Q. Yes, please. 1 Tuesday, 21 May 2024 1 2 (9.45 am) 2 A. So I would like to make the following clarification and 3 MR BLAKE: Good morning, sir, can you see and hear me? 3 comments in relation to my statement and, as before, 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you very much. 4 I give this evidence to the best of my knowledge and 5 MR BLAKE: This morning, we're going to hear from Ms Lyons. 5 6 ALWEN LYONS (affirmed) 6 Firstly, in my statement, I refer to a meeting with 7 Questioned by MR BLAKE 7 Alice Perkins and Lord Arbuthnot as having taken place 8 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full 8 on 12 March 2012, this being the date indicated to me by 9 9 name, please? the Inquiry. However, on further review of the 10 10 material, I can see that this meeting took place on A. It's Alwen Lyons. Q. Ms Lyons, you should have in front of you a witness 11 13 March 2012. 11 statement, or at least in a bundle in front of you. 12 Secondly, it was my belief that Susan Crichton had 12 13 13 been General Counsel for the -- from the point of A. I do, yes. Q. Can you see that? Thank you. Is that dated 24 April 14 separation from Royal Mail Group. However, since 14 2024? 15 submitting my statement, I've been made aware that Susan 15 16 A. Yes. 16 Crichton was actually Legal and Compliance Director from 17 Q. Could I please ask you to turn to the final page, that's 17 separation and became General Counsel in July 2013. 18 18 Thirdly, paragraph 64 and 96 of my statement refer 19 Α. Yes. 19 to the Royal Mail Group Internal Audit with a reference 20 Q. Can you confirm that that is your signature? 20 number. It has come to my attention that the reference 21 21 A. It is. number referred to at these paragraphs and within the 22 Q. Is that statement true to the best of your knowledge and 22 index is incorrect. The correct reference number is 23 belief? 23 POL00029474. 24 24 Α. So I'd like to make some clarifications to that Fourthly, paragraph 62 on page 15 of my statement 25 statement, if that's okay. 25 refers to the action log from a Board meeting on 1 12 January 2012 and the statement suggests that two 1 sincere sorrow that this scandal has happened and, in 2 reports were to be circulated. Having revisited the 2 particular, my deep regret for those wrongfully 3 action log, it states "a report" rather than "two 3 convicted or accused. These words cannot even begin to 4 reports", were circulated to the board. 4 put right what has happened but they are sincere. 5 5 I cannot imagine how it must have been for And, lastly, my statement at paragraph 345 on 6 page 104 refers to my contact with ex-colleagues after 6 subpostmasters whose voices were not -- went unheard 7 7 my retirement, including, for example, with Paula throughout these years and I want to express my deep and 8 Vennells. I had forgotten, until reminded recently, 8 genuine remorse for what has happened. 9 that Paula had contacted me in March and in June 2020, 9 Q. Thank you very much, Ms Lyons. The statement you have 10 spoken about is WITN00580100, and that will be uploaded via text message and follow-up email in June 2020, to 10 11 ask if I could help with details for her information to 11 onto the Inquiry's website. 12 12 the Select Committee. I believe she called me on two I want to begin today just by looking at your 13 occasions, March 2020 and June 2020, but I do not recall 13 background. I think you were employed by the Royal Mail 14 that I was able to provide you with any information. 14 Group and the Post Office for some 33 years; is that 15 I've also been reminded that I met Paula for dinner 15 correct? 16 early in 2020 and I cannot specifically recall what we A. Yes, that's right. 16 17 spoke about. Since retiring, I've had a small number of 17 Q. I think, in fact, your parents ran a sub post office --18 other communications with Paula. 18 And that is my clarification, thank you. 19 -- and I think your father was the NFSP General 19 Q. Secretary at one stage? 20 Q. Thank you. Subject to those clarifications, is that 20

> 22 Q.

A. He was.

You joined the Royal Mail Group in 1984 --

23 A. Yes.

21

24 Q. -- and you started as a graduate trainee?

25 A. Yes.

Yes, before I give evidence I would like to convey my 3

you would like to say as well.

Q. Thank you very much. I believe there's something else

statement true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

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22 **A**.

Α.

- 1 Q. You held various roles over the length of your career?
- 2 **A.** Yes.
- 3 Q. Those included, amongst others, as an Area Manager and4 then Retail Network Manager between 1991 and 1995.
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. I think you've said in your statement that you were
- 7 responsible for 180 sub post offices in that role --
- 8 A. I was.
- 9 Q. -- and you were involved in what you've referred to as
- 10 to "disciplining" subpostmasters. Can you assist us
- 11 very briefly with what that may have involved?
- 12 A. So only in as much as if there was an audit at
- 13 an office, I would have been involved in making the
- 14 decision as to the future for the subpostmaster or to
- 15 interview them or just talk to them about what had
- 16 happened, et cetera.
- 17 Q. You were then Head of the Retail Network for South
- 18 London between 2000 and 2001?
- 19 A. I was.
- 20 Q. There you headed a team of 18 Retail Line Managers.
- 21 I think you also heard appeals in relation to the
- 22 discipline of --
- 23 A. I think -- I seem to remember a couple in that time.
- 24 Q. Yes, and that was, of course, during the rollout of
- 25 Horizon 2000 and 2001?

- 1 subpostmasters?
- 2 A. So, yes, my team, when I was running South London, they
- 3 were the Retail Network Managers looking after
- 4 subpostmasters.
- 5 Q. Did you have any personal experience of using the
- 6 Horizon system?
- 7 A. Only very -- so every Christmas we would go and help in
- 8 our post offices, so you'd go -- you'd have somebody
- 9 training and then you'd go for the day and use the
- 10 Horizon system but I didn't have any experience of
- 11 balancing the Horizon system.
- 12 Q. When did you first become aware of the Post Office or
- 13 Royal Mail Group's prosecutorial function?
- 14 A. I can't really say when I became aware. I think it was
- 15 later when we were talking about Sparrow -- I didn't
- 16 think I realised at the time that we prosecuted.
- 17 Q. So even when you were involved in the discipline of
- 18 subpostmasters or the appeals from subpostmasters, you
- 19 weren't aware that the company was also prosecuting
- 20 subpostmasters?
- 21 A. So, no, I wouldn't have been involved with any of the
- 22 prosecutions.
- 23 Q. But were you aware of that function?
- 24 A. I don't remember being aware.
- 25 $\,$ Q. You held various other roles after the Head of Direct

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- 1 **A.** Yes.
- 2 Q. Do you recall that period?
- 3 A. To the best of my memory, yes, that was when it was
- 4 rolling out.
- 5 Q. You were then Regional General Manager between 2001 and
- 6 2002 --
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. -- responsible for running post offices in the South
- 9 East region --
- 10 **A.** Yes
- 11 Q. -- and Head of Direct Manager Branches between 2002 and
- 12 2005 --
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. -- with four regional managers reporting to you?
- 15 **A.** Yes
- 16 Q. During those various roles and perhaps some others,
- 17 presumably you had a fair bit of direct contact with
- 18 subpostmasters?
- 19 A. So not when I was -- not when I was General Manager for
- 20 Directly Managed because those are the Crown Offices, so
- 21 at that point I would have no contact with
- 22 subpostmasters.
- 23 Q. But in the other roles I've described, so in the '90s --
- 24 A. In south London --
- 25 Q. -- early 2000s, did you have a fair bit of contact with

- 1 Manager Branches and in 2011 you became Company
- 2 Secretary; is that right?
- 3 A. That's right, yes.
- 4 **Q.** I think you held that role until 2017?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Can you assist us with why you were approached in
- 7 respect of that particular role?
- 8 A. So I -- up until that point, I'd been doing separation
- 9 from Royal Mail Group for about 18 months and we were
- 10 putting together a new Board with an independent chair,
- and I had the relevant qualification to be a company
- 12 secretary, and I had a CIMA qualification and I knew --
- 13 because of how long I'd worked in the business and my
- 14 experience in the business, I was approached by Paula
- 15 Vennells and Debbie Moore to ask if I would like to be
- 16 Company Secretary.
- 17 Q. What was your relationship with Paula Vennells at that
- 18 stage?
- 19 A. Well, at that stage, she was the CEO, she was running
- 20 the company. I think I had a good relationship with her
- 21 but not a necessarily close one.
- 22 Q. Do you know why you were specifically chosen for that
- 23 role?
- 24 A. I think Paula, and probably more Debbie, thought I had
- 25 the experience to carry out that role.

- 1 Q. Did you ever been a company secretary before that role?
- 2 **A.** No.
- 3 Q. How about the Chair, what was your relationship like4 with the Chair at that stage?
- 5 A. So I think it was good. It was very professional.
- 6 I tried to help with Alice's induction into the business
- 7 and point her in the right directions when she wanted to
- 8 go and learn more information about different parts of
- 9 the business.
- 10 Q. You took on the role in 2011. When were you first awareof subpostmasters experiencing issues with Horizon?
- 12 **A.** So I believe it was at a board meeting and the issue was
- 13 raised, I think it was early 2012, was raised by Les
- 14 Owen, who was a Non-Executive Director.
- 15 Q. We've heard, for example, of a 2009 Computer Weekly
- 16 article. Was that something you were aware of?
- 17 A. Not that I remember.
- 18 Q. In all of the various roles you held within the Post
- 19 Office over the years before becoming Company Secretary,
- 20 had you not heard of complaints from subpostmasters
- 21 experiencing problems with the Horizon system?
- 22 A. Not that I can remember.
- 23 Q. I want to ask you about the role of company secretary.
- 24 Do you consider that when you took on that role you were
- 25 fully aware of what the role of a company secretary
 - 9
- 1 Accountant, and to get any further in the Finance
- 2 Department, you had to be qualified. So I decided this
- 3 is what I wanted to do and spent four years getting the
- 4 qualification.
- 5 Q. Was that a qualification that was specific to a company
- 6 secretary role or a broader finance role?
- 7 A. No a broader finance role. It's a finance -- it's
- 8 an accountancy role.
- 9 Q. You've set out in your statement at paragraph 29 various
- 10 roles that were involved with the position of company
- 11 secretary. I want to take you to the expert report that
- 12 we have from Dame Sandra Dawson and Dr Steward
- 13 outlining -- it goes into quite a bit of detail about
- the different roles within a company.
- 15 A. Okay.
- 16 Q. Could we please turn to EXPG0000006, please. This the
- 17 first of their reports. Could we please turn to
- page 23. I'm just going to take you to a few sections
- 19 of the report to see if it accords with your
- 20 understanding of your role. If we look 2.2.9, it says:
- 21 "The Chair, with the support of Company Secretary,
- 22 is responsible for ensuring that all committees have
- 23 sufficient support to conduct their business
- 24 effectively, eg with timely and appropriate papers and
- 25 minutes."

- 1 involved.
- 2 A. No, and before I accepted the role I did some research
- 3 as to what it would be that I would be taking on.
- 4 I went to see the Royal Mail Group Company Secretary,
- 5 had a couple of meetings with him, I also did some
- 6 research online about what the role was, what the
- 7 responsibilities were, so that I made an informed
- 8 decision about whether I thought I should take that role
- 9 on.
- 10 Q. Were you provided with any training for the role?
- 11 A. So I had some training and some ongoing training after
- 12 taking the role. I did some, I think, three or four
- online courses before I started and then, whilst I was
- doing the role, there was some catch-up, whenever
- anything changed with the Companies Act or, you know, we
- 16 needed updating, some -- I think it was legal firms that
- 17 offered company secretaries to come in and have a day
- with them, and I did, I think, three or four of those.
- 19 Q. I think you've said you were accredited by the Chartered20 Institute of Management Accountants in 1993?
- 21 **A.** Yes.
- 22 Q. What made you take on that qualification in 1993?
- 23 A. So in 1993 -- or just before that because it took me
- 24 four years to qualify -- I was working in the Finance
- 25 Department of the business, I was the Management
 - 1
- 1 Do you agree with that description of the role?
- A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Do you think you fulfilled that role?
- 4 A. I believe so.
- 5 Q. If we turn over the page to 24, 2.2.17, please -- it's
- 6 the bottom of page 24, thank you. It says:
- 7 "Chairs are accountable for running the Board, ie 8 for ensuring that the Board ..."
- 9 Then it goes through various different
- 10 accountabilities of the chair:
- o accountabilities of the chair
- 11 If we look at (f), it says:
- 12 "With the Company Secretary, ensuring that movement
- on and off the Board is accompanied by appropriate
- 14 induction (training and familiarisation with duties of
- 15 Board [members] and company strategy, operations and
 - risks) and exit (confidentiality, equipment, access
- 17 controls) procedures."
- 18 Do you agree that was one of your roles?
- 19 **A.** Yes.

- 20 Q. Do you think you fulfilled that role?
- 21 A. I believe so.
- 22 $\,$ **Q.** Could we turn to page 29, 2.2.33. There's a detailed
- 23 section on the role of a company secretary. It says:
- 24 "A Company Secretary is an officer who is appointed25 by the company's directors to advise the board on all

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Then over the page, we see there at (b):

15

1		governance matters and codes."	1		"Working with Chair to ensure that all Board members
2		Do you agree with that?	2		are aware of their duties and powers;
3	A.	Yes.	3		"Providing secretarial services to the Board and all
4	Q.	Do you think you fulfilled that?	4		its committees, including arranging meetings, minuting
5	A.	I do.	5		meetings;
6	Q.	"They will normally seek to ensure compliance with the	6		"Working with the Chair on the Board agenda; and
7		company's legal obligations. Their accountability is to	7		"Arranging participation of non-Board members for
8		the Board and the Chair to ensure that all appropriate	8		specific items in Board discussions (including handling
9		governance measures are brought to the Board's	9		sight of relevant minutes, timing of Board appearances,
10		attention. As regards the functioning of the Board,	10		follow up)."
11		they are technically independent of the CEO, and	11		Do you agree with those duties?
12		accountable to the Chair. However, as an Executive	12	A.	Yes.
13		colleague (and in a sense subordinate to the CEO) they	13	Q.	Do you think you fulfilled those?
14		need a very good working relationship with the CEO, who	14		I think I did, yes.
15		is likely to be very influential in their relationship."	15		I think at one stage in your statement you refer to part
16		Do you agree with that summary?	16		of your role as being a conduit?
17	A.	I do, yes.	17	A.	Yes.
18	Q.	Again, do you think you fulfilled that role?	18	Q.	But it does see as though it is more of a substantive
19	A.	I do.	19		role than simply a conduit to the Board; do you agree
20	Q.	One more, also on the same page. There are various	20		with that?
21	-	accountabilities that are set out there at 2.2.34:	21	A.	Oh, yes, definitely.
22		"A Company Secretary's accountabilities normally	22	Q.	
23		include:	23	-	of documents over the years was it wider than is
24		"Maintaining the company's statutory books,	24		described here, taking forward, for example, certain
25		including registers of directors and shareholders;	25		strategic matters for the CEO and chair?
		13	20		14
		On the second se	4		UDan diliana da conta como est for INI en Frenchis
1	Α.	So at times, it was wider and but always coming back	1		"Providing adequate support for [Non-Executive
2		to the Board. So I was if I did other things, it was	2		Directors] typically from the [company secretary]."
3		mindful that I was doing them on behalf of and for the	3		Did you see that as part of your role?
4	_	Board and the Chair, sorry, and the Chair.	4	Α.	I think providing adequate support for the non-execs,
5	Q.	I mean, that's quite an important distinction. Do you	5	_	definitely.
6		think that you were pursuing those objectives for the	6	Q.	Do you think you fulfilled that role?
7		Board or for the Chair?	7		I believe so.
8	Α.	I think both.	8		One of the roles involves minuting Board minutes.
9	Q.	Do you think that the Board had sufficient oversight of	9	A.	Yes.
10		that work?	10	Q.	Can you assist us with what experience or what training
11	A.	I think they did. I think they did at the time.	11		you had in respect of that skill?
12	Q.	Can we please, while we're on this report, turn to	12	A.	So I believe that one of the training courses I did
13		page 102. There's one more reference there to a company	13		before I took up the role was in minute taking. So it
14		secretary. It's at the bottom of the page. This is	14		was an online course and it was in minute taking.
15		a table that sets out various changes over time. That	15	Q.	Can you assist us with who the provider was
16		there refers to the Walker Review of the banking crisis,	16	A.	I'm sorry, it's too long ago. I can't.
17		which:	17	Q.	The Post Office was wholly owned by the Government?
18		" proposed changes to the Combined Code to	18	A.	Yes.
19		strengthen the principles of stewardship and greater	19	Q.	To what extent did you consider the corporate governance
20		challenge in financial services, which were taken on by	20		rules of a commercial company to apply to the Post
21		other sectors. Proposals for all large listed companies	21		Office?
22		included:	22	A.	So, clearly, the Post Office did not have to comply to
~~		moladoa.	22	Λ.	co, deality, the root office did not have to comply to

24

25

practice and so I would have looked at those rules and

thought "Which of these are relevant for us?", and

- 1 I would have discussed -- if it was necessary, would
- 2 discuss that with the Chair.
- 3 Q. What, if any, difference did you see in the governance
- 4 of a publicly listed compared to a publicly owned
- 5 company?
- 6 A. I think we had a difference -- a different type of
- 7 governance because we had governance through to the
- 8 Government and, therefore, we had, for instance,
- 9 a non-exec that was a Shareholder Executive
- 10 representative. So in some ways there was additional
- 11 governance in terms of how we were responding.
- 12 Q. What role did you see the Government or the Civil
- 13 Service playing in the governance of the company?
- 14 A. So they were our shareholder. So, in my eyes, a very
- 15 important role and having that Shareholder Executive NED
- on the Board was very important.
- 17 Q. What, if any, conflicts of interest did you see between
- 18 the ownership of the Post Office by the Government?
- 19 $\,$ A. So the only conflicts of interest in Board meetings that
- 20 I remember -- and all Board members gave a declaration
- 21 at the beginning that they would speak up if there was
- 22 a conflict of interest -- the only conflict of interest
- 23 I remember was that the Shareholder Executive wasn't in
- 24 the room when we were discussing funding and areas that
- 25 we were going to negotiate with the Government. I don't
 - 17
- 1 A. No, she wasn't.
- 2 Q. Was that something that you considered?
- 3 A. So I think it was something that Alice considered but it
- 4 was her decision that she wouldn't -- that General
- 5 Counsel would not be a member of the Board or even
- 6 attend Board meetings.
- 7 Q. What was your view on that?
- 8 A. I don't think I had a view either way. If the Chair
- 9 wanted and the Board wanted the General Counsel in the
- 10 room, that would be fine. When I was -- so I worked to
- 11 the General Counsel, so the General Counsel was my boss,
- 12 until Chris Aujard came along and, because he was
- an interim, I then worked to Paula for about nine months
- 14 and then when Jane MacLeod came along I worked again for
- 15 the General Counsel. So I am not sure that it would
- have changed the Board at all to have the General
- 17 Counsel there.
- 18 Q. Because you were on the Board?
- 19 A. Well, I wasn't on the Board; I was attending the Board
- 20 meetings, yes.
- 21 Q. Is that why you don't believe it would make
- 22 a difference: because you attended?
- 23 A. Yes.
- ${\bf 24}~{\bf Q}.~{\bf How}$ about the contract and personnel management? Where

25 do you consider the oversight and accountability for the

- 1 see any others.
- 2 Q. We spoke about the prosecutorial function --
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. -- of the company?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Where did you consider oversight and accountability for
- 7 the investigation and prosecution function to lie within
- 8 the company?
- 9 A. So I certainly didn't it lying with company secretary
- 10 because I had no input to any prosecutions. I would
- 11 have thought it would have lie -- laid with the Legal
- 12 Team.
- 13 Q. Do you recall any specific mechanisms for reporting and
- 14 feedback, in that respect, to the Board?
- 15 A. So there was -- so the Board heard -- had litigation
- 16 reports sent to them at -- not at every Board meeting,
- 17 I think quarterly or they would come to the Board. And
- 18 I think that's the way that the significant litigation
- 19 was passed to the Board.
- 20 Q. Who would you expect to have fed back to the Board in
- 21 that respect?
- 22 A. So I would have expected that to be the General Counsel.
- 23 Q. We've seen -- and I don't know if you saw Ms Crichton's
- 24 evidence -- but General Counsel wasn't, in fact,
- 25 a member of the Board?

18

- 1 contractual and personnel management of subpostmasters
- 2 to have laid within the company?
- 3 A. From my memory, I believe it sat in Network. So there
- 4 was a Network Director and I believe that that
- 5 responsibility would have sat with them.
- 6 Q. Again, do you recall any specific mechanisms for
- 7 reporting in that respect?
- 8 A. No, not that I can recall.
- 9 Q. Who would you have expected to feed back to the Board?
- 10 A. From the Network?
- 11 Q. Yes.
- 12 A. I would have expected the Network Director to have come
- 13 to the Board.
- 14 Q. To have attended the Board?
- 15 A. No, to -- so the way that the Board meeting worked was
- 16 you had your Members of the Board and myself in the
- Board meetings, and then when executive members were
- 18 coming along to give a presentation or share a paper or
- 19 whatever, they would come to that specific part of the
- 20 Board meeting.
- 21 Q. Where did you consider oversight and accountability of
- 22 issues relating to the Horizon system to have laid?
 - 23 A. So if we're talking about Horizon, as in the computer
- 24 system, I would have -- I believed that lay with the CIO
- 25 because I believe they had the relationship with

Fujitsu. 1

- 2 Q. Do you recall any specific mechanism for reporting and
- 3 feedback in that respect?
- 4 A. So I think the CIO did come to the Board on a few
- 5 occasions, not only talking about Horizon, talking about
- 6 the wider IT.
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, I may not have quite caught the
- 8 acronym. Did you say "CIO" or "CEO"?
- 9 A. CIO, sorry, sir.
- 10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's what I thought.
- MR BLAKE: So Chief Information Officer. 11
- Yes, Chief Information Officer. 12 A.
- 13 That was Lesley Sewell at the time? Q.
- 14 A. Yes
- Q. How would you judge whether something needed to be 15
- 16 brought to the Board's attention?
- 17 A. So I would check with the Chair. If something came to
- 18 my attention that I believed that either the Chair or
- 19 the Board would -- should know. I would check with the
- 20 Chair and she would -- or he when it was Tim -- they
- 21 would generally say, yes, this needs to be sent to the
- 22 Board. It was something that could come to a Board
- 23 meeting, then I would generally check the agenda with
- 24
- the Chair -- not generally, I always checked the agenda
- 25 with the Chair because it was the Chair's agenda, and
- 1 a significant role during that period --
- 2 A. No.

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- 3 Q. -- that period of great change?
- 4 A. No, I believed I could represent the business well.
- 5 I knew the business well. I knew Royal Mail well
- 6 because I had been managing the Royal Mail contract for
- 7 the few years before that. So I didn't have any
 - concerns, no. It was a tough few months because --
- 9 well, it was a very serious issue that was happening.
- 10 Q. What committees or formal groups were you a member of in
- 11 respect of the decision making for separation?
- 12 Α. So there was one formal meeting, where I think -- where
- 13 it was the Government, myself and Royal Mail, and
- 14 I think Royal Mail were represented by McKinseys, as
- 15 their consultant, and I would go to that meeting.
- 16 I think it was weekly and, as we got nearer to
- 17 separation, it became more regular.
- 18 We would have morning conference calls, which lasted 19 about an hour, and then, in terms of me taking that
- 20 information back into the Post Office, I would --
- 21 I cannot specifically remember who sat on which
- 22 committees but the Post Office had a Separation Working
- 23 Group where I would bring the information back from the
- 24 large committee and say, "These are the areas we're
- 25 discussing and this is where Royal Mail wants to go, and

- 1 I might have had input from executive members saying,
- 2 "I need to bring this paper to the Board", or whatever,
- 3 and I would -- the Chair and I would sit down and look
- 4 at the agenda and say -- agree the timings and agree the
- 5
- 6 Q. Would you be, effectively, a conduit to the Chair for
- 7 that purpose?
- 8 Yes, yes. So -- I mean, some areas came seasonally
- 9 because you'd have a budget and some came quarterly,
- 10 some came when the exec wanted to raise or discuss
- 11 something with the Board, and I would amalgamate all
- 12 these into an agenda, go and see the Chair and say,
- 13 "This is what needs to come to this board meeting, are
- 14 you happy with all those things coming?", and we'd agree
- 15
- 16 Q. I now want to move on to the separation of Royal Mail
- 17 and the Post Office.
- Okay. 18 A.
- 19 You've said that you were involved before you became
- 20 Company Secretary --
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 -- in that role. Separation itself occurred shortly
- 23 after you became Company Secretary.
- A. 24 Yes
- 25 Q. Did you have any concerns about being appointed to such

- 1 this is what I've told them where we are but I need more
- 2 information from the experts in the business", if you
- 3 like, because we talked about every single aspect of the
- 4 business and how it would be affected by this
- 5 separation.
- 6 Q. You've said that you discussed every aspect of the
- 7 business.
- 8 Δ It felt like it.
- 9 Q. To what extent was there discussion about the Horizon
- 10 system?
- 11 A. So I honestly do not remember there being specific
- 12 discussion about the Horizon system. I do remember
- 13 there being discussion about IT and I went -- because we
- 14 were talking about splitting the IT systems, and I'm not
- 15 sure that happened on the date of separation because
- 16 I think -- I seem to remember that Lesley came to the
- 17 Board to talk about separation later. So not everything
- 18 separated on 1 April 2012, because it would have been
- 19 impossible to do that, and the separation actually
- 20 carried on probably for another two to three years.
- 21 What discussion, if any, was there about the
- 22 prosecutorial function from what you can remember?
- 23 I don't remember any discussion about that. Α.
- 24 So there were discussions about lots of things but not
- 25 the two matters that are quite important to this

1	Inquir	y?
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- 2 A. Well, not that I can remember.
- 3 Q. Were you involved in developing the governance 4 structures at the Post Office that would follow the 5 separation?
- 6 Α. Only in terms of the Board.
- 7 Q. What do you recall of significant changes that you --
- 8 A. So coming -- so Post Office always had a Board but it 9 wasn't an independent Board and, after -- and the reason 10 that the Board was put in place before separation was 11 that, otherwise, Post Office was also -- was almost 12 negotiating with its boss because Royal Mail was its

So they wanted to split the Board and give us an independent Board before separation so that Board could then have the governance, and I was involved with that governance in terms of helping Alice set up the Board, finding Non-Executive Directors and all the things that have to happen before you set up a Board.

- 20 Q. Were you involved in the development of policies and 21 procedures in respect of governance or was it more 22 structural?
- 23 A. More structural.

boss.

24 Q. Could we please turn to POL00179491 and this is a chain 25 of emails that relate to the investigations and

> "[Royal Mail Group] Security wish to take the prosecution lead for offences committed against [Royal Mail Group] products, including Post Office employees and/or agents. Post Office Security position is that the lead/parent organisation of the employee/agent apprehended should take the lead for prosecution (in line with their HR and Prosecution Policy and will be the organisation most likely to have the evidential material in which to support a prosecution)."

page, John Scott forwards the email to a number of people and you're one of the named people there. Do you recall this discussion?

- 14 A. I don't recall this discussion, no.
- 15 Q. Why would you have been copied into a discussion 16 relating to the Investigations MOU; was that --
- 17 A. I think purely because of my separation role. So on 18 here you've got a lot of people who were part of that separation team, if you like, from Royal Mail as well as 19 20 Post Office.
- 21 Q. If we look from the bottom of page 1 over to page 2, 22 please, there's a response from Tony Marsh, who is the 23 Group Security Director at the Royal Mail Group; do you 24 remember Mr Marsh?

25 A. I do, yes.

If we go over to page 3, please, the bottom of that

1 prosecution function within the Post Office and the 2 drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding. Could we start on page 4, please. It's the second half of page 4

3 4 and on to page 5. There's an email here from John

5 Scott, who is the Post Office Head of Security to Mike

6 Young. Do you recall who Mike Young was?

- 7 A. So Mike Young was, I think, the Chief Information 8 Officer at the time.
- 9 Q. Thank you. He says:

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"Mike [this is 6 March 2012].

"We believe we're close to an agreement.

12 "There have been a number of debating points, but 13 are now down to the last two:

"Number 1

"[Royal Mail Group] Security focus primarily on investigations and prosecution with a view for compensation via the courts and then supported by crime prevention post-apprehension. They seek to allow further theft/crime to continue in order to be able to identify and apprehend the offender for such prosecution. Post Office Security will support this approach in most circumstances, but cannot agree on every occasion which has been discussed."

Then, if we go down the page over to the next page, you have the second debating point, number 2.

- Q. You're still copied in here.
- 2 Yeah.
- Q. He says: 3

"Colleagues

"The conference call will take place. The main issue has been unflagged changes made by [the Post Office] in returned documents", et cetera.

If we scroll down, I am just going to read that paragraph that begins "It is inaccurate". He says:

"It is inaccurate and disingenuous for John to state [it quotes, I think, the bit that I've just read] 'RMG Security focus primarily on investigations and prosecution with a view to compensation via the courts and then supported by crime prevention post apprehension. They seek to allow further theft/crime to continue in order to be able to identify and apprehend the offender for such prosecution', as he does in his associated email of 6 March to Mike Young. If this was the basis of John's briefings to Mike Young then some of Mr Young's mornings explicable briefs and positions may now be better understood. [Royal Mail] Security naturally pursues a strategy of prevention, deterrence, disruption and detection, with prosecution and asset recovery a key element of the deterrence approach. [Royal Mail] Security would never seek to prolong

1 offending behaviour, as this would exacerbate losses to 2 the organisation and its customers, impact negatively on 3 customer satisfaction and public perception and might 4 result in an offender facing increased penalties, which 5 would in itself be an affront to natural justice. Any 6 suggestion to the contrary is unprofessional and does 7 John little credit."

> Do you recall tensions between the Investigations and Security branches of the Royal Mail and the Post Office?

- A. So I didn't at the time. Having read this now, it's 11 12 very clear that there were tensions between the two of 13 them and, yeah, it's very clear.
- Q. If we scroll up to page 1, please, in the middle email, 14 15 there is an email from you to Susan Crichton. You say: 16 "Mike would have stamped on this very quickly."

17 A. So my response there was that, if Mike thought that he 18 was not being presented with all the information by 19 John, he would have very quickly gone and sorted that 20

21 Q. So are you there saying that Mr Marsh is wrong or --

22 No, no, no. I'm saying -- so, from what we've just 23 heard, my understanding is that Tony Marsh is saying 24 that John Scott has misrepresented something to Mike 25 Young and my point here is that -- and Mike's on that

1 Post Office as a prosecutor?

2 A.

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3 Q. Were you aware of, for example, the ongoing duties of 4 disclosure?

5 A. No.

- 6 Q. Did you give the Board or enable the Board to have 7 a briefing on their duties as a prosecuting body?
- 8 A. So I believe there was, I think it's later, though.
- 9 There was discussion at the Board around prosecution but not at the start of them becoming a Board, no. 10

Q. So there was discussion, I think, once the Horizon 11

12 issues --

13 A. Yes, yes.

14 Q. -- are raised in the Board but, in terms of them taking 15 over an entirely new function, are you aware of any 16 briefing about their duties?

17 A. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Who did you consider was responsible to ensure that the 18 Board had systems in place so that they were aware of 19 20 their legal and regulatory responsibilities?

21 A. So it would have been -- in terms of governance, it 22 would have been myself, along with the Chair.

23 Do you see any issue there? Q.

24 I think it would have been helpful -- knowing what 25 I know now, it would have been helpful if the Board had

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1 email chain -- Mike would have very quickly stamped on

2 that and gone back to John and said, "I'm being given

3 the wrong information here".

4 Q. Did you know John Scott at this time?

5 Yes, I knew him.

6 Q. Did you have a view on his abilities?

7 A. I didn't know him well enough to have a view on his abilities, really. I just knew him as a colleague in 8 9 the business

10 Q. If we scroll up we see a response from Susan Crichton, 11 and she says:

12 "Oh no it's all Lesley needs at the moment." 13 Can you assist us with that at all?

14 No. and is that -- so --

15 Q. Lesley Sewell is copied in to --

16 A. Are we assuming Lesley is John Scott's boss? I don't 17 know the hierarchy so I don't know what Susan's 18 referring to here.

19 Q. You have no recollection of this particular chain?

20 A. No.

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21 Q. Thank you. That can come down.

In terms of taking over the prosecution and investigation functions from the Royal Mail Group, did you have any training, were you given any training, on the particular legal and regulatory obligations on the

1 had a briefing on the prosecutions.

2 Q. Do you reflect on that as a personal failing?

3 A. It wouldn't have been for me to provide that but 4 I should -- I could have gone and asked for whoever was

5 now taking over the prosecutions to come to the Board 6 and explain prosecutions to the Board.

7 Q. It wouldn't have been for you to provide the training or

8 the briefing itself?

9 A. No, no.

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Q. But as somebody who was responsible for the governance 10 11 function within the Board, do you take some

12 responsibility for not having that briefing?

13 Yes, I have to.

14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Earlier to Mr Blake, when he was asking 15 you about when you first realised that either Royal Mail 16 or Post Office exercised a prosecution function, you 17 gave me the impression -- and I'm not saying that in any 18 critical sense -- that you were not actually aware that 19 that function was being exercised by either until a date 20 after separation. Now, on the face of it, that may be 21 quite surprising, given that something as important as 22 prosecuting is passing from Royal Mail to Post Office.

> So could we just revisit your best recollection of when you were aware that, first, Royal Mail, if at all, secondly, Post Office, were actually exercising

- 1 a prosecution function?
- 2 A. So, sir, I'm not sure in that email -- and we'd have to
- bring it back up, if it suggests that we are prosecuting
- 4 and, if it does, then that's something I missed or --
- 5 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I'm not too concerned --
- 6 A. Okay.
- 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I don't think it does, subject to
- 8 Mr Blake correcting me, but I'm more interested in the
- 9 fact that there's going to be a transition from Royal
- Mail prosecuting people to Post Office prosecuting
- people and, from what you've told me, so far at least,
- 12 there was simply no discussion, amongst any of the
- senior people, of which you were aware, that this was
- 14 going to happen; now, is that right?
- 15 A. No, I'm saying I wasn't aware. There was discussion
- 16 between senior people, clearly, because we've just --
- 17 and Mike Young, who was the Chief Information Officer,
- 18 he would have owned this and there must also have been
- 19 a handover in the Legal Team with lawyers coming over
- 20 from Royal Mail to Post Office. My comment earlier was
- 21 that -- and I still would, I think, stick to that,
- 22 I wasn't aware of the detail of the -- of us
- 23 prosecuting. I -- so the assumption I made until later,
- 24 when I found out about it, was that it was -- that we
- 25 were using external -- the police or whoever to do those
- 1 of matter wouldn't reach Board level?
- 2 A. Well, a lot of things that happened through separation
- 3 and the agreements between Royal Mail and Post Office
- 4 didn't -- I don't believe went to Board level because
- 5 there would have just been too many of them. However,
- 6 this is, you know, an important issue that the Board,
- 7 I believe, should have been aware of and I'm not sure
- 8 they were.
- 9 Q. I now want to ask you about your lines of reporting --
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. -- because you've given some evidence about that, that
- 12 you reported to two General Counsels: first, Susan
- 13 Crichton --
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. -- second, Jane MacLeod. There was this period in
- 16 between the two where Mr Aujard was Interim General
- 17 Counsel. Am I right in saying you didn't report to
- 18 Mr Aujard; during that period you reported directly to
- 19 the CEO?
- 20 A. That's right.
- 21 Q. Were you the most senior officer to be reporting to the
- 22 General Counsel?
- 23 A. I mean, the General Counsel also had a Head of Legal and
- 24 other people in their teams, so I wouldn't have
- 25 considered myself any more senior than some of those 35

- 1 prosecutions.
- 2 MR BLAKE: When you referred to "senior people", I mean,
- 3 we're concerned really today, principally, with the
- 4 Board.
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- ${\bf 6} \quad {\bf Q}. \quad {\bf Do} \ {\bf you} \ {\bf think} \ {\bf if} \ {\bf the} \ {\bf Board} \ {\bf had} \ {\bf known} \ {\bf about} \ {\bf it} \ {\bf you} \ {\bf would}$
- 7 have known about it?
- 8 A. I think so.
- 9 Q. So we've seen emails with Mike Young in, John Scott in,
- 10 about Investigations Memorandum of Understanding --
 - 11 A. Yes, yes.
 - 12 Q. -- as an example. If that had reached Board level and
- there had been discussion about the prosecution function
- 14 at Board level, you would have known about it?
- 15 A. It would have been in the minutes, yes.
- 16 Q. Well, I suppose Board level doesn't necessarily mean
- 17 formal board discussions.
- 18 A. Oh, okay. So I still believe I would have known about
- 19 it because the general practice was that anything going
- 20 out to the Board was sent via me, so that we could keep
- 21 an understanding of what's being sent to the Board
- 22 because, otherwise, it wouldn't be -- it would not be
- 23 good governance if anybody could send anything to the
- 24 Board.
- 25 $\,$ Q. Do you find it surprising or unsurprising that that kind

- 1 people but I was the only officer of the Board reporting
- 2 to the General Counsel.
- 3 Q. Can we please have a look at WITN10010102. This is
- 4 an organogram that has been produced as an exhibit by
- 5 Jane MacLeod. We can see there at the top, POL Board
- and your position is on the top right-hand side,
- 7 "Company Secretary"?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. We then see below that, the structure that falls
- 10 underneath the Chief Executive and then the General
- 11 Counsel. If we have a look to the left-hand side, it
- says there company secretary, prior to 2016, reporting
- 13 directly to the Chief Executive; is that wrong?
- 14 A. That's wrong. So there was a period in 2016 which was
- when Chris Aujard was General Counsel, and it's only for
- 16 that period that I reported to the Chief Exec.
- 17 Q. Then we see on the right-hand side of that Company
- Secretariat and Company Secretary and the line going there to General Counsel; is that more of how you saw
- there to General Counsel; is that more of how you saw -other than that temporary position --
- 21 **A.** Yes
- 22 Q. -- that's where you saw your reporting line?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. Is it in any way odd that you were a member of the Board
- but reporting to somebody who was not a member of the

- 1 Board and who is considerably below the Board?
- 2 A. So I didn't consider it odd. It didn't change the way
- 3 I behaved or -- on a day-to-day basis. It didn't --
- 4 although I was a member of the General Counsel's team,
- 5 I considered myself also a member of the Chair's team
- and a member of the Board's team. So, no, I don't think
- 7 it changed the way I behaved, that I was a member of the
- 8 General Counsel's team.
- 9 **Q.** Who would induct the General Counsel? We've seen a bit
- of movement during this period.
- 11 A. Yes. So that would have been the outgoing General
- 12 Counsel. I believe that Susan would have done the
- 13 induction for Chris Aujard, and Chris Aujard would have
- 14 done the induction for Jane MacLeod.
- 15 Q. Did you oversee that at all?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. There's quite a lot of movement at quite an important
- 18 time --
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. -- for the Inquiry. I mean, just to give you a very
- brief timeline, we have the separation in April 2012.
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. We have the Second Sight Interim Report in July 2013.
- We have various important advice, Mr Clarke's Advice on
- 25 Gareth Jenkins in July 2013 --

- 1 my role.
- 2 Q. But you don't recall being responsible in any way for
- 3 that passing of information?
- 4 A. No, not at all.
- 5 Q. Thank you. That can come down.
- 6 I want to move on now to your early work on what
- 7 I'll call Horizon issues.
- 8 A. Okay.

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- 9 Q. We see some emails. The first one I'll look at is March
 - 2012. That's POL00096052. It's an email chain of
 - 13 March 2012. It's an email from Alice Perkins to
- 12 Paula Vennells, Susan Crichton, you and Lesley Sewell.
- 13 The subject is "James Arbuthnot" and it says:

"Alwen will do a note of the meeting for you and attach on a personal basis, a document which [James Arbuthnot] gave me. I won't duplicate that but would like to talk to you about this once you've had a chance

18 to read them and what follows.

"I think [James Arbuthnot] genuinely wants to seek a resolution to the difficulties concerned and is willing to believe that we will do the right things.

There is a real prize for us in finding an effective way of convincing him and his fellow MPs that things are as

they should be. He believes that this will quieten down

25 Private Eye and would prevent proposed escalation,

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. -- Mr Clarke's Advice on the retention of materials, the
- 3 "shredding" advice in August 2013?
- 4 A. Yeah.
- ${\bf 5}$ $\,$ $\,$ ${\bf Q.}$ $\,$ We have Susan Crichton leaving towards the latter half
- 6 of 2013 --
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 Q. -- Mr Aujard taking his position in October 2013.
- 9 Throughout the later period so 2014, you have issues
- 10 with the Mediation Scheme and then you have Jane MacLeod
- 11 taking over in January 2015.
- 12 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 13 Q. How were those 2013 issues, from Susan Crichton's time,
- 14 passed to somebody like Jane MacLeod? How would the
- 15 company ensure that that institutional knowledge from
- 16 2013 moved to the person who took on the role in 2015?
- 17 A. So my understanding is that that the -- so the briefing
- 18 from Susan to Chris Aujard, I believe Susan did that,
- 19 and she would also have had at the time a Head of Legal.
- 20 who would presumably have -- not that I have any
- 20 Who would prosumably have -- not that thave any
- 21 knowledge -- but would have briefed Chris Aujard on the
- 22 legal issues that are -- that are going on with the
- 23 company. I don't specifically remember -- or I don't
- 24 believe that I was involved in that briefing, although
- 25 I must have briefed him about the Board because that was

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- 1 eg adjournment debate etc. To do this, we might
- 2 commission a new independent review of the Horizon
- 3 related questions (my thought) or invite him accompanied
- 4 by someone from Computer Weekly to visit the Model
- 5 Office and be shown how Horizon works (his suggestion)
- 6 or something else altogether.

"I promised to go back to him once I had the chance to consider all this. I would like to do so by Easter

9 or at least have fixed a further meeting by then.

"I am asking Glenda to set up a further meeting to
 discuss this amongst ourselves in the next couple of

12 weeks

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So there's a small group here who are discussing
James Arbuthnot and what looks like what ultimately
becomes Second Sight's investigation.

- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 Q. Why were you part of this group?
- 18 A. Well, so Alice is -- I went with Alice to visit James
- 19 Arbuthnot and this is the note she's asking for about
- 20 that meeting. I believe Alice wanted me to be involved
- when she couldn't be around, almost as her ears on
- 22 anything that was discovered.
- 23 $\,$ Q. Do you think that that is part of the role of company
- 24 secretary or is that something else?
- 25~ **A.** I think it is part of the role of company secretary to

- 1 flag up issues to the chair, if they arise and you have
- 2 to be part of the conversation to enable you to flag
- 3 those issues up.
- 4 Q. Were you there simply to listen or to provide
- 5 a substantive contribution?
- 6 Α. So I think I was -- when Alice was in the room, I was
- 7 there to listen and take a note and support her and,
- 8 therefore, the Board. When she wasn't in the room,
- 9 I would contribute but I always did so thinking that I'm
- 10 here representing Alice and the Board.
- Could we turn, please, to POL00107712. We're now on 11 12 11 April. If we could start on page 3, please. There's
- 13 an email from yourself to Rod Ismay, and you say:
- 14 "Rod, can we have the file on this office as well.
 - I will ask Glenda to organise an urgent meeting with the
- 16 four of us to go through both files to see if there are
- 17 similarities. If Oliver and James are coming it would
- 18 be great to be able to look at the keystrokes which 19 caused this and explain why they happened."
- 20 So this is relating to Oliver Letwin, so we've now
- 21 got James Arbuthnot and Oliver Letwin --
- 22 A.

- 23 Q. -- and you're asking Rod Ismay to provide you with
- 24 a file; is that right?
- 25 A.

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- 1 What I meant by this was that we're going to talk about
- 2 two cases. What I would have liked to see was the
- 3 accounts for those two cases, which show the -- all the
- 4 transactions, the keystrokes, that have gone into those
- 5 accounts so that we can somehow find out where
- 6 a discrepancy has happened, where a mistake has
- 7 happened. So that's what I mean by "keystrokes".
- 8 Q. Keystrokes implies some sort of recording of every
- 9 single move that a subpostmaster makes?
- 10 A. Yes, yes.
- Q. What was your understanding of the information that was 11
- 12 available to either subpostmasters or to the Post
- 13 Office, in that respect?
- 14 A. So my understanding, at this point, and -- was that
- 15 a subpostmaster could see everything in their account
- 16 and they would be able to look at their account and look
- 17 at all the transactions and understand what had
- 18 happened.
- Did you understand that they could look at the 19 Q.
- 20 transactions or the keystrokes because those are two
- 21 different things, aren't they?
- 22 A. Okay, so, in my head, I was -- so I don't differentiate
- 23 between those two things. That's maybe because I'm not

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- 24 as IT literate, or whatever, but what I thought I was
- 25 saying here was I would like to look at the keystrokes

- Q. Do you recall this? 1
- 2 Don't recall it but, from reading it now, yes, I --
- Q. I think it's the case of Ms Merritt --3
- 4 A. That's what I was doing --
- Q. -- that was being raised by Oliver Letwin? 5
- 6 A. Yes, yes.
- 7 Q. A few questions in relation to this. I mean, first of
- 8 all, were you then taking a slightly more proactive
- 9 role?
- 10 A. So I believe I was trying to get all the people that
- 11 were inputting to the notes for Alice and Paula for this
- meeting to provide information, so that a note could be 12
- 13 written. That's my belief of what's going on here.
- 14 Reference here to looking at the keystrokes which caused
- 15 the issue.
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. You had, by this stage, worked at the Post Office and
- Royal Mail for a very considerable period of time. 18
- 19 Α. Yes.
- 20 Q. You had worked with subpostmasters?
- 21 A. Yes
- 22 You had, as you say, used Horizon but never balanced on
- 23 Horizon?
- 24 Α. Yes
- 25 Q. What did you mean by "keystrokes"?

- 1 for each transaction. So --
- 2 Q. So every step that led up to the transaction --
- 3 A. Every step, yes, yes.
- 4 Q. Did Mr Ismay or anybody come back to you and say that's
 - possible or not possible?
- 6 A. Not that I can remember. I think we got a -- I think we
- 7 got the files through that we needed to put together the
- 8 brief for the two MPs.
- Q. Did you, at this stage, know what ARQ data was? 9
- 10 A. No.

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- 11 Q. Do you recall looking at what you understood to be the
- keystroke data at that time or the transaction data? 12
- So I didn't look at this in any detail. The people who 13 A.
- 14 were providing this would provide this for the report
- 15 for the MPs. I didn't have the knowledge to be able to
- 16 challenge any of these reports.
- 17 Q. Could we turn to POL00057656, please. This is a note
- 18 from 3 May 2012 discussion on James Arbuthnot and Oliver
- 19 Letwin meeting. This is your note, I think your name is
- 20 at the bottom of it.
- 21 **A**. Yeah.
- 22 Q. Do you recognise it?
- 23 I don't recognise it but it clearly is my note.
- 24 Q. It has there "Present: Alice, Paula, Susan and Alwen",
- 25 so a very small group: Chair, Chief Executive, General

1	Counsel	and v	vou?
	Ocurisci	anu	you:

2 A. Yes.

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3 Q. "On 17 May, we have [James Arbuthnot] and [Oliver 4 Letwin] arriving at 10.30 with [Oliver Letwin] leaving 5 at 11.30 and [James Arbuthnot] leaving at 12.00:

> "The best outcome of this meeting would be a position where they believe our evidence in their individual constituent's cases and support how we are handling the current situation.

"Longer term, once they are assured by the review of Horizon they could 'help' to win others round."

If we scroll down on the same page, one of the bullet points says as follows, it says:

"Explain the old and new Horizon systems and that any live system review would have to be on the new system, although we have an audit trail of every keystroke in the old system kept for 7 years."

There's again there the reference to "keystrokes".

- 19 A. Yes. ves.
- 20 Q. Was that a term that the other attendees at this meeting 21 would have used or is this your wording?
- 22 **A.** So this is my note of the conversations in the meeting, 23 so I don't know whose words those are in the meeting. 24 So I don't know what the others in the meeting knew and 25 I don't know who mentioned "keystrokes", if it was me or

"Brampton SPSO Barnsley.

"Contract termination due to an aged debt of £20,000 -- former [subpostmaster] claims ATM/Horizon was at fault for the loss in as much as a transferred to ATM figure doubled up (matter dealt with by conduct and not prosecution) ...

Whilst in summary the former [subpostmaster] was not operating the ATM reconciliation correctly, she is alleging that the Horizon system and ATM machine generated the loss and that she has been the innocent victim in this matter."

If we scroll up, please, we have Mr Flemington sending you and Ms Crichton that email and saying:

"So a possible ATM issue rather than Horizon this

Your response was:

"This isn't the only ATM one though so we need to be careful we don't make that the next computer system they want a forensic review of!!"

Can you assist us with why you were being copied in and why this correspondence was taking place with Mr Flemington?

- 23 A. So I don't know why I was copied in by Hugh. So I don't 24
- 25 We've seen your involvement with James Arbuthnot --Q.

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someone else. I don't have a recollection.

- 2 Q. Do you recall anyone ever challenging that term or 3 anyone explaining the level of information that was or 4 was not available to the Post Office?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 **Q.** Were you aware of costs involved in obtaining what we 7 know as ARQ or audit data?
- 8 A. No, at this -- I didn't know what ARQ data -- or what it 9 was called or whatever.
- 10 Q. Thank you. Could we please turn to POL00180773. We're
- 11 still in 2012. If we scroll down, there's an email from
- 12 Hugh Flemington. So if we -- yeah, that's fine. Thank
- 13 you. So it's Mr Pardoe to Hugh Flemington, Susan
- 14 Crichton is copied in. It's then forwarded to you by
- 15 Hugh Flemington slightly above but we can stick with
- 16 this email to start with. Did you know Mr Pardoe?
- 17 A.
- 18 Q. So he says it's related to "Wincor ATM Log Fault", and 19 he savs:

20 "As per our conversation I have been advised that 21 a contract termination issue has been passed, by former 22 [subpostmaster], to Shoosmiths in regards to alleged 23 Horizon issues and an erroneous entry in an ATM log (not 24 a Horizon log)."

It gives the details:

Yes.

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- Q. -- with Oliver Letwin.
- 3 A.
- 4 By this stage, were you taking more of an active role in 5 those discussions regarding potential litigation, for
- 6 example, we see here the mention of Shoosmiths, which is 7
 - a law firm?
- 8 A. Yes, I don't believe I had any involvement in the
- Shoosmiths issues but this -- it may well be that Hugh 9
- 10 thought, because of the James Arbuthnot and the MP
- 11 meetings, that it was -- you know, it mentions Horizon,
- 12 so I needed to be included.
- 13 Q. Your comment there that "[We have got] to be careful we
- 14 don't make that the next computer system they want
- 15 forensic review of", was that reflective of a general
- 16 view in the company; was that something that was simply
- 17 your own view?
- A. So I think that -- I think -- I must have known at the 18
- 19 time, and I don't recall now, but I must have known at
- the time that there were ATM -- there were issues with 20
- 21 the ATM reconciliations and how those numbers got put
- 22 into Horizon. But it was a completely separate system,
- 23 so I don't know why I made that comment. You know. No,
- 24 I don't know.
- 25 Q. Could we please turn to POL00180830. We're now just

1 over a week later, 28 June, on page 2, please. Hugh 1 Mr Flemington proposes as follows, he says: 2 2 Flemington sends Paula Vennells an email. 3 "Hi Paula 3 4 4 "I just wanted to flag this court case to you. page 3 he says: 5 "We have civil (not criminal) case in court tomorrow 5 6 where we have already had an admission from the 6 7 subpostmaster that she owed us the money. Tomorrow sees 7 8 us try to put a charge on her property so if she ever 8 9 sells it we (hopefully) get paid back out of the scales 9 10 proceeds." 10 Then it gives a brief history, and it says: 11 litigator." 11 12 "She started out as a [subpostmistress] in 2008 and 12 13 seems to have had balancing issues from the start. She 13 14 closed temporarily in 2010 due to ill health and finally 14 15 for good in 2011. We never terminated her because of 15 16 her illness. She resigned in June 2011 but it seems by 16 17 November 2011 we had noticed losses (10k). The husband 17 18 18 then makes various allegations. However the 19 subpostmistress offers a debt management payment which 19 20 we reject (only £5 per month). We issued court 20 21 21 proceedings for the whole debt in [February] this year 22 22 and the subpostmistress admitted the debt! We then took adequate support." 23 the steps to place a charging order on the property to 23 24 24 try to ensure we actually see the money if we ever sell 25 their property." 25 49 1 team that we saw before: 1 2 "For your information only -- update on this one for 2 3 vou: 3 4 "The hearing went ahead last Friday and we were 4 email? 5 5 granted a 'Final Charging Order' over Mrs Etheridge's 6 ... house. 6 7 7 "The district judge made it clear this doesn't mean [the Post Office] can force her to sell her property. 8 8 9 It just protects [the Post Office's] position if she 9 10 ever does sell." 10 know about it. 11 The bottom point says: 11 12 "Apparently Mr Etheridge turned up to court with 12 13 a bundle of papers, including correspondence with his 13 14 MP. We have not had sight of this bundle but have 14 **A**. Yeah. 15 requested a copy ..." 15 16 If we scroll up, please, there's a response from 16 17 17 Ms Vennells, she says: Α. Yes 18 "Hugh: Thank you very much. Just so I'm clear, does 18 19 this mean we got the outcome you wanted, ie no 19 20 adjournment and future repayment of the debt?" 20 21 21 person leading on that. My only role would have been if

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"I think we proceed with the hearing." Over the page, please, on page 3 at the top of "I don't think we should agree to any adjournment application as it will just encourage more debtors to play the system and use these tactics to slow down our ability to recovery. They will all jump on the bandwagon. We will however need to manage the PR side and Alana has already been briefed by Chris our If we scroll down it details the complaint by the subpostmistress's husband it's the fourth pull up there, halfway through that, it says: "Mr Etheridge appears to have blamed the ATM for the losses, but he never sets out any specific allegations. He also refers to a lack of adequate training and at one point appears to blame staff members for entering inaccurate detail on to the Horizon system. No specific allegations are made about the Horizon system itself. He also accuses the business of failing to provide If we scroll, please, to page 1, the bottom of page 1, Hugh Flemington sends this email to you, Paula Vennells and Susan Crichton. So, again, the same small [I think that's prosecutions] etc and things like economic cut-off levels below which we don't chase etc." Can you assist us with why you were copied into this A. So I -- again, I don't know why I was copied into this email. It may well have been because that enabled them to update Alice, I don't know. I don't remember updating Alice from this email, so -- I don't remember this email but I would imagine it was because it was Horizon issue and Hugh -- or Hugh felt that I needed to Q. It looks as though, from the summer of 2012, the Post Office was looking into the whole area of prosecution --Q. -- and things like economic cut-off levels, so perhaps not going after the smaller cases? Q. Is that something, as Company Secretary, would have been relevant to your role as Company Secretary? A. No, I think Susan Crichton as General Counsel was the

and when it came to the Board, so at -- the board

25 Q. Would it be of relevance to the Board that the whole

business were making.

were -- it was explained to them what decisions the

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His response is as follows: "Yes, we got the outcome we wanted and we have the

flexibility not to press it further etc if we ever want to be 'caring', etc.

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And yes we are looking at the whole area of prosec

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- 1 area of prosecutions was being rethought at that stage?
- 2 A. So I don't know if the Board knew that at this point and
- 3 my expectation would be that, when we have something to 4 tell the Board, we would then take that to the Board and
- 5 say, "This is what we've considered and this is the
- 6 changes we would want to make".
- 7 Q. Do you recall following that up at all, asking any
- 8 questions at this stage about the business looking at
- 9 the whole area of prosecutions?
- 10 A. I don't because I would have seen there that Susan was 11 picking that up.
- 12 Q. Would you have independently taken anything forward to
- 13 the Board or would you have relied on Susan Crichton to
- 14 raise it as an issue with you?
- A. So I would have relied on Susan Crichton. 15
- 16 MR BLAKE: Sir, that is probably an appropriate moment to
- 17 take our first morning break.
- 18 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. What time, 11.10?
- 19 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
- 20 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine.
- 21 (11.00 am)
- 22 (A short break)
- 23 (11.11 am)

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- 24 MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. Can you see and hear me?
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, yes.

attention of Second Sight and to James Arbuthnot, Second Sight were proposing a system whereby subpostmasters could provide information without fearing that that information would be used to prosecute them. The draft announcement says, as follows, it says:

"[The Post Office] also recognises that some members of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance may have concerns about submitting cases for independent review by Second Sight where even basic case information is communicated to [the Post Office]. Whilst [the Post Office] cannot provide any form of immunity from prosecution in respect of information held by [the Post Office], in recognition of the concerns expressed by the JFSA, [the Post Office] agrees not to take any prosecution action relating to information provided by JFSA without the agreement of the Board of [the Post Office] and to deal with each case submitted in a sensitive manner."

Just pausing there, by this stage, undoubtedly you were aware that the Post Office carried out a prosecution function?

- 22 **A**. Yes.
- 23 Q. Could we please turn to the first page, the bottom of 24 the first page. There's an email from Susan Crichton to 25 you and Mr Baker. She says as follows:

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MR BLAKE: Sticking with the summer of 2012, can we please look at POL00180986, please. If we could please turn to page 2, 19 July 2012. We have an email here from lan Henderson of Second Sight to Susan Crichton, and there is a draft policy statement regarding what by then is the Justice for Subpostmaster Alliance submitted cases. Mr Henderson says:

"This is probably way off but this is the sort of briefing note that Janet and I discussed this afternoon."

11 Can you recall who Janet was?

- 12 So Janet was James Arbuthnot's PA or Executive 13 Assistant, actually.
- 14 Q. Thank you.
- 15 It was Janet Walker. A.
- 16 Q. The statement, the draft statement, says as follows:

17 "[The Post Office] has agreed that the Office of the 18 Right Honourable James Arbuthnot should contact Alan 19 Bates and the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance and 20 request that [they] submit approximately 5 of their best 21 cases for interpreter rem by Second Sight Support 22 Services Limited."

> So this is the beginning of Second Sight's work on those cases. There is a section at the bottom that addresses individuals bringing their cases to the

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1 "Alwen and Simon -- can we discuss, lan produced 2 this at my request because Kay Linnell (forensic 3 accountant) make much of the fact that she had been 4 contacted by a number of current subpostmasters who had 5 issues with Horizon but were too frightened to contact

6 [the Post Office] because of the consequences ... 7 obviously we want to be able to review these current

8 cases but I said that we could not give a blanket 9 undertaking not to prosecute so this is the result.

10 What do you think?"

11 Why is Susan Crichton contacting you and Mr Baker? A. I think she's contacting me because it mentions the 12

13 Board. So, in the proposal, it mentions that the Board 14 could be -- could almost sign off cases being allowed 15 into the scheme, into --

- Q. I think the proposal was that they wouldn't prosecute 16 17 without the authority of the Board?
- 18 A. Right, yes. So I think that's why Susan has included me 19 in this
- 20 Q. If we scroll up, we have your response. You say:

"Don't really like the Board being involved but can't see any way round it. My concern is that this becomes the route for misbalances and cases that could be sorted by Angela or Rod and their teams will use this route for [business as usual]."

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1 Susan Crichton says:

2 "Thought we could substitute ExCo?"

Is your understanding of that that she is intending

to replace the Board with the Executive Committee in

- 5 terms of that authorisation?
- 6 A. Yes, that's my understanding.
- 7 Q. Thank you. Then you respond and say:
- 8 "Yes, I think so if possible."
- 9 It was only, at that stage, five cases that were
- 10 being looked at by Second Sight. Why did you not want
- 11 that to go to the board?
- 12 A. Because it might not have stopped at five, and it didn't
- 13 feel to me, as if it was a Board decision.
- 14 Q. Were issues such as misbalances seen as principally
- 15 matters for the Executive Committee and below, at this
- 16 stage?

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- 17 A. So I think the misbalances -- I think that Angela was
- doing -- had already started a piece of work looking at
- 19 improving support and I'm -- I would have expected
- 20 misbalances to go through there, rather than to come to
- 21 the Board.
- 22 Q. Was this, we see your response there, was that
- 23 a decision you made on your own?
- 24 A. I don't know. I may well have run this past Alice.
- 25 I have no evidence that I did that but I may well have
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- 1 Alice and she believes this, so I can't say one way or
- 2 the other whether I spoke to the Chair.
- 3 Q. Given that it doesn't say, "I spoke to Alice", and given
- 4 that it says "My" --
- 5 A. Then -- sorry.
- 6 Q. Is it more likely or less likely that this is something
- 7 you decided on your own?
- 8 A. I can't really say but I think it's probably more likely
- 9 because I would have put it in the email if I'd spoken
- 10 to Alice.
- 11 Q. Thank you. Can we turn to POL00143704 and the bottom of
- the first page. We have an appointment reminder or
- 13 place holder, "Room 108 and by [conference] call", and
- the attendees required: Susan, that's Susan Crichton;
- then you; Simon, Simon Baker; Ron and Ian, that's Ron
- 16 Warmington and Ian Henderson. Did you have regular
- 17 meetings at this stage with Second Sight?
- 18 A. So yes, there were regular meetings with Second Sight.
- 19 Q. How regular were they?
- 20 A. I can't really say how regular. But we had a lot of
- 21 contact with them.
- 22 Q. Why were you a required attendee?
- 23 A. So, again, I think it would have been because I went to
- the initial meeting with Alice and all the things
- 25 flowing from that, and Horizon was now -- we're coming 59

- 1 done
- 2 Q. It certainly appears from this email that you were
- 3 acting as some sort of filter mechanism for the Board;
- 4 is that something that you would routinely do?
- 5 A. So if anybody had come to me and said, "We would like
- 6 the Board to do this", I would general have gone to the
- 7 Chair and said -- not necessarily to do with this, to do
- 8 with anything in the business -- I would have gone to
- 9 the Chair and said, "Do you think this is appropriate
- for the Board? Is it the right level?", and we'd have
- 11 had that discussion.
- 12 Q. In this particular case, you're not sure whether you did
- that or not?
- 14 A. I can't remember.
- 15 Q. Perhaps if we scroll down slightly on this page, we have
- the email from Susan Crichton to you at 10.58, your
- 17 response at 2.51. Is it likely or unlikely that you
- would have had a conversation between those hours?
- 19 A. I can't say. If Alice had been in the office, for
- 20 instance, I may well have popped into her office and
- 21 said, "Alice, can I just run this past you?" I --
 - 22 Q. I mean, you refer there to, for example, "My concern is
 - 23 that this" --
- 24 A. Yes, I'm not saying -- and it may well -- if I had
- 25 talked to Alice, I may well have said I have spoken to
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- 1 up to, I think, the Second Sight Interim Report.
- 2 **Q.** We're still in 2012?
- 3 A. Oh, okay, sorry.
- 4 Q. We're still some way off?
- 5 A. Some way off that, okay. So I think I was included in
- 6 things because of the initial contact with Alice and
- 7 that's why I was included and was invited to meetings
- 8 and --
- 9 Q. You weren't just invited; you were a required attendee?
- 10 A. Oh, yes, I --
- 11 Q. That suggests that you had --
- 12 A. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt --
- 13 Q. There are only a very small number of people, three
- 14 people from the Post Office. It is suggested that you
- played more than just, for example, a note-taking role?
- 16 A. No, I did take part in these meetings.
- 17 Q. Yes. Could we now move on, then, to 2013 and could we
- start with POL00184716. This is February 2013. If we
- scroll down, please, there's an email from Mr Warmington
- 20 to Susan Crichton. I think you've said in your witness
- statement, it's paragraph 163, that you were involved in
- 22 ensuring that Second Sight's questions were addressed by
- the most appropriate person?
- 24 **A.** Yes.
- 25 Q. Here we have a complaint from Second Sight in relation

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1 to the information that's being provided by the Post 2 Office. Mr Warmington says as follows, he says: 3

> "As previously reported, lan and I are getting seriously concerned about whether [the Post Office] is getting to grips with issues that we are raising. Only Angela van den Bogerd seems to have grasped the need to really dig into these assertions and join with us (lan and I) in our efforts to seek the truth. An air of defensiveness still seems to dominate here and we don't seem to be able to get the message across that there is no future in [the Post Office] simply trying to 'defend its patch' by constantly refuting -- with scant effort or evidence -- every allegation that we put forward."

Was that a complaint that you recognised at the time?

- 17 A. So I'm not sure I do -- or I did. I can't remember this 18 specific email but I think my role here was to try and 19 find the right people that could help Second Sight get 20 what they needed I don't think -- at this point, they 21 are sharing what they need, I think they're sharing the 22 allegations with us but I'm not sure we've seen any 23 evidence at this point. I think we're just responding 24 to allegations.
- 25 Q. Yes.

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1 review.

- 2 Q. Expected by who?
- 3 A. By the Chair and by the -- you can't say the business 4 because that's not an entity but, ultimately, by the 5 Chair.
- 6 Q. We'll also see in due course complaints from Second 7 Sight that they were being provided with large amounts 8 of irrelevant information. Is that a complaint that you 9 recognise?
- A. I don't remember that. No, I don't remember that. 10
- Q. Let's turn to POL00185741. There's a note of a meeting 11 with Second Sight, 11 March 2013. Are these your notes? 12
- 13 Α. Does it say at the bottom?
- 14 Q. It doesn't have a name at the bottom.
- A. Unlikely, I think, but they could be. 15
- 16 **Q.** Attendees, we have you and Simon Baker with Mr Henderson 17 and Mr Warmington. Were you the most senior Post Office
- 18 representative at that meeting, would you say?
- 19 A. Yes, probably.
- 20 Q. If we scroll down, we have "Items discussed". One of 21 them is the John Armstrong case:
- 22 "Very simple incident.
- 23 "Occurred last year.
- 24 "Customer wanted to pay for a phone bill, while it 25 was being processed there was a power failure.

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A. And, therefore, maybe it appeared we were defensive. 1

Q. If we scroll up, please, we then have a response from Susan Crichton to you, and she says:

"Can we have a chat about this when you get a moment?"

Do you recall speaking with Susan Crichton about concerns that were being raised by Second Sight about an air of defensiveness at the Post Office.

- 9 A. I don't. I don't recall.
- 10 Q. Why would Susan Crichton want to talk to you about the 11 content of this email?
- 12 A. I don't recall this email. I don't know what she wanted 13 to talk to me about. It could have been that she wanted 14 me to help put some more pressure on people to be 15 providing Second Sight with the information they needed.
- 16 Was that part of your role? Q.
- 17 A. I did chase people for people, yes, I did chase.
- 18 Q. At whose instigation?
- 19 So, at whose -- so I believed that the Chair had agreed 20 to this -- the Second Sight review -- the Chair wanted 21 it to go ahead and my belief was that I had to help it 22 as much possible to get to the information it needed as 23 quickly as possible. So why am I doing this? Because 24 I -- in my -- I believed I was expected to do that

25 because we'd signed up to Second Sight doing this

1 "Horizon backed out the transaction -- without 2 communicating this to the subpostmaster.

> "For the first time we have evidence Horizon has done something without reporting to the subpostmaster.

"These incidents seem to be limited to power or communication failures.

"Some evidence that subpostmasters have raised these type of issues with the Post Office but Post Office have fobbed off the subpostmaster (eg of letter from Andy Winn).

"We expect to receive this spot review by the end of the week."

13 This seems to be the first evidence that they have 14 seen of -- that Horizon could do something without 15 a subpostmaster knowing that it was being done; do you 16 agree with that?

- So this must be Second Sight's note because they are --17 Α. 18 the way it's written. So I don't know exactly what 19 happens when there's a communication failure. I always 20 believed that a report was generated by Horizon to tell 21 the subpostmaster what had happened, what had gone 22 through and what hadn't. So I'm unclear about how
- 23 I would have responded to Second Sight saying this.
- 24 Q. If your position before this meeting was that the 25 subpostmaster would be able to see what went wrong --

- 1 and we saw this morning your reference to, for example,
- 2 keystrokes and that kind of information?
- 3 A. Yes, yes.
- 4 Q. You are here finding out that, for the first time, there
- 5 is evidence that Horizon has done something without
- 6 reporting it to the subpostmaster. That must have been
- 7 quite a significant moment for you, mustn't it?
- 8 A. So I would have wanted to see the evidence of what
- 9 they've got here, what Second Sight are saying add
- 10 I don't remember seeing any evidence.
- Do you remember asking for the evidence? 11 Q.
- 12 A. I don't.
- 13 Q. Do you remember doing anything about this particular
- information? 14
- 15 A. I don't, because I think I would still have believed
- 16 that the subpostmaster could see this disconnect.
- 17 Q. We have a meeting with Second Sight where you are the
- 18 most senior attendee from the Post Office where you are
- 19 being told, for the first time, that they have evidence
- 20 that Horizon has done something without reporting it to
- 21 the subpostmaster. Must that not have been a very
- 22 significant moment in your career?
- 23 A. So as I say, I still believed that the subpostmaster
- could see this and I would have -- I should have asked 24
- 25 for more evidence, and I don't believe I would have
- 1 A. Alice's role, I'd have said.
- 2 Q. I think you're the only one who's listed here to be
- 3 having a conversation with the Chair. Were you, at this
- 4 meeting, effectively the route between Second Sight and
- 5 the Chair?
- 6 A. Well, I suppose I was always the route between Second
- 7 Sight and the Chair. I was the route of anything and
- 8
- 9 Q. Do you recall a conversation with Alice Perkins
- following this meeting? 10
- A. I don't. 11

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- Q. Could we please turn to POL00186290. We'll start at the 12
- bottom of the first page, 10 April 2013, Simon Baker 13
- 14 emails to you and to Susan Crichton. Again, it's that
- 15 team of three:
 - "Susan, Alwen
 - "Next Wednesday morning ... I have scheduled an offsite meeting with the three of us to get some
- 19 thinking time to cover the following points ..."
- He sets out there the various points. He says: 20
- 21 "lan is holding the date in his diary. Ron can't
- 22 make it in person, but could join us on the phone."
- So it seems as though they're trying to schedule 24 a meeting with Second Sight, Ian and Ron; do you recall
- 25 that?
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- 1 done. I wasn't -- although I was the most senior person
- 2 here, I'm not the IT person here, Simon is. So I would
- 3 have expected him to have also picked up on this.
- 4 Q. Second Sight were your independent investigators --
- 5 Α.

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- 6 Q. -- who had been appointed by the Post Office to carry
 - out an independent investigation. Whether you, somebody
- 8 who wasn't familiar with IT, thought or didn't think
- 9 that the system could do something, you're here being
- 10 told that, in fact, it can do something without telling
- 11 a subpostmaster?
- So yes, that is a serious issue. I don't remember in 12
- Second Sight's Interim Report it having this. 13
- 14 Q. That's further down the line. We're now only in March
- 15 2013.
- 16 Yes, yes. A.
- 17 But do you recall raising it ...
- 18 I don't, no.
- 19 If we look down, there are actions and it says:
- 20 "Alwen to discuss with Alice the confidentiality 21
- conditions of the MPs meeting and her status/role at the 22
- 23 Can you assist us with the "her status/role at the
- 24 meeting"; is that your role or Alice's role at the
- 25 meeting?

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- No I don't recall that specific meeting.
- 2 Q. If we scroll up, please, we have a response from you.
- 3
- "This isn't in my diary ..." 4
 - I think that must be:
- 6 "... I am [perhaps 'meant'] to be with Alice in
- 7 [Wednesday] morning."
- 8 A.

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- Q. If we look at the top email from Susan Crichton to you: 9
- "Alwen are you going to be with her all morning. 10
- 11 Simon and I need some time with you to work out the
- 12 strategy for taking this forward, and your input was key
- 13 as we need to decide how we deal with the aftermath of
- 14
- the [James Arbuthnot] meeting and how to take this
- 15
- 16 It seems from that email that Susan Crichton has
- 17 formed the view that your input is key in those
- 18 meetings; is that something you would agree with or not?
- Well, it is key because they want to decide in the 19
- aftermath of the James Arbuthnot meeting, so it's key 20
- 21 because, again, they want my input, clearly, and it
- 22 would be input with the Board in mind and with things in
- 23 mind that -- because that's the position I came from. 24 You say with the Board in mind?
- 25 A. Or, sorry, with the Chair in mind.

- 1 Q. With the Chair in mind?
- 2 A. Yes, not the Board.
- 3 Q. So this is, again, with the background, if we trace it
- 4 back to where we started this morning with the meeting
- 5 with James Arbuthnot, the meeting with Oliver Letwin --
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ Q. $\,$ -- you were, in your view, acting on behalf of the Chair $\,$
- 8 in these meetings that followed with Second Sight?
- 9 **A.** Yes.
- 10 Q. Had you been asked to carry out that role by the Board?
- 11 **A.** No
- 12 Q. Did you see your role as acting in this role as Company
- 13 Secretary, or as something else?
- 14 A. I don't think you could say it was the traditional
- 15 company secretary role. I think it was wider than that.
- 16 Q. Wider or separate to that?
- 17 A. I think -- still think it was predicated on the Chair
- and going back to supporting the Chair and being the
- 19 Chair's ears and eyes in the business, if you like. So
- 20 I think it was still supporting that role.
- 21 Q. In your training to become company secretary, was part
- 22 of that training informing you that you were to be the
- 23 Chair's ears and eyes on the business?
- 24 A. So I think there was something about facilitating the
- 25 Chair -- the chair's connection with the business,
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- 1 were times when I thought then, "This is a lot of work
- on top of my traditional company secretary role", and
- 3 I probably think the same now.
- 4 Q. Why were you being asked to do this role?
- 5 A. I think some of it was about herding the business to try
 - to get them to respond to questions and information for
- 7 Second Sight. So I think I was being asked to
 - facilitate the independent -- getting information to the
- 9 independent review.

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- 10 Q. Could we please turn to POL00186602. We're now on 7 May
- 11 2013. At the bottom of the page, Mr Baker emails Angela
- van den Bogerd, Susan Crichton and you, and he says:
 - "I would like to release the Spot Reviews to Second
- 14 Sight tomorrow evening. Any chance I could have your
- 15 comments or approval by the end of day tomorrow?"
- 16 If we scroll up we have your response, which is:
- 17 "You already have my sign off Simon."
- 18 Why, again, as Company Secretary, would you need to
- 19 sign off the provision of spot reviews to Second Sight?
- 20 A. So I don't remember this email but I think what's --
- 21 when the spot reviews were put together, there were
- 22 certain people that owned parts of the spot review
- 23 because they were subject experts in those areas. So,
- 24 for instance, Angela would have owned anything to do
- 25 with the Network, Lesley would have owned or -- would

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- 1 and -- but this is a long -- quite a long time ago now.
- 2 I can't specifically remember what was in that training.
- 3 Q. But did you see it as part of your role as Company
 - Secretary to be attending these kinds of meetings and to
- 5 be pursuing objectives on what you understood to be on
- 6 behalf of the Chair?
- 7 A. No, I think it was wider than my traditional Company
- 8 Secretary role.
- 9 Q. Was that something you ever discussed with the Chair,
- 10 "Why am I performing a job that is not, in fact, the job
- 11 of a company secretary?"
- 12 A. I can't remember having that conversation with the
- 13 Chair. I had weekly one-to-ones with the Chair and the
- 14 Chair would have known I was doing this work, so -- but
- 15 I don't specifically remember asking her "Do you want me
- 16 to do this work on your behalf?"
- 17 Q. But did you have any concerns that you're being asked to
- do a role that is, in fact, not the role of a company
- 19 secretary?
- 20 A. I don't think so at the time.
- 21 Q. Looking back at it now, do you think you were being
- 22 asked to do a role or carrying out a role that was not,
- 23 in fact, your role?
- 24 A. I think, as time went on, and this became -- there was
- 25 more to do in this role, if you like, I am sure there

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- 1 have owned anything to do with IT and so I don't think
- 2 there were any specific areas that I had to sign off
- 3 because I wasn't the subject matter expert, which is why
- 4 I'm saying -- I think why I'm saying to Simon "You've
- 5 already got my" -- "I'm happy for you to send these but
- 6 you need everybody else's input first".
- 7 Q. You're not saying there, "You don't need my sign off",
- 8 though --
- 9 **A.** No.

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- 10 Q. -- you're saying, "You already have my sign off"?
- 11 A. Yes, yes.
- 12 Q. Why would you have needed to sign off the provision of
- 13 information to Second Sight?
- 14 A. So -- and I can't remember this email, as I say, but
- 15 I don't think I am signing off the information. I think
 - I'm signing off "This is what the spot reviews looked
- 17 like and, if it's not me providing information and
- detail in that area, that person should be signing it
- off, not me, but I am happy for this to go to Second
- 20 Sight". I don't think I'm signing off the detail.
- 21 **Q.** No, but Mr Baker is saying, "I would like to release the
- spot reviews to Second Sight", can he have your comments
- or approval and you say, "You already have my sign off".
- 24 It certainly reads as though you are signing off the
- 25 release of the spot reviews to Second Sight. My

- 1 question is: why would you, Company Secretary, need to 2 sign off the release of the spot review to Second Sight?
- 3 A. So, as I say, I can't remember this. It may well have
 - been that Simon and I have had a conversation about the
- 5 spot reviews and I've said to him "When you've got all
- 6 the information, then, you know, it doesn't need my
- 7 further sign off. You're getting information from all
- 8 these people". But I'm --

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- 9 Q. It doesn't say, "You don't need my sign off", it says,
- 10 "You already have my sign off".
- 11 A. So then I would have said that to him face-to-face.
- 12 That's what I'm assuming. I am assuming this -- there
- 13 hasn't been another email where I've signed this off.
- 14 This is, I think, I've had a conversation with Simon
 - which says, "The spot reviews need to get to Second
- 16 Sight", and he's going and asking for information is
- 17 right in the spot reviews, and I've already that the
- 18 conversation which said, "Yes, we need to get these to
- 19 Second Sight". But that's just me surmising when
- 20 reading this now.
- 21 Q. Why, as Company Secretary, would you need to sign off
- the provision of information to Second Sight?
- 23 $\,$ A. So, as company secretary, I don't think I did have to
- 24 sign it off.
- 25 **Q.** Thank you. Could we turn to POL00029588. The second

not be aware that there is, in fact, a receipts and payments mismatch.

At the bottom of this page, he says:

"One of the situations that we are taking as a result of the Local Suspense problem we found this year is to put some further checks in for 'situations that should never happen' that related to that problem and to raise an alert if they do."

The reference there to "situations that should never happen", did that strike you at all? We will see that you are copied in to that email. Is this is an issue that caused you any concern as at 16 May 2013?

- 13 A. So the way I'm reading this that the mismatches should
 14 never happen, so the --
- 15 Q. Should never happen?
- 16 A. Yes, should never happen. So the piece above where the
- 17 final report mismatch, that's the way I'm reading that,
- is that, in the future, those things should never
- 19 happen.
- 20 Q. But, also, that things have occurred that shouldn't
- 21 happen and that wouldn't necessarily be visible to
- 22 a subpostmaster?
- 23 $\,$ A. But where is -- you see, I can't see anywhere here that
- 24 it's not visible to the subpostmaster.
- 25 **Q.** Well:

- 1 half of the page, please, is an email from Gareth
- 2 Jenkins to Mr Baker. So by 16 May 2013, did you know
- 3 who Gareth Jenkins was?
- 4 A. I did, yes.
- 5 Q. How did you know who he was?
- A. Mainly from these emails.
- 7 $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ $\,$ Can you recall when you first approximately came into
- 8 contact, was it in this context?
- 9 A. I think so, yes.
- 10 Q. Was it gathering information for Second Sight?
- 11 A. Yes

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- 12 Q. Yes. The subject is "Balancing issues in 2010", and
- he's setting out there, I think, what we know as the
- 14 receipts and payments mismatch issue. I'll just read to
- 15 you a little bit from that email. He says:

"If the clerk presses Cancel ... and on the rollover screen then presses Rollover again, then the Final

- 18 Balance report will have Receipts/Payments mismatch
- 19 (Total Receipts not equal to Total Payments) which will
- 20 ultimately lead to a Non-zero Trading Position on the
- 21 Branch Trading.

22 "If the clerk does not check the Final Balance 23 report, he/she may not be aware that the report has

24 a Receipts/Payments mismatch."

So the net effect is that the subpostmaster might

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- 1 "If the clerk does not check the Final Balance 2 report, he/she may not be aware that the report has 3 a Receipts/Payments mismatch."
- 4 A. But it's in the final balance report.
- 5 Q. Yes.
- 6 A. I'm not for a moment saying that it's right but I'm
- 7 saying, when I read this, my belief was that the clerk
- 8 could still see the mismatch.
- 9 Q. But would it be of concern to you that Mr Jenkins from
- 10 Fujitsu was identifying that there were situations that
- 11 should never happen, that didn't necessarily have
- 12 an alert and that, in future, one of the actions they
- were taking was to put in some further checks for such
- 14 problems and raise an alert if they did occur; did that
- 15 cause you any concerns?
- 16 A. So -- and I can't remember reading this but, reading it
- 17 again, the way I think I would have read this was: this
- has happened, it was clearly wrong that it happened, it
- does appear in the balance -- so, that's the first thing
- 20 I would have picked up from here -- however what he's
- saying is, in the last paragraph here, "But we have put
- something in place so this should never happen again",
- and that there will be another alert, alongside, you
- 24 know, the mismatch that -- that is visible, "We will
- 25 give another alert to the subpostmaster". That's the

1	way I'm read	ling	it.
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2 Q. That is how Simon Baker communicates it above. If we 3 scroll above, we can see an email from Mr Baker to 4 Lesley Sewell and you, saying:

"Lesley, Alwen

"Brief overview of the problem encountered in 2010 below

"The reassuring point, for those looking for comfort, is that in this case Horizon's monitoring systems automatically picked up the anomaly."

"For those looking for comfort", but were you in any way concerned by the contents of that email?

- 13 A. Well, I think I would have been concerned -- I can't 14 remember the email but I think I would have been 15 concerned that this had happened in the first place.
- 16 Q. Yes.

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- 17 A. That would have caused me concern but I think -- I don't
- think I was looking for comfort. I think that the rest 18
- 19 of the email would have given me comfort that (1) the
- 20 subpostmaster can see it happening and, secondly, now
- 21 that it has happened, Fujitsu would put something in
- 22 place to ensure the subpostmaster could see it.
- 23 Q. Why was Mr Baker emailing just you and Lesley Sewell on 24 this issue?
- 25 A. I don't know. Are we both -- if you go down further

- 1 Were you aware that he had given evidence in criminal 2 prosecutions?
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Were you aware that he'd given evidence in any court 5 proceedings?
- 6 A. No, not that I remember.
- 7 Q. Could we look turn to POL00186943, please. If we could 8 look at the second of those emails, 21 May 2013, so 9 shortly -- the previous email that we looked at was 10 16 May; this is 21 May. This is from you to Alice Perkins and the subject is "James [Arbuthnot] meeting". 11

You say:

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"Alice I wanted to apologise for the lack of clarity at the meeting today. Paula and I have had a conversation about the way forward and the need to ensure Second Sight are working to their terms of reference, finding out the facts and not focusing so much on keeping the [Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance] on board.

"The [Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance] issue will be picked up in the wider stakeholder piece which Paula and I have already discussed with Mark and Martin Edwards about.

"I have spoken to Second Sight and also to Susan who is contacting Second Sight this evening to reiterate our 79

down, are we both on the email further down?

2 Q. No.

3 A. No, so he's sending this on to us, okay. I don't know 4 why, whether I was chasing something for someone.

I understand why Lesley would be on there because she's 5

6 the Chief Information Officer. She's the conduit with

7 Fujitsu, so it's right that she should be on there and

8 whether this is me chasing something or -- I don't know. 9 Q. Do you want to try and see if you can think about why

10 only two people from the Post Office were copied into

11 that email, or sent that email, and it was you and

12 Lesley Sewell? We've heard that Lesley Sewell was Chief

13 Information Officer but why you?

14 A. I really don't know. Maybe I'm the only person that 15 doesn't know about this yet.

16 Q. Is it likely you would have discussed that with the

Chair or the Chief Executive?

A. So I do know -- and I cannot remember the date but I do 18 19 recall that there was a conversation with the Chair

20 about bugs because -- and before the Second Sight

21 Report. So there was that conversation. Whether it was predicated on this email, I cannot remember.

23 Q. In terms of Mr Jenkins, you said that you became

24 familiar with him around this time?

25 **A**.

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concerns and to ensure that they are focused on delivering the 2-3 MP cases before the summer. Which they promised me they would do.

"I would like to clarify one point as I realised that you and Paula were both disappointed with the time which has elapsed since the exchange of letters between James and [Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance] written on 16 April and felt we should have moved things on.

"I should explain that we were not copied in on these letters but received them from Second Sight as blind copies two weeks after they were written. This has made reference to them very difficult, and managing the ongoing timelines and agenda challenging.

"I believe the call with James on Thursday and a subsequent meeting after recess will help us understand his position in moving this to closure, and also enable us to drive the agenda more proactively."

Can you assist us with why -- first of all, what do you recall of the James Arbuthnot meeting, very briefly, that took place on 21 May?

21 The one after this?

22 **Q.** No, the one that you're apologising in relation to.

23 So I'm -- I think this is -- I can't specifically 24 remember but I think this is the -- a pre-meet for 25

a James Arbuthnot meeting, and it's -- this -- so

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- I don't think James was at this meeting. I think this
 is a meeting with Alice and Paula, and presumably other
 relevant people who are -- you know, Mark might have
 been there, I don't know who was there, but I don't
 think James Arbuthnot was in this meeting.
- Q. Thank you. So this was a pre-meeting before a meetingwith James Arbuthnot?
- 8 A. That's my understanding.
- 9 Q. You seem to be concerned, requiring an apology for
 10 a lack of clarity. Can you assist us with why you were
 11 apologising?
- 12 A. I don't remember this meeting but if I've apologised for 13 a lack of clarity it's likely that Alice has left the 14 meeting not very pleased with how it has gone, 15 basically. And I think it may be something to do with 16 the copy of the letter, which we -- I allude to further 17 down and that she would have expected us to have done 18 more, if we'd had that letter since the 16 April. So 19 I suspect that we didn't get as far in this meeting as 20 we would have hoped to get.
- Q. There also seems to be some concern that has been raised about Second Sight working outside of their terms of reference, for example. Do you recall concerns being raised by Paula Vennells regarding Second Sight working within their terms of reference?

1 straightforward and frank.

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"I think it would be worth having a chat about this at some point soon. There are some things to learn from it.

"In the meantime, we must get into a different gear on this issue. We stood to gain a huge prize from embarking on this ... "

Just pausing there, what did you understand to be the "huge prize"?

- A. So again, it's her words but I think she was talking
 about an opportunity to show that the computer, Horizon,
 was -- had integrity. I think that's where she is
 coming from and to be able to show to the MPs -- because
 Alice's main concern was the MPs -- was to show to the
 MPs that -- what had actually happened.
- Q. "... huge prize from embarking on this though it was
 never going to be easy. We have almost blown it on more
 than one occasion and if it goes wrong it will be hugely
 damaging. Too bad if we find substantive things which
 are wrong. But if what goes wrong is self-inflicted,
 that would be inexplicable.

"This is not all down to you by any means but I do think in practice you have a pivotal role of only to bring things to my attention -- which you have sometimes done."

A. So I think -- and I think the -- later on, we'll probably get to it -- the Board were also concerned about the speed at which Second Sight were producing evidence and I think, certainly for Alice, I think Alice, when we started the review, wanted a forensic review to look at the Horizon computer. That's what I think, and you'll have to Alice and you'll no doubt have a chance to do so, but that's my belief, that Alice

And what was becoming more apparent was that Second
Sight were looking in a much more wider frame than "Does
the computer work?", and I think that's what these
conversations were about.

wanted to know that the computer worked, basically.

- 14 Q. You're apologising there. Is that something you
 regularly did to Alice Perkins; is that something
 unusual, something that stood out?
- A. I wouldn't have said it was regular but I -- if I did
 feel that something hadn't gone as well as I would have
 wanted it to go for the Chair, then I would apologise
 because it's, you know, it's easy to apologise and say,
 "I'm sorry, Alice, we didn't have as good a meeting as
 we had hoped to have today".
- Q. If we group we can see Alice Perkins' response, shesays:

"Thank you for saying all this. Characteristically

1 What did you understand by that?

- 2 A. Well, again, you'd have to ask Alice what she meant by 3 that but I took from that -- again, from rereading the 4 email -- that we were taking too long to do things. 5 I mean, it's interesting, in Alice's head, you know, if 6 we find substantive things wrong with the computer, then 7 let's find those things wrong with the computer and have 8 proper evidence there's things wrong with the computer 9 and put them right. That's sort of what I'm reading 10 from this.
- 11 Q. What did you understand by "self-inflicted" to have12 been? It seems to be a criticism of yourself or --
- 13 A. I don't think it is. Well, it might have been. I don't
 14 think it is. I think it's that the business has not
 15 provided things and has not -- and it's an independent
 16 review, so it's not a case of, you know -- because
 17 I know the word "managing" that review has been used at
 18 a later stage in the Board. It's not a case of managing
 19 that review; it's enabling that review to get to a place

21 I'm not reading that as personal to me but I could 22 be wrong.

that review needs to get to and get to it quickly.

23 Q. She then says:

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24 "This is not ..."

25 I've put the emphasis on the word "all":

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- 1 "This is not all down to you by any means but I do 2 think in practice you have a pivotal role ..."
- 3 What did you understand by "of only to bring things 4 to my attention"?
- 5 A. I think it should be "if only".
- 6 **Q.** "If only to bring things to my attention"?
- 7 A. So that's me coming back to the fact that the things
- 8 I was doing, I was doing on behalf of Alice and, here,
- 9 she's making it very clear that, you know, the role that
- 10 you need to bring things to my attention.
- Then she says "which you have sometimes done"? 11 Q.
- 12 Α. Yes, yes.
- 13 Q. Would you have read that to mean not always?
- A. Not necessarily. It's a bit damned with faint praise, 14
- isn't it, really? 15
- 16 Q. Do you read this email or did you read this email as
- 17 a bit of a telling off from the Chair? I mean, you've
- 18 apologised in the email below and it's not just "Thank
- 19 you very much for apologising", it's then just raising
- 20 some concerns about something that could be hugely
- 21 damaging to the business?
- 22 A. So, yes, I would have had taken this as a telling off
- 23 from the Chair.
- 24 Q. Is it something that you recall that stands out in
- 25 memory, being criticised by the Chair of Post Office?
- 1 Q. Was there increased pressure coming from above during
- 2 this period, in light of Second Sight's investigation
- 3 seemingly, potentially causing problems for the
- 4 business?
- 5 A. Who do you mean by "from above"?
- 6 Q. Entirely up to you.
- 7 Oh, okay. Well, there's pressure here from Alice, isn't
- 8 there, because I can see it in this email, that this
- 9 meeting has not gone very well, I've apologised because
- 10 I knew she left the meeting not very happy and she's
- 11 come back and explained why she wasn't very happy, in
- 12 terms of tensions between -- yes, there was pressure,
- 13 there was clearly pressure, we were doing a lot of work,
- 14 trying to get Second Sight to do a place where they
- 15 could do the Interim Report, trying to get them to focus
- 16 on evidence, and there may well have been pressure, you
- 17 know, or -- between Alice and Paula. I don't know.
- Q. Could we please turn to POL00105632. This is the very 18
- 19 next day, 6.00 in the morning, an email from you to
- 20 Paula Vennells, copied to Martin Edwards, Mark Davies
- 21 and Susan Crichton. You say:
- 22 "Paula the only things that is not for the brief for 23 James is our move away from 'there are no bugs in
- 24 Horizon' to 'there are known bugs in every computer
- 25 system this size but they are found and put right and no 87

- A. As I say, I didn't remember this email, so it couldn't 1
- 2 have stood out for me.
- 3 Q. Do you remember significant tensions towards the end of
 - May 2013 with the Chair, in respect of the Second Sight
- 5 investigation?
- 6 A. Not between myself and the Chair, no. I don't remember
- 7 that. Whether there were other tensions with other
- 8

- 9 Q. Do you recall increased pressure at this time in the
- 10 business in relation to the work that Second Sight were
- 11 carrying out at the time?
- 12 A. Yes. Yes, I do.
- 13 Q. Do you recall concerns that the Second Sight
- 14 investigation could be hugely damaging?
- A. So Alice is saying, "If it goes wrong it will be hugely 15
- 16 damaging"; I don't think she's saying that it's going to
- 17 be hugely damaging.
- "We have almost blown it on more than one occasion ..." 18 Q.
- 19 Α.
- 20 Q. "We stood to gain a huge prize from embarking on this
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- 22 And I think this is all about how long it's taking and
- 23 the clarity of Second Sight in Alice's mind looking at
- 24 the computer. I think that's what she's talking about
- 25 here, but I --

- subpostmaster is disadvantaged by them' it would be good 2 to be able to go on and say 'or has been wrongly
- 3 suspended or prosecuted'.
 - "I do not think that is a phone call conversation
- 5 but needs to be aired at some point with James, I would 6 suggest at your meeting."
- 7 "Our move away from 'There are no bugs in Horizon"; 8 who is "our"?
- So I think this is talking about a brief for James' 9
- 10 meeting and I can't remember who was putting that
- 11 together. It may have been Martin Edwards, it may have
- 12 been Mark Davies. I can't remember and I've -- this is
- 13 me saying -- this is me saying, in the brief -- I've
- 14 obviously read the brief for James and, in the brief for
- 15 James, we are silent on there are no -- you know, we are
- 16 silent on the fact that we have found bugs.
- 17 So I believe this is me saying we need to be upfront
- 18 here and we need to be honest and we need to say we have
- 19 found some bugs in Horizon, and well, as you can read.
- 20 "... but they are found and put right and no
- 21 subpostmaster is disadvantaged by them' ..."
- 22 **A**. That's -- sorry.
- 23 Q. How could the Post Office say that or be confident in
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- 25 **A**. Well, I think what I'm saying here is we need evidence

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- 1 that we can -- if we want to say these things, we need 2 evidence that they are 100 per cent true and the same --3 you know, the same true of or have been wrongly 4 suspended or pros -- if we want -- if we're going to say 5 to James anything on bugs, we need to be absolutely 6 clear that that statement is true, that they've been 7 found, put right and no subpostmaster is disadvantaged 8
- 9 Q. But aren't you saying that is what James needs to be 10 told?
- No, I'm saying --11 Α.
- 12 You're saying it's not in the brief, there isn't Q.
- 13 anything in the brief for James --
- 14 Α.
- 15 Q. -- that has our new line, our new line being not that 16 there aren't bugs in Horizon but that there are bugs, 17 that that arises in every computer system, but they are 18 found and put right and no subpostmaster is 19 disadvantaged by them. That was the new corporate line, 20 it seems from this email.
- 21 Two questions, really: where did that corporate line 22 originate from and, secondly, how could you be confident 23 that that was correct?
- 24 A. Well, I wasn't confident that was correct. I'm asking 25 the question here. I'm not saying, "Put these two
- 1 A. I can't remember if those are my words or if I'm saying 2 "It would be good to be able to say, 'or have been 3 wrongly suspended or prosecuted' but we mustn't go on 4 and say that if it isn't true".
- 5 Q. Where is that in that email?
- 6 A. Well, it's not written but no one -- I don't believe 7 that we would have put that in a brief if we didn't --
- 8 if we hadn't checked it. Susan is on this email so --
- 9 Q. It wasn't in the brief, though?
- 10 A. It wasn't --
- 11 Q. "Paula, the only thing that is not in the brief for
- 12 James is our move away", and the move away is not "There
- are no bugs", but now "There are bugs but they're found 13
- 14 and put right and no subpostmaster is disadvantaged by
- 15
- A. Yes, yes. 16
- 17 Q. Where, in this correspondence, does it suggest, in any 18 way, that that might not actually be accurate and that
- that needs to be looked into? 19
- 20 A. Well, it doesn't, in this correspondence. However, I do 21 not believe that it would have been included in a brief
- 22 if we weren't sure that it was right.
- 23 Q. How can you be so sure?
- 24 A. I can't be. I can't be. This is an email from me to
- 25 Paula saying "The only thing that's missing out of

things in the brief for James", I'm saying the brief for James needs to cover bugs and, if we have the information that says we can say that sentence, in parenthesis, and the final sentence, if we have that information, that should be in James' brief.

I'm not -- I --

- 7 Q. Where are you saying, "If we have that information"?
- 8 I'm saying it would be good to say but --
- No, you're saying, "It would be good to be able to go on 10 and say 'or has been wrongfully suspended or
- 11 prosecuted". You weren't sure you could go that far
- 12 but it does seem from this email that you thought you
- 13 could at least say that they're found and put right and
- 14 no subpostmaster is disadvantage by them, or have
- 15 I misinterpreted that email?
- 16 A. I personally think you've misinterpreted that email but, 17 you know, I can't specifically remember sending this 18 email. I do know I would not have wanted anything to be 19 in a brief for anyone that wasn't an accurate piece of 20
- 21 Q. So where are those words that are quoted here from? 22 A. I can't remember but they are quoted. I don't think
- 23 they're my words.
- 24 Q. Well, you are proposing the addition of "or has been 25 wrongfully suspended or prosecuted", aren't you?

1 James' brief is a comment on bugs, and I would like it 2 also to be clear about prosecutions". But I'm not --3 this is not saying just put these in the brief without 4 anybody checking anything.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Can I tell you, Ms Lyons, how I read it, which I think is very similar to Mr Blake. First of all, you were saying there's nothing in the brief about a move in the Post Office position from "There are no bugs in Horizon" to "There are known bugs in every computer system", et cetera, all right? My reading of that is not least buttressed by evidence I've heard from other sources, that, by this stage, that was the Post Office's position, either because Second Sight had tipped them the wink or, more likely, because there were people in Post Office who knew, of course, that there were bugs in Horizon by this stage. All right?

So that's the Post Office line, which you identify as not being in the brief. Then you go on to say, "And it would be good" -- in other words "if we can" -- "can we say 'or has been wrongfully suspended or prosecuted", where I accept that the inference to be drawn from that is you're only going to say if it's accurate but you're hoping that it can be said, all right?

Then, just as a matter of detail, I think, from 92

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1	previous emails, it's clear that there was to be a phone
2	call conversation with Lord Arbuthnot on 23 May, if you
3	go back to the previous emails, you'll see that, and you
4	saying it's not appropriate to have this in
5	a conversation but, rather, in a meeting, which is going
6	to take place at some future time.

That's as I read it, Ms Lyons. Have I got that hopelessly wrong?

9 A. No, I think that's helpful. Thank you.

10 MR BLAKE: Is it helpful or accurate?

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- A. It's helpful because I can't now say what was in my mind 11 in 2013 but, reading that, I would say that it's 12 13 accurate to the way I'm reading it now.
- Q. The "or has been wrongfully suspended or prosecuted", 14 15 was that something you were aware the Post Office had 16 confirmation of, or was --
- 17 A. I wasn't sure, so that's why I was asking.
- 18 Q. Do you recall anybody coming back to you and saying 19 that's accurate or not accurate?
- 20 A. I don't and I don't know if that ended up in the brief, 21 and with -- if we felt comfortable to say that.
- 22 Q. It's quite a significant shift in the Post Office's 23 position at this time from "No bugs" to "There are
- 24 bugs". Was that something that was raised at Board

25 level at this time?

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1 (A short break)

2 (12.25 pm)

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MR BLAKE: Thank you, Ms Lyons.

Could we please turn to POL00098655. Moving on to 21 June 2013. This is an email from you to Paula Vennells and Lesley Sewell, and copied to Susan Crichton. So, again, that small group of individuals who have been in a number of emails that we've been looking at today:

"Paula

"As you medicinal remember [James Arbuthnot] is hosting a meeting on 8 July where [Second Sight] are going to present their interim findings to MPs and [Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance], on 3 MP cases.

"We had a call with Second Sight today and have now put in place calls every day from next Tuesday to take us through to their report being ready.

"There are still risks with what the report will say. Not around the system but around the wider issues eg training and support (which [Second Sight] are counting as part of the Horizon operating model).

"I am sure that there will be enough in the report for JFSA to cause mischief if they want to with the media, and Ruth is involved in updating the comms plan.

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"[Second Sight] have a call with James on 2 July and

A. I can't remember if it was raised at Board. I do

remember it being raised with the Chair but I would have

to check minutes about the Board, but -- and it was 3

4 a shift. It was -- you know, until that time, I naively

5 didn't think there were bugs in Horizon.

- 6 Q. So that was quite a significant moment in time, this 7 shift?
- A. Yes, I think it was. 8
- 9 Q. If it isn't contained in, for example, Board minutes, at 10 that particular time, what would you have to say about

11 that?

A. Well, I think it -- I think it should have come to the 12

13 board. It certainly -- the Chair, it certainly went to

14 the Chair, and I cannot remember whether we had

15 a conversation about it, and about it coming to Board.

16 Clearly it came to Board when the Second Sight Report

17 came to Board. But that's later.

MR BLAKE: Yes. 18

19 Thank you, sir. That might be an appropriate moment 20 to take our second morning break.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. What time shall we resume? 21

22 MR BLAKE: 12.25, please.

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, by all means.

MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. 24

25 (12.13 pm)

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you have a call with him on the 3rd and we should know 2 in advance what the report will say and therefore what 3 they are likely to say to James.

"Things will get clearer next week but my biggest concern at the moment is if the review focuses on training, et cetera, how the [Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance] will respond. I think you can make some positive noises to [James Arbuthnot] on the 3rd including improvements in training and support and also our idea of a Horizon user group made up of existing subpostmasters who use the system.

"I will get an update in the diary for us and Lesley on Wednesday next week."

It seems, by this stage, so 21 June 2013, even, you are having quite a significant role in matters relating to the Second Sight investigation.

17 A. So I cannot remember this email. I think this email --18 and I can't remember it specifically -- might be me putting down on paper what a group of people have 19 discussed. So I think this might be me going to Paula 20 21 and saying, "Right, as you remember, we've got this 22 meeting", and so I don't think these are only my words 23 but I've got no evidence of that.

24 Q. "I am sure there will be enough in the report"; "My 25 biggest concern at the moment" -- the penultimate

- paragraph "Things will get clearer next week but my
 biggest concern at the moment"; "I think you can make
 some positive noises to [James Arbuthnot]". I mean,
- 4 there's no "We" in that email is there?
- A. No, I accept that and it's written in the first personso it's me saying this to Paula, I accept that.
- Q. Do you accept, irrespective of whether you remember the email, don't remember the email, that, by the summer of 2013, you were clearly not just collating documents for Second Sight; you were having some strategic input on the response to Second Sight?
- A. I think I was trying to put in place a journey to the
 Interim Report and trying to understand who is seeing
 who, when, and when we needed to brief people, and
 whatever. So yes, I am trying to lay out how we get to
 the Second Sight Interim Report.
- 17 Q. "I think you can make some positive noises to [James
 18 Arbuthnot] including improvements in training and
 19 support ..."

I mean, that's not simply laying something out, is it? That's making a positive suggestion to the CEO as to how she should respond to the Second Sight Report?

- A. Well, she will have seen what we've seen. So, in the
 paragraph above where it says that there are no issues
 around -- not issues around the system but around
- James Arbuthnot, for instance, yes, I am, and that she
 can talk about training and support. So if that's
 advice, then yes, this email is advice.
 - Q. You say "if that's advice"; is that advice or is that not advice?
- 6 A. Yes, that's advice.

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7 Q. Can we turn to POL00188912. This is an email we will
8 return to on the issue of remote access but I want to
9 look at something else. It's the bottom email from
10 Simon Baker, again very small distribution list, to you,
11 Susan Crichton and Lesley Sewell. Subject "Second Sight
12 Call", and it's number 2, "Bugs in Horizon". This is
13 a call, a very animated call with Ron and Ian:

"Bugs in Horizon: They are concerned that [James Arbuthnot] is or has been told by Post Office that there are no bugs in Horizon, and that is what [James Arbuthnot] believes and when Second Sight inform him that there were bugs, and subpostmasters accounts were affected it will go 'viral' amongst MPs and the press -- my suggest here is that Paula gives this news to James first and explains to him why this isn't a problem. We may also want to go to the press first on this, as part of are overall message, to get out our message out first."

If we scroll above, there's a response from you but 99

- 1 training and support, that's what we were being told at
- the time, and what I'm saying to Paula here is that
- 3 there are things that she can discuss with James about
- 4 how things are being improved and are being changed.
- 5 Q. Ms Lyons, isn't it now time to reflect on your work on
- 6 the Second Sight issue in the summer of 2013 and accept
- 7 that you had more of a significant role than is
- 8 reflected in your evidence so far?
- 9 A. So I did have a role with Second Sight, yes. I don't
 - believe I collected any information for them because
- 11 I wasn't an expert in that field. So my role was much
- 12 more almost -- and, again, it's the "facilitating"
- word -- my role was much more facilitating Second Sight,
- helping them get what they needed to get and then, when
- meetings were coming up, laying out what was needed to
- happen. And, yes, here I'm obviously -- I am saying to
- 17 Paula "These are the areas for the meeting with James".
- 18 $\,$ **Q.** Are you providing advice to the Chief Executive as to
- 19 how best to respond to the Second Sight Report?
- 20 A. I don't think -- no, I don't think I am. I think the
- 21 Chief Executive would have made her own decision as to
- 22 how to respond to the Second Sight Report.
- 23 **Q.** She may make her own decision but are you providing her
- 24 with advice?
- 25 **A.** I'm saying that there are areas for positive noises for

that relates to the remote access issue, which I'll return to shortly.

3 So Mr Baker has raised the issue of bugs in Horizon,

4 James Arbuthnot at this stage, so we're now 24 June

5 2013, and Lord Arbuthnot isn't aware that the Post

6 Office accepts that there are bugs in the system. Do

7 you agree with that?

- 8 A. So is this email before or after the one that we talked 9 about earlier?
- 10 Q. Could we scroll down, please. We're going in order, in11 date order, so --
- 12 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: It is after.
- 13 A. So it's after. In that email, we've already said that
- the brief for the James Arbuthnot meeting, I've already
- raised the fact that there's nothing about bugs in that
- 16 brief and shouldn't there be.
- 17 MR BLAKE: Yes, so that was 23 May.
- 18 A. Right, okay.
- 19 **Q.** We're now 24 June, so we're a month later, Second Sight
- 20 are concerned that James Arbuthnot still is of the
- opinion that there are no bugs in Horizon; do you recall
- 22 this email?
- 23 A. I don't recall this email and, given the email earlier,
- 24 I would have thought that James Arbuthnot would have
- 25 known.

Q. Who would have told him? 1 appropriate to tell Lord Arbuthnot about it in 1 2 2 A. Well, it was a brief for Paula, wasn't it? Paula was a telephone call which was occurring that day but you 3 going to see James Arbuthnot and I thought that what we 3 anticipate, in effect, that it will be told to him in 4 said was that we would change the subpostmaster --4 a face-to-face meeting. So the question becomes: was 5 sorry, we would change the Post Office "There are no there a meeting between Lord Arbuthnot and anybody in 5 6 bugs in Horizon" to "There are bugs in Horizon which", 6 the Post Office, but presumably Paula Vennells, between 7 et cetera, et cetera. 7 23 May and 24 June? 8 Q. Is your evidence today that that would have been 8 A. I haven't got that evidence. I don't know. 9 communicated to James Arbuthnot in May 2013, when you 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Fine. 10 sent that email? 10 MR BLAKE: Can we please turn to POL00371710. We're on A. Well, I have no evidence as to whether that happened. 11 28 June now, if we could turn to the second page, 11 But that's what I thought the email we were discussing 12 please. The bottom of the first page, top of second 12 13 13 page. It's an email from Gareth Jenkins to Lesley earlier was suggesting. Q. Would it have been of concern to you if it hadn't been 14 Sewell and the subject is "My witness statement for the 14 raised with James Arbuthnot in May 2013? 15 MISRA case". It says: 15 16 A. Yes, because I think that's what I'm trying to say in 16 "Lesley, 17 that email. I, you know, I wanted it to be raised with 17 "Attached is my final Witness Statement for the 18 Misra case. This was heard in Guildford Crown Court in 18 him, and I also, if it was true, wanted the prosecution 19 piece to be raised with him. 19 October 2010 and concerned West Byfleet Post Office. 20 Q. Because of its significant impact? 20 "Page 14 covers my response to a problem that had 21 21 A. Absolutely. been identified in an earlier case (that involving Lee 22 22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Just as a matter of timeline, because, as Castleton who took [the Post Office] to court for unfair 23 you will have appreciated, I think, I'm quite interested 23 dismissal which he lost). 24 24 in the points that we've just been discussing, in that "Do you need me to dig out anything more on this? 25 May email of the 23rd, you suggest it wouldn't be 25 I think the key point is that Horizon did have bugs has 102 1 been discussed in court and [the Post Office] still won 1 too recent. Hugh can we check, or is it quicker to ask 2 the case." 2 Gareth Lesley. 3 So just to remind ourselves, we have the local 3 "I will certainly be sharing this with Janet on 4 suspense account problem, that's the 14 branch issue, 4 Monday." 5 5 said by Second Sight to have occurred from 2011. Then Lesley Sewell said: 6 "Will ask ..." 6 A. Okay. 7 7 Q. We have the 64 issue, the receipts and payments mismatch I think that's Fujitsu? 8 issue: 64 branches, said by Second Sight to have been 8 A. Yes. 9 discovered in September 2010. Q. Were you concerned at this stage about whether there 9 10 were additional bugs, which might call into question the We have here reference by Mr Jenkins to the Seema 10 11 Misra case which was October 2010 and he is accepting 11 evidence that Mr Jenkins gave in the Misra case or in 12 that -- well, he is highlighting there that there was 12 other cases? 13 reference to a third bug in that case, the Callendar 13 A. So I'd had no knowledge of more bugs. I just knew the 14 Square bug. Do you recall that issue? 14 three bugs that were being talked about. 15 A. So, I only recall it having now read this email and 15 Q. Yes. So we knew the two that went to Second Sight, and 16 having listened to some of the Inquiry. 16 then we have here the reference to the third, the 17 Q. If we scroll up, we can see Mark Davies responding to 17 Callendar Square bug --18 this. Lesley Sewell has forwarded it to you, Martin 18 A. Yes, yes. Edwards and Mark Davies. Mark Davies said: 19 19 Q. -- being referred to by Gareth Jenkins. Did that not raise your concerns about the reliability of the Horizon 20 "This is massively important. 20 21 "Is there also a possibility that all incidents --21 system? 22 14 and 64 -- have been referenced in court?" 22 A. So we had been provided with -- and I think there was

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Then if we scroll up, we have a response from you.

"I would have thought the 14 is unlikely as it is 103

went through what happened, the risk, how it was put right, et cetera, et cetera, and I think I knew --

a document somewhere, which is a brief for Paula, which

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(26) Pages 101 - 104

- 1 that's what knew at this point.
- 2 Q. But you're receiving in June 2013 an email from Gareth
- 3 Jenkins attaching a statement from a criminal case in
- 4 which he made reference to the Callendar Square bug,
- 5 presumably that was relatively new news to you, the
- 6 Callendar Square bug?
- 7 A. Well, I'm getting the timeline is quite difficult,
- 8 because I don't know -- because there were three cases
- 9 in the Second Sight Report, there were two and then the
- 10 other one was mentioned --
- Q. Yes. 11

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- 12 A. -- and I don't know at which point they became clear to
- 13 us, and I think this document that was done for Paula --
- 14 and I don't know what brief that was for -- had all
 - three in them. So if it was in there and it was before
- 16 this, then I would have known about them.
- 17 Q. So around 28 June, you were aware of three bugs, one of
- 18 which as we've seen, Gareth Jenkins gave evidence
- 19 relating to in the Misra case?
- 20 A. I believe so.
- 21 Q. So were you and those around you concerned at this time
- 22 about the potential implications of that?
- 23 A. Of there being three bugs?
- 24 Yes, and of Mr Jenkins having provided evidence in
- 25 criminal proceedings?

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[Horizon Online]).

"The Falkirk bug was first raised in the Castleton civil case and was then picked up on for a number of subsequent criminal cases even though it was irrelevant to those environments. Defence experts were using it as an example that Horizon has had bugs."

If we scroll up, you respond and you say as follows, you say:

"The question was really about whether the defect had been spoken about in open court other than in the Misra case as it helps that it was in the public domain and not 'covered up' in any way."

Mr Jenkins responds to you and he says as follows: "Alwen,

"I understand the bug was spoken about in the Castleton case (I wasn't personally involved). It was definitely spoken about in the Misra case where it was interrogated about [its] length. Other cases where it was mentioned were settled out of court as far as I know."

Isn't the penny beginning to drop now, with the reference to cases being settled out of court that have raised that particular bug?

24 A. No, not -- no because I think cases were settled out of 25 court. 107

So --A.

2 Q. You can take those two separately.

- 3 A. Okay.
- 4 Q. So first the bugs.
- A. So the bugs, I went from believing there were no bugs to 5
- 6 believing there were -- being given evidence there were 7
- these three bugs and that they had been dealt with and
- 8 I was given some comfort that they'd been dealt with
- 9 properly. So I didn't know that there were any more
- 10 bugs and I would have expected Lesley, or whoever, to
- 11 have told us if there were or if there was the potential
- 12 of more.

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- 13 Q. Could we please turn to POL00031352. If we start on
- 14 page 3, please. This is the same day, 28 June.
- 15 An email from Simon Baker on page 3, please, the bottom
- 16 of the page. He emails Gareth Jenkins, you're copied in
- 17 directly to that email to Gareth Jenkins. He says:
 - "Gareth

19 "You mention discussing the Falkirk bug in the Misra 20 case today, are there any other examples where bugs have 21 been discussed in court."

- 22 If we scroll up, please, he says:
- 23 "Simon,
- 24 "I'm not aware of any other specific bugs being 25 discussed in court (either related to Horizon or

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- Q. Why might they have been settled out of court?
- 2 A. I don't have any information about why cases were
- 3 settled out of court, I just knew that some cases were
- 4 settled out of court.
- 5 Q. Did that cause you to think about whether, in fact,
- 6 there might have been something in their allegations?
- 7 A. I'm sure there were lots of different reasons why they
- 8 were settled out of court. I didn't have that
- 9 information, so ...
- 10 Q. Did you ask anybody for that information?
- A. No, I didn't. 11
- 12 Q. If we scroll up, we have another response, you say:
- 13 "Thanks Gareth. Can we get the witness statement 14 for Castleton please Hugh. Thanks, Alwen."
 - Then Hugh says:

16 "Jarnail -- can you get Castleton case details 17 please [as soon as possible] as Alwen has asked for."

18 Then we have a response from Jarnail Singh. I'll 19 read to you just some extracts from the response. He 20 begins by saying:

> "In criminal trials both the prosecution and defence put their case to the jury. Who make a decision 'beyond all reasonable doubt' on finding it the defendant guilty, jury do not give reasons for their verdict and it is not possible to ask the jury the basis and details 108

1 upon which they made their decision. On occasion 2 particular point can be inferred." 3 Did you understand what's meant there? 4 A. Yes, I think so. 5 Q. What did you understand by that? 6 A. Just that you -- so I understand what he's saying is 7 that we can't get a reason why a case that a jury sees 8 gives their decision. 9 Q. He says: 10 "This is the only criminal trial where a jury has 11 been required to consider in detail the integrity of the 12 Horizon system." 13 He summarises Seema Misra was a subpostmistress at 14 West Byfleet. He says about halfway down the second 15 paragraph, he says: 16 "The jury's verdict showed that it was sure that 17 computer error played no role in the case. There has 18 been no appeal against conviction." 19 He savs: 20 "We instructed our own expert, Gareth Jenkins, from 21 Fujitsu. This was a turning point in the case." 22 About halfway thorough paragraph 4 he says: 23 "In a nutshell his final conclusion was this: he 24 hadn't found any problem but there still might have been 25 a problem that he and Jenkins [this is talking about the 1 is clear and can be communicated. 2 "Mark is putting in place external comms ...

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1 defence expert] might have missed. The jury clearly 2 rejected this as wishful thinking after considering all 3 of the evidence in the case." 4 He says at 5, about halfway down: 5 "It provides a rigorous analysis that is woefully 6 absent from the vague and illogical complaints about 7 Horizon that are reported in some sections of the media. 8 The judgment referred briefly to a real computer problem 9 that had emerged at the Callendar Square office in 10 Falkirk. Gareth Jenkins to investigate this problem. 11 He provided a detailed summary of the problem in his 12 witness statement ... He also explained in that 13 statement why he concluded that it was irrelevant to 14 Mrs Misra's case." 15 Were you satisfied by the explanation that was 16 provided by Mr Singh? 17 A. Well, he was -- yes, he was the expert. He was, you 18 know, he was -- I'm not a lawyer. He was the lawyer. 19 He was the expert, so, yes, I was satisfied. 20 Q. Can we please turn to POL00144909. The second page, 21 please. We're now at 28 June 2013 and you email Paula 22 Vennells "Next steps on Horizon issues -- update": 23 "Paula 24 "Rod Ismay and Lesley working the detail of the 2 25 bugs, to understand them and get them into language that 110 1 The comment there, "I do think this is the right 2 place to share the bugs we have found and how we have 3 dealt with them", your evidence to the Chair earlier was 4 that you thought that that had already been dealt with 5 by Paula Vennells after the meeting in May. 6 It certainly reads here as though you are, in fact, 7 going to be the bearer of that bad news; is that right? 8 So certainly it sounds -- I've said I will tell them how we've dealt with them. So it could -- it could well be 9 10 that I had not remembered this and that this is the first time that we've talked about bugs. It could also 11 12 be that Paula had shared it and I'm just sharing the 13 detail of the bugs but, reading this now, I think I was 14 expected to share the detail about the bugs. 15 Q. Why is it that the Company Secretary is fulfilling the 16 role of communicating that important shift in the Post Office's position? 17 18 19 relationship from the first meeting with Alice and, if 20 21 try and help sort out any things for her that were for 22 23 to do this.

you: "I am going to spend time with Janet [Janet Walker, James Arbuthnot's Chief of Staff] at 9.00 on Monday morning, she says she can give me as long as it takes. My approach will be to try to get to understand the status of the review and the risk to James and us of an incomplete Interim Report. I will share the fact that [Second Sight] are not using all the evidence they are being given and are our concerns is that their approach to try and keep everyone happy is not how we would expect a forensic accountant to behave. I do think this is the right place to share the 'bugs' we have found and how we have dealt with them, which is why the report from Rod/Lesley checked by Legal and Mark is important. My objective is to get Janet to a place where she also wants the meeting to be cancelled. I am also going to mention the timing of the report aligned with the funding and James' unhelpful comment to Jo about 'unfair convictions'. I will have to play this meeting a bit by ear!"

"We have a call with [Second Sight] this afternoon

It's the fourth paragraph I'd like to just read to

A. So I was seeing Janet because she and I had had a good Janet had any issues, she would contact me and I would James. You would have to ask others why I was expected 24 Q. Which others?

25 A. Well, you'd have to ask Paula because I would have

- 1 thought Paula would have wanted to speak to James.
- 2 Q. You say, "I do think this is the right place to share
- 3 the bugs"?
- 4 A. Because it looks as if we haven't shared them yet.
- 5 Q. Yes.
- 6 A. So I'm going, "Look, we have to share this information
- 7 about bugs and I'm seeing Janet".
- 8 Q. You had a good relationship with Janet Walker --
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. -- and it was your advice that now was the time to share
- 11 that information, not with James Arbuthnot himself, but
- 12 with the person who you had a good relationship with?
- 13 A. Well, I don't think I was under any misillusion that if
- 14 I shared it with Janet it wouldn't be shared with James,
- 15 you know, I --
- 16 **Q.** Were you being used as the bearer of bad news by the
- 17 company?
- 18 A. Possibly. But it's me suggesting I do this. It's me
- saying I do think we need to share this with Janet and,
- 20 therefore, James before the Second Sight Report comes
- 21 out.
- 22 Q. We started today looking at the expert report and the
- 23 role of the company secretary?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 **Q.** Where in the role of the company secretary does this
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- 1 A. Yes, yes.
- 2 Q. -- to the Chair. This not communicating anything to the
- 3 Board. In fact, it's the very opposite, isn't it? It's
- 4 communicating something to an external party?
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 Q. Why is the Company Secretary doing that?
- 7 A. Because I had the meeting with Janet and I didn't want
- 8 to go to that meeting and not tell her about the bugs
- 9 that I now knew about.
- 10 Q. Why were you attending a meeting with Janet?
- 11 A. So I was attending a meeting with Janet because I -- it
- 12 was my -- I had the connection with Janet and I was
- 13 attending this meeting with Janet in advance of the
- 14 Second Sight Interim Report, and it was to -- and I'm
- 15 going from memory here -- but I believe this meeting was
- 16 to understand how both James and the Post Office and
- 17 Second Sight were going to align the following week and
- 18 understand how this report was going to come out and how
- 19 we were going to deal with it.
- 20 Q. Was it a strategic choice to break the news to
- 21 a friendly face, to somebody not as senior as James
- 22 Arbuthnot, somebody who assists him; not directly from
- 23 the Chief Executive to the Parliamentarian but from you
- 24 to his assistant?
- 25 A. I don't believe that's a choice that I made. I believe 115

- 1 kind of a role come in?
- 2 A. Well, it doesn't.
- 3 Q. Why were you doing it?
- 4 A. Because, in this instance, I was trying to get the
- 5 information about bugs out to Janet and, therefore, to
- 6 James, and, if no one else was seeing them before the
- 7 Second Sight Report, then I needed to do that.
- 8 Q. I mean, we've seen email after email about bugs, direct
- 9 liaison with Gareth Jenkins by this stage, you are
- 10 meeting up with the assistant to the key
- 11 Parliamentarian?
- 12 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 13 Q. Why, as I say, is the Company Secretary being tasked
- with all of this or, even if you're not being tasked,
- why is the Company Secretary doing this work?
- 16 A. So I've explained that, originally, the connection with
- 17 James and with Alice was through James, and that's how
- 18 I had a relationship with Janet. We've also seen emails
- 19 where Alice is saying that, you know, I needed to be
- 20 involved in things and needed to feed back things to
- 21 Alice when things arose.
- 22 Q. Feeding back to Alice absolutely would fall under that
- 23 job description that we looked at --
- 24 A. Yes, yes, yes.
- 25 Q. -- the role to communicate --

- 1 I got to this point and I was saying "At the meeting on
- 2 Monday, I think I have to share what we know about
- 3 bugs". I wasn't willing to go to this meeting and see
- 4 Janet and talk about how we move towards a Second Sight
- 5 review without talking to her about bugs.
- ${\bf 6}$ $\,$ $\,$ ${\bf Q}.$ $\,$ "My objective is to get Janet to a place where she also
- 7 wants the meeting to be cancelled."
- 8 A. So I'm -- I believe that is the meeting that James has
- 9 got with Second Sight --
- 10 Q. Yes.
- 11 A. -- and the reason for that is that this was now -- it
- 12 wasn't the Interim Report we had here; it was
- an incomplete report. And you can see from above that
- 14 Second Sight hadn't used all the evidence, there were
- gaps in the report and the reason I'm saying that
- James -- there is a risk with James having this meeting
- 17 with Second Sight is because the Second Sight Report at
- this point is not accurate, it's incomplete.
- 19 Q. Isn't this a highly strategic move that you are advising
- on here: when to tell the Parliamentarian, the objective
- to get the subsequent meeting with Second Sight
- cancelled; that's well beyond your role as CompanySecretary, isn't it?
- 24 A. Absolutely, and it's beyond -- we -- I could not tell
- Janet that the meeting needed to be cancelled. I needed

to explain to Janet that this was an incomplete Interim

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"Can we call bugs incidents from now on please."

2		Report, that not all the facts were in it, that there	2		That is the same day as the email that we have just
3		was evidence lacking and, if James went ahead with his	3		been looking at. Why are you, on that day, seeking to
4		meeting with Second Sight, there was risk that he would	4		rename bugs.
5		be that he would be misinformed. That's all I'm	5	A.	Well, you can see from the email before that I'm calling
6		doing here and then it would be for Janet and James to	6		them bugs and I have no problem with that. Mark Davies,
7		decide whether the meeting should be cancelled.	7		who is the Communications Director, comes out and says
8		I didn't want them to go ahead not knowing that the	8		"Can we call them something else, please", and that's me
9		report was incomplete.	9		going out to everybody on that email and saying, "Can we
10	Q.	I'm just going to take you to two very brief documents	10		call bugs incidents from now on, please".
11		before we break for lunch. Could we just turn to	11	Q.	Was that in your role as Company Secretary or is that in
12		POL00296821. If we turn over to page 2, this is	12		some other role?
13		an email from Andrew Parsons to Rodric Williams	13	A.	That's just me cascading Mark Davies' email.
14		providing detail about a particular bug.	14	Q.	If we turn, please, to POL00380985. Within a matter of
15		"Mrs Wall was terminated in September 2011. The	15		days we have the email that the Inquiry has already
16		first '14 Bug' error in her branch occurred after she	16		seen, 2 July. Paula Vennells seeking an answer to the
17		was terminated", et cetera.	17		question:
18		So it was relating to what was at that time referred	18		"What is a non-emotive word for computer bugs,
19		to as the "14 Bug".	19		glitches, defects that happen as a matter of course?"
20		Could we group please, Hugh Flemington says,	20		"Answer:
21		"Useful". Then Mark Davies says:	21		"'Exception or anomaly'"
22		"Can we change the way we are referring to this	22		Who set that particular question, do you recall?
23		please as a matter of urgency?"	23	A.	
24		If we look above, we have a request from you to Mark	24	Q.	If we scroll above, we have the full distribution list,
25		Davies, Hugh Flemington and Lesley Sewell:	25		so you were on that distribution list. Do you remember,
		117			118
1		at that stage, Paula Vennells seeking a non-emotive word	1		"Is this another anomaly it does worry me that the
2		for bugs?	2		number seems to be going up."
3	Α.	No, I don't, I just I just know that we stopped	3		So the very next day you are then referring to
4	Α.	calling bugs "bugs".	4		a bug, the Callendar Square bug, as an anomaly. Do you
5	Q.	One final document before we break, POL00029638. This	5		recall using the corporate dictionary?
6	ų.	is within a day of that email. If we turn to page 2,	6	Α.	
7		please. We have Gareth Jenkins emailing Simon Baker:	7	Α.	to use that word, I would probably start using that
8		"Simon"	8		word.
9		It was about the Callendar Square bug.	9	Q.	
10		"It was first raised in 2005."	10	Œ.	bugs "anomalies"?
11		If we scroll down, it says, halfway down that	11	Α.	
12		paragraph:	12	Α.	called them but I'd been asked to call them this, so
13		"The problem in business terms was that due to	13		I called them it.
14		transactions not being visible, [subpostmasters]	14	МЕ	R BLAKE: Thank you, sir. That is an appropriate time for
15		considered that they had not been input and so re-input	15	1411	lunch. Could we come back at 2.00, please. Thank you.
16		the transactions, thus ending up with duplicate	16	QII	R WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, yes. I was mute. Yeah, 2.00.
17		transactions and so when the originals came through the	17		R BLAKE: Thank you very much.
18		following day, the accounts would be in a mess."	18		.04 pm)
19		The bottom paragraph:	19	((The Short Adjournment)
20		"This problem was evidenced by a large number of	20	12	(The Short Adjournment)
				•	
21 22		events in the event logs." If we scroll up, please. Simon Baker forwards it to	21 22		R BLAKE: Good afternoon, sir, can you see and hear me? R WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you.
23		you, Susan Crichton, and Hugh Flemington. If we scroll	23		R BLAKE: Can we please turn to POL00029641.
23		up we have an email from you to Lesley Sewell and Susan	23	IVI	We're at 3 July 2013. So the same day, in fact the
25		Crichton:	24 25		evening, of the email that I took you to before lunch.
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If we scroll down, please. There's an email from Rodric
Williams to Rod Ismay and Lesley Sewell and it's about
the local suspense problem. I think yes, you're not
in this chain, are you? He says as follows, he says:
"All here's my summary of my call with Andy Winn
I think it's information about the 14 branch issue:

"The issue first surfaced at the Post Office Finance Service Centre on 6 February 2012, at the close of a Branch Trading period ...

"FSC might have proactively contacted the [subpostmistress or subpostmaster] given the size of the discrepancy.

"FSC investigated, saw that it looked wrong, and brought the account back to balance ... at no cost to the [subpostmaster]."

It says there:

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"Over the next few weeks, as the rest of the branch trading data for the same period was processed, the other 13 branch anomalies were noted.

"Those other branches' accounts were brought to balance, again at no cost to the subpostmaster.

"This was not perceived to be a significant issue given the small number of branches affected and the small sums involved."

121

1 information about this bug.

Q. Could we turn, please, to POL00027825. Still on 3 July, same day. There's an email from Paula Vennells, second email. She says:

"Ignore the note below. Just getting mixed up with mails: I'm sure there are plenty of good reasons but let me ask anyway: could our two documents be shared with [James Arbuthnot]? They are so clear -- it might help his understanding."

Do you recall what those two document were at all?

- A. I don't. Does it make it any clearer further down the 11 12
- 13 Q. Well, it's no the clearer because that email says, 14 "Ignore the note below", so it may not be.
- 15 A. Oh, no.
- Q. There's a response from you above, and you say as 16 17 follows:

18 "I think it's risky. It would depend on how open he 19 is with us, if he listens and whether we believe we have 20 convinced him to amend his approach to media, MPs, etc."

- 21 A. So I don't remember this email and I don't know which 22 two documents Paula is alluding to. It could be our 23 media brief, I don't know.
- 24 Q. So to continue a theme that we were discussing for most 25 of the morning, this is again you being really part of

1 Then it says:

2 "On 6 February 2013, the Willen [subpostmaster] 3 contacted [the Post Office] National Business Support 4 Centre to report the same discrepancy in his Branch Trading as the previous year."

So were you aware that this particular problem was, first of all, reported to the Post Office back in 2012, that it, although they thought they had addressed it, appeared again in February 2013?

- 10 A. So I was aware of this as a bug. So I don't know how 11 much detail I had on it. It would have been in one of the reports I got about the bugs. 12
- 13 Not just a bug but a bug that lasted from 2012 on to 14 2013. If we scroll over the page, it was passed to 15 Fujitsu between 6 and 8 February 2013 and was resolved
- 16 in April 2013. So were you aware that the 14 branch 17 issue or anomaly was an issue that lasted for well over
- 18 a year and which was known to the Post Office at the 19 time?
- 20 A. So I think in one of those documents it does explain how 21 it happened, and I think it's triggered by the date. So 22 it comes -- so it happens a year later, if you see what
- 24 Q. Yes.

I'm saying.

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25 A. So I was aware of this bug and I think I had had

1 that inner circle, advising Paula Vennells not on 2 whether a matter should go to the Board but should go to 3 James Arbuthnot.

4 A. So I think in the run-up to meeting James Arbuthnot, 5 yes, I was involved in that. Because I was the one 6 meeting Janet and I was the one doing lots of the input 7 into James.

8 Q. Again, same question as I was asking this morning: what 9 part of the job of a company secretary was that?

A. Well, it isn't the part of a traditional company 10 11 secretary role; it's a role that seemed to have evolved 12 because I got involved with Alice in the initial meeting 13 with James Arbuthnot.

14 Q. Thank you. We're now quite a way -- I mean, we started 15 looking at emails from 2012 --

16 A. Yes.

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17 Q. -- so this is a year on. Could we please turn to 18 POL00192017. We're now on 8 July. If we have a look down the first page, we can see there, at the bottom of 19 the page, please, Sarah Paddison on behalf of Paula 20 21 Vennells, on 8 July:

> "As promised in my previous email, here is a copy of the final draft of the [Second Sight] Report ... They took on board the majority of our comments over the weekend, but not all of them. The second attachment is

> > 124

an internal note detailing the remaining aspects of the
 report which we believe are misleading or factually
 inaccurate."

Would you have read the Second Sight Report at that point?

- A. I think at this point I would have just sent the two
 things that Paula's asking me to the Board but I do
 believe I read the Second Sight Report.
- 9 Q. Approximately around this time?
- 10 A. I can't be sure but I would have imagined I would have11 done.
- Q. Where there is a report that is relevant to the legal
 and regulatory obligations of the company, would you
 generally have read that substantive report?
- 15 A. Yes

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- 16 Q. If we scroll up we see you then forward it to the
 17 "Horizon reading room". Can you assist us with what
 18 that is?
- A. So the Board had a reading room, so this could well bea folder within the Board's reading room.
- Q. How would you decide whether it was something to go tothe Board or not to go to the Board?
- A. So here you can see that I'm being told to send it tothe Board
- 25 Q. Yes.

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"I spoke with Alice this morning: as I [explained] (and rightly) Alwen and I need to give an oral update to the Board tonight and she would like a paper tabled and discussed next week at the Board meeting."

Could we scroll up, please. Susan Crichton says:

"We are working [through] this and will have thoughts later today which can feed in."

Paula Vennells says:

"... do you mean everyone is [or are there] multiple angles? If so, that's great, when would be a good time for a call?"

Susan Crichton responds:

"Alwen Hugh and I it was Lesley as well but she has gone to the House of Parliament to help brief Jo S -- also Angela is around so will try and get her to help."

So we saw the first email from Mark Davies. Was it, in your view, appropriate for Mark Davies, the Head of Communications, to have been providing the kind of thoughts that we've seen at the end of this chain?

- 20 A. Can we go back down?
- Q. Yes, absolutely. If we scroll down. What was your view
 of the role of Mark Davies at this particular time, in
 the response to the Second Sight Report?
- A. My understanding would be that Mark would be pulling
 together the PR response and all the Communications
 127

A. So it would have got sent to the Board. If something - if I wasn't sure, I would ask the Chair.

Q. Could we please turn to POL00099149, please. Thank you.
 Over the page, actually, the second page, we have

5 an email that the Inquiry has already seen from Mark

6 Davies to Paula Vennells. You're also an addressee and

7 he provides some thoughts on the next steps following

8 the publication of the Second Sight Report and proposes

9 various initiatives. If we scroll up, please, to

page 1, we have a response from Paula Vennells. Shesays:

12 "Mark, thank you for this.

"All, if you could do something similar -- half
a dozen points on what you think we need to do next,
re your own areas and overall. It will help define next
steps. See below.

17 "Susan, re point one below -- do you have
18 a proposal/something in writing as to what the next
19 legal steps are, or is this referring to the general
20 conversation last week re the external lawyers code of
21 disclosure?"

Do you recall an issue with the Code of Disclosure at this point?

24 **A.** No.

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25 Q. No. It then says:

126

1 response.

Q. There we see some substantive suggestions about the wayforward, such as:

"[Second Sight] will have to be involved: they have to position themselves with the MPs as crucial independent voice.

"We need to find ways of supporting them in areas where they do not have expertise ...

9 "That support needs to look with them at all cases 10 brought by MPs", et cetera.

11 **A.** Mm.

12 Q. Did you have a view at that stage about whether it was
13 or wasn't appropriate for the Head of Communications to
14 be inputting in that way?

15 A. I know that Mark had a lot of contact with MPs and
 16 I think that was maybe part of his role, as well, so
 17 maybe that's why he's picked up the MP piece. I think

he's just sending some thoughts and saying, you know,

19 "These are my thoughts, what do you think?"

20 **Q.** If we scroll up we have, in the first email, a meeting 21 with you -- at the very top of the page, please -- you,

Hugh, and Susan Crichton. What do you recall of those conversations?

24 **A.** So I don't recall those conversations. I would imagine that, if Alice has asked for a call and Paula wants to

		The P
1		give her a verbal update that evening and she wants
2		a Board paper, I'm seeing my job here as coordinating
3		that verbal update and then the Board paper.
4	Q.	If we scroll down, the reference to the update to the
5		Board, it says:
6		" update to the Board tonight"
7		Sorry, if we scroll down to the bottom of that page,
8		there:
9		" I need to give an oral update to the Board
10		tonight and she would like a paper tabled"
11		Do you recall there being a conversation with the
12		Board that night?
13	A.	I don't but, if Alice has asked for it, it probably
14		happened.
15	Q.	If we turn to POL00027573, these are some minutes of
16		a Board meeting on that day. You've referred to this in
17		your witness statement. It addresses an entirely
18		different topic. It's the 2013/2020 strategic call.
19	A.	Oh right, yes.
20	Q.	If we scroll down, we can see. So that's a conference
21		call held on 9 July and we can scroll down it, there's
22		no mention and you've said in your statement there
23		of any Horizon related issues?
24	A.	No.
25	Q.	Would that have been the moment to have raised those 129
1		"Simon is preparing a further advice about Gareth
2		Jenkins as agreed. However he touched on the [Gareth
3		Jenkins] point in his earlier advice on the 8th."
4		You're not copied into this correspondence. Were
5		you aware, at this time, of concerns within the Post
6		Office about the reliability of Gareth Jenkins?
7	Α.	No.
8	Q.	Can we please turn to POL00145427. If we scroll down

please, this is the next day, 12 July. So the bottom of page 1, into page 2. We have an email there, Susan Crichton to you, subject is "Board Paper for circulation":

"Alwen -- if you can bear to read it quickly [please] do as I am tired ... of it!"

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If we scroll up, please, the response from you:

"Sorry I know you don't want to but I have change the recommendation and a few bits are you happy."

We will come to look at the changes that are made.

Then this is the response from Susan Crichton, which I took her to in her evidence, where she says:

"Hi you must have read my mind whilst I was walking the dog I suddenly thought it wasn't a good idea to mention 'bugs' so have changed that and also found another couple of typos -- the recommendation is much better."

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1 issues or was that a separate call?

2 A. So I think -- no, this is a completely separate call, and I think this would have been earlier in the day. 3

Q. Thank you. Do you think it's likely or unlikely that, 4

if there was a call later that day, there would be 5

6 minutes of that call?

7 A. I think it's likely there would be a note of the call,

not necessarily minutes, unless it was -- it was 8

9 convened as a Board meeting.

10 Q. Who would have taken the note of the call?

A. It would likely to be me. 11

Thank you. Could we please now turn to POL00297607. 12

13 We're moving on now to 11 July. If we could scroll

14 down, please. So this is 10 July, and the top one is

15 11 July, and this is an email that relates to Gareth

16 Jenkins and Rodric Williams is saying here to the

17 external lawyers at Cartwright King, copying in Susan

Crichton and others:

"Do you have some suggested wording for how we break the [and we think that's 'Gareth Jenkins'] news to [Fujitsu], including why it is a problem for you from a criminal law perspective?"

If we scroll up, please, on the 11th, it's an email from Martin Smith at Cartwright King to Rodric Williams, Susan Crichton copied in:

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1 So we saw there that the day before, and the day 2 before that, there's that chain of emails relating to 3 the Gareth Jenkins issue.

4 A. Yes.

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5 Q. You are in contact with Susan Crichton, who was involved 6 in the Gareth Jenkins issue. Did Susan Crichton, at 7 this point where you are discussing a Board paper for

8 circulation, mention concerns about the reliability of

9 Gareth Jenkins?

A. No, I do not remember ever seeing any concerns about 10 11 Gareth Jenkins or the Clarke Advice, or at all.

Q. Thank you. The paper that was sent to you is 12 POL00145421. Perhaps if we turn to page 3 and if we 13

14 could keep page 3 on screen, at the bottom of page 3,

15 please, so the "Recommendations", and then could we 16 please also bring up on screen your amended version, and

17 that is POL00145426.

18 Do you recall in that email chain you had told Susan 19 Crichton that you had amended the "Recommendations"?

20 A.

21 Q. So this, on the right-hand side, is the original 22 version. If we look on the left-hand side, if we could 23 turn, please, to page 3 of that version, we can see

24 there that the "Recommendations" is now changed. It was

25 originally:

1		"The Board is asked to:	1
2		"Note the update and action set out above;	2
3		"Consider whether the Post Office cease criminal	3
4		prosecutions;	4
5		"Request the Audit and Risk Committee to oversee the	5
6		actions set out above."	6
7		It's now changed to:	7
8		"Note the update and actions set out above;	8
9		"Decide whether the Audit and Risk Committee should	9
10		consider the position of the Post Office as	10
11		a Prosecuting Authority alongside its work in	11
12		September"	12
13		So that second recommendation, the explicit	13
14		recommendation to consider whether the Post Office cease	14
15 16		criminal prosecutions has been removed. Can you assist	15 16
17	Α.	us with why that was removed? So the ones on the left, they are the ones that were	17
18	Q.	That's the updated version that you returned to Susan	17
19	Q.	Crichton on the left.	19
20	Α.	Okay.	20
21	Q.	The right-hand side is the version you were sent by	21
22	Œ.	Susan Crichton originally.	22
23	Α.	So I can't I only saw these two papers this morning.	23
24	Q.	Yes.	24
25	A.	I can't really help with why I suggested the ones on the 133	25
1		my advice on how I thought that would land with the	1
2		Board and whether I thought that was enough information	2
3		or whether they needed to take information out but	3
4		I don't specifically remember this one.	4
5	Q.	Do you have any recollection at this time of the Board's	5
6		views on ceasing prosecutions?	6
7	A.	I don't, I'm sorry.	7
8	Q.	Could we please turn to POL00191966. This is the same	8
9		day, 12 July. This isn't an email that went to you but	9
10		this is just to assist us with the timeline of where we	10
11			
		are. Rodric Williams is sending to Andrew Parsons,	11
12		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the	12
12 13		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached:	12 13
12 13 14		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which	12 13 14
12 13 14 15		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has	12 13 14 15
12 13 14 15 16		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has	12 13 14 15
12 13 14 15 16 17		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution	12 13 14 15 16 17
12 13 14 15 16 17		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more	12 13 14 15 16 17
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more detailed note should arrive on Monday, which I will	12 13 14 15 16 17 18
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more detailed note should arrive on Monday, which I will forward to you once I have it."	12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19		external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more detailed note should arrive on Monday, which I will forward to you once I have it." So, again, we have there, that's the Gareth Jenkins	12 13 14 15 16 17 18
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	A.	external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more detailed note should arrive on Monday, which I will forward to you once I have it."	12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A. Q.	external lawyer, and a team of internal lawyers, the attached: " which sets out the high level issue which Cartwright King (our criminal law solicitors) has identified with the Fujitsu evidence Gareth Jenkins has been providing in support of the criminal prosecution cases conducted for Post Office Limited. A more detailed note should arrive on Monday, which I will forward to you once I have it." So, again, we have there, that's the Gareth Jenkins advice that you referred to	12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

left and not the ones on the right. Q. The one on the left reflects the ultimate version that went to the Board. A. Okay. Q. Do you recall, in July 2013, discussions about whether the Post Office ceases criminal prosecutions? A. I don't. Is that in the main body of the report? Q. So that's 8.2, the "Recommendations". A. So I -- no, I can't remember. Q. Did you get involved -- I mean, is this a typical example of you getting involved in what recommendations were made to the Board; is this unusual; is this something we might see elsewhere or not? A. I can't really comment. I'm -- having only seen this this morning, I don't know why those two things change or why I thought the left one was a better update for the Board or a better part of the Board paper. Q. The question really was about whether that was something you would typically do, to amend recommendations to the Board or to --A. No. Q. No. So if you had made that change, would it have been an unusual change to have made? A. I think so, yes. I mean, not this particular paper but people did send me Board papers, you know, and ask for 134 Q. -- at the time. We just had an email chain about discussing a paper for the Board. Is that a matter that you would have expected to have gone to the Board had you known about it? A. Absolutely. Q. Could we please turn to POL00099200. Same date, 12 July, you are there emailing Susan Crichton and Paula Vennells and you're providing them with a timeline. So this is events that are going to happen over the next week or so, I think; is that right? A. Yes. Q. Yes. So on 15 July: "... Decide who's going to lead going forward. "16th -- Paper and discussion with the Board. "16th -- meeting with [Second Sight] and External Lawyers ... "17th -- [you] to call AB ..." Is that Alan Bates? A. I assume so. Q. "... re toxic cases and set up a face-to-face to understand which cases he believes are in this category and a quick talk through, with [the Post Office] lead." Can you assist us with what "toxic cases" is

a reference to?

- A. So I can't specifically but I think I was saying that
 I would call Alan Bates and talk about the specific
 cases that he thought needed to be discussed face to
 face as -- well, the Second Sight review -- so they
- 5 hadn't done their Interim Report yet, have they, or had
- 6 they? Sorry, I'm a bit --
- 7 Q. Not yet.
- 8 A. -- a bit confused by the timeline here.
- 9 Q. Sorry, they have. Sorry, yes.
- 10 A. They have?
- 11 Q. Yes.
- 12 A. Okay. So -- and I'm --
- 13 Q. So we're still going chronologically.
- 14 A. Okay. Okay.
- 15 Q. There's been a discussion of the Board paper, which is
- 16 entitled "Update following the publication of the
- 17 report", and that's the discussion between you and Susan
- 18 Crichton.
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. We have on the same day, an email from Rodric Williams
- 21 circulated internally and to Mr Parsons about those
- 22 Gareth Jenkins concerns. We're still on the same day,
- 23 so after the report, and this is the timeline going
- 24 forward.

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25 **A.** So I can't remember this and I'm reading it now and 137

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- 1 If we scroll up, Mr Smith from Cartwright King 2 responds, you're copied in:
 - "I have asked Simon to draft a response tomorrow morning."
 - That's Simon Clarke from Cartwright King.
 - Then the email above that from Mr Flemington sent to the others but copied in to you:
 - "Thanks Martin
 - "Presumably we need to give off the signals that we are proactive, doing all the right things [regarding] writing to people to keep the [Attorney General] and [Criminal Cases Review Commission] calm. Hopefully if they see that they may leave us to it for the moment."
 - So this is, presumably, a very significant period of time in your career. You've received a letter that the Second Sight Report has been received, you've now received a letter from the Criminal Cases Review Commission. Do you agree with that, that it was quite a significant moment?
- 20 **A.** So the problem I have here is I did not see the -- I don't believe I saw the Clarke Advice.
- 22 **Q.** Yes.
- A. And yet, clearly, people are responding -- the rest of
 these people on this email have seen the Clarke Advice
- and are responding about how they are -- how, because of 139

- 1 thinking what would I have meant? I would imagine the
- 2 contact with Alan Bates would be to find out which
- 3 cases -- because we've looked at spot reviews, five spot
- 4 reviews, from JFSA but we haven't looked at individual
- 5 cases, although some were in the spot reviews. So
- 6 I think this is me going to Alan Bates and saying,
- 7 "Which are the other cases that we need to talk about
- 8 and to bring into the next piece of work?"
- 9 Q. Thank you. Looking at this timeline, on the 15th,
- that's, in fact, the day of Simon Clarke's substantive
- 11 advice on Gareth Jenkins.
- 12 A. Yes

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13 Q. The very next day, there is a proposed paper and14 discussion with the board on Horizon issues.

I'd like to turn now to POL00122552. I'm going to skip to the 15th, so that's the date to decide who's going to lead, going forward.

If we scroll down over the page to page 2. This is the day of the Jenkins Advice. Susan Crichton is emailing Cartwright King lawyers, and you're copied into this. She says:

"Martin -- we have received the attached from the Criminal Cases Review Commission should you draft reply on our behalf or should we refer them to you to reply on our behalf?"

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- 1 the cases, they're going to take them back to the CCRC
- 2 and -- but I'm not a lawyer. I do not know what needs
- 3 to go to the CCRC, so I'm not -- I haven't got the
- 4 detail behind what's going on here.
- 5 Q. But you have a board meeting the next day?
- 6 A. Yes, and -- sorry.
- 7 Q. Does that flag to you, the CCRC writing to you, that
 - there might be some serious issues with cases that the
- 9 Post Office has prosecuted?
- 10 A. So I would not have the detail of that. Susan Crichton
- 11 and the Legal Team would have the detail of that and my
- 12 expectation would be, if there's something in there that
- the board needed to know about, the Board would be told
- 14 the next day.
- 15 Q. They would be told by Susan Crichton?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 Q. Yes. Could we please turn to POL00021516, and these are
- the Board minutes of 16 July 2013. We see there that
- 19 you are in attendance, if we scroll down, please. The
- one person who is not in attendance at this Board
- 21 meeting is Susan Crichton. Do you recall why Susan
- 22 Crichton wasn't invited into that Board meeting?
- 23 A. So was there a legal paper at this Board meeting?
- Q. Well, if it assists, her evidence was that she was keptout of the meeting.

- So is this that -- I do remember that meeting. 1 Α.
- 2 Q. Yes

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- 3 A. This is that meeting; yes?
- 4 Q. This is that meeting.
- 5 A. Okay. So I -- my practice was that I would go to the
 - executive member who was coming to the Board to present
- 7 and I would give them an approximate time when they
- 8 needed them to be standing outside the door, basically.
- 9 When the moment came for us to deal with their paper,
- 10 I would stand up, go to the door, invite them in and
- they would come and present their paper and, at the end 11
- 12 of their presentation, I would get up, take them to the
- 13 door, and bring the next person in, if there was a next
- 14 person
 - At this Board meeting -- and our boardroom had frosted glass, so you could see if there was someone outside. At this Board meeting, Susan was waiting outside to come in and, as we started the Board -- it's not the first issue. I don't think.
- 20 Q. No, we could scroll down. Horizon update is page 6.
- 21 A. Okay.
- 22 Q. We had seen previous correspondence that identified
- 23 Susan Crichton as the relevant person to speak to that
- 24 issue
- 25 A. Yes, so at the relevant point in the Board meeting,
- 1 for her not being called into the room to address
- 2 Horizon issues?
- 3 A. So I think in the minutes it says that -- if we just
- 4 scroll down a bit. Oh, no, sorry, it's here. It's at
- 5 (b). So the Board were concerned that the review opened
- 6 the business up to claims and the Board asked if Susan
- 7 Crichton as General Counsel was in any way implicated. 8
- So, as this conversation was going on and I was taking
- 9 my notes, I assumed that it was because of that that
- 10 Susan hadn't been invited into the room.
- Q. Yes. Did anybody say why? 11
- 12 **A**.
- 13 Q. Was there any discussion?
- 14 A.

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- Let's read a little bit about what it says emerged from 15 Q. 16 the meeting so (a):
 - "The CEO explained that although the Second Sight Report had been challenging it had highlighted some positive things as well as improvement opportunities."
- 20 So was it just the CEO who was addressing these 21 issues, from your recollection?
- 22 A. So from these minutes, and I believe, the CEO then took 23 over responsible for delivering this paper.
- 24 Q. Then:
- 25 "(b) The Board were concerned that the review opened 143

- 1 I stood up and walked towards the door and was asked to
- 2 hang on a minute, to sit down because there was going to
- 3 be, I assumed, a discussion before Susan came into the
- 4 room. I mean, that did happen sometimes, if the Board
- 5 wanted a discussion on the paper before the executive
- 6 member came in, that did happen. So I was asked to sit
- 7 down --
- 8 Q. I could ask you to stop there: who asked you?
- 9 A. I believe the Chair but -- yes, I believe the Chair
- because it would have been the Chair who would have said 10
- 11 they needed to have a discussion.
- 12 Q. Okay. So it was Alice Perkins?
- 13 A. I believe so.
- 14 Q. Thank you.
- 15 A. So I sat back down as I was asked to do and then this
- 16 part of the meeting progressed. I do believe that --
- 17 and I don't know at what point but, at some point during
- 18 this Board update, I believe I said to the Chair "Do you
- 19 want Susan in the room because she has the detail?". and
- 20 I was told "No".

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- 21 Q. This was a significant meeting because, as you have just
- 22 explained, the CCRC have written to you the day before,
- 23 you were copied in to that. We have seen that
- 24 Ms Crichton was receiving very significant advice in
- 25 relation to Gareth Jenkins. What explanation was given 142
 - the business up to claims of wrongful prosecution. The Board asked if Susan Crichton, as General Counsel, was in any way implicated in the prosecutions ...
 - "(c) The Board expressed strong views that the business had not managed the Second Sight review well and stressed the need for better management and cost control going forward."

Now, minutes don't always reflect precisely what is said at a meeting. Can you assist us with that comment? Was there a particular -- there's a reference there to the business had not managed Second Sight well. Was it business that was the subject of their concern? Were

- 14 So I think -- I believe, if there had been named people,
- 15 I would have put those in the minutes. So I think the
- 16 "not managing Second Sight well", and you can see there
- 17 the cost control, I believe the Board thought -- and

there named people?

- 18 I can't speak for them individually, obviously, but,
- 19 from this minute, I believe that the Board thought the
- 20 Second Sight review was taking too long and that they
- 21 weren't focusing in on what the Board had originally
- 22 thought they were going to focus in, which was basically
- 23 the computer.
- 24 Q. You were somebody who was, as we've seen, quite involved 25 in liaising with Second Sight. Was there any criticism

- 1 of you in this meeting?
- 2 A. Not that I can recall.
- 3 Q. Did you infer any criticism of you?
- 4 A. I can't remember there being any criticism.
- 5 Q. Did you infer or was there any criticism of any specific
- 6 named individuals?
- 7 A. Well, only the Susan Crichton bit at the top. Can we go
- 8 down a little bit further?
- 9 **Q.** Yes.
- 10 A. Because they then go on to say the Board accepted it was
- 11 an independent review but they still thought the
- 12 business hadn't managed that review well.
- 13 Q. There's lots of reference to, "the business, the
- business, the business", did they really just speak in
- 15 terms of the business or was there comment on the
- 16 performance of particular individuals?
- 17 A. Not that I can recall.
- 18 Q. We have there "ACTION: Susan Crichton". Was it normal
- 19 for somebody to be listed as the action point, having
- 20 not attended the meeting?
- 21 A. No, this is really unusual. It's really unusual that
- 22 someone was left outside the door. It's really unusual
- 23 for someone to get an action point without being in the
- 24 room.
- 25 **Q.** It being so unusual, why is there no reference to that
- 1 uncomfortable with that, they would have said so.
- 2 Q. But it wasn't just that she wasn't at the meeting; it
- 3 was, as you've said, somebody specifically asked during
- 4 the course of the meeting for her not to come in.
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 Q. Is that not a notable event that should be minuted?
- 7 A. I don't think so but, clearly, it could have been
- 8 minuted differently but the Chair and everyone who
- 9 checked these minutes were happy that this was the way
- 10 it was minuted.
- 11 Q. But you're the Company Secretary?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 **Q.** Are you responsible for the minutes or not?
- 14 A. Yes, I am responsible for the minutes.
- 15 Q. Could we turn to page 6, please, and have a look again
- 16 at the Horizon update. Did you, in this meeting,
- 17 mention having received a letter from the Criminal Cases
- 18 Review Commission?
- 19 **A.** No.
- 20 $\,$ Q. No. One of the things that you said to me earlier was
- 21 that the General Counsel didn't need to attend all of
- 22 the Board meetings because you were personally in the
- 23 reporting line. Did you consider whether, at this
- 24 particular meeting, you should say something?
- 25 **A.** I didn't think I had the knowledge to say anything.

- 1 fact in the minutes itself?
- 2 A. Well, there's reference that she is not in the room.
- 3 Q. Where's the reference to her --
- 4 A. Because she's not on the list. She's not named as --
- 5 there would have been, at the beginning, "Susan
- 6 Crichton, General Counsel, joined the meeting". So --
- 7 Q. But we have -- if we scroll up to page 1, if we scroll
- 8 down, we have "Apologies for Absence", we don't have
- 9 Susan Crichton's name there?
- 10 **A.** No.
- 11 Q. "In Attendance", we have who is there. We don't have
- 12 any reference to who is sitting outside the room waiting
- to be called in and there isn't any reference throughout
- 14 these minutes to the fact that the Chair had asked for
- 15 Ms Crichton not to be called in. Is that something you
- would expect to find in the minutes of a Board meeting?
- 17 A. No, no, I wouldn't.
- 18 Q. So if somebody had been asked to attend but had been
- 19 kept outside, you would not expect that to be minuted in
- 20 the minutes
- 21 A. So I wouldn't have expected it to be, no, because the
- Board minute is what happened in that room and she
- 23 didn't come into the room, and that's -- now the Board
- 24 minutes were agreed by the Chair, were agreed by the
- 25 Board at the following Board meeting, so if anyone was 146
- 1 I could have told them about a letter but I couldn't
- 2 have told them what that letter meant or what we were
- 3 going to do about that letter. So I didn't have the
- 4 expertise to raise that.
- 5 Q. Irrespective of the CCRC issue, we've seen email, after
- 6 email, after email copied to you, sent to you, asking
- 7 for your opinion, relating to James Arbuthnot, relating
- 8 to Second Sight. Did you not think that Susan Crichton
- 9 not being in that meeting, you were actually quite
- an appropriate person to address the Board on this
- 11 issue?
- 12 A. So I think the appropriate person to address the Board
- 13 was the CEO, was Paula Vennells, because she's
- 14 addressing the Board and has most of the updates that
- 15 I would have had.
- 16 Q. Do you think that you had provided her with the
- 17 sufficient information to speak to all of those issues?
- 18 A. I'm not sure the CCRC, because that had happened, you
- 19 know, the same -- the day before or the same day or
- 20 whatever but I believe that Paula would have known the
- other issues with Second Sight and with, you know -- but
- that's my recollection now.
- 23 $\,$ **Q.** Could we just return to the first document that we saw
- this morning, and that's the expert report, EXPG0000006,
- 25 please. It's page 30. It's the bottom of page 29 into

1 page 30, please:

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"The Company Secretary's accountabilities normally include ..."

Then we have (e):

"Arranging participation of non-Board members for specific items in Board discussions (including handling sight of relevant minutes, timing of Board appearances, follow up)."

Do you think you failed in that on this occasion?

- 10 A. No, I don't. I had arranged for Susan to be there at 11 the correct time to give her presentation to the Board and I was stopped from getting her into the room by the 12 13 Chair. So I actually do think I was doing what it says 14
- Q. Do you think that not raising any concerns about that, 15 16 knowing that Susan Crichton was very well placed to 17 speak to the Horizon issues, was in any way a failing on 18 your part?
- 19 Α. So I can't specifically remember but I think I will have 20 raised -- I would have raised concerns with that after 21 the meeting with Alice and possibly Paula.
- 22 Q. You would have raised concerns?
- 23 A. I believe I would have done. I can't specifically 24 remember but, having gone through that meeting, where 25 clearly Susan had been excluded from the meeting,

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- 1 picture at the Post Office, concerns about the Criminal
- 2 Cases Review Commission?
- 3 A. Not that I can remember.
- 4 Q. Do you think that the board or members of the Board were
- 5 kept properly up-to-date and informed of those
- 6 developments?
- 7 A. Well -- and I don't know if, you know, if it's
- 8 chronologically is -- if it's in this order, but
- 9 I wasn't appraised of the Clarke Advice, and I don't
- 10 believe that I -- well, I don't believe I sent the
- Clarke Advice to the Board so, therefore, the Board were 11
- 12 not appraised of the Clarke Advice. So things should
- 13 have been sent that weren't, I think.
- 14 Q. Who do you place responsibility for that on?
- 15 A. Well, it has -- it has to be anyone who knew about the
- 16 Clarke Advice. I mean, I don't know who the Clarke
- 17 Advice was shared with, whether it was shared with the
- 18 Chair, whether it was shared with Paula. All I know is
- 19 that I don't believe I received it and I was not asked
- 20 to send it to the Board. So I don't know who made the
- 21 decision for it not to go to the Board but I don't
- 22 believe it ever went to the Board.
- 23 Q. Can we turn to POL00192758, please.
- 24 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Before we do, Mr Blake, there's just one

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25 aspect of the minutes that I would like to go back to,

- 1 I would have raised that, I believe, with the Chair and
- 2 with Paula.
- 3 Q. What did you say?
- 4 A. I can't remember, I specifically can't remember.
- Q. I mean, it's quite a significant moment in time --5
- 6 A. No, absolutely.
- 7 Q. -- both for your professional career but especially for
- 8 this Inquiry. Do you recall any conversation with Paula
- Vennells or Alice Perkins? 9
- 10 A. I can't recall any specific conversation but my belief
- 11 is that, if I'd -- if that had happened, I would have
- spoken to especially the Chair about how that meeting 12
- 13 had been run and that someone was standing outside
- 14 waiting to deliver a report.
- 15 Q. We know that Board work doesn't just occur at those
- 16 formal Board meetings.
- 17 A. No.
- 18 **Q.** There are number of people who attended that meeting,
- 19 and a number of Non-Executive Directors, for example.
- 20 Did you have discussions over lunch, over dinner, over
- 21 a drink, over some other social activity with any of
- 22 them, raising concerns about how that particular meeting
- 23 was conducted?
- 24 A. Not that I can remember.
- 25 Q. Did you have any discussions with them about the growing
- 1 if I may.
- 2 MR BLAKE: Absolutely. Those minutes are POL00021516.
- 3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: If we go to the section dealing with the
- 4 Horizon update, which I think is page 6.
- 5 MR BLAKE: Yes
- 6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So under (b) the specific question is
- 7 raised as to whether Ms Crichton was, in any way,
- 8 implicated in the prosecutions, and then there's
- a report of what followed. Could we now go to (e), 9
- 10 please, over the page. There's an explicit reference
- 11 there, is there not, Ms Lyons, to the Board asking
- 12
- Ms Vennells if she had considered changing the person
- 13 leading for the business. All right?
- 14 Now, the person leading for the business, we've been
- 15 told, was Ms Crichton; was that your understanding?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So is that the reason she was excluded
- 18 from the meeting because, in effect, she was going to be
- 19 criticised?
- 20 Possibly. Possibly.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you. Yeah, over to you, Mr Blake. 21
- 22 MR BLAKE: Is it a little odd that she's not mentioned by
- 23 name in the -- I mean, you said that if somebody had
- 24 been mentioned by name it would be in the minutes. It's
- 25 a bit cryptic, isn't it, the "person leading"?

- A. I don't think anything was meant by that. I think 1 2 that -- I don't think it was -- I can't remember these 3 minutes and I don't think it was changed, you know, 4 anybody said, "Oh that shouldn't be mentioned by name". 5 So I can't remember.
- 6 Q. Can we now turn to POL00193019. I'm going to skip out 7 that other document.

We're now moving to 30 July 2013 and an email from Simon Baker, you're copied in there:

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"You will shortly receive an invitation to a Horizon Investigation Risk workshop.

"The purpose of the workshop is to identify, quantify and produce mitigation plans for the risks associated with the Horizon investigation and related activities, including an improvement project to respond to the findings."

Do you recall the Horizon Investigation Risk workshop?

- 20 A. I don't, I'm afraid. I don't think I was a member. 21 I think I was just being told it was happening.
- 22 Q. Thank you. Can we turn now to POL00193585. This is 23 advice from Bond Dickinson on the risks principally to 24 the directors of the company. Do you recall this 25

advice?

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1 a prosecution case or assisted with an accused's 2 defence."

By this stage, that is August 2013, were you aware of concerns about the reliability of Gareth Jenkins?

- 5 A. So I didn't -- I do not believe I saw this advice.
- 6 I don't believe I sent this advice to the Board.
- 7 Q. Because, over the page on page 3, there's a section on 8 D&O risks, and it says:

"We have considered whether a claim could lie against a director or officer of Post Office. We think this is unlikely, as it will be difficult for a subpostmaster to pierce the corporate veil. Most of the above claims, if brought and if viable, would be against Post Office Limited as a company. Nevertheless we can envisage the following possible scenarios involving directors and officers ..."

They set out there the possible claims that could be brought. Now, we saw in those Board minutes that we looked at a concern amongst the Board of their potential liability for matters arising from --

21 A. Yes, yes.

22 Q. -- Second Sight's Report. This seems to be an advice 23 that addresses those very risks. Why do you think it is 24 that this wasn't brought to your attention if it wasn't?

I have no idea because this is exactly what the Board 25 A.

1 A. No.

2 Q. One of your responsibilities, I think, as Company Secretary, involved looking out for the kinds of risks 3 4 that are discussed in this document --

5 A. Yes

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Q. -- is that right? If we look over the page, please, we can see section there "Risks to Post Office":

"Prosecutions and convictions

"As noted above, where circumstances warrant, Post Office prosecutes subpostmasters who have acted criminally. The basis of these prosecutions is often found in the transaction records recorded in Horizon. As a result of Second Sight's investigation/Interim Report, Post Office is reviewing all its criminal prosecutions over the last three years to identify any cases where a conviction may be unsafe.

"In particular, the expert evidence of one Post Office witness, Dr Gareth Jenkins of Fujitsu, may have failed to disclose certain historic problems in the Horizon system. Under the criminal prosecution guidelines, Post Office has an obligation to disclose this previously undisclosed information to subpostmasters' defence counsel. Post Office is required to make these retrospective disclosures where the additional information ... may have undermined 154

were asking for.

- 2 Q. Do you recall the Board ever receiving that kind of 3
- 4 A. So I believe there was a paper, I think written by Chris 5

Day, about a D&O risk, but I do not think the Board

- 6 or -- I certainly did not receive -- I don't believe
- 7 I received this and I don't believe I sent it to the
- 8 board. Again, I can't say if any Board members saw this
- advice, as in the CEO or the Chair. But --9
- 10 Q. Separately, as at that time, so August 2013, were you 11 personally aware of the concerns about the reliability
- 12 of Gareth Jenkins' evidence?
- 13 A. No. Because this document would have made that very 14 clear, as well.
- 15 Q. Yes. Thank you. Can we please now -- we're going to 16 move on to autumn 2013. Could we please look at 17 POL00146545. If we could start at the bottom of page 2, 18 the bottom of the page. We have an email from Jarnail 19 Singh to you, saying:

"Alwen

"For criminal prosecution and civil litigation cases it is essential for Post Office to instruct expert witness to produce expert reports on the impact of Second Sight's Interim Report on the Horizon system. Please find attached both CV from Professor Kramer and 156

Professor Dulay from Imperial College London who have agreed to undertake the expert witness work."

If we scroll up we see a response from you saying:

"I think Lesley and Hugh should sign this off.

Lesley from an IT perspective, that these CVs will mean they will understand and be able to explain Horizon."

At this stage, where Jarnail Singh is specifically contacting you about two potential new experts, were you aware of concerns about the reliability of Gareth Jenkins.

- A. So, at this stage, I knew that we -- I knew the business 11 12 was not using Gareth Jenkins any more because I think 13 something came up as an ARC meeting and we talked about 14 finding an expert witness, but there was no explanation 15 as to why we were no longer allowed to use Gareth 16 Jenkins or if he'd retired, or -- I didn't know that 17 information. But we were asked -- the Board asked for 18 this specific thing to happen, for us to go and find, 19 and to find out how much it would cost as well, because 20 that was the other issue that came up in the ARC.
- 21 Q. Did no one ever ask the question: why aren't we using 22 our own expert?
- 23 A. So I think in -- I think it says somewhere that we can 24 no longer use, and I don't remember ever it being asked 25 "Well why?"

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- 1 had been requested of Brian Altman, now KC, relating to 2 potentially stopping prosecuting altogether?
- 3 A. I can't remember it.

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- 4 Q. Would it have concerned you that somebody described as 5 the Post Office's "über QC" was advising on 6 a significant matter relating to prosecutions and that 7 wasn't widely known?
- 8 A. So I -- so what I thought we were chasing here was a new 9 expert witness and that's the piece of work that 10 I thought I was helping to coordinate by getting the CVs 11 looked at or whatever. Now Susan is saying we might not 12 be doing this any more. I mean, I think in an earlier 13 document, there's something about ceasing prosecutions. 14 So I'm not surprised that we are considering ceasing 15 prosecutions but, if we are going to prosecute, we need 16 a new expert witness.
- 17 Q. Was that discussion, so the issue that was not widely 18 known within the Post Office, was that known at Board level, do you think? 19
- 20 A. I can't remember if it was ever taken to Board that 21 Brian Altman was doing this work.
- 22 Q. Again, it's a small group of people, similar group to 23 the emails that we've seen over the years in 2012 and 24 into 2013. Is it surprising that, at this stage, you
- 25 still are not aware of concerns that were raised about 159

Q. Ever asked or ever asking? 1

2 A. I don't remember ever asking. If someone says to you "We're no longer doing that, we're doing this, go away 3 4 and sort that out", we were doing the "Go away and sort 5

- 6 Q. You had personally liaised with Gareth Jenkins --
- 7 Yeah

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- Q. -- over a number of years; was it not surprising you 8 9 were moving on to new experts?
- 10 A. Well, I'd had probably a dozen emails from Gareth 11 Jenkins when I was asking for things. I didn't know 12 Gareth, I don't think I'd ever met Gareth, so I didn't 13 read anything into it, apart from we need a new expert 14
- 15 Q. Moving on to POL00146548, please. On page 1, there's 16 an email from Hugh Flemington, if we scroll down, to 17 Lesley Sewell and you -- thank you, sorry, if we could 18 scroll up -- topic being "Experts Horizon issues". He 19 savs as follows:

"Susan was minded to slow this down: Brian Altman (our über QC) may recommend that [the Post Office] cease prosecuting altogether -- therefore why waste time and money committing to this person. This piece of work is not widely known within [the Post Office]."

Were you aware at that time of a piece of work that

1 Gareth Jenkins?

- Well, unless someone had shared that with me, I wouldn't 2 3 have been aware. You know, a lot of the people on these 4 emails are the lawyers. I wouldn't have been aware 5 unless someone told me.
- 6 Q. Okay, I'm going to now move on to 2014. Could we please 7 turn to POL00147542. I'll just go to a few documents 8 from 2014 and then we're going to move on to a separate 9 subject of remote access.
- 10 A. Okay.

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11 Q. We have the second email from Alice Perkins to yourself. 12 We're now in March 2014, and it relates to the Audit and 13 Risk Committee papers, and she says:

14 "I can't attend this meeting but I was looking at 15 the papers to see the post-mortem/lessons learned from 16 Horizon/[Second Sight] stuff. I thought we were told at 17 the board last week that it was on the agenda for this 18 meeting? What am I missing -- braincells or paper or 19 neither?!"

> Then you forward that to Belinda Crowe, and say: "I need to go back on this. I thought you had discussed the delay on this with her."

Can you recall the context of this discussion? So, again, I'm assuming here but I'm reading these emails and I'm thinking that, on the original ARC agenda

there was a piece on there about Horizon/Second Sight post-mortem or whatever we want to call it, lessons learned, and that Alice was expecting that to be on the agenda and was expecting a paper. I clearly have taken it off the agenda on the advice of Belinda because it's either not ready or whatever. I've sent the papers out without it, and Alice is saying, "Well, where's the paper on Horizon/Second Sight?"

I wouldn't have sent that paper, I don't believe, unless I thought that Belinda had had this conversation with Alice because I knew, because I'd been in the Board the week before, and I knew that Alice was expecting this to come to ARC.

Q. Thank you. One final document before we move on, and that's POL00147834.

We're still in 2014, we're in March 2014 and you are there giving thoughts on advice received from Linklaters. Can you assist us with why you were there giving your thoughts on --

A. So I would only have given my thoughts, I think, if I'd
been asked and, because I'm sending it direct to Chris,
I assume I was asked by Chris, rather than Chris and
Paula, but clearly I've sent it to both of them, and
I have gone through the Linklaters advice and given
them -- I've been asked for my opinion, I think, on how

subpostmasters are not employees. There is no broader duty of care which would extend the contractual duties owed by the Post Office in any respect relevant to the issues in this Report."

Your comment is as follows, it's 1.2:

"... said in this way this is exactly the heavy handed big business [versus] small subpostmasters that James [Arbuthnot] thinks we are guilty of."

A. Mm-hm.

Q. So it's talking about the relationship between
11 subpostmasters and James Arbuthnot is concerned that
12 it's a heavy-handed relationship. Was that shared
13 amongst the Board? Are you summarising here what you
14 think the Board's views are or are they your own views?

think the Board's views are or are they your own views?

A. So this was shared with Alice, certainly at her first
meeting with James, and I can't remember whether she
shared that -- she gave an update to the Board. I'm not
sure -- I can't remember whether she shared that with
the board or if at any of the other meetings that we've
seen today, whether it was mentioned. Sorry, I've -
21 Q. Was that a concern though. I mean, was it something you

Q. Was that a concern though. I mean, was it something you
 ever discussed with the CEO, the Chair, senior
 executives, about a heavy-handed big business versus
 small subpostmaster relationship?

A. So I think it might have been a concern for the chair 163

the Board will respond to the Linklaters advice, and
 that's what I've done here. But it's only my opinion.
 I don't -- the Board might not have responded like this.
 It's just my opinion.

Q. I'd just like to go through a few of those and, if we
 could bring up on screen alongside it, the Linklaters
 advice, and that is POL00107317, please. Thank you.

So if we could turn to 1.2 on the left-hand side, so that is, I think, the second page. Thank you. So the Linklaters advice, do you recall the circumstances in which the Linklaters advice had been sought?

A. So I think the Board had asked for advice on the subpostmaster's contract and -- the subpostmaster's contract and whether the subpostmaster's contract enabled the Post Office to get money back from the subpostmasters over losses. I think that's -- and that's me paraphrasing it but ...

18 Q. They say on left-hand side:

"The relationship between subpostmasters and the Post Office is governed by the standard form contract which, according to its terms, allows the Post Office to recovery losses and is terminable on three months' notice without the need to specify a reason. The relationship between the subpostmasters and the Post Office is one of principal and agent and the

because of the conversations that she'd had with James.
 Wider than that, I can't really say.

3 Q. Okay. 1.4:

"Absent such proof that Horizon is not working as it should, the Post Office should be able to recover losses which the Horizon records indicate are owing on an individual [subpostmaster's] account. If the Post Office is entitled to recover losses, then there can be no question of a consequential loss claim on the part of the [subpostmaster] relating to their recovery ..."

You say:

"... the Board will be in different places, NM ..."Is that Neil McCausland.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So he was a non-executive?

16 A. He was, he was the SID as well.

Q. The --

18 A. Senior Independent Director.

19 Q. Thank you:

20 "... will say good then we can put the lid back on 21 the can of worms and pay very little. AP ..."

22 That's Alice Perkins, is it?

A. Yes.

24 Q. "... will be more concerned about political optics."

25 Is this an insight we get into the different

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- positions on the Board on paying money to subpostmastersor recovering money?
- A. These are just my thoughts of how I think they would
 respond. So, you know, they may have responded very
 differently. So these are just -- you know, this is how
 I think they will respond when they read this document
 and Alice was always concerned about the political
 optics and making sure that we took account of what MPs
 were saying, et cetera, et cetera, and Neil was much
- 12 Q. The suggestion, though, being that he was also concernedabout not paying very much.

more pragmatic, I suppose, about, you know, how do we

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take this forward.

- 14 A. I think everyone, I think the whole Board were concernedabout the cost.
- 16 Q. Thank you. If we scroll down the left-hand side to 2.3:

"Importantly, Jo Swinson, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs, noted that there was no evidence of a systemic problem with Horizon. This has also been the Post Office's conclusion on the information so far available to it. We know that there is, so far as we understand it, no objective report which describes and addresses the use and reliability of Horizon. We do think that such a report would be helpful, though there is

doubts about the reliability of the system then this could obviously impact on the Post Office's ability to claim losses since it calls into question whether such losses exist at all. This is the fundamental question and one which has not yet been satisfactorily addressed."

You say:

"... this will worry them as we have said all along that there is no systemic issue with Horizon, this may make them think there might be an issue and why hasn't the business undertaken a proper forensic review/audit."

So you had here received advice from Linklaters questioning whether, in fact, the Post Office had properly looked into the reliability of Horizon and you were concerned that that would worry the Board?

- A. Well, it's sort of the same point as 2.3, that we talked about earlier, is that this is now saying that we need a proper forensic review of Horizon before we can say it has integrity.
- Q. If we scroll down, please, to 5.55. This is the lastparagraph we'll look at in this document. 5.55:

"The Post Office in its capacity as a prosecutor has duties of disclosure which extend beyond the date of conviction in any particular case. [Then it cites a case there] it was observed that private prosecutors

a decision to be made about how broad and/or thorough it needs to be."

Your comment on that, if we look on the right-handside is:

5 "[It's] unhelpful, because it suggested that we 6 should have taken a different route, and commissioned 7 such a report rather than use Second Sight, so why 8 didn't we."

- 9 **A.** So -- sorry.
- 10 Q. No, you carry on, please.
- 11 A. So that comment there is how I think -- my thoughts of 12 how I think the Board will respond because we've already 13 had, in a Board meeting, the suggestion that business 14 hasn't managed Second Sight and it's all taking too long 15 and -- et cetera, et cetera. So I think 2.3, because 16 2.3 on the left-hand side is suggesting that we need to 17 do a more in-depth report to address the use and 18 reliability of Horizon, I think the Board will be 19 frustrated because they thought that's what they were 20 getting with Second Sight.
- 21 Q. Thank you. If we stick with the left-hand side and
 22 scroll down, let's go to 5.30. It's page 8. Thank you.
 23 So 5.30 says:
 - "It is the reliability of the Horizon system as a matter of principle which is important. If there are 166

are subject to the same obligations to act as a ministers of justice as the public prosecuting authorities. Any material in the possession of Post Office which might cast doubt on the safety of any particular conviction ought therefore to be disclosed to the convicted party."

Your comment on that is:

"This will cause concern again as it reopens the [Post Office] as a prosecutor, even if that is not what is being said."

So is it fair to say that, as at March 2014, you
were concerned that the Board would not be happy with
the Linklaters advice, both because it raises issues
with the reliability of the Horizon system, the fact
that there hasn't been a comprehensive report addressing
Horizon and also that it raised issues relating to the
Post Office's prosecution role?

A. So as I've said, this email is me assuming what the
 Board will think. So that's a bit dangerous but that's

20 me assuming that's what they will think, and what I've 21 tried to do in the report is highlight the areas that

I think will cause concern for the Board. And the mainconcern, I think, is that the Linklaters report seems to

be saying "This is all fine, you can reclaim monies,

25 et cetera, et cetera, however you have to prove first 168

1		Horizon's integrity".	1		(A short break)
2		And I think, firstly, the Board thought we were	2	(3	.29 pm)
3		doing that with Second Sight and that's clearly not	3		R BLAKE: Thank you.
4		enough. So what I've tried to say and the	4	••••	Moving on to the topic of remote access. Could we
5		prosecution the prosecutor piece because this 5.55	5		start with POL00029589, please, second page, please
6		is referring to the Clarke Advice and Gareth Jenkins.	6		over the page an email from Paula Vennells to you.
7		Well, I hadn't seen that, I didn't believe the Board had	7		She says:
8		seen that, so I'm not when I say "reopened the PO as	8		"Alwen, thanks for the various documents coming
9		a prosecutor", I'm not reading that as the Clarke	9		through! An enormous volume. Hopefully, you will be
10		Advice; I'm reading it as, you know, Post Office has	10		reaching the end soon.
11		a capacity as a prosecutor and I believed we were	11		"How did the call go [this morning] [regarding James
12		already doing some work to understand how we would	12		Arbuthnot] with [Second Sight]? And has Janet been in
13		change that.	13		touch?"
14	Q.	Looking back now at when that report ultimately went to	14		If we go over the page to page 1 at the very top, we
15	٦.	the Board, do you recall concerns that you had expressed	15		have an e-mail from you to Paula Vennells. You say:
16		in that email arising or not arising?	16		"Okay here goes
17	Α.	I honestly can't remember.	17		"Good call with [Second Sight] but James has
18	Q.	Okay, thank you.	18		definitely caused confusion with his cases or themes or
19	٦.	Sir, I only have one more topic to address before	19		topics etc.
20		handing over to Core Participants but I think that might	20		"[Second Sight] have agreed they will look into
21		be an appropriate time to take our mid-afternoon break.	21		3 cases, they will tell JFSA which 3 cases to keep them
22	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Certainly. All right. So we'll resume	22		on board but [Second Sight] are choosing which.
23		again at 3.30, okay.	23		"One of these will be dealing with the issue of
24	MR	BLAKE: Thank you very much.	24		remote access to a subpostmaster's account, which James
25		6 pm)	25		specifically raised.
	•	169			170
1		"I have just spoken to Lesley who has engaged	1		adjustments which can be made centrally which they say
2		Fujitsu today and is confident that within a week they	2		happens very rarely, so we are waiting to see that and
3		will provide evidence about access and audit trails	3		the controls in place. However they suggest that what
4		etc."	4		Rudkin heard was testers [from Horizon Online] referring
5		"Lesley and I will meet [Fujitsu] on the third to go	5		to test data and not the live environment. This would
6		through this, and then if we are comfortable go through	6		be good if we could prove it.
7		with [Second Sight] and [Fujitsu] on the 6th, so let the	7		"The plan is to look at the audit trails and then
8		technical people can discuss the detail."	8		have a joint meeting with us, [Second Sight] and
9		So as at May 2013 you were aware of a specific	9		Fujitsu."
10		interest in the issue of remote access?	10		So you're specifically there raising the issue of
11	A.	Yes.	11		Mr Rudkin's case and remote access to Paula Vennells or
12	Q.	Could we look at POL00029590, on the second page. We're	12		Paula Vennells' Chief of Staff.
13		now in June, 4 June, an email from Martin Edwards, Chief	13	A.	Yes.
14		of Staff to Paula Vennells. He says:	14	Q.	POL00029601. We're moving to 11 June now, and this is
15		" as you know, Paula is seeing Alice tomorrow.	15		an email from Ron Warmington of Second Sight, in advance
16		She asked if you could provide an update on the latest	16		of a call the next day. He says:
17		state of play with James Arbuthnot <i>et al</i> ."	17		"I'm afraid only two of the seven documents that
18		Your response is above that. I will just read to	18		you've enclosed seem to be relevant to SR005"
19		you a couple of passages from your response. You say:	19		That's Mr Rudkin's case
20		"SS [Second Sight] are now working on the 3 cases as	20	A.	Yes.
21		agreed which include the Rudkin case, where he alleges	21	Q.	
22		that he heard someone at Fujitsu state they could alter	22		"The other five (in themselves excellent) documents
23		a subpostmaster's account.	23		that were enclosed all relate to [Horizon Online],
24		"Lesley and I had a meeting with Fujitsu this week	24		which, as is explained in Gareth Jenkins' affidavit
25		and they are providing for us an audit trail of	25		was rolled out between January and September 2010. They

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are therefore irrelevant to SR005 ..."

Do you remember this morning I was mentioning an email from Mr Warmington that was concerned with overdisclosure of irrelevant material.

5 A. Yes, yes.

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6 Q. Then if we scroll down, he raises a concern, he says:

"Luckily, we have picked up this basic error at this point and not while presenting our Interim Report to a roomful of MPs."

Over the page, please:

"I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's call. But we need to produce something that is crisp, easy to understand, and that absolutely NAILS this really serious allegation once and for all."

Do you recall Second Sight being determined to get to the bottom of that remote access issue as well?

- 17 A. Yes, I think they were but I think the business were aswell.
- 19 Q. If we move on to 24 June, that's POL00188912. This is
 20 an email I took you to earlier but I said I'd come back
 21 to it. If we scroll down to the second email, it's
 22 Simon Baker to you, Susan Crichton and Lesley Sewell.
 23 He's had a call with Ron and Ian, SR005, so the same
 24 case, the Rudkin case:

"[They're] Very unhappy (and angry) with our 173

"It is unfortunate that, due to the length of time that has elapsed ... neither [the Post Office] nor Fujitsu were able to identify any individual who met with the [subpostmaster] ..."

Then they refer to managing to find an email proving that the meeting took place:

"Unfortunately, due to a change in email systems, emails from 2008 have yet to be provided to us, but [they] have reviewed", some of the relevant material.

Then if we look down at 1.14, this is how they end their review into Mr Rudkin's case. They say:

"We are left with a conflict of evidence on this issue and our enquiries are continuing, particularly in light of the new information confirming that the meeting on 19 August 2008 did in fact occur."

So concerns prior to Second Sight's Interim Report raised by Second Sight about the lack of information or lack of clarity on the remote access issue, and, in fact, there's no greater clarity by the time they've produced their Interim Report. They make clear that it's still up in the air.

- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Is that your understanding?
- 24 **A.** Yes
- 25 Q. Moving on in time, please, to 30 April 2014, could we

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response to SR005 -- 'Post Office haven't answered the questions, just spouting out the same old line'. We need to sort this out in the next few days. I have taken the action provide them focused information which should provide them what they need. Although I am concerned about the time I have to gather it."

The response above from you, you email Lesley Sewell and say:

"Lesley I think you're going to have to get involved in the Bracknell one or we are going to lose the argument."

12 So you're escalating it there with Lesley Sewell?

- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. Do you recall Second Sight being unhappy and angry atthis stage?
- A. Only from documents that I've been sent from the
 Inquiry. I didn't -- I didn't recall this specifically
 but all I'm doing here is saying, you know, "Second
 Sight clearly are not getting what they want, Lesley,
 you own the relationship, you've got to get involved".
- Q. Thank you. Then we have the Interim Report that was
 ultimately produced, that's POL00099063, and that's
 8 July 2013. This is their Interim Report. If we look
- 24 at page 12, it addresses Mr Rudkin's case, spot review
- 25 SR05. If we go over the page, 1.7, for example:

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- please look at UKGI00019321. This is a Board meeting,
 which you are in attendance. If we could please turn to
- 3 page 6, there's now reference to the Deloitte report.
- 4 Do you recall discussion about the Deloitte report?
- 5 A. I do, yes.
- Q. Was one of the purposes of the Deloitte report to assist
 with that issue of remote access, to get greater clarity
 in that?
- 9 A. So I think the main purpose of the Deloitte report, from my memory, was that, whereas the Linklaters report had
- 11 said -- had given us information about the contract, it
- was predicated on that Horizon had integrity. So l believe the Deloitte report -- and there were two
- 14 halves, I think, because one was up to -- one was
- older -- one was new Horizon and then there was some
- 16 look at old Horizon but that came later, but I believe
- 17 the Deloitte report was asked for to fill that gap.
- 18 Q. Was one of those gaps in corporate knowledge to do with19 the remote access issue?
- 20 A. So I can't specifically remember that but it may well21 have done.
- Q. Do you recall getting any greater clarity after theInterim Report on that very issue?
- 24 A. After the Interim Report?
- 25 Q. Yes. So we've seen the Interim Report --

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1 A. Yes.

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- 2 Q. -- ended up without any --
- 3 A. Without any -- yes -- so, no, I don't think the interim4 report moved us forward at all.
- So we have here the Board discussing the Deloitte
 report. This in advance of the Deloitte report, and it
 says:

"The Board welcomed Lesley Sewell ... and Gareth James [who was a partner at Deloitte], to the meeting. Chris Aujard also rejoined the meeting.

"The Chairman thanked Gareth James for his draft report and explained that there were a number of people who were sceptical about Horizon. The Board were concerned to know the truth about the reliability of the system. Deloitte's views would need to be expressed in such a way that they would persuade reasonable lay people."

It might be suggested that that last sentence there is suggestive of trying to direct Deloitte in a particular way, to persuade people. Is that your understanding of those words?

A. No, my understanding of that is that it needs to be
 written in such a way as people can understand it and
 that's what I'm reading into that. So make it
 accessible is -- I think.

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page. It's an email from you to Chris Aujard and Belinda Crowe. Thank you very much.

This is 23 May, so we've seen there the meeting itself was 21 May. Presumably, the minutes themselves are not typed up on 21 May; there is a process that follows that meeting.

- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. We're now on 23 May, which is the date that the Deloitte9 report was actually produced.
- 10 A. Okay.
- 11 Q. So that is what we refer to as the final Deloitte
 12 report, although I think, on the front, it says that
 13 it's a draft for discussion, or something along those
 14 lines. You are emailing Chris Aujard and Belinda Crowe
 15 and you say as follows:

"It's a bit smoke and mirrors but here are the minutes, comments ASAP please."

Now, I think in your witness statement you've said that there's no issue with the words "smoke and mirrors", you didn't mean anything by it; is that correct?

A. Well, clearly, it's very unprofessional and I shouldn't
 have put it in the email. I seem to recall that when
 I left -- when I escorted Belinda and Chris out of the
 meeting, because the conversation had been quite

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Q. Thank you. Then (e):

"Chris Aujard explained that several of the subpostmasters who were challenging Horizon had made allegations about 'phantom' transactions which were non-traceable. Assurance from Deloitte about the integrity of the system records logs would be very valuable.

"The Board asked what assurance could be given pre-2010 when the different Horizon system was in use. It was agreed that Gareth James would produce and cost a proposal for additional work to enable assurance for the wider system, including pre-2010."

There was then a further Board meeting that followed the report, can we please turn to POL00021525. That is the Board meeting of 21 May 2014. Do you recall that Board meeting?

- 17 A. I'm not -- no, not in detail.
- 18 Q. I'll take you to the relevant part. So it's page 9.
 There's a section on Sparrow. We see there, if we
- scroll down, reference there to the draft executive
- summary of the Horizon Assurance Review having been circulated to the Board.
- 23 I want to see how these minutes were drafted.
- 24 A. Okay.
- 25 **Q.** Could we turn to POL00384388, please. It's the second 178

1 cyclical in terms of Sparrow, and Belinda, I believe,

turned to me and said, "Oh, good luck with minuting

3 that", and I'd said to her, "It's a bit smoke and

4 mirrors", and I stupidly had carried the conversation on

to this email but it's unprofessional and it shouldn't

6 have happened.

- Q. But, I mean, "smoke and mirrors" is suggestive of insome way misleading?
- 9 A. Yeah, no, that's not what I meant and my minutes werenot misleading.
- Q. What you are doing, though, is you're sending to Belinda
 Crowe and Chris Aujard draft minutes that they are then
 amending?
- A. So my practice was that I would take verbatim notes
 wherever possible and when the conversation was cyclical
 and that was quite -- that became quite difficult, but
 they were taken, I would then draft the minute, and it

18 would be sent out to the executive member or -- Belinda

19 wasn't an executive member, but the executive member who

was responsible for the input to that part of the

21 meeting. They would then give their input. I would

then get that back and I would revisit my verbatim notes

23 to check that, actually, their input had come to the

24 meeting first, and that it was accurate. So that was my

practice and then, after that had happened, the minute

1 would go to the Chair for their input.

Q. If we scroll up we can see that Belinda Crowe hasresponded, and she says:

"Comments from me but Chris will need to agree. We are going to be speaking shortly."

If we scroll down we can see, now they're in a slightly different colour, I think, the comments. We might be able to see them if we scroll down, please, under "Sparrow". Can you see? It's a little difficult to see but the comments seem to be in a slightly less dark format.

12 A. Okay.

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13 Q. So it has been amended here as follows:

"It was reported that [and then] the draft executive summary of the Horizon Assurance Review prepared by Deloitte had been circulated to the Board. Chris advised that it was anticipated that the full review would be available to the business on Friday, 23 May and that he would circulate it to the ... Board ..."

It's this addition I would like to ask you about:

"... as soon as possible but only when he was satisfied with its drafting and clarity of expression; it was agreed that he would escalate within Deloitte if he had concerns about the quality of the product."

Now, that was added on the day that, in fact, that

hadn't -- if this hadn't been in there at whatever - you know, whatever level, I would have gone back and
 challenged Chris and Belinda. I don't remember doing
 that.

- 5 Q. Are the number of changes unusual?
- 6 A. So ...
- 7 Q. If we scroll down, we can see more over the page as8 well.
- 9 A. So this -- there was a lot of information being put in
 10 by Belinda and Chris, who obviously wanted as much
 11 information in here as possible.
- 12 **Q.** Or wanted to direct how the minutes would read?
- 13 A. Well, you know, I think -- I believe I went back and14 checked my notes and a lot of this information might
- 15 have been in their report, and my practice was not to
- 16 regurgitate the report in the minutes because the Board
- 17 had the report. So --
- 18 Q. They didn't yet have the report, though, did they?
- 19 A. They brought a report to this meeting, didn't they?
- 20 Q. They had an executive summary at the meeting.
- 21 **A.** Yes.
- 22 $\,$ **Q.** The report would follow and the words that were inserted
- 23 were to the effect that they wouldn't necessarily
- 24 receive the report straight away.
- 25 A. Right. So this does look as if there'd been a lot of

1 Chris Aujard and Belinda Crowe received the report

2 itself, so they are amending minutes referring to

3 a report that they have now received.

- 4 A. I didn't realise that.
- 5 Q. No. Do you see an issue with that?
- A. I would if I didn't believe that I went back to myverbatim notes and checked them.
- 8 $\,$ **Q.** I mean, is it possible that those words that are
- 9 highlighted there were not actually spoken at that
- 10 meeting?
- 11 A. Well, we do say that we want them to be clear, don't we,
- we want them to be understandable?
- 13 Q. Sorry, it's the second --
- 14 A. Yes, yes.
- 15 Q. So it's him saying, in essence, that he would escalate
- 16 to Deloitte if he had concerns about the quality of the
- 17 product and the Board might not be receiving it when he
- 18 receives it.
- 19 A. Yes. I -- with hindsight, knowing that they received
- 20 the report on the same day, that might be an issue, if
- 21 Belinda and Chris are responding to this having read the
- 22 report, then that's a completely different mindset to
- 23 just responding to this as this is what they believe
- they told the meeting. I do think I would have gone
- 25 back and checked my verbatim notes and, if they 182
- 1 additions. However, I would -- my practice, as I say,
- 2 was to go back and check my verbatim notes and, if
- 3 I hadn't heard this at the meeting, I would have gone
- 4 back to Chris and Belinda and said, "Actually, you
- 5 didn't say any of this, you can't just have them in the
- 6 minutes".
- 7 Q. Thank you. Let's look at the report very quickly. It's
- 8 POL00028062. It's page 31. Did you read the Deloitte
- 9 report?
- 10 A. So I'm not sure that I saw the long Deloitte report and,
- 11 therefore, I'm not sure the Board saw the long Deloitte
- 12 report
- 13 Q. Given that you had a governance aspect of your role --
- 14 **A**. Yes
- 15 Q. -- why would you not have read the Deloitte report?
- 16 A. Because I'm not sure it was given to me.
- 17 **Q.** Having read it now, is it not a document that you18 recognise?
- 19 A. I don't recognise it.
- 20 $\,$ Q. Can we turn to page 31, please, and it's the bottom
- there. I don't know if you've seen me go through this
- or anybody go through this with other witnesses but it's
- 23 (g):

"A method for posting 'Balancing Transactions' wasobserved from technical documentation which allows for

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(46) Pages 181 - 184

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posting of additional transactions centrally without the requirement for these transactions to be accepted by subpostmasters ... Whilst an audit trail is asserted to be in place over these functions, evidence of testing of these features is not available ..."

Third bullet point:

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"For 'Balancing Transactions' ... we did not identify controls to routinely monitor all centrally initiated transactions to verify that they are all initiated and actioned through known and governed processes, or controls ..."

The final one:

"Controls that would detect where a person with authorised privileged access used such access to send a 'fake' basket into the digital signing process could not be evidenced to exist."

Looking at those now, are those matters that you would have expected to have been brought to your attention, given to your involvement in the remote access issue?

21 A. Yes. I mean, the first one there is interesting because 22 it doesn't -- the first one there doesn't say "without 23 the knowledge of the subpostmaster", because -- it says 24 the subpostmaster hasn't got to accept them but it 25 doesn't say without the knowledge of the subpostmaster.

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- 2 Α. From reading these emails, yes.
- 3 Q. Yes, but do you recall it at the time?
- 4 A. Ah --

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5 Q. We have below that the email from Gareth James, which 6 sets out deliverables:

> "These seek to create a shorter document for you (intended for Board circulation) which focuses on certain key (and most relevant) aspects of our wider work to date."

Could we please turn to POL00346396. There is then on that page we see an email from you to Paula Vennells:

"Paula do you want this to go to the Board this evening as written by Chris, or should it wait until he has answered the questions in the morning."

She savs:

"We should certainly [refer to the] pre/post as otherwise it will look like we've forgotten it."

Do you recall an issue relating to, I think, Legacy Horizon and Horizon Online --

- 21 **A**. Yes, yes.
- 22 Q. -- and not enough detail on that issue?
- 23 A. Yes, because Deloitte were, in fact -- I think they'd 24 been asked to do two -- to do one report but then tell
- 25 us how they -- whether they were able to and how much it 187

So I believed at this point that the subpostmaster could see everything in their account, every -- you know, like I spoke about earlier, keystroke, every transaction and, even if they were sent a transaction correction and -the process changed because they used to have to accept them, even if they were sent them and now we don't have to accept them, they would still see them.

That was my understanding at this point. However, I do not remember seeing the long Deloitte report. I remember the Board summary, which came to the Board at a later date.

12 Q. That's what I would like to ask you about, that summary, 13 and the way that that was drafted. Could we please turn to POL00346391, page 2 and into page 3. You're copied 15 in here, an email from Chris Aujard to Paula Vennells 16 and others.

> "Dear all -- Following the 2 longish calls that I have had with Deloitte today, they have now come back in the email below with a revised statement of the 'deliverable' that they are proposing to produce for us ... If the general consensus is this is okay, I would propose to ask Alwen to circulate the email to the Board with following message from me ..."

> Do you recall a process by which Deloitte were going to be drafting effectively a summary of the report,

would cost to do a report on Legacy Horizon.

2 Q. Thank you. Could we turn to POL00346406, this is a very 3 early in the morning email from Chris Aujard, 30 May --4 you're copied in -- to Gareth James at Deloitte:

> "We have discussed at some length the need to provide as much comfort as possible in respect of the period prior to 2010. For clarity, could you kindly confirm that you still propose to do this?

"2) On the question of the audience for the document, this is principally the Board in the first instance; as discussed we will however, want to be able to use any high level conclusions you may reach as a foundation for the release of the Linklaters advice -at this stage we are not sure what form we would need your conclusions to be expressed in ...

"3) The proposed timings do not work ... for us ..." It seems as though there was some anger towards

18 Deloitte about the time that it was all taking; is that 19 correct, was that your recollection?

20 Α. Yes, yes, sorry.

21 Q. I'll summarise, really, where we get to from there.

22 There is then produced the summary for the Board and the 23 summary does not set out the information that I've taken

24 you to before about remote access.

25 A. Okay.

- Q. Do you recall the summary being provided and any 1 2 discussions about how that summary would be drafted and 3 whether it should or shouldn't include more detail or 4 detail about remote access?
- 5 A. I don't recall that and I haven't seen any papers that 6 suggest I'm part of that conversation.
- 7 Q. Thank you. I'm going to move on now very quickly to the 8 Swift Review. Could we please bring up on screen 9 POL00153835. We're on 18 December 2015, an email from 10 Mark Underwood to you. Over the page, please, or down to the bottom, and the top of page 2. There we go. 11

12 "Hi Alwen,

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"Thank you for providing Patrick with the minutes for the Sparrow Sub Committee meetings and the extracts from other Board meetings relevant to Sparrow. I will forward these on to Jonathan Swift QC this afternoon. As one would expect, numerous papers and reports are cross-referenced in these minutes."

Can you recall assisting with the provision of information to Jonathan Swift?

- 21 A. Not specifically but now that I've seen this, yes, I can 22 recall that.
- 23 Q. Can you recall ever reading his report, his ultimate 24 report?
- 25 A. I don't think I ever saw his report.

1 Sorry, it's at that meeting, in fact, that: 2 "The CEO explained that the decision not to 3 prosecute agents if they could use the Horizon system as 4 a defence would be reconsidered once Deloitte had 5 completed their work on Horizon and could be used in 6 court as an expert witness."

> Was this also the meeting at which you retired? Yes, if we go over to page 7, so at that same meeting where there was discussion about not prosecuting agents, it has "Resignation and Appointment of the Company Secretary". Can you briefly assist us with the reasons for your retirement --

- So they were --13 Α.
- 14 Q. -- or resignation --
- A. -- personal reasons because we'd had two bereavements in 15 16 the family, close family, and one very ill person in my 17 close family, and I needed to be at home supporting them, rather than commuting up to London. 18

MR BLAKE: Thank you. 19

Sir, those are all of my questions. There are some 20 21 questions from Mr Jacobs and also from Ms Shah on behalf 22 of the National Federation of SubPostmasters.

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right.

24 MR BLAKE: Shall we start with Mr Jacobs.

25 Questioned by MR JACOBS 191

- Q. Did you ever discuss his report or the drafting of his 1 2 report with any senior executives at the Post Office?
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Q. Would a report of that nature be something that you 5 would expect to know about or to be told about, or to 6 read?
- A. So can I just clarify, is this the report that Tim 7 8 Parker, when he became Chairman, was asked to --
- Q. Yes. 9
- 10 A. So I never saw this report and I don't remember Tim 11 Parker ever sharing that report with the Board.
- 12 Q. So you were, to some extent, involved in the provision 13 of information?
- 14 A.
- 15 Q. Do you remember any other involvement, other than that?
- 16 A. No.

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- 17 Q. Did you ever discuss it with the Chair?
- A. So I believe the Chair made it very clear that he'd been 18 19 asked to do this independently and, therefore, there was 20 no discussion about it.
- 21 Q. Thank you.

22 Very finally, your resignation. Could we just turn 23 to POL00021549. 25 July 2017, we have a Board meeting 24 and it's at page 4:

"(e) The CEO explained that the decision ..."

MR JACOBS: I'd like to take you to a document, please, 2 POL00058155.

> While that's waiting to come up, I should tell you I represent a large number of subpostmasters, subpostmistresses and assistants who were affected by this scandal and are represented by Howe+Co.

So this is a document about a story, and all will be made clearer. Could we go, please, to page 2 of 3 at the bottom of that page. It's an email from Hugh Flemington -- if we could scroll down -- 24 July 2012 to Susan Crichton, you and Simon Baker:

"This the story text which J put together [and we can see that 'J' is Jarnail Singh] following our meeting last week. Any comments, please, before we release it?"

15 So the story from Mr Singh is entitled "Second Sight 16 Review Draft". To summarise it, the first paragraph 17 says that Post Office are going to undertake a review; 18 second paragraph says Second Sight are going to be 19 instructed and it will focus on cases raised by Members 20 of Parliament, and that JFSA want their own forensic 21 accountant to monitor the work of Second Sight, that 22 accountant is Kay Linnell.

23 But I want to focus on the third paragraph, please, 24 so if we could maybe highlight that. I'll read:

> "All of the above is accepted based on the terms of 192

> > (48) Pages 189 - 192

the Review being carried out, but it must be stressed that this is not an acknowledgement by the Post Office Limited that there is an issue with Horizon. The Horizon system is working properly, robust and is being used up and down the country ..."

Then importantly:

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"... when the system has been challenged in the criminal courts, it has been successfully defended."

I want to ask you about that last statement, "When the system has been challenged in the criminal courts it has been successfully defended", and what I want to suggest is that that is not true; would you agree?

- 13 A. So, at this point, I would have -- as Mr Singh is the 14 criminal lawyer, I would have accepted that that what he 15 was telling me was the truth.
- 16 You would have accepted that it was or wasn't true? Q.
- 17 A. Was the truth at that point because he's telling me that 18 this is what's happened in the criminal courts.
- 19 Q. Well, were you aware that Suzanne Palmer, who is 20 a client who we represent and who was one of the case 21 studies in an earlier phase of this Inquiry, had been 22 acquitted by a jury in Southend Crown Court in January 23 2007, and she had asserted in her defence that the 24 Horizon system had prevented her from challenging any 25 Horizon figures which she hadn't agreed. There had
- not only attended the hearings, attended those trials, 2 they gave evidence against our clients and they were 3 present when the jury delivered their verdict. Is that not something that you knew?
- 5 A. No.

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- 6 Q. Did you consider, or did Ms Crichton consider, or did 7 Mr Baker consider, that it would have been appropriate 8 before accepting this statement or putting this out that 9 there should be some fact checking that went on?
- 10 A. Absolutely. I would have expected -- if there was any 11 doubt in this last sentence here from Mr Singh, I would 12 have expected other members of the Legal Team to 13 challenge that, either Mr Flemington or Ms Crichton, and 14 to say this is not a correct statement.
- 15 Q. Well, if we could just go up to page 2 of 3 at the 16 bottom, please, so just scrolling up slightly, you will 17 see that you wrote an email to Simon Baker, and it says:

18 "Simon can you go to Alana with this request for the 19 'story' [Post Office's story] as they are the experts." 20

Who was Alana?

- 21 A. Alana was Mark Davies' deputy in the Communications 22
- 23 Q. Okay. Why did you call it the "story" with speech 24
- 25 A. So I'm referring to what Mr Flemington said further down 195

- 1 been, at her trial, a jury question directed at the Post
- 2 Office to the effect of "What is Mrs Palmer supposed to
- 3 do if she didn't agree it or doesn't agree with the
- 4 figure that Horizon produced?", and the Post Office had
- 5 been unable or unwilling to answer that question. So
- 6 an acquittal in relation to a subpostmistress who
- 7 challenged the Horizon system in January 2007. Quite 8 a significant event.
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Is that something that you were aware of?
- 11 So I don't believe I was aware of that.
- 12 Okay. Moving on, and you may give the same answer, but Q.
- 13 I need to put it to you. Also in 2006, in Northern
- 14 Ireland, in Dungannon court, Maureen McKelvey, another
- 15 one of our clients, was acquitted by a jury and, in her
- 16 trial, it came to light that an Area Manager had
- 17 experienced problems with balancing on the Horizon
- 18 system at Ms McKelvey's branch terminal and she had
- 19 maintained, right from the start, that the losses that
- 20 were alleged were due to errors on the computer system.
- 21 Is that something that you knew about?
- 22 A. Not that I remember, no.

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- 23 Q. Now, the Inquiry -- you may or you may not know this --
- 24 has heard evidence from the Post Office Investigators in
- 25 both of those cases, Ms Allan and Ms Winter, and they 194
- 1 in the email and I'm not reading anything else into that 2 at this point.
- 3 Q. Okay, well, if we could move up, then, after your 4 request Mr Baker wrote to Alana Renner, copying you in 5 with Mr Flemington and Ms Crichton:

"Please can help us craft our message around the Second Sight review. We need to combat the assertion that the review is acknowledgement that there is a problem with Horizon.

"Jarnail has drafted some words below. Do they strike the right tone?"

So what we see here is the purpose of the story is to stop anyone saying that Post Office are acknowledging that there's a problem with Horizon.

- 15 I think it's important here that, in the Second Sight review, Horizon was used as a more generic term than 16 17 just the computer. So here I don't know if Simon is
- saying problem with Horizon as the computer, rather than 18
- 19 the wider Horizon. Clearly, the wider Horizon is also 20 very important.
- 21 Q. Okay. If we could then scroll up to the next email,
- 22 which is Ronan Kelleher, 27 July 2012 at 11.27, so he
- 23 writes to Simon Baker, you're copied in again, and he 24 savs:
- 25 "As this message will most probably find its way 196

into the media, we need to get the message across from the start that we continue to have full confidence in the robustness of the Horizon system and ... I suggest the following tweaking to the proposed wording from

If you scroll down to the bottom of that letter, the "tweak", so to speak, and then you can see the final sentence; it's not part of a sentence, it's a sentence on its own:

"When the system has been challenged in criminal courts, it has been successfully defended."

So the expert, as you put it, looked at this, looked into this and, when it was came back and it was given a sort of final draft treatment, that sentence remained, didn't it?

- 16 A. Yes, and that's appalling.
- 17 Q. Then, going up to the top, then, we've got -- or the second from the top email: 18
- 19 "Ronan

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- 20 "That works. Thanks.
- "Simon." 21

22 So everything seems to be fine with that. Then the 23 last email in the chain, which was Jarnail Singh to Hugh 24 Flemington, there's been some redaction there but we can 25 see your name and --

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- 1 known. Whether Mr Singh knew, I don't know. But, you
- 2 know, you would have imagined that the lawyers on this
- 3 email chain would have known about the prosecutions
- 4 brought against subpostmasters.
- 5 Q. Thank you. The date of this, 31 July, you were the
- 6 Company Secretary at that point, weren't you?
- 7 A. I was.
- 8 Q. Did you present the story or show the story to the
- 9
- A. I cannot remember doing so but I may have shared it with 10 11 Alice
- 12 Q. Okay. I'm just going to see if I have any more 13 questions.
- 14 Finally, can you explain why it was called "our 15 story" in inverted commas?
- A. I think it's because right at the beginning of the 16
- 17 email, Hugh Flemington unfortunately calls it a "story"
- 18 and that's continued all the way up the email, and
- I think that's why. 19
- 20 Q. So it's a deliberate use of words, isn't it?
- 21 A. Yes, it's deliberate in this email but, in terms of "our
- 22 story", I think it's just saying what's -- what do the
- 23 Post Office want to say about this? That's ...
- 24 MR JACOBS: I have no further questions. Thank you.
- 25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

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Yeah.

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- 2 Q. -- Susan Crichton's name:
 - "Dear Hugh, Susan Alwen
- 4 "You have seen the final draft of 'our story' can
- 5 this now be released to our agents and counsel for
- 6 consistent approach and submissions when there is 7 [I think that's probably a typing mistake]
- 8
 - "Challenges to the Horizon.
- 9 "Regards
- 10 "Jarnail."
- 11 So the question I wanted to ask you is who are "our
- 12 agents" who this was going to go out to?
- 13 A. I don't know who he means by "our agents", unless its 14 subpostmasters.
- 15 Q. So other subpostmasters?
- 16 A. Yes, that is what I'm assuming but --
- 17 Q. Then, perhaps more troubling, this was going to go out
- 18 to counsel. Surely that means that this was going to be
- 19 used by barristers in cases against subpostmasters?
- 20 A. Well, that's why I'm -- I said it was appalling.
- Q. Do you accept, having said that it was appalling, that 21
- 22 Post Office knew, must have known, that there had been
- 23 Horizon acquittals and deliberately put out a false
- 24 account to cover that up?
- 25 A. So I don't know who, on this email chain, would have 198
- 1 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.
- 2 MR BLAKE: We have Ms Shah from the NFSP, she's assured me
- 3 she's going to be seven minutes, and then we have,
- 4 briefly, Ms Patrick as well.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, okay. 5
 - Questioned by MS SHAH
- 7 MS SHAH: Good afternoon, Ms Lyons, can you hear me?
- 8 A. I can, yes.

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- Q. I represent the NFSP at this Inquiry. I'm going to be 9
- 10 remembering to sections of your witness statement but
- this does not need to be brought up unless you wish to 11
- 12 review these sections.
- 13 So we saw in your witness statement that your
- 14 parents ran a sub post office and I think that your
- 15 father was also a previous General Secretary of the NFSP
- 16 from 1980 to 1991; is that correct?
- 17 A. That's correct, yes.
- 18 Q. In paragraphs 32 and 33 of your witness statement, you
- 19 describe your role as including the disciplining of
- 20 subpostmasters. This Inquiry has heard a great deal
- 21 about the overzealous, aggressive and intrusive way in
- 22 which audits and investigations were carried out with
- 23 an attitude of guilty from the outset, terminology used
- 24 such as "offender reports"; in fact you would have been
- 25 part of that way of working, wouldn't you?

- No, I don't believe so. I mean, I had no part of the 1 Α. 2 investigation procedures or -- I was the Area Manager or 3 the Retail Network Manager between '91 and '95, as you 4 say in paragraph 32. I spent most of my time trying to 5 help subpostmasters and support them. If something 6 happened, which meant that there was an issue at 7 an office, I believe that I would approach things in 8 an even-handed way and would have listened to the
- Q. So you wouldn't accept that, given that we have heard
 about this culture of guilty until proven innocent,
 that, given your family background in a sub post office
 and the family background in the NFSP, there is not much
 empathy being shown in this disciplining of

subpostmaster as well as listening to investigation or

subpostmasters when you were in your role?

A. So I'm saying that I don't agree with you in terms of my

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whatever.

- empathy with subpostmasters. In '91 to '95, the
 Investigation part of the business was in Royal Mail
 Group and that was a very different culture to how we
 dealt with subpostmasters and tried to help
 subpostmasters during this time. So I would really
 disagree that I was heavy-handed with subpostmasters at
 all.
- 25 **Q.** Okay. At paragraph 49, of your witness statement, you 201
- been discussed today, can you describe the differences
 in the level of disciplinary action and sanctions
 between subpostmasters and Crown Office cases?
 A. So, at this point, I wasn't dealing with subpostmasters
- 4 5 at all. I believe in the Crown Office cases, if someone 6 had a loss on the counter, they would be -- I believe 7 they could have so many losses within so many months of 8 time. I can't remember specifically but they would 9 have -- they would get some additional training, maybe, 10 if they were new or -- they would have support because, 11 in a Crown Office, you've got a branch manager standing 12 there who can be helping them with any issues on the
- 14 Q. So are you aware of the reason for the differences
 between Crown Office staff who are employed and
 self-employed, small business people, as to the level
 and attitude towards disciplinary action and/or
 sanctions?
- A. So they were on a very different contract, so that's why
 it was different: one was an employee and one was
 an agent.
- Q. So would your evidence be that it's nothing to do withthe ability to recovery funds from subpostmasters?
- 24 A. I don't believe it was.

counter.

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25 **Q.** Okay. At paragraph 360 of your witness statement you 203

- 1 talk about your role as Head of Directly Managed
- 2 Branches. What was taking place during that time with
- 3 the disciplining and/or prosecutions of Crown Office
- 4 personnel?
- 5 A. So it was a very different regime because they were
- 6 employees not agents and there was an HR process, which
- 7 meant that, if someone at an office -- there was
- 8 a problem with someone in a Crown Office, then they
- 9 would be part of the -- they're employees so they would
- be dealt with very differently than subpostmasters.
- 11 Q. How about prosecutions?
- 12 A. I can't remember any prosecutions but I might have --
- 13 I might have misremembered that but I can't remember any
- 14 prosecutions specifically about Horizon issues.
- 16 who represented Crown Office employees about the
- 17 approach to disciplining and prosecutions, albeit you
- 18 can't remember any prosecutions regarding Horizon
- 19 specifically?
- 20 A. So I had a lot of discussions with the CWU about the
- 21 people issues and trying to work with them, actually, to
- 23 well as, you know -- so I had lots of discussions with
- 24 the CWU.

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25 **Q.** So, from your knowledge in your various roles which have 202

try and make sure that our people were looked after as

- 1 say that your pride in working for the Post Office is
- 2 now tainted by what has happened. Do you not understand
- 3 or accept your own either active or passive role in what
- 4 has happened?
- 5 A. Yes, I do understand that. That's why my 34 years at
- 6 the business, which I was very proud of when I left, is
- 7 tainted, and it's very difficult because, you know,
- 8 something that you are very proud of like that, it's
- 9 suddenly not right to be proud of it any more.
- 10 Q. Would you accept that, given your family background in
- 11 a sub post office and your family background in the
- 12 NFSP, it might be said that you took the saying "poacher
- 13 turned gamekeeper" to the extreme?
- 14 A. I find that quite offensive, actually. My family
- 15 background, I think, enabled me to understand some of
 - the issues that subpostmasters were going through and,
- 17 at no point, did I think I was, you know, "poacher
- turned gamekeeper". I believe that, through all my
- 19 career, I did a lot to help subpostmasters.
- 20 MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. It's Ms Patrick.
- 21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Is that it, Ms Shah?
- 22 **MS SHAH:** I've got a few more short questions, sir. Sorry.
- 23 Would you accept that you shut your mind to the
- 24 consequences of everything you knew and ought to have
- 25 taken further and that directly or indirectly led to

1	subpostmasters being wrongly prosecuted?	1		You might be glad to hear I've only got one document
2	A. So in hind	2		I want to ask you about and it's about the Deloitte work
3	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I don't think the witness can answer that	3		that Mr Blake has already asked you about. He's asked
4	because she wasn't in any relevant post at any relevant	4		you about April and May in the minutes in 2014. I want
5	time to this Inquiry when people were being prosecuted.	5		to look at one document which comes a little after that,
6	MS SHAH: Okay, sir.	6		which is POL00029733. If we could look at the bottom
7	Okay. Would you agree that your actions, directly	7		third of page 1, I'd be grateful.
8	or indirectly, led to organisations and unions such as	8		We can see there, at the very bottom third of that
9	the NFSP and the CWU being misled to keep their concern	9		page, we see an email from you, Ms Lyons. Can you see
10	to a minimum and avoid them putting their support behind	10		that?
11	the JFSA?	11	A.	Yes.
12	A. So I don't believe my actions did that. I believed that	12	Q.	It's dated 4 June 2014. I don't need to read those
13	I was acting in good faith. I believed that the	13		names but do you accept that's the Board?
14	information I was given from experts within the business	14	A.	Yes.
15	and I relied on that information. If I had a regret,	15	Q.	So it's a message from you to the Board and it's
16	it's that I relied on information from people who	16		forwarding, and we see the header there, "Deloitte
17	I considered to be experts without demanding more proof.	17		Briefing Message from Chris Aujard and Lesley
18	MS SHAH: That concludes my questions. Thank you.	18		Sewell", and it's marked, "Strictly Private and
19		19		Confidential Subject to Legal Privilege".
20		20		The message says you're forwarding a message from
21	Questioned by MS PATRICK	21		Chris Aujard and Lesley Sewell and you attach the
22		22		Deloitte briefing.
23	•	23		Just for fullness, if we scroll up a little, we can
24		24		see the message. It goes over on to page 2, as well.
25	since had their convictions overturned. 205	25		We don't need to read it all out because it's quite 206
1	long sorry, scroll down. You say:	1		reflected the original?
2	"Dear All,	2	A.	No, because I wouldn't be able to do so.
3	"As detailed in the Board update sent last Saturday,	3	Q.	You don't recall asking to see the original at this
4	please find attached Deloitte's final draft 'Board	4		time?
5	Briefing', received by us late this afternoon."	5	A.	No, I don't recall asking.
6	As you go down, it talks about:	6	Q.	I just want to ask you and to check whether this helps
7	" features of the Horizon system which operate to	7		your memory on who might have completed the summary for
8	provide subpostmasters with full ownership and	8		the Board and helped with the Deloitte summary; now was
9	visibility of their branch ledger, and which maintains	9		it Mr Aujard and Ms Sewell who would have asked you to
10	a complete and accurate audit trail."	10		circulate this message?
11	The next paragraph:	11	A.	Can we keep going down for a minute to see who the
12	"The briefing strives to be succinct and	12		signatory
13	intelligible. However, given the subject matter and	13	Q.	Of course.
14	scope of the review, it remains somewhat technical."	14	A.	Yes. So this message has come from Lesley and Chris and
15	There are some bullet points which provide	15		that's who I am circulating it on behalf of. Now, that
16	a summary. We don't need to go to those for now but	16		doesn't mean I didn't check with someone before I did
17	I just want to ask you one question.	17		that. So I might have checked with Paula, for instance.
18	You circulate this message with the attachment and	18		It doesn't look as if I checked with Alice. So we were
19	the summary to the Board. Now, you've said you didn't,	19		expecting this update from Lesley and Chris, so I'm
20	in April and May, read the Deloitte report, the original	20		circulating it on their behalf.
21	version, and I think your evidence is that, until you	21	Q.	Okay. If we scroll up to the very top of this document,
22	were shown it by the Inquiry, you hadn't seen the	22		we see that you circulate it separately to Rodric
23	original report; is that right?	23		Williams. Can you see that there, at the top?
24	A. That's my belief, yes.	24	Δ	I can, yes.

25 **Q.** You say:

25 Q. So you wouldn't have checked this summary accurately

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1	Sorry should have ccd you in as you did all the	i A. Thank you.
2	work!"	2 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So we'll resume tomorrow morning with
3	Now, you're circulating a message from Mr Aujard and	3 Ms Vennells, I take it?
4	Lesley Sewell. Can you remember now which of both of	4 MR BLAKE: That's correct, sir, yes.
5	them might have asked you to circulate the document?	5 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Jolly good. Thank you.
6	A. No, I can't.	6 (4.28 pm)
7	Q. You're forwarding it to Mr Williams, saying:	7 (The hearing adjourned until 9.45 am the following day)
8	" should have cc'd you in [because, essentially]	8
9	you did all the work!"	9
10	Does that help your memory on who was involved in	10
11	the preparation of the final summary for the Board with	11
12	Deloitte?	12
13	A. So Rodric was a lawyer and I am reading into this now	13
14	that he had the connection with Deloitte and that he	14
15	was and so I would have said it was Chris Aujard but	15
16	that's only because I'm saying here that Rod, a lawyer,	16
17	did all the work.	17
18	MS PATRICK: Thank you, Ms Lyons. That's all the questions	18
19	we have for you.	19
20	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Is that it, Mr Blake?	20
21	MR BLAKE: It is, yes. Thank you, sir.	21
22	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, thank you very much, Ms Lyons, for	22
23	producing a detailed witness statement and for coming to	23
24	the Inquiry today to answer very many questions. I'm	24
25	grateful for your participation.	25
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