Wednesday, 15 May 2024 MR STEVENS: Thank you, if I can call him, sir. 1 1 2 (9.45 am) SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, of course. 3 MR STEVENS: Good morning, sir, can you see and hear me? 3 PATRICK FRANCIS ULICK BOURKE (sworn) 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you. 4 Questioned by MR STEVENS 5 MR STEVENS: Sir, I should say we are due to have a fire Before we start today's proceedings, there's just 5 6 something I'd like to mention to Mr Henry and 6 alarm at 10.00. I will simply pause while that goes on, 7 Mr Moloney. Can you both see me? 7 rather than have a formal adjournment. 8 MR STEVENS: Yes, sir, they can. 8 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stevens, when Mr Bourke was taking the 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine. Well --9 oath, I found what he was saying quite difficult to 10 MR STEVENS: Sorry, Mr Henry isn't here. That was my fault. 10 hear. Was that your experience as well? SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Moloney is present but not Mr Henry, MR STEVENS: Yes, sir, I agree, and I think if we can ask 11 11 but I take it Ms Page is here? 12 12 Mr Bourke --13 MR STEVENS: Yes, sir. 13 Mr Bourke, can I ask you first just to state your SIR WYN WILLIAMS: What I'd like to say is this: that I have 14 14 full name reflected overnight on the decision which I made 15 A. It's Patrick Francis Ulick Bourke. 15 16 yesterday afternoon to close the proceedings without 16 Q. That's fine. Thank you for giving evidence to the 17 giving both Mr Henry and Mr Moloney the opportunity to 17 Inquiry today. Mr Bourke, you've provided two witness 18 put questions to Mr Davies. I have decided that that statements, which I want to go to in the first instance. 18 19 was wrong of me and, accordingly, I apologise to both 19 Your first is dated 11 April 2024. Do you have that in 20 Mr Moloney and Mr Henry, their professional and lay 20 front of you? 21 clients. 21 A. I do. Q. That statement is referenced WITN09830100. Could I ask 22 All right, Mr Stevens, we can continue. 22 23 MR STEVENS: Thank you, sir. We have Mr Bourke today. 23 you, please, to turn to page 126. 24 I just want to check he can see and hear us? 24 A. Yes. 25 THE WITNESS: I can, thank you. 25 Q. Is that your signature? 1 A. It is, yeah. 1 Office Limited]." 2 Q. You then provided a second statement, which, amongst 2 You refer to graduating with a degree in law and 3 other things, clarifies or corrects some parts of your 3 French. Then you say: 4 first witness statement. That is dated 2 May 2024. Do 4 "I trained as a lawyer at the European Commission, 5 5 you have that in front of you? the Post Office, and DJ Freeman and qualified as 6 A. I have, yes. 6 a solicitor in 1997." 7 7 Q. That is document reference WITN09830200. It runs to Please can you confirm when you trained with the 8 seven paragraphs. Could I ask you, please, to turn to 8 Post Office? 9 A. For a period of two months in the period between 1995 page 7 of the statement. 9 A. Yes. 10 and 1997 -- sorry, for a period of two terms of six 10 Q. Is that your signature? 11 months between those two dates. 11 Q. Two terms of six months, so is that two seats, 12 A. It is, yes. 12 13 Q. Can you confirm that, taken together, the contents of 13 effectively? 14 those statements are true to the best of your knowledge 14 A. That's exactly right, yes. 15 and belief? Q. What area of law were those seats in? 15 A. I can confirm that. A. One was focused on general commercial and competition 16 16 17 Q. Your statement now stands as evidence in the Inquiry. 17 law, and the other was in intellectual property. 18 They will both be published on the website shortly. Q. While you were training as a solicitor with the Post 18 19 I am going to ask you some questions about them but 19 Office, did you have any involvement with the Criminal 20 I'd like to start, please, with your first witness 20 Law Department? 21 statement, if we can have that at paragraph 5, page 2, 21 A. No, they were -- you know, I was aware that they existed 22 on the screen. At paragraph 5, you set out your 22 but there was no crossover in our work. 23 background and you say: 23 Q. Did you have any discussions with anyone in the Criminal 24 "I have been asked to provide my professional 24 Law Department about their work? 25 background and qualifications prior to joining [Post 25 A. Not to the best of my recollection.

- Q. You go on to say that you practised at Berwin Leighton 1
- 2 for two years and then you say you were Head of European
- 3 Affairs for Post Office in 1999, again based in
- 4 Brussels, when you say you stopped practising as
- 5 a lawyer. When did you stop practice as a lawyer?
- 6 Α. After my stint with Berwin Leighton.
- 7 Q. So when you were Head of European Affairs for Post
- 8 Office, what did your role entail?
- 9 A. That was policy work, policy and advocacy work.
- 10 Q. Did you have any involvement with matters relating to
- 11 the Horizon IT project whilst in that role?
- 12 No, none whatsoever. I was engaged in work concerning Α.
- 13 the liberalisation of postal markets across Europe.
- 14 Q. You then held roles as a civil servant in what is now
- 15 the Ministry of Justice, correct?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. We'll jump to the most relevant time now: you joined
- 18 Post Office Limited in 2014 as Programme Manager for the
- 19 Mediation Scheme?
- 20 A. Yes, I did.
- 21 Q. In that role, who did you report to?
- A. Initially to Belinda Crowe and then, subsequently, to 22
- 23 Jane MacLeod.
- 24 Q. I take it from your earlier evidence that you didn't
- 25 have a practising certificate at the time as a solicitor
- 1 Security Team into three smaller teams, with only the
- 2 Financial Crime Team (looking at money laundering
- 3 issues) remaining within Jane MacLeod's wider
- 4 Directorate. While I was not directly involved in this
- 5 decision, I was aware of concerns at senior level about
- 6 the prevailing work culture which characterised the
- 7 team."

- Please could you describe what concerns you were
- 9 aware of about the work culture in the Security Team?
- Yes, of course. The -- I think the summary is that it 10 A.
- 11 was very old-fashioned and depended on a very command
- 12 and control type style of management, with the person at
- 13 the top of that, the top of that function really, you
- 14 know, being the determinant of everything, and --
- 15 Q. Just pausing there, sorry, who at that time was top of
- 16 the department then?
- 17 A. John Scott.
- Q. John Scott, thank you. Please continue. 18
- So, no, it was very old-fashioned and did not conform to 19
- 20 what was then the prevailing view of what team
- 21 management -- if you like, effective management
- 22 consisted in.
- 23 Q. When you were looking at those concerns or when you were
- 24 aware of those concerns, to what extent were people
- 25 concerned that that work culture was affecting the way 7

- 1 when you were Programme Manager?
- 2 A. That's correct.
- 3 Q. So at no time as Programme Manager did you hold yourself 4 out as a lawyer?
- A. At no time during my time at the Post Office, no. 5
- 6 In June 2016, you became Deputy Corporate Services
- Director, correct? 7
- 8 Correct. A.
- 9 Q. What role did that entail?
- 10 A. As I think I described in my witness statement, I was
- 11 chiefly involved in acting as a deputy to the General
- 12 Counsel, Jane MacLeod, for the purposes of management,
- 13 rather than for the purposes of any legal advice she
- 14 might be giving. She was engaged in a process to
- 15 integrate various other teams from across the business
- 16 so, in particular, the audit and risk function and
- 17 information security, and information rights, and she
- 18 asked me to help her integrate those teams into a more
- 19 coherent whole.
- 20 On that, please, could we bring back up your witness
- 21 statement at page 4, please. Thank you. If we could go
- 22 to the bottom of the page, you there refer to the role.
- 23 At the end you say:
- 24 "Within approximately 6 to 12 months of the new 25
 - structure taking shape, steps were taken to break up the

- 1 the Security Department investigated matters, such as
- 2 subpostmasters?
- 3 So I'm not sure what the link was, you know, between the
- 4 culture and the practice of investigation, particularly
- 5 of subpostmasters, but I think it's fair to say that the
- 6 sort of -- there was a sense that, in some ways, the
- 7 culture was reminiscent of, I don't know, you know,
- 8 a group of sort of ex-policemen investigators coming
- together and that had a sort of particular culture to 9
- 10 it, which was a bit of an anathema to what the Post
- 11 Office was trying to build.
- Can you expand on that? Why was it different to what 12
- 13 Post Office was trying to build on?
- 14 A. Well, the rest of Post Office was very open and
- 15 collaborative by nature. The Security team, from
- 16 memory, acted much more stand alone and seemed to enjoy,
- 17 if you like, being slightly to one side. I dare say,
- 18 you know, there was a sense in which, you know, being
- 19 an Investigator was somehow sort of special but that's
- 20 about as far as I can go, really.
- 21 Q. Well, if you were involved in the restructure, was it
- 22 not part of your role and responsibility to look at what
- 23 effect that culture had on the actual work that was
- 24 being carried out by the Security Department?
- 25 **A**. No, it wasn't. The decision was taken and it fell to me

- 1 to sort of, if you like, pick up the pieces and see, you
- 2 know -- do the follow-through. So, as I say in my
- 3 witness statement, I didn't take part in the decision;
- 4 I was somewhat involved in its implementation.
- 5 Q. When did you first become aware of these concerns
- 6 regarding the Security Team?
- 7 A. I think quite early on. You know, as soon as they sort
- 8 of report in to the -- report in to Jane MacLeod's
- 9 function.
- 10 $\,$ Q. So when you say "early on", is that early on in your
- 11 role in 2014 or early on when you became Deputy
- 12 Corporate Services Director?
- 13 A. The latter.
- 14 Q. Latter. You then, in January 2018, became Corporate
- 15 Affairs Director, a role that's now known as Government
- 16 Affairs and Policy Director; is that right?
- 17 A. That's correct.
- 18 **Q.** When you became Corporate Affairs Director, how did your
- 19 role change?
- 20 A. Well, very substantially, in that I was engaged in
- 21 a range of different issues to that which I'd been
- 22 previously engaged with. I obviously had been quite
- 23 heavily involved in, particularly, the Mediation Scheme,
- 24 and so I retained an interest, I suppose, in the work
- being done in that area but, by this stage, I was also
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- 1 what do you mean by that?
- 2 A. Well, I mean by that that, obviously, context is very
- 3 important in this affair, and we were not imbued with
- 4 the same knowledge that we have today about what was
- 5 going on or may have been going on in the background.
- 6 So, as we were seeing it, the work involved in the
- 7 Mediation Scheme, the Complaints and Mediation Scheme,
- 8 was a genuine attempt to try to resolve the complaints
- 9 brought forward by a relatively small number of
- 10 subpostmasters and, you know, I think we did do some
- 11 very sensible things in order to try to achieve that
- 12 objective.
- 13 Q. In the context of investigations, would you accept that
- 14 acting in good faith includes keeping an open mind?
- 15 **A.** As a general principle, yes, but I wasn't involved in
- 16 any investigations.
- 17 Q. I'll rephrase, then. In Post Office's work, in
- 18 responding to allegations about the Horizon IT System,
- when you're responding to them and listening to those
- 20 allegations, do you think acting in good faith included
- 21 keeping an open mind about the allegations?
- 22 A. I do and I think we did, and a number of the documents
- that have been shared with me and that I've also
- 24 requested from Post Office Limited show that, whilst we

25 had a growing sense of confidence in the operation of

- 1 looking at the broader range of issues facing the Post
- 2 Office, notably in terms of issues relating to our
- 3 relationship with Government, funding questions around
- 4 the subsidy, and so on.
- 5 Q. The fire alarm may go off at any point but, if we can6 bring up page 124, please, of your witness statement.

(Pause for fire alarm test)

Well, we now know we have a working and long-winded fire alarm.

Page 124. I want to look about your approach as
Programme Manager and in relation to the scheme. You

say, a few lines down in that paragraph, "In that

13 regard" --

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Sorry, I should say you're referring to your involvement in how Post Office Limited handled challenges to the integrity of Horizon by subpostmasters, Members of Parliament, journalists and

subpostmasters, Members of Parliament, journalists and
 members of the public. You say:
 "In that regard, I think the work I was engaged in

was conducted in good faith and involved me, and others
 at [Post Office Limited], doing a significant number of
 sensible and reasonable things as we attempted to

23 understand and to resolve the complaints and disputes

24 brought forward as part of the Scheme."

When you say you carried out the work in good faith,

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- the Horizon system as the investigations and case
- 2 reviews came forward from Second Sight, I record in
- 3 a number of different places that we should not be
- 4 complacent. Whilst it was certainly the case that we
- 5 could draw some comfort from what we've discovered to
- date, we should not be complacent that that would be the
- 7 final word.
- 8 $\,$ **Q.** Mr Bourke, I'm going to explore with you what actually
- 9 happened. My question is simply: do you accept it
- 10 involved keeping an open mind? Your answer is yes. Do
- you accept that acting in good faith also meant acting
- 12 with transparency?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 Q. Would you accept that acting with good faith includes
- 15 acting fairly?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 Q. When you were brought on to the Mediation Scheme, what
- did you understand the objectives of what's been termed
- 19 Project Sparrow to be?
- 20 A. My understanding was that this was a project established
- 21 to receive, analyse, examine and hopefully resolve
- 22 a number of issues brought forward by postmasters as
- part of a Complaints and Mediation Scheme.
- 24 **Q.** Your role as Programme Manager, what did you understand

25 that role to involve on a day-to-day basis?

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- A. My role involved ensuring the throughput of cases 1 2 through the various stages of that, ensuring that the 3 Working Group, that had been set up to look at questions 4 of whether or not cases were suitable for mediation, to 5 ensure that those meetings were equipped with the 6 information they needed to make those determinations and 7 to, you know, otherwise facilitate the successful 8 conclusion of that project.
- Q. When you joined Post Office Limited, what, if anything,
 were you told about Post Office Limited's general
 strategy or approach to responding to challenges brought
 by subpostmasters regarding the integrity of the Horizon
 IT System?
- 14 A. I don't think I was told anything specifically about our 15 approach, just that, you know, we were to, you know, 16 consider the cases thoroughly, the investigations would 17 be -- or I should say the re-investigations would be as 18 thorough and complete and exhaustive, where possible, 19 obviously the timing was a bit of a factor in terms of 20 the availability of evidence in some cases, but that we 21 would, you know, do a -- you know, do a -- do the 22 best -- do the work to the best of our ability in 23 ensuring that we understood what was really the source 24 of the complaints and, where it was possible to do so, 25 to achieve a resolution through mediation.

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- 2 A. Yes, that's right.
- Q. So your evidence is that, within a period of two months,
 you'd developed this frustration as to how Post Office
 Limited was being portrayed in its handling of the
 scheme?
- A. Well, yes, I think it got more pronounced as the months
 went on but, even then, it was clear to me that we were
 not achieving any sort of cut-through in terms of what
 our position might be or might have been at the time
 because simply we were not being heard.
- Q. Please can we look at POL00116790. This is the briefing
 that we were referring to in your witness statement for
 Paula Vennells and, if you could go down, please, to
 "Background/Argument" -- thank you. At paragraph 4, you
 say -- you put:

"Secondly, we would urge you to stress the fact that you are in charge of an organisation that has, at its heart, the determination to improve people's lives (often the most vulnerable in our society). Indeed, you have obligations in this regard. While the issue being championed by MPs may seem important to them in campaign terms, this pales into insignificance to the bigger, social mission of [Post Office Limited] and your leadership of it, not to mention the only materially

Q. I want to look at some examples now of the approach in practice. If we can bring up, please, page 34, paragraph 68 of your statement. We can see midway down you're talking here about a briefing note for Paula Vennells, who was having a meeting with MPs on 17 November. You say:

"At the time, there was a sense of frustration within [Post Office Limited] about accusations being made in the media and on social media which did not acknowledge the genuine efforts being made by [Post Office Limited] to resolve the issues raised by subpostmasters through the Scheme."

13 Did you share this frustration at this point? 14 A. I had begun to, yes. It seemed to me that we were 15 doing -- as I said in the paragraph you took me to right 16 at the outset, that we were doing some really sensible 17 things to try to get to the bottom of this. We were 18 providing applicants with money, so they could properly 19 formulate their applications to the scheme using 20 professional advisers, usually lawyers, sometimes 21 accountants. We were paying for the mediations and the 22 cost of mediations, the investigations were very, very 23 thorough and we were approaching the question of 24 mediation in good faith.

25 **Q.** You'd been involved for two months at that point, hadn't

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thousands of people who depend critically on our services. It would be a brave MP who sought to champion one above the other."

Was it your view that Post Office's public purpose was more important than the allegations made by subpostmasters that they'd been convicted and imprisoned in prosecutions that relied on data from Horizon that may have been unreliable?

- A. Well, that's not the question that I was actually faced
 with. Although a number of cases involving criminal
 convictions had been accepted into the scheme, none of
 those were taken forward as part of the mediation
 process.
- Q. Well, what it says is, "While the issue being championed
 by MPs may seem important", one of the issues being
 championed by MPs was that there may have been unsafe
 convictions, wasn't it?
- 18 **A.** Yes.
- Q. So the question is: did you consider that Post Office'spublic purpose was more important than that issue?
- A. On the basis that I had seen nothing and the Post Office
 has seen nothing to suggest that the question of unsafe
 convictions had any evidence behind them, then I suppose
- 24 I did at the time feel that.
- 25 Q. Was that a commonly held belief within Post Office?

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- 1 A. I don't know.
- Q. Did Paula Vennells challenge it, when she received thisbriefing?
- 4 A. I can't recall.

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- Q. Do you think that's keeping an open mind to theallegations?
- 7 A. Well, we had had the cases submitted to us, and it was 8 apparent from our reading of them that, although there 9 were some suggestions that Horizon may be problematic, there had not been anything advanced to suggest that 10 11 Horizon was actually responsible for the losses being 12 complained of. So, to that extent, then it was 13 important to see it in the context -- in that context. 14 I would also add that the scheme admitted 150 15 applications into its numbers, which is a relatively 16

small number, 136 were actually taken forward as part of it, the others having been resolved prior to (unclear) and in the context of the number of users over the relevant period of the Horizon system, which are 500,000, this represented a very small minority of cases.

So there was a certainly an idea in my mind that, in the absence of evidence that Horizon had caused the shortfalls, as far as we could determine at that stage, you know, the, you know, it was important that we

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front of us in the scheme, there were, in almost all cases, a very rational and, frankly, quite mundane explanation for what had transpired in those that didn't rely on, you know, theoretical possibilities, which were pretty improbable. So I think sort of there was a sense in which, in the absence of evidence, to continue pursuing a line which relied on a theoretical possibility, rather than the facts in front of us, seemed to me to be somewhat self-indulgent.

Q. Please can we bring up POL00150306. If you could go to page 2, please. If we could go to Nick Wallis' email of 16 December, this is an email to Mark Davies. He asked various questions. The fourth substantive paragraph down, Mr Wallis says:

"I get the sense from speaking to a number of [subpostmasters] that they don't like the system, they don't trust it and they live in fear of what the Post Office might do if they get something wrong with it."

If we can turn back to page 1, please, to your response -- go down, please. You start by saying:

"Apart from its breathtakingly facetious tone, this looks to me to be clutching at straws a little bit."

Why did you think Mr Wallis' email was "breathtakingly facetious" in tone?

A. Well, I think if you scroll down to Mr Wallis' email and 19

retained our focus on the day-to-day mission, whilst still absolutely addressing the complaints being made, but it couldn't come at the cost of it.

Q. If we turn the page, please. You refer at paragraph 5
 to the Horizon issue being one "we are absolutely
 willing to entertain", and then at 6, you say:

"But there must be limits: we cannot accommodate the self-indulgence of a number of malcontents to the continuing detriment of our customers. The tiny minority making allegations, while deserving of respect and due process, cannot be allowed to pollute our public service mission."

So when you're referring to the malcontents are they the people in the Mediation Scheme?

A. Well, that was the view of a number of them, as it says
 there and, looking back on this, I clearly regret the
 sort of rather florid language I've used but --

18 Q. Why did you use that language?

A. Well, I think it was borne of a sense of frustration,
 rather than anything else and it's not -- I'm not
 seeking to excuse it. It's a poor choice of language.

But I think it is explicable, in terms of the

23 frustration I was then feeling.

24 Q. What was the self-indulgence that you were referring to?

25 A. Well, I think certainly, with the cases that we had in

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1 it's the fifth paragraph down, where he says:

"If you have data which shows that the vast majority of [subpostmasters] love using Horizon and trust it implicitly, it would up useful to have that information."

You know, I think I took that as being laden with sarcasm, which I think it was. So I was reacting to that, in the first instance.

9 Q. If we can go back up to the email, please:

"In conclusion, I'm not sure it merits much more than a cursory response", at the bottom.

Then, if we go up, please, Rodric Williams replies to you, saying:

"I swear, you are the only person I've met more
cynical than me, and then by some considerable margin
..."

You respond by saying:

18 "Thank you, sir, I take that as a serious badge of19 honour [smiley face]."

You're self-describing as cynical of the allegations
 being made by journalists regarding the Horizon IT
 System in this instance, aren't you?

A. Well, I think up to a point. I mean, look, this
 exchange -- and I know it's come up in a different
 context -- you know, obviously it doesn't look good,

- 1 eight years on but, you know, I think this is the sort 2 of, you know, dark humour which is quite often employed
- 3 in these contexts to relieve pressure. So I don't
- 4 excuse it, but I think one can read rather too much into 5 it, if I may say so.
- 6 Q. Does it show an inherent distrust of the allegations 7 made by journalists and subpostmasters that you held?
- 8 No, it's not an inbuilt distrust. It's not
- 9 a predisposition to distrust; it's reflective of the
- 10 fact that there wasn't any evidence for the propositions
- that were being advanced. 11
- 12 Q. I'm going to move on to a different subject now and I'm
- 13 going to look at your involvement in preparing
- 14 a briefing for a Westminster Hall debate in December
 - 2014. I'm not going to be asking you any questions that
- 16 go to the accuracy of matters said within Parliament,
- 17 simply to your involvement in the briefing beforehand
- 18 and a document afterwards.
- 19 I want to start, though, by looking at your
 - knowledge of some matters. When you joined as Programme
- 21 Director, what was your knowledge of Post Office
- 22 Limited's prosecutorial function?
- 23 A. My knowledge was that, like any other company, it had
- 24 the ability to take out private prosecutions. My
- understanding was that the historic position had been 25
- 1 Q. When you were taking the role of Programme Director,
- 2 obviously we've discussed already, part of that involved
- 3 applicants who had been convicted of criminal offences,
- 4 yes?

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- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Did you not receive a briefing on the issues that were
- 7 relevant to the safety of those convictions?
- 8 A. No, I did not.
- 9 Q. Did you not ask any questions yourself to satisfy
- 10 yourself about what Post Office had done to review the
- 11 safety of those convictions?
- 12 A. No, and just to clarify my previous answer, I was aware
- 13 that work had been undertaken to review a number of
- 14 historic matters but that was my -- that was the extent
- 15 of my knowledge of it. For my purposes, the relevant 16
- points were: were these cases going to be admitted into 17 a mediation phase, and I was aware that there had been
- 18 strong advice from both Simon Clarke and from Brian
- 19 Altman, then QC, that such cases should not, frankly, in
- any circumstances go into a mediation process, and that 20
- 21 is what I took as my lead.
- 22 Q. Slightly different question before I move on is: your
- 23 evidence is you weren't aware of the Simon Clarke
- 24 Advice, were you aware of the underlying allegation that
- 25 Gareth Jenkins had provided expert evidence in breach of 23

- 1 that the police had more or less indicated that this was
- 2 something better handled by the Post Office, given that
- 3 there were specific circumstances attaching to the work
- of a subpostmaster that Post Office Investigators ought 4
- 5 to be more familiar with, and so there was sort of
- 6 accommodation as between the police and the Post Office
- 7 Investigations Team that it would take it forward.
- 8 I was also conscious of the fact that the
- 9 prosecutions, whilst obviously somebody at the Post
- 10 Office had to eventually say "yes" or "no" to whether or
- 11 not charges should be brought, the advice was always 12 provided by external lawyers, in the main Cartwright
- 13 King, and external counsel. So, from my perspective,
- 14 there were a number of inherent checks and balances in
- 15 that process.
- 16 Q. Are you now aware, if I said the Simon Clarke Advice of
- 17 15 July 2013 concerning Gareth Jenkins, are you aware of
- 18 what that is?
- 19 A. I am, yes.
- 20 Q. Were you aware of the Clarke Advice when you joined as
- 21 Programme Director?
 - 22 No, to the best of my knowledge, I only became aware of
 - 23 the Clarke Advice in 2018.
- 24 Q. Sorry, was that 2018?
- 25 Yes, 1-8.

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- 1 duties to the court or expert duties?
- A. I don't believe so. I certainly at some point became 2
- 3 aware of the fact that, for whatever reason -- and
- 4 I don't think I was ever clear on the point -- the
- 5 expert witness that we had historically used could no
- 6 longer perform that function, and I was aware that steps
- 7 were being taken to explore the -- bring on board
- 8 an alternative. In the event, I don't think that
- occurred because we ceased prosecutions in 2013, to all 9
- 10 intents and purposes.
- 11 Q. So when do you say you were aware of Post Office
- 12 performance not being able to rely on the same expert
 - witness?

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- 14 A. I can't give you a precise timescale but it was probably
- 15 in the -- look, at a best guess, and it really is only
- 16 a guess, sometime around the spring of 2015.
- 17 Q. I want to look at remote access now, your knowledge of
- 18 that. Can we look at POL00091395. So this is an email 19
- from Belinda Crowe and it goes to you and others on
- 20 October 2014. Could we go to page 2, please, and we 20
- 21 see an email that's forwarded to you from James Davidson of Fujitsu and sets out some matters on remote access. 22
- 23 Could we go down the page, please, to 2, "Can Fujitsu
- 24 change branch data without a subpostmaster being aware
- 25 of the change?" It says:

1 "Once created, branch transaction data cannot be 2 changed, only additional data can be inserted. If this 3 is required, the additional transactions will be visible 4 on the trading statement but would not require 5 acknowledgement/approval by a subpostmaster. The 6 approval is given by Post Office via the change process. 7 In response to a previous query Fujitsu checked last 8 year when this was done on Horizon Online and we found 9 any one occurrence in March 2010 which was early in the 10 pilot for Horizon Online and was covered by 11 an appropriate change request from Post Office and 12 an auditable log. For Old Horizon, a detailed 13 examination of archived data would have to be undertaken 14 to look into this across the lifetime of use."

It goes on to discuss cost.

16 So breaking this down, this tells you, doesn't it, 17 that Fujitsu could insert transactions into branch 18 accounts --

19 Α. In short, that's correct.

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- 20 Q. -- and that, when it did that, that it didn't need to be 21 approved by a subpostmaster?
- 22 A. It didn't need to be but, in fact, my understanding is 23 this occurrence -- and it says there in the middle of 24 the paragraph, "we only found one occurrence in March

2010", my understanding was this was done as part of

- 1 A. My understanding was, if they were to perform the 2 requirements of the task of daily accounting, this would
- 3 have been visible to them, yes. 4 Q. Where did you get that understanding from?
- 5 A. From Fujitsu.
- 6 Q. How was it going to be clearly visible to the 7 subpostmaster?
- A. Because it would not carry the postmaster's unique 8 9 identifier code.
- 10 Q. So your understanding is, at this time, that the 11 subpostmaster themselves would be able to see that data 12 to show that it was somewhere else, or Fujitsu, that 13 entered that data?
- 14 A. They would be able to identify that it was not a transaction which they had entered. 15
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stevens, can you give me the date, 16 17 again, of that email which provides that answer?
- MR STEVENS: Of course, sir. The date of the email that 18 19 provided the answer was 17 April 2014 and it was 20 forwarded to Mr Bourke on 20 October 2014.
- 21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I just wanted to check I'd got the dates 22 right. So April and October.
- 23 MR STEVENS: Yes, sir.
- 24 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, fine, thanks.
- THE WITNESS: Sorry, I don't know if it would be helpful for 25

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1 a pilot and, in fact, the subpostmaster concerned was 2 fully informed --

3 Q. Mr Bourke, my question was: it didn't need to be. We 4 can look at the other matters, in due course, but 5 I think your answer to that was you agreed it didn't 6 need to be. You've already said it's been done once for

Horizon Online but the position was, for old Horizon or

8 what we call Legacy Horizon, Fujitsu couldn't tell you

9 to what extent, if at all, transactions had been

10 inserted into branch accounts.

11 A. On the face of it, that is correct, yes.

12 Q. At that time, were you clear at all as to whether 13 a subpostmaster would be able to clearly identify 14 whether Fujitsu had inserted a transaction into the 15 account, rather than it being generated in the branch 16 itself?

17 A. My understanding is that any such balancing transaction 18 would leave an auditable trail distinguishing that 19 transaction from any performed by the subpostmaster.

20 Q. That's slightly different, that's about an auditable 21 trail. I'm saying, at this time, did you know whether 22 or not it would be clearly visible to a subpostmaster, 23 on the data that they could access, that a transaction 24 had been added into the branch accounts by Fujitsu,

25 rather than in branch?

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1 me to say at this stage that I think on 7 November, so 2 just two or so weeks later, Mark Underwood and I had

3 an exchange of email following a discussion with

4 Fujitsu, in which we confirmed our understanding of what 5 was and what was not possible in terms of remote access,

6 and that's the point at which I think my knowledge of

A. I'm terribly sorry, sir. I was just saying that it

7 these issues really began to form.

8 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, you dropped your voice through the 9 last few words.

11 might be of interest and helpful to the Inquiry to know 12 that there's an exchange of emails between myself and 13 a colleague, Mark Underwood, following a conversation 14 with Fujitsu on 7 November, just some two or so weeks

15 later, in which we confirmed that our respective

16 understanding of what was and was not possible in remote 17 access terms was aligned to one another and reflected

18 the state of our knowledge at that time.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine. Thank you. 19

20 MR STEVENS: Sir, I don't propose to go to that but, just 21 for the record, the reference for that is POL00149488.

That's the emails to which Mr Bourke is referring. 22

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, 00149888?

24 MR STEVENS: 488.

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SIR WYN WILLIAMS: 488, thank you. 25

MR STEVENS: Slightly different topic, Mr Bourke, please.

It's still on remote access but a different element to

it. Can we look at POL00307633, please.

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Apologies, I'm playing catch-up here. This is an email from Belinda Crowe to you on 23 October 2014, and we can see in the attachments -- well, there are attachments. It's difficult to see what they are from the description there but in your witness statement you refer to one of them, and that's POL00027153. This is a report for the Post Office Board that is dated on 6 June 2014, so before your time, and its authors were Chris Aujard and Mark Davies.

Presumably you would have read this, it being sent to you by Belinda Crowe?

- A. So I'm not clear that I would have read it in any great detail. This email was sent to me some two weeks after I joined and, to the best of my recollection, the point of it being sent to me was to look at or to note the fact that advice had previously been taken by Post Office as to the susceptibility of Post Office to a challenge for judicial review were steps taken to move the scheme in-house. So I was not focused on anything else it might have said.
- 24 But you're sent two attachments and, at this point, Q. 25 I think you are looking to instruct a separate

the design for processing and storing transaction data with integrity."

You would accept, would you, that the Deloitte report was an important document, this is Project Zebra, it was an important document in the context of Post Office Limited's response to the applicants in the scheme or how it approached allegations against the Horizon IT System.

- 9 A. So I was not aware of Project Zebra until much, much 10 later, in the context of preparing instructions for Jonathan Swift and Christopher Knight, who conducted the 11 12 Swift Review
- 13 Q. But this document effectively tells you what Project 14 Zebra is, doesn't it?
- A. Well, not really, no. It certainly doesn't go into the 15 16 findings and it wouldn't have been apparent to me that 17 there was a project called Zebra or that Deloitte had 18 been particularly instructed to look at anything in 19 particular. As I've previously said, the purpose of 20 this document being shared with me was to inform my 21 consideration of whether or not instructing counsel to 22 provide advice on the susceptibility of Post Office 23 in -- as it might seek to change the scheme, was 24 susceptible to judicial review. So I wasn't looking at 25 it from the purposes of data integrity or the Deloitte

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1 counsel -- a separate barrister, sorry -- to advise on 2 the issue of judicial review. That's at this time, yes?

3 A. Shortly thereafter, yes.

4 Q. So if you're sent two documents and you're considering 5 instructing counsel on the same issue, presumably you 6 would have at least reviewed the documents?

7 A. Yes but I would have taken -- I would have focused on 8 those bits which were relevant to the work that I was 9 taking forward at the time, which had nothing to do with 10 remote access and everything to do with judicial review.

Q. Let's look at page 3, because this is, effectively, in 11 12 the middle of the document. We see, if you go to the 13 bottom, it's just before the conclusion -- thank you. 14 It refers to the Deloitte report and Linklaters advice, 15 and paragraph 5.2 says:

> "As regards the Sparrow-related issues it is believed that given the limited scope of the work Deloitte were able to undertake it is highly unlikely that we will be able to extract any further comfort or assurance without their doing substantially more work. Furthermore, it is also clear that Deloitte will not consent to the publication of their report or use their name to publicly assert that the system is working with integrity unless they undertake specific testing. That said, the report does give some comfort for the Board on

1 report.

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- 2 Q. Just a few days earlier, Belinda Crowe had sent you the 3 email regarding remote access, correct?
- 4 A. Um --
- 5 Q. You've just been to it.
- 6 Yes, I mean, she would have -- yes, she may well have 7 sent me an email on remote access, yeah.
- **Q.** At this time, you are dealing with, as we say, 8 9 applications in the scheme. If you read this and saw, 10 "That said, the report does give some comfort for the 11 Board on the design for processing and storing 12 transaction data with integrity", surely you would have 13 considered that to be relevant to the work you were
- 14 carrying out? 15 Well, up to a point, although I was not at that stage focused on questions of data integrity. As I've said, 16
- and I say again, I was looking at this from the point of 17 18 view of the susceptibility of Post Office to a JR: 19 should we change the scheme? I think I'm right in 20 saying that the email from Belinda Crowe, to which you 21 refer, was sent to me on 23 October of that year, which 22 is, you know, perhaps week five of my arrival at Post
- 23 Office, not the knowing the subject matter terribly

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So, I'm afraid, if I'm guilty of having, you know,

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- 1 not immediately seen the relevance of those things at 2 the time, then I can any apologise, but I think it's --
- 3 Q. Let's look at it in context. You receive the email on 4 remote access from Belinda Crowe a few days before, so
- 5 remote access is on your mind. Your earlier evidence,
- 6 you referred us to a conversation you had with Mark
- 7 Underwood on 7 November regarding remote access. Is
- 8 your evidence that, when reading this report here, on or
- 9 around 23 October, you simply put issues of data
- 10 integrity out of your mind?
- A. Well, my evidence is that I wasn't focused on that 11
- 12 point, and the email confirming my understanding of what
- 13 was and was not possible in relation to remote access
- 14 and the exchange between myself and Mark Underwood dates
 - from 7 November, sometime after 23 October.
- 16 Q. Please can we go back to the issue of remote access and
- 17 POL00149598, please. Thank you. Now, if we can go down
- 18 to the bottom of this page, please, we see there's
- 19 another email exchange -- well, sorry it's an email
- 20 exchange between you and James Davidson at Fujitsu and,
- 21 presumably, this was arising from your work with Fujitsu
- 22 to establish the position in respect of remote access?
- 23 A. Yes, it reflects my growing involvement in issues of
- 24 remote access, yes.

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25 Q. You say in this email:

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- 1 So how did you come to describe the allegations as 2 "haseless"?
- 3 A. Because when we were looking at the cases in the
- 4 scheme -- and, please, I mean, just for the sake of
- 5 context, my only involvement was the cases in the
- 6 scheme, in none of those cases could it be said that
- 7 remote access was responsible for the losses being
- 8 complained of, and we know that because of another
- 9 exchange with Fujitsu, in which they reported, because
- 10 we asked them to, to identify whether or not any such
- 11 remote access had taken place, and the answer came back,
- 12 not once but twice, with the final answer coming back
- 13 saying, "Everything appears golden".
- 14 Q. So your evidence here is that you're not referring to
- 15 the general allegation made about remote access, you're
- 16 saying this is allegations in individual cases within
- 17 the scheme?
- A. That was the work that both we and Second Sight 18 19 ostensibly were focused on.
- Q. I said this would be about a briefing, let's look at the 20
- 21 briefing and how that was created. I think you accept
- 22 in your evidence that you were asked to assist UKGI --
- 23 sorry, the Shareholder Executive to prepare a briefing
- 24 for Jo Swinson on 11 December 2014?
- 25 A. Yes, that's right.

1 "We absolutely share the ambition to put the 2 baseless allegations brought forward by Second Sight and

3 applicants where they belong, but there is a bit of 4

handling to be done ..."

Where did the allegations belong?

- 6 A. Well, they needed to be taken at face value but needed
 - to be examined for any evidence to support them, like
- 8 any allegation and, as the expression "baseless
- 9 allegations" suggests that allegations were certainly
- 10 being made but very little evidence was being adduced in
- 11 support of those allegations, so that's the point I was
- 12 making.
- 13 Q. Would you say this is an open-minded approach to the
- 14 allegations being made by Second Sight?
- 15 A. I don't think it's a closed approach. It's an approach
- 16 which requires Second Sight to do more than just allege
- 17 things and to provide evidence for those allegations.
- 18 I don't think that's in any way unreasonable.
- 19 Well, you'd been told, hadn't you, that inserting
- 20 transactions into branch accounts was possible, yes?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 You, at this stage, didn't know to what extent, if at
- 23 all, that feature had been used in Legacy Horizon?
- 24 A. I mean, that is true. I didn't even know if that
- 25 facility existed in Legacy Horizon.

- 1 Could we look, please, at POL00150097. Now, this is one
- of the drafts of the briefings you prepared. If we look 2
- 3 at paragraph 77 of your statement -- we don't need to
- 4 bring it up -- you say that you shared an early draft of
- 5 this document with Belinda Crowe, Andrew Parsons and
- 6 Mark Underwood on 12 December 2014; so did you draft
- 7 this document?
- A. I would have drafted the draft, yes. 8
- Q. If we look, please, at page 3 and if we could go down to 9
- 10 show just what -- that's perfect, thank you. It says:
- "What were the main accusations of the Interim 11
- 12
- 13 That's referring to Second Sight's Interim Report,
- 14 isn't it?

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- 15 Yes, the Interim Report of 2013, I think.
- You write under "other conclusions were": 16
- 17 "2 incidents where defects in the Horizon software
- 18 gave rise to 76 branches being affected by incorrect
- 19 balances or transactions, which took some time to
- 20 identify and correct (but which were corrected)."
- Using the word "incident", was that a word you used 22 yourself or did you receive guidance on it?
- 23 I certainly didn't receive guidance on it. I think
- 24 that's what I would have chosen myself.
- 25 Q. Do you think that fairly reflects the points made about

1	the receipts and payments mismatch bug and the suspense
2	account bug in the Interim Report, to describe them as

3 "incidents"?

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4 A. Well, if you read the sentence, it says "two incidents 5 where defects", so, in fact, I'm talking about "defects"

in the Horizon software, not "incidents" in the Horizon

software. I think defects is -- whether you want to

8 call it a "bug" or a "defect" or an "anomaly" or

an "exception", I'm not sure it really makes much

differs. The point is there was a problem with the

11 Horizon software which gave rise to these issues.

12 Q. Could we look at a further version of the draft 13 briefing, please. It's UKGI00002719, page 4, please.

If you could go down to "Progress/Results", thank you.

15 It says:

> "What were the main accusations of the Interim Report?"

18 It now says:

> "Those Second Sight identified a number of areas of concern that needed further investigation, it must be noted that their primary finding was one of no evidence of system wide problems with the Horizon software."

Can you recall why the further information in your earlier briefing was taken out.

A. I've no idea. I'm not sure. Maybe it was just for the

1 or may have been the author of this draft?

2 A. I think what I'd say sir, is that, as with all

3 briefings, particularly ones going to the ministers,

there is a process of quality assurance that would

typically involve people more senior than the original

6 draftsman and I suspect that's what happened in this

7 case. So, although the initial words and the working

draft would have emanated from me, the final version

9 that went would have had the approval of people more

senior than myself.

11 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I follow that but, without 12

displaying too much ignorance, I'm not sure, as I sit

here at the moment, which paper eventually went to the

Minister. So that I was simply trying to get a sequence

15 right, if you see what I mean. So, again, can I just be 16

clear: the first draft we looked at you probably did

author; is the state of your evidence that you don't

know whether you authored this one or do you know,

19 whichever it is

20 A. I authored this one as a draft. The final version --

21 and this may or may not be it -- was, you know,

22 authored --

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sure. Right. So simply so that I can be

24 clear in my mind -- I'll use the phrase "the probability

25 is" -- the probability is that you did author the two 39

1 sake of brevity but the basic conclusion at the second

2 bullet point you've read out is accurate.

3 Q. Do you think that's a full and fair briefing of what was 4 in the Interim Report for the Minister?

A. Insofar as the Horizon system is concerned, yes. 5

6 Q. So your evidence is that it wasn't important to

7 highlight to the Minister that the Interim Report had

8 included information about at least two bugs in the

9 system?

10 A. The bugs that were reported by Second Sight were not

11 new. We had, in fact, told Second Sight about those two

bugs on a voluntary basis. So ... 12

13 Q. Mr Bourke, can you answer the question, please. The

14 question was about the briefing: is your evidence that

15 you didn't think it was important or that the Minister

16 shouldn't be informed of the two bugs in the Interim

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18 A. Look, in circumstances where it was not new information,

19 I -- and they'd been satisfactory resolved, at that time

20 I clearly didn't think that, if indeed I was the author

21 of this final version.

22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I was going to ask you. Do

23 I understand your evidence to be that the first draft

that we looked at, you accept the probability that you 24

25 were the author, whereas are you accepting that you were

1 drafts that we've looked at so far?

2 Δ Yes.

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SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, fine. 3

4 MR STEVENS: Sir, at this point, I think if we can look at,

actually in fairness to Mr Bourke, Mr Bourke's evidence,

6 in his witness statement.

7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Please.

MR STEVENS: Page 42, paragraph 81. 8

9 So we were looking at UKGI00002719, which you see,

10 sir, is the URN at the end.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. 11

12 MR STEVENS: We see the evidence there that:

"It appears that shortly before this, at 11.13, he [referring to Mark Underwood] had shared the same

15 version of the briefing document with me and Belinda

16 Crowe in a separate email chain, and at 11.19,

17 I forwarded this to Richard Callard, which both Belinda

18 Crowe and Mark Underwood in copy."

19 So there's then evidence on various drafts that went 20 backwards and forwards.

21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. Anyway.

22 MR STEVENS: It may help, sir, if I go to this, because this

23 was going to be a question I had.

24 If you can look at POL00150316. Mr Bourke, are you

25 able to assist us with if this the final version of the

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1 report for the Minister? 2 A. No. But it looks like a near finalised version, if it's 3 not the final version. Just by way of clarification, 4 briefings for ministers are drafted and finalised by 5 civil servants rather than by people at the Post Office. 6 So we would have provided a great deal of material but 7 the file package that was communicated to, in this case 8 Jo Swinson MP, would have had the approval sign-off of 9 whatever the appropriate management chain was in the

Civil Service at that department.

Q. Please can we look at page 4 of this document. We have a question about "Why did Post Office agree to incorporate convicted cases into the scheme if it knew it wasn't going to mediate?" We see the fourth bullet point down says:

"Post Office is, however, under an absolute duty to immediately disclose any information which might undermine the Prosecution's case or support the case of the defendant and Post Office has done so where appropriate."

Can you recall if you took any advice or were involved in the drafting of this section of the report?

A. So I don't recall but it was my practice, certainly, to consult people in the Legal Team whenever matters around matters of criminal law, which I was really very

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1 **Q.** Yes.

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2 A. The Westminster Hall debate took place on 17th December, 3 and I -- in an answer I gave at the beginning of this 4 session, I think told you that my -- I think that sort 5 of knowledge began to emerge, for me, sometime in the 6 spring of 2015, although I wasn't aware of the details. 7 I'm not sure I even knew the identity of Mr Jenkins at 8 the time, just that there had been a problem which 9 rendered the previous expert as being usable in future 10 proceedings and some work being conducted to explore the 11 possibility of an alternative expert being found to 12 effectively provide the same expertise in any future 13 cases.

14 Q. I want to look at the last two documents before we have
15 a short break, POL00308923, please. If we can go down
16 to the bottom of the page, please -- thank you -- we see
17 your email to Richard Callard at Shareholder Executive.
18 He was the Shareholder Non-Executive Director at that
19 point, wasn't he?

20 A. He was, yes.

21 **Q.** It said:

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22 "Richard

"Suggested responses to the additional questions prompted by [presumably that's 'Jo Swinson's'] chat with [now Lord Arbuthnot, James Arbuthnot]."

unfamiliar with, were concerned. I think -- and I don't know whether it's helpful to think where I didn't know -- but the question of whether -- the question as to why criminal cases were first allowed into the scheme, if indeed the prospect of mediating them was highly unlikely, I think may have been born of a desire to, if you like, get the scheme up and running, and, in any event, although those cases were not mediated because we had had very strong advice that they could not be, it would nonetheless enable the applicants to benefit from a full re-examination and investigation of their cases, and a criminal case review -- sorry, a case review report from an independent firm of forensic accountants, such that it could be used by them, in

So it wasn't an entirely pointless exercise for them to be part of the conflated Mediation Scheme, even if the mediations did not take place in those cases.

the -- you know, if they decided that was the thing to

do, to lodge an appeal against their conviction.

Q. Do you think around this time, as part of your
 involvement with creating this briefing, you would have
 been made aware of the difficulties with Gareth Jenkins'
 evidence?

A. I think it's unlikely, because this is still, to thebest of my knowledge, late 2014.

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1 Is that right?

2 A. That's my reading of it, yes.

3 Q. You see

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"For the sake of expediency, I am copying internal colleagues for their comments please ...

"I would be particularly grateful for the views of Jarnail on the criminal aspects of this and [Andy Parsons] to check I have done the Statute of Limitation bit justice."

10 If we go up, please, we see Jarnail Singh then sends 11 a response to you, and it looks like that's internal to 12 Post Office, and Richard Callard isn't included in the 13 copy list.

14 A. Yes, with the exception of Andy Parsons who was15 obviously not --

16 Q. Yes, a fair point. Sorry, I was focusing on Callard,but, yes, Andrew Parsons is there.

18 A. (The witness nodded)

19 Q. Can we look, please -- oh, sorry, he says:

"Please see my note and comments in red."

Can we look at those. That's POL00040517. One of the questions we see is "Destruction of documents relating to cases in the scheme". Presumably, the first point, which isn't in red, "Post Office has not, and will not, destroy any documents relating to cases in the

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- scheme", that was written by you, was it?
 A. It would have been written by me on the basis of
- information supplied by somebody else because my
 understanding of retention periods would have been
 limited at this stage.
 - Q. If we look at Mr Singh's comments, if we could just go down slightly, refers to data retention policies, he says:

"[The] Implied suggestion that this is unwarranted is incorrect. CK [Cartwright King] had to advice [it should be 'advise'] [Post Office Limited] not to shred/destroy documentation after such an instruction was given in the Security Team and following publication of the Interim Second Sight Report."

Do you remember reading that?

- 16 A. I don't particularly, although I do know what it refers17 to now, yes.
- 18 Q. Would you have read it?

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- A. Almost certainly, yes, to the extent that I would havereally engaged with it, I'm less certain. My
- 21 recollection just isn't strong enough to tell you.
- 22 Q. Well, it's very important, isn't it? Because what we're
- 23 talking about here is the question is about destruction
- of documents relating to cases in the scheme, and
- 25 Mr Singh is saying or alluding to advice about

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- Q. That's my question, just a further gloss on it: with
 this information, do you think it should have been
- 3 passed on to the Shareholder Executive?
- 4 A. I think probably, yes.
- 5 **MR STEVENS:** Thank you, sir, that's probably a good time to have our morning break.
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. What time shall we resume?
- 8 **MR STEVENS:** 11.15, sir.
- 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Okay.
- 10 MR STEVENS: Thank you.
- 11 (11.05 am)
- 12 (A short break)
- 13 (11.15 am)
- 14 **MR STEVENS:** Good morning, sir, can you see and hear me
- 15 again?
- 16 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you.
- 17 MR STEVENS: Mr Bourke, can you see and hear me?
- 18 A. I can.
- 19 **Q.** Good. Please can we move on slightly to after the
- Westminster Hall debate. Can we look at POL00351025.
- 21 If we could go down to Jarnail Singh's email of
- 22 8 January. So this is 8 January 2015 and Mr Singh is
- 23 providing some comments on BBC Inside Out requests for
- 24 an interview. What Mr Singh says we see in the second
- 25 paragraph:

1 an instruction being given to the Security Team to

shred/destroy documentation. Would that not have set

- 3 alarm bells ringing?
- 4 A. Yes. Yes. No, absolutely. I don't know whether I had
- 5 alarm bells as a result of this particular
- 6 correspondence but certainly I became aware that
- 7 an instruction was given, not to the Security Team but
- 8 within the Security Team. But my understanding was that
- 9 no -- nothing of the sort, in fact, transpired and there
- was a great deal of consternation that it had ever been
- 11 thought appropriate to give in the first place.
- 12 Q. Where did you get that understanding from?
- 13 A. I don't particularly recall but it would have been in
- conversations with other people engaged in this work.
- So any number of people, including Rod Williams, Belinda
- 16 Crowe, Mark Underwood, Andy Parsons, and so on.
- 17 **Q.** Did you pass on this allegation or otherwise inform
- 18 Richard Callard or anyone at Shareholder Executive?
- 19 A. I don't recall.
- 20 Q. Do you think you would have done?
- 21 A. I think probably, yes, but I think -- whether I did or
- 22 somebody else did, I think it would have been shared
- 23 with them on the basis that this was something that was
- 24 clearly inappropriate and was likely to generate adverse
- 25 comment, as well it might.

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1 "Whilst Post Office wish to say that there are no2 systemic faults, the Second Sight Interim Report which

3 has been disclosed to the defendants and their legal

4 representatives does mention two defects/bugs which give

rise to 76 branches being affect by incorrect balances

6 or transactions."

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A bit further down, it says:

8 "It also raises questions as to whether [Post Office 9 Limited] knew of the existence of those bugs. If so, to

whom at [Post Office Limited] Fujitsu communicated them.

11 Those were certainly not known to me at [Post Office

12 Limited] Legal until day or so prior to the publication

of the Second Sight Interim Report. The difficulty here

is made worse by the fact that [Gareth] Jenkins,an employee of Fujitsu has been making statements for

use in criminal proceedings which made no references to

17 the very bugs which it is understood he told Second

18 Sight about. People were prosecuted and pleaded guilty

19 following the receipt of his statement which implied no

20 bugs had been found."

We see, I should have said, you're cc'd in to this email. Presumably you would have read this at the time?

- 23 A. I imagine so, yes.
- Q. So would you accept -- earlier, you couldn't quite place
 a date on when you were aware of the issue with Gareth

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1		Jenkins that you were aware of it or would have been
2		aware of it 8 January 2015, at the latest?
3	A.	I think in theory, yes, that's right.
4	Q.	When you say "in theory", is
_		Mall same and business because the same sections and the same sections and the same sections are sections as the same sections and the same sections are sections as the same section are sections are sections as the same section are sections are sections are sections are section

- 5 A. Well, sorry, yes, I mean, I was a recipient in -- I was
- the copy recipient of this email and, whilst I don't
- 7 have any sort of very clear recollection of having read
- 8 it in any great detail, as a matter of fact, yes, you're
- 9 correct.

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10 Q. Please can we look at UKGI00002944. Now, we don't need
11 to show this on the screen but, sir, for your reference,
12 and Mr Bourke for you, as well, at page 48, paragraph 93
13 of your statement, you refer to this document, and you
14 say:

"On 13 January 2015 I shared a draft of Post Office Limited's response to the Westminster Hall debate with Richard Callard."

You give the URN, the unique reference number, for the email and, later on, this document we're looking at. This was, as I understand it, effectively a further briefing document to deal with matters that had been raised during the Westminster Hall debate; is that right?

A. So I think, after the Westminster Hall debate, from
 memory, what we tried to do was to collect all the

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1 A. That's correct.

- Q. Given you sent it to Richard Callard at Shareholder
 Executive on 13 January 2015, do you take respons
- 3 Executive on 13 January 2015, do you take responsibility
- 4 for its contents?
- 5 A. No, because it was a collaborative effort. So I wrote
- 6 it and I edited it but the specialist content which
- 7 I solicited from other colleagues really belongs to
- 8 them.

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- Q. So when you say no, is it fair to say that, if you were told a matter, say you were told "X" on a subject matter, you would be responsible for including that in the response but you wouldn't be responsible for the accuracy of what was provided to you by the subject matter expert?
- 15 A. That's a more accurate description, yes.
- 16 **Q.** Could we look at page 10, please. At paragraph 40, you say:

"To date no evidence has been identified by Post Office as part of its reinvestigation of each and every case, nor advanced by Second Sight or an individual Applicant, to suggest that the conviction of any Applicant to the Scheme is unsafe."

If we can go over to page 12, please. There's a section on "Approach to Prosecutions". We see 51 talks about the power of prosecution as a private

1 allegations that had been made during the course of that

debate, and others which we had obviously had from other

3 sources, with the purpose of developing a more

4 comprehensive document to address each and every one of

5 those. From memory, I think there was envisaged to be

6 two such documents, one sort of rather briefer one

7 intended to be used in more sort of general

8 communications, and then a longer, more granular one

9 intended to inform Members of Parliament. The response

10 was the product of a collaborative effort on the part of

11 a fair number of people, from -- as I think I made clear

12 in my statement.

13 Q. Presumably, this document runs to 15 pages. Is this the14 longer document, the more granular one, as you

described?
A. I think it must have been. I think Tom Wechsler, who
was working with me on the scheme and interface with the

Working Group, started this process and, at some point,

19 I took over the task of bringing it together, as a sort

20 of briefing coordinator, which was not atypical of my

role at the time.

Q. So briefing coordinator, would that include ensuring
 that different parts of the business or subject matter
 experts would contribute to the briefing on areas where

25 their subject was in issue?

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1 individual; 52 is interviews under caution. We get to 54 and it says:

"All cases of potential criminal [misconduct] are thoroughly investigated and decisions about appropriate courses of action are taken on the basis of available facts and evidence."

It goes on to say:

"When Post Office decides to prosecute a case, its conduct of the prosecution is scrutinised by defence lawyers and ultimately by the Courts themselves."

If we go over the page, on 56:

"Once a decision has been made to prosecute, the Post Office has a duty to disclose the evidence against a suspect, along with all evidence that would assist the defence or undermine the prosecution. Post Office refutes the allegation that it has put pressure on defendants to plead guilty, sometimes to lesser offences."

Why did this briefing not include reference to the issues with Gareth Jenkins?

A. That's a fair question. I think this document -- I'm not convinced I was aware of the issues around Gareth Jenkins at the time. But, in any event, the -- as we've just discussed, the content where it relates to specialist issues, particularly around, you know,

- 1 matters which I really know nothing about, ie criminal
 2 law and procedure, I would have relied entirely on the
 3 advice I was given by the Legal Team.
- 4 Q. Who in the legal team would you have relied on?
- 5 A. I would have relied on, I expect, Jarnail Singh, but
- 6 more particularly, you know, the advice that he was
- 7 being -- you know, he was effectively the conduit
- 8 between the Post Office and Cartwright King, our
- 9 external legal providers. So that added, to my mind,
- a measure of reassurance that there was an internal
- 11 independent organisation with its own professional
- 12 standards of ethics and responsibilities.
- 13 Q. Let's just focus: you said Jarnail Singh and referred to
- 14 Cartwright King. If you would rely on Jarnail Singh,
- we've seen, as at 8 January 2015, Jarnail Singh was
- 16 raising the issue of Gareth Jenkins with you in
- 17 an email. So can you explain, in those circumstances,
- 18 why there is no reference to Gareth Jenkins in this
- 19 report?

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- 20 A. I'm sure that briefing would have been circulated to
- 21 those people once more prior to its finalisation. So --
- 22 Q. Mr Bourke, earlier I asked you of the difference of
- 23 responsibilities: one is the subject matter itself,
- 24 which you accepted or you said was a matter for the
- 25 subject matter expert; and the second one is, if
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- 1 A. I think I'm right in saying that the impulse was we had
 - had a lot of accusations made against us and we wanted
- 3 to actually produce a more comprehensive piece. The
- 4 ultimate purpose to which that would be put, I think,
- 5 was still in question but, certainly, it would find its
- 6 way to Mr Callard, who had --
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, so at least one of its purposes
 - was to provide, obviously, accurate information, one
- 9 imagines, to Mr Callard?
- 10 A. (No audible answer)
- 11 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine.
- 12 MR STEVENS: Can we bring the briefing back up. It's
- 13 UKGI00002944, and if we could look at page 11, please.
- 14 THE STENOGRAPHER: Mr Stevens, can I just check the witness
- answered Sir Wyn's last question because there was no
- 16 audible response.
- 17 MR STEVENS: I will check with the witness.
- 18 The Chair asked -- Mr Bourke, did you give an answer
- 19 to the Chair's question, his last question?
- 20 A. I believe so, yes.
- 21 Q. What was that answer, please? Just for the transcript?
- 22 A. So he asked me whether at least one of the purposes in
- 23 the preparation of this document was to provide
- 24 information to Richard Callard at UKGI, to which
- 25 I replied "Yes".

- 1 a subject matter expert tells you of something, you
- 2 accepted responsibility for seeing that that makes its
- 3 way into the briefing; do you not accept that?
- 4 A. Well, I do but you get --
- ${\bf 5} \quad {\bf Q.} \quad \mbox{In those circumstances, why, in this briefing, is there}$
- 6 no reference to Gareth Jenkins?
- 7 A. I'm not sure.
- 8 $\,$ Q. Is it because you didn't want to highlight the problem
- 9 with Gareth Jenkins and past prosecutions?
- 10 A. Absolutely not, no.
- 11 Q. Well, what other explanation is there?
- 12 A. As I tried to advance a second or two ago, each one of
- these exercises sees me fairly methodically consulting
- 14 people around the business and the finalisation of this
- 15 text, for this document, would have been okayed by our
- 16 Criminal Law Team. So, insofar as there were good
- 17 reasons or other reasons to exclude it, it would have
- 18 fallen to them to take.
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Can I just be sure that I'm clear about
- 20 its intended purpose. Was this a document prepared for
- 21 dissemination internally in the Post Office or was it
- 22 a document intended ultimately for Mr Callard in his
- 23 role, which was shared internally in the Post Office
- 24 before it got to him, or was there some other purpose
- 25 that I haven't yet heard about?

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- 1 MR STEVENS: Thank you. I apologise. I'll try to make sure
- 2 that, if I spot a nod, it gets recorded on the
- 3 transcript.

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- 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, I should have confirmed
 - Mr Callard's (sic) agreement with my premise --
- 6 MR STEVENS: No, sir, I'll take sole responsibility.
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Not Mr Callard -- I'm getting confused
- 8 now -- Mr Bourke.
- 9 MR STEVENS: Yes, right, we're on page 11 of this briefing.
- 10 If we could go down to paragraph 48, please. We see
- 11 here we have 2Remote and Malicious Access to Branch
- 12 Accounts". It says: 13 "During the del
 - "During the debate it was suggested that
- subpostmasters' accounts can be amended remotely, in
- Horizon, without their or their staff's knowledge.
- There is no functionality in Horizon for either
- 17 a branch, Post Office or Fujitsu (suppliers of the
- Horizon system) to edit, manipulate or remove
- transaction data once it has been recorded in a branch's accounts. It is possible for Fujitsu to view branch
- data in order to provide support and conduct maintenance
- but this does not allow access to any functionality that
 - 23 could be used to edit record transaction data.
 - "Post Office can send transaction acknowledgements
 (TA) or transaction corrections (TC) to branches."

1 Pausing there, transaction acknowledgements and 2 transaction corrections both require the subpostmaster 3 to accept them; do you agree with that?

4 A. That's my understanding, yes.

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"TAs are used to record transactions that have been processed in branch through other systems ... and TCs [transaction corrections] to correct errors made by branches. Both TAs and TCs need to be accepted by a user logged into the branch Horizon terminal before 10 they are recorded in the branch accounts. They are 11 therefore fully visible to each branch.

> "There is also no evidence of malicious remote tampering and the suggestion made during the debate that a secretive team at a Post Office location is engaged in this sort of activity is flatly denied."

Why did you not refer to what was called balancing

transactions, which we discussed before, namely where a subpostmaster didn't need to accept the insertion? Yes, look, I mean, I think that's a good question. As I've indicated previously, all of these briefings were the product of collaborative effort by internal and also external advisers. From recollection, the view taken or the view advised/advanced by Womble Bond Dickinson, or Bond Dickinson, as it then was, was that the balancing

transaction was -- there having only been one instance

1 I recall about whether or not that facility had been 2 used -- was available and, indeed, had been used in the 3 previous version of Horizon, and it just didn't -- just 4 wasn't part of our considerations at that time.

Q. But we referred to emails earlier where it was raised, and you've just said in your evidence that it was ruled out as being disproportionate; is that not right?

A. I did say that. That's my recollection. I can't be absolutely certain about the way it was put to us but the advice we have from our external legal advisers was that, you know, balancing transactions were -- had been exceptionally rare to address a particular anomaly, the postmaster had been informed and, in those circumstances, it was not a credible avenue for -- or it was not a material avenue to pursue for these purposes.

Now, in retrospect, as I've said, I don't think that was the right call and, if I had my time again, I would have disclosed it or I would have included it in this briefing.

19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I mean, in summary form, to give 20 21 a "complete", in inverted commas, picture of Legacy 22 Horizon and Horizon Online, you would have included the 23 balancing transaction point in relation to Horizon 24 Online and you would have included a statement saying, 25 "We don't know whether the function existed to do the

1 of it, where the postmaster had been informed, it didn't 2 merit inclusion. Now, in retrospect, I think that was 3 a mistake and we should have included it in this 4 briefing.

Q. Let's pause there: the one instance you were aware of 5 6 was in Horizon Online, wasn't it?

7 Α.

8 Q. At this stage, did you know or had Fujitsu told you if 9 or the extent to which a similar matter had been used in 10 Legacy Horizon?

11 A. No, they hadn't, and I'm not even sure that that 12 facility existed in that system. I think, from memory, 13 a conclusion was drawn that -- or I think on the advice 14 of Fujitsu, that to conduct that sort of retrospective 15 analysis would have been immensely lengthy, complicated,

16 and ultimately expensive and was disproportionate to the 17

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18 So how could that then have been a justification that 19 you thought it had only been used once in Horizon 20 Online, not to mention this potential avenue of remote 21 access when you didn't know the position in respect of 22 Legacy Horizon?

23 A. Well, as I say, the only time balancing transactions 24 were brought to my attention was in the context of 25 HNG-X, the Horizon Online. There was no discussion that

1 same on Legacy Horizon".

A. That's absolutely what we would have -- what I believe 2 3 we probably ought to have done, with the benefit of 4 hindsight. At the time, I was preparing this document 5 I was three months into the job and I didn't think --

6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, I follow why you say it didn't happen 7 but that's the reality of it, isn't it?

A. Absolutely, and I'm very happy to say that, if I had my 8 9 time again, I would have included both those things.

MR STEVENS: Please can we bring up POL00310761. If we 10 11 could go to the second page, please. We'll see when we 12 scroll up in a moment, this is an email from you to Rodric Williams on 20 January and you say: 13

"You were going to send me [Brian Altman QC's] reports -- would you mind when you get a chance?"

Why were you asking for those reports at that stage? A. I think it was in preparation for the response to the

18 Westminster Hall debate and I think I was in the process of assembling the documentation that demonstrated that, 19 20 you know, a number of reviews had taken place, although 21 I did not know the precise scope or the extent of those 22 reviews. But I wanted to, you know, I knew some had 23 taken place but I'd never actually seen any of them.

24 Q. So if we go up, please, we see Rodric Williams sends 25 that on the same day. It says "apologies for the 60

delay", four advices attached: interim review, general review and two others.

Did you read those advices when you received them?

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A. I don't believe I did, actually, in actual fact. You know, there was quite a voluminous set of material related to, you know, historical matters and my chief objective in obtaining them -- I think I'd first asked for them in December -- was in making sure that we had all constituent parts available to us in the context of, you know, what we thought was likely to be more requests for information.

- 12 Q. What is the purpose of having all the constituent parts13 together if you're not going to read the advices?
- A. To ensure of their availability, should they become
 relevant, or should we need to deploy the actual -- you
 know, the actual documentation at any future point --
- 17 Q. Presumably you thought they may have been relevant byasking for them?
- A. I wanted a complete set, yes, of what I had understood
 to be a number of reviews that had taken place into past
 prosecutions and, indeed, advice on our prosecution
 processes.
- Q. So your evidence is this was just to have on hand if the
 need arose, despite the fact you previously settled
 a response document that covered things like Post Office

expertise or area of responsibility. There was nothing to suggest to me that this advice wasn't acted on by the people at the Post Office who you'd expect to act upon it: so the General Counsel, the criminal lawyers, and so on. So, no, I didn't, is the short answer.

- Q. Did you have any indication as to whether or not Richard
 Callard or others at Shareholder Executive knew about
 the issues relating to Gareth Jenkins?
- 9 A. I don't know off the top of my head but I think it would 10 be difficult to imagine that they weren't aware of the 11 fact that prosecutions could no longer take place on the 12 basis of an absence of an expert witness to attest the 13 robustness or otherwise of Horizon. So I think it would 14 be difficult to imagine that they weren't aware at least 15 of the fact that we couldn't, at that time, prosecute, 16 because we didn't have the requisite expert.
- Q. Mine's a slightly more precise question, which is: do
 you have any knowledge as to whether anyone at
 Shareholder Executive knew of the allegations against
 Gareth Jenkins, namely that he'd acted in breach of his
 expert duties?
- A. I don't have any direct knowledge of that, no. I justposited what I think probably would have happened.
- Q. Okay, I want to go to a different topic now and look at
 the closure of the Mediation Scheme. Please can we

Limited's prosecutorial practices? Is your evidencereally that you didn't read these advices?

A. I certainly don't think I'd read them in any great
 detail, no. They're quite specialist in nature. I may
 have read some of them. I don't think I would have
 engaged with them with any real degree of real
 application, if I may say so.

8 Q. Well, let's look at POL00006581. This is the general
9 review by Brian Altman KC, and it's dated 15 October
10 2013. Could we please turn to page 5. Now, you said
11 they were lengthy documents. Do you think you would
12 have read the executive summary?

13 A. Quite possibly, yes.

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14 Q. If we turn please to page 6 and (x), it says:

"I agree that Gareth Jenkins is tainted and his position as an expert witness is untenable. Thus, a new expert should be identified as soon as practicable."

18 Following receipt of this advice, did you tell
19 Richard Callard or anyone at Shareholder Executive about
20 the issues relating to Gareth Jenkins?

A. No. These were matters for the Legal Team to act upon.
 I think this was 2015, sometime after this review was
 conducted and, certainly, post any prosecutions by Post
 Office. So no, not because of a lack of care; it just
 simply wasn't something that fell within my area of

bring up POL00149669.

We don't need to have this up but, sir, for your reference, and also, Mr Bourke, for you: at page 35, paragraph 71 of your statement, you refer to this as a note of advice for Paula Vennells that you prepared to inform her consideration as to how to respond to the proposal advanced by MPs that Post Office Limited mediate all cases in the scheme where this was recommended by Second Sight.

So we can see immediately that the recommendation is to decline that proposal. Can we go down, please, to paragraph 4 for the reasons. So paragraph 4 effectively says it's not something that Post Office Limited could accede to or agree to mediate all cases because it would require mediating criminal cases; is that a fair summary of the reason?

- 17 A. Yes, on which we'd had strong advice.
- 18 Q. Yes. Paragraph 5 is a slightly different reason. It19 says:

"It would also necessarily entail the mediation of cases in which [Post Office Limited] is not, on any reasonable view, responsible for the losses or other complaints it is alleged to [have been] the cause of."

So this is non-criminal or court cases but Post Office does not want to mediate all of them because, on

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- the merits, there will be some that it considers are not worth mediating; is that fair summary?
- A. I'm not sure "worth" but there simply wasn't anything to
 mediate because the facts pointed to a very clear
- conclusion about the responsibility or otherwise for theloss.
- 7 $\,$ Q. Okay, well, I won't explore what the distinction there
- 8 is supposed to be but was that view, in paragraph 5, the
- 9 view of the entire team or an agreed view of the team
- 10 who were working on the scheme?
- 11 A. To the best of my knowledge, yes, as we looked at the
- 12 cases and the CRs being produced by Second Sight, it was
- 13 a difficult conclusion -- it was difficult not to reach
- 14 that conclusion.
- 15 **Q.** Can you recall if Paula Vennells accepted that advice
- 16 and agreed as well?
- 17 A. Not specifically, although I think she, I think, came to
- share the view which those of us closer to the subject
- 19 matter had reached earlier, that all was not
- 20 straightforward in Second Sight's advice.
- 21 Q. Can you just explore that: when you say "she came to the
- view", was there a difference of opinion at the start?
- 23 A. I think that's right, and I think in my witness
- 24 statement I refer to the fact that I had written in some
- 25 briefing that I had come to the view that Second Sight's
- suggestion [that's the position of accepting all
 mediations], not least since it would entail the
 mediation of criminal cases (on which we have advice in
 the strongest terms that to do so would subject Post
 - It goes on to say:

Office to intolerable risk) ..."

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- "It would necessarily entail the mediation of cases in which [Post Office Limited] is not, on any reasonable view, responsible for the losses or other complaints it is alleged to be the cause of."
- So it's basically the same advice you were giving to Paula Vennells, wasn't it?
- A. Yeah, as I say in my witness statement, this was drawn
 largely from the document I prepared for Paula Vennells
 for the previous engagement.
- 16 Q. Can you recall if Alice Perkins accepted that advice?
- 17 A. I believe so. She, I think, wrote an email to summarise
- her encounter with James Arbuthnot in Ankara, in which
- she certainly gave every indication that she had taken
- the briefing to heart, yes.
- 21 $\,$ Q. I'm just going to take a brief segue at the minute, for
- 22 chronology purposes, but we'll come back to those
- 23 briefings but can we please bring up POL00149685. So
- 24 it's an email exchange between you and Tom Wechsler on
- 25 26 November 2014, so the same day on which you say you 67

- 1 impartiality was questionable and she had picked me up
- on that, but the -- in the immediate aftermath, both
- 3 Mark Davies and Tom Wechsler provided support for that
- 4 contention, having seen the cases. So she had formed
- 5 the view that it was too strong a claim to make on the
- 6 basis of some of the early case review reports but,
- 7 having read more of them, and seen -- having been
- 8 involved in them for a longer period, she came to share
- 9 that view.
- 10 Q. We might be talking at a slightly different point.
- 11 I think we will come to that briefing in shortly. My
- 12 point is: do you recall if Paula Vennells accepted the
- 13 advice that Post Office Limited shouldn't agree to
- 14 mediate all cases because some of them did not merit
- 15 mediation?
- 16 A. I believe so, yes.
- 17 Q. Please could we bring up POL00149683.
- Now, for context -- we don't need to have it on screen -- but at paragraph 72, page 37 of your statement you say that on 26 November 2014 you prepared a corresponding update -- so corresponding to the last one we saw -- for Alice Perkins, in advance of a trip
- 23 she was making to a conference in Turkey.
- 24 If we go to paragraph 2, please:
- 25 "Advice is now with the CEO to refuse this
 - 6
- 1 drafted the briefing for Alice Perkins, yes?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. This is, I think, shortly before a conference you were
- 4 going to have with Tom Weisselberg KC on the prospects
- 5 of a judicial review of matters in relation to the
- 6 Mediation Scheme, if there was an amendment?
- 7 **A.** That feels about right. I can't remember the exact date.
- 9 **Q.** If we could go down to the bottom email, please,
- 10 Mr Wechsler says:
- 11 "Subject: He was sat next to me.
- 12 "Back covering in full effect!"
- 13 Your response obviously shows a degree of upset 14 about that, and you say:
- 15 "... unfortunate that he bumped into Alice before
- 16 Mark and I collared him. I fear for RW a bit ..."
- 17 Is "RW" Rodric Williams?
- 18 A. I would imagine so.
- 19 Q. When you're saying "He was sat next to me", who was this20 referring to?
- 21 A. I have looked at this email over and over again in
- 22 preparation for this Inquiry and I just simply cannot
- remember who it was we were referring to.
- Q. If we look, please, to the next email, again, from TomWechsler:

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"Teaching you to suck eggs but I laid the ground for the way out of this with honour preserved. Although there is a fundamental difference of view on public/private law point, circumstances have changed markedly."

So do we take from this that whatever embarrassment had been caused, it was related to the public law advice in some way?

A. I think it may have been. As I think I referred to in my witness statement again, there had been previous advice obtained by Post Office before I joined, so, in the summer, I think, of 2014, from a firm called Beachcroft, and the partner there, I think, was Stephen Hocking, who had come to a different conclusion about the susceptibility of any decision in relation to the Working Group, or the scheme more generally, than the advice than we subsequently received from Tom Weisselberg, and I think there was a bit of an issue around how those two bits of trusting advice -- or advices could be reconciled with one another.

And I think I'm right in saying that Tom Wechsler was advancing the point that the passage of time and the events that had occurred during that time did point to a new set of circumstances which might offer some part explanation for that distinction.

- A. Well, no, but if I objected to every turn of phrase that I thought was slightly off, you know -- no, I didn't but I just got on with it.
- Q. Do you recollect how this matter was resolved or anycall you had with Tom Wechsler?
- 6 A. No, I don't.

Q. Right, let's move on back to the Mediation Scheme. Canwe look at POL00006575, please.

So we have a minute from the Sparrow Subcommittee meeting on 12 January 2015. I think the Inquiry has seen a different version of this with an incorrect date on at one point but this is 12 January 2015. We see at the bottom you are in attendance. Looking at summarising the points to consider, it said the Committee received a paper on the position of the scheme and discussed steps to be taken:

"(c) [Mark Davies] explained the recent Westminster Hall debate ..."

Chris Aujard reported changes in business processes regarding prosecutions. There was then the judicial review advice provided by Tom Weisselberg QC and a discussion over whether it was inconsistent with the Beachcroft advice; Chris Aujard was saying it wasn't. Then at (f) it says:

"The committee discussed Second Sight and their

- Q. With that background, who do you think this may refer
 to; who are the list of potential candidates to whom it
 can refer?
- 4 A. I genuinely can't remember. I mean, I suppose, if I'm
 5 right about the awkwardness of contrasting advice, one
 6 set obtained by me -- by my team in November, and the
 7 other obtained by Post Office in the summer, it may have
 8 been Chris Aujard, but I just don't know.
- 9 Q. In Tom Wechsler's email, below the main paragraph, he10 savs:

11 "Coming up with a new version of history not just on 12 this will be key to eg ensuring that nothing sticks on 13 AP/PV ..."

14 Presumably that's Alice Perkins and Paula Vennells?

- **A.** That's my understanding, yes.
- 16 Q. "... when blame is being apportioned."

17 Was this common practice within Post Office, to18 rewrite history?

- A. Not in my experience. Absolutely not, no. I mean, you
 know, youd have to ask Tom Wechsler why he used that
 turn of phrase. It certainly wasn't mine.
- 22 Q. Well, if you look above, you say:

"Thank you. Will call later on."

You didn't object to the turn of phrase at the time, did you?

1 'Part Two' Report due to be finalised in April. The
2 committee agreed that the Business was unlikely to be
3 able to stop this report from being produced but should
4 press Second Sight to complete the individual case
5 reviews by the end of March, ie giving the cases
6 priority."

So at this meeting was the Sparrow Subcommittee exploring ways to stop Second Sight producing it's updated Part Two Report?

A. I don't think so, in the sense that I think that (f) records the fact that, insofar as they once had, that ship had sailed and they were reconciled to the fact that it was going to emerge. I think there was a concern, because the Part Two Report had been very long in gestation, that, actually, the delays to the scheme occasioned by the focus on the Part Two Report was preventing them from addressing themselves to the cases in the scheme, which we felt deserved a greater deal of priority in their attentions.

But, you know, they were a small outfit, I think three people doing the work, and, you know, necessarily just the sort of -- just the capacity point prevented them from doing multiple things simultaneously with any sort of speed, and we really wanted them to complete their work on individual cases, so it might achieve

- 1 mediations where they were possible within a reasonable 2 time frame.
- Q. You said, then, that the ship had sailed. So when was
 the ship in the dock? When did the committee want to
 prevent the Part Two Report from being finalised?
- Α. Well, I honestly don't know but it does appear to me, on a simple reading of this, that, you know, that possibility had been discussed. I think, and I've seen, in earlier documents dating from before my time at the Post Office, that reservations about Second Sight's performance had been articulated as far as back as 2013, and I think they were only retained either at the end of 2012 or early 2013. So, very soon after they joined, people were already beginning to wonder whether they'd made the right selection.
- 16 Q. We can see from (g):

"The Committee asked the Business to produce an options paper to analyse the most effective ways to bring the Scheme to a sensible conclusion ..."

Let's go to that options paper. And if we could look at POL00102065, please. I think earlier you were referring to a briefing where Paula Vennells challenged you on a reference to impartiality. I think that may be this briefing, we shall see in a moment. It says the "Issue":

that's opening up an option which had previously beenrejected in November, the year before?

A. Not quite. One of those is a departure, "Mediate all cases" would have been a complete departure, but "Mediate all cases apart from criminal cases" would have been a refinement on the proposal made by James Arbuthnot and colleagues on 17 November, and that refinement was critically important and distinguished it from a proposal made by James Arbuthnot back then.

- Q. So I'm going to what was rejected by Post Office because when we looked at both of the briefing notes given by you, there were two reasons for rejecting that proposal: one was rejecting criminal cases and one was it would involve mediating cases on which Post Office thought there wasn't merit in a mediation.
- A. You're quite right to pick me up on that and I apologise. I think we saw the mediation of all cases as being, you know, responsive to the desire of the JFSA for the opinion of Second Sight to be determinative of the question of what or not we would mediate, and it seemed to ask that, in circumstances where we needed to find a way through, that was a concession worth making, even if we didn't necessarily think that all of those cases were meritorious.
- 25 Q. That then says:

1 "A discussion about the relative merits of number of options for breaking through the *impasse*."

"Recommendation" was:

"That participants to the meeting consider and discuss this paper before coming to a view on the best course of action to take ..."

We can look at the options at the bottom, there's four. You say:

"Seek to maintain status quo -- in circumstances where JFSA do not participate in any meaningful way, Second Sight's impartiality is a fiction and all those involved consider that the scheme is not fit for purpose; this option appears to have little to recommend it."

Now, you referred earlier to Paula Vennells challenging you on a matter, is that this: Second Sight's impartiality is a fiction?

- 18 A. Yes, I believe so, yeah.
- 19 Q. I don't think we need to go there, sir, but for your20 reference the email is POL00117056.

Over the page, other options are:

22 "Mediate all cases or all cases apart from criminal cases."

So that's quite a shift from the position -- well, not a shift because it's an option, I suppose, but

"... bring an end to the Working Group ..."
3 is "Payout or pay-to-litigate", which is

essentially to offer a sum of money, and 4:

"End the scheme, mediate cases with merit, defend remaining claims as business as usual -- bring an end to the Working Group while inviting Second Sight to enter into a new contract (ending all others) to complete their review of all cases (anticipated in May 2015) and specifically precluding the production of a Part II Report."

So the ship hadn't sailed, had it? You and the committee were still considering trying to stop Second Sight producing the Part Two Report?

A. That -- it appears that was still a consideration. In the event, the combination of options 2 and 4 was the decision arrived at, which did not prevent the production of the Part Two Report but did involve us rescoping Second Sight's engagement so they could focus after the production of the Part Two Report exclusively on providing what we assured applicants to the scheme would get as a minimum, which was a reinvestigation of their case and an independent case review report from Second Sight, which they could then use to take whatever action they felt was appropriate, including taking us to

court if necessary.

Q. I just want to look at two of those options in a touch
 more detail. If we turn to page 5, please. It is the
 "Mediate All" option. It says:

"All aspects of current scheme maintained, including Working Group ..."

That appears to be an inconsistency with the earlier bit of the document but:

"... including the Working Group to oversee scheduling and case throughput, but Post Office accepts the recommendation of Second Sight to mediate as final, and mediate all cases."

Then it goes on to refer to the variant of not accepting criminal cases. So, at this stage, 26 January 2015, the option you're putting forward for mediating all or mediating non-criminal cases is to keep Second Sight on board; is that right?

- 17 A. That's correct, yeah. Sorry, actually could you just18 repeat that?
- 19 Q. Yes. So your proposed option for mediating all or
 20 mediating non-criminal cases includes keeping Second
 21 Sight involved in the scheme?
- 22 A. Yes, it does.

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- Q. If we turn to page 9, please. This is the "End Scheme,
 Mediate Cases With Merit". We see again:
- 25 "Post Office closes the scheme but invites Second
- 1 A. Sorry, yes I can.
- 2 Q. Sorry, just to make sure we can hear you.

Please can we go to POL00130853. This a set of slides, we see it says, "Confidential and legally privileged". We don't need to show it but your witness statement paragraph 48 says you assisted in preparing or editing some of these slides for a meeting between Mark Davies, Paula Vennells and Alice Perkins. Because it says "legally privileged", would you have received any legal advice when drafting these slides?

- 11 A. I imagine so, yes.
- 12 Q. Could we look at page 4, please. We can see at13 4 February, the advice there is:

"We are therefore disbanding the WG [Working Group]."But we agree to mediate all non-criminal cases.

"We release Second Sight from their work but offer that if any case (including criminal) wants to use them they can apply to us for financial support."

Do you recall how that decision was taken or any discussions that led to that being the proposed cause of action?

A. So I think this would have come after the options paper had been considered and, from memory, this was
 a briefing taking place between Paula and Alice in advance of a full Board meeting. The first two

Sight to enter into a new arrangement to complete their independent review ...

3 "New contract could specifically preclude the4 production of a Part II Report."

5 So this is sort of a distinct option from the
6 "Mediate All": it's where you mediate the cases with
7 merit and, at the same time, make efforts to try to stop
8 a Part Two Report from being produced; is that a fair
9 summary?

10 A. It's one of the options that are in the paper, yes.

11 MR STEVENS: Thank you.

Sir, looking at the time, I think it's probably time for our second morning break.

14 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, certainly. So 12.25? No, sorry,

15 12.20.

16 MR STEVENS: Yes, thank you, sir.

17 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Thanks.

18 (12.10 pm)

19 (A short break)

20 (12.20 pm)

21 MR STEVENS: Sir, can you still see and hear me?

22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you.

23 MR STEVENS: Mr Bourke, can you see and hear me?

24 A. (Unclear)

25 Q. Sorry, Mr Bourke, can you repeat that?

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highlighted bullet points should probably be in reverse,
 in that the ambition was not to disband the Working
 Group but rather, by agreeing to mediate all

non-criminal cases, we were effectively making the work of the Working Group redundant, and that was just the

way it was, simply because a decision to mediate had
 already been taken and the purpose of the Working Group

was to recommend whether or not that should be the case.
 In circumstances where we decided to mediate all the

cases apart from non-criminal ones, the purpose of the
Working Group -- there simply wasn't any need for

12 a Working Group in those circumstances.

Q. Was there any link between this decision being taken and
 the appearance of Paula Vennells and Angela van den
 Bogerd at the BIS Select Committee?

15 Bogerd at the bis select Committee?

16 **A.** I don't believe so. I think this was just

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17 a continuation of a discussion that had taken place --

that had been taking place since late the previous year.

19 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00021728. At the bottom we
 20 see an email from you to Andrew Parsons, saying, "Second
 21 Sight -- contractual issues". It refers to speaking:

"... grateful if [you] could produce a short bit of advice on the manner of implementation and consequences of a future decision to terminate Second Sight's engagement.

"The advice needs to cover (but should not be limited to ...) the nature and extent of [Post Office Limited's] ability to control access to, and uses of, all and any information it has provided to [Second Sight]; the duration and effective notices of that control in particular with regard to the Part II report they are preparing, and the legal and practical effects of the 30-day notice period which the letter of engagement provides for."

Was this seeking advice on how Post Office Limited may be able to restrain Second Sight from producing a further Part Two Report?

A. No, it wasn't. I think we were concerned that, in the circumstances where a decision were taken to terminate this phase of Second Sight's engagement -- and bear in mind they were retained to do something else thereafter -- we didn't want uncontrolled access to quite a lot of confidential information that had been shared with them in the context of the scheme. In particular, we had shared with them the details of applicants' circumstances, some of which, you know, were, frankly, deeply personal in nature and should not have been reaching a wider audience. As I think we made clear throughout this, the confidentiality of that information was paramount to us.

of [Second Sight] so to prevent the Working Group giving counter instructions to [Second Sight] during the notice period."

It goes on to say:

"Post Office could therefore demand the return of Confidential Information at the same time as giving termination notice. If complied with, this would have the practical effect of stopping any further work by [Second Sight]. In practice, we would expect [Second Sight] to resist handing over information."

It goes on to talk about publication.

Would you accept this advice is effectively giving a roadmap for how to limit what work Second Sight can do?

- 15 A. I don't think that's the primary purpose but it16 certainly goes into that sort of territory, yes.
- 17 Q. You say it's not the primary purpose. We don't need to
 18 have it on the screen but the points you said the advice
 19 should cover was:
 - "... the nature and extent of POL's ability to control access to and uses of all and any information it has provided to Second Sight, the duration and effectiveness of that control, in particular with regard to the Part Two report they are preparing, and the legal and practical effects of the 30-day notice period which

Q. The email referred to speaking with Andrew Parsons. Can
 you remember if you spoke to him before the 4 February
 slides that we looked at just a moment ago?

A. I'm sure I would have spoken to him. You mean, in terms of the preparation of those slides or ...?

Q. Yes. I asked in those slides did you receive legal
 advice on it, and I think you said --

8 A. Yes, I'm sure I would have done or, certainly, Rod
 9 Williams -- you know, Bond Dickinson and Rod Williams
 10 were working very much side by side in this process.

Q. Can we look at the Bond Dickinson advice that came in
 response, the note of advice. It's POL00006364. The
 "Executive Summary" first points out that:

"[Second Sight's] engagement can be terminated ... without restriction on 30 days' ... notice."

It says:

"On balance, we consider that the Post Office can
direct [Second Sight] to do no more work during this
notice period. Even if we are wrong, the consequence
will only be a damages claim against [Post Office
Limited] by [Second Sight] for 30 days lost pay.

"During the notice period, [Second Sight] are entitled to act on the instructions of the Working Group. We therefore recommend that Post Office simultaneously disbands the Working Group on termination

the letter of engagement provides for."

You'd had a discussion with Andrew Parsons, presumably you discussed what advice you wanted from the note?

A. Yes. But I think, if you're -- the concern we had -the overriding concern we had in seeking that advice was
the use to which Second Sight might put information
which they had been given in confidence and that was
the -- you know, that was really the primary purpose of
seeking that advice.

11 Q. Let's go back to your options paper, please. It's
12 POL0010265, and page 5, please. Now, this is the more
13 detailed version of the note on the option to "Mediate
14 All". I took you previously at page 2 to a summary of
15 it, which referred to bringing an end to the Working
16 Group. This one says:

"All aspects of the current scheme maintained, including Working Group to oversee scheduling and case throughput, but Post Office accepts the recommendation of Second Sight ..."

Now, Post Office had adopted the "Mediate All --Save for Criminal Cases", hadn't it, by the time it was seeking advice from Andrew Parsons?

24 A. Yes, I think that's right, yes.

25 Q. Was the reason that the decision was made to close the

the letter of engagement provides for.

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- 1 Working Group in order to stop Second Sight receiving 1 "... it must have been [Second Sight] that told 2 2 instructions from them to produce further work? James Arbuthnot about their termination ..." 3 A. That was not the predominant -- but I don't -- to the 3 It goes on to say: 4 4 best of my recollection, that was not a consideration "... we should send a follow-up letter to [Second 5 5 Sight] saying that we note that they have breached these that was certainly in my mind. 6 Q. You've started that answer "It was not the 6 obligations despite our warning", referring to their 7 predominant" --7 obligations to confidentiality. 8 8 A. Well, I did and I corrected myself. Your response is to agree, and say: 9 9 Q. So your evidence is you can't recollect if it was "Having got to the point where (after a long time) 10 10 we are sort of in charge, we should make sure they know a purpose or not? No, my evidence is that I don't think it was 11 it." 11 Α. a consideration that was in my mind. 12 So you were effectively agreeing to threaten 12 13 Q. Can you recollect if it was a consideration or it was 13 litigation against Second Sight in respect of their 14 discussed by other people within Post Office? 14 confidentiality obligations, weren't you? A. I can't. Honestly, no, I can't. What I can tell you is 15 A. No. What I was doing was saying that we should send 15 16 that we were aware, or at least I was aware, that having 16 them a letter saying that their breach of the 17 taken the decision to mediate all cases, the role of the 17 obligations had not gone unnoticed. I don't think 18 18 Working Group was superfluous and, you know, that was -anybody ever considered that we would actually take 19 given that the Working Group was not functioning, in any 19 legal proceedings against them but I think it was
- Working Group was superfluous and, you know, that was given that the Working Group was not functioning, in any
 event, because of JFSA's refusal to discuss any cases
 that we didn't agree automatically to mediate, that was
 an acceptable outcome.
- Q. Can we look, please, at POL00022512? If we go to Andrew
 Parsons' email at the bottom, you see it's 12 March
 2015, and he effectively says:

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them up on each little in infringement we make sure
[Second Sight] do not see these are idle threats. We
also avoid any suggestion that we have waived these
obligations through doing nothing; this may be important
down the line if there is a more serious beach that we
do not want to enforce."

The idea of enforcing the confidentiality agreements by way of litigation, if necessary, was very much on your mind, wasn't it?

A. In the event of a more serious breach, is what Andrew Parsons says, and, you know, in circumstances where Second Sight had decided to share with a wider audience details of the individual cases which we were dealing with, and which we had guaranteed absolute confidentiality over to the applicants of the scheme, that is potentially a breach that would warrant some sort of enforcement action

Q. So is your evidence that this was concerned with
 personal data of the applicants; that's what your
 concern was?

21 **A.** Yes, I mean, that really was a major consideration and, you know, actually, a major hindrance to our being able to make our case. Hoisted, if you like, by our petard on that front because, whilst we were very serious about honouring our obligations of confidentiality, it

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appeared that our -- those -- some of those applying to
the scheme did not feel similarly bound by them and
Second Sight equally did not feel similarly bound by
them. So, yes, I think our overriding concern was
precisely that.

important -- my email reflects that I felt that it was

Q. Well, it says, looking at Andrew Parsons' email again,

what we felt was taking place.

the last paragraph:

important that they understood that we were not blind to

"The letter need not be aggressive but by pulling

Q. Well, let's look at POL00021837, please. If you can go
 down, please, to the bottom email. Thank you, perfect,
 thank you.
 This is 8 June 2015 from you to Second Sight and it

This is 8 June 2015 from you to Second Sight and it refers to the Panorama documentary by BBC that they were considering to produce, and you say:

"I know that you are already well aware of your terms of engagement but I nonetheless take this opportunity to remind you of the restrictions which apply to all contact with the media under clause 8 of those terms in particular ..."

Now, that's not referring to personal data and protecting personal data of applicants, is it?

19 **A.** Why not?

20 Q. Well, it's for me to ask the questions.

21 A. All right

Q. If you want to explain why that doesn't refer to thepersonal data of the applicants, please say.

A. Sorry, forgive me. I didn't mean to ask a question of
 you. I was simply reacting to the fact that, in my

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1 mind, that expression is more than capable of 2 encompassing the personal data of the cases in the 3 scheme?

Q. The reality is, Mr Bourke, you go on to say:

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"I should stress that any breach of this would be strictly enforced by the Post Office."

You were seeking to stop Second Sight from discussing matters with the BBC, weren't you?

- A. Well, I was seeking to ensure that they adhere to the terms of the engagement which they'd entered into with Post Office Limited. I don't think that's necessarily the wrong thing to do or, you know, I think this happens daily in any number of companies, that you engage a set of professional advisers but you don't expect them to go and give interviews to Panorama using confidential information you shared with them under the terms of that contract. So I don't think there's anything particularly remarkable about this, I confess.
- 19 Q. Is it the case that what you were doing here was you had 20 a concern that Second Sight were going to give opinions 21 that would give support to the allegations made by the 22 subpostmasters?
- 23 A. I think we were concerned that they might both share 24 details of the cases in the scheme and, also, on the 25 basis of what our experience had been at the advice they 89

with a view to gain for himself or another, or with intent to cause loss to another."

Your response is above:

"I would personally end the sentence after 'accounts'."

So what you're effectively saying is remove the words "with a view to gain for himself or another or with intent to cause loss to another", yes?

- 9 A. Yes.
- Q. The reason you give is that you: 10

"... would not want to encourage a subjective debate about whether or not applicants intended to gain, or cause us loss. I can just see someone saying, 'I was in such a muddle, I didn't know what else to do, but I didn't mean to ..."

Were you aware at the time that the words "with a view to gain for himself or another or with view to cause loss to another" was wording lifted from Section 17 of the Theft Act 1968 concerning false accounting?

- A. I don't believe so. 21
- The fact that Rodric Williams said, "but I think this 22 Q.
- 23 should reflect the actual offence", did that not tip you
- 24
- 25 A. Well, I don't know where he'd drawn that from but, yes,

1 had provided to us, advance certain propositions, for 2 which there was no evidence, that would occasion us 3 a great deal of difficulty, simply because they'd been 4 put in the public arena.

- Q. I want to turn now, please, to the Part Two Report. 6 Please can we look at POL00151715. We see the subject 7 is "[Post Office Limited] Part II response -- revised", 8 so this was part of work to create Post Office's
- 9 response to the Part Two Report produced by Second 10 Sight, wasn't it?
- 11 A. I believe so, yes.
- 12 If we look at the bottom of the page, please, it's 13 an email from you to Belinda Crowe and others, and you 14 refer to a Word document with some wording, which you 15 say is tweaked wording attached. If we go up to Rodric 16 Williams' next email, it says:

"Good distinction, but I think it should reflect the actual offence", and we're talking about here false accounting:

"[Would] you be happy with this?"

21 It savs:

> "It is important to understand that subpostmasters are not prosecuted by Post Office for incurring losses in branch. Prosecutions for false accounting occur where a person dishonestly falsifies branch accounts 90

I accept that it was a sort of a statement that had been drawn from some source. I didn't know whether it was

3 the Theft Act of '67 or anywhere else but, yes.

4 Q. Is what you're saying here that you wanted to avoid 5 applicants arguing that they didn't have a view to make 6 a gain for themselves or another or that they didn't 7 have any intention to cause loss?

8 A. So I think I was advancing a view on the basis that, in 9 the cases we had in the scheme, in the cases we've seen, 10 there were lots and lots of cases that involved false 11 accounting, not just on one occasion but on multiple 12 occasions stretching, in some cases, to multiple years, 13 and I think, at that point, it would have been difficult 14 to make the argument that, you know, it was the product 15 of confusion or being in a muddle.

16 Now, I've clearly stated the law wrong and, you 17 know, for that I'm happy to apologise. It was 18 a suggestion. I've asked whether it made sense and 19 I don't know whether it was taken up.

- 20 Q. Mr Bourke, what you're saying here is "Let's not 21 encourage anyone to grapple with the issue of 22 dishonesty", really, isn't it?
- 23 A. Look, I didn't see it like that at the time, no.
- 24 How did you see it?
- 25 **A**. Well, as I've tried to explain, many of the cases we

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1 were looking at involved periods of false accounting 2 stretching, in some cases, to years and I think it's 3 difficult, in those circumstances, to attribute that to 4 being muddled or, you know, doing it by mistake. So 5 I think -- in those circumstances, I think the case is 6 more arguable about whether or not that constitutes 7 intent to cause loss to another. But it's clearly 8 wrong, so I didn't know if it was right, hence my 9 question "Does that make sense?" and, as I say, it was 10 a suggestion rather than, you know, me sort of saying, 11 "This is what we're going to do".

12 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00129447. This is on 9 March13 2015 from Andrew Parsons and you're copied. It says:

"On the remote access point mentioned below, Simon is referring to this extract in the Scheme Report ..."

It says:

"The Deloitte report, cited by Simon below, describes the balancing transaction process."

Now, when you received this, presumably you would have looked down to the email below for context and to understand what Mr Parsons was talking about?

- A. I'm not sure. I mean, the email was not addressed to
 me, as you can see. So I may have done, I may not have
 done. I don't know.
- 25 **Q.** Remote access, at this point, was quite an important

includes a comment to the effect that they have observed
(in their desktop audit) 'a method for posting balancing
transactions ... which allows for the posting of
additional transactions centrally without the
requirement for these transactions to be accepted by
SPMRs ..."

It goes on to say:

"Accordingly, we are concerned that should the Deloitte report subsequently be disclosed people may be able to compare both documents and argue that they are inconsistent."

Were you aware of the Deloitte report at this time, in 2015?

- 14 A. No, I wasn't, not as the Deloitte report, and I thinkthis refers to Project Zebra, if I'm not mistaken.
- 16 **Q.** Yes.

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- 17 **A.** I was aware of balancing transactions. I didn't know that the balancing transactions knowledge came from something called Project Zebra and the desktop exercise performed by Deloitte prior to my arrival, and I wasn't aware of the fake basket hypothesis, as well.
- Q. So if you say, "No I wasn't", is your evidence that youdidn't read this email from Martin Smith?
- A. I don't think I would have read it, no. I mean, I think
 this email, if you just scroll up to the people it is

1 issue, wasn't it?

2 A. Yes.

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- Q. So, with that in mind, do you think it's likely you
 would have looked down to see the substantive email to
 which Mr Parsons is referring?
- 6 A. It's possible but I can't tell you for sure.
- 7 Q. If you could turn to page 2, please, to look at the8 email. It's from Martin Smith and it says:

"May I also take this opportunity to mention a point which Simon Clarke has raised. He has noted that the end of term report contains the following proposition."

It says:

"There is no functionality in Horizon for the Post Office or Fujitsu ... to edit, manipulate or remove transaction data once it has been recorded in a branch's accounts. The Post Office can only post additional, correcting transactions to a branch's accounts but only in ways that are visible to postmasters, eg transaction corrections and transaction acknowledgements. It is also possible for Fujitsu to view branch data in order to provide support and conduct maintenance but this does not allow access to any functionality that could be used to edit recorded transaction data."

He goes on to say:

"He has also commented that the Deloitte report

between, is, you know, an email between Martin Smith and Rodric Williams and, if you go up again, it's a conversation between Rodric and -- and then if you look, the email to which I am copied in, and which I would have paid the most attention to, he goes on to say, "If we wanted to make the extract complete we would need to at something like", blah, blah, blah and then he says about balancing transactions, about which I knew.

I don't know whether he then goes on to say anything about the fake basket hypothesis. In fact, he doesn't so --

Q. Well, Mr Bourke, it says there, above where it's
 highlighted "the Deloitte report cited by Simon below";
 presumably you would have read that?

- 15 A. No, I don't think I would have done.
- 16 Q. So your evidence is, I think, that this email that says,17 "Rodric and everyone else by copy", which you're copied

in to, you're saying you didn't read it?

- A. No, I'm saying I read the bit that was -- I read the bit
 that was, you know -- (no audio)
- Q. If you read it, you would have seen it says, "TheDeloitte report cited by Simon below"?
- A. I agree, I would have read those words. That doesn't
 mean I would have read the documents cited below.
- 25 I took what I needed, for my purposes, from this email

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- 1 that was addressed by Andrew Parsons to other people and
- 2 I was copied in to it.
- 3 Q. Is your evidence at this stage, having read this email,
- 4 that you were or were not aware of a report by Deloitte
- 5 that covered balancing transactions?
- 6 A. I was aware of the balancing transactions element but
- 7 not the fake basket element, and I agree with you, had
- 8 I read all the way through to the end and looked at
- 9 Martin Smith's correspondence with --
- 10 Q. Sorry, Mr Bourke, that's a different question. My
- 11 question is: at this point in time, 9 March 2015, I'm
- 12 trying to clarify if your evidence is that you knew that
- 13 there was a Deloitte report that covered balancing
- 14 transactions?
- 15 A. I'm not sure if I knew there was a Deloitte report until
- this email but I knew about the balancing transaction
- 17 process
- 18 Q. Right. So you received this email and you know there's
- 19 a Deloitte report?
- 20 A. No, I know there's a balancing transaction process.
- 21 I didn't know where it had emanated from.
- 22 Q. I'll ask that again: 9 March 2015, are you accepting
- 23 that you knew there was a Deloitte report that described
- 24 balancing transactions?
- 25 **A.** Having read this email, yes.

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- 1 balancing transactions but I was not aware of it as
- 2 having been recorded in any Deloitte report.
- 3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Okay, I understand.
- 4 Right. Do you want an extra three minutes,
- 5 Mr Stevens, in view of that intervention?
- 6 MR STEVENS: No, sir. If we could come back at 1.55, I'd be
- 7 grateful
- 8 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine. Thank you.
- 9 MR STEVENS: Thank you.
- 10 (12.55 pm)
- 11 (The Short Adjournment)
- 12 (1.55 pm)
- 13 MR STEVENS: Good afternoon, sir, can you see and hear me?
- 14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I can indeed.
- 15 MR STEVENS: Mr Bourke, can you see and hear me?
- 16 A. I can, thank you.
- 17 MR STEVENS: I can hear you.
- 18 Mr Bourke, before lunch, I just want to, I think,
- 19 clarify where we got to, I think your evidence was that,
- as at the date of the email we were just discussing,
- 21 9 March 2015, from Andrew Parsons, at that point, you
- 22 were aware of the existence of this Deloitte report; is
- 23 that right?
- 24 A. I don't believe so. I was aware of the existence of
- 25 a balancing transaction but not of the Deloitte report.

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1 MR STEVENS: Sir, I wonder if that might be an appropriate

- place to stop for lunch. I would ask if we could start
- 3 again five minutes early, at 1.55.
- 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, but let me just ask Mr Bourke this
- 5 question, just so that I'm entirely clear, that's all
- 6 I'm doing it for. You acknowledged this morning that
- 7 you were aware of what I would call the James Davidson
- 8 email, the Fujitsu email.
- 9 A. (No audio)
- 10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: -- and you obviously would have been by
- 11 this stage, yeah?
- 12 A. Sir, I was aware -- (no audio)
- 13 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: The balancing transaction that Deloitte
- 14 refers to, is that the same as the revelation in the
- 15 Davidson email?
- 16 A. I believe it is, yes.
- 17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, well, that's what I thought. Does
- that throw any light upon how you would have viewed
- 19 these emails?
- 20 A. (No audio)

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- 21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: In other words, were you being told
- 22 something at the back of your mind you already knew or
- 23 was this new information?
- 24 A. That was the point I was trying to make, and obviously
- 25 unsuccessfully, that I was aware of the facility of

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- Q. Right. So let me just bring that document up again, so
- 2 that we're all singing from the same hymn sheet. I'll
- 3 just get the reference. It's POL00129447.
- So, as we see, it's from Andrew Parsons, you're copied in, and it says:
- 6 "Rodric (and everyone else by copy)."
- 7 In the third paragraph down it says:
- 8 "The Deloitte Report, cited by Simon below,
- 9 describes balancing transactions ..."
- 10 I thought, having reviewed the transcript, that your
- 11 evidence was that, at this date, you accepted you were
- 12 aware of the existence of the Deloitte report?
- 13 A. No, and I apologise if there was any -- if I didn't
- 14 express myself clearly. I think I was aware of
- 15 balancing transactions being possible quite early on but
- 16 I didn't know that it had been covered by a Deloitte
- 17 report. It was something that was relayed to me,
- 18 I think, in correspondence I'd been shown between James
- Davidson and, I think, Rodric Williams some time back in202014.
- 21 Q. So on reading this email and reading, as I say, "The
- Deloitte report cited by Simon below" and reading that,
- your evidence is you were not aware of the existence of
- 24 the Deloitte report?
- 25 A. I don't believe so, no.

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(25) Pages 97 - 100

- 1 Q. Is your evidence that you didn't read this email?
- 2 A. No, my evidence is that I read this top sheet but
- 3 I didn't go on to read the exchange which accompanies
- 4 it.
- 5 Q. So your evidence is that you read the paragraph that
- 6 says, "The Deloitte report cited by Simon below
- 7 describes the balancing transaction process"? You read
- 8 that sentence?
- 9 A. I did, yes.
- 10 Q. So, presumably at that point, then, you must have beenaware of the existence of this Deloitte report?
- 12 A. Sorry, I think we're just talking at cross purposes.
- 13 I obviously, having read this email, was aware of
- . oz nedelj, namig reda ane eman, nae anare e.
- 14 a Deloitte report. Now, I was previously aware of
- 15 balancing transactions. This was not news to me. The
- 16 Deloitte report, however, was and I think the Deloitte
- 17 report being referred to there is the Project Zebra
- 18 report, which I only became familiar with in the context
- 19 of the Swift Review.
- 20 Q. Well, the Swift Review is later than this.
- 21 A. I accept that, yeah.

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- 22 Q. So I'll ask one last time: on reading this email, do you
- 23 accept that you were informed of the existence of the
- 24 Deloitte report that described balancing transactions?
- 25 **A.** I accept that I was made aware, through this email, of

"All of these processes for correcting/updating
a branch's accounts have similar features. All of them
involve inputting a new transaction into the branch's
records (not editing or removing any previous
transactions) and all are shown transparently in the
branch transaction records available to subpostmasters
(as well as in the master ARQ data)."

Do you know why this didn't refer to the distinction with balancing transactions that a subpostmaster did not have to accept a balancing transaction, whereas they did with transaction acknowledgements and transaction corrections?

- 13 A. No, I don't. I was involved in assembling this document
- 14 but not for the substantive detailed content where it
- applies to technical issues. As we've previously
- 16 discussed and as I think it says in paragraph 14.5, the
- 17 use of a balancing transaction was only used once at
- 18 least in the context of Horizon Online, and I --
- 19 Q. That's a different issue, Mr Bourke. You say you were
- 20 involved in drawing it together but, based on the
- 21 knowledge you had, you would have known that that was
- 22 incomplete, wouldn't you?
- 23 A. Sorry, in what respect?
- 24 Q. In that it doesn't refer to balancing transactions being

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25 capable of inserting a transaction without the

- 1 a Deloitte report which describes balancing
- 2 transactions.
- 3 Q. Thank you. That document can come down.
- We've covered that you've said you're already aware
- 5 of balancing transactions. Reading the transcript
- 6 before, your evidence was that you were not aware of
- 7 other issues raised in relation to data integrity, such
- 8 as in relation to baskets, in the Deloitte report; is
- 9 that right?
- 10 A. That is right, yes.
- 11 Q. Could we look, please, at POL00041059. This is a draft
- 12 of the "Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme, Reply of
- 13 Post Office Limited to Second Sight's Briefing Report --
- 14 Part Two". Were you involved in contributing to the
- 15 drafting of this document?
- 16 A. Yes, I was.
- 17 **Q.** Please could we look at page 57, paragraphs 14.5 and
- 18 14.6. It says:
- 19 "It has always been possible for Post Office to
- 20 correct errors in and/or update a branch's accounts.
- 21 This most commonly done by way of a transaction
- 22 correction however it could also be by way of
- 23 a balancing transaction or transaction acknowledgement."
- 24 It goes on to talk about balancing transactions.
- 25 At 14.6:

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- 1 subpostmaster accepting it.
- 2 A. Without the postmaster accepting it, yeah, I agree, but
- 3 it leaves an auditable mark.
- 4 Q. So I ask again: why wasn't it included in --
- 5 A. I honestly don't know. I didn't write this section.
- 6 Q. Can you recall if this wording of the draft made it into
- 7 the final document?
- 8 A. No, I can't.
- 9 Q. That can come down, thank you.
- 10 I want to move on and look at a matter to do with
- 11 Panorama. Please can we bring up POL00140211. This is
- 12 entitled "Panorama Meeting -- Tuesday 9 June", would
- that have been June 2015?
- 14 A. Yes, it would have been.
- 15 Q. This is on Bond Dickinson notepaper. We will see, if we
- 16 go down, Matt Bardo is listed there. Was this a meeting
- with researchers from the BBC?
- 18 A. This was an on-the-record background briefing that Mark
- 19 Davies initiated with Matt Bardo, and I think there was
- one other individual present at the meeting, as well,
- 21 from the BBC, yes.
- 22 Q. Was this recorded and then transcribed?
- 23 A. I assume so, yes.
- 24 Q. Could we look, please, at page 18. If we could go to
- the very bottom, we see Matt Bardo says:

"... mindful of the time ... if I just say remote access you will immediately know what I am going to ask about."

Then if we go over the page, the end says:

"So what exactly is possible and what exactly isn't possible as far as you're concerned when it comes to accessing transactions on a branch terminal?"

Then if we go down, please, we can see Angela van den Bogerd gives an answer, and it says:

"I think the question is really can anybody access the branch data without an audit trail?"

Tim Robinson says: "Yes, without the subpostmaster's knowledge."

Angela van den Bogerd says: "Yes and the answer to that is no."

Matt Bardo: "Sorry, when you say an audit trail, you mean an audit trail that is completely transparent to the subpostmaster?"

Angela van den Bogerd says: "Yes."

- 20 Q. Did you agree with that position at the time?
- 21 Α. Yes

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- 22 So was it not your understanding that a balancing 23 transaction could be inserted into branch accounts
- 24 without the subpostmaster's knowledge?
- 25 A. On the basis that an audit trail is available to the 105
- a shorthand, that, as I say, if the postmaster is 2 looking at his or her accounts, you know, as they're 3 required to do, this would be something that would 4 highlight itself as being something that they didn't 5
 - recognise as being from them. So, to that extent, it
- 6 would have been within the subpostmaster's knowledge,
- 7 not necessarily at the time the insertion was made but
- 8 certainly very soon after it had been done.
- 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's really something I wanted to ask
 - you -- sorry to interrupt, Mr Stevens -- but when you
- 11 talk about an audit trail, do you mean by that that, if
- 12 they looked at the audit available to them on a given
- 13 day, then, if there had been an insertion, they could
- 14 notice that, amongst all the various transactions, there
- 15 was one that didn't bear their hallmark, yes?
- A. Correct. 16
- 17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: If they didn't look at it on that 18 particular day, they wouldn't know, would they, because 19 they then wouldn't have access to the relevant part of 20 the audit trail?
- 21 A. The -- my understanding is that in Legacy Horizon, then 22 subsequently in Horizon Online, they had 42 days, in the 23 former case, of audit available to them in branch and, 24 in the latter case, 60 days of audit. So if they were
- 25 trying to balance their accounts, as they were required 107

- 1 postmaster, then, I mean, I don't want to get into
- 2 semantics but the audit trail shows that that
- 3 transaction was not -- or, sorry, not that transaction
 - but that insertion was not created by the postmaster,
- 5 and it is therefore not something that I would say is
- 6 outwith the knowledge of the postmaster.
- 7 Q. So you're saying it's within the subpostmaster's
- 8 knowledge because the transaction could go in without
- 9 their knowledge but they could, to the best of your
- 10 belief, look at an audit trail and see that an external
- 11 transaction has been inputted into their branch
- 12 accounts?
- 13 A. Yes, if they are doing their daily cash declarations and
- 14 reconciling the accounts as something they were required
- 15 to do under the terms of the contract, the transaction
- 16 would identify itself as having been something done by
- 17 somebody else and, therefore, it would have been
- 18 transparent to the postmaster.
- 19 Q. Do you think that that position, that we've discussed
- 20 there, is adequately conveyed by Angela van den Bogerd,
- 21 simply by saying that transactions cannot be inserted
- 22 without the subpostmaster's knowledge?
- 23 A. Well, I mean, I think -- I mean, look, you could go on
- 24 to explain it more fully but I don't think she was being
- 25 disingenuous when she was saying that. It was 106
- 1 to do by their contract, it wouldn't have taken long to 2 identify it.
- 3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, say that again? They had 42 days
- 4 where the audit trail would remain in Legacy Horizon,
- 5 and what about on Horizon Online?
- 6 A. 60 days, it would have been extended for another 18.
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Okay, fine. Thank you.
- A. I think the reason for those time periods, sorry, just 8
- to build on that because it's helpful, I think the 9
- 10 timings, the 42 and 60 days, were designed to enable
- 11 them to complete all their cash declarations both --
- 12 weekly, daily and monthly, that they needed to, in
- 13
 - a full cycle available audit data.
- 14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.
- 15 MR STEVENS: Just to clarify, because it's something which
- 16 the Inquiry may need to follow up, is it your evidence
- 17 that the understanding you've just given about the data
- 18 that was available to subpostmasters, on the audit, as
- 19 you say, your understanding, did that come from Fujitsu?
- 20 Yes. We were consistently told that any insertion that 21 took -- sorry, any injection of a transaction would
- 22 always be auditable.
- 23 Q. I'm asking a slightly different thing. I'm saying not
- 24 auditable, as a broad matter, but available for the
- 25 subpostmaster to see in branch within the 42 or 60 days?

That's my understanding, yes. 1 Α. 1 paragraph 181. You say: 2 Q. Your understanding came from Fujitsu; is that your 2 "My recollection is that [Post Office Limited] 3 evidence? 3 remained concerned about unresolved disputes following 4 A. Yes. 4 the closure of the scheme, and wished to provide 5 **Q.** Please can we turn the page in the document to page 21. 5 reassurance that it was doing all that it was reasonable 6 If we could go down to -- a bit further, please. You 6 to do to seek to resolve those disputes. Jane MacLeod 7 start talking about remote access and the part I want to 7 or possibly me, felt that [Post Office Limited's] 8 look on is Tim Robinson says: 8 incoming Chairman, Tim Parker, who was without any 9 q "But not without knowledge of ..." vested interests, could perform that role supported by 10 You say: "But not without the knowledge and it has 10 external counsel, who was entirely independent from the been used once. Once and once only in the entire time 11 team at [Post Office Limited]." 11 12 Horizon has been effective. It happened as part of the 12 So my understanding of that is you say the 13 pilot. That is what a pilot is supposed to surface and 13 provenance of what we now call the Swift Review was 14 it was done you know ..." 14 either an idea by you or Jane MacLeod? 15 At this point, did you know that balancing 15 A. I think that's right, although the actual instruction 16 transactions or something equivalent to balancing 16 for it to begin was given by Baroness Neville-Rolfe, but 17 transactions hadn't been used in Legacy Horizon? 17 I don't know whether that was as a result of discussions we'd had with the department and it was adopted as their 18 A. No, I didn't. I'm afraid, I probably didn't draw the 18 19 distinction between the two systems. My understanding 19 solution but my recollection is that I think the initial 20 was that balancing transactions had only been used once 20 idea probably emanated from us. 21 21 and, as it turns out, that would have been as part of Q. Could we look, please, at POL00153064. This is an email 22 the pilot for Horizon Online. 22 from you to Jane MacLeod on 2 September 2015, so before 23 Q. Thank you. That document can come down. 23 the Swift Review, effectively, and you say: 24 24 I want to move to look at the Swift Review, please. "Following a recent further (and pretty major 25 Can we bring up your witness statement, page 86, 25 I gather) wobble on BNR ..." 109 110 1 That's Baroness Neville-Rolfe, isn't it, BNR? 1 an early further meeting on the back of the 'very 2 A. Yes. 2 serious findings' of Panorama's investigation." 3 Q. Was that a yes, sorry? 3 It goes on to say, in the last sentence, that: 4 A. Sorry. Yes, it was. 4 "The email goes on to suggest that someone like 5 5 Q. Now, in your witness statement at paragraph 130 you say Sir Terry Leahy (ex CEO of Tesco ...) or Stuart (now 6 that wobble or wobbles referred to episodes of 6 Baron) Rose ... would be ideal." 7 7 discomfort and concern on the part of Baroness Now, that was referring to those two people being 8 Neville-Rolfe; do you stand by that? 8 good people to oversee an independent review, wasn't it? 9 A. Yes, I do. 9 A. Yes. Q. You say: 10 Q. In fact, was what you were meaning here that Baroness 10 Neville-Rolfe had wobbled from the party line that no 11 11 "Beyond bizarre, but there you go." further investigation was necessary? 12 12 Do you see that? 13 Α. No, no, it is unsurprising to my mind that, when faced 13 Yeah, absolutely. 14 with colleagues in the House suggesting there's more --14 Q. So is it not the case that you were against the idea of 15 you know, that the Panorama programme revealed all sorts 15 a further investigation into the matters which had been 16 of things, that, you know, her confidence would have 16 described as "Sparrow issues"? 17 been shaken and it only -- it is only a reference to the 17 A. At that stage, I didn't feel it was a sensible course of 18 fact that, you know, when faced with something that is 18 action. I think, at this stage, we had the CCRC already 19 engaged in conducting its important work and it wasn't

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- 19 difficult, challenging, that ministers, you know, will 20 feel like any normal human being, ups and downs in terms
- 21 of the confidence they've got in the matters before
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- 23 Q. The second paragraph, you refer to an email from MPs 24 Andrew Bridgen, Kevan Jones, and, it says:
- 25 "... it would appear, Oliver Letwin, requesting

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21 in fact, unveiled anything terribly new. The 22 whistle-blower in question, despite our repeated efforts

23 to understand what he was alleging, came to nothing, and

24 I note that, in the Swift Review itself, I think

25 Jonathan Swift comes to the conclusion that it wasn't

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immediately clear to us that the Panorama programme had,

1 entirely clear what the person who it was, Richard Roll, 2 was actually suggesting had happened or was possible. 3 Q. Okay, so 2 September, then, you're against the idea of 4 the review. Before going back to the Swift Review,

let's just look at the next paragraph. You refer to internal discussions about key risks, and you say:

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"Bluntly, while BIS officials do a sensible enough job of relaying information, we are less confident about their ability/willingness to provide her with proactive, robust advice and deliver difficult messages."

Is this, in effect, a criticism of Shareholder Executive decisions for not putting a Post Office spin on information relevant to the Sparrow issues?

14 A. No, it's got nothing to do with spin. It's a question 15 of whether or not they were relaying the strength of our 16 case effectively.

Q. Could we please bring up POL00041135. So this is a letter dated 7 September 2015 to Baroness Neville-Rolfe from Jane MacLeod. We see it refers to a meeting on 6 August, a briefing about matters relating to the BBC Panorama documentary. If we could turn, please, to page 4, it says, "Way Forward":

"At our meeting on 6 August 2015 you advised that you would ask the new Chairman, Tim Parker, to review the Post Office's position."

1 on to say in that very paragraph, you know, we would 2 welcome the Government Department's support in resisting 3 the current calls for a public inquiry. So that's what 4 we were objecting to, not the review that Tim Parker 5 eventually undertook. 6

Q. Could we look, please, at the Swift Review itself. It's POL00006355. Now, this is a detailed report. I'm not going to take you through all of it. Could we look, please, to page 51, thank you. If we could bring paragraph 145 into view, thank you.

So it says:

"It seems to us that the Deloitte documents in particular pose real issues for [Post Office Limited]."

The Deloitte documents, I think, referred to there are the Project Zebra documents from 2014; is that right?

17 A. That's my understanding, yes.

18 Q. It says:

> "First, both the existence of the balancing transaction capability and the wider ability of Fujitsu to 'fake' digital signatures are contrary to the public assurances provided by Fujitsu and [Post Office Limited] about functionality of the Horizon system. Fujitsu's comment we quote above seems to us to be simply incorrect, and [Post Office Limited's] Westminster Hall

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1 So is it not the case that this idea did come from 2 Baroness Neville-Rolfe in early August 2015, rather than 3 coming from you?

A. Not necessarily, no., for the simple reason that we

5 would have discussed these matters with Richard Callard 6 and Laura Thompson and it may have been during the 7 course of those conversations that the idea surfaced.

8 As I say, I can't be sure where the initial idea came 9 from but I did say, a second or two ago, that certainly

10 the decision to launch it was taken by Baroness

11 Neville-Rolfe.

12 Yes, but, Mr Bourke, in your evidence you suggest that Q. 13 the idea came from either you or Jane MacLeod. We went 14 to an email on 2 September 2015 when you were against 15 the idea of some sort of review, and this tells us that 16 Baroness Neville-Rolfe, on 6 August 2015, advised that

17 she wanted Tim Parker to look at Post Office's position.

18 It's pretty clear, isn't it, that the idea for the Swift

19 Review didn't come from you?

20 A. As I said, I'm not sure about that but I think we're 21 talking at cross purposes. I think the calls being made 22 by Kevan Jones and others was for a different sort of 23 review, ie a judicial review, a Government sponsored 24 review, rather than something like this, which was one 25 step below that but would hopefully -- well, as it goes

1 Response is incomplete."

Now, pausing there, that was the response we were referring to earlier, wasn't it, in January 2015?

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4 A. Yes, that's right, yes.

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Q. So this is, effectively, it's directly saying, in terms, 6 that that response was incomplete, based on what was in 7 the Deloitte report. Now, following receipt of this 8 advice, did you inform either Shareholder Executive or UKGI about the fact that the Westminster Hall response 9 10 was incomplete?

11 A. I don't think we did so in terms of, you know, 12 an immediate call in to the department, no. But we 13 shared the output of the Swift Review with Baroness 14 Neville-Rolfe and Tim Parker.

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Q. Let's be careful there. You said, "We shared the output 16 of the Swift Review with Baroness Neville-Rolfe", what 17 do you mean by the "output"?

A. Well, I haven't got the letter in front of me but 18 19 I think it detailed in -- I think it went into some 20 considerable detail about both the positive and adverse 21 findings that Jonathan made -- that Sir Jonathan made.

22 Q. I see. So just to be -- your evidence is that what 23 Baroness Neville-Rolfe was told about the Swift Review 24 is contained in the letter or correspondence from Tim

25 Parker and there wasn't further oral briefings on it?

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- A. I honestly can't remember but there was -- I imagine 1 2 conversations took place at official level because they 3 would have been -- sorry, UKGI would have been 4 interested in -- because it was UKGI by this stage --5 would have been interested in what was going on, but 6 I honestly can't remember the detail of those 7 conversations. So it's entirely possible that that was 8 communicated to them but I can't specifically recall 9 that happening.
- 10 Q. Could we look, please, at POL00103110. So if we can go 11 down the page slightly, please, we see there Jane 12 MacLeod to Tim Parker on 22 January 2016. So my 13 understanding is this was shortly after a draft of 14 the -- or it's an indication being given as to Jonathan 15 Swift's recommendations to Tim Parker but not a final 16 report. A final report hadn't been completed; is that 17 right?
- 18 A. Yes, I think Tim Parker received a draft report in the 19 week of 11 January.

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20 Q. If we go again to the top of the page, we see that this 21 email was sent to you there. So, if we can go, please, 22 back down to Jane MacLeod's email and over the page to 23 "Briefing to the Minister", it says:

> "We also discussed with Jonathan whether there were any limitations from his perspective on the content of

"As promised, I spoke to Laura Thompson about any developments she might have to report on how best to communicate the shift in focus to the litigation and away from the review."

Do you have any recollection of that conversation?

- 6 A. A vague one but, yes, I remember the conversation having 7 taken place.
- 8 Q. What's your recollection of the conversation?
- 9 A. Well, I think there was a discussion because this, 10 I think, came once proceedings had been issued and there 11 was a question mark about whether or not the 12 recommendations that Jonathan had made, eight in total, 13 should be taken forward under the aegis of his review or 14 whether, in the light of proceedings having been issued, 15 they should instead be taken forward under the -- you 16 know, through the exercise to defend the litigation.
- 17 Q. Did you tell Laura Thompson anything about the content 18 of the recommendations in the Swift Review?
- 19 I'm sure in the intervening period I would have told her Α. 20 about the sort of headline facts, yes.
- Q. What headline facts would you have told her? 21
- 22 A. Well, there was some follow-up to be done on the IT
- 23 front. We'd just been speaking about some of those.
- 24 There was a question mark about whether or not the NBSC,
- 25 the helpline, for want of a better expression, was

your briefing to the Minister. Jonathan confirmed that there were no limitation this is from his perspective, although he noted that if a physical or electronic copy were provided, this could result in the loss of legal privilege in connection with the document, recognising that, in the absence of privilege, the report could be disclosable under a [Freedom of Information] request."

"Accordingly, our recommendation is that you provide a verbal briefing to the Minister that in response to the question", and it goes on.

When he says "our recommendation" was "our" including the team, including you?

- 14 A. No, I think she was referring to the -- I think she 15 could have easily have said "my recommendation" but 16 I think what she was referring to there is the 17 recommendation both of her and Jonathan Swift.
- Q. Did you discuss whether or not the Swift Review should 18 19 have been shared with the Minister, as a document in 20 itself, with Jane MacLeod or Tim Parker?
- 21 A. Not personally, no. At least, I don't think I did, no.
- 22 Please could we turn to POL00024911. So we have at the 23 top a response from Jane MacLeod to you, it's in 24 response to an email that you sent earlier that day. If

25 we could go down to that, please. You said:

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1 providing sensible and accurate advice to those people 2 calling it. There was a recommendation on the question 3 of whether or not theft -- sorry, a charge or theft was 4 being properly levelled or was probably -- properly 5 being made in certain cases. So I think there were 6 eight in total. I can't remember each and every one of 7 them individually but I would have given her or Richard 8 Callard or both a heads-up on what remained to be done.

This was, you know, an exercise that we felt was important to ensure that we had done everything that we reasonably could to address the complaints that had been initially raised in the context of the Complaints and Mediation Scheme.

- 14 Q. Would you have said anything about the Deloitte reports, 15 the Project Zebra reports?
- A. I don't think I would have said the words "Project 16 17 Zebra" because I don't think I ever knew about that 18 codename for it. I think it's unlikely. I think 19 I would have -- insofar as I talked to her about the 20 specifics, it would have just been about the specifics 21 rather than about, you know, particular names.
- 22 Q. I want to look at one aspect of the recommendations 23 which was taken forward, and that's Project Bramble. 24 Could we please look at POL00029990. This is an email

25 from Andrew Parsons to you and others on 13 July 2016

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and it says:

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"... I wanted to give you a heads up on the 'remote access' issues that have been revealed through Deloitte's preliminary report."

Now this was, as you say, Project Bramble. One of the things Deloitte was looking at are matters to do with remote access on the recommendation of Jonathan Swift; is that broadly matter?

- 9 A. No, that's entirely accurate. Yeah.
- 10 Q. What was your role in relation to Project Bramble? A. So I convened a meeting with colleagues from -- one or 11 12 two colleagues from the business and also three people 13 from Deloitte -- Andrew Whitton, Mark Westbrook and 14 there was one other person, whose name escapes me --15 and, effectively, that was a meeting called with a view 16 to initiating Project Bramble. We were very clear on 17 the back of Jonathan Swift's review that we want to --18 well, he had already indicated as soon as he got the 19 draft that he wanted all recommendations accepted and 20 followed through. So, even before the finalised report 21 reached him on, I think, 8 February, we had already 22 begun work to scope what would need to be done by

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I attended -- I convened a meeting to initiate that

Deloitte in order to satisfy his recommendations. So

1 information.

project.

- 2 Q. Do you know how widely the Project Bramble report was 3 shared? So, to the best of your knowledge, was it 4 provided to the Post Office Board?
- 5 A. To the best of my knowledge, I don't, but I can imagine 6 it would have been.
- 7 Q. To the best of your knowledge, was the Project Bramble 8 report provided to UKGI?
- 9 A. I honestly don't know but, since UKGI have a seat on the 10 Board, that would have had the same effect.
- Q. Please could we look at POL00028070. This is a further 11 12 draft report --

Apologies, we're just waiting for a phone, thank vou.

This is a further draft report, 3 October 2017. To what extent were you still engaged with Project Bramble

16 17 at this point? A. I don't know which one in the sequence this was.

- 18 19 I think I'd listed, or you disclosed to me eight or --20 seven or eight versions of iterations of this report. 21 My level of engagement reduced over that time very 22 markedly because I was moving away from anything to do 23 with this subject area but I was keeping, you know, in
- 24 loose touch, just through discussions with Mark
- 25 Underwood, who I think was the point person engaged with 123

1 Q. It seems you're still involved as an identified 2 recipient where the summary of Andrew Parsons' advice, 3 when the first preliminary report is produced.

4 So at this stage, what's your ongoing involvement?

- A. Well, I think it's beginning to reduce, only because 5 6 I think my role changed but, at this stage I -- you 7 know, I'm -- obviously I have been involved in the 8 scheme and I've been involved in some of the debates 9 about remote access and one of the reasons I think 10 Andrew Parsons is sharing this with me is because it 11 extends very substantially, the understanding that 12 certainly I had and, as I understand it, my colleagues 13 had, of what was possible in terms of remote access by 14
- 15 Q. Well, in your own words, could you set out what your 16 understanding was of that expansion?
- 17 Well, we had -- prior to this email, my understanding 18 had always been that any data recorded on the whatever 19 the repository was, BRDB, can never be deleted, amended, 20 manipulated. All that could happen is a new 21 transaction -- a new entry being put in, the balancing 22 transaction, and that would be auditable. This, as it 23 says in line one of the background, says very clearly 24 that they have the ability to delete and edit

25 transactions. Now, that is -- that was entirely new 122

Deloitte colleagues in making sure they were getting what they needed. There is an email, I think, addressed to me from Mark Westbrook indicating that he was having some difficulty in getting what he needed out of Fujitsu and I think, simply because I was more senior person than Mark Underwood at the time, he was effectively asking me to give them a nudge to accommodate the work that they were doing. But, as I say, my involvement with bramble dwindled quite rapidly.

My last understanding of what it had found was that the -- whilst the Horizon system was certainly not completely watertight, the steps one would need to take to overcome the various security controls would be really quite difficult to achieve and that -- I think I say in my witness statement -- I think it wasn't entirely clear to me why somebody at Fujitsu would be -with the wherewithal and the right access rights, would set their mind to doing that.

19 Q. If we look at the content of this and turn to page 7, 20 please, paragraph 1.4.2.6. It refers to:

> "A limited number of authorised Fujitsu personnel have sufficient privileges to theoretically add/delete/ change data in the BRDB (Privileged Users)."

It goes on to say, the bottom paragraph:

"Through our enquiries, we have identified that 25

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- 1 current Privileged Users [sorry, that's at the bottom of 2 the page, please] have access to the KMS ..."
 - That's the key management system, is it?
- 4 A. I don't know.

are not kept."

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Q. "... such that they could theoretically cover up changes
 they make to the BRDB data. This is a failure by
 Fujitsu to implement its own segregation of duties
 policy. We are unable to determine how long this
 vulnerability has existed as records of historic users

Then if we go over the page, please. We have:

"Based on assertions from Fujitsu

[paragraph 1.4.2.14], there is a key split in dates around the audit trail of privileged user usage in July 2015:

"Pre-July 2015 only superuser log on and log offs were logged. However these are expected to be of low volume, and would always (if valid accesses) be approved by a documented access request form."

Then after 2015 it refers to various audit data that was created.

Now, looking back, what you were describing earlier of your knowledge and your understanding, is that effectively what's set out here? Do you think you would have read this report at the time and understood this to

- 1 was -- were the people who were conducting the
- 2 litigation rather than me.
- 3 Q. Yes, but you did sit on the Postmaster Litigation
- 4 Steering Group, didn't you?
- 5 A. Yes, I did, and --
- 6 Q. Remote access was a key issue in the Group Litigation,
- 7 wasn't it?
- 8 A. Of course it was, yes.
- 9 **Q.** You were involved in establishing this project, correct?
- 10 A. Yes, yes.
- 11 Q. You say, I think, your involvement dwindled but, given
- 12 your responsibilities on the steering group, do you not
- think you would have read these clarification questions
- 14 and answers to understand what position or what advice
- 15 Deloitte was providing?
- 16 A. You know, the fact of being on the PLSG does not mean
- that I was the best person to, you know, understand or
- 18 query or challenge the information of being -- you know,
- 19 also on the PLSG were people who were specifically
- 20 employed by the company to deal with IT issues. So I'm
- 21 afraid the answer is, no, I didn't. You know,
- 22 I followed it as a matter of curiosity but not with any
- 23 great application or rigour.
- 24 $\,$ Q. How widely available or -- let me rephrase that, sorry.
- 25 To what extent were these Deloitte reports discussed 127

- 1 be the position that Deloitte were taking?
- 2 A. What's the date of this document, please?
- 3 Q. It's 3 October 2017.
- 4 A. I mean, I think it's unlikely. I certainly -- I mean,
- 5 with the best will in the world, the documents are --
- 6 make for quite difficult reading, make hard reading and
- 7 I think, unless you're quite well versed in these
- 8 matters, they would be -- you know, I would find it very
- 9 difficult to draw sensible conclusions from it without
- 10 some considerable guidance, which I didn't have. So
- 11 I think the answer to that is -- the short answer is no,
- 12 I don't think so.
- 13 $\,$ **Q.** Well, let's go further on in the document. Page 132,
- 14 please, appendix 7. It says:
- 15 "Clarification questions
- "The below clarification questions and associatedanswers attempt to provide clarity on queries arising
- 18 from the content of this report."
- 19 Presumably questions which have been put by Post
- 20 Office. Do you remember anything about that?
- 21 A. Not in the context of this exercise, no. I mean --
- 22 Q. Apologies. I spoke over you.
- 23 A. I was just going to say, by this time, this exercise was
- being done in the context of the Group Litigation. So,
- 25 if you like, the internal client for these purposes
 - 126
- 1 in the Postmaster Litigation Steering Group?
- 2 A. I honestly don't recall. I really don't think they
- 3 would have been gone through in any forensic detail,
- 4 simply because they would have only really been
- 5 intelligible to people with the necessary expertise and
- 6 I think that would have made for a very difficult and,
- 7 if I may say so, boring meeting for the majority of
- 8 participants.
- 9 **Q.** Can you recall passing on any of the Bramble reports to
- 10 any other person outside of Post Office Limited?
- 11 **A.** No, because I didn't think I had -- I didn't have
- 12 custody of the Bramble reports.
- 13 Q. You say you didn't have custody, is your evidence that
- 14 you didn't have access to the Bramble reports?
- 15 A. I could have had access if I'd asked for it but I didn't
- 16 have routinely access to it. As I say in my witness
- 17 statement, I'm amazed it went on for as long as it did
- and produced so many reports. I simply had no knowledge
- of that or, insofar as I did, it didn't register.
- 20 **Q.** I wanted to now just cover a few topics on the Group
- 21 Litigation itself.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Before you do, Mr Stevens, and I'm sorry
 to be a bit interruptive today so to speak.
- 24 MR STEVENS: Not at all.
- 25 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I just want to put these things in

a chronological order, if I can. This draft report of 3 October 2017 appears to be describing a form of remote access which had hitherto not been known at the Post Office but which seems to have existed from 2015, all right? Now, I'm not sure if I've got that right but let's assume that for the moment.

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In Mr Justice Fraser's judgments, he dealt with Legacy Horizon, which was from commencement to 2010, roughly; Horizon Online; and then third version, that which was extant when he was carrying on the proceedings. The question I want to ask you is, first, the third version, was that a version which was either in being and/or under construction, if that's the right word, in or around 2015?

15 A. If you're addressing that question to me, sir, I'm16 afraid --

17 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** You don't know the answer, all right.

Well, the next question -- you may not know the answer
to this either: was there any attempt to understand
whether the what I'll call "enhanced ability" to
remotely access outside the branch was available under
either Legacy Horizon or Horizon Online, as opposed to
the version which succeeded Horizon Online?

A. Again, I don't know. What I do know of the judgments,
 of course -- I mean, if I can characterise it, I think
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1 educating me, Mr Stevens.

MR STEVENS: Yes, I'll do that. I will cover it another
 time. But we will leave it there with this witness.
 Thank you, sir.

5 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.

MR STEVENS: I was moving to the Group Litigation.

Please could we bring up POL00025509. These are terms of reference and membership for the Postmaster Litigation Steering Group and, if we go to the bottom, please -- thank you -- we can see you are a representative of Corporate Services. What was Corporate Services' role on the Postmaster Litigation Steering Group?

14 A. Corporate Services was the name -- was the temporary 15 name given to the expanded Legal Team to include the 16 Audit and Risk and Information Rights teams as well as 17 the Security Team, as it evolved, as it reduced in size, 18 and so it didn't have any -- save for the legal 19 function, it didn't have any subject matter expertise to 20 bring to the party in the way that perhaps other 21 participants did.

22 **Q.** In practice, what would you say your role was on this committee?

A. I think, really, in practice, I was on it, really, for
 two reasons: partly as a sort of deputy for Jane
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Mr Justice Fraser described the first version, Legacy
 Horizon, as being sort of full of holes --

3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.

4 A. -- and the second being rather better but only the third
 5 version as being robust comparable to other systems in
 6 use in other places.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Exactly so, but I was trying to work out 7 8 in my own mind whether what we had here, putting it 9 bluntly, was a function of remote access, which was 10 "enjoyed", in inverted commas, with Horizon Online, but 11 nobody ever reviewed it until much later, or whether the 12 enhanced access, which is revealed in this draft report, 13 came about either coincidentally or otherwise with the 14 third version of Horizon. That's what I'm trying to 15 establish.

16 A. Yeah, I'm afraid I can't assist --

17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: You can't help. That's the top andbottom of it.

All right, Mr Stevens looks as if he may know the answer.

MR STEVENS: I can assist by taking you through the
 document. They are quite --

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Don't waste the time with the witness.

24 MR STEVENS: Yes

25 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** We can do certain things by you just

MacLeod, as a sort of eyes and ears; and, secondly, because I might be able to offer some insight on the basis that I understood some of the issues that had been

4 raised in the context of the scheme, which, of course,

is only a very small or subproportion of those whojoined the Group Litigation.

Q. Now, we earlier referred to the Swift Review
 recommendations and the crossover with the Group
 Litigation. To what extent were the recommendations in
 the Swift Review being pursued separately to the Group

11 Litigation, from the time that the claim form was

12 served?

A. So my recollection is that, all eight recommendations
were set in train as soon as we got the draft report
from Sir Jonathan Swift, so that's to say the week of
11 January 2016; the finalised document was presented on
8 February, and then the proceedings, I think, were
issued in July 2016, at which point, advice was obtained

from both Anthony de Garr Robinson, the QC then with responsibility for the management of the litigation as

a whole, as well as Jonathan Swift QC, as the author of

the Swift Review, as to whether it was appropriate to cease the work under the banner of the review but carry

out equivalent work under the banner of the litigation,

and we double checked that that was something that

1		was that was something that Jonathan Swift was	1		briefing the Group Executive:
2		agreeable to, which he was.	2		" this morning of the progress of the litigation
3	Q.	If we turn the page in this document, please, the terms	3		and the planned positioning of various issues
4		of reference say that the objectives of the PLSG are to	4		"As expected there was significant concern around
5		ensure that Post Office's defence of the claim, first!	5		the apparent change in emphasis from previous public
6		"Protects the Network"; what does that mean?	6		statements, the resultant adverse publicity this may
7	A.	I think it simply means that, you know, it enables the	7		create, and the impact this may have on new ministers,
8		running of 11,500 branches to continue without	8		who will not have been briefed."
9		interruption.	9		I should have said in the above, it says:
10	Q.	The rest:	10		"In particular, I commented on the issues around the
11		"Is proportionately managed;	11		response to the remote access issue."
12		"Does not place unplanned constraints or resources	12		Now, this was in the context, was it, of, a couple
13		burdens on Post Office; and	13		of weeks earlier, the first operation Bramble report
14		"Is Consistent with business as usual practices"	14		being produced?
15		So did the steering group have any responsibility	15	A.	So I think that's right. It was certainly 13 days
16		for following up on the recommendations in the Swift	16		precisely after Andy Parsons sent me and others the
17		Review?	17		email which disclosed the fact that Fujitsu revealed the
18	A.	I don't believe so, certainly not in formal terms, no.	18		ability of super users to edit or otherwise manipulate
19	Q.	So who was responsible for keeping any oversight of the	19		existing data on the ARQ.
20		recommendations in the Swift Review at this point?	20	Q.	Were you involved in the discussion with the Group
21	A.	I assume the Legal team was appropriately supported by	21		Executive?
22		other specialists whether in finance or elsewhere.	22	A.	No.
23	Q.	Please can we bring up POL00110482. Can we go to	23	Q.	If we turn to Andrew Parsons' email, I think it's
24		page 3, please. We see here it's Jane MacLeod's email	24		page 1, please, at the bottom. He refers to:
25		of 26 July 2016, which you're copied into. It refers to 133	25		"Jane's email accurately records our current 134
1		understanding."	1		Office as to how to deal with the wording on remote
2		It says:	2		access in the letter of response?
3		"Deloitte are investigating the key questions"	3	A.	I don't recall doing so. I think it's fair to say that
4		Then if we go up to Jane MacLeod's email, it talks	4		the 13 July revelation, if I can put it that way, from
5		about wording, and this is wording for the letter of	5		Andrew Parsons, caused a fair bit of consternation. So
6		response, isn't it, how to deal with remote access?	6		it would have been the subject of discussion generally
7	A.	How to deal with remote access on the basis of	7		between the people involved but I don't think I had any
8		incomplete information.	8		role in actually finalising or suggesting particularly
9	Q.	What Jane MacLeod suggests here is to write:	9		forms of word that might accommodate what, as I say, was
10		"Access to databases. Database and server access	10		incomplete information.
11		and edit permission is provided, within strict controls	11		This was new information. We still hadn't got to
12		to a small, controlled number of specialist Fujitsu	12		the bottom of exactly what it meant, and Fujitsu hadn't
13		personnel. Our current understanding is that although	13		provided us with the you know A to 7 in terms of the

personnel. Our current understanding is that although it may be possible theoretically to use these permissions in a way that could affect a branch's accounts, it is unclear why any such permissions would be used by those specialists in such a way. Any such use of these permissions in this way would, in any event, be logged and be subject to compliance with the specified controls."

Then in brackets:

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"We have asked Fujitsu to advise whether such permissions have ever been used in this way."

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You're not copied in to that email. Did you have any discussions around this time with people within Post

Ve still hadn't got to int, and Fujitsu hadn't provided us with the, you know, A to Z in terms of the comprehensive answer that we were looking for.

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So, given that the letter of response was due to go, I think, in very short order, when this revelation was made, I think colleagues were looking for the best way of reflecting this new knowledge, and this is the sort of exchange that took place in order to do that.

20 Q. Could we please look at POL00041259. It's an email from 21 Andrew Parsons the following day, and you're included on 22 the recipient list. It says:

> "Please find attached the final version of the letter of response that we intend to send tomorrow.

> > "The only outstanding point is Tony's approval ..."

1 That's presumably Anthony de Garr Robinson KC? 2 A. That's correct, yes. 3 Q. "... approval of the remote access wording ..." 4 Do you remember if you looked at this copy of the 5 letter of response? 6 A. I think I was sent it and asked if I had any input to make. From memory, I did read it. I think I may have 7 8 made a one or two minor suggestions but -- and I don't 9 actually recall what those were and whether they related 10 to this remote access point, in particular. Q. Let's have a look at the draft that was attached. It's 11 12 POL00041260 and, if we could go to page 24, and if we 13 could go down to paragraph 5.16.4. So how it's drafted 14 there, the last two sentences say: 15 "As far as we are currently aware, privileged 16 administrator access has not been used to alter branch 17 transaction data. We are seeking further assurance from 18 Fujitsu on this point." 19 That was changed from previously, where the draft 20 suggested: 21 "We have asked Fujitsu to advise whether such 22 permissions have ever been used in this way." 23 So the draft that Jane MacLeod sent has changed to 24 this and it appears to have gone from saying, "We don't 25 know if this access has been used this way", to, "As far 137 1 MR STEVENS: Good afternoon, sir, can you see and hear me? 2 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you. 3 MR STEVENS: Thank you. 4 Mr Bourke, can you see and hear me? 5 A. I can, thank you. 6 Q. Thank you. Please can we bring up Mr Bourke's witness 7 statement, page 118, paragraph 275. Thank you. You say 8 9 "In relation to specific aspects of disclosure [this 10 is disclosure in the GLO] I am asked about [your] knowledge of Fujitsu's Known Error Log ..." 11 12 You say it "was and remains limited": 13 "I had a layman's understanding of what it was 14 insofar as it had become part of the lexicon around the 15 time of the Group Litigation and I would hear the term 16 referred to in conversation around [Post Office 17 Limited1." 18 When did you first become aware of the Known Error 19 Log? 20 A. I think it was in the context of a PLSG meeting. 21 Q. So, during your time on the scheme, as the scheme 22 manager, no one in Post Office Limited had discussed 23 a Known Error Log with you? 24 Not to the best of my knowledge, no.

Q. Just explain in your own lay term, what -- I mean, is it

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1 as we're aware, it hasn't been used in this way but 2 we're seeking further assurance". 3 Are you aware of whether Fujitsu provided any input 4 into whether the privileged administrator access had 5 been used when drafting this version of the letter of 6 response? A. I don't think I am aware of whether or not they were --7 8 they provided any input at this juncture. 9 Q. I don't need to go there, sir, but, for your reference, 10 the version of this, as sent, is POL00110507. 11 Sir, looking at the time -- I don't have that much 12 to go -- but, for the transcriber, I propose we take 13 a short ten-minute break. 14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. Sorry, could you give me that 15 reference again? 16 MR STEVENS: I'm sorry, sir, I'm rushing through. It's 17 POL00110507. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you. 18 19 MR STEVENS: Sorry, I'm told it's a 15-minute break. I'm 20 sorry, so could we say 3.20? SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Jolly good. 21 22 MR STEVENS: Thank you, sir. 23 (3.07 pm) 24 (A short break) 25 (3.20 pm) 138 1 fair to say that the Known Error Log could be described 2 as a log of known errors? 3 A. Yes. I believe that's right. I think I say elsewhere 4 in my statement that I thought that it denoted a record, 5 a sort of live document, a live record, of non-material 6 issues that would crop up from time to time in the 7 operation of the system. **Q.** Well, that point, non-material, where did you get that 8 9 understanding from? A. That's a fair question: I'm not sure I know. I formed 10 11 the view -- and this is quite possibly completely 12 incorrect -- that the Known Error Log was -- you know, recorded sort of hiccups but I think the PEAK was more 13 14 serious. But I don't recall now what "PEAK" even stands 15 for, I'm afraid. Q. If you could look at POL00003340. If we look at page 2, 16 17 please. This is the Post Office's generic defence and 18 counterclaim in the GLO proceedings, which I think in 19 your evidence you say you reviewed at the time, yes? 20 A. I think I've read, yes.

paragraph 50(4) in the generic defence. It refers to the Known Error Log and says:

24 "To the best of Post Office's

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"To the best of Post Office's information and belief, the Known Error Log is a knowledge base document 140

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1 used by Fujitsu which explains how to deal with, or work 2 around, minor issues that can sometimes arise in Horizon 3 for which (often because of their triviality) 4 system-wide fixes have not been developed and 5 implemented. It is not a record of software coding 6 errors or bugs for which system-wide fixes have been 7 developed and implemented. To the best of Post Office's 8 knowledge and belief, there is no issue in the Known 9 Error Log that could affect the accuracy of a branch's 10 accounts or the secure transmission and storage of 11 transaction data." 12

Was this paragraph and Post Office's response ever discussed at the Postmaster Litigation Steering Group?

14 A. I don't know. I don't know. It may have been.

I didn't attend every meeting of the PLSG but I have no

16 memory of that being discussed, no.

17 Q. To the best of your knowledge, who would have given18 instructions for that paragraph to be pleaded?

19 A. I would have imagined -- I don't know this for sure --

20 but I imagine it would have been Rob Houghton who was

21 I think, by that stage, our Chief Information Officer.

22 Q. Could we please look at POL00023013. We see it's

an email from Mark Underwood on 25 September 2018. It's

sent to you, attaching papers ahead of a Postmaster

25 Litigation Steering Group call, and one of those is:

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- 1 is that's an Americanised date and this is 7 April 2015;
- 2 is that correct?

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- 3 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 4 Q. We see there are two attachments to this: one is
 - "Receipts and Payments Mismatch Notes"; and one,
- 6 "Correcting Accounts for Lost Discrepancies."

I want to look at one of those, please, and that's

8 FUJ00081946.9 Do you recal

Do you recall reading this document when it was sentto you?

11 A. Yes, I think so, though I think it was the otherdocument, which I was focused on, but yes.

13 Q. This says:

"This note relates to PEAKs [and then gives thenumbers]."

16 Then it says:

"PC0204263 describes a problem with the [stock unit] balancing that will result in a receipts and payments mismatch."

At this point, did you enquire as to what the PEAK database was?

- 22 **A.** No.
- 23 **Q.** Why not?
- A. Because what was being brought to my attention through
 this document was something else, which was a reference
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1 "Whether Post Office should disclose the contents of2 the PEAK system to the claimants."

3 If we look at that decision paper now, it's

POL00023013 -- sorry, it's POL00023014. My apologies.

So it's talking about whether Post Office should
 disclose the PEAK system, and on "Voluntary Disclosure",
 we see there, there's paragraph 1.3.5:

"The Post Office has an ongoing duty to disclose adverse documents. Given the nature of the documents contained in the PEAK system, it is likely it will contain adverse documents and therefore, disclosure of these will need to be given at some stage."

Now, pausing there, when did you first become aware of the PEAK system?

15 **A.** It would have been in the context of one of these

16 meetings but, as I say, I don't know what a PEAK refers

17 to, really.

Q. Was any consideration given to whether the PEAK system
 needed to be reviewed for the purposes of considering
 the safety of past criminal convictions?

21 **A.** I don't know.

22 Q. Bear with me one moment, please.

23 Please could we turn up FUJ00081944. We see this is 24 an email from Mark Underwood to Kevin Lenihan, you're 25 copied in to it. It says "4/7/2015". My understanding 142

1 in the other document to the -- well, two things: one,

2 the -- effectively, the balancing transaction issue,

3 which we've spoken about; and secondly, some language in

4 there seems to suggest that Fujitsu could remotely

5 access -- could access branch accounts more freely than

6 what we thought possible.

7 Q. Right. Well, let's look at that just for completeness.

It's FUJ00081945. Is this the document you're referring to?

10 A. Yes, it is.

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11 **Q.** This a well-known document to the Inquiry regarding the receipts and payments mismatch bug. At page 3, is this

13 what you're referring to, Solution One refers to:

"... Alter the Horizon branch figure at the counter to show the discrepancy. Fujitsu would have to manually write an entry value to the local branch account."

Then it says:

"Risk -- This has significant data integrity concerns and could lead to questions of 'tampering' with the branch system and could generate questions around how the discrepancy was caused. This solution could have moral implications of Post Office changing branch data without informing the branch."

That's what you were referring to earlier?

25 A. So that's the balancing transaction issue, I think.

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13 A.

I seem to recall -- and perhaps it's not in this document, but somewhere, I think, in this document, there's some language that seems to suggest that Fujitsu have had the ability to do -- to remotely access branch accounts more freely than we'd understood, and this was brought to my attention by Second Sight on the eve of the finalisation of the Part Two Report, on 8 or 9 April 2015 and, immediately on receipt, I remember instructing Mark Underwood and Andrew Parsons to work with Fujitsu to put me in a position to be able to respond to the suggestion being made by Ian Henderson with something meaningful and accurate to go back to him with.

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They also consulted Pete Newsome, who, at that time, confirmed and was very insistent upon the fact that, whilst the language might point to a more easy remote access than we thought possible, he considered it to be loose language by non-experts and that he was confirming absolutely that the only way that, you know, this could be done was through a balancing transaction, which would leave an auditable trail, and those are the terms upon which I then replied to Ian Henderson on, I think, 8 April, and he finalised the report on that basis.

But the information is contained in Section 17, if I'm not mistaken, of the Part Two Report -- sorry, section 14, if I'm not mistaken, of the Part Two Report. 145

the nature of, you know -- I wouldn't be human if I didn't think that -- you know, or if I didn't regret massively what -- all the sort of upset, destruction, distress that's been occasioned by this dreadful saga for all those affected but, particularly, for those people who were wrongly prosecuted and wrongly convicted, but that is a human sentiment and it is meant very, very genuinely. But whatever failings POL made in the context of, you know, improper disclosure in the prosecutions of certain individuals prior to my joining the Post Office, it just feels to me to be a bit hollow for me to apologise for those things.

But I -- as a representative of the organisation, I do absolutely want to join myself to the apology that it has made because it was quite right to have made it.

- Q. Where you say "POL has quite rightly made for its 16 17 failings during this period", what do you consider its 18 failings to be?
- 19 A. Well, as best I understand it and having looked at 20 this -- you know, the developments that we've seen 21 from -- in recent years, you know, and particularly the 22 quashings of convictions in, I think, April 2021 23 onwards, there was obviously some real deficiency in the 24 disclosure -- deficiency in the process of prosecutions through a failure of disclosure in those cases, with the 25

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Q. Sir, we've had actually had an application for a Core Participant to ask questions on that issue, so I'm going to leave that there and one of the Core Participants will deal with it

I've just got one last question. It's on your witness statement, please, page 124, paragraph 294.

You say, at the bottom of the page, actually, if we could just go down a little more, please:

"I therefore joined myself to the apology [Post Office Limited] has quite rightly made for its failings during this period."

Why have you used the term you "join [yourself] to the apology"?

A. I thought long and hard about this, and I'm obviously also aware of the various apologies that have been made by previous participants to this Inquiry. As I say in the preceding lines, I personally think that I was engaged in some good faith exercises that we did -- that I did, according to the best of my ability. I wasn't involved in the prosecutions; I wasn't involved in disclosure failings; and I fear that, if I were to say I have a personal apology to make, that would be, you know, potentially derided by those it was intended to -it was intended for.

If you ask me what I genuinely feel, it is more in

appalling result that, you know, people who might have otherwise had a defence were left without one to make, or had one -- few defences to make.

So, you know, anybody who is on the receiving end of something like a custodial sentence or even not a custodial sentence, as a result of having that criminal procedural rights infringed, I mean, you'd have to be, as I say, completely heartless not to feel deep pain and sorrow for that.

10 **Q.** Do you think Post Office Limited is responsible for any 11 failings or was responsible for any failings whilst you 12 were employed by it from 2014 onwards?

I've no doubt that it got a number of things wrong but,

- 14 in respect of -- I mean, to be perfectly honest, I think 15 that question is too broad, really, to answer sensibly. 16 No doubt we could have approached things differently. 17 One can always make improvements but my observation of
- 18 the time that I was engaged in these matters is that 19 certainly myself and all the people who were working 20 around me were working to the best of their ability in 21 good faith. We did find it frustrating because we
- 22 didn't seem to achieve any cut through at all with those 23 people either applying to the scheme or their supporters
- 24 in Parliament and, you know, it's of regret that we 25 didn't find a device to sort of put things more

1		differently.	1		mismatch bug?
2		But, you know, beyond that, you know, I think I'll	2	A.	The balancing transaction, yes.
3		remain I'll stick with what I've said.	3	Q.	Yes. Now, what I want to do first is just look at the
4	MR	STEVENS: Thank you.	4		email chain where you set up the meeting with Fujitsu,
5		Sir, that concludes my questions. We have had	5		which you referred to. That's POL00353224. If we go,
6		applications from Core Participants to ask some	6		please, to page 3, this email was yes, if we go to
7		questions. I understand it will be Ms Page first, who	7		page 3 we'll see how the chain sort of gets kicked off.
8		will be about ten minutes; then Mr Moloney will be,	8		The second paragraph, this is Mark Underwood, and
9		I think, less than five minutes; and ten minutes from	9		you're copied in, and this is Mark Underwood basically
10		Mr Stein.	10		seeking that sort of 11th hour response. In the second
11		I think you're on mute, sir.	11		paragraph, he says:
12	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Over to you, Ms Page.	12		"Back in 2010, a bug was identified in Horizon which
13	MS	PAGE: Thank you very much, sir.	13		caused a receipts and payments mismatch issue Second
14		Questioned by MS PAGE	14		Sight has been provided with [documents]."
15	MS	PAGE: Mr Bourke, as Mr Stevens has said, there's	15		So those documents were the notes of the meeting and
16		an issue I want to ask you about and it is to do with	16		Gareth Jenkins report, yes, on the bug?
17		the 11th hour response to Second Sight's Part Two	17		It says this at the end of the paragraph:
18		Report, which dealt with the "Solution One" meeting,	18		"Second Sight are not interested in the bug itself
19		didn't it?	19		but rather the method by which Post Office could have
20	A.	The Solution One meeting?	20		edited branch data to resolve the bug."
21	Q.	The Solution One meeting; the meeting at which Solution	21		So that's what is being investigated at the 11th
22		One that may be shorthand for us in the Inquiry that	22		hour just before the Part Two Report is to be published,
23		you're not perhaps quite as familiar with but	23		yes?
24		Solution One was offered up, wasn't it, by Fujitsu as	24	A.	Yes.
25		a means of dealing with the receipts and payments 149	25	Q.	Then, if we just scroll down, what the email does is it 150
1		quotes the Solution One wording and, in particular, it	1		a diary appointment the following morning but there's
2		refers to that question of risk:	2		nothing in writing from Fujitsu, so it must be that
3		"This has significant data integrity concerns and	3		meeting at which the response from Fujitsu is
4		could lead to questions of 'tampering' with the branch	4		consolidated it; is that right? Is that your
5		system"	5		recollection?
6		So, again, that's what's being looked at, isn't it?	6	A.	It's not my recollection but, if you say so, yes.
7		That's the sort of key concern?	7	Q.	All right. Thank you.
8	A.	Yes.	8		Following that meeting, if we then look at your
9	Q.	All right. Well, if we go up to page 1, we see that	9		response to Second Sight, it's POL00029836. If we go to
10		then there's your follow-up to that, stressing the	10		page 2, please, if we scroll up just a little bit we can
11		urgency. If we just scroll down a little bit, that's	11		see that this is your email to Ian Henderson of Second
12		your email saying:	12		Sight and Jane MacLeod, your General Counsel, copied in
13		"Thanks all.	13		to those various people, including Ron Warmington of
14		"Needless to say it's really important that we do	14		Second Sight, and Mark Underwood, who was at the meeting
15		have something really meaningful and accurate to go back	15		with Fujitsu.
16		to [Second Sight] with at some point tomorrow."	16		Then, if we scroll down a little bit to the bottom
17		Then you suggest this meeting between Mark	17		of page 2, if we can just look at the penultimate
18		Underwood, Pete Newsome that's the Fujitsu man, yes;	18		paragraph, you say this:
19		is that right?	19		"The language used in the documents produced by Post
20	A.	Yes.	20		Office/Fujitsu and to which you refer is unfortunate
21	Q.	And Andrew Parsons. You suggest that they have that	21		colloquial shorthand used by those working on the
22		meeting and they're going to then discuss how to respond	22		Horizon system. I can see how it could be read to
23		to that key concern, aren't they?	23		suggest that Post Office was 'altering' branch data but
	Α.	Yes.	24		the above explains why this is not the case."
25	Q.	So I can say, just for the record, that there is then 151	25		So that is presumably what you meant when you said 152

- 1 to Mr Stevens just a little while ago that Mr Newsome
- was insistent that the use of the word "tampering" was
- 3 loose language by non-experts; is that right?
- 4 A. I believe so, yes.
- Q. So you composed this based on what Mr Newsome said in that meeting?
- 7 A. No, the email was composed through a combination of Andy
- 8 Parsons and myself and others, and other, I think,
- 9 documents that I've exhibited to my witness statement
- show very clearly that there were some track changes in
- 11 this document that point to the fact that this was, you
- 12 know, a collaborative effort. But there was
- 13 a substantial input from --
- 14 Q. Sorry, can I just focus in, though, on this point about
- 15 colloquial language. That was based, presumably, on
- 16 Mr Newsome saying that there had been loose language by
- 17 non-experts at the meeting when solution one was
- 18 offered; is that right?
- 19 A. That's my recollection, yes.
- 20 Q. Now, loose language is one thing. Colloquial language
- 21 is another. We could also characterise it in this way
- couldn't we, Mr Bourke: it's deeply troubling language,
- 23 isn't it, if somebody says that there's a capacity to
- 24 tamper with branch accounts; would you accept that?
- 25 A. Yes, I can accept that, yes.

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your email was used as the Post Office's formal response to that section of the Part Two Report.

Now, in fact, one of the Post Office employees who attended the meeting at which Fujitsu offered up Solution One was a gentleman called Andrew Winn. He has told this Inquiry that he was the person who signed off on Fujitsu's use of the power to insert transactions into branch accounts.

It would have been a simple matter, would it not, to have talked to the Post Office employees who went to the meeting when Solution One was offered up, wouldn't it?

- A. If you're suggesting that there's something I could have done, sensibly, yes, but, given that this was not new information, I think it was reasonable to expect this had been bottomed out prior.
- 16 **Q.** Well, you've told us that you didn't know whether
- 17 Solution One or the tampering facility was used during
- 18 the lifetime of Legacy Horizon. It would have been
- 19 perfectly reasonable at this juncture, given the
- 20 seriousness of what Second Sight were suggesting, to try
- 21 to find out, at least by speaking to those Post Office
- employees who had been at the meeting, and who were
- 23 still in the employ of Post Office at that time,
- 24 wouldn't it?
- 25 **A.** Well, yes, but I have no way of knowing whether that 155

1 Q. Thank you. The email can come down now.

Whether or not those at the meeting where solution
one was discussed were experts, what they do say, what
those Fujitsu people must have said, was that Fujitsu
was able to tamper with branch accounts and that's what
was being investigated. As Mr Stevens established with
you earlier, Mr Bourke, you did not know anything about
whether that had happened during the lifetime of Legacy

10 A. No.

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- 11 **Q.** Yet your response to Second Sight was, in effect, to
- 12 dismiss the idea that there had ever been any tampering,
- 13 wasn't it?

Horizon, did you?

- 14 A. I was relaying the information that was provided to me
 - by Fujitsu, and the only other point I'd raise in this
- 16 context is that this is information that Second Sight
- 17 had for some considerable time prior to raising it with
- me on the eve of their finalisation of the Part Two
- 19 Report.
- 20 Q. Nevertheless, in your formal response, or rather in Post
- 21 Office Limited's formal response to the Part Two Report,
- that wording from your email was used almost word for
- word. I won't take you to it because, as I say, it's
- 24 more or less the same, but I'll give the reference:
- POL00041059, and the relevant bit is at page 57. So

1 happened or not. I can tell you that I didn't do it,

- 2 no.
- 3 Q. You took at face value from an interested party, that is
- 4 Fujitsu, what they wished to say by way of a gloss on
- 5 the wording of Solution One, instead of finding out the
- 6 truth from Post Office's own staff, didn't you?
- 7 A. Well, no, because, you know, as I've said throughout my
- 8 witness statement, you know, I was in the habit of
- 9 taking at face value the views and the expertise offered
- 10 to me. I had no reason, at this point, to doubt the
- 11 veracity of what I was being told by Fujitsu. We are
- not -- we are not, at this stage, in 2024, but instead
- 13 in 2015.
- 14 Q. In Second Sight's report, they were giving you the
- reason to doubt it. They were suggesting that there was
- 16 another way that you could look at this information and
- you had other ways to look at it and, instead, you just
- 18 took the interested party's view, instead of the
- 19 disinterested party's view; that is Second Sight's view,
- 20 didn't you?
- 21 A. I wouldn't characterise it that way but --
- 22 Q. This is part of a culture of denial and turning a blind
- 23 eye when disinterested and legitimate concerns were
- being raised, wasn't it, Mr Bourke?
- 25 A. I completely refute that.

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- Q. I think the witness said, "I don't accept that," or 1 2 words to that effect?
- 3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's what I understood, Ms Page. Yes.
- 4 MS PAGE: Thank you, sir. Those are my questions.
- 5 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.
- 6 Is it Mr Moloney next?

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Questioned by MR MOLONEY

- 8 MR MOLONEY: Sir, yes. Thank you.
 - Mr Bourke, you told Mr Stevens that, at one point, when relations with Second Sight were breaking down, Post Office contemplated enforcement action including
- 12 demanding the return by Second Sight of all documents 13 provided to them during the Mediation Scheme, yes?
- A. No, I said that we would envisage doing so if there was 14
- 15 a very serious breach of that confidentiality --
- 16 Q. You said to Mr Stevens that your overriding concern in 17 doing so was to preserve the personal data of the applicants to the Mediation Scheme? 18
- 19 A. Yes. I think that's right.
- 20 Q. Yes. With that overriding concern in mind, did you ever
- 21 ask for the return of personal data of the applicants
- 22 that had been provided to the JFSA?
- 23 A. I can't recall.
- 24 Q. Because they'd received much of the same material that
- 25 Second Sight had received, hadn't they?
 - 157
- 1 extends that far but my understanding is that
 - postmasters were required to do a number of checks on
- 3 a daily, weekly and monthly basis, and that the period
- 4 of time for which the information was available
- 5 reflected their -- well, was sufficient to enable them
- 6 to discharge their contractual responsibilities.
- 7 Right. Well, the Inquiry has heard evidence about the 8
 - balancing period and how long that took and I won't go
- 9 back into that.
 - When considering what you were going to be saying by way of your evidence to this inquiry, did you, by any

chance, watch or read the evidence of subpostmasters, as

- 13 they'd given it in the earlier stages of the Inquiry?
- 14 A. Do you mean in Phase 1?
- 15 Q. Yes.
- 16 A. Yes, I watched some of it, yes.
- 17 Q. Do you remember that subpostmasters would talk about the
- 18 fact that they would spend their evenings and sometimes
- 19 nights trying to make sense of the material that they
- 20 had before them, that they would neglect their families
- 21 and their relationships, and all that they could do was
- 22 try and make some sense of the material that they had,
- 23 because it didn't make sense to them; do you remember
- 24 that evidence?
- 25 A. I do. What I would say is that there are -- for every 159

A. Well, yes, but they would have received only that which 1 2 pertained to them, rather than pertained to the whole 3 group of 136. It is -- given it's their personal data, 4 the concerns were obviously less significant.

MR MOLONEY: Thank you very much, Mr Bourke. 5

6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stein?

Questioned by MR STEIN

8 MR STEIN: Mr Bourke, you gave evidence earlier today and 9 you were discussing the ability of subpostmasters to 10 consider the audit trail, okay? Your evidence related 11 to a question of -- as you were talking about -- you 12 thought for Legacy Horizon, that subpostmasters might 13 have something like 42 days to consider what was on the 14 audit trail, and you thought that perhaps, in relation 15 to Online, it might be longer, something like 50 or 16 60 days.

> Now, we're going to, with the Inquiry, look into that in more detail but does it help to be reminded that it was more likely to be from trading period to trading period, in other words that it related -- this period of time with which any examination within the branch could take place, would have had to have taken place between the trading periods that existed at the time; is that

25 A. I hesitate here because I'm not sure if my expertise 158

- 1 one of those people who were having difficulties -- and
- 2 I don't suggest for a second they weren't having
- 3 difficulties and I feel for them in that respect --
- 4 there were thousands of others who were managing to do
- 5 this on a daily basis across the UK.
- 6 Q. So you're saying, are you, that the subpostmasters that
- 7 had those difficulties, they brought it upon themselves,
- 8 that they're the ones that perhaps could have done
- 9 things somewhat better, as against the ones that didn't
- 10 make complaints because, apparently, they were better 11
- than the people that had the problems? Is that what
- 12 you're trying to say, Mr Bourke?
- 13 A. No, all I'm trying to say is that some people will have
- 14 experienced difficulties but, actually, a large number
- 15 of people didn't, and that doesn't make one or the other
- 16 better than the other. It's just a --
- 17 Q. But do you recognise that, for the people that were
- 18 having these difficulties, trying to find some way of
- 19 making some understanding or some better understanding
- 20 of the material that they had, when it literally would
- 21 not make sense, for hours and hours, are you seeking to
- 22 say that that is something that perhaps maybe they
- 23 should put behind them and get on with their lives?
- 24 A. No, I'm not suggesting that at all but I don't know 25 whether that information they were looking at did or did

3 4 5 6 7		things but, actually, they had the wherewithal to get to the right conclusions and, for whatever reason, they'd either forgotten the training, or what have you. So, you know, all I'm saying is that it is possible that another postmaster might have made sense of those.
8	Q.	There speaks someone, Mr Bourke, yourself, who has, in
9	ų.	fact, either no or little understanding about how these
10		matters occurred within branches, as you said earlier;
11		is that fair, Mr Bourke?
	٨	
12	Α.	Well, no, I don't think
13	Q.	Is your opinion about matters that you don't actually
14		understand yourself?
15	Α.	No, I don't think it is fair. I'm simply thing to you
16	_	the opposite hypothesis.
17	Q.	Okay, let's have a look at a document and see whether
18		that helps about your attitude to matters. The document
19		is POL00246340. If we look at the top line, we'll see
20		there that this is a reference to a meeting that's due
21		to take place. As you can see there, it includes you,
22		Patrick Bourke, and the meeting is Tuesday at 3.00 pm
23		and you'll see there that under "Attachments" references
24		are there to 6 December, okay?
25		Now, we're now going to have a look at another 161
1		Then next bullet point is "Gareth Jenkins", and then
2		it says this:
3		"Fujitsu put forward Gareth Jenkins, one of the
4		engineers of Horizon, to give evidence in criminal
5		prosecutions. Following a review by Brian Altman QC,
6		Post Office was advised that Mr Jenkins' evidence was
7		incomplete because his statements led the Court to
8		believe there were no issues with Horizon when
9		Mr Jenkins knew there were."
10		Then it goes on to talk about the damage to
11		Mr Jenkins' credibility.
12		Let's just pause there for a moment and just deal
13		with the Mr Jenkins question. So in this meeting, in
14		relation to December 2016, by that date, do you know
15		whether Fujitsu had been told that there were these
16		credibility damaging issues in relation to Mr Jenkins or
17		not?
18	A.	No, I don't.
19	Q.	Right. So we've got then two matters that are being
20	ų.	considered and then it goes on to say at that page,
20 21		under the "Gareth Jenkins" bullet point:
2 i 22		"In a more general sense, the fortunes of Post
		Office and Fujitsu are entwined."
23		-
24		Then if you scroll further down, if you would,
25		please: 163

not make sense. For example, in the Mediation Scheme,

there were cases where postmasters did not understand

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document, which is POL00246342. So this is a document 1 2 that is being referred to in relation to the meeting, as 3 you can see there, 6 December 2016. The meeting email that we've just looked at included such people as Ms van 4 den Bogerd, Mr Williams, and you and others. So this is 5 6 in relation to, as we can see, top left-hand corner, 7 "Postmaster Group Action, Confidential and Legally 8 Privileged". As we go down here, under "Background", it 9 says: 10 "Post Office has commissioned Deloitte to 11 investigate 'remote access' issues within Horizon ... Deloitte need input from Fujitsu, including its 12 13 engagement at various workshops. However [it goes on to 14 say] Fujitsu is refusing to cooperate unless it is paid for its services." 15 16 Then it goes on to talk about two particular 17 matters: 18 "Fujitsu has arguably contributed to the need for 19 Deloitte's investigations ..." 20 Then it refers to, in short form -- I'll put it in 21 the bullet points -- "Statements about remote access", 22 and, if you look at the bottom line of that paragraph, 23 it refers to the fact that Fujitsu has: 24 "... contributed to the allegation that Post Office 25 has concealed an ability to change transaction data." 1 "There would therefore seem to be good, albeit 2 self-interested, reasons for why Fujitsu may wish to 3 assist Post Office." 4 Then if we look further down under the "Issue": 5 "Post Office may therefore wish consider whether it 6 is best to either: 7

"Pay Fujitsu for its time insisting Deloitte and not raise the above matters; or

"Use the above points so to persuade Fujitsu to provide its support in relation to the Group Litigation at reduced/zero [hour] cost."

Okay?

13 A. Yes.

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14 Q. So, in relation to these particular questions, do you 15 know whether the Post Office had decided to try to extort Fujitsu into the position whereby it was going to 16 17 support the Post Office's position within the 18 litigation; do you know whether that was what was decided or not, Mr Bourke? 19 20

A. I don't, but the cooperation of Fujitsu in the Deloitte work was an issue which had been raised to my attention, and, indeed, I spoke to Mr Stevens about it this afternoon, where it was clear that they were not providing the sort of access and information that Deloitte needed to complete its work on what was then

can bring them to the table and to cooperate.

Q. Lastly, Mr Bourke, you've discussed with Mr Stevens in

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Project Bramble. So, clearly, my intervention did not

meet with any success because, had it, this piece of

So

3		paper would not have been needed.	3		the last few questions today the level of your own	
4	Q.	Well, Mr Bourke, do you think it's appropriate that	4		personal responsibility. You said that you, as	
5		an institution such as the Post Office, wholly owned by	5		an example, weren't someone that was stopping	
6		the Government, is thinking about trying to twist the	6		disclosure. Well, did you, at this time, consider the	е
7		arm of a corporation such as Fujitsu by saying, "Look,	7		question of whether this information that was appa	arently
8		this is what you've done to us. You'd better help out,	8		being considered to be used to arm wrestle or twis	st the
9		otherwise these issues may become known"? Do you think	9		arm of Fujitsu to cooperate, did you stop and cons	sider
10		that's an appropriate way for the Post Office to behave,	10		whether it might be helpful for the subpostmasters	s to
11		Mr Bourke?	11		know this, rather than you weaponising it?	
12	A.	Well, it's not something I would have done, no.	12	A.	I'm sorry, but I just didn't have conduct of the	
13	Q.	Well, did you say at this meeting, "Well, I think this	13		litigation at all and, insofar as the you know, the	se
14		is horrendous. We can't, in all good conscience, try	14		were new revelations to me, as much as anybody	else. S
15		and make Fujitsu do this sort of thing in this way. Why	15		given that the prosecutions, in which, you know,	
16		don't we have an honest approach to them and say: 'Look,	16		disclosure failings took place pre-dated my arrival	at
17		there are real issues here, we ought to consider	17		the Post Office, I think that's, you know, a bit of	
18		together, that affect the people's lives'," Mr Bourke?	18		a stretch.	
19	A.	So I don't know whether that approach had not already	19	Q.	So not for your consumption, Mr Bourke; let some	body
20		been tried and not met with success. It may be that	20		else try and make those decisions. You're not pre	pared
21		approach was tried and did not meet with success and so	21		to enter into the consideration of whether	
22		this is, you know, the third attempt to try to get their	22		subpostmasters should know about Mr Jenkins. T	hat's
23		cooperation, and you can understand, in the context that	23		your excuse; is that right, Mr Bourke?	
24		these really important matters that you've just	24	A.	It's by no means an excuse. We had any number	of
25		outlined, that people are struggling to see how else we	25		eminent lawyers engaged in this matter. We have	
1		General Counsel, we've had legal departments, we've had			INDEX	
2		advice from Brian Altman, we've had Simon Clarke giving			INDEX	
3		advice. Of all the people who might be providing advice			PATRICK FRANCIS ULICK BOURKE (sworn)	2
4		on this issue, I should think I was one of the least			TATRIOR TRANSIG GEIGIT BOOTINE (SWOTT)	2
5		likely people to offer it.			Questioned by MR STEVENS	2
6	MR	STEIN: Thank you, sir.			Questioned by WIN OTEVENO	
7		WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr Stein.			Questioned by MS PAGE	149
8	Oliv	Is that it, Mr Stevens?			Questioned by Wo 1 AGE	143
9	MP	STEVENS: Yes, sir. That's it.			Questioned by MR MOLONEY	157
10		WYN WILLIAMS: Right.			Questioned by WIN WOLONET	101
11	SIN	Thank you, Mr Bourke, very much, for your very			Questioned by MR STEIN	158
12		detailed witness statement and for answering questions			Questioned by WIN 31 EIN	130
13		5 .				
		during the course of today. I'm grateful to you.				
14 15		So we'll resume again at 9.45 tomorrow with				
15	MD	Ms Sewell; is that right?				
16		STEVENS: That's correct, sir.				
17		WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you very much.				
18		STEVENS: Thank you.				
19		8 pm)				
20	(The hearing adjourned until 9.45 am the following day)				
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