FRIDAY, 11 MAY 2012
(10.00 am)

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, Mr Jay.

MR JAY: Sir, the witness today is Mrs Rebekah Brooks, please.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.

MRS REBEKAH MARY BROOKS (sworn)

Questions by MR JAY

MR JAY: Your full name, please, Mrs Brooks?

A. Rebekah Mary Brooks.

Q. May I ask you, please, to look at the large file in front of you and identify the two witness statements you have provided us with. The first is under tab 1, a statement dated 14 October of last year, and secondly under tab 2, a statement dated 2 May of this year. The principal focus today will be on the second statement, but are you content to confirm the truth of both statements?

A. Yes.

Q. I'll attempt a timeline of your career, Mrs Brooks. Tell me if I make any mistakes. You joined News International on the Sunday magazine of the News of the World in 1989; is that right?

A. That's right.

Q. In 1995 you were appointed deputy editor of the News of the World under Mr Hall, in 1998 appointed deputy editor of the Sun under Mr Yelland, and in May 2000, editor of the News of the World, aged 31; is that right?

A. Yes, that's right.


A. Yes.

Q. CEO of News International -- can we be clear of the dates here, because there's been some doubt about it. Was the announcement of your appointment in June 2009 but you took up the job formally on 2 September 2009?

A. That's correct, yes.

Q. Then you resigned on 17 July 2011 --

A. 15th.

Q. 15 July.

A. (Nods head)

Q. So we're completely clear about the constraints bearing on your evidence, you are under police investigation in the context of Operation Weeting, Operation Elveden and also for allegedly perverting the course of justice; is that true?

A. It is.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mrs Brooks, I'm grateful to you for the obvious care you've put into the statements that you've made, and I'm conscious of the difficulty the time must be for you.
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| **A.** Yes.  
**Q.** Did you receive messages of commiseration or support from politicians, in July 2011 in particular?  
**A.** Some.  
**Q.** Either directly or indirectly; is that right?  
**A.** Mainly indirectly.  
**Q.** Yes. In order to get a fair picture, since if we focus on one individual alone the picture will logically be distorted, are you able to assist us with from whom you received such messages?  
**A.** I had some indirect messages from some politicians, but nothing direct.  
**Q.** The indirect ones, who were the politicians?  
**A.** A variety, really, but -- some Tories, a couple of Labour politicians. Very few Labour politicians.  
**Q.** Can we be a bit more specific, Mrs Brooks?  
**A.** Sorry, I'm not trying to be evasive. I received some indirect messages from Number 10, Number 11, Home Office, Foreign Office.  
**Q.** So you're talking about secretaries of state, Prime Minister, chancellor of the Exchequer, obviously, aren't you?  
**A.** And also people who worked in those offices as well.  
**Q.** Labour politicians? How about them?  
**A.** Like I say, there were very few Labour politicians that  |
| -------|-------|
| **sent commiserations.**  
**Q.** Okay. Mr Blair, did he send you one?  
**A.** Yes.  
**Q.** Probably not Mr Brown?  
**A.** No. He was probably getting the bunting out.  
**Q.** It has been reported in relation to Mr Cameron -- but who knows whether it's true -- that you received a message along the lines of: "Keep your head up." Is that true or not?  
**A.** From?  
**Q.** From Mr Cameron, indirectly. You'll have seen that in the Times.  
**A.** Yes. I would say so. But it was indirect. It wasn't a direct text message.  
**Q.** Did you also receive a message from him via an intermediary along these lines:  
"Sorry I could not have been as loyal to you as I have been, but Ed Miliband had me on the run." Or words to that effect?  
**A.** Similar, but again, very indirectly.  |
| Page 7 | Page 8 |
| **Q.** So, broadly speaking, that message was transmitted to you, was it?  
**A.** Yes.  
**Q.** Out of interest, do you happen to know how these messages do enter the public domain?  
**A.** We have a very strong free press, who have great access to politicians, so ...  
**Q.** We may be coming back to that, but you can't be of any more particularity than that, can you?  
**A.** Journalists doing their job.  
**Q.** Mr Cameron also said publicly:  "We all got too close to News International." Or words to that effect. Was that a view he ever communicated to you personally?  
**A.** No.  
**Q.** Can I ask you, please, about Mr Murdoch, by way of background. We know he told the House of Lords communications committee -- this was back in 2007 when he was spoken to, I think, in New York -- that he was a traditional proprietor who exercises editorial control on major issues, like which party to back in a General Election or policy on Europe. Do you agree with that or not?  
**A.** Yes.  
**Q.** Does it apply as much to the News of the World as the Sun or does that only apply to the Sun?  |
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<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Without delving into this in any great detail, Is that right?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Before I became editor of the News of the World, maybe absolutely aware of my views on Europe. I think even &quot;Take Europe, for example. Mr Murdoch was absolutely aware of my views on Europe. I think even before I became editor of the News of the World, maybe even deputy editor.&quot; Is that right?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Without delving into this in any great detail, presumably you are a Eurosceptic; correct?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes, I suppose so.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> And politically, your position is fairly similar to Mr Murdoch's, is it?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> In some areas, yes.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Which areas do they differ?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Well, we disagreed about quite a few things, more in margins of it rather than the principles. So, I don't know: the environment, DNA database, immigration, top-up fees, the amount of celebrity in the paper versus serious issues, columnists, the design, the headline, size, the font size, the point -- I mean, you know, we had a lot of disagreements, but in the main, on the big issues, we had similar views.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Yes. So on the issue of celebrity against serious issues, where did each of you stand on that?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> I liked more celebrity and he wanted more serious issues.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Why did you want more celebrity?</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> In terms of your social and cultural views -- I'm not going to pry into that too much, but are you a strong believer in human rights and the Human Rights Act?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Not particularly, no. I mean, in its form. Obviously its existence, absolutely, but there were parts of the Human Rights Act that we campaigned against in the Sun when I was there. At one point, the Conservative Party, I think, were going to repeal it and replace it with a British bill of rights. I think that was the case, but I think that's now been dropped.</td>
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A. Because there were lots of things in the Sun that wouldn’t reflect his views.

Q. I think he meant on the big points, not on the minutiae.

A. Okay.

Q. Would you agree with that?

A. I accept that.

Q. At paragraph 12 of your witness statement -- I’m now on your second statement -- you give us a thumbnail sketch of what the Sun is, what it represents, what its cultural values are. It embodies an attitude, you say, rather than a particular social class, et cetera. Then you say:

“It is sometimes said that the relationship between the Sun and its readers reflects the national conversation. If you wanted to know what the nation was talking about, you would look at the Sun.”

We have a contrast here. Some would say: if you want to know what Mr Murdoch is thinking, look at the Sun, and then you’re saying: if you want to know what the nation’s talking about, look at the Sun. Which is correct?

A. The one in my witness statement.

Q. Why do you say that?

A. Because I wrote it and I believe it.

Q. What do you mean by “the nation” here?

A. I do see that point. It was meant to really say -- if -- for example, you know, the conversation in the pub or the conversation at work. So during the Manchester City/Manchester United clash, you know, that conversation -- the incident that happened there, that would be talked about in the pub and that’s what I meant by “national conversation”. It wasn’t meant to be taken any more literally than that.

Q. A reflection then of the sort of debate which you would hear in any pub, dining room table or whatever, but not a reflection of the individual collective views of the readership. Is that a fair description?

A. No, not particularly. I think -- no.

Q. Who elects you, apart from Mr Murdoch?

A. We’re not elected officials.

Q. You’re saying it’s a myth. But it’s a truth, isn’t it?

A. I don’t think it is, no.

Q. Who elects you, apart from Mr Murdoch?

A. That was also what I was addressing there, yes.

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Q. Who elects you, apart from Mr Murdoch?

A. That was also what I was addressing there, yes.
Q.  Do you know that to be true or you believe it to be right?

MURdoch:  Mr Murdoch was instrumental in your appointment; is that paragraph 256 your statement, you say you believe that

Q.  And when you become editor of the Sun, which is 2003, or other newspapers.

A.  Occasionally, yeah.  I mean, Mr Murdoch's contact with them, but they are in a position to lead opinion. Would you agree with that?

A.  I think you can present issues to the readership, yes, and that's part of being an editor.

Q.  Well, depending on the paper, yes.  I mean, you can do.

A.  You need better sources, Mr Jay.

Q.  Various sources, but ...

A.  Completely.  I don't know -- where is it from?

Q.  And that he sent a dress to the police station.  Is that bit true?

A.  No.

Q.  So this is all fiction then?

A.  Completely.  I don't know -- where is it from?

Q.  Various sources, but ...

A.  You need better sources, Mr Jay.

Q.  Well, confidential sources.  They're all in the public domain, actually, but I'm not expressing a view on their reliability.

A.  I'm sorry --

Q.  It may be leading up to a question much later on in relation to all of this.

A.  Okay.

Q.  There is evidence, though, I've seen that there was a 40th birthday party for you at Mr Rupert Murdoch's house.  Is that correct?

A.  That is correct.
Q. Were politicians present on that occasion?
A. Yes, some.

Q. Mr Cameron and Mr Blair were presumably present, were they?
A. It was a surprise party for me, so I'm pretty -- I know Mr Blair was there. I'm not sure if Mr Cameron was.

Q. There are all sorts of stories as to what the birthday present was, but I'm not going to ask you because it's outside the --

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, please.

A. You've asked me if I've been swimming with Mr Murdoch.

MR JAY: No, I won't. In 2006, you were appointed chief executive officer of News International.

A. 2009.

Q. 2009. Paragraph 26, pardon me. Was that Mr Murdoch's idea?
A. I discussed that appointment with James and Rupert Murdoch.

Q. Was it Rupert Murdoch's idea?
A. I think it was more James Murdoch's idea in the beginning, but both of them, both of their ideas.

Q. Why was that job of interest to you?
A. I think I'd been editing the Sun for seven years by then, and I was interested in -- very interested, like most journalists are, in looking at the future economic models of journalism and basically how you continue to financially keep, you know, high quality journalism going, and I think the digital age and the iPad and the paywalls, they were all of interest to me and something that I was looking forward to doing.

Q. Okay. Now, Mr Mohan was your replacement as editor and I think he was your strong recommendation; is that right?
A. He was, yes.

Q. Why?
A. He'd been my deputy for a few years, so I'd seen the paper that he'd edited in my absence, and also I'd attended a few more business management programmes in the last year of my editorship of the Sun -- a couple of modules at the LSE, some internal management programmes -- and Dominic had had much more time to edit the paper on his own, and I thought he was doing a very good job.

Q. In terms of the general political perspective I've mentioned earlier, where you stood vis-a-vis Mr Murdoch, does Mr Mohan stand in more or less the same place or a different place?
A. Not entirely -- Dominic is not entirely the same as I am.

Q. But none of us are -- you know, we all have different shades of grey.
A. Not necessarily.

Q. Okay. July 2011. Were you embarrassed when Mr Murdoch indicated that you were his priority?
A. Are you referring to the -- when we -- in the street?

Q. Indeed.

A. I wasn't at the time, because I didn't think that's what he was saying. I -- he was being asked by many reporters lots of different questions, and I think someone said, "What's your priority", and he looked towards me and said, "This one." I took that to mean he meant as in this issue. It was only the next day when I saw how it could have also been interpreted in the papers that I realised that was the interpretation that had been put on it. So I wasn't embarrassed at the time because I didn't know that's what he meant.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh.

MR JAY: Your relationships with politicians. Can we go back to Mr Blair, and we'll do this chronologically.

Paragraph 53 of your statement of claim. You say you met him on numerous political and social occasions and these meetings increased in frequency throughout his decade as Prime Minister. You had many formal, informal telephone on a number of issues.

You're giving a picture here of contact which became very frequent; is that fair?

A. I think it became more frequent when I became editor of the Sun, but that probably would go for most politicians, although obviously, as you heard from Mr Murdoch, Mr Blair flew out to a News Corp conference, I think in around 1995, and I probably met him shortly after that. So it's -- and then he obviously -- they were in power for ten years, so it's over a very long period of time.

Q. I'm sure there wasn't a key moment but an important date was 2003 when you became editor of the Sun. Did you find that your contacts with politicians generally increased from that point in time?
A. Yes, I would say so.

Q. It's also clear that -- tell me if this is wrong -- that you became friendly with Mr Blair?
A. Yes.

Q. Were there text and email exchanges with him or not?
A. No, he didn't have a phone or -- mobile phone, or in fact, I think, use a computer when he was Prime Minister.
25     politicians' wishes; is that correct?
24     wishes. It's you, as an editor, reacting to the
23 Q. It's just like the Sun, then, reacting to its readers'
22 so it's not a particularly insightful comment but
21 I mean, millions of books have been written about this,
20 Q. How can you do that if they are a constant presence?
19 account.
18 Q. On the level of personality, the clash that there was
17 Q. Your job, you tell us, is to hold politicians to
16 to politicians who can tell us things that we don't
15 explain things that are going on, tell us policy
14 that's being developed, all those things that we can
13 know, explain things that are going on, tell us policy
12 tell about the changes they
11 wanted to make or had made to the Labour Party. On the
10 press' side, me included, were journalists, and access
9 They had a very big story to tell, at its best, shall we say.
8 had a very big story to tell about the changes they
7 in the answer you gave a minute ago. Wouldn't you
6 Q. But you weren't disinterested in this, Mrs Brooks,
5 to just gather information; it's also to analyse and
4 to a politician or a line from a politician and repeats it
3 verbatim in their newspaper without checking it or
2 analysing it. I mean, the role of a journalist is not
1 to just gather information; it's also to analyse and

2 Q. The question was: what steps, if any, did you take to
1 Q. Tony Blair and New Labour were arguably masters of spin.
0 A. Well, I think if a politician or a Prime Minister ever
9 put a friendship with a media executive or a media
8 company in front of his or her abilities to do their
7 professional duties properly, then that is their
6 failing, and I think if a journalist ever compromised
5 their readership or their role as a journalist through
4 friendship, then that is their failing. So I think it's
3 simply put.
2 Q. Why do you think that was?
1 A. I think you have to look particularly at

1 A. Absolutely.
0 Q. How can you do that if they are a constant presence?
9 A. Well, very easily, because you can find out quite easily
8 what's going on and hold them to account for it.
7 A constant presence doesn't mean that you don't hold
6 politicians to account. I think every journalist and
5 every newspaper does that all the time on behalf of its
4 readers.
3 Q. It depends if at all the line is crossed, because if
2 a friendship developed or an antipathy develops, then
1 the constant presence is in danger of being abused,
0 isn't it?

2 A. Well, I think if a politician or a Prime Minister ever
1 put a friendship with a media executive or a media
0 company in front of his or her abilities to do their
9 professional duties properly, then that is their
8 failing, and I think if a journalist ever compromised
7 their readership or their role as a journalist through
6 friendship, then that is their failing. So I think it's
5 simply put.
4 Q. Tony Blair and New Labour were arguably masters of spin.
3 What steps, if any, did you take to counteract that?
2 A. First of all, I actually think that Gordon Brown and
1 Charlie Whelan were masters of spin more than Alastair
0 Campbell and Tony Blair. I don't think -- it's often
9 reported that it was Tony Blair and Alastair Campbell,
8 but I think the whole of New Labour engaged in a new
7 way, a more intense way, with the media when they came
to power.
6 Q. Your job, you tell us, is to hold politicians to
5 their readership or their role as a journalist through
4 friendship, then that is their failing. So I think it's
3 simply put.
2 Q. Why do you think that was?
1 A. I think you have to look particularly at

1 A. No, not at all.
0 Q. But the impetus on your narrative is coming from the
9 politicians, not from the press.
8 A. I think –
7 Q. Which is correct?
6 A. I think the point of New Labour, if you like, embracing
5 the media in a different way was because they felt they
4 had a very big story to tell, at its best, shall we say.
3 They had a very big story to tell about the changes they
2 wanted to make or had made to the Labour Party. On the
1 press' side, me included, were journalists, and access
0 to politicians who can tell us things that we don't

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<td>1 A. Right. And what was the question, sorry, Mr Jay?</td>
<td>1 sure it's true. You know, let's say 50/50. But at the end, particularly, we were on the side of Mr Blair.</td>
<td>8 (Pages 29 to 32)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Q. You were on Mr Blair's side, not Mr Brown's side, weren't you?</td>
<td>2 Q. So totally disinterestedly, in the fair interests of your readers, you maintained impartiality between them?</td>
<td>Merrill Corporation (+44) 207 404 1400</td>
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1 A. No.
2 Q. Owing to the documents you've told us about, the
3 existence only of a desk diary --
4 A. It's not even my own desk diary, so ...
5 Q. Some meetings may have been cancelled, some meetings may
6 not have within included. So this should not be seen as
7 other than indicative; is that the way you wish to put
8 it?
9 A. That's correct.
10 Q. We know that from Alastair Campbell's diary that there
11 was a dinner on 27 April 1997 -- you, your ex-husband,
12 Mr Blair, Mr Campbell -- which was four days before the
13 famous election of 1 May 1997. Do you recall that?
14 A. Not particularly, but I'm sure it's correct. We were
15 following Mr Blair's conference or last conference on
16 education, or we were doing a big number on education in
17 the paper. So I think it was to do with that, but
18 I can't remember. Is it in Alastair's book? I'm
19 sure --
20 Q. Yes, page 733 of the first volume. Obviously you were
21 going to be discussing what was then 99 per cent likely
22 to happen, namely a huge victory for the Labour Party.
23 Self-evident, isn't it?
24 A. Well, this is 14 years ago. I know there was -- I know
25 there was a meeting at an education rally, so it might
Page 33

1 be the same -- one and the same thing.
2 Q. Okay. When we see an entry such as "Tony Blair lunch",
3 does that mean just Mr Blair or can it mean "and others
4 present as well"?
5 A. I would say that up until quite late in my editorship of
6 the Sun, that most of those dinners will have been
7 attended by political editor and particularly lunches
8 would have been -- and all prime ministers do this to
9 newspaper groups and senior cabinet visitors, is they
10 come into the newsroom and sit down with the editor and
11 the most senior executives and discuss issues of the
12 day. So I think a lot of those would have been that
13 format.
14 Q. Dinners in restaurants? How does that work?
15 A. You see --
16 Q. Just Mr Blair or other people there?
17 A. In 1999? I doubt that very much. But again, I'm sorry, that is literally what it says in the diary.
18 I have probably better notes at News International, but
19 I --
20 Q. It's just your memory, Mrs Brooks, particularly if you
21 look at the period 2003 to 2007. You'll have memories
22 not of particular events but whether other people were
23 there on occasion or not.
24 A. I mean, like everybody, I'll probably have a better
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1 recollection of 2003 to 2007 than 1999, which is 13, 14
2 years ago, so.
3 Q. I was asking you about 2003 to 2007. Can you --
4 A. Which --
5 Q. I'm not asking you about a particular entry.
6 A. Right.
7 Q. I'm just asking whether a dinner with the Prime Minister
8 in a restaurant might have been one-to-one, or would it
9 always have been with someone else there?
10 A. I think from in that period I, from memory, had about
11 three dinners with Mr Blair on my own.
12 Q. We see one dinner at the home of Matthew Freud and
13 Elisabeth Murdoch. Again, if one reads material online,
14 one would be led to believe that there were frequent
15 occasions when Mr Blair went with you to the home of
16 Mr Freud and Elisabeth Murdoch. Is that correct or not?
17 A. No; once.
18 Q. You can only remember one or you are sure there was only
19 one?
20 A. I'm sorry, I thought your question was that I took
21 Mr Blair to the home of Matthew --
22 Q. You were there on the same occasion. Whether you're
23 taking him or not, I'm not sure --
24 A. No, sorry, I will have seen Mr Blair probably much more
25 since he left office in their company, but on occasion,
Page 35

1 yes, he was there.
2 Q. Informally, spontaneously? Did that ever happen?
3 A. No.
4 Q. You say "on occasion". Can you give us a feel for the
5 number of occasions when he was at the home of Matthew
6 Freud and Elisabeth Murdoch when he was Prime Minister?
7 A. I actually think quite few.
8 Q. Quite a few?
9 A. No, few. As in very few.
10 Q. A handful then. Is that what you're telling us?
11 A. Maximum, yes.
12 Q. Can we look at the elections of 1997, 2001 and 2005 as
13 of one piece. Was the support of your newspaper,
14 whether it be the News of the World or the Sun -- I know
15 you weren't editor in 1997 -- the subject of prior
16 discussion with Mr Blair or his advisers?
17 A. I have no idea for 1997. Not in 2001 that I can
18 remember. But in 2005, it was a very difficult time for
19 the Labour Party, and I think -- I am pretty sure it was
20 Michael Howard who was leader of the opposition at that
21 time, and so the Sun newspaper, at the time under my
22 editorship, we were very even-handed during that
23 election process, giving both equal weight to all party
24 policies. So I'm not sure we particularly had
25 a conversation with the Labour Party about access --
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support.

Q. In 2005, though, the Sun did support the Labour Party.

A. That's a matter of record.

A. That's right.

Q. It changed, of course, in September 2009.

A. Mm.

Q. But the question was: was the fact of the Sun's support the subject of prior discussion with Mr Blair or his advisors?

A. Not that I can remember, no. It wouldn't be -- it wouldn't be that way. In fact, I think in 2005 -- again, it's very difficult. I wish I'd had some access to my notes, but I think in 2005 the Sun -- we left it right to the day, and I think we erected a sort of Vatican-style chimney on the roof of Wapping and whatever coloured smoke -- sorry, it was funny at the time. It's clearly lost in translation now, but anyway, whatever smoke at the time came up. So we had red smoke and blue smoke.

Q. You'd run out of yellow smoke? You made that note to the Select Committee.

A. I'm not sure we could have found any yellow smoke at the time. We clearly would have needed it now. I think we left it to that minute. I remember being on the roof of Wapping and looking down and seeing all the press guys waiting for the colour to come out. And -- I didn't see Mr Blair standing there with them, though, waiting.

Q. That wasn't the question. The question was a more straightforward one: was the Sun's support the subject of prior discussion --

A. No, sorry, I keep thinking -- I keep saying the same thing. No, I don't remember having a prior discussion with him about it. But I think, if I'm correct in the 2005 Vatican chimney, we didn't tell anyone, until we got to the roof of Wapping, what colour was coming out.

Q. Did you at least make it clear to Mr Blair and his advisers before that election which aspects of Labour Party policy would be less or more acceptable to your readers?

A. There was not a particular discussion about policy but it would be fair to say that leading up to the 2005 General Election, there was a huge debate on the next stage of the European constitution and the Sun, the Daily Mail and, I think, the Telegraph were all campaigning quite hard to have a referendum put in the 2005 manifesto. And so, yes, that would have been subject of discussion, you know, if there were any meetings pre the 2005 -- I'm not sure if there are any, but ...
Q. A. Well, he wasn't Prime Minister for very long, and in 2009, the Sun came out for the Tories and contact was very limited after that.

Q. It stopped on 30 March 2009. There was a telephone call, and that's the last contact you've recorded.

Q. When, sorry? Can I just check that date?

Q. Yes, 30 March 2009. Do you see that one?

A. I can't, but anyway, I know — I'm not sure that's true.

Q. Well, unless the diary is incomplete, it is true, isn't it?

A. The diaries are very incomplete, and -- you know, I do want to make this point. They are very incomplete.

Q. But after 30 March 2009, the Sun was moving inexorably towards with Gordon Brown's government, and I think around March 2009 -- it may have been a bit later -- I think that's just my PA's desk diaries, so they perhaps won't have everything in.

Q. But after 30 March 2009, the Sun was moving inexorably supporting the Conservative Party, wasn't it?

A. I think the position at the Sun at the time was not an overwhelming support for the Tory Party, but more that we had a few major issues in which we had, on behalf of our readers, particularly on Afghanistan, fallen out with Gordon Brown's government, and I think around March 2009 -- it may have been a bit later -- I think that's when Gordon Brown announced that the referendum that had been many promised in the 2005 manifesto on the European constitution, they were going to renege on that promise, and again, I think it was the Mail and the Telegraph and the Sun who -- particularly at the Sun, so I'll just speak to the Sun -- called then for a snap election in the autumn of 2009 because this referendum was a hard-fought battle. The population by far wanted that referendum on the European constitution, and so we had fallen out with each other, but I still saw him from close interaction with Sun readers. I mean, for the last 11 years, every year I go on holiday on a £9.50 caravan park with Sun readers. I take all my executive team. We go through their emails. The post room at the Sun is sort of legendary. It's now an email room, or a very pro-armed forces paper and some of the failings in Afghanistan, we were getting an incredible amount of feedback on, not just from the troops on the ground but also from the military here. So we had a pretty good idea on those issues.

A. Yes, no, I think on Europe we -- on our European campaign, which had been a long tradition at the Sun way before I became editor but believed in it too -- on particularly the European constitution, we had spent probably since 2005 -- and the sentence that I said then was in 2009 -- we were pretty sure of where our readers stood on that matter. We'd had lots of polls that we'd been done. We'd run petitions in the newspaper.

A. I think both the Mail and the Sun ran phone lines saying, "Call in if you feel this promise should be kept about the referendum." So there was a lot of feedback from the readers on that particular issue.

And on Afghanistan, I think it's fair, through our Help for Heroes campaign, that we are considered to be...
inbox, but the letters that we get through them are always looked at. There's a great sort of culture at the Sun newsroom that the reader is always to be respected. I mean, it's almost a sackable offence to be rude to a reader. We get readers ringing us up asking for directions if they're lost somewhere. We have quite a close -- and I'm sure it's the same on other papers, but I remember when I moved from the News of the World to the Sun, it was one of the things that I noticed the difference in.

MR JAY: Can I ask you about your social circle, I hope not intrusively. Is it fair to say that there was a close social circle in existence here: you, Wendi Murdoch, Elisabeth Murdoch, and at one stage Sarah Brown?

A. We all knew each other, but we didn't meet as a group like that very often. In fact, I think probably once.

Q. Okay. I'm doing this chronologically, so we're onto Mr Cameron now.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is that convenient just to have five minutes?

MR JAY: Yes.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.

(11.09 am)

(A short break)

(11.21 am)

1 Q. Were you at all surprised?

2 A. I'd already had the -- I wasn't surprised when he finally got the job because he'd called me with George Osborne, but --

3 Q. At a slightly earlier stage, when you first heard of it, were you at all surprised that the Conservative Party wanted to appoint Mr Coulson?

4 A. Not really. I mean, journalists are good communicators and Alastair Campbell went to the Mirror.

5 Amanda Platell I think worked for William Hague, Iain Duncan Smith. So there's a long history of journalists going into politics, so it didn't occur to me this was any different.

6 Q. I think your answer is: you weren't surprised at all?

7 A. No.

8 Q. The list of your meetings, which is RMB1. It's a list of meetings with members or leaders of political parties. Do you have that page, Mrs Brooks?

9 A. Yes, I have, yes.

10 Q. For the meeting at Santorini, Greece, which is the bottom of the first page of this list, you put an asterisk by it. You say you don't have a record of this meeting although you do recall meeting Mr Cameron while on holiday with the Murdoch family in Santorini, Greece, in 2008. That's why you've included it in the list, is it?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Whose idea was it that Mr Cameron meet with the Murdochs, to his biography, in 2005, you actually supported Mr Liam Fox for the Conservative leadership. Is that correct or not?

13 A. I don't think that is correct. I can't -- I don't think the Sun came out for a particular candidate in the leadership. We probably didn't support Ken Clarke because of Europe, but I don't remember actually having a particular line in the paper for the leadership.

14 Q. Okay. Mr Coulson is appointed Director of Communications in or about May 2007. Did you have any involvement in that event?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Can you recall when you first got to hear about it?

17 A. Yes, I can. I think I've written it in my witness statement. I heard about it from Andy Coulson after he had met with George Osborne and I then was told by Andy again that he'd got the job.

18 Q. What was your reaction to that piece of news?

19 A. I probably said, "Well done."

20 Q. That's what you said, but what was your reaction to it?

21 How did you feel about it?

22 A. Well, he'd had to resign from the News of the World and, you know, he'd found another job, a good job, so as a friend I was very pleased for him.
A. I think it was an afternoon and an evening. I think that's all.

Q. Were you witness to any of the conversations which took place, or not?

A. Yes, I was witness to one with him and Mr Murdoch about Europe, because we were in Europe. Very general terms. But then he had subsequent other conversations where I wasn't around.

Q. So there were a number of conversations, possibly on a number of topics. Is that the picture?

A. Well, it wasn't a sort of formal sit-down conversation. However, the one I was witness to was a sort -- I happened to be there when they were talking about Europe. I was brought into the conversation because they were talking about Europe.

Q. Was this an occasion you were pleased about or not?

A. Well, it seemed to -- it was a very cordial meeting and it went well. Like I say, it lasted for either an afternoon or an evening, so it wasn't particularly long.

Q. Because by that point you were quite friendly with Mr Cameron, weren't you?

A. Yes.

Q. Because we know from your list that on new year's eve 2008, he attended a new year's eve party at your farm, didn't he? Your husband's farm.

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A. Yes, but not at our home. It was my sister-in-law's party.

Q. So her home nearby; is that it?

A. No, the point I was just trying to make was the Brooks family had a family connection with the Camerons before I came along, so I just wanted to make that distinction.

Q. Is the distinction that Mr Cameron is only a friend of the Brooks family, or are you accepting that Mr Cameron became your friend?

A. Yes. No, of course I'm accepting that.

Q. Looking further down this list, 3 May 2009, lunch at the home of James and Kathryn Murdoch. From that point, of course, there's no evidence that you're meeting with Mr Brown; is that fair? Although you did say that your list may not be complete in relation to Mr Brown.

A. I know my list isn't complete. I'm not sure -- I'm sure Gordon Brown and Tony Blair have had to release their social and formal and informal meetings, haven't they? With -- and I'm pretty sure if they have, there will be meetings at Downing Street with Mr Brown from that period in May right up until September. I don't know how many, though.

Q. The topic of conversation on 3 May 2009. It's difficult to remember any specific events, of course I understand, but did it cover political issues?

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A. It will have done in general terms. I mean, there were probably lots of other people there at the lunch, but again, May 2009 -- like I say, I'm not quite sure that my memory's correct, but I'm pretty sure that the European constitution debate was, shall we say, at large, as was Afghanistan at the time. So they may have been two of the issues.

Q. We know that on 9 September 2009, Mr James Murdoch told Mr Cameron at a drink at the George that the Sun would support the Conservative Party at the next election. The headline on the front page, I think, was on 30 September 2009.

A. Mm-hm.

Q. When did you first know that that shift would take place?

A. To the -- to the Conservative party?

Q. Yes. I've given you the date when Mr James Murdoch told Mr Cameron that it would happen: 9 September 2009. When did you first know that that shift would take place?

A. Well, if we put aside the timing of it, I think probably in the June 2009. Me and Rupert Murdoch and James Murdoch had started to have discussions, because I think by that stage -- and that was post the renegot on the referendum, it was post a campaign for a snap election, and it was -- I think one of my last front pages that I edited of the Sun was "Don't you know there's a bloody war on?" The point of it was there didn't seem to be one senior politician, including the Prime Minister, who was willing to address the issues the military were facing out there, and so I think that was around June --

Q. You're moving off the question now. The question was a simple one: when did you first know? You gave me the answer. It was June 2009. You kindly expanded upon it. There were conversations: you, the two Murdochs and Mr Kavanagh. Is that in a nutshell?

A. Yes.

Q. Was any part of the discussion about who was likely to win the next election?

A. I think back in June, the main discussion, which is why I tried to give you a little bit of background, so you could understand the context, was that it was more that we had lost things to support Gordon Brown's government on and what did that mean. So there were very initial discussions in June.

Q. When those discussions coalesced into a fixed position, which must have arisen by 9 September 2009 by the latest, was any part of the decision based on who was likely to win the next election?

A. I'm not sure what the polls were at the time. It was
much more, in that summer, about our readership and
where they stood in terms of the policies that the
Labour government -- the bank bailout had been the year
before. The debt, the rising debt, so -- the recession.
There were lots of issues that our readers were
concerned about, and like I say, the main point of
summer was the fact that we probably hadn't written one
editorial in support of the Labour government for quite
some time. So it wasn't as clearcut as -- as the
question.
Q. I'm not saying it was. The question was: was any part
of the discussion related to who was likely to win the
next election?
A. Well, in general terms, it would have been, but not --
but only a part of it, because I can't remember what the
polls were at the time. I think the Tories were in the
lead then. But polls are polls.
Q. But from your perspective, if it's true that you're
mirroring the views of your readers, then by definition
you would be interested in how they were going to vote
at the next election. Do you see the logic of that?
A. I do, and the issue with the Sun, which I think is
probably one of the most interesting things about its
readership, is the amount of floating voters. So if
you're a Mirror reader or a Mirror journalist, you're
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A. I can't, I am afraid. There will have been other people
present, maybe people from the office. But not
particularly that one. I think we had one dinner where
there were some military chiefs there. I'm not sure if
that was the one.
Q. At that dinner, was there any discussion as to the
timing of the Sun's change of support?
A. No, we didn't tell anyone the timing.
Q. Did Mr Cameron at any stage know the timing?
A. Probably he knew it was within a period of time from the
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Rupert Murdoch's the boss, but I was instrumental in it,
as was Trevor Kavanagh, Tom Newton Dunn and the editor,
Dominic Mohan.
Q. Final decision made by Rupert Murdoch, but you are the
driving force behind it, or not?
A. No, I was instrumental rather than the driving force.
It was pretty collective in terms of everyone's view,
particularly the readership's view, but everyone's view
that we were going to sort of distance ourselves from
the Labour Party that we'd supported for many years, but
as in terms of the timing, it was probably quite a small
group.
Q. And you were part of that small group?
A. Yes.
Q. Of course, the timing was careful inasmuch as it
succeeded Mr Brown's speech at that conference, didn't
it?
A. It did.
Q. And so designed, rightly or wrongly, to cause him
maximum political damage. Would you agree?
A. Well, the discussion on the timing was this, which is it
would be terribly unfair at the start of a party
conference to say that before hearing what Mr Brown and
the senior cabinet ministers had to say. For all we
knew, they could have come up with a fantastic policy
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<th>Page 57</th>
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<td><strong>A.</strong> Well, who did you mean then?</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> I was talking more about fairness rather than it was going to affect the decision. I thought or we thought it was fair not to do it at the beginning of their party conference. They probably wouldn't see it like that, but at the time it was thought to be the right thing.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Are you seriously saying that Mr Brown might have said something which caused you, the Sun, to change their minds and go back to plan A?</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> Five of you then, add him as well.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Ultimate responsibility, Mr Rupert Murdoch.</td>
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<td><strong>A.</strong> No, I'm not seriously saying that. What I'm saying is we felt it was unfair to cloud a party conference in that way. So that was the reason for the timing not being before. I think you heard from Mr Coulson yesterday that the Conservative part, if they'd had their way, they would have liked the endorsement at the beginning of their conference. But the reason -- the main -- the sole reason for -- we knew it was going to be -- we absolutely were ready to do this in that party conference season, but the reason for that night is because Mr Brown's speech, which I can't remember how long it lasted, but the key was that he spent less than two minutes on Afghanistan, and we felt that was the right timing in order to distance ourselves from --</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> All five of you in different ways exercising considerable power. Would you agree?</td>
<td><strong>Mr James Murdoch was a party to it. You were instrumental, to use your term, and Mr Kavanagh was there as well. Effectively it was those four people, wasn't it?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A.</strong> Oh, yes. I'm not --</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> I think from the Sun's point of view it was an incredibly important decision that the Sun made in 1997, after many, many years of Tory support --</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> And Mr Mohan, the editor.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> There was nothing in his speech which made a difference to the timing, was there?</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> Please just keep to the question, Mrs Brooks. The question was about this decision in 2009.</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> Yes. Was he contributing much to this debate or not?</td>
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<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Yes.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Don't give us ancient history. Focus on this, please.</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> All five of you then, add him as well.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> Ultimate responsibility, Mr Rupert Murdoch.</td>
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<td><strong>A.</strong> No, but ancient history is quite important in this manner because I think you’re asking for an explanation. So I think that it was a very important decision and we did it carefully considering after many years of Labour support.</td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> Five of you then, add him as well.</td>
<td><strong>Mr James Murdoch was a party to it. You were instrumental, to use your term, and Mr Kavanagh was there as well. Effectively it was those four people, wasn't it?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>30</strong> A. But I don't think we've ever seen it in those terms.</td>
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<td><strong>32</strong> A. Because rightly or wrongly, I believe and have believed throughout my career that I was -- my main responsibility was to a readership, and that any influence that we could come to bear on their behalf or for their concerns was the most important thing, and that's just the way it was. So I don't think we saw it like that. Yes, in answer to your question, we knew there would be certain individuals in the Labour Party that would not be happy with that decision.</td>
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Day 69 AM  Leveson Inquiry  11 May 2012

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(+44) 207 404 1400
perspective, the Sun newspaper has in its history always
done sort of quite dramatic endorsements. It's like the
paper. It's strong, it's punchy. It tells it as it is.
When you reach an opinion, it's pretty obvious. And,
you know, from the Vatican chimney of smoke to Kelvin's
"Will the last person turn out the lights?", we have had
a tradition and a history of being bold and dramatic in
our timing when it came to politics. So we just didn't
see it in the terms that you're couching it at, although
I know that critics did.
Q. Mm. We know you had conversations with those close to
Mr Brown in relation to the decision. Before I ask you
about those, did you try to speak to Mr Cameron before
the headline went out?
A. No, I didn't. I was busy.
Q. Too busy to try and speak to him. Is that it?
A. My main concern was to try and speak to Mr Brown.
Q. Why was he a higher priority than Mr Cameron here?
A. Because I felt it was the right thing to do, to speak to
Mr Brown before anybody else.
Q. Out of what motive?
A. Well, I think general courtesy, but I thought it was the
right thing to do, and also Mr Brown and his wife were
due to come to the News International party that night
and I wanted to get hold of them beforehand.

Q. Did you leave a series of voicemail and text messages on
the mobile phones of Mr Brown and Lord Mandelson?
A. I think "a series" is too strong a word. I left
a message for both of them, yes.
Q. For Mr Brown to speak to you urgently. Was that it?
A. Well, it was a private conversation, but the tone of it
was very aggressive and, quite rightly, he was hurt by
the projection and the headline that had been put on the
story, and I think, also quite rightly in his defence,
he suspected or thought that this may be a way in which
the Sun was going to behave, and I assured him that it
wasn't, that it was a mistake, the headline was too
harsh and this was not the way the paper was going to
behave.
Q. But you were no longer the editor, of course, were you?
A. No, but I had spoken to the editor that morning, very
early on, when I saw the headline, and we had discussed
it at length and come to that conclusion.
Q. So you told Mr Mohan not to repeat that sort of thing,
either?
A. A. He rang me.
Q. Can you remember anything about the conversation?
A. Yes, I can, because it was -- it was quite tense.
Q. Okay, so what was said then?
A. I did have a conversation with Mr Brown, and I think it
was in October, rather than that night or that week.
Q. So within a week of the --
A. No, I think it was a few weeks after.
Q. Why did it take you so long to speak to him?
A. Well, I had tried to speak to him on the night, and then
I'd spoken to Lord Mandelson instead, and it was clear
that there was nothing more to say at that point.
Q. Why?
A. I don't think he wanted to talk to me.
Q. So when you did speak to him eventually, can you
remember anything about that conversation?
A. I do. I remember it quite clearly because it was in
response to -- the Sun had splashed on a letter that
Gordon Brown had written to a bereaved mum whose son had
died in Afghanistan and he had got some spelling
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the Sun had been particularly harsh to him over it, and
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remember.
Q. What, at his instigation or yours? Can you recall?
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A. Well, it was a private conversation, but the tone of it
was very aggressive and, quite rightly, he was hurt by
the projection and the headline that had been put on the
story, and I think, also quite rightly in his defence,
he suspected or thought that this may be a way in which
the Sun was going to behave, and I assured him that it
wasn't, that it was a mistake, the headline was too
harsh and this was not the way the paper was going to
behave.
Q. But you were no longer the editor, of course, were you?
A. No, but I had spoken to the editor that morning, very
early on, when I saw the headline, and we had discussed
it at length and come to that conclusion.
Q. So you told Mr Mohan not to repeat that sort of thing,
did you?
A. A. I thought that Mr Brown's concerns that the Sun coverage
was going to be a personal attack was understandable and
I thought that would be wrong.
Q. That's what politicians fear most from the Sun, isn't
it; personal attack? And it's what the Sun has quite
often indulged in, would you agree?
A. A. I don't think he wanted to talk to me.
Q. So when you did speak to him eventually, can you
remember anything about that conversation?
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1 Mr Brown shows that it actually doesn't happen all the time. I mean, I remember it very clearly for the nature of it and -- no, sorry, I don't accept that.

2 Q. But fear of personal attack from the Sun has been a factor in what politicians do or don't do. You well know that, Mrs Brooks, don't you?

3 A. I think that Neil Kinnock may feel that about the Sun. But I'm not sure that the paper has been like that for a while.

4 Q. For how long?

5 A. I just don't think it concentrated on the personal -- in the main. Occasionally, obviously, depending on the story, that would happen, but in the main, I think the Sun concentrated on the issues and the policy and the campaigns, rather than attacking just for the sake of personal attacks, and I think Mr Brown felt that letter was purely personal attack.

6 Q. Fear of personal attack and a fear of allegedly holding politicians to account by prying intrusively into their personal lives. That has been part of the métier of the Sun, hasn't it?

7 A. Obviously I'm going to object to "prying intrusively". The whole point that newspapers or the press in general, shall we say, hold politicians to account on occasion has been found to be intrusive, but that is not the policy.

8 Q. These are aberrations then? Is that what it amount to?

9 A. I think that when a newspaper oversteps the line, that -- I have heard criticism of papers that I have edited and others -- that privacy is a hugely debated topic in every newsroom, but your question, your premise, was that this was the culture, and I was just disputing that.

10 Q. I think as well it's also a manifestation of the power that the Sun and other high circulation newspapers can exercise, often through the personality of the editors.

11 A. Sorry, what was the question?

12 Q. A manifestation of the power high circulation newspapers can exercise, often through the personality of their editors. It is the fear that if the politician departs from what the paper wants, there may be a personal attack.

13 A. I -- I don't think it's fair to say that politicians live in fear of newspapers. They are highly motivated, ambitious people, and MPs don't scare easily. So I don't think that's fair that they live in fear of power and because I believe that the power of a paper is its readership -- I know, but that's what I believe, and that it's its readership -- then that would be like

14 saying they're fearful of the leadership or the electoral.

15 Q. This is a sort of recurring theme in what you're saying, that the roots here are the readership, it all flows up through the tree, which is you, and then emitted out, but you have no role in any of this?

16 A. But the reader --

17 Q. Is that right?

18 A. I suppose that the point of me being here is to give the Inquiry some explanation of how the newspapers I edited worked, and it was true that the readership was at the very centre of that paper, and so going against that readership -- that's why I'm saying that it's not a particular individual editor that has a power; it is the paper.

19 Q. How one can test this: after you have a piece which some would say is personal -- and we're talking about Mr Brown's piece -- what happens? Does your inbox fill up with emails of approbation or is there a deathly silence? What happens? Can you help us?

20 A. Well, in extreme circumstances, going over history, numbers of people can stop by the newspaper. In terms of that particular story, I think I -- I wasn't on the paper at the time, so I think I do remember that being a negative reaction from the readers, although they felt

21 policy.

22 Q. And Princess Diana's death, actually.

23 A. And Princess Diana's death, actually.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. For the majority -- for a lot of newspapers, yes. So there have been other occasions.

26 Q. Can I just go back to this conversation with Mr Brown. You said it was tense, he was angry. No doubt you say it was also a private conversation. I don't really want to lead you on this, if you understand me, but did he say anything which is relevant to this Inquiry, particularly in the context of evidence we've heard from Mr Murdoch?

27 A. Sorry, what particular piece of evidence from Mr Murdoch?

28 Q. Well, then I'm leading you. I just thought that putting Page 65

29 that, you know, the Prime Minister should probably take the time to spell the name of a grieving widow correctly, and certainly the bereaved son, and there was some sort of -- overall, they felt that, you know, at least he'd taken the time to do it, and I think that's probably fair. It wasn't an overwhelming reaction but yes, you do get reactions.

30 Q. The one extreme reaction, of course, was Hillsborough, but since then there's never been anything equivalent, has there? Where people actually voted with their feet and didn't buy the paper?

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43 A. Sorry, what particular piece of evidence from Mr Murdoch?

44 Q. Well, then I'm leading you. I just thought that putting Page 68

17 (Pages 65 to 68)
it in those terms you'd follow what I was referring to.
You followed Mr Murdoch's evidence, did you?
A. I did follow Mr Murdoch's evidence. I think Mr Brown
was very angry, and I'm not sure there was anything
particularly relevant to this Inquiry, although when
Mr Murdoch relayed his conversation with Mr Brown --
I cannot remember when that was -- Mr Murdoch also told
me the same story that he told you.
Q. Okay, well that is of some assistance, but can we be
clear: when did Mr Murdoch relay that conversation to
you?
A. The reason I can't remember the timing is because
obviously I had my own rather angry and intense
conversation with Mr Brown. However, previous to that
conversation, I had also indirectly, again, had
similar -- not threats made, but similar sort of veins
of reaction -- sorry, similar sort of comments made
about the Sun abandoning Labour after 12, 13 years.
Hostile comments. So when Mr Murdoch told me his
conversation, it didn't surprise me.
Q. What did Mr Murdoch tell you?
A. Exactly what he told the Inquiry.
Q. And the conversation you had with Mr Brown, was that
issue returned to or not?
A. It was -- like I said, I feel that the content probably
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was a private conversation, but the tone of it --
unless, of course, Mr Brown would like to tell you about
it, but he was incredibly aggressive and very angry.
Q. It's relevant in this sense, Mrs Brooks. I doubt
whether in the end this Inquiry will resolve questions
of fine detail, but you were chief executive officer of
News International. You might have been fearful that if
Mr Brown did win at the next election, of course against
the odds, he had it in his power to harm the interests
of your company. Do you see that?
A. I don't accept it. I see the question, but I --
Q. Which part don't you accept?
A. That I didn't think that.
Q. So that obvious point didn't cross your radar at all,
did it?
A. That at no point in the conversation with Mr Brown
did I think: "If he wins, he will go against the
commercial interests of credit company"? He was just
incredibly aggressive and angry.
Q. I'm sure it wasn't a thought which flashed through your
mind during the conversation, but when you reflected on
the conversation, it would immediately spring to mind,
wouldn't it?
A. It didn't, no.
Q. At no stage in the run-up to the 2010 election did you
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harbour any such fear or concern; is that it?
A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. Because although Mr Brown had said those things to
Mr Murdoch and although I had heard similar insinuations
from others close to Mr Brown, that there was a sort of
a tone of threat about it, the fact is that it just
didn't occur to me that they were real or proper or --
I just -- I would just dismiss them, I suppose.
Q. Some would say that an elected government, either
through executive power conferred on it by mandate or
through Parliament in due course, would be quite
entitled to bring in media policies which it thought to
be in the public interest but which nonetheless did
impact on the commercial interests of media companies.
Would you agree?
A. I'm sure that it is absolute -- of course it's proper
for all governments to debate and introduce regulation
and policy on the media. Of course I agree with that.
Q. I'm just trying to explore your thinking in 2010. You
have here Mr Brown allegedly, on your evidence, hostile
to News International, and you have Mr Cameron, who
isn't. Is that right? I'm not saying he's favourable
to News International but he's certainly not hostile, is
he?
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A. He wasn't hostile to the Sun.
Q. No. It's just how this would weigh in your thinking.
A. Mm-hm.
Q. So that's something that you should be thinking about.
A. That depends if you -- I mean, Gordon Brown is -- if you
accept the premise that Gordon Brown is a responsible
politician that doesn't put personal prejudice or
bitterness before his policy-making decisions -- so if
you accept that premise, then the threats are pointless
and should be dismissed. However, if he's not that
person and he does put those things, then that's
a failing in his duty because it's not -- it shouldn't
be about his personal prejudices. The Sun supported the
Labour Party for many, many years, and then decided to
make a change. So it didn't occur to me at the time
that Mr Brown and his colleagues would devote their time
in -- into carrying out those threats.
Q. Of course, it might have been part of the implied
settlement between the Sun and the Labour Party, who,
after all, were in power for 10 years, that the quid pro
quo for support is that the Labour Party would not
intrude into areas media policy which could harm the
interests of News International and other similar
Q. Can you assist us with the content of any of these text messages?
A. Some, if not the majority, were to do with organisation, so meeting up or arranging to speak. Some were about a social occasion, and occasionally some would be my own personal comment on perhaps the TV debates, something like that.
Q. How often do you think you met with him socially during this period? Let's take the first five months of 2010. Ignore the record, because we agree --
A. No, I'm ignoring the record, but at least it gives me a sort of memory refresh. Sorry, what was the period of time?
Q. Let's just take the run-up to the 2010 election, which was, I think, on 6 May 2010. I may be wrong about the exact date. The four or five months before then.
A. Yes.
Q. How often would you meet with him or did you meet with him socially?
A. I did meet with him between January 2010 and the election. As you can see, I have no record of it, so --
I think we will have met about -- I mean, obviously it's
16 MR JAY: Anything else?
A. Occasionally he would sign them off "LOL", "lots of love", actually until I told him it meant "laugh out loud", then he didn't sign them like that any more. But in the main, "DC", I would have thought.
Q. Can we see, however, how far we get? It is said that he texted you at certain times, up to a dozen times a day.
A. I didn't text Gordon Brown, no.
Q. I see. And it's said he would write to the opposition or Prime Minister, he had better things to do and I hope that as chief executive I did. I mean, I would text Mr Cameron and vice versa, on occasion, like a lot of people.
Q. Everyone wants to know how his texts are signed off.
A. In the main --
LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do I?
MR JAY: Well, you probably don't, actually, but if I don't ask, people will enquire why the question wasn't asked.
LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.
MR JAY: But I'm happy to be overruled, frankly.
A. What was the decision?
LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Answer the question.
A. Oh right, sorry, sir. He would sign them off "DC" in the main.
MR JAY: Anything else?
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Q. Was it related to his hiring of Mr Coulson and possibly having second thoughts about that?
A. No, not in that instance, no.
Q. On any other instance?
A. No.
Q. Are you sure about that?
A. Yes.
Q. We're really in the dark then as to what these conversations were about, apart from a general --
A. Well, because they were very general. He -- they weren't a sort of -- it was particularly around the civil cases in 2010. Your question was: did we ever speak about it in those two years, and my answer is: yes, we did, very generally, but I do remember in late 2010 having a particular -- perhaps a more detailed conversation, because if you go back in the chronology of the phone hacking situation, that was when the civil cases were coming in and being made newsworthy.
Q. Okay, can I just ask you about a different topic: the phone hacking situation, that was when the civil cases were coming in and being made newsworthy.
A. Longer, actually, but yes.
Q. They have a country house in Oxfordshire as well, don't they?
A. Yes, they do.
Q. About how often have you been in the Freuds' home in the country, your home in the country or the Camerons' constituency home in the company of other politicians?
A. So just to distill that to make it easier to answer, how many times I've been in David Cameron's home with other politicians?
Q. Yes, or the Freuds' country home or your home.
A. Yes, or the Freuds' country home or your home.
Q. Are you sure about that?
A. Approximately.
Q. I'm pretty sure never, David Cameron's home in the countryside. I think once, maybe, George Osborne may have been present at a dinner at my own and I think the only time at Elisabeth Murdoch and Matthew Freud's house was her 40th in -- a couple of years ago.
Q. Yes, the 40th party we've got under tab 40, haven't we?
A. It's the last tab. It was in August 2008.
Q. Oh, sorry.
Q. It actually was held at somewhere called Burford Priory.
A. It's in Burford.

Q. Do you know if BSkyB is still a client of Freud Communications?
A. I don't. I'm sure -- I mean, you know, Freud Communications is a huge company. I don't know their full client list. I'm pretty sure they haven't represented BSkyB on a corporate level, but I'm sure they will have represented lots of other areas of Sky.
Q. Can I just ask you some general questions about that bid. When were you made aware that the bid would be made?
A. I think before the public announcement, shortly before the public announcement.
Q. Before the General Election or after, do you think?
A. I think it was before -- yeah, before. I actually can't remember when the public announcement was, but it was shortly before.
Q. This was obviously a big moment for News Corp.
A. Yes.
Q. If News International had no interest in it, why were News International as well, wouldn't it?
A. Maybe six weeks, a couple of months beforehand.
Q. Because it would obviously have knock-on effects for News International as well, wouldn't it?
A. Well, not particularly. No. No.
Q. If News International had no interest in it, why were you told about it?
A. It wasn't that we had no interest. Obviously, as part of News Corp, we were interested, but at the time, the way it was presented to me was -- I didn't think it was going to have an effect on News International.
Q. Did you have a formal role in the BSkyB transaction?
A. I -- I played no formal role in the BSkyB transaction and certainly not the strategy of timing and all that kind of thing. I was made aware that it was on the cards, so to speak, before the public announcement.
Q. Because it would obviously have knock-on effects for News International as well, wouldn't it?
A. Well, not particularly. No.
Q. If News International had no interest in it, why were you told about it?
A. It wasn't that we had no interest. Obviously, as part of News Corp, we were interested, but at the time, the way it was presented to me was -- I didn't think it was going to have an effect on News International.
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A. It wasn't that we had no interest. Obviously, as part of News Corp, we were interested, but at the time, the way it was presented to me was -- I didn't think it was going to have an effect on News International.
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A.  No, I never heard them acknowledge that, no.

Q.  Mr Osborne, Mr Hunt, did they know about it?

A.  No, I don't, but I think it -- I think it might have
been James Murdoch, but I don't know that.

Q.  Obviously someone who enjoys classical allusions.  Was
been James Murdoch, but I don't know.

A.  No, I don't, but I think it might have
been James Murdoch, but I don't know that.

Q.  A few weeks before; is that it?

A.  Around the same time.

Q.  A few weeks before; is that it?

A.  No, maybe a couple of months before.  Six, eight weeks
before.

Q.  Do you know who chose that code name?

A.  No, I don't, but I think it -- I think it might have
been James Murdoch, but I don't know that.

Q.  Obviously someone who enjoys classical allusions.  Was
it a code name which anybody in government knew about?

A.  No, I don't think so.

Q.  Mr Osborne, Mr Hunt, did they know about it?

A.  No, I never heard them acknowledge that, no.

Q.  If you could look at the list again of RMB1, the
meetings with prime ministers, and identify whether the
BSkyB bid was discussed on any relevant occasion. On
9 October 2010, there was dinner at Chequers with
Mr Cameron.

A.  Yes.

Q.  Might you have raised the bid on that occasion?

A.  No.  I'm pretty sure that was his birthday party.

Q.  That's the private party we'd covered about 15 minutes
ago.

A.  I --

Q.  What about 23 December 2010, which we've already had
some evidence about?

A.  It was -- rather than discussed at that dinner, it was
mentioned and I think James Murdoch's testimony said
that, and I was aware that it was mentioned, but it was
not by any means widely discussed at that dinner.  It
was mentioned because it was in the news because of --
because obviously Dr Cable had resigned from that role.

Q.  Were you party to any conversations along the lines of:
"Dr Cable has acted in breach of duty.  Let's hope the
next one, Mr Hunt, does not"?

A.  Not necessarily, but clearly that was our view, that we
hoped that having been always put to us that it would be
a very fair process and -- which, of course, we were

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party at my sister-in-laws, and I popped in on my way to
another dinner and I actually don't have any memory,
because I don't think I did even speak to him or
Samantha that night, but my sister-in-law tells me they
were definitely there for the party, so I would have
seen them, but not even to have a proper conversation.
Q. So as to the scope of any conversation, which you say
wasn't a proper conversation, are you sure it would not
have covered the BSkyB issue?
A. On?
Q. Boxing Day.
A. Definitely. Absolutely not. I mean, I don't think
there was a conversation.
Q. I will come back to certain aspects of BSkyB in due
course, but I'd like to cover some general questions now
about the subject matter of conversations with
politicians, seeking to ignore, to the extent which one
can, private and social matters. It's self-evident that
your conversations with politicians would embrace the
issues of the day; is that fair?
A. Sometimes, yes.
Q. Would they also embrace issues such as press regulation
and media policy?
A. Very rarely. I mean, there are some examples of when
I have met with a politician particularly to discuss
that, but they were very infrequent.
Q. And the role of the BBC, was that often the subject or
sometimes the subject of conversation?
A. Not particularly. I mean, from my perspective, Sun
readers are pretty pro-BBC. I think in general, wasting
in any public sector or taxpayer's money was something
that we would address with the BBC on occasions and
others, but not in a sort of -- I never really had
a conversation with a politician about the sort of
top-slicing the licence fee or all that kind of -- just
not ...
Q. What about issues such as self-regulation of the press
and the Press Complaints Commission? Were those ever
discussed with politicians?
A. Again, probably not enough, but no.
Q. Why do you say "not enough"?
A. Well, when you asked me the question, I was just
reflecting on the fact that I couldn't remember
a conversation with a politician where we did discuss
the PCC, which is --
Q. What about press ethics? Was that ever the subject of
couversations with politicians?
A. Well, obviously because of the last couple of years it
has been the subject, but --
Q. Can we go back before then?
Q. Was that a discussion in like vein which he had with you?
A. No. Although I think that post Iraq, I think there was some conversations about the 24-hour media, which is, I think, what he was referring to, the sort of the fact that we, the press, have become feral beasts because there was always a constant need for a new story. So occasionally 24-hour news was mentioned in terms of Iraq, but not really. I was surprised when he said that.
Q. Well, his speech speaks for itself, but "feral beasts"
A. I think went further than just a temporal point, that the press is there 24 hours a day. It's also to do with the way they behave. Sometimes they're a bit wild and off their leashes. Do you see the analogy?
A. I see the analogy, yes.
Q. He didn't communicate any of those concerns to you?
A. No.
Q. Did politicians ever complain to you privately about coverage in the Sun of them?
A. Yes, occasionally. You know, there was a -- if people -- if someone felt it was unfair -- I mean, you asked me a question earlier about -- I can't remember how you phrased it, but if I had passed information from Gordon Brown to Tony Blair, I think it was something like that, and which I said wasn't true. There's plenty of people doing that, but on occasion they would complain. Tony Blair would often complain about our attitude to Europe and him on Europe, regularly. Many, many Home Secretaries would regularly complain about campaigns or -- that we were doing in the paper. So yes, they did. I think our role was -- I think that was correct because our role was to hold them to account on certain issues.
Q. Okay. Some further general questions. Let's see if we can analyse the power play which may or may not be in issue here. It would be fair to say, wouldn't it, that you were very close to Mr Rupert Murdoch, who trusted you implicitly; are we agreed?
A. I was close to him, yes.
Q. And he trusted you implicitly --
A. Yes.
Q. Would you also agree that politicians, for whatever reason, wanted to get close to Mr Murdoch to advance their own interests? Are we agreed?
A. I think that a lot of politicians wanted to put their case to Mr Murdoch. "Advance their own interests" is probably -- I'm sure most politicians have a higher view of what they were doing, but yes.
Q. I'm not suggesting this is wholly selfish, but I think we can agree more or less where we are.
A. Mm.
Q. This may be the more important point: that in order to get close to Mr Murdoch, in practice they had to get close to you. Would you agree with that?
A. No.
Q. Why not?
A. Because it's not true.
Q. Would you agree that politicians might perceive that you had influence over Mr Murdoch?
A. No, I certainly don't think that, no. I think they --
I was an editor of a newspaper, a very large circulation newspaper, with a wide readership with an exceptional percentage of floating voters, and I do believe that, like other editors in similar situations, politicians did want to get access to the editor of the Sun and his or her team as much as possible. But I don't think that people ever thought to get to Mr Murdoch they had to go through me. I don't think that's correct.
Q. Let's see if we can break that down. Politicians certainly wanted to get close to you, to have access to you, didn't they?
A. Yes.
Q. And you were someone who Mr Murdoch trusted implicitly, were you not?
You're a very empathetic person. You understand how
human beings think and feel, don't you?
A. I do like people, yes, and journalists, as a main, do
try and be empathetic, otherwise no one would tell them
anything.
Q. But you understand the potential of, if I can put it in
this way, personal alchemy, how you with get people to
do or might get people to do what you want, and indeed
what they are trying to do with you. Don't you get any
of that?
A. I'm not sure quite what you mean.
Q. I'm not suggest anything sinister here. I'm talking
about really the power of human empathy. Some people
are empathetic and it's completely lost on them. But
it's not lost on you, is it?
A. Well, I hope to be empathetic in life to people, yes.
Q. I just wonder whether you sense or sensed -- because
we're talking about the past now -- the effect you might
have had on politicians. Some of them may even have
been afraid of you. Is that true?
A. I literally -- like I say, I don't see politicians as
these sort of easily scared people. Like I say, most of
them are pretty strong, ambitious and highly motivated,
so...
Q. Let's see if we can just take one case study and see
whether there's any validity in that case study.
A. Okay, right.
Q. You remember the McCanns serialisation case?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Actually, we have Dr McCann's evidence in relation to
this in the bundle at page 57 under tab 6. Do you have
that there? We're working from the transcript of the
evidence this Inquiry received on 23 November 2011.
A. Right, yes.
Q. If you look at page 57, line 11, the question I asked
was:
"You talk about a meeting with Rebekah Brooks ..."
Are you on the right page?
A. They're not numbered in that way.
Q. Yes, right. I have it, sorry. Thank you, sir. Yes?
MR JAY: The question was:
"You talk about a meeting with Rebekah Brooks which
led to a review of your case, a formal review. Just to
assist us a little bit with that, can you recall when
that was?"
Dr McCann's answer was:
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Page 100
1. Q. Did you then take the matter up with Downing Street direct?
2. A. No.
3. Q. Did you not tell Downing Street that the Sun was going to demand a review and the Prime Minister should agree to the request because the Sun had supported him at the last election?
4. A. No, in fact I didn't speak to Downing Street or the Home Secretary about this, but I know that Dominic Mohan or Tom Newton Dunn will have spoken to them.
5. Q. Pardon me?
6. A. They would have spoken directly to either Number 10 or the Home Office. I'm not sure. You'll have to ask them. Probably the Home Office, I would have thought.
7. Q. That the Sun wanted an immediate result and that a letter would be posted all over the front page from the McCanns to the Prime Minister asking for a review, unless Downing Street agreed. Did that happen?
8. A. I think that's how the Sun launched the campaign from memory. It was with a letter, yes.
9. Q. The Home Secretary was told that if she agreed to the review, the page 1 letter would not run. Do you remember that?
10. A. No, I don't.
11. Q. But as the Secretary of State did not respond in time, the Home Secretary was told that if she agreed to the review of the case by the Home Office, the page 1 letter would not run. Do you remember that?
12. A. I -- you asked if it was successful and he says it was, yes.
13. Q. Yes. Can you remember anything about that intervention?
14. A. Actually, to just go back, the reason I was involved as chief executive was because it concerned two newspapers, the Sunday Times and the Sun. So if you like, I did the deal with HarperCollins from the corporate point of view, and then left it to the two editors, John Witherow and Dominic Mohan, to decide the different approaches.
15. Q. Let's see whether we can agree or disagree on what may have happened. When you were discussing the arrangements with the McCanns, you asked if there was anything more they wanted. Do you recall that?
16. A. Maybe, yes.
17. Q. And Dr Gerry McCann said that he wanted a UK police review of the case. Do you remember him saying?
18. A. That I do, yes.
19. Q. Do you remember your answer being: "Is that all?"
20. A. I may have said it slightly more politely: "Is there anything else before we conclude this meeting?", but -- I don't particularly remember saying that, but maybe I did, yes.
21. Q. I'm not suggesting to you that it was impolite; I'm just summarising the gist of what you said.
22. A. Maybe, yes. We had been going through a list of issues that Dr McCann and Kate McCann wanted to be assured of before we went forward with the serialisation, so possibly.

23. Q. Did you publish the letter on the front page. Do you remember that?
24. A. I do remember the Sun kicking off the campaign with a letter, yes.
25. Q. But you don't believe there was any conversation or indeed threat to the Secretary of State? Is that right?
26. A. I'm pretty sure there would have not been a threat, but you'll have to -- we'll have to ask Dominic Mohan, because, like I said, my involvement was to discuss the campaign in the continued search for Madeleine with the McCanns and to do the deal on the book and to -- they -- because I had done so many campaigns in the past, they wanted my opinion, but after that I left it to both editors to execute the campaign.
27. Q. What I've been told is that you then intervened personally, Mrs Brooks. You told Number 10 that unless the Prime Minister ordered the review by the Metropolitan Police, the Sun would put the Home Secretary, Theresa May, on the front page every day until the Sun's demands were met. Is that true or not?
28. A. No.
29. Q. Is any part of that true?
30. A. I didn't speak to Number 10 or the Home Office about the McCanns until, I think, after the campaign had been won, and then it came up in a conversation that I had -- and
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<th>Q.</th>
<th>You must have been told, Mrs Brooks?</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>I remember Dominic Mohan telling me that the review was going ahead.</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>That the Sun had won, in other words?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>He didn't put it in those terms, but he said -- well, actually, I think he said, &quot;The McCanns have won.&quot;</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>The Sun headline on 14 May, front page, was that as a result of its campaign, the Prime Minister was &quot;opening the Maddie files&quot;. Do you remember that one?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>I remember the Sun winning the campaign, the McCanns winning the campaign, yes.</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>So this is not, you say, a case study then in the exercise of power by you? I'm not suggesting that the end result was right or wrong. Many would say it was right, that there should be a review. I'm just saying the means by which you achieved the objective --</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>But it could be said that a review of Madeleine McCann's case, with everything that had gone on, was the right thing to do. We presented the issue. We supported the McCanns in their determination to get a review. It wasn't new. They'd tried before, before the election, and the election had come into -- and the Sun -- and the Home Secretary clearly thought it was a good idea too, because I'm pretty sure there wasn't -- it wasn't a long campaign. It wasn't like Sarah's Law over ten years.</td>
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<th>Q.</th>
<th>It also chimes with the commercial interests of your argument, or the McCanns' argument, was correct.</th>
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<td>A.</td>
<td>Right, sorry.</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>Perhaps you would say all you were doing was reflecting the views of your readers. Is that it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>I think in that case, it was an issue that we brought to the readers, that we explained to the readers that a review hadn't taken place and that -- we presented the McCanns' story as in the reason why they wanted the review. I think that absolutely chimed with our readership and the campaign was started with a very heartfelt letter and the politicians were convinced our argument, or the McCanns' argument, was correct.</td>
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<th>I don't even think directly with the Prime Minister.</th>
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<td>I think it was one of his team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
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| LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could we ask this: were you part of a strategy that involved your paper putting pressure on the government with this sort of implied or express threat? |

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<td>1. papers because this sells copy, doesn't it?</td>
<td>1. seriously, and as it turned out, he was entirely</td>
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<td>2. A. Well, campaigns can sell newspapers. I think the</td>
<td>2. correct.</td>
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<td>3. serialisation of the book actually was good for</td>
<td>3. Q. Did you give any advice to Mr Cameron as to whether</td>
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<td>4. circulation for the Sunday Times. I'm not sure how well</td>
<td>4. Mr Grieve might move on?</td>
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<td>5. the campaign was in circulation terms, but they would be</td>
<td>5. A. No, no. In fact, after that conversation -- sorry, it</td>
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<td>6. a matter of record. It may have been.</td>
<td>6. is important to remember Mr Cameron wasn't at that</td>
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<td>7. Q. Can I deal, finally before lunch, with one other example</td>
<td>7. dinner.</td>
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<td>8. just to get your evidence on this. Mr Dominic Grieve at</td>
<td>8. Q. That's right. Did you indicate to Mr Cameron in any way</td>
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<td>9. one point was the Shadow Home Secretary, wasn't he?</td>
<td>9. what your view was about Mr Grieve?</td>
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<td>10. A. Yes, he was.</td>
<td>10. A. No. In fact, Mr Osborne and Mr Cameron did the opposite</td>
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<td>11. Q. Do you remember a conversation with him over dinner</td>
<td>11. to me, where they were at pains to explain that</td>
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<td>12. which you discussed the Human Rights Act?</td>
<td>12. Mr Grieve's view, which has now proved to be entirely</td>
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<td>13. A. I do, yes.</td>
<td>13. correct, was absolutely not their view and they were</td>
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<td>14. Q. To cut to the quick, his position was in favour of the</td>
<td>14. going to repeal the HRA and replace it with a British</td>
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<td>15. Act and your position was not, if one wanted to distill</td>
<td>15. bill of rights, and that Mr Grieve was mistaken.</td>
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<td>16. it into one sentence; is that correct?</td>
<td>16. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just before we break, could I take</td>
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<td>17. A. I don't think that's quite right. Similar, his</td>
<td>17. you back to this issue that we've bounced around several</td>
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<td>18. position was that it was -- it was a shadow cabinet</td>
<td>18. times, which is who is leading who.</td>
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<td>19. dinner, and his position was that David Cameron's</td>
<td>19. A. Yes.</td>
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<td>20. promise or, shall we say, the Tory Party's promise to</td>
<td>20. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do you think that at least in part,</td>
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<td>21. repeal the HRA and replace it with a British bill of</td>
<td>21. what you were in fact doing, to use your own words, was</td>
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<td>22. rights, I think was the plan at the time, was not --</td>
<td>22. bringing issues to your readers as opposed merely to</td>
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<td>23. should not be so easily promised to papers like the Sun</td>
<td>23. responding to your readers' interests?</td>
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<td>24. and the Mail and the Telegraph, and so it wasn't that he</td>
<td>24. A. I think that's correct, yes.</td>
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<td>25. was pro it or against it. He was just making the legal</td>
<td>25. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm sure we'll come back to it this</td>
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<td>1. point that it was very difficult to do.</td>
<td>28. afternoon, but I would like your view, which you can</td>
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<td>2. Q. Were you impressed with him after that conversation?</td>
<td>3. reflect upon, on this: everybody's entitled to be</td>
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<td>3. A. Well, as it turned out, he was absolutely right, but at</td>
<td>4. a friend of whomsoever they want to be a friend. That's</td>
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<td>4. the time -- it was more his colleagues around the table,</td>
<td>5. part of life. But can you understand why it might be</td>
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<td>5. because I think they'd put out a policy announcement</td>
<td>6. a matter of public concern that a very close</td>
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<td>6. that it was going to be in the manifesto they would</td>
<td>7. relationship between journalists and politicians might</td>
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<td>7. repeal the HRA. David Cameron had written for the Sun</td>
<td>8. create subtle pressures on the press, who have the</td>
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<td>8. explaining this. And so the dinner conversation was</td>
<td>9. megaphone, and on the politicians, who have the policy</td>
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<td>9. quite heated, as he was the only one at the table</td>
<td>10. decisions?</td>
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<td>10. saying, &quot;Actually ...&quot; I admired him standing up to his</td>
<td>11. A. Yes, I can understand that.</td>
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<td>11. shadow colleagues like that, and as I say, in the end</td>
<td>12. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. 2 o'clock.</td>
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<td>12. he's turned out to be correct.</td>
<td>13. (1.02 pm)</td>
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<td>13. Q. Didn't you tell Mr Cameron, after that conversation you</td>
<td>14. (The luncheon adjournment)</td>
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<td>14. had with Mr Grieve, words to this effect: &quot;You can't</td>
<td>15.</td>
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<td>15. have someone like that as Home Secretary. He won't</td>
<td>16.</td>
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<td>16. appeal on our readers. Move him&quot;? And that's indeed</td>
<td>17.</td>
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<td>17. what happened.</td>
<td>18.</td>
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<td>18. A. No, I did not tell Mr Cameron to move him. What -- the</td>
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<td>19. conversation -- as I say, it was a very heated</td>
<td>20.</td>
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<td>20. conversation, borne out by -- his colleagues were trying</td>
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<td>21. to almost silence him at the table because he was, in</td>
<td>22.</td>
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<td>22. effect, saying one of the promises the Conservatives had</td>
<td>23.</td>
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<td>23. made to the electorate was they were going to repeal --</td>
<td>24.</td>
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<td>24. and it was almost the opposite way around, that they</td>
<td>25.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. were concerned that his view was not to be taken</td>
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