## Friday, 29 September 2023

## (10.00 am)

MS PRICE: Good morning, sir. Can you see and hear us?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you. 5
MS PRICE: May we please call Mr Jones.
JOHN HOWARD JONES (sworn)

## Questioned by MS PRICE

MS PRICE: Can you confirm your full name please, Mr Jones.
A. It's John Howard Jones.
Q. You should have in front of you a hard copy of a witness statement in your name and dated 17 May 2023. If you turn to the last page of that, please, which is page 14, do you have a copy with a visible signature?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Is that your signature?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. Are the contents of that statement true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
A. Yes, they are 22
Q. For the purposes of the transcript, the reference is WITN08560100. There's no need to display that now.

1
management and the control of cash at the Network.
Q. Then in 1990 you became a branch manager?
A. That's correct.
Q. In 1994 you became a Retail Network Manager?
A. That's correct.
Q. In 2002, you became an Area Development Manager working on the Network Reinvention Programme. What was your role in relation to the Network Reinvention Programme?
A. I was the area development manager for the Western Territory. The Network Reinvention Programme split the country into three areas: North, East and West. Essentially, West was everything on the motorway network west of the M6, west of the M40, west of the M25, right the way down to the South and West Coast.

Essentially, I managed a team of Business Development Managers who were developing the voluntary closure programme, so we were basically reducing the size of the network from a commercial point of view in the urban sector. We didn't cover the rural sector. So we were managing the voluntary exit of postmasters and closure of those branches as part of an ongoing

Thank you for coming to the Inquiry to assist it in its work and for providing the witness statement that you have. As you know, I will be asking questions on behalf of the Inquiry.

Today I'm going to be asking you about issues which arise in Phase 4 of the Inquiry, focusing on your involvement in the proceedings bought by the Post Office against Mr Castleton, relating to the alleged losses at Marine Drive Post Office branch.

You joined the Post Office in 1982 as a counter clerk; is that right?
A. That is correct, yes.
Q. In 1988 you became a visiting officer. Can you help us with what that role involved?
A. The visiting -- the visiting officer essentially worked out of defined areas in -- I was working in South Manchester and basically you were visiting directly managed branches, agency branches, franchise branches, to really manage the kind of score -- balance scorecard that we had in those days, which was around service, customer service and accuracy of documentation, particularly to our clients, as well as cash 2
commercial journey.
Q. You became a Senior Account Manager in 2006; is that right?
A. That is correct.
Q. In 2009 you became a Project Manager in directly managed branches?
A. Yes.
Q. A Flagship Manager of a directly managed branch in 2010 --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and you held Area Manager roles between 2011, and 2019?
A. That is correct.
Q. In 2019 you held the role of Regional Manager of the East of England; is that right?
A. That is correct.
Q. Separately to these roles, you held the role of an Appeals Manager from 2003 until you left the Post Office in 2019; is that right?
A. That is correct.
Q. Just to be clear, you were, in this role, hearing appeals from disciplinary decisions taken by the Post Office, weren't you?
A. Not necessarily -- well, not necessarily
disciplinary, the -- there's a wide range of
appeals that you hear as an Appeals Manager.
Disciplinary, yes, but also the vast majority of appeals are against various process. So for example, if a branch manager or a counter colleague did not agree with their personal development review score, it's not a disciplinary appeal hearing but they have that right to appeal against that score. Appeals against our attendance policy, bullying and harassment, et cetera.

So it's quite a wide-ranging element, so with Post Office employees there are a significant area of policies that they can appeal against.
Q. You explain in your witness statement made for the Inquiry that the Appeals Manager role is not a permanent role, rather it is something which Senior Managers do alongside their day-to-day role?
A. That is correct.
Q. Did that possible, any difficulties for those performing the Appeals Manager role in terms of the time they had to deal with these appeals?
A. You had to manage your time very succinctly, depending on the size of the case, the nature of 5
original decision-maker, from whose decision you were hearing the appeal, was considering, so you could look at new information?
A. Absolutely, yes.
Q. The process, which you also set out at paragraph 6 of your statement to the Inquiry, consisted of pre-appeal inquiries, you say to establish the nature of the case --
A. Yes.
Q. -- the appeal interview --
A. Yes.
Q. -- post-appeal inquiries --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and, you say, conclusion and summing-up; and finally, the decision and any recommendations. Is that a fair summary?
A. That's absolutely correct.
Q. Is it right that you only heard three appeals brought by subpostmasters during your career with the Post Office?
A. That is correct.
Q. Only one of these was related to the Horizon System, Mr Castleton's case?
A. That is correct.
Q. Mr Castleton's appeal was against the decision
the case, to give full due diligence to that appeal and fairness to that appeal. Very often, a huge amount of your analysis work was done in the evenings or it was done at the weekend, just to slot it in around the day job. Obviously, you were making time slots when you needed to visit a branch to hold the hearings, et cetera. But a huge amount of time was actually on your own time.
Q. You say at paragraph 6 of your statement to the Inquiry that:
"Appeals were allocated by the HR Service Centre and that the allocation process and the way in which an appeal is conducted is intended to ensure that appeals are an independent rehearing of a case."

So your understanding of your role as
an Appeals Manager was to hear cases afresh; is that right?
A. That's absolutely correct.
Q. You were not, therefore, limited to the material before the original decision-maker?
A. Sorry, can you clarify that?
Q. If you were hearing things afresh, you were not limited, were you, to the information which the 6
taken by his Retail Network Manager Catherine Oglesby on 17 May 2004 to terminate
Mr Castleton's contract as the subpostmaster of Marine Drive Post Office; that's right, isn't it?
A. That is right, yes.
Q. A decision which you upheld?
A. That is correct.
Q. I would like to start, please, with the documentation which you were provided with when you were allocated Mr Castleton's appeal. Could we have on screen, please, POL00071234. Could you explain, please, what this document is?
A. This document is a standard business document that is summarised in the event of a termination. It's normally done by the contracts manager however, in this case, I believe it was done by Cath, to detail the reasons, the rationale, for their decision.
Q. We can see Mr Castleton's details at the top and then at point 4 there are brief details of the case. If we can scroll down a little bit so we can see that whole box, please.

You see there the brief details are:
"Large unexplained losses at the office over 8
a 12-week period. PMR blames the Horizon kit and software problems. No errors on system. No error notices due. No figures could be identified that had been changed by the system. Checks done by helpline, NBSC, Horizon Helpdesk, Girobank, postmasters records and Chesterfield. Request sent to Fujitsu to check suspense account software, as not yet received. PMR suspended as a precaution. I have had three temps in there over the last ten weeks, no large losses."

At point 5, we have "Details of specific charge":
"Unexplained losses totally $£ 25,758.75$. ."
We have the date on which Mr Castleton was suspended, 23 March 2004, then a brief summary at point 7 of the reasons for termination. It says this:
"No evidence to support PMR claims of computer problems. As soon as the people were removed from the office the losses stopped. The computer equipment has not been changed. Losses reached a very large amount in a very short space of time."

Could we go, please, to page 3 of this 9
the steps you took but, just focusing at the moment on the documents that you had in front of you and had been looking at --
A. Yes, I had all of those documentation.
Q. If we can scroll down, please, towards the bottom of the index. Item 16 seems to have been documents contained in a separate file, comprising record of balances, cash accounts, Horizon printouts. Do you recall having been given this separate file at the time?
A. No. Not on receipt of the appeals file.
Q. Going over to the fourth page of this document, please, we can see the title at the top "Marine Drive Post Office Summary of Events". This is a five-page document. If we can look at the last page, please, which is page 8 within the larger document we're in. The last line here:
"My decision is to summary terminate Lee Castleton's contract for services."

Did you understand this summary to have been authored by Catherine Oglesby who made the decision to terminate Mr Castleton's contract?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. The next document, going over two pages, please, to page 10, is the "Audit Report", dated
document. This appears to set out the documents which you were provided with for the appeal; is that right?
A. That is correct, yes.
Q. Would you have read the documents enclosed with this index?
A. Absolutely. That's the sort of the key understanding of the case, really, to look at the level of detail that's gone into the case, which starts to form my processes and appeals, and it's just to look at the sort of pre-appeal enquiries, that can range from rechecking the sort of calls that Cath has made, certainly going to the Late Accounts Division at Chesterfield to ascertain are there any error notices in the system that could potentially explain the losses that were being incurred.

And due to the really unusual nature of the case -- l'd never heard of a case where either a counter colleague or a postmaster had singly blamed Horizon for the losses and not followed the appropriate advice that had been given by the Retail Line Manager -- I chose to visit the branch to --
Q. If I can just stop you there. We'll come on to 10

23 March 2004, the second document in your pack, so to speak. This had been completed by Helen Hollingworth, inspector. The first paragraph reads as follows:
"An audit took place at Marine Drive Post Office on 23 March 2004. Helen Hollingworth led the audit and in attendance was Chris Taylor. The audit commenced at 8.00 am and on our arrival the subpostmaster was very pleased to see us. He explained problems he had been having at the office regarding balancing. His problems with balancing started in week 43 with a misbalance of [minus] $£ 4,230.97$. He was adamant that no members of staff could be committing theft and felt that the misbalances were due to a computer problem. He had been in contact with the Retail Line Manager Cath Oglesby and the Horizon helpline regularly since the problems began. The following table gives further weeks' balance declarations on the cash account."

So the first contemporaneous document you would have read, assuming you reached the file in order, was this, saying that Mr Castleton was "very pleased to see us", he explained his

12
problems with balancing, he was adamant that the problem was with his computer system and he had been in regular contact with the Retail Line
Manager and the Horizon helpline since the problems began.

When you read this, what did you take from it?
A. It was unusual, that the -- all the advice that Cath had previously given to Mr Castleton didn't seem to be in place in terms of the bringing everything into individual stocks units and --
Q. If I can just pause you there.
A. Yeah, sorry.
Q. If you're reading your file and this is one of the first documents you read, when you read this, before going to consider anything else, what did you take from this account here from the auditor, in relation to Mr Castleton?
A. That the audit team were there to identify and potentially find a solution to the issues that were appertained between those dates and the list of weeks 43 to 48 , the losses that were being incurred or the misbalances that were being incurred.
Q. Going over the page, please, page 11 of this 13
bottom of his balancing problems, wasn't he?
A. He was and, again, that was unusual that a postmaster would ask for a full audit of their branches. I've never -- certainly never in my experience have come across that, nor would an audit team necessarily act on that. They would normally go through the Retail Line Manager before committing to an audit.
Q. You set out in your statement to the Inquiry the steps you took as part of your pre-appeal hearing enquiries. Could we have that statement on screen, please. It's WITN08560100, and it's page 5 of that statement, please, paragraph 16. You say here:
"I contacted the decision manager who was Cath Oglesby to go through the documentation I had received. This allowed me to ensure that I had a thorough understanding of the case and the associated paperwork and to understand the rationale for the decision to terminate Mr Castleton's contract."

Did you speak to Catherine Oglesby before or after you went through the documentation you had been provided with; can you remember?
A. I would have spoken to her after because l've no
document, we see a letter of suspension of the same date as the audit report. Over the page again, please, page 12 of this document, we see a letter to Mr Castleton from Ms Oglesby dated 26 April 2004, informing Mr Castleton that she is considering the summary termination of his contract on the grounds that the audit on 23 March resulted in a total shortage of £25,758.75.

Going on two pages, please, page 14 of this document, this is a letter from Mr Castleton to "Mrs Oglesby and Mrs Joyce", dated 28 April, which followed Ms Oglesby's letter of 26 April. In it, he says this of the audit, in the first substantive paragraph:
"I would like to point out that the audit took place at this office at my request. I felt I was in a situation that nothing was being done and I felt I needed more people involved."

This was Mr Castleton flagging that he was the one who had requested the audit which took place, wasn't it?
A. It was indeed, yes.
Q. So Mr Castleton was seeking scrutiny of his accounts, he was seeking help to get to the 14
working relationship with Cath. I know the name but, as an Appeals Manager, it's independent of the particular area that Cath works in. So it would always have been after, in my recollection, because -- it's kind of got to be after, because you've got to understand what the case is and then sort of build that rationale as part of your pre-appeal enquiries.
Q. You already had a summary of events from Ms Oglesby in your papers, didn't you, which we've looked at, that first document?
A. Yes, I have.
Q. Given you were independently rehearing this case, do you think there was a danger in speaking to the original decision-maker, in addition to simply reading their summary of the events, in that their view of the case might influence your own?
A. No, and I actually don't. I've always followed that process with all my appeals to understand what the decision -- irrespective of the type of appeal, to understand the rationale for the decision taken, which it might seem strange but it does help you with your pre-appeal enquiries. It can point you in certain directions that may
not be immediately obvious when you read the papers.
Some appeals do not come as concise as that one, some are a little harder to deal with, so I always follow that process.
Q. One of the pre-appeal hearing enquiries you made was to contact the Transactional Account Team at Chesterfield, wasn't it --
A. Yes, it was.
Q. -- to check for error notices, as they were called during the period we're talking about? It's right, isn't it, that error notices were generated when a subpostmaster made a mistake when inputting transaction details into their computer?
A. That is correct.
Q. So because there were physical documents evidencing transactions, which were sent off in an envelope to the relevant team, such an error could be picked up?
Q. So error notices do not assist us in a situation where the discrepancy is being caused not by the incorrect inputting of the figures but, instead, for example, by a bug, error or defect in the
where the discrepancy is being caused not by the 17

Horizon System?
A. Not necessarily, because of the -- with an error notice, they come from various clients. So if you are experiencing a discrepancy, it could be from Alliance \& Leicester Girobank, it could be from National Savings, some of those error notices take a considerable amount of time to come back through the system. So one of the things that I was looking at when I reviewed all the paperwork and the documentation prior to visiting the branch was really to start to close down points that could explain the discrepancies.

So some error notices take three months, some can take six months or longer. I've known some from National Savings Bank can take considerably longer because we're relying on the customer submitting their documentation at the same time. So it was important to understand what was coming through the system that potentially could have explained some or all of the discrepancies that Mr Castleton was incurring.
Q. But regardless of when that error notice might come through, primarily what's being picked up 18

Support Centre and the Horizon System Helpline to confirm if the checks on the Horizon integrity had been completed and to check the phone calls to ascertain if the branch had ever had to close. The Horizon System Helpline confirmed that the checks previously requested did not raise any issues on the integrity of the system. The National Business Support Centre confirmed that there were no reported calls of the branch closing."

You refer here to checks on the Horizon integrity. At the time, did you understand it to be part of the role of the Horizon System helpline to conduct checks on the integrity of the system.
A. That is my understanding, yes, or they may refer it to Fujitsu.
Q. Just decoding that, what that meant was whether the figures produced by the system were accurate; is that right?
A. No. What I was referring to here was Cath had made various calls into the HSH, the Horizon System Helpdesk, to have those checks. I believe at the time, those checks hadn't come through and it was trying to verify the position 20
that Cath had started off as part of her case.
Q. But just in terms of what the integrity of Horizon actually meant, that was referring, wasn't it, to whether the figures being produced were accurate?
A. Yes, it was
Q. Setting aside Mr Castleton's case in particular, did you understand, at the time, that Horizon software problems could, in principle, cause discrepancies in branch accounts?
A. That's in 2004 and in 2006. I personally had never been made aware of any issues whatsoever in the Horizon System.
Q. The Horizon System helpline looked at the integrity of Horizon and, presumably, you didn't think that was just in this case. What did you think the purpose of those checks were, if it wasn't possible for the system to cause discrepancies in the accounts?
A. To ascertain if everything that had been processed in the branch was correct and if there was nothing affecting the accuracy of that information.
Q. Contained within the documentation you were provided with for the appeal was a table setting 21
the breakdown given by Andrew Wise in his statement for the Castleton case.

Did you read the information relating to the helpline calls? Did you read through these tables?
A. Absolutely. Because that started to indicate -when I first read through both of the tables, one of the areas that kind of jumped out at me at the first -- before I visited the office, was, potentially, was this a training issue? That there were lots of various issues that have been relayed, some are transactional, some are just kind of reaching out and asking for help.

And that's what I started to look at when I visited the office, to see what the state of the accounts were, what the -- how the office was trading. I appreciate there'd been two interim postmasters in there, but that really was the start point to go to the office and look at the accounting documentation for myself to try to rebuild the accounts, as I didn't have any other analysis, really, as part of the case and what was happening.
Q. On any view, this was not someone who was seeking to hide the apparent discrepancies which
out the calls made from Marine Drive Post Office to the Horizon System helpline and a table setting out the calls made from the branch to the Network Business Support Centre. Could we have on screen, please, POL00071234, starting at page 20, please.

So we can see at the top there that these are the HSH, the Horizon System helpline calls. On my count there were 20 calls relating to the Marine Drive branch in the relevant period, that is January to April 2004, nine of which related to balancing or discrepancy issues and six of which were reports of computer problems. Does that sound about right to you, having looked at this document to refresh your memory more recently?
A. Yes, it does. I think the remainder are NBSC calls.
Q. Going forward, please, to those NBSC calls, page 23. On my count, there are 74 calls recorded here. Of these calls, 11 appear to relate to the issue of balancing or discrepancy issues, a further 11 appear to relate to computer issues and a further four relate to both balancing and computer issues, and that was 22
were occurring, was it?
A. Absolutely not.
Q. Quite the opposite, wouldn't you agree?
A. Indeed, yes. Absolutely.
Q. You say at paragraph 11 of your statement to the Inquiry, and you have said it again this morning, that you considered this case to be most unusual, as you had never before seen or heard of an instance where a subpostmaster or POL employee was making a claim that discrepancies were as a result of the Horizon System. Did you ask anyone at the Post Office whether there were any other cases in which subpostmasters or Post Office employees had made such claims?
A. There's only one point at the -- towards the end of the appeal hearing, after -- we'd done the appeal hearing, sorry -- that I discussed the case with my colleagues on the points that Mr Castleton had asked me to look at. That was a discussion of the case with a very experienced colleague.
Q. But did you ask whether there were any other cases, apart from Mr Castleton's, of people experiencing what Mr Castleton was experiencing? 24
A. No, I didn't. It was the first time I'd seen anything like it.
Q. Did the fact that you thought this to be an isolated case influence the way you assessed Mr Castleton's appeal?
A. No, it was really to relook at everything that was happening within the branch that I could possibly analyse to see if there was -- there was no evidence that Mr Castleton was producing as part of the -- his case to Cath Oglesby. So, therefore, it was -- my thought train was looking at rebuilding those accounts to see if there was something that could explain the shortfalls, and that's the approach I took with this appeal.
Q. Had you been aware of other cases where subpostmasters or Post Office employees were making the same claims as Mr Castleton, that apparent discrepancies were being caused by problems with the system, would that have changed the way you approached this case?
A. Potentially, yes. But I still thought it was really important to go through all the documentation at the branch to ascertain its arithmetical correctness, to -- I'm not 25
meeting, Julie Langham, was a representative of the National Federation of SubPostmasters. Mr Castleton was, in fact, not a member of the National Federation of SubPostmasters and it is Mr Castleton's recollection that Ms Langham was, in fact, a fellow subpostmaster. Was that just an assumption you were making as to Ms Langham's association with the National Federation of SubPostmasters?
A. Yes, I was. I was completely unaware that Mr Castleton wasn't a member of the NFSP, although, however, that is detailed in the additional bundle that l've recently received.
Q. One of the factors you have cited in favour of your decision to uphold the termination of Mr Castleton's contract, this paragraph 34a of your statement -- we needn't display that now -was that Mr Castleton did not take the action recommended by Cath Oglesby to create single stock units to identify if there was embezzlement taking place and to perform frequent balance and cash declarations to identify daily or interdaily balance positions. You asked Mr Castleton about this at the appeal hearing, didn't you?
Q. Could we go, please, to the record of the appeal hearing contained within your decision letter to Mr Castleton. The reference is POL00071227. It is page 4 of that document, please. Starting, please, at the third paragraph down there:
"JJ ..."
Is that you?
A. It is.
Q. "... asked what action he took following the first discrepancy in Week 39. LC said he made a call to the helpline to say he was short and began to work through all the figures. LC stated he kept asking for help following subsequent shortages, but his Retail Line Manager said it could be in the system and would probably come back.
"JJ asked if LC had taken any other action. LC said they had discussed splitting the stock unit or running a manual week. LC said he had been in favour of running a manual week to prove the system was wrong, but this had not actually been done and he was then suspended."

We also have some handwritten notes of this meeting. Could we have on screen those notes,
please, which is POL00082324. Starting on page 2 of that document, please, as the first page is blank, we see the title and reference to who was at the meeting, so notes of the meeting held on 1 July 2004 at Darlington Post Office and the people present at interview there.

Then over to page 4 of this document, please, about halfway down we see JJ -- this is you -- and the question:
"Your RLM suggested splitting the stock
unit. Why were you so adverse to this?"
LC says:
"No. Not until week 9 of the problem. I was not adverse to splitting the stock unit, I was adverse to the fact that the suggestion had been made in week 9 after so many phone calls and repeatedly asking for help. We discussed a manual week also and we decided that was the best way to prove the fault on the computer, but Chrissie was away over the next two balances and then I was suspended before we had [and it looks like the word 'chance' at the bottom]."

So Mr Castleton is effectively saying, isn't
he, that the suggestion came too late to be 29
he didn't take it on board?
A. My understanding is that the -- that Cath had asked Mr Castleton a lot earlier in the case to put that discipline in place.
Q. Both before the appeal hearing and at the appeal hearing, it was clear, wasn't it, what
Mr Castleton was saying, consistently and repeatedly, that the discrepancies being shown by the Horizon System were caused by the system and did not represent real losses?
A. That is correct.
Q. Could we have on screen, please, Mr Jones's statement to the Inquiry, WITN08560100. At page 6, please. Paragraph 21 here, you say:
"As far as I can recall, Mr Castleton submitted no actual specific evidence at the appeal hearing, the core of his submission as I recall centred on blaming the Horizon System and the data telephone lines for causing the cash discrepancies."
A. Yes -- sorry.
Q. Apologies. What evidence could Mr Castleton have produced at the appeal hearing, over and above the evidence you already had as a result of your enquiries?
helpful. Do you remember him saying that?
A. I don't recall those specific words. My understanding from Cath was that the suggestion to go to individual stocks and do the frequent cash declarations is a standard process that we always put in place where we've got multi-user stocks and, when you put them down to individual stocks, you can start to isolate and eliminate any issues you may be having, and particularly doing the cash declarations, frequently you would, if there was a bug there or if there's anything that was causing anything untoward, you can immediately address it, rather than simply waiting until you do the cash account at the week end -- at the end of the physical week, then it becomes a bit of a needle in a haystack.

If you're splitting that stock unit up and putting that rigour in place, you can see if there are things happening that potentially Cath could have taken back to the Horizon System Helpdesk, simply to look at.
Q. But in circumstances where Mr Castleton was saying the suggestion was too late to be helpful, was that a factor that you should have taken into account in your decision making, that 30
A. I kind of return back to the advice, the salient advice that the -- Cath Oglesby had put -- asked him to put in place. That is the standard approach that we use right the way up to myself leaving the business in 2019, that when you're operating on multi-user tills, then if you put those into individual stock units and do the necessary cash declarations maybe in the morning and then afternoon, then if there is anything that is causing a discrepancy in the system, then you will see that.

That should be -- and give the opportunity to take that away and look at it. That wasn't available, it didn't happen and so, for me, there was nothing else that I could look at that related to the Horizon System being the core of these issues.
Q. But that not being available, what else could Mr Castleton have produced at the appeal hearing in these circumstances to support what he was saying?
A. That's a very good question. I'm really not sure because the other cases -- and this is with hindsight -- that are identified in Mr Justice Fraser's report, that postmasters were

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identifying issues and raising those and dealing with those that were accepted by the HSH call centre. That really was the area we were looking at that, that that particular process hadn't been followed, so we really had nothing else to go on.
Q. You go on at paragraph 22 of your statement, directly below, to say:
"I do not recall any other submissions or mitigation made by Mr Castleton or Julie Langham other than the requests by Mr Castleton to recheck the Horizon accounts from weeks 45 to 50 of the 2003/2004 financial year."
A. That is correct.
Q. Some analysis of weeks 46 to 50 was done after the appeal hearing by a Post Office area manager called Anita Turner, wasn't it?
A. It was indeed.
Q. You communicated the results of that analysis to Mr Castleton by way of a letter dated 8 July 2004. Could we have this on screen, please. It's LCAS0000113, at page 54 of that document, please. If we can just zoom out a little, so we can see further down and over the page, this is the letter from you, going back, please, one 33

| "Cash account week 48 , week ending | 1 |
| :--- | :---: |
| $26 / 02 / 2004$ : The branch declares a shortage | 2 |
| discrepancy of $£ 3,509.18$. The figure of | 3 |
| $£ 8,243.10$ remains in the suspense account. The | 4 |
| table at the top of the printout indicate the | 5 |
| zero discrepancy from week 47 and the | 6 |
| discrepancy from week 48 . | 7 |
| "Cash account week 49 week ending | 8 |
| $04 / 03 / 2004$ : The branch transfers the shortage | 9 |
| discrepancy from the previous week of $£ 3,509.18$ | 10 |
| to the already open suspense account. The | 11 |
| rolling total in the suspense account now stands | 12 |
| at $£ 11,752.28$. The branch then declares | 13 |
| a further shortage of $£ 3,512.26$. | 14 |
| "Cash account week 50, week ending | 15 |
| $11 / 03 / 2004:$ The branch does not transfer the | 16 |
| previous shortage discrepancy from week 49 of | 17 |
| $£ 3,512.26$ into the suspense account. This | 18 |
| shortage discrepancy is rolled over into week 50 | 19 |
| without the subpostmaster making good the | 20 |
| discrepancy. It should be noted that rolling | 21 |
| losses forward is in breach of the | 22 |
| Subpostmaster's Contract. The final balance | 23 |
| declared of $£ 10,653.11$ is made up of $£ 3,512.26$ | 24 |
| from week 49 and a further shortage discrepancy | 25 |

page, to Mr Castleton, and you say:
"... Mr Castleton
I am writing to advise you of the
independent analysis that has been conducted on the Horizon balance printouts that you requested be performed at your appeal hearing on 1 July 2004."

Just pausing there, the independent analysis you're talking about is the review of the documentation by Post Office Area Manager Anita Turner?
A. That is correct.
Q. The analysis is as follows:
"Cash account week 46, week ending 12/02/2004: The branch declared a shortage discrepancy of $£ 8,243.10$.
"Cash account week 47, week ending 19/02/2004: The branch opened a suspense account facility and transferred the shortage discrepancy of $£ 8,243.10$ into the discrepancy. The week ending report at the top of the printout indicates the discrepancy from the previous week and the entry from the addition to table $2 a$ (the suspense account) which shows a net discrepancy for the week of zero. 34
of $£ 7,140.85$ from week 50 ."
In your statement to the Inquiry at paragraph 27 -- we needn't turn it up unless you wish to, Mr Jones -- you say this:
"The results of the findings were communicated to Mr Castleton on 8 July 2004 to advise him of the findings of the analysis and confirm that the Horizon accounts for the weeks 45 to 50 were deemed to be performing correctly."

But it's right, isn't it, that all this analysis did was to confirm the discrepancies being shown by the system?
A. Mr Castleton specifically asked at his appeal hearing to check the suspense accounts and, to give full and due fairness to the points Mr Castleton was raising when I discussed the case with a colleague, that was why we asked an independent manager who had no dealing with the case whatsoever to cast a separate set of eyes over how the suspense account was working. That's what Mr Castleton had asked for and those results were the outcome of that second set of eyes looking at the accounts.
Q. What the analysis did not do was to assist in 36
any way on the question of whether the figures being generated by the system were correct, did it?
A. Mr Castleton asked us to look at the suspense account to see if it was working correctly. My understanding of that analysis is that the suspense account appeared to be working correctly.
Q. Just to be clear, Mr Jones, then, we shouldn't take from your statement at paragraph 27, the statement to the Inquiry, that "the accounts were deemed to be performing correctly" meant anything more than the analysis we've just seen.
A. Indeed.
Q. At paragraph 24 of your statement to the Inquiry, you say that:
"In 2004 [you] were unaware of what Fujitsu generated Horizon reports were available."
A. That is correct.
Q. This was, as you've said a number of times in your statement, an independent rehearing of the case --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and we've already established you were not limited to the material which had been before 37
behalf of its subpostmasters or can't you help with that?
A. I really can't help with that. However, I think

Mr Justice Fraser's report clearly identifies that that really wasn't the case in all the circumstances.
Q. You did some analysis of the cash accounts at Marine Drive Post Office for the weeks 46,47 and 50 , didn't you?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. The results of this feature in your decisions letter sent to Mr Castleton under "Factors affecting the decision". Could we have that decision letter on screen, please. It is POL00071227.

It is page 7 of that document, please. About a third of the way down the page we see point 5 , "Factors affecting the decision". Then at the bottom of the page at (f) we have this:
"The daily cash transactional analysis that was conducted identified in cash accounts week 46,47 and 50 that there was clear evidence of false cash declarations being made as the cash received from a giro customer was not reflected in the final cash declaration at the branch.

Ms Oglesby.
A. That is correct.
Q. Did it occur to you, at any stage when you were making your enquiries, to ask someone, whether that was someone from within the Post Office or someone at Fujitsu, whether there was any further evidence which Fujitsu might be able to provide which might assist you in your task?
A. I was completely unaware of any other reports, as -- within my role or in the role of Appeals Manager, that could have assisted me.
Q. You say at paragraph 29 of your statement to the Inquiry that you had no authority to access Fujitsu. Setting aside the question of whether you personally had authority to access people at Fujitsu, did it occur to you that someone at the Post Office should ask Fujitsu to investigate further whether any problems with the system might be causing the apparent discrepancies?
A. I didn't and, with hindsight, that potentially could have been a route that I could have followed.
Q. To the best of your recollection, did the Post Office see it as any part of its role to raise concerns like Mr Castleton's with Fujitsu on 38

Mr Castleton was unable to offer any explanation for such discrepancies, other than it 'was the system'."

Could we have on screen, please, Mr Jones's statement to the Inquiry, that's WITN08560100. Page 9 of that document, please, paragraph 34.
You list here the factors you say you took into consideration when upholding the decision to terminate Mr Castleton's contract. Do take the time to look at this again, so the factors that you list here and then, again, over the page it continues. (Pause)

Just scrolling down to the end of those factors. You do not list in your statement to the Inquiry under these factors the factor that you listed in your decision letter at (f), that there was clear evidence in the cash accounts for weeks 46,47 and 50 of false cash declarations being made, as the cash received from a giro customer was not reflected in the final cash declaration at the branch. Why is that?
A. That was a complete oversight by myself.
Q. You did include this factor, factor (f), in your decision letter in your statement you made for 40
the litigation against Mr Castleton, didn't you?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. Could we have that statement on screen, please. It is LCAS0000113. It's page 3 of that, please. Starting towards the bottom of the page at paragraph 12, please. You say here:
"I also conducted a daily transactional analysis from both daily and weekly balance snapshots in the cash accounts of weeks 46, 47 and 50 in which there were losses of $£ 8,243.10$, zero, and $£ 10,653.11$ respectively. My analysis showed that there were anomalies between the cash contained in the balance snapshot for the Tuesday of those weeks and the final cash declaration set out in the final balance in the weekly Cash Account produced on the Wednesday. For example, I evaluated individual transactions between Tuesday 10 February 2004 and Wednesday 11 February 2004 for cash account week 46. My evaluation indicated that the actual transactional receipts exceeded those payments that were declared by the Marine Drive branch by approximately $£ 15,300$. It can be demonstrated, by reference to a giro receipt, that a cash deposit of $£ 16,500$ by the car auction [there's 41
book and receipt slip. I was advised by the Interim Subpostmaster that this was normal practice for the branch to check the amount in the pouch and then complete the deposit and receipt slip on behalf of the customer. The amount deposited was then processed without any verification with the customer. The pouch would then be returned to the customer with the receipt slip on their next visit to the branch."

You then say at 14:
"I analysed all of that customer's deposits since November 2003 to confirm that the deposits had been brought to account. I double checked the cash account weeks of 46,47 and 50 where I had carried out a daily transactional analysis, to establish whether the levels of cash that had been declared had actually been received from this customer. My analysis showed that erroneous cash declarations had been made because the cash usage that occurred in the weeks 46,47 and 50 was not reflected in the final cash declared by the Marine Drive branch upon completion of the weekly balance. In other words, the cash that the giro receipts and balance snapshots showed that the Marine Drive 43
a customer number] was received on Wednesday 11 February 2004 but this is not reflected in the Cash Account signed by Mr Castleton at the close of business on the Wednesday. A cash declaration of approximately $£ 49,000$ should have been made as opposed to the incorrect cash declaration that was actually made of $£ 33,100$. In other words, my assumption at the time was that the Marine Drive branch physically received approximately $£ 15,300$ more cash than the amount it actually declared for that week in the Cash Account. I have no conclusive explanation for this other than that the paper records were seriously inaccurate."

You go on at paragraph 13:
"I again visited the Marine Drive branch on 30 June 2004 to track the Girobank business deposits that the branch received and to establish the flow of cash into the branch. The Marine Drive branch permanently held the account book for the car auction who regularly deposited significant volumes of cash each Wednesday. The deposit pouch I examined from the company at my visit to the branch contained a large amount of cash and was accompanied by a blank inpayment 42
branch had physically received from this customer was not reflected in the cash that Mr Castleton declared in the Cash Account for each of the weeks examined. The cash physically deposited at the Marine Drive branch should have been accounted for."

So you were telling the court, in your witness statement, that there were three instances where cash which was received by Marine Drive branch was not declared. This, if true, would have been a great cause for concern, would it not?
A. Potentially, yes. The analysis that was done in terms of looking and tracking the overall business and the mean value was also looking at potential areas where we could further look to explain the discrepancies. So I have no Fujitsu reports or the luxury of Fujitsu reports to do all that analysis. The analysis was done manually from the documentation that I had available to me at the branch.
Q. Shortly before the trial took place in December 2006, the Post Office obtained a draft accountancy report in the Castleton case. This draft was dated 29 November 2006. You have seen 44
this document, I think, for the purposes of preparing your statement to the Inquiry; is that right?
A. Yes, that was the -- this is the BDO Stoy Hayward report?
Q. Yes.
A. Yes, that's the first time I had seen that document.
Q. So just to be clear, were you provided with a copy of that report or told anything about its findings, relating to your evidence, before you gave evidence in the Castleton trial?
A. No, I was not. The first time I saw that report was with the Horizon Inquiry documentation that was sent to me. That's my recollection.
Q. Could we have that draft report on screen, please. It is POL00069955. We can see, as you have already said, it was prepared by BDO Stoy Hayward, chartered accountants. Could we go, please, to page 4 of this document. This is the summary of the report. Over the page, please, subparagraph (e):
"There is a suggestion by a Mr John Jones of the Post Office that Mr Castleton had omitted receipts from a car auction customer which paid 45
16.20 shows a receipt of $£ 16,537.25$ for account [there's a reference number].
"Report dated 18 February 2004 timed at
17.04 shows a receipt of $£ 12,000.00$ for account
[again there's a reference number].
"Report dated 10 March 2004 timed at 16.46
shows a receipt of $£ 12,000$ [for the same account].
"From the detailed transaction listings
these amounts can be seen to be entered into Horizon as follows:
" $£ 16,537.25$ at 15.08 on 11 February 2004, posted to code 262.
" $£ 12,000$ at 13.26 on 18 February 2004 posted to code 262.
"£12,000 at 11.55 on 10 March 2004 posted to code 262."

Do you accept now that you were wrong in your conclusion set out in your witness statement for the litigation against Mr Castleton that Mr Castleton had not declared these three large sums of cash received by the branch.
A. Yes, I do and I can't explain how that happened.
Q. Could we go, please, to the transcript of your
in large amounts in cash to its Girobank account. My conclusions are that the three large amounts that Mr Jones refers to were correctly dealt with in the cash account. This is discussed in section 7."

Could we go, please, to section 7, that's page 22 of this document. This is entitled "Errors in Recording Receipts; Incorrect cash declarations". At 7.1.1:
"In his witness statement Mr John Jones of the Post Office comments at paragraph 12 about incorrect cash declarations.
"Mr Jones refers to receipts in a customer's account [there's a reference number]. I have examined the available information on this account covering the points that Mr Jones raises.
"In his Daily Analysis -- Cash Account for weeks 46,47 \& $50 \ldots$ Mr Jones suggests that the three receipts were excluded from the weekly cash balances declared by Mr Castleton.
"I have been given photocopies of Giro Deposits -- Office Copy slips which would appear to be printouts from the Horizon computer.
"Report dated 11 February 2004 timed at 46
evidence given at the trial on 12 December 2006. The reference is LCAS0000570. Turning, please, to the second page of that document. We can see you being sworn at the top, examination-in-chief by Mr Morgan and then, a bit further down at E, please, the question is:
"Could you turn through that document to page 489. Could you tell the court what you see there, please.
"Answer: That is a statement and my signature dated on 5 October 2006.
"Question: Have you had an opportunity to read this witness statement recently?
"Answer: I have indeed.
"Question: Are there any corrections or changes to it that you would wish to make?
"Answer: No, there are not."
Can we turn, please -- well, first of all, when you were being questioned by Mr Castleton, do you remember him challenging you on your conclusion at paragraph 12 of your statement for the litigation? The conclusion relating to the figure of $£ 15,300$ ?
A. Very vaguely. I can't specifically recall it but I do remember Mr Castleton challenging me on 48
that, yes.
Q. Could we turn, please, to page 47 of this transcript, starting just below "Circa 22":
"So from there, where you state the branch receives $£ 15,300$ more in receipts than in payments, is that still the case?"

So this is a question from Mr Castleton. The answer here from you is:
"From these figures that would appear not to be the case.
"Question: Are you happy with those figures?
"Answer: I am indeed.
"Question: So that is factual then, as far as you are aware?
"Answer: As far as I am aware."
Then His Honour Judge Havery asks between D and E :
"What is this thing anyway, Mr Castleton?"
The document that is being asked about.
The defendant:
"It is something that Mr Jones prepared for the appeals panel where he provided me with proof that cash came into the office but was not in actual fact accounted for. But because of 49
operate and it was his position, wasn't it, that
you had not taken into account cash which had been returned, which was foreign currency or unusable notes. Do you recall that now?
A. Very vaguely.
Q. We have Mr Castleton's skeleton argument for the trial. Could we have that on screen, please. That is POL00107458. Turning, please, to page 5 of that document. Actually, if we can go back one page, please, just to put it in context.

We see here "Defendant's skeleton on trial to be heard from Monday 4 December 2006".

Then going over the page, please, to paragraph 10, which is towards the bottom of that second page. Mr Castleton says this:
"Mr Jones witness, asserts that only £20,000 was returned over the period of 15 January to 17 March. This is because $£ 35,000$ actually returned was made up of foreign currency (Scottish notes), coinage and unusable notes (defaced, ripped). This then proves that the £35,000 returned when taken from the actual ordered $£ 316,590$ gives $£ 282,000$. This, when consideration that the Branch needed £288,000 to fulfil its payments clearly shows that 51
the discrepancies in the figures then the assertion, I believe, is not correct. Do you believe that, Mr Jones?
"Answer: There would appear to be just for 46 a figure that I am not sure where that figure originally derived from.
"Question: So you are happy that in week 46 your assertion that $£ 15,000$ came into the office but in actual fact was not accounted for is incorrect?
"Answer: The branch receives $£ 15,000$ greater than receipts, I would concur that would appear to be incorrect."

I understand your evidence that you were not told about the draft report from BDO before you gave evidence at the trial but, at any point before the trial, did you check the figures, as Mr Castleton had done, to make sure you were right in your conclusions about cash received not being declared?
A. No, I didn't because I didn't have access to that documentation.
Q. Another point which Mr Castleton questioned you on was your suggestion that the branch had been ordering more cash than it needed to have to 50
physically all cash is accounted for. Therefore I would ask that ' C ' is allowed to prove that this physical cash is missing before my witnesses and I are asked to defend these assertions."

Did you check the figures on the levels of cash held by the branch before the trial?
A. Not before the trial, no. Everything that was relating to my analysis was from 2004.
Q. Could we have on screen, please, Mr Jones's statement to the Inquiry, WITN08560100. Page 7 of this, please, it's paragraph 28 towards the bottom of the page. Starting at the penultimate line:
"Given the documentation at my disposal and the enquiries I was able to conduct, I have never been able to determine the cause of the shortfalls experienced by Mr Castleton. It was not possible to determine from the information at my disposal if the discrepancies were caused by the Horizon System. However, my enquiries verified that all the customer transactions over the periods in question were performed correctly and accurately at the Marine Drive branch."

Did it not concern you at the time that you 52
were upholding the termination of the contract 1 of someone in circumstances where the cause of the apparent shortfalls was undetermined?
A. The decision that -- well, as part of my enquiries, all the areas that I was able to look at, with the documentation that was available to me at the time to verify all the customer transactions, essentially, l'd reached a point where everything we'd looked at, that there was nowhere else, really, to go with that and the decisions were based on the balance of probability. So, essentially, I was looking at everything that I possibly could to ascertain was the -- were the accounts operating correctly, and everything that I was able to look at indicated that they were.

There had been two interim postmasters following Mr Castleton's suspension who'd ran the branch, both of those, apart from one error that I believe was appropriate to leaving a customer's transactions on the stack, the branch was operating as one would normally expect a post office to operate.

So there was no other areas that I could possibly look at from the information that I had 53
Q. He was reporting the apparent discrepancies and repeatedly seeking help to get to the bottom of them. You didn't see any problem with the way customer transactions were being done in the branch and you couldn't ascertain yourself, from the information you had, whether Mr Castleton was right that the discrepancy in the figures did not reflect a true loss?
A. That is correct, yes.
Q. In these circumstances, what did you understand to be the reason that the Post Office was terminating Mr Castleton's contract?
A. That the unexplained losses were genuine losses to the business and the Retail Network Managers have a role in the business to protect our assets and value and, therefore, I think Cath had reached a point where those losses were believed to be real losses, hence why she took that decision, probably based on risk.

And that was the understanding of the case: that those unexplained losses were genuine losses and that's why the decision was taken.
Q. If you believed those to be real losses, what did you think had happened to the money?
A. I've no genuine idea where the money went.
available to me at that time, that's -- you evaluate all those points and reach the decision that I did, on the balance of probability that the decision that was taken by Cath Oglesby was the correct decision at that time. Obviously, knowing what we know now, then potentially that was not the correct decision.
Q. You're saying here it wasn't possible to determine from the information you had if the discrepancies were caused by the Horizon System. Again, didn't that concern you, that you simply could not say, from what you had looked at, if his theory was correct or not?
A. Everything I looked at to verify all the customer transactions were done correctly, looking at all the figures that were going into the accounts, there was nothing that alluded to that the Horizon System was not working correctly.
Q. To draw things together, at the time you took your decision, nobody had been able to identify the cause of the apparent discrepancies, there was no evidence that Mr Castleton had stolen any money?
A. Correct

54

There is certainly no accusation whatsoever that Mr Castleton did anything untoward with that. I've never been able to find out where those losses, if they were real losses, went to. Hence why I think at the start of the case the Security and Investigation Team did not want to get involved in that. There was no evidence of any criminal activity taking place, in their view. So I really can't explain where the monies went to.
MS PRICE: Sir, those are all the questions I have. Subject to any questions you may have, maybe it is nearly time for our morning break, to ascertain whether there are any questions from Core Participants.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, let's find that out first. Are there any questions from Core Participants?
MS PAGE: There is a very short question from me, sir.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. I think we will take the morning break now, if I -- because I would like something checked during the break. When you began questioning Mr Jones about what I will call his view in 2004, that there had been, in effect, under-declarations of cash received, 56
which appeared to be part of his reasoning for upholding the termination, and then pointed out that that did not appear at paragraph 34 of his witness statement, I think he used words which suggested that they didn't appear in paragraph 34 because that was an oversight on his part.

I want that checked because, if he did say that, that would be entirely inconsistent with what followed, namely you demonstrating that, by the time he gave evidence at the trial, he was accepting under cross-examination from Mr Castleton that his view on that topic was erroneous or, at least, that's my understanding of the evidence.

I would like that checked because, if he did say that to me, I want to know why he was telling me that, in effect, it was an oversight that it didn't appear in paragraph 34.

Now, I may have misunderstood what he is saying, which is why I want the transcript checked before either I or anybody else pursues that point. So we'll take our break and would someone check the transcript for me, please?
MS PRICE: Yes, sir. Of course. Shall we come back 57
going to ask for one document to be put up on the screen, please. It's POL00083351.

Now, this is an email from you to Mr Stephen Dilley, copying in Mandy Talbot and Cath
Oglesby, and we can see that it's near-ish to the beginning of the involvement of those lawyers in the POL v Castleton trial, 17 November 2005. You've attached your appeal report and you've gone through some of the issues that have come out from that appeal report but, if we scroll down to the bottom you summarise, and that final paragraph reads as follows:
"In summary, the decision to terminate the contract for services of Mr Castleton was sound and on the balance of probabilities the cash was removed by a person or persons working within the branch."

Now, you've just told us in fact there was no evidence, was there, that cash was removed?
A. There was no specific evidence that was ever levelled against Mr Castleton. In terms of the summary of the case, they were believed to be live losses and therefore there was the belief that that cash was missing, hence why
in 20 minutes, in that case? So 11.45.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, please, yes.
MS PRICE: Thank you, sir. (11.25 am)

## (A short break)

(11.45 am)

MS PRICE: Hello, sir, can you see and hear us?
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you.
MS PRICE: Sir, you asked that the transcript was checked. In answer to my question as to why the factor listed at (f) in the decision letter was not included in the list of factors in the statement to the Inquiry, the answer was:
"That was a complete oversight by myself."
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you.
All right. Well, before I ask any questions, if I do, let those recognised legal representatives who wish to ask questions ask their questions.
MS PRICE: I think it's Ms Page who has questions. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.

Questioned by MS PAGE
MS PRICE: Thank you, sir.
Mr Jones, I represent a number of subpostmasters including Mr Castleton. I'm 58

Mr Castleton's contract was initially terminated by Cath Oglesby.

Therefore, taking that assumption, that the cash and the losses were genuine losses, then, on the balance of probabilities, where is that cash? That was the rationale for that statement.
Q. Is it right that you took the view that either Mr Castleton or Ms Train must be guilty of theft?
A. There was never any allegation or insinuation ever made that Mr Castleton did anything improper, and I think that's also recorded at the Royal Courts of Justice, when I think Mr Castleton asked me a similar question.
Q. But that's what you believed, isn't it?
A. Working on the balance of probabilities that if those cash losses were real, and it was believed they were by both the dismissing manager, and there was nothing else that I couldn't uncover to indicate anything else, then there was a belief that that cash had gone.
Q. Do you have anything to say to Mr Castleton now?
A. I've always said, and I said to Mr Castleton at the Royal Courts of Justice, there's never been 60
any insinuation that he did anything wrong. There's been no wrongdoing on the part of Mr Castleton. No evidence to suggest that.
Q. So you don't have anything else that you want to say to him now?
A. I think, on the balance of Mr Justice Fraser's report and the amount of bugs that were uncovered that were in the Horizon System, then I think both myself -- and I'm happy to apologise but, also, I think Post Office Limited have got a duty of care to apologise because, quite clearly, Mr Justice Fraser's identified many bugs that potentially -- there's probably only one, l've looked at those having read Mr Fraser's reports on a number of occasions.
Because you do some soul searching when you find out the nature that was uncovered in the Horizon trial and you've got to do some soul searching to understand that was decision I took correct? And the nearest bug that I could -- or that was recorded in Mr Justice Fraser's report, was the Falkirk bug, that potentially that may, with hindsight, have affected Marine Drive.
So l'm more than happy to apologise that, on behalf of the Post Office but, in essence, at 61

MS PAGE: I have no further questions. Thank you.

## Questioned by SIR WYN WILLIAMS

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Could that document remain on
screen, please. Sorry, if you scroll up, to the sentence which is the one that's visible right at the top where we are. It's the sentence which begins under (i) "On a number of occasions it was demonstrated", could that be highlighted please? It's about halfway through that paragraph.

Now, my understanding, and please feel free to correct me, Mr Jones, if I'm wrong in this, that when you wrote your statement for the High Court, that sentence, not in precisely that form of course, but that sentence was included in your witness statement. When I say "included", that point rather, rather than the sentence, was included in your witness statement.
A. That is correct.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That was because, at the time you dismissed the appeal of Mr Castleton, you believed that to be true, as I understand it?
A. I do and documentation that -- both BDO Stoy Hayward and their forensic analysis concluded the same. I also understand in the additional
that time in 2004, we were completely unaware, and even at 2006 when the case went to the Royal Courts of Justice, of anything that was actually wrong with the Horizon System.

The one point I would like to make is that BDO Stoy Hayward were provided with detailed Fujitsu reports, certainly weren't available to myself. When those accounts were reopened in 2006, what did they actually see? Because of the detail of those reports that the author has concluded his report on, would suggest that they were not just Credence reports; they were at a different level that, potentially, when they were reopened, could Fujitsu have seen a bug or something affecting those accounts, that would have explained everything that has since transpired -- or I say everything but has since transpired from the Horizon trials.

So at that point in 2006, those accounts were reopened, Mr Castleton's account was reopened. So I think it's a question that needs to be asked of Fujitsu. What did they see? Because they provided really detailed reports to BDO Stoy Hayward to do a forensic analysis of those accounts. Does that answer the question? 62
bundle of papers that Fujitsu have made a similar -- I think it is Julie Welsh from Fujitsu, I'm not sure who she was responding to, she wasn't responding to myself, it was that they were also seeing exactly the same. So I think it's not just me saying that I believe that was the case; there are two other independent statements that say exactly the same.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I'm confused now, and you'd better put me right, because I thought that this sentence, in effect, related to that part of your appeal decision which you subsequently, in the trial, accepted wasn't correct on the basis.
A. This, sir, is different. This is the --

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right, then I've made a mistake in highlighting that sentence. Forget that sentence and let me start where I -- from a different point.

In your appeal decision at paragraph (f), you made as one of your reasons for upholding the appeal that which was contained in that paragraph (f). That's correct, isn't it?
A. Which is that paragraph, sir?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. I'm sorry, I'm not
64
helping you as much as I should. Ms Price asked you to look at paragraph 34 of your witness statement, and you have that in hard copy in front of you, and she pointed out to you that paragraph (f) of your appeal decision did not feature as a factor in paragraph 34 to your witness statement.
A. Yes, sir, that is what I referred to as a complete oversight on my part.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Exactly.
A. And I apologise for that.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Exactly. Now, you have said that it was an oversight that you did not include that amongst the factors and I just want to ask you a few questions about that.

In the witness statement which you made for the Castleton trial, it did feature as one of the reasons why you upheld the termination, did it not?
A. It did and my analysis was based on the branch undercopies that I was able to access at the branch to recreate that. I think the documentation was -- also referred to under the BDO Stoy Hayward report was using Fujitsu's either Credence what -- other error reports to 65
seen it. You weren't aware of it.
A. Sorry, yes, I wasn't aware of it. If I had seen it, then --
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Never mind about the hypothetical.
A. Right.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So nothing in the Stoy Hayward report alerted you to the fact that you may have made a mistake, for the simple reason that you hadn't seen it?
A. Correct.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. But Mr Castleton asked you questions along the lines of "You're mistaken in your belief", did he not?
A. He did.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: As a result of those questions, you conceded that you were or at least could have been mistaken in your belief?
A. Yes, and it comes back to the -- my analysis to derive the points I made was taken from manual undercopies in the branch. Hence why there may have been -- those undercopies may not have been present. That's why the mistake may have occurred.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. My point is simply this: 67
identify those particular transactions. I was using manual undercopies that -- those undercopies may not have been fully complete, hence why the analysis I drew was what it was.

Whereas BDO Stoy Hayward have specific Fujitsu reports that indicated the deposits by time and potentially cash user, I was simply using the hard copies that was in the branch, and therefore it may well be that the individual hard copies for those transactions were not there, or were not in the order that all other documentation was at the branch. I don't know, I can't --
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, because my understanding Mr Jones, is that you had not seen the Stoy Hayward report before you gave evidence in the Castleton trial and, indeed, hadn't seen it until it was disclosed to you by the Inquiry?
A. That is correct.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So nothing in the Stoy Hayward
report could have alerted you to the fact that you may have been mistaken when you gave evidence in the Castleton trial.
A. It potentially could, because the -- if --

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, it couldn't if you hadn't 66
that when you were challenged about it at the trial, you conceded that Mr Castleton had a point or at least may have a point?
A. I did indeed.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. That's why I want to explore with you why you tell me that you'd simply forgotten about this factor when you drafted paragraph 34. Because that event having occurred in the trial, you having realised that you may have made a mistake, makes me wonder how it comes to be that you forgot that, at the time of the appeal decision, you included it as a factor.
A. I just can't explain why it wasn't in the statement I gave. It is a complete oversight on my part. I apologise. I clearly remember the -- well, I vaguely remember it, it was 19 years ago.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, there is another explanation: that you deliberately sought to hide the fact that you had included as a factor in your appeal decision one which you subsequently recognised may not have been of a valid reason for upholding the appeal.
A. Absolutely not. Like I say, I was --

68

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's unduly suspicious on my part, is it?
A. I can only offer an apology, sir, but I -- under no circumstances did I deliberately miss that off my statement to the Horizon Inquiry.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Because if you had thought about it -- and can I suggest to you that what your statement to the Inquiry should have said was "I recall the following factors were taken into consideration as part of my decision", that's how paragraph 34 starts. It would then have included the subparagraph (f) but then would have gone on to say, "I now recognise and I recognised in 2006, that my reliance upon paragraph (f) was misplaced", or words to that effect. That's really what happened, isn't it?
A. With hindsight, like I say, I apologise, sir, that -- well, absolutely. That's what it should have said.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, all right. Thank you very much. I think that concludes the questions, does it?

MS PRICE: Yes, sir.
We do have one matter of housekeeping which affects the next witness and, sir, if you're 69
A. Simon Recaldin.
Q. Mr Recaldin, you should have in front of you three witness statements. I'm going to just take you through each one of them.

The first is dated 30 March 2023. It has the URN WITN09890100. Do you have that in front of you?
A. Ido.
Q. Can I ask you to turn to the final substantive page in that statement, page 15. Is that your signature?
A. It is.
Q. Thank you. The second statement is dated 13 July this year, 2023. It has the URN WITN09890200. Do you have a copy of that in front of you?
A. Ido.
Q. If you could turn to the final substantive page, that's page 31 , is that your signature at the end?
A. It is.
Q. Thank you. Finally, we have a statement, a third statement of today's date, 29 September. That's WITN09890300. Do you have a copy of that in front of you?
amenable to it, I would suggest an early lunch to deal with that rather than a break and then lunch at the usual time.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. That's fine by me.
Mr Jones, thank you for making you witness statement --

THE WITNESS: Thank you.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: -- and thank you for giving evidence before me.

We will convene again at 1.05 ?
MS PRICE: Yes, sir. Thank you.
( 12.04 pm )
(The Short Adjournment)
( 1.05 pm )

## (Proceedings delayed)

( 1.13 pm )
MR BLAKE: Good afternoon, sir.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.
MR BLAKE: Can I call Simon Recaldin, please. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.

MR BLAKE: Thank you.
SIMON RECALDIN (affirmed)
Questioned by MR BLAKE
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full name, please?

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A. I do, but without that reference on it.
Q. Ah, yes. That's absolutely fine. If I could ask you to turn to page 5 of that document, you have the original in front of you or a version that hasn't been uploaded but it's entirely the same. Can you confirm that that is your signature on page 5 ?
A. It is.
Q. Thank you very much.

Are all three of those statements taken together true to the best of your knowledge and belief?
A. They are.
Q. Thank you. As you know, those statements will be uploaded and published in due course.

You are the Remediation Unit Director at the Post Office; is that right?
A. I am.
Q. Can you tell us what the Remediation Unit is? I think it was previously known as the Historical Matters Unit; is that correct?
A. Correct, and the Remediation Unit -- I head up the compensation schemes for postmasters for the Post Office.
Q. Thank you. You've been in that position since

10 January 2022; is that correct?
A. That is correct.
Q. Were you at the Post Office before that or in another job?
A. I was not in the Post Office before that in -I was working for another -- in another role.
Q. Thank you. You are involved in managing the delivery of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme, the criminal appeals process and matters such as that. It may be that you make a return appearance to this Inquiry in Phase 5 or 6 or 7. I'm not going to ask you today about any of those issues.

Today we're going to address a single issue and that is various prosecution statistics that have been provided.

To begin with, l'd just like to get some terms or acronyms out of the way. Can we start with post-conviction disclosure exercise. It's referred to in your statement by PCDE, but if we could stick to the full title, post-conviction disclosure exercise, can you briefly tell us what that is?
A. A post-conviction disclosure exercise is an exercise of bringing data together within 73
data together in one place. That became the PCDE.
Q. Thank you very much. We'll get to the spreadsheets shortly. You have defined Horizon-related cases. Can you tell us or how you define a Horizon related case?
A. Horizon related is where the evidence provided in the prosecution either was essential -Horizon was essential to that prosecution or partly used as evidence for the prosecution.
Q. In terms of figures, you have identified 700 Potential Future Appellants; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. 88 convictions or, in fact I think, two more today have been overturned; is that correct?
A. Post Office 88, and non-post Office prosecution's overturned, three -- sorry, one for CPS, two for Northern Ireland and today two from Scotland.
Q. Thank you. You've identified that there are 538 that have not yet appealed; is that correct?
A. Some of those have appealed and are in the process of having their appeal looked into.
Q. I think in your third statement you have given various numbers of cases that were either
certain parameters, in order to ascertain whether or not we can appropriately evaluate them for the appeals process.
Q. That results, I think, in the identification of what you call Potential Future Appellants. Again, in your statement you refer to those as PFAs but if we could stick to that during your evidence as "Potential Future Appellants". Can you tell us what is a Potential Future Appellant?
A. It's somebody who they would have been convicted and that conviction might have been -- would have been done by Post Office as the prosecutor, the prosecution would be based wholly or partly on data derived from Horizon and, finally, the prosecution would have been taken place between 1999/2000 and 2013.
Q. Who set those parameters?
A. So we worked with P\&P, Peters \& Peters, our legal -- and that was -- those were set through a disclosure management document that was originally set up and an addendum to the disclosure management document, which was an amalgamation of a number of spreadsheets found across Post Office that pulled all that 74
abandoned or refused or cases that are pending?
A. I have.
Q. Thank you. We don't need to repeat those now.
A. Thank you.
Q. To identify what you've termed Potential Future Appellants you have created a casework spreadsheet. Can you previously tell us what casework spreadsheets are?
A. The casework spreadsheet is work identified across the country when we decided to amalgamate all the information to understand the population of potentially unsafe convictions. So we went out to P\&P -- went to Peters \& Peters, sorry, went out to investigate all those. Several of those came in. I think the number in my witness statement is around 100, were brought back to amalgamate them into one central database and then that was analysed and put to the PCDE, along with the full criteria which I've previously described.
Q. So that's the post-conviction disclosure exercise?
A. Correct, sorry.
Q. Can you tell us who was providing those figures to Peters \& Peters?
A. So it was through a disclosure process. So Post 1 Office were doing that and they were independently going out and getting those spreadsheets, the Security team and other teams.
Q. You have created something called the master search term list. Can you tell us what the master search term list is, please?
A. So master search term is the prerequisite to populating the PCDE.
Q. So the PCDE, the post-conviction disclosure exercise, that is a document, is it?
A. Yes.
Q. Yes. I want to ask you this afternoon about a number of different requests that have been made, both by the Inquiry and also under the Freedom of Information process, that appear to give different statistics, and I want to try to get to understand why they are different.

If I could ask you to look -- if we could bring on screen, in fact, paragraph 25 of your second witness statement. So that is WITN09890200 -- thank you very much -- and if we look at paragraph 25. That is page 9. So this was a request from the Inquiry itself, rather than a Freedom of Information Request and we can 77

If it assists, I think you say, for example, that they were based on information in the casework spreadsheets; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. And that there was a degree of verification from underlying papers but that some dates couldn't be verified?
A. Correct.
Q. In fact, you've carried out further verification checks and now the figure is slightly different. So it's now 781 prosecutions with 700 convictions; is that correct? So the number of prosecutions has come down somewhat and the number of convictions has slightly changed?
A. That is correct.
Q. So we have there 781 prosecutions with 700 convictions, that's nearly 90 per cent of prosecutions resulting in convictions. You're not here to give expert evidence but does the Post Office have a view as to whether that is a high conviction rate or not?
A. Doesn't have a view.
Q. Has it considered whether there is a high conviction rate or not? Are you aware of --
A. No, I don't know.
see there it's summarised by you in your second witness statement. You say:
"Request number 6 ..."
That's I think a Rule 9 Request number 6:
"... asked for confirmation of (a) the number of prosecutions [the Post Office] brought (in total) between 2000 and 2015, and (b) the number of those prosecutions brought that resulted in a conviction."

You've set out there that, as part of that:
"[Herbert Smith Freehills] explained that they were instructed that [the Post Office] brought a total of 844 prosecutions between 2000 and 2015, which resulted in 705 convictions, on the basis of the following understanding of the scope of the request and limitations ..."

So you set out, after that, various limitations that applied. Can you summarise for us the limitations that apply in the identification of those figures? So that's 844 prosecutions in that 15-year period, resulting in 705 convictions. I think you'll find those, for your assistance, at paragraph 31 of your witness statement, although we don't need to bring that up on screen.
Q. I'm going to move on to the Freedom of Information Requests and we're going to see what looks like inconsistent figures being given and I'd like you to explain briefly why that might be. We're going to look at the first Freedom of Information Request, that's at paragraph 37 of your statement. It's page 13. Could we please bring that up on screen. So page 13 of the second statement. Thank you. So you've called it here the "[Freedom of Information Act] Response 1", 26 September 2016, and the question, the request to the Post Office was:
"How many subpostmasters have had charges filed against them for false accounting and inflating figures and/or theft? Since 2010."

The response, we can see below, there are various statistics provided and a table. If we could scroll down slightly. Can you assist us with telling us who compiled this response and how they went about that?
A. It was the -- from -- I cannot recall who did it. I do have it in my notes, if you're --
Q. I don't think we need a name but in terms of the department?
A. My understanding, it would have been the -- it 80
would have been overlooked by the Legal department.
Q. Can you briefly summarise for us how they went about obtaining those figures?
A. They would have done an exercise asking various people questions around gathering the data together.
Q. Where from? You described various different spreadsheets, databases, et cetera. Can you assist us with how those figures were obtained?
A. That would have been the starting point. They would have looked at the databases containing the number of prosecutions in that period.
Q. I think you said in your statement that:
"The person who is understood to have compiled the date has confirmed the source of the data likely to have been the casework spreadsheet."
A. Correct.
Q. Is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Are there any limitations in those figures that you'd like to draw to the Inquiry's attention?
A. The limitations are based on the question asked in terms of the request around "false

81
the following reasons ..."
It then gives four reasons below. The first is that:
"The table below is based solely on information held by Post Office Limited, and does not therefore reflect information (if any) that may be held by Royal Mail ...
"The request covers a lengthy period of time extending back 30 years.
"Data relating to convictions between 1991
and 2006 in particular have been compiled from extremely limited available material.
"The table excludes cases where the data held by Post Office is inconclusive as to whether the prosecution was brought by any other organisation, or whether it resulted in a conviction.
"In addition, although you have asked for information on both prosecutions and convictions, the table contains information on convictions only. This is because Post Office does not hold a sufficiently complete set of data for prosecutions which do not result in a conviction, again reflecting the length and aged period of the request.
accounting" and "inflating figures" and "since 2010", so obviously the data produced is limited by the question.
Q. I'm going to move on to another Freedom of Information Request and that's set out at page 14 of your statement. It's referred into your statement as "FOIA", that's Freedom of Information Act "Response 2", 22 May 2020. Now this is a request that was made by Nick Wallis, a journalist and author, and that reads as follows, the Post Office was asked to supply:
"... 'by year the number of prosecutions of: subpostmasters, their assistants or Post Office workers (eg those in Crown Post Offices) brought by the Post Office/Royal Mail since 1990.
Please also supply, by year, the number of criminal convictions which resulted from those prosecutions'."

It's quite a lengthy response but I will read it all out. The response was as follows:
"We do not hold all of the information which pertains to your request. The information we do hold is set out in the table below. However, the data is likely to be incomplete and therefore should be treated with caution, for 82
"The below table sets out the number of prosecutions brought for which we hold records and have been able to determine that there was a conviction. To date, we have been unable to locate any records before 1991. There are 104 cases where Post Office Limited holds information recording that the defendant was convicted, but not the date of the conviction, for which the year has been listed as 'Unknown'."

Then if we go over the page we have there a table.

Now, it doesn't seem to have entirely answered the request because it doesn't separate out prosecutions and convictions. You were able to provide the Inquiry with various statistics for prosecutions and convictions between 2000 and 2015, which we've just talked about. Can you assist us with why it wasn't able to provide both of those details? So both convictions and prosecutions?
A. Because the number of prosecutions, we didn't have a complete set of data for the number of prosecutions.
Q. Thank you. So you did have some data and that 84
data fed into the earlier figure that you gave to the Inquiry?
A. Yes.
Q. But here that information wasn't provided because it wasn't felt to be complete; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Thank you. If you add up the total between 2000 and 2015, the number you reach is different to the one that was provided to the Inquiry, the response that we've been over already. Can you assist us with why those figures might be different?
A. No. I'm happy to look at it and come back to the Inquiry.
Q. At paragraph 43 and onwards in your statement, you provide some limitations to this data.
A. Correct.
Q. You've come here today to assist the Inquiry --
A. I do.
Q. -- in respect of this data and in respect of the information you have provided in that statement. Can you briefly summarise for us what you consider to be the key limitations to that data?
A. Again, it's the question that is asked, the data 85
of Appeal asked counsel for the appellants whether they wished to argue that the number of prosecutions rose immediately after Horizon was rolled out and it was argued by counsel for the appellants that -- I think you set out in your statement that there were maybe two or three prosecutions pre-Horizon and it went up to 40 or 50 post-Horizon.

The answer from counsel to the Post Office is set out in your witness statement, if we could go to that. That's at paragraph 50, so it's over the page, please. I think these are the words of Mr Altman, King's Counsel, in the Court of Appeal and he's there giving a number of statistics. We see there he says, for example:
"... In 1999 there were 60 in total."
That figure doesn't appear in that table that we've just looked at for 1999, the figure that's given to Mr Wallis is 50. Are you able to assist us at all with that difference?
A. Yeah, again, it's down to the question that's been asked but also this data is dynamic. So it's moving all the time. As the PCDE exercise carries on, more data is collected and the 87
that is taken from the master -- the spreadsheet, and ensuring that the data is robust in terms of the prosecuting authority and the details of each case itself.
Q. Perhaps, if we scroll down and look at paragraph 43 and 44 in your statement, that may assist you with providing a slightly fuller answer in respect of the limitations.
A. As per the statement, prosecutions which had definitively resulted in convictions and not prosecutions -- cases in which the prosecution authority was believed to be Post Office, as opposed to other prosecuting authorities. Cases which appeared to be based on a shortfall of the branch accounts, ie for example, there may be cases which referred to robbery or others and, therefore, not shortfall related. And cases where the defendants were -- their title didn't fit with the description being asked.
Q. Further details set out in your witness statement. Can we move on, please, to the information provided to the Court of Appeal in the Hamilton proceedings. That's page 19 of your witness statement. It's the bottom of page 19. In the Hamilton proceedings the Court 86
numbers move all the time as we get more certainty around the numbers of prosecutions and the numbers of convictions.
Q. But I think there's a more significant answer that's set out in your witness statement, and that is that the 1999 figure of 60 included things like robberies and burglaries?
A. Correct, because it was -- because it was all convictions and these are related to Horizon-related convictions.
Q. So the figure there, 60 for 1999, included things like robberies and burglaries, whereas the post-Horizon figures, so the 2000 onwards figures, am I right in understanding that those were actually figures excluding robberies and burglaries, et cetera, because they focused on Horizon and the way that you've described a Horizon conviction?
A. That is my understanding
Q. Is it -- are we therefore to understand that that's very much like comparing chalk and cheese in terms of those two figures, because robberies and burglaries are obviously totally different subjects that aren't reflected in those later figures?
A. Correct
Q. That was then, as you set out in your witness statement, accompanied by a note to the Court of Appeal, which gave some of the limitations in those figures. I'm not going to bring it up on screen and it may not yet be available to Core Participants but it will be shortly. We have a Unique Reference Number for that that I'll provide now for the purpose of the transcript: that's INQ0000721.

Perhaps that's something that we will look at in more depth in Phase 5 of this Inquiry. Again, those figures don't match the ones that were provided to the Inquiry. I think we were given the figure of 705 convictions. Are you able to assist at all with why those figures and the ones that were provided to the Inquiry are different?
A. Again, because it's dynamic. The exercise, I think the number went from 705 to 700 , as the data is analysed and reasons for taking the cases out of that population are found. For example, there may be a case that was -- that the initial indication was that it was -- the conviction was in England but, following 89
any evidence from Horizon."
Then went on to say:
"Post Office Limited's prosecution records are incomplete. It is not possible to determine in any given case whether the person who was prosecuted was unwilling or unable to make good a shortfall, nor when the last such circumstances arose. The last time a postmaster was prosecuted by Post Office Limited in relation to a shortfall identified within their branch was 2015. Post Office Limited does not know, however, whether any postmasters have been prosecuted in relation to shortfalls at their branch by any other prosecuting entity ... subsequent to 2015."

Is that response accurate?
A. I understand it still to be accurate, yes and consistent, related to information we have.
Q. Thank you. I think you give some information in paragraph 59 about a 2019 case. Are you able to assist us with that, please?
A. There was a 2019 case and that was, sort of, a Head Office case and wasn't Horizon related.
Q. Thank you. Moving on to the fourth Freedom of Information Act request and that's on page 24,
research, that case might have been discovered to be in Scotland and, therefore, been taken out of the PCDE.
Q. Thank you. I think that you have other explanations that are also provided --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- at paragraph 54 onwards in your witness statement.
A. Correct.
Q. We can move on to the third Freedom of Information Act response. That is at page 23 of your witness statement, could we please bring that up on screen, it's paragraph 56. This was requested 23 April 2021 and the request was as follows:
"I would like to know when the last time Post Office attempted a prosecution. I would also like to know the last time a subpostmaster was unwilling or unable to make good any reported shortfalls was prosecuted."

The response from the Post Office on 20 May 2021 said:
"Post Office limited last prosecuted an individual in 2019. This prosecution was not branch related and did not relate to or rely on 90
thank you. If we could just scroll down slightly. We have there paragraph 60, the request on 26 April:
"Please confirm how many criminal prosecutions took place against postmasters and postmistresses for fraud and/or false accounting in the 10 years prior to the introduction of the 'Horizon IT Computer System'."

Then we have the answer at paragraph 61:
"I can confirm that Post Office holds some information in relation to this. The Horizon IT System was introduced in 1999. For the ten years prior to that (between 1989 and 1999), Post Office cannot confirm the number of criminal prosecutions that took place. This was because the age and manner in which information was recorded in this period, before widespread use of computerised records, means it is not possible to verify the accuracy of Post Office records. The surviving historical records for pre-1999 cases are extremely limited and the information cannot be relied on as definitive.
"A search of these records provides information about 57 prosecutions the Post Office appears to have carried out that resulted 92
in convictions. These were initiated after a shortfall was identified in the relevant individual's branch which, for the purposes of this data, usually relate to cases recorded as theft, fraud, cash loss, audit shortage or false accounting and does not include convictions which appear not to have relied on Horizon data in whole or in part (eg burglary or robberies) ..."

Is that response correct?
A. No, I think there's been a mistake in there, if I may advise the Inquiry. As per my witness statement, in the final sentence it says:
"Any conviction before 2000 cannot have relied on Horizon because Horizon hadn't been installed."

So that's an error and my apologies for that error.
Q. The 57 figure there, 57 prosecutions, in the 10 years prior to Horizon, that doesn't seem to tally with the response that was provided to Mr Wallis or a later response that we're going to see. Are you able to assist us with that inconsistency?
A. Because it was limited to shortfall cases. So 93

Information Act response, that's 24 March 2023.
Can you look at page 26, please, paragraph 65.
I'm going to briefly take you through this response. The request was:
"Can you say how many [subpostmasters] you prosecuted between 1990 and 1999? Can you say how many [subpostmasters] you prosecuted between 2000 and 2009?"

Again, looking for that difference between the two:
"What is the [percentage] increase in the latter figure? What [percentage] of 1990 to 1999 convictions were overturned? What [percentage] of the latter figures figure were overturned?"

The response is as follows:
"... We can confirm that the Post Office does hold the information you have requested. For the period of 1990-1999, Post Office cannot verify the accuracy of this information due to the age and way information was recorded before the widespread use of computerised systems. The surviving historical records for pre-1999 cases are extremely limited, and the information cannot be relied on as definitive".
Q. We're going to now look at the fifth Freedom of

It then goes on to say:
"A search of these records provides
information has provided to the following information [sic]."

Number 1, in answer to the question can you say how many subpostmasters you prosecuted between 1990 and 1999, the response is:
"Due to the limited records ... we can confirm there were 65 convictions for postmasters.
"2. Can you say how many [subpostmasters] you prosecuted between 2000 and 2009?"

The answer there is " 380 ".
"What is the [percentage] increase in the latter figure?"

It says:
" $484 \%$ but please note caveat in relation to limitation of records as above.
"What [percentage] of 1990-1999 convictions were overturned? 0\%.
"What [percentage] of the latter figure ... were overturned? 8\%."

These are once again different figures. Can you assist us with this response and whether that response is accurate?

96
A. The percentage given is absolutely not accurate.
Q. Just scroll up. Thank you. We'll just scroll up to have a look at the figure that's provided there. Yes, sorry. Can you assist us?
A. Yes, so the -- I think the percentage was worked out at 484 per cent, one of the numbers, which is a human error and, again, with apologies to the Inquiry, that's wrong.

They were compared -- the numbers were comparing convictions with prosecutions, which is a nonsense. So that can be disregarded, if I could be so bold.
Q. So the figure there incorrectly compared the percentage for the number of prosecutions with the number of convictions --
A. Yes.
Q. -- for the different years?
A. Correct.
Q. So they're again comparing chalk and cheese?
A. You can -- yes, correct.
Q. Are there any other limitations to that data or is there any other reason why the figures are different to previous figures we've seen?
A. As per my witness statement, we were able to provide figures for prosecutions that did not 97
a period of time and it continues to -- this a dynamic database, and continues to be updated and continues to move and, therefore, depending when the requests come in, will be dependent on the information that comes out, and so the data will move accordingly and it depends on the time that the requests are entered.

In respect and, in particular, around the 22 May FOIA requests, again, with apologies to the Inquiry, the inaccuracies are in that dataset, and we now recognise that in terms of the drawing up of my second witness statement. We recognise that and there were errors in that and, again, with apologies. And that will be corrected.
Q. Thank you. That 22 May 2020 request that was the request made by Nick Wallis. I believe the Post Office has written to him today to apologise for the errors in the data that were provided; is that correct?
A. That is correct.
Q. Can you assist us with why it was just today that the Post Office wrote to Mr Wallis, given that your witness statement, for example, your second witness statement, was now written some
result in convictions in response to this request, of the post-1999 period because of the additional work to the Inquiry, and any data pre-'99 is very difficult and cannot be relied on in any way.
Q. Sorry, can you just expand upon that?
A. Because -- simply because the limitations of availability of data and its reliability.
Q. So in terms of pre-1999, so pre-Horizon data, is the Post Office's position that that data is unreliable because of the lack of information that you have available to you?
A. Yes.
Q. We've seen quite a variation in figures this afternoon. Can you assist us with why, overall, there is such an inconsistency or lack of consistency in these figures?
A. I'd absolutely like to. So, firstly, each FOIA request may have a slightly different question, do have different questions and, therefore, that will drive differences in numbers. So it's the -- the parameters of the information requests are different.

Secondly, as hopefully I've tried to describe, the data revolves over this, over 98
time ago?
A. We felt it was appropriate to advise him regarding an update of his Freedom of Information Request at the same time as the Inquiry.
Q. But you updated the --
A. Apologies --
Q. -- Inquiry on 13 July 2023 with the figures?
A. Mm .
Q. Why has the letter appeared in his inbox today?
A. We felt it was appropriate to advise him.
Q. Why today, though? We're having a hearing today; is that a coincidence?
A. I don't think so.
Q. So it was intentionally to apologise to him prior to your giving evidence?
A. Yes.
Q. You've produced an appendix with more accurate figures and that, I think, you call appendix 2. Could we bring that up on screen, please. That's WITN09890208. Thank you.

If we could zoom out to get a better picture of the overall table, please. Thank you very much. Do you have more confidence in the figures that are provided here than in the 100
earlier table that we saw?
A. I do. With the caveat, if I may, to say that -this again, these numbers are dynamic because we keep on improving our data.
Q. Again, can you just briefly explain the difference between the shaded area, the unshaded area and also why certain numbers are in brackets and some aren't?
A. I can. The pre-2000 data, which is the darker background and from 1990 to 1999, relates to all offence types where the convictions have been confirmed or is assumed where the defendant was an SPM, assistant or a Post Office employee, including all case types. So it's all convictions, and then the figure in the brackets are likely to involve a shortfall in the branch.
Q. A shortfall?
A. Correct.
Q. Thank you.

Some people might use these statistics to suggest that there was an increase in prosecutions by the Post Office in the years prior to the rollout. We see there 26 and 51 in the years 1998 and 1999. Other people might use the figures we've heard, the 484 per cent 101
or has it carried out and analysis and produced something conclusive, which can say whether the number of prosecutions increased before Horizon or whether there was a significant increase after Horizon, one way or another?
A. So we have carried out an exercise as per the bracketed numbers to see whether or not they're shortfall related and then the remainder -- the 2000 onwards, you know, are Horizon related. Now, in terms of the numbers that are shaded in brackets, clearly Horizon wasn't there and, therefore, we've taken a number of definitions of what could be a shortfall, depending on the investigation and depending on the data that we gathered, so if there's fraud or something or another description of the activity that's being investigated, we have associated that with a potential shortfall and, therefore, we would put it in that bracketed population.
Q. I'm not sure that assists us either way. You're identifying that you have confirmed those statistics?
A. Correct.
Q. But does the Post Office -- I mean to put -does the Post Office consider itself able to 103
increase in that Freedom of Information Request, for example, to suggest that the number of prosecutions dramatically increased in the decade after Horizon. You're not a statistician or an expert witness today. Can you tell us what the Post Office's position is in respect of those two positions?
A. Firstly, hopefully as l've already articulated, the 484 per cent is a human error and a nonsense. So, again, apologies for that. But in terms of the numbers before and after the introduction of Horizon, which was 1999 to 2000 time, I can confirm from the stats that the -and I'm not a statistician, but the numbers increase before and -- of prosecutions increase before and after --

Sorry, convictions increase before and after the introduction of Horizon.
Q. Statistically correct but I think you have also said in your evidence today that there are issues with your figures pre-Horizon?
A. Correct.
Q. So in light of the issues that you've raised, regarding the figures pre-Horizon, does the Post Office have a position, has it taken a position 102
say, to put this matter to bed, whether there was or was not a significant increase in prosecutions following the implementation of Horizon?
A. There were an increase in convictions coming up to the introduction of Horizon and there were a continued increase in convictions after the introduction of Horizon. The root cause of those, I don't know.
Q. When you say there was an increase: statistically from the information you've gathered, there was an increase before Horizon --
A. Yes.
Q. -- but, as you've said, the records are a little dodgy, to say the least?
A. Are not great. I didn't use the word "dodgy" but they are potentially inaccurate, simply because of the length of time that has been between now and then.
Q. Are the records that post-date Horizon more accurate because of the electronic records?
A. The automation, correct.

MR BLAKE: The automation.
Thank you very much, I feel like we've had 104
enough of statistics for the afternoon. I don't think there are any questions.

## Ah, Mr Whittam may have a question, in fact.

## Questioned by MR WHITTAM

MR WHITTAM: Richard Whittam on behalf of Fujitsu. Technical problems out of the way and back statistics. Mr Blake was asking you to put these matters to bed. It's not quite as simple as that, is it. You've been very frank with your analysis of the matters, and it's as simple as this, isn't it: you can only gather statistics that were recorded at the time and still exist -- you'll have to say yes, I can see you nodding, simply because of the shorthand note -- that 1999 and before then, for all the caveats that we've had set out, we don't need to repeat them, the records are incomplete and therefore unreliable?
A. Is that a statement or -- if that's a question --
Q. Do you agree with that?
A. Yes, because of the passage of time I recognise there is difficulty in gathering data pre-1999.
Q. Because those records can't be verified; do you agree with that? 105
a nonsense, because it's comparing different things.
A. I described the percentage that was calculated at 484 per cent as a nonsense because it compares convictions with prosecutions and it should be discounted as a figure for submission to the Inquiry.
Q. Thank you. As for any cause -- and Mr Blake tried quite hard to get you to describe a Post Office position on whether prosecutions went up after the introduction of Horizon -- you'd defer, wouldn't you, to a witness who was in charge of security at the Post Office, who has given evidence before us to say that the increase was more to do with the low numbers before he arrived in September 1999, and it then, after a short dip, went up because of an improvement in efficiency of the Investigation team from around 2001 onwards. You would defer to a witness of fact as to what was happening at the time?
A. I think my statement was clear in terms of I recognised that the numbers of convictions went up pre the introduction of Horizon and post the introduction of Horizon. In terms of the
A. No, some of the records that are there can be verified.
Q. But if things weren't recorded at the time or can't be found, you can't say that they are accurate figures?
A. If they can't be found -- correct.
Q. As you've made plain, the non-conviction cases data pre-1999 is very limited and incapable of being verified as accurate? That's paragraph 24 of your statement, if it helps. It's your words?
A. Yes, I think it's -- yeah, certainly limited.

Some of it is capable of being verified. If it's there, we can verify it.
Q. But it's the things that aren't there that caused the problem?
A. To your point.
Q. You use the description of --
(Microphone switched off)
THE STENOGRAPHER: Can you start the question again, sorry?
MR WHITTAM: Certainly.
You've described the comparison that was being sought of you in the Freedom of Information Act response number 5, as being 106
root cause of why those were the case, I do not know.
MR WHITTAM: I'm very grateful?
Sir, that's all that lask.

## Questioned by SIR WYN WILLIAMS

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Can I be at least attempt to be clear in my mind, Mr Recaldin. As I understand it, your Appendix 2 is, as we sit here, the best attempt you can make to provide accurate information about the number of convictions between 1990 and 1999, on the one hand, and 2000 and 2019, on the other?
A. Yes, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right.
A. On the basis that it continues to be dynamic because the data still comes in and we evaluate in the live environment.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. As you say in appendix 2, that is subject to caveats which you set out at paragraph 71 of your witness statement.
A. Yes, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So looking at that table, I have to go back to paragraph 71 and read what it says, yes?
A. Yes, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: The figures between 1990 and 1999, they may be wrong in the sense that there is information missing, as I understand it?
A. Yes.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: But there were at least that number of convictions in those years --
A. Yes.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: -- is that right? And of those convictions, by a process of assessment or analysis, the figures in brackets attempt to categorise the convictions which related to what we've called shortfalls?
A. Correct, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So that, if what you're telling me is correct, I can be reasonably confident, for example, that in the year 1999 there were at least 51 convictions to which at least -- of which 21 related to shortfalls as Post Office assess it?
A. Correct, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. So far as 2001 and onwards is concerned, my understanding of the last column in the table is that that records the number of what you have defined as Horizon-related convictions?

109
very much.
THE WITNESS: Thank you, Sir Wyn.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Anything else from anyone?
MR BLAKE: No, sir. I think we are finished.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Very well. So we start again on Tuesday -- oh, sorry.

First of all, Mr Recaldin, thank you for three witness statements, one produced at very short notice, obviously, and for coming to explain some parts of those witness statements this afternoon.

We'll start again at 10.00 on Tuesday morning.
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
THE WITNESS: Thank you. ( 2.08 pm )
(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am on Tuesday, 3 October 2023)
A. Correct.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So that, in fact, there were many
more convictions -- I say many -- there were more convictions each year but those are the record of the convictions which Post Office regard as being Horizon related, as you have defined it?
A. Yes, Sir Wyn.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: There is no doubt that there were those convictions because you have a record of those convictions, so the only area for debate would be whether or not they were Horizon related?
A. Yes, Sir Wyn. And if I can refer you to 5 , item 5 -- sorry, the note under the appendix 2.5 for 2001, we can see there are 35 Horizon related cases, and there were 44 non-Horizon. So overall, there were 79 convictions.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I follow that.
A. And 13 of the 44 non-Horizon cases are likely to have involved a shortfall in the branch.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.
A. So they may have been to do with a branch without the Horizon System in it.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I follow. All right. Thank you 110


MR BLAKE: [7]
70/17 70/19 70/21 70/24 104/24 111/4 111/14
MR WHITTAM: [3]
105/5 106/22 108/3
MS PAGE: [2] 56/18 63/1
MS PRICE: [12] 1/3
1/6 1/9 56/11 57/25
58/3 58/7 58/9 58/20 58/23 69/23 70/11
SIR WYN WILLIAMS
[47] 1/5 56/16 56/20
58/2 58/8 58/15 58/21 63/3 63/20 64/10 64/16 64/25 65/10 65/12 66/14 66/20 66/25 67/4 67/7 67/12 67/16 67/25 68/5 68/19 69/1 69/6 69/20 70/4 70/8 70/18 70/20 108/6 108/14 108/18 108/22 109/1 109/5 109/8 109/14 109/21 110/2 110/9 110/19
110/22 110/25 111/3
111/5
THE
STENOGRAPHER:
[1] 106/20
THE WITNESS: [3]
70/7 111/2 111/15
-
'99 [1] 98/4
'by [1] $82 / 12$
'C' [1] 52/2
'chance' [1] 29/22
'Horizon [1] 92/8
'Unknown' [1] 84/10
'was [1] 40/2

## 0

04/03/2004 [1] 35/9
1
1 July [1] 34/6
1 July 2004 [2] 26/20 29/5
1.05 [2] 70/10 70/14
1.13 [1] 70/16

10 [2] 11/25 51/14
10 February [1]
41/18
10 January [1] 73/1
10 March 2004 [2]
47/6 47/16
10 years [2] 92/7
93/20
10,653.11 [2] 35/24
41/11
10.00 [3] 1/2 111/12 111/17
100 [1] 76/16
104 [1] 84/5
11 [4] 13/25 22/21
22/23 24/5
11 February [2]
41/19 42/2
11 February 2004 [2]
46/25 47/12
11,752.28 [1] 35/13
11.25 [1] 58/4
11.45 [2] 58/1 58/6
11.55 [1] 47/16

11/03/2004 [1] 35/16 12 [4] 14/3 41/6
46/11 48/21
12 December [1]
48/1
12,000 [3] 47/7 47/14
47/16
12,000.00 [1] $47 / 4$ 12.04 [1] 70/12

12/02/2004 [1] 34/15 13 [4] 42/15 80/7 80/8 110/20
13 July [1] 71/14
13 July 2023 [1] 100/8
13.26 [1] 47/14

14 [4] 1/15 14/10
43/10 82/6
15 [1] 71/10
15 January [1] 51/17 15,000 [2] 50/8 50/11
15,300 [4] 41/23
42/10 48/23 49/5
15-year [1] 78/21
15.08 [1] 47/12

16 [2] 11/6 15/13
16,500 [1] 41/25
16,537.25 [2] 47/1
47/12
16.20 [1] $47 / 1$
16.46 [1] 47/6

17 March [1] 51/18
17 May 2004 [1] 8/2
17 May 2023 [1] 1/14
17 November [1]
59/8
17.04 [1] 47/4

18 February 2004 [2] 47/3 47/14
19 [3] 19/22 86/23
86/25
19 years [1] 68/18
19/02/2004 [1] 34/18
1982 [1] 2/12
1988 [1] 2/15
1989 [1] 92/13
1990 [8] 3/3 82/15 95/6 95/12 96/7
101/10 108/11 109/1
1990-1999 [2] 95/19

96/19
1991 [2] 83/10 84/5
1994 [1] 3/5
1998 [1] 101/24
1999 [25] 87/17
87/19 88/6 88/11
92/12 92/13 92/21
95/6 95/13 95/19
95/23 96/7 96/19 98/2 98/9 101/10 101/24 102/12 105/15 105/23 23 March 2004 [1] 106/8 107/16 108/11 109/2 109/16
$\frac{19}{2}$

## 2

2.08 [1] 111/16
2.5 [1] 110/15

20 [3] 22/6 22/9 58/1
20 May [1] 90/21
20,000 [1] 51/16
2000 [13] 74/17 78/7
78/13 84/17 85/8
88/13 93/14 95/8 96/12 101/9 102/12 103/9 108/11
2001 [3] 107/19
109/21 110/16
2002 [1] 3/7
2003 [2] 4/18 43/12
2003/2004 [1] 33/13
2004 [33] 8/2 9/16
12/1 12/6 14/5 21/11
22/11 26/9 26/20 29/5 33/13 33/21 34/7 34/15 34/18 35/2 35/9 35/16 36/6 37/17 41/18 41/19 42/2 42/17 46/25 47/3 47/6 47/12 47/14 47/16 52/9 56/24 62/1
2005 [1] 59/8
2006 [12] $4 / 2$ 21/11
44/23 44/25 48/1
48/11 51/12 62/2 62/9
62/19 69/14 83/11
2009 [3] 4/5 95/8 96/12
2010 [3] 4/9 80/15 82/2
2011 [1] 4/11
2013 [1] 74/17
2015 [6] 78/7 78/14
84/18 85/9 91/11
91/15
2016 [1] 80/11
2019 [8] 4/12 4/14
4/19 32/5 90/24 91/20
91/22 108/12
2020 [2] 82/8 99/16
2021 [2] 90/14 90/22
2022 [1] 73/1
2023 [7] 1/1 1/14
111/18
21 [2] 31/14 109/18
22 [3] 33/7 46/7 49/3
22 May [1] 99/9
22 May 2020 [2] 82/8 99/16
23 [3] 22/20 90/11 90/14
23 Ma
12/6 14/8 9/16
24 [3] 37/15 91/25 106/9
24 March [1] 95/1
25 [2] 77/20 77/23
25,758.75 [2] 9/14 14/9
26 [2] 95/2 101/23
26 April [3] 14/5
14/13 92/3
26 September 2016
[1] 80/11
26/02/2004 [1] 35/2
262 [3] 47/13 47/15 47/17
27 [2] 36/3 37/10
28 [1] 52/12
28 April [1] 14/12
28 June [1] 26/9
282,000 [1] 51/23
288,000 [1] 51/24
29 [1] 38/12
29 November 2006
[1] $44 / 25$
29 September [1]
71/23
29 September 2023
[1] $1 / 1$
2a [1] 34/24
3
3 October 2023 [1] 111/18
3,509.18 [2] 35/3
35/10
3,512.26 [3] 35/14
35/18 35/24
30 June [1] 42/17
30 June 2004 [1]
26/9
30 March 2023 [1]
71/5
30 years [1] 83/9
31 [2] 71/19 78/23
316,590 [1] 51/23
33,100 [1] 42/7
34 [8] 40/6 57/3 57/6
57/19 65/2 65/6 68/8
69/11
34a [1] 27/16
35 [1] 110/16
35,000 [2] 51/18

71/5 71/14 95/1 100/8 51/22

37 [1] 80/6
380 [1] 96/13
39 [1] 28/11
4
4 December 2006 [1] 51/12
4,230.97 [1] 12/13
40 [1] 87/7
43 [4] 12/12 13/22
85/16 86/6
44 [3] 86/6 110/17 110/20
45 [2] 33/12 36/9
46 [12] 33/15 34/14
39/8 39/22 40/18 41/9
41/19 43/14 43/21
46/19 50/5 50/7
47 [10] 34/17 35/6
39/8 39/22 40/18 41/9
43/14 43/21 46/19
49/2
48 [3] 13/22 35/1
35/7
484 [5] 96/17 97/6
101/25 102/9 107/4
489 [1] 48/8
49 [3] 35/8 35/17
35/25
49,000 [1] 42/5
5
5 October 2006 [1] 48/11
50 [16] 33/12 33/15
35/15 35/19 36/1 36/9
39/9 39/22 40/18
41/10 43/14 43/21
46/19 87/8 87/11
87/20
51 [2] 101/23 109/17
538 [1] 75/20
54 [2] 33/22 90/7
56 [1] 90/13
57 [6] 92/24 93/19
93/19 94/1 94/9 94/17
59 [1] 91/20
6
60 [4] 87/17 88/6
88/11 92/2
61 [1] 92/9
62 [1] 94/9
63 [1] 94/13
64 [1] 94/14
65 [2] 95/2 96/9
7
7,140.85 [1] 36/1
7.1.1 [1] 46/9

700 [4] 75/11 79/11
79/16 89/20
705 [4] 78/14 78/22
89/15 89/20

| 7 |  |  | $\begin{gathered} \text { also [19] } 5 / 27 / 5 \\ 28 / 2429 / 1841 / 7 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 83 / 15 \text { 84/5 90/19 91/1 } \\ & 91 / 591 / 1291 / 14 \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { accountants [1] } \\ & 45 / 19 \end{aligned}$ |  |  |  |
|  |  | affects [1] 69/25 affirmed [2] 70/22 | 44/15 60/13 61/10 | $93 / 14$ 97/21 97/22$98 / 3$ 98/5 105/2 107/8 |
| 781 [2] 79/11 79/16 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { accounted [4] 44/6 } \\ & 49 / 2550 / 952 / 1 \end{aligned}$ |  | 63/25 64/5 65/23$77 / 15$ 82/16 87/23 |  |
| 79 [1] 110/18 |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { affirmed [2] 70/22 } \\ & 112 / 10 \end{aligned}$ |  | anybody [1] 57/22 <br> anyone [2] 24/12 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | accounts [27] 10/14 | 16/4 16/6 24/17 29/16 | although [3] 27/1 | ything |
| 8 | $\begin{aligned} & 11 / 814 / 2519 / 18 \\ & 21 / 1021 / 1923 / 16 \end{aligned}$ | 33/15 78/17 87/3 93/1 | 78/24 83/18 | 25/2 30/12 30/12 32/9 |
|  |  | 102/11 102/16 | Altman [1] 87/13 | $37 / 13$ 45/10 56/2$60 / 1260 / 21 ~ 60 / 23$ |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & 21 / 1021 / 1923 / 16 \\ & 23 / 2125 / 1233 / 12 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { 102/17 103/5 104/7 } \\ & 107 / 11 \text { 107/17 } \end{aligned}$ | always [5] 16/4 16/19$17 / 530 / 660 / 24$ |  |
|  | $36 / 836 / 1536 / 24$$37 / 1139 / 7 ~ 39 / 21$ |  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { 60/12 60/21 60/23 } \\ & 61 / 161 / 462 / 311 / 3 \end{aligned}$ |
| 88 [2] 75 |  | afternoon [7] 32/9 70/17 70/18 77/13 | $\text { am [11] } 1 / 2 \quad 12 / 8 \quad 34 / 3$ | anyway [1] 49/19 <br> apart [2] 24/24 53/19 |
|  | $\begin{array}{\|ll} 37 / 11 & 39 / 7 \\ 39 / 21 \\ 40 / 17 & 41 / 9 \\ 53 / 14 \end{array}$ | 98/15 105/1 111/11 | 9/13 49/16 50/5 58/4 |  |
|  | $62 / 1962 / 2586 / 15$ | again [27] 14/3 15/2 | $111 / 17$ | apologies [7] 31/22 <br> 93/17 97/7 99/9 99/14 |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { 62/19 62/25 86/15 } \\ & 94 / 394 / 12 \end{aligned}$ |  | ga | 100/7 102/10 |
|  | accuracy [4] 2/24 |  |  | pologise [8] 61/10 |
|  | 21/22 92/19 95/20 |  |  |  |
|  | accurate [11] 20/2 | 85/25 87/22 89/13 | 74/2 | 68/16 69/17 99/19 |
| 52/17 53/5 53/15 |  |  |  |  |
| 54/21 56/3 65/21 8 | 96/25 97/1 100/18 | 97/19 99/9 99/14 |  |  |
| 84/15 84/19 87/20 | /5 | 101/3 101/5 102/10 |  | 23 |
| 8/16 91/20 93/23 |  | - |  |  |
|  | accurately [1] 52/24 | against [11] 2/9 5/3 | 43/3 43/6 61/7 <br> amounts [3] 46/1 | 4/22 55/1 |
|  |  | 5/8 5/9 5/14 7/25 41/1 |  |  |
| about [27] 2/6 17/11 | acronyms [1] | 47/20 59/22 80/14 |  | /14 6/2 6/2 6/14 |
| 22/14 27/24 | across [3] 15/5 74/25 | $\begin{aligned} & 92 / 5 \\ & \text { age [2] } 92 / 1695 / 21 \end{aligned}$ | analyse [1] | 7 7/10 7/12 712 |
|  |  |  | 3] 43/ | /11 10/2 10/11 15/10 |
| 49/20 50/15 50/19 | act [7] | aged [1] 83/25 |  | 16/8 16/22 16/24 17/6 |
| 6/23 63/9 65/15 67 | 82/8 90/11 91/25 95/1 | agency [1] 2/20 | analysis [31] 6/3 |  |
|  | 106/25 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { ago [2] 68/18 } 100 / 1 \\ & \text { agree [4] } 5 / 5 \quad 24 / 3 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 23 / 2233 / 1533 / 19 \\ & 34 / 434 / 834 / 1336 / 7 \end{aligned}$ | 24/18 25/5 25/15 26/7 |
| 77/13 80/20 81/4 | action [3] 27/18 |  |  | 6/20 27/24 28/2 31/5 |
| 84/18 91/20 92/24 | $28 / 10 \text { 28/18 }$ | 105/21 105/25 <br> Ah [2] 72/2 105/3 | $\begin{aligned} & 36 / 1236 / 2537 / 6 \\ & 37 / 1339 / 739 / 2041 / 8 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 31 / 531 / 1731 / 23 \\ & 32 / 1933 / 1634 / 6 \end{aligned}$ |
| 108/10 | activity [2] 56/8 |  |  |  |
| above [2] 31 | 103/16 alerted [2] 66/21 67/8 |  | $\begin{aligned} & 41 / 1143 / 1643 / 18 \\ & 44 / 1344 / 1944 / 19 \end{aligned}$ | 36/14 59/8 59/10 |
|  | actual [5] 31/16 | all [43] 11/4 13/8 |  | $63 / 2164 / 1364 / 20$$64 / 2265 / 568 / 12$ |
| bsolute | 41/20 49/25 50/9 | $\begin{aligned} & 16 / 2018 / 918 / 21 \\ & 25 / 2328 / 1336 / 11 \end{aligned}$ | 44/13 44/19 44/19 46/18 52/9 62/24 |  |
| 7/4 7/17 10/7 23 | 51/22 |  | 63/24 65/20 66/4 | 68/22 68/24 75/23 |
| 4/2 24/4 68/25 69 | $\left.\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { actually [12] } 6 / 8 \\ 16 / 19 \\ 21 / 3 \\ 28 / 22 \end{array} 42 / 7 \right\rvert\,$ | $\begin{aligned} & 39 / 543 / 1144 / 19 \\ & 48 / 1852 / 152 / 2253 / 5 \end{aligned}$ | 67/19 103/1 105/10 109/10 | 86/22 87/1 87/14 89/4 appealed [2] 75/21 |
| 98/ |  |  |  |  |
| accept [2] | 42/11 43/17 51/9 | 53/7 54/2 54/14 54/16 | Andrew [1] 23/1 | 75/22 |
| d [2] 33/ | $\begin{array}{\|l\|} \text { 51/18 62/3 62/9 88/15 } \\ \text { adamant [2] 12/14 } \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 56 / 11 \text { 58/16 64/16 } 60 / 4 \\ & 66 / 1169 / 20 \text { 70/4 } \end{aligned}$ | Anita [2] 33/17 34/10 Anita Turner [1] | appeals [22] 4/18 4/22 5/1 5/1 5/3 5/8 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 13/1 | 72/10 74/25 76/11 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Anita Turner [1] } \\ & 33 / 17 \end{aligned}$ | $5 / 165 / 225 / 236 / 12$ |
|  |  | $\begin{aligned} & 76 / 1482 / 2082 / 21 \\ & 87 / 2187 / 2488 / 188 / 8 \end{aligned}$ | anomalies [1] 41/12 | 6/15 6/18 7/18 10/10 |
| 38/15 50/21 65/21 | add [1] 85/8 <br> addendum [1] 74/22 |  | another [8] 50/23 | 11/11 16/2 16/20 17/3 |
| accompanie | addendum [1] 74/22 addition [3] 16/16 | 101/1 | 68/19 73/4 73/6 73/682/4 103/5 103/16 | $\begin{array}{\|l\|} 38 / 10 \\ \text { appear [14] } \\ \text { 22 } \end{array}$ |
| /3 | 34/23 83/18additional [3] 27/13 | 101/14 105/15 108/4 110/25 111/7 |  |  |
| [ |  |  | answer [11] $26 / 6$ | 46/23 49/9 50/4 |
| account [39] 4/2 | $63 / 2598 / 3$ | allegation [1] 60/11 alleged [1] 2/10 | 49/8 58/10 58/13 | 0/13 57/3 57/5 57/19 |
| 12/21 13/17 17/7 | address [2] 30/13 <br> 73/14 |  | 62/25 86/8 87/9 88/4 92/9 96/5 96/13 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { 77/16 87/18 93/7 94/2 } \\ & 94 / 10 \end{aligned}$ |
| 30/14 30/25 34/14 |  | alleged [1] 2/10 <br> Alliance [2] 18/5 19/5 |  |  |
| 34/17 34/18 34/24 |  | allocated [2] 6/12 | answered [1] 84/1 | appearance [1] <br> 73/11 |
| 35/ | adjourned [1] 111/17 <br> Adjournment [1] |  | any [48] 5/21 7/15 |  |
| /12 35/15 35/18 |  | allocation [1] 6/13 | 10/15 20/7 $21 / 12$ | appeared [4] 37/7$57 / 186 / 14100 / 10$ |
| 36/21 37/5 37/7 41 | adverse [3] 29/11 29/14 29/15 | allowed [2] 15/17 | $\begin{aligned} & 23 / 22 \text { 23/24 24/13 } \\ & 24 / 2328 / 1830 / 933 / 9 \end{aligned}$ |  |
| 19 42/3 42/12 |  | 2/2 |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { appears [2] 10/1 } \\ & 92 / 25 \\ & \text { Appellant [1] } 74 / 10 \\ & \text { appellants [6] } 74 / 5 \\ & 74 / 875 / 1276 / 687 / 1 \\ & 87 / 5 \\ & \text { appendix [5] } 100 / 18 \end{aligned}$ |
| 43/13 43/14 | advice [4] 10/22 13/8 | alluded [1] 54/17 | $\begin{aligned} & 24 / 23 \text { 28/18 30/9 33/9 } \\ & 37 / 138 / 3 ~ 38 / 6 ~ 38 / 9 \end{aligned}$ |  |
| /3 46/2 46/4 46/14 | 32/1 32/2 <br> advise [5] 34/3 36/7 <br> 93/12 100/2 100/11 <br> advised [1] 43/1 <br> affected [1] 61/23 | along [2] 67/13 76/19 alongside [1] 5/18 | $\begin{aligned} & 38 / 1838 / 2440 / 143 / 6 \\ & 48 / 1550 / 1654 / 23 \end{aligned}$ |  |
| 46/16 46/18 47/1 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 7/8 51/2 62/20 |  |  | 55 |  |
| accountancy [1] |  |  | 56/17 58/16 60/11 |  |
|  |  | 45/18 85/11 102/8 | 61/1 73/12 81/22 83/6 |  |

(30) 71 - appendix
appendix... [4]
100/19 108/8 108/18 110/15
appendix 2 [3]
100/19 108/8 108/18
appertained [1] 13/21
applied [1] 78/18
apply [1] 78/19
appreciate [1] 23/17
approach [2] 25/14 32/4
approached [2] 25/21 94/23
appropriate [4] 10/22 53/20 100/2 100/11
appropriately [1] 74/2
approximately [3]
41/23 42/5 42/10
April [6] 14/5 14/12 14/13 22/11 90/14 92/3
April 2004 [1] 22/11
April 2021 [1] 90/14
are [87] 1/20 1/22 5/3
5/12 6/15 8/21 8/24
10/15 17/4 18/4 19/13 22/8 22/17 22/20
23/12 23/12 26/2
30/19 32/24 46/2
48/15 48/17 49/11
49/15 50/7 52/4 56/11
56/14 56/17 63/6 64/7 72/10 72/13 72/16 73/7 75/20 75/22 76/1 76/8 77/18 79/24 80/16 81/22 81/24 84/5 87/12 87/20 88/9 88/20 88/23 89/15 89/17 89/22 90/5 91/4 91/20 92/21 93/23 94/7 94/13 94/16 95/24 96/23 97/21 97/22 98/23 99/7 99/10 100/25 101/3 101/7 101/16 102/20 103/9 103/10 104/15 104/17 104/18 104/21 105/2 105/17 106/1 106/4 110/4 110/16 110/20 111/4
area [11] 3/7 3/11 4/11 5/13 16/3 33/3 33/16 34/10 101/6 101/7 110/11
areas [6] 2/18 3/13
23/8 44/16 53/5 53/24
aren't [3] 88/24 101/8 106/15
argue [1] 87/2
argued [1] 87/4
argument [1] 51/6 arise [3] 2/7 94/2 94/11
arithmetical [1] 25/25
arose [1] 91/8
around [8] 2/23 6/5 76/16 81/6 81/25 88/2 99/8 107/19
arrival [1] 12/9
arrived [1] 107/16
articulated [1] 102/8 as [120]
ascertain [8] 10/15 20/4 21/20 25/24 53/13 55/5 56/14 74/1 aside [2] 21/7 38/14 ask [17] 15/3 24/12 24/23 38/4 38/17 52/2 58/16 58/18 58/18 59/1 65/14 71/9 72/3 73/12 77/13 77/19 108/4
asked [25] 24/20 27/24 28/10 28/18 31/3 32/2 36/14 36/18 availability [1] 98/8 36/22 37/4 49/20 52/4 available [11] 32/14 58/9 60/15 62/22 65/1 67/12 78/5 81/24 82/11 83/18 85/25 86/19 87/1 87/23
asking [7] 2/4 2/6 23/13 28/14 29/17 81/5 105/7
asks [1] 49/17 assertion [2] 50/2 50/8
assertions [1] 52/5 asserts [1] 51/16 assess [1] 109/19 assessed [1] 25/4 assessment [1] 109/9
assets [1] 55/16
assist [18] 2/2 17/22
36/25 38/8 80/18
81/10 84/19 85/12
85/19 86/7 87/21
89/16 91/21 93/23
96/24 97/4 98/15 99/22
assistance [1] 78/23 assistant [1] 101/13 assistants [1] 82/13 assisted [1] 38/11
assists [2] 79/1
103/20
associated [2] 15/19 103/17
association [1] 27/8 assumed [1] 101/12 assuming [1] 12/23 assumption [3] 27/7 42/8 60/3
at [193]
at page 26 [1] 95/2 attached [1] 59/8 attempt [3] 108/6 108/9 109/10
attempted [1] 90/17 attendance [2] 5/9 12/7
attention [1] 81/23
auction [3] 41/25
42/21 45/25
audit [14] 11/25 12/5 12/7 12/8 13/19 14/2 14/7 14/14 14/16 14/21 15/3 15/6 15/8 93/5
auditor [1] 13/18 author [2] 62/10 82/10
authored [1] 11/21 authorities [1] 86/13 authority [4] 38/13 38/15 86/3 86/12
automation [2] 104/23 104/24 32/18 37/18 44/21 46/15 53/6 54/1 62/7 83/12 89/6 98/12 aware [7] 21/12 25/16 49/15 49/16 67/1 67/2 79/24
away [2] 29/20 32/13

## B

back [14] 18/8 19/19
28/17 30/20 32/1
33/25 51/9 57/25
67/19 76/16 83/9 85/14 105/6 108/23
background [1] 101/10
balance [17] 2/22 12/20 27/22 27/23 34/5 35/23 41/8 41/13 41/15 43/23 43/25 53/11 54/3 59/16 60/5 60/17 61/6
balances [3] 11/8 29/21 46/21
balancing [7] 12/11 12/12 13/1 15/1 22/12 22/22 22/25
Bank [1] 18/16
based [8] 53/11
55/19 65/20 74/14 79/2 81/24 83/4 86/14 basically [2] $2 / 19$ 3/21
basis [3] 64/14 78/15 108/15
Bates [1] 26/3
BDO [8] 45/4 45/18

50/15 62/6 62/24
63/23 65/24 66/5 be [92] $2 / 42 / 64 / 21$ 9/3 12/14 13/10 16/5 17/1 17/20 18/4 18/5 19/4 20/13 24/7 25/3 26/6 26/11 28/16 29/25 30/9 30/23 32/12 34/6 35/21 36/9 37/7 37/9 37/12 38/7 38/19 41/23 43/8 45/9 46/24 47/10 47/10 49/10 50/4 50/13 51/12 55/11 55/18 55/23 57/1 57/9 59/1
59/23 60/9 62/22 63/8 63/22 66/9 68/11 72/15 73/10 74/14 79/7 80/5 82/24 82/25 83/7 85/5 85/12 85/24 86/12 86/14 86/15 89/6 89/7 89/23 90/2 91/17 92/22 95/25 97/11 97/12 98/4 99/2 99/4 99/14 103/13 105/24 106/1 106/4 106/6 107/6 108/6 108/6 108/15 109/2 109/15 110/12
became [7] 2/15 $3 / 3$ 3/5 3/7 4/2 4/5 75/1
because [55] 15/25
16/5 16/6 17/17 18/2 18/17 19/11 23/6 32/23 43/20 49/25 50/21 51/18 56/21 57/6 57/8 57/16 61/11 61/16 62/9 62/23 63/20 64/11 66/14 66/24 68/8 69/6 83/21 84/14 84/22 85/5 88/8 88/8 88/16 88/22 89/19 92/16 93/15 93/25 94/23 98/2 98/7 98/7 98/11 101/3 104/19 104/22 105/14 105/22 105/24 107/1 107/4 107/17 108/16 110/10
becomes [1] 30/16 bed [2] 104/1 105/8 been [79] 9/4 9/22 10/22 11/3 11/6 11/9 11/20 12/2 12/10 12/16 13/3 15/24 16/4 19/2 20/3 21/12 21/20 23/12 23/17 25/16 28/21 28/23 29/16 33/5 34/4 37/25 38/21 42/6 43/13 43/17 43/17 43/19 44/6 44/11 46/22 50/24 51/3 52/17 53/17
54/21 56/3 56/24

60/25 61/2 66/3 66/22 67/18 67/22 67/22 68/23 72/5 72/25
73/16 74/11 74/12 74/13 74/16 75/15 77/14 80/25 81/1 81/11 81/17 83/11 84/3 84/4 84/9 85/11 87/23 90/1 90/2 91/12 93/11 93/15 94/23 101/11 104/19 105/9 110/23
before [35] 6/22
13/16 15/8 15/22 23/9 24/8 29/21 31/5 37/25 44/22 45/11 50/15 50/17 52/3 52/7 52/8 57/22 58/16 66/16 70/9 73/3 73/5 84/5 92/17 93/14 95/21 102/11 102/15 102/16 102/17 103/3 104/12 105/15 107/14 107/16 began [4] 12/19 13/5 28/13 56/23
begin [1] 73/17
beginning [1] 59/6
begins [1] 63/7
behalf [5] 2/4 39/1
43/5 61/25 105/5
being [28] 10/17
13/23 13/24 14/18
17/23 18/25 21/4 25/19 31/8 32/16 32/18 36/13 37/2 39/23 40/19 48/4 48/19 49/20 50/20 55/4 80/3 86/19 103/16 106/9 106/13 106/24 106/25 110/6 belief [6] 1/21 59/24 60/22 67/14 67/18 72/12
believe [7] 8/18 20/24 50/2 50/3 53/20 64/6 99/17
believed [8] 26/24
55/18 55/23 59/23
60/16 60/18 63/22 86/12
below [7] 33/8 49/3
80/16 82/23 83/2 83/4 84/1
best [5] 1/21 29/19
38/23 72/11 108/8
better [2] 64/11 100/22
between [22] 4/11
13/21 19/1 41/12 41/18 49/17 74/16 78/7 78/13 83/10 84/17 85/8 92/13 95/6 95/7 95/9 96/7 96/12 101/6 104/20 108/11
between... [1] 109/1
bit [3] 8/22 30/16 48/5
BLAKE [4] 70/23
105/7 107/8 112/12
blamed [1] 10/21
blames [1] 9/1
blaming [1] 31/18
blank [2] 29/3 42/25
board [1] 31/1
bold [1] 97/12
book [2] 42/21 43/1
both [12] 22/25 23/7
31/5 41/8 53/19 60/19
61/9 63/23 77/15
83/19 84/20 84/20
bottom [10] 11/6
15/1 29/23 39/19 41/5 51/14 52/13 55/2 59/11 86/24
bought [1] 2/9
box [1] 8/23
bracketed [2] 103/7 103/19
brackets [4] 101/8 101/15 103/11 109/10 branch [67] 2/11 3/3 4/8 5/4 6/7 10/24 18/11 19/4 19/9 20/4 20/10 21/10 21/21 22/3 22/10 25/7 25/24 26/15 26/17 34/15 34/18 35/2 35/9 35/13 35/16 39/25 40/21 41/22 42/9 42/16 42/18 42/19 42/20 42/24 43/3 43/9 43/22 44/1 44/5 44/10 44/21 47/23 49/4 50/11
50/24 51/24 52/7
52/24 53/19 53/22 55/5 59/18 65/20
65/22 66/8 66/12
67/21 86/15 90/25
91/11 91/14 93/3 94/3 94/11 101/16 110/21 110/23
branches [6] 2/20
2/21 2/21 3/25 4/6 15/4
breach [1] 35/22
break [6] 56/13 56/21
56/22 57/23 58/5 70/2
breakdown [1] 23/1
brief [3] 8/21 8/24
9/16
briefly [7] 73/22 80/4
81/3 85/23 94/13 95/3 101/5
bring [6] 77/20 78/25 80/8 89/5 90/12 100/20
bringing [2] 13/10 73/25
brought [9] 7/19 43/13 76/16 78/6 78/8 78/13 82/14 83/15 84/2
bug [5] 17/25 30/11 61/20 61/22 62/14 bugs [3] 26/2 61/7 61/13
build [1] 16/7
bullying [1] 5/9
bundle [2] 27/13 64/1 burglaries [4] 88/7 88/12 88/16 88/23 burglary [1] 93/8 business [11] 3/18 8/14 19/25 20/8 22/4 32/5 42/4 42/17 44/15 can't [11] 39/1 39/3 55/14 55/15 but [59] $5 / 2$ 5/7 6/8 11/1 16/2 16/23 17/24 18/24 21/2 23/18 24/23 25/22 28/15 28/22 29/20 30/22 32/18 36/11 42/2 48/25 49/24 49/25 50/9 50/16 59/11 60/16 61/10 61/25 62/17 63/15 67/12 69/3 69/12 72/1 72/5 73/20 74/7 79/6 79/19 80/23 82/19 84/8 85/4 87/23 88/4 89/7 89/25 96/17 100/6 102/10 102/14 102/19 103/24 104/15 104/18 106/3 106/15 109/5 110/4

## C

calculated [1] 107/3
call [8] $1 / 6$ 26/13
28/12 33/2 56/24
70/19 74/5 100/19
called [5] 17/11
33/17 77/5 80/9 109/12
calls [14] 10/13 20/4 20/9 20/22 22/1 22/3 22/8 22/9 22/18 22/19 22/20 22/21 23/4 29/17
came [4] 29/25 49/24 50/8 76/15
can [93] 1/3 1/5 1/9 2/15 5/13 6/23 8/20 8/22 8/23 10/12 10/25 11/5 11/13 11/15 13/12 15/24 16/25 18/15 18/16 19/4 19/14 19/14 22/7 30/8 30/13 30/18 31/15 33/23 33/24 41/23 45/17 47/10 48/3 85/23 86/21 90/10 92/10 95/2 95/5 95/6 95/17 96/5 96/8 96/11 96/23 97/4 97/11 97/20 98/6 98/15 99/22 101/5 101/9 102/5 102/13 103/2 105/11 105/13 106/1 106/14 106/20 108/6 108/9 109/15 110/14 110/16
can't [11] $39 / 139 / 2458 / 2456$
$47 / 24$ 66/13 68/14 105/24 106/4 106/4 106/6 cannot [7] 80/21 92/14 92/22 93/14 95/19 95/25 98/4 capable [1] 106/13 car [3] 41/25 42/21 45/25
care [1] 61/11
career [1] 7/19
carried [6] 26/17
43/15 79/9 92/25 103/1 103/6
carries [1] 87/25
case [50] 5/25 6/1
6/16 7/8 7/23 8/17
8/22 10/8 10/9 10/19 10/19 15/18 16/7
16/14 16/17 21/1 21/7 21/16 23/2 23/22 24/7 24/19 24/21 25/4 25/10 25/21 31/3 36/18 36/20 37/22 39/5 44/24 49/6 49/10 91/22 91/23 101/14 108/1
cases [25] 6/18
24/13 24/24 25/16
32/23 75/5 75/25 76/1 83/13 84/6 86/11
86/13 86/16 86/17
89/22 92/21 93/4
93/25 94/2 94/5 94/10 95/23 106/7 110/17 110/20
casework [5] 76/6
76/8 76/9 79/3 81/17
cash [74] 2/25 3/1
11/8 12/20 19/6 27/22
30/5 30/10 30/14
31/20 32/8 34/14

48/18 51/9 58/7 59/5 $\quad 34 / 17$ 35/1 35/8 35/15  69/3 69/7 70/19 70/24 $39 / 7$ 39/20 39/21 $\quad 54 / 22$ 104/8 107/8 71/9 72/6 72/19 73/18 $39 / 23$ 39/23 39/25 73/22 74/2 74/8 75/5 $\quad 40 / 17$ 40/18 40/19 76/7 76/24 77/6 77/25 40/21 41/9 41/13 78/18 80/16 80/18 $\quad 41 / 14$ 41/16 41/19 81/3 81/9 84/18 85/11 $41 / 24$ 42/3 42/4 42/6 55/20 56/5 58/1 59/23 Castleton's [20] 7/23 62/2 64/7 75/6 86/4 7/25 8/3 8/11 8/20 89/23 90/1 91/5 91/20 11/19 11/22 15/21

21/7 24/24 25/5 27/5 27/16 38/25 40/9 51/6 53/18 55/12 60/1 62/20
categorise [1] 109/11
Cath [19] 8/18 10/13
12/17 13/9 15/16 16/1 27/19 30/3 30/19 31/2 Chose [1] 10/23 27/19 30/3 30/19 31/2 Chris [1] 12/7 32/2 54/4 55/16 59/4 Chrissie [1] 29/20 60/2
Catherine [3] 8/1 11/21 15/22
Catherine Oglesby [1] 15/22
cause [9] 21/9 21/18 26/7 79/10 cheese [2] 88/21 97/19
cheques [3] 19/6
19/11 19/12
Chesterfield [3] 9/6
10/15 17/8
chief [1] 48/4

Chrissie [1] 29/
Circa [1] 49/3
circumstances [7]
30/22 32/20 39/6 53/2
55/10 69/4 91/8
cited [1] 27/14
claim [1] 24/10

108/1
caused [6] 17/23
25/19 31/9 52/20 54/10 106/16
causing [4] 30/12 31/19 32/10 38/19
caution [1] 82/25 caveat [2] 96/17 101/2
caveats [2] 105/16 108/19

cent [5] 79/17 97/6 101/25 102/9 107/4 central [1] 76/17 centre [5] 6/13 20/1 | $59 / 20$ | $59 / 25$ | $60 / 460 / 6$ | centre [5] 6/3 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 60/18 60/22 63/5 | 20/8 22/4 33/3 |  |  |

cast [1] 36/20 centred [1] 31/18
Castleton [79] 2/9 certain [3] 16/25 74/1
9/15 12/24 13/9 13/18 101/7
14/4 14/5 14/11 14/20 certainly [6] 10/13
14/24 18/22 23/2
24/20 24/25 25/9
25/18 26/15 26/25
27/3 27/11 27/18 27/24 28/4 29/24 30/22 31/3 31/7 31/15 31/22 32/19 33/10 $33 / 1133 / 2034 / 134 / 2$ 36/6 36/14 36/17 36/22 37/4 39/12 40/1 41/1 42/3 44/3 44/24 45/12 45/24 46/21 47/21 47/21 48/19 48/25 49/7 49/19 50/18 50/23 51/15 52/18 54/23 55/6 56/2 57/13 58/25 59/7 59/15 59/22 60/9 60/12 60/15 60/23 60/24 61/3 63/21 65/17 66/17 66/23 67/12 68/2

7/25 8/3 8/11 8/20 20/23 20/24 21/17
claims [3] 9/19 24/15 25/18
clarification [1]
26/23
clarify [1] 6/23
clear [8] 4/21 31/6
37/9 39/22 40/17 45/9 107/22 108/7
clearly [5] 39/4 51/25
61/12 68/16 103/11
clerk [1] 2/13
clients [2] $2 / 2518 / 3$
close [3] 18/11 20/5
42/4
closing [1] 20/10
closure [2] 3/20 3/25
Coast [1] 3/17
code [3] 47/13 47/15
47/17
coinage [1] 51/20 coincidence [1]
100/13
colleague [4] 5/5
10/20 24/22 36/18
colleagues [1] $24 / 19$
collected [1] 87/25
column [1] 109/23
come [15] 10/25 15/5
17/3 18/3 18/8 18/25
19/19 20/24 28/17
57/25 59/10 79/13
85/14 85/19 99/4
comes [4] 67/19
68/11 99/5 108/16
coming [4] 2/1 18/20
104/5 111/9
commenced [1] 12/8
comments [1] 46/11
commercial [2] 3/22
4/1
committing [2] 12/15 15/8
communicated [2]
33/19 36/6
company [1] 42/23
compared [2] 97/9 97/13
compares [1] 107/5
comparing [4] 88/21
97/10 97/19 107/1
comparison [1]
106/23
compensation [1] 72/23
compiled [3] 80/19 81/16 83/11
complete [9] 40/23
43/4 58/14 65/9 66/3 68/15 83/22 84/23 85/5
completed [2] 12/2 20/3
completely [4] 26/5 27/10 38/9 62/1
completion [1] 43/23
comprising [1] 11/8 computer [11] 9/20
9/22 12/16 13/2 17/15
22/13 22/24 22/25
29/20 46/24 92/8
computerised [2]
92/18 95/22
conceded [2] 67/17
68/2
concern [3] 44/11
52/25 54/11
concerned [1]
109/22
concerns [1] 38/25 concise [1] 17/3
concluded [3] 26/12 62/11 63/24
concludes [1] 69/21 conclusion [4] 7/14 47/19 48/21 48/22 conclusions [2] 46/2 50/19
conclusive [2] 42/12 103/2
concur [1] 50/12 conduct [2] 20/14 52/16
conducted [5] 6/14 26/8 34/4 39/21 41/7 confidence [1] 100/24
confident [1] 109/15 confirm [12] 1/9 20/2 36/8 36/12 43/12 72/6 92/4 92/10 92/14 95/17 96/9 102/13 confirmation [1] 78/5 confirmed [5] 20/6 20/9 81/16 101/12 103/21
confused [1] 64/10 consider [3] 13/16 85/24 103/25
considerable [1] 18/7
considerably [1] 18/17
consideration [3] 40/8 51/24 69/10
considered [2] 24/7 79/23
considering [2] 7/2 14/6
consisted [1] 7/7 consistency [1]
98/17
consistent [1] 91/18
consistently [1] 31/7
contact [3] 12/17
13/3 17/7
contacted [1] 15/15
contained [6] 11/7 21/24 28/3 41/13 42/24 64/22
containing [1] 81/12
contains [1] 83/20 contemporaneous [1] $12 / 22$
contents [1] $1 / 20$
context [1] 51/10
continued [1] 104/7
continues [5] 40/12
99/1 99/2 99/3 108/15
contract [12] $8 / 3$
11/19 11/22 14/7
15/21 27/16 35/23 40/9 53/1 55/12 59/15 60/1
contracts [1] $8 / 17$ control [1] 3/1
convene [1] 70/10
convicted [2] 74/11 84/8
conviction [17] 73/19
73/21 73/24 74/12
76/21 77/10 78/9
79/21 79/24 83/17
83/24 84/4 84/8 88/18
89/25 93/14 106/7
convictions [50]
75/14 76/12 78/14
78/22 79/12 79/14 79/17 79/18 82/17 83/10 83/20 83/21 84/15 84/17 84/20 86/10 88/3 88/9 88/10 89/15 93/1 93/6 94/1 94/10 94/17 95/13 96/9 96/19 97/10 97/15 98/1 101/11 101/15 102/17 104/5 104/7 107/5 107/23 108/10 109/6 109/9 109/11 109/17 109/25 110/3 110/4 110/5 110/10 110/11 110/18 copies [2] 66/8 66/10 copy [7] 1/12 1/16 45/10 46/23 65/3 71/15 71/24
copying [1] 59/4
core [5] 31/17 32/16 56/15 56/17 89/6 correct [79] $2 / 143 / 4$ 3/6 4/4 4/13 4/16 4/20 5/20 6/20 7/17 7/21 7/24 8/8 10/4 17/16 17/21 19/16 19/19 21/21 26/10 26/18 26/19 31/11 33/14 34/12 37/2 37/19 38/2 50/2 54/5 54/7 54/13 54/25 55/9 61/20 63/12 63/19 64/14 64/23 66/19 67/11

72/21 72/22 73/1 73/2 65/25
75/12 75/13 75/15 criminal [5] 56/8 73/9
75/21 76/23 79/3 79/4 82/17 92/4 92/15
79/8 79/12 79/15 criteria [1] 76/19 81/19 81/20 81/21 cross [1] 57/12 85/6 85/7 85/18 88/8 cross-examination 89/1 90/9 93/10 97/18 [1] 57/12
97/20 99/20 99/21 Crown [1] 82/14 101/18 102/19 102/22 currency [2] 51/3 103/23 104/23 106/6 51/19 109/13 109/15 109/20 customer [15] 2/24 110/1
corrected [1] 99/15
corrections [1] 48/15
correctly [9] 36/10
37/5 37/8 37/12 46/4
52/23 53/15 54/15 54/19
correctness [1] 25/25
could [69] $7 / 38 / 11$
8/12 9/3 9/25 10/16
12/14 15/11 17/20
18/4 18/5 18/12 18/21
19/21 21/9 22/4 25/7
25/13 28/2 28/16
28/25 30/20 31/12
31/22 32/15 32/18 33/21 38/11 38/21 38/21 39/13 40/4 41/3 44/16 45/16 45/19 46/6 47/25 48/7 48/8 49/2 51/7 52/10 53/13 53/24 54/12 61/20 62/14 63/3 63/8 66/21 66/24 67/17 71/18 72/2 73/21 74/7 77/19 77/19 80/7 80/18
87/11 90/12 92/1 94/19 97/12 100/20 100/22 103/13 couldn't [4] 55/5 60/20 66/25 79/6 counsel [4] 87/1 87/4 87/9 87/13
count [2] 22/9 22/20 counter [3] 2/13 5/4 10/20
country [2] 3/13 76/10
course [3] 57/25
63/15 72/15
court [7] 44/7 48/8
63/14 86/22 86/25 87/14 89/3
Courts [3] 60/14
60/25 62/3
cover [1] 3/23
covering [1] 46/16
covers [1] $83 / 8$
CPS [1] 75/18
create [1] 27/19
created [2] 76/6 77/5
Credence [2] 62/12

18/18 39/24 40/20
42/1 43/5 43/7 43/8
43/18 44/2 45/25
52/22 53/7 54/15 55/4
customer's [3] 43/11
46/13 53/21

## D

daily [6] 27/23 39/20
41/7 41/8 43/15 46/18
danger [1] 16/14
darker [1] 101/9
Darlington [1] 29/5
data [38] 31/19 73/25
74/15 75/1 81/6 81/17
82/2 82/24 83/10
83/13 83/23 84/23
84/25 85/1 85/17
85/21 85/24 85/25
86/2 87/23 87/25
89/21 93/4 93/7 97/21
98/3 98/8 98/9 98/10
98/25 99/5 99/19
101/4 101/9 103/14
105/23 106/8 108/16
database [2] 76/17
99/2
databases [2] 81/9 81/12
dataset [1] 99/11
date [7] 9/15 14/2
71/23 81/16 84/4 84/8 104/21
dated [12] 1/13 11/25
14/4 14/12 33/20
44/25 46/25 47/3 47/6
48/11 71/5 71/13
dates [2] 13/21 79/6
day [3] 5/18 5/18 6/5
days [1] $2 / 23$
deal [3] 5/23 17/4 70/2
dealing [2] 33/1 36/19
dealt [1] 46/4
debate [1] 110/11
decade [1] 102/4
December [3] 44/22
48/1 51/12
decided [2] 29/18 76/10
decision [40] 6/22
7/1 7/1 7/15 7/25 8/7
decision...[34] 8/19
11/18 11/22 15/15
15/20 16/15 16/21
16/23 27/15 28/3
30/25 39/13 39/14
39/18 40/8 40/16 40/25 53/4 54/2 54/4 54/5 54/7 54/21 55/19 55/22 58/11 59/14 61/19 64/13 64/20 65/5 68/12 68/22 69/10
decision-maker [3]
6/22 7/1 16/15
decisions [3] 4/22
39/11 53/11
declaration [5] 39/25
40/21 41/15 42/5 42/7
declarations [11]
12/20 27/22 30/5
30/10 32/8 39/23
40/19 43/19 46/9
46/12 56/25
declared [11] 34/15
35/24 41/22 42/11
43/17 43/22 44/3
44/10 46/21 47/21
50/20
declares [2] 35/2 35/13
decoding [1] 20/18
deemed [2] 36/9 37/12
defaced [1] 51/21
defect [1] 17/25
defend [1] 52/4
defendant [3] 49/21
84/7 101/12
Defendant's [1]
51/11
defendants [1] 86/18 defer [2] 107/12 107/20
define [1] 75/6
defined [4] 2/18 75/4
109/24 110/7
definitions [1]
103/12
definitive [2] 92/22
95/25
definitively [1] 86/10 degree [1] 79/5 delayed [1] 70/15
deliberately [2] 68/20 69/4
delivery [1] 73/8
demonstrated [2]
41/23 63/8
demonstrating [1]
57/10
department [2] 80/24 81/2
dependent [1] 99/4 depending [4] 5/25 99/3 103/13 103/14 depends [1] 99/6 deposit [3] 41/25 42/23 43/4
deposited [3] 42/21 43/6 44/5
deposits [5] 42/18 43/11 43/12 46/23 66/6
depth [1] 89/12 derive [1] 67/20 derived [2] 50/6 74/15
describe [2] 98/25 107/9
described [5] 76/20 81/8 88/17 106/23 107/3
description [3] 86/19 103/16 106/18 despite [1] 94/21 detail [3] 8/18 10/9 62/10
detailed [4] 27/12 47/9 62/6 62/23 details [8] 8/20 8/21 8/24 9/12 17/14 84/20 86/4 86/20
determine [5] 52/17 52/19 54/9 84/3 91/4 developing [1] 3/19 development [4] 3/7 3/11 3/19 5/6
did [61] 5/5 5/21
11/20 11/23 13/6 13/17 15/22 20/7 20/12 21/8 21/16 23/3 23/4 24/12 24/23 25/3 26/22 27/18 28/1 31/10 36/12 36/25 $37 / 238 / 3$ 38/16 38/23 39/7 39/10 40/24 41/2 50/17 52/6 52/25 54/3 55/8 55/10 55/24 56/2 56/6 57/3 57/8 57/16 60/12 61/1 62/9 62/22 65/5 65/13 65/17 65/18 65/20 67/14 67/15 68/4 69/4 80/21 84/25 90/25 94/2 94/10 97/25
didn't [22] 3/23 13/9 16/10 21/15 23/21 25/1 26/21 27/25 31/1 32/14 38/20 39/9 41/1 50/21 50/21 54/11 55/3 57/5 57/19 84/22 86/18 104/17
difference [4] 19/1
87/21 95/9 101/6
differences [1] 98/21
different [20] 62/13

64/15 64/19 77/14 77/17 77/18 79/10 81/8 85/9 85/13 88/23 89/18 94/16 96/23 97/17 97/23 98/19 98/20 98/23 107/1
differently [1] 26/5 difficult [1] 98/4 difficulties [1] 5/21 difficulty [1] 105/23 diligence [1] 6/1 Dilley [1] 59/4 dip [1] 107/17 directions [1] 16/25 directly [4] 2/20 4/5 4/8 33/8
Director [1] 72/16 disciplinary [4] $4 / 22$ 4/25 5/2 5/7 discipline [1] 31/4 disclosed [1] 66/18 disclosure [8] 73/19 73/22 73/24 74/21 74/23 76/21 77/1 77/10
discounted [1] 107/6
discovered [1] 90/1
discrepancies [18]
18/13 18/22 21/10
21/19 23/25 24/11
25/19 31/8 31/20
36/12 38/19 40/2
44/17 50/1 52/20
54/10 54/22 55/1
discrepancy [20]
17/23 18/4 22/12
22/22 28/11 32/10 34/16 34/20 34/20 34/22 34/25 35/3 35/6 35/7 35/10 35/17 35/19 35/21 35/25 55/7
discussed [5] 24/18
28/19 29/18 36/17 46/5
discussion [1] 24/21
dismissed [1] 63/21
dismissing [1] 60/19
display [2] $1 / 25$ 27/17
disposal [2] 52/15
52/20
disregarded [1]
97/11
Division [1] 10/14
do [48] $1 / 15$ 1/17 5/18 11/9 16/14 17/3 17/22 30/1 30/4 30/14 32/7 33/9 36/25 40/9
40/14 44/18 47/18 47/24 48/20 48/25 50/2 51/4 58/17 60/23 61/16 61/18 62/24 63/23 69/24 71/6 71/8

71/15 71/17 71/24 72/1 80/22 82/21
82/22 83/23 85/20 98/20 100/24 101/2 105/21 105/24 107/15 108/1 110/23
document [36] 8/13
8/14 8/14 10/1 11/12 11/15 11/17 11/24 12/1 12/22 14/1 14/3 14/11 16/11 19/22 22/15 28/5 29/2 29/7 33/22 39/16 40/6 45/1 45/8 45/20 46/7 48/3 48/7 49/20 51/9 59/1 63/3 72/3 74/21 74/23 77/11
documentation [21] 2/24 8/10 11/4 15/16 15/23 18/10 18/18 19/2 19/7 21/24 23/20 25/24 34/10 44/20 45/14 50/22 52/15 53/6 63/23 65/23 66/12
documents [7] 10/1 10/5 11/2 11/7 13/15 17/17 26/14
dodgy [2] 104/16 104/17
does [15] 16/24
22/13 22/17 35/16 62/25 69/22 79/19
83/6 83/22 91/11 93/6 95/18 102/24 103/24 103/25
doesn't [5] 79/22 84/13 84/14 87/18 93/20
doing [2] 30/10 77/2 don't [14] 16/19 26/1 30/2 61/4 66/12 76/3 78/24 79/25 80/23 89/13 100/14 104/9 105/1 105/16
done [16] 6/3 6/4
8/16 8/18 9/5 14/18 24/17 28/23 33/15 44/13 44/19 50/18 54/15 55/4 74/13 81/5
double [1] 43/13
doubt [1] 110/9
down [19] 3/17 8/22
11/5 18/12 19/22 28/6 29/8 30/7 33/24 39/17
40/13 48/5 59/11
79/13 80/18 86/5
87/22 92/1 94/19
draft [4] 44/23 44/25
45/16 50/15
drafted [1] 68/8
dramatically [1] 102/3
draw [2] 54/20 81/23
drawing [1] 99/12 drew [1] 66/4 drive [19] 2/10 8/4 11/14 12/5 22/1 22/10 26/8 39/8 41/22 42/9 42/16 42/20 43/22 43/25 44/5 44/10
52/24 61/23 98/21
due [8] 6/1 9/3 10/18 12/16 36/16 72/15 95/20 96/8
during [4] 7/19 17/11
56/22 74/7
duty [1] 61/11
dynamic [5] 87/23
89/19 99/2 101/3
108/15

## E

each [6] 42/22 44/4
71/4 86/4 98/18 110/4
earlier [3] 31/3 85/1
101/1
early [1] 70/1
East [2] 3/14 4/15
effect [4] 56/25 57/18
64/12 69/16
effectively [1] 29/24
efficiency [1] 107/18
eg [2] 82/14 93/8
eg burglary [1] 93/8
eg those [1] 82/14
either [7] 10/19 57/22
60/8 65/25 75/8 75/25 103/20
electronic [1] 104/22
element [1] 5/11
eliminate [1] 30/8
else [10] 13/16 32/15
32/18 33/6 53/10
57/22 60/20 60/21
61/4 111/3
email [1] 59/3
embezzlement [1]
27/21
employee [2] 24/10 101/13
employees [3] 5/12 24/14 25/17
enclosed [1] 10/5
end [5] 24/16 30/15
30/15 40/13 71/20
ending [6] 34/14
34/17 34/21 35/1 35/8
35/15
England [2] 4/15 89/25
enough [1] 105/1
enquiries [11] 10/12
15/11 16/8 16/24 17/6
19/24 31/25 38/4
52/16 52/21 53/5
ensure [2] 6/15 15/17
ensuring [1] 86/2

| E | $65$ | fa | fi | front [8] 1/12 11/2 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| entered [3] 26/16 | $\text { ] } 4$ |  |  |  |
| 47/10 99/7 | 42/ | fairness [2] 6/2 36/16 Falkirk [1] 61/22 | 13/15 14/14 16/11 23/7 23/9 25/1 28/11 |  |
| entirely [3] 57/9 72/5 | 44/4 46/15 | false [6] 39/23 40/18 | 29/2 45/7 45/13 48/18 | 37 |
|  | example [11] 5/4 | 80/14 81/25 92/6 93/5 | 56/16 71/5 80/5 83/2 | 38/16 38/17 38/25 |
| ed [1] | 17/25 19/5 41/17 79/1 | far [4] 31/15 49/14 | 111/7 | 44/17 44/18 62/7 |
|  | 86/15 87/16 89/23 | 49/16 109/21 | firstly [2] 98/18 102/8 | 62/14 62/22 64 |
|  | 99/24 | fault [1] 29/ | fit [1] 86 | 10 |
| 19/12 | exceeded [1] 41/2 | favour [2] 27/14 | five [1] 11/1 | Fujitsu's [1] 65/2 |
| environm | exclude [1] 9 | 28/2 | flagging [1] | ulfil [1] 51/25 |
| 108/17 | excluded [3] 46/2 | feature [3] 39/1 | Flagship [1] | ull [7] 1/9 6/1 |
| ipment [1] |  |  | 42 |  |
| erroneous [2] 43/19 | excludes [1] 8 | bruary [7] |  | 76/19 |
|  | excluding [1] 88/15 | 41/19 42/2 46/25 47/3 | focusing [2] 2/8 11/1 | fuller [1] 86/7 |
| error [18] 9/3 10/15 | exercise [10] 73/19 | 47/12 47/14 | FOIA [3] 82/7 98/18 | fully [1] 66/3 |
| 17/10 17/12 17/19 | 73/22 73/24 73/25 | fed [1] 85/1 | 99/9 | further [15] 1 |
| 17/22 17/25 18/2 181 | 76/22 77/11 81/5 | Federation [3] 27/ | follow [3] 17/5 | 19/22 22/23 22/24 |
| 18/14 18/24 19/4 | 87/24 89/19 103/6 | 27/4 27/8 | 5 | 33/24 35/14 3 |
| 53/19 65/25 93/17 | exist [1] 105 | feel [2] 63/11 104/25 | followed [6] | 38/7 38/18 44/1 |
| 93/18 97/7 102/9 | exit [1] $3 / 24$ | fellow [1] 27/6 | 14/13 16/19 33/5 | 63/1 79/9 86/20 |
| errors [4] 9/2 46/8 | expand [1] 9 | fe | 38/22 57/10 | uture [5] 74/5 7 |
| 99/13 99/19 | ex |  | following [10] 12/19 | 74/9 75/12 76/5 |
| essence [1] 61/25 |  | few [1] 65/15 |  | G |
| [2] | 24/21 52/18 | fifth [1] | 104 |  |
|  |  | figure [20] | foll | gathered [2] 103/15 |
| essentially [5] | 18/4 24/25 24/25 | 48/23 50/5 50/5 79/10 | 34/13 47/11 59/13 | 104/12 |
|  | expert [3] 26/1 79/19 | 85/1 87/18 87/19 88/6 | 82/11 82/20 90/15 | gathering [2] 81 |
| establish [3] $7 / 8$ $42 / 1943 / 16$ | 102/5 | /11 89/15 93/19 | 95 | 105/23 |
|  | explain [12] 5 | 95/12 95/14 96/15 | foreign [2] 51/3 | gave [8] 45/12 50/16 |
| [4] 5/10 6/7 81/9 | 8/13 10/17 18/12 | 96/21 97/3 97/13 | 51/19 | 57/11 66/16 |
| 88/16 | 25/13 44/17 47/24 | 101/15 107/6 | forensic [2] 62/24 | 8 |
| et cetera [2] 81/9 | 56/9 68/14 80/4 101/5 | figures [48] 9/3 | 63/24 | [3] |
| 88/16 |  |  | forget [1] |  |
| evaluate [3] 54/2 | explained [5] 12/10 | 26/15 28/13 37/1 49/9 | forgot [1] 68/11 | genuine [4] 55/13 |
| 74/2 108/16 | 12/25 18/21 62/16 | 49/12 50/1 50/17 52/6 | forgotten [1] 68/7 | 55/21 55/25 60/4 |
|  | 78/ | 54/16 55/7 75/11 | form [2] 10/10 63/ | get [9] 14/25 55/ |
| aluation [1] 41/20 | explanation [4] 40/1 | 76/24 78/20 80/3 | forward [2] 22/19 | 56/7 73/17 75/3 77 88/1 100/22 107/9 |
| even [2] 62/2 94/3 | ations [1] 90/5 | 85/ | found [4] 74/25 89/22 | 3 |
| evenings [1] 6/4 | explore [1] 68/6 | 88/13 88/14 88/15 | 106/4 106/6 | giro [6] 19/6 39/24 |
| $\text { 「31 } 11 / 1416 / 9$ | extending [1] 83/9 | 88/22 88/25 89/5 | four [2] 22/24 83/2 | 40/20 41/24 43/24 |
| $16 / 17$ | extremely [3] 83/12 | 89/13 89/16 95/14 | fourth [2] 11/12 | 46/22 |
| ever [3] 20/4 59/2 | 92/21 95/24 | 96/23 97/22 97/23 | /2 | obank [4] 9/6 |
|  | eyes [2] 36/21 36/24 | 97/25 98/14 98/17 | franchise [1] 2/21 |  |
| everything [11] 3/15 | F | 100/8 100/19 100/25 | frank [1] 105 | give [7] 6/1 |
| 13/11 21/20 25/6 52/8 |  | 1/25 102/21 1 | Fraser's [7] 26/3 | 0/24 |
| 53/9 53/13 53/15 | fac | 106/5 109/1 109/10 | 32/25 39/4 61/6 6 | 79/19 91/19 |
| 2/17 | fact [17] 25/3 27/3 | file [5] 11/7 11/10 | 61/15 61/2 | given [16] |
|  | 27/6 29/15 49/25 50/9 | 11/11 12/23 13/14 | fraud [3] 92/6 93/5 | 11/10 13/9 16/13 23 |
| evidence [32] 9/ 25/9 31/16 31/22 | 59/19 66/21 67/8 | filed [1] 80/14 | 103/15 | 46/22 48/1 52/15 |
| $31 / 2438 / 7 \text { 39/22 }$ | 68/21 75/14 77/20 | final [10] 35/23 39/25 | free [1] 63/11 | 75/24 80/3 87/20 |
| 40/17 45/11 45/12 | 79/9 94/22 105/3 | 40/21 41/14 41/15 | Freedom [13] 77/16 | 89/15 91/5 97/1 99/ |
| 48/1 50/14 50/16 | 107 | 43/22 59/12 71/9 | 77/25 80/1 80/5 80/1 | 107/14 |
| 54/23 56/7 57/11 | factor [9] 30/24 | 71/18 93/13 | 82/4 82/7 90/10 91/24 | gives [3] |
| 57/15 59/20 59/21 | 40/15 40/24 40/24 | finally [3] 7/15 71/22 | 94/25 100/3 102/1 | 83/2 |
| 61/3 66/16 66/23 70/9 | 58/11 65/6 68/7 68/13 | 74/15 | 106/24 | g [3] 70/8 87/14 |
| 74/8 75/7 75/10 79/19 | 68 | financial [1] | Freehills [1] |  |
| 91/1 94/4 100/16 | fac | find [5] 13/20 56/3 | frequent [2] 27/22 | $3 / 19$ |
| 102/20 107/14 | 40/10 40/14 40/15 |  | 30/4 | $25 / 2328 / 230 / 4$ |
| evidencing [1] 17/18 | 58/12 65/14 69/9 | $\begin{gathered} \text { findii } \\ 45 / 1 \end{gathered}$ | Friday [1] 1/1 | 33/7 42/15 45/19 4 |
| exactly [4] 64/5 64/8 | factual [1] 49/14 | fine [2] 70/4 72/2 | friendly [1] 19/8 | 47/25 51/9 53/10 |

G
go...[3] 84/11 87/11 108/23
goes [1] 96/1
going [25] 2/6 10/14
11/12 11/24 13/16
13/25 14/10 19/22
22/19 33/25 51/13 54/16 59/1 71/3 73/12 73/14 77/3 80/1 80/2 80/5 82/4 89/5 93/22 94/25 95/3
gone [4] 10/9 59/9 60/22 69/13
good [7] 1/3 32/22
35/20 70/17 70/18 90/19 91/6
got [6] 16/5 16/6 26/5 30/6 61/11 61/18 grand [3] 19/8 19/9 19/13
grateful [1] 108/3 great [2] 44/11 104/17
greater [1] 50/12 grounds [1] 14/7 guilty [1] 60/9

## H

had [83] 2/23 5/23 5/24 9/4 9/9 10/20 10/22 11/2 11/3 11/4 12/2 12/10 12/16 13/2 13/9 14/21 15/17 15/18 15/23 16/9 20/3 20/4 20/5 20/21 21/1 21/11 21/20 24/8 24/14 24/20 25/16 26/15 28/18 28/19 28/20 28/22 29/16 29/22 31/2 31/24 32/2 33/5 36/19 36/22 37/25 38/13 38/15 43/13 43/15 43/17 43/17 43/19 44/1 44/20 45/7 45/24 47/21 48/12 50/18 50/24 51/2 51/2 53/17 53/25 54/9 54/12 54/21 54/23 55/6 55/17 55/24 56/24 60/22 66/15 67/2 68/2 68/21 69/6 80/13 86/9 94/23 104/25 105/16
hadn't [6] 20/24 33/5 66/17 66/25 67/10 93/15
halfway [2] 29/8 63/9 Hamilton [2] 86/23 86/25
hand [1] 108/11
handwritten [1] 28/24
happen [1] 32/14 happened [3] 47/24 55/24 69/16
happening [4] 23/23 25/7 30/19 107/21 happy [5] 49/11 50/7 61/9 61/24 85/14 harassment [1] 5/10 hard [5] 1/12 65/3 66/8 66/10 107/9 harder [1] 17/4 has [22] 9/22 10/13 19/4 34/4 58/20 62/10 62/16 62/17 71/5 71/14 79/13 79/14 79/23 81/16 84/9 96/3 99/18 100/10 102/25 103/1 104/19 107/13 hasn't [1] 72/5 have [166]
Havery [1] 49/17 having [9] 11/9 12/11 22/14 30/9 61/14 68/8 68/9 75/23 100/12
haystack [1] 30/16 Hayward [10] 45/5 45/19 62/6 62/24 63/24 65/24 66/5 66/16 66/20 67/7 he [35] 12/10 12/10 12/13 12/16 12/25 13/1 13/2 14/14 14/20 14/25 15/1 15/2 28/10 28/11 28/12 28/14 28/20 28/23 29/25 31/1 32/20 49/23 55/1 57/4 57/8 57/11 57/11 57/16 57/17 57/20 61/1 67/14 67/15 87/15 107/16 he's [1] 87/14 head [2] 72/22 91/23 hear [4] 1/3 5/1 6/18 58/7
heard [5] 7/18 10/19 24/9 51/12 101/25 hearing [23] 4/22 5/7 6/24 7/2 15/11 17/6 19/23 24/17 24/18 26/7 26/20 27/25 28/3 31/5 31/6 31/17 31/23 32/19 33/16 34/6 36/15 100/12 111/17 hearings [1] 6/7 held [9] 4/11 4/14 4/17 29/5 42/20 52/7 83/5 83/7 83/14 Helen [2] 12/2 12/6 Hello [1] 58/7 help [9] 2/16 14/25 16/24 23/13 28/14 29/17 39/1 39/3 55/2 Helpdesk [3] 9/5 20/23 30/21
helpful [2] 30/1 30/24 $93 / 15$ 93/15 93/20 helping [1] 65/1 helpline [11] 9/5 12/18 13/4 20/1 20/5 20/14 21/14 22/2 22/8 23/4 28/12
helps [1] 106/10 hence [5] 55/18 56/5 59/25 66/4 67/21
her [2] 15/25 21/1 Herbert [1] 78/11
here [19] 11/17 13/17 15/14 20/11 20/21 22/21 31/14 40/7 40/11 41/6 49/8 51/11 54/8 79/19 80/10 85/4 85/19 100/25 108/8 hide [2] 23/25 68/21 high [3] 63/13 79/21 79/23
highlighted [1] 63/8 highlighting [1] 64/17
him [9] 30/1 32/3 36/7 48/20 61/5 99/18 100/2 100/11 100/15 hindsight [4] 32/24 38/20 61/23 69/17 his [25] 8/1 12/11 12/25 13/2 14/6 14/24 15/1 23/1 25/10 28/15 31/17 36/14 46/10 | 46/18 49/17 51/1 54/13 56/24 57/1 57/3 57/7 57/13 62/11 100/3 100/10
historical [3] 72/21
92/20 95/23
hold [6] 6/7 82/21
82/23 83/22 84/2 95/18
holds [2] 84/6 92/10
Hollingworth [2]
12/3 12/6
Honour [1] 49/17
hopefully [2] 98/24 102/8
Horizon [90] 7/22 9/1 9/5 10/21 11/9 12/18 13/4 18/1 20/1 20/2 20/5 20/11 20/13
20/22 21/3 21/8 21/13 21/14 21/15 22/2 22/8 24/11 26/1 26/3 26/16 30/20 31/9 31/18 32/16 33/12 34/5 36/8 37/18 45/14 46/24 47/11 52/21 54/10 I checked [1] 19/25 54/18 61/8 61/18 62/4 I chose [1] 10/23 62/18 69/5 73/8 74/15 I clearly [1] 68/16 75/5 75/6 75/7 75/9 I contacted [1] 15/15 87/3 87/7 87/8 88/10 I could [7] 25/7 32/15 88/13 88/17 88/18 38/21 53/24 72/2 91/1 91/23 92/11 93/7

94/4 98/9 102/4 102/24 103/3 103/5 68/4 104/21 107/11 107/24 104/17 110/12 110/16 110/17 36/17

I deliberately [1] 69/4 described [1] 107/3

103/9 103/11 104/4 I didn't [6] 23/21 25/1 104/6 104/8 104/13 38/20 50/21 50/21 107/25 109/25 110/6 I discussed [2] 24/18

110/20 110/24
Horizon-related [3]
75/5 88/10 109/25
housekeeping [1] 69/24
how [16] 23/16 26/1
36/21 47/24 68/10
69/11 75/5 80/13
I do [11] 33/9 48/25
58/17 63/23 71/8
71/17 72/1 80/22
85/20 101/2 108/1
I don't [7] 26/1 30/2 66/12 80/23 100/14 104/9 105/1
I double [1] 43/13
80/20 81/3 81/10 92/4 I drew [1] 66/4
95/5 95/7 96/6 96/11 I evaluated [1] 41/17
HOWARD [3] 1/7 I examined [1] 42/23
1/11 112/2
however [7] 8/17
19/13 27/12 39/3
52/21 82/23 91/12
HR [1] 6/12
HSH [3] 20/22 22/8 33/2
huge [2] 6/3 6/8
human [2] 97/7 102/9
hypothetical [1] 67/5
I
I actually [1] 16/19
I again [1] 42/16
I also [2] 41/7 63/25
I always [1] 17/5
I am [5] 34/3 49/13
49/16 50/5 72/18
I analysed [1] 43/11
I apologise [3] 65/11
68/16 69/17
I appreciate [1]
23/17
I are [1] 52/4
I ask [2] 58/16 71/9
I be [1] 108/6
I believe [5] 8/18
20/24 53/20 64/6 99/17
I call [1] 70/19
I can [10] 10/25
13/12 31/15 69/3
92/10 101/9 102/13
105/13 109/15 110/14
I can't [3] 47/24
48/24 66/13
I cannot [1] 80/21

77/19 97/12

I feel [1] 104/25
I felt [2] 14/17 14/19
I first [1] 23/7
I follow [1] 110/25
I gave [1] 68/15
I had [7] 11/4 15/17
15/18 43/15 44/20 45/7 67/2
I have [12] 9/9 16/12
42/12 44/17 46/14
46/22 48/14 52/16
56/11 63/1 76/2 108/22
I head [1] 72/22
I just [2] 65/14 68/14
I kind [1] 32/1
I know [1] 16/1
I looked [1] 54/14
I made [1] 67/20
I managed [1] 3/18
I may [3] 57/20 93/12
101/2
I mean [1] 103/24
I needed [1] 14/19
I now [1] 69/13
I personally [1] 21/11
I really [1] 56/9
I recall [2] 31/18 69/9
I recognise [1]
105/22
I recognised [2]
69/14 107/23
I referred [2] 65/8 94/9
I represent [1] 58/24
I reviewed [1] 18/9
I right [1] 88/14
I said [1] 60/24
I saw [1] 45/13
I say [5] 62/17 63/16
68/25 69/17 110/3
I should [1] 65/1
I started [1] 23/14
I still [1] 25/22

I suggest [1] 69/7
I think [41] 22/17
39/3 45/1 55/16 56/5
56/20 57/4 58/20
60/13 60/14 61/6 61/9
61/10 62/21 64/2 64/6
65/22 69/21 72/20
74/4 75/14 75/24
76/15 78/4 78/22 79/1
81/14 87/5 87/12 88/4 89/14 89/20 90/4 91/19 93/11 97/5 100/19 102/19 106/12 107/22 111/4
I thought [1] 64/11
I took [2] 25/14 61/19
I understand [2]
50/14 91/17
I vaguely [1] 68/17
I visited [2] 23/9 23/15
I want [6] 57/8 57/17
57/21 68/5 77/13
77/17
I was [19] 2/18 $3 / 11$
14/18 18/9 20/21
27/10 29/14 29/15
29/21 38/9 43/1 45/13 52/16 53/5 53/12 66/1 66/7 73/5 73/6
I wasn't [1] 67/2
I will [3] 2/4 56/23
82/19
I would [10] 8/9
14/16 15/25 52/2
56/21 57/16 62/5 70/1 90/16 90/17
l'd [7] 10/19 25/1
26/5 53/8 73/17 80/4 98/18
I'II [1] 89/8
I'm [21] 2/6 25/25
32/22 58/25 61/9
61/24 63/12 64/3
64/10 64/25 64/25
71/3 73/12 80/1 82/4 85/14 89/5 95/3
102/14 103/20 108/3
I've [13] 15/4 15/25
16/19 18/15 27/13
55/25 56/3 60/24
61/14 64/16 76/19
98/24 102/8
idea [1] 55/25
identification [2] 74/4 78/20
identified [10] 9/4 26/2 32/24 39/21 61/12 75/11 75/20 76/9 91/10 93/2
identifies [1] 39/4 identify [6] 13/19

27/20 27/23 54/21 66/1 76/5
identifying [2] 33/1 103/21 ie [1] $86 / 15$
ie for [1] 86/15
if [77] $1 / 145 / 46 / 24$
8/22 10/25 11/5 11/15 13/12 13/14 18/3 19/8 increased [2] 102/3 20/2 20/4 21/17 21/20 103/3
21/21 25/8 25/12 incur [1] 19/10 27/20 28/18 30/11 $\quad$ incurred [3] 10/17 30/11 30/17 30/18 32/6 32/9 33/23 37/5 incurring [1] 18/23 44/10 51/9 52/20 54/9 indeed [8] 14/23 24/4 54/12 55/23 56/4 56/21 57/8 57/16 58/17 59/11 60/17 63/4 63/12 66/24 66/25 67/2 69/6 69/25 71/18 72/2 73/20 74/7 77/19 77/19 77/22 79/1 80/17 80/22 83/6 84/11 85/8 86/5 87/10 indicate [3] 23/6 35/5 92/1 93/11 94/19 60/21 97/11 100/22 101/2 indicated [3] 41/20 103/15 105/19 106/3 106/6 106/10 106/13 109/14 110/14
immediate [1] 19/17 immediately [3] 17/1 30/13 87/3
implementation [1] 104/3
important [2] 18/19 25/23
improper [1] 60/13 improvement [1] 107/18
improving [1] 101/4 inaccuracies [1] 99/10
inaccurate [2] 42/14 104/18
inbox [1] 100/10 incapable [1] 106/8 include [3] 40/24 65/13 93/6
included [10] 19/13
58/12 63/15 63/16 63/18 68/12 68/21 69/12 88/6 88/11
including [3] 58/25 94/17 101/14
incomplete [3] 82/24 91/4 105/17 inconclusive [1] 83/14
inconsistency [2] 93/24 98/16 inconsistent [2] 57/9 80/3
incorrect [6] 17/24 INQ0000721 [1] 42/6 46/8 46/12 50/10 $89 / 10$

50/13
incorrectly [1] 97/13
increase [14] 95/11
96/14 101/21 102/1
102/15 102/15 102/17 103/4 104/2 104/5
104/7 104/10 104/12 107/15

13/23 13/24

33/18 37/14 48/14 49/13 66/17 68/4
independent [7] 6/15 16/2 34/4 34/8 36/19 37/21 64/8
independently [2] 16/13 77/3
6 index [2] 10/6 11/6

53/16 66/6
indicates [1] 34/22
indication [1] 89/24
individual [7] 13/11
30/4 30/7 32/7 41/17 66/9 90/24
individual's [1] 93/3
individuals [1] 94/18 inflating [2] 80/15 82/1
influence [2] 16/18 25/4
information [53] 6/25 7/3 21/23 23/3 46/15 52/19 53/25 54/9 55/6 76/11 77/16 77/25 79/2 80/2 80/6 80/10 82/5 82/8 82/21 82/22 83/5 83/6 83/19 83/20 84/7 85/4 85/22 86/22 90/11 91/18 91/19 91/25 92/11 92/16 92/22 92/24 94/24 95/1 95/18 95/20 95/21 95/24 96/3 96/4 98/11 98/22 99/5 100/4 102/1 104/11 106/25 108/10 109/3 informing [1] 14/5 initial [1] 89/24 initially [1] 60/1 initiated [1] 93/1 inpayment [1] 42/25 input [1] 19/2
inputting [2] 17/14 17/24
inquiries [2] 7/7 7/12 $19 / 3$ 29/24 36/11 Inquiry [41] 2/1 2/5 60/16 64/23 69/16 2/7 5/16 6/11 7/6 15/9 105/11
24/6 26/24 31/13 36/2 isolate [1] 30/8 37/11 37/16 38/13 isolated [1] 25/4 40/5 40/15 45/2 45/14 issue [3] 22/22 23/10 52/11 58/13 66/18 73/14
69/5 69/8 73/11 77/15 issues [16] 2/7 13/20
77/24 84/16 85/2 20/7 21/12 22/12
85/10 85/15 85/19 22/23 22/24 22/25
89/12 89/14 89/17 23/11 30/9 32/17 33/1
93/12 97/8 98/3 99/10 59/10 73/13 102/21
100/5 100/8 107/7 102/23
Inquiry's [1] 81/23 it [196]
insinuation [2] 60/11 it's [47] $1 / 115 / 65 / 11$
61/1
inspector [1] $12 / 3$
installed [1] 93/16
instance [1] 24/9
instances [1] 44/9
instead [1] 17/24
instructed [1] 78/12
integrity [6] 20/3
20/7 20/12 20/14 21/2
21/15
intended [1] 6/14
intentionally [1]
100/15
interdaily [1] 27/23
interim [3] 23/18
43/2 53/17
interview [2] 7/10
29/6
into [24] 3/13 10/9
13/11 17/14 19/2
20/22 26/16 30/25
32/7 34/20 35/18
35/19 40/7 42/19
47/10 49/24 50/8 51/2
54/16 69/9 75/23
76/17 82/6 85/1
introduced [1] 92/12
introduction [8] 92/7
102/12 102/18 104/6
104/8 107/11 107/24
107/25
investigate [2] 38/17
76/14
investigated [1] 103/17
investigation [3]
56/6 103/14 107/19
involve [1] 101/16
involved [5] 2/16
14/19 56/7 73/7
110/21
involvement [2] 2/8 59/6
Ireland [1] 75/18
irrespective [1]
16/21
is [231]
ish [1] 59/5
isn't [9] 8/4 17/12

8/16 10/11 15/12
15/12 16/2 16/5 17/12
19/4 26/4 33/22 36/11
41/4 52/12 58/20 59/2
59/5 62/21 63/6 63/9
64/6 72/5 73/19 74/11
78/1 79/11 80/7 82/6
82/19 85/25 86/24
87/12 87/22 87/24
89/19 90/13 98/21
101/14 105/8 105/10
106/10 106/12 106/14
106/15 107/1
item [2] 11/6 110/14
Item 16 [1] 11/6
its [8] 2/2 25/24
38/24 39/1 45/10 46/1
51/25 98/8
itself [3] 77/24 86/4 103/25

## J

January [3] 22/11
51/17 73/1
JJ [3] 28/7 28/18 29/8
job [2] 6/5 73/4 JOHN [5] 1/7 1/11 45/23 46/10 112/2 joined [1] 2/12
Jones [21] 1/6 1/7
1/10 1/11 36/4 37/9 45/23 46/3 46/10 46/13 46/16 46/19
49/22 50/3 51/16
56/23 58/24 63/12
66/15 70/5 112/2
Jones's [3] 31/12
40/4 52/10
journalist [1] 82/10
journey [1] 4/1
Joyce [1] 14/12
Judge [1] 49/17
Julie [3] 27/1 33/10 64/2
July [7] 26/20 29/5
33/20 34/6 36/6 71/14
100/8
jumped [1] 23/8

| $J$ | LCAS0000113 [2] | lit | 25/18 27/7 30/25 | $24$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| June [3] 26/9 26/9 |  |  | 38/4 70/ | 44/ |
| J2/17 | LCAS0000570 [1] | live [2] 59/24 108/17 | manage [2] 2/21 5/24 | 49/23 53/7 54/1 56/ |
| just [38] 4/21 6/4 |  | locate [1] | naged [4] 2/20 |  |
| 10/11 10/25 11/1 | least [8] 57/14 67/17 | longer [2] 18/15 | 8 4/6 4/8 | 63/12 64 |
| 13/12 19/11 20/18 | 68/3 104/16 108/6 | 18/17 | management [3] 3/1 | 64/11 64/18 68/6 |
| 21/2 21/16 23/13 | 109/5 109/17 | look [26] |  | 8/10 70/4 70/ |
| 26/23 27/6 33/23 34/8 | leaving [2] 32 | 11/15 23/14 | manager [29] | 09/15 |
| 37/9 37/13 40/13 45/9 | 53/20 | 23/19 24/20 30/2 | 3/7 3/11 4/2 4/5 4/8 | mean [2] 44/1 |
| 49/3 50/4 51/10 59/19 | led [1] 12/6 | 32/13 32/15 37/4 | 4/11 4/14 4/18 5/1 5/4 | 103/24 |
| 62/12 64/6 65/14 | Lee [1] 11/18 | 40/10 44/16 53/5 | 5/16 5/22 6/18 8/1 | means [1] |
| 68/14 71/3 73/17 | left [1] 4/18 | 53/16 53/25 65/2 | 8/17 10/23 12/17 13/4 | meant [3] 20/1 |
| 84/18 87/19 92/1 94/8 | legal [3] 58/17 74/20 | 77/19 77/23 80/5 | 15/8 15/15 16/2 28/16 | 37/12 |
| 97/2 97/2 98/6 99/22 |  |  | 33/16 34/10 36/19 | in |
| 101/5 | Leicester [2] 18/5 | 94/25 95/2 97/3 | 38/11 60/19 | 28/25 29/4 29/4 |
| Justice [9] |  |  | Managers [3] 3/19 | er [2] 27/3 |
| 32/24 39/4 60/14 |  |  |  |  |
| 60/25 61/6 61/12 | 104/19 | 54/12 54/14 61/14 | managing [2] 3/2 | ember |
| 61/21 62/3 | lengthy [2] | 75/23 81/12 87/1 | 73/7 | emory |
| K | let | 18/9 25/12 33/4 36/24 | Mandy [1] | 106/19 |
| keep [2] 94/20 101/4 | let's [1] | 44/14 44/15 53/12 | manner [1] | migh |
| kept [1] 28/14 | letter [13] | 54/16 95/9 108/22 | manual [5] | 16/23 18/24 38/7 |
| key [2] 10/7 85/2 | 14/11 14/13 28/3 | looks [2] 29/22 80/3 | 28/21 29/18 66/2 | 38/19 74/12 80/ |
| keyed [1] 19/4 | 33/20 33/25 39/12 | loss [3] 19/18 55/8 | 67/20 | 5/12 90/1 101/20 |
| keys [1] 19/9 | 40/16 40/2 |  | manually | 101/24 |
| kind [5] 2/22 16/5 | 58/11 100/10 | losses [25] 2/10 8/25 | many [10] 29/16 | mind [2] 67/4 108 |
| 23/8 23/13 32/1 | level [2] 10/9 62/13 | 9/11 9/14 9/21 9/22 | 61/13 80/13 92/4 95 | minus [1] 12/13 |
| King's [1] 87 | levelled [1] 59/2 | 0/17 10/2 | 95/7 96/6 96/11 110/2 | minutes [1] 58/1 |
| kit [1] $9 / 1$ | levels [2] 43/16 52 | 31/10 35/22 41/10 | 110/ | misbalance [1] |
| know [13] 2/3 16/1 | light [1] 102/23 | 55/13 55/ | March [9] 9/16 12 | misbalances [2] |
| 54/6 57/17 66/12 | like [21] 8/9 14/1 | /18 55/2 | 4/8 47/6 47/1 | 12/15 13/23 |
| 72/14 79/25 90/16 | 25/2 29/22 38/25 | 55/23 56/4 56/4 59/24 | 51/18 71/5 95/1 | misplaced [1] |
| 90/18 91/12 103/9 | 56/21 57/16 62/5 | 60/4 60/4 60/1 | Marine [18] 2/10 8/4 | miss [1] 69/4 |
| 104/9 108/2 | 68/25 69/17 73/1 | lot [1] 3 | 1 | missing [3] 52 |
| knowing [1] 54/6 | 80/3 80/4 81/23 88/7 | lots [1] | 26/8 39/8 41/22 42/9 | 59/25 109/3 |
| knowledge [2] 1/2 | 88/12 88/21 90/16 | low [1] 107/15 | 42/16 42/20 43/22 | mistake [6] 17/ |
| 72/11 | 90/18 98/18 | lunch [2] 70/1 | 44/5 44/10 | 4/17 67/9 67/2 |
| known [2] 18/15 | likely [4] 81/17 82/24 | luxury [1] 44/18 | 52/24 61/23 | 68/10 93/11 |
| 72 | 1 | M | Marine Drive [4] 2/10 | mistaken [3] 66/22 |
| L |  |  | 61/2 | 67/14 67/ |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| lack [2] | 8/19 81/22 | M | /1 | 57/20 |
| Langham [3] 27/1 | 81/24 85/17 85/24 | M6 [1] 3/16 | match [1] 89/13 | tigation [1] |
| $27 / 533 / 10$ | 86/8 89/4 97/21 98/7 | made [33] 5/15 10/13 | material [3] 6/21 | Mm [1] 100/9 |
| Langham's [1] 27/7 | limited [17] 6/21 6/25 | 11/21 17/6 17/1 | 37/25 83/12 | moment [1] 1 |
| large [7] 8/25 9/10 | 37/25 61/10 82/2 83/5 | 2 | matter [2] 69/24 | Monday [1] 51/12 |
| 9/23 42/24 46/1 46/3 | 83/12 84/6 90/23 91/9 | 24/14 28/11 29/16 | 104/1 | money [3] 54/24 |
| 47/22 | 91/11 92/21 93/25 | 33/10 35/24 39/23 | matters [4] | 55/24 55/25 |
| la | 95/24 96/8 106/8 | 40/19 40/25 42/6 42 | 73/9 105/8 105/10 | monies [1] 56/10 |
| last [10] | 106/12 | 43/19 51/19 60/12 | may[35] 1/6 1/14 8/2 | months [2] 18/14 |
| 11/16 11/17 90/16 | Limited's [1] 91/3 | 64/1 64/16 64/21 | 20/16 30/9 | 18/15 |
| 90/18 90/23 91/7 91/8 | line [7] 10/23 11/17 | 65/16 67/9 67/20 | 56/12 57/20 61/22 | more [18] 14/1 |
| 109/23 | 12/17 13/3 15/7 28/15 | 68/10 77/15 82/9 | 66/3 66/9 66/22 67/8 | 22/15 37/13 42/10 |
| late [3] 10 | 52/14 | 99/17 106/7 | 67/21 67/22 67/23 | 9/5 50/25 6 |
| 30/23 | lines [2] 31/19 67/13 | Mail [2] 82/15 | 68/3 68/10 68/23 | 5/14 87/25 88/1 88/4 |
| la | list [7] 13/22 40/7 | majority [1] 5/2 | 73/10 82/8 83/7 86/6 | 89/12 100/18 100/24 |
| latter [4] 95/12 95/14 | 40/11 40/14 58/12 | make [7] 48/16 50/18 | 86/15 89/6 89/23 | 104/21 107/15 110/3 |
| 96/15 96/21 | 77/6 77/7 | 62/5 73/10 90/19 91/6 | 90/21 93/12 98/19 | 10/4 |
| lawyers [1] 59/7 | listed [3] 40/16 58/11 | 10 | 99/9 99/16 101/2 | gan [1] 48/5 |
| [6] 28/11 28 | 84/9 | maker [3] | 105/3 109/2 110/23 | morning [6] 1/3 24 |
| 28/18 28/19 28/20 | listings [1] 47/9 | 16/15 | maybe [3] 32/8 56/12 | 32/8 56/13 56/2 |
| 29/12 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { litigation [3] } 41 / 1 \\ & 47 / 2048 / 22 \end{aligned}$ | makes [1] 68/10 <br> making [8] 6/6 24/10 | $\begin{array}{lll} 87 / 6 \\ \text { me [25] } & 15 / 17 & 23 / 8 \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 111 / 13 \\ & \text { most [1] 24/8 } \end{aligned}$ |

motorway [1] 3/15
move [7] 80/1 82/4 86/21 88/1 90/10 99/3 99/6
moving [2] 87/24 91/24
Mr [135]
Mr Altman [1] 87/13
MR BLAKE [4] 70/23
105/7 107/8 112/12
Mr Castleton [72] 2/9 9/15 12/24 13/9 13/18 14/4 14/5 14/11 14/20 14/24 18/22 24/20 24/25 25/9 25/18 26/15 26/25 27/3 27/11 27/18 27/24 28/4 29/24 30/22 31/3 31/7 31/15 31/22 32/19 33/10 33/11
33/20 34/1 34/2 36/6 36/14 36/17 36/22 37/4 39/12 40/1 41/1 42/3 44/3 45/24 46/21 47/21 47/21 48/19 48/25 49/7 49/19 50/18 50/23 51/15 52/18 54/23 55/6 56/2 57/13 58/25 59/15 59/22 60/9 60/12 60/15 60/23 60/24 61/3 63/21 67/12 68/2 Mr Castleton's [19] 7/23 7/25 8/3 8/11 8/20 11/22 15/21 21/7 24/24 25/5 27/5 27/16 38/25 40/9 51/6 53/18 55/12 60/1 62/20
Mr Fraser's [1] 61/15
Mr John [1] 46/10
Mr Jones [16] 1/6 1/10 36/4 37/9 46/3 46/13 46/16 46/19 49/22 50/3 51/16 56/23 58/24 63/12 66/15 70/5
Mr Jones's [3] 31/12 40/4 52/10
Mr Justice [3] 26/2 32/24 39/4
Mr Justice Fraser's
[3] 61/6 61/12 61/21
Mr Morgan [1] 48/5
Mr Recaldin [3] 71/2 108/7 111/7
Mr Stephen [1] 59/3 Mr Wallis [3] 87/20 93/22 99/23
Mr Whittam [1] 105/3
Mrs [2] 14/12 14/12
Mrs Joyce [1] 14/12
Mrs Oglesby [1]

14/12
MS [13] 1/8 14/4
necessary [1] 32/8
need [5] 1/24 76/3
14/13 16/10 27/5 27/7 $78 / 24$ 80/23 105/16 38/1 58/20 58/22 60/9 needed [4] 6/6 14/19
65/1 112/4 112/6
Ms Langham [1] 27/5
Ms Langham's [1] 27/7
Ms Oglesby [3] 14/4 16/10 38/1
Ms Oglesby's [1] 14/13
Ms Page [3] 58/20
58/22 112/6
Ms Price [1] 65/1
Ms Train [1] 60/9 much [11] 65/1 69/21 70/24 72/9 75/3 77/22 88/21 100/24 104/25 111/1 111/14
multi [2] 30/6 32/6 multi-user [2] 30/6 32/6
must [1] 60/9 my [53] 10/10 11/18 14/17 15/4 16/4 16/20 20/16 22/9 22/20 24/19 25/11 30/2 31/2 37/5 38/10 41/11 41/19 42/8 42/23 43/18 45/15 46/2 48/10 52/3 52/9 52/15 52/20 52/21 53/4 57/14 58/10 63/11 65/9 65/20 66/14 67/19 67/25 68/16 69/1 69/5 69/10 69/14 76/15 80/22 80/25 88/19 93/12 93/17 97/24 99/12 107/22 108/7 109/22
myself [7] 23/20 32/4 40/23 58/14 61/9 62/8 64/4

## N

name [5] 1/9 1/13
16/1 70/25 80/23
namely [1] 57/10
National [7] 18/6 18/16 19/25 20/8 27/2 27/4 27/8
nature [4] 5/25 7/8
10/18 61/17
NBSC [3] 9/5 22/17 22/19
near [1] 59/5
near-ish [1] 59/5
nearest [1] 61/20 nearly [2] 56/13 79/17
necessarily [5] 4/24 4/24 15/6 18/2 19/7

50/25 51/24
needle [1] 30/16
needn't [2] 27/17 36/3
needs [1] 62/21
negative [1] 19/17
net [1] 34/25
network [10] 3/2 3/5
3/8 3/9 3/12 3/15 3/21
8/1 22/4 55/14
never [10] 10/19 15/4
15/4 21/12 24/8 52/17
56/3 60/11 60/25 67/4
new [1] 7/3
next [4] 11/24 29/20
43/9 69/25
NFSP [1] 27/11
Nick [2] 82/9 99/17
nine [1] 22/11
no [43] 1/24 9/2 9/2
9/3 9/10 9/19 11/11
12/14 15/25 16/19
20/9 20/21 25/1 25/6
25/9 29/13 31/16
36/19 38/13 42/12
44/17 45/13 48/17
50/21 52/8 53/24
54/23 55/25 56/1 56/7
59/20 59/21 61/2 61/3
63/1 66/14 69/4 79/25
85/14 93/11 106/1 110/9 111/4
nobody [1] 54/21
nodding [1] 105/14 non [4] 75/16 106/7 110/17 110/20
non-conviction [1] 106/7
non-Horizon [2]
110/17 110/20
non-post [1] 75/16
nonsense [4] 97/11
102/10 107/1 107/4
nor [2] 15/5 91/7
normal [1] 43/2
normally [3] 8/16
15/7 53/22
2 North [1] 3/14
Northern [1] 75/18 not [116]
note [4] 89/3 96/17
105/15 110/15
noted [1] 35/21
notes [7] 28/24 28/25
29/4 51/4 51/20 51/20 80/22
nothing [8] 14/18
21/22 32/15 33/5
54/17 60/20 66/20
67/7
notice [3] 18/3 18/24 111/9
notices [7] 9/3 10/16
17/10 17/12 17/22 18/7 18/14
November [3] 43/12 44/25 59/8
November 2003 [1] 43/12
now [27] 1/25 27/17
35/12 47/18 51/4 54/6
56/21 57/20 59/3
59/19 60/23 61/5
63/11 64/10 65/12
69/13 76/3 79/10
79/11 82/8 84/13 89/9
94/25 99/11 99/25 103/10 104/20
nowhere [1] 53/10
number [39] 37/20
42/1 46/14 47/2 47/5
58/24 61/15 63/7
74/24 76/15 77/14
78/3 78/4 78/6 78/8
79/12 79/14 81/13
82/12 82/16 84/1
84/22 84/23 85/9 87/2
87/14 89/8 89/20
92/14 96/5 97/14
97/15 102/2 103/3 103/12 106/25 108/10 109/6 109/24
Number 1 [1] 96/5
number 5 [1] 106/25
number 6 [2] 78/3 78/4
numbers [16] 75/25
88/1 88/2 88/3 94/16
97/6 97/9 98/21 101/3
101/7 102/11 102/14
103/7 103/10 107/15 107/23

## 0

obtained [2] 44/23 81/10
obtaining [1] 81/4
obvious [1] 17/1
obviously [5] 6/5
54/5 82/2 88/23 111/9
occasions [2] 61/15 63/7
occur [2] 38/3 38/16
occurred [3] 43/20
67/24 68/9
occurring [1] 24/1
October [2] 48/11
111/18
off [5] 17/18 19/5
21/1 69/5 106/19
offence [1] 101/11
offer [2] 40/1 69/3
office [86] 2/9 2/11
2/12 4/19 4/23 5/12

7/20 8/4 8/25 9/21
11/14 12/6 12/11
14/17 22/1 23/9 23/15 23/16 23/19 24/12 24/14 25/17 26/8 29/5 33/16 34/10 38/5 38/17 38/24 39/8
44/23 45/24 46/11 46/23 49/24 50/8
53/23 55/11 61/10
61/25 72/17 72/24
73/3 73/5 74/13 74/25
75/16 75/16 77/2 78/6
78/12 79/20 80/12
82/11 82/13 82/15
83/5 83/14 83/21 84/6
86/12 87/9 90/17
90/21 90/23 91/3 91/9
91/11 91/23 92/10
92/14 92/19 92/25
95/17 95/19 99/18
99/23 101/13 101/22
102/25 103/24 103/25
107/10 107/13 109/18
110/5
Office's [2] 98/10 102/6
Office/Royal [1] 82/15
officer [2] 2/15 2/17
Offices [1] 82/14
often [1] 6/2
Oglesby [15] 8/2
11/21 12/18 14/4
14/12 15/16 15/22
16/10 25/10 27/19
32/2 38/1 54/4 59/5 60/2
Oglesby's [1] 14/13 oh [1] 111/6
omitted [1] 45/24
on [150]
once [1] 96/23
one [30] 7/22 13/14
14/21 17/4 17/6 18/8
23/8 24/16 27/14
33/25 51/10 53/19
53/22 59/1 61/14 62/5
63/5 64/21 65/17
68/22 69/24 71/4 75/1
75/17 76/17 85/10
97/6 103/5 108/11 111/8
ones [2] 89/13 89/17
ongoing [1] 3/25
only [9] 7/18 7/22
24/16 51/16 61/14
69/3 83/21 105/11
110/11
onwards [6] 85/16
88/13 90/7 103/9
107/19 109/22
open [1] 35/11
opened [1] 34/18

## 0

operate [2] 51/1 53/23
operating [3] 32/6 53/14 53/22
opportunity [2] 32/12 48/12
opposed [2] 42/6 86/13
opposite [1] 24/3 or [85] 5/4 6/4 10/20 13/23 15/22 17/25 18/15 18/21 20/16 22/12 22/22 24/8 24/9 24/14 25/17 26/6 27/23 28/20 30/11 33/9 33/10 38/5 38/10 39/1 44/18 45/10 48/15 51/3 54/13 57/14 57/22 59/17 60/9 60/11 61/20 62/14 62/17 66/11 67/17 68/3 69/15 72/4 73/3 73/11 73/11 73/18 74/2 74/14 75/5 75/9 75/14 76/1 76/1
79/21 79/24 80/15 82/13 83/16 86/16
87/6 87/7 90/19 90/25 91/6 92/6 93/5 93/8 93/8 93/22 97/21 98/16 101/12 101/13 102/5 103/1 103/4 103/5 103/7 103/15 103/15 104/2 105/19 106/3 109/9 110/12 order [3] 12/24 66/11 74/1
ordered [1] 51/23 ordering [1] 50/25 organisation [1] 83/16
original [4] 6/22 7/1 16/15 72/4
originally [2] 50/6 74/22
other [26] 23/22
24/13 24/23 25/16 28/18 32/23 33/9 33/11 38/9 40/2 42/8 42/13 43/23 53/24 64/7 65/25 66/11 77/4 83/15 86/13 90/4 91/14 97/21 97/22 101/24 108/12
others [2] 26/4 86/16 our [8] 2/25 5/9 12/8 55/15 56/13 57/23 74/19 101/4 out [49] $2 / 187 / 5$ 10/1 14/16 15/9 22/1 22/3 23/8 23/13 26/17 33/23 41/15 43/15

## 47/19 56/3 56/16 57/2 $90 / 11$

59/10 61/17 65/4 page 24 [1] 91/25 73/18 76/13 76/14 page 3 [2] 9/25 41/4 77/3 78/10 78/17 79/9 page 31 [1] 71/19 82/5 82/20 82/23 84/1 page 4 [3] 28/5 29/7 84/15 86/20 87/4 87/5 45/20
87/10 88/5 89/2 89/22 90/2 92/25 97/6 99/5 100/22 103/1 103/6
105/6 105/16 108/19 outcome [1] 36/23 over [22] 8/25 9/10 11/12 11/24 13/25 14/2 29/7 29/20 31/23 33/24 35/19 36/21 40/11 45/21 51/13 51/17 52/22 84/11 85/11 87/12 98/25 98/25
overall [4] 44/14 98/15 100/23 110/18 overlooked [1] 81/1 oversight [7] 40/23 57/6 57/18 58/14 65/9 65/13 68/15 overturned [6] 75/15 75/17 95/13 95/15 96/20 96/22 own [2] 6/9 16/18
page 15 [1] 71/10 page 19 [2] 86/23 86/25
page 2 [1] 29/2
page 20 [1] 22/6
page 22 [1] 46/7
page 23 [2] 22/20
page 47 [1] 49/2
page 489 [1] $48 / 8$
page 5 [5] 15/13
19/21 51/8 72/3 72/7
page 54 [1] 33/22
page 6 [1] 31/14
page 7 [2] 39/16
52/11
page 8 [1] 11/16
page 9 [2] 40/6 77/23
pages [2] 11/24 paragraph 54 [1] 14/10
paid [1] 45/25
panel [1] 49/23
paper [1] 42/13
papers [4] 16/10 17/2
64/1 79/6
paperwork [2] 15/19
18/10
paragraph [54] 6/10 7/6 12/3 14/15 15/13 19/22 24/5 27/16 28/6 31/14 33/7 36/3 37/10 paragraph 62 [1] 37/15 38/12 40/6 41/6 94/9 42/15 46/11 48/21 paragraph 63 [1] 51/14 52/12 57/3 57/6 94/13
57/19 59/12 63/10
64/20 64/23 64/24
65/2 65/5 65/6 68/8
69/11 69/15 77/20
77/23 78/23 80/6
85/16 86/6 87/11 90/7
90/13 91/20 92/2 92/9 part [20] 3/25 15/10
94/9 94/13 95/2 106/9 108/20 108/23
paragraph 10 [1]
51/14
paragraph 11 [1] 24/5
paragraph 12 [3]
41/6 46/11 48/21
paragraph 13 [1] 42/15
paragraph 16 [1] 15/13
paragraph 19 [1] 19/22
Paragraph 21 [1]
31/14
paragraph 22 [1] 33/7
paragraph 24 [2]
37/15 106/9
paragraph 25 [2]
77/20 77/23
paragraph 27 [2]
36/3 37/10
paragraph 28 [1]
$52 / 12$
paragraph 29 [1]
38/12
paragraph 31 [1] 78/23
paragraph 34 [8] 40/6 57/3 57/6 57/19 65/2 65/6 68/8 69/11
paragraph 34a [1]
27/16
paragraph 37 [1]
80/6
paragraph 43 [2]
85/16 86/6
paragraph 50 [1]
87/11
90/7
paragraph 56 [1]
90/13
paragraph 59 [1]
91/20
paragraph 6 [2] 6/10
7/6
paragraph 60 [1]
92/2
paragraph 61 [1]
92/9
paragraph 65 [1]
95/2
paragraph 71 [2]
108/20 108/23
parameters [3] 74/1
74/18 98/22

25/10 26/7
57/1 57/7 61/2 64/12
65/9 68/16 69/2 69/10
78/10 93/8
Participants [3]
56/15 56/17 89/7
particular [6] 16/3
21/7 33/4 66/1 83/11 99/8
particularly [2] 2/25
30/9
partly [2] 74/14 75/10
parts [1] 111/10
passage [1] 105/22
pause [2] 13/12
40/12
pausing [1] 34/8
payments [3] 41/21
49/6 51/25
PCDE [7] 73/20 75/2
76/18 77/9 77/10
87/24 90/3
pending [1] 76/1
penultimate [1]

52/13
people [8] 9/20 14/19 24/24 29/6 38/15 81/6 101/20 101/24
per [9] 79/17 86/9
93/12 97/6 97/24
101/25 102/9 103/6 107/4
percentage [10]
95/11 95/12 95/14
96/14 96/19 96/21
97/1 97/5 97/14 107/3
perform [1] 27/21
performed [2] 34/6 52/23
performing [3] 5/22
36/9 37/12
Perhaps [2] 86/5 89/11
period [12] 9/1 17/11
22/10 51/17 78/21
81/13 83/8 83/25
92/17 95/19 98/2 99/1
periods [1] 52/23
permanent [1] 5/17
permanently [1] 42/20
person [4] 26/25
59/17 81/15 91/5
personal [1] 5/5
personally [2] 21/11 38/15
persons [1] 59/17
pertains [1] 82/22
Peters [6] 74/19
74/19 76/13 76/13
76/25 76/25
PFAs [1] 74/7
Phase [3] 2/7 73/11
89/12
Phase 4 [1] 2/7
Phase 5 [2] 73/11 89/12
phone [2] 20/4 29/16
photocopies [1]
46/22
physical [5] 17/17
19/1 26/14 30/15 52/3
physically [4] 42/9
44/1 44/4 52/1
picked [2] 17/20
picture [1] 100/22
place [16] 12/5 13/10
14/17 14/22 26/20
27/21 30/6 30/18 31/4
32/3 44/22 56/8 74/16
75/1 92/5 92/15
plain [1] 106/7
please [75] 1/6 1/9
1/15 8/9 8/12 8/13
8/23 9/25 11/5 11/13
11/16 11/24 13/25
14/3 14/10 15/12
(40) operate - please
please... [59] 15/13
19/21 22/5 22/6 22/19 28/2 28/5 28/6 29/1 29/2 29/8 31/12 31/14 33/21 33/23 33/25 39/14 39/16 40/4 40/6 41/3 41/4 41/6 45/17 45/20 45/21 46/6 47/25 48/2 48/6 48/9 48/18 49/2 51/7 51/8 51/10 51/13 52/10 52/12 57/24 58/2 59/2 63/4 63/9 63/11 70/19 70/25 77/7 80/7 82/16 86/21 87/12 90/12 91/21 92/4 95/2 96/17 100/20 100/23
pleased [2] 12/9 12/25
pm [4] 70/12 70/14 70/16 111/16
PMR [3] 9/1 9/8 9/19
point [24] 3/22 8/21
9/12 9/17 14/16 16/25 23/19 24/16 26/23 39/18 50/16 50/23 53/8 55/17 57/23 62/5 62/19 63/17 64/19 67/25 68/3 68/3 81/11 106/17
pointed [2] 57/2 65/4
points [6] 18/12
24/19 36/16 46/16 54/2 67/20
POL [2] 24/10 59/7
POL00069955 [1] 45/17
POL00071227 [2] 28/4 39/15
POLO0071234 [2] 8/12 22/5
POL00082324 [1] 29/1
POL00083351 [1] 59/2
POL00107458 [1] 51/8
policies [1] 5/13
policy [1] 5/9
populating [1] 77/9
population [3] 76/11 89/22 103/19
position [10] 19/17
19/20 20/25 51/1 72/25 98/10 102/6 102/25 102/25 107/10 positions [2] 27/23 102/7
possible [6] 5/21 21/18 52/19 54/8 91/4 92/19
possibly [3] 25/8

53/13 53/25
post [88] 2/9 2/11 2/12 4/19 4/23 5/12 7/12 7/20 8/4 11/14 12/5 22/1 24/12 24/14 pre1999 [5] 25/17 26/8 29/5 33/16 34/10 38/5 38/17 38/23 39/8 44/23 45/24 46/11 53/23 55/11 61/10 61/25 72/17 72/24 73/3 73/5 73/19 73/21 73/24 74/13 74/25 75/16 75/16 76/21 77/1 77/10 78/6 78/12 79/20 80/12 82/11 82/13 82/14 82/15 83/5 83/14 83/21 84/6 86/12 87/8 87/9 88/13 90/17 90/21 90/23 91/3 91/9 91/11 92/10 92/14 92/19 92/24 95/17 95/19 98/2 98/10 99/18 99/23 101/13 101/22 102/6 102/24 103/24 103/25 104/21 107/9 107/13 107/24 109/18 110/5 Post Offices [1] 82/14 post-1999 [1] 98/2 post-appeal [1] 7/12 post-conviction [5] 73/19 73/21 73/24 76/21 77/10
post-date [1] 104/21
post-Horizon [2] 87/8 88/13
posted [3] 47/13 47/14 47/16
postmaster [3] 10/20 15/3 91/8
postmasters [9] 3/24 9/6 23/18 32/25 53/17 72/23 91/12 92/5 96/10
postmistresses [1] 92/6
potential [7] 44/16 74/5 74/8 74/9 75/12 76/5 103/18
potentially [17] 10/16 13/20 18/21 19/10 23/10 25/22 30/19 38/20 44/13 54/6 61/13 61/22 62/13 66/7 66/24 76/12 104/18
pouch [3] 42/23 43/4 43/7
practice [1] 43/3 pre [20] 7/7 10/11

95/23 98/4 98/9 98/9 101/9 102/21 102/24 105/23 106/8 107/24
pre-'99 [1] 98/4
pre-1999 [5] 92/21
95/23 98/9 105/23
106/8
pre-2000 [1] 101/9
pre-appeal [8] 7/7
10/11 15/10 16/8 16/24 17/6 19/23 26/7
pre-Horizon [4] 87/7
98/9 102/21 102/24
precaution [1] 9/9
preceding [1] 94/24
precisely [1] 63/14
prepared [2] 45/18
49/22
preparing [1] 45/2
prerequisite [1] 77/8
present [2] 29/6
67/23
presumably [1] 21/15
previous [4] 34/23
35/10 35/17 97/23
previously [5] 13/9 20/6 72/20 76/7 76/20 PRICE [3] 1/8 65/1 112/4
primarily [1] 18/25
principle [1] 21/9
printout [2] 34/22 35/5
printouts [3] 11/9 34/5 46/24
prior [6] 18/10 92/7 92/13 93/20 100/16 101/23
probabilities [3]
59/16 60/5 60/17
probability [2] 53/12 54/3
probably [3] 28/17 55/19 61/13
problem [5] 12/16 13/2 29/13 55/3 106/16
problems [13] 9/2
9/20 12/10 12/12 12/19 13/1 13/5 15/1 21/9 22/13 25/20 38/18 105/6
proceedings [4] 2/8 70/15 86/23 86/25
process [14] 5/3 6/13 7/5 16/20 17/5 19/12 30/5 33/4 73/9 74/3
75/23 77/1 77/16 109/9
processed [2] 21/21 43/6

15/10 16/8 16/24 17/6 processes [1] 10/10 19/23 26/7 87/7 92/21 produced [9] 20/19

21/4 31/23 32/19 41/16 82/2 100/18 103/1 111/8
producing [1] 25/9
programme [4] 3/8
3/10 3/13 3/20
Project [1] 4/5
proof [1] 49/24
prosecuted [9] 90/20
90/23 91/6 91/9 91/13 95/6 95/7 96/6 96/12 prosecuting [3] 86/3 86/13 91/14
prosecution [11] 73/15 74/14 74/16 75/8 75/9 75/10 83/15 86/11 90/17 90/24 91/3
prosecution's [1] 75/17
prosecutions [37]
78/6 78/8 78/13 78/21
79/11 79/13 79/16
79/18 81/13 82/12
83/19 83/23 84/2
84/15 84/17 84/21
84/22 84/24 86/9
86/11 87/3 87/7 88/2
92/5 92/15 92/24
93/19 97/10 97/14
97/25 101/22 102/3
102/15 103/3 104/3
107/5 107/10
prosecutions' [1] 82/18
prosecutor [1] 74/13 protect [1] 55/15 prove [3] 28/21 29/19 52/2
proves [1] 51/21
provide [8] 38/8
84/16 84/19 85/17
89/9 94/15 97/25 108/9
provided [23] 8/10 10/2 15/24 21/25 45/9 49/23 62/6 62/23
73/16 75/7 80/17 85/4
85/10 85/22 86/22
89/14 89/17 90/5
93/21 96/3 97/3 99/20

## 100/25

provides [2] 92/23
96/2
providing [3] 2/2
76/24 86/7
published [1] 72/15
pulled [1] 74/25
purpose [2] 21/17 89/9
purposes [3] 1/23
45/1 93/3
pursues [1] 57/22
put [14] 30/6 30/7

31/4 32/2 32/3 32/6 51/10 59/1 64/11
76/18 103/19 103/24
104/1 105/7
putting [1] 30/18

## Q

question [22] 29/9
32/22 37/1 38/14 48/6
49/7 52/23 56/18
58/10 60/15 62/21
62/25 80/12 81/24
82/3 85/25 87/22 96/5
98/19 105/3 105/20 106/20
questioned [14] 1/8 48/19 50/23 58/22 63/2 70/23 105/4 108/5 112/4 112/6 112/8 112/12 112/14 112/16
questioning [1] 56/23
questions [17] 2/4
56/11 56/12 56/14 56/17 58/17 58/18 58/19 58/20 63/1 65/15 67/13 67/16 69/21 81/6 98/20 105/2
quickly [1] 94/6
quite [7] 5/11 24/3 61/12 82/19 98/14 105/8 107/9

## R

raise [2] 20/7 38/24
raised [1] 102/23 raises [1] 46/17 raising [2] 33/1 36/17
ran [1] 53/18
range [2] 4/25 10/12
ranging [1] 5/11
rate [2] 79/21 79/24
rather [6] 5/17 30/13
63/17 63/17 70/2
77/24
rationale [5] 8/19
15/20 16/7 16/22 60/6
reach [2] 54/2 85/9
reached [4] 9/23
12/23 53/8 55/17
reaching [1] 23/13
read [13] 10/5 12/23
13/6 13/15 13/15 17/1
23/3 23/4 23/7 48/13
61/14 82/20 108/23
reading [2] 13/14
16/16
reads [3] 12/4 59/12 82/10
real [5] 31/10 55/18
55/23 56/4 60/18
realised [1] 68/9
really [17] 2/21 10/8
10/18 18/11 23/18
23/22 25/6 25/23
32/22 33/3 33/5 39/3
39/5 53/10 56/9 62/23
69/16
reason [4] 55/11 67/9 68/24 97/22
reasonably [1]
109/15
reasoning [1] 57/1
reasons [7] 8/19 9/17
64/21 65/18 83/1 83/2 89/21
rebuild [1] 23/21
rebuilding [1] 25/12
Recaldin [7] 70/19
70/22 71/1 71/2 108/7
111/7 112/10
recall [9] 11/9 30/2 31/15 31/18 33/9 48/24 51/4 69/9 80/21
receipt [8] 11/11
41/24 43/1 43/5 43/9 47/1 47/4 47/7
receipts [8] 41/21
43/24 45/25 46/8
46/13 46/20 49/5
50/12
received [14] 9/8
15/17 27/13 39/24
40/19 42/1 42/9 42/18
43/18 44/1 44/9 47/22
50/19 56/25
receives [2] 49/5 50/11
recently [3] 22/16 27/13 48/13
recheck [1] 33/12
rechecking [1] 10/12
recognise [4] 69/13
99/11 99/13 105/22
recognised [4] 58/17 68/23 69/14 107/23
recollection [4] 16/5 27/5 38/23 45/15 recommendations
[1] $7 / 15$
recommended [1] 27/19
record [4] 11/8 28/2 110/5 110/10
recorded [8] 22/21
60/13 61/21 92/17 93/4 95/21 105/12 106/3
recording [3] 26/14 46/8 84/7
records [20] 9/6
42/13 84/2 84/5 91/3
92/18 92/20 92/20
92/23 95/23 96/2 96/8

96/18 104/15 104/21 $\quad$ relying [1] 18/17 104/22 105/17 105/24 remain [1] 63/3 106/1 109/23
recreate [1] 65/22
reducing [1] $3 / 21$
refer [4] 20/11 20/16 74/6 110/14
reference [11] $1 / 24$
26/12 28/4 29/3 41/24 46/14 47/2 47/5 48/2 72/1 89/8
referred [7] 65/8
65/23 73/20 82/6 86/16 94/9 94/22 referring [2] 20/21 21/3
refers [2] 46/3 46/13 reflect [2] 55/8 83/6 reflected [6] 39/24 40/20 42/2 43/21 44/2 88/24
reflecting [1] 83/24
refresh [1] 22/15 refused [1] 76/1 regard [1] 110/6 regarding [3] 12/11 100/3 102/24
regardless [2] 18/24 94/21
Regional [1] 4/14 regular [1] 13/3 regularly [2] 12/18 42/21
rehearing [3] 6/16 16/13 37/21
Reinvention [3] 3/8 3/10 3/12
relate [5] 22/22 22/23
22/24 90/25 93/4 related [21] 7/22 22/11 32/16 64/12 75/5 75/6 75/7 86/17 88/9 88/10 90/25 91/18 91/23 103/8 103/9 109/11 109/18 109/25 110/6 110/13 110/16
relates [1] 101/10 relating [8] 2/10 22/9 23/3 26/16 45/11 48/22 52/9 83/10 relation [6] 3/9 13/18 91/10 91/13 92/11 96/17
relationship [1] 16/1 relayed [1] 23/12 relevant [4] 17/19 22/10 93/2 94/4 reliability [1] 98/8 reliance [1] 69/14 relied [5] 92/22 93/7 93/15 95/25 98/4 relook [1] 25/6 rely [1] 90/25
remainder [2] 22/17 103/8
remains [2] 26/6 35/4 Remediation [3] 72/16 72/19 72/22
remember [6] 15/24 30/1 48/20 48/25 68/16 68/17
removed [3] 9/21 59/17 59/20
reopened [4] 62/8
62/14 62/20 62/21
repeat [3] 76/3 94/7
105/17
repeatedly [3] 29/17
31/8 55/2
report [24] 11/25
14/2 32/25 34/21 39/4
44/24 45/5 45/10 45/13 45/16 45/21 46/25 47/3 47/6 50/15 59/9 59/11 61/7 61/21 62/11 65/24 66/16 66/21 67/8
reported [2] 20/9 90/20
reporting [1] 55/1
reports [12] 22/13
37/18 38/9 44/18
44/18 61/15 62/7
62/10 62/12 62/23
65/25 66/6
represent [2] 31/10 58/24
representative [1]
27/1
representatives [1] 58/18
request [28] 9/7
14/17 77/24 77/25
78/3 78/4 78/16 80/6 80/12 81/25 82/5 82/9
82/22 83/8 83/25
84/14 90/14 91/25 92/3 94/22 94/24 95/4 98/2 98/19 99/16 99/17 100/4 102/1 requested [5] 14/21 20/6 34/5 90/14 95/18 requests [7] 33/11 77/14 80/2 98/23 99/4 99/7 99/9
research [1] 90/1
respect [5] 85/21 85/21 86/8 99/8 102/6 respectively [1]
41/11
responding [2] 64/3

## 64/4

response [22] 80/11
80/16 80/19 82/8
82/19 82/20 85/11

90/11 90/21 91/16
93/10 93/21 93/22
96/7 96/24 96/25 98/1
106/25
Response 1 [1] 80/11
Response 2 [1] 82/8
result [5] 24/11 31/24 67/16 83/23 98/1
resulted [7] 14/8
78/9 78/14 82/17
83/16 86/10 92/25
resulting [2] 78/21
79/18
results [5] 33/19 36/5
36/23 39/11 74/4
Retail [8] 3/5 8/1
10/23 12/17 13/3 15/7 28/15 55/14
return [2] 32/1 73/10
returned [5] 43/8
51/3 51/17 51/19
51/22
review [2] 5/6 34/9
reviewed [1] 18/9
revolves [1] 98/25
Richard [1] 105/5
right [40] 2/13 3/16
4/3 4/15 4/19 5/8 6/19
7/18 8/4 8/6 10/3
17/12 20/20 22/14
26/9 26/11 32/4 36/11
45/3 50/19 55/7 56/20
58/16 60/8 63/5 64/11
64/16 64/25 67/6
67/12 68/5 69/20 70/4
72/17 88/14 108/14
108/18 109/8 109/21
110/25
rigour [1] 30/18
ripped [1] 51/21
risk [1] 55/19
RLM [1] 29/10
robberies [5] 88/7
88/12 88/15 88/22
93/8
robbery [1] 86/16
robust [1] 86/3
role [17] 2/16 3/9
4/14 4/17 4/21 5/16
5/17 5/19 5/22 6/17
20/13 38/10 38/10
38/24 55/15 73/6 94/21
roles [2] 4/11 4/17
rolled [2] 35/19 87/4
rolling [2] 35/12
35/21
rollout [1] 101/23
root [2] 104/8 108/1
rose [1] 87/3
route [1] 38/21
Royal [5] 60/14 60/25

62/2 82/15 83/7
Rule [1] 78/4
running [2] 28/20 28/21
rural [1] 3/23
said [17] 24/6 28/11 28/16 28/19 28/20 37/20 45/18 60/24 60/24 65/12 69/8 69/19 81/14 90/22 94/8 102/20 104/15 salient [1] 32/1 same [9] 14/2 18/19 25/18 47/7 63/25 64/5 64/9 72/6 100/4
Savings [2] 18/6 18/16
saw [2] 45/13 101/1 say [47] 6/10 7/7 7/14
15/14 19/24 24/5
26/12 26/23 28/12
31/14 33/8 34/1 36/4
37/16 38/12 40/7 41/6
43/10 54/12 57/8
57/17 60/23 61/5
62/17 63/16 64/8
68/25 69/13 69/17 78/2 79/1 91/2 95/5 95/6 96/1 96/6 96/11 101/2 103/2 104/1 104/10 104/16 105/13 106/4 107/14 108/18 110/3
saying [9] 12/24 29/24 30/1 30/23 31/7 32/21 54/8 57/21 64/6 says [8] 9/18 14/14 29/12 51/15 87/15 93/13 96/16 108/24
Scheme [1] 73/8
schemes [1] 72/23
scope [1] 78/16
score [3] 2/22 5/6 5/8
scorecard [1] 2/22
Scotland [2] 75/19 90/2
Scottish [1] 51/20
screen [21] 8/12
15/12 19/21 22/5
28/25 31/12 33/21
39/14 40/4 41/3 45/16
51/7 52/10 59/2 63/4
77/20 78/25 80/8 89/6
90/13 100/20
scroll [9] $8 / 2211 / 5$ 59/11 63/4 80/18 86/5 92/1 97/2 97/2
scrolling [1] 40/13
scrutiny [1] 14/24
sealed [1] 19/12
search [5] 77/6 77/7
77/8 92/23 96/2

| $\mathbf{S}$ |
| :--- |
| searching [2] 61/ |
| $61 / 19$ |
| second [10] $12 / 1$ |
| $36 / 2348 / 351 / 15$ |

71/13 77/21 78/1 80/9 99/12 99/25
Secondly [1] 98/24 section [2] 46/5 46/6 sector [2] 3/22 3/23 security [3] 56/6 77/4 107/13
see [39] $1 / 38 / 20$
8/23 8/24 11/13 12/10
12/25 14/1 14/3 22/7
23/15 25/8 25/12 29/3 29/8 30/18 32/11
33/24 37/5 38/24
39/17 45/17 48/3 48/8
51/11 55/3 58/7 59/5 62/9 62/22 78/1 80/2
80/16 87/15 93/23
101/23 103/7 105/13
110/16
seeing [1] 64/5
seeking [4] 14/24
14/25 23/25 55/2
seem [4] 13/10 16/23
84/13 93/20
seems [1] 11/6
seen [15] 24/8 25/1
26/6 37/13 44/25 45/7 47/10 62/14 66/15 66/17 67/1 67/2 67/10 97/23 98/14
Senior [2] 4/2 5/18
sense [1] 109/2
sent [4] 9/7 17/18 39/12 45/15
sentence [9] 63/5 63/6 63/14 63/15 63/17 64/12 64/17 64/18 93/13
separate [4] 11/7 11/10 36/20 84/14
Separately [1] 4/17
September [4] 1/1 71/23 80/11 107/16
September 1999 [1] 107/16
seriously [1] 42/14 service [3] 2/23 2/24 6/12
services [2] 11/19 59/15
set [23] 7/5 10/1 15/9 36/20 36/23 41/15 47/19 74/18 74/20
74/22 78/10 78/17 82/5 82/23 83/22 84/23 86/20 87/5 87/10 88/5 89/2 105/16 108/19
sets [1] $84 / 1$
singly [1] 10/20 setting [4] 21/7 21/25 22/3 38/14
Several [1] 76/14
shaded [2] 101/6 103/10
Shall [1] 57/25
she [5] 14/5 55/18 64/3 64/4 65/4
short [7] 9/23 28/12 56/18 58/5 70/13
107/17 111/9
shortage [10] 14/8 34/15 34/19 35/2 35/9 35/14 35/17 35/19 35/25 93/5
shortages [1] 28/15 shortfall [16] 19/10 73/8 86/14 86/17 91/7 six [2] 18/15 22/12 91/10 93/2 93/25 94/3 size [2] 3/21 5/25 94/11 101/16 101/17 103/8 103/13 103/18 110/21
shortfalls [7] 25/14
52/18 53/3 90/20 91/13 109/12 109/18 shorthand [1] 105/14 shortly [4] 26/11 44/22 75/4 89/7
should [13] $1 / 12$
30/24 32/12 35/21 38/17 42/5 44/5 65/1 69/8 69/18 71/2 82/25 107/6
shouldn't [1] 37/9 show [1] 19/17
showed [3] 41/12 43/18 43/25
shown [2] 31/8 36/13 shows [6] 19/8 34/24 47/1 47/4 47/7 51/25 sic [1] 96/4
signature [6] 1/16
1/18 48/11 71/11
71/19 72/7
signed [1] 42/3
significant [6] 5/13
19/10 42/22 88/4 103/4 104/2
similar [2] 60/15 64/2
Simon [4] 70/19
70/22 71/1 112/10
simple [3] 67/9 105/8 105/10
simply [11] 16/16
19/11 30/13 30/21 54/11 66/7 67/25 68/7 98/7 104/18 105/14 since [9] 12/18 13/4
43/12 62/16 62/17 72/25 80/15 82/1 82/15
single [2] 27/19 73/14
sir [31] 1/3 56/11
56/19 57/25 58/3 58/7 58/9 58/23 63/2 64/15 64/24 65/8 69/3 69/17 69/23 69/25 70/11 70/17 108/4 108/5 108/13 108/21 108/25 109/13 109/20 110/8
110/14 111/2 111/4 112/8 112/16
Sir Wyn [8] 108/13 108/21 108/25 109/13 109/20 110/8 110/14 111/2
sit [1] 108/8
situation [2] 14/18 17/22
skeleton [2] 51/6 51/11
slightly [7] 79/10
79/14 80/18 86/7 92/2 94/19 98/19
slip [3] 43/1 43/5
43/9
slips [1] 46/23
slot [1] 6/5
slots [1] 6/6
slow [1] 94/19
Smith [1] 78/11
snapshot [1] 41/13
snapshots [2] 41/9 43/25
so [101] 3/20 3/23
5/3 5/11 5/11 6/17 7/2
8/22 12/2 12/22 14/24 16/3 17/4 17/17 17/22 18/3 18/8 18/14 18/19 19/8 19/14 19/16 22/7 25/10 29/4 29/11 29/16 29/24 32/14 33/5 33/23 40/10 44/7 44/17 45/9 49/4 49/7 49/14 50/7 53/12 53/24 56/9 57/23 58/1 61/4 61/24 62/19 62/21 64/5 66/20 67/7 74/19 76/12 76/21
77/1 77/1 77/8 77/10 77/21 77/23 78/17 78/20 79/11 79/12 79/16 80/8 80/9 82/2 84/20 84/25 87/11 87/23 88/11 88/13 93/17 93/25 97/5 97/11 97/12 97/13 97/19 98/9 98/9 98/18 98/21 99/5 100/14 100/15 101/14 102/10 102/23 103/6 103/15 108/22 109/14 109/21 110/2 110/11 110/17

110/23 111/5
software [3] 9/2 9/8 21/9
solely [1] 83/4 solution [1] 13/20
some [29] 17/3 17/4 18/6 18/14 18/15
18/16 18/21 23/12 23/12 28/24 33/15 39/7 59/9 61/16 61/18 73/17 75/22 79/6 84/25 85/17 89/4 91/19 92/10 99/25 101/8 101/20 106/1 106/13 111/10
somebody [1] 74/11 someone [7] 23/24
38/4 38/5 38/6 38/16 53/2 57/24
something [9] 5/17
25/13 49/22 56/22 62/15 77/5 89/11 103/2 103/15
sometimes [1] 19/14 somewhat [1] 79/13 soon [1] 9/20
sorry [18] 6/23 13/13 24/18 31/21 63/4 64/25 67/2 75/17 76/13 76/23 94/6 94/19 97/4 98/6 102/17 106/21 110/15 111/6
sort [5] 10/7 10/11 10/13 16/7 91/22
sought [2] 68/20 106/24
soul [2] 61/16 61/18
sound [2] 22/14
59/15
source [1] 81/16
South [2] 2/19 3/17
space [1] $9 / 24$
speak [2] 12/2 15/22
speaking [2] 16/15 94/6
specific [6] 9/12 30/2
31/16 59/21 66/5 94/21
specifically [2] 36/14 48/24
split [1] 3/13
splitting [4] 28/19
29/10 29/14 30/17
SPM [1] 101/13
SPMs [1] $94 / 23$
spoken [1] 15/25
spreadsheet [4] 76/7
76/9 81/18 86/2
spreadsheets [6]
74/24 75/4 76/8 77/4 79/3 81/9
stack [1] 53/21
staff [1] 12/14
stage [1] 38/3 standard [3] 8/14 30/5 32/3
stands [1] 35/12 start [10] $8 / 9$ 18/11 23/19 30/8 56/5 64/18 73/18 106/20 111/5 111/12
started [4] 12/12 21/1 23/6 23/14 starting [7] 22/5 28/5 29/1 41/5 49/3 52/13 81/11
starts [2] 10/10 69/11
state [2] 23/15 49/4
stated [1] 28/14
statement [84] 1/13
1/20 2/3 5/15 6/10 7/6
15/9 15/11 15/13 23/2 24/5 26/24 27/17
31/13 33/7 36/2 37/10 37/11 37/15 37/21
38/12 40/5 40/14
40/25 41/3 44/8 45/2
46/10 47/20 48/10 48/13 48/21 52/11 57/4 58/13 60/7 63/13 63/16 63/18 65/3 65/7 65/16 68/15 69/5 69/8
70/6 71/10 71/13
71/22 71/23 73/20
74/6 75/24 76/16
77/21 78/2 78/24 80/7
80/9 81/14 82/6 82/7
85/16 85/22 86/6 86/9
86/21 86/24 87/6
87/10 88/5 89/3 90/8
90/12 93/13 94/14
97/24 99/12 99/24
99/25 105/19 106/10
107/22 108/20
statements [6] 64/8
71/3 72/10 72/14
111/8 111/10
statistically [2]
102/19 104/11
statistician [2] 102/4 102/14
statistics [10] 73/15 77/17 80/17 84/16 87/15 101/20 103/22 105/1 105/7 105/12
stats [1] 102/13 stenographer [2] 94/7 94/20
Stephen [1] 59/3
steps [2] 11/1 15/10
stick [2] 73/21 74/7
still [6] 19/23 25/22 49/6 91/17 105/13 108/16
stock [6] 27/20 28/19
29/10 29/14 30/17 32/7
sums [1] $47 / 22$ supply [2] 82/11 82/16
support [5] 9/19 20/1 20/8 22/4 32/20
supporting [1] 26/25 sure [5] 32/23 50/5 50/18 64/3 103/20 surviving [2] 92/20 95/23
suspended [4] 9/9 9/16 28/23 29/21 suspense [11] 9/7 34/18 34/24 35/4 35/11 35/12 35/18 36/15 36/21 37/4 37/7 suspension [2] 14/1 53/18
suspicious [1] 69/1 switched [1] 106/19 sworn [3] 1/7 48/4 112/2
system [44] 7/23 9/2 9/4 10/16 13/2 18/1 18/8 18/20 19/3 19/15 19/19 20/1 20/5 20/8 20/13 20/15 20/19 20/23 21/13 21/14 21/18 22/2 22/8 24/12 25/20 26/16 28/16 28/22 30/20 31/9 31/9 31/18 32/10 32/16 36/13 37/2 38/18 52/21 54/10 54/18 61/8 62/4 92/12 110/24
system' [2] 40/3 92/8 systems [1] 95/22

## T

table [17] 12/19 21/25 22/2 34/24 35/5 80/17 82/23 83/4 83/13 83/20 84/1 84/12 87/18 100/23 101/1 108/22 109/23 tables [2] 23/5 23/7 take [15] 13/6 13/17 18/7 18/14 18/15 18/16 27/18 31/1 32/13 37/10 40/9 56/20 57/23 71/4 95/3
taken [18] 4/23 8/1 16/23 28/18 30/20 30/25 51/2 51/22 54/4 55/22 67/20 69/9 72/10 74/16 86/1 90/2 102/25 103/12
taking [5] 26/11 27/21 56/8 60/3 89/21 Talbot [1] 59/4 talked [1] 84/18 talking [2] 17/11 34/9 tally [1] 93/21
task [1] 38/8 Taylor [1] 12/7 team [8] 3/18 13/19 15/6 17/7 17/19 56/6 77/4 107/19
teams [1] 77/4
Technical [1] 105/6 telephone [1] 31/19 tell [10] 48/8 68/6 72/19 73/22 74/9 75/5 theft [4] 12/15 60/10 76/7 76/24 77/6 102/5 80/15 93/5
telling [4] 44/7 57/18 80/19 109/14
temps [1] 9/10 ten [2] 9/10 92/12 term [3] 77/6 77/7 77/8
termed [1] 76/5
terminate [6] 8/2
11/18 11/22 15/20 40/9 59/14
terminated [1] 60/1 terminating [1] 55/12 termination [7] 8/16 9/17 14/6 27/15 53/1 57/2 65/18
terms [17] 5/22 13/10 21/2 44/14 59/22 73/18 75/11 80/23 81/25 86/3 88/22 98/9 99/11 102/11 103/10 107/22 107/25
Territory [1] 3/12
than [14] 30/13 33/11
37/13 40/2 42/10
42/13 49/5 50/12
50/25 61/24 63/17
70/2 77/25 100/25
thank [44] 1/5 2/1 58/3 58/8 58/15 58/23 63/1 69/20 70/5 70/7 70/8 70/11 70/21 70/24 71/13 71/22 72/9 72/14 72/25 73/7 75/3 75/20 76/3 76/4 77/22 80/9 84/25 85/8 90/4 91/19 91/24 92/1 97/2 99/16 100/21 100/23 101/19 104/25 107/8 110/25 111/2 111/7 111/14 111/15
that [656]
that I [7] 53/13 53/15
53/25 60/20 61/20
65/21 108/4
that's [58] 3/4 3/6
6/20 7/17 8/4 10/7
10/9 21/11 23/14
25/14 32/22 36/22
40/5 45/7 45/15 46/6
54/1 55/22 57/14
60/13 60/16 63/5
64/23 67/23 68/5 69/1
69/10 69/16 69/18
their [18] 5/5 5/18 8/19 15/3 16/16 16/17 17/14 18/18 43/9 56/8 58/19 63/24 75/23 82/13 86/18 91/10 91/13 94/21
them [8] 26/13 30/7
55/3 71/4 74/3 76/17 80/14 105/17
themselves [1] 19/16
then [50] 3/3 8/21
9/16 16/7 19/15 19/18
28/23 29/7 29/21
30/16 32/6 32/9 32/9
32/11 35/13 37/9
39/18 40/11 43/4 43/6
43/8 43/10 48/5 49/14
49/17 50/1 51/13
51/21 54/6 57/2 60/4 60/21 61/8 64/16 67/3 69/11 69/12 70/2 76/18 83/2 84/11 89/2 91/2 92/9 96/1 101/15 thorough [1] 15/18 103/8 104/20 105/15 107/17
theory [1] 54/13
there [120]
there'd [1] 23/17
there's [14] 1/24 4/25
24/16 30/11 41/25
46/14 47/2 47/5 60/25
61/2 61/13 88/4 93/11
103/15
therefore [17] 6/21 25/11 52/1 55/16 59/24 60/3 66/9 82/25 83/6 86/17 88/20 90/2 98/20 99/3 103/12 103/18 105/18
these [25] 4/17 5/23
7/22 22/7 22/21 23/4 32/17 32/20 40/15 47/10 47/22 49/9 52/4 55/10 87/12 88/9 92/23 93/1 94/4 96/2 96/23 98/17 101/3 101/20 105/8
they [44] 1/22 5/7
5/13 5/23 15/6 17/10 18/3 19/9 19/13 19/16 19/16 20/16 28/19 53/16 56/4 57/5 59/23
60/19 62/9 62/11
things [9] 6/24 18/9
30/19 54/20 88/7
88/12 106/3 106/15 107/2
think [48] 16/14
21/16 21/17 22/17
39/3 45/1 55/16 55/24
56/5 56/20 57/4 58/20
60/13 60/14 61/6 61/9
61/10 62/21 64/2 64/6
65/22 69/21 72/20
74/4 75/14 75/24
76/15 78/4 78/22 79/1
80/23 81/14 87/5
87/12 88/4 89/14
89/20 90/4 91/19
93/11 97/5 100/14
100/19 102/19 105/2
106/12 107/22 111/4
third [5] 28/6 39/17
71/23 75/24 90/10
this [118]
those [84] 2/23 3/25
5/21 11/4 13/21 18/6
19/14 19/18 20/23
20/24 21/17 22/19
25/12 28/25 30/2 32/7
33/1 33/2 36/22 40/13
41/14 41/21 49/11
53/19 54/2 55/17
55/21 55/23 56/3
56/11 58/17 59/6
60/18 61/14 62/8
62/10 62/15 62/19
62/25 66/1 66/2 66/10
67/16 67/22 72/10
72/14 73/13 74/6
74/18 74/20 75/22
76/3 76/14 76/15
76/24 77/3 78/8 78/20
78/22 81/4 81/10
81/22 82/14 82/17
84/20 85/12 88/14
88/22 88/24 89/5
89/13 89/16 94/15
102/7 103/21 104/9
105/24 108/1 109/6
109/8 110/4 110/10
110/11 111/10
though [2] 94/3
100/12
thought [5] 25/3

70/4 71/19 71/24 72/2 $62 / 12$ 62/13 62/22
62/23 64/5 72/13 74/11 77/2 77/18 78/12 79/2 80/20 81/3 81/5 81/11 87/2 88/16
97/9 104/18 106/4 106/6 109/2 110/12 110/23
they're [2] 97/19 103/7
thing [1] 49/19
track [1] 42/17 tracking [1] 44/14 trading [1] 23/17 train [2] 25/11 60/9 training [1] 23/10 transaction [2] 17/14 47/9
transactional [6]
17/7 23/12 39/20 41/7 41/21 43/15
transactions [12] 17/18 19/14 26/14 26/17 41/17 52/22 53/8 53/21 54/15 55/4 66/1 66/10
transcript [7] 1/23
47/25 49/3 57/21 57/24 58/9 89/9
transfer [1] 35/16 transferred [1] 34/19 transfers [1] 35/9 transpired [2] 62/17 62/18
treated [1] 82/25 trial [18] 44/22 45/12 48/1 50/16 50/17 51/7 51/11 52/7 52/8 57/11 59/7 61/18 64/14 65/17 66/17 66/23 68/2 68/9
trials [2] 26/3 62/18 tried [2] 98/24 107/9 true [5] 1/20 44/11
55/8 63/22 72/11
try [2] 23/21 77/17 trying [1] 20/25 Tuesday [5] 41/14 41/18 111/6 111/12 111/18
turn [8] 1/14 36/3
48/7 48/18 49/2 71/9 71/18 72/3
Turner [2] 33/17 34/11
Turning [2] 48/2 51/8 two [13] 11/24 14/10 23/17 29/21 53/17 64/7 75/14 75/18 75/18 87/6 88/22 95/10 102/7
two pages [2] 11/24 14/10
type [1] 16/21
types [2] 101/11 101/14

## U

unable [4] 40/1 84/4 90/19 91/6 unaware [4] 27/10 37/17 38/9 62/1 uncover [1] 60/20 uncovered [2] 61/8 61/17
under [9] 39/12 40/15 56/25 57/12 63/7 65/23 69/3 77/15 110/15
under-declarations [1] 56/25
undercopies [6] 26/13 65/21 66/2 66/3 67/21 67/22
underlying [1] 79/6 understand [20] 11/20 15/19 16/6 16/20 16/22 18/19 20/12 21/8 26/1 50/14 55/10 61/19 63/22 63/25 76/11 77/18 88/20 91/17 108/7 109/3
understanding [16]
6/17 10/8 15/18 20/16 30/3 31/2 37/6 55/20 57/14 63/11 66/14 78/15 80/25 88/14 88/19 109/22
understood [1] 81/15 undetermined [1] 53/3
unduly [1] 69/1
unexplained [4] 8/25
9/14 55/13 55/21
Unique [1] 89/8
unit [8] 28/20 29/11 29/14 30/17 72/16
72/19 72/21 72/22
units [3] 13/11 27/20 32/7
unless [1] 36/3
unreliable [2] 98/11 105/18
unsafe [1] 76/12 unshaded [1] 101/6 until [6] 4/18 19/16 29/13 30/14 66/18 111/17
untoward [2] 30/12 56/2
unusable [2] 51/4 51/20
unusual [4] 10/18 13/8 15/2 24/8
unwilling [2] 90/19 91/6
up [27] 7/14 17/20 18/25 30/17 32/4 35/24 36/3 51/19 59/1 63/4 72/22 74/22 78/25 80/8 85/8 87/7 89/5 90/13 94/20 97/2 97/3 99/12 100/20 104/5 107/10 107/17 107/24
update [1] 100/3
updated [2] 99/2 100/6
upheld [2] 8/7 65/18 uphold [1] 27/15 upholding [5] 40/8 53/1 57/2 64/21 68/24 uploaded [2] 72/5 72/15
upon [3] 43/23 69/14 98/6
urban [1] $3 / 22$
URN [2] 71/6 71/14
us [33] 1/4 2/16 12/10 12/25 17/22 37/4 58/7 59/19 72/19 73/22 74/9 75/5 76/7 76/24 77/6 78/19 80/18 80/19 81/3 81/10 84/19 85/12 85/23 87/21 91/21 93/23 96/24 97/4 98/15 99/22 102/5 103/20 107/14 usage [1] $43 / 20$ use [7] 32/4 92/18 95/22 101/20 101/24 104/17 106/18 used [2] 57/4 75/10 user [4] 19/8 30/6 32/6 66/7
user-friendly [1] 19/8 using [3] 65/24 66/2 66/8
usual [1] 70/3
usually [1] 93/4
V
vaguely [3] 48/24
51/5 68/17
valid [1] 68/24
value [3] 19/11 44/15 55/16
variation [1] 98/14
various [11] 5/3 18/3
20/22 23/11 73/15
75/25 78/17 80/17
81/5 81/8 84/16
vast [1] 5/2
verification [3] 43/7 79/5 79/9
verified [6] 52/22
79/7 105/24 106/2
106/9 106/13
verify [6] 20/25 53/7
54/14 92/19 95/20
106/14
version [1] 72/4
very [27] 5/24 6/2
9/23 9/23 12/9 12/25 24/21 32/22 48/24 51/5 56/18 69/20
70/24 72/9 75/3 77/22 88/21 98/4 100/23 104/25 105/9 106/8 108/3 111/1 111/5 111/8 111/14
view [9] 3/22 16/17
23/24 56/9 56/24 57/13 60/8 79/20
79/22
visible [2] $1 / 1663 / 5$
visit [4] 6/7 10/23
42/24 43/9
visited [3] 23/9 23/15
42/16
visiting [5] 2/15 2/17
2/17 2/20 18/11
visits [1] 26/8
volumes [1] 42/22
voluntary [2] 3/20
3/24
W
wait [2] 19/15 19/18
waiting [1] 30/14
Wallis [5] 82/9 87/20
93/22 99/17 99/23
want [9] 56/6 57/8
57/17 57/21 61/4
65/14 68/5 77/13
77/17
was [302]
wasn't [21] 14/22
15/1 17/8 21/4 21/18
27/11 31/6 32/13
33/17 39/5 51/1 54/8
64/4 64/14 67/2 68/14
84/19 85/4 85/5 91/23
103/11
way [17] 3/17 6/14
25/4 25/21 29/19 32/4
33/20 37/1 39/17 55/3
73/18 88/17 95/21
98/5 103/5 103/20 105/6
we [137]
we'd [2] 24/17 53/9
we'll [5] 10/25 57/23 75/3 97/2 111/12 we're [9] 11/17 17/11 18/17 73/14 80/2 80/5 93/22 94/25 100/12
we've [14] 16/11 30/6 37/13 37/24 84/18 85/11 87/19 97/23 98/14 101/25 103/12 104/25 105/16 109/12
Wednesday [5] 41/16
41/18 42/1 42/4 42/22
week [34] 9/1 12/12
28/11 28/20 28/21
29/13 29/16 29/18
30/15 30/15 34/14
34/14 34/17 34/17
34/21 34/23 34/25
35/1 35/1 35/6 35/7
35/8 35/8 35/10 35/15
35/15 35/17 35/19
35/25 36/1 39/21
41/19 42/11 50/7
weekend [1] 6/4 weekly [4] 41/8 41/16 43/23 46/20
weeks [13] 9/10 13/22 33/12 33/15 36/8 39/8 40/18 41/9 41/14 43/14 43/21 44/4 46/19
weeks' [1] 12/20
well [13] $2 / 254 / 24$
48/18 53/4 56/16 58/16 64/10 66/9 66/25 68/17 68/19 69/18 111/5
Welsh [1] 64/2
went [16] 15/23 55/25 56/4 56/10 62/2 76/12 76/13 76/14 80/20 81/3 87/7 89/20 91/2 107/10 107/17 107/24

## were [144]

weren't [4] 4/23 62/7 67/1 106/3
west [6] $3 / 143 / 14$ 3/15 3/16 3/16 3/17
Western [1] 3/12
what [66] 2/16 3/9 8/13 13/6 13/17 16/6 16/21 18/20 20/18 20/21 21/2 21/16 23/14 23/15 23/16 23/23 24/25 28/10 31/6 31/22 32/18 32/20 36/22 36/25 37/17 48/8 49/19 54/6 54/12 55/10 55/23 56/23 57/10 57/20 60/16 62/9 62/22 65/8 65/25 66/4 69/7 69/16 69/18 72/19 73/23 74/5 74/9 76/5 76/7 77/6 80/2 85/23 94/7 95/11 95/12 95/13 96/14 96/19 96/21 102/6 103/13 107/20 108/23 109/11 109/14 109/24
what's [2] 18/25 19/2
whatsoever [3] 21/12 36/20 56/1
when [35] 6/6 8/10 13/6 13/15 17/1 17/13 17/14 18/9 18/24 23/7 23/14 30/7 32/5 36/17 38/3 40/8 48/19 51/22 51/23 56/22 60/14 61/16 62/2 62/8 62/13 63/13 63/16 66/22 68/1 68/7 76/10 90/16 91/7 99/4 104/10
where [28] 10/19

17/23 24/9 25/16 30/6 wide [2] 4/25 5/11 44/16 49/4 49/23 50/5 95/22 53/2 53/9 55/17 55/25 will [14] 2/4 19/9 56/3 56/9 60/5 63/6 32/11 56/20 56/23 64/18 75/7 81/8 83/13 $70 / 10$ 72/14 82/19 84/6 86/18 101/11 101/12
whereas [2] 66/5 88/12
whether [28] 20/18
21/4 24/13 24/23 26/5 wish [3] 36/4 48/16 37/1 38/4 38/6 38/14 38/18 43/16 55/6 56/14 74/2 79/20 79/23 83/15 83/16 87/2 91/5 91/12 96/24 103/2 103/4 103/7 104/1 107/10 110/12 which [74] 1/15 2/7 2/23 5/17 6/14 6/25 7/5 8/7 8/10 9/15 10/2 10/10 11/16 14/13 14/21 16/10 16/23 17/18 22/11 22/13 23/25 24/13 29/1 34/24 37/25 38/7 38/8 41/10 44/9 45/25 46/23 50/23 51/2 51/3 51/14 57/1 57/4 57/21 63/5 63/7 64/13 64/22 64/24 65/16 68/22 69/24 74/23 76/19 78/14 82/17 82/21 83/23 84/2 84/9 84/18 86/9 86/11 86/14 86/16 89/4 92/16 93/3 93/7 94/14 97/6 97/10 101/9 102/12 103/2 108/19 109/11 109/17 109/18 110/5
Whittam [4] 105/3 105/4 105/5 112/14 who [20] 3/19 11/21 14/21 15/15 23/24 29/4 36/19 42/21 58/18 58/20 64/3 74/11 74/18 76/24 80/19 80/21 81/15 91/5 107/12 107/13 who'd [1] 53/18 whole [2] $8 / 2393 / 8$ wholly [1] 74/14 whose [1] 7/1 why [30] 29/11 36/18 40/21 55/18 55/22 56/5 57/17 57/21 58/10 59/25 65/18 66/4 67/21 67/23 68/5 68/6 68/14 77/18 80/4 84/19 85/12 89/16 94/15 97/22 98/15 99/22 100/10 100/12 101/7 108/1

30/22 43/14 44/9 widespread [2] 92/17 $28 / 16$ 30/11 43/7

25/20 26/4 26/11 44/11 44/12 46/23 48/16 49/9 50/4 50/12 50/12 52/2 53/22
56/21 57/9 57/16
57/23 62/5 62/11
62/15 69/11 69/12
70/1 74/11 74/12
74/14 74/16 80/25 81/1 81/5 81/11 81/12
90/16 90/17 103/18
107/20 110/12
wouldn't [2] 24/3
107/12
writing [1] 34/3
written [2] 99/18 99/25
wrong [7] 28/22
47/18 61/1 62/4 63/12
97/8 109/2
WITN08560100 [5]
1/24 15/12 31/13 40/5
52/11
WITN09890100 [1]
71/6
WITN09890200 [2]
71/15 77/22
WITN09890208 [1]
100/21
WITN09890300 [1]
71/24
witness [40] 1/13 2/3
5/15 44/8 46/10 47/19
48/13 51/16 57/4
63/16 63/18 65/2 65/7
65/16 69/25 70/5 71/3
76/15 77/21 78/2
78/24 86/20 86/24
87/10 88/5 89/2 90/7
90/12 93/12 94/14
97/24 99/12 99/24
99/25 102/5 107/12
107/20 108/20 111/8 111/10
witnesses [1] 52/4
wonder [1] 68/10
word [2] 29/22 104/17
words [7] 30/2 42/8 43/24 57/4 69/15 87/13 106/11
work [5] $2 / 26 / 3$
28/13 76/9 98/3
worked [4] 2/18 26/2
74/19 97/5
workers [1] 82/14
working [10] $2 / 183 / 8$
16/1 36/21 37/5 37/7
54/18 59/17 60/17
73/6
works [1] 16/3
would [50] 8/9 10/5
gdoing [1] 61/2
wrote [2] 63/13 99/23
WYN [12] 63/2 108/5
108/13 108/21 108/25
109/13 109/20 110/8
110/14 111/2 112/8 112/16
$Y$
yeah [5] 13/13 87/22
90/6 94/1 106/12
year [8] 33/13 71/14
78/21 82/12 82/16
84/9 109/16 110/4
years [9] 68/18 83/9
92/7 92/13 93/20
97/17 101/22 101/24 109/6
yes [81] 1/5 1/17 1/19 1/22 2/14 4/7 4/10 5/2 7/4 7/9 7/11 7/13 8/6 10/4 11/4 11/23 14/23 16/12 17/9 20/16 21/6 22/17 24/4 25/22 26/4 26/10 26/19 26/22 27/10 28/1 31/21 37/23 39/10 41/2 44/13 45/4 45/6 45/7 47/24 49/1 55/9 57/25 58/2 58/2 58/8 58/21 65/8 67/2 67/19 67/25 69/20 69/23 70/11 70/20 72/2 77/12 77/13 85/3 91/17 94/17 94/21 97/4 97/5 97/16 97/20 98/13 100/17 104/14 105/13 105/22 106/12 108/13 108/21 108/24 108/25 109/4 109/7 110/8 110/14 110/19 110/22 12/23 14/16 15/3 15/5 yet [3] 9/8 75/21 89/6 15/7 15/25 16/4 19/16 you [427]
you'd [4] 64/10 68/6 81/23 107/11 you'll [2] 78/22 105/13
you're [13] 13/14 30/17 32/5 34/9 54/8 67/13 69/25 79/18 80/22 94/6 102/4 103/20 109/14 you've [21] 16/6 37/20 59/8 59/9 59/19 61/18 72/25 75/20 76/5 78/10 79/9 80/9 85/19 88/17 100/18 102/23 104/11 104/15 105/9 106/7 106/23
your [115]
yourself [1] 55/5

## Z

zero [3] 34/25 35/6
41/11
zoom [2] 33/23
100/22

