## (10.00 am)

MR BLAKE: Good morning, sir, can you see and hear me?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you very much, yeah.
MR BLAKE: Thank you. This morning we're going to hear from Mr Brander.

## GRAHAM DAVID BRANDER (sworn)

## Questioned by MR BLAKE

MR BLAKE: Thank you, can you give your full name please.
A. Graham David Brander.
Q. Thank you, Mr Brander. You should have in front of you a witness statement dated 30 October 2023; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Could I ask you to have a look at the final substantive page of that statement, it's page 40.
A. Yeah.
Q. Is that your signature?
A. It is, yes.
Q. Thank you very much. Can you confirm that statement is true to the best of your knowledge and belief?

Branch Manager after that?
A. Yes.
Q. It was in the year 2000 that you became Security Manager?
A. That's correct.
Q. Am I right to say that, when you became Security Manager you hadn't, for example, spent time as a police officer or investigating regulatory offences or anything?
A. No, no previous background in that area.
Q. No particular qualifications?
A. No.
Q. No background in accountancy or --
A. Accounting, no.
Q. Horizon, obviously, was being rolled out in 2000?
A. Yeah.
Q. Was that very shortly or at the same time as you became Security Manager? Did you experience Horizon in the branch that you were working in?
A. Yeah, I can remember it was -- when I was doing the pre-coursework for the Security Manager role, Horizon had just been installed in my branch. So that was going on with obviously the staff, with onsite trainers, whilst I was taking
A. It is, yes.
Q. Thank you very much. The witness statement has a URN of WITN08300100. That's now in evidence, and will be published on the Inquiry's website in due course?
A. Okay.
Q. Thank you very much. I want to start today briefly with a little bit of background about your career. You joined the Post Office in 1984 --
A. Yes.
Q. -- as a counter clerk in a Crown Office; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you join straight after school or was there something --
A. After sixth form college.
Q. Thank you. I think you also trained subpostmasters in respect of serving customers and balancing; is that correct?
A. Yeah, that was like an ad hoc role, as and when required, whilst I was a counter clerk.
Q. That was pre-Horizon?
A. Yes.
Q. You became an Assistant Branch Manager and then 2
a back seat to a certain extent doing the pre-coursework, as well as obviously managing the branch.
Q. So you were training to become a Security Manager?
A. Yeah.
Q. Am I right then to say that you didn't attend the Horizon training at that point in time?
A. Yeah, again it's a long time back but l've a vague recollection that myself and the team would have done, like, some sort of classroom/remote training on the equipment with, like, a dummy set-up for the Horizon equipment. So I can remember doing that in maybe threes and fours of the team, because obviously we needed the team to carry on serving the customers, so I think we went away three or four at a time to like a classroom environment.

So I did have some training in that respect but I'm not sure how much involvement I had whilst Horizon was installed at my branch because, as I said, the focus was -- not the focus, but a lot of my time was used doing the pre-coursework modules.
Q. Thank you very much. In respect of
pre-coursework modules, I think you've said in
your statement that you did a two-week
residential course and two weeks before that was pre-course learning?
A. From as best as I can recall, I think it was roughly two weeks for each but, as I say, the pre-course work, it wasn't a set amount of time, that was just the time where I'd been sent the modules and was trying to fit it in whilst managing the branch.
Q. So for two weeks you were preparing for the course --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to become a Security Manager.
A. Yeah.
Q. You were running the branch?
A. Yeah.
Q. Horizon was being rolled out in your branch --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- and it was perhaps a busy period of time?
A. It was, yes.
Q. Was there Horizon training as part of that course to become a Security Manager or was that entirely separate?
A. Entirely separate, I believe. I don't recall
postmaster and, ultimately, look -- where we were looking to do change, oversee the end-to-end process for the branches within my area, of where either they or a new postmaster, either on site or at a new premises, would actually convert to the assigned new model.
Q. Thank you. As I say, we may come back in detail to that role. Most of our time today will be spent on your period as a Security Manager.
A. Okay.
Q. That later role you continued until 2017 and I think in 2017 you took voluntary redundancy?
A. That's correct, yes.
Q. Then you rejoined the Post Office in 2019 as something called a change manager; is that right?
A. Yes.
Q. Very briefly, what is a change manager?
A. It's similar issues to the NTFCA role but it's more sort of like business as usual. So I deal predominantly with service issues. So if a branch closes for whatever reason, then, subject to business need, I will look for a solution to either reopen, so under the existing model, or it might be that we have 7

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Horizon being on the actual Security Manager course.
Q. Thank you, another role that we will possibly come to in due course, in March 2012 you became a Network Transformation Field Change Advisor; is that correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Can you very briefly tell us what that role involves?
A. It was -- Government had funded Post Office a considerable amount of money in order to effectively modernise our network. So it was moving away from what we called a sub post office, like a typical old-style post office, tucked away in a corner of a premises, or whatever, to a more modern model where you'd have a larger main model post office or a smaller local post office.

So my role was to work within a geographical area and engage with postmasters and they had the option of either to convert to the new model which had been assigned to their branch or stay as they were at that time or look to leave the Post Office. So I would explain the detail in respect of each of those options to the 6
a part-time outreach service or it might be something where we would operate a stop from one of our mobile vans. But lots of things that I get involved in but, predominantly, it's maintain service within a geographical area.
Q. Am I right to say that you're still in that role and still employed by Post Office?
A. I am, yes.
Q. Thank you very much. I'm going to start, as I say, by looking at the role of Security Manager. I'll look at the general role before going on to some case studies.
A. Sure.
Q. In terms of your early work as a Security Manager, you've described in your statement that you were initially based in a room above Eastleigh Crown Office; is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. That's in Southampton, is it?
A. Yeah, just outside.
Q. Just outside. At the time, I think, Security Managers were spread around the country; is that correct?
A. Most of us were. There were some that would be like at Head Office, you'd have a number of

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personnel and a fellow locations would have X-number but, certainly, the team I was in, I'm just thinking, I think we were all individually spread across the geographical area, effectively working on our own.
Q. I think you said you were isolated to a certain extent. Can you help us with what you meant by that?
A. Obviously, it's a very steep learning curve and then you come off the course and then I'm in an office above a Crown Office and, obviously, I've got colleagues -- at that time, it's the South West area, so from the Southampton area, it went down to Devon and Cornwall, I think we even had South Wales, or whatever.

So isolated in so much as all my colleagues were spread far and wide, there was no one in the office working with me that I could say "Ooh, how do I do this?" It was a case of pick or whenever I attended a colleague's office or team leader's office, or they come to my office to support me in whatever area.
Q. Thank you very much. I'm going to say something on behalf of the stenographer, who hasn't yet complained but l'm going to ask if it's possible 9
new role, roughly nine months. So sometime in 2011, I moved to an office in Swindon with two other colleagues, one in the Investigation Team and one I think he was in the Fraud Risk Team.
Q. In terms of numbers of Security Managers, did that change in any significant way over the period of time?
A. It did. So I can't recall specific numbers but, yeah, like anything in life, you have a restructure and it's basically another name for headcount reduction. So not just for Security, I should imagine it was across the board but, yeah, my recollection of when I joined, the number of Security Managers then, from when I left, had been reduced significantly.
Q. So when you started, there was a larger number but they were geographically spread out --
A. Yeah
Q. -- and you weren't all in the office at the same time --
A. Yeah
Q. -- you were calling people up. By the time you left, there was a smaller number?
A. Yeah
to speak slightly slower.
A. Yes, I apologise.
Q. Thank you very much. Your early work, I think, you've said was involved in things like robbery cases; is that correct?
A. I can't remember. It fluctuated between either dealing with purely with criminal investigations or purely with physical security and also what we called multi-skilled, where it would be a combination of the both.

When I first joined, I think it was the multi-skilled but I can't be certain but, certainly within a year of that, I then moved to a team that purely dealt with effectively post-robbery incidents and advising on procedural security and then went back to an investigation role.

But, as I say, during the course of the 12 years I was in the role, it fluctuated between whether it was just one particular role or a multi-skilled role.
Q. Starting in Eastleigh Crown Office, did the location that you worked and the team in which you worked, change over that period?
A. Yes. For a brief period before I moved to the 10
Q. Were they more centrally located or were they still dispersed?
A. I'm not sure about centrally but it was like, um, I think -- I mean, John Scott, who was Head of Security at the time, wanted to move away from people being siloed in lots of different locations to creating hubs. So I think there were five or six hubs.

So I think at that time the Head Office was London and then we had our Administration Office in Chesterfield. So I think that held some -like, Leeds or Manchester, and Swindon because that was where we -- our National Stock Centre was, that was classed as one of, I think, six hubs. So myself and two colleagues worked there for about nine months.
Q. You've described in your statement different types of criminal investigations you were involved in: audit shortages, Crown Office losses, suspension and allowance frauds, as examples?
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you give us an indication of the proportion of your time spent on those different areas or a percentage or --
A. Pretty much impossible to do. What I can say is, from recollection, a lot of my time was spent dealing with pension allowance fraud, initially. The reason that eased off and then evaporated was because the pension allowance books were replaced with something called Post Office Card Account, so instead of being issued with a pension or allowance book, then the customers or benefit claimants would be issued with either a Post Office Card Account or they could use their own bank account.

So that's why -- so it might have been up here predominantly dealing with pension allowance fraud -- okay, I can't remember how many Crown Office losses or audit shortages but, obviously, once the pension allowance books ended and we had Post Office Card Accounts, there seemed to be an increase in audit shortages. That's just as best as I can recall.
Q. What kind of period? Can you give us an --
A. Ooh, I really don't know when pension allowance books were phased out. Probably -- I could be way off -- 2005/6, something like that? I really don't know.
Q. But around that period you experienced more
learning, basically just to show me how to type with more than one finger on a laptop, because no experience of typing, so ...
Q. So isolated to some extent, geographically spread out --
A. Yes.
Q. -- ad hoc shadowing order learning from
colleagues --
A. Yes.
Q. -- but that could include something as simple as learning how to type with two hands?
A. Well, even one finger at the time, yeah --
Q. More than one finger --
A. -- and I didn't even -- back in 2000 , I wouldn't even have had a computer or laptop.
Q. Was there anybody in particular who assisted you?
A. I think probably the two that helped most was probably Gary Thomas, who was the nearest to me, I think he had an office in Poole, so about 30 miles away, but he was new to role and Geoff Hall was my team manager at the time so Geoff would come up to my office as often as he could or I would go to Geoff's office in Taunton but, like I say, I can't remember how often that was.

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cases that involved audit shortages, did you?
A. Yeah, because the pension allowance books were no longer, so therefore you couldn't commit fraud in that way any more.
Q. Thank you. You've described for us the two-week course. You've also referred to in your statement shadowing and working with more experienced colleagues.
A. $\mathrm{Mm}-\mathrm{hm}$.
Q. Was that something formal, ad hoc, informal?
A. Ad hoc, yeah. I can't remember but I think, early days, my team leader would have popped to the office as often as he could, bearing in mind he was based in Taunton, so probably about 90 miles away from me. I had a colleague that had recently joined not long before me, so spent a bit of time with him but, again, I think he'd only been in the role himself maybe three/four months before me, so he was obviously new and learning.

And another colleague that I recall coming up to help was based in the Plymouth area, in Devon. So no one particularly close. And I remember the colleague in Devon actually coming up whilst I was doing the pre-course 14

But, again, it's -- I certainly think -I can vaguely recall two occasions where I sat in on an interview as a witness.
Q. Who were your team leaders?
A. At the time was Geoff Hall.
Q. Geoff Hall?
A. Yeah.
Q. Thank you. Was that throughout the 12-year period?
A. Oh, no. Might have been five, six, seven or more. So do you want all the names that I can remember?
Q. Absolutely.
A. Okay, so Geoff Hall was team leader at one stage. When I moved into Physical Security, that was, I think, Steve Rigby. Then I come back and I think it was Tony Utting, and that was in the South East team. I think it went back to Geoff Hall, I had Dave Posnett, I think I had Ged Harbinson for a time, and ended with Jason Collins, and also, in the middle somewhere, I had Paul Whitaker. They're the ones that I can remember, so quite a few.
Q. Thank you. In the two-week residential training, the pre-learning or the shadowing, to
what extent were you trained on things like the law?
A. Well, the ones that I can remember, which I put in the statement, I can remember the Theft Act and I think the reason I remember that -- I seem to recall numbers better that I can recall detail and I seem to recall that the Theft Act was the Theft Act 1968 or 1978, I might have got that wrong but I tend to remember numbers, so it's possible I remember that.

Obviously, the Police and Criminal Evidence
Act Codes of Practice. I don't recall training on the Act itself, although we might have been, but it was certainly the Codes of Practice we were trained on. There was a fair bit other, like I say, there's a box like that of various modules, maybe a dozen or so booklets. There was quite a bit we did. I think RIPA, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act? Have I got that right? I think that was covered.
Q. That was during the two-week training?
A. Yes.
Q. Were there regular updates, regular training that was provided to you on the job or?
A. There possibly was. The only training that 17
report, which would be almost identical to the legal report.
Q. In fact, we will see in due course, two different reports that are very similar but slightly different and maybe one is a day after the other, or something along those lines.
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you assist us with why that might be?
A. Sorry, what's -- I --
Q. The legal report and the discipline report, for example. Often, they're similar but not the same --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- and sometimes they're produced on sequential days, or something like that.
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you assist us with why that might be?
A. Yeah, so, from memory, it would be you would type up the legal report and then, basically, it would be the same report that you'd use for the discipline, but you would remove things to -like all reference to exhibits, because you wouldn't be sending a case file to the discipline decision maker, which generally was the Contract Manager.

I can remember after that course is there was -I think it was called a cognitive interview course and it was supposed to be similar to the way that police conducted interviews. I can't remember when that was but I remember having training on that type of interview.

Other than that, there was no, like, refresher training, or whatever, that I can recall. As I say, it was just learning on the job from colleagues and team leader.
Q. Thank you. I'm going to ask you now about the role and your day-to-day work. You were involved, you've said, in the interview of suspects and production of various reports.
A. Yeah.
Q. We're going to come to see investigation reports. Are there other types of reports that you were involved in producing?
A. Well, obviously, you do the original investigation report and there might be, like, further reports with further enquiries conducted to the Criminal Law Team. There would also be, at the same time of what I think would be referred to as like the legal report, the initial legal report, there'd be a discipline 18

So -- I mean, other than -- I think there might have been a period of time when there was a section at the end for failings in procedure, or whatever. I think at the time that was also in the discipline report but that might have been removed towards the end of my role, from memory.

But I think just referencing anything that was in any appendices that would go in the case file, that was removed from the discipline report, I think, and, obviously, at the end of the report, it would say something along the lines of "These papers are now submitted for advice on the sufficiency of evidence to the Criminal Law Team", whereas I think I'd word it to the discipline manager, the case file was "being sent up to the Criminal Law Team for advice". So slightly worded different but I think, from memory, it was removing references to appendices.
Q. Thank you. You've described in your statement preparing various things along the way for the criminal prosecution and investigation. At paragraph 34 of your statement you say, as follows, you say:
"Prior to an interview under caution, and ifthe suspect had legal representation, I woulddisclose to the solicitor details of thesuspected offence and any documents that I wouldbe producing."
We'll come to see those kinds of documents,the interview transcripts, et cetera, in duecourse, but can you assist me with thequalification there "and if the suspect hadlegal representation". Would you provide moreto somebody if they were legally represented?A. Yes. If they hadn't asked for a solicitor thenI don't believe we would have disclosed anythingother than during the course of the interview.So no advance disclosure to somebody that wasn'tlegally represented.
Q. Did you have any guidance in that respect or training in that respect?
A. No, I think it was just a case of if there was a solicitor present, then they would ask for disclosure, so you would disclose details of the suspected criminal offence and -- you know, and a bit of detail around how the Post Office operates, and then any documentation that you intended to show during the course of the 21
know, I would be asking, whether it was somebody
at my office, or l've picked the phone up or
I've gone to their office, but it would have been, I think, "Show me what I need to do".
Q. Is it the same in respect of a committal file, for example, that you would have learned from the job from colleagues what to include in that kind of a file?
A. Yeah, I can -- I can't remember what the first case was from a committal bundle but I do remember, sat in my office -- again, vaguely -and thinking "What do I do?" So I think or I know that my team leader and colleagues came up and assisted and then, over a period of days, the committal bundle was prepared and produced.
So I think once I'd done the first one, you know, I might have needed some more assistance with a further one but once you've done something for the first time, that helps with the next one, which then helps with the next one, next one, and becomes almost like second nature after a period of time, when you've done enough of them.
Q. Can I just take you to your statement. It's WITN08300100, and it's page 9. It'll come up on 23
interview.
Q. So if it was requested, that kind of information would be provided?
A. Yes
Q. But there wasn't some sort of procedure whereby, in respect of all interviews, for example, a minimum level of documentation was provided?
A. No. I can't remember what guidance there was on it but it would be -- before the interview, we would know what documentation that we would likely to be showing during the interview, so that's what we would show to the solicitor and whether they wanted to take copies before we started the interview. So, yeah, that's just how I can recall doing it. I can't remember what guidance governed that or what training governed that but that's what we would have done.
Q. Okay. You prepared a case file for the Criminal Law Team. How is it that you would know what to provide the Criminal Law Team with?
A. (a) from just being shown my colleagues, team leader, whatever -- so I can't remember the first case file that I would have submitted but I would have been shown, so anything I didn't 22
screen. So, as part of your preparation for drafting the witness statement, we drew to your attention a number of different policy documents over the years. If we scroll down we can see some of those, so things like Investigations Procedures Policy, et cetera. Then if we look at paragraph 38, that's over the page, you've said this, you said:
"I have no recollection of any of the documents listed above. It may be that I had previously seen some, or all of these documents but I have no recollection. I would have thought that policy documents would have been stored on some sort of database, in which someone could access if required."

Am I right to understand, from the evidence you've just given and this here, that, really, much of your work was about learning on the job and copying what your team leader and others showed you, rather than actually referring to specific policies?
A. I believe so. There may have been some policy shown on the induction training. I may have been referred to them. Initially, I honestly can't recall. I certainly have my recollection 24
of when I was up and running, so to speak, in the job thinking "I'd better go and check so-and-so policy", wherever that may be. It really was learning on the job, as you say, from colleagues and team leader.
Q. If we look at page 17 of the same statement, paragraph 63, you say at the last sentence of that paragraph, you say:
"As best as I can recall, following my induction training, knowledge and experience was gained through shadowing and working with more experienced colleagues, including support from the Team Leader."

So, again, is that much of the same, that, in reality, these policies may have been available somewhere, you can't recall --
A. Sure.
Q. -- but, in reality, it was learning on the job?
A. Yes.
Q. Can we also look, please, at paragraph 102 on page 29. In respect of cases that are committed, you say:
"If a case was committed to the Crown Court, then the Security Manager would prepare a committal bundle (copies of evidence, 25
Q. So where you say "submit this to the Criminal Law Team who would then deal with the any disclosure to the defence", what exactly do you mean?
A. Well, I assume that, what I sent them, they sent to the defence.
Q. So you mean send disclosure to the defence, rather than make decisions with respect to disclosure?
A. Well, I would say -- as I say, I'd prepare a committal bundle that goes up to the Criminal Law Team. I didn't then know what they did with that but I just assumed that they would then submit copies of it to the defence team.
Q. Thank you. Were there any reviews carried out while you were carrying out this job, key performance indicators or testing in respect of knowledge of Codes of Practice, and those kinds of things?
A. Not that I can recall, no.
Q. I want to move on to the relationship with the Audit Team. It's paragraph 45 of your witness statement and perhaps that can be brought up on the screen. That is page 12, paragraph 45. You describe two situations where Security Managers 27
statements and unused material) and submit this to the Criminal Law Team, who would then deal with any disclosure to the Defence."

You say on the next paragraph, 103:
"I have no knowledge or recollection of disclosure requests and as per paragraph 102 above, my understanding is that such requests would be dealt with by the Criminal Law Team."

So am I to understand that you saw it as the Criminal Law Team's responsibility to make decisions in respect of disclosure and pursuing, for example, reasonable lines of inquiry?
A. Well, it's -- I never disclosed anything directly to the defence. It would be to our Criminal Law Team and I just assumed that what I sent them, they sent the defence.
Q. But did you see the burden of, for example, pursuing reasonable lines of inquiry, which point away from the guilt of a suspect, did you see that as lying with yourself or lying with the Criminal Law Team, who would then tell you what you needed to do?
A. It was the Security Manager's role to conduct all reasonable lines of inquiry and then we would report that to the Criminal Law Team. 26
would attend a post office with auditors, you say either at the same time as the auditor or just after the audit had been completed.
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you assist us with who would determine the time at which a Security Manager would attend with the auditors?
A. Okay, so say, to use a pension allowance fraud as an example, there would have been a lot of pre-investigation done, like collating foils, analysing Horizon data, looking at who the suspected perpetrator was. So once you'd done lots of enquiries before and gathered evidence, then the Security Manager would request an audit and probably go in on the day with the auditors. Primarily, you're going there to speak to them about the pension allowance fraud but it was standard practice to also audit the accounts at the same time. So, in those situations, the Security team would almost always go in at the same time as the auditors or shortly afterwards.

You know, the auditors would go in and start the audit and we'd come in a little bit later because the postmaster, or whoever, the suspect, would need to be witnessing the audit. So that 28
would be an example of when we gone in before.
There could have been concerns that there may be issues at a branch, I -- a potential deficit in the accounts.

And there might be occasions whereby the Security team would go out at the same time as the Audit Team, or shortly afterwards, or there might be situations where why we would go out later in the day, if the Audit Team had gone in, a case that the Security team weren't aware of, it could have just been a routine audit, and a significant shortfall was identified and, in those situations, it might be that the team leader would assign the case and ask members of the team to go out on that day, or it could well be that an audit shortage was identified and we'd look to conduct an interview sometime later.
Q. So there's a variety of different circumstances where a variety of different things might happen?
A. Yeah.
Q. Was there any guidance as to when Security

Managers should or shouldn't attend with auditors?

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actual audit in that situation was really a case of, you know, we also need to check the status of the accounts. We weren't necessarily expecting there to be a shortfall in the accounts but they needed to be checked and verified anyhow.
Q. So in a pension allowance case was the audit in fact there to gather evidence to support the case, rather than to --
A. No, no, it was just because we needed to check the status of the accounts. So it was --
Q. Can we read into it the fact that a Security Manager attends and wants to speak to somebody, that, in fact, there was an investigation ongoing and that action was likely to be taken?
A. Yeah, if we were going out for a pension allowance fraud then, absolutely, we would be looking to interview. It might be that we've identified fraud but, at that stage, we don't know who the perpetrator is or it might be that we've identified fraud and, through accessing Horizon data, we've identified the suspect.
Q. How about a shortfall in accounts case? So what would be the purpose be of a Security Manager attending with the auditors where a shortfall
A. Again, I think it's just through learning how these cases were dealt with, as part of the on-the-job training and learning.
Q. Thinking about it, about an Auditor turning up to establish whether or not there is something improper going on, do you think it is appropriate for a Security Manager, who isn't in fact carrying out an audit, to be attending at the same time as the Auditor?
A. As I say, I think, most of the time in those cases, we turned up maybe couple of hours after the audit had started, so roughly nearing when the audit was being completed. Because, if we went there, we would turn up, show our ID, explain the nature of why we were there, and literally not have any involvement with the postmaster until the audit had been completed.
Q. Why were you there, though? If the audit was to be a fair audit, which had reached no conclusions prior to the audit, what would the need be for a Security Manager to attend?
A. As I say, a prime example I was given was like pension allowance fraud. Then obviously we would -- that's why we were there, to speak to that person about pension allowance fraud. The 30
has been reported and the auditors are looking into that?
A. As I say, I'm not sure how often that happened when there was -- because, unless there was something that had been brought to our attention, that there were concerns about a branch -- and I can't recall it happening very often -- it was purely reactionary.

So the Audit Team would have gone in and done their audit, whether it was a routine audit or whether another department had asked for it say, for instance, some money had been asked to be returned and it wasn't or less than, that may have generated an audit. But the Security team might not necessarily have been told at that stage, so we might have gone in afterwards.
Q. Absolutely.
A. I'm just --
Q. But when you did go in, if you did go in at the same time, if you attended at the same time as the Auditors in a shortfall case, what could have been the reason for that?
A. I'm just trying to remember a case where I did go in at the same time as the Auditors for a shortfall case. I can't recall.

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Q. Can you see downsides to that?
A. Sorry?
Q. Can you see any downsides or disadvantage in that happening?
A. I don't think I can because we certainly would have gone out whilst an audit was being conducted for pension allowance fraud and whether it was pension allowance -- either way, the accounts were going to be audited in the same manner, so, using that as an example, I -I'm -- I don't -- or I certainly can't recall any issue with the Security Managers going out at the same time because, if there was, then we wouldn't have done it.

If we'd have known that there was an issue or somebody else more senior said, "Why are you doing that?", that was just the process and the guidance that we were given --
Q. When you say "guidance", not written guidance, just --
A. Just by learning, yeah, from, you know, like learning how to do the job.
Q. Can you see, for example, how it may have been intimidating to a subpostmaster to have an Auditor and a Security Manager attend? 33
Q. I think you've described a CS001 form, later a GS001 form?
A. Yeah, as I say, I can remember numbers.
Q. Can you assist us with what those forms are at all?
A. Yeah, the CS001 or GS001 was the legal rights form. The 003 was the Post Office Friend form and I think that was an 005, which was a search record.
Q. Is that, essentially, a tick box to confirm to yourself that you had informed, for example, the suspect of their rights?
A. Not so much a tick box. I mean to say, there'd be quite a bit of text on the form that explains the legal rights, things like "You're not under arrest, you're free to leave at any time, you can ask for a solicitor now. You can change your mind, if you don't want a solicitor now, you can have one later on".

So there's quite a lot of detail and there were questions to be read out to the person being interviewed, and they would be asked to sign and date against their answer, ie "Do you require a solicitor at this time?" Yes, "Sign against that line"; no, "Sign against that
A. Oh, absolutely. So whenever -- whether there's an audit going on or not, say, for instance, if you go to a Crown Office, I don't doubt for one minute it was intimidating when the Security team turned up, whether you'd done anything wrong or not. In my opinion, we were just normal people that had just come from counter clerks, Branch Managers but, for somebody else, they didn't know who we were, and they were -I think there was a perception of "Oh god, it's the Security team turned up", or whatever.

So yeah, I'm absolutely certain that would have been intimidating and, likewise, if there's an audit going on as well, you've been audited and then the Security turned up, so yeah, I'm sure that was potentially intimidating for somebody.
Q. Moving on to the interview, using an audit shortage case as an example, you've said that, if it was decided there needed to be an interview, the suspect would be cautioned and their legal rights would be explained. We'll come and have a look at the records of interview.
A. Okay.

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line", and then you say, "You can change your mind at any time".

And I think it mentioned also the fact that the interview was conducted in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 Codes of Practice and, from memory, we used to have a copy of that booklet, usually just popped it on top of the tape machine, if anyone wished to refer to that during the course of the interview.
Q. You've said in your statement that for voluntary interviews, the suspect could have a Post Office Friend present?
A. Yes.
Q. Can I just clarify, were all of the interviews that you carried out voluntary interviews or did you see them as voluntary interviews?
A. No, because there'd be times when the police were asked to assist and they'd be arrested.
Q. Once they'd been arrested, it was not a voluntary interview but you, the Post Office, were still carrying out those interviews or --
A. Yes, we would still conduct the interview and obviously the same legal rights would apply but, in my experience, custody sergeant wouldn't 36
permit a Post Office Friend, only a solicitor, to attend.
Q. Do you know why that was?
A. No idea.
Q. In terms of the Post Office Friend, we've seen in some places somebody from the National Federation of SubPostmasters would attend?
A. Yeah.
Q. Would there be other Federations and unions who would attend and other people?
A. It could be anyone who worked for the business that wasn't directly involved in the inquiry. So for instance, it couldn't be a member of staff, who could potentially, either at that time or subsequently, become a witness or suspect themselves. Sometimes -- I think sometimes we might have allowed a family member, obviously they didn't work for the Post Office, but we may have allowed that.

But, typically, it was somebody, maybe from another office, another postmaster, or if it was a Crown Office, somebody from another Crown Office, but, typically, they had a friend, it usually was somebody from the National Federation of SubPostmasters, from memory. 37
Q. -- but your searches weren't governed by those codes?
A. Yeah, we still adhered to the codes but it would be on a voluntary basis
Q. We're going to now come to the decision to prosecute. There comes a time after all of those steps where that decision is taken. You've said in your statement at paragraph 58 that the decision to prosecute would be made by a Senior Security Manager
A. Yes, as far as I can recall, yes.
Q. Perhaps we can go to that, actually. It's page 15 of the witness statement. That's WITN08300100. Thank you.

At the bottom of the page there, we have paragraph 58 and you say in the middle there:
"From my recollection, the decision to prosecute would be made by a Senior Security Manager, and this was probably the Head of the Security Fraud Team."

If we go over the page, paragraph 59 and 60 -- I'm just going to read those two paragraphs -- you say there:
"I have no knowledge or recollection as to what test was applied by those making
A. Yeah.
prosecution and charging decisions, or what factors were considered at the evidential and the public interest stage?
"I am unaware as to what advice, legal or otherwise, was provided to those making decisions about whether to prosecute and what charges to bring, other than that I believe that they would have seen the case file, or at least, the advice from the Criminal Law Team when considering their decision."

Are we to read into that that you accept that you weren't qualified to make those kinds of important decisions?
A. Yes.
Q. Is it in some way an acceptance that you didn't have the training or qualifications to take a decision, which was potentially ultimately seeing somebody go to prison?
A. Yeah, we could ask the Criminal Law Team and say, "You may want to consider such and such charge", but, ultimately, the Criminal Law Team would advise on charging because they were the legal experts and then the Senior Security Manager would be the ones who make the decision as to whether we prosecuted or not.
Q. You were Security Manager for 12 years?
A. Yes.
Q. Should we in any way be surprised that you're not aware of the test that was applied by those making the decision or what it was that they considered at those stages?
A. I mean to say, (a) it wasn't me making that decision; (b) I may have been aware but I certainly have no recollection of it today.
Q. Having worked in that role for quite a significant period of time, is it just that somebody at your level didn't get involved in those kinds of things or what are we to read into the fact that you don't have any recollection as to the test to be applied?
A. To be honest, I'm not even sure I recall there being a test. It was like Criminal Law Team advised on charges and then the Senior Security Manager would look at everything, weigh it all up and then they would make the decision. But I don't know what test there was or what guidance or training they had to make that decision. Because it wasn't something that I ever did.
Q. I'm going to look at an investigation report as 41
Q. Thank you. I'm just going to take you through a few extracts from this report. Could we look about halfway down the first page, the paragraph starting "On Wednesday", thank you. It says:
"... Field Support Advisor attended Rowlands Castle SPOB with his colleague ... in order to verify the cash on hand at the branch. Mrs Hutchings was present and when they identified a deficit in the accounts of around [ $£ 9,000$, nearly $£ 10,000$ ]."

Can we scroll down to page 4, the bottom of page 4. We have there it says:
"On Friday, 15 April ... I was contacted by Issy Hogg, solicitor who was representing Ms Hutchings. It was agreed that I would conduct a voluntary interview at Eastleigh Post Office ..."

Then over the page it summarises some of the interview. It was a prepared statement and it says there:
"From the prepared statement it can be seen that Mrs Hutchings believed she migrated to Horizon Online in May/June 2010, although I established just prior to the commencement of the interview that the migration date was 5 July
an example. It's a case study that we're going to come back to. Could we look at POL00046706, please. This is the investigation report in the case of Lynette Hutchings. I'm going to take you to that particular case in detail later this morning or early afternoon but I just want to look at it as an example of an investigation report?
A. Yes.
Q. So this is a report I think that you completed, if we look at the final page. At the bottom of that page it has your name there, 5 May 2011.

If we go back to the first page, please, we see there "Designated Prosecution Authority: Dave Pardoe, Senior Security Manager -Operations". So when you say the Senior Security Manager made the decision, is that what we see there in terms of Dave Pardoe being named as the prosecution authority?
A. Yes, it would be -- the designated prosecution authority would make the decision as to whether we prosecute or not.
Q. Who would you prepare this form for?
A. It says "Investigation, Legal", so that would be for the Criminal Law Team. 42
2010. It states that at the time of the migration, all accounts balanced. It then goes on to suggest that problems arose following the migration to Horizon Online. It states that only her and her husband worked in the Post Office and at no stage have they stolen any money. It states that they only served against their own usernames and did not know each others Horizon passwords.
"It states that Mrs Hutchings altered cash declarations but not in order to create a gain for herself or a loss to the Post Office and that she felt the balances would be corrected through transaction corrections. She stated that she only altered the cash declarations in order to continue to operate the Post Office.
"The prepared statement refers to some difficulties that Mrs Hutchings apparently encountered. These related to unexplained stock discrepancies, problems with Horizon equipment and that the helpline was difficult to access and unreliable."

So front and centre there in her defence, in the statement, prepared statement, was a complaint about the Horizon system. If we 44
move on to page 6, please, and about three quarters of the way down, I'm just going to read to you this paragraph. It says:
"The evidence, based on my analysis of the inch ONCH schedule and the apparent inflation of $£ 50$ notes when completing a Branch Trading Statement would appear to support the fact that Mrs Hutchings has committed fraud, having dishonestly made false representations in the accounts namely the Branch Trading Statements for Rowlands Castle sub post office for the period between 13 January 2010 and 30 March 2011 in the sum of $£ 10,814.83$ when she had thereby intended to make a gain for herself or another or to expose Post Office Limited to a risk of loss, which is contrary to Section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006."

Just pausing there, are those your words, your analysis?
A. Yes.
Q. Then if we go over the page to page 7, please.

We have in bold, I think this may be your
conclusion or your summary at the end:
"During the course of this investigation
I have not identified any failings in security 45
were involved in the decision-making process; do you accept that?
A. No, not at all. I think around that time we were asked put in our report -- and, again, this is only from recollection -- what offences we found had been committed and it did seem strange because I felt that was the role of the Criminal Law Team. So if you look back at earlier investigations and certainly at the reports, you will get that standard bit at the end. It was only -- I can only recall it sort of like nearing the end when I was in the Security team or for a period, that we were asked to -- not stipulate but suggest what offence may have been committed, in more detail than other than just saying "These case papers are submitted for your advice on the evidence".

So, obviously, I would have been -- there must have been something, I'm not a lawyer, there must have been something that directed me to that, so I would have just pretty much copied that word for word from the relevant section I'd been directed to from the Fraud Act.
Q. So if we turn to page 6 and the penultimate paragraph, is this the paragraph you mean? 47
procedures other than the fact, that for whatever reason, as stated in her prepared statement, Mrs Hutchings admits to altering her cash declarations. The audit was instigated by the Cash Management Team following the fact that she only returned $£ 14,000$ when $£ 30,000$ was requested. Although the fraud appears to have been going on for some time, because of the relative low amounts being inflated this branch wouldn't necessarily have appeared very high up in the Cash Management risk matrix."

Then we have the sentence that you referred to earlier at the end, I think it's a standard form of words, effectively:
"These papers are now forwarded to you for sight and advice on the sufficiency of the evidence as to whether criminal charges are brought ..."

So you're sending it there to the lawyers for their advice on the sufficiency of evidence.

Some of the words that are used in this report -- I mean, the page before that I took you to about the Fraud Act and you go through the various elements of fraud and how they're made out -- they do sound very much like you 46

Where you go through effectively some elements from section 1 of the Fraud Act, and you say:
"... based on my analysis ... would appear to support the fact that Mrs Hutchings has committed fraud ..."
A. Yes, that wasn't typical but, again, when -I don't remember the case at all but, when I'm reading through this, I seem to have a vague recollection that round about that time we would have been asked to, you know, suggest what offence we believe had been committed, which seemed a bit odd because that was the Criminal Law Team's role. There would have been no other reason for me to have gone and found this detail from the Fraud Act, unless I'd been instructed to do so. It would have been the standard "Paper submitted, please advise on sufficiency of evidence".
Q. I mean, as you say, you hadn't received any real training in criminal law?
A. No, we would obviously have been made aware of the Fraud Act and, obviously, either sent a copy of it or directed to a copy of it, and I dare say I read it at the time, but I'm not a lawyer, so I wouldn't have had a knowledge of it. So 48

I'm sure there was some direction at that time for a -- certainly a brief period of time, where we were being asked to suggest what offence had been committed.
Q. I mean, you had a two-week residential course plus some ad hoc shadowing, for example?
A. Yes, obviously, by that time, I've got 11 years' experience under my belt.
Q. Did you feel yourself qualified to analyse something and come to a decision in respect of Mrs Hutchings having committed fraud?
A. I think I would be qualified to suggest that what had happened appeared to be fraud but the detail was put down there as to what part of the Act it related to, I would have had to have been directed to that. But I think I can safely say, yes, in my analysis, it appears that fraud has been committed. Previously, before the Fraud Act was introduced, I would have probably said it would appear that false accounting had been conducted.
Q. Going back to your witness statement where you say, at paragraph 58:
"From my recollection the decision to prosecute would be made by a Senior Security 49
that, I don't know where I got it from, but you'd be able to see from other reports around about that time whether fellow Security Managers were doing something similar.
Q. So you say around that time, that's May 2011: do you mean in May 2011; do you mean in 2011; do you mean in --
A. I honestly can't remember. As I say, until I read the report I -- well, I can't remember the case at all.
Q. Would you expect it to be quite isolated, that kind of example, where you're providing that kind of analysis?
A. I don't think it was isolated. Obviously, things chop and change over a period of time and, at that time, I think there was a direction -- how far before I wrote this report that was the direction, how long afterwards that was direction, I don't know. Whether that was still in force when I left in 2012 and for how long that stayed there, I honestly don't know.

But it was certainly something, through my main recollection, for the bulk of the time I was a Security Manager, I don't recall doing 51

Manager and this was probably the head of the Security Fraud Team."

It looks very much -- at least in this period and you've been very clear to say it was just in this period -- that you are doing more than just providing a report to the Criminal Law Team. You are a Security Manager who is carrying out quasi-legal analysis there?
A. We always conduct analysis, so we would analyse the evidence that we've identified.
Q. You say it's particular to this period in time. What period in time was it that you were asked to --
A. I honestly can't remember but it always was, as I said, "Paper submitted, please advise on sufficiency of evidence", but it's only through reading through this report that I received as part of the Inquiry -- because I looked at it and thought "Why on earth am I putting that in there?" and I was, if you like, racking my brains and I seem to recall that, around about that time, we were asked to suggest a charge.

That's my recollection, no doubt there's other reports that would have been submitted around that time, so, if no one else is doing 50
anything other than "Here's the papers, please advise."
Q. So is it your evidence that, in terms of decision to proceed or not proceed, that wasn't for you?
A. No, I'm just suggesting what offence may have been committed. So in terms of saying it appears that they've committed fraud, we were instructed to (unclear) the fraud because obviously there's -- the Fraud Act, like any piece of legislation, can be a fairly big document, so it's basically being asked what Section of the Fraud Act it relates to. But, again, that should really be for the Criminal Law Team.
Q. You say you were instructed. Who were you instructed by?
A. I honestly don't know.
Q. Would it have been somebody in the Security team, somebody in the Criminal Law Team?
A. Oh, absolutely. It would have been a direction from within the Security team, yeah.
Q. In 2011, who was the Head of the Security Team?
A. Well, I don't know if the direction would have come from the Head but the Head of the Security 52

Team in 2011 would have been John Scott.
Q. You say you don't think it necessarily would have come from the Head?
A. Well, no, John Scott was the overall Head of Security. Then you would have, I think at that time, based on that report, Dave Pardoe was the Head of the Fraud strand. But we also had other departments. We also had Financial Investigation Team as well. There was Casework Team, so -- I mean to say, we had Fraud Risk Team, Crime Risk Team, so there was lots of different functions within the Security Team, so --
Q. That kind of an instruction to analyse something in a quasi-legal kind of analysis, where would that have come from?
A. No, I don't think the instruction was to analyse. That's something we would always do. I think the instruction, from recollection, was to expand on what offence we felt had been committed.
Q. But you can't remember where that instruction came from?
A. No, and I'm sure it was fairly recent, from -recent in terms of towards the end of my tenure
Q. Was that very clear, that delineation?
A. Sorry, say again?
Q. Was that delineation very clear?
A. Yes, yes, absolutely. I mean to say, it's on the actual offender report for every -- for the entirety that I was a Security Manager. I believe that it was a prosecution decision authority, so you actually had to name who that person was.
Q. Can we look at UKGIO0014355, please. This is a different case. This the case of Wendy Buffrey. We're now May 2010, so the previous year. Can we have a look at the final page, please. Page 3., thank you. So this is a document that you have written. Is this is an investigation report or -- this is a response to a memo, I think, if we look at --
A. Can you scroll back to the top, please?
Q. Absolutely.
A. Yeah, so this will be a "further to" report.
Q. A "further to" report. So you'd draft an investigation report, there'd be some questions from the Criminal Law Team, and then you'd write what's referred to as a further to report?
as a Security Manager.
Q. So 2011? 2010? What is recent? I'm just trying to understand?
A. I don't want to give you a year because I honestly don't know.
Q. Can you see how that kind of analysis might have carried weight with those who were making the ultimate decision?
A. But, as I say, the analysis is the analysis. Whether I put the bit in about the specific part of the Fraud Act, the analysis -- we were always going to do an analysis so, basically, l'm -the ONCH, which stands for Overnight Cash Holdings, l'm looking at the actual declarations being made, so I'm analysing that. Whether it's in the same paragraph as making reference to a particular piece of the Fraud Act, the Security Managers are always going to conduct analysis of the evidence.
Q. So you were analysing the evidence but am I right to say that you didn't give the instruction as to whether to proceed or not to proceed?
A. No, as I say, that would be for the prosecution decision authority.

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A. Yeah, this is me responding to the memo they sent following my initial report.
Q. So it says there:
"Further to your memo dated 23 April 2010,
I now make the following points:
"1) I have discussed the proposal of solely accepting a plea to fraud. Of $£ 5,000$ with Mr Paul Southin, Financial Investigator and we are both in agreement that this is unacceptable. Our joint opinion is that the fraud charge should remain at [ $£ 26,000]$, which may or may not include a separate further charge for the $£ 5,000$ remittance deficit."

Then you respond to various things that are said in the defence statement. That looks very much like you are having a view as to whether to proceed or not to proceed and playing a part in that decision process?
A. I'm relaying the opinion of myself and Paul Southin, who was the Financial Investigator.
Q. Yes. But I mean that's doing very much the kind of thing that you said you didn't do, isn't it? If we scroll up:
"... we are both in agreement that accepting a [certain plea] is unacceptable."

Isn't that getting involved in the decision-making process?
A. It's giving an opinion. I mean to say, there's another case I'd been sent, whereby I'm asked for my opinion by counsel and I say "I agree with counsel but, ultimately, Dave Pardoe would need to make the decision on the basis of the plea".
Q. So in this case, would it have definitely gone to Dave Pardoe?
A. Every decision would have to be made by Dave Pardoe, is my understanding, yeah -- well, whoever was the prosecution decision maker. In this respect, on -- I don't know, was it -- have we charged -- we must have charged at this date, so, yeah, in this case Dave Pardoe would have made the decision and it looks like myself and Paul Southin are responding and giving our opinion on the 5,000 . But, ultimately, that would be, yeah, for the Criminal Law Team, and whether it needed to go back to the prosecution decision authority, I don't know.
Q. Can you see how the Security Manager saying that here's an agreement with the Financial Investigator that a certain plea is unacceptable 57
and going back in that time, but certainly I'm giving my opinion and that of Paul Southin that we don't believe that the 5,000 should be accepted.

But I agree that if -- that those decisions
ultimately should be made by the Prosecution
Decision Authority and, if I hadn't gone to
whoever that was, I think Dave Pardoe -- I don't
know whether it was Dave Pardoe, then, yes,
I hold my hands up, I should have done that but I don't know whether I did or didn't.
Q. If we look at POL00112329, that's actually the memo that this was sent in response to. So the memo of the 23 April 2010. Thank you. It's POL00112329.

Sorry, it's quite a large document so it'll take a few moments. Thank you. It's pages 50 and 51. This is just a bundle of documents, so we can ignore the first page.

Thank you. That's page 50. So this is the original memo. It comes from Principal Lawyer of the Criminal Law Division, it's addressed to Post Office Security and you're the only named individual on this particular memo. If we scroll down to over the page, she says, as 59
might well be seen as a decision as to whether to accept that plea or not?
A. Yes. Having read this, again, then, yes, I should be giving opinion, but I shouldn't be doing anything that affects a decision on the basis of whether pleas are accepted. That is for the Criminal Law Team, counsel, or the Senior Security Manager.

Whether at that stage the Financial Investigator had sufficient authority, I don't know but, clearly, we both, having spoken to Paul Southin, I'm reporting that we're -- or our opinion is that we shouldn't be accepting that 5,000 . And, yeah, without going back in time, and knowing whether what conversations were had or contact with Dave Pardoe, just on that basis, then, yes, it should have gone back to Dave Pardoe to say, "Do you agree?" So I accept that, if that wasn't done.
Q. So reflecting on that particular case, is it your evidence that that was inappropriate?
A. Sorry, that was?
Q. Inappropriate?
A. Well, again, it's difficult to know, of all the conversations that may or may not have been had 58
follows:
"Could you form any consider the matter with a view to whether or not a plea to the $£ 5,000$ is sufficient and whether the trial should proceed.
"Copies of the Defence Statement and Basis of Plea are enclosed. On the basis that the case is to proceed, I would be grateful if you could consider the defence case statement and address any issues as to further disclosure."

Was she wrong to ask you to formally consider the matter with a view to whether or not to accept the plea? Should that have been sent directly to the Senior --
A. I'm not sure she was asking me. It was sent to the generic Post Office Security address.
Q. Yes.
A. So they may well then have gone to the Prosecution Decision Authority, I don't know.
Q. Well, we see the response to that memo which is --
A. Yeah, I've responded to it, yes, I see that.
Q. Yes. Was there any process to ensure that those kinds of memos were seen by the Senior Security Manager?
A. Well, as I say, it was sent to, as I say, the

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generic Post Office Security address, so that would be a team of people that would -- I don't know if it was like an admin function or a support function. So whether that then got relayed to the Prosecution Decision Authority, I don't know. But if there's no correspondence from them, then I can only assume not and they've just taken my opinion. So, because I was copied in, I've obviously looked at that and seen that they are asking me for my opinion.
Q. Is this, again, in your opinion, another rare example where you are giving or effectively giving a decision in respect of prosecution or seem to be?
A. No, I -- based on what we've seen, myself and Paul Southin have collectively given an opinion that we shouldn't just be accepting the $£ 5,000$.

Whether anyone else was asked that as well, other than obviously the email going to the generic team, that address, I don't know. But as I say, I can't recall a case and I can't recall others, other than, as I said, I gave an example of where there was another case that was in the various bundles sent to me, whereby I'd give an opinion, and said this decision had 61
lawyer. It's another "Further to" memo.
A. Yeah.
Q. So did you begin all your further to memos with the words "Further to"; is that right?
A. (The witness laughed)
Q. Would you call this one of your further to memos?
A. Yes, this is -- as it suggests: Dave sent me a memo and I'm responding to their memo and I've worded it "Further to".
Q. If we could go halfway down the page, the fourth paragraph, you say in this case:
"There does appear to be some difficulty in proving at this stage that Mrs Gill is the person who has stolen the money, although my belief is that she has. The difficulty being her 'no comment' response to the majority of questions put to her at interview and the possible implication that her now deceased husband may have been responsible.
"Whether or not Mrs Gill has stolen the money herself, it would seem apparent that she played a key role in concealing the deficit in this branch namely by not processing Lottery transactions and not amending her scratchcard on 63
to be made by Dave Pardoe, but here I haven't done. So it looks like, yeah, I haven't gone to Dave Pardoe and I should have done.
Q. Is that rare, common, exceptional?
A. It's hard to say, Mr Blake, because I don't remember really any of these cases, so I can only go on the cases that l've been supplied with.
Q. But, in terms of the 12-year period in which you were a Security Manager, was it quite routine for you to offer those kinds of comments?
A. I don't think so, no. I mean to say, once charges had been formulated or advised upon by the Criminal Law Team, and then the decision to prosecute had been agreed or authorised, I'm not sure there was much variation in charges other than it may well be that we've gone with a theft charge and then the defence offer pleas to false accounting, and they may have been accepted.
Q. I'm going to look at one more document before we break for our mid-morning break and it's POLO0010122, please.

This is an altogether different case, Mrs Gill, July 2010. This is correspondence from yourself to Mr Jarnail Singh, senior 62

## hand figures ..."

Then you say this, if we could scroll down:
"In view of the above you may feel that fraud charges covering 6 November 2008 (date Mrs Gill was previously reinstated) to 19 August 2009 (date of audit) are more fitting than theft charges."

Then you say:
"You may feel it's more appropriate to formulate", et cetera.

The "You may feel" formulation, that sounds, again, very much like it is in effect an instruction to the lawyer as to how you consider the case should be charged.
A. It's not an instruction. I'm just saying that, based on the evidence, it may be that they feel that that's a more appropriate charge. Again, I'm just giving my opinion, which is what we were asked to do in the legal report.
Q. Did you feel sufficiently qualified to make that call?
A. As I said, I'm not a lawyer but, back then, I would have had, like, a working understanding of various forms of legislation. Today, I really can't answer.
Q. Was there some degree of delegation or a lack of supervision coming from the Senior Security Manager that allowed or perhaps required you to get more involved than possibly your role should have entailed?
A. I don't think so, because the Senior Security Manager would have read the report when making the decision as to whether we prosecute or not and I wouldn't have thought that the way I'm constructing a report and a case file would have been much different, if any, to Security Managers around the country. If there was, then, no doubt, that would have been relayed back to me.
Q. Do you recall any instances, where you've used formulations like "You may feel that X offence has been committed", are there any circumstances you can recall where a charge was not brought?
A. A charge was not brought?
Q. Yes.
A. I'm sure there would have been but I can't recall any specific cases. Again, I can't recall any specific cases but there may have been cases where we submitted a report to the Legal Team, where we got evidence of the 65
or whatever, at the branch.
You'd still write it up but not to the Criminal Law Team. You'd just write it up to the Casework Team saying "There's no evidence of criminality", something like that. But for significant audit shortages or pension allowance fraud, then I think they would probably all go up to the Criminal Law Team but they may advise no further action, but I can't recall any specific ones, no.
Q. If we, for example, were to access all of the investigation reports that you did over the 12-year period that went to the Criminal Law Team, would we ever find one that said, "I don't think there's sufficient evidence to take this matter forward"?
A. Quite possibly. I honestly don't know.
Q. Wouldn't that be something that you might remember?
A. Not necessarily, no. I'm going to say that these are cases that we did prosecute and I can't remember.
MR BLAKE: Yes.
Sir, thank you very much. That's probably an appropriate time for a mid-morning break.
criminal offence but we can't pinpoint who it was and, if you can't identify who -- or there's insufficient evidence as to who the perpetrator is, then I think in those situations it will be no further action taken.
Q. So is it your evidence that, in certain investigation reports, for example, you might recommend no further action is taken?
A. No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't recommend no further action, I don't believe.
Q. Are there investigation reports that you completed that didn't suggest further action?
A. Say that again, please?
Q. Were all of your investigation reports aimed, effectively, at building the case or were there some cases where, in your investigation report, you said, "I don't think criminal charges should be brought"?
A. I am sure -- like I say, there was a number of cases we would deal with, I'm going to say it could be something like missing vouchers, or whatever, so there could be something that's gone up to our admin department and they've opened it up and things are missing and you might go there and you might find the vouchers, 66

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. What time shall we resume.
MR BLAKE: At 11.35?
SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: Yes, fine.
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
(11.22 am)
(A short break)
(11.35 am)

MR BLAKE: Thank you, Mr Brander. I'm going to move on to a different topic, and that is --
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Before you start, can I just say that I'm due to take delivery of a new work computer at around about 12.45. So if I disappear, literally for a few seconds from the screen, that's what's happening, all right?
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, sir.
ARQ data and bugs, errors and defects. Can you assist us with what you recall, insofar as the process is concerned for obtaining ARQ data from Fujitsu?
A. Yes, so whether there was a form fill in, l'm not sure, or whether it was just an email, but it'll go up to, like, an admin department. It might have been Casework Management Team at the time.
implications?
A. I don't know about -- depending on what circumstances, but certainly it restricted the amount that I would have requested.
Q. So it wasn't requested as a matter of course; it was something that you would go through a thought process before requesting?
A. Yeah, it's -- so, for instance, you might have a case, say an audit shortage case, and you might go for month prior to the audit. You can get various printouts, which aren't always that user-friendly and doesn't necessarily tell you everything, but, with the audit data, you could sort and filter, and more user-friendly to see if you can identify, yeah, anything that could support why there was a significant shortfall there.
So, if -- again, this is just the best as I can recall, if you look at that first month and you didn't really find anything that supported the investigation either way, it may well be that you then didn't then order any more. If you identified something, you might then request more. In doing so, again, you might then pluck a period of time, say maybe
Looking at the documentation that I've been sent, it looked like it subsequently then went to the Crime Risk Team but, ultimately, the request would go in from the Security Manager to an admin function within Security, who would then submit the request to Fujitsu.
Q. Do you recall any limitations on being able to obtain that data, whether it would be number of reports, cost of reports, or anything along those lines?
A. Yeah, absolutely. I believe an $A R Q$ request covered a month's worth of data. So, obviously, one request, you know, would be one month to two months, and so forth. So there was quite tight restrictions on what we could order as per a standard request. If, at any stage, we went over that, it might roll on to the following month.

Ultimately, there could be a cost but, when the Investigator requested it, it was very much on -- I wouldn't say essential -- if you really needed it as part of your investigation, from my experience, probably ordered more requests to do with a pension allowance fraud case, and possibly for audit shortage cases, because of 69 - 71 the tight restrictions on how much we could order, it was possible that any large amounts requested were following on from a request from either our solicitors or defence solicitors.
Q. Were you aware of any internal policies that governed the number of requests you could make or the amount of data you could request?
A. I can't recall what number, other than the fact that it was tight. Put it this way, I -- for me, personally, I could order as much as I wanted to, to conduct my enquiries into the Horizon data.
Q. Was the impression given that the amount was tight, to use your words, given by the Post Office, by Fujitsu, by the Security Manager, or who?
A. No, it would have just been within the Security team because I think that was part of the contract that was agreed with Fujitsu. So I think Fujitsu would have probably supplied whatever was physically possible but there would be charges to the Post Office for it, if it went over the allotted amount.
Q. Do you recall the Post Office ever not
requesting $A R Q$ data because of those 70
three months away, six months away, or whatever, it wouldn't be a case of "Ooh, I found all this, so I'm going to do a blanket 1 year, 15 months, or whatever, as an audit shortage case".

But I think you're also mindful, you may have interviewed somebody, you may or may not have had audit data at that time, but if -depending on what comes up at interview, you might feel the need to order another batch of data. But then you're mindful of the fact these people are being interviewed, it's going to be quite traumatic for them and it could be one month/two months before I get another lot of data.

So I can remember it being frustrating both in terms of me being able to conduct investigations and also how long I would have to wait, which also had the effect of somebody being under investigation having to wait, whereas if I could access it all straightaway, I can just do it all on the one day, without having to delay things.
Q. So there were some delays in obtaining the data once it had been ordered?
A. Yes.
Q. But, in terms of actually ordering it, you were reluctant to order large amounts because of cost implications?
A. Yes.
Q. A lot of the evidence that you've given this morning is about things being passed from your predecessors or those who you work with, rather than being written out in policies. Is it the same case with ARQ data, that that was information that had been passed to you by colleagues, rather than a document that you saw?
A. Not so much colleagues. I think it had just come down from more senior levels within the Security team. But that was just always, as far as back as I can remember, that was always the case from when I joined, that if -- whenever the first case came about, where I had to order Horizon data, it was no doubt told to me "Well, just be mindful of how much you feel you need and order".

It may have been I just order one month's worth. I honestly can't remember the first time I first ordered it but, certainly, that was always my understanding from -- because when I joined Horizon had already started being
generated a generic and non-specific software error event, which went unnoticed in the monitoring of events. A financial imbalance was evident and was subject to investigation by Fujitsu Service Support Centre and Post Office Limited. The financial imbalance has been resolved and there is reference to a software correction. The "Impact", it says:
"We need to work with [the Post Office] to recheck the ARQs and reconfirm the data integrity during the period of May 2007 to November 2008 -- penny will do this."

I'm going to take you, before I ask you about this particular incident, to a couple more documents addressing the same issue.

Can we look at FUJO0155400. So here we have
Peter Sewell, copied in. If we look at the
bottom of page 2, we have an email to Dave
Posnett from Rob Wilson. What was your relationship like with Dave Posnett?
A. Dave Posnett?
Q. Yes.
A. Dave Posnett was a colleague within the same team at the time. He was my line manager at the time. Got on really well with Dave.

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rolled out.
Q. We're going to see some documents that have been in your pack, emails from Penny Thomas. What did you understand the role of Penny Thomas who worked at Fujitsu to be?
A. Yeah, Penny's a name that I can recall from Fujitsu and I think she was the person that the admin function would submit the ARQ requests to in Fujitsu. And Penny would be the one to supply the data and, if subsequently required, a statement.
Q. We're going to see her mentioned in the Hamilton case study that we'll come to, probably before lunchtime, but I just want to start by taking you to some emails of 2009. Could we can look at FUJ00155399, please. So this is an email that was in your pack. It's not an email that was sent to you.
A. Okay.
Q. We see there, if we scroll down, there's mention in that second substantive paragraph of an occurrence in December 2007 where there was an unseen database lock, where an administrative balancing transaction failed to be written to the local message store database. This 74
Q. So if we have a look over the page, please, Dave Posnett is sending Rob Wilson an email in relation to this particular incident that's been identified by Fujitsu, and he says:
"Rob,
"In relation to the standard witness statement Fujitsu provide ..."

Then if we look at the second point:
"The following additional paragraphs have been inserted (page 7). I personally do not see the need for these if there are no problems identified with the data relating to the case in question. Why inform anyone about a problem we've had within the network, but possibly only at one branch, if it bears no relation or relevance."

Then below it has the form of words that Fujitsu were proposing be included within a witness statement, what's described as the standard witness statement that Fujitsu provide. That is an explanation of the incident. So the proposed form of words is:
"In December 2007 an occurrence was reported in one office where a Stock Unit rollover coincided with the End Of Day Process running. 76

This led to a previously unseen database lock where an administrative balancing transaction failed to be written to the local message store database", et cetera.

If we have a look at page 2 at the top of the page, we have Dave Posnett emailing Penny Thomas at Fujitsu to say:
"I would say Business As Usual [regarding] witness statements, ie don't include the two additional paragraphs on the last page.
"If any issues materialise in due course, we can address then -- suggest the ARQs for these 4 cases are assessed first."

Sticking with the same issue could we have a look at FUJ00155421, please. Penny Thomas to Dave Posnett, 4 February 2009. She says:
"The event logs have been checked for all data provided to [the Post Office] as a result of the 195 ARQs which fall within the time frame. A total of 27 instances of concern were identified. All instances have been fully analysed and we can confirm that the locking was caused by contention between the EOD process and a Riposte checkpoint being written. No transactions or balancing activities carried out 77
time. At one point, he was a Security Manager, at the same time that I was. He then got promoted, I'm not sure what role. I think, from memory, Dave was in the Fraud Risk Team. He may even have been Casework Manager for a time, I don't know. He was a Financial Investigator. He was --
Q. So in 2009 we have him sending the email as Fraud Risk Manager.
A. Yeah. There was a Fraud Risk Team that John

Scott had set up. I can't -- well, I've never worked in that team, so I can't recall exactly what they did, because we also had a Crime Risk Team, as well, so l'm not sure what the difference was.
Q. Would you have expected somebody who was in that position to have provided that kind of information to you about the reliability of ARQ data or potential issues?
A. I honestly don't know. I'm going to say it's -in a broader sense, what we now know absolutely should have been disseminated to numerous people but that particular item, I've no idea who Dave would have referred that to. I can see -I don't begin to understand half the
at branches were affect."
So this is an issue that affected the ARQ report rather than the balancing activities at branches. She says there:
"The standard witness statement has been reviewed, and is attached. No reference has been made to the locking issue but minor revisions have been made."

Were you made aware of this incident at all,
or -- I know it's -- well, it's 2009.
A. Yeah.
Q. Was that an incident you were aware of at the time?
A. I certainly -- I have no recollection of it.

No. I don't recall it at all.
Q. Did Penny Thomas ever indicate to you that there may be issues with the reliability of ARQ data?
A. No, not at all.
Q. Dave Posnett is obviously the point of contact for Penny Thomas in relation to this issue. What was his role in relation to -- that you conducted your work, was he, for example, responsible for training and compliance of your work?
A. Well, like most people, Dave's role changed over 78
technicalities of it all but I can see that Dave responded to Penny. Whether Dave has raised that to anyone else more senior to him or anyone else, I honestly can't say but I have no recollection of it.
Q. Do you think, if you had been passed that kind of information, it might have affected your obligations of disclosure in particular cases?
A. Well, as I say, clearly what we now know and with a greater understanding of disclosure, then yes, it should have been disclosed along with numerous other things.
Q. When you say a "greater understanding of disclosure", do you mean a greater understanding of bugs, errors and defects in the system or do you mean a greater --
A. No, I think a greater understanding, from looking at the evidence and the documentation I've been supplied with, of disclosure in general.
Q. Have you identified deficiencies in disclosure from looking at that information?
A. Well, it seems to be that we should have disclosed all the -- well, unless I'm reading it wrong, all the Horizon data. It's a tough one 80
because, obviously, I was Security Manager for 12 years, I don't recall any issues, certainly in cases I dealt with, where any cases had been thrown out or, for want of better terminology, because of lack of disclosure, but certainly from the previous inquiries, disclosure was a big part of why certain convictions were quashed.

So there seems to be a lot of emphasis on the fact that why wasn't all disclosure in relation to Horizon data disclosed as a matter of course for the whole indictment period? So when I say better understanding, I think, you know, it's just understanding that all of that data should have been disclosed.

I'm not aware of anyone that knew any bugs, errors or defects and you would have thought that we would have been advised of that. Had we have known, then, clearly, that would have been dealt with in whatever way by the Post Office at the time.
Q. So is it your evidence that you didn't know about bugs, errors and defects and hadn't been told of any bugs, errors and defects?
A. No, no, I'm going to say, I can see from the 81

Horizon data was said to have been unreliable.
A. I don't recall this email, no, and it was
clearly sent to me in error, the first one, and
I hadn't seen until supplied as part of the bundle, any further to, other than Andy Hayward saying, "Not for me".
Q. One thing we do see is at page 25, Dave Posnett is copied in to the chain. Thank you. We see there Dave Posnett's name on the top right-hand side. Again, not something that you were told about at the time by Mr Posnett?
A. Sorry, say again?
Q. Was it not something that Mr Posnett brought to your attention at that time?
A. No, I don't recall ever having this brought to my attention. I'm going to say Andy Hayward clearly says, "Not for Graham B", and that's no doubt the last I heard of it.
Q. If we look at page 19 of this chain, we have Graham Ward's response, and it's the second half of the page, and he says as follows:

## "Andrew/Jason

"I'm aware of two ongoing cases at West Byfleet ... and Orford Road ... and also some historical cases but as [Financial
evidence that there were -- moving towards the latter years that I was a Security Manager, there were, to use the terminology, challenges to Horizon but I don't recall ever seeing any reference to bugs, errors or defects.

Put it this way, in simplistic terms, I was not aware of any issues with Horizon that could have caused these discrepancies.
Q. Can we look at POL00106867, please. It's page 27. This is an email from Andrew Daley to a few people. You are included on this email chain at this point, and it says:
"Andy called me and asked whether you guys (Graham, if FIU have any cases in dispute/new issues that could affect your case) could put together some stats on these cases, where the accused's defence was/is that Horizon data is unreliable for any amount of reasons given by the accused."

Now, we're going to see from the email above that, in fact, certainly in Andy Hayward's opinion, that was inadvertently sent to you and, in fact, should be Graham Ward. But do you remember receiving an email in 2010 that sought to put together statistics on cases where 82

Investigators] we wouldn't have Horizon disputed cases other than those reported by the Investigators, who will have far more details on the issues than us.
"I have attached an article from an IT magazine, which may have bought this issue to the fore in the first place which may be of interest to lan."

So his explanation there is that the Investigators would have far more details than he would. As an Investigator, presumably, in 2010 you were aware of a growing number of cases that disputed the reliability of the Horizon system.
A. I think, yeah, in the latter years, there were more -- as I say, to use the terminology -challenges to Horizon system. I'm going to say I wasn't aware of any that were what we would term successfully challenged in the courts.
Q. If we have a look at the bottom of page 1 on to page 2, into page 3 even. We have there a response from Dave Posnett. It says:
"All
"Could we please ensure that Rob Wilson, the Head of Criminal Law, is kept appraised of the 84

Then it's over two pages because there's a blank page:
"... situation and included in any further meetings on the subject."

It says this:
"Our prosecution cases have faced an increase in challenges, as well as our civil cases, so the activities outlined below and indeed going forward are applicable to both legal teams."

So you would agree that in 2010 there was an increase in challenges, and your evidence is yes, but --
A. I believe so, yes.
Q. -- they didn't succeed, is ...
A. Well, I wasn't aware of any that -- as you'd imagine, if Horizon had been successful challenged in any case, then you would expect the whole Security and Criminal Law Team to be aware of it. But I can recall -- I can't remember specific cases but I can recall there were occasions where maybe a memo from the Criminal Law Team successfully challenged -sorry, successfully rebutted any challenge, 85
A. Sorry, I don't understand.
Q. Well, you were aware of an increase in challenges. You said you may well have thought about it but did you do anything about it?
A. As I say, I cannot recall.
Q. If you had done something about it, would you recall having done something about it?
A. Well, let's put it in simple terms. I -- up until the point I left Post Office, I had no reason to believe there was anything wrong with the integrity of Horizon.
Q. But that wasn't the question. The question was whether you actually did something about it.
You were aware of an increase in cases?
A. Not as far as I can recall, Mr Blake.
Q. Can we look at FUJ00154911, please. It's page 7. We're still in 2010, here, this is May 2010, page 7. This is an email from you at the bottom half of the page. It says:
"Please can you arrange for Penny and Andy at Fujitsu to supply statements covering the workings and integrity of Horizon for Up Hatherley Post Office ... from [and it gives two dates]. I also need Penny to produce Horizon data supplied for this period and ARQs ... and 87
something like that, some sort of wording. So I think it's possibly in my mindset that Horizon had been challenged but not successfully. But, again, it's --
Q. Didn't an increase in challenges, though, make you --
A. I think so, like I say, it's hard to recall but I think there was a growing number in the latter years, yes.
Q. Did you not think to yourself "Well, why is there this growing number? Is this something that I should be investigating?"
A. I may well have done, but I cannot recall thinking that.
Q. Sorry, I don't understand that answer.
A. Right, you said -- yeah, I may well have thought "Ooh, we're getting more challenges", and I may have thought something about that, but --
Q. But you didn't do anything --
A. -- I cannot recall what my mindset would have been at that time or even if I did have any thoughts on it.
Q. Do you recall carrying out any investigation into the reliability of Horizon, there being an increase in challenges?

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for Andy to produce a schedule detailing all calls to the [Helpdesk] during this period."

So in 2010 you were aware, for example in this particular case, of a challenge to the integrity of Horizon?
A. Yes, as I say, I'm sure I can recall that there was an increased number of challenges to Horizon but I believe Penny's statement covered the integrity of Horizon anyhow.
Q. Were you not making enquiries of colleagues about any concerns that they may have had at this time, an increasing number of cases about the integrity of Horizon? Was it not something that was discussed in the office?
A. Well, as I say, up until 2011 the office was just me but, at team meetings, we discussed cases. I can't remember what specifically was discussed but, yeah, we had team meetings. So if there would have been any concerns, collective concerns, no doubt they would have been discussed but I don't recall anything.
Q. In the same year, can we look at POL00106848, we're now at the end of 2010. This is another case, Pamela Stubbs' case. If we have a look over the page, it says as follows:

|  | "Along with Graham Brander I met with | 1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Mrs Stubbs on 17 January and she was convinced | 2 |
|  | that Horizon was at fault. She has retained | 3 |
|  | daily transaction logs for December to January | 4 |
|  | in which time she lost $£ 9,000$ is not prepared to | 5 |
|  | release this until she can compare it to Fujitsu | 6 |
|  | data. I have examined the Fujitsu data and | 7 |
|  | cannot see any indications of fraud. She has | 8 |
|  | declared all the losses and has been asking for | 9 |
|  | assistance for some time. There is | 10 |
|  | a possibility (although she will not accept it) | 11 |
|  | that an assistant has been taking the money but | 12 |
|  | that puts the onus back on her to report it to | 13 |
|  | the police. I have sent her the Fujitsu data to | 14 |
|  | reconcile with her daily transaction logs but | 15 |
|  | from a criminal/fraud point of view there is no | 16 |
|  | scope for further investigation into any | 17 |
|  | criminal activity." | 18 |
|  | That is a report that reports that you | 19 |
|  | attended alongside the Investigator or as one of | 20 |
|  | the Investigators in that case. Do you remember | 21 |
|  | that case? | 22 |
| A. | No, but then, as I say, I -- other than | 23 |
|  | attending with Mike, whose case it would have | 24 |
|  | been, as I say, I don't remember it at all. But | 25 |
|  | 89 |  |
|  | today, other than obviously seeing it in the | 1 |
|  | bundle. | 2 |
| Q. | Can we go back to your witness statement, | 3 |
|  | paragraph 68, please. That's page 18 of | 4 |
|  | WITN08300100. It's page 18. Thank you. | 5 |
|  | Paragraph 68 says as follows, the final sentence | 6 |
|  | in paragraph 68: | 7 |
|  | "I have no recollection of any reference | 8 |
|  | made in relation to any 'Horizon bugs, errors | 9 |
|  | and defects' during my time as Security | 10 |
|  | Manager." | 11 |
|  | You then go on to talk about the various | 12 |
|  | case studies in your statement, and can we look | 13 |
|  | at page 32. It's paragraph 114. This is in | 14 |
|  | relation to the Hamilton case. At | 15 |
|  | paragraph 114, page 32, you say: | 16 |
|  | "... it was always my understanding that the | 17 |
|  | Horizon system was robust, as this was the | 18 |
|  | message that was always instilled in everyone by | 19 |
|  | [the Post Office] and I was not aware of any | 20 |
|  | reference to 'bugs, errors or defects' relating | 21 |
|  | to the integrity of Horizon." | 22 |
|  | Paragraph 126, that's page 34, and that's in | 23 |
|  | the context of the Julian Wilson case. It says, | 24 |
|  | at 126 : | 25 |

other than attending for interview, I almost certainly wouldn't have had any involvement in it.
Q. You say there's nobody to speak to but here you're working with Mike Wilcox. Do you recall any discussions about whether there might be something in the fact that Horizon was at fault?
A. We may well have done at the time but, as I say, I do not recall this case at all.
Q. If we look at FUJ00156648, that is the Helen Rose report that this Inquiry is well aware of. This case actually features in that report. It's page 2 of the report, the Barkham case. It says:
"This case was raised following an ongoing dispute between Mrs Stubbs and the Post Office, regarding an outstanding debt ... Mrs Stubbs is suggesting that Horizon is at fault when it was moved into a Portakabin during renovations."

Were you aware of the Helen Rose report in August 2012 and that it was looking into a case that you had been involved in?
A. I have no recollection of it. It may well have been during shared with the wider Security Team but I certainly have no recollection of it 90
"... I was not aware of any reference to
'bugs, errors or defects' relating to the integrity of Horizon at this time."

If we look at paragraph 143 , that's page 39, this is in the context of the Hutchings case that we're going to come to, paragraph 143 says:
"... I was not aware of any reference to 'bugs, errors or defects' relating to the integrity of Horizon at this time."

Then the paragraph below is a general paragraph, which says:
"I have been asked to what extent (if any) did I consider a challenge to the integrity of Horizon in one case to be relevant to other ongoing or future cases. My response is that I have no recollection of any specific challenges to the integrity of Horizon."

I mean, weren't all of those cases that we've just been looking at challenges to the integrity of Horizon?
A. Yeah, well, people saying that there might have been an issue with Horizon, what I'm saying is my recollection of it. From the documentation, I can see that people have said "Ooh, I think Horizon is at fault", or words to that effect,
but I have no recollection of any specific cases, only from what l'm seeing from the documentation.
Q. You can see from the documentation a number of contemporaneous cases, 2010/2011, where there are challenges to the integrity of Horizon?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you not consider that those were important information in respect of disclosure in all of the cases that you were dealing with that challenged Horizon, that there were these other cases?
A. Well, as I've said, it was always the belief instilled in us that there was no issues with Horizon. If there'd been -- if I had a genuine belief that there were issues with Horizon -- it was all very well somebody saying, "Ooh, I think it's the equipment that's at fault", but, as I've said, it was always instilled in us that Horizon was robust, that's the terminology that was used, I had no reason to disbelieve that. We'd had cases that had gone through the court system whereby Horizon had been challenged, and unsuccessfully.

So I think that probably added to my belief 93

So there is clear reference to an --
A. Yeah, exactly. I've already said that -although I can't recall the specific cases, I was aware that there were more challenges to Horizon at that time. Put it this way, I can't remember going back, say, for the first half of when I was a Security Manager there'd been any challenges to Horizon, but that may be because it's, you know, far longer ago, and I can't recall. But it just seemed to have been built up maybe last two to three years before I left.
Q. Clearly, there are a number of people who were prosecuted and some who went to prison during that two to three years.
A. Yes.
Q. Can we look at paragraph 144. You say:
"I have been asked to what extent (if any) did I consider a challenge to the integrity of Horizon in one case to be relevant to the other ongoing or future cases. My response is that I have no recollection of any specific challenges to the integrity of Horizon."

The suggestion there is that you don't consider the increase in challenges to be at all relevant to those individual cases, that the
that Horizon was robust. So I believed it was robust. So, if I felt it wasn't, then that would no doubt be something that, not just I, everyone would be disclosing.
Q. Well, we spoke earlier about, for example, pursuing reasonable lines of inquiry.
A. Yes.
Q. A feeling that the system is robust, do you think that is sufficient where you have a growing number of cases where people are saying that there are Horizon integrity problems?
A. There was a growing number but l'm going to say that maybe a handful that I dealt with, I'm going to say it wasn't like every case suddenly everyone is challenging Horizon but there was -for whatever reason, there were more challenges to Horizon.
Q. Weren't those Dave Posnett's exact words about a growing number of cases?
A. Sorry, Mr Blake. I didn't catch that.
Q. I think those were Dave Posnett's exact words, weren't they, "our prosecution cases have faced an increase in challenges as well as our civil cases"?
fact that number of people were challenging Horizon, it seems as though you didn't consider that that was relevant?
A. I think, if it was relevant, there would have been a collective response. But, as I say, I cannot recall, going back that time --
Q. What do you mean by "collective response"?
A. Well, there might have been the fact that, right, we're getting all these cases or increasing cases that have been challenged in, then when people view the reports that go up or the committal bundle, or whatever, somebody, whether Criminal Law Team or Senior Security Manager, say, "Well, we need to start disclosing these other cases"

I would only be privy to the cases I dealt with. There may be references to other cases at team meetings but I wouldn't know the detail and I certainly wouldn't know cases from the other teams in other parts of the country.
Q. Who was this figure who should have been carrying out this task of disclosing --
A. I don't know.
Q. Because we spoke earlier about who was responsible for the disclosure process.
A. Yeah, obviously --
Q. I think you said that you were responsible?
A. -- the onus fell on the Security Manager to disclose any relevant material, yes.
Q. And to pursue reasonable lines of inquiry?
A. Yes.
Q. We have number of cases here that challenged Horizon, you had team meetings where Horizon challenges were mentioned; did you not think that it was incumbent on you?
A. No, no, I said that we had team meetings where this may have been a topic of discussion. I also said I cannot recall what was covered at the team meetings.
Q. Well, we've seen a number of documents that mention challenges to Horizon.
A. Yeah, absolutely, I agree with you that there were clearly a lot more challenges to Horizon from maybe 2009/10/11 onwards.
Q. And a number of people in that period who were convicted of criminal offences and who went to prison?
A. Yes.
Q. So I think what we would like to know from you is what went wrong there and why it was that 97
A. I really don't know what else to say.
Q. We're going to move on now to look at the first of our case studies, that's the Jo Hamilton case study, the South Warnborough Post Office. Can we please bring up on screen POL00113278, and it's page 37. I'm just going to briefly take you to the Court of Appeal's judgment in the case of Hamilton \& Others. Page 37, please, just because you're the first substantive witness in respect of the investigation that was carried out in this case. It's paragraph 142. The Court of Appeal says there:
"On 19 November 2007, Josephine Hamilton pleaded guilty to 14 counts of false accounting. The prosecution case was that she had made false entries on Horizon making claims about the presence of cash on hand which were untrue. The prosecution ICL agreed not to proceed with the charge of theft (which was ordered to lie on file) on the basis that the outstanding shortage of $[£ 36,000$ ] was to be paid by the time of sentence."

The next paragraph says:
"Mrs Hamilton's case was that she had not stolen the money or acted dishonestly. In
there wasn't greater disclosure of those challenges to those who were being prosecuted?
A. As I say, I can only -- I think, when we were getting more of these challenges, that was more -- there's always been -- I'd no reason to ever believe that there was anything wrong with Horizon and I think, around about that time, there may have been messages coming from above: Horizon's robust.

I cannot recall any specifics or who that was but there was always this feeling that, whenever there were challenges, then the business would say "There's no issues with Horizon".
Q. Given your duties of disclosure, do you think a feeling was sufficient or do you think you should have been carrying out investigations?
A. Well, all I can say is I believe I conducted, yeah, my inquiries and, you know, the work that I was required to do as a Security Manager in what I believed to be the correct manner.
Q. I'm not sure that answers the question of whether your feeling were enough and why you didn't carry out investigations into the integrity of Horizon.

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a prepared statement to the criminal investigation, she described number of inadequacies in Horizon which she had encountered. Between 23 October 2003 and 9 June 2006, she had made 26 calls to the Horizon Helpdesk. Between 3 December 2003 and 5 January 2006, she had made numerous calls to the Post Office's National Business Support Centre Helpline."

Scrolling down to the bottom of the page it says that:
"There was no examination of the ARQ data for bugs, errors or defects and no examination for evidence of theft. The unfiltered ARQ data is no longer available but it appears that there was no evidence to corroborate the Horizon evidence. There was no proof of an actual loss as opposed to a Horizon generated shortage."

The Court of Appeal says that they were presented with further information which bolsters their conclusion that the prosecution should not have been brought and which forms part of a concession, in fact, by the Post Office, and that is that the Post Office Investigator had reported that there was no 100
evidence of theft:
"despite this, a Post Office internal log entry for 22 November 2007 records that Mrs Hamilton's pleas were accepted on the understanding that unless she repaid the shortfall by the date for sentence, the Post Office would proceed with the theft charge."

Paragraph 147, the Court of Appeal says:
"The Post Office concedes that it was
unacceptable to hold open the threat of the theft charge unless Mrs Hamilton agreed to forgo
any criticism of Horizon. We regard this as
even more alarming in circumstances in which the
Post Office's own investigator had reported there was no evidence of theft."
It says:
"The Post Office's conduct gives a firm impression that the condition of repayment in return for the Post Office dropping the theft charge placed undue pressure on Mrs Hamilton. It gives the impression that the Post Office was using the prosecution process to enforce repayment."

Now, I'm going to take you through a few documents in relation to this case. I'm going 101
Q. Yes. If we look at that summary there, it seems as though she wasn't in attendance because she was too ill, so the keys were obtained. Once the keys had been obtained, the three of you went to conduct the audit; is that correct?
A. Yeah.
Q. Let's read below the figures that are given there, it says:
"Due to the disarray of the branch, and our inability to locate essential weekly paperwork, it was not possible to verify volume stock remittances. This was compounded by a problem encountered on Horizon requiring it to be rebooted. An additional $£ 61.77$ shortage was consequently highlighted by Horizon which could not be accounted for, and the total shortage put to late accounts was $£ 36,644$."

Are we to understand there that the auditors themselves actually experienced a problem with Horizon when they attended the audit?
A. It looks like it, yes. Unless -- I don't think it was uncommon that Horizon has to be rebooted. I think it was the old switch it off and switch it on again.
Q. It seems as though an additional $£ 61.77$ shortage 103
to start with the Auditor's report. It's at POL00044497. It is 9 March 2006, "Audit of Post Office". The first paragraph says:
"... I met the Area Intervention Manager
Elaine Ridge, and Graham Brander, Investigations Manager.
"The subpostmistress, Josephine Hamilton, was not in attendance at all throughout the audit being too ill. Elaine went to her home address, retrieved the keys, and Graham, Elaine and myself entered the secure area to commence the audit."

So it seems there were three of you who were in the secure area to commence the audit; is that correct?
A. Yes, three of us went in but the Auditor would have done the audit.
Q. So prior to having reached any conclusion as to the results of the audit, you were already in attendance?
A. Yes.
Q. Yes. You were also aware at that time that Jo Hamilton was too ill to attend?
A. I'm not sure when I became aware of that. It might have been when I attended. 102
was identified after it was switched on and switched off again; is that correct?
A. Yeah.
Q. If we can read at the bottom of the page it says:
"Upon reaching the result Elaine visited Mrs Hamilton and precautionary suspended her."

Am I right to understand that you also attended Ms Hamilton's address?
A. Well, I don't recall it but, yes, I did.
Q. Perhaps we can look at your witness statement in this respect. It's paragraph 85 of your witness statement. It's page 24 at the top of the page. You say this, in respect of your attendance at Mrs Hamilton's home address, you say:
"The purpose of my attendance was to advise Ms Hamilton that I would be conducting an investigation into the audit shortfall and would like to interview her."

Why did you attend her address on that day in person?
A. I was -- again, from reading the documentation, I was asked by my team leader to attend because there were concerns that there was going to be a shortfall. I don't recall a situation before 104
or after where I was asked to do that. So, obviously, when there's a significant shortfall, we would invite the person, you know, suspected of having committed a criminal offence to attend an interview.

So as -- again, I can't recall exactly what the mindset was but, as Elaine was going back to precautionary suspend her, whether it was my decision to go with her or whether I phoned Geoff and Geoff said to go with her to do that, I don't know. But, either way, from the documentation, I went with Elaine just to introduce myself and to say face-to-face, you know, what would be the process in respect of what I would be conducting.
Q. Many regulators or similar bodies often send written requests for an interview. We have here a case, it's a village Post Office, a lady who was well established in the local community, approaching 50 years old with two children. I don't think -- you didn't have any information to suggest, for example, that she was a flight risk or anything along those lines, did you?
A. No, it wasn't a concern. It -- I could have easily not gone and just written to her but 105
investigation.
Q. All of that could have been done in writing.
A. It could have been.
Q. You were aware she was unwell and was cooperating. The suggestion might be made that you went to her home address to have a little look around?
A. Why would I be having a look around?
Q. Were you looking to see her lifestyle, for example?
A. And I would know that from ten minutes in her house?
Q. Mr Brander you're quite a large gentleman; do you think it might have been quite intimidating to Mrs Hamilton --
A. As I've said previously, Mr Blake, I don't doubt for one minute that every time members of the Security team attended a branch, it was intimidating for somebody, irrespective of our size.
Q. But it wasn't just intimidating; it was also unnecessary, wasn't it?
A. Well, it certainly wasn't my intention. I could have easily not gone and just sent the letter out, which I did later that day, but I just must 107

I think it was just -- courtesy is not the right word but it was just a case of -- again, I can't recall it but I just assume it was just Elaine was going there to precautionary suspend her and I went with her just to explain -- so that Mrs Hamilton wasn't all "Well, what happens next?"

This is what has happened next and it can be seen from the documentation that we're in and out in ten minutes. It wasn't a lengthy visit it was purely just to say this is what my role is, and I said, "Please contact me when you're ready because I understand that you've been signed off on sick leave". So there was no pressure applied. It was just really for Mrs Hamilton's information as to, you know, what was going to be conducted in respect of my investigation.
Q. Mr Brander, she had already given her keys to the Area Manager for the audit to be conducted. You were aware that she was unwell at the time. What was the purpose of attending her home address on that occasion?
A. As I said, to explain -- introduce myself and explain the process for the criminal 106
have felt it was more appropriate just to go and introduce myself, as I was there, for no other reason.
Q. You gave evidence earlier today about attendance with the Auditors. It seems, from hearing your evidence earlier and from hearing other evidence, that there was certainly a practice that built up that Security Managers would attend with Auditors, there would be a number of people attending. Is this part of that practice, that it was important for you as a Security Manager, to make your presence known on that occasion?
A. I went there because I was asked to attend by my team leader and, as I said, I cannot recall any other incidents, in my 12 years, where I would have attended in that scenario. If we were attending -- attending with the intention to pursue the investigation at the time, there would have been at least one other colleague and possibly two other colleagues. But, as I went on my own, it was purely just to see what discrepancy, if any, there was and then, at that time, whether it was my decision to go with Elaine or whether I spoke to Geoff and Geoff 108
said, "Go and introduce yourself and do this"; I honestly can't recall.
Q. You said that you recall that you were asked to attend by a team leader; is that your recollection or isn't it your recollection?
A. I have no recollection but that's what the documentation suggests.
Q. Where in the documentation does it suggest that your team leader suggested that you attend?
A. Well, I believe it's in some of the emails.
Q. Okay, well, we can have a look at those emails in due course.
A. Well, the information would have been passed on to Geoff Hall, as is in the documentation, and then for that to have been given to me as a case, or just to attend, Geoff Hall would have instructed me to do so.
Q. To attend in person?
A. Yes. I--
Q. To attend her home address?
A. I wouldn't have just done that off my own bat.
Q. To attend her home address?
A. Well, to actually go out to the audit. I didn't know until that point whether the keys had been obtained or -- I think I was -- I didn't know 109
one other colleague where we would be intending to conduct interviews on that day. But, clearly, in this case, there was no intention. So I'm not really sure why I was asked to spend the morning there, effectively, witnessing something which the Auditor could ordinarily have relayed back to us, as would have been the normal case, other than the fact that Geoff must have asked me to go there.
Q. Looking back at that, do you think that it wasn't appropriate to attend?
A. I can't say it wasn't appropriate. As I say, it's ...
Q. Were there any guidelines in place in respect of, for example, someone who was unwell, whether attendance at their home address was appropriate or not appropriate?
A. I honestly don't know but, obviously, when I was there, I certainly wasn't looking to do anything relating to the investigation at that time. I made that clear and I left it entirely with Mrs Hamilton to contact me when she felt in a position to do so. So I felt that I had, you know, acted fairly.
Q. Did your presence add any value that a letter 111

Elaine Ridge, so I was just asked to attend and meet this person and the auditor.
Q. What I'm trying and to understand is why you were an essential element to attendance on that day. So we have the auditors, they're carrying out an audit.
A. Yeah.
Q. We have the regional manager who has obtained the keys.
A. Yeah.
Q. Why was it necessary -- we have an audit report so they report what they've carried out?
A. Yeah --
Q. Why was it necessary for a large Security Manager to attend on that day?
A. I completely understand what you're saying, Mr Blake, and, as I have said, I do not recall a situation, either before or after, where I had been asked to attend because, if there was a discrepancy, that could have been relayed back to us and we could have just dealt with it as we normally would do.

I can't -- I don't know why I was asked to attend because the only other time that I've attended an audit would have been with at least 110
couldn't have?
A. Oh, no, absolutely. It could have been done afterwards. As I say, I went to the house, no doubt, because I was at the audit and Elaine was going there to do the suspension. So, as I said, I don't know if it was my decision to go or whether I spoke to Geoff, because obviously I'd been relaying back whether there was a shortfall or not to Geoff, and whether Geoff advised me to go there, I honestly can't recall.
Q. Okay, so when you say your attendance was required by the team leader, you mean your attendance at the audit not at Mrs Hamilton's home address --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and it was a personal decision to attend the home address or you can't recall?
A. I can't recall whether that was my decision to go with Elaine, because she was going there anyhow, or whether I would have spoken to Geoff and Geoff suggested I went there.
Q. Do you have any reflections on even the attendance of Elaine and the termination of the contract in person? Do you think that needed to happen in person?
A. Well, just for clarity, there was no termination of the contract. They were precautionary suspended. But if -- put it this way, if I'd have thought that there was an issue with it, I wouldn't have gone but I don't know whether that was an instruction or whether I just felt it appropriate at that time, as I was there, to just introduce myself. Nothing more than that, just to introduce and explain to Mrs Hamilton, you know, what the nature of the investigation would be.
Q. Looking back at it, do you still think it was appropriate?
A. I really don't see that I did anything wrong by doing that, no. I'll say if Mrs Hamilton felt intimidated by me being there then I can only apologise but that certainly wasn't in my mindset that she would have felt that way. And, again, that was more the reason why we were literally we in and out.
Q. Can we look at POL00044389, please. This is the investigation report of 19 May. If we look at the final page, it has your name as the Investigations Manager. Thank you. Can we look at page 3, please.

I introduced myself to Mrs Hamilton and her mother, showing both of them my identity card.
I was present when Ms Ridge precautionary suspended Mrs Hamilton's contract for services."

It then says, if we could scroll down
slightly:
"I explained to Mrs Hamilton that I wasn't
able to discuss anything relating to the audit deficit until the interview. Mrs Hamilton made no significant statement at that time. I was at the private residential for ten minutes, leaving with Ms Ridge at 11.00. Mrs Hamilton's mother was present the whole time, a copy of my notebook entry can be found ..."

Then if we have a look slightly further down the page, it says:
"Having analysed the Horizon printout and accounting documentation, I was unable to find any evidence of theft or that the cash figures had been deliberately inflated."

Now, we know that you're not an accountant, and that you don't have a background in those kinds of matters. Can you assist us with how it would be that you would find evidence of theft, looking at those printouts?

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I'm just going to take you through certain sections of the investigation report. It says there:
"Whilst at the Post Office, I obtained some Horizon printouts and accounting documentation, including cash account finals and branch trading statements."

Am I right in saying that you obtained the data from the Horizon system, so we're not talking here about any audit data, ARQ data?
A. No.
Q. This is printouts?
A. These are physical printouts, yes. That -- the Horizon printouts and accounting documentation would have been items that a postmaster would be required to generate whenever they do their daily transaction summaries or weekly or accounting at the end of either the week, when it was cash accounts, or the end of the month, when it was branch trading. But there may well have been some Horizon printouts that the Auditor generated.
Q. It then says:
"At 10.50 hours, together with Ms Ridge I attended Mrs Hamilton's private residence. 114
A. Quite often you wouldn't. Because a lot of the printouts were just summaries of transactions conducted during the course of the week. So you might have -- I don't know, say something that says $X$ amount of giro deposits, totalling $X$ amount, which wouldn't necessarily tell you that much.

There could be things like -- things that we would look at would be like cash declarations so you would look to see whether there was one done shortly after a previous one. So it might be that somebody has declared the true cash on hand followed by with what I would have referred to an inflated figure but, again, looking at the reports and documentation it appeared that only one declaration was being done at a time. So when I'm making that statement, it's not like "Here's the true cash, here's the inflated cash"; there was just one declaration.

And although, obviously, the amount's been declared, based on the physical cash that was found on hand, it would have appeared that they were being inflated, I didn't have the true one followed by what I would have referred to as the inflated one.
Q. So if we look at the final paragraph, for example, one of the things you looked at was whether there was an occasion where a genuine cash figure would be declared followed by an inflated figure. That was one kind of investigation that --
A. Yes, that's what l've just referred to, yes.
Q. If we go over the page to page 4, the penultimate paragraph on page 4, you say:
"In my experience, it was unusual to see regular deposits, all round figures, although I now believe that these represent genuine deposits, possibly the shop takings."

So, again, was another thing you looked for whether there were lots of round numbers, as opposed to decimal figures?
A. No, I think it was -- I was looking at, you know, large figures. But, again, if somebody's banking shop takings, they would generally, you know, to make things account with like their private retail, it might be, say for instance, if somebody is banking $£ 2,000$, it might be that they want to bank $£ 2,235.60$.

For instance, when I go back to my days working in a post office as a counter clerk, 117
any training in respect of other matters. It also refers to an alleged $£ 1,500$ error, which doubled to $£ 3,000$, when attempts were made to correct it, and another error of $£ 750$. No dates are supplied in respect of those alleged errors. It also suggests that the Post Office's systems are shambolic and details alleged problems encountered. It states that all staff used the same Horizon username, again citing a lack of training for this."

Over the page, thank you. Finally, it states:
"I can say that I've never stolen any money or acted dishonestly."

If we look down, please, down the page, you showed Mrs Hamilton a couple of branch trading statements. Those are, I think, the documents that were printed off the Horizon system. If we please go over the page to page 7 , this is the relevant part that I think was highlighted at the bottom of this page by the Court of Appeal. It says as follows:
"I'm unable to state what would appear to be the period of offending, mainly due to the fact that Mrs Hamilton responded no comment to my 119
et cetera, et cetera, we wouldn't necessarily get round amounts. From all the shops that paid in, it might be like $£ 2,226.46$, because that was of the takings of the day. So that's what I would mean by I wouldn't necessarily have seen rounded figures because, if somebody is making a deposit, and it's just a round figure, potentially, that could have been somebody making a fraudulent entry.
Q. So are we to read into this that the investigation that you carry out in respect of the printouts is a slightly unscientific look at the figures to see if there's anything that stands out?
A. Yeah. Exactly because you've literally just got printouts and nothing more that you can sort or filter.
Q. Could we look at page 5, please, the bottom of page 5 . It then refers to the prepared statement that was read out at the interview and it says:
"The prepared statement seems to intimate that she didn't receive adequate training at the time and that the manuals were old and out of date. It also suggests that she didn't receive 118
questions. You may wish to consider a charge of theft for the audit deficit of $£ 36,000$..."

Sorry, this isn't the part that was mentioned by the Court of Appeal, that's going to come shortly but here you're doing exactly the thing that we talked about earlier, which is saying you may want to consider a charge of theft; is that correct? You're suggesting a potential charge there?
A. Well, in such wording "You may wish to consider a charge of theft", yes.
Q. Then you say:
"The only evidence appears to be the fact that the audit identified the money as missing. Concerns only came to light following a request to return excess cash and instead of doing so Mrs Hamilton was signed off as sick. Additionally, Mrs Hamilton has only supplied a prepared statement as some form of explanation, yet refused to answer any questions."

How is it that you can say that it was a case of theft and they may want to consider a charge of theft if the only evidence was that the audit identified the money as missing? How 120
is that sufficient, in your view, to justify the previous paragraph?
A. Well, because there's a significant shortfall and, at the time, we weren't aware of any issues with Horizon. So --
Q. Well, you were aware that issues had been raised with Horizon by Mrs Hamilton. How can you reach the conclusion --
A. Yeah, yeah --
Q. -- that they may wish to consider a charge of theft when you yourself made clear in your investigation report that the only evidence appears to be the fact that the audit identified the money as missing?
A. Yes. Well, in terms of theft but, also, I do make mention the fact that the purported cash on hand increases over a period of time. I also make mention that -- and, again, I do a schedule as well, showing that the cash was recorded up until quite some time prior to the audit and then that ceased for some reason.

But, yeah, as far as the theft charge, it was. It was simply the case that a large shortfall and I had no reason to believe that the cause of that was anything other than the 121
let's leave it up to the jury?
A. No, if I believed that some had stolen the money, I believe that that would be a dishonest act but I wouldn't report that I believed it to be dishonest.
Q. So was your view that, in any cases where an audit identified the money as missing, that would be a crime of theft, irrespective of the circumstances?
A. Yeah, if there was a significant audit shortage that there was no reasonable explanation for, then that would be, to me, evidence of a criminal offence.
Q. Was that something -- a criminal offence, yes, but in terms of theft --
A. Well, evidence of theft, yes.
Q. -- was there any internal guidance or was it just a gut feeling that, if money is missing, it's theft?
A. Well, I don't think it was as clear-cut as that, but, yeah, in situations like this, where there's a large shortfall, I think that was just everyone's belief that it would, you know, it would be down to theft or fraud because as I say, people weren't always charged with theft. 123
fact that someone had stolen the money.
Q. Were you aware at that time that theft required proof of dishonesty?
A. Yes
Q. Where in those two paragraphs, where you're recommending a charge of theft and saying that the audit identified cash money as missing, do you identify any element of dishonesty?
A. No, there's nothing in the report to say that.
Q. So do you think it was appropriate in those circumstances, where there's nothing in the report to suggest dishonesty, to suggest a charge of theft?
A. Well, from my recollection, dishonesty is always -- not always the easiest part of the elements of the points to prove for theft to prove, and it's down to would the layman, average man or woman on the street, think it a dishonest act or would the person themselves think it was a dishonest act? I don't recall ever, in the report, writing whether I felt it was dishonest in a report. I didn't see that was a requirement.
Q. So you didn't have a view as to whether it was dishonest or not and, in essence, your view was 122

In this case, I'm asking them to consider a charge of theft, but --
Q. But you're accepting there, are you, that there was, at that stage, no evidence of dishonesty?
A. If I -- if I believed somebody had stolen money, I'd believe them to be dishonest.
Q. Where's the evidence that they've stolen money?
A. Well, as I say, the significant shortfall.
Q. Yes. Where does that lead you to the conclusion that the money has been dishonestly appropriated?
A. I couldn't see where the money had gone.
Q. Didn't Mrs Hamilton tell you that there was a problem with Horizon?
A. I can't remember everything that was on the prepared statement but she was saying that she's had some issues and, obviously, we looked into that, in terms of obtaining call logs and I think it was Andy Dunks produced the call logs in evidence.
Q. You did look into it, actually, and we can see over the page, page 8, the same investigation report. You say:
"I requested Horizon data in respect of this case, covering the period 9 February 2006 to

8 March 2006. This wasn't received until after I had interviewed Mrs Hamilton. I've now had a chance to view the data and I'm unable to identify anything of an incriminating nature."

So, in fact, in your own investigation report, you're saying you've reviewed the ARQ data and haven't found anything incriminating.
A. Yes.
Q. So again --
A. In that one-month period, yes.
Q. -- does that support or undermine a charge of theft?
A. I'm simply saying I've analysed one month of data and haven't found anything of an incriminating nature. So I haven't found where the money has gone and I haven't found any evidence, whereby things like declaring the true cash on hand followed by a fraudulent figure, as referred to earlier.
Q. So might that support her explanation or might it support your view that it was theft?
A. I don't think it really changed. I'm going to say it's hard to recall going back all that time what my mindset was.
Q. Well, looking at it now, we see that you've 125
"In view of the fact that the prepared statement suggests that numerous problems had occurred at South Warnborough Post Office I requested and subsequently received details of calls made to both the Network Business Support Centre and the Horizon Support Helpdesk. From the NBSC log, it can be seen that numerous calls were made requesting advice on a number of subjects. It also details a number of losses reported, details as follows ..."

It sets out each of those losses and it says below that:
"Both the NBSC and HSH call logs detailed reported problems in respect of the Horizon kit."

So it seems there as though she was contemporaneously reporting problems with Horizon to the Helpdesk.
A. Yeah, it refers to problems with the Horizon kit, yes.
Q. Yes. In your experience, what kind of a thief would call their victim, three years before they're investigated, to ask the victim to help them identify where the missing money was?
A. Sorry, you've lost me there.
looked at the data, you're unable to identify anything of an incriminating nature. Does that support or undermine a charge of theft?
A. I say it was purely just for one month of data. If I'd have had access to the whole data and analysed that and didn't find anything of an incriminating nature, then that might have affected my mindset more so than just analysing one month.
Q. So your view is that one month's worth of data that doesn't contain anything incriminating is of no evidential value?
A. I think, again, I can only go on what was in the report. As I say, I don't recall the case.
I --
Q. I'm not asking you to recall the case, just looking act it now --
A. I understand that.
Q. -- with 12 years of experience as a Security Manager, is your view that, having not found anything of an incriminating nature in one month's worth of ARQ data, that supports or undermines a case of theft?
A. I don't really see it does either.
Q. Okay, well, let's move on to the next paragraph:

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Q. We have there Mrs Hamilton phoning the Post Office --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- the alleged victim of a loss --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- saying, "I'm experiencing these losses. Can you help me find it?"
A. Yeah.
Q. In your experience, how on earth can that support a case for theft? Surely that undermines a case for theft, doesn't it?
A. I'm not sure it does. I mean to say, I think it was Colin Woodbridge went out and looked at it, these -- they're not all individual shortfalls; they were shortfalls that obviously started at $£ 2,000$-odd and ended up at $£ 3,000$-odd, as per what Mr Colin Woodbridge had reported. And, from what I can remember of the documentation, he went out there and couldn't find anything wrong.
Q. We have Mrs Hamilton phoning the Helpdesks in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, reporting missing funds.
A. Yeah.
Q. If the crime of theft requires dishonesty --
A. Yeah.

| Q. - - does this support or undermine a case of | 1 |
| :--- | :---: |
| theft? | 2 |
| A. Well, as I say, collectively the $£ 2,000$ became | 3 |
| the $£ 3,000$ and then there's one for $£ 750$ and, in | 4 |
| Mrs Hamilton's prepared statement, she mentioned | 5 |
| something along the lines of $£ 1,500$ which | 6 |
| doubled to $£ 3,000$, which, without her giving me | 7 |
| dates, I assume is the first four entries, and | 8 |
| then the $£ 750$ afterwards, and then there's | 9 |
| another one for $£ 1,000$. So that's quite small | 10 |
| amounts in respect of the overall deficit of | 11 |
| £36,000. | 12 |
| Q. We have $1,2,3,4,5,6$ entries. If we scroll | 13 |
| up, these are calls made to the Post Office | 14 |
| requesting advice on discrepancies. In your | 15 |
| experience, as an Investigator, would it be | 16 |
| usual or unusual for a thief to call up the Post | 17 |
| Office to tell them how much money they had been | 18 |
| missing? | 19 |
| A. I have absolutely no idea whether these may well | 20 |
| have been genuine losses at the time, and | 21 |
| whether money was dishonestly appropriated after | 22 |
| that time. | 23 |
| Q. We have, in the paragraph below, it says: | 24 |
| "I explained to Ms Taylor that the Post | 25 |

I have absolutely no idea whether these may well
"I explained to Ms Taylor that the Post 129

Looking back at that, looking at her explanation in her interview, looking at all those points that l've just taken you to, do you think that your statement within this investigation report, that the criminal team should consider a charge of theft, was appropriate.
A. At the time, I would have done, obviously. Now, it's many, many years since I've been in the investigation role, so it's very hard to comment. But, yes, l'll say it was a significant shortfall, so I'm sending it up to the Legal team, asking for their expertise as to whether they feel that criminal charges are bought against Ms Hamilton.
Q. You're also suggesting what criminal offence they should charge, weren't you?
A. Earlier on, I've asked they may wish to consider theft, yes.
Q. Having considered all those things that we've looked at just now, do you still consider that that was an appropriate recommendation to make?
A. As I say, I have no recent experience of conducting criminal investigations but, at that time, that would have been my thought. But

Office would be looking to recover the funds owing from Mrs Hamilton and that any payments would be accepted without prejudice."

Was it important for the Post Office to recover the money?
A. That was -- something we were tasked with was trying to recovery monies owed to Post Office, yes, from criminal investigations.
Q. Then we have at the bottom there, at the bottom of page 8, your summary:
"During the course of this investigation, the following failings were identified. It was identified that this office had been holding approximately $£ 25,000$ more that its ONCH targets but excessive cash holdings appeared to have gone unnoticed for some time."

Over the page please:
"In Mrs Hamilton's prepared statement, it states that all staff used the same Horizon username. The prepared statement suggests that Mrs Hamilton didn't comply with all the training aids sent to her. These papers are now forwarded to you for sight and advice on the sufficiency of the evidence as whether criminal charges are brought against Mrs Hamilton." 130
ultimately.
Q. You have 12 years of experience of criminal investigations.
A. Yes.
Q. You've been provided with this investigation report. We've gone through it.
A. Yes.
Q. Looking back at the points that l've highlighted to you, do you still think that recommending a charge of theft was appropriate?
A. Again --
Q. I'm not asking you at the time what you thought, I'm asking you --
A. I appreciate that, Mr Blake.
Q. -- now, looking back?
A. I'm not recommending, I'm asking them to consider. They are the legal experts. No solicitor is going to think "Ooh, the Security Manager has suggested or asked me to consider this charge, l'll go with that". They will use their legal expertise to determine, based on the law, what if any charges they feel our appropriate.
Q. I don't think you've answered the question as to whether you still think it's appropriate. But

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| if we stick with that, is it really your view | 1 |
| :--- | :--- |
| that it didn't really matter what you | 2 |
| recommended because the Criminal Law Team would | 3 |
| make up their own minds? | 4 |
| A. Yes, we were asked to sort of say, you know, you | 5 |
| may wish to consider a particular offence as | 6 |
| part of their report but, ultimately, the | 7 |
| Criminal Law Team will advise on it and then | 8 |
| a Senior Manager will decide whether we | 9 |
| prosecute or not. | 10 |
| Q. I think your evidence is that you still think | 11 |
| that that was appropriate? | 12 |
| A. I really don't because it's been so long since | 13 |
| I have done it -- or whether I've had 12 years' | 14 |
| experience or not, I've really struggle remember | 15 |
| details of what I did as a Security Manager. | 16 |
| It's only through looking at the documentation | 17 |
| that I'm gaining an understanding as opposed to | 18 |
| a recollection. | 19 |
| MR BLAKE: Sir, I think, unless you have any | 20 |
| questions, that might be an appropriate moment | 21 |
| to take our lunch break. | 22 |
| SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, start again at 2.00, yes? | 23 |
| MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. | 24 |
| (1.00 pm) | 25 | 133

grateful if you would arrange for copies of the requested statements to be sent to me as soon as possible."

So are we to understand from this that Jo Hamilton had given you signed authority to obtain her bank details for the relevant period of the alleged offending.
A. Yes.
Q. Can we just look back at your witness statement for this Inquiry, that's WITN08300100 and it's page 24 , paragraph 85 , please. It's actually page 25, paragraph 93.

At the very end of that paragraph, at the very bottom of the page, it begins " I ", and then if we scroll down over the page, it says:
"I can also see that I sought to obtain bank statements relating to Ms Hamilton."

Do you think that is a fair reflection of the evidence? I mean, one thing you don't mention there is that you don't mention that Ms Hamilton had given you permission. It reads perhaps as though you sought to obtain them from Mrs Hamilton but had not been provided with them.
A. Sorry, I think that was just a summary of the
(The Short Adjournment)
MR BLAKE: Good afternoon, sir, can you see and hear
me?
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, I can, thank you.
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
Mr Brander, I've got a few more questions on
the case of Hamilton and then we will move on to
the other two case studies, but they'll be quite
brief, and then I have a few miscellaneous
topics, some of which have been suggested by
other Core Participants.
A. Okay.
Q. Can we begin, please, with POL00118745, please.
This is a letter dated 30 June 2006 to the
manager at Nationwide Building Society. It's
a letter you wrote, and I'm just going to read
to you from it. You say there that:
"Mr and Mrs Hamilton have given you signed
authority for bank account details to be
disclosed to [you].
"Unfortunately, to date, I have not received
any such details from you. As this information
has been requested as part of a criminal
investigation that I am conducting, I would be
enquiries I conducted.
Q. Yes, so what you don't say there is "Mrs Hamilton gave me authorisation to obtain her bank statements but I unfortunately was or wasn't successful in obtaining them from the bank itself"?
A. No, but I would have been in -- you know, the reports and -- that had been submitted and were part of the bundle.
Q. But for the purposes of this Inquiry, do you think it might have been helpful in that statement to have said Mrs Hamilton actually gave permission for me to access her bank statements?
A. Okay, I'm going to say it wasn't a deliberate omission but, yeah, apologies if it should have been added.
Q. Do you think that the fact that she had given authority to obtain her bank statements was a relevant factor to consider when weighing up an offence of dishonesty?
A. Not necessarily because there may not have been any evidence of criminality in the bank accounts and I wouldn't have known what bank accounts she held so I would have only been submitting
requests for ones that she gave authority to.
Q. You're an Investigator, presumably you had the power to obtain information as to how many bank accounts a person had, didn't you?
A. I can't recall what powers I had. I know that we would, almost as a matter of course, ask if they would sign authority for bank accounts. I know that we subsequently had a Financial Investigation Team that had powers. I'm not sure whether I had any powers, other than on a voluntary basis.
Q. When you're weighing up whether somebody was dishonest, if they've given you permission to contact their bank and to obtain their statements and to look to see, for example, whether they were leading a particular lifestyle, do you think that that might be worth considering when you're weighing up whether somebody was dishonest or not?
A. Well, not necessarily, because, as I said, I don't know whether I'd have been given authority for all bank accounts. Also people -sometimes with looking at bank accounts, it's not always what you see, it's what you don't see. So they might not have been aware of that. 137
over to you?
A. Yes.
Q. You would use that authority to go through and not just check for any excessive amounts within the bank statement but also for cash transactions --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- et cetera. Isn't the fact that somebody is volunteering that information, volunteering that statement, something that you thought merits consideration in weighing up whether they were dishonest?
A. Not necessarily but it was clearly reported to the Criminal Law Team that that's an inquiry I had looked to conduct. So, if they want to place any credence on it, they could have done but I don't think so, for the reasons I've just given.
Q. You were providing opinions as to offences, so it's relevant to your own consideration of whether offences have been committed as well as the Criminal Law Team's, isn't it?
A. Yes --
Q. Was that something --
A. -- and, as I said, from recollection, I don't

So for example, if -- certainly, going back, you know, several years, people used to purchase things with cash more so than they do with cards these days. So if, for instance, I'm looking -they might have thought "Okay, I haven't paid any fraudulent deposits into my accounts so they won't find anything, but I might also be looking for the fact have you been making any cash withdrawals, ie how have you paid at the cash and carry, for your suppliers, for your private business? How have you paid for money for your food?"

So, again, I might be looking at something that isn't there, ie cash withdrawals, to sustain just basic living and the person may have given authority, not realising that I will be looking at other things, other than just, boom, here's a deposit that looks like it's criminality.
Q. So you didn't have powers to obtain those bank statements by compulsion?
A. I don't recall. I may have done but I don't recall.
Q. The way that you would go about it normally would be to request that they sign authority 138
think I placed any emphasis on whether somebody did or didn't but, ultimately, I think from the documentation, I wrote to two banks and two banks are saying, well, I think the answer was given that they hadn't received them. So I went back to Mrs Hamilton and asked if she wouldn't mind signing them again, which I know was an inconvenience, but I don't appear to have had a response.
Q. If somebody hadn't provided you with the original authority to contact their bank, you would have held that against them, wouldn't you, in weighing up dishonesty?
A. No, I don't think so. I mean, it's hard to think back what my mindset would have been at that time but I don't think so.
Q. So --
A. But certainly, at the time --
Q. -- the act of obtaining a bank statement didn't matter one way or another?
A. As I say, it's really hard to think back to what my mindset would have been at that time but, certainly, I don't know when the Financial Investigation Unit came into force but they would -- I think they could do -- was it

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production orders, something like that?
Q. Yes. How would that affect things?
A. Sorry, say again?
Q. How would that affect your decision making? If you had the power to obtain a bank statement via a production order but, in fact, the person you were investigating said, "I don't mind signing a piece of paper that allows you access to my bank statements", did it still not make any material difference to your decision --
A. I'm not sure I had any thoughts on it because they would -- certainly in the case of Ms Hamilton, she took advice and her solicitor, I believe from the documentation, advised her that it was okay to do so. I don't think I had any firm opinion that it was being authorised. Sometimes the advice from the solicitor was do so, sometimes it was not do so, and I would just report accordingly. I don't think I had any real thoughts on it.
Q. Can we look at POL00118610. This is a "further to" memo in the case of Hamilton on 11 August 2006. You provide some information further to enquiries. Can we please turn to page 4. I just want to ask you a few questions about 141
statement that would cover the integrity of Fujitsu, I believe.
Q. The integrity of Horizon?
A. Sorry, yeah, the integrity of Horizon.
Q. The next paragraph:
"In respect of NBSC calls, Mr lan Speck, Service Review Manager, has advised me that it's impossible to highlight what call may have caused a discrepancy. He basically states that discrepancies are due to mistakes made at the Post Office branch, either directly with the customer, which wouldn't be recoverable, or by incorrectly using Horizon, which would usually be recoverable by means of an error notice (now called transaction correction) being generated when a mismatch in the accounting becomes apparent", and he refers to an email.

The fact that an error could generate a discrepancy, is that something that would be relevant to your consideration as to whether somebody had committed an offence of dishonesty?
A. Sorry, can you say that again?
Q. You're being told, in respect of the NBSC, that it was possible for there to be a discrepancy as a result of user error. Is that something to
this. The first substantive paragraph there says:
"I have spoken to Mr Graham Ward, Investigation Team Casework Manager who advises that a standard statement could be obtained from Fujitsu covering the fact that the discrepancies would not be due to system error."

Now, first of all, who was Graham Ward and why was he the relevant person to approach?
A. At that time, Graham was the Casework Manager.
Q. Why would he be the person to approach for a statement from Fujitsu?
A. At the time, as I said earlier, I think we had links to Fujitsu and I think that was either -I think at the time it would be the Casework Team and I think, later on, I think the main person was, like, Jane Owen in the Crime Risk Team.
Q. What did you understand by a standard statement from Fujitsu that could cover the fact that discrepancies would not be due to system error?
A. I can only assume that was, you know, the standard statement that we would get when -like, for instance, when they're producing ARQ data but, basically, as it suggests, a standard 142
weigh up when you are considering whether somebody has committed an offence of dishonesty?
A. Yeah, yeah, I mean to say that, obviously,
there's some things called human error and, if
there was an error made, it could be something that could be identified. If, say, for instance, you're serving on a counter and you give somebody $£ 10$ too much change, unless the customer has noticed and is honest and said, "You've given me £10 too much" that's not going to be recoverable.

If somebody has, you know, entered something on Horizon and when the physical document or if it's gone -- if it's like an online transaction, but either way when it's married up with the actual transaction, if it's identified there's an error then, obviously, a transaction correction would be produced and that would have been sent back to the branch. So yeah, absolutely, human error can occur.
Q. Did you, in this case, consider whether, for example, human error, or the fact that a human error could result in a discrepancy, might be something to take into account when considering whether the alleged offender was acting
dishonestly?
A. Well, I think this is the reason why l've gone to Mr Speck in the first place and he is basically saying it's impossible to highlight what would have caused a discrepancy.
Q. So can the fact that a discrepancy can be caused by user error, did that feature in your thinking in respect of criminality, in an offence of dishonesty?
A. If somebody has made an error then that's not going to be criminality, unless it was maybe a deliberate error to hide something. But, yeah, human error can occur, and that wouldn't be, in the main part, a criminal offence.
Q. Your response to that is:
"Having looked at the call logs myself, I cannot see anything that relates to a single or multiple discrepancies that would account for the audit deficit."

So your response to that was to check the call logs, was it, rather than the underlying ARQ data, for example?
A. Yeah, I'm looking at the call logs and I can see reference to what we've mentioned earlier, the actual discrepancies that Ms Hamilton raised 145
Q. By the 30 June, Mrs Hamilton had given you signed authority to obtain her bank statements and here, 11 August, you were, for example, being told by the NBSC, or in respect of the NBSC, that user error could be or is a potential cause of discrepancies and you're being told that there's a standard statement that's available from Fujitsu.

Why isn't it, at this stage, that you are not revisiting your initial investigation report or making further inquiries of Fujitsu in respect of the particular concerns that Mrs Hamilton had raised?
A. User error can happen at any time and, if there was -- and as I say, other than the scenario I gave where you've given a customer too much money, then, generally, over a relatively short period of time, from my understanding, is a transaction correction would come back. So if you caused an error and your accounts go down, the transaction comes back and the accounts recalibrate.
Q. I'm not talking specifically about user error, I'm talking about everything you've learnt by this date. You don't seem to have in any way 147
A. Yeah.
revisited your opinion that a charge of theft would be appropriate?
A. Sorry, I missed that last bit. Sorry, my hearing is not the best.
Q. There is nothing that has shown you, since your original investigation -- nothing to build upon that charge of theft, was there? You hadn't received any further evidence that --
A. No, I don't think so, no. Not in respect of the call logs anyhow, no.
Q. Irrespective of the call logs, we've seen the investigation report and then we've seen what you've called a further two memos.
A. Yeah.
Q. So that is your standard second step --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- responding after the investigation report.

You haven't received any further evidence to make you more sure of theft or anything along those lines, have you?
A. I'm going to say I believe the theft was, you know, an offence that was committed because there's nothing that had come back to show that this $£ 36,000$ attributed to any errors that I was aware of.

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SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's it in a nutshell, isn't
it? You thought that the Auditor had identified
a loss of $£ 36,000$, you believed Horizon was
accurate and, therefore, there must have been
a theft; that's what it boils down to, isn't it?
A. Pretty much, sir, and --
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, and nothing happened during
the course of the investigation thereafter that
deflected you from that opinion. That's what it
boils down to also, isn't it?
A. Again, I can't recall but, from looking at this,
I think my thought was that it remained theft,
yes.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. Fine.
MR BLAKE: Thank you. Can we look at POLO0049083,
please, now in October 2007. The bottom email
is an email from Richard Jory who was,
I believe, counsel in this case. He is emailing
Jennifer Andrews in the Criminal Law Team, he
says:
"Counsel defending has offered pleas to
Counts 2-9 inclusive) and asked me to take
instructions as to whether this might be
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. Fine. 14
MR BLAKE: Thank you. Can we look at POL00049083, 15 please, now in October 2007. The bottom email 16 is an email from Richard Jory who was, 17 $-18$
Jennifer Andrews in the Criminal Law Team, he 19

## "Juliet/Jenee. <br> "Juliet/Jenee.

2122        false accounting in this matter (I presume ..... 23Counts 2-9 inclusive) and asked me to take
    24instructions as to whether this might be
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respect of the acceptance of pleas and the
bringing of charges. It seems there that you
are very much filling the shoes of the Senior
Security Manager, aren't you?
A. No, I said any decision, in respect of whether we accept this, would need to be made by Dave Pardoe.
Q. Well, your view is canvassed by the Criminal Law Team in the email below "Could you provide your views with regard to pleas", and you are giving quite a definitive opinion there, aren't you?
A. They've asked for my opinion and $I$ agree with counsel.
Q. Do you think it was an appropriate thing to be giving an opinion on?
A. Well, if I didn't think counsel felt it appropriate, then surely counsel wouldn't have asked the Investigator.
Q. Are you sure you ran this past the Senior Security Manager?
A. I have no idea. This is 2007.
Q. You've said that the Senior Security Manager made the decision in every case. Might it be possible that this is a case where the Senior Security Manager didn't make the decision?
respect of the acceptance of pleas and the bringing of charges. It seems there that you are very much filling the shoes of the Senior Security Manager, aren't you?
an appropriate offer. My view is that there is evidence that she has taken the money and that there is sufficient evidence to support theft, but Royal Mail may be content with guilty pleas to dishonesty matters if she undertook to repay the amount of the shortage, ie $£ 36,344.89$. It might be the worth speaking to the officers Graham Brander and Colin Price to canvass their views."

We then have an email from Jennifer Andrews to yourself:
"Could you provide your views with regard to indicated please as soon as possible?"

The top email is from you responding, saying:
"I agree with counsel. In my opinion, the evidence clearly shows theft, Charge 1. However, if the defence are offering up guilty pleas to all false accounting charges then I would suggest we accept this on the understanding that Mrs Hamilton agrees to repay the full amount."

So you are there giving an opinion and suggesting that it is accepted. We spoke earlier about who is the decision maker in 150
A. It's possible. I've gone back to the Criminal Law Team and said it needs to be made by Dave Pardoe. I'm going to say also included in that email it says Investigation Team Post Office so that would have been the generic email for the Investigation Team. So I can't say whether -well, I saying that, I can actually see that Dave Pardoe is copied in.
Q. Are you aware of Dave Pardoe ever disagreeing with your opinion in respect of acceptance of pleas?
A. Not that I'm aware of, no. I'm going to say I don't recall this coming up very often, whereby l'd be asked for my opinion because, ultimately, that would be for the, you know, once we got to this stage, it would be like counsel deciding.
Q. Is that right? By this stage, when counsel were advising, was it effectively acceptance of counsel's advice?
A. Well, as I say, I can't recall exactly how it worked but, certainly in this case, Dave Pardoe was copied in to what l've -- you know, how l've responded with my opinion and the fact that it should be for Dave Pardoe to consider. I can't 152
recall this case or any other particular cases whereby l've been asked to give my opinion. But counsel, if they need opinions sought, it might come back to the Security Manager, it might come back to the Criminal Law Team. I honestly can't say.
Q. In respect of the substantive decision, do you think it was appropriate to offer a lesser charge in return for payment of money that you couldn't prove had been stolen?
A. I'm not a lawyer, so it's not really my decision on what charges to, you know, charge or accept.
Q. If you're not a lawyer --
A. I'll happily give my opinion if I'm asked for my opinion.
Q. But you didn't think that you were qualified to actually give that opinion?
A. I've given my opinion but the decision is to be made by Dave Pardoe.
Q. Why did you give an opinion, if you didn't think you were qualified to do so?
A. No, I'm not saying I wasn't qualified. I said if I was asked to give an opinion, I would do my best to give an opinion and that's what l've done. But, ultimately, it's for the experts to 153
hearings, as would any Security Manager.
Q. Could we look at POLO0044388, 19 November. This is the ultimate court hearing and a reporting back from the principal lawyer. She says as follows:
"The defendant pleaded guilty to false accounting, counts 2-15 on the indictment. The case has been adjourned to 25 January for pre-sentence reports.
"The defendant has been informed that full payment must be made prior to that date. The theft count has remained on file on the understanding that it should be proceeded with if the money is not repaid."

At the bottom of that page, it says:
"It has been made clear to the defence that there must be some recognition that the defendant that the money short of theft and that a plea on the basis that the loss was due to the computer not working properly will not be accepted."

Having attended that hearing, presumably you were present at those discussions?
A. Yeah, I've attended but I don't recall that statement, whether that statement actually came 155
decide on what charges are acceptable and for the Senior Security Manager to decide whether they concur.
Q. Can we look at POL00049154, please. We're now in November 2007. This is correspondence to the Investigation Team from the principal lawyer, and she says:
"As you know there has been some discussion as to whether or not pleas to false accounting would be acceptable. I note this would be agreeable providing that Mrs Hamilton were to repay the full amount."

She says:
"I understand, however, that she is not yet in a position to repay and has not yet given a date on when this can be done."

She says there:
"One option would be for the theft count to be left on file pending payment by the date of trial or some later date."

Is this something that you remember discussing at the time?
A. No.
Q. Did you attend any of the hearings in this case?
A. Typically, I would attend most if not all
up in court or whether that was just reported back. It looks like it would have been covered in court but I certainly can't remember that far back.
Q. Would you have been the only Investigator in court or would Mr Pardoe, for example, have been present?
A. No, Mr Pardoe wouldn't have been there.
Q. Insofar as there needed to be liaison with an Investigator, were you the appropriate person on that occasion to be liaising with and discussing next steps?
A. It was always the Investigator that attended court hearings but we're not the experts there. There would also be someone from the Criminal Law Team, usually one of the -- either the solicitor or one of the -- I don't know the legal analysts or legal executives, somebody from the Prosecution Support Office.
Q. Who would they take their instructions from?
A. Who would they take their instructions from?
Q. Yes.
A. Well, I should imagine counsel would take instructions from the Criminal Law Team.
Q. Who do the Criminal Law Team take their 156
instructions from?
A. I should imagine a Senior Security Manager.
Q. The Senior Security Manager not being present at court, do you recall on this occasion who instructions were taken from in respect of this agreement?
A. I'm certainly not -- I don't -- I've had to read that paragraph a few times to try and even understand it. I've not instructed -- I don't even understand -- you know, recognise that terminology. That would have been -- whoever has made that statement would have been Criminal Law Team or counsel.
Q. I'm going to move on to a slightly different topic but just sticking with the Hamilton case, and I'll take this very quickly because you've already given evidence in relation to your understanding of the disclosure process. But I just want to look through the schedules that were completed.

Can we look at POL00059376, please. You'll recall this morning I asked you about a paragraph in your witness statement where you said that the Criminal Law Team would deal with any disclosure to the defence. I think you 157
that you would create the Schedule of Unused Material but then there may be further unused material that had come from another route within the Post Office that you're not aware of?
A. If I'd been asked to conduct further enquiries or something else comes to light -- and I can only think of the one case in the bundle and I can't remember which case it was, but there was further documentation, I'm going to say it might have been Mrs Hamilton's case, that the defence had made counsel aware of, and I don't recall it but I had to go up to chambers to look through loads of ringbinders containing documentation.

So I think possibly that then was added to another unused material statement. So in that scenario -- but I can't recall any others. Not to say that there weren't but that's just, I believe, an example where it -- you know, further enquiries were required or further items were identified and it was then added to, I believe, the unused material.
Q. In your recollection, who would decide whether there was material that might reasonably be considered capable of undermining the 159
Q. So I properly understand this, are you saying 158
prosecution case or assisting the defence case, which hadn't already been disclosed?
A. Yeah, I'm going to say that was -- when we were doing the committal bundle or filling these forms anyhow, then obviously there's one of the forms is unused material that may undermine the prosecution, assist the defence. So the Security Manager was tasked with doing that. So they would fill that form in.
Q. Aside from the form filling though, who do you consider was responsible for determining what might reasonably be considered capable of undermining or assisting?
A. Well, the Security Manager would present it as they thought but, obviously, then the Criminal Law Team and counsel would obviously have a view on it, and there were -- I think, things were moved or there was times when I'd been asked to give a deeper explanation of some things on the unused material.
Q. Can we look at POL00048205. We'll see a series of memos over 2006 and 2007 that are send by the Criminal Law Team to the Investigation Team, copied to you. This is the first of those. If we scroll down to the bottom, it says:
"I list below the statements which appear to be necessary in this case but the Investigation Manager should also consider whether there are any other areas which can usefully be covered", et cetera.
It refers at number 5, over the page, to a copy statement dealing with the Horizon system and confirming that the calls could not have been attributed to the discrepancy in the accounts.
Did you see it as part of your role to carry out investigations as to the reliability of the Horizon system?
A. Well, basically, I would have -- you know, when -- I'd have conducted the enquiries as part of the investigation and, once it went up to the Criminal Law, from memory it was quiet reactive. So whatever they asked for, I would have endeavoured to obtain.
Q. So you would wait for them to ask for information and you would see it as your job to go and --
A. If something else came about or I was still conducting enquiries, then, yeah, then I would do it myself. But I think, once the case file 161
In your witness statement, as we went over, you said that the Criminal Law Team would deal with any disclosure to the defence. Looking at this and looking back now, would it be more accurate to say that, in fact, you were ultimately responsible for disclosure decisions.
A. As I said, I would disclose it to the Criminal Law Team and I'd assume they would disclose everything to the defence but I didn't know what they did disclose. I think it's terminology. I didn't see myself as a Disclosure Officer. It was just one of the many tasks that the Security Manager had to deal with because there was no separate Disclosure Officer.
Q. Thank you. I'm now going to move on to the case study of Lynette Hutchings. Could we please look at POL00113278. That's the judgment in the Hamilton Court of Appeal case. I just want to again take you to the relevant part that deals with the Hutchings case, that's page 57, paragraphs 267 to 272.
Just to assist everybody who is sitting here today, I'm just going to briefly outline what this case is about.
The Court of Appeal say that on 30 July 163
went up, most if not all enquiries had been conducted.
Q. If we scroll down, you'll see there wording that's included in other memos that says:
"You will be aware of the provisions of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 concerning disclosure. Please confirm whether there is any material which might be reasonably be considered capable of undermining the prosecution case or assisting the defence case and which has not already been disclosed. Please also let me have", and there are various forms there.

There's another example of that at POL00048473. I think this is, in fact, the document you were referring to where there's reference to something being taken off the unused material list because it's become an exhibit. That's number 3. Then, at the bottom paragraph, it's again standard wording:
"I remind you that the requirement for the disclosure to the defence is a continuing duty. If there is any such material [et cetera], please forward this to this office immediately. If you're in any doubt", et cetera. 162

2012, Lynette Hutchings pleaded guilty to one count of false accounting. The Post Office offered no evidence against her on one count of fraud and a not guilty verdict was entered.

They say that between 1 June 2010 and 5 April 2011, Ms Hutchings made 33 calls to the National Business Support Centre, two of which related to losses or gains. Dip samples covering 13 January to 30 March showed that she had made four calls to the Horizon System Helpdesk for advice:
"Ms Hutchings produced a prepared statement at her interview under caution, saying that problems had arisen since her branch had transferred to Horizon Online. She had believed that the incorrect balances would be sorted out by transaction corrections in the fullness of time. She had not stolen any money nor had she acted dishonestly. She gave specific examples of problems she had experienced, including the fact that the Post Office advice was difficult to access and unreliable.
"In her written basis of plea, Ms Hutchings said that she had balanced the books to put off the evil day of having to sort out the muddle.

She did not take any money nor had she intended to. That basis was not accepted by the prosecution but they did not contest it."

If we look at paragraph 271, the final part of that paragraph, it says:
"There was no investigation into the integrity of the Horizon figures. The investigation concentrated on proving how the accounts were falsified, which was admitted, rather than examining the root cause of the shortfall. There was no investigation of Ms Hutchings' complaints, as set out in her prepared statement. There was no proof of an actual loss, as opposed to a Horizon generated shortfall."

I want to take you to the interview that was carried out with Ms Hutchings and that can be found at POLO0056417, please. We have two records of interviews, this is the first of those two, and you are listed there as the interviewing officer, alongside Gary Thomas. If we scroll down, we can see there various things that you referred to before as being part of the interview process, so reminded of rights, confirmed solicitor explained the caution, not 165
declarations were altered was to enable me to operate the Post Office. I am unable to explain why the balances are incorrect but would give examples of some of the difficulties as follows: the helpline was difficult to access and unreliable, secure stock created unexplained discrepancies on a weekly basis, the screen on the stock unit needed recalibrating on occasions due to cursor sticking, the back office printer was replaced because it was unreliable, the smaller counter's printer stuck and not produced expected receipts, one monitor crashed and the power pack had to be replaced", et cetera.

Would you agree that the reliability of the Horizon system was front and centre of her defence to this case?
A. Well, I think she's referred to a few occasions where equipment needed to be replaced. As I say, I can't recall the detail but I think -did we not get a statement from Andy Dunks that explained all the calls in this case?
Q. That wasn't actually my question. My question was about her case --
A. I know, l'm just trying to recall --
Q. -- and her defence. Do you agree that the 167
under arrest, free to leave, et cetera. All of those are set out in the record of interview.

Could we turn over the page, please. This is her written statement. I'm going to read some of it. It says:
"I am Lynette Hutchings. This statement is my version of events and I have asked my solicitor to write it down. We migrated to Horizon Online in approximately May/June 2010. At the time of migration all accounts balanced. Ever since we have been with Horizon Online the balances have been wrong. When I talk about we, I also refer to my husband who assists me in the Post Office. At no stage have we stolen money from the Post Office nor are we aware of making mistakes in our day [must be 'to day'] operation of the system. Because of this we always believed that incorrect balances would be sorted out through transaction corrections. When I altered the cash declarations, this was not done in order to create a financial gain for myself or a loss to the Post Office. I genuinely believed that there was no loss and that the balances would be corrected in the fullness of time. The only reason the cash 166
reliability of the Horizon system was central to her defence?
A. Oh, no, absolutely, in her prepared statement she's saying that -- where is it? Yeah, she's listed a few issues that she's had with the Horizon equipment.
Q. I just want to move to page 8, please. Mr Thomas, your co-interviewing officer, says as follows to Ms Hutchings, he says:
"Okay, in respect of obviously we have Issy today and you have prepared a statement, etc, is there any reason I could ask you why you've actually got Issy Hogg as you solicitor and not somebody from [and then it's not clear what is said]. Do you not have any solicitors locally?"

Do you consider that to be an appropriate question to put to a defendant in an interview?
A. I'm going to say when I was looking through the documentation I did see that and I don't understand it, to be honest. But I knew there was a reason why Gary had asked that at the time but I don't know what it would have been.
Q. Were you aware that Issy Hogg had represented, for example, Jo Hamilton, Seema Misra and other defendants?
A. I wasn't aware of Seema Misra but I was aware that Issy Hogg was the person I spoke to in respect of Ms Hamilton. But Issy Hogg wasn't the solicitor in attendance at the interview.
Q. I mean, you were sitting next to Mr Thomas at this interview. If he had said something like that, which is recorded in the transcript, would that not have struck you as slightly odd?
A. As I say, it's -- I honestly don't know. I can't say. I'm going to say, looking at it now, it strikes me as slightly odd -- going back in time, there may have been some reason why Gary has asked that. Perhaps Gary was aware of other cases where Issy had represented people.
Q. What possible relevance could that have to whether this individual was guilty or not of a criminal offence?
A. Well, at face value, I don't see it does.
Q. You see the suggestion, it seems from there, that in some way those who were conducting these interviews held it against defendants if they were represented by a particular solicitor, the suggestion being perhaps that that solicitor is helping to run a particular argument in a range of cases?

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true? It wasn't a correct cash declaration?
A. Yeah, she's saying it wasn't a true figure.
Q. Can we please go back to a document that we started with this morning and that is POLO0046706, and that is the investigation report from this particular case study. It's 5 May 2011, investigation report. I read to you from it this morning. I'm just going to repeat -- it's page 5 .

In fact, could we go to the bottom of page 4 and down to page 5 ., and slightly up, thank you. Perfect.

So you can see there a paragraph that begins "I was made aware that", and that's something I'm just going to ask you just to hold in your mind when we look at another document. It may be that I can bring them both up on screen next to each other. Then the next paragraph:
"On Friday, 15 April I was contacted by Ms Issy Hogg, solicitor who was representing Ms Hutchings. It was agreed that I would conduct a voluntary interview."

Then over the page it details what was said in the interview and the detail of the prepared statement. So it says:
Q. That's in admission from her that it wasn't

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"From the prepared statement it could be seen that Mrs Hutchings believed she migrated to Horizon Online in May/June although I established just prior to the commencement of the interview that the migration date was 5 July. It states that at the time of the migration all accounts balanced. It then goes on to suggest that problems arose following the migration to Horizon Online. It states that only her and her husband worked in the Post Office and at no stage had they stolen any money. It states that they only served against their own usernames and did not know each others passwords.
"It states that Ms Hutchings altered cash declarations [and that's the admission I just took you to] but not in order to create a gain for herself or a loss to the Post Office and that she felt the balances would be corrected through transaction corrections. She stared that hes only altered the cash declarations in order to continue to operate the Post Office.
"The prepared statement refers to some difficulties that she encountered. These related to unexplained stock discrepancies,
problems with Horizon equipment and that the
helpline was difficult to access and unreliable."

This is the investigation report. I now want to take you to another report. I think it's the disciplinary investigation report, this being the criminal investigation report. It's POLO0044508. If it's possible to have that document side by side with this, that would be ideal.

So if we look at the final page on the
left-hand side, that one's dated 6 May. The one on the right-hand side is 5 May and they're slightly different and you explained this morning that a disciplinary investigation report is slightly different to a criminal investigation report; is that correct? (No audible answer)
The one on the left-hand side, does it look
like a disciplinary investigation report?
A. No, the one on the left is -- it's got -I don't understand that because it's got "Personnel" at the top and "Legal" at the bottom. Can you go to -- if it's addressed to -- did you say it was Nigel Allen, was it? 173
about the logs.
If we look on the left-hand side, if we scroll over the page on the left-hand side, there is no summary of the interview. There is no summary at all of Mrs Hutchings' account, as provided in the interview. You've said that certain information was left out of the disciplinary investigation report, things like appendices or similar documents.
A. Mm .
Q. Was it standard not to include a subpostmaster's account in a disciplinary investigation report?
A. I don't think so. Whether it was because it was summarised in the prepared statement, I honestly can't say.
Q. Do you think it would have been helpful to those considering disciplinary investigations to know what was said by a defendant in an interview?
A. Well, as I say, my recollection was that it would almost be identical, other than the fact that you would remove reference to, you know, exhibits and appendices, and whatever, and I think there was a period of time when the failings of -- in procedure were included in both reports but at a time it was removed from 175
Q. If we could go to the first page of the one on the left.
A. Yeah, so it's headed to Nigel Allen, so this -obviously l've not changed the footer to "Personnel". So yeah, this is the discipline one.
Q. So the one on the left is the discipline one.
A. Yes.
Q. Thank you. Can we turn to page 3 of the discipline one, so 3 on the left; and could we have a look at page 4 on the right. Could that one on the right be a full half? Thank you very much. You'll recall that I took you to the point where it said, "I was made aware that", so if we have a look on the right, that is near the bottom, and there's a paragraph that says, "I was made aware that there were two errors", and on the left discipline report, it says,
"I was made aware there were two errors", on the final paragraph. Thank you.

The one on the right, as we've seen, if we scroll over the page on the right, goes on to detail Mrs Hutchings' account in interview and the detail of that interview. It also then refers to telephone call with Mr Allen, talking 174
the discipline one and that was e-mailed separately.
Q. Can you think of any good reason why the account in this case doesn't seem to be included?
A. Well, I'm not sure because it was a summary of the prepared statement, which obviously came from the -- Mrs Hamilton and the defence solicitor. So I'm really not sure.
Q. It is summarised as follows, in the one on the left, it says:
"From the summaries, it can be seen that Ms Hogg reads out a prepared statement, following which Mrs Hutchings answers no comments to questions put to her."

But there is no detail contained in that report of the kind that we see on the right-hand side.
A. I'm just trying to correlate the two. I can see from the summaries it can be seen on the third paragraph on the left one --
Q. Yes, and on the right is the detail that isn't included on the left-hand side. So all of those, top half of that page, is not included at all.
A. So obviously on the left I'm going to say -176
Q. If you look on the left-hand side --
A. Can we go one page above, please, on the right-hand one?
Q. Yes.
A. Right, I can't see where the bottom of page 2 finishes and I can't -- sorry, I know it's a pain. The one on the left, can we go up a page? I'm just trying to see where they were last the same.
Q. So it's there it's "I was made aware that there were two errors", that paragraph is included?
A. Right okay, yeah.
Q. But then they depart from one another over the page --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- on the left-hand side. That's different, and if we look on the right-hand side, if we go over the page, they meet up again where it says, "As can be seen from the taped summaries". So that's the bottom --
A. Yeah, as I say, I really don't know why -- I'm going to say there would have been some reason but I don't know what the reason would have been because, normally, it was the same report with just certain things omitted for the discipline 177
for a call log."
You had spoken to Mr Allen and requested a schedule of call logs made to the Post Office helpline. We're aware of a separate helpline being held by Fujitsu, the Horizon System Helpdesk. Did you make enquiries of Fujitsu systems, in respect of this matter?
A. As I say, I don't recall it, but from reading the documentation it seems -- I think Nigel Allen was due to conduct the disciplinary interview with Ms Hutchings and it was then that he gave me the evidence that he had been given by, I think, the Auditor.

I can't recall why -- the purpose of, you know, the conversation with Mr Allen, but I hadn't requested. He obviously made me aware that he had a schedule of call logs to the Post Office helpline, not the Horizon Support Helpdesk. So, clearly, l've asked him to email them over to me.
Q. Was it more common for you to obtain information from the Post Office helpline than it was the Fujitsu one?
A. Absolutely, it's purely because, for whatever reason I spoke to Mr Allen, he made me aware 179
report.
Q. Yes, I mean, would you accept that it's not helpful to have a subpostmaster's account removed from a discipline report?
A. Yeah, I can't explain why it's not there because, as I say, they need to consider that when they're considering that with things like the audit report and any other evidence that they've gathered themselves to make a decision. So there must have been some logical reason why it's not there but I cannot recall why not.
Q. Can we stick with the right-hand side, please. I just want to read -- there's a paragraph there that I haven't read out and it begins "Prior to the interview commencing". It says:
"Prior to the interview commencing I telephoned Mr Allen who advised me that he had a schedule of call logs made by Rowlands Castle Post Office to the Post Office helpline. He then emailed it to me and I printed off a copy. The first entry [and it gives it the date] irrelevant, beyond that they relate to the branch being closed for the audit [gives a date] and after that there's one call from the interim subpostmaster and one relating to the request 178
that he had them. So I said -- clearly have said, "Can you send them over?"
Q. But in terms of a typical case, for example --
A. In terms of what, sorry?
Q. -- a typical case -- was it more common for you to obtain Post Office helpline information? We spoke earlier about, for example, difficulties with ARQ data. In respect of the Horizon Helpdesk information, was it straightforward? Did you regularly obtain that information or did you rely more on the Post Office's own helpline records?
A. I think, I can't remember if they were requested all -- through the Post Office helpline or how I got them from the Horizon Support Helpdesk, I think it was possibly all through the Helpdesk but the actual call logs that Mr Allen sent me would have been the same way. He would have got them from the Post Office Helpdesk.
Q. Okay. We can move on. One final document in relation to this particular case, and that is POL00046626. It's a memo from Jarnail Singh copied to you but to the National Security Team. If we could scroll down, please. He says:
"The defence solicitors read out the 180
pre-prepared statement which was followed by no comments to all questions put to the defendant. Bearing this in mind and the contents of the pre-prepared statement, it is very likely that the above-named defendant may contest the case. It appears from the contents that she may bring into question her claim that the Horizon system was not working properly and refers to some of the difficulties the defendant encountered with the system.
"I am therefore of the view that it would be more prudent for the officer to complete his enquiries and further investigations and produce the evidence by means of witness statements and exhibits at this stage", and it lists certain things that needed to be obtained.

If we go over the page, it's number 5 and 6
that I'd like to look at. Number 5 says:
"The officer should find evidence rebutting the allegations and criticisms made in the pre-prepared statement, which was read out by the defendant's solicitor in the defendant's interview under caution. Evidence is needed to rebut these."

Then:
181 183
interview. From your recollection, in this kind of a case, would you simply rely on a statement from Fujitsu, rather than making direct enquiries with Fujitsu about the reliability of the Horizon system?
A. Well, as I've said, anything that we got from Fujitsu, we would do from, you know, a central point in security. I wouldn't request anything directly from Fujitsu unless, for example, I'm emailing Andy or Penny directly just to say when can we expect this statement because, obviously, the clock's ticking? But the initial request, I would be requesting it myself, only via the Security admin team that submitted the requests.
Q. Is that Mr Ward or somebody else?
A. I think, looking at this as addressed to Maureen

Moors, she I think, it was what was then referred to as the -- or part of the Crime Risk Team that would do it. I'm not even sure that there actually was a Casework Team per se at that stage. Certainly, Mr Ward, in 2011, I'm pretty sure would have been a Financial Investigator at that time.
Q. So was it later that he carried out that function of liaising with Fujitsu, or?
"Statements dealing with the integrity of Horizon and call logs to the Horizon Support Helpdesk which should also go into some depth explaining the workings of the system."

Do you recall making enquiries with Fujitsu in respect of this matter?
A. As I say, I don't recall the case at all.
Q. Do you recall ever making enquiries with Fujitsu, other than requesting those standard statements in respect of any concerns with the integrity of the Horizon system?
A. Not specifically. I can see from the documentation that there were some -- yeah, some references to either what's a standard statement and then some that would cover the integrity of Horizon but, I must admit, I thought the standard statement covered the integrity of Horizon. But, either way, if I'm requesting statements, it will be on the behalf of the Criminal Law Team and it will go through the relevant security admin department to actually go to whoever in Fujitsu and ask for them.
Q. Looking at this particular case, obviously there were some examples of problems with Horizon that were raised in the prepared statement in 182
A. It would have -- from recollection, it was either through the Casework Team originally and then it was this Crime Risk Team but, either way, it was -- even within the Casework Team, it may or may not have been Graham Ward that did it, or whoever was the Casework Manager at the time. There was other -- you know, like, direct reports in a support function within the Casework Team and, likewise, I think Maureen was in, like, a support function within the Crime Risk Team.

But, either way, whichever relevant department it was, to all intents and purposes, it was an admin team within Security that would make the requests or, as we've seen, Graham Ward in his capacity as Casework Manager would make requests.
Q. Thank you. I'm going to move on to the final case study and I'll be very brief with this case study. This the case of Julian Wilson. Can we look again at the Court of Appeal judgment, POL00113278, please. It's page 43 of that judgment, paragraph 175 to 178. Thank you.

Very briefly, the appeal in Mr Wilson's case was brought posthumously. He had pleaded guilty 184
to two counts of fraud. It appears that three counts of false accounting did not proceed:
"In his interview under caution, Mr Wilson said that he had raised problems with Horizon with his line manager and was told that there was nothing wrong with the system. In his resignation letter to his Contract Manager, he stated that he had raised the problem of misbalances on three occasions and received no adequate response. In an agreed basis of plea, Mr Wilson stated that the losses occurred because of staff or systemic errors and not because the money had been stolen. He admitted to inflating the cash-on-hand figures over five years to ensure that the accounts balanced, but believed that the alleged shortfall was due to problems with Horizon."

The Court of Appeal notes there, in paragraph 177, about halfway through:
"The Post Office did not investigate any of
the criticisms of Horizon made by Mr Wilson
historically and during his detailed interview."
We'll look, very briefly, at what he said
about Horizon, in interview. Can we look at
POL00050140, please. So you're one of the 185
were called, and I raised the question of misbalances with him, and I'd been keeping a record. I said could the system be wrong or are we doing, he said "No, no the system cannot be wrong as there's nothing wrong with the system". Perhaps two years ago we had a letter sent round from the Federation as to whether anybody was experiencing misbalances. I said that I had and I actually then was asked to submit to the Federation copies of trading reports. This relates to the trading reports not the old, the old system, and I sent copies of those to the Federation."

So, again, straightforward away in his case he raised issues with the Horizon system in interview.

I mean, looking at these case studies that I've taken you to, each one raising issues with the Horizon system, I know that you've explained that the Casework Team would liaise with Fujitsu but, as an Investigator, do you think that you did enough investigating in respect of problems with the Horizon system?
A. I'm really not sure what I could have done. I'm going to say I can't go -- (a) it wouldn't have 187
interviewing officers, again, with Gary Thomas.
Was it quite regular for you to work with Gary
Thomas on cases to interview together?
A. Yeah, I think, more often than not, due to the fact that we were relatively close to each other in respect of other members of the team.
Q. Thank you. Could we scroll down, and it's here that Mr Wilson gave his account. He says, for example:
"I had an audit some six months later and everything on the audit was fine. I had trained for one week when I first covered the Post Office. I didn't have any more training after that. So not all of the transactions that I carried out I was familiar with, so I therefore had to ask a member of staff how to perform a particular transaction, had it not come up in the first week of training. When I balanced, I balance every Wednesday as required by Post Office Limited, some weeks it was up, some weeks it was down and I kept a record of all those transactions as to what was up and down during, you know, my period as a postmaster. I at one time had a manager who's the line manager in those days, I think they 186
been my mindset to do so because we were -I think when these -- the increased number of cases come about, we were getting messages from various sources, I believe, saying, yeah, there's nothing wrong with the Horizon, whatever, so that was in my mindset.

But I don't see how a Security Manager could go to Fujitsu and say -- or anyone, and say,
"Can you check the integrity?" because I believe that's what Fujitsu were doing when they were being asked to produce statements.
Q. You were an Investigating Officer tasked with investigating criminal offences that could lead to people's convictions and imprisonment. Do you not think that you should have been trying to find out more about these alleged issues and pressing Fujitsu in respect of them?
A. I say, again, it wouldn't be for me to go to Fujitsu but there may well have been questions asked amongst the team with these cases. I really can't recall.
Q. But you were the person who was investigating those cases, so --
A. Well, not this case I wasn't. I was second officer. I was only there for the interview. 188

| Q. Absolutely, but some of the cases that I've | 1 |
| :--- | :--- |
| taken you to, you were, for example, the | 2 |
| Disclosure Officer and had specific duties | 3 |
| relating to disclosure, specific duties to | 4 |
| pursue reasonable lines of inquiry. Did you | 5 |
| think that it was unreasonable to pursue those | 6 |
| kinds of lines of inquiry? | 7 |
| A. Well, all I can say, Mr Blake, is, from | 8 |
| recollection, I had no reason to believe that | 9 |
| there was any issue with the integrity of | 10 |
| Horizon because that was the message that came | 11 |
| through. That seemed to be conveyed in the | 12 |
| statements. As I say, we'd had challenges that | 13 |
| had gone through the courts system and none were | 14 |
| upheld so I can't say for certain but I'm just | 15 |
| surmising that that was probably why I, like, no | 16 |
| doubt, others, had the mindset that there was no | 17 |
| issue with Horizon. | 18 |
| Q. Who was the message coming from, internally at | 19 |
| the Post Office? You've said a number of times | 20 |
| that was the message. | 21 |
| A. Yeah. | 22 |
| Q. Who was it coming from? | 23 |
| A. As I say, I think -- I can't think specifically | 24 |
| or where the sources were, I think once there | 25 | 189

this doesn't look like something the Investigator would have done.
Q. Thank you very much. Those are all my questions in relation to this case study.

I have a few very brief miscellaneous topics. The first is Mr Gareth Jenkins. Can we look at FUJ00156530, please.

Can we start on page 3. Thank you. There's an email here that you're not a party to yet, and that is an email from Emma Haley to Andrew Bolc, and she says -- it's a case of Bramwell. Is that a case you remember at all, Royal Mail v Bramwell.
A. I didn't until I saw the documentation. I vaguely recall it, and I think it was Mike Wilcox's case, and I was second officer, and I think when Mike left it was transferred to me, I believe.
Q. It says:
"Council would bluntly like Fujitsu to pour as much cold water as possible on the defence report. If the expert is saying we cannot disagree with anything at all, then we're potentially in some difficulty. I've asked counsel to provide a specific list of questions, 191
was number of cases, you know, at the latter stages, possibly it was coming down the line from, you know, like senior Security, whether that was the Fraud strand lead, whether that was the Head of Security, whenever we had national meetings, I don't know. But it was just always the belief -- and I had no reason to disbelieve that Horizon wasn't working.

So I think it's possibly a combination -because there were times when there were becoming more and more cases where there were challenges. So, again, I can't recal specifically but I'm sure there was messages saying no, Horizon is fine, but I don't know -I couldn't give you a name of who said that or a particular source
Q. One final document in Mr Wilson's case, can we look at POL00044767, please. This is a summary of facts that was prepared for the Magistrates to consider suitability for the Magistrates Court or the Crown Court. Is this a document that you would have seen at the time? Is it a document you prepared? Do you recall this document?
A. Well, as I say, I wasn't the Investigator but 190
but really the essence is: how much, if anything, can we rebut?"

So it seems as though there is a defence report addressing Horizon. She says there:
"I mentioned to counsel Mr Brander's suggestion of barrister training in Cardiff. That might be ideal."

Are you able to assist us with what barrister training in Cardiff might have been a reference to?
A. I think it might have been, like, training on the use of Horizon. I can't be certain but I think possibly that was, I'm going to say, because I see the barristers, you know, the chambers are in Cardiff. My recollection was that they would be at Bell Yard in London, but -- so whether we started using a different chambers and they might not have been as au fait as our barristers in London, I don't know, but --
Q. So that's training for prosecution counsel on -that's prosecution counsel it's talking about, in terms of --
A. Oh, absolutely, yeah, yeah, yeah, yes.
Q. Can we go to page 2, please, and it's the bottom 192
of page 2 and this is where you are included in the email, so you will have received that chain. This says:
"Graham,
"Please see Emma's email for your
information. Could you see if Fujitsu can work with these rather vague instructions, otherwise I think the only way forward is for you to meet with Sue as soon as possible to help her understand the system and iron out the specifics that need to be addressed.
"It would seem easiest if you could contact Sue's clerk."

So it seems to be that counsel is called Sue.

Could we scroll up to the bottom of page 2.
You then email Penny Thomas and you say:
"Hi Penny
"Please would you look at the email below
from our solicitors in the Bishops Hull case and pass on to Gareth. Counsel would like Gareth to advise on what from the defence expert report faxed to you last week that he is able to rebut if anything.
"I have asked for an electronic copy of the 193
It's the third paragraph in that email. You say:
"... only Penny Thomas performs the expert witness role for Fujitsu. As you have probably gathered, we have enough problems getting Andy Dunks to produce the call logs, let alone the entire workings of Horizon. As such, if defence wish to cross-examine on Horizon, ie Penny's statement, then we will have to rearrange trial date. If Penny isn't required to give evidence in person then we're okay so I don't know if Alex wants to speak to defence counterpart to gauge if Penny will be required."
Why is it that you describe Penny Thomas there as performing the expert witness role for Fujitsu?
A. Because that would have been my understanding, whether that was correct or not, but I think it's because Penny was the one that was producing the bulk of the statements so -- when she was doing the Horizon data, and then, you know, covering the workings of Horizon, so that was probably why I thought it was Penny Thomas, so I don't think I was, you know, even aware of somebody called Gareth Jenkins until the
expert report but it is down to the defence as to whether they are prepared to supply this as they are only required to serve a hard copy."

In your witness statement for this Inquiry,
I think you've said that you have no recollection of the name Gareth Jenkins.
A. No, not at all, until I saw this.
Q. Do you know why that might be, given that you're referring to him, you know, by his first name there. It seems certainly from that email that you seem to be quite familiar with --
A. Well, I can only assume that I was advised that Gareth was the person to give a statement in that respect, because, previously, my understanding was it would have been Penny Thomas.
Q. Absolutely. So l'd like to actually take you back to a document that we've looked at, it's a different page of the same document. It's POL00112329, please, and it's page 63. That's exactly the issue that l'd like your assistance with, and it's the role of Penny Thomas. If we look at page 63 of this document, there's an email from you to Phil Taylor in the case of Wendy Buffrey. Thank you.

Bramwell case.
Q. What did you understand the expert, an expert witness role to involve?
A. Somebody who just had an expert knowledge of the relevant subject matter, I guess.
Q. Was it something that you'd received any training or instruction in or were there any policies that you're aware of?
A. Having seen bits about expert witnesses in the bundle and Inquiry, then, no, I'm pretty sure my understanding -- let me rephrase that.

I am pretty sure I wouldn't have understood exactly what an expert was, and their duties at that time, having seen what l've seen recently.
Q. Thank you, then I have just a couple of very small topics. The first is Crown Offices. Did you experience any differences in attitude towards Crown Office employees to subpostmasters in respect of the approach to investigations?
A. Not from anything I dealt with or was, you know -- where I assisted in an interview with a colleague. As far as we were concerned, if there was evidence of a criminal offence, everyone would be treated the same and, in my experience, that would be fairly and
professionally.
Q. Were there any differences in the proportion of Crown Office employees you investigated compared --
A. Sorry any difference in the?
Q. Proportion of the Crown Office employees compared to subpostmasters?
A. Well, I think there were less because there were far less Crown Offices than there were sub post offices.
Q. Thank you, another topic: your role as the Network Transformation Field Change Advisor. Were there any financial incentives, such as bonuses, to convert branches to the new model?
A. I think so, yes. I think there was, for a period of time, an incentive bonus. I can't remember what the criteria was but there was a bonus of some sort, yeah.
Q. Was that to get people to change the contract that they were on?
A. Well, if they converted to either the local or the mains model, whichever one was attributed to them, then, yes, they would get a new contract. But, although there was an incentive bonus, when we -- certainly when we started the process, we 197
least.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, unless they're going to tell me that they're only going to be literally a few minutes we'll have a break, all right.
MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. Perhaps we could come back at 3.40.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right.
MR BLAKE: I don't believe they're going to be very long but they will be more than a few minutes.
( 3.24 pm )

## (A short break)

( 3.38 pm )
MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir.
Mr Jacobs.

## Questioned by MR JACOBS

MR JACOBS: Good afternoon, Mr Brander.
Hello, I represent 156 subpostmasters and subpostmistresses and assistants instructed by Howe+Co. I want to ask you about your knowledge of the bugs, errors and defects. I don't want to go over the evidence that we've heard this morning in your answers to questions from Mr Blake but do you recall you were taken to the Helen Rose report and you were taken to a synopsis of a number of subpostmasters who'd 199
were absolutely inundated with postmasters either wanting to leave because they would have, at the time, received a payment equivalent to 18 months of their best year of remuneration out of the last three, which, fairly quickly, I believe, moved to 26 months, which, from my understanding, was possibly more than they would have obtained from looking to do a commercial transfer where they might sell their retail business and market the post office alongside it.

But also the postmaster would get a conversion payment, which I believe was 12 months of the best year out of the last three, to convert to the local model or the mains model. So there were obviously incentives to both the postmaster but I think because the Post Office were keen to get numbers of new models ASAP, that's possibly why there was an incentive bonus, initially, but that bonus wasn't there for the whole time. I can't say how long it was.

## MR BLAKE: Thank you.

Sir, those are all of my questions. We have questions from Mr Moloney and Mr Jacobs at 198
raised Horizon Issues and one of those was our client Pam Stubbs.
A. Yeah, as I say, I recall that there was a larger or increased number of challenges nearer or leading up to the time when I left the Post Office, maybe the first couple of years, but yes.
Q. You were taken to page 2 of the report and we don't need to call it up because we've seen it, unless you want to see it again, but the passage was:
"Mike Wilcox stated, along with Graham Brander I met with Mrs Stubbs on 17th January and she was convinced that Horizon was at fault."

It goes on to say that Mrs Stubbs had retained her own transaction logs and was going to compare them with Fujitsu data. So she was very much challenging the Horizon system.
A. $\mathrm{Mm}-\mathrm{hm}$.
Q. Mr Blake took you to other evidence, the case of Mrs Hutchings, when at interview she again made a very strong challenge to the system. It was suggested that this is inconsistent with what you've repeatedly said in your statement, where 200
you say, paragraph 144, an example:
"I have no recollection of any specific challenges to the integrity of Horizon."
A. Mm-hm.
Q. When that was put to you, you said:
"Well, the message from above was that there were no issues with Horizon."

Then you went on to say, this was about 12.15 this afternoon -- I'm sure it's been a long day but you might recall saying that -you went on to say that you can't recall who that message came from.
A. Yeah.
Q. Now, my clients are a little anxious that a lot of people who were in senior positions at the time are coming to the Inquiry and are not answering this question. They're not able to say who told them to disregard, essentially, what subpostmasters were saying about the Horizon system.
A. Yeah.
Q. So what I want to do is I just want to go through that. Could you tell me who your line managers were at the time, about 2010, for example, which was when you spoke to Ms Stubbs? 201
Q. What about John Scott?
A. John Scott was the Head of Security so, obviously, when we periodically got together as a national team, there would be agenda items but I honestly can't recall what they would be. But, like everyone seems to have been saying, this word "robust", which isn't a word I would necessarily have used in everyday occurrences, seemed to be the word that was always used. So when I first joined Investigations, because I had no IT background, this was all brand new, it was new to everybody, we had no reason to believe there was any issues. But suddenly the word "robust" seemed to appear. So I am just assuming that was the wording in the message we were given but I don't know from what source.
Q. What about David Pardoe?
A. Well, Dave Pardoe would have been -- so, for instance, myself as a Security Manager, say, for instance; Jason when I left, team leader; then it would be Dave Pardoe as the Fraud Strand leader, who would then report to John Scott.
Q. So are you saying then that all of these people are people who could have told you the message
A. Well, going back, when I left, it was Jason Collins.
Q. Right.
A. I cannot recall, it might have been ... err ... I think -- it might have been Jason. I was temporarily promoted, I think, for a few months in 2008. I think then Ged Harbinson acted as team leader for a fairly small period of time because Jason was effectively Casework Manager at that stage. So I think, roughly from -sometime in 2009 to when I left it might have been Jason Collins. So Geoff Hall early days; changed teams and I think there was Tony Utting; Paul Whitaker was just before I was temporarily promoted; Dave Posnett, I can't quite remember when he was in there; but certainly when I left, it was Jason.
Q. Jason Collins?
A. Yeah, and, as I say, I think -- but that doesn't mean to say any message came via Jason. It might have been that we were at an national team meeting and it could have been there. As I say, I can't remember what source -- well, I really -- if I could, I would absolutely have no qualms saying but I just cannot recall. 202
is "There's nothing wrong with the Horizon system" --
A. It could have come from there it could have been coming from cases from -- you know, where the Criminal Law Team has said that we've, you know, successful rebutted, to use the terminology, cases. I don't know but I think I do -- without being specific, I'm sure, once we got to the stage where there was more and more cases challenging Horizon, there was definitely a message that come through from somewhere, so -- and, again, even if it was, say, John Scott, and it may well be that he was given the message from somewhere else.
Q. Okay, but when you say a message came through from somewhere and you said earlier on it might have been a national team meeting, are you really not able to say who that came from?
A. I really -- if I knew, I would absolutely, I'm on oath, if I could recall where and whom, I would absolutely share that with the Inquiry.
Q. So it was just a general view that you all held; is that right?
A. Well, I can't speak for everybody but, just speaking to colleagues, that did seem to be the 204
actual belief, not just in Security. I think
with all personnel in Post Office.
Q. Did you think, when confronted by subpostmistresses like Mrs Stubbs and when interviewing Ms Hutchings, did you not think "Well, there must be something wrong with that instruction, with that general view"?
A. When there was an increase, I may well have done but I honestly can't recall that. And, as I said, it's -- looking back in hindsight, you can -- if there was a national picture that individual Security Manager was fed into and I could see the national picture, I might have a better gauge of it.

I'm going to say we talked over a period of time of, I think, 2006 to 2011, maybe three or four cases, and not making excuses, that would have been maybe one of 10 to 15 cases was dealing with at the time. So you're on the constant conveyor belt of boom, boom, boom, boom, dealing with umpteen different cases, I don't really think there was much time to reflect and review cases. I assume that, if that was being looked at, that would be looked at by a central point, so from the Inquiry I see 205
of a group of former postmasters, all of whom were prosecuted and convicted and all of whom have had their convictions quashed?
A. Uh-huh.
Q. One of those former postmasters is Mrs Josephine "Jo" Hamilton, who sits next to me.
A. Yeah, okay.
Q. Do you recognise her, Mr Brander?
A. Only from -- I can't remember. I think was there a local news article that Jo may have appeared on that I recognised her from, fairly recently?
Q. Right okay.
A. Then I've seen her at -- who I thought was Jo Hamilton, I've seen her at the Inquiry and I've seen other evidence. But, other than seeing Jo, Mrs Hamilton, on the -- I don't know, have I got that right or wrong? Was there a news article? I don't know. But I think I do recognise Jo from recent events, not from when I did the investigation.
Q. All right. Well, I just want to ask you about two days, one at the start and one at the end, of the investigation and prosecution of Mrs Hamilton. The first is the day of the audit 207
that there was the Helen Rose report. I don't believe I was aware of that at the time, I may have been. But that would have made sense to me, that, if it was being looked at it would have been a central point who would have had access to all cases, nationally.

I would only have been aware of my cases. Yes, the lady just mentioned, I think Mrs Stubbs, I don't recall it. I would have been aware for the interview and I would have had no other dealings with it but it would have made more sense to me that somebody that could have looked at this centrally could have reviewed the cases, but I don't believe that report was disseminated to people like myself. May have been, I just don't recall.
MR JACOBS: I am just going to ask if I have any more questions for you.

I don't have any more questions for you.
A. Okay, thank you.

MR JACOBS: Thank you.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Moloney?
MR MOLONEY: Thank you.

## Questioned by MR MOLONEY

MR MOLONEY: Mr Brander, I ask questions on behalf 206
of her post office. Mr Blake has asked you questions about that, in fact it was during the course of this morning?
A. Yeah.
Q. You said today that your reason for going to Mrs Hamilton's house with Elaine Ridge was to introduce yourself and to set out how things would proceed from that day.
A. Yes.
Q. But didn't you say to Mrs Hamilton, "There's
a big deficit, where is it?"
A. Sorry, say that bit again?
Q. There's a big deficit, where is it?
A. No, I didn't ask her any questions relating to the investigation whatsoever.
Q. You told her about a deficit of $£ 30,000$, didn't you?
A. I -- from looking at the documentation, I said there's a deficit in excess of or around $£ 30,000$, but that's probably because that was when Ms Ridge was explaining the reason for precautionary suspending her, that would have been the reason given.
Q. She replied to you "I'm struggling with the computer", didn't she, when you asked her about 208
where the deficit was?
A. No, that's not true. I made a notebook entry of what was actually covered at the time. There was nothing discussed and I don't believe Mrs Hamilton made any comment whatsoever but, again, I'm only going on the documentary evidence including the notebook entry I would have made at the time.
Q. Then didn't you say "Well, you're the only one that's had problems with it"?
A. Okay -- no, that's completely untrue.
Q. All right. From where you were sitting on the sofa in the living room --
A. Sorry, I didn't catch that last bit?
Q. From where you were sitting on the sofa in the living room, do you remember --
A. I have no idea if I was sitting or standing. I cannot recall, even through looking at the documentation and my notebooks, I cannot recall going to Ms Hamilton's address.
Q. All right. Well, see if you remember this, that you began to look around the room at the objects in the room, and --
A. Sorry, say that again?
Q. You began to look round the room at the objects 209

Mrs Hamilton was sentenced at Winchester Crown
Court, were you present, Mr Brander?
A. I was, yes.
Q. Yes. So you remember that. A large number of residents of Mrs Hamilton's village, customers of the Post Office, turned up to court to give support to her; do you remember that?
A. Exactly, and that's the reason why I remember being at that court appearance because it was almost surreal in the fact that there were so many people, the public gallery was filled, I think every seat was taken.
Q. Outside court, after the proceedings had concluded, the local press --
A. Sorry, what's the last bit?
Q. Is it that you can't hear me or is it you can't understand --
A. My hearing is appalling. My hearing isn't the best.
Q. Okay. Outside court, after the proceedings had concluded, the local press took group photos of Mrs Hamilton and those from the village who came to support her. Do you remember that?
A. I don't, no.
Q. Because, as the press were taking photos, do you
in the room and Mrs Hamilton's late mother, who sadly died before Mrs Hamilton's conviction was quashed, said, "This is my house as well", didn't she?
A. I would not be looking around -- I was in and out in ten minutes. That was time for us to introduce ourselves, for Elaine Ridge to then precautionary suspend Mrs Hamilton, for me to explain the nature of the investigation and that I would be writing to her later that day and asking her to contact me when she felt able to be interviewed.

So I was just there explaining the process because I'd been asked to attend the audit and I was just explaining the nature of the process to Mrs Hamilton. There was no -- in no case whatsoever would I be asking any questions relating to an investigation whereby somebody hadn't been cautioned.
Q. No, because that would be wrong, wouldn't it?
A. Sorry, I didn't catch that?
Q. That would be wrong, wouldn't it?
A. Absolutely.
Q. The second day l'd like to ask you about is the day of Mrs Hamilton's sentencing. When 210
remember saying to them as you walked past "Don't take photos of her, she's a criminal"?
A. Oh, do you want -- I'm not even sure whether I should actually grace that with an answer. No, I wouldn't have said something like that.
MR MOLONEY: That's all I ask, sir. Thank you very much.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you. Is that it, Mr Blake?
MR BLAKE: Yes, sir, it is.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, thank you, Mr Brander, for giving a witness statement and for coming to give evidence and I hope that all those Core Participants who are listening and/or who are present at the hearing, including of course Mrs Hamilton, will have found the evidence today informative.

So I'm sorry to have to announce that we're starting at 9.00 tomorrow morning. That is because I have an appointment at 3.00 pm which I have to keep and, therefore, we have to finish at 2.00 but I thought everyone was entitled to some explanation of why we were starting, by court standards, at a very early time.

Thank you, l'll see you in the morning.
MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, sir.
212
( 3.54 pm )

(The hearing adjourned until 9.00 am
the following day)

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