

Friday, 8 March 2013

1

2 (10.00 am)

3 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you. Good morning. Yes,

4 Mr Roberts. Is that Mr Roberts I see behind the files?

5 Thank you. Yes, would you like to come and sit down.

6 I shall be calling the jury in in a moment and we shall

7 be taking your evidence. If, at any stage, you feel any

8 discomfort and you need a break then please tell me. If

9 there is a break and you wish to go outside, then you

10 may do so, but only on condition that you remain either

11 just in the area immediately outside this room or on the

12 way to and in the gentleman's lavatory, which Mr Clark

13 will show you. But nowhere else; do you understand?

14 Thank you. Can we have the jury in, please.

15 Mr Roberts, do take your jacket off if you're more

16 comfortable without it. If you have a mobile phone,

17 could you switch it off.

18 A. Yeah.

19 THE CORONER: I suggest that you pour yourself a glass of

20 water while you're there.

21 (In the presence of the Jury)

22 THE CORONER: Yes, good morning, members of the jury. We're

23 going to begin this morning with evidence from

24 Mr Keith Roberts, and then we shall be reading some

25 statements to you. What I hope to be able to do later

1 on today is to give you an indication of the sort of
2 timescale that we're looking at between now and Easter.
3 All right? Thank you very much.

4 Yes, Mr Roberts, could you take the oath, please.

5 KEITH ROBERTS (sworn)

6 THE CORONER: Mr Roberts, thank you very much. You'll see
7 that there are a couple of microphones there. The sound
8 in this room isn't very good so please could you keep
9 your voice up and if you could speak close to the
10 microphones then that will help everyone to hear what
11 you're saying.

12 Mr Maxwell-Scott, who's standing, is going to ask
13 questions initially on my behalf and then there may well
14 be questions from others. All right? Thank you.

15 Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

16 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Good morning, Mr Roberts.

17 A. Good morning.

18 Q. Could you give the court your full name, please?

19 A. Keith Roberts.

20 Q. Is it right that you were employed as a clerk of works
21 by the London Borough of Southwark?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And that you worked as a clerk of the works on the
24 refurbishment project at Lakanal House in 2006/2007?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. If I could firstly just ask you to help the members of
2 the jury briefly to understand what the job of clerk of
3 works was. Can we have a look at a job description at
4 page 4500, which is in bundle 11 of the chronological
5 bundles. If you wait, Mr Clark will find you a copy.
6 (Handed)

7 This is a document that the London Borough of
8 Southwark have provided to us. The first thing to say,
9 in fairness to you, is that it is for a senior clerk of
10 works, "Hay 9", which I think is a pay scale, and it may
11 be that that is not an exact description of your job at
12 the time.

13 A. No, that's not correct.

14 Q. You were of a lower level of seniority than this?

15 A. Just clerk of works, yeah.

16 Q. Do you remember if you did have a job description in
17 this format, although presumably with slightly different
18 content?

19 A. I was given a -- I was given one with the application
20 form for the job, but it wasn't this one.

21 Q. If I could then ask you more generally about three
22 aspects of the project and ask you whether any of them
23 fell within your job description and your role.
24 Firstly, was it part of your job to monitor the progress
25 of the works and whether they were running to time or

1 getting behind time?

2 A. Correct, yes.

3 Q. Then secondly, was it part of your job to monitor the
4 quality of the work that was being done?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did monitoring the quality of the work include checking
7 that the work that was carried out was the same as the
8 work that had been specified?

9 A. Correct, yeah.

10 Q. Then finally in relation to Building Control issues, was
11 it any part of your job to ensure that the work that was
12 done complied with Building Regulations?

13 A. No.

14 Q. If, for any reason, an inspector from the Building
15 Control department happened to come to site, would it
16 have been any part of your job to talk to them or to
17 report back afterwards about anything they said?

18 A. No.

19 Q. To the best of your recollection, did any inspectors
20 from Building Control ever come and inspect the work in
21 2006/2007?

22 A. I'm not aware.

23 THE CORONER: Mr Roberts, can you please keep your voice up.
24 When you're answering, if you direct your answers across
25 the room towards the members of the jury, that will help

1 them to hear your evidence and also keep you close to
2 the microphones, rather than answering the questions
3 down the room. Thank you.

4 Q. If I then ask you very generally about some things that,
5 as far as we can tell from the documents, you regularly
6 did as part of your job. Is it right that you regularly
7 attended the monthly residents' pre-progress meetings?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Is it right that you regularly attended the monthly
10 progress meetings?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Is it the case that you prepared weekly reports using
13 a standard format?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. I'll ask you to look at one of those just as an example
16 to refresh your memory. If we look in file 8,
17 page 3148. Mr Clark will find it for you, because it's
18 a different file.

19 THE CORONER: I think you can put away the one that's on the
20 desk. (Handed)

21 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Mr Roberts, you may not have seen one of
22 these for several years, but if you take a moment to
23 have a look at it, I imagine you'll probably remember
24 the format because you filled them in every week, didn't
25 you?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. On the first page you record visitors to the site. On
3 the second page you fill out a daily record of events
4 for each of the five working days of the week. On the
5 third page, you fill out boxes about site organisation,
6 standard of workmanship, anything that's defective
7 that's been done, anything that was previously defective
8 and still needs to be corrected, and then you comment on
9 the progress generally; is that right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Over the page, now on 3151, you record how many
12 subcontractors were on site.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Then on 3152, you give a weekly update on the progress
15 of the works by reference to different features of the
16 works, whether each of those different features is
17 complete or partially complete, and then you give
18 an overall percentage.

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. So on this particular week the works were overall
21 60 per cent complete?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. If I could then show you an example of a residents'
24 pre-progress meeting. It's the first one. It will be
25 in a different file at page 1764. That will be in

1 file 5. (Handed) You won't have seen that document for
2 a long time, Mr Roberts, so take a moment to have a look
3 at it. You'll probably recognise the format. If you
4 look on the second page, so 1765. I wanted to ask you
5 about what you were recorded there as having said, under
6 4.0, "Clerk of works report". So this is the first
7 meeting with residents, as I understand it, the first
8 residents' pre-progress meeting, and what we see
9 recorded here in the minutes is:

10 "Keith Roberts introduced himself to the team and
11 explained his role in the project, which is as follows:
12 preventing problems arising (or elimination/minimising
13 their effect) by anticipation; ensuring the contractor
14 understands instructions; inspecting the works and
15 quality control; regular reporting to the construction
16 project manager and liaison with other consultants and
17 the contractors; compiling and maintaining site
18 records."

19 Then the next point, 4.2:

20 "One of Keith's key roles is in inspecting the works
21 and quality control, for example ensuring that the
22 contractor's workmanship and materials are as
23 specified."

24 Would that be a fair summary of your role?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And as you pointed out earlier, it was part of your role
2 to check that the works were done in accordance with the
3 specification, but it wasn't part of your role to check
4 whether the specification complied with the
5 Building Regulations; is that right?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. What I wanted to do finally, Mr Roberts, was just to ask
8 you about one particular aspect of the works. Before
9 doing so, is it right that you would, unless you were on
10 annual leave, have been on site every day during this
11 project?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What I wanted to ask you about was the electrical
14 rewiring works and the impact of those on the communal
15 areas, particularly the communal corridors. Is it right
16 that the flats were rewired and that also there was
17 rewiring in the cavity above the suspended ceilings on
18 the communal corridors?

19 A. I didn't deal with the electrical part of the works.
20 They had their own electrical clerk of the works for
21 that.

22 Q. There was an electrical clerk of the works?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Was that --

25 A. Jamie Anderson.

1 Q. Jamie Anderson. Was he from Southwark --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- or from Apollo?

4 A. From Southwark.

5 Q. From Southwark?

6 A. I'm just the mechanical -- I'm just the mechanical part

7 of the works, ie the paint and the walls and flooring --

8 THE CORONER: Mr Roberts, I'm not hearing what you're

9 saying.

10 A. Sorry. There was -- there was an electrical clerk of

11 the works that was appointed by Southwark. I just dealt

12 with mechanical works, ie the painting, the walls,

13 floors, installation of bathrooms and toilets, so I --

14 I didn't deal with the electrical part of it.

15 THE CORONER: Thank you.

16 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: If I could ask you a couple of questions

17 in any event about your knowledge of works to the

18 suspended ceiling, based on the fact that you were on

19 site a good deal of the time, and we'll see how we get

20 on.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. To your knowledge, is it right that there was rewiring

23 and new cabling run in the cavity above the suspended

24 ceilings?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And that the process of carrying out that work required
2 the suspended ceiling, to some extent, to be taken
3 down --

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. -- and put back-up?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. From your memory, can you help us with whether on each
8 corridor the whole of the suspended ceiling was taken
9 down to do that, or just some of the panels?

10 A. I can't -- can't recall, to be honest with you.

11 Q. When you walked around Lakanal House, do you remember
12 seeing some panels from the suspended ceiling down?

13 A. Yes, yes, yeah.

14 Q. Do you ever remember seeing in any of the corridors the
15 whole suspended ceiling down?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Do you remember ever looking up into the suspended
18 ceiling when one or more panels was down?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Do you remember anyone ever saying anything to you about
21 what was in the cavity above the suspended ceiling?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Do you remember anyone ever saying to you that the
24 cavity above the suspended ceilings was not subdivided?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Thank you very much, Mr Roberts. Those are my
2 questions, but others may have some.

3 THE CORONER: Thank you. Mr Edwards.

4 Questions by MR EDWARDS

5 MR EDWARDS: Thank you. Just one question, please. If you
6 could turn to -- sorry, I'm Mr Edwards on behalf of some
7 of the families. If I could ask you to turn to file 7
8 in the chronological bundle, page 2423, please.

9 (Handed) In fact, start at page 2422 so you can see
10 what the document is we're looking at. This is one of
11 your weekly reports from the week ending 6 August 2006.
12 If you turn over the page, just by the second holepunch
13 under "Thursday, 3/8/06", about five lines in, there's
14 a line that says:

15 "Health and safety on site today to inspect the
16 site."

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Can you remember who were "health and safety" there?
19 Can you remember whether it's someone from Southwark,
20 someone external --

21 A. No, it's Apollo, estate agent.

22 Q. Do you remember now what it is that they were
23 inspecting?

24 A. I couldn't tell you. I assume it's to make sure the
25 site's -- site's tidy, everybody's wearing their PPE,

1 scaffold's been installed correctly.

2 Q. So they're inspecting whether the work being done is

3 safe --

4 A. The work on site, yeah.

5 Q. -- rather than what's being built is safe?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 THE CORONER: Mr Dowden? Ms Al Tai? Thank you. Who's

9 next. Mr Walsh?

10 MR WALSH: No, thank you, madam.

11 THE CORONER: Mr Compton?

12 MR COMPTON: No, thank you, madam.

13 THE CORONER: Mr Leonard?

14 MR LEONARD: No, thank you.

15 THE CORONER: Ms Canby? Ms Petherbridge?

16 Mr Matthews.

17 Questions by MR MATTHEWS

18 MR MATTHEWS: Mr Roberts, my name's Matthews. I ask

19 questions on behalf of the London Borough of Southwark.

20 Can I just ask you about another type of document that

21 I believe you filled out during this project. Can I ask

22 that you look at page 3861. This is something we can

23 see that's called a defects inspection sheet; is that

24 right, Mr Roberts?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Is this something that you would fill out?

2 A. Yeah, I would -- the site agent would accompany me and
3 we'd carry out a defects inspection.

4 Q. Again, it's natural that you're looking at me. Please
5 don't. I don't think anyone heard that. If you could
6 repeat it.

7 A. It's a joint defects inspection with the site agent, and
8 I note it down and the site agent then corrects them.

9 THE CORONER: Sorry, I didn't catch that. I didn't hear
10 what you said. Could you repeat it?

11 A. This defects inspection is compiled by a joint
12 inspection with the site agent. The defects are noted
13 and then the site agent corrects them.

14 THE CORONER: Thank you. And who is the site agent?

15 A. The site agent at the time was Perry White.

16 MR MATTHEWS: The site agent, that's Apollo, employed by
17 Apollo?

18 A. Yes. Oh sorry, this one -- the contracts manager
19 accompanied me on this day, Joe Root.

20 Q. This day that we're looking at then, we can see at the
21 top the date and time of the inspection. It relates to
22 internal corridors and stairwell inspection, and that's
23 23 March 2007.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. This one also has filled out this particular sheet.

1 It's been added to, with the date of the reinspection;
2 is that right?

3 A. Correct, yeah.

4 Q. We can see that there's a column. The columns are "Item
5 defect", "Date reinspected", and we can see that the
6 date of reinspection is 9 July 2007, and we can see that
7 it's marked there whether the issue has been corrected
8 at that time or not?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Just looking down at this one, we can see that number 3
11 concerns Tor coating --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- not having sufficient coatings and the primer coat is
14 showing through in the fire exit lobbies. That's
15 9 July 2007 that appears to have been corrected.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. If I can ask you just to look at the bottom of this
18 page --

19 THE CORONER: Sorry, just so that the jury are reminded, the
20 Tor coating, that's the painting?

21 A. Correct.

22 THE CORONER: Thank you.

23 MR MATTHEWS: Number 16 at the bottom, we can see:
24 "Corridor ceilings require fire sealing and large
25 holes and cut-outs require sealing. Panels also require

1 missing screws replacing."

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Again, we can see that 9 July appears as "yes".

4 Can I then ask you to go to one more of these, and
5 that's at page 3979. We need to look to the bottom of
6 the page to get a date. This appears to have a date of
7 9 July 2009; is that right, Mr Roberts?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Back towards the top of the page, in that box at the
10 top, we have the type of inspection is "internal and
11 external inspection". This time the inspection is being
12 carried out with Perry White, the site agent. We can
13 see that in the middle box.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. We can see, if we look down at the numbers, number 5, we
16 have:

17 "Fire exit door not closing correctly, catching on
18 threshold. Requires easing and adjusting."

19 That's the front right-hand side 12th floor fire
20 escape walkway.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Can we see that effectively you and Mr White appear to
23 have gone down each of the fire escape walkways
24 examining the fire exit doors?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And how they're closing and what maintenance work needs
2 to be done to them; is that right?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. I don't think it can be -- I'm helped by Ms Sanderson.
5 Can we go back to that date, because I don't think the
6 date can be right, can it? It's on the next page that
7 the correct date is there, 9 July 2007. So page 3980.

8 In fact, while we're here, we can see one of the
9 matters at 17 that's examined:

10 "Front side of the building requires a fire stop
11 between the 1st and 14th level around the new electrical
12 conduit installed."

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Thank you very much, Mr Roberts. Madam, that is all
15 I ask.

16 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Members of the jury, do
17 you have any questions for Mr Roberts? Thank you.

18 Questions from THE CORONER

19 THE CORONER: Mr Roberts, can I just take you back in that
20 bundle to page 3862. I'm looking at item 17. Do you
21 have that?

22 A. Yes.

23 THE CORONER: Just to turn the page back, this is when you
24 did your inspection on 23 March 2007. So item 17 says:

25 "Fire stops are required to the conduits that go

1 through the floors."

2 Do you see that?

3 A. Yes.

4 THE CORONER: Can you explain to us, please, what that

5 refers to?

6 A. It's -- the fire stop is where electrical -- electrical

7 installation has been drilled through each floor, and

8 it's sealed with an anti-flammable foam to prevent fire.

9 THE CORONER: Yes, okay. Where do the conduits run?

10 A. Between each floor, down the lifts, the lift areas.

11 THE CORONER: Okay, that's helpful. Thank you very much.

12 Can I take you back to file number 7. You might

13 have it on your desk. Mr Clark, you can take the other

14 two files if you like, to get them out of Mr Roberts'

15 way. Page 2423 I want to look at.

16 A. Sorry, 24 ...?

17 THE CORONER: 2423. Mr Edwards, a moment ago, took to you

18 this page. I'm looking at the box for Thursday,

19 3 August.

20 A. Yes.

21 THE CORONER: Mr Edwards took you to the entry regarding

22 health and safety. Can I ask you to look at the entry

23 above that, which says:

24 "Carried out an inspection with Jamie Anderson, the

25 electrical engineer, to flats 40 and 28 to inspect the

1 condition [and so on] ... and the electrical routes that
2 are to be taken."

3 Can you tell me something about those electrical
4 routes?

5 A. I can't answer that. That's a decision made by Jamie.
6 I just accompanied him in case there was any building
7 alterations required, so unless they -- unless -- it's
8 all decided by an electrical engineer, what routes to
9 take and how they -- how they go about it.

10 THE CORONER: I see. So you don't recall what that was
11 about?

12 A. I don't, sorry.

13 THE CORONER: All right.

14 Yes, thank you very much, I think that's all I need
15 to cover with you. Thank you very much.

16 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Sorry, excuse me, unfortunately
17 we've got a couple of late questions, my apologies.

18 THE CORONER: Yes, of course.

19 Questions from THE JURY

20 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Just two sides of the same coin.

21 We were just interested in whether you issue
22 a certificate to state that the work is complete both on
23 the job as a whole and also in particular to painting
24 such as the Tor painting, mainly because that's
25 a fire-retardant material. So when the Tor paint is

1 finished, is there a certificate or some guarantee that
2 you might issue to say that that's up to scratch, and
3 also at the end of the job as a whole, is there
4 a handing over process, or a certificate of some kind,
5 that is your guarantee that the job has been done up to
6 standard?

7 A. The Tor coating's guaranteed by the manufacturer, which
8 goes to the -- the project manager. So I don't --
9 I don't guarantee the works, I just inspect the progress
10 which is supposed to be carried out.

11 As for the end of the contract, I just sign
12 a completion form to say that the works are complete,
13 but it's not a guarantee from myself.

14 THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY: Just a moment while I confer with
15 my fellow juror. (Pause) That's all our questions,
16 I think.

17 THE CORONER: Thank you very much.

18 Members of the jury, we'll just take a five minute
19 break, so if you'd like to go with Mr Graham that would
20 be helpful. Do leave your papers behind. They'll be
21 quite safe. Thank you.

22 (In the absence of the Jury)

23 THE CORONER: Thank you, Mr Roberts. We've completed your
24 evidence and you're now released from custody, so you're
25 free to go.

1 A. Thank you.

2 THE CORONER: Those who collected you this morning may be
3 able to take you back home, but if they can't, I confirm
4 that we shall meet the cost of a taxi to take you home.
5 So you're free to go.

6 A. Thank you.

7 (The witness withdrew)

8 THE CORONER: About five minutes.
9 (10.39 am)

10 (A short break)

11 (10.45 am)

12 THE CORONER: Thank you.

13 (In the presence of the Jury)

14 THE CORONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Maxwell-Scott, I think
15 we're going to read some statements now?

16 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Yes, that's correct, madam. Just before
17 doing so, I am going to ask for Mr Walsh to come forward
18 just to give formal identification evidence in relation
19 to Catherine Hickman, because I believe that's not
20 something that's been covered thus far in evidence.

21 THE CORONER: All right, thank you very much.

22 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: We've spoken to him and he can do that in
23 a moment or two.

24 THE CORONER: Okay, thank you very much. If you could do
25 that then, thank you.

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DC DAMIAN WALSH (recalled)

THE CORONER: Yes, do sit down. Would you switch on the microphones, please. Yes, you swore an oath yesterday and I don't need you to repeat that, thank you.

A. Thank you, madam.

Questions by MR MAXWELL-SCOTT

MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I want to ask you just a couple of questions in relation to formal identification of Catherine Hickman. We've heard evidence that a body was found within flat 79 after the fire and that that body had severe burns, and what I wanted to ask you was about steps that were taken to formally identify the body by dental records. Is it right that a statement was taken from an Alfred Martin?

A. That's right, sir, yes.

Q. And that he was asked to compare the dental records for Catherine Hickman with the body that had been found in flat 79?

A. That's correct, yes.

Q. If you could have a look at that statement and simply tell us what the conclusions were. I think they're at the very bottom of the final page, just four lines.

A. "It was in the view of Mr Martin that there was almost perfect correlation between the ante-mortem dental records of Catherine Hickman and my port-mortem dental

1 findings and in the absence of any incompatibilities, it
2 is my opinion that the individual examined by me at the
3 above location on the above date was indeed
4 Catherine Hickman."

5 Q. Thank you very much. No further questions.

6 THE CORONER: Yes, I'm sorry, before you go, the members of
7 the jury don't actually know who Mr Walsh is.

8 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Ah, right.

9 THE CORONER: So I think perhaps the cart before the horse,
10 but perhaps you could just identify yourself to the
11 members of the jury, please.

12 A. Yes, I'm a Detective Constable and I'm based on the
13 police investigation team that was involved in the
14 Lakanal investigation from the start, from when the fire
15 started.

16 THE CORONER: Thank you very much. Yes, does anyone have
17 any questions? Thank you.

18 Thank you very much for coming.

19 A. Thank you, madam.

20 (The witness withdrew)

21 THE CORONER: Thank you.

22 Witness statement of BERNARD HOLLOWAY read

23 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I'll now read the statement of Mr Bernard
24 Holloway. This statement is dated 19 February 2013 and
25 reads as follows:

1 "I make this statement in connection with the
2 inquest into the deaths of the above named following
3 a fire at Lakanal House, Sceaux Gardens, Camberwell,
4 London SE5 7DP on 3 July 2009."

5 THE CORONER: Before you continue, I wonder would it be
6 possible to increase the size, please? Thank you.

7 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: "I am now a freelance writer. Prior to
8 that I had worked in building surveying from the early
9 1970s. I was initially a member of the Institute of
10 Architecture and Surveyors and qualified as a building
11 surveyor in about 1987.

12 "I was employed by Donald James Chartered Surveyors
13 from about the age of 21 years. As I recall, the firm
14 initially started as Caliendo & Associates and later
15 became Donald James. The partners were Donald Caliendo
16 and Philip Cleverley. The practice dealt with the usual
17 range of work undertaken by surveyors, including
18 valuations for commercial and residential properties,
19 but also dealt with a large amount of work for housing
20 associations, designing schemes for converting
21 properties into flats. I became a partner in the firm
22 when Philip Cleverley retired in about 2001/2002.
23 However, I left the practice and became a sole
24 practitioner in about 2003, but retired from the
25 surveying professional about four years ago to

1 concentrate on a writing career.

2 "I hold no historic files or other records relating
3 to works carried out by the practice as these were
4 destroyed in a flood to a basement storage area
5 approximately ten years ago.

6 "In the latter part of 1986, the practice was
7 approached by the London Borough of Southwark
8 (Southwark) to provide a scheme for improving the
9 communal corridors at two maisonette blocks at
10 Lakanal House and Marie Curie House, Sceaux Gardens,
11 Camberwell. The blocks had become somewhat run down and
12 Southwark required a low maintenance solution to improve
13 the aesthetic appearance of the communal areas.
14 I handled this project within the practice, subject to
15 the supervision of the partners. The practice had
16 worked for Southwark on previous occasions but I have no
17 recollection of the precise nature of these particular
18 projects.

19 "I cannot be sure as to the precise sequence of
20 events due to the passage of time and lack of documents.
21 However, I have been referred to a letter that I wrote
22 on behalf of the practice to Southwark, dated
23 2 December 1986, in which I set out details of works
24 that the practice had been asked to deal with being as
25 follows:

1 "(i) Removal of chipboard ceiling board to soffit
2 on corridors and reinstatement of 25-millimetre thick
3 Panoflam fire-resistant boarding of 100 times 50 SW
4 framework back to the existing height, with
5 flame-resistant balancer to rear face and handed white
6 laminate to out face. All to provide half-hour fire
7 resistance and to restrict spread of flame in accordance
8 with by-law requirements. Trade information is
9 enclosed.

10 "(ii) Removal of plywood and chipboard access panels
11 to service ducts where occurring within corridor areas
12 and renewal with half-hour fire SW frame and Panoflam
13 boarding with intumescent fire seal to edge of panel and
14 junction to frame.

15 "(iii) Fire stopping within vertical service ducts
16 (2 No.) by specialist contractor. Trade literature is
17 enclosed.

18 "(iv) Removal of defective and provision of
19 half-hour fire doors between communal corridor and
20 staircase area.

21 "(v) Provision of intumescent pyrogrill within
22 ventilation duct from ventilated lobby to internal
23 bathroom area.

24 "I assumed that the practice would have been
25 consulted by Southwark at some point prior to my letter

1 of 2 December 1986. I believe that I would have carried
2 out an initial inspection of the properties and then
3 drawn up a specification for the works. The
4 specification would have been sent to Southwark for
5 comment and approval well before any works commenced.

6 "It was my recollection that the works were carried
7 out in one tranche. However, from perusing documents
8 provided to me by the coroner it appears that works were
9 also carried out in the latter part of 1989/early 1990.
10 I can only assume that Southwark required the works to
11 be divided into two separate phases, most probably for
12 budgetary reasons.

13 "Whether or not the works were divided into two
14 separate phases, I do have a recollection of referring
15 the complete specification document for the works to
16 Southwark's Building Control department so as to ensure
17 that the proposed works were compliant with appropriate
18 regulations and building practices applicable at the
19 time. For some reason, I distinctly remember that the
20 Building Control department advised that as these were,
21 in effect, repair works, they did not fall under their
22 authority. However, the Building Control department
23 recommended that we seek the advice of the
24 London Fire Brigade in relation to the proposed works.
25 I do not recall the names of the persons I dealt with at

1 the Building Control department at that time.

2 "Acting on the advice of Southwark's Building
3 Control department, a copy of the full specification for
4 the works was sent to the London Fire Brigade. I have
5 a clear recollection of meeting a representative of the
6 Fire Brigade on site and going through the specification
7 with him on an item-by-item basis. I cannot be sure of
8 the date of this meeting but I would have thought it was
9 likely to be in late 1986. I am unable to remember
10 specific issues discussed at that meeting due to the
11 passage of time. I can only assume that as the purpose
12 of the meeting was to consider fire prevention issues
13 that the proposed replacement materials for the ceilings
14 would have been discussed and potentially the question
15 of the ceiling voids and whether fire stop partitions
16 were required. However, I would have been entirely
17 guided by the Fire Brigade representative in relation to
18 these matters.

19 "The specification prepared was approved as it
20 stood. Nevertheless, I am sure that if any
21 recommendations or alterations had been made in relation
22 to the specification these would have been incorporated
23 before it was put out to tender. It will be noted from
24 my letter of 2 December 1986 I refer to the meeting with
25 the Fire Brigade and state:

1 ''We have had a meeting with the fire officer on
2 site and items (i) to (v) are all in accordance with his
3 advice.'

4 ''Following these initial dealings with Building
5 Control and London Fire Brigade, the specification would
6 have been put out to tender. I believe that Southwark
7 would have dealt with the tender process themselves,
8 although I may very well have assisted with the
9 selection of contractors after the tenders came in.

10 ''I have seen documents provided to me by the coroner
11 which suggest the contractors appointed to deal with the
12 phase 1 works were a firm called Buckingham & Sons
13 Limited. I have no specific recollection of this firm
14 of contractors being appointed but accept from the
15 documents that it is likely that they did carry out the
16 initial phase 1 works.

17 ''I believe that the phase 1 works would have
18 commenced in the summer of 1987, on the basis that I
19 have been referred to a building notice dated
20 19 June 1987. Whilst the practice was only appointed to
21 be the contract administrator, I believe that I would
22 have visited the site at least twice a week and possibly
23 more than that if a particular matter had arisen which
24 required my input.

25 ''It would appear from the documents provided by the

1 coroner that the phase 2 works commenced in the latter
2 part of 1989 or early 1990. I believe that the phase 2
3 specification was based upon the original specification
4 I had prepared. From these documents, it would seem
5 that Ronald J Orwell & Partners were appointed as
6 quantity surveyors (possibly also for phase 1). I can
7 only assume that they effectively split the
8 specification that I had prepared and put it into
9 a format so that the phase 2 works could be put out to
10 tender separately. I have no recollection of being
11 involved in the tender process for the phase 2 works.

12 "The document from the coroner contain a priced
13 tender for the phase 2 works from a building called
14 WJ Mitchell & Sons Limited, being dated 7 November 1989.
15 The documents also contain a letter dated
16 7 November 1989 from a Mr J Bates at Southwark Housing
17 to WJ Mitchell, awarding them the contract for the
18 works. The letter also makes reference to my
19 appointment as Southwark's representative for the works.
20 I have no specific recollection of the precise nature of
21 my role but I assume that this would have largely
22 involved visiting the site, checking on progress of the
23 works, dealing with any problems or issues arising
24 et cetera.

25 "As before, it is difficult for me to remember when

1 I visited the site but are likely to have taken place
2 approximately twice each week, although may have been
3 more if there were any particular issues that required
4 my input. However, it will be appreciated that a clerk
5 of the works was appointed, Mr Kilgannon, to oversee the
6 phase 2 works and I would assume that he would have been
7 present in site on a day-to-day basis. In connection
8 with the phase 1 works, I also assume that a clerk of
9 works, site supervisor or other similar person would
10 have been on site daily.

11 "I have been asked to comment on the materials used
12 in the works. In general terms, all materials specified
13 were of British Standard or had equivalent approvals or
14 certifications as being fit for use. In relation to the
15 ceiling boarding, I recall that I had carried out
16 research on a material called Panoflam and visited the
17 manufacturers/suppliers' officers and technical
18 department to ensure it was fit for purpose, and as will
19 be noted from my letter of 2 December 1986 I enclosed
20 literature from the manufacturers. The material was
21 considered to be suitable following my meeting with the
22 representative of the London Fire Brigade when the
23 original specification was discussed and agreed.

24 "I have also been asked to comment on the lack of
25 any specific boxing in of the staircases from the

1 individual maisonettes that cut into the ceiling voids
2 of the balconies. I have no recollection of being asked
3 by Southwark to specifically deal with this in the
4 scheme of works required. In essence, the works
5 Southwark required were to improve the cosmetic or
6 aesthetic appearance of the corridors and communal areas
7 and allow for easy maintenance and this would have been
8 outside of my remit.

9 "I have also been asked to comment on a letter that
10 I apparently wrote to the London Fire Brigade in 1990
11 regarding door locks. I have not seen this letter and
12 do not have any specific recollection of it. I do not
13 particularly recall door locks being part of the works.
14 However, I do have a recollection that the balcony
15 escape doors on the exterior of the building separating
16 the means of escape balcony from the central stairwell
17 were constantly being vandalised and I may have sought
18 advice regarding an appropriate repair or other
19 solution.

20 "I have no knowledge of working with contractors in
21 the name of Drake & Skull in relation to the works at
22 Lakanal House or Marie Curie House.

23 "I have done my very best to recall my involvement
24 in these works. Even with the aid of the documents
25 provided by the coroner, my recollections in many areas

1 are very sketchy as this occurred over 25 years ago.
2 I would genuinely struggle to provide any further
3 information over and above what I have included in this
4 statement."

5 That's the end of the statement.

6 THE CORONER: Thank you.

7 Witness statement of EDMUND DALY read

8 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I will next read the statement of Edmund
9 Daly. I'll just get that up on the screen. This is at
10 page 133 in the bundle of statements to be read. It's
11 a statement dated 11 February 2013. It reads as
12 follows:

13 "My name is Edmund Daly (people call me Eddy). I
14 have been employed by the London Ambulance Service for
15 29 years. I am a paramedic and a team leader.

16 "Overview. On 3 July 2009, my call sign was N345.
17 I had my major incident cards with me. I was in a car
18 at Elephant and Castle roundabout waiting to be
19 allocated to a call. I heard on general broadcast EOC
20 asking for any available vehicles to attend for a baby
21 trapped in fire. I contacted EOC on my radio and
22 offered to help. Shaun Rock, a paramedic on
23 a motorbike, had just pulled in to talk to me. I told
24 him about the call and we both went to Lakanal House.
25 The logs show that I was dispatched at 4.31 pm and

1 I arrived on scene at 4.36 pm. Sean arrived before me
2 as he was on a bike. I parked on Havil Street.

3 "3 July 2009. On scene, I approached Boyd Fisher;
4 I recognised him as a senior officer. He was on
5 Dalwood Street, by Fontenelle building, on the grass.
6 Boyd said I should be bronze loading. Together we
7 decided that loading should be on Havil Street, near
8 Fontenelle House, with parking further up Havil Street,
9 opposite the old St Giles' hospital tower. The role of
10 bronze loading involves receiving casualties from triage
11 and loading them onto an ambulance, ensuring that the
12 appropriate staff, equipment and vehicles are in place
13 for transfers to hospital.

14 "At about 5 pm or a short time before, I made my way
15 back to my car to get some paperwork. I was approached
16 by a woman with a baby; she told me that she was on the
17 phone to her friend who was trapped on the 11th floor.
18 She handed me her mobile phone and I spoke to Dayana.
19 I introduced myself, saying my name is Eddy Daly and
20 I work for the London Ambulance Service. I asked her
21 where she was and she told me that she was in the
22 bathroom of flat 81, with her daughter, son, neighbour
23 and baby -- five people in total. She told me she was
24 trapped. I asked if she had placed a towel at the foot
25 of the door. She told me that she had done this, having

1 been advised by the Fire Brigade. I advised her to stay
2 low down and that I would maintain regular contact with
3 her. At that stage, she said everyone was okay.
4 I think the call lasted about three minutes, after which
5 I gave the mobile phone back to the woman but I recorded
6 Dayana's mobile number.

7 "I then approached Boyd Fisher, who was with
8 a senior officer from the London Fire Brigade, and
9 I relaid the conversation I had just had with Dayana,
10 that she and four others were trapped in flat 81. The
11 fire officer said that several calls had been received
12 from residents in the block and they were aware that
13 people were trapped. Shortly after we had to retreat
14 from the block due to debris falling.

15 "I was busy setting up the bronze loading on
16 Havil Street, but over the next 30 minutes I had further
17 telephone calls with Dayana, at least three. I called
18 her mobile first, and after that she would also call me
19 to ask me what was happening. I wanted to reassure her
20 as much as I could, as I felt terrible for her being
21 trapped in the building. I wanted to offer her comfort.

22 "About 15 minutes after our first conversation,
23 I spoke to Dayana again. She said that they were okay,
24 although I could hear crying in the background. I tried
25 to reassure her and told her to ring me back if the

1 situation was getting worse. Every time I spoke to her,
2 Dayana seemed calm. At one point I remember asking
3 Dayana where she was from and she asked me where I was
4 from. I told her my family is from Montserrat, which is
5 a British island in the West Indies. I also told her
6 I was born in St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

7 "Just after that conversation, I saw a man trying to
8 get through the cordon on the junction of Havil Street
9 and Dalwood Street. He was trying to get through
10 towards Lakanal House. He was being prevented from
11 going through the cordon. The man then approached me
12 and told me that his wife was trapped in flat 81.
13 I realised that he must be Dayana's husband. It seemed
14 to be a coincidence that he spoke to me. I was wearing
15 a bronze loading tabard and a white hat and I was on
16 Havil Street, as I was dealing with the bronze loading.
17 I got the impression that he thought I was a firefighter
18 as he was asking me to do something for his wife.
19 I told him I'm ambulance and I said that I had been
20 speaking to his wife and that she was okay. We jointly
21 approached a nearby firefighter and Dayana's husband
22 urged the firefighter to do something and pointed up to
23 the flat, where the fire was. The firefighter and
24 I reassured him that everything was being done to rescue
25 them, and I reassured him that the fire service knew

1 that she was there.

2 "Shortly after that, Dayana's husband went off into
3 the crowd. I did not see him again until after Dayana
4 had been brought out of the building. I did not speak
5 to him again.

6 "A short time later, I had another conversation with
7 Dayana. She explained that they could feel the heat and
8 that at one point they had been joined in the bathroom
9 by three other people. Later she told me that they had
10 left.

11 "My last conversation with Dayana was around
12 5.30 pm. She continued to be calm but I could sense the
13 rising emotion in her voice. She said that smoke and
14 fire were coming in and I could hear choking in her
15 voice. I continued to try and reassure her, and again
16 advised her to stay low to the floor. After that,
17 I called Dayana's number but my calls were not answered.
18 I knew that the HART were in the building and I hoped
19 that they had been rescued. I informed LAS silver,
20 Steph Adams, that I had lost contact with Dayana.

21 "At about 6 pm, or just after, I heard on the radio
22 that the HART were about to enter flat 81. Later,
23 an adult female was brought to the loading area on
24 a trolley, with LAS staff providing resuscitation. It
25 was my understanding that it was Dayana and I was

1 distraught. I heard a loud scream and saw Dayana's
2 husband in the crowd. Dayana was loaded into
3 an ambulance and taken to St Thomas' Hospital. Two
4 children were also brought to loading, loaded onto
5 ambulances and taken to hospital. I stayed on scene
6 until late in the evening and then I attended a debrief
7 at the town hall.

8 "Reflecting on the incident is still emotional for
9 me because of the conversations that I had with Dayana.
10 I have thought about that day a lot, and I still do,
11 asking myself whether I could have done things
12 differently. However, I am certain that I passed on the
13 information I had about Dayana's location as soon as
14 I had it, to my senior officer and to the fire service.
15 I stayed in touch with her to try to reassure her."

16 That's the end of the statement.

17 THE CORONER: Thank you.

18 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Then I'm going to read two statements
19 from Mr Abdul Nuhu.

20 THE CORONER: Are you happy to carry on, or do you need
21 a short break?

22 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: I'm happy to carry on.

23 Starting at page 418 of the bundle for witnesses to
24 be called.

25

1 Witness statements of ABDUL NUHU read

2 THE CORONER: Members of the jury, you recall that Mrs Nuhu
3 gave evidence a while ago. We're not asking her husband
4 to come to give evidence, but we're going to read some
5 of his evidence.

6 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Just by way of introduction, Mr Nuhu gave
7 a first statement on 12 August 2009, which runs to some
8 13 pages. We're not going to be reading that statement.
9 By agreement, we're going to read Mr Nuhu's second
10 statement and his third statement, but I mention it
11 because certainly the second statement refers back to
12 the first one.

13 THE CORONER: But the ones that you're reading are
14 sufficient for our purposes?

15 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: They're sufficient for our purposes and
16 they are shorter. This statement from Mr Nuhu is dated
17 12 August 2010 and reads as follows:

18 "This is further to my statement dated
19 12 August 2009, which related to my experience during
20 a fire at Lakanal, Camberwell, on 3 July 2009. I lived
21 in number 80 on the 11th floor with my wife and
22 children. I have been asked the following questions:

23 "1. What were the smoke conditions like in the 11th
24 floor level north corridor when Helen Udoaka came to
25 your flat?"

1 The answer is:

2 "The corridor was filled with black smoke, which
3 meant that we could only breathe in it for a very short
4 time.

5 "2. Why did you not leave your flat and go
6 downstairs?"

7 Answer:

8 "We had been sleeping during the afternoon, so when
9 we awoke and realised there was a fire, the smoke in the
10 corridor was already thick. If I had been on my own
11 I might have risked it but I did not want to put my wife
12 and children in danger by taking them through the smoke.
13 Also, I had spoken to the emergency services and was
14 told that the Fire Brigade were in attendance and were
15 aware of the situation.

16 "3. Why did you eventually leave your flat and what
17 were the smoke conditions like in your flat?"

18 Answer:

19 "Helen was also with us with her baby. The
20 situation in our flat was getting worse, with smoke
21 coming in through the gap under the door. I could also
22 see flames outside and I was becoming concerned that we
23 were trapped, and so I took down a curtain in case
24 I needed it to make a climbing rope. Eventually I heard
25 the sound of breaking glass and realised that had we

1 needed to get out.

2 "4. When you went into your neighbour's flat from
3 the east balcony, what were smoke conditions like in her
4 flat?"

5 Answer:

6 "Her flat seemed to be clear of smoke. We all
7 crowded into the bathroom, which was initially clear of
8 smoke, but after about 20 minutes, smoke started
9 entering from the vent and so I advised her to try and
10 seal it with paper and sellotape.

11 "5. When you went into your neighbour's flat from
12 the east balcony, what were smoke conditions like on the
13 balcony?"

14 Answer:

15 "I do not recall much smoke on the balcony at that
16 time.

17 "6. When you left her flat and went out onto the
18 balcony, what were the smoke conditions like on the
19 balcony outside her door?"

20 Answer:

21 "There was a lot of smoke. I was trying to get the
22 attention of the emergency services to rescue us, but
23 when I was joined by my wife I tried to persuade her to
24 get back inside because the smoke was so bad.

25 "7. Why did you not go down the staircase from the

1 balcony?"

2 Answer:

3 "I knew that the balcony led to the staircase.
4 However, when I had earlier been in my flat, I had seen
5 a lot of smoke on the landing that led to the lifts and
6 stairwell. Therefore, I thought that there may be fire
7 in that area and so I did not want to walk into further
8 danger. However, I was not aware that the balcony was
9 an actual escape route."

10 That's the end of that statement. Then page 421 is
11 the beginning of Mr Nuhu's third statement. This is
12 dated 12 December 2012 and reads as follows:

13 "I make this statement in connection with the
14 inquests into the deaths of the six people named above.
15 I have previously provided two witness statements to the
16 police, dated 12 August 2009 and 12 August 2010. I have
17 had the opportunity to consider those statements and
18 exhibit to them.

19 "Timings. I have been provided with the following
20 information about when certain events happened.
21 I understand that this information is uncontroversial
22 because it comes from records made at the time:

23 "(a) The first 999 call relating to the fire at
24 Lakanal House was made at 16.18;

25 "(b) The first fire engines arrived at Lakanal House

1 at about 16.23;

2 "(c) I made my 999 call at 16.36;

3 "(d) When my daughters and I were taken to King's
4 College Hospital by the London Ambulance Service, we
5 left Lakanal House at 17.46.

6 "In this statement I will describe, to the best of
7 my recollection, how long certain events took. I agree
8 that the events I describe must have taken place between
9 about 16.23, when the first fire engine arrived, and
10 17.46, when we left Lakanal House, and so it may be that
11 some of the periods of time I refer to were in fact
12 shorter than I remember them.

13 "Photographs and diagrams. I have been shown the
14 following photographs."

15 He then identifies five photographs, and what I can
16 do at this point is break off and show those on the
17 screen.

18 THE CORONER: Yes, thank you. That would be helpful.

19 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Firstly photograph IMGP5617, which was
20 taken at 17.08 on the day of the fire by the
21 London Fire Brigade. That's on the screen now.
22 Secondly, IMGP5619, which was taken at 17.09 on the day
23 of the fire by the LFB, and that's on the screen now.
24 Thirdly, photograph IMGP5628, which was taken at 17.27
25 on the day of the fire by LFB. That's on the screen

1 now. Fourthly, photograph DSC0102, which was taken on
2 4 July 2009 by LFB, which is on the screen now.

3 Fifthly, photograph DSC7106, which was taken on
4 23 July 2009 by BRE Global. That's on screen now.

5 THE CORONER: Thank you.

6 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Then the statement continues:

7 "I have also been shown the following diagrams ..."

8 These diagrams are stills from the computer
9 presentation and should be in the jury bundle.

10 THE CORONER: Yes, we've looked at these a number of times.
11 Thank you.

12 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: They are:

13 "... (a) west elevation floor numbers; (b) a diagram
14 showing the flat numbers; (c) flat configurations:
15 lower; (d) flat configurations: upper; (e) flat
16 configurations, west flat; (f) flat configurations:
17 lower floors 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13; (g) flat
18 configurations: upper floors 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14;
19 (h) west flat, ingress and egress.

20 "Escape routes. I would like to describe what I
21 knew about the different exits from my flat. As well as
22 the front door to the flat leading onto the corridor
23 there was another small door round the stairs. This was
24 also on the lower floor of the flat.

25 "There were balconies on both sides of the upper

1 floor of the flat. They could be reached by a door from
2 the kitchen on the west side and a door from the living
3 room on the east side. The balconies were clear and you
4 could walk along them, but I had never done this because
5 it would mean walking past other people's kitchens and
6 living rooms. I had seen that on each side of the
7 building there was a fire door where the balconies
8 reached the central staircase. There was a bar you
9 would push to open the door. I do not think these doors
10 could be opened from the other side, from the central
11 staircase.

12 "I did not think of the balconies as fire escapes as
13 such, just as balconies. As far as I was aware, if
14 there was a fire my means of escape would be to go out
15 of the front door, along the corridor (which was not far
16 because my flat was the closest flat to the central
17 staircase) and down the stairs. I would not use the
18 lift if there was a fire because it would not be safe.

19 "Events on the day of the fire. As I explained in
20 my previous statements, on the day of the fire, my
21 family and I had been sleeping. When we woke up, we
22 thought we could smell something burning. I went
23 upstairs to check where the smell was coming from but we
24 could not see anything that was causing it. I came back
25 downstairs and looked out of one of the bedroom windows

1 and I could see smoke. The bedrooms are on the east
2 side of the building. In my first statement, I said
3 that I thought that the smoke was coming from the 4th,
4 5th or 6th floor. On reflection, I do not think that is
5 right. I think that the smoke was coming from about the
6 9th floor.

7 "I remember that we went to the front door and
8 looked outside into the corridor. There was already
9 smoke there. I could not tell where it was coming from.
10 I could see that the lift and landing area was filled
11 with smoke. I did not go out as far as the door that
12 leads to the lift and landing area but I could see the
13 smoke because parts of the door were made of glass.

14 "In my first statement, when I say that I shut the
15 door to prevent smoke coming into the building I am
16 referring to the front door to our flat. I cannot
17 remember whether I opened the door or whether my wife
18 did, or whether we each opened the door once.

19 "I remember that at one point when our front door
20 was open we saw a neighbour, whom I now know was
21 Helen Udoaka, with her baby. She was coming from the
22 opposite side to the central staircase. Helen Udoaka
23 was panicking. She came into our flat with her baby.
24 My wife has mentioned to me that she also saw a man in
25 the corridor at that time but I do not remember seeing

1 a man there.

2 "Once we had shut the door again, my wife said that
3 she thought we should use the lift to get out of the
4 building. I stopped her and told her that because there
5 was a fire it would not be safe to use the lift.

6 "I called 999. I have been told that I made the
7 call at 16.36. When I made the call I was in our flat.
8 I am not sure, but I think Helen Udoaka was with us in
9 the flat when I made the call.

10 "In my first statement I mention that Helen Udoaka
11 passed me her mobile phone so that I could speak to her
12 husband. We were still in our flat when I was speaking
13 to him.

14 "I thought that the Fire Brigade were not coming
15 quickly enough and so I was trying to think of
16 an alternative escape route. I took a curtain down from
17 one of the bedrooms and cut it into strips, which I then
18 tied together to make a rope. I think I did this after
19 I called 999.

20 "We decided to leave our flat when we heard glass
21 shattering and we could see smoke and flames near one of
22 the windows in one of the bedrooms. I think that was
23 about 15 minutes after I called 999. The six of us (me,
24 my wife, our two daughters and Helen Udoaka and her
25 baby) left our flat together. We went upstairs and out

1 of the kitchen door onto the balcony on the east side of
2 the building. We went along the balcony away from the
3 central staircase to the next flat. This was
4 Dayana Francisquini's flat, which is flat 81. I am not
5 sure whether I knew the number of the flat at the time.
6 We went into other flat through the door that led from
7 the balcony into her living room. At her suggestion we
8 went downstairs and into the bathroom. At that point
9 there were nine people in the bathroom
10 (Dayana Francisquini, her two children, and the six of
11 us that had come from our flat).

12 "When we first went into her flat, there did not
13 seem to be any smoke and Dayana was calm. There was no
14 smoke in the bathroom, and so we were all happy to sit
15 in there and wait for the Fire Brigade to come to help
16 us. I think that Dayana may have been popping in and
17 out from time to time to check on things because it was
18 her flat, though I am not sure.

19 "Things were calm until we noticed that smoke was
20 coming through the vent in the bathroom. I think that
21 happened after we had been in the bathroom for 20-25
22 minutes. That was the first time we had seen any smoke
23 in the bathroom. It was not strong smoke. Dayana gave
24 us wetted towels for the children's faces. She held
25 a towel against the vent. I told her that she could not

1 stay holding the towel because she needed to be free to
2 move around and asked her if she had any sellotape and
3 newspaper. Dayana left the bathroom to fetch some. The
4 rest of us stayed in the bathroom.

5 "At that time, smoke was only coming in through the
6 vent. I used the sellotape and newspaper to cover over
7 the vent. This seemed to work and to stop the smoke
8 coming in.

9 "Not long after that, perhaps about ten minutes
10 afterwards, I saw smoke coming in under the door. I was
11 very worried then that the flat might be filled with
12 smoke or that there might be a fire in the flat. I left
13 the bathroom to see what was happening in the flat.
14 After that, I did not go back to the bathroom at any
15 stage.

16 "I went into one of the bedrooms. I think it was
17 the bedroom on the left as you look at it from the front
18 door to the flat, which is the bedroom furthest from the
19 bathroom. Dayana followed me out of the bathroom.

20 "I opened one of the windows and I was shouting down
21 to the firemen that we were in a precarious situation.
22 I think one of the newspapers printed a photograph of me
23 leaning out of the window. While I was leaning out of
24 the window I could feel a sharp heat on my left-hand
25 side. I looked to the left and saw a big fireball, by

1 which I mean a large, continuously burning fire. It was
2 just a few windows to my left on the same level, so
3 I think it must have been in flat 79. It was very
4 close. I left the window and went upstairs. This was
5 not because the heat was too severe for me to stay where
6 I was but because I had seen that there was a large fire
7 very close to us and I realised that I needed to do
8 something to help us all to escape.

9 "I do not know what Dayana was doing while I was at
10 the window. If I said anything to her at that point, it
11 would have been something about the big fire to our
12 left. I have been shown photograph DSC0102, which shows
13 a child's bedroom where the mattress has been removed
14 from the bed. Dayana did not say anything to me about
15 a mattress when I was with her and I do not remember
16 seeing her move the mattress. I do not remember seeing
17 a mattress on the floor. So far as I remember,
18 everything with the beds was properly arranged.

19 "I went upstairs to the balcony on the east side of
20 the building. I did not see what Dayana did. She did
21 not come upstairs with me. My wife has told me that
22 Dayana went back to the bathroom.

23 "I was alone on balcony for several minutes, perhaps
24 as long as 20 minutes. I shut the door from flat 81
25 behind me. I was banging on the balcony and shouting

1 that there were people in the flat, including children,
2 who needed help. Although there were a lot of people
3 outside the building, it was not too loud, and I think
4 people could hear what I was shouting. When I went out
5 onto the balcony, I saw the rope I had made earlier. It
6 was lying half in and half out of the door that leads
7 from the balcony into the kitchen of our flat. I must
8 have dropped it there in a moment of panic when we left
9 our flat before going into flat 81. I tied the rope to
10 the bannister of the balcony. I cannot remember exactly
11 which part I had tied it to. I pulled on the rope to
12 see if it would hold my weight. During that time,
13 people below were shouting at me not to use the rope or
14 jump.

15 "I was then joined on the balcony by my wife, who
16 was carrying our daughter, Yasmina, and our other
17 daughter, Miriam, who must have followed my wife.
18 I told them to go back inside because there was too much
19 smoke on the balcony. The smoke was coming in waves.
20 My wife said that they would not go back inside and so
21 we all stayed on the balcony. We were all together on
22 the balcony from the time they first joined me until we
23 were helped out of the building by firemen.

24 "In my first statement, I said after my wife had
25 joined me on the balcony there was a time when she went

1 back to the bathroom, but this is incorrect. At one
2 point she did say that she wanted to go back into the
3 flat but there was too much smoke inside and so she did
4 not go back in. While we were on the balcony, the door
5 back into flat 81 was shut. We stayed in the part of
6 the balcony where the rope was tied to the bannister.

7 "In the time which was on the balcony, first by
8 myself and then with my family, there was nobody else on
9 the balcony. I did not see anyone from any of the other
10 flats.

11 "When the firemen arrived I could see that they were
12 trying to get through the door from the central
13 staircase to the balcony. They were trying to break
14 down the door. I shouted to them to ask if they wanted
15 me to press the bar on our side of the door to open it.
16 They shouted back to say yes, so I went along the
17 balcony towards the central staircase and opened the
18 door. I cannot remember whether we walked or ran.

19 "In my previous statements, I have described how we
20 went down the main stairs and what happened after that.
21 I do not remember being asked by anyone about the layout
22 of the building or of the flats. As I described in my
23 previous statements, we told the firemen that there were
24 other people who were still in the flat we had come
25 from. I cannot remember whether we said that they were

1 in flat 81 or whether we said that it was the flat next
2 to flat 80. I'm not sure if I knew at the time that
3 Dayana's flat was flat 81."

4 That's the end of the statement.

5 THE CORONER: Thank you very much.

6 MR MAXWELL-SCOTT: Madam, those are all the statements that
7 I propose to read today.

8 THE CORONER: Thank you.

9 Well, members of the jury, that is the end of the
10 evidence that we're going to be hearing today, so you
11 are now free for the rest of the day. It might be
12 helpful just to have a look ahead at next week. On
13 Monday, we shall be having expert evidence about
14 firefighting from Mr Brian Davey. We shall be having
15 some further evidence from Symphony Windows, and then
16 later in the week we shall be having evidence from
17 senior members of the London Fire Brigade. Then there
18 may be some other evidence that we'll be slotting in
19 through that. So next week is going to be quite a busy
20 week, but our aim is to finish all of the evidence that
21 we would like you to hear by next Friday. So we hope
22 that by close of business next Friday the evidence will
23 be complete.

24 Then it would probably help you to know how we plan
25 the remainder of these inquests. You'll understand that

1 once the evidence is complete, then all of the advocates
2 need quite a bit of time in order to collate the
3 evidence and gather their thoughts together, so the
4 likelihood is -- this is provisional at the moment but
5 the likelihood is that we shall not be requiring you to
6 attend on Monday the 18th or Tuesday the 19th or
7 Wednesday the 20th. We shall probably need those days
8 in order to prepare for the next stage. I'm hoping that
9 on Thursday 21 March, I shall be able to begin my
10 summing-up of the case to you, so probably by the
11 morning of Friday, the 22nd, we shall be asking you to
12 retire to begin considering your verdicts. All right?
13 So that will just be the first day of that
14 consideration.

15 So I hope that that helps you to give some idea of
16 the overall timescale for the next couple of weeks, and
17 then the following week, which is holy week, just
18 running up to Easter, that will give us a few days free
19 to give you the time that you're going to need to carry
20 out your deliberations. But certainly we're hoping very
21 much that it will be possible to finish by Easter
22 itself. Does that help? As I say, that's all
23 provisional at the moment, but that's what we have in
24 mind. Thank you very much.

25 You're free to go now for the weekend. Please

1 remember the warnings that I give you. You must not
2 talk to anyone about this matter, about the evidence
3 that you've heard, and please, you must not carry out
4 any of your own research. Please could you be back here
5 for a start on Monday at 10 o'clock. Thank you very
6 much.

7 (In the absence of the Jury)

8 THE CORONER: Good. Are there any issues that anyone would
9 like to raise before we finish for this afternoon?
10 Fine. Next week is going to be quite a busy week but
11 does anyone foresee any problems with the timetable for
12 next week as it's currently looking? Good. Thank you
13 very much. Until Monday then, thank you.

14 (11.38 am)

15 (The Court adjourned until 10 o'clock on Monday,
16 11 March 2013)

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Day 37 OF Transcription of the
Lakanal House Fire
Inquest - 08/03/13
Corrected