1	Friday, 10 May 2024	1	RODERICK MARK ISMAY (re	-sworn)
2	(9.44 am)	2	Questioned by MR BEE	*
3	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Before you start, Mr Beer, I've been	3	R WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Beer, I think it may	
4	asked to advertise In Your Own Words, and it's	4	given what you have told me about the v	arious possible
5	particularly addressed to members of the public who may	5	lines of questioning, if I give Mr Ismay th	e warning
6	not yet have participated in it. We started the project	6	about self-incrimination.	
7	or, to be more precise, the Secretariat started the	7	BEER: Sir, yes.	
8	project I don't want to claim any credit for this	8	R WYN WILLIAMS: You may have heard r	ne give this warning
9	in March and there's been a good deal of response to it.	9	to other witnesses but let me give it to yo	ou. It's not
10	But I'd like more response and I simply want to tell you	10	really a warning, Mr Ismay, it's a directio	n about how
11	that, in the premises now, we have what we might call	11	we might proceed.	
12	a collection box, where those people who visit the	12	Under our law, a witness at a public	inquiry has the
13	Inquiry and who wish to participate in telling me about	13	right to decline to answer a question put	to him by any
14	their experiences, can fill in the questionnaire and	14	lawyer who is asking questions, and the	right to decline
15	deposit it in the collection box, and that might be	15	answering a question arises if there is a	risk that the
16	an easy way of people to participate if they are at the	16	answer to that question would incriminat	e the witness.
17	Inquiry.	17	We call it, in shorthand form, the privileg	e against
18	Obviously, if they're not at the Inquiry, I would	18	self-incrimination.	
19	still encourage them to use all the other available	19	I have decided that fairness demand	ds that I remind
20	means of participating but, if you happen to be at the	20	you of that privilege before you resume	our evidence.
21	Inquiry and you haven't yet done it, I'd be grateful if	21	However, it will be for you to make it clea	ar to me that,
22	you'd fill in the collection box, so to speak.	22	in respect of any question put to you, it is	s your wish
23	Mr Beer.	23	to rely upon the privilege against self-inc	rimination.
24	MR BEER: Thank you very much, sir. May I re-call Rod	24	If, therefore, any questions are put to yo	u by any of
25	Ismay.	25	the lawyers who ask questions or, for that	at matter, by
	1		2	
1	me, which you do not wish to answer on the grounds that	1	kindly since provided a second witness s	statement, dated
2	the answers might incriminate you, you must tell me	2	10 April 2024, which is 48 pages long. It	should be in
3	immediately after the question is put. At that point,	3	front of you in a hard copy. Can we turn	to that,
4	I will consider your objection to answering the question	4	please. Its URN is WITN04630200 and	if you turn to
5	and, thereafter, rule upon whether your objection should	5	the	
6	be upheld.	6	It says "0100" on it.	
7	Are you represented by a lawyer here today?	7	That's the wrong witness statement, then	١.
8	THE WITNESS: Yes.	8	Oh, that's the first witness statement. O	h, right,
9	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, well, that being the case, if any	9	okay, I've got you. "0200", yes.	
10	doubt arises in your mind as to whether you should	10	If you turn to the 48th page, please, you	should see
11	invoke the privilege and you wish to be assisted by your	11	a signature?	
12	lawyer, then, in all probability, I will permit you to	12	Yeah.	
13	do that before we go any further. But, again, you must	13	Is that your signature?	
14	tell me that you wish to consult with your lawyer so	14	That I see my signature, yes.	
15	that I can consider whether that's appropriate in the	15	Are the contents true to the best of your	knowledge and
16	circumstances.	16	belief?	
17	Do you understand all that, Mr Ismay?	17	Yes, they are.	
18	THE WITNESS: I understand, yes, thank you.	18	Thank you very much. That can be put	to one side.
19	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much. Mr Beer?	19	I'm going to start, Mr Ismay, with wh	at might be
20	MR BEER: Thank you, sir.	20	a significant topic, deal with that and the	n deal with
21	Good morning, Mr Ismay.	21	issues chronologically.	
22	A. Good morning, Mr Beer.	22	The first topic is the extent to which	
23	Q. As you know, I ask questions on behalf of the Inquiry.	23	Office was aware, in July 2013, of the th	=
24	You last gave evidence before the Inquiry on 11 and	24	referred to in the Second Sight Interim R	-
25	12 May 2023, nearly a year ago to the day. You've	25	I think you know that the Second Sight Ir	nterim Report of

12 May 2023, nearly a year ago to the day. You've

I think you know that the Second Sight Interim Report of

- 8 July 2013 referred to three bugs in Horizon: the
  receipts and payments mismatch bug; the suspense account
  bug; and the Callendar Square or Falkirk bug. Correct?
- 4 A. I can certainly remember through all the documents the
- 5 first two of those bugs you've mentioned. I remember
- 6 the name of the third one from the other matters.
- 7 I couldn't recall that those three items were in Second
- 8 Sight's report but I've come across all three of them
- 9 mentioned in the documents, yes.
- 10 Q. Okay. In fairness, the third bug wasn't named as the
- 11 Callendar Square or Falkirk bug in the report; it was
- 12 referred to as a third bug?
- 13 A. Right, okay. I'm familiar with lots of correspondence
- 14 that refers to the two bugs and talks about a 62 and
- 15 a 14, which are the first two of the matters that you
- 16 mentioned there.
- 17 Q. Yes, but, in any event, you know that the Second Sight
- 18 Report referred directly to the first two: the receipts
- 19 and payments mismatch bug and the local suspense account
- 20 bug?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Thank you. I want to look at some material, please,
- 23 exchanged shortly before the publication of the report
- 24 about knowledge within the Post Office of those bugs.
- 25 Can we start with POL00060572 and it will come up on the
  - 5
- checks and balances already built into the system. It
   looks likely that Second Sight's Report will focus on
   these two bugs."
- 4 Do you agree, just reading this now -- I know you
- 5 weren't a copyee on the distribution list -- that
- 6 Mr Singh is implying that the Post Office knew about the
- 7 first two bugs as a result of Mr Jenkins informing
- 8 Second Sight about them?
- 9 A. I don't know. Show me -- show me that part of it.
- 10 Q. Paragraph 5, the one I've just read.
- 11 A. Oh, right. Well, he's certainly saying that Gareth
- 12 Jenkins has told Second Sight of the two bugs.
- 13 Q. Yes. What about more broadly? Can you recall at the
- 14 time of the weeks before, in the run-up to the
- 15 publication of the Second Sight Report, was information
- 16 coming out like this, that Second Sight were going to
- 17 refer to two bugs?
- 18 A. I don't know.
- 19 Q. You can't remember?
- 20 A. I can't remember and I don't know whether that was
- 21 coming out. My recollection or involvement in it was
- 22 various spot reviews and some questions wanting some
- 23 kind of subject matter expert input that myself and my
- 24 team would have come forward with. I can't remember
- 25 conversations about these two bugs.

- 1 screen for you. This is an email of 30 June, you can
- 2 see at the top, from Jarnail Singh, and then underneath
- 3 the date the "To" list: Hugh Flemington, Alwen Lyons,
- 4 Mark Davies, Rodric Williams and Lesley Sewell. You're
- 5 not a copyee on this, yes?
- 6 A. Yes, I see that.

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- 7 Q. This is a week before the Second Sight Report. He says:
- 8 "Further to our conversations and emails on Friday
- 9 afternoon, I would like to confirm the following ..."
  - He says he thinks it's unhelpful to reference to "Bug 14" because it suggests there'd been 13 previous problems.
    - Then if we go down to number 5, please:
  - "Simon Clarke, prosecution counsel, and Martin Smith
- 15 [of Cartwright King] spoke to Gareth Jenkins on Friday,
- 16 28 June. He told them that he had only volunteered
- information about two bugs present in the system to
- 18 Second Sight. He also told them that those bugs would
- 19 not have affected the integrity of the data being used
- 20 in [a case] the Samra prosecution. If I may speculate
- 21 here a little here, Gareth Jenkins only told Second
- 22 Sight of two bugs, the Post Office only knew of two
- bugs. It seems, therefore, unlikely that they would
- 24 find any other bugs without Gareth Jenkins knowing about
- 25 it due to the mechanics of the system reporting and the

  - Q. Okay, that can come down. What about when the Interim
- 2 Report was published on the 8 July? Do you recall that
- 3 the approach that the Post Office took to the Second
- 4 Sight Report was that it was revelatory of the two bugs?
- 5 A. No, I can't recall how it did respond to it. I can't
- 6 recall a sense of saying something was revelatory or
- 7 not. I don't know how the Post Office did respond to
- 8 the Second Sight Interim Report at that time.
- 9 Q. Do you not remember being involved in a process --
- 10 A. Yeah --
- 11 Q. -- which --
- 12 A. -- I remember being --
- 13 Q. -- just let me finish -- being involved in a process in
- the run-up to the publication of the report which sought
- to discover "What did we know about the bugs and how
- 16 high within the organisation did such knowledge go?"
- 17 A. No, I -- I don't recall going through that. I know
- 18 there's lots of evidence that you've sent me with many
- 19 different dates on it, I think going back earlier than
- 20 that, where there was internal knowledge of the receipts
- and payments mismatch item, and in terms of what do
- I remember knowing at the time about that, I think
- there's some documents that you've shown me, and you've
- 24 given me so many documents I can't remember what
- 25 document has got what date in it that I've read out of

- 1 the sort of couple of thousand pages that I've been
- 2 looking at in the last couple of weeks. So I don't feel
- 3 that I can say what I remember happened then, but I do
- 4 know that I was involved in lots of work that would be
- 5 sort of subject matter expert contribution to things to
- 6 do with the various discussions that were going on to
- 7 help Second Sight prior to that date.
- 8 Q. I'm just talking about on publication day and after
- 9 publication day. Can you recall whether the Post
- 10 Office's public-facing position was "These two bugs
- 11 they've referred to, we've known about those for ages
- 12 and we dealt with them appropriately at the time", or,
- 13 "This Second Sight Report is revelatory of the bugs to
- 14 us"
- 15 A. No, I can't recall whether the Post Office response was
- 16 either of those but I would think, in my mind, if I was
- 17 kind of looking at these at the time, that I would have
- 18 thought "Yes, I was aware that that receipts and
- 19 payments mismatch bug was identified some time earlier
- and I'd understood that it had been fixed some time
- 21 earlier, as some of the other evidence shows", but, I'm
- 22 sorry, as regards the specific time of the date of --
- the date in 2013 that you're talking about, I can't
- remember what was going on that day, no, sorry.
- 25 **Q.** Okay, let's look at the receipts and payments mismatch
  - 9
- 1 A. One.
- 2 Q. He said, when he gave evidence to the Inquiry, that he
- 3 reported back to you about this meeting concerning the
- 4 receipts and payments mismatch bug. Is he correct in
- 5 what he said there?
- 6 A. I don't know. I don't know whether he reported back to
- 7 me straight after that meeting but I know in some of the
- 8 other evidence documents there's things, I think, in the
- 9 middle of October where I attended something to do with
- 10 this. I don't know what conversations Andy came to me
- 11 before that but Andy was somebody who generally would --
- with a concern for matters, and his very role was to
- 13 resolve challenges and sort of issues and experiences
- 14 that subpostmasters got.
  - His Relationship Manager role was very much about that and he would often come to me with things that he
- that and he would often come to me with things tlooking at and trying to resolve, to the benefit of
- a subpostmaster, so we would speak a lot. I can't
- 19 remember whether he came to me on this specific item or
- 20 not. I'm sorry.
- 21 Q. If we look at page 3, please. Can you see that there
- 22 are three proposals there --
- 23 **A.** Yes.

- 24 Q. -- as solutions --
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 bug --
- 2 A. Right.
- 3 Q. -- then and turn to your knowledge of it and your
  - involvement with it in the years before July 2013.
- 5 A. Yeah

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- 6 Q. Can we start, please, with POL00028838. This is
- 7 a document with which we are very familiar and I'm
- 8 therefore not going to take the Inquiry through it. Can
- 9 I ask you some limited questions about it. Can you see
- the group of attendees on the first page there?
- 11 A. Yes, I can, yes.
- 12 Q. This is a group of people who either had met when this
- document was written or were to meet when this document
- was written for the purposes of a meeting in early
- October 2010, and it's about the receipts and payments
- 16 mismatch bug. Okay?
- 17 Can you see on there Andrew Winn, Andy Winn?
- 18 A. Yes, I can.
- 19 Q. Was he one of your team?
- 20 A. Yes
- 21 Q. Did he report to you?
- 22 A. He didn't directly report to me, but he was a member of
- 23 my team, yes. Yes.
- 24 Q. How many grades of management were there between him and
- 25 you?

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- 1 Q. -- to the existence of the bug, yes?
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. Solution One, Two and Three, which have kindly been
- 4 highlighted.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. Do you agree the choice between those solutions,
- 7 ie which one to take, was a very significant decision to
- 8 take?
- 9 A. Yes, that would be very significant. My understanding
- 10 had always been that there was no scope to have what
- 11 you'd call direct entry to Horizon and I would not want
- there to have been the possibility to have direct entry
- 13 to Horizon. So the range of options that we've got
- there, there's clearly one that is a very unpalatable
- 15 one
- 16 **Q.** So just before we get on to the unpalatable option,
- 17 number 1, my questions at the moment are focused on just
- 18 choosing between Solutions one, two and three was
- 19 a significant choice?
- 20 A. Well, yes, yes, there is a significant -- yeah, yeah.
- 21 Q. And the kind of thing that Mr Winn ought to have come
- 22 back to you on?
- 23 A. Yes, and he may well have. I'm sorry that I can't
- 24 remember it but I think -- I expect that Andy would
- 25 have -- yeah, have wanted to seek and share such

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- a topic. I can't remember whether he did but I knowthat in his care he would have wanted to.
- Q. Okay, now you said -- I think you volunteered -- that
   one of the choices was unpalatable because it revealed
   the possibility of a form of remote access, in which
- 6 branch accounts could be altered remotely, essentially,
- 7 yes?
- 8 A. Yeah.9 Q. I think you said it was your understanding, so it would
- have been your understanding in October 2010, that that wasn't a possibility?
- 12 A. That's correct, yeah.
- 13 Q. So, if you had been told about Solution One by Mr Winn,
- 14 that would have been news to you, that there was a form
- of remote access by Fujitsu in which they could tamper
- with branch accounts and change data in them without
- 17 a subpostmaster's knowledge; that would have been news
- 18 to you?
- 19 A. That would have been news to me, yes, yeah. I think
- 20 that would have -- so let's say, linked to some other
- 21 evidence that's in there, and one of the things that
- 22 I challenged about changes to a report later on, there
- were a number of misunderstandings that, for example,
- 24 transaction corrections, which my team would issue to
- 25 branches, there were situations where people within Post 13
- 1 and, secondly, they'd be able to do so without the
- 2 branch being able to see it?
- 3 A. Well, it's certainly setting out that -- yes, but, as
- 4 say, whether they'd got the functionality to or not,
- 5 I don't know, or whether they were thinking they could
- 6 build something to give them the functionality, I don't
- 7 know.
- 8 Q. This doesn't speak about it conditionally --
- 9 **A.** No.
- 10 Q. -- "If Fujitsu have this facility, then they could do
- 11 this"?
- 12 A. No --
- 13 Q. This speaks as if they could do it?
- 14 A. Yeah, this don't speak to the conditionality, the other
- document that you've said you're going to come to later
- on does have an element of conditionality and that
- 17 conditionality would have come out of sort of
- 18 correspondence and discussions and things that IT had
- said to me about the system.
- 20 Q. So if Mr Winn had either shown you this document or told
- 21 you about Solution One, by October 2010 you had
- 22 knowledge, would you agree, of a form of remote access
- 23 by Fujitsu which could change branch data without
- 24 knowledge or agreement of a subpostmaster?
- 25 A. Yeah, this document, if I've seen this, would have

Office would sometimes say, "Well, doesn't a transaction correction directly influence a -- the branch accounts?", which it did not.

But there were misunderstandings about some other things and, therefore, you know, there had been that thing that I think is in the Zebra report, a suggestion of Products and Branch Accounting having direct access to a branch's accounts, which it did not because we just issued TCs for a branch to accept. There were some misunderstandings of what the teams did.

So I think there's a later document on this one where I've written an email that's in the pack, where I've used some wording like "We would not want this kind of functionality to exist and we would not want" -- and I think the word is something like --

- 16 Q. I'm going to come to that, don't worry, Mr Ismay.
- 17 A. Yeah
- 18 Q. Just focusing on this document at the moment --
- A. So I don't know whether that functionality actually
   existed. Fujitsu were saying, "Do you want us to write
   a manual entry to the system?" I don't know whether
   they actually had the functionality built to do it or
- 23 not.
- Q. Would you agree that this document makes clear, firstly,that Fujitsu could tamper with branch accounts remotely

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- 1 alerted me to say that Fujitsu --
- 2 Q. Thank you.
- 3 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 4 Q. Can we move on, then, please. POL00055410.

5 If we scroll down, please, you're not included on 6 this chain. It's an email from Mr Simpson to Rob

- Wilson, you remember him as being a senior lawyer withinPost Office?
- 9 A. Yes, yes.

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10 Q. Thank you. He says:

"I am forwarding you the attachments above in relation to a series of incidents, identified by Fujitsu this week, whereby it appears that when posting discrepancies to the local suspense, these amounts simply disappear at branch level and a balance is shown.

"The above includes Fujitsu's initial analysis and proposed solution/s, whilst the other documents the outputs from various meetings held this week. My concern is around the proposed solution/s, one or more of which may have repercussions in any future prosecution cases and on the integrity of the Horizon Online system."

If we scroll up, please, we can see that was forwarded to two other lawyers, who I think you would have probably known: Juliet McFarlane and Jarnail Singh?

- 1 A. Well, I recognise the names now from the documents, yes.
- 2 Jarnail, I knew his name from when I was there. I don't
- 3 recall Juliet's name but yes, yeah.
- 4 Q. One of the documents, the first one, the receipts and
- 5 payments note, that's the document I've just shown you,
- 6 okay? Can you see the attachments there?
- 7 A. Right, that was the document we were just --
- 8 Q. That was the document we've just looked at.
- 9 **A.** Yeah.
- 10 Q. The other one is a document called "Loss Discrepancies"
- and was a report prepared by Mr Gareth Jenkins about the
- 12 receipts and payments mismatch bug.
- 13 A. Right.
- 14 Q. Did any of this is three people, Rob Wilson, Juliet
- 15 McFarlane or Jarnail Singh, get in touch with you around
- this time, 8 October 2010, after they received this
- 17 email about the bug and the implications for the
- 18 integrity of the Horizon system and prosecutions?
- 19 A. I can't remember any of them coming to me at that time.
- 20 Q. Given that one of your team, Andrew Winn, had been in
- 21 the meeting.
- 22 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 23 Q. None of them, so far as you recall, got in touch with
- 24 you?

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- 25 **A.** I can't recall them getting in touch. I'm sorry if they
  - prospect of somebody else coming in, and that was the question before, but as we had extensive dialogue on
- 3 that before, I think, if the -- if the Post Office
  - lawyers had agreed with another party, that that review
- 5 should happen, then that visit needed to happen.
- 6 But, no, I did not get -- and I don't recall,
  - I don't think anybody came to me to say, from the Legal
  - Team, "This visit needs to happen". I got a thirdhand
- 9 message that came via Andy from somebody else, which
- 10 didn't excite me at the idea of another review, as
- 11 I say, when we'd got, pre-privatisation, lots of reviews
- going on. So I don't think that I blocked a visit and
- 13 I don't think that I was involved in disclosure either.
- 14 Disclosure wasn't for me to be doing disclosure.
- 15  $\,$  Q. Okay. You had had some involvement in the Seema Misra
- 16 case, to the extent you've just described?
- 17 **A.** Yeah, I don't think I'd got any involvement other than
- 18 that third-hand message that somebody wanted to make
- 19 a visit.
- 20 Q. I'm just asking at the moment, given that Andy Winn was
- 21 one of your staff --
- 22 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 23  $\,$  Q. -- and had been present at that meeting, the early
- 24 October meeting --
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 did but I can't recall them.
- 2 Q. We saw on the last occasion that you gave evidence that
- 3 you were quite extensively involved in administering and
- 4 in making decisions about disclosure in the Seema Misra
- 5 case, about whether an expert would have access to the
- 6 premises in order to view documents or conduct tests; do
- 7 you remember that?
- 8 A. I remember that topic. I wasn't involved in issues of
- 9 disclosure. What I got, and the questions they asked me
- 10 for were that Andrew Winn had come to me with a message
- 11 thirdhand from somebody else who said that somebody
- 12 wanted to come and do a visit to Chesterfield. The
- 13 question in the previous witness session was along the
- lines of why was I, you know, not happy about that,
- 15 because that was the narrative that Andy Winn had used,
- and I replied that there were so many reviews going on
- 17 in the Product and Branch Accounting Team, for business
- 18 efficiency, Royal Mail separation, loads of things going
- on, I wasn't excited about the prospect of another visit
- 20 coming in and --
- 21 Q. Who's a defence expert --
- 22 A. Yeah --
- 23 Q. -- who was proposed to come in?
- 24 A. Yeah, so I wasn't -- so I don't think that I stopped
- 25 another expert coming in. I wasn't happy about the
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- 1  $\,$  Q. -- and, given that you had had some involvement in the
- 2 Seema Misra case, did any of these three come to you
- 3 when they received documents about Seema Misra, or
- 4 potentially about Seema Misra's case, and the receipts
- 5 and payments mismatch bug?
- 6 A. Right. So I can't remember them coming to me and, given
- 7 the quality of *(unclear)* documents I'm sure if they had
- 8 they would have emailed me and you would have found such
- 9 an email but I can't remember them coming to me.
- 10 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00055418. This, again, after
- 11 4.00 on the Friday, before the trial starts on the
- 12 Monday. It's from Mandy Talbot, do you remember her?
- 13 A. Yes, I remember Mandy Talbot, yes.
- 14 Q. What do you remember as her role and function?
- 15 **A.** She was some sort of, I don't know, Head of Legal. She
- 16 was either a Post Office or Royal Mail senior lead on
- 17 some aspect of legal activity. I can't remember whether
- 18 it was criminal or civil, but, yeah.
- 19 Q. We can see it's an email at 4.09 on that Friday
- afternoon to Mr Singh, and copied to Mike Granville and
- 21 to you. What function did Mike Granville perform at
- this time, October 2010?
- 23 A. I don't know at that exact date but my recollection of
- 24 Mike's role was that he'd got a stakeholder relations
- role, which would have worked with, what do you call it,

- 1 BIS or one -- one of the Government departments that
- would be the shareholder, I think, for Post Office. So
- 3 I think Mike's role was in regulatory relations and
- 4 links with that department.
- 5 Q. We know from other evidence that, shortly after this
- 6 email is sent, Mr Singh either prints out, or somebody
- 7 using Mr Singh's log-in details prints out, the
- 8 attachments to the email we've just looked at, do you
- 9 understand --
- 10 A. Yeah, right.
- 11 Q. -- detailing the receipts and payments mismatch bug?
- 12 A. Right.

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13 Q. So shortly after this. This email says:

"Mike and Rod [ie the pair of you as copyees] are also very interested in any developments at the trial next week which impact on Horizon. You promised to let me know if anything unfortunate occurred in respect of Horizon. Please can you copy Rod and Mike into any messages. Incidentally I assume that you have briefed external relations. Can you let us know who you have briefed because Mike and Rod may wish to have input into any story relating to Horizon. They may give you a call on [a number] for an update. Incidentally Postmasters for Justice met with the Minister this week and were accompanied by Issy Hogg and the lady from Shoosmiths."

examples I didn't see where I've been asked to input to other articles, responses to articles. So the number of times that people were approaching me for input, I'd have probably wanted to be abreast of what was happening because I seem to have been approached for all sorts of things.

In respect of that report, I would like to just clarify, I -- and in my witness statement, I didn't say that I was asked to do a one-sided report. Under intensive questioning, I did respond that it could look like a one-sided report but, to be clear, my recollection wasn't that Dave asked me to produce a one-sided report, my recollection --

14 Q. We've got a recording of what you said on the lastoccasion --

- 16 **A.** But my --
- 17 **Q.** -- which has been transcribed, you having given evidence
- on oath; are you changing your evidence?
- 19  $\,$  A. No, I'm not changing my evidence but what I'm saying is,
- 20 in my evidence, I said that I was approached for the
- 21 reasons -- for assurance, given that Dave had evidently
- 22 seen questions being asked about Horizon and would have

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- 23 been saying "Well, why does the organisation feel that
- 24 Horizon would? What are the reasons for assurance?"
- 25 And I acknowledged in that previous attendance that it

- 1 You see there it says "You promised to let me know
- 2 if anything unfortunate occurred in respect of Horizon",
- 3 following "You being very interested in developments at
  - trial next week which may impact on Horizon"; were you
- 5 very interested in developments at the trial of Seema
- 6 Misra?

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- 7 A. I think that this follows on probably a couple of months
- 8 after the report that has become known as the Ismay
- 9 Report, and there's other --
- 10 Q. The 2 August 2010 report?
- 11 A. Yes, so this is like -- what is this, two or three
- 12 months after that? So probably, in light of having
- 13 compiled that report, I probably did have a kind of
- 14 a focus on, well, are there some other things being said
- 15 here?
- 16 **Q.** Why does that follow, that you'd written a report that
- 17 you told us last time --
- 18 A. Yeah.
- 19 Q. -- consistently with your instructions from David
- 20 Smith --
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. -- was to present one side of the coin on Horizon's
- 23 integrity. Why would you be concerned with whether
- there existed another side of the coin?
- 25 A. Right, so there were several things and some other

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- 1 could be seen to have looked one-sided because it did
- 2 look one-sided, but I wasn't asked to produce
- 3 a one-sided report; I was asked for the reasons for
- 4 assurance, given that Dave was a new Managing Director,
- 5 which --
- 6 Q. Okay, we're getting a bit distracted. I'm asking you
- 7 why, three months after then -- sorry, two months after
- 8 then, you had a continuing interest on any developments
- 9 that might impact on Horizon?
- 10 A. Well, I think just because I was so often being
- 11 approached for things about it.
- 12 Q. Were you seen as something like the go-to guy on
- 13 defending Horizon?
- 14 A. No, I think I was seen as a subject matter expert about
- 15 branch accounts and processes and was approached
- regularly for that. Just in the way that, through the
- 17 Second Sight process, I or my team were the subject
- 18 matter experts on things and so were approached
- 19 regularly with questions.
- 20 Q. Were you not very interested, in fact, to see whether
- 21 anything came out at the trial that undermined your
- 22 one-sided -- your myopic report?
- 23 A. I don't think so.
- 24 Q. Did Mr Singh, in fact, get in contact with you in the
- course of the Misra trial?

- 1 A. I don't think he did, and that goes back the things
- 2 about having that third-hand message before it about
- 3 somebody coming to Chesterfield. I don't recall any
- 4 other approaches, no, I don't recall that.
- 5 Q. This is moving on beyond the third-hand message. This
- 6 is an email to Mr Singh and to you, essentially hooking
- 7 you up and telling Mr Singh that he should get in
- 8 contact with you if anything unfortunate occurred in
- 9 respect of Horizon.
- Did he get in contact with you about the receipts
  and payments mismatch bug that had been discovered on
- 12 this -- so far as the documents show, so far as he was
- 13 concerned -- Friday afternoon.
- 14  $\,$  A.  $\,$  I don't think so and I can't remember him approaching me
- on it, no.
- 16 Q. Did you have an interest in the Misra trial to see
- whether anything about the receipts and payments
- 18 mismatch bug came out?
- 19 A. No. No, and when -- I think when the Misra trial was
- 20 proceeding, it was a name that sort of came out of the
- 21 blue to me as a case name. So it wasn't something that
- 22 I was looking at. I know -- I think one of my team was
- 23 invited --
- 24 Q. Just to stop you there. When did it come out of the
- 25 blue?

- 1 we've seen elsewhere and that you might come on to in
- 2 some other items. So I have -- and other evidence shows
- 3 that I have had some input into some responses to
- 4 articles. I can't remember at this particular date
- 5 whether I wanted to.
- 6 Q. Were you seen at this period of time as somebody who
- 7 should have their hand on the Post Office tiller,
- 8 guiding what was said and not said about the Horizon
- 9 system?
- 10 A. No, I don't think so.
- 11 Q. Why would you want to have input into stories relating
- 12 to Horizon?
- 13 A. Well, I was seen with the Product and Branch Accounting
- 14 back office finance role as often having a subject
- 15 matter expert view on things to do with Horizon.
- 16 Q. Can we move forward, please, to November 2010, the
- following month, and look at POL00294684. Can we see
- that Antonio Jamasb was emailing you, amongst a group of
- other people, the proposed attendees, an invitation to
- a meeting on 15 July (sic)?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. The subject was to be the "Receipts and Payments
- 23 resolution". Can you see that under "Subject"?
- 24 **A.** Yes.
- 25 Q. Thank you.

- 1 A. Well, I don't know, but the case with the request about
- 2 "Can somebody come to Chesterfield", the third-hand
- 3 thing, came out of the blue, and the date that that
- 4 happened was on whatever the correspondence was that
- 5 we've had from Andy Winn in the previous packs. So ...
- 6 Q. Would you agree that, if this is right, you maintained
- 7 a continuing interest in Horizon and, in particular,
- 8 an interest in the Seema Misra trial?
- 9 A. I think because I was approached so often, as I say, as
- a subject matter expert on stuff, I was probably
- 11 interested in Horizon. I don't think that I was -- and
- 12 this isn't -- this is no disrespect to the individuals
- in that case because the outcome of all the cases is
- 14 awful -- but I don't think I was kind of looking at that
- 15 specific case for any reason, no.
- 16 Q. In the third line, it says:
- 17 "Can you let us know, [Mr Singh], who you've
  - briefed, because Mike and Rod may wish to that have input into any story relating to Horizon."
- 20 Was that correct: that, at the point of the Misra
- 21 trial, you wanted to have input into stories relating to
- 22 Horizon?

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- 23 A. I don't know at that exact date but, clearly, there's
- 24 a number of things where I've had an input into either
- 25 complaints or responses to articles in the press, which
  - 26
  - A. I can see the bit to resolve discrepancies generated by
- 2 branches and I can see the attachments called receipts
- 3 and payments, yeah.
- 4 Q. If you just look at the subject line, which is
- 5 highlighted about five in --
- 6 A. Oh, sorry.
- 7 Q. -- "Receipts and Payments resolution" --
- 8 A. I've gone further down, sorry. Yeah.
- 9 Q. If we just go over the page and scroll down, the message
- 10 concludes in the penultimate paragraph:
- 11 "We are looking for you as senior stakeholders to
- 12 agree [an] approach as a way forward."
- 13 **A.** Yeal
- 14 Q. Go back to the first page, please. Those proposed
- attendees, would you agree that they are, you included,
- 16 senior stakeholders?
- 17 **A.** They are all part of the management, not directors.
- 18 Many of them aren't reports to directors but they're
- 19 probably Senior Managers in different parts of the
- 20 organisation, yes.
- 21 Q. So a fair description of senior stakeholders in this
- 22 issue?
- 23 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 24 Q. Thank you. It says, as you said:
- 25 "The aim of the meeting is to discuss a working

- group proposal: to resolve discrepancies generate by branches following a specific process during the completion of the trading statement."
- completion of the trading statement."Then, if we go over the page, pleat
  - Then, if we go over the page, please, we'll see a series of solutions set out, One, Two, and Three, which I think you'll recognise.
- 7 A. Yes, they were in the previous document, weren't they?
- 8  $\,$  Q. Yes, they were in the October 2010, the month before,
- 9 document --
- 10 A. Yeah.

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- 11 Q. -- for the meeting at which Andy Winn had been present,
- 12 yes?
- 13 **A.** Yeah.
- 14 Q. You'll see that Solution One is presented in exactly the
- 15 same way, yes?
- 16 A. Okay.
- 17 **Q.** Yes?

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- 18 A. It looks like it.
- 19  $\,$  Q. So, by this time, if Andy Winn hadn't drawn your
- 20 attention to that record of the meeting or told you
- 21 about Solution One, you were, at this time, would you
- 22 agree, fixed with knowledge that Fujitsu could tamper
- 23 with branch accounts remotely and that they could do so
- 24 without the branch being able to see it.
- 25 **A.** Yeah, yeah, it looks that I was specifically being
- 1 updated report. I was -- my -- as you can see from the
  - annual appraisal document that we've got in this pack,
- 3 you can see the number of things that I was involved in,
- 4 of which this was a very small part of a wide range of
- 5 things and, so, in hindsight -- absolutely, in
- 6 hindsight -- I wish I'd done something to respond to
- 7 this but, at the time, with loads of competing
  - pressures, sadly this one didn't lead me to do what, in
- 9 hindsight, I would wish I would have done to have
- 10 responded to it.
  - But I was doing many, many -- and I know this doesn't -- this won't satisfy subpostmasters impacted by all of this -- but I'd got loads and loads of different competing priorities, pre-privatisation going on and efficiency reviews in my team, and so, sadly, I didn't do something on the back of this. I wish I had but I didn't. And I was exceedingly busy with loads of
- 18 other competing priorities.
- 19 Q. Or was it that you were happy for your myopic report to20 stand, that said there were no backdoors into the
- 21 Horizon system?
- 22  $\,$  A. No, I think I'd moved on from that report and I wouldn't
- 23 have called it a myopic one. I realise, looking at it,
- 24 it does look like that but it wasn't intended to be.
- 25  $\,$  **Q.** There are no records that we've got, I think, of the

- 1 approached there, yeah.
- 2 Q. Those facts, do you agree, blew a hole through your
- 3 Ismay Report of 2 August 2010, in which you said there
- 4 were no backdoors in the Horizon system?
- 5 A. That is -- yeah, that -- yeah --
- 6 Q. Yes, so what did you do about it?
- 7 A. Well, I didn't issue a new report.
- 8 Q. Why not?
- 9 A. Because I hadn't been asked to and, as I've put in the
- 10 comments at the end of it, we didn't have a terms of
- 11 reference for it. I was asked to, at short notice, to
- 12 produce reasons for assurance for the system and it was
- 13 a one-off report.
- 14 Q. You knew you had new information that showed that
- 15 a part, a significant part, of your August 2010 report
- 16 was wrong, didn't you?
- 17 A. Yes, I can see this does show that part of that report
- 18 was wrong --
- 19 Q. A significant part of the report was wrong. The "there
- 20 are no backdoors in Horizon" part was just wrong, wasn't
- 21 it?
- 22 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 23 Q. So why didn't you do anything about it?
- 24 A. Well, because, evidently, lots of people were aware of
- 25 it from this and I wasn't tasked with doing an ongoing
  - 3
- 1 decision that was made at this 15 November 2010 meeting.
- 2 A. Right.
- 3 Q. Do you know which solution was adopted?
- 4 A. No, but I know that there was a letter that, in the end,
- 5 I was asked to sign that went out to affected branches.
- 6 I don't know whether it was this -- if I get me numbers
- 7 right, and forgive me if I get me numbers right, but
- 8 I think this was the one that we're talking about that
- 9 was affecting 62 branches.
- 10 Q. Yes.
- 11 A. There was an issue that affected 14 branches. I know
- 12 I did sign a letter that went out to affected branches
- 13 to explain how, whichever of those issues was
- 14 resolved -- and I don't know if it was this one or the
- other one, or whether I might even have been involved in a letter to both -- both situations. But I'm surprised
- that's not appeared as a document somewhere, that
- 18 letter.
- 19 Q. That can come down. Thank you.
- 20 Can we look at what else you were doing in November
- 21 2010, and look at POL00120561. This is an email from
- 22 Mr Granville, who, at the footer, gives his job title as
- 23 Head of Regulation Strategy --
- 24 A. Right
- 25 Q. -- if we just go up to the top, so the same month, about

a fortnight after that meeting -- to, amongst other people, you and Paula Vennells. The subject is an "Update on JFSA and Horizon issues and urgent response needed for [the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills]". There's an attachment, which is a response to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills for them to reply to JFSA, and Mr Granville says he's:

"... sending this note around to provide an update on the issues related to JFSA and to ensure concurrence with the line that I am taking back to [Business, Innovation and Skills]."

By way of "Background", this is just by way of context for you:

"You will all be aware of the allegations that the JFSA has been making about the integrity of the Horizon system and the associated processes that [the Post Office] uses in terminating contracts. There have also been various legal cases relating to individual subpostmasters being prosecuted for theft/false accounting where the JFSA have had some kind of involvement (the most recent being Ms Misra, West Byfleet, where the ex-subpostmaster was recently found guilty of theft). As you are [also] aware Channel 4 were also looking at the subject in the summer -- although nothing has yet come of this.

"Our approach throughout has been to robustly defend the integrity of the Horizon system."

So that's the background. Then Mr Granville says:

"However [The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills] continue to be interested in this issue. They have had a succession of MPs writing in to the Minister on behalf of constituent subpostmasters referencing the JFSA's allegations and the JFSA have also written directly to the Minister on several occasions. As a result of this pressure, back in September, Ed Davey agreed to a meeting with the JFSA and whilst at the meeting the Minister listened and didn't commit to any actions [the Department of Business, Innovation and skills] thereby maintain an 'involvement' in this issue."

Then this:

"As a result of this and to follow up the [Department of Business, Innovation and Skills] meeting with the JFSA, Mike Whitehead recently met with Rod Ismay, Lynn Hobbs and myself and went through some of the points that JFSA raised at the meeting with BIS plus a few more of the recent MP letters that have been received on the subject."

Is that right, that you recently met with officials from the Department and went through points raised by

everyone's attention is that BIS are looking for general

1 the JFSA about Horizon?

- A. I can't remember meeting with Mike Whitehead and BIS but
  I've got a lot of respect for Mike Granville and, if he
  said that I did, then no doubt that I did but I can't
  recall the meeting.
- Q. Do you remember discussing the Seema Misra case withofficials at BIS?
- 8 A. No.

- Q. How was the Seema Misra case viewed by Post Office at
   this time, after she had been convicted and sent to
   prison?
- 12 A. I don't know.
- 13 Q. Was it not seen as a great victory which vindicated therobustness of Horizon?
- A. I don't know. I know that in some of the other evidence documents there's been some things that, rightly, in other hearings, people have said, "Oh, I wish I hadn't said that". There's been various congratulatory emails went around after it, I think, but I don't know how it was judged now.
- Q. Remember those answers for about 20 minutes' time,Mr Ismay.

Can we scroll down under "Response", second paragraph under "Response":

"However, the key point I'd like to draw to

lines to go back to the JFSA. BIS accept [the Post Office's] assurances about the integrity of the system ..."

Just stopping there. Was that your state of understanding at the time: that the Government was accepting assurances given to it by the Post Office about the integrity of Horizon?

A. I don't know what the Government was accepting at that time. I did a report that I understood was for internal purposes to Dave Smith. I can't remember meeting with BIS but I certainly don't know what the Government's perspective was on it. Evidently, there were senior people who were meeting with these departments but I can't recall meeting with them and I was surprised, and I apologise if I did receive Dave's email with these five points in or nine points prior to the report that I compiled, that's got called the Ismay Report, but I don't remember those narratives and those people that were being talked about there.

I produced what I -- my recollection was, as an internal report for a new Managing Director, and I don't recall something that -- which is in the documents that -- either in the Rule 9 or Rule 10 has been shared with me that does refer to, I think, some

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1 ministers. But I didn't think I was party to that and 2 I don't recall that.

## Q. He continues:

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"[The Government does not] want to intervene in that area but they do have some concerns about some of the ways in which our disciplinary processes might be perceived.

"To take this issue forward, a suggested approach is to be robust on our current system and procedures -- but also to make reference to some work being undertaken

Then, at the foot of the page he says:

"In the attached document the relevant extract looks like this ..."

Then if we go over the page, please, to the bold system, he has essentially cut in to the email something from the attachment, ie the proposed text to go back to the Government with; can you see that?

- 19 A. Yes, I can see that, yes.
- 20 Q. So what he's essentially saying to you, amongst others, 21 is, "Is it okay if we say this to the Government?", yes?
- 22 Α. Yeah, yeah.
- 23 Q. "The Horizon system and accompanying contractual 24 processes remain fully robust. Their integrity and 25 sound basis have been demonstrated over many years, and

been sentenced to 15 months [imprisonment, I think that is] by the judge taking all due regard to judicial guidelines. It is probably inappropriate to comment about the detail of the trial ... worth pointing out the defence for Mrs Misra did use an IT expert with regard [to] comments on the Horizon system and a clear decision was arrived at by the court.

"[Mr] Singh ... explains the charges were ..." Then they're set out.

Then if we go over the page, please, second paragraph, there's a confiscation hearing. Some information about the standard of proof. Lots of adjournments, whilst Mrs Misra's solicitors kept asking for more and more evidence, which was supplied, it is

"It is probably inappropriate to comment to the MP about the detail of the trial [but point out that an IT expert was used] and a clear decision was arrived at by the court."

There's nothing in here about the receipts and payments mismatch bug, is there?

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- 22 Α.
- 23 Q. There's nothing in here, take it from me, in the rest of 24 the briefing to the Government, about the fact that 25 Fujitsu can tamper with branch accounts without the

they have underpinned the provision of effective and sustainable service to Post Office customers. [Post Office] refutes the unsubstantiated allegations made by the JFSA."

Would it be fair to describe that as the usual line: 6 that Post Office say that the system is fully robust?

- 7 I think so, yeah.
  - Then if we scroll down, please. Postscript:

9 "I have just had Mike Whitehead on to me saying that 10 Ed Davey is coming under 'extreme pressure' to respond 11 to cases that he has received. I will send to Mike the 12 extract of the information in the attached document on 13 the three specific cases referred to us by BIS but 14 I know he will come back to us asking for something on 15 the 'way forward' ..."

If we can look, please, at the document that's attached, relating to the three specific cases, can we look at page 7, please, of this. He addresses here the Mrs Misra case; can you see that?

- 20 A. Yes. Yes, I can.
- 21 Q. If we just scan through it, please, and then if we keep 22 scanning, and keep scanning. Then, second paragraph 23 from the bottom:
  - "The case has now been before the courts, and Mrs Misra was found guilty after a full jury trial ...

- 1 subpostmaster being able to see that they've done so, is 2 there?
- 3 A. No. No, there isn't.
- 4 Q. Did you raise that point?
- 5 A. I don't know.
- 6 Q. You knew about that, as you've accepted, having been at 7 the meeting on 15 November 2010. When you received this
- 8 email, "This is what we're going to brief the
- Government", did you think to say, "Hold on, I've got 9
- 10 some new information"?
- 11 A. No, I don't think I did. In hindsight, I can see that
- I probably should've but I don't think I did, no. 12
- 13 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00088956. This is an email 14
- exchange in the next month, December 2010 and it's quite 15 a complicated chain, this email. But the essentials of
- 16 it, if we scroll down, please, to the email at the foot
- of the page, are Lynn Hobbs -- you remember her, don't 17
- 18
- 19 A. Yes, I do.
- 20 Q. What function did she perform?
- 21 A. She was some sort of a leader within Post Office Network
- 22
- 23 Q. Is emailing John Breeden, yes? You remember him?
- 24 Yeah, I can't remember his exact --
- 25 Contracts' Manager --

A. Oh, yeah.
 Q. Saying:

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11 12 "This the last email exchange I had with Mike Granville about the BIS meeting [I think that's the one we've just referred to]. The attached documents are what Mike was proposing sending to BIS and I commented as below. I am also forwarding two further emails, one from Rod Ismay, which is the final report he produced."

Then, over the page, please:

"The second from Mike Granville with a document that was sent to BIS in advance as a briefing ..."

Then can you see she's cut in to the email there --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- an email to you, yes --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- which looks to have been written either, as I think
 17 we established on the last occasion, before your report
 18 was finalised or after your report was finalised, but
 19 most probably before?

A. I don't know, I'd say it was most probably before my
 report. I would think that this email probably related
 to that thing where you've showed me a table that was
 undated but a meeting in the 15 November. So, and now
 I -- looking at this, I imagine that Lynn was
 probably -- one of her team was perhaps at that meeting

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a report, I'd just been asked to produce a one-off to
help Dave understand the other context, that, if he sees
these allegations in the press, what are the other
reasons why people think the system works?

Q. So I think you agreed on the last occasion that your
report was founded on a false assertion that ought to
have been corrected in the light of this email here, if

this was received after you'd written your report?

M. Well, in hindsight, yes. It would have been probably helpful to have notified people that this other matter has come to light that wasn't in there but, in the context of everything that I was doing, I don't think it

14 Q. A bit beyond helpful, maybe essential?

occurred to me to do that at the time.

15 A. Yeah, yeah.

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Q. Can we look, please, at -- and this is a document we
 didn't have last time -- POL00120475. This is written
 by you on 29 November 2010, yes?

19 A. Yeah, this is the one that I referred to earlier.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 **A.** Yeah.

22 **Q.** You say:

"This note is to respond to some recent concernsabout data during branch balancing processes.

"In draft as yet to ensure it makes sense to those 43

and had said to Lynn that that was one of those three options that came up but they were after -- they were after my report. They were not before the Ismay Report.

Q. You told us on the last occasion that this email here

that's cut in to this email chain was a really important statement because it was explaining that things could be written into the branch system, which you had said in

8 your report could not happen?

9 A. Yeah.

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10 Q. So this statement here from Lynn Hobbs undermined yourreport, yes?

12 A. Looking at it now, yes, I can see that undermines my13 report.

Q. You agreed on the last occasion that your report was
 founded on the incorrect assertion that branch systems
 could not be amended or written into remotely and it
 ought to have been corrected, yes?

18 A. I did say that. That report was written before this,
19 I think and, at the time, my understanding was that
20 there wasn't remote access, when I did that report
21 that's become known as the Ismay Report. Yes, looking

22 at it in hindsight, I might wish that I'd revisited it,

but I was asked at short notice to produce a report with
 a load of other competing priorities going on, and

25 didn't produce a report, wasn't asked to produce

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1 not so closely involved ...

"The issue [is] sometimes known as the 'Receipts and payments mismatch' ..."

Yes?

5 A. Yeah.

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Q. "[It] has come up in some recent emails. There have
 been several business discussions about how to resolve
 it and an option had been referred to which, if adopted,
 would have led to adjustments being made direct in
 Horizon."

U Horizon.

11 That shows that you had clocked, you had realised --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- you that completely understood the significance ofSolution One --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- doesn't it?

17 **A.** Yeah.

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Q. "For clarity, whilst this was (for completeness) flagged
as an option, my understanding is that it has always
been rejected as it would undermine the longstanding
principle that all entries in Horizon be initiated or
authorised by the branch."

So it seems that you had an understanding, by late November 2010, that Solution One, essentially covert, remote access, had been rejected?

A. Yeah.

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- Q. "It is undoubtedly possible with any IT system that
   special mechanisms could be developed to adjust users
   systems and data, however, [Post Office] colleagues have
   remained satisfied.
  - "(A) that [Post Office] would not wish this facility to be built for Horizon, and
  - "(B) that there are segregations of duties and change management controls which would prevent Fujitsu from deploying such functionality."

Dealing with (A), why were you speaking about a facility being built, if the documents, as we have seen, had revealed to you that the facility already existed?

- A. Well, the way this thing is written, like we used the
   word "conditionality" earlier, this written as if, at
   the time, I'd got some perception in writing this that
   perhaps it hadn't been built, that it was an option that
   would require some build.
- Q. Where had you got that perception from if the documents that we've seen that you were passed made it clear that there was no conditionality, it wasn't an "If Fujitsu could do this, it would be a bad thing", it was, "They could do this thing"?
- 25 **A.** Well, I can only think that it would have come from
- into it, segregations which would prevent Fujitsu from
  deploying it. It speaks as if it already exists,
  doesn't it?
  - A. I think you could read it with conditionality or not and I think that there will be people who will look at it one way and there will be people that look at it another way and I think that the fact I've written this thing with conditionality in it must have meant that I'd got some feeling of conditionality when I was writing that. And, as I've said, I'd got lots of changes that I was often asking for, for my team, for POLSAP systems and there was always an element of conditionality of "Yes, we can do A, B or C but all of them we're going to have to modify something and get approval to do that thing

So I was very used to being given options, all of which would require some action ahead of them. I know the narrative in here doesn't say that but one writes what one writes and, in hindsight, you can wish there was all sorts of things that you'd written into it and I'm giving you the wider context of what I think would have influenced my thinking, and that wider context hasn't all been written in here, but this Inquiry is trying to help to understand the wider context that things were written in.

1 a conversation with IT, but most -- there was a lot of 2 things that my team in the Finance Service Centre or 3 Product and Branch Accounting, as it was called, there 4 were a lot of things that, for our own SAP system we were always asking for things to be changed, and most 5 6 things would always get aired as well, "You can do this 7 but we've got to build it". So I would have been quite 8 used to a concept of being given a number of options, 9 but all of them would have got a conditionality of "But 10 we've got to do something to enable this thing to

happen".
Q. Then you go on to (B), that there are segregations of duties and controls which would prevent Fujitsu from deploying such functionality.

15 A. Yes --

16 Q. That speaks as if the thing already exists but it's17 tightly controlled?

A. No, I think that's saying that, in the Post Office
 change management processes, there was segregation of
 duties so that, if you were trying to propose a change
 to something, there'd got to be independent approval of
 the proposal to do that thing, so --

23 Q. It doesn't say that, Mr Ismay --

24 A. No, that --

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25 **Q.** It says there would be if this facility was built, built

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So I'm giving you had context of options always had some conditionality on the build to them. I realise you can read it and say "Odd, it doesn't say that", but that is the wider context that change management processes operated in. If you're given three options, usually all of them need something to do with them.

7 Q. You carry on:

"The specific 'R&P' issue [receipts and payments mismatch issue] has arisen from a non-compliant series of user actions in branch."

11 A. Yeah.

12 **Q.** So you, you're blaming the subpostmasters there, aren't13 you?

14 A. Not -- no, I think what --

15 Q. What does --

16 A. What --

17 Q. What does "non-compliant series of user actions" mean?

18 **A.** Well, you'll see in the other documentation around the
19 receipts and payments mismatch that there was a sequence
20 of events that were trading periods and balancing
21 periods, which mean weeks and months, I think, you would

22 expect to do a certain sequence of events to close down

a period and roll into a new riot. "Non-compliant"

might be an unhelpful way of describing it but branches
 knew what to do, or training should have helped branches

to understand what to do for the sequence of events to close down your trading periods and roll into a new period.

The analysis on this case, which is well documented in another piece of evidence, I think one that Gareth had written on it, shows that branches did something that was an unexpected routine, ignoring something and doing something different to what the routine should be that all the other branches were following, and which training material, I think, would have told people to do about rolling new periods. So it's not --

- Q. So this was an attempt, this email, wasn't it, to cover
   up your own, and indeed the Post Office's, knowledge of
   remote access, wasn't it?
- 15 A. No, I don't think it was.

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- 16 Q. Did you understand the importance of the remote access
  17 issue in relation to claims against or prosecutions of
  18 subpostmasters?
- A. Oh, yeah, I understood it. If remote access existed,
   then I understand that that's, you know, that's a really
   bad thing. We don't want that. And I was very clear in
   future things as well, such as when we had an aborted
   tender for another IT supplier, that one of my inputs
   into requests for that was always there must absolutely
   not be an ability for remote access; subpostmasters must
- 1 Post Office and Fujitsu.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Fujitsu must have said at that meeting
  4 "We can do it", ie access remotely, in some form or
  5 another. Functionality had nothing to do with it after
  6 that, did it, because they told you they could do it?
  7 When I say "told you", I mean told the Post Office.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So whatever may have been chatted about
   in the IT Department of the Post Office is completely
   irrelevant because all they had to do was to recheck, if
   necessary, with Fujitsu, "Can we do it or not?"
- 13 A. I should have gone back and said "So does this
  14 functionality actually exist" because Fujitsu could have
  15 sat there and said "We can turn the screens orange", the
  16 screens weren't orange but they could have sat there and
  17 said "We can turn the screens orange", and they would
  18 have had to do something to make them go orange.
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Okay, thank you.
- MR BEER: Just look at the top of the email, four paragraphs
   in. You say in the third paragraph there had been
   several discussions about how to resolve it, and
- an option which, if adopted, would have led to
- 24 adjustments being made direct in Horizon. Then in the
- 25 fourth paragraph, you say:

- be absolutely in charge of the creation of the entriesthat go into their system. I'm sorry that --
- Q. You were in possession now of two sources of
   information, the Lynn Hobbs email and, at the very
   least, the meeting on 15 November, that undermined the
   narrative that you've just described?
- A. Well, I don't know if it had been built, I don't know if
  the functionality existed. As I've said, my
  recollection of stuff was that there was always
  a conditionality of, if something is not working and
  you've got to do changes for it, you've always got to do
  something to enable --
- Q. Just stop there Mr Ismay, if you may. Do you agree (a)
   that the document that was exchanged in October 2010
   included no conditionality in it?
- 16 A. That document didn't use conditional wording.
- 17 Q. Do you agree (b) that the three solutions that were set
   18 out in the email of 15 November 2010 included no
   19 conditionality in it?
- A. I agree that those documents didn't. But this one I've
   written, which would have come from conversations with
   IT, does include it. So I've got different documents in
   a similar time frame.
- 24 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** But I'm sorry, option one, which is where all this started with, was revealed at a meeting between

1 "Whilst this was flagged as an option ... it's 2 always been rejected."

Not "It's been rejected as an option because Fujitsu
would have to build some functionality in the system to
allow the very thing to happen and we don't want that to
happen", do you? You're saying "It's there on the table
but we've rejected it as an option"?

- 8 A. Well, those words aren't there but I don't know, at the
   9 time, whether that functionality did exist or didn't.
- 10 It's clearly been said in there and referred to.
- 11 Whether it needed building or not, I don't know.
- 12 I don't know and I'm sorry. I don't know.
- Q. You knew that a subpostmaster facing prosecution, if
   they knew about the possibility of such remote access,
   would be able to say to a court "There's scope for doubt
   as to the cause of the alleged shortfalls in the system.
- They emanated not from me, but from the system", didn't you?
- A. Well, I wasn't thinking about disclosure, I don't think,
  in these things. I know a lot of this matter is talking
  about disclosure matters but I was looking at internal
- control environments and things, not about what shouldor shouldn't be disclosed. Disclosure wasn't something
- that was my role, my responsibility in there, and so
- 25 I wouldn't have been looking at these documents through

a concept of -- which I probably wouldn't have understood at the time -- what are the requirements of disclosure?

I'm learning quite a lot about them through the context of this Inquiry but I wouldn't have been thinking, "Oh, what's the disclosure aspect of this?" That just wasn't my -- I was not the lawyer. I was not the disclosure person. I was unaware of some of the

8 9 aspects of disclosure and I'm learning about them now. 10 Q. Do you recall that, by March 2011, a number of different 11 parts of the Post Office were involved in the response still to the receipts and payments mismatch bug? 12 13 There's lots of people in those emails, yeah. Α.

Q. I'm moving forward now, Mr Ismay, to March 2011. Let's 14 look at an email that might help you. POL00029611. 15 16 You'll see at the top of the page there that this was

17 a chain sent on to you in June 2013, and we're going to 18 come back to that later because that's just before the 19 publication of the Second Sight Report.

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21 Q. I'm going to suggest in a moment that this is part of 22 the backwards look --

23 A. Oh, right, okay.

24 Q. -- to see what we knew and who knew about the receipts 25 and payments mismatch bug. So you got this eventually.

1 "Matt Hibbard ..."

Do you know who he was?

3 A. Yes, he was a direct report to me at some point, yes.

4 "... was happy for the process and the Fujitsu document 5 as Rod [I think that's you] was off. Andy Mac has taken 6 action from Mike [Young] to ensure we maintain closer

links with [Product and Branch Accounting and you]. Tony is already working on issue management and how P&BA

9 raise issues with [Service Delivery], and this will help 10

[Service Delivery] to formally raise and resolve them with Fujitsu.

"Both Mikes were keen we use this as a positive, eg old Horizon would not have picked this up, yet the logs in Data Centre, and Event alerting meant we picked this up, and can demonstrate what has happened ...

"We are writing to branches ... with walk through of the detail as required."

Yes?

19 A. Yes.

Q. So it's quite a cast of people that knew about, at least at this time, the receipts and payments mismatch bug: IT, with the references to Sewell and Young; do you agree?

55

23 24 Α.

25 Q. Network, in relation to Anita Turner, yes? 1 A. Okay.

2 Q. But if we go down, please, thank you, if we just scroll 3 up to get the email header. We can see from Mr Russell, 4

who is a Commercial Advisor within Service Delivery, he

5 sends an email out to Lesley Sewell. You'll know she

6 was Head of IT, yes?

7 A. Yes.

Q. Can you see Andy McLean; do you know who he was? 8

9 A. He was -- I think his title was Head of Service

10 Delivery.

11 Q. "Quite a lot of info here but I will outline what we 12

agreed.

13 "Word documents attached are the letters going out 14 to branches on Monday. They have been approved by Legal 15 and [Product and Branch Accounting], (Andy Winn) and 16 [Service Delivery, Tony Jamasb]", I think that is, yes?

17 A.

18 Q. "I ran Mike [Granville], Mike [Young] and Andy [I'm not 19 sure who Andy M is] through the detail last week. We

20 have agreed to write all of the losses and repay the

21 gains via subpostmaster pay. We have a document from 22 Fujitsu on what happened. This provides audit trail and

23 shows what happened for a branch ... I am awaiting

24 clearance from Network (Anita Turner) [in relation to]

25 how to approach [the Federation].

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Product and Branch Accounting, with a reference to you 3

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. The Live Service and Problem Team, the reference to 6 Mr Jamasb, yes?

7 A.

8 Q. And Commercial, because this email is from Mr Russell, 9 yes?

10 **A**. Yes.

11 Q. Also that Legal were aware; they've approved the letters 12 that are going to go out to branches, yes?

13 Right yes, yeah.

14 Q. This acknowledges that old Horizon wouldn't have picked 15 this up, yes?

A. Yes. That's what it says, yes. 16

Q. Was that your understanding at the time, that, if this 17 18 receipts and payments mismatch bug or something similar

had been present in Legacy Horizon, it would not or may 19

not have been picked up by the system? 20

21 A. I don't know. I don't know if that was the thought

22 process I went through or not.

23 Q. If that was the case, would that not provide a question 24 or raise a question mark over Horizon data that had been

25 relied on in past prosecutions?

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1	A.	Well, I see what you say. I don't know whether that
2		occurred to me or to anybody else in this at the time.
3		I think there was some of these issues, this well,
4		this issue and that other one, that got fixed, I think
5		we would have had a focus on that was a failure at the
6		time, it's got fixed, we've moved on, now we're going
7		back and pulling out correspondence around that fix.
8		But I think mine and my team's thought process would
9		have moved away from this.
10		We were being invited to come back to share
11		documents related to it but I think once the fix had
12		
		been done and these letters had been gone out, we'd have
13		moved on to many of the others topics we were dealing
14	_	with.
15	Q.	This email was forwarded to you at the time
16	Α.	Yeah.
17	Q.	by Lesley Sewell, we can see that if we scroll up?
18	Α.	Yeah.
19	Q.	On 7 March 2011. Then two years and three months later,
20		you were forwarding it to Simon Baker and Susan
21		Crichton, yes?
22	A.	Yes, yes.
23	Q.	That was in the context of the Second Sight
24		investigation, wasn't it?
25	A.	I don't know, the timeline would say it is. I don't
		57
1	A.	Yeah.
2	Q.	or a chain which seeks to explain who knew what and
3		when?
4	A.	Yeah.
5	Q.	You were able to access it in 2013, just before the
6		publication of the Second Sight Report, and forward it
7		to Simon Baker and General Counsel, yes?
8	A.	Yes, I can't remember what date the Second Sight Report
9		was. I know you said earlier but, yes, I've forward
10		this to those people to, yeah.
11	MR	BEER: Thank you.
12		Sir, that's an appropriate moment. I'm not sure
13		what time your clock says.
14	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Well
15	MR	BEER: I've got two different times on the go here.
16		WYN WILLIAMS: I'm saying 11.05.
17	MR	BEER: Can we break until 11.15 then, please?

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24 25 (11.05 am)

(11.17 am)

**SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Sure. **MR BEER:** Thank you.

MR BEER: Thank you, sir.

(A short break)

Mr Ismay, can we turn, please, to POL00296795.

We'll see that this is an email of 28 June 2013 from

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4		bug?
5	A.	Well, I don't know. It could have been that or it could
6		have been that the Second Sight Report, rightly, and
7		Second Sight would have been alerted to this issue and
8		the other issue and, therefore, I think there was
9		probably questions being asked of "Well, let's just
10		explain do we all understand what this topic was that's
11		going into the report? So you could be right. I don't
12		know whether it was about who knew or whether it was
13		what exactly was this topic because it would and
14		we've seen something somewhere else, where it's about,
15		"How do you kind of put a plain English description on
16		this?"
17		I don't think a lot of people would have understood
18		what on earth this receipts and payments issue was. So
19		I think there were often questions about accounting
20		processes where people would say, "Can you just explain
21		that again? Where's that thing that explains what this
22		was?" So you might be right. I don't know. I don't
23		know.
24	Q.	So if either of us is right, either it's a chain which
25		seeks to explain what the problem was 58
1 2 3		Andrew Winn, forwarded to, amongst other people you, with a couple of attachments, the receipts and payments notes and, I think, an Excel document maybe, yes?
4	A.	Yes.
5	Q.	If we just look at the chain, then, by going back to the
6		foot of page 2 and the top of page 3 a bit more,
7		thank you. Andrew Winn forwards on 28 June to the Duty
8		Manager a document, and says:
9		"I found problem [he gives a number] which was
10		assigned Not sure if this is the problem or not from
11		the description."
12		Then underneath it:
13		"The first mail I can find from Tony"
14		That's Antonio Jamasb:
15 16		"This is the first I can find from Tony referring to this.
17		"Lesley Sewell needs a summary of the issue when
18		Fujitsu first alerted [the Post Office] and when this
19		was first escalated as a major incident."
20		Then if we scroll up, please, Emma Langfield, part
21		of the Branch and IT Systems Team, says to Mr Winn
22		and eventually, as I say, this is forwarded to you:
23		"There has been significant archiving so we
24		cannot access the full incident history from our
25		personal emails we have determined the following.

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know why, but, yes, the timeline would say that.

Q. Presumably because of a need to investigate who knew

what and when about the receipts and payments mismatch

"The call was raised with the Service Desk on 1 October 2010.

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"Initial conference call with Fujitsu and [Product and Branch Accounting] as was for discussion of the issue and assessment of the impact was scheduled for Monday, 4 October at 1.00 pm. This delay was due to details from Fujitsu on issued being experienced needing to be shared.

"The incident was logged on remedy Monday, 4 October 2010 during the conference call at 1.00 pm.

"Following on from the initial call, a follow up was scheduled for 4.00 pm.

"I would say the 1.00 pm call was a sense check of the information collated from Thursday, 29 September (documentation of Fujitsu investigations created by Gareth Jenkins) and Friday, 1 October branch lists. Tony and I agree that the 4.00 pm call was the first initiation of the major incident process our reasoning being that from this a working group -- from this call a working group was formed to manage the incident to resolution."

Then she attaches some material.

If we scroll up, please. It's forwarded to you and, amongst others, Simon Baker. Would the fact that this chain about knowledge of and escalation of the receipts

1 was being managed out of the Legal Team. Simon, if he's 2 involved in it, may have come in as a project manager to 3 assist in that. I was being involved from a point of 4 view of a subject matter expert responding to things 5 like the suspense accounts, which we may well talk 6 about, and some of the spot reviews. So I -- and I can 7 only remember meeting with Second Sight once -- sorry if 8 I met with them more -- but I wasn't the main interface 9

- 10 Q. You know that Second Sight spoke about remote access
   11 through the prism of Simon (sic) Rudkin having given
   12 an account --
- 13 A. Right, yeah, yeah.
- 14 Q. -- of visiting a basement in Fujitsu, Bracknell15 headquarters --
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. -- and witnessing something, which to him looked andsmelt like remote access, yes?
- 19 **A.** Yes.
- Q. Do you know why the documents that we've looked at, that
   revealed knowledge by Post Office of the facility for
- 22 such remote access, were not revealed to Second Sight --
- 23 **A.** No. No I don't.
- 24 Q. -- and, instead, there was a denial of his account?
- 25 **A.** I can only think because there was so many things going 63

1 and payments mismatch issue forwarded to Simon Baker

2 mean to you that this was related to or relevant to

3 Second Sight's work?

4 A. I can't remember what Simon Baker was doing. I know of

5 him and I think he's in various other documents, as part

of Second Sight, isn't he? And so, if -- and, sorry,

7 I can't remember out of the thousands of pages you've

8 given me -- but if Simon Baker was in the Second Sight

9 work then yes, yes.

10  $\,$  Q. If Second Sight, you agree, had seen the meeting note of

11 October 2010, the email of 15 November 2010 or any

12 similar documents, they would have found out that

13 Fujitsu could tamper with branch accounts without the

14 subpostmaster knowing, wouldn't they?

15 A. Yeah, clearly, we had that earlier conversation but,

16 yes, they would have thought that, yes.

17 Q. To your knowledge, were those documents which revealed

that Fujitsu could tamper with branch accounts without

19 the subpostmaster knowing sent to Second Sight?

20 A. I don't know.

21 Q. When you received this, did you have any responsibility

for ensuring that the material was sent to Second Sight?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Who had that responsibility?

25 A. Well, I think that the relationship with Second Sight

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1 on and so many documents but it's a fair question.

2 I don't know why it wasn't.

3 Q. At all events, when Second Sight were looking into the

4 issue of remote access, you didn't ensure that they were

5 given the attachments to this email or the documents

6 that we looked at earlier, revealing that such remote

7 access was possible by Fujitsu?

8 A. No, no.

9 Q. You said that Legal, to your mind, had the

10 responsibility for dealing with issues of disclosure to

11 Second Sight. Would that include Rod Williams, who is

12 included on this chain?

13 A. I think so, I'm not exactly sure what the sort of lead

14 point of contact was but I think it was Legal or

15 a Project Manager assigned to the matter.

16 Q. So the short point, is this right, that correction of

17 your report back in 2010 does not occur when you are

18 given documents that reveal Fujitsu's facility for

remote access and, in 2013, when Second Sight are

20 reporting, those documents don't get revealed either?

21 A. No, that looks to be the case, yeah.

22 Q. Can we move forwards, please, then. POL00098797. Thank

you. Can we look at the second page, please. We're

24 here, very shortly before publication, this isn't

an email exchange including you but it does concern you.

1 A. Yeah.

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Q. It's between Alwen Lyons and Paula Vennells, of 28 June
 2013, and the next steps on Horizon issues update reads:

"Paula

"Rod Ismay and Lesley [Sewell] are working the detail of the 2 bugs, to understand them and then get them into language that is clear and can be communicated."

Is that right, that, shortly before the Second Sight Report, you were working on the detail of the two bugs to understand them?

- 12 A. Well, I can't remember my timeline of things but,
- 13 clearly, there are bits of correspondence in here that
- say that, so yeah.
- 15 **Q.** Were you part of a team that was seeking to recreate
- 16 Post Office's corporate knowledge of the two bugs that
- 17 the Second Sight Report was going to break into the
- 18 open?
- 19 A. Well, I think, looking at this, that I would have had
- 20 corporate memory and understanding and so was somebody
- 21 who could try to put into plain English something to
- 22 explain to other people who might have had no
- 23 involvement or might not even -- I don't know even know
- 24 if some people were kind of employed or in roles at
- an earlier point in time. So yes, I would get asked and
- 1 A. Yeah, looks like it, yeah.
- 2 Q. Do you agree there was, at the time of the Second Sight
- Report, an investigation, a look-back, to see who had
- 4 known about the receipts and payments mismatch bug and
- 5 how high within the organisation such knowledge went?
- 6 A. Yeah, it looks like it, yeah.
- 7 Q. Do you agree, despite that investigatory work, the Post
  - Office took a position that the bug had been discovered
- 9 or revealed by Second Sight, as a result of a disclosure
- 10 made to it by Gareth Jenkins?
- 11 A. It looks like it, from the bits of evidence that you've
- 12 shared with me, where I think something says that Gareth
- 13 revealed it to -- not to Fujitsu -- to Second Sight.
- 14 Q. Do you know, additionally, that Second Sight themselves
- 15 were asking the question of the Post Office in 2013, in
- the run-up to the publication of their report: who,
- 17 within Post Office, knew about the receipts and payments
- 18 mismatch bug?
- 19 A. No, can you ask me that question again?
- 20 Q. Yes. We've looked at what the Post Office, in fact,
- 21 knew.

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- 22 A. Right.
- 23  $\,$  Q. We have looked at the extent to which that was revealed
- 24 to Second Sight.
- 25 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 this looks like an example where I would have been asked
- 2 to help to narrate and summarise what a particular thing
- 3 was that had happened before and, in this case, this --
- 4 these particular bugs, yes.
- 5 Q. When you were putting it into plain English, did you
- 6 include, within the plain English, the fact that you had
- 7 found out, you knew, that Fujitsu could tamper with
- 8 branch accounts without a subpostmaster knowing?
- 9 A. I don't know. I don't know whether what I put together10 said that or not. I don't know.
- 11 Q. There is no document of which the Inquiry is aware of
- 12 you ever having said that.
- 13 A. Right. I don't know.

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- 14 Q. That can come down. Thank you.
  - Stepping back, do you agree that in 2010 and 2011
- 16 the receipts and payments mismatch bug was known across
- 17 every major relevant department in the Post Office,
- 18 including the Legal Team?
- 19 A. Yes, it looks like it was, yes.
- 20 Q. Do you agree it was known about by number of senior Post
- 21 Office employees within those departments?
  - 22 A. Yeah, it looks like it, yeah.
  - 23 Q. Do you agree those senior Post Office employees had been
- brought in, in 2010 and 2011, to consider the options
- 25 available to rectify the bug?

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- Q. I'm asking a related question. Do you know that, in
- 2 2013, Second Sight themselves were pursuing the same
- 3 question that I'm pursuing now: who within the Post
- 4 Office knew about the receipts and payments mismatch
- 5 bug?

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- 6 A. Oh, right. No, I don't know.
- 7 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00029618. Can we start,
  - please, with page 2. Scroll down a little bit. Ron
- 9 Warmington to Simon Baker, under the heading "Two
- 10 Systems Defects", on 25 June 2013:

"Simon.

12 "This is the draft section of the report dealing

with the two defects. Please let me know if I've got

14 anything wrong. I'm afraid that the [Post

15 Office]/Fujitsu reports on the defects don't cover

everything I need to know. I also need to know whether,after the defects were detected the subpostmasters who

had made good shortages that they should not have ma

had made good shortages that they should not have made

19 good were reimbursed and if so how many months later.

20 I think you said they were all reimbursed in due course.

21 "Also, the first report (on the receipts and

payments problem) mentions, on 2 of 30, 'this will assist in explaining the issue to senior management and,

24 if necessary, the press'. Can you please let me know

whether, when and who (at Board level) was informed

1		about this defect (and also the later local suspense
2		defect) and whether any press release was issued in
3		respect of either of them? [And] can I see a copy?"
4		Yes?
5	A.	Yes.
6	Q.	So Mr Warmington for Second Sight was asking,
7	-	essentially, how high within the organisation knowledge
8		went
9	Α.	Yes. I can see that.
10	Q.	of both bugs, yes?
11	Α.	Yes, I can see that, yes.
12	Q.	If we scroll up, please. Mr Baker replies:
	Q.	
13		"I will get back to you tomorrow. I need to double
14		check a few things first."
15		Then scroll up, please:
16		"Just got this from Ron. I can get back to him on
17		most of the questions but your help on who in the Post
18		Office knew about it. I know from the email that Rod
19		sent that Mike Young knew but don't know if it went any
20		higher."
21		Then scroll up. Lesley Sewell replies:
22		"I don't know if it went any higher than Mike, Andy
23		Mc also managed service at the time
24		"I can't say if we said anything to the press.
25		"Other points our Board at the time would have
		69
1	A.	If I've got the bug right, then I think I was. I think
1 2	A.	If I've got the bug right, then I think I was. I think there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth
_	A.	
2	A.	there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth
2	Α.	there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or
2 3 4	A. Q.	there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of
2 3 4 5		there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of it. So if that's the one you're asking about, then yes.
2 3 4 5 6		there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of it. So if that's the one you're asking about, then yes. Can we look, please, at POL00029641.
2 3 4 5 6 7		there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of it. So if that's the one you're asking about, then yes. Can we look, please, at POL00029641.  If we scroll to the foot of the page, please, 3 July 2013, an email from Rodric Williams to you and Lesley
2 3 4 5 6 7 8		there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of it. So if that's the one you're asking about, then yes.  Can we look, please, at POL00029641.  If we scroll to the foot of the page, please, 3 July
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 22	Q.	there was other correspondence where I was asking Gareth Jenkins if he could construct a sort of a column or analysis of what things would look like at each stage of it. So if that's the one you're asking about, then yes. Can we look, please, at POL00029641.  If we scroll to the foot of the page, please, 3 July 2013, an email from Rodric Williams to you and Lesley Sewell, copied to others, "Timeline for Local Suspense Problem":  " here's my summary of a call with Andy Winn."  He was to amend or correct as necessary:  "Issue [we're talking about the local suspense bug here] first surfaced at [the Post Office] Finance Centre on 6 February 2012, at the close of a branch trading period."  Yes?  Yes. Then second bullet point from the bottom:  "Not perceived to be a significant issue given the small number of branches affected"  Then last bullet point:

1 been Royal Mail as we didn't have an independent Board. 2 Paula [Vennells] would have been Network Director at the time with Dave Smith as MD." 3 4 Were you made aware of this search for information at the time by Second Sight, how far up did corporate 5 6 knowledge of the receipts and payments mismatch bug go? 7 I don't think I was. My recollection of what I was doing with Second Sight was, like I said, responding to 8 questions about the suspense account and specific spot 9 10 reviews. You see this is 25 June 2013, yes? 11 Q. Yes. 12 13 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00029611, the chain that we 14 looked at earlier; do you remember? A. I remember you had this email up earlier, yes. 15 16 Q. This is dated 19 June 2013. Was this part of a search 17 for how far up the organisation knowledge went? A. I don't know. I think what we talked about earlier was 18 19 that it was either that or it was an attempt to describe 20 what the issue was, and I don't know which was the case. 21 Q. Thank you. That can come down. 22 Can I turn to the local suspense account bug. Were 23 you involved in work conducted in June 2013 to create 24 a timeline of events concerning the discovery of the bug 25 and the Post Office's response to it? Yes, I can see that. So the timeline suggests that the first that the Post 2 3 Office knew of the bug was 6 February 2012, yes? 4 Yes, it looks like that, yes. 5 Q. We can see from this email that the Post Office knew 6 that 13 other branches were affected but didn't regard 7 the issue as significant, given that number of branches being involved, yes? 8 9 A. Yeah. Q. And that then, in 2012, they didn't pass the problem to 10 11 Fujitsu but only did so when, a year later, the same 12 problem came up again, yes? Well, I don't know whether there was any reference to 13 14 Fujitsu earlier or not --Q. I should have gone over the page. 15 It's not included in this timeline, clearly. 16 17 Q. Just go over the page, please. I should have read you 18 this: "NBSC passed this on to Fujitsu." 19 20 Yes? Right, yeah. 21 Α. 22 Q. Can you help us as to who within the Post Office knew

A. No, I don't know who knew about it, no.

in February 2012?

about the suspense account bug, following its discovery

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- 1 Q. In 2013, when, amongst other things, you were copied in
- 2 on this email, did you make it clear to your line
- 3 management or to anyone else that the Post Office had
- 4 first discovered the suspense account bug in February
- 5 2012, actually a year before Fujitsu knew anything about
- 6 it?
- 7 A. I don't know whether I did that. I don't know.
- 8 Q. To the extent that the Post Office suggested on and
- 9 after publication of the Second Sight Report that it
- 10 knew about the local suspense account bug because of
- 11 Second Sight's investigation, that would be wrong,
- 12 wouldn't it?
- 13 **A.** Sorry --
- 14 Q. To the extent that the Post Office made a suggestion
- that it only knew about the local suspense account
- 16 problem because Second Sight were revealing it to
- 17 them --
- 18 A. Yeah, that would be wrong.
- 19 Q. -- that would be wrong?
- 20 A. Yeah, we clearly knew about it. I don't know how many
- 21 people knew about it but the Post Office and me clearly
- 22 knew about it before that, yeah, from these emails,
- 23 yeah.
- 24 Q. It would be incorrect, a false impression to create,
- 25 that it was Mr Jenkins revealing these issues to Second
  - 73
- 1 A. Right, yeah.
- 2 Q. We can look at it at FUJ00083721. If we scroll down --
- 3 thank you -- Anne Chambers to Mike Stewart, about
- 4 Callendar Square in 2006. Yes?
- 5 A. Yes. I don't know which company they worked for,
- 6 though. Are they both Post Office or Fujitsu people or?
- 7 Q. Can you help us, please, as to your knowledge of how
  - high within the organisation knowledge of the Callendar
- 9 Square or Falkirk bug went in 2006?
- 10 A. Sorry, I've got no idea.
- 11 Q. When did you first become aware of it?
- 12 A. I don't know when I first became aware of it and, if you
- hadn't shared all this information with me, I don't
- think that the name would even have been in my head. So
- 15 I could any go from whatever dates, documentation is in
- here. I'm sorry but I've got so many, many things that
- 17 I was involved in, I can't remember. Sadly, even with
- 18 the gravity of some of these issues, I can't remember
- 19 them.

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- 20 Q. Thank you. That can come down.
- 21 Were you aware of a move at about the time of the
- 22 Second Sight Interim Report, in fact in the months
- 23 leading up to it, that senior management in the Post
- 24 Office decided to move from a position that there were
- 25 no bugs in Horizon to a position saying, "Yes, there may

- 1 Sight, rather than the Post Office already knowing about
- 2 them for years?
- 3 A. Well, it seems -- I don't know why Gareth, as opposed to
  - Post Office, I don't know why the sequence of events of
- 5 who raised it with them was what it was. I don't know
- 6 if Second Sight had asked the question had there been
- 7 some bugs that were known about? And, for example, my
- 8 Ismay Report did refer to certain things in there that
- 9 would have predated these. If Second Sight had asked,
- 10 I would have thought the Post Office would have
- 11 responded and not waited for Gareth to respond. So
- 12 I don't know who raised something first or not with
- 13 Second Sight.
- 14 Q. Can we turn to the Callendar Square or Falkirk bug.
- 15 That document can come down, thank you. Were you aware
- in June and July 2013 that the Post Office had known
- about the Callendar Square bug right back in 2006?
- 18 A. I'm aware now, looking at all this information. There's
- so much -- and I used to get 200 emails a day -- I can't
- remember what I got at a time and what the dates were,
- but I can see, I think, from some other evidence that
- 22 you've shared, that Post Office knew of something else
- 23 back in -- whether it was 2005 or 2006, and if that's --
- is that what the Callendar Square bug was?
- 25 **Q.** Yes.

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- 1 have been some known bugs but none of them, in fact,
- 2 disadvantaged subpostmasters"?
- 3 A. I can't remember that but I can clearly see it in some
- 4 of the correspondence that you've shared with me or that
  - I've seen on social media in the last few days.
- 6 Q. Were you party to discussions that, "We need to pivot
- 7 our position corporately from the 'No bugs' position to
- 8 'Yes, there are bugs but it's just like every computer
- 9 system; it had bugs in it and has bugs in it, but none
- 10 of them disadvantaged subpostmasters in any way""?
- 11 A. I don't know if I was party to that but I would -- sat
- here now, I would say, yeah, all systems have got
- problems in them.
- 14 Q. I'm talking about the pivot, the change in approach?
- 15 A. Right, okay.
- 16 Q. Were you party to discussions and decisions that this is
- 17 what the Post Office needed to do in the run-up to
- 18 Second Sight?
- 19 A. I don't know, I can't remember that I was but I don't20 know.
- 21 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00105632. This is the end of
- 22 May 2013. It doesn't include you on the distribution
- 23 list. It's from Alwen Lyons to Paula Vennells, copied
- 24 to others. "James brief", and I think this is in
- readiness for a meeting with James Arbuthnot MP:

"Paula the only thing that is not in the brief for James is our move away from 'there are no bugs in Horizon' to 'there are known bugs in every computer system this size but they are found and put right and no subpostmaster is disadvantaged by them'. It would be good to be able to go on and say 'or has been wrongly suspended or prosecuted'."

Again, were you part of a team or a group of people

that discussed moving from position A to position B? A. I can't recall being part of one, no. I was involved in all sorts of meetings on all sorts of different topics with all sorts of people, so, sorry, but I can't remember being one.

- 14 Q. You can't recall being part of a group or a team that 15 were essentially giving instructions or giving 16 information to managers and directors above you that we 17 need to pivot here, we need to change direction?
- 18 A. I can't remember being part of that, no.
- 19 Q. Okay, that can come down. Thank you.

20 Were you aware, after the publication of the Second 21 Sight Report on 8th July 2013, of legal advice being 22 given by an employed barrister called Simon Clarke?

23 A. No. I've read -- and I know he's been here recently, so 24 I've seen all sorts because I've happened to look at 25 some things, but I don't think that I can remember any

1 collated that report, back in 2010 but I moved on and my 2 job was covering all sorts of stuff of managing

a broader finance service centre, putting in accounts payable functions and other things, and my job was kind

of further away from all of this. So I don't think that

6 there was a reason that should have been made aware of 7

it because I didn't have a role, other than being called

back for subject matter expertise on spot reviews and

9 the suspense accounts.

- 10 Q. I'm not suggesting that you had any responsibility for 11 prosecutions --
- 12 Α. Right.

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- 13 Q. -- or that you needed to be told about it in that 14 capacity.
- 15 A. Right, of course.
- But you, as an individual, were continuing to place 16 17 reliance on what Gareth Jenkins had told you, weren't 18
- 19 A. Well, Gareth did lots of things supporting our POLSAP 20 system, as well, so he was somebody who did various 21 change deliveries for lots of things on central finance 22 systems. So he was somebody that my team had a lot of 23 dialogue with. My team wouldn't have been relying on 24 him, because we weren't leading prosecutions. We

wouldn't have been relying -- what he did or didn't do

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1 involvement or awareness of either him or the other 2

gentleman, whether I've had documents -- Mr Altman,

3 I don't think either of them were things that I don't

4 think I'd got any involvement or awareness of.

- Q. I'm not, in the interests of time, going to take you to 5 6 Mr Clarke's Advice of 15 July 2013.
- 7 Α. Right.

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- Q. It sounds as if you're now familiar with it. 8
- 9 Essentially, he said that the expert from Fujitsu,
- 10 Mr Jenkins, upon whom reliance had been placed by Post
- 11 Office in written witness statements in a series of
  - cases and who had given evidence orally in one case,
- 13 Seema Misra's, his evidence was fatally undermined, that
- 14 he couldn't be used as a witness in relation to any more
- 15 prosecutions concerning subpostmasters because he'd
- 16 breached his duties to the court in failing to reveal
- 17 his own knowledge of bugs, errors and defects. Okay?
- 18 A. Yes, so I've seen that. I've read the two reports which
- 19 have been shared with me and the Rule 10 which cover 20
- 21 Q. Is this something of which you ought to have been made 22 aware at the time?
- 23 A. Well, I wasn't leading prosecutions or disclosure, so
- 24 I'm not sure that it is something that I should have
- 25 been made aware of. You can say that I did that report,
- 1 in court wouldn't have been a matter for the operation
- 2 or running of my team. It's just -- it was a separate
- 3 thing, totally.
- 4 Q. You'd relied on him in your report, hadn't you? In one
- 5 of your appendices you essentially cut and paste or
- 6 exhibited --
- 7 A. So in that --
- Q. -- what he had said about the integrity of Horizon, 8
- 9 hadn't you?
- A. Well, I have somewhere -- yeah, is that in my 2010 10
- 11 report?
- 12 Q. Yes --

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- 13 Right, yeah, yeah, I've included something from him in
- 14 that, yeah.
- 15 Q. Would you accept that the information from Mr Clarke and
  - as supplemented by Mr Altman, who had concluded that
- 17 Mr Jenkins was a tainted witness and his position was
- untenable as a witness, amounted to an acknowledgement 18
- 19 that the Post Office's evidence as to the integrity of
- 20 the Horizon system was unsafe, didn't it?
- 21 Yes, it does. But you're referring to my report as well
- 22 in there, and my report was an internal document not
- 23 something that was part of a court case. I'd prepared
- 24 something that was for internal use at the MD's request,
- 25 not knowing the wider context of how this was suddenly

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1 going to become such a pivotal thing people keep 2 referring to in lots of contexts.

- 3 Q. At all events, you were not made aware of either Mr Clarke's advice or Mr Altman's general review? 4
- 5 A. No, I don't think I was, no. I don't think I was.
- 6 Q. Thank you. Can we turn to some broader issues, please, 7 and look, firstly, at your witness statement at 8 paragraph 7, please.
- 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I take it you mean the second one?
- 10 MR BEER: Yes, second witness statement, please. Thank you.
- 11 Paragraph 7, which is page 3.

You're here dealing with, in this part of your statement, your recollection of your involvement and giving instructions in relation to the Cleveleys case involving Julie Wolstenholme, yes?

16 Α. Yes.

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17 **Q.** You say, in the fourth line:

18 "My recollection is that I asked members of the IT 19 Directorate what their view was about such articles and 20 that Cleveleys came up in that conversation, with the IT 21 directorate firmly of a view that the criticism was 22 unfounded."

- 23 Yes?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 You say a few lines further on:

- 1 Cleveleys case. I think, in my role in risk, because 2 I could see these comments being made in press cuttings, 3 I think I approached Dave to ask him about well, what do 4 you think about these things I can see in the press? 5 And I think he would have then raised Cleveleys in 6 response to that, to say, "Well, particular topics were 7
  - So I think that was -- I think that was the context of which I became aware of the Cleveleys case. I wasn't involved in the -- wasn't kind of involved in the case; it was an awareness of it, I think.

raised in that one and it was just totally unfounded".

- 12 Q. I mean, you tell us here that you, a little further down 13 the page after the second bit of highlighting, you 14 escalated counsel's opinion to David Miller?
- 15 A. Yeah.

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- Q. Why were you doing that? What had that got to do with 16 17 you?
- A. Well, I think something had been sent to me, there's 18 19 some sort of email in the pack that indicates the
- 20 Finance Director wasn't there at the time, somebody had
- 21 been trying to share something with him, so they came to
- 22 me and, given that the Finance Director was on holiday,
- 23 I think, at that time, or he certainly wasn't there,
- 24 then, whatever it was that people were trying to
- 25 escalate to the Finance Director, I must have decided,

"My recollection ... is that the Post Office Head of IT, Dave Smith, did not agree with these opinions and he disagreed with the validity of the approach adopted by the IT expert to reach their opinion. Rightly or wrongly, I trusted that internal opinion, from someone I understood to be an expert on Horizon."

So you're essentially saying there, if I can summarise, that you became aware of an expert report prepared in the Cleveleys case. You, instead of accepting what was in that report, took your view from the Head of Post Office IT, Dave Smith, who you trusted.

Yes, yes. I don't know whether I'd read the particular 12 A. 13 reports there, although there's clearly an email where 14 I forwarded one of them and asked somebody else if 15 they'd got the other one but I -- yeah, I relied and 16 they probably -- the organisational culture was that you 17 don't all try to second guess what somebody else is 18 doing in the management team. I trusted somebody who 19 I understood was an expert who'd overseen the sort of 20 implementation phases and Go Live of that system.

> That may have been wrong, in hindsight, I accept. Maybe I should have been more sceptical but, yeah, I trusted Dave, IT Dave's judgement at that time.

- 24 Why were you involved in the Cleveleys case at all?
- 25 Well, I don't -- I'm not sure that I was involved in the

1 well, in his absence, I'm going to escalate this to the 2 Chief Operating Officer because this is something that 3 clearly was intended for director level.

4 Q. You say, if we go over the page, please, to page 6, 5 paragraph 12, that your understanding was that:

6 "... there had been a large team of experts involved 7 in developing the Horizon system, that it had undergone 8 extensive testing and that the independent consultancy, 9 Gartner, had reported positively on the deployment of 10 the system. I do not believe I took any further action 11 in relation to the concerns raised in Mr Coyne's report 12 nor [were you] asked to. The organisation 13 responsibilities agreed for [you] at the time focused on 14 Financial Services regulatory compliance", et cetera?

15 Α.

Q. "If the Horizon system was a priority, it would have 16 17 been a responsibility for IT."

Yes?

19 A. Yes.

18

- 20 Q. Why did you decide that the Gartner report and its 21 contents were more reliable than another report, that of 22 Mr Coyne, that raised issues about the integrity of
- 23 Horizon?

24 A. Perhaps because of false reliance on the tone from Dave Smith, where I think Dave -- I mean, I would have had no 25 84

1		idea what consultancies had been involved when Horizon	1	Q.	It says:
2		was deployed but I think it would have been Dave that	2		"Following our conference call today"
3		raised with me that there was this report, this analysis	3		So it seems like at the end of February 2010 you had
4		that Gartner did and, in hindsight, yeah, you can look	4		a conference call about challenges to Horizon:
5		at it and say, "Well, what happened about looking at	5		" below is a brief summary of the agreed key
6		Mr Coyne's"	6		activities to progress next steps"
7	Q.	What was the approach taken at the time to Mr Coyne's	7		Yes? Can you see that?
8	ų.	report? Did anyone investigate the concerns raised in	8	٨	Yes, I can.
9		Mr Coyne's report?	9		
		•		Q.	
10	Α.	Well, I presume, from the way that Dave, IT Dave Smith,	10		"Information security (SL&DK)"
11		replied to me at the time, that he didn't he thought	11		Do you know who that is a reference to: sue Lowther
12		that the approach to it and the conclusions were	12		perhaps?
13		inappropriate. I presume that he'd looked into what	13	A.	I would imagine it's Sue Lowther and Dave King.
14		Mr Coyne had said.	14	Q.	Okay, Dave King, okay:
15	Q.	Can we move forwards in time, please, and look, please,	15		" to conduct initial investigations and provide
16		at POL00326799, and start by looking at page 4, please.	16		terms of reference outlining remit and requirements to
17		This chain of emails sorry, if we can scroll down,	17		carry out a full investigation, (resource, timescales
18		please sent by Andy Hayward, and if we scroll up,	18		and any associated ancillary costs). (NB agreement by
19		please. Thank you, stop there.	19		all that with [Dave King] and our 'banking consultant',
20		In February 2010, from Andy Hayward to Mandy Talbot	20		we have far more expertise and knowledge than anyone
21		and, amongst others, you can you see that	21		else likely to pus for this initial piece of work).
22	A.	Yes, I can.	22		Then 3:
23	Q.	with the subject heading "Challenges to Horizon",	23		"Subject to the agreement of 2, conduct full
24		yes?	24		investigations into integrity issues, with conclusions/
25	A.		25		report to be provided. Once investigated and
		85			86
1		conclusions drawn, gain external verification to give	1		but, clearly, I'm cc'd on something I'm referring to it,
2		a level of 'external gravitas' to the response to these	2		so I must have been, but I can't remember the
3		challenges. (Recommend Ernst & Young as the most	3	Q.	Do you know what prompted a decision to conduct a "full
4		suitable partner to complete this [to be advised])."	4		investigation" into Horizon integrity issues?
5		Then if we scroll up, please:	5	A.	No.
6		"Can we make sure that Rob Wilson is kept appraised	6	Q.	If we just go back down to look at what the agreed
7			7		actions were said to be. Keep going, please. There,
8		Yes? Then scroll up a little further, please, just	8		stop.
9		to the first line of Mr Wilson's reply:	9		Under 2:
10		"If it is thought that there is a difficulty with	10		"Information security to conduct initial
11		Horizon then clearly the action in the memo is not only	11		investigations and provide terms of reference outlining
12		needed but it is imperative."	12		remit and requirements to carry out full investigation
13		Can you help us, there's a reference there to	13		"
14		a conference call having taken place on that day,	14		So it was going to be, it seems, a pre-investigation
15		26 February 2010. We haven't got a minute of it, and	15		to settle the terms of reference and remit of a full
16			16		
		this is the best evidence, I think, that we've got as to		٨	investigation, yes?
17		what was discussed and what happened. Can you recall	17	Α.	Yeah.
18		joining a conference call about Horizon integrity issues	18	Q.	3, then "conduct full investigation into integrity
19		in February 2010?	19		issues". Can you help us, what would have prompted
20	Α.	No. I was involved in loads of conference calls.	20		a decision to conduct a full investigation into
21		There's some weeks I was back-to-back on conference	- 71		integrity issues?

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calls all week but, what they were, I'm sorry, you know,

there is all sorts I can't remember from then. I can't

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remember being on a call about challenges to Horizon

you could ask me where I'd gone on holiday that year and

22  $\,$  **A.** Well, I don't know what prompted it. I can only assume

it must have been a response to that.

25 Q. Was such a full investigation carried out?

that, because of allegations being made in cases, that

		1 1 1/1
1	Δ.	I don't know

- 2 Q. You would know if one was, wouldn't you?
- 3 Α. Well, possibly. As I say, there are so many things that
- 4 were going on, so many reviews of different things, but
- 5 I can't remember one and I think the tone of what you
- 6 get further down from Rob Wilson seems to lead on to
- 7 kind of challenging the review.
- 8 Q. Yes, he says, "Plainly it's got to be done but", and
- 9 then he lists, I think, five buts, yes?
- 10 A. Yes, so I don't know -- I don't know if
- an investigation --11
- You know very well that no investigation was carried out 12 Q.
- 13 and, instead, what happened was you were asked to report
- 14 and provide a one-sided view, weren't you?
- A. Oh, no, so I was asked to -- I was asked to put the 15
- reasons for assurance in a context where a new Managing 16
- 17 Director had heard allegations, and my recollection is
- being asked to put together "Well, what's those other 18
- 19 reasons that -- why do management feel confident about
- 20 the system?" And that was a gathering of -- and it
- 21 wasn't an audit, it wasn't a testing of stuff. It was
- 22 gathering assertions of why -- what elements of the
- 23 training infrastructure, the call centre environment,
- 24 other things that are well documented in that report
- 25 were reasons that one might have confidence in the

  - Q. Scroll up, thank you. So the first line is:
    - "If it's thought there's a difficulty then not only
- 3 is a full investigation needed but it's imperative."
  - Then he sets out what I've described as five buts.
- 5 A. Yeah.

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- 6 Q. "The consequence will be that to commence or to continue 7 to proceed with any criminal proceedings will be
- 8 inappropriate."
  - That's But 1. You can read the rest of that
- 10 paragraph to yourself.
- 11 Paragraph 2: 12
  - "What is being suggested is that an internal investigation is conducted. That will be disclosable as
- 14 undermining evidence on the defence in the cases 15 proceeding through the courts."
- 16 That's But 2:
  - "Inevitably the defence will argue that if we are carrying out investigation, we do not have confidence in Horizon and, therefore, to continue to prosecute will be
- 20 an abuse of process", But 3.
- 21 "Alternatively, we could be asked to stay the
- 22 proceedings", But 4.
- 23 "The potential impact is much wider for the Post 24 Office, in that every office in the country will be seen
- 25 to be operating a compromised system with untold damage
  - 91

- system. That was what I was asked to put together and
- 2 what I did.
- 3 So you're probably right, there probably was no review on the back of this one and maybe it -- you know, 4
- further down the line when Dave came in and asked "I can 5
- 6 hear all this in the news, what's the other side of the
- 7 story?"
- 8 Q. You, according to this email chain, had been part of
- 9 a conference call --
- 10 Yeah. Α.
- 11 Q. -- the outcome of which was to set up a train of events
- 12 that would have led to a full investigation of Horizon's
- 13 integrity with external verification. Agreed?
- 14 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 15 Q. I'm asking you to help us: what happened to that
- 16 agreement?
- 17 A. I don't know. Sounds like nothing happened.
- Q. Can you help us as to why? Was it Mr Wilson's 18
- 19 intervention?
- 20 A. I presume so. I don't know.
- 21 Q. Did you understand Mr Wilson's intervention?
- 22 Well, looking at it now --
- 23 Q. If you scroll up to it, just to remind you.
- 24 A. Yes, let's see what was his intervention. Let's see it
- 25 again.

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- to the business", But 5.
  - Then scroll down, please:
  - "To continue prosecuting ... offenders knowing that
- 4 there is an ongoing investigation could also be
- 5 detrimental to the reputation of my team. If we were to
- 6 secure convictions in the knowledge that there was
- 7 an investigation, we would be open to criticism and
- 8 appeal to the Court of Appeal, who would be highly
- 9 critical of any prosecutor's decision to proceed in the
- 10 knowledge that there could be an issue with the
- evidence." 11
- 12 Is it those five things that stopped an independent
- 13 investigation in its tracks?
- 14 Α. I don't know. Probably.
- 15 Well, you've been party to a decision to carry out
- 16 an investigation that was going to be independently
- 17 verified. You must have thought "Well, hold on, why
- 18 isn't this happening? This is quite a big piece of
- 19 work. Horizon integrity would be on the line. Are we
- 20 going to do it or not"?
- 21 A. I think we've got so much -- in hind -- I mean, this is
- 22 massive, this whole topic of Horizon, obviously, in the
- 23 context of this Inquiry and what happened to people, but
- 24 there were so many things that were going on in changes
- 25 within the organisation, that this would have been one

of many things leading to possibilities of reviews for stuff.

My team and the Finance Service Centre, or Product and Branch Accounting, as it was called, probably at the time of this email, were constantly subject to reviews of different things, and so a meeting suggesting a review here, there would have been lots of meetings about lots of different reviews that were going on and, sadly, in the context of all of those different reviews going on, not everything went ahead. My team was relentlessly subject to reviews, ahead of pre-privatisation, ahead of efficiency reviews, continual headcount reduction targets, just relentless reviews that were going on in my team.

MR BEER: Sir, that's an hour or so gone. Can we take thesecond break until 12.20, please?

17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.

18 MR BEER: Thank you.

19 (12.09 pm)

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20 (A short break)

21 (12.20 pm)

22 MR BEER: Thank you, sir, good afternoon.

In my excitement, Mr Ismay, I went too fast through some of the Cleveleys material. Can we just go back a little bit and look at a few more documents on that.

1 Carol King, was she part of your department at that 2 time?

A. Not at that time. When I took over the Product and
 Branch Accounting team, I don't know, it was couple of
 years after that, she was part of my team then but not
 in 2004. I think I was managing the Branch Audit Team
 then and Carol wasn't part of that team.

8 Q. If we scroll up, we see at the top to of the page that9 this email chain was sent to you, she says:

10 "Rod

11 "As before.

"Cheers

13 "Carol."

14 A. Yeah.

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15 Q. It appears that Carol King asked was asked by you tosend her this correspondence, wasn't she?

17 A. Yeah, looks like it, yeah.

18 Q. That, late July 2004, was at the time that a settlementwas taking place, wasn't it, of the Cleveleys case?

20 A. It looks like settlement was going on. Well, no, the

settlement correspondence is March, in this email, so

22 that thing to me is three months later. I don't know

23 when the settlement was going on but that email was four

24 months later.

25~  $\,$   $\,$  Q.  $\,$  If we go back down the page, the part about

1 I've asked you so far about how you responded to the 2 Jason Coyne report --

3 A. Right, yes.

4 Q. -- and the assurance you took from Post Office's own IT?

5 **A.** Yes

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6 **Q.** Can we look at some documents at the time, please.

POL00158511. We can see from the top of the page there that this is a chain of emails which was eventually sent

9 to you in July 2004, yes?

10 A. Yes.

Q. If we look at the foot of the page, please. We can see an email from Carol King to Jim Cruise, who was the lawyer in the case, acting on behalf of the Post Office, and she says:

"I have read the notes and spoken to Jennifer Robson about this case and wonder if you could clarify something for us please? If we were to settle (and we are not stating at this point that we will) could we ask for this to be without prejudice and settle without admitting that Horizon was at fault. There have been a number of postmasters who have not been able to use the equipment though trained fully at the time of installation and it has frequently been used as an excuse for errors. We would not want this case to set a precedent for similar cases in the future."

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subpostmasters not having been able to use the equipment, despite being fully trained and using

equipment, despite being fully trained and using that as
 an excuse for errors and not wanting the Cleveleys case

4 to set a precedent for similar cases in the future, was

5 that a concern of yours?

A. Well, I don't know. I think -- I expect that me
 corresponding with Carol would have come about for the

same reasons as me looking at press cuttings and saying
to Dave "What's going on with these allegations here",

and, similarly, I probably said to Carol, because we

11 were -- well, she didn't report to me, we were based in

the same building, I probably said, "Well, I'm new, what

was this case? What was Cleveleys? Or what is

14 Cleveleys?"

15 Q. But weren't you involved, in July 2004, with taking the
 lead in getting a settlement agreed within the Post

17 Office?

18 A. I don't know, was I?

19 Q. I'm finding out at the moment why these questions were20 being asked in March 2004 about a concern that

21 settlement of the case might set a precedent. Was that

22 something you were concerned about?

23 **A.** I don't know. I don't know whether I was but I can see 24 from other correspondence that's related to this in the

25 packs that I've had, that there was a concern that

there'd been a lack of document retention and, if I'm referring to the right case, such that Post Office couldn't respond to something because there was no documentation going back, and it looks like it led to a request to Fujitsu to retain documentation for longer.

So me looking at it, it looks to me like, yeah, Post Office weren't wanting to set a precedent but, because there was a case where they'd got no documentation to refer to, to support the case they were making, not that they were confirming there had been a problem with the system. They just couldn't get the old documentation back

- 13 Q. If we go to the top of the page and just remember the14 date --
- 15 **A.** Yeah.

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- 16 Q. -- 26 July at 5.09.
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00142503. Can we see the19 same date, 26 July --
- 20 A. Yeah
- 21 Q. -- about half an hour later, yes --
- 22 A. Yeah.

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- 23 **Q.** -- 5.48 pm? An email from you, and just help us with
- 24 who all of the people are on the distribution list?
- 25 **A.** So the "To" list, so I think Donna Parker was the PA,
- 1 Goes to court next month.
  - "Mandy -- Peter Corbett is on holiday. I am now escalating it to Dave Miller ...
    - 2tony, please can you advise who is leading ...
    - "Carol, thanks for your correspondence ..."
    - I think that's the correspondence we just looked at:
  - "... please do not circulate this any further than is necessary than to support Dave and Group Legal with the case."
  - You were taking a coordinating role here, weren't you?
- A. Well, I think the email that's off the bottom of the 12 screen refers to the Finance Director not being there, 13 14 and what I've said earlier was I think I was forwarding 15 this to the Chief Operating Officer in the absence of 16 the Finance Director. Probably, if this was indeed 17 about a decision about making a settlement, I'd expect 18 that would have been something of the gravitas of going 19 up to an authority that would have been at a director
- 20 level to approve --21 **Q.** Where was the authority to settle level?
- 22 A. Well, I don't know but I would expect that something of
- 23 this significance -- and I've seen in some other
- 24 correspondence reference to -- which I can't remember
- 25 what the settlement amount was but I've seen some other 99

- 1 I think, to Dave Miller.
- 2 Q. He was a director?
- 3 A. So David Miller was Chief Operating Officer, I think, he4 was a director. I think Donna was his PA.
- 5 Q. Yes.
- A. Mandy, you know, in Legal; Tony, Head of Security; and
   Carol managing a team --
- 8 Q. We've discussed?
- 9 **A.** Yeah.
- 10 Q. The subject is the Cleveleys case?
- 11 A. Yeah.

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- 12 **Q.** You say:
- "Donna -- as discussed here is the correspondence rethe legal case.
- "The first arrow below contains a note from GroupLegal today ... This is counsel's opinion.
- 17 "The other arrow sections below contain some more18 background from Carol King ...
- "In summary we suspended Mrs Wolstenholme. We claimed for the value of these losses ... she counterclaimed ... Within her claim was an 'experts
- opinion' which was unfavourable concerning Horizon andFujitsu.
  - "We have lodged £25,000 in court but she has no legal representation and is pursuing the full amount.
- 1 correspondence that says that it was over 100,000, and
- 2 I'm sure that would have been something that would have
- 3 been requiring a director to sign that off. I don't
- 4 know what the delegated authority levels were but
- 5 I think it would have required that.
- Q. Again, why were you taking a coordinating or centralrole here in this case?
- 8 A. Well, I think this came to me because the Finance9 Director wasn't there.
- 10 Q. You say at the end:
- 11 "... do not circulate this any further than is
- 12 necessary to support Dave and Group Legal ..."
- 13 Why was that?
- 14 A. Well, I don't know why I've said that in there. I think
- 15 probably there's a sensitivity to names and not wanting
- 16 wider audiences to be aware of, you know -- take even
- 17 Mrs Wolstenholme's position in there. I doubt we'd have
- been wanting to have a name of somebody in wide
- 19 circulation around the organisation in respect to them.
- 20 **Q.** Is this effectively you seeking authority for
- 21 settlement?
- 22 A. No, I think I'm escalating it up -- I wouldn't --
- 23 I didn't have a budget. I managed the -- I think, at
- 24 that time, I was managing the branch Audit Team, so my
- 25 budget would have been the payroll costs of the branch

- 1 Audit Team, and the costs of running its database.
- 2 I wouldn't have had a budget and be responsible for the
- 3 settlement they'd made in a case. So I'd be escalating
- 4 this to somebody who would be the budget holder for such
- 5 a case
- 6  $\,$  Q. Mr Ismay, you appreciate that I'm investigating why your
- 7 footprint --
- 8 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 9 Q. -- or your fingerprints are on a number of Horizon
- 10 integrity cases --
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 **Q.** -- across time?
- 13 A. Oh, yes, yeah.
- 14  $\,$  Q. And I'm asking at the moment why are you here? Why are
- 15 you involved here?
- 16 A. Well, I think for the reasons that I've articulated
- 17 there.
- 18 Q. Okay, can we move to a different series of cases then
- and look at POL00184236. Look at page 2, please. We're
- in the following year. An email from Mandy Talbot to,
- 21 amongst other people, you -- can you see that --
- 22 A. Yes, I can.
- 23 Q. -- under the heading "Challenge to Horizon" --
- 24 A. Yeah.

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25 Q. -- can you see that?

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- 1 Investigation Team with me, and I think at the time of
- 2 this case -- so I wasn't close to the detail of
- 3 particular cases but my understanding -- and I realise
- 4 this changes in light of what other attendees at this
- 5 hearing have said -- I understood, and it was shared
- 6 with me in the witness -- in the pack for the previous
- 7 hearing, that there was a branch in this correspondence
- 8 where the Auditors went in and the safe door was open,
- 9 the doors to the branch were open and a whole chain of
  - events which somebody has now said "That was a template,
- 11 I shouldn't have used that template for it".
- 12 But I was in a position where I'd got the
  - Investigations and Audit Team reporting to me, they were
- 14 saying they'd had reasons for going to a particular
- branch, they'd had findings when they were at the branch
- and then, suddenly, we were on the receiving end of
- 17 a counterclaim, when there was lots of evidence or
- 18 evidence that the Post Office believe was evidence of
- 19 there having been a loss in the branch.
- 20 Q. Mr Ismay, can I just try and cut through things and ask:
- 21 why were you being asked, through the distribution of
- 22 this email chain to you, to contribute to the
- 23 suggestions made by Mandy Talbot?
- 24 A. Possibly because Tony Utting reported to me at that
- 25 time, who is in that chain. So it would be quite common 103

- 1 A. Yeah, I can see that, yes.
- 2 Q. Mrs Talbot summarises the facts of the Castleton case;
- 3 can you see that?
- 4 A. I can see this is about the Castleton case, yes.
- 5  $\,$  **Q.** Then if we scroll down, a summary of Mr Bajaj's case;
- 6 can you see that?
- 7 A. Yes, I can see that.
- 8 Q. If we scroll on, please, some "Issues":
- 9 "In each case, the postmasters are challenging the
- validity of data provided by Horizon and the cases
- 11 became litigious before that evidence could be properly
- 12 investigated."
  - Then under "Suggestions" -- do you see that?
- 14 A. Yes.

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- 15 Q. If we scroll down, please, to number 5:
- 16 "Identify current numbers of [Post Office] or
- 17 Fujitsu staff who can provide statements in the two
- 18 current cases which (a) validate the system (b) explain
- the Horizon process from end-to-end and (c) explain why
- each and every point made by the Defendants is
- 21 irrelevant or can be explained."
- 22 Again, why were you involved at this stage?
- 23 A. So I think at this point, when I joined Post Office
- I took over a team that included the Branch Audit Team,
- for a brief period of time I'd also got the

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- 1 that somebody would be cc'd -- if you were in a bit of
- 2 correspondence, your boss might be cc'd in it as well --
- 3 Q. So a lawyer is raising two cases in which subpostmasters
- 4 have separately --
- 5 A. Right.
- 6 Q. -- made accusations --
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 Q. -- about the reliability of the Horizon system --
- 9 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 10 Q. -- and she says "We need to identify people in Post
- 11 Office or Fujitsu who can explain why each and every
- point they've made is irrelevant or can be explained".
- 13 **A.** Yes
- 14 Q. Is that the approach that Post Office took, generally?
- 15 A. Well, I think --
- 16 Q. If somebody raised a problem --
- 17 A. Right, yeah.
- 18 Q. -- we need to explain why it's irrelevant or can be
- 19 explained away?
- 20 A. I'm not sure that that was the case but, clearly, I can
- see in hindsight we didn't listen and I've said in my
- 22 statement there was a failure of listening to --
- 23 Q. Failure of?
- 24 A. Organisationally, a failure of listening to the
- 25 allegations that were being made.

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- Q. Would you agree that the way that that's formulated inparagraph 5 is particularly close minded or deaf?
- A. That does look close minded but the -- but people in the
   organisation, just like my conversation with Dave Smith,
- 5 had got a lot of misplaced -- perhaps misplaced
- 6 confidence, misplaced faith in Horizon, but lots of
- 7 things about the whole way it had been designed, rolled
- 8 out, tested, test environments, lots of stuff that would
- 9 have been reasons that made the organisation and
- 10 individuals in it more assured about the system.
- 11 Q. This formulation in paragraph 5, do you agree,
- 12 presupposes that the Horizon system had no issues or
- 13 bugs within it, doesn't it?
- 14 A. Well, it's looking for people who can provide statements
- to validate the system. Well, yes, so, to -- so, in
- point C -- I guess point C does say that, yes. Yeah.
- 17 Q. How did the Post Office, in fact, satisfy itself that
- the system had no bugs in it and why each and every
- 19 point made by defendants was either irrelevant or could
- 20 be explained away?
- 21 A. I would think either because, if an allegation about the
- 22 system was quite clear, then maybe that could be
- 23 explained as not an issue for certain reasons. Often,
- 24 I think the response was, well, Horizon must be wrong,
- and it wasn't pinpointing, well, what is it that's 105
- 1 system, it works fine for me", that, possibly wrongly,
- 2 amplified itself to lead to a view that, well, the
- 3 majority of cases where there's an allegation about the
- 4 system -- it can't be right, you know --
- 5 Q. Is the truth of the matter --
- 6 A. I can see that's wrong but there was that amplification
- 7 of lots of people saying, "The system works for me",
  - many, many.

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- 9 Q. Is the truth of the matter revealed by the sentence two10 paragraphs above, "Suggestions", where Ms Talbot says:
- 11 "If the challenge is not met, the ability of Post
- 12 Office to rely on Horizon for data will be compromised
- and the future prosperity of the network compromised."
- 14 That's an irrelevant consideration, isn't it, in
- 15 whether or not we investigate fairly and impartially
- 16 whether there is substance in the complaints made?
- 17 **A.** Yeah --
- 18 Q. Do you agree?
- 19 A. A case should be looking at the individual in the case
- and hearing what's going on in there. That should be
- 21 separate to the specifics of that case. Commercially,
- the fact is an organisation would be concerned about
- 23 that but that should have been kind of separate to the
- 24 case, yeah.
- 25  $\,$  **Q.** Bringing that into account is the tail wagging the dog,

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wrong? So my involvement in awareness of cases was
often more about the high value cases, so we'd be
talking like six-digit cases that were going through,
and we'd have a belief that there were indicators of -suspicions that had caused Auditors to go out to

suspicions that had caused Auditors to go out to
a branch, were often what were confessions at branches

7 when the Auditors went out there.

And, as I've said in my statement, I would talk to subpostmasters and representatives of subpostmasters a lot -- and I know there will be listeners who don't believe what I'm about to say -- but I felt passionately about subpostmasters and did a lot to try to make stuff easy for subpostmasters to do their work. I was absolutely passionate about it. And, as I've said in my statement, I'd got people from the NFSP and other multiple partners who were confident that they were

users of the system, their staff were users of the
 system, and they weren't experiencing the issues that --

they weren't experiencing the issues that were being raised or feeling that there were issues to be raised.

So this may be wrong and this, just like I could have had misplaced confidence in what Mr Smith was saying to me, but when you've got representatives, trade union representatives of subpostmasters and individual subpostmasters saying, "I don't have a problem with the

- 1 isn't it?
- 2 A. Well, it does look like that, yeah.
- 3 Q. Can we see what was done about this and look at
- 4 POL00142539, remembering we were just then at the end of
- November, 23 November 2005; we're now in the early part
- 6 of December 2005.
- 7 **A.** Okay.
- 8  $\,$  **Q.** This is a record of a meeting in Coton House in Rugby;
- 9 can you see that?
- 10 A. Yes, I can. Yeah.
- 11 Q. Or it's an agenda for such a meeting.
- 12 **A.** Right
- 13 Q. Can you see, second down, Marie Cockett?
- 14 **A.** Yes.
- 15 Q. Did she report to you?
- 16 A. She didn't at that time. When I took over Product and
- 17 Branch Accounting, which I think was the following year,
- she was a report to me then but I think I took over
- 19 Product and Branch Accounting in March or April or June
- 20 2006, I think. So she wasn't -- so I don't think she
- was a report to me then because I didn't have P&BA then.
- 22 Q. Graham Ward reported to Tony Utting, didn't he?
- 23 A. Yes. I think so, yes. Yeah.
- 24 Q. Can you see the purpose of the meeting is set out under
- 25 "Background", under the heading "Horizon Integrity"?

A. Yes.

Q. "There have been several recent cases where subpostmasters have cited errors in the Horizon system as explanations for discrepancies in their accounts -either as part of a challenge against the termination of their contract or challenging the right to recover error notices/transaction corrections from their remuneration.

"Recently, a letter was published in The SubPostmaster asking readers to send in details of incidents where they believe Horizon caused errors in their accounts. Lawyers acting on behalf of a subpostmaster currently in dispute with the Post Office have written stating they are contemplating a joint action on behalf of number of current and former subpostmasters. This would challenge the accounting integrity of the Horizon system and Post Office's right to make transaction corrections and recover resulting debts based on Horizon data.

"In one past case (Cleveleys) Post Office settled out of court following an adverse report on Horizon's potential to cause errors from an expert appointed by the court. Fujitsu [said] that the report was not well founded, but Post Office and Fujitsu were not able to persuade the expert to change it."

Then if we go down, please, "Meeting purpose": 109

A. Well, it looks like it wants to look at that. I'm
 surprised that some of the roles aren't clear.

surprised that some of the roles aren't clear, though,

3 where it says who leads on particular things, because

4 I would have thought that was clear.

5 Q. But it's asking a series of sensible questions, isn't

6 it?

- 7 A. Go back up to it.
- 8 Q. Yes, please. Bottom of page 3, please.
- 9 A. Thank you. Yes, yeah, yeah.
- 10 Q. It's saying, "What information do we need from Fujitsu?"
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. "What data, what analysis, what reports? What witness
- 13 statements are required?" It's talking about
- 14 an independent expert.
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. So it's not the close-minded approach that we saw
- 17 previously, is it?
- **A.** No. No.
- **Q.** Were any of the people on page 1 required to report back
- 20 to you? If we just go back to page 1, please, at the
- 21 top.
- 22 A. I don't know if people were required to report back to
- 23 me.
- 24 Q. Would you expect any of them to report back on a meeting
- 25 like this to you, given your involvement, in particular,

"To review the above issues and recommend ...

"1. Who manages dealings with subpostmasters and their lawyers relating to actual or potential civil cases? What processes are required to identify as early as possible those cases that [have] a Horizon aspect? Who needs to be involved, and how they will be coordinated?

"2. Are new processes required with Fujitsu to obtain data, analysis, reports or witness statements for civil cases?

"3. Is there a need for an independent expert to be appointed in advance who could on request provide evidence to the court in such cases? If so what exactly would the expert's role be, what qualifications and qualities are needed, how would we go about appointing one? What preliminary work would be required to get the expert 'up to speed'?

"4. Who will act as client briefing external lawyers ..."

Then over the page:

"5. What are the budget implications ..."

Would you agree that, on the face of this, that's a rather open minded and fair approach to the issue of how do we respond to complaints about Horizon and its integrity that we are now facing?

in Cleveleys and the Castleton case?

A. Well, I think my involvement in those was not as a prime lead on those cases. So Cleveleys, I've said I have seen press cuttings that led me to ask questions to Dave about IT systems, and so what was this case that was raising these things, and what do you think about the IT expert's opinion that's come back on that?

So, yes, I did ask about that case and the other case, but that was two cases and there were lots of cases that were going on and I was doing it lots of other things. So this is significant, the Horizon integrity, but Horizon integrity was a matter for the IT Team to make sure that the system was robust. So there would be representatives who might have been in teams that I would manage who would go to meetings now and again, again, as subject matter experts to contribute to something, but it wouldn't necessarily mean that the line manager needed to get a report of every meeting that everybody went to.

So, in the big context of where we are today, yes, it looks like something that should have been reported to me at the time. With lots of people going to lots of meetings, it wasn't the case that one would expect everybody to report back to their line manager about there they'd been to. So in the context of where we

- 1 were back then, I'm not sure whether it would have been
- 2 something that should have been reported back to me.
- 3 Q. Can we look at the minutes of the meeting, please.
- 4 POL00119895. We can see the attendees that in fact went
- 5 to the meeting.

- 6 A. Right, yeah, right.
- 7 Q. Were any of those in your team?
- 8 A. Well, as I say, at some point, which I think was later
- 9 than this, Marie became part of -- or I took over the
- 10 team that included Marie. I think possibly Alvin was
- 11 probably part of my team at that time, I think.
- 12 **Q.** Thank you. Can we go to page 4, please. I'm not going
- to read all of the minutes, apart from paragraph 4:
  - "Appointing an external expert is likely to give the
- best results in court. The expert will need to be able
- 16 to testify both on overall status of Horizon and related
- 17 systems and on the analysis of data relating to
- 18 individual cases ... may be needed for the Castleton
- 19 case after 7 February. Therefore discussions with
- 20 Fujitsu should be initiated on the role, terms of
- 21 reference and access to Fujitsu staff and information
- 22 for such expert advice should be obtained from Peter
- 23 Corbett on the desirability of using our external
- 24 auditors to provide such an expert, even though such
- 25 a person may be seen as less independent by a court."
  - 113
- 1 **Q.** Yes, apologies for the number of documents. In the
- 2 Inquiry, we like to give people full disclosure.
- 3 A. Yeah
- 4 Q. When he gave evidence, Mr Utting said that "Mr Ismay
- 5 [you] should have approached Peter Corbett, the Finance
- 6 Director, on where to go with this list of actions". So
- 7 we asked him --
- 8 A. Right.
- 9 Q. -- "Who should have made these actions happen?", and he
- 10 said you. Is that right?
- 11 A. Well, I wasn't at the meeting. I didn't manage most of
- the people, so no.
- 13 **Q.** Why would he think it was you who had responsibility on
- 14 where to go with these actions? Who should make them
- 15 happen?
- 16 A. Well, I don't know. I could only imagine that, because
- 17 I reported to the Finance Director, Peter, who's named
- 18 earlier, that perhaps he thought I'd be best able to
- 19 explain these to Peter. But I wasn't in that meeting
- 20 itself, and I don't know why it didn't just go from
- 21 whoever led that meeting to Peter. I don't know.
- 22 **Q.** His evidence to the Inquiry was that it was up to you to
- 23 make the actions from this December 2005 meeting happen,
- 24 in particular in relation to the obtaining of an expert
- 25 report.

- 1 Then "Specific Actions", can you see number 5:
- 2 "KB ..."
- 3 I think that's Keith Baines, yes?
- 4 **A**. Um --
- 5 Q. "... to discuss the need for and [terms of reference] of
- 6 an external report with Fujitsu."
- 7 A. Right. Yeah.
- 8 Q. Was the result of this meeting fed back to you --
- 9 A. I don't know.
- 10 **Q**. -- ie --

15

- 11 A. I think there's another bit of correspondence that does
- 12 suggest it was but I'm not sure. I've got so many
- documents in my head, I'm not sure.
- 14 Q. In any event, in late 2005, were you aware of a decision
  - having been taken that the appointment of an expert who
- 16 was external to Post Office and Fujitsu, who was
- 17 independent, was likely to give the best results in
- 18 court and should, therefore, be commissioned?
- 19 A. I don't know. I can't remember that. But I wouldn't
- 20 dispute that, that an independent expert would be
- 21 an appropriate thing to carry gravitas and independence
- 22 in a court case. Whether I knew that at the time, I'm
- sorry, I've got so many documents and so many things in
- 24 my mind, I'm not sure whether I did or I didn't, but it
- 25 would make sense.

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- 1 A. Well, I genuinely can't remember that.
- 2 Q. Did you do anything to take any of these actions, and,
- 3 in particular, the obtaining of an expert independent
- 4 report about Horizon, forwards?
- 5 A. I can't remember doing like that but it looks like --
- 6 well, no. I mean, Gareth is not an independent expert,
- 7 is he, so no.
- 8 Q. Do you bury the actions in order to avoid Horizon coming
- 9 under scrutiny?
- 10 **A.** No.
- 11 Q. Why wasn't this one taken forwards?
- 12 A. I don't know. I can only say like I've said before,
- that there were so many, many things going on.
- 14 Q. Were you concerned that an external report might
- 15 actually uncover problems with Horizon --
- 16 A. No, I don't think so.
- 17 Q. -- that the Horizon edifice might start to crumble?
- 18 A. No, I don't think so and I think, if there was doubt
- 19 about the system, then it would be right to have had
- 20 somebody independent to look at it, so --
- 21 Q. So why wasn't somebody independent asked to look at it?
- 22 A. I don't know. But I don't think that I -- I evidently
- 23 didn't take these things forward but I'm not sure that
- 24 I should have been -- that I was the person who should
- 25 be. This was a thing about Horizon system, there were

1		IT representatives who were on that list of attendees,	1		Talbot, POL00113909. If we scroll down, please, and
2		presumably somebody at IT had convened the thing in the	2		keep scrolling. So we can see there that's the end of
3		first place. I don't know why they didn't take that	3		her email, I think, dated 9 December 2006. If we go
4		forward and I don't know why Tony said it was for me,	4		back to the first page of the email. I'm afraid it's in
5		who wasn't at this meeting, to be the one to take	5		a hard copy. If we go down, please.
6		forward actions arising from a meeting that I wasn't at.	6		Thanks. 9 did I say December? I meant November.
7	Q.	You did report to Peter Corbett, didn't you?	7		2006. Can you see you're copied in there?
8	A.	Yes, I did. I reported to Peter Corbett.	8	A.	Yes, I can, yeah.
9	Q.	He's right that, if you were to approach anyone for	9	Q.	Yes. She says she's received some very good news about
10		authority, it would be Peter Corbett, the Finance	10		the case?
11		Director, wouldn't it?	11	A.	Yeah.
12	A.	If I was approaching somebody, I would approach Peter	12	Q.	Yes?
13		but I don't know why it's thought that I should be the	13	A.	Yes.
14		person who was taking this forward.	14	Q.	I asked you about this last time but, if we can just
15	Q.	Thank you. That can come down.	15		remind ourselves of my questions and your answers, and
16		At the same time that this was going on, the	16		the point we're going to come to in a moment is we
17		Castleton litigation was rumbling on, wasn't it?	17		didn't have your reply last time to this email; we now
18	A.	That was in '05 or '06.	18		do.
19	Q.	Yes.	19		Can we have a look, please, at INQ00001064, page 10,
20	A.	Right.	20		please. You will see that I'm quoting on the left-hand
21	Q.	Across this period.	21		side page, page 37 on the internal pagination, line 18,
22	A.	Right.	22		from this email:
23	Q.	Now, you've already answered quite a lot of questions	23		"That last line, the last two lines of that
24		about the Castleton case and, in particular, I think on	24		paragraph, "the benefit of having a judgment is that the
25		the last occasion, I asked you about an email from Mandy 117	25		Post Office will be able to use this to demonstrate 118
1		things to the network and it will be of tremendous use	1		it?"
2		in convincing other postmasters to think twice about	2		Then you say:
3		their allegations"	3		"I don't recall that being the feeling but, clearly,
4		Then I ask:	4		that is the that's a fair interpretation/description
5					of the sort of tone of those two lines that you've
6		" does that reflect your understanding of the	5		
		" does that reflect your understanding of the Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in	6		referred to"
7		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"	6 7		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank
8		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:	6 7 8		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.
		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However,	6 7 8 9		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at
8		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is	6 7 8 9 10		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit
8 9		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that	6 7 8 9 10 11		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the
8 9 10		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is	6 7 8 9 10		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit
8 9 10 11		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."	6 7 8 9 10 11		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?
8 9 10 11 12	A.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.	6 7 8 9 10 11 12	A.	Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.
8 9 10 11 12 13	A. Q.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?" You said: "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant." Yes, yeah. You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	A. Q.	Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?
8 9 10 11 12 13 14		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant.	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15		Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?" You said: "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant." Yes, yeah. You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Q.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant.	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q. A.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant.  Right, okay. Right.	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Q. A.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant. Right, okay. Right.  I carry on:	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your recommendations your closing paragraph below captured
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Q. A.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant.  Right, okay. Right.  I carry on:  "It's again suggesting that the result from a [civil] case can be weaponised, isn't it?"  You say:	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your recommendations your closing paragraph below captured it very well."  You say:  "This should be a considerable addition to our
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q. A. Q.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant. Right, okay. Right.  I carry on:  "It's again suggesting that the result from a [civil] case can be weaponised, isn't it?"  You say:  "Yes."	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay? Yes. It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your recommendations your closing paragraph below captured it very well."  You say:  "This should be a considerable addition to our armoury in responding to the number of other cases that
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Q. A. Q.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?" You said: "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant." Yes, yeah. You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant. Right, okay. Right. I carry on: "It's again suggesting that the result from a [civil] case can be weaponised, isn't it?" You say: "Yes." I say:	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay?  Yes.  It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your recommendations your closing paragraph below captured it very well."  You say:  "This should be a considerable addition to our armoury in responding to the number of other cases that may have been stirred up by Mr Castleton's letters into
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q. A. Q.	Post Office's approach to Mr Castleton's case in general?"  You said:  "It doesn't reflect my recollection of it. However, the language that's used in that, I would agree, is similar to the language that's used in the thing that you've shown me that's four or five years later and is not pleasant."  Yes, yeah.  You're cross-referring to the Misra "bandwagon" email there and saying that the language used is not pleasant. Right, okay. Right.  I carry on:  "It's again suggesting that the result from a [civil] case can be weaponised, isn't it?"  You say:  "Yes."	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22		Then if we scroll on, please, and then again. Thank you, I think that was the end of it.  Can we turn, please, to POL00158577. Can we look at the foot of the page, please, and just scroll to a bit of the next page, the Mandy Talbot email of the 9 November 2006, "I have received some very good news", et cetera, okay? Yes. It's the same email. If we go to the top of the first page, you replied:  "Mandy I would also support your recommendations your closing paragraph below captured it very well."  You say:  "This should be a considerable addition to our armoury in responding to the number of other cases that

other agents writing in reply to him and suggesting more cases. Thanks, Rod."

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So, firstly, you were an important voice in giving Mandy Talbot instructions in the case, weren't you?

- 5 A. I wouldn't give Mandy instructions but I've fed back in 6 a way that I'm not proud of, looking it that reply, but 7 I would not be giving Mandy instructions.
- 8 Q. You say that you support her recommendations, don't you?
- 9 A. Well, there's a difference between supporting and 10 instructing somebody. So Mandy must have made a proposal about something and I've agreed with it. 11
- 12 You were an enthusiastic adopter of her advice that the Q. 13 case should be weaponised to use against others, weren't 14 vou?
- A. I think we believed that, when there were shortages 15 16 found at audit, possibly wrongly, my belief, from what 17 Auditors were saying to me that they'd found, was that, 18 actually, there was a genuine theft of something. So --
- 19 Q. When I suggested on the last occasion that Mrs Talbot 20 was seeking to use the result, weaponise it for other 21 subpostmasters and make them wary of taking the Post 22 Office on, I obviously had no idea that you would say 23 that it would be an addition to your armoury; that's how 24 you viewed it, didn't you?
- 25 Α. Well, yeah, I mean, that's what I've said. Yeah. Yeah.
- 1 I've made here, now I can see that, which I couldn't 2 remember when we spoke before, and say, well, neither of 3 us said something very nice there.
- 4 Q. You wanted to use Mr Castleton's case as something to be 5 used to suppress complaints from other people who were 6 having trouble with Horizon, didn't you?
  - A. I understood in this case -- and I've hesitated to use the complete narrative out of the witness statement that was shared with me before -- but I understood in this case that the safe doors were open, the office doors were open and somebody came back in a state into the office there, and that there'd been all sorts of audit satisfaction that money had been stolen. So, in hindsight, that may have been totally wrong and what's been said by the person who had written that witness statement suggests that it was not a reliable witness statement to have been put. But that was the kind of stuff that was influencing my perspective, where we'd got this particular case in this item here.

And, I mean, you may not agree with me but that context of Auditors went to a branch because things -there was some suspicion that led them to go there and when they found all the doors open and the things that were in that statement, that would reinforce, "Well, probably there was a theft had happened", and so,

Q. Why did you view the Post Office as having an armoury to 1 2 be used against subpostmasters?

3 Well, I don't know why I've used that language there. A.

4 That's not pleasant language but I've said --

Q. The last time you were criticising Mandy Talbot for 5 6 using unpleasant language and, far from you doing that 7 at the time, you gleefully adopted it, didn't you?

8 Well, clearly, I have in there and I can't -- I couldn't 9 remember having said -- but you've produced this email 10 and I did. So I'm sorry, I'm not proud of what's in

11 that email but I felt not proud of what you'd shown me 12 before of what other people were saying, and now,

13 evidently, I've said something similar.

14 Q. Were your answers, that I've just read to you, on the 15 last occasion truthful, where you suggested that 16 Mrs Talbot was being unpleasant and that you rather 17 disagreed with what she was suggesting?

18 Sorry, what do you mean there?

19 Well, you said "Well, where Mandy Talbot is speaking 20 about using this case against other subpostmasters" --

21 A. Right, right.

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22 -- "to put them off from taking us on, that was 23 unpleasant".

24 A. Yes, that sounded like that and I couldn't remember the 25 reply that I'd made here and, in light of the reply that

perhaps wrongly in the whole context of it, that was the context of what was in my mind at the time and, because 2 Auditors would also say, "We've had confessions in one 4 of these visits but later on, months down the line, 5 somebody retracted a confession", that wrongly, perhaps, was amplifying itself into my head to think, "Well, if allegations are being made, it's a change of response late in the day", and perhaps is an inappropriate response, and I and others doubted the validity of those 10 allegations that were being made.

11 In hindsight, we should have been listening to them. 12 It was probably a wrong context but I and others in 13 management were operating on a context where Auditors 14 went to branches because there was some suspicion and 15 the statements that they were getting from them 16 reinforced that suspicion --

17 Q. Who was responsible for signing off the expenditure of

18 very high levels of legal costs on civil litigation at 19 this time?

20 A. I don't know but I would expect that would have been up 21 to a legal director at Board level.

22 Q. There were costs that had been incurred of some £300,000 23 on the Post Office's side --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- to seek to recover a debt of £25,000-odd. We've

- heard previously from Alan Cook that it would have been the Network Director -- he wrongly named Paula Vennells as being the relevant Network Director at that time -is it right that it would be the Network Director that would be responsible for signing off the expenditure of legal costs, to your understanding?
- A. Well, I don't know who was. I would have had expected it would have been somebody in the legal line, who would have been responsible for signing legal expenses with something that was of big magnitude. They may well have consulted other people but I would have expected somebody at the legal line to sign off.
- 13 Q. Did the lawyers always have a client, ie a non-lawyer,14 as somebody that gave them instructions?
- 15 A. I don't know.
- 16 Q. Were you ever that client?
- 17 A. No. I wasn't a client -- I wasn't giving lawyers
  18 instructions. We debated instruction quite a lot in the
  19 last hearing. My understanding is that the lawyers
  20 would have been defining what was going on in taking
  21 forward these cases, based on the evidence that had come
  22 out of audits and been submitted to them, as to whether
- it was right to take a case forward or not.
  Q. Just as a point of information, if we scroll down,
- 25 please, we can see, at this is time, November 2006, that 125
- smiles in the room, which tends to suggest that people might share my view that we have a truncated afternoon. **MR BEER:** No, they were thinking about an entirely different

thing, sir!

Mr Ismay, can we begin, please, where we left off,
which is about delegated authority for the management of

legal claims and settlement authorities and incurment of legal costs, by looking at POL00294897, please.

This is a freestanding minute of 14 October 2011 and it's a request for delegated authority, as regards costs of legal action, and it says, "We" -- the context of who the "we" is isn't completely clear but it says:

"We request POL IC approval ..."

What would POL IC mean?

- 15 A. That would mean Post Office Limited's Investment16 Committee.
- 17 Q. So who was on the Investment Committee?
- 18 A. I don't know who was on the Investment Committee but
  19 I think it probably would have been the Finance
- 20 Director. I think there would have been a -- one of the
- 21 business partners in Finance, sort of a -- somebody who
- would communicate and kind of challenge budget holders.
- 23 **Q.** I see.

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- 24 A. Yeah, and some of the senior management.
- 25  $\,$  **Q.** "We request [Post Office Investment Committee] approval

- 1 Richard Parker was the acting Network Director.
- 2 A. Okay. Right.
- 3 Q. Would he be responsible, to your understanding, for4 signing off the expenditure of large legal fees?
- A. I'm sorry, I don't know. Again, I would have thought
   that the Legal Team would have been responsible for
   signing off large legal fees but I don't know whether
   Richard would or not. I don't know.
- 9 MR BEER: Thank you.

Sir, it's 1.10 now, might we break until 2.00 pm, please?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Where do we think we're going this
 afternoon, Mr Beer? Because I want to be frank with
 everyone: yesterday took it out of me and I have no
 intention of sitting beyond our normal finishing time on
 a Friday which is between 3.00 at 3.30. I just wanted
 everybody to know that.

MR BEER: Sir, I've given that information to some of the
 representatives who might want to ask questions already,
 so they can calibrate their questions accordingly.

21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you.

22 (1.09 pm)

23 (The Short Adjournment)

24 (2.00 pm)

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25 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** As I walked in, Mr Beer, there were

for delegated authority to [Kevin Gilliland] ..."

Very careful over the pronunciation there, I understand I have mispronounced it before:

"... to approve the initiation of legal action and subsequent legal costs in the defence of challenges made by Shoosmiths. These challenges are on behalf of former subpostmasters who have been dismissed for financial irregularities and who have challenged the integrity of the Horizon system in their defence. Post Office is at an early stage of action. However, costs of defence for the current 'Letters before action' are estimated at [X], current upper estimate of costs, should more cases proceed, is [X]."

Then "Background":

"Throughout the last 10 years, the Horizon accounting system has been subject to a number of unfounded criticisms in the national press. It has also faced questions in the Houses of Parliament and allegations in court by former subpostmasters and their legal defence teams. Post Office has consistently won its prosecutions, and presiding judges have made statements which had been expected to deter further baseless allegations, however the challenges continue to be made."

Then under "Current situation", second paragraph: 128

"[Post Office] had around 20 cases which it wished to take to court where the defence blamed Horizon. [Post Office] is confident that Horizon is not at fault, however, some of the predicted legal costs outweigh the debts being pursued. [The Post Office] could not economically justify individual cases but to abandon such cases risked giving unwarranted credence to the JFSA's allegations.

"The counterclaims have now brought these to a head. Post Office Legal now has to defend onerous request from Shoosmiths and consider its response."

Then underneath "Steering Group":

"[The Post Office] has now established a steering group chaired by Rod Ismay and involving representatives from legal, IT, Network and Security, with reference to Press Office and other teams as considered necessary."

Over the page, please:

"The terms of reference [second paragraph] of the group are as follows:

"To propose to the defined business decision makers and subsequently manage, a coordinated litigation plan to address existing challenges and deter future challenges in the most pragmatic and efficient manner. This group to review the status of the overall response and be empowered to make decisions on tactical matters." 129

So there were quite a few things, there's other documents, that one would be quite surprised that I'd be called to lead a group like this.

- Q. Were you equipped to lead a steering committee to run the strategy for litigation?
- 6 A. No.

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- 7 Q. Did you run the steering group?
- 8 A. It looks like I was put forward and probably started 9 something here but I think I pretty quickly slipped out 10 of it and other people took this thing forward, as I've seen from lots of other documents. I don't think that 11 12 I did this for very long.

- 13 Q. Do you remember what you did when you were the leader or 14 chairman of the steering group for litigation?
- 15 A. I can't remember specifically what I was doing in those 16 forums but I do know that when we had the -- what was it 17 called -- the letter of action that came in from 18 Shoosmiths, I think I was approached for 19 an understanding of what were the cases that were 20 involved in it because my team, where a case had gone 21 through and there may have been, rightly or wrongly, 22 whatever you call it, a debt that was being chased, 23 often my team would have got the more complete summary 24 of historic cases.

Whereas Legal were focused on cases that were live 131

Were you chosen to chair this steering group? 1

- A. It looks like it, yeah.
- 3 Q. Do you know why you were chosen to chair the steering 4 group to deter future challenges to Horizon?
- 5 A. Well, I think because I've seemed to have had
- 6 an involvement at various points and an understanding of
- 7 the whole chain of events, and there was quite a rapid
- 8 turnover of people in different departments and, for
- 9 better or worse, I seem to have been a person who's been
- 10 there through the whole chain of events, whereas most
- 11 other functions, staff left and joined quite rapidly and
- 12 that kind of corporate memory was lost in many
- 13 functions.
- 14 Q. Or was it because you, as we've seen in 2005/2006 and 15 again through your report in 2010, were regarded as 16 a pair of hands who would always defend Horizon on
- 17 behalf of the Post Office?
- 18 A. Well, no, I think I was a common person, as I've said, 19 because of that kind of common knowledge through the 20 whole thing. There's some other stuff that you've got
- 21 as documents that sort of challenge -- like, where it
- 22 said this person needs putting through his paces, there
- 23 were quite a few things that I had as feedback that
- 24 I wasn't a great chair of meetings and that I'd ramble 25
  - on and drone on about things.

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1 and future, sometimes the history of what cases happened 2 a few years ago would come to my team because we've got

3 a record of former subpostmasters, and I think that

4 would have influenced me being invited to some of these

5 things because of that corporate knowledge that was more

6 complete in my team than some others teams.

- 7 Q. At this time, 2011, were you still maintaining the line 8 set out in your August 2010 Horizon report that Horizon --9
- 10 A. I think --
- 11 Q. -- integrity was robust --
- 12 A. Yes, I think I was, yes.
- 13 -- and its data could be relied on?
- 14 A. Yes, I think.
- 15 Q. So could we would move forward a year, please, to late 16 2013 and look at POL00146823, and look at the bottom of 17 the page, please, an email from Charles Colquhoun to you 18 of 15 November 2013, under the heading "Sparrow":

"Rod,

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"Just had a meeting on Sparrow. We need a paper to explain the accounting around Horizon at a high level. One of the points I want to make is that Horizon has few errors with clients -- does such a paper exist? If not could one be produced next week? High level one."

Then up the page, you say on the same day:

"Hi. Am on BlackBerry. No [document] to hand today but front page of exec [summary] of paper I did for Dave Smith's ExCo still holds good ..."

So, stopping there, the "front page of executive summary of paper I did for Dave Smith's ExCo", that's a reference to your August 2010 report, isn't it?

- A. Yes, I think it is, yes.
- Q. You're saying in November 2013 that the paper, or the
   executive summary of your Ismay Report of August 2010,
   still holds good, aren't you?
- 11 A. Yes, I am.

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- Q. Do you think it was right to say, in the light of the
   knowledge that you had by November '13, that what you
   had written about the integrity of Horizon still holds
- 15 good? A. In light of what we now know in hindsight, no, I wish 16 17 that I'd been able to write that and say, "But you should note that there were these issues that we've now 18 19 become aware of", but I think with everything that was 20 going on at the time, I've given probably an 21 off-the-cuff response, and, yeah, I hesitate to keep 22 saying I forget things but, even couple of years 23 onwards, there are so many things going on you don't 24 remember everything that happened but, yes, you'd be 25 right to say it would be better if I had thought of
- but they weren't resonating in my mind to that level,
  and that -- and I --
- Q. Why weren't they resonating? Sorry to speak over toyou.
- 5 A. No, I understand. Yeah, I'd just got so many things 6 that were going on, and I know that, in the context of 7 this individual huge matter that the Inquiry is looking 8 at, that sounds bad. But I just had so many, many 9 things that I was doing and this sort of email wanting 10 something immediately was a common thing on so many, 11 many topics, loads of people across the Post Office 12 loads of things, want, "Can I have this by today? Can 13 I have this by tomorrow?"
- 14 Q. Mr Ismay, you're answering my question as if, because of 15 the pressure of the moment, you wouldn't have realised 16 that things had emerged in the intervening two years 17 that undermined the conclusions of your report. Isn't 18 the better way to look at it that, over those two years, 19 you would have realised that things had emerged that 20 undermined the conclusions of your report? This wasn't 21 a snap decision to be made in replying on a BlackBerry, 22 was it? It was a drip, drip, drip over those two years 23 that meant you knew your report had been substantially
- 25 **A.** Those things did undermine my report but this is a small

undermined, didn't you?

- those other -- those issues that had arisen and it would be better if this email, if I had put those in it but I don't think I did think of them, and I clearly didn't
- 4 put them in there.
- Q. Mr Ismay, you didn't need hindsight to say that. By
   this time, you had gone through the Second Sight
   process --
- 8 A. Right, yes.
- 9 Q. -- and the two bugs that they identified had come to at10 least your knowledge by then?
- 11 A. Yeah.

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- 12 Q. You knew, through all of the documents we looked at this
   13 morning, that what you had written about remote access
   14 was unsupportable. Why were you still peddling the line
   15 in your August 2010 report?
- A. Well, because I'd just got so many things going on and
   I would have kept referring back to that paper, I think.
   When somebody comes up at short notice and says, "Ooh,
- I need a paper about Horizon", my natural instinct wouldbe to think, "Oh, right, okay, yeah, I did one of those
- a few years ago, I'll refer you to that". I'm sorry Q. Did you knowingly regard that as your guiding star, your report, knowing that, in fact, plenty of information had
- report, knowing that, in fact, plenty of information had
   emerged, to your knowledge, that directly undermined it?
   A. Clearly, other things had arisen that did undermine it
- A. Clearly, other things had arisen that did undermine if 134

number of emails out of hundreds of thousands -- or tens of thousands of emails that I was getting and I was being asked to respond to lots of stuff at short notice, and, sadly, sometimes I didn't put all of the things together that were in there and I did, sadly, kind of constantly have that thing in my mind of, "Well, there were all these reasons for assurance that were articulated, and the, whatever you call it, 14 bug and the 64 bug did get fixed", and so because technical changes had been done to stop the recurrence of them, sadly they probably went off my radar a bit thinking, well, that's been sorted, when, in this context, we should have been looking at it, even though they'd been sorted, they weren't sorted at some point at time, and so, in the kind of whole time frame, we should have still been considering them.

But I think because I was very focused on operational processes of today, how do you keep today's operation going, I was often looking at, well, if a problem has been convicted, what are we doing about today's processes? And that focus on today's processes, I think, was to the detriment of thinking about, evidently, the disclosure of some things that were happening in yesterday's processes.

I was absolutely, you know, required to be keeping 136

- 1 a focus on today's processes, where the Product and
- 2 Branch Accounting team was on a constant knife edge of
- 3 how could its -- the daily data processing of what came
- 4 out of the Horizon system that needed to be converted
- 5 into a format for clients was constant knife edge of the
- 6 time to process the files and get that sorted. So I was
- 7 always, and had to be, very focused on today and the
- 8 systems that work today. And, sadly, that was to the
- 9 detriment of issues that I did know about, about systems
- 10 earlier, but I was very focused on today's systems and
- 11 today's processing.
- 12 Was it that you were proud of your report, and that you Q.
- 13 continued to trade off it afterwards --
- 14 Α.
- Q. -- or you thought your stock in the company had risen 15
- 16 because you had written a report --
- 17 Α.
- 18 Q. -- defending Horizon?
- 19 No, I'd got lots of reports that I'd written. That
- 20 report I think I had probably moved on from. I do
- 21 accept that there's a thing where, in my annual
- 22 appraisal, I've referred -- and you've got it, I've
- 23 referred it to the Chairman saying, "Good report". That
- 24 had happened but I wasn't looking at this as my stock.
- 25 My stock, that I rated myself on and my team, was the
- 1 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00296291. You'll see at the
- 2 top it's the "Pre Year End PDR", I think that means
- 3 performance development review -- is that right --
- 4 A. That's correct, yeah.
- 5 Q. -- for you for 2012/2013, and this is written by you,
- 6 yes?
- 7 A. That's correct, yes.
- 8 Q. Just help us to try to date it, where it says, "Pre Year
- 9 End PDR"?
- A. So I think the appraisal year in the Post Office was 10
- 11 like the financial year to March. So I would probably
- 12 have written something like this as a pre-year end
- discussion but I'd have probably had a pre-year end 13
- 14 conversation with my boss and I would have submitted
- 15 that ahead of that conversation, so this would probably
- 16 have been done in February or March, of -- sorry --
- 17 Q. February or March 2013?
- A. Yes, I think so, yes. 18
- Q. If we look, you say it's been a "good year" for you. 19
- 20 Then, "Highlights of my year", if we scroll down
- 21 a little bit, please, do you see three bullet points
- 22 from the bottom --
- 23 A. Yes, I do, yeah.
- 24 -- which is, I think, the thing that you knew I was
- 25 going to ask you about.
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- 1 satisfaction that we were getting, a regular feedback
- 2 out of forums, such as with the NFSP and with multiple
- 3 partners, where those colleagues in the Network were
- 4 satisfied that the back office efficiency programme and
- 5 the way we were improving systems, whilst still going
- 6 through headcount reduction, how we were improving the
- 7 quality of service in today's service with that, so that
- 8 was what I rated myself on.
- 9 Q. Did you consider it a feather in your Post Office cap
- 10 that you were able to continually rebut Horizon claims?
- 11 No, I know I've referred to that in my -- in that annual
- 12 appraisal, but --
- 13 Q. Let's wait for that question to arise. I'm asking: did
- 14 you consider it a feather in your Post Office cap that
- 15 you personally were able continually to rebut Horizon
- 16 claims?
- 17 A. I don't think I was responding to allegations from
- subpostmasters. There was often articles that were 18
- 19 coming along and general questions, and I was able to
- 20 respond with "These are the reasons for assurance about
- 21 the system, these are the reasons that certain processes
- 22 and controls work". I was satisfied that I was
- 23 responding with those things, I wasn't taking
- 24 satisfaction from closing down an individual
- 25 subpostmaster's case.

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 "JFSA -- praise from Chairman for 'the Ismay Report' and
- 3 being able to continually rebut claims."
- 4 A. Yeah.
- 5 Q. Was the Chairman you were referring to at that time
- 6 Alice Perkins?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Was it she that praised you for your August 2010 Ismay
- 9
- 10 A. Yes, and what I've put in the statement --
- Q. When did she praise you for your August 2010 report? 11
- A. I don't know, but if I've put it in my '12/'13 12
- 13 appraisal, it would have been some time between April
- 14 2012 and March 2013.
- Q. What did Alice Perkins say to you? 15
- A. So my recollection of what she's said in my statement 16
- 17 and I think that she said something like "Oh, you're the
- 18 author of the Ismay Report, a good report". I don't
- 19 remember her --
- 20 Q. In what context did she say it?
- 21 A. So I think that I was being shown around a building, and
- 22 I think that we'd just moved from Old Street to
- 23 Moorgate. I think I'd come down and probably the
- 24 Finance Director was probably saying "Right, let's walk 25

you round the building so you can familiarise yourself

- 1 with the new place we're in", and one of the offices we
- 2 went to was where Alice was, and so I think that when we
- 3 walked in to her office, I would have been introduced,
- 4 "This is Rod Ismay", and, you know -- and I think that's
- 5 what she said in response to that. I don't think there
- 6 was anything more to it than that.
- 7 Q. The second part of the sentence is capable of two
- 8 interpretations.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. It could mean: (a) that a highlight of your year was
- being able to continually rebut claims; or it could mean
- 12 (b) that the Chairman, Alice Perkins, praised you for
- 13 being able to continue to rebut claims?
- 14 A. Oh, right. Okay.
- 15 Q. Which is it?
- 16 A. I don't think I'd written it in a sense of that she was
- 17 praising me for rebutting them. I think I'd written it
- in the sense of where I was responding to things like
- 19 press comments and being invited to list out reasons for
- 20 assurance
- 21 Q. Why was it a highlight that you were able to continually
- 22 rebut claims?
- 23 A. Well, because I was being asked "Rod, what are the
- 24 reasons for assurance about the whole control
- 25 environment here?" So a positive for me that I was 141
- 1 consistently -- continually"?
- 2 A. I've been able to continually explain a controlled
- 3 environment which would provide assurance for
- 4 whatever --
- 5 Q. That's a different thing, Mr Ismay. That's --
- 6 A. But that's what --
- 7 Q. That's "I'm a technical person, and yet I have been
- 8 able, in plain English, to translate technical knowledge
- 9 into plain English".
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. That's not what you're saying here. You're saying,
- 12 "It's a matter of pride to me that I've been able to
- 13 continually rebut claims", aren't you?
- 14 A. One shortens one's in things, so no doubt there could
- 15 have been a whole paragraph written for this but, in
- 16 a few words I've got for an executive summary, I've only
- 17 put a few words in, and you'll see this is one line out
- of a three-page document where the majority of my time
- 19 was going on other things. What was I proud of in the
- 20 year? I was proud of the things that were higher up
- 21 that list in a rank order coming down it.
- 22  $\,$  Q. The Ismay Report was prepared in just under two weeks,
- 23 I think we established last time. You were instructed
- just before the 21 July 2010 and published to
- an internal audience on 2 August 2010?

- 1 continually able to, in plain English, describe what the
- 2 control environment was.
- Q. So a matter of personal and professional pride that youcan bat claims against Horizon off?
- 5  $\,$  **A.** That I was able to summarise control environments in
- 6 plain English that other people could understand.
- 7 Q. Was the answer to my question: yes, it was a matter of
- 8 personal and professional pride to you that you were
- 9 able to bat claims making allegations against Horizon
- 10 off?
- 11 A. No, it was a matter of pride to me and putting this into
- it that I was able to describe a controlled environment
- 13 to give people assurance about it, which did lead to
- rebutting allegations that were being made in the press,
- or the organisation felt that it was rebutting those
- 16 allegations.
- 17 Q. You've, in your evidence just now, badged this up
- 18 about -- as relating to press claims?
  - 19 **A.** Yes
  - 20 Q. Yes, you had been the leading member of the litigation
- 21 steering group, hadn't you?
  - 22 A. Yeah, yeah.
  - 23 Q. Is that not what you're referring to here?
- 24 A. I think I'm referring across the whole gamut.
- 25 **Q.** So including "I have been able to rebut legal claims 142
- 1 A. I was given a pretty short turnaround to do it.
- 2 Q. Did you receive feedback from other very senior people
- 3 in the company, short of the chairman herself?
- 4 A. So I think when I compiled and circulated that report to
- 5 the addressees on it, I think some of them replied to
- 6 say, "Thank you". I don't know --
- 7 Q. Did you get any pats on the back "Well done, Rod"?
- 8 A. I don't know what the email said but I think they were
- 9 along the lines of thank you. I don't think they were
- 10 very long emails but there were some thanks came back
- 11 from some of that audience for sharing that report.
- 12 Q. We've seen this morning a series of occasions where
- people have raised the question "Should we?", and the
- 14 answer came back "Yes, I think we should", get
- 15 an independent external report into Horizon?
- 16 A. Right, yeah.
- 17 **Q**. Was your report something that essentially put that
- 18 issue to bed?
- 19 A. I don't think my report would have put that to bed.
- 20 That would --
- 21 Q. Were you asked by any member of the Post Office Board
- for your own view on whether an independent
- 23 investigation into the reliability of Horizon should be
- 24 commissioned after your report?
- 25 A. I don't know. Maybe we've got correspondence about

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- people like Deloitte coming in and looking at something.
   So I was clearly --
- Q. Did Mr Smith, for example, speak to you about whether itwas necessary to get an independent report after yours?
- A. No, so I don't think that that Dave -- I don't think he
   came to me and said, "After your report, Rod, we need to

7 do that", no I don't think so.

- Q. He has told us there was no merit in commissioning
   an independent expert or indeed a forensic accountant to
   test the reliability of Horizon, because your report
- 11 adopted a clear-cut position on that, at that point?
- 12 A. Well, I didn't know that he'd said that but my report13 was not an investigation. My report was a summary of
- speaking to different people and different teams to say,
- 15 "Can you explain the control environment? Can you
- 16 explain training? Can you explain how call centres
- 17 works, so that I can kind of summarise what are the
- 18 things that influence our thinking to think we can rely
- on this system". So I'd be surprised that somebody
- would look at that and say, "Ooh, that's actually
- 21 an investigation of stuff", because it wasn't
- 22 an investigation; it was a summary of existing
- 23 understanding.
- Q. So you'd be surprised if somebody looked at your
   document and thought that it was a balanced and fair
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- sadly, I think part of this whole chain of events was --and, you know, this will not be assuring and close
- 3 things for subpostmasters at all, but there were too
- 4 many things going on, too many massive things in the
- 5 organisation and, sadly, I think sometimes that would
- 6 have led to things not being read or scoped in
- 7 a particular way, that, in hindsight, one might say
- 8 "Well, I wish that had been done".
- Q. Does it amount to this, that, on a number of occasions
   from 2005 onwards, direct consideration was given to
   obtaining an expert report that was independent of the
- 12 Post Office and, on every occasion that was raised, it
- 13 was rejected?
- 14 A. Well, it looks like it. It looks like there's been15 several points, as you say, where consideration has been
- 16 given and a third-party report hasn't happened so --
- 17 **Q.** Instead, your report was commissioned, which I think
- 18 you've accepted was limited and one sided?
- 19 A. It would be -- could be perceived and I think I said it
- 20 could be seen as having been one sided but that was in
- 21 the context of a new MD who was hearing things in the
- press and said, "Right, I'm hearing these in the press,
- 23 how robust is Horizon? What are these other factors
- 24 that influence management to think in the way that
- 25 they're thinking?"

- 1 representation of all of the evidence?
- 2 A. I imagine in the world that the Post Office was working
- 3 in, and people probably read things quite quickly and
  - thought, "Oh, that answers something", without thinking,
- 5 "Hold on, this isn't an independent audit that's been
- 6 done on this, that might not have gone through the
- 7 thought process", and it should have because it wasn't
- 8 an audit, it wasn't challenging whether things were true
- 9 or not. It was taking assertions from different teams
- 10 to put into a summary of these reasons in these
- 11 categories of things that give us confidence about the
- 12 system.
- 13 Q. Are you saying that people in the Post Office generallyread things too quickly?
- 15 **A.** I think some things probably were read too quickly.
- 16 Q. Why was that? Why did Post Office not contain some slow17 and careful readers?
- 18 A. I think because the Post Office was challenged with the
- 19 number of things about the -- that its whole financial
- 20 solvency, the restructuring of its network, deployment
- of an IT tower strategy to reinvent the whole model of
- 22 how technology worked across the whole organisation, pay
- 23 negotiations, constant strikes.24 There was all sort of stuff
  - There was all sort of stuff, left, right and centre, that was -- all of these things were really big, and so,

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- So, yes, it looks one sighted but the very context of it was "I've heard the other side of it, please give
- 3 me that other side of it so a default" --
- 4 Q. Then, between it being written over the following years,
   5 a series of events occurred and information was revealed
- 6 to you which undermined its contents?
- 7 A. Yes, yeah.
- 8 Q. You didn't correct it --
- 9 A. No, I --

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- 10 Q. -- but continued to hawk around its conclusions as if11 they still held true?
- 12 A. Yes, I did and, with all the things going on, yes,
- 13 I did. Yeah. In hindsight, I might wish that I'd put
- 14 those R&P issues and others together but, in the heat of
- the moment with things, no, I didn't. But I did still
- 16 take comfort from the controls that were narrated, they
- 17 weren't tested but the fact that we'd got all those
- things around recruitment, around training, around call
- 19 centres, around escalation processes. All those things
- did continue to make me think, "Well, there are lots of
- routes for support and control to be in place".
- Q. Last topic, please. When you gave evidence in Phase 3
   last year, you gave evidence about the Seema Misra
- 24 "bandwagon" email; do you remember?
- 25 A. I remember us talking about --

1 Q. Shall we look at the transcript. INQ00001064. If we 2 can look, please, at page 7, please, and internal 3 page 28, which is bottom right. If we scroll down --4 scroll up.

> I was showing you the Seema Misra email exchange from Jarnail Singh and read the last sentence of it:

"It is to be hoped the case will set a marker to dissuade others from jumping on the Horizon bashing bandwagon'."

I put to you that that was a sentiment with which you no doubt very much approved at the time and you said:

"I'd been involved in collating that thing about the reasons to be assured about Horizon. I would hope that I wasn't using language like 'Horizon bashing'. I was focused on reasons for integrity of the system and, clearly, there's a number of things that have come out that are contrary to the concept of integrity of it, for language like 'Horizon bashing' isn't -- well, it's unpleasant language to use again."

21 Yes? A. Yeah.

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23 Q. I think, at the time, we didn't have your reply to that 24 email but we do now. Can we look, please, at 25 POL00169170. Look at page 2, please. We can see

1 Q. -- and say:

> "... please note Dave Smith's [Managing Director] thanks to you all for your work on this important case.

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"Dave and the [Executive Team] have been made aware of the significance of these challenges and have been supportive of the excellent work going on in so many teams to justify the confidence that we have in Horizon and in our supporting processes.

"This is an excellent result and a big thanks to everyone."

So, far from thinking that the language that Mr Singh had used was unpleasant, you jumped on the bandwagon too, didn't you?

- 14 A. Well, I hadn't used the word "bandwagon" but
- 15 I forwarded -- as Dave Smith asked, forwarded the thanks 16 and I have referred to the significance and confidence 17 in Horizon, so I --
- Q. You've joined in the back slapping. 18
- Yeah, I've -- yes, I've -- I have congratulated people 19 20 for their input to that, yeah, yeah.
- Q. Was it the case that the Executive Team and the Managing 21 22 Director had been watching the Misra case very closely?
- 23 A. Well, it looks like it. I don't know how closely they 24 were watching it, but it looks like they were.
- 25 You saw the Misra case, didn't you, as a vindication of Q. 151

1 Jarnail Singh's email at the top of the page there, 2 second paragraph:

3 "It is hoped that the case will set a marker to 4 dissuade other defendants from jumping on the Horizon 5 bashing bandwagon."

Yes?

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7 A. Yes, I can see that.

8 Q. Then page 1, foot of the page, David Smith -- that's the 9 David Smith that commissioned you to write the Ismay

10 Report, isn't it?

11 That's the Managing Director.

12 Q. MD David Smith?

13 Yeah.

14 Q. He forwards that on to you, even though you were a recipient of it originally, but I think adds in Mike 15 16 Moores, who wasn't a recipient of it; Mike Young, who

17 wasn't a recipient of it; and Paula Vennells, who wasn't

18 a recipient of it, and says:

19 "Rod

20 "Brilliant news. Well done. Please pass on my 21 thanks to the team."

22 Then up the page, please. You, I think, send it 23 back, that chain, to all of the people who were included 24 on the original chain and add people in -- don't you --

25 A. Yeah, it looks like it, yeah.

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1 what you had concluded in your report, didn't you?

2 A. No, I think the two things -- you can link them but

3 I think they were separate. I didn't see the Misra case

4 as a justification of my report. I'd done my report

5 and, rightly or wrongly, I might have been kind of

6 assured that there were those reasons in there. The

7 Misra case was a separate thing to that. I wouldn't see

8 the Misra case as a justification of my report.

9 Q. You saw it, at the very least, as a case the outcome of 10 which justified the confidence that the Post Office had 11 in Horizon, didn't you?

A. Yeah, that's what I've said. The evidence that went 12

13 into it must have supported the organisation's

14 confidence in Horizon and Dave's asked me to forward

15 those thanks, and I have, to the wider audience who'd --

16 who were in that email.

17 MR BEER: Mr Ismay, thank you very much once again for 18 answering my questions.

19 A. Okay.

20 MR BEER: Sir, the Core Participants have some questions.

21 I think, given the timing of them, it will be acceptable

22 just to sit through until we finish.

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Who is going first?

24 MR BEER: I think Mr Jacobs is first.

25 MR JACOBS: I think I'm first, sir. I'm not switched on ...

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I hope you are, in both senses.

2 Questioned by MR JACOBS

- 3 MR JACOBS: Mr Ismay, I want to ask you about suspense4 accounts.
- 5 A. Okay, right.

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- 6 Q. You deal with that at paragraph 74 of your statement.
- 7 Can we just quickly put that up on screen.
- 8 WITN04630200, page 33 of 61, please. While we're
- 9 waiting for that to come up -- I'll read it. 74:

"Second Sight posed the question as to whether SPMs may have paid for alleged shortfalls that became profits in POL's or its clients' suspense accounts. I was involved in compiling POL's responses to that question, and POL00025783 included product examples, process explanations and a rationale for why this was considered

16 not to be the case."

17 So if we can now go to that document, that's
18 POL00025783. You might be familiar with this document,

19 Mr Ismay.

- A. I remember lots about suspense -- I don't know that
   particular document but, yeah, it'll probably remind me
   when I see it.
- 23 **Q.** It'll come up on the screen in a second. So here we have it
- 25 A. Yeah.

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1 "As set out in the Post Office's previous paper, so long 2 as a subpostmaster submits the applicable evidence from 3 their branch records to show that there was no error on 4 their part (that they followed the correct branch 5 accounting processes), the Post Office will not charge 6 that branch (or will withdraw any related charge) 7 arising from a discrepancy even where a client maintains 8 that there is a discrepancy."

So here, what you're saying is that the subpostmaster has to prove they didn't make a mistake in order not to have to pay?

- A. Well, I think the subpostmaster we would expect to
   provide something because we wouldn't know what the
   subpostmaster did. We would any see the record of what
   the subpostmaster had recorded in Horizon. We would
   your see the record of what paperwork got sent to the
   check processing unit, for example.
- 18 Q. It's proving a negative, isn't it?
- 19 **A.** Try me again, sorry.
- Q. They've got to show they didn't make a mistake in orderto get themselves out of trouble?
- 22 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 23 Q. Then, finally:
- "Post Office's processes are therefore designed sothat subpostmasters are not disadvantaged by the

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- Q. I'll just go through the summary quickly, just so you
   will be familiar --
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. -- with it. So reading through:

"Second Sight's principal concern is that credit
 amounts in the Suspense Account are absorbed by Post
 Office as profit rather than being returned to branches
 to balance out losses in those branches."

That's what Second Sight are concerned with --

10 A. Yes.

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- 11 Q. -- and that's what you were addressing.
- 12 A. Yes.

13  $\,$  **Q.** "Whether the cost of the unresolved discrepancy between

Post Office and a client (whether held, in the suspense

15 account or otherwise) falls on a branch is not

16 necessarily dependent on the position between Post

17 Office and its client but principally turns on the

actions of the branch in following, or not, the correct

19 branch accounting process."

20 So the discrepancy is down to whether the 21 subpostmaster or their assistants made an error is what 22 you're saying here, isn't it?

A. Yes, I'm saying there would have been some anomaly in
 recording something, for example recording a deposit as

25 £20 when it was £10, or something like that.

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operation of its suspense accounts and, if operated correctly, Post Office will not take into its own profit money that should have been credited to branches."

So, if the subpostmaster doesn't make a mistake,Post Office don't take the cash, effectively?

6 A. Yeah.

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Q. Right. So now let's move on because this is really the point I wanted to ask you about. If we go to page 3 in the document, and there's a section that says, "Credits to the suspense account", and you can see the penultimate paragraph. If we could just highlight that that begins "Credits in the suspense account that remain unresolved". So:

"Credits in the suspense account that remain unresolved for 3 years are moved to the Post Office profit and loss and account. Effectively, Post Office absorbs these credits as profit. The operation of a suspense account in this way is standard practice for most businesses."

19 most businesses."

This what is you wrote, isn't it?

- 21 A. Yes, it is, yes.
- 22 Q. Now, the point that our clients wanted me to put is that
- 23 it's never a profit, is it? Money that is held in
- a suspense account cannot be a profit, can it?
- 25 A. The money in the suspense account, the examples that

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1 I worked through, show that often a client would say 2 that they were owed a certain amount, the Post Office 3 records said a higher amount so, if the client said, "No 4 you don't owe us that amount of money", then we did take 5 those amounts to profit, but we would have -- in my 6 team, the Product and Branch Accounting team, I know 7 where people would look as many records as they could to 8 try to make calls to individual branches, to find out 9 was this something that should be corrected in 10 an individual branch, so there would have been a lot of 11 work that went on before something --

12 Q. I accept that, but -- I accept that you say that but the 13 main point, the question that I'm asking you, is that 14 what's in the suspense account is money that might make 15 up for a genuine shortfall, so it would balance to zero 16 and then it wouldn't show as a positive, or it's money 17 that belongs to the subpostmaster, because that money 18 was never due because there was an error in the system. 19 Do you see what I'm saying?

20 A. Yeah, I do see what you're saying. I think there's 21 another "there" within that as well, that, if there that 22 been a shortfall at some point and a subpostmaster had 23 put money in to make a shortfall good and they shouldn't 24 and then something went the other way, then absolutely 25 the subpostmaster should get that money and because they

1 that good and they should be entitled to money back. 2 But a lot of errors would arise where something hadn't 3 been a shortage in the first place and that money is 4 effectively money that, on trust, the subpostmaster has 5 got it in the till, where, actually, it's customer money 6 en route to a customer's bank account. It's not the 7 subpostmaster's money, it's not Post Office's money, 8 it's customers' money.

9 Q. I've got the point. Your wording is "The operation of 10 a suspense account in this way" which is it goes into 11 the profit and loss account after 3 years, "is standard 12 practice for most businesses".

Right.

14 Q. These were not, Mr Ismay, most businesses?

15 A. No, no.

13 Α.

16 Q. These were financially stricken people --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- who were having to borrow, who were having to find 19 money that they were struggling to find, at the expense, 20 sometimes, of not being able to feed their families. 21 This was an overly rigid corporate approach and,

22 essentially, this took money from the postmasters and 23 ploughed it into Post Office's own profits. That was

24 what Second Sight and Sir Anthony Hooper wanted to find

25 out, isn't it? put money in but, often, I think these things were not that way round and, actually, it's the customer's money or the client's money.

So if, if a thing was keyed in the wrong way, then there was not money that the subpostmaster should take out of the till because, actually, it's the customers that should have been credited to their bank account.

8 I'm talking about subpostmasters money here, that's all 9 I'm talking about because the money that subpostmasters 10 paid in to the Post Office on account of Horizon 11 shortfalls, shortfalls that didn't exist, that were

12 illusory, that is their money that the Post Office 13 turned into profit and that is what so many

14 subpostmasters are so angry about, that Post Office took 15 their money. It's a serious matter, isn't it?

16 A. Oh, that's a serious matter but my understanding was 17 that we've looked at the 62 and the 14 branch issues and 18 I thought they were narrowed to those branches only, 19 where things arose in other branches and we could see 20 that Fujitsu confirmed it didn't relate to those 21 branches, then I think I've come back to our expectation 22 that this affected the customer or the client.

> The money that's in the till in a post office, if a subpostmaster has made a shortage good, then yes, there's a situation that they shouldn't have had to make 158

That's what they were asking but we believed that the -there'd been a miskey, something like that, in a branch, and we'd done everything we could to try to pin down what was the branch -- so the examples I've given in here reference to things where, say, cheque paid into --

I'm sorry that I'm speaking too fast, I'll try to slow down.

We did as much as we could but, if there was no record of what the branch number was and, sometimes, the cheque processing centre, IPSL, they sometimes raised issues where they received, like, a blank envelope with cheques in it and you've got no idea which the Post

13 Office was that had sent them, so --

14 Q. Mr Ismay, I apologise, but we don't have much time. 15 I just want to take you, finally, because I think this 16 might help you with the answers you're giving --

17 A. Okay, yeah, yeah thanks.

18 Q. -- to paragraph 79 and 80 of your statement.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. WITN04630200. Then I'll have couple of guestions and 21 then I'm finished, okay?

22 A. Okay, yeah.

23 Q. Paragraph 79, please. So you're talking about this 24 process, page 36 of 61, 79.

25 "At the time, based on the general but perhaps 160

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misplaced confidence in Horizon and its related processes, and in light of the credits or write offs agreed for the known issues disclosed to Second Sight and referenced in their Interim Report, my recollection is that neither nor POL believed that there were illusory losses nor that SPMs were paying for alleged shortfalls that generated profits for POL."

Moving down to 80, the last sentence:

"However, I would be less confident to say [what you're saying] now, with hindsight, in light of the increased concern about Horizon that has risen through this Inquiry."

13 A. Yeah.

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- Q. My final questions for you are these: you predicated all
  your responses to Second Sight on the assumption that
  there could never be any illusory loss because you
  needed to demonstrate that Horizon was robust because
  that's what you said in your report in 2010. That's
  what you did. isn't it?
- A. I did, but we were -- we didn't believe there were
   illusory losses because we thought the processes worked,
   and I know there was the 62 and the 14 but we did
   compensation to those branches to deal with that. So we
   didn't think that it applied in other branches.
- 25 **Q.** Let me put this to you, then: you were asked to respond

convicted and have since had their convictions quashed.

I want to be very quick. I want to ask you about one document. It's POL00294931. If we can look midway down the page, if we can scroll down a little to start with, and stop around here, you see, that's an email from Emily Springford, who we know is a lawyer who is in the Royal Mail Group.

- 8 A. Okay, right.
- Q. I think you've been saying this morning you're familiar
   with the Inquiry, you've been following some of the
   evidence. Is this is an advice you've seen before?
- 12 A. Well, it's in my pack, I think, this.
- 13 Q. Yeah. I'm going to try and take it quickly. I just
  14 wanted to check if it was something you were familiar
  15 with. If we scroll down a little way, we can see she's
  16 advising on four letters of claim that had been received
  17 from former subpostmasters, we've talked about them this
  18 morning, the Shoosmiths claim of 2011.
- 19 A. Right, okay, yeah.
- Q. This is 20 October 2011 and she starts talking about
   document preservation. But if we can roll up a little
   way, you see there she's saying:

"Please ensure this communication reaches everyone in your department who has access to, or is in the position to create, documents relating to the issues", 163

to a legitimate concern and you provided a one-sided view and what you were doing here is you were rebutting, you were not investigating, because you predicated your answers on the presumption that there could not be illusory losses, which suited the Post Office position.

It wasn't a balanced response, was it, Mr Ismay?

6 7 It doesn't look a balanced response but we didn't 8 believe that there were illusory losses and, therefore, 9 the way of conducting it was to try to summarise some 10 individual product transactions and describe them with 11 a belief that there weren't illusory losses. I wasn't 12 doing it to rebut an allegation about Horizon; I was 13 doing to it to describe, if we look at Camelot, if we 14 look at ATMs, if we look at cheques, whatever it was, 15 the products that I've now related in the 406-page 16 suspense account document, I and my team, we didn't 17 believe that there were illusory losses. We just 18 didn't.

19 MR JACOBS: I haven't got any more questions for you but20 thank you very much.

21 A. Okay, thank you.

#### Questioned by MS PATRICK

23 MS PATRICK: Good afternoon, Mr Ismay. My name is Angela
 24 Patrick and I act with Mr Moloney KC and Hudgell
 25 Solicitors for a number of subpostmasters who were
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1 the issues being subpostmaster claims.

2 A. Yes.

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3 Q. "... arising in these claims. I've started a list of4 teams", and so on.

If we scroll up a little way, we see, again, she deals with document creation. Sorry, down, into her email a little further, please, over the page. If we go down to "Document creation", so I can see the end of those bullets, please. Thank you. You see here she is dealing with document creation and she says:

"It is very important that we control the creation of documents which relate to the above issues and which might be potentially damaging to POL's defence to the claims, as these may have to be disclosed if these claims proceed to litigation. Your staff should therefore think very carefully before committing to writing anything relating to the above issues, which is critical of our own processes or systems, including emails, reports or briefing notes. We appreciate that this will not always be practicable ..."

If we go to the bullets she gives some guidance on what she thinks needs to be done to understand whether or not a document might attract legal privilege. She says:

"If the dominant purpose of the communication is not 164

(41) Pages 161 - 164

to obtain legal advice, try to structure the document in such a way that its dominant purpose can be said to be evidence gathering for use in litigation;

"Mark every such communication 'legally privileged and confidential'."

Then she goes on to give some more guidance. At the end, she says:

"Where possible and appropriate, copy a member of Legal Services into the communication, and make clear that you are doing so to enable them to advise on the content. Please note that copying a member of Legal Services into the communication alone will not necessarily suffice."

Then just to top it off, she says:

"If in doubt, call Legal Services before committing anything to writing which relates to these issues and contains critical wording."

She ends by giving some advice on particular documents they want to be sourced and provided to the Legal Team.

Now, if we scroll right back up to the top of the document, beyond the top of Ms Springford's email and stop there for a moment. Now, this advice that was coming, Mr Ismay, from the Legal Team, on privilege in connection with proposed civil proceedings on the

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- 1 A. Yeah, so I expect my boss is in the audience for it,
- 2 I imagine my boss has cascaded it to me.
- 3 Q. Okay, by this point, you knew that some subpostmasters
- 4 had been prosecuted by the Post Office on the basis of
- 5 Horizon data --
- 6 A. Yeah.

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- 7 Q. -- including some who were in the Shoosmiths group?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. Yeah. Did anybody ever, whether around the time of the
- 10 Springford advice or later, cascade down to you, and on
- 11 to your team, any advice, first, about Post Office's
- 12 continuing duties as a prosecutor?
- 13 A. I don't think about duties as a prosecutor, because
- 14 that's a matter for the Legal Team to be considering, so
- 15 I don't think that people would have approached my team
- 16 about matters of that --
- 17 Q. Separately, did anybody cascade in the way that this
- 18 advice was, any advice to you on the relationship
- 19 between any duties the Post Office might have as
- 20 a prosecutor and their relationship between those duties
- 21 and this Springford advice on the care to be taken in
- 22 relation to documents critical of Post Office systems?
- 23 A. Well, I don't think so and I say that because my team
- 24 weren't, like, the prosecutor, we weren't Legal. So
- 25 I don't think it would have been relevant to us.

- 1 creation of documents which would be critical of Post
- 2 Office systems, you'd have treated it with some
- 3 significance, wouldn't you?
- 4 A. Yeah, yeah.
- Q. You would have expected anybody else receiving it totreat it seriously?
- 7 You're nodding. The transcriber likes you to say 8 "yes" or "no"?
- 9 A. Okay, yes.
- 10 Q. Yes. Ms Springford's advice there she's giving, it's
- 11 meant to be disseminated by those who read it who
- 12 receive it, trickled down and cascaded through the
- 13 business; is that right?
- 14 A. (The witness nodded)
- 15 Q. If we see there, her email isn't addressed to you,
- 16 you're not on the original list of recipients.
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. But, in this document, we can see somehow you've
- 19 received it and you're forwarding it on. You're
- 20 cascading it, you're sending it to Mr David X Gray?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. Was he somebody in your team?
- 23 A. I think he was in the IT Team.
- 24 Q. Yes. So it was being cascaded through the business,
- 25 wasn't it?

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- 1 Q. Okay. Did you understand that Post Office had
- 2 continuing duties towards those that they had
- 3 prosecuted?
- 4 A. I think my understanding would have been that
- 5 a prosecution had been completed and that was it. I can
- 6 see now from all the correspondence that I've had, that
- 7 when one has become aware of something that should have
- 8 been disclosed, then you need to go back. But I think
- 9 at the time, that wouldn't have understood disclosure
- 10 like that.
- 11 MS PATRICK: Thank you very much, Mr Ismay. I have no
- 12 further questions for you.

### Questioned by MS PAGE

- 14 MS PAGE: Mr Ismay.
- 15 A. Hello

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- 16 **Q.** Were you the Post Office's gatekeeper for the remote
- 17 access secret?
- 18 **A.** No.
- 19 Q. It was your team in Chesterfield that actually signed
- off when Fujitsu sought approval for tampering remotely
- 21 with branch accounts, wasn't it?
- 22  $\,$  **A.** We were one of the people approached in that three
- 23 options paper.
- 24  $\,$  Q. No, I'm talking about when, routinely, Fujitsu would
- 25 tamper with branch accounts and seek Post Office

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- approval to do so. It was your team that gave that 1 2 approval, wasn't it?
- 3 A. No, I don't think so.
- 4 Q. Well --
- 5 A. I don't think --
- 6 Q. -- Mr Andrew Winn, when he gave evidence at this 7 Inquiry, admitted it. He said this:
- 8 "I could see myself being the voice that would give 9 Post Office Limited approval, yes."
- 10 That's what he said.
- A. Well, we didn't think that we'd got -- we didn't think 11 that Fujitsu had got access to do that, then. 12
- 13 Q. Well, Mr Winn has admitted it. He wouldn't have taken on that role without you knowing about it, would he? 14
- A. Well, I don't think he did have that role. 15
- 16 Q. You may remember, Mr Ismay, the last time I asked you
- 17 questions, I asked you about the Lynn Hobbs email to you
- 18 and Mr Granville, which told you about the facility to
- 19 remotely tamper with accounts and I asked you why it had
- 20 only survived in the form of a cut and paste into
- 21 another email; do you remember that?
- 22 A. I don't remember your exact question but I'm aware that
- 23 thing doesn't have a date on it and I don't know why it
- 24 doesn't. I don't know why it's a cut and paste without
- 25 a date.

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- 1 No, the other thing wasn't an attempt at a whitewash and 2 this wasn't either.
- 3 Q. In 2011, you made a bit of a slip on this. You'll have
- 4 been given the documents about the 2011 Ernst & Young
- 5 audit and, of course, as a qualified accountant, you'll
- 6 understand about audits, won't you?
- 7 A. Yes, I do.
- 8 Q. Well, that 2011 audit made it clear that at Fujitsu
- 9 there was a failure to keep track of Horizon users and
- 10 those who could access different parts of the system,
- 11 ves?
- A. There was a long management letter with those kind of 12 13 things in, yes.
- 14 Q. To put it simply, that was about remote access,
- 15 Mr Ismay; do you understand that? It was about the
- 16 controlled environment, as you would put it?
- A. It was about the controlled environment but, having 17
- looked at -- and I couldn't remember it until you sent 18
- me that document to look at in the Rule 10 pack but I'm 19
- 20 not sure if that document in there actually talks about
- 21 remote access.
- 22 Q. It does not use those words --
- 23 Α. Does it say that in it?
- 24 Q. No, it does not use those words. This is what it says,

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25 in the executive summary, in the main area for the

- Q. Mr Ismay, you knew that that email had to be deleted, 1
- 2 didn't you?
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Q. Not only because it undermined your report, the Ismay
- Report, but also, more importantly, because you 5
- 6 understood that it undermined the safety of all of those
- 7 past convictions. You knew that, didn't you?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. So you tried to cover your tracks back in 2010, didn't
- 10 vou?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. The only email that you left to posterity was the one
- 13 that Mr Beer KC took you to this morning, in which you
- 14 tried to introduce conditionality, as you put it.
- 15 That's the only email you left for posterity, Mr Ismay.
- 16 A. No, it's not and you've, through Post Office, have got
- 17 access to all sorts of documents. I was very meticulous
- in my file, in that I didn't delete stuff. 18
- 19 Q. That's the only one in which you admit your knowledge
- 20
- 21 A. I didn't go round deleting my history of emails on this
- 22 topic. So no.
- 23 Q. Was that email that introduced conditionality another
- 24 mini whitewash, Mr Ismay, another attempt at
- 25 a whitewash?

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- 1 management to focus upon, the Post Office Management to
- 2 focus upon, it says this -- I won't take you to it
- 3 because it's short.
- 4 A. Okay.

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- 5 Q. "This may lead to the processing of erroneous or
- 6 unauthorised transactions."
- 7 Do you understand the import of that sentence?
- 8 A. Yes, I do, yeah, yeah.
- 9 Q. All right, now I'm going to just take you to one
- document, please. It's POL00295091 and if, when it 10
- comes up we could scroll to the bottom half of page 1, 11
- 12 please. From Sarah Hall to you and a number of other
- people: Chris Day, Mike Granville, Susan Crichton, Mike 13
- 14
- Young, Lesley Sewell, and copied to David X Gray:
- 15 "RMG ARC paper draft re Horizon -- urgent for review 16 by [Thursday] midday."
  - What it says is:
  - "The RMG ARC requested a paper on the IT controls and the Horizon claims. With input from various experts this has now been drafted but it is clearly a sensitive area so I attach the draft for your review and comments before it goes to the group for circulation to the ARC."
    - She goes on to describe that the meeting is on 8 December, and she talks about their approach, the history of the relationship with Fujitsu, what Horizon

1 does.

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"... we in POL are satisfied with the controls around it, then what we have done to improve the EY IT controls audit and then finally the position on the claims."

All right? So that's making it clear, isn't it, that there's going to be a presentation, in effect, to the ARC committee about these issues that have been raised by the EY audit, yes?

- 10 A. Yes, looks like it, yeah.
- 11 Q. All right. Now if we scroll up to your reply, please.

Bearing in mind it's been acknowledged as a sensitive area, hasn't it, and what you say is this in your paragraph 1, you are basically commenting on the slides that are going to be shown in the ARC committee and you say this:

"Paragraph 1 -- to add a sentence along the following lines 'The IT control issues identified during the audit did not question the integrity of accounting data in the system. Rather, they were recommendation about the documentation and authorisation of changes to the system and about opportunities for streamlined assurance'."

Now this, and this is your slip, Mr Ismay:
"The rationale for this is that [the] purposes of
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would be massive implications for past convictions. You understood that, didn't you, and you were making that clear in this email?

A. But in a context of the EY recommendations hadn't
 identified errors in the data. So I was --

- Q. Yes, but let's just concentrate on what you understood
   and what's happened here. Having understood that,
   you've spoken to Rob Wilson, yes?
- 9 A. Um, no, I don't think I did --
- 10 Q. You have had spoken to --
- A. -- because Rob Wilson, as we've seen in earlier
  documentation, had made that indication in the email
  that Mr Beer shared a couple of hours ago in the
  Inquiry. So I don't think I've gone to Rob Wilson on
  30 November 2011 to ask him that. I think I've recalled
  that that thing was something that Rob Wilson had said
- 18 Q. I see. So you'd seen that email chain, had you?

and I've referred back to it.

accounts, doesn't it?

- 19 **A.** Well, I've referred to that same stuff in the Ismay20 Report.
- 21 **Q.** Yes, okay. Well, there's a lack of controls, that's
  22 what you understood from the EY report, and the EY
  23 report said that that could lead to unauthorised
  24 transactions. So that does affect the integrity of the

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ongoing RMG Criminal Prosecution activity, Rob Wilson,
(RMG Head of Criminal Law) has advised that were that
not the case then current prosecutions would have to be
stayed. It is important to make clear EY did not
challenge the integrity of accounting data in the
system."

A. Yes, you'll see that, and I don't consider that to be 7 8 a slip. What I would say is that this refers to the 9 changes to systems, that EY weren't saying that the 10 accounting data didn't have integrity in it and so I was 11 then clarifying and forwarding something that Rob Wilson 12 had said before, so if it was the case that this wasn't 13 identifying errors in the data, we wouldn't want it to 14 look like it was identifying errors in the data because 15 it hadn't identified errors in the data, so it wasn't

it hadn't identified errors in the data, so it wasn't
a slip, it was a genuine forwarding and, for
completeness, of input from the lawyer on that, to
clarify that EY hadn't challenged the integrity of the
accounting and the data and wouldn't want somebody to

read this and think it was challenging the integrity ofthe accounting data. So not a slip.

Q. You understood, Mr Ismay, and you were making it clear
 to the others, that if there were inadequate controls
 and audit data could not be guaranteed as an authentic
 record of what had taken place in branch, that there

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A. It indicates it could lead to it. They haven't
 identified that it did lead to it and I don't think --

Q. You were giving false comfort here to the ARC Committee,
 weren't you, because you were suggesting that there had
 been no question about the integrity of accounting data
 when, in fact, the EY report said that there might be
 unauthorised transactions as a result of the lack of
 controls.

A. No, I think I've clarified something, and the ARC would
 have -- I imagine the ARC would have got the whole EY
 reports. So the ARC would be able to read all the
 things that Ernst & Young had said and have just
 contextualised this.

14 **Q.** You were massaging what the EY report said, weren't you?

15 A. No, I think I was clarifying stuff for the reader on it16 and --

17 Q. What's more, you knew that Fujitsu could and did tamper
18 with branch accounts, use that remote access facility;
19 you knew that?

A. No. I've seen emails that -- and that thing about
option A, B, C, that refer to that but I don't know that
it had been built and I don't know that they used it.
I don't know that they used it.

Q. Rob Wilson knew, as well. He had received the email,
 the same one, with those Solutions One, Two and Three,

- the Friday before Seema Misra's trial started on the
   Monday. He knew and you knew about that facility. This
   email shows that you and he were deliberately covering
- 4 up what you knew about remote access --
- 5 A. No.
- Q. -- and doing so because you knew about the implicationsfor past convictions, didn't you?
- 8 A. No, and in the answers that I've given to you already,
- 9 I've explained why that's not the case.
- 10 MS PAGE: Thank you, sir.
- 11 MR BEER: Sir, unusually, I've got a couple of supplemental
- 12 questions, with your permission, and looking very
- 13 carefully at the time.
- 14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: To be snookered by one's own counsel, eh?
- 15 MR BEER: I think that was a "yes".
- 16 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I may not listen! Carry on.

## 17 Further questioned by MR BEER

- MR BEER: Mr Ismay, it's a continuation of the theme of
   knowledge of remote access, and it's a series of
   questions that I ought to have put to you earlier but
- 21 didn't. It concerns 2014.
- Do you remember I asked you about the emerging picture of remote access coming in 2010 in October and
- November, through the showing to you of Solutions One,
- 25 Two and Three?

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- 1 POL00031409. Can you see that's called "Zebra Action
- 2 Summary"?
- 3 A. Yes, I can.
- 4 Q. Can you see it's version 0.3, yes, dated 12 June?
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 Q. Can we then next look at an email, POL00346958. Can you
- 7 see this is an email of 17 June to you, 9.00 in the
- 8 morning from Julie George, attaching Zebra Action
- 9 Summary version 0.3?
- 10 A. Yes, yeah.
- 11 Q. So the report I've just showed you?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. "I have tried to call you Rod ... a summary of draft
- actions arising from Deloittes recent piece of work on
- 15 the Horizon systems.
- 16 "Clearly ... no blame attached anywhere", et cetera.
- 17 Okay?
- 18 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 19 Q. Can we look at the action summary that you were sent
- 20 then, back to POL00031409. Look at page 6, please, and
- 21 look at paragraph 4.2.2 under "Data Logging":
- "One point raised in the report was that it was
- 23 possible for someone with privileged access to delete
- 24 data from specific areas of Horizon. This was always

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25 a risk with individuals using admin or power user

- 1 A. Yes, yes.
- 2 Q. Yes? Then in 2011 as well?
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. Then again in 2013. I just want to look at 2014,
- 5 please.
- 6 **A.** Okay.
- 7 Q. Do you remember the Project Zebra Report?
- 8 A. Having seen all these documents, it's kind of bringing
- 9 that back to my mind, yeah.
- 10 Q. Can you remember what Project Zebra was?
- 11 A. I think it was some sort of -- there was a Deloitte
- 12 review. You've sent me -- I can't remember exactly what
- 13 the document --
- 14 Q. It was a report commissioned by the Post Office --
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. -- of Deloitte --
- 17 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 18 Q. -- which, amongst other things, addressed the Horizon
- 19 system?
- 20 A. Yeah, yeah.
- 21 Q. I'm not going to look at the report; I just want to look
- 22 at the summary of it --
- 23 A. Right.
- 24 Q. -- that was distributed after the report had been
- 25 delivered to the Post Office. Can we look at

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- 1 accounts and is a persistent risk, one that needs to be
- 2 catered for in almost any organisation."
- 3 A number of witnesses to the Inquiry have told us
- 4 that they did not realise, on reading the 2014 Deloitte
- 5 report, a conclusion expressed -- it was on page 31 --
- 6 about remote access and the facility to delete data,
- 7 a facility owned by people with admin or power user
- 8 rights. This Post Office summary of the Deloitte report
- 9 specifically raises that issue, doesn't it?
- 10 **A.** It does, and that function shouldn't exist but it does.
- 11 Q. It specifically --
- 12 A. And --
- 13 Q. -- draws to the reader's attention, out of all of the
- 14 pages of the Deloitte report, that facility, doesn't it?
- 15 A. Sorry, this document that we're looking at, is this
- something that Post Office has written in response to
- 17 Deloitte?
- 18 **Q.** Yes.
- 19 **A.** Right, okay. Right.
- 20 Q. It's a summary of actions arising from the Deloitte
- 21 report.
- 22 A. Right. Okay, right.
- 23 Q. This is a narrative part of it.
- 24 A. Right.
- 25 Q. The point I'm making is that a number of people have

1		said, "We, the Post Office, didn't spot these paragraphs	1		directly into Horizon, and I said that needs changir	ng
2		tucked away in a Deloitte report about remote access.	2		because it doesn't. That's a complete misundersta	anding
3		We didn't realise those until Jonathan Swift pointed	3		and I proposed a very onerous alternative piece of	f work,
4		them out to us in 2016."	4		and I think my focus on this document was that the	at just
5		I'm saying this document here flags that issue up,	5		leapt out so much to me to say, "You've got	
6		doesn't it?	6		a misunderstanding in there, that you think Financ	ial
7	A.	It does, yeah.	7		Services"	
8	Q.	It was sent to you, wasn't it?	8	Q.		
9	Α.	I don't know, was it?	9	Ψ.	backdoors into Horizon.	
10	Q.	We just looked at the email attaching it.	10	A.		
11		Okay, right. Yes.	11	Q.		na told
12		Yeah?	12	Q.	there are such backdoors.	ig tolu
	Α.	Yes.	13		Right. Yeah.	:0
14		It was sent to you?	14		Why did you do nothing on each of those four occ	
	Α.	Yeah.		A.	Well, I'm sorry, I think I've just got so many things	
16		This undermined your report yet again, didn't it?	16		going on, this just hasn't registered with me either,	,
17	A.	Well, yes.	17		and that's no good saying that. That's not	
18	Q.	So what did you do about it?	18		a satisfactory thing, but it didn't.	
19	A.	Well, I don't think I did anything about it. I don't	19	MR	BEER: Thank you very much, Mr Ismay.	
20		remember it. But what I remember about the Zebra Report	20		That was the supplemental topic, sir.	
21		was the other thing that's in the evidence where	21	SIR	R WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.	
22		I challenged one of the actions, Action 4A, I think, at	22		So that brings today's proceedings to an end.	
23		the end of the report, where there'd been	23		Thank you, Mr Ismay, for making a second wi	tness
24		a misunderstanding that said that Product and Branch	24		statement and for coming back to give evidence to	oday.
25		Accounting had got the ability to put transactions 181	25		I'm grateful to you. 182	
1 2 3		Thank you to the legal representatives of Core Participants who curtailed themselves admirably. We'll meet again on Tuesday. I think it's Mr Mark			INDEX  RODERICK MARK ISMAY (re-sworn)  Questioned by MR BEER	2 2
4		Davies on Tuesday?			Questioned by MR JACOBS	153
5	MR	BEER: That's right, sir. Full day.			Questioned by MS PATRICK	162
6	SIR	R WYN WILLIAMS: Fine. Thank you.			Questioned by MS PAGE	168
7	(3.1	15 pm)			Further questioned by MR BEER	177
8		(The hearing adjourned until 9.45 am				
9		on Tuesday, 14 May 2024)				
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