1	Wednesday, 26 July 2023	1	A.	Yes, I do.
2	(9.30 am)	2	Q.	Thank you, if you turn to page 16, is that your
3	MR BLAKE: Good morning, sir.	3		signature?
4	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Morning, Mr Blake.	4	A.	Yes, it is.
5	MR BLAKE: Sir, this morning we're going to hear	5	Q.	Is that statement true to the best of your
6	from Mr Coyne and Ms Helliwell. As you know, we	6		knowledge and belief?
7	finish today at 2.00, so the plan is to take two	7	A.	Yes, it is.
8	breaks, two 15-minute breaks every hour and	8	Q.	Do you have any clarifications to make in
9	a half or so.	9		respect of that statement?
10	There will be a fire alarm at 10.00 today.	10	A.	In this witness statement I said that I hadn't
11	The plan is for us to put our hands over our	11		seen the letter of instruction from
12	ears, rather than leave the room.	12		Ms Helliwell, which was correct at the time that
13	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yeah, fine.	13		I made that statement, but later on, at the back
14	MR BLAKE: There wouldn't be any lunch. Everybody	14		end of last week, I was provided with a number
15	will take their lunches at 2.00.	15		of other documents and within there was the
16	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, that's fine, Mr Blake.	16		letter of instruction.
17	MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. I'm going to call	17	Q.	Thank you very much. I'm going to start today
18	Mr Coyne, please.	18		by asking you about your background. Your
19	JASON PETER COYNE (sworn)	19		witness statement, WITN00210100 it doesn't
20	Questioned by MR BLAKE	20		need to be brought onto screen but that's just
21	Q. Can you give your full name, please?	21		for the purposes of the transcript that will
22	A. Jason Peter Coyne.	22		be published in due course.
23	Q. Mr Coyne, you should have in front of you	23	A.	Yes.
24	a witness statement dated 16 May 2023; is that	24	Q.	In terms of your background, it's set out in
25	correct?	25		that statement. Most relevant for today is that
	1			2
1	in 2000 you were part of a company, you were	1		to be instructed by parties that had frustrated
2	a shareholder in the company called Best	2		implementations to try to avoid disputes and
3	Practice Group Plc; is that right?	3		that built up our contact with law firms.
4	A. Yes, that's right.	4	Q.	Was one of the roles you had at that time acting
5	Q. Can you very briefly tell us what your role was	5		as an expert witness?
6	in that company and what the company did?	6	A.	Yes. Yes, it was.
7	A. Yes, so we set up that company in 2000 because	7	Q.	It was in that role that you acted in a case
8	we'd noticed that technology within companies	8		that we're going to be coming to, which is the
9	was accelerating rapidly and, whereas before,	9		Cleveleys case, or what we refer to as the
10	technology was just an aid to businesses,	10		Cleveleys case?
11	technology was now being talked about in terms	11	A.	Yes.
12	of business transformation, so requiring	12	Q.	You then moved in 2009 to IT Group UK; is that
13	fundamental changes to businesses whilst	13		correct?
14	technology was brought in.	14	A.	That's right, yes. And IT Group was looking
15	We spotted that there was a number of what	15		purely at the distressed end of computing, so it
16	we at the time called misaligned expectations,	16		was looking at things like failure mode analysis
17	the suppliers would think they were delivering	17		to find out why projects had gone wrong, whether
18	one things, the customer would think they were	18		they could be brought back on track or not or
19	going to receive something different. So Best	19		whether we could provide expert witness evidence
20	Practice Group was set up to help the parties	20		throughout the dispute resolution process, if
21	come together throughout the contracting process	21		the contract needed to come to an end.
22	to understand what would be delivered and what	22		So we helped people like insurers, we were
23	the parties' relative roles and responsibilities	23		instructed by law firms, often instructed by
24	would be.	24		technology companies, to advise how to get
25	It was as a result of that that we started	25		projects back on track, or purchasers of 4
	5			<del>-</del>

- technologies to find out what they should change
- 2 within their own organisation to make the
- technology project work better for them.**Q.** It was while you were at IT Group UK that y
- Q. It was while you were at IT Group UK that you
   acted in the *Bates & Others* litigation, as also
- 6 an expert witness?
- 7 A. That's right, from about 2016.
- 8 Q. That's something that we'll be looking at in
- 9 more depth in Phase 5 of this Inquiry.
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. You're now a partner in Evolution Project
- 12 Consulting; is that correct?
- 13 A. Yes
- 14 Q. Is that broadly the same or different to those
- 15 two previous --
- 16 A. No, it's broadly the same. The companies that
- 17 I've worked for have gone through various
- 18 mergers and acquisitions over the years, and
- 19 Evolution Project Consulting is now just back to
- 20 me on my own, rather than part of a larger
- 21 organisation. But doing broadly the same thing,
- 22 helping people with technology disputes.
- 23 Q. Do you continue to act as an expert witness?
- 24 A. I do, yes. The company has only been operating
- on its own for a couple of months, so I don't
  - 5
- 1 changes were in the late 1990s, and CPR35,
- 2 I believe, was updated, certainly before 2000,
- 3 to ensure that experts were shown to be more
- 4 independent and, in fact, were more independent.
- 5 And there was the declaration of independence
- 6 that has to be signed now on all expert reports.
- 7 Q. In the Cleveleys case you were a joint expert --
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. -- and in the Bates litigation you were
- 10 an expert for one particular party?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 **Q.** Can you tell us the difference between those two
- 13 situations?
- 14 A. I mean, your obligations are still exactly the
- same. Your obligation is to assist the court
- and you have to remain independent, whether you
- 17 are instructed by two parties or whether you're
- 18 instructed by one party, such as was in the
- 19 Bates litigation. So your opinions don't
- 20 change. The way you go about the process, the
- 21 analysis, doesn't change. You have to take as
- 22 much care and diligence, irrespective of which
- 23 process is followed.
- 24 The only difference really is that the two
- 25 parties in a joint litigation -- in a joint

- 1 yet have any instructions but that is the
- 2 desire.
- 3 Q. When did you first become an expert witness?
- 4 A. I believe it will have been probably the turn
- 5 of -- of 2000, or something like that, when we
- 6 started Best Practice Group.
- 7 Q. What did you understand and perhaps what do you
- 8 understand now to be the role of an expert
- 9 witness, in summary?
- 10 A. Well, the overriding obligation is to assist the
- 11 court and to ensure that you take an independent
- 12 viewpoint and that you consider all evidence
- very carefully, you don't fail to report any
- 14 evidence that you've seen and that you search
- out all the evidence that might be available.
- 16 It's really the independence side of it that
- 17 was the very, very early teachings that I got
- from all the material that I took from the
- 19 Institute of Experts and all the different
- 20 various parties that were involved in expert
- 21 witness training in those early days, and still
- 22 today.
- 23 Q. Was it broadly the same in the early 2000s as it
- is today, in terms of your duties as an expert?
- 25 A. Yes, I believe so I think the majority of the
  - 6
- 1 instruction come together to generally agree
- what your instruction should be, and you accept
- 3 that as a joint instruction, and then, when you
- 4 submit your report, you generally invite
- 5 questions from both parties and then you would
- 6 generally respond to those questions. That's
- 7 typically the process and the difference when
- 8 it's a joint instruction.
- 9 Q. I'm going to move on now to talk about the
- 10 Cleveleys case.
- 11 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 12 Q. You're the first witness in this Inquiry who is
- 13 going to be addressing questions on the
- 14 Cleveleys case, so I'm going to take you through
- some very basic facts to begin with just to set
- 16 the scene.
- 17 **A.** Yes.
- 18 Q. Can we look at POL00118218, please. It's page 3
- 19 of the trial bundle. You'll see here that the
- 20 claim was served, if we scroll down a little
- 21 bit, on 26 April 2001, and it began life, if we
- look at the top, in the Croydon County Court.
- The value of the claim, in the bottom right-hand
- corner, is approximately £11,000.
- 25 **A.** Mm-hm.

1	Q.	Is that your recollection?	1		Counterclaim, paragraph 2 of the Defence, so
2	Α.	Yes.	2		page 8 now, this is Mrs Wolstenholme's defence,
3	Q.	Can we look at page 5, please, if we scroll on	3		and at paragraph 2, we see there it says:
4		a couple of pages, there is the particulars of	4		"The Defendant asserts that her employment
5		claim. The defendant is a lady called Mrs Julie	5		was terminated unlawfully and she has made
6		Wolstenholme.	6		an application to the Industrial Tribunal"
7	Α.	Mm-hm.	7		So her defence was that she had been
8	Q.	If we look at paragraph 2 she was the	8		unlawfully terminated.
9	Q.	subpostmistress at Cleveleys branch and her	9	A.	Yes.
10		contract had been terminated. The Post Office	10	Q.	There is a counterclaim in her claim, if we keep
11		were suing her for return of certain equipment.	11	۷.	on scrolling down to the next page, towards the
12		If we scroll over to the next page, and keep on	12		bottom of page 7, there appears to be
13		scrolling to the end of the particulars of	13		a counterclaim, a little bit further down. This
14		claim, we have there, that's signed by	14		begins at the bottom of that screen. If we go
15		a statement of truth by James Cruise or Jim	15		over the next page to paragraph 14 of the
16		Cruise, who we will, in due course, become	16		Defence and Counterclaim, thank you.
17		familiar with, and there's also the name	17		Perhaps, if we could blow up paragraph 14.
18		Catherine Churchard of Legal Consignia Legal	18		This is where the issue of the computer
		Services.			'
19			19		system is raised, it says there:
20		This is a document I think that you were	20		"Further or in the alternative it was
21		provided with when you prepared your expert	21		an implied term of the contract between the
22		report?	22		Claimant and the Defendant that the computer
23	Α.	Yes.	23		system provided by the Claimant would be fit for
24	Q.	Thank you.	24		its purpose and the Claimant is in breach of
25		If we turn over the page to the Defence and 9	25		this term in that the computer system provided 10
1		was unfit for purpose and the Claimant failed to	1		there.
2		ensure that the system was working adequately."	2	A.	Yes.
3	A.		3	Q.	If we continue to scroll to page 17, this is
4	Q.	Thank you very much. If we scroll down to the	4		still with the Amended Particulars of Claim, and
5		next page, Mrs Wolstenholme was claiming	5		we see there for the first time appearing in
6		damages, if we keep on scrolling down, damages	6		this bundle the name of Weightmans Vizards
7		for wrongful dismissal, damages for breach of	7		solicitors, who, by that stage, were on record
8		the implied term to provide a computer system	8		acting for Post Office.
9		fit for purpose, and further damages, and it's	9	A.	Yes, mm-hm.
10		signed there at the bottom of page 12. The date	10	Q.	Can we please turn now to page 93 of this
11		of this document is 6 June, 6 June 2001	11		bundle. This is the Post Office's reply to
12	A.	Yes.	12		Mrs Wolstenholme's defence, by now, by this time
13	Q.	which may be of relevance because we're going	13		we're in the Blackpool County Court, so it's
14		to address issues of the provision of audit	14		been transferred.
15		data, et cetera, so the date the claim began,	15	A.	Yes.
16		and the date of the defence hear it is June	16	Q.	If we scroll down we'll see that's the reply and
17		2001, when the issue of the computer system was	17	۳.	the defence to the counterclaim, and it's
18		first raised.	18		page 95, paragraph 4. We see there that the
19		If we scroll over the page, there's Amended	19		Post Office state:
20		Particulars of Claim. These don't matter for	20		"It is denied that the said computer system
20 21		present purposes and we can continue scrolling	21		was unfit for its purpose and it is averred that
22		to page 15, which is the end of the Amended	22		the same worked adequately."
		to page 10, without is the end of the America	22		the same worked adequatery.

23 **A.** Mm-hm.

Q. Thank you. I'm going to take you to a few court

orders just to set the scene and again to take

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Particulars and at the bottom of that page we

see the name of Ms Helliwell, who we will be

hearing from later today, who is the signatory

1 you to a few relevant dates for your 2 instruction. Can we turn to page 98, please. 3 This is an order of the Blackpool County Court 4 of 16 July 2001 and, if we look at point (B) on 5 the notice, it says: 6 "There may be an issue as to expert evidence 7 given the counterclaim." 8 A. 9 Q. Can we go to the next page which is another 10 order, this time 30 August 2001, Order paragraph 2. At this stage it says: 11 12 "Both parties ... have permission to rely 13 upon one expert each in computer systems." 14 Α. Mm-hm Q. If we turn to page 103, that's an order of 15 16 5 August. It seems as though by that stage 17 there was a stay until October of that year, 18 possibly because Employment Tribunal proceedings 19 were continuing during that period. 20 A. Right. Mm-hm. 21 Q. If we turn over the page to 104, that's 22 14 February 2003, so by this stage matters had 23 resumed and, if we look at paragraph 8 of that 24 order, it is ordered by the Blackpool County 25 Court that: 13 1 A. Yes. 2 Q. Then we turn to page 110. A case management 3 hearing has ultimately taken place on 7 July 4 2003, and there are certain orders made that are 5 relevant to your instruction and paragraph 1 6 says that: 7 "[The] Claimant do by 4 pm on July 21st 8 serve on the Defendant copies of the relevant 9 computer logs from June 2000 until November 10 2000." 11 Paragraph 4, it says there: 12 "It appearing to the Court that archived 13 material on the computer may have been 14 destroyed, it is directed that 15 "a) Claimant solicitors so make further 16 enquiries and copy any correspondence to 17 Defendant [and the] 18 "b) Parties [are to] make enquiries of 19 expert as to whether an opinion can be given 20 using only computer logs." 21 Right, yes. A. 22 Q. Can we now turn to POL00118221, please. It's

page 47 of that bundle. This is part of the

trial bundle but there are relevant documents

within that I'm going to take you to. This

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1 "On it appearing to the court that expert 2 evidence is needed on the issues of 3 liability/causation and that the evidence should 4 be given in the form of written reports of a single expert instructed jointly by the 5 6 parties in the field of Computer Technology." 7 Α. Yes. Q. So this is the first mention of a single joint 8 9 appointed expert. 10 Can we please now turn to page 107, thank 11 you very much. 12 By 17 May 2003, we have Mrs Wolstenholme 13 writing to the Deputy District Judge and it 14 appears that she is complaining in this letter 15 that Weightman Vizards hadn't yet appointed 16 an expert and also that she had requested call 17 logs and they hadn't been provided. 18 If we go back a page to page 106, this is 19 the subsequent order of 5 June 2003, where the 20 District Judge says that upon reading her letter 21 and it appearing that the claimants have failed 22 to give standard disclosure to the defendant and 23 that the parties had failed to instruct a single 24 joint expert, the matter latter is listed for, 25 essentially, a case management hearing. 1 is page 47. We're now on 3 September 2003. 2 Thank you very much. This is a letter to 3 yourself at Best Practice Group and it is from 4 Weightman Vizards and it says at the beginning: 5 "We refer to previous communications between 6 this firm and Judith Bohren and confirm that we 7 are acting on behalf of the Claimant, Post 8 Office Limited in connection with its claim 9 against Julie Wolstenholme." 10 Can you assist us, who was Judith Bohren? A. Judith at this time was working in the capacity 11 12 of a general administrator within Best Practice 13

14 Q. Do you recall why you were selected at this 15

A. Possibly proximity to the computer, and I live 16 17 in -- near Preston, Lancashire, so it's only 18 relatively round the corner from Cleveleys. But -- perhaps, but I really don't know. 19 20

Q. It appears as though there was a conversation 21 before this letter, discussing your instruction?

22 A. Yes, and I seem to think that -- it's a hazy 23 recollection -- but Judith will have come to me 24 and explained that we've had a call, an enquiry, 25 what types of things, would we need? So it

- 1 probably would have been Judith that went back 2 to Susanne Helliwell and said, "I've spoken to 3 Jason and these are the things that he would 4 need in order to opine on this".
- 5 Q. Thank you. Can we go to the bottom of this 6 page. Can I just check, you've mentioned 7 Susanne Helliwell there. Was she your only 8 contact with at Weightman Vizards or was there 9 anybody else you had contact with or did you 10 speak to the Post Office?
- A. No, I certainly didn't speak to anyone directly 11 at the Post Office or I don't believe I did. 12 13 And I think it was only Susanne Helliwell that 14 I dealt with at Weightmans.
- Q. Thank you. Can we have a look at the bottom 15 16 paragraph of this page. It explains the 17 background. So:

"Various matters are raised by Mrs Wolstenholme in the proceedings regarding the inadequacy of the Horizon computer system and in this regard, on 10 February 2003, it was ordered that evidence should be given in the form of a written report of a single expert instructed jointly by the parties in the field of Computer Technology."

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seems as though, by that stage, there wasn't the

2 audit data available to actually look at the 3 underlying transaction data; is that correct? 4 A. Yes, but I think that, in itself, is quite 5 surprising. And, you know, I did note that 6 there was talk about, you know, data being kept 7 on the machine for so many days, I think it was 8 30 days, and then data being removed after 9 18 months. From my knowledge since this matter,

10 I don't believe that that would have been correct at the time. I don't believe that 11 12 archived data would have been removed after

18 months.

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So perhaps there was other data that was available. There were certainly things like KELs and things like that that were available at the time that would have assisted me to come up with my opinion but none of those were provided either.

- When you say you think the audit data would have 20 Q. 21 been longer than 18 months is that because you 22 know subsequently that later data had been held for longer. 23
- 24 A.
- 25 Q. So it may have been there was a change in the

19

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Can we scroll down the page, over to the next 3 page. Just looking at this letter here, can you 4 summarise briefly for us what you were asked to 5

6 Α. To produce an opinion on whether, essentially, 7 the use of the Helpdesk by the Cleveleys post 8 office was reasonable use, whether the calls 9 that were being placed to the Helpdesk by the 10 subpostmaster were placed appropriately, and 11 I was given somewhere between 80 or 90 call 12 logs, really without very much context, and 13 I was asked to go through those and effectively 14 categorise them as calls requesting general 15 help. So, for example, "Could you tell me how 16 I do this", so that might suggest a lack of 17 training or a lack of understanding, or whether 18 they were calls relating to a defect, 19 generically a defect, could be with 20 hardware/software interfaces in the operation of 21 the system, and therefore the subpostmaster 22 called the Helpdesk seeking guidance and 23 resolution about that defect.

24 So that's the process that I went through. 25 Q. As we saw from those previous court orders, it

1 procedure in how long they held data?

It's possible that there was a change and that 2 3 statement was correct at the time. Certainly, 4 later on, data was kept for a lot longer than 5 that.

6 Q. The letter that's on our screens right now, is 7 that what you understood to be a letter of 8 instruction?

9 A. Yes.

21

Q. Thank you. Can we go over the page now to 10 11 page 49 of the bundle and it's another letter.

12 This is a letter from yourself to Ms Helliwell 13 of 19 September 2003. Looking at this document,

14 can you tell us what your response to that

15 letter of instruction was?

A. Yes, so I said it's not clear to me what you're 16 17 asking me to do. You've simply provided me with 18 70 or 80 telephone call logs and, in order to 19 opine whether the system was operating normally,

a comparison of the Cleveleys subpostmaster --

20 that what I would need to do -- I'd need to do

22 Horizon System with other terminals in other

23 branches to see if I could see whether there was

24 a difference with either the operation -- the

25 way Ms Wolstenholme operated the system or

4		and a state of the control of the co			A A	
1		whether there was something specific about the	1		to you to assess with a view to confirming	
2		technology within Cleveleys or whether this was	2		whether you would be able to provide a report	
3		stereotypical of all the Horizon systems.	3		which would be of value to the Court and if so,	
4	Q.	It seems as though what you're asking for there	4		detailed the matters upon which you would be	
5		is a further set of logs	5	5 able to report."		
6	A.	Yes.	6		So you're being told in that letter that	
7	Q.	from other branches?	7		there isn't a comparable set of call logs. Was	
8	A.	Yes.	8		your understanding from reading that that there	
9	Q.	You're not asking there for, for example,	9		wasn't a set of call logs, that there was	
10		statistics?	10		an issue with finding comparable cases, or what	
11	A.	No.	11		the issue was there?	
12	Q.	But you're asking for the actual underlying logs	12	A.	I believe that, because I'd set out various	
13		from other branches?	13		criteria, you know, similar numbers off similar	
14	Α.	Yes, and I say there "I believe a further set of	14		sites, that they were unable to find either	
15	,	support logs would be required".	15		a similar sized or similar turnover Post Office.	
16	0	If we turn over the page we have the response	16		I now know that that statement that's made	
17	Œ.	from Weightman Vizards, 17 November 2003, and	17		there can't really be correct at the time	
		-				
18		it's the bottom of that first page I'd like to	18		because, as a better understanding of the Post	
19		look at. It says there:	19		Office estate there, there would have been many	
20		"As you are aware, our client has	20		sites that could have been used as comparators,	
21		unfortunately been unable to obtain a set of	21		and because I now understand that these are PEAK	
22		comparable call logs and it has therefore been	22		logs well, there was many thousands of PEAK	
23		agreed between the parties that copies of the	23		documentation that could have been used, and the	
24		pleadings, witness statements and relevant	24		support logs that could have been used to pull	
25		documents in the proceedings would be provided	25		together that comparable information.	
		21			22	
1	Q.	Thank you. We dealt with this in Phase 2.	1	Q.	Can we go, please, to page 7 and I'm going to	
1 2	Q. A.	Thank you. We dealt with this in Phase 2. Mm-hm.	1 2	Q.	Can we go, please, to page 7 and I'm going to just look at two paragraphs there because you	
		Mm-hm.		Q.		
2	A.	Mm-hm.	2	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you	
2	A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as	2	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second	
2 3 4	A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs	2 3 4	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and	
2 3 4 5	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes.	2 3 4 5	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference	
2 3 4 5 6	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over?	2 3 4 5 6	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.	
2 3 4 5 6 7	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but	2 3 4 5 6 7	Q.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC.	
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to	2 3 4 5 6 7 8		just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC. Okay, yes.	
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to bring up the statement that had been submitted	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC.  Okay, yes.  Then if we scroll down to paragraph 12.	
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to bring up the statement that had been submitted in those proceedings by Elaine Tagg, who was the	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	A.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC.  Okay, yes.  Then if we scroll down to paragraph 12.  There's the fire alarm. We'll just take	
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	A. Q. A. Q.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to bring up the statement that had been submitted in those proceedings by Elaine Tagg, who was the retail manager of the Retail Network Manager	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	A.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC. Okay, yes. Then if we scroll down to paragraph 12.  There's the fire alarm. We'll just take a short break.	
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A. Q. A. Q. A. A.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to bring up the statement that had been submitted in those proceedings by Elaine Tagg, who was the retail manager of the Retail Network Manager at the Post Office, that's POL00118219. This again was in the trial bundle, so this was in a bundle you would have seen at the time? Yes. I think, in fact, we'll see in your report that you refer specifically to the witness statement of Ms Tagg. That's at page 5 of this bundle. This is a statement of 16 October 2003, and it explains there that Ms Tagg was employed by Post Office, her title was previously Retail Network	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC.  Okay, yes.  Then if we scroll down to paragraph 12.  There's the fire alarm. We'll just take a short break.  (Fire alarm sounds)  I think we can continue. Could we zoom into paragraph 12, please. I'm just going to read out that paragraph. It says:  "Mrs Wolstenholme persisted in television the Horizon System Helpdesk in relation to any problems which she had with the system and generally, these problems related to the use and general operation of the system and were not technical problems relating to the system.	
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A. Q. A. Q. A. A.	Mm-hm. At that time, there may have been PinICLs as well as PEAKs Yes or at some stage it switched over? That's right, yeah. I'm going to turn to your report in a moment but before we look at your report I just want to bring up the statement that had been submitted in those proceedings by Elaine Tagg, who was the retail manager of the Retail Network Manager at the Post Office, that's POL00118219. This again was in the trial bundle, so this was in a bundle you would have seen at the time? Yes. I think, in fact, we'll see in your report that you refer specifically to the witness statement of Ms Tagg. That's at page 5 of this bundle. This is a statement of 16 October 2003, and it explains there that Ms Tagg was employed by Post Office, her title was previously Retail Network	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	A.	just look at two paragraphs there because you refer specifically in your report to the second of these two paragraphs, it's paragraph 11 and 12 so the bottom of page 7, please.  So paragraph 11 sets out the difference between the Horizon System Helpdesk and the NBSC.  Okay, yes.  Then if we scroll down to paragraph 12.  There's the fire alarm. We'll just take a short break.  (Fire alarm sounds)  I think we can continue. Could we zoom into paragraph 12, please. I'm just going to read out that paragraph. It says:  "Mrs Wolstenholme persisted in television the Horizon System Helpdesk in relation to any problems which she had with the system and generally, these problems related to the use and general operation of the system and were not technical problems relating to the system.	

with a brief analysis of the calls to the

25 **A.** Mm-hm.

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1		Horizon System Helpdesk which I prepared
2		following Mrs Wolstenholme's suspension are at
3		[she gives the reference]. Whilst there were
4		some problems at other branches, they were not
5		insurmountable and were often due to the system
6		crashing or were general teething problems."
7	Α.	Mm-hm.

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Q. This is a particular paragraph that you, in due course, pick up. I'm just going to take you to a few more extracts from this witness statement to provide a bit more context. Can we look at paragraph 15. That's over the page on page 9 and the second half of paragraph 15. She says:

"In the first six weeks of Mrs Wolstenholme's appointment and prior to the installation of the Horizon equipment, the office had an average balancing record. Following the installation of the Horizon computer system a period of adjustment time was allowed and in any event the shortages at Mrs Wolstenholme's post office were not excessive up to June 2000 for an office of that size."

The next paragraph, she says that on 1 June there was an audit, or the results of an audit,

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evidenced by the call logs that the problems which she was experiencing were largely due to the misuse and operation of the system and apart from the times when the system crashed, were not usually the fault of the system."

If we scroll down or go over to the next page, page 11, paragraph 22, I'm going to again read that paragraph. It says:

"On 1 November 2000, I receive a call from Mrs Wolstenholme during which she informed me that the Horizon System had crashed and that she was unable to roll two stock units, namely those of herself and Mr Harrison, into the next cash account period."

Just pausing there, this is actually a log that we're going to come to in due course.

A. Yes

"On 2 November 2000, I attended Cleveleys sub post office and met with Mrs Wolstenholme. My colleague, Carol Hargreaves, another Retail Line Manager, was also in attendance. We found the system to be operational but accepted that there had been some problems following the upgrade, none of which would have prevented rollover. Mrs Wolstenholme was reluctant to open the

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and it can be seen that the report states that there were good controls in relation to the Horizon System.

Then it's paragraph 17 where she says:

"On 21 June 2000, [she] wrote to Mrs Wolstenholme stating that it was now some ten weeks since the Horizon System was deemed to be fully operational and stating that there was currently a loss being held in her account in 10 the sum of £2,497.94 and requesting that 11 arrangements be made to repay the loss ... Mrs Wolstenholme responded by letter dated 12 13 9 July 2000 blaming the shortages on the 14 problems which she claimed to be having with the 15 Horizon System."

16 A. Mm-hm.

17 Q. If we go over the page, it says there:

> "The Post Office was not experiencing any problems of this nature with the other sub post offices and as I have stated above, whilst there were some problems at other offices, they were mainly teething problems or involved the system crashing and were not ongoing to the extent of the problems which Mrs Wolstenholme was experiencing. I was very much of the view as is

office as she felt that the Horizon System was malfunctioning. Mr Harrison indicated that he may turn off the system as he had no faith in it. I warned him at the time that Mrs Wolstenholme would be in breach of contract to do this and would be suspended. Carol and I checked the cash and stock which was correct and the office opened at 2 pm. During my visit, I discussed with Mrs Wolstenholme the position regarding the losses on her account."

If we go to page 13, this is the penultimate paragraph I'm going to be taking you to this morning, paragraph 26, just at the top of paragraph 26, it says:

"On 30 November 2000, I received a call from the Post Office Helpline to say that Cleveleys sub post office had not rolled the office and that again only Mrs Wolstenholme's and Mr Harrison's stock had been affected. I was also informed that the subpostmaster had reported a 'large shortage' and was refusing to roll the office over until the 'problems' were sorted out. I telephoned the office and told Mr Harrison to open the office with the 8 stocks which had been rolled correctly. He stated that

the office was already open but that they were working manually and would not be using the Horizon System until it had been 'sorted out'."

I'd now like to look at the very final paragraph of this witness statement. It's page 19. Ms Tagg ends that statement by saying:

"Approximately 18,000 post offices are using the Horizon System which is fully backed by the Federation of SubPostmasters. I am of the view that the problems encountered by Mrs Wolstenholme stemmed from the misuse and operation of the system and save for the early teething problems in February/March 2000 were not technical problems relating to the Horizon System itself. On the occasions when I and other employees of the Post Office used the

16 17 Horizon System at Cleveleys post office we

experienced no problems whatsoever. The Post

19 Office had grounds to terminate

20 Mrs Wolstenholme's contract and the contract was

21 properly terminated."

> We see at the bottom of that statement, a statement of truth.

24 A.

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25 Do you recall reading this at the time?

- 1 estate. But when I was told that that wasn't 2 available, I was told that I would just have to 3 give an opinion based on the call logs that I've 4 seen for the Cleveleys one.
- 5 Q. Thank you. Then if we go about halfway down 6 that page, it begins "The statement from 7 Ms Tagg", and if we could highlight perhaps from 8 there down to and including the penultimate 9 paragraph, so yes, from the bottom there from 10 the word "This", if we could highlight that section. 11
- 12 A.

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13 Q. You make findings based on Ms Tagg's statement. 14 Can you please tell us what those findings were,

15 up to the penultimate paragraph.

A. Yes. So I say that, in my opinion, what Ms Tagg 16 17

states is not a true representation of the

evidence that I've seen from looking at the

calls, the 90 or so calls. And, as I stated

a minute ago, 63 of those calls are system

failures, and only 13 are Ms Wolstenholme

22 calling the wrong support Helpdesk and, in

23 Ms Tagg's statement, she suggests that the vast

majority are asking for help and that there are

25 practically no reports of system problems. 1 A. I do, yes.

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2 I'm now going to turn to your report, that can be found at WITN00210101. This is your covering 3

letter to Ms Helliwell, 21 January 2004. If we

5 turn over the page, this is your opinion. Now,

6 on the second paragraph there you set out your

7 initial opinion prior to examination. Can you

8 briefly summarise your initial opinion for us?

9 A. So what I set out here is that, of the calls

10 that I've examined, the call logs that were

11 provided, that 63 of those calls are, without

doubt, system failures, so relating to either 12

13 hardware, software or interfaces, and only 13 of

14 the calls that I looked at could or should be

15 considered as Mrs Wolstenholme requesting help

16 or guidance.

17 Sorry to pause you there, but I think that's 18 your substantive opinion.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. In the second paragraph, if we could just zoom

21 in to that, you gave an initial opinion, I think

22 you're repeating the initial opinion there.

23 A. Yes. No, what I'm saying -- what I was saying

24 there is it would be difficult of me to give

25 an opinion without a comparative across the

1 Then I go on to say that the system issues 2 we see, screen lock freezes and blue screen 3 errors, can't possibly be of Ms Wolstenholme's 4 making but are due to the faulty computer

5 system, and I specifically highlight a call

6 there and I make reference to the constant

7 rebooting that was requested of her.

Q. In fact, if we look at the final paragraph on 8 9 that page, you address the advice from the Post 10 Office to reboot the system.

11 A. Mm-hm.

12 Q. Can you tell us what you say in that final

13 paragraph or summarise that final paragraph for

14 us?

15 Yes, from the looking at the detail in the call

16 logs, there appeared to be a pattern emerging

17 where Ms Wolstenholme was told to reboot -- just

18 simply reboot the terminal. And I made the

19 observation that, whilst rebooting might get you

20 back up and running, it essentially masks what

21 the underlying problem might be. There needs to

22 be analysis of things like crashdumps, you know,

23 why did the system freeze, what did go wrong.

24 But I couldn't see within the call logs that

25 that analysis was really going on. It was more

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just get the machine back up and running.

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That's not to say that people weren't changing things in the background but you couldn't necessarily see that from the logs.

In fact, from the knowledge in *Bates*, we know that there was a huge amount of changes that was going on in the background and being pushed out, so it might well be that, you know, a reboot and then a couple more days, something then might change with the Horizon terminal.

- then might change with the Horizon terminal.

  Can we go over to the next page, which -- is it
  a continuation of the opinion, or has the word
  "Opinion" at the top? Are you able to assist us
  with whether this is the core of your opinion or
  something different to what we've just seen?
- 16 A. Yeah, it's a very curious note this, really, and 17 it's not in the format that I would typically 18 put together expert witness notes with, and my 19 consideration at the time is that this was 20 a report that would go in that would then prompt 21 additional information being provided and that 22 ultimately might turn into a better formatted 23 expert report with various sections. But 24 because there was almost very little to work 25 with, it's formatted in this curious way. It's

a reduction in the calls at the end of June 2000
and I'm not sure if we managed to identify what
that might be.

Q. I think you say in the report that it could be
 due to the faults reducing in frequency but it
 could also be that Mrs Wolstenholme tired of --

7 That's right, yes. One thing that happens with 8 users -- and this is from a direct experience of 9 managing helpdesks -- is if the users are 10 constantly told to reboot, effectively they'll 11 stop ringing the Helpdesk because, if all you're 12 told is just to reboot, well when you might as 13 well reboot yourself. You don't have to waste 14 your time on the phone, knowing that someone is 15 going to tell you to reboot. So you do see that 16 apathy, I think it might be, that you just simply reboot yourself and don't log the call. 17

- 18 Q. So a reduction in calls could be caused bya number of things?
- 20 A. It could be, yes.
- 21 Q. It could be caused by the system being fixed --
- 22 A. That's right.
- Q. -- but also it could be caused by apathy, as youput it?
- 25 A. Mm-hm.

1 more like an observation, a canter through the 2 various highlights that we see in the call logs.

Q. Thank you. Beginning with what's at the top,
down to but not including the paragraph that
begins "From 31 October", are you able to
summarise the types of faults that you observed
and your findings in that respect?

8 Yes. So when a screen freezes, you know, you 9 can be pressing the keys and nothing is 10 happening, that has to be a system fault. The 11 user can't cause that and we certainly saw those types of problems. We had blue screens, where 12 13 the system, the operating system, crashes. You 14 may well see it on your home PC, you often call 15 it the "blue screen of death", you lose all your 16 work and it's just a blue screen. That can't be 17 anything that a user can cause. It's typically 18 a hardware fault and there was a number of those 19 that was going on.

There was also the need to exchange hardware. Hardware was switched out by Post Office, or Fujitsu, suggesting that they suspected ongoing hardware problems, although it would seem that there was no real improvement that was made. I also point out that there was

Q. If we look at the bottom two paragraphs on this
 page can you please summarise those paragraphs
 for us?

A. Yes. We start to see within the call logs, discrepancies being discussed. Whether the word itself "discrepancies" are mentioned, or whether it's an imbalance, or something failed to post, or something like that and there's a reference to all sorts of figures showing minuses where there should be pluses. So that appears to be something within the Horizon System has either changed, so a different version has been pushed out by Fujitsu that's tried to fix something and that's perhaps broken something else, or, alternatively, a new type of working has been experienced at Cleveleys, they're doing something in a different way, and that's exposed defects within the Horizon System.

19 Q. The final paragraph?

A. Yeah, so in one of the calls it says that the PM
was advised that this was an issue since
an upgrade has taken place, so consistent with
what I'd said before. A new version of Horizon
has been released, was pushed out to the
terminals and, although the subpostmasters

PM needs to contact NBSC and let them know of

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1		wouldn't necessarily know they were using a new	1		And then I also point out that whilst there
2		version, behind the scenes it would be a new	2		was a reduction in calls between July and
3		version. And it would seem that this problem	3		October, it might be user disillusionment with
4		has been seen across the estate by Fujitsu since	4		the Helpdesk or comparative system stability.
5		they've moved out an upgrade.	5		But then I do point out that from late October,
6	Q.	I'll take you to that particular call log	6		the re-occurrences of the faults, which had been
7		shortly. Can we just turn over the page,	7		the subject of the earlier log calls, seem to
8		please, to the summary of your opinion. You	8		resurface after, in quotes, an "upgrade" to the
9		have three conclusions there. Can you please	9		counters which seems to have occurred around
10		take us through, briefly, each one of those	10		23 November 2000.
11		conclusions?	11	Q.	Thank you. I'm now going to take you, just by
12	A.	Yes. Yes, okay. So I say that the technology	12		way of an example, to one of those logs you
13		installed at Cleveleys was clearly defective in	13		analysed. Can we look at POL00118252, please,
14		elements of its hardware, software or	14		and it's page 24 of that particular document.
15		interfaces, and that the majority of the errors	15		This does feature in the trial bundle but this
16		in the fault logs could not be the making of	16		is just a clearer version of the same document.
17		Ms Wolstenholme. The next statement I made is	17	A.	Yes.
18		that Post Office is more focused on simply	18	Q.	We see there this is an issue that was opened on
19		closing calls rather than trying to get to the	19		1 November 2000, so that was the date I took you
20		bottom of what the issues might be and the	20		to in Ms Tagg's statement.
21		instruction to reboot would allow the business	21	A.	Mm-hm.
22		to get back up and running again but it could	22	Q.	We see there the caller is Julie Wolstenholme.
23		potentially mask the efforts, certainly from the	23	A.	Mm-hm.
24		Post Office from the postmaster to	24	Q.	Are you able to interpret the particular problem
25		understand what's going on.	25		very briefly for us?
		37			38
1	A.	I think the simple answer is not. I wouldn't be	1		Mrs Wolstenholme getting upset.
2		an expert in the actual process that was going	2	A.	Yes, and it's part of this is to do with the
3		on. But there certainly appears to be an issue	3		entry of or the remming in of the smart cards
4		with the adjustment of stock figures and that	4		so entering them into stock and registering the
5		they are appear to be showing in the	5		value of those cards within the system and it
6		different units. So there's some sort of	6		would appear that they didn't register correctly
7		imbalance going on, as a result of a fault.	7		or they registered on one terminal but not the
8	Q.	If we scroll down to the fourth entry, this is	8		other terminal or with a different value.
9		something you've already referred to.	9	Q.	We see below that it says, "RNM", so Regional
10	A.	Yes.	10		Manager, "Elaine Tagg", that's the author of the
11	Q.	It says there:	11		witness statement.
12		"PM advised that this is an intermittent	12	A.	Yes.
13		problem occurring since the counters were	13	Q.	" called re the call she is on her way to the
14		upgraded on 23 October."	14		office and wants updating on the situation.
15	A.	Mm-hm.	15		Spoke to ref Cath on third line who advised she
16	Q.	Thank you. If we go over the page, to the	16		will check who is working on the call and get
17		second entry of that, it says:	17		them to ring the office asap message relayed
18		"Still awaiting a reply getting very	18		back to the [Regional Manager]. [Regional
19		upset waiting to balance and get to family,	19		Manager] not very happy with response."
20		etc."	20		If we go down four further entries it says:
21		This is a call on Wednesday, so I think	21		"PM [subpostmistress] chasing call,
22		Wednesday may have been balancing day	22		contacted EDSC who advised are looking at this
23	A.	Yes.	23		now, relayed back to PM, who advised has managed
24	Q.	and this was 7.08 pm, 7.00 in the evening,	24		to roll 7 stock units but 3 have not. Advised
			25		DM manda to combact NDCC and let them Imput of

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and it seems to record a message from

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1		the situation as they will probably not be able	1		callbacks. Apologised for not receiving any
2		to do a cash account."	2		callbacks, and advised that I would escalate the
3	A.	Mm-hm.	3		fact that the agents she has spoken to have
4	Q.	The one below says:	4		promised callbacks within the hour, as they
5		"mm calling they have called a few times now	5		should not be making promises like these.
6		"	6		Advised that 3rd line are very busy with their
7		I think that may be Regional Manager	7		investigations and sometimes do not have time to
8		calling:	8		call back. They may call back sometimes if they
9		" they have called a few times now	9		require additional information etc. Advised
10		expecting a call back with info and no one has	10		that I would monitor the call, and if any
11		called them, the office is closed but they are	11		updates occurred, I would notify them."
12		waiting for a call."	12		The entry below says that there is a KEL and
13	A.	Mm-hm.	13		it says:
14	Q.	The next substantive entry says:	14		"The KEL explains that it is currently being
15	ų.	"Contacted the [Regional Manager] for this	15		investigated by development. I have not spoken
16		office as she has now made a complaint regarding	16		to the customer."
17		this issue."	17		Do you now know what a KEL is and did you at
18	A.	Yes.	18		the time?
19	Q.	"Elaine advised that all SUs have now been	19	Α.	I don't believe at the time I knew what a KEL
	Q.			A.	
20		rolled over and they are now checking them to	20		would be. It would be my expectation that
21		see if the final balance is showing to be	21		I should have been provided with the KELs that
22		correct. One of the SUs had something added to	22		matched the call logs because that would have
23		it, whilst rolling over. Elaine was very	23	_	held my opinion vastly.
24		annoyed that no one from 3rd line had called her	24	Q.	There's an entry of Monday, 6 November, which
25		back, as she had been promised number of 41	25		says, "contacted pm on [6 November]." If we 42
4		lack at the and of the tanks, it as in	4	•	Continue on the language of th
1		look at the end of that entry it says:	1	Ų.	Seeing as we know that there was a KEL, a Known
2		"Not made any declarations, 4,000 short in bal"	2		Error Log for this particular issue Yes.
3			3		
4		That must be balance.	4	_	was that a fair statement?
5	Α.	Balance, "that week".	5	Α.	· ·
6	Q.	Yes. Then the entry below says:	6		certainly there were a large number of problems
7		"Call E was reassigned from the [Horizon	7		at Cleveleys and with the information that
8		Helpdesk] to group SMC1. Reassign for	8		I finally got from Post Office, whilst it wasn't
9		development as this is a known problem with KEL	9		comparative logs, it was giving me high level
10		and await solution."	10		information about the types of problems in
11	Α.	Yes, so that's the software needs to be changed	11		another I think it was six post offices.
12		to fix this problem.	12		They were suffering large numbers of
13	Q.	We read earlier that can be taken down thank	13		problems with hardware and software of
14		you the statement from Elaine Tagg of the	14		interfaces in the same way that Cleveleys was,
15		Post Office, that stated to the effect that	15		and I asked for that to be representative of the
16		Mrs Wolstenholme's calls to the Helpdesk were	16		estate. So that suggests that the whole estate
17		not technical problems. Was this a technical	17		was suffering similar types of problems as well
18		problem?	18		as what was being experienced at Cleveleys at
19	A.	Yes.	19		that time.
20	Q.	We also read in the statement of	20	Q.	Seeing Ms Tagg's name as the Regional Manager
21		Mrs Wolstenholme sorry, Ms Tagg that	21		and the contact with the Helpdesk in this
22		suggested that post offices weren't experiencing	22		particular instance, do you have any views on
23		this kind of problem or the kinds of problems	23		whether her statement was fair and accurate?
24		that she described.	24	A.	No, it wasn't fair or accurate because she
25	A.	Mm-hm.	25		clearly would have had knowledge of that
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(11) Pages 41 - 44

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- particular -- of that particular call and was
   keeping abreast of what was going on, so was
   fully aware that there was technical problems.
- Q. Thank you. I'm going to move on now to some
   discussion within Fujitsu about your report and
   also official responses to your report.
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Can we please look at WITN04600304. These are
  9 comments made by Steve Parker to Jan Holmes
  10 within Fujitsu, so it's not an email that you
  11 would have seen at the time.
- 12 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 13 Q. It's dated 17 February 2004, and we'll come on
   14 and see that there was an official response on
   15 20 February --
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. -- so shortly before the official response.
- They seem to be comments on your report. I'lltake them one by one.
- 20 If we look at the first, there's a comment 21 on the passage which says that the technology is 22 clearly defective.
- 23 A. Yes.

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- 24 Q. He says there:
- 25 "Any technology that runs 24 hours a day 45

the PM working again in the fastest possible time to ensure that the PMs business is not interrupted.

"It is a trade off between time taken to diagnose and impact to PMs business."

Do you have a view on that at all?

Well -- and again, it is true, whenever you're going to decide to reboot and get up and running, and we'll see this in our own businesses, that is a trade-off. Do I spend the time on the telephone reporting all the issues to then just reboot or do I just reboot myself? At least I'll be up and running, I'll be operational, the business continue to trade.

The difference here is the process of rebooting and not analysing the information that's led to it, could well mean that you have accounts that are incorrect as a result of that system flaw and, ultimately, that imbalance, that discrepancy, may well be used in evidence against you in later action. So I don't think it's fair on the subpostmasters for Fujitsu to be using the fastest possible -- or Post Office to be using the fastest possible approach to getting the Horizon terminals back up and

will have hardware defects that require fixing.This is normal business."

Do you have a view on that at all?

4 A. So it would be fair to say that there is a risk that exists that with any technology that runs 5 6 24 hours a day it will, at some point in time, 7 suffer a hardware defect that will require fixing. But it will require that qualification 8 9 that the -- they call it the "meantime between 10 failure", so how much time would you expect 11 before the next failure exists. We were seeing

failures in Cleveleys almost on a daily or weekly basis. So that is an unreasonable

14 meantime between failure.

So there is a real danger with that statement that's made there that the non-technical user, reading that, might take that to be that I'm incorrect in what I'm saying, whereas I think what is being said is actually he agrees with what I'm saying but I think it's very, very clumsily worded.

Q. If we look at the second point, he comments on
 your point about the Helpdesk being focused on
 closing calls and he says:

"True, but this focus is also about getting

running then, because, essentially, it's only
Fujitsu and the Post Office that benefit from
that reboot and get up and running; the
subpostmasters are potentially massively
disadvantaged by that.

6 Q. The third point comments on your view that there7 work were worrying discrepancies. He says:

"Must be the major issue. Counter systems caused discrepancies. Answer has to be 'no way'."

He makes three points. The first is:

"Almost all accounting errors in computer
systems are caused by user error. GIGO
principle."

Is that "garbage in, garbage out" principle?

A. I think it is. It really is quite a delusional view, though. Why should it be the case that accounting errors are caused by user error? Anyone in technology will know that it's typically bugs within the code that will lead to the types of errors that we see here. You've always got to examine what the user was doing and whether it was being used appropriately. But if these systems are designed to be quite robust it's typically a software defect that

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will lead to an imbalance.

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2 Q. "b) 'Systems' are in place ... (NBSC, suspense 3 account entries, etc) like any other computer 4 system to ensure that such discrepancies can be 5 resolved."

Do you have a view on that?

A. It is true that over time, a number of additional systems and processes were set up by Post Office to deal with the inadequacies of Horizon in the early days, and there was number of other checks and balances and teams of people that were fixing transactions.

So it should say that, whether they were at this point in time or whether they developed later over time, systems are in place, but there was the huge potential for flaws. They were very heavily human-based systems that were put in place and that -- some of them were mechanised later.

- 20 Q. Go when you say human-based, do you mean 21 workarounds and things like that, rather --
- 22 A. Yeah, workarounds and people putting things into 23 a Excel spreadsheet and seeing if it added up 24 and making corrections and, yeah, various human 25 workarounds.

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1 what's called the happy path, so, if everything 2 goes well with the transaction, you'll get the 3 successful result at the end. It's only if 4 something differs within that or if certain 5 types of transactions that have done, or certain 6 transactions are done in certain sequences.

> So what goes on at a particular post office that exposes a defect may only be seen in a handful of other post offices because of the nature of it. And, certainly, in some of the defects that we looked at as part of the GLO, you will see in the bug table at the back, some of the defects only hit 20 or 30 or 50 different post offices at various points to in time. So that's an incorrect statement.

MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. 16

> Sir, we're about halfway through Mr Coyne's evidence. Because of the timetable today I think it may be sensible to actually take our first break of the day now.

> > 51

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, that's fine with me, yes. 21

22 MR BLAKE: So if we could come back at 10.55.

23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: 10.55, that's fine. Okay, see

24 vou then.

MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.

1 Q. There's reference to the suspense account system 2 being in place. Are you aware of the suspense 3 account being removed at a point in time?

A. Yes, I was. I don't recall at the moment when the suspense account was moved but, yes, the suspense account would allow a place for transactions to be essentially parked until it's worked out later what has gone wrong, whether it was a misposting or whether it was a defect and then it could be taken out and reposted somewhere else, and then that was removed later.

12 Q. If we look at (c), he says:

> "Yes, software errors can make such mistakes. However, the systems in place ensure that such errors are picked up and resolved. If this problem was caught by a software error the same error would exist on all Horizon sites. 17,000 PMs are not complaining of misbalancing and discrepancies."

20 A. No, that's incorrect. What you see with defects 21 in software is that they may only trigger with 22 a very specific series of either key presses or 23 series of transactions, or certain events going 24 on with -- on the estate. Because when 25 developers test software they generally test

1 (10.39 am)

(A short break)

3 (10.55 am)

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4 MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. I'm going to try to 5 perform some computer wizardry of my own and 6 bring two documents on side by side: one is 7 FUJ00121512 and the second is FUJ00121535. 8 Thank you very much.

> On the left-hand side of our screen, we have the Fujitsu response to your expert report, and on the right-hand side we have your response to their response.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So the left-hand side is dated 20 February 2004 15 and your response is a week later, 27 February 16 2004.

17 A. Yes

18 Q. I'm going to take you through, one by one, each 19 of their comments on your report. So if the 20 left-hand document, if we could go over to the 21 next page, please, thank you. So they address 22 first the Horizon System Helpdesk. Can you 23 assist us with what your understanding is of 24 what Fujitsu were saying about your comments on

25 the Horizon Helpdesk?

**A**.

A. So Fujitsu are explaining that there is what they call a strict contractual service level agreement covering up -- sorry, covering aspects such as pick-up time, time to fix, time to close and that they operate to that criteria because that's the commercial contract that they have with the Post Office

So it could well be the case that it is better for Fujitsu to close a call by rebooting a computer than it is to spend a lot of time investigating it because that might put them in breach of their service level agreement.

I don't know, I haven't seen that service level agreement and that's why I've said it's a matter for the Post Office and Fujitsu because it's their commercial agreement, rather than me to comment on that.

18 Q. The final part of the entry on the left-hand19 side says:

"Whilst the primary objective of the HSH is to return the Outlet to normal operation as soon as possible, and rebooting the Counter often meets that objective, this does not mean that the problem is closed at that point in time, as a detailed scrutiny of overall problem

process. But I don't believe it operates significantly different when I was looking at it in 2016 to 2018, than what it operated then. You know, the desire to reboot and get operational appeared to be consistent then with what it -- now with what it was then. And the fixing of faults and effectively pushing those fault fixes out in the background was also the same.

I think in my second report to the GLO, we -- I listed a number of release notes suggesting that something had been changed and pushed out and it was in the thousands. So the system constantly evolves and, for that reason, the reboot, it's conceivable that that might -- the rebooting might not fix the problem but if something is changed in the background and then you're told to reboot, then that might actually lead to an improvement.

- lead to an improvement.
  Q. If we scroll down on the left side, Fujitsu then
  addressed the transaction handling on reboot.
- **A.** Mm-hm.
- Q. Are you able to assist us with your
   understanding of what Fujitsu's position on that
   was?

1 management processes would reveal."

I requested other information with regard to
these calls and I was told that there was no
information available. So if there are -- if
there's other material available that references
the calls that were made by the Cleveleys post
office, then that should have been provided to
me so I could have opined on that.

That may well be the case and, in my report,

- 10 Q. Is an example of that the Known Error Log?
- 11 A. Yes

**Q.** In respect of this particular entry, knowing
what you know now, the experience you've gained
over the years, your involvement in the Group
Litigation, et cetera, do you have any
observations now on that particular issue?

17 A. Sorry, when you say "that particular issue"?
18 Q. The Horizon System Helpdesk point from your
19 original report. Do you still stand by it? Do
20 you have any other thoughts that have developed
21 over time in relation to that?

A. Well, I have got a far better understanding of how the process operates, how the calls are placed, the different tiers of support and the documents that are created throughout that

A. Yes.

Q. It may be -- we can scroll down the page, as
well, onto the next page on the left-hand side,
because they say:

"Simply put, the design of the system precludes the possibility of a Session Stack being partially, or doubly committed and thus accounting errors cannot be introduced through system crash or forced reboot."

A. Yes, and that always has been the position that's been advanced and that was the position that was advanced in the GLO later, in that, essentially, by rebooting, there couldn't possibly be any inconsistencies within the counter transactions. Although, as the number of different types of transactions occurred, and certainly other sort of off-counter transactions, Camelot and things like that, and credit and debit card transactions, as it started to grow, we opined it in the GLO, there were certainly bugs, errors and defects that

related to that process and it was shown that discrepancies did occur as a result of that. **Q.** So is that statement at the bottom of the

Q. So is that statement at the bottom of theleft-hand side, in your view, incorrect?

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- Well, the design, if carried out effectively, 1 Α. 2 should have precluded the possibility. So from 3 a design perspective, but, you know, bugs, 4 errors and defects in systems aren't by design. 5 They creep in as a result of development or 6 a lack of testing or just circumstances that 7 haven't been considered that need dealing with 8 when they arise. So because the reference is to
- 9 design and it might not be an incorrect
  10 statement, but it doesn't set the context
- 11 correctly.
- 12 Q. If we look on the right-hand side, can you
   13 summarise what your response was at the time on
   14 that particular issue?
- A. Mm-hm. I would -- just by Fujitsu simply
  stating that that is their position, I could not
  accept that as altering my position, and whilst
  I've said that whilst it assists my
  understanding, it would not be proper of me to
  alter my opinion based on an explanation but if
- you can present supportive evidence to me, but
   I was told that that had been destroyed, I'm
- 23 more than happy to consider that evidence.
- Q. Thank you. Moving down on the left-hand side to"Reasonableness' of calls to [the Helpdesk]",

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- A. Yes, "S" is software. I mean, you know,
   there's -- there's some very big numbers there,
   in software. And so all of the post offices
   that are listed on the left have all been
   suffering software problems. So these aren't
   user problems because user problems will be
   under "A", advice and guidance.
- 8 Q. Are you, in interpreting that particular table,
  9 also reliant on what call type had been
  10 attributed to that call by the Helpdesk itself
  11 or by whoever is making the log in the first
  12 place?
- A. Yes, on the left-hand side this isn't my data,
  this is Fujitsu's data, and they have put
  numbers in the respective boxes. So it's
  Fujitsu that have decided, for example, that
  Headingley has suffered 27 software calls in
  a particular period, and I say I don't know what
  that period actually is.
- 20 **Q.** I think you said earlier that you hadn't been provided with the underlying logs and had asked.

  21 Just to clarify, you didn't have a conversation with Fujitsu about this? This was with

  22 Weightman Vizards or with somebody else?

25 A. No, that's right. Yes, that's correct.

what is your understanding of what Fujitsu weresaying in relation to this particular point?

3 A. So Fujitsu had looked at some call logs and 4 these should have been the call logs that should have been disclosed to me but they said that 5 6 they couldn't be disclosed to me. But then 7 they'd found some -- they gave it a particular 8 term for these -- it was unregulated data or 9 something like that that they then looked at. 10 They'd then done some analysis on those calls, 11 and had presented in overview their view from 12 looking at those calls and they were setting out 13 in that table the detail.

But if you look at that detail, you've actually got, for example, "H" is hardware. If you look down the "H" column, you can see that, you know, Headingley 5, Dungannon 2, so pretty much in that representative sample lots of people were suffering from hardware issues, a number were suffering from implementation issues.

Sorry, can you just show me the legend a bit further down?

24 Q. Absolutely. If we scroll down slightly, and it
 actually goes over the page, as well.

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I didn't have a conversation with Fujitsu about that. But I believe I say, in my response -yes, I do. So the -- under "Reasonableness of calls", second paragraph starts with "Now it seems". So what I say there:

"Now it seems that your client has located
data that they believe enables comparison.
Although the raw data has not been made
available to me ..."

10 Q. If we scroll down on that page as well, I think
11 there's another paragraph under the
12 "Reasonableness of calls".

13 A. At the top of that I say:

"Although I must stress that no raw data has
been [provided] so I am disadvantaged, is it
your client's intention to rely upon the data
sample referred to in this letter?"

So am I to take that table as evidence that
I should be considering or am I going to get the
raw underlying data?

- Q. If we could scroll down on that left-hand side,what is it that Fujitsu were saying that
- 23 analysis shows?
- A. So Fujitsu were suggesting that Cleveleys is no
   better or worse, broadly, than the rest of the

estate, which I thought was quite a bizarre position to take and I think I made a comment on this because it appears that the whole estate was suffering huge numbers of problems. So by just saying they're all as bad as Cleveleys, I didn't know why that was helping anything.

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But then what they say is it is worth noting that Fujitsu Services is not aware of similar complaints or claims being made from the other outlets on the list. But I know full well that there was a number of complaints and claims being made broadly across the estate. That's not to say that it was those particular post offices on the list there. So I didn't know whether had list had perhaps been cherrypicked because there'd been no complaints by them or not. But I know across the estate that there was large numbers of problems.

- Q. Looking at your response on the right-hand side,
  what was your response at the time in relation
  to the analysis that had been put forward by
  Fujitsu?
- A. Yes. Okay. I say from the sample presented,
   the mean for software issues is 20 across the
   rest of the estate but for Cleveleys it's 35;

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accuracy of the response or fairness of the
 response?
 A. There consistently appears to be, within Fu

A. There consistently appears to be, within Fujitsu and/or Post Office, a reluctance to ever really grasp the analysis of the issue and to look at it. And the times that this is -- that this comment about, you know, by design, double entry bookkeeping, the way that the audit logs are kept, all of these sort of principled issues are just repeated, when really it's often absolutely obvious that there has to be a technical problem that should be looked at.

And I don't know whether it's an outward facing position, "This is what we say but we will actually have a look at it", or whether it's "This is what we say and we don't need to bother having a look at it", and I don't know which of those it actually is.

- 19 Q. If we now look at "Operator advice to 'Reboot",
  20 and if we scroll down on the right-hand side, so
  21 that they match up -- thank you. Can you tell
  22 us what you understand Fujitsu to be saying in
  23 this respect and your response to Fujitsu?
- 24 A. Yes, so Fujitsu agree with me that it deals with25 effect and not the cause but they say that work

1 for network, the mean is one against five for

2 Cleveleys; software, the mean is 20 against 35;

3 and hardware, the mean is four against six. So

4 what I say is that all of these issues are

5 significantly higher for Cleveleys than the

6 mean. So it's inconsistent with the statement

7 that Fujitsu are making that Cleveleys is

8 largely no better or worse than the rest of the

9 estate.

Q. So is it an accurate summary of your evidence
 now that, on the one hand or first of all, the
 figures themselves don't really help because

13 they show lots of problems at lots of places?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. But, second, to the extent that they do help,
 16 what they do show is that Cleveleys was actually
 17 suffering from a large number of software

18 faults --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- compared to others?

21 A. Yes.

Q. Do you have any observations again, now having
 gained further experience of the system, your
 experience in the GLO, as to the response that

24 experience in the GLO, as to the response that

25 was provided at that time by Fujitsu, the

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goes on in the background and regular
 maintenance updates are made to adjust those

3 problems. So the suggestion there is that they

4 acknowledge that there are problems, that the

5 system is then changed and that an update is

6 then rolled out. So, theoretically, it should

7 be better the next time, although there has

8 often been cases where a fix has been rolled out

9 that's then caused what's called regression

10 problems. So it breaks other things that had

11 been previously fixed, when -- because of

version control issues within the software.

13 Q. So being told that there are fixes, is that

helpful or does it cause other issues that you

15 might want to investigate?

A. Well, you see, whenever a fix is made within the
software, you then have to understand what the
impact of that fault actually was and, in order

to look at the impact, you've got to know when

20 did that version of software get pushed out to

21 the estate, when did we fix it and, during that

22 period of time, how many subpostmasters have the

potential to be impacted by that particular

24 defect?

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And if there was an impact, you've really

- got to, effectively, rerun all of the accounts, or potentially make an exclusion that there was knowledge of a particular issue during that period and, therefore, you certainly couldn't rely upon that data, certainly not for a prosecution, but you just couldn't rely upon that data because you don't really understand what the impact or potential impact on the data that defect might have had.
- 10 Q. Again, knowing what you know now, your
  11 experience in the GLO, et cetera, do you have
  12 any additional views on this particular response
  13 from Fujitsu or is that the evidence you've just
  14 given?
- 15 A. No, I think I'm content.
- 16 Q. Thank you.

Moving down to "Defective Equipment", again can you tell us what you understood Fujitsu to be saying there and your response at the time?

A. So Fujitsu suggests that it was just simply
a subjective view that I provided. But my
response is that this is tool for business.
This isn't a home PC that might -- at the time
might have got used, you know, a couple of hours
a day and got switched off every night. You

Fujitsu saying, you know, "We're doing what we said we would do" to Post Office, doesn't really help the matter with Cleveleys suffering horrendous problems.

Q. If we scroll down on the left-hand side to the section on "Worrying Discrepancies", I'm going to read you that first paragraph. It says:

"It is difficult to comment on the statement made by the Expert in this part of the Summary although he is alluding to the fact that system errors may be responsible for this. I have explained why this cannot happen earlier in this report. The argument has been put forward by a number of postmasters in the past when challenged by Post Office Limited for unacceptable losses and each time it has fallen when confronted by transaction data that demonstrates that the system was operating normally during the disputed period.

"Unfortunately Fujitsu Services is unable to provide archived transaction data in respect of Cleveleys for the disputed period as, under the terms of the contract in force with Post Office Limited at that time, it would have been deleted from the archive 18 months after it was ..."

1 know, this needs to have a much lower level of
2 defect and a much higher meantime before failure
3 than the rest of the technology because of the
4 criticality of it. So I say that I was
5 confident in my statement that it was clearly
6 defective.

Q. Again, knowing what you know now, is thereanything you would add to that?

9 A. Well, only that, you know, we know that there
10 was a large number of hardware -- or hardware
11 and interface problems that were seen, whether
12 it be PIN pads or printers or network devices
13 that have all suffered from problems that led to
14 or had the potential to cause problems with
15 postmaster accounts.

16 Q. The next one "Closing Calls", I don't think that
17 is actually addressed in your response but are
18 you able to assist us with what you understood
19 Fujitsu to be saying there?

A. Yes, so again, Fujitsu are referring to their
 own commercial agreement with Post Office, and
 rightly so. If they've got that agreement with
 Post Office, that's the way that they should
 operate. It doesn't necessarily correlate with
 the interests of the subpostmaster. So just

What was your response to that?

A. So what I said at the time is I'm unsure

A. So what I said at the time is I'm unsure how this can be resolved, as, clearly, the PM reported discrepancies and those discrepancies correlate with the reported upgrade in the system. So the suggestion is that the upgrade has led to these discrepancies. But I've said, without further information, I think you'd need an additional witness of fact to be able to opine on that, if there's no documents or a system that I can look at, because I've been told it's not available -- although we know that there was additional information that was available -- that then there's very little I can do with that.

But then I conclude that by saying, in short, the answer posed by your letter -- and this was the letter from Susanne Helliwell -- will I change my opinion, is no, my opinion currently remains as set the out in my original note.

Q. The statement on the left-hand side that system
 errors can't happen, knowing what you know now,
 reading the precise words that are on the
 left-hand side, do you have any views on what's

1		said there?
2	A.	Well, you know, I mean, absolutely we know, as
3		a result of the work that was done in the GLO,
4		that system errors can be responsible for
5		accounting issues, shortfalls and, in fact, we
6		proved, and Judge Fraser agreed, that a number
7		of I don't exactly know what the number was
8		off the top of my head but 25, 28 or whatever of
9		the defects, had lasting impacts.

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So, effectively, all of the workarounds that may well have been put in place by Post Office to deal with the technical defects weren't successful and it was lasting problems with accounts. And it's clear from the -- well, I say recent disclosure from my point of view --I only got the documents on Wednesday or Thursday of last week -- there are references to PEAKs in those documents that I'm absolutely convinced were not disclosed to me as part of the GLO.

So the number that we reported to the GLO of bugs, errors and defects may possibly increase with other disclosure.

24 I'm going to take you to one more response by Q. 25 Fujitsu, and that's WITN04600206, please. It

> Case Manager) and we both feel that there is probably another opportunity to influence the Expert's opinion by inviting him to Post Office Account locations ... and providing him with access to data, records and people who can deal with his observations directly."

Is that ever an opportunity that was extended to you?

- 9 A. No, no, and, you know, I was told that there was 10 no records that were available. It's only now, 11 when my opinion appears to be adverse, if you 12 will, to them that they're now suggesting that 13 they can set up people and documents that I can 14 go and have a look at.
- 15 Q. If you have a read to yourself of that first 16 entry, the "Horizon System Helpdesk", are you 17 able to assist us with what you understand 18 Fujitsu to be saying there and whether that 19 changes your position at all?
- A. 20 So, I mean, what they are simply saying is 21 they're restating the primary objective of the 22 Helpdesk is short-term and return the outlet to 23 normal business as rapidly as possible, and 24 certainly what we saw in the call logs was lots 25 of reboots:

1 may be that you didn't see this particular 2 document. Are you able to assist us with 3 whether you saw this or received this at the 4 time?

- A. No, I didn't see this at the time. I think this 5 6 was provided to me by the Inquiry.
- 7 Q. Yes. It was certainly in your document pack 8 that was provided.
- 9 A. Yes.

10 Q. I'd like to just take you through each one of 11 those headings and see if anything that was said

further internally at Fujitsu that wasn't 12

13 received by you would have changed anything.

14 A. Yes.

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Q. If you have look at the first entry, so "Horizon 15 16 System Helpdesk".

17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Sorry, Mr Blake, is there a date 18 on this document?

19 MR BLAKE: There's not a date on the document 20 itself. I'm sure I can assist at some point by 21 providing that date.

22 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.

23 MR BLAKE: If we look at the third paragraph it 24 says:

"I have spoken to Jim Cruise, (Post Office

"Advice to reboot is the most effective way of doing this. It is not the function of the HSH to analyse crashdumps while on the phone to postmasters."

Because crashdumps are one of the things that are typically created when a machine will blue screen and that was experienced at Cleveleys. So I suggested, I think in the first document that I sent, that I would analyse those crashdumps but Fujitsu said that they've now been deleted so they weren't available to me. But what he does go on to say here is that my comment regarding not getting to the bottom is flawed because he says that there is a KEL that was produced at least for one of the calls, that shows that they were investigating things.

17 And, again, if that KEL had have been 18 provided, it may well have been the case that my opinion would be -- have been extended to 19 "Whilst they are rebooting, I can see that there 20 are KELs which show that further analysis was 22 going on in the background", but that wasn't 23 provided to me.

24 Q. If we scroll down to "Transaction Handling on 25 Reboot" again, are you able to just have a quick

- 1 read of that and summarise it for us and tell us
- 2 if that would have changed your opinion in any
- 3 wav?
- 4 A. No, it wouldn't have changed my opinion. And,
- 5 you know, I agree the way the system is
- 6 designed, and if you went to test a system, as
- 7 I did as part of the GLO, and tried to reboot
- 8 and try and make it cause a transaction failure,
- 9 you'd struggle to do it. You might have to do
- 10 this thousands or tens of thousands of times to
- get it to happen for you on demand, or then it 11
- 12 might happen for a subpostmaster five times in
- 13 succession, but that's just the way these issues
- 14 occur. So, no, there's nothing in there that
- 15 would change my opinion.
- 16 Q. Thank you.
- 17 A. I'm quite surprised that they say that the audit
- data would be deleted as quick as this because 18
- 19 I thought it was kept for a longer time. Maybe
- 20 that's only changed in more recent times.
- 21 Q. The next heading "Reasonableness of Calls", can
- 22 you assist us with that, please?
- 23 A. Yes. So --
- 24 Q. Perhaps we can scroll over the page, as well.
- 25 Yeah. So I think there appears to be suggestion
  - 73
- 1 Would that have assisted you?
- 2 A. I mean, it might be of interest to see how it
- 3 works but, when it comes to committing something
- 4 to an expert report, then you really need to
- 5 evidence the detail of this. So I'd really want
- 6 to drill into what specifically was going on at
- 7 Cleveleys. So going there and asking them to
- 8 drill into the records at Cleveleys might be --
- 9 might have been interesting but, no, I wouldn't
- 10 be convinced just by a walk around and
- 11 an assurance.
- 12 Q. The next one, "Defective Equipment".
- 13 So the response here is that he would need to
- 14 understand the basis of my opinion. Well, that
- 15 opinion was formed from the call logs and it
- 16 talks about equipment being changed, which would
- 17 suggest that somebody contemporaneously has
- 18 determined that it was faulty, or blue screens.
- 19 Blue screens is normally a hardware fault or
- 20 perhaps software fault. So I think that's
- 21 a reasonable assumption to make, that there was
- 22 likely hardware faults.
- 23 Q. Finally on this document, they address your
- 24 point on "Worrying Discrepancies". If we could
- 25 scroll down.

- 1 there that Fujitsu say that they could pull the
- 2 raw data for the call logs, which was asked for
- 3 at the time but wasn't provided. But it would
- 4 appear that that data, it's now being suggested,
- 5 could be available, but only after my initial
- 6 opinion has been documented.
- 7 Q. In respect of the dispute between the two of you
- 8 with regards to the comparison data, do you have
- 9 a view on what they say there?
- 10 A. So what's being said there is that there are
- 11 other factors, including but not limited to
- training, competency, capability and the PM's 12
- 13 attitude towards raising calls. Interestingly,
- 14 that list only includes the human factors rather
- 15 than the technology factors or the differences
- 16 in the types of transactions that the post
- 17 offices do.
- 18 Q. "Operator advice to Reboot". Again, are you
- 19 able to assist us?
- 20 So they acknowledge that I've asked for the
- 21 crashdumps but said that they will have been
- 22 destroyed. They offer for me to go, and it
- 23 looks like there's some sort of -- they're going
- 24 to offer me a walk around to assure me of the
- 25 support and proper resolution activity.

- Yes, so that appears that they haven't yet
- 2 considered the specific calls that I referred to
- 3 at that point in time.

- 4 Q. Because it says "We need to consider" --
- 5 "We need to consider the specific calls that the
- 6 Expert is referring to."
- 7 I mean, the worry there is that they've made
- 8 statements there about how robust and resilient
- 9 the system is generically, without actually
- 10 going and looking at these particular issues
- 11 that I raised. So that's, you know, potentially
- 12 a failure there, really and they should have
- 13 been considered in detail, presumably before
- 14 this action was ever started.
- 15 Q. Can we briefly look at FUJ00121690. This is
- a covering letter, a covering email from Jan 16
- 17 Holmes of Fujitsu to Keith Baines, Mandy Talbot,
- 18 Susanne Helliwell and others, Colin Lenton-Smith
- 19 mentioned there as well. The date of this is
- 20 5 August 2004 and it attaches further analysis
- 21 that has been carried out as at this date. So 22 we're now in August 2004. And if we look at
- 23 FUJ00121691, this is the further analysis.
- 24
- 25 Is this anything that was shared with you at the

- 1 time or anything that you were aware of at all?
- 2 A. It looks like that table is the same table, is
- 3 it not? Headingley and Dungannon?
- 4 Q. It certainly has the same post offices, there
- 5 are slightly different statistics, it may be
- 6 a slightly different period.
- 7 A. Right.
- 8 Q. But I don't believe that this is a document that
- 9 you have ever seen?
- 10 A. I don't believe I've seen that document, no.
- 11 Q. Thank you. Can we look at POL00022842. This is
- the summary of bugs, errors and defects from the
- 13 Bates & Others litigation?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. Can we turn over the page, please. If we look
- 16 at number 2 "Callendar Square", it's agreed that
- the bug occurred between the years of 2000 and
- 18 2006.
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. If we go down to number 9, "Reversals", this
- 21 occurred for a short period in 2003.
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Number 10, "Data Tree Build Failure
- 24 discrepancies", its identified effect was during
- 25 1999 and 2000.

- 1 during the period in which you were toing and
- 2 froing with Fujitsu in respect of your expert
- 3 report, do you have a view as to the sufficiency
- 4 of information that you were given during that
- 5 Cleveleys case about bugs, errors and defects in
- 6 the Horizon System?
- 7 A. Yes, I mean, that -- the information that I was
  - given was deficient. There was lots of
- 9 information that would appear was available, and
- 10 had to be available because we've seen it or we
- 11 saw it as part of the GLO, that simply wasn't
- 12 provided to me.

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- 13 Q. Would knowing about those bugs, errors and
- 14 defects that I've just highlighted in 2000,
- 15 1999, et cetera, would they have made
- 16 a difference to your report in its strength of
- 17 opinion or otherwise?
- 18 A. It may have been a longer report, setting the
- 19 scene better but I think, ultimately, my opinion
- was that the Horizon System, as installed atCleveleys, was flawed. It had hardware,
- 22 software and interface problems and had suffered
- from discrepancies. So my opinion wouldn't have
- 24 changed. There might have been more underlying
- 25 evidence that would have supported that ultimate

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. Over the page, "Girobank discrepancies", that's
- 3 number 11.
- 4 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 5 Q. It occurred between May and September 2000.
- 6 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 7 Q. Number 12, "Counter replacement issues", the
- 8 first was created in 2000.
- 9 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 10 Q. 15. "Phantom Transactions".
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. That arose in 2001.
- 13 At number 16, "Reconciliation issues",
- 14 mentioned in 2000.
- 15 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 16 Q. 18, "Concurrent logins".
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. This occurred in 1999 and 2000.
- 19 If we go over the page, number 22,
- 20 "Bugs/errors/defects introduced by previously
- 21 applied PEAK fixes".
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Some of the PEAKs are from 2000.
- 24 Thank you very much.
- 25 Knowing that these bugs were present, some

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- 1 opinion.
- 2 Q. Do you have a view as to whether it should have
- 3 been disclosed to you at the time?
- 4 A. Certainly, yes. My position is that all
- 5 information that relates to defects, because
- 6 this was a report about whether there was
- 7 defects or not, should be disclosed, and I think
- 8 that the question of relevance should actually
- 9 be left with the person who's opining on it,
- 10 rather than lawyers taking a view on whether
- something is relevant or not, because there is
- 12 a danger that documents get taken out because
- they're considered as being not relevant, where
- 14 if you had the technical context, you might be
- able to see that a document was relevant.
- In addition, I expressly asked for certaincategories of documents and they weren't
- provided. I was told that it was destroyed.
- 19 Q. Can we look at FUJ00121724. This is an email
- 20 you won't have seen at the time but it has
- 21 subsequently been provided to you. It's from
- 22 Jan Holmes of Fujitsu to Colin Lenton-Smith, and
- 23 William Mitchell. It says:
- 24 "Colin, Bill.
- 25 "following on from the Cleveleys outcome,

what looks like the reappearance of Shobnall Road and the possible outcome of that case I believe we should consider a risk position around the litigation support."

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He then comments on the Cleveleys case. He says:

"Although Cleveleys may appear to be closed it could be construed that POL bought off Mrs Wolstenholme rather than defend their system. Even if a gagging order is placed on the woman she apparently had a gaggle of postmasters lined up to support her case and they will be well aware of what the final outcome was. I'm sure they will not be keeping quiet. It is not clear why Post Office chose to settle rather than fight although I suspect they realised that to expose the HSH transcripts in Court would not help their case -- personally I can understand that position."

Number 2:

"Shobnall Road has come back. Bill has apparently been asked to provide a Witness Statement to the effect that nothing contained in the HSH calls over the period in question could have caused, or be described as, a system

1 if it is an ongoing case at an approximate time 2 in which reference is made to phantom 3 transactions, would that information have 4 assisted you in your analysis of the Cleveleys 5 case? Do you think it would or should have been 6

disclosed to you? 7 A. Yes. It should have been disclosed. I mean, 8 I expressly asked for call logs from other 9 postmasters with a similar profile -- I think 10 that was the word that I used. So I would have thought that I would -- you know, should be able 11 12 to distill something from that. Certainly if 13 anyone was aware of defects that was causing 14 discrepancies at the time, those should be 15 disclosed and then the exercise that should 16 follow from that is, once we're aware of what 17 the defects are and how they lead to 18 discrepancies, then attempt to demonstrate that 19 Cleveleys was or was not subject to that 20 particular defect. And that -- that would have 21 to be done across the whole estate and certainly 22 should have been provided to me by way of 23 evidence.

24 Q. Thank you. I want to ask you about a different 25 topic very briefly and that's ARQ data. 83

1 malfunction. I'm attaching a brief analysis of 2 the HSH transcripts that I did in April.

3 Comments made by engineers that 'keyboards can 4 cause phantom transactions' do not help the Post

Office's position. I suspect that we cannot 5

6 make the statement required and when [Post

7 Office] read the transcripts in detail they may

8 well think that they could not submit them 9

anyway."

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10 That reference there to an issue in Shobnall. Road and keyboards can cause phantom 12 transactions, in that email of August 2004, does 13 that impact your view as to the sufficiency of 14 information that you were provided with in the 15 Cleveleys case?

16 A. I don't know what the particular issue was at 17 Shobnall Road but I am certainly aware now of 18 phantom transactions and, throughout the GLO, 19 there was a number of documents that we looked 20 at that theorised about whether keyboards could 21 lead to phantom transactions but, certainly 22 during the Cleveleys investigation, none of that 23 was provided and, if that's thought to relate to

24 Cleveleys, then that's significant. Q. If it isn't thought to relate to Cleveleys but

1 A. Yes.

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2 Q. A significant feature of the Cleveleys case is that there was no audit data available. 3

4 A. Mm-hm.

5 Q. Were you at the time aware of different types of 6 data that might be available to you, had it been 7 available, had it been kept?

8 A. I'm not sure I would have been aware of the 9 different types. I would have known just from 10 general industry experience of accounting 11 systems -- yeah, I've created accounting systems 12 myself -- that there would be some sort of audit data. But I perhaps wouldn't have known it was 13

14 called or ultimately ends up being ARQ data.

15 I don't think I would have known that at the

16 time

17 Q. We've heard, and we will no doubt hear more. 18 about differences between a standard ARQ extract 19 and raw data from the audit store.

20 A. Yes. Mm-hm.

21 Q. What would you have wanted to have seen had you 22 had the opportunity in the Cleveleys case?

23 A. So for the particular transactions of interest, 24 or days of interest that you can determine from

25 looking at the call logs, the expectation would

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1		then be, or the next request would then be "Can
2		I have a look at the transactional data for
3		those days?", which would show me the
4		transactions in accounting terms, and then from
5		that, look at the audit data that's behind those
6		transactions, to try to determine whether
7		something has gone wrong with the posting of the
8		transactions or systematically from the back
9		end.
10	Q.	Are you able to assist us at all, and you may
11		not be, whether filtered ARQ data is something
12		you would have been satisfied with in this case
13		or whether you would have wanted to see more?
14	A.	I would never be satisfied by seeing filtered
15		anything, without understanding what filtering
16		has gone on. The danger is with any filter,
17		well, what has been taken out? So my preference
18		would always be to go for the raw data, and then
19		I will filter myself based on what I see fit.
20	Q.	Knowing what you know now, do you have any
21		concerns in that particular regard?
22	A.	Well, I certainly know that filtered and
23		unfiltered data was a feature in the GLO and
24		there was problems then with the filtering, as
25		such, about what was left out. But there is 85

1 Α. Right. Q. Finally, I'd just like to take you to a few 2

3 criticisms that were made by Fujitsu and by the 4 Post Office in respect of your report or you acting as the expert in the Cleveleys case. Can we look at FUJ00121561, please. This is

an email from Jan Holmes to Colin Lenton-Smith,

and he says:

"Draft email to Jim Cruise for you to consider. I've transferred the contentious statements from the paper to the email because it's not in the interests to piss the Expert off. That said it has to be pointed out to Jim that his report is far from impartial and, in truth, we have a problem because there is little we can do to dispel some of the assertions other than say 'rubbish'."

I want to take you to one more document before I ask the question and that's FUJ00121747. This is a subsequent report on the Cleveleys case and it was written by Jan Holmes. Can we look at page 4, please, of that report. It's halfway down, under 3.1. He says there:

"The Expert, who was supposed to be jointly appointed, has taken a very one-sided view of 87

1 a factor that I just noted in the documents that 2 were disclosed -- certainly disclosed to me only 3 last week -- that relates to a discovery that the ARQ data itself has duplicates within it. 4 5 So it shows that transactions have been 6 duplicated in the ARQ data. And this is 7 a report, I believe, from Penny Thomas and Gareth Jenkins, and it refers to two PEAKs, the 8 numbers of which I don't recognise, and it also q 10 refers to two specific post offices that were involved in some form of litigation or criminal 11 action at the time. 12

> So it would appear that, as a result of pulling the ARQ data perhaps -- and I don't know this for a fact -- but perhaps to support the litigation or whatever it was at the time, they discovered that ARQ data was incorrectly showing duplicate transactions.

Now, the potential impact that flows from that could be huge but, without investigating it further, I don't know. There is a PEAK number -- there's two PEAK numbers listed in there.

24 Q. It is a matter we will be dealing with with 25 other witnesses in due course.

1 life and has drawn conclusions that are based on 2 a paper review of HSH call logs covering the 3 period from initial rollout of the office to 4 November 2000. In some cases his analysis of 5 the call logs is incomplete and stops at the 6 point where it supports his opinion." 7

What's your view of those comments that were made by Mr Holmes?

I mean, certainly I dispute that "taken a one-sided view of life". Part of my training, and it's a constant focus in what I do, is I have to look -- I have to take a very balanced view. And, certainly, when it's a joint expert report, you have to make sure that everything that's available from the parties has been considered. So I completely refute that view.

17 And the fact of the matter is, I did only do that paper review because that was the only 18 information that was said to be available to me. 19 20 He's obviously got other additional information 21 that wasn't disclosed to me.

22 Q. Finally, similar points made by the Post Office. 23 It's POL00031815. This is a PowerPoint 24 presentation by somebody called Dave Smith who was the IT Director at the Post Office. If we 25

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1		look at page 3 of this presentation, he	1		at the evident and then say they have
2		addresses the Cleveleys case, and he says there:	2		a different view of it, I do believe that that
3		"Solicitor appoints 'expert'.	3		is a delusional view. They just fail they
4		"Expert was not challenged or managed.	4		fail either to consider it or their opinions are
5		"Expert assumes status of 'joint' expert.	5		flawed when looking at that evidence. Or,
6		"Produced a report which in my view exposed	6		alternatively, from Fujitsu's point of view,
7		the expert as a 'sham'.	7		they're looking at it from a commercial lens
8		"Nonetheless expert concluded that Horizon	8		that all they need to do is satisfy Post Office.
9		could have caused the discrepancy.	9		They don't have any real primary interest in
10		"Did not have access to audit trail so	10		satisfying subpostmasters.
11		couldn't refute.	11	Q.	Finally, are there any other matters relevant to
12		"That is prove that what the expert said	12		the Cleveleys case that you think should be
13		could happen didn't happen."	13		drawn to the attention of the Chair?
14		Are you able to give is your view on that	14	Δ	No, not relevant to Cleveleys, no. No.
15		opinion?	15		We may well have you back in Phase 5 to address
16	Α.	Well, I mean I believe it's delusional to	16	۹.	issues relating to the Group Litigation.
17	۸.	then look at evidence and simply say that that	17	Δ	Mm-hm.
18		isn't correct, and I looked at the evidence and	18		R BLAKE: Sir, before I ask whether any Core
19			19	IVII	Participants have any questions, do you have any
		I said what my opinion was, and still remains:			
20		that system was absolutely flawed at that point	20	C.	questions?
21		in time and throughout the GLO we proved, and	21		R WYN WILLIAMS: No, thank you very much, no.
22		Judge Fraser agreed, that that system had	22	IVII	R BLAKE: I don't believe there are any questions
23		a large number of bugs, errors and defects.	23	۰.	from any Core Participants, so we are finished.
24		If Fujitsu aren't going to look at the	24	51	R WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, Mr Coyne,
25		detail of the evidence or they're going to look 89	25		for coming to give oral evidence and for making 90
1		a witness statement in advance. As you will	1		please.
2		appreciate, I have read a great deal of what	2	SI	R WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.
3		you've had to say in many different contexts, so	3		SUSANNE JANE HELLIWELL (affirmed)
4		it's nice to put a face to the voice, so to	4		Questioned by MS PRICE
5		speak. Thank you.	5	M	S PRICE: Good afternoon, Ms Helliwell, my name is
6	THI	E WITNESS: Thank you.	6		Emma Price. As you know, I ask questions on
7		BLAKE: Thank you, sir. Can we take a 15-minute	7		behalf of the Inquiry.
8		break until 12.10 and then we will hear from	8	Α.	
9		Ms Helliwell.	9	Λ.	
10				O.	Could you give your full name, please?
11	SIR			Q. A	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's	10	A.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.
	SIR	<b>WYN WILLIAMS:</b> Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even	10 11		Susanne Jane Helliwell. Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it
12 13	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond	10 11 12	A.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness
13	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well,	10 11 12 13	A.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful.
13 14		WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.	10 11 12 13	A.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful.  You should have in front of you a hard copy
13 14 15		WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who	10 11 12 13 14 15	A. Q.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful.  You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name
13 14 15 16	MR	WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm very sorry that there's a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who will be managing it very well, even better.	10 11 12 13 14 15	A. Q.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful.  You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name  Yes.
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13 14 15 16 17 18	MR	a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who will be managing it very well, even better.  WYN WILLIAMS: Oh, well, then you'll have new points to manage. Thank you.	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	A. Q. A. Q.	Susanne Jane Helliwell. Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful. You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name Yes dated 14 July 2023? Yes.
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13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	MR SIR MR (11	a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who will be managing it very well, even better.  WYN WILLIAMS: Oh, well, then you'll have new points to manage. Thank you.  BLAKE: Thank you.  53 am)  (A short break)	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	A. Q. A. Q. A.	Susanne Jane Helliwell. Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful. You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name Yes dated 14 July 2023? Yes. If you turn to page 7 of that statement; is that your signature? Yes, my signature has been removed, obviously, but I did sign that statement.
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13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	MR SIR MR (11 (12 MS SIR	a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who will be managing it very well, even better.  WYN WILLIAMS: Oh, well, then you'll have new points to manage. Thank you.  BLAKE: Thank you.  53 am)  (A short break)  10 pm)  PRICE: Sir, can you see and hear us?  WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you very much.	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	A. Q. A. Q. A. Q.	Susanne Jane Helliwell. Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful. You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name Yes dated 14 July 2023? Yes. If you turn to page 7 of that statement; is that your signature? Yes, my signature has been removed, obviously, but I did sign that statement. Are the contents of that statement true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	MR SIR MR (11 (12 MS SIR	a sort of hard endpoint at 2.00, so that even a few minutes, I'm afraid, we can't go beyond it, but I know that you'll manage it very well, Mr Blake.  BLAKE: Thank you, it's actually Ms Price who will be managing it very well, even better.  WYN WILLIAMS: Oh, well, then you'll have new points to manage. Thank you.  BLAKE: Thank you.  53 am)  (A short break)  10 pm)  PRICE: Sir, can you see and hear us?	10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	A. Q. A. Q. A. Q.	Susanne Jane Helliwell.  Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing a witness statement to the Inquiry. We are very grateful.  You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name Yes.  dated 14 July 2023? Yes.  If you turn to page 7 of that statement; is that your signature? Yes, my signature has been removed, obviously, but I did sign that statement.  Are the contents of that statement true to the

1	Q.	For the purposes of	ne transcript, the URN is	
2		WITN09420100. Th	ere is no need to display th	nat.

Today I'm going to be asking you about issues which arise in Phase 4 of the Inquiry, focusing on action taken by the Post Office against subpostmasters and others and, in particular, upon the proceedings brought by the Post Office against Julie Wolstenholme in relation to her time as a subpostmaster of Cleveleys sub post office.

In terms of your background, you were admitted as a solicitor in 1990; is that correct?

14 A. Yes.

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- 15 Q. Where did you practice when you first qualified?
- 16 A. When I first qualified, I practised at a small
- 17 firm in Manchester called -- it was called
- 18 Shammah Nicholls.
- 19 **Q.** Around 10 years after being admitted as
- 20 a solicitor, in January 2000, you became
- 21 a solicitor at Weightman Vizards; is that right?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Which team at Weightmans did you first join?
- 24 A. I first joined the commercial litigation team,
- as it was known then, and then I had done some
  - 93
- 1 A. I believe that I may have had some involvement
- 2 in some employment cases. But I can't -- it's
- 3 just the timing is very -- it's just very
- 4 difficult to think of the timing but I believe
- 5 I may have had some involvement or it may have
- 6 coincided with me having some involvement in
- 7 employment cases for the Post Office.
- 8 Q. Did you have any knowledge of the Horizon IT
- 9 System before becoming involved in the Cleveleys
- 10 case?
- 11 A. No, not as far as I can recall.
- 12 Q. You have explained in your witness statement
- 13 that proceedings against Mrs Wolstenholme were
- 14 initially issued and dealt with by the Legal
- 15 Services Department of Consignia Plc; is that
- 16 right?
- 17 **A.** Yes.
- 18 Q. We have a copy of the trial bundle prepared for
- 19 the Cleveleys trial, which was listed in August
- 20 2004. Could we have on screen, please, trial
- 21 bundle A from that, which contains the pleadings
- in the case. The reference is POL00118218.
- 23 Starting please on page 3 of that document 24 using the external electronic numbering, we have
- 25 the claim form and, towards the bottom of the

- 1 employment work at my previous firms, so
- 2 I started -- I moved more into employment over
- 3 time. So I did a mix of commercial litigation
- 4 and employment work.
- 5  $\,$  **Q.** Which team were you in at the point you became
- 6 involved in the Cleveleys case?
- 7 A. I believe -- I was still doing a mix but I had
- 8 moved more towards employment but I was still
- 9 doing a mix of commercial litigation as well.
- 10 **Q.** You remained employed with Weightmans until
- 11 around July 2005?
- 12 A. Yeah, that's -- yes, for the best of my
- 13 recollection it was around then.
- 14 Q. Then for around four years you were away from
- the practice of law running your own business?
- 16 **A.** Yes.
- 17 Q. Then in 2009, you went back to practice as
- 18 a solicitor with a firm in Manchester; is that
- 19 right?
- 20 A. Yes, that's right.
- 21 Q. You left to take on a consultancy role to that
- firm in 2019, a role you remain in now?
- 23 A. Yes, that's right.
- 24 Q. Before the Cleveleys case, had you been involved
- in any other cases on behalf of the Post Office?

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- 1 page, please, we have the issue date here of
- 2 23 April 2001. We can see, about halfway down
- 3 the page, brief details of claim, delivery up of
- 4 goods belonging to the claimant and, going over
- 5 the page, please, the statement of truth on the
- 6 claim form, towards the bottom. This is signed
- 7 by James Cruise, said to be a senior lawyer at
- 8 Consignia Plc Legal Services.
- 9 Could we go over the pa
  - Could we go over the page again, please.
- These are the original Particulars of Claim; is
- 11 that right?
- 12 **A.** Yes
- 13 Q. Over the page, please, to the second page of
- 14 those particulars. We can see at the bottom
- that these are dated 19 April 2001 and again the
- 16 statement of truth is signed by James Cruise?
- 17 **A.** Yes.

19

- 18 Q. You say at paragraph 5 of your statement --
  - I don't think we need to turn it up -- that you
- 20 would have become involved in the case at some
- 21 point after the issue of proceedings in 2001,
- 22 and prior to the preparation of the Amended
- 23 Particulars of Claim in February 2003. Should
- 24 we understand from these documents that, as of
- 25 19 April 2001, the date of the original

1		Particulars of Claim, Weightmans had not yet	1		the Post Office?
2		been instructed on the case?	2	A.	Yes.
3	A.	I believe so. I believe that we were instructed	3	Q.	Could we turn back, please, to page 5 in this
4		subsequently and that they might have been	4		document, the original Particulars of Claim
5		dealing with it, I assume dealing with it,	5		looking at paragraph 3, please. We can see the
6		in-house.	6		description here of number of items and
7	Q.	Could we turn, please, within this bundle to	7		equipment, including two safes, Horizon computer
8		external page 87. This is the "Notice of	8		equipment, an alarm system and some scales, and
9		Transfer of Proceedings" dated 11 June 2001, and	9		then estimates of value of these items at
10		we can see that this is addressed to the	10		paragraph 4. Then at paragraph 5 we have this:
11		claimant's solicitor identified as being	11		"Expressly or by implication the Defendant
12		Consignia Legal Services?	12		agreed that she would deliver up to the Claimant
13	A.	Yes.	13		and/or would permit the Claimant to collect the
14	Q.	So it seems as though the matter was still being	14		said items and equipment on demand and/or after
15		dealt with in-house at this stage on 11 June	15		termination of the said contract and/or on or
16		2001?	16		after cessation or use of the said premises as
17	A.	Yes.	17		a sub post office and/or within a reasonable
18	Q.	Turning, please, to page 98 of the bundle. This	18		time of such demand or termination or cessation
19		is the notice of allocation or listing hearing,	19		of use."
20		dated 16 July 2001.	20		Turning over the page, the background to the
21	A.	Mm-hm.	21		dispute is provided. Then at paragraph 8 we
22	Q.	We can see here the claimant's solicitor is here	22		have this:
23		identified as Weightman, so would we be right to	23		"The Defendant has therefore refused to
24		understand by this, that by the 16 July 2001,	24		deliver up the safes and other equipment or
25		Weightman Vizards was on record as acting for	25		permit the same to be collected"
		97			98
1		About halfway down the page, we can see what	1		The Defendant asserts that her employment was
2		the claim was for:	2		terminated unlawfully and she has made
3		"delivery up of these items and equipment or	3		an application to the Industrial Tribunal for
4		their value in damages"	4		unfair dismissal and in that claim she has
5		So it's right, isn't it, that the original	5		claimed re-engagement and reinstatement at the
6		claim brought by the Post Office related only to	6		premises in Cleveleys where she was carrying out
7		the recovery of items and equipment or their	7		her employment"
8		value in damages?	8		Mrs Wolstenholme raises here the ongoing
9	A.	Yes. Could I just correct one small thing that	9		employment proceedings she had bought against
10		I mentioned before about which department I was	10		the Post Office for unfair dismissal.
11		in at the time that Weightmans became involved.	11	A.	Mm-hm, yes.
12	Q.	Of course.	12	Q.	
13	A.	Just having seen the fact that our name appeared	13		document, which reads:
14		on the notice back in July 2001, at that stage	14		"Paragraph 5 of the particulars of claim is
15		I would definitely have been just in the	15		denied. In the alternative it is necessary for
16		commercial litigation department.	16		the said items to remain in the said premises
17	Q.	Thank you. Turning, please, to page 8, using	17		until the determination of the disputes between
18		the external pagination, this is the defence and	18		the parties."
19		counterclaim on behalf of Mrs Wolstenholme.	19		We see here Mrs Wolstenholme's response to
20		Paragraph 2 of that reads as follows:	20		the claim. She denied that she had agreed to
21		"In relation to paragraph 2 of the	21		surrender the items and equipment.
22		Particulars of Claim the Defendant admits that	22		Alternatively, it was necessary to keep them for
23		she was a subpostmistress but she contends that	23		those reasons.
24		on its true construction the contract between	24		Then, over the page again, please, at
25		her and Claimant was a contract of employment.	25		paragraph 14:
-		··p··-y···-			, 5 ,

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1	"Further or in the alternative it was
2	an implied term of the contract between the
3	Claimant and the Defendant that the computer
4	system provided by the Claimant would be fit for
5	its purpose and the Claimant is in breach of
6	this term in that the computer system provided
7	was unfit for its purpose and the Claimant
8	failed to ensure that the system was working
9	adequately. The Defendant has supplied the
10	Claimant with details of the persistent
11	inadequacies of the said computer system."
12	It's right, isn't it, that Mrs Wolstenholme

It's right, isn't it, that Mrs Wolstenholme was raising as part of her counterclaim an allegation that the computer system in her branch was unfit for purpose and that the Post Office had failed to ensure that the system was working adequately.

18 Yes, she has raised that allegation. Α.

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19 Turning, please, to page 93, using the external 20 pagination, this is the reply and defence to 21 counterclaim. Could we have, please, page 97. 22 Scrolling down a little, we can see that this 23 document appears to be dated 2001, it's no more 24 specific than that. And there is a statement of

truth going up a little, please, signed by

- 1 Does this help you date your involvement at all?
- 2 A. Possibly. Sorry, could you just go back to the 3 document you were in before, was that the Reply 4 and Counterclaim?
- 5 Q. Yes, that's page 93, please, and the last page 6 of that, sorry, is 97.
- 7 A. Yes, so I think that I probably -- I wouldn't have been involved at that stage and, again, to 8 9 the best of my recollection, I may have become 10 involved when we dealt with the Amended -- just before we dealt with the Amended Particulars of 11 12 Claim in, was it February 2003? Because again, 13 with the proceedings stayed for a period of time 14 after this, I can't remember the exact dates. 15 But proceedings were stayed and then I think the
- 16 first time my reference comes into play is more around 2003. 17
- 18
- When you did pick up the file, presumably you 19 would have read the pleadings that were on file?
- 20 Α.
- 21 Q. Just looking then, please, at the substance of 22 the Reply and Defence to Counterclaim, this is 23 page 95, please. At paragraph 3, we can see 24 here the Post Office's case in relation to 25 whether or not the agreement was lawfully

103

a solicitor named David Robert Jacks. 1

Weightmans' name and address appears beneath

3 this. Was David Jacks a fellow solicitor at

4 Weightmans?

A. I believe he was a partner at Weightmans, but he 5 6 may not have been at that time because he

7 describes himself as a solicitor, but I believe

8 he was a partner.

9 Q. Can you help us with whether you were the file

10 handler on this case from the start when

11 Weightmans were first instructed or whether the

file was transferred to you at a later date?

13 Is it possible to just go back to the notice

14 from the court where Weightmans appeared?

15 Q. Of course.

16 A. That could have the reference on it.

17 Q. This is page 98 of the bundle. Notice of allocation or listing hearing. Was this the 18

19 order you were looking for --

20 A. Yeah.

21 **Q.** -- 16 July 2001?

22 A. Yeah, at that stage it's just David Jacks'

23 reference. My name doesn't appear on it and it

would have done if I was the file handler at 24

25 that time

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1 terminated.

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3 Q. We can see here, 3.1:

> "The Defendant well knew and accepted that the Claimant had given lawful and proper notice of termination of the said agreement and offered a payment in lieu of the 3-month notice the Defendant was entitled to under the written agreement;

"The said sum was calculated from the date of suspension of the Defendant (30/11/2000) with the last date of service identified as 28/2/01;

"3.3 The Defendant normally would have £19,322.85 in commission for this period. Due to the fact that there were outstanding losses incurred by the Defendant (£17,825.37) and for which she was liable to make good to the Claimant, the claimant paid the balance or excess of commission or remuneration to the Defendant in the sum of £1,497.48."

So the Post Office was suggesting that there were outstanding losses incurred by Mrs Wolstenholme, which was why she was not paid the full commission she would have received in the three-month notice period. Is that a fair

reading of that? 1 "On 28 August 2001 we wrote via solicitor to 1 2 2 A. Yes, it seems to be, yeah. Weightmans for logs from June 2002, [I think 3 Q. 3 that's 'NO 2000'] never received. I wonder Then at paragraph 4, please: 4 4 why." "It is denied that the said computer system 5 was unfit for its purpose and it is averred the It may be that you can't help us if you 5 6 same worked adequately." 6 believe you were involved later but were you ever aware of a request in 2001 on behalf of or 7 Would you agree that it is clear, on the 7 8 face of the pleadings we have been through so 8 from Mrs Wolstenholme for call logs. 9 far, all dated 2001, that an issue in the case 9 A. No, I wasn't, no. 10 from the outset was whether the computer system 10 Q. At any stage before the Particulars of Claim 11 in the Cleveleys branch was fit for purpose and 11 were amended in February 2003, did anyone at 12 worked adequately? 12 Weightman Vizards ask the Post Office for 13 A. Yes, I'd agree with that. 13 records of any reports made by Mrs Wolstenholme 14 Q. Could we have on screen, please, WITN09020113. 14 of problems with the computer system? I know 15 This is a draft letter exhibited by Julie Kay, 15 you may be slightly limited by what you would 16 (née Wolstenholme) to her witness statement 16 have picked up, if you took that file on later, 17 provided to the Inquiry. 17 but were you ever aware of such a request before 18 We need not have her statement up on screen 18 February 2003? 19 but the reference for the witness statement for 19 A. I can't recall, to be truthful, I just can't 20 the transcript is WITN09020100. This document 20 recall. It's 19 years ago, or more, isn't it, 21 21 is referenced at paragraph 9 of that statement then? But, yeah, I just can't remember. 22 and it is her evidence that this was drafted by 22 We have a number of court orders in the trial her father. 23 23 bundle which provide some insight into the 24 Could we have, please, the second page of 24 progress of the proceedings after the Reply and 25 that document, three lines down: 25 Defence to Counterclaim was filed on behalf of 105 106 1 the Post Office in 2001. Starting, please, with 1 before my involvement and I don't think it was 2 page 98, and this is going back, please, to the 2 ever really acted on, was it, because the 3 trial bundle POL00118218. That's page 98. This 3 proceedings were stayed. 4 is the order we've looked at already of the 4 Q. We'll come in due course to that order you're 5 5 16 July 2001, for the purposes of trying to date thinking of in terms of the single joint expert 6 Weightmans' involvement, and we can see here 6 direction. Over the page, please, to the order 7 7 that an allocation hearing is being listed. of 11 March 2002. We can see the case 8 Over the page please, we that have the order 8 management conference which had been listed 9 of 30 August 2001. This appears to be an order being adjourned to May. Over the page again, 9 10 made following the allocation hearing? 10 14 May 2002, again we have an adjournment to A. Yes. 11 June 2002. Over the page again, please, the 11 12 order of the 14 June 2002. We have another 12 Q. As far as you are aware, were you involved in this stage in August 2001? If we just scroll 13 13 adjournment to July 2002. 14 down a little, so we can see the directions 14 15 15 order, doesn't it? 16 A. I don't believe I was because, again, my 16 17 reference doesn't appear on the order. 17 reference? Do you have any recollection of there being 18 18 19 a direction at one stage in the proceedings 19 20 giving permission for both parties to rely on

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one expert each in computer systems?

A. I actually don't. My recollection is that there

I don't -- yeah, when I saw this, I just don't

have any recollection of that. It's obviously

was the -- an order was made for a joint expert.

107

A. Can I just -- my reference then appears on that Q. If you can just indicate where you see your A. The -- this is the general form or judgment of order, dated 14 June 2002. My reference appears 20 in the claimant's reference. The reference to 21 NJK was the partner, the Head of Commercial 22 Litigation, from memory, in Liverpool. 23 Q. Okay, and who was that individual? 24 Neil Kelly. 25 Q. How do you spell that surname?

1			I -I -Y
	Δ	N-F-	I -I - Y

- 2 Q. Just going back, please, one page, so your 3 reference doesn't appear on that May 2002
- 4 document and it does for the first time --
- 5 A.
- 6 Q. -- on the next page, please, 14 June 2002. So
- 7 does that help us pinpoint then when you became
- 8
- 9 A. Yes, it does, yes.
- 10 Q. If we can go over the page again, please. This
- is the order of 5 August 2002. We can see the 11
- claim is stayed until October 2002. 12
- 13 Paragraph 2, please, of the directions, just
- 14 a little further down the page:
- 15 "Upon termination of the stay, the
- 16 Claimant's solicitor shall within 14 days of
- 17 termination write to the court explaining the
- 18 position in relation to the hearing before the
- 19 EAT, and the court shall then consider whether
- 20 to list for a case management conference or
- 21 whether to order a further stay."
- 22 So it would appear that there were a number
- 23 of adjournments and then a stay, seemingly
- 24 because of the ongoing Employment, and then
- 25 Employment Appeal, Tribunal proceedings.
  - 109
- 1 liability/causation and that the evidence should
- 2 be given in the form of written reports of
- 3 a single expert instructed jointly by the
- 4 parties in the field of Computer Technology."
  - What can you recall, if anything, about the
- 6 change in the directions in the case from each
- 7 party having permission to rely on its own
- 8 expert to the direction for a single joint
- 9 expert?

- A. I actually don't really recall why that 10
- 11 happened. It may have -- I'm guessing, but it
- may have been that there was more of a move 12
- 13 towards a single joint expert, maybe previously
- 14 parties had been each allowed to rely on their
- 15 own expert but there was -- I don't know when
- 16 the shift was but there was a shift to the
- 17 courts, you know, going more along the single
- 18 joint expert approach. So whether it's that,
- 19 I don't know.
- 20 Q. Can you recall now what the Post Office's
- 21 position was on whether each party should have
- 22 its own expert or whether there should be
- 23 a single joint expert? I know it's difficult
- 24 after so much time?
- 25 A. I can't recall. No, I can't recall, I'm afraid.

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A. Yes.

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- 2 Q. Do you recall that being the case?
- Vaguely. Having read the bundle, the trial 3
  - bundle, it did come back to me that there was
- a stay for a period of time, yes. 5
- 6 Q. If we could turn, please, to page 104. We come
- 7 now to a directions order of 14 February 2003.
- 8 Just looking at the recital there, it appears
- 9 that a hearing took place at which the claimant
- 10 was represented by a solicitor from Weightman
- 11 Vizards. Was this you?
- A. I can't specifically recall but I believe it 12
- 13 would have been me.
- 14 It appears here that the defendant was in person
- 15 at that hearing?
- 16 Yes. A.

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- 17 **Q.** We can see from paragraph 2 here that permission
- 18 was given for amended Statements of Case from
- 19 the Post Office and permission for an Amended
- 20 Defence and Counterclaim. The order records
- 21 that Mrs Wolstenholme's claim and appeal to the
- 22 Employment Appeal Tribunal had been dismissed.
  - Then at paragraph 8, we have this:
- 24 "On it appearing to the court that expert
  - evidence is needed on the issues of
    - 110
- 1 Could we look, please, to the amended
- 2 Particulars of Claim, which is page 13 of this
- 3 bundle, using the external pagination. We can
- 4 see here particulars were amended pursuant to
- 5 the order of Deputy District Judge Lambert,
- 6 which we have looked at. Turning, please, to
- 7 page 15, scrolling down to the bottom, please,
- 8 we can see your name and signature on the
- statement of truth on behalf of the Post Office. 9
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Were these Amended Particulars drafted by
- 12 counsel? It may assist if we scroll down
- 13 a little more.
- 14 A. Yes, I think they were. Is it Tina
- 15 Rañales-Cotos?
- Q. Just scrolling down a little more, please. 16
- 17 A. Yes

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- 18 Q. Looking, then at the new paragraphs in these 19 particulars, page 13 again, please. Starting
- 20 with paragraph 3:
- 21 "A copy of the contract for services is
- attached at pages 1-60. The Claimant will rely 23 on the contract for services for its full terms
- 24 and effect at trial." 25

Paragraph 4:

"In particular, pursuant to section 9(M) paragraphs 12 and 13 of the contract for services, the Defendant is reliable for losses arising at the defendant's post office during the period of the contract for services. "The Defendant's subpostmaster's account shows an overall final loss in the sum of £25,034.04 in respect of the period up and to including 4 December 2000. An itemised breakdown of this figure is attached at pages 61-67. Such sum remains outstanding to date." Over the page once more, please. Paragraph 13 reads: "Further the Defendant is indebted to the Claimant in the sum of 25,034.04 which represents the overall final loss figure on the Defendant's subpostmaster's account and the Claimant claims such sums."

It's right, isn't it, that the Post Office was no longer limiting its claim to the return of equipment, it was also seeking payment of the sum of £24,034.04, a sum it claimed represented losses in the Cleveleys branch, which Mrs Wolstenholme was liable for under her

1 Q. Of course. So the Particulars of Claim, the 2 Amended Particulars of Claim we've just looked 3 at, contained a bold statement that 4 Mrs Wolstenholme was liable under the contract 5 for the losses? A. Yes.

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7 Q. But there was no reference there, was there, to 8 those losses having been caused by 9 Mrs Wolstenholme's negligence, carelessness or 10 error?

A. Not in that document, no. 11

12 Q. Did this reflect your instructions at the time 13 that subpostmasters were liable for all apparent 14 losses in branch, regardless of the cause of 15 those apparent losses?

A. Yes, it did. 16

17 Q. At the time that the Particulars of Claim were amended, were you asked to advise on the 18 contractual position on liability of 19 20 subpostmasters like Mrs Wolstenholme for 21 apparent losses or shortfalls occurring within 22 their branch?

23 A. I just don't -- I don't recall.

24 Q. Moving then, please, to the Amended Defence and 25 Counterclaim, page 88, please. We can see here 115

contract for services? 1

2 A. Yes.

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Q. The Post Office was relying upon section 9(M) of the contract and, in particular, paragraphs 12 and 13, which was appended to the Amended Particulars of Claim. Could we have, please, page 45 of this bundle. Paragraphs 12 and 13 read as follows:

"The subpostmaster is responsible for all losses caught through his own negligence carelessness or error, and also for losses of all kinds caused by his assistants. Such losses must be made good immediately.

"The financial responsibility of the subpostmaster does not cease when he relinquishes his appointment, and he will be required to make good any losses incurred during the term of his office which may subsequently come to light."

There is no reference, is there, in the Particulars of Claim, the Amended Particulars of Claim, to the losses alleged by the Post Office having been caused by Mrs Wolstenholme's negligence, carelessness or error, is there?

25 A. Sorry, could you just repeat that?

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1 that the title of "Defence" has been amended to 2 "Re-amended Defence", and looking at the first 3 page, scrolling down a bit, please, we can see 4 an amendment to the paragraph numbers to reflect 5 the new numbering in the Amended Particulars of 6 Claim, a change to paragraph number 6. So at 7 paragraph 3, there. Over the page, please, we see some further changes to paragraph numbers. 8 9 The paragraphs dealing with the new aspects of 10 the Post Office's claim, that is the claim for 11 losses to be paid, were paragraphs 3, 5 and 13. 12 Just scrolling down, please, to check, they

15 A. No.

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Q. Just for completeness, turning to the last page 16 17 of this document page 92, please. This document 18 is dated 14 April 2003.

re-amended defence?

don't appear to be referenced, do they, in this

External page 110, please, in this bundle. This is the order of District Judge Bryce, dated 7 July 2003 and it appears from the recital that, again, a solicitor from Weightmans attended this hearing on behalf of the Post Office. Was this you, do you think? 25 **A**.

I believe, unless if I was on holiday or

	anything like that, it probably would have been	1		of experts as to whether an opinion can be given
	me that attended that hearing.	2		using only computer logs."
Q.	We can see the first direction here reads:	3		So were these your instructions at the time
	"Claimant do by 4 pm on July 21st 2003 serve	4		in relation to archived material, that they may
	on Defendant copies of relevant computer logs	5		have been destroyed? There appears to be some
	from June 2000 until November 2000."	6		uncertainty about that.
	Does this direction tell us that the Post	7	A.	Yes, it would have been my instructions at the
	Office had not, up to this point, provided	8		time and we were probably trying to make
	Mrs Wolstenholme with the computer logs for this	9		enquiries just to see what had happened, and
	period?	10		that's why that direction was given.
A.	Yes, it does tell us that.	11	Q.	That document can come down now. Thank you.
Q.	Can you help us at all with why that was?	12		Is it right that this material, the archived
A.	I'm afraid I just I can't recall. It may be	13		material, was held by Fujitsu and not the Post
	that we had been asking for them but, without	14		Office?
	seeing my correspondence to the Post Office	15	A.	Yes, as I understand it. Yes.
	around this time, I can't I just can't	16	Q.	Looking, then, to what steps were taken by and
	recall.	17		on behalf of the Post Office following this
Q.	At point 4 of the directions please:	18		directions order, may we have on screen, please,
	"It appearing to the Court that archived	19		the second part of trial bundle C, which is the
	material on the computer may have been	20		documents bundle. The reference for that is
	destroyed, it is directed that	21		POL00118221. If we could turn to external
	"a) Claimant solicitors so make further	22		page 217, please. This is a letter to you dated
	enquiries and copy any correspondence to	23		24 July 2003. Going over the page, please, down
	Defendant.	24		to the bottom, please, we can see this is from
	"b) [I think that is] Parties make enquiries 117	25		Jim Cruise. Was he your primary Legal Services 118
	contact at this time?	1		This detail is held for 35 days in an accessible
A.	Yes, he was.	2		area and after that time it is archived. I have
Q.	We can see from the first paragraph, going back	3		been informed by Fujitsu that prior to 1st April
	to the first page, please, that this letter	4		2003 this detail was only held for 18 months.
		5		The position is now that since 1st April 2003
	•	6		Fujitsu hold message store information for
		7		7 years.
		8		"However, no transaction details are now
				available and accessible for the period 1999 and
				2000."
				Some emails appear to have been attached to
				Mr Cruise's letter and those appear over the
	•			page, please. Starting please at the bottom of
				the email chain, which is page 220, scrolling
	office closed and the data would therefore have			down, please, the first email in this chain is
				from a man called Reg Barton, writing to Kevin
	-			Parkin at 8.35 on 4 July 2003, the first line
				reads:
				"I understand that POL have been raising
				some questions about Cleveleys SPSO"
				He goes on to explain the position in
				relation to Horizon equipment and the data
				warehouse.
	, -			Going back, please, to page 219, just one
	a message store which holds greater detail.  119	25		page, about two-thirds of the way down the page.  120
	A. Q. A.	me that attended that hearing.  Q. We can see the first direction here reads:     "Claimant do by 4 pm on July 21st 2003 serve on Defendant copies of relevant computer logs from June 2000 until November 2000."     Does this direction tell us that the Post Office had not, up to this point, provided Mrs Wolstenholme with the computer logs for this period?  A. Yes, it does tell us that. Q. Can you help us at all with why that was? A. I'm afraid I just I can't recall. It may be that we had been asking for them but, without seeing my correspondence to the Post Office around this time, I can't I just can't recall.  Q. At point 4 of the directions please:     "It appearing to the Court that archived material on the computer may have been destroyed, it is directed that     "a) Claimant solicitors so make further enquiries and copy any correspondence to Defendant.     "b) [I think that is] Parties make enquiries     117  contact at this time?  A. Yes, he was. Q. We can see from the first paragraph, going back to the first page, please, that this letter addresses the court order of 7 July 2003 and computer evidence in particular. The next paragraph sets out the basis on which computer equipment was provided by Fujitsu and then two paragraphs down, starting "The Horizon System":     "The Horizon System went live at Cleveleys on 10th February 2000 and the sub post office at Cleveleys closed on 30th November 2000. It is understood that the computer equipment was left plugged in and running for some time after the office closed and the data would therefore have been archived. Fujitsu Services have informed Post Office Limited that their technicians would not be able to retrieve the data with data which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been kept for 13 weeks, and then, over the page, please:     "Beyond the data warehouse Fujitsu have a message store which holds greater detail.	me that attended that hearing.  Q. We can see the first direction here reads:  "Claimant do by 4 pm on July 21st 2003 serve on Defendant copies of relevant computer logs from June 2000 until November 2000."  Does this direction tell us that the Post Office had not, up to this point, provided Mrs Wolstenholme with the computer logs for this period?  A. Yes, it does tell us that.  Q. Can you help us at all with why that was?  A. I'm afraid I just I can't recall. It may be that we had been asking for them but, without seeing my correspondence to the Post Office around this time, I can't I just can't recall.  Q. At point 4 of the directions please:  "It appearing to the Court that archived material on the computer may have been destroyed, it is directed that  "a) Claimant solicitors so make further enquiries and copy any correspondence to Defendant.  "b) [I think that is] Parties make enquiries  117  contact at this time?  A. Yes, he was.  Q. We can see from the first paragraph, going back to the first page, please, that this letter addresses the court order of 7 July 2003 and computer evidence in particular. The next paragraph sets out the basis on which computer equipment was provided by Fujitsu and then two paragraphs down, starting "The Horizon System":  "The Horizon System went live at Cleveleys on 10th February 2000 and the sub post office at Cleveleys closed on 30th November 2000. It is understood that the computer equipment was left plugged in and running for some time after the office closed and the data would therefore have been archived. Fujitsu Services have informed Post Office Limited that their technicians would not be able to retrieve the data in these circumstances."  The next paragraph deals with data which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been held by the data warehouse which would have been held by the data warehouse w	me that attended that hearing.  Q. We can see the first direction here reads:  "Claimant do by 4 pm on July 21st 2003 serve on Defendant copies of relevant computer logs from June 2000 until November 2000."  Does this direction tell us that the Post 7 A. Office had not, up to this point, provided 8 Mrs Wolstenholme with the computer logs for this period?  A. Yes, it does tell us that. 11 Q. Can you help us at all with why that was? 12 A. I'm afraid I just — I can't recall. It may be 13 that we had been asking for them but, without seeing my correspondence to the Post Office 15 A. around this time, I can't — I just can't recall. 17 recall. 17 recall. 19 Learn that archived 19 material on the computer may have been destroyed, it is directed that 21 Claimant solicitors so make further 22 enquiries and copy any correspondence to Defendant. 24 Learn 17 Learn 17 Learn 18 Learn 19 Learn 1

1	There is an email from John Moran. He addresses
2	the position in relation to the data warehouse
3	and the message store. Then over to the top of
4	the next page, please.
5	"In any case it would appear that any date
6	in 2001 is well beyond the 18-month everywhere
7	thus there is nothing we can do on this one."
8	Was it your understanding at the time, from
9	these emails, that this was the first time the

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Post Office had tried to attain any data relating to the relevant period at the Cleveleys branch, in early July 2003?

13 A. It was certainly the first time I'd have raised 14 it with -- around the first time I'd raised it 15 with them. I'm not sure if it had been raised 16 with them before then.

17 Q. Before we move to a different document in this 18 bundle, just going up, please, to the top of 19 page 219, it would seem that by this point, 20 Mandy Talbot, from Legal Services, had at least 21 some involvement in the case, because she's at 22 the top of that email chain. Was there a time 23 when both Jim Cruise and Mandy Talbot were 24 involved in the case?

25 Α. There may have been. I'm just trying to

1 Mr Coyne specifically came to be approached as 2 a potential single joint expert? 3 A. I can't specifically recall but, at that time,

4 we'd have -- I'd have looked at suitable experts 5 in that field -- that's the best information

6 I can give -- unless he was recommended by 7 somebody.

 ${\bf Q.}\,\,$  Then three paragraphs down, you explain that 8 9 you're enclosing the letter that we've just looked at of 24 July 2003. So that's the fourth 10 11 paragraph on the page:

> "We enclose a copy of the letter from the Post Office to this firm dated 24 July 2003 ..."

14 A. Yes

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15 Q. You continue:

> "... we are writing to you for the purposes of ascertaining whether you would be able to provide an expert report having that sight of only the computer logs and having not had an opportunity to inspect the computer system."

Finally, on the last paragraph, you enclose the computer logs. So:

"We accordingly enclose copies of the computer call logs between January 2000 and November 2000."

1 remember Mandy Talbot's position at that time.

2 Was she Jim Cruise's -- was she senior to Jim

3 Cruise?

4 Q. We know from correspondence that she is described as his boss, in effect. 5

6 Yeah. So maybe she had some involvement.

7 I don't know. But it looks obviously as though

8 she did have some involvement.

9 Q. Could we have, please, page 47, still within 10 this bundle. This is a letter from you to

11 Mr J Coyne from Best Practice Group. That is

Jason Coyne, the single joint expert in the 12

13 case; is that right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. It's dated 3 September 2003. You set out in 16 that first paragraph the background to the

17 matter?

Yes. 18 Α.

19 Q. Then, over the page, please, you provide the 20

history of the contact between your firm and 21 Mr Coyne. Is that right that the first contact

22 was in June 2003?

23 A. I believe it would have been because that's when

24 I referred to it in the letter.

25 Q. Can you recall how the Best Practice Group and 122

1 Just pausing there, the information that was 2 provided to you by the Post Office and which was 3 passed on to the expert was that in 1999 and 4 2000, archived material was held for 18 months.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So had a request for archived material in the 7 message store been made in June 2001, when the 8 Post Office received Mrs Wolstenholme's original defence, then material going all the way back to 9 10 January 2000 would, on this estimate of time,

11 still have been available?

12 On this estimate, it would have been, yes.

13 In terms of why such a request was not made,

14 Mrs Wolstenholme raised this point in

15 correspondence with you in November 2003 and 16 then January 2004.

17 We need not look at both letters as the 18 point is restated in exactly the same terms in 19 the second but if we could have, please, 20 page 231 in this bundle, this is a letter dated 21 21 January 2004 to you, the penultimate

22 paragraph reads as follows:

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"Why when it was obvious in December 2000 that this case was going to be pursued through court were all computer details destroyed?"

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If we can go over the page, please, to page 232, we will find your response dated 26 January 2004. Over the page again, please, at point 5, we find your response on this particular issue and you say:

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"Proceedings were commenced by our client in April 2001 seeking only delivery up of the goods and equipment at the former post office premises following your suspension in November 2000. The fitness of the computer equipment was referred to in your Defence and Counterclaim received in June 2001 and it is therefore not correct to state it should have been obvious to our client in December 2000 that this was going to be an issue. As we now know, the computer records were only kept for a limited period at that time under the procedures then existing. Unfortunately, it was not apparent to our client's representatives at the time that the computer records would feature so heavily in the preparation of the case. Further, you did not at any time request that they be preserved."

Who were you referring to when you described your client's representatives at the time? Were you referring to Royal Mail in-house Legal

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instructed. I also don't know whether the
 person that dealt with it before me made

3 a request to the Post Office, so it's difficult

4 for me to comment on that.

5 Q. Of course. There was some further

6 correspondence between you and Mr Coyne before

he provided his opinion, wasn't there? So

Mr Coyne replied to your letter of

9 3 September 2003 on 19 September 2003, and this

10 is within the bundle we're currently looking at,

at external page 49, please. If we can scroll

down a little bit, please.

So Mr Coyne is effectively asking in this letter for clarification, further information,

and instructions, isn't he?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. I think you've had a chance to see this letter

18 before?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 Q. Then you wrote to Mr Coyne on 17 November 2003

before he provided his opinion, enclosing some

22 further documentation, so may we go to that

23 letter, please, page 50 in this bundle.

24 **A.** Yes.

25 Q. The first line there:

1 Services or Weightmans?

2 A. Royal Mail in-house Legal Services.

3 Q. Were these your instructions: that the Post

Office had not appreciated that the computer

5 records would feature so heavily in the

6 preparation of the case?

7 A. Yes, they were my instructions. They would have

8 been -- the letter would have been written in

9 accordance with those instructions.

10 Q. Did you find it surprising that nobody within

11 Post Office had recognised the need to obtain

computer records upon receipt of

13 Mrs Wolstenholme's defence in June 2001?

14 A. Did you say "do" I find it or "did" I find it?

15 Q. Did you then and do you now?

16 A. To the best of my recollection, I do recall

17 being surprised that there were no records

18 available: surprised and probably frustrated.

19 Q. With hindsight, should your firm have recognised

20 the need for Post Office to obtain computer

21 records in this case when the firm was first

22 instructed in July 2001?

23 A. It's difficult because, obviously, I wasn't

involved at the time and I don't know what

25 information and on what basis we were

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1 "We refer to your recent telephone 2 conversation with our Ms Helliwell and in that 3 regard, we enclose copies of the followed ..."

4 So the letter appears to have been sent 5 following a telephone call that you had with 6 Mr Coyne. Do you recall now what you discussed 7 with Mr Coyne during that telephone call?

8 A. I don't. It was virtually 20 years ago.

9  $\,$   $\,$  Q. Of course. We can see here that you enclosed

10 those documents listed below, including the

11 witness statements being relied upon by the Post

12 Office and Mrs Wolstenholme.

13 **A.** Yes.

14 Q. You refer to the background to the case set the15 out in your previous letter and, just scrolling

down a little, please, there is reference to the

17 comparable call logs that Mr Coyne had asked for

and then we have "As you are aware", the last

19 paragraph there.

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** "... our client has unfortunately been unable to

22 obtain a set of comparable call logs and it has

23 therefore been agreed between the parties that

24 copies of the pleadings, witness statements and

25 relevant documents in the proceedings would be

provided to you to assess with a view to
confirming whether you would be able to provide
a report which would be of value to the Court
and if so, detailing the matters upon which you
would be able to report."

Was this letter and your previous letter to Mr Coyne, dated 3 September 2003, the extent of your instructions to Mr Coyne, as far as you can recall?

- 10 A. As far as I can recall.
- Q. Do you recall whether Mrs Wolstenholme had any 11 12 input into the instructions provided to
- 13 Mr Coyne?

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- A. I think she would have had to have some. Yeah, 14
- 15 she would have had to have some involvement
- 16 because it was a joint instruction and
- 17 I referred to that in my correspondence. Do
- 18 I -- is she copied into my letter, or -- or not?
- 19 Q. If we can scroll up to the top, please. Not on 20 the face of that letter.
- 21 A. There's nothing at the end of it, then.
- 22 If we can just scroll down and go over the page,
- 23 please, and just scrolling down a little
- 24 further, please.

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25 A. I can't -- I mean, I can't recall, but it's 129

> on screen that's POL00118219. That is external page 5, please.

If we could scroll down a little more. To the best of your recollection, were you involved in the drafting of this statement?

- 6 A. Yes, to the best of my recollection, I would 7 have been -- I was. I obviously hadn't recalled 8 because I didn't have the document and 9 I couldn't remember who the witnesses were so
- 10 I was only -- my statement was based on the 11
- documents that I had at that time.
- 12 Q. Of course. This statement addresses the call 13 logs which are exhibited to the statement by 14 Ms Tagg. Did you yourself do any analysis of 15 the call logs for the period 10 January 2000 to
- 16 30 November 2000?
- A. I can't recall. I assume I worked through the 17 statement with each individual and that would 18
- have been the case with Elaine Tagg, and worked 19
- 20 through the documents with her. But that's as
- 21 far as I can recall.
- 22 Q. Going, please, to paragraph 12 of that statement 23 which is external page 8:

"Mrs Wolstenholme persisted in telephoning the Horizon System Helpdesk in relation to any

1 a joint instruction, so she would have had to

2 have had some involvement and I refer to

3 agreement being reached between the parties for

4 the expert to report, as far as -- if to the

extent he is able. So that would -- yeah, that 5

6 would obviously assume that she has had

7 involvement and has seen correspondence but

8 I can't be certain, just because of the time.

9 Q. The Inquiry does have documentation indicating

10 that it was a joint instruction. It was just in

11 terms of the content of that letter but if you

12 can't recall --

13 I can't recall. A.

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14 Q. One of the documents which was sent to Mr Coyne

was a witness statement from a lady called

Elaine Tagg, who was Mrs Wolstenholme's Retail 16

17 Line Manager. You say in your statement to the

18 Inquiry at paragraph 13(v) that, to the best of

19 your recollection, you were involved in the

20 drafting of the witness statements of Keith

21 Baines and Jan Holmes.

> You have fairly recently, I know, had the opportunity to refresh your memory as to the content of Elaine Tagg's statement dated 16 October 2003. If we can have that, please,

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1 problems which she had with the system and 2 generally, these problems related to the use and

3 general operation of the system and were not

4 technical problems relating to the system.

5 Copies of the call logs for the period

6 10 January 2000 to 30 November 2000 together

7 with a brief analysis of the calls to the

8 Horizon System Helpdesk which I prepared

9 following Mrs Wolstenholme's suspension are at

10 the pages 28-112 of 'EMT1'. Whilst there were

11 some problems at other branches, they were not

12 insurmountable and were often due to the system

13 crashing or were general teething problems."

14 At the time, did you have any concerns about 15 the accuracy of Ms Tagg's assessment of the 16 types of problems which Mrs Wolstenholme was 17 reporting via the Horizon System Helpdesk?

A. I don't recall that I did, because we were just 18 acting on the information and instructions that 19 20 we received from the client and, obviously, the

21 documents, you know, that were provided.

22 Q. You refer in your statement for the Inquiry to your involvement in the drafting of Keith 23

24 Baines' witness statement. He was at the time

25 a Post Office employee who held the role of

1		contract manager with responsibility for	1		to occur, this is usually through incorrect
2		contracts with Fujitsu Services; that's right,	2		inputting to the computer system in the office
3		isn't it?	3		affected by the mistake. All subpostmasters
4	Α.		4		were fully trained in the use of the Horizon
5	Q.	He appears to have produced two witness	5		equipment. The system was fully tested before
6		statements for these proceedings, one dated	6		it was used by the Post Office and it is fit for
7		14 October 2003 and the second dated 11 August	7		its purpose. The system itself does not create
8		2004, the second one being a matter of days	8		losses as is claimed by Mrs Wolstenholme."
9		before the trial date. Just to clarify, were	9		What was the process by which Mr Baines'
10		you involved in the drafting of both of those	10		first statement was drafted; can you remember?
11		statements?	11	Α.	
12	Α.	,	12	Q.	Did you take instructions over the telephone?
13		them, and I think, as I mentioned in my	13		Did you have a meeting? Did he send you
14		statement, it would also have been the case that	14		a draft?
15		counsel was instructed to review and advise on		A.	
16		the draft statements, as he would have been with	16		telephone or face-to-face, and then produced
17	_	Elaine Tagg's as well.	17		a draft, which we'd have amended and looked at
18	Q.	Just looking for now at the first of these	18		over a period of time. I can't remember, is it
19		statements, please, may we have on screen	19		in this statement or his other one where
20		POL00118250. If we can go over the page,	20	_	there's isn't there a query in the draft?
21 22		please, to paragraph 5 of this statement. We see here the evidence:	21 22	Q.	
			23		a query in the draft
23 24		"Any faults that occurred in the Horizon			Yeah.
24 25		computer system were eliminated once they were identified. Whilst it is possible for mistakes	24 25	Q.	which we can turn up if you'd like us to. My question for the moment is about who else was
20		133	20		134
1		involved in the process. So was anyone from	1		the key points, going over to the second page,
2		Royal Mail Legal Services involved in this	2		please, about halfway down. A little further
3		process?	3		down, please, starting:
4	A.	With all the statements before they were	4		"The statement from Ms Elaine Tagg, the
5		finalised, everything went through my contact at	5		Retail Network Manager of the Post Office
6		Royal Mail, or it would have done. That's	6		Limited, at paragraph 11 stated that:
7		whether, you know, it's Jim Cruise or Mandy	7		"Mrs Wolstenholme persisted in television
8		Talbot and, as I said, counsel would also be	8		the Horizon System Helpdesk in relation to any
9		involved as well.	9		problems which she had with the system
10	Q.	Were you told by Mr Baines or indeed anyone else	10		generally, these problems related to the use and
11		from the Post Office about the faults that	11		general operation of the system and were not
12		occurred in the Horizon computer system that are	12		technical problems relating to the system.'
13		referenced at that paragraph 5 when the	13		"This, in my opinion is not a true
14		statement was being drafted? Were you told what	14		representation on the evidence that I have had
15		they were?	15		access to. Of the 90 or so fault logs that
16	A.	I can't remember.	16		I have reviewed, 63 of these are without doubt
17	Q.	Jason Coyne provided an opinion in the case in	17		system related failures. Only 13 could be
18		January 2004. May we have this on screen,	18		considered as Mrs Wolstenholme calling the wrong
19		please. It is WITN00210101. That first page is	19		support helpdesk requesting answers to 'How do I
20		the covering letter, dated 21 January 2004, sent	20		? type training questions."
21		to you and copied to Mrs Wolstenholme. We've	21		Pausing there, did you find this assessment
22		been through this document in some detail this	22		of Ms Tagg's evidence by Mr Coyne troubling at
23		morning with Mr Coyne and I know you are	23		all?
24		familiar with it, so I don't intend to go over		A.	Well, I would have done at the time, yes.
0.5		the nement line but line but instabline on an	25		Did you spice it with Me Tons on anyone also

the report line by line but, just picking up on

25 **Q.** Did you raise it with Ms Tagg or anyone else

1		from the Post Office, as far as you can	1		to your primary Post Office contact from Legal
2		remember?	2		Services in the first instance?
3	A.	I don't remember specifically raising this but	3	A.	Yes, I'd have sent it to Jim Cruise, I think, at
4		I know I certainly raised concerns about the	4		the time, would I? But yeah, I'd have sent it
5		report itself. Not only the his opinion	5		to my primary contact immediately, yes.
6		about Ms Tagg's statement but just generally.	6	Q.	May we have on screen, please, POL00118249.
7	Q.	Mr Coyne goes on in the next paragraph:	7		This is an email from Jim Cruise to Keith Baines
8		"The majority of the system issues were	8		and others, copied to you, dated 30 January
9		screen locks, freezes, and blue screen errors	9		2004. We can see here:
10		which are clearly not a fault of	10		"You have previously had some involvement
11		Mrs Wolstenholme's making, but most probably due	11		with this case in which losses at the above SPO
12		to faulty computer hardware software, interfaces	12		are being blamed by the former SPM on the
13		or power."	13		Horizon computer system being faulty and causing
14		Over the page, please, about halfway down,	14		the losses.
15		we then have this:	15		"The case is before Blackpool County Court
16		"From 31st October, (starting at call log	16		and a computer expert, Best Practice Group Plc,
17		number 10253234) there seems to be a number of	17		is the expert witness and they have produced
18		logs which talk of 'large discrepancies' in	18		an opinion which concludes that the system was
19		stock figures, trial balances with 'all sorts of	19		defective and the majority of errors noted in
20		figures showing minus figures' [with another	20		the fault logs could not be attributed to being
21		call log referenced]."	21		Mrs W's case fault. This is clearly unhelpful
22		What was your reaction at the time to	22		to POL's case."
23		Mr Coyne's opinion?	23		Then he asks:
24	A.	I was shocked and concerned.	24		"Who would be the best person to see the
25	Q.	Would you have sent this opinion from Mr Coyne 137	25		opinion and comment on it please. Would it need 138
1		to be referred to Fujitsu itself? It may be	1		Can you remember now what Mr Cruise's
2		that we can take up with the expert witness some	2		immediate response to Mr Coyne's opinion was?
3		of the matters referred to in the report and	3	A.	I believe it was surprise and, you know, shock,
4		clarify them or even persuade them that they are	4		similar to mine.
5		wrong if this is possible."	5	Q.	Did you think Mr Cruise's suggestion, if we can
6		Turning over the page, please, we see	6		go back, please, to the first page of that
7		Mr Coyne's opinion was sent under cover of this	7		document, that it may be that they could
8		email to its recipients.	8		persuade the expert that he was wrong, was
9	MS	PRICE: Being conscious of the time, sir, should	9		an appropriate one?
10		we have a very short break now? I do hope still	10	A.	Sorry, could you just repeat that again?
11		to finish my questioning by 2.00 when we need to	11	Q.	Did you think that suggestion from Mr Cruise,
12		finish for the day but I'm conscious we've been	12		that it may be that they could persuade the
13		going for some time. Just five minutes, sir.	13		expert that he was wrong, was an appropriate
14		I think you may be on mute, sir.	14		one?
15	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: I'm saying that I'm in your hands	15	A.	No, but, obviously, I wasn't involved in the
16		and five minutes is fine by me.	16		drafting of that detail but I certainly wouldn't
17	MS	PRICE: Five minutes, then.	17		have advised that that be said or that be, you
18	(1.2	20 pm)	18		know, that that would ever be done.
19	•	(A short break)	19	Q.	May we have on screen, please, FUJ00121515.
20	(1.2	28 pm)	20		This is another email from Jim Cruise, this time
21		PRICE: Sir, can you see and hear us?	21		dated 24 February 2004. It's sending
22		WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you.	22		an attachment called "Cleveleys letter" to Keith
23		PRICE: We just had up on screen the document	23		Baines and Colin Lenton-Smith. It is copied to
24		POL00118249, the email from Jim Cruise to Keith	24		you, among a number of others. We have the
25		Baines and others from 30 January 2004.	25		letter which was attached. Could we have that 140

on screen please, it is FUJ00121512. This is a letter from Colin Lenton-Smith to Keith Baines, dated 20 February 2004. So scrolling down, please, we see Colin Lenton-Smith at the bottom there.

He explains that he's writing:

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"... in response to [Mr Baines'] letter of 6 February 2004 and note Post Office's concern in respect the Expert's opinion that the Horizon System installed at Cleveleys branch was defective and that the HSH was more concerned with closing call than preventing recurrence of faults.

"An appendix is attached which sets out Fujitsu Services' view of and response to the main points in the Expert's report.

"In respect of the earlier correspondence between Jan Holmes (Fujitsu Services) and Jim Cruise (Post Office Limited), we would be prepared to discuss this further if this would help progress the situation."

Then going over the page, please, we can see an attached document entitled "Appendix". Do you remember reading this document at the time?

A. Yes, I do now, having seen it, yes.

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as stated in my original note."

One of the reasons Mr Coyne gave for the comparative figures from other branches provided in Fujitsu's appendix not changing his mind was that he had not been provided with the raw data. Do you know why the raw data from the comparison exercise was not provided to Mr Coyne?

- A. No, I don't, I'm afraid, no.
- 9 Q. May we have on screen, please, FUJ00121534.
  10 This appears to be an email sent on 3 March 2004
  11 by your secretary, but sending on your comments
  12 about Mr Coyne's response; is that right?
- 13 A. Mm-hm. Yes.
- 14 Q. In those comments you say:

"The response to the initial report of Jason Coyne of Best Practice Group has been sent to him and his reply is attached. He has not taken on board any of the points made and has not revised his report at all.

"I would welcome any further points you have to make on his further report but it seems to me that his report cannot be accepted by PO Limited and that an application needs to be made to the court for Fujitsu to give evidence about the Horizon System and its working in view of the

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1 Q. Just pausing there. You say at paragraph 17 to

2 your statement of the Inquiry that Peter Sewell

3 asked Fujitsu to review Mr Coyne's report. The

4 reference you provided in your statement is to

5 an email chain from August 2003, before

6 Mr Coyne's instruction. Is it right to

7 understand that it was, in fact, Mr Baines who

8 asked Fujitsu, through Mr Lenton-Smith, to

9 review Mr Coyne's opinion?

10 A. Yes, it is right, yes.

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11 Q. May we have on screen, please, POL00118221, at

external page 236, please. This is a letter

from you to Mr Coyne, dated 27 February 2004.

14 Was this you sending on the Fujitsu document

15 entitled "Appendix" containing comment on

16 Mr Coyne's opinion?

17 **A.** Yes, I believe it would have been that, yeah.

18 Q. We have Mr Coyne's response to Fujitsu's

19 observations. Can we turn up, please, external

20 page 57, within this bundle. Mr Coyne's

21 response came by email on 2 March 2004 and we

22 can see Mr Coyne's conclusion over the page,

23 please, just above the "Best Regards":

"In short to answer the question posed in your letter, No my opinion, currently, remains 142

stance taken by the expert witness."

So was this your advice to the Post Office,
that an application should be made for the Post
Office to rely on evidence from Fujitsu about
the Horizon System and its working?

A. From -- to the best of my recollection, what
 would probably have happened is that we were - the Post Office were being told one thing by the
 expert and something else by Fujitsu, so, on the

10 basis of the information that they were

11 receiving from Fujitsu, then I would have said

that on the basis of that, then we couldn't

13 accept the report and Fujitsu would need to

14 therefore, like I say, give evidence and then it

would be a matter for the court to decide.

16 Q. May we have on screen, please, FUJ00121567.

17 This is an email from Jan Holmes to Jim Cruise.

18 dated 12 March 2004, copied to Colin

19 Lenton-Smith. It doesn't appear that you were

20 copied into this email but I'd like to ask you

21 about some of the observations made in it.

22 Mr Holmes gives his observations on Mr Coyne's

23 reply in the first sentence:

"We have reviewed Jason Coyne's reply to our paper and are disappointed that he was unable or

unwilling to change any of his original opinions based on our original submission."

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He made some further observations on Mr Coyne's reply and explains that a further paper is attached. Then this, in the penultimate sentence:

"We are happy to accommodate him at any or all of our locations and arrange such interviews and access to data that he requires, and would ask that you make this offer to him."

May we have on screen, please, WITN04600206. This is the attachment to Mr Holmes email of 12 March.

Sir, you were asking about the date for this document earlier in relation to the evidence of another witness. It was attached to an email of 12 March 2004.

18 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thanks very much.

MS PRICE: Were you provided with the email from
 Mr Holmes or the attached response from Fujitsu
 that we see here at the time?

A. I don't remember seeing the email that you just
 showed me before. I can't say. But I would
 have been provided with this response.

25 **Q.** About halfway down this page there is

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1 Cruise's boss:

"The PM rejected the offer that was made to her some time ago and a trial date has been set for August (I don't know exactly when). POL are still taking advice as to how best to deal with this and Mandy's view/belief was that the safest way to manage this is to throw money at it and to get a confidentiality agreement signed. She is not happy with the 'Experts' report as she considers it to be not well balanced and wants, if possible, to keep it out of the public domain. This is unlikely to happen if it goes to Court."

Is this description of Mandy Talbot's view of the case consistent with your recollection of the Post Office position at the time, that the safest way to manage this was to throw money at it and get a confidentiality agreement signed?

A. I don't ever recall having that discussion or
 even the reference to a confidentiality
 agreement. I don't think that was discussed
 with myself anyway. I don't think so.

Q. Were you aware at all that it was a priority for
 the Post Office to keep Mr Coyne's opinion about
 the Horizon System confidential?

1 a reference to a Known Error Log, a KEL, and

2 that's his statement, that paragraph starting

3 "His statement that the HSH". Did you

4 understand what a KEL was at the time of your

5 involvement in Cleveleys?

6 A. Gosh. I may have known at the time but I can't7 recall.

8 **Q.** If you had known that Known Error Logs still existed, would you have considered those to be

10 potentially disclosable documents?

A. If I'd have known that they existed, I would
 have said that they were disclosable documents,

13 yes.

14 Q. Were you aware at the time that Fujitsu had made15 an offer to Jim Cruise, for forwarding to

16 Mr Coyne, to accommodate Mr Coyne at Fujitsu

17 locations?

18 A. I don't know, I actually don't remember that at19 all.

20 Q. May we have on screen, please, FUJ00121637.

21 This is an email from Jan Holmes to Colin

22 Lenton-Smith, dated 7 June 2004. We can see

23 here that there's an account of a conversation

24 with Mandy Talbot and this was the document that

25 I was thinking of earlier, the reference to Jim

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1 A. I think it -- I may not have been involved at

2 this -- I may not have known that at this stage

3 but then I've seen the advice that we got from

4 our barrister, Stefan Lewinski and advice on

5 evidence and quantum, and that talks about

6 publicity. So if it was -- it would have been

7 referred to probably shortly after this or

8 around the time of the conference with counsel

9 that the Post Office were concerned about

10 publicity.

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11 Q. Picking up, then, on that advice from counsel,

may we have this on screen, please. The

reference is POL00118229. May we have page 18

of this document, please. We can see here that

the date of the document is 26 July 2004, so

16 less than a month before the listed trial.

17 Would you have drafted the instructions to

18 counsel to advise on evidence in quantum?

19 A. Yes, I would have done.

Q. Turning back, please, to page 3 and starting at
 paragraph 10, we have here the advice from
 counsel:

"Mrs Wolstenholme has defended the proceedings, claiming that the computer system installed by the Post Office was defective and

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1	this was, in fact, the cause of the losses	1	"Recognising the weakness of its position,
2	recorded within her accounts. Further,	2	the Post Office has made a payment into court of
3	Mrs Wolstenholme puts the Post Office to strict	3	£25,000."
4	proof of the losses it claims. Finally,	4	Over the page to paragraph 14, we can see
5	Mrs Wolstenholme counterclaims for damages in	5	that counsel was advising on a number of
6	respect of: wrongful termination of her	6	matters, the first one being the Post Office
7	contract; breach of her human rights; a claim	7	claim against Mrs Wolstenholme and the issues of
8	under the Commercial Agents (Council Directive)	8	evidence that it raised. Over the page again,
9	Regulations 1993; a claim for the breach of the	9	please, we find the crux of the matter at
10	implied term to provide a computer system fit	10	paragraph 17:
11	for its purpose."	11	"In view of the negative expert's report in
12	At paragraph 11:	12	this case regarding the computer system in
13	"The trial of this matter is now about one	13	place, Mrs Wolstenholme's suggestion that the
14	month away. A joint computer expert's report	14	errors that arose were the result of defects in
15	has been obtained. This report concludes, from	15	the computer system must be taken seriously. It
16	the limited records available, that the computer	16	is sufficient to place genuine and significant
17	system installed by the Post Office did appear	17	doubt on the evidence relied upon by the Post
18	defective. There is a very limited amount of	18	Office. In my opinion, to dispel that doubt and
19	documentation available in respect of the detail	19	to persuade a Court that its claim was
20	of calls made by Mrs Wolstenholme and problems	20	justified, the Post Office would need to be able
21	with her computer at the relevant time as well	21	to produce to the Court sufficient original
22	as in relation to the errors and losses which	22	evidence in support of its claim. It is unable
23	built up in her Post Office records. This is	23	to do so. I therefore conclude that the Post
24	because these records were destroyed about	24	Office's claim against Mrs Wolstenholme in
25	18 months after events occurred.	25	respect of losses on her asked would be likely
	149		150
1	to fail."	1	"Given the lack of evidence in support of
2	Over the page, again, please to	2	the Post Office's position on losses, and also
3	paragraph 19:	3	the strong evidence suggestive of serious
4	"Further, for the Post Office to have	4	failures in the computer system installed at the
5	a chance of succeeding in its monetary claim	5	Cleveleys' premises, the suggestion that
6	against Mrs Wolstenholme it would also need	6	Mrs Wolstenholme was in serious or repudiatory
7	evidence of the following:	7	breach of her subpostmaster agreement appears
8	"(i) clear proof that the secondary evidence	8	unsustainable. In the circumstances, there
9	provided by the Post Office had to be or was	9	would appear not to have been grounds for
10	extremely likely to be, correct;	10	summary termination of that contract.
11	"(ii) clear evidence that the computer	11	Accordingly, pursuant to paragraph 9(1)(m) of
12	problems reported by Mrs Wolstenholme would not	12	the Contract, Mrs Wolstenholme was entitled to
13	or could not have had any impact on the losses	13	a minimum of three months notice of
14	and figures contained within her accounting	14	termination."
15	system;	15	Over the page, please, to paragraph 25:
16	"(iii) ideally, clear evidence to counter	16	"In the circumstances, Mrs Wolstenholme's
17	the criticisms made by the computer expert in	17	breach of notice claim appears likely to
18	this case."	18	succeed."
19	Paragraph 20:	19	May we turn, please, to page 11 of this
20	"On my understanding of this case, I do not	20	document, which is paragraph 37, a little
21	anticipate that such evidence will be	21	further down, and this is dealing with
22	anticipate that such evidence will be available."	21	Mrs Wolstenholme's claim that there had been
23	Then at paragraph 21, in relation to the	23	a breach of an implied term in respect of the
24	claim for wrongful termination of	24	computer:
25	Mrs Wolstenholme's contact:	25	"Mrs Wolstenholme claims that there was

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a breach of an implied term that she be provided with a computer system that was fit for purpose. This term has not been admitted by the Post Office and there is a case for arguing that any such term should only extend as far as the obligation to take reasonable steps to provide a computer system that was fit for its purpose. The basis for implying either term would be that it was necessary for the purpose giving the subpostmaster contract business efficacy and/or as representing the obvious but unexpressed intentions of the parties."

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Over the page, please. Counsel addresses a possible argument on the qualification of such a claim at paragraph 39, namely that Mrs Wolstenholme's contract would never have been terminated were it not for the defects in the computer system.

Then at paragraph 40, there is some advice on how to address this aspect of Mrs Wolstenholme's claim:

"It is in relation to the possibility of such a claim being advanced by Mrs Wolstenholme that the form of any implied term in respect of the computer system becomes important. If the

retained. Her claim against the Post Office in respect of failure to give proper notice is likely to succeed. What is the appropriate course of conduct in the circumstances, particularly given the desire of those instructing me and the Post Office to avoid, if possible, publication of the negative experts' report in the public arena?"

Just pausing there, "the desire of those instructing me and the Post Office", who had expressed the view, as far as you can remember, that they wanted to avoid publication of the negative experts' report in the public arena?

- 14 A. The Post Office.
- Q. Can you remember who in particular, now? 15
- A. No, it would be whoever I was dealing with at 16 17 that time
- Q. What did you understand lie behind this concern 18
- 19 of the Post Office? 20 A. At the time, I can't remember what would --
- 21 I don't know what lay behind that, because 22 I just knew, from their point of view, that they
- 23 wouldn't want the adverse publicity of defects
- 24 being shown in the system -- in the Fujitsu --
- 25

you know, the Horizon System. But I don't 155

1 term extended simply to the Post Office taking

2 all reasonable steps to provide a computer

3 system fit for its purpose, then the fact that

4 the system provided may have been defective on

occasion does not necessarily indicate a breach 5

6 of this term. However, evidence would need to

7 be adduced, on behalf of the Post Office, that

8 reasonable steps were indeed taken. For this

reason, I consider it would be advisable to seek

10 to introduce, on behalf of the Post Office.

11 further evidence setting out further detail as

to: support provided in respect of the computer 12

13 system installed; and attempts made to rectify

14 defects identified. This evidence might be from 15 an appropriate employee within the Information

16 Technology part of the Post Office business,

17 and/or from an appropriate employee from the 18

suppliers of the computer system itself." 19 Moving, then, to counsel's conclusions.

20 Page 15 of this document, please, paragraph 49 21 at the bottom of the page:

22 "On the basis of the above, it can be 23 concluded that the Post Office claim against

> Mrs Wolstenholme will fail, save for the return of the equipment which she has possibly

> > 154

1 remember. I can't remember anything more than

that. I mean, I suppose it was already --2

3 Mrs Wolstenholme had already brought a claim in

4 the Employment Tribunal. It had gone to the EAT

5 and they probably just were concerned that

6 adverse publicity would follow any decision of

7 the court.

8 Q. Did you share counsel's view that the Post

9 Office's claim against Mrs Wolstenholme will

10 fail, save for the claim relating to the

11 equipment retained?

12 A. The Post Office would have had a copy of that,

13 of the advice -- of counsel's advice.

14 Q. Yes, but did you share counsel's view on the

15 case, on the merits?

16 A. Did I share that with the Post Office?

17 Q. Did you share that view? Did you agree with it?

18 A. Oh, yes. Yes, I did.

Q. Would we be right to understand that the only 19

20 aspect of the claim or counterclaim which

21 counsel was advising should not be conceded was

22 claim for the breach of the implied term that

23 the computer system provided to Mrs Wolstenholme

24 would be fit for purpose?

25 A. Sorry, could you just repeat that, please?

1	Q.	We've been through a number of aspects of the	1		matter could then proceed to a more limited
2		claim. So the claim the Post Office brought	2		hearing to deal specifically with the remainder
3		against Mrs Wolstenholme for the recovery of	3		of her counterclaim."
4		losses, the counterclaim relating to not giving	4		Just going over the page, please, at
5		notice of termination and then the alleged	5		paragraph 54:
6		the counterclaim relating to an alleged breach	6		"The opportunity for taking these points
7		of an implied term that the computer system	7		will of course be the dates already listed for
8		provided to Mrs Wolstenholme should be fit for	8		trial. The issues for the client and those
9		purpose. The counsel addressed each of those	9		instructing me are the additional evidence
10		and, in relation to the implied term point,	10		raised above and the question of how the trial
11		·	11		· ·
12		seemed to be taking a slightly more nuanced	12		should be approached. Again, I have already
	٨	view.			discussed this with my instructing solicitor.
13	Α.	Mm.	13		Having considered the matter further, my view is
14	Q.	So looking, please, at paragraph 51:	14		that the most appropriate course would be for
15		"In the circumstances, it seems that one	15		these matters to be raised at trial following
16		method by which seems the Post Office might best	16		appropriate application having been made in
17		achieve its objectives could be by making	17		respect of any further evidence and/or changes
18		careful admissions within the Court proceedings.	18		to the statement of case put forward by the Post
19		This is a matter which I have discussed already	19		Office. With careful case management, the
20		with those instructing me, but I can set briefly	20		issues identified could then be isolated at
21		out a possible approach.	21		trial and dealt with as deemed fit by the trial
22		"To illustrate, the Post Office could	22		judge."
23		formally abandon its claim against	23		So the evidence that counsel was advising in
24		Mrs Wolstenholme and formally admit her claim of	24		relation to appears to relate to reasonable
25		wrongful termination of her contract. The 157	25		steps taken to produce a computer system that 158
1		was fit for purpose to deal with that implied	1		please, WITN04600310. We can see there's a lis
2		term breach argument being made by	2		of attendees there, including you, Mandy Talbot,
3		Mrs Wolstenholme.	3		counsel, Jan Holmes and Keith Baines, and there
4	A.	Yes.	4		are some notes with counsel's opinion on the
5	Q.	So my question is: is that the only aspect of	5		case, on the first page.
6		the claim that counsel was advising should be	6		Going over to the second page and the third
7		continued with, that should be defended?	7		page, we see about halfway down:
8	A.	Yes, it does appear that that's the case, yes.	8		"SL: cannot say there were no glitches.
9	Q.	So was it in this context that counsel was	9		Will be candid about that but what did we do to
10		suggesting further evidence should be obtained	10		help it?"
11		from the Post Office and Fujitsu?	11	A.	Yes.
12	A.	Yes. Yes, to the best of my recollection,	12	Q.	Then there's some discussion further down this
13		I think it would have been.	13		page about evidence that might be obtained from
14	Q.	We know that Jan Holmes and Keith Baines both	14		POL or POA. Over the page again, to the last
15		produced statements dated 11 August 2004,	15		page, please. We see:
16		shortly before trial and I think it's your	16		"JH will take up with KB.
17		evidence that you assisted with the drafting of	17		"Turning info into Witness Statements JH
18		those statements. Was that the point of these	18		& KB liaise with SH."
19		statements: to address reasonable steps taken by	19		So is that you?
20		the Post Office to provide a computer system	20	A.	Yes.
21		that was fit for purpose?	21	Q.	"SH agreed."
22	Α.	I believe so but there's a reference to we	22	٠.	So is that the background to you working on
23	,	clearly had a conference with Stefan Lewinski,	23		those statements with Jan Holmes and Keith
24		as well.	24		Baines?
—-T			4		

25  $\,$  **Q.** We can go to that. May we have on screen,

25 A. Yes. We'd have had the -- received the advice

1	from counsel and then had the conference, on the		1	it. You can decide between you how best to
2	basis of the advice which he gave, to discuss it		2	proceed in these rather unfortunate
3	in more detail, and then, as a consequence of		3	circumstances.
4	this conference, those statements would have		4	MS PRICE: Sir, I think we have some questions on
5	been prepared.		5	behalf of Core Participants, maybe about
6	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Ms Price, we're perilously close		6	20 minutes in total, as I understand, in
7	to 2.00.		7	addition to my five or ten minutes. So we do
8	MS PRICE: Sir, I was just comparing notes with		8	have around half an hour of evidence left.
9	Mr Blake. We are going to need to come back		9	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right, that's fine. I'll say
10	tomorrow, I'm afraid, sir. I don't have much		10	no more, then. See you in the morning, 10.00.
11	more but it will be another five or ten minutes		11	(2.00 pm)
12	and we are now nearly at 2.00, I'm afraid.		12	(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am
13	I apologise for not being able to keep to my		13	the following day)
14	time.		14	<b>3</b>
15	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, that's fine. Subject to		15	
16	anybody in the room thinking this is		16	
17	inappropriate, if you really are only five or		17	
18	ten minutes away from finishing, then I would		18	
19	have no objection to the witness being asked to		19	
20	answer questions in writing to complete her		20	
21	evidence, rather than be dragged back tomorrow,		21	
22	unless of course she doesn't mind. If she		22	
23	doesn't mind, that's fine.		23	
24	But feel free to discuss that possibility.		24	
25	All right? I don't need to make a ruling about		25	
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