

Wednesday, 5 May 2021

(10.00 am)

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

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

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

Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

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

Ms Parkes?

Summary of evidence of HN353 and HN351

MS PARKES: Thank you, Sir. Good morning.

I'll be summarising evidence for HN353 and HN351.

Starting with HN353.

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/728762/3}. If we look at
16 paragraph 2, we see this is a report about a meeting on
17 7 November 1975 at the University of London Union of
18 the All London Troops Out Movement. And it was to
19 discuss the setting-up of a secretariat to replace
20 the TOM organising committee. A resolution to that
21 effect had been passed at the recent TOM national
22 delegate conference.

23 Could you help us with this reorganisation, please?

24 A. Again, I was not involved in it at national level,
25 simply because I had not been elected to the London

1 Coordinating Committee and didn't get involved anymore
2 at national level. So, I -- you know, I heard about all
3 these things at secondhand. I wasn't clear of the exact
4 reasons for this reorganisation.

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

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

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

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

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

18 A. Yes, yes.

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

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

1 him, he would have been partly responsible for trying to
2 sort them all out, and he would also have been involved
3 in the strategy for London.

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

6 A. Yes.

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

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

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

14 A. Yes.

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

18 A. Yes.

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

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

1 database.

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

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

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

9 A. Yes.

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

13 A. Never to my knowledge.

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

16 A. No.

17 Q. Was TOM seeking to overthrow parliamentary democracy?

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

20 Q. Thank you.

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

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

1 This is a report dated 29 September 1975.

2 Paragraph 2 says:

3 "The South East London Branch of the Troops Out
4 Movement held their regular weekly meeting at Charlton
5 House, Charlton, SE7 on Tuesday 23 September 1975 from
6 8 pm until 10 pm. 15 persons attended the meeting which
7 was chaired by Rick Gibson.

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

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

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

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

1 commonly available to members of the public. So I don't
2 think they could have met -- he could have met members
3 of the Provisional IRA. I think maybe there was
4 a confusion there between the IRA and Sinn Fein.

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

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

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

16 A. Yes, yes.

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

20 A. That's right.

21 Q. So not authoritarian?

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

1 many ways they were a safe haven from much of
2 the sectarian activity that was going on inside the TOM
3 at the time.

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

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

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

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

24 And then "Rick Gibson" actually found out that I was
25 involved, and he said, "Do you think they'd let me come

1 along?" And I said, "Well, I'll -- I'll tell them
2 you're interested." And I told them that Rick was
3 interested in coming along to some of the discussion
4 groups, and they said, "Fine, bring him 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,
7 as 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
11 suspicions about him, worries about him. And they did
12 an 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 Peckham Road, SE5, 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. 5:

15 "This immediately led on to the position of
16 Trotskyists in Troops Out Movement and general criticism
17 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 struggling to read that. It says:

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 the Prevention of Terrorism
4 Act 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 the replacement of them by
10 independent members. [Privacy] saw the likely make up
11 of 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, in August, we made several trips to

1 the Midlands, to try and organise accommodation for when
2 we got there.

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

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

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

23 The fact that at this stage Big Flame were involved
24 in trying to take over the leadership from Lawless would
25 suggest to me that there were less people involved at

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

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

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

21 I know that he had told people in Big Flame that he
22 was interested in -- in joining and that he told them
23 that he was thinking of moving to Liverpool. And it was
24 in Liverpool that Big Flame had a sizeable branch that
25 had close contacts with people in -- in nationalist

1 communities in the North of Ireland. And this was one
2 of the things, I think, that aroused their suspicions.

3 MR BARR: Thank you.

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

5 Thank you.

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

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

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

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

20 Are you willing to put off your lunch break by half
21 an hour, Mr Chessum?

22 A. Yes, that will be fine.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

24 Then subject to the shorthand writers, we'll
25 continue to finish your questions.

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

3 So, some final questions, Mr Chessum, about
4 Big Flame as an organisation. To your knowledge, was
5 Big Flame involved in the commission of criminal
6 offences?

7 A. No, they weren't.

8 Q. Was Big Flame involved in promoting public disorder at
9 demonstrations?

10 A. I never knew them to be.

11 Q. Did Big Flame have as an objective overthrowing
12 parliamentary democracy?

13 A. They wanted to establish a socialist society as opposed
14 to a capitalist society and economy. That, I think,
15 does not necessarily mean that they want to overthrow
16 democracy -- parliamentary democracy.

17 Q. Thank you.

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

1 A. I knew about the relationship that "Rick Gibson" had
2 established between "Mary" and her flatmate. That was
3 common knowledge in the South East London Branch.
4 I also knew that he was involving himself in
5 a relationship with someone in Big Flame.

6 I got the feeling that these relationships were not
7 substantial, but they were sexual relationships.
8 I didn't find out until later that he'd had a much more
9 substantial relationship with another woman in
10 Big Flame.

11 Q. Sticking with "Mary" for the moment. Did the fact that
12 it was known that he was having a sexual relationship
13 with "Mary" have any influence on whether or not you
14 suspected "Rick Gibson" of being an
15 undercover police officer?

16 A. No, because this kind of sleeping around was very common
17 in -- in that time amidst the kind of people that
18 I knew.

19 It came as a great culture shock to me when I moved
20 to London, because I was a Methodist from a village and
21 we -- we had a very different culture. But certainly
22 when I moved to London I discovered that people -- that
23 many of the people that I knew had a completely
24 different culture and -- and their lifestyle was very
25 different.

1 So, the fact that "Rick Gibson", along with many
2 others, was involving himself in this lifestyle would
3 not have aroused suspicions about him any more than all
4 the other people.

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

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

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

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

1 some kind.

2 But as time went by and we got to know him, we
3 became friendly with him, a year or two later we looked
4 back and said: "Oh, weren't we paranoid", you know, "We
5 thought Rick might be an undercover officer of some kind
6 when we first met him", you know, "It's embarrassing; we
7 were so paranoid at the time". And of course, we were
8 right the first time.

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

14 A. There -- there was one -- one woman in Big Flame that --
15 I think it was common knowledge. Just as it was common
16 knowledge that "Mary" and her flatmate had had
17 a sexual relationship with "Rick Gibson", so it was
18 fairly common knowledge that this other woman in
19 Big Flame had had that kind of relationship.

20 Q. And then so -- and the fourth relationship, though, was
21 unknown to you at the time?

22 A. That was unknown to me until "Rick" was uncovered as
23 being an undercover police officer and I was shown
24 the file on him that Big Flame had where he had left
25 a note to that other -- that other woman explaining why

1 he was leaving.

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

6 A. I wasn't told the identity of that woman, and in fact
7 I still don't have definite information about it,
8 although I now have suspicions about it.

9 The reason why I was given to understand that it was
10 a very substantial relationship was that when -- when
11 "Rick Gibson" was uncovered and departed from the scene,
12 he -- he felt obliged to leave a note to that woman
13 explaining why he had gone away. He didn't feel obliged
14 to leave that note to anybody else, he left it to her
15 and her alone, so it was clearly a close relationship
16 and had been long-standing.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 Can I move now to the officer we know as "HN353",
19 who used the cover name "Gary Roberts". On
20 the information that we were able to provide you when we
21 requested a witness statement, you didn't -- it didn't
22 ring any bells. Now that you've had access to
23 the hearing bundle, is it still the case that it doesn't
24 ring any bells?

25 A. It rings a few bells now, because I've learned that he

1 became Vice President of the Students' Union at Thames
2 Poly, and we did have someone on the executive of Thames
3 Poly who was very sympathetic to us and it was very
4 helpful to us when we were organising local things. So
5 I now realise that that person was "Gary Roberts".

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

7 A. No, I can't remember much about it. I know that when --
8 when we organised anything, we wanted to get the support
9 of local students as well as the local Labour Movement,
10 and we contacted Thames Poly because we knew that that
11 particular political -- that particular students' union
12 was sympathetic and helpful, and we knew that there was
13 one person there who belonged to a left group and was
14 particularly sympathetic.

15 Q. And that was "Gary Roberts"?

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

17 Q. Thank you.

18 Can I come now to Big Flame discovering that
19 "Rick Gibson" was not who he said he was, and you've
20 touched upon this already. You've explained that you
21 only found out later when you returned to London to
22 visit old friends. Can you help us with how it was that
23 Big Flame established that "Rick Gibson" was not who he
24 said he was?

25 A. Yes. I returned to London in -- I wanted to see lots of

1 old friends. It was -- it was the first time I'd been
2 back to London since moving to the Midlands, and one of
3 the first things I did was to go to the West Midlands
4 meeting of the Troops Out Movement -- sorry,
5 the West London meeting of the Troops Out Movement,
6 which happened to be meeting that day. So, I went
7 straight to that meeting before I went to
8 the combination I'd established in London. And when
9 I attended that meeting, I was immediately approached by
10 the most senior member of Big Flame, who said, "I want
11 to talk to you about your friend 'Rick Gibson'". He
12 said, "I've got my -- I've got my clothes in
13 a launderette down the road; if you'll wait until
14 the meeting's finished, come with me to the launderette
15 and I'll tell you all about it". And he then told me
16 all about the way in which they'd uncovered
17 "Rick Gibson".

18 He said that they had become suspicious of him and
19 had decided to investigate him, that they had somehow or
20 other got hold of his birth certificate -- or, no, they
21 got -- they got -- somehow got hold of his date of birth
22 from a document of some kind and they went to
23 Somerset House to look up his birth certificate, which
24 they found there. But they weren't content with that.
25 It told them where he was born, and they went down to

1 the local records office where he was born -- somewhere
2 down in Kent, I think it was -- and there it was that
3 they discovered his death certificate. So they were
4 quite thorough in their investigation.

5 When they discovered that he was not who he said he
6 was, they were unsure who he was. They didn't know
7 whether he was Special Branch, MI5. He claimed to have
8 worked, before he came to London, at a campsite in Essex
9 somewhere, and they went to visit that campsite and
10 discovered it was run by an army major and his son, so
11 they wondered if he was army intelligence. They even
12 wondered if he was from a fascist organisation. So
13 they -- even though they knew he wasn't who he said he
14 was, they were unclear as to precisely who he was,
15 though they thought that the most probable thing was
16 that he was the state in some form.

17 When they discovered that he was not who he said he
18 was, they were rather scared about this. They wanted to
19 -- they wanted to, as it were, persuade him to go away,
20 so they told him that they checked everybody who joined
21 Big Flame, or tried to join Big Flame, and this was
22 a routine thing, but would he tell them things about
23 what school he went to, if he had relatives anywhere
24 that they could check up on, all of these kind of
25 things. They actually checked the school that he said

1 he had been to and they said, "Nobody of that name has
2 ever been here", and they confronted him with that and
3 he told them -- every time they confronted him with
4 something, he made up another story. He said, "Oh well,
5 it was embarrassing, I got -- I got expelled from
6 the school I went to, so I lied about which one I'd gone
7 to; I didn't want you to know about that". And he gave
8 them the names of people who he claimed were his
9 relatives, and they checked those out and they were
10 the same surname but they didn't know anybody
11 called "Rick".

12 They told me that a couple of the people that they
13 checked out that he had -- he had given their addresses,
14 and they were people who lived at ports, and this
15 aroused their suspicion that he might be Special Branch
16 because they thought that one of the jobs of
17 Special Branch was to check the ports and this would
18 give him an alibi for being there, if he was seen there.
19 So they became more and more convinced that he was
20 Special Branch of some kind.

21 But they didn't want to reveal to him that they
22 really knew who he was, they -- they wanted him to still
23 think that they were just checking up on him in the hope
24 that that would make him go away -- he would take fright
25 and go away. And it was only when he didn't go away, he

1 bluffed it out the whole time, that they decided, after
2 a meeting, to take him into a pub and -- and they waited
3 -- I was told they waited for him to buy his round of
4 drinks, and when he came back they spread out his birth
5 certificate and his death certificate on the table in
6 front of him, and they said he went as white as a sheet,
7 he went very emotional, he looked as though he was going
8 to start and cry, and he -- he still said it was
9 a mistake in the Records Office. He said, "I ..." -- he
10 said, "I can give you the number of a local company;
11 I can give you their extension number; if you ring that
12 number I have a brother who works there; ring that
13 number in the morning and he'll confirm who I am". So
14 they did that, and again, the same thing happened. Sure
15 enough, there was somebody there on that extension who
16 had the name Gibson, but he said, "I haven't got
17 a brother".

18 So, they then went to his flat, which I now know
19 they had had a meeting in, and they found it completely
20 empty. There was not a stick of furniture left in it
21 and it had obviously been cleared out overnight, and
22 they never saw him again.

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

1 I -- I was told who had the file. I went to his house
2 and he showed me the file. Inside the file I saw his
3 birth certificate and his death certificate, and I also
4 saw the note that he had left to this woman. There was
5 no name of the woman on the note. I can't remember
6 whether there was none there, or whether it had been
7 redacted. So, I mean, I became very convinced that in
8 fact, yes, you know, he was -- he was the state
9 infiltrating Big Flame.

10 They were so concerned that they actually compiled
11 a little dossier which they put in a sealed envelope and
12 the sealed envelope was given to, I was told, two
13 different people and they were told that, "Only open it
14 if something happens to a member of Big Flame; otherwise
15 it's all secret".

16 So, far from seeking retribution against "Rick"
17 while he was around, they were worried about retribution
18 from the state because they'd uncovered him and they --
19 they were quite scared. They told me not to tell anyone
20 about it all, to keep it secret, so for a long time
21 I didn't tell anyone. Eventually, of course, it's such
22 a -- such an important thing to have happened that I did
23 start to tell people, and in the end I had -- I --
24 journalists came to see me, in the 80s. They came to
25 see me to talk about "Rick Gibson", and I was

1 interviewed by, I think, three different journalists who
2 came to see me at different times. I know now -- I know
3 now that the state were aware of the fact that these
4 journalists were visiting me.

5 Q. Thank you.

6 Can you help us with whether any of the suspicions
7 about "Rick Gibson" arose from what he had been saying
8 to the women with whom he'd been having sexual
9 relations?

10 A. They never said that it was the women who had suspected
11 him, although when I knew that he had been uncovered as
12 a -- as -- as an infiltrator from the state, one of
13 the first things I did was to go to the flat of "Mary".
14 She was still sharing it with that same flatmate. And
15 I went to the flat and I said to them, "I want to talk
16 to you about 'Rick Gibson'". They knew that he had
17 disappeared from the scene, and I said, "Why do you
18 think he disappeared"? And "Mary's" flatmate actually
19 spontaneously said, "We wondered if he was a police
20 officer". And I said, "Why was that"? And she said,
21 "Well, we've got no real evidence, but he -- after he'd
22 had relationships with us of a sexual nature, he never
23 stayed until the morning, he always left in the middle
24 of the night; we wondered if he was going back to a wife
25 and family". And I -- and I said, "Well, I can tell you

1 that I do have evidence now that he was an infiltrator",
2 and I told them the whole story about Big Flame.

3 Q. And what was their reaction to that?

4 A. I think they were shocked, but there was part of them
5 that was not surprised.

6 Q. And you took some steps of your own, you tell us in your
7 witness statement. You visited the premises of
8 the employer that "Rick Gibson" had said he'd worked
9 for?

10 A. Well, yeah, this is another thing that, looking back,
11 alarms me. It makes me realise just how much he was
12 targeting me, because before he became London organiser,
13 he had reported to his superiors that I was interested
14 in the job of London organiser, and it was after that
15 that he managed to get on the London Coordinating
16 Committee and I didn't, and I wondered if, you know,
17 people were in on it, whether to stop me getting there.

18 And then, when I -- he reported, I now know, to his
19 superiors that I had got a job with
20 the London Electricity Board in Woolwich, and it was
21 shortly after this that he told me that he had now got
22 a job in Woolwich and there was this office at the --
23 round the back of a bank, up a -- up a staircase, and
24 I now think, well, it seems fairly clear to me now that
25 that office was a front and, you know, he -- he was

1 obviously still wanting to keep in close contact with
2 me. I relate those two things now.

3 So, I only went to that office once. And there was
4 a woman there, and there was quite a few files. But
5 I didn't go right inside the office, I could -- I went
6 just inside it and could see -- see -- see the rest of
7 the inside of it. "Rick" had suggested to me that,
8 since he was working in Woolwich, we could meet every
9 lunchtime and maybe meet in a pub and have a chat. And
10 there were two occasions when -- I -- I think
11 I suggested it -- there was a Woolwich free ferry that
12 went across the river and back again, and there would be
13 just time to go on that. And it was a nicer way, on
14 the Woolwich free ferry -- it was like a free boat
15 trip -- we could meet on that, instead of going into
16 a smoky pub room. And we did that a couple of times.

17 So when -- when "Rick" -- when I learned that "Rick"
18 had disappeared, I thought, "Well, I'll go and
19 investigate that office". And I went to it and it was
20 closed. And I went into the -- I went into the bank at
21 the front of the building and I asked information.
22 I said "Well, that -- that office round the back of --
23 you know, up the stairs, are there still people there?"
24 And they said, "Oh no, no, it's -- they -- they moved
25 a month ago". You know, it was just as "Rick's" flat

1 was empty of all sticks of furniture, so -- so
2 the office had been vacated. So, you know, I thought,
3 "Ah, this was obviously just a front, it wasn't
4 a genuine office".

5 "Rick" claimed at the time -- he said he was driving
6 a van. Well, I only went to that office once, and that
7 was at his suggestion. It was by appointment with him.
8 And he -- he said he had got a job driving a van and
9 because of that he was going to places like Hull.
10 Again, a port. And obviously now I know that he was an
11 undercover police officer, he wouldn't have another
12 full-time job. So, I -- the bank actually gave me
13 the telephone number of the -- of the people who had
14 moved from that office up their stairs, and I rang that
15 number, and when I rang it, to begin with, they -- they
16 said, "Oh, hold the line", and they went off for some
17 considerable time, and when they came back they said,
18 "Well, he doesn't work here any more, but we are still
19 in contact with him; if you would like to leave your
20 name, address and telephone number, we'll -- we'll ask
21 him to get back to you". Well, of course, obviously he
22 never did.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 I just want to go back so something you said
25 a little earlier about speaking to journalists in

1 the 1980s.

2 Could we have up, please, tab 97, which is
3 {MPS/731078}.

4 This is a Special Branch memorandum from
5 a Detective Sergeant to the Chief Superintendent of
6 S squad, of which the SDS was a part. It's dated
7 24 June 1986. It says:

8 "The following information has been received from
9 a secret and delicate source:-

10 "[Privacy], a freelance researcher, is currently
11 engaged in obtaining material on Special Branch activity
12 on behalf of [Privacy] of the 'Observer'. This research
13 is expected to take at least four to five weeks and
14 [Privacy] is uncertain whether, because of the amount of
15 the information he is obtaining, the final product will
16 be published in the 'Observer' or will appear as a book.

17 "In particular [Privacy] has received information
18 from Richard Chessum, who works as a press officer for
19 the Labour Committee on Ireland, concerning a man
20 name 'Gibson' who is known also to [Privacy]. It
21 appears 'Gibson' was discovered to be a Special Branch
22 infiltrator into 'Big Flame' in the mid-1970s.
23 [Privacy] has apparently told [Privacy] that [Privacy],
24 another member of the LCI and of the Troops Out
25 Movement, had seen 'Gibson' outside New Scotland Yard.

1 [Privacy] has given [Privacy] [Privacy]'s telephone
2 number and has also suggested he contact [Privacy] who
3 was a member of 'Big Flame' at the time."

4 So, you mentioned earlier that you now know that
5 the police were onto the communications between you and
6 journalist, and this is evidence of that. But it's also
7 evidence, isn't it, of a missing piece of the jigsaw,
8 namely that "Rick Gibson" had been spotted outside
9 New Scotland Yard?

10 A. Yes, I know the -- I know the identity of the person who
11 thought he'd seen him outside Scotland Yard. This was
12 a long time after he disappeared. So, yes, he -- nobody
13 had ever seen him since, but this particular person
14 reported the fact that he'd seen a man he was sure was
15 "Rick Gibson" entering New Scotland Yard.

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

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

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

24 A. Well, it was confirmation to us really that he was
25 a police officer rather than anything else.

1 I -- I had a friend who had written a book on
2 the media and Ireland, and she often contacted me and
3 said, "I've got a journalist who's contacted me and I'd
4 like to put him in touch with you because he's
5 interested in -- in 'Rick Gibson' and his disappearance;
6 is it all right if I give this journalist your name and
7 number?" Because it was filtered by her and I trusted
8 her, I said yes to several of them. And they came to
9 visit me then in -- in Sheffield, actually.

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

12 A. Oh no. No, no, we didn't do that. It was -- we didn't
13 want -- we didn't want a big wedding. It was a very
14 small private family affair. So, you know, we didn't
15 invite anybody outside of immediate family to it.

16 Q. In the bundle that we've provided you with, there are
17 a number of reports about you and your partner. As
18 you've mentioned, there's a report about your
19 employment. In fact, there's more than one report about
20 your employment. There's a report about your wedding,
21 there's a report about you moving to Kenilworth, and
22 then there's a later report about you moving to
23 Leamington Spa in 1977. I think on the basis of what
24 you've told us, by that stage you were a member of
25 the Labour Party?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. You've seen all of those reports. What is your reaction
3 to Special Branch having been recording such extensive
4 details of your personal life?
- 5 A. It's very surprising to me that they were interested in
6 those personal details. I can understand them being
7 interested in the political aspect of our lives, but to
8 be interested in those personal details to the extent of
9 reporting on them, very often very trivial things, I do
10 find that rather worrying. I find it -- I find it
11 sinister, actually.
- 12 Q. And my final question to you is, you've expressed in
13 your witness statement a concern that there might be
14 a link between the reporting on you and the difficulties
15 you experienced later in life obtaining employment.
16 Could you explain the basis of those fears to us.
- 17 A. Yes, well, I applied for thousands of jobs -- well,
18 I calculated at the time about 1,500 jobs over a period
19 of five years in the 80s, applying for absolutely
20 everything, jobs for which I was qualified, jobs for
21 which I was well overqualified, in a desperate attempt
22 to get work, and I just never seemed to be able to get
23 an interview for anything. There were other factors at
24 work, and I understand that. But I think the sheer
25 longevity of my unemployment and the fact that it went

1 on for so very long does give rise to suspicion in my
2 mind.

3 And there was the occasion, so much later in my
4 life, when I -- when -- when I came back from Edinburgh
5 to Sheffield to live here again, when I was desperate
6 for any kind of job just to keep in touch with my
7 children. And I applied for a job, just as a sorter
8 with the Post Office, and we had this little test we had
9 to do. And I more than excelled in the test they gave
10 us. We were told that there would be feedback, to tell
11 us why they weren't employing us. So I -- I called to
12 ask for that feedback, and I was told that in my case
13 they couldn't give me any. And I said, "Why not?" And
14 the man said, "Well, I'm not at liberty to tell you."

15 Now, there had been one or two letterbombs sent by
16 Republicans in -- in the period just before then. And
17 I did strongly suspect at the time that they had access
18 to the fact that I'd been politically active on
19 the question of Northern Ireland, and that this might
20 well be a factor, this might well be the reason why they
21 couldn't tell me why they couldn't give me feedback.

22 Obviously, I had no direct evidence, all the other
23 jobs that I applied for, but I know many of my friends
24 were very surprised that I didn't get interviewed for
25 some of those jobs. And I was putting it down to other

1 factors, but in the end I began to think, well, is there
2 something else going on here?

3 MR BARR: Thank you.

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

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chessum, our procedures require that there
8 is now a break anyway, apart from needing to have time
9 to have some lunch, so that those who may have questions
10 that they want to ask of you, through Mr Barr, can put
11 them to him. Would you mind coming back after a lunch
12 break of an hour and answering any questions there may
13 be?

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

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

17 A. Yes.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: -- in that eventuality?

19 A. Yes.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

21 Then we'll break now for an hour, for everybody to
22 have lunch and for those questions to be contemplated.

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

1 The time is now 1.35 pm, so we shall resume at
2 2.35 pm. Thank you.

3 (1.35 pm)

4 (The short adjournment)

5 (2.35 pm)

6 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to
7 the afternoon session of today's evidential hearings.
8 For those in the virtual hearing room, please remember
9 to turn off both your camera and microphone.

10 I will now hand over to the Chairman,
11 Sir John Mitting, to continue proceedings.

12 Chairman.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

14 Are there any questions from anyone other than
15 Mr Marquis, Mr Barr?

16 MR BARR: No, sir.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chessum, your counsel, Piers Marquis, has
18 some questions to ask of you in re-examination. If you
19 can now ask his questions, please.

20 Questions by MR MARQUIS

21 MR MARQUIS: I do indeed.

22 Mr Chessum, it's one topic with a few associated
23 questions. To help guide you in respect of where we're
24 going, just before lunch you referred to the occasion
25 that "Rick Gibson" was elected onto the London

1 Coordinating Committee and you were not. Do you recall
2 the occasion that I'm referring to?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Firstly, in terms of "Rick Gibson's" ascent up
5 the hierarchy of the Troops Out Movement, what stage was
6 this election?

7 A. It was round about the time when I'd been approached to
8 be the London organiser by Gery Lawless and a senior
9 person in Big Flame.

10 Q. Which you've also referred to.

11 Just so that we're clear, because everybody who's
12 listening may not be, the role of London organiser and
13 a position on the London Coordinating Committee,
14 were they the same role or entirely different roles?

15 A. They were different roles in -- well, the London
16 organiser role obviously had to be somebody on
17 the London organising committee, but one was a group
18 role, the other was a single, personal role.

19 Q. So it was you and "Rick Gibson" who were standing for
20 delegate position to that committee; is that right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Can you tell us what the circumstances of the vote were
23 and how it turned out?

24 A. Well, people from Workers Fight and
25 Revolutionary Communist Group came in force to

1 the meeting, and it was clear that they were going to
2 try and get themselves elected in place of us. At that
3 time, it was assumed in place of me and "Rick Gibson",
4 because "Rick Gibson" and myself were very much on one
5 side and they were on the other. So, it was assumed
6 that either they would have two delegates,
7 the Workers Fight/RCG people, or we would have two
8 delegates.

9 In fact, one person of Workers Fight was elected and
10 "Rick Gibson" was the other person elected. And when
11 the votes were counted, "Rick Gibson" got two more votes
12 than I did. We couldn't understand this, because in
13 theory, he should have got the same number as me,
14 because, you know, we knew roughly the people who were
15 there and how they were lined up politically.

16 What we know now of course is that "Rick" was an
17 undercover policeman, so he probably voted for himself
18 but not for me, which would account for one of those
19 votes. The other vote, we can't be a hundred per cent
20 certain about it, but at the time we assumed that it was
21 "Mary's" flatmate, because she was in Workers Fight and
22 she'd also had a sexual relationship with "Rick Gibson".
23 So we assumed at the time that, looking around the room,
24 that it must have been her who voted for -- for "Rick".
25 But she wouldn't have voted for me, because she had no

1 reason to. We were friendly with both "Mary" and her
2 flatmate, but political on opposite sides.

3 Q. Okay.

4 So the vote to the London Coordinating Committee,
5 was that a significant vote for "Rick Gibson" at that
6 time?

7 A. It was a significant vote, because there was
8 the question of who was going to be the London
9 organiser. I think it's possible -- I mean, I can't get
10 the chronology absolutely right, but I had -- in answer
11 to one of the previous questions I've explained that for
12 personal reasons, I decided to withdraw, because
13 a friend of mine who was also wanting to do it, I was
14 unhappy about having to stand against her.

15 Incidentally, she was the person who wrote the book
16 on the media and Northern Ireland.

17 And I didn't want to cause ill feeling between us.
18 And especially when Gery Lawless came up to me and made
19 very derogatory remarks about her, saying, "Well, I'll
20 support you against her," and I -- I felt, well, I'm
21 going to feel incredibly disloyal if I carry on standing
22 under these circumstances, and I felt compromised. And
23 I did say to her -- I reported the conversation to her
24 that Gery had had with me. And I think at that stage we
25 both withdrew. And in the end, of course, "Rick Gibson"

1 got elected onto the London Committee. And then
2 the person who had said he would support me from
3 Big Flame and said Big Flame would too, he came up to me
4 and said, "Well, it's all been resolved because 'Rick
5 Gibson's' volunteered to do it."

6 Q. To be clear, you turned down the job of London organiser
7 because of this personal relationship you've told us
8 about, but would you have taken the position on
9 the London Coordinating Committee?

10 A. Yes. And I think that -- I don't think "Rick Gibson"
11 would have been aware of the conversation that I'd had
12 with my friends. I think that would have been unknown
13 to him. So he would have thought that I was still
14 interested in the job of London organiser. And -- and
15 he had reported -- he had reported to his superiors that
16 I was in line for a job, and that I -- if I applied
17 for it, I was likely to get it, because I was regarded
18 as very efficient. I mean, that's in -- in the report
19 that he sent to his superiors, so there would have been
20 a serious interest on his part, and I assume on theirs
21 if they wanted him to progress in the organisation, to
22 make sure that I was not elected to that committee.

23 Having said all that, of course, there must have
24 been an element of luck involved here in -- in "Rick's"
25 rise to that position, because it would be impossible

1 before the start of the meeting to predict exactly
2 the number of people who would be there, but this was
3 all in the mix.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 We know that after that he rose to be, you've told
6 us, the convenor of the secretariat. Was there a higher
7 role in the movement than convenor of the secretariat?

8 A. No, that was the highest role really.

9 Q. And if you can answer this, retrospectively, would
10 the impact on the movement have been different had it
11 been you rather than he who was connected -- elected to
12 the London Coordinating Committee?

13 A. Well, given that he was an undercover policeman and that
14 he wouldn't have had the interests of the movement at
15 heart, I can't believe that he didn't engage in some
16 actions which were detrimental to the organisation. So
17 I think the answer to that is yes.

18 MR MARQUIS: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Mr Chessum.

19 Sir, I don't have any more questions. Thank you for
20 the time that you've allowed me.

21 Questions from THE CHAIRMAN

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

23 Mr Chessum, may I ask you, because you are the only
24 person who is able to give evidence about this, a bit
25 about Big Flame? "Rick Gibson" is dead, obviously, and

1 can't speak about it. But there is in the annual report
2 for 1976 of the SDS a description of Big Flame. You've
3 given evidence about it, describing them as libertarian
4 Marxists. And I would like, if I may, to explore with
5 you a little bit more about them.

6 Am I right in thinking that they were first formed
7 in Liverpool?

8 A. That's where they originated, I understood, yes.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: You describe them as "libertarian Marxists".

10 "Libertarian" is a word that's often used in connection
11 with groups that are anarchist or influenced by
12 anarchists. Is that a correct understanding in this
13 context or not?

14 A. Not really. They were libertarian in the sense that
15 they were less dogmatic and they were more open to
16 discussion and to differences of views within
17 the organisation.

18 The -- the Trotskyists, of course, believed in
19 what's called "democratic centralism"; it came from
20 Lenin. And you have a democratic discussion in
21 the organisation, but once the organisation has decided
22 upon a line, then everybody has to stick to it.

23 I remember when I was in the IMG that I was
24 reprimanded by one or two of the senior people in
25 the IMG because I had told somebody outside

1 the organisation that I disagreed with the line on some
2 of the things they were doing. And I was told, "You
3 don't speak to people outside the organisation and tell
4 them you disagree with the organisation." This would
5 have been unthinkable with Big Flame, because they
6 believed in continuing discussion. They believed in
7 "libertarian" in the sense that they were less dogmatic,
8 were willing to accept different views within their
9 organisation. And they were less perturbed by people
10 actually speaking outside the organisation about those
11 differences of views.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: So for "libertarian", I should
13 read "undogmatic"?

14 A. Yes.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Were they relatively well organised?

16 A. It's difficult for me to say because I was never
17 a member. But I think, yeah, they had -- they had
18 structures within the organisation which related to
19 their organisation. As I say, I was never involved in
20 that, but I know that many of the people I met in
21 Big Flame were feminist women, and they -- they were
22 less interested in the structure of the organisation and
23 organisation, they were more interested in free
24 discussion.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for clearing up one or two things

1 for me about Big Flame. I'm grateful to you.

2 I'm also deeply indebted to you for the care and
3 thoughtfulness of the written and oral evidence that
4 you've provided. My knowledge of the events of 1975 and
5 1976 in which you participated when I started
6 the Inquiry was very little, as I demonstrated by saying
7 that the deployment of "Rick Gibson" was unremarkable.
8 Plainly it wasn't. I'm grateful -- very grateful to you
9 for all you've done to help put me right about that.

10 Thank you.

11 A. Thank you.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: We're now going to break for ten minutes to
13 enable the Inquiry's technical apparatus to be set up
14 differently to hear the evidence of a former
15 undercover officer, HN200.

16 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone. We will now take
17 a break. May I remind those in the virtual hearing room
18 to remember to join your break-out rooms, please.

19 The time is now 2.50 pm, so we shall resume at 3 pm.

20 Thank you.

21 (2.47 pm)

22 (A short break)

23 (3.00 pm)

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

25 I will now hand over to the Chairman to continue

1 proceedings.

2 Chairman.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Before we begin the evidence of HN200,
4 the usual video recording made earlier is going to be
5 played.

6 I am conducting this Inquiry under a statute,
7 the Inquiries Act 2005, which gives me the power to make
8 orders regulating the conduct of the Inquiry including
9 its hearings. In the exercise of that power I have made
10 a number of orders which affect what you may and may not
11 do in the hearing rooms and after you leave them.
12 Breach of any of the orders is a serious matter, and may
13 have serious consequences for you.

14 If I am satisfied that a person may have breached an
15 order, I have the power to certify the matter to
16 the High Court, which will investigate and deal with it
17 as if it had been a contempt of that court. If
18 satisfied that a breach has occurred and merits
19 the imposition of a penalty, the High Court may impose
20 a severe sanction on the person in breach, including
21 a fine, imprisonment for up to two years and
22 sequestration of their assets.

23 Evidence is going to be given live over screens in
24 the hearing rooms. It is strictly prohibited to
25 photograph or record what is shown on the screens, or to

1 record what is said by a witness or anyone else in
2 the hearing rooms. You may bring your mobile telephone
3 into the hearing rooms, but you may not use it for any
4 of those purposes. You may use it silently for any
5 other purpose.

6 In particular, you may transmit your account of what
7 you have seen and heard in a hearing room to any other
8 person, but only once at least ten minutes have elapsed
9 since the event which you are describing took place.

10 This restriction has a purpose. In the course of
11 the Inquiry, I have made orders prohibiting the public
12 disclosure of information, for example about
13 the identity of a person, for a variety of reasons.

14 These orders must be upheld. It is inevitable that,
15 whether by accident or design, information which I have
16 ordered should not be publicly disclosed will sometimes
17 be disclosed in a hearing. If and when that happens,
18 I will immediately suspend the hearing and make an order
19 prohibiting further disclosure of the information
20 outside the hearing rooms. The consequence will be that
21 no further disclosure of that information may be made by
22 mobile telephone or other portable electronic device
23 from within the hearing room, or by any means outside
24 it.

25 I am sorry if you find this message alarming. It is

1 not intended to be. Its purpose is simply to ensure
2 that everyone knows the rules which must apply if I am
3 to hear the evidence which I need to enable me to get to
4 the truth about undercover policing. You, as members of
5 the public, are entitled to hear the same public
6 evidence as I will hear and to reach your own
7 conclusions about it. The Inquiry team will do their
8 best to ensure that you can.

9 If you have any doubt about the terms of this
10 message or what you may or may not do, you should not
11 hesitate to ask one of them and, with my help if
12 necessary, they will provide you with the answer.

13 Thank you.

14 HN200

15 THE CHAIRMAN: HN200, can you hear me? You may need to
16 press the mute button. Can you hear me?

17 A. I can, Sir.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm going to break, I think, at about
19 4 o'clock, for quarter of an hour, to enable
20 the shorthand writers to have a break, and you also. If
21 at any time you need a break earlier than that, or at
22 any other time, all you need to do is say so.

23 Do you wish to affirm or to be sworn?

24 A. I'd like to affirm, Sir.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Then may the words of affirmation be read to

1 A. (inaudible).

2 Q. Sorry, can you just confirm that you heard me?

3 A. I did hear you, yes.

4 Q. Thank you.

5 And you reported on the Twickenham branch of
6 the International Socialists, and then
7 the Worker's League in the same area; is that right?

8 A. That's right as well, yes.

9 Q. I'm going to start, please, by asking you a few
10 questions about your background before asking you about
11 your experiences in the SDS.

12 You joined the police in the mid-60s and were posted
13 to Central London police station as a uniformed officer,
14 where you policed demonstrations, you say, virtually
15 every week; is that correct?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. And it was your view, is this right, that at those
18 demonstrations, money was sometimes wasted because there
19 would be large numbers of police officers but no
20 activists on occasion, or on other occasions, too few
21 police officers and too many activists; is that right?

22 A. (inaudible).

23 Q. Thank you.

24 You later joined Special Branch in the late 1960s
25 and eventually joined C Squad in Special Branch; is that

1 right?

2 A. I joined (inaudible) C Squad -- I joined C Squad, yes.

3 Q. And C Squad investigated left wing groups; is that
4 right?

5 A. That's right.

6 Q. Whilst you were in Special Branch, so before you joined
7 the SDS, you changed your appearance; is that right?

8 A. It is.

9 Q. You grew your hair and grew a beard?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Was that in order that you could, to some extent,
12 operate undercover in your role as a Special Branch
13 officer?

14 A. It was, but it (inaudible) attempted assassination of
15 Sir Robert Carr in 1971, which I was (inaudible)
16 (inaudible) --

17 MS HUMMERSTONE: I'm going to stop you, HN200, because I'm
18 really struggling to hear and understand you because of
19 the transmission difficulties.

20 I wonder whether we may need to have a very short
21 break, just to see if we can work this out, because it's
22 quite difficult to hear your evidence.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we'll have to do that.

24 I'm very sorry about this, but this is the first
25 time we've had a serious technical problem with evidence

1 shoulder, and no one else?

2 A. Yes, that's correct.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's much better.

4 Ms Hummerstone.

5 MS HUMMERSTONE: Thank you.

6 Thank you, HN200.

7 HN200, I don't need to know any details, but can you
8 confirm, please, that prior to your SDS deployment, you
9 grew your hair and your beard as an additional security
10 measure, as part of your Special Branch role; is that
11 correct?

12 A. That is correct, yes.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 You say in your witness statement that you became
15 aware of the SDS in the late 1960s when you saw members
16 of Special Branch mixing with activists as activists; is
17 that right?

18 A. I saw them joining in demonstrations, and I suppose
19 I put two and two together.

20 Q. Were you told anything about the reason for that at the
21 time?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Were you aware at that stage of the level of
24 infiltration that was practised by the SDS?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Is this right, you say you assumed that it was in order
2 to obtain more reliable information about disorder to
3 allow for adequate policing; is that right? That's what
4 you assumed?

5 A. That is right.

6 Q. Was that confirmed to you? Did you have that confirmed
7 to you by anybody else?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Did others know about the SDS? Was that an open secret
10 in Special Branch?

11 A. No, the SDS was kept very close in Special Branch. It's
12 just that I happened to know the people involved and
13 made my own assumption.

14 Q. Thank you.

15 You were invited to join the SDS, you say in your
16 witness statement, by HN294, and you were asked to go
17 and see him. Did you go through any sort of interview?

18 A. Can I just refer to my ...?

19 Q. Yes, of course you can.

20 A. Yes, I had an interview with -- whatever his number was.

21 Q. HN294. Thank you.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And so was that an interview, when you went to see him?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Yes.

1 And you say you think you were recommended by
2 somebody else within Special Branch; is that right?

3 A. I -- I think I assumed that I was, yes.

4 Q. Why did you decide to join the SDS?

5 A. (inaudible) different types of policing.

6 Q. Some of your answer was lost, I'm afraid, HN200.

7 The part that I heard was "different types of policing".

8 Could you just repeat your answer, please.

9 A. Yes. It was something that I had never done, and
10 I wanted to expand my knowledge of different types of
11 policing, I assume.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 I now want to ask about how it differed from your
14 Special Branch role.

15 Can we have up on screen, please, the following
16 document {MPS/739315}. That's behind tab 3 in the hard
17 copy bundle.

18 This is a report dated 21 October 1971. And you can
19 see that it's a report on the Hackney and Islington
20 branch of the International Socialists and a private
21 branch meeting that took place in a meeting room in
22 a public house in N16.

23 Paragraph 2 says that:

24 "Observation was maintained within the saloon bar of
25 the public house, in which the entrance to the meeting

1 room is located, and in the vicinity of the premises.

2 Detective Sergeants ..."

3 And there are two names that have been redacted for
4 privacy reasons there:

5 "... and detective constables ..."

6 And five names redacted and then your cipher,
7 "HN200", and then a Woman Detective Constable's name
8 also:

9 "... were engaged on the observation."

10 That indicates there are a large number of people
11 carrying out observations outside that meeting room; is
12 that right?

13 A. That's right.

14 Q. If we go down to the next paragraph:

15 "The meeting commenced at 8.20 pm, the members
16 having been gathering in the saloon bar from 7.45 pm.
17 Entry to the meeting by Special Branch officers was
18 attempted without success but it is understood that
19 a proportion of the time was allocated to discussion of
20 matters arising from the Skegness conference.

21 Twenty-one persons attended."

22 And if we scroll down the page, we will see that
23 what is later reported is a large number of car
24 descriptions with their registered owners.

25 And over the page, please, {MPS/739315/2}. If we

1 carry on scrolling down, please. Thank you very much.

2 A number of descriptions of the people who attended
3 the meeting.

4 Is that a report -- a typical report for
5 a Special Branch officer engaged on the kind of duties
6 that you were engaged in at the time in C Squad?

7 A. No, it's not a typical C Squad report. I was trying to
8 explain when the line went down -- (overspeaking) --

9 Q. HN200, let me ask you this in this way then, please.

10 Can we just go back to the first page
11 {MPS/739315/1}.

12 The second paragraph, the observations take place in
13 the saloon bar but not in the premises themselves, not
14 in the room itself.

15 How did your -- how did it differ, the SDS --
16 the sort of access you could obtain through the SDS to
17 that you could obtain observing left wing groups in
18 Special Branch ordinarily? What sort of access could
19 you gain as an SDS officer?

20 A. Well, as an SDS officer, as a member of
21 the organisation, you would be invited into the meeting.

22 Q. And so instead of having to attempt access without
23 success, you would simply be going in and be able to
24 report fully on who was there and what was going on in
25 the course of the meeting?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. That's right. Thank you very much.

3 You can take that document down now, please.

4 You were married when you joined the SDS. Was

5 the impact of your SDS work on your family life

6 discussed with you?

7 A. Yes, it was.

8 Q. It involved a number of evening -- a lot of evening

9 work, a lot of weekend working. Was that something you

10 discussed with your wife?

11 A. Yes, I did.

12 Q. And you say in your witness statement that you thought

13 it would entail stress. Why did you think it would

14 entail stress, the SDS working practices?

15 A. Because it was something I'd never done before. It's

16 obviously something you have to be very careful of how

17 you approach, to do it successfully; and, well, to be

18 honest, the first year was very stressful.

19 Q. You say that you were fortunate that you were tasked to

20 infiltrate the International Socialists, as they were

21 not too extreme. And I'm going to ask you about that in

22 a moment. But you say this:

23 "If I had been tasked to infiltrate a Marxist group,

24 I would probably have asked to come out of the field."

25 Why would you not have wanted to infiltrate

1 a Marxist group?

2 A. Because to be honest, after about a year, it wasn't
3 something I particularly enjoyed; and I knew from
4 speaking to people who were in Marxist groups that
5 I probably wouldn't have enjoyed it at all. And I would
6 probably have asked to come off.

7 Q. What were you told about the difference between your
8 deployment and the infiltration of a Marxist group by
9 your colleagues?

10 A. Well, the group that I infiltrated, to me, was very
11 similar to a lot of my friends, it was very low key.
12 From what I heard from people who knew about Marxist
13 groups -- I'm basically a people person, and I like to
14 have a sort of light-hearted attitude to life. And from
15 what I heard of the Marxist groups, they were very
16 serious, and I'm not sure I would have enjoyed it.

17 Q. And was that something you heard from other members of
18 the SDS or from other --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- police officers in different fields? Members of
21 the SDS. Okay, thank you.

22 And were those from conversations you had when you
23 all met together at the safe house?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Yes. So you understood what sort of experiences they

1 were having from your conversations there?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 We're going to come on and just explore that
5 a little bit more in a little while.

6 What did you understand was the main purpose of
7 the SDS?

8 A. Well, I always understood that the SDS was set up to
9 gain accurate information about forthcoming public order
10 events, which would enable our uniformed colleagues to
11 provide the right level of protection and policing at
12 those events. Having policed events myself in the 60s,
13 when they either got totally out of hand or, as I -- you
14 mentioned earlier, that there were hundreds of policemen
15 sat round doing nothing, basically, I thought that was
16 their main role.

17 Q. And was that your main focus of your reporting and your
18 interest?

19 A. Yes, that's correct.

20 Q. Thank you.

21 I'm going to ask you a little bit now, please, about
22 training.

23 When you joined the SDS in 1974, you had been
24 a Special Branch officer since the late 1960s. Were you
25 -- would it be right to describe you as a relatively

1 experienced Special Branch officer by the time you
2 joined the SDS?

3 A. Yes, that's probably fair.

4 Q. You say in your witness statement you had no formal
5 training for your SDS role; is that right?

6 A. That's right.

7 Q. But you spent six months in the back office, and you
8 refer in your witness statement to training being given
9 to you by others in the back office; is that right?

10 A. Yeah, people who were in there with me. And also, as
11 a back office person, I did actually go out and meet
12 those who were doing it, and obviously I got some
13 experience off them.

14 Q. So what form did that training take? Is this right, it
15 wasn't formal training, but would you have described it
16 as sort of "informal training"? Is that a fair
17 description?

18 A. That -- that's fair.

19 Q. And what form did it take? What were you doing in
20 the back office that enabled you to obtain informal
21 training as to your upcoming role?

22 A. Well, obviously there was always somebody in
23 the back office who was coming off the squad, perhaps.
24 And I obviously talked to the senior officers in there,
25 and picking their brains.

1 Q. And did you see reports being written up and things of
2 that nature?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And were you able to -- did you speak to
5 the undercover officers who had been withdrawn from
6 the field about their experiences, for example?

7 A. I don't think I knew any in those days who'd been
8 withdrawn from the field.

9 Q. But those that had come -- who had come back to
10 back office after their deployment, were there any of
11 those officers?

12 A. There was -- there was some who came back to
13 the back office. I myself went back into normal duties
14 through the back office.

15 Q. And so you spoke to SDS officers that you saw in
16 the back office about what they were doing day-to-day,
17 did you?

18 A. Not in any great detail, no.

19 Q. And the managers, did they tend to be present in
20 the back office, so that you could speak to them about
21 what was going to be expected of you?

22 A. Yes, I would say supervision was very good, and they
23 were very sympathetic to somebody coming onto the squad
24 or in going off. You could always go and chat to them
25 if you had any problems.

1 Q. And were they able to provide some sort of guidance as
2 to what was going to be expected of you in your
3 forthcoming role?

4 A. Yes, I think so.

5 Q. You also say in your witness statement that prior to
6 your active deployment, so prior to going into
7 the field, you also went to the twice-weekly meetings at
8 the safe house; is that right?

9 A. That's right.

10 Q. And whilst you were at the safe house, prior to your
11 active deployment, did you listen to the other
12 SDS officers talking about their experiences and their
13 day, or matters of that nature?

14 A. There wasn't a lot of discussion between them, but, yes,
15 some of them I knew, and we obviously discussed things.

16 Q. And we understand that reports were submitted to
17 managers during the course of at least one of those safe
18 house meetings -- I think a Monday. Did you submit
19 reports on a Monday generally?

20 A. Generally, yes, we always had a meeting on Monday. And
21 obviously reports relating to the weekend were handed in
22 then.

23 Q. And were those reports discussed during that Monday
24 meeting when you used to attend as a -- prior to your
25 deployment?

1 A. They were generally discussed by people who'd been at
2 the weekend's activities.

3 Q. Right.

4 And as somebody who was not yet deployed going to
5 the safe house twice a week, what was the purpose of
6 your visit to the safe house at that stage? Was it to
7 enable you to familiarise yourself with the lifestyle
8 and sort of things you were going to need to be
9 undertaking in the future, or did it have another
10 purpose?

11 A. No, it -- I think that -- you've qualified it exactly
12 there. You could talk to the people who were doing it,
13 obviously pick their brains, and be prepared a bit for
14 what you might face.

15 Q. And did you find it helpful in preparing you for what
16 you were likely to face?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. One episode that took place during the time that you
19 were probably in the back office and then visiting
20 the safe house, on 15 June 1974 there was
21 a demonstration in Red Lion Square and
22 a counter-demonstration against the National Front, at
23 which an activist called Kevin Gately met his death.
24 Were you aware of any reports filed on
25 the Red Lion Square demonstration by any SDS officers?

1 A. No, and I remember, now you've mentioned the name,
2 Kevin Gately. To be honest, I can't recall the exact
3 circumstances of it.

4 Q. No.

5 Can you recall the demonstration being discussed at
6 all at the safe house?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No. Thank you.

9 You also say in your witness statement that you had
10 a number of discussions with HN343 -- if you want to
11 just check that name.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Because he was the officer that you were due to replace;
14 is that correct?

15 A. He -- he was in the same field as I was going into, yes.

16 Q. He, I think, reported on the Fulham and Hammersmith
17 branch of the International Socialists; is that right?

18 A. I'm not so sure which area he was in.

19 Q. Don't worry.

20 Did he -- was he able to tell you about the nature
21 of the group that you were about to infiltrate?

22 A. I can't -- I can't remember any discussions on that
23 nature, no.

24 Q. Okay, thank you.

25 I just want to ask you now briefly about any

1 specific training you may or may not have undertaken.

2 You say in your witness statement that you think
3 that whilst you were in the back office, you did see
4 the Home Office Circular "Informants who take part in
5 crime", is that right, about the role -- about
6 participating informants? You think you did see that?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Were you shown that specifically, do you think, by your
9 managers, can you recall?

10 A. I would imagine it was intentional, yes.

11 Q. Yes, thank you.

12 Were you given any training or guidance about what
13 to do if you were arrested during the course of your
14 undercover duties?

15 A. Yes. We were all supplied with a number which, if you
16 did get arrested and it looked as though there was going
17 to be serious charges, or something like that, you could
18 get the officer in charge of the station to ring that
19 number. Obviously we didn't want to show (inaudible) to
20 the prisoners that were in the police station, if any,
21 with you. So that was the way it was supposed to be
22 handled. But I don't remember anyone having to do that,
23 so ...

24 Q. Were you given any training or guidance about how to
25 recognise and how to treat information which might

1 attract legal professional privilege?

2 A. I can't remember any, no.

3 Q. Thank you.

4 Were you given any advice, or was there any
5 discussion, about how far it was acceptable to become
6 involved in the private lives of those that you met
7 during the course of your undercover deployment,
8 the activists that you were mixing with?

9 A. No. Obviously out collecting most intelligence on
10 demonstrations took place at the branch meetings of
11 the International Socialists. Our secretary in
12 particular was very good at bringing us up to date with
13 any information on forthcoming demonstrations, such as
14 coach numbers, where they were coming from and the mood
15 of those coming along, and that sort of stuff. But that
16 was it really.

17 Q. And were you given any advice or training on
18 participating in sexual relationships with people in
19 your target group, or other activists you came into
20 contact with? (Pause)

21 A. Has it gone again?

22 Q. It's okay now. It's okay now.

23 Can you hear me?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you want me to repeat the question?

1 Were you given any training or advice on engaging in
2 sexual relationships with those that you came into
3 contact in your undercover identity?

4 A. Well, no. I always assumed it would not be permitted.

5 Q. Thank you.

6 I'm going to now ask you a few things about your
7 undercover identity. The cover name you used was that
8 of a deceased child; is that right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You say in your witness statement that the normal way --
11 you say "normal way" of choosing a name for your
12 undercover deployment was to go to Somerset House and
13 find the name of someone who had died. Can you recall
14 who told you that that was the normal way that things
15 were done?

16 A. I can't, no.

17 Q. If you need to refer to the cipher list, then please do.

18 A. No, I can't remember at all who told me, because I was
19 a bit upset, and I actually said, "Why is that
20 necessary?"

21 Q. I'm going to ask you -- I want to ask you about that.

22 Do you think it might have been a manager, or was it
23 another undercover officer who told you?

24 A. I honestly can't remember.

25 Q. You can't remember.

1 You were upset about that. Why were you upset
2 about it? Why did you query it?

3 A. Because it wasn't something that sat comfortably with
4 me. The reason I was given was that we needed to have
5 a birth certificate to obtain subsequent documentation
6 for myself, such as obtaining a car -- car insurance,
7 and that sort of stuff.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And driving licence.

10 Q. And that didn't sit right with you; is that right?

11 A. Not really, no.

12 Q. Okay.

13 And do you remember who you queried that with? Who
14 did you speak to about that?

15 A. It was probably the person that told me that was
16 the normal procedure.

17 Q. Okay.

18 Did you discuss it with anybody else? Did you
19 discuss it with any of your fellow SDS officers?

20 A. I don't remember doing that, no.

21 Q. Did you understand you had a choice as to whether to use
22 a real identity or a fictitious identity, or were you
23 required to go and choose the name of a deceased
24 individual?

25 A. Well, I'm afraid I assumed that, being told that that

1 was the normal way to do it, I just took that as fact.

2 Q. Were you aware that in fact it hadn't always been
3 the practice --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- that -- no, okay, thank you.

6 Were you told about any previous security
7 compromises?

8 A. Sorry, I don't quite understand the question.

9 Q. Were you told that there had been any difficulties in
10 the past with the identities of SDS officers, and so you
11 had to go and have a -- choose a real person to --

12 A. Well, as I said, that -- I was told that was the only
13 way you could get things -- to get your driving licence
14 and stuff like that, possibly insurance number and ...

15 Q. You say that somebody from the back office went with you
16 to Somerset House. Can you remember who that was that
17 went with you to Somerset House when you went to choose
18 a name?

19 A. No, I can't.

20 Q. You say in your witness statement that you chose
21 the name of somebody who died as a teenager, so that
22 anyone looking through would have had to look through
23 a larger number of binders in order to come across
24 the child's death certificate.

25 Did you tell anybody else that you had done that,

- 1 that you had chosen the name of a teenager?
- 2 A. Well, obviously the -- the person that took me up there
3 or helped me was aware. It just seemed to me silly to
4 take the date of birth of a child who'd died shortly
5 after birth, because obviously anybody from the left who
6 was checking that would get the death certificate and
7 also could collect the two, because they were close
8 together.
- 9 Q. So you thought that was an additional way of maintaining
10 your security?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Did you ever consider the possibility that you could be
13 confronted with the death certificate of somebody who
14 had died? Does it follow that you had thought of that,
15 that you thought that that was a possibility, that you
16 could be confronted with the death certificate of your
17 undercover identity?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. During the course of your deployment, we understand that
20 that's something in fact that happened to HN297,
21 Rick-Clark. Did you become aware of the circumstances
22 of his compromise in 1976, I think it was?
- 23 A. I knew that he had some problems in that they'd actually
24 shown him his death certificate.
- 25 Q. And was that something -- was that event discussed with

1 your superiors, or did anybody discuss it at
2 the safe house, that security compromise?

3 A. No, I think Rick Clark volunteered the information, if
4 I remember rightly.

5 Q. Did his unmasking, did that impact on your actions in
6 any way? Did you take extra special care after you
7 learned about Rick Clark?

8 A. Not really, no.

9 Q. Did it occur to you that there was at least a risk that
10 the family members of the dead child would find out what
11 you were doing, that you were using their child's birth
12 certificate and details?

13 A. Well, I think that's why I was not happy with it in
14 the first place.

15 Q. And did you understand that your own conduct during your
16 deployment might impact on the risk of your identity
17 being compromised, that if you were to behave in such
18 a way as to draw your identity into -- sorry, I put that
19 very, very clumsily.

20 Did you understand that your own behaviour during
21 your deployment would have an impact on the risk of your
22 identity being compromised?

23 A. I don't quite understand.

24 Q. No, I'm sorry, I put that clumsily again. My fault. My
25 fault.

1 Did you understand that your behaviour during your
2 deployment might mean -- so if you were to behave in
3 a -- HN200, I'm going to abandon that question entirely,
4 okay? It's not phrased in the way that I would have
5 wanted to phrase it, and it's not in fact a question
6 I think that requires an answer. So I'm going to move
7 on.

8 Did you mention to anybody else in the SDS that you
9 were relying on the identity of a deceased child? Did
10 anybody else know that, save for the management figure
11 that told you to get the identity in the first place?

12 A. Not as far as I know, no. I assume that several members
13 had gone down that road, from what I'd been told.

14 Q. But that wasn't something that was discussed between
15 you, between the undercover officers?

16 A. No.

17 Q. So does it follow then you never heard anybody else
18 expressing reservations, or might you have done?

19 A. No, I didn't.

20 Q. Okay. Thank you.

21 You had cover employment as a mechanic and van
22 driver, and in your witness statement you say that your
23 cover employment was tested on at least one occasion --
24 I think the filter cap was left off the engine, or
25 something of that nature -- and that on another occasion

1 you were challenged at a meeting; is that right? That
2 someone challenged you and said that you were a spy; is
3 that right?

4 A. Yes, that's -- that's correct, but that wasn't unusual.

5 Q. Right, so that was something that was quite common,
6 the challenging, was it?

7 A. The challenge was common at new arrivals in the group,
8 or people at the meetings.

9 Q. How did you deal with that? When you were challenged in
10 a meeting, how did you -- what did you do?

11 A. I think I laughed it off.

12 Q. Right.

13 We've -- you say in your witness statement that
14 you'd been told about another undercover officer who'd
15 been accused of being a spy, but he pointed at someone
16 else and said, "No, that's him," and then the other
17 person who he, as it were, counter-challenged was kicked
18 out of the meeting.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Was that UCO somebody called Mike Ferguson, do you know,
21 HN135?

22 A. I know HN --

23 Q. Or you just don't know?

24 A. But I don't remember who it was.

25 Q. Was that something that you were told by other

1 SDS officers, or by management?

2 A. No, it was (inaudible) the SDS officers.

3 Q. And was that a tactic of deflecting attention, do you
4 think? Were you taught that that's what you should do,
5 if somebody accused you of being a spy
6 -- (overspeaking) --

7 A. No.

8 Q. No, thank you.

9 A. It's just, you know, something that came up in sort of
10 light-hearted conversation.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 When you were tested by your car being -- your van
13 being interfered with, did you tell your managers about
14 that?

15 A. I can't remember.

16 Q. No, okay.

17 So you can't help me with what their reaction might
18 have been to that?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No. Thank you.

21 A. Luckily I was able to put it right.

22 Q. Thank you.

23 You had a cover vehicle, and you say you would
24 sometimes drive to your cover accommodation before going
25 home, in case anybody was watching; is that right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Because you spent very little time in fact overnight at
3 your cover accommodation; is that right?

4 And you said you undertook some basic
5 anti-surveillance checks by driving twice around
6 a roundabout, and matters of that nature?

7 A. That -- that came natural from previous jobs I had done.

8 Q. Does it follow that you were using -- you were driving
9 your cover vehicle to your real address then?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Or did you -- yes, okay.

12 Did anyone tell you to use those anti-surveillance
13 techniques, or is that just something that came to you
14 naturally?

15 A. It's just something that I'd been doing for a couple of
16 years before.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 You were tasked to infiltrate
19 the International Socialists. I think you say in your
20 witness statement it probably would have been
21 DCI Derek Kneale who tasked you to infiltrate
22 the International Socialists; is that right?

23 A. Yes, I think it was.

24 Q. You have described the International Socialists as "not
25 too extreme" and many as "holding reasonable views"

1 which may also have been held by a police officer, for
2 example. What do you mean, please, by "not too
3 extreme"?

4 A. Well, what I mean is the causes they were supporting,
5 particularly in my branch, it's always amazed me that
6 the left and organisations like IS always assume that
7 the police think opposite to them. For instance, of all
8 the demonstrations I've done, like against
9 the Vietnam War, there was loads of my colleagues in
10 the uniformed branch that thought exactly the same as
11 the people who were demonstrating did. I imagine it
12 would be the same with the Irish question as well.

13 Q. And you say in your witness statement that their views
14 on Vietnam you considered reasonable, whilst their views
15 on Ireland you perhaps didn't agree with; is that right?

16 A. I don't remember if that's what I said. I didn't quite
17 (inaudible).

18 Q. It simply says this:

19 "I recognise many IS members as holding reasonable
20 views, and it can be forgotten that some policemen held
21 those views as well. I was sympathetic with their views
22 on aspects like the Vietnam War, but I did not support
23 other aspects, like what the IRA was doing in Britain at
24 that time."

25 A. That's true.

1 Q. And is that because they were broadly supportive of
2 the IRA, is that right? With some sort of -- broadly
3 supportive, but not entirely supportive, of IRA tactics
4 on the mainland; is that right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. I want to ask you now about subversion.
7 The term "subversive", what did you understand by that
8 term when you were deployed in the SDS?

9 A. Well, I -- I would say it's if you have an established
10 system, like we have in this country, we're a democracy,
11 or -- and somebody tries to interfere with that by
12 surreptitious means, I call that "subversive".

13 Q. You, in your witness statement, have described
14 the International Socialists as having "subversive
15 objectives". But did you consider
16 the International Socialists to be planning to overthrow
17 the systems in this country, the democracy in this
18 country? Is that what you understood?

19 A. Probably more interfere with them than overthrow them,
20 because that wasn't a reality.

21 Q. So interfere with it, rather than overthrow?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And you have said they had subversive objectives in
24 the sense of being disruptive. Is that what you mean
25 by "interfering"?

- 1 A. Yes, I mean, I think disruption comes into it.
- 2 Q. How did they seek to disrupt parliamentary democracy in
3 this country, can you recall?
- 4 A. No, I can't recall a particular incident, no.
- 5 Q. Did they generally use violent means, in your
6 experience?
- 7 A. Not in the area that I was working in, but I was aware
8 that at some of the demonstrations, the more extreme
9 branches would be involved in that.
- 10 Q. Did you attend demonstrations with
11 the International Socialists?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. And the demonstrations that you attended, did you
14 witness any violence?
- 15 A. There was only one that nearly got violent, and that was
16 the closest we came.
- 17 Q. And were members of your branch participating in that
18 violence?
- 19 A. It never actually came to violence. We -- we came to
20 a face-to-face two cordons, one of police officers, one
21 of the IS. But it didn't disrupt -- it didn't erupt
22 into anything more than that.
- 23 Q. Did you participate in or witness any demonstrations
24 which also involved the National Front during the course
25 of your deployment?

- 1 A. No, I don't remember.
- 2 Q. You say that you were tasked to infiltrate
3 the International Socialists. Did you get the sense
4 that if you did not think your tasking was justified
5 that you could have challenged it?
- 6 A. No, I didn't. I wouldn't have thought of doing that
7 anyway, because I -- I was just happy to go in the areas
8 that they were short of officers in.
- 9 Q. You explain in your witness statement that, on occasion,
10 in particular during the Monday meetings at
11 the safe house, you would be specifically tasked in
12 relation to a forthcoming event by your managers; is
13 that correct?
- 14 A. We were sometimes, yes, told that there would be an
15 interesting event that was coming up.
- 16 Q. And you also say that you could put forward ideas to see
17 if senior managers agreed. What did you -- what do you
18 mean by that?
- 19 A. Well, we often had a sort of open house, where various
20 people put forward the suggestions and they were
21 discussed; and some were rejected, some --
- 22 Q. Suggestions about what?
- 23 A. About ways we could infiltrate, say, the more extreme
24 groups, or certain events where they might go. But
25 there was a lot of open discussion between officers.

1 Q. Right.

2 So, was that a discussion that took place with
3 the officers and managers all together, or was that
4 something that took place in private, between you and
5 managers?

6 A. No, it was an open house, as I say. There were
7 obviously managers there at the time, and it was just
8 a general discussion.

9 Q. Right, okay. Thank you.

10 You say that one of the benefits of infiltrating
11 the International Socialists was that it gave you cover.
12 What did you mean by that?

13 A. I meant that it was almost an expectation that
14 the International Socialists would turn up at every
15 event there was. I was told by at least two different
16 groups that we were just glorified newspaper sellers,
17 but they -- they were not put out if we turned up at one
18 of their events. So whilst they didn't regard us as
19 being anything worth talking about, they weren't
20 surprised if we turned up at the event. And so that was
21 a benefit to me in the role I was doing.

22 Q. And when you say "events", what do you mean by "events"?

23 A. Well, I meant some -- sorry, was that ...?

24 Some groups organised their own, obviously,
25 demonstrations.

- 1 Q. Yes.
- 2 A. And we could turn up on the periphery as glorified paper
3 sellers and actually, if you like, they didn't think it
4 sinister that we were there. So, it was normal.
- 5 Q. And -- no, I won't ask that.
- 6 You, I think, don't recall infiltrating
7 the Worker's League, but you accept that you must have
8 done so because your name appears on reports; is that
9 right?
- 10 A. That is right, yes.
- 11 Q. Can you recall this. It seems, from the documents that
12 the Inquiry has obtained about the Worker's League, that
13 your branch of IS, the Twickenham branch, rebelled
14 against the IS leadership and was then suspended
15 indefinitely by the IS central committee; is that right?
16 Or executive committee; is that right?
- 17 A. That is right, yes.
- 18 Q. The Twickenham branch of IS, how many people were
19 involved in the Twickenham branch of IS; can you recall?
- 20 A. I -- I imagine -- I think our meetings used to average
21 about 15, something like that. And a good turn out,
22 maybe 20/25. But that didn't mean they were all
23 members, because most of our meetings were open.
- 24 Q. When the Twickenham branch decided to break away from
25 the International Socialists, was that something that

1 was put to a vote within the -- in the branch, or was
2 that something that was just simply discussed?

3 A. To be honest, I can't remember the exact meeting that
4 was decided at.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. Perhaps seeing the report on it ...

7 Q. Can I ask you this -- it might be just a useful time to
8 ask you this question: were you ever given any guidance
9 about how to behave if your vote -- you were in such
10 a small group that your vote might have been an
11 important vote as to the direction taken by the group
12 that you were in?

13 A. No.

14 Q. No.

15 What would you have done had your vote been
16 important?

17 A. Well, it depends what the matter was we were discussing.

18 Q. Were you ever instructed, or did you ever aim, to
19 disrupt the groups that you were in or splinter them, so
20 that you weakened them overall?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Was that any part of your intention?

23 A. No.

24 Q. The Worker's League appears to have had more of a focus
25 on industrial workers and a shift away from

- 1 the political theorising of the International
2 Socialists; is that right?
- 3 A. I think that's fair, yes.
- 4 Q. And in one of the documents in your witness pack -- I'm
5 not going to take you to it, because I think it just
6 will be unnecessarily clumsy, but there is a list of
7 the supporters of Worker's League, together with their
8 former International Socialists branch and their
9 trade union memberships. Why do you think you recorded
10 their trade union membership? Why was that something
11 that you thought was important to record?
- 12 A. If that was one of my reports, I included that because
13 it was something that was discussed at the meeting.
- 14 Q. It seems to have been a relatively small organisation as
15 of April 1976. It had a national membership of only 143
16 people. You say in your witness statement it was in
17 the same political spectrum as
18 the International Socialists. Did you regard
19 the Worker's League as a subversive organisation?
- 20 A. Not particularly, no.
- 21 Q. And did you regard them as posing any threat to public
22 order?
- 23 A. It was never discussed at the early(?) meetings,
24 the ones which I went to. It was more of a --
25 structured meetings about the set-up, and that sort of

1 thing, of the -- the new group.

2 Q. And can you recall, during the time that you were
3 reporting on the Worker's League, any use of violence by
4 them?

5 A. No.

6 Q. No.

7 I'm going to just move on, please, to talking first
8 about your reports and the writing of reports.

9 You say in your witness statement that you attended
10 one or two meetings with your activist target group each
11 week. Did you write a report on each meeting, do you
12 think? Can you recall?

13 A. Not on all of them, no. It would depend what they were
14 about, what was discussed.

15 Q. Would it depend if something happened that you thought
16 was of Special Branch interest at the meetings, or did
17 you not filter your information that far?

18 A. No, it would have been if that was the case. But bear
19 in mind that some of those meetings I was going to,
20 other Special Branch officers would have been covering
21 anyway, when they were the public meetings. And
22 obviously, if I saw there was somebody there I knew,
23 then I wouldn't put it in my report, I'd leave it to
24 them.

25 Q. Right.

1 And how about your branch, the Twickenham branch of
2 the International Socialists and later the Worker's
3 League; did you provide a report to your managers for
4 each meeting that you went to, do you think?

5 A. Well, in particular, there's five there of meetings in
6 Birmingham of the Worker's League, and I'm sure that
7 I didn't go to all those five meetings. So, I can
8 remember going twice, and I may have gone a third time,
9 but I can't -- I definitely didn't go to all the five,
10 so ...

11 Q. And it's right to say that there are a number of reports
12 that you were sent that you don't think are in fact your
13 reporting; is that right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And is it also right to say that there is, you think,
16 a lot of your reporting missing, particularly that that
17 focused on demonstrations; is that right?

18 A. Well, I don't think I found any on -- reports that I'd
19 done on demonstrations, and yet probably most of my
20 reports were on information relating to demonstrations.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 Your recollection is that you wrote up your -- you
23 made notes on the demonstration or event or meeting that
24 you went to, they were sent to the back office, where
25 they were put into decent English, I think you said in

- 1 your witness statement; is that right?
- 2 A. Yes, we -- we gave them in in sort of note form on
3 the Monday, and then the back office would collect. If
4 there was three of four of us gone to the same
5 demonstration, I imagine they'd all be incorporated into
6 one report.
- 7 Q. If you went to an event where several SDS officers were
8 in attendance, did you work together to produce
9 a report, or would you have put in separate reports
10 about that event?
- 11 A. We'd have put in separate notes on what had happened, as
12 far as we were concerned, at the event, and then
13 obviously those would go in on the Monday, and if
14 the back office had any queries, they could discuss it
15 with us straight away, and then they could come up with
16 the sort of umbrella report.
- 17 Q. And did you ever discuss demonstrations which you had
18 attended with several other SDS officers when you were
19 at the safe house with them, before you put in your
20 report, or anything of that nature?
- 21 A. I don't remember discussing it before I put in a report,
22 but we sometimes obviously used to talk about what had
23 happened when we got together.
- 24 Q. I just want to cover briefly the sort of things you
25 included in your reports.

1 Did you report on forthcoming demonstrations? You
2 said you reported largely on demonstrations themselves,
3 which is the reporting that we have not been able to
4 find, but did you also report on forthcoming
5 demonstrations and events?

6 A. Well, obviously, as I said earlier, I think our
7 secretary was very forthcoming with information relating
8 to forthcoming demonstrations; and obviously I put that
9 in as a report prior to the demonstration; because she
10 was very detailed, like how many coaches had been
11 ordered to attend demonstrations, and where they were
12 coming from. That was all helpful to, obviously, our
13 colleagues in uniform as well.

14 Q. So those details would have been put in a report and
15 given to your managers on a Monday morning, for them to
16 type up in the back office -- (overspeaking) --

17 A. (inaudible) yeah.

18 Q. Thank you.

19 And you also say you reported on the details of
20 individuals in the target group and dates of them
21 joining or leaving groups, or matters of that nature.
22 Why did you report on details of them leaving or joining
23 groups?

24 A. I don't remember saying that, but if I have, it wasn't
25 a general thing. I mean, obviously if people joined my

1 group I'd report on it, or if people left my group I'd
2 report on it. But I probably wouldn't have any
3 knowledge of other groups.

4 Q. Why would you report on members of your group either
5 leaving or joining?

6 A. Well, just to keep an up-to-date record of who was in
7 our group and ...

8 Q. Thank you.

9 There is a report in which you report the employment
10 details of the person concerned. I'm not going to ask
11 to put it up on screen, because I think, again, it will
12 just be unnecessarily clumsy, but for the reference of
13 those people watching, it's {UCPI/17609} at tab 18.

14 The report reads:

15 "An active member of the Worker's League of
16 Trotskyists is employed at the London Borough of
17 Ealing."

18 And then it gives the address.

19 Employment details of members of your target group,
20 why might those be relevant?

21 A. Well, if he was -- if they were employed in a position
22 like that, in a -- you know, a council, or also if they
23 were employed in a college, or something like that, it
24 would be normal to put it in.

25 Q. And there's another report which in fact you refer to in

1 your witness statement, in which you provided bank
2 details for the Middlesex district of International
3 Socialists, but you say you didn't think they were using
4 money in any way illegitimately.

5 What relevance did you understand bank details of
6 the International Socialists to have? Why did you
7 report that, do you think?

8 A. I think that was one of the reports I wasn't sure was
9 mine. I can't remember.

10 Q. We don't actually have it in your pack, so I'm not going
11 to ask you anything further about it. But your memory
12 is you can't really remember that report, and it may not
13 have been you making that report; is that right?

14 A. That's -- that's what I'm saying, yeah.

15 Q. Okay, thank you.

16 If you wanted to, were you able to request that --
17 files from Special Branch to be brought to
18 the safe house for you to check on any information, or
19 anything of that nature, during your time in the SDS?

20 A. It wasn't normal. I'm sure we could have requested it.
21 And if it had been appropriate, we would probably --
22 they'd probably have been brought out.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 I'm going to go on just to show you two reports. It
25 might be a convenient time to break, because I see

1 the time is now 4.25, and I think probably the shorthand
2 writers need a short break, and perhaps you need a short
3 break.

4 I don't know whether that's a convenient moment,
5 Sir?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly it is.

7 So we all know, roughly how long do you anticipate
8 being?

9 MS HUMMERSTONE: Perhaps another three-quarters of an hour.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

11 We'll break now for quarter of an hour. There will
12 then be about another three-quarters of an hour's
13 questions. We will then have another break while
14 Ms Hummerstone is fed questions, if anyone wants her to
15 ask further questions of you, and then your evidence
16 will be concluded.

17 Can you bear with us while we do that?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

20 Back in quarter of an hour, please. Thank you.

21 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, 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 4.25 pm, so we shall reconvene at
25 4.40 pm.

1 Thank you.

2 (4.20 pm)

3 (A short break)

4 (4.40 pm)

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

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

8 Chairman.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

10 Ms Hummerstone.

11 MS HUMMERSTONE: Thank you.

12 Can you hear me, HN200?

13 A. Yes, I can.

14 Q. Thank you.

15 Just before we broke, I told you I was going to show
16 you a document. I was going to show you two, but in
17 fact I'm now going to show you just one.

18 Please can we have up on the screen {UCPI/12060},
19 please.

20 That's at tab 6 in the hard copy bundle.

21 Thank you.

22 This is a meeting of the West Middlesex district of
23 the International Socialists that took place at a public
24 library. The second paragraph indicates that:

25 "The meeting was opened by the Chairman ...

1 (Hounslow Branch) who introduced the District Organiser
2 ... His speech consisted of a report back on IS
3 intervention in the recent strikes at Hoovers and AEC.
4 While no new members had been recruited, strong contacts
5 had been made with militants in both factories due to
6 the participation of IS members in the picket lines."

7 Was it a fairly frequent topic in the Middlesex
8 district or the Twickenham branch of IS the intervention
9 by IS in strike action, or supporting pickets, or
10 industrial action in general? Was that a frequent
11 topic?

12 A. No, it wasn't. This is the only time I think I've seen
13 it was talked about.

14 Q. In your witness statement you refer to the -- speaking
15 about trade unions being infiltrated by IS. You say
16 that you would have viewed that as being particularly
17 subversive; is that right?

18 A. Is that in this report, or another report?

19 Q. It's in your witness statement. I'll just read you
20 the short passage:

21 "Based on the reports I have seen, I would consider
22 the suggestions of trade unions being infiltrated as
23 being particularly subversive."

24 A. Right.

25 Q. Is that right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Was it your understanding that the International
3 Socialists were trying to infiltrate trade unions?

4 A. I imagine they would have been, yes. But as I said,
5 I don't remember it coming up in many of our discussions
6 until this one here.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 You can take that document down now, please.

9 In your witness statement, you deal with reporting
10 on elected politicians, and you have given us an example
11 of somebody that you reported on as Peter Hain, who you
12 say you reported on addressing an event during
13 the course of your deployment. I think he wasn't in
14 fact an MP during the time that you were in the SDS.

15 When do you think, approximately, did you hear
16 Peter Hain addressing an event? Was that during your
17 time in the SDS, or some time afterwards, do you think?

18 A. Well, I don't remember. I think somebody asked me about
19 MPs and I said, "Well, the only one I can remember
20 hearing was at a demonstration, and it was Peter Hain."

21 Q. And do you remember hearing him during your time in
22 the SDS, or did you hear him some time later when he was
23 an MP?

24 A. This was one occasion while I was on the SDS.

25 Q. Right.

1 And can you -- do you remember who he was
2 addressing, what the meeting was, or event was?

3 A. No, I can't, to be honest.

4 Q. If an MP had been speaking at an event that you attended
5 during your time in the SDS, would you have reported on
6 that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No.

9 A. No, I mean, I think MPs frequently address meetings and
10 demonstrations, and I would consider that quite normal.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 In your witness statement you say that your managers
13 made it clear that you should not get into the position
14 of leading a group in any particular direction. And
15 you've told us that you weren't given any advice about
16 how you should conduct yourself in meetings about
17 voting, matters of that nature.

18 Did you ever receive any guidance about taking up
19 roles which conferred responsibility within your target
20 group?

21 A. Yes, I can remember being told early on that you could
22 not get in any situation where it could be
23 constrained(?) that I was actually directing the --
24 the action, or it was -- you had to be -- you had to be
25 entirely reactive, rather than proactive. Which would

1 discount roles such as secretary, chairman, which could
2 be construed you were leading the -- the action.

3 Q. So no role that meant that you might lead the action.

4 Was that formal advice given? Was it something
5 written down? Or was it just something that you were
6 told by your managers, can you remember?

7 A. It was just something I was told that you wouldn't do.

8 Q. I'm sorry, I preempted myself. Was that advice given by
9 managers or by other SDS officers, can you remember?

10 A. That would be managers, when I was first going out.

11 Q. And were you aware that others received that same
12 advice?

13 A. I didn't hear anyone mention they had, but I just
14 imagine they would have done, yes.

15 Q. You were appointed as the contact secretary for
16 Twickenham branch of IS. Did you consider that that was
17 a role which had any responsibility for your group, or
18 could be construed as directing -- (overspeaking) --

19 A. -- as I remember, that role consisted of looking after
20 a notebook with contact numbers in it, which I thought
21 may be useful, but wasn't actually leading any
22 particular action. It more could be described as I was
23 being proactive.

24 Q. Why did you think that might be useful to be the contact
25 secretary?

1 A. Because obviously every time there was a new contact, it
2 would come through me, so that could be useful,
3 depending on who they were.

4 Q. Right, so that might be information you reported back,
5 do you mean?

6 A. -- (overspeaking) -- report back, yes.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 You say in your witness statement that you were
9 aware that some of your colleagues got more heavily
10 involved in taking positions of leadership. Were there
11 any concerns raised by your colleagues about other
12 people taking positions of leadership within their
13 contact group?

14 A. I don't remember it ever being discussed.

15 Q. And do you remember whether the senior managers approved
16 of people taking on positions that had -- leadership
17 positions in contact groups? Can you remember what
18 the managers thought about that?

19 A. No, but I would imagine, having given the advice to me,
20 that it would be similar for other officers.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 You describe in your witness statement going to
23 the pub after demonstrations. Was that with other
24 members of the International Socialists, other members
25 of your --

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. -- the Twickenham branch?
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. And you also describe becoming friendly with somebody
5 from your branch whose mother ran a pub and who used to
6 bring along barrels of beer to parties that he had at
7 his house, and things of that nature; is that right?
- 8 A. Yes, he's one of the people I knew in the branch I can
9 remember. I mean, I can't remember many of the others
10 at all.
- 11 Q. So is it right to say that you formed social
12 relationships with those that you were engaged in
13 the branch? You had a sort of -- you socialised
14 together?
- 15 A. Very rarely, but that was one occasion when I did go to
16 a social event.
- 17 Q. So the one occasion when you went to a social event,
18 what was that, please?
- 19 A. He used to put these barrels of beer up in his garden
20 and invite, obviously, members of the branch round, and
21 he -- he was -- he worked at a college as --
- 22 Q. Right, okay.
- 23 And so you went to a party at his house with barrels
24 of beer there. Were there many people there?
- 25 A. Probably 15, something like that.

- 1 Q. And were they all -- were they largely members of
2 the Twickenham branch of IS, or other people as well?
- 3 A. No, there was a few members of the branch, but I think
4 some of them were his people he taught.
- 5 Q. Were you given any advice about friendships with members
6 of your target group, or anything of that nature?
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. And you say that some of the views that were expressed
9 by members of your target group you had some sympathy
10 with; is that right?
- 11 A. Well, obviously some people in IS had similar views on
12 what was happening in the world to me, yes.
- 13 Q. Did you -- would you have said you formed friendships
14 with members of your target group?
- 15 A. No, I wouldn't.
- 16 Q. Did you try and avoid friendships with members of your
17 target group?
- 18 A. It never really came up. As I say, apart from that
19 occasion, when obviously a few of the guys went, but it
20 didn't come up on other occasions.
- 21 Q. Did your managers ever ask for any details about any
22 socialising with members of your target group?
- 23 A. No.
- 24 Q. Would you have told them, for example, about attending
25 the party with the man with the barrels of beer in his

- 1 garden? Would you have told them about that?
- 2 A. Not as a routine thing, but, I mean, unless something
3 came up there that I thought was, you know, requiring
4 me to tell him.
- 5 Q. Do you know what your managers' attitude would be
6 towards socialising with members of your target group?
- 7 A. No, but they never particularly told us not to. I --
8 I just considered it normal.
- 9 Q. You attended twice-weekly meetings on a Monday and
10 a Thursday at the safe house; is that right?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And there was only one safe house, wasn't there, and
13 then it moved to a different location? But there was
14 only ever meetings at one safe house at a time, is that
15 right, it's just a little --
- 16 A. One safe house at a time. But the two meetings in
17 the week were at different safe houses.
- 18 Q. And so were all your fellow SDS officers encouraged to
19 attend both of those meetings?
- 20 A. Most of them did. Sometimes they had other functions on
21 and couldn't.
- 22 Q. And so, largely --
- 23 A. Largely -- (overspeaking) -- to get about sort of 80%,
24 something like that -- (overspeaking) --
- 25 Q. And you said, on a Monday was the day that you submitted

1 reports. Were those written up -- were your notes
2 written up at the safe house, or did you write those up
3 at home, before submitting them?

4 A. It depends. If it was a demonstration, say, on
5 a Saturday, then I would normally write my notes and
6 take it on the Monday. If it was Sunday, then I might
7 make my notes at the meeting on the Monday.

8 Q. You say that the order of events was that you filed your
9 reports, and then you had a general group discussion.
10 Was that with the managers present? Is this what you
11 described before, the chipping-in of different officers
12 --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- making suggestions and --

15 A. Sometimes people needed to talk to managers on their own
16 and sometimes managers just wanted to see people on
17 their own, but in general we just used to all muck in
18 together.

19 Q. And where did those discussions take place within
20 the safe house?

21 A. Well, it would be in one of the other rooms in the flat,
22 in a bedroom or something.

23 Q. So it was a flat with bedrooms; and was there a sitting
24 room, a sort of larger communal area?

25 A. Yes, yeah.

1 Q. And is that where you sat to have the group discussions
2 between the managers and the SDS officers?

3 And during that group discussion, what sort of
4 things were discussed?

5 A. Anything that you wanted to raise, basically. You know,
6 obviously not private stuff. That was done -- you could
7 ask to see -- see the boss on his own. But they were
8 normally fairly light-hearted. We didn't discuss any
9 hard politics, anything like that --

10 Q. -- (overspeaking) --

11 A. -- more or less of a relaxation session.

12 Q. You were aware, I think you say in your witness
13 statement, of where other SDS officers were deployed.
14 From those discussions at the safe house, were you aware
15 in general terms what went on in their deployments,
16 things that happened to them during the course of
17 the week, things of that nature?

18 A. Some would discuss it more than others.

19 Q. Was it an opportunity to raise difficulties, to talk
20 about anything you -- anything that had confronted you
21 that you might want to ask advice on for your fellow
22 officers, and things like that?

23 A. Yes --

24 Q. -- (overspeaking) -- conversations?

25 A. -- it was just basically an open forum that people could

1 throw anything in. And obviously some of that affected
2 other people, and they might have experienced something
3 similar, or ...

4 Q. Right, okay, thank you.

5 And you also, on those Monday meetings, had
6 individual discussions with managers. Was that an
7 opportunity to raise any kind of welfare issues or
8 things of a private nature?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And was it also an opportunity to raise any sort of
11 difficulties or consult managers on tasking and things
12 of that nature?

13 A. Yes, I mean, it was an opportunity to have a private
14 discussion, obviously, with the boss on whatever topic
15 you wanted to raise with them.

16 Q. How long in general would those Monday meetings take?
17 How long did you spend at the safe house on the Monday
18 evenings?

19 A. I think generally we met at about 11, and I would think
20 they started packing up about 3.

21 Q. Right, okay. So about four hours all in all, you were
22 all together?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. The Thursday meeting you have described as more a sort
25 of socialising --

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. -- event; is that right?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. And again, how long do you think you spent at your
5 meeting on the Thursday?
- 6 A. Again, from about 11. But I mean, sometimes we'd --
7 we'd cook a lunch for everybody. Other times we'd have
8 visitors, like the Commissioner came down a couple of
9 times to a Thursday meeting. So they tended to go on
10 later, until about 5, people started drifting off.
- 11 Q. And were your managers present throughout that Thursday
12 meeting at the safe house?
- 13 A. Not always. Sometimes they'd go back to the office
14 early, obviously if they had stuff on.
- 15 Q. But they were present at least at some stage, were they,
16 during those Thursday meetings?
- 17 A. Yeah, not -- not all of them. They didn't all come all
18 the time, but usually one of them would come, either
19 the chief inspector or the inspector.
- 20 Q. And was this an opportunity to sort of unwind and relax
21 with other people who were going through a very similar
22 experience to what you were going through?
- 23 A. Yeah, it was a day in which basically we could all get
24 away from it, although obviously some people had
25 meetings and stuff in the evening to go to, but it

1 tended to be the relaxation time, yes.

2 Q. And again, during this Thursday ...

3 A. Gone again.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Ms Hummerstone has frozen, I think.

5 A. Yes.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's hope that the people who are operating
7 it -- the equipment can get her back on screen.

8 Yes, she's back again.

9 Ms Hummerstone, you were frozen for a time.

10 MS HUMMERSTONE: I was frozen. I have to say, I thought
11 the officer was frozen, but perhaps he's not.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: No, he and I have been alive throughout, it's
13 you who have been frozen.

14 MS HUMMERSTONE: I'm grateful. It's very difficult to know
15 where the problem is. Thank you.

16 Sorry, HN200. We were talking about the sort of
17 things you spoke about during the course of your meeting
18 on a Thursday, which was rather longer than the Monday
19 meeting with your fellow officers. Was that a time when
20 you could share your experiences and talk about any
21 problems you might have with your other officers, and
22 seek their advice about anything that was troubling you,
23 or matters of that nature?

24 A. Yeah, it was open house, basically.

25 Q. And it's also, isn't it, when -- were the newer officers

1 who were being trained up, they would come along to that
2 meeting too, so they could sit around with you,
3 listening to that conversation as you had done. Did
4 that still happen when you were deployed?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did you develop into quite a tightly-knit group in
7 the SDS during this time, because you shared this very
8 unique policing experience?

9 A. I think the majority of us probably did. There were
10 a few that liked to come and do what they had to do and
11 go, but generally, the majority, I think, enjoyed
12 the time. It was time to get away from all
13 the undercover stuff and get, you know, back to normal
14 a bit.

15 Q. So did you have a laugh and a joke and a relax,
16 basically, on that Thursday?

17 A. Yes, yes.

18 Q. Did you have a drink at all? Did you drink alcohol
19 during that meeting or not?

20 A. Not generally, no.

21 Q. We know from your witness statement that you had
22 a friendship with DC Richard Clark, who we known as
23 HN297, but did you form any other particular friendships
24 with any other SDS officers during the course of your
25 deployment?

1 A. Well, they -- some of them were in the same category as
2 Richard Clark was, that they were people I knew
3 throughout my career. Richard Clark, I only worked with
4 him, actually, the time on the SDS. And I think I left
5 before he sort of stayed on. But we bumped into each
6 other throughout our career, and it was the same with
7 some of the others. A few of them I worked with on
8 other squads, but generally, I think, no, there was no
9 strong friendships I had with any of the others out --
10 when I was out there.

11 Q. Your friendship with Richard Clark, did that -- so that
12 pre-dated, did it, your time in the SDS?

13 A. Yes, we -- I can't remember when we first met, but --

14 Q. -- (overspeaking) --

15 A. -- (inaudible).

16 Q. Did it continue after your deployment to the SDS? You
17 continued to have a friendship with him?

18 A. Yes, throughout our career.

19 Q. And did he tend to come to the Thursday social meeting
20 at the safe house?

21 A. Normally, yes.

22 Q. And did you ever socialise together away from
23 the safe house during that time?

24 A. We had the odd drink together on -- usually -- not --
25 not particularly on the SDS, but on other jobs we'd

- 1 done, we used to have the odd pint, yes.
- 2 Q. And did you and Richard Clark ever discuss details of
3 your day-to-day undercover work during your time
4 together on the SDS?
- 5 A. Not really, no. I mean, obviously, when we were both on
6 the squad at the same time, he knew I was in IS. But
7 I mean, for example, I've only found out today that he
8 was in the Troops Out Movement. I didn't know that.
- 9 Q. Right.
- 10 Do you agree that Richard Clark had a reputation as
11 a bit of a ladies' man? Did he have that reputation in
12 the squad?
- 13 A. Not particularly, no. No, I wouldn't say so.
- 14 Q. Could you recall him being teased about that by any
15 other officers at the safe house?
- 16 A. What, being a ladies' man?
- 17 Q. Yes.
- 18 A. No, I don't.
- 19 Q. Did Richard Clark tell you ever that he had sexual
20 relationships with anyone in his cover -- when he was in
21 his cover identity? Did he ever tell you about that?
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. I now want to ask you about HN300, so you may just have
24 to look at your cipher key.
- 25 A. Yes. Yeah.

1 Q. Just this: did he have a reputation as a bit of
2 a womaniser, HN300, can you remember?

3 A. I think the answer to that would be yes.

4 Q. And was that something that was discussed at
5 the safe house when you were all together?

6 A. To be honest, I don't ever remember him coming. I don't
7 know when he was on the squad, and I don't know whether
8 we overlapped, but --

9 Q. I think in your witness statement you indicate that you
10 did overlap with HN300. But you say he did have
11 a reputation as a womaniser, but you can't recall
12 whether that was mentioned at the safe house; is that
13 right?

14 A. Yeah, that's right.

15 Q. Did you ever attend any SDS reunions?

16 A. To be honest, I can't remember.

17 Q. You can't remember.

18 A. No.

19 Q. You recall, I think, two separate police commissioners
20 attending the safe house during your deployment; is that
21 right? Robert Mark and then David McNie attended at
22 the safe house then?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. I just want to deal with this, please.

25 You say that public disorder at demonstrations was

1 not a regular event in the 1970s, not as it had been in
2 the 1960s; is that right?

3 A. That's very true, yes.

4 Q. Is it your view that there was a reduced need for public
5 order policing during the 1970s; do you think there was
6 less need for it during the 1970s because of
7 the reduced -- because there was less public disorder?

8 A. I think that's certainly true if you compare it with
9 the 60s, yes.

10 Q. And were there fewer large-scale demonstrations during
11 the 1970s that you can recall?

12 A. I think so, yes.

13 Q. You say in your witness statement that demonstrations
14 were more adequately policed in the 1970s, and you have
15 attributed that to the work done by the SDS; is that
16 right?

17 A. Yes, I think so.

18 Q. Why do you say that?

19 A. Because in the 60s I don't think there was any
20 intelligence. I'm talking now prior to the squad being
21 set up in '68; I don't think there was any intelligence
22 given to the uniformed branch as to what the likelihood
23 of disorder was, or, you know, the number of people
24 likely to turn up. Which is what led to what we said
25 about earlier, you know, loads of policemen doing

1 nothing, or loads -- a few policemen trying to fight off
2 more demonstrators, and not being able to.

3 Q. Finally, this, HN200. I just want to ask you about your
4 withdrawal from the SDS.

5 You say you -- when you came to the point where you
6 were leaving the SDS, you sent a postcard, I think; is
7 that right? Did you devise your exit strategy? Was
8 that your idea, the exit strategy, or was that something
9 that you were instructed to do?

10 A. No, that was my idea entirely.

11 MS HUMMERSTONE: Right. Thank you very much.

12 HN200, I've got no further questions for you at this
13 time, but if you'll just wait there for a moment,
14 please.

15 A. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: As I explained, we now break for quarter of
17 an hour, so that if anyone does have any questions that
18 they want Ms Hummerstone to ask you, they have an
19 opportunity of putting them to her. Will you come back
20 in quarter of an hour, please?

21 Thank you.

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

25 The time is 5.10, so we shall reconvene at 5.25 pm.

1 Thank you.

2 (5.10 pm)

3 (A short break)

4 (5.25 pm)

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

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

8 Chairman.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

10 Ms Hummerstone, I understand that there are one or
11 two questions that others wish you to ask --

12 MS HUMMERSTONE: There are.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: -- HN200.

14 MS HUMMERSTONE: There are, thank you.

15 HN200, just a few more questions, please. I want to
16 ask you just a few more questions about HN300. If you
17 have to look at the cipher key, just to remind yourself
18 of who that was.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. You have said that you can recall that he had
21 a reputation as a bit of a womaniser during the time
22 that you were in the SDS. Can you recall telling me
23 that?

24 A. I thought I said the opposite, but ...

25 Q. This is HN300. I think Rick Clark you said you couldn't

1 recall him being described as a ladies' man, but HN300,
2 I think you said you could remember him being -- having
3 a reputation as a womaniser. Does that sound right?

4 A. If you say so, yes. If it's what I said.

5 Q. Well, I just wanted to remind you of your evidence, so
6 that you can answer some follow-up questions about it.

7 Can you recall who HN300 was?

8 A. Yes, yeah.

9 Q. Thank you.

10 And is that right? Can you recall he had
11 a reputation as a bit of a womaniser?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. It seems that his deployment to the SDS was -- he was
14 deployed at the same time as you into the SDS. How did
15 you become aware that he had that reputation, do you
16 think?

17 A. I was in hospital and he came to visit me, and I didn't
18 see him for the visit, but when he went, my nurse came
19 in and said, "Oh, your friend's very nice," and he'd
20 been talking to her all the time, instead of visiting
21 me.

22 Q. Right.

23 So is that what you mean when you say he had
24 a reputation as a womaniser?

25 A. I think so, yes.

1 Q. And was that during the time you were in the SDS or
2 after your time in the SDS?

3 A. That was after -- it was towards the end of my term on
4 the SDS, and he was on after me as well, I think.

5 Q. Was it ever discussed with your fellow officers the fact
6 that HN300 was a bit of a womaniser?

7 A. I would think some of them had the same idea as me after
8 that experience, yes.

9 Q. Did you ever hear that he had a sexual relationship with
10 a member of his target group? Did you ever hear
11 anything of that nature?

12 A. No, and I honestly don't know what his target group was.

13 Q. And in fact, may have gone on to marry somebody from his
14 target group. Did you ever hear about anything like
15 that?

16 A. I know -- I did hear that he married somebody he brought
17 back from Eastern climes.

18 MS HUMMERSTONE: Okay.

19 Thank you, HN200, that's very helpful. I've got no
20 further questions for you. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any re-examination?

22 MR SANDERS: No, thank you, Sir.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

24 HN200, I'm sorry about the late start and the
25 technical hitches. These things are always bound to

1 occur to somebody at some time, it was just your
2 misfortune that they occurred to you. But thank you for
3 giving evidence to the Inquiry and taking this afternoon
4 to do it.

5 A. Thank you very much, Sir.

6 MR FERNANDES: Thank you, everyone. The hearings have now
7 finished for the day. We shall resume at 10.00 am
8 tomorrow.

9 (5.30 pm)

10 (The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am on Thursday,
11 6 May 2021)

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