

<p>1 2 (2.00 pm) 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. 4 MS BOON: Sir, the next witness is Timothy Gordon. 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you. 6 MR TIMOTHY JOHN GORDON (sworn) 7 Questions by MS BOON 8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you very much for coming from 9 South Wales, Mr Gordon. 10 A. You're welcome. 11 MS BOON: Please give your full name. 12 A. Timothy John Gordon. 13 Q. You've provided the Inquiry with a witness statement 14 dated 10 February this year? 15 A. Yeah. 16 Q. You've signed a statement of truth in the standard form; 17 is that right? 18 A. That's correct. 19 Q. Is this your formal evidence to the Inquiry? 20 A. It is, yes. 21 Q. You've been the editor of the South Wales Echo 22 since November 2010? 23 A. That's correct. 24 Q. Before that, you edited Wales on Sunday for eight years? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 Q. So it's the full range, not just about the crimes 2 themselves, but to some degree police politics? 3 A. Absolutely, yeah. 4 Q. In terms of the culture, you say that you would describe 5 the relationship generally as straightforward and 6 professional? 7 A. Yes, I would, yeah. 8 Q. But you understand from talking to some of your 9 reporters that it can be difficult to get information 10 quickly from police press officers? 11 A. Yes, there have been issues over the years with the 12 police press office officers, particularly at weekends 13 when they don't work, when we can find it particularly 14 difficult to get information. When the press officers 15 aren't working on the weekends, our reporters call up 16 the duty inspectors and often we have found -- a certain 17 amount of reporters have told me that even though they 18 have been told that something is happening -- a member 19 of the public may have rung in to say there's an 20 incident happening in such-and-such a place -- once we 21 ring up the duty inspector, they quite often say to us: 22 "No, there's nothing happening, we don't know anything", 23 and then on the Monday/Tuesday, a press release might 24 come out detailing an incident that has happened. 25 Q. Have you sought to resolve that issue?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. You've worked as a journalist for over 20 years? 2 A. Mm-hm. 3 Q. In that time, you've been a general reporter, night 4 editor of the Western Mail, and worked on the news desk 5 at ITV Wales? 6 A. That's correct. 7 Q. You've not at any time been a specialist crime reporter, 8 however? 9 A. No. 10 Q. Your crime correspondent, Abby Alford, has provided 11 a statement to the Inquiry. Her statement is taken as 12 read. That's right, isn't it? 13 A. That's correct. 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: She happens to be on maternity leave, 15 so it's perfectly reasonable that we do that. Thank 16 you. 17 MS BOON: Before I move on to relations between the media 18 and South Wales Police from your perspective, what sort 19 of crime story does your paper aim to cover? Is there 20 any particular kind? 21 A. Oh, it's a wide and varied range of crime stories, from 22 small local crimes all the way through to big murder 23 cases, and obviously police stories as well in terms of 24 job losses or what's happening generally with the 25 police.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 A. Partly -- part of the meeting that we had with the 2 Chief Constable and the Deputy Chief Constable, part of 3 the conversations that we had during that meeting were 4 in relation to that at the time. They were talking 5 about staffing, over the weekends, the press office, but 6 that hasn't happened yet. 7 Q. Your crime reporter, Abigail Alford, says that since 8 approximately 2009 she's noticed a gradual sea change in 9 that the police seem more hesitant about making contact 10 with the press than previously. First of all, is that 11 something you recognise, a sea change, and secondly, is 12 it something you can account for? 13 A. It's certainly something that a lot of my reporters talk 14 about. Somebody like Abby -- it's interesting that Abby 15 thinks that as well herself. Somebody like Abby, who 16 would have regular contact with the police and would 17 build up contacts with the police offers, would have 18 a better opportunity to get information flowing quickly 19 and more freely. Other reporters might find that more 20 difficult because they don't have the contacts and they 21 don't know the specific officers, so it could be 22 a question of trust there to begin with. 23 Q. Yes. 24 A. Funnily enough, I asked some of our reporters to put 25 some notes together for me before I came down today, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

1 one of them has told me about Gwent police -- if you
 2 don't mind going through this -- where, in the recent
 3 times, in recent weeks, the Chief Constable of Gwent
 4 police has put together guidelines for police officers
 5 and media. In these guidelines, which I understand have
 6 been sent to every police officer in the force, they've
 7 been told they cannot speak to a member of the media
 8 without prior permission from the press office.
 9 When we asked the head of press why these guidelines
 10 had been created, my reporter was told they were
 11 tightening up due to Leveson and the Filkin report.
 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: They can't be tightening up due to
 13 anything I've done yet.
 14 **A. I think there's a general feeling -- I've certainly**
 15 **noticed it as well in the past few months -- that people**
 16 **are deciding not to engage with each other and not to**
 17 **talk openly with each other. So there is almost a sense**
 18 **that everybody is waiting to see what the outcome is.**
 19 **People are already beginning to not talk to each other,**
 20 **and the fact that this has happened in Gwent would**
 21 **suggest that that's true.**
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. I just wonder, when you raised
 23 the issue about the weekend duty, why the answer to the
 24 Chief Constable wasn't: "You don't need a press officer
 25 on duty weekend; you just need the inspector to be

Page 5

1 prepared to tell us!"
 2 **A. Absolutely. That's absolutely correct and right. In**
 3 **the meetings that we had with the Chief Constable and**
 4 **the Deputy Chief Constable, you actually find out that**
 5 **the higher up the force you get, there's certainly**
 6 **a feeling there that they're willing for more**
 7 **information to be released, but that notion doesn't seem**
 8 **to have trickled down to the officers.**
 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's a bit difficult to draw that
 10 inference in relation to Gwent.
 11 **A. Certainly in relation to Gwent, it's entirely the**
 12 **opposite, yeah.**
 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You haven't received a copy of
 14 that --
 15 **A. I don't have a copy of that, no.**
 16 MS BOON: In terms of your personal contact, as editor of
 17 the South Wales Echo, with South Wales Police, you set
 18 out in your statement the level of contact with the
 19 Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and assistant
 20 chief constables.
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 Q. What you say can probably be taken as read, but is it
 23 fair to summarise your contact as limited mainly to very
 24 formal meetings to discuss issues of concern at that
 25 time?

Page 6

1 **A. Very much so, yes. Yeah, a very sort of professional**
 2 **relationship that is dealt with on that basis.**
 3 Q. I think there was one meeting that was of a more social
 4 nature.
 5 **A. Yes. Following on from the meeting that we had in our**
 6 **offices, the first meeting came about when the police**
 7 **cuts were being announced. So they wanted to talk to us**
 8 **about the police cuts that were coming in, we wanted to**
 9 **talk to them about the issues we had about the flow of**
 10 **information, so we had that meeting and following on**
 11 **from that meeting, we invited the Chief Constable and**
 12 **his partner and the Deputy Chief Constable and her**
 13 **partner to an evening dinner, the Inspire Wales awards.**
 14 Q. But it's not your practice to have regular or even
 15 occasional lunch or dinner meetings with senior
 16 officers?
 17 **A. No. I think it's probably a point well worth making in**
 18 **terms of the differences, as I see it, certainly between**
 19 **the regionals and the nationals when it comes to expense**
 20 **accounts and expense policies -- I did a sum last week**
 21 **in preparation for coming down here, where I looked at**
 22 **how much we spent in a year on entertaining people.**
 23 **This took into account editors and probably 58**
 24 **journalists who would be front-facing, so who would have**
 25 **the opportunity to take somebody out for a drink or**

Page 7

1 **a meal, and the calculation that I came up with was that**
 2 **the average reporter/editor spends, on average, 71 pence**
 3 **a week on taking people out. It's not something that's**
 4 **in our culture and hasn't been for a very, very long**
 5 **time.**
 6 Q. If the expense account were larger, would that alter
 7 things? Would that alter practices?
 8 **A. I may go to lunch more often! No.**
 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, it's a cultural thing. It's
 10 not a precise amount of money; it's the way the business
 11 goes. Do you think that you run your relationship with
 12 the police as other regional editors run their
 13 relationships with their local forces and that London
 14 and the Met is just different? Or do you think there's
 15 a difference in Wales?
 16 **A. No, from what I know from my fellow regional editors --**
 17 **and we do meet up quite often -- is that the way I'm**
 18 **expressing myself would be very, very similar to them.**
 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And of course you're part of the
 20 Trinity Mirror Group?
 21 **A. Yes.**
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So there are a large number of
 23 regional newspapers involved in that.
 24 **A. There are. We're the biggest regional newspaper group**
 25 **in Britain.**

Page 8

1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.
 2 MS BOON: We've heard from other witnesses that these
 3 meetings over lunch and dinner can be useful in terms of
 4 fostering a relationship of trust. It's implicit in
 5 what you're saying that you don't feel it's necessary to
 6 have that level of contact for there to be a good
 7 working relationship between --
 8 **A. I certainly have no issue with a journalist taking**
 9 **somebody out for a drink or a journalist taking somebody**
 10 **out for lunch. It's just that we don't tend to do it**
 11 **that often.**
 12 Q. I see.
 13 **A. But I don't have any problem with it.**
 14 Q. And the other way around -- as far as you recall, you've
 15 never accepted hospitality from South Wales Police?
 16 **A. As far as I recall, no, I certainly haven't, unless of**
 17 **course you're -- you know, if a cup of tea when**
 18 **I visited the Butetown police station counts as**
 19 **hospitality, and there may have been the offer of**
 20 **a biscuit. I can't remember.**
 21 Q. Turn to paragraph 24 of your statement, our page 00921.
 22 You expressed the view there that it's important that
 23 journalists maintain a professional relationship with
 24 police officers.
 25 **A. Yes.**

Page 9

1 Q. In your own words, where do the boundaries lie in this
 2 relationship?
 3 **A. I think it's really important for me that our**
 4 **journalists are totally professional in their dealings**
 5 **with the police. By that, I mean that they are honest,**
 6 **forthright and they deal with integrity in all their**
 7 **dealings with the police and police officers.**
 8 **I say that because it's important. Sure, you can**
 9 **get to know an officer, and I think there's a great**
 10 **value in our reporters getting to know their local**
 11 **officers so they can understand exactly what's happening**
 12 **in those areas, so they can have open and frank**
 13 **discussions with what's happening in their areas, crime,**
 14 **and the only way the public can be helped to allay the**
 15 **fears of crime or whatever. But also I think it's**
 16 **really, really crucial that that relationship is kept**
 17 **professional, so that if there ever comes a time when we**
 18 **have to ask the hard questions and we have to ask the**
 19 **hard questions of that police officer, that we can do so**
 20 **without fear or favour.**
 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Did you have any difficulty, in
 22 connection with asking hard questions and in the light
 23 of your relationship with the police, in relation to
 24 your reporting of the collapse of the recent very
 25 substantial corruption trial?

Page 10

1 **A. No. No, we didn't. We were able to ask the hard**
 2 **questions, I think, although there are still some**
 3 **answers that are out there that haven't been given to us**
 4 **yet.**
 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm not investigating the states of
 6 your investigative work; I'm just wanting to know how
 7 that impacted on the relationship.
 8 **A. Part of the meeting when the Deputy Chief Constable and**
 9 **the Chief Constable came to see us as well was also to**
 10 **do with that case, where are they informed us that they**
 11 **would be giving us a full off-the-record briefing on**
 12 **what was coming up in the case at the time. The**
 13 **officers in question, or the officers who are in command**
 14 **now, weren't part of the force at the time, so they were**
 15 **very clear that they wanted this to be an open appraisal**
 16 **of what had happened, because they didn't want to be**
 17 **coloured or tainted by what happened in the past.**
 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And you found that's what happened as
 19 you asked questions, that they were open and --
 20 **A. Well, obviously we had to wait for the case to happen.**
 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Of course.
 22 **A. Then the case happened and it collapsed. There's**
 23 **a bigger story there, probably, than we know.**
 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But you haven't found anything about
 25 your relationship has impacted adversely upon your

Page 11

1 ability to ask the questions and maintain the dialogue?
 2 **A. No, because our relationship is a purely professional**
 3 **one.**
 4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.
 5 MS BOON: Do you give any training or guidance to your
 6 reporters or new reporters along the lines that you've
 7 set out to assist them in securing a professional
 8 relationship only?
 9 **A. Are you talking specifically as regards to the police?**
 10 Q. Well, yes.
 11 **A. There's no specific training where we say, "This is how**
 12 **you should deal with the police", but most of our**
 13 **journalists will have gone through journalism school, so**
 14 **they're all trained. If some of them come to us as**
 15 **trainees, then they're on a two-year probation period.**
 16 **So we have a training manager who trains them through**
 17 **for their NCTJ finals.**
 18 Q. You don't give any additional guidance to your reporters
 19 about relations with the police or relations with
 20 contacts generally, about maintaining professional
 21 distance?
 22 **A. Yes, we do talk to the reporters about maintaining**
 23 **a professional distance from people, yeah. Or from the**
 24 **police, yeah.**
 25 Q. How would you know if your crime reporter were

Page 12

1 developing an overly close relationship with any one or
 2 more police officers?
 3 **A. In terms of expenses -- obviously I've outlined that we**
 4 **don't really have huge expense accounts, but every**
 5 **expense within Trinity Mirror has to be signed off by**
 6 **a senior editor, so every expense is seen. Any gifts**
 7 **or -- well, any gifts or any hospitality which is given**
 8 **to one of our journalists which would be of**
 9 **a significant amount would be expected to be -- that**
 10 **journalist is -- under our policy guidelines, would have**
 11 **to let a senior editorial management know that that had**
 12 **happened.**
 13 Q. So the expenses aren't just seen; they're scrutinised,
 14 are they?
 15 **A. They're scrutinised, yes.**
 16 Q. When asked about the extent to which you oversee
 17 communications between your crime reporter and the
 18 police, you state that it would only be during discusses
 19 about stories that issues might arise.
 20 **A. Yes.**
 21 Q. What sort of matters might alert you to a problem?
 22 **A. Obviously during conversations when we're discussing**
 23 **stories that have come up, if there's anything at all in**
 24 **there that my instinct would lead me to think that there**
 25 **might be something awry or something not right, then**
 Page 13

1 **I would be asking the questions: where did the**
 2 **information come from? Who gave it to you? How did you**
 3 **get it? And then we would discuss the story and decide**
 4 **whether we believed that story was right for publication**
 5 **or not.**
 6 Q. Are you aware of any reporter receiving information from
 7 a police officer that might be termed a leak? When
 8 I say "leak", I mean information that that officer might
 9 not be allowed to provide to a journalist?
 10 **A. No, I'm not, no.**
 11 Q. Would you be concerned if one of your reporters were
 12 actively seeking that information from a police officer
 13 or a member of civilian staff?
 14 **A. Actively seeking? What do you mean by actively seeking**
 15 **that information?**
 16 Q. I suppose asking questions that might go further than
 17 the police officer would otherwise be prepared to go.
 18 **A. No, I can't see one of our reporters doing that. I know**
 19 **that Abby, in her statement, was quite clear that she**
 20 **never ever asked an officer to give her information that**
 21 **he would be unhappy with it appearing in print.**
 22 Q. If Ms Alford were to come to you and say, "A police
 23 officer has just given me information, I think it's
 24 a leak, I don't think he or she was authorised to give
 25 me that information", what, if anything, would you do
 Page 14

1 at that stage?
 2 **A. We'd have to sit down and discuss what that story was**
 3 **and what that leak was. If it had to do with the public**
 4 **interest and we felt that our readers should know about**
 5 **it, then we would have a discussion about the story. We**
 6 **would look to see if we could stand it up in another**
 7 **area, from another source as well, at the same time, and**
 8 **we would discuss it fully with our lawyers as well**
 9 **before publication if we decided to publish.**
 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's not so much merely that an
 11 officer might not be authorised; it's if it was
 12 abundantly clear he positively wouldn't have been
 13 authorised, that he'd been forbidden from doing it.
 14 That's really the tenor.
 15 **A. Yeah. Again, this is down to the public interest, so we**
 16 **would have the public interest discussion about it.**
 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.
 18 MS BOON: Have you or, to your knowledge, your reporter
 19 received any unofficial prior notification about arrests
 20 or raids or other police action?
 21 **A. I know that reporters are often given notification of**
 22 **some arrests and sometimes they're invited to go along**
 23 **on raids to pick up people. Say, cannabis farms or**
 24 **whatever. So that happens quite a lot. When I attended**
 25 **the Butetown police station as a guest, I was taken into**
 Page 15

1 **the Monday conference meeting, where all the events of**
 2 **the weekend were discussed and that -- I was alerted to**
 3 **the fact that there may have been some arrests that day.**
 4 **But that's very, very, very unusual.**
 5 Q. In terms of the future, you set out in your statement
 6 what you say should not be done. You're concerned about
 7 avenues being closed off or a code of practice being
 8 created which encourages no discussion or puts in place
 9 a filter, for instance the press office. Do you have
 10 any thoughts on what should be done?
 11 **A. I am all for the free flow of information. I think it's**
 12 **really important in a democratic society that that**
 13 **happens. I'm concerned that Gwent police have announced**
 14 **that their officers can't talk to the media unless they**
 15 **are given prior permission from their press office. I'm**
 16 **concerned that we find it difficult to get information**
 17 **and weekends and even during the week I'm concerned that**
 18 **there are occasions when the press officers can be**
 19 **difficult and it seems like they're withholding**
 20 **information from us. I would much prefer that we could**
 21 **move forward trusting each other, that my reporters**
 22 **could build and develop relationships with police**
 23 **officers on a professional basis, so there is no fear of**
 24 **favour granted on either side but that the information**
 25 **is free flowing, and I would much prefer if police were**
 Page 16

<p>1 encouraged to give as much information as they possibly 2 could. 3 Q. If the police are encouraged to give as much information 4 as they possibly can, and they are given clear 5 guidelines, would you have concerns about any 6 requirement to make a written record of contact with 7 journalists? 8 A. I think my fear about a written record -- it already 9 sounds like you're proposing that there may be something 10 wrong with talking to a journalist and the mere fact 11 that you're suggesting that everything has to be written 12 down and taken as a note -- 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, no, I don't think that Ms Boon 14 was suggesting that everything had to be written down, 15 but that the fact of contact should be noted, as you 16 might note something else. 17 A. Well, my only concern in that area would be that if you 18 are putting up an extra block, even if it's just taking 19 a note, unless it's to officers who have an abundance of 20 notes to take already and are always complaining about 21 having an abundance of notes to take and not having 22 enough time to go out and do their job because of 23 form-filling all the time -- that would be my concern, 24 that that's just another thing that they would have to 25 do. I would rather let the relationship move forward.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 A. No, only that that I'd like it to be sort of clear that 2 there is a huge difference between the regional press 3 and what appears to be happening in the nationals, or in 4 some nationals. The regional press is a very, very 5 different arena and we seem to work in what appears to 6 be a very different way, judging by some of the stuff 7 that has been said in this Inquiry. We work within our 8 communities. We work very close to our communities. 9 Integrity is a mainstay of our business. It's really 10 important for us to be honest, it's really important for 11 us to try and tell the truth. We work in our areas 12 every day, so our readers won't allow us to get away 13 with anything that isn't right, and that's what we try 14 and aspire to do every day. 15 Q. You say that there are a number of differences between 16 the regional media and the national media. Do you feel 17 that you've referred to all the differences that you 18 would like to? 19 A. When I say "differences", I'm only speaking in terms of 20 some the things that have come out from the Inquiry. 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Have they surprised you? 22 A. Yes. Yes. 23 MS BOON: Thank you. Those are my questions. 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: A couple more questions, if I could 25 ask. First of all, I have seen another editor from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 There is a mutually beneficial relationship built on 2 trust and professionalism. 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I wasn't suggesting, and I don't 4 think Ms Boon was suggesting, form-filling, but, for 5 example, a note in a diary: "Met Mr Gordon of the 6 South Wales Echo, discussed burglary statistics in 7 Romney(?)", or whatever. 8 A. As I say, my only fear would be, as I mentioned before, 9 that it's just another thing that may discourage 10 officers from talking. 11 MS BOON: Just to test it in this way: police officers are 12 accustomed, when they're out on patrol or generally 13 operationally, to making records in their pocket 14 notebooks of contact that they've had, what they've been 15 doing. They know that by doing that there's no 16 suggestion that what they've done is inherently wrong. 17 Do you think it could not be seen as part of an 18 officer's day that if he or she speaks to a journalist, 19 that a brief record is made? 20 A. I can see that as a possibility, but I still have the 21 feeling that it has a tinge of: if they're talking to 22 a journalist, they have to be very careful of what 23 they're talking about. 24 Q. Is there anything you would like to add to anything you 25 said before or to your statement?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 South Wales, as you probably know. 2 A. (Nods head) 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But I am keen to learn whether there 4 is anything in the way in which life operates in Wales 5 that is different from what I've learnt not about the 6 nationals -- I take your point on that -- but in perhaps 7 the regions of England that I should have regard to, 8 whether there's any particular Welsh feature which you 9 feel it's appropriate to bring to my attention. 10 A. It's a difficult question for me to answer. I have only 11 ever worked in England in Leicester, and that was over 12 20 years ago. 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. 14 A. So I don't know if there is a huge variation, but from 15 talking to other editors around a group, I don't believe 16 so. 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. My second question is 18 this: I'm very grateful to you and obviously your staff, 19 who have helped fill you in on details. Is there 20 anything that you've picked up from them that, albeit 21 hearsay, you would like to share with me from the work 22 that you've done preparing to come today? 23 A. I think the only thing from my staff is that there is 24 a fear that it's becoming harder and harder to talk to 25 police officers, it's becoming harder and harder to get</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 a release of information, quickly, timely, and clear, 2 and that would be our main concern. Because of the way 3 we work and the communities that we work in, it's really 4 important for us that information flow is fast and that 5 it is -- that it comes to us without any issues or any 6 problems with it, that we can't get access to it. 7 If you could imagine sort of working in an 8 environment nowadays where you have social media, you 9 have Twitter, you have Facebook. Our reporters are 10 hearing about things happening on Facebook and Twitter 11 before the police are confirming them to us, before they 12 are telling us what's happening, and for us, what we 13 really need to do is have a relationship with the police 14 where they will release information to us as quickly as 15 possible. 16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand that. Mr Gordon, thank 17 you very much indeed for coming. 18 A. You're welcome. 19 MR JAY: Sir, we have three witnesses from the West 20 Midlands. 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Very good. 22 MR JAY: I have decided, subject to your view -- and 23 I haven't discussed it with you -- that we'll hear 24 Mr Faber first. He's the editor of the 25 Birmingham Express & Star. Then we'll hear the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 A. There are three daily newspapers, one that covers 2 Wolverhampton and the back country, which is the 3 Express & Star. There is the Birmingham Mail, which is 4 the Birmingham paper, and then there is the Coventry 5 Telegraph, which covers the southern part of the West 6 Midlands. 7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: They're separately owned? 8 A. Coventry and Birmingham are owned by Trinity Mirror and 9 we are an independent family-owned newspaper. 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Right. Well, we've heard Trinity 11 Mirror from Wales, so that's fair enough. Right. 12 MR JAY: You have a circulation, I think, of 105,000? 13 A. That's correct. 14 Q. Does that make you the regional newspaper with the 15 largest circulation in the United Kingdom? 16 A. That's right. 17 Q. Thank you. We're going to pick up on a number of points 18 which you've made in your helpful statement, Mr Faber. 19 First of all, the culture change which you identify in 20 paragraph 2 and the introduction of press officers. 21 Tell us a little bit about that and the advantages and 22 disadvantages that that has brought in. 23 A. That is something that has developed over probably the 24 last 10 to 15 years, insofar as the access to individual 25 police officers is limited and media enquiries tend to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 Chief Constable and Inspector Sally Seeley together, but 2 after Mr Faber. 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm entirely in your hands, Mr Jay. 4 Not always, but on this occasion. 5 MR JAY: Thank you. So it's Mr Faber, please. 6 MR ADRIAN FABER (sworn) 7 Questions by MR JAY 8 MR JAY: Thank you, Mr Faber. Your full name, please? 9 A. Adrian Faber. 10 Q. Thank you. You provided the Inquiry with a witness 11 statement dated 26 January of this year. You've signed 12 and dated it, but there isn't a statement of truth on 13 your statement. That doesn't matter. Is this your 14 formal evidence to the Inquiry? 15 A. Yes, indeed. 16 Q. In other words, you're content to attest to its truth. 17 I think I was wrong in saying it's the Birmingham 18 Express & Star; I think it's the Wolverhampton 19 Express & Star? 20 A. That's correct. 21 Q. Thank you. You are the editor of that paper and have 22 been for the past ten years; is that right? 23 A. That's right. 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just give me a picture, could you? 25 In the Midlands, how many regional newspapers operate?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 go through the press office. This has its advantages 2 and its disadvantages. The advantages are that when 3 there is a major incident or a force-wide event, then 4 there is a central point of contact where you can go to 5 to get information and request interviews. The downside 6 to it is that there is increasingly limited access to 7 the actual police officers on the ground, and it tends 8 to be that the press office is there to provide standard 9 information and if we want to go further than that and 10 find out more, we will try to go to the individual 11 officers, but sometimes we are referred back to the 12 press office. 13 Q. You point out that this has ramifications in relation to 14 what many of your readers are interested in, namely what 15 you describe as low level crime, such as burglaries and 16 theft. 17 A. That's right. 18 Q. You wish there to be more information released in 19 relation to those crimes; is that correct? 20 A. Yes. Probably not unnaturally, the police will 21 concentrate on the bigger crime, the murder or the big 22 robbery, and what tends to happen is very often 23 information about low-level burglaries, thefts, 24 small-scale assaults aren't released, probably because 25 there are an awful lot of them and it's a lot of work</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

1 putting all that information out, and I think it's
 2 important that we don't lose sight that for a lot of our
 3 readers, the smaller-scale crime is as important, if not
 4 more important, than the bigger crime.
 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do the crime maps help?
 6 **A. The crime maps do help. The crime maps certainly do**
 7 **help. But very often that's information that's released**
 8 **at a later date. Very often what we're after is the**
 9 **sort of story where a number of burglaries have happened**
 10 **in a particular area or a number of thefts have happened**
 11 **in a particular area, and we want that information**
 12 **quickly because we feel it's right that our readers have**
 13 **that information available so they can react**
 14 **appropriately if they think it's necessary.**
 15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Would that necessarily be collated by
 16 the police in that way?
 17 **A. Not necessarily, I don't think.**
 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That might be part of the problem.
 19 **A. Not necessarily, but very often when we make the**
 20 **enquiries, when we know that that has happened, then**
 21 **that information is available.**
 22 MR JAY: You refer on the first page of your statement,
 23 towards the bottom -- this is our page 58565, where you
 24 say:
 25 "This manifests itself with the police view that the
 Page 25

1 public have an exaggerated perception of crime which is
 2 fuelled by media coverage."
 3 I just wondered what the evidence base was for
 4 ascribing that as the police view.
 5 **A. Certainly we know that one of the police views is that**
 6 **there is a need for public reassurance, that the public**
 7 **shouldn't be unnecessarily alarmed, and I think**
 8 **sometimes that can take the form of some details**
 9 **being -- not withheld but not necessarily actively put**
 10 **out there, so that people are less -- there is**
 11 **a feeling, if you like, that if small-scale crime is put**
 12 **together and -- the press will put an exaggerated and**
 13 **dramatic headline upon it, and sometimes communities**
 14 **will get an exaggerated fear of crime in a particular**
 15 **area.**
 16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: There is no doubt, is there --
 17 I think it's a consequence of a number of surveys --
 18 that the fear of crime is greater than the risk of
 19 actually being the victim of a crime, in fact because
 20 the quantity of crime is decreasing.
 21 **A. I would agree. However, if there were six burglaries in**
 22 **a particular street or six break-ins of garden sheds,**
 23 **then I think it's appropriate that the public should**
 24 **know that, that that has taken place, so that they can**
 25 **take appropriate action if necessary, rather than**
 Page 26

1 saying, "Well, it's only a small number break-ins and we
 2 don't want people to think it's happening everywhere,
 3 and the Express & Star will put an overly dramatic
 4 headline on it and everybody will be terrified that
 5 burglaries are happening everywhere."
 6 **I think I would argue that the reader is intelligent**
 7 **and perceptive enough to be able to make their own**
 8 **judgment.**
 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It also depends how you tell the
 10 tale, doesn't it?
 11 **A. Of course it does.**
 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: If you tell the tale in that way,
 13 then that's the conclusion they'll reach.
 14 **A. Maybe, but nonetheless, I think the reader will always**
 15 **draw their conclusion from it. I don't think we would**
 16 **ever exaggerate, necessarily.**
 17 Q. You refer, Mr Faber, to a tier of bureaucracy between
 18 the journalists and police officers, and this is the
 19 interposition of the press office.
 20 **A. Yes.**
 21 Q. Are we to draw from that this point: that when your
 22 crime reporter, for example, wants to speak to a police
 23 officer, that is prevented, or does just take a while
 24 longer to get that organised?
 25 **A. It would tend to take a while longer to get that**
 Page 27

1 **organised, and I think here it's very often a time**
 2 **pressure as opposed to any other pressure. I don't**
 3 **necessarily think it is an unwillingness to arrange for**
 4 **us to speak to a particular police officer. I don't**
 5 **think that's the case. It's very often a time pressure**
 6 **and an extra element that's introduced between the**
 7 **journalist and the police officer.**
 8 Q. And you are in competition now, if that's the right way
 9 of putting it, with all forms of electronic media,
 10 including social media --
 11 **A. We are.**
 12 Q. -- which increases the time pressure, doesn't it?
 13 **A. It does.**
 14 Q. Paragraph 3, please, of your statement.
 15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You have an online edition as well?
 16 **A. We do.**
 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Which is free to anyone?
 18 **A. Which is free to anybody. We also have an iPad app.**
 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I wasn't asking you an advert,
 20 Mr Faber. The point I was making was going to be rather
 21 different, that this is no longer: "We need to know for
 22 tomorrow morning's paper"; this is, if not 24/7, not far
 23 removed from that.
 24 **A. It's not even tomorrow morning's paper. We publish on**
 25 **the day, so we can ring up at 7 o'clock in the morning**
 Page 28

<p>1 and say we need something for the paper by 9 or 2 10 o'clock that morning. 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. 4 MR JAY: You explain, Mr Faber, the nature of your contacts 5 with senior officers. Over the last 18 months, you've 6 met the Chief Constable at your office to discuss future 7 planning. You've met the Wolverhampton police 8 superintendent to discuss the riots last summer. This 9 is to provide background information, context -- 10 A. Yes, indeed. 11 Q. -- which stories, in due course, might be written with 12 greater -- 13 A. Yes, indeed. Yes. 14 Q. -- people have used the terms colour and texture? 15 A. None of those were meetings to be reported upon. They 16 were all for that background information. 17 Q. So off the record in the sense of non-reportable as well 18 as non-attributable? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. So these are informal discussions and it's implicit in 21 what you say that they're not in any restaurant or wine 22 bar or pub; they're in an office? 23 A. They're in my office. 24 Q. What do you think about the ethical considerations if 25 one were to transfer these meetings to a more social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Have you been surprised by the 2 evidence? I asked that question before. 3 A. Yes, I think I have and I think my colleagues in the 4 office have been surprised as well. 5 MR JAY: The Inquiry's also received a fair amount of 6 evidence about the dissemination, the transfer of 7 informal information from police officers to 8 journalists, often, I suppose, unauthorised or the 9 boundaries may be unclear. 10 First of all, is that the sort of information which 11 would be of interest to your newspaper, even were you to 12 receive it? 13 A. Information that was -- would be considered 14 inappropriate to release? 15 Q. I'm not necessarily putting it that high, but 16 information which the disseminator would realise there 17 was at least an issue as to whether it should be 18 communicated to a journalist? 19 A. We would certainly be interested, I'm sure. Whether we 20 published anything would be another matter. 21 Q. Can we just take that in stages, Mr Faber? Without 22 giving away any trade secrets, is it the sort of 23 information which you do happen to receive from time to 24 time from police officers? 25 A. Not that I can remember. I can't think of an occasion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 environment? Do you think that's appropriate or not? 2 A. I don't see anything wrong in a drink or a coffee or 3 a sandwich at lunchtime. I think if it starts to get 4 much more elaborate than that, then I would probably 5 start to feel uncomfortable. 6 Q. What is it which is making you hypothetically 7 uncomfortable? 8 A. I think you start to blur the professional relationship. 9 There is the opportunity professionally to have a good 10 relationship, but equally there is the danger of it 11 going too far. Quite where that line comes I'm not 12 altogether sure, but there is certainly a consideration 13 to be made there. 14 Q. The chief constable you refer to is sitting in this 15 Inquiry room, and you would no doubt say it's implicit 16 in your statement that you have a good relationship with 17 him? 18 A. (Nods head) Yes. 19 Q. You don't feel that relationship would be enhanced by 20 taking it to the sort of social environment I've 21 mentioned? 22 A. I don't think it would be enhanced or -- no, I don't see 23 how it -- what difference it would make. You're able to 24 have a perfectly professional relationship without 25 elaborate entertainment or socialising.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 where we've received information that I've looked at and 2 thought: "Crikey, we should certainly not be in 3 possession of this information." 4 Q. Oh right. 5 A. No, I can't. 6 Q. And if your crime reporter had been in receipt of such 7 information, he or she would have discussed the matter 8 with you -- 9 A. Absolutely, yes. 10 Q. -- prior to any issue arising as to publication? 11 A. They would. 12 Q. The second question is really a hypothetical one: that 13 if you were ever in receipt of such information, what do 14 you think would be the ethical and practical 15 considerations which would arise in your mind before you 16 decided whether or not to publish? 17 A. Well, we would first of all have to put it to the public 18 interest test. That would be -- that it wasn't simply 19 tittle-tattle, that there was a public interest -- 20 potentially a public interest matter for us. And 21 I think at that point, if there was information that had 22 been given to us by a police officer, we would have to 23 verify that through another way or through a more senior 24 source before we published anything. 25 Q. So you --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)

<p>1 A. I think there's an important point here, insofar as most 2 regional editors, including myself -- you are a hands-on 3 manager. So the provenance of each story or each story 4 that is brought to you is tested fully. Anything that 5 is contentious or potentially contentious, or where 6 a public interest issue is likely to come about is 7 tested to the nth degree before we publish. 8 Q. I understand. So the public interest issues which might 9 arise hypothetically in relation to information which 10 you receive from police officers, they probably do arise 11 in practice if they relate to a celebrity or other areas 12 of possible public concern, but there's a clear private 13 interest in keeping the information unpublished? 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. Is there -- I won't ask that question. Can I ask you, 16 please, about paragraph 5 of your statement, where you 17 tell us about what your crime reporter has and what he 18 or she does. You say in the second paragraph: 19 "Our crime reporter would have a number of telephone 20 numbers for police officers and press officers. He 21 estimates that he could have up to 70 numbers of police 22 officers and press officers. Not all are currently 23 serving officers." 24 So it would follow from that that your crime 25 reporter is able to speak to some police officers,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 Q. Could you help us a bit about those? What are the 2 general subject matters? 3 A. A great concern to our readers, for example, are the 4 savings that are having to be made in the police, so the 5 reductions in the number of police stations, the 6 reductions in numbers of officers. That would be -- 7 those would be important stories for us. So, if you 8 like, there is a balance there between: yes, there is 9 the positive story of the successful investigation and 10 the successful court case or the successful crime 11 initiative, but equally there are critical stories as 12 well. 13 Q. Yes. 14 A. I think part of having that relationship and trust means 15 that that's accepted, if you like, that that is -- that 16 no one is looking for preferential treatment, 17 particularly. 18 Q. You're saying that you don't think the police have any 19 difficulty with that, that they understand it's part of 20 your job to report in that way; is that right? 21 A. Yes, I wouldn't -- yes, absolutely. 22 Q. Has some of the information and material from the 23 negative stories been provided directly by police 24 officers who may be disgruntled by what's going on? 25 A. We probably get -- occasionally we get letters. Not <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p> </p>
<p>1 bypassing the press office? 2 A. Yes, indeed. I would say all those numbers have been 3 volunteered to him by those individuals. 4 Q. Yes. When you say, "Not all are currently serving 5 officers", does it follow that some information is 6 provided to you from people who are not serving officers 7 but formerly were? 8 A. No, I don't think that's the case. I think it's more 9 the case that those are old phone numbers that are -- 10 Q. I understand. Can I ask you about paragraph 7. The 11 question was: 12 "What are the police seeking from you?" 13 You say: 14 "The police have been anxious to highlight crimes 15 and use the significant relationship and power of [your] 16 newspaper in order to get information from the public 17 that could help with investigations. 18 "Secondly, they're looking for publicity and 19 coverage, for example, of good police practice and 20 initiatives. They're also keen to provide information 21 about successful investigations that have led to arrest 22 and convictions in the courts." 23 Are there ever situations which arise in which you 24 would publish negative stories about the police? 25 A. Oh yes, there would be. Yes, there would be.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 that often, I have to say. It doesn't happen that 2 often. And very often, they are stories that are sort 3 of ill-informed, if you like, are not really there when 4 they're looked into. 5 Q. I see. Your crime reporter, of course, is not a member 6 of the Crime Reporters Association. 7 A. That's right. 8 Q. But that in itself doesn't create a difficulty in your 9 relations with the police because none of your immediate 10 competitors are members. 11 A. No, that's right. 12 Q. And you indicate that the sort of hospitality which has 13 been offered -- and it's very limited, paragraphs 10 and 14 11 of your statement, 58569. There have been occasional 15 trips to local football games -- 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. -- and the occasional drink but nothing more than that? 18 A. That's it. 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So you could probably match the 20 evidence of your Cardiff colleague, 71 pence per week 21 per journalist. I don't ask you. 22 A. It wouldn't be much more. It wouldn't be much more. 23 Q. Paragraph 15. You're sometimes given information about 24 upcoming arrests or raids. You explain the usefulness 25 of that. Are you ever invited along on such arrests or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 raids?</p> <p>2 A. Our staff are. Yes, they are. Not me personally, but</p> <p>3 our staff certainly are. We've been a number of</p> <p>4 occasions when we've been invited on drug raids,</p> <p>5 cannabis houses, particularly in the aftermath of the</p> <p>6 riots last summer. On a couple of occasions, we were</p> <p>7 invited along to raids to recover stolen goods.</p> <p>8 Q. Can I ask you to comment on the public interest issues</p> <p>9 here. Do you ever show the faces of the suspects or the</p> <p>10 arrestees?</p> <p>11 A. No, normally those are blanked out. Those would be</p> <p>12 blanked out.</p> <p>13 Q. That's an editorial policy which you apply --</p> <p>14 A. Yes, it is. It is, yes. After their conviction, we</p> <p>15 would use them, obviously, with their faces.</p> <p>16 Q. The other broader point: what do you think is the public</p> <p>17 interest of you being invited along occasionally on</p> <p>18 these raids?</p> <p>19 A. I think it's important that our readers understand and</p> <p>20 see that justice is being done, I suppose it is, as its</p> <p>21 most basic. I think it's good for them to understand</p> <p>22 that people are being brought to justice and that --</p> <p>23 I think that we provide the balance. Yes, we do do the</p> <p>24 negative story when people are complaining and</p> <p>25 protesting about their local police station being shut</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 information allows us to make a judgment on quite</p> <p>2 what -- show quite how high a profile we would use that</p> <p>3 story and picture.</p> <p>4 Q. You're just giving that by way of an example?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. But it demonstrates the value of off-the-record</p> <p>7 briefings --</p> <p>8 A. The other area where probably we get, if you like,</p> <p>9 off-the-record briefings would tend to be prior to court</p> <p>10 cases to give information ready for publication when</p> <p>11 a court case comes to an end, on the understanding that</p> <p>12 it isn't for publication at that time but is at the time</p> <p>13 of the -- after the trial, and obviously if the person</p> <p>14 involved is found not guilty, that information is not</p> <p>15 used.</p> <p>16 Q. Yes. At paragraph 18, the paragraph which is, on the</p> <p>17 internal numbering of your statement, page 9, our</p> <p>18 page 58572, you make a significant point. It's one</p> <p>19 which we heard from the previous witness about the</p> <p>20 importance of mutual trust. Could I ask you, please, to</p> <p>21 elaborate on that point, develop it in your own words,</p> <p>22 please, Mr Faber?</p> <p>23 A. I think this is a significant difference between</p> <p>24 ourselves and the national press. Insofar as any</p> <p>25 regional local paper operates within its own</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 or the hours being curtailed, but nonetheless we do</p> <p>2 highlight the good work as well, and I think it's</p> <p>3 important for a paper that serves a particular community</p> <p>4 that we present a balance, because we are very much</p> <p>5 going back to the same people again and again for</p> <p>6 information, for stories, and if we don't strike that</p> <p>7 balance, if we're not seen to be fair, then people don't</p> <p>8 talk to us again.</p> <p>9 Q. Thank you. In paragraph 14, you make it clear that you</p> <p>10 do receive off-the-record updates on incidents and</p> <p>11 investigations and you raise the very difficult issue of</p> <p>12 missing people.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Is there anything in addition which you'd like to say</p> <p>15 about that? Why an off-the-record briefing might be of</p> <p>16 assistance there?</p> <p>17 A. Missing people can be a difficult area. There can be</p> <p>18 a great deal of difference between a young person who</p> <p>19 goes missing walking home from school, who has never</p> <p>20 done anything like that before, and it is completely out</p> <p>21 of character, compared to a missing young person who has</p> <p>22 disappeared for a couple of days but has probably done</p> <p>23 it on five, six, seven previous occasions. Obviously</p> <p>24 the police will issue the photograph and a few details</p> <p>25 with both of those stories. However, the background</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 communities, we depend on our contacts within that</p> <p>2 community. If we don't have their trust and their</p> <p>3 understanding and their respect, and they don't have</p> <p>4 ours, we don't have those contacts. We can't go back to</p> <p>5 those people again.</p> <p>6 Our staff -- myself and all my staff live within the</p> <p>7 community that we serve therefore you very quickly get</p> <p>8 to hear if people think that you have behaved</p> <p>9 inappropriately over an issue or a particular story.</p> <p>10 You very quickly pick up that vibe because you're living</p> <p>11 within it.</p> <p>12 So for us, balance, integrity, trust, accuracy as</p> <p>13 far as possible are absolutely critical to us. Without</p> <p>14 those, we significantly lose our power.</p> <p>15 Q. You make it clear that the consequence of that and of</p> <p>16 those values -- you say there's a fairly clear line that</p> <p>17 is understood by the police and the journalists at the</p> <p>18 Express & Star which cannot be crossed without some</p> <p>19 reaction from the reader:</p> <p>20 "This line is different to that which would be</p> <p>21 acceptable in a national newspaper because of our deep</p> <p>22 community contacts."</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. So you're clearly suggesting there that you adopt, if</p> <p>25 I may say so, a more conservative approach?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 A. Yes, "conservative" with a small "C". 2 Q. Yes. 3 A. That's absolutely right. 4 Q. That's an important point. We've heard it before and no 5 doubt we'll hear it again, but it's important that it is 6 heard. 7 Paragraph 21, you go back to the issue of police 8 press officers, which you describe as a necessary evil. 9 I don't think you're suggesting there that they 10 shouldn't exist; is that fair? 11 A. No. 12 Q. I ask you, please, about the HMIC report. You address 13 the question of whether contacts between police officers 14 and the media should be recorded, by which I mean the 15 fact of their occurrence being noted. 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. You, in line with most, if not all, of your colleagues, 18 are against that. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. May I ask you why? 21 A. I think it's introducing a codification, if you like, 22 into what is a less formalised dialogue. Recording 23 sounds fairly innocuous, making a note in your diary. 24 However, once it starts to be recorded in that way, that 25 each one has to be recorded, and at some point Page 41</p>	<p>1 anything. It's uncontrollable. I see the force of the 2 argument that there should be much more openness, and 3 that's one of the things that you've said, and it's why 4 you cast press officers as having a negative impact as 5 well. You want to get the story, and you don't see why 6 the story shouldn't be given to you by the person who is 7 most able to tell it, not mediated through a press 8 officer. 9 A. Correct. 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand the point. So one might 11 argue that there should be a far more relaxed attitude 12 to allowing police officers to speak to the press, but 13 on the other hand, you wouldn't want a complete 14 free-for-all because if there's a free-for-all, there's 15 no control, so that then you run the risk that it gets 16 somewhat out of hand and all sorts of material that is 17 legitimately confidential and should be confidential 18 leaks into the public domain without any mechanism of 19 control at all. 20 A. But -- 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: What I'm saying is that this may not 22 be -- it may be that there has to be something that 23 balances a greater access, a more open exchange of 24 information, to prevent it being a free-for-all. You 25 can disagree with me, but do you understand the point Page 43</p>
<p>1 presumably would have to be submitted in some sort of 2 way, I think there is a danger that both sides, the 3 journalist and the police officer, slightly begin to 4 look over their shoulder and say, "Well, should I be 5 saying this? Oh crikey, I've had two contacts here with 6 the press; is this right?" And suddenly there begins to 7 be -- an element of doubt comes into it all. An element 8 of slight suspicion starts to come into the system. 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand that, but isn't it right 10 that a police officer should be thinking that if he's 11 seeing a journalist three times a week, he might have 12 got the calibration of the relationship slightly wrong? 13 A. That could happen on occasions. When there is 14 a substantial investigation or a substantial court case, 15 that may well happen -- 16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I agree, but take us away from that. 17 This is merely routine. 18 A. No, I still feel that that is an element of concern, 19 because certain officers could have a number of 20 contacts, completely innocently, with a journalist, and 21 I just -- I do feel that somehow, once that element of 22 recording comes into it, compulsory recording comes into 23 it, then there is a slightly different dimension to it. 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: The risk is that if you don't have 25 some mechanism, it becomes utterly -- it could be Page 42</p>	<p>1 that I'm trying to make? 2 A. I do. But at the moment we don't have that system of 3 recording and we don't particularly have a problem. We 4 don't have a free-for-all. We have professional people 5 on both sides. 6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But you've already said that you're 7 concerned that you don't always get through to the right 8 source. You started this by saying, "Well, I recognise 9 the need for press officers, but I'm losing information 10 out", and I'm saying I understand that. If it's a press 11 office, there's no problem -- 12 A. Absolutely. 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- because the press office will 14 know. 15 A. Absolutely. 16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So what I'm saying is if you want to 17 remove the conduit of the press office, has there not 18 got to be a balance? 19 A. But would recording those conversations necessarily make 20 police officers any more open, any more accessible? 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, it may be that 22 a Chief Constable might say, "I want officers to be open 23 and accessible. I want them to be prepared to engage in 24 dialogue with the press, at an appropriate level and 25 only on subjects about which it's appropriate to talk. Page 44</p>

1 I want that, but I have to have some sight of what's
 2 going on. I have to have some sort of understanding of
 3 the four corners of this policy, and unless there's
 4 something there, then it's a free-for-all. I can cope
 5 with that very simply by saying, 'Go through the press
 6 office', and they'll identify the extent of contact."
 7 Then I run into your other vice.
 8 **A. I worry about that coding. I do worry about it.**
 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So you --
 10 **A. I understand your point. I understand your point fully,**
 11 **but I worry that that coding, that codification, that**
 12 **ruling on contact, of every single contact, which can be**
 13 **at different levels --**
 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Everybody has to apply common sense.
 15 **A. Yes.**
 16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: If you bump into a policeman in the
 17 street, you say --
 18 **A. Yes.**
 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- "Hello, Constable. How are you?"
 20 You don't have to make a note of that. I'm actually
 21 taking you on face value that this is a professional
 22 dealing with a professional. Of course. But you might
 23 have to choose: "I'd rather go through a press office or
 24 I'd rather not go through a press office and accept some
 25 other ..."

Page 45

1 This won't necessarily be my decision. I'm not
 2 saying what the answer is.
 3 **A. Yes.**
 4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm merely postulating the
 5 possibility for you to consider to test your proposition
 6 that you should have one without the other.
 7 **A. It is very difficult, because it isn't simply -- you**
 8 **don't simply have a journalist rings up a particular**
 9 **police officer, a particular detective or a uniformed**
 10 **officer. It can come in all sorts of different ways,**
 11 **different levels, different importances, and if every**
 12 **single contact somehow is codified, I think it makes it**
 13 **very difficult for a relaxed response.**
 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So you prefer to have to go through
 15 the press office?
 16 **A. No, no, no, absolutely not. Absolutely -- absolutely**
 17 **not. I would prefer --**
 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Nothing?
 19 **A. -- there be access to the police without necessarily the**
 20 **police officer having to feel she they have to record**
 21 **that contact.**
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: The value of having to record it --
 23 and I'm pressing you a little bit because this is,
 24 I think, very important.
 25 **A. Absolutely.**

Page 46

1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- is that it just does make the
 2 police officer think: "Is this right? Is this
 3 sensible? Does this fit with the policy of openness
 4 that my Chief Constable has encouraged me, or is there
 5 a risk that this is just going a bit too far?"
 6 **A. But I don't think we have -- I don't think in the West**
 7 **Midlands there is a problem with us having information**
 8 **that is secret, that we shouldn't have. Equally,**
 9 **I don't think there's a problem with police officers**
 10 **giving out information that they shouldn't be. We have**
 11 **a very professional, trustworthy relationship.**
 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But you're unhappy that it has to go
 13 through the press office?
 14 **A. Yes, we have certain professional frustrations that we**
 15 **have to go through the press office. However, that**
 16 **doesn't mean to say that we're necessarily completely**
 17 **unhappy with the relationship.**
 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm very pleased to hear it.
 19 **A. We do speak regularly to police officers. When the**
 20 **riots were taking place, they were most professional at**
 21 **keeping us informed. So I think we're introducing,**
 22 **through this codification, an extra dimension that**
 23 **probably locally isn't necessary.**
 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well.
 25 MR JAY: Well, thank you, Mr Faber. Those were all the

Page 47

1 questions I had.
 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I have one other question, and this
 3 is going to come somewhat out of the left field, I'm
 4 afraid. You will be aware that prior to Christmas,
 5 I received a considerable amount of evidence about the
 6 way in which the press interacted with the public, and
 7 one of the issues that was raised with me, which I am
 8 still considering, obviously, is the impact of the
 9 digital revolution on the commerciality, particularly of
 10 regional newspapers, and the change of the dynamic away
 11 from the classifieds, which alter the profitability of
 12 newspapers --
 13 **A. Yes.**
 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- and therefore the extent to which
 15 they can serve their community. The example that I gave
 16 to a number of editors was the fact that when I was
 17 a young barrister, there were court reporters in
 18 Liverpool Crown Court every single day, and they were
 19 also at the magistrate's courts and they followed the
 20 courts and they followed the local authority meetings
 21 and health authority meetings. These reporters now seem
 22 to be diminishing in number dramatically.
 23 So I wanted to give you the opportunity -- you don't
 24 have to take it because you've had no warning of this at
 25 all -- to provide your insight as an extremely

Page 48

1 experienced editor over many, many years of a large
 2 number of different regional newspapers. Now, if you
 3 want to think about it, that's fine. If you prefer not
 4 to answer it, that's fine.

5 **A. No, I think I'm quite happy to answer that.**

6 **The past few years have been extremely painful for**
 7 **regional newspapers in terms of declining revenues, in**
 8 **terms of the switch from the printed word to online. As**
 9 **far as the Express & Star goes, we are in the lucky**
 10 **position to still have something like 100 journalists.**
 11 **So we still cover the court, we still go to all the**
 12 **council meetings in the boroughs that we serve. There**
 13 **are several boroughs that we serve. We attend the**
 14 **health authority meetings, we go to Crown Court, we go**
 15 **to the magistrate's court. Not every newspaper is in**
 16 **that lucky position.**

17 **However, I think what has happened now is that in**
 18 **many areas -- journalistically we're talking about --**
 19 **people are having to work harder, quicker, cleverer, and**
 20 **there is increasing pressure. There's no doubt about**
 21 **it. There is increasing pressure, and the problem that**
 22 **all newspapers face is having to resource websites,**
 23 **which we're having to do journalistically, and at the**
 24 **same time attempt to make money. And that is proving**
 25 **the difficult area. Everybody at the moment is**

Page 49

1 **wrestling with how you appoint credible online services,**
 2 **online, on your phone, on your iPad, and attempt to make**
 3 **money. That is the crucial -- that is the crux of what**
 4 **the economics of regional newspapers are now about:**
 5 **maintaining the newspaper and at the same time**
 6 **attempting to turn the digital operation into**
 7 **a profitable operation.**

8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Let me ask a compendious question,
 9 because I think I know what your answer is going to be,
 10 but again, answer it or not as you wish. The issues
 11 that I've had to face over the last few months you've
 12 dealt with in relation to the police, but would it be
 13 right that the sorts of concerns that have been
 14 expressed by a large number of people to me are not
 15 reflected in the concerns that you have to face in
 16 Wolverhampton?

17 **A. In terms of the difference between national and**
 18 **regional?**

19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.

20 **A. Absolutely right. I can safely say we have never hacked**
 21 **anybody's phone, we have never paid a public official,**
 22 **police officer or anybody else any money for anything.**
 23 **We have never been asked for money for anything. I can**
 24 **safely say that every dealing with any police officer of**
 25 **West Midlands police or any other police force that**

Page 50

1 **I have dealt with over the years, I have never but had**
 2 **professional treatment.**

3 **What would -- the difference between national and**
 4 **regional is immense, and I think my colleagues and**
 5 **I have been most surprised. They are not what we deal**
 6 **with on a day-to-day basis in Wolverhampton at all.**

7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You've not had privacy issues?
 8 **A. I don't think we have, no.**

9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I just thought I'd remind everybody
 10 that there was an earlier part to this Inquiry. Thank
 11 you very much indeed, Mr Faber. We'll have a break.
 12 (3.14 pm)
 13 (A short break)
 14 (3.22 pm)

15 MR JAY: The next two witnesses are Mr Sims and Ms Seeley,
 16 please.

17 MS SALLY CLARE SEELEY (sworn)
 18 MR CHRISTOPHER PETER SIMS (affirmed)
 19 Questions by MR JAY

20 MR JAY: Thank you. Please sit down. I'm going to invite
 21 each of you, Mr Sims first, to provide your full names
 22 and to affirm your witness statements. Your full name
 23 please, Mr Sims?

24 MR SIMS: Christopher Peter Sims, Chief Constable of West
 25 Midlands police.

Page 51

1 Q. Thank you. You've provided the Inquiry with a witness
 2 statement dated 17 January 2012. There's a much smaller
 3 statement which relates to Staffordshire, but we're not
 4 going to address that in any detail. Are the contents
 5 of that statement true?

6 MR SIMS: Yes.

7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Sims, I'm sure you appreciate, and
 8 so that everybody else is reminded, the assessor
 9 appointed to assist me in relation to police matters
 10 was, of course, a former Chief Constable of your force.

11 MR SIMS: Yes.

12 MR JAY: Then you, Ms Seeley, can you provide us with your
 13 full name and then I'll invite you to affirm your
 14 statement.

15 MS SEELEY: It's Sally Clare Seeley.

16 Q. Your statement is dated 28 February. I'm not sure
 17 you've signed it yet. It doesn't matter. Is this your
 18 true statement?

19 MS SEELEY: It is.

20 MR JAY: Mr Sims, first of all, you are currently the
 21 Chief Constable of the West Midlands police. You
 22 started off though in the Met in 1980. You've worked
 23 your way up the ranks. You were Chief Constable of
 24 Staffordshire between September 2007 and June 2009?

25 MR SIMS: Yes.

Page 52

<p>1 Q. You've been in post then for two and three-quarter 2 years; is that right? 3 MR SIMS: Yes. 4 Q. Then you, Ms Seeley, you are a chief inspector within 5 the West Midlands police. You joined in 1991 and you 6 are currently the head of corporate communications. 7 You've held that post since April of last year; is that 8 right? 9 MS SEELEY: That's correct. 10 Q. Mr Sims, can I ask you some general questions about your 11 force. The size of your force, first of all, and the 12 geographical area it covers? 13 MS SEELEY: Okay. Well, it covers the old county of West 14 Midlands. So the black county, Birmingham, Solihull, 15 down to Coventry, I think a population of around 16 2.8 million people. We have around 13,000 staff, made 17 up of around 8,000 police officers, police staff, police 18 CSOs and specials. 19 Q. Thank you. Ms Seeley, I'm sure you'd like to deal with 20 this question. The staff within your department, how 21 many are there, please? 22 MS SEELEY: There are 30 in my department. 23 Q. Thank you. You are not, as it were, someone who has 24 worked in the press before. You're a police officer and 25 doubtless you will go off to do more formal policing in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 explain the nature of your relationships with editors. 2 They take place occasionally, but not very often, and 3 always in a formal office environment; is that right? 4 MR SIMS: Yes, it is. 5 Q. Later on in your statement, paragraph 7, we don't have 6 the question that was posed to you, we just see the 7 answer, "Never". The question was: 8 "To what extent have you accepted hospitality from 9 the media whilst Chief Constable?" 10 And the answer is "Never" -- 11 MR SIMS: Never. 12 Q. -- to that question. I mean, first of all, has any 13 hospitality been offered to you by the media? 14 MR SIMS: No. 15 Q. You can't, I suppose, answer the question why not 16 because we'd need to know from the person who was 17 offering, but it suggests that there's an understanding 18 at the very least, between you and relevant editors that 19 this isn't the sort of thing that happens in the West 20 Midlands. Why do you think that is? 21 MR SIMS: I think your previous witness went to the heart of 22 this, that it's a professional relationship, it's based 23 upon events, it's based upon long-term understanding of 24 what's going on and it functions very smoothly without 25 the need for there being any artificial creation of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 due course? 2 MS SEELEY: (Nods head) 3 Q. What do you think are the advantages and the 4 disadvantages of the fact that you're a police officer 5 first and foremost and not a press officer? 6 MS SEELEY: I think there's a level of objectivity, and as 7 I come into the department, I will remain there for just 8 a relatively short period of time, approximately two 9 years. So the relationships that are formed, I believe, 10 remain professional and objective. So that adds 11 a benefit to having a police officer in there, and 12 obviously, being a police officer with 20 years' 13 service, I add a real context and understanding of 14 policing to the work that we do within the department, 15 and that supports my team. 16 Q. Mr Sims, in paragraph 2 of your statement, our 17 page 55065, describe the nature of your relationship 18 with the media. You describe it as traditional and 19 transactional. What do you mean by "transactional"? 20 MR SIMS: Only that it's mostly driven by news, so the 21 volume of contact is mostly a function of what's going 22 on. What's going on can be about crime, but equally it 23 can be about changes within policing as well, but it's 24 very much driven by events. 25 Q. Thank you. Then in paragraph three, Mr Sims, you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 relationships. 2 Q. Do you think this is a function of the obvious fact that 3 there are fewer editors with whom you would have 4 dealings, and moreover those are editors with whom you 5 have to have dealings because they're the heads of 6 a limited number of regional papers? 7 MR SIMS: I think that there is a sort of mutual dependence 8 that is strong. I think that's a really positive thing 9 because I think the editors that I speak to have a real 10 stake in the way the West Midlands develops, and I share 11 that as well. 12 Q. Do you have a view as to the ethics of hospitality, the 13 offering of it and the acceptance of it, between media 14 and police? 15 MR SIMS: I don't think it's specifically a media issue. 16 I think it goes to the heart of the police role, which 17 is to be impartial and to be seen to be impartial. 18 Q. Implicit in that answer is that your view is that it 19 shouldn't happen. Is that right or not? 20 MR SIMS: There may be occasions -- it's a very broad 21 definition, hospitality. There may be occasions when it 22 could be appropriate, but no, I don't think it should be 23 part of the way we work. 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could I just ask, Mr Sims, you've 25 never worked in the Met?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 MR SIMS: No, I was 15 years in the Met. 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I'm sorry. Have you been 3 surprised by what you have heard about the relationship 4 between the most senior officers in the Met and 5 reporters or do you think that's just a natural 6 consequence of the way the Met works? 7 MR SIMS: I think there is a very different context in the 8 Met to the context in which we operate outside, and 9 again, the previous witness sort of hinted at this from 10 a journalistic point of view. I think the sort of 11 relationships are different between national media and 12 police. 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That might be so in fact, but really 14 my question was: should they be? Is there a reason? Is 15 there an explanation for that? 16 MR SIMS: I'm probably not the best witness to answer that, 17 sir. I've certainly been surprised when some of these 18 issues have come forward. I genuinely don't think they 19 happen beyond that particular era and location. 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. I would accept that you 21 wouldn't necessarily be the best witness, except by 22 saying that you did 15 years in the Met, you make 23 yourself rather more qualified. 24 MR SIMS: Well, as a very junior -- I worked up to the level 25 of chief inspector, so ...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 communication. So that's all the communications outside 2 of the call-handling function for the force. So we will 3 deal with operational communications, which is the media 4 side of things, but also we deliver to the local areas, 5 so the territorial communications, supporting our local 6 neighbourhood teams, also supporting corporate 7 departments in communicating their work and managing 8 their demands, and then clearly the way the organisation 9 is reshaping, we have a real need -- we've always had 10 a need, but a real need in this changing era to 11 strengthen our internal communications, which we're 12 responsible for delivering against as well. 13 Q. Thank you. This then links into paragraph 12 of 14 Mr Sims' statement, but it may be, Ms Seeley, you are 15 best placed to deal with this, that all engagement with 16 the media is recorded and monitored by the press office; 17 is that correct? 18 MS SEELEY: That's correct. 19 Q. And you say: 20 "Records are kept of media contact and requests, and 21 wherever possible, interviews are recorded, along with 22 actions." 23 Is this limited, then, to the fact of there having 24 been a contact, rather than the substance of what the 25 contact was about, or is a gist kept of what the contact</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But the reason I ask is because I'm 2 struggling to see why there should be a difference of 3 approach -- I understand the dynamics are different -- 4 between London and the rest of the country. It may be 5 there should be, but I'm struggling to see why there 6 should be. 7 MR SIMS: Equally, I'm sure that it would be wrong to 8 generalise about the Metropolitan Police, 50,000 people. 9 You know, it would be wrong to -- 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And I wouldn't dream of doing that. 11 And I understand that. The risk that, of course, we've 12 had to confront is the perception -- 13 MR SIMS: Yes. 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- that there is an issue, whereas 15 there may very well not be, and it's quite wrong, but 16 the perception has certainly been identified. 17 MR SIMS: Yes. 18 MR JAY: Can I ask you a general question about the press 19 office. This will then link into paragraph 12 of 20 Mr Sims' statement. At paragraph 2 of your statement, 21 you describe the role and remit of the press office, and 22 you make it clear that media engagement is just one 23 facet of the role it plays and occupies. May I ask you 24 briefly to elaborate on that? 25 MS SEELEY: Yes. My department is responsible for corporate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 was about? 2 MS SEELEY: There is a general gist in relation to the 3 contact and the reason for that contact. We'll 4 understand who the contact was with within the 5 journalistic sense and within the force, and what the 6 rationale and what the purpose of that contact was, and 7 then the communications that came as a result of that, 8 and clearly we monitor that more widely, because the 9 result of that contact will be seen through 10 publications. 11 Q. Does this system cover, though, direct contacts between 12 the journalist and the police officer? Ones which 13 bypass the press office, in other words. 14 MS SEELEY: Well, the force policy directs officers to 15 contact -- to inform the press office of contact with 16 journalists so we can support them in their contact with 17 the media and ensure that they're the right person and 18 that they're appropriately supported in that contact. 19 Q. Maybe we should look at the policy. I don't know 20 whether you have the same file as I'm working from but 21 if you have, it's tab 6 and it's a document called "West 22 Midlands police, press and public relations department, 23 guidance on force and departmental policy". 24 MS SEELEY: Yes. 25 Q. It starts at our page 07870. It may be the relevant</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 paragraph is paragraph 7, at the bottom of our 2 page 07874. Am I in the right place? 3 MS SEELEY: Yes. 4 Q. I'm not quite sure what this means, though, Ms Seeley: 5 "All staff should have Press Bureau open on their 6 computers to enable them to answer basic queries from 7 the media where the response is evident from the log." 8 So is this right: the police officer on the intranet 9 system will be able to work out what the lines are -- 10 MS SEELEY: No, no, sorry. This is specifically relating to 11 a system that is available to my staff, and I know it's 12 previously been introduced into the Inquiry. It's the 13 Solcara Press Bureau system, so my staff, when they 14 receive queries, they will look at the Solcara Press 15 Bureau system with that contact. So this relates to my 16 staff sitting with their systems open so they're ready 17 to record that contact as quickly as possible. 18 Q. Yes, my apologies. 19 MR SIMS: Sorry, it's probably worth just saying as well 20 that one reason for recording that is that most of this 21 in major crime cases will be disclosable. So what this 22 is doing is it's creating a disclosure product that can 23 feed into criminal cases. 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Why would it be disclosable? 25 MR SIMS: Because we would have to disclose exactly what</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 that they can make appropriate comment to the media. 2 It's there as a confidence-building support. In the 3 context we're talking about, of course it also is 4 creating a record of what's going on. 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And do you have experience of 6 officers who actually should have told you but didn't 7 tell you? 8 MR SIMS: There will be, yeah. 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is that a problem for them or for 10 you? 11 MR SIMS: You know, it can cause little bumps, but we deal 12 with them. 13 MR JAY: So the recording of the activity is both at the 14 press office level and at the individual officer level, 15 who is expected to notify you who will keep the record; 16 is that right? 17 MS SEELEY: That's right, yes. 18 Q. Is part and parcel of the thinking here that it's 19 a restraint on police officers giving out inappropriate 20 information to the press, or does that sort of point 21 simply not enter your radar? 22 MS SEELEY: Staff are guided to talk within their role and 23 remit and their areas of business and understanding. 24 This is about supporting the force in understanding the 25 information that has been shared and supporting staff in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 went out to the media and when. 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: If it undermines the case of the 3 prosecution or assists the case of the defence? 4 MR SIMS: Well, we'd reveal it in every case. 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I see. So this goes beyond the CPIA? 6 MR SIMS: Yes. Well, it's supportive of the principle, yes. 7 MS SEELEY: It ensures that we have a consistent record of 8 our communications in that area, so we can share that 9 information with the media as a whole. 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: How long has this policy been in 11 operation, that a police officer should, if he's 12 contacted, make sure you know about it? 13 MS SEELEY: I don't know the exact date. 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, no, no, just generally. 15 MS SEELEY: It would be something that I would routinely 16 have done. As a police officer within the organisation, 17 I would have sought support, because it wouldn't be 18 something that I would readily have encountered, would 19 be contact with the media. 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Have you ever found out that officers 21 haven't told you? 22 MS SEELEY: Yes. 23 MR SIMS: Yes. I think this long pre-dates the discussions 24 here, and it is about providing professional support. 25 It is actually designed to encourage officers to feel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 sharing that information, because the issue with 2 officers being approached directly is that there are 3 thousands of officers within the organisation. Are they 4 the most informed? Are they the best to give that 5 information to that journalist or to whoever is querying 6 that? 7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So you provide an extra reason for 8 it, that extra reason being to make sure that the best 9 information -- not necessarily the most police-friendly, 10 but the most accurate, the best information is used to 11 respond to the query. 12 MS SEELEY: Yes. 13 MR SIMS: Perhaps I'd give another reason, which is kind of 14 efficiency. 15 MS SEELEY: Mm. 16 MR SIMS: I can't necessary afford for all 13,000 employees 17 to be chasing after media contacts. It makes a lot of 18 sense to focus that effort professionally through people 19 that do this full-time. 20 MR JAY: Mr Sims, may I ask you, please, to develop a point 21 you make on page 5 on the internal numbering of your 22 statement, our page 55069, four lines down, when you 23 say: 24 "West Midlands police employees can expect to have 25 contact with local or national media. However, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 amount of contact significantly depends upon their role 2 and function." 3 I think we learn more about this in tab 9, which is 4 the media training manual. 5 MR SIMS: Yes. 6 Q. Which starts at our page 07927. 7 MR SIMS: Yes. 8 Q. On my understanding, this is standard material which 9 obviously is owned by the press and public relations 10 department, but it aids training of police officers in 11 their contacts with the media. Have I correctly 12 understood it? 13 MR SIMS: Yes. 14 Q. Some basic principles are set out. For example, 07931, 15 page 5 on the internal numbering, this is the level of 16 information which should be provided and the type of 17 information, with the emphasis on obvious points such as 18 clarity and precision. Then it says in capitals: 19 "Remember, it's not the role of the police to act as 20 censors." 21 MR SIMS: Yes. 22 Q. Then on the next page, our page 07932, "Who should talk 23 to the media?": 24 "The main purpose of the press and public relations 25 department is to relieve officers from the pressure of Page 65</p>	<p>1 area of knowledge, then feel free to talk. Is that the 2 general message? 3 MR SIMS: Yes, and particularly neighbourhood officers will 4 be talking to different groups all the time, and 5 probably really since this guidance and training package 6 was written, the onset of the digital age means that 7 a number of my neighbourhood officers frequently have 8 thousands of Twitter followers that they are talking to 9 continuously about local events. 10 Q. Yes. 11 MR SIMS: But this is, I suppose, a sort of -- it's not 12 a contradiction. It's a sort of controlled empowerment. 13 We want people to be open, we want people to talk, but 14 we want to encourage people to talk about things that 15 they understand and know about and to do it in a climate 16 where they're getting the full support of Sally's team. 17 Q. Are you able to say about how long this policy has been 18 in place? I can't find a date on it. 19 MR SIMS: I think it pre-dates my arrival, so several years. 20 Q. Then the last bullet point: 21 "Constables and sergeants are often naturals at 22 speaking to the media and as a general rule, they should 23 not be afraid to answer questions. But they should 24 limit themselves to the facts and not speculate, give 25 opinions or talk about policy-related issues." Page 67</p>
<p>1 speaking to the media. Why should they spend valuable 2 time talking to journalists about handbag snatches?" 3 Clearly, there's a resource issue here and an 4 expectation amongst the community you're serving, that 5 that community would not wish officers to be spending 6 a disproportionate amount of time speaking to 7 journalists, but on the other hand would understand that 8 a reasonable amount of time should be spent; is that 9 right? 10 MR SIMS: Yes. 11 Q. Then the next bullet point: 12 "But don't forget -- talking to the media gives you 13 a chance to get your message across and build up 14 a relationship with them. So there are occasions when 15 you should talk to journalists." 16 So the principle of openness and transparency. Then 17 the next point: 18 "The question you should ask yourself is why 19 shouldn't you speak to the media rather than why should 20 you. As a general rule, only inspectors and above 21 should talk about policy-related matters." 22 Then I paraphrase. The press and public relations 23 department is better placed to deal with those matters, 24 unless you're fairly senior, that is, but if it does 25 relate to an operational issue and it falls within your Page 66</p>	<p>1 That's more common sense advice? 2 MR SIMS: Yes. 3 Q. Then there's some general advice on the next page on 4 getting fair coverage, and then further general advice 5 as to how best to conduct an interview, which again I'm 6 sure is entirely sensible. 7 Mr Sims, you were going on to talk about the advent 8 and increasing importance of social media and Twitter. 9 How is that working within your force and how is it 10 impacting at all on what journalists are doing or 11 wanting to do? 12 MR SIMS: Well, I think it's working very well for us. 13 I mentioned in my statement a couple of examples (a) of 14 local officers tweeting to local followers, principally, 15 and being able to provide quick information. We heard, 16 for example, the shed break example that was being 17 talked about. We can now, in effect, put that sort of 18 information into the public domain almost instantly. 19 Classically, this is a development that has both 20 opportunity and risk, and we accept both, so that within 21 the press office team we monitor those officers that are 22 using social media, to try, again, to support what 23 they're doing. We want to encourage it to happen and it 24 is growing exponentially at the moment in terms of its 25 usage. Page 68</p>

<p>1 Again, I think I mentioned in the statement another, 2 I think, slightly different example, where one of my 3 inspectors who leads on my behalf on mental health 4 issues has thousands of followers from that sort of 5 professional community who interact with each other 6 through social media and increase the sharing of 7 knowledge, so just two or three examples where it can be 8 a very, very positive thing indeed.</p> <p>9 In the wake of the riots, we won an award for the 10 degree to which we were using social media, firstly to 11 try to counter false rumours that were spreading, but 12 also to give the public as much information as quickly 13 as we could.</p> <p>14 Q. Might it be said -- I'm not saying this is 15 a disadvantage -- that one by-product of this is it 16 places greater pressure on the press office, because if 17 matters are being disseminated by social media, then 18 journalists are saying, "We're not getting a slice of 19 this", and therefore they are demanding an even more 20 urgent response from the press office to cover that 21 ground and maybe provide greater information. Is that 22 what's happening, do you think?</p> <p>23 MS SEELEY: Well, journalists are under pressure because of 24 the dynamics of social media, as has previously been 25 discussed, but journalists follow us on social media, so</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 is the policy which is yet to be imposed, but is under 2 consideration, under consultation; is that correct?</p> <p>3 MR SIMS: Yes, and I think we find ourselves out of step by, 4 I think, a well-meaning anti-bureaucratic attempt to put 5 financial values where financial values are probably not 6 a good determinant of recording practice. So we do want 7 to move away from it. Simultaneously, we're moving 8 towards putting all of this into the public domain 9 directly, which I think again is helpful. And behind 10 all of this, frankly, sits not a lot. This is --</p> <p>11 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Because it just doesn't happen?</p> <p>12 MR SIMS: Well, it happens in little pieces. This is, you 13 know, people retiring and being given £50 by the 14 community. This is sort of unusual stuff, really. So 15 on that basis, I suspect we have underplayed its 16 importance and we are working to make sure it gets 17 the -- (a) that it's in line with national best 18 practice, and it gets the sort of --</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, that raises a slightly different 20 question. I think next week I'm seeing somebody from 21 ACPO, but is it sensible that different forces should 22 have different policies on this or is it sensible that 23 there should be a national policy?</p> <p>24 MR SIMS: I think the -- it's one of those areas that 25 traditionally 43 forces have come up with different</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 they're picking up the information that we're sharing 2 directly from source, so either from the force social 3 media accounts or from the officers. So there is 4 a benefit there where they are having that real-time 5 sharing of information that was called for previously.</p> <p>6 Q. Thank you. Mr Sims, you deal with the issue of gifts 7 and hospitality in relation at least to your policies at 8 paragraph 20 of your statement and following, 9 page 55070. My understanding is that the policy which 10 is currently in place is force directive 02/2010, which 11 is under tab 11.</p> <p>12 MR SIMS: Yes. Yes, I'm there, yes.</p> <p>13 Q. It starts at page 07958. I think the relevant part 14 really is 3.1: 15 "Appropriate gifts and hospitality up to the value 16 of £75 may be accepted and given without a recording of 17 details." 18 But then if we go to the next band, £75 to £250, it 19 has to be authorised by a commander or departmental 20 head, and then above £250, the director of resources.</p> <p>21 MR SIMS: Mm-hm.</p> <p>22 Q. I think it's fair to say that the draft 2012 policy is 23 more stringent.</p> <p>24 MR SIMS: Yeah.</p> <p>25 Q. It's under tab 2 and it starts at page 55089. So this</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 forms of words. I don't think the public would 2 understand why that was the case, and it seems entirely 3 right that we do all converge our policies, and I think 4 that's a recommendation from the HMIC report and very 5 happy to do that.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. It's a question of calibrating 7 it correctly and putting it across in language that's 8 simple, straightforward --</p> <p>9 MR SIMS: Absolutely.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- and not overly complex.</p> <p>11 MR SIMS: Yes, I agree.</p> <p>12 MR JAY: It's arguable -- I just put it as lightly as 13 that -- that paragraph 2.6 of your draft, page 55091, is 14 easier to understand than the Metropolitan Police's new 15 policy, but I only say that tentatively. I've said it's 16 arguable. If you look at the advice here, it's quite 17 clear, really, what's acceptable and what isn't, and 18 indeed the general standards which should apply in 19 making the individual officer decide what may be 20 acceptable and what isn't.</p> <p>21 MR SIMS: And I think you've hit upon a really important 22 point, that we shouldn't equate integrity with recording 23 processes. Recording processes, you know, have actually 24 a very limited impact, I think, on personal behaviour, 25 so our emphasis has always been to work upon values. We</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

1 do a lot of work with officers about values, and I think
 2 people understand instinctively what is acceptable and
 3 what isn't.
 4 Q. So when you give examples of items that are unlikely to
 5 be acceptable, you're not laying down rigid rules? You
 6 probably are in relation to cash.
 7 MR SIMS: Mm.
 8 Q. Alcohol -- well, the odd offer of a pint of beer, that
 9 would be okay, presumably, but not more than that.
 10 Lavish food or entertainment -- well, it's a question of
 11 fact and degree. Again, you say with you this is all
 12 largely hypothetical.
 13 MR SIMS: (Nods head)
 14 Q. Then you give examples. Private boxes at sporting
 15 events. So the occasional tickets to watch a game of
 16 football which isn't in a private box would be
 17 acceptable; is that, generally speaking, right?
 18 MR SIMS: Well, I think --
 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Depends how Wolverhampton Wanderers
 20 are performing, presumably.
 21 MR SIMS: Don't, please, sir. That's not fair.
 22 I think context is everything here, and much more
 23 important than the nature of the gift, if you like, is
 24 where it has arrived from and, I suppose, implicitly
 25 what expectations come with it. That's why -- I think,

Page 73

1 in a sense, the old policy was too much about numbers,
 2 when actually the important thing is about what is the
 3 context here.
 4 MR JAY: And also what the public might think.
 5 MR SIMS: Absolutely, yes, indeed.
 6 Q. At the end of 2.6, you say:
 7 "Certain events and products should be avoided,
 8 especially where there's no tangible policing or
 9 community link or benefit and where embarrassment or
 10 reputational damage to the force could be caused."
 11 So again, a reasonable touchstone for acceptability.
 12 MR SIMS: Mm.
 13 Q. I move on to paragraph 25 of your statement, where you
 14 say you cannot find any evidence of informal contact
 15 with the media. That's probably consistent with the
 16 evidence we've heard from Mr Faber, but, of course,
 17 proving a negative is difficult to establish. By
 18 "informal contact", you're referring there to what,
 19 though?
 20 MR SIMS: I suppose I could have used the word "social
 21 contact", perhaps. Going back to the opening page of
 22 the statement, I think the contact that exists is a sort
 23 of transactional contact that is aimed from both sides
 24 at either delivering information, producing a story, but
 25 I don't -- I've no knowledge or evidence of contact that

Page 74

1 goes beyond that.
 2 Q. Some of the questioning of Metropolitan Police officers
 3 and their journalistic counterparts has been along the
 4 lines of trying to capture whether there's informal
 5 dissemination of information from the police to the
 6 press, some of which might be unauthorised. Is that, in
 7 your view, a problem in your area?
 8 MR SIMS: No.
 9 Q. You said that with some confidence. I'm sure you're
 10 right, but what is the evidence base for that?
 11 MR SIMS: I suppose it's the nature of the information that
 12 we're dealing with, the nature of the product that we
 13 monitor in terms of press, TV, radio. There's no
 14 evidence of that sort of information coming into the
 15 public domain.
 16 Q. Would you agree with that, Ms Seeley?
 17 MS SEELEY: I would, yes.
 18 Q. I just wonder, though, why, in the last sentence of
 19 paragraph 25, the policy is being re-examined. You
 20 mention the HMIC report, but --
 21 MR SIMS: Well, I think -- and I sit here today, don't I?
 22 In some respects, I'm sort of quite surprised to be
 23 sitting here today talking about these issues, but they
 24 clearly have gathered a lot of public interest, and we
 25 need to make sure that not only the facts are right, but

Page 75

1 the perception is right as well.
 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Surprised to be here to be talking
 3 about it because this just isn't an issue for the West
 4 Midlands or because it really shouldn't be an issue or
 5 isn't an issue for the police?
 6 MR SIMS: No, I would put it like this: in all the contact
 7 I have with communities in the West Midlands,
 8 opinion-formers in the West Midlands, this just has
 9 never arisen as an issue.
 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But don't you think that in itself is
 11 a very interesting and important fact?
 12 MR SIMS: Well, if I'm here to prove a negative, I suppose,
 13 yes.
 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, you're here -- rather than
 15 describe it as proving a negative, I would rather say:
 16 to provide context for the culture, practice and ethics
 17 of the relationship outside the context that I am
 18 provided by the Metropolitan Police. So I'm sorry if
 19 West Midlands council taxpayers are losing out on you
 20 for the day.
 21 MR SIMS: Not at all.
 22 MR JAY: You do make the point, though, Mr Sims, that there
 23 have been leaks from time to time, paragraph 31 of your
 24 statement. This relates in particular to
 25 disgruntlement, if that's the right word, flowing from

Page 76

<p>1 budget reductions and some members of staff who may be 2 at the wrong end of these. 3 MR SIMS: Yes. 4 Q. Their job being made more difficult or perhaps even 5 non-existent. That has given rise to some leaks of 6 information? 7 MR SIMS: It has, and we are losing over 2,500 posts over 8 the next few years and having to go through some really 9 difficult decisions and I suppose I'm not surprised that 10 some people would feel that they want to take some of 11 those issues to the media. 12 Q. How do you know about the leaks in those cases? Is it 13 because you have been able to track a particular story 14 which has resulted to antecedent disclosure? 15 MR SIMS: I think the case I'm particularly thinking of, the 16 person in question appeared as a silhouette on local 17 television. 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, that's pretty good evidence. 19 MR SIMS: Yes. 20 MR JAY: Paragraph 33, Mr Sims. There have been 15 21 investigations. 22 MR SIMS: Yes. 23 Q. I should make clear what the precise question was. Bear 24 with me one moment. These are investigations into 25 actual suspected leaks.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 Q. I understand. In paragraph 38, which relates 2 specifically to the Bribery Act -- you say towards the 3 end of that paragraph, 55073: 4 "All officers have received significant training 5 around culture and values and all supervisors receive 6 technical training on anti-corruption measures." 7 The training around culture and values, presumably, 8 is this the generic training -- 9 MR SIMS: Yes. 10 Q. -- which informs all police officer decisions and value 11 judgments? 12 MR SIMS: Yes, I suppose particularly around 13 decision-making, where, along with a number of other 14 forces, we've been doing a lot of work to try and help 15 officers find ways of making what, in our jargon, we 16 call values-based decision-making, which in effect is 17 making good judgments and being able to support why 18 those judgments have been made. 19 Q. And privacy issues are part of that process, are they? 20 MR SIMS: Yes, in general terms. I mean, if you like, the 21 rights of the individual feature as a balancing issue in 22 most decisions. 23 Q. Okay. Can I ask you, Mr Sims, now, a specific point 24 about paragraph 43. The question was about media crime, 25 which was a question which has been asked generally of <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p> </p>
<p>1 MR SIMS: Yes. 2 Q. Ten failed to produce conclusive evidence. Two 3 investigations led to minor disciplinary action. 4 A further three investigations are, at present, ongoing. 5 So the two investigations we're looking at -- it may be 6 unnecessary to go into the details of those and I am 7 sure you wouldn't wish to do so, but do they relate to 8 the type of issues you're referring to in paragraph 31? 9 MR SIMS: Not entirely. I think -- this is sort of a fairly 10 broad basket of examples that we've put under the 11 heading of "leak". Principally, these are actually 12 dissatisfaction from involved members of the public at 13 the way information has entered the public domain. So, 14 for example, there is a complaint that officers have 15 disclosed details following the death of a relative of 16 a complainant, and if I can, this does get very much 17 back to the previous witness. One of the hardest areas, 18 I think, in the relationship between the police and the 19 media, is around disclosure of personal information. 20 Quite understandably the media will push us to be 21 disclosing more. We sit somewhere in the middle, where 22 we're also protecting privacy of individuals. And 23 actually, a number of these cases are where, from the 24 individuals' point of view, we've not created that 25 balance in the right way.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 police officers. You refer to one investigation 2 in February 2011 in relation to the insertion and then 3 discovery of a covert recording device within a mosque. 4 I think the upshot was, though, that that in itself 5 didn't amount to a criminal offence. 6 MR SIMS: No. 7 Q. And that was the end of the investigation. 8 MR SIMS: I understand that the people within the mosque 9 that found the device made a referral to Ofcom. Ofcom 10 were comfortable that public interest was being served 11 and there was no further action. 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: This was about alleged inappropriate 13 treatment of students; is that the -- 14 MR SIMS: It was that programme, yes. It was partly filmed 15 in Birmingham, partly in Yorkshire, and the device was 16 in a classroom attached to a mosque. 17 MR JAY: Can I ask you about subparagraph (d), harassment by 18 journalists. 19 MR SIMS: Perhaps I'll ... 20 Q. Yes. Can you give us a bit of the background to that, 21 please? We don't need to know the individual cases, of 22 course, but the general points which arise. 23 MS SEELEY: I think this relates more specifically to when 24 we do have national media involvement in cases and where 25 victims have been in touch with us because there have <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p> </p>

1 been intrusive methods to try and obtain details about
 2 them or about the case, such as door knocking within the
 3 local area and how matters are reported.
 4 MR SIMS: But in fairness, our experience has always been
 5 that if we challenge that behaviour, the behaviour seems
 6 to stop.
 7 MS SEELEY: Yes.
 8 Q. And you challenge that behaviour by doing what?
 9 MR SIMS: Contacting the newspaper or TV station, whatever
 10 it is.
 11 MS SEELEY: Directly. And obviously there'll be staff or
 12 officers, but press office staff deployed within that
 13 area and we will identify where the issue is and deal
 14 with that at source.
 15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Are you talking about local media
 16 outlets or national media outlets?
 17 MS SEELEY: My experience, although limited -- but I have
 18 discussed this with my head of news, who has seven or
 19 eight years' experience -- it's predominantly the
 20 national outlets, because, as we've previously heard,
 21 the local outlets are embedded within those communities
 22 and rely on the trust and confidence of the communities
 23 for sales but also information.
 24 MR JAY: Your jurisdiction, as it were, for asking or
 25 telling or instructing the journalists to stop, are you

Page 81

1 applying the Protection of Harassment Act?
 2 MR SIMS: Common law.
 3 Q. Common law? I understand.
 4 MS SEELEY: I think that comes down to the relationships and
 5 that journalists don't want to be having a disparate
 6 relationship with us.
 7 Q. The conversation may be only along the lines of: "Please
 8 stop"?
 9 MS SEELEY: Yes.
 10 Q. It isn't more preemptory than that.
 11 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, the issue comes if they say,
 12 "No, why should I?" Then you have to look at it.
 13 MR SIMS: Of course, and that's where you could enter the
 14 harassment bit.
 15 MR JAY: Yes. Mr Sims, paragraph 45, the question was: what
 16 is your current impression of the culture within
 17 Midlands police in relation to its dealings with the
 18 press? The implication might be that before July 2011,
 19 the relationship was good, but it's deteriorated since.
 20 Is that what you're intending to convey?
 21 MR SIMS: No. No, not at all. No. What I was trying to
 22 say in that paragraph really is that there is a -- at
 23 the heart of the relationship, there is a sort of
 24 healthy tension, really, and having heard the previous
 25 witness -- Mr Faber would say that he's seeking more

Page 82

1 information from us, seeking it quicker. We, on the
 2 other hand, will probably challenge him around, you
 3 know, defending the reputation of the force, trying to
 4 make sure that what we do is presented as favourably as
 5 possible, and that's the sort of daily tension that's
 6 acted out, I think, in a very professional environment
 7 for the interests of the public.
 8 Q. One of the points Mr Faber made -- it's paragraphs 2 and
 9 21 of his statement but I can summarise -- is that there
 10 is a certain degree of concern of slowness of being able
 11 to make contact with the relevant person, relevant
 12 police officer, and access having to be mediated through
 13 your office. I think the concern was not that you
 14 prevented access, but rather that it was happening too
 15 slowly. Do you feel that there's any validity behind
 16 that complaint? If there is, what if anything could be
 17 done about it?
 18 MS SEELEY: I feel at times that there clearly are tensions
 19 and Mr Faber did refer to deadlines, but officers are
 20 only on duty for a given amount of time. It may be that
 21 the person they want to speak to isn't available as and
 22 when is required, but we do try to facilitate contact as
 23 quickly as possible and then identify another relevant
 24 officer to support them in their enquiries.
 25 I'm mindful that -- and again, I think that the

Page 83

1 Chief Constable's already previously touched on this --
 2 with social media putting information into the public
 3 arena rapidly, there is a pressure on us to release
 4 information that we have a duty to ensure is accurate
 5 and correct and that we protect the victims and their
 6 families by ensuring that it's accurate and correct
 7 before we release it to the media. So again, there are
 8 tensions that come with our access to that information
 9 and to ensure that that's accurate.
 10 MR SIMS: I'd perhaps just add it's not a wilful approach.
 11 MS SEELEY: No.
 12 MR SIMS: I think this is just the sort of bump and grind
 13 of, you know, daily news that is absolutely getting
 14 faster and faster and expectations of information
 15 getting quicker, and we can't always resource that, and
 16 it's not necessarily, I think, my job to put more and
 17 more people in and more and more resource into this to
 18 necessarily help with deadlines. But I do think there's
 19 a huge overlap of interest more generally.
 20 MS SEELEY: Yes, but those professional relationships that
 21 have been discussed are exactly what's required for us,
 22 to understand each other's drivers and demands and those
 23 tensions, to bring about the strength of relationships,
 24 especially with the local and the regional media.
 25 Q. Another point you make, Ms Seeley, paragraph 39 in your

Page 84

<p>1 statement -- you're dealing with the value of 2 off-the-record conversations and you give three 3 particular types of case at our page 10101, on the 4 internal numbering page 20, where off-the-record 5 conversations may be valuable. We've already heard the 6 example of missing persons. Then domestic incidents, 7 where one can understand the utility of the 8 off-the-record briefing. Then bomb hoaxes and security 9 scares. What are the issues which arise in the last 10 category? 11 MS SEELEY: With bomb hoaxes and security scares, quite 12 often the national media are interested in those and 13 would like to respond to those. We will get calls from 14 the national media saying they have a team but, for 15 example, they'll be based in London, so is it 16 appropriate to deploy that team? And we like to add 17 some context around that, where we have information 18 where we believe that it's a false call or that the -- 19 there isn't a suspicious issue or package there, and 20 that the roads or the area will be opened imminently, 21 but we can't share that with the public until it's 22 finalised and we're confident that that is the way that 23 it's going to go, and so we can share that in an 24 off-the-record briefing with the media so they can 25 decide whether to deploy or not. However, in the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 Q. What's your view about the privacy Article 8 human 2 rights issues which arise? How are those rights, in 3 other words, protected, if at all? 4 MR SIMS: That is part of the contract, and as you heard 5 previously, that is making sure that photographs are 6 pixelated and that we don't allow details of people that 7 haven't been charged with an offence to enter the public 8 domain. 9 Q. So provided that the journalists don't enter private 10 appropriate and provided that the suspects' face is 11 pixelated and details aren't given up which might 12 indicate who he or she is, then all privacy issues are, 13 as it were, catered for? 14 MR SIMS: I think they're balanced, aren't they, against the 15 public interest of doing it. 16 Q. Mr Sims, finally -- but we're not going to deal with it 17 today because it arrived only late yesterday 18 afternoon -- you have provided us a witness statement 19 dealing with the PNC security issues. That statement 20 I'm confident we'll be able to take as read, but in due 21 course, not today. 22 MR SIMS: All right. 23 Q. It will need to be considered by others. You've also 24 provided us -- but we probably don't need to publish 25 it -- the more recent guidance on the use of social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 interests of public safety, we're not in a position to 2 share that information with them at that time. 3 MR SIMS: I think more generally there is a shared interest 4 in denying the hoaxer the sort of oxygen of publicity 5 that they're seeking. That, again, comes back to the 6 fact that our local media is working in the interests of 7 the wider community, as I think we are. 8 MS SEELEY: Yes. 9 Q. I've been asked to raise this issue with you, Mr Sims: 10 do you have a policy on media ride-alongs, by which 11 I mean, having the media attend raids and arrests? 12 MR SIMS: Yes. It's not something we do all the time, but 13 we do do it from time to time, and actually the example 14 that Mr Faber used following the riots is a really good 15 example, where, I suppose, from a public interest point 16 of view, we wanted to reassure the public that people 17 weren't able to loot shops in the West Midlands with 18 impunity, that there was a deterrent that was there, but 19 also to use the opportunity that the media coverage 20 created to push forward on the unidentified photographs 21 that we had at that stage. 22 So it is controlled. It's something that the press 23 office organises. There is a sort of contract, if you 24 like, in terms of what's disclosed, but I think used in 25 a sparing fashion it can be very positive.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 media, including Twitter. 2 MR SIMS: Yes. 3 Q. Can I ask this: is there any difficulty about publishing 4 any of those guidances? 5 MR SIMS: No. 6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It might be useful to deploy the 7 material in relation to Twitter. 8 MR JAY: Yes. We will make that available then. 9 MR SIMS: Yes. 10 Q. Again, it was only provided recently -- 11 MR SIMS: And it's a policy that we've literally been 12 working on in the last few weeks. 13 MR JAY: We'll arrange for that to be put on the system. 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you. 15 MR JAY: Thank you very much. Those are the questions 16 I had. 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I want to go back to the very 18 beginning of your evidence, if you don't mind. I think 19 you said there were 30 people employed in your team. 20 How many of them are police officers and how many are 21 civilians? 22 MS SEELEY: I'm the only police officer within the 23 department. So they're all trained police staff 24 members. 25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: How many of them have a background in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 journalism?</p> <p>2 MS SEELEY: Five have a background in journalism -- sorry,</p> <p>3 five are trained within journalism, and four have</p> <p>4 a background within journalism, two of those within the</p> <p>5 print media and two of those within radio, all on</p> <p>6 a local basis.</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Right. Has there been a tradition in</p> <p>8 the West Midlands that the head of the communications</p> <p>9 team should be a serving police officer or is that</p> <p>10 recent?</p> <p>11 MS SEELEY: No, that's been the tradition within West</p> <p>12 Midlands police.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And I well understand your</p> <p>14 explanation that there is a value in that, because,</p> <p>15 first of all, you know the business, the police</p> <p>16 business, and secondly, your period in office, as it</p> <p>17 were, is temporary, so there isn't time for any</p> <p>18 suggestion to develop of inappropriate favourites or</p> <p>19 friendships or relationships because you'll pass on and</p> <p>20 somebody else will start from scratch.</p> <p>21 MS SEELEY: (Nods head)</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Sims, I suppose it's a managerial</p> <p>23 question. Do you see anything in the operation that</p> <p>24 West Midlands has to undertake that is different, save</p> <p>25 for size, than the operation which the Metropolitan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 is that we have some professional people who give</p> <p>2 knowledge, skill, continuity, that sit behind --</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: She mentioned her head of news.</p> <p>4 MS SEELEY: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR SIMS: Yes, some very able people. I think the huge</p> <p>6 benefit of having the police officer there is to connect</p> <p>7 that function to the values of the rest of the force and</p> <p>8 to make sure that it never sits as a sort of an adjunct</p> <p>9 to the force; it is part of its core operation. It is</p> <p>10 actually a very operational department. It's pretty</p> <p>11 much a 24/7 continuous operation, works closely with</p> <p>12 major investigations and so on. So I think it helps</p> <p>13 build that connectivity.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And for West Midlands -- and I spare</p> <p>15 the chief inspector's blushes -- it's appropriately</p> <p>16 staffed at chief inspector rather than higher-ranking</p> <p>17 level?</p> <p>18 MR SIMS: Yes, the Chief Inspector reports directly into the</p> <p>19 Deputy Chief Constable.</p> <p>20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I see.</p> <p>21 MR SIMS: So that provides the focus in terms of</p> <p>22 strategically what's happening and then the team are</p> <p>23 able to sort of execute that requirement.</p> <p>24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, that's an important detail. So</p> <p>25 there isn't a superintendent and a chief</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 Police has to undertake.</p> <p>2 MR SIMS: In terms of media?</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: In terms of media.</p> <p>4 MR SIMS: Yes, because our contact with national media is</p> <p>5 very limited.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm not expressing myself very well.</p> <p>7 MR SIMS: Sorry.</p> <p>8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm interested in the idea that there</p> <p>9 is a positive value in having a police officer as the</p> <p>10 director of the operation, not only because of the</p> <p>11 professional background of the officer but also of the</p> <p>12 rotation skills and how that would play out --</p> <p>13 MR SIMS: I understand the question.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- also in the context of the need to</p> <p>15 develop sufficient professionalism, because by the time</p> <p>16 the chief inspector's really got into the job and</p> <p>17 understands every single nook and cranny of it, she'll</p> <p>18 be running Coventry or whatever might be her next role.</p> <p>19 MR SIMS: I think there is a balance, isn't there, between</p> <p>20 professional skills and between having someone who is</p> <p>21 identifiable, and Sally does do some media work on our</p> <p>22 behalf and can act as the sort of credible voice for</p> <p>23 West Midlands. I think there's a balance between having</p> <p>24 that and between having some professional capability as</p> <p>25 well, and I think the way we've balanced this thus far</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 superintendent --</p> <p>2 MR SIMS: In between.</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- that stand between her and the</p> <p>4 most senior ranks?</p> <p>5 MR SIMS: No. No.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you very much indeed. Thank</p> <p>7 you both for coming.</p> <p>8 MR SIMS: Thank you very much.</p> <p>9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Very good. Tomorrow</p> <p>10 morning, 10 o'clock.</p> <p>11 (4.25 pm)</p> <p>12 (The hearing adjourned until 10 o'clock the following day)</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

<p>A</p> <p>Abby 2:10 4:14 4:14,15 14:19</p> <p>Abigail 4:7</p> <p>ability 12:1</p> <p>able 11:1 27:7 30:23 33:25 43:7 61:9 67:17 68:15 77:13 79:17 83:10 86:17 87:20 91:5,23</p> <p>absolutely 3:3 6:2,2 32:9 35:21 40:13 41:3 44:12,15 46:16,16,16,25 50:20 72:9 74:5 84:13</p> <p>abundance 17:19,21</p> <p>abundantly 15:12</p> <p>accept 45:24 57:20 68:20</p> <p>acceptability 74:11</p> <p>acceptable 40:21 72:17,20 73:2 73:5,17</p> <p>acceptance 56:13</p> <p>accepted 9:15 35:15 55:8 70:16</p> <p>access 21:6 23:24 24:6 43:23 46:19 83:12,14 84:8</p> <p>accessible 44:20 44:23</p> <p>account 4:12 7:23 8:6</p> <p>accounts 7:20 13:4 70:3</p> <p>accuracy 40:12</p> <p>accurate 64:10 84:4,6,9</p> <p>accustomed 18:12</p> <p>ACPO 71:21</p> <p>act 65:19 79:2 82:1 90:22</p> <p>acted 83:6</p> <p>action 15:20 26:25 78:3 80:11</p> <p>actions 59:22</p> <p>actively 14:12,14 14:14 26:9</p> <p>activity 63:13</p> <p>actual 24:7 77:25</p> <p>add 18:24 54:13 84:10 85:16</p> <p>addition 38:14</p> <p>additional 12:18</p>	<p>address 41:12 52:4</p> <p>adds 54:10</p> <p>adjourned 92:12</p> <p>adjunct 91:8</p> <p>adopt 40:24</p> <p>Adrian 22:6,9</p> <p>advantages 23:21 24:1,2 54:3</p> <p>advent 68:7</p> <p>adversely 11:25</p> <p>advert 28:19</p> <p>advice 68:1,3,4 72:16</p> <p>affirm 51:22 52:13</p> <p>affirmed 51:18</p> <p>afford 64:16</p> <p>afraid 48:4 67:23</p> <p>aftermath 37:5</p> <p>afternoon 87:18</p> <p>age 67:6</p> <p>ago 20:12</p> <p>agree 26:21 42:16 72:11 75:16</p> <p>aids 65:10</p> <p>aim 2:19</p> <p>aimed 74:23</p> <p>alarmed 26:7</p> <p>albeit 20:20</p> <p>Alcohol 73:8</p> <p>alert 13:21</p> <p>alerted 16:2</p> <p>Alford 2:10 4:7 14:22</p> <p>allay 10:14</p> <p>alleged 80:12</p> <p>allow 19:12 87:6</p> <p>allowed 14:9</p> <p>allowing 43:12</p> <p>allows 39:1</p> <p>alter 8:6,7 48:11</p> <p>altogether 30:12</p> <p>amount 3:17 8:10 13:9 31:5 48:5 65:1 66:6 66:8 80:5 83:20</p> <p>announced 7:7 16:13</p> <p>answer 5:23 20:10 46:2 49:4,5 50:9,10 55:7,10,15 56:18 57:16 61:6 67:23</p> <p>answers 11:3</p> <p>antecedent 77:14</p> <p>anti-bureaucr... 71:4</p> <p>anti-corruption 79:6</p> <p>anxious 34:14</p> <p>anybody 28:18 50:22</p> <p>anybody's 50:21</p> <p>apologies 61:18</p> <p>app 28:18</p> <p>appeared 77:16</p> <p>appearing 14:21</p> <p>appears 19:3,5</p> <p>apply 37:13 45:14 72:18</p> <p>applying 82:1</p> <p>appoint 50:1</p> <p>appointed 52:9</p> <p>appraisal 11:15</p> <p>appreciate 52:7</p> <p>approach 40:25 58:3 84:10</p> <p>approached 64:2</p> <p>appropriate 20:9 26:23,25 30:1 44:24,25 56:22 63:1 70:15 85:16 87:10</p> <p>appropriately 25:14 60:18 91:15</p> <p>approximately 4:8 54:8</p> <p>April 53:7</p> <p>area 15:7 17:17 25:10,11 26:15 38:17 39:8 49:25 53:12 62:8 67:1 75:7 81:3,13 85:20</p> <p>areas 10:12,13 19:11 33:11 49:18 59:4 63:23 71:24 78:17</p> <p>arena 19:5 84:3</p> <p>arguable 72:12 72:16</p> <p>argue 27:6 43:11</p> <p>argument 43:2</p> <p>arisen 76:9</p> <p>arising 32:10</p> <p>arrange 28:3 88:13</p> <p>arrest 34:21</p> <p>arrestees 37:10</p> <p>arrests 15:19,22 16:3 36:24,25 86:11</p> <p>arrival 67:19</p> <p>arrived 73:24 87:17</p> <p>Article 87:1</p> <p>artificial 55:25</p> <p>ascribing 26:4</p> <p>asked 4:24 5:9 11:19 13:16 14:20 31:2 50:23 79:25 86:9</p> <p>asking 10:22 14:1,16 28:19</p>	<p>81:24</p> <p>aspire 19:14</p> <p>assaults 24:24</p> <p>assessor 52:8</p> <p>assist 12:7 52:9</p> <p>assistance 38:16</p> <p>assistant 6:19</p> <p>assists 62:3</p> <p>Association 36:6</p> <p>attached 80:16</p> <p>attempt 49:24 50:2 71:4</p> <p>attempting 50:6</p> <p>attend 49:13 86:11</p> <p>attended 15:24</p> <p>attention 20:9</p> <p>attest 22:16</p> <p>attitude 43:11</p> <p>authorised 14:24 15:11,13 70:19</p> <p>authority 48:20 48:21 49:14</p> <p>available 25:13 25:21 61:11 83:21 88:8</p> <p>avenues 16:7</p> <p>average 8:2,2</p> <p>avoided 74:7</p> <p>award 69:9</p> <p>awards 7:13</p> <p>aware 14:6 48:4</p> <p>awful 24:25</p> <p>awry 13:25</p>	<p>20:25</p> <p>beer 73:8</p> <p>beginning 5:19 88:18</p> <p>begins 42:6</p> <p>behalf 69:3 90:22</p> <p>behaved 40:8</p> <p>behaviour 72:24 81:5,5,8</p> <p>believe 20:15 54:9 85:18</p> <p>believed 14:4</p> <p>beneficial 18:1</p> <p>benefit 54:11 70:4 74:9 91:6</p> <p>best 57:16,21 59:15 64:4,8 64:10 68:5 71:17</p> <p>better 4:18 66:23</p> <p>beyond 57:19 62:5 75:1</p> <p>big 2:22 24:21</p> <p>bigger 11:23 24:21 25:4</p> <p>biggest 8:24</p> <p>Birmingham 21:25 22:17 23:3,4,8 53:14 80:15</p> <p>biscuit 9:20</p> <p>bit 6:9 23:21 35:1 46:23 47:5 80:20 82:14</p> <p>black 53:14</p> <p>blanked 37:11 37:12</p> <p>block 17:18</p> <p>blur 30:8</p> <p>blushes 91:15</p> <p>bomb 85:8,11</p> <p>Boon 1:4,7,11 2:17 6:16 9:2 12:5 15:18 17:13 18:4,11 19:23</p> <p>boroughs 49:12 49:13</p> <p>bottom 25:23 61:1</p> <p>boundaries 10:1 31:9</p> <p>box 73:16</p> <p>boxes 73:14</p> <p>break 51:11,13 68:16</p> <p>break-ins 26:22 27:1</p> <p>Bribery 79:2</p> <p>brief 18:19</p> <p>briefing 11:11 38:15 85:8,24</p> <p>briefings 39:7,9</p> <p>briefly 58:24</p>	<p>bring 20:9 84:23</p> <p>Britain 8:25</p> <p>broad 56:20 78:10</p> <p>broader 37:16</p> <p>brought 23:22 33:4 37:22</p> <p>budget 77:1</p> <p>build 4:17 16:22 66:13 91:13</p> <p>built 18:1</p> <p>bullet 66:11 67:20</p> <p>bump 45:16 84:12</p> <p>bumps 63:11</p> <p>Bureau 61:5,13 61:15</p> <p>bureaucracy 27:17</p> <p>burglaries 24:15 24:23 25:9 26:21 27:5</p> <p>burglary 18:6</p> <p>business 8:10 19:9 63:23 89:15,16</p> <p>Butetown 9:18 15:25</p> <p>bypass 60:13</p> <p>bypassing 34:1</p> <p>by-product 69:15</p>	<p>catered 87:13</p> <p>cause 63:11</p> <p>caused 74:10</p> <p>celebrity 33:11</p> <p>censors 65:20</p> <p>central 24:4</p> <p>certain 3:16 42:19 47:14 74:7 83:10</p> <p>certainly 4:13 5:14 6:5,11 7:18 9:8,16 25:6 26:5 30:12 31:19 32:2 37:3 57:17 58:16</p> <p>challenge 81:5,8 83:2</p> <p>chance 66:13</p> <p>change 4:8,11 23:19 48:10</p> <p>changes 54:23</p> <p>changing 59:10</p> <p>character 38:21</p> <p>charged 87:7</p> <p>chasing 64:17</p> <p>chief 4:2,2 5:3,24 6:3,4,19,19,20 7:11,12 11:8,9 22:1 29:6 30:14 44:22 47:4 51:24 52:10,21,23 53:4 55:9 57:25 84:1 90:16 91:15,16 91:18,19,25</p> <p>choose 45:23</p> <p>Christmas 48:4</p> <p>Christopher 51:18,24</p> <p>circulation 23:12 23:15</p> <p>civilian 14:13</p> <p>civilians 88:21</p> <p>Clare 51:17 52:15</p> <p>clarity 65:18</p> <p>Classically 68:19</p> <p>classifieds 48:11</p> <p>classroom 80:16</p> <p>clear 11:15 14:19 15:12 17:4 19:1 21:1 33:12 38:9 40:15,16 58:22 72:17 77:23</p> <p>clearly 40:24 59:8 60:8 66:3 75:24 83:18</p> <p>cleverer 49:19</p> <p>climate 67:15</p> <p>close 13:1 19:8</p> <p>closed 16:7</p> <p>closely 91:11</p> <p>code 16:7</p>
B					<p>C</p> <p>C 41:1</p> <p>calculation 8:1</p> <p>calibrating 72:6</p> <p>calibration 42:12</p> <p>call 3:15 79:16 85:18</p> <p>called 60:21 70:5</p> <p>calls 85:13</p> <p>call-handling 59:2</p> <p>cannabis 15:23 37:5</p> <p>capability 90:24</p> <p>capitals 65:18</p> <p>capture 75:4</p> <p>Cardiff 36:20</p> <p>careful 18:22</p> <p>case 11:10,12,20 11:22 28:5 34:8,9 35:10 39:11 42:14 62:2,3,4 72:2 77:15 81:2 85:3</p> <p>cases 2:23 39:10 61:21,23 77:12 78:23 80:21,24</p> <p>cash 73:6</p> <p>cast 43:4</p> <p>category 85:10</p>

codification 41:21 45:11 47:22	36:10 complainant 78:16	11:8,9 22:1 29:6 30:14 44:22 45:19 47:4 51:24	core 91:9 corners 45:3 corporate 53:6 58:25 59:6	13:17 24:15,21 25:3,4,5,6,6 26:1,11,14,18 26:19,20 27:22	decide 14:3 72:19 85:25 decided 15:9 21:22 32:16	determinant 71:6 deterrent 86:18 develop 16:22 39:21 64:20 89:18 90:15
codified 46:12 coding 45:8,11 coffee 30:2 collapse 10:24 collapsed 11:22 collated 25:15 colleague 36:20 colleagues 31:3 41:17 51:4	complaining 17:20 37:24 complaint 78:14 83:16 complete 43:13 completely 38:20 42:20 47:16 complex 72:10 compulsory 42:22	52:10,21,23 55:9 91:19 constables 6:20 67:21 Constable's 84:1 consultation 71:2 contact 4:9,16 6:16,18,23 9:6 17:6,15 18:14 24:4 45:6,12 45:12 46:12,21 54:21 59:20,24 59:25,25 60:3 60:3,4,6,9,15 60:15,16,18 61:15,17 62:19 64:25 65:1 74:14,18,21,22 74:23,25 76:6 83:11,22 90:4	correct 1:18,23 2:6,13 6:2 22:20 23:13 24:19 43:9 53:9 59:17,18 71:2 84:5,6 correctly 65:11 72:7 correspondent 2:10 corruption 10:25 council 49:12 76:19 counter 69:11 counterparts 75:3 country 23:2 58:4 counts 9:18 county 53:13,14 couple 19:24 37:6 38:22 68:13 course 8:19 9:17 11:21 27:11 29:11 36:5 45:22 52:10 54:1 58:11 63:3 74:16 80:22 82:13 87:21 court 35:10 39:9 39:11 42:14 48:17,18 49:11 49:14,15 courts 34:22 48:19,20 Coventry 23:4,8 53:15 90:18 cover 2:19 49:11 60:11 69:20 coverage 26:2 34:19 68:4 86:19 covers 23:1,5 53:12,13 covert 80:3 CPA 62:5 cranny 90:17 create 36:8 created 5:10 16:8 78:24 86:20 creating 61:22 63:4 creation 55:25 credible 50:1 90:22 crikey 32:2 42:5 crime 2:7,10,19 2:21 4:7 10:13 10:15 12:25	32:6 33:17,19 33:24 35:10 36:5,6 54:22 61:21 79:24 crimes 2:22 3:1 24:19 34:14 criminal 61:23 80:5 critical 35:11 40:13 crossed 40:18 Crown 48:18 49:14 crucial 10:16 50:3 crux 50:3 CSOs 53:18 cultural 8:9 culture 3:4 8:4 23:19 76:16 79:5,7 82:16 cup 9:17 current 82:16 currently 33:22 34:4 52:20 53:6 70:10 curtailed 38:1 cuts 7:7,8	decisions 77:9 79:10,22 decision-making 79:13,16 declining 49:7 decreasing 26:20 deep 40:21 defence 62:3 defending 83:3 definition 56:21 degree 3:2 33:7 69:10 73:11 83:10 deliver 59:4 delivering 59:12 74:24 demanding 69:19 demands 59:8 84:22 democratic 16:12 demonstrates 39:6 denying 86:4 department 53:20,22 54:7 54:14 58:25 60:22 65:10,25 66:23 88:23 91:10 departmental 60:23 70:19 departments 59:7 depend 40:1 dependence 56:7 depends 27:9 65:1 73:19 deploy 85:16,25 88:6 deployed 81:12 Deputy 4:2 6:4 6:19 7:12 11:8 91:19 describe 3:4 24:15 41:8 54:17,18 58:21 76:15 designed 62:25 desk 2:4 detail 52:4 91:24 detailing 3:24 details 20:19 26:8 38:24 70:17 78:6,15 81:1 87:6,11 detective 46:9 deteriorated 82:19	developed 23:23 developing 13:1 development 68:19 develops 56:10 device 80:3,9,15 dialogue 12:1 41:22 44:24 diary 18:5 41:23 difference 8:15 19:2 30:23 38:18 39:23 50:17 51:3 58:2 differences 7:18 19:15,17,19 different 8:14 19:5,6 20:5 28:21 40:20 42:23 45:13 46:10,11,11 49:2 57:7,11 58:3 67:4 69:2 71:19,21,22,25 89:24 difficult 3:9,14 4:20 6:9 16:16 16:19 20:10 38:11,17 46:7 46:13 49:25 74:17 77:4,9 difficulty 10:21 35:19 36:8 88:3 digital 48:9 50:6 67:6 dimension 42:23 47:22 diminishing 48:22 dinner 7:13,15 9:3 direct 60:11 directive 70:10 directly 35:23 64:2 70:2 71:9 81:11 91:18 director 70:20 90:10 directs 60:14 disadvantage 69:15 disadvantages 23:22 24:2 54:4 disagree 43:25 disappeared 38:22 disciplinary 78:3 disclosable 61:21
comfortable 80:10 coming 1:8 7:8 7:21 11:12 21:17 75:14 92:7 command 11:13 commander 70:19 comment 37:8 63:1 commerciality 48:9 common 45:14 68:1 82:2,3 communicated 31:18 communicating 59:7 communication 59:1 communications 13:17 53:6 59:1,3,5,11 60:7 62:8 89:8 communities 19:8,8 21:3 26:13 40:1 76:7 81:21,22 community 38:3 40:2,7,22 48:15 66:4,5 69:5 71:14 74:9 86:7 compared 38:21 compendious 50:8 competition 28:8 competitors	concerned 14:11 16:6,13,16,17 44:7 concerns 17:5 50:13,15 conclusion 27:13 27:15 conclusive 78:2 conduct 68:5 conduit 44:17 conference 16:1 confidence 75:9 81:22 confidence-bui... 63:2 confident 85:22 87:20 confidential 43:17,17 confirming 21:11 confront 58:12 connect 91:6 connection 10:22 connectivity 91:13 consequence 26:17 40:15 57:6 conservative 40:25 41:1 consider 46:5 considerable 48:5 consideration 30:12 71:2 considerations 29:24 32:15 considered 31:13 87:23 considering 48:8 consistent 62:7 74:15 constable 4:2,2 5:3,24 6:3,4,19 6:19 7:11,12	content 22:16 contentious 33:5 33:5 contents 52:4 context 29:9 54:13 57:7,8 63:3 73:22 74:3 76:16,17 85:17 90:14 continuity 91:2 continuous 91:11 continuously 67:9 contract 86:23 87:4 contradiction 67:12 control 43:15,19 controlled 67:12 86:22 converge 72:3 conversation 82:7 conversations 4:3 13:22 44:19 85:2,5 convey 82:20 conviction 37:14 convictions 34:22 cope 45:4 copy 6:13,15	core 91:9 corners 45:3 corporate 53:6 58:25 59:6 correct 1:18,23 2:6,13 6:2 22:20 23:13 24:19 43:9 53:9 59:17,18 71:2 84:5,6 correctly 65:11 72:7 correspondent 2:10 corruption 10:25 council 49:12 76:19 counter 69:11 counterparts 75:3 country 23:2 58:4 counts 9:18 county 53:13,14 couple 19:24 37:6 38:22 68:13 course 8:19 9:17 11:21 27:11 29:11 36:5 45:22 52:10 54:1 58:11 63:3 74:16 80:22 82:13 87:21 court 35:10 39:9 39:11 42:14 48:17,18 49:11 49:14,15 courts 34:22 48:19,20 Coventry 23:4,8 53:15 90:18 cover 2:19 49:11 60:11 69:20 coverage 26:2 34:19 68:4 86:19 covers 23:1,5 53:12,13 covert 80:3 CPA 62:5 cranny 90:17 create 36:8 created 5:10 16:8 78:24 86:20 creating 61:22 63:4 creation 55:25 credible 50:1 90:22 crikey 32:2 42:5 crime 2:7,10,19 2:21 4:7 10:13 10:15 12:25	crimes 2:22 3:1 24:19 34:14 criminal 61:23 80:5 critical 35:11 40:13 crossed 40:18 Crown 48:18 49:14 crucial 10:16 50:3 crux 50:3 CSOs 53:18 cultural 8:9 culture 3:4 8:4 23:19 76:16 79:5,7 82:16 cup 9:17 current 82:16 currently 33:22 34:4 52:20 53:6 70:10 curtailed 38:1 cuts 7:7,8	D d 80:17 daily 23:1 83:5 84:13 damage 74:10 danger 30:10 42:2 date 25:8 62:13 67:18 dated 1:14 22:11 22:12 52:2,16 day 16:3 18:18 19:12,14 28:25 48:18 76:20 92:12 days 38:22 day-to-day 51:6 deadlines 83:19 84:18 deal 10:6 12:12 38:18 51:5 53:19 59:3,15 63:11 66:23 70:6 81:13 87:16 dealing 45:22 50:24 75:12 85:1 87:19 dealings 10:4,7 56:4,5 82:17 dealt 7:2 50:12 51:1 death 78:15	difficult 3:9,14 4:20 6:9 16:16 16:19 20:10 38:11,17 46:7 46:13 49:25 74:17 77:4,9 difficulty 10:21 35:19 36:8 88:3 digital 48:9 50:6 67:6 dimension 42:23 47:22 diminishing 48:22 dinner 7:13,15 9:3 direct 60:11 directive 70:10 directly 35:23 64:2 70:2 71:9 81:11 91:18 director 70:20 90:10 directs 60:14 disadvantage 69:15 disadvantages 23:22 24:2 54:4 disagree 43:25 disappeared 38:22 disciplinary 78:3 disclosable 61:21

61:24	30:2 36:17	engagement	68:16,16 69:2	facts 67:24 75:25	31:10 32:17	43:14,14,24
disclose 61:25	driven 54:20,24	58:22 59:15	78:14 85:6,15	failed 78:2	51:21 52:20	44:4 45:4
disclosed 78:15	drivers 84:22	England 20:7,11	86:13,15	fair 6:23 23:11	53:11 54:5	frequently 67:7
86:24	drug 37:4	enhanced 30:19	examples 68:13	31:5 38:7	55:12 89:15	friendships
disclosing 78:21	due 5:11,12	30:22	69:7 73:4,14	41:10 68:4	firstly 69:10	89:19
disclosure 61:22	29:11 54:1	enquiries 23:25	78:10	70:22 73:21	fit 47:3	front-facing 7:24
77:14 78:19	87:20	25:20 83:24	exchange 43:23	fairly 40:16	five 38:23 89:2,3	frustrations
discourage 18:9	duty 3:16,21	ensure 60:17	execute 91:23	41:23 66:24	flow 7:9 16:11	47:14
discovery 80:3	5:23,25 83:20	84:4,9	exist 41:10	78:9	21:4	fuelled 26:2
discuss 6:24 14:3	84:4	ensures 62:7	exists 74:22	fairness 81:4	flowing 4:18	full 1:11 3:1
15:2,8 29:6,8	dynamic 48:10	ensuring 84:6	expect 64:24	falls 66:25	16:25 76:25	11:11 22:8
discussed 16:2	dynamics 58:3	enter 63:21	expectation 66:4	false 69:11 85:18	focus 64:18	51:21,22 52:13
18:6 21:23	69:24	82:13 87:7,9	expectations	families 84:6	91:21	67:16
32:7 69:25	<hr/> E <hr/>	entered 78:13	73:25 84:14	family-owned	follow 33:24	fully 15:8 33:4
81:18 84:21		entertaining	expected 13:9	23:9	34:5 69:25	45:10
discusses 13:18	earlier 51:10	7:22	63:15	far 9:14,16 28:22	followed 48:19	full-time 64:19
discussing 13:22	easier 72:14	entertainment	expense 7:19,20	30:11 40:13	48:20	function 54:21
discussion 15:5	Echo 1:21 6:17	30:25 73:10	8:6 13:4,5,6	43:11 47:5	followers 67:8	56:2 59:2 65:2
15:16 16:8	18:6	entirely 6:11	expenses 13:3,13	49:9 90:25	68:14 69:4	91:7
discussions	economics 50:4	22:3 68:6 72:2	experience 63:5	farms 15:23	following 7:5,10	functions 55:24
10:13 29:20	edited 1:24	78:9	81:4,17,19	fashion 86:25	70:8 78:15	Funnily 4:24
62:23	edition 28:15	environment	experienced 49:1	fast 21:4	86:14 92:12	further 14:16
disgruntled	editor 1:21 2:4	21:8 30:1,20	explain 29:4	faster 84:14,14	food 73:10	24:9 68:4 78:4
35:24	6:16 13:6	55:3 83:6	36:24 55:1	favour 10:20	football 36:15	80:11
disgruntlement	19:25 21:24	equally 30:10	explanation	16:24	73:16	future 16:5 29:6
76:25	22:21 49:1	35:11 47:8	57:15 89:14	favourably 83:4	forbidden 15:13	<hr/> G <hr/>
disparate 82:5	editorial 13:11	54:22 58:7	exponentially	favourites 89:18	force 5:6 6:5	game 73:15
disproportionate	37:13	equate 72:22	68:24	fear 10:20 16:23	11:14 43:1	games 36:15
66:6	editors 7:23 8:12	era 57:19 59:10	Express 21:25	17:8 18:8	50:25 52:10	garden 26:22
dissatisfaction	8:16 20:15	especially 74:8	22:18,19 23:3	20:24 26:14,18	53:11,11 59:2	gathered 75:24
78:12	33:2 48:16	84:24	27:3 40:18	fears 10:15	60:5,14,23	general 2:3 5:14
disseminated	55:1,18 56:3,4	establish 74:17	49:9	feature 20:8	63:24 68:9	35:2 53:10
69:17	56:9	estimates 33:21	expressed 9:22	79:21	70:2,10 74:10	58:18 60:2
dissemination	effect 68:17	ethical 29:24	50:14	February 1:14	83:3 91:7,9	66:20 67:2,22
31:6 75:5	79:16	32:14	expressing 8:18	52:16 80:2	forces 8:13 71:21	68:3,4 72:18
disseminator	efficiency 64:14	ethics 56:12	90:6	feed 61:23	71:25 79:14	79:20 80:22
31:16	effort 64:18	76:16	extent 13:16 45:6	feel 9:5 19:16	force-wide 24:3	generalise 58:8
distance 12:21	eight 1:24 81:19	evening 7:13	48:14 55:8	20:9 25:12	foremost 54:5	generally 2:24
12:23	either 16:24 70:2	event 24:3	extra 17:18 28:6	30:5,19 42:18	forget 66:12	3:5 12:20
document 60:21	74:24	events 16:1	47:22 64:7,8	42:21 46:20	form 1:16 26:8	18:12 62:14
doing 14:18	elaborate 30:4	54:24 55:23	extremely 48:25	62:25 67:1	formal 1:19 6:24	73:17 79:25
15:13 18:15,15	30:25 39:21	67:9 73:15	49:6	77:10 83:15,18	22:14 53:25	84:19 86:3
58:10 61:22	58:24	74:7	<hr/> F <hr/>	feeling 5:14 6:6	55:3	89:18 84:13,15
68:10,23 79:14	electronic 28:9	everybody 5:18	Faber 21:24 22:2	18:21 26:11	formalised 41:22	generic 79:8
81:8 87:15	element 28:6	27:4 45:14	22:5,6,8,9	fellow 8:16	formed 54:9	genuinely 57:18
domain 43:18	42:7,7,18,21	49:25 51:9	23:18 27:17	felt 15:4	former 52:10	geographical
68:18 71:8	embarrassment	52:8	28:20 29:4	fewer 56:3	formerly 34:7	53:12
75:15 78:13	74:9	evidence 1:19	31:21 39:22	field 48:3	forms 28:9 72:1	getting 10:10
87:8	embedded 81:21	22:14 26:3	47:25 51:11	file 60:20	form-filling	67:16 68:4
domestic 85:6	emphasis 65:17	31:2,6 36:20	74:16 82:25	Filkin 5:11	17:23 18:4	69:18 84:13,15
door 81:2	72:25	48:5 74:14,16	83:8,19 86:14	fill 20:19	forthright 10:6	gift 73:23
doubt 26:16	employed 88:19	74:25 75:10,14	face 45:21 49:22	filmed 80:14	forward 16:21	gifts 13:6,7 70:6
30:15 41:5	employees 64:16	77:18 78:2	50:11,15 87:10	filter 16:9	17:25 57:18	70:15
42:7 49:20	64:24	88:18	Facebook 21:9	finalised 85:22	86:20	gist 59:25 60:2
doubtless 53:25	empowerment	evident 61:7	21:10	finally 87:16	fostering 9:4	give 1:11 12:5,18
downside 24:5	67:12	evil 41:8	faces 37:9,15	finals 12:17	found 3:16 11:18	14:20,24 17:1
draft 70:22	enable 61:6	exact 62:13	facet 58:23	financial 71:5,5	11:24 39:14	17:3 22:24
72:13	encountered	exactly 10:11	facilitate 83:22	find 3:13 4:19	62:20 80:9	39:10 48:23
dramatic 26:13	62:18	61:25 84:21	fact 5:20 16:3	6:4 16:16	four 45:3 64:22	64:4,13 67:24
27:3	encourage 62:25	exaggerate 27:16	17:10,15 26:19	24:10 67:18	89:3	69:12 73:4,14
dramatically	67:14 68:23	exaggerated	41:15 48:16	71:3 74:14	frank 10:12	80:20 85:2
48:22	encouraged 17:1	26:1,12,14	54:4 56:2	79:15	frankly 71:10	91:1
draw 6:9 27:15	17:3 47:4	example 18:5	57:13 59:23	fine 49:3,4	free 16:11,25	given 11:3 13:7
27:21	encourages 16:8	27:22 34:19	73:11 76:11	first 4:10 7:6	28:17,18 67:1	14:23 15:21
dream 58:10	engage 5:16	35:3 39:4	86:6	19:25 21:24	freely 4:19	16:15 17:4
drink 7:25 9:9	44:23	48:15 65:14		23:19 25:22	free-for-all	32:22 36:23

43:6 70:16 71:13 77:5 83:20 87:11 gives 66:12 giving 11:11 31:22 39:4 47:10 63:19 go 8:8 14:16,17 15:22 17:22 24:1,4,9,10 40:4 41:7 45:5 45:23,24 46:14 47:12,15 49:11 49:14,14 53:25 70:18 77:8 78:6 85:23 88:17 goes 8:11 38:19 49:9 56:16 62:5 75:1 going 5:2 23:17 28:20 30:11 35:24 38:5 45:2 47:5 48:3 50:9 51:20 52:4 54:21,22 55:24 63:4 68:7 74:21 85:23 87:16 good 9:6 21:21 30:9,16 34:19 37:21 38:2 71:6 77:18 79:17 82:19 86:14 92:9 goods 37:7 Gordon 1:4,6,9 1:12 18:5 21:16 gradual 4:8 granted 16:24 grateful 20:18 great 10:9 35:3 38:18 greater 26:18 29:12 43:23 69:16,21 grind 84:12 ground 24:7 69:21 group 8:20,24 20:15 groups 67:4 growing 68:24 guest 15:25 guidance 12:5,18 60:23 67:5 87:25 guidances 88:4 guided 63:22 guidelines 5:4,5 5:9 13:10 17:5 guilty 39:14 Gwent 5:1,3,20 6:10,11 16:13	<hr/> H hacked 50:20 hand 43:13,16 66:7 83:2 handbag 66:2 hands 22:3 hands-on 33:2 happen 11:20 24:22 31:23 36:1 42:13,15 56:19 57:19 68:23 71:11 happened 3:24 4:6 5:20 11:16 11:17,18,22 13:12 25:9,10 25:20 49:17 happening 2:24 3:18,20,22 10:11,13 19:3 21:10,12 27:2 27:5 69:22 83:14 91:22 happens 2:14 15:24 16:13 55:19 71:12 happy 49:5 72:5 harassment 80:17 82:1,14 hard 10:18,19,22 11:1 harder 20:24,24 20:25,25 49:19 hardest 78:17 head 5:9 20:2 30:18 53:6 54:2 70:20 73:13 81:18 89:8,21 91:3 heading 78:11 headline 26:13 27:4 heads 56:5 health 48:21 49:14 69:3 healthy 82:24 hear 21:23,25 40:8 41:5 47:18 heard 9:2 23:10 39:19 41:4,6 57:3 68:15 74:16 81:20 82:24 85:5 87:4 hearing 21:10 92:12 hearsay 20:21 heart 55:21 56:16 82:23 held 53:7 Hello 45:19 help 25:5,6,7 34:17 35:1 79:14 84:18 helped 10:14	20:19 helpful 23:18 71:9 helps 91:12 hesitant 4:9 high 31:15 39:2 higher 6:5 higher-ranking 91:16 highlight 34:14 38:2 hinted 57:9 hit 72:21 HMIC 41:12 72:4 75:20 hoaxer 86:4 hoaxes 85:8,11 home 38:19 honest 10:5 19:10 hospitality 9:15 9:19 13:7 36:12 55:8,13 56:12,21 70:7 70:15 hours 38:1 houses 37:5 huge 13:4 19:2 20:14 84:19 91:5 human 87:1 hypothetical 32:12 73:12 hypothetically 30:6 33:9	<hr/> I idea 90:8 identifiable 90:21 identified 58:16 identify 23:19 45:6 81:13 83:23 ill-informed 36:3 imagine 21:7 immediate 36:9 immense 51:4 imminently 85:20 impact 43:4 48:8 72:24 impacted 11:7 11:25 impacting 68:10 impartial 56:17 56:17 implication 82:18 implicit 9:4 29:20 30:15 56:18 implicitly 73:24 importance 39:20 68:8 71:16	importances 46:11 important 9:22 10:3,8 16:12 19:10,10 21:4 25:2,3,4 33:1 35:7 37:19 38:3 41:4,5 46:24 72:21 73:23 74:2 76:11 91:24 imposed 71:1 impression 82:16 impunity 86:18 inappropriate 31:14 63:19 80:12 89:18 inappropriately 40:9 incident 3:20,24 24:3 incidents 38:10 85:6 including 28:10 33:2 88:1 increase 69:6 increases 28:12 increasing 49:20 49:21 68:8 increasingly 24:6 independent 23:9 indicate 36:12 87:12 individual 23:24 24:10 63:14 72:19 79:21 80:21 individuals 34:3 78:22,24 inference 6:10 inform 60:15 informal 29:20 31:7 74:14,18 75:4 information 3:9 3:14 4:18 6:7 7:10 14:2,6,8 14:12,15,20,23 14:25 16:11,16 16:20,24 17:1 17:3 21:1,4,14 24:5,9,18,23 25:1,7,11,13 25:21 29:9,16 31:7,10,13,16 31:23 32:1,3,7 32:13,21 33:9 33:13 34:5,16 34:20 35:22 36:23 38:6 39:1,10,14 43:24 44:9 47:7,10 62:9	63:20,25 64:1 64:5,9,10 65:16,17 68:15 68:18 69:12,21 70:1,5 74:24 75:5,11,14 77:6 78:13,19 81:23 83:1 84:2,4,8,14 85:17 86:2 informed 11:10 47:21 64:4 informs 79:10 inherently 18:16 initiative 35:11 initiatives 34:20 innocently 42:20 innocuous 41:23 Inquiry 1:13,19 2:11 19:7,20 22:10,14 30:15 51:10 52:1 61:12 Inquiry's 31:5 insertion 80:2 insight 48:25 insofar 23:24 33:1 39:24 inspector 3:21 5:25 22:1 53:4 57:25 91:16,18 inspectors 3:16 66:20 69:3 inspector's 90:16 91:15 Inspire 7:13 instance 16:9 instantly 68:18 instinct 13:24 instinctively 73:2 instructing 81:25 integrity 10:6 19:9 40:12 72:22 intelligent 27:6 intending 82:20 interact 69:5 interacted 48:6 interest 15:4,15 15:16 31:11 32:18,19,20 33:6,8,13 37:8 37:17 75:24 80:10 84:19 86:3,15 87:15 interested 24:14 31:19 85:12 90:8 interesting 4:14 76:11 interests 83:7 86:1,6 internal 39:17 59:11 64:21	65:15 85:4 interposition 27:19 interview 68:5 interviews 24:5 59:21 intranet 61:8 introduced 28:6 61:12 introducing 41:21 47:21 introduction 23:20 intrusive 81:1 investigating 11:5 investigation 35:9 42:14 80:1,7 investigations 34:17,21 38:11 77:21,24 78:3 78:4,5 91:12 investigative 11:6 invite 51:20 52:13 invited 7:11 15:22 36:25 37:4,7,17 involved 8:23 39:14 78:12 involvement 80:24 iPad 28:18 50:2 issue 3:25 5:23 9:8 31:17 32:10 33:6 38:11,24 40:9 41:7 56:15 58:14 64:1 66:3,25 70:6 76:3,4,5,9 79:21 81:13 82:11 85:19 86:9 issues 3:11 6:24 7:9 13:19 21:5 33:8 37:8 48:7 50:10 51:7 57:18 67:25 69:4 75:23 77:11 78:8 79:19 85:9 87:2,12,19 items 73:4 ITV 2:5	<hr/> J January 22:11 52:2 jargon 79:15 Jay 21:19,22 22:3,5,7,8 23:12 25:22 29:4 31:5	47:25 51:15,19 51:20 52:12,20 58:18 63:13 64:20 72:12 74:4 76:22 77:20 80:17 81:24 82:15 88:8,13,15 job 2:24 17:22 35:20 77:4 84:16 90:16 John 1:6,12 joined 53:5 journalism 12:13 89:1,2,3 89:4 journalist 2:1 9:8,9 13:10 14:9 17:10 18:18,22 28:7 31:18 36:21 42:3,11,20 46:8 60:12 64:5 journalistic 57:10 60:5 75:3 journalistically 49:18,23 journalists 7:24 9:23 10:4 12:13 13:8 17:7 27:18 31:8 40:17 49:10 60:16 66:2,7,15 68:10 69:18,23 69:25 80:18 81:25 82:5 87:9 judging 19:6 judgment 27:8 39:1 judgments 79:11 79:17,18 July 82:18 June 52:24 junior 57:24 jurisdiction 81:24 justice 1:3,5,8 2:14 5:12,22 6:9,13 8:9,19 8:22 9:1 10:21 11:5,18,21,24 12:4 15:10,17 17:13 18:3 19:21,24 20:3 20:13,17 21:16 21:21 22:3,24 23:7,10 25:5 25:15,18 26:16 27:9,12 28:15 28:17,19 29:3 31:1 36:19 37:20,22 42:9
--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

42:16,24 43:10 43:21 44:6,13 44:16,21 45:9 45:14,16,19 46:4,14,18,22 47:1,12,18,24 48:2,14 50:8 50:19 51:7,9 52:7 56:24 57:2,10,14 58:1,10,14 61:24 62:2,5 62:10,14,20 63:5,9 64:7 71:11,19 72:6 72:10 73:19 76:2,10,14 77:18 80:12 81:15 82:11 88:6,14,17,25 89:7,13,22 90:3,6,8,14 91:3,14,20,24 92:3,6,9	laying 73:5 lead 13:24 leads 69:3 leak 14:7,8,24 15:3 78:11 leaks 43:18 76:23 77:5,12 77:25 learn 20:3 65:3 learnt 20:5 leave 2:14 led 34:21 78:3 left 48:3 legitimately 43:17 Leicester 20:11 letters 35:25 level 6:18 9:6 24:15 44:24 54:6 57:24 63:14,14 65:15 91:17 levels 45:13 46:11 Leveson 1:3,5,8 2:14 5:11,12 5:22 6:9,13 8:9 8:19,22 9:1 10:21 11:5,18 11:21,24 12:4 15:10,17 17:13 18:3 19:21,24 20:3,13,17 21:16,21 22:3 22:24 23:7,10 25:5,15,18 26:16 27:9,12 28:15,17,19 29:3 31:1 36:19 42:9,16 42:24 43:10,21 44:6,13,16,21 45:9,14,16,19 46:4,14,18,22 47:1,12,18,24 48:2,14 50:8 50:19 51:7,9 52:7 56:24 57:2,13,20 58:1,10,14 61:24 62:2,5 62:10,14,20 63:5,9 64:7 71:11,19 72:6 72:10 73:19 76:2,10,14 77:18 80:12 81:15 82:11 88:6,14,17,25 89:7,13,22 90:3,6,8,14 91:3,14,20,24 92:3,6,9	lightly 72:12 limit 67:24 limited 6:23 23:25 24:6 36:13 56:6 59:23 72:24 81:17 90:5 line 30:11 40:16 40:20 41:17 71:17 lines 12:6 61:9 64:22 75:4 82:7 link 58:19 74:9 links 59:13 literally 88:11 little 23:21 46:23 63:11 71:12 live 40:6 Liverpool 48:18 living 40:10 local 2:22 8:13 10:10 36:15 37:25 39:25 48:20 59:4,5 64:25 67:9 68:14,14 77:16 81:3,15,21 84:24 86:6 89:6 locally 47:23 location 57:19 log 61:7 London 8:13 58:4 85:15 long 8:4 62:10,23 67:17 longer 27:24,25 28:21 long-term 55:23 look 15:6 42:4 60:19 61:14 72:16 82:12 looked 7:21 32:1 36:4 looking 34:18 35:16 78:5 loot 86:17 LORD 1:3,5,8 2:14 5:12,22 6:9,13 8:9,19 8:22 9:1 10:21 11:5,18,21,24 12:4 15:10,17 17:13 18:3 19:21,24 20:3 20:13,17 21:16 21:21 22:3,24 23:7,10 25:5 25:15,18 26:16 27:9,12 28:15 28:17,19 29:3 31:1 36:19 42:9,16,24 43:10,21 44:6 44:13,16,21	45:9,14,16,19 46:4,14,18,22 47:1,12,18,24 48:2,14 50:8 50:19 51:7,9 52:7 56:24 57:2,13,20 58:1,10,14 61:24 62:2,5 62:10,14,20 63:5,9 64:7 71:11,19 72:6 72:10 73:19 76:2,10,14 77:18 80:12 81:15 82:11 88:6,14,17,25 89:7,13,22 90:3,6,8,14 91:3,14,20,24 92:3,6,9 lose 25:2 40:14 losing 44:9 76:19 77:7 losses 2:24 lot 4:13 15:24 24:25,25 25:2 64:17 71:10 73:1 75:24 79:14 low 24:15 low-level 24:23 lucky 49:9,16 lunch 7:15 8:8 9:3,10 lunchtime 30:3	43:16 65:8 88:7 maternity 2:14 matter 22:13 31:20 32:7,20 52:17 matters 13:21 35:2 52:9 66:21,23 69:17 81:3 meal 8:1 mean 10:5 14:8 14:14 41:14 47:16 54:19 55:12 79:20 86:11 means 35:14 61:4 67:6 measures 79:6 mechanism 42:25 43:18 media 2:17 5:5,7 16:14 19:16,16 21:8 23:25 26:2 28:9,10 41:14 54:18 55:9,13 56:13 56:15 57:11 58:22 59:3,16 59:20 60:17 61:7 62:1,9,19 63:1 64:17,25 65:4,11,23 66:1,12,19 67:22 68:8,22 69:6,10,17,24 69:25 70:3 74:15 77:11 78:19,20 79:24 80:24 81:15,16 84:2,7,24 85:12,14,24 86:6,10,11,19 88:1 89:5 90:2 90:3,4,21 mediated 43:7 83:12 meet 8:17 meeting 4:1,3 7:3,5,6,10,11 11:8 16:1 meetings 6:3,24 7:15 9:3 29:15 29:25 48:20,21 49:12,14 member 3:18 5:7 14:13 36:5 members 36:10 77:1 78:12 88:24 mental 69:3 mention 75:20 mentioned 18:8 30:21 68:13 69:1 91:3 mere 17:10	merely 15:10 42:17 46:4 message 66:13 67:2 met 8:14 18:5 29:6,7 52:22 56:25 57:1,4,6 57:8,22 methods 81:1 Metropolitan 58:8 72:14 75:2 76:18 89:25 middle 78:21 Midlands 21:20 22:25 23:6 47:7 50:25 51:25 52:21 53:5,14 55:20 56:10 60:22 64:24 76:4,7,8 76:19 82:17 86:17 89:8,12 89:24 90:23 91:14 million 53:16 mind 5:2 32:15 88:18 mindful 83:25 minor 78:3 Mirror 8:20 13:5 23:8,11 missing 38:12,17 38:19,21 85:6 Mm 64:15 73:7 74:12 Mm-hm 2:2 70:21 moment 44:2 49:25 68:24 77:24 Monday 16:1 Monday/Tues... 3:23 money 8:10 49:24 50:3,22 50:23 monitor 60:8 68:21 75:13 monitored 59:16 months 5:15 29:5 50:11 morning 28:25 29:2 morning's 28:22 28:24 morning,10 92:10 mosque 80:3,8 80:16 move 2:17 16:21 17:25 71:7 74:13 moving 71:7 murder 2:22 24:21	mutual 39:20 56:7 mutually 18:1 <hr/> N name 1:11 22:8 51:22 52:13 names 51:21 national 19:16 39:24 40:21 50:17 51:3 57:11 64:25 71:17,23 80:24 81:16,20 85:12 85:14 90:4 nationals 7:19 19:3,4 20:6 natural 57:5 naturals 67:21 nature 7:4 29:4 54:17 55:1 73:23 75:11,12 NCTJ 12:17 necessarily 25:15,17,19 26:9 27:16 28:3 31:15 44:19 46:1,19 47:16 57:21 64:9 84:16,18 necessary 9:5 25:14 26:25 41:8 47:23 64:16 need 5:24,25 21:13 26:6 28:19 29:1 44:9 55:16,25 59:9,10,10 75:25 80:21 87:23,24 90:14 negative 34:24 35:23 37:24 43:4 74:17 76:12,15 neighbourhood 59:6 67:3,7 never 9:15 14:20 38:19 50:20,21 50:23 51:1 55:7,10,11 56:25 76:9 91:8 new 12:6 72:14 news 2:4 54:20 81:18 84:13 91:3 newspaper 8:24 23:9,14 31:11 34:16 40:21 49:15 50:5 81:9 newspapers 8:23 22:25 23:1 48:10,12 49:2 49:7,22 50:4
K keen 20:3 34:20 keep 63:15 keeping 33:13 47:21 kept 10:16 59:20 59:25 kind 2:20 64:13 Kingdom 23:15 knocking 81:2 know 3:22 4:21 8:16 9:17 10:9 10:10 11:6,23 12:25 13:11 14:18 15:4,21 18:15 20:1,14 25:20 26:5,24 28:21 44:14 50:9 55:16 58:9 60:19 61:11 62:12,13 63:11 67:15 71:13 72:23 77:12 80:21 83:3 84:13 89:15 knowledge 15:18 67:1 69:7 74:25 91:2	L language 72:7 large 8:22 49:1 50:14 largely 73:12 larger 8:6 largest 23:15 late 87:17 Lavish 73:10 law 82:2,3 lawyers 15:8					

<p>night 2:3 Nods 20:2 30:18 54:2 73:13 89:21 non-attributable 29:18 non-existent 77:5 non-reportable 29:17 nook 90:17 normally 37:11 note 17:12,16,19 18:5 41:23 45:20 notebooks 18:14 noted 17:15 41:15 notes 4:25 17:20 17:21 noticed 4:8 5:15 notification 15:19,21 notify 63:15 notion 6:7 November 1:22 nowadays 21:8 nth 33:7 number 8:22 19:15 23:17 25:9,10 26:17 27:1 33:19 35:5 37:3 42:19 48:16,22 49:2 50:14 56:6 67:7 78:23 79:13 numbering 39:17 64:21 65:15 85:4 numbers 33:20 33:21 34:2,9 35:6 74:1</p> <hr/> <p>O</p> <p>objective 54:10 objectivity 54:6 obtain 81:1 obvious 56:2 65:17 obviously 2:23 11:20 13:3,22 20:18 37:15 38:23 39:13 48:8 54:12 65:9 81:11 occasion 22:4 31:25 occasional 7:15 36:14,17 73:15 occasionally 35:25 37:17 55:2 occasions 16:18 37:4,6 38:23 42:13 56:20,21</p>	<p>66:14 occupies 58:23 occurrence 41:15 odd 73:8 Ofcom 80:9,9 offence 80:5 87:7 offer 9:19 73:8 offered 36:13 55:13 offering 55:17 56:13 offers 4:17 office 3:12 4:5 5:8 16:9,15 24:1,8,12 27:19 29:6,22 29:23 31:4 34:1 44:11,13 44:17 45:6,23 45:24 46:15 47:13,15 55:3 58:19,21 59:16 60:13,15 63:14 68:21 69:16,20 81:12 83:13 86:23 89:16 officer 5:6,24 10:9,19 14:7,8 14:12,17,20,23 15:11 27:23 28:4,7 32:22 42:3,10 43:8 46:9,10,20 47:2 50:22,24 53:24 54:4,5 54:11,12 60:12 61:8 62:11,16 63:14 72:19 79:10 83:12,24 88:22 89:9 90:9,11 91:6 officers 3:10,12 3:14 4:21 5:4 6:8 7:16 9:24 10:7,11 11:13 11:13 13:2 16:14,18,23 17:19 18:10,11 20:25 23:20,25 24:7,11 27:18 29:5 31:7,24 33:10,20,20,22 33:22,23,25 34:5,6 35:6,24 41:8,13 42:19 43:4,12 44:9 44:20,22 47:9 47:19 53:17 57:4 60:14 62:20,25 63:6 63:19 64:2,3 65:10,25 66:5 67:3,7 68:14 68:21 70:3 73:1 75:2</p>	<p>78:14 79:4,15 80:1 81:12 83:19 88:20 officer's 18:18 offices 7:6 official 50:21 off-the-record 11:11 38:10,15 39:6,9 85:2,4,8 85:24 Oh 2:21 32:4 34:25 42:5 57:2 91:20 okay 53:13 73:9 79:23 old 34:9 53:13 74:1 once 3:20 41:24 42:21 Ones 60:12 ongoing 78:4 online 28:15 49:8 50:1,2 onset 67:6 open 10:12 11:15 11:19 43:23 44:20,22 61:5 61:16 67:13 opened 85:20 opening 74:21 openly 5:17 openness 43:2 47:3 66:16 operate 22:25 57:8 operates 20:4 39:25 operation 50:6,7 62:11 89:23,25 90:10 91:9,11 operational 59:3 66:25 91:10 operationally 18:13 opinions 67:25 opinion-formers 76:8 opportunity 4:18 7:25 30:9 48:23 68:20 86:19 opposed 28:2 opposite 6:12 order 34:16 organisation 59:8 62:16 64:3 organised 27:24 28:1 organises 86:23 other's 84:22 outcome 5:18 outlets 81:16,16 81:20,21 outlined 13:3 outside 57:8 59:1</p>	<p>76:17 overlap 84:19 overly 13:1 27:3 72:10 oversee 13:16 owned 23:7,8 65:9 oxygen 86:4 o'clock 28:25 29:2 92:10,12</p> <hr/> <p>P</p> <p>package 67:5 85:19 page 9:21 25:22 25:23 39:17,18 54:17 60:25 61:2 64:21,22 65:6,15,22,22 68:3 70:9,13 70:25 72:13 74:21 85:3,4 paid 50:21 painful 49:6 paper 2:19 22:21 23:4 28:22,24 29:1 38:3 39:25 papers 56:6 paragaph 9:21 23:20 28:14 33:16,18 34:10 36:23 38:9 39:16,16 41:7 54:16,25 55:5 58:19,20 59:13 61:1,1 70:8 72:13 74:13 75:19 76:23 77:20 78:8 79:1,3,24 82:15,22 84:25 paragraphs 36:13 83:8 paraphrase 66:22 parcel 63:18 part 4:1,2 8:19 11:8,14 18:17 23:5 25:18 35:14,19 51:10 56:23 63:18 70:13 79:19 87:4 91:9 particular 2:20 20:8 25:10,11 26:14,22 28:4 38:3 40:9 46:8 46:9 57:19 76:24 77:13 85:3 particularly 3:12 3:13 35:17 37:5 44:3 48:9 67:3 77:15 79:12</p>	<p>partly 4:1 80:14 80:15 partner 7:12,13 pass 89:19 patrol 18:12 pence 8:2 36:20 people 5:15,19 7:22 8:3 12:23 15:23 26:10 27:2 29:14 34:6 37:22,24 38:5,7,12,17 40:5,8 44:4 49:19 50:14 53:16 58:8 64:18 67:13,13 67:14 71:13 73:2 77:10 80:8 84:17 86:16 87:6 88:19 91:1,5 perception 26:1 58:12,16 76:1 perceptive 27:7 perfectly 2:15 30:24 performing 73:20 period 12:15 54:8 89:16 permission 5:8 16:15 person 38:18,21 39:13 43:6 55:16 60:17 77:16 83:11,21 personal 6:16 72:24 78:19 personally 37:2 persons 85:6 perspective 2:18 Peter 51:18,24 phone 34:9 50:2 50:21 photograph 38:24 photographs 86:20 87:5 pick 15:23 23:17 40:10 picked 20:20 picking 70:1 picture 22:24 39:3 pieces 71:12 pint 73:8 pixelated 87:6,11 place 3:20 16:8 26:24 47:20 55:2 61:2 67:18 70:10 placed 59:15 66:23 places 69:16 planning 29:7 play 90:12</p>	<p>plays 58:23 please 1:11 22:5 22:8 28:14 33:16 39:20,22 41:12 51:16,20 51:23 53:21 64:20 73:21 80:21 82:7 pleased 47:18 pm 1:2 51:12,14 92:11 PNC 87:19 pocket 18:13 point 7:17 20:6 24:4,13 27:21 28:20 32:21 33:1 37:16 39:18,21 41:4 41:25 43:10,25 45:10,10 57:10 63:20 64:20 66:11,17 67:20 72:22 76:22 78:24 79:23 84:25 86:15 points 23:17 65:17 80:22 83:8 police 2:18,23,25 3:2,10,12 4:9 4:16,17 5:1,4,4 5:6 6:17 7:6,8 8:12 9:15,18 9:24 10:5,7,7 10:19,23 12:9 12:12,19,24 13:2,18 14:7 14:12,17,22 15:20,25 16:13 16:22,25 17:3 18:11 20:25 21:11,13 23:25 24:7,20 25:16 25:25 26:4,5 27:18,22 28:4 28:7 29:7 31:7 31:24 32:22 33:10,20,21,25 34:12,14,19,24 35:4,5,18,23 36:9 37:25 38:24 40:17 41:7,13 42:3 42:10 43:12 44:20 46:9,19 46:20 47:2,9 47:19 50:12,22 50:24,25,25 51:25 52:9,21 53:5,17,17,17 53:24 54:4,11 54:12 56:14,16 57:12 58:8 60:12,22 61:8 62:11,16 63:19 64:24 65:10,19</p>	<p>75:2,5 76:5,18 78:18 79:10 80:1 82:17 83:12 88:20,22 88:23 89:9,12 89:15 90:1,9 91:6 policeman 45:16 Police's 72:14 police-friendly 64:9 policies 7:20 70:7 71:22 72:3 policing 53:25 54:14,23 74:8 policy 13:10 37:13 45:3 47:3 60:14,19 60:23 62:10 67:17 70:9,22 71:1,23 72:15 74:1 75:19 86:10 88:11 policy-related 66:21 67:25 politics 3:2 population 53:15 posed 55:6 position 49:10,16 86:1 positive 35:9 56:8 69:8 86:25 90:9 positively 15:12 possession 32:3 possibility 18:20 46:5 possible 21:15 33:12 40:13 59:21 61:17 83:5,23 possibly 17:1,4 post 53:1,7 posts 77:7 postulating 46:4 potentially 32:20 33:5 power 34:15 40:14 practical 32:14 practice 7:14 16:7 33:11 34:19 71:6,18 76:16 practices 8:7 precise 8:10 77:23 precision 65:18 predominantly 81:19 preemptory 82:10 prefer 16:20,25 46:14,17 49:3 preferential</p>
--	---	--	---	---	--	---

35:16 preparation 7:21 prepared 6:1 14:17 44:23 preparing 20:22 present 38:4 78:4 presented 83:4 press 3:10,12,14 3:23 4:5,10 5:8 5:9,24 16:9,15 16:18 19:2,4 23:20 24:1,8 24:12 26:12 27:19 33:20,22 34:1 39:24 41:8 42:6 43:4 43:7,12 44:9 44:10,13,17,24 45:5,23,24 46:15 47:13,15 48:6 53:24 54:5 58:18,21 59:16 60:13,15 60:22 61:5,13 61:14 63:14,20 65:9,24 66:22 68:21 69:16,20 75:6,13 81:12 82:18 86:22 pressing 46:23 pressure 28:2,2 28:5,12 49:20 49:21 65:25 69:16,23 84:3 presumably 42:1 73:9,20 79:7 pretty 77:18 91:10 prevent 43:24 prevented 27:23 83:14 previous 38:23 39:19 55:21 57:9 78:17 82:24 previously 4:10 61:12 69:24 70:5 81:20 84:1 87:5 pre-dates 62:23 67:19 principally 68:14 78:11 principle 62:6 66:16 principles 65:14 print 14:21 89:5 printed 49:8 prior 5:8 15:19 16:15 32:10 39:9 48:4 privacy 51:7 78:22 79:19 87:1,12 private 33:12	73:14,16 87:9 probably 6:22 7:17,23 11:23 20:1 23:23 24:20,24 30:4 33:10 35:25 36:19 38:22 39:8 47:23 57:16 61:19 67:5 71:5 73:6 74:15 83:2 87:24 probation 12:15 problem 9:13 13:21 25:18 44:3,11 47:7,9 49:21 63:9 75:7 problems 21:6 process 79:19 processes 72:23 72:23 produce 78:2 producing 74:24 product 61:22 75:12 products 74:7 professional 3:6 7:1 9:23 10:4 10:17 12:2,7 12:20,23 16:23 30:8,24 44:4 45:21,22 47:11 47:14,20 51:2 54:10 55:22 62:24 69:5 83:6 84:20 90:11,20,24 91:1 professionalism 18:2 90:15 professionally 30:9 64:18 profile 39:2 profitability 48:11 profitable 50:7 programme 80:14 proposing 17:9 proposition 46:5 prosecution 62:3 protect 84:5 protected 87:3 protecting 78:22 Protection 82:1 protesting 37:25 prove 76:12 provenance 33:3 provide 14:9 24:8 29:9 34:20 37:23 48:25 51:21 52:12 64:7 68:15 69:21 76:16	provided 1:13 2:10 22:10 34:6 35:23 52:1 65:16 76:18 87:9,10 87:18,24 88:10 provides 91:21 providing 62:24 proving 49:24 74:17 76:15 pub 29:22 public 3:19 10:14 15:3,15 15:16 26:1,6,6 26:23 32:17,19 32:20 33:6,8 33:12 34:16 37:8,16 43:18 48:6 50:21 60:22 65:9,24 66:22 68:18 69:12 71:8 72:1 74:4 75:15,24 78:12 78:13 80:10 83:7 84:2 85:21 86:1,15 86:16 87:7,15 publication 14:4 15:9 32:10 39:10,12 publications 60:10 publicity 34:18 86:4 publish 15:9 28:24 32:16 33:7 34:24 87:24 published 31:20 32:24 publishing 88:3 purely 12:2 purpose 60:6 65:24 push 78:20 86:20 put 4:24 5:4 26:9 26:11,12 27:3 32:17 68:17 71:4 72:12 76:6 78:10 84:16 88:13 puts 16:8 putting 17:18 25:1 28:9 31:15 71:8 72:7 84:2	31:2 32:12 33:15 34:11 41:13 48:2 50:8 53:20 55:6,7,12,15 57:14 58:18 66:18 71:20 72:6 73:10 77:16,23 79:24 79:25 82:15 89:23 90:13 questioning 75:2 questions 1:7 10:18,19,22 11:2,19 12:1 14:1,16 19:23 19:24 22:7 48:1 51:19 53:10 67:23 88:15 quick 68:15 quicker 49:19 83:1 84:15 quickly 3:10 4:18 21:1,14 25:12 40:7,10 61:17 69:12 83:23 quite 3:21 8:17 14:19 15:24 30:11 39:1,2 49:5 58:15 61:4 72:16 75:22 78:20 85:11	59:9,10 realise 31:16 really 10:3,16,16 13:4 15:14 16:12 19:9,10 21:3,13 32:12 36:3 56:8 57:13 67:5 70:14 71:14 72:17,21 76:4 77:8 82:22,24 86:14 90:16 real-time 70:4 reason 57:14 58:1 60:3 61:20 64:7,8 64:13 reasonable 2:15 66:8 74:11 reassurance 26:6 reassure 86:16 recall 9:14,16 receipt 32:6,13 receive 31:12,23 33:10 38:10 61:14 79:5 received 6:13 15:19 31:5 32:1 48:5 79:4 receiving 14:6 recognise 4:11 44:8 recommendati... 72:4 record 17:6,8 18:19 29:17 46:20,22 61:17 62:7 63:4,15 recorded 41:14 41:24,25 59:16 59:21 recording 41:22 42:22,22 44:3 44:19 61:20 63:13 70:16 71:6 72:22,23 80:3 records 18:13 59:20 recover 37:7 reductions 35:5 35:6 77:1 refer 25:22 27:17 30:14 80:1 83:19 referral 80:9 referred 19:17 24:11 referring 74:18 78:8 reflected 50:15 regard 20:7 regards 12:9 regional 8:12,16 8:23,24 19:2,4 19:16 22:25	23:14 33:2 39:25 48:10 49:2,7 50:4,18 51:4 56:6 84:24 regionals 7:19 regions 20:7 regular 4:16 7:14 regularly 47:19 relate 33:11 66:25 78:7 relates 52:3 61:15 76:24 79:1 80:23 relating 61:10 relation 4:4 6:10 6:11 10:23 24:13,19 33:9 50:12 52:9 60:2 70:7 73:6 80:2 82:17 88:7 relations 2:17 12:19,19 36:9 60:22 65:9,24 66:22 relationship 3:5 7:2 8:11 9:4,7 9:23 10:2,16 10:23 11:7,25 12:2,8 13:1 17:25 18:1 21:13 30:8,10 30:16,19,24 34:15 35:14 42:12 47:11,17 54:17 55:22 57:3 66:14 76:17 78:18 82:6,19,23 relationships 8:13 16:22 54:9 55:1 56:1 57:11 82:4 84:20,23 89:19 relative 78:15 relatively 54:8 relaxed 43:11 46:13 release 3:23 21:1 21:14 31:14 84:3,7 released 6:7 24:18,24 25:7 relevant 55:18 60:25 70:13 83:11,11,23 relieve 65:25 rely 81:22 remain 54:7,10 remember 9:20 31:25 65:19 remind 51:9 reminded 52:8 remit 58:21	63:23 remove 44:17 removed 28:23 report 5:11 35:20 41:12 72:4 75:20 reported 29:15 81:3 reporter 2:3,7 4:7 5:10 12:25 13:17 14:6 15:18 27:22 32:6 33:17,19 33:25 36:5 reporters 3:9,15 3:17 4:13,19 4:24 10:10 12:6,6,18,22 14:11,18 15:21 16:21 21:9 36:6 48:17,21 57:5 reporter/editor 8:2 reporting 10:24 reports 91:18 reputation 83:3 reputational 74:10 request 24:5 requests 59:20 required 83:22 84:21 requirement 17:6 91:23 reshaping 59:9 resolve 3:25 resource 49:22 66:3 84:15,17 resources 70:20 respect 40:3 respects 75:22 respond 64:11 85:13 response 46:13 61:7 69:20 responsible 58:25 59:12 rest 58:4 91:7 restaurant 29:21 restraint 63:19 result 60:7,9 resulted 77:14 retiring 71:13 reveal 62:4 revenues 49:7 revolution 48:9 re-examined 75:19 ride-alongs 86:10 right 1:17 2:12 6:2 13:25 14:4 19:13 20:13,17 22:22,23 23:10 23:11,16 24:17
--	--	--	---	---	--	---

25:12 28:8	scrutinised	serves 38:3	77:20,22 78:1	61:19 76:18	stages 31:21	stringent 70:23
32:4 35:20	13:13,15	service 54:13	78:9 79:9,12	89:2 90:7	stake 56:10	strong 56:8
36:7,11 41:3	sea 4:8,11	services 50:1	79:20,23 80:6	sort 2:18 7:1	stand 15:6 92:3	struggling 58:2,5
42:6,9 44:7	second 20:17	servicing 33:23	80:8,14,19	13:21 19:1	standard 1:16	students 80:13
47:2 50:13,20	32:12 33:18	34:4,6 66:4	81:4,9 82:2,13	21:7 25:9	24:8 65:8	stuff 19:6 71:14
53:2,8 55:3	secondly 4:11	89:9	82:15,21 84:10	30:20 31:10,22	standards 72:18	subject 21:22
56:19 60:17	34:18 89:16	set 6:17 12:7	84:12 86:3,9	36:2,12 42:1	Star 21:25 22:18	35:2
61:2,8 63:16	secret 47:8	16:5 65:14	86:12 87:4,14	45:2 55:19	22:19 23:3	subjects 44:25
63:17 66:9	secrets 31:22	seven 38:23	87:16,22 88:2	56:7 57:9,10	27:3 40:18	submitted 42:1
72:3 73:17	securing 12:7	81:18	88:5,9,11	63:20 67:11,12	49:9	subparagraph
75:10,25 76:1	security 85:8,11	share 20:21	89:22 90:2,4,7	68:17 69:4	start 30:5,8	80:17
76:25 78:25	87:19	56:10 62:8	90:13,19 91:5	71:14,18 74:22	89:20	substance 59:24
87:22 89:7	see 5:18 7:18	85:21,23 86:2	91:18,21 92:2	75:14,22 78:9	started 44:8	substantial
rights 79:21 87:2	9:12 11:9	shared 63:25	92:5,8	82:23 83:5	52:22	10:25 42:14,14
87:2	14:18 15:6	86:3	Simultaneously	84:12 86:4,23	starts 30:3 41:24	successful 34:21
rigid 73:5	18:20 30:2,22	sharing 64:1	71:7	90:22 91:8,23	42:8 60:25	35:9,10,10
ring 3:21 28:25	36:5 37:20	69:6 70:1,5	single 45:12	sorts 43:16 46:10	65:6 70:13,25	such-and-such
rings 46:8	43:1,5 55:6	shed 68:16	46:12 48:18	50:13	state 13:18	3:20
riots 29:8 37:6	58:2,5 62:5	sheds 26:22	90:17	sought 3:25	statement 1:13	suddenly 42:6
47:20 69:9	89:23 91:20	she'll 90:17	sir 1:4 21:19	62:17	1:16 2:11,11	sufficient 90:15
86:14	seeing 42:11	shops 86:17	57:17 73:21	sounds 17:9	6:18 9:21	suggest 5:21
rise 77:5	71:20	short 51:13 54:8	sit 15:2 51:20	41:23	14:19 16:5	suggesting 17:11
risk 26:18 42:24	seeking 14:12,14	shoulder 42:4	75:21 78:21	source 15:7	18:25 22:11,12	17:14 18:3,4
43:15 47:5	14:14 34:12	show 37:9 39:2	91:2	32:24 44:8	22:13 23:18	40:24 41:9
58:11 68:20	82:25 83:1	shut 37:25	sits 71:10 91:8	70:2 81:14	25:22 28:14	suggestion 18:16
roads 85:20	86:5	side 16:24 59:4	sitting 30:14	South 1:9,21	30:16 33:16	89:18
robbery 24:22	Seeley 22:1	sides 42:2 44:5	61:16 75:23	2:18 6:17,17	36:14 39:17	suggests 55:17
role 56:16 58:21	51:15,17 52:12	74:23	situations 34:23	9:15 18:6 20:1	52:2,3,5,14,16	sum 7:20
58:23 63:22	52:15,15,19	sight 25:2 45:1	six 26:21,22	southern 23:5	52:18 54:16	summarise 6:23
65:1,19 90:18	53:4,9,13,19	signed 1:16 13:5	38:23	spare 91:14	55:5 58:20,20	83:9
Romney 18:7	53:22 54:2,6	22:11 52:17	size 53:11 89:25	sparing 86:25	59:14 64:22	summer 29:8
room 30:15	58:25 59:14,18	significant 13:9	skill 91:2	speak 5:7 27:22	68:13 69:1	37:6
rotation 90:12	60:2,14,24	34:15 39:18,23	skills 90:12,20	28:4 33:25	70:8 74:13,22	Sunday 1:24
routine 42:17	61:3,4,10 62:7	79:4	slice 69:18	43:12 47:19	76:24 83:9	superintendent
routinely 62:15	62:13,15,22	significantly	slight 42:8	56:9 66:19	85:1 87:18,19	29:8 91:25
rule 66:20 67:22	63:17,22 64:12	40:14 65:1	slightly 42:3,12	83:21	statements 51:22	92:1
rules 73:5	64:15 69:23	silhouette 77:16	42:23 69:2	speaking 19:19	states 11:5	supervisors 79:5
ruling 45:12	75:16,17 80:23	similar 8:18	71:19	66:1,6 67:22	station 9:18	support 60:16
rumours 69:11	81:7,11,17	simple 72:8	slowly 83:15	73:17	15:25 37:25	62:17,24 63:2
run 8:11,12	82:4,9 83:18	simply 32:18	slowness 83:10	speaks 18:18	81:9	67:16 68:22
43:15 45:7	84:11,20,25	45:5 46:7,8	small 2:22 27:1	specialist 2:7	stations 35:5	79:17 83:24
rung 3:19	85:11 86:8	63:21	41:1	specials 53:18	statistics 18:6	supported 60:18
running 90:18	88:22 89:2,11	Sims 51:15,18,21	smaller-scale	specific 4:21	step 71:3	supporting 59:5
	89:21 91:4	51:23,24,24	25:3	12:11 79:23	stolen 37:7	59:6 63:24,25
S	seen 13:6,13	52:6,7,11,20	small-scale	specifically 12:9	stop 81:6,25 82:8	supportive 62:6
safely 50:20,24	18:17 19:25	52:25 53:3,10	24:24 26:11	56:15 61:10	stories 2:21,23	supports 54:15
safety 86:1	38:7 56:17	54:16,20,25	smoothly 55:24	79:2 80:23	13:19,23 29:11	suppose 14:16
sales 81:23	60:9	55:4,11,14,21	snatches 66:2	speculate 67:24	34:24 35:7,11	31:8 37:20
Sally 22:1 51:17	senior 7:15 13:6	56:7,15,20,24	social 7:3 21:8	spend 66:1	35:23 36:2	55:15 67:11
52:15 90:21	13:11 29:5	57:1,7,16,24	28:10 29:25	spending 66:5	38:6,25	73:24 74:20
Sally's 67:16	32:23 57:4	58:7,13,17,20	30:20 68:8,22	spends 8:2	story 2:19 11:23	75:11 76:12
sandwich 30:3	66:24 92:4	59:14 61:19,25	69:6,10,17,24	spent 7:22 66:8	14:3,4 15:2,5	77:9 79:12
save 89:24	sense 5:17 29:17	62:4,6,23 63:8	69:25 70:2	sporting 73:14	25:9 33:3,3	86:15 89:22
savings 35:4	45:14 60:5	63:11 64:13,16	74:20 84:2	spreading 69:11	35:9 37:24	sure 10:8 30:12
saying 9:5 22:17	64:18 68:1	64:20 65:5,7	87:25	staff 14:13 20:18	39:3 40:9 43:5	31:19 52:7,16
27:1 35:18	74:1	65:13,21 66:10	socialising 30:25	20:23 37:2,3	43:6 74:24	53:19 58:7
42:5 43:21	sensible 47:3	67:3,11,19	society 16:12	40:6,6 53:16	77:13	61:4 62:12
44:8,10,16	68:6 71:21,22	68:2,7,12 70:6	Solcara 61:13,14	53:17,20 61:5	straightforward	64:8 68:6
45:5 46:2	sent 5:6	70:12,21,24	Solihull 53:14	61:11,13,16	3:5 72:8	71:16 75:9,25
57:22 61:19	sentence 75:18	71:3,12,24	somebody 4:14	63:22,25 77:1	strategically	78:7 83:4 87:5
69:14,18 85:14	separately 23:7	72:9,11,21	4:15 7:25 9:9,9	81:11,12 88:23	91:22	91:8
says 4:7 65:18	September 52:24	73:7,13,18,21	71:20 89:20	staffed 91:16	street 26:22	surprised 19:21
scares 85:9,11	sergeants 67:21	74:5,12,20	somewhat 43:16	staffing 4:5	45:17	31:1,4 51:5
school 12:13	serve 40:7 48:15	75:8,11,21	48:3	Staffordshire	strength 84:23	57:3,17 75:22
38:19	49:12,13	76:6,12,21,22	sorry 57:2 61:10	52:3,24	strengthen 59:11	76:2 77:9
scratch 89:20	served 80:10	77:3,7,15,19		stage 15:1 86:21	strike 38:6	surveys 26:17

suspect 71:15	27:25 39:9	54:3,6 55:20	touch 80:25	undermines 62:2	value 10:10 39:6	28:8 32:23
suspected 77:25	tends 24:7,22	55:21 56:2,7,8	touched 84:1	underplayed	45:21 46:22	35:20 39:4
suspects 37:9	tenor 15:14	56:9,15,16,22	touchstone 74:11	71:15	70:15 79:10	41:24 42:2
87:10	tension 82:24	57:5,7,10,18	track 77:13	understand 3:8	85:1 89:14	48:6 52:23
suspicion 42:8	83:5	62:23 65:3	trade 31:22	5:5 10:11	90:9	56:10,23 57:6
suspicious 85:19	tensions 83:18	67:19 68:12	tradition 89:7,11	21:16 33:8	values 40:16	59:8 78:13,25
switch 49:8	84:8,23	69:1,2,22	traditional 54:18	34:10 35:19	71:5,5 72:25	85:22 90:25
sworn 1:6 22:6	tentatively 72:15	70:13,22 71:3	traditionally	37:19,21 42:9	73:1 79:5,7	ways 46:10
51:17	termed 14:7	71:4,9,20,24	71:25	43:10,25 44:10	91:7	79:15
system 42:8 44:2	terms 2:23 3:4	72:1,3,21,24	trained 12:14	45:10,10 58:3	values-based	websites 49:22
60:11 61:9,11	6:16 7:18 9:3	73:1,18,22,25	88:23 89:3	58:11 60:4	79:16	week 7:20 8:3
61:13,15 88:13	13:3 16:5	74:4,22 75:21	trainees 12:15	66:7 67:15	variation 20:14	16:17 36:20
systems 61:16	19:19 29:14	76:10 77:15	training 12:5,11	72:2,14 73:2	varied 2:21	42:11 71:20
	49:7,8 50:17	78:9,18 80:4	12:16 65:4,10	79:1 80:8 82:3	verify 32:23	weekend 5:23,25
	68:24 75:13	80:23 82:4	67:5 79:4,6,7,8	84:22 85:7	vibe 40:10	16:2
T	79:20 86:24	83:6,13,25	trains 12:16	89:13 90:13	vice 45:7	weekends 3:12
tab 60:21 65:3	90:2,3 91:21	84:12,16,18	transactional	understandably	victim 26:19	3:15 4:5 16:17
70:11,25	terrified 27:4	86:3,7,24	54:19,19 74:23	78:20	victims 80:25	weeks 5:3 88:12
tainted 11:17	territorial 59:5	87:14 88:18	transfer 29:25	understanding	84:5	welcome 1:10
take 7:25 17:20	test 18:11 32:18	90:19,23,25	31:6	39:11 40:3	view 9:22 21:22	21:18
17:21 20:6	46:5	91:5,12	transparency	45:2 54:13	25:25 26:4	well-meaning
26:8,25 27:23	tested 33:4,7	thinking 42:10	66:16	55:17,23 63:23	56:12,18 57:10	71:4
27:25 31:21	texture 29:14	63:18 77:15	treatment 35:16	63:24 65:8	75:7 78:24	Welsh 20:8
42:16 48:24	thank 1:5,8 2:15	thinks 4:15	51:2 80:13	70:9	86:16 87:1	went 55:21 62:1
55:2 77:10	12:4 19:23	thought 32:2	trial 10:25 39:13	understands	views 26:5	weren't 11:14
87:20	21:16 22:5,8	51:9	trickled 6:8	90:17	visited 9:18	86:17
taken 2:11 6:22	22:10,21 23:17	thoughts 16:10	Trinity 8:20 13:5	understood	voice 90:22	West 21:19 23:5
15:25 17:12	38:9 47:25	thousands 64:3	23:8,10	40:17 65:12	volume 54:21	47:6 50:25
26:24	51:10,20 52:1	67:8 69:4	trips 36:15	undertake 89:24	volunteered 34:3	51:24 52:21
tale 27:10,12	53:19,23 54:25	three 21:19 23:1	true 5:21 52:5,18	90:1		53:5,13 55:19
talk 4:13 5:17,19	59:13 70:6	42:11 54:25	trust 4:22 9:4	unhappy 14:21	W	56:10 60:21
7:7,9 12:22	88:14,15 92:6	69:7 78:4 85:2	18:2 35:14	47:12,17	wait 11:20	64:24 76:3,7,8
16:14 20:24	92:6,8	three-quarter	39:20 40:2,12	unidentified	waiting 5:18	76:19 86:17
38:8 44:25	theft 24:16	53:1	81:22	86:20	wake 69:9	89:8,11,24
63:22 65:22	thefts 24:23	tickets 73:15	trusting 16:21	uniformed 46:9	Wales 1:9,21,24	90:23 91:14
66:15,21 67:1	25:10	tier 27:17	trustworthy	United 23:15	2:5,18 6:17,17	Western 2:4
67:13,14,25	thing 8:9 17:24	tightening 5:11	47:11	unnaturally	7:13 8:15 9:15	we'll 21:23,25
68:7	18:9 20:23	5:12	truth 1:16 19:11	24:20	18:6 20:1,4	41:5 51:11
talked 68:17	55:19 56:8	time 2:3,7 4:4	22:12,16	unnecessarily	23:11	60:3 87:20
talking 3:8 4:4	69:8 74:2	6:25 8:5 10:17	try 19:11,13	26:7	walking 38:19	88:13
12:9 17:10	things 8:7 19:20	11:12,14 15:7	24:10 68:22	unnecessary	Wanderers	we're 8:24 13:22
18:10,21,23	21:10 43:3	17:22,23 28:1	69:11 79:14	78:6	73:19	23:17 25:8
20:15 49:18	59:4 67:14	28:5,12 31:23	81:1 83:22	unofficial 15:19	want 11:16 24:9	38:7 47:16,21
63:3 66:2,12	think 5:14 7:3,17	31:24 39:12,12	trying 44:1 75:4	unpublished	25:11 27:2	49:18,23 52:3
67:4,8 75:23	8:11,14 10:3,9	49:24 50:5	82:21 83:3	33:13	43:5,13 44:16	59:11 63:3
76:2 81:15	10:15 11:2	54:8 66:2,6,8	turn 9:21 50:6	unusual 16:4	44:22,23 45:1	69:18 70:1
tangible 74:8	13:24 14:23,24	67:4 76:23,23	TV 75:13 81:9	71:14	49:3 67:13,13	71:7 75:12
taxpayers 76:19	16:11 17:8,13	83:20 86:2,12	tweeting 68:14	unwillingness	67:14 68:23	78:5,22 85:22
tea 9:17	18:4,17 20:23	86:13,13 89:17	Twitter 21:9,10	28:3	71:6 77:10	86:1 87:16
team 54:15 67:16	22:17,18 23:12	90:15	67:8 68:8 88:1	upcoming 36:24	82:5 83:21	we've 9:2 23:10
68:21 85:14,16	25:1,14,17	timely 21:1	88:7	updates 38:10	88:17	32:1 37:3,4
88:19 89:9	26:7,17,23	times 5:3 42:11	two 42:5 51:15	upshot 80:4	wanted 7:7,8	41:4 58:11
91:22	27:2,6,14,15	83:18	53:1 54:8 69:7	urgent 69:20	11:15 48:23	59:9 74:16
teams 59:6	28:1,3,5 29:24	Timothy 1:4,6	78:2,5 89:4,5	usage 68:25	86:16	78:10,24 79:14
technical 79:6	30:1,3,8,22	1:12	two-year 12:15	use 34:15 37:15	wanting 11:6	81:20 85:5
Telegraph 23:5	31:3,3,25	tinge 18:21	type 65:16 78:8	39:2 86:19	68:11	88:11 90:25
telephone 33:19	32:14,21 33:1	tittle-tattle 32:19	types 85:3	87:25	wants 27:22	whilst 55:9
television 77:17	34:8,8 35:14	today 4:25 20:22		useful 9:3 88:6	warning 48:24	wide 2:21
tell 6:1 19:11	35:18 37:16,19	75:21,23 87:17	U	usefulness 36:24	wasn't 5:24 18:3	widely 60:8
23:21 27:9,12	37:21,23 38:2	87:21	unauthorised	utility 85:7	28:19 32:18	wider 86:7
33:17 43:7	39:23 40:8	told 3:17,18 5:1	31:8 75:6	utterly 42:25	watch 73:15	wilful 84:10
63:7	41:9,21 42:2	5:7,10 62:21	unclear 31:9		way 2:22 8:10,17	willing 6:6
telling 21:12	46:12,24 47:2	63:6	uncomfortable	V	9:14 10:14	wine 29:21
81:25	47:6,6,9,21	tomorrow 28:22	30:5,7	validity 83:15	18:11 19:6	wish 24:18 50:10
temporary 89:17	49:3,5,17 50:9	28:24 92:9	uncontrollable	valuable 66:1	20:4 21:2	66:5 78:7
ten 22:22 78:2	51:4,8 53:15	totally 10:4	43:1	85:5	25:16 27:12	withheld 26:9
tend 9:10 23:25						

<p>withholding 16:19 witness 1:4,13 22:10 39:19 51:22 52:1 55:21 57:9,16 57:21 78:17 82:25 87:18 witnesses 9:2 21:19 51:15 Wolverhampton 22:18 23:2 29:7 50:16 51:6 73:19 won 69:9 wonder 5:2 75:18 wondered 26:3 word 49:8 74:20 76:25 words 10:1 22:16 39:21 60:13 72:1 87:3 work 3:13 11:6 19:5,7,8,11 20:21 21:3,3 24:25 38:2 49:19 54:14 56:23 59:7 61:9 72:25 73:1 79:14 90:21 worked 2:1,4 20:11 52:22 53:24 56:25 57:24 working 3:15 9:7 21:7 60:20 68:9,12 71:16 86:6 88:12 works 57:6 91:11 worry 45:8,8,11 worth 7:17 61:19 wouldn't 15:12 35:21 36:22,22 43:13 57:21 58:10 62:17 78:7 wrestling 50:1 written 17:6,8,11 17:14 29:11 67:6 wrong 17:10 18:16 22:17 30:2 42:12 58:7,9,15 77:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <p>yeah 1:15 3:3,7 6:12 7:1 12:23 12:24 15:15 63:8 70:24 year 1:14 7:22 22:11 53:7 years 1:24 2:1 3:11 20:12</p>	<p>22:22 23:24 49:1,6 51:1 53:2 54:9,12 57:1,22 67:19 77:8 81:19 yesterday 87:17 Yorkshire 80:15 young 38:18,21 48:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p>00921 9:21 02/2010 70:10 07870 60:25 07874 61:2 07927 65:6 07931 65:14 07932 65:22 07958 70:13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>10 1:14 23:24 29:2 36:13 92:12 100 49:10 10101 85:3 105,000 23:12 11 36:14 70:11 12 58:19 59:13 13,000 53:16 64:16 14 38:9 15 23:24 36:23 57:1,22 77:20 17 52:2 18 29:5 39:16 1980 52:22 1991 53:5</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>2 23:20 54:16 58:20 70:25 83:8 2,500 77:7 2.00 1:2 2.6 72:13 74:6 2.8 53:16 20 2:1 20:12 54:12 70:8 85:4 2007 52:24 2009 4:8 52:24 2010 1:22 2011 80:2 82:18 2012 52:2 70:22 21 41:7 83:9 24 9:21 24/7 28:22 91:11 25 74:13 75:19 250 70:18,20 26 22:11 28 52:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>3 28:14 3.1 70:14</p>	<p>3.14 51:12 3.22 51:14 30 53:22 88:19 31 76:23 78:8 33 77:20 38 79:1 39 84:25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>4.25 92:11 43 71:25 79:24 45 82:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>5 33:16 64:21 65:15 50 71:13 50,000 58:8 55065 54:17 55069 64:22 55070 70:9 55073 79:3 55089 70:25 55091 72:13 58 7:23 58565 25:23 58569 36:14 58572 39:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>6 60:21</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>7 28:25 34:10 55:5 61:1 70 33:21 71 8:2 36:20 75 70:16,18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p>8 87:1 8,000 53:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>9 29:1 39:17 65:3</p>			
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