# 2022 Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes 

Before: The Commissioner, The Honourable Justice John Sackar

At Leve1 2, 121 Macquarie Street, Sydney, New South Wales

On Monday, 15 May 2023 at 10.11am
(Day 51)

Mr Peter Gray SC
(Senior Counse1 Assisting)
Ms Claire Palmer
(Counsel Assisting)
Mr Enzo Camporeale
(Director Legal)
Ms Caitlin Healey-Nash
(Senior Solicitor)
Mr Rhys Carvosso
A1so Present:
Mr Anders Mykkeltvedt and Ms Amber Richards for NSW Police
Mr Murugan Thangaraj SC with Mr Jonathan Milner for Mr Willing

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes?
MR GRAY: Commissioner, today is expected to be the final day of evidence for public hearing 2. Mr Willing will return to the box to answer some further questions. I'm ready to proceed.

Your Honour might wish to take appearances.
THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, certainly.
MR THANGARAJ: I appear for Mr Willing, Commissioner.
THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
MR MYKKELTVEDT: Your Honour, I appear for the Commissioner of Police.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you again. All right. Mr Willing, would you be kind enough to come forward.

Just because there has been a bit of a break in proceedings, I will get you to be resworn, and just forgive me, I've just forgotten. Oath or affirmation?

MR WILLING: Oath is fine, Commissioner.
THE COMMISSIONER: All right.
<MICHAEL JOHN WILLING, resworn:
MR GRAY: Commissioner, I should, before I ask Mr Willing some questions, hand up two additional volumes of the tender bundle, volumes 15 and 16, and there are also some agreed short minutes reflecting some orders that are not controversial.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR MYKKELTVEDT: Commissioner, those short minutes are agreed.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Mykkeltvedt.
Yes, I have made those orders, thank you very much.
<EXAMINATION BY MR GRAY:
MR GRAY: Q. Mr Willing, when you were last in the witness box here in February, I asked you some questions about Pamela Young's lengthy 445-page statement; you may remember?
A. Yes.
Q. And speaking generally for the moment, I suggested to you that her statement made it clear that her opinion was that the most likely explanation for Scott Johnson's death was suicide; do you remember me putting that to you? A. Yes.
Q. And you declined to accept that characterisation, you'11 recal1?
A. Yes.
Q. And you said, and I am paraphrasing, that you thought she simply outlined the evidence relating to each of the three possible hypotheses, but then just left it to the Coroner?
A. Yes.
Q. In effect, you were suggesting - again my words not yours - that her statement was, as it were, neutral as to those three possibilities?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, first of all, have you thought further, since you were last here, about the question of what impression a reader of her statement would have received on that point?
A. I have.
Q. And do you accept that while all three possibilities that is, suicide, homicide and misadventure - were all covered or dealt with in her statement, it was quite clear that her own view was that suicide was more likely than either of the other two?
A. Yes.
Q. And would you agree also that it was quite clear that her own view was, firstly, that suicide was distinctly likely and there was solid evidence supporting that theory? A. Yes.
Q. Secondly, that homicide was distinctly unlikely, and the evidence for that theory was weak to non-existent?
A. Yes.
Q. And, thirdly, that misadventure was possible, but that she didn't devote much attention to that possibility?
A. I think that's correct, yes.
Q. It may be that $I$ can eliminate the next half a dozen pages of what $I$ was going to ask you, given those answers. Is there a reason why you have come to that somewhat different view since you were last here?
A. Since $I$ was last - or since $I$ gave evidence in February, I should say, I've read and received lots of different documents which has swayed my opinion to what you've just put to me and what I've agreed to.
Q. In that case, I will do, I think, a rather more broad-brush approach than $I$ had planned to do.
A. Sure.
Q. You may recal1 - and if you need to have the statement
in front of you of course we wil1 put it there - that at the end of her very long statement, the 1 ast 15 pages or so - -
A. Yes.
Q. -- from about 430 to 445 are under the heading "Opinion"?
A. Yes.
Q. So we've had 400-plus pages of factual matter - -
A. Yes.
Q. -- investigative results, and then there's 15 pages under a heading "Opinion"?
A. Yes.
Q. And she gives, firstly from paragraph 2878 through to 2898, so 20 paragraphs, the suicide hypothesis?
A. Yes, that's correct.
Q. Then from 2899 to 2970 , the homicide hypothesis?
A. Yes.
Q. And then from 2971 to the end, the misadventure hypothesis?
A. Yes.
Q. In the broad, taking them in slightly different order, with the homicide - sorry, the misadventure hypothesis, she essentially says that misadventure is not impossible, but there had been some previous cases of misadventure in that area?
A. Yes.
Q. And then essentially leaves it there on the topic of misadventure?
A. Yes, without having the statement in front of me, I accept what you're saying, sir.
Q. And on the homicide hypothesis - and I can go through this in more detail if you find it necessary - essentially, what she does is two things: she identifies factors that might be put forward as supporting a homicide hypothesis?
A. Yes.
Q. And, secondly, she then refutes or debunks each of those, in turn?
A. Yes.
Q. So she's plainly saying that the homicide hypothesis is unlikely to be right?
A. Yes.
Q. Then as to suicide, overal1, what she does, conversely, is, firstly, to identify factors that are put forward against the suicide hypothesis?
A. Yes.
Q. And, secondly, she refutes or debunks those factors?
A. Yes.
Q. So overal1, she's plainly saying that the suicide hypothesis is likely to be right?
A. Is more likely than the others, yes.

MR GRAY: Now, could Mr Willing have tab 377 , which would be in volume 16, I think, [NPL.3000.0003.2864_0001].
Q. This may be a little hard to read, it's in rather smal1 print, but --
A. I have it in front of me here, sir.
Q. Yes. The email chain is in May, on 20 May 2015. So about five weeks after Coroner Barnes has ordered the third inquest?
A. Yes.
Q. Five weeks after the Lateline interview and about four weeks after Pamela Young has been removed from the Scott Johnson investigation?
A. Yes.
Q. What we find here is that Detective Acting Superintendent Laidlaw writes to Coroner Barnes seeking approval for DCI Pamela Young to travel to England to obtain statements from two people about matters concerning suicide in relation to Scott Johnson.
A. That's right, yes.
Q. As I mentioned, that's about a month after she has been removed from the Scott Johnson investigation, and she is proposing to fly to England to obtain statements from two people supportive of the suicide theory?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. Did you know that that was proposed a month after she'd been taken off?
A. No. I was relieving as an Assistant Commissioner in another area, however, Mr Laidlaw who was relieving me, raised it with me, and I thought it was an unlikely proposal that the Coroner would agree to, but told him he should contact the Coroner and raise that with him.
Q. Again, to state perhaps the obvious, it suggests a considerable attachment to the suicide theory on the part of --
A. Yes, it does, it does.
Q. -- Pamela Young, doesn't it?
A. Yes, it does.
Q. Did you also share her view that suicide was the most likely explanation for the death of Scott Johnson?
A. Oh, I think I gave evidence on the last occasion under questioning from Mr Tedeschi. My view changed at various times. I thought at some parts of the inquiry, at some points I thought that suicide was much more likely; other times I thought no, depending on my own analysis of what I was being told at the time. But I thought overall that
suicide was a likely possibility - likely explanation for what occurred with Scott.
Q. Can I just ask you to have a look at tab 382
[NPL.0147.0001.0005_0001] in that bund1e.
A. Yeah.
Q. This is the note of your interview with the solicitor from Ashurst --
A. Yes.
Q. -- ten days or so after the Lateline interview.
A. Yes.
Q. On page 3, towards the bottom, about two paragraphs from the bottom --
A. Yes.
Q. -- maybe start three paragraphs from the bottom, where it has your initials, "MW", the question that you have been asked to respond to and the topic you have been on is in the paragraph or so before, if you just orient yourself --
A. Yes, I'm aware.
Q. -- is one aspect of the Johnson family's belief that this was a homicide and that there were gangs operating, and so on?
A. Yes.
Q. You can see that that's the subject matter?
A. Yes, it is, yes.
Q. And you're recorded as saying the Johnsons embellished the facts --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and said it was the same area as Scott's death when it was actually a distance away?
A. Yes.
Q. Then you're recorded as saying:

I think he has probably gone up there to engage in casual sex and either fallen asleep and fallen over or committed suicide.
A. That's right.
Q. So misadventure or suicide?
A. Yes.
Q. This is Apri1 2015?
A. That's correct, yes.
Q. Pausing there, did that view remain the same thereafter or is that a view that, as you have described, chopped and changed a bit?
A. It did chop and change a bit. You'11 see in the next line I mention Alan Turing, as a mathematician, similar sort of circumstances, a homosexual man who was concerned over the style of mathematics that Turing engaged in, and I thought that that was a likely scenario at the time, but it did change. There was another - you know, it was before the Coroner for a considerable period of time after that and I thought ultimately that you couldn't determine one way or the other.
Q. So when you're recorded here as saying in April

2015 --
A. Yes.
Q. -- "My theory is", and you refer to Alan Turing --
A. Yes.
Q. -- that theory underwent some changes thereafter?
A. Yeah. Yeah, it changed.
Q. Now, you certainly shared Ms Young's view, I gather, that it was not a homicide?
A. I thought that there was no evidence to indicate it was a homicide. I couldn't rule that out, of course, but I thought it was more likely the other two scenarios.
Q. Did you share her view that the Johnson family were wrong in continuing to push the homicide theory?
A. I didn't think they were wrong in continuing to push
it. In the absence of the other two theories, I thought that was narrow, and that the other two hypotheses should be considered as well.
Q. Did you agree with the view that she seems to have had that the Johnson family were the police's opponents in connection with the Scott Johnson inquest?
A. No, I didn't. Not opponents.
Q. She saw them that way, it appears, from what we've been provided with in documentary form?
A. Yes, that's very clear.
Q. Do you agree with that?
A. I do.
Q. She seemed to have the view - and I'11 take you to a document or two --
A. Sure.
Q. -- that one objective of the police in the third inquest would be to defeat the Johnson family by convincing the Coroner that it was not homicide?
A. Yes, I think that's - that's true. I have read those sentiments.
Q. And did you understand that to be her objective at the time she was doing her work on the Johnson case?
A. I understood that she reached a conclusion and then pushed that conclusion.
Q. Now, do you say that you didn't regard it as an objective of the police to defeat the Johnson family in that way?
A. Not defeat. I mean, you know, it was certain1y an adversarial relationship that had evolved over time.
I didn't consider defeating them to be an objective.
Q. Can we just have a look at 382A
[NPL.201.00001.0029] --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- which is some bullet points that you prepared at about the time you were going to be interviewed by the Ashurst solicitor?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, on page 4 of those notes just below halfway down the page - now, just to orient you, this is 14 Apri1. It's the day after the Lateline interview. Do you see the paragraph beginning "At 5.04 pm "?
A. Yes, I do, yeah.
Q. Now, you refer there to a text message from DCI Young
on 14 April, where she says that the Johnson family criticise and humiliate her "and all our efforts"; do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And your response --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and you're evidently quoting from a text message that you sent her, is:

I know Pam. I have felt this crap too and you know that I support you. I want all
the hard work you have done to come out in court for what it is and show the Johnsons for what they are. We need to let that happen and can't jeopardise that now by letting them win.
A. Yes.
Q.

This is for Penny and well and all of the other people who have helped.

Now, doesn't that suggest that you were keen, just as she was, not to let the Johnsons win?
A. I say that, and I'm attempting to appease her, because she was very upset at the time.
Q. Do you mean to say that you used that kind of language although you didn't actually believe it?
A. I didn't see it as an "us" - you know, as a game to be played where there was a winner or not, but it was - I was appeasing her because that was very much her view.
Q. Well, she responds:

Mick - I will not let them win - that is not in my DNA.
A. Yes.
Q. Once again making it very clear that she saw it as her against the Johnsons?
A. That's right.
Q. And she wanted to defeat them, obviously?
A. Yes.
Q. And a defeat was no finding of homicide?
A. That could be, yes, that's right, yes.
Q. It's pretty obvious, isn't it?
A. Yes.
Q. And you respond:

Ok. I understand. We wi 77 work it through and we wi 71 come out on top.
A. Yes.
Q. Again, that is you saying to her, "I agree, we wil1 defeat the Johnsons, we will win"?
A. Yes, that is.
Q. But you say that wasn't actually your attitude, in fact?
A. I was attempting - as I said, I was attempting to appease her. She was extremely upset. I didn't see it as a - as a game with a winner or loser, but it was in the context of all of the criticism that Pam had received up until that point.
Q. You may recall last time you were in the witness box I asked you a couple of questions about an email, which I can dig up if need be --
A. Sure.
Q. -- from two and a half years later - that is, on the day that the Coroner actually made the finding in November 2017 that it had been a homicide.
A. Yes.
Q. And there were some emails that I showed you which indicated that those that had worked on the case for the police - namely, Penny Brown in particular - were very upset; do you remember that?
A. Yes. Yes, I do.
Q. And the obvious inference is, isn't it, that those working on the case right up to November 2017, including Penny Brown, were upset because they were dead against
a finding of homicide?
A. Yes.
Q. We11, what do you say about the open-mindedness of those who were conducting that investigative work?
A. I believe that they were open-minded but - during the course of the investigation, up until the time it went to the Coroner. From then on it was in the hands of the Coroner, but they reached a conclusion, without a doubt.
Q. Wel1, they started with a view, it seems, well and truly by April 2015, that it was not homicide and was very likely to be suicide?
A. Very likely, yes, that's right.
Q. And they evidently still held that view right up to November 2017 and conducted the inquiry, albeit under the direction of the Coroner, from that perspective?
A. Yes.
Q. That doesn't sound very open-minded?
A. By that point it was in the hands of the Coroner, but --
Q. I'm asking you about the --
A. But I agree with what you're saying.
Q. -- approach of those doing the work, the police officers?
A. Yes.
Q. And you are agreeing with me?
A. Yes, I am.
Q. Now, I wil1 turn to the Lateline topic.
A. Sure.
Q. You may as well just keep that folder there, if you wouldn't mind.
A. Sure.
Q. Because most of the documents that $I$ want to show you are in that folder.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, on the last occasion back in February, the Commissioner asked you a few questions and I asked you one
or two - the Commissioner asked you a few at page 1711 of the transcript. And Mr Willing should have that, either on the screen or in front of him, if we can. Now, if we scroll down towards the bottom, yes, at the bottom of 1711 --
A. Yes.
Q. -- there's a question from me at line 41:
Q. Now, you knew that Pamela Young was going to be interviewed for Lateline, didn't you?

And your answer starts with the word "No"; do you see that? A. Yes.
Q. And you go on to say a bit more, which you can read to yourself, it's on the screen, and you refer to knowing something about background - and I will come to this in some detail --
A. Sure.
Q. -- but you then say:
A. ... I was unaware that ... she would
actually give a live interview or an
interview, I should say, that would be televised.

Now, is that answer correct?
A. Yes. It's a reference to the in-studio interview that she gave on 13 April.
Q. Your answer included that you were unaware that she would give an interview that would be televised.
A. Yes.
Q. That's not right, is it?
A. No, it doesn't take into account the door-stop
interview that she did during the day on the 13th.
Q. The Commissioner then asked you:
Q. ... do I understand it to say --
this is at 1712 --
that she didn't tell you that she was going on air that night?

And you said, "No, no"?
A. I'm referring - that's correct, I did say that.
Q. You said that on the transcript, but that answer is not true, is it?
A. It doesn't take into account the fact that she had recorded an interview at the Glebe Coroners Court with the $A B C$ that may have gone on television that night.
Q. Do you still say that she didn't tell you that she was going to be on Lateline that night, having been interviewed for Lateline?
A. Yes, for - sorry, in the - in an in-studio capacity like she did. But she was interviewed at the court, as I said.
Q. So the Commissioner asks you at about 1ine 14:
Q. It must have come as a complete shock and a surprise when you saw her face on the television, then, did it?

And your answer was:
A. Yes --
A. Yes.
Q. --

I received a telephone call saying that, "Pam is on Lateline". I turned it on and saw her there.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, is the answer "Yes", truthful - that is, it came as a shock and surprise when you saw her face on the television?
A. In that capacity, in an in-studio-style interview, yes.
Q. We11, the Commissioner took that very point up with you in the next few questions.
A. Yes.
Q. Line 19:
Q. ... did it come as a shock and
a surprise --

Answer:
A. Yes, it did.
Q. -- to see her on the television?
A. Yes, it did.
A. Yes.
Q. The Commissioner asked:
Q. ... she never asked your permission?
A. To go on television like that, no.

The Commissioner says:
Q. Yes, correct.

And then he asks you:
Q. ... (b) therefore you had no knowledge
that she was going on television?
A. Not like that, no.
A. Yes, that's correct, yes.
Q. The Commissioner then asked you:
Q. When you say, "not like that", I'm so sorry, not at all?

And your answer was:
A. No, not on - not on television at all.

Now, that's not true, is it?
A. Yeah, that's - what you are saying is right and I was wrong. I didn't take into account --
Q. You were wrong?
A. Yes. I didn't take into account the fact that she had
been interviewed by $A B C$ at court and that it may be on television later on that night.
Q. So do you still say, now, this morning, that you didn't know until you saw the Lateline program that night that she was going to be on it having been interviewed for it?
A. I still say $I$ didn't know that she was going to do an in-studio interview like she did. I --
Q. Wel1, what do you say that you did know?
A. I did know that she had been interviewed by ABC Lateline at court, and that was likely, or could be on as part of a series or an exclusive story by Lateline that night.
Q. I'11 come back to that. Then on page 1713, at about line 29, I asked you:
Q. ... however it came about, you in fact saw the Lateline broadcast?

And you said, "Yes, I did."
A. Yes.
Q. The Commissioner then asked you:
Q. As a result of a phone call?

And you said, "Yes, that's correct". Now, that's not accurate, is it?
A. I don't think so. I've seen material since then where I received an email, I think on my phone, from a Detective Chief Inspector, and I think that was the notification that I received which caused me to turn on the television.
Q. Wel1, I'11 come to that, too, but when that email was sent to you and he told you that Pamela Young was on television --
A. Yes.
Q. -- your answer was, "Watching, mate", in other words, you were already watching it?
A. Some minutes later, I replied that. I turned on the television after receiving notification.
Q. Let's go to a bit of the detail. Now, the Lateline broadcast, as we know, was on the evening of Monday, 13 Apri1?
A. Yes.
Q. Earlier that day there had been a directions hearing before State Coroner Barnes with respect to the Johnson case?
A. Yes.
Q. For some weeks before that there had been discussions and planning about how to handle the media in relation to what was 1 ikely to happen at that directions hearing?
A. For about two weeks prior, yes.
Q. And some of those discussions involved you?
A. Yes.
Q. Two of the main aspects for the directions hearing, as everyone understood, were going to be, firstly, whether the Coroner would actually order a third inquest --
A. Yes.
Q. -- correct? And, secondly, whether the Coroner would make a non-publication order over Pamela Young's lengthy statement, or whether it would become public, or largely public?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, the police, to that point - up to and including

13 Apri1 - and DCI Young, were contending that her statement should not be released to the public?
A. Yes.
Q. They were contending that there should be a non-publication order over it?
A. Yes.
Q. But there was concern within the police, especially on the part of Pamela Young, that the statement had somehow already been provided to the Johnson family?
A. Yes.
Q. So, so far you're agreeing with what I'm putting?
A. Yes.
Q. A11 right. Now, could you just turn to 372
[NPL.0138.0002.3306] in that bund1e, please.
A. Yes.
Q. That is an emai1 from Georgina Wells, usually referred to as Georgie Wells --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to Strath Gordon, both of those people being in the world of the Media Unit or some such unit in the police hierarchy?
A. Yes.
Q. They were media officers. And Georgie We11s is telling Strath Gordon on 14 Apri1, and that is, the day after the Lateline interview, something about the background leading up to it. Do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. She says that on Wednesday, 1 Apri1, there was discussion with you and Pamela Young about how to manage the media around the directions hearing, given that the police knew that the Johnson family had a copy of the statement and were likely to approach the media?
A. Yes.
Q. So you agree that that indeed did happen?
A. Yes.
Q. And she says, Georgie We11s says:

We agreed on backgrounders with The Australian [namely] (Dan Box) and ABC [name7y] Lorna Know7es ...

And I just pause there for the moment.
A. Yes.
Q. I asked you about what you meant or what you understood "backgrounders" last time?
A. Yes.
Q. And as I recall it, you said it meant, in effect, talking to a journalist off the record?
A. Yes.
Q. Giving the journalist a bit of an understanding about something that was likely to be a topic on which they might
want to write?
A. Yes.
Q. So you refer to "backgrounders" with Dan Box and Lorna Knowles. And then, according to Georgie Wells, what also was discussed involving you and Pam Young and Georgie Wells was:
... with the possibility of on record interviews if and when the statement was made public by the Coroner.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, first of all, do you agree that that, although it's only four or five 1 ines long, captures what was discussed?
A. It does, but I didn't have the conversations with Pame1a Young about the possibility of going on the record when the statement was made public or if the statement was made public. They were conversations between Georgie Wells and Pamela.
Q. A11 right. We'11 come to an emai1 where something similar is said, but --
A. Sure.
Q. -- you don't recall being party to discussions where there was this kind of rider or qualification about going on the record if the statement was made public?
A. I don't recall specifically. It was certain1y something that Pam thought could happen, should that eventuate.
Q. A11 right. Now, on this same topic, if you just fiick over to 382A [NPL.2017.0001.0029_0001] again, which is your notes?
A. Sure.
Q. Just about above halfway on the page there's a bullet point beginning, "A couple of weeks prior to 13 April"; do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. Which would put it at around about 1 Apri1, close?
A. Yes.
Q. And probably, do you think, referring to the same discussion that Georgie Wells has just been referring to in that email?
A. I think that refers to a discussion between Pamela Young and I that had - that led to the dialogue with Georgie Wells.
Q. So we need to look at these two bullet points together?
A. Yeah.
Q. In the one that $I$ have started with you say that

DCI Young spoke to you about a media strategy?
A. Yes.
Q. I won't read it al1 out but you can read it to yourself, and halfway down that bullet point she says her idea was - we11, you say:

Her idea was that we "background" select journalists with the contents of her statement ... so they had the complete story --
et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. And the third-last 1 ine of that bullet point reads as follows, in your note:

If one was --
that is, if a non-publication order was issued --
then the discussions would be nul7 and void
(they could not use the information
provided as it came from DCI Young's statement).
A. Yes.
Q. And you agreed with that approach and you organised a meeting with Georgie Wells?
A. Yes.
Q. And then that's what the next bullet point tells us about?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, in that bullet point, you note that Georgie Wells was going to brief the Director of Public Affairs, Strath Gordon?
A. Yes.
Q. And you were going to speak to Detective Chief Superintendent John Kerlatec and then in due course to the Deputy Commissioner Nick Kaldas?
A. Yes.
Q. About this proposed approach involving background?
A. That's correct.
Q. And the next bullet point tells us that Strath Gordon, according to Georgie Wells, approved that or agreed with that approach?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, did Pamela Young tell you, around this time, around about 1 April or so, that she herself had already given a copy of the statement to Emma Alberici at the ABC some time previously?
A. No.
Q. If she had told you that, what would you have done? A. It would have stopped the backgrounding strategy; it would have stopped it then and there.
Q. And why so?
A. Because we were in a position where we were asking or seeking a non-publication order over the statement and it had been provided to a journalist already.
Q. You're aware now, $I$ take it, having seen these materials at least in recent times --
A. Yes.
Q. -- that Pamela Young had indeed given her

445-page statement to Emma Alberici some eight weeks earlier?
A. Yes.
Q. If we go to tab 354 [SCOI. 82991_0001] we see Emma Alberici telling someone else in the $A B C$ in an email, first of all, in the first paragraph, that she was going to be
having lunch with Steve Johnson and Dan G1ick the next day? A. Yes.
Q. But then in the longer paragraph beginning, "I have", Emma Alberici says:

I have an exclusive (explosive) interview with the Detective Chief Inspector who led the reinvestigation of the case.

Now, I'11 come to this in a siightly different way short1y, but since this is on 11 Apri1, she's evidently referring, apparently referring, to the interview that she had with Pamela Young the day before, on the 10th?
A. Yes.
Q. And did you know, either on the 10 th or by the 11 th, that Pamela Young had been to the $A B C$ and given an interview of some description to Emma Alberici?
A. A backgrounding discussion, yes.
Q. You knew or thought you knew that she'd given
a backgrounding discussion --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to Emma Alberici on the 10th?
A. Yes.
Q. In the second 1 ine of that paragraph, Emma Alberici says, referring to Pamela Young:

She has said (we taped yesterday under embargo) --
A. Yes.
Q. --
that this family has used their wealth and position to improperly influence the NSW judiciary.

Was that something that she ever said to you or made known to you, that she had that view?
A. That they had improperly - that she thought that they had improperly influenced the New South Wales judiciary? No.
Q. By using their wealth and position?
A. The judiciary? No.
Q. We11, did she have a view, that you were aware of, that they had used their wealth and position to improperly influence someone else, not being the judiciary?
A. She had a view that the Homicide Squad or the Police Force had been influenced to conduct the Strike Force Macnamir investigation.
Q. And is that a reference, as you understood it, to the meeting with the Police Minister --
A. Yes.
Q. -- at the time of Australian Story, or broader than that?
A. A reference to her views arising from the meeting with the Minister at the time, around the time of the Australian Story.
Q. Emma Alberici goes on in this email:

Pamela Young is frustrated by the multi
millions of dollars likely to be spent on
a third coronial inquest (which will be
announced Monday) when there is
unequivocally no new evidence to uncover.
That seems to be what Pamela Young apparently has said to Emma Alberici?
A. Yes.
Q. And is that consistent with what, to your knowledge, she was saying to you and others at the time?
A. Not openly 1 ike that. She certainly felt frustrated that a lot of time and resources had gone into the investigation, but not in those words.
Q. Emma Alberici goes on:

I know this because she --
that is Pamela Young --
(extremely confidentially) gave me a copy
of her 500 page report 8 weeks ago \& I've
read it al7.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, "eight weeks ago" would take us back to approximately mid February -- -
A. Yes.
Q. -- you agree?
A. Yes.
Q. And when was the first time that you learned that Pamela Young had given Emma Alberici her statement back in February?
A. When I read this material that was provided.
Q. Meaning in the last month or so or --
A. Yes.
Q. Prior to that, no idea?
A. No.
Q. If we go to tab 346 in the same volume
[NPL.0138.0001.0072] you'11 see there's an emai1 from Penny Brown to Pamela Young on 17 February
A. Yes.
Q. And the subject heading is "Documents for Emma"; do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. And Penny says to Pam:

Hi Pam,

I have placed a double sided copy of your large statement in a massive blue manila ... envelope on your desk.
A. Yes.
Q. And the next paragraph:

I spoke to Emma today and informed her that you would contact her and arrange a time to catch up.

Do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. So do you read that as telling us that on 17 February, Penny Brown provided a copy of the 445-page statement to Pamela Young for Pamela Young to give to Emma Alberici?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. What do you say about the appropriateness of that conduct by both Pamela Young and Penny Brown?
A. Completely inappropriate and wrong.
Q. Now, the backgrounder idea, as I mentioned to you a little while ago --
A. Yes.
Q. -- seems to have had, at least in some people's minds, a qualification, namely, the possibility of going on the record if and when the statement was made public?
A. Yes.
Q. If we go to 382, your Ashurst interview, and go to the middle of page 2, or just above the middle of page 2 --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you see the solicitor asks you, "What does backgrounding mean"?
A. Yes.
Q. And you say, "Off the record". And you go on to say a bit later in that answer:

There was concern whether there was
non-publication order over her statement.
If there was no order then the statement
was on the public record. After that
Georgie and Pam discussed whether she could go on the record.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, could you explain what you meant when you gave that answer? Is that a discussion that you were party to or that you were told about or - please tell us.
A. No, as I said before, the discussions around the possibility of going on the record occurred between Georgie and Pam. If her statement was - like, there was
no-publication order over the statement.
Q. Yes, but you're telling the Ashurst solicitor on 24 April--
A. Yes.
Q. -- that Georgie and Pam discussed whether she could go on the record?
A. Yes.
Q. So somebody, either Georgie or Pam, must have told you that?
A. Yes.
Q. And who was it who told you?
A. Georgie, I believe, but I can't recall exactly.
Q. Well, what is it, as you recall, that Georgie said had been discussed with between her and Pamela Young on that point?
A. That if the statement went on the record, there was a possibility of - sorry, if the statement was - had no non-publication order over it, there was a possibility of doing an on-the-record interview, should requests come in, but it would be something that would have to come back for further consideration and approval.
Q. This is the account given to you by Georgie Wells?
A. If it was Georgie that told me - I believe it was Georgie.
Q. Could we go to 347, please [NPL.0138.0001.0037]. Now, this is an email from Georgie Wells to John Kerlatec and Kenneth Finch and also copied to yourself, Pamela Young and Bradley Monk?
A. Yes.
Q. And it is on 7 April?
A. Yes.
Q. So six days before the directions hearing. Please just tell us, first of all, who was John Kerlatec - that is, what position did he hold - and Kenneth Finch?
A. So John Kerlatec was my direct boss. He was the Director of Serious Crime Directorate, as it was structured at the time, within the State Crime Command.

Ken Finch - Kenneth Finch - was his equivalent as the Director of the Organised Crime Directorate - so there were two directorates within State Crime Command. At the time of this email he was acting as the Commander of the State Crime Command, so Acting Assistant Commissioner.
Q. I see. So two very senior officers?
A. Yes.
Q. So Georgie Wells tells them within the first paragraph that the directions hearing is coming up on 13 Apri1?
A. Yes.
Q. And in the second paragraph she tells them that Pamela Young has prepared a statement of 445 pages, and that Pamela Young has sought a non-publication order?
A. Yes.
Q. But she also tells them that it's possible that it could be made available to the media for reporting as soon as Monday?
A. Yes.
Q. She says there's concern that the media, given that 445 pages is a long document, might rely on the Johnson family's view of the world because there wouldn't be time to absorb of the lengthy statement; correct?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. And so the strategy proposed is in the next
paragraph beginning "As such":
... we would like to provide a background
briefing to the $A B C$ and The Australian prior to Monday ...
A. Yes.
Q. So far, that's as you understood was to happen?
A. Yes.
Q. That's something that you were conscious of having agreed to?
A. Yes.
Q. And the reason was so that they - the $A B C$ and The

Australian - could have a look at the report and have a chat to police about what's in it, it would be for background information only and off the record?
A. Yes.
Q. So far consistent with your understanding?
A. Yes.
Q. Then she says that they - the $A B C$ and the Australian would also be informed that there would be a possibility there may be a non-publication order. I won't worry about the sentence referring to the Sydney Morning Herald, but the next sentence reads:

If and when the statement is made public, we would be happy to go on the record then, plus address any media requests from all media (including Rick Feneley).
A. Yes.
Q. Now, this comes to you, among others, this email?
A. Yes.
Q. What did you understand by that sentence beginning, "If and when the statement is made public"?
A. As I said in my previous answer, if the statement did not have a non-publication order over it there was the possibility of going on the record and conducting formal on-the-record interviews, but those interviews would have to come back - if that took place, I should say, that would require a further discussion and approval involving a number of people.
Q. Well, to cut to one part of the chase that I will come to --
A. Yes.
Q. -- is it your understanding, rightly or wrongly, that Pamela Young seems to have regarded that sentence as giving her permission on the afternoon of 13 April to give an interview to Lateline?
A. I - I can't answer whether she thought that or not. She may have taken that as meaning that, but I - that's a massive stretch from what was agreed, and she knew that those media requests - she'd been around a long time - had to be discussed and approved before you do it.
Q. So your evidence is - correct me if I'm wrong - that that sentence beginning "If and when", that I've just taken you to --
A. Yes.
Q. -- meant that if the statement was made public, consideration might be given in due course --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to doing something in public; correct?
A. Yes.
Q. But that it didn't mean that if the statement was made public, a public interview, not a backgrounder, not off the record, was immediately authorised?
A. That's correct.
Q. Because you say, I think, do you, that authorisation for that step would need to come back for consideration, approval, discussion, et cetera?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Gray, I noticed a few minutes ago that you had a problem with your microphone. It's not projecting quite as efficiently as it might. I don't know whether that's because you've --

MR GRAY: I will see if I can do better, Commissioner. That may be an improvement.

THE COMMISSIONER: I think it is, yes. Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. I just, on this same email, wanted to ask you one more thing --
A. Yes.
Q. -- about the next paragraph beginning "Additional1y";
do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q.

Additionally, Det Supt Mick Willing intends to advise the Coroner that we will be backgrounding a number of reporters on the statement as a courtesy.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, that seems to mean that you were going to advise the Coroner that you were going to be backgrounding reporters and you would be advising him prior to doing the backgrounding. "We will be backgrounding", it says; do you see that?
A. Yeah, that's the way it reads but that's not in reality what happened.
Q. That's obviously not what happened?
A. No.
Q. Is it not what happened because you didn't get around to it or because you changed your mind and decided to do something different?
A. No, it didn't happen - that was the way it was written but it happened after the Coroner ordered the new inquest, because if he hadn't and there was no inquest, it was a null and void proposition.
Q. Well, in particular I think you may mean if he had made a non-publication order, this wouldn't have come into play?
A. As well, yes.
Q. Back to 367 [NPL.0138.0002.2771], stil1 on this same point, this is Georgie Wells's email of 14 April I have asked you about the first paragraph but just have a look at the second paragraph where she says to Strath Gordon, Kenneth Finch and John Kerlatec:

In discussing the backgrounders, we had spoken about the ability for Pam to go on the record if the Coroner made the statement public, but would consider any requests on the day.
A. Yes, I think you're referring to a different email
from the one you showed me before, but yes, that's right.
Q. I am referring to a different email, I'm sorry, but, at any rate, looking at this one now --
A. You're correct.
Q. Georgie Wells says:
... we had spoken about the ability for Pam to go on the record if the Coroner made the statement public ...

Now, is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q.
... the ability for Pam to go on the record ...
A. The conversation that Georgie and her had had.
Q. Well, that you knew about?
A. That I - yes, I think I did know about it, yes.
Q. Well, was the ability for Pam to go on the record going to be triggered immediately if the Coroner made the statement public?
A. No. She would have to come back and seek approval for that.
Q. We'11 go through a few of these emails.
A. Sure.
Q. But that last addendum that you just put in --
A. Yes.
Q. -- that she'd have to come back and seek approval doesn't seem to get mentioned in any of these emails?
A. No.
Q. That's right isn't it? Is that because you would regard that as so obvious that it goes without saying?
A. It does.
Q. Now, Mr Thangaraj points out - and I did take you to this --
A. Sure.
Q. -- that the next few words says:
... but would consider any requests on the day.
A. Yes.
Q. That's certainly there?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you understand that to mean that - wel1, do you understand it to mean, looking at it now, that there was a possibility that, on the day, Pam might be given the green 1 ight to go on the record?
A. It was a possibility but again it would have to require a further discussion and approval involving a number of people.
Q. And who would it have had to involve?
A. Myself, John Kerlatec, Ken Finch at the very least, Georgie would be notified, and given the circumstances, Strath Gordon as wel1. And given that - sorry, and also I would suggest that the Deputy Commissioner Kaldas would have had some input as well, given the fact that he was involved in approving the backgrounding strategy.
Q. In that same email, while $I$ have it open --
A. Sure.
Q. -- in the first paragraph, Georgie Wells says:

Last Tuesday --
which would make it 7 Apri1--
Pam Young indicated she would prefer to
speak with Emma Alberici on background at
ABC rather than Lorna Knowles ...
A. Yes.
Q. Now, did you know that at some point along the 1 ine?
A. At around that time, yes.
Q. Georgie says that Mick Willing - that is, yourself and she, Georgie, discussed briefly and agreed to that?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, 374 [NPL.0138.0004.5545] if you would. This is a note by Strath Gordon --
A. Yes.
Q. -- in effect to himself on the week of 21 Apri1, a week or so after the Lateline interview?
A. Yes.
Q. In the third paragraph he says:

The previously agreed media strategy involved back grounding Dan and an ABC reporter ...

Agreed?
A. Yes .
Q. You agreed that's certainly right, and then Strath Gordon goes on:
... and then if we needed to provide comment on the Coroners decision we could do that in the day.

Maybe he means "on the day"?
A. "On the day".
Q. Now, what does that mean, as you understand it? What was it that "we could do" on the day?
A. That if the - there was a non-publication - there was no non-publication order, I should say, over the statement, that we could provide comment on the Coroner's decision on the day, but it would require further discussion.
Q. Can I just take you back, now, to 348 ,
[SCOI.82992-0001] which is the day after - this is 8 Apri1.
This is an ABC email, but it's the day after 7 April, which is the date of the email we just looked at, in effect summarising the backgrounding strategy?
A. Yes.
Q. So here we are on the day after that, 8 April, and Emma Alberici is telling people at the ABC what has been happening at her end about the upcoming interview with Pamela Young, and in about the fourth line in she says:

We also have an exclusive interview with the head of Homicide at NSW Police Pamela Young who has had carriage of the case for the past 3 years.

Now, that term "exclusive interview" doesn't sound like "backgrounder", does it?
A. No, not at all.
Q. So if Emma Alberici, as at 8 April, was under the impression that Pamela Young was giving her an exclusive interview, that would be quite contrary to what you understand was approved?
A. Yes.
Q. She goes on, Emma Alberici does, a few lines below that:

Pamela Young is prepared to say that this
family, given its wealth, has had too much influence over the criminal justice system.

Did you have any indication prior to seeing the Lateline program that Pamela Young was going to say that?
A. No.
Q. Emma Alberici goes on:

I have had a copy of the 500 page police report which I have almost finished reading. It is not a public document and I'm the only person outside police who's had a chance to read it.

We've covered that before, that she has had it since February?
A. Yes.
Q. And Emma Alberici goes on:

The document proves that the family has twisted facts and made stuff up to garner public support for a finding of "murder".

Now, as you understand Pamela Young's statement, does the statement do that?
A. No.
Q. Does that indicate to you that if Emma Alberici has that understanding, it's an understanding that has come not from the statement but from what Pamela Young has said to her?
A. That's a possibility, yes - or probability, I should say.
Q. However, Emma Alberici goes on in the next 1 ine: Police are still convinced it was suicide ...

Do you see that?
A. Mmm-hmm, yes.
Q. Now, again, presumably, do you agree, that is something that Emma - sorry, that Pamela Young must have said to her?
A. Yes.
Q. And were police general1y, not just Pamela Young, convinced it was suicide?
A. No, we - everyone I think individually had their own theories, but by and large, the investigation conducted by Pam and Penny reached a conclusion, and I think she's believed that it was suicide was more than likely. Again, my opinion changed and I thought suicide or misadventure was probably more likely, but others - and others' views I don't know.
Q. The word Emma Alberici uses is not "more likely" or language of that sort but "convinced" --
A. Yeah.
Q. Was that Pamela Young's view? Was she convinced it was suicide?
A. I think it was.
Q. Emma Alberici goes on to say:

Police have asked me if it's ok for The Australian to be given an interview Monday with Pamela Young also.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, we know that The Australian was in fact given an interview on the Friday, actually, but with Dan Box?
A. The backgrounding interview, yes.
Q. A backgrounding interview, yes. But what I'm interested in is police, according to Emma Alberici, asking her at the $A B C$ whether it was okay for police to give The

Australian an interview. Did you understand that that was what was happening?
A. No, I didn't. There was always the possibility that after the backgrounding of Mr Box and The Australian that he would come back and asked for an interview but I can't recall it being specifically discussed.
Q. According to Emma Alberici, she spent an hour in conversation with "them all", seemingly police personnel, and "have had them agree that The Australian can't publish until Tuesday"; do you have any knowledge of that?
A. No, I don't.
Q. In the next few lines she talks about what sort of package she would do in advance of the program, and she says then:

We wil7 then have a studio interview with Pamela Young which will be explosive.
A. Yes.
Q. This is on the 8th - this is before she's had even the backgrounder, much less the second interview?
A. Yes.
Q. That would indicate, would it, that Pamela Young must have already told her enough for Emma Alberici to anticipate that what she would say would be explosive?
A. Yes.
Q. And Emma Alberici goes on:

She wil7 also say --
that is Pamela Young will also say --
that \$\$mil7ions have been wasted by the
state of NSW pursuing a case that can never
be solved on the available evidence.
That was in fact her view, I gather?
A. Yes.
Q. The next sentence is:

The last coronial "open" finding should
stand and, if anything, changed back to suicide.
A. Yes.
Q. And that seems to be Emma Alberici recording Pamela Young's view?
A. That's right.
Q. So if there were any doubts from your earlier evidence, it's plain there isn't?
A. That's correct.
Q. And Pamela Young's view about the suicide theory is crystal clear?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, just bear with me one second. Just back to 382A, just keeping this chronological or close to it, on the top of page 2, do you see there's a couple of paragraphs dealing with what you were doing on 8 April? The top of page 2 begins "On 8 April 2015"?
A. Yes.
Q. So what you do is that you brief Mr Kerlatec about the proposed strategy, by which I assume you mean the backgrounding strategy?
A. Yes.
Q. And he agrees. Then a bit later in the day the two of you meet with Deputy Commissioner Kaldas, and he agrees as we11?
A. Yes.
Q. And he asks for a briefing note on Macnamir so that he could brief the Police Minister, Mr Grant?
A. Then - yes.
Q. And we know, and we have it in this bundle, that you indeed did a briefing note?
A. Yes.
Q. And indeed, Pamela Young made some contributions to it?
A. She did.
Q. And that did go up to Deputy Commissioner Kaldas?
A. Yes.
Q. Then on 9 April, which is the next paragraph, next bullet point on where we are on 382A --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you are in the office and DCI Young tells you that she's going to do the backgrounding with Dan Box the next day?
A. Yeah, later in the afternoon or evening, yes.
Q. And she tells you that she doesn't want the media officer, Siobhan McMahon, present at that backgrounding? A. Yes.
Q. She refers to an earlier Australian Story event and she says - that is, DCI Young says - that she did not want to feel restricted by having the media officer present?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, did that cause you any concern when she told you that?
A. It did, because it wasn't usual, but - and I expected that Siobhan would report that up to Strath Gordon, who would contact me, but I trusted that Pam would do the right thing and it was backgrounding only.
Q. But presumably you must have realised that she wanted to say things to the journalist that might be controversial or problematic?
A. Yes. But it was on background, so it wouldn't make a difference because it wasn't public.
Q. Well, if it was on background and it wouldn't make a difference, why not have the media officer there?
A. Well, she should have.
Q. But you agreed to 1 et her not have her there?
A. That's right, and I discussed it with Strath and we both came to that conclusion, that we trusted Pam would know what to say.
Q. Wel1, she was in effect flagging, in this indirect way, that she was likely to say something a bit controversial. One possibility was going to be this was a suicide.
A. That's right, it's a possibility.
Q. Sorry?
A. That's a possibility, yes.
Q. And another possibility was going to be, would you agree, that she would tell the journalist that the Johnson family had far too much influence over the police and the Police Minister?
A. That's a possibility.
Q. And were you untroubled about her saying such things with no media officer present?
A. I was concerned, as I said, and I knew, or thought, that Strath would ring me about it and we would have that discussion, but $I$ trusted her.

THE COMMISSIONER: $Q$. Having been alerted to the fact that she didn't want someone present, though, I take it it didn't occur to you to speak to Young and remind her that she should not say anything controversial?
A. It didn't, sir, because I trusted that she had the experience and know-how to do that, to not say something controversial.
Q. But she was almost, in a sense, giving you a heads-up, wasn't she, that she was going to speak, in effect, controversially, in the sense of off the record, and you thought you trusted her sufficiently to, what, speak discreetly off the record?
A. Yes.

MR GRAY: Q. If we turn to 352 [NPL.0138.0004.7178], this is Siobhan McMahon telling you, in effect, the same thing, that Pamela Young doesn't want to have her present at the backgrounder. That is tab 352?
A. She's telling Blake Clifton, who was the manager of the media --
Q. I'm sorry, not telling you, I beg your pardon, sorry. Telling those that are the recipients of this email -A. Yes.
Q. Thank you for that - that Dan Box was coming and, second paragraph, that Georgie had asked her, Siobhan, to sit in on the meeting between Pamela Young and Dan Box and that that was normal Media Liaison Officer protocol? A. Yes.
Q. But then reports that DI Young had requested that she not attend the briefing, which is indeed what she had told you the day before?
A. Yes.
Q. And the reason, apparently, that Detective Inspector Young gave to Siobhan McMahon was that she wants to have a free and frank discussion with Mr Box about the investigation, and this would be hindered by the presence of a media 1 iaison officer?
A. Yes.
Q. Indeed, the decision, said Pamela Young, was designed to protect Siobhan McMahon or any media officer from possible repercussions?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, I appreciate that you didn't get this emai1, but the topic - namely, Pamela Young in effect demanding that the media officer not attend --
A. Yes.
Q. -- because there might be repercussions --
A. Yes.
Q. -- was one that came to your notice, wasn't it?
A. Yes, it did.
Q. Wel1, what were the repercussions that were anticipated?
A. I - as in from Pam talking to - what did Pam think the repercussions would be?
Q. No, what did you think were the possible repercussions that you were alive to by letting Pam go off without the presence of a media officer?
A. Well, it was off the record, so $I$ wouldn't - I didn't think that there were going to be any repercussions from what she said, because it was off the record.
Q. Well, Siobhan McMahon makes the point - to the non-police reader a pretty obvious point - in the next paragraph:

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... it stil7 puts me in a difficult
position. If today's meeting eventually
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leads to the publication of controversial comments, questions will be asked about why I was not present.

That seems like a reasonable point for her to make?
A. Yes, that's right, yes.
Q. And while the notion of "backgrounder" might involve the notion of "off the record", the risk always exists, you would agree, that something that is supposed to be off the record one way or another finds its way on the record?
A. The risk does exist but it's very rare.

Backgrounding - I mean, that's a normal part of media relations, is talking to journalists and it not becoming public; but the risk does exist.
Q. A risk that Siobhan McMahon obviously recognised?
A. Yes.
Q. And I'm sure you also recognised?
A. Yes.
Q. But it was a risk you were prepared to take?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Gray, I was going to take a break. Is that a convenient point?

MR GRAY: Oh, yes, that's convenient.
THE COMMISSIONER: A11 right. I wil1 take a short break, thank you.

## SHORT ADJOURNMENT

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Gray?
MR GRAY: Q. Mr Willing, could you turn to 382A again. On the second page, just around about halfway, there's a couple of entries for 10 April, being the Friday?
A. Yes.
Q. And I think I have asked you about the first topic, which concerns Siobhan McMahon --
A. Yes.
Q. -- being asked not to go to the backgrounder with

Dan Box. But I want to ask you about the second-bottom bullet point on that page, which is "Later that afternoon" - ie, on the 10th?
A. Yes.
Q. You say that DCI Young rang you and explained what she had been doing, and it then says:
[DCI Young] said that the back-grounder went well--
ie, that must be the one with Dan Box?
A. Yes.
Q. And that she was "on her way to the $A B C$ now"?
A. Yes.
Q. So she was obviously going to the $A B C$, as you understood it, on the afternoon of the 10th to do the backgrounder with the $A B C$ ?
A. Yes, the start of it, at the very least, yes.
Q. We11, when you say "the start of it", as far as you knew, she was going there to do the backgrounder?
A. Yes, but it was late in the afternoon, I didn't know how long that would take. But that was the purpose of her going there.
Q. And she told you, apparently, that she was going to see Emma Alberici. Was that the first time you knew -A. No, I think that she - some days prior to that, she made it clear that she wanted to talk to Emma Alberici after the Lorna Knowles suggestion was mooted.
Q. Now, at 382, the tab before, which is your Ashurst interview, if we turn to page 6, do you see just below halfway on that page, there's a passage attributed to you beginning, "My understanding was"?
A. Yes.
Q. I won't ask you about it, but you can see the couple of paragraphs above are talking about the Siobhan McMahon topic?
A. Yes.
Q. Then you say in that paragraph beginning "My understanding was", talking about the backgrounding, you
say:
I sent her a text --
that is Pam Young --
saying "let me know how you do". She said "all good, I am on the way to the $A B C$ ".
A. Yes.
Q. This is on the 10th?
A. Correct.
Q. And you say:

By that time I was aware it was Emma
Alberici and I said "ok". It was important for me to have Pam talk to someone she was comfortable with. It wasn't going to work if she didn't feel the journalist would be true to the agreement. Then that was it. I didn't hear anything and I trusted everything was fine.
A. Yes.
Q. So your understanding on the 10 th was that she was going off to the $A B C$ on the 10th to do the backgrounder and that she had done so?
A. That she had at least started it because I didn't hear the outcome of it.
Q. Well, you said, "I didn't hear anything and I trusted everything was fine"?
A. Yes. Well, I assumed that --
Q. You assumed it was not just one backgrounder on the 10th but two - Dan Box --
A. Oh, yes, sorry, yes.
Q. -- and Emma Alberici?
A. Yes, correct.
Q. If we go to the actual interview that Pamela Young did do with Emma Alberici on that day, we find that at 342 [NPL.2017.0004.0549] in this bundle. It goes for quite
a number of pages, 30 or more pages, and I only want to ask you a few questions about it. On page 2, do you see at about line 32, Emma Alberici asks her - I should add, on the front page, the cover page of this, it's a recorded interview, and according to the cover page it's in the Lateline studio?
A. Yes.
Q. And at 1 ine 32 on page numbered 2, Emma Alberici asks her:

What's your personal opinion about what happened to Scott Johnson?

Do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And the answer comes, it's at line 40 , she says
... my formal view ... to the coroner is,
of course, it could sit under .. . any of
those three categories ... but my personal
view --
and I won't read it all out - is that it's feasible that suicide is what happened?
A. Yes.
Q. I'm paraphrasing.
A. Yes.
Q. So she distinguishes between the formal view and her personal view?
A. Yes.
Q. And she expands on that a little bit at the top of page 3:

So I am swayed, personally, that the current finding, the open finding, could move a bit more towards suicide again?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, what Emma Alberici then does, and you can see this at about line 16 , is to say, "Well, I'm going to get you to do that again"?
A. Yes.
Q. Because Emma Alberici thinks that could be improved upon, apparently.
A. Yes.
Q. And so down the bottom of that page, Pamela Young says at 43:
.. we would sway more towards homicide.
And she corrects herself, "suicide". And then at page 4 , Pamela Young says at 1 ine 8 that if she were to say it's most likely to be suicide, "that is such a controversial statement"; do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And she says:

I want to say I believe, it's my true belief, but it's going to be so controversial ...
A. Yes.
Q. And again, as per my questions to you earlier this morning, it's quite obvious what her personal view actually is?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, what Emma Alberici ultimately does on page 7, at about line 14, is to ask the question again, to give Pamela Young another go at asking the same question, namely, "What do you personally think happened to Scott Johnson"?
A. Yes.
Q. And she gives another answer at 1 ine 17 and following; you can see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Also referring to suicide. And then over at page 11, there's a series - if you just read, if you wouldn't mind, to yourself from about 1 ine 3 down to 1 ine 37 - just read those to yourself.
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. Now, Pamela Young refers to her understanding that
part of this exercise on this day was going to be for what she calls "a grab", at line 4 ?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. And "to attract attention", she says, at 1 ine 8 ?
A. Yes.
Q. And Emma Alberici explains that it's possible to get something on radio with Mark Colvin, and so on?
A. Yes.
Q. And then at line 34 , Emma Alberici says:
... it's like, you know, "Watch Lateline for more".
A. Yes.
Q. Now, I appreciate you didn't know on the day that this exchange was occurring --
A. That's right.
Q. -- but looking at it now, it rather looks as though Emma Alberici and Pamela Young were planning to use excerpts from this interview, being held on the 10th -A. Yes.
Q. -- as a kind of promotional material for what was going to be broadcast on Lateline the next week? A. Yes.
Q. And if that was what Pamela Young was doing on the 10th - -
A. Yes.
Q. -- was that remotely within what you understood she was supposed to be doing?
A. Not at al1.
Q. What explanation, if any, can you offer as to why she did that and what she thought she was doing?
A. It seems to me, and on the material that $I$ have read, that this was all pre-planned.
Q. With what in mind, as far as you know or can surmise?
A. To do a story after the announcement of the inquest on the Monday.
Q. And was any such plan or idea ever discussed with you?
A. No.
Q. So then at the bottom of that page, 11, Emma Alberici gives Pamela Young a third go at the question. She says:

```
        ... let's try that again .... what do you
        personally think happened to Scott Johnson?
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Do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. So then Pamela Young gives another answer talking about suicide in a slightly different way?
A. Yes.
Q. And then just finally, I think, on this transcript, if I could just take you to page 20 - this is a different point, but $I$ wanted to ask you about something she says on page 20. Do you see that at 1 ine 24 on page 20, Emma Alberici asks her:

What's changed since the last coronial inquest that would warrant another one?

Do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And Pamela Young gives an answer beginning at line 27, which you may read to yourself, I won't take you to that first paragraph.
A. Yes.
Q. But then in the second paragraph of her answer, at
line 37 she says:
We have put to the test some of the findings of Operation Taradale --
A. $\mathrm{Mmm}-\mathrm{hmm}$.
Q. - -
which ... did identify or reinvestigate some gay-hate crimes in Bondi, and two were found to be possible homicides.

Do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Now, what do you understand her to mean by that, "We have put to the test some of the findings of Operation Taradale"?
A. That she had, as part of her investigation into Scott Johnson's death, looked at the circumstances around the three Bondi matters, if I can characterise them as that, and included that as part of her investigation back to the Coroner, or to the Coroner.
Q. Well, of course, the second coronial inquest, the one under Carme1 Forbes --
A. Yes.
Q. -- in 2012 had made the open finding departing from the previous suicide finding?
A. Yes.
Q. And one of the reasons Carme1 Forbes gave for changing from suicide to open finding was her awareness, as Coroner, of what had been uncovered in the Taradale exercise about Bondi; correct?
A. Yes.
Q. So when Pamela Young says, "We have put to the test some of the findings of Operation Taradale", should we understand that as meaning that the police were concerned in the Johnson case to show that the findings of Operation Taradale were not reliable?
A. Did you - sorry, can you repeat that, determined to show or --
Q. That the findings of Operation Taradale were not reliable?
A. I don't know whether I'd go as far as they're determined to show, but certainly look at them and analyse them as part and parcel of the investigation.
Q. Well, put them to the test, apparently - that seems to suggest a challenging of them, doesn't it?
A. An analysis of them and to see whether or not, you know, with information that was developed during the Macnamir investigation, whether they could add light or change the views of what happened to those men.
Q. Well, I'11 make it clear what I'm putting to you. If the view of Pamela Young, as we've seen, was very much that Scott Johnson's death was a suicide - if that was her view --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and if she was keen to combat and rebut the family's view that it was a homicide - which it seems it was?
A. Yes.
Q. It seems she was keen to do that, we've agreed?
A. Yes.
Q. Then one pathway towards combating the Johnson family homicide theory would have been to undercut the Taradale findings, wouldn't it?
A. That could be a possible pathway, yes.
Q. Wel1, isn't that what she's pretty squarely saying, when she says, "We put the findings of Taradale to the test"?
A. It does read that way, but $I$ think what she's saying is that she's - they've done an analysis of the findings as part and parcel of the investigation. I can't take it any higher than that.
Q. Back to 382A. At the bottom of the second page, at the very last bullet point, you refer to 12 April, which is the Sunday, getting a text from DCI Young. Do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. She says that she's letting you know that the $A B C$ had called her to clarify a number of matters and are sounding very much convinced of the true facts of the matter.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, that presumably indicated to you that the $A B C$ were clarifying things that she had said two days before in the backgrounder?
A. Yes.
Q. And that Pamela Young's impression was, apparently, that the $A B C$ was on board with her view, when she refers to "the true facts"?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. Now, moving to 13 April itself --
A. $\quad \mathrm{Mmm}-\mathrm{hmm}$.
Q. -- we know that at around about 12 noon or thereabouts, the middle of the day, Coroner Barnes announced the outcome of the directions hearing. Do you recal1 that?
A. Yes, I do. I thought it was slightly before then, but yes.
Q. The first thing was that, yes, there would be a third inquest?
A. Yes.
Q. And the second thing was that a slightiy redacted version of the Pamela Young statement would indeed be public?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, back to those questions this morning about the qualification or rider to the strategy, here we are now, the Coroner has said, "Yes, the statement is public" -A. Yeah.
Q. -- and those strategy documents that $I$ showed you referred in various ways to the possibility of, "If that happened, we could think about going on the record"? A. Yes, that's right.
Q. Now, once this did happen and the Coroner did make that ruling about publication of the statement, what happened, to your knowledge, about that qualification or rider about the possibility of going on the record?
A. Nothing changed. In terms of going on the record to talk about the content of the investigation, her statement, she would have to come back and have a discussion and pose that, and we would discuss it involving a range of people, before that was approved.
Q. Now, in fact, the police issued a press release --
A. That's right.
Q. $\quad-\quad$ shortly afterwards?
A. About 1 o'clock.
Q. About 1 o'clock, as you say. And we find that at 356 [NPL.0138.0004.7163_0001]?
A. Yes.
Q. A couple of emails about it, but the press release or the text of the press release is there. And meaning no disrespect to it, it's in fairly uncontroversial, fairly bland terms?
A. That's right.
Q. Now, it seems that Pame1a Young was actually interviewed outside the court shortly after the Coroner made these decisions on that day, 13 April?
A. Yes.
Q. At tab 343 [NPL.2017.0004.0588_0001], there is
a transcript of the short interview with her on the footpath outside the Coroners Court - you've seen that, I presume?
A. I have, yes.
Q. And she says at the top, for example:

Yes. The NSW Police are very pleased about the decision today.

Et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. I want to ask you one or two questions about what she says, but first of all, in terms of her giving this interview, what did she tell you about whether she had or hadn't given any kind of interview at the court after the Coroner made his decision?
A. When she rang at 5 o'clock, or around about 5 o'clock when I was on the way home, she said that she'd recorded an interview with Emma Alberici at the court - or recorded an interview at the court.
Q. "At the court", did you say?
A. She - sorry, she said she'd recorded an interview with ABC. I think she said "at the court", but - that's what I took it to mean.
Q. But she didn't tell you, or you didn't - you weren't told by someone else, that, in fact, by the time she came out of the court, the media had all gone?
A. Yes, that's right. I had that - yes.
Q. So how could she have given an interview at the court if the media had all gone?
A. Clearly, that wasn't right.
Q. Well, do you mean that she first told you that the media had all gone, but at some later stage in the day she told you she'd given an interview at the court?
A. That's right, at 5 o'clock. So she's told myself and Georgie Wells that the media had gone, because she had been tied up with counse1, and by the time she got out they had gone. Later on, at 5 o'clock, she's told me that she's recorded an interview.
Q. And you think - and we'11 come to that --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you think that she told you at 5 o'clock that she had recorded an interview at court?
A. That's what I thought it was, because I didn't know of a recorded interview on the 10th, on the Friday. So it could only have been that.
Q. Well, let's just have a look at some of that. Back to 382A on the third page, the first bullet point begins, "About 9am on 13 April"?
A. Yes.
Q. And the next seven or eight bullet points are all about 13 April?
A. Yes.
Q. And four bullet points down she says, "Not long afterwards" - that is, not long after 12.20:

Not long afterwards I telephoned [her] or
she telephoned me and she said that she had
been with Senior Counsel and that there
were no media left outside for her to do
a door-stop statement with.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, that seems to be not true on her part?
A. That seems to be not true.
Q. Because she plainly did do a door-stop statement outside the court?
A. At some time. I don't know what time it was.
Q. And at 382, which is your Ashurst interview, at page 6 towards the bottom, do you see in the paragraph beginning, "I got on with my day", about three from the bottom --
A. Yes.
Q. $\quad-$ you record or you tell Ashurst that Pamela Young said in relation to the door-stop that she had been in there too long, the media were all gone?
A. Yes.
Q.

Unknown to me she did do a door stop but with Emma Alberici.
A. Yes.
Q. So it was unknown to you that she had done this door-stop with Emma Alberici?
A. When she rang me, yes.
Q. Now, if we go back to 343 , in terms of what she in fact said at this door-stop, could I take you to the third page, or page 3, the interviewer asks her - it actually starts at the bottom of page 2. The interviewer says to her:
... you have suggested that a new inquest wil7 deliver no different finding to that --
the one in 2012 by Coroner Forbes.
A. Yes.
Q. And she asks Pamela Young:

Can you tel 1 us how you arrived at that conclusion, given we haven't had another inquest yet?

In Pamela Young's answer, she says, about four 1 ines into it that none of the new evidence - and now I'm quoting from hereon:
... is direct - directly relates to Scottbeing murdered. So that is why I have thatposition of an open finding is potentiallythe most appropriate finding. But, ofcourse, that's up to the coroner. It's notimpossible that it be - perhaps go backtowards suicide, either, or misadventure.
A. Yes.
Q.

Any of those things are possible ...
Now, we'll come to the news bulletin in a moment, but that passage where Pamela Young says those things appears on the `ABC News. You're aware of that, I take it?
A. No, I haven't - I have never seen the bulletin at all.
Q. All right. If we can go to 361
[NPL.0138.0002.2947_0001], please, here we are at 4.35pm.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, I appreciate you are not on the distribution list of this email but it's Georgie Wells's daily media update for that day; correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And so she is updating the media personnel about numerous topics, one of which is the Scott Johnson inquest? A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Can I just interrupt, I'm sorry, Mr Gray.
Q. Mr Willing, you've explained who Mr Finch and Mr Kerlatec are. Who was Mr Anthony Cooke?
A. Mr Cooke - my reading of that, Commissioner, is Mr Anthony Cooke was a fellow Detective Superintendent at that time, at State Crime Command. He may have been relieving into Kenneth Finch's position as the Director of Organised Crime.
Q. I see. And the names - we see "Cc" and there's a whole series of names?
A. Yes.
Q. Perhaps without being entirely precise, is that more or less the whole of the Police Media Unit?
A. No, it's the Acting Deputy Commissioner, at the time, his staff officer, some members of the Media Unit and members of State Crime Command executive.
Q. A11 right. So the "Cc" is a mixture --
A. Yes.
Q. -- of both police officers and media personnel?
A. Yes.
Q. All right. So, not to put too fine a point on it, this is being distributed quite widely, obviously, through both senior police and media?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. And when you mentioned - I think you said "Deputy Commissioner", but you may have said "Assistant Commissioner", is that Carmine Minnelli?
A. That's Frank Minnelli. Carmine is his first name. He was, at that point, relieving into the position of Deputy Commissioner that was ordinarily occupied by Nick Kaldas.
Q. And one other name just to ask you about is Zdenka -Z-D-E-N-K-A - Vaughan?
A. Yes.
Q. She is, as I understand it - correct me if I'm wrong either the media officer or some such type for the Commissioner of Police himself?
A. Yeah, Commissioner's personal executive media adviser.
Q. So this media update goes to, among others, the Commissioner's personal media adviser?
A. Yes.
Q. And what Georgie Wells is telling everybody on the list about the Johnson inquest hearing that day is, and we see it on the bottom half of that first page, that the hearing happened, the Johnson family had spoken to the media afterwards, that the police had issued a media release, and then, in the second bullet point:

Last week, backgrounders were facilitated
by Det Ch Insp Pam Young with Dan Box [of The Australian] and Emma Alberici [of the $A B C]$ about the contents of the police statement.
A. Yes.
Q. So appreciating you didn't get this emai1, nonetheless, as you understood it, that was correct?
A. That's correct. At that time, yes.
Q. Then at 5 o'clock or thereabouts, there's a phone call
from Pamela Young to you about her going to the $A B C$ that afternoon to talk to Emma Alberici?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, was she on her way to the $A B C$ or was she on her way back from the $A B C$, having been interviewed by Emma Alberici?
A. I took it, from what she told me, she was on the way to the $A B C$.
Q. Wel1, when you gave evidence here in February, you said that, that it was - that she rang you on the way to the ABC?
A. Yes.
Q. That's at page 1720. But I wanted to take you to your almost contemporaneous account of this. If we start at 382A on the third page, now, do you see the first bullet point begins, "About 9am on 13 Apri1"?
A. Sorry, which --
Q. This is the third page, of 382 A .

THE COMMISSIONER: It's the first bullet point on that page.

THE WITNESS: Oh, yes, thank you, Commissioner.
MR GRAY: $Q$. So just to orient you, I've asked you about this bullet point already, so we are on 13 April?
A. Yes.
Q. Then four bullet points down, there's one beginning, "Later that afternoon around 5pm"?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. And your note says that around $5 p m$ you were driving home when you received a call from DCI Young:

She stated that she had recorded an interview with $A B C$...
A. Yes.
Q. Not "was going to", but "had".
A. Yes.
Q. We11, as I say, last time you were here, your evidence was that she rang you on the way to the $A B C$. This note says that she rang you having already recorded the interview with the ABC? What's --
A. No, recorded an interview at the court is the way I took that.
Q. I see. So when you say here in this note, "She stated that she had recorded an interview with ABC", you say that you took that to mean she had recorded an interview outside court?
A. Yes, when she - in line with her approval to do a stand-up.
Q. But how could that be so when you had been told by her that there were no media left outside court?
A. She's - either a media - ABC has turned up after she has told me that or she has told me an untruth.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And when did you put all that together, Mr Wiliing?
A. Sorry, sir?
Q. When did you put that proposition together - your analysis, just a moment ago, either that she's told you an untruth or it's happened later?
A. When I went through these documents that had been provided to me.

THE COMMISSIONER: A11 right. Okay.
MR GRAY: Q. I'm sorry, I just missed that answer, Mr Willing. I'm sorry I didn't hear it.
A. When did I put these - you know, that scenario - when

I went through the documents that had provided - had been
provided to me since I gave evidence.
Q. Oh, I see. So your answer now that you think your reference in that bullet point to her recording an interview with the ABC was a reference to a door-stop -A. Yes.
Q. -- is something that you've put together in the last month or so?
A. Yes.
Q. You see, if she told you, as she evidently did, that she had not done a media interview outside the court because there were no media left, then when she rang you at 5 pm to say that she had recorded an interview with the $A B C$, she must have been talking about something else, mustn't she?
A. No. No, not at all. Like, so she's - that's the only thing it could have been at that time, because I'd given her approval to do a door-stop. I didn't know about the interview on the Friday at all, the recording. I knew she'd done a background. But I didn't know of a recorded interview until she told me at 5 o'clock.
Q. I see. So you agree, of course, that you knew that she had done a backgrounder on the Friday?
A. Yes.
Q. But you're saying that although you knew that, you didn't know that it was in the form of a recorded interview?
A. Correct.
Q. And is this your evidence, then, that when she rings you at 5 o'clock and says, "I have recorded an interview with the ABC" --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you now think that you must have assumed that that was a reference to the door-stop that she must have done that day?
A. Yes.
Q. Even though she had actually told that you there were no media left when she came out of the court?
A. That's right. And she said the same thing to Georgie Wells as well.
Q. Yes. Maybe so. But my point is you think - your evidence is that when she told you she'd recorded an interview with the $A B C$ on the Monday, you understood that to mean an interview by way of a door-stop outside the court, even though she had told you there were no media left when she came out of the court?
A. Yes.
Q. It's hard to fathom how that could be right, Mr Willing.
A. Not if a journalist has turned up after she's told both myself and Georgie Wells around midday that there were no media present.
Q. What would make you think that that must have happened?
A. It was the only logical explanation because I didn't know of the interview that had been recorded on the Friday.
Q. We11, looking at your note here on 382A -- -
A. Yes.
Q. -- it goes on that she'd told you not only that she had recorded an interview, but that her interview, along with interviews with Steve Johnson and Dan Glick, would feature on that night's Lateline?
A. Yes.
Q. So you agree that she told you that?
A. Yes.
Q. And this caught you by surprise, you said, in this note?
A. Yes.
Q. Why?
A. Because she had said before that there was no door-stop opportunity with the - the media pack had already gone. So when she said that she had, in fact, done that, that caught me by surprise.
Q. You see, what you actually wrote in this next
sentence, soon after the Lateline interview in Apri1 2015, was:

I did not know what form the interview took
at that point and assumed that it was the original back-grounding discussion that was going to be used by Lateline.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, that's a different explanation, isn't it?
A. No, that's - the way that I've written that is actually referring to two things. I thought that the backgrounding at that point - when she told me that there was going to be a Lateline program, I thought the backgrounding would feed in to that program, and I didn't know what form the interview took down at the court, whether or not she was standing outside the court or whether or not she was sitting down. I didn't know at the time.
Q. What you wrote was you did not know what form the interview took at that point but you assumed that it - the interview - was the original backgrounding discussion?
A. I've - I'm referring to two things there.
Q. But the original backgrounding discussion is the one on Friday, the 10th, is that --
A. That's right.
Q. So what you wrote here in your notes for Ashurst was that you assumed that the interview that she had referred to in using the word "interview" was the Friday backgrounding discussion?
A. No. What I'm referring to is that if anything was going to be used for content or to provide content for a Lateline exclusive interview - sorry, exclusive story, it would come from the backgrounding, and I didn't know what she had done at the court, but assumed it was the - it was a stand-up, because that was the only thing that she was authorised to do. I'm referring to two different things there.
Q. Yes. Well, you don't make a reference here in this bullet point note to assuming that the material featuring Pamela Young that would appear on Lateline was the door-stop that day at all, do you? You don't suggest that? A. No, I don't, but that is exactly what happened.
Q. But you now say it, having thought about it in the last month?
A. No. At the time that was the only thing that it could have been - something from the court.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. So it didn't come, or, rather, to put it another way, you weren't concerned that, in fact, she was going to be on Lateline that night in a recorded interview, whatever it was?
A. I didn't think that was a possibility, sir.
Q. I beg your pardon?
A. Sorry, I didn't think that she would do an in-studio interview.
Q. No, I didn't ask you that. I said: it didn't cause you any concern, I take it, that she was telling you that she had recorded an interview, wherever it was and whatever its content was - didn't concern you that it was going to be shown on Lateline that night, whatever it was she said? A. No, sir, because I thought it was grabs from the court as to how --
Q. I didn't ask you that either. I'm simply asking you now: it did not give you any concern that she was telling you that she had recorded an interview and that it was going to be on Lateline that night? That didn't concern you at all as at 5 o'clock in the afternoon?
A. No.
Q. Okay. You assumed that, and trusted her, that whatever it was, it would be discreet and appropriate? A. Yes, that's right.
Q. And was 5 o'clock in the afternoon the first time that you were aware that she had recorded an interview which was actually going to be shown on television that night, not on the news but on a program called Lateline?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Now, at tab 382, your Ashurst interview, at page 6 , on this same point, just about the second-bottom paragraph on page 6, beginning, "Next thing I hear" --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you tell Ashurst:

Next thing $I$ hear $I$ am driving home and she says she did an interview with Emma Alberici that will be on TV tonight.
A. Yes.
Q. And your evidence is, I gather, that again, you thought that she meant by that a door-stop that she must have done, even though she told you that she hadn't done one?
A. That's right.
Q. And you tell Ashurst:

I was driving and thought it meant
backgrounding information being used.
A. That's right.
Q. No reference to the possibility that it must have been some door-stop that you'd been told hadn't happened?
A. But the next line, I say:

At most a stand up type interview.
Q. You do say that. And do you now say that, by that, you were referring to an assumed possibility --
A. Yes.
Q. -- of something outside the court?
A. Yes.
Q. You said, in this interview:

I really didn't think much more of it. $I$ assumed it would be a door stop or just the material from the background made into a story.

What do you mean by "the material from the background made into a story"?
A. Well, the information that Pam had provided $A B C$, providing context for a story.
Q. Context?
A. Yeah.
Q. So your evidence is that it didn't cross your mind that an actual formal interview, not simply a door-stop on the street but a formal interview, had occurred at al1? A. No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Can I ask you this, Mr Wi11ing: as at 13 Apri1, I take it you were familiar, were you, with the program Lateline and its format?
A. Yes, I was.
Q. And you appreciated, as at 13 Apri1, that it was, if you 1 ike, a features style of program as opposed to a 7 pm news broadcast?
A. Yes, it was certainly different to a $7 \mathrm{pm}-$
Q. Well, different in the sense that it was, if you want to put it in media terms, more like a features program rather than a daily update of news stories as the 7 pm news might be?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. We11, is this right, Mr Willing: at any rate, that by this time, 5 o'clock or so, you knew that something on the record featuring Pamela Young was going to be broadcast on Lateline that night?
A. That was likely to be on, yes, on Lateline.
Q. On the record, not off the record?
A. A door-stop style interview could be used, on the record, as part of the Lateline.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And had you authorised in your own mind expressly by 5 pm that she be on Lateline that night in a recorded interview?
A. Expressiy? No.
Q. And that was contrary, wasn't it, to what you thought was going to happen and contrary to what you thought your understanding was?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you not think to take up with her, "Why on earth have you done this"? For example, "I told you not to", or something like that?
A. I had - sir, I had told her that she could do
a door-stop interview. That's what I assumed it was which was recorded, and that those grabs or the interview itself as a door-stop might be used on Lateline.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right.
MR GRAY: Q. So you assumed that whoever door-stopped her at the court or near it told her that the door-stop grab was going to be on Lateline?
A. It was likely to be on Lateline, yes.
Q. Did you ask her what she had said on the record?
A. No, I didn't.
Q. Did you in any way remonstrate with her or reprimand her as to going off, away from the agreed strategy?
A. No, I didn't. Again, I assumed it was the door-stop which she'd been authorised to do. I didn't know what she'd said and I didn't ask her.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Well, the other thing, Mr Willing, is, if I may ask you, in your note at 382A on page 3, in that bullet point, "Later that afternoon" --
A. Yes.
Q. -- maybe I've missed it, you don't put anything in there about it being "likely to be on Lateline"; rather, she told you it "would feature on that night's Lateline program"?
A. No, I don't.
Q. You don't what?
A. Include anything in that bullet point.
Q. No, and what I'm getting at is you've used, in a couple of answers you've given, that your understanding was that the interview was only likely. She didn't use "likely" in her conversation with you, apparently; she was telling you, seemingly, given the language you used, that it was a certainly that not only she, but that Mr Johnson and Mr Glick would also be on?
A. I can't recall what she told me, sir.
Q. But your note here says "would feature on that night's Lateline program"; you don't use the term "would likely feature on that night's Lateline program", do you? A. No, I don't.

MR GRAY: Q. And in the same vein at 382 when you give an interview to Ashurst on this point, at the bottom of page 6, the paragraph beginning, "Next thing I hear", you say that Pamela Young told you - "she did an interview with Emma Alberici that wil1 be on TV tonight"?
A. Yes.
Q. Not "like1y", but "wil1 be"?
A. Yes.
Q. So that was your actual knowledge, wasn't it, at 5 o'clock, that it was something on the record from Pamela Young was going to be on television that night?
A. That's correct, yes.
Q. Now, you then, I gather, having been told that, ring Georgie Wells?
A. Yes.
Q. Look at 382 A, the same paragraph we've been looking at on page 3, two or three 1 ines from the bottom?
A. Yes.
Q.

I then rang Georgie Wells and advised her of my conversation with DCI Young.
A. Yes.
Q. You say something to the same effect in the Ashurst interview?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And she says, Georgie Wells does, "I'd better let

Strath know and put on the media report."
And then we find the update to the media report at 362 [NPL.0138.0002.3238]. Do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. This is Emma Alberici. If you flick over a page, you can see that what she's doing is updating the one that we looked at a little while ago from 4.35 pm --
A. Yes.
Q. -- with what you've just told her, in effect?
A. Yes.
Q. So she tells the people that this goes to:

In addition to the media update re: ... Macnamir, [DCI] Pam Young spoke to Emma Alberici from ABC Lateline on camera today.
The reporter also spoke with Steve Johnson.
Both are to appear on tonight's Lateline.
A. Yes.
Q. That doesn't read as though Georgie Wells thinks that all that has happened is some door-stop, does it, "Both are to appear"?
A. To me it does, because both were at the court, both recorded interviews at the court, and I think that's exactly what she's referring to - that those interviews would be used as part of a Lateline story.
Q. Well, I hear what you say but at this point, half past 6 on the Monday afternoon, you didn't know whether Emma Alberici had spoken to Steve Johnson at all, outside the court or otherwise?
A. I'm not sure whether I did or not. I can't recall. It would be most likely, because each time that Mr Johnson was in town, he would record an interview like that out in front of the court.
Q. Now, at 7 o'clock, the ABC news bulletin is broadcast?
A. Yes.
Q. We have the transcript at 362B [SCOI.47473_0001], which I presume you've read?
A. I have read it, yes.
Q. Have you looked at the video clip of the news?
A. No.

MR GRAY: I will just play it now, if I may, Commissioner.
THE COMMISSIONER: Certainly.
MR GRAY: Q. It is tab 362A [SCOI.47474_0001]. It's the ABC nightly television news bulletin for that night and I think one can tell - I think what is visible on the screen is that this story comes on about 3 minutes 20
seconds in to the 30 -minute news bulletin.
A. Okay.

MR GRAY: At any rate, here it is.
(Video played)
MR GRAY: Q. Now, a couple of things about that,
Mr Willing.
A. Yes.
Q. The material featuring Pamela Young that is shown in that news report outside the court --
A. Yes.
Q. -- is the passage that $I$ showed you from the transcript of her interview on that day?
A. Yes.
Q. We went to it a little while ago. At the end of that item on the ABC News, the news reader, Juanita Phillips says, as you just heard:

And you can see an exclusive interview with the lead detective in that case on Lateline tonight at about 10.30 here on $A B C T V$.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, it's pretty clear, isn't it, that the exclusive interview referred to was something other than the grab outside the court?
A. No, I don't agree with that.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. So you thought, did you, that what we've just seen on the screen was the full extent of what would later be seen on Lateline, namely, just a door-stop interview of the sort that was just observed?
A. That was part of what would be on.
Q. So you thought it would be more extensive, did you?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: I see. A11 right. Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Do you mean a more extensive part of the same door-stop?
A. Yes.
Q. And that would be something that would come within the description of "exclusive interview", would it?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you watch the $A B C$ News that night?
A. No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Did anyone tel 1 you that the announcement had been made shortly after 7 that there would be an exclusive interview with Pamela Young that evening?
A. Not after the news, no, sir.
Q. We11, did you find out at some point that there would be an exclusive interview, long before it was broadcast? It was said to be on at 10.30 at night. When do you say you first heard that there was an exclusive interview with Pamela Young?
A. I'm not sure when it was, sir, but I--
Q. Well, 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock?
A. No, I didn't hear anything about the Macnamir matter or the inquest at all until $I$ received a message which caused me to turn on the television, which was the Lateline program. Nothing between 5 o'clock when I had a conversation with Pam and then spoke to Georgie Wells, until then.

THE COMMISSIONER: A11 right, thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. We11, 1et's have a look at tab 364 [NPL.0138.0001.0042]. Now, this document has a date which is 17 Apri1, and you'11 see it's from Pamela Young to Pamela Young?
A. Yes.
Q. And the subject heading is "Texts Mick Willing \& Georgie Wells"; do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. And I want to ask you some questions about these text messages. Just read them through to yourself first.
A. I've read them.
Q. It's quite obvious, isn't it, that the first one is
a text from Pamela Young to you and Georgie Wells shortly
after the ABC news bulletin at 7 o'clock on 13 April?
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. That is, on that evening of 13 Apri1, maybe while the news bulletin was still going or else shortly after 7.30 ?
A. It could be and I'm mistaken in my previous answer in terms of --
Q. And what Pamela Young tells you in very plain Eng1ish is that:
... in case you missed it the $A B C$ news coverage was balanced with a reference to an exclusive tonight on Lateline.
A. Yes.
Q. You knew that by about 7.30 that night at least, didn't you?
A. I did, and I was mistaken in my answer to the Commissioner before about that. I still took that to mean that it was the door-stop interview that would --
Q. Look at the next sentence Pamela Young says to you:

I am glad we went with $A B C$ - -
A. Yes.
Q. --
as they go with the journalism not the ratings.
A. Yes.
Q. She adds:

Hair \& lippy good too-especially on Penny!
A. Yes.
Q. But I'm focusing on:

I am glad we went with $A B C$ as they go with the journalism not the ratings.

That's plainly not a reference to some grab on the doorstep, isn't it?
A. I don't agree with that. She's mentioning Penny there. Penny was not part of any interview at Lateline that night. It could only refer to being at court, because Penny was there with her, as you could see on the footage.
Q.

I am glad we went with $A B C$ as they go with the journalism ...
A. Yes.
Q. What's the journalism got to do with the door-stop?
A. I don't know what that means other than her review on the quality of the $A B C$ compared to other media outlets.
Q. And I again put to you it's pretty obvious that she is not talking about a door-stop when she says that there's going to be "an exclusive tonight on Lateline"?
A. I don't agree, sir.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Let me put this to you, Mr Willing: she refers to a balanced coverage -A. Yeah.
Q. -- which might be her reference to the ABC's journalism, but the concept of a balanced coverage in this context, you fully appreciated, was Ms Young on one side and Mr Johnson and Mr Glick on the other. If it was going to be balanced, surely it must have occurred to you perhaps it didn't - that the competing sides or the protagonists were going to be asked about their respective views, to provide balance?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. We11, that's not a door-stop, is it? If people are giving exclusive interviews, both of whom think they know what happened or believe they know what happened, it's rather more than a door-stop; it's protagonists being given both an opportunity by way of a balanced interview, isn't it?
A. That's correct.
Q. You were pretty media savvy, weren't you, or regarded yourself as so at this time, surely?
A. Yes, but it still fits within the realm of
a door-stop.
Q. I know it now fits within the realm of a door-stop, but I'm asking you obviously at the time you either didn't - it didn't occur to you that it was more than that or, alternatively, you did appreciate it was more than that but you were comfortable to trust whatever Pamela Young had said.
A. I didn't think it was more than a door-stop interview.
Q. And you were comfortable to trust whatever she had said?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Now, after she texts you that, that the news had had a reference to "an exclusive tonight on Lateline", Georgie Wells texts back saying:

Thanks Pam, look forward to seeing it.
A. Yes.
Q. And you text back:

Ta Pam. I wil7 have to stay up late....on
a school night too!
A. Yes.
Q. Clearly signifying, do you agree, that having been told at least by now that she was going to be on Lateline that night in an exclusive, you would stay up and watch it?
A. I said that, and I didn't.
Q. You said that but you didn't?
A. No - until I got notification and then turned it on.
Q. At 11 minutes past 8 that night --
A. Yes.
Q. -- this is tab 366 [SCOI.47469_0001], you yourse1f sent a text to State Coroner Michael Barnes?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. And you were telling him about something being on

Lateline that night?
A. Yes.
Q. Let's just go through how you put it to Mr Barnes.

You said:

Good Evening Sir, a courtesy text to let you know that in 7 ight of the media --
"in light of the media" --
being pushed by the Johnson family Pam has been interviewed by the $A B C$ and the Australian concerning [strike force] Macnamir.
A. Yes.
Q. Then you say:

She will most likely be on Lateline tonight (as will family interviews etc).
A. Yes.
Q. First of all, you knew that it wasn't just most likely; you had been told that she would be on Lateline, hadn't you - that's what you wrote when you spoke to Ashurst?
A. Yes, I assumed that it would be on Lateline, given the fact that she had given what was an exclusive interview at the court with $A B C$ Lateline.
Q. She told you - sorry, go on.
A. With ABC Lateline.
Q. According to what you wrote in your notes at 382 A and according to what you told Ashurst at 382 , what Pam Young told you was that an interview by her with the ABC "will be on Lateline tonight", not "1ikely", but "wil1 be"; correct? That's what you wrote?
A. That's what I wrote, yes.
Q. But it's not what you told Mr Barnes. You watered it down to "most 1ikely"?
A. That's what I've texted --
Q. Why did you do that?
A. No reason at all. I thought that there was, again, a recording that occurred outside the court, as with other members of the Johnson family, that would be part of a story that would feature that night.

THE COMMISSIONER: $Q . \quad$ Was the use of the term "most likely" careless on your part?
A. It could be, sir.
Q. Well, how else could it be construed? It was contrary
to what you were being told, wasn't it?
A. If it was a door-stop interview, then --
Q. Mr Willing, it was contrary to what you were being told, wasn't it? You weren't told that "it could be", "it may be", "it may not happen", "it could happen but it may not"; you were told by her earlier in the evening that she'd been recorded; was on that evening. It wasn't "most likely" at all?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. And did anyone ever ring you from this media department at the police department and tel 1 you that there'd already been an announcement on the 7 o'clock news about the Lateline interview?
A. No.
Q. Does the media organisation within the police normally keep senior police officers abreast of current affairs such as this?
A. They do but not - I wouldn't necessarily get a phone call or anything.
Q. No, I appreciate that, but this was a pretty big story, wasn't it?
A. It was one of a number of big stories.
Q. We11, it might have been one of a number of big stories but this was a pretty significant historic event in the sense that a third inquest was pretty much almost not heard of, was it --
A. Yes.
Q. -- in circumstances like this?
A. Yes.
Q. And it was probably one of the biggest stories as far as the police was concerned on 13 April?
A. Yes.

MR GRAY: Q. In the next sentence you tel 1 Mr Barnes: This --
that is, Pamela Young most likely being on Lateline - was something that we discussed up to our Deputy Commissioner and head [of] public affairs and we all agreed that we needed to do it for a number of reasons.
A. Yes.
Q. But that's not true, is it?
A. It's referring to the backgrounding strategy.
Q. What was discussed up to Deputy Commissioner and Head of the Public Affairs level was backgrounding off the record?
A. Yes.
Q. And you all agreed that you needed to do that backgrounding off the record?
A. Yes.
Q. But you're telling Mr Barnes:

She wil7 most 7 ike7y be on Lateline tonight ... This was something that we discussed ...
et cetera. That's just not true, is it?
A. I'm referring to what $I$ believed to be a door-stop interview at Glebe that day.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And the door-stop had been discussed, had it, up to Deputy Commissioner level?
A. No, no.
Q. Wel1, what had been discussed - merely the backgrounding?
A. Yes, yes. And I'm making reference to her appearance being on Lateline as coming from that door-stop interview
at G1ebe that day.
MR GRAY: Q. Which you knew, because she had told you, was going to be "an exclusive interview"?
A. I can't recall. I've recorded that in my notes, so that must be right.
Q. Well, that's what her text says. Her text to you --
A. Yes, sorry, that's right, yes.
Q. -- refers to the exclusive interview --
A. It's in the text.
Q. -- in the words that Ms Juanita Phillips had used?

THE COMMISSIONER: Can I ask, and I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr Gray.
Q. You agreed, I thought, with Mr Gray a little while ago that the text which came from Ms Young could have come around about 7.30 or a bit after that?
A. Yes.
Q. Is there any reason why you didn't tell Commissioner Barnes - sorry, Coroner Barnes until 11 minutes past 8?
A. No reason.
Q. Did you speak to anybody in the meantime before you texted him about the Lateline interview with Pamela Young? A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. I didn't feel it necessary.

MR GRAY: Q. Were you in regular contact with Coroner Barnes at around this time?
A. Yes .
Q. Obviously you had his mobile number?
A. Yes.
Q. Were you having discussions with him about the Johnson case?
A. Regular discussions, yes.
Q. Did that stop after the third inquest had been announced?
A. No.
Q. Once the third inquest was announced, it was thereafter his inquiry as Coroner --
A. Yes.
Q. -- correct? I think you have explained that?
A. Yes.
Q. And until another week or so, it was Pamela Young's case, as the senior officer from Unsolved Homicide, who was running it up to that point?
A. Yes.
Q. Of course, you were Commander Homicide?
A. Yes.
Q. So you were superior to her and she reported to you ultimately?
A. Yes.
Q. But you were in quite frequent conversation or communication with the Coroner about the Johnson case?
A. Yes. Amongst other matters, but yes.
Q. And is that normal or routine?
A. Yes.
Q. The actual strategy which we looked at this morning, at least as some of these documents recorded, included the idea that you would, as a courtesy, brief or inform the Coroner that the backgrounding of Dan Box and the ABC was going to occur?
A. Yes.
Q. Remember we looked at that?
A. Yeah.
Q. And as we've seen, you didn't inform the Coroner that the backgrounding was going to occur but, rather, what you did at 11 minutes past 8 was to inform him that Pamela Young was likely to be on Lateline that night? A. Yes.
Q. Why did you not actually implement the agreed courtesy approach?
A. Because it - if there was no inquest that had been
ordered then it was irrelevant. So I was waiting until after the order of the inquest.
Q. Right. That was midday or so?
A. Yes.
Q. You left it unti1 11 minutes past 8 ?
A. That's right.
Q. At a point when you knew not just that there'd been backgrounding but that Pamela Young was going to be on Lateline in an exclusive interview --
A. Yes.
Q. -- in a matter of an hour or two?
A. Yes.
Q. Why leave it so late?
A. I can't - I can't explain other than that was the time
that $I$ had and felt it should --
THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Sorry, just before you move on, you left an invitation for a chat. Did that take place?
A. Not then, no.
Q. When?
A. I have had discussions with Mr Barnes at a number of times after that in the days following, and weeks following.
Q. But not on the evening of the 13th?
A. Not from my recollection at all, no.
Q. What about the 14 th?
A. Yes, I think I did speak to him on the 14th.

THE COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Now, you learned, at least by Pame1a Young's text, that she's going to be on camera on the Lateline program?
A. Yes.
Q. And you tel 1 Mr Barnes, using your words, that she would "most likely" be on Lateline that night?
A. Yes.
Q. But then you say you didn't watch it, even though you'd told Pamela Young that you would?
A. I didn't watch it until the - I received a message that she was on it, so I turned it on.
Q. Well, you already knew she was going to be on it?
A. That's right, but I - I didn't.
Q. So why did getting a message change anything?
A. It didn't, but it caused me to remember that she was on and so I turned it on. The fact that somebody had texted - or, sorry, messaged me and said that she was on caused me to turn it on. I didn't even turn my mind to watching it, to be honest.
Q. So at 8.11 you send a text to the Coroner, because you think he needs to know that something is going to be on Lateline, but you then yourself don't even watch it until someone sends you a text while it's on and at that point you decide that you'11 turn it on?
A. That's right.
Q. Were you not interested?
A. Yes, I was interested, but I had a lot of other things on. I can't recall what was happening at home at the time, either, and I - I don't know and I can't remember why I didn't sit and wait and watch it.
Q. We11, the text is at 366A [NPL.0138.0009.0356_E_0001] from Detective Inspector Yeomans?
A. Yeah.
Q. You may be able to clarify this for me, perhaps, but his text is recorded as happening at 9.43pm?
A. Yes.
Q. And your response is recorded at 9.52 pm ?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, we heard Juanita Phillips say that Lateline would be on at 10.30, but it would appear that it was already on at 9.43, if not earlier, on Channel 24. Can you enlighten us about the timing at all?
A. No, I can't.
Q. At any rate, your evidence is, is it, that you were at home but not watching Lateline at all, but you get a text
from Peter Yeomans, who says that Channe1 24 is doing "a story re North Head murder / suicide with Pam Young", at which point you then turn it on?
A. Yes, although I can't discount getting a phone call or a text message other than that, but something's caused me to turn on the television and watch the Lateline interview. I wasn't watching it before.
Q. In your evidence back in February you did mention a telephone call?
A. Yes.
Q. And I'm not holding to you this, but you said, "I may have received a telephone call from someone, I can't remember who"?
A. Yes.
Q. And is that a recollection that you still partly have?
A. I don't know. I thought this might have been it that caused me to turn it on. It could have been a telephone call or a text. I just don't remember.

MR GRAY: Commissioner, I don't have very long to go but I see it is 1 o'clock. It might be convenient to take the break.

THE COMMISSIONER: No, I'll take the break very shortly and we will resume at 2 , thank you.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT
THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Gray.
MR GRAY: Q. Mr Willing, I asked you before lunch about whether you were in regular or fairly frequent contact with the Coroner, Mr Barnes, at around this time and you said essentially that yes, you were.
A. Yes.
Q. I wanted to ask you about one particular part of your Ashurst interview on that topic. I'm sorry, it's not your Ashurst interview; it's your own notes. Oh, no, in fact it is your Ashurst interview, if you turn to tab 382. At the very bottom of page 6 there's a reference to you texting the Coroner. That's on the night of the 13th?
A. Yes.
Q. Which we've been through?
A. Yes.
Q. And then on the top of page 7, you tell Ashurst: The next day --
that is 14 Apri1 -I heard from the Coroner.
A. Yes.
Q. He said he didn't watch it but said he trusted Pam knew what to say.
A. Yes.
Q. You go on: Later that evening --
still 14 April --
after talking to Frank Minelli [sic] I raised issues regarding Pam interview with the Coroner.

Do you remember all this? Do you remember telling Ashurst these things?
A. Yes.
Q. According to this record of interview or this transcript of the Ashurst interview, you told Ashurst as follows:

The Coroner said "I have watched parts of it, there were some issues regarding credibility of witnesses, but I tend to think it's a tactic by Agius and it's a storm in a tea cup but $I$ need to talk to Counse1. It serves me no purpose to move Pam from this. I feel sorry for her and hope she is ok".
A. Yes.
Q. Is that an accurate note of what you told Ashurst?
A. Yes, I think it is.
Q. So the Coroner, Mr Barnes, told you that he thought the Pamela Young Lateline interview was a storm in a teacup?
A. At the time, yes. He hadn't watched it all.
Q. Did he form a different view, or tell you he had a different view, at some later time?
A. Yes.
Q. When was that and what did he say?
A. I can't recall exactly when but he turned his mind to referring Pamela for contempt of court charges.
Q. Did he have a conversation with you in which he said "I no longer think it is a storm in a teacup" or anything along those 1 ines?
A. No, he spoke to me about the fact that she had recorded an interview on the 10th and the 13th and then didn't communicate with me any further in relation to that particular issue or the Lateline - sorry, the Lateline issue, I should say. I can't recall when that actual conversation was but it was within days after.
Q. The Ashurst solicitor asked you a question about whether the Coroner must have been furious that the letter was leaked. Do you know what that's a reference to? Is that a reference to the statement or is that a reference to something else?
A. No, it's a reference to a letter that Mr Agius wrote to the Coroner asking that Pamela Young be removed from the strike force and then that subsequently appeared in media.
Q. I see, thank you. And your answer after that
question --
A. Yes.
Q. -- after giving the answer to the question, you go on
to say that you went down to meet the Coroner regarding another topic, namely, the Lindt Cafe topic, but that in the course of that meeting about the Lindt Cafe matter:

The Coroner said something about good relationship with Lindt family, 'unlike
actions of other difficult families' and looked at me.
A. Yes.
Q. Is this also an accurate record of what you told Ashurst?
A. Yes.
Q. So the indication, you took it, was that Mr Barnes was indicating that the Johnson family was a difficult family? A. That's the way that I interpreted it, yes.
Q. Were there other conversations between you and Mr Barnes about the Johnson family or Steve Johnson during the course of this third inquest period?
A. Beforehand, yes, a number of conversations around emails that I'd received, the criticism of Pam Young, and to the point where, early on, State Coroner Barnes interjected and said, "No more correspondence between Steve Johnson and myself and police".
Q. And after this time - that is, after 14 April?
A. I - no, it was all through the Crown Solicitor's Office at the time, and Sophie Dawson acting on our behalf.
Q. All right. I just want to go to the Lateline interview itself. As broadcast - that is to say what went to air. It's at tab --
A. What tab is that, sir?
Q. That's at tab 318 [SCOI.82483_0001]?
A. 318?
Q. Oh, yes, apologies. Volume 14, sorry. If you just keep volume 16 with you as well, the whole - the transcript of the entire interview between Pamela Young and Emma Alberici on the 13th is at tab 344
[NPL.2017.0004.0592_0001] and of course on1y part of that goes to air as part of the Lateline program?
A. Okay .
Q. I'm sorry to burden you with two folders, but if I could just start at 344 , which is in the other folder that you have got there?
A. Yes.
Q. So the very first question that Emma Alberici asks Pamela Young is:

> Do you accept, now, that the initial investigation into the death of Scott Johnson back in 1988 was flawed?
A. Yes.
Q. The answer that Pamela Young gives is as follows:

Not at al7. It was to the standard of the day. It was accepted by the coroner then. And there's stil7 evidence and information that Scott may have suicided.

And then she goes on.
A. Yes.
Q. So almost the first thing she says is to draw attention to the suicide theory; you'd agree?
A. Yes.
Q. Consistent with what we've accepted this morning was obviously her view?
A. Yes.
Q. And similarly at page 5 of this tab 344 , at about 1 ine 30 or so, she refers to the Golden Gate Bridge topic?
A. Yes.
Q. And she says:

I think it's very important to mention the Golden Gate Bridge and compare it to ... North Head.

Do you see that?
A. Yes.
Q. She's obviously emphasising what she sees as a similarity between thinking about jumping from a height at one place and perhaps, in fact, jumping from a height at another place.
A. Yes.
Q. And indeed, she uses the expression at line 43, "Lo
and behold" - "Golden Gate Bridge" on one occasion, "Lo and behold" on another occasion?
A. Yes.
Q. Again, making it pretty crystal clear to anyone watching or listening that her view was that this man had jumped?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, if we go to 318 now, which is the interview or the part of the interview as broadcast, including the whole Lateline program, the first part of the program has some introductory material from Emma Alberici and then some exchanges between her and Steve Johnson?
A. Yes.
Q. Some of which involves Steve Johnson being on site at North Head, if one is watching it?
A. Yes.
Q. At the bottom of page 2 of this tab, tab 318,

Emma Alberici says:
26 years after Scott Johnson's death, police remain of the view that suicide is the most likely explanation.

Do you see that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Now, what point of this broadcast was it when you started watching, on your account?
A. I cannot recal 1 when it was.
Q. Well, did you see anything involving Steve Johnson or on1y Pamela Young?
A. I think the first time that $I$ started watching $I$ saw a visual of Pamela Young in studio. So whether that's before or after --
Q. There isn't, as far as $I$ can see, anything involving Steve Johnson after Pamela Young's part of the program begins.
A. Right. Okay.
Q. Someone will correct me if I've missed something, but I don't believe there is. So your recollection is that you
only saw the program as it involved Pamela Young?
A. That's when I recal1, and I can't be certain, but the first time $I$ turned it on was - I saw her in an in-studio situation. But $I$ can't be a hundred per cent certain on that.
Q. Now, this is in tab 318, the broadcast --
A. Yeah.
Q. - at the bottom of page 3, we have that first question that $I$ just took you to?
A. Yes.
Q. That's included with her answer about "There's stil1 evidence and information that Scott may have suicided"; do you think you saw that?
A. I don't know.
Q. On the next page, page 4, she talks about victimology, she talks about Mr Noone, she talks about some submissions that Mr Agius had made?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you recal 1 whether you saw any of that?
A. I don't.
Q. Then on page 5, just above halfway on the page, she's talking about only eight out of 30 cases being possibly gay hate, and so on?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you remember whether you saw that part?
A. I don't.
Q. At the bottom of that page, there's the Golden Gate Bridge --
A. Yes, again, yes.
Q. -- part?
A. Sorry, yep.
Q. Do you recal1 - did you see that?
A. I can't recall what $I$ saw, but --
Q. At about 10 ines down on page 6 , she says.
... [Mr Johnson] used influence, including

I consider influence on the Government, to make the death of Scott a priority in my office over other jobs that we had.

Did you see that?
A. I have a vague recollection of seeing that but $I$ can't be sure. I also see a part there about the New South Wales Crime Commission. I think I saw that.
Q. Right. That's a reference to the fact that, at one point, the Crime Commission was invited to --
A. Yes.
Q. -- check over her investigation and how she'd gone about it?
A. Correct, yes.
Q. Then on page 7, which is getting towards the end of the broadcast, Emma Alberici says:

And before I let you go, I must pick up on what you said just a moment ago when you talked about the influence Steve Johnson has had over the Government and others. Where do you think that comes from?

And then Pamela Young launches into the answer that involves accusing the then Police Minister of kowtowing to Steve Johnson?
A. Yes.
Q. So you saw that part?
A. I think I did.
Q. And down the bottom of that page, on the same theme, at the very bottom, she says:

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                ... the minister ... rang my commander --
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A. Yes.
Q. Is that you?
A. That's me, but it didn't occur.
Q. Sorry, say that again?
A. That's me, but the Minister didn't call me, it was his Chief of Staff.
Q. Right. Accepting that, the minister - you correct that to the minister's Chief of Staff - rang you and:

> ... also rang the Johnson family and arranged a meeting and gave them their strike force, their priority over everyone else's death.

And she goes on to say - Pamela Young does - that was absolutely improper. Wrong on every level, very wrong. So you saw that?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, those criticisms by her of Steve Johnson and the Johnson family improperly using influence over the government were nowhere to be found in her statement, were they - the 445-page statement?
A. That's correct.
Q. And similarly, the accusations of kowtowing and so forth against the minister are nowhere to be found in the statement?
A. No, that's right.
Q. And I ask that because, as you know, it has been suggested on behalf of Pamela Young in the documents that you have that everything she said on Lateline had only been things that she'd said in her statement?
A. That's clearly not true.
Q. That's obviously not correct, is it?
A. That's - what you're saying is correct.
Q. Now, you saw at least as much of the Lateline program as you've now just indicated?
A. Yes.
Q. You knew that she was going to be on Lateline on camera in some form or other?
A. In some form or other, yes.
Q. What did you think she was going to say?
A. I thought that she would - it was in line with her approval to welcome the inquest. Pretty, you know, benign, along the terms of what went out in the media - the written media release that went out.
Q. You still thought that even after she'd told you that what was going to be on Lateline was an exclusive with her? A. Yes, because she was the only - Lateline was the only outlet that she spoke to.
Q. We11, when you saw that she, in fact, emphasised suicide, that she, in fact, attacked the Johnson family for using their influence in an unfair or inappropriate or wrong way and she, in fact, attacked the former Police Minister in extremely strong language --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- were you surprised?
A. Absolutely.
Q. Were you amazed?
A. Yes.
Q. Shocked?
A. Yes.
Q. Angry?
A. Yes, angry.
Q. Yet you didn't ring her or text her?
A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. Not at that time. Oh, because $I$ knew that it would be dealt in - first thing in the morning.
Q. We11, did you not ring her or text her because you were not actually surprised by what she'd said?
A. No, that's not right at all. I knew that it would cause all sorts of problems in the morning and I recall saying to my wife, "Tomorrow's going to be a long day."
Q. So you'd say that the reason for not ringing her or not texting her was not because you agreed with what she'd said?
A. No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Did you send a text to any other police officer about your impressions of what you'd seen? A. Not that night.
Q. Why not?
A. Because it was late at night.
Q. Oh, all right, everyone's sleeping, I understand. But this is a very serious matter concerning the police and it didn't occur to you to communicate further with Coroner Barnes, Mr Yeomans or, for that matter, anybody else in the Police Force?
A. No.

MR GRAY: Q. Now, other senior police were shocked and surprised, it would appear from material we've seen; would you agree?
A. Yes.
Q. And one of those was Mr Finch, Ken Finch?
A. Yes.
Q. And if we go to 367 , which is an email chain somebody could perhaps take the second folder away so that Mr Willing doesn't have to navigate two. Yes, thank you.

So you have $367 ?$
A. Yes.
Q. You've got tab 367?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. So at the bottom of the first page you can see there's an email from Kenneth Finch at 24 minutes past 10 pm --
A. Yes.
Q. $\quad-$ on the night of the 13th?
A. Yes.
Q. He sends it to Strath Gordon from Public Affairs, and Mr Kerlatec, whose position you described earlier -
a senior police officer?
A. Yes, I reported to him, yep.
Q. Sorry?
A. I reported to him.
Q. Yes, quite. And so Ken Finch asks:

So - the question is who organised - and approved Pam Young's interview with Emma

So you've seen that at least in recent times, that email? A. Yes.
Q. And it seems that nobody answers that question that night - that is, Strath Gordon doesn't and John Kerlatec doesn't. But the next day, this is now on the front page of this chain, halfway down the page, Strath Gordon responds:

My understanding is that there were background briefings ...

Et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. And then at the top of the page, Strath Gordon, having sent his response on, both to Ken Finch and John Kerlatec and Georgie Wells, Georgie Wells then responds at $7.57 a m$ on the 14 th, and I've been through that email with you before?
A. Yes, you have, yeah.
Q. Now, obviously Ken Finch has been taken very much by surprise --
A. Yes.
Q. -- one infers from the content of his question. And you would say that you also were, but you just didn't send anybody a text or an email?
A. No, and I knew that it would be something that would be discussed first thing in the morning.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. But leave aside whether you thought something was bound to happen. As the head of Homicide, why didn't you take an initiative if you thought what had happened was so out of the ordinary?
A. I can't answer that, sir, I don't know.
Q. Well, you say you can't answer it, but would you like to assist me in some way or other? You're the head of Homicide. You say that you see something on the television that you're not expecting. It's outside what you thought was reasonable, and yet you don't initiate anything either on the evening or even first thing the next morning?
A. No, that's --
Q. Were you just waiting for something to happen, were you? If nothing happened it would be okay? What were you thinking?
A. I knew that first thing in the morning, that it would be an issue that would be discussed and --
Q. No, but why didn't you take it up? If you were the head of Homicide, Mr Willing, and you thought it was inappropriate, why did you wait for someone else? If you really thought it was inappropriate and out of the bounds of reasonableness, why on earth did you sit back to wait? Were you waiting to see whether there was an adverse or a positive reaction, testing the water? What were you doing?
A. I don't recal1, sir. There was a 24 - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Okay, that's fine. If you don't recal1, you don't recal1, thank you.

MR GRAY: $Q$. I just need to take you back to the transcript that $I$ started with this morning, if Mr Wiliing could have that transcript again, and/or on the screen, it's page 1711.

Down the bottom of 1711, just revisiting this from this morning, the question at line 41:
Q. ... you knew that Pamela Young was
going to be interviewed for Lateline, didn't you?

Answer, "No" - that answer is not true, is it?
A. I knew that she - by that point I knew that she had recorded something that was going to be on Lateline or likely to be on Lateline.
Q. And then at the top of page 1712, the Commissioner asked:
Q. So do $I$ understand it to say that she
didn't tell you that she was going on air that night?

Answer, "No, no".
A. Yeah, no.
Q. That's not true either?
A. That's not right, at the time.
Q. And a couple of lines down:
Q. It must have come as a complete shock and a surprise when you saw her face on the television, then, did it?

Answer, "Yes" - that can't be true either?
A. In that form, in an in-studio interview that we refer to as - colloquially as an "A Current Affair style interview", it absolutely surprised me.
Q. Well, the Commissioner pursued this with you at 1712, at lines 14 and following. He asked you:
Q. It must have come as a complete shock and a surprise when you saw her face on the television, then, did it?

Answer, "Yes", and you received a phone call.
A. Yes.
Q. The Commissioner asked:
Q. ... to answer my question did it come
as a shock and a surprise ... to see her on the television?
A. Yes, it did.

That can't be true. You knew she was going to be on the television?
A. That's correct, but I'm referring to an in-studio style of interview.
Q. And the Commissioner then asked:
Q. ... she never asked your permission.

And you answered:
A. To go on television like that ...
making the distinction you're making, "no". But the Commissioner goes on:
Q. ... and (b) therefore you had no
knowledge that she was going on television?
A. Not like that, no.

Then it's the next question $I$ want to ask you about. The Commissioner asks:
Q. When you say "not like that", I'm so
sorry, not at all?
A. No ... not on television at all.

That's not true, is it?
A. No, it's a mistake.
Q. When you gave evidence last time, in February, had you, in the course of your preparation for giving evidence, gone back to how it came about that this Pamela Young Lateline interview happened?
A. Amongst other topics, yes.
Q. No doubt amongst other topics, granted --
A. Yes.
Q. -- but one of the topics was that one, the Lateline interview and Pamela Young and the aftermath of it? A. Yes, yes, but not to the degree $I$ have now, you know, since that time.
Q. So your evidence today would be, would it, that when you gave those answers such as the one at line $35-$ A. Yes.
Q. -- that is, you had no knowledge that she was going to on television at all - that is merely a mistake and not a deliberate misstatement?
A. No, it's a mistake; that's correct. I'm trying to say that not in that form of an in-studio interview, no.
I made a mistake.
Q. I'm sorry?
A. And I've made a mistake.
Q. I have a couple more questions only, and it's just concerning the day or two after 13 Apri1.
A. Sure.
Q. If we go back to 382A, at the bottom of the third page - this is your notes, your bullet point notes for

## Ashurst --

A. Yes.
Q. -- the second-bottom bullet point on that third page, you record:

The following morning 14 Apri 1 ... around 7am I received a text message to call [Detective Chief Superintendent Kerlatec].

When you did, he asked whether there was a problem with the interview last night with DCI Young as he had received a terse email from Acting Assistant Commissioner Ken Finch? A. Yes.
Q. Which is obviously the one we just looked at?
A. That's correct, yeah.
Q. So you advised him of the content of the interview that is, advised Mr Kerlatec, I gather?
A. That's correct. As - what $I$ saw of the interview at the time.
Q. And what was his reaction, when you told him, whatever you told him?
A. I think I was driving at the time on the way in to the office. I can't recall exactly what he said at the time but it would be something along the 1 ines of, "Okay, we need to sort - talk about this when you get in to the office and this will cause issues", or something like that.
But I can't recall the exact conversation.
Q. We11, as I recal1, but correct me if I have this inaccurate, he was one of the ones involved in and approving the strategy back on 7 Apri1?
A. That's right.
Q. The backgrounding strategy; correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. And presumably, he said to you when you told him what Pamela Young had actually done - did he - "Well, for heaven's sake that wasn't the agreed strategy"?
A. He may well have said that. I just can't recall it.
Q. The next bullet point on this page you say:

Later that morning when $I$ arrived at work I received a call from the Executive Media Advisor Zdenka Vaughan.
A. $\mathrm{Mmm}-\mathrm{hmm}$.
Q. This is the lady who's the personal media adviser to the Commissioner?
A. Yes.
Q. Who was then Mr Scipione?
A. Yes.
Q. You had Detective Inspector $01 e n$ and George We11s with you, so Zdenka Vaughan was on speaker, and you all the discussed the fact that DCI Young was not authorised to conduct the interview she did nor say the things she did on Lateline?
A. That's right.
Q. Now, Zdenka, it says, was about to brief the

Commissioner of Police and would call back?
A. Yes.
Q. And then at the top of the next page:

A short time later Zdenka called back and said that she had spoken with the [Commissioner of Police] and that he agreed that no comment should be made by --

I suppose that should read "Police", or something like that?
A. Yeah, that's right.
Q.
... [and he] wanted everyone to know that he supported DCI Young and was aware of the hard work ...

Et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. So did you get the impression from Zdenka at that point - that is, pretty early in the morning - that the Commissioner of Police was not too troubled?
A. At that point in the morning, yes, that's right.
Q. Did you understand from Zdenka that he had seen it?
A. No, I didn't at all.
Q. Don't know or --
A. I don't know.
Q. Then --

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And by this stage - that is, early though it was - you had made - you had taken no initiative to contact Ms Young?
A. That's correct.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Now, the next thing that seems to have happened, at least on the documents that we have, is at 368, tab 368 [NPL. 3000.0009.0669_0001]. Now, this emai1, which we'11 just go through, at the top of it it says,
"From: Michae1 Wiliing"?
A. Yeah, that's right.
Q. But it begins immediately:

Hi Zdenka.

It's Georgie using Mick Willing's computer.
A. Yes.
Q. I'11 come back to that, but at any rate, it's evidently from your computer, at least, from Michael Willing, and it's to Zdenka Vaughan and to a few other people, Strath Gordon, Ken Finch and Georgie Wells and one or two others?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, this is at 9.18am on the Tuesday, and it's Georgie Wells apparently sending this from your computer? A. That's right.
Q. So was she with you? Were you there when she sent it?
A. Yes, myself, and I think Chris Olen was with us in the office as well.
Q. Right. So even though she's sent it, it's a kind of
a joint communication?
A. Yes.
Q. And so Georgie, and you, say to Zdenka:

Some 7 ines:
and then some sort of bullet points, which I take it are suggested 1 ines that perhaps the police could issue as a kind of response?
A. Yeah, should they get inquiries coming through the door.
Q. And did you play a part in drafting those 1 ines?
A. I would have, yes.
Q. So the first 1 ine says, or the first bullet point:

DCI Pam Young did express some personal views during last night's interview, but the majority of points she raised are contained within her statement provided to the Coroner.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, what that rather eloquently doesn't mention is that the really big-ticket problem items were not in the statement provided to the Coroner; correct?
A. Yeah, that's right.
Q. Whose idea was it to massage that problem in that way?
A. I - I don't know. Would be collective decision, three of us having input into it, and again, Zdenka could have used that and done what she wanted with it. Strath Gordon and others were contained in that as well, they could have al1 had input into it.
Q. Well, even though it may strictly or literally not be wrong, to say that the majority of points she raised are within her statement is somewhat at a distance from the thrust of the problem, isn't it?
A. Yes, that would be right, yes.
Q. Why suggest that as part of the collective you and Georgie and Chris Olen who were suggesting it?
A. It would - it was providing some information that
could be massaged into a response back.
THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And is it correct or not at this stage, you can't recall one way or the other whether you saw the whole program or not; is that still the position? A. That's correct.
Q. So you were writing this off to the Commissioner not having, yourself - you tell me - viewed the whole program? A. The three of us, yes.
Q. We11, when you say "the three of us", I know there's often safety in numbers, but you were the senior person in the room, weren't you?
A. That's right, I was.
Q. And are you telling me that you were writing to the Commissioner suggesting a considered strategy, not yourself having watched the whole program?
A. That's correct.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR GRAY: Q. At this point, 9.18, when you and the other two send this to Zdenka, was it your understanding that at that stage the Commissioner was relaxed about the Lateline broadcast?
A. Yes.
Q. And that's because that's the impression that Zdenka had given you?
A. Yes, yes.
Q. And did that belief on your part - namely, that the Commissioner was still fairly relaxed - feed in to the suggested first bullet point?
A. It might have but again, I don't know specifically who thought of it or presented that as an option, as a bullet point, but the three of us were involved in it.
Q. Then what seems to have happened is that by a few hours later, the view of the Commissioner and perhaps others had changed?
A. Yes.
Q. Is that right? If we turn over one to 369
[NPL.3000.0004.0742_0001] we see an emai1 from Rick Feneley
of the Sydney Morning Herald at 12.03, ie, midday, or thereabouts --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to Zdenka. And I won't read it out but --
A. Yes.
Q. -- you've no doubt read it in preparation for today.

And Rick Feneley is, in effect, saying, "Is the
Commissioner going to stand behind Pamela Young or is he not?"
A. That's correct, yes.
Q. So it's apparent from the approach of the Herald journalist, and no doubt from other media responses, that the media didn't regard this Lateline broadcast by Pamela Young as something to be relaxed about; agreed? A. Certainly not Mr Feneley, not at all.
Q. No. And, in fact, it looks like Zdenka was pretty quick to do something about this one, because you send it or, rather, Rick Feneley sends it to her at 12.03, and two minutes later, she sends it to you and says she's ringing you "now"?
A. Yes.
Q. So that tends to indicate that alarm bells were ringing?
A. It does, yes.
Q. And - just bear with me.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Just before you go ahead, I'm sorry to ask this question, would you go back to 368 just for a moment, Mr Wiliing. Just remind me, yourself, Georgie Wilson [sic], and who else were in the room, did you say?
A. Georgie Wells --
Q. Wells, I'm sorry, and --
A. -- and Chris Olen, Detective Chief Inspector Chris 01 en .
Q. And did you discuss with each other the fact that you hadn't watched it all, you say; had the other two watched it, to your knowledge?
A. I don't know, sir. I can't recal1 that.
Q. You don't know. Would you agree with me, though, that the whole tone of that email is one of total support for Pam Young?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: Q. Now, 382A, which are your bullet points for Ashurst, the fourth page, the second-last page, I've taken you to the first bullet point, which is at a relatively early time in the morning, 7 or 8 o'clock?
A. Yes.
Q. But then you say:

Shortly before midday $I$ received a called from Zdenka who said that the [Commissioner of Police] (via herself and Strath Gordon) were getting media inquiries demanding to know whether he "stood by his officer's comments."
A. Yes.
Q. And Zdenka said to you - pausing there, one of those was obviously the Feneley email that $I$ just showed to you?
A. Yes.
Q. And Zdenka said to you:

We have to put something out about the matter and ... "you will have to own this, Mick."
A. Yes, yes.
Q. So those words in quotes are what Zdenka said to you "You will have to own this, Mick"?
A. Yes.
Q. And you understood that as the Commissioner saying that to you, "You will have to own this, Mick"?
A. Oh, look, I understood it as Zdenka saying it. Whether the Commissioner had direct input into that, I mean, her role was to manage media. I'm not sure whether the Commissioner had any input into that or not.

THE COMMISSIONER: Q. But her role was not to give you directions, was it?
A. She could.
Q. She was, what, senior to you in the force?
A. She was in a more senior position, given the role that she had, and most certainly could.
Q. So she could give you directions presumably in relation to media strategy and so on?
A. Yes.
Q. Obviously not in relation to homicide issues?
A. No, but general media strategy, yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Al1 right.
MR GRAY: Q. Okay. So the next bullet point:
... 15 minutes later I telephoned Zdenka with DI Olen and Georgie Wells present.
A. Yes.
Q. And I interpolate obviously for the second time?
A. Yes.
Q.

We - -
that is you and Georgie and Mr Olen -discussed a set of words that would be appropriate ...

And you drafted them and circulated them?
A. Which is the "inopportune".
Q. Which brings in the word "inopportune", and we find that at tab 370 [NPL.0138.0002.6715_0001]?
A. Mmm-hmm.
Q. At the bottom of that page, 370 , we see that you indeed send an email at 12.49, so only three-quarters of an hour after the ones that $I$ took you to before.
A. Mmm-hmm.
Q. And you say to Z - that's Zdenka - and Strath:

Below words for consideration. I am happy to own the comment subject to the Commissioner's view.
A. Yeah.
Q. And this time around, rather than saying - that's the last one at tab 368 that said, "The majority of points she raised are contained within her statement", now we have:

Perhaps some of her comments (on Lateline) were inopportune ...

Et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, the word "inopportune" was a word that came from you or from Zdenka or --
A. No, it came from Strath Gordon.
Q. From Strath Gordon?
A. Yes.
Q. And you endorse it or go along with it?
A. Yes.
Q. And you send that form of words to Zdenka and a number of others including Strath Gordon. Strath Gordon says he is fine with it?
A. Yep.
Q. Georgie Wells says, subject to one very sma11 minor amendment, that once the Commissioner has approved the wording, that wil1 go out?
A. Yes.
Q. And indeed it does go out a bit later?
A. Yes.
Q. In that form, with the "inopportune" word in?
A. Yes.
Q. And you speak to Pame1a Young. I'm back on 382A now.
A. Yes.
Q. And she's not happy?
A. Not at al1.
Q. She asked that you try to get it changed to say that the comments were her own views?
A. Yes.
Q. You rang Zdenka. She and Strath Gordon ring you back.

You talk about it some more. You tell DCI Young that - and it reads as follows:
"we are onto in town and trying to convince."

What does that mean?
A. We were on to - we were talking to Zdenka and Strath trying to convince them to not use that word "inopportune", because she was very upset about it, Pam.
Q. But they say, "No, we want to use that word"?
A. Yes.
Q. And so it goes - that's what happens?
A. That's right.
Q. And she remains unhappy?
A. Yes.
Q. Thereafter?
A. Yes.

MR GRAY: I have nothing further, thank you.

## <EXAMINATION BY MR THANGARAJ:

MR THANGARAJ: Q. Just staying with that document, page 4 , the last four numbers 0032 , of your notes pre the Ashurst interview, you were asked earlier about the suicide theory, at the beginning of the day, and you were taken to about halfway down the bullet point, "At 5.04pm I received", et cetera.

THE COMMISSIONER: A bit further down the page, I think.
THE WITNESS: Sorry.

MR THANGARAJ: Yes.
THE COMMISSIONER: There it is. Okay.
MR THANGARAJ: Q. Page 4 of your notes for the Ashurst interview?
A. Oh, yes, sorry.
Q. Sorry, I thought that's where we were.
A. My fault, yes.
Q. At the beginning of the day you were taken to some questions in relation to the suicide theory and from that paragraph of that bullet point, "At 5.04 pm onwards", and you ultimately said you wanted to appease Pam Young in relation to this issue.
A. Yes.
Q. Now, I wanted to take you to what had preceded that point leading in to that, but we have conveniently done that now in part. At that time, you've just been taken to a few bullet points by Counsel Assisting, and then you say, that second bullet point above "At 5.04":

I then telephoned DCI Young and informed
her that the words were not going to change
and that they would go out under my hand.
A. Yes.
Q.

She became very upset and began crying before hanging up the call.
A. Yes.
Q. So you knew before the 5.04 pm text message that you received - you knew what her state of mind was?
A. Yes.
Q. Generally with the police?
A. Yes.
Q. And also with the fact that it was going out under your hand, the word "inopportune"?
A. Yes.
Q. And that you had failed to convince head office to change the wording to something that suited her?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. And as part of your attempts to provide some sort of pastoral care, welfare, the next bullet point:

Over the next hour or so $I$ attempted to telephone DCI Young on a number of occasions ...
A. Yes.
Q. If you had got through to her, what were you going to try to achieve?
A. To try and calm her down. I'm not sure whether or not she'd said it beforehand but she said that she was going off sick, at some point, which was of concern to me.
Q. And then the communication you, in fact, had after a number of attempts to call her was the text message she received - you received from her at 5.04?
A. Yes.
Q. And you say that as a result of what had transpired, conveniently noted on that one page, you attempted to appease her in the way that you had attended to on the phone calls that you attempted earlier?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, at any time during this, did Pam Young say to you, "We11, you knew I was going to say this, Mick"?
A. No.
Q. Did she ever say, "You authorised me to go on Lateline and say these things"?
A. No.
Q. Did she say, "I told you at 5 pm when I rang you that I was going there for the interview"?
A. No.
Q. Now, I need to take you to some questions in relation to the Lateline topic, but just before we get to that, I just want to ask a couple of things of what was happening in Apri1 2015. Now, the incident at Lindt Cafe was about four months prior?
A. Yes, that's right, yep.
Q. How important a priority was Lindt Cafe for your role in Apri1 2015?
A. It consumed a considerable amount of my time because it was the biggest investigation being conducted in the country at the time. I had a detective chief inspector that was running it with a strike force of 30 to 40 detectives preparing material that would eventually become part of the coronial inquest. The Coroner at the time had kicked off an inquest, had started an inquest, and it was an ongoing factor that consumed a lot of my time and attention.
Q. And part of that involved scrutiny panels. What were they?
A. Scrutiny panels were an idea that we came up with to provide support to the inspector that was running that investigation. It was done with the concurrence of the State Coroner, so it involved myself, John Kerlatec, Mick Fuller, who chaired it, and Deputy Commissioner Kaldas providing advice and guidance to the investigator that was running that inquiry.
Q. 16 Apri1, so a few days after this, there was a significant announcement that happened in relation to the William Tyrrell investigation?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, on 16 April, were you involved in - were you being interviewed --
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry, can I just interrupt? I do apologise. Where does this evidence come from about the William Tyrrell - is it in the papers?

MR THANGARAJ: I'm just asking him.
THE COMMISSIONER: I know you are, but are you giving evidence about it, are you? I am not quite sure. It may be uncontroversial.

MR THANGARAJ: I don't think anything is going to be controversial. I don't expect it to be.

THE COMMISSIONER: We11, I just don't know. But if you're
going to ask me to find that some announcement was made of some significance, some thought ought to be given to me having, if it's uncontroversial, some material about it, because I personally don't have judicial knowledge or notice of what you're talking about. I have no doubt that Lindt Cafe was on the table, I'm just certainly not aware of William Tyrrell at all, sorry. I know about the case but I don't know about the proximity of the announcement you are talking about now in the light of - and your evidence I accept uncontroversially, but at the moment it's from you only, is all I'm saying.

MR THANGARAJ: Yes, I understand that. I will take whatever steps are needed.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR THANGARAJ: Q. On 16 April you conducted interviews in relation to a major announcement in relation to the William Tyrrell investigation?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. And was that something that was being considered internally for a number of days leading in to that 16 April press conference?
A. Yes, yes, and it was a major press conference followed up with some exclusive interviews.
Q. Just very briefly, what was the announcement that was being made on that day in relation to that investigation?
A. That the investigation had identified a paedophile ring that may have had some connection to the case.
Q. Now, on 16 and 17 April - I think this is noted in the diary notes that have recently been added to the supplementary bundle - there was a convening of Homicide leaders from around the country?
A. Yes.
Q. Heads of Homicide from around the country were here for - was it a two-day conference on the 16th and 17th?
A. Yes, for the first time. That group gathered in Sydney for --
Q. And had you initiated that?
A. I had.
Q. So there was some involvement leading into the 16th of April for that?
A. Yes.
Q. And how many active cases was the Homicide branch looking at, roughly, in April of 2015?
A. At any one time, between 60 and 80 active homicides. April of 2015 would be no different.
Q. I want to go specifically now to the 13th, and just in relation to this area, you've been asked a lot of questions of the phone call that took place with Pam Young and also the notes that you made, the recollection, and then the interview - sorry, the meeting you had with Ashurst.
A. Yes.
Q. We know that the phone call was at around 5 pm . What were you doing on the afternoon of the 13th, so immediately prior to the phone call?
A. I was at a funeral for the first ever Homicide Squad commander, Detective Inspector Harry Tupman.
Q. And was that a major event for police?
A. (Witness nods).
Q. And why was that?
A. It was a major event for the Homicide Squad and it was - prior to that, Mr Tupman had been invited in for a morning tea with his daughters, and all of the previous Homicide Squad commanders were present with the Commissioner, and it was quite a culturally significant matter for the Homicide Squad, given its history.
Q. I just want to take you through a few points generally and specifically in relation to the questions you've been asked. We've heard evidence and we read evidence about the media backgrounding strategy being discussed and approved at very high levels of the police?
A. Yes.
Q. And it's clear from that material that the strategy that was being discussed was backgrounding and off the record?
A. Yes.
Q. And what was being sought was a balance in the publicity that was being generated by this particular case?
A. Yes.
Q. And as we've seen, including from a document that you were taken to earlier, there would be a reconsideration of the question of on the record on the 13th if needed?
A. Yes.
Q. Was there ever a reconsideration on the 13th --
A. No.
Q. - - of that question? Now, Pam Young had approval to do the door-stop at G1ebe on the 13th?
A. Yes, I gave her that approval.
Q. To welcome the inquest, et cetera?
A. Yes.
Q. It was put to you, with respect, entirely accurately, that the media release was quite bland?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, the media release went out because, as far as the police understood it, the media pack had gone?
A. As far as Georgie Wells and I understood it, yes.
Q. So the media release that went out was the one that you've been taken to today?
A. Yes.
Q. And did she have authority at that door-stop at G1ebe to go further than that media release?
A. No.
Q. Document ending 2947 - I don't need to take you to it because we've been taken to it but it's the media update that Georgia Wells does.
A. Yes.
Q. She did not mention the Glebe interview with

Emma Alberici - it's not in that document, is it?
A. That's right.
Q. Given that Pam Young had conducted that door-stop at Glebe, was she required to inform police media?
A. Yes.
Q. So you take it from that document that she failed to
comply with her obligations and tell police media on the 13th of the door-stop?
A. Yes.
Q. That media release that went out, would that have gone to Pam Young by email to her phone?
A. Yes.
Q. And that would have been before her call to you at 5pm?
A. Yes, around 1 o'clock - before 1 o'clock, yeah.
Q. I have just taken you to April 2015 generally and specifically up to and including 13 April, and ignore everything you've read since that time, if that's possible, but as of that time in April 2015 up to the 13th is all I'm asking you about, did you trust Pam Young?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you trust her to comply with approvals?
A. Yes.
Q. Even if they had not been, to her knowledge - sorry, we know that she knew that there was a background strategy approved at high levels. Even without that, did you have confidence that she would comply with approvals to whatever extent that they were?
A. Yes.
Q. As of 13 April, by the end of that phone call at around 5 pm , as far as you were aware, had she complied with her obligations?
A. Yes, she had.
Q. As far as you understood it?
A. As far as I was aware, yes.
Q. Did you have any reason, by the end of that phone call, to believe that she had gone past her authority?
A. No, although she had done an interview with one journalist at court, was my understanding.
Q. But at that stage, did you understand that she had gone outside, further than the media pack, the media release?
A. No.
Q. Now, you've read the door-stop interview - since that time, in more recent times, you've read the transcript of the door-stop interview in Glebe?
A. Yes.
Q. Did she exceed her authority by saying what she did?
A. Yes, I think she did.
Q. Now, the approval that she had was to speak to the media on the 13th at Glebe?
A. Yes.
Q. And she did not speak to the media pack and she reported back to the police that they had all gone --
A. That's right.
Q. - - by the time she came out?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, you don't know whether or not she waited for the media pack to leave, I take it?
A. I don't know.
Q. But it just so happened that despite everyone else leaving, Emma Alberici happened to be at Glebe after the rest of the media had left?
A. Yes.
Q. And so if that had happened, that she waited, deliberately or otherwise, and Pam Young only spoke to Emma Alberici at Glebe, would you regard that as an exclusive?
A. Yes.
Q. You've seen the $A B C$ footage from the news at 7 pm which we have just seen today?
A. Yes.
Q. And you've read the transcript at G1ebe?
A. Yes.
Q. Was there more in the transcript than there was on the footage?
A. Yes, considerably more.
Q. Who had authority to allow a police officer to give an exclusive interview to media?
A. Strath Gordon.
Q. Did you have that authority?
A. No.
Q. And when you understood that this had happened, did you keep it to yourself or did you ring the Media Unit?
A. Oh, I rang Georgie Wells, who in turn said that she'd better notify Strath.
Q. So the protocol was for you to ring media and that's what you did?
A. Yes.
Q. Media Unit, I'm sorry?
A. Yes.
Q. The text message that you received from Pam Young and you were taken to this by Counsel Assisting - talked about balance and that she was happy the ABC had been involved?
A. Yes.
Q. Had there been consideration of excluding a different media organisation in the lead-up to this?
A. Yes, the Herald.
Q. And we read the documents, there was a belief that the Herald's reporter had formed a view against the police's position?
A. That's right.
Q. And that there was no point speaking to the Herald at that point?
A. Yes.
Q. Or that particular journalist?
A. Yes.
Q. So part of Pam Young's belief was that they needed to speak to an organisation that would provide balance, that would listen to things fairly, and that the Herald journalist wasn't one of them?
A. That's correct, yes.
Q. So when she talks about balance and the ABC, that is in the history of the Herald being problematic from her
point of view?
A. Yes.
Q. She also says in the text message - she also talks about Penny Brown and her appearance, her lipstick, et cetera, in that text message. Now, there's never been a suggestion that Penny Brown would appear on the Lateline studio interview -- -
A. No.
Q. -- as far as you've ever understood it?
A. No. No.
Q. Her message - sorry, just before that, before you received the message, did you have any reason to think that Pam Young would exceed her authority?
A. No.
Q. When you received that text message and she spoke about Penny Brown's appearance, was that consistent or inconsistent with her having conducted a door-stop at G1ebe?
A. It was consistent with her having conducted a door-stop at Glebe because Penny Brown was present at the same time.
Q. And it's quite usual, isn't it, when there are a couple of officers involved in an investigation or a court case, that one wil1 speak and one or others will stand behind them?
A. Yes.
Q. Or will be in the footage of walking along pathways?
A. Yeah, will be in the vicinity with them, yes, that's right.
Q. To your knowledge, was anyone in the Media Unit alarmed before the Lateline interview actually went to air? A. No.
Q. To your knowledge, had everyone else assumed, like you, that Pam Young would behave in authority?
A. Yes.
Q. And we now have read important material as to the history of the contact between Pam Young, Penny Brown on the one hand, and the $A B C$ on the other hand?
A. Yes.
Q. On that topic, going back to the document ending $A$, 2733 [sic], Emma Alberici expressed views internally on the 8th to others of the $A B C$. You have read that, haven't you?
A. I have read it, yes.
Q. And obviously those views in relation to Pam Young and what Pam Young would say and the form in which she would say it could only have come from Pam Young?
A. That's right.
Q. Is that your understanding?
A. That's correct.
Q. Now, as of 8 Apri1, Emma Alberici has an assurance from Pam Young that she would speak on the record?
A. Yes.
Q. You have read that?
A. Yes, I have.
Q. At the very best, your understanding was there may be consideration to go on the record on 13 April?
A. Yes.
Q. So that means well before that possibility had even arisen, Pam Young had assured Emma Alberici that she would go on the record?
A. That's correct.
Q. Now, apart from Penny Brown, are you aware of anyone else in police knowing that at that time?
A. I'm not aware of anyone knowing that.
Q. Would you regard Pam Young as actively misleading the police in relation to these issues?
A. Yes.
Q. Did she have authority to promise Emma Alberici an on-the-record interview on 8 April?
A. No.
Q. Let alone an exclusive?
A. No.
Q. And we've seen from that material that not only had
she promised an exclusive interview, but that it would be explosive, and there was the influence allegation against the family and politicisation involving the Minister?
A. Yes.
Q. Did Pam Young ever have any authority to say that in the way that she did, or at all, on the record?
A. No.
Q. Did she tell anyone, to your knowledge, that she had recorded the interview on the 10th, which Emma Alberici had said may be used on the record - for example, the Mark Colvin program?
A. Not to my knowledge.
Q. Did she have authority to allow Emma Alberici to use the recording on the 10th for another ABC program?
A. No.

MR THANGARAJ: Nothing further.
THE COMMISSIONER: I've got a couple of matters I just want to take up with Mr Willing.

MR MYKKELTVEDT: Your Honour, I should indicate I will have just one subject to touch upon.

THE COMMISSIONER: I beg your pardon?
MR MYKKELTVEDT: I should indicate that I will have just one subject to touch upon.

THE COMMISSIONER: And what subject will that be, given that Mr Tedeschi has already had his go?

MR MYKKELTVEDT: Mr Tedeschi hasn't had his go in relation to the matters that have been considered today. The
subject I wish to touch upon --
THE COMMISSIONER: Well, why don't you do it now, before I ask my questions.

MR MYKKELTVEDT: Yes, that was all I was exploring.
THE COMMISSIONER: All right. No, that's fair, thank you.

## <EXAMINATION BY MR MYKKELTVEDT:

MR MYKKELTVEDT: Q. Mr Willing, you were asked some questions about Pam Young's views as at April 2015 in relation to the likelihood that Mr Johnson died by suicide. Do you recal 1 that --
A. Yes.
Q. -- at the very outset of today; and, in addition, her view that the case could never be solved on the available evidence as it then stood?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, Pam Young, to your knowledge, was appointed the investigation supervisor on or about 2 April 2013; is that right?
A. Yes, it was.
Q. And would you agree that her statement was finalised on 13 July 2014?
A. Yes.
Q. And in the meantime, you wrote to the Crime

Commission?
A. Yes.
Q. And you sought that they provide a view as to whether the relevant lines of inquiry had been covered?
A. Yes.
Q. And in turn, whether there was anything in their powers, the specific powers that are ascribed to the Crime Commission, that would allow them to further investigate the matter?
A. Yes.
Q. And be of assistance to the NSW Police Force?
A. Yes.
Q. And they wrote to you in February 2015, I think - or 2014, I should say?
A. Yes.
Q. And indicated that they considered that there had been a careful - or I should actually pull up the exact words.
Can you be shown, perhaps, tab 350A
[NPL.3000.0014.0195_0001] and the middle of the third
page of that document?
A. I think I've got that. 350A.
Q. Yes. Do you see in the middle of that page a heading "Conclusion of major investigations"?
A. Yes.
Q. So I took you before to a letter that you had written on 4 October 2013.
A. Yes.
Q. And there is some italicised text in that passage?
A. Yes.
Q. Can you indicate for the Commission whether that
italicised text is in fact text that was contained in your 1etter?
A. Yes.
Q. And then on 18 February 2014 you received a response?
A. Yes.
Q. In which the Commission indicated that the investigations to that point conducted had been comprehensive and thorough --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and had not identified any 1 ine of inquiry that had not already been undertaken?
A. Yes.
Q. And then, as I suggested to you before, the Commission indicated:

Similarly, it is considered that there is no scope for the Commission to exercise its statutory powers in a way which would assist the investigation any further.
A. Yes.
Q. So as at the date of Apri1 2015, the views that

Pam Young had expressed were expressed on the back of quite a lengthy investigation?
A. Yes.
Q. That had resulted in a 445-page statement?
A. Yes.
Q. And had had the benefit of the Crime Commission's views as to, among other things, whether there were further 1 ines of inquiry that could be pursued?
A. Yes, that's right.
Q. Now, did you yourself at any stage during the course of Pam Young's investigations seek to direct her or influence her to form a conclusion that suicide was the most likely outcome?
A. Not at all.

MR MYKKELTVEDT: Those are the questions that $I$ had.
THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
Q. Mr Willing, just a couple of questions. First, I assume from what's happened and what has been said that you, amongst other telephone numbers, would have had Pamela Young's various contact details in your phone?
A. Yes.
Q. And you could, if you had chosen to do so, made contact with her on the evening of the 13th or early the following morning, on the 14th?
A. Yes.
Q. Was Ms Young ever disciplined, by reason of her unauthorised activities?
A. Not before - no, she wasn't.
Q. And Ms Brown - was she ever spoken to by you or anybody else to find out what part she had played in this unauthorised activity?
A. Not by me.
Q. By anyone to your knowledge?
A. I'm not sure whether anyone else did, sir.
Q. But you certainly did not initiate any activity to determine to what extent Ms Brown was privy to what had occurred?
A. Sir, a Part 8A complaint had been initiated as part of the process.
Q. What does that mean?
A. So under the Police Act, a complaint investigation had been started but not physically conducted. So it was recorded that a complaint would be lodged against those officers and investigated down the track, but Pamela Young went off sick and it was never concluded.
Q. Well, when you say "never concluded", do you mean, by that, never pursued?
A. Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. They are the matters that I had. Is there anything arising out of that, Mr Thangaraj? Thank you.

MR GRAY: Commissioner, that concludes the evidence for public hearing 2.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.
MR GRAY: And under the regime that has been promulgated, the submissions of Counsel Assisting will be due in three weeks' time and the submissions by other authorised parties, three weeks after that.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, all right. I think you are all aware of those dates. Does that still fit in with the I think we talked about 21 June for you --

MR THANGARAJ: Which predates the end of the six weeks from now, unfortunately. We will leave it as it is and we will see what happens.

THE COMMISSIONER: The only difficulty I've got, as is obvious, is the report date, and I want to obviously provide that everybody has such opportunity as they need reasonably to respond.

MR THANGARAJ: Yes, that's fine, the timetable is fine.
THE COMMISSIONER: We will try to accommodate everybody. Having spent time involved in the matter, both in your interests but more importantly Mr Willing's interests, he would want his preferred counsel. We will sort something out, I'm sure, even if we have to contact you in Scotland or somewhere. All right.

Yes, Mr Gray, were you going to say something?

MR GRAY: I hope this is of assistance. There has been some communication, I believe - I will be corrected if I'm wrong about this - as to possibly amending the dates for the oral submissions in relation to this public hearing to - they were to have been I think 26 and 27 June, or the 27 th and 28 th perhaps, to 30 June, which is a Friday, and 3 July, which is a Monday. If that's not convenient, we can work something out, but I understand that may be convenient.

THE COMMISSIONER: Does that work for you?
MR THANGARAJ: Sorry, I don't think that involves me.
MR GRAY: No, that's right.
THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Well, why don't I leave counsel to try to sort something out if you can, and what is suitable to counsel will suit me, I'm certain. All right. I will now adjourn, thank you. Sorry, Mr Willing, I should excuse you from further attendance, thank you.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.
<THE WITNESS WITHDREW
AT 3.16PM THE SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY


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