

<p>1 Monday, 2 July 2018</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to</p> <p>4 today's hearing. We are going to hear further evidence</p> <p>5 from firefighters in the course of today.</p> <p>6 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>8 Please may we call our next witness, who is</p> <p>9 Firefighter Thomas Abell.</p> <p>10 THOMAS ABELL (affirmed)</p> <p>11 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Good morning.</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: Morning.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Good morning, Mr Abell.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Good morning.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Are you happy standing or would you prefer to sit?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I'm happy standing, yeah.</b></p> <p>18 Q. If at any time you want to sit, please just say and you</p> <p>19 can sit.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Could you please give the inquiry your full name?</p> <p>22 <b>A. My name is Thomas Charles Abell.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Thank you very much.</p> <p>24 You have a statement which has been given to the</p> <p>25 police and provided to the inquiry, which you should</p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Firefighter.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Now, you set out details in your statement of your</p> <p>3 training, but I'd like to ask you just one or two</p> <p>4 questions about the following that may be particularly</p> <p>5 relevant to our work.</p> <p>6 You say that you're considered competent in the</p> <p>7 first line of the second paragraph of page 1. Could you</p> <p>8 explain what competent means.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Competent means -- after finishing training school,</b></p> <p>10 <b>you're on development -- you have a development folder</b></p> <p>11 <b>that you need to complete -- you complete various</b></p> <p>12 <b>aspects of the job role. After a certain amount of time</b></p> <p>13 <b>and proving that you're competent in different areas,</b></p> <p>14 <b>you get signed off as a competent firefighter and you</b></p> <p>15 <b>get to take these things called diamonds off your helmet</b></p> <p>16 <b>so people can see you are a competent firefighter. I</b></p> <p>17 <b>think that was in about 2013, I became competent.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right. When as soon as possible before June 2017 were</p> <p>19 you graded competent, or was it just when you left</p> <p>20 training?</p> <p>21 <b>A. It was 2013 when I finished my development folder, as</b></p> <p>22 <b>it's called, you're then competent and you become a</b></p> <p>23 <b>competent firefighter.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Were you reassessed at any time between then and 2017?</p> <p>25 <b>A. It was ongoing assessment through finishing training</b></p> <p>Page 3</p>
<p>1 have in a small bundle in front of you --</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. -- at tab 5A. The Relativity reference to that is</p> <p>4 MET000080558. Attached to it are, I think, two</p> <p>5 documents: your contemporaneous notes, handwritten,</p> <p>6 which is MET00005699, and your statement MET00005700.</p> <p>7 So far as your statement is concerned, Mr Abell,</p> <p>8 it's dated 13 December 2017. Have you read it recently?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Are its contents true, can you confirm?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>13 Have you discussed your statement or the evidence</p> <p>14 that you are going to give today to the inquiry with</p> <p>15 anybody before coming here today?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Can you just give me a thumbnail sketch of your career</p> <p>18 at the London Fire Brigade, starting with when you</p> <p>19 joined.</p> <p>20 <b>A. I joined the London Fire Brigade in September 2011.</b></p> <p>21 <b>I started my basic training for four months at Southwark</b></p> <p>22 <b>Training Centre. After that, I was posted to North</b></p> <p>23 <b>Kensington fire station on the Red Watch, that will be</b></p> <p>24 <b>in early February 2012, and I've been there ever since.</b></p> <p>25 Q. At June 2017, what was your rank?</p> <p>Page 2</p>	<p>1 <b>school to that time.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Right.</p> <p>3 High-rise fires. This is a subject I just want to</p> <p>4 investigate with you a little bit.</p> <p>5 Were you, as at June 2017, aware of any fires such</p> <p>6 as Shepherds Court or Lakanal House?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I was aware of Lakanal House through a case study</b></p> <p>8 <b>I looked at in 2014 with the Brigade, in Christmas 2014,</b></p> <p>9 <b>and I was at the Shepherds Court fire.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You were at Shepherds Court?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. What did you learn from your case study about</p> <p>13 Lakanal House that you just told us about in 2014?</p> <p>14 <b>A. The case study was a long time ago; I can't remember the</b></p> <p>15 <b>real ins and outs of what we learned. But it was</b></p> <p>16 <b>obviously at that point one of the most unusual and</b></p> <p>17 <b>worst fires the Brigade had dealt with. But I really</b></p> <p>18 <b>can't remember the content; it was too long ago.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Was there anything in that training that you remember</p> <p>20 about what would happen when compartmentation within</p> <p>21 a high-rise block is breached?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I can't remember.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Can you remember anything about whether you learnt</p> <p>24 anything in that programme about the spread of fire on</p> <p>25 the exterior of a high-rise block?</p> <p>Page 4</p>

<p>1 <b>A. No, I can't remember.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So you can't remember one way or the other; is that</p> <p>3 right?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, it's a long time ago.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Shepherds Court, you say you attended.</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Was that at the same time as Mike Dowden and the rest of</p> <p>8 Red Watch?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I believe it was, yes. I was in the same machine as</b></p> <p>10 <b>Mike Dowden.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Do you remember who attended from Red Watch in addition</p> <p>12 to you and Mr Dowden?</p> <p>13 <b>A. The only people I remember were me, my governor</b></p> <p>14 <b>Mike Dowden and Charlie Batterbee was there; he was</b></p> <p>15 <b>riding a different machine and got there a bit later.</b></p> <p>16 <b>I can't remember anybody else from that fire.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Do you remember at what stage in the progress of the</p> <p>18 Shepherds Court fire you arrived?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I believe it was when it was made pumps eight, so we</b></p> <p>20 <b>were a bit of a later attendance and the fire was in</b></p> <p>21 <b>full swing when we arrived.</b></p> <p>22 Q. What did you see when you arrived?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I saw a multi-compartment fire that had spread up the</b></p> <p>24 <b>building.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Could you see what was on fire on the outside of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 <b>Trellick Tower, we were looking at high-rise a little</b></p> <p>2 <b>bit more. So that was a pre-made Fire Brigade training</b></p> <p>3 <b>package that would've been delivered by Watch Manager</b></p> <p>4 <b>Dowden.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Can you remember what the focus -- or the take-away, if</p> <p>6 you like -- from that particular training programme was</p> <p>7 just a few weeks before Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I believe it was just a general refresher in the basics</b></p> <p>9 <b>of high-rise firefighting, sort of what to do on</b></p> <p>10 <b>arrival, sectorisation of the building -- you know,</b></p> <p>11 <b>stuff we would already know from previously at training</b></p> <p>12 <b>school, but just to refresh your memory.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Anything about how to deal with a fire on the exterior</p> <p>14 of a building?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Anything about what would happen if compartmentation was</p> <p>17 breached?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Anything about what you might do if you had to consider</p> <p>20 partial or total evacuation of a high-rise building?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>22 Q. In your witness statement at page 1, paragraph 2, you</p> <p>23 say at the end of the first line:</p> <p>24 "The last realistic firefighting training I have had</p> <p>25 for high a rise block of flat was in the summer of 2016.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 building?</p> <p>2 <b>A. It looked to be just, like, the windows; the area around</b></p> <p>3 <b>the windows was on fire.</b></p> <p>4 Q. In your career at North Kensington, have you attended</p> <p>5 calls to fires in high-rise buildings before?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. When and where, can you help?</p> <p>8 <b>A. The one that I can remember will be Trellick Tower,</b></p> <p>9 <b>which was around a month and a half/two months before</b></p> <p>10 <b>Grenfell Tower, and that was a fire in one compartment.</b></p> <p>11 Q. A fire in one compartment, yes.</p> <p>12 In very short terms, what were the lessons that you</p> <p>13 learnt as a firefighter from attending the fire at</p> <p>14 Trellick Tower?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Not really any lessons, but one thing that happened</b></p> <p>16 <b>there was the wet rising main was defective and wouldn't</b></p> <p>17 <b>work, so that delayed us in making entry to that</b></p> <p>18 <b>compartment.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Yes.</p> <p>20 How often prior to June 2017 did you receive</p> <p>21 training in relation to fighting fires in high-rise</p> <p>22 residential properties?</p> <p>23 <b>A. We have a regular training that's in our diary.</b></p> <p>24 <b>I believe the last time before Grenfell was actually</b></p> <p>25 <b>just a few weeks before. Having just been at</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 The course was called 'Back to basics,' and comprised of</p> <p>2 a case study lecture on the Lakanal house high rise</p> <p>3 fire. The course also had a practical element to it,</p> <p>4 where we carried out a drill relating to a high rise</p> <p>5 fire. We used Hammersmith's tower to do this."</p> <p>6 Could you just tell me a little bit about the case</p> <p>7 study. First of all, do you remember, what were its</p> <p>8 basic elements?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I need to mention that the case study, I think, since</b></p> <p>10 <b>doing the statement, I might have confused what I just</b></p> <p>11 <b>mentioned to the you about the Lakanal House case study</b></p> <p>12 <b>I did in 2014 with the contents of this back to basics</b></p> <p>13 <b>session. I don't believe it was about Lakanal House.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Oh, I see. Okay. So everything you've told me just now</p> <p>15 about 2014 applies to the questions on the case study?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. I see, okay.</p> <p>18 Let me just press you a little bit, though. The</p> <p>19 practical side of it, you say you did a drill relating</p> <p>20 to a high-rise fire and you used Hammersmith's tower to</p> <p>21 do this.</p> <p>22 Could you just describe for us what you did in</p> <p>23 practical terms when carrying out the drill relating to</p> <p>24 a high-rise fire using Hammersmith's tower?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Well, again, that's a long time ago. My memory's not</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 <b>great of that day. I just remember that I was a pump</b></p> <p>2 <b>operator in that drill, so my job was just to augment</b></p> <p>3 <b>the water supply, and I can't remember what anybody else</b></p> <p>4 <b>would've done at that drill in their different job</b></p> <p>5 <b>roles. It was a long time ago.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You also describe in your statement in, I suppose, the</p> <p>7 second part of the second main paragraph -- you say in</p> <p>8 the first sentence:</p> <p>9 "In addition to this I would have completed the</p> <p>10 Breathing Apparatus (B/A) refreshers course -- this is a</p> <p>11 breathing apparatus refresher that we have to pass</p> <p>12 annually."</p> <p>13 You say it's a two-day assessment comprising</p> <p>14 theoretical and practical elements.</p> <p>15 Could you clarify whether the refresher training</p> <p>16 takes place over two days every two years --</p> <p>17 <b>A. It's every two years, yes. I said annually there, but</b></p> <p>18 <b>it is every two years.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Is there a one-day course in the intervening year?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yeah, there's another one day course which covers</b></p> <p>21 <b>a little bit less, but we do that once a year,</b></p> <p>22 <b>I believe, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So you do two days one year, one day the next?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Two days, one day, et cetera.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 a building -- say halfway up a building -- carrying out</p> <p>2 firefighting or a rescue and your whistle goes? What</p> <p>3 are you trained to do at that point?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Well, theoretically you need to get out of that building</b></p> <p>5 <b>if your whistle goes, because you need to get out.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay. Are you given any training as to what choices you</p> <p>7 might have as opposed to just getting out at that point?</p> <p>8 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Can I just turn, then, to the next topic, which is your</p> <p>10 own personal professional experience of high-rise fires.</p> <p>11 What front-line experience do you have of fighting</p> <p>12 actual fires in actual high-rise buildings?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I've not fought a fire in a high-rise building until the</b></p> <p>14 <b>night of Grenfell Tower. Yeah.</b></p> <p>15 Q. So when you say in the second-last line of the second</p> <p>16 paragraph on page 1, "I have never 'fought fire'", do</p> <p>17 you mean that Grenfell Tower was actually your first</p> <p>18 high-rise actual fire you attended?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I've attended high-rise fires, but I wasn't in a BA crew</b></p> <p>20 <b>that went into the building and extinguished the fire.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Thank you. Right.</p> <p>22 If you look at the bottom of page 1, and over to the</p> <p>23 top of page 2 of your statement, you refer there to the</p> <p>24 stay-put policy, and you say:</p> <p>25 "The 'stay put policy,' is a policy the LFB use when</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. I see.</p> <p>3 What are the basic elements of what you learned in</p> <p>4 those courses?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Again, it's refresher training, so it's stuff you</b></p> <p>6 <b>basically already know, but it's just getting you back</b></p> <p>7 <b>to grips with it.</b></p> <p>8 <b>On the two-day course, I believe the first day is</b></p> <p>9 <b>comprised of more classroom-based theory sessions, you</b></p> <p>10 <b>might do a case study of a certain fire, and the second</b></p> <p>11 <b>day will be comprised of drills where you go into a fire</b></p> <p>12 <b>box and learn how to deal with the heat, and then</b></p> <p>13 <b>another one where you do a drill in putting out that</b></p> <p>14 <b>fire, pretending it's a real job.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Can I explore something with you: did you get any</p> <p>16 training at any time, or any intelligence or education</p> <p>17 of any kind, about what should happen when your whistle</p> <p>18 goes to warn you that your air is getting low and you're</p> <p>19 in a high-rise building?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Ideally you want to be out before your whistle blows.</b></p> <p>21 <b>You have a pre-alarm which starts going off when you</b></p> <p>22 <b>have, I think, less than 90 bar pressure in your set,</b></p> <p>23 <b>which is a warning that you need to get out. But we're</b></p> <p>24 <b>trained to get out before that happens.</b></p> <p>25 Q. So are you trained as to what to do when you're in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 fighting fire in high rise buildings. Unless the fire</p> <p>2 is in your flat you should stay within your flat and</p> <p>3 wait for the fire brigade to attend and to put it out."</p> <p>4 It goes on -- I'll just read it all to you:</p> <p>5 "The advice would be to stay put and wait until the</p> <p>6 fire-brigade can make an assessment, where upon they</p> <p>7 will instruct you on what to do next. This relies on</p> <p>8 compartmentalisation working. High rise buildings are</p> <p>9 designed so that the fire is isolated to the one</p> <p>10 affected flat."</p> <p>11 Now, I've read that all to you because I have one or</p> <p>12 two questions about that to unpack it.</p> <p>13 First of all, can you tell us where you get that</p> <p>14 overall knowledge about stay put from?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Well, that was my general understanding from over the</b></p> <p>16 <b>years of being in the job. It's not actually,</b></p> <p>17 <b>I believe, an LFB policy; it's a building's policy that</b></p> <p>18 <b>we will adhere to if we're there.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Is the understanding that you've reflected there in your</p> <p>20 statement something that you were trained to understand</p> <p>21 or is it an understanding that comes from experience or</p> <p>22 talking people?</p> <p>23 <b>A. In my case it's come from experience, but I don't recall</b></p> <p>24 <b>having a training package specifically designed about</b></p> <p>25 <b>the stay-put policy.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 Q. When you say experience, what kind of experience are you 2 drawing on when you explain your stay put understanding? 3 <b>A. It's a known fact that when you go into the high-rise 4 buildings on our ground, you see the tablets on the 5 walls that say, "This building operates a stay-put 6 policy", so that's where you'd see it.</b> 7 Q. I see. Okay. 8 So is it right you're describing here generally what 9 you see by way of standing policies that building owners 10 apply to buildings that you go into? 11 <b>A. Yes.</b> 12 Q. Is that your -- I mean, I just need you to clarify that 13 for me. 14 <b>A. It's not an LFB policy; it would be something to do with 15 the building and people who aren't us.</b> 16 Q. Okay. Sorry, just to press this a little: are you 17 telling us that your understanding of stay put is that 18 that is the policy generally that building owners apply 19 on a sort of standing basis to the buildings that you 20 visited as a firefighter? 21 <b>A. At high-rise, yes, that would be my experience.</b> 22 Q. You say in the first sentence of that paragraph: 23 "The 'stay-put policy,' is a policy the LFB use when 24 fighting fire in high rise buildings." 25 What do you mean there by "the LFB use"?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 do in relation to a stay-put policy if 2 compartmentalisation failed from the inside? 3 <b>A. I don't recall any training for that.</b> 4 Q. Right. 5 In the context of your statement "This relies on 6 compartmentalisation working" -- this is in the context 7 of stay put -- did you receive any training as to what 8 to do with the stay-put policy if you or your incident 9 commander perceived that compartmentation was not 10 holding? 11 <b>A. No.</b> 12 Q. So were you trained as to what alternatives there would 13 be as to stay put or alternatives to stay put you would 14 use in the event that compartmentation failed? 15 <b>A. No.</b> 16 Q. Can I turn now to another topic, which is your 17 familiarity with Grenfell Tower. 18 Did you ever attend a familiarisation visit at 19 Grenfell Tower? 20 <b>A. I did. The last one I can remember -- I actually can't 21 remember the date, but it was during the renovation of 22 the tower. That wasn't a full 7(2)(d) visit, as 23 I recall; it was to -- we'd been informed that the dry 24 rising main was under some form of construction to be 25 extended. We had to go along and see what our plan</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Again, that's probably not fully correct; I'll say we 2 work with it but it's not an LFB policy.</b> 3 Q. When you say you were with it, what do you mean? 4 <b>A. Well, if you know the building's got a stay-put policy, 5 then that will be the advice to residents: to stay where 6 they are.</b> 7 Q. So you go with the policy the building owner has put on 8 the building? 9 <b>A. Yes.</b> 10 Q. If you look at the top of page 2 in the second line, you 11 say: 12 "This relies on compartmentalisation working." 13 Did you receive any training as to what you as 14 a firefighter should do if you or your incident 15 commander thought that compartmentalisation wasn't 16 working? 17 <b>A. The training we have for compartmentalisation failing 18 would be to use a covering jet and spray that above that 19 compartment to prevent it from spreading to any flats 20 above or to the side. That's not always possible, 21 depending on the height of the fire, though.</b> 22 Q. Right. So covering jet, that would be on the exterior 23 of the building? 24 <b>A. On the exterior, yes.</b> 25 Q. What training, if any, did you receive in what you would</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 <b>would be if we were to have a fire in that few-day 2 period that the dry riser was off the run.</b> 3 Q. Okay. Let's just take this in stages, if we can. 4 Can I just get the time of year, first of all. Can 5 you remember whether that visit was wintertime or 6 summertime? 7 <b>A. I believe probably summertime, but I'm not 100 per cent 8 sure.</b> 9 Q. That was the last one, was it, before the Grenfell Tower 10 fire in June 2017? 11 <b>A. In terms of familiarisation, yes.</b> 12 Q. Are you drawing a distinction between familiarisation 13 and what I call 7(2)(d) visits? 14 <b>A. Well, there's a little difference there because we were 15 called for a specific thing, just to look at that 16 situation with the dry riser. So it wasn't a 17 fully-blown 7(2)(d) visit where we'd look at other 18 things.</b> 19 Q. I'll come back to this dry riser issue in a moment. 20 Just in terms of what you call "full-blown 7(2)(d) 21 visits", did you ever go on a full-blown 7(2)(d) visit 22 to Grenfell Tower in your time at Red Watch at North 23 Kensington? 24 <b>A. I can't remember one, no.</b> 25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 Going to what I might call the dry rising main</p> <p>2 visit, if that's not too much of a label.</p> <p>3 Do you remember who gave you instructions to do that</p> <p>4 visit?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I don't remember who gave us the instruction; I just was</b></p> <p>6 <b>informed by my watch manager on the day that we were</b></p> <p>7 <b>going to make this visit.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you remember being given specific things as to what</p> <p>9 to look for?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No. We were literally going there to see what our plan</b></p> <p>11 <b>would be.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Your overall plan or just to look at the dry rising</p> <p>13 main?</p> <p>14 <b>A. To look at the dry riser.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Can you run me through what happened when you turned up</p> <p>16 at Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>17 <b>A. So it's a long time ago, but I believe we -- I think we</b></p> <p>18 <b>might have met with a contractor on site. I didn't</b></p> <p>19 <b>speak to that person; I believe that was Mike Dowden.</b></p> <p>20 <b>But I think we thought of a plan of action, which I thin</b></p> <p>21 <b>involved hauling a 70-millimetre piece of hose to the</b></p> <p>22 <b>Grenfell Walk mezzanine level to augment the water</b></p> <p>23 <b>supply while this dry riser was being extended.</b></p> <p>24 Q. What was the state of the building construction at that</p> <p>25 time, do you remember?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Maybe half an hour, but that's just a rough estimate.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you get a chance to look at anything else while you</p> <p>3 were there, other than the dry rising main locations?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I don't remember looking at anything else, no.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Did you report, when you got back to the station, as to</p> <p>6 what you'd found and what you would do in the event of</p> <p>7 a fire?</p> <p>8 <b>A. That would have been recorded by the officer in charge.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did you go inside the tower on that visit?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Briefly, I think, to the lobby area.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Which lobby area?</p> <p>12 <b>A. What was then, I believe, the ground-floor lobby area at</b></p> <p>13 <b>the mezzanine Grenfell Walk level. I think that was</b></p> <p>14 <b>just to see where we would be plugging in our hose if we</b></p> <p>15 <b>had a fire in that few-day period.</b></p> <p>16 Q. At that stage when you visited, you refer to the</p> <p>17 Grenfell lobby mezzanine level; was that still connected</p> <p>18 to the walkway opposite the south side of the tower?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So if you wanted to access the tower main entrance, how</p> <p>21 would you get in at that time?</p> <p>22 <b>A. At that time, you would have gone up the concrete stairs</b></p> <p>23 <b>onto Grenfell Walk that are opposite where now is the</b></p> <p>24 <b>main entrance on the now ground-floor level.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay. When you went to the tower, did you see what the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 <b>A. I just remember it being a bit of a working site but</b></p> <p>2 <b>sort of boarded off and -- yeah, it was</b></p> <p>3 <b>mid-construction, yeah.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you remember whether there was any scaffolding or --</p> <p>5 <b>A. I can't remember whether there was scaffolding.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Did you get a chance to look up at the exterior of the</p> <p>7 building?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I would've seen it, but I didn't really pay a massive</b></p> <p>9 <b>deal of attention to the outside of the building.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Can you remember what you saw when you saw it?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. You don't remember seeing any cladding or --</p> <p>13 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>14 Q. -- sandwich panels or anything like that?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Do you know from your own knowledge whether any of your</p> <p>17 fellow visitors from Red Watch looked up at the building</p> <p>18 and noted the presence of cladding or sandwich panels?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I don't know.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay.</p> <p>21 How long did the visit last?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I can't remember how long it lasted, no.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I know it's difficult; it's two years ago or so.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Or more, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. But roughly?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 standing general advice to residents of Grenfell Tower</p> <p>2 was on your visit?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Not at that time, no.</b></p> <p>4 Q. You say not at that time; at any other time?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I don't recall, no.</b></p> <p>6 Q. So is the answer never?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Right. So no, never?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I can't remember, to be honest.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Okay.</p> <p>11 Now, if you look at the bottom of page 2 of your</p> <p>12 statement -- this is picking it up in your statement</p> <p>13 where you talk about your visit -- you say there, and</p> <p>14 the top of page 3 -- you refer to:</p> <p>15 "The last time I had been in the tower was whilst it</p> <p>16 was being refurbished."</p> <p>17 Then you say:</p> <p>18 "This was for home visits to flats. Here we spoke</p> <p>19 to residents and gave them general fire advice. We also</p> <p>20 made sure that their fire alarms were working."</p> <p>21 Did you or anybody else, first of all, keep a record</p> <p>22 of which flats and residents you spoke to to give</p> <p>23 general fire advice to?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Would that be normal?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 <b>A. Well, actually, we wouldn't personally. I think it</b>  2 <b>would've been kept on a central home fire safety visit</b>  3 <b>database.</b>  4 Q. Right.  5 Let me just explore the advice.  6 You say you gave them general fire advice. Could  7 you describe that for us? What was that general advice?  8 <b>A. Well, what we would do is what we call home fire safety</b>  9 <b>visits. So you'll speak to each individual resident of</b>  10 <b>a property, you'll talk to them about what they'd do in</b>  11 <b>the event of a fire, what their knowledge was about how</b>  12 <b>they would get out, practise their escape plan. You</b>  13 <b>would also talk about their cooking habits and bedtime</b>  14 <b>routines, so we suggest people close doors at bedtime so</b>  15 <b>if there were a fire, it would keep them safe in their</b>  16 <b>compartment.</b>  17 <b>Yes, it's a general visit to -- and also we install</b>  18 <b>smoke alarms if they need them free of charge.</b>  19 Q. Right.  20 In your answer just now, you said that you would  21 talk to them about what their knowledge was about how  22 they would get out and practise their escape plan.  23 Can you just enlarge on that?  24 <b>A. Yes.</b>  25 Q. Given Grenfell Tower's layout, what advice did you give</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 to suffer the effects of that, such as smoke or heat?  2 <b>A. It would be the same advice. If they felt they were</b>  3 <b>becoming involved in the fire, it would be the same</b>  4 <b>thing: to, if you could, get yourself and others out.</b>  5 <b>If you feel that you can't get out, try and find the</b>  6 <b>room with the cleanest air, hopefully by a window, close</b>  7 <b>the door, use bed sheets and whatnot to block any gaps</b>  8 <b>in the door and phone 999.</b>  9 Q. How many other firefighters at North Kensington Red  10 Watch accompanied you on giving those kinds of visits  11 and advice?  12 <b>A. I couldn't hear you there, sorry.</b>  13 Q. How many other people at North Kensington Red Watch  14 accompanied you when you gave that kind of advice?  15 <b>A. We usually work in twos, two pairs.</b>  16 Q. Who was your buddy?  17 <b>A. At Grenfell, I believe that day it was Firefighter</b>  18 <b>Dorgu.</b>  19 Q. How many trips to give that kind of advice did you make  20 in your time at Red Watch to Grenfell Tower?  21 <b>A. To Grenfell Tower, that's the only one I remember.</b>  22 Q. And do you remember roughly how many residents you spoke  23 to and gave that kind of advice to?  24 <b>A. I think me and Chris Dorgu may have spoken to about four</b>  25 <b>different flats of residents.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 or do you think you would've given in that respect?  2 <b>A. I would've told them to stay put because that's what we</b>  3 <b>would expect the policy to be in all sort of residential</b>  4 <b>high-rise blocks.</b>  5 Q. Okay. But you say in the answer that you gave us what  6 their knowledge was as to how they would get out and  7 practise their escape plan. What I want to ask you  8 about is what advice you gave them as to how to get out  9 and their escape plan.  10 <b>A. I'm talking in a general term there; that would more</b>  11 <b>apply to a two up, two down house, not the high-rise.</b>  12 <b>I'm just talking in general terms there about home fire</b>  13 <b>safety visits.</b>  14 Q. I see. So when we talk about what advice you gave to  15 the Grenfell residents in particular, did it cover  16 advice as to how to get out and what their escape plan  17 might be?  18 <b>A. All it would cover is if the fire is in their</b>  19 <b>compartment, we'd say: close the doors, get yourself and</b>  20 <b>others out, go downstairs, outside, and make sure you</b>  21 <b>phone 999 to raise the alarm. That would be the extent</b>  22 <b>of what I would say.</b>  23 Q. Did you give them any advice about what they should do  24 if they thought or found out that there was a fire  25 elsewhere in the building and that they were beginning</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 Q. How were those flats selected?  2 <b>A. There was a list that we were given by the Brigade of</b>  3 <b>people who needed to be spoken to, to be given advice.</b>  4 Q. How was that list put together, do you know?  5 <b>A. I'm not 100 per cent sure. I think they would be known</b>  6 <b>as priority people. I don't know the ins and outs of</b>  7 <b>how these people are selected, but we just worked off</b>  8 <b>that list.</b>  9 Q. Was anybody on the list of people you spoke to people  10 who were elderly or children or had, for example,  11 mobility issues?  12 <b>A. I can't remember. I don't recall any mobility issues,</b>  13 <b>but I can't remember.</b>  14 Q. Do you remember having any difficulty communicating your  15 advice because of any language questions?  16 <b>A. No.</b>  17 Q. So you're sure that the advice you did give them was  18 understood clearly by the residents you spoke to?  19 <b>A. Yes.</b>  20 Q. Can I turn then to the night of 14 June.  21 <b>A. Yes.</b>  22 Q. At page 2, paragraph 3, you've described the journey,  23 and you mention a call sheet in the second line and you  24 say:  25 "This information is found on a piece of paper</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 called a 'call sheet.'</p> <p>2 Is that the same as a tip sheet?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That's the same as a tip sheet, yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Is that piece of paper generated by a system?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, it's the mobilising system in the station. So</b></p> <p>6 <b>we'll receive the call from a system of control and</b></p> <p>7 <b>they'll print it out of a teleprinter in our watch room</b></p> <p>8 <b>and that will be the call sheet.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Whose responsibility is it on the watch to take the tip</p> <p>10 sheet out of the machine and then take it to the pump?</p> <p>11 <b>A. The watch room attendant is responsible for going and</b></p> <p>12 <b>receiving the message and confirming with control that</b></p> <p>13 <b>it's been received by pressing a button on a screen, and</b></p> <p>14 <b>you'll then find the drivers will also join them in the</b></p> <p>15 <b>room to look at where the location is and, if they're</b></p> <p>16 <b>not sure, look on the map for reference so you know</b></p> <p>17 <b>where you're going.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Do you remember who the watch room attendant was on the</p> <p>19 night of Grenfell Tower's fire?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I don't remember who it was, no.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Was it anybody who then joined G271 and G272 and</p> <p>22 attended the fire?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, they will have attended the fire, yes. One of</b></p> <p>24 <b>us -- one of the members of the crew, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. I see. Not somebody who stays behind?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 <b>you could hold onto them, but we do have a log of them</b></p> <p>2 <b>anyway on the teleprinter if needs be that can be</b></p> <p>3 <b>printed off again at a later date.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Okay. In your statement, you say in the middle of that</p> <p>5 same paragraph:</p> <p>6 "I could see that it read, 'Fire - Flat 16</p> <p>7 Grenfell Tower, Lancaster West Estate.'"</p> <p>8 Then you say:</p> <p>9 "I could see four call signs attached to this call,</p> <p>10 making it a four appliance call."</p> <p>11 Now, you may not know this, Mr Abell, but we have</p> <p>12 information that the original despatch was for three</p> <p>13 appliances: two from North Ken and Kensington 331, and</p> <p>14 then that was swiftly changed within a minute or two to</p> <p>15 four.</p> <p>16 <b>A. I've since learned this, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. What's your recollection of --</p> <p>18 <b>A. My recollection there would be incorrect because it</b></p> <p>19 <b>would've shown the three on that call slip at the time.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay. So do you know why you said four when you made</p> <p>21 your statement?</p> <p>22 <b>A. That will be the predetermined attendance for that --</b></p> <p>23 <b>for the high-rise, four pumping appliances, so that's</b></p> <p>24 <b>why I wrote that.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Oh, I see. So when you say, "I could see four call</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 <b>A. No, it would be a member of the crew.</b></p> <p>2 Q. This tip sheet, does the whole crew normally look at the</p> <p>3 tip sheet or is it just something kept by the watch</p> <p>4 manager or crew manager?</p> <p>5 <b>A. It will tend to be held onto by the officer in charge,</b></p> <p>6 <b>but if they feel they need to give any information out,</b></p> <p>7 <b>they can pass it back to the crew behind or give more</b></p> <p>8 <b>information about where we're going, if it's required.</b></p> <p>9 Q. In your experience, what normally happens to the call</p> <p>10 sheet?</p> <p>11 <b>A. The watch room attendant will rip it off. It's in two</b></p> <p>12 <b>parts, so one would go to the pump, that's one of our</b></p> <p>13 <b>machines, and the other will go to the ladder, the other</b></p> <p>14 <b>one of our machines. So you have one per machine. That</b></p> <p>15 <b>will tend to stick with the officer in charge on</b></p> <p>16 <b>a normal basis.</b></p> <p>17 Q. You say two parts; is it like a carbon copy --</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. -- with two bits to it, or ...?</p> <p>20 <b>A. A part that stays at the station and two parts that rip</b></p> <p>21 <b>off together will go to the two different machines.</b></p> <p>22 Q. After the incident, what happens to the piece of paper?</p> <p>23 Is it filed or is it left in the cab and then swept out</p> <p>24 with all the other bits --</p> <p>25 <b>A. It tends to get swept out. If it was a significant job,</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 signs attached to this call", just clarify with me, do</p> <p>2 you mean that on the tip sheet it showed what the</p> <p>3 predetermined attendance was or did it show what actual</p> <p>4 calls for actual pumps had been made?</p> <p>5 <b>A. It would show what actual pumps had been made at that</b></p> <p>6 <b>time. That was obviously a mistake that I later</b></p> <p>7 <b>learned, so I was slightly wrong there.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Now, you say you were posted as driver -- that's in your</p> <p>9 next sentence:</p> <p>10 "As I was posted as a driver, it was my</p> <p>11 responsibility to get to the scene of the fire as</p> <p>12 quickly and safely as possible."</p> <p>13 How does the posting work? At what point do you get</p> <p>14 posted to be driver, first of all?</p> <p>15 <b>A. At the start of the shift. So you would have a roll</b></p> <p>16 <b>call where you learn which position you'll be riding on</b></p> <p>17 <b>the fire engine.</b></p> <p>18 Q. How is that distributed?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I think it's a randomly generated list. People tend to</b></p> <p>20 <b>get rotated around different job roles.</b></p> <p>21 Q. I see. Who does the distribution?</p> <p>22 <b>A. That would be -- the officer in charge can do it or they</b></p> <p>23 <b>can hit a random button which randomises who goes where.</b></p> <p>24 Q. And the watch manager and the crew manager, are they</p> <p>25 ever posted to be drivers? Do they ever post themselves</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p>

<p>1 to be drivers?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, they'll be sitting on the front next to the driver,</b></p> <p>3 <b>but they won't drive.</b></p> <p>4 Q. So is it a matter of, as it were, pot luck as to whether</p> <p>5 you are driver or BA wearer or firefighter without BA?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Essentially, yeah, but you're all trained, so ...</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. If you go to page 3, paragraph 3, jumping ahead</p> <p>8 in your statement, you explain what happens on the</p> <p>9 journey that you could hear via the main scheme radio,</p> <p>10 and then you go on to say in the next sentence or two</p> <p>11 further on:</p> <p>12 "Extra information would be sent to the appliance's</p> <p>13 Mobile Data Terminal (MDT). I would not have had sight</p> <p>14 of this as I was the driving the vehicle and it would</p> <p>15 normally be left to another crew member to read."</p> <p>16 First of all, do you remember who read the</p> <p>17 information on the MDT on the way to Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>18 <b>A. That would be Chris Secrett, the officer in charge at</b></p> <p>19 <b>the time, sitting next to me.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Just help me, he would be -- so I can get an internal</p> <p>21 picture of the cab on this journey, you were sitting</p> <p>22 where?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I will just clarify, I was driving Golf 272, which is</b></p> <p>24 <b>the pump.</b></p> <p>25 Q. And he was sitting --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 <b>information about different buildings on the ground that</b></p> <p>2 <b>can be called upon.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right. From your recollection -- I mean, you say you</p> <p>4 didn't see the contents of the mobile data terminal on</p> <p>5 the way to the fire; did you ever get a chance to look</p> <p>6 at it later than arrival but during the fire or ...?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Right. So when you say it would also contain</p> <p>9 a pre-prepared firefighting plan for Grenfell Tower,</p> <p>10 that's not based on what you saw on the night?</p> <p>11 <b>A. That's based on what I know from -- just generally.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Generally?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. That's what you would expect?</p> <p>15 <b>A. It's on there, yeah. That's what I would expect, yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Would you expect a mobile data terminal to contain</p> <p>17 information about specific construction risks --</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, there will be --</b></p> <p>19 Q. -- the building presented?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yeah, there may be risks about things in the building,</b></p> <p>21 <b>for example hazardous materials, anything that would be</b></p> <p>22 <b>a concern to us from a safety point of view would be on</b></p> <p>23 <b>that database that you can look at.</b></p> <p>24 Q. What about if the building itself presented a hazard</p> <p>25 because of the way it was constructed or because of the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Crew Manager Secrett is sitting to my --</b></p> <p>2 Q. -- on your left?</p> <p>3 <b>A. -- left.</b></p> <p>4 Q. On the nearside?</p> <p>5 <b>A. On the front seat, nearside, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. And the MDT terminal is where?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It is central, but facing at him, because he would be</b></p> <p>8 <b>the one who would read that on the way to a shout if</b></p> <p>9 <b>need be.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Can the other crew members lean forward and see what was</p> <p>11 on the screen?</p> <p>12 <b>A. It wouldn't be easy but they could do it on that</b></p> <p>13 <b>machine, yeah.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Are there machines on which you can't?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Our new machines now have tablets in the back, but at</b></p> <p>16 <b>that time the only tablet was in the front.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Right. And you didn't get to see it because you were</p> <p>18 driving, I think you've just said?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. And you say:</p> <p>21 "Our MDT would also contain a preprepared fire</p> <p>22 fighting plan for Grenfell Tower ..."</p> <p>23 You say it "would" also contain; do you remember</p> <p>24 whether it did?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, that would be on our -- it has a database</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 materials that were contained within its construction?</p> <p>2 Is that something you would expect to be in the mobile</p> <p>3 data terminal information?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Do you know what information the contents of the mobile</p> <p>6 data terminal is normally based on?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It's a built-up knowledge from previous visits to the</b></p> <p>8 <b>tower that will be updated into the operational risk</b></p> <p>9 <b>database, which is a central database where all this is</b></p> <p>10 <b>put together by the Fire Brigade that any crew can</b></p> <p>11 <b>access.</b></p> <p>12 Q. From your knowledge of the night itself, did anybody say</p> <p>13 to you that the mobile data terminal was showing that</p> <p>14 the building itself contained materials or had</p> <p>15 construction that presented a hazard?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I don't recall that, no.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Just taking one or two other topics, from your knowledge</p> <p>18 of what you learnt about what the information was on the</p> <p>19 mobile data terminal on that night, did anybody tell you</p> <p>20 that it contained information about the lifts?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No one told me that, no.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Smoke vents, anybody tell you about --</p> <p>23 <b>A. No one told me about that, no.</b></p> <p>24 Q. In your witness statement at page 3, third paragraph,</p> <p>25 you say:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p>



<p>1 "We arrived for about lam or slightly after I am.  2 I sighted[sic] my appliance underneath the concrete  3 mezzanine at the end of Grenfell Road, behind pump  4 ladder G271."  5 When you say you sited it, do you mean, just to be  6 clear, you parked there?  7 <b>A. I parked, yes.</b>  8 Q. When you arrived at Grenfell Tower, did you receive any  9 further information?  10 <b>A. On the way to the tower?</b>  11 Q. When you arrived.  12 <b>A. When we arrived, no.</b>  13 Q. You say on the way, let's look at that.  14 On the way to Grenfell Tower, in addition to the  15 mobile data terminal information, did you receive any  16 further information?  17 <b>A. You'll see in my statement it says I overheard the radio</b>  18 <b>saying there had been multiple calls to the incident.</b>  19 Q. I was going to come to that, but let's go to that now.  20 What did that mean to you?  21 <b>A. If there's multiple calls, that means more than one</b>  22 <b>person has phoned 999 to separately report the fire, or</b>  23 <b>any incident, really, so that will say to you that you</b>  24 <b>are definitely looking at a fire here; it's likely not</b>  25 <b>going to be a false alarm or anything like that.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 Q. -- PPE?  2 <b>A. PPE, yes.</b>  3 Q. Yes. And that was tuned to channel 1?  4 <b>A. That was channel 1, the fire ground channel.</b>  5 Q. Where would you have been sitting or standing when you  6 heard that message?  7 <b>A. I believe I would've been outside my appliance getting</b>  8 <b>water to work.</b>  9 Q. Do you remember where Mike Dowden was at that point?  10 <b>A. I don't remember where he was when he said that.</b>  11 Q. You then go on in your statement to describe the  12 charging of the dry riser in the next paragraph, and at  13 the bottom of page 3 -- just pick it up -- you say after  14 that, at the very bottom:  15 "... I assisted my colleagues with deploying a 45 mm  16 hose, to be used as a 'covering jet' to the East side of  17 the tower in an attempt to prevent the fire spreading  18 from the 4th floor to the floors above."  19 I'll go on to read to the end of the paragraph:  20 "I could see flames coming out of a window on the  21 fourth floor. At this time the flames were concentrated  22 to that one flat. The covering jet was aimed above  23 these flames, with the intention of stopping the fire  24 reaching the floor above."  25 Now, I've read all that to you because I have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 Q. Right. And multiple calls, is that, in your experience,  2 significant? Does it signify anything more serious than  3 the norm?  4 <b>A. It would suggest that there was a fire presenting itself</b>  5 <b>for multiple people to phone up, yes.</b>  6 Q. Does that give you any indication about the seriousness  7 of the fire, the fact that there are multiple calls?  8 <b>A. I would say that you would be assuming that you're going</b>  9 <b>to a serious fire if there are multiple calls.</b>  10 Q. When you arrived at Grenfell Tower, after having parked  11 up, did you receive any further information regarding  12 the nature or location of the fire?  13 <b>A. No. Not to my knowledge, no.</b>  14 Q. Did you receive any further information about the  15 seriousness of the fire at that point?  16 <b>A. The first indication I got of that was I overheard on</b>  17 <b>the radio I think Michael Dowden said, "We've got a job</b>  18 <b>here". So, yeah.</b>  19 Q. Right. Now, let's just explore -- you say over the  20 radio; when you heard that, where was he standing?  21 <b>A. I don't know where he was standing; that was on my</b>  22 <b>personal fire ground radio that I heard that.</b>  23 Q. That was my next question: that was on your personal  24 radio which is clipped into your --  25 <b>A. Yes, clipped onto my tunic.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 a number of questions about that.  2 First of all, how long after you had secured the  3 water supply did the covering jet start up, do you  4 remember?  5 <b>A. That would've been very, very soon after, more or less</b>  6 <b>as soon as I would've charged the dry riser. The next</b>  7 <b>thing would be looking at: do we need a covering jet?</b>  8 Q. Right.  9 <b>A. Yes.</b>  10 Q. Did anybody give you orders to apply a covering jet?  11 <b>A. I didn't hear an order, but I started to do it myself</b>  12 <b>and other firefighters were already joining in, so there</b>  13 <b>may have been an order there, yes, to them.</b>  14 Q. Why did you start to do it yourself?  15 <b>A. It's just what you do at a job. If you see there's</b>  16 <b>a bit of fire coming out the window, I know we need</b>  17 <b>a covering jet as early as possible, so I'll just</b>  18 <b>naturally start doing that.</b>  19 Q. Would it be normal to act without a specific  20 instruction; in other words, working on the basis of  21 your own judgment and experience rather than from  22 a specific instruction from the incident commander?  23 <b>A. If needs be, yes.</b>  24 Q. If needs be. What were the needs be?  25 <b>A. For example, as I said there, I could see flames coming</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 out the window and knew straight away we needed</p> <p>2 a covering jet. If I was to go and ask someone if that</p> <p>3 was the right thing to do, that could delay me in what</p> <p>4 I'm doing, so we just get to work.</p> <p>5 Q. You say there were other firefighters already joining</p> <p>6 in. Who were they, do you remember?</p> <p>7 A. I believe it would be Firefighter Bills from my fire</p> <p>8 station, North Kensington. I'm not 100 per cent sure</p> <p>9 who the other one or two were, but they would've been</p> <p>10 from Hammersmith or Kensington fire station.</p> <p>11 Q. Right. And who at that stage, when you joined in, was</p> <p>12 in control of the covering jet?</p> <p>13 A. I cannot remember who actually took over the covering</p> <p>14 jet to work it. I know at a later time it ended up</p> <p>15 being Firefighters Des Murphy and Charlie Cornelius, but</p> <p>16 I'm not sure if they were the first people on it.</p> <p>17 Q. At the point when the covering jet started to be</p> <p>18 applied, what was the fire doing, do you remember?</p> <p>19 A. All I could see was that it was coming out of the window</p> <p>20 of the fourth floor.</p> <p>21 Q. Could you see anything happening to the exterior of the</p> <p>22 building?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Could you see anything coming off the building?</p> <p>25 A. No.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 MR MILLETT: We've only been going for 45 minutes but I'm</p> <p>2 doing well in terms of time.</p> <p>3 I need to give a trigger warning in relation to</p> <p>4 that. This may be an appropriate moment --</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I was going to ask, Mr Abell, you</p> <p>6 appear to be quite comfortable in giving evidence; is</p> <p>7 that the case?</p> <p>8 THE WITNESS: Yes, I'm fine.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You don't feel the need for any</p> <p>10 break at the moment?</p> <p>11 THE WITNESS: No, I'm fine to continue.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, normally on a morning when we</p> <p>13 start at 10 o'clock, we would have one longer break</p> <p>14 about halfway through, let's say 11.20 or thereabouts.</p> <p>15 Do you think you can keep going until then?</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: I can keep going, yes.</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, I suggest we do that,</p> <p>18 unless you have other reasons for wanting a short break.</p> <p>19 MR MILLETT: I have no other reasons. My only reason for</p> <p>20 the short break was to enable people to leave the room</p> <p>21 while I give the trigger warning.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That can certainly be done. Would</p> <p>23 you like to give a clear trigger warning and then we'll</p> <p>24 just give people a chance to leave.</p> <p>25 MR MILLETT: I am going to show -- and I am assuming,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 Q. When the covering jet started, how long was it applied</p> <p>2 for?</p> <p>3 A. I'm not sure.</p> <p>4 Q. Did it start and then stop, or once it started, it</p> <p>5 carried on?</p> <p>6 A. Again, I'm not sure; I didn't stand around and watch it</p> <p>7 being used.</p> <p>8 Q. Do you remember any discussion about putting or jetting</p> <p>9 water at flat 16 in order to prevent external fire</p> <p>10 spread or travel of fire into the cladding? Do you</p> <p>11 remember a discussion about that?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. Do you remember being involved in any discussion about</p> <p>14 whether the water should be aimed below or above</p> <p>15 flat 16?</p> <p>16 A. No.</p> <p>17 Q. Do you remember any discussion about whether it was safe</p> <p>18 to put a jet into flat 16?</p> <p>19 A. I don't remember any discussion, but I know</p> <p>20 operationally that that wouldn't be safe at the time.</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Yes.</p> <p>22 Now, Mr Chairman, I'm doing quite well but I want to</p> <p>23 show the witness a video -- very short video -- just to</p> <p>24 see if it can help further recollection.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 Mr Abell, that you are able to look at this without</p> <p>2 difficulty personally.</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. If there's any problem about that, please tell me. But</p> <p>5 what I am going to show you is a short clip from the</p> <p>6 fire spread video that forms part of Professor Bisby's</p> <p>7 sequence of fire on the outside of Grenfell Tower, and</p> <p>8 some people looking at it may find it distressing.</p> <p>9 If they do, then I would ask that they take steps</p> <p>10 not to see it and not to hear the audio that accompanies</p> <p>11 it, and to leave the room now if they feel they need to</p> <p>12 or to turn away from the live stream if they feel that</p> <p>13 the video or audio would be distressing.</p> <p>14 So perhaps I can just allow 30 seconds to elapse.</p> <p>15 Mr Documents Director, if you could queue that up,</p> <p>16 please, that would be very good. It is Bisby flame</p> <p>17 spread video at 01.15.39.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: While we give people a chance to</p> <p>19 leave if they wish to --</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: 36 is probably best.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: -- Mr Abell, you understand what</p> <p>22 we're going to see: we're going to see film of the fire</p> <p>23 developing up the outside of the building.</p> <p>24 THE WITNESS: Okay.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And you don't have any concerns</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 about watching that or hearing voices on the audio 2 channel? 3 THE WITNESS: No. 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Very good. All right, thank you. 5 MR MILLETT: Mr Documents Director, if you could go back to 6 the very start of this sequence, rather than that 7 precise time slot. 8 Mr Abell, what I'm going to do is first of all run 9 the sequence and show it to you as a whole, and then run 10 it again and ask one or two questions about it. 11 <b>A. Okay.</b> 12 Q. Is that okay? 13 <b>A. That's fine, yes.</b> 14 Q. Is that clear? All right. 15 So if we go from the start of the sequence, Paul, 16 that would be great. 17 (Video played) 18 Now, in that sequence, what we saw was the exterior 19 doing what it was doing, and then we saw a jet slightly 20 later in the sequence. 21 If we start at 01.15.36, we can see that the jet 22 isn't applied until a little bit of time has elapsed. 23 Let's just run it through again. I want you to 24 note, please, first of all what the building is doing, 25 and then what the individual firefighters are doing in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 very difficult to be precise in terms of time with your 2 own recollection -- did you know or did you see that the 3 fire on the exterior was behaving in this way? 4 <b>A. I didn't know it was as bad as that, I think I must have 5 been doing something else around the south side of the 6 building, but I saw that it was getting a little bit 7 worse. I don't recall seeing things falling off and 8 what we saw on the video there.</b> 9 Q. Again, I know it's difficult to be precise with timings, 10 but what do you remember you were doing on the south 11 side of the tower at that time? 12 <b>A. I might have been rigging in my full PPE. I think as 13 a driver you tend to get off the truck and put your 14 tunic on and start getting things to work straight away, 15 and then when you get a bit of respite, you would then 16 go and put your leggings and helmet on. I might have 17 been doing that, which would have kept me occupied for 18 that little bit of time.</b> 19 Q. Just pause there and take that last answer and let's 20 examine it a bit. 21 How long does it normally take you, as 22 an experienced firefighter, to get into a PPE kit? 23 <b>A. Well, I had to go and get it from the machine. It will 24 probably be, well, 30 seconds or maybe a minute.</b> 25 Q. Okay. Right. Can you just describe for everybody what</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 front of the building, and this is on the east side, and 2 then at what time the covering jet starts to be applied. 3 So if we could just play that again, please. 4 (Video played) 5 This is 01.15.36. You can see what the fire is 6 doing and what's coming off the building. 7 Just pause there. 8 Can you identify to the best of your recollection, 9 Mr Abell, who the individuals are in the foreground of 10 that still taken from this video? 11 <b>A. From the tabard and the white helmet, that would be 12 Watch Manager Dowden in the bottom-left. I'm not 13 100 per cent sure who the two firefighters are there. 14 I can't see there.</b> 15 Q. Right. Do you remember whether or not one of them might 16 be you? 17 <b>A. That wasn't me, no. I didn't operate the covering jet.</b> 18 Q. Right. At this time, where were you, to the best of 19 your recollection? 20 <b>A. I would've been on the south side of the building next 21 to the pump, Golf 271.</b> 22 Q. I see, okay. 23 If you just continue with the video then, please. 24 (Video played) 25 Just pausing there. At that time -- I know it's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 you have to do to get into a PPE kit? 2 <b>A. Okay, as a driver at a job, I would find my PPE on the 3 off-side locker of the truck, open it. I'll have to 4 take my shoes off, get my boots off the truck, take my 5 tunic off because there's sort of shoulder straps that 6 go on the leggings. I put my feet into my boots, pull 7 my leggings up, shoulder straps on, tunic back on, 8 zipped up, Velcro, helmet on the head.</b> 9 Q. Would you say that's something that takes a little bit 10 of practice? 11 <b>A. Not necessarily practice, but I suppose you get quicker 12 at it over time.</b> 13 Q. Going back to the video -- can we just run this 14 through -- I want you to watch what the building is 15 doing and then the application of water. 16 (Video played) 17 See, there it goes up. The first time we have it 18 there is at about 01.15.53 or so. 19 My question really, having shown you that, is it 20 looks as if the building was already on fire on the 21 exterior and flaming bits were falling off it before 22 that jet was first applied. That's what it looks like. 23 Is that right, to the best of your recollection? 24 <b>A. What I've said is my recollection, but obviously it was 25 a long night and I may be wrong on that.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 Q. Okay. Because you say in your statement:</p> <p>2 "I could see flames coming out of a window on the</p> <p>3 fourth floor."</p> <p>4 This is back to the first paragraph on page 4:</p> <p>5 "At this time the flames were concentrated to that</p> <p>6 one flat. The covering jet was aimed above these</p> <p>7 flames, with the intention of stopping the fire reaching</p> <p>8 the floor above."</p> <p>9 And it looks from this as if, in fact, pieces of</p> <p>10 burning material were falling down before the covering</p> <p>11 jet was applied.</p> <p>12 I'll just ask that question one more time: is that</p> <p>13 what you recall or do you recall something different?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I don't recall seeing the falling debris, but that's</b></p> <p>15 <b>just my memory.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Okay.</p> <p>17 One more question: you say in the last sentence of</p> <p>18 this paragraph that the covering jet was aimed above the</p> <p>19 flames with the intention of stopping the fire reaching</p> <p>20 the floor above; having seen the video so far, is that</p> <p>21 what happened, to the best of your recollection?</p> <p>22 <b>A. So far, I couldn't see it going above the flames there,</b></p> <p>23 <b>no.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Could we just move the video on to the next sequence.</p> <p>25 Can we start at the very start -- at the very, very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 video.</p> <p>2 We'll move on to a different topic now, which is</p> <p>3 entry into Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>4 On page 4 of your statement, in the second</p> <p>5 paragraph, you say:</p> <p>6 "Once the covering jet had been established, I was</p> <p>7 instructed by Watch Manager (WM) O'Keefe to wear</p> <p>8 breathing apparatus (BA). I was partnered up with</p> <p>9 Firefighter (FF) Archer -- who also wore breathing</p> <p>10 apparatus. I was aware very early on that the</p> <p>11 'Fire-lift' was not working; therefore we had to rely on</p> <p>12 the stairwell to go up and down the various floors.</p> <p>13 This stairwell served as the only fire escape for the</p> <p>14 building."</p> <p>15 I just want to concentrate with you on your sentence</p> <p>16 or part-sentence that says, "I was aware very early on</p> <p>17 that the 'Fire-lift' was not working".</p> <p>18 You say "very early on"; how long after you arrived</p> <p>19 do you think you became aware that the fire lift was not</p> <p>20 working?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I heard a message on the radio probably three or so,</b></p> <p>22 <b>four minutes, maybe less than that, after turning up,</b></p> <p>23 <b>and that was Crew Manager Secrett saying -- I heard him</b></p> <p>24 <b>say on the radio, "Mike, the fire lift's not working."</b></p> <p>25 Q. Right. And three or four minutes after turning up, do</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 start -- just focus on the right-hand picture.</p> <p>2 If you go back to the very start, Mr Documents</p> <p>3 Director.</p> <p>4 I just want to ask you about what you could see on</p> <p>5 the ground.</p> <p>6 We can't see it there.</p> <p>7 We'll start the sequence and we'll pick it up.</p> <p>8 Now, if you watch the jet going on ...</p> <p>9 (Video played)</p> <p>10 Now, the next sequence -- now, there. Is the jet</p> <p>11 being applied above or below the window, do you think?</p> <p>12 <b>A. That's below the window there.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Right. If we just move the sequence on just a little</p> <p>14 bit so we can see more of the application of the hose,</p> <p>15 does it stay below the window or does it ever go above</p> <p>16 the window?</p> <p>17 <b>A. That seems to be staying below the window there.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay. Does that prompt a recollection in your mind as</p> <p>19 to whether the hose was actually put or aimed above the</p> <p>20 flames or not?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I just remembered it being above the flames. Maybe</b></p> <p>22 <b>that's because it's what I'd expect but, again, my</b></p> <p>23 <b>memory is probably not great at that time.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Thank you very much.</p> <p>25 I think that's all we need to show you from the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 you remember roughly where you were at that time?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Again, I would be outside of the south side of the</b></p> <p>3 <b>building, I imagine bowling hoses out ready for the dry</b></p> <p>4 <b>riser.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Right. Where was Watch Manager O'Keefe at that point?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I don't think he was even there at that point. I think</b></p> <p>7 <b>Kensington hadn't arrived when I heard that message.</b></p> <p>8 Q. I was going to ask you: how did you receive instructions</p> <p>9 from Watch Manager O'Keefe, who wasn't on the scene at</p> <p>10 that stage?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I think there's an issue with the chronology here. I've</b></p> <p>12 <b>gone back to something there in my statement, obviously,</b></p> <p>13 <b>to reference why I went up the stairs from our BA wear.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay. We'll come back to that chronological point</p> <p>15 perhaps in a moment.</p> <p>16 So that I'm clear, you wouldn't receive normally,</p> <p>17 would you, instructions from a watch manager who was not</p> <p>18 yet status 3?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Focusing on the fire lift, you heard the message being</p> <p>21 relayed from Chris Secrett to Mike Dowden?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So it was on channel 1 and available to all, was it?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. So it wasn't a message given to you; it was just</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

<p>1 a general message to --</p> <p>2 <b>A. It was just -- I intercepted -- I overheard it, yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Just so that I'm clear, when your fire ground radio is</p> <p>4 on, as it were, on receive, can you hear all</p> <p>5 communications on channel 1?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, if it was on channel 1, you'll hear everything</b></p> <p>7 <b>that's being said.</b></p> <p>8 Q. If it's on channel 1, I see.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Would the same apply if you're on another channel?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay.</p> <p>13 You refer to the words "Fire-lift" in inverted</p> <p>14 commas with a capital letter. What do you mean by the</p> <p>15 expression "Fire-lift"?</p> <p>16 <b>A. That would be a firefighting lift that we can take</b></p> <p>17 <b>control of to assist in our firefighting efforts.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right. What was your understanding about what kind of</p> <p>19 lift Grenfell Tower had so far as firefighting was</p> <p>20 concerned on arrival?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I would've known there was a fire lift in there that we</b></p> <p>22 <b>could take control of.</b></p> <p>23 Q. How would you know that?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Again, it may have been an assumption, but you'd expect</b></p> <p>25 <b>this in a residential high-rise of this type.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 consequences the fire lift not working might have for</p> <p>2 the firefighting strategy at Grenfell Tower that night?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Well, I wouldn't have thought much about it at the time</b></p> <p>4 <b>as I was doing other things, but just that they'd either</b></p> <p>5 <b>have to use it in normal lift mode or would have to go</b></p> <p>6 <b>up the stairs to set up the bridgehead.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. Did that create any concern in your mind for</p> <p>8 impact on the search and rescue of residents?</p> <p>9 <b>A. The fire was on the fourth floor, so I knew, even if it</b></p> <p>10 <b>wasn't working at all, we'd still be able to set up</b></p> <p>11 <b>a bridgehead without going up too many stairs. It</b></p> <p>12 <b>wouldn't delay us too much in that situation.</b></p> <p>13 Q. I'm going to continue with this line of questioning, but</p> <p>14 I just want to ask you to go back a little bit to see if</p> <p>15 you can clarify something about what the pumps were</p> <p>16 supplying.</p> <p>17 We looked at the covering jet earlier. Do you</p> <p>18 remember whether one pump was supplying both the</p> <p>19 covering jet as well as the dry rising main or were</p> <p>20 there two pumps, one supplying the dry rising main and</p> <p>21 the other supplying the covering jet?</p> <p>22 <b>A. They were both supplied from Golf 271.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Would that be normal?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes, in that situation, yes, because that's where the</b></p> <p>25 <b>water is being taken to from the hydrant, so that's</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 Q. I was going to ask you: you say it may be an assumption;</p> <p>2 can you remember whether it was an assumption or whether</p> <p>3 you actually had any actual knowledge about what the</p> <p>4 actual lift could do?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I'll say that's an assumption.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay. And an assumption based on your experience, is</p> <p>7 it?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes, from past experience, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Right.</p> <p>10 In your experience, is there a difference between</p> <p>11 a firefighting lift and a fire lift or fireman's lift?</p> <p>12 <b>A. It's all the same thing with a slightly different name.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Okay.</p> <p>14 When you heard Chris Secrett give this message, did</p> <p>15 he describe it as a fire lift or what did he say, how</p> <p>16 did he describe the lift?</p> <p>17 <b>A. He said, "Mike, the fire lift isn't working". That is</b></p> <p>18 <b>what I recall.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You remember him using those words?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. What did you understand wasn't working?</p> <p>22 <b>A. That's -- I only heard that.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Just that.</p> <p>24 <b>A. So I'd assume they couldn't control the lift themselves.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Do you remember what thoughts you had about what</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 <b>where our water supply is being augmented.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Why wouldn't you use Golf 272?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Because to use Golf 272, we would have to go and find</b></p> <p>4 <b>another hydrant to use straight away. Yes, so that's</b></p> <p>5 <b>basically it. It would take a lot of time and we could</b></p> <p>6 <b>just plug straight into Golf 271 in a third delivery and</b></p> <p>7 <b>get the covering jet to work straight away.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So I'm clear in terms of lines of hoses, you have a hose</p> <p>9 going from the hydrant to pump 271.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. And then two lines coming off -- or maybe three, is</p> <p>12 it -- pump 271: two to the dry rising main and one to</p> <p>13 the covering jet?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes. From the hydrant we have two twin 70-millimetre</b></p> <p>15 <b>hoses going from the hydrant to the inlet of our pump on</b></p> <p>16 <b>the back of the fire engine.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So that's two, okay.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, and we have three deliveries off the back of the</b></p> <p>19 <b>pump as well, 70-millimetre deliveries.</b></p> <p>20 Q. I see, so two in hydrant to pump, three out, two to the</p> <p>21 dry riser, one to the covering jet?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. And they all work at the same time?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Now, going forward, you get inside Grenfell Tower and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 you make your way with Firefighter Archer to the</p> <p>2 bridgehead on the second floor. That's what I think you</p> <p>3 tell us.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. According to our breathing apparatus telemetry data, we</p> <p>6 have you there at the bridgehead at 01.21.07. I'll just</p> <p>7 show you the data we've got just to clock the time so</p> <p>8 that you know what I'm talking about.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>10 Q. If you are shown, please, the telemetry data</p> <p>11 spreadsheet, which is in bundle of documents, tab 1,</p> <p>12 LFB00003115.</p> <p>13 We can see that the fourth pair down is in purple,</p> <p>14 and you, Mr Abell, are there as the second of the</p> <p>15 Archer/Abell pair, if I can call you that --</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. -- with your station, North Kensington, next to you on</p> <p>18 the left. Wayne Archer has Hammersmith on the left</p> <p>19 above you. And then if you go to the green column,</p> <p>20 "Tally out", we have you tallying out at 01.21.16, and</p> <p>21 Wayne Archer at 01.21.07.</p> <p>22 Now, when you tallied out, did you go under air at</p> <p>23 that point?</p> <p>24 <b>A. When you take the tally out, we'd be under air at that</b></p> <p>25 <b>point, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. We've heard a bit about that already. So one of two has</p> <p>3 the BARIE; is that right?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes, should have one per BA team.</b></p> <p>5 Q. And you still had your main fire ground radio?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Still on channel 1?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Mine was still on channel 1, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Could you use it if you needed it?</p> <p>10 <b>A. If I needed it, I could put it on channel 6 and use it,</b></p> <p>11 <b>yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Was there any reason why you would have to put it on</p> <p>13 channel 6?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Sorry, I'll explain. Channel 1 would be the fire ground</b></p> <p>15 <b>channel we've already talked about. Channel 6 is the BA</b></p> <p>16 <b>channel. So the people on that would be the BA crews in</b></p> <p>17 <b>the building and entry control point, they'll be on</b></p> <p>18 <b>channel 6, so you have less traffic.</b></p> <p>19 Q. I see. And the BARIE would be channel 6 too, would it?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Now, in your statement you say -- this is the third</p> <p>22 paragraph down, near the middle of the page on page 4:</p> <p>23 "Firefighter (FF) Archer and I made our way to the</p> <p>24 bridge head ... Here we met with Firefighter Dorgu who</p> <p>25 had already been upstairs. He told us to follow him."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 Q. Okay. And then just looking across the page, we can see</p> <p>2 you have an initial pressure of 282.08 bar, and then you</p> <p>3 log on to the ECB at 01.21.29, so just 13 or so seconds</p> <p>4 later.</p> <p>5 What happens when you log on to the ECB?</p> <p>6 <b>A. You remove your tally from your -- you have a little</b></p> <p>7 <b>computer unit on your left strap of your BA set with</b></p> <p>8 <b>what we call a tally connected to it. You remove the</b></p> <p>9 <b>tally from what we call the bodyguard. That's the thing</b></p> <p>10 <b>that shows us how much air we've got left and what our</b></p> <p>11 <b>time to whistle is. You give that to the entry control</b></p> <p>12 <b>officer, who will slip this electronic tally into</b></p> <p>13 <b>an entry control board, and that will communicate with</b></p> <p>14 <b>your BA set. So if you go up some floors, the people at</b></p> <p>15 <b>the entry control board can see how much air you've got</b></p> <p>16 <b>left and how long you've been in there, how long you've</b></p> <p>17 <b>got until you should come out. It communicates with</b></p> <p>18 <b>each other.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did you have a radio inside your BA helmet --</p> <p>20 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>21 Q. -- set?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>23 Q. You didn't? What about Mr Archer, did he?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Firefighter Archer had what we call BARIE comms.</b></p> <p>25 Q. BARIE comms?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 Do you recall any discussion or conversation with</p> <p>2 Firefighter Dorgu about what he had found upstairs at</p> <p>3 that point?</p> <p>4 <b>A. From what I remember, we got to the entry control point</b></p> <p>5 <b>and, like I say, he'd been upstairs, he seemed to be the</b></p> <p>6 <b>authority on what was going on, he knew what was going</b></p> <p>7 <b>on. He said, "Follow me to this floor; there's a fire</b></p> <p>8 <b>in a flat that you need to put out".</b></p> <p>9 Q. Okay. Did he say where he was going?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I believe he would've said the floor he was going to.</b></p> <p>11 <b>I actually misremembered this in two different</b></p> <p>12 <b>statements as being the fifth and the sixth floor.</b></p> <p>13 <b>I now know it's the fifth floor.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Fifth?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Just to be clear, what did he tell you about where you</p> <p>17 were going?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I think he said it was a fire in this flat that we</b></p> <p>19 <b>needed to tackle.</b></p> <p>20 Q. On which floor?</p> <p>21 <b>A. On the fifth floor.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did he tell you what you were to do?</p> <p>23 <b>A. He just told us where to go and we would know what to do</b></p> <p>24 <b>then; we'd just make entry and try our best to put it</b></p> <p>25 <b>out.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 Q. Did he give you a flat number?</p> <p>2 <b>A. He didn't give me a flat number but he pointed to the</b></p> <p>3 <b>flat that it was when we got there.</b></p> <p>4 Q. When you got there he pointed?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. And where did he point, do you remember?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It was -- as I went through into the lobby area, it was</b></p> <p>8 <b>on the right-hand side in the right-hand corner.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Right. Okay.</p> <p>10 I am going to freeze you there, as it were, and in</p> <p>11 your imagination take you back down to the bridgehead</p> <p>12 and ask you a number of questions about the conditions</p> <p>13 there and on the stairs.</p> <p>14 First of all, when you arrived at the bridgehead and</p> <p>15 went the under air, as we've just discussed together,</p> <p>16 what were the conditions like at the bridgehead in terms</p> <p>17 of air?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Clear.</b></p> <p>19 Q. What were the conditions like in terms of people? Was</p> <p>20 it busy or ...?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I believed there would've been the -- I can't fully</b></p> <p>22 <b>remember, but people who would've been there would be</b></p> <p>23 <b>the entry control officer, that would be Alex</b></p> <p>24 <b>De St Aubin, Watch Manager O'Keefe and obviously</b></p> <p>25 <b>Firefighter Dorgu and me and Firefighter Archer,</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 And the condition in the stairs as you went up to</p> <p>2 the fifth floor, what was that like to start with?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That was clear.</b></p> <p>4 Q. And as you got up towards the fifth floor?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Still clear.</b></p> <p>6 Q. It remained clear, did it?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. When you opened the door from the stair into the</p> <p>9 fifth-floor lobby, what were the conditions like in the</p> <p>10 fifth-floor lobby when you did that?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I remember it being clear in there.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Right. So we get to the point when Firefighter Dorgu</p> <p>13 points at the flat you're supposed to be going to.</p> <p>14 Where is Firefighter Archer at this moment?</p> <p>15 <b>A. He would've been next to me at this time.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Okay. And where did Firefighter Dorgu point, do you</p> <p>17 remember? So you're standing at the door, you've come</p> <p>18 out of the stairs into the fifth-floor lobby, where does</p> <p>19 he point?</p> <p>20 <b>A. He showed us round and pointed at the front door of the</b></p> <p>21 <b>flat in the right-hand corner as you'd come out the</b></p> <p>22 <b>door.</b></p> <p>23 Q. What about the water? Was there water available to you</p> <p>24 already on the fifth floor when you got there?</p> <p>25 <b>A. At that point, I believe Crew Manager Stern and</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 <b>I believe, at that time.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So in terms of who was in charge of the bridgehead, you</p> <p>3 remember that at that time, when you went under air, it</p> <p>4 was Watch Manager O'Keefe?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Not Crew Manager Secrett?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I don't believe so, no.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay.</p> <p>9 At that time -- 1.21 or so, when you went under</p> <p>10 air -- do you remember seeing any residents or occupants</p> <p>11 coming down the stairs?</p> <p>12 <b>A. As I made my way up the stairs, I believe probably three</b></p> <p>13 <b>people came down as I was going up.</b></p> <p>14 Q. How soon after leaving the bridgehead did you encounter</p> <p>15 three or so people coming down?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Pretty soon. It would've been around probably the third</b></p> <p>17 <b>floor that I saw -- so, yeah.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right. And what kind of condition were these occupants</p> <p>19 leaving the building in?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I didn't really notice what condition they were in,</b></p> <p>21 <b>I just was aware that they were coming down, but I was</b></p> <p>22 <b>quite focused on what I was trying to do.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Did you notice anything about them?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Not really, no.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 <b>Firefighter Hippel, they were there on that floor as</b></p> <p>2 <b>well and they were getting the water -- they were</b></p> <p>3 <b>getting the hose set up, basically, there.</b></p> <p>4 Q. So my next question is: who was it who set a hose into</p> <p>5 the dry rising outlet?</p> <p>6 <b>A. It would have been Crew Manager Stern and</b></p> <p>7 <b>Firefighter Hippel.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Was there any hose plugged in on any lower floor which</p> <p>9 was then used as a backup hose on the fifth floor?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Not to my knowledge.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Okay. So the water you had to fight the fire in the</p> <p>12 flat on the fifth floor was solely the water coming from</p> <p>13 the fifth floor dry rising main outlet?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Would that be normal procedure?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Normally you'd go from the -- the first team would go</b></p> <p>17 <b>from the floor below and plug in and go to the next</b></p> <p>18 <b>floor up and then start tackling the fire.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Yes.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Obviously I wasn't aware of other hoses, but at that</b></p> <p>21 <b>point we would've already plugged in on the third and</b></p> <p>22 <b>fourth floor, so that would mean that those two would</b></p> <p>23 <b>have to plug in on the fifth floor.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Exactly. Did you have any thoughts at the time about</p> <p>25 whether that was safe firefighting?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 <b>A. At the time, that didn't cross my mind; I was just happy</b>  2 <b>to get the hose.</b>  3 Q. Okay.  4 Then you say in the third main paragraph on page 4,  5 just picking it up:  6 "I think this flat was situated directly above the  7 flat of the original fire. Prior to forcing entry into  8 this flat, I noticed the door to the neighbouring flat  9 was slightly ajar."  10 Do you see that?:  11 "The door then opened and I could see a family of  12 four within the flat. I would describe them as a young  13 couple (man/woman) in their thirties, a young boy  14 approximately two years old and an elderly gentleman.  15 They looked Middle Eastern."  16 Did you see what the condition of the air was in  17 their flat through the door which was ajar?  18 <b>A. I don't remember seeing the condition of the air, no,</b>  19 <b>but I believe it was clear.</b>  20 Q. You believe it was clear. Okay.  21 Do you remember which door it was in relation to the  22 flat that you were going to fight the fire in?  23 <b>A. It was to the left of the fire flat.</b>  24 Q. As you look at it?  25 <b>A. As you look at the two doors, it's on the left-hand</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 about what the standing advice to residents was at  2 Grenfell Tower?  3 <b>A. It would've been the stay-put advice.</b>  4 Q. Again, did you know that or were you assuming that from  5 your experience?  6 <b>A. That would be my assumption from the type of building,</b>  7 <b>residential high-rise.</b>  8 Q. Now, you then go on to say that Firefighter Dorgu and  9 Hippel assisted them down the staircase. How far down  10 did you take them, do you remember?  11 <b>A. I didn't assist them down the staircase; it would be</b>  12 <b>Firefighter Dorgu. I believe he went out the door with</b>  13 <b>them, and I didn't see where he went after then.</b>  14 Q. You don't know how far down he went?  15 <b>A. I don't know how far down he went, no.</b>  16 Q. Did he come back again, do you remember?  17 <b>A. I don't believe he did after that, no.</b>  18 Q. Right.  19 So what happened next in terms of the fire in the  20 flat you had gone to the fifth floor to fight?  21 <b>A. Okay, well, Firefighter Archer and I went to the door.</b>  22 <b>Firefighter Archer had what we call a halligan bar,</b>  23 <b>which is sort of a prying bar we use for opening doors.</b>  24 <b>He started to sort of break entry into the fire flat.</b>  25 Q. A halligan bar, you call it?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 <b>side.</b>  2 Q. Right. You say you advised -- well, let's look at the  3 next paragraph, I'm jumping ahead a bit fast:  4 "They asked me what they should do, as they were  5 next to a flat where there was a suspected fire I told  6 them to leave. They exited their flat initially with a  7 pram (for the young child). I instructed them to leave  8 it behind, and to make their way to the stairwell.  9 I believe Firefighters Dorgu and Hippel assisted them  10 down the staircase."  11 First of all, when you say you advised the family to  12 leave, why did you do that?  13 <b>A. Well, to be honest, they were already -- they looked</b>  14 <b>very willing to leave, they wanted to get out, and they</b>  15 <b>were more or less coming out the door, so I thought I'll</b>  16 <b>just -- I'd let them, make sure they got out.</b>  17 Q. Right. How was that consistent with the standing  18 stay-put advice that was in place in the building?  19 <b>A. Well, I suppose I got them out because they were willing</b>  20 <b>to come straight out and I didn't want to stop them.</b>  21 Q. Did anybody instruct you to give them that advice?  22 <b>A. No, that was just on the fly I did that, yes.</b>  23 Q. Okay.  24 I should've asked you this question earlier, but at  25 that point in the night, did you have any understanding</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 <b>A. A halligan bar, yes.</b>  2 Q. Is that different from or the same as an enforcer?  3 <b>A. It's different from an enforcer.</b>  4 Q. How is it different?  5 <b>A. An enforcer is essentially a battering ram that you use</b>  6 <b>brute force to smash a door down. A halligan bar --</b>  7 <b>it's a bit more subtle. You put it in the side of the</b>  8 <b>door and try and crow-bar it open, essentially.</b>  9 Q. Like a jemmy?  10 <b>A. Yes, try and basically get the (inaudible) out.</b>  11 Q. Who had the halligan bar with them, was it you or was it  12 Archer?  13 <b>A. Firefighter Archer was using that.</b>  14 Q. What happened next? You got into the flat. What were  15 the conditions like in the flat that you saw?  16 <b>A. Well, at first, he opened the door and the door closed</b>  17 <b>on us by accident straight away, so we had to open the</b>  18 <b>door again. I ended up sort of booting the door open</b>  19 <b>because I couldn't get the halligan bar -- I couldn't</b>  20 <b>open it again with the halligan bar. The visibility was</b>  21 <b>zero; there was thick black smoke coming straight out</b>  22 <b>from the moment we kicked the door open.</b>  23 Q. At the top of page 5 you describe what you just told us.  24 You say:  25 "... I just kicked the door in, almost immediately a</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 64</p>



<p>1 thick plume of smoke came out of the flat. I could see</p> <p>2 thick black smoke, this was to floor level, and</p> <p>3 visibility was zero. I was very surprised at this and</p> <p>4 I started to feel concerned."</p> <p>5 Just pause there.</p> <p>6 What was surprising to you about what you were</p> <p>7 seeing?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Well, in that situation, I'm going to the floor above</b></p> <p>9 <b>the initial fire floor, I'd maybe expect there to be</b></p> <p>10 <b>a bit of smoke in there, maybe the fire from the floor</b></p> <p>11 <b>below has gone through the window of the floor above,</b></p> <p>12 <b>maybe set the curtains on fire. I'd expect maybe a bit</b></p> <p>13 <b>of smoke, but those sort of -- the sort of smoke that</b></p> <p>14 <b>came out, the thick black smoke to floor level, would</b></p> <p>15 <b>indicate this is a fully-involved fire in this flat,</b></p> <p>16 <b>which is unusual.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Right. In the next sentence you say:</p> <p>18 "At this point I was only aware of fire on the</p> <p>19 fourth floor and fire within a tower block should not</p> <p>20 spread in this way, however it was obvious to me that</p> <p>21 this was a fire compartment due to the smoke and poor</p> <p>22 visibility."</p> <p>23 Can you just explain, first of all, what do you mean</p> <p>24 when you say:</p> <p>25 "... however it was obvious to me that this was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 <b>been smoke that had gone in through the windows of that</b></p> <p>2 <b>compartment, maybe there was a slight bit of fire if the</b></p> <p>3 <b>windows were open or something. I wasn't expecting that</b></p> <p>4 <b>it would be, like I say, a fully-blown fire in there.</b></p> <p>5 Q. But when you got in and you saw the thick smoke, you</p> <p>6 realised you did have a fire there.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, so compartmentation would've failed at that point,</b></p> <p>8 <b>yes, I would've thought.</b></p> <p>9 Q. So you realised the compartmentation between floors 4</p> <p>10 and 5 had failed?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. What did that mean to you? Was that significant?</p> <p>13 <b>A. That was significant to me because my job then is to try</b></p> <p>14 <b>and nip this fire in the bud and put the fire out in</b></p> <p>15 <b>this compartment before it spreads to the sixth floor.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Yes. Did you have any thoughts yourself about whether</p> <p>17 it would be appropriate to evacuate people?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Did you contact or try to contact Mike Dowden to tell</p> <p>20 him what you'd seen in the flat on the fifth floor?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you know why that is?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I was in BA mode, essentially, so I believe it would've</b></p> <p>24 <b>been -- Firefighter Archer would be communicating with</b></p> <p>25 <b>the bridgehead saying that sort of information.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 a fire compartment due to the smoke and poor</p> <p>2 visibility."</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes, the sheer amount of black smoke is what's normally</b></p> <p>4 <b>consistent with a fire, and a bad one.</b></p> <p>5 Q. A fire and a bad one, but when you say this was a fire</p> <p>6 compartment, do you mean this was a compartmented fire</p> <p>7 or do you mean this was a fire in a compartment?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I might have used a bit of Brigade lingo there. It's a</b></p> <p>9 <b>fire flat, there's a fire in that flat, and I wouldn't</b></p> <p>10 <b>have necessarily expected there to be a real significant</b></p> <p>11 <b>fire in that flat.</b></p> <p>12 Q. I follow, okay.</p> <p>13 Just going back to what you say a little bit earlier</p> <p>14 in the sentence:</p> <p>15 "At this point I was only aware of a fire on the</p> <p>16 fourth floor and a fire within a tower block should not</p> <p>17 spread in this way ..."</p> <p>18 But you see a fire in this flat.</p> <p>19 Now, given that you had been instructed to fight</p> <p>20 a fire in a flat on the fifth floor, and you knew there</p> <p>21 was a fire in a flat immediately below it on the fourth</p> <p>22 floor, did you have any thoughts at the time about</p> <p>23 whether compartmentation had failed within the tower</p> <p>24 itself?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I thought that -- like I say, I thought maybe there had</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 Q. You say "would be"; do you know whether he did?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I cannot recall whether he did or not.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Right. Would you, if you were communicating it, expect</p> <p>4 to communicate with the bridgehead or with the incident</p> <p>5 commander direct?</p> <p>6 <b>A. The bridgehead.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Okay.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Through channel 6.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Having seen compartmentation fail between the fourth and</p> <p>10 the fifth floors, would it be normal not to communicate</p> <p>11 with Mike Dowden direct but nevertheless still to go via</p> <p>12 the bridgehead?</p> <p>13 <b>A. You'd still go through the bridgehead, yeah, through the</b></p> <p>14 <b>BA communications channel.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Okay. In your experience, once you're in a tower in</p> <p>16 breathing apparatus, would it be normal only to</p> <p>17 communicate with the bridgehead and not directly with</p> <p>18 the incident commander on the ground?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: Okay.</p> <p>21 Mr Chairman, I'm going to continue in this vein for</p> <p>22 a little bit of time. I note the time, which is</p> <p>23 somewhere stranded between 11.20 and 11.25. I don't</p> <p>24 know whether the witness would like a break. I'm happy</p> <p>25 to continue until 11.30.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'd inferred from what I'd seen that</p> <p>2 we were now going to go into the flat with the witness;</p> <p>3 is that right?</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Yes, I am.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That might be a sensible point to</p> <p>6 have a break.</p> <p>7 Mr Abell, we're going to have a break now, about</p> <p>8 15 minutes.</p> <p>9 Can I ask you, please, over the break, not to talk</p> <p>10 about your evidence or anything else relating to the</p> <p>11 inquiry.</p> <p>12 THE WITNESS: Of course, yes.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. You go with</p> <p>14 the usher, she'll look after you.</p> <p>15 We'll stop now and resume at 11.40, please.</p> <p>16 Thank you.</p> <p>17 (11.23 am)</p> <p>18 (A short break)</p> <p>19 (11.40 am)</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Abell?</p> <p>21 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ready to keep going?</p> <p>23 THE WITNESS: I am, yes.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Very good. Mr Millett.</p> <p>25 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Abell.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 <b>A. The higher up you go, it will be slightly less, on the</b></p> <p>2 <b>23rd floor, for example, than the fifth floor, just by</b></p> <p>3 <b>gravity.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you remember at any point speaking to the tenant of</p> <p>5 flat 26 or anybody who had come down the stairs to tell</p> <p>6 you that there was a fire in the flat there?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you remember whether any of your colleagues spoke to</p> <p>9 anyone from flat 26?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Since the fire, I believe either Christopher Dorgu or</b></p> <p>11 <b>Justin O'Beirne had talked to them and that's how they</b></p> <p>12 <b>knew there was some form of fire in that flat.</b></p> <p>13 Q. But your knowledge on the night itself, you say,</p> <p>14 I think, no?</p> <p>15 <b>A. On the night, I didn't know.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Now, can we go back to your statement, please, page 5.</p> <p>17 In the second paragraph, you describe what happens after</p> <p>18 you entered the flat. You were operating the branch and</p> <p>19 Firefighter Archer was behind you managing the hose and</p> <p>20 using the thermal imaging camera.</p> <p>21 You then go on at the end of that paragraph to say:</p> <p>22 "It was hard to identify any source of fire and all</p> <p>23 the firefighting techniques I deployed were not having</p> <p>24 any effect on the fire."</p> <p>25 Do you remember whether you communicated what you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 Just a couple of questions, standing back for</p> <p>2 a moment from what you were doing in flat 26.</p> <p>3 First of all, if you were firefighting internally --</p> <p>4 you, Tom Abell, were firefighting internally -- who was</p> <p>5 the pump operator on G272?</p> <p>6 <b>A. 271, who would be the pump operator for that --</b></p> <p>7 Q. 271, sorry, my mistake.</p> <p>8 <b>A. That would be Firefighter Bills, I think.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Bills. Okay.</p> <p>10 What was 272 being used for?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I don't know what that was being used for at that time.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay.</p> <p>13 If you were carrying out internal firefighting on</p> <p>14 two levels at that time -- so level 4 and level 5 within</p> <p>15 Grenfell Tower -- would that have any impact on the</p> <p>16 water supplies available for exterior firefighting?</p> <p>17 <b>A. You have a slight impact, but for internal firefighting,</b></p> <p>18 <b>you're rarely walking in there with the hose in the "on"</b></p> <p>19 <b>position, squirting water the whole time; you'll be</b></p> <p>20 <b>using it in short bursts. So the pressure will usually</b></p> <p>21 <b>be around the same for firefighting outside in that</b></p> <p>22 <b>circumstance.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Right.</p> <p>24 What about the higher up the building you go in</p> <p>25 order to fight fires internally, would that be the same?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 were finding about firefighting techniques to anybody at</p> <p>2 the bridgehead?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Not with the bridgehead, no.</b></p> <p>4 Q. What about to Mike Dowden on the fire ground?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't radio down to the</p> <p>7 bridgehead and say, "All the firefighting techniques I'm</p> <p>8 using aren't working"?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I didn't have comms at that point. I didn't have</b></p> <p>10 <b>a direct line of communication with the bridgehead. My</b></p> <p>11 <b>BA partner had the BARIE comms set.</b></p> <p>12 Q. You had a radio though.</p> <p>13 <b>A. I had a radio, but that was on channel 1 for the fire</b></p> <p>14 <b>ground and I couldn't hear anything on the radio at that</b></p> <p>15 <b>time.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Do you know whether your firefighting buddy, as it were,</p> <p>17 Archer, shared your view that all the firefighting</p> <p>18 techniques that you were deploying weren't working?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I'm not sure.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Do you know whether he made a communication with the</p> <p>21 bridgehead to that effect?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I don't know.</b></p> <p>23 Q. When you say, "all the firefighting techniques</p> <p>24 I deployed were not having any effect on the fire", did</p> <p>25 that surprise you in any way?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 <b>A. Well, like I say, I couldn't find where the fire was,</b>  2 <b>and to paint a picture, it was like having your eyes</b>  3 <b>closed; you couldn't see your hand in front of your</b>  4 <b>face. Also, the thermal imaging camera, you had to put</b>  5 <b>it right next to your visor and press it against your</b>  6 <b>visor to see any sort of light from it, it was that</b>  7 <b>thick.</b>  8 <b>Also, on your visor there would be all sorts of</b>  9 <b>carbon build-up. When you try and wipe that off with</b>  10 <b>your gloves, the carbon is on there too, so you're just</b>  11 <b>smearing it around. It was very difficult to identify</b>  12 <b>where a fire was on the thermal imaging camera.</b>  13 Q. What was the heat like inside the compartment?  14 <b>A. At first -- it was warm at first.</b>  15 Q. Right.  16 You go on in the next paragraph to explain what you  17 mean. In the next paragraph you say:  18 "At some point I was aware that the hose appeared to  19 have snagged on something. Firefighter Archer left to  20 try and find the affected hose part to de-tangle. He  21 gave me the TIC, I used it to try and identify seats of  22 fire."  23 Just focusing on that evidence for the moment, where  24 did he leave you, do you remember?  25 <b>A. He left me -- we'd gone into the compartment. We'd gone</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No.</b>  2 Q. Do you know why that is?  3 <b>A. I believe the snag was much further back than he</b>  4 <b>expected, out in the lobby area. I believe he got sort</b>  5 <b>of overcome by the conditions in the lobby, got a bit</b>  6 <b>lost and couldn't find his way back into me.</b>  7 Q. You say "believe"; is that belief based on something you  8 saw at the time on the night?  9 <b>A. I saw nothing at the time.</b>  10 Q. Okay.  11 How long did you stay in flat 26 on your own with  12 a snagged hose and no buddy and no radio communication?  13 <b>A. A number of minutes. I couldn't put an exact amount of</b>  14 <b>time on it.</b>  15 Q. Right.  16 Okay, before I go on, you told us about  17 communications. In the middle of this paragraph you  18 say:  19 "Firefighter Archer had not returned I had no radio  20 communications (I didn't have a 'BARIE radio' -- radio  21 set built into the breathing apparatus) and my efforts  22 were not having the desired effect on the fire. I made  23 the decision to leave the compartment for my own  24 safety."  25 Did you try to use your fire ground radio that was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 <b>past, I believe, what I felt like was a bathroom,</b>  2 <b>a little toilet room, a cupboard, and I think we were at</b>  3 <b>the end of that sort of hallway. I remember feeling</b>  4 <b>a chair, like a one-piece sort of suite chair, and threw</b>  5 <b>it out the way, so that might hint that might've been</b>  6 <b>a living room area. That's all I can tell you.</b>  7 Q. Did Firefighter Archer leave you alone in the flat?  8 <b>A. Yes.</b>  9 Q. Did you have water?  10 <b>A. Yes.</b>  11 Q. You did. So the tangle wasn't causing a blockage to the  12 water supply, was it?  13 <b>A. No.</b>  14 Q. But you were alone in the fire compartment with  15 a snagged hose and no buddy?  16 <b>A. Yes.</b>  17 Q. And no BARIE radio?  18 <b>A. No.</b>  19 Q. Is that safe?  20 <b>A. It's not safe at all, no.</b>  21 Q. Were you concerned?  22 <b>A. At first I wasn't concerned because I thought he'd be</b>  23 <b>coming straight back, having got some more hose, but he</b>  24 <b>didn't return and I was there for some time on my own.</b>  25 Q. He didn't return at all?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 on your PPE to communicate with the bridgehead at that  2 moment?  3 <b>A. Well, I believe I did, but in the conditions, you can't</b>  4 <b>see -- you can't change from channel 1 to channel 6, and</b>  5 <b>if you can't see your radio, you cannot do that, really,</b>  6 <b>unless you're very, very lucky, so ...</b>  7 Q. Was there a reason why you didn't use channel 1 to  8 communicate what you were finding and the situation you  9 found yourself in?  10 <b>A. Not at that time, no.</b>  11 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't do that?  12 <b>A. I don't know why I didn't do that, but I didn't do that.</b>  13 Q. Just a few lines above that -- and I've jumped ahead  14 a little bit to follow up on communications -- in the  15 paragraph, you say:  16 "I also had to periodically regulate the temperature  17 of the room, but in a way that I did not 'steam' myself.  18 After a period of doing this, I could feel that the  19 temperature had increased and it now felt very hot."  20 Could you just give us an impression of how hot it  21 was?  22 <b>A. Well, I'm talking about regulating the temperature of</b>  23 <b>the room; this means to put what we call a safety pulse</b>  24 <b>above your head where you spray a pulse of water into</b>  25 <b>the smoky -- into the gas above you, and it will cool</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 the room down. I felt the need to do that, I think,</p> <p>2 probably two or three times.</p> <p>3 Q. Was it working?</p> <p>4 A. It worked for a period, but then obviously the</p> <p>5 temperature would steadily rise back up again. If you</p> <p>6 put too much water in, if you keep doing that loads,</p> <p>7 you'll eventually -- you'll burn yourself with the</p> <p>8 steam, so I had to play a bit of a game of controlling</p> <p>9 the temperature.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay.</p> <p>11 Did you at that stage discover where the fire</p> <p>12 actually was?</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. Did you think it was in the compartment or did you not</p> <p>15 have a view?</p> <p>16 A. I could hear -- at one point I held my breath -- so your</p> <p>17 own BA set can make quite a bit of noise when you're</p> <p>18 breathing in and out. I had shouted for my BA partner</p> <p>19 a number of times really loud and had no response, so</p> <p>20 I held my breath to see if I could hear him or hear his</p> <p>21 distress unit going off. When I did that, I could</p> <p>22 actually hear the fire crackling like a bonfire quite</p> <p>23 loudly in front of me, sort of to my right in front of</p> <p>24 me, that sort of area, but I never saw anything on the</p> <p>25 TIC or with my own two eyes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 A. At this point, I was basically dragging myself along the</p> <p>3 floor, trying to drag all the hose back out with me that</p> <p>4 I'd taken in. That's not easy. I followed the wall.</p> <p>5 I could hear some commotion, some shouting, sort of</p> <p>6 muffled shouting from what I imagine would be the</p> <p>7 stairway, and I think I made out someone shouting,</p> <p>8 "I can't find my BA partner". So that obviously is</p> <p>9 going to be referring to me.</p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 A. So I essentially followed the voices as a guide to make</p> <p>12 it back out to the door to the stairway.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay.</p> <p>14 What was your air level like at that stage, do you</p> <p>15 remember?</p> <p>16 A. At the time, I don't remember. I've seen it since on</p> <p>17 your records, but I didn't know at the time.</p> <p>18 Q. Had your whistle gone off?</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. Given the conditions in the lobby that you encountered</p> <p>21 when you exited the flat, did you alert anybody else on</p> <p>22 that floor to the presence of fire in the flat, in other</p> <p>23 words a flat on the fifth floor?</p> <p>24 A. Could you repeat the question there, sorry?</p> <p>25 Q. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 Q. Did that surprise you?</p> <p>2 A. Well, like I say, in the conditions, I just couldn't see</p> <p>3 the TIC, so ...</p> <p>4 Q. Right.</p> <p>5 A. It's not a great situation.</p> <p>6 Q. Were those kinds of conditions conditions you were used</p> <p>7 to, in your experience, or were they something</p> <p>8 completely new to you?</p> <p>9 A. I've been in that level of visibility probably once</p> <p>10 before, but I wasn't on my own without comms.</p> <p>11 Q. You then, I think, describe in the same paragraph, just</p> <p>12 after the reference to the BARIE radio:</p> <p>13 "I made the decision to leave the compartment for my</p> <p>14 own safety. I made my way back to the exit by following</p> <p>15 the hose. Once I had got to the Lobby I could see the</p> <p>16 visibility had deteriorated, it was almost as bad as in</p> <p>17 the flat."</p> <p>18 Did you manage, do you think, to have any effect on</p> <p>19 the fire in the flat or not?</p> <p>20 A. I don't believe I did, no.</p> <p>21 Q. So you come out into the lobby and you say that it had</p> <p>22 deteriorated. Was there any sign of Firefighter Archer</p> <p>23 there?</p> <p>24 A. When I got into the lobby, again, as bad as --</p> <p>25 visibility-wise was as bad as in the flat.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 Given the conditions that you encountered in the</p> <p>2 lobby on coming out into the lobby from that flat on the</p> <p>3 fifth floor, did you alert anybody in any of the other</p> <p>4 flats on the fifth floor that there was a fire?</p> <p>5 A. No.</p> <p>6 Q. You didn't. Is there a reason why you didn't do that?</p> <p>7 A. To be honest, I was in a bad way with -- I think</p> <p>8 I mention in my statement, my legs felt like jelly. The</p> <p>9 adrenaline had worn off and I was pretty much shot</p> <p>10 trying to carry everything out with me, and I was</p> <p>11 dragging my way out because I thought I might not get</p> <p>12 out of there.</p> <p>13 Q. Okay.</p> <p>14 You go into the stairwell. You say that on the next</p> <p>15 page.</p> <p>16 Before we get there, at the bottom of page 5, you</p> <p>17 say that Firefighter Archer was with a BA crew from</p> <p>18 Hammersmith:</p> <p>19 "They were getting ready to go in. I tried my best</p> <p>20 to explain what I had just done."</p> <p>21 How many of them were there in that group, do you</p> <p>22 remember?</p> <p>23 A. As I got to the door, I believe Firefighter Archer sort</p> <p>24 of helped me through the door. I got to my feet.</p> <p>25 I believe there was the watch manager from Hammersmith</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 <b>and there was a crew of three BA wearers. I didn't know</b>  2 <b>who these BA wearers were at the time, but I now know</b>  3 <b>two of them to be Crew Manager Matt Sefton and</b>  4 <b>Firefighter Ben Brodrick.</b>  5 Q. What did you tell them about what you had just done and  6 what you'd found in the flat?  7 <b>A. I tried my best to brief them as to where I thought the</b>  8 <b>fire was. Again, I don't know who I was talking to in</b>  9 <b>the BA team, but I put my head as close to his as</b>  10 <b>I could and I think I said something along the lines of,</b>  11 <b>"Go through the door, follow the right-hand wall, keep</b>  12 <b>going to the door that's open, the fire is in that</b>  13 <b>flat." But I probably wasn't being too clear at the</b>  14 <b>time because I was pretty out of breath, so that's what</b>  15 <b>I tried to get across.</b>  16 Q. Okay.  17 Over the page you say, in the first paragraph,  18 page 6:  19 "Fire-fighter Archer and I made our way down the  20 stairs back to the bridgehead entry/control. I got my  21 tally back ..."  22 Could you describe for me the conditions on the  23 stairway on your descent.  24 <b>A. I don't remember the conditions. I believe they were</b>  25 <b>reasonably clear but I can't be certain about that.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 Q. Now, we can take your time of return to the bridgehead  2 as about 1.40 from the BA telemetry data. We don't need  3 to look at it.  4 Do you remember who was in charge at the bridgehead  5 there? You said O'Keefe was in charge earlier. Was he  6 still in charge?  7 <b>A. I believe he was. I believe in my statement as well</b>  8 <b>I said I briefed the entry control point, but thinking</b>  9 <b>over the last few days, I actually don't remember</b>  10 <b>briefing the entry control point with what I'd seen.</b>  11 Q. I was going to ask you, because you say in the next  12 sentence in the first paragraph on page 6 you debriefed  13 the entry control officer and apprised him of the  14 situation and O'Keefe was the officer in charge of the  15 bridgehead at that time.  16 The entry control officer was who?  17 <b>A. That would have been Alex De St Aubin, firefighter.</b>  18 Q. You say you debriefed him; do you remember what you  19 said?  20 <b>A. I don't remember debriefing him. I think I --</b>  21 Q. Okay. How did that get into your statement, do you  22 know?  23 <b>A. I think at the time -- watching all my colleagues speak</b>  24 <b>in the last week, I've been thinking about this a lot</b>  25 <b>every day and it's brought back some more memories from</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 Q. What about people coming down?  2 <b>A. I didn't see anybody else come down apart from me and</b>  3 <b>Firefighter Archer.</b>  4 Q. Did you hand your hose to the Hammersmith BA crew?  5 <b>A. I believe I sort of dropped it outside the door as</b>  6 <b>I came out and they would've picked it up.</b>  7 Q. Which door, the stairwell?  8 <b>A. The door to the lobby going into the stairway on the</b>  9 <b>fifth floor.</b>  10 Q. Got it. You dropped it on the inside, lobby side?  11 <b>A. It would've being in the staircase side, outside.</b>  12 Q. What happened to it, did somebody pick it up?  13 <b>A. I didn't see anyone pick it up. I sort of stumbled</b>  14 <b>towards the BA crew and tried to tell them what I'd</b>  15 <b>seen.</b>  16 Q. Stumbling, you say?  17 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b>  18 Q. Then you went down. How easy did you find it to descend  19 from the fifth floor to the bridgehead?  20 <b>A. Well, I was still trying to get my legs back. I think</b>  21 <b>I had my hand on the wall, sort of trying to guide me</b>  22 <b>down, taking deep breaths, trying to sort of recover.</b>  23 Q. Did the conditions improve or did they stay the same on  24 the stairway as you went down?  25 <b>A. I don't remember.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 <b>the night, and when I thought about it, I thought</b>  2 <b>I don't actually remember saying anything to the entry</b>  3 <b>control point, I'm not sure why I thought that. So</b>  4 <b>that's my honest answer.</b>  5 Q. No. Okay.  6 Do you remember whether you told anybody, whether at  7 the bridgehead or outside on the incident ground  8 externally, what you had encountered on the fifth floor?  9 <b>A. No.</b>  10 Q. You don't remember or you remember you didn't?  11 <b>A. I didn't personally go round telling anyone what I had</b>  12 <b>seen on the fifth floor.</b>  13 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't?  14 <b>A. I think I was just keen to get out and get my gear off,</b>  15 <b>so ...</b>  16 Q. What about Firefighter Archer? Do you know from your  17 own knowledge whether he communicated what he had found  18 on the fifth floor to anybody at the bridgehead or on  19 the incident ground?  20 <b>A. He might have talked to the entry control point, but I'm</b>  21 <b>not 100 per cent sure.</b>  22 Q. Once you were out of the tower, what was your next task?  23 <b>A. I went to a garage area underneath the concrete</b>  24 <b>mezzanine for Grenfell Walk. I took my breathing</b>  25 <b>apparatus set off and I did what we call a fire ground A</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 <b>test, which means you take your cylinder off, put</b>  2 <b>a fresh cylinder on, and that was with a view to maybe</b>  3 <b>going back into the building again, if I needed to.</b>  4 Q. Is it quite common to do more than one wear at  5 an incident?  6 <b>A. No, not really. It happens very rarely and usually</b>  7 <b>you'd have a real good break in between if that were the</b>  8 <b>case.</b>  9 Q. Did anybody instruct you to go and do an A test?  10 <b>A. An A test, no, I just did it. It's just a good</b>  11 <b>practice.</b>  12 Q. Right. Were other firefighters, to your knowledge, also  13 doing fire ground A tests with a view to going back up  14 into the tower?  15 <b>A. Just after I started mine, I was joined by Crew Manager</b>  16 <b>Batterbee, who had been in BA crew 1, and he sat</b>  17 <b>opposite me doing his BA set at the same time.</b>  18 Q. Did you have a conversation with him?  19 <b>A. A brief conversation. I think I must have said, "That</b>  20 <b>was bad, wasn't it?" Nothing more than that, really.</b>  21 <b>He looked like he'd had a bit of a bad wear himself, but</b>  22 <b>we didn't really have a big conversation.</b>  23 Q. Right. Did you discuss together what you were going to  24 do next?  25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 I've read that all out to you, so we've got it on  2 the screen. I want to ask one or two questions.  3 First of all, you say this was the first point at  4 which you'd really seen the flames on the exterior.  5 Where were you standing, do you remember, when you  6 first saw the flames?  7 <b>A. I walked up the stairway onto Grenfell Walk, which would</b>  8 <b>be the first-floor mezzanine level. As I got up there,</b>  9 <b>I had a real good view of the east side of the tower,</b>  10 <b>and that's where I saw how bad it had got.</b>  11 Q. Right. And you say:  12 "I remember thinking 'this is going up like rocket  13 fuel!'"  14 Had you ever seen anything like that before?  15 <b>A. No.</b>  16 Q. You say that the flames had consumed more than one half  17 of one side of the tower. When you say one half, do you  18 mean -- well, what do you mean?  19 <b>A. I think when I did my police interview there, I couldn't</b>  20 <b>remember exactly how far up the building they went, so</b>  21 <b>I just said more than one half, meaning from bottom to</b>  22 <b>top.</b>  23 Q. Right.  24 <b>A. But the video would suggest it was actually to the top</b>  25 <b>at this point.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 Q. Okay.  2 On page 6 of your statement, if you look at  3 paragraphs 2 and 3 in there, you start by saying,  4 "I would approximate that the time was now about  5 1.45 am", and that tallies, you should know, with your  6 BA data, and then you go on to say that you went to the  7 garage area and came out.  8 You were asked by Watch Manager Collins and other  9 firefighters to set up and supply water to two ground  10 monitors. The purpose of these ground monitors was to  11 prevent the fire from the east side encroaching onto the  12 south side. You then explain where they're set up.  13 Then you explain in the next paragraph what the ground  14 monitor is.  15 You then in the third paragraph say in the middle:  16 "This is the first point at which I realised how  17 much the fire had spread. I was aware of heavy smoke on  18 the fifth floor but this was the first time I had really  19 seen the flames and fire to the exterior of the  20 building. I remember thinking, 'this is going up like  21 rocket fuel!' The flames had consumed more [than] half  22 of one side of the tower, they were ferocious flames.  23 It was completely unprecedented; a fire in a Tower block  24 should not spread like this. Fires are normally fought  25 from the inside and not the outside."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 Q. I was going to ask you whether you meant bottom to top  2 or whether you meant laterally, sideways.  3 <b>A. That would be bottom to top.</b>  4 Q. Right.  5 Do you remember seeing whether it was spreading?  6 <b>A. Well, it would be my assumption that it was spreading</b>  7 <b>quite rapidly, the way it was going.</b>  8 Q. In which direction, do you remember seeing in which  9 direction it was spreading?  10 <b>A. I only saw the fire on the east side of the tower at</b>  11 <b>that point, so just upwards at that point.</b>  12 Q. Okay.  13 The ground monitors were operational. Do you  14 remember having any view about whether they were being  15 effective at fighting the fire on the exterior?  16 <b>A. No, I pretty much ran up the stairs with the gear and</b>  17 <b>helped set them up, then I got sort of roped in to do</b>  18 <b>other jobs. So I didn't hang around and wait for them</b>  19 <b>to get turned on, so I couldn't comment on how effective</b>  20 <b>they were being.</b>  21 Q. In the last sentence in the third paragraph on page 6  22 you say:  23 "Fires are normally fought from the inside and not  24 the outside."  25 First of all, do you mean there in relation to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 high-rise blocks?</p> <p>2 <b>A. High-rise fires, yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. And normally fought from the inside and not the outside;</p> <p>4 that being so, was it usual or unusual to have</p> <p>5 a covering jet on the outside?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Well, it's usual because you're not fighting a fire with</b></p> <p>7 <b>a covering jet; it's a defensive tactic. So it's purely</b></p> <p>8 <b>to stop fire spread, you're not -- it could actually be</b></p> <p>9 <b>dangerous to fight that fire from the outside if a BA</b></p> <p>10 <b>crew are in that room because, like I said earlier about</b></p> <p>11 <b>the steam, you could, in the worst-case scenario, steam</b></p> <p>12 <b>your colleagues to death if they're in there, so ...</b></p> <p>13 Q. When you say outside, you're applying that to a covering</p> <p>14 jet and a ground monitor, or are they the same thing,</p> <p>15 effectively?</p> <p>16 <b>A. They are not the same thing technically but they're</b></p> <p>17 <b>being used for the same reason: to stop fire -- it's</b></p> <p>18 <b>like a defensive tactic to stop the fire spreading</b></p> <p>19 <b>around.</b></p> <p>20 Q. In terms of a ground monitor, just describe for us what</p> <p>21 it is physically, as a piece of equipment.</p> <p>22 <b>A. In layman's terms, it's like an unmanned or unstaffed</b></p> <p>23 <b>water turret that you weigh down, and it can throw a</b></p> <p>24 <b>large amount of water, much more than a normal</b></p> <p>25 <b>firefighting branch, at a target.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 caused it to rupture. Do you remember roughly when that</p> <p>2 was during the night?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Maybe about two hours after we turned up. Again, that's</b></p> <p>4 <b>a real -- that's a guess. So much happened that night.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Then you go on to say, four lines down:</p> <p>6 "Luckily the water supply to the building was still</p> <p>7 sufficient despite this issue."</p> <p>8 Was that your view at the time?</p> <p>9 <b>A. That was my assumption. I mean, the water going into</b></p> <p>10 <b>the building is under very sort of high pressure, around</b></p> <p>11 <b>10 bar, so although it was spraying quite a bit of water</b></p> <p>12 <b>around, I didn't feel that we were losing water and that</b></p> <p>13 <b>it would be, like, massively detrimental to what was</b></p> <p>14 <b>going on inside the building.</b></p> <p>15 Q. So that was your impression, was it?</p> <p>16 <b>A. That's my impression, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Did anybody tell you on the night that they were having</p> <p>18 difficulties with water pressure?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right. Have you heard since the fire about difficulties</p> <p>21 with water pressure from anybody else?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Not really, no.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Did you witness the ruptured hose being replaced?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I was one of the people who replaced it later on. It</b></p> <p>25 <b>took quite a long time to be able to do this because of</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 <b>You usually use these for maybe a warehouse fire.</b></p> <p>2 <b>If you didn't want to commit people into there for</b></p> <p>3 <b>safety reasons, you could fight it from a distance with</b></p> <p>4 <b>a very powerful ground monitor.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Assuming -- this is maybe a slightly strange</p> <p>6 expression -- normal water pressure for central London,</p> <p>7 what sort of height would you be able to get a plume of</p> <p>8 water up from a ground monitor?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It would be quite high. I would be speculating.</b></p> <p>10 <b>I don't actually know the official height you could get</b></p> <p>11 <b>with it really, but ...</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay. Let me ask you more specifically: on the night,</p> <p>13 do you remember how high you managed to get the ground</p> <p>14 monitor to apply water up at Grenfell Tower? How many</p> <p>15 floors up, do you remember?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No. It's worth adding there as well that they're on the</b></p> <p>17 <b>south side of the building to stop it from spreading</b></p> <p>18 <b>potentially around to the south side of the building</b></p> <p>19 <b>rather than up the east side of the building.</b></p> <p>20 Q. While I'm on water pressure, let me just jump ahead</p> <p>21 a little bit. I'm going to come back to other parts of</p> <p>22 your statement in a moment, but let me walk ahead with</p> <p>23 you to page 8 in your statement, paragraph 3.</p> <p>24 You describe there how a large piece of cladding</p> <p>25 fell onto one of the two dry riser delivery hoses and</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 <b>the amount of debris that was falling down, and also, to</b></p> <p>2 <b>replace it, you'd have to cut the supply of water for</b></p> <p>3 <b>a short amount of time completely, which obviously would</b></p> <p>4 <b>be very dangerous to those inside. So you've got to the</b></p> <p>5 <b>look at risk over benefit.</b></p> <p>6 <b>Later on, when things calmed down a little and there</b></p> <p>7 <b>was less debris falling, we did a really quick</b></p> <p>8 <b>changeover, and that would've been when it was getting</b></p> <p>9 <b>light. I don't know the exact time, but it was getting</b></p> <p>10 <b>light at that point.</b></p> <p>11 Q. In that sentence you say -- it's the middle of the</p> <p>12 paragraph before the half paragraph break:</p> <p>13 "We eventually replaced this hose around 2-3 hours</p> <p>14 after the rupture when the amount of falling debris had</p> <p>15 lessened."</p> <p>16 The "we" there includes you personally, does it?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Who else helped you?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Firefighter David Badillo, Watch Manager Dowden,</b></p> <p>20 <b>Firefighter Bills and I believe Crew Manager Secrett was</b></p> <p>21 <b>there as well at that point.</b></p> <p>22 Q. So it was a North Ken job?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, by chance, we all happened to be at the same place</b></p> <p>24 <b>then, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Okay. And the amount of falling debris -- I mean, at</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 92</p>

<p>1 the moment when the hose had ruptured, could you just</p> <p>2 give us an impression of what you could see, hear and</p> <p>3 feel?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Well, I was under -- the Grenfell Walk at the mezzanine</b></p> <p>5 <b>level offered quite a good natural protection from what</b></p> <p>6 <b>was falling down, but we still had a few close shaves,</b></p> <p>7 <b>but we were mostly protected. But there were big pieces</b></p> <p>8 <b>of materials falling down that were red hot, some the</b></p> <p>9 <b>size of a table or a similar size, a metre squared</b></p> <p>10 <b>maybe. There was stuff smashing all over the place.</b></p> <p>11 <b>That was building up essentially a bonfire at the bottom</b></p> <p>12 <b>of the tower that we had to control throughout the night</b></p> <p>13 <b>with hose reels to protect the exit route for any crews</b></p> <p>14 <b>and residents.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Yes.</p> <p>16 Now, can I ask you to go back in your statement to</p> <p>17 page 7 at the top. Well, actually, I'd probably better</p> <p>18 start at the foot of page 6 after you've described</p> <p>19 setting up the ground monitor.</p> <p>20 You say:</p> <p>21 "I was aware that there was a discussion about</p> <p>22 hauling up a (9m) nine metre ladder to the mezzanine</p> <p>23 level, to assist with rescue operations. I could see</p> <p>24 there were many people leaning out of windows on various</p> <p>25 floors of the tower trying to get our attention. They</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 <b>to be the entrance.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So what kind of angle was the ladder at?</p> <p>3 <b>A. The 9-metre ladder?</b></p> <p>4 Q. The 9-metre ladder.</p> <p>5 <b>A. It was -- I think we knew it might not be high enough to</b></p> <p>6 <b>get to where we wanted to go, so we had to pitch it at</b></p> <p>7 <b>a very steep pitch to get as much height as we could.</b></p> <p>8 <b>When I was climbing it, I wasn't feeling safe at all.</b></p> <p>9 <b>I think my feet were more or less hitting the wall at</b></p> <p>10 <b>one point as I was climbing up. When I got about near</b></p> <p>11 <b>the top, I said to Watch Manager Collins, "This isn't</b></p> <p>12 <b>going to work, we're not going to get people down this</b></p> <p>13 <b>ladder".</b></p> <p>14 Q. Then you go on on page 7, five lines down, to say:</p> <p>15 "The ladder was simply not long enough. We then</p> <p>16 decided to replace the 9m ladder with a 135 ladder --</p> <p>17 this ladder is 13.5 metres in height and is quite heavy.</p> <p>18 Under WM Collin's instruction, approximately seven</p> <p>19 fire-fighters and two to three members of public hauled</p> <p>20 this ladder to the Mezzanine level. This was achieved</p> <p>21 by some of us pushing the ladder up (from the ground</p> <p>22 floor) whilst others pulled from the Mezzanine level."</p> <p>23 Would it be quite unusual to involve members of the</p> <p>24 public in a rescue operation like that?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 were doing this by shining lights and waving towels."</p> <p>2 Then you go on to describe:</p> <p>3 "Watch manager (WM) Collins, Crew Manager (CM) Ashe</p> <p>4 and other fire-fighters hauled a 9m metre ladder to the</p> <p>5 mezzanine floor."</p> <p>6 First of all, where was that ladder from, do you</p> <p>7 remember?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I believe that was from North Kensington's pump, which</b></p> <p>9 <b>would be Golf 272.</b></p> <p>10 Q. I see.</p> <p>11 And you then say, over the page:</p> <p>12 "We pitched the ladder in an attempt to reach</p> <p>13 causalities on the south west side of the tower at a</p> <p>14 fifth floor window."</p> <p>15 So this is running, so I'm clear, from the mezzanine</p> <p>16 level -- is that the walkway over the garages?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. So it's going across like a bridge, is it, onto the</p> <p>19 south side of the tower?</p> <p>20 <b>A. The mezzanine level?</b></p> <p>21 Q. Yes.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes, I believe that used to be the old entrance to</b></p> <p>23 <b>Grenfell Tower pre-refurbishment. So you have Grenfell</b></p> <p>24 <b>Walk and essentially like a little bridge going to the</b></p> <p>25 <b>side of the building, which now leads nowhere but used</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 Q. How long did that process take, fetching the 13.5-metre</p> <p>2 ladder and then getting it up to the mezzanine level, do</p> <p>3 you remember?</p> <p>4 <b>A. A couple of minutes. I would be surprised if that's</b></p> <p>5 <b>ever been done before, to be honest, with a 135 ladder.</b></p> <p>6 <b>If you see a fire engine drive down the road with a big</b></p> <p>7 <b>ladder down the back of it, that's the ladder we're</b></p> <p>8 <b>talking about hauling aloft.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Right. I didn't realise they are detachable.</p> <p>10 Presumably they are.</p> <p>11 <b>A. That one is a detachable ladder, yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Which pump did it come from, do you remember?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Golf 271.</b></p> <p>14 Q. That was 271's, okay.</p> <p>15 Then you go on in the second paragraph to say:</p> <p>16 "Once we had managed to get this ladder up to the</p> <p>17 Mezzanine level we pitched the ladder to the fifth floor</p> <p>18 apartment where the two males were signalling for our</p> <p>19 attention."</p> <p>20 Then you go on to describe in graphic terms the use</p> <p>21 of that ladder to perform that rescue.</p> <p>22 I'll read it into the record:</p> <p>23 "... I performed a rescue of one of the males.</p> <p>24 I did this by coaching him onto the ladder.</p> <p>25 Understandably this took a bit of time as it was a</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>



<p>1 daunting experience for the male, but slowly he managed</p> <p>2 to climb on the ladder and descended to the Mezzanine</p> <p>3 level. I would say this male was of Middle Eastern</p> <p>4 appearance. I only spoke to him to give him instruction</p> <p>5 on how to descend the ladder; once I had completed my</p> <p>6 rescue I handed this male to the police who escorted him</p> <p>7 away. Another fire-fighter performed the rescue of the</p> <p>8 second male. This ladder was left in situ, there were</p> <p>9 no other casualties presenting from that window."</p> <p>10 First of all, do you remember which direction the</p> <p>11 flat faced from where you were performing this rescue?</p> <p>12 <b>A. South.</b></p> <p>13 Q. South. And how near to the southwest corner was the</p> <p>14 flat? Did it abut the southwest corner or was it in the</p> <p>15 middle of the south face?</p> <p>16 <b>A. It was reasonably close to the southwest corner, maybe</b></p> <p>17 <b>two flats across.</b></p> <p>18 Q. When you say two flats across, do you mean --</p> <p>19 <b>A. From the west face.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Do you mean two flats or two window frames?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Probably two window frames. It's hard to remember.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Now, you say that you coached him onto the ladder.</p> <p>23 Where were you during this time?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I was on the ladder with him, so I went all the way up</b></p> <p>25 <b>to the window level and I told him, "Okay, if you want</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 <b>person.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you learn from him what the conditions were like in</p> <p>3 his flat?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Do you know who the other firefighter was who performed</p> <p>6 the rescue of the second male?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It was a firefighter from Ealing, but I can't remember</b></p> <p>8 <b>his name. I footed the ladder while he brought the</b></p> <p>9 <b>second casualty down.</b></p> <p>10 Q. How do you remember he was from Ealing?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I recognised him from where I'd been on standby before</b></p> <p>12 <b>where you go to do duty at another station, but I can't</b></p> <p>13 <b>remember his name.</b></p> <p>14 Q. So far as you remember, what method did that Ealing</p> <p>15 firefighter use to perform the rescue of the second</p> <p>16 male?</p> <p>17 <b>A. The same method as me.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right. And did it go to plan in the same way?</p> <p>19 <b>A. It went more or less the same way, yes. It was a bit</b></p> <p>20 <b>slow, but that's understandable given the scariness of</b></p> <p>21 <b>the situation.</b></p> <p>22 Q. At page 7 in the next paragraph, you say:</p> <p>23 "Having performed this rescue I noticed a male on a</p> <p>24 very high floor lowering bed sheets which he had tied up</p> <p>25 together in an attempt to descend to the ground floor.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 <b>to get out of here, you need to get onto this ladder",</b></p> <p>2 <b>and essentially I'm just telling him exactly what to do</b></p> <p>3 <b>and putting his mind at ease. So I'm not carrying him</b></p> <p>4 <b>down the ladder; he's able to go down himself, so I'm</b></p> <p>5 <b>trying to give him the confidence to get onto the ladder</b></p> <p>6 <b>and climb down.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. Just trying to picture it in my own mind, where</p> <p>8 was the head of the ladder situated in relation to the</p> <p>9 window he was coming out from?</p> <p>10 <b>A. It was against his windowsill, I think a little bit over</b></p> <p>11 <b>the top of his windowsill.</b></p> <p>12 Q. So you were below him on the ladder, were you?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. So when you descended, were you below him and he was</p> <p>15 above you, or ...?</p> <p>16 <b>A. There was a bit of crossover, so my head would be about</b></p> <p>17 <b>where his feet are and I'm just making sure he's putting</b></p> <p>18 <b>his feet on the rails properly just trying to keep him</b></p> <p>19 <b>at ease, basically.</b></p> <p>20 Q. That process, was that something that you had been</p> <p>21 trained to do or was that on-the-spot improvisation?</p> <p>22 <b>A. That's what you are trained to do, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Did you see for yourself what the conditions were like</p> <p>24 inside his flat?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I didn't pay attention to the conditions, just the</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 This was on the south side of the tower around the 16th</p> <p>2 to 17th floor. I could see that the South side of the</p> <p>3 tower was on fire, but I cannot remember how close the</p> <p>4 flames were to this male."</p> <p>5 Do you remember where the fire was, could you see?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I can't remember exactly. I think it might have just</b></p> <p>7 <b>been creeping round to the south side, but I couldn't be</b></p> <p>8 <b>certain about that.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Okay. And do you remember how much of the south side</p> <p>10 was alight at that point?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. What did the fact that he was doing what he was doing</p> <p>13 tell you about the conditions on the south side of the</p> <p>14 tower at those levels?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Sorry, could you repeat the question?</b></p> <p>16 Q. Yes. Did the fact that you saw a man on a very high</p> <p>17 floor lowering bed sheets on the south side of the tower</p> <p>18 tell you anything about the conditions inside the</p> <p>19 building on the south side at that point?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Well, I could assume he was in some distress in there</b></p> <p>21 <b>but, to be honest, I think at the time I thought maybe</b></p> <p>22 <b>he's overreacting here, so this is going to be a more</b></p> <p>23 <b>dangerous way out of the building than going down the</b></p> <p>24 <b>stairs. That was the thought that crossed my mind.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you report what you had seen up on that high floor</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 100</p>

1 with that man to anybody?

2 **A. I was with Watch Manager Collins, who was one of the**

3 **officers in charge at the time, so he witnessed that as**

4 **well, but I didn't report it to anybody else.**

5 Q. Do you know whether Watch Manager Collins did?

6 **A. I'm not sure.**

7 Q. Okay.

8 **A. To be honest, we both didn't want to let this guy out of**

9 **our sight and were shouting up to him to not try to**

10 **rappel down the building.**

11 Q. You don't remember whether you then made arrangements

12 for him to be rescued from his floor?

13 **A. I didn't make any arrangements for him to be rescued,**

14 **no.**

15 Q. Right. Okay. We know in fact that it turned out okay

16 because, as you go on to say in the next part of that

17 paragraph, you subsequently met this man after the fire.

18 **A. Yes, I think he's called Olu Talabi.**

19 Q. Right. Okay.

20 Just a few other questions about communications.

21 G272 was designated as the incident command pump.

22 We have that as a matter of record. Were you aware of

23 that?

24 **A. No, not on the night, no.**

25 Q. Have you got experience of an incident command pump

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1 being left in a situation whereby its radio would be on

2 the loud speaker in the hamper, I think you call it, at

3 the back?

4 **A. It can happen, yes. But an incident command pump would**

5 **usually be a little bit further away, and if I were**

6 **operating on one of those, I would prefer to be sitting**

7 **inside the cab where it's a bit more quiet and I can**

8 **hear the internal radio more clearly, yes.**

9 Q. Do you remember on the night what the position was in

10 relation to the incident command pump's radio? Who was

11 manning it, first of all?

12 **A. I don't know who was manning that radio from the night.**

13 **I believe from what I've heard since it was**

14 **Firefighter Bills, who I turned up with at the start of**

15 **the incident.**

16 Q. But do you have any recollection of your own

17 independently as to how it was that messages being sent

18 to the ICP would be heard by anybody on the incident

19 ground?

20 **A. No.**

21 Q. Okay.

22 How did radio communication between the incident

23 pump and Brigade control occur? How would that work, do

24 you remember?

25 **A. I don't remember from the night, no.**

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1 Q. If the driver of the incident command pump, Danny Bills

2 in this case, was not there, he was busy, how would

3 Brigade control communicate with the fire ground?

4 **A. In the very beginning stages, if he was not by the radio**

5 **or any of us weren't by the radio, then they wouldn't be**

6 **able to get that message through.**

7 Q. Right. Okay.

8 A couple more questions.

9 Are you familiar with the condition of metabolic

10 heat stress?

11 **A. Yes.**

12 Q. Could you just explain what it is?

13 **A. We covered this at training school. It's where under**

14 **certain stress in a fire, your sort of motor skills can**

15 **be affected and it can cause you stress and make you do**

16 **things that you wouldn't normally do or -- yeah.**

17 Q. Right.

18 **A. I haven't got a more technical explanation than that, to**

19 **be honest.**

20 Q. Looking back on it, do you think you might have been

21 affected by metabolic heat stress at any point on the

22 night?

23 **A. I am not sure, I don't know.**

24 Q. Did you ever consult anybody about whether you --

25 **A. No.**

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1 MR MILLETT: No, okay.

2 I have no further questions for you,

3 Firefighter Abell. Thank you very much for coming to

4 give your evidence.

5 **A. Thank you.**

6 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You can help me with one aspect that**

7 **you touched on earlier. Do you remember we just talked**

8 **about breathing apparatus and the A test you do on the**

9 **fire ground?**

10 **A. Yes.**

11 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do you happen to know how many BA**

12 **cylinders a standard pump would carry?**

13 **A. You would have five spare cylinders on a pump.**

14 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Five spares.**

15 **A. Yes.**

16 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do any of the standard pumps have**

17 **a facility for recharging?**

18 **A. Yes, when the BA sets are on the back of the truck,**

19 **they're always on charge. There's a wire that goes**

20 **inside, and when they're not being used, they're on**

21 **charge.**

22 **SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So the pump has a compressor?**

23 **A. Sorry, not a compressor, no. We have our cylinders**

24 **delivered to us on station and we take those full**

25 **cylinders onto the truck. What I thought you were**

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26 (Pages 101 to 104)

<p>1 referring to there was electronic charge to the battery.</p> <p>2 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> No, I was thinking of whether any of</p> <p>3 the pumps had the ability to recharge the cylinders.</p> <p>4 <b>A.</b> We don't recharge cylinders on the fire ground, no.</p> <p>5 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> So you've got the five spares and</p> <p>6 that's it?</p> <p>7 <b>A.</b> Yes.</p> <p>8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Yes, that's very helpful, thank you.</p> <p>9 Do you want to follow that up at all?</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: No, Mr Chairman. Thank you.</p> <p>11 Firefighter Abell, thank you very much for coming to</p> <p>12 give your evidence to the inquiry. I should say, as</p> <p>13 I said to all other firefighters who have come before</p> <p>14 you, that we're very grateful to you for your assistance</p> <p>15 today and thank you very much.</p> <p>16 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> I would like to add my thanks to</p> <p>17 those of Mr Millett.</p> <p>18 I don't suppose it could have been a very agreeable</p> <p>19 experience, but you've given a lot of evidence and a lot</p> <p>20 of very helpful evidence, and we're very grateful to you</p> <p>21 for coming along to do so. Thank you very much indeed.</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>23 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Would you like to follow the usher</p> <p>24 and she'll take you out. Thank you.</p> <p>25 (The witness was released)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 mathematics.</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: It's logical, but I'm in your hands,</p> <p>3 Mr Chairman.</p> <p>4 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> You know roughly how many questions</p> <p>5 you have. If you are telling me you think we ought to</p> <p>6 start again at 1.30, I would like to know that.</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: With this witness, we may need more breaks than</p> <p>8 the last witness, and I would ask you to start at 1.30.</p> <p>9 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> I am sorry, you are not going to get</p> <p>10 a longer than usual lunch hour. I would like to start</p> <p>11 at 1.30, please. Thank you very much.</p> <p>12 (12.30 pm)</p> <p>13 (The short adjournment)</p> <p>14 (1.30 pm)</p> <p>15 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, I'm told that it is necessary to</p> <p>17 rise at 4.00 today because some core participants have</p> <p>18 a preplanned trip up the tower.</p> <p>19 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Yes.</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: Is that convenient to you, Mr Chairman?</p> <p>21 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> No, we'll do that. Will you find</p> <p>22 a convenient point around about 4 o'clock?</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: Yes, I will. Thank you.</p> <p>24 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Thank you very much.</p> <p>25 MR MILLETT: In which case I'm going to call our next</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Now, Mr Millett.</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, the next witness is Firefighter</p> <p>3 Justin O'Beirne from G272 North Kensington.</p> <p>4 It may be better for him, I think, if we were to</p> <p>5 break now and to come back, let's say, 1.45 to start his</p> <p>6 evidence at that stage, rather than starting it now and</p> <p>7 then breaking after 20 minutes.</p> <p>8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> I can see that. My draft programme</p> <p>9 suggests that you may be able to complete his evidence</p> <p>10 this afternoon. Is that still possible?</p> <p>11 MR MILLETT: It's difficult, I think, but it may have to be</p> <p>12 possible.</p> <p>13 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Well, I wasn't seeking to confine</p> <p>14 you but --</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: No.</p> <p>16 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> You've told me what I need to know,</p> <p>17 which is we can't have a particularly long lunch.</p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: I think that's what I was really trying to</p> <p>19 communicate.</p> <p>20 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> So if we were to stop now and give</p> <p>21 ourselves a slightly long lunch and say 1.45, that's not</p> <p>22 going to tie your hands too much, is it?</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: It will tie my hands by an extra 15 minutes</p> <p>24 more than it would do if we started at 1.30.</p> <p>25 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Well, true. Very good. Good</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 witness, Firefighter Justin O'Beirne.</p> <p>2 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Thank you.</p> <p>3 JUSTIN O'BEIRNE (called)</p> <p>4 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Good afternoon, Mr O'Beirne. You</p> <p>5 are going to take the oath, I think, please.</p> <p>6 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>7 (The witness was sworn)</p> <p>8 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Thank you very much.</p> <p>9 You are comfortable standing?</p> <p>10 THE WITNESS: I'll let you know if I'm not.</p> <p>11 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> Please do.</p> <p>12 THE WITNESS: Okay.</p> <p>13 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> That's what I was going to say to</p> <p>14 you.</p> <p>15 THE WITNESS: Oh, right, okay.</p> <p>16 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK:</b> We can easily remove that if you'd</p> <p>17 rather sit down, and if you get to a point where you</p> <p>18 need a break, just indicate.</p> <p>19 THE WITNESS: Cheers. Okay, thank you.</p> <p>20 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>21 MR MILLETT: Good afternoon, Mr O'Beirne.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Afternoon.</b></p> <p>23 Q. First of all, can I just say how grateful we are to you</p> <p>24 for coming here to the inquiry to give your evidence</p> <p>25 today. It is very much appreciated.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 <b>A. You're very welcome.</b></p> <p>2 Q. If there are any questions which I ask you which you</p> <p>3 don't understand, I will happily ask them again or ask</p> <p>4 them in a different way, just say. And if you need</p> <p>5 a break at any point, just signal and you can have</p> <p>6 a break.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Just so you know, we're aiming to finish this afternoon</p> <p>9 at about 4 o'clock. I may not have finished your</p> <p>10 evidence by then, but it doesn't matter, just so you</p> <p>11 have that in your mind.</p> <p>12 <b>A. Thank you.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Can I ask you to look at your statement first of all,</p> <p>14 please, which you'll find at tab 6A in the little bundle</p> <p>15 in front of you. It's a blue bundle.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. It should be on the screen there.</p> <p>18 <b>A. I can see it on the screen.</b></p> <p>19 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You can either see it on the screen</b></p> <p>20 <b>or in the hard copy in that blue folder in front of you.</b></p> <p>21 <b>A. Right, okay.</b></p> <p>22 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Use whichever you find more</b></p> <p>23 <b>convenient.</b></p> <p>24 <b>A. Right, yes.</b></p> <p>25 MR MILLETT: Okay. This isn't for you but for the system we</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Can you confirm for us that its contents are true?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Have you discussed your statement or the evidence that</p> <p>5 you are going to give today with anybody before you came</p> <p>6 here?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Now, you joined the London Fire Brigade in April,</p> <p>9 I think, 1998?</p> <p>10 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Can you just give us a brief summary of your career in</p> <p>12 the London Fire Brigade since April 1998.</p> <p>13 <b>A. I came out of training school maybe around September of</b></p> <p>14 <b>that year, went to Park Royal fire station, where they</b></p> <p>15 <b>had one truck, and moved on to -- after about a year and</b></p> <p>16 <b>a half of being there, I moved to North Kensington,</b></p> <p>17 <b>which brings us up to around about -- what was it --</b></p> <p>18 <b>maybe March 2002 -- or 2001, I moved to North Kensington</b></p> <p>19 <b>fire station. I've been on Red Watch since I started my</b></p> <p>20 <b>career and I've been on the reds at North Ken for about</b></p> <p>21 <b>17 years now.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Yes.</p> <p>23 I wonder whether when you speak you might just</p> <p>24 either stand a little closer to the microphone, perhaps,</p> <p>25 or speak up just a little bit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 operate here, Mr O'Beirne, its reference is</p> <p>2 MET000083321, and there are, attached to that statement,</p> <p>3 some contemporaneous notes as JOB/3, and they are</p> <p>4 MET00005337, and a handwritten statement, MET00005338.</p> <p>5 You should have those in front of you in the little</p> <p>6 bundle as well at tab B. Could you just confirm that</p> <p>7 they are yours? That's your handwritten statement of</p> <p>8 JOB/3 and a secondhand written statement.</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes. (Pause)</b></p> <p>10 <b>Okay. Right, okay, yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Yes? You recognise those as yours?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes, I think the last page was written by somebody else,</b></p> <p>13 <b>was it? I don't recognise the handwriting.</b></p> <p>14 Q. We can look at that in due course.</p> <p>15 Then we have exhibits 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and</p> <p>16 11, and perhaps, Mr Chairman, we'll read the Met</p> <p>17 references into the record later.</p> <p>18 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</b></p> <p>19 <b>MR MILLETT: But in your bundle at tab C, you should have</b></p> <p>20 <b>those exhibits, Mr O'Beirne, if you could just confirm</b></p> <p>21 <b>that, JOB/1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.</b></p> <p>22 <b>A. Okay, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I am just showing you that.</p> <p>24 So far as your statement is concerned, it's dated</p> <p>25 29 December 2017. Have you read it recently?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 <b>A. There's a table in the way, you know that, don't you?!</b></p> <p>2 Q. I know there is. Perhaps you could just speak up a bit,</p> <p>3 if you could.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Okay, yes. Right.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Thanks.</p> <p>6 Now, at the bottom of page 1 and top of page 2, you</p> <p>7 say:</p> <p>8 "North Kensington is quite a busy fire station and</p> <p>9 we get a fair amount of fires."</p> <p>10 Can I just get an impression of what you mean by</p> <p>11 that? How many call-outs do you get in an average</p> <p>12 shift?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I couldn't tell you. Sometimes you might not turn</b></p> <p>14 <b>a wheel all night and sometimes it could be very busy.</b></p> <p>15 <b>I wouldn't like to speculate. I believe it is one of</b></p> <p>16 <b>the busier fire stations, and I believe it is also one</b></p> <p>17 <b>of the busier fire stations for fires.</b></p> <p>18 Q. For fires, for actual fires?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yeah, not just alarms and stuff like that, for actual</b></p> <p>20 <b>fires, yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Okay. You've set out quite a bit in your statement</p> <p>22 about training, but I would like to ask you about your</p> <p>23 training for high-rise firefighting in particular.</p> <p>24 In your statement, in the third paragraph on page 2,</p> <p>25 if you would just look at that, you say:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 "Within the LFB, we also complete regular training 2 in high-rise firefighting and within the last year we 3 did a simulation of a high-rise fire at Hammersmith Fire 4 Station." 5 Just pausing there, when you say regular high-rise 6 firefighting training, how often is regular? 7 <b>A. I'd say we regularly discuss at the station about 8 firefighter drills and stuff like that, but I'd say at 9 least once a year, but it's obviously very hard to put 10 into practise at the station with just a drill tower.</b> 11 Q. Right, okay. We'll look at that. 12 You say there that you did within the last year 13 a simulation of a high-rise fire at Hammersmith fire 14 station. Can you just tell us what that involved? 15 <b>A. It was mostly based for officers, if I remember rightly, 16 that were going through the procedures that they'll 17 adopt, and after that we went outside and done 18 a simulation of a fire in a tower block.</b> 19 Q. You say a simulation, what -- 20 <b>A. The procedures that we put into place, as in the fire 21 floor, the search area and the lobby area.</b> 22 Q. Okay. Did any part of that simulation involve a fire 23 which had broken out of the compartment of origin? 24 <b>A. To the best of my knowledge, no.</b> 25 Q. What about the breaking out of smoke from the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No.</b> 2 Q. Now, you go on in the same paragraph to say: 3 "In this training we talked about policy and the 4 procedures that we go through at an incident and where 5 to put a bridgehead." 6 What policy or policies were you trained in during 7 that training programme, do you remember? 8 <b>A. No. No, I don't remember. I could say high-rise 9 policy, obviously, like -- I don't know whether it was 10 fire survival guidance, but I wouldn't like to 11 speculate.</b> 12 Q. You do remember the high-rise policy, policy 633? 13 <b>A. I'm surprised you know that. As I say, if we're doing 14 a high-rise drill, then we would be working from that 15 policy you just said.</b> 16 Q. Thank you. 17 Beyond the simulation course you did at Hammersmith 18 fire station, have you ever had training in what happens 19 if the exterior of a tower block catches fire? 20 <b>A. No.</b> 21 Q. Have you ever had training as to what happens if a fire 22 in a tower block spreads beyond the compartment of 23 origin? 24 <b>A. I believe not.</b> 25 Q. Did that training programme at Hammersmith involve any</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 compartment of origin, did it involve that? 2 <b>A. No.</b> 3 Q. Did any part of that training involve the spread of fire 4 on the exterior of a high-rise building? 5 <b>A. No.</b> 6 Q. Did any part of that training involve how the exterior 7 of a building might behave in the case of a fire? 8 <b>A. What I understand from your question is -- are you 9 asking whether it would -- would the fire jump from one 10 window to another, is that what you're asking? Or are 11 you asking the actual material on the outside of 12 a building?</b> 13 Q. Well, the answer to your question to me is both, but 14 let's take it in stages. 15 So, first of all, did any part of that training 16 involve what happens if a fire jumps through a window 17 and up a floor? 18 <b>A. I don't remember any specific training about that. They 19 would just say that you'd get crews in to put it out.</b> 20 Q. Did any part of that training exercise involve cladding 21 or how cladding -- 22 <b>A. No.</b> 23 Q. -- would behave. 24 What about any other kind of surface or structure on 25 the exterior of the building in the event of a fire?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 training about the stay-put policy? 2 <b>A. I wouldn't -- I'd say no.</b> 3 Q. Do you have, in your experience of firefighting in North 4 Kensington over the years you were at Red Watch there, 5 an understanding -- your own understanding -- of what 6 a stay-put policy is? 7 <b>A. Yes, I do have an understanding of it.</b> 8 Q. What is that understanding? 9 <b>A. That if your compartment or property, your dwelling, 10 isn't involved in the fire, that you stay in your 11 property and wait for the fire and rescue service to 12 attend and advise, otherwise you could hamper the 13 efforts of the firefighters once you leave the building.</b> 14 Q. In your time in North Kensington -- indeed, anywhere 15 else in London -- did you ever get any training on when 16 it might be appropriate for those on the incident ground 17 to abandon the stay-put policy in favour of 18 an alternative? 19 <b>A. I'd say no.</b> 20 Q. Did you attend a course or receive any training in 21 a course called "Back to basics"? 22 <b>A. At Hammersmith.</b> 23 Q. That's the same course, is it? 24 <b>A. Yes.</b> 25 Q. I see, thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 Do you remember whether in that course there were</p> <p>2 any lessons taught to you about what was learnt at</p> <p>3 a fire at Lakanal House in south London in 2009?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I didn't receive that training, I believe.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You didn't?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I believe I wasn't at work that day.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Had you heard as at June 2017 of the fire at</p> <p>8 Lakanal House?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, I've heard of it, yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. In what context?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I heard that some people had obviously tragically died</b></p> <p>12 <b>and they were told to stay in their flats or something</b></p> <p>13 <b>like that. Other than that, nothing more than that.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 Just pursuing that a little bit, as an experienced</p> <p>16 firefighter in North Kensington, if I'd said to you</p> <p>17 before June 2017 the words "Lakanal House", what would</p> <p>18 that have meant to you?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Sorry, you'll have to --</b></p> <p>20 Q. If I had come up to you in May 2017 and said to you,</p> <p>21 "Justin, what does Lakanal House mean to you?" what</p> <p>22 would you have told me?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I would say that people were told to stay in their</b></p> <p>24 <b>properties by the Fire Brigade, I believe -- as I say,</b></p> <p>25 <b>this might just be speculation -- and then the fire</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Is it correct to say that you were familiar with</p> <p>3 Grenfell Tower as a building because it was on North</p> <p>4 Kensington's patch?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. As at June 2017, how familiar were you with</p> <p>7 Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I'd been there on quite a few occasions. Nothing too</b></p> <p>9 <b>recent before 2017.</b></p> <p>10 Q. If you look at page 3 of your statement, please, you say</p> <p>11 at the bottom there in the first line:</p> <p>12 "I have been to Grenfell Tower many times, on</p> <p>13 regular basis within the last 17 years, as it is one of</p> <p>14 the tower blocks in the area covered by North Kensington</p> <p>15 Fire Station."</p> <p>16 Then you say:</p> <p>17 "We go to high-rise buildings, such as Grenfell</p> <p>18 Tower, to do home fire safety visits where we check or</p> <p>19 fit smoke alarms and give fire safety advice."</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Do you remember ever going to Grenfell Tower itself to</p> <p>22 do home fire safety visits?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I don't remember going to that particular building to do</b></p> <p>24 <b>it, no.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Then you say two lines on:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 <b>obviously took hold in their dwellings and they died.</b></p> <p>2 <b>That's pretty much all I know about it prior</b></p> <p>3 <b>to June 2017.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Okay.</p> <p>5 As at June 2017, were you aware that there had been</p> <p>6 a fire at Shepherds Court in August 2016?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes, I was aware, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Did you attend that fire?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I did, yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right. On which pump, do you remember?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I drove our pump, which is Golf 272, from Soho fire</b></p> <p>12 <b>station to Shepherd's Bush.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Okay. And at what stage in the fire did you arrive, do</p> <p>14 you remember?</p> <p>15 <b>A. We turned up obviously quite late on to the incident.</b></p> <p>16 <b>I can't remember exactly what I saw. If I remember</b></p> <p>17 <b>rightly, it may be there had been fire involving three</b></p> <p>18 <b>different dwellings, if I remember rightly, and I can't</b></p> <p>19 <b>remember -- it was at the tail end of the incident, so</b></p> <p>20 <b>we didn't really do a great deal.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Did you get any training after the Shepherds Court fire</p> <p>22 as to the lessons learnt from Shepherds Court?</p> <p>23 <b>A. I don't believe so, no.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Did you learn any particular lessons as a firefighter</p> <p>25 from your attendance at Shepherds Court?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 "Therefore I've been to Grenfell to do smoke alarms</p> <p>2 and I've also been there quite a few times due to the</p> <p>3 automatic fire alarm (AFA) going off in the communal</p> <p>4 areas."</p> <p>5 First of all, can I just focus with you on doing</p> <p>6 smoke alarms. When you say "I've been to Grenfell to do</p> <p>7 smoke alarms", what do you mean?</p> <p>8 <b>A. It would be the thing that I just said I don't remember</b></p> <p>9 <b>doing. So the home fire safety visits, that would be</b></p> <p>10 <b>the smoke alarms.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Do you have any particular recollection of --</p> <p>12 <b>A. At the time writing the -- with the police statement --</b></p> <p>13 <b>I don't have any recollection of it now, no.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay. When you say "do smoke alarms", do you mean</p> <p>15 advising residents on what smoke alarms to fit?</p> <p>16 <b>A. You're asking a fire safety question, I guess.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Yes.</p> <p>18 <b>A. So I just saw Tom explain most of it to you, which he</b></p> <p>19 <b>articulated very well, but, yes, we check and fit our</b></p> <p>20 <b>own smoke alarms or maybe we'll check smoke alarms that</b></p> <p>21 <b>are pre-fitted and give them advice on fire safety.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you know from your own knowledge whether, as</p> <p>23 at June 2017, there were standard smoke alarms fitted</p> <p>24 within the flats at Grenfell Tower that were all the</p> <p>25 same or whether people had different ones?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I don't know. I can't answer that.</b></p> <p>2 Q. When you were talking to residents at Grenfell about</p> <p>3 fire safety, do you remember whether you ever had</p> <p>4 occasion to discuss what happened if stay put failed or</p> <p>5 evacuation or escape routes or anything like that?</p> <p>6 <b>A. As I say, I'm not 100 per cent sure that I have actually</b></p> <p>7 <b>been to a home fire safety visit there.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Fair enough. Fine.</p> <p>9 So looking at the next part of the sentence we were</p> <p>10 looking at, which was where you say:</p> <p>11 "... I've also been there quite a few times due to</p> <p>12 the automatic fire alarm (AFA) going off in the communal</p> <p>13 areas."</p> <p>14 Then you go on to say:</p> <p>15 "However we haven't been called there for a while</p> <p>16 regarding the alarm going off therefore I presume there</p> <p>17 isn't an AFA there in the communal areas there now.</p> <p>18 This may explain why on the night of the fire at</p> <p>19 Grenfell Tower, I didn't hear this or any alarms going</p> <p>20 off."</p> <p>21 Can I just understand this: is it your recollection</p> <p>22 that at one stage there had been a communal fire alarm</p> <p>23 in Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. When was that?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 121</p>	<p>1 <b>used to go or does now go into the lift lobby, if</b></p> <p>2 <b>I remember rightly, you'd walk through a door there,</b></p> <p>3 <b>turn left, and maybe a metre or two, another left and</b></p> <p>4 <b>you're getting into the concierge's office, the back</b></p> <p>5 <b>part of the concierge's office.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Do you remember whether the concierge's office was</p> <p>7 manned?</p> <p>8 <b>A. It was -- there was a person there. I don't remember</b></p> <p>9 <b>being there at an alarm when it wasn't -- when there</b></p> <p>10 <b>wasn't anyone there. Does that make sense?</b></p> <p>11 Q. Yes, it does make sense.</p> <p>12 Put it this way: was the concierge's office</p> <p>13 operated, to the best of your knowledge, 24 hours a day?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes, I presume it was. Yes, when they had the alarm,</b></p> <p>15 <b>I would say it was, yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right.</p> <p>17 Let me ask you this: under the system as you</p> <p>18 remember it, if there was smoke or fire in a lobby on</p> <p>19 a floor outside the lifts --</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. -- what would happen in the concierge's office?</p> <p>22 <b>A. The alarm would sound and it will show in the</b></p> <p>23 <b>concierge's office what floor the smoke detector head</b></p> <p>24 <b>has been activated.</b></p> <p>25 Q. What would the concierge do, do you remember?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 123</p>
<p>1 <b>A. I wouldn't like to guess. I would -- well, I would like</b></p> <p>2 <b>to guess actually, yes, it's probably before the refurb.</b></p> <p>3 Q. When you say you would like to guess, that's doing the</p> <p>4 best with your recollection, is it?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. When you say "in the communal areas", can you just</p> <p>7 describe what you mean?</p> <p>8 <b>A. If I remember rightly, there would be smoke detectors</b></p> <p>9 <b>and sounders in the communal areas and the panel in the</b></p> <p>10 <b>concierge's office that used to be on the ground floor.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Communal areas, would those include the lobbies outside</p> <p>12 the lifts on each floor?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Would that all be connected up to a single panel in the</p> <p>15 main lobby? Is that --</p> <p>16 <b>A. That was connected up into the concierge's office behind</b></p> <p>17 <b>a door and glass screen and stuff, yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Just help me, where was this concierge's office?</p> <p>19 <b>A. From --</b></p> <p>20 Q. To the best of your --</p> <p>21 <b>A. -- memory?</b></p> <p>22 Q. Yes.</p> <p>23 <b>A. I believe when you walked through -- I can't remember</b></p> <p>24 <b>too much about the layout, how it's changed, but when</b></p> <p>25 <b>you walk through the main entrance, and the door that</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 122</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I wasn't there when the concierge would get the alarm.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Do you remember whether that fire alarm system was</p> <p>3 connected to North Kensington fire station?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Sorry?</b></p> <p>5 Q. Was that alarm system connected up in any way to North</p> <p>6 Kensington fire station?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I believe it was an automated system that obviously goes</b></p> <p>8 <b>to, I guess, a private company and then it goes to</b></p> <p>9 <b>control and then obviously back to us.</b></p> <p>10 Q. How much of this do you actually know from your own</p> <p>11 knowledge as opposed to thinking you know?</p> <p>12 <b>A. You're asking how much of this is factual or ...?</b></p> <p>13 Q. Yes, if you like.</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's what I believe it is. It's -- what do you want,</b></p> <p>15 <b>a percentage or ...?</b></p> <p>16 Q. It's the best of your recollection?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If I've understood you correctly,</b></p> <p>19 <b>I mean, can you actually remember a time when there was</b></p> <p>20 <b>an automatic fire alarm?</b></p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes, there was definitely an automatic fire alarm in</b></p> <p>22 <b>Grenfell Tower.</b></p> <p>23 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</b></p> <p>24 <b>MR MILLETT: Did you visit Grenfell Tower after the</b></p> <p>25 <b>refurbishment works were complete?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 124</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I don't know whether I did or not.</b></p> <p>2 Q. I am going to turn to some questions now about the night</p> <p>3 of the fire on 14 June 2017.</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You cover this in your statement from page 5 onwards,</p> <p>6 and I want to pick it up, if I can, on page 6.</p> <p>7 You say at the bottom of page 6 -- and just to set</p> <p>8 the context, I think you're talking about your kit, your</p> <p>9 breathing apparatus, and you say halfway down that</p> <p>10 paragraph:</p> <p>11 "However because we extra firefighters and were able</p> <p>12 to get more equipment off the pumps I thought I would</p> <p>13 take the IEC kit in as I didn't want to go empty handed.</p> <p>14 I might have also taken a couple of branches in. I</p> <p>15 didn't put my BA set on as this is always the role the</p> <p>16 pump ladder crew. It is therefore normal at an incident</p> <p>17 for some of us to enter the location initially without</p> <p>18 our BA sets on."</p> <p>19 First of all, can you just tell us, what is the IEC</p> <p>20 kit?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I'm not very good with abbreviations ... It's the</b></p> <p>22 <b>emergency -- it's the first-aid kit.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Right.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Incident emergency care. I can't even think at the</b></p> <p>25 <b>moment, unfortunately.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 [go] through to the 2nd floor lift lobby, which is</p> <p>2 directly above the ground floor lift lobby."</p> <p>3 Do you remember, first of all, on arrival there</p> <p>4 being a need to find a key fob?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You don't?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you remember any discussion between North Kensington</p> <p>9 crews and an individual resident about accessing the</p> <p>10 lobby behind the main entrance?</p> <p>11 <b>A. You'll have to say that again, sorry.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Do you remember any discussion taking place between the</p> <p>13 North Ken crews who were attending and an individual --</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. -- about how to get from the main entrance into the lift</p> <p>16 lobby?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Oh, no, I think I was a little bit behind them.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Right. Do you remember how you gained entrance into the</p> <p>19 ground-floor lift lobby?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I entered the lift lobby -- the door was open when</b></p> <p>21 <b>I arrived with the IEC pack.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Then at the top of page 8, just following that a little</p> <p>23 bit further forward --</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. -- you say:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 Q. You then say:</p> <p>2 "It is therefore normal ... for some of us to enter</p> <p>3 the location initially without our BA sets on."</p> <p>4 So is that what happened to you, you went in without</p> <p>5 your BA set on in the first instance?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, I did.</b></p> <p>7 Q. If you look at page 7, you say, halfway down that page:</p> <p>8 "I then made my way from the pump into Grenfell</p> <p>9 Tower, through the main entrance where there is a</p> <p>10 concrete roof above the doors. I had the IEC kit over</p> <p>11 my shoulder."</p> <p>12 You then say:</p> <p>13 "Once you're inside the foyer there is a big open</p> <p>14 space ..."</p> <p>15 And you describe it.</p> <p>16 Then you say:</p> <p>17 "The stairs are within the open space of the foyer,</p> <p>18 which are separate from the main core staircase of the</p> <p>19 building, lead to the first 2 floors. At the top of the</p> <p>20 stairs on the 2nd floor there is a walkway overlooking</p> <p>21 the foyer with a door at the end which you open with a</p> <p>22 key fob. This leads to the main staircase which is</p> <p>23 immediately to your right."</p> <p>24 Then you say:</p> <p>25 "I think there's another door on the left that does</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 "When I entered the foyer, I went straight to the</p> <p>2 ground floor lift lobby. I'm not sure if I was last one</p> <p>3 going in but as I got to the lift, which quite small, it</p> <p>4 seemed to be full of equipment. I remember seeing</p> <p>5 branches, about 4 lengths of hose and breaking in gear.</p> <p>6 I can't remember who was in the lift or there but the BA</p> <p>7 crew would have waited there for the lift and a crew</p> <p>8 manager would also have been there."</p> <p>9 Then you say this:</p> <p>10 "I think they were having problems trying to</p> <p>11 activate the fire lift."</p> <p>12 Just focusing on that, what do you remember about</p> <p>13 problems trying to activate the fire lift?</p> <p>14 <b>A. The reason why I said that, I didn't -- I don't think</b></p> <p>15 <b>that they actual mentioned anything about problems, but</b></p> <p>16 <b>as I got to the door and looked in the door, it was full</b></p> <p>17 <b>of hose and obviously the firefighters weren't in there.</b></p> <p>18 <b>Therefore, I presumed they were having a problem with</b></p> <p>19 <b>the lift at the time.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay. So did anybody tell you at the time that there</p> <p>21 was a problem with the fire lift?</p> <p>22 <b>A. From my knowledge, no, but unfortunately, you know, that</b></p> <p>23 <b>may be wrong.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Okay. And you then say:</p> <p>25 "Due to the problems with the lift, there being so</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 128</p>



<p>1 much kit in there and the IEC kit being quite big,  2 I thought I would walk up the stairs as the fire was  3 only on the fourth floor."  4 Then you describe in the next paragraph that  5 process. You say:  6 "I then went back into the foyer and I managed to  7 get through door in the glass wall to the foyer stairs.  8 I vaguely remember trying to open this glass door and  9 someone who was coming out letting me in, as I think you  10 also need a magnetic fob to open this door."  11 Just looking at that, what do you remember about the  12 ease of access which you, as a firefighter, had into and  13 out of the building?  14 <b>A. Well, we was just fortunate there was someone --</b>  15 <b>a resident there to let us in, yes.</b>  16 Q. What would've happened had there not been a resident  17 there to let you in?  18 <b>A. I presume it had a panel for an express key to open --</b>  19 <b>like an emergency open.</b>  20 Q. You then describe you going up to the fourth floor, you  21 went up the stairs.  22 Did you go straight to the fourth floor?  23 <b>A. I cannot remember what I done.</b>  24 Q. Okay. Do you remember whether anybody instructed you to  25 go to the fourth floor?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 flat in a high-rise block without water and without BA?  2 <b>A. Do you mean like by the policy? The policy would state</b>  3 <b>that you charge a hose on the floor below and bring it</b>  4 <b>up with you.</b>  5 Q. Had that happened when you entered the fourth-floor  6 lobby?  7 <b>A. That hadn't happened, no.</b>  8 Q. Right. So to repeat my question: were you, when  9 entering into the fourth-floor lobby without BA and  10 water, doing so in accordance with policy?  11 <b>A. No, it wasn't according to the policy, no.</b>  12 Q. Had anybody asked you to depart from policy?  13 <b>A. No.</b>  14 Q. Can you tell us why you did so?  15 <b>A. No, I can't, I don't know. If someone had said -- even</b>  16 <b>if the crew manager had said, "We'll go against policy",</b>  17 <b>as I say, I don't remember.</b>  18 Q. Okay.  19 Would it be rare for you personally not to comply  20 with the policy on high-rise firefighting in the way  21 you've just described?  22 <b>A. What's rare?</b>  23 Q. Not often.  24 <b>A. Percentages you want?</b>  25 Q. No, just as a feeling. I mean, is it something you do</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 131</p>
<p>1 <b>A. I don't think so. I don't know.</b>  2 Q. What were you going to the fourth floor to do?  3 <b>A. I believe -- well, the fire was on the fourth floor, so</b>  4 <b>between sort of the lifts, I've really vague memories of</b>  5 <b>it, from leaving the lift, maybe going through the door,</b>  6 <b>going up to the second floor, I remember vaguely about</b>  7 <b>the second floor, and I don't even remember whether</b>  8 <b>I carried any equipment up to the fourth floor.</b>  9 Q. You say in the third paragraph on page 8:  10 "I then went into the 4th floor lobby."  11 That's from the stairwell, is it?  12 <b>A. Yes.</b>  13 Q. Before you pushed open the door, did you have any idea  14 of what the conditions were going to be like in the  15 fourth-floor lobby?  16 <b>A. No. I don't know whether I was the first in there, into</b>  17 <b>the fourth-floor lift lobby, and I didn't know what the</b>  18 <b>conditions were going to be like before I went up there.</b>  19 Q. No, but you didn't have a hose with you, did you?  20 <b>A. Sorry?</b>  21 Q. Did you have a hose with you?  22 <b>A. No.</b>  23 Q. You didn't have any BA?  24 <b>A. I didn't, no.</b>  25 Q. Would it be normal to enter into a lobby outside a fire</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 more often than not?  2 <b>A. You mean like -- yeah, I may push the boundaries a bit,</b>  3 <b>yes.</b>  4 Q. Okay. Is that something you and your colleagues, you  5 would say, do from time to time?  6 <b>A. Yes, we try to maybe use our initiative, yeah.</b>  7 Q. Okay. Right.  8 What was it about using your initiative that  9 persuaded you that it was all right to go into the  10 fourth-floor lobby, where you didn't know the  11 conditions, without water and without BA?  12 <b>A. As I say, I'm pretty sure I wasn't the first one up</b>  13 <b>there, but whoever was, they wouldn't have just opened</b>  14 <b>the door and stuck their head in. There was a bit of</b>  15 <b>common sense involved. They'll crack the door open and,</b>  16 <b>if it's clear, they'll probably set in to that part of</b>  17 <b>the dry riser.</b>  18 Q. Okay.  19 Now, the second floor -- although you don't,  20 I think, say this in terms in your statement -- let me  21 put it this way: did you know at the time you ascended  22 up to the fourth floor that the second floor was going  23 to be used as the bridgehead?  24 <b>A. Yes. Yes. Yes, I did, yeah.</b>  25 Q. And --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 132</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I know that just because that is always the case.</b></p> <p>2 Q. That is policy?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did anybody say to you, "Bridgehead's on the second</p> <p>5 floor, fire flat's on the fourth floor"?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I don't think so.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Did you proceed to the bridgehead first before going up</p> <p>8 to the fourth floor?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Obviously I would've -- I don't know.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Did you treat the second floor as the bridgehead where</p> <p>11 you had to pass entry control before going further?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes, well, I left the IEC kit on the second floor, which</b></p> <p>13 <b>is at the bridgehead, so those actions would say that,</b></p> <p>14 <b>yes, I treated it as the bridgehead, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did anybody clock you, as it were, going past the</p> <p>16 bridgehead, up to the fire floor?</p> <p>17 <b>A. What, not wearing breathing apparatus?</b></p> <p>18 Q. Yes, without wearing breathing apparatus.</p> <p>19 <b>A. I don't know who has seen me, but someone's going to --</b></p> <p>20 <b>even if we went to the third floor to start up with our</b></p> <p>21 <b>first line, it is still going past BA control.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Did you have any involvement in setting up the third</p> <p>23 floor line which would then be run up to the fourth</p> <p>24 floor?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Limited.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 133</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Do you remember where Firefighters Brown and Batterbee</p> <p>3 were at that stage?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Okay. After you had set the hose into the dry rising</p> <p>6 outlet on the fourth floor, what did you do next?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I don't know who plugged the branch into the end of the</b></p> <p>8 <b>hose, but it could've even been me, I don't know, and</b></p> <p>9 <b>went to turn on the valve.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Okay. If you look at page 8 of your statement, fourth</p> <p>11 paragraph down, you describe in the first part of that</p> <p>12 paragraph what Charlie Batterbee and Danny Brown were</p> <p>13 doing. You say they were there wearing BA and ready to</p> <p>14 break into the flat.</p> <p>15 Did you see them doing that?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Then you say Crew Manager Secrett was probably there</p> <p>18 too. You say "probably"; do you remember him being</p> <p>19 there or are you guessing?</p> <p>20 <b>A. It's very hard to remember who was there, actually.</b></p> <p>21 <b>Straight after this incident I still couldn't remember</b></p> <p>22 <b>who was --</b></p> <p>23 Q. No, I understand. Okay.</p> <p>24 Then you say:</p> <p>25 "I didn't see any smoke in the lobby or coming from</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 135</p>
<p>1 Q. What was the limit of that activity?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I just turned the valve on.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Could you just talk me through what you did. So you</p> <p>4 left the second floor, went up the stairs to the third</p> <p>5 floor, then what?</p> <p>6 <b>A. No. No, I didn't. No, I went up to the fourth floor.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. Let me -- I may have confused you --</p> <p>8 <b>A. Okay, floor 3 --</b></p> <p>9 Q. Yes.</p> <p>10 <b>A. -- was actually the second line, okay?</b></p> <p>11 Q. Yes.</p> <p>12 <b>A. I didn't go into that floor until a bit later on.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Right. So you went straight to the fourth floor?</p> <p>14 <b>A. From memory, yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did you have any involvement in setting the hose into</p> <p>16 the dry rising main on that floor?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. What was that involvement? What did you do?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I think I plugged it in, I don't remember opening the</b></p> <p>20 <b>door for the riser, and I turned on the valve.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Who was on the fourth floor in the lobby at that point,</p> <p>22 do you remember?</p> <p>23 <b>A. If my memory serves me right, I remember seeing</b></p> <p>24 <b>Firefighter Dorgu and Firefighter Badillo.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Dorgu and Badillo.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 flat 16 at this point, I couldn't smell anything and I</p> <p>2 couldn't hear a smoke alarm going off. It all appeared</p> <p>3 very normal."</p> <p>4 You say "very normal"; is it normal in a high-rise</p> <p>5 block to have no alarms going off at all when you attend</p> <p>6 a flat fire?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I would expect the alarm to be going off in a flat that</b></p> <p>8 <b>was on fire, yes. Other than that -- I think the point</b></p> <p>9 <b>I was trying to make is that it wasn't -- it was</b></p> <p>10 <b>a normal fire, was the point I was trying to make with</b></p> <p>11 <b>that.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Do you remember who laid out the hose once you'd set it</p> <p>13 into the dry riser?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Did you have to wait long between setting the</p> <p>16 hose into the dry riser and the hose being charged ready</p> <p>17 for entry into flat 16?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No, obviously I said it in my statement, maybe 30</b></p> <p>19 <b>seconds or less than a minute. It didn't seem like we</b></p> <p>20 <b>had to wait for the water. As soon as we plugged it in</b></p> <p>21 <b>and I went to turn it on and there was no water, I don't</b></p> <p>22 <b>think the crews were ready to go in any way.</b></p> <p>23 Q. You then say in the third paragraph on page 9:</p> <p>24 "I can't remember whether it was CM BATTERBEE or FF</p> <p>25 BROWN who put the door of the flat on fire in but as</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 136</p>

<p>1 they did this I standing about 5 or 6 metres away on the 2 other side of the lobby with my back to the wall by the 3 dry riser." 4 Could you see them from where you were standing? 5 <b>A. Yes.</b> 6 Q. You could. So you had a view across the lobby, did you? 7 <b>A. I was -- yes, looking across the lobby by the door to</b> 8 <b>the stairs.</b> 9 Q. How good was your view of the front door of flat 16 at 10 that point? 11 <b>A. I could see the full door other than the crew standing</b> 12 <b>in front of it.</b> 13 Q. Okay. If you look at that paragraph a little bit 14 further on, you say: 15 "I think they squirted some water around the door 16 first and then it might have taken a couple of goes to 17 get it open." 18 Is that a couple of goes with the enforcer? 19 <b>A. Yes, I said it may have or it might have just gone in</b> 20 <b>one. There was no real problem with putting in the</b> 21 <b>door.</b> 22 Q. Okay. Then you say: 23 "However as soon they as they did this, thick black 24 smoke came through the top of the door into the lift 25 lobby. The smoke came out of the top 40cm of the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 Q. Right. Okay. 2 Then you say at the end of that paragraph: 3 "The thick black colour of the smoke made me think 4 that it wasn't a ventilated fire and it was contained 5 within the flat." 6 Could you just explain by what you mean by 7 a ventilated fire? 8 <b>A. The smoke that was coming out was replaced by the air</b> 9 <b>that was going in underneath it, which I presumed at the</b> 10 <b>time meant that it was still contained in that</b> 11 <b>compartment.</b> 12 Q. Right. 13 <b>A. Is that clear?</b> 14 Q. Subject to my next question, yes, it is. 15 <b>A. Okay.</b> 16 Q. My next question is: why does the colour of smoke change 17 when a fire is ventilated? 18 <b>A. I wouldn't say the colour of the smoke changes, but it's</b> 19 <b>the density really.</b> 20 Q. The density changes, right. 21 Once the door to flat 16 had been opened, is it 22 right that you then left the fourth floor and went up to 23 the fifth floor? 24 <b>A. With an exchange of words with Firefighter Badillo, yes.</b> 25 Q. Let's just look at that. So you have an exchange of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 doorway and was rolling across the top of the lobby 2 ceiling." 3 <b>A. Yes.</b> 4 Q. Is that how you remember it? 5 <b>A. That is how I remember it, yes.</b> 6 Q. Now, you say it was thick black smoke; seeing thick 7 black smoke, what did that tell you about the nature or 8 seriousness of the fire in flat 16? 9 <b>A. I would say it was quite a serious fire, there was -- to</b> 10 <b>me it seemed like it might have been going for a while,</b> 11 <b>I guess, yet I put further in my statement I didn't</b> 12 <b>think that it was going to be like a backdraft</b> 13 <b>situation.</b> 14 Q. Right. You say: 15 "I was slightly taken aback by the amount of smoke 16 that came out of the door, as it was a little more than 17 I was expecting." 18 What were you expecting. 19 <b>A. Well, obviously not that.</b> 20 Q. Why were you expecting obviously not that? 21 <b>A. We were called to a fire in a kitchen probably with</b> 22 <b>little fire loading or fuel to the fire. We got there</b> 23 <b>quite quick, and it seemed as though there was a lot</b> 24 <b>more smoke than I was expecting to be in a flat for</b> 25 <b>a small fire that I presumed we were going to.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 words. I'm not sure that's in your statement, but it 2 doesn't matter. Could you just tell us about the 3 exchange of words. 4 First of all, where was Firefighter Badillo when you 5 spoke to him about your going upstairs? 6 <b>A. We'd just come out of the flat that they put the door</b> 7 <b>in. I believe -- well, Dave was definitely in front of</b> 8 <b>me. I must have been on the way through the door when</b> 9 <b>they put the door in. And we stopped outside the door</b> 10 <b>in the stairs of the fourth floor. I was a few steps</b> 11 <b>down from Dave, and that's when he told me that his</b> 12 <b>battery had run out, so I gave him one of my spare</b> 13 <b>batteries.</b> 14 Q. Yes, as you say. Then actually picking that up, if we 15 can, in your statement, if you look at the bottom of 16 page 9, you say: 17 "We were in the stairs for about a minute and a half 18 [this is just after the bit about the battery] before I 19 thought I would go and see if the fire had spread 20 upstairs or if anyone was up there." 21 Is that something you told Firefighter Badillo? 22 <b>A. Yes, I may have said it to him. Well, we split up, so</b> 23 <b>I'd say that he knew I was going up, but I wouldn't --</b> 24 <b>I don't know whether I actually said it to him, that</b> 25 <b>I was going up.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 140</p>

<p>1 Q. You don't know whether you did or didn't?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I don't know whether I actually said it to him, but he</b></p> <p>3 <b>would've been aware because he went down and I went up.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did he see you going up?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I think he did, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. So far as you remember.</p> <p>7 <b>A. As far as I remember, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Now, you'd arrived at Grenfell Tower at 00.59. Can you</p> <p>9 estimate the time when you left the fourth-floor lobby</p> <p>10 to go up to the fifth floor?</p> <p>11 <b>A. It was immediately after me and Dave were on the stairs,</b></p> <p>12 <b>I don't know, a minute after they put the door in.</b></p> <p>13 <b>I wouldn't like to guess the timeline because I think</b></p> <p>14 <b>I would be shockingly wrong with that.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Right.</p> <p>16 Now, just picking it back up, then, at the very</p> <p>17 bottom of page 9 -- I have just shown you this -- you</p> <p>18 say you were in the stairs for about a minute and</p> <p>19 a half:</p> <p>20 "... before I thought I would go and see if the fire</p> <p>21 had spread upstairs or if anyone was up there."</p> <p>22 Then over the page, you continue in your statement.</p> <p>23 You say:</p> <p>24 "I was the 1st person to go up the stairs. It's not</p> <p>25 necessarily my job to go and check the other floors, as</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 trip up a floor?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Instinct.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Instinct?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. That's interesting. This instinct, based on experience?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I don't know. I can only imagine it is.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Instinct looking at what?</p> <p>8 <b>A. There was -- I'm only guessing here now, unfortunately,</b></p> <p>9 <b>but from -- as we had so many people there, there wasn't</b></p> <p>10 <b>necessarily anything for me to do, as such, so I just</b></p> <p>11 <b>thought I would take a look upstairs. I'd maybe call it</b></p> <p>12 <b>instinct.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Was there something particular about what you'd seen in</p> <p>14 the fire in the flat or smoke from the flat on the</p> <p>15 fourth floor that triggered this instinct?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Possibly. If I had a different job to do, I probably</b></p> <p>17 <b>wouldn't have gone upstairs.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay.</p> <p>19 Did you communicate your decision to go upstairs to</p> <p>20 anybody?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No, only, as I say, I -- I don't know whether I said it</b></p> <p>22 <b>to Dave Badillo, so, no, but I certainly didn't say</b></p> <p>23 <b>anything on the radio.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You had a radio with you, didn't you, a fire ground</p> <p>25 radio?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 we did have two crew managers there, however because we</p> <p>2 had extra firefighters there that night I thought</p> <p>3 I would check to see if the floor above was alright."</p> <p>4 Just pausing there, did anybody ask you to go up the</p> <p>5 stairs and check the other floors?</p> <p>6 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>7 Q. So you did that off your own bat?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes, I did.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Would it be normal at what you thought was an ordinary</p> <p>10 high-rise fire for a firefighter to decide for himself</p> <p>11 or herself to explore another part of the building?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I can't speak for every other firefighter, but after</b></p> <p>13 <b>seeing the smoke coming out of the flat on the fourth</b></p> <p>14 <b>floor, I thought I'd investigate to see if there was any</b></p> <p>15 <b>effects on the fifth floor.</b></p> <p>16 Q. What was it about what you saw of the smoke coming out</p> <p>17 of the flat on the fourth floor that you thought might</p> <p>18 need investigating on the fifth floor?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Just as I said before, the density of the smoke, maybe.</b></p> <p>20 <b>I was -- I just took it upon myself to go and have</b></p> <p>21 <b>a look.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Were you concerned that there might be spread up the</p> <p>23 building at that point?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Not at that point, no.</b></p> <p>25 Q. What made you think that it was necessary to make the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Tuned to channel 1?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes, it was.</b></p> <p>4 Q. If you'd wanted to tell anybody where you were going,</p> <p>5 who would you have communicated with?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I would have nothing to report back. If I wanted to</b></p> <p>7 <b>tell someone, I suppose everything goes back to the</b></p> <p>8 <b>officer in charge, really, but I didn't.</b></p> <p>9 Q. You didn't.</p> <p>10 Did anything make you suspect at that point, as you</p> <p>11 left the fourth floor and went to the fifth, that the</p> <p>12 fire had started to spread upstairs?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Not before I opened the door of the fifth-floor lobby,</b></p> <p>14 <b>no.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You say in the next sentence in the first paragraph on</p> <p>16 page 10:</p> <p>17 "I could have put a BA set on but I felt that due to</p> <p>18 my level of experience I was better placed to go and see</p> <p>19 what was going on with the other floors and that if</p> <p>20 I reported something [to] WM DOWDON[sic] he would take</p> <p>21 me more seriously than perhaps other firefighters. From</p> <p>22 the start, I did not expect the fire to have spread to</p> <p>23 multiple floors."</p> <p>24 It looks from that, Mr O'Beirne, that your purpose</p> <p>25 in deciding for yourself to go and look and see what was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 happening on the other floors was because if something</p> <p>2 was amiss up there, you could report to Watch Manager</p> <p>3 Dowden, who would then take you seriously because of</p> <p>4 your experience?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes. Unfortunately, I made myself look very ... yes,</b></p> <p>6 <b>I believed that that would've been the case, yes.</b></p> <p>7 Q. So would it not have been important, if you did find</p> <p>8 something on the fifth floor that you thought your</p> <p>9 experience required you to report to him, to report it</p> <p>10 to him?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay. Well, we'll come to that. Let's get you up to</p> <p>13 the fifth floor.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You go to the fifth floor and you describe your trip to</p> <p>16 it. You say:</p> <p>17 "I don't remember pasting anyone on the stairs as</p> <p>18 I went up."</p> <p>19 Could I just ask you: what were the air conditions</p> <p>20 in the stairwell like at that point?</p> <p>21 <b>A. They were clear. They were clear.</b></p> <p>22 Q. They were clear?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. And then you say you didn't feel any level of urgency as</p> <p>25 you went up.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I looked through their letter box, and didn't see any</b></p> <p>2 <b>smoke.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Before we leave them, what happened to that family?</p> <p>4 Where did they go? Do you know?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I believe they went down the stairs.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Right.</p> <p>7 Then you say in the second paragraph on page 10,</p> <p>8 four lines up from the bottom:</p> <p>9 "As I looked through the letterbox of their flat and</p> <p>10 it seemed like it was nicely wallpapered and it was</p> <p>11 brightly lit, as the hallway light was on. I couldn't</p> <p>12 see or smell any smoke [from within] the flat, although</p> <p>13 I have no recollection of any smells from that night.</p> <p>14 However I presumed the family must have shut their</p> <p>15 kitchen door."</p> <p>16 What did that tell you? You look in, you see no</p> <p>17 smoke, what did you think was going on within that flat?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Well, I presumed that there was no one in there,</b></p> <p>19 <b>obviously, because the family had left and they shut the</b></p> <p>20 <b>door behind them by mistake.</b></p> <p>21 <b>I can only work off what they've told me and they</b></p> <p>22 <b>said that their kitchen was alight, so I radioed down to</b></p> <p>23 <b>say that the kitchen was alight and we needed a BA crew</b></p> <p>24 <b>and breaking-in gear.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You say in the next paragraph in your statement, if we</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 147</p>
<p>1 Then you say:</p> <p>2 "As I walked from the stairwell into the 5th floor</p> <p>3 lobby, it was clear of smoke but a family of 3 people</p> <p>4 had just come out of the flat that was directly above</p> <p>5 the flat 16."</p> <p>6 And they told you that their kitchen was alight?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Do you remember what they said to you, do you</p> <p>9 remember their words?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Not from memory now, no.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Okay. And what was your reaction to that at the time?</p> <p>12 What did you think?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I didn't doubt them, I guess, but I thought it might</b></p> <p>14 <b>have been just smoke.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Right. Because you say at the end of the first</p> <p>16 paragraph on page 10:</p> <p>17 "From the start, I did not expect the fire to have</p> <p>18 spread to multiple floors."</p> <p>19 So when the family come out from the flat</p> <p>20 immediately above flat 16 and tell you that their</p> <p>21 kitchen was alight, was that news to you which would be</p> <p>22 surprising?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes, of course it would've been surprising, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. What did you do next when they told you that their</p> <p>25 kitchen was alight?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 146</p>	<p>1 can just have that on the screen, and I just want to</p> <p>2 focus on your communications with Watch Manager Dowden,</p> <p>3 if I can.</p> <p>4 You radioed down to Watch Manager Dowden. Where</p> <p>5 were you standing when you did that?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I was standing in the lift lobby on the fifth floor,</b></p> <p>7 <b>outside the door of the flat that -- flat -- what was</b></p> <p>8 <b>it? -- 26, I believe.</b></p> <p>9 Q. When you said something along the lines of "Flat above</p> <p>10 the fire floor is on fire, the kitchen is alight, we</p> <p>11 need a BA crew and breaking-in gear", those are the</p> <p>12 words you said into the radio, are they?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, I believe so. Whether I said about the kitchen --</b></p> <p>14 <b>but I definitely said we need a crew up here, the flat</b></p> <p>15 <b>above the fire floor is alight and we need a BA crew</b></p> <p>16 <b>with breaking-in gear.</b></p> <p>17 Q. As far as you're concerned, did you think Mike Dowden</p> <p>18 had heard what you said?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Obviously this message is directed at Mike Dowden, but</b></p> <p>20 <b>it's also for everybody else on the fire ground.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Right.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Who will hopefully pick up the message, obviously.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Did you think at the time that Mike Dowden had picked</p> <p>24 that up?</p> <p>25 <b>A. At the time, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 Q. How did you think he would've picked that up? By what 2 mechanism or medium would he have heard you make this 3 message?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Sorry, do you mean did I use my radio?</b></p> <p>5 Q. You were using your radio; what would Mike Dowden have 6 received the message on?</p> <p>7 <b>A. On his handheld radio.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So it would have broadcast on his handheld radio to him, 9 would it?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. And how would other people have heard that message, do 12 you think?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Well, at the time, that message is also directed at 14 other trucks coming onto the fire ground, that will 15 be -- have other BA wearers.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right. Which channel were you on?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Channel 1.</b></p> <p>18 Q. So is it right that everyone who was tuned into 19 channel 1 and receiving channel 1 messages would've 20 heard that message?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I believe so, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Do you remember anybody communicating back to you that 23 your message had been received and understood by 24 anybody?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 Did you attempt to speak to anybody other than 2 Mike Dowden about what you'd found on the fifth floor?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No, I didn't, no. As I say, this was a message that was 4 sent out -- obviously it's directed at the officer in 5 charge, but it's to everybody on the fire ground to hear 6 that there's a fire above the fire floor.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. Did you try to send that message to the 8 bridgehead on channel 6?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Is there a reason why not?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I have no reason why I didn't.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Okay.</p> <p>13 Was that an option, if you thought you might not 14 have got the message through to Mike Dowden, to send it 15 to the bridgehead instead?</p> <p>16 <b>A. There is an option to change to channel 6 and see if 17 I can get hold of the officer in charge at the 18 bridgehead, yes. I had no doubt in my mind that that 19 message had been sent and everyone on the fire ground 20 had received it.</b></p> <p>21 Q. You say you had no doubt; that's right, is it, even 22 though you had no confirmation that that message had 23 been received?</p> <p>24 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you speak to anybody else on the fifth floor, any</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 Q. Would it be normal for you to receive such a message if, 2 in fact, that message had been received and understood 3 by anybody?</p> <p>4 <b>A. You may get a response. It's not unusual if you do not 5 get a response.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Okay. So the fact that you didn't get a response didn't 7 tell you anything one way or the other, did it, about 8 whether your message had been received or understood?</p> <p>9 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You just assumed it had?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Watch Manager Dowden says that he doesn't recall getting 13 any kind of message like that from you from the fifth 14 floor.</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Can you comment on that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Maybe his radio might have transmitted and he's 18 obviously very busy, or it may not -- his radio may not 19 have picked it up.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Right. So if his radio was on transmission because he 21 was using it to send messages, would that mean that he 22 wouldn't be able to hear messages coming in?</p> <p>23 <b>A. When I sent that message, there was -- no one was 24 speaking in the radio because I sent the message.</b></p> <p>25 Q. I see. I see.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 other occupants?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No, just that family that come out of flat 26.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did you knock on any doors on the fifth floor?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, I didn't, no.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Did you think to do so? Did you think --</p> <p>6 <b>A. Obviously not, otherwise I would've done it, but 7 I didn't.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Looking back now -- these questions aren't easy -- is 9 there a reason why you didn't knock on any of the doors 10 on the fifth floor?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Probably due to the stay-put policy. There was a fire 12 in a compartment on that floor. I presumed it would 13 stay in that compartment.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 Did the fact that there was a fire in the flat, or 16 at least possibly smoke in that flat, alert you to any 17 problems with compartmentation in the building, now 18 you'd been up there?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No, it didn't -- it just -- to me, a window's gone and 20 it's licked up into another window is how I saw that 21 situation at that time.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Now, the next thing that you do -- I'm summarising quite 23 a bit of activity that you put in your statement --</p> <p>24 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>25 Q. -- is you go down to get an enforcer off the pump.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 152</p>

<p>1 <b>A. Off the pump ladder, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Off the pump ladder.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did anybody tell you to do that or was that your own</p> <p>5 idea?</p> <p>6 <b>A. No, no, it was purely my idea.</b></p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Okay.</p> <p>8 Mr Chairman, it's now 2.30?</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: This witness has been going for a good hour.</p> <p>11 I'm in the middle of a line of questions, but this might</p> <p>12 be an appropriate moment for a break.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Let's see.</p> <p>14 Mr O'Beirne, how are you getting on?</p> <p>15 THE WITNESS: Sounds perfect, yes. No problem at all.</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Could you finish this topic within,</p> <p>17 say, 10 minutes or so?</p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: Yes.</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Shall we do that and then we'll have</p> <p>20 a break when you get to the end.</p> <p>21 Is that all right for you?</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: Perfect, yes, thank you.</p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: Did you tell Watch Manager Dowden that you were</p> <p>24 off to get an enforcer off the pump ladder?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 153</p>	<p>1 How could they keep tabs on you if you didn't --</p> <p>2 <b>A. They just keep tabs on us if we're in breathing</b></p> <p>3 <b>apparatus, within reason, yeah.</b></p> <p>4 Q. I see, so their concern is the BA wearers going up into</p> <p>5 the tower and down again rather than anything else more</p> <p>6 widely on the fire ground; is that right?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I would say yes. I would say so.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Now, if you look at page 11 of your statement,</p> <p>9 paragraph 2, you say that:</p> <p>10 "As I made my way down the stairwell, I don't</p> <p>11 remember there being any smoke. When I went past the</p> <p>12 door to the 4th floor it was closed, as lobby doors</p> <p>13 automatically close behind you, and I didn't see any</p> <p>14 smoke coming out into the stairwell."</p> <p>15 So at that stage, could you tell us what had</p> <p>16 happened to the hose that was supposed to be set into</p> <p>17 the third-floor dry riser?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, the hose that was set into the third-floor dry</b></p> <p>19 <b>riser hadn't been -- I know now that it hadn't been</b></p> <p>20 <b>charged, but it hadn't been taken out. So it hadn't</b></p> <p>21 <b>been charged, hadn't been taken out the lift lobby area</b></p> <p>22 <b>on the third floor and brought up at that stage.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Which explains why the fourth-floor lobby door was</p> <p>24 closed.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 155</p>
<p>1 Q. What about people at the bridgehead, did you tell them</p> <p>2 that that's where you were going?</p> <p>3 <b>A. To be honest, no, I didn't tell anyone. I don't</b></p> <p>4 <b>actually remember seeing anyone.</b></p> <p>5 Q. How could Watch Manager Dowden keep tabs on you if you</p> <p>6 weren't telling him where you were going and what you</p> <p>7 were doing?</p> <p>8 <b>A. He can't really keep tabs. He's got more important</b></p> <p>9 <b>things to be doing than knowing where his firefighters</b></p> <p>10 <b>are every second, I guess.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Is that right? Is it not important for an incident</p> <p>12 commander, in your experience, to know where his</p> <p>13 firefighters are and what they are doing?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Obviously his primary concern is us, but we're off doing</b></p> <p>15 <b>stuff, he ...</b></p> <p>16 Q. Is that how it works in general, in your experience,</p> <p>17 that actually there's a fair measure of discretion given</p> <p>18 to the firefighters on the fire ground to do what they</p> <p>19 think is best to tackle --</p> <p>20 <b>A. As long as they come back in one piece, yes, I guess --</b></p> <p>21 <b>well, maybe not just do what they want, no, there's</b></p> <p>22 <b>obviously procedures in place. Mike Dowden has an</b></p> <p>23 <b>expectation of us, of what we do.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Right.</p> <p>25 What about bridgehead command? Does the same apply?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 154</p>	<p>1 Q. Because if it had been taken up, it would've been</p> <p>2 propped open.</p> <p>3 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>4 Q. In paragraph 3 of the same page, you say:</p> <p>5 "As I came out of the building I was focused on</p> <p>6 getting the breaking in gear so I didn't pay much</p> <p>7 attention to who else was outside at that time."</p> <p>8 Did you look back up at the tower at that stage?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No, I didn't, no.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Did you hear anybody talking outside about how the fire</p> <p>11 was progressing?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I don't remember seeing anyone outside the -- no, so</b></p> <p>13 <b>I was very unaware of what the extent of the fire was.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Could you just describe your movements. You exit the</p> <p>15 tower from the main entrance; is that right?</p> <p>16 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. And you go across to pump ladder 271.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, to get the -- there's a little hydraulic ram or</b></p> <p>19 <b>I -- well, we'd used the enforcer to break the door in</b></p> <p>20 <b>already, so that's in the smoke-filled lobby upstairs.</b></p> <p>21 Q. The distance from the entrance to the tower and that</p> <p>22 pump ladder was what?</p> <p>23 <b>A. The best part of maybe 10 metres or something like that.</b></p> <p>24 Q. So it's a few steps to go to the pump ladder and back in</p> <p>25 again?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 156</p>

<p>1 <b>A. Probably about 10 good strides, I guess.</b></p> <p>2 Q. All right.</p> <p>3 Just cutting through this, you get to the pump</p> <p>4 ladder, you find there's no enforcer and you decide to</p> <p>5 go back up to the second floor. I think that's</p> <p>6 summarising what you say in your third paragraph on</p> <p>7 page 11.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. And a say you think the last sentence:</p> <p>10 "I think it took me about 2 and half minutes to get</p> <p>11 down from the 5th floor, outside to the pump ladder, and</p> <p>12 back up the stairs."</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Then you say you didn't put a BA set on, and then in the</p> <p>15 last paragraph on page 11:</p> <p>16 "However when I went back into the building, I'm not</p> <p>17 sure why but I actually ended up going onto the 3rd</p> <p>18 floor rather than the 2nd floor."</p> <p>19 Was that a mistake? Did you intend to go to the</p> <p>20 second floor but ended up on the third floor?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I may have gone into the -- I think I brought the</b></p> <p>22 <b>sledge-hammer up. I don't even know where I put it.</b></p> <p>23 <b>I must have put it at the bridgehead on the second</b></p> <p>24 <b>floor. I'm not 100 per cent sure. I definitely went</b></p> <p>25 <b>into the third floor.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 157</p>	<p>1 Q. You explain then at the bottom, you say:</p> <p>2 "Either FF DORGU or FF BADILLO had smashed the glass</p> <p>3 window to make a hole through which to plug in the hose,</p> <p>4 probably because we didn't have the keys to this door."</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. And if you go over the page:</p> <p>7 "However this caused a problem as we would normally</p> <p>8 turn the valve on from above but the hole made was below</p> <p>9 the valve."</p> <p>10 Then you explain about what the difficulties were</p> <p>11 with that.</p> <p>12 I've read you that at a little bit of length because</p> <p>13 you describe the difficulties at length, but my question</p> <p>14 is a similar one: who would you expect to have held the</p> <p>15 keys to the glass door protecting the dry riser valve on</p> <p>16 the third floor?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I don't know.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Was it a surprise to you that you had to smash the</p> <p>19 glass?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I wouldn't say -- yeah, no, it's not a surprise that --</b></p> <p>21 <b>I didn't obviously smash the glass, it was broken before</b></p> <p>22 <b>I got there, but, no, I wouldn't be surprised that the</b></p> <p>23 <b>glass would have to be smashed to plug the hose in.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Is that a normal thing, in your experience?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I've seen it done before, I think, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 159</p>
<p>1 Q. Did you pass the bridgehead on the way up?</p> <p>2 <b>A. As I say, I don't even know whether I went into the</b></p> <p>3 <b>bridgehead. I can't actually remember. I don't</b></p> <p>4 <b>remember seeing anyone. I don't remember stopping at</b></p> <p>5 <b>the second floor. I just remember at the fire engine,</b></p> <p>6 <b>walking towards the pump when I couldn't find the</b></p> <p>7 <b>hydraulic ram, and the next minute I was on the third</b></p> <p>8 <b>floor, so ...</b></p> <p>9 Q. When you were going to the third floor or when you</p> <p>10 arrived at the third floor, did you tell anyone where</p> <p>11 you were or where you were going?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Did you know at this stage whether there was any kind of</p> <p>14 plan as to how best to assist the occupants of the</p> <p>15 building in terms of rescue or identification?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Continuing in the last paragraph on page 11, if we can,</p> <p>18 you say:</p> <p>19 "When I went onto the 3rd floor, I found FF DORGU</p> <p>20 who had plugged in the hose and flaked it out to get it</p> <p>21 ready."</p> <p>22 And then you describe how Firefighter Badillo would</p> <p>23 have helped him, and you then go on and explain how the</p> <p>24 valve works.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 158</p>	<p>1 Q. Now, you then describe in the next paragraph that you</p> <p>2 told Firefighter Dorgu that the flat on the fifth floor</p> <p>3 was alight, and you say:</p> <p>4 "He said something like, 'you mean it's smoke' but I</p> <p>5 said 'No, the people coming out said it's alight.'</p> <p>6 I left FF DORGU with the hose and went back up to the</p> <p>7 5th floor."</p> <p>8 Do you know whether Firefighter Dorgu communicated</p> <p>9 what you told to him to anybody else?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I don't, no.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You left Firefighter Dorgu, as you say, with the hose --</p> <p>12 that's on the third floor -- and you went back up to the</p> <p>13 fifth floor.</p> <p>14 What were the conditions like in the stairwell on</p> <p>15 the way back from the third to the fifth floor at this</p> <p>16 point?</p> <p>17 <b>A. They were fine, very clear.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Were people coming down? What was the traffic like on</p> <p>19 the stairs?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I don't remember, but there could've been people passing</b></p> <p>21 <b>me but I just don't remember.</b></p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: Right.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, if we're going now to</p> <p>24 deal with the fifth floor flat, might that be</p> <p>25 a convenient moment?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 160</p>



<p>1 MR MILLETT: Yes.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think, Mr O'Beirne, we will have</p> <p>3 a break now.</p> <p>4 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So you go with the usher, we'll</p> <p>6 resume at 2.55. Is that all right?</p> <p>7 THE WITNESS: Perfect, thanks very much.</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, 2.55, please.</p> <p>9 (2.40 pm)</p> <p>10 (A short break)</p> <p>11 (2.55 pm)</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr O'Beirne?</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you, sir.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good.</p> <p>15 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>16 MR MILLETT: Mr O'Beirne, a couple of revision questions, if</p> <p>17 I may.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>19 Q. First of all, going back to your training and lessons</p> <p>20 learnt in the light of Lakanal House, do you remember</p> <p>21 whether there was any discussion or education given to</p> <p>22 you or in which you were involved after Lakanal House in</p> <p>23 2009 about whether the stay-put policy should be</p> <p>24 revised?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Not to my knowledge, no.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 Q. When you got to the fifth floor, were you alone?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Was there any smoke in the fifth-floor lobby once you</p> <p>4 left the stairwell?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Could you smell anything?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No, I couldn't smell anything all night. I have no</b></p> <p>8 <b>memory of smelling anything all night.</b></p> <p>9 Q. You said before, okay.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You returned to the flat where you were told the fire</p> <p>12 was, and that was directly above flat 16; is that right?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Could you see the number of the flat on the flat front</p> <p>15 door?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No, I don't remember it was that number, I only found</b></p> <p>17 <b>out that it was that number after.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay.</p> <p>19 <b>A. I said it was the fire -- above the fire floor.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay. Now, if you could go, please, to page 12 of your</p> <p>21 statement, you say in the third line:</p> <p>22 "However when I looked through the letterbox I had</p> <p>23 looked through earlier, there was thick black smoke</p> <p>24 inside the hallway of the flat and I could no longer see</p> <p>25 anything inside. I couldn't see the wallpaper and I</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 163</p>
<p>1 Q. No. Secondly, we talked a moment ago before the break</p> <p>2 about your activities on the third floor helping</p> <p>3 Firefighter Dorgu lay out the hose, breaking the glass</p> <p>4 on the dry rising main outlet.</p> <p>5 Do you remember whether you knocked on any doors on</p> <p>6 the third floor?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No. When I walked into the third-floor lobby, all</b></p> <p>8 <b>I done was turn the valve on. Everything -- I didn't do</b></p> <p>9 <b>anything with the hose --</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 <b>A. -- and I didn't knock on any doors. I was only there</b></p> <p>12 <b>for a very short period of time.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Do you know whether anybody else on that floor knocked</p> <p>14 on any doors?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I don't know.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Going back to your trip to the fifth floor, are you able</p> <p>17 to estimate at what time you returned to the fifth</p> <p>18 floor?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No. Came in to the building again with the sledge,</b></p> <p>20 <b>which I don't remember carrying, actually. I don't know</b></p> <p>21 <b>where I left the sledge. I went straight to the third</b></p> <p>22 <b>floor, I believe. So I don't know. If you have a time</b></p> <p>23 <b>stamp on when I re-entered the building, I would say it</b></p> <p>24 <b>couldn't be more than two minutes after that that</b></p> <p>25 <b>I re-entered the fifth floor.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 162</p>	<p>1 couldn't tell whether the light was on or off. Smoke is</p> <p>2 normally thicker at the top which is probably why I</p> <p>3 couldn't see the light but I remember thinking that</p> <p>4 whatever was burning has gone up really quickly due to</p> <p>5 amount of smoke that accumulated in the 3 or 4 minutes</p> <p>6 since I had first looked through the letterbox. I</p> <p>7 thought this was really quite serious as something was</p> <p>8 burning really quickly, although I still didn't think at</p> <p>9 that stage that people were going to die or anything</p> <p>10 like that."</p> <p>11 Now, let me just ask you about that. I've read it</p> <p>12 out to you in full because there are a number of</p> <p>13 questions I've got about it.</p> <p>14 First of all, you say there was thick black smoke</p> <p>15 inside the hallway of the flat.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. You could no longer see anything inside. That's how you</p> <p>18 remember it, is it, just completely black?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Just through looking at the letter box, I -- yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. In light of the change that you had seen between your</p> <p>21 first trip and your second trip only a few minutes later</p> <p>22 back up to the fifth floor, what did that change in the</p> <p>23 smoke conditions inside the flat tell you about the</p> <p>24 nature of the fire inside the flat?</p> <p>25 <b>A. That something was burning, which was giving off a lot</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 164</p>

<p>1 <b>of smoke. So I believed at that time it was more</b>  2 <b>serious than I first thought.</b>  3 Q. Right.  4 Did you have any thoughts about whether the fire had  5 spread from the fourth to the fifth floor?  6 <b>A. Yes.</b>  7 Q. What were those thoughts? What did you think?  8 <b>A. Well, I thought they had spread to the fifth floor.</b>  9 <b>Obviously after the tenants or the occupant left the</b>  10 <b>flat and said it was alight, I didn't -- I wouldn't say</b>  11 <b>I doubted them that it was alight, but I felt at that</b>  12 <b>time, the second time I looked through the letter box,</b>  13 <b>it was pretty much confirmed that that flat would've</b>  14 <b>been alight.</b>  15 Q. Did that confirm to you that compartmentation as between  16 the fourth and fifth floor had failed?  17 <b>A. This could've been through an open window, so -- but,</b>  18 <b>yes, I believed there was now two compartments on fire</b>  19 <b>in that building.</b>  20 Q. Right.  21 Did you think that it was important at that stage to  22 tell anybody on the fire ground below what you had just  23 seen through the letter box in that flat?  24 <b>A. I believed that my message was received the first time</b>  25 <b>round. I think I might have said it in my statement,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 Did you speak to anybody else at all on the fifth  2 floor about the presence of fire?  3 <b>A. No, not from my -- no, no.</b>  4 Q. Now, in the second-last paragraph on page 12, just look  5 down at that for a moment, you say:  6 "However as I didn't have a BA set, hose or a crew,  7 I thought there was nothing I could do on the 5th floor.  8 I was still thinking that Hammersmith's crew would be  9 coming with a couple of BA sets and they would come  10 straight in. I therefore decided to go up to check the  11 6th floor."  12 Did you take any steps to find out why the  13 Hammersmith BA crew had not yet arrived?  14 <b>A. No.</b>  15 Q. Did you have any thoughts about whether you would now  16 put the door in and attempt to tackle the fire?  17 <b>A. No, not at all.</b>  18 Q. And just explain why that was.  19 <b>A. I didn't have water, BA set, as I explained, hose, I was</b>  20 <b>on my own. There was obviously -- it looked like</b>  21 <b>a well-established fire in there at this stage.</b>  22 <b>I certainly wasn't going to break the door down, no.</b>  23 Q. Did you think at the time that it was important to get  24 a BA crew with water up there as soon as possible to  25 attack that fire?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 <b>I can't remember whether I sent a second message about</b>  2 <b>the fifth floor.</b>  3 Q. Well, I'll come to that, but I'm just at the point of  4 you looking through the letter box. Did you radio  5 anybody down at that point and say, "The flat's full of  6 thick smoke, I think compartmentation has gone"?  7 <b>A. No, but if the compartment has failed from downstairs to</b>  8 <b>upstairs, it would've gone through a window, so that</b>  9 <b>would've been visible from outside.</b>  10 Q. You say that would've been; was that your assumption at  11 the time?  12 <b>A. That was my assumption at the time, that if one</b>  13 <b>compartment has failed, it's gone through a window.</b>  14 Q. Okay.  15 Did you take any steps to notify the remaining  16 occupants of the fifth floor of the presence of fire on  17 their floor?  18 <b>A. No.</b>  19 Q. Is there a reason why?  20 <b>A. There is no reason why, I just -- well, from the stay</b>  21 <b>put not -- yes, stay-put policy is that no other</b>  22 <b>compartment was involved, so I guess through training</b>  23 <b>and stuff, I didn't think that any other compartment was</b>  24 <b>going to be involved.</b>  25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>	<p>1 <b>A. When I looked through --</b>  2 Q. The letter box.  3 <b>A. -- I still -- yes, to a level, yes, it would've been</b>  4 <b>quite important, but there was nothing I was going to be</b>  5 <b>able to do to hurry them up the stairs. I still thought</b>  6 <b>that there was now just two compartments alight.</b>  7 Q. Yes. You say there was nothing you could do to hurry  8 them up the stairs; did you think at the time of  9 switching to channel 6, radioing down to the bridgehead  10 and saying, "Send the Hammersmith BA guys up fast"?  11 <b>A. Yes. Well, I might have said about Hammersmith --</b>  12 <b>I presumed it was both trucks were going to come to --</b>  13 <b>it could've been any BA crew, yeah. No, I didn't think</b>  14 <b>of changing to channel 6 to say that there was a fire on</b>  15 <b>the fifth floor.</b>  16 Q. Do you know why that --  17 <b>A. No, I don't have an answer to that, no.</b>  18 Q. What about radioing down to Mike Dowden again to say,  19 "It's urgent, you've got to send a pair of BA wearers  20 and some water up to the flat on the fifth floor now"?  21 <b>A. Because I believed that my message that I first sent was</b>  22 <b>received by people on the fire ground.</b>  23 Q. Okay. But even though you'd now seen the fire become  24 more serious in flat 26 for yourself, you still didn't  25 pursue that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p>

<p>1 <b>A. No. As I say, from my understanding that it's gone from</b>  2 <b>one window to another, it will be seen from the outside,</b>  3 <b>so I didn't think I was the only person on the fire</b>  4 <b>ground that would know that the flat above the fire</b>  5 <b>floor was alight.</b></p> <p>6 Q. At the bottom of the page, you say:  7 "I don't remember radioing WM DOWDON again regarding  8 this flat before I left the 5th floor, as I normally try  9 to keep radio traffic to a minimum. I had already sent  10 a message to get a crew to attend and the radio should  11 only be used for important things."</p> <p>12 My question is: was that not an important thing, to  13 extinguish the fire in flat 26, to justify sending a  14 further message?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes, sorry, yes, yeah, of course it's very important,</b>  16 <b>but as I say, the fire has broken out of one window and</b>  17 <b>gone into another, so it would be visible from the</b>  18 <b>outside. So me confirming that there's a fire in the</b>  19 <b>flat where they can see from the outside, it would be</b>  20 <b>one of the reasons why I wouldn't want to take up radio</b>  21 <b>traffic.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Yes.  23 In your statement at the top of page 13, you say:  24 "However my notes, which were made after the  25 incident, state that I again radioed WM DOWDON again to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 169</p>	<p>1 floor."</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Am I reading it right?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yeah, yeah.</b></p> <p>5 Q. "I looked through the letter box and the flat was filled  6 with thick black smoke. Radioed to WM Dowden again and  7 described rapid worsening conditions."  8 Now, this contemporaneous note was done, as  9 I understand it -- well, you tell me: when was that  10 done?</p> <p>11 <b>A. That was done most of it the next morning, straight</b>  12 <b>after the fire, and then I went home to have a sleep and</b>  13 <b>then come back and finish that off around about</b>  14 <b>8 o'clock that evening.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Looking at the contemporaneous note that you did just  16 after the fire, do you think that it's right that you  17 did radio down to Watch Manager Dowden again and tell  18 him about the rapidly worsening conditions?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I would say that my notes here were probably right, but</b>  20 <b>after doing my police statement, I obviously doubted</b>  21 <b>myself.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Okay.  23 Again, do you have any recollection about receiving  24 any kind of confirmation --</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 171</p>
<p>1 tell him about the worsening conditions before I went up  2 to the 6th floor."</p> <p>3 You do indeed do that. I'll show you the notes if  4 I can. It's page 2 of the contemporaneous notes, your  5 first set.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like him to look at that?</p> <p>7 MR MILLETT: Yes, I would like him to look at that, please,  8 if he could be shown that, and, Mr Trial Director, that  9 is MET00005338.</p> <p>10 Now, if you look at page 2, and if you look halfway  11 down --</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can I just ask, can you read that on  13 the screen?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Even if it was big enough, I probably couldn't read it.</b></p> <p>15 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We have the hard copy there. If you</b>  16 <b>go to the blue --</b></p> <p>17 <b>A. Ah, perfect. Thank you.</b></p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: That's your handwriting, is it?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes, it is.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay. Well, we can read it, so you're being a bit hard  21 on yourself. Can we just follow it down, you say:  22 "I then went back to the 5th floor approximately  23 3-5 mins after ..."</p> <p>24 Then help me:  25 "... my initial entry to the lobby of the 5th</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 170</p>	<p>1 Q. -- from Watch Manager Dowden or anybody else on the fire  2 ground about the message you'd sent them?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did you have any reason to think that your  5 communications were or might not be working at that  6 stage?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Could you test them or did you try to test them with  9 anybody else?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Did it occur to you that it might be strange that no one  12 was speaking to you?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No. No, it wasn't that strange. Sorry.</b></p> <p>14 Q. No. Okay.  15 Did anybody at this stage know where you were apart,  16 perhaps, from Firefighter Dorgu, who you'd told you were  17 going back up to the fifth floor?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Okay.  20 So you then say at the end of paragraph 1 on page 13  21 you radioed Watch Manager Dowden "before I went up to  22 the sixth floor", and then you describe in the next  23 paragraph how you made your way up the stairs.  24 How soon after radioing Watch Manager Dowden did you  25 go up to the sixth floor?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 172</p>

<p>1 <b>A. Immediately after.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Was that trip or part of the trip under instruction or</p> <p>3 off your own bat?</p> <p>4 <b>A. It was off my own back.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You then say in the first main paragraph on page 13:</p> <p>6 "As I made my way up the stairs, conditions in the</p> <p>7 stairwell were normal and free of smoke. I'm not sure</p> <p>8 if anyone passed me on the stairs as I went up. Once I</p> <p>9 was on the 6th floor, I went straight to the door of the</p> <p>10 flat that was directly above the other flats on fire.</p> <p>11 It was a little bit smoky in the lobby ..."</p> <p>12 Then you go on to describe a Spanish-speaking family</p> <p>13 of three coming out. I'll come back to that.</p> <p>14 But just in terms of the conditions in the</p> <p>15 sixth-floor lobby, Mr O'Beirne, you say it was a little</p> <p>16 bit smoky; could you describe that smoke for us, first</p> <p>17 of all?</p> <p>18 <b>A. You could see across the lobby. It was darkish,</b></p> <p>19 <b>I guess, in colour, not very light white smoke, so it</b></p> <p>20 <b>would've been a darker grey, I guess. But visibility</b></p> <p>21 <b>was okay.</b></p> <p>22 Q. What, if anything, did the presence of smoke in the lift</p> <p>23 lobby on the sixth floor tell you about the progress of</p> <p>24 the fire that you had seen so far?</p> <p>25 <b>A. To me, it seemed like it had been going up through maybe</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 173</p>	<p>1 Q. You say in the next sentence:</p> <p>2 "They had closed the front door of their flat but</p> <p>3 I could still open it."</p> <p>4 Did you actually open their front door?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I'm sure I looked inside that flat, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. How far open did you open the door, do you think?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I didn't open -- I wouldn't have opened it totally, but</b></p> <p>8 <b>I would've opened it a bit to have a look and then I</b></p> <p>9 <b>would have shut it again, I should think.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You describe the smoke. You say:</p> <p>11 "As I did this it was heavily smoke-logged inside</p> <p>12 the flat. I could see a wall of thick black smoke, from</p> <p>13 floor to ceiling, which was greyer at the bottom and</p> <p>14 darker at the top. Thick black smoke came out of the</p> <p>15 door into the lobby so I quickly closed the door again."</p> <p>16 What did that smoke and those conditions tell you on</p> <p>17 the sixth floor about the way in which this fire was now</p> <p>18 behaving?</p> <p>19 <b>A. It told me that the fire is -- at that time I felt was</b></p> <p>20 <b>going from one window to another upwards.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Right. So where would the smoke have been coming from?</p> <p>22 What would've been burning to produce smoke like that in</p> <p>23 the flat on the sixth floor, now two floors above the</p> <p>24 fire, did you think?</p> <p>25 <b>A. At the time, I didn't even pay it too much of attention,</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 175</p>
<p>1 <b>open windows or something at the time.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Right. So did you have any thoughts about whether it</p> <p>3 was progressing through the building in any other way,</p> <p>4 the fire?</p> <p>5 <b>A. The fire -- no, no, just purely outside.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Right.</p> <p>7 Now, as I've just shown you in your statement, you</p> <p>8 go on to say:</p> <p>9 "... as I approached the door a Spanish speaking</p> <p>10 family of 3 were coming out of their flat, again the</p> <p>11 same door 2 floors above the fire floor, and heading</p> <p>12 towards the door to the stairs."</p> <p>13 Now, just pause there.</p> <p>14 Did you say anything to them, to this family?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I would've said something along the lines of, "Is there</b></p> <p>16 <b>anyone in there?" and would've directed them towards the</b></p> <p>17 <b>stairs to go down.</b></p> <p>18 Q. You say halfway down the paragraph:</p> <p>19 "I can't remember my conversation with them other</p> <p>20 than them telling me that their flat was alight and I</p> <p>21 asked them if there was anyone else inside. I don't</p> <p>22 remember what they replied but I am certain they did not</p> <p>23 say 'yes' in response to this question."</p> <p>24 Did you examine their flat? Did you look inside it?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I went to the door, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 174</p>	<p>1 <b>I just knew that now it's -- another flat was alight.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You thought another flat was alight?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes, another one. That would be the third one, isn't</b></p> <p>4 <b>it? We're on floor 6 now, aren't we? So that would be</b></p> <p>5 <b>the third flat alight is what I thought.</b></p> <p>6 Q. So the smoke that you saw -- just clarifying your</p> <p>7 evidence, I think -- correct me if I'm wrong --</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did it work this way: you now thought, having seen the</p> <p>10 smoke in this flat, which is two floors above the fire</p> <p>11 floor, that there were now three separate flats</p> <p>12 separately alight?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, they told me that their flat was alight, if</b></p> <p>14 <b>I remember rightly, yes, so I thought there was three</b></p> <p>15 <b>flats alight.</b></p> <p>16 Q. So this wasn't just smoke propagating from the fourth</p> <p>17 floor and coming into the fifth and sixth floor; these</p> <p>18 were three separate fires?</p> <p>19 <b>A. No, I'm sure they told me that their flat was alight.</b></p> <p>20 Q. What did that tell you now about the extent of the</p> <p>21 breach of compartmentation in the building, if anything?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Whether I paid it any attention at all at that time --</b></p> <p>23 <b>you know, all I could say was maybe I would've thought</b></p> <p>24 <b>that the windows were open. Obviously a level of</b></p> <p>25 <b>concern because of how quick it's -- you know, three</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 176</p>

<p>1 floors have gone up -- yeah, three floors are alight</p> <p>2 now, quicker than I can go up the stairs, it felt, so,</p> <p>3 yeah, I was growing concerned. I had a growing concern</p> <p>4 with it.</p> <p>5 Q. Did you have any thoughts about how serious the</p> <p>6 situation was becoming?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I was dealing with the here and now. I didn't -- yeah.</b></p> <p>8 <b>I thought three flats were alight. I thought we can go</b></p> <p>9 <b>and put three flats out.</b></p> <p>10 Q. On page 13, in the next paragraph down, you say:</p> <p>11 "Although the fire had spread upwards, [I] thought</p> <p>12 that it was still contained as it was only 2 floors</p> <p>13 above the fire floor. It still seemed like quite a</p> <p>14 normal fire at this point therefore I didn't think it</p> <p>15 was necessary to knock on everyone's doors and tell them</p> <p>16 to get out or that I had the time to do this when ...</p> <p>17 there were more important things I should be doing. All</p> <p>18 flats are basically concrete blocks and normally the</p> <p>19 only place that a fire encased in concrete might spread</p> <p>20 is upwards."</p> <p>21 Can I just ask you about that evidence.</p> <p>22 You are faced with three separate fires on three</p> <p>23 separate floors, which had started in one place, in one</p> <p>24 flat, on one floor.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 177</p>	<p>1 trying to get the people out that flat, and I still</p> <p>2 thought that it would only be those three compartments.</p> <p>3 Q. I see.</p> <p>4 Did you take any steps to notify the remaining</p> <p>5 occupants of the sixth floor --</p> <p>6 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>7 Q. -- as to the presence of fire on that floor?</p> <p>8 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Can you explain why that was?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Because it was only that flat that was involved in the</b></p> <p>11 <b>fire, the flat on the sixth floor that the family had</b></p> <p>12 <b>come out -- what flat was it, 36? Yeah, so that was the</b></p> <p>13 <b>only flat on that floor that was involved in the fire at</b></p> <p>14 <b>the time, I believed.</b></p> <p>15 Q. But at that stage, you have a fire which has spread from</p> <p>16 fourth floor to fifth floor, set it alight; fifth floor</p> <p>17 to sixth floor, set that flat alight, and there's no</p> <p>18 guarantee it is going to stop at that stage.</p> <p>19 Did you begin to think at that stage that in fact</p> <p>20 the fire was now spreading and that people now needed to</p> <p>21 be alerted to the fact that there was a fire on their</p> <p>22 floor?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No, it didn't cross my mind to knock on their doors and</b></p> <p>24 <b>try to get anybody out of their flat.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You say in the paragraph I've just read you in the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 179</p>
<p>1 Q. Why do you say there that you thought it was still</p> <p>2 contained?</p> <p>3 <b>A. It was contained to three flats at the time is what</b></p> <p>4 <b>I thought.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Did you have any thoughts about its progress?</p> <p>6 <b>A. You mean the speed in which it set three flats alight?</b></p> <p>7 Q. Let me be clear, you say, "I thought it was still</p> <p>8 contained", but it had gone quite quickly from a fire in</p> <p>9 one flat to a fire in a flat above it and then a fire in</p> <p>10 a flat above that.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. That doesn't sound to the unskilled, like me, like</p> <p>13 a contained fire.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Obviously the police statement was written after I knew</b></p> <p>15 <b>the outcome of that night. That's why I tried to put it</b></p> <p>16 <b>in maybe layman's terms.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So just trying to get clarity on your thoughts at the</p> <p>18 time, at that moment you saw the third fire, ie the fire</p> <p>19 on the sixth floor --</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. -- what made you think at that stage that it was still</p> <p>22 contained and wouldn't progress further up the building?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Bad choice of words. It obviously wasn't contained.</b></p> <p>24 <b>There was three compartments now alight is the way I saw</b></p> <p>25 <b>it. I was just dealing with the here and now. I was</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 178</p>	<p>1 second line:</p> <p>2 "It still seemed like quite a normal fire at this</p> <p>3 point ..."</p> <p>4 Is that right? Is it in your experience normal for</p> <p>5 a fire which starts in a room in one compartment in</p> <p>6 a high-rise tower block to spread to the flat above and</p> <p>7 then the flat above that?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Obviously it's not normal, but as I said, if you take it</b></p> <p>9 <b>in the context that this was written after I found out</b></p> <p>10 <b>what -- or after it happened, I was trying to maybe</b></p> <p>11 <b>downplay, if that's the right phrase to use.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Right. I am just trying to see to what extent, when you</p> <p>13 wrote this in your police statement, it really reflected</p> <p>14 what you actually were thinking at the time.</p> <p>15 So casting your mind back and forgetting your police</p> <p>16 statement at the moment and looking at the fact that you</p> <p>17 now have a fire in flat 16, a fire in flat 26 and a fire</p> <p>18 in flat 36, did you think, "Well, this is normal", or</p> <p>19 did you think, "This is not normal"?</p> <p>20 <b>A. No, it's obviously not normal. It's broke into three</b></p> <p>21 <b>flats, well, quick, but I didn't expect it to break into</b></p> <p>22 <b>any more quickly like it has or anything like that.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Why is that?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I just -- I was dealing with what I saw at that time.</b></p> <p>25 <b>What was there was now three different flats alight that</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 180</p>

<p>1 <b>were in a line. I didn't ...</b></p> <p>2 Q. Did you have any thoughts about the risk of lateral fire</p> <p>3 spread?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No, to me at the time it just seemed like it was</b></p> <p>5 <b>affecting the flats in a straight line going vertical.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You say you didn't think you had the time to knock on</p> <p>7 other people's doors "when there were more important</p> <p>8 things I should be doing".</p> <p>9 Could you just tell me: what were those more</p> <p>10 important things you thought you should be doing?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I felt that the other flats on that floor were going to</b></p> <p>12 <b>be safe, and I radioed down to say that there's two</b></p> <p>13 <b>floors alight above the fire floor and I wanted to</b></p> <p>14 <b>investigate further by going upstairs.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You say you radioed down.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. And you do indeed say that, if you just look at the last</p> <p>18 paragraph on page 13 of your statement, you say:</p> <p>19 "I radioed down to the Governor, WM DOWDON, again</p> <p>20 but I didn't get any reply. I didn't get a reply to any</p> <p>21 of the radio messages I sent to the governor but</p> <p>22 I assumed he was still very busy but that he could hear</p> <p>23 me."</p> <p>24 On this occasion, how confident are you that you did</p> <p>25 send that message from the sixth floor?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 181</p>	<p>1 <b>it wasn't something that crossed my mind that evening.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Right.</p> <p>3 Have you any personal experience as a front-line</p> <p>4 firefighter of dealing with lateral fire spread in</p> <p>5 a high-rise?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I haven't been on an incident like that, but I'm aware</b></p> <p>7 <b>of it. I think we must have done case studies and</b></p> <p>8 <b>stuff.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did you know or have any training on how lateral fire</p> <p>10 spread happens, what the mechanisms are?</p> <p>11 <b>A. As I said, I believe wind --</b></p> <p>12 Q. Wind.</p> <p>13 <b>A. -- can blow embers in. Other than that, I couldn't</b></p> <p>14 <b>really go into the science of it.</b></p> <p>15 Q. What about how the building is built? How the building</p> <p>16 is constructed, is that something that might affect --</p> <p>17 <b>A. Oh, you mean like the wing of a plane or something like</b></p> <p>18 <b>that? Is that what you're getting at? Along those</b></p> <p>19 <b>lines?</b></p> <p>20 Q. Let me ask the question: did you ever have any training</p> <p>21 or did you have any firefighting experience about the</p> <p>22 effect of building construction on lateral fire spread?</p> <p>23 <b>A. We may have, but I don't remember any training on the</b></p> <p>24 <b>shape of a building affecting it.</b></p> <p>25 Q. What did you know on the night of the Grenfell Tower</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 183</p>
<p>1 <b>A. Yes, I'm very confident, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You remember doing that?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes. Yes, I would definitely have done that.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you remember getting any kind of confirmation --</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. -- from anybody?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Now that you saw three flats alight, did it not concern</p> <p>9 you that you weren't getting any confirmations or</p> <p>10 feedback from anybody at all?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No, it didn't concern me. I'm sure that at the time</b></p> <p>12 <b>I was quite aware that if there was a fire in the flat</b></p> <p>13 <b>above and I've radioed that down, it would've only</b></p> <p>14 <b>breached via the window, so I wasn't overly concerned</b></p> <p>15 <b>that someone didn't get back to me because they probably</b></p> <p>16 <b>would've been aware of it.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Just to go back to the question of lateral spread we</p> <p>18 discussed just a moment ago.</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. If I can just ask you one or two further questions about</p> <p>21 that.</p> <p>22 Is your experience that lateral fire spread in</p> <p>23 a high-rise block is rare?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I don't know whether it's rare. Obviously the wind</b></p> <p>25 <b>affects it and there's things like that. At that time,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 182</p>	<p>1 fire as to how Grenfell Tower was built so as to be able</p> <p>2 to withstand the risk of lateral fire spread?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I didn't know that.</b></p> <p>4 Q. So what led you to believe that so far as lateral fire</p> <p>5 spread is concerned, Grenfell Tower would behave</p> <p>6 normally?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Sorry, say that again, please.</b></p> <p>8 Q. What led you to believe that so far as Grenfell Tower</p> <p>9 was concerned, it would behave normally when it came to</p> <p>10 lateral fire spread?</p> <p>11 <b>A. You mean like so that -- but lateral fire spread can</b></p> <p>12 <b>happen, is that what you're -- I'm aware that lateral</b></p> <p>13 <b>fire spread can happen.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Given what you didn't know about the way in which</p> <p>15 Grenfell Tower was built, how could you assess whether</p> <p>16 Grenfell Tower would promote lateral spread of fire?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Oh, I don't know, I ...</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay. Is it right that in fact you just assumed that</p> <p>19 there wouldn't be lateral spread of fire?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Okay, you can say that, yes, but I was dealing with</b></p> <p>21 <b>three flats that were in a line, one above the other, so</b></p> <p>22 <b>lateral fire spread didn't really come into my thoughts</b></p> <p>23 <b>at that time.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You then go up to the seventh floor, and we see this</p> <p>25 from the first paragraph on page 14 of your statement.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 184</p>

<p>1 You say:</p> <p>2 "Again as I went up again the stairwell from the 6th</p> <p>3 to 7th floor the conditions were normal and clear. "</p> <p>4 First of all, your move from the sixth to the</p> <p>5 seventh floor, was that under instruction or was that</p> <p>6 off your own bat?</p> <p>7 <b>A. It was off my own back.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Second question: did you tell anybody when you were</p> <p>9 leaving the sixth floor and going to the seventh?</p> <p>10 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>11 Q. So just to summarise your trip, as it were, fourth to</p> <p>12 fifth, fifth to sixth --</p> <p>13 <b>A. Nice way to put it.</b></p> <p>14 Q. -- sixth to seventh --</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. -- you were really a free range free agent, were you?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I'm sure there's a better way to explain it or express</b></p> <p>18 <b>it than that, but, yes, no one was aware that I was</b></p> <p>19 <b>doing what I was doing other than the radio messages</b></p> <p>20 <b>that I sent down.</b></p> <p>21 Q. In your experience, would it be normal to have --</p> <p>22 I don't mean to be disrespectful in describing you in</p> <p>23 that way -- as it were, a free operator, with no BA and</p> <p>24 no water, going up through the tower without telling</p> <p>25 anybody where he is and without being under instruction</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 185</p>	<p>1 the reference to which is INQ00000148.</p> <p>2 Now, this isn't a perfect means by which to ask you</p> <p>3 to identify yourself, Mr O'Beirne, but we've got the</p> <p>4 time stamp there, subject to adjustment, of 01.21.57</p> <p>5 taken from the seventh-floor lobby CCTV camera. Given</p> <p>6 the timing, can you help identify yourself in that</p> <p>7 picture?</p> <p>8 <b>A. My torch looks like that, and I'm not being sarcastic.</b></p> <p>9 Q. No, that's helpful.</p> <p>10 <b>A. There are several different types of torches. That's</b></p> <p>11 <b>quite a new one, which looks like mine. Other than</b></p> <p>12 <b>that, yeah, skin tone maybe. I don't know, I would</b></p> <p>13 <b>suggest it probably is me, but it's difficult to say</b></p> <p>14 <b>obviously from that.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Looking at the conditions in the lobby there, does that</p> <p>16 correspond with your recollection of the conditions in</p> <p>17 the lobby as you remember them?</p> <p>18 <b>A. This is floor 7, isn't it?</b></p> <p>19 Q. Floor 7.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Well, to be honest, I thought it was a little bit</b></p> <p>21 <b>smokier than that when I went into floor 7, to be</b></p> <p>22 <b>honest.</b></p> <p>23 Q. To be fair to you, it's not perhaps the most perfect</p> <p>24 picture, but you thought it was a bit smokier than this</p> <p>25 picture shows us; is that what you're saying?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 187</p>
<p>1 to find out what was happening?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Why were you in that position?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Inquisitive, maybe. I don't know. Maybe there's</b></p> <p>5 <b>a better phrase than that. But once I saw the fire on</b></p> <p>6 <b>the fifth floor, and obviously I didn't have any</b></p> <p>7 <b>equipment to deal with that at the time, I thought I'd</b></p> <p>8 <b>investigate further and found myself, I don't know,</b></p> <p>9 <b>investigating a bit more, I guess.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 Before leaving the sixth floor, did you take any</p> <p>12 steps to satisfy yourself that a BA crew would come up</p> <p>13 to extinguish that fire, or fight that fire?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Other than them radio messages that I said that there's</b></p> <p>15 <b>a fire in the flat two floors above the fire floor.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Right.</p> <p>17 Now, when you arrived on the seventh floor, you say</p> <p>18 at the top of your statement, page 14:</p> <p>19 "... the conditions were normal and clear. There</p> <p>20 was no smoke at all and I can't remember seeing anyone</p> <p>21 on the stairs."</p> <p>22 Now, we've got a photograph, which is a still taken</p> <p>23 from the seventh-floor lobby camera. It has a time on</p> <p>24 it, which is useful because we can fix you at a time.</p> <p>25 Could you please be shown CCTV camera 5 at 01.21.57,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 186</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes, it looks quite clear to me there and I'm sure it</b></p> <p>2 <b>was a bit smokier than that.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Okay.</p> <p>4 Now, that has you arriving on the seventh floor at</p> <p>5 01.21.57. Does that timing sound about right to you?</p> <p>6 Just to give you another time check. You'd arrived at</p> <p>7 the incident at 00.59. This is 22 minutes later. Would</p> <p>8 that be about right?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes, I mean, it may be. It's very hard to keep track of</b></p> <p>10 <b>the time. It seems like I was quite off. I think I was</b></p> <p>11 <b>about 20 minutes off with my first 40 minutes of timing</b></p> <p>12 <b>through my police statement, so it would be difficult to</b></p> <p>13 <b>say.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Right.</p> <p>15 You have decided to go to the seventh floor. Can</p> <p>16 I just ask you why you did decide to go up to the</p> <p>17 seventh floor?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Because the three flats that were alight underneath --</b></p> <p>19 <b>obviously had a feeling that maybe there's a problem</b></p> <p>20 <b>above that.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Right. So would it be fair to say that you were chasing</p> <p>22 the fire upwards inside the building?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Well, it obviously looked like that after, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. How does it look to you at the time?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I just wanted to see if it had spread to the next floor</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 188</p>

<p>1 up so, yeah, maybe that's a phrase you could use.</p> <p>2 Q. Did you tell Mike Dowden that you'd gone on to the</p> <p>3 seventh floor or anybody else indeed?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I radioed on the seventh floor to say that there was</b></p> <p>5 <b>a fire three floors above the fire floor now, I believe</b></p> <p>6 <b>it was.</b></p> <p>7 Q. You then explain in the first paragraph on page 14 --</p> <p>8 you say in the middle of the paragraph:</p> <p>9 "There was a little bit of smoke in the lobby at</p> <p>10 this time but you could still see everything and I could</p> <p>11 see their door."</p> <p>12 "Their door" is a reference to a family who were</p> <p>13 coming out of their door, saying something along the</p> <p>14 lines that it was on fire.</p> <p>15 Could you just explain which flat you're talking</p> <p>16 about there?</p> <p>17 <b>A. It was directly above the original fire floor, so it --</b></p> <p>18 <b>whatever number it was, it would end in 6, so that would</b></p> <p>19 <b>be 36, would it?</b></p> <p>20 Q. That would be 46.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Okay, 46, yeah. But I wouldn't have looked at any door</b></p> <p>22 <b>numbers at the time or anything like that.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So you were always going to look at the same flat in the</p> <p>24 same location on the lobby floor?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, that was what I was doing at that time.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 189</p>	<p>1 <b>A. It's hard to remember now, but I think from -- I would</b></p> <p>2 <b>suggest that it was the same as the smoke on the other</b></p> <p>3 <b>floors, which were dark.</b></p> <p>4 Q. What thoughts did you have about the spread of fire to</p> <p>5 this floor, the seventh floor, now?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Well, obviously, I was concerned, because I've only</b></p> <p>7 <b>just -- it seemed as though run up the stairs.</b></p> <p>8 Q. In the next paragraph you say:</p> <p>9 "After the family had gone down the 1st 1/2 flight</p> <p>10 of stairs and were almost down the next 1/2 flight of</p> <p>11 stairs I said to them, 'Is anyone there anyone else in</p> <p>12 there?'"</p> <p>13 Why did you wait until then to ask them that</p> <p>14 question?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I think I ushered them -- I can't remember whether</b></p> <p>16 <b>I ushered them to the door -- to the stairs, I then went</b></p> <p>17 <b>back to look in the flat, or whether I'd -- I just</b></p> <p>18 <b>remember them being down the half landing, second</b></p> <p>19 <b>time -- on the second half landing.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did you get an answer to your question?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I think I might have said it in my statement, but the</b></p> <p>22 <b>lady stopped and started to come back towards me.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Yes, and you told her to keep going down.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. But did you get an answer to your question: is there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 191</p>
<p>1 Q. Right.</p> <p>2 You say a little bit lower down in the paragraph:</p> <p>3 "I didn't go to their door due to the smoke ..."</p> <p>4 Where was the smoke?</p> <p>5 <b>A. It was in their flat, if I remember rightly.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Right.</p> <p>7 Did they leave their door open or closed, do you</p> <p>8 remember?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It was open when I -- I think I approached the door, if</b></p> <p>10 <b>I remember rightly, and they were just coming out as</b></p> <p>11 <b>I was approaching the door.</b></p> <p>12 Q. So they were coming out, they went past you, you say you</p> <p>13 ushered them down the stairs.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Did you then keep the door open and look in or did you</p> <p>16 go into their flat?</p> <p>17 <b>A. As I say, I couldn't remember whether I closed the door</b></p> <p>18 <b>properly, or whether it might have been left ajar</b></p> <p>19 <b>slightly.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Okay.</p> <p>21 Did you close their door after they had gone and you</p> <p>22 had looked into their flat?</p> <p>23 <b>A. The last person to touch that door was me, yes.</b></p> <p>24 Q. And what sort of smoke was it, how thick was it, what</p> <p>25 colour was it, that you saw inside their flat?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 190</p>	<p>1 anybody left in the flat?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I didn't get an answer to it, no, but she wasn't pulling</b></p> <p>3 <b>at me or anything like that to say that there's someone</b></p> <p>4 <b>in there.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Did you go back to their flat to check?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I didn't go in the flat to check if there was someone in</b></p> <p>7 <b>there, no, but as I say, I may have gone back to the</b></p> <p>8 <b>door of the flat or I've gone back upstairs.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did you alert anybody else on the seventh floor now</p> <p>10 about the presence of fire in the flat on that floor?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, via the handheld radio.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Sorry, it's my fault. Did you alert anybody else on the</p> <p>13 seventh floor, any other occupant of the seventh floor?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Is there any reason why you didn't do that?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No, there isn't any reason other than there was only one</b></p> <p>17 <b>compartment on that floor that was alight.</b></p> <p>18 Q. So the question I just asked you gets the same answer</p> <p>19 for all the other floors below?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. What you did say a minute ago was that you alerted via</p> <p>22 the handheld radio, and you do say in your second</p> <p>23 paragraph on page 14 at the very end:</p> <p>24 "I believe I then radioed down again to the governor</p> <p>25 WM DOWDON to tell him that it was alight three floors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 192</p>



<p>1 above the fire floor."</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. And is that your clear recollection?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes. There is no reason why I wouldn't have saw that</b></p> <p>5 <b>flat alight and radioed down.</b></p> <p>6 Q. No. Absolutely. I can understand why you say that.</p> <p>7 But is that your clear recollection? Standing here</p> <p>8 today, can you actually remember --</p> <p>9 <b>A. A year on -- but when I wrote this statement, I'd say</b></p> <p>10 <b>that yes, I said it, and in my notes I'm sure I would've</b></p> <p>11 <b>said it.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Yes.</p> <p>13 Just to clear something up, if you go to your</p> <p>14 contemporaneous notes that we were looking at earlier,</p> <p>15 your handwritten notes, you say at the bottom of page 2,</p> <p>16 top of page 3 of those notes -- and that's</p> <p>17 MET00005338 -- after the reference to the family:</p> <p>18 "I told her to keep going down the stairs. I am not</p> <p>19 to[o] sure at what point I radioed WM Dowden that the</p> <p>20 flat 2 floors above the fire floor was [alight]."</p> <p>21 When you say two floors --</p> <p>22 <b>A. Above the fire floor, yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. We're now on floor 7, so in fact that's three floors.</p> <p>24 <b>A. Okay, I have obviously in those notes mixed up the</b></p> <p>25 <b>occupants --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 193</p>	<p>1 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>2 Q. You didn't. You just limited it to telling Watch</p> <p>3 Manager Dowden that that flat was on fire?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Okay. Again, can I assume that you didn't receive</p> <p>6 a reply --</p> <p>7 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>8 Q. -- or a confirmation of any kind?</p> <p>9 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Now, just at this point, the fire has started in a flat</p> <p>11 on the fourth floor, it's progressed up three levels --</p> <p>12 from 4 to 5, 5 to 6 and 6 to 7 -- at some speed.</p> <p>13 Did you have any thoughts about how this fire was</p> <p>14 behaving at this point?</p> <p>15 <b>A. No, not -- other than it's going up through each</b></p> <p>16 <b>compartment very fast, no.</b></p> <p>17 Q. In your experience, had you ever seen a fire spread up</p> <p>18 from flat to flat to flat --</p> <p>19 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>20 Q. -- like that?</p> <p>21 Did you have any thoughts about what the strategy</p> <p>22 should be for alerting and evacuating occupants in flats</p> <p>23 above the fire?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Do you know -- it's hard to know why -- why you didn't</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 195</p>
<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 <b>A. -- of the two floors.</b></p> <p>3 <b>SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, actually, the next --</b></p> <p>4 <b>MR MILLETT: In fact, if you go on -- Mr Chairman, you are</b></p> <p>5 <b>quite right, you spotted it, my mistake -- you say:</b></p> <p>6 "I went to floor 7 that way, smoke in the corridor a</p> <p>7 bit and saw a Spanish speaking group (maybe 3). They</p> <p>8 spoke broken English. The[y] said their flat was on</p> <p>9 fire. I radioed to WM Dowden that the flat 3 floors</p> <p>10 above the fire floor was [alight]."</p> <p>11 So does that confirm your recollection standing here</p> <p>12 today --</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. -- of your passing a message to Watch Manager Dowden?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. At least so far as you thought you had.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Exactly, yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Okay.</p> <p>19 <b>A. Obviously when I'm saying I'm telling Watch Manager</b></p> <p>20 <b>Dowden, it's obviously not necessarily directly straight</b></p> <p>21 <b>to him, but for everyone else as well, yeah?</b></p> <p>22 Q. Yes. Of course.</p> <p>23 In addition to radioing down, did you try to pass</p> <p>24 a message on to make sure that BA wearers with water</p> <p>25 came up to that flat as well to attack the fire in it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 194</p>	<p>1 have any thoughts of that nature?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I was dealing with one situation at a time, I think.</b></p> <p>3 Q. That's very fair.</p> <p>4 You then decide to go up to the eighth floor, as you</p> <p>5 say in the next paragraph down, the third paragraph on</p> <p>6 page 14:</p> <p>7 "I then went ... straight up the stairs to the 8th</p> <p>8 floor."</p> <p>9 Again, same question as before: was that under</p> <p>10 instruction or was that off your own bat?</p> <p>11 <b>A. That was off my own back.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Can you describe the conditions that you found on the</p> <p>13 stairway on the way up?</p> <p>14 <b>A. It was clear on the way up on the stairs.</b></p> <p>15 Q. In the third paragraph there on that page, you say that</p> <p>16 the eighth-floor lobby was heavily smoke-logged, do you</p> <p>17 see? You say:</p> <p>18 "By this stage there was quite heavy smoke in the</p> <p>19 lift lobby of that floor so I came straight out and went</p> <p>20 up to the next floor."</p> <p>21 Do you see that?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Did you discover where the smoke in the eighth-floor</p> <p>24 lobby was coming from?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 196</p>

<p>1 Q. Did it occur to you to try to find out?</p> <p>2 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did you radio down to say, "Just got to the eighth</p> <p>4 floor, smoke-filled here too"?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I don't think I did, no.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Could you give us some idea of the kind of speed at</p> <p>7 which you were climbing up the building and looking in?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I don't know, it's probably -- is it 5 seconds a floor,</b></p> <p>9 <b>maybe.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Sorry, only from the 8th to the 9th would've been</b></p> <p>12 <b>5 seconds.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Right.</p> <p>14 <b>A. I was obviously taking time with the families in</b></p> <p>15 <b>between.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Yes.</p> <p>17 You say:</p> <p>18 "... there was quite heavy smoke in the lift lobby</p> <p>19 of that floor so I came straight out ..."</p> <p>20 When you say quite heavy smoke, was it smoke that</p> <p>21 could be breathed without breathing apparatus or not?</p> <p>22 <b>A. From trying to recall it now, no, no -- well, you</b></p> <p>23 <b>wouldn't really want to be in that situation anyway, but</b></p> <p>24 <b>from memory, I've opened that door, I wouldn't be able</b></p> <p>25 <b>to see the lift doors.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 197</p>	<p>1 I didn't understand why the lift lobbies were getting</p> <p>2 smokier as I went up, when the fire was down on the 4th</p> <p>3 floor but I thought smoke might be coming up the lift</p> <p>4 shaft."</p> <p>5 Just pausing there, you knew that there were fires</p> <p>6 on the fifth, sixth and seventh floors because you'd</p> <p>7 seen flats on fire or been told about flats on fire.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Did that not explain to you why there was so much</p> <p>10 smoke-logging on the eighth floor?</p> <p>11 <b>A. As I said, it may have been through the lift shaft was</b></p> <p>12 <b>something that crossed my mind.</b></p> <p>13 Q. You then go on to say:</p> <p>14 "At that point I thought [we] are not going to get</p> <p>15 enough people down to the tower to rescue everyone."</p> <p>16 When you say to rescue everyone, do you mean mass</p> <p>17 evacuation of the whole block?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I think that statement, when I wrote that, may have been</b></p> <p>19 <b>a little bit after floor 8, or -- but not mass</b></p> <p>20 <b>evacuation. At that time, I was thinking that obviously</b></p> <p>21 <b>there will be smoke in the lift lobbies and we need to</b></p> <p>22 <b>get crews to knock on people's doors and take them out.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I suppose what I'm really asking you, Mr O'Beirne, is</p> <p>24 when you say:</p> <p>25 "At that point I thought were are not going to get</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 199</p>
<p>1 Q. You wouldn't be able to see the lift doors?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes, which were 2 to 3 metres away.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did you have any thoughts about whether to alert the</p> <p>4 occupants of the eighth floor to the fact that there was</p> <p>5 heavy smoke-logging on their floor?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Even if I was in a BA -- maybe, but I didn't want to</b></p> <p>7 <b>introduce the smoke into their atmosphere.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Right.</p> <p>9 I think you've answered this before, but just so I'm</p> <p>10 clear, did you communicate with anybody --</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. -- at the bridgehead or on the fire ground outside that</p> <p>13 there was heavy smoke-logging in the eighth-floor lobby?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I believe I didn't, no.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You then say in the second line in the third paragraph</p> <p>16 on page 14:</p> <p>17 "It began to dawn on me, as I was going up and it</p> <p>18 was getting smokier, that people were in danger from</p> <p>19 smoke inhalation."</p> <p>20 I'll just read you the whole paragraph because</p> <p>21 I think, first of all, it should be read into the</p> <p>22 record, but secondly, I have a number of questions. You</p> <p>23 say:</p> <p>24 "I think this began to start to sink in around the</p> <p>25 8th floor as the lobby was so heavily smoke logged.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 198</p>	<p>1 enough people down to the tower to rescue everyone."</p> <p>2 Was that a thought you had at that moment?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I think I had a bit of a sinking feeling on -- which</b></p> <p>4 <b>I now know was between floors 11 and 12. That was</b></p> <p>5 <b>probably the point when I realised that there were going</b></p> <p>6 <b>to be people that are dying in there.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Right. We'll come to that. But can I just be clear</p> <p>8 that at this point, eighth floor, your thoughts had</p> <p>9 turned, at that time --</p> <p>10 <b>A. I don't think that my thoughts had turned at that time</b></p> <p>11 <b>to mass evacuation, no.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>13 Just again so I'm clear, when do you remember your</p> <p>14 thoughts did turn first to the need for mass evacuation?</p> <p>15 <b>A. My understanding of -- well, I didn't think it was going</b></p> <p>16 <b>to be mass evacuation, I thought that we need to get BA</b></p> <p>17 <b>crews to each individual flat and escort people out, is</b></p> <p>18 <b>what I thought.</b></p> <p>19 Q. And that thought was at what stage? What floors had you</p> <p>20 reached when you had that thought?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Only from reading the notes after and the floors that</b></p> <p>22 <b>I realised I'd got to, it was between floors 11 and 12.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Okay. We'll come to that as we go up the building.</p> <p>24 I think we next go to the 9th floor, and this is</p> <p>25 page 15, first paragraph, you say:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 200</p>

<p>1 "I then went up to the 9th floor. I think I reached 2 this floor within 2 minutes of finding the smoke in the 3 flat on the 5th floor." 4 Now, is that right, do you think? 5 <b>A. It's a best guess time, but I don't know.</b> 6 Q. If it is right, it would mean that you had covered three 7 further floors -- 6, 7 and 8 -- in 2 minutes; is that 8 possible? 9 <b>A. 6, 7 and 8 -- yeah, I mean, I'm just trying to dismantle</b> 10 <b>it now, how long did I spend with the two families, and</b> 11 <b>the rest of it was quite quick. So it wouldn't be far</b> 12 <b>off. Maybe -- no more than 4 minutes, I should think,</b> 13 <b>anyway.</b> 14 Q. Again, same question as before: your decision to go up 15 to the 9th floor, was that under instruction or off your 16 own bat? 17 <b>A. No, it wasn't under instruction, off my own back.</b> 18 Q. So you are very much the free agent rising up through 19 the tower finding out what the conditions are; is that 20 a fair description of your roll? 21 <b>A. I'd prefer if you described it a little bit different,</b> 22 <b>but that was what I was doing at the time.</b> 23 Q. How would you describe it? 24 <b>A. I was trying to gather information.</b> 25 Q. Right, okay.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 201</p>	<p>1 Q. So you were counting them in your head rather than 2 checking -- 3 <b>A. Well, I counted the three floors. I knew what floor was</b> 4 <b>alight because we broke the door in. I checked 5, so</b> 5 <b>I counted, as you say -- yes. But I was just radioing</b> 6 <b>down saying two, three and four floors above the fire</b> 7 <b>floor.</b> 8 Q. You say, as you do, that there was absolutely no smoke 9 in the lift lobby on level 9. Did you look to see 10 whether there was any smoke or fire in flat 66; in other 11 words, the flat on level 9 immediately above all the 12 flats you'd seen below which were alight? 13 <b>A. I didn't approach the door, no.</b> 14 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't do that? 15 <b>A. Because I left and went up to the next floor. But other</b> 16 <b>than that, no, there isn't a reason why I didn't check</b> 17 <b>that floor.</b> 18 Q. I know you left and went to the next floor, but what 19 prompted you not to look in the corresponding flat on 20 that floor when all the others below it had been alight? 21 <b>A. At the time, I was under the impression that the smoke</b> 22 <b>may have been coming from the lift shaft of the other</b> 23 <b>floors -- onto floor 8, should I say. And it hadn't --</b> 24 <b>the fire hadn't reached floor 9.</b> 25 Q. Going back to that lift shaft subject, is there a reason</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 203</p>
<p>1 What were the conditions in the stairs on your way 2 up from level 8 to level 9 like? 3 <b>A. It was clear.</b> 4 Q. Stairs were clear. Did you encounter any occupants on 5 the stairs? 6 <b>A. I may have, but I don't remember.</b> 7 Q. When you come to the second line of page 15, you say: 8 "When I opened the door from the stairwell to 9th 9 floor and went into lobby, I had a look around and there 10 was absolutely no smoke at all on that floor. I don't 11 remember seeing any floor numbers in the stairwells but 12 I could tell this was the 9th floor as it was brightly 13 lit and I could see a big 9 on the wall between the 14 lifts." 15 Just in terms of numbering, you could tell it was 16 the 9th floor because of the 9 between the lifts, so 17 that's in the lift lobby. Was there a number 9 in the 18 stairwell? 19 <b>A. I don't remember seeing any numbers in the stairwell.</b> 20 Q. At all? 21 <b>A. No, not at all. I don't -- yeah, from memory I don't</b> 22 <b>remember seeing them.</b> 23 Q. How were you counting the floors as you went up? 24 <b>A. Two, three, four floors above the fire floor. That's</b> 25 <b>how I was counting them up.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 202</p>	<p>1 why the smoke would be coming through the lift shaft 2 when you'd seen fires in flats 16, 26, 36, 46 -- 3 <b>A. I didn't --</b> 4 Q. -- 56? 5 <b>A. Yes, I didn't know that there was a fire on floor 8.</b> 6 <b>I presumed all the doors were closed. My assumption at</b> 7 <b>that time was that the smoke had come up the lift shaft</b> 8 <b>on floor 8.</b> 9 Q. Do you know why you made that assumption? 10 <b>A. I have no idea, that was just the first thing that come</b> 11 <b>to my mind.</b> 12 Q. Okay. 13 Do you remember whether you radioed down to 14 Mike Dowden as to what you found on the 9th floor in the 15 lobby there? 16 <b>A. No, I didn't.</b> 17 Q. When you say you didn't, you mean -- 18 <b>A. I didn't radio down.</b> 19 Q. You didn't? 20 <b>A. No.</b> 21 Q. You're sure? You can remember not -- 22 <b>A. I'm quite sure I didn't radio down the 9th floor was</b> 23 <b>clear.</b> 24 Q. You then went up to the 10th floor, and you say that in 25 the second paragraph on page 15:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 204</p>

51 (Pages 201 to 204)

<p>1 "I believe I then went onto the 10th floor lobby but 2 I came straight out again as it was heavily smoke logged 3 there." 4 Could you describe the smoke that you saw in the 5 lobby on the 10th floor? 6 <b>A. It's obviously difficult to remember, but all I remember 7 is each door I opened, the smoke was very heavy. So 8 that would've been including floors 10 and 11.</b> 9 Q. Did you look to see where the smoke might have been 10 coming from? 11 <b>A. No. From memory, when I opened the door, it was thick 12 smoke, so I closed it again straight away. So there 13 would be no way of telling from what direction the smoke 14 was coming from.</b> 15 Q. Did you think about knocking on any doors on that level, 16 floor 10? 17 <b>A. No.</b> 18 Q. Again, why is that? 19 <b>A. I wouldn't have been able to breathe if I went through 20 that door.</b> 21 Q. Did you have any thoughts about why level 8 was 22 smoke-logged, level 10 was heavily smoke-logged, as 23 you've just described, but level 9 was clear? 24 <b>A. Yes, I -- after checking floor 11 -- I don't know if you 25 want to go to floor 11 now.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 205</p>	<p>1 "I realised then that something wasn't quite right 2 there and it wasn't a normal fire. I thought that there 3 would be people who were going to die because of the 4 amount of smoke in the lobbies of the different floors 5 presumably due to more flats being alight. I thought 6 that we wouldn't be able to get enough fire engines and 7 firefighters up those stairs to get everyone out. 8 I have been doing my job for quite a while, nearly 20 9 years, and normally I feel that I have an answer for 10 anything, for any problem, but this didn't seem normal 11 and I didn't know what to do." 12 That must have come as quite a moment to you. 13 <b>A. Yes.</b> 14 Q. Did you think to share that moment with anybody? 15 <b>A. At that time, no.</b> 16 Q. Is there a reason why you didn't? 17 <b>A. Whilst I was trying to process the information is when 18 I heard the shout.</b> 19 Q. And what is it now that you'd seen in total, when you 20 stopped at this moment between the 11th and 12th floors, 21 that led you to think now that after 20 years, this is 22 something you've never seen before and that people were 23 going to die because of the amount of smoke in the 24 lobbies? 25 <b>A. As I say, now I believe -- after there was two more</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 207</p>
<p>1 Q. No, we're still on 10. 2 <b>A. Yeah, the reasoning was -- no, it was strange, 3 obviously, that there was a gap.</b> 4 Q. Right. Did you have any thoughts about why there was 5 a gap? 6 <b>A. I did when I went -- after I opened the door to 7 floor 11.</b> 8 Q. Right. Okay. You do go there. 9 Before you go there, can I just ask you, did you 10 radio down to Mike Dowden about the conditions in the 11 lobby on floor 10? 12 <b>A. I didn't radio down about the conditions.</b> 13 Q. Then in your statement you say -- this is the second 14 paragraph, second line: 15 "After I came out of the 10th floor I think I went 16 up the stairs to the half landing above the 10th floor, 17 but I'm not sure. I may have stopped between the 11th 18 and 12th floors. I stopped to have a think about what 19 to do. I realised then that something wasn't quite 20 right there and it wasn't a normal fire." 21 What was it at level 11, or the half landing below 22 level 11, that made you stop? 23 <b>A. Because floor 9 was clear, so obviously smoke wasn't 24 coming up through the lift lobby -- or the lift shaft.</b> 25 Q. Yes. You then say, four lines down:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 206</p>	<p>1 <b>floors above floor 9 that had smoke in it, I thought 2 that floor 10 and 11 were on fire.</b> 3 Q. Right. What did that mean to you so far as 4 compartmentation at Grenfell was concerned? 5 <b>A. It means that it was probably about six or seven or 6 eight flats that are alight now, so if you're asking do 7 I think that it failed at that time, that didn't cross 8 my mind whether it had failed at that time, but I just 9 realised that there was a lot of flats alight.</b> 10 Q. Did you have any thoughts at that moment about whether 11 a standing policy of advice to residents to stay put 12 remained safe advice to give? 13 <b>A. Sorry, can you just say that again?</b> 14 Q. Did you have any thoughts at that time, that moment, 15 about whether any standing advice to residents to stay 16 put would continue to be safe advice to give? 17 <b>A. To be honest, that wouldn't have crossed my mind at the 18 time. At that time, I was just thinking: how are we 19 going to get BA crews into these smoky lift lobbies to 20 get the residents out of their flats that are not 21 involved in the fire.</b> 22 MR MILLETT: Yes. 23 Mr Chairman, I just have a couple more questions and 24 we can finish off this line at 4 o'clock, if that is 25 convenient.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 208</p>

<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Of course.</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: So just doing your best with the timing, where</p> <p>3 do you think you were when you had this stop between the</p> <p>4 11th and the 12th floors and had these thoughts?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I went up the stairs very quickly, so I'm not too sure</b></p> <p>6 <b>what -- have you got a time stamp on floor 7?</b></p> <p>7 Q. Yes, it's about 1.21.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Okay, so I probably ascended the building -- less than</b></p> <p>9 <b>2 minutes to get there, I'm sure. Maybe even a minute.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Right.</p> <p>11 Now, in your last paragraph on page 15 you say:</p> <p>12 "I believe it was around this time, when I was</p> <p>13 somewhere between the 7th and 10th floors, that I heard</p> <p>14 WM DOWDON saying on the radio 'make pumps 8' to request</p> <p>15 8 fire engines to attend the incident."</p> <p>16 Now, we have that time at 01.19.08.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Okay.</b></p> <p>18 Q. That was where you were between the 7th and the 10th</p> <p>19 floors; this is now between the 10th and 11th floors.</p> <p>20 Had you heard any further make-ups since hearing pumps</p> <p>21 eight?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No, I didn't hear any other make-ups.</b></p> <p>23 MR MILLETT: Okay.</p> <p>24 Mr Chairman, I think I've come to a natural end at</p> <p>25 this stage.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 209</p>	<p>1 Well, you go with the usher and we'll start again at</p> <p>2 10 o'clock in the morning.</p> <p>3 THE WITNESS: Perfect.</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much indeed.</p> <p>5 (Pause)</p> <p>6 Thank you all very much. 10 o'clock tomorrow,</p> <p>7 please.</p> <p>8 (4.00 pm)</p> <p>9 (The hearing adjourned until Tuesday, 3 July 2018 at</p> <p>10 10.00 am)</p> <p>11 INDEX</p> <p>12</p> <p>THOMAS ABELL (affirmed) .....1</p> <p>13 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY .....1</p> <p>14 JUSTIN O'BEIRNE (called) .....108</p> <p>Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY .....108</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 211</p>
<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>2 MR MILLETT: I have got a few more questions to ask,</p> <p>3 probably another 45 minutes to an hour with this witness</p> <p>4 tomorrow morning, if that's not inconvenient to you and</p> <p>5 to the witness.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr O'Beirne, I'm sorry, because I am</p> <p>7 sure you were hoping to finish this afternoon, weren't</p> <p>8 you?</p> <p>9 THE WITNESS: Yes, but that's fine. That's not a problem,</p> <p>10 sir.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I hope it's not going to cause you</p> <p>12 too much difficulty to come back tomorrow.</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: No, it won't.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You've heard what Mr Millett</p> <p>15 said: 45 minutes to an hour. We'll try to keep him to</p> <p>16 that.</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: I'll look forward to that.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. You had better leave us</p> <p>19 now.</p> <p>20 Can I just mention one thing. I should have said</p> <p>21 this to you earlier. Now you've started giving your</p> <p>22 evidence, can you please not discuss your evidence or</p> <p>23 anything to do with it overnight.</p> <p>24 THE WITNESS: Yes, okay. No problem.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 210</p>	

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