

Coroner's Inquests into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005
Hearing transcripts - 24 January 2011 - Afternoon session

1 (2.00 pm)

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr O'Connor?

3 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: My Lady, our next witness is Simon Ford
4 who is going to give evidence by videolink. My Lady, as
5 you are aware, he is to give evidence from inside the
6 prison estate.

7 Mr Ford, can you hear me?

8 THE WITNESS: I can hear you, yes.

9 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Mr Ford, my name is Andrew O'Connor,
10 I'm one of the Counsel to the Inquests and I'm going to
11 be asking you questions first in a few moments. When
12 I finish my questions, it may well be that some of the
13 other barristers in the room have questions for you
14 after that. Do you understand that?

15 THE WITNESS: I do.

16 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: The coroner, Lady Justice Hallett, is
17 in the room and we're now in court session, although you
18 probably can't actually see the coroner on the screen in
19 front of you.

20 Mr Ford, before you give evidence, I believe you're
21 going to affirm rather than -- Mr Ford, can you hear me?

22 THE WITNESS: I can hear you, yes.

23 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: I think there might be a slight problem
24 with our videolink. The picture that we're looking at
25 froze a moment ago, but I'm going to carry on and let's

1 assume that it carries on working.

2 So, Mr Ford, the first thing we need to do is ask
3 you to take an affirmation and the usher here is going
4 to read out the words, and please can you repeat the
5 words after she reads them?

6 MR SIMON MARK FORD (affirmed)

7 (Evidence given by videolink)

8 Questions by MR ANDREW O'CONNOR

9 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Thank you. Could you give us your full
10 name, please?

11 A. Yes, Simon Mark Ford.

12 Q. Mr Ford, in July 2005, I think it's right that you were
13 a firefighter based at Soho fire station. Is that
14 right?

15 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.

16 Q. You were a member of blue watch?

17 A. Yes, that's correct.

18 Q. On 7 July 2005, you arrived to start your shift at about
19 9.15 in the morning. Is that right?

20 A. That's correct, yes.

21 Q. Were you, in fact, a little late that morning to start
22 your shift?

23 A. Yes, I was a little late, yes.

24 Q. Was that perhaps because you'd been caught up in some of
25 the travel disruption that had already started by that

1 time that morning?

2 A. Yes, exactly that, exactly that, yes, I got caught up
3 in, obviously, the disruption with what happened
4 previous.

5 Q. How was it that you made your way into work that
6 morning?

7 A. Could I say the picture's gone as well this side?

8 Q. I'm sorry?

9 A. That's better. The picture went for a second.

10 Q. Okay, but it's okay again now, is it?

11 A. It's okay again now, yes. What was your question again,
12 please?

13 Q. I'm sorry, I asked you how it was you got into work that
14 morning.

15 A. Yes, I drove in, but the traffic was still very severely
16 delayed.

17 Q. I see. It may be that by the time you reached Soho fire
18 station, at about 9.15, two of the appliances from the
19 fire station had already left to attend the emergency at
20 King's Cross station. Is that right?

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

22 Q. So the only appliance that was left was your appliance,
23 which was the --

24 A. Yes, that's right, yes.

25 Q. -- the hydraulic platform. Is that right?

1 A. That's correct, yes.

2 Q. We've already heard evidence from Mr Hume this morning
3 and he's explained how, although he wasn't a member of
4 your watch -- he was a member of red watch -- he had
5 stayed on that morning because the person who would
6 normally have been crewing that vehicle with you hadn't
7 arrived. Is that your memory of what happened?

8 A. Yes, that's it as well, yes, that's correct.

9 Q. I think you were, in fact, the driver of the hydraulic
10 platform appliance that morning.

11 A. That's correct, yes.

12 Q. We've heard from Mr Hume that you and he spent the time,
13 after you arrived and after the other two appliances had
14 gone, watching the television and seeing on the news the
15 developing story around London that morning?

16 A. Yes, that's correct, yes, we did, we saw the news.

17 Q. We've seen from some of the records that your appliance
18 was mobilised at about 9.50 and you were told that there
19 was an emergency at Tavistock Square and, indeed, an
20 explosion?

21 A. Yes, that's right, 9.49, yes, that's right.

22 Q. In the witness statement that you gave to the police
23 a few months after these events -- it was in November --
24 you said that you, at that point, suspected that in fact
25 it was a bomb that had caused the explosion. Is that

1 right?

2 A. Yes, that is correct, yes.

3 Q. What made you think that? Because, of course, that
4 information hadn't come through from headquarters.

5 A. Because on the news he said there had been a power
6 surge, but there'd been too many power surges in too
7 many different areas, so we came to the conclusion that
8 it was a bomb at certain places.

9 Q. I see. Was that something you discussed with Mr Hume
10 perhaps as you made your way towards Tavistock Square?

11 A. I spoke with Mr Hume in the mess in the fire station and
12 with the off-going watch, which was the red watch, so
13 I assume they was all watching it, in the TV room,
14 unfold.

15 Q. I see. Now, Mr Ford, can you give us some sort of idea
16 of the time that it took between receiving the
17 mobilisation message in Soho fire station and you and
18 Mr Hume arriving at Tavistock Square?

19 A. I think it was between 3 to 4 minutes.

20 Q. One infers from that that the traffic was fairly light
21 on the roads, at least the roads that you had to drive
22 along?

23 A. Yes, it was quite light for West End traffic going out,
24 but when I got to Southampton Row, it started getting
25 a bit busy then --

1 Q. I see.

2 A. -- as I was going to Southampton Row up into
3 Tavistock Square.

4 Q. Could we have on the screen, please, the photograph
5 [INQ10345 - not for publication]?

6 Mr Ford, we're looking on our computer system in
7 court at a photograph of the bus scene and I believe
8 that you've got a hard copy of the photograph there with
9 you. It's a photograph taken from behind the bus and
10 a few storeys up looking on to the road. Is that what
11 you're looking at now?

12 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.

13 Q. Mr Ford, I showed this photograph to Mr Hume when he was
14 giving evidence before lunch and he agreed with me that
15 the -- if one looks over on the right-hand side of the
16 road beyond the bus, one can see parked, first of all,
17 another bus, and then, behind that, a fire appliance,
18 and he thought that was your fire appliance. Is that --
19 do you think that's right?

20 A. Yes, 100 per cent right, yes.

21 Q. You, of course, parked the appliance, so you're sure
22 that was where you parked the fire engine?

23 A. 100 per cent.

24 Q. Then, if you look down next to the bus, you'll see
25 a lamp post with a blue bus lane sign on it, and just

1 next to it you can see two people who are in
2 Fire Brigade outfits, and he confirmed to me that that
3 certainly was the outfit that you and he were wearing
4 that day?

5 A. Yes, that is, yes.

6 Q. What was your first impression, Mr Ford, when you
7 reached Tavistock Square?

8 A. My first impression was utter devastation and utter
9 horror. We turned up, we could see the bus had
10 exploded, and obviously we could see body parts and
11 torsos and debris everywhere. So it's not a usual scene
12 we turn up to. It was quite shocking.

13 Q. In your statement, Mr Ford, you refer to seeing a body
14 in what you describe as a basement. Could I ask you to
15 have another look at the photograph, please? Is it
16 possible for you to describe to us on this photograph
17 where it was that you saw that body?

18 A. Yes, in -- I'd say the middle of the bus, from across to
19 the basement on the left-hand side, and it was down
20 there, just a torso.

21 Q. Is where you're describing just closer to the building
22 than the black iron railings that we see?

23 A. That's where the black iron railings are, that's where
24 the torso was, yes.

25 Q. So you describe it as a basement, but we could also

1 describe it as a light-well, as it were, it's open to
2 the open air?

3 A. That's correct, yes.

4 Q. Was that body something that you looked at particularly,
5 Mr Ford, or just something that you had a fleeting
6 glance of?

7 A. Well, there was so much going on at that present time,
8 it was a passing glance, because there was obviously
9 people that were needing more help than this body that
10 was in the basement, which was already definitely dead.

11 Q. You say it was definitely dead. Did you look at it long
12 enough to reach that conclusion?

13 A. Oh, well, it was -- I don't think it had any arms or
14 legs, so I definitely think it was dead.

15 Q. You saw a body down in that light-well, and you are
16 quite sure he was dead?

17 A. Yes, definitely. As I said, I thought that he was dead,
18 definitely, yeah.

19 Q. Thank you for that. We've heard from Mr Hume that he
20 was involved in the task of moving the bodies -- I'm
21 sorry, the casualties, the living casualties, from the
22 road behind the bus into the courtyard of the BMA. Is
23 that something you were also involved with with him?

24 A. Yes, we worked very closely together, yes, definitely.
25 The link's gone again, actually.

1 Q. Can you hear me?

2 A. I can hear you, yes, I can hear you.

3 Q. Well, let's carry on for the moment, Mr Ford.

4 In your --

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. In your witness statement, you refer to seeing someone

7 whom you describe as a black lady sitting on the side of

8 the bus facing the BMA, that's the nearside of the bus.

9 This lady you describe as hanging out of the bus. When

10 was it that you saw her?

11 A. As soon as we walked by the bus to get to the

12 casualties.

13 Q. I don't want to ask you any particular detail about what

14 you saw, Mr Ford, but can you tell me this: were you

15 able to form an impression whether she was alive or

16 dead?

17 A. She was definitely dead.

18 Q. Are you quite sure of that?

19 A. 100 per cent, yes.

20 Q. We've heard from Mr Hume that, once you and others had

21 completed the task of moving the living casualties into

22 the BMA courtyard, you then got on board the bus and

23 started to move the living casualties from the bus off

24 and they were then taken into the BMA themselves.

25 A. That's correct, yes.

1 Q. Can you describe to us, then, what happened at that
2 time?

3 A. What do you want me to say, how we got the casualties
4 off?

5 Q. Yes, first of all, perhaps, did you get on board the
6 bus?

7 A. Yes, I did, yes. First, we found it very difficult to
8 get on board the bus in the first place. Obviously you
9 have seen my witness statement, you know the reason why.

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. The bus down -- there was a sheet of metal which was at
12 the back end of the bus. We tried to go up this and we
13 kept going and slipping. Eventually, we got up there.
14 We'd seen several casualties that were apparently dead
15 to us straightaway. There was a casualty in front of
16 us, a black lady, who happened to be -- I think I say
17 female 1, which was an Asian lady.

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. Can I check my statement quickly?

20 Q. Of course. I think it's right to say that that female
21 casualty was the first casualty that you removed from
22 the bus?

23 A. It was, yes.

24 Q. Tell us, how did you manage to do that?

25 A. Obviously, what we did, we used a bus window, which had

1 blown out, as a stretcher, and we was reassuring her at
2 all times, trying to talk to her, trying to make sure
3 she was okay, and we put her on the blown-out window.
4 Then we took her back down that ramp which we was using,
5 and then passed her to someone else, and then went back
6 up -- back on to the bus again, past the black lady
7 again.

8 Q. Can I just ask you this, Mr Ford, it may be obvious to
9 you, but we've heard from other witnesses, several other
10 witnesses, who got on board the bus using the central
11 doors. Why was it that you didn't get on to the bus
12 through those doors and then evacuate the casualties
13 through those doors?

14 A. Well, there was only three people on the bus in the
15 entire time we were there, which was the police officer,
16 myself and Kevin Hume. The people that were trapped
17 were at this position, and that's the only way we could
18 get to them. There's another guy further down the line,
19 which I'll talk to you about in a minute, and he -- as
20 the bus moved down, he was trapped and the only place we
21 could get to him, a good place to get to this guy, was
22 from where we were standing.

23 Q. So was it the case that, although it was possible to get
24 on and off through those doors, that just didn't get you
25 to where you needed to be to rescue these particular

1 casualties?

2 A. To my knowledge, that's correct, yes.

3 Q. You've told us about the first casualty that you
4 removed. There was then, I think, a second casualty,
5 a man, with a very serious leg injury, whom you managed
6 to get off the bus.

7 A. That's correct, yes.

8 Q. What do you recall about him and about how you got him
9 off?

10 A. Well, when we got back on to the bus again, we could
11 hear him screaming, and he was trapped, there was
12 a metal sheet trapping him. We couldn't reach him. The
13 only way we could reach him was by going over a bit
14 further towards him. He showed tremendous courage and
15 strength. I don't know how he did it, but he showed
16 tremendous courage and strength to give us his hands to
17 manoeuvre himself a little bit so we could get him away
18 from the sheet of metal. He managed to do it, and we
19 were reassuring him all the way. I think Kev grabbed
20 hold of his belt, I grabbed hold of his jacket, and we
21 managed to lift him, with his help, off from where he
22 was trapped, and we lifted him up, put him on the bus
23 window again, which we used, and I put his leg -- his
24 leg -- I put his leg where his leg should be, and his
25 other leg was just hanging on slightly, but he was still

1 conscious for a set of time and we passed him down to
2 Nick Ellis from Holloway fire station.

3 Q. Yes. In the police statement that we have from you,
4 Mr Ford, you describe this man as being a black male.
5 Do you think it's -- we actually think that he was
6 probably a man called Mr Mark Beck, who is white.
7 Do you think it's possible that you may have got his
8 colouring wrong, perhaps because he was so dirty from
9 the soot and other dust from the explosion?

10 A. I don't know, I couldn't tell you, actually, to be
11 honest with you. Maybe.

12 Q. So you don't have a clear memory?

13 A. I thought he was a black male, though.

14 Q. You don't have a clear memory of his skin colour?

15 A. Well, I thought he was black, to be honest. But I could
16 be wrong.

17 Q. I see. Thank you. You mentioned Mr Ellis, another
18 member of the Fire Brigade, not from Soho police station
19 but from Holloway police station. Your memory, is it --

20 A. Fire station.

21 Q. Sorry, fire station. He had arrived by that time, had
22 he?

23 A. Yes, he was there by then, yes, and he was instructing
24 his firefighters where to go, et cetera.

25 Q. You then, I think, turned to the third casualty, whom

1 you managed to get off the bus, who was an Oriental
2 gentleman who was on the -- again, on the nearside of
3 the bus. Is that right?

4 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.

5 Q. Can you tell us what you remember about the process of
6 getting him off the bus?

7 A. The process, yes. He had a metal carbon fibre wrapped
8 around his throat. Myself and Kevin managed to cut the
9 wire free from his throat, and then we manhandled the
10 wire away from him. We saw him trapped -- he had
11 a backpack on as well. We saw him trapped and we -- we
12 got him away from the situation, put him on a -- on the
13 bus window and then passed him down to -- passed him
14 down to Station Officer Nick Ellis -- he was at
15 Holloway -- but he was -- I thought he was --
16 I thought -- he was in and out of consciousness, and
17 I thought he was -- he died in our arms, but I've found
18 out it was a week later, but it was upsetting.
19 I thought he'd gone.

20 Q. You say that he was in and out of consciousness. Do you
21 remember anything else about the condition that he was
22 in at that time?

23 A. He had blast injuries to his face and he was --
24 obviously, he was -- he was not in a good way,
25 obviously, and I've no more to say about that, actually.

1 I can't remember anything else.

2 Q. No. He was the last of the living casualties who were
3 removed from the bus. Is that right?

4 A. That's correct, yes.

5 Q. In your statement, Mr Ford, you do refer to checking
6 other people on the bus, people who weren't still alive,
7 and you describe them as being all apparently dead, or
8 words to that effect.

9 Do you have a particular memory of any of the other
10 people on the bus? You've already told us about the
11 black lady. Do you have a particular memory of any of
12 the others?

13 A. I'm afraid I don't, no, I'm sorry.

14 Q. Can I ask you this --

15 A. I can't remember.

16 Q. -- when you say "check", do you mean actually check for
17 their pulse or some other test of that nature, or was it
18 simply that you looked at them and took the view they
19 were not still alive?

20 A. You could tell they totally weren't still alive by the
21 injuries they'd suffered. If anyone we thought may have
22 been alive, we checked for a pulse and we checked for
23 breathing, but the injuries were so severe that you
24 could see that they were clearly dead.

25 Q. Thank you, Mr Ford. Was it at that point that you got

1 down off the bus?

2 A. After making sure everyone else who was alive off the
3 bus, that's when we got off, yes.

4 Q. You didn't get back on again at all, I think?

5 A. No, because obviously we were told there could be
6 a secondary device on there, so it was to get the
7 casualties off as quickly as possible and away from the
8 bus as quickly as possible.

9 Q. Of course, by that stage, all the casualties pretty much
10 had been moved into the BMA courtyard?

11 A. That's correct, yes. The triage areas I think, set up
12 shortly afterwards.

13 Q. Did you then go and spend some time assisting the
14 doctors and other medics with those casualties?

15 A. Yes, I was trying to help, what was needed with
16 dressings, et cetera, and just reassuring certain
17 casualties and we were lucky that the BMA building was
18 there and there were so many medics there because they
19 knew what to do straightaway.

20 Q. We've heard from Mr Hume that I think both of you, some
21 time after that, went round to Russell Square station
22 and gave some assistance there?

23 A. Yes, we went down to Russell Square and they needed some
24 heavy equipment down at Russell Square Underground and
25 we helped set up an area down there.

1 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Thank you very much, Mr Ford. Those
2 are all the questions I have for you. As I said, it may
3 be that some of the other barristers will now wish to
4 ask you further questions.

5 A. Thank you very much.

6 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Gallagher?

7 Questions by MS GALLAGHER

8 MS GALLAGHER: Mr Ford, just some limited questions from me
9 on behalf of a number of the bereaved families.
10 Could I first just ask you about this black male
11 whom you've described?

12 You were asked whether you thought he was black or
13 white, it was suggested to you he might be a Mr Beck,
14 and you said you were quite sure he was or you thought
15 he was black. We do know from other evidence that
16 reference has been made to two black men trapped in this
17 area. One of whom, who was conscious, was seen by
18 another witness attempting to free himself and
19 ultimately survived, and then a second black male who
20 the evidence suggests was killed outright.

21 Do you recall, Mr Ford, seeing a second black male
22 in the area? So do you recall, amongst the dead bodies
23 that you saw, any of them being a black male?

24 A. No, I'm really sorry, I don't actually. I can't
25 remember.

1 Q. No problem at all, Mr Ford. My Lady, for your note the
2 reference is to Mr McKee's statement, it's INQ1689-4 and
3 5.

4 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.

5 MS GALLAGHER: There's just one other matter, Mr Ford. In
6 your witness statement -- I know you have a copy
7 there -- you say at page 2, about halfway down the page:
8 "Anyone who was dead or any body parts were left
9 where they were."

10 This is you describing what you understood was
11 happening quite shortly after you've arrived as the
12 first crew on scene from the London Fire Brigade.
13 We've heard evidence this morning from a different
14 witness who was working in the BMA building and he
15 described people who were obviously dead being moved.
16 That's not something you were aware of. As you
17 understood it, anyone who was dead or any body parts
18 were being left where they were. Is that right?

19 A. Yes, I think, when we first turned up at the scene,
20 obviously the people we were looking out for is the
21 people that were still alive, so I don't -- I wouldn't
22 say the dead bodies we moved straightaway to the BMA
23 building.

24 After everything's been sorted out, who was alive,
25 and moved to the -- to inside the BMA building, then

1 I think maybe the bodies were moved after that. That's
2 what I believe.

3 Q. What you meant by that part of your statement was your
4 focus was on saving lives, any lives that were saveable,
5 so your priority was --

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. -- to focus upon survivors rather than upon the dead.

8 A. That's it, yes, it was.

9 Q. Just one last matter, Mr Ford. We know that you were
10 manning a hydraulic platform that day, a specialist
11 appliance. We've heard evidence from your colleague
12 that it was -- it had limited and basic first aid
13 equipment and, obviously, it had no stretchers on it
14 either, which is why you ended up using --

15 A. No stretchers at all, no.

16 Q. Which is why you ended up using makeshift stretchers
17 from the wreckage of the bus?

18 A. That's correct, yes, there was nothing on there we could
19 use.

20 Q. So it's a very different appliance, Mr Ford, to
21 a Fire Rescue Unit, an FRU, which would have quite
22 a large amount of specialist rescue equipment and first
23 aid equipment, is that right?

24 A. That's correct, yes. But I think they were all out at
25 the London Underground at the time.

1 MS GALLAGHER: Yes, we know from other evidence there were
2 only ten of them available. One of them, in fact,
3 couldn't be manned that day and the other nine had
4 already been sent to the earlier three scenes. So
5 you're quite right, Mr Ford, we'll hear other evidence
6 later confirming that. Thank you.

7 A. Thank you.

8 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Coltart?

9 Questions by MR COLTART

10 MR COLTART: Mr Ford, only a few questions, if I may.
11 I think that your remaining colleagues from the Soho
12 fire station had been sent, in fact, to deal with the
13 incident at King's Cross. Is that right?

14 A. That's correct, yes, yes, that's correct.

15 Q. So Messrs Shaw, Newton, Roche and Wilson, these were
16 people with whom you worked closely, presumably, at Soho
17 fire station, but they'd gone elsewhere and you'd gone
18 to Tavistock Square?

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. You say at the end of your statement:

21 "After the incident, I could not really talk to
22 anyone about my experiences, as the rest of my watch
23 went to King's Cross, and Kev [in other words, Mr Hume]
24 is a member of red watch and we don't work together."

25 But did you have an opportunity to discuss with your

1 colleagues who had gone to King's Cross the experiences
2 which they had encountered at that incident?
3 A. Yes, we discussed both incidents, but it's -- if they're
4 at King's Cross, I'm at Tavistock Square, so it's
5 a completely different incident and we couldn't really
6 talk about it, so I felt a bit isolated. We'd talk
7 about everything as a fire -- as a station, as a fire
8 station and as a watch, but on this occasion, I just
9 felt a little bit isolated, that's all, because I wasn't
10 at the same incident as them. I wish they were with me,
11 do you know what I mean?
12 Q. I understand that entirely. There had been some issues
13 in relation to the London Fire Brigade attendance at
14 King's Cross which arose primarily out of the erroneous
15 sending of some the fire engines to Euston Square rather
16 than to either King's Cross or Russell Square.
17 Do you recall having any discussions with your
18 colleagues from King's Cross about the impact which that
19 had had on their ability to deal with matters at
20 King's Cross?
21 A. No, I didn't have any discussions with them, no.
22 Q. Could we just have on screen briefly, please, [LFB56-92]?
23 If we could enlarge that first paragraph, please.
24 You may not have this document in front of you, in
25 which case I'm going to tell what you it is and then

1 read out the relevant passage from it. It's
2 a memorandum --
3 A. We've lost the link at the moment.
4 Q. Can you still hear me?
5 A. I can still hear you, yes.
6 Q. I think perhaps we'll carry on.
7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Carry on.
8 MR COLTART: Thank you. This is a memorandum that Mr Hearn,
9 your station commander at Soho sent to a man called
10 Tim Cutbill of the London Fire Brigade after the event:
11 "Tavistock Square and King's Cross incidents.
12 "Tim, with regard to the above incidents it's very
13 difficult to pick out several individuals who performed
14 above what would normally be expected and also to
15 exclude others for recognition who attended the events
16 at that day. However, I will attempt to summarise what
17 I know from my attendance at Tavistock Square as
18 'monitoring officer' and from the interviews I have held
19 with each member of Soho blue watch who were the first
20 in attendance at King's Cross."
21 Do you recall, yourself, ever attending an interview
22 with Mr Hearn in relation to how matters had unfolded at
23 Tavistock Square?
24 A. I can't remember, to be honest with you, no.
25 Q. We've heard from officers who attended at other scenes

1 that they took part later on in a formal debriefing
2 process where they got together at a certain specified
3 time, on a specified date, to discuss how things had
4 gone and to make comments as to how things might be done
5 better in the future. Were you ever invited yourself to
6 attend a debriefing session of that kind?

7 A. Yes, I did go to a debrief, yes.

8 Q. Can you recall where and when that debrief took place?

9 A. I can't recall the time. It's obviously after this
10 incident. I went sick for five weeks afterwards from
11 stress, but I remember it being at Westminster fire
12 station, and I think -- actually, if I do remember
13 correctly, I think the chief officer there,
14 Brian Knight.

15 Q. I'm sorry, I missed that name. Would you just let us
16 have it again?

17 A. It was the chief officer at the time.

18 Q. And his name was?

19 A. Ken Knight.

20 Q. Was that Brian Knight?

21 A. I believe it was Ken Knight. I might be mistaken. I've
22 been out -- Ken Knight.

23 Q. Ken Knight, I'm told by others better informed than I.
24 Are you able to recall roughly how many of you attended
25 this event?

1 Mr Ford, to put this into some context for you,
2 we've been asking repeatedly of the London Fire Brigade
3 if there was any debrief for the officers who attended
4 at Tavistock Square and we've been repeatedly told there
5 was none. Are you able to assist us with how many other
6 officers attended with you at the debrief at Westminster
7 fire station?

8 A. Yes, it wasn't all officers, there were firemen there as
9 well, you see. But there wasn't many at all, it was
10 only a couple of machines.

11 Q. Were you conscious of -- were there any materials there
12 to help you, for example, by way of a PowerPoint display
13 or a flipchart or anything of that nature?

14 A. No, no, nothing like that. It was about times, about
15 times turning up to the shout, et cetera.

16 Q. Was it just in relation to Tavistock Square or did it
17 encompass discussion about the other incidents that day,
18 the other bombsites?

19 A. To be fair, I can't say about the other incidents, but
20 I do know Tavistock Square was spoken about.

21 Q. Were you conscious of the time of anybody taking any
22 note of what was being said?

23 A. Well, I said it felt like -- it felt like a long time we
24 was on the bus on our own for. I thought we were on the
25 bus on our own for a long time, but I found out

1 afterwards Holloway were in attendance in a quick time,
2 and they were there as soon as possible, as soon as they
3 got to the incident.

4 Q. Do you remember --

5 A. It did feel like a long time on our own.

6 Q. Do you remember any of your colleagues from Soho fire
7 station, whether it's Mr Shaw, Mr Newton,
8 Mr Colebrook-Taylor, or any of the others, attending
9 with you at that debrief at Westminster fire station?

10 A. No, I don't, no.

11 Q. Finally this: do you recall ever any discussion, any
12 canteen chat or otherwise, at the fire station at Soho
13 about Mr Colebrook-Taylor's efforts to obtain a debrief
14 for the King's Cross officers?

15 A. I remember Adam Colebrook-Taylor trying to get a debrief
16 from the earliest time. I can't -- he obviously didn't
17 get a debrief, but I know I had a debrief with the
18 Tavistock Square.

19 Q. Did Mr Colebrook-Taylor or any of his other colleagues
20 ever express to you their understanding as to why they
21 weren't receiving a debrief?

22 A. No, not at all, no.

23 MR COLTART: All right, thank you very much. I have no
24 further questions.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Saunders?

1 Questions by MR SAUNDERS

2 MR SAUNDERS: Mr Ford, I want to ask you some questions on
3 behalf of one particular family. Their daughter,
4 Shyanu Parathasangary, is the lady you've referred to as
5 the black lady. She's on the downstairs of the bus
6 nearest the pavement. I think you've referred to her,
7 seeing her initially and saying that she was obviously
8 dead. Do you remember that?

9 A. That's correct, yes.

10 Q. Can I just confirm this, Mr Ford: her Ladyship has seen
11 your statement and in the body of the statement you
12 refer to this black lady -- in fact, she and her family
13 are from Sri Lanka, but you refer to her on at least
14 three, if not four, occasions when you're obviously
15 trying to rescue those who are still alive, because you
16 had to move very close past her and, on occasions,
17 beside her, and I think it's quite clear on each --

18 A. That's correct, yes.

19 Q. -- of those occasions, Mr Ford, you obviously were very
20 close and throughout this there were never any signs of
21 life as far as she was concerned?

22 A. I'm afraid to say there never was, no.

23 MR SAUNDERS: All right. Thank you very much indeed for
24 that, Mr Ford.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Sheff?

1 Questions by MS SHEFF

2 MS SHEFF: Mr Ford, you received your call from the
3 Control Centre of the possible bomb on the bus at 9.49,
4 but you'd already been watching the news on Sky so you
5 were aware of what was going on, were you?

6 A. I was, yes, I was aware.

7 Q. Thank you. It was your intuition that these were not
8 power surges because there was too much that was going
9 on in too many different places. Is that correct?

10 A. That's correct, yes, that's correct, yes, that's
11 correct.

12 Q. Did you have access on your vehicle to a central
13 emergency services radio system or just to the LFB
14 system?

15 A. It was the LFB.

16 Q. Was that the same, as far as your communications were
17 concerned, at the station itself, you were only aware of
18 what was coming through to you from LFB control?

19 A. That's correct, yes, what was coming through LFB control
20 and, obviously, you listen on the radio airwaves as
21 we're going to Tavistock Square as well. We knew there
22 was other incidents.

23 Q. Those radio airwaves being from LFB central control?

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. Thank you. You said that you moved casualties from the

1 rear area of the bus and one of them, you said in your
2 statement, was from by a taxi. Were these casualties
3 all live?
4 A. They all were at the present time, yes.
5 Q. When you went on to the bus, you were on the lower deck,
6 and again in your statement -- on page 3, my Lady -- at
7 the bottom you said that:
8 "We started to check out ..."
9 You have your statement in front of you, do you?
10 A. Yes, I do, yes.
11 Q. Good, that's helpful. Can you see the penultimate
12 paragraph:
13 "We then started to check out all the remaining
14 passengers on the bus and they all appeared dead."
15 A. "There were at least three to four other dead persons on
16 board ..."
17 MS SHEFF: I'm sorry?
18 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: He is in the wrong paragraph. The
19 paragraph before.
20 MS SHEFF: Just the paragraph above that:
21 "We then started to check out ..."
22 Do you see three lines above that? Just where you
23 were, if you go up three lines.
24 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.
25 Q. So having helped those whom you felt were still alive

1 and were, therefore, priority, you then went to check
2 others who were seemingly beyond help. Is that correct?

3 A. That's correct, yes.

4 Q. How did you ascertain whether they were dead or not?
5 Did you take any pulses or did you just take it from
6 their appearance that they were no longer alive?

7 A. To be fair, I think we could tell from the way they were
8 that they were definitely dead.

9 Q. Did that take into account the nature of their injuries?

10 A. Exactly, yes, thank you.

11 Q. For example, as you were telling us earlier about the
12 gentleman in the basement whom you saw earlier, because
13 of his injuries, he clearly didn't seem alive? Was it
14 the same with regard to these bodies?

15 A. Yes, it was the same scenario, what I said earlier there
16 in the text. I mean, you could clearly see they were
17 dead, in the positions they were.

18 Q. Do you have any recollection of any particular people
19 who were in that position?

20 A. Only the black lady, that's the only one I can remember,
21 because the rest I was just trying to focus on getting
22 the people out who were alive off the bus with Kevin as
23 quickly as possible. I think, soon after we got on
24 there, the bodies started getting covered with salvage
25 sheets or something, they started getting covered,

1 because obviously it was looking quite horrific the
2 scene, so I think they were getting covered, the bodies
3 were getting covered at that time.

4 Q. So those of you who were on the bus were able to
5 ascertain whether there was any sign of life from the
6 other bodies?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Having ascertained that there weren't, those bodies were
9 then covered up in order to protect them from prying
10 eyes and protect the public from the scene. Is that
11 right?

12 A. That is correct, yes, to show some sort of dignity,
13 that's all, for the victims of what happened, if you can
14 do in a situation like that.

15 Q. Yes, of course. When were they covered up and who did
16 that?

17 A. I couldn't tell you who covered them up, but I know,
18 whilst we were on top of the bus, I know we tried to
19 cover the black lady as well, while we was working,
20 working there, in that vicinity, because we was in very
21 close contact and we just wanted to show her some
22 respect, you know.

23 Q. Yes, of course. So that was while you were actually on
24 that bus the first time?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So you had with you --

2 A. When we got on there first, we tried to cover her
3 straightaway.

4 Q. Right. So, as you left the bus, you left it in a state
5 whereby it would not be open to public view, the bodies
6 on it?

7 A. That's what we tried to do. I couldn't say if every
8 body was covered, but I know a couple had to be covered
9 because the way they were -- because we were working in
10 that vicinity as well, so we wanted to just show a bit
11 of dignity. We were working in close quarters, do you
12 know what I mean, and it was very tight and, you know,
13 it was quite an horrific scene.

14 MS SHEFF: Yes. Well, thank you for doing so on behalf of
15 the families. No further questions.

16 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Boyd?

17 Questions by MS BOYD

18 MS BOYD: Mr Ford, can I just ask you about the debrief you
19 attended?

20 I think you told us that Sir Ken Knight took the
21 debrief. Sir Ken Knight was the Commissioner in 2005.

22 Are you sure it was Sir Ken Knight?

23 A. It was Ken Knight that was there.

24 Q. He was there?

25 A. That's all I recall, that's what I recall.

1 Q. Who was actually --
2 A. He didn't believe -- go on?
3 Q. Who was actually asking any questions?
4 A. It was a debrief with people that were at -- who
5 I thought were at the scene and, obviously, people who
6 were at the scene were asking the questions, and I had
7 to ask how come we were there -- it felt like we were
8 there for a long time on our own, and I got dismissed by
9 Ken Knight. I remember it being Ken Knight.
10 Q. Was it any formal debrief? You've been asked was there
11 a flipchart or a formal presentation.
12 A. No, there was nothing like that at all, no.
13 Q. So it was more of an informal debrief?
14 A. Yes.
15 MS BOYD: Thank you very much.
16 A. That's correct. Thank you.
17 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Any other questions for Mr Ford?
18 Mr Ford, can you hear me? I'm Lady Justice Hallett,
19 the coroner.
20 A. I can, yes.
21 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Ford, whatever's happened in your
22 life since 2005, no one can doubt the courage you
23 displayed on 7 July 2005. I do appreciate your being
24 prepared to help me in these proceedings. I know it
25 means a lot to the bereaved families and to those that

1 you helped rescue, so thank you very much for all that
2 you did that day. Thank you.
3 A. Thank you.
4 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr O'Connor?
5 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: May I invite you to call Michael Ellis?
6 MR MICHAEL JOHN ELLIS (sworn)
7 Questions by MR ANDREW O'CONNOR
8 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Could you give us your full name,
9 please?
10 A. Michael John Ellis.
11 Q. Mr Ellis, in July 2005, you were a station officer at
12 Holloway fire station, I believe.
13 A. That's correct.
14 Q. You were in command of blue watch at the time?
15 A. That is also correct.
16 Q. On the morning of 7 July 2005, can we take it that, as
17 at Soho fire station, the shift had changed at about
18 9.00?
19 A. The shift had changed at 9.00.
20 Q. You were part of the incoming shift, were you?
21 A. I was.
22 Q. Were you and the rest of your shift at the station aware
23 of the developing incidents across London?
24 A. At 9.00 we routinely change shift and we carry out
25 a roll call and, on the morning of 7 July, it was no

1 different, we were carrying out a roll call at the
2 station.

3 Whilst carrying out that roll call, the duty person
4 that was in the watch room who had been monitoring the
5 listening post had come out and explained to me that
6 a major incident had been declared at Aldgate. So I was
7 aware that something, at that stage, was taking place.

8 Q. You mention there a listening post. Can we take it that
9 that is someone whose role it is to listen to the London
10 Fire Brigade radio communications?

11 A. Yes, we have a duty person who's nominated at the change
12 of the shift who sits in the watch room, and they will
13 carry out log bookings and other associated tasks and
14 there is a listening -- at that time, a listening post
15 in the watch room and they would be listening to the
16 radio, if it was on.

17 Q. There is a separate procedure, is there not, for the
18 mobilisation of an appliance from your particular fire
19 station and that's a different procedure?

20 A. I don't understand the question, sorry.

21 Q. Let me put it a different way.

22 If one of the fire appliances from your station was
23 mobilised, that's something that you would be informed
24 of by a different way, not simply by someone hearing it
25 at the listening post?

1 A. Yes, it would be over the teleprinter.

2 Q. So the listening post is just a way of keeping generally
3 informed of what's going on around London?

4 A. Yes, that's right.

5 Q. We've heard that Mr Hume and Mr Ford, at Soho fire
6 station, were watching the television and getting some
7 information that way. Was that also taking place at
8 your fire station?

9 A. Not at that time, because we were still taking part in
10 roll call and we were obviously in the process of
11 nominating people for their duties of the watch.

12 Q. I see. We know -- and we'll come to this in a minute --
13 that two appliances from Holloway were mobilised at
14 about 9.50 that morning. Were they the first two
15 appliances that were mobilised that day?

16 A. To that particular incident, along with the hydraulic
17 platform from Soho. So we were a part of the initial
18 attendance to that incident, that is correct.

19 Q. Yes. What I wanted to ask was whether any appliances
20 from Holloway had previously been sent to any of the
21 other incidents across London?

22 A. No, we hadn't.

23 Q. Can we look, then, at [LFB24-1], please? Mr Ellis, the
24 two appliances from Holloway that were sent to Tavistock
25 were -- their call signs were A311 and A312. Is that

1 right?

2 A. That is correct.

3 Q. We see towards the bottom of this page -- we don't need
4 to, I think, enlarge it any further -- reference to
5 those. I'll ask you about them in a minute, but it's
6 right, is it, that A311 was a pump ladder and that was
7 your vehicle?

8 A. Alpha 311 was the pump ladder, it's significant in so
9 much as, from the order in, I would be aware that I was
10 being ordered as a watch commander, so that I would be
11 expected to take command at the incident.

12 Q. I see. So that's because the A311 -- or A311 as I think
13 you put it -- is first in the list, you're the senior --

14 A. It's got the prefix WC in the title, which means watch
15 commander.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. So I would know from the order in that I was expected to
18 take command or I was being ordered on for that incident
19 as the commander.

20 Q. I understand. A312 was a pump machine, I've seen it
21 described as?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. What's the difference between a pump machine and a pump
24 ladder?

25 A. Effectively, it's the equipment that both the appliances

1 carry. A pump ladder, primarily, we would refer to as
2 the rescue machine and a pump would be, for layman's
3 terms, an everyday appliance that we would use for
4 a number of duties, but effectively a pump and pump
5 ladder do similar tasks.

6 Q. I think you've already made it clear that you were in
7 command of the appliance A311.

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. It was Leading Firefighter Drew, I believe, who was in
10 command of A312?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Were you in court this morning, Mr Ellis?

13 A. I was.

14 Q. So you heard Mr Hume give evidence?

15 A. I did.

16 Q. You would then have seen that we looked at this entry
17 timed at 09.50, which shows the mobilisation of those
18 three vehicles, and the words that you would have seen
19 that came through the printer at your respective fire
20 stations above the reference to the three vehicles
21 "suspected explosion at Tavistock Square".

22 A. Can I just make a point of clarity?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. When I received the order in, I wasn't at the station.

25 I was mobile on the station's ground, so I would have

1 received an order in via radio telephony, which is what
2 the "RT" stands for. So I would have received the order
3 in from the location that I became available from.

4 Q. You say you were mobile, did you say in the station
5 grounds?

6 A. On the station's ground, which meant that we'd been to
7 another shout prior to attending Tavistock Square.

8 Q. You were returning?

9 A. Yes, we'd been -- I'd been ordered to a flooding that
10 morning, which we'd completed and, therefore, the
11 appliance was then available for immediate dispatch for
12 the next incident.

13 Q. I see. Before we look at any other entries, can you
14 help us whether the "A6" which we see after "suspected
15 explosion" is of any significance?

16 A. The A6 is a code that would be used by Control, but it's
17 not a code we'd be familiar with on the station. The
18 line -- the significant information for us would be the
19 time of call, the -- what we're actually being called
20 to, the address, the grid square and the other
21 appliances that are attending the incident.

22 Q. I see. So there is, in fact -- and this may -- it
23 probably doesn't matter, but there's no information that
24 you were sent to the effect that it was an explosion on
25 a bus, it's just a suspected explosion?

1 A. At that time, it was a suspected explosion.

2 Q. The fact that you were mobile, unlike A312 and A244,
3 does that also explain this other slight discrepancy on
4 this document, in that we see, don't we, that A312 and
5 A244 are committed by the system at 09.50 shortly before
6 the mobilisation message was sent, whereas your vehicle
7 seems to have been committed after the mobilisation
8 message was sent?

9 A. That would be purely down to the way that the system
10 records the time of order in through the operator and so
11 on and so forth. At the time the message is sent to the
12 station via the teleprinter mobilisation system, we
13 would be receiving the order in over the radio at the
14 same time.

15 Q. So you simply divert? Instead of driving back towards
16 the station, you divert to wherever you would need to
17 go?

18 A. I would be called up with a priority message to inform
19 me I was about to receive an order in. I would respond
20 to the priority message from the control operator and
21 then they would read effectively what is on there to me.
22 I would confirm what the order in was, which would
23 probably take no longer than a minute to a minute and
24 a half at most.

25 Q. In fact, we see from this document I'll show you in

1 a minute it looks as if you, in fact, arrived before the
2 other machine from Holloway at Tavistock Square.

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. Could we, just to confirm that, look at the third page
5 of this document, please, and focus in on the grid?

6 We see A311 and A312, the two top lines. You were
7 in court this morning when we established that the third
8 line, A244 is in error, that was Mr Hume, he did get
9 there first.

10 A. That's right.

11 Q. But your vehicle is shown as arriving at 10.00. And the
12 other vehicle, Firefighter Drew's vehicle, is shown
13 arriving at 10.05, five minutes later.

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. Does that accord with your memory of when the machines
16 arrived?

17 A. A couple of significant points. The time of call was
18 09.49. Time mobilised, as shown on this sheet, is
19 09.50. We then go from the time of call to the time
20 mobile, which is saying 09.55. In actual fact, our
21 mobile time would have been quicker than that, because
22 I've already said that the call handling -- for me to
23 take the call, would be approximately a minute, a minute
24 and a half, so we would have been en route, and the same
25 with the attendance time, the attendance time could have

1 been slightly before that because there is often a delay
2 if we've got a number of appliances all trying to commit
3 to being in attendance. So I would say it could have
4 been before that.

5 Q. I see. At any rate, the order in which the appliances
6 arrived, Mr Hume's appliance first, then yours, then
7 Mr Drew's, that is correct?

8 A. That is correct.

9 Q. I think it's right to say that you approached
10 Tavistock Square from the other direction to that of
11 Mr Hume. You approached from the north, did you?

12 A. We did.

13 Q. Did you drive down, in fact, Upper Woburn Place?

14 A. We did.

15 Q. Where did you park?

16 A. We turned off of Marylebone Road and turned left into
17 Upper Woburn Place, and more or less stopped at the top
18 of the road.

19 Q. It may be that we can use a plan to help to you show us.
20 Could we try [INQ10285-2], please? Does that help,
21 Mr Ellis? We see, just to orientate you, Euston station
22 is up towards the top, towards the left and towards the
23 top.

24 A. Yes, well, we would have been towards the top. As soon
25 as we turned into -- a couple of things. Obviously, we

1 were aware that we had been called to an explosion. Up
2 to that point, I was monitoring radio traffic, so I knew
3 that there was other things going on. Then, when we
4 turned into Upper Woburn Place, that was the first time
5 that we were aware or really realised what we were
6 facing with and, therefore, in line with what we would
7 normally do for such an incident, we'd stopped further
8 away for crew safety and procedural -- operational
9 procedural matters.

10 Q. So somewhere between the junction of Euston Road and
11 Tavistock Square?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Perhaps closer to Euston Road?

14 A. Yes, yes.

15 Q. Did you then go towards the scene on your own, leaving
16 your crew in the vehicle, or did you all progress down
17 to the bus?

18 A. No, it's very clear, when we'd arrived, already been
19 gathering information around the incident, we'd already
20 been pre-briefing on the appliance as to what our
21 actions would be, it was clear that we had been -- at
22 that point, we didn't know what we'd been called to, but
23 we soon established that the vehicle in front of us was,
24 in fact, a bus. I made a conscious Command decision
25 that the crews would turn the appliances around, we'd

1 start setting up an RVP, gathering the equipment
2 together and I would go to the bus to make contact with
3 Leading Firefighter Hume and Firefighter Ford to make an
4 on-scene assessment as to exactly what was required.

5 Q. I see. So you went forward on your own?

6 A. I did.

7 Q. Did you go straight to the bus or did you take the
8 opportunity to do a recce of the scene more generally?

9 A. No, straight to the bus.

10 Q. Was it at that point -- you've heard Mr Hume and Mr Ford
11 give evidence -- that they became aware of you as they
12 were moving some of the live casualties off the bus?

13 Was that what they were doing at this moment?

14 A. At that -- I think they'd seen -- I think Kevin had seen
15 us turn into Upper Woburn Place and certainly I'd seen
16 that there was two -- at that time, two firefighters
17 working in the rear of the bus, and as I was walking
18 towards them, we'd made eye contact with each other.

19 Q. Could we have another look at, in fact, the MOBIS
20 document we looked at before? It's LFB24. Could we
21 look at page [LFB24-2], please?

22 If we could enlarge at the top there, do you see
23 this, Mr Ellis, here's a message timed at 10.12 --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- from you, so this is some 10 minutes, or maybe even

1 a little longer than that, after you arrive.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Can I ask, would you have sent this from your fire
4 appliance, or were you able to send it from a handheld
5 device?

6 A. No, it would go from the fire appliance and I would have
7 had a discussion with my driver, formulated the message
8 and the driver would have sent the message for me on my
9 behalf.

10 Q. When was this sent in terms of the narrative? Was it
11 sent before -- would you have decided to send it before
12 you left the machine to go on your recce or after you'd
13 been down to see Mr Hume and Mr Ford?

14 A. No, this was after and, to the best of my recollection,
15 it would have been sent, I believe, after we'd removed
16 people from the bus.

17 Q. It's quite a useful assistance in terms of pinning down
18 some of the times, you see, Mr Ellis. Perhaps we can
19 look towards the bottom of the page, if we could. You
20 see -- I want to ask you a bit more about this message
21 in a minute, but you can see that about half an hour, or
22 a little less than that, later, 10.39, another message
23 is sent where you say:

24 "All saveable life removed from the bus."

25 That would be, what, some 40 minutes or even

1 a little more than that after you arrived? Was it, in
2 fact, as late as that that all the casualties were
3 removed --

4 A. No, no.

5 Q. -- or was it more like that message at 12 minutes past?

6 A. The initial actions for us on arrival, one, we weren't
7 sure at that stage whether there were any secondary
8 devices, so the priority was to remove people from the
9 bus, which we were doing.

10 In order to put the message together at 10.39, I had
11 had to enter the bus and make, as best as I could,
12 a scene assessment and then formulate that message. So
13 that message would have come some time after the initial
14 rescues.

15 Q. Thank you for clarifying that. We've leapt ahead or
16 ourselves a little. Can we go back to 12 minutes past?
17 So this is a message that you sent, having been to the
18 bus.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. As we've heard, it was when you arrived at the bus that
21 that process of removing the casualties from it was
22 taking place.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So this is much closer in time to the time when the
25 casualties were moved off.

1 A. Yes., that's correct.

2 Q. When you got to the bus, is it right that Mr Hume and
3 Mr Ford were already on board moving those casualties
4 off?

5 A. They were.

6 Q. You, of course, were becoming the senior LFB officer on
7 scene at this moment, as it were?

8 A. That's right.

9 Q. You were taking over from Mr Hume.

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. Did you speak to him about the scene?

12 A. Yes, I did, yes, it was very difficult. I think there's
13 a number -- you know, it was difficult. I'd gone to the
14 bus. It was important for me, I had priorities to
15 assess the scene, decide on how many people were left on
16 the bus, how we were going to get them off and what
17 I was faced with from extrication and, whilst we were
18 taking the people off the bus, we were talking to each
19 other about the scene assessment, what he perceived to
20 be the difficulties at that time, and what I perceived
21 to be my priorities and I then took charge immediately,
22 but that was all taking place at the same time.

23 Q. I see. Mr Hume and Mr Ford were agreed that the three
24 casualties they moved off the bus first was a female
25 casualty, then a man with a very seriously injured leg

1 and then, finally, the man we know as Sam Ly.

2 Certainly, it was Mr Ford who said that it was while
3 they were moving the second of those casualties, the man
4 with the injured leg, that he was first conscious that
5 you were there. Is that consistent with your memory?

6 A. More or less. I recall it more or less the same, yes,
7 there was three casualties and, in fact, the last -- or
8 the gentleman we were taking off certainly we were in
9 dialogue at that time, yes.

10 Q. You will have heard me ask both Mr Hume and Mr Ford
11 about the second casualty that was taken off, the man
12 with the badly injured leg.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. I think it's right to say that in the statement you gave
15 to the police you didn't actually mention what colour
16 his skin was. Do you have any memory of that at all?

17 A. I've got to be honest, no, I haven't. It was very
18 difficult and there was a lot going on in a very short
19 space of time.

20 Q. There were obviously far more important things on your
21 mind at the time.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What about the third casualty? Do you have a memory of
24 him, Sam Ly as we now know his name to be?

25 A. Yes, I do, yes.

1 Q. Tell us what you remember about him and what you were
2 doing while that process of trying to get him off the
3 bus was taking place?

4 A. I think Sam had become a focal point of where we were
5 with removing people from the bus. We'd had dialogue
6 around the type of extrication that we may have to do or
7 not do. I had instructed the crews initially to put
8 equipment together, expecting to have to carry out
9 a difficult extrication. We were very fortunate that,
10 on that occasion, we were able to manhandle the debris
11 from the bus, which was far quicker, and it was very
12 quick. Our priority was to get people off the bus, get
13 them away from the bus as quickly as possible, and to do
14 as much as we could do for all of the people that were
15 there in the best possible way.

16 And Sam certainly was -- it was just very difficult,
17 and we did everything we could do as quickly as
18 possible.

19 Q. Were you still on the pavement while Sam Ly was being
20 taken off?

21 A. I spent some time standing on the pavement reassuring
22 and trying to comfort Sam Ly whilst we were in the
23 process of removing the debris from around the bus in
24 order to be able to free him, and then assisted by going
25 into the middle of the bus and lifting him out of the

1 bus from underneath the collapsed roof with another
2 firefighter.

3 Q. Did you also climb up over the outside of the bus rather
4 than go in through the doors?

5 A. No, we went in through the middle doors because we could
6 gain access through the middle doors and the way the
7 roof had collapsed we could crawl in underneath the roof
8 and perch on the seat in front, where Sam Ly was
9 sitting, and lean over to assist lifting him out of the
10 bus.

11 Q. What was his condition while all this was going on?

12 A. He was obviously in severe distress. I think it was
13 difficult because there were moments where he was
14 obviously in a lot of pain, lapsing in and out of
15 consciousness, and other times when he was probably
16 quite calm, if you like, but more to do with shock, but
17 it wasn't easy, no.

18 Q. You mentioned the equipment that you instructed your
19 crew to bring which, in the end, wasn't needed. Was
20 that the Holmatro cutting equipment that we've heard
21 about?

22 A. Yes, we have a standard set of cutting equipment on each
23 front line appliance for normal extrication, and it
24 would be exactly, because of what we'd been called to.
25 So it was a range of equipment I'd ask them to be

1 preparing and, as with all things, in order to start
2 cutting, we have to assemble the equipment and then
3 start the procedure, and then I've made an assessment
4 that, in order to remove him from the bus as quickly as
5 possible, the cutting equipment wouldn't be required, so
6 I'd asked them to leave that and get to the bus as quick
7 as possible.

8 Q. So is it the case that these were instructions you'd
9 given before you'd left the fire appliance in the first
10 instance to start preparing that equipment?

11 A. Yes, yes.

12 Q. They never, in fact, brought it down to the bus?

13 A. I think it was brought halfway down because they had set
14 up an equipment dump -- they were already in the first
15 aid equipment, small gear, the cutting equipment, and
16 salvage sheets and things that we would need -- and by
17 that time, I was able to make an assessment that
18 actually those items of equipment weren't required and
19 we would be able to revert to manhandling the debris of
20 the roof away.

21 Q. I see. We've heard that, once, with your assistance and
22 the assistance of others, he was moved off the bus, he
23 was put onto a makeshift stretcher, a table or something
24 of that nature?

25 A. A table, I believe, yes.

1 Q. And then taken into the BMA courtyard?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. You presumably weren't one of those carrying the table
4 because you were up on the bus?

5 A. No, I wasn't.

6 Q. Just, again, to try to get an idea of the timing, was it
7 after all that had happened that you then went back to
8 the appliance and sent that message that we were looking
9 at that was timed, I think, at 12 minutes past?

10 A. I think that would be correct, yes.

11 Q. You mentioned, when you were talking about the cutting
12 equipment and the crews preparing that equipment, that
13 at the same time, as I understood you, they were also
14 preparing first aid equipment. Tell us more about that.
15 Was that the first aid equipment carried on your
16 appliances?

17 A. Each appliance carries first aid equipment and it would
18 be our standard procedure that, if we was attending,
19 effectively, a road traffic accident -- you could
20 categorise it as that -- the crews would know the
21 standard equipment we'd be expected to take with us, and
22 it's important that the crews ready that equipment to
23 take it with them rather than going to the scene and
24 coming back for equipment. So I was comfortable that
25 that's what they were doing.

1 Q. I just want to ask you a few questions about the sort of
2 equipment that involves and if one does it by reference
3 to the equipment that was needed at the scene. First of
4 all, stretchers, were there any stretchers on board?

5 A. We don't carry stretchers on front line pumping
6 appliances.

7 Q. What about oxygen canisters?

8 A. We carry the standard laerdal on both pump and pump
9 ladder which we would use for administering oxygen to
10 patients.

11 Q. So there would have been one of those devices on each of
12 the --

13 A. On each. Every front line appliance carries a basic
14 first aid kit and the laerdal, as it would be referred
15 to then.

16 Q. Another piece of -- type of medical equipment that was
17 needed in due course were fluids to be used
18 intravenously. Did you have anything of that nature?

19 A. No, we don't -- at that time, we don't involve fluids,
20 no, that's an ambulance job.

21 Q. Did I hear you say "at that time"?

22 A. At that time, no, we wouldn't have been doing it, no.

23 Q. Do you do that now?

24 A. I don't believe we do, no.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Does it sound as if the first aid

1 equipment is geared towards those who are likely to be
2 affected by a fire?

3 A. No, the first aid equipment is a standard first
4 intervention first aid equipment which we would use in
5 a range of circumstances, so RTAs in particular,
6 certainly fires, because it's what predominantly we
7 would be going to, but it's got a range of first aid
8 equipment that we can use in a number of circumstances,
9 all of which we were trained in administering.

10 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: What about defibrillators or heart
11 monitors, equipment of that nature?

12 A. We weren't carrying defibrillators at that time, but
13 I believe we do now.

14 Q. I see. The oxygen canisters that you mentioned, were
15 you aware that those were subsequently used at the
16 scene?

17 A. Yes, they would have been used, yes.

18 Q. I've asked you about first aid equipment from the point
19 of view of particular types of equipment that were
20 needed, we've heard from other evidence.

21 Can you give us an idea of what other sort of first
22 aid kit you had that would have been in that dump of
23 first aid kit that the crews were assembling?

24 A. The contents of the first aid kit?

25 Q. Yes, in very general terms.

1 A. It would be basic bandages, splints. We'd have had, you
2 know, normal sort of tweezers, scissors. Effectively
3 it's a first response first aid kit.

4 Q. I see. Can I take you back, then, to the time when
5 Sam Ly, the last living casualty, was removed from the
6 bus? In the statement that you gave to the police
7 in October 2005, you said this -- I think you were
8 referring to about this time. You said:

9 "Whilst in the bus, I took this opportunity to
10 assess the number of casualties that were in the bus and
11 try and establish if anyone else was saveable. I had
12 checked two other casualties for signs of life but this
13 was to no avail."

14 Do you remember those two casualties whom you
15 checked for signs of life?

16 A. I couldn't definitely say, no. It was -- I've got
17 a responsibility and, to the best of my ability, that's
18 what I did.

19 Q. You've heard some evidence about the lady -- she's
20 referred to as a black lady, although we know that her
21 family was from Sri Lanka -- who was sitting just behind
22 Sam Ly. Do you remember her at all?

23 A. I do remember the casualty behind Sam Ly, but I wouldn't
24 have been able to say whether it was a male or female at
25 that time.

1 Q. It may be we can't take this much further in the light
2 of your understandable lack of memory, but can I just
3 ask you this: where you say that you checked other
4 casualties for signs of life, can we take it that you
5 were checking pulses or checking for breathing, that
6 sort of check?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Did you get off the bus fairly shortly after this?

9 A. Initially, once all of -- as we -- as I'd said in the
10 statement, saveable life, they'd been removed from the
11 bus, it was a priority then to get people away as
12 quickly as possible. I then went back into the bus,
13 I think I might have well been with an ambulance
14 officer, to try to establish how many people were
15 actually left on the bus.

16 Q. I see, yes. Perhaps we'll come to that in a moment.
17 But just at that time when you were leaving the bus
18 after getting Sam Ly off, you were the senior
19 Fire Brigade officer there?

20 A. I was.

21 Q. Did you consider it to be part of your responsibility to
22 check that either you or officers under your command had
23 established that there were, indeed, no living people
24 left on the bus at that point?

25 A. Well, at that -- by that time, I'd been liaising with an

1 ambulance officer, so we'd -- my priority was to
2 establish if we'd got anyone there that we believed we'd
3 be able to save and, if so, how we'd get them off of the
4 bus, and then it was also to make contact with the
5 police officer and ambulance officer and then ask for
6 their specialist knowledge around what people were
7 left -- if there was anyone else to be rescued.

8 Q. As you and your team were getting off the bus at about
9 10.15 or a bit before that, had you formed a view that
10 there were indeed no saveable lives left on the bus?

11 A. Yes, I had, yes.

12 Q. Could we then look back at the screen and back at that
13 document, LFB24 [LFB24-2]? We then can, I think, look down at the
14 message that you sent at 10.39.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. This is some half an hour or so after the message at
17 12 minutes past. Before we look at the detail of that,
18 what had you been doing in the intervening period? Was
19 it the making contact with other emergency services that
20 you mentioned to me a moment ago?

21 A. I'd already met with officers from the -- there was
22 officers from the police force, the Ambulance Service,
23 had been speaking to my leading firefighter about where
24 we were, establishing the triage area, which was -- I'd
25 been informed walking wounded had gone to the

1 County Hotel, so there was some people in the
2 County Hotel, the more seriously wounded had gone into
3 the BMA courtyard.

4 So it was about establishing scene safety. Satisfy
5 myself that, at that time, we'd still not confirmed the
6 secondary device issue. Keeping the crews away from the
7 main scene of operations, establishing where the triage
8 area was, that that was safe. We'd got a reasonable
9 amount of substantial cover should there be a secondary
10 device, and that we could evacuate the people from the
11 BMA courtyard in a safe way, they didn't have to come
12 back through the scene. Establishing an RVP,
13 establishing the restrictive zone.

14 In that phase, I'm then gathering as much
15 information and taking command and trying to bring some
16 normality back to the scene that's in front of us, and
17 for myself to be able to send that message back to our
18 control for them to understand exactly what the scene of
19 operations are.

20 Q. So it's this message which was really your first full
21 message --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- containing the detailed information that you'd
24 managed to obtain in that period?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. If we look at it, as I say, it's timed at 10.39. The
2 first words are you confirming that all saveable life
3 removed from the bus, though, as you've said, that was
4 something that had happened, in fact, a while before.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You then said four persons confirmed apparently dead on
7 the bus. Do I understand that you'd gone back on the
8 bus before sending this to try and --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- count, as it were, the number of bodies on the bus?

11 A. Yes, that's the best way of putting it, yes. We'd gone
12 back on to the bus to try to establish what was left --
13 you know, to be able to put a figure to formulate the
14 message.

15 Q. In fact, there were six bodies on the bus at this point,
16 as you probably know.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. An obvious inference is that only four of them were
19 sufficiently visible that you had seen them at that
20 point.

21 A. Yes, it was difficult, yes.

22 Q. This was still, of course, before the controlled
23 explosion took place. So is it fair to say that you
24 didn't want to stay on the bus any longer than necessary
25 or disturb too much on the bus?

1 A. There was that pressure, but also the pressure that we
2 wanted to do -- make sure we'd done the best and that,
3 if there was anyone left there, that it was possible we
4 had done everything we could to be certain. So as
5 quickly as possible, but that's where we were.

6 Q. In an ideal world I could ask you some questions through
7 which we could establish which four people or bodies you
8 had seen by the time you sent this message and,
9 therefore, which two you hadn't.

10 Is your memory detailed enough for us to undertake
11 that exercise? Do you have a memory of which four
12 bodies you had seen at this point?

13 A. Not -- I'm sorry, but, no, not this long ago. It was --
14 no, I couldn't really say. But I know it was difficult
15 and there was insufficient for me to make a decision
16 around where they were situated on the bus, that that's
17 what they were or who they were.

18 Q. Reading on in the message, you refer to eight casualties
19 all suffering from multiple blast injuries removed to
20 the triage centre in the BMA building. Were they in the
21 building itself or possibly in the courtyard, do you
22 think?

23 A. In the courtyard.

24 Q. Then nine further casualties all suffering from multiple
25 injuries also removed to the triage centre adjacent to

1 the BMA building. Do you recall, is that outside on the
2 pavement or in a different building?

3 A. No, in fairness I think it was all part of the BMA
4 courtyard.

5 Q. I see. You then say:

6 "Crews assisting with first aid at [the] scene."

7 We've heard Mr Hume and Mr Ford describe that's
8 exactly what they did after they had finished on the
9 bus.

10 A. That's right.

11 Q. "Further secondary device suspected."

12 We've heard evidence about that.

13 "Restrictive zone has now been enlarged. This
14 incident is at Upper Woburn Place."

15 A. That's right.

16 Q. Is that because you had initially been given a different
17 address for the incident?

18 A. We'd been given -- I think it was Tavistock Square and
19 there was -- where the bus was resting I think was
20 Upper Woburn Place. So there was an issue between just
21 clarifying the address, but it was more of a formality
22 than anything else.

23 Q. Yes, I see. Do you remember the controlled explosion
24 taking place?

25 A. Yes, I do.

1 Q. The other evidence we have is it was around about this
2 time, at around 10.40. Is that consistent with your
3 memory?
4 A. Yes, I would say that's about right, yes.
5 Q. Can we look briefly at the next message you sent, which
6 was, again, about half an hour later after that?
7 Again, it's a message from you confirming that A24
8 is now in attendance. A24, would that be a more senior
9 officer to yourself?
10 A. That would be a station manager, yes.
11 Q. Do you remember who that was?
12 A. Yes, I do.
13 Q. Could you give his name?
14 A. Yes, Station Manager Hearn.
15 Q. Mr Hearn --
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. -- whose name we've heard before?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. You described that a Silver meeting has been held with
20 the ambulance and police services. Euston fire station,
21 we've heard from other evidence that Euston fire station
22 was designated the place where these Silver meetings
23 happened?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. It was a little way away from the scene, but it was felt

1 to be the place with the best communications, I think?

2 A. Yes, it was at the top of the street and, for strategic
3 purposes, it was the best place for us to hold a meeting
4 of that nature.

5 Q. If we look over the page, we see Euston fire station
6 used as the RVP point for further officers attending.

7 Towards the end of the message we see this:

8 "Ambulance and police have made this a major
9 incident but Fire Service have not made this a major
10 incident."

11 Can I just ask you a few questions about that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Presumably it would have been within your power to have
14 declared this a major incident for the Fire Service, if
15 you had felt that appropriate?

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. It may be surprising, to a layman at any rate, that an
18 incident like this -- a bomb on a bus in Central London,
19 a large number of people killed, even larger number of
20 people injured -- would not be a major incident for the
21 Fire Service. Can you explain why that would be?

22 A. There's a number of -- each of the emergency services
23 has the right to call or declare a major incident.

24 Primarily for us, we would be -- or I would be
25 looking at what we would be required to carry out as

1 a Fire Service. To the untrained eye, you would look at
2 the incident we had in front of us and, even although it
3 looks the way it does from the purposes of the resources
4 that I'd got in order to deal with that incident,
5 I could establish that I didn't require any specialist
6 cutting equipment, so I didn't require an FRU, it wasn't
7 required, didn't require any additional resources, so,
8 therefore, I was quite comfortable with the decision
9 that I made at that time that the ambulance would
10 declare it, because obviously there is a large number of
11 casualties, so that would be their responsibility and,
12 likewise, the police would take primacy because it would
13 become a crime scene and, effectively, once we'd carried
14 out our rescues at the scene and established that
15 there's no danger of fire and everyone was off the bus,
16 we would be in a good place.

17 Also, because there's three -- by this time, we had
18 known there had been three other incidents declared in
19 London that were all attracting resources. It would be
20 something for me to have in the back of my mind that
21 I wouldn't want to be tying resources up to Tavistock
22 when they could be deployed at other incidents, so there
23 wasn't a requirement, I was quite comfortable with that
24 decision.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So really it's whether you declare

1 a major incident for the Fire Brigade depends upon what
2 Fire Brigade resources you need as opposed to what other
3 resources -- for example, a dozen ambulances might be
4 required, it doesn't mean you need a dozen fire
5 appliances?

6 A. That's correct.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Is that the basic message?

8 A. That's correct.

9 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: We know, of course, that firefighters
10 can perform a wide variety of roles, not all of them
11 roles that they're specially trained for. So here we've
12 seen that the firefighters assisted with first aid in
13 the courtyard.

14 A. They did.

15 Q. But in terms of the specialist firefighting roles or
16 roles that the Fire Brigade are particularly trained
17 for, from the time that you arrived at the scene, some
18 time about 10.00 or a minute or so after, did you at any
19 point feel that you didn't have sufficient resources?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Not only did you not declare it a major incident, but
22 there was no, in fact, message from you asking for any
23 further resources at all?

24 A. No, I didn't require it.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Let's move on. Putting aside

1 specialist firefighting roles, as Mr O'Connor has said,
2 firefighters will perform other roles, was there ever an
3 occasion where you felt you didn't have sufficient
4 people generally there to carry out all the roles that
5 were required?

6 A. No.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So you didn't even need just a pair
8 of hands or a strong body?

9 A. No, because within -- it's difficult to put time, but
10 I would say, within arrival from 10.00 to my first
11 message at 10.12, our responsibility for the removing
12 and extrication of casualties had been completed within
13 that 10-12-minute window, and, therefore, my specialist
14 personnel would not have been required to assist with
15 that and I didn't feel that we were needed to make
16 the -- you know, require additional resources for --
17 I would have ended up with a street full of firefighters
18 effectively not with a role to be doing, and they could
19 be deployed elsewhere. It's about a balance.

20 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Thank you. Mr Ellis, just looking
21 down, I only have one or two more questions for you, we
22 see -- I think it's your final message that you sent
23 from the scene at 12.08 [LFB24-3]. This, if you like, is -- it
24 seems to be something of a summary concluding message.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. "Eight persons apparently dead." Did you mean by that
2 on the bus and off the bus?

3 A. In total, yes.

4 Q. You give the number of casualties removed, the bus
5 declared safe by the police explosives team, so the
6 controlled explosion had taken place by this point, as
7 we know?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. You refer to the restricted zone in place and then you
10 say "No further Brigade attendance required". That, as
11 I say, was at 12.08. If we could go a little bit down
12 the page, we see your appliance, that's A311, timed at
13 leaving a few minutes later at 12.14.

14 A. That is correct.

15 Q. Is that a time -- as you've described it earlier, these
16 times are sometimes out by a few minutes, but is that
17 roughly accurate?

18 A. I would say that's roughly right, yes.

19 Q. You didn't return to Tavistock Square that day?

20 A. No, I didn't, no.

21 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: Thank you very much, Mr Ellis, those
22 are all the questions I have for you.

23 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Gallagher?

24 Questions by MS GALLAGHER

25 MS GALLAGHER: Mr Ellis, I'm not going to press you on the

1 timings in terms of how quickly the live casualties were
2 removed from the bus because it doesn't affect my
3 clients. I expect others will do that. But am I right
4 in understanding your evidence to be that, by 10.12,
5 you'd actually completed that process of removing those
6 live casualties from the bus?

7 A. To the best of my knowledge, I believe that to be
8 correct, yes.

9 Q. So that first message that you sent at 10.12, which
10 makes no reference to saveable life having been removed
11 from the bus, that was still sent after you had, in
12 fact, removed saveable life from the bus?

13 A. On arrival, I'd gone to the bus and we were faced -- or
14 I was faced with the crews from Soho, with, I believe,
15 three or four people to be removed from the bus. They
16 were taken off the bus as quickly as possible, and then,
17 after the last person was taken off the bus, who
18 I believed to be Sam Ly, I would have then formulated
19 that message. I don't think I would have been standing
20 formulating a message knowing that I'd got people on the
21 bus to be removed.

22 Q. In fact, then, your 10.39 message is just repeating what
23 you think you'd done by 10.12?

24 A. Yes, 10.12 would be the point at which I'm confident
25 we've got everyone off of the bus, and then the 10.39 is

1 what we would call an informative message, further
2 detail, what we'd been carrying out at the incident.

3 Q. Mr Ellis, I'm not going to press you further on it
4 because it doesn't affect my clients, but it does seem
5 rather odd that there's this gap of half an hour between
6 the two messages and, in fact, you think that by 10.12
7 you've already completed the actions which you describe
8 in the 10.39 message.

9 A. It's not odd to me in so much as, with what was taking
10 place, we'd had to formulate a clear message back to
11 Control as best as I could, gathering the information
12 from all of the people that were on the scene, and that,
13 unfortunately, does take some time.

14 Q. Mr Ellis, I'm just going to deal with the equipment that
15 you did actually have on the scene on the day. So it
16 was three appliances in total: the hydraulic platform
17 from Soho and two fire engines?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. The hydraulic platform from Soho is a specialist
20 appliance. We've heard that it had very limited first
21 aid equipment, no stretchers or spine boards and,
22 indeed, Firefighter Ford and Leading Firefighter Hume
23 had to make makeshift stretchers from the wreckage of
24 the bus, including the windows of the bus. You've heard
25 that evidence, I think, today.

1 A. I have heard that, yes.

2 Q. You've told Mr O'Connor about the fire engines. Again,
3 they don't carry stretchers. You were asked about other
4 medical equipment, fluids and so on, you've given us
5 detail there.

6 It's right to say, isn't it, that there were no fire
7 rescue units, FRUs, present at Tavistock Square at any
8 time?

9 A. I hadn't requested an FRU to attend Tavistock Square.

10 Q. Did you know, Mr Ellis, before attending the scene,
11 that, in fact, all of the available FRUs had already
12 been deployed?

13 A. I wouldn't have known that, no.

14 Q. Could we look at [LFB49-30], please? It's just towards
15 the top of the page under "Fire Rescue Units", it says
16 "kp1", key point 1. It just confirms that nine of the
17 ten FRUs were available on the morning of 7 July, one
18 wasn't available for deployment because of a lack of
19 qualified crew, so four went to Aldgate, four to
20 Edgware Road and one to King's Cross.

21 So, in fact, none of them were available, had you
22 requested it at that time.

23 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Did you need one?

24 A. No, the point -- that's the point I've made. The
25 question was I didn't need it, so, therefore, I didn't

1 request it. Had I requested it, then my Control would
2 have told me what the availability was. For me, it
3 would have made no difference to the conclusion of that
4 incident because it wasn't required.

5 The cutting equipment we carry on the front line
6 fire appliance would have been sufficient, if we needed
7 to use it. But we didn't.

8 MS GALLAGHER: My Lady, I'm going to come to this in
9 a moment when we deal with the answers to the major
10 incident issue because, of course, Mr Ellis has given
11 evidence about not requiring specific types of cutting
12 equipment, but in fact, from the chronology we can see
13 he initially thought he did need certain equipment. It
14 becomes apparent at a later stage that he does not.
15 So what I'm interested in -- and I'll explore it in
16 a moment -- is what was going through his mind at the
17 outset, when he's got very limited information and when
18 he doesn't declare a major incident or request
19 additional equipment at the time, rather than with the
20 benefit of hindsight. That's why it's necessary to put
21 these.

22 Just for completeness, Mr Ellis, in the same
23 document, LFB --

24 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Just before you go on, are you
25 accepting that all the saveable lives, all the people,

1 had been removed from the bus by 10.12?

2 MS GALLAGHER: My Lady, it doesn't seem to fit with the
3 other evidence. The reason I'm not pressing it is it's
4 of more relevance to other counsel. We've obviously
5 spoken between us about focusing on issues which are of
6 more relevance to our client families.

7 It doesn't affect Mr Fatayi-Williams who's killed
8 outright, so is recovered from the bus but plainly
9 didn't survive, so isn't affected by that, and it
10 doesn't affect Miriam Hyman, who's on the pavement and
11 not on the bus at all, my Lady, so I leave it to others
12 to press that, if it's of relevance to their clients.

13 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Just supposing Mr Ellis is wrong and
14 people had only been taken off the bus by, say, 10.30.
15 I'm just concerned that we focus on what really are the
16 true issues. To what extent could it be argued that
17 whether or not Mr Ellis was right about whether he
18 should or shouldn't have requested a Fire Rescue Unit,
19 which may or may not have been available, whether it had
20 any impact at all, if all the people whose lives could
21 be saved were off that bus, in what was, in any view,
22 quite a short time?

23 MS GALLAGHER: Well, it's 10.39 is the second message
24 obviously, my Lady. In fact, it may be sensible to just
25 go to some documents which suggest that, in fact,

1 despite Mr Ellis indicating in answer to your questions
2 that there was no requirement for any more people, and
3 he was satisfied he had full -- he had all the resources
4 available to him that he needed, to go to some documents
5 which Mr Ellis prepared himself much closer to the time,
6 my Lady, which would suggest otherwise. I wasn't going
7 to go to them now, but I think, in the light of your
8 questioning, I will.

9 Could we go to [LFB57-9], please?

10 Mr Ellis, this is an internal report which you
11 prepared on 10 August 2005.

12 Towards the bottom of that page, the very last
13 paragraph, you describe walking towards the bus and it
14 becoming apparent that this was a very serious incident,
15 multiple casualties involved, you say "the situation was
16 very serious to say the least", and over the page at the
17 top of page 10 [LFB57-10], you say:

18 "At no time did we stop operations to talk. It was
19 all hands on and very to the point."

20 Then if we could go to page 12 [LFB57-12], this is a letter,
21 Mr Ellis, from you, commending a number of your officers
22 sent to ADO Baily, and the reference, about halfway down
23 this page, but the type is quite small, the sentence
24 simply says:

25 "There was no time for talking and thinking at this

1 stage as the situation was desperate."
2 In those documents, and also in your statement,
3 Mr Ellis, the impression that's given is that there were
4 really two phases to what you did on the day. There was
5 the all hands on deck phase, when the situation was
6 desperate, to use your own words from this letter, and
7 when you were pressed and doing as much as you possibly
8 could yourself, engaging with trying to remove the live
9 casualties, and then, at a later stage, you view your
10 role as being responsible for controlling operations.
11 So what I'm suggesting to you from that is that the
12 control role wasn't actually taken up until a later
13 stage. At this earlier stage, what you're doing is
14 yourself becoming involved in attempting to save life
15 and dealing with what's a very desperate situation.
16 A. Can I just clarify the word "desperate"? I think
17 I wrote that very soon after the event, if not that
18 night, or the following night, and for me it was
19 desperate in so much as the way that what we were
20 confronted with -- I wasn't saying it was a desperate
21 situation that I hadn't got control of. I was saying
22 that it was a very difficult set of circumstances, and
23 when I walked to the bus to take my briefing from
24 Kevin Hume, I was standing on the pavement as the
25 casualty was being passed off and, therefore, the

1 reference to "it was all hands on", or whatever it was
2 I said, was making the point that, when I arrived,
3 I didn't have any time to do anything else.

4 Q. Of course. Mr Ellis --

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Gallagher, I want to know where
6 this is going.

7 MS GALLAGHER: Certainly.

8 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Because I know how a number of things
9 have been reported from these proceedings, and I want to
10 know, is there any suggestion that, because Mr Ellis
11 starts helping to save life, he's in some way at fault
12 for not exercising the control role? Is there some kind
13 of implied criticism? Because I think that's how
14 Mr Ellis is taking your questions.

15 MS GALLAGHER: Certainly. Obviously, my Lady, from all of
16 the scenes we've had a rather unusual situation where,
17 at some scenes, individual officers didn't take
18 a control role, individuals didn't take a control role
19 and became involved in saving lives. Indeed, we know
20 that's how Mr Biddle was saved at Edgware Road.
21 At other scenes, people followed the instructions to
22 the letter, didn't become involved themselves, and
23 instead adopted a control role rather than getting their
24 hands dirty and getting involved.
25 Mr Ellis has followed the same type of approach as

1 was adopted in Edgware Road and, indeed, resulted in
2 saving the life of Mr Biddle there, and what I'm simply
3 trying to do is establish the distinction between what
4 happened at Edgware Road and what happened at this
5 scene, on the one hand, and what happened at Aldgate and
6 King's Cross, on the other. There certainly is no
7 intended criticism of Mr Ellis.

8 What I do want to establish in respect to the
9 decision not to declare a major incident, my Lady, is
10 simply when Mr Ellis turned his attention to that,
11 because it becomes apparent later that he doesn't need
12 specialist cutting equipment and so on, but the question
13 is whether that was clear to him as he was approaching
14 the bus and from the initial view that he had and why,
15 at that time, he decided not to declare a major
16 incident.

17 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: If you can show me any evidence to
18 suggest that a failure to declare it was a major
19 incident has affected the rescue operation. Otherwise
20 it is irrelevant.

21 MS GALLAGHER: Certainly. My Lady, there are some
22 references throughout some of the London Fire Brigade
23 documents to "what ifs", so they obviously won't answer
24 your question, but there are some concerns raised in
25 some of those documents about some issues which didn't

1 turn out to be significant on the day at
2 Tavistock Square, but could have been.
3 For example, if there had been CBRN, there may have
4 been some issues. It turns out that there weren't, so
5 in fact, what Mr Ellis did turned out in the actual
6 circumstances to be absolutely the right thing. I was
7 intending to explore those issues but, as they're
8 hypotheticals, I'm quite happy not to explore them if
9 you'd rather I didn't.

10 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: I think we need to be careful to
11 remember just the job that was done by so many of these
12 people that day and I think we need to be careful about
13 the questions that are asked. If there's something that
14 you think is going to lead to some question mark over
15 the systems employed by London Fire Brigade, fine, but
16 if this is just about "Well, on another day, that
17 decision might have been thought" -- to question it, and
18 there's no basis for suggesting anybody's lives could
19 have been saved by a different approach, then I'm not
20 happy with that.

21 So it's a question of where you're going with it.

22 MS GALLAGHER: Certainly. My Lady, in the light of the fact
23 that, from my families, Mr Ellis' decisions don't have
24 a direct impact, because of where Ms Hyman was and
25 because of where Anthony Fatayi-Williams was, I'm quite

1 happy not to explore this further, and for any of the
2 other counsel, whose individuals may be affected by it,
3 if they wish to explore it, that's fine, but certainly,
4 from my point of view, I'm not going to explore it any
5 further.

6 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.

7 MS GALLAGHER: Mr Ellis, there's just one last issue. We've
8 heard reference from earlier witnesses, and also there's
9 reference in some of the London Fire Brigade documents
10 to London Fire Brigade individuals on the day having to
11 gather their information from Sky News. We heard
12 Mr Ford and Mr Hume hearing this. Could we also look at
13 [LFB51-14], please? It's paragraph 105.

14 It's a quote from the London Assembly, and they
15 say -- they describe Incident Commanders feeling
16 isolated, as they were unable to get information about
17 other incidents. Is that an emotion that you felt? Did
18 you feel isolated on the day through the lack of
19 information?

20 A. No, not at all, because I've got the mainframe radio.

21 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: You were above ground?

22 A. Absolutely.

23 MS GALLAGHER: It's understood to be a reference to the
24 Underground. I just thought, for completeness, I had to
25 confirm. Although it says "Incident Commanders", it

1 doesn't include you, Mr Ellis?

2 A. It didn't affect me, no.

3 Q. You felt engaged and appropriately informed on the day?

4 A. Yes, I was confident with the information I'd been
5 passed and, if I'd needed anything else, I could have
6 asked for it without question.

7 MS GALLAGHER: Certainly, Mr Ellis, there was no criticism
8 intended of you. It was obviously a matter which
9 we wished to explore. It plainly made absolutely no
10 difference to the individuals whom I represent, to their
11 loved ones, and my apologies if you thought that I was
12 criticising you in any way. It certainly wasn't my
13 intention.

14 A. Thank you.

15 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you, Ms Gallagher. Mr Coltart?

16 Questions by MR COLTART

17 MR COLTART: Just three short topics, if I may. Firstly,
18 the circumstances of your deployment, I must confess,
19 for my part, I'm not quite clear where you were when you
20 had set off to Tavistock Square. You had been out to
21 a flooding?

22 A. A flooding.

23 Q. You'd completed that job. Were you setting off from
24 Holloway fire station or were you setting off from
25 somewhere else?

1 A. No, I haven't got my statement, but in my statement it
2 says where we'd gone to, where we'd been mobilised to,
3 so we'd finished the incident at that address, and then
4 we received the order in from there to proceed to
5 Tavistock, which significantly was closer from there to
6 go to Tavistock than had we been at the station.

7 So, in fact, we were closer than where we were
8 mobilised from than had we been at the station.

9 Q. Fine. I don't think we do have that address, certainly
10 not in the statement that I'm looking at. But it may be
11 it's possible to dig it out. Mr O'Connor to the rescue,
12 I see.

13 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: It's certainly in the statement that
14 Mr Ellis gave to the London Fire Brigade, and he recalls
15 that there had been a call to a flooding at an address
16 in Ellington Street, Barnsbury.

17 MR COLTART: Near Ellington Street, I think you said?

18 A. Ellington Street, that would be right.

19 Q. Your colleagues from Holloway -- if we needed to we
20 could go back to the MOBIS report. I think it took them
21 about 13 minutes to get from the fire station on
22 Holloway Road presumably, is it --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- to Tavistock Square?

25 A. Tavistock Square.

1 Q. Second topic. Again, clarification, please, if you
2 would help us with this.

3 Cutting equipment. I'm a bit at sea now with the
4 various different terms and I want to see if we can get
5 to the bottom of it. Is Holmatro cutting equipment the
6 same as a Rapid Intervention System?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. It is?

9 A. Holmatro is the make of the equipment. The Rapid
10 Intervention set is a generic term for the items of
11 equipment that would make up our first front line
12 response. So there would be a combi tool, which will do
13 cutting, and a spreader and a range of other power tools
14 that we would use. But in general, it's the front line
15 cutting equipment that we would carry on all front line
16 fire appliances.

17 Q. Now, we know from the evidence we had this morning,
18 I think from Mr Hume, that the appliance he was on
19 didn't have that sort of equipment because it's used for
20 completely different purposes. But for normal fire
21 engines, as the public would understand it, do they all
22 carry that Holmatro cutting equipment?

23 A. The pump ladders would carry cutting equipment. Pumps,
24 I believe, don't carry the cutting equipment, at that
25 time. We only had the sets on the pump ladder.

1 Q. On a ladder, right.

2 A. Hence, that's why, when we have the predetermined
3 attendance, you would have those appliances on the
4 initial call. So I would know what sets of equipment
5 I've got at the incident.

6 So the earlier question about making the judgment as
7 to whether I would require a Fire Rescue Unit, which
8 carries heavier, more sophisticated cutting equipment,
9 can be qualified as to say I knew that I didn't need
10 that. I'd got equipment with me in order to deal with
11 the type of cutting we may have had to have done.

12 Q. The ordinary pump, as opposed to the pump ladder, does
13 that carry any form of cutting equipment, or did it, at
14 the time, carry any form of cutting equipment?

15 A. At that time, it would have just carried the electrical
16 tools and not the Holmatro set.

17 Q. Thank you. The third and final topic is this: you've
18 heard from Mr Ford this afternoon that he attended
19 a debrief at Westminster fire station, and he thought
20 that Sir Ken Knight was present at that meeting, do you
21 recall yourself or your teams attending that meeting?

22 A. No, I didn't attend that.

23 Q. Were you ever invited to attend a debrief so that you
24 could discuss your actions on the day and how things had
25 developed?

1 A. 7 July was my second day duty, and I came off of duty on
2 the Saturday morning, and I had been contacted off-duty
3 to attend a performance review of command debrief on
4 Monday, which was my day off. So I was debriefed on the
5 Monday immediately following the incident by an
6 Assistant Commissioner.

7 Q. Leaving aside the PRC debrief, which obviously was for
8 you in your command function on that day, what about the
9 rest of your crew? Were they ever invited, or were you
10 with them invited, to attend a debrief for the fire
11 officers who had attended at Tavistock Square?

12 A. No.

13 MR COLTART: Thank you. I've no further questions.

14 MR SAUNDERS: Nothing, thank you, my Lady.

15 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Sheff?

16 Questions by MS SHEFF

17 MS SHEFF: Mr Ellis, you are obviously not fully medically
18 trained and, therefore, you can't pronounce life
19 extinct, but you presumably are trained in first aid
20 procedures. Are you trained in being able to assess
21 saveable life?

22 A. To a degree, yes. Hence the involvement of the
23 Ambulance Service. On that particular day, it was
24 fairly easy to establish who we felt we would be able to
25 save, yes.

1 Q. Did you make that assessment by means of looking at the
2 casualties or actually by checking pulses?

3 A. The pulse.

4 Q. Did you check for breathing as well?

5 A. We -- I remember checking to the best of my ability,
6 yes, at the time.

7 Q. So it wasn't just a cursory glance --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- at the bodies? Did you actually take the time and
10 effort to check them?

11 A. It was very serious and it was about making an informed
12 judgment, because it was -- you know, I knew we had to
13 be sure.

14 Q. Yes, because, of course, once you'd removed what you
15 believed to be those saveable, the others would just
16 remain there and wouldn't be assisted, so you had to
17 make that decision before --

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. -- you left the others in situ. Yes, thank you.

20 You were asked by Mr O'Connor which four bodies you
21 had seen. Are those the four bodies that you did
22 actually check the pulses of and check for breathing?

23 A. They would have been the four -- the last four people
24 that we'd looked at that were complete where it was felt
25 that we should do that, yes.

1 Q. Was it you who checked all those four or were they split
2 between the three of you that were on the bus?

3 A. No, we'd checked -- once we'd removed the people from
4 the bus, and then there was the issue around
5 establishing detail for the message, that was with an
6 ambulance personnel person and we'd done the last -- in
7 my mind, I can't be sure, but we were the last people to
8 go in the middle of the doors and to do a review of the
9 scene to satisfy ourselves that, you know, everyone had
10 been taken off the bus that we could save.

11 Q. I just want to check the numbers with you because, as
12 Mr O'Connor has already mentioned to you, of course
13 there were more than four bodies left on that bus.
14 Do you think, between the three of you, you checked
15 all the bodies or was it four that you recollect that
16 all of you checked and put that number together?

17 A. I'm confident that we checked everyone. I'm trying to
18 be sensitive around saying how you go about checking
19 what was left on the bus.

20 Q. Of course, yes.

21 A. That was the difficulty, and I can't -- five years on,
22 it was difficult, but they were the four that I would
23 have said were clear to me.

24 Q. Yes, in terms of whole bodies.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Can I just ask you about those four bodies? You say
2 it's too long ago, you couldn't really say, but if I
3 gave you this description, I wonder if it might jog your
4 memory at all.

5 Do you recall a 39-year-old woman dressed in black
6 with a black skirt and black shoes with a black bar
7 across the front? Does that jog any memory of yours?

8 A. I'm afraid it doesn't, no.

9 Q. Just finally this: by 10.12, you'd completed the process
10 of removing all the saveable casualties. Does that
11 mean, therefore, that by that time you had assessed all
12 saveable life on the bus?

13 A. Yes, it does, yes.

14 Q. Because, presumably, that was done at the same time if
15 not before you actually removed all the casualties?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So within a relatively short time after you'd arrived
18 and certainly after the explosion had occurred, those
19 bodies had been looked at to check whether anything
20 could be done for them?

21 A. Definitely, yes.

22 MS SHEFF: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Ellis.

23 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Boyd?

24 Questions by MS BOYD

25 MS BOYD: Mr Ellis, first of all, can we just clarify, prior

1 to being called to Tavistock Square, you have explained
2 that you were on your way back from a call to
3 a flooding, and I think we know that you'd been called
4 to that flooding at about 9.30. That's in your LFB
5 statement. In fact, the other appliance had also been
6 called to an automatic fire alarm. But their call was
7 shorter so that they were back at the station when they
8 were called to Tavistock Square but, as you've
9 explained, you'd only just completed your call to the
10 flooding and were mobile on your way back.

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Is that the sequence of events?

13 A. In fact, we'd finished the call to the flooding and we
14 received the call from Ellington Street so we were
15 mobilised from Ellington Street to Tavistock Square.

16 Q. Thank you. You were the first fire appliance on the
17 scene at 10.00 shortly followed by A312, but of course
18 the hydraulic platform is a specialised vehicle so it
19 would come under a separate category to a fire
20 appliance. So you were the first appliance as such?

21 A. Yes, for a lay person, if you was talking about fire
22 engine or fire appliance, we were the first fire engine
23 in attendance at Tavistock Square.

24 Q. Mr Hume thought that the hydraulic platform only carried
25 the basic same first aid kit but not the oxygen laerdal.

1 Is that right or does, in fact, the hydraulic platform
2 carry the laerdal as well?

3 A. I believe that the hydraulic platform or aerial
4 appliances carry the same first aid level profession as
5 we have on our front line appliance as well as the
6 laerdal.

7 Q. By the time you arrived, both Leading Firefighter Hume
8 and Firefighter Ford had already removed four casualties
9 from the road and assisted them into the BMA building
10 and were in the process of assisting those three live
11 casualties from the bus and, of course, as they've
12 explained and you've explained, time was very much of
13 the essence. You had very little time to think. Your
14 focus was on getting live casualties away from that
15 scene as soon as possible. Is that right?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. The threat of a secondary device was, as we've heard,
18 a very real threat.

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. Is that why you undertook the bomb implementation
21 procedure, having your appliances parked some distance
22 away?

23 A. Operationally, because we'd been called to an explosion,
24 and obviously, fortunately, we were in the position that
25 we could see what had happened, it was on the surface,

1 it was clear that there had been -- an explosion had
2 taken place on the bus. Therefore, part of the routine
3 training that we receive is that we put a system of
4 procedures in place to protect, not only us, but the
5 people that we're evacuating, and that was what we did
6 on the day.

7 Q. Did you have your handheld radio with you?

8 A. I did.

9 Q. So you were able to communicate with your crew on your
10 appliance?

11 A. Yes, I could.

12 Q. So you walk swiftly to the bus and are you effectively,
13 because of the time constraints, briefed by Leading
14 Firefighter Hume at the same time as engaging in the
15 rescue, it all happens at once?

16 A. We'd arrived. I'd got off of the appliance, instructed
17 the leading firefighter of the pump to start instigating
18 the -- as it was then, bomb procedure.

19 My driver, I'd asked him to turn the appliance
20 round, and they were in the process of doing that. I'd
21 walked to the bus and literally, as I'd arrived to stand
22 on the side of the pavement, I was talking to Leading
23 Firefighter Hume as one of the casualties was being put
24 onto the white table, and we were conducting our
25 handover and briefing at the same time because, at that

1 time, speed was of the essence, we wanted to get people
2 off the bus and also get away from the scene as quickly
3 ourselves.

4 Q. At that point in time, was Sam Ly still trapped?

5 A. Sam Ly was in front of me from where I was standing on
6 the pavement.

7 Q. Just in terms of this radio message which you asked to
8 be sent and was sent at 10.12, did you communicate that
9 by radio to your driver, Mr McDermott?

10 A. No, I believe I'd actually -- I'd spoken, and the driver
11 on the day wrote the message -- I dictated the message
12 to him and he wrote that down on the message pad and
13 then it was sent from the appliance.

14 Q. Because Mr McDermott's statement says that, after you
15 asked to send him that message, which he then sent, you
16 asked him to bring rescue and first aid equipment.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. What we're trying to clarify is whether that was whilst
19 you were at the bus or had you gone back to the bus? In
20 other words, you've told us that you implemented bomb
21 procedure --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- told your crew what to do. You walked ahead to the
24 bus --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- and you engaged with Leading Firefighter Hume. As
2 this rescue was taking place, Sam Ly is still trapped.
3 Did you radio back your message or did you walk back to
4 the bus or how was that communicated?

5 A. I believe I walked back.

6 Q. If Mr McDermott is right, at that stage you then asked
7 for some cutting equipment, which we know wasn't needed?

8 A. That's right, yes.

9 Q. So at 10.12, Sam Ly is still in the bus. You then walk
10 back to the bus and, in fact, as we know, the cutting
11 equipment wasn't required. So by the time you got back
12 to the bus, had Firefighter Ford and Leading
13 Firefighter Hume managed to manhandle the wreckage away
14 from Sam Ly? Because at some point it seems that they
15 were told that cutting equipment wasn't necessary and
16 they left it.

17 A. From where we were at the time, initially when we'd
18 first looked at the damage and the way the structure was
19 on the bus, it had looked as though we would need to
20 remove it using the cutting equipment. But then, after
21 moving some of the lighter debris, it became apparent
22 that we could lift -- it could be lifted out of the way,
23 which is what we eventually did. It was able to be
24 manhandled rather than needed to be cut.

25 I can't be -- I'm sorry, I can't be clear --

1 Q. It's very difficult and I may have complicated matters
2 even further. But on reflection, do you think that your
3 first evidence is right, that you sent that message at
4 10.12 after Sam Ly was rescued or do you think it's
5 possible that Sam Ly's final extrication was minutes
6 after that message was sent?

7 A. I think I'd sent the message after we'd extricated him.
8 Personally, I think it was after.

9 Q. What we're clear about, however, is that the cutting
10 equipment wasn't needed?

11 A. No, it wasn't required.

12 Q. And certainly not the cutting equipment that is kept on
13 an FRU?

14 A. No, definitely not.

15 Q. I think, at some stage, ADO Hearn turned up followed by
16 DO Howgate and DO Wolf. Is that correct?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. Just again to help us on the timing, we know that
19 DO Wolf turned up at 10.25. If we could have up on the
20 screen LFB26 [LFB26-1], please.

21 DO Wolf is the inter-agency liaison officer. He
22 attended in that role. He starts a log at 10.25, and he
23 says:

24 "Attended scene and made contact with IC (Station
25 Officer Ellis). Explosive device activated on bus. 17

1 casualties removed/rescued by Brigade. 8 casualties
2 located in triage area BMA. 9 casualties in
3 County Hotel. 4 fatalities located on bus. 1 fatality
4 located in basement area ... Further suspect device
5 located on bus. EXPO in attendance."

6 That's at 10.25, and that, in fact, is the content
7 of the message that you then send some time later at
8 10.39. So in fact, all that information is clearly
9 known at 10.25.

10 Whilst we have that document, on the issue of the
11 initiating a major incident, could we turn to the
12 following page [LFB26-2], please.

13 At 10.40, he records:

14 "Established contact with MPS Silver and LAS
15 Silver."

16 Just pausing there, could you just expand upon the
17 role of an inter-agency liaison officer?

18 A. Yes. Inter-agency liaison officers, known as ILOs, are
19 specialist car driver officers that work very closely
20 across the services with the ambulance and police
21 service, and they are given special training and
22 security clearance to have access to additional
23 information that could be of use to the
24 Incident Commander when they attend.

25 So they work primarily in a liaison role and they

1 can confer with the Incident Commander if there's any
2 additional information they have access to, that
3 ordinarily we wouldn't have on the fire ground. So they
4 are there as a supporting role.

5 Q. Thank you. To go on, he establishes contact with those
6 Silvers, and then records:

7 "Major incident declared by both MPS and LAS. Both
8 advised that LFB will not be declaring the scene a major
9 incident as sufficient resources were available to
10 undertake the Brigade's primary function."

11 If we can go over the page [LFB26-3], please:

12 "Silvers also advised that three additional sites
13 had been declared major incidents, all of which
14 attracted a significant attendance. Given the
15 possibility of further incidents, it may be more
16 appropriate to maintain resources at current level."

17 That's essentially the reasoning that you gave us
18 a little earlier.

19 Is it also right that, in relation to that issue
20 that was highlighted at your PRC -- and I think if we
21 look at [LFB25-4], please we can see in the middle there
22 that it's highlighted, that decision, as a good point:

23 "Major ... ambulance incident declared, calm
24 presence of mind and informed DRA ..."

25 I think that stands for dynamic risk assessment.

1 "... led to correct and significant decision that no
2 further Brigade attendance required."

3 Finally, you were asked about a debrief. You
4 attended the PRC. So from the operational Command and
5 Control point of view, your actions are both analysed
6 and you have an opportunity to raise any concerns.

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. If there had been a concern about lack of equipment, you
9 would have been able to raise it at that stage,
10 presumably?

11 A. Yes, it was significant, in that the PRC was so -- was
12 conducted very quickly after the incident. It was
13 unusual to be called in on an off-duty day, and because
14 we'd been -- I would have been on duty the second -- the
15 first and second night, I'd had time to discuss with the
16 crews who attended whether there were significant issues
17 for myself to raise at the PRC and there weren't any.

18 MS BOYD: Thank you very much.

19 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Any other questions for Mr Ellis?
20 Mr Ellis, those are all the questions that we have
21 for you. I am very conscious that, just because you are
22 a trained professional, it was your job to take command,
23 that doesn't in any way make you immune to the horrors
24 that faced you and the fears that you must have felt.
25 You took the brave decision to become part of the rescue

1 operation because saving lives was your number one
2 priority. I have no doubt, having heard you, that if
3 you felt that the rescue operation in the circumstances
4 that confronted you would have been better served by
5 your doing something else, then that is what you would
6 have done. Thank you very much for everything you did
7 and thank you for helping me.

8 A. Thank you.

9 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: What are we going to do, Mr O'Connor?

10 MR ANDREW O'CONNOR: My Lady, we do have two further
11 witnesses. Much of the ground has been covered, I hope,
12 by the witnesses we have already heard. We are
13 confident that the evidence of the two further witnesses
14 will be shorter. My Lady, I don't know how late you
15 want to sit today. It may be that we need to have
16 a short break for the transcribers, in any event.

17 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: It looks as if that is the message
18 I am getting. Five minutes.

19 (4.05 pm)

20 (A short break)

21 (4.10 pm)

22 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Hay, I understand there may be
23 some concern about when Mr Ford gave his evidence
24 whether his present situation might have been revealed.
25 Can I make it plain for any journalist who might have

1 spotted -- I'm afraid I didn't notice it myself -- his
2 present location, I have given or we have given him
3 assurances that his location will not be revealed, so it
4 is not to be published. It's entirely irrelevant to
5 these proceedings.

6 MR HAY: Grateful, my Lady, I'm sure the press --

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Other than the fact that he's on the
8 prison estate, that can be revealed because it was
9 elicited by Mr O'Connor.

10 MR HAY: Absolutely, my Lady. My Lady, may I invite you to
11 call Mr Drew, please?

12 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Sorry, just in case any journalist is
13 trying to make sense of what I have said, they can
14 report that Mr Ford is in prison. What they can't
15 report is the precise prison.

16 MR JAMES WILLIAM DREW (sworn)

17 Questions by MR HAY

18 MR HAY: Mr Drew, may I invite you to give your full name to
19 the court, please?

20 A. James William Drew.

21 Q. Mr Drew, you were also based at Holloway fire station on
22 7 July 2005?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. Were you the crew manager in charge of appliance
25 Alpha 312?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Is that a pump ladder?

3 A. It's a pump.

4 Q. Mr Drew, if you can do your best to keep your voice up.

5 I know it's difficult.

6 A. Sorry.

7 Q. Thank you. We know that there were other incidents

8 obviously going on in London prior to your attendance

9 being required at Tavistock Square. Were you, yourself,

10 aware of the other incidents?

11 A. Yes, as previously explained, we became aware, whilst

12 changing shifts at the fire station, that a major

13 incident procedure had been declared by an officer in

14 charge at Aldgate. So we were aware that something was

15 going on, but wasn't exactly sure what at that time.

16 Q. But you weren't aware of major incidents being declared

17 either at Edgware Road --

18 A. No.

19 Q. We've seen the MOBIS report which relates to your

20 appliance, I'm not going to take you to that, but you

21 were mobilised at 9.50.35 and, according to the MOBIS

22 report, you arrived at the scene at just after 10.05?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. Does that accord with your recollection?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Yours was the third appliance to arrive?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. You also approached from the Euston Road into
4 Upper Woburn Place?
5 A. I believe we approached from Eversholt Road or Street,
6 which comes from a slightly different direction.
7 Q. Where did you park the appliance?
8 A. At the same location as station Officer Ellis'
9 appliance.
10 Q. So between the Euston Road and Upper Woburn Place?
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. On arrival at the scene, what were you directed to do?
13 A. I was asked by Station Officer Ellis to keep the crews
14 with the appliances while he made an assessment of the
15 scene and be ready to be mobilised to help out,
16 basically.
17 Q. Do you recall Mr Ellis returning back to the appliances
18 once he had assessed the scene?
19 A. No.
20 Q. How was the message then passed to you as to what to do
21 next?
22 A. By handheld radios.
23 Q. Was that from -- by Mr Ellis over the radio?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. What did he tell you to do?

1 A. He asked me to arrange for the Holmatro cutting
2 equipment or Rapid Intervention set, as it's known, to
3 be taken to the scene of the blast with first aid
4 equipment, with the crews that were available to assist,
5 potentially free any casualties and assist with first
6 aid.

7 Q. We know from Mr Ellis' evidence that that cutting
8 equipment wasn't actually required in the end?

9 A. No, it wasn't.

10 Q. As you made your way over to the bus, you mention in
11 your statement seeing two figures on the road who were
12 obviously dead as they had been covered by blankets.

13 I just want to ask you very briefly about that by
14 reference to the photograph we've seen earlier today.

15 May I ask for [INQ10345 - not for publication] to be brought up? Now, in
16 your statement, you mentioned that the figures -- the
17 people covered by blankets were on the road. This
18 photograph shows that, on the far left-hand side, there
19 were two people covered by blankets on the pavement. Is
20 that what you meant?

21 A. I believe it may have been, yes.

22 Q. When you approached the bus, what were you asked to do?

23 A. Operation -- well, basically, they was trying to get
24 the -- release the casualty. As you know, the cutting
25 equipment wasn't required, and I and my -- the crew

1 members that I approached the bus with, assisted to get
2 the casualty on to a -- like a trestle table, and
3 assist, basically removing him from the bus and taking
4 him to the courtyard of the BMA.

5 Q. That casualty we understand to be Mr Ly.

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. By the time you had approached the bus, had he already
8 been removed from the bus?

9 A. No.

10 Q. So he was still trapped, as it were, in the wreckage?

11 A. He was still sitting in the position, yes, on the seat.

12 Q. Are you able to say -- I know it's difficult -- how much
13 time had passed from your arrival at the scene at 10.05
14 to the point that Mr Ly was eventually extricated from
15 the bus and placed on a stretcher or makeshift
16 stretcher?

17 A. It was no more than ten minutes.

18 Q. Once he had been removed from the bus, did you help
19 carry the stretcher to the courtyard?

20 A. I believe so.

21 Q. After that, I believe your statement describes your
22 returning to the bus?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. You mention seeing the female who was sitting directly
25 behind where Mr Ly had been.

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. We believe that female to be Shyanuja Parathasangary.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. Were there any signs of life at all from that female?

5 A. None at all.

6 Q. From there, where did you then go?

7 A. I believe I -- after Mr Ly was rescued off the bus, we

8 was aware that there were photographers and people

9 trying to gain a view of the scene, and I walked round

10 the bus to the offside of the bus where there were two

11 further deceased.

12 Q. Can I ask you about those two further deceased? Were

13 they both at the rear of the bus on the offside?

14 A. Yes, yes.

15 Q. Was one of them covered?

16 A. I believe so.

17 Q. The one who wasn't covered, can you describe him or her?

18 A. From what I can remember, reading my statement --

19 obviously this is a long time ago -- it was a gentleman,

20 about 50 years' old.

21 Q. Was he situated right at the rear of where the bus would

22 have been?

23 A. I can't remember --

24 Q. The rear seat?

25 A. -- if he was right at the back or in front of the back

1 seats, I'm afraid.

2 Q. Was that gentleman also plainly dead?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You mention in your statement then returning to the
5 courtyard. As you approached it, you refer to seeing
6 a body between the void between the wall and the
7 pavement of the British Medical Association?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you remember that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. That body, in your statement you refer to it as being
12 a female body, but I think you were subsequently shown
13 a photograph by the police. Is that right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Was that photograph of a male person?

16 A. I can't remember if they told me if it was a male or
17 not. They come and questioned me and asked -- and
18 I gave an additional statement.

19 Again, this is quite a while ago and I can't
20 remember if it was because I said it was a female and it
21 was actually a male and they wanted to qualify that,
22 I can't honestly remember if they said, you know, "Are
23 you sure it was a female or not?"

24 Q. The evidence we've heard suggests that that person was
25 a young male called Jamie Gordon.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. But when you looked over the railings, was it a very
3 brief, fleeting glance?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Again, when you did so, was it plain that that person
6 was dead?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. I think you were then given responsibility by Mr Ellis
9 for the casualty handling area.

10 A. That's right.

11 Q. What roles did you perform there?

12 A. As has already been explained, there was a lot going on.
13 There was members of the British Medical Association
14 present. There was ambulance staff. And I was given
15 the task of basically maintaining brigade operations in
16 that area, liaising with the ambulance crews and British
17 Medical Association personnel as to ensuring that
18 equipment was provided, so first aid equipment,
19 assistance from Brigade personnel in terms of life
20 support, and, yes, basically liaising with Station
21 Officer Ellis and keeping him informed of what was going
22 on.

23 Q. In your statement, you then describe being asked by the
24 police to assist in the recovery of a female from the
25 lower level.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. I just want to ask you where that lower level was. We
3 heard evidence earlier today that there was a female who
4 had previously died in the courtyard and been taken down
5 to the basement garage area. Is that what you mean by
6 the lower level?

7 A. I believe so, yes.

8 Q. Did you go down to the basement garage and assist in
9 recovering her body?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Where did you take her to?

12 A. We brought her up into the courtyard where the fountain
13 was within the BMA complex.

14 MR HAY: Mr Drew, thank you very much. I have no further
15 questions for you, but others may.

16 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Gallagher?

17 MS GALLAGHER: Nothing from me, my Lady.

18 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Saunders?

19 MR SAUNDERS: Nothing thank you.

20 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Sheff?

21 MS SHEFF: No, thank you.

22 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Ms Boyd?

23 Mr Drew, you've waited all this time and nobody else
24 has any questions for you. Do I take it from Mr Ellis'
25 report you had only been in post about a month when this

1 happened?

2 A. Yes, roughly.

3 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: I've seen what Mr Ellis said about
4 you. We haven't dwelled upon what you did today because
5 of the time, but you obviously played a very full part,
6 and impressed Mr Ellis, who was rightly proud, in my
7 view, of what you did and what your crew did. Thank you
8 very much.

9 A. Thank you.

10 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Yes, Mr Hay?

11 MR HAY: My Lady, Mr McDermott remains to be called today.
12 I am advised that he can come back tomorrow morning, if
13 you require.

14 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: I think we'll try to get
15 Mr McDermott's evidence finished, shall we? It will
16 mean he can get back to his usual duties.

17 MR STEPHEN AMBROSE McDERMOTT (sworn)

18 Questions by MR HAY

19 MR HAY: Mr McDermott, can you give your full name to the
20 court shall please?

21 A. My name is Stephen Ambrose McDermott.

22 Q. Mr McDermott, you were also a firefighter based at
23 Holloway fire station?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. You were part of Mr Ellis' crew?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. We've heard from Mr Ellis already today. Were you
3 present whilst he was giving evidence?

4 A. Yes, I was.

5 Q. I'm not going to ask you about the deployment because
6 Mr Ellis has covered that. What I want to ask you about
7 is what happened once you arrived at Tavistock Square.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. Upon arrival, was it right that you were the driver of
10 the appliance?

11 A. Yes, that's correct.

12 Q. You were asked to turn the appliance around?

13 A. That's right.

14 Q. We've seen earlier the messages which were sent by
15 Mr Ellis to London Fire Brigade Control.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Were you responsible for sending those messages?

18 A. I was responsible for sending the first message.

19 Q. Was that the message at 12 minutes past 10 which we've
20 been discussing earlier today?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did Mr Ellis come over to you to send that message or
23 did he radio to you what he wanted to say?

24 A. He told me himself, in person.

25 Q. So he had gone to the scene and then walked back to

1 return to where your fire appliance was?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What did he then ask you to do?

4 A. I think Mr Ellis went back to the scene and he radioed
5 that he needed to bring some rescue equipment, some
6 first aid equipment to the bus, which he subsequently
7 cancelled and just told us to come to the bus as quickly
8 as we possibly could.

9 Q. So you sent the message at 10.12. Mr Ellis then
10 returned to the scene, radioed to you to bring cutting
11 equipment and first aid equipment?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Did he then cancel that request by the radio as well?

14 A. Yes, via the radio, handheld radios, yes.

15 Q. And said you should come to the bus as quickly as you
16 could?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. At the point you got to the bus -- we've heard evidence
19 about Mr Ly who was trapped in the wreckage -- was Mr Ly
20 still trapped in the wreckage?

21 A. Mr Ly was still in the bus, yes.

22 Q. How long after sending the message at 10.12 would you
23 say did it take you until you were at the bus itself?

24 A. Literally minutes, 2, 3 minutes maybe.

25 Q. How long after that was it until Mr Ly was then

1 extricated from the bus?

2 A. Maybe I think the same time, another 3, 4 minutes maybe.

3 Q. Were you involved in the extrication?

4 A. When Mr Ly came off the bus, I was a stretcher-bearer
5 for him, we used a wooden table to bring him into the
6 BMA building.

7 Q. Once you had taken him into the BMA, did you then assist
8 with any of the other casualties who were in there?

9 A. Yes, I held a saline drip for -- I think it was
10 a paramedic, for a lady, and also went round asking the
11 other medical staff whether they needed anything, was
12 there anything I could get for them, just to help them.

13 Q. Can I ask you about the lady whom you were holding the
14 saline drip for?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Can you describe her in any way?

17 A. All I can say is she was a black lady.

18 Q. Did she have any visible injuries at all?

19 A. Not that I could see.

20 Q. Are you able to say -- again, I know it's difficult --
21 roughly at what time you were holding the saline drip?

22 A. I can't really give a time, I'm really not sure on
23 times.

24 Q. Are you able to say how long after you had arrived at
25 the scene perhaps?

1 A. I'd only be guessing. Probably about 20 to 25 minutes.

2 Q. I believe that lady subsequently passed away. Is that
3 correct?

4 A. That's right, yes.

5 Q. We believe her to be Gladys Wundowa. Whilst you were
6 holding the saline drip, did she have any other
7 equipment, either assisting her breathing or monitoring
8 her in any way, attached to her?

9 A. Not that I can remember.

10 Q. Do you recall who was attending to her?

11 A. I believe it was a paramedic.

12 Q. Were you present when she died?

13 A. Yes, I was, yes.

14 Q. Again, I know it's very difficult, but are you able to
15 give us any idea about approximately what time that may
16 have been?

17 A. After I started helping her, assisting the paramedic
18 with a saline drip, it wasn't long after, a few minutes,
19 maybe 5 minutes at the tops.

20 Q. During that time, did Mrs Wundowa verbalise at all, did
21 she say anything?

22 A. No, no.

23 Q. Were you then asked to assist in the recovery of
24 a female deceased who had been taken down to the
25 basement garage of the British Medical Association?

1 A. Yes, I was.

2 Q. When you went down, where did you then take her to?

3 A. I brought her back up into the BMA courtyard and placed
4 her next to the black lady that had died previously.

5 MR HAY: Mr McDermott, thank you very much. I have no more
6 questions for you, but others may.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Does anybody have any questions for
8 Mr McDermott?

9 Mr McDermott, I'm glad I didn't ask you to come back
10 tomorrow, otherwise I think you might have been rather
11 cross if I'd asked you to come all the way back just for
12 a few minutes, but it is important. I mean, there may
13 well have been matters that people wished to explore
14 with you, so I hope you understand why we asked you to
15 come.

16 It does look as if, in fact, the timing may be
17 slightly different from the way in which Mr Ellis
18 remembers it, but I'm not surprised that people get
19 their timings wrong in situations such as this.

20 So thank you very much for your assistance, because,
21 from what you say, it looks as if some living passengers
22 at that time may still have been on the bus at about
23 10.18, 10.20.

24 A. Yes.

25 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: That does, of course, help the

1 enquiries I have to make. So thank you very much. You
2 were involved in a horrid and dangerous operation that
3 day. Thank you for all did you too.

4 A. Thank you.

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Right?

6 MR HAY: My Lady, that completes the evidence for today.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you very much. 10.00 tomorrow.

8 (4.30 pm)

9 (The inquests adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)

10