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And on 2 March of 2019 you were sworn in as Defence Industries Minister.
Is that correct?---That is correct.

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Walk us through that meeting?---I was in – I was in my office and – so my recollection is that Fiona and Brittany came into the office, they sat down and we started to have a discussion. I said to her it was about the security, you know, incident and I wanted to know, you know, from her perspective what happened.

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Can I just pause there. Prior to that meeting had you had any one-on-one conversations with Fiona Brown in preparation for it?---We would – I don't recall specifically that I did, but we would have, yes.

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Okay. As part of those conversations did you query why she was upset of Ms Brown?---No.

Did Ms Brown offer it?---No.

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I am just sort of trying to get the – sorry, there is no trick questions here?---No.

I am just trying to get the dynamic that took us into that meeting. At this stage, on your evidence, you knew nothing about the subsequent allegations on the 22nd of – it was just a security breach?---A serious security breach, yes.

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A serious security breach. What – how do you define a serious security breach?---A serious security breach is where, for example, in the Minister for Defence Industries' office which has highly classified material, commercial-in-confidence material, you have very clear security requirements in terms of clean desk, document handling, document security and also access issues in the office, so any breach of those security requirements is serious.

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There would – it would not be possible to have a non-serious security breach by entering your office as Defence Industries minister in the middle of the night? A suite, I am sorry?---No, not unless authorised and not unless there for a highly important work reason.

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Okay, so I am just – the element that made it a serious security breach was the fact that it was your suite?---Well it would have been the same for any minister but particularly for a minister in the Defence portfolio, cabinet minister. We have highly classified documents that we work with as a matter of routine and you expect the highest standards which is why there is a

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ministerial code of conduct in any office but I think particular in portfolios like Defence.

5 I was just trying to unpack why the insertion of the adjective 'serious' before the 'breach'. Okay, so there was some conversation between yourself and Fiona Brown prior to the meeting with Ms Higgins but you still do not recall Ms Brown offering you any of the detail of Saturday – of the previous Saturday, of the Saturday week before?---No.

10 You did not inquire any further about why she was upset?---I – at that point I had no need because in my mind it was a security breach.

15 What was your concern at this stage?---My concern was to find out from her perspective why they were there, why they did what they did and also why she was upset, so she was upset to the point that Fiona was concerned.

You had not asked Ms Brown whether she had made those inquiries prior to this meeting?---I knew that she had talked to Ms Higgins, absolutely.

20 But you did not ask her what she – what was said?---I don't recall specifically asking her that because at that time it was a security breach.

25 Okay, so take us into the meeting of Monday, 1 April. In as much detail as you can, please qualify it by 'I can't remember verbatim but – about this' but can you walk through what – who said what and in what sequence?---I – look, I don't have recollection sort of three years later of word for word. However, I did start the conversation by explaining what the meeting was about.

30 Which was what?---About the security breach, and so I asked Ms Higgins about the incident and she was very apologetic, she was embarrassed and she did apologise because she knew it was the wrong thing - - -

35 HER HONOUR: Please, senator, just do not look into her mind. Just the words said, thanks?---Okay, so she - - -

MR DRUMGOLD: She said, 'Sorry'?---She apologised, yes.

40 You said, 'This is about a security breach'?---Yes.

She said, 'Sorry'?---Yes.

45 Okay, what was said next?---She also indicated that she knew that it was not the right thing to do and that she didn't want to lose her job.

Was her job at risk at this stage?---No.

Did you – what leads you to say that?---Well she had raised the issue that she didn't want to lose her job.

5 But was it – I am just sort of trying to find out how she might have thought that. Had you instructed Ms – do you know if Ms Brown had conveyed to her that her job was at risk, or?---I don't believe she did, no.

10 Ordinarily would her job have been at risk for one security breach like this?---No.

No? Okay. So you conveyed that to her?---Yes.

15 And what happened next?---She explained in a little bit more detail over the course of the discussion that they – she was very drunk and she couldn't remember what had happened that night. But in the course of saying that she did mention to me that she woke up the next morning and got – I can't remember the exact words, but mentioned that she got dressed. And it was at that point – she was also a little more distressed and it was at that point that I thought, 'I'm not the right person to be talking' – you know, if you've got
20 somebody who can't remember what happened and she was getting dressed and she's distressed – so that's when I said to her that, you know, as her boss – and I'm not a trained counsellor and I'm not the person to be having this conversation with. So I suggested to her that I knew we had AFP in the building and that here in the ACT they're community policing, so I suggested
25 to her that she might rather have this conversation with somebody more qualified and that she should talk to the AFP, and I said that we'd be happy to facilitate that if she wanted to. My recollection is she didn't say yes straight away, but she did a bit later. I think she – I don't think she approached me, she approached Fiona and – who took her to meet with the AFP. So that was
30 on the Monday.

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25 Well, let me ask it this way. You have sought the transcripts of Ms Higgins’s evidence in this trial, haven’t you?---Yes.

Why?---Because I was – I was curious to know what had been said but I was advised by my lawyer that that wasn’t appropriate.

30 You arranged for your husband to sit in the back of the court, didn’t you?---No, he’s not my husband, but my partner has been here in the court, yes.

35 And he’s been talking to you about the evidence that Ms Higgins gave, hasn’t he?---No, he has not. My lawyer was very – my lawyer was very clear and I have been in Rwanda for the last week. I came back early to testify today.

40 You wrote to my friend – you wrote an SMS to my friend asking him to send transcripts to your lawyer at the conclusion – at the commencement of Ms Higgins’ cross-examination, didn’t you?---Yes, but I was advised that it was not appropriate. I hadn’t realised it wasn’t appropriate because I haven’t been in this situation before, so my lawyer made it very clear that it wasn’t appropriate.

45 And you’re saying that your partner has sat in the back of the court through Ms Higgins’s evidence and you’ve not once asked him about Ms Higgins’ evidence?---He has been very clear. My lawyer was very clear with him not to discuss it with me. Yes.

So what would be the point of him sitting in the back of the court? I mean, he lives in Perth with you, doesn't he?

5 MR WHYBROW: Well, I object, your Honour. Your Honour, this is getting well beyond any rational unfavourable evidence.

HER HONOUR: It is. I am aware of the test and I am going to extend the leave.

10 MR WHYBROW: As your Honour please.

MR DRUMGOLD: Thank you, your Honour.

15 Your partner lives in Perth?---He does.

And during Ms Higgins's evidence, your're in Rwanda?---Yes.

And your partner lives in Perth?---Yes.

20 And your partner finds himself in the back of the court listening to Ms Higgins' evidence. Correct?---Yes, although we do have a house here in Canberra and he has been here in Canberra for most of the last month.

25 And two hours into Ms Higgins's cross-examination you texted my friend asking him to send your lawyer transcripts of the trial. Correct?---Yes.

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JURY RETIRED

[3.18 pm]

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<LINDA KAREN REYNOLDS, Recalled: [3.29 pm]

<EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR DRUMGOLD CONTINUED

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Now, first of all I am suggesting that your lawyer had no interest in these transcripts, it was you that had interest in these transcripts and that message is to say 'Can you send them to my lawyer' with a clear understanding that your lawyer would pass them on to you?---Yes, I did ask for them. But, again, it

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So I am suggesting that on this basis you are clearly - - -?---Yes.

- - - politically invested in the outcome of this trial, aren't you?---No. What's

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