 or possibly the 6th floors.  
 22 Again, do you remember changing that crew's brief?  
 23 A. No.  
 24 Q. Again, is that an example of the kind of thing that was  
 25 happening at that time, around about the 03.30 mark?

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1 **A. I would be surprised about that happening at that time.**  
 2 **I don't recall that happening at that time, without**  
 3 **a very good reason behind it.**  
 4 Q. Is it possible -- don't speculate -- that those briefs  
 5 were changed but it was Pat Goulbourne and not you doing  
 6 that change, effecting that change?  
 7 **A. It's possible, and if he did, it would be for good**  
 8 **reason.**  
 9 Q. Once the system was changed or, as you would have it,  
 10 added to so that you were doing floor sweeps and moving  
 11 up the building from low down, can you explain why EDDBA  
 12 resources were being tasked to those lower floors?  
 13 **A. No, I can't.**  
 14 Q. Is there a good reason that you can think of?  
 15 **A. I can probably think of several possibilities but it**  
 16 **wouldn't be fair or accurate.**  
 17 Q. Okay.  
 18 In general terms, can you explain what the purpose  
 19 of sending EDDBA wearers to low floors to search and  
 20 rescue would be when you have outstanding FSG calls  
 21 coming from high floors?  
 22 **A. Having not committed them to do that task, I wouldn't be**  
 23 **able to answer that honestly, why that was done.**  
 24 Q. Do you remember having a discussion which some of the  
 25 witnesses have referred to as heated or passionate or

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1 enthusiastic, with Watch Manager Williams and Station  
 2 Manager Wolfenden about who was in charge of committing  
 3 crews?  
 4 **A. I remember having a heated discussion with Station**  
 5 **Manager Wolfenden. I think it's fair to say it was**  
 6 **a passionate discussion because we weren't reaching the**  
 7 **FSGs that he wanted us to reach. I remember that heated**  
 8 **discussion with him, yes.**  
 9 Q. You do.  
 10 **A. I don't recall it being about who was in charge.**  
 11 Q. The discussion was about, what, floor levels, was it?  
 12 **A. Yes.**  
 13 Q. Do you remember a discussion with him or Williams about  
 14 a decision by bridgehead command not to commit any crews  
 15 above a particular floor?  
 16 **A. No, because that's not true.**  
 17 Q. Right.  
 18 **A. We reached a point where, as I've tried to explain,**  
 19 **there was floors we couldn't reach. It didn't mean**  
 20 **that -- it was never a conscious decision: we are not**  
 21 **going above there. It was: right now that's not safe,**  
 22 **we've got to deal with that floor and make that a safer**  
 23 **working area.**  
 24 Q. Coming back to the question of floor levels and  
 25 discussions, Station Manager Wolfenden's evidence was --

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1 I'm summarising it again, I hope fairly -- that he came  
 2 to speak to you when he heard that the bridgehead was  
 3 not committing crews above the 10th floor and, as  
 4 a result of a discussion, you agreed to try to get crews  
 5 up to the 15th floor.  
 6 Does that discussion ring a bell with you?  
 7 **A. It does sound familiar, yes.**  
 8 Q. Do you remember roughly when you had that discussion?  
 9 **A. Absolutely not, no.**  
 10 Q. I've shown you the photograph with the yellow wires  
 11 where it says 04.30, no one above 15th floor.  
 12 Does that assist in your recollection as to when you  
 13 might have had that conversation?  
 14 **A. That may well have been around that time but I couldn't**  
 15 **be sure of that, I'm afraid.**  
 16 Q. Was that a separate discussion about who was in charge  
 17 of --  
 18 **A. No, I think I remember that as being the discussion**  
 19 **I referred to earlier.**  
 20 Q. Okay.  
 21 **A. There wasn't ...**  
 22 Q. Do you have a recollection of Station Manager Egan  
 23 coming to speak to you at the bridgehead when it was on  
 24 the ground floor of the tower?  
 25 **A. I don't remember seeing Station Manager Egan within the**

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1 **building.**  
 2 Q. He gave evidence and said -- again, I'm commenting, and  
 3 for our record it's the transcript of 4 July at pages 17  
 4 to 19, and I'm summarising again -- that there was  
 5 a discussion between him, you and DAC Goulbourne in  
 6 which he expressed concern -- are you okay?  
 7 **A. Yes.**  
 8 Q. He expressed concern that too much focus was being put  
 9 on trying to put the fire out and not enough focus on  
 10 rescuing occupants of the building. That's what he  
 11 remembers.  
 12 Do you remember that?  
 13 **A. Can I ask, what time did he say this was around?**  
 14 Q. Well, I'm not going to be able to tell you exactly --  
 15 **A. Okay, so --**  
 16 Q. Late on.  
 17 **A. So the answer is no, I don't remember that conversation,**  
 18 **and that would be wholly inaccurate because it became**  
 19 **very apparent very early on that this was no longer**  
 20 **a firefighting operation, it was actually a rescue**  
 21 **operation.**  
 22 Q. Do you remember whether Station Manager Egan expressed  
 23 any frustration, either to you or anybody else, that the  
 24 command unit wasn't getting back any reports of the  
 25 results of deployments?

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<p>1 <b>A. I do not remember seeing Station Manager Egan within the</b>  2 <b>building.</b>  3 Q. Do you remember speaking to him on the radio at all?  4 <b>A. No.</b>  5 Q. Did you have any conversations with Station Manager Egan  6 on the night?  7 <b>A. I have a vague recollection of seeing him at some point</b>  8 <b>outside early on in the evening, before I even took over</b>  9 <b>as fire sector commander, but I don't remember having</b>  10 <b>a conversation with him at all, no.</b>  11 Q. Now, I want to turn to the question of the change in  12 stay-put advice.  13 Can I ask you to look at your second statement.  14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Are you happy to carry on?  15 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b>  16 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We can have a break if you would –</b>  17 <b>A. That's fine, I'm all right, thank you.</b>  18 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.</b>  19 MR MILLETT: Can I ask you to look at your second statement,  20 please, Mr Welch, and ask you to go, please, to page 9.  21 It's the final paragraph, in fact.  22 You say:  23 "I think I became aware of a change to the stay put  24 advice sometime around 08:00 am."  25 I think you changed that right at the start of your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 209</p>	<p>1 Q. So "Group Manager Cook came in and told me", do you know  2 where he got that information from?  3 <b>A. Well, throughout the evening, he was the main source of</b>  4 <b>information, conduit between the bridgehead and the</b>  5 <b>command unit.</b>  6 Q. Was he? Was he running or on the radio?  7 <b>A. Running.</b>  8 Q. This is Matt Cook, is it?  9 <b>A. Yes.</b>  10 Q. Did he have pieces of paper in his hand at all with fire  11 survival guidance details on it?  12 <b>A. I don't remember.</b>  13 Q. You don't remember?  14 <b>A. Not that I remember, no.</b>  15 Q. Can I ask you to look at the short incident log, please,  16 at page 22. I want to show you the time mark of  17 02.17.36, where you can see a service request for  18 a dangerous structure engineer. This is not long after,  19 as you can see from the time, 02.36, you had left CU8  20 and gone to the bridgehead.  21 Were you aware at the time that a dangerous  22 structure engineer had been called for?  23 <b>A. I requested one.</b>  24 Q. You were the one who requested it?  25 <b>A. Just to make it clear, I asked for information to get</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 211</p>
<p>1 evidence to 06.00 am.  2 <b>A. 03.00 am.</b>  3 Q. 03.00 am, I'm so sorry.  4 How did you become aware?  5 <b>A. Group Manager Cook came in and told me.</b>  6 Q. He came into the bridgehead, did he?  7 <b>A. Yes.</b>  8 Q. That was when it was on the 3rd floor, was it?  9 <b>A. Ground floor, I believe.</b>  10 Q. You believe it was the ground floor?  11 <b>A. I thought it was the ground floor, so it was around that</b>  12 <b>03.00 am mark.</b>  13 Q. Right. I mean, we don't have precise times for the  14 move, but we think the bridgehead was being moved down  15 at 03.08, which is why we have the picture of the  16 3rd floor wall at that time.  17 <b>A. My recollection is I was down on the ground floor when</b>  18 <b>I got that information, so maybe 03.30.</b>  19 Q. We're still trying to establish exactly what time it was  20 changed, but at the moment we can give a range, let's  21 say, between 02.30 and 02.50. If that is right, do you  22 know or understand why you at the bridgehead only came  23 to learn of the change in the stay-put advice after  24 that, so long after that?  25 <b>A. I've no idea.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 210</p>	<p>1 <b>back to the command unit to request a dangerous</b>  2 <b>structure engineer.</b>  3 Q. Am I right in thinking this wasn't something that  4 originated from DAC O'Loughlin?  5 <b>A. My request would go back to him and he would make the</b>  6 <b>formal request into control.</b>  7 Q. What led you to ask for a dangerous structure engineer?  8 <b>A. Protocols, really, in that any fire we have in</b>  9 <b>a substantial building that's got a large percentage of</b>  10 <b>it involved in fire, I would ask for a dangerous</b>  11 <b>structure engineer to give me a better overview of the</b>  12 <b>integrity of that building.</b>  13 Q. Did you have any particular concerns about the integrity  14 of Grenfell Tower at that point?  15 <b>A. Only the impact a fire of that size would have on that</b>  16 <b>building.</b>  17 Q. Did you have any thoughts at that stage, given you were  18 asking for a dangerous structure engineer to be called  19 for, about whether the stay-put advice was still a wise  20 thing to be giving residents?  21 <b>A. No, because my request for the dangerous structure</b>  22 <b>engineer wasn't as a result of specific concerns; it was</b>  23 <b>an overview of things we should consider.</b>  24 Q. So you didn't see any inconsistency between calling for  25 a dangerous structure engineer and at the same time</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 212</p>

1 maintaining the stay-put advice in place?  
 2 **A. To me the two were unconnected, and ultimately to change**  
 3 **that stay-put advice was -- so people who were making**  
 4 **fire survival guidance calls, in my view their best**  
 5 **chance was for us to go and get them, try and improve**  
 6 **the conditions for their route out to make it safe. By**  
 7 **changing the stay-put advice and telling them to get out**  
 8 **into an area they didn't know was a higher risk than us**  
 9 **trying to get to them.**  
 10 Q. That takes me to another question, which is --  
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, how are you getting on?  
 12 MR MILLETT: I only have about five more minutes of  
 13 questions. Perhaps we can finish that off and then we  
 14 can take a --  
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Then we'll have the usual 5 minutes,  
 16 plus the usual 5 minutes.  
 17 MR MILLETT: I appreciate that, Mr Chairman. I'm going to  
 18 finish off this and a couple of other I hope short  
 19 things, if I may.  
 20 Mr Welch, why might it be dangerous to change the  
 21 stay-put policy to an all out?  
 22 **A. Because with people coming out into an area that they've**  
 23 **already deemed is unsafe for them to get out to, we're**  
 24 **not there to assist them, we're not there to improve the**  
 25 **conditions they're coming into before they come out, and**

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1 **a large number of people coming down a very narrow**  
 2 **staircase poses its own safety issues. Also, we had no**  
 3 **way of communicating that.**  
 4 Q. There's a lot of FSG information on the walls and on  
 5 pieces of paper.  
 6 Do you have any particular recollections  
 7 independently of any particular flat numbers?  
 8 **A. No, none whatsoever.**  
 9 Q. So if I were to ask you questions about, for example,  
 10 flat 205 or flat 204, flat 74, would you be able to help  
 11 me?  
 12 **A. Absolutely no recollection of any individual numbers.**  
 13 Q. None stand out in your memory?  
 14 **A. No, I'm sorry.**  
 15 MR MILLETT: Okay.  
 16 Mr Welch, thank you very much. You will be glad to  
 17 hear I have come to the end of my questions. What  
 18 normally happens is I ask the chairman to rise for  
 19 a few minutes to make sure I have covered all my notes.  
 20 I am going to ask him to do that now.  
 21 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I am going to rise for 5 minutes.  
 23 It sometimes happens that there are further questions,  
 24 so could you please go with the usher now and obviously  
 25 don't talk to anyone about your evidence, and we'll come

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1 back in 5 minutes and see whether there are.  
 2 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.  
 4 Right, 4.25, please.  
 5 MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.  
 6 (4.21 pm)  
 7 (A short break)  
 8 (4.28 pm)  
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you, Mr Welch. I don't know  
 10 if there are any more questions. Mr Millett is going to  
 11 tell us now.  
 12 MR MILLETT: Mr Welch, in the usual way of things, there are  
 13 a few that I have been reminded to ask you very  
 14 helpfully.  
 15 The first relates to PPV, positive pressure  
 16 ventilation units. Could I take you to page 9 of your  
 17 first statement, please. This is an equipment question.  
 18 In the second line there, you say that:  
 19 "I used a Positive Pressure Ventilation Unit (PPV)  
 20 to try and push smoke up the stairwell so we could get  
 21 higher but it didn't work."  
 22 When you say it didn't work, did the machine work?  
 23 **A. Yes, it did.**  
 24 Q. So do you mean when it didn't work it was the method  
 25 that didn't work?

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1 **A. By the time that the PPV unit had arrived and we set it**  
 2 **up, we were unable to use it at the bottom of the**  
 3 **staircase and it actually had to be used in the entrance**  
 4 **to the main lobby.**  
 5 Q. Right.  
 6 **A. Which made it quite ineffective, because what it ended**  
 7 **up doing was drawing -- the clean air that it should**  
 8 **draw in behind it was actually the smoke from the**  
 9 **burning debris around the building, so it just increased**  
 10 **the smoke within the building.**  
 11 Q. So you were drawing in --  
 12 **A. Dirty air.**  
 13 Q. From outside?  
 14 **A. Mm.**  
 15 Q. Because of the unique situation about burning debris  
 16 having come off the building?  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 Q. What about a mobile extraction system, a mobile smoke  
 19 extraction system? Do you know what I mean by one of  
 20 those?  
 21 **A. It's not something I'm familiar with.**  
 22 Q. No. In general terms, are you aware that mobile smoke  
 23 extraction systems are available that you can bring to  
 24 tower blocks and suck the smoke out?  
 25 **A. I've never seen one being used at all, no, no.**

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1 Q. I just thought I would try that one.  
 2 Self-evacuation.  
 3 We have examples of occupants managing under their  
 4 own steam to get out of the building. We have one at  
 5 4 o'clock, a family coming down at 04.00 am or so and  
 6 two ladies evacuating by themselves at 04.40.  
 7 Were you aware that, as late as that in the night,  
 8 individuals were self-evacuating?  
 9 **A. Yes, I was, yes.**  
 10 Q. Did that tell you anything about whether it was actually  
 11 possible to get people up to the higher floors?  
 12 **A. I think the important thing to understand with this is**  
 13 **that the conditions in a building like that, with that**  
 14 **extent of fire, changed by the second. So it may well**  
 15 **be that people may be able to get out in a very small**  
 16 **window of time and make it, but that will be a very**  
 17 **small window of time because that condition will have**  
 18 **changed 10 seconds, 30 seconds later.**  
 19 **So they were very lucky.**  
 20 Q. When they self-evacuated, did you yourself talk to them  
 21 about what they'd found and what they'd experienced?  
 22 **A. No, I think I was made aware that they had done.**  
 23 Q. Were you aware at the time?  
 24 **A. Vaguely. I was aware it was later on, because**  
 25 **I remember the surprise at that time that they managed**

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1 **to get out.**  
 2 Q. Did the FSG team working under you get a good debrief  
 3 from them, do you think, which would inform further  
 4 deployments?  
 5 **A. As far as I'm concerned, everyone that came out**  
 6 **unless -- everyone that came out that was from the fire**  
 7 **crew's point of view in a fit state to be able to give**  
 8 **us a debrief, and from the resident's point of view were**  
 9 **also in a fit enough state and had a good enough level**  
 10 **of English, then we were getting debriefs from every**  
 11 **person. They were the only things that may have got in**  
 12 **our way to prevent that or slow that down.**  
 13 Q. Still on the subject of debriefing, you say -- this is  
 14 page 7 of your statement, but we need not go back to  
 15 it -- when a BA didn't report back, you would declare  
 16 a firefighter emergency, and then they would appear with  
 17 their face masks off because they had run out of air,  
 18 summarising what you say.  
 19 Are you aware of any previous incidents where  
 20 firefighters would arrive back at the bridgehead with  
 21 their face masks off because they've run out of air?  
 22 **A. That would be extremely rare and very bad practice.**  
 23 **I believe on the night I declared a firefighter**  
 24 **emergency three times, which is a very serious issue for**  
 25 **us. It means one of our personnel or people under our**

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1 **control are in need of rescuing. But that is a very**  
 2 **good indicator of the levels that individuals and the**  
 3 **risks that individuals are willing to take to try and**  
 4 **rescue residents out of Grenfell Tower.**  
 5 Q. Have you ever been at an incident previously where  
 6 multiple firefighter emergencies have been declared?  
 7 **A. No.**  
 8 Q. You I think say that you asked Watch Manager Williams to  
 9 prioritise FSG calls; is that right?  
 10 **A. I remember having a conversation with Watch Manager**  
 11 **De Silvo. I don't specifically remember having that**  
 12 **conversation with Watch Manager Williams. But I think**  
 13 **my recollection is that he told me how to prioritise**  
 14 **them.**  
 15 Q. Watch Manager Williams says that you told him to  
 16 prioritise the calls. It comes from his statement and  
 17 he has given some evidence about that.  
 18 Do you remember having that conversation with him?  
 19 **A. No.**  
 20 Q. You don't?  
 21 **A. But it's quite likely that I probably did.**  
 22 Q. Do you remember giving him any specific instructions as  
 23 to how to go about prioritising the calls?  
 24 **A. No, but I suspect it'd be the same brief I'd given Watch**  
 25 **Manager De Silvo earlier.**

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1 Q. When giving instructions either to him or Watch Manager  
 2 De Silvo, did you have thoughts about whether the  
 3 firefighting strategy would be improved by requiring  
 4 them to collate FSG calls by floor or by flat number?  
 5 Did you think about that?  
 6 **A. I do have recollections of BA crews being committed to**  
 7 **floors for FSGs. I remember seeing that happening.**  
 8 **I don't recall exactly when that was happening. But**  
 9 **I do recall crews being committed to a floor rather than**  
 10 **a flat and told to search all flats on that floor.**  
 11 Q. Just approaching the question of collation and  
 12 organisation of FSG calls, did it occur to you to ask  
 13 Watch Manager De Silvo or Watch Manager Williams to make  
 14 deployments in order of floor rather than on a first  
 15 come first served basis?  
 16 **A. No, and that's not a practice I would encourage.**  
 17 Q. Why is that?  
 18 **A. If we only get one to a floor, then I don't want them**  
 19 **waiting until they got two or three before we deploy; we**  
 20 **will deploy to each one that needs us as soon as we can,**  
 21 **which to me is better practice.**  
 22 Q. What would you do if on the way to a floor that you  
 23 deployed them to, firefighters would come across  
 24 a rescue they needed to make urgently so they never  
 25 actually got to their floor?

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1 **A. That happened. That happened regularly. They would**  
 2 **communicate that back to the bridgehead either by radio**  
 3 **or upon their return and I witnessed then other crews**  
 4 **being deployed to the crew's initial task.**  
 5 Q. Were you satisfied in your own mind that where crews had  
 6 been diverted from their original deployment to  
 7 a particular flat or floor, a redeployment to that flat  
 8 or floor occurred?  
 9 **A. Absolutely. I was absolutely satisfied and had absolute**  
 10 **faith with the crews working with me on the bridgehead**  
 11 **that that was happening.**  
 12 Q. Were you reliant when doing that redeployment on getting  
 13 accurate and satisfactorily detailed debriefings from  
 14 crews as they came down?  
 15 **A. Yes.**  
 16 Q. Going back to the question I asked you before, you are  
 17 satisfied you got that on each occasion, are you?  
 18 **A. Yes. Even the crews that weren't fit enough when they**  
 19 **did come down would mean we would get the information**  
 20 **some time later, but they were crews that had reached**  
 21 **their task or beyond. So quite often where we would**  
 22 **deploy crews to a flat, actually the residents of that**  
 23 **flat have already moved. So, you know, the crews would**  
 24 **come back and it would be, actually, there's nobody in**  
 25 **that flat, because people were moving around a lot on**

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1 **the night.**  
 2 MR MILLETT: Mr Welch, thank you very much, I have no  
 3 further questions for you.  
 4 Can I just say, I'm very grateful to you for coming  
 5 here and assisting us with our investigations. It's  
 6 very much appreciated.  
 7 THE WITNESS: Sir, with your permission, may I address the  
 8 families?  
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Of course.  
 10 THE WITNESS: I would just like to say to the families that  
 11 we're very sorry for the amount of people we lost that  
 12 night. We couldn't have done any more. We did  
 13 everything we could, and every one of us that went into  
 14 that building were willing to lose our own lives to save  
 15 your loved ones. We didn't let you down, the building  
 16 let us all down, and I'm sorry for your loss.  
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Welch, thank you very much.  
 18 I am sorry this day has gone on rather longer than  
 19 you may have wished or we might have hoped, but it's  
 20 really very valuable to have had your evidence, and I am  
 21 grateful to you for coming along.  
 22 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.  
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you, and you are free to go.  
 24 THE WITNESS: Thank you.  
 25 (The witness withdrew)

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1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: There we are for the day,  
 2 Mr Millett.  
 3 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, I'm sorry that that took  
 4 a little bit longer than I would have hoped. I'm  
 5 grateful to you for sitting a little bit later than we  
 6 would normally.  
 7 Tomorrow morning I'm told Mr Kinnier is taking  
 8 charge.  
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, he hasn't put you up to ask for  
 10 an early start?  
 11 MR MILLETT: No, he's not, nor has he provided me with any  
 12 information that would lead me to make that application  
 13 unprompted. So 10 o'clock.  
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. 10 o'clock  
 15 tomorrow, please.  
 16 Thank you.  
 17 (4.40 pm)  
 18 (The hearing adjourned until Wednesday, 19 September 2018 at  
 19 10.00 am)  
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