

1 Wednesday, 5 May 2021

2 (10.00 am)

3 MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Day 10  
4 of hearings in Tranche 1 Phase 2 at  
5 the Undercover Policing Inquiry. My name is  
6 Neil Fernandes and I am the hearings manager.

7 For those of you in the virtual hearing room, please  
8 turn off both your camera and microphone unless you're  
9 invited to speak by the Chairman, as Zoom will pick up  
10 on all noises and you will be on screen.

11 I now hand over to the Chairman, Sir John Mitting,  
12 to formally start proceedings.

13 Chairman.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

15 Ms Parkes is going to spend the next half an hour or  
16 so summarising the evidence of two undercover officers  
17 who've provided witness statements, and reminding us of  
18 the evidence of three who haven't, which are contained  
19 in documents only.

20 Ms Parkes?

21 Summary of evidence of HN353 and HN351

22 MS PARKES: Thank you, Sir. Good morning.

23 I'll be summarising evidence for HN353 and HN351.

24 Starting with HN353.

25 HN353 joined the SDS in late spring 1974 and served

1 in the unit until June 1978. He infiltrated  
2 the International Socialists, the IS, and the  
3 International Marxist Group, the IMG, using the cover  
4 name "Gary Roberts". There is a restriction order in  
5 respect of his real name. The reports date between  
6 18 June 1974 and 4 August 1978; although he claims to  
7 have infiltrated the two groups between September 1974  
8 and June 1978, amounting to a total of 195 weeks.

9 HN353 joined Special Branch in the early 1970s as  
10 a detective constable, but he did no undercover work  
11 prior to joining the SDS. He describes the existence of  
12 the unit as a "well kept secret", although he did not  
13 know any details about its operation.

14 He was recruited by an SDS officer with whom he had  
15 worked previously, and agreed to join because it sounded  
16 different and exciting. He was not required to  
17 undertake any tests or interviews as part of this  
18 process, and there was no formal information or training  
19 provided to him about the nature of the work. He  
20 understood that his primary role was to gather  
21 intelligence about public disorder so that  
22 demonstrations could be policed effectively.

23 His initial service in the SDS back office typing up  
24 reports allowed him to learn from other officers. He  
25 was not given specific instructions about what

1 intelligence to obtain, but knew from prior police  
2 experience which information about group activities  
3 would be of interest.

4 HN353's cover name "Gary Roberts" was that of  
5 a deceased child. He obtained the name and date of  
6 birth from Somerset House, but did not use any other  
7 details from the child's life. He also took the IMG  
8 party name "Gary Shopland", although he does not recall  
9 ever using this.

10 He had cover accommodation near Muswell Hill and  
11 cover employment as a painter/decorator, although he did  
12 no work in this role.

13 After joining the South East London Branch of  
14 the IMG, he enrolled in a bachelor's degree at  
15 Thames Polytechnic studying political economy, funded by  
16 the MPS. He became vice president of the student union.  
17 He fell behind with his coursework and never sat his  
18 finals.

19 HN353 was provided with a cover vehicle in which he  
20 stored tools to cover his cover employment. He also  
21 used it for group work in the IMG, assisting in  
22 the distribution of the Red Star newspaper, and  
23 transporting Jonathan Silberman on a speaking tour.

24 HN353 states that he was part of the Finsbury Park  
25 IS from approximately September 1974, but he agrees that

1 he was probably the author of an IS report signed in his  
2 real name and dated 18 June 1974.

3 He recalls attending the demonstration where  
4 Kevin Gately lost his life, but notes that his reporting  
5 on this is missing. This demonstration took place in  
6 June 1974 which, combined with the June report bearing  
7 his name, may indicate that HN353 infiltrated the IS  
8 a little earlier than he recalls.

9 He would not have considered himself an official IS  
10 member, but states that he reported regularly on  
11 the group for at least a year. HN353 recalls that his  
12 involvement with the South East London IMG began in  
13 around September 1975, and for about six months he  
14 attended both groups, before the IMG required him to  
15 choose between them. He chose the IMG and remained  
16 a member of that group until the end of his deployment  
17 in around June 1978.

18 He believes that his initial tasking into the  
19 Finsbury Park IS would have come from Detective Chief  
20 Inspector Kneale, who was also responsible for his move  
21 to the IMG.

22 HN353 can't be sure whether he influenced this  
23 transfer, but having reviewed the reports provided by  
24 the Inquiry, he believes that he might have been tasked  
25 to the IMG to replace HN338.

1           HN353 denies being the author of any of the IMG  
2 reports attributed to him prior to September 1975.  
3 However, it should be noted that from 21 November 1974  
4 there are a number of SDS reports which concern IMG  
5 members connected to Thames Polytechnic or IMG meetings  
6 in South East London, both features of HN353's  
7 reporting.

8           HN353 suggests that IMG reporting prior to  
9 the autumn of 1975 is likely to be that of HN338, an  
10 SDS officer also deployed into the IMG. However,  
11 the Inquiry believes that HN338 was withdrawn from  
12 the field in December 1973, and so could not be  
13 responsible for this reporting.

14           In addition, HN338 reported on the IMG in  
15 the Notting Hill and West London area.

16           The report dated 31 December 1974, which HN353  
17 rejects as being attributable to him by virtue of  
18 the date, provides information about an IMG meeting  
19 which took place in the Queen's Arms on Burrage Road  
20 SE18, the site of a large number of meetings of  
21 the south-east branch of the IMG, which HN353 confirms  
22 were attended by him.

23           HN353 disputes the attribution of various other  
24 reports in his pack, whilst also noting that  
25 the majority of his IS reporting is missing.

1           For the IMG, he states that the Inquiry appears to  
2           be missing his reporting between December 1977 and  
3           June 1978, including coverage of two large anti-racism  
4           demonstrations, one in Lewisham and another in  
5           Wood Green. The latter involved the IMG scouting for  
6           the route to be taken by the National Front march. He  
7           states that:

8           "We were scoping for good attack points and sources  
9           of ammunition, (ie rubble)."

10          He would also have provided a report after  
11          the demonstration took place.

12          HN353 believes that the public order intelligence  
13          was disseminated to police uniform departments, and  
14          would have been valuable where it was relied upon. In  
15          general, HN353 believes that the available reporting  
16          does not really show the kind of intelligence that he  
17          produced on the subject of public order, but he does not  
18          know why this would be missing.

19          Amongst the reports attributable to HN353 obtained  
20          by the Inquiry there is no reference to any potential or  
21          actual violence, and no overt discussion of potential or  
22          actual public disorder. During HN353's IS deployment  
23          between September 1974 to March 1976, there was one  
24          reference to a demonstration, albeit one organised by  
25          the National Abortion Campaign and not by IS. 70 people

1 attended this march, led by three women in a Mini with  
2 a loudspeaker.

3 During his IMG deployment between September 1975 and  
4 June 1978, there are 15 reports which mention  
5 demonstrations or pickets. Three of these refer to  
6 joint actions with other groups to protest against  
7 public sector cuts, for example the closure to  
8 the Weir Maternity Hospital; two deal with planned  
9 opposition to the National Front; two refer to IMG  
10 attendance at an anti-fascist protest, one in Blackburn  
11 and another in Hyde, Cheshire; although HN353 believes  
12 this latter report is not his.

13 One additional report refers to a planned national  
14 anti-racism demonstration, and the remaining reports  
15 refer to IMG support for other organisations, such as  
16 the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Party  
17 Young Socialists.

18 Although none of the reports mention violence, HN353  
19 states that he witnessed the usual punch-ups at  
20 demonstrations with the IMG, but he was generally at  
21 the back.

22 On one occasion, he and other protesters were  
23 charged by a police mounted unit. There was no violence  
24 to property that he can recall; it all took place  
25 between right and left wing groups, with the police in

1           between.

2           During his involvement in IS, HN353 would attend at  
3           least one private meeting per week, as well as public  
4           meetings and demonstrations at the weekend. He  
5           continued this pattern following his transfer to  
6           the IMG, but in addition to this schedule he attended  
7           Thames Polytechnic, where he was involved in student  
8           politics. This resulted in him being in his cover  
9           identity for eight hours a day. It was rare for him to  
10          have time off at home, but this happened more frequently  
11          in the autumn and winter months, when there were fewer  
12          demonstrations.

13          He attended meetings at the SDS safe house three  
14          times a week, but this fell to twice a week later in his  
15          deployment. Managers were also available by telephone  
16          or in person outside regular meeting times. He notes  
17          that:

18                 "... I would hand in a manuscript report at our SDS  
19          meetings which I'd never see again, I don't recall  
20          seeing the typed-up version."

21          As for the content of reports, HN353 writes:

22                 "I would Hoover up everything, it wasn't my job to  
23          analyse it, I would just report [it]."

24          The majority of the reporting attributed to HN353  
25          records discussions at IMG meetings, usually on



1 the topics of policies and political structure of  
2 the organisation. He states that he included  
3 the political content of meetings, but that this would  
4 have been more for the benefit of the Security Services  
5 than for the police.

6 Counter-subversion was not the primary aim of  
7 the SDS, but virtually all intelligence was copied to  
8 the Security Services.

9 HN353 did not have any direct involvement with them,  
10 but the Security Services did award him a commendation  
11 for one of his reports, which he assumes was for the IMG  
12 national conference.

13 A telephone message from Box 500 thanks Assistant  
14 Chief Superintendent Kneale, on 3 November 1976, for  
15 the report on the IMG conference, stating that it will  
16 "be of tremendous value to my service".

17 HN353 states that:

18 "I don't think anything I witnessed was actually  
19 subversive, the IMG were strong on words, but in  
20 hindsight I think they were not really likely to act on  
21 them."

22 His view was that the IMG wanted to establish  
23 a communist state with power to the workers, but he  
24 states that:

25 "I don't think they knew how to achieve that goal

1           ... The theory they followed would have endorsed the use  
2 of violence to achieve their aim, but I never saw them  
3 actually applying violence to that aim, aside from when  
4 they were trying to throw the National Front off  
5 the street."

6           HN353 was not tasked to report on entryism, but he  
7 knew that it would be of interest to Special Branch and  
8 Security Services. Although, in the IMG this was done  
9 in "a quite half-hearted way". He was not aware of any  
10 IMG policy of entryism into trade unions.

11           HN353 states that he was not tasked to report on  
12 racial or sexual equality campaigns, but would record  
13 these topics where they were discussed in meetings, such  
14 as various anti-racist work planned by the IMG. There  
15 is a report dated 24 January 1977 concerning  
16 the founding delegate conference of the All Lewisham  
17 Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. Workshops at this  
18 event:

19           "... revealed the considerable amount of antipathy  
20 towards the police in Lewisham, who were seen to engage  
21 in frequent harassment of blacks. The question was  
22 asked why no official representative of the police was  
23 in attendance at the conference."

24           HN353 states that he was not tasked to report on  
25 this meeting, but would have attended in his capacity as

1 vice president of the student union.

2 Reports dated 8 May 1975 and 27 June 1975 record  
3 engagement by the core participant "Mary" with  
4 the National Abortion Campaign, and a report on  
5 27 June 1975 contains personal details about her planned  
6 holiday. These reports pre-date the time when HN353  
7 believes he reported on the IMG, but he notes that he  
8 does recognise "Mary's" name, although he cannot be sure  
9 why.

10 A further report dated 26 September 1975 also  
11 mentions "Mary".

12 Core participants Richard Chessum and Piers Corbyn  
13 are also mentioned in HN353's reporting. He states that  
14 Piers Corbyn was not an elected politician during this  
15 period, although he might have been a local councillor.

16 HN353 states that he did not hold any position of  
17 responsibility in IMG. He recalls being advised by  
18 managers not to become an organiser in groups. There  
19 was no training on whether close relationships in cover  
20 identities were permitted, nor any discussion about  
21 participation in criminal activity. However, HN353  
22 reports that he had no personal or sexual relationships  
23 and did not take any positions of trust with activists.  
24 He did not engage in any criminal activity, save for  
25 wilfully obstructing the highway selling newspapers, or

1 tearing down opposition posters at demonstrations.

2 He did not know any of his colleagues participate in  
3 any criminal activity, although some involvement in  
4 public disorder might have occurred. He would not have  
5 known if any of them had engaged in sexual relationship  
6 whilst deployed.

7 The end of HN353's deployment coincided with the end  
8 of his studies, which pleased him as he had been offered  
9 another police role. He believes that he withdrew from  
10 the group by making up a story that he was too depressed  
11 to take his finals. He was unaware of a 12-month limit  
12 on the length of deployments, but does not believe that  
13 this duration would have allowed sufficient time to  
14 enter and exit a group successfully.

15 Sir, that concludes the summary for HN353. I will  
16 move on now to HN351.

17 HN351 served in the SDS from spring 1974 to  
18 March 1975, reporting on the International Socialists or  
19 the IS. He used the cover name "Jeff Slater".  
20 Publication of his real name is restricted.

21 He joined Special Branch in the early 1970s as  
22 a detective constable, during which time he gained some  
23 experience of undercover work. He cannot recall how he  
24 was selected for the SDS, but thinks it was likely that  
25 SDS managers spoke to him to explain the nature of

1 the work.

2 HN351 did use a deceased child's identity, which he  
3 notes was a convention at the time, although he cannot  
4 recall being given specific instructions to do so, nor  
5 the rationale for this practice. He used the name and  
6 date of birth of the deceased child, but no further  
7 details from his life.

8 He undertook some work in his cover employment and  
9 had a cover vehicle and accommodation, along with some  
10 cover documentation.

11 HN351 received no formal training, although he felt  
12 that his prior undercover work in Special Branch,  
13 combined with his service in the SDS back office,  
14 provided some preparation. He was not given specific  
15 instructions about the kind of intelligence to seek,  
16 although officers could request guidance at the weekly  
17 SDS meetings. He states that:

18 "You picked up all sorts of information without  
19 knowing whether it would be of use, but passed it back  
20 anyway. That said, we had a general understanding of  
21 which areas Special Branch was interested in, and would  
22 not stray beyond that."

23 He knew not to act as an agent provocateur from  
24 CID training school. He states that no Tradecraft  
25 Manual existed to his knowledge.

1           HN351 started his deployment in the SDS back office,  
2           and by the end of May 1974 was described as being ready  
3           to go into the field. However, the first report  
4           attributed to this officer dates from several months  
5           later than that, 8 August 1974. The final report  
6           attributed to him dates from 24 March 1975. The maximum  
7           length of his deployment would have amounted to 43  
8           weeks.

9           The majority of the reports attributed to him  
10          concern the Tottenham branch of IS. HN351 has not been  
11          able to confirm the attribution of these reports,  
12          stating that he would not have written any of them  
13          himself, as he provided intelligence orally or via  
14          irregular notes.

15          These were typed up by administrative staff and  
16          disseminated by his superiors. He never saw  
17          the finished product, and he has been unable to comment  
18          on whether any of his reporting is missing. He states  
19          that the intelligence he provided may have been used to  
20          form composite reports, as other officers were also  
21          reporting on IS.

22          He was not tasked to infiltrate a particular group  
23          at the outset of his deployment, but he went to protests  
24          and demonstrations, where he made contact with  
25          activists. He believes that this information would have

1           been relayed to managers at the weekly SDS meetings,  
2           where he would have been instructed to focus on IS. His  
3           only formal group membership was of IS.

4           This group was of interest because they were  
5           a subversive group, "organising to bring about the fall  
6           of the state, and they would use any means available to  
7           achieve this, including violence". He states that part  
8           of the reason he was deployed was to gain information  
9           about the number of police needed to manage protests.

10          HN351 goes on to say that he:

11          "... witnessed plenty of serious public disorder and  
12          violence whilst serving as an undercover office."

13          And although he cannot recall the specific  
14          incidents, it would have been "during demonstrations  
15          that got out of hand", where he saw severe beatings of  
16          policemen by activists, and activists beating up members  
17          of the public who intervened.

18          He also witnessed violence between counter-protest  
19          groups, and saw activists cause damage to property. He  
20          was never involved in any disorder, violence or other  
21          criminal activity.

22          The only potential violence discussed in the reports  
23          attributed to HN351 occurs following a Socialist Worker  
24          meeting on 1 August 1974. IS members planned to attend  
25          a National Front demonstration in Leicester that month,

1 and were considering taking pepper, marbles and flour  
2 with them.

3 Some reports contain employment details about IS  
4 members and others discuss links between IS and trade  
5 unions. For example, a report on 20 March 1975  
6 identifies a Tottenham member as being part of  
7 the National Union of Journalists. In his witness  
8 statement HN351 explains that:

9 "Special Branch would have been interested in  
10 employment that was taken up by IS members because they  
11 may have created problems within their workplaces by  
12 arranging strikes and the like."

13 A report dated 22 November 1974 states that  
14 a Finsbury Park IS member at a North London aggregate  
15 meeting stressed the need for more intervention by IS  
16 members in industrial disputes at local factories. In  
17 reference to this report, HN351 notes that:

18 "It is possible that I was asked to report on  
19 the influence of IS in industrial settings and trade  
20 unions, but I do not remember this."

21 He goes on to say that:

22 "I was not tasked to report on trade unions while in  
23 the SDS and would only have mentioned them if I was  
24 concerned that a member of IS would seek to disrupt  
25 their legitimate activities and use the trade union to



1 further IS's subversive aims."

2 He denies joining a union or becoming involved in  
3 any union affairs.

4 Some reports mention racial or sexual equality  
5 campaigning. For example, a report on 5 December 1974  
6 contains discussion about the necessity of appointing  
7 a women's industrial organiser, while a report two weeks  
8 later notes that members were urged to attend a picket  
9 outside a Mile End pub, where the landlord was  
10 exercising "a pernicious form of the colour bar".

11 HN351 states that he was not tasked to report on  
12 equality campaigning and cannot say why this information  
13 would have been included.

14 Other reports concern a variety of topics: IS talks  
15 on global political issues, discussion of  
16 the Irish Troubles, plans to attend protests and  
17 educational classes, and details of individual branch  
18 members. Two reports from January 1975 contain copies  
19 of the North London district IS babysitting rota.

20 A report dated 25 February 1975 provides a list of  
21 people who attended a birthday party at a private  
22 address, most but not all of whom were IS members.

23 HN351 notes that although he was not specifically  
24 tasked to attend social events, sometimes it was  
25 necessary in order to maintain cover.

1           A report dated 6 January 1975 identifies  
2 "Jeff Slater" as the new Socialist Worker organiser, but  
3 HN351 has no recollection of whether or not he undertook  
4 this role.

5           He states that he did not take on any positions of  
6 trust or form particularly close relationships whilst  
7 undercover, which he attributes to the brevity of his  
8 deployment. He did not engage in any  
9 sexual relationships and none were ever discussed in his  
10 presence.

11           HN351's deployment ended at his request because he  
12 found it "too debilitating and exhausting, both mentally  
13 and physically". However, he does not consider his  
14 difficulties to have been a reflection of the level of  
15 support available, and believes that the informal  
16 welfare monitoring was adequate for the era.

17           HN351's SDS work did have long-term effects on his  
18 emotional wellbeing and mental health. He could not  
19 seek help with this due to the secrecy around his work,  
20 and there were no welfare services available to him  
21 within the MPS at the time.

22           Sir, that concludes the summary for HN351.

23           In addition to the witness statements and documents  
24 for these officers, the Inquiry is also publishing today  
25 documents in relation to HN297, HN300 and HN13.

1           HN297 had the cover name "Rick Gibson" and reported  
2           on the South East London Branch of the Troops Out  
3           Movement and on Big Flame. Analysis of his documents  
4           can be found at pages 153 to 171 of  
5           Counsel to the Inquiry's written opening statement for  
6           Tranche 1 Phase 2.

7           HN300's cover name was "Jim Pickford". He reported  
8           on various left wing groups in the Battersea and  
9           Wandsworth area, as well as on the Anarchist Workers  
10          Association. Analysis of his documents is at pages 175  
11          to 180 of the written opening statement.

12          And, finally, HN13 used the cover name  
13          "Barry Loader", and reported on the Communist Party of  
14          England (Marxist-Leninist). Documents relating to his  
15          deployment are considered at pages 180 to 184 of  
16          the written opening statement.

17          Sir, that concludes the summaries introduction.

18        THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. We will now break for  
19          ten minutes to enable arrangements to be set up for  
20          the resumption of live evidence.

21        MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone. We will now take  
22          a break. May I remind those in the virtual hearing room  
23          to remember to join your break-out rooms, please.

24          The time is now 10.30 am, so we shall reconvene at  
25          10.40 am. Thank you.

1 (10.28 am)

2 (A short break)

3 (10.40 am)

4 MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone, and welcome back.

5 I will now hand over to the Chairman to continue  
6 proceedings.

7 Chairman.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

9 As at the beginning of every live evidential  
10 session, a recording made earlier is going to be played.  
11 If you're listening to it for the first time, please  
12 listen carefully.

13 I am conducting this Inquiry under a statute,  
14 the Inquiries Act 2005, which gives me the power to make  
15 orders regulating the conduct of the Inquiry including  
16 its hearings. In the exercise of that power, I have  
17 made a number of orders which affect what you may and  
18 may not do in the hearing rooms and after you leave  
19 them. Breach of any of the orders is a serious matter  
20 and may have serious consequences for you.

21 If I am satisfied that a person may have breached an  
22 order, I have the power to certify the matter to  
23 the High Court, which will investigate and deal with it  
24 as if it had been a contempt of that court. If  
25 satisfied that a breach has occurred and merits

1 the imposition of a penalty, the High Court may impose  
2 a severe sanction on the person in breach, including  
3 a fine, imprisonment for up to two years and  
4 sequestration of their assets.

5 Evidence is going to be given live over screens in  
6 the hearing rooms. It is strictly prohibited to  
7 photograph or record what is shown on the screens, or to  
8 record what is said by a witness or anyone else in  
9 the hearing rooms. You may bring your mobile telephone  
10 into the hearing rooms, but you may not use it for any  
11 of those purposes. You may use it silently for any  
12 other purpose. In particular, you may transmit your  
13 account of what you have seen and heard in a hearing  
14 room to any other person, but only once at least  
15 ten minutes have elapsed since the event which you are  
16 describing took place.

17 This restriction has a purpose. In the course of  
18 the Inquiry, I have made orders prohibiting the public  
19 disclosure of information, for example about  
20 the identity of a person, for a variety of reasons.  
21 These orders must be upheld. It is inevitable that,  
22 whether by accident or design, information which I have  
23 ordered should not be publicly disclosed will sometimes  
24 be disclosed in a hearing. If and when that happens,  
25 I will immediately suspend the hearing and make an order

1 prohibiting further disclosure of the information  
2 outside the hearing rooms. The consequence will be that  
3 no further disclosure of that information may be made by  
4 mobile telephone or other portable electronic device  
5 from within the hearing room, or by any means outside  
6 it.

7 I am sorry if you find this message alarming. It is  
8 not intended to be. Its purpose is simply to ensure  
9 that everyone knows the rules which must apply if I am  
10 to hear the evidence which I need to enable me to get to  
11 the truth about undercover policing. You, as members of  
12 the public, are entitled to hear the same public  
13 evidence as I will hear, and to reach your own  
14 conclusions about it. The Inquiry team will do their  
15 best to ensure that you can. If you have any doubt  
16 about the terms of this message or what you may or may  
17 not do, you should not hesitate to ask one of them and,  
18 with my help if necessary, they will provide you with  
19 the answer.

20 Before we begin today's evidential hearing, I would  
21 like to thank those of you who are tweeting messages  
22 outside the hearing room about what is going on and is  
23 transmitted to it for abiding in a general way with  
24 the instruction that you've just heard played. But  
25 I was told that a number did, for one reason or another,

1 get their estimate of ten minutes wrong and tweeted, on  
2 one or two instances, significantly before  
3 the ten-minute period had elapsed.

4 Ten minutes has been chosen for a purpose. It  
5 permits me and the Inquiry team to stop breaches of  
6 orders that I have made from being disclosed outside  
7 the hearing room. It's a necessary control, and I would  
8 ask, please, everybody who is transmitting to take care  
9 to allow the ten minutes to elapse. Absolutely the last  
10 thing I want to do is to have to take steps to enforce  
11 that ten-minute period. Thank you.

12 MR RICHARD CHESSUM (called)

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chessum, can you hear me? It may be that  
14 you're on mute.

15 A. Yes, I can hear you. Sorry.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Good. No, going on to mute is a mistake that  
17 I used to make repeatedly, and all of us make it first  
18 time round. Don't worry about it.

19 Do you wish to swear or to affirm?

20 A. Affirm.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, then the words of affirmation will be  
22 read to you in a moment.

23 (Witness affirmed)

24 Mr Barr.

25 Questions by MR BARR

- 1 MR BARR: Thank you, Sir.
- 2 Mr Chessum, please could you confirm your full name?
- 3 A. It's Richard Thomas Chessum.
- 4 Q. And are the contents of your witness statement dated
- 5 4 April 2020 true and correct --
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. -- to the best of your knowledge and belief?
- 8 A. Yes. Yes, they are.
- 9 Q. That puts the whole of your witness statement into
- 10 evidence, and so I will only dwell on certain parts of
- 11 it now.
- 12 Can I start, please, with an overview of your
- 13 political activism. You tell us that the overarching
- 14 aim of your political activity over a lifetime has been
- 15 to contribute to a better world; is that right?
- 16 A. That's right.
- 17 Q. And that you began your journey as a Methodist Christian
- 18 Socialist, where you developed your beliefs in social
- 19 justice, human rights and socialism?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. You then moved into the Labour Party and worked for
- 22 the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament whilst you were
- 23 living in Bedfordshire in the 1960s?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. And then, from about 1968 onwards, you became much more



- 1 interested in international issues?
- 2 A. Yes, and I moved to London in 1968.
- 3 Q. And there you became involved with the Vietnam  
4 Solidarity Committee, and you attended all three of  
5 the major VSC demonstrations in October 1967, March 1968  
6 and October 1968?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. You then became involved in the Anti-Apartheid Movement  
9 and the Stop the Seventy Tour; is that right?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. And you tell us in your witness statement that there was  
12 an occasion where you joined a pitch invasion at  
13 the Oval cricket ground and spread pebbles on  
14 the outfield; is that right?
- 15 A. Well, not on the outfield, on the actual pitch itself.  
16 About 20 of us ran onto the pitch. And our aim was to  
17 bring the game to a halt, in order that we could engage  
18 in discussion with the actual players, the South African  
19 players, and we did that. And after the demonstration  
20 had finished, we -- we left.
- 21 Q. Can you help me whether that was part of the campaign  
22 against the Wilf Isaacs tour, or whether it was part of  
23 the campaign against the forthcoming tour of  
24 the South African cricket team?
- 25 A. Yeah, it was the W Isaacs XI, which, like the full

1 South African team, was entirely white; and it was  
2 a prelude to the tour of the official South African  
3 international side the following year.

4 Q. And as a member of which group were you participating in  
5 that direct action?

6 A. It was the Stop the Seventy Tour really.

7 Q. You also tell us in your witness statement that you were  
8 at one of the rugby matches at Twickenham. Can you help  
9 us with whether that was the December 1969 test match or  
10 whether it was the January 1970 match between  
11 South Africa and the Barbarians?

12 A. I can't really. Rugby was not a sport that I followed.  
13 And I remember going on one occasion to a rugby match  
14 where there was a protest, but I can't remember which  
15 one.

16 Q. Can you recall the nature of the protest that took place  
17 at that match?

18 A. Well, it varied. I mean, people ran onto the pitch --  
19 onto the -- onto the field. And, actually, some smoke  
20 bombs were thrown, but I was not involved in that.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 You then enrolled at Goldsmith's College in 1970 and  
23 set up the Socialist Society there?

24 A. Yes. There was no Socialist Society in Goldsmith's when  
25 I enrolled. I had been to the LSE, where my sister had

1           been a student, and in -- in that university there was  
2           a Conservative Society, a Liberal Society, no Labour  
3           Society, but there was a Socialist Society, because in  
4           those days I think there was general disillusionment  
5           with the Labour government of '64/'70, and most  
6           independent socialists were outside the Labour Party.  
7           So I had in mind when I went to Goldsmith's College  
8           setting up a Socialist Society similar to the one that  
9           was in the LSE.

10          Q.   And that, you tell us, was a democratic organisation, it  
11               was open to all students and staff, and you generally  
12               held open meetings weekly?

13          A.   Yes, I -- I set up a stall myself, because no one else  
14               was there to do it.  And I recruited about 70 people to  
15               the Socialist Society on that first day.  It was a time  
16               when there was a great deal of political awareness.  And  
17               in fact my future wife was one of the people that  
18               I recruited on that day.

19          Q.   And you also joined the Anti-Internment League and  
20               organised a demonstration following the killings on  
21               Bloody Sunday on 30 January 1972?

22          A.   Yes.  I saw it as a continuation of the activity that  
23               I'd already been involved in.  I shared a flat with  
24               several people, one of whom was Irish, and she was very  
25               indignant that we were organising against American

1 troops in Vietnam but not doing anything about our own  
2 British troops in Northern Ireland, and she persuaded me  
3 that I should do something. I met some people from  
4 People's Democracy on the demonstration, and -- in  
5 Trafalgar Square, who were distributing leaflets. I got  
6 talking to them. I ended up helping them distribute  
7 the leaflets, because I felt their cause was just. So  
8 yes, I was -- I saw my involvement in Irish politics as  
9 very much a continuation of the anti-racist politics  
10 that I'd been involved in.

11 Q. And what were your concerns about internment?

12 A. It was -- it was a power which had been given to  
13 the Northern Ireland government under the Special Powers  
14 Act. It was an extreme form of legislation, very  
15 repressive. And in fact, one of the leaders of  
16 apartheid in South Africa said he would willingly swap  
17 all of his anti-terrorist powers for one special clause  
18 of the Special Powers Act. So it was introduced --  
19 internment was introduced in every decade of  
20 the Northern Ireland state, and it was introduced again  
21 in the 1970s as a response to the troubles that were  
22 occurring.

23 It was -- it was a red -- it was -- it was an -- it  
24 was -- it was inflammatory, really, because it was one  
25 of the things that the people in the north on

1           the nationalist side had always felt was one of the most  
2           repressive things that they endured, and to introduce  
3           internment was like a red rag to a bull, and I do think  
4           it led to a recruitment to the IRA.

5        Q.   And did that concern you?

6        A.   Yes.  It was not the direction that I felt that  
7           the British Government should allow the Northern Irish  
8           government to go in.

9        Q.   Then you tell us that in 1972 you joined  
10       the International Marxist Group?

11       A.   Yes, I did.  In some ways I was reluctant to join any of  
12       the left groups because I'd been involved in  
13       the Labour Party in the 1960s, which was a very broad  
14       based coalition.  When I set up the Socialist Society,  
15       I -- I envisaged a very broad based society which would  
16       include socialists of all different varieties.  So, it  
17       was against -- it was against the grain for me to join  
18       a small left wing group.  But in those days, most people  
19       on the left were joining these groups.  And in the end,  
20       if you didn't join one or other of these groups, you  
21       tended to get a bit isolated, and I was persuaded by  
22       some people in the IMG, who I'd known through  
23       the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, that I should join them  
24       because I agreed with them more than -- more than  
25       others.  And on that basis I did join.  I was uncertain

1           about whether to join, but I did. In the end, I only  
2           lasted for a year in the organisation, because again,  
3           I reacted against being in a little goldfish --  
4           a political goldfish bowl; I preferred to be on the open  
5           sea.

6           Q. So just to be clear, we're going to come to "Rick  
7           Gibson" in a moment. Were you a member of the IMG at  
8           any time that you knew "Rick Gibson"?

9           A. No, I -- I was in the IMG, I think, from '72 to '73.  
10          "Rick Gibson" appeared on the scene after the Birmingham  
11          pub bombings in -- well, they were in November 1974.  
12          And I think he appeared just after then.

13          Q. You tell us that the Troops Out Movement, commonly known  
14          by the acronym "TOM", formed, as best you can recall, in  
15          1973, but you didn't join the organisation immediately?

16          A. No, I -- I had been ill. In fact, I had a period of  
17          illness at the time. And I -- I left the -- I left my  
18          course for a year because of that and had gone back to  
19          it, and therefore I was studying for the final year of  
20          my degree a bit late; so I wanted to concentrate on that  
21          and I didn't want to get ill again, so I had really  
22          decided to bow out of active politics a little bit. And  
23          it wasn't until Gibson arrived on the scene that -- that  
24          I got involved again.

25          Q. We're going to come back to TOM in a lot more detail in

1           due course, but it may help to set the scene at this  
2           stage to ask a few questions about it as an  
3           organisation.

4           Is it right that it had essentially two aims?  
5           The first was to seek the withdrawal of British troops  
6           from Northern Ireland, and the second was  
7           self-determination for the Irish people?

8           A. Yes.

9           Q. And it had a tier of national organisation, a tier of  
10          London organisation and then branches all around  
11          the country?

12          A. Yes.

13          Q. And that the London branches sent delegates to  
14          the London meetings, and all branches sent delegates to  
15          national events; is that right?

16          A. Yes, yes.

17          Q. And the group held an annual national conference?

18          A. Yes.

19          Q. It promoted educational activities?

20          A. Yes, raising awareness.

21          Q. And deputations to Northern Ireland and reports, and  
22          that sort of thing?

23          A. That's right. I never myself went on any of  
24          the deputations to Northern Ireland, but it -- it did do  
25          that.

- 1 Q. And also organised demonstrations?
- 2 A. Yes. Occasionally.
- 3 Q. Moving on now to a little bit later in your political  
4 life. You became very active in the Labour Committee  
5 on Ireland; is that right?
- 6 A. Yes, and I was -- I was very -- very much at home in  
7 the Labour Committee on Ireland. It was much more broad  
8 based organisation that I felt much more at home in than  
9 other organisations I'd belonged to previously.
- 10 Q. And you tell us that you acted as the press officer for  
11 the Labour Committee on Ireland from approximately  
12 the mid-1980s into the early 1990s?
- 13 A. Yes, I had been Parliamentary Labour candidate in  
14 the 1983 election, and I'd received quite a lot of  
15 publicity through press releases that I'd put out; and  
16 this came to the notice of some people in  
17 the Labour Committee on Ireland, and they invited me to  
18 become their press officer.
- 19 Q. And at what stage in your political career did you  
20 rejoin the Labour Party?
- 21 A. I had rejoined the Labour Party in 1976. I'd been  
22 a member from 1963 to 1968 in Bedfordshire. When  
23 I moved to London, I never really made a conscious  
24 decision to resign from the party, but I -- I lapsed.  
25 Perhaps if I'd have stayed in Bedfordshire I'd have



1           stayed a member, but because I moved to London and got  
2           involved in lots of other activities, and there was  
3           general disillusionment with the performance of  
4           the Labour government of the 60s, it didn't seem  
5           priority to rejoin at that time.

6           I -- when we moved from London to the Midlands, when  
7           I took up a grant to do a PhD, I had decided that once  
8           we moved I would rejoin. And I was also inspired to  
9           rejoin by what I saw as a growing left wing movement  
10          inside the Labour Party associated with Tony Benn.

11         Q.    Would I be right to understand that you rejoined  
12           the Labour Party after you had last seen "Rick Gibson"?

13         A.    That's right, yes.

14         Q.    Returning now to more recent years, you tell us that  
15           the latest chapter of your political activism has been  
16           with a group called Assist Sheffield, for the last  
17           17 years, which assists asylum seekers and refugees?

18         A.    Yes. A friend of mine -- a friend of mine and I and one  
19           or two other people, we organised a Conversation Club  
20           for refugees and asylum seekers, where they could come,  
21           break out of their isolation and learn to speak English  
22           better by mixing with English-speaking people. And it  
23           came to our notice in that Conversation Club that many  
24           of them were completely destitute, and we then  
25           investigated why and we learned much more about

1 the asylum system and why this was happening; and we  
2 decided that really we needed to set up another  
3 organisation that would raise money for them to pay them  
4 a small amount of money each week, and eventually to  
5 provide them with accommodation. And that was the basis  
6 on which we set up Assist.

7 I think we were conscious of the fact that we were  
8 fighting not only destitution, but also racism in our  
9 society as well, because all of the refugees and asylum  
10 seekers we knew were people of colour, and we felt that  
11 there was a lot of prejudice against them.

12 So we set it up not knowing how long it would last,  
13 because we had no idea whether we could sustain it, but  
14 in fact it's grown to quite a substantial registered  
15 charity now. It's -- has eight houses where we house  
16 asylum seekers, it has 300 volunteers, and it's become  
17 a substantial presence in the city of Sheffield.

18 Q. Thank you, Mr Chessum.

19 With all of that background in mind, I'm now going  
20 to take you, if I may, to the last days of 1974. At  
21 that time, you were still a student at  
22 Goldsmith's College, weren't you?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Is it right that you were a member of  
25 the Student's Council?

1       A. Yes, I was elected to the Student's Council. I had been  
2       a candidate -- the left candidate for president of  
3       the Students Union, but Goldsmith's was not  
4       a particularly left wing place on the whole, but I did  
5       get elected to the Student's Council.

6       Q. You were a member of the AIL, but you were not a member  
7       of TOM?

8       A. I had been a member of the Anti-Internment League  
9       earlier. I'm not -- not sure the Anti-Internment League  
10      still existed by then.

11      Q. I think you're absolutely right. It had --

12      A. Yes.

13      Q. -- (overspeaking) -- by then?

14      A. It was the Troops Out Movement that had been set up as  
15      the main Irish campaigning organisation.

16      Q. You had been involved with the AIL. --

17      A. Yes.

18      Q. You weren't actually a member of TOM. But did there  
19      come a point in time when you were contacted by TOM  
20      about a man who called himself "Rick Gibson"?

21      A. Yes, there were -- there were some of us in  
22      Goldsmith's College who felt that we ought to be doing  
23      more on Ireland. After the Birmingham pub bombings,  
24      which were a terrible atrocity, some Irish people were  
25      reported as being attacked in the street, and we felt

1 that things were escalating out of control of  
2 the British Government really, and getting worse. And  
3 we felt that we ought to be doing more on Ireland. But  
4 we were provoked into doing it when someone called "Rick  
5 Gibson" had written to the national office of the Troops  
6 Out Movement and the national office of the Troops Out  
7 Movement contacted me and said, "We have this person  
8 who's interested in -- in joining the Troops Out  
9 Movement, he's asking if there is a branch in South East  
10 London, he's signed on as a student for  
11 Goldsmith's College, and so, you know, could you do  
12 anything about setting up something that would enable  
13 him to be active?" And we met together and decided to  
14 do that.

15 Q. Can I show you a document, please. This is the document  
16 at tab 1 of the hard copy bundle. It's {UCPI/12122}.

17 This is an intelligence report from the SDS, dated  
18 11 February 1975. The subject is "Goldsmith's College",  
19 and it reads:

20 "The following information has been received from  
21 a reliable source:-

22 "On Thursday, 30 January 1974, a meeting was held by  
23 the Socialist Society of Goldsmith's College, Lewisham  
24 Way, SE14, on the subject, 'Why a Troops Out Movement'.  
25 The meeting lasted from 7 pm until 9.30 pm and was

1 attended by about 45 persons."

2 First of all, is there an error in the date there?

3 Should that be 30 January 1975?

4 A. Yes, it should.

5 Q. Can we go now, please, to paragraphs 5 and 6.

6 We see at paragraph 5 that an ex-paratrooper called

7 McConnell was the main speaker.

8 And then at paragraph 6, it says:

9 "The most important item to be discussed was

10 proposed by Richard [Chessum] ..."

11 I think it should say "Chessum" not "Chesham",

12 shouldn't it?

13 A. Yes, it should. That's a frequent misspelling of my

14 name, actually.

15 Q. It is indeed:

16 "... who suggested that a South East London branch

17 of TOM be formed with representatives coming from all

18 the groups present. This was met, initially, with

19 little enthusiasm but it was eventually decided that an

20 informal meeting would take place in one week ..."

21 I can't quite read ...

22 "... in one week's time with at least one

23 representative of each group being present."

24 Two questions. First of all, was "Rick Gibson" at

25 that meeting?

1       A. I think it's likely that he would have been. We had met  
2       "Rick Gibson" in the students union bar initially, and  
3       he was certainly involved with us before we organised  
4       any public meetings.

5       Q. Yes, because that was going to be my second question.  
6       Had you met "Rick Gibson" before 30 January 1975?

7       A. Yes, I'm -- I'm sure we had.

8               I'm trying -- I've been trying to remember when we  
9       first met "Rick Gibson" in the student union bar,  
10       because I think, looking back, we did meet with him  
11       probably in December, but of course it was a bit late  
12       then, with term coming to an end, to organise anything  
13       public, which is why we delayed doing that until after  
14       the term resumed in -- in the spring, and that's why  
15       the meeting was in January -- the public meeting.

16       Q. Thank you.

17               We can take that document down now, please.

18               You mentioned earlier the fact that the Birmingham  
19       pub bombings occurred on 21 November 1974; and you  
20       suggest in your witness statement a connection between  
21       that event and the appearance not much later of "Rick  
22       Gibson" on your scene.

23               Do you have any basis for that other than the very  
24       obvious temporal connection?

25       A. It was in retrospect that I think we regarded it as

1 significant, once we knew that Rick had been an  
2 undercover police officer. At the time, it seemed like  
3 a coincidence.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 There is then a small meeting that takes place on  
6 6 February. And perhaps we can look at the report of  
7 that. It's at tab 2 of the hard copy bundle and the  
8 reference is {MPS/728678}. And if we could go to  
9 page 2, please, {MPS/728678/2}.

10 This report is dated 17 February 1975, a date which  
11 I'm going to just ask you to hold in mind, please.

12 The subject is "South East London TOM", although in fact  
13 the branch didn't exist at this stage, did it? It  
14 hadn't actually been set up?

15 A. That's right, yes. Yes, we were in the process of -- of  
16 organising then.

17 Q. And it says at paragraph 2:

18 "On Thursday 6 February 1975 in the Students' Union  
19 bar at Goldsmith's College, Lewisham Way, SE14, an  
20 informal meeting was held to discuss the possibility of  
21 forming a South East London Troops Out Movement. It  
22 lasted from 8.30 pm until 10 pm and was attended by five  
23 persons."

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Paragraph 3:

1            "It had been suggested by Richard Chessum, an  
2            ex-member of the IMG, at a TOM meeting held the previous  
3            week."

4            And then there is discussion about that.

5            If I pick it up at the bottom of paragraph 3, it  
6            says:

7            "He had hoped for a representative from each of  
8            the extreme left wing organisations to attend, but in  
9            the event only he and one other person were present at  
10           the start, to be joined later by three persons from  
11           Lewisham IMG who only attended because their own  
12           educational class had been cancelled."

13           Now, we don't normally name activists who are not  
14           already in the public domain or participating in  
15           the Inquiry, so please bear that in mind when answering,  
16           but who was the other person present with you at  
17           the start of the meeting?

18           A. I don't really remember.

19           Q. I see.

20           A. I -- I mean, we held -- we -- we met quite a bit in  
21           the students' union bar; it was a regular meeting place  
22           for informal meetings. And I know we had a number of  
23           different meetings in the students' union bar at that  
24           time, and different people attended on different  
25           occasions.



1 Q. If we could scroll down to the bottom of the page,  
2 please.

3 Paragraph 5 records the persons present as being  
4 yourself, two people whose names are redacted for  
5 privacy reasons and a person who we are knowing by  
6 the pseudonym "Mary", with whom "Rick Gibson", we are  
7 told, went on to have a sexual relationship.

8 Is it your recollection that this was a very small  
9 meeting?

10 A. This was -- this was a meeting -- where was this? In  
11 the students' union bar?

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. Yes. Well, they were all small meetings in  
14 the students' union bar. They were people who were most  
15 committed, who we felt would be most likely to help in  
16 setting up a branch.

17 Q. And we see that the report bears the name of "R Clark",  
18 which is "Rick Gibson's" real name.

19 A. Mm.

20 Q. Is it fair to say, then, that "Rick Gibson" had been  
21 introduced to "Mary" from the very earliest stages of  
22 his deployment?

23 A. I'm never quite sure when he met "Mary" for the first  
24 time. I know that "Mary's" account, when I saw her  
25 again recently, after 50 years, she said that she first

1 met him when she was on a -- a socialist stall,  
2 a socialist -- a Socialist Society stall. And she said  
3 that was the first time she met him, so it wasn't like  
4 we introduced her to him, it was she met him  
5 independently of some of us.

6 Q. I see, thank you.

7 Could we take that document down now, please.

8 I asked you to bear in mind the date of that report,  
9 17 February, because it's one of four reports which bear  
10 that date. I'm going to display each of the other three  
11 in turn.

12 First of all, could we have the document which is at  
13 tab 3 {UCPI/12136}.

14 This is a report about "Mary" dated 17 February, and  
15 we see that it says at paragraph 2:

16 "'Mary', although not a member of IMG is actively  
17 involved with the group in the Lewisham and New Cross  
18 areas and attends education classes run by  
19 the organisation."

20 Paragraph 3:

21 "She was born in South Africa on [Privacy] and lived  
22 in that country until she was 21. She is now a third  
23 year teacher training student at Goldsmith's College,  
24 SE14. She lives at ..."

25 And we've redacted the address for privacy.

1           There then follows a physical description, and at  
2 paragraph 6 it says:

3           "'Mary' cannot be identified in Special Branch  
4 records."

5           So, it would appear from that that "Rick Gibson" had  
6 compiled a report about "Mary", who previously had not  
7 been identified by Special Branch.

8           Can I take it that you are completely unaware that  
9 this was going on at the time?

10        A. I was completely unaware of it, yes. In fact, I think  
11 I only found out after the event that "Mary" was  
12 associating herself with the IMG, because of course she  
13 -- she did that long after I'd ceased to be a member.  
14 And in fact, I had ceased active involvement in  
15 Goldsmith's College as a student at the time "Mary"  
16 became very much more involved. It was after I'd ceased  
17 to be involved in politics in Goldsmith's College that  
18 "Mary" herself stood as the left candidate for  
19 the president of the students' union.

20        Q. Thank you.

21           Could we take that down now and could we have up  
22 a document at tab 4, which is {MPS/728205}.

23           This is a report of the same date, about you. It  
24 says at paragraph 2:

25           "Richard Chessum, a former IMG member, is currently

1 engaged in trying to form a South East London branch of  
2 the TOM. He lives at 234 Burrage Road, SE18 and works  
3 at Lewisham Public Library, although he intends leaving  
4 at the end of March to study full time for his sociology  
5 finals in the summer. Apparently he was a full-time  
6 student at Goldsmith's College until last year, but did  
7 not finish his course because of ill-health."

8 It then goes on to say -- identify who you were  
9 understood to be cohabiting with, and to provide  
10 a physical description of you.

11 Before we scroll down, can I ask you, where it says  
12 that you were trying to form a South East London Branch  
13 of TOM, are we to understand from what you've told us  
14 already that that was at the instigation of -- or as  
15 a result of "Rick Gibson" coming forward and expressing  
16 an interest?

17 A. Yes. When we got the communication from the national  
18 TOM, I think we just felt, well, if -- if other people  
19 who have not been involved before are expressing  
20 interest, you know, we ought really to do something.

21 Q. And if we could scroll down now. It says:

22 "Chessum first came to the notice of Special Branch  
23 on 24.1.69 when he contributed an article  
24 to 'Black Dwarf' entitled 'Decent British Housewives'.  
25 On 14.5.70 his name and address were taken by police

1 following a flyposting incident at the Oval by members  
2 of the South East London STST. On 4.2.72 he intervened  
3 in a scuffle when two men were being arrested for taking  
4 and driving away, as a result of which one escaped. He  
5 then described himself as a member of  
6 the National Council for Civil Liberties."

7 After a redaction, it says:

8 "He last came to notice on 16.11.73 when it was  
9 stated he was living at 234 Burrage Road ... and that  
10 his sister ..."

11 The name redacted:

12 "... had moved to York."

13 First of all, what is your reaction to reading how  
14 much information had been recorded about your previous  
15 political activities?

- 16 A. Well, as far as the article in Black Dwarf is concerned,  
17 I was worried when I saw that I'd come to their notice  
18 because of that. I was really worried about what did he  
19 say; will I be embarrassed by what I said in that  
20 article? But when the article was dug out by my legal  
21 team and I saw it again, I was quite surprised.  
22 I thought it was a well written article, it was a satire  
23 on the kind of society we were living in. It even  
24 satirised the demonstrators at the Vietnam  
25 demonstration. I think it was printed as a letter with

1 my Bedfordshire address at the bottom, and I suspect  
2 that was because it -- it didn't conform to all  
3 the political stances that the people in Black Dwarf  
4 would have liked, so they didn't print it as an article,  
5 they printed it as a letter.

6 But my -- my reaction was that if I came to  
7 the notice of the -- of the Special Branch because of  
8 that, it's very worrying, because there was nothing in  
9 -- in that which should have caused them to -- to be  
10 concerned. And it -- I just felt that it was a mindset  
11 on their part that was really quite sinister and  
12 dangerous, and that was my reaction to that.

13 I don't recall a flyposting incident at the Oval.  
14 It was when we ran on the pitch, I assume.

15 And with the -- the so-called "scuffle", I had been  
16 involved setting up an anti-racist organisation in -- in  
17 South East London as a consequence of Asian people being  
18 attacked in the street, and they were hospitalised, some  
19 of them, quite badly. And because I'd been involved in  
20 a lot of these things where there had been lots of  
21 racial attacks, when I saw two white people apparently  
22 attacking two African-Caribbeans in a side street near  
23 King's Cross, I tended to assume it was a racial attack.  
24 And the man who was with me, we were walking to  
25 a political meeting, I didn't know who the other man

1 was, but we -- we -- we assumed it was a racial attack.  
2 He got involved and told me to get involved as well.  
3 I think I'd have been rather more cautious if -- if he  
4 hadn't been with me. But we did try and intervene. And  
5 then it turned out that the -- the white men who we  
6 thought were attacking the African-Caribbeans were in  
7 fact plain clothes police officers, and they were  
8 arresting them for attempting to drive and take away  
9 a stolen motor vehicle.

10 So, mistaken about the reasons for their -- their  
11 actions. But I was very, very concerned when we got to  
12 the police station just how racist the atmosphere in  
13 the police station was. The -- the police constable who  
14 had arrested me, he took us up to the desk and told  
15 the Sergeant, "the coon" -- he referred to him  
16 as "the coon" -- "was trying to steal a motor vehicle  
17 and this character was helping him." And the Sergeant  
18 at the desk, who I expected to react against that kind  
19 of racist language, he said -- he said -- he pointed at  
20 me and he said, "Take him to the interview room," and  
21 then he said, "Take the coon down to the cell."

22 And there was this constant racist atmosphere and  
23 language the whole time I was there. It was uncorrected  
24 by any senior officer, including the -- the inspector,  
25 who took part in my interrogation, my interview.

1           So, although we were mistaken, I think, in thinking  
2           that the motivation of the police was -- we didn't know  
3           were policemen when we saw them, we were mistaken in  
4           thinking that their actions were motivated by racism,  
5           but they certainly displayed a lot of racism when we got  
6           to the police station.

7           Q. You've explained very fully this incident in your  
8           witness statement, and it led ultimately to you being  
9           prosecuted.

10           Can I ask you, did there come a time when you told  
11           "Rick Gibson" about those events?

12           A. I think I may well have told him, yes. I had so many  
13           conversations with "Rick Gibson".

14           After meetings of the South East London Branch  
15           when -- when there was a lot of sectarianism, often he  
16           and I would stay behind for an hour or two afterwards  
17           and chat to each other about what had happened at  
18           the meeting. And, you know, we became quite friendly  
19           and I would have -- I would have told him lots of  
20           things, yes. I think it highly likely that I told him  
21           about that.

22           Q. Can you remember whether it would have been before or  
23           after 17 February 1975?

24           A. No, I can't remember that.

25           Q. If we could have up now, please, a document at tab 5,



1 which is {MPS/728938}, and we'll need page 2, please,  
2 {MPS/728938/2}.

3 This is the final of the series of four reports  
4 dated 17 February compiled by Detective Constable Clark.  
5 And it reads:

6 "The following information has been received from  
7 a reliable source:-

8 "[Privacy] [Privacy], is a member of Lewisham IMG.  
9 At present she is employed as a student nurse at  
10 [Privacy] Hospital, [Privacy]. It is understood that  
11 she cohabits with Richard Chessum."

12 There's then a physical description.

13 And at paragraph 4 it says:

14 "[Privacy] has recently come to notice in connection  
15 with Lewisham IMG. Chessum is the subject of ..."

16 And then it gives a file reference.

17 This report is a report on your then partner, who  
18 became your wife the following year; is that right?

19 A. Yes, we -- we lived together for three years before we  
20 were married, and for 20 years afterwards.

21 Q. That can be taken down now.

22 This may seem like a very obvious question, but had  
23 you realised on 17 February 1975 who "Rick Gibson"  
24 really was and what he was reporting about you, would  
25 you have had anything to do with him in the setting up

1 of the South East London Branch of TOM?

2 A. Well, obviously not. If we had realised he wasn't who  
3 he said he was, we would not have had anything to do  
4 with him.

5 Q. Let's look now at what "Rick Gibson" did do in  
6 the setting-up of the South East London TOM. You tell  
7 us in your witness statement that he was involved in  
8 some of the preparatory activities, including, for  
9 example, distributing leaflets; is that right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And we know that there was a meeting to discuss  
12 the possibility of launching the branch.

13 Perhaps we can call that up. It's at tab 9, and  
14 reference is {MPS/728701}. And if we could go to  
15 the second page, please, {MPS/728701/2}.

16 We're now at 24 March 1975, being the date of  
17 the report. And paragraph 2 reads:

18 "On Wednesday 12th March 1975, a meeting was held at  
19 Goldsmith's College, Lewisham Way, SE14, to discuss  
20 the possibility of forming a South East London Branch of  
21 the Troops Out Movement. All Left-Wing groups and  
22 Trades Unions had been invited to send representatives  
23 but in the event only 14 persons attended the meeting."

24 And then if we could go to paragraph 4, please.

25 Picking up at the end of that paragraph, it says:

1            "It was agreed that the group should meet at 8.15 pm  
2            on Tuesday, 18 March at Goldsmith's College and that  
3            Richard Chessum would contact members of the TOM  
4            executive."

5            So, do we see here the preparations for launching  
6            the new branch of TOM being taken forward by casting  
7            the net wide amongst local left wing groups and trade  
8            unions?

9            A. Yes. I think we were disappointed at the time that we  
10           found it so difficult to get then involved.

11           Q. And had "Rick Gibson" been involved in the preparations  
12           for this meeting?

13           A. Yes.

14           Q. And if we go over the page, please, {MPS/728701/3}, we  
15           see that amongst those recorded as being in attendance  
16           is "Mary".

17           One gets the impression, looking at the papers, that  
18           you are quite a small group of activists working  
19           together, yourself, your partner, "Mary", the man who  
20           called himself "Rick Gibson", and perhaps a very small  
21           number of others. Is that a fair picture for us to have  
22           in mind?

23           A. It is, yes. As I say, we were -- we were hoping that  
24           some of the left wing groups around would get more  
25           involved than in fact they -- they did. And I think

1           it's fairly typical of some of the left wing groups  
2           around that they only jump on bandwagons when they're  
3           already worth jumping on, from their point of view.

4       Q.   Thank you.

5           Can we go now to what appears to us to be a document  
6           which records the inaugural meeting of the South East  
7           London Branch of TOM.

8           It's at tab 10 and the reference is {MPS/728710}.  
9           And if we could go to page 2, please, {MPS/728710/2}.  
10          {MPS/728710/3}. Thank you very much.

11          It says at paragraph 2:

12          "On Tuesday 18 March 1975, a meeting of the newly  
13          formed South East London Branch of the Troops Out  
14          Movement was held at Goldsmith's College, Lewisham Way,  
15          SE14. The meeting began at 8.30 pm and ended at  
16          10.30 pm. Eleven persons attended and Richard Chessum  
17          was the Chairperson."

18          Paragraph 3:

19          "The first item on the agenda was the election of  
20          officers. The only nominations were Rick Gibson, as  
21          secretary, and [Privacy] as treasurer, both of whom were  
22          elected. It was decided to postpone the election of  
23          a student organiser until a member from Goldsmith's  
24          attended. It was then agreed that Rick Gibson and  
25          Richard Chessum would attend the Liaison Committee

1 Conference to be held on Saturday 22 March at 1 Addison  
2 Gardens, W14, commencing at 2 pm, as delegates and  
3 [Privacy] as an observer."

4 So, just to stop there. Am I right that this is  
5 the inaugural meeting of South East London TOM?

6 A. Yes, I think that's -- could be described as such.

7 Q. And do you recall chairing it?

8 A. I don't recall it, but I'm not surprised that I did.

9 Q. I see.

10 And we see "Rick Gibson" being appointed secretary;  
11 is that correct?

12 A. Yes, well, some of us who were involved were coming up  
13 to our finals, and we didn't want to get too committed,  
14 and being secretary is the most -- it involves the most  
15 activity of all, being secretary. And Rick, I remember  
16 him saying that he was quite prepared to do it; he  
17 volunteered to do it. And he -- he also said that he  
18 had a car and he could -- he could -- he could drive me  
19 around to meet up with the -- the people who had been  
20 involved in the Anti-Internment League before, to see if  
21 they were willing to be active again.

22 Q. Did he take an interest in those people?

23 A. Yes. I mean, many of them were Irish of a republican  
24 persuasion, and we went and knocked on their doors and  
25 asked -- told them we were setting up another

1           organisation, would they like to be active again. And  
2           almost uniformly the response was that they were worried  
3           about being active again because the Prevention of  
4           Terrorism Act had been introduced, and lots and lots of  
5           Irish people were being rounded up and arrested who had  
6           not been involved in terrorism, but they were worried  
7           that this was happening in the Irish community, and they  
8           wanted to lie low for a time because they were afraid of  
9           being arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

10           So they said for this reason they wouldn't get  
11           involved. But of course what they didn't realise was  
12           that they were telling this to a police officer.

13       Q.   And what information other than the contacts with  
14           the former AIL activists did being secretary of  
15           the South East London branch of TOM give "Rick Gibson"?

16       A.   Well, if anybody contacted us and wanted to join, he  
17           would be the person that would receive the contact and  
18           -- and follow it up, or get -- get someone else to  
19           follow it up.

20       Q.   And would he have access to the membership details of  
21           all the members?

22       A.   Of -- of the local branch? Yes. At that stage.

23           I mean, eventually he was to get access to the national  
24           membership, but at that stage it would be just the local  
25           members at local branch.

1 Q. We see that one of the first things that happens,  
2 recorded at the bottom of the paragraph I read out, that  
3 he's nominated, together with you, as a delegate to go  
4 to the liaison committee conference. I get  
5 the impression, looking at the documents, that being an  
6 active member of a branch gives him access to higher  
7 tiers of the TOM organisation as a delegate to various  
8 meetings; is that fair?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And it seems to be something that happened straight  
11 away?

12 A. Yes. I think, looking back -- and we didn't know at the  
13 time that he was an undercover officer, but he must have  
14 been surprised at the good fortune that he had in being  
15 able to -- to get himself into these kind of places so  
16 quickly.

17 It was fortuitous from his point of view that we  
18 were coming up to our finals, and therefore we were  
19 happy for him to be the secretary. And he had quite  
20 a bit of luck, I think, in -- in other respects at  
21 a later stage of the organisation with his rise through.

22 Q. I'm going to be asking about the various activities of  
23 the South East London Branch of TOM in a moment. But  
24 just whilst we've got this document up to look at what  
25 was being proposed at this very early stage, could we

1 scroll down so we can see the whole of paragraph 4 and  
2 5, please.

3 Paragraph 4 says:

4 "A discussion then took place on which left wing  
5 groups and Trades Unions should now be informed of  
6 the existence of a TOM branch in South East London, and  
7 whether these groups could affiliate. It was finally  
8 decided that individuals, who were members of other  
9 groups, could join TOM if they wished and that their  
10 group would be allowed to send one delegate to each  
11 meeting. It was left to Gibson and [Privacy] to compile  
12 a mailing list for those groups not represented."

13 So in short, it would appear the group was seeking  
14 affiliates and Gibson was at the heart of the efforts to  
15 contact them; is that fair?

16 A. That's fair, yes.

17 Q. "Richard Chessum proposed that a delegation from  
18 the Branch meet local MPs to establish their position on  
19 Ireland. It transpired then that one such MP,  
20 Roland Moyle ... was an under Secretary of State at  
21 the Northern Ireland Office and [Privacy] (Workers  
22 Fight) suggested a picket of his 'surgery'. [Privacy],  
23 an observer from the South London TOM, suggested that  
24 this item was rather delicate and advice should be  
25 sought from the LCC. This was agreed and the subject



1 was placed on the agenda for the next meeting."

2 So do we see there that reaching out to Members of  
3 Parliament, presumably to lobby them, was also on  
4 the agenda?

5 A. Very much so.

6 Q. And do we also begin to see the beginnings of different  
7 points of view within the South East London branch of  
8 TOM with a member of Workers Fight expressing a view  
9 which wasn't immediately assented to by others?

10 A. Yes, I mean, there were many, many discussions and  
11 disagreements about tactics and strategy. This is  
12 normal, I think, in most organisations.

13 Q. I'd like to ask some general questions now about what  
14 the South East London branch of TOM went on to do and  
15 how it operated. Is it right to say that from time to  
16 time, "Rick Gibson" would chair branch meetings?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And that the early branch meetings took place very often  
19 at your home, but later on it became normal for them to  
20 meet at Charlton House?

21 A. Yes, I think, once we got Charlton House as a venue,  
22 most meetings were held there. But there were some  
23 meetings at -- at my -- my flat, yes.

24 Q. And that "Rick Gibson" would have been involved in  
25 organising events and producing leaflets?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And that one of the activities of the group was to  
3 organise pickets. So for example, there was a picket of  
4 the home of a Member of Parliament, Roland Moyle, on  
5 Blackheath; is that right?

6 A. That's right. And looking back, it's of great interest  
7 now because we -- we picketed outside his house, and  
8 Rick was very much involved in the organisation of that,  
9 along with the rest of us. And when we -- when we had  
10 the picket outside the house, some people came out of  
11 the house and invited us in for tea and biscuits, and we  
12 went in. Roland Moyle himself was not there, but they  
13 described them -- themselves as colleagues of his. And  
14 they asked us lots of questions about what our views  
15 were on the North of Ireland. And I remember them going  
16 round one by one and asking us all: if you were in  
17 Northern Ireland, which organisation would you support?  
18 At the time, you know, we were quite naive, I suppose,  
19 we answered all these questions. But looking back,  
20 I think it's highly likely that those people were part  
21 of the state that was interested in our activities. And  
22 knowing, as we now know, that Rick was an  
23 undercover police officer, he may have tipped them off  
24 to be there, so that this all -- this could all take  
25 place. It's -- I know it's speculation, but it seems

1 quite plausible that this was all well organised by  
2 people that we had no idea were the -- were the secret  
3 state.

4 Q. I'd like to show you a report about a picket outside  
5 Roland Moyle's home.

6 It's at tab 36 of the hard copy bundle.

7 The reference is {MPS/728723/3}. Thank you.

8 It's dated 22 July 1975, and paragraph 2 reads:

9 "As a finale to its 'Week of Action' the South East  
10 London branch of [TOM] held an open air rally on Sunday  
11 20th July opposite the home of Roland Moyle MP, Under  
12 Secretary of State for Northern Ireland ..."

13 Then there are two privacy redactions:

14 "A maximum at any one time of twenty persons  
15 participated, the majority of whom stayed for only  
16 a brief period. At one stage a delegation attempted to  
17 see the MP but in the event only [Privacy] was allowed  
18 to the front door of his house, whereupon Roland Moyle  
19 refused to speak to him. The picket lasted from 2 pm  
20 until 4 pm."

21 And amongst those who are listed as taking part are  
22 "Rick Gibson" and yourself.

23 Now, this report obviously isn't -- doesn't accord  
24 with the account that you have just recalled. Can you  
25 recall whether or not there was more than one picket

1 outside Roland Moyle's house?

2 A. I don't remember them being any more than one; and  
3 certainly the intention was not to hold a rally, it was  
4 a vigil. So I don't recognise this report at all.

5 Q. And insofar as it says that Roland Moyle was present but  
6 refused to speak to a solitary person allowed to  
7 the door, that obviously doesn't accord with your  
8 recollection now. Can you help us with how strong your  
9 recollection now is?

10 A. I have a very strong recollection of it, because it  
11 seemed at the time that it was quite a surprise to be  
12 invited into the house. And there was -- I think there  
13 was about half a dozen of us went into the house, and we  
14 all -- we were -- we were all asked who we supported if  
15 we were in Northern Ireland, and we all gave different  
16 answers. I remember it very clearly.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 Could we take that document down, please.

19 Is it right that another activity that South East  
20 London TOM was involved in was flyposting?

21 A. On -- on one or two occasions, yes.

22 Q. And that "Rick Gibson" took part in that?

23 A. Yes. I remember that he and a woman called Olivia and  
24 myself had agreed to do it on one occasion, and Rick and  
25 Olivia came to my flat in the evening to pick me up, and

1 I had one of the migraines which I occasionally had, and  
2 I was in no fit state to do it, so I told him, "I'm very  
3 sorry, but I am just not well enough." I was in bed at  
4 the time and I went to answer the door and I --  
5 you know, I felt like lying in a darkened room, so  
6 I couldn't -- I couldn't go with them. But they went  
7 off. And I was given to understand that they had  
8 carried out the flyposting.

9 Q. And another activity which "Rick Gibson" took part in  
10 was attending the Greenwich Trades Council with you?

11 A. Yes, I think it was something we did once or twice.

12 Q. And could you assist us with the nature of the Trades  
13 Council?

14 A. Well, there's a Trades Council, or was a Trades Council,  
15 in most areas, and they were composed of delegates from  
16 all the different trade unions in the area, and they  
17 acted on behalf of the trade unions in the area.

18 I remember the president of -- of Greenwich  
19 Trades Council was very sympathetic to us and supported  
20 us.

21 Q. And was the purpose of your meetings to essentially  
22 lobby them to advance your cause?

23 A. It was, yes. And to see what action they could take on  
24 behalf of the cause, and to have discussions with them  
25 about that.

1 MR BARR: Thank you.

2 Sir, would now be a convenient moment to take our  
3 morning break?

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly it would.

5 We have a 15-minute break now. Will you resume your  
6 evidence after 15 minutes, please?

7 A. Mm.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

9 MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone. We will now take  
10 a break. May I remind those in the virtual hearing room  
11 to remember to join your break-out rooms, please.

12 The time is now 11.45 am, so we shall reconvene at  
13 12 pm. Thank you.

14 (11.46 pm)

15 (A short break)

16 (12.00 pm)

17 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome back.

18 I will now hand over to the Chairman to continue  
19 proceedings.

20 Chairman.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Barr.

22 MR BARR: Thank you, Sir.

23 Mr Chessum, we were looking at "Rick Gibson's"  
24 activities in the early days of the South East London  
25 branch of TOM. I'd like to show you a document about

1 a public meeting.

2 It's at tab 23. It's {MPS/728681/3}, and once it's  
3 up, if we could have page 3, please.

4 It's dated 5 June 1975 and paragraph 2 reads:

5 "The South East London Branch of the Troops Out  
6 Movement held their first public meeting on Wednesday  
7 21 May 1975 at Charlton House, Charlton Village, SE7.  
8 The meeting which was entitled 'The Labour Movement in  
9 Ireland' attracted an audience of 45 persons, and began  
10 at 8 pm ending at about 9.45 pm."

11 Is it right that this was the first public meeting  
12 of the new branch?

13 A. It -- it probably would have been if you don't count  
14 the public meetings we held in Goldsmith's College. If  
15 they're classified as being meetings held by  
16 the Socialist Society rather than the local South East  
17 London Branch, then yes.

18 Q. Thank you.

19 Paragraph 3:

20 "Compared with recent public meetings held by both  
21 South and North London branches of TOM, which in terms  
22 of numbers were both disasters, this particular meeting  
23 was generally regarded as being an unqualified success,  
24 mainly because of good local publicity. Much of  
25 the credit for this must go to both Richard Chessum and

1 Rick Gibson who spent a considerable time in publicising  
2 the meeting in the local area and large numbers of  
3 the Labour Movement, albeit members of the IS and IMG,  
4 were present in the audience."

5 Is it right to say that you and "Rick Gibson" had  
6 done a great deal to publicise this meeting?

7 A. Yes, we had, and our visits to the Greenwich  
8 Trades Council were all part of that.

9 Q. And we can see, just at the very bottom of the page,  
10 that:

11 "The meeting was chaired by Rick Gibson ..."

12 Is that right?

13 A. It's not something I remember, but it may well have  
14 been.

15 Q. Thank you.

16 And if we can go over the page now, please, to  
17 paragraph 7 {MPS/72681/4}, at paragraph 7, it says:

18 "The following persons were identified as having  
19 been present ..."

20 And there are a number of names, including "Rick  
21 Gibson's" and your own, and then a lot that we've had to  
22 redact for privacy reasons.

23 One gets the impression, reading this document,  
24 Mr Chessum, that "Rick Gibson" has been very active in  
25 seeking to attract people to this meeting, and then when



1           they attend, he reports their attendance to  
2           Special Branch. Is that a fair impression, or is there  
3           anything you can tell us that would gainsay it?

4           A. No, that's -- that's fair. I mean, as secretary of  
5           the branch, he would obviously -- that would be his job,  
6           to try and get as many people there as possible. And in  
7           his other -- wearing his other hat as an  
8           undercover police officer, he would be reporting it to  
9           Special Branch.

10          Q. Thank you.

11                 Can we take that down, please, and can we have up  
12                 instead tab 26, which is {MPS/728668}.

13                 This is a report dated 23 June 1975. Paragraph 2  
14                 reads:

15                 "Members of the South East London Branch of  
16                 the Troops Out Movement attended a Labour Party meeting  
17                 on the evening of Tuesday 17 June 1975 at Alderwood  
18                 School, Rainham Close, SE9, which dealt with  
19                 the forthcoming by-election in West Woolwich. No  
20                 disorder occurred and the members of TOM confined  
21                 themselves to asking the Labour candidate his views on  
22                 Ireland and the withdrawal of troops."

23                 You and "Rick Gibson" are both listed as being  
24                 present.

25                 Can you remember this event?

1 A. I can't remember it, but it's the kind of thing that we  
2 did at the time.

3 Q. It states that no disorder occurred. Would that be  
4 right?

5 A. Well, we would have no interest in incurring disorder.  
6 Our objective would have been to try and persuade people  
7 in the Labour Party to support us.

8 Q. Yes, well, that takes me to my next question.

9 Was there ever any possibility of public disorder at  
10 this event?

11 A. I wouldn't have thought so.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 Could we take that down, please.

14 You've described "Rick Gibson" as being "very  
15 committed", "enthusiastic" and "willing" in your witness  
16 statement. Is that fair?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I'd like to explore now your relationship, personally,  
19 with "Rick Gibson". You obviously attended meetings  
20 together?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And you would drink and have a chat?

23 A. Yes. Usually in the pub after meetings.

24 Q. You went to see Charlton Athletic play football  
25 together?

1 A. Yes, I think it was he who suggested that. I think we  
2 went on a couple of occasions.

3 Q. And so how would you describe the level of friendship  
4 that you had with "Rick Gibson"?

5 A. Well, I think we developed a kind of a bond, because we  
6 were both opposed -- or we seemed to be opposed to  
7 the sectarianism that was existing within the Troops Out  
8 Movement. We seemed to share a number of -- of -- of  
9 views together. It was -- it was relaxing to be able to  
10 sit and discuss with somebody who was not involved in  
11 one of the other left wing groups, and to be able to  
12 discuss these things freely. I didn't -- obviously  
13 I had no idea that I was discussing it with an  
14 undercover police officer.

15 Q. No.

16 Did you regard him as somebody who could be relied  
17 upon?

18 A. In terms of his efficiency as a branch secretary, yes.  
19 And he seemed to be reliably anti-sectarian.

20 Q. Could you describe his relationship with a senior figure  
21 in the movement, Gery Lawless?

22 A. Well, of course, I knew Gery Lawless from the days of  
23 the Anti-Internment League. Which is why, when we set  
24 up the Troops Out Movement branch in South East London,  
25 I got Gery to come and speak at the local branch

1 meeting. Rick didn't know him obviously until he got  
2 involved in -- nationally in the Troops Out Movement  
3 itself. I suspect he got to know him gradually over  
4 a period of time. I knew him before.

5 Q. And did "Rick Gibson" align himself with Gery Lawless  
6 within TOM?

7 A. Well, yes, he did. I mean, some of the sectarian left  
8 groups dismissed us as the Lawless grouping, which was  
9 a pejorative term. We regarded ourselves as just  
10 independents in the Troops Out Movement. But there was  
11 an informal alliance at national level between  
12 Gery Lawless and others and Big Flame, because we -- we  
13 jointly had an interest in trying to stop sectarians  
14 taking over the organisation.

15 What -- I suppose what -- the other thing that  
16 united us in -- in -- around Lawless was the fact not  
17 only that he was very, very committed on Ireland and had  
18 no axe to grind in terms of another left wing group, but  
19 he was a former member of the IMG, and a number of us  
20 who were independents in the Troops Out Movement were  
21 also former members of the IMG, so we had that common  
22 historical background.

23 Q. Can you help us with who you're referring to when you  
24 use the phrase "the sectarians"?

25 A. Well, all left wing organisations, all the Trotskyist

1 organisations tend to be sectarian, some more so than  
2 others. But it was in particular the Workers Fight  
3 group and the Revolutionary Communist Group who we  
4 experienced as being the most disruptive.

5 Q. And when you say "disruptive", does that mean trying to  
6 essentially take over and exert control over your  
7 branch?

8 A. Yes, and also causing division in different branches.

9 Q. In terms of -- coming back to "Rick Gibson" and how he  
10 behaved, how would you describe his behaviour within  
11 the group?

12 A. Within the South East London group?

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. Well, he tried to befriend everybody and was laid-back  
15 and relaxed. He gave the impression of somebody who  
16 just kept clear of sectarianism and went about being an  
17 efficient secretary.

18 Q. As we've seen from the documents, you were living at the  
19 time at 234 Burrage Road. How frequent a visitor was  
20 "Rick Gibson" to your home?

21 A. He came quite frequently. Sometimes we had Troops Out  
22 Movement meetings there. Those of us who had been  
23 members of different far-left organisations, Marxist  
24 organisations, and who had left them, we felt the need  
25 to have further discussion amongst ourselves, and we

1           organised what we called "Marxist discussion groups" at  
2           234 Burrage Road. And the people who came were people  
3           who no longer belonged to any of the left groups but  
4           were still Marxists of one kind or another, and Rick  
5           attended some of these meetings as well. And I do  
6           recall that he came on some social occasions, because we  
7           got to know him so well.

8           Q. Was there ever any consideration of him moving into 234  
9           Burrage Road?

10          A. Not until right towards the end of our -- our stay in  
11          London. We -- my girlfriend and I, we shared a flat  
12          with several other students usually, it wasn't just  
13          the two of us. And there was comings and goings; some  
14          students left and then they were replaced by others.  
15          And towards the end of our time in London, Rick did say  
16          to me, "Well, if ever there's a vacancy in your flat",  
17          he said, "I might be interested." That was as far as it  
18          went. But of course, then we left London.

19          Q. Thank you.

20                 I'd like to move now away from the South East London  
21          Branch to "Rick Gibson's" rise through -- upwards within  
22          TOM.

23                 First of all, it's right, isn't it, that he played  
24          a role in organising TOM's activities to mark  
25          the anniversary of Bloody Sunday in 1976?

1 A. Yes. There was a Bloody Sunday anniversary march every  
2 year.

3 Q. Can we start, please, by looking at the document at  
4 tab 59, which is {UCPI/9306}. Thank you.

5 This is a report dated 13 November 1975.

6 Paragraph 2 reads:

7 "The Organising Committee of the Troops Out Movement  
8 met at University of London Union, Malet Street, WC2,  
9 between 6.30 pm and 8 pm on Friday 7th November 1975.  
10 In addition to seven members of the committee, both  
11 [Privacy] and [Privacy] [Privacy] were present."

12 Paragraph 3:

13 "The only item to be discussed was the suggestion by  
14 the Ad Hoc Committee for the Bloody Sunday  
15 demonstration, that a pre-rally mobilisation should be  
16 arranged for December."

17 Then paragraph 4:

18 "The members of the Organising Committee were  
19 bitterly divided on the subject but the proposal was  
20 eventually accepted by 3 votes to two, two persons  
21 having abstained."

22 If we scroll down further, Gery Lawless and "Rick  
23 Gibson" are both present.

24 Can you remember whether you were present at this  
25 meeting?

1 A. No, I wasn't.

2 Q. You can't help us, therefore, with the nitty gritty, but  
3 what stands out from this report at paragraph 4 is  
4 the fact that there was a division of opinion about an  
5 aspect of the organisation for the upcoming  
6 commemoration of Bloody Sunday which was subject to  
7 a very narrow vote.

8 Are you able to help us at all with whether "Rick  
9 Gibson" influenced the outcome of that vote?

10 A. No, I wouldn't -- I wouldn't know that. I know that --  
11 I know that the IMG were very involved in all of that,  
12 and Gery as a former member of the IMG was concerned  
13 that they were trying to take over the organisation of  
14 Ireland activities, and he saw them as a bit of a rival  
15 to his running of the Troops Out Movement. So it may  
16 all have been related to that.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 If we could take that down now, please, and go to  
19 tab 67, which is {MPS/728772}.

20 We see from paragraph 2 that this is a report about  
21 the London coordinating committee of the Troops Out  
22 Movement, which met at the University of London union,  
23 Malet Street on 12 December 1975 at 7.30 for two and  
24 a half hours. Gery Lawless chaired the meeting and 17  
25 persons are recorded as present.



1 Paragraph 3 reads:

2 "The first item of interest was the 'Bloody Sunday'  
3 demonstration and rally on 1 February 1976. It was  
4 established that the only definite speaker was Eamonn  
5 McCann. [Privacy] suggested that TOM required  
6 the services of the 'May Day Theatre Group', who  
7 performed a play on Northern Ireland, and a group  
8 called 'The men of no property', who had released an  
9 LP called 'England's Vietnam'. Negotiations were still  
10 in progress for the appearance of John Lennon. A rally  
11 subcommittee was then set up, consisting of [Privacy],  
12 convenor, Gery Lawless, [Privacy] [Privacy] and Rick  
13 Gibson."

14 You are not named on the list of attendees, so can  
15 I take it you can't help us with the detail?

16 A. That's right.

17 Q. But is it right, to your knowledge, that "Rick Gibson"  
18 was a member of the subcommittee for this demonstration?

19 A. Yes, he got involved in the national organisation in  
20 a way that I didn't at that stage.

21 Q. And that included, for example, trying to attract high  
22 profile speakers for the event?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Could we take that document down, please, and go to  
25 tab 69, which is {MPS/728774}.

1           This is a report dated 20 January 1974. Paragraph 2  
2 tells us:

3           "The London Coordinating Committee of the Troops Out  
4 Movement held its first meeting since Christmas, on  
5 Friday 9 January 1976 at Friends International Centre,  
6 Torrington Place ... from 7.45 until 10 pm.  
7 The meeting, which was chaired by [Privacy], was  
8 attended by 19 persons.

9           "Although a lengthy agenda had been drawn up by the  
10 secretariat, which had met prior to the meeting,  
11 the entire proceedings, apart from some minor matters,  
12 were devoted to the TOM rally to be held in Hammersmith  
13 Palais on Sunday 1 February 1976, following  
14 the Bloody Sunday demonstration."

15           Now, we'll be coming back to the Hammersmith Palais  
16 in a moment, but for the meantime, paragraph 4:

17           "Gery Lawless was obliged to report that, of all  
18 the speakers he had contacted, only two were probables:  
19 Eamonn McCann and Bernadette McAliskey, and even  
20 the latter had not been definitely confirmed. [Privacy]  
21 (Irish TGWU), [Privacy] [Privacy] (President of the New  
22 York City Council) and John Lennon (the pop star) had  
23 all declined."

24           So we get an update there, don't we, on the speakers  
25 for that meeting?

1 A. Yes, and familiar speakers. I remember Eamonn and  
2 Bernadette were two of the speakers we had at the rally  
3 of the Anti-Internment League, way back in the early  
4 70s. They were perennials.

5 Q. And if we go to paragraph 5:

6 "In spite of the length of time taken to discuss  
7 these items, virtually everything was referred to  
8 the Rally Committee which, in addition to Gery Lawless,  
9 Rick Gibson, [Privacy] [Privacy] and [Privacy], was  
10 expanded to include [Privacy] [Privacy] and  
11 [Privacy] ... [Privacy]'s latest girlfriend."

12 So we see that "Rick Gibson" continued to sit on  
13 that committee, which was expanding in size?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. At paragraph 6:

16 "In the short period of time remaining, [Privacy]  
17 criticised [Privacy], the TOM Press Officer, for his  
18 inactivity. She proposed to be replaced by a Press  
19 Committee, which she would convene. Rick Gibson and  
20 [Privacy] went further and insisted on [Privacy]'s  
21 removal from the Secretariat for persistently being  
22 absent from meetings. This subject, however, was  
23 referred to the next Secretariat meeting."

24 Can you help us at all with the stance which "Rick  
25 Gibson" took about the then extant press officer, and

1           whether he did, as recorded here, actively seek that  
2           person's removal from office?

3           A. I can't really. I wasn't involved in the national  
4           organisation at that time; he was. What surprises me is  
5           the extent to which he was really proactive in these  
6           reports in trying to make things happen, rather than  
7           just being one of a number of people involved.

8           Q. Thank you.

9                     Can we take that down now, please, and can we go to  
10           tab 72, which is {MPS/728777}. Thank you.

11                    If we could pick that up at paragraph 2. It's  
12           a report dated 4 February 1976:

13                    "The secretariat of the Troops Out Movement met at  
14           the University of London Union, Malet Street ... from  
15           7.30 ... to 8.30 ... on Friday 16 January 1976. This  
16           particular meeting included the National Officers of  
17           the Troops Out Movement, with the exception of  
18           [Privacy], and was chaired by [Privacy]."

19                    We know that "Rick Gibson" is recorded as attending  
20           this meeting as the London organiser, secretariat. Are  
21           we seeing here "Rick Gibson" beginning to rub shoulders  
22           with the most senior people within TOM?

23           A. Yes.

24           Q. And that's nationally?

25           A. Yes.

1 Q. Paragraph 3, if we could have the whole of that  
2 paragraph up, please:

3 "The cancellation of the Movement's booking of  
4 Hammersmith Palais for its Bloody Sunday rally on  
5 1 February was the first item on the agenda. Following  
6 a lengthy discussion it was agreed that legal advice  
7 should be sought on the matter. Gery Lawless proposed  
8 that at some time in the future, possibly just prior to  
9 February 1st it might be necessary to call a press  
10 conference to explain the reasons why the use of  
11 the hall had been denied. It was the general feeling of  
12 the meeting that the police were responsible for this  
13 action and for getting the North West London Branch of  
14 TOM banned from the Crown public house in Cricklewood."

15 The first question I've got for you is about  
16 the booking of the Hammersmith Palais. Can you explain  
17 to us what happened?

18 A. I can't really, because this was all -- all done at  
19 national level, and, I mean, I was not involved at  
20 national level at the time.

21 Q. Did you become aware that plans for the Bloody Sunday  
22 rally were being disrupted by the cancellation of  
23 the booking of the Hammersmith Palais?

24 A. Yes, yes, we all heard about that. And I must say, it  
25 -- it -- it reminded me of the time in

1 the Anti-Internment League in the earlier 70s when in  
2 fact we did have information that the Special Branch had  
3 gone round to various public houses and told  
4 the publicans there that we were an illegal organisation  
5 and they cancelled our bookings. That happened in  
6 the days of the Anti-Internment League. And we were  
7 told by the publicans concerned that Special Branch had  
8 visited them and told them that we were illegal, which  
9 of course was not true.

10 So when this happened, when the Hammersmith Palais  
11 was -- they cancelled the booking for us, then we all  
12 suspected that it was a similar kind of situation.

13 Q. And now that you know that "Rick Gibson" was in fact an  
14 undercover police officer, do you have any concerns  
15 about the cancellation of the Hammersmith Palais  
16 booking?

17 A. Well, yes. He could well have been involved in putting  
18 doubts in the mind of the people running  
19 the Hammersmith Palais, of course.

20 Q. Can we take down tab 72, please, and could we have up in  
21 its place tab 73 {MPS/728779}. Thank you.

22 This is a report dated 11 February 1976 from  
23 the SDS. It's again a meeting of the London  
24 Coordinating Committee of TOM.

25 Could we have paragraph 5, please.

1           That reads:

2           "The question of electing a TOM Press Officer was  
3           again raised and it was agreed, in principle, that  
4           a press committee should be elected rather than an  
5           individual officer. The first function of such  
6           a committee would be to prepare a comprehensive  
7           statement about the general harassment of TOM by  
8           the state, especially the denial of indoor public halls  
9           such as the Hammersmith Palais. [Privacy], Rick Gibson,  
10          [Privacy] and [Privacy] were then chosen to be members  
11          of the committee. Having motivated this strategy,  
12          Gery Lawless refused to serve on the committee."

13          Insofar as you are able to help us -- and I do  
14          appreciate you were not a party to the particular  
15          decisions -- is what's happening that the old press  
16          officer is losing office, being replaced by a committee  
17          and an undercover police officer, "Rick Gibson", is  
18          a part of that committee?

19          A. Yes, we -- we heard all about the divisions over  
20          the press secondhand, but we were aware that there were  
21          problems. The exact nature of the problems was not well  
22          known to us at local level.

23          Q. I see.

24          And now that you do know that "Rick Gibson" was an  
25          undercover police officer, do you have any concerns

1           about the fact that the committee, whose first function  
2           was "to prepare a comprehensive statement about  
3           the general harassment of TOM by the state", included an  
4           undercover police officer?

5           A. Yes, is the short answer.

6           Q. Would you like to expand on that, please.

7           A. Well, given that he was an undercover police officer, he  
8           clearly didn't have the welfare of the organisation at  
9           heart, and his motives were quite different, and we have  
10          no means of knowing the extent to which he was  
11          sabotaging the organisation more generally and how this  
12          was part of that strategy.

13          Q. Thank you.

14                 That can be taken down now.

15                 More general questions about the Bloody  
16          Sunday march. Would "Rick Gibson" have had a role in  
17          organising things like the stewards, speakers and  
18          the planning generally of that meeting?

19          A. He would have been involved in everything.

20          Q. And privy to all the details?

21          A. Yes.

22          Q. Was there any disorder at the march?

23          A. I don't remember any.

24          Q. We've seen from the earlier documents that you and "Rick  
25          Gibson" were often delegated to attend London events of



1 TOM. Is it right that "Rick Gibson" was also delegated  
2 on occasions to national level events?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And was he treated as a trusted comrade?

5 A. He wouldn't have been nominated if he wasn't.

6 Q. I'd now like to focus on some particular posts that he  
7 obtained. We've seen some references to the London  
8 Coordinating Committee and he was elected to the London  
9 Coordinating Committee, wasn't he?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Perhaps we could look at tab 48 {MPS/728755}. This is  
12 a report dated 25 September 1975. Paragraph 2 says:

13 "The London Coordinating Committee of the Troops Out  
14 Movement met at Friends International Centre, Torrington  
15 Place, WC1 on Friday 19th September from 9.30 pm until  
16 10.15 pm. About 32 persons attended the meeting which  
17 was chaired by [Privacy].

18 "The first item discussed was a proposal by both  
19 North and North West London branches of TOM that  
20 the number of persons on the organising committee be  
21 increased by two. This, and a proposal that [Privacy]  
22 and Rick Gibson be elected to the committee, was passed.  
23 A three man standing orders committee for the National  
24 Delegates Conference, comprising [Privacy], [Privacy]  
25 and probably [Privacy], was approved. There followed

1           ratification of branches in Harrow, Hemel Hempsted and  
2           Bootle."

3           So we're seeing that in less than a year after his  
4           arrival on the scene, he's elected to the London  
5           Coordinating Committee; is that right?

6           A. Yes.

7           Q. Could you help us with the significance of the London  
8           co-ordinating committee to TOM?

9           A. Well, it was the coordinating committee that -- that  
10          really organised all the activities of the branches. It  
11          would be responsible for dealing with any problems that  
12          arose in the branches, and trying to settle them. It  
13          was -- it was the organising committee that really had  
14          oversight of everything that was happening in London.

15          Q. Did it have any role in setting the campaigning  
16          priorities for London branches of TOM?

17          A. Yes, it would have done.

18          Q. And did it take reports from London branches of TOM?

19          A. Yes.

20          Q. And would "Rick Gibson" on the LCC have had an  
21          opportunity to have a say over the affairs of London  
22          branches?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. And over the setting of the strategic priorities for  
25          the London branches?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. It follows from his appointment that that may have taken  
3 an opportunity from someone else. Do you know whether  
4 there was any competition for the post on the London  
5 Coordinating Committee?
- 6 A. Which particular post are you talking about?
- 7 Q. The one that -- at the moment I'm asking about this one,  
8 about the appointment we have just seen. Do you know  
9 whether that was something that anybody else -- any  
10 genuine campaigner would have liked to have occupied?
- 11 A. Well, I know that there was a time when they wanted  
12 a London organiser, and I was approached by both  
13 Gery Lawless and by a senior member of Big Flame, who  
14 asked me if I would be interested. And I was given to  
15 understand from both of them that if I was interested,  
16 they would support me in that role.
- 17 What followed after that was a vote in the local  
18 South East London Branch, to elect two delegates to  
19 the London Coordinating Committee. Rick was involved --  
20 Rick was -- Rick was elected and I wasn't. He got two  
21 more votes than me in the -- in the South East London  
22 Branch meeting. And I think this took the national  
23 people a bit by surprise that I wasn't elected by my  
24 local branch onto the London Coordinating Committee.
- 25 Q. Just to be clear, are we talking -- does this relate to

1 the appointment which is recorded in the document on  
2 the screen, or not?

3 A. This was September '75. It was talking about two extra  
4 people being elected to a committee, wasn't it?

5 I was asked if I wanted to be the London organiser.  
6 And in fact, Rick himself became the London organiser.

7 Q. Thank you. We'll come back to the London --

8 A. Yes, yes, yes.

9 Q. -- I just wanted to be clear. Thank you.

10 Whilst we're with the LCC, could we take that  
11 document down, please, and bring up tab 82 {UCPI/9684},  
12 please.

13 Again, I do appreciate that you weren't on these  
14 committees, and there may be a limit to how far you can  
15 help us, but just in case.

16 This is a report dated 12 May 1976. It's a meeting  
17 of the London Coordinating Committee on 23 April 1976 at  
18 the University of London Union. And I'm going to alight  
19 upon a number of paragraphs which refer to "Rick  
20 Gibson".

21 First of all, paragraph 3. I'm afraid it's a very  
22 poor quality document, but we'll do our best:

23 "Following the acceptance of the previous meeting's  
24 minutes Rick Gibson, convenor of the secretariat,  
25 reported on the arrangements to date for the TOM

1 National Delegate Conference. He said that  
2 the conference would be held from 11 am on Saturday 15th  
3 to 4 pm on Sunday 16th May 1976, at the City of London  
4 Polytechnic, Whitechapel Road, E1 and that subject to  
5 the ratification of that meeting, the secretariat  
6 recommended that there be a three person standing orders  
7 committee comprising [Privacy] and [Privacy]. This was  
8 accepted providing that [Privacy] who was not present,  
9 agreed."

10 Then if we can go down to paragraph 5, please:

11 "Next came reports from [Privacy] and Rick Gibson on  
12 a fringe meeting set up by the Troops Out Movement at  
13 the Labour Party Young Socialists conference in  
14 Blackpool. [Privacy] said that the meeting had been  
15 organised by 'The Socialist Charter' and that, in spite  
16 of gross sectarianism from [Privacy] towards both  
17 [Privacy] and TOM policies, the meeting had been  
18 successful. Gibson severely criticised [Privacy] for  
19 his behaviour and said that TOM members should not  
20 attack each other at open meetings."

21 Over the page {UCPI/9684/2}. Thank you:

22 "It was then decided that Gibson, [Privacy] and  
23 [Privacy] should prepare a document on the Blackpool  
24 meeting for circulation to TOM branches and inclusion in  
25 the left wing press.

1           "The final item was a short report on the TOM Press  
2 Committee from Rick Gibson, but nothing of note was  
3 said."

4           Now, it would appear from this report, put bluntly,  
5 that "Rick Gibson" is in the thick of it. From talking  
6 to him, did you get the impression that he was a very  
7 active member of the London Coordinating Committee?

8       A. Well, very much so, because he moved from the London  
9 Coordinating Committee and being London organiser to  
10 become convenor of the national secretariat, and he was  
11 obviously moving up and up in the organisation. And  
12 he -- he would have been trusted by Lawless and people  
13 in the leadership. And for that reason, he would have  
14 been given a lot of responsibility.

15       Q. And the reference we see to him severely criticising  
16 somebody for their behaviour and attacking another  
17 member of TOM in public, was the taking of a position  
18 and the criticism of others something that you ever  
19 experienced "Rick Gibson" doing?

20       A. Well, I understand that one of the people he attacked  
21 was someone called Sean McKavanagh, who was in fact  
22 the founder and leader of Workers Fight, and a bitter  
23 enemy of Gery Lawless. So in attacking him, he would  
24 have curried favour with Lawless, and he would have  
25 established his credentials even more with Lawless. So

1           there may have been a reason for this kind of attack on  
2           particular individuals.

3           Q. Thank you.

4                     Can we take that document down please, and can we  
5           turn now to the question of the post of London  
6           organiser.

7                     I'd like to start with tab 55, which is  
8           {MPS/728736}.

9                     This is a meeting of the organising committee of  
10          TOM, which took place on 20 October and is reported  
11          on on 28 October. At paragraph 4 it reads:

12                    "Gery Lawless then proposed that nominations for  
13          the vacant national officer posts, not filled at  
14          the recent National Delegate Conference, should be  
15          delayed for two weeks to allow branches time to discuss  
16          the matter. The only exception to this was the position  
17          of London Organiser and it was agreed that Rick Gibson  
18          should stand for this post."

19                    Is this the post that you were talking about  
20          a little while ago?

21          A. Yes, I had -- I had already told people that I wished to  
22          withdraw. And the reason I wished to withdraw was  
23          a personal reason really, because a friend of mine was  
24          also wanting to stand for it, and Gery Lawless  
25          approached me and said some very derogatory things about

1 her, and said that he would support me against her. And  
2 I was very friendly with her and her partner at the  
3 time, and I began to feel that I was a bit compromised,  
4 and that I -- this would compromise my friendship with  
5 -- with that couple. So, I began to feel that I was  
6 best withdrawing really. And I think she withdrew too.

7 And after this had happened, I explained this to  
8 the member of Big Flame who had approached me about  
9 doing the job, and said that I was worried about this.  
10 And then some time after that, he approached me again  
11 and he said, "Well, don't worry about it, because 'Rick  
12 Gibson' has agreed to do it."

13 Q. ^^ Thank you.

14 Could we take that document down now and could we  
15 have up in its place {MPS/728736/3}. If we look at  
16 paragraph 2 we see this is a meeting on 7 November 1975  
17 at the University of London Union of the all London  
18 Troops Out Movement and it was to discuss the setting up  
19 of a secretariat to replace the TOM organising  
20 committee. A resolution to that effect had been passed  
21 at the recent TOM national delegate conference.

22 Could you help us with this reorganisation, please.

23 A. Again, I was not involved in it at national level,  
24 simply because I had not been elected to the London  
25 Coordinating Committee and didn't get involved any more



1 at national level. So, I -- know, I heard about all  
2 these things at secondhand. I wasn't clear of the exact  
3 reasons for this reorganisation.

4 Q. But was it a significant reorganisation of TOM?

5 A. I would assume that it was a reorganisation to make it  
6 more effective.

7 Q. If we can go down now, please, to paragraph 5:

8 "Next came recommendations for the remaining  
9 national officers. [Privacy] was proposed at Literature  
10 Officer and [Privacy] at Parliamentary Organiser. There  
11 were two nominations for Labour Party organiser,  
12 [Privacy] and [Privacy] and after lengthy discussion  
13 Rick Gibson was selected to stand for the post of London  
14 Organiser."

15 It's right, isn't it, that he went on to be  
16 the London organiser?

17 A. Yes, yes.

18 Q. Could you help us with what information that post would  
19 have given him access to?

20 A. Well, I think we answered it really in -- on my answer  
21 to a previous question. He would have known everything  
22 that was happening in the London branch, he would have  
23 had an overview of all of that, information about  
24 divisions within different branches would have come to  
25 him, he would have been partly responsible for trying to

1           sort them all out, and he would also have been involved  
2           in the strategy for London.

3       Q.   And would he have had access and ear of national  
4           organisers?

5       A.   Yes.

6       Q.   And would he have had access to any legal advice that  
7           was being taken at a London level?

8       A.   He would have done if any legal advice was being taken.

9       Q.   We saw earlier the reference to a desire to take legal  
10          advice about the cancellation of the Hammersmith Palais.  
11          Is that the sort of thing that he might have been privy  
12          to?

13      A.   Yes.

14      Q.   He went on to national level and in particular to become  
15          the convenor of the national offices of the secretariat,  
16          didn't he?

17      A.   Yes.

18      Q.   Are you able to assist us with what additional  
19          information that that post would have given him?

20      A.   Well, he had previously had oversight of the whole  
21          London organisation. That would have given him  
22          oversight of the national organisation, and he would  
23          have been in charge of the names and addresses of people  
24          all over the country, he would have had access to that  
25          database.

1 Q. A would he have been privy essentially to the national  
2 strategic level thinking of TOM?

3 A. Oh yes. Yes, yes. He would have been one of the key  
4 people involved in that.

5 Q. And would he have had any influence, if he'd chosen to  
6 use it, to steer the direction of the organisation  
7 nationally?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Can I ask you generally about TOM, please. Did TOM, at  
10 the demonstrations it organised, seek to encourage any  
11 public disorder?

12 A. Never to my knowledge.

13 Q. Other than flyposting, was it involved as an  
14 organisation in promoting any unlawful conduct?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Was TOM seeking to overthrow parliamentary democracy?

17 A. No. We were -- we were lobbying MPs to try and get them  
18 on our side. We supported parliamentary democracy.

19 Q. Thank you.

20 There is a reference to a speaker at an event saying  
21 that he had met several prominent members of  
22 the Provisional IRA. I'll just call that up so that you  
23 can see it.

24 It's at tab 49. It's {UCPI/7665}.

25 This is a report dated 29 September 1975.

1 Paragraph 2 says:

2 "The South East London Branch of the Troops Out  
3 Movement held their regular weekly meeting at Charlton  
4 House, Charlton, SE 7 on Tuesday 23 September 1975 from  
5 8 pm until 10 pm. 15 persons attended the meeting which  
6 was chaired by Rick Gibson.

7 "[Privacy] opened by giving a brief educational talk  
8 on Northern Ireland. He stated that on a recent visit  
9 to Belfast he had met several prominent members of  
10 the Provisional IRA and members of the Irish Republican  
11 Socialist Party. Nothing else of particular interest  
12 was mentioned."

13 And if we scroll down, please, we can see that you  
14 and "Rick Gibson" are both recorded as being present at  
15 that meeting.

16 Could you help us, please, with what relationship  
17 there was, formal or informal, between  
18 the Provisional IRA and TOM?

19 A. There was no direct relationship between TOM and  
20 Provisional IRA. I suspect that that report is a little  
21 bit inaccurate in that it wouldn't be  
22 the Provisional IRA, it would be Provisional Sinn Fein,  
23 the political party, that they would have met. The IRA  
24 were a secret organisation and its members were not  
25 commonly available to members of the public, so I don't

1 think they could have met -- he could have met members  
2 of the Provisional IRA. I think maybe there was  
3 a confusion there between the IRA and Sinn Fein.

4 Q. Were there individuals within TOM who were sympathetic  
5 to the Provisional IRA?

6 A. It's very difficult. I mean, TOM had members all over  
7 the country. It would be difficult to say absolutely  
8 that there was not a single member with -- with that  
9 kind of sympathy, but in general, we -- we didn't -- we  
10 were not an organisation that supported violence. We  
11 supported changing British policy in order to end  
12 the violence.

13 Q. So the house line was the two aims that we discussed at  
14 the start of your evidence?

15 A. Yes, yes.

16 Q. Can I move now, please, to Big Flame. You describe  
17 Big Flame as an organisation in the libertarian Marxist  
18 tradition; is that right?

19 A. That's right.

20 Q. So not authoritarian?

21 A. They were very -- very much the opposite of  
22 authoritarian. They were very egalitarian and  
23 libertarian and encouraging free discussion and open  
24 discussion, tolerance of opposing views. In many -- in  
25 many ways they were a safe haven for much of

1 the sectarian activity that was going on inside the TOM  
2 at the time.

3 Q. They would stand in contrast to some of the more  
4 disciplined authoritarian left wing organisations?

5 A. They were, and they had lots of feminist women in  
6 Big Flame who felt uncomfortable in -- in a sectarian  
7 atmosphere and they found Big Flame much more conducive  
8 to them.

9 Q. And you explain in your witness statement that "Rick  
10 Gibson" took an interest in Big Flame. Could you  
11 explain that, please?

12 A. Well, after I'd been in the IMG and left it and reacted  
13 against some of the authoritarianism of the Trotskyist  
14 groups, I was still a Marxist of a kind and I wanted to  
15 involve myself with others who were of like mind, and  
16 one of the senior people in Big Flame did approach me  
17 and say they were having discussion groups and they were  
18 inviting people to attend who weren't actually members  
19 of their organisation because they wished them to be  
20 open discussion groups. It was my invitation only and  
21 people they thought would be sympathetic and interested  
22 in being involved.

23 I -- I got involved, and then "Rick Gibson" actually  
24 found out that I was involved and he said, "Do you think  
25 they'd let me come along"? And I said, "Well, I'll --

1 I'll tell them you're interested", and I told them that  
2 Rick was interested in coming along to some of  
3 the discussion groups and they said, "Fine, bring him  
4 along".

5 Q. And you tell us in your witness statement that you did  
6 bring him along, he attended meetings, but he didn't, as  
7 far as you are aware, ever become a member?

8 A. My understanding is that he was not a member. We --  
9 they took it in turns to -- being an egalitarian  
10 organisation there was rotation of speakers at these  
11 meetings. There was discussions, and everyone took  
12 a turn at leading the discussion, and there was one  
13 occasion when Rick took a turn, and I always remember  
14 it, because he had voluminous notes in front of him,  
15 sheets of paper with notes on, but he was -- he seemed  
16 unable to make use of them, and when he tried to give  
17 the opening introduction, he completely dried up and  
18 there was a really rather embarrassed silence, and one  
19 of the women there said, "Well, Rick's given us, okay,  
20 an introduction, let's open it to general discussion".

21 So I felt that he -- he wasn't really up to doing  
22 it. He didn't really understand what he was trying to  
23 talk about. He had made notes but was unable to make  
24 use of them, so perhaps that should have been an early  
25 indication that, you know, he wasn't really a committed

1 person.

2 Q. Was it your impression that "Rick Gibson" wanted to  
3 become a member of Big Flame?

4 A. I -- I understood -- I didn't understand until I had  
5 left London, actually, and I went back on one occasion  
6 to meet people I used to know and I -- I -- that was  
7 when I went back and discovered that he had disappeared  
8 and they had uncovered who he truly was, and they told  
9 me that the reason was that he had tried to join  
10 Big Flame, and at that point they had various suspicions  
11 about him, worries about him, and they did an  
12 investigation into him and discovered who he was.

13 Q. Thank you. I'll come back to that in a little while.

14 I'd just like to call up two reports which record  
15 some information about Big Flame meetings at which "Rick  
16 Gibson" appears to have been present.

17 First of all, {UCPI/10775}. Thank you.

18 This is a report on Big Flame dated 5 August 1976,  
19 which I'd like to pick up at paragraph 2. It says:

20 "As a general policy of attempting to offer some  
21 form of resistance to the leadership (ie Lawless  
22 clique) within the Troops Out Movement, Big Flame have  
23 decided to re-vamp their London Ireland Commission which  
24 was suspended some months ago. It was felt that  
25 the previous series of meetings had got somewhat out of



1 hand and were at the end in no way controlled by  
2 Big Flame. On this occasion, however, it was decided  
3 that these present meetings would be called and  
4 controlled by Big Flame and that independent elements  
5 invited should be under no illusion about that fact."

6 Paragraph 3:

7 "Such a meeting was held on Sunday 25th July 1976 at  
8 62-peck had Road, SE 5, the home of Rick Gibson. Eight  
9 persons (five of whom were members of  
10 Big Flame) attended the meeting which was chaired by  
11 [Privacy]. The proceedings lasted from 6 pm until  
12 9.45 pm."

13 And if we could go down to paragraphs 5 and 6,  
14 please. Five:

15 "This immediately led on to the position of  
16 Trotskyists and Troops Out Movement and general  
17 criticism of their tactics. [Privacy] intimated that an  
18 anti-Trotskyist grouping within the Troops Out Movement,  
19 which would encompass most independent elements, could  
20 defeat the present leadership but ..."

21 I'm struggle to go read that. It's:

22 "... [something] the opposition to this suggestion  
23 of possibly forming a breakaway TOM, his ideas became  
24 somewhat watered down. Those present, however, were  
25 very critical of the leadership especially since

1           independents tended to work hard at projects which they  
2           did not fully agree with. On the other hand, although  
3           work around such issues and Prevention of Terrorism Act  
4           and Anti--recruiting was part of TOM policy,  
5           the Trotskyists had refused to assist."

6           If we could go down to paragraph 6, please  
7           {UCPI/10775/2}.

8           You can see that "Rick Gibson" was listed at  
9           paragraph 6 as amongst those present.

10          I'd like you to hold the contents that I've just  
11          read in mind, please, Mr Chessum, and can we take that  
12          down and bring up 21 -- sorry, {UCPI/21388}.

13          We can see there a report of the 27 September 1976,  
14          and it says at paragraph 2:

15          "Independent elements within the Troops Out Movement  
16          have over recent months become increasingly frustrated  
17          at carrying out the doctrine of the 'Lawless clique' to  
18          the exclusion of all else. As a result Big Flame  
19          members in TGM have been instrumental in bringing  
20          together some of the more influential members of  
21          the organisation in the hope of formulating a common  
22          policy with which to fight the leadership at the next  
23          National Delegate Conference , due to take place in late  
24          November."

25          If we could scroll down, please.:

1            "A gathering of these was held on Thursday  
2            2nd September 1976, at [Privacy], the home of  
3            [Privacy] ..."

4            And it gives the times:

5            "Although only nine persons attended, it was seen as  
6            a significant beginning since during the course of  
7            the meeting it became increasingly clear that the major  
8            aim of those represented would have to be the defeat of  
9            the present leadership and replacement of them by  
10           independent members. [Privacy] saw the likely makeup of  
11           the new leadership as being an amalgam of ... Rick  
12           Gibson, [Privacy], [Privacy], [Privacy] and hopefully  
13           [Privacy], if he would agree to rejoin the organisation.  
14           Those present thought that without this change  
15           the Troops Out Movement would cease to exist."

16           And we can see further down the page that "Rick  
17           Gibson" is recorded as having been present.

18           Now, would it be right to say that you had no idea  
19           of these meetings at the time?

20           A. I had no idea that those meetings were taking place. In  
21           July, I -- I got married and we went off to Cornwall for  
22           a couple of weeks on honeymoon. We were due to leave  
23           London at the beginning of September for me to go and  
24           take up a grant to do a PhD at Warwick ^ university, and  
25           in the meantime we made several trips to the Midlands to

1 try and organise accommodation for when we got there.

2 So, I think, from -- from -- from early part of  
3 July, I was not involved and didn't know what was going  
4 on.

5 Q. Now that you have seen these two documents which appear  
6 to show -- I'll put it bluntly -- plotting, can you help  
7 us as someone who was an experienced member of TOM with  
8 your analysis of what was happening and "Rick Gibson's"  
9 role in it?

10 A. Well, there had always been a rather uneasy alliance  
11 between Gery Lawless and grouping that supported him and  
12 Big Flame, because they were rather different  
13 politically. Lawless and his friends were -- were --  
14 well, were hard line Trotskyists in many ways and  
15 Big Flame was much more libertarian, they had different  
16 priorities for working the organisation, but they had  
17 a joint interest in stopping smaller sectarian left  
18 groups from taking over the organisation, and for a long  
19 time it was only that alliance between the Lawless  
20 people and Big Flame that kept these sectarian  
21 organisations at bay.

22 The fact that at this stage Big Flame were involved  
23 in trying to take over the leadership from Lawless would  
24 suggest to me that they were less people involved at  
25 the national leadership level, and I do wonder if some

1 of the left Trotskyist groups that had been involved in  
2 the organisation had decided to call it a day and left,  
3 because I find it strange that Big Flame should think at  
4 that stage that they had the numbers to take over  
5 the organisation.

6 "Rick Gibson" had always been supportive of both  
7 the Lawless -- Gery Lawless and Big Flame, and obviously  
8 his strategy was to maintain himself as a bridge between  
9 the two groups. At this stage, he'd obviously decided  
10 to plot with Big Flame against Lawless, which was  
11 a change in strategy.

12 I suspect that he saw the way the wind was blowing  
13 and that he felt the strategy needed to change so that  
14 he could keep in the centre of things. And he was  
15 also -- it became clear that he was very interested in  
16 joining Big Flame and he would want to be on their side  
17 in order that he could, as we now know as an  
18 undercover police officer, get involved in infiltrating  
19 them.

20 I know that he had told people in Big Flame that he  
21 was interested in -- in joining and that he told them  
22 that he was thinking of moving to Liverpool and it was  
23 in Liverpool that Big Flame had a sizeable branch that  
24 had close contacts with people in -- in nationalist  
25 communities in the North of Ireland action this was one

1 of the things, I think, that aroused their suspicions.

2 MR BARR: Thank you.

3 Sir -- can we take that document down, please.

4 Thank you.

5 Sir, I'm afraid I've rather overrun. Might  
6 I suggest -- I think I may need as much as another half  
7 an hour, so I'm in your hands as to whether we should  
8 break for lunch now or whether I should carry on.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you think you can finish in half an hour,  
10 because we could then both break for lunch and break to  
11 permit people to put additional questions to you, if  
12 they have any, and permit Mr Marquis to see whether he  
13 wishes to re-examine.

14 MR BARR: Yes, I can do that, Sir.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: That depends in part on the shorthand  
16 writers. May I ask if they're willing to continue for  
17 another half an hour without a break and of course  
18 dependent on Mr Chessum.

19 Then subject to the shorthand writers, we'll  
20 continue to finish your questions.

21 MR BARR: Thank you. I've been told the shorthand writers  
22 are content to continue and I'm grateful to them.

23 So, some final questions, Mr Chessum, about  
24 Big Flame as an organisation. To your knowledge, was  
25 Big Flame involved in the commission of criminal

1 offences?

2 A. No, they weren't.

3 Q. Was Big Flame involved in promoting public disorder at  
4 demonstrations?

5 A. I never knew them to be.

6 Q. Did Big Flame have as an objective overthrowing  
7 parliamentary democracy?

8 A. They wanted to establish a socialist society as opposed  
9 to a capitalist society and economy. That, I think,  
10 does not necessarily mean that they want to overthrow  
11 democracy -- parliamentary democracy.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 Can I move now to a completely different topic and  
14 that is the sexual relationships which "Rick Gibson"  
15 became involved in as an undercover police officer.  
16 The Inquiry has been greatly assisted by a witness  
17 statement from the woman who we are calling "Mary" and  
18 so I need not ask you a great deal of detail about that.  
19 But what I would like to ask you is did you know about  
20 the sexual relationship at the time?

21 A. I knew about the relationship that "Rick Gibson" had  
22 established between "Mary" and her flatmate. That was  
23 common knowledge in the South East London Branch.

24 I also knew that he was involving himself in  
25 a relationship with someone in Big Flame. I got

1 the feeling that these relationships were not  
2 substantial but they were sexual relationships.  
3 I didn't find out until later that he'd had a much more  
4 substantial relationship with another woman in  
5 Big Flame.

6 Q. Sticking with "Mary" for the moment. Did the fact that  
7 it was known that he was having a sexual relationship  
8 with "Mary" have any influence on whether or not you  
9 suspected "Rick Gibson" of being an  
10 undercover police officer?

11 A. No, because this kind of sleeping around was very common  
12 in -- in that time, amidst the kind of people that  
13 I knew. It came as a great culture shock to me when  
14 I moved to London, because I was a Methodist from  
15 a village and we -- we had a very different culture.  
16 But certainly when I moved to London I discovered that  
17 people -- many of the people that I knew had  
18 a completely different culture and -- and their  
19 lifestyle was very different. So the fact that "Rick  
20 Gibson", along with many others, was involving himself  
21 in this lifestyle would not have aroused suspicions  
22 about him any more than all the other people.

23 Q. Well, perhaps the other way round. Would it have  
24 allayed any suspicions you might have had in the sense  
25 would you have expected a police officer to do that?



1       A. I wouldn't have expected a police officer to do that,  
2       no, although, of course, we now know that many of them  
3       did.

4       Q. I'm sensing that you didn't have any real suspicions  
5       about "Rick Gibson" anyway; is that fair?

6       A. It -- it is, except to one proviso, that when he first  
7       appeared on the scene, my then girlfriend and I, we did  
8       discuss him and we discussed the fact that why is he so  
9       interested in Ireland, because most of the people we  
10      knew who were interested in Ireland had -- they were  
11      either of -- they either had Irish connections in  
12      the sense that they had Irish family connections, or  
13      they had been involved in other left wing campaigns and  
14      then began to rethink their attitude to Ireland as well.  
15      Rick didn't fall into either of these two categories, so  
16      it puzzled us as to why he was so interested. And we  
17      did discuss -- we even discussed the possibility that,  
18      you know, could he be a -- could he be an infiltrator of  
19      some kind.

20             But as time went by and we got to know him, we  
21      became friendly with him, a year or two later we looked  
22      back and said, "Oh, weren't we paranoid, you know, we  
23      thought Rick might be an undercover officer officer of  
24      some kind when we first met, it was embarrassing, we  
25      were so paranoid at the time", and of course we were

1 right the first time.

2 Q. Now, you tell us in your statement that there was  
3 another female TOM activist with whom "Rick Gibson" had  
4 some sexual contact. Obviously without revealing her  
5 identity in any way, can you help us with how -- (a)  
6 whether you knew that at the time?

7 A. There -- there was one -- one woman in Big Flame that  
8 I think it was common knowledge, just as it was common  
9 knowledge that "Mary" and her flatmate had had  
10 a sexual relationship with "Rick Gibson", so it was  
11 fairly common knowledge that this other woman in  
12 Big Flame had had that kind of relationship.

13 Q. And then the fourth relationship, though, was unknown to  
14 you at the time?

15 A. That was unknown to me until "Rick" was uncovered as  
16 being an undercover police officer and I was shown  
17 the file on him that Big Flame had where he had left  
18 a note to that other -- that other woman explaining why  
19 he was leaving.

20 Q. And you tell us that you were given to understand that  
21 that was a more serious relationship. Can you, again  
22 without revealing the identity of the woman in any way,  
23 help us with any details?

24 A. I wasn't told the identity of that woman, and in fact  
25 I still don't have definite information about it,

1           although I now have suspicions about it.

2           The reason why I was given to understand that it was  
3           a very substantial relationship was that when -- when  
4           "Rick Gibson" was uncovered and departed from the scene,  
5           he -- he felt obliged to leave a note to that woman  
6           explaining why he had gone away. He didn't feel obliged  
7           to leave that note to anybody else, he left it to her,  
8           her alone, so it was clearly a close relationship and it  
9           had been long-standing.

10          Q. Thank you.

11                 Can I move now to the officer we know as HN353, who  
12                 used the cover name "Gary Roberts". On the information  
13                 that we were able to provide you when we requested  
14                 a witness statement, you didn't -- it didn't ring any  
15                 bells. Now that you've had access to the hearing  
16                 bundle, is it still the case that it doesn't ring any  
17                 bells?

18          A. It rings a few bells now, because I've learned that he  
19                 became vice president of the students' union at Thames  
20                 Poly, and we did have someone on the executive of Thames  
21                 Poly who was very sympathetic to us and it was very  
22                 helpful to us when we were organising local things. So  
23                 I now realise that that person was "Gary Roberts".

24          Q. Are you able to help us then at all with what he did?

25          A. No, I can't remember much about it. I know that when --

1           when we organised anything, we wanted to get the support  
2           of local students as well as the local Labour Movement,  
3           and we contacted Thames Poly because we knew that that  
4           particular political -- that particular students' union  
5           was sympathetic and helpful, and we knew that there was  
6           one person there who belonged to a left group and was  
7           particularly sympathetic.

8           Q.   And that was "Gary Roberts"?

9           A.   I now realise that it was, yes.

10          Q.   Thank you.

11                    Can I come now to Big Flame discovering that "Rick  
12                    Gibson" was not who he said he was, and you've touched  
13                    upon this already. You've explained that you only found  
14                    out later when you returned to London to visit old  
15                    friends. Can you help us with how it was that Big Flame  
16                    established that "Rick Gibson" was not who he said he  
17                    was?

18          A.   Yes. I returned to London in -- I wanted to see lots of  
19                    old friends. It was -- it was the first time I'd been  
20                    back to London since moving to the Midlands, and one of  
21                    the first things I did was to go to the West Midlands  
22                    meeting of the Troops Out Movement -- sorry, the West  
23                    London meeting of the Troops Out Movement, which  
24                    happened to be meeting that day. So I went straight to  
25                    that meeting before I went to the combination ^ I'd

1 established in London. And when I attended that  
2 meeting, I was immediately approached by the most senior  
3 member of Big Flame who said, "I want to talk to you  
4 about your friend "Rick Gibson"". He said, "I've got  
5 my -- I've got my clothes in a launderette down the road  
6 if you wait until the meeting's finished, come with  
7 me to the launder ette and I'll tell you all about it".  
8 And he then told me about the way in which they'd  
9 uncovered "Rick Gibson".

10 He said that they had become suspicious of him and  
11 had decided to investigate him, that they had somehow or  
12 other got hold of his birth certificate -- or, no, they  
13 got -- they had somehow got hold of his date of birth  
14 from a document of some kind and they went to  
15 Somerset House to look up his birth certificate which  
16 they found there. But they weren't content with that.  
17 It told them where he was born and they went down to  
18 the local records office where he was born, somewhere  
19 down in Kent, I think it was, and there they discovered  
20 his death certificate. So they were quite thorough in  
21 their investigation.

22 When they discovered that he was not who he said he  
23 was, they were unsure who he was, they didn't know  
24 whether he was Special Branch, MI5. He claimed to have  
25 worked before he came to London at a camp site in

1 essence ex-somewhere. Then they went to visit that camp  
2 site and discovered it was run by an army major and his  
3 son so they wondered if he was army intelligence. They  
4 even wondered if he was from a fascist organisation. So  
5 they -- even though they knew he wasn't who he said he  
6 was, they were unclear as to precisely who he was,  
7 though they thought that the most probable thing was  
8 that he was the state in some form.

9 When they discovered that he was not who he said he  
10 was, they were rather scared about this. They wanted to  
11 -- they wanted to, as it were, persuade him to go away,  
12 so they told him that they checked everybody who joined  
13 Big Flame, or tried to join Big Flame, and this was  
14 a routine thing, but would he tell them things about  
15 what school he went to, if he had relatives anywhere  
16 that they could check up on, all these kind of things.  
17 They actually checked the school that he said he had  
18 been to and they said nobody of that name has ever been  
19 here, and they confronted him with that and he told  
20 them, every time they confronted him with something he  
21 made up another story. He said, "Oh well, it was  
22 embarrassing, I got expelled from the school I went to  
23 so I lied about that". And he gave them names of  
24 relatives and they checked those out and they were  
25 the same surname but they didn't know anybody

1           called "Rick".

2           They told me that a couple of people that they  
3           checked out, he had given their addresses and they were  
4           people that lived at ports and this aroused their  
5           suspicion that he might be Special Branch because they  
6           thought one of the jobs of Special Branch was to check  
7           the ports and this would give him an alibi for being  
8           there if he was seen there. So they became more and  
9           more convinced that he was Special Branch of some kind.

10          But they didn't want to reveal to him that they  
11          really knew who he was, they wanted him to still think  
12          that they were just checking up on him in the hope that  
13          that had make him go away, he would take fright and go  
14          away. And it was only when he didn't go away, he  
15          bluffed it out the whole time, that they decided after  
16          a meeting to take him into a pub and they waited --  
17          I was told they waited for him to buy his round of  
18          drinks, and when he came back they spread out his birth  
19          certificate and his death certificate on the table in  
20          front of him and they said he went as white as a sheet,  
21          he went very emotional, he looked as though he was going  
22          to start and cry, and he still said it was a mistake in  
23          the records office. He said, "I -- he said, "I can give  
24          you the number of a local company, I can give you their  
25          extension number, if you ring that number I have

1 a brother who works there, ring that number in  
2 the morning and he'll confirm who I am". So they did  
3 that, and again, the same thing happened. Sure enough  
4 there was somebody there on that extension who had  
5 the name Gibson but he said, "I haven't got a brother".

6 So they then went to his flat, which I now know they  
7 had had a meeting in, and they found it completely  
8 empty. There was not a stick of furniture left in it  
9 and it had obviously been cleared out overnight and they  
10 never saw him again.

11 But as I say, he had left this note to the woman  
12 with whom he'd had a substantial relationship with and  
13 she handed it to Big Flame and they put it on the file.

14 I -- I was told who had the file. I went to his  
15 house and he showed me the file. Inside the file I saw  
16 his birth certificate and his death certificate and  
17 I also saw the note that he had left to this woman.  
18 There was no name of the woman on the note. I can't  
19 remember whether there was none there or whether it had  
20 been redacted. So, I mean, I became very convinced that  
21 in fact, yes, you know, he was -- he was the state  
22 infiltrating Big Flame.

23 They were so concerned that they actually compiled  
24 a little dossier which they put in a sealed envelope and  
25 sealed envelope was given to, I was told, two different



1 people and this were told that "only open it if  
2 something happens to a member of Big Flame, otherwise  
3 it's all secret".

4 So far from seeking retribution against "Rick" while  
5 he was around, they were worried about retribution from  
6 the state because they'd uncovered him, and they -- they  
7 were quite scared. They told me not to tell anyone  
8 about it all, keep it all secret, so for a long time  
9 I didn't tell anyone. Eventually, of course, it's such  
10 a -- such an important thing to have happened that I did  
11 start to tell people and in the end I had -- I --  
12 journalists came to see me in the 80s. They came to see  
13 me to talk about "Rick Gibson" and I was interviewed by  
14 I think three different journalists who came to see me  
15 at different times, and I know now that the state were  
16 aware of the fact that these journalists were visiting  
17 me.

18 Q. Thank you.

19 Can you help us with whether any of the suspicions  
20 about "Rick Gibson" arose from what he had been saying  
21 to the women with whom he'd been having sexual  
22 relations?

23 A. They never said that it was the women who had suspected  
24 him, although when I knew that he had been uncovered as  
25 a -- as an infiltrator from the state, one of the first

1 things I did was to go to the flat of "Mary" and she was  
2 still sharing it with that same flatmate, and I went to  
3 the flat and I said to them, "I want to talk to you  
4 about 'rick Gibson'". And they knew that he had  
5 disappeared from the scene. And I said, "Why do you  
6 think he disappeared"? And "Mary's" flatmate actually  
7 spontaneously said, "We wondered if he was a police  
8 officer". And I said, "Why was that"? And she said,  
9 "Well, we've got no real evidence, but after he'd had  
10 relationships with us of a sexual nature, he never  
11 stayed until the morning, he always left in the middle  
12 of the night, we wondered if he was going back to a wife  
13 and family". And I -- and I said, "Well, I can tell you  
14 that I do have evidence now that he was an infiltrator",  
15 and I told them the whole story about Big Flame.

16 Q. And what was their reaction to that?

17 A. I think they were shocked, but there's part of them that  
18 was not surprised.

19 Q. And you took some steps of your own, you tell us in your  
20 witness statement. You visited the premises of  
21 the employer that "Rick Gibson" had said he worked for?

22 A. Well, this is another thing that, looking back, alarms  
23 me. It makes me realise just how much he was targeting  
24 member of staff, because before he became London  
25 organiser, he had reported to his superiors that I was

1 interested in the job of London organiser, and it was  
2 after that that he managed to get on the London  
3 Coordinating Committee and I didn't, and I wondered if,  
4 you know, people were in on it, whether to stop me  
5 getting there.

6 And then, when I -- he reported, I now know, to his  
7 superiors that I had got a job with the London  
8 Electricity Board in Woolwich, and it was shortly after  
9 this that he told me that he had now got a job in  
10 Woolwich and there was this office at the -- round  
11 the back of a bank, up a staircase, and I now think,  
12 well, it seems fairly clear to me now that that office  
13 was a front and, you know, he -- he was obviously still  
14 wanting to keep in close contact with me. I relate  
15 those two things now.

16 So, I only went to that office once and there was  
17 a woman there and there was quite a few files, but  
18 I didn't go right inside the office, I could -- I went  
19 just inside it and could see -- see -- see the rest of  
20 the inside of it. "Rick" had suggested to me that since  
21 he was working in Woolwich, we could meet every lunch  
22 time and maybe meet him in a pub and have a chat, and  
23 there were two occasions when I -- I think I suggested  
24 it. There was a Woolwich free ferry that went across  
25 the river and back again, and there would be just time

1 to go on that, and it was a nicer way on the Woolwich  
2 free ferry, it was like a free boat trip. We could meet  
3 on that instead of going into a smoky pub room and we  
4 did that a couple of times.

5 So when "Rick" -- when I learned that "Rick" had  
6 disappeared I thought I'll go and investigate that  
7 office and I went to it and it was closed and I went  
8 into the -- I went into the bank at the front of  
9 the building and I asked information. I said that  
10 office round the back of -- you know, up the stairs, are  
11 there still people there and they said, "Oh no, no,  
12 it's -- they -- they moved a month ago".

13 You know, it was just as "Rick's" flat was empty of  
14 all sticks of furniture, so the office had been vacated.  
15 So, you know, I thought ah, this was obviously just  
16 a front, it wasn't a genuine office.

17 "Rick" claimed at the time, he said he was driving  
18 a van. I only went to of that office once and that was  
19 at his suggestion. It was by appointment with him. And  
20 he -- he said he had got a job driving a van and because  
21 of that he was going to places like Hull. Again,  
22 a port. And obviously now I know that he was an  
23 undercover police officer, he wouldn't have another  
24 full-time job. So, I -- the bank actually gave me  
25 the telephone number of the -- of the people who had

1 moved from that office up those stairs, and I rang that  
2 number and when I rang it, to begin with, they -- they  
3 said, "Oh, hold the line", and they went off for some  
4 considerable time, and when they came back they said,  
5 "Well, he doesn't work here any more, but we are still  
6 in contact with him, if you would like to leave your  
7 name, address and telephone number, we'll -- we'll ask  
8 him to get back to you". Well, of course, obviously he  
9 never did.

10 Q. Thank you. I just want to go back so something you said  
11 a little earlier about speaking to journalists in  
12 the 1980s.

13 Could we have up, please, tab (inaudible), which is  
14 {MPS/731078}.

15 This is a Special Branch memorandum from  
16 a Detective Sergeant to the chief superintendent of  
17 S squad, of which the SDS was a part. It's dated  
18 24 June 1986. It says:

19 "The following information has been received from  
20 a secret and delicate source:-

21 "[Privacy], a freelance researcher, is currently  
22 engaged in obtaining material on Special Branch activity  
23 on behalf of [Privacy] of the ' Observer'. This  
24 research is expected to take at least four to five weeks  
25 and [Privacy] is uncertain whether, because of

1 the amount of the information he is obtaining, the final  
2 product will be published in the ' Objector' or will  
3 appear as a book.

4 "In particular [Privacy] has received information  
5 from Richard Chessum, who works as a press officer for  
6 the Labour Committee on Ireland, concerning a man  
7 name 'Gibson' who is known also to [Privacy]. It  
8 appears 'Gibson' was discovered to be a Special Branch  
9 infiltrator into 'Big Flame' in the mid-1970s.

10 [Privacy] has apparently told [Privacy] that [Privacy],  
11 another member of the LCI and often Troops Out Movement,  
12 had seen 'Gibson' outside New Scotland Yard. [Privacy]  
13 has given [Privacy] [Privacy]'s telephone number and has  
14 also suggested he contact [Privacy] who was a member  
15 of 'Big Flame at the at the time."

16 So you say that you now know that the police were  
17 onto the communications between you and journalist and  
18 this is evidence of that. But it's also evidence,  
19 isn't it, of a missing piece of the jigsaw, namely that  
20 "Rick Gibson" had been spotted outside  
21 New Scotland Yard?

22 A. Yes, I know the -- I know the identity of the person who  
23 thought he'd seen him outside Scotland Yard. This was  
24 a long time after he disappeared. So yes, he -- nobody  
25 had ever seen him since, but this particular person

1 reported the fact that he'd seen a man he was sure was  
2 "Rick Gibson" entering New Scotland Yard.

3 Q. And as far as you're aware, is that how the connection  
4 with the police as opposed to a fascist organisation or  
5 the Security Service was made?

6 A. Sorry, I didn't -- repeat that.

7 Q. Is that how a connection between "Rick Gibson" and  
8 police was made as opposed to the other suspicions you  
9 had, namely that he might have come from a fascist  
10 organisation or from the Security Service?

11 A. Well, it was confirmation to us really that he was  
12 a police officer rather than anything else. I -- I had  
13 a friend who had written a book on the media and  
14 Ireland, and she often contacted me and said, "I've got  
15 a journalist who's contacted me and I'd like to put him  
16 in touch with you because he's interested in -- in 'Rick  
17 Gibson' and his disappearance, is it all right if I give  
18 this journalist your name and number"? Because it was  
19 filtered by her and I trusted her, I said yes to several  
20 of them, and they came to visit me then in -- in  
21 Sheffield, actually.

22 Q. You tell us that you got married in the summer of 1976.  
23 Did "Rick Gibson" attend your wedding?

24 A. Oh no. No, no, we didn't do that. It was -- we didn't  
25 want -- we didn't want a big wedding. It was a very

1 small private family affair. So, you know, we didn't  
2 invite anybody outside of immediate family to it.

3 Q. In the bundle that we've provided you with, there are  
4 a number of reports about you and your partner. As  
5 you've mentioned, there's a report about your  
6 employment. In fact, there's more than one report about  
7 your employment. There's a report about your wedding,  
8 there's a report about you moving to Kenilworth and then  
9 there's another report about you moving to  
10 Leamington Spa in 1977. I think on the basis of what  
11 you've told us by that stage you were a member of  
12 the Labour Party?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. You've seen all of those reports. What is your  
15 recollection to Special Branch having been recording  
16 such extensive details of your personal life?

17 A. It's very surprising to me that they were interested in  
18 those personal details. I can understand them being  
19 interested in the political aspect of our lives, but to  
20 be interested in those personal details to the extent of  
21 reporting on them, very often very trivial things, I do  
22 find that rather worrying. I find it -- I find it  
23 sinister, actually.

24 Q. And my final question to you is, you've expressed in  
25 your witness statement a concern that there might be



1 a link between the reporting on you and difficulties you  
2 experienced later in life obtaining employment. Could  
3 you explain the basis of those fears to us.

4 A. Yes, well, I applied for thousands of jobs -- well,  
5 I calculated at the time about 1,500 jobs over a period  
6 of five years in the 80s, applying for absolutely  
7 everything, jobs for which I was qualified, jobs for  
8 which I was well overqualified in a desperate attempt to  
9 get work and I just never seemed to be able to get an  
10 interview for anything. There were other factors at  
11 work and I understand that, but I think the sheer  
12 longevity of my unemployment and fact that it went on  
13 for so very long does give rise to suspicion in my mind.

14 And there was the occasion so much later in my life  
15 when I -- when -- when I came back from Edinburgh to  
16 Sheffield to live here again when I was desperate for  
17 any kind of job just to keep in touch with my children,  
18 and I applied for a job just as a sorter with the Post  
19 Office and we had this little test we had to do and  
20 I more than excelled in the test they gave us. We were  
21 told there would be feedback to tell us why they weren't  
22 employing us. So I -- I called to ask for that feedback  
23 and I was told that in my case they couldn't give me  
24 any. And I said, "Why not"? And man said, "Well, I'm  
25 not at liberty to tell you".

1           Now, there had been one or two letter bombs sent by  
2           Republicans in -- in the period just before then, and  
3           I did strongly suspect at the time that they had access  
4           to the fact that I'd been politically active on  
5           the question of Northern Ireland and that this might  
6           well be a factor, this might well be the reason why they  
7           couldn't tell me why they couldn't give me feedback.  
8           Obviously I had no direct evidence all the other jobs  
9           that I applied for, but I know many of my friends were  
10          very surprised that I didn't get interviewed for some of  
11          those jobs and I was putting it down to other factors,  
12          but in the end I began to think, well, is there  
13          something else going on here?

14       MR BARR: Thank you.

15           Mr Chessum, you've been very patient with my many  
16          questions. Thank you very much. If you could just wait  
17          there for a moment, please.

18       THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chessum, our proceedings require that  
19          there is now a break anyway, apart from needing to have  
20          time to have some lunch, so that those who may have  
21          questions that they want to ask of you through Mr Barr  
22          can put them to him. Would you mind coming back after  
23          a lunch break of an hour and answering any questions  
24          there may be?

25       A. That will be fine, if you need me.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, would you be back in an hour, please,  
2 in other words available on screen in an hour --

3 A. Yes.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: -- in that eventuality?

5 A. Yes.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

7 Then we'll break now for an hour for everybody to  
8 have lunch and for those questions to be contemplated.

9 MR FERNANDES: We will now take a break for lunch. For  
10 those in the virtual hearing room, please remember to  
11 join your break-out rooms.

12 The time is now 1.35 pm, so we shall resume at  
13 2.35 pm. Thank you.

14 (1.35 pm)

15 (The short adjournment)

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25