

LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND ETHICS OF THE PRESS

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF GARY GIBBON

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I, **GARY GIBBON**, of Channel 4 News, Parliamentary Press Gallery, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA **WILL SAY** as follows:

I have recently received a letter from Kim Brudenell, the Solicitor to the Inquiry, dated 5 August 2011, which contains a series of numbered questions. I have responded to each of those questions in the equivalently numbered paragraphs below.

1. I am a journalist and have been the political editor of Channel 4 News since 2005. I was the political correspondent on Channel 4 News since 1996. Before that I was a political producer and general producer from September 1999. I have always worked in broadcast journalism not newspaper journalism. I was the Chairman of the Parliament Lobby in January 2010 to January 2011.
2. The Compliance Manual produced by ITN in 2004 with which I am familiar contains guidelines on journalistic conduct, as does the Ofcom Code. I do not work alone here in our Westminster bureau but have the help of colleagues who are also familiar with ITN's corporate governance.
3. I consider my programme editor, Jim Gray, and his senior editorial management team to be responsible for upholding relevant policies generally along with John Battle, the ITN Head of Compliance but of course I strive to ensure that I comply with the guidelines in my reports.
4. To the best of my knowledge these policies are adhered to in practice.
5. I am aware of no changes. The Bribery Act 2010 was a news story to me as I never pay for information and phone hacking is only relevant to me as a political story.
6. I think there may be a misunderstanding about my job title "Political Editor". At Channel 4 News as "Political Editor", my primary responsibility is to report and analyse political news on-screen and online. I also provide the Editor and Channel 4 with political advice and insight to inform wider coverage decisions. But I do not have an executive or line-management function for complying content beyond my own contributions.

I am based in Millbank, next to Parliament, rather than Channel 4 News's offices at 200 Gray's Inn Road, although of course I frequently visit the latter. I check my sources of information myself of course and discuss any issues arising with the editorial team at Channel 4 News.

7. As the actual reporter I am aware of the sources that I am using. They are usually first hand conversations with politicians and their advisers, other bodies and individuals with an interest in public life, past documentary sources and secondary sources. None of these individuals are paid by me or by Channel 4 News in monetary form or in kind. I do of course periodically buy contacts coffees, drinks or a meal over which we discuss politics. When I make a claim on my expenses ITN is informed of the people I have been entertaining.
8. Ethics can and should play a role in the media. I understand ethics in this context to mean the striving for accuracy and only using methods which I would be comfortable defending in subsequent open challenge, with my journalistic methods being commensurate with the public interest element of the story.
9. I have never felt any financial or commercial pressure from anyone within my organisation or Channel 4 Television and cannot therefore provide instances of such pressure affecting decisions that I have made.
10. I have not been offered or made aware of financial incentives at Channel 4 News for me to provide exclusive stories, although exclusive stories are obviously encouraged and can influence journalistic career paths.
11. I have no knowledge of Channel 4 News using private investigators or paying police sources, mobile phone companies or others with access to the same, or public officials for information. I have never done so.
12. I have no role in such activities and no knowledge of it.
- 13-15 Not applicable.
- 16-17 I do not pay politicians for information. Channel 4 News does, however, make very occasional payments to politicians to appear as experts in special programming such as election night coverage, or when a report or online commentary is commissioned that requires them to produce authored content on our behalf.
18. I have never been involved with "paid sources" of any kind to my knowledge.
19. I have never been involved in computer hacking in any way and have no knowledge of my employer being involved in that either.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed: .....  
**Gary Gibbon**

Dated: .....