

Tuesday, 15 October 2024

1  
 2 (10.00 am)  
 3 MS HODGE: Good morning, sir. Can you see and hear us?  
 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you very much.  
 5 MS HODGE: Thank you. Our first witness today is Mike  
 6 Young.  
 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.  
 8 MS HODGE: Please could the witness be sworn.  
 9 MICHAEL THOMAS YOUNG (sworn)  
 10 Questioned by MS HODGE  
 11 Q. Thank you. Please give your full name?  
 12 A. Michael Thomas Young.  
 13 Q. You should have in front of you a copy of your witness  
 14 statement dated 8 August 2024.  
 15 A. I do.  
 16 Q. That statement runs to 63 pages. Could I ask you,  
 17 please, to turn to page 58.  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. Do you see your signature there?  
 20 A. I do.  
 21 Q. Is the content of that statement true to the best of  
 22 your knowledge and belief?  
 23 A. It is.  
 24 Q. Thank you. Mr Young, I'm going to begin by asking you  
 25 a few questions about your professional background,

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1 Q. In that role, you were responsible for IT development in  
 2 the Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia and Pacific  
 3 regions; is that right?  
 4 A. IT operations and development, yes, that's correct.  
 5 Q. Thank you. Before taking up your role at Verizon, had  
 6 you undertaken any formal training or obtained any  
 7 qualifications in information technology?  
 8 A. I have a diploma in security management.  
 9 Q. When did you obtain that?  
 10 A. I think that was whilst at Orange. I was studying for  
 11 a diploma in security management and that continued  
 12 after leaving Orange too.  
 13 Q. So far as that diploma is concerned, in security  
 14 management, what aspects of information technology was  
 15 covered, do you recall?  
 16 A. Most parts of cyber -- what we would know as cyber  
 17 security today.  
 18 Q. Thank you. You say you left Verizon in June 2006 and  
 19 after spending a year running your own consultancy you  
 20 joined BT in July 2007 as their Vice President of Global  
 21 Services; is that right?  
 22 A. That is correct.  
 23 Q. Dealing then with your employment at the Post Office,  
 24 you joined Post Office as Operations Director in August  
 25 2008, initially reporting to the Managing Director, Alan

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1 before we go on to deal with some of the substantive  
 2 matters dealt with in your statement.  
 3 Firstly, on leaving school, you joined the British  
 4 Army in which you served for 11 years; is that correct?  
 5 A. That is correct.  
 6 Q. After leaving the army you served as a police officer  
 7 for seven years, rising to the rank of Detective  
 8 Sergeant; is that right?  
 9 A. That is correct.  
 10 Q. Between March 1995 and February 1998 you say you worked  
 11 for Orange Plc; is that the mobile network provider and  
 12 Internet service provider?  
 13 A. It was at the time, yes.  
 14 Q. Forgive me, at the time, yes. You explain that you were  
 15 initially employed by Orange as an Investigations  
 16 Manager, responsible for fraud and security matters; is  
 17 that right?  
 18 A. Correct.  
 19 Q. You were later promoted to the Group Head of Security  
 20 Management; is that correct?  
 21 A. That's correct.  
 22 Q. Upon leaving Orange, you took up a role as the Chief  
 23 Information Officer and Vice President of International  
 24 IT for Verizon Business Solutions; is that correct?  
 25 A. That is correct.

2

1 Cook; is that right?  
 2 A. That's correct.  
 3 Q. You describe your responsibilities as Operations  
 4 Director as being to develop and manage at an executive  
 5 level the partnership and relationship with suppliers.  
 6 A. Correct.  
 7 Q. Is that how you saw your role at the time?  
 8 A. (The witness nodded)  
 9 Q. In your role as Operations Director you had a number of  
 10 direct reports, which included the Head of Change and  
 11 IS, which was responsible for overseeing technology, is  
 12 that right --  
 13 A. That's right.  
 14 Q. -- as well as the Head of Security?  
 15 A. Correct.  
 16 Q. When you joined the Post Office, what did you understand  
 17 the remit of the Post Office Security Team to be?  
 18 A. It was an all-encompassing type mandate. It was all  
 19 areas of risk across the POL business. So making sure  
 20 that employees were aware of their security  
 21 responsibilities so, therefore, there was some form of  
 22 training for employees when they were brought on board  
 23 to the Post Office. That was supplied and supported by  
 24 the Security Team, right the way through to acting on  
 25 intelligence that may refer to security in the Cash

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1 Vehicles in Transit arena, which was a very large part  
2 of my operational remit, and right the way through to  
3 investigations.

4 **Q.** When you say "investigations", can you clarify what you  
5 mean by that: are you talking about criminal  
6 investigations; did you understand that the Post Office  
7 Security Team were responsible for investigating alleged  
8 offences of fraud, theft and false accounting, for  
9 example?

10 **A.** One aspect of John Scott, the Head of Security's, roles  
11 and responsibilities was to look at criminal  
12 investigations, yes.

13 **Q.** In your statement, you say that you were not responsible  
14 for investigations into potential criminality within the  
15 Post Office Network and that you had no involvement with  
16 prosecutions or civil litigation. Given that you had  
17 oversight of a team which conducted criminal  
18 investigations, do you think that that's entirely  
19 accurate to say that you had no responsibility for the  
20 investigation into potential criminality within the  
21 network?

22 **A.** I do.

23 **Q.** Who did you think was responsible at an executive level  
24 for managing and overseeing the criminal investigations  
25 carried out by the Post Office Security Team?

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1 Group via my former career as a policeman and some of  
2 the gaps in my understanding were either covered off in  
3 the intro by Alan Cook or my introduction in my first  
4 weeks of getting to know my team and, in particular,  
5 John Scott as he told me about his roles and  
6 responsibilities. And I knew that, in terms of  
7 prosecutions within -- potential prosecutions within the  
8 Post Office, that it was being handled under that Royal  
9 Mail Group type mantle, with a strong emphasis coming  
10 from the Legal Team.

11 **Q.** I wonder if we could please take a look at an email  
12 chain that took place in 2011 between John Scott, your  
13 Head of Security, you, Mr Young, and Rob Wilson, the  
14 Head of Criminal Law team, and it bears the POL00019281.  
15 Thank you. If we could scroll down, at the top we have  
16 the last email in the chain. If we could scroll down,  
17 please, to the bottom of page 2.

18 This is an email from, we can see, Rob Wilson. If  
19 we just scroll up to the bottom of page 1, please, it is  
20 said to be from Monica Thompson but seems to be sent on  
21 behalf of Rob Wilson, Head of Security. This is  
22 addressed to John Scott and copied to Susan Crichton.  
23 As you'll see, you're later copied into the email. It  
24 relates to a letter from a Member of Parliament  
25 requesting that the Post Office discontinue the

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1 **A.** There was an overlapping responsibility managed via  
2 Royal Mail Group for all criminal prosecutions across  
3 the group and John was the -- John Scott, the Head of  
4 Security for POL, was the lead into that. In my  
5 introduction, when arriving at the Post Office, it was  
6 made clear to me that that process did not need my  
7 supervision or my line management because that had been  
8 in place over a number of years, and I was told not to  
9 get involved and to leave it with both Legal and that  
10 RMG, Royal Mail Group, type framework.

11 **Q.** Who told you that?

12 **A.** Alan Cook, my boss, the CEO.

13 **Q.** Upon joining the Post Office, what did you understand to  
14 be the relationship between the Post Office Security  
15 Team and the Royal Mail Group Security Team and those  
16 who had responsibility for criminal prosecutions?

17 **A.** As a former policeman, I knew that Royal Mail Group had  
18 a means of prosecuting people because I'd seen them in  
19 my police career involved in certain aspects of  
20 prosecutions. What I understood from talking to John,  
21 as an introduction to John, as one of my direct reports,  
22 was how the process worked, because I asked questions,  
23 in relation to what had been described to me by Alan  
24 Cook.

25 So I had some sense of how it worked at Royal Mail

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1 prosecution of a constituent. It reads:

2 "Dear John

3 "Please find enclosed a copy of a letter dated  
4 18 July received in today's post. You will see from the  
5 associated summons the allegation in this case concerns  
6 the theft of over £53,000.

7 "My current instructions are that not all of the  
8 money has in fact been repaid. My understanding is that  
9 a total of £18,104.75 has been paid and that in any  
10 event despite the comments made in the letter that this  
11 case in the public interest to prosecute.

12 "Bearing in mind this letter has come from an MP and  
13 has been forwarded to the Chairman, I have copied the  
14 correspondence to you and will be grateful if my  
15 instructions could be confirmed in due course.

16 "If I can be of any assistance, please do not  
17 hesitate to contact me ..."

18 So that penultimate paragraph, Mr Wilson is seeking  
19 confirmation of instructions from John Scott; do you see  
20 that?

21 **A.** Yes.

22 **Q.** If we scroll up, please. Thank you. So the second  
23 email in the chain is from Mr Scott to you. We see  
24 various other recipients copied, including Susan  
25 Crichton, Head of Legal, and others. It reads:

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1 "Mike.  
 2 "Please find attached a letter from the [Right  
 3 Honourable MP], in regards to Post Office Security  
 4 prosecuting one of his constituents ... and requesting  
 5 that we discontinue.  
 6 "The letter has been forwarded to the Chairman's  
 7 office [as we see below], so is likely to become a flag  
 8 case."  
 9 He says:  
 10 "I'll ensure that the case and prosecution is  
 11 reviewed and that any future action taken is appropriate  
 12 and proportionate, although you can see the initial  
 13 assessment from Rob Wilson below.  
 14 "We'll arrange a holding letter in the meantime ..."  
 15 My question is this: if you had no oversight of  
 16 these matters, why is it that in July 2011 Mr Scott  
 17 brings this to your attention and raises it with you?  
 18 **A.** So amongst my direct reports -- and there were number,  
 19 we've only covered two or three of them -- I made it  
 20 clear that anything that was likely to escalate to the  
 21 Board -- POL Board and the Royal Mail Group Board -- and  
 22 certainly anything that was coming from the shareholder,  
 23 I'd like to be copied in and made aware of. And I think  
 24 in part, John is making sure, on a rare occasion --  
 25 a very rare occasion -- that he is standing true to that

1 **A.** My immediate answer to that would be I didn't think it  
 2 described quite what my job role was. My job role was  
 3 a small -- a small part of my job role was the IT, with  
 4 a CIO or an IT director, as we'd know them today, *in*  
 5 *situ* and managing that on a day-to-day basis. I had, as  
 6 we briefly covered earlier, responsibility for all of  
 7 the core programmes, change programmes -- and I'm not  
 8 talking about IT change here, I'm talking about changes  
 9 to the network, changes to the property portfolio -- all  
 10 of the change programmes reported to me at the executive  
 11 level with Neil Ennis, at the time, being my direct  
 12 report for that; I had CVIT, the Cash Vehicles in  
 13 Transit. Post Office, I think, still remains the  
 14 largest mover of physical cash in the country. It's  
 15 a very, very large enterprise with depots right the way  
 16 through the UK, and some significant fleet that backs  
 17 that up on a day-by-day type basis; and then I had  
 18 a number of other elements that sat alongside that, so  
 19 it was quite a broad -- quite a broad remit.  
 20 And a small part of my time was spent on the IT, and  
 21 I've talked about that in my statement. It did grow  
 22 with Horizon Online but it still relied very heavily on  
 23 my direct report chain to keep me abreast of anything  
 24 that they thought I should be aware of, so that I could  
 25 lend my support and supervision at POL Board, at the POL

1 instruction.  
 2 **Q.** Just to be clear, from this it's right to understand  
 3 that you were aware that your Head of Security, John  
 4 Scott, was giving instructions to the Criminal Law Team  
 5 about the conduct of cases; is that correct?  
 6 **A.** Well, I'm aware clearly through the disclosure of what  
 7 the Inquiry has brought forward. Having read that, I'm  
 8 aware of it in terms of the content. Was I aware that  
 9 John was doing something like that on a norm? The  
 10 answer to that is no.  
 11 **Q.** You did not know that at the time; is that correct?  
 12 **A.** No.  
 13 **Q.** Dealing then briefly with some changes in your job title  
 14 and your responsibilities during the course of your work  
 15 with the Post Office, you've said that in and around  
 16 April 2010, your job title changed to that of the Chief  
 17 Technology and Operations Services Director; is that  
 18 correct?  
 19 **A.** That is correct.  
 20 **Q.** That didn't result in any changes in your roles and  
 21 responsibilities; is that right?  
 22 **A.** Throughout my time, I think, at the Post Office, my  
 23 roles and responsibilities didn't change.  
 24 **Q.** I think you say you weren't happy with that title  
 25 though; is that right, and why is that?

1 Executive Team, and across that large mandate.  
 2 **Q.** Now, a few months later in October 2010, you were  
 3 promoted to the job of Chief Operations Officer; is that  
 4 correct?  
 5 **A.** It is but, by way of an explanation, at the time when  
 6 Alan Cook left -- and for me, Alan Cook left relatively  
 7 quickly, to a point where I think most of the Executive  
 8 Team that were *in situ* didn't really have much of  
 9 an opportunity to say cheerio. As we all know David  
 10 Smith, former Parcelforce, came in as an interim  
 11 Managing Director and, at that time, you know, David --  
 12 he didn't explain it to me, though I asked -- had  
 13 promoted or given Paula Vennells the title of Chief  
 14 Operating Officer.  
 15 You can't be an Operations Director and have a Chief  
 16 Operating Officer without some people drawing  
 17 conclusions and looking at how that all works together.  
 18 So I had the debate with David Smith, and he said, "What  
 19 title do you want because, you know, Chief Operating  
 20 Officer is Paula's and frankly that's done", and I chose  
 21 what I thought would best get me through, if you like,  
 22 in the interim. But it wasn't truly reflective of the  
 23 role, as I've described.

24 Much later on, as David Smith leaves the Post Office  
 25 and then goes into group to pick up a new role in Royal

1 Mail Group, Paula becomes the Managing Director.  
 2 I wasn't aware that that was going to happen but clearly  
 3 things had moved to a point where that took place, and  
 4 a little later down the road, Paula suggested that I've  
 5 then become the Chief Operating Officer. But through  
 6 that entire journey from Operations Director to Chief  
 7 Technology and Services Director, and even Chief  
 8 Operating Officer, my roles and responsibilities didn't  
 9 change. There was a significant programme that took the  
 10 best part of my final year at Post Office to complete,  
 11 which was essentially manage the negotiation on behalf  
 12 of the Post Office as it related to separation from  
 13 Royal Mail Group, and that was, you know, three or four  
 14 days a week to bring that to fruition over a 12-month  
 15 period.

16 And during that time, in that mainstay, that's when  
 17 I was the Chief Operating Officer.

18 **Q.** Thank you. So just dealing briefly, then, with the  
 19 circumstances of your departure. In March 2012, you  
 20 were informed by Paula Vennells, then Managing Director,  
 21 that you would not be sitting on the Board  
 22 post-separation, you say, and that your title would no  
 23 longer remain Chief Operating Officer; is that correct?

24 **A.** That is correct.

25 **Q.** You say you decided to leave at that stage as you

13

1 **A.** I physically left in the second week of March but  
 2 contractually left, yes, around that date.  
 3 **Q.** I'd like to rewind then to when you first joined the  
 4 Post Office in 2008 and your knowledge and understanding  
 5 of the Horizon system that was in place at the time. So  
 6 the version of Horizon which was running in the Post  
 7 Office at the time you joined was Legacy Horizon; is  
 8 that correct?

9 **A.** That is correct.

10 **Q.** In your statement you make some general comments about  
 11 your attitude to Legacy Horizon. I wonder if we could  
 12 bring that up, please, at WITN11130100, at page 10,  
 13 paragraph 30, please. You say this:

14 "During my first three years I spent a lot of my  
 15 time visiting Post Office branches, getting a feel for  
 16 everyone's morale, and trying to see whether there were  
 17 strategies we could implement to help. Nothing in the  
 18 branches was reported to me that indicated that there  
 19 was something fundamentally wrong with Legacy Horizon or  
 20 Horizon Online. Still, to this day, I am unaware of  
 21 an identified part of the Horizon code that someone can  
 22 point to [to] show that Horizon is fundamentally flawed.  
 23 I believe an effective IT system requires not only good  
 24 technology, but that technology needs to be wrapped in  
 25 good processes and training for all users. Like any IT

15

1 regarded that as a demotion?

2 **A.** It's difficult, in career terms, to go from one title,  
 3 to another title, to Chief Operations Officer, to then  
 4 go back to another title, which may very well have been  
 5 Operations Director. The mandate I'm going to presume  
 6 was not likely to stay the same. In fairness to Paula,  
 7 I had more than hinted that the separation negotiation  
 8 that I was undertaking was likely to be my last big  
 9 effort for the Post Office. So I think there were  
 10 a number of people that knew that it wasn't my intent to  
 11 say -- to stay. I think I'd given my all over four  
 12 years for Post Office and wanted to move on to something  
 13 different.

14 So when the dialogue took place in a one-to-one with  
 15 Paula, we rapidly, you know, came to an agreement on how  
 16 that might work. But, certainly, going from Chief  
 17 Operating Officer back to Operations Director, and then  
 18 some sort of restructure, which inevitably will have  
 19 taken -- would have taken place based on separation, it  
 20 would have seen less of a remit and, candidly, I wanted  
 21 to leave on a high, having delivered the Separation  
 22 Agreement and having that title.

23 **Q.** Just to bring that summary of your roles and  
 24 responsibilities at Post Office to a conclusion you,  
 25 ultimately left in April 2012; is that right?

14

1 system, they all have ..."

2 You've used the term "BEDs", that's bugs, errors and  
 3 defects; is that right?

4 **A.** *(No audible answer)*

5 **Q.** "... requiring fixes or updates."

6 Now, I just want to clarify, if I can, what it is  
 7 exactly that you're seeking to convey here. The first  
 8 comment you make, in effect, is that nothing was brought  
 9 to your attention in those early years that suggested  
 10 Legacy Horizon was fundamentally flawed; is that fair?

11 **A.** That's correct.

12 **Q.** But you knew from your previous roles that all systems  
 13 have bugs, errors and defects; is that right?

14 **A.** That stands true today with any system.

15 **Q.** Therefore, like any other system, you would have  
 16 expected Legacy Horizon to have some bugs that required  
 17 fixing; is that fair?

18 **A.** It's difficult to comment over something you're not  
 19 aware of. So if we just take a step back for a moment,  
 20 so on arriving at POL, I was taken through -- I think my  
 21 statement makes it clear -- about an hour's worth of  
 22 training and overview of Horizon and I was given  
 23 a fairly thorough brief by the then IT Director,  
 24 Mr Smith, or Dave Smith, on, you know, how it was  
 25 operating across The Branch Network, and, for those

16

1 people that know Horizon, an hour is not a great deal of  
2 time.

3 So no one in the course of that introduction in the  
4 model office, within what was then the headquarters of  
5 Post Office, indicated any flaws with the system.  
6 Operating issues, I want to be clear of what I mean by  
7 that. So no one mentioned any BEDs but they did mention  
8 blue screens and network-related issues in branch which  
9 caused particular problems. But, as part of that  
10 dialogue, I was also briefed on the fact that Horizon  
11 Online, HNG-X, in other terms, had already been planned  
12 for and was already contractualised with Fujitsu, so  
13 its replacement was already in swing with Fujitsu  
14 already undertaking to write the code for that new  
15 system.

16 So I arrive, I'm given a brief overview of Horizon  
17 and an hour's worth of training in the model office via  
18 the IT Director. I'm told how the contract works to  
19 a degree, in very short measure, and I'm told that the  
20 future of Horizon has already been embedded into  
21 a contract that lasts until 2015. But Horizon Online  
22 sought to deal with the operating issues that were felt  
23 across a number of branches in the network.

24 But at no time in that dialogue was there any  
25 mention -- I mean, the one that I think the Inquiry has

17

1 a significant bug, it was addressed, this was the form  
2 of it but, to date, since then, it's clean running.

3 I would have expected it but it didn't come.  
4 **Q.** Dealing with what Mr Smith did say to you, you addressed  
5 this at paragraph 41, please, if we could turn to that  
6 on page 14. Thank you. You refer at the top to two  
7 issues, those are the hardware issues to which you've  
8 just referred -- the blue screen freezes and the ISDN  
9 Internet connection -- and you say that the two issues  
10 described were not linked to criminal prosecutions.

11 You go on to say:

12 "However, I was aware of complaints about the  
13 integrity of Legacy Horizon by some of the  
14 [subpostmasters]. I recall speaking to Smith ..."

15 That's David Smith, Head of Change and IS; is that  
16 right? There are, of course, two David Smiths, so we  
17 want to be clear that -- is that correct, you're talking  
18 about him?

19 **A.** Yes, that is correct. It was confusing for me at the  
20 time.

21 **Q.** You recall speaking to him about to him about the  
22 allegations when you joined the Post Office. You say:

23 "From memory, I believe he assured me verbally that  
24 there was nothing wrong with ... Horizon and nothing to  
25 worry about (or words to that effect)."

19

1 picked up on and I've seen since the Inquiry has come  
2 about is the Callendar Square issue, as an example. No  
3 one took me through that or made any indication that we  
4 were suffering with any type of BED that was core to the  
5 code of Horizon. And the fact that the network was very  
6 expansive -- at that time, it isn't the size it is now,  
7 it was 12,000/13,000 branches -- you know, if there were  
8 significant issues in the Horizon code, they would have  
9 aired themselves in some form or other in a more  
10 expansive way across the entire network, and that  
11 clearly wasn't the case when I arrived.

12 **Q.** You have mentioned, Mr Young, the Callendar Square bug,  
13 which you say wasn't brought to your attention during  
14 your early briefings on Horizon; is that right?

15 **A.** In the introduction, yes.

16 **Q.** Do you think you should have been told that there was  
17 a known software bug in Legacy Horizon which was capable  
18 of causing receipts and payments mismatches, of which  
19 the Post Office was aware?

20 **A.** I'm hesitating only from the point of view that, clearly  
21 in the eyes of the Post Office, certainly David Smith --  
22 it was in his rearview mirror and had long gone by the  
23 time I arrived two years later.

24 Would I have expected to have been told? Had I been  
25 in his shoes, I would have said that there was

18

1 I just want to explore with you briefly what you  
2 understood Mr Smith to be saying about Legacy Horizon,  
3 and I think there are two -- well, there may be more,  
4 but two possible readings of this: one is that he was  
5 telling you that there were no faults in Legacy Horizon,  
6 which might explain the accounting errors about which  
7 subpostmasters were complaining; another possibility is  
8 he was saying that, like all systems, Legacy Horizon had  
9 some faults but that these were being appropriately  
10 managed.

11 What did you understand him to be saying to you at  
12 the time: was it the first or second of these, or indeed  
13 something else entirely?

14 **A.** So something slightly different. There wasn't  
15 an in-depth discussion about some subpostmasters  
16 complaining about Horizon. So, you know, it wasn't  
17 a ten-minute/five-minute discussion around that,  
18 I remember him saying that some subpostmasters have  
19 historically complained about the system and I didn't  
20 draw too much of a conclusion from that, other than  
21 I thought it was related to both the ISDN issue the  
22 network in branch, as well as the blue screen type  
23 problems that occurred as part of that process.

24 So I asked -- I asked, "Are we talking about the  
25 operational type issues that sometimes occur in branch?"

20

1 He said "Yes and no, some people blame the system when  
2 they're caught out". And I asked, "What do you know  
3 what you mean by caught out?"

4 "When they may be stealing from the branch", was  
5 where the conversation -- I think where the conversation  
6 went. But it didn't -- I didn't hang on that and,  
7 candidly, neither did he.

8 **Q.** What you said here was that he gave you a verbal  
9 assurance that there was nothing wrong with Legacy  
10 Horizon. But does not follow that that's not entirely  
11 consistent with what you yourself understood about IT  
12 systems at the time, which is that they're all liable to  
13 have some bugs, errors and defects and, in your words,  
14 the issue is how you deal with that?

15 **A.** So at the time that Dave Smith was taking me through  
16 that process in the model office, there were no issues  
17 with the system from a code point of view. So there was  
18 nothing suggested that a coding error was causing  
19 problems in branches. I want to be clear about that.  
20 So we didn't go down that route. I've made already  
21 clear that he didn't mention the Callendar Square issue.  
22 He largely emphasised the operational frailties of the  
23 Legacy Horizon system, and talked to some postmasters  
24 suggesting the system was at fault when they were  
25 prosecuted for theft.

21

1 discrepancies?

2 **A.** To investigate what, sorry?

3 **Q.** Accounting discrepancies.

4 **A.** I don't think I ever, in those early days -- in fact I'm  
5 trying to think across the stretch of the 4 years -- did  
6 we -- I'm sure we're going to come to the Horizon Online  
7 early pilot issues -- but I don't think I ever went in  
8 to a conversation with Dave Smith, looking at the  
9 end-to-end process, or with Fujitsu, where the start of  
10 the conversation was about accountancy or data  
11 mismatches because it had been made clear to me by both  
12 entities, both Fujitsu, Dave Smith and the support  
13 teams, that Fujitsu/Horizon, were all working within the  
14 limits of the contract, and within the limits of the  
15 SLAs.

16 And so no one was raising their hand to suggest we  
17 had a -- I'll call it a code issue on Horizon, or  
18 an anomaly that might relate to code, that might be  
19 causing a mismatch in some form or other.

20 **Q.** You've just said that you were given assurances by  
21 Fujitsu that there were no significant issues, coding  
22 problems, that might lead to accounting discrepancies.  
23 Who within Fujitsu gave you those assurances?

24 **A.** In order to answer that question, I think it's probably  
25 best to frame how I elected to run the relationship with

23

1 **Q.** Did you make any enquiries of Mr Smith about the  
2 end-to-end processes which were in place to manage any  
3 bugs, errors and defects that were detected in Legacy  
4 Horizon?

5 **A.** We did that much later on in the practicalities.  
6 This -- in my first weeks at the Post Office, there were  
7 a number of people I had to see and be introduced to,  
8 including at Royal Mail Group. So as I became more  
9 familiar with the architecture, as I got to grips with  
10 some of the contractual arrangements with Fujitsu, they  
11 were pieces of work that were done over a number of  
12 months, as you start to get a sense of your whole  
13 mandate and what that means. It was a very, very big  
14 mandate and there were lots of calls on my time. So  
15 invariably some of this homework, for want of better  
16 words, was as I've suggested: homework. You took it  
17 home and ran through it with a fine-toothed comb.

18 Did I understand the way the Helpdesk and other  
19 functionality worked around Horizon? In broad terms,  
20 the answer to that is yes.

21 **Q.** So you say that that's a topic you dealt with a little  
22 later, when you were dealing with practicalities. What  
23 do you recall being told about the end-to-end processes  
24 that were in place, within Fujitsu but also as between  
25 Fujitsu and Post Office to investigate accounting

22

1 Fujitsu, and I think my statement makes it clear but  
2 I'll spell it out. I didn't have the time, candidly --  
3 the time it deserved, certainly -- to run down  
4 everything in IT, that's largely why we had an IT  
5 Director/CIO and a big team, a fairly sizeable team for  
6 what essentially is an outsourced solution. It's  
7 a service. The contract made it clear that we didn't  
8 own the IP to the code and some of the conversations  
9 I had with a Gavin Bounds or a Duncan Tait at Fujitsu  
10 made that quite clear, "The code is ours. You own the  
11 service because you pay for that but you don't pay the  
12 code". I had a particular view on that but I can't  
13 argue that the contract supported their stance.

14 So I found it, you know -- I managed the  
15 relationship on the basis that I would deal with the top  
16 tier management when there was an escalation and I would  
17 clearly get closer to Fujitsu as it related to Horizon  
18 Online, which was coming down the road, and build  
19 a relationship on that basis. But I wanted the IT  
20 Director/CIO to have responsibility for running the day  
21 to day and the day-to-day end to end.

22 So, you know, the CIO and IT Director didn't have  
23 responsibility for training; that largely settled with  
24 our network branch colleagues. But they did have  
25 responsibility for some of the Helpdesk and technical

24

1 type aspects of the service. And I wanted the IT  
2 Director and the CEO to manage that because, candidly,  
3 if I'd been in their shoes, that's the way I would have  
4 wanted to run it.

5 So the way we had it framed very early on was that  
6 I would basically ring the top echelon of Fujitsu if  
7 leverage was required, to get things resolved, or to  
8 talk through strategic type themes that the IT Director  
9 and I were aligned to, but they were there to run the  
10 relationship on a day-to-day basis, including any  
11 operational impediments that may occur along the  
12 journey. And I think the disclosure documents provided  
13 as part of the Inquiry support that framework.

14 **Q.** The answer you have just given suggests that you weren't  
15 ever given any direct assurances by employees of Fujitsu  
16 as to the robustness or integrity of the code in Legacy  
17 Horizon; would that be correct?

18 **A.** Let me apologise, I should have answered your question  
19 because I went off at a slight tangent there. I think  
20 you have seen it in some of the documents but,  
21 certainly, I had a bullish relationship with Fujitsu,  
22 I demanded excellence and, if I thought there were  
23 shortcomings, I wasn't immune from making it quite clear  
24 that I was unhappy and, again, taking the discovery  
25 document process as a whole, I think that theme comes

25

1 come to Horizon Online shortly -- but I understood your  
2 evidence a short time ago to be that, so far as you were  
3 concerned, you'd received assurances, both from David  
4 Smith but also from Fujitsu, that Legacy Horizon was  
5 operating fine. What I wanted to establish was whether  
6 you were given any direct personal assurances by Fujitsu  
7 concerning the operation of Legacy Horizon; do you  
8 recall whether that is the case or not?

9 **A.** Two names that spring to mind in terms of that dialogue:  
10 Stephen Long and Gavin Bounds. And it wasn't one  
11 conversation; it was probably several over the tenure.

12 **Q.** From those individuals, you understood that all was  
13 well?

14 **A.** I want to be clear. In the context of a conversation  
15 with Fujitsu around where things were, I had, as part of  
16 that conversation -- whether it was in their offices  
17 visiting their sites, which I did periodically -- I had  
18 a conversation as part of that process that asked about  
19 the continuing integrity of Horizon Legacy and, even  
20 after the delivery of Horizon Online, Horizon Online.

21 **Q.** Thank you. So if we move on, please, to the pilot of  
22 Horizon Online. You explain in your statement that you  
23 became aware of several bugs, errors and defects that  
24 were identified, that is to say the fault/the problems  
25 manifested during the rollout of the pilot; is that

27

1 through.

2 So I would regularly, where there was an operational  
3 issue, if we go to Horizon Online as a classic example,  
4 when I was made aware of the two Oracle issues, that we  
5 know to be Oracle issues now and had to wait some time  
6 to find them during the pilot, I'll use words my mother  
7 would say: I gave Fujitsu pretty short shrift and said  
8 "These need sorting out really, really quickly". And,  
9 in between those times where there may have been  
10 operational imperatives that we were dealing with,  
11 change that went in badly, hardware failures that may  
12 have happened in the data centre, I was constantly  
13 asking the question, you know, "Does the system work the  
14 way you would expect it to? The service seems to work  
15 for us", et cetera, et cetera.

16 And, as the media played out around the integrity of  
17 Horizon, those messages back to Fujitsu got sharper and  
18 they got sharper. A lot of communication via the  
19 telephone but also some communication, as you see in the  
20 disclosure documents, by email and by letter, to ask  
21 that very question and demand some sort of discovery  
22 process over what, essentially, was two-thirds new code  
23 in Horizon Online.

24 **Q.** With respect to you, Mr Young, I don't think you have,  
25 in fact, answered my question which was -- and we'll

26

1 correct?

2 **A.** Yes, that's correct.

3 **Q.** These faults had caused service interruptions and delays  
4 which required the rollout to be paused; is that right?

5 **A.** That is correct.

6 **Q.** Now, you said on more than one occasion in your  
7 statement that you were not concerned about the  
8 existence of bugs, errors and defects *per se*, and that  
9 the key issue for you was how they were being handled;  
10 is that fair?

11 **A.** That's correct.

12 **Q.** I think you say that's particularly so in a pilot  
13 period, where you might expect to experience more  
14 problems, more faults, than in live operation?

15 **A.** Correct.

16 **Q.** Now, you explain in your statement that, for some  
17 considerable time, Fujitsu were unable to identify the  
18 underlying root cause of the problems that were being  
19 experienced during the pilot; is that fair?

20 **A.** That is fair.

21 **Q.** You say that you were sufficiently concerned about the  
22 situation that you considered rolling back the pilot and  
23 reverting to Legacy Horizon; is that right?

24 **A.** That's correct. I did say that. I would like to point  
25 out that a rollback would have been extremely difficult

28

1 and caused any number of problems. So a part of your  
2 thinking when you're going through that process is, "Do  
3 I cause more problems by rolling back than trying to  
4 persist and roll forward?" And you're constantly  
5 evaluating on what you're being told and the datasets  
6 you've got to work with as a consequence.

7 But, certainly, had Horizon Online seen a more  
8 elongated timeline around dealing with what we now know  
9 as those Oracle bugs, we would seriously have had to  
10 consider rolling back.

11 **Q.** Do you recall when it was that the Oracle bugs -- well,  
12 obviously, I think you didn't know initially that there  
13 were Oracle bugs. We'll come on to look at when that  
14 was discovered but, when the problems first manifested  
15 themselves in the pilot, do you recall precisely when  
16 that was brought to your attention -- I say "precisely",  
17 in terms of months?

18 **A.** I mean, through the disclosure via the Inquiry process  
19 and the documents that were provided to me, March 2010  
20 is around the time frame, so between February and March  
21 a data mismatch was being aired and, as I understand  
22 it -- and I knew it was small numbers -- in comparison  
23 to the network as a whole, I think there were, at the  
24 time, 62 affected branches.

25 **Q.** We'll come on to some of that detail shortly but in your  
29

1 I had a viewpoint that suggested, as it was coded  
2 related, find the issue in the code and then someone  
3 goes into that code and fixes it almost overnight. And,  
4 as we know now today, digital systems are done that way  
5 today right down to your iPhone. So I had a viewpoint  
6 then that that should take days not weeks, and this took  
7 too long. So I can't be specific about the date but my  
8 general take at the time and I feeling I have now is  
9 that it took way too long to address.

10 **Q.** I would like to ask you, I just wish to clarify, please,  
11 what you say about these two bugs at paragraph 46 of  
12 your statement. So that's at the bottom of page 15 and  
13 over the page to page 16, please. If we could bring  
14 that up.

15 You explain there that it was in March 2010 you  
16 learnt that the faults causing the service interruptions  
17 and delays during the pilot were two different Oracle  
18 bugs, that being faults in the Oracle database software.  
19 You then say this:

20 "The two Oracle [bugs, errors, defects] caused  
21 a data mismatch; therefore, I still maintained that  
22 there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the system."

23 Can you just please explain what you mean by that?  
24 Why is it that there being a data mismatch meant there  
25 was nothing fundamentally wrong with the system?

31

1 statement you say it was in March 2010 that you learnt  
2 that the underlying root cause of the faults/the bugs,  
3 were a fault in the Oracle database software. So that's  
4 consistent with what you've just -- well, that's  
5 slightly different, in the sense that March 2010 was  
6 when the underlying root cause was identified. My  
7 question to you was: do you recall how long it took  
8 Fujitsu to identify that underlying root cause, from the  
9 point at which it was brought to your attention that  
10 these faults were manifesting to March 2010?

11 **A.** It was number of weeks, so can I be specific? No, but  
12 it was number of weeks. In my world, it was too long,  
13 and there was a lot of telephone communication from me  
14 to the CEO at Fujitsu around, you know, where his sense  
15 was on finding the issue and mitigating it. Again, as  
16 you're evaluating the continuing rollout versus  
17 a rollback, those conversations were pretty much  
18 an imperative. There is no doubt about it that, from  
19 the point it had been identified to the point that -- as  
20 in "We've got an issue" -- to the point that we've got  
21 "It looks like it's bug related" and some form of  
22 potential resolution from Fujitsu, in my mind, it took  
23 way too long, and not, in my world -- you know, in my  
24 tech world, not the normal time frame for resolution  
25 around a software bug.

30

1 **A.** I've been in the technology world for a long time.  
2 So -- and I've rolled out probably thousands of systems.  
3 So I guess the point I'm trying to make, as part of that  
4 process, is: when you're in a pilot, you're going to  
5 have problems. I've never known a pilot in any rollout  
6 of any system not have some sort of associated issues  
7 with it. And, again, I'm going to make the point: today  
8 you can be given a new phone and within weeks it will  
9 have a software update. It's dealing, essentially, with  
10 bugs that have come to light that weren't seen or hadn't  
11 come to light in a test type process.

12 This was no different on Horizon Online. I knew  
13 that, providing we could identify the nature of the  
14 bugs, that we could address that software. It's still  
15 in pilot. It's not in main rollout and, at the point  
16 the bugs were found, rollout stopped. So, you know, I'm  
17 in a place, as the executive in charge of IT, with my  
18 CIO, we're in charge of a process that, if you like, is  
19 half pregnant and we've got to work out what we do next,  
20 and part of my worry was that we needed to have some  
21 assuredty from Fujitsu that they could deal with the bugs  
22 once they'd identified them and that we could get back  
23 into smooth running.

24 I look at that process, rightly or wrongly, but  
25 certainly from my point of view and experience, I look

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1 at that process as relatively the norm in rolling out  
 2 a pilot, and this was a pilot. It wasn't a great start  
 3 to a pilot, and there were lots of communications both  
 4 to the POL Board and my executive colleagues, and to  
 5 Royal Mail Group as a consequence. And there were  
 6 ramifications around some of that communication. But  
 7 I still felt relatively confident that having identified  
 8 the bugs, the mitigations would address it and we'd be  
 9 back to safe waters and, therefore, fundamentally, I had  
 10 faith in the system.

11 **Q.** Just to be clear, because the way it's written perhaps  
 12 could be read in a number of different ways but I think  
 13 what you're saying is that the mere fact that a bug had  
 14 caused a data mismatch did not, in itself, mean that  
 15 there was something fundamentally wrong with the system;  
 16 is that what it is you're saying?

17 **A.** That would be a better way of interpreting my answer,  
 18 yes.

19 **Q.** Now, I'd like, please, to look at some correspondence  
 20 that you had with Duncan Tait, who was then Managing  
 21 Director for the Private Sector Division at Fujitsu in  
 22 May 2010. That's FUJ00095658, please.

23 Thank you. This a letter from you -- we'll see when  
 24 we get to the bottom -- to Mr Tait, dated 10 May 2010.  
 25 It reads:

33

1 onerous and may be affecting the profitability of the  
 2 contract."

3 Just pausing there, what exactly did you mean by  
 4 that, the concern that Fujitsu were realising savings,  
 5 and --

6 **A.** There was a significant saving to the Post Office for  
 7 rolling out Horizon Online, 50 million. It was  
 8 important to our cost base in the eternal endeavour of  
 9 the Post Office to get to self-supporting, and the  
 10 contract in place with Fujitsu had to not only deliver  
 11 Horizon Online but it had to deliver those efficiencies.  
 12 What I'm trying to convey, as part of that language in  
 13 there was I was worried that they had -- they didn't  
 14 have enough expert resources managing this important  
 15 programme. In other words, they'd leaned it out. In  
 16 order to realise efficiencies, they'd cut costs  
 17 themselves, and there weren't enough expert resources to  
 18 deal with the bugs or other related issues that may come  
 19 out from pilot. And I'm making that point as part of  
 20 that process, and I'm asking him to go open book, which  
 21 is rare, but it's -- it basically means, "Show me your  
 22 costs and your resource plan, so I can see what I'm  
 23 paying for". They're not duty bound to do that but  
 24 I thought it was a request worth putting to them.

25 I should emphasise that the issues related in the

35

1 "Dear Duncan  
 2 "Recently, members of the Post Office Executive Team  
 3 met with some of our Group Executive colleagues to  
 4 review our current standing on our Fujitsu contract.  
 5 The purpose of this meeting was twofold, one to review  
 6 the current situation of the HNG-X Programme and,  
 7 secondly, to review the Fujitsu contract as a whole.  
 8 These types of review follow best practice and are  
 9 common within the Group where there is significant  
 10 reliance on a partner or a supplier."

11 You then say this, and this culminates in your  
 12 request for what you describe as an open-book approach,  
 13 you say:  
 14 "It was recognised during this review process that  
 15 our relationship with Fujitsu is of long standing, has  
 16 thus far proved fruitful to both parties and continues  
 17 to play a pivotal role in the successful delivery of  
 18 Post Office's products and services. There were several  
 19 areas where we believe there is room for improvement  
 20 that would allow us to follow best practice and further  
 21 reinforce confidence in delivery."  
 22 You then say this:  
 23 "There remains a concern that with the longer  
 24 running rollout of handling and the fact you are already  
 25 contractually realising our savings that this may be too

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1 early pilot brought, you know, concerns -- not  
 2 significant concerns, but certainly concerns -- both to  
 3 my executive colleagues and the Board, and later on at  
 4 Royal Mail Group Board when Alan Cook was presenting  
 5 where the Post Office was with its strategy. He had to  
 6 update the Board with regards to where HNG-X was in  
 7 terms of its rollout and, as a consequence of that, Alan  
 8 and I had a conversation around the outputs from our own  
 9 Executive colleagues, some of the questions that were  
 10 asked in the Royal Mail Group-type process at that Board  
 11 meeting, and we agreed that I would sit down with the  
 12 Group's CIO at Royal Mail Group, and the General Counsel  
 13 of Royal Mail Group, just to discuss the Fujitsu  
 14 contract, where things were and what we might be able to  
 15 do collectively at a group level to bring pressure to  
 16 bear on Fujitsu to take us through a successful pilot  
 17 and subsequent rollout.

18 There's a big risk both in terms of being able to  
 19 deal with customers in the branch network with this new  
 20 programme and also that 50 million in inefficiencies.

21 **Q.** Just to be clear, it was those discussions you just  
 22 described that led to the sending of this letter; is  
 23 that correct? We see that reference in the first  
 24 paragraph --

25 **A.** I think in the three of us sitting down, I agreed that

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1 I would take the overall concerns -- and we talked about  
 2 what those is might look like -- and write a letter to  
 3 Fujitsu. I probably ought to -- because it would  
 4 probably be helpful to, you know, to the Inquiry to  
 5 know, if they don't already -- Fujitsu -- we were  
 6 Fujitsu's major client in the UK, I think their biggest  
 7 client in the UK, certainly one of the top two. They  
 8 had an ambition, a significant ambition, to grow the  
 9 account into Royal Mail Group. If you'll note in some  
 10 of the communication between POL and -- from Fujitsu to  
 11 POL, it's usually someone that signs off with "Royal  
 12 Mail Group Account Executive", or whatever the case may  
 13 be, and the reality is, Royal Mail Group wasn't taking  
 14 anything in terms of a service from Fujitsu: it was POL,  
 15 and it was Horizon.

16 But there was a drive to seek further revenues from  
 17 Royal Mail Group, and my sitting down with the General  
 18 Counsel and with the CIO of Royal Mail Group and then  
 19 formulating this letter and making clear the type of  
 20 entities that had been involved in the formulation of  
 21 the letter was a way of applying pressure to them that  
 22 suggested, you know, again, in the interests of keeping  
 23 it short and candid, "Get your act together here because  
 24 if you have got ambitions with Royal Mail Group, we as  
 25 a whole are very unhappy and we need you to show us that

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1 a feeling that it was Royal Mail Group Board, POL Board  
 2 and POL Executive challenging Fujitsu to step up to the  
 3 plate.

4 **Q.** Now, you don't receive a response from Mr Tait until  
 5 29 June 2010 and that comes into you by email. We can  
 6 see that at FUJ00096312, please. If we scroll down,  
 7 please, to the second page, we can see at the top the  
 8 date of the email, 29 June 2010, and the subject is  
 9 "Response to your letter". So that is the letter of  
 10 10 May we were just looking at a short time ago. He  
 11 says to you:

12 "Dear Mike,

13 "Thank you for your letter -- we have recently been  
 14 having similar meetings and have come to similar  
 15 conclusions in the governance area. We would like to  
 16 support your initiative and formalise into contract  
 17 a periodic ongoing senior level relationship review and  
 18 a more operational level board at which the current  
 19 governance relationships in the contract come together."

20 He then says that has been taken forward. If we  
 21 then look down, please, to the third paragraph, he says:

22 "Since your letter, I am extremely pleased with the  
 23 progress that has been made. We have located the source  
 24 of the troubles and taken steps to rectify the issues  
 25 and we have now recommenced the pilot. Currently

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1 you are manned up with the right resources to deliver  
 2 what we expect you to do and we want some assurance that  
 3 you're also going to give us our efficiencies and" as  
 4 the letter further states, "we want some assurance that  
 5 the code around Horizon Online works as it should do".

6 **Q.** We see there, as you say, in addition to your request  
 7 for an open book, in the third paragraph, you say you'd  
 8 like access to Executive correspondence within Fujitsu  
 9 relating to a recent red alert. You go on to say:  
 10 "Additionally, we would like you to consider  
 11 bringing in a qualified independent party and asking  
 12 them to review and audit how the current programme is  
 13 run, as well as testing resource and skill levels both  
 14 on the programme ... and other key initiatives underway  
 15 at Fujitsu."

16 As you said just now, you explain in your statement  
 17 that the reason why you, in particular, I think, but  
 18 possibly others, felt it was necessary to request  
 19 an independent review was that you had concerns about  
 20 the quality of the code in Horizon Online; is that  
 21 correct?

22 **A.** Yes. It's one of the only times -- there may have been  
 23 one other time -- where I formally wrote a letter to  
 24 Fujitsu, rather than a phone call or even an email.  
 25 I wanted it -- you know, I wanted it to have a tone and

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1 counters running on HNG-X stand at just under 20% of the  
 2 estate. We are now rolling out at about the maximum  
 3 levels originally envisaged with no further sign of the  
 4 problems that initiated our discussions."

5 He goes on to say:

6 "The cause of the issues [as you've already alluded  
 7 to] that delayed the High Volume Pilot was deficiencies  
 8 with the Oracle product code."

9 He says:

10 "Oracle has confirmed this and that the issue has  
 11 been resolved. I am sure this conclusion will have  
 12 restored your confidence in Fujitsu and both our teams'  
 13 ability to deliver this programme."

14 He then goes on to say this:

15 "As a result, I think it makes sense for our teams  
 16 to maintain focus on the remainder of the pilot and the  
 17 full rollout phase, as you appreciate, with all complex  
 18 major programmes there will be issues to deal with. At  
 19 this crucial phase, we can see no benefit and will not  
 20 be pursuing a third party review."

21 So, in essence, he rejects that proposal in your  
 22 letter of May 2010 to carry out a review.

23 We can see your response to him, please, at page 1.  
 24 You say this:

25 "Duncan

40

1 "Thank you for your response to my letter.  
 2 "It won't surprise you to learn that I am somewhat  
 3 disappointed that it took so long to formally reply to  
 4 my correspondence of 10 May and with the apparent 'sea  
 5 change' on approach to some of our concerns."  
 6 So you effectively then go on to say:  
 7 "My understanding from our weekly calls was that you  
 8 had taken advice from KPMG as to how you could go 'open  
 9 book' with us and therefore didn't foresee a problem in  
 10 doing so. On the issue of having a qualified  
 11 independent party audit to evaluate Fujitsu programme  
 12 execution, along with staffing levels and skills base,  
 13 I have been briefed that you had spoken to several  
 14 entities to pursue this endeavour. Indeed, I was told  
 15 you were close to agreeing terms with one of these.  
 16 Additionally, in our calls you will recall I had asked  
 17 whether there was a possibility of the Post Office  
 18 'owning' the Terms of Reference and again this was  
 19 something you were going to strongly consider.  
 20 "As it stands now, I feel I have been led down  
 21 a journey of a number of months, just so you can say  
 22 'no'. This does not reflect well on our relationship  
 23 and will not be well received in the next review."  
 24 It's quite clear, I think, from reading that email,  
 25 that you had understood from your conversations with

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1 I thought, candidly, that we had a better  
 2 relationship than that. I had known Duncan in my job  
 3 when I was at Horizon as the CIO there, and I thought he  
 4 would recognise what I was having to deal with, in terms  
 5 of the pressure around Horizon Online and the oversight  
 6 that the whole thing was under from Royal Mail Group  
 7 through to the POL Board and, therefore, I was expecting  
 8 a little bit more of a collegiate attitude from Duncan  
 9 than I got.  
 10 There were several calls where I make that quite  
 11 clear, and Duncan made clear that he didn't think there  
 12 was anything wrong with Horizon, there wouldn't be  
 13 anything -- isn't anything wrong with Horizon Online.  
 14 I was getting the line of "We run algorithms against the  
 15 code, we're looking constantly looking for anomalies,  
 16 you should take assurance from that", et cetera,  
 17 et cetera, et cetera.  
 18 And my response would be, "If you went open book and  
 19 demonstrated some often that, I'd be able to see it.  
 20 I can't naturally -- having taken so long to deal with  
 21 the two Oracle issues, I can't take you at your word",  
 22 and they were pretty strong conversations and,  
 23 ultimately, the only take away I took from those  
 24 conversations and from this interchange was that, you  
 25 know, "It's our IP and we don't want to share it. We

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1 Mr Tait, firstly, that he was willing to undertake that  
 2 third-party review that you'd requested; is that  
 3 correct?  
 4 **A.** Yes.  
 5 **Q.** And that you'd felt that you'd been rather strung along  
 6 by him, to only be told many weeks later that it  
 7 wouldn't be taking place?  
 8 **A.** I was pretty angry at the response.  
 9 **Q.** Did you take any steps to escalate this issue and to  
 10 insist upon an independent review of Horizon Online at  
 11 that stage?  
 12 **A.** So certainly the POL Board, the Executive Team and Royal  
 13 Mail Group were aware of the interchange here, because  
 14 all those parties had played a part in bringing it  
 15 together. So what perhaps -- in order to be a little  
 16 bit more helpful, but perhaps what this letter and  
 17 response don't quite show is that there were two or  
 18 three phone calls that went between, you know, the  
 19 letter and the response.  
 20 Duncan and some of his team were of the view that we  
 21 had signed up to a service, and the service was working  
 22 in its given parameters within the contract -- and  
 23 I couldn't argue that -- and that Horizon Online was in  
 24 pilot and, again, his response of around 20 per cent of  
 25 the network starts to, you know, allude to that point.

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1 own the intellectual property rights around the code,  
 2 you've no right to see it, and you've no right, really,  
 3 to insist that we review our own code".  
 4 I didn't agree with that. I've never agreed with  
 5 that but it gives you a sense of where Fujitsu were in  
 6 their thinking versus where I was, and several of my  
 7 time, including, in fairness to Lesley Sewell, the CIO  
 8 at the Post Office.  
 9 You know, if there's one overriding message: don't  
 10 see this as a one-off letter and reply. There was a lot  
 11 of communication that sat round it at all levels and,  
 12 whenever the opportunity allowed, I would interject  
 13 with, you know, "We need to start looking at the  
 14 system".  
 15 You'll note, I do want to draw a conclusion in case  
 16 we don't get there, I do want to make a point. One of  
 17 the last documents I provide, just before I exit Post  
 18 Office, is a noting paper, I think, to the POL Board,  
 19 and then there's a POL Board -- there's two documents --  
 20 where I actually ask, I think we're set for -- I'm sure  
 21 we'll get there but I think we're set for a proper  
 22 end-to-end review, and there were a lot of reasons  
 23 around that, but some of this was catch-up to that.  
 24 And then there's another point. Martin Moran, who  
 25 had been brought on to run the white label telecoms

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1 product that Post Office was marketing at the time, sat  
2 down with me -- it was another one of my objectives, to  
3 sit down with Fujitsu, to use Fujitsu as a means of  
4 taking their pricing power to get a great telecoms  
5 contract out of BT. They're a big entity, so they'd get  
6 better discounts and we were trying to move away from  
7 Talk Talk.

8 But in the course of that dialogue, one of the  
9 things that I pushed was, "If we do this telephony  
10 contract with you, Fujitsu, I want the rights and the IP  
11 to the code for Horizon", and I asked for that  
12 specifically to be written in so that issue around the  
13 IP of Horizon could be taken off the table. If I owned  
14 those rights, I now have a right to look at my code  
15 because I've got those now contractualised as a side  
16 product from agreeing a telephony contract with you.

17 And Martin Moran makes that clear in one of the  
18 Board papers that was in the discovery process. But the  
19 point I'm trying to make is: that was me at that  
20 negotiating table with Martin saying, "We'd like the  
21 IP". I just needed that final segment to take away the  
22 point of, "You don't own the IP. We own the IP, you've  
23 got a service".

24 **Q.** Just to wrap up where we are at the end of June 2010,  
25 you've been sufficiently concerned about the quality of

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1 the marketplace to recruit a CIO that had financial  
2 services experience -- that's where we were going with  
3 some of our products and services set -- because  
4 I didn't have it, and David Smith, the now retired IT  
5 Director, didn't have it. So I went out and recruited  
6 Lesley Sewell as part of that process. She was the  
7 ex-Managing Director of IT for Northern Rock, the bank,  
8 at the time.

9 So Mark Burley reported to Lesley and his job was to  
10 rollout Horizon Online.

11 **Q.** Now, he addresses his email to you and Sue Huggins, and  
12 it's not necessary to go through the full chain but it  
13 originates with a request from David Smith essentially  
14 raising a series of questions prompted by the proposed  
15 Channel 4 report, and Mark provides some answers to  
16 those and, in this email, we see some additional points  
17 that he wished to draw to your attention and the  
18 attention of Sue Huggins. I just wanted to scroll down,  
19 please, to look at a couple of those points.

20 Now, he refers at point 1 to the fact that the  
21 system has been designed to retain integrity, even when  
22 it fails and he said this is important, "as we could  
23 never claim the system does not fail".

24 That's a point he makes further down in the email.

25 At point two, he refers to three cases of which he

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1 the Horizon code to request an independent review of  
2 Fujitsu but Mr Tait, standing on his contractual rights,  
3 has said, "It's not going to happen"?

4 **A.** Indeed.

5 **Q.** So moving forward, then, please, one month later,  
6 questions are raised in the press about the integrity of  
7 Horizon, in reporting by Channel 4; do you remember  
8 that?

9 **A.** I do.

10 **Q.** That reporting prompted David Smith -- so a different  
11 David Smith, this is the Managing Director of Post  
12 Office -- to request an internal investigation into  
13 complaints about Horizon; is that correct?

14 **A.** You're referring to the Ismay Report?

15 **Q.** Yes.

16 **A.** Yes.

17 **Q.** I'd like to please look at some correspondence relating  
18 to that request and which ultimately flowed into what we  
19 know is the Ismay Report. It bears the reference  
20 POL00120481, please. Thank you. This is an email from  
21 Mark Burley to you and Sue Huggins. Just to clarify,  
22 what was the relationship, in terms of reporting, as  
23 between you and Mark Burley?

24 **A.** Mark reported to Lesley Sewell. You know, David Smith,  
25 the CIO or IT Director, has retired. I went out into

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1 is aware: Cleveleys, Castleton and Alderley Edge.

2 These goes on to say this at point 3:

3 "None of the subpostmasters dismissed for  
4 discrepancies have -- to my knowledge -- produced any  
5 hard evidence. However in the past [Post Office  
6 Limited] hasn't always tabled the evidence from the  
7 audit logs."

8 Now, dealing with that first point, as to the fact  
9 that subpostmasters hadn't produced hard evidence that  
10 accounting discrepancies for which they'd been held  
11 liable had been caused by faults in Horizon, with your  
12 police officer's hat on, did you think it was right that  
13 the burden of proof would rest on subpostmasters to show  
14 that Horizon was at fault in causing these accounting  
15 discrepancies?

16 **A.** No.

17 **Q.** Did that stand out to you at the time as an issue; do  
18 you recall?

19 **A.** Did that -- can you repeat that, please?

20 **Q.** Sorry. Did that jump out at you at the time as  
21 a problem, that subpostmasters were being required to  
22 produce evidence, that the onus was on them to do so?

23 **A.** I don't know, to be honest, at the time. You know,  
24 I refreshed my memory, I guess like most witnesses, when  
25 the discovery documents were given to me. So when I was

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1 refreshing my memory, did that spring out to me, but did  
 2 I know the Inquiry was ongoing? The answer is yes. But  
 3 I'm not sure whether I did at the time or not, I just  
 4 don't recall. I suspect it probably did.

5 **Q.** If it did, what, if anything, would you have done about  
 6 that?

7 **A.** I didn't do anything, I don't think. I -- you know,  
 8 it's just a suspicion. To your point, my previous  
 9 employment as a police officer would have taken me down  
 10 that road. It's not, by no means, an excuse but when  
 11 you're inundated with 300 or 400 emails a day and you've  
 12 got the world before you in terms of what you've got to  
 13 deliver, you can't pick up on every nuance in an email,  
 14 if I'm being candid.

15 **Q.** He goes on to say at point 3, we've looked at:  
 16 "... in the past POL hasn't always tabled the  
 17 evidence from the audit logs."  
 18 Was that something that you were aware of at the  
 19 time?

20 **A.** No. So it's through a number of iterations of emails  
 21 that, again, were part of the disclosure, or I start to  
 22 piece together, you know, since the Inquiry has been  
 23 underway just how some of these things were coming to,  
 24 you know -- were coming into being. How some of the  
 25 prosecutions were working through. I'm not trying to

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1 some subpostmasters were being done for false accounting  
 2 as opposed to theft. And, you know, from my policeman  
 3 days I understand the difference between both and the  
 4 proof of evidence that's required to prove both.

5 So I gradually got to realise the system is playing  
 6 a more integral part in the prosecution process than  
 7 I perhaps originally might have known in my first year  
 8 of service at the Post Office, as an example.

9 **Q.** You attribute that understanding to reading the Ismay  
 10 Report; is that right?

11 **A.** Some of it but there were -- you got -- the best way of  
 12 describing it is you got glimpses of it perhaps in  
 13 a Board meeting, in an executive meeting, where  
 14 a particular prosecution was being talked about because  
 15 it had raised a flag in some form or other. You're not  
 16 party to the conversation, other than you're a set of  
 17 ears around the table and you pick up a little bit of  
 18 what might be going on.

19 As you do that, you start to see the email flow  
 20 where some of this starts to eke itself out. You're  
 21 starting to get a better sense of what is happening.  
 22 And then, of course, the Ismay Report is the first time  
 23 for me, personally, you sit there and you start to see  
 24 a large component of that talking about, in some detail,  
 25 some of the prosecutions and the nature of those

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1 avoid it; candidly, I didn't know that that's what we  
 2 were doing.

3 **Q.** What Mr Burley appears to be conceding at this point is  
 4 that, although postmasters hadn't been able to prove  
 5 that the discrepancies are caused by Horizon, Post  
 6 Office hasn't bothered to check whether that's, in fact,  
 7 the case -- sorry, in every case, it isn't the case that  
 8 Post Office has checked that the audit --

9 **A.** One or the things that I -- sorry.

10 **Q.** No, sorry.

11 **A.** One of the things I'm aware of within the Fujitsu  
 12 contract is the retrieval of data from Fujitsu was  
 13 a cost service, it was an additional cost type service,  
 14 and there was -- as part of the contract that  
 15 I inherited, there was a set sum put to one side to draw  
 16 data from Fujitsu, as and when, and then when you  
 17 exceeded that amount in a given year, you then paid  
 18 more.

19 So I'm not sure whether that point is related to,  
 20 you know, we don't do it in every prosecution because  
 21 there's a cost associated to it and it's not required.  
 22 I didn't -- I simply, when I read that part of the  
 23 email, I didn't know we had got down to audit logs. In  
 24 fact, it wasn't until later on, and some of that through  
 25 the Ismay report, that I took on board the point that

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1 prosecutions, and the sensitivity, as such, was such  
 2 that I didn't, other than through -- with Lesley Sewell,  
 3 I didn't pass to anyone else in my DR team because  
 4 I thought it was very sensitive -- very sensitive data.

5 But it's through a drip-drip-drip type process that  
 6 you start to get a sense of what's being done on the  
 7 prosecution side because I wasn't being told, and  
 8 I wasn't seeking -- because I'd been told not to -- via  
 9 John Scott or Susan Crichton or via the Royal Mail Group  
 10 process, which is even further away from where I might  
 11 sit.

12 **Q.** So is it right to understand that, from reading the  
 13 Ismay Report, you understood, firstly, that Horizon data  
 14 was being used by the Post Office to support and to  
 15 evidence, for example, an offence of false accounting in  
 16 the prosecutions that were being brought against  
 17 postmasters? That is to say that data from Horizon had  
 18 a role in the prosecutions brought against  
 19 subpostmasters --

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** -- and that you also understood that the integrity of  
 22 that data was therefore essential to the safety of those  
 23 prosecutions; would that have been apparent to you from  
 24 reading Mr Ismay's report?

25 **A.** Yes, and I do think my statement does say in some part

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1 that having a statement from a distinguished engineer or  
 2 someone from Fujitsu that talks about data that's under  
 3 their management, even with an audit log, is, you know,  
 4 in my view, not independent. I would have expected to  
 5 see, in prosecutions of this nature, an independent  
 6 expert commenting on Horizon data and audit logs. It  
 7 felt a little -- as you're drawn into it from the edges,  
 8 it felt a little like poachers turned gamekeepers, and  
 9 it didn't fit well with me as a former police officer.  
 10 It wasn't truly independent.

11 **Q.** Just to be clear, are you saying that you understood  
 12 from Mr Ismay's report that Fujitsu were providing  
 13 expert evidence in support of --

14 **A.** I understood that there was some -- I can't remember if  
 15 it was directly from the Ismay Report but it's on that  
 16 drip-drip-drip type basis. One of my conclusions was  
 17 that some of the evidence that was being provided around  
 18 Horizon and consequent prosecutions wasn't, in my  
 19 opinion, an independent expert that knew the system and  
 20 therefore could talk to it to any great degree. It was  
 21 someone in Fujitsu and, for me, that's not independent.

22 **Q.** Having identified that as a concern, did you raise that  
 23 with anybody within the Executive Team of the Post  
 24 Office or indeed raise concerns with your Head of  
 25 Security, who was giving instructions to the Criminal

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1 I had very few levers that I could pull, contractually  
 2 or otherwise, with Fujitsu. There wasn't anything  
 3 I could see, and when I talked to my direct report team,  
 4 the specifics of those, candidly, that might be working  
 5 in Service Delivery, Lesley, those that might be working  
 6 in other aspects of IT, that have sight of some of the  
 7 end-to-end Horizon-type pieces, when I talked to them,  
 8 they were in a place where the system was doing what it  
 9 needed to do, and prescribed -- as per described by the  
 10 contract.

11 And every time there was something new, either laid  
 12 out in the media or otherwise, I would do that round --  
 13 I would do that round robin. Invariably there would  
 14 also be a call or an email that would go in to Fujitsu,  
 15 Duncan/Gavin Bounds/whoever, usually one of those two --  
 16 to ask questions.

17 And so I sit here, you know, despite the backwards  
 18 and forwards communication with Duncan saying "This is  
 19 all I can do, I can't see anything happening on the  
 20 system as we're now going into main rollout, and  
 21 actually the feedback from The Branch Network is really  
 22 positive. I'm not sure what we do next, with regards to  
 23 Horizon". So I want to make that point.

24 Then the Ismay Report lands, and I saw the Ismay  
 25 Report as a next best endeavour, if you can't get into

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1 Law Team?

2 **A.** I just -- I can't recall. The likelihood is no. I was,  
 3 you know, I was clearly told "Let the process be the  
 4 process".

5 **Q.** I'd like to briefly look at what you say your reaction  
 6 was on reading the Ismay Report. That's at paragraph 92  
 7 of your statement, please. You say this:

8 "The Ismay Report confirmed that the system was not  
 9 flawed. The report analysed some of the more  
 10 high-profile prosecutions that were highlighted in the  
 11 media, and his report determined that the information  
 12 and evidence used in these cases were reliable. At the  
 13 time, the Ismay Report solidified my view that there was  
 14 not a technical problem with Horizon."

15 Now, that report was sent to you in August in 2010;  
 16 is that right?

17 **A.** It is.

18 **Q.** So that's really barely a month or less than two months  
 19 after your exchanges with Mr Tait have concluded, rather  
 20 unsatisfactorily, concerning a review of the code of  
 21 Horizon Online. It might be thought surprising that you  
 22 took such great comfort from the Ismay Report, given the  
 23 extent of concerns you had about Horizon Online and its  
 24 code?

25 **A.** So the reason I took comfort from the Ismay Report was

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1 the code or an end-to-end investigation around the  
 2 system itself. So -- and I drew from it, as my  
 3 statement makes clear, some comfort that, in Product  
 4 Branch & Accounting, in Chesterfield and -- you know,  
 5 I knew Rod Ismay fairly well, as well as I knew anyone  
 6 at the Post Office, I found him to be quite balanced and  
 7 a fair-minded individual, I took some confidence from  
 8 his analysis of the whole thing.

9 And it didn't take any -- it didn't mitigate all of  
 10 my concerns but it gave me a boost that, okay, we're not  
 11 seeing anything on the system, my DR is not seeing  
 12 anything on the system, the challenge and response  
 13 process written or otherwise with Fujitsu says that the  
 14 system is fine now we're through the Oracle type  
 15 problems, okay, we're in a better place. It also gave  
 16 me a window into some of that prosecution type piece.

17 So I did, I drew some comfort from that. Did I have  
 18 something in the back of my mind that, you know, would  
 19 say, you know, are we ever going to get to a point where  
 20 we can, you know, get into that code? Then the answer  
 21 is, you know, it was always there. So I think it should  
 22 be. But I was always keeping a close eye, via Lesley  
 23 and the team, on where the system was systematically,  
 24 and there was nothing in that process that would draw  
 25 you to a conclusion, having dealt with the Oracle bugs,

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1 that there was a problem.

2 And Ismay's report was more or less saying the same  
3 thing to a degree, but adding other parts to the  
4 process: training, the process itself and then the  
5 prosecution type -- small window into the prosecution  
6 type piece.

7 So it gave me some measure of comfort going forward,  
8 despite the backdrop from the Duncan Tait interplay on  
9 looking at the system in detail.

10 **MS HODGE:** Thank you, sir. That may be a good time to take  
11 our morning break, I'm conscious we've been going for  
12 an hour and a half now.

13 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, by all means. So what time shall we  
14 resume?

15 **MS HODGE:** Shall we resume at 11.45, please?

16 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, fine.

17 (11.30 am)

(A short break)

19 (11.45 am)

20 **MS HODGE:** Good morning, sir -- yes, still the morning.

21 Good morning, sir. Can you see and hear us?

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

23 **MS HODGE:** Thank you.

24 Mr Young, I'm going to move on now, please, to  
25 another topic, concerning your knowledge of a bug we

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1 conversation with Mr Ismay; do you recall whether you  
2 spoke to him orally about the issue?

3 **A.** I agree, it does intimate that but I can't recall it.

4 **Q.** When you say in your statement that he downplayed it, is  
5 that a fair reading, do you think, of this short email  
6 exchange?

7 **A.** Well, it's the feeling I had, so yes.

8 **Q.** Do you recall reading the report that was attached to  
9 his email?

10 **A.** No.

11 **Q.** Do you think that you would have read it at the time you  
12 received it?

13 **A.** Yes.

14 **Q.** I wonder if we could pull it up, please, just to see if  
15 you recognise it. I believe it is POL00188387. Do you  
16 recognise that document as something which you read at  
17 the time?

18 **A.** I do.

19 **Q.** Mr Ismay alerted you to the last two paragraphs on  
20 page 1. If we could scroll down to those, please. This  
21 is in relation to the cause of the problem. It reads:

22 "The problem occurs as part of the process of moving  
23 Discrepancies into Local Suspense.

24 "When Discrepancies are found when rolling an SU  
25 ..."

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1 know as the receipts and payments mismatch bug. You say  
2 in your statement you first became aware of this bug in  
3 February 2011 and you attribute your discovery of it to  
4 a conversation you had with Lesley Sewell, who, by then,  
5 had taken over from David Smith as Head of Change and  
6 IS; is that right?

7 **A.** Yes.

8 **Q.** Forgive me, you're nodding but, for the purposes of the  
9 transcript -- thank you.

10 **A.** Yes, I have been warned. I should have realised that.  
11 Yes.

12 **Q.** You also refer to an email you received from Mr Ismay,  
13 which you describe as downplaying the issue; is that  
14 right?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** I wonder if we could take a quick look at that, please.

17 It's FUJ00081545. Thank you. If we could scroll down  
18 to the very bottom, please. It's page 4. Thank you.

19 This is dated 18 February 2011, the subject "Receipts &  
20 Payments Issue", from Mr Ismay to you, reading:

21 "Mike -- please find attached the paper from Fujitsu  
22 that I referred to.

23 "In particular please see the last 2 [paras] of  
24 page 1 and the trial balance on page 13."

25 This suggests that there may have been a prior

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1 That is presumably a stock unit, is that what you  
2 would have understood that to be a reference to, SU?  
3 Not sure?

4 **A.** I don't know what "SU" stands for.

5 **Q.** So:

6 "When Discrepancies are found when rolling an SU  
7 over into a new TP ..."

8 Do you know what "TP" stands for?

9 **A.** I don't know what that is either.

10 **Q.** "... then the User is asked if they should be moved to  
11 Local Suspense. Should they Cancel at this point the  
12 Discrepancy is zeroised in the Local Cache ..."

13 Do you know what was?

14 **A.** Yes, a cache is a data depository, so ...

15 **Q.** "Note that there is no corresponding Balancing  
16 Transaction generated in the Local Cache and so the  
17 Local Cache is in an Unbalanced state."

18 So that's obviously quite a technical report. If we  
19 go back to the email chain we can see you that some  
20 discussion with a Will Russell. If we could return to  
21 FUJ00081545, please. Thank you. That's at the bottom  
22 of page 3. Thank you.

23 So, following on from Mr Ismay's report, you write  
24 to Will Russell, later the same day, saying you want to  
25 sit down with him and possibly several others to:

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1 "... understand these latest issues on Horizon and  
2 where we are with them. This is very important as there  
3 is a lot of media interest in Horizon at the moment."

4 You say:

5 "What would be helpful is if you could send me  
6 a written summary on what the integrity issues are and  
7 what has been done about them."

8 Why is that request being directed to Will Russell  
9 at that stage?

10 **A.** I don't know. I can't be sure what Will's role is.

11 I can't remember what his job description was. Clearly,  
12 he was in the mix on this but, being able to describe  
13 what his actual job role was and how that related to me,  
14 I can't.

15 **Q.** If we just scroll up, please, we can see at the bottom  
16 he was Commercial Advisor; does that assist you?

17 **A.** *(No audible answer)*

18 **Q.** So he emails then, if we go to the top of his email,  
19 I believe it's later the same day. If we scroll up to  
20 the -- no, this is two days later, so 2 February.

21 Mr Russell emails you back to say:

22 "Mike,

23 "I will pull you together a summary on Monday.

24 "The issue Rod refers to, and outlined in the paper,  
25 was an issue that occurred in September 2010, post Go

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1 the February and March time frame. So why this didn't  
2 reach me before then, I've no idea.

3 **Q.** Sorry, my question was: when it did come to your  
4 attention in February, do you recall the context as to  
5 why or whether there was any background to that specific  
6 issue being raised with you at that stage?

7 **A.** No. Just that it was a bug.

8 **Q.** So Will's email goes on to say:

9 "This issue affected 62 branches and a PEAK was  
10 raised and quickly closed by Fujitsu. The issue only  
11 affected branches that followed a set sequence of button  
12 depressions, and this sequence was not a normal action  
13 that branches would have followed. The resultant error  
14 arising from the unusual events caused the receipts and  
15 payments line on the branch accounts to mismatch  
16 (eg they were not as equal as they should be). This can  
17 be seen in the reports in the attached document."

18 He goes on to say:

19 "Letters to branches had been prepared, and signed  
20 off by Legal, and the team were looking to issue these  
21 shortly, as we need to communicate to the branches  
22 involved what has happened. However, these letters have  
23 been held back, pending Rod's intervention."

24 He then says this:

25 "Fujitsu are confident that they can show and prove

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1 Live of HNG. The issue was not encountered interesting  
2 testing, model office or pilot, and came to light in  
3 live through Fujitsu alerting. As per the normal  
4 process, Fujitsu reported the issue into the SD live  
5 Service Desk once the discrepancies were identified by  
6 the HNG system. SD pulled together a team of  
7 stakeholders to assess the issue and track through to  
8 resolution, this included; Fujitsu, [Product and Branch  
9 Accounting, IT and Change], Security, Network and  
10 Legal."

11 Just pausing there, what this appears to show, what  
12 Mr Russell told you at the time, was that several months  
13 before you'd been notified about the existence of this  
14 bug, it had been reported to stakeholders in IT and  
15 Change and Security for which you had oversight; would  
16 you agree?

17 **A.** Yes.

18 **Q.** Do you know why there was an apparent delay of many  
19 months in bringing this bug to your attention?

20 **A.** I don't, no.

21 **Q.** Do you recall the context in which the integrity issues  
22 were raised with you by Mr Ismay and Ms Sewell in  
23 February 2011?

24 **A.** Well, I think I've said in previous evidence that  
25 I first became aware of them in March. So February --

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1 that nothing has been lost on the system, as events have  
2 been generated to show what has happened for each  
3 individual branch. However I have escalated the  
4 concerns into Fujitsu at senior level."

5 Now, in your statement you say that, to you, the  
6 receipts and payments mismatch bug echoed the complaints  
7 from JFSA about reconciliation issues; is that correct?

8 **A.** That's correct.

9 **Q.** Was that something that occurred to you at that time  
10 that it was brought to your attention or was this  
11 something that you've reflected on in hindsight?

12 **A.** In time. Not at the time.

13 **Q.** Sorry, that didn't occur to you at the time?

14 **A.** No.

15 **Q.** It has since?

16 **A.** Yes.

17 **Q.** Is that because the bug was capable of causing  
18 a discrepancy to appear in the subpostmaster's branch  
19 accounts?

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** Why do you think it is that that didn't occur to you at  
22 the time?

23 **A.** It's pilot, and I would expect bugs to occur. I took  
24 some -- if you look at the second sentence down in that  
25 email:

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1 "This issue was not encountered during testing,  
2 model office or pilot and came to light [through] live  
3 through Fujitsu alerting."

4 So that algorithmic approach to looking for the data  
5 and looking for anomalies highlighted the issue, and  
6 that gave me -- you know, that gave me some sense of  
7 confidence that we had the right countermeasures in,  
8 even in early pilot, to find any anomalies -- let's call  
9 them anomalies, as opposed to bugs.

10 So I took some confidence from that as it was aired.  
11 And, in essence, in the description given to me by  
12 Fujitsu on how they managed the day-to-day code to look  
13 for anomalies, this proved that they were capable of  
14 doing it, and that gave me some confidence.

15 **Q.** Did you discuss the bug with your Head of Security at  
16 the time it was brought to your attention?

17 **A.** I don't recall. What I would say is, generally, when we  
18 were firefighting some of these issues in pilot, we  
19 invariably came together as a team. So when I ran my  
20 management teams, we all came together. Was John -- can  
21 I categorically say John Scott was aware of this level  
22 of detail? I can't. But he certainly will have been  
23 aware that there were bugs in the early rollout of HNG-X  
24 and he'll have been aware that there will have been  
25 a mismatch too.

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1 because, in my view of the original Oracle issues in  
2 Horizon rollout, it was 62 branches that were impacted.  
3 So it can't be that we've got two 62 branches impacted.  
4 That's the anomaly.

5 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** I follow that point. So, on the  
6 assumption that the Oracle defect is a different problem  
7 to this, you're pointing out that there's a huge  
8 coincidence in two defects, I'll call them, affecting 62  
9 branches and, therefore, you're querying whether, in  
10 fact, there's just one defect; is that it?

11 **A.** That's it, yes.

12 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Okay. But I think you'd agree  
13 with counsel that the second paragraph, read as  
14 a paragraph would certainly suggest that this happened  
15 after the rollout and not in testing?

16 **A.** I agree that that second paragraph sounds like that's  
17 the case.

18 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes.

19 **A.** I'd like to make a point, because it may be where  
20 counsel is coming from, if that is the case, as in we're  
21 past pilot and Horizon Online is in play, properly  
22 online, and Legacy is condemned to history, this would  
23 be something new to me.

24 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. All right.

25 **MS HODGE:** Just to be clear, when you say this would be new

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1 **Q.** Your response, Mr Young, was that this was a bug  
2 identified in pilot. What Mr Russell's email suggests  
3 is that it wasn't identified during testing, model  
4 office or pilot and that it had come to light in the  
5 live running of Horizon Online. Can you see that in the  
6 second paragraph to which I referred you?

7 That's what he told you at the time; is it your  
8 evidence that that is incorrect?

9 **A.** Well, my view of that was it was the new system not the  
10 old one and you're suggesting that it was the old system  
11 in the run-up to the new system.

12 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Well, I don't think that's correct,  
13 Mr Young. I was confused by your answer. What this  
14 document says to me -- and please contradict me if I've  
15 got it wrong -- that this manifested itself after  
16 Horizon Online had been rolled out and it had not  
17 manifested itself in the testing process, if I can put  
18 it in that way. Having manifested itself, Fujitsu then  
19 dealt with it because they discovered it. Now is that  
20 the proper reading of this document?

21 **A.** Well, my immediate answer to that, sir, is I'm not sure.  
22 So I'm just running that through and reading this again.

23 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, if you would, please.

24 **A.** The drilling noise isn't helpful.

25 It's the 62 branches that cause me to think about it

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1 to you, as in at the time it was brought to your  
2 attention, you didn't understand this to be a bug that  
3 had been detected in the live operation of Horizon  
4 Online?

5 **A.** After main rollout, yes.

6 **Q.** That seems surprising, given what Mr Russell said to you  
7 in this email in terms, that this has been discovered in  
8 the live operation of the system?

9 **A.** I would make the point that, again, in the discovery  
10 process, looking at the documents, particularly those  
11 where I have to report some of the issues around where  
12 we are with Horizon and the subsequent rollout, and so  
13 on and so forth, including operational failures and  
14 change failures, I don't think there's anything in those  
15 reports that talks about a bug or a data mismatch bug,  
16 in that time frame after rollout. And I would have been  
17 obliged to notify the Board and the Executive Team that  
18 that was the case.

19 **Q.** So what you're saying is, by reason of the fact that you  
20 did not notify the Board of this bug, it follows, in  
21 your view, that you can't have understood it to be a bug  
22 that was affecting the live operation or had affected  
23 the live operation of Horizon Online?

24 **A.** Past pilot, yes.

25 **Q.** Can we look, please, at a little later in the chain.

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1 I think it must follow from what you've just said that  
 2 you accept that you didn't bring the bug to the  
 3 attention of the Senior Executive Team of the Post  
 4 Office; is that correct?  
 5 **A.** Well, not if this is a pilot, which I think is the way  
 6 it's being read. I agree that second paragraph suggests  
 7 something in main roll -- it's done and it's now the  
 8 live system, then end-to-end and everyone's on it.  
 9 I won't have done that if I haven't been told that  
 10 there's a bug in the main rollout. So no, I won't have  
 11 notified anyone. That doesn't suggest that Lesley or  
 12 part of the team generally will have done that. It  
 13 follows on that, usually, something of this nature also  
 14 would end up very quickly from me on Duncan Tait's radar  
 15 screen. And there's nothing in the disclosure process,  
 16 and nothing I recall, that would suggest I had  
 17 conversations with him about a bug after Horizon Online  
 18 was delivered in full rollout.

19 So if I don't know, I can't tackle the vendor,  
 20 I can't inform, as I normally would, my executive  
 21 colleagues in the POL Board and, more importantly, in  
 22 main rollout, this would have been classed as a major  
 23 incident. Despite the fact that it's only 62 branches  
 24 that are impacted, this would have caused a major  
 25 incident report and there's nothing I've seen in the

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1 the Post Office. I thought this, the way I read this  
 2 was that this was the catch-up following those two bug  
 3 related issues in rollout, not anything else.  
 4 **Q.** Do you accept, Mr Young, that's not what the email says  
 5 in terms?  
 6 **A.** Do I accept, sorry?  
 7 **Q.** That that's not what the email says. It says this was  
 8 a bug detected in September, in the live operation of  
 9 Horizon Online. It appears it wasn't reported to you,  
 10 as you say, in September but it is here being brought to  
 11 your attention in February 2011?  
 12 **A.** Yes, I do accept that; post-Go Live Horizon Online.  
 13 **Q.** Now, if that is correct, that is to say that in February  
 14 2011 it was brought to your attention that a bug had  
 15 been detected in the live operation of Horizon Online,  
 16 which caused discrepancies in the branch accounts of 62  
 17 Post Office branches, is that something which you ought  
 18 to have brought to the attention of your Head of  
 19 Security, who had responsibility for overseeing the  
 20 investigations of suspected offences of fraud, theft and  
 21 false accounting?  
 22 **A.** Had I known, the answer to that is, yes.  
 23 **Q.** Had you known what, Mr Young?  
 24 **A.** I'm making the point that I didn't associate what this  
 25 says to a new bug post-rollout of Horizon Online.

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1 disclosure process and nothing I recall that indicates  
 2 a major incident process has kicked in, beyond those  
 3 that I have described as part of the pilot.  
 4 **Q.** Now, your evidence, as I understand it, is, because you  
 5 didn't report it, you must have understood at the time  
 6 that it was a bug that had been detected in pilot. Now,  
 7 an alternative hypothesis is this: that you were  
 8 notified in February 2011, as evidenced by this email,  
 9 that a bug had been detected in the live operation of  
 10 Horizon Online and you simply failed to bring that to  
 11 the attention of your more senior colleagues?  
 12 **A.** No, you misunderstand me. I was aware of two Oracle  
 13 bugs and those Oracle bugs were eventually identified  
 14 and mitigated by Fujitsu as part of the pilot, and they  
 15 were part of a major incident process. They went to the  
 16 both Boards: POL and Royal Mail Group, and essentially  
 17 necessitated that letter to Duncan Tait that we've  
 18 already gone through. I'm saying I didn't know about  
 19 this other bug, if indeed that is the case -- I'm not  
 20 suggesting you're wrong but I'm not suggesting I'm wrong  
 21 either -- if indeed there was one in September, I'm not  
 22 aware of it, and certainly no one escalated it to me.  
 23 This email reads to me like the catch-up on payments  
 24 to subpostmasters, that they can keep the money they may  
 25 have made, as about this and we'll take the writedown in

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1 **Q.** Let's go on a little bit please in --  
 2 **A.** So I want to make the point that that's really clear.  
 3 Had I known this was a bug, we're past -- it's in --  
 4 Horizon Online is in and it's running and we've got  
 5 a payment mismatch. This is in addition to the two  
 6 Oracle bugs and we're in this situation where there's  
 7 another bug that's been, let's call it illuminated, and  
 8 it's caused this issue miraculously across the same  
 9 sized branch network, okay. Like I said, this would  
 10 have caused a major incident review and it would have  
 11 caused an update to the POL Board and to Royal Mail  
 12 Group, as a consequence.  
 13 I would have sat down with my direct report team to  
 14 talk about the input to those the various reportings, to  
 15 ensure that we are all aligned and we had the right  
 16 messaging in place, that it was accurate. I don't  
 17 recall going through any of that at all and I don't see  
 18 anything in the disclosure process to me, as part of the  
 19 Inquiry, that indicates that other than this email.  
 20 **Q.** You say, Mr Young, it would have caused a major incident  
 21 review and that, because you haven't seen one, it must  
 22 follow that it wasn't a fresh or a new bug. But what we  
 23 can see, the explanation that Mr Russell gives, is that  
 24 Fujitsu reported it to the Service Desk, and the Service  
 25 Desk notified relevant stakeholders.

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1 So is that not the way in which this bug was brought  
2 to the attention of the Post Office?  
3 **A.** Yeah.  
4 **Q.** Could we please look at a slightly later email chain --  
5 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Before we do, can I just ask you, this  
6 email begins with a reference to the writer pulling  
7 together a summary on Monday; do we have that document?  
8 **MS HODGE:** Sir, I don't believe we do but what we do have is  
9 another email exchange about, I think, a further  
10 briefing that took place.  
11 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Fine.  
12 **MS HODGE:** That's the one to which I propose to take the  
13 witness.  
14 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes. That's fine, Ms Hodge, yes.  
15 **MS HODGE:** So it's POL00029611. Thank you. If we scroll  
16 down, please, it's an email from Will Russell, dated  
17 4 March 2011. It's addressed to Lesley Sewell, your  
18 direct report as Head of IS and Change.  
19 So this is a couple of days, probably about ten days  
20 or so, after Will's email to you. He updates Lesley:  
21 "Quite a lot of info here but I will outline what we  
22 agreed on this issue."  
23 There are Word documents attached, he says, and the  
24 Word documents attached are letters going out to  
25 branches on Monday. These have been approved by Legal,  
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1 logs in Data Centre and Event alerting meant we picked  
2 this up, and we can demonstrate through reports what  
3 happened. We can generate reports for each branch if  
4 challenged."  
5 So what this indicates, does it not, is that you  
6 approved the decision to write off the losses and repay  
7 the gains via subpostmaster pay, that was something you  
8 discussed and approved at the time?  
9 **A.** I agreed with it yeah, I did. I wouldn't say  
10 "approved". That would probably go through Mike Moores.  
11 **Q.** Forgive me. There's also a reference in the paragraph  
12 beginning "Matt Hibbard". It reads:  
13 "Andy Mac has taken action from Mike Y to ensure we  
14 maintain closer links with [Product and Branch  
15 Accounting]/Rod."  
16 Do you recall why it was that you gave an action to  
17 Andy to maintain closer links with Product and Branch  
18 Accounting and Rod Ismay, as a result of what had  
19 occurred?  
20 **A.** I mean Andy was in charge of Service Delivery, so trying  
21 to make sure that Andy and Rod Ismay were aligned, and  
22 continued to be aligned, in Service Management would not  
23 be an alien thing.  
24 **Q.** Were you concerned that to maintain closer links because  
25 this hadn't been brought to your attention in September  
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1 Product and Branch Accounting and SD. He says:  
2 "I ran Mike G, Mike Y, and Andy M through the detail  
3 last week. We have agreed to write off the losses and  
4 repay the gains via subpostmaster pay. We have  
5 a document from Fujitsu on what happened. This  
6 [includes] audit trail and shows what happened for  
7 a branch, as well as events generated and logged by  
8 Fujitsu, plus what the branch saw on their reports.  
9 I am just awaiting clearance from Network (Anita Turner)  
10 re how to approach NFSP (propose to finalise that on  
11 Monday for 62 branches affected as shown on Excel  
12 spreadsheet)."  
13 If we just scroll down, please, the penultimate  
14 paragraph reads:  
15 "Both Mikes ..."  
16 By which presumably Mr Russell is referring to Mike  
17 Granville and you, Mr Young? Is that a fair --  
18 **A.** It's either Mike Granville or Mike Moores, the CFO, and  
19 me. I agree it's me.  
20 **Q.** You agree that it's you in this context?  
21 **A.** Yes.  
22 **Q.** That being because he's referred to a previous  
23 discussion with the two of you and with Andy:  
24 "Both Mikes were keen we use this as a positive,  
25 eg Old Horizon would not have picked this up, yet the  
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1 2010?  
2 **A.** I don't know, is the answer to that. The other thing  
3 that's thrown me, as part of this, you know, pilot  
4 versus post-Horizon Online, is the same process was  
5 applied then around the losses and the repay of gains to  
6 the 62 branches in pilot. So there were gains made and  
7 the subpostmasters were allowed to keep them, and the  
8 losses, which I think amounted to about £20,000, the  
9 Post Office took. So -- and, you know, I'm not  
10 suggesting it's wrong. All I'm pointing out is, if  
11 you're reading it, there's a lot of similarities to this  
12 and the exact same issue, or the bug issue that we had  
13 in pilot.  
14 **Q.** If we look a little further down at the final paragraph,  
15 Mr Russell says:  
16 "We are writing to branches, and following up with  
17 call from to NBSC/[Product and Branch Accounting], with  
18 walkthrough of the detail as required. We have  
19 commitment from Fujitsu to visit any branches to run  
20 them through what happened ... We have had receipt and  
21 payment mismatches before, so this is not something new  
22 to manage, albeit this issue was very complicated in how  
23 it was reported, and evident to the branch."  
24 That would tend to suggest, would it not, this was  
25 a fresh issue that was being raised?  
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1 A. I agree.

2 Q. Now, you say in your statement that, so far as the  
3 reporting of this particular matter was concerned, you  
4 considered that it was the responsibility of Rod Ismay,  
5 as Head of Product and Branch Accounting, to bring this  
6 information, by which I understand you to mean the  
7 existence of the bug, to the attention of Susan  
8 Crichton?

9 A. To what, to Susan Crichton?

10 Q. To Susan Crichton; is that correct?

11 A. In terms of the financial aspects and the fact that it  
12 was going to involve allowing subpostmasters to keep the  
13 upside and the Post Office to take the downside, yes.  
14 I think what you're alluding to is: because it questions  
15 the integrity of Horizon, did I see it as Rod's -- Rod  
16 Ismay's responsibility to keep Susan Crichton aware that  
17 there's been an issue that now would play into that  
18 integrity? The answer to that is clearly yes.

19 Q. Why did you consider it was Mr Ismay's responsibility to  
20 bring that to the attention of Ms Crichton?

21 A. He has clearly been -- he has clearly been dealing with  
22 it. What I don't know from this outlay, and I've not  
23 seen from this outlay, is how the issue was resolved  
24 from Fujitsu, and I've not seen anything in the  
25 disclosure document that articulates that, and that's my

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1 we're going to do about it? Yeah.

2 Q. So far as you are aware, were there any systems in  
3 place, whilst you were in your role, to ensure that  
4 information about the operation and integrity of Horizon  
5 was routinely communicated to those who had  
6 responsibility?

7 A. Can you repeat the question, please? Certainly the  
8 beginning part.

9 Q. So far as you were aware, were there any systems in  
10 place to ensure that information about the operation and  
11 integrity of Horizon was communicated to those within  
12 Post Office who had responsibility for conducting  
13 criminal investigations?

14 A. Well, I've described it, because it went to everyone.  
15 So major incidents, if you're really alluding to was  
16 Susan Crichton aware of any major incident like a bug on  
17 the system, as this might suggest, then the answer to  
18 that is she's part of the Executive Team and the POL  
19 Board. She'll have seen the major incident report. And  
20 the same with the briefs to the POL Board. If there was  
21 any, let's call it "discontinuity" in the operation of  
22 Horizon in the branch network that may have affected  
23 footfall, may have affected revenues, whatever the case  
24 may be, that would have been reported either through  
25 noting, or in some other way, written to the Board, and

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1 problem with the whole process.

2 There's nothing in the disclosure process that's  
3 revealed any communication to Fujitsu at a senior level.  
4 There may have been some documents that I'm not copied  
5 on or seen, and there's nothing that's come back the  
6 other way. So -- and yet, dealing with a bug of this  
7 nature, both sides have -- POL and Fujitsu will have  
8 been aware of the sensitivities, which is why it would  
9 have been raised up to the flag, and you'd expect to see  
10 something that that travels by way of communication  
11 between the two entities, and I haven't seen that.  
12 I haven't been copied on or seen anything in relation to  
13 that.

14 Q. Now, bearing in mind that Mr Ismay, in early February,  
15 has escalated this matter to you, why did it rest on his  
16 shoulders to then take it forward and bring it to the  
17 attention of Legal?

18 A. I don't know. You'd have to ask Rod that. More  
19 importantly, I would have expected a Lesley -- I would  
20 have expected, in normal practice, Lesley would have  
21 raised this with me and I may very well have said to  
22 Lesley "Please go see Susan", because of the point  
23 around the question marks it leaves around integrity.  
24 And I would have also put an action plan together to say  
25 how do we approach this from Fujitsu and what is it

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1 Susan sat on the Board.

2 Q. So is your evidence that the systems in place to  
3 disseminate this information were perfectly adequate; is  
4 that what you're saying?

5 A. Yes, and there were examples of that in some of my  
6 documents.

7 Q. I'd like to move on, please, Mr Young, to I think what  
8 will be our penultimate topic, that relates to your  
9 knowledge of what's described rather loosely as "remote  
10 access". You deal with this at paragraphs 52 to 54 of  
11 your statement. I wonder if we could bring that up,  
12 please.

13 Now, just before we look at what you say in those  
14 paragraphs, I think you say that, as a matter of  
15 generality, you would have expected there to be some  
16 form of remote access to a system such as Horizon from  
17 your prior experience in working in IT; is that right?

18 A. There is in every system but yes.

19 Q. But you say that, specifically in relation to this  
20 system, you did not know that Fujitsu could insert, edit  
21 or delete transaction data or data in branch accounts  
22 without the knowledge or consent of subpostmasters,  
23 managers or assistants, nor that such action could not  
24 leave a robust audit trail.

25 From where had you obtained that understanding,

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1 please?

2 **A.** It's come from a number of arenas. So having spent time  
3 around the Helpdesk, having spent time with Fujitsu in  
4 their offices, where they support the Horizon product  
5 and spent time with my own team, I'm aware of what the  
6 process was. And access into the system remotely -- so  
7 remotely might be, you know, from the offices in Fujitsu  
8 through to where the system resides in a data centre,  
9 you know, you're not -- there's not a cable, you're  
10 doing a remote access, you're doing that knowing that  
11 there is a full audit log, right down to the keystroke  
12 of everything that happens at that point and then there  
13 is a checksum process that goes through, that can't be  
14 changed. It's very, very secure, to ensure that, if  
15 anything does go wrong or if there is a disagreement  
16 over what happened, that log can be used -- that audit  
17 log can be used to describe the actions that were taken,  
18 right down to the keystroke.

19 But my understanding of how the whole end-to-end  
20 support process worked was that, at the point  
21 a subpostmaster was having a problem in branch, and it  
22 required some form of reset, some form of change to the  
23 data, though I don't think that happened very, very  
24 often, it was done with the permission of the -- it was  
25 meant to be done with the permission of the

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1 having to remote in and fix it, okay, they should be  
2 doing that with my authority and my purview as to what  
3 they're doing. And, at the end of the exercise, my  
4 agreement that they've done it. And then the access  
5 should conclude. Okay?

6 Again, I think there have been examples given where  
7 that's not been the process that's been followed  
8 through. But that's the process I understood from  
9 a Post Office -- you know, and Fujitsu, "Let's help the  
10 subpostmaster because there's an issue".

11 **Q.** So I just want to be clear, you've given evidence about  
12 your understanding at the time and what you've learnt  
13 subsequently in the Inquiry. At the time you were in  
14 post, you understood that, firstly, remote access was  
15 possible because it had to be for a system such as  
16 Horizon, correct?

17 **A.** Yes.

18 **Q.** Secondly, that if it was used or if changes were made to  
19 data, they would be done with the consent of the  
20 postmaster?

21 **A.** Yes.

22 **Q.** Thirdly, that there would be a clear audit trail to  
23 evidence any such remote access?

24 **A.** An uncorruptible audit trail.

25 **Q.** Now, it came to your attention in 2011 that there were

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1 subpostmaster, and that audit log was to stand true over  
2 that whole process. So, of course, the Second Sight  
3 investigation has proved that that wasn't always the  
4 case.

5 I do want to make the point because I've heard the  
6 language in the Inquiry having seen some of the other  
7 evidence that's been given: for me, backdoor access is  
8 an access that's usually attributed to the person that  
9 has written the code and he or she uses it as a quick  
10 entrance into the data or into the code in order to  
11 change something almost on the fly, and the summary is  
12 it's usually not an auditable process. Okay?

13 And I'd like to think that modern day systems -- and  
14 I would include Horizon Online as part of that  
15 process -- was much more robust than that. So where  
16 someone is dealing with the code that may have  
17 ramifications to a subpostmaster or The Branch Network  
18 as a whole, they're testing it first and validating it,  
19 and when they're accessing it through, there are  
20 a number of parties that have oversight to that process.  
21 It's clear, through some of the evidence process that  
22 I've seen in the Inquiry that that level of due  
23 diligence frankly was missing.

24 And the basic one that subpostmasters would worry  
25 about is, if I am asking for support and someone is

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1 concerns about the system controls in place in relation  
2 to privileged access rights; is that correct?

3 **A.** Following the Ernst & Young audit report, yes.

4 **Q.** What did you understand to be the nature of Ernst &  
5 Young's concerns about those privileged access rights?

6 **A.** There were several, so one, I think, talked about some  
7 of the change control type process which should be --  
8 you know, from an operating point of view, should be  
9 really tight. But the one I think my statement latches  
10 on to and talks about, is the user access/privilege  
11 access type process. So that identified what I thought  
12 were some fairly rudimentary issues, right? So not --  
13 and, again, my statement says the same thing, you  
14 know -- not the type of issues you would expect a blue  
15 chip technology company like Fujitsu to have in play.

16 Now, I'm sure part of the process, from the Fujitsu  
17 point of view might be, you know, we were moving from  
18 Horizon to Horizon Online and things had to change quite  
19 quickly and we were still playing catch-up. I don't  
20 hold to that, candidly, I think privileged access in all  
21 its various facets needs to be buttoned down throughout,  
22 and it's clear from the Ernst & Young report that wasn't  
23 the case. And it's also clear that there were one or  
24 two super-users that had access to everything, and that  
25 that wasn't supervised in the way I would expect it to

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1 be. It might have an audit log associated to it but it  
 2 wasn't supervised.  
 3 There were, as an example -- and I do make this  
 4 point in my statement but I'll make it here again -- in  
 5 most corporates now, when you're deploying  
 6 a multiplicity of systems, you have an automated process  
 7 that's tied to the exit of an individual from a company.  
 8 Even through HR, you have a process that where you may  
 9 have someone suspended and suspended from your back-end  
 10 systems, that there's an automated process that takes  
 11 their rights, their log-in rights, password and log-in  
 12 rights, to certain systems away. Maybe forever, maybe  
 13 for a set point in time.

14 And some of that -- the sophisticated ones cover  
 15 leaves of absence when people are on holiday, and so on  
 16 and so forth, just to apply an additional layer of  
 17 security. I was surprised, from the Ernst & Young  
 18 report, that they didn't have anything like that in play  
 19 and, when I became aware of the output, via Lesley and  
 20 via Ernst & Young, there were a lot of phone calls with  
 21 Fujitsu as to why some of the basics on security  
 22 management with privileged access were missing.

23 **Q.** Did you consider at the time that the inadequate  
 24 controls over privileged access had implications for the  
 25 integrity of the data process by Horizon?

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1 have, and you're also concerned this has data integrity  
 2 implications. Did you consider at the time that there  
 3 might be a necessity for a backward looking review of  
 4 how privileged access rights had been used and what  
 5 implications that might have for the complaints being  
 6 made by subpostmasters?  
 7 **A.** The reason I'm hesitating is my sense is -- and it's  
 8 upon a review with Fujitsu, you know, in a visit -- that  
 9 they had it reasonably buttoned down, certainly better  
 10 than the E&Y type report might suggest, on Horizon,  
 11 Legacy Horizon, but I believe the shift to Horizon  
 12 Online and some of the dynamics associated with that may  
 13 have caused some of what we saw in the Ernst & Young  
 14 report. Did I look back at the time as I'm doing  
 15 Horizon Online? You know, if I'm being candid, I've got  
 16 a whole wealth of stuff I've got to deliver against.  
 17 I'm not getting into the weeds of what would be other  
 18 people's responsibilities.

19 Might I have -- in hindsight, and knowing where we  
 20 are today, might I have taken a step back from  
 21 everything else I was doing and said, "Hold on a minute  
 22 here, we need to look at privileged access?", the answer  
 23 to that is yes, but hindsight is a wonderful thing.

24 **Q.** I'm conscious of the time. What I'd like to do,  
 25 Mr Young, is just seek some brief clarification on

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1 **A.** Yes, I considered that, yes.

2 **Q.** Now, bearing in mind that you believed all privileged  
 3 access rights were audited, did you give any  
 4 consideration to requesting a full audit of privileged  
 5 access rights be carried out by Fujitsu?

6 **A.** Well, we again, it's in the disclosure process, we set  
 7 up an Audit Board that was going to audit following  
 8 through on the audit report from Ernst & Young, to  
 9 ensure that we got those issues resolved as quickly as  
 10 possible. And I deliberately made a push via Lesley,  
 11 who is very competent, to get that done and marshal it  
 12 under her leadership, which she did. I think, by the  
 13 time we got to the end of October of that year, and it's  
 14 reflected in the Board paper, we had addressed that  
 15 privileged access type issue.

16 **Q.** I think it would be fair to say that that was a forward  
 17 looking approach, that is to say that you wished to shut  
 18 down or to reduce the extent of privileged access rights  
 19 which Ernst & Young had raised concerns about.

20 What I'm asking you about now is a backward looking  
 21 review, so bearing in mind you know that subpostmasters  
 22 are complaining about discrepancies in their accounts,  
 23 and you're conscious that, from Ernst & Young's audit,  
 24 that privileged access rights have been granted to  
 25 a much broader number of employees than they should

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1 a number of points with you relating to your sort of  
 2 knowledge and awareness of discussions around private  
 3 prosecutions. So at paragraph 111 of your statement --  
 4 I wonder if we could bring that up, please, page 36 --  
 5 you say this:

6 "Occasionally, in [Board] meetings, discussions  
 7 regarding prosecutions would be had between the Chair,  
 8 the [Managing Director, Alan Cook or David Smith],  
 9 [Paula] Vennells, and Susan Crichton, General Counsel.  
 10 I did not have anything to contribute and did not stray  
 11 into these discussions, as I had no direct knowledge of  
 12 responsibility for or involvement in these cases."

13 What I'd like to do is test if your recollection of  
 14 that is correct. We have reviewed the minutes of the  
 15 Post Office Board and we haven't found evidence of your  
 16 attendance, beyond an original meeting in 2008. Do you  
 17 think you're right in recollecting that these matters  
 18 were discussed in your presence at Board level by these  
 19 individuals?

20 **A.** So I want to be clear about the point I'm trying to make  
 21 there because, based on the question that was poised to  
 22 me in the preparation of the statement, I cannot say  
 23 that I was at a Board meeting and didn't hear a side  
 24 conversation or some element of a conversation that  
 25 might be associated with -- let me draw an example --

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1 you know, the Legal Counsel having an issue with  
 2 a particular prosecution.  
 3 And there may have been, on occasion, a passing  
 4 conversation between, you know, the Legal Counsel, Alan  
 5 Cook, or Paula, or whatever the case may be.  
 6 Now, if you're there, I can't say -- I didn't  
 7 listen. They were partial conversations. They  
 8 weren't -- there was never, in my view, anything done of  
 9 any great note -- which is an anomaly, candidly --  
 10 around prosecutions in Board papers. It was never  
 11 a topic of conversation that the Board or the Executive  
 12 Team at the time would get their chairs round and talk  
 13 to, to some degree, some familiarity that Susan, or the  
 14 General Counsel, whoever it may have been at the time,  
 15 may have chosen to brief the Executive on.  
 16 But I am aware, and that's why it's in the  
 17 statement, that there were, you know, one or two  
 18 occasions where something may have been said and,  
 19 because you've got nothing to contribute, you know, you  
 20 switch off in those types of conversations and they're  
 21 relatively sensitive and confidential by nature, but  
 22 anything minuted -- I mean, in fairness to both Alan  
 23 Cook and certainly Dave Smith, anything said according  
 24 to an agenda in the Post Board was minuted. If it  
 25 wasn't minuted, it wasn't an agenda item.

1 a prosecution, at the point you've lost integrity around  
 2 access via Fujitsu, to help the Post Office, without the  
 3 subpostmaster being present to say, "Yes or no", and  
 4 without an audit log that validates what has happened,  
 5 then you've lost integrity.  
 6 And my understanding from looking in on some of what  
 7 Second Sight said -- because I was deeply interested in  
 8 where their investigation went because, candidly,  
 9 I think I started that process off -- but I was also,  
 10 you know, interested in what our Distinguished Engineer  
 11 at Fujitsu said around auditable logs. And there is  
 12 clearly a window there where it's not nailed down the  
 13 way it should do and, therefore, you cannot  
 14 categorically say that data was altered with the  
 15 subpostmaster's permission at each and every stage.  
 16 So you've lost integrity and, at the point you've  
 17 got that, you can't prosecute against it, in my view.  
 18 **Q.** Now, you say in your statement that you began to  
 19 question the integrity of Horizon after you received  
 20 a further call from -- forgive me, you've mentioned  
 21 an earlier call but you received two calls from Computer  
 22 Weekly, asking you to comment on Horizon's integrity; is  
 23 that correct?  
 24 **A.** That is correct.  
 25 **Q.** The second of which you can date to late 2011, early

1 **Q.** On the topic of prosecutions, you say in your statement  
 2 that the Post Office should have stopped prosecuting  
 3 subpostmasters after they'd received Second Sight's  
 4 Report. Does that reflect your view as to the timings  
 5 of this, that is to say that, once Post Office was in  
 6 possession of that report, the prosecutions should have  
 7 stopped? What I want to ask you is, why do you date it  
 8 to the Second Sight Report and not, for example, to the  
 9 discovery that you had in February 2011 of a bug which  
 10 could cause accounting discrepancies?  
 11 **A.** So a code issue, a bug issue, can get resolved. You've  
 12 got some aftermaths that you've got to resolve and some  
 13 of which we've talked about. But the issue that I think  
 14 makes the difference from the Second Sight Report is, my  
 15 understanding, from what I've learnt, not having seen  
 16 the report but certainly seen their evidence, is they've  
 17 found that Fujitsu -- Post Office, Fujitsu, largely --  
 18 had an -- you know, there was an -- potentially  
 19 an un-auditable access into the system. At the point you  
 20 don't have an audit log that you can validate, you've  
 21 lost your evidential trail, if you're relying on the  
 22 data in Horizon.  
 23 There may have been other prosecutions that didn't,  
 24 but the point I'm trying to make is, you know, where  
 25 largely Horizon is featured as the evidential layer for

1 2012; is that right?  
 2 **A.** Yeah, it's somewhere in a three to four-month window,  
 3 yes.  
 4 **Q.** Which you say coincided with significant negotiations  
 5 over the separation of Royal Mail Group and Post Office?  
 6 **A.** Yes.  
 7 **Q.** It's to that second conversation that you date your  
 8 significant concerns about Horizon's integrity; is that  
 9 fair?  
 10 **A.** I want to just give you a sense where I was at this  
 11 point in time because I think that's pertinent to where  
 12 we are. So I'm working three or four days a week on  
 13 separation. The nearer you get to separation, you're  
 14 now writing a contract between you and Royal Mail Group,  
 15 and it wasn't easy aligning, you know, your own  
 16 Executive Team with Royal Mail's Executive Team, and  
 17 there was a lot of toing and froing, to be candid, and  
 18 we -- the team that pulled that together with a little  
 19 bit of help from me, you know, did a good job because it  
 20 stood the test of time for 10 years.  
 21 But I want to make the point that it was -- in the  
 22 last three or four months of my service at Post Office,  
 23 I lived and breathed delivering that contract. It was  
 24 probably every working hour that I could apply to it.  
 25 So I'm in the negotiation when my phone rings, just

1 as we're finishing up. I excuse myself, I go into  
2 an anteroom and it's a journalist from Computer Weekly,  
3 right? So it's been a bad day. So I take the call,  
4 it's quite a courteous call and, in fairness to the  
5 journalist whose name I can't remember, he says in  
6 summary the JFSA now has a much larger group -- and it  
7 was, it was hundreds -- of subpostmasters that are  
8 disputing the integrity of Horizon and, more  
9 importantly, they're engaging with lawyers -- later on  
10 it was established that it was Shoosmiths -- to start  
11 pulling together a case -- you know, to take a case to  
12 court.

13 I emphasise what I had right the way through and  
14 still believed, at that time: that Horizon, in my view  
15 worked as prescribed, I didn't see any issues. There  
16 was maybe a chosen few words I'd used, which have been  
17 repeated in Private Eye and elsewhere.

18 But, nonetheless, that's what I did. I finished the  
19 call up as courteously as I could. It couldn't have  
20 lasted more than five minutes. And to the point I think  
21 you're now alluding to, I was -- I'd got to the point  
22 where, frankly, I'd had enough. And I rang Duncan Tait  
23 up -- you know, it's like a continuous drib drab with  
24 Fujitsu -- and just said, "Look, I've just had this call  
25 with Computer Weekly, this is where he says things are.

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1 rightly or wrongly -- I said, "I'm expecting Fujitsu to  
2 pay for this audit but I want it to be under Post  
3 Office's leadership", and he agreed to that.

4 As soon as I'd finished that call, I rang Paula and  
5 repeated the conversation I had with Computer Weekly and  
6 the conversation I had with Duncan, and she said,  
7 "Right, okay then". I said, "I've got to get you into  
8 other room with Duncan, so we can take this forward".

9 She asked for his phone number, I gave her the phone  
10 number and my presumption -- again, I'm still doing  
11 separation and I'm writing down the contract -- is that  
12 there was some form of telephone call between the two of  
13 them, which I know took place because I think in Paula's  
14 evidence she suggests there were phone calls that took  
15 place.

16 But that's how I left it and, you know, that's why  
17 my belief is, carrying that through to June when Second  
18 Sight are brought on Board, from when I left in March,  
19 you know, it was clearly followed through and my noting  
20 paper in March to the Board, you know, before I left,  
21 March 2012, talks about a full evaluation of the system  
22 and that it should be a shared process between ourselves  
23 and Fujitsu with execs from both companies, and it talks  
24 about what that might mean.

25 I expected that to expand, and the one thing I think

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1 This is reflecting badly on all of us, your brand and  
2 our brand in POL, and we need to address it, and there's  
3 no two ways about it, Duncan, you know, we're going to  
4 have to investigate this system thoroughly".

5 Now, I'm conscious at this point that there are --  
6 and you'll ask me who and I won't be able to name  
7 them -- but there were one or two people saying at the  
8 point you do that you now question past prosecutions and  
9 other bits of -- but I'd got to the point where, you  
10 know, the wealth of subpostmasters that appeared to have  
11 been affected and the media outlay that was now coming  
12 more and more to the fore, where I felt we needed to be  
13 much more proactive and, albeit I was dispirited by  
14 Duncan's reply to my letter, I had continued to knock on  
15 that door and more or less got the same apply each and  
16 every time.

17 Every time there was a media outlay, I used it as  
18 a mechanism to say, "Are we sure about the system, are  
19 you sure you won't have look at it". You know, we'd had  
20 those conversations. This time around, I'd got to  
21 a point where I'd had enough and said, "We're going to  
22 do it and, more importantly, I want your support". And,  
23 in fairness to Duncan, he took a minute or two to think  
24 about that and calmly replied "Okay, I think you're  
25 right". And I said, which was an important point,

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1 that still hasn't happened and should have happened, in  
2 my view -- and I know this is a long-winded answer --  
3 okay, you can't look at the system in isolation. Right,  
4 the system is one thing and certainly the code needs  
5 reviewing to see what anomalies there are and the  
6 practices they apply to keeping that code where it needs  
7 to be, but you need to look at the process mapping that  
8 sits round that system and the training that's applied  
9 to the Branch Network and the use of that system. I see  
10 too often, even today, with digital systems, where  
11 people buy a digital system and somehow expect the  
12 digital system to make their life easier, without  
13 changing the process that they have, and that all three  
14 need to work in perfect harmony: process, training,  
15 system.

16 And, in my view, from an investigation point of  
17 view, it should have been a big hitter like Ernst &  
18 Young, okay, that came in and vetted everything because  
19 I still don't think that's happened.

20 Q. Finally, Mr Young, you say that in your conversations  
21 with Mr Tait, in which you raised, I suppose, what was  
22 a further request for an independent review of Horizon,  
23 you pointed out that damage was being done to the brand  
24 of the Post Office and to Fujitsu. Was that your  
25 principal concern, damage to the brand, rather than the

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1 injustices that might have been caused to postmasters?  
 2 **A.** It was both. It was a conglomerate of a lot of things.  
 3 I think this was hurting a lot of people:  
 4 subpostmasters, clearly, former subpostmasters, and  
 5 subpostmasters. But, as I think my statement alludes  
 6 to, you know, I was very conscious that the one thing,  
 7 I would say about the Post Office is it has a lot of  
 8 long-term employees. It has people that have worked  
 9 20/30, in some cases occasionally, 40 years in the  
 10 company. To have this backdrop, this Inquiry backdrop,  
 11 and where we are today, you know, clearly, you know,  
 12 impacts those people too that have given -- you know,  
 13 everything they can to the job that they've done day in  
 14 and day out for 30/40 years, and I was conscious of that  
 15 type of portfolio.

16 There's some very loyal people across the Branch  
 17 Network and in headquarters and, amongst the support  
 18 teams, that were trying to do the best job they could  
 19 and this was going on in the background and people were  
 20 talking about it in the way they are today and, you  
 21 know, if you go to a party and say, "Who do you work  
 22 for?" And it's the Post Office, you know, that backdrop  
 23 doesn't really reflect their time in the job, over the  
 24 years they've been working for the Post Office, and the  
 25 same for the Branch Network.

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1 well, I will not just try; I will keep within the  
 2 strictures.

3 **Questioned by MR STEIN**

4 **MR STEIN:** Mr Young, my name is Sam Stein, I represent  
 5 a large group of subpostmasters who have all been  
 6 affected by this scandal and a number of them were  
 7 involved in the GLO, that's the High Court litigation.  
 8 Okay?

9 Now, your evidence, as far as I can understand it,  
 10 has been this, and can I just summarise it: that when  
 11 you came into the Post Office, you were told that,  
 12 largely, the operation of the investigation and  
 13 prosecution section was being dealt with by a team and  
 14 that you shouldn't really interfere. That's a summary,  
 15 a paraphrase of what you said; is that about right?

16 **A.** Yeah, I think the words used were "You don't need to be  
 17 part of it".

18 **Q.** Yes, and, secondly, in similar lines, when you were  
 19 thinking about the question of what is Fujitsu up to,  
 20 regarding the operation of the system and its coherence  
 21 or its integrity, you were told, well, that's up to  
 22 Fujitsu because Fujitsu owns the data, and owns the  
 23 source code, and that therefore they're in control of  
 24 that; again that's about right, is it?

25 **A.** Well, they don't own the data. The data was always

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1 It's left a litany of bad press behind that, you  
 2 know, some people probably deserve but others don't, and  
 3 I was conscious of that too.

4 **MS HODGE:** Thank you, Mr Young. I have no further  
 5 questions.

6 Sir, there are some questions from Core  
 7 Participants. I think those are likely to take us  
 8 beyond 1.00, but I'm sure that Mr Young would like to  
 9 finish his evidence. So it may be that if we canvas how  
 10 long those are likely to take, you can take a view as to  
 11 whether you'd be willing to take a slightly later lunch  
 12 break.

13 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, yes. So who wants to ask questions,  
 14 and how long are you going to take?

15 **MS PATRICK:** Sir, for the Hudgells team we have around  
 16 25 minutes.

17 **MS PAGE:** I'm afraid similar time from me as well, sir.

18 **MR STEIN:** Sir, on behalf of Howe+Co, five minutes.

19 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Well, let's use those few minutes  
 20 up to lunchtime to hear Mr Stein's questions and then  
 21 I think it's inevitable we'll have to have a break for  
 22 lunch.

23 So your five minutes could go to ten, Mr Stein, but  
 24 not longer than that. That's what it boils down to.

25 **MR STEIN:** Thank you very much. I will try to keep to --

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1 going to be the Post Office's, if it's generated by  
 2 branch. But they certainly owned -- they owned the code  
 3 of the system.

4 **Q.** Right, and the sense we get from your statement is that  
 5 it was only towards the end of your tenure, your years  
 6 at the Post Office, did you start to gain some concerns  
 7 regarding the system and, therefore, you wrote  
 8 a document to the Board, which was a noting document to  
 9 the Board, which was to say, "ought to be reviewed"?

10 **A.** Yes.

11 **Q.** Okay. Now, you've been asked a number of questions by  
 12 Ms Hodge about the mismatch bug, can we call it that,  
 13 just as a simple short version of it?

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** You've explained that, regarding the mismatch bug, and  
 16 this is what you put in your statement: you thought that  
 17 it had arisen in the testing environment, rather than  
 18 the full rollout, yes?

19 **A.** No, the testing environment is one thing. Just to make  
 20 sure we're all talking about this in the --

21 **Q.** Remember how little time I have.

22 **A.** In the pilot, right, you've tested it. You think it's  
 23 fit for purpose. You're now running a pilot over -- in  
 24 waves. You run a pilot and then you go to the next  
 25 wave, next wave and then, before you know where you are,

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1 there's a sitdown and "Let's now go out into main  
2 rollout".

3 **Q.** So let's make matters as simple as possible: you did not  
4 think it was a bug that was operating in the live  
5 environment. That's what you say throughout your  
6 statement, that's as you've given your evidence  
7 originally to Ms Hodge, yes?

8 **A.** Yes.

9 **Q.** Right. So, by the time, in fact, in February 2011,  
10 you're being made aware of this mismatch bug, did you  
11 realise that it was important, particularly as against  
12 the growing clamour in the public sphere, regarding the  
13 reliability of Horizon?

14 **A.** It's the -- having listened to the -- you know, the  
15 evidence and, more importantly, having, you know, looked  
16 at that summary that talked about February 2011, if  
17 in -- if it's not a -- because I'm a -- like I said,  
18 there were certain facts that had symmetry to pilot: the  
19 62 branches, the way the outfall was dealt with, the  
20 gains were kept by the postmasters, the debts were  
21 managed and kept by the Post Office, exactly the same  
22 process, it would appear, have been carried out on both  
23 mismatches but it's why I thought they were one and the  
24 same.

25 **Q.** Did you think that the mismatch bug at the time, in  
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1 important: this was very important, as against the media  
2 issues that were current at that moment; do you accept  
3 that, Mr Young?

4 **A.** Agreed.

5 **Q.** Right. Now, let's try and work this through. There was  
6 no mention in the document where, just before leaving  
7 Post Office, you say to the Board that there needs to be  
8 a review of the system. There's no mention of the  
9 mismatch bug in that document?

10 **A.** No, there's not, no.

11 **Q.** There's no reference by you to the Board of this very  
12 important issue as against a lot of media interest going  
13 on at the time. There's no reference by you to the  
14 Board of this very important issue either, is there?  
15 You don't take it up to the Board?

16 **A.** No, there's not, and equally, there's no reference to me  
17 via Fujitsu or via Lesley or via my own team with that  
18 regard.

19 **Q.** So shall we just look at your own levels of personal  
20 responsible to start off with --

21 **A.** Okay.

22 **Q.** -- because you appeared to be the person that people are  
23 going to. They're saying, "Mike, look, there's this  
24 problem, and it's a problem in the live environment".  
25 Now, if we're talking about personal responsibility,  
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1 2011, when it was raised with you, was important as  
2 against the growing clamour regarding the integrity of  
3 the Horizon system in the public?

4 **A.** Well, clearly the answer to that would be yes.

5 **Q.** Right. Can we go then go, please, to FUJ00081545. It  
6 should come up on the screen, and if we can go to  
7 page 4, please, on the system, that would be very  
8 helpful.

9 If we scroll up, please. Right. Stop there,  
10 please.

11 Okay. So we can see here, this is from you,  
12 18 February 2011, 7.58 in the evening, and it's to  
13 Mr Russell and Mr McLean, and it says:  
14 "Will  
15 "I need to sit down with you and possibly several  
16 others just to understand these latest issues on Horizon  
17 and where we are with them. This is very important as  
18 there's a lot of media interest in Horizon at the  
19 moment."  
20 Then you're asking:  
21 "What would be helpful is if you could send me  
22 a written summary on what the integrity issues are and  
23 what's been done about them."  
24 Okay? So we can see that, at that point in time,  
25 there was no doubt in your mind that this wasn't just  
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1 you're someone that talks a fair bit in your statement  
2 and your evidence about your experience, both in  
3 background, in the armed forces, then the police and  
4 then in systems and operations. Now, this is being  
5 relayed to you as being an important issue in the live  
6 environment outwith the Post Office. It was your  
7 responsibility to take this to the Board, wasn't it,  
8 Mr Young, and you didn't carry that out?

9 **A.** Yes.

10 **Q.** You also were aware that there was an implication, you  
11 must have been aware that there was an implication with  
12 bugs in the system, the live system, that this could  
13 impact upon investigations, and police cases that were  
14 being considered, and cases that were being taken  
15 through the court. You mentioned a couple of times  
16 that, with your background police experience, things  
17 were of interest to you on occasions, and you used that  
18 experience to analyse matters. You must have been aware  
19 that this was going to go to and implicate issues that  
20 were related to police cases; it's true, isn't it,  
21 Mr Young?

22 **A.** Possibly, and the only reason I'm hesitating to give  
23 an affirmative to that is I probably was looking at this  
24 purely from an IT standpoint, but does it have  
25 implications around those people that have been  
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1 prosecuted? The answer is yes, I understand that.  
 2 **Q.** You did nothing about that either?  
 3 **A.** Can we just take a step back?  
 4 **Q.** Well, did you or did you not do something about that,  
 5 Mr Young?  
 6 **A.** I'd like to take a step back, if that's all right?  
 7 **Q.** I'd prefer you to answer the question but I'll let you  
 8 have your step back.  
 9 **A.** I will answer your question, if I can take a step back,  
 10 all right?  
 11 I thought this was tied to, and I'm wrong, clearly,  
 12 having gone through this now, I thought this was tied to  
 13 the original Oracle bug, which I thought had been dealt  
 14 with. Clearly, that's not the case. I'm going to come  
 15 back to the point I made before because I don't want  
 16 that to get lost. Usually -- and I don't know of any  
 17 other occasion, potentially, where this may have  
 18 occurred -- usually, when something like this happens,  
 19 a major incident is generated.  
 20 That's not by me. That's by the people operating  
 21 the system and they sit both sides of the fence, in IT  
 22 and in Fujitsu, and, at the point a major incident comes  
 23 out, the Executive Team and the Boards get those major  
 24 incidents, along with me, at the same time. That's  
 25 missing.

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1 to the Board. You were one possible means of getting it  
 2 to the Board but there were others, the reality is it  
 3 didn't get to the Board; is that it, in summary?  
 4 **A.** From the disclosure documents, yes, sir, that's the  
 5 case.  
 6 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Thank you.  
 7 **MR STEIN:** So the position is, Mr Young, you and others all  
 8 failed to do your job properly as regards to this issue;  
 9 is that fair?  
 10 **A.** No.  
 11 **Q.** Okay.  
 12 **A.** I've said why it's not fair.  
 13 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** All right, thank you.  
 14 **MR STEIN:** The last question on this. The document I asked  
 15 to go on the screen says this:  
 16 "I need to sit down with you and possibly several  
 17 others just to understand these latest issues ..."  
 18 So, in fact, that reply, written by you, tells us  
 19 that these were the latest issues; they weren't the  
 20 previous issues. You knew these were separate to the  
 21 earlier ones, didn't you, Mr Young?  
 22 **A.** I'm not disputing that when I read that now but, in the  
 23 happening, in the operation, that's what I was seeing.  
 24 I was seeing something related to the original Oracle  
 25 bugs --

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1 Also, what's missing is any sort of executive  
 2 overlay from Duncan, Gavin Bounds or anyone in Fujitsu,  
 3 out of courtesy to me. That's missing too, okay?  
 4 So I am sat there, I think at the time, seeing this  
 5 as part of the original Oracle issue. It clearly isn't,  
 6 okay? Is it a miss by me? In answer to your question,  
 7 the answer is yes. Had I known that it was a new bug,  
 8 managed in the same way, in all its various facets, and  
 9 miraculously appearing to affect 62 branches like the  
 10 original one did, I would have had phone calls both to  
 11 Fujitsu and to my Board colleagues.  
 12 But there is a process that sits in IT from  
 13 a Service Delivery and IT point of view, that doesn't  
 14 need me in the link. If Mike Young is away on leave or  
 15 ill, it doesn't all fall flat on its face. There are  
 16 processes and procedures that kick in that allow this to  
 17 get escalated with all of the backdrop of how it's come  
 18 about and what's being done about it. I don't see any  
 19 of that in this, or in the disclosure process. That's  
 20 the only point I'm trying to make. So do I accept --  
 21 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Can I summarise this, otherwise it won't  
 22 be five minutes, it'll be 15?  
 23 **MR STEIN:** Yes, sir.  
 24 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** The position is that you would have  
 25 expected that, one way or another, this should have got  
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1 **MR STEIN:** No further questions.  
 2 **A.** -- so I don't dispute that point.  
 3 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Thank you. So we'll break for  
 4 lunch now.  
 5 Before we do, Ms Hodge, are you taking this  
 6 afternoon's witness as well?  
 7 **MS HODGE:** I am sir, yes.  
 8 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** So let's just have a minute of  
 9 an overview. We're obviously going to run significantly  
 10 into this afternoon still with Mr Young. So where does  
 11 that leave the next witness and the length of time that  
 12 that witness may take?  
 13 **MS HODGE:** I don't expect the witness to take anything like  
 14 as long as we've taken with Mr Young, in that I have  
 15 some questions for him but I can cut my cloth, and  
 16 I don't think there are a lot of questions from Core  
 17 Participants.  
 18 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Can I ask Core Participants to confirm or  
 19 contradict what Ms Hodge has just said about their  
 20 questioning?  
 21 **MR STEIN:** From our point of view, I think that's right,  
 22 yes. Thank you, sir.  
 23 **MS PATRICK:** From ours too, sir. I think most of the  
 24 questions we wanted to cover are going to be covered by  
 25 Counsel to the Inquiry.  
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1 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Ms Page or Mr Henry?  
 2 **MS PAGE:** I'm just having a very quick look. Mr Henry is  
 3 not in the room and was going to deal with this witness  
 4 but I've just looked at the Rule 10 and I can confirm  
 5 that we don't have questions.  
 6 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Fine. Well, that's fine.  
 7 I'm prepared to sit, you know, reasonably this  
 8 evening to finish the witness but, as you all know by  
 9 now, by about 4.45, my powers to concentrate are waning,  
 10 shall we say. So I hope everyone will bear that in  
 11 mind.  
 12 So we'll start again at 2.00, yes?  
 13 **MS HODGE:** Yes. Thank you, sir.  
 14 (1.02 pm)  
 15 (The Short Adjournment)  
 16 (2.00 pm)  
 17 **MS HODGE:** Good afternoon, sir. Can you see and hear us?  
 18 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, I can, thank you.  
 19 **MS HODGE:** Thank you.  
 20 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Who is going first?  
 21 **MS HODGE:** I believe it's Ms Page.  
 22 **Questioned by MS PAGE**  
 23 **MS PAGE:** Mr Young, you were Chief Operating Officer when  
 24 you left POL in April 2012 with Lesley Sewell Head of  
 25 Technology, one of your direct reports, yes?

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1 **Q.** She has her own --  
 2 **A.** -- that the construct that I put in place per my  
 3 comments before the lunchtime break, allowed the  
 4 business to pursue, in hand with Fujitsu, a proper  
 5 investigation of the three elements I talked to: the  
 6 process, the training and the system itself.  
 7 **Q.** Well, let's go back a little bit and what you say about  
 8 the chain of command in 2010. You've told us in your  
 9 witness statement -- no need, I think, to go to it --  
 10 that after David Smith moved to Royal Mail Group in  
 11 October 2010, you say he continued to actually have  
 12 oversight of the Post Office and, in particular,  
 13 Ms Vennells continued to report to him until around  
 14 April 2011, yes?  
 15 **A.** That's my understanding, yes.  
 16 **Q.** What was the degree of oversight as far as you  
 17 understood; are you talking daily, weekly, monthly  
 18 interventions?  
 19 **A.** Between?  
 20 **Q.** Between Ms Vennells and Mr Smith.  
 21 **A.** I don't know, genuinely don't know.  
 22 **Q.** How do you know that she was still reporting to him?  
 23 **A.** It's a good question. I think some of that -- I can't  
 24 remember how but some of that has some through the  
 25 disclosure process and some of that has come through not

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1 **A.** Yes.  
 2 **Q.** Yet you take no responsibility for the Horizon scandal;  
 3 is that right?  
 4 **A.** We all have a part to play in that tier around tech. If  
 5 the tech doesn't work as described and has caused the  
 6 failures that it's caused, then yes, we've got some  
 7 responsibility, and that includes me.  
 8 **Q.** But you said that it was really other people's fault for  
 9 not telling you of the problems with Horizon, just like  
 10 Paula Vennells said that it was your fault for not  
 11 telling her.  
 12 **A.** I highlighted -- other than the last bug, which is  
 13 a misnomer that I'll have to come to terms with,  
 14 I highlighted all the issues we had with Horizon. As  
 15 we've heard, I challenged Fujitsu with regards to  
 16 looking at the system. I was reminded that it was  
 17 a service, we didn't own the IP. I think some of the  
 18 work I did got us to a point where we could demand it  
 19 because we would own the IP. I think I did, you know,  
 20 everything I could.  
 21 Paula's response was based, as I understand it, on  
 22 a conversation we had after the first Computer Weekly  
 23 call. Now, I actually left in the second week of March  
 24 2012 and Paula was there seven years later. So  
 25 I thought --

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1 talking with Paula but with other executives within POL,  
 2 the suggestion being that she had some handover with  
 3 Dave Smith and, as a consequence, he was a mentor/coach  
 4 as she went through this process. And I think my  
 5 statement talks to -- and down the road, Moya Greene  
 6 took on that more of that mantle.  
 7 **Q.** Can we then just look at what Mr Smith says about your  
 8 involvement in the background to the Ismay Report. If  
 9 we could bring up his evidence, please. It's  
 10 INQ00001128.  
 11 When we get there it's page 19, internal numbering,  
 12 page 76. Mr Smith said that there were no terms of  
 13 reference for the Ismay Report but, in effect, he said  
 14 that you were one of a few people who was giving  
 15 Mr Ismay instructions. So, if we look at the right-hand  
 16 side of this page -- sorry, yes, the right-hand of 76 --  
 17 it's an answer that he gives, a large answer in the  
 18 middle of page 76:  
 19 "I think the structure at the time was that Mike  
 20 Moores -- actually it was Mike I had charged with  
 21 writing the report, and that between Mike and myself and  
 22 Mike Young and Sue, we go back to that conversation, we  
 23 agreed that it would be appropriate for Rod to carry out  
 24 the actual activity, and Mike, myself and Mike Young,  
 25 all at various times, did have conversations with Rod to

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1 sort of set the tone of what we wanted and expected to  
2 come back and also to help and review his progress.  
3 That was more the two Mikes than myself but the three of  
4 us -- it wasn't just one conversation, it was a set of  
5 conversations."

6 Then summarising that, the question is:

7 "So your evidence is that Mr Ismay was getting  
8 instructions from would be people at multiple times?"

9 Would you agree with that?

10 **A.** I don't recall giving any instructions. I was asked  
11 questions and I responded to those questions but  
12 I didn't give instructions to Rod or to anyone else.  
13 I actually saw the preparation of that statement going  
14 across the whole tech team, not just me, but I responded  
15 to questions as and when they came across my desk.

16 **Q.** Let's go a little bit further down, then, see what else  
17 Mr Smith says. At page 22, internal pages 87 to 88, on  
18 the left, Mr Stevens quotes from his witness statement,  
19 and it says:

20 "At the time, I do not think that we thought that  
21 there was any merit in commissioning a further report by  
22 an IT expert or forensic accountant or similar to test  
23 the reliability of Horizon as the report was clear-cut  
24 in its position. There was nothing in it which  
25 suggested we should investigate Fujitsu or Horizon

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1 so those were the fundamental reasons."

2 Was the Seema Misra case part of the reasoning for  
3 not pursuing an independent report?

4 **A.** I don't know. As I alluded to this morning, I wasn't  
5 privy to the prosecution case, for want of better words,  
6 the case prepared against Seema Misra. What little  
7 I got in terms of prosecution data came via the Ismay  
8 Report in itself.

9 **Q.** Well, this is rather different, isn't it? What he's  
10 suggesting, Mr Smith, is that, actually, in the  
11 aftermath of the Ismay Report, when "we", the management  
12 team that he has set out on the left-hand side of the  
13 page, when "we" were considering whether or not to take  
14 further action, whether the Fujitsu system was tamper  
15 proof, whether it needed a forensic accountant or  
16 similar to test that, one of the reasons not to do that  
17 was that the Seema Misra trial had tested the Horizon  
18 system and the Horizon system had come through that  
19 test. So he's suggesting you were part of those  
20 discussions.

21 **A.** So I can categorically say that's not the case.

22 **Q.** Let's look at the email chain that we've already looked  
23 at, the Mark Burley email chain. POL00424359. This is  
24 a slightly different version of the same email chain,  
25 which has a little bit more in it. If we could scroll

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1 further."

2 Then he asks:

3 "Who was the 'we' when you say that?"

4 **"Answer:** I'm talking about a combination of the  
5 Post Office Senior Management Team."

6 Then further down:

7 "Paula Vennells, Mike Young, Mike Moores."

8 So, again, that's suggesting you were part of  
9 a small group of people responsible for what was going  
10 to happen both in the Ismay Report and what was going to  
11 happen as a result of the Ismay Report; do you dispute  
12 that?

13 **A.** That's the way it reads, yes.

14 **Q.** Do you agree with what he says there?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** All right. Well, let's just look at the right-hand  
17 side, and this answer, the large-ish answer in the lower  
18 half:

19 "... the fundamental piece was that we believed that  
20 the system was tamper proof so the Fujitsu position that  
21 was laid out was quite clear. We had not seen in any of  
22 the recent cases any issues that would suggest a problem  
23 and, in fact, a few weeks later, as we now know wrongly,  
24 but at the time, we saw the Seema Misra case as a test  
25 of the Horizon system, and it had come through that, and

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1 down, please, to page 4, you'll recognise this from the  
2 version that we saw earlier today. It's an email from  
3 Mark Burley to you and Sue Huggins with various others  
4 copied in. In Mr Burley's paragraph 2, he refers to the  
5 three cases that he's aware of, and I'd just like to  
6 pick up on the Castleton case, middle of the paragraph:

7 "Castleton where we presented a copy of the audit  
8 log to the subpostmaster's solicitor who promptly agreed  
9 there was no substance to the SPMR's claim and advised  
10 him to settle the debt. The solicitor was sacked by the  
11 subpostmaster who proceeded to court, lost the case and  
12 liability of £300,000 but declared himself bankrupt.  
13 The judge decided there was 'no flaw' in the Horizon  
14 system and 'the logic of the system is correct' and 'the  
15 conclusion is inescapable that the Horizon system was  
16 working properly in all material aspects'."

17 You will have known, won't you, that what goes on  
18 between a solicitor and their client is privileged,  
19 wouldn't you?

20 **A.** Indeed.

21 **Q.** So that summary there was nonsense, wasn't it? There  
22 was no way Post Office could know what Castleton's  
23 solicitor said to Castleton, was there?

24 **A.** Potentially, yes.

25 **Q.** Was this malign rumour part of the commonplace lazy

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1 assumptions that Post Office Management made about  
2 subpostmasters, that they were dishonest or incompetent,  
3 that sort of baseless rumour mongering?

4 **A.** Within the Post Office or within the executive? I mean,  
5 frame it.

6 **Q.** Well, within your knowledge.

7 **A.** Look, I've seen this played out in the Inquiry before.  
8 I can honestly say not that I'm aware of. Was there  
9 a -- to further just make a point, was there a view that  
10 Horizon was secure and working as it should do? Yes.  
11 And did people feel, including myself, that we should  
12 defend it because we had no other datasets to suggest  
13 otherwise? The answer to that is yes, too.

14 But I can't say there was a deliberate stream of  
15 guidance, advice, however you want to term it, coming  
16 from wherever, to -- you know, to do untold things to  
17 the subpostmasters that might be going through or about  
18 to go through a prosecution. That's not something that  
19 I am aware of.

20 **Q.** Let's turn, then, to the Misra trial again, and if  
21 I could have POL00169170, please. This is the famous  
22 bandwagon email, which was sent around after the Misra  
23 trial, and what we see in this version of it is your  
24 name as one of the people copied in. Can we scroll  
25 down, please. There we are. The email from Marilyn

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1 Seema Misra. I only became aware of this case after  
2 seeing the Channel 4 programme and reading the Ismay  
3 Report. I was not copied on the initial email dated  
4 21 October 2010 regarding the conviction of Seema Misra.  
5 (Email from Rod Ismay to Jarnail Singh [et cetera]).  
6 I was not aware that as a result of a successful RMG/POL  
7 prosecution a pregnant lady was imprisoned."

8 That's not correct, is it?

9 **A.** No, on reflection, having looked at that discovery  
10 document, the answer would be no. In fairness the email  
11 doesn't talk about her personal circumstances but I take  
12 your point.

13 **Q.** Do you think you've made any other self-serving errors  
14 of that nature in your evidence?

15 **A.** It's not self-serving, genuinely not self-serving.

16 **Q.** What about the recollection of the second Computer  
17 Weekly call and your subsequent very detailed  
18 recollection of your conversation with Duncan Tait; is  
19 that a little bit self-serving, Mr Young?

20 **A.** No, I was angry. So I remember it implicitly because  
21 I knew what it would mean and it was me almost  
22 passing -- you know, passing the ability to get the  
23 system investigated onto the -- what would be, after  
24 separation, the CEO of the Post Office. And I have made  
25 the point -- there were a number of points to that and

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1 Benjamin in the bottom half of the page is the bandwagon  
2 email, and we see here that it has been forwarded from  
3 David Smith, that's the manager David Smith, to you,  
4 Mr Ismay, Mr Moores and Ms Vennells:

5 "Rod

6 "Brilliant news. Well done. Please pass on my  
7 thanks to the team.

8 "Regards

9 "Dave."

10 This was Post Office using a criminal trial for  
11 improper collateral purposes, wasn't it?

12 **A.** That's not the way I see it. I actually think what Dave  
13 Smith was trying to do was thank people for their  
14 efforts to see it through. Now, we can argue about  
15 whether it was right or wrong; that's the way I saw it.  
16 I did nothing with that email. I think the intent  
17 was -- the way I read this email from Dave Smith, the  
18 intent was I was to pass my thanks on potentially to  
19 John Scott. I didn't. I read through it and I left it  
20 as it was. But I do think -- and I did see Dave Smith's  
21 evidence -- I do think, you know, it's not a great  
22 message, personally.

23 **Q.** Could we have your witness statement up, please, at  
24 page 35, paragraph 110:

25 "Further, I was not involved in the prosecution of  
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1 one of them was we didn't own the IP and, every time you  
2 knocked on Fujitsu's door, you know, "You bought  
3 a service, we're in the parameters of the service". And  
4 it wasn't until quite late in the year that we had  
5 secured the IP through the broadband contract.

6 So there were a number of actions that add  
7 credibility to the action that happened after that call.

8 **Q.** Well, let's go to some communications with Parliament.  
9 I'll just actually go to one and perhaps give some  
10 references for others in the interests of time.

11 POL00417094. If we could scroll down a little,  
12 please. There's a lot of Mikes in this email chain, it  
13 gets a bit confusing but this first Mike is actually  
14 a draft directed to Mike Whitehead from Mike Granville.  
15 It says to Mike Whitehead:

16 "In response to you query:

17 "The system is based on a user log-in, and all  
18 actions have to be endorsed by the user. POL cannot  
19 remotely control a branch's system. Any technical  
20 changes by Fujitsu that impact the system have to go  
21 through clearance processes which would prevent any  
22 amendment to existing data. The independent audit file  
23 is in place and can show all the system activity, down  
24 to a single keystroke, in a particular branch."

25 So that was a draft. If we scroll up, Mike  
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1 Granville wants to run it past you, Mike Young. So he  
 2 sends it to you and he says:  
 3 "If it is helpful re your meeting with Paula --  
 4 please see below my draft response to BIS ..."  
 5 So do you know what became of that; are you aware  
 6 that that then did actually go as far, as we can tell,  
 7 to Mike Whitehead at BIS, that formulation about remote  
 8 access?  
 9 **A.** I don't know. Like you, I would presume it went to  
 10 where it was meant to go.  
 11 **Q.** As I say, I wouldn't take you to it but in POL00120561,  
 12 we see a further briefing which includes that wording.  
 13 It goes again to you, it covers various issues to do  
 14 with the Seema Misra trial, it talks about the very  
 15 robust stance that Post Office wanted to take, did take,  
 16 continued to take and that BIS took up, therefore, with  
 17 Ed Davey following his meeting with Sir Alan Bates.  
 18 Now, you were obviously aware that these very robust  
 19 lines were going to Parliament, weren't you?  
 20 **A.** Well, I'm -- clearly, I'm aware of that. So as my  
 21 statement said, I didn't sit down. The only MP I sat  
 22 down with, which was an introductory meeting to the Post  
 23 Office, was with Ed Davey, and a number of the execs  
 24 were invited and that meeting lasted an hour and, as my  
 25 statement says, it didn't cover Horizon. Where I may be  
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1 **Q.** Whether this was accurate.  
 2 **A.** I thought it was accurate.  
 3 **Q.** On the basis of what you'd be told by Fujitsu?  
 4 **A.** Yes, and what my own team thought was in place.  
 5 **Q.** Well, let's look at what happened further on down the  
 6 line because in November 2011 you were still giving the  
 7 same sort of robust lines to Parliament. POL00295067.  
 8 If we scroll down a little, please. As we can see, this  
 9 is from 18 November 2011. If we stay on the email from  
 10 Rod Ismay to you, if you're willing to take it from the  
 11 subject line "Parliamentary Questions about Horizon",  
 12 that's what we're dealing with. In the middle of the  
 13 first paragraph:  
 14 "It remains consistent with our robust stance but is  
 15 a more concise set of words."  
 16 Then if we scroll up to your reply:  
 17 "Sorry not to have got back to you sooner, been  
 18 stuck in MDA negotiations all day."  
 19 So that confirms that at this point in time you're  
 20 very strongly tied up with that:  
 21 "I'm okay with the approach and the wording."  
 22 So, by this time, you are aware of the EY reports,  
 23 you are aware of issues growing and yet you're still  
 24 content with this robust stance to go to Parliament.  
 25 **A.** I'm trying to work out the point. So are you pointing  
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1 asked by someone, in this case from regulatory, or maybe  
 2 from PR for a sanity check around a statement, in this  
 3 particular case, audit controls on the data, you know,  
 4 I'll provide that.  
 5 I'm responding to an internal response. I never had  
 6 a direct conversation with a Member of Parliament or  
 7 with representatives of the Government that later on  
 8 joined the Board.  
 9 **Q.** Did you not feel that, as Chief Operating Officer with  
 10 technology in your remit, it was your responsibility to  
 11 make sure that what was said to Parliament was  
 12 absolutely accurate?  
 13 **A.** Yes.  
 14 **Q.** Yet you didn't, did you?  
 15 **A.** Why?  
 16 **Q.** This was not accurate, was it? The EY findings are not  
 17 mentioned here, are they?  
 18 **A.** No.  
 19 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Well, to be fair --  
 20 **MS PAGE:** To be fair, actually --  
 21 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** -- *(unclear)*.  
 22 **MS PAGE:** Quite, I withdraw. Thank you, sir, and  
 23 I apologise.  
 24 But you didn't bother to find out did you?  
 25 **A.** Bother to find out what specifically?  
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1 to the fact that E&Y had raised some issues associated  
 2 with user and privilege access because I didn't see  
 3 anything in the EY report that. Talked about audit  
 4 logs, checksum datas and keystrokes. So I'm trying  
 5 to -- I want to answer your question but I'm trying to  
 6 see what bent there is to it.  
 7 **Q.** Well, at this point you've told us this morning that  
 8 you're starting to have some concerns about Horizon and  
 9 yet you're content for the robust position, the same  
 10 kind of robust language that's been going back now since  
 11 the previous year and you don't see any need to revisit  
 12 that approach?  
 13 **A.** So maybe your interpretation and mine are slightly  
 14 different but there was always a nagging doubt, okay, at  
 15 the point that you've got more and more subpostmasters,  
 16 you know, it grew, as we all know, in the JFSA, saying  
 17 the system was wrong.  
 18 If you didn't have that nagging doubt, okay, then,  
 19 you know, you've got a bit of a problem. So it acts  
 20 almost as a conscience check. I'm going to go back to  
 21 what I said and maintained, right. I saw nothing in the  
 22 Horizon system beyond what was in rollout, and then some  
 23 of the change activities and the hardware failures that  
 24 suggested Horizon was doing anything but what it was  
 25 prescribed to do, and it certainly was within its SLAs,  
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1 and where there were failings, okay, they were  
2 highlighted.  
3 The issue associated with privileged access worried  
4 me, right? I've no doubt about that because I thought  
5 that might be better policed, but it was addressed in  
6 a relatively short timescale. It's only with the  
7 hindsight of this Inquiry and some of what I've learnt  
8 from the Second Sight Report that, you know, I now know,  
9 through that benefit, that some of the audit logging, as  
10 I might have perceived it, okay, isn't -- wasn't as  
11 locked down as best practice would indicate and it was  
12 open to abuse.

13 **Q.** But you tell us that, by the time you had that second  
14 call with Computer Weekly, you were getting concerned  
15 and, thereafter, you were determined to make sure that  
16 there was a review of Horizon?  
17 **A.** So one of the reasons why I was getting concerned is  
18 there was more of this. There was more a push from, you  
19 know, executives and from the Government Shareholder to  
20 respond to letters they had had from some of their  
21 parishioners, in which case must have been  
22 subpostmasters, okay, and I was having to underwrite  
23 some of that. And I did that quite deliberately because  
24 I wanted to take the pressure off Lesley, so she could  
25 do her job, which was the day-to-day management of the  
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1 ensure the Horizon computer system in branches  
2 nationwide is fully accurate at all times."  
3 We probably don't need to go through it all because  
4 it's very much the line that was being taken by Post  
5 Office at that time but, if we scroll up, we can see  
6 that it's a debate about whether or not to send that  
7 letter. It goes to Paula Vennells from David Simpson,  
8 it goes to Susan Crichton, it goes to Mike Granville and  
9 someone called Rebekah Mantle. Various other people are  
10 copied in, including obviously you, Kevin Gilliland, Sue  
11 Huggins, Rod Ismay.

12 Now, if we then go a little further up we see that  
13 Paula Vennells responds to everyone and then you say in  
14 the email above that that you're happy with the letter.  
15 You and Susan have spoken about it and you're both  
16 comfortable with it.

17 If we then go further up again, we see that Rod  
18 Ismay has forwarded it to Angela van den Bogerd, and he  
19 says:

20 "... thanks for our time this afternoon. [This is  
21 the] response to Private Eye ..."

22 He attaches a pdf. If we scroll all the way up,  
23 just for completeness, we can see that he also sends the  
24 Private Eye pdf.

25 Now, what's interesting about the various people  
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1 system.

2 At the point that you're having the conversation  
3 with Computer Weekly, towards the end of 2011, you're at  
4 a point where you're being told: litigators have been  
5 appointed and there's now hundreds of subpostmasters.  
6 Right? Did my mindset change at that point? The answer  
7 is yes. Did my mindset significantly before then? The  
8 answer is no because I couldn't point to anything on the  
9 system. I still wanted something from Fujitsu that told  
10 me the system, right down to a code level, was working  
11 properly, and the response I got was, "It's a service,  
12 our algorithms aren't bringing up any anomalies".

13 I mean, I'm not sure where else you'd like me to go  
14 because the heat, if we can call it heat, is coming from  
15 Parliament through parishioners and it's coming through,  
16 you know, the media.

17 **Q.** Let's just go to one last document, please. It's  
18 POL00338400 and this relates to the letter that you  
19 signed off on to go to Private Eye, following their  
20 article.

21 **A.** Yeah.

22 **Q.** If we start, please, at page 2.

23 If we scroll down a little bit we can see the  
24 content of your letter, and it's the bit that starts:

25 "Sir, the Post Office takes meticulous care to  
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1 copied in on that is that an email -- which I won't  
2 bring up for the benefit of time but which is  
3 a well-known email now -- the Lynn Hobbs email, in which  
4 she talks about the fact that Fujitsu does have the  
5 capacity to go into branch accounts and amend the data,  
6 that email from Lynn Hobbs went to pretty much all of  
7 those people who I've just read out. They all therefore  
8 knew that the claim that Horizon had no backdoors was  
9 not correct, and they were all in on this email chain in  
10 which it's proposed that you write a letter to Private  
11 Eye saying there's absolutely nothing wrong with  
12 Horizon, it's all perfect.

13 Do you feel that you were being set up here?

14 **A.** No. I do want to -- I don't. So I had been asked  
15 I think, once or twice before to put my name to  
16 a statement that said the system is secure, in a set of  
17 words, so I wasn't surprised when the Private Eye  
18 article came up that I was being asked to do the same.

19 So I want to make sure, because I said this earlier  
20 on in my evidence this morning, a backdoor -- we have to  
21 be careful about how we use our language -- a backdoor  
22 is for me and it is for most people in tech --

23 **Q.** We all heard your explanation.

24 **A.** Right, well, then there was no backdoor, okay, and  
25 everything, as far as I was concerned, at this point,  
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1 and even when I left, was an auditable checksum log,  
2 okay, that was uncorruptible and no one could get into  
3 it. So that was the case up until the day I left and  
4 the only time that that changed in my viewpoint was when  
5 I was seeing some of the outputs from the Inquiry and  
6 particularly the comments from Second Sight.

7 **Q.** But you also told us that, when you had that second call  
8 with Computer Weekly, that was when your concerns  
9 started to really mount --

10 **A.** And I've explained why.

11 **Q.** -- and you've explained why. You also explained that  
12 one of the reasons that your concerns mounted was that  
13 the firm Shoosmiths had hundreds of people that they  
14 were now acting for, yes?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** If we could scroll down to the bottom of page 3,  
17 please --

18 **A.** Can I just -- on the Shoosmiths issue, it wasn't the  
19 fact that I was worried about the lawyers finding  
20 something. I want to be clear about that. It was  
21 the -- these were hundreds of subpostmasters that had  
22 grouped together and now were bringing in lawyers,  
23 presumably at their own expense, to pursue this. So it  
24 brought real -- for me, it brought real -- it suggested  
25 there was a real dynamic around having had system

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1 Shoosmiths have taken up the cause of the subpostmasters  
2 and yet you are willing to have your name put to the  
3 letter to Private Eye. You have just explained to us at  
4 length why it is --

5 **A.** Yeah.

6 **Q.** -- that Shoosmiths made your concerns more heightened.  
7 Are you sure you are not suffering from more  
8 self-serving memories here, Mr Young?

9 **A.** *(The witness laughed)* I just recall the phone call and  
10 I recall that feeling that this thing had moved to  
11 another level and we needed to change our -- you know,  
12 we needed to change our perspective on having the system  
13 looked at.

14 **Q.** Thank you.

15 **A.** So, you know, putting the two together, that's just  
16 where my head was at.

17 **MS PAGE:** Thank you.

18 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Ms Patrick?

19 **Questioned by MS PATRICK**

20 **MS PRICE:** Thank you, sir.

21 Mr Young, my name is Angela Patrick. I act for  
22 a number of subpostmasters who were convicted and have  
23 since had their convictions quashed. You might be glad  
24 to hear I only want to look at two topics and, if we can  
25 start with the Ismay Report. You've gone over that at

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1 issues. Okay? So the numbers growing and the  
2 postmasters themselves bringing in a high-end law firm  
3 to fight their fight suggested, you know, this wasn't  
4 a group of disgruntled subpostmasters that just wanted  
5 to blame the system as an out, potentially, this was --

6 **Q.** They were taking it seriously?

7 **A.** -- something very different and, on the basis of that  
8 notable difference, that's why, you know, I went back  
9 to -- I didn't ask for permission, I went back to Duncan  
10 and said, "No, we're going to have to do this".

11 **Q.** Let's just look at the email at the bottom half of the  
12 page from David Simpson to the same addressees I read  
13 out earlier, you're copied in, and this is about the  
14 letter that you're about to write to Private Eye.

15 If we pick it up:

16 "The names of the subpostmasters featured are very  
17 familiar and the claims made against Horizon are the  
18 same ones we've seen many times before. The article  
19 also mentions Shoosmiths and a possible legal action the  
20 firm may bring -- but Shoosmiths have been saying the  
21 same thing since the early part of the year.  
22 Disappointingly -- but perhaps not surprisingly --  
23 Private Eye has not run in full the very short statement  
24 we sent to them."

25 So at this point, Mr Young, you are on notice that

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1 length this morning with Ms Hodge, and again just now  
2 with Ms Page.

3 There's only one section I really want us to look at  
4 but I just want to clarify what you've said. Now, in  
5 early summer 2010, you'd been chasing Fujitsu, without  
6 success, to ask for an independent third-party review of  
7 Horizon Online, hadn't you?

8 **A.** Yes.

9 **Q.** By the summer, Ms Page took you to the email thread  
10 again, you knew that the then Managing Director, David  
11 Smith, had been asking questions following the Channel 4  
12 journalism reporting, and that you had been looped into  
13 that process.

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** You've told us that you were particularly assured on  
16 reading the Ismay Report?

17 **A.** Sorry?

18 **Q.** You were particularly assured on reading the Ismay  
19 Report?

20 **A.** I was. It gave me some confidence around the system.

21 **Q.** Indeed. Now, you would have read that about I presume  
22 August 2010, I think it was finished?

23 **A.** I wouldn't be able to tell you, but I would imagine as  
24 soon as it was circulated I was reading it.

25 **Q.** Indeed, and that would have informed your approach,

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1 going forward, having been assured, having read the  
2 Ismay Report, I assume that would have informed the tack  
3 you were taking going forward?

4 **A.** Yes.

5 **Q.** Now, the Inquiry has looked at the detail of the report  
6 with Mr Ismay and lots of other witnesses. I don't want  
7 to go into the nitty-gritty, I want to look at one part,  
8 and if we could bring it up it's at POL00026572. The  
9 part I want to look at is on page 19 and, if we could  
10 scroll to the bottom of the page, I'd be very grateful.

11 We see there is a part there on media. This part  
12 deals with the "Independent Review and Audit Angles".  
13 I don't want to look at all the detail but you can see  
14 that there in front of you but you can see in the first  
15 paragraph there:

16 "POL has actively considered the merits of  
17 an independent review. This has been purely from the  
18 perspective that we believe in Horizon but that a review  
19 could help give others the same confidence that we  
20 have."

21 Now, the bit that I really want to look at is on the  
22 next page, so if we could scroll over, I'd be very  
23 grateful. If we could stop, it's that first paragraph  
24 at the top which the Inquiry has seen a number of times  
25 before. Can you see that there, Mr Young?

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1 back to the Post Office as a request from me and them,  
2 we would have some persuading to do with those that sat  
3 doing the prosecutions. But, you know, I was tackling  
4 it one bridge at a time.

5 **Q.** Just pausing there, what you've said this morning, we  
6 know pre-Ismay Report, you've given that in evidence,  
7 from the start of your role you knew that the Royal Mail  
8 Group and Post Office as part of that had been pursuing  
9 individual prosecutions?

10 **A.** Yeah.

11 **Q.** When you read this, did it cause you any concern?

12 **A.** Well, I recognise, I think the point you're trying to  
13 make -- recognise -- the point you're asking me to  
14 recognise -- do I recognise that this potentially shuts  
15 the door on being even handed with regards to a review  
16 on Horizon, basically saying, if you do go down that  
17 particular road, we're going to have to go right the way  
18 back through all the prosecutions and -- I recognise  
19 what that means. I am -- I'm saying it wasn't changing  
20 my approach with Fujitsu. So yes, I recognise that.

21 **Q.** Okay, and you've given evidence, you were pushing in  
22 summer 2010. I want to look on to the second issue now,  
23 and I want to move forward to Shoosmiths, and you've  
24 gone over it a little bit again just now with Ms Page.

25 So we're whizzing forward to back end of 2011 and

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1 **A.** I can.

2 **Q.** Yes:

3 "It is also important to be crystal clear about any  
4 review if one were commissioned -- any investigation  
5 would need to be disclosed in court. Although we would  
6 be doing the review to comfort others, any perception  
7 that [the Post Office] doubts its own systems would mean  
8 that all criminal prosecutions would have to be stayed.  
9 It would also beg a question for the Court of Appeal  
10 over past prosecutions and imprisonments."

11 Now, we've heard a lot about reading things with  
12 your former policeman's hat. Did the inclusion of that  
13 section and your reading of that section cause you any  
14 concern?

15 **A.** Let me answer it this way. So it wasn't going to  
16 dissuade me from pushing Fujitsu to have an independent  
17 review of the system. So -- and indeed, it didn't. So  
18 it was -- you know, Duncan may allude to the fact that,  
19 you know, it usually came up in our conversations,  
20 certainly when we were face to face, or it was a long  
21 conversation, or when there was a media output, you  
22 know, I would run the ground again around potentially  
23 looking at the system.

24 So I wanted to get to a point where I'd got Fujitsu  
25 to agree and I've no doubt, if I brought that ticket

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1 the time the Post Office received number of letters of  
2 claim from a number of subpostmasters, including Julian  
3 Wilson. Mr Wilson died before his conviction could be  
4 quashed and we represent Mrs Karen Wilson, his widow,  
5 who is a Core Participant in this Inquiry.

6 I want to look at what your statement says -- and  
7 you don't need to turn this up, you can if you want to,  
8 it's at page 44, for the record it's WITN11130100, and  
9 I want to look at page 44, starting at paragraph 143.

10 You say:

11 "Regarding proposed litigation, I was not aware of  
12 the proposed Shoosmiths litigation until it was  
13 mentioned via the second Computer Weekly call, where  
14 they indicated that the JFSA instructed lawyers [and  
15 there's a little bit of a grammatical issue there].  
16 Computer Weekly did not refer to the litigation as the  
17 Shoosmiths litigation."

18 You go on:

19 "During my tenure, I was unaware that the Post  
20 Office took any particular approach to legal privilege,  
21 how to manage confidential communication, and the  
22 retention of documents generally and as it related to  
23 the issues raised by the JFSA about Horizon or any  
24 potential litigation ... I personally did not take any  
25 legal advice."

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1 Then the last paragraph:  
 2 "In late 2011 [this is paragraph 145] and early 2012  
 3 I was not involved in the potential litigation against  
 4 POL from [subpostmasters]. I did not have any  
 5 involvement or knowledge of the issues of litigation  
 6 until the second Computer Weekly call (as mentioned in  
 7 paragraph 143 above). During that time, I was focused  
 8 on the Separation", and so on.  
 9 You've already talked about this a little with  
 10 Ms Page.  
 11 Now, you've repeated again that the second call from  
 12 Computer Weekly, that's what changed your perspective,  
 13 yes?  
 14 **A.** Yeah, it was a combination of a lot of things but that  
 15 one call got me to a point where enough was enough, we  
 16 needed to do something, yes.  
 17 **Q.** It was after that call that you remember calling Duncan  
 18 Tait?  
 19 **A.** Yes, immediately after.  
 20 **Q.** Okay. Can we look at one document, please, for now.  
 21 It's POL00294928. If we can go to the bottom of the  
 22 second page of that document I'd be very grateful.  
 23 Can you see that there, Mr Young? There's an email  
 24 at the very bottom. I want to look at that first. Can  
 25 you see it?

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1 and I don't want to spend a lot of time on it. But can  
 2 you see there there's an email from Emily Springford?  
 3 **A.** I can.  
 4 **Q.** You can see the date there, 20 October, same day as the  
 5 email we just saw and, shortly after that email, so it's  
 6 at 3.51; can you see that?  
 7 **A.** Yeah.  
 8 **Q.** Yes. You can see it goes to Ms Sewell, she's on the top  
 9 line of the addressees, and also, if we look at the  
 10 second line, it goes to you, doesn't it, Mr Young?  
 11 **A.** It does.  
 12 **Q.** You can see there what the subject matter says. It's  
 13 the JFSA claims, disclosure and evidence gathering.  
 14 It's headed "Privileged and confidential", it says:  
 15 "Dear all,  
 16 "As you are aware", suggesting there has been some  
 17 conversation in the business before that email, doesn't  
 18 it?  
 19 **A.** Yeah.  
 20 **Q.** Yes:  
 21 "... [Post Office] has received", and it goes on to  
 22 talk about the letters of claim, the substance of the  
 23 claim being relative to training, to support, to their  
 24 use of the Horizon system and the Horizon system itself.  
 25 I'm sure you've seen this document, I think it's

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1 You can see there's an email there from Paula  
 2 Vennells, at 13.48 on 20 October 2011. Can you see  
 3 there the heading, the subject matter of the email,  
 4 "Horizon independent assessment"; can you see it?  
 5 **A.** Yeah.  
 6 **Q.** Yes, and she writes:  
 7 "Lesley, excuse me if I missed it -- did you get  
 8 back to me re confirmation as to how robust/reliable  
 9 [Pinterest] ..."  
 10 We think it might be Pintest.  
 11 **A.** It is Pintest, yes.  
 12 **Q.** "... (is the right name) were? le what other type of  
 13 validation work they have done on this scale/for whom?  
 14 "Also when do we expect the results?  
 15 "Kevin has heard today the BBC may be going for more  
 16 coverage."  
 17 We can see that's copied to you, isn't it, Mr Young?  
 18 **A.** It is.  
 19 **Q.** I just want to look at another document to see where we  
 20 are on this date because the Inquiry knows that, on that  
 21 day, a Royal Mail Group lawyer circulated direct advice  
 22 on legal privilege. So if we could look at that, it's  
 23 POL00176467, please. If we can go to page 2, and stop  
 24 there.  
 25 Now, the Inquiry has seen this email a lot of times

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1 been provided to you, she goes on to advice on document  
 2 preservation, document destruction and matters of legal  
 3 privilege.  
 4 Now, do you recall this email being sent to you, and  
 5 legal professional privilege being drawn to your  
 6 attention for the circulation to your team?  
 7 **A.** I don't recall. So you're right, I did get this via  
 8 disclosure from the Inquiry. I didn't recall this email  
 9 and I think part and parcel of that rationale was, you  
 10 know, no change. Let me explain myself by that comment  
 11 or those comments. I mean, essentially, I think what  
 12 this is saying is, in relation to Horizon, its integrity  
 13 or otherwise, nothing was to be deleted or disposed of  
 14 and all matters related to that were to be kept. And  
 15 that was, you know, that was normal practice anyway.  
 16 But I take your point. That was my interpretation of  
 17 the letter.  
 18 **Q.** So I mean, this is -- by this time, we're in 2011,  
 19 you've been talking about an independent review, the  
 20 year before, of Horizon Online, albeit. You've been  
 21 involved in the press coverage. Do you accept that, at  
 22 least at this point, in October 2011, you would have  
 23 known that there was litigation in contemplation?  
 24 **A.** Yeah. That said as such, yes.  
 25 **Q.** If we can turn back to the document we were just looking

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1 at I'd be very grateful. It's POL00294928, please.

2 If we go back to that last email at the bottom of  
3 page 2, we can start there. Now, if we scroll up we can  
4 see Ms Sewell replies. If we scroll up a little bit  
5 further, so we can see the header, thank you.

6 We can see Ms Sewell replies, and she replies later  
7 that afternoon at 5.39, and can you see that there  
8 you're copied in, Mr Young, aren't you?

9 **A.** Yeah.

10 **Q.** But she also copies in Emily Springford and Hugh  
11 Flemington, doesn't she?

12 **A.** She does.

13 **Q.** She changes the subject matter to "Legally privileged  
14 and confidential". Now, the Inquiry has seen the advice  
15 we just turned up. Part of the advice is, if you're  
16 talking about these matters, can you copy in Legal and  
17 can you head it "Legally privileged and confidential".

18 Now, she writes to Ms Vennells, in her reply:

19 "Fujitsu have reviewed who they will use for the  
20 review of HNG-X and as such will not be using Pen Test  
21 Partners as they had originally intended. They have now  
22 in engaged with KPMG to complete the review, which they  
23 expect to take two months.

24 "There is a meeting tomorrow with Legal to discuss  
25 the scope and timing of this review."

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1 going on with this Horizon independent assessment, isn't  
2 she? You're nodding, Mr Young. You have to say "yes"  
3 or "no" for the recording.

4 **A.** I'm -- can I read it? I'm conscious that we've got  
5 a stenographer. So I just --

6 **Q.** In that case, just to be absolutely -- not this part, if  
7 we can go back to Ms Vennells' original email, that's  
8 what I'm talking about. Her original email at the very  
9 bottom, which she heads, "Horizon independent  
10 assessment", and then she says she wants to know who's  
11 doing it, doesn't she, how robust and reliable they  
12 are --

13 **A.** I can read that, yes.

14 **Q.** -- and she wants to know what other kind of validation,  
15 what they've done, what scale and by whom, doesn't  
16 she --

17 **A.** Indeed.

18 **Q.** -- and when can we expect the results, and she says, "We  
19 know the BBC is going to have some more coverage".

20 So she wants to know because she knows there's going  
21 to be more press coming up, doesn't she, and she wants  
22 to know what the lay of the land is?

23 **A.** It would appear so. I mean, Paula will have to talk to  
24 what she meant by the email. But I take your point in  
25 the chain -- in the change of -- let's call it

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1 Now, before we go up to the answer that comes next,  
2 this is October 2011. Was there a plan at this point to  
3 have an independent assessment of Horizon commissioned  
4 by Fujitsu?

5 **A.** Well, this would suggest there was.

6 **Q.** It would suggest that, given it's an exchange involving  
7 both Ms Vennells and Ms Sewell, and copied to you, that  
8 that plan was known both to the IT Team and to the  
9 executive, wouldn't it?

10 **A.** It suggests that. What I would say is I'm trying to  
11 correlate the call to Duncan after the Computer Weekly  
12 piece and the time frame here. They may very well be in  
13 the same time frame. But I, you know, I'm copied in  
14 and, undoubtedly, I would have read it.

15 **Q.** Indeed.

16 **A.** But I'm -- and the reason why it is worth making the  
17 point, the reason why Lesley has come to the fore to do  
18 this, my suspicion, she will have to speak for  
19 herself -- was that I'm out finalising the MDA on  
20 separation and, therefore, she's now taking the lead  
21 with Fujitsu. But your point, yes, it would suggest  
22 that.

23 **Q.** But just looking at what Ms Vennells is saying for  
24 a moment. Ms Vennells is writing to Ms Sewell and you  
25 and she's expressing her view she wants to know what's

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1 clarification or subject, she's put it under, later on  
2 she puts it understanding legal privilege. I take your  
3 point.

4 **Q.** So if we can scroll up just to the next stage in the  
5 conversation, we can see the longer reply at, if we keep  
6 going. Thank you. Stop. We can see Ms Vennells'  
7 replies to you the next day, Friday, 21 October -- can  
8 you see that Mr Young --

9 **A.** I can.

10 **Q.** -- early in the morning. She says:

11 "This is very high profile. We have had lawyers'  
12 advice about how mails etc are now handled ... so what  
13 is happening here?"

14 "Why do Fujitsu think they can change the test  
15 company after they have to told us who they are using?  
16 Why is there a meeting to discuss scope and timing --  
17 when it was asked for 6 months ago and the scope must  
18 have already been agreed when Pen Test were appointed?"

19 "And re 'timing in another two months' -- Lesley,  
20 the last comms you and I had was that we'd have it in  
21 a couple of weeks!

22 "This is unsatisfactory -- it looks as though it is  
23 not being taken seriously and [we] don't know where the  
24 accountability lies -- in POL or in Fujitsu?"

25 The next part:

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1 "A Class Action legal case against [Post Office]  
2 would be hugely negative reputationally, it could cost  
3 us a lot of money and this verification, which  
4 presumably could be of enormous help is not even off the  
5 blocks?

6 "I don't understand.

7 "How can it be independent if Fujitsu are choosing  
8 and swapping suppliers? Is that sustainable evidence in  
9 court -- independently verified by a company they  
10 choose? KPMG are a good company -- are they qualified  
11 to do this? And do they have initiation with Fujitsu?

12 "Finally, I know everyone is working very hard but  
13 I'm a bit disappointed that I found out only by asking  
14 as a result of potential BBC coverage.

15 "With this going on, I could have easily sent a note  
16 in response to a Board query, saying not to worry  
17 because there's a verification under way and the results  
18 are due any day soon! It doesn't help our IT  
19 credibility if I am on the back foot with what's going  
20 on."

21 Now, she's sent that to you, Mr Young. It has come  
22 from your Managing Director. Can I assume you would  
23 have read it?

24 **A.** I don't recall it but, yes, if it was sent to me I would  
25 have read it.

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1 independent assessment and its relevance to the  
2 litigation?

3 **A.** Right, first of all, it was where I was going to go.  
4 I'm in a blind spot here. So I have no idea what  
5 this -- I can see what it's about but I have no idea  
6 about what the content has been between Fujitsu and Post  
7 Office, what Lesley may have had by way of dialogue with  
8 Paula and then what Lesley may have had with dialogue  
9 with Fujitsu and vice versa. So I'm -- it was sent to  
10 me in error, I saw it in the disclosure process, okay,  
11 and I still don't know what it's about.

12 At the point I respond to Duncan and Paula after  
13 that Computer Weekly meeting, I'm straight back into  
14 finishing off the MDA on separation, which is why  
15 I suspect -- I can't confirm but it's why I suspect  
16 Paula was using Lesley to talk to Fujitsu and air out  
17 the possibility of a full review of the system.

18 I had done a telephone introduction of sorts,  
19 certainly spoken to Paula and Duncan and said, "You two  
20 guys need to meet", and Paula had as much opportunity as  
21 Lesley to reach for the phone and speak to Duncan or the  
22 management team in Fujitsu to seek the clarity. So I'm  
23 a bit bemused that I'm being asked about something I've  
24 not really been involved in before that, up until that  
25 initial call to Computer Weekly, and I don't have the

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1 **Q.** At this point, she is plainly aware of the possibly  
2 devastating impact of litigation challenging the  
3 integrity of Horizon, isn't she?

4 **A.** The email suggests that, yes.

5 **Q.** She was treating this, her original message about  
6 an independent assessment, as significant and, in fact,  
7 she says "potentially of enormous help", isn't she?

8 **A.** Yes, she is. I want to make a point here because I --

9 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Well, hang on a minute. This is getting  
10 a little too long-winded. What is the endpoint of this  
11 line of questioning, Ms Patrick?

12 **MS PATRICK:** Sir, if I can just ask the next question, it  
13 might help.

14 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Fine.

15 **MS PATRICK:** We don't see a response. We haven't seen  
16 a response from you, Mr Young, but, if we scroll up  
17 we'll see a message from Ms Vennells. Again:

18 "Mike, I've realised I sent this to you and it was  
19 intended for Lesley.

20 "But actually as her boss, would you mind looking  
21 into. (Also, watch the tone", and she speaks about it  
22 sounding cross while she's on holiday.

23 Now, we haven't seen a response but, having perhaps  
24 in error raised this with you rather than Ms Sewell, did  
25 you pick up the phone to Ms Vennells and talk about this

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1 answers for you.

2 **Q.** You don't have the answers. I'm asking you if you did.

3 **A.** No.

4 **Q.** Now, what we know is that you were pushing for  
5 an independent review the year before. We know that  
6 this ended up in your inbox, and it's your evidence  
7 that, between this point in October 2011 and in March  
8 2012, by the time you leave, there's been no progress.  
9 Nothing done to push forward this independent code level  
10 review that you thought might be needed and that might  
11 have been covered in your conversation with Duncan Tait,  
12 and which ought to have been paid for by Fujitsu.  
13 Nothing had happened, had it?

14 **A.** By the looks of it, no.

15 **MS PATRICK:** Okay. Thank you very much. We don't have any  
16 other questions, Mr Young.

17 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Is that it, Ms Hodge?

18 **MS HODGE:** Yes, sir. That concludes the questioning of  
19 Mr Young.

20 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. Well, Mr Young, first of all,  
21 I owe you an apology for saying publicly that the  
22 Inquiry could not trace you when that was palpably wrong  
23 because they had traced you and you'd been in  
24 communication with them. But I appreciate that that may  
25 have caused you unnecessary distress, so I apologise for

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1 that.

2 Secondly, thank you for your witness statement and

3 giving evidence today.

4 **THE WITNESS:** Thank you.

5 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. What next, Ms Hodge?

6 **MS HODGE:** Sir, I propose a short ten-minute break --

7 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes.

8 **MS HODGE:** -- and then we can resume with Mr Oldnall and do

9 our very best to complete his evidence today.

10 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** All right. Jolly good. Thank you.

11 **MS HODGE:** Thank you.

12 (3.01 pm)

13 (A short break)

14 (3.14 pm)

15 **MS HODGE:** Hello again, sir. Can you see and hear us?

16 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Yes, I can and I'm sorry if I kept you

17 waiting a few minutes.

18 **MS HODGE:** No, thank you, sir.

19 Our next witness is Simon Oldnall.

20 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** I'll just go out of view for a moment or

21 two while I locate my hard copy of his statement. I'll

22 be with you in a second. (Pause)

23 **MS HODGE:** Thank you. Please can the witness be sworn.

24 **SIMON GEOFFREY OLDNALL (sworn)**

25 **Questioned by MS HODGE**

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1 its exhibits. Could you turn to page 15, please.

2 **A.** Yes.

3 **Q.** Do you see your signature there?

4 **A.** I do, yes.

5 **Q.** Is the content of that statement true to the best of

6 your knowledge and belief?

7 **A.** It is, yes.

8 **Q.** Your second statement, please, dated 30 April 2024.

9 That bears the reference WITN03680200.

10 **A.** Yes, that's correct.

11 **Q.** You have that before you, thank you. That's a long

12 statement running to 276 pages. Could I ask you,

13 please, to turn to page 255.

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** Do you see your signature there?

16 **A.** I do, yes.

17 **Q.** Is the content of that statement true to the best of

18 your knowledge and belief?

19 **A.** It is, yes.

20 **Q.** Thank you. The third statement, Mr Oldnall, bears the

21 reference WITN03680300. That's dated 2 September 2024;

22 do you have that in front of you?

23 **A.** I do, yes.

24 **Q.** That's 46 pages in length. At page 41, do you see your

25 signature?

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1 **MS HODGE:** Please give your full name.

2 **A.** Simon Geoffrey Oldnall.

3 **Q.** Mr Oldnall, you've provided four statements to the

4 Inquiry, the first of which was a corporate statement,

5 which addressed a Teach-In session provided to the

6 Inquiry when it was constituted in non-statutory form;

7 is that correct?

8 **A.** That's correct.

9 **Q.** Your second, third and fourth statements you've given in

10 response to questions directed to Post Office Limited;

11 is that right?

12 **A.** That's correct.

13 **Q.** My questions to you today will be focused mostly on

14 actions and events which have occurred since you joined

15 the Post Office in December 2020 but before we turn to

16 that, please, I'd just briefly like to go through the

17 formality of confirming each of your statements. Do you

18 have a copy of the statements in front of you?

19 **A.** I do.

20 **Q.** Thank you. If we deal with them in date order, can we

21 begin with your first statement to the Inquiry dated

22 20 July 2022, which bears the reference WITN03680100.

23 Do you have a copy of that in front of you?

24 **A.** I do.

25 **Q.** That statement, I believe, runs to 20 pages, including

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1 **A.** Yes, I do.

2 **Q.** Thank you. Is the content of that statement true to the

3 best of your knowledge and belief?

4 **A.** It is, yes.

5 **Q.** Thank you. Your fourth statement, which you gave

6 recently on 9 October 2024, it bears the reference

7 WITN03680400. It's seven pages long, your signature at

8 page 6, please.

9 **A.** Yes.

10 **Q.** Is the content of that statement true to the best of

11 your knowledge and belief?

12 **A.** Yes, it is.

13 **Q.** Thank you. You are currently employed as the branch

14 Technology Director at Post Office Limited; is that

15 right?

16 **A.** That's correct, yes.

17 **Q.** Before joining the Post Office, you worked, you say, for

18 20 years in the private sector for consultancy and

19 technology companies in the delivery of technology

20 change programmes?

21 **A.** Yes, that's correct.

22 **Q.** Prior to that, you were employed as a civil servant for

23 10 years in the Department for Work and Pensions,

24 including its predecessors?

25 **A.** That's correct, yes.

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1 Q. Thank you. As we've discussed already, you joined the  
2 Post Office in September 2022 (*sic*). Your original  
3 title was Horizon IT Director; is that right?  
4 A. That's correct, yes.  
5 Q. Subsequently changed to Branch Technology Director --  
6 A. In April this year, that's correct.  
7 Q. -- in April this year. What was the reason, please, for  
8 the change in your title?  
9 A. It was a broadening of my scope, it encompassed not only  
10 Horizon but also a number of related technology elements  
11 within the branch.  
12 MS HODGE: Thank you.  
13 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I think you may have said, Ms Hodge,  
14 "2022", but was it 2020 or 2022?  
15 A. 2020, sir.  
16 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, fine, okay. I may have misheard you  
17 but I just wanted to be clear about that, thank you.  
18 MS HODGE: One area of your responsibilities is the  
19 management of the Post Office Branch Technology Team; is  
20 that correct?  
21 A. That's correct, yes.  
22 Q. Now, you say in your statement the team is comprised of  
23 various subteams; is that right?  
24 A. That's correct.  
25 Q. One of which is named Remediation and Change.

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1 changes were made in the aftermath of the Group  
2 Litigation?  
3 A. Yes, very much so. That was my initial scope.  
4 Q. You were appointed approximately ten months after the  
5 Horizon Issues Judgment was handed down; is that right?  
6 A. That's correct.  
7 Q. What impression did you form upon joining the Post  
8 Office as to the progress which had been made in  
9 responding to the issues raised in that judgment?  
10 A. I think my initial impression was that fairly limited  
11 progress had been made by that point. I think the CIO  
12 at that time had started to put in place the mechanism  
13 to address the judgment findings but there had been  
14 probably little substantive progress at that stage.  
15 Q. What did you understand to be the reasons why limited  
16 progress had been made in that 10-month period?  
17 A. I don't think those reasons were particularly made clear  
18 to me. By the time I joined, we had appointed  
19 an independent audit firm that would help us understand  
20 where we were currently but that work hadn't really  
21 substantially started by that stage.  
22 Q. That firm was KPMG; is that correct?  
23 A. No, initially the firm was BDO, we later changed that to  
24 KPMG.  
25 Q. So that change took place during your tenure; is that

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1 A. The Remediation Programme was a programme within my team  
2 scope, yes.  
3 Q. Could you please just briefly describe the role of that  
4 team?  
5 A. That team was set up in response to driving the  
6 remediation activities that would address the findings  
7 made in the Horizon Issues Judgment.  
8 Q. You also describe in your statement another subteam  
9 known as Security Risks and Investigations; is that  
10 correct?  
11 A. That's correct, yes.  
12 Q. What's the role and function of that team?  
13 A. That's effectively looking at where we need to support  
14 issues with Horizon and making sure that Horizon remains  
15 secure and reliable.  
16 Q. Can you describe the nature and extent of liaison  
17 between your Branch Technology Team and the Network  
18 Crime and Risk Support Team.  
19 A. We effectively provide data to that team. That's  
20 probably about the extent, and that data is normally  
21 provisioned through what's called the ARQ process.  
22 Q. That's the principal extent of your --  
23 A. That's the principal extent of our interaction, yes.  
24 Q. Would it be fair to characterise a key part of your role  
25 upon joining the Post Office as to embed and ensure

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1 right?  
2 A. Very shortly afterwards, yes.  
3 Q. You explain in your statement that KPMG produced a draft  
4 report in December -- so a couple of months after you  
5 joined -- in which they noted that, in particular, no  
6 progress had been made in relation to privileged or  
7 elevated access controls within the Horizon environment,  
8 is that correct --  
9 A. That's correct, yes.  
10 Q. -- and that the Post Office used limited controls around  
11 remote access.  
12 A. (*The witness nodded*)  
13 Q. I think you say you made that one of your key priorities  
14 upon --  
15 A. Absolutely yes.  
16 Q. -- taking on responsibility for this area.  
17 You also say in your statement that, in parallel  
18 with that audit work that was ultimately commissioned  
19 from KPMG, the Post Office was setting up a Forensic  
20 Investigation Team within the IT function --  
21 A. (*The witness nodded*)  
22 Q. -- to support the response to the Common Issues Judgment  
23 and the Horizon Issues Judgment. Is that the Security  
24 Risk and Investigations Team that you --  
25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Is that one and the same?  
 2 A. That's correct, yes, that's one and the same.  
 3 Q. I think you say it was recognised in August 2020 that  
 4 capabilities were quite limited in that respect?  
 5 A. They were, yes.  
 6 Q. They've since been scaled up, is that --  
 7 A. We have improved that capability, yes.  
 8 Q. Now, during your tenure as Head of Branch Technology,  
 9 you have been required to deal not only with historic  
 10 Horizon issues but also current issues; is that fair?  
 11 A. That's correct, yes.  
 12 Q. Do you consider you have sufficient resources to manage  
 13 both of those workstreams in parallel?  
 14 A. Yes, we effectively separated looking at historical and  
 15 remediation activity into a programme, whilst I created  
 16 a business as usual team to deal with the ongoing and  
 17 current management of Horizon.  
 18 Q. So dealing firstly with the remediation aspect,  
 19 a programme was launched in late 2020; is that right?  
 20 A. That's correct, yes.  
 21 Q. That coincided, I think, broadly with the draft findings  
 22 from KPMG; is that --  
 23 A. Yes, it did.  
 24 Q. -- and built upon those?  
 25 A. It did. They were the basis for the programme.

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1 Horizon?  
 2 A. Yes, we looked at the historical defects that were  
 3 highlighted in the judgment, and we went through them  
 4 methodically and checked whether they could be present  
 5 in the current version of Horizon and we tested and had  
 6 KPMG verify that testing, to ensure that they were no  
 7 longer present in the system.  
 8 Q. I think the third example you explain that the Update  
 9 Horizon Technology Team -- that was part of your  
 10 remediation, team, was it --  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 Q. -- designed a new process for managing current defects  
 13 in the system; is that correct?  
 14 A. That is correct, yes.  
 15 Q. I would just like to ask you briefly about that process,  
 16 so the processes you have in place for managing current  
 17 defects. So there are two aspects to this. You've  
 18 introduced new process and resource for capturing bugs,  
 19 errors and defects during testing; is that correct?  
 20 A. That is correct, yes.  
 21 Q. Where and how is that testing of Horizon performed  
 22 please?  
 23 A. So that testing is Post Office led. We have created  
 24 a Test Team within Post Office. This is led by test  
 25 professionals and we effectively have created an overall

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1 Q. In your statement you say there were, in effect, three  
 2 principal phases to that Remediation Programme.  
 3 A. *(The witness nodded)*  
 4 Q. Would it be fair to say the first constituted what might  
 5 be thought often as quick fixes, which could be dealt  
 6 with fairly swiftly and at limited cost?  
 7 A. Yes, they were things which we should just get on with  
 8 and do fairly rapidly and quickly, yes.  
 9 Q. You say that one of those was a pilot of a new dispute  
 10 mechanism for subpostmasters to improve the end-to-end  
 11 investigation processes. Can you describe that please  
 12 in a little more detail?  
 13 A. Yes. We effectively looked at the process whereby  
 14 postmasters could flag concerns to us around  
 15 discrepancy. This was done in conjunction with changing  
 16 a button on Horizon to make sure there was some way that  
 17 postmasters could report those discrepancies to us, that  
 18 then was backed off to a process, whereby we would look  
 19 into that discrepancy and work with postmasters to  
 20 understand what had happened.  
 21 Q. That's a process that sits outside the trading and  
 22 balancing --  
 23 A. Effectively, yes.  
 24 Q. -- function. You say that with the support of Fujitsu  
 25 you resolved 62 historical defects that were present in

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1 testing approach that we don't just accept code and put  
 2 it into live. We test it, we ensure that we test it  
 3 against what's called a regression pack, and we give  
 4 a level of assurance that, actually, when we make  
 5 a change to Horizon, we don't introduce new bugs, errors  
 6 or defects.  
 7 Q. So that code is provided to you by Fujitsu --  
 8 A. It is, yes.  
 9 Q. -- is that correct? You're performing testing,  
 10 including regression testing, on the code --  
 11 A. *(The witness nodded)*  
 12 Q. -- before it's released into the live environment?  
 13 A. That's correct, yes.  
 14 Q. Can you please explain what systems do you now have in  
 15 place to monitor and detect defects in the live running  
 16 of the Horizon system?  
 17 A. There are number of steps we take. Obviously, if issues  
 18 are reported to us, we investigate and investigate  
 19 whether that is as a result of a defect. We have  
 20 a process whereby when a defect is reported to us, we  
 21 very rapidly convene a process around that defect and  
 22 determine what the impact might be, whether it is what  
 23 we describe as poor user experience or whether in fact  
 24 it's something that might impact the branch. If it's --  
 25 all those defects are then reported out. Normally

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1 within 48 hours to the branch, we would publish the list  
 2 of those defects and we engage with a broad range of  
 3 stakeholders to ensure that that impact is understood  
 4 and then prioritised for fixing.

5 **Q.** In your statement, you say this about the reporting of  
 6 defects:

7 "Where a direct is detected in the live system it  
 8 will be reported to the IT Service Desk."

9 That assumption being by a postmaster, is that --

10 **A.** It can be by a postmaster or it can be by anybody who  
 11 determines there's a defect, yes. But, normally, we'd  
 12 expect the end user potentially to find that defect but  
 13 other ways do exist.

14 **Q.** You say that analysts in the IT Service Desk are  
 15 provided with knowledge-based articles about the  
 16 identified defect. Who produces those, please?

17 **A.** They're produced by my team.

18 **Q.** They can refer to those when they are dealing with  
 19 issues raised with them that might relate to the bug.  
 20 Do you have any systems in place to monitor the calls to  
 21 the Service Desk to ensure quality assurance in relation  
 22 to the application of those knowledge-based articles?

23 **A.** There are number of measures around the IT Service Desk  
 24 and its performance that's reporting out. It's  
 25 a separate part of the technology team, it's not

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1 cooperation from third parties?

2 **A.** That's correct, yes.

3 **Q.** You say that one key aspect of this phase related to  
 4 making improvements in the provision of transaction and  
 5 branch accounting data to subpostmasters --

6 **A.** That's correct.

7 **Q.** -- addressing a problem identified in the Horizon Issues  
 8 Judgment concerning their access to branch accounting  
 9 data on their own system?

10 **A.** The direct access to branch accounting data by  
 11 postmasters, yes.

12 **Q.** You say that there was a significant initiative planned  
 13 to remedy that problem but that the Post Office hasn't  
 14 been able to deliver that change into Horizon; is that  
 15 correct?

16 **A.** That's correct, yes.

17 **Q.** Why is that?

18 **A.** Ultimately, that solution was dependent on another  
 19 technology programme, which was our migration away from  
 20 our physical data centres in Belfast. So the technology  
 21 that would have enabled us to get that data much more  
 22 readily available to postmasters was dependent on that  
 23 other programme, which was ultimately cancelled.

24 **Q.** Now, I think you make quite clear in your statement  
 25 that, firstly, it was regrettable that that couldn't be

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1 directly part of my team, but there are number of  
 2 systems in place to monitor the IT Service Desk and the  
 3 performance of the IT Service Desk, yes.

4 **Q.** I think, essentially, what you say in your statement is  
 5 this is now a process which is led and owned by the Post  
 6 Office, rather than by Fujitsu as it was --

7 **A.** That's correct, yes.

8 **Q.** You've said that the new testing processes identify  
 9 approximately four new defects every month?

10 **A.** I think four might be the current number of defects we  
 11 have, yes, so it is a very small number of defects  
 12 currently.

13 **Q.** In the live environment?

14 **A.** Correct.

15 **Q.** You have systems in place to notify postmasters of  
 16 those?

17 **A.** We too. We utilise number of communication channels,  
 18 including Branch Hub and bulletins out to postmasters,  
 19 yes.

20 **Q.** Now, you discuss in some detail the third phase of the  
 21 Remediation Programme, which you explain was launched in  
 22 mid-2022; is that correct?

23 **A.** That's correct, yes.

24 **Q.** This addressed some of the more tricky issues that  
 25 required both greater funding on the one hand but also

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1 taken forward, particularly because the purposes of the  
 2 initiative was to give postmasters greater transparency  
 3 over their own accounting data.

4 What I'd like to ask you now relates to the approach  
 5 that is taken or has been taken in the course of the  
 6 last year in relation to the recovery of Horizon  
 7 shortfalls. Can you assist us, what is the Post  
 8 Office's current position in relation to the recovery of  
 9 shortfalls shown by Horizon?

10 **A.** I believe the current position is that we do not recover  
 11 shortfall unless the postmaster agrees with the reason  
 12 for that shortfall.

13 **Q.** I wonder if we could take a look, please, at  
 14 POL00448362. Is this a document with which you're  
 15 familiar?

16 **A.** Not immediately, sorry.

17 **Q.** If we scroll down, please, to page 3, so it's called  
 18 "Loss Recovery Update". The document itself doesn't  
 19 have a date but the metadata suggests its date is  
 20 2 August 2024.

21 **A.** Okay.

22 **Q.** It provides this by way of background, it says point 1:  
 23 "Following the recommendations made in the Group  
 24 Litigation Order and Common Issues Judgment, in 2018/19  
 25 [Post Office Limited] ceased action to recover

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1 Established Losses from [postmasters]. This activity  
2 has been on hold since this time, except where  
3 a postmaster both agrees to pay the established loss and  
4 proceeds to repay."

5 So that's consistent with your understanding as to  
6 the current position. However, it goes on to say:

7 "To support implementation of associated [Common  
8 Issue Judgment] recommendations, a new team (Network  
9 Monitoring and Support) and target operating model was  
10 set up in April 2021, its purpose being to support  
11 [postmasters] to review and resolve discrepancies mainly  
12 found during their trading period balancing process."

13 It goes on at point 3:

14 "The process to review a discrepancy and identify  
15 the cause is formally documented and regularly assured  
16 by the Assurance and Complex [transaction] Team."

17 What is your understanding as to the role and  
18 purpose of that team and your liaison, if any, with it?

19 **A.** So that is the team, I believe, that's led by John  
20 Bartlett. That team, as the title suggests, would  
21 provide assurance over a number of investigation-type  
22 activities. So, in this context, I would suggest they  
23 are probably looking at the way that the discrepancy has  
24 been looked at by the Network Support Team, as opposed  
25 to anything else.

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1 with John Bartlett's team, the Assurance & Complex  
2 Investigation Team, as they're known:

3 "This includes looking at Horizon transaction data  
4 to ensure Horizon acted as expected and is therefore  
5 unlikely to be the cause of the discrepancy."

6 It goes on to say there are a number of possible  
7 outcomes: writing off a balance of below minimum value;  
8 writing off the cause as not being established;  
9 correcting with a transaction correction if the cause is  
10 due to a processing error; or establish that the loss  
11 has arisen, on the balance of probabilities, due to  
12 negligence, carelessness or error.

13 What points 5 and 6 make clear is that, as indicated  
14 above, if the postmaster, in a sense, disagrees with the  
15 analysis as the underlying root cause, then the Post  
16 Office essentially would leave the matter there.

17 **A.** Correct, yes.

18 **Q.** But it goes on to make a series of recommendations.  
19 I just want to establish with you your knowledge in  
20 relation to those, and what enquiries were made of you.  
21 If we could please scroll down to page 4. Thank you.  
22 So it lists number of options and recommendations,  
23 identifies there are risks associated with each one. So  
24 the second point:

25 "Each of these options give rise to risk(s) below

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1 **Q.** Now, you said earlier -- it may be a question of  
2 terminology -- but the extent of your cooperation with  
3 what we discussed earlier as the network crime -- let me  
4 get my reference correct.

5 Yes, the Network Crime and Risk Support Team, that  
6 you provide ARQ data to that team following a request to  
7 Fujitsu Services.

8 **A.** (*Unclear*) -- the ARQ process.

9 **Q.** Do you provide any support to the Assurance and Complex  
10 Investigations Team in analysing that data to explain  
11 what the underlying cause of a discrepancy might be?

12 **A.** I don't recall that we provide particularly regular  
13 support. We would probably, on request, if asked about  
14 a particular defect or a particular issue with the  
15 system, we would provide that support.

16 **Q.** Do you think that the analysis of, for example, ARQ  
17 audit data is something which would probably fall within  
18 the ambit of your team, bearing in mind their expertise  
19 and their technical knowledge?

20 **A.** We can certainly support that analysis. We don't  
21 habitually carry out that analysis though.

22 **Q.** Do you think you should?

23 **A.** We could.

24 **Q.** So we paused there to say that the process of reviewing  
25 the discrepancy and identifying the root cause rests

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1 ..."

2 The first being that the Post Office is not adopting  
3 a consistent process for postmasters, presumably  
4 because, if someone agrees, they pay up but, if they  
5 don't, they do --

6 **A.** That's correct, yes.

7 **Q.** -- and, therefore, you've got a difference in treatment,  
8 which isn't based on the Post Office's own analysis as  
9 to the underlying cause of the discrepancy?

10 **A.** Correct.

11 **Q.** Secondly, that the policy position is unclear; thirdly,  
12 that there's significant reputational risk for the Post  
13 Office; fourthly financial risk; fifthly that there's  
14 a risk to the relationship with the Post Office's  
15 shareholders, as the approach may be non-compliant with  
16 the guidance around managing public money. What would  
17 you understand the concern there to be?

18 **A.** I would be speculating but I would imagine, given the  
19 guidance around the spending of public money, given that  
20 Post Office already received a subsidy from Government  
21 and that funds a number of activities, I would imagine  
22 that that risk is being called out as potentially  
23 non-compliant but I'd be speculating.

24 **Q.** 6, a concern that some of the options might be likely to  
25 embed improper financial behaviours and practices in the

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1 network of postmasters, if there are no sanctions or  
2 proper consequences for failing to follow the proper  
3 policies and procedures?

4 Finally, the Post Office might be failing in its  
5 duty of care to postmasters?

6 So those various risks, some to Post Office and some  
7 to postmasters. Then, please at page 5, please. Thank  
8 you. So here, under "Actions", we see the  
9 recommendation that:

10 "... the Post Office begins to recover losses  
11 through civil action or deduction from remuneration  
12 (where necessary), following an agreed process and the  
13 approval of an external, independent board. All other  
14 options give rise to significant [postmaster] and [Post  
15 Office] risks across a range of factors."

16 Were you aware of that recommendation?

17 **A.** I believe I'm aware of some of this activity, yes.

18 **Q.** If we scroll down to the bottom of page 6, please. So  
19 these are under the heading "Actions", listed against  
20 various stakeholders in the business, and we see against  
21 "Technology" you are named, and the action is to:

22 "Confirm that as of today the data can be relied  
23 upon to commence the loss recovery process (noting that  
24 part of the process is to check Horizon)."

25 Do you recall being asked to confirm that --

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1 If we scroll down to the bottom of page 4, please.

2 Apologies, if we go up, thank you. We see this is  
3 an email from you, if we scroll up a little further,  
4 please. We see it is addressed Daniel Walton. Can you  
5 confirm his role and your liaison with him?

6 **A.** Yes, so Dan Walton is the Fujitsu lead for the Post  
7 Office Account.

8 **Q.** It's copied to John Bartlett?

9 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*

10 **Q.** So the title "Support to City of London Police  
11 Investigation". It reads:

12 "Dan

13 "I understand from John that there have been some  
14 challenges with supporting an ongoing police  
15 investigation that involves a large sum of money.

16 "I obviously understand broader context, but wanted  
17 reassure that [Post Office Limited] is supporting the  
18 police investigation and offering any and all assistance  
19 we can. Can I ask that you help with any conversations  
20 that City of London Police need to have with Fujitsu  
21 Services Limited."

22 Now, what is the nature of your involvement, if any,  
23 with investigations carried out by Post Office Limited  
24 Investigation Team, and any subsequent referral to the  
25 police?

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1 **A.** Yes --

2 **Q.** -- that Horizon data can be relied upon to support the  
3 loss recovery process?

4 **A.** Yes, I do recall that, yes. This is part of a working  
5 group and from memory, now, this paper was sent to me  
6 I think probably around the time I was on annual leave  
7 but yes, I do recall.

8 **Q.** Can you assist as to when that was in terms of  
9 timescale?

10 **A.** It would have been somewhere around the summertime,  
11 so --

12 **Q.** Over the course of the summer?

13 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*

14 **Q.** Do you recall what you said when you were asked?

15 **A.** I don't believe I actually have actioned this as yet,  
16 but what I will probably have to do is commission  
17 a piece of work to effectively meet that action.

18 **Q.** So that one, so far as you're concerned that's an action  
19 that's pending?

20 **A.** Correct, yes.

21 **Q.** I wonder if we can go on to look at an email chain  
22 concerning the support that might be provided by the  
23 Post Office and Fujitsu to a police force investigating  
24 suspected criminal conduct. That chain dates from April  
25 of this year, and it bears the reference FUJ00243203?

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1 **A.** Yes. My role in this email chain was effectively  
2 Mr Bartlett reached out to me, as I manage the Fujitsu  
3 relationship on a day-to-day basis, and he asked me to  
4 impress onto Fujitsu the need to cooperate with City of  
5 London Police, and that was the extent of my engagement  
6 in this conversation.

7 **Q.** Now, bearing in mind that the Post Office hasn't, for  
8 some time, sought to recover losses from postmasters  
9 unless they agreed to repay them, did it strike you as  
10 odd; were you at all concerned to be asked to lend your  
11 support to this particular process?

12 **A.** Not particularly, no. My understanding from Mr Bartlett  
13 was that this was -- this wasn't a simple case of  
14 a postmaster that we were, in some way, pursuing over  
15 a loss; that this was a much larger and very much  
16 a police matter.

17 **Q.** So the crucial difference here being, so far as you are  
18 concerned, this is an investigation which has been  
19 managed independently by the police?

20 **A.** That's correct, yes.

21 **Q.** Now if we could just scroll up, please, thank you.  
22 Mr Walton responds to your email?

23 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*

24 **Q.** Saying this:

25 "Hi Simon

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1 "Thank you for your message below.  
 2 "As this is a legal matter, [Fujitsu] Legal are  
 3 communicating with the City of London Police.  
 4 "I am not involved in those communications, and in  
 5 any event, [Fujitsu] considers it to be inappropriate  
 6 for Post Office and [Fujitsu] to be discussing a police  
 7 investigation."  
 8 What did you make of that suggestion that it was  
 9 somehow inappropriate for there to be any discussions  
 10 between the Post Office and Fujitsu concerning  
 11 an ongoing police investigation?  
 12 **A.** I think my immediate reaction was probably something of  
 13 confusion, given that my request was simply to my  
 14 counterpart in Fujitsu to ensure that Fujitsu cooperate  
 15 with police. So probably slightly confused by the  
 16 response but, nonetheless, that was Fujitsu's response.  
 17 **Q.** If we scroll up, please, we can see Mr Bartlett responds  
 18 to Mr Walton, and copies you in. We'll come to the  
 19 point shortly but, essentially, he says to Mr Walton  
 20 that one of his team has gone back to the City of London  
 21 Police to see how the contact you reference below was  
 22 progressing and have an open and objective engagement on  
 23 this matter:  
 24 "[City of London] has informed [the Post Office]  
 25 that they have not had any additional information nor  
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1 the -- an unwillingness to be involved in any kind of  
 2 prosecution of postmasters, which I can understand.  
 3 **Q.** So moving on briefly, you discussed the ongoing  
 4 relationship between Fujitsu Services and Post Office in  
 5 your statement and you comment that one of the concerns  
 6 raised in the Horizon Issues Judgment was the extent of  
 7 the Post Office's reliance upon Fujitsu, and I think  
 8 you've described -- forgive me, you're nodding, and I'm  
 9 conscious that --  
 10 **A.** Apologies, yes. I'll say, yes, when --  
 11 **Q.** But I didn't ask you a question, in fairness: is that  
 12 correct?  
 13 **A.** That is correct, yes.  
 14 **Q.** Thank you. You describe number of steps which the Post  
 15 Office has taken to improve its oversight of Fujitsu.  
 16 We've discussed some of those already: regression  
 17 testing, for example, to check the quality of code; and  
 18 then also the developing your own capability for  
 19 monitoring and alerting capacity issues in relation to  
 20 performance of the system; and network statistics,  
 21 transaction processing, through what's called  
 22 an AppDynamics tool?  
 23 **A.** AppDynamics, yes, that's correct.  
 24 **Q.** I think one of the areas you've sought to address in  
 25 particular, because you've made it a priority, is  
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1 contact with Fujitsu after the single, exploratory and  
 2 inconclusive conversation."  
 3 He said:  
 4 "They left that conversation with the feeling that  
 5 they were indirectly being told that the Horizon system  
 6 was unreliable and so the case could not progress. We  
 7 really need to explore this as this is not the nuanced  
 8 impression Simon Oldhall has given me."  
 9 Now, you obviously were copied into that email.  
 10 What did you understand Mr Bartlett to be saying there  
 11 and what is this nuanced impression that you had as to  
 12 Horizon's reliability?  
 13 **A.** From memory, the conversation with Mr Bartlett was very  
 14 much around the fact that we obviously used Horizon data  
 15 in a number of contexts, both through the ARQ process  
 16 where we retrieve that data, and so I think I was again  
 17 confused by Fujitsu's position that the system was  
 18 unreliable, given that, obviously, they provide that  
 19 system to Post Office, it's our core trading platform,  
 20 and we rely on the data within that platform for  
 21 a number of purposes.  
 22 **Q.** Do you have any sense as to why Fujitsu are taking that  
 23 position in this correspondence?  
 24 **A.** I don't have an immediate view on why they've taken that  
 25 position. I can only speculate that it was probably  
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1 privileged access. But you state there have been some  
 2 issues in relation to that --  
 3 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*  
 4 **Q.** -- and the extent of cooperation you've received. Can  
 5 you explain those, please?  
 6 **A.** Yeah, we have made significant improvements around the  
 7 privileged and remote access process and I think it's  
 8 important to differentiate between privileged and remote  
 9 access. So we have tightened up particularly the  
 10 process whereby there's a role that I believe was  
 11 referenced in the Horizon Issues Judgment called APPSUP,  
 12 where specifically that process now has very tight  
 13 controls around it where it requires input by three Post  
 14 Office employees, and the knowledge and consent of  
 15 a postmaster before we use that role.  
 16 We've also improved our reporting around privileged  
 17 access, so elevated or privileged access and the use of  
 18 that, and that is now reported and scrutinised monthly  
 19 through what's called the Information Security  
 20 Management Forum.  
 21 We have identified there's still additional  
 22 improvements we'd like to make to that reporting but it  
 23 is a significantly improved position to that which KPMG  
 24 found when they looked at this in 2020.  
 25 **Q.** I think you sought to review Fujitsu's management of  
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1 privileged access and, indeed, to ensure there's  
 2 an ongoing audit of that?  
 3 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*  
 4 **Q.** Have you found that Fujitsu have been cooperative in  
 5 that process?  
 6 **A.** So in terms of -- there has been number of audits we've  
 7 carried out, a number of audit activities. We did  
 8 commission an independent piece of work via Deloitte.  
 9 It was commissioned through our internal audit process  
 10 but, effectively, we had an external provider and  
 11 Fujitsu's cooperation with that particular audit didn't  
 12 go to the extent we would have liked. However, there is  
 13 an annual independent audit, particularly around the  
 14 controls around the Horizon system that's carried out by  
 15 Ernst & Young, EY, and Fujitsu fully cooperated with  
 16 that particular audit and we are currently reviewing  
 17 this year's output from that audit.  
 18 **Q.** Forgive me, when was that audit concluded?  
 19 **A.** It was actually completed slightly late this year in  
 20 September this year.  
 21 **Q.** In September but you found that cooperation in that  
 22 was --  
 23 **A.** Yes, there was full cooperation with that.  
 24 **Q.** I'd like to move on, please, to another topic, which  
 25 you've mentioned already. This is ARQ or audit data in

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1 directly.  
 2 **Q.** Although you're not involved in the day-to-day  
 3 practicalities you have explained that, because you're  
 4 responsible for managing Post Office's contractual  
 5 relationship with Fujitsu, you have, on occasion, been  
 6 brought in to deal with these issues relating to ARQ  
 7 data; is that right?  
 8 **A.** That's correct, yes.  
 9 **Q.** You explain that when a request is raised of Fujitsu,  
 10 Post Office is, in effect, exercising a contractual  
 11 right over which you have oversight, and that you've  
 12 been involved in managing discussions with Fujitsu, for  
 13 example, in relation to the reimbursement of the costs  
 14 associated with remediation requests; is that --  
 15 **A.** That's correct, yes.  
 16 **Q.** So under the current processes, I think a great many  
 17 requests were made by the Remediation Unit; is that  
 18 right?  
 19 **A.** That's correct, yes.  
 20 **Q.** In order to investigate historic shortfalls?  
 21 **A.** That's correct.  
 22 **Q.** Do you know which other parts of the business are  
 23 currently involved in making requests for audit ARQ  
 24 data, Fujitsu and for what purpose?  
 25 **A.** I think the next sort of second biggest user is probably

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1 Horizon. You explain in your statement you're not  
 2 involved in the day-to-day practicalities, that is to  
 3 say the raising of requests and the processing of those  
 4 requests; is that right?  
 5 **A.** That's correct, yes.  
 6 **Q.** You say that process is managed by the Network Crime and  
 7 Risk Support Team?  
 8 **A.** That is correct, yes.  
 9 **Q.** Why does the responsibility for that process sit within  
 10 that team?  
 11 **A.** I think it's an historic thing, effectively. They've  
 12 been the conduit to access that process. That will  
 13 change over time but I think it's probably just  
 14 an historical piece at this stage.  
 15 **Q.** Where do you think that process ought to sit -- you say  
 16 it's likely to change. Do you think it will better sit  
 17 elsewhere in the --  
 18 **A.** The process will change as we move away from the current  
 19 Horizon audit solution, to the inhouse Post Office  
 20 solution that we're building currently, where, actually,  
 21 the process will become much more self-service. So at  
 22 the moment it's very, very manual, you fill in a form,  
 23 it's transmitted, you get the data back. We're  
 24 currently building a solution whereby people who require  
 25 that audit data will be able to access it much more

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1 the Branch Support Team who investigate discrepancies in  
 2 branch, and they probably consume the vast majority of  
 3 other requests. Some requests come directly from my  
 4 team, where we want to look at audit data as well but it  
 5 is largely Remediation Unit, and the Branch Support  
 6 Team.  
 7 **Q.** Why would your own team be seeking audit data for  
 8 an investigation?  
 9 **A.** If a postmaster has flagged a problem with us, we will  
 10 look at all sources of data, and so we will look at  
 11 audit transaction data, we will look at data we've  
 12 extracted from a particular Horizon counter. We look at  
 13 number of sources to make sure there isn't a problem  
 14 with Horizon.  
 15 **Q.** That would be, would it, to investigate a reported bug,  
 16 error or defect?  
 17 **A.** A bug, error or defect, effectively, yes.  
 18 **Q.** When that data is extracted, whether by -- presumably if  
 19 it's extracted by your team, you would analyse that  
 20 data?  
 21 **A.** We would look at that data, yes.  
 22 **Q.** If it's extracted by the Branch Support Team, they would  
 23 be responsible for analysing it?  
 24 **A.** That is correct, yes.  
 25 **Q.** I'd like to ask you some very brief questions about

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1 changes which Fujitsu Services proposed to the ARQ  
 2 request form; do you recall that?  
 3 **A.** Yes, I do, yes.  
 4 **Q.** So I think it was in mid-to-late May this year --  
 5 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*  
 6 **Q.** -- that Fujitsu submitted -- well, I think they  
 7 instructed that ARQ requests should henceforth be made  
 8 on a form which contained two new mandatory questions;  
 9 is that correct?  
 10 **A.** That is correct, yes.  
 11 **Q.** Can we just bring a copy of that up, please. It's  
 12 FUJ00243223.  
 13 Thank you. So at the top, we see under the heading  
 14 "Mandatory", firstly the first question:  
 15 "Is this request related to either (i) the  
 16 investigation of or (ii) action being taken or intended  
 17 to be taken by the Post Office against a postmaster or  
 18 Post Office worker in connection with a potential fraud,  
 19 theft, breach of contract or any other potential  
 20 impropriety which is suspected to have occurred at  
 21 relevant Post Office branches?"  
 22 So seeking an answer yes or no to that.  
 23 Secondly:  
 24 "Will this information be used to support either  
 25 a postmaster or a Post Office worker to achieve

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1 had been raised for that reason?  
 2 **A.** Well, I think the second leg of the question actually  
 3 talks about action being taken or intended to be taken  
 4 by the Post Office against a postmaster: Post Office  
 5 doesn't take action against postmasters. So it doesn't  
 6 really stand even as a question and then it goes on to  
 7 talk about any other Post Office worker with a potential  
 8 fraud, breach of contract. It felt very broadly worded,  
 9 and not actually relevant to the way Post Office  
 10 operates today.  
 11 **Q.** As you've said a short time ago, the Post Office is  
 12 designing its own audit store for Horizon, enabling  
 13 storage of audit data for all branch transactions within  
 14 the Post Office, is that correct --  
 15 **A.** That is correct, yes.  
 16 **Q.** -- and that the process of retrieving data from that  
 17 would henceforth be carried out by the Post Office.  
 18 That's the intention, is it?  
 19 **A.** That's the intention, yes.  
 20 **Q.** Presumably Post Office will continue to use ARQ data  
 21 once it's brought inhouse for investigations into the  
 22 cause of discrepancies, is that --  
 23 **A.** Absolutely, yes. ARQ, effectively, is the process to  
 24 retrieve audit data. So, yes, we will continue to use  
 25 audit data in support of a number of activities.

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1 financial redress, including under the combination  
 2 schemes such as the Horizon Shortfall Scheme established  
 3 or administered by either the UK Government or the Post  
 4 Office, for action ... taken against them by the Post  
 5 Office?"  
 6 Again, a yes or no answer.  
 7 Now, this came to you to deal with; is that right?  
 8 **A.** It was escalated to me to have a discussion with  
 9 Fujitsu, yes, as you say, Fujitsu effectively  
 10 unilaterally imposed these questions upon Post Office.  
 11 **Q.** Why was there objection on the part of Post Office to  
 12 answering what, on the face of it, appeared some quite  
 13 straightforward questions as to the purpose to which the  
 14 information would be put?  
 15 **A.** I think we felt particularly the first question was  
 16 very, very broad; the second question, Fujitsu were well  
 17 aware of why we were requesting lots and lots of data  
 18 around redress. So, overall, we didn't feel the  
 19 mandatory changes were necessary.  
 20 **Q.** In relation to the first question, you say that you were  
 21 concerned it was unduly broad. On the face of it, it  
 22 seems to be quite narrowly focused to investigations or  
 23 actions to be taken in relation to specific -- suspected  
 24 criminal activity. Would it -- why would it be  
 25 difficult for Post Office to confirm whether the request

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1 **Q.** What steps do you intend to take to ensure the accuracy  
 2 of that data is maintained for its use in investigations  
 3 and for related prosecutions, if that be the case?  
 4 **A.** So the solution with designing it, it's designed with  
 5 a similar level of rigour around an audit solution for  
 6 similar systems to Horizon. So, although it uses more  
 7 modern technology to the current, very physical storage,  
 8 it will maintain the same levels of integrity,  
 9 effectively, in the ability to audit how that data was  
 10 retrieved and found.  
 11 **Q.** Thank you. Sorry, that can be brought down, thank you  
 12 very much.  
 13 There's one final topic I'd like to raise with you,  
 14 Mr Oldnall, relating to the New Branch IT programme.  
 15 Now, that's not a programme over which you have direct  
 16 management responsibility; is that right?  
 17 **A.** That's true. Yes, that's correct.  
 18 **Q.** But is it right that it's one of the programmes you  
 19 sponsor under your -- you said that you have  
 20 responsibility for sponsoring number of change  
 21 programmes.  
 22 **A.** I have number of change programmes. New Branch IT  
 23 specifically refers to the replacement of the Horizon  
 24 counter software. Within my remit, I have things like  
 25 the new portable counter device and the new self-service

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1 device but not the replacement of the Horizon counter  
2 device -- of the Horizon counter software, as such.  
3 **Q.** That's not to say that you don't have any awareness or  
4 understanding of the issues that have been encountered  
5 by the programme; is that right?

6 **A.** That's true. Yes, that's correct.

7 **Q.** So you say in your statement that it was initially  
8 proposed that the New Branch IT programme would be  
9 deployed in a manner that would enable Post Office to  
10 exit its contract with Fujitsu by March 2025.

11 **A.** That's correct.

12 **Q.** Is that correct? But due to delays in the development  
13 and rollout of the system, the deployment is now not due  
14 to start until June 2026. Firstly, is it your  
15 understanding that the system is currently still on  
16 track to be deployed in June 2026?

17 **A.** I believe we're currently at a stage where we're  
18 reviewing the current plan for the replacement of  
19 Horizon and I think as others' evidence have given that  
20 that review is live right now, to work out what that  
21 plan might look like.

22 **Q.** What do you understand to have been the reasons for the  
23 delay, the historic delays, in the programme, which  
24 caused the original timetable to be relapsed?

25 **A.** So I've obviously seen a number of documents that have

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1 **A.** From the documentation, I think, that's been shared with  
2 me, I've seen some of those, yes.

3 **Q.** Sorry, when you say that's been shared with you, do you  
4 mean by the Inquiry?

5 **A.** By the Inquiry, yes, sorry.

6 **Q.** But, absent that, it wasn't something of which you were  
7 aware in your role as --

8 **A.** I was broadly aware of some concerns that had been  
9 raised, particularly around the level of defect in the  
10 new system, but not very specifically.

11 **Q.** What can you tell us about --

12 **A.** I was broadly aware that there were concerns around the  
13 volume and the levels of defects that were present in  
14 the system and particularly the -- I'm going to  
15 characterise it as the enthusiasm to get the new system  
16 out there, potentially. Some of those defects were not  
17 being controlled and managed in the way that I would  
18 particularly have liked.

19 **Q.** Did that cause a personal concern to you, to learn that  
20 there was pressure to roll out a system with outstanding  
21 bugs and defects?

22 **A.** At a personal level, yes. We've spent quite a large  
23 amount of time over the last four years trying to build  
24 confidence and making sure that Horizon doesn't have  
25 a volume of defects in it. So yes, rolling out a system

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1 been shared with me. I think there's been number of  
2 issues around probably technical complexity, wanting to  
3 ensure that the product itself is fit for purpose, and  
4 so going through quite extended levels of testing and,  
5 ultimately, I think building up an understanding of  
6 a system that is quite diverse in its product nature,  
7 has taken much longer than potentially Post Office  
8 originally anticipated.

9 **Q.** To your knowledge, has the provision of sufficient  
10 funding been an issue in achieving a design and  
11 a solution that is fit for purpose?

12 **A.** I'm aware of some of the funding discussions and have  
13 been involved in some of the funding discussions.  
14 I think, as others have talked about, the iterative  
15 nature of funding a programme of that scale probably  
16 hasn't been particularly helpful but I also am aware  
17 that the initial estimates for how much it would cost  
18 to replace Horizon have greatly increased, yes.

19 **Q.** Now, we know from other witnesses that concerns have  
20 been raised internally within the Post Office and  
21 particularly through the Post Office's internal Speak-Up  
22 process.

23 **A.** *(The witness nodded)*

24 **Q.** Are you aware of the nature of those concerns that have  
25 been raised?

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1 that has a higher level of defects, it would definitely  
2 cause me concern, yes.

3 **Q.** Now, obviously, that was a concern reported to you. Did  
4 you have any knowledge as to whether there was any merit  
5 or that there was any substance to that complaint?

6 **A.** Not directly, no.

7 **Q.** From where in the organisation did you understand the  
8 pressure to be coming to get the system rolled out, even  
9 if it had outstanding defects?

10 **A.** I couldn't specifically say from where in the  
11 organisation. I know, obviously, there's -- as you've  
12 highlighted, the ambition was to have this rolled out by  
13 initially 2024 and then 2025.

14 **Q.** Are you personally concerned that the Post Office might  
15 be repeating the mistakes of the past in its handling of  
16 this particular programme?

17 **A.** At a personal level, yes, I would be concerned if we  
18 didn't face into those defects. I think the opportunity  
19 that is being taken now is to take a step back and  
20 ensure that the NBIT programme does deliver to the kind  
21 of standard that our postmasters expect.

22 **MS HODGE:** Thank you very much, Mr Oldnall. I have no  
23 further questions for you.

24 **A.** Thank you.

25

Questioned by MR STEIN

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1 **MR STEIN:** Mr Oldnall, a couple of questions. There's  
2 a document which I'll ask to go on the screen. I just  
3 want to ask you when you were first made aware of this  
4 document, okay?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** So that's the question. FUJ00243199.

7 **A.** Thank you.

8 **Q.** Sir, this is -- can I call it the "Fujitsu/Patterson  
9 letter", 17 May this year.

10 Now, I think, Mr Oldnall, you should have had this  
11 within the documents you had from the Inquiry.

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** My question is not about when you got it through the  
14 Inquiry: my question is when you got this document, if  
15 you did, through your workplace?

16 **A.** Yes, I did. So Mr Walton alerted me this letter was  
17 coming. I think I received a copy around about the  
18 weekend it was issued, via Mr Brocklesby.

19 **Q.** Right. Did this trigger a discussion internally about  
20 where this letter should go to? In other words, should  
21 it go to Legal, and if so, what their opinion of it was  
22 and, in relation to police investigations, whether the  
23 police should be kept informed of it and, indeed, other  
24 parts of the system?

25 **A.** The discussion I was aware of internally was certainly  
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1 **Q.** Have you got to the bottom of this letter yet?

2 **A.** Not me personally, no.

3 **Q.** No. Has anyone?

4 **A.** I believe and I've seen, obviously, there's been  
5 an exchange of letters in this same thread.

6 **Q.** All right. Next question, slightly different. So can  
7 I take the framing of a Post Office branch that's  
8 experiencing shortfall, and I'm going to deliberately  
9 use the figure of £115. I will come to the reason why  
10 I'm using £115 in a moment, all right?

11 So I'm a subpostmaster at a branch and I can see on  
12 my Horizon system that there is a shortfall of 115.  
13 Okay?

14 **A.** Mm-hm.

15 **Q.** All right. Now, we know that the R&D button will  
16 trigger certain events within the Post Office system.  
17 That there will be, putting it shortly,  
18 an investigation, yes?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** Yes, okay. We also know that, if I'm the subpostmaster  
21 and I call up the Helpline and say, "Look, I've got this  
22 figure, I don't understand it. What's going on? It's  
23 a shortfall, £115", then as well, that should also  
24 trigger some type of investigation, yes?

25 **A.** Yes, correct.  
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1 led by Legal. I think the discussion I was involved in  
2 was more around what would be Post Office's response to  
3 the content of the letter.

4 **Q.** Right. Did you have any dealings directly with  
5 Mr Patterson or a subordinate of Mr Patterson's about  
6 the content of this letter --

7 **A.** Not directly --

8 **Q.** -- considering your Fujitsu relationship?

9 **A.** Correct. Not directly, no.

10 **Q.** Does that mean one of your team did?

11 **A.** No. So my interaction with this letter sort of started  
12 and ended with Mr Walton telling me the letter was  
13 coming, and that was it.

14 **Q.** Okay. The letter itself is from Fujitsu, obviously who  
15 runs the system, and it's saying, you know, "Don't rely  
16 upon our system". That seems to have quite an effect  
17 upon the sorts of projects that you're engaged in?

18 **A.** It does. I think I've used the word "confusing",  
19 a couple of times in my evidence so far today. I found  
20 that particular letter quite confusing because, on one  
21 hand, you're right, it says "Don't rely on our system",  
22 which is an interesting position for a supplier and not  
23 one I've experienced in my career; but, equally, says,  
24 "Please use our data to sought redress". So it is  
25 somewhat confusing.  
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1 **Q.** Right. What if I pay off the shortfall without  
2 notifying the Post Office, either via the R&D button or  
3 the Helpline? Is there a way that the systems that you  
4 are aware of can identify that I in my branch, with that  
5 shortfall, have essentially identified the shortfall and  
6 then paid it off, without notifying you through the two  
7 ways I've just identified?

8 **A.** So the system would identify -- if this is being done at  
9 the trading period --

10 **Q.** Yes.

11 **A.** -- so somebody has settled to cash, effectively, or  
12 settled by cheque.

13 **Q.** Yes, which is why I'm using the figure of 115. You'll  
14 probably be able to explain why in a moment.

15 **A.** I assumed why. Then, yes, we would be able to identify  
16 that that settled to cash had happened. What we would  
17 not be able to identify is why. So we wouldn't be able  
18 to understand that the postmaster went, "Actually, £115,  
19 I remember that. I did that wrong", as opposed to "I've  
20 no reason why that's happened".

21 So for us to get into the £115, we would need the  
22 postmaster to press the R&D button.

23 **Q.** Right. So the sheer fact that a subpostmaster  
24 identifies 115 as being the shortfall and then pays it  
25 off using cash, which is the reason for using 115 as my  
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1 example, doesn't, in fact, of itself, trigger a Post  
 2 Office investigation?  
 3 **A.** Not an investigation as such, no. I think you'll  
 4 probably hear from Melanie Park tomorrow, where they  
 5 talk about they do look for patterns --  
 6 **Q.** Yes.  
 7 **A.** -- and they do look to go, "Okay, that branch is  
 8 regularly doing that, let's go and talk to them and see  
 9 whether they need any additional help and support".  
 10 **Q.** The reason why I've used the figure 115 is?  
 11 **A.** I knew you were going to ask me that, Mr Stein.  
 12 Apologies, I can't remember.  
 13 **Q.** Well, it's because what the system does also is it  
 14 accounts for cash in terms of the notes that's used.  
 15 I used 115, so that we've got 20s, 10, 5 --  
 16 **A.** You've got a mixture of notes.  
 17 **Q.** -- and that, therefore, there's a way of actually  
 18 understanding that the system has had that cash input if  
 19 you wanted to do it.  
 20 **A.** You jogged my memory, Mr Stein. Thank you. Yes.  
 21 **MR STEIN:** No further questions. Thank you, Mr Oldnall.  
 22 **THE WITNESS:** Thank you.  
 23 **MS HODGE:** Sir, I think that's all the questions we have  
 24 from Core Participants.  
 25 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right.

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1 Well, thank you very much, Mr Oldnall, for producing  
 2 four witness statements, one of which is extremely  
 3 detailed and two of which are quite detailed. I am very  
 4 grateful to you for doing that work and I expect you're  
 5 quite glad that your time in the witness box was  
 6 comparatively short. But, anyway, thank you very much.  
 7 **THE WITNESS:** Thank you, sir.  
 8 **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right. We'll resume again at 10.00  
 9 tomorrow morning.  
 10 **MS HODGE:** Yes, sir. Thank you.  
 11 **(4.12 pm)**  
 12 **(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)**  
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