

17/7/09

**Q) Why didn't the MPS follow up on the involvement of Neville Thurlbeck?**

**A)** The parameters of the investigation were set and revolved around the initial complainants and subsequent evidential product harvested during this period. The involvement of a wider 'list' of other 'victims' came about pre arrest phase as a result of information provided by the telephone companies and post arrest from the many documents seized in the arrest searches.

Both Goodman and Mulcaire were advised by a legal team, provided by the News of the World and refused to answer any questions asked of them by investigators after arrest.

Police encountered some difficulty in searching the desk of Goodman within News International offices at Wapping on August 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 with an insistence at every stage that police should wait for senior lawyers to turn up and be given an opportunity at obtaining a court order preventing police searching News International, further they prevented other officers from entering News International to assist with those searches.

In relation to the documents recovered from searches on August 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 which included the e mail from Ross Hindley at the NOTW which is shown as, '*Transcript for Neville: Wednesday, June 29 2005*' The document was found in hard copy form, at the home address of Mulcaire and appeared to be from Hindley at the NOTW to Mulcaire at his email address.

The document was listed on the sensitive unused schedule (MG6D page 18/31) reviewed by prosecution counsel.

Whilst this document caused concern that others were involved in criminality **it was insufficient alone** to prove that Hindley, Thurlbeck or others were engaged in a conspiracy to commit an offence of interception of communications, the mere fact that they used/saw transcripts of conversations is not itself sufficient evidence to charge with a criminal offence of conspiracy to intercept communications.

It is important to differentiate the investigative strategy and risk reduction strategy taken at the time, to the very different focus today of whether in fact lots of journalists at the NOTW or elsewhere were involved in a criminal conspiracy.

Prosecution counsel took the view that the indictment for Goodman and Mulcaire adequately reflected the extent of the criminality the defendants were engaged in.

The wider list of documents with details of 'victims' recovered from Mulcaire, including the email described above were reviewed by counsel, as part of the review of sensitive unused material.

Police could have arrested Thurlbeck and/or others. The experience police had of the stance taken by News International staff led them to suspect that any other journalists arrested would not readily assist police by answering any questions this would inevitably leave investigators with insufficient evidence to charge others. Further enquiries were undertaken by investigators to prove the involvement of other journalists by requesting telephone information and floor plans from News International at the time. These were frustrated from the outset.