

<p>1 2 (2.00 pm) 3 MR JAY: The last point I'd like to make in relation to the 4 ICO issue is a meeting which took place on 13 July 2006, 5 a note of which we will see in bundle 10, tab 16, 6 page 00389. 7 A. 369? 8 Q. Sorry, 389, my apologies. Top right, it says RJT13. 9 A. Yes, I have it. 10 Q. The reason for the meeting is to discuss your response 11 to recommendations in the first report, "What price 12 privacy?". Do you see under "Specifics" -- 13 A. Yeah. 14 Q. "Mr Thomas set out the background and gave the history." 15 And at the end of the first bullet point says: 16 "He [that's Mr Thomas] expressed some disappointment 17 that the PCC had not been more forthright in its 18 condemnation of the activity." 19 Is that a fair criticism? 20 A. No, it's not a fair criticism. 21 Q. Because? 22 A. Because I had been forthright in my condemnation of 23 blagging and offences against the Data Protection Act in 24 speeches and the annual reviews and interviews, 25 repeatedly, to be quite frank.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 A. Indeed. 2 Q. Can I ask you about the next page, please? This is the 3 issue about the Code of Practice Committee. The basic 4 point is that it was news to Mr Thomas that there was 5 jurisdictional separation, as it were, between the PCC 6 and the Code of Practice Committee. 7 A. Mm. 8 Q. Is it a fair criticism that you had not carefully 9 explained to him back in 2003 and 2004 that there was 10 that division of powers and that if he wanted a code 11 amendment, he needed to go to the Code of Practice 12 Committee rather than to you? 13 A. No, I think that is also an unfair criticism, and it was 14 as a direct result of the advice we gave him at this 15 meeting that he went to the Code of Practice Committee, 16 entered into correspondence with Les Hinton, who at the 17 time was chairman of the Code Committee, and then 18 I think proceeded to send the Code Committee a possible 19 draft of a revised clause 10. Those words were not 20 accepted by the Code Committee but it was strengthened 21 and amplified. 22 Q. Why was it left to Mr Thomas to go to the Code of 23 Practice Committee? Why wasn't that matter, which was 24 preeminently one which you should take up on behalf of 25 the PCC with a sister committee, in effect?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. At the second bullet point you set forth your position. 2 You said: 3 "The PCC is not able to act as a general regulator." 4 What did you mean by that? 5 A. I think what I had in mind there was a notion that we 6 should in some way take on the work of the 7 Information Commissioner by virtue of being a Press 8 Complaints Commission, and this is what I wanted to 9 reject. The point I always made to Mr Thomas, apart 10 from my insistent demands on beef, was to suggest that 11 we had to work in a complementary way. He did his 12 thing, but there were things that we could do to help 13 him, and I've described them in the -- before lunch. 14 And I think as a consequence of this precise meeting, it 15 led to direct contacts between the Code Committee and 16 Mr Thomas, which led to a change in clause 10 on 17 subterfuge in the code of practice. 18 Q. I think your position is -- and you articulated it this 19 morning -- that you believe that the PCC is correctly 20 called a regulator, but you've qualified that in 21 language which we've heard. 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. Which, of course, is a position somewhat different from 24 that taken by Mr Toulmin and Mr Abell yesterday, isn't 25 it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 A. No, I thought actually this would be helpful. Rather 2 than mediating his contacts with the Code Committee on 3 the matter of clause 10, the very best thing he could do 4 was to speak to them directly. It was a kind of 5 obvious, common sense practical thing to do, to which he 6 raised no objection, and which bore fruit. 7 Q. But is this not another example of you adopting 8 a somewhat minimalist approach, leaving it to Mr Thomas 9 to have dealings with, in effect, your own Code of 10 Practice Committee? 11 A. If that is minimalism, that is a strange concept, 12 considering the amount of effort we had made to exhort 13 journalists to obey the Data Protection Act, without 14 ever having been given evidence of which journalists and 15 which newspapers had committed sins. 16 So I think that -- what was this, our third meeting 17 with Mr Thomas, I believe? Yes, third. It might have 18 been fourth but I think it was third. It was 19 a thoroughly positive and constructive thing to do, 20 which bore fruit. 21 Q. The next question and final question on the ICO issue is 22 one which others, I know, want me to put. You get the 23 second report. You get the table in the second report. 24 The Daily Mail happens to be top of the list but maybe 25 it doesn't matter precisely who it is. Why don't you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 call in the editor, or one of the editors or some of the 2 editors near the top of the list, and ask for an 3 explanation? 4 A. I was not in the business of calling in editors to 5 explain actions that were perfectly legal. The beef had 6 to be an indication of which newspapers and which 7 journalists had actually hired inquiry agents to procure 8 information illegally. Then we would have been in 9 a different ball game, but we never got there. 10 Q. But that's a misunderstanding, I think, Sir Christopher, 11 of the table in the second report. The table in the 12 second report evidenced, in Mr Thomas' view, probably 13 illegal transactions. So the point I'm putting to you 14 is: on the basis of that table alone and assuming that 15 Mr Thomas it is acting in good faith and has evidence, 16 as he must be doing, why not call in some editors and 17 ask for an explanation? 18 A. He can have all the good faith in the world, but like 19 the chairman of the Select Committee himself, I wanted 20 to see the beef. Then we had something to say to the 21 editors. And it wasn't just me; it was also the Select 22 Committee itself wanted to know the answer. He couldn't 23 give it. So by definition, there was a limit to what 24 could have been done. We could have done more -- 25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It may be he couldn't give it because</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 A. Absolutely, and we could have done that at the Select 2 Committee as well. We could have closed the meeting, 3 chucked the public out, and done it in a different way. 4 Q. I think your position, though, is really one of partial 5 disbelief. Because he didn't provide you with the 6 evidence, you doubted his conclusions. You said, in 7 terms in your memorandum to the Select Committee, that 8 the evidence was old and incomplete, and that, for you, 9 was enough. You didn't need to cause any further 10 investigations? 11 A. A lesser -- 12 Q. That's the true position, isn't it? 13 A. No, it's not that at all. A lesser consideration was 14 the fact that the information went back to 2002 and 15 2001, so it was several years old. That was a lesser 16 consideration. The main consideration, as I've said 17 several times now in this hearing, is that I needed 18 actionable information. That was never given. 19 Q. Move off that topic to a different one. Mr Desmond, he 20 doesn't pay his subscriptions to the MPA, I think, in 21 2008, and you write a letter to him -- it's probably not 22 necessary to turn up the letter -- asking for a meeting 23 and a discussion. Was there any discussion with 24 Mr Desmond in relation to that? 25 A. No, there was no meeting, and there was no discussion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 that itself would breach the data protection 2 legislation. 3 A. My Lord? 4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, it may be he couldn't give it 5 because he would be disclosing information in breach of 6 data protection. 7 A. Well, then that is a very curious situation to find 8 yourself in when you're giving evidence under 9 parliamentary privilege. 10 MR JAY: Well, Sir Christopher, the position under 11 Section 59 of the Data Protection Act, as Parliament 12 itself pointed out, probably correctly, is that there 13 wasn't an impediment on Mr Thomas giving the information 14 to the newspapers, should the newspapers request it -- 15 and eventually they did, after a number of years -- but 16 I think there was a recognition that there was a problem 17 in giving it to you, that information, because that 18 would not be justified under Section 59. 19 A. Well, in which case, I have to say, why was it then in 20 his letter of November 2003 that the 21 Information Commissioner suggested that in certain 22 circumstances he would be prepared to give me that 23 information? 24 Q. Yes, but he made it clear that that would have to be 25 under very specific conditions, didn't he?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 with him. I don't think he was interested in having 2 one. 3 Q. Why was that, do you think? 4 A. Well, you'll have to ask him. 5 Q. Did you try and engage him further in discussions? 6 A. Well, no, for the very good reason that, if I remember 7 rightly, I wrote that letter in January 2008, and then 8 on 19 March of that year, the court ruled against the 9 four Northern &amp; Shell titles. I spoke relatively 10 mildly, considering the circumstances, to the media, and 11 from then, I think, as far as Mr Desmond was concerned, 12 I was the devil incarnate, so there was no point of 13 engaging in any kind of dialogue with him. 14 Q. He didn't rejoin the PCC through the mechanism, 15 I suppose, of repaying his subscriptions until after you 16 left in May 2009; that's right, isn't it? 17 A. Yeah, I think that's right. I think once I had gone, he 18 felt that an impediment had been removed to his resuming 19 relations to the PCC, which also included paying his 20 subscription to the MPA. I think that's what had 21 happened. 22 Q. Yes. At the very least, then, there was some bad 23 feeling from his point of view -- not necessarily, of 24 course, from yours -- in relation to the handling of the 25 McCann case, wasn't there?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 A. There was extremely bad feeling from Mr Desmond about 2 that, which I think he expressed even at this Inquiry. 3 Q. Maybe I was guilty of understatement on that occasion. 4 May I ask you, please, to look at file 5, which 5 I think is in a lever-arch file in front of you, which 6 says B5 to 9. 7 A. I don't see a 5 here. What is this I have? No, I -- do 8 I have that? No, I don't think I do. 9 Q. I think there's a composite bundle which is 5 to 9. 10 A. This is 10. Something weird about -- oh, what's this? 11 Oh, sorry, I couldn't read the label. My apologies. 12 Q. If you kindly turn up tab 1. 13 A. Oh yeah. 14 Q. This is a letter you write quite early on in your term 15 as chairman to the editor of the Sun. Do you remember 16 this one, Sir Christopher? 17 A. Oh yes. 18 Q. 26 September 2003: 19 "Dear Rebekah ..." 20 If I can paraphrase -- it's a letter which has been 21 redacted. 39320 is the number. 22 A. Yeah, I'm looking at it. 23 Q. It relates -- I mean, it may be that we're being too coy 24 over this since we all remember the particular incident. 25 It relates to the use of the word "bonkers" in the Page 9</p>	<p>1 A. I said it was just silly, didn't I, something like that? 2 Yeah. Well, it was silly, and it also contradicted her 3 first paragraph, in which she said: 4 "As you know, the Sun is strongly committed to the 5 code of practice -- and opposed to any form of 6 discrimination, on health or any other grounds." 7 Q. It's fair to say that on the next page, there is an 8 acceptance that the Sun made the mistake. 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. But then they go back into the offensive, really, by 11 saying: 12 "Whenever we do, our rivals, in particular the BBC 13 and some of the broadsheets, are ready to stir the pot. 14 Respectfully, I think it would be a mistake to dance to 15 their tune every time a tabloid slips up." 16 Again, what do you make of that? 17 A. Silly and sillier, really. 18 Q. Your note says, after pointing out it's silly and that 19 the broadsheets would have got a similar letter from you 20 had they transgressed in an identical way -- you say: 21 "Another lunch for the new year." 22 A. Yeah, that's absolutely right, and as I said to you in 23 early evidence, I tried to see each national editor once 24 a year over lunch. We were setting up the programme, 25 I suppose already, in October 2003, 2004, and obviously Page 11</p>
<p>1 context of a sportsman -- let's put it neutrally, in 2 that term -- who unfortunately was suffering from mental 3 illness at the time, and therefore the use of the term 4 "bonkers" was entirely inappropriate. You pointed out 5 that that was right, and you asked for reassurance that 6 breaches of the code of this nature would not occur; 7 that's correct, isn't it? 8 A. That is absolutely right. 9 Q. And then the reply is at tab 3 at page 39323. 10 A. Yeah, I'm getting there. 11 Q. It's not particularly contrite, is it? The point -- 12 A. No, I remember this. Yes. 13 Q. The point is made in the final paragraph of this first 14 page: 15 "I hope you will not mind my adding one final 16 thought about your letter. I consider you 17 a constructive and interested critic of the newspaper 18 industry and value your opinion; but the tone and style 19 of a newspaper is a matter for an editor. If the 20 readers object (and a few certainly did in this case), 21 they have the option of buying another newspaper to 22 read." 23 How would you characterise that reply? We can see 24 what you thought about it at the time, I know, because 25 there's a manuscript annotation -- Page 10</p>	<p>1 Rebekah Wade, as she then was, would be included in that 2 list. 3 Q. Yes. Some might say this is a slap on the wrist which 4 is dismissed by the editor of the Sun and you're going 5 to sort it all out now in a lunch in the new year, which 6 it is a certain way of operating. Is that a fair point? 7 A. It's an unfair point. This letter is in fact an 8 expression of extreme irritation, and it never happened 9 again. I mean, not the letter, but the -- that kind of 10 medical reference. 11 Q. Okay. You gave an interview to the Guardian, I think, 12 when you left -- or about the time when you left -- on 13 the expiry of your second term. It's at B6, tab 12, so 14 I think probably the same file you're looking at, 15 section 6 of that file? 16 A. B6, tab 12? 17 Q. Yes. 18 A. This is -- oh, the 6 is embraced by the 5 to 9, yes. 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You'll find -- 20 A. Yes, section 6. I've found it. What was the tab again? 21 MR JAY: 12. 22 A. I'm sorry. 23 Q. A piece in the Guardian written by -- it's 24 Professor Greenslade, isn't it? 25 A. It is Professor Greenslade. Page 12</p>

<p>1 Q. 30 March 2009.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. The headline "Watchdog or lap dog?"</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Can I just deal with a few points you raised. His</p> <p>6 commentary I don't think we need -- we can read it. The</p> <p>7 second page at the top is quite interesting. Do you see</p> <p>8 this:</p> <p>9 "When asked in his valedictory interview what he</p> <p>10 thinks is wrong with the PCC, Meyer replies: 'Not</p> <p>11 a lot.'"</p> <p>12 Are you correctly reported there?</p> <p>13 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>14 Q. So presumably, then, your position is: not a lot is</p> <p>15 wrong, not a lot needed to be changed in March 2009, and</p> <p>16 perhaps not a lot needs to be changed now; is that</p> <p>17 right?</p> <p>18 A. Well, I think in an interview with Roy Greenslade, to</p> <p>19 have said, after six years, in answer to his question,</p> <p>20 "A hell of a lot" would have been perverse. So I said,</p> <p>21 "Not a lot", but this does not contradict what I have</p> <p>22 said in my witness statement, that things need to be</p> <p>23 done to improve the effectiveness of the PCC.</p> <p>24 Q. Then it continues:</p> <p>25 "He believes [that's you, of course] he's done much</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 you reply:</p> <p>2 "I have to tell you that inside this building we say</p> <p>3 to each other: 'It would be better if we had some more</p> <p>4 adjudications.'"</p> <p>5 What did you mean by that?</p> <p>6 A. This was an old debate between me and Roy Greenslade</p> <p>7 about adjudications and what I meant by that was</p> <p>8 actually, if you could say, instead of: "We've done 39</p> <p>9 adjudications in a year, or 49 or 51" -- which doesn't</p> <p>10 sound very much, given the large number of people who</p> <p>11 have come to us with complaints and the large number of</p> <p>12 rulings that we make. That presentationally, for those</p> <p>13 who don't understand how the PCC works, doesn't look</p> <p>14 like a very great deal and it's quite hard to explain</p> <p>15 how rulings operate. So if we could say -- let's say we</p> <p>16 said we had 250 adjudications a year. Presentationally,</p> <p>17 it would be better, but the fact of the matter is you</p> <p>18 cannot artificially inflate the number of adjudications.</p> <p>19 Your job, among others, is to mediate between</p> <p>20 complainant and editor. If you can bring the thing to</p> <p>21 a resolution, you have done your job.</p> <p>22 There are circumstances in which it is necessary to</p> <p>23 go to the full Commission, and that produces an</p> <p>24 adjudication one way or another. That was the point of</p> <p>25 my argument, but as I say, Roy and I -- Roy Greenslade</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 to ward off statutory legislation and to enhance the</p> <p>2 status of the press, following what many regarded as its</p> <p>3 Wild West period of the late 1980s when tabloids were</p> <p>4 misbehaving on a regular basis. I think it's improved</p> <p>5 a great deal over the last six years. I'm not saying</p> <p>6 we've reached a state of grace but it's in a state of</p> <p>7 permanent evolution and it's done jolly well."</p> <p>8 So you're pretty pleased with how well you've done,</p> <p>9 and you might well be entitled to be, but that's what</p> <p>10 you're telling Professor Greenslade, aren't you?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, and I would rest on those words even now.</p> <p>12 Q. You've made it absolutely clear that one of your</p> <p>13 objectives was to ward off statutory legislation; is</p> <p>14 that right?</p> <p>15 A. Of course.</p> <p>16 Q. Can I ask you just another point or two. At the bottom</p> <p>17 of this page:</p> <p>18 "There is precious little transparency in the way</p> <p>19 the PCC goes about its behind the scenes business of</p> <p>20 resolving complaints by acting as an arbitrator.</p> <p>21 Although the organisation also negotiates a solution</p> <p>22 between the two parties, wouldn't more adjudications</p> <p>23 against offending papers generate more public</p> <p>24 confidence?"</p> <p>25 Then it's recorded on the next page -- you laugh as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 and I have had this debate going back to when I started</p> <p>2 at the PCC in 2003.</p> <p>3 Q. I think you're rejecting the proposition which may have</p> <p>4 been implied through Professor Greenslade's remark or</p> <p>5 question, that the whole system is loaded or skewed in</p> <p>6 favour of achieving a mediation, a resolved settlement,</p> <p>7 as it were, rather than an adjudicated solution; is that</p> <p>8 right?</p> <p>9 A. Well, there was a -- there is a philosophical difference</p> <p>10 between Roy Greenslade and myself on this. If you go</p> <p>11 back to the original Calcutt insight into the then new</p> <p>12 PCC, the notion of mediation was a the centre of his</p> <p>13 recommendations. Now, if you can bring a complaint to</p> <p>14 a successful conclusion -- don't forget we moved fast</p> <p>15 when I was chairman. We could generally turn this</p> <p>16 around within a month, give or take a few days, so it</p> <p>17 wasn't a protracted process. If you could do that to</p> <p>18 the satisfaction of the complainant, job well done. If</p> <p>19 you couldn't, then you would go to adjudication.</p> <p>20 Q. But there's a sense, though, of attribution here, that</p> <p>21 a lot of the energy comes out of the complaint, it's in</p> <p>22 the interests of the newspapers to get a mediated</p> <p>23 settlement rather than adjudication, so all the</p> <p>24 pressures are on sorting it out "amicably", rather than</p> <p>25 reaching a decision of the PCC itself. Is that not</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

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<p>1 fair?</p> <p>2 A. No, that sounds plausible, but actually it's heretical.</p> <p>3 Let me put it like this: the threat of an adjudication</p> <p>4 doesn't drag the issue out. As I said, we turn these --</p> <p>5 I used to turn these round, on average, within a month.</p> <p>6 The pressure is on the editor, because editors --</p> <p>7 I haven't actually been able to say this, but I will say</p> <p>8 this now. Editors hate negative adjudications in their</p> <p>9 newspapers, and if they know one is coming down the</p> <p>10 pipe, then the pressure mounts on them to come up with</p> <p>11 a remedy that is satisfactory to the complainant.</p> <p>12 So, far from there being attribution in the system,</p> <p>13 you actually have satisfaction in the system, and if you</p> <p>14 didn't have this satisfaction in the system, you would</p> <p>15 not have the vast increase in the number of ordinary</p> <p>16 people, 98 per cent of those who come to the PCC who</p> <p>17 seek help from that organisation. If it was attrition,</p> <p>18 we wouldn't have anybody.</p> <p>19 Q. Thank you. Can I ask you to look at the bottom of the</p> <p>20 page. In the middle of the page, he makes the point</p> <p>21 about independence or lack of it, which we've already</p> <p>22 addressed. Bottom of the page:</p> <p>23 "He also points to his success in having stamped out</p> <p>24 the use of the phrase 'illegal asylum seeker' ..."</p> <p>25 A. Yeah, yeah.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 Q. Page 4 of 4. Halfway through:</p> <p>2 "When Anthony Lester QC [of course, it was, I think,</p> <p>3 Lord Lester by then] asked him what had happened if</p> <p>4 Mosley had gone to the PCC instead, Meyer said he</p> <p>5 couldn't predict what the PCC would have said as it</p> <p>6 would have weighed up issues of privacy against freedom</p> <p>7 of expression."</p> <p>8 Well, that's correct, isn't it?</p> <p>9 A. Yeah.</p> <p>10 Q. "Lester said, just like [that should be</p> <p>11 'Mr Justice Eady', in fact]-- when I asked directly</p> <p>12 whether he agreed with Eady's judgment, he simply said</p> <p>13 that the matter would have led to a big debate amongst</p> <p>14 the commissioners."</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Is that what you said to --</p> <p>17 A. Absolutely. So I was less frank to him than I have been</p> <p>18 to you.</p> <p>19 Q. Fair enough.</p> <p>20 Can I ask you, please, about your time as press</p> <p>21 secretary to the then Prime Minister between 1994 and</p> <p>22 1996. Is this right: those were the days before you had</p> <p>23 a professional director of communications or spin</p> <p>24 doctor, whatever you want to call them? You had</p> <p>25 a distinguished civil servant to act as your press</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 Q. I understand that:</p> <p>2 "... but he's much more reticent when I ask him</p> <p>3 about his failures and his regrets."</p> <p>4 Was that a fair comment?</p> <p>5 A. Where is in? Which paragraph?</p> <p>6 Q. Bottom of the page.</p> <p>7 A. Oh, very bottom? I'm sorry, I'm on the wrong page.</p> <p>8 I do apologise. I was looking at the first page. Oh,</p> <p>9 yes. About his failures and his regrets?</p> <p>10 Q. Mm.</p> <p>11 A. Well, what is your question? Is your question: what are</p> <p>12 my failures and what are my regrets?</p> <p>13 Q. No, I didn't ask that question. It's whether Professor</p> <p>14 Greenslade has correctly characterised your position,</p> <p>15 which was reticence, on that occasion?</p> <p>16 A. I think I might -- sorry, I don't want to sound</p> <p>17 arrogant. Maybe I was scratching my head trying to</p> <p>18 think about failures and regrets. But I mean, it's</p> <p>19 a fair interview, this. It's a good interview in which</p> <p>20 he does a decent job and I'm not going to quibble with</p> <p>21 him at all on anything.</p> <p>22 Q. The final point is that Professor Greenslade asked you</p> <p>23 about the Mosley case. That's on the last page of this</p> <p>24 interview.</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 secretary; have I got that bit right?</p> <p>2 A. Yes. The practice was nearly always to have a civil</p> <p>3 servant doing the job in Downing Street. Not</p> <p>4 invariably.</p> <p>5 Q. You say in your statement -- you refer to the cringing</p> <p>6 of politicians to the press. Could you elaborate on</p> <p>7 that for us, please?</p> <p>8 A. Well, which way into that? Enormous attention was paid</p> <p>9 to editors of national newspapers -- this extended, to</p> <p>10 a degree, to regional editors, but not much -- and so</p> <p>11 a considerable effort went into courting them, bringing</p> <p>12 them around for privileged one-or-one briefings, for</p> <p>13 example. This was in the early 1990s. I believe that</p> <p>14 that practice has now expanded phenomenally over the</p> <p>15 years.</p> <p>16 So what it came down to was an exaggerated belief in</p> <p>17 the influence of the front page headline and commentary</p> <p>18 columns within. There was an absolute belief that</p> <p>19 newspapers and their editors could win or lose elections</p> <p>20 depending on how they reported the stories.</p> <p>21 I personally believe that that influence is gigantically</p> <p>22 exaggerated.</p> <p>23 So the result of that was we did pay -- we, in</p> <p>24 Downing Street, did pay a lot of attention, more than</p> <p>25 I thought was necessary, to trying to pull people on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

5 (Pages 17 to 20)

<p>1 board. And of course the more you do that, the more 2 demanding the editors and proprietors, in some cases, 3 become. So I was always a bit skeptical about that. 4 Q. Sorry? 5 A. So I was pretty skeptical about the power of newspapers. 6 Q. Were there particular organisations, editors and 7 proprietors who were especially courted? 8 A. Well, by the time I turned up in Downing Street in early 9 1994, the government of John Major was in some trouble, 10 and in the two years that I was there, that trouble got 11 worse. Polls got worse, new Labour leader made things 12 worse, and so the number of editors who could be counted 13 on to be, how can I put it, supportive, diminished with 14 every month that passed. So there was a natural 15 courting of those who supported the Prime Minister, to 16 make sure they stayed on board. 17 The issue was always: to what extent should one try 18 and turn newspapers and their editors who were hostile 19 to the government? My own personal belief was: if 20 you're going to go in for this kind of practice, you 21 should have everybody in. That is how things progressed 22 in my two years there. 23 Q. I think if I can put the question in a perhaps more 24 loaded way. Was there particular attention paid to the 25 Murdoch papers?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 "subterranean" -- which might be said to be 2 objectionable. I'm talking about private discussions 3 and dealings between the press and politicians, from the 4 press' perspective designed to influence policy. Did 5 that happen? 6 A. Yes, of course it did, because private contacts between 7 the politicians and the press are as old as sin itself. 8 Q. Yes. Well, we may be in the realm of sin, since it's 9 anti-democratic, but I must ask you to give us some 10 particular examples of this. Are you able to do that? 11 A. Private contacts? Well, over meals, for example. That 12 happened. 13 Q. What sort of things went on which you can assist the 14 Inquiry about, Sir Christopher? 15 A. I'm just trying to remember how many of these meals 16 I was present at. I mean, although I was the press 17 secretary, I was not omnipresent, not least because 18 I was a civil servant and not an employee of central 19 office. Now, we were in the curious situation of having 20 somebody out at central office -- Tim Collins, I think 21 it was -- who spoke for the party, and I spoke for the 22 government. 23 Now -- I know you're getting impatient. I can see 24 it coming. 25 Q. No, I'm just trying to drill down into what your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 A. No, not especially. There was an attempt to get 2 alongside Rupert Murdoch, but if my memory serves, it 3 failed utterly, because I think Rupert Murdoch 4 considered John Major to be a loser, and by all 5 accounts, Rupert Murdoch was not interested in losers. 6 I do recall an occasion when they met for dinner 7 when I was there -- I wasn't present at the dinner. 8 This was brokered by somebody else and it was, by all 9 accounts, not a success. 10 So the short answer to your question is: no, 11 actually, in practice. 12 Q. Do you feel that the press in any way influenced 13 government policy or tried to influence government 14 policy or tried to influence the selection of ministers 15 by the Prime Minister? 16 A. Oh yes, of course they do. I mean, that's part of the 17 partisan parcel, isn't it? If you are a partisan 18 newspaper and you have a line to peddle, you'll go for 19 policies, you'll go for people. 20 Q. No, my question, I think, was guilty of considerable 21 imprecision. There's nothing wrong with the press 22 publicly taking a particular position on a policy. 23 A. Of course not. 24 Q. I'm talking more about the behind-the-scenes activity -- 25 I think the term I used when opening the case was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 evidence is. 2 A. Well, I'm drilling. Right now I'm drilling! 3 Q. Okay. 4 A. And most of these occasions were considered as party 5 occasions to be organised by the party, rather than by 6 the civil servant government spokesman. It is part of 7 the rich tapestry of political life. It happens. It 8 happens to this day. It's happening now, maybe, over 9 lunch. No, it's a bit -- no, it could be. 10 No, you're not going to get rid of this. This 11 happens. Private contacts are there. Public contacts 12 are there. Private pressures, public pressures. 13 Q. I'm not seeking to question your evidence in any way, 14 Sir Christopher, but I think what we'd like to hear is 15 a concrete example, one that you can give, you feel, 16 within the bounds of propriety, going back now 15 plus 17 years. Can you share with us a particular example? 18 A. Of a private meeting between a Prime Minister and 19 a proprietor, for example? Is that -- 20 Q. Yes, in which there was an attempt to influence policy. 21 If you feel that you don't want to, fine, but if you can 22 give us an example, please do so. 23 A. I -- I think what I have to say to you, particularly as 24 I'm on oath, is I need notice of this question. But 25 I can remember people coming in.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 Q. Okay.</p> <p>2 A. I think, to be fair, I wasn't expecting that question,</p> <p>3 but you've lobbed it at me.</p> <p>4 Q. You're right, I didn't give you warning of it and given</p> <p>5 the nature of the question, I can see why it may not be</p> <p>6 appropriate for you to want to answer it without</p> <p>7 thinking very carefully --</p> <p>8 A. Quite.</p> <p>9 Q. -- about what you're going to say.</p> <p>10 You do say in your witness statement that the</p> <p>11 Prime Minister shelved a proposed privacy law, which</p> <p>12 I imagine hadn't got very far --</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. -- in terms of its formulation because, as you say, he</p> <p>15 had no wish to antagonise proprietors and editors who</p> <p>16 had set their face against a privacy tort.</p> <p>17 A. Mm.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you stand by that statement?</p> <p>19 A. Yeah. I mean, it is an accurate reflection of my</p> <p>20 memory, which I think on this is pretty accurate. Do</p> <p>21 you wish me to repeat this -- what I said in the witness</p> <p>22 statement?</p> <p>23 Q. Well, I don't think there's a need to repeat it. It's</p> <p>24 whether you want to elaborate it.</p> <p>25 A. No, I don't think so. This thing had been rattling</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 transgression."</p> <p>2 A. I do.</p> <p>3 Q. Then you said:</p> <p>4 "Most people agree with that."</p> <p>5 And then you said, in answer to one MP's question --</p> <p>6 the question was:</p> <p>7 "You're going to continue to encourage apologies to</p> <p>8 be much firmer?"</p> <p>9 "Answer: Yes, otherwise it's ridiculous. They</p> <p>10 should be, as I said, at least as prominent as the</p> <p>11 original transgression."</p> <p>12 Then in answer to a point about front-page splashes,</p> <p>13 as it was put, you said:</p> <p>14 "What I'm saying is this: if we go to formal</p> <p>15 adjudication, you come out with a formal adjudication</p> <p>16 and there has been some hideous transgression on the</p> <p>17 front page, then I would expect the adjudication to be</p> <p>18 published, or at least to start on the front page,</p> <p>19 depending on how long the adjudication was going to be.</p> <p>20 I think that would be entirely reasonable."</p> <p>21 Is it your evidence to the Inquiry, so we're clear</p> <p>22 about it, that those notions were carried through in</p> <p>23 practice between 2003 and 2009?</p> <p>24 A. With difficulty.</p> <p>25 Q. Right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 around Whitehall for god knows how long, a draft White</p> <p>2 Paper. I inherited it from my predecessor, Gus</p> <p>3 O'Donnell, and it had manifold problems. Problems of</p> <p>4 drafting, of concept, of defining public interest -- all</p> <p>5 kinds of problems in there, and I think it reached</p> <p>6 a pitch where the Prime Minister anyway had lost</p> <p>7 interest in something he'd been quite keen on, so I was</p> <p>8 told before I arrived in Downing Street, and lost</p> <p>9 interest, and anyway thought the moment had passed and</p> <p>10 he did not want to antagonise people.</p> <p>11 Q. Sir Christopher, I have been asked to put to you one</p> <p>12 question in relation to the evidence you gave to the</p> <p>13 Select Committee back in 2003.</p> <p>14 A. Yeah.</p> <p>15 Q. It was on 21 May 2003. So this, as it were, is your</p> <p>16 first outing to the Select Committee.</p> <p>17 A. Yeah.</p> <p>18 Q. In the context of apologies and prominence of</p> <p>19 publication, you said a number of things, all consistent</p> <p>20 with each other. You said:</p> <p>21 "These things ..."</p> <p>22 That's to say the publication of the correction or</p> <p>23 the negative adjudication.</p> <p>24 A. Yeah.</p> <p>25 Q. "... should be at least as prominent as the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 A. With difficulty. You referred earlier on, Mr Jay, to --</p> <p>2 you suggested I was rash, so early in my career as</p> <p>3 chairman, making a number of ex cathedra statements,</p> <p>4 having had very little experience in the job, and</p> <p>5 I suspect that applies to those remarks in conveying the</p> <p>6 optimism that I seemed to express that I could achieve</p> <p>7 this very soon.</p> <p>8 In fact, over those six years, we did reach</p> <p>9 a position where we had front-page tasters for</p> <p>10 adjudications, which we'd never had before, and I have</p> <p>11 referred already in this hearing to the way in which</p> <p>12 adjudications, apologies and all that sort of thing</p> <p>13 moved up towards the single digit pages of the</p> <p>14 newspaper.</p> <p>15 So there was progress, but against that rather --</p> <p>16 those rather absolutist statements that you've just</p> <p>17 quoted to me, it fell short of what I aspired to.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. Of course, the difference is that whereas your</p> <p>19 pronouncements on Section 55 were properly understood</p> <p>20 ex cathedra, this was a pronouncement which I think, to</p> <p>21 use the Latin, was ex curial, because this did fall</p> <p>22 precisely within your jurisdiction, didn't it?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, it did, but the difference between my ex curial</p> <p>24 statement and my ex cathedra statement was two years,</p> <p>25 and two years is a long time in the life of the PCC.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 MR JAY: Yes. Thank you very much, Sir Christopher.  2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could I just ask one question? It  3 arises out of the evidence that you gave in relation to  4 the political sphere. I'm not concerned about the  5 extent to which an editor or proprietor wished to seek  6 to persuade the government or politicians of any  7 persuasion to a particular policy for which they were  8 advocates, but I am interested in a slightly different  9 type of policy, and that is the extent to which the  10 press used their links in to government and politicians  11 to affect policy insofar as it affected them. That  12 might be for business reasons. It might be for their  13 own views as to privacy or whatever. Privacy is one  14 example. Another might be in relation to the business  15 interests of a particular newspaper group. Because that  16 happening sub rosa, under the surface, may give rise to  17 slightly greater concern than editors pushing policies  18 for which they were well known in their newspapers.  19 A. You see -- yeah, I see exactly what you're saying,  20 my Lord. The first thing to say is that politicians  21 should be grown-ups. They know with whom they are  22 supping and they know the boundaries of what is  23 permissible and what is not permissible. So they have  24 to make a decision -- they, the politicians, have to  25 make a decision about how close or how not close they're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 A. I know, but I can't think of anything else which is more  2 to your point.  3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's entirely fair enough, because  4 whereas it's not surprising that politicians may meet  5 editors in the same way they meet industrialists or  6 economists or any group of people and expect to be the  7 subject of lobbying, there is somebody there to keep an  8 eye on what's going on and report it, namely the press.  9 But that may not work in the example that I've just  10 given.  11 A. It may not work, although considering how editors watch  12 each other like hawks, if there appears to be some kind  13 of advantage accruing to one newspaper group rather than  14 to another, then you might it find some kind of  15 balancing position taken by -- how can I put it? -- the  16 disfavoured bit of the press.  17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: If that's how it happens. Of course  18 if the general line would be supportive, then it might  19 just disappear under the surface.  20 A. It could do. I mean, I can't -- I can't say that that  21 couldn't happen. I mean, I think the BSKyB thing was  22 quite interesting in this respect, in which the press  23 split on the issue.  24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. I think it might be that we'll  25 learn a bit more about that in due course.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 going to be with whichever newspaper group, be it the  2 editor or proprietor. That's the first thing to say,  3 and I say it as a general proposition.  4 In my own external experience, looking back to those  5 two years when I was working with John Major, actually,  6 the only subject I can remember in which I was, to  7 a degree, directly involved was on the matter of  8 a possible privacy law. Before I was appointed -- yes,  9 before I took up the job of press secretary, somebody  10 from News International came out to see me while I was  11 still in the embassy in Washington and said, "Please, we  12 don't like a privacy law", and I said, "I haven't even  13 got my feet under the desk yet. I hear what you say but  14 we'll see."  15 So the press at that time was lobbying very hard not  16 to have a privacy law. Now, that would have been  17 a factor in the final calculations by the Prime Minister  18 about whether or not it was wise to go ahead with  19 a privacy law, but in my own view, looking back on it,  20 the intrinsic difficulties of drafting that White  21 Paper -- leave aside the attitude of editors and  22 proprietors -- was already sufficient to kill the  23 project.  24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's a slightly different point, as  25 I'm sure you'll appreciate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 All right, thank you very much indeed.  2 A. Thank you, my Lord.  3 MR JAY: Thank you. The next witness is Lord Grade, please.  4 LORD MICHAEL IAN GRADE (sworn)  5 Questions by MR JAY  6 MR JAY: Your full name?  7 A. Michael Ian Grade.  8 Q. Thank you very much. We're not going to need,  9 fortunately, any of those documents around you; only  10 your witness statement, which you've given us. It's  11 dated 15 September of last year, and you've signed it.  12 This is your evidence to the Inquiry.  13 You've also provided us with a CV. Your career in  14 broadcasting is well-known, of course. You were  15 chairman of the BBC for two and a half years between  16 2004 and 2006. Then you were appointed executive  17 chairman of ITV where you stayed for about three years;  18 is that correct?  19 A. Correct.  20 Q. Then you moved on to various companies, and in January  21 of last year, you went to the House of Lords as Lord  22 Grade of Yarmouth, and you take the Conservative whip;  23 is that correct?  24 A. Correct.  25 Q. I'm going to ask you some general questions which are</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)



<p>1 targeted less at your witness statement but more general 2 issues. Can I ask you, please, about your appointment 3 to the PCC? Can you remember when that was, please? 4 A. I think it was May last year. 5 Q. The appointment process, obviously a lot of it you don't 6 know about, but you do know about the interview, 7 obviously. Were you asked about your commitment to 8 freedom of the press and the principles of 9 self-regulation? 10 A. I was asked whether I supported statutory regulation or 11 not, and I outlined some reasons why I didn't favour 12 statutory regulation. 13 Q. We're going to cover those reasons in a moment. 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. Were you asked about the need or desirability to balance 16 the interests of free speech, including the democratic 17 constitutional right of the press to express themselves 18 freely, against private rights of individuals? 19 A. I don't recall being asked that question at all, no. 20 Q. Okay. You've mentioned statutory regulation in the 21 context, I think, of not agreeing with statutory 22 regulation. Can we elaborate why you take that 23 position, please, Lord Grade? 24 A. I don't take the view that statutory regulation would 25 be -- would have a chilling effect on investigative Page 33</p>	<p>1 The same complaint, because there's a joint 2 jurisdiction here, went to Ofcom, and Ofcom came to the 3 same conclusion, but it took them, I think, three 4 months. It certainly took them many months to go 5 through their processes because they have a statutory 6 obligation, and they are a statutory body. 7 So I worry about the time -- when people complain 8 about what's written about them, what's published about 9 them, they want speedy -- they want a speedy response 10 and a speedy redress, and I think the statutory 11 framework would slow that rather unpleasantly, and I'm 12 a sceptic. 13 The second reason I would give is I would be very 14 worried about a statutory body taking over that function 15 of the PCC which is extraordinarily effective, which is 16 its ex-ante intervention prior to publication and in 17 fact stopping publication, which the staff of the PCC 18 are absolutely brilliant at, and I would worry about 19 a statutory and politically appointed body having the 20 powers to stop publication. That would worry me 21 considerably. 22 Q. Yes. Can you explain, Lord Grade, why a statutory 23 scheme created imposed or created by legislation would 24 be inconsistent with the PCC carrying out its 25 anti-harassment and equivalent work? Page 35</p>
<p>1 journalism. Investigative journalism is alive and well 2 in broadcast television, which is heavily regulated, 3 licensed and so on. I don't take that view at all, and 4 we are happily past the days when the politicians of the 5 day used to pack the boards of the regulators with their 6 friends and supporters, such as my time as a controller 7 of BBC One when, in the days of then Mrs Thatcher's 8 government, where the board of the BBC were packed with 9 her friends. 10 We've moved on from then. We have a Nolan process. 11 We have a political culture of much more independent 12 regulation, which I think has been very, very healthy. 13 So those are not my objections. 14 My principal objections to statutory regulation: 15 once you have statutory regulation, you have the 16 prospect of judicial review post-judgment, and at that 17 point, that means that the regulator has to be painfully 18 methodical in its processes in order to ensure that it 19 isn't judicially reviewed. That slows the process up 20 and means -- I'll give you an example. When the BBC got 21 into trouble over the Jonathan Ross/Brand broadcast, the 22 BBC Trust, not being a statutory body, was able to send 23 for the Director General, sort the matter out, get 24 a correction and an apology all done within a space of 25 I think a week or ten days. Page 34</p>	<p>1 A. The worry -- I hope I'm on the same point here. My 2 worry would be that the influence that the PCC currently 3 has to stop publication, to stop harassment, could be 4 abused by a statutory body with -- you know, if it was 5 captured politically in some way or another, could be -- 6 it could be -- stopping publication of a story could be 7 misunderstood, and I don't think the public would have 8 confidence in a politically appointed body having the 9 powers to stop publication. 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Are we using the concept of statutory 11 regulation in slightly different ways here? I can 12 easily visualise precisely what is you're talking about. 13 If you had a statutory regime which set up the whole 14 thing and sought to control the whole thing, that indeed 15 could give rise to that risk. 16 But how about a slightly different approach -- and 17 I'll give the standard warning that I've not got there, 18 I'm not in this position, but I am just exploring what 19 you're saying -- that recognises the existence of 20 a body, maybe to give some carrots for membership, but 21 leaves appointment, the management and the adjudicative 22 responsibilities entirely to that body and does not 23 prescribe approaches but leaves it to the body, so that 24 there it is a framework -- but only a framework -- which 25 allows an independent body, independently appointed -- Page 36</p>

<p>1 and there are lots of bodies that fit into that 2 category -- to do the work in a more structured way than 3 is possible when it is purely consensual? 4 A. I have no doubt that if the structure that you have 5 described, sir, were to go into Parliament at one end 6 and come out exactly in that form as an Act, then 7 I think that could indeed be workable, and I'm a great 8 believer in incentives for publishers to be members of 9 PCC2 or whatever it's going to be called, and being part 10 of a recognised body that, let's say, judges could take 11 into account in a case involving a newspaper. If 12 a newspaper goes down on a particular case, the fact 13 that they're a fully paid up member of a functioning and 14 statutorily recognised PCC and so on, I think that would 15 be very, very helpful. 16 What worries me is the parliamentary process of 17 getting a structure such as you described through both 18 Houses of Parliament. 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I must let Mr Jay continue and pick 20 it up at the end, but at the moment, certainly I was 21 very concerned to ensure that there was a political 22 consensus for the work of this Inquiry, because it 23 simply couldn't work if there wasn't. I have not seen 24 anything to suggest that the events of the last few 25 months, as this Inquiry has proceeded, has diminished</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 been talking about the great confidence that the 2 Ipsos MORI poll showed, sitting here for two months -- 3 I appreciate I've had a wide range of people who have 4 expressed concerns, from the celebrities to people who 5 are not at all celebrities -- doesn't necessarily give 6 me quite the confidence that Sir Christopher has, and 7 I hope that that's not unfair to the PCC or to anybody 8 else. 9 MR JAY: Lord Grade, one argument which is frequently 10 employed against statutory regulation in the context of 11 the press, in contra-distinction to the broadcasting 12 media -- 13 A. Forgive me, when you say "statutory regulation", we're 14 talking about a more interventionist model than that 15 which his Lordship has described just now? 16 Q. Probably, yes. 17 A. Yes, okay. 18 Q. -- is that statutory regulation in that sense is 19 objectionable because it might prevent the press from 20 being partisan, which is its right. Of course, 21 broadcasters have a statutory duty not to be partisan. 22 Do you give any weight to that argument? 23 A. None at all. 24 Q. And why not? 25 A. Broadcasters are licensed. They are licensed in order</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 that broad consensus. What happens thereafter, after 2 I've produced a report, may actually be just as much 3 a matter for you, wearing a different hat, as anybody 4 else. 5 A. Mm. I understand that. I understand that. 6 I think the devil of the template that you've just 7 described -- I won't say "recommended" but described as 8 an option -- the devil of that will undoubtedly be in 9 the detail, but statutory recognition of a -- provided 10 that the PCC2 is entirely seen to be and operated on 11 a basis that is entirely independent, both of 12 government/Parliament and also of the proprietors and 13 publishers, seems to me a very important way forward. 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Can I say -- and I suppose I have to 15 be careful about this too but I'm not going to be too 16 careful -- with that proposition I entirely agree, 17 subject to anything I might hear over the next few 18 months, of course. 19 A. Indeed. 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But I am not in any sense encouraged 21 to believe that the government, politicians of any 22 persuasion, the legislature, the judiciary or indeed the 23 proprietors of the press should have ownership of the 24 scheme, because it only works if the public have 25 confidence in it, and although Sir Christopher has just</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 to give them access to a nationally owned resource, the 2 spectrum that belongs to the nation. They pay for that 3 in various ways and they are regulated accordingly. 4 Now, on that primary requirement, to be impartial 5 and not to be partisan like newspapers, where there are 6 no barriers to entry, we are in -- sorry, I'm rushing 7 through this. There are no barriers to entry today to 8 broadcasting, really, because the spectrum is almost 9 infinite, the spectrum available. It wasn't in the days 10 when broadcasting regulation was first put in place and 11 the requirement for impartiality -- on that washing line 12 of impartiality was hung taste and decency, family 13 watersheds, producer guidelines, journalist 14 guidelines -- these have built up because of caselaw 15 over decade and decades, so we are where we are as 16 a part of history. 17 For newspapers to feel that their ability to be 18 partisan as a result of statutory regulation without 19 statutory obligation to be impartial seems to me -- just 20 doesn't hold water. There is a statutory obligation on 21 broadcasters to be politically impartial and 22 independent. 23 Q. Okay. Now the issue of sanctions. Would you be in 24 favour of a new body, a successor body, having what some 25 have called more substantial teeth, including the power</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

10 (Pages 37 to 40)

<p>1 to enact fines?</p> <p>2 A. I think that's essential for a regime of</p> <p>3 quasi-regulation or regulation, whatever you want to</p> <p>4 call it, to have visible, tangible, painful means of</p> <p>5 a sanction, yes. Once you give the newspaper -- the</p> <p>6 PCC2 the powers of sanction, how do you then keep the</p> <p>7 publishers inside the tent? The Northern &amp; Shell issue.</p> <p>8 That's a difficult one, which I think you can only solve</p> <p>9 by creating means by which it is also in their interest</p> <p>10 to remain inside the tent.</p> <p>11 Q. Yes, and by "interest", that would include or might be</p> <p>12 primarily commercial interest, it may be seen more</p> <p>13 widely. How would one create the necessary carrot, as</p> <p>14 it were, to keep people who might have a tendency to</p> <p>15 want to stay out within the tent?</p> <p>16 A. If I was a publisher and I was in court -- let's take</p> <p>17 a defamation case. I'll declare an interest in a second</p> <p>18 on that. I've sat on the all parliamentary</p> <p>19 pre-legislative scrutiny committee on the reform of the</p> <p>20 Defamation Act, so just to declare an interest there.</p> <p>21 But let's say a newspaper is in court and there's</p> <p>22 a libel case, and let's say the newspaper goes down and</p> <p>23 the judge at the end of that says, "Look, I've looked at</p> <p>24 this. You're a member of the PCC. You're a good</p> <p>25 member, in good standing. You consulted -- you know,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 a firmer footing than presently and I'd be hugely</p> <p>2 supportive if I could understand, at the end of the day,</p> <p>3 if there was a breach of that contract, what the redress</p> <p>4 was. What are the damages? What redress can -- if the</p> <p>5 PCC sued News International for not publishing</p> <p>6 a retraction or an apology -- if it just refused and</p> <p>7 decided it was going to walk away, what is the legal</p> <p>8 sanction? What -- can you get specific performance?</p> <p>9 What -- I'm not quite sure. A contract is terrific, but</p> <p>10 if there's a breach, how does that get resolved in a way</p> <p>11 that would prohibit or inhibit a breach? That's what</p> <p>12 I need to understand. I haven't quite got there yet.</p> <p>13 Q. As a matter of general principle -- this would need to</p> <p>14 be thought through -- I don't think there's any</p> <p>15 impediment for the PCC itself getting an order for</p> <p>16 specific performance against the recalcitrant newspaper</p> <p>17 who fails to publish the adjudication or fails to pay</p> <p>18 the fine. You could improve it, I suppose, by having an</p> <p>19 express term of the contract which recognises that there</p> <p>20 would be a right to obtain specific performance in the</p> <p>21 PCC.</p> <p>22 A. Fine.</p> <p>23 Q. But to be absolutely clear, the ramifications of this</p> <p>24 have not been fully considered. I'm just expressing</p> <p>25 them as --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 you went to your lawyers, you did everything you could</p> <p>2 at the time. Actually, I'm finding against you, but</p> <p>3 I take it that you're a responsible newspaper because of</p> <p>4 your attitude to the PCC2, and therefore the damages --</p> <p>5 I'm going to mitigate the damages", or -- I'm not</p> <p>6 a lawyer so I'm not quite sure --</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: We'd do it the other way around.</p> <p>8 We'd say if you were not, then you were at risk of</p> <p>9 higher damages.</p> <p>10 A. Absolutely, absolutely, and I think that would be</p> <p>11 a hugely important incentive, a carrot -- if you're</p> <p>12 going to give PCC2 the stick, there ought to be a carrot</p> <p>13 as well, and I think it would be well worth newspapers</p> <p>14 remaining signed up as good members in good standing of</p> <p>15 the PCC, if that was going to be taken into</p> <p>16 consideration if they did go down, even on cases of</p> <p>17 public interest, privacy, defamation and so on. I think</p> <p>18 that would be a huge incentive.</p> <p>19 MR JAY: Instead of some sort of statutory regulatory model,</p> <p>20 which I know, for the reasons you've given, you don't</p> <p>21 espouse, I think you favour some sort of contractual</p> <p>22 model; is that correct?</p> <p>23 A. I think that's worthy of exploring. The devil again</p> <p>24 will be in the detail. The only issue that concerns me</p> <p>25 about the contractual model -- I think it does put it on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 A. No, but I --</p> <p>2 Q. -- probable positions.</p> <p>3 A. I do think the contractual relationship between PCC2 and</p> <p>4 the publishers is a very attractive one, because it</p> <p>5 creates clarity.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It doesn't permit you to have</p> <p>7 a carrot, though.</p> <p>8 A. No, it would have to go alongside the carrot, I think.</p> <p>9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's quite difficult to see how you</p> <p>10 would define it because a carrot could only be justified</p> <p>11 by law.</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Contrary to popular opinion, judges</p> <p>14 don't actually simply decide what they want to decide.</p> <p>15 They follow the law. So once there is a law that</p> <p>16 provides you with any sort of carrot, there has to be</p> <p>17 a definition of who gets the carrot, and to define who</p> <p>18 gets the carrot has itself complexities if the only body</p> <p>19 that is entitled to the carrot is bound together solely</p> <p>20 in a private contract.</p> <p>21 A. I see.</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, that's a question which I'm</p> <p>23 really asking, and you say, "Well, thank you very much,</p> <p>24 I'm not the right person to ask."</p> <p>25 A. Indeed. I'll look to my learned friends for expensive</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 advice on that one.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, that's fair enough. I'm very</p> <p>3 cheap.</p> <p>4 A. I'll take the fifth amendment on that.</p> <p>5 MR JAY: Lord Grade, you've been a member of the PCC for</p> <p>6 seven or eight months, if I've added it up correctly.</p> <p>7 Are there any insights you can bring to the Inquiry on</p> <p>8 the experience you've built up over that period?</p> <p>9 A. A few quick points.</p> <p>10 Firstly, the thing that surprised me the most, which</p> <p>11 I learnt at the interview, was the extent to which there</p> <p>12 was ex-ante intervention by the PCC to stop some of the</p> <p>13 worst excesses. That really surprised me. Seeing that</p> <p>14 in action amongst the amazing staff of the PCC has been</p> <p>15 very encouraging to me.</p> <p>16 I joined because I thought -- I applied and I felt</p> <p>17 that the direction that Baroness Buscombe was taking the</p> <p>18 PCC in with independent appointments and a majority of</p> <p>19 independent people of real standing on the PCC was</p> <p>20 something I felt I could sign up to. I certainly</p> <p>21 wouldn't have signed up years ago when it was kind of</p> <p>22 not quite as independent. That appealed to me a great</p> <p>23 deal. I thought it was the right direction it was going</p> <p>24 in.</p> <p>25 On the negative side, I think that -- I think there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 A. It's barely resourced to do what it does now. It's been</p> <p>2 starved of rations, really. I think it gets a minuscule</p> <p>3 increase each year, which is hard-fought and hard-won.</p> <p>4 The staff work ridiculous hours. Bear in mind that</p> <p>5 they're getting calls from editors or night editors and</p> <p>6 news editors at 11, 12 o'clock at night, all across the</p> <p>7 weekend. It's extraordinary what they do. They're</p> <p>8 underpaid, overworked, overstretched, and the newspapers</p> <p>9 do not recognise the work that they do, and the budget</p> <p>10 is ridiculous.</p> <p>11 Q. Are you able to assist the Inquiry with some sense of</p> <p>12 the dynamic of PCC meetings, particularly when</p> <p>13 adjudications are being discussed? Is there any sense</p> <p>14 in which the editors line up on one side and the</p> <p>15 independent public members on another side? Could you</p> <p>16 help us with a flavour of --</p> <p>17 A. I've never experienced that. I must have attended now</p> <p>18 eight or nine meetings. Where a case is going against</p> <p>19 a newspaper, where the recommendation of the officers is</p> <p>20 that there's been a clear breach of the code --</p> <p>21 such-and-such a clause in the code, the editorial</p> <p>22 figures on the board, who are in a minority, are the</p> <p>23 first to speak out in condemnation and say, "I can't</p> <p>24 believe they did that, that was a --" you know, it's</p> <p>25 a very, very honest debate. A very, very honest debate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 isn't enough -- there should be total separation between</p> <p>2 the finances of the PCC and the operation of the PCC,</p> <p>3 and it should be for the independent members -- it</p> <p>4 leaves the question open as to who appoints them -- it's</p> <p>5 for the independent members of PCC1 and PCC2 to decide</p> <p>6 who they appoint and to be part of the process in</p> <p>7 appointing the chairman and so on and so on, which it</p> <p>8 isn't at the moment.</p> <p>9 And the fact that PressBoF controls the purse</p> <p>10 strings leaves them in the position where -- which they</p> <p>11 either do or they don't abuse -- I don't have enough</p> <p>12 experience yet, but it leaves them in the position where</p> <p>13 they can have a huge influence on the constitution and</p> <p>14 the running of the organisation. I don't think that's</p> <p>15 healthy.</p> <p>16 So there has to be complete separation. The</p> <p>17 publishers are going to have to pay for the new body,</p> <p>18 but they must be more than arm's length away from</p> <p>19 influencing appointments and so on.</p> <p>20 Q. In your view, from what you've been able to observe,</p> <p>21 Lord Grade, is the PCC resourced to do more than that</p> <p>22 which it does now, namely to deal with complaints, to</p> <p>23 provide valuable, as you've explained, ex-ante advice</p> <p>24 and interpret compensation and the add-on activities we</p> <p>25 have also heard evidence about?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 Anybody with an interest, obviously, leaves the room at</p> <p>2 that point, if they're part of a group and it's one of</p> <p>3 their newspapers in the group, whether it's a local</p> <p>4 newspaper or national newspaper.</p> <p>5 No, the debates are very, very, very fair. There</p> <p>6 are debates about the wording and quite often -- I can't</p> <p>7 think of an example at the moment because we get papers</p> <p>8 that thicken every week (indicates). There are examples</p> <p>9 where editorial figures around that table have</p> <p>10 strengthened the criticism in the adjudication.</p> <p>11 So I don't have any issue in that regard whatsoever,</p> <p>12 and I wouldn't -- personally speaking, I wouldn't be</p> <p>13 there if that was the case. I wouldn't stay there if</p> <p>14 that was the case.</p> <p>15 Q. Has there been discussion on more general issues of</p> <p>16 policy or themes which have come out which have caused</p> <p>17 any controversy?</p> <p>18 A. I think -- no, I don't -- not controversy. Good, honest</p> <p>19 debate, robust debate, sometimes ending -- and I think</p> <p>20 this is a positive, because in my experience of</p> <p>21 broadcasting, the producer guidelines and the statutory</p> <p>22 codes that the regulators are required to produce, in</p> <p>23 the light of experience and case law as programmes come</p> <p>24 and go, get updated and amended for the purpose of</p> <p>25 clarity or covering things that people haven't thought</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

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<p>1 of before and so on and so on. Quite often those 2 debates end up with -- it's possible they get passed 3 back by the Commission to the Code Committee to look at 4 and clarify and rewrite the code. So it's a very 5 effective forum.</p> <p>6 MR JAY: Yes. Thank you very much, Lord Grade.</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I have a couple of more points to 8 raise.</p> <p>9 I'm interested that you said you were asked about 10 your belief in self-regulation but not asked about the 11 balance between Article 10 and Article 8. You 12 understand what I mean by that?</p> <p>13 A. An individual's right to privacy versus the public's 14 right to know?</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Correct.</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Because isn't part of your job, your 18 adjudicative role, entirely based to balancing freedom 19 of expression against privacy or similar rights? Is 20 that a fair analysis of your adjudicative role?</p> <p>21 A. Absolutely. When I -- let me answer, if I may, the 22 point about the interview. I think my track record and 23 my career has been as an editor-in-chief of a number of 24 broadcasting organisations with huge editorial 25 responsibility, and therefore I think the interview</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 A. Yes, exactly, yes. Yes.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I don't think that anybody would say 3 "Oh yes, I'm in favour of statutory regulation, full 4 stop." It is not a binary question. It's not statute or 5 self. I mean, I might be interested in your view, 6 because the great value you bring to this Inquiry is 7 that you've seen all the perspectives. In your 8 experience, is what the PCC does truly regulating at all 9 as opposed to providing a very sophisticated complaints 10 mechanism?</p> <p>11 A. I think the PCC, as it exists today, is just not 12 resourced to do any more than be a disputes resolution 13 vehicle, which it does extremely well. It's just not 14 resourced to do any more, and I think that one of the 15 problems with the PCC is that you'll get different 16 opinions from different people as to what they think its 17 role has been and what its remit has been.</p> <p>18 It doesn't have the powers -- no, it doesn't have 19 the resources. You don't need the powers. If you want 20 to go and investigate something, you ought to be able to 21 go and do it, but if you haven't got the resources to do 22 it, you just can't do it.</p> <p>23 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You can ask your editors to provide 24 the information.</p> <p>25 A. You certainly can, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 panel would have known that I'm pretty well -- my life 2 has been doing that. I've been doing that as a career 3 for 30, 40, years.</p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p>5 A. When I enter the Commission board meeting, I always feel 6 I am there to represent the public, the public as 7 potential victims of press intrusion, et cetera, and 8 misrepresentation and so on, but also representing the 9 public with their right to know and freedom of 10 expression and so on, and you are having to balance that 11 all the time. Every case is different.</p> <p>12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's the point. That's the job.</p> <p>13 A. Exactly.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Equally, one might say that asking 15 you about what you felt about independent or 16 self-regulation may be the subject of the criticism that 17 you're being asked whether you're "one of us", as 18 opposed to taking a critical look at the system that 19 you're going to join to see whether it's at very best 20 model that could be achieved. Do you see the point?</p> <p>21 A. I think that's a fair criticism. I can't answer it, 22 because had I answered that I was in favour of statutory 23 regulation, I'm not sure where that debate would have 24 gone at the interview.</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But that's the point, isn't it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And wait and see if they say no.</p> <p>2 A. But have you got the people to process that information?</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand.</p> <p>4 A. And have you got the resources to pay them? The answer 5 is: no, you haven't.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand the point.</p> <p>7 I entirely agree with you that, for example, ex-ante 8 intervention, as you call it, and the anti-harassment 9 policy are extremely valuable tools to try and prevent 10 problems arising. But if the PCC is not resourced to do 11 the job that the public expect it to do, then the 12 question arises how one configures an operation so that 13 it can do the job that the public want it to do and 14 equally bring everybody who ought to be involved into 15 the tent.</p> <p>16 A. It comes down to money, doesn't it, really? The 17 newspapers are -- you know, it's an ex-growth sector of 18 our economy. They are shrinking. Newspaper readership 19 is falling. There's an intense fight for market share 20 and share of advertising and so on, which in my view is 21 only going to intensify the competition, and the 22 temptation that goes with the competition, which is how 23 we've got to where we are today. So I think the need 24 for your Inquiry and your recommendations has never been 25 greater.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

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<p>1 I mean, there are some people who would say that in 2 the light of the criminal proceedings and so on that are 3 going on in another part of this problem, that will be 4 enough to deter newspapers. Deter individuals, I should 5 say. That may well be enough in the short term, but in 6 the long term --</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: The trouble is the history doesn't 8 support --</p> <p>9 A. Correct.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- that view, and you may have heard 11 me say, because I have said before, that I am very keen 12 that the industry take the advantage that the Inquiry 13 provides to ensure that there is a system that the 14 public will accept, and not just to attempt to, as it 15 were, moderate me as much as possible simply to allow 16 business to carry on as usual.</p> <p>17 A. Mm.</p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Can I ask another question?</p> <p>19 A. Please.</p> <p>20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You've been quite clear and 21 forthright about PressBoF, which I understand. Could 22 I ask for your view about the risk of public 23 acceptability, and indeed the desirability, of there 24 being so many serving editors, both on its board and 25 entirely responsible for the code.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 sure they get good input. I had a former journalist, 2 a former editor of ITN as a governor of the BBC when 3 I was chairman of the governors there. It was a great 4 help in deciding some of the complaints and so on, the 5 issues and the codes that we operated. I think you can 6 get that information quite easily and produce a code 7 that everybody feels is relevant to the industry today 8 without having serving editors.</p> <p>9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You see, one of the concerns is that 10 the same names, or certainly the same titles, are there 11 or thereabouts and have always been there or 12 thereabouts, which creates a risk of concern.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I say no more, and I'm not saying 15 anything at all adverse about the people who actually 16 hold those jobs. I'm not being --</p> <p>17 A. I can give you, from my own personal experience, 18 assurance that, let us say, Paul Dacre and the 19 programme -- he is not rewriting the code to enable the 20 Daily Mail to get up to any mischief.</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, no, and Mr Dacre, who has been 22 as you know, the subject of some criticism by some 23 witnesses, equally was the very first to stand up at one 24 of my seminars and say, "Wherever we are now, we have to 25 move on", and I applaud that, as I have done, clearly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 A. I think it's a problem more of perception than it is 2 of -- in reality. I think a lot of criticism of the PCC 3 has been attached to the position that you describe, and 4 if we are in the business of increasing public 5 confidence and political confidence and judicial 6 confidence in the PCC, PCC1 or 2, then it may be that 7 you're going to have to make it a rule that you can't 8 have serving editors.</p> <p>9 Now, the gap you leave there -- this is 10 a fast-moving business -- is the day-to-day knowledge of 11 an operating professional in drafting the codes, but it 12 shouldn't be impossible. The ITC, the IBA before and 13 the ITA before that, and now Ofcom, they produce codes 14 based on precedent they've built up over years. They 15 are informed by producers and editors and 16 programme-makers and the experience over the years, and 17 they get adjusted and refined. So there is huge input. 18 Just because you don't have a serving editor on the Code 19 Committee doesn't mean you can't consult and get 20 evidence from them and drafting suggestions and so on. 21 So you get their input another way, but I think the 22 public would have much more confidence in the code.</p> <p>23 The code at Ofcom -- the codes at Ofcom are drawn up 24 by the Ofcom, the board of Ofcom. Occasionally they 25 have retired journalists on the board of Ofcom. I'm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 So I'm not being personal about any of this.</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But I am trying to look at it from 4 a systemic position, because if one is trying to get 5 a system that is seen to be credible and in which 6 everybody can have confidence, then it's quite important 7 that it isn't personal, that it doesn't depend upon one 8 human being, because when that human being moves on, the 9 thing can crumble. So one has to make it sufficiently 10 robust that it's beyond all that.</p> <p>11 A. I agree with that entirely, and I think when I talked 12 about the independence of the Commission, Commission 2, 13 whatever it is, I think that has to go right through the 14 constitution of the new body, including Code Committees 15 or any of the subcommittees. I think serving editors 16 and proprietors have to be seen to be outside. 17 Contributing, being consulted and so on, but not inside.</p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Lord Grade, thank you very, very much 19 indeed. Thank you.</p> <p>20 MR JAY: Shall we take our five minutes?</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I'm very sorry, yes, we'll take 22 five minutes.</p> <p>23 (3.24 pm)</p> <p>24 (A short break)</p> <p>25 (15.32 pm)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

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<p>1 DAVID JAMES FLETCHER LORD HUNT OF WIRRAL (sworn)</p> <p>2 Questions by MR JAY</p> <p>3 MR JAY: Lord Hunt, please sit down and make yourself</p> <p>4 comfortable. Your full name, please, for the Inquiry?</p> <p>5 A. David James Fletcher Lord Hunt of Wirral.</p> <p>6 Q. Thank you very much. You have kindly provided the</p> <p>7 Inquiry with a witness statement which is signed and</p> <p>8 dated by you on 12 January this year, and there's also</p> <p>9 a statement of truth. So this is your formal evidence</p> <p>10 to the Inquiry; is that right?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, it is.</p> <p>12 Q. Thank you very much.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Lord Hunt, I think it's right --</p> <p>14 I think there's a difference between us of seven years,</p> <p>15 and I must confess that I have absolutely no</p> <p>16 recollection at all, but I am reliably informed that we</p> <p>17 attended the same school, if that matters to anybody,</p> <p>18 the school being in Liverpool.</p> <p>19 A. I'm very proud that we both went to Liverpool College</p> <p>20 and I have a clear recollection of that experience</p> <p>21 but --</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I recollect the experience.</p> <p>23 MR JAY: Lord Hunt, you have been the chairman of the PCC</p> <p>24 since 17 October of last year, so that gives you only</p> <p>25 three months' experience, as it were, in the saddle. In</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 states that the candidate must be committed to the</p> <p>2 principles of press freedom and to self-regulation, and</p> <p>3 presumably it follows that you are committed to those</p> <p>4 principles?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. May I just point out that I joined my present law</p> <p>6 firm in 1965 and I've been a partner since 1969. So it</p> <p>7 pre-dates my career in Parliament and it has continued</p> <p>8 right up to date.</p> <p>9 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>10 A. But I applied for the job because I have a passionate</p> <p>11 belief in freedom of the press. I think it's one of the</p> <p>12 most valuable assets we have in the UK and it's much</p> <p>13 envied across the world.</p> <p>14 I also have seen for myself how state regulation can</p> <p>15 go very badly wrong, and it's always preferable if it</p> <p>16 can be the self-regulation which is the basic structure.</p> <p>17 Q. Thank you. I'll obviously cover that in a moment with</p> <p>18 you, Lord Hunt. May I understand what you mean by</p> <p>19 "self-regulation", regardless of what the advertisement</p> <p>20 might mean by it?</p> <p>21 A. Self-regulation of the press, which I'd prefer to call</p> <p>22 independent self-regulation of the press, means of the</p> <p>23 press, for the press, in the public interest.</p> <p>24 Q. But not by the press, presumably?</p> <p>25 A. Well, it must, of course, be a voluntary system into</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 a nutshell, your previous career, please?</p> <p>2 A. I can personally think of no better container than</p> <p>3 a nutshell. Shall we keep it at that, or would you like</p> <p>4 me to go --</p> <p>5 Q. We're not going to cover every detail, but you were</p> <p>6 a member of Parliament. You served in the cabinet under</p> <p>7 Baroness Thatcher, I think as Secretary of State for</p> <p>8 Wales, is that right, and then under Lord Major --</p> <p>9 sorry --</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Sir John.</p> <p>11 MR JAY: Sir John Major. I think you were, again, Secretary</p> <p>12 of State for Wales and also Chancellor of the Duchy of</p> <p>13 Lancaster. You left Parliament in 1977. You became</p> <p>14 a life peer, is that correct, back in 1997?</p> <p>15 A. 1997. So I've been in Parliament for 35 years.</p> <p>16 Q. Thank you very much. Since then you have been</p> <p>17 a practising solicitor, partner, at a well-known firm,</p> <p>18 which practises in commercial and regulatory law -- that</p> <p>19 is your specialism -- and you became chairman of the PCC</p> <p>20 in the autumn.</p> <p>21 May I ask you about the appointment process. You</p> <p>22 answered an advertisement, which you refer to in</p> <p>23 paragraph 3 of your witness statement; is that right?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. You provided me with a copy of the advertisement and it</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 which the press subscribe. I also chair a body called</p> <p>2 the Lending Standards Board, which is a self-regulatory</p> <p>3 body, successor to the Banking Code Standards Board,</p> <p>4 which was again a self-regulatory structure which was</p> <p>5 subscribed to by all the major firms involved in that</p> <p>6 particular industry. So when I refer to</p> <p>7 self-regulation, I really want to see the participation</p> <p>8 of the whole industry in its own regulation.</p> <p>9 Q. Thank you. To go back to the process of application and</p> <p>10 interview, it is clear from Mr Abell's evidence</p> <p>11 yesterday that you must have been interviewed by the</p> <p>12 current chair of PressBoF, who is Lord Black; is that</p> <p>13 correct?</p> <p>14 A. Yes. My recollection, on 30 September, was that my</p> <p>15 previous interviews had been with a firm who had been</p> <p>16 instructed to come forward with a shortlist, and it was</p> <p>17 my contact within that firm, a Mr Vardi, who made me</p> <p>18 aware that I was to be interviewed on 30 September.</p> <p>19 When I arrived, the chairman of the interview panel was</p> <p>20 Lord Black, but there were a range of people on the</p> <p>21 other side of the table, including an independent</p> <p>22 assessor.</p> <p>23 Q. The range of people -- there were some lay members, as</p> <p>24 it were, and other members of PressBoF; is that correct?</p> <p>25 A. I was told that the interview panel was a subcommittee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

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<p>1 of PressBoF. But it had, of course, the independent 2 assessor and also the head-hunting firm was represented 3 on the other side of the table.</p> <p>4 Q. In an interview which you gave with or to 5 Professor Greenslade, you apparently said, in terms of 6 why you put your name forward, that it was Lord Wakeham 7 who got you into a corner and, as it were, persuaded you 8 to throw your hat in the ring. Is that fair or not?</p> <p>9 A. It's a complicated history, and I'm not sure how much 10 you want me to go into it, but I was, at the time, 11 considering putting my name forward for a range of 12 posts. I then became aware of this advertisement, and 13 Lord Wakeham, with whom I served -- I was one of his 14 colleagues for many years -- told me that he felt that 15 there was a need for the regulation of the press to be 16 taken further forward with some ideas, and he was aware 17 that I had just, for the Law Society of England and 18 Wales, presented them with a report on the recommended 19 future of regulation of solicitors and I'd also carried 20 out the first independent review of the Financial 21 Ombudsman Service. So against that background, John 22 Wakeham said to me that he thought I should put my name 23 forward.</p> <p>24 Q. Thank you. One other point which comes out of 25 Professor Greenslade's interview is that you told him</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 sufficient, thank you.</p> <p>2 MR JAY: Is it inherent in what you're saying, Lord Hunt, 3 that a regulator would have wider powers, both of 4 investigation and of sanction?</p> <p>5 A. Yes. Once -- what I feel is that the PCC has some 6 appurtenances of a regulator, such as a pre-publication 7 service of developing a book of caselaw, but it doesn't 8 have the full range of powers that any regulator must 9 have and therefore I conclude it is not a regulator.</p> <p>10 The proposed new body, to which we'll come in 11 a moment, would be a regulator and I regard that as 12 a huge difference.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you. Your aversion to statutory regulation of the 14 press is made clear in paragraph 3 of your witness 15 statement, if not elsewhere. The reason you give: 16 "I believe that would be an unacceptable impingement 17 on our freedoms." 18 Why is there a nexus between statutory controls, 19 as you describe them here, and an impingement on our 20 freedoms?</p> <p>21 A. Perhaps it would suffice to quote someone whose statue 22 is outside my law office, John Wilkes, who, 250 years 23 ago, in 1762, said, "The liberty of the press is the 24 birthright of a Briton, and is justly esteemed the 25 finest bulwark of the liberties of this country."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 that in your view the PCC was not a regulator. Does 2 that accurately set out your position and/or would you 3 wish to elaborate on that?</p> <p>4 A. Yes. Speaking as a lawyer, I looked at the articles of 5 association and at the powers of the Press Complaints 6 Commission, against also the background of having been 7 in the cabinet that received the reports of Sir David 8 Calcutt in 1990 and then again in 1993, which described 9 what was needed as a regulator.</p> <p>10 But I think in the second report, in 1993, Sir David 11 concluded that the press had not come forward with what 12 could be described as a regulator and he set out what he 13 felt a statutory regulator should be. So against that 14 background, I could see that the PCC was not, in 15 Sir David's terms, a regulator, and it had -- didn't 16 have the powers of a regulator. I thought I was stating 17 the obvious.</p> <p>18 Q. Yes.</p> <p>19 A. But suddenly I became aware that virtually everyone 20 agreed with me.</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, Sir Christopher doesn't.</p> <p>22 A. Yes, Sir Christopher and I go back a long way and I can 23 hardly recall a time when he has agreed with me, but 24 I don't want to go too far.</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, I think you've said quite</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 That's something I so passionately believe in.</p> <p>2 Q. I think all of us would believe in that, but it's the 3 antipathy or aversion to statutory controls and the 4 impact that those controls might have on these cherished 5 freedoms. Why does the existence of statutory controls 6 threaten these freedoms?</p> <p>7 A. I think I would talk about statutory regulation, not 8 statutory controls. I rely on "The Essential Law for 9 Journalists" to point out all the statutory provisions 10 that apply and restrict freedom of the press. I'm not 11 just talking about defamation or the Data Protection Act 12 or the Freedom of Information Act. The list is endless. 13 It's a massive textbook. So there is also statute 14 there.</p> <p>15 What is missing, thank goodness, is a statutory 16 regulator, and that is what I would regard as an 17 infringement of the freedom of the press.</p> <p>18 Q. I think, again, we might all agree that if there were 19 a statutory regulator which itself was responsible for 20 the imposition of standards and, by virtue of that, 21 would be capable of curbing the exercise of the press' 22 democratic right to express itself, then we would have 23 a regrettable state of affairs. But if the statutory 24 regulator did not have power to set standards, would the 25 very fact that there was a statutory regulator be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

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<p>1 offensive, in your view?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Because?</p> <p>4 A. Because of my 35 years in Parliament. Perhaps the best</p> <p>5 way to describe my background is to say that I've seen</p> <p>6 too many examples of where a simple objective was to be</p> <p>7 reached through a new bill, and perhaps I would</p> <p>8 summarise it by saying the road to parliamentary hell is</p> <p>9 paved with good intentions.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Does that include -- and I've raised</p> <p>11 this with a couple of witnesses -- the independence of</p> <p>12 the judiciary, now enshrined in section 3(1) of the</p> <p>13 Constitutional Reform Act?</p> <p>14 A. I have in front of me the Constitutional Reform Act, and</p> <p>15 I do recall when it was going through Parliament and the</p> <p>16 debates that we had, where judicial opinion was greatly</p> <p>17 valued, particularly in the upper house, and there was</p> <p>18 general agreement that we had to enshrine the</p> <p>19 independence of the judiciary in legislation. But there</p> <p>20 is no such agreement -- and I'm well aware of the views</p> <p>21 of my parliamentary colleagues -- there is no such</p> <p>22 agreement about the independence of the press. There</p> <p>23 are very strong views in Parliament that there must be</p> <p>24 stronger limits on the power of the press and this</p> <p>25 would, therefore, in my mind, open a Pandora's box. It</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 public.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And in the light of all that has</p> <p>4 emerged, I think I've said this: tinkering around the</p> <p>5 edges is, I think, unlikely to be sufficient.</p> <p>6 A. (Nods head)</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I gather from your nod that you do</p> <p>8 not disagree with me?</p> <p>9 A. Oh, I strongly agree. I think this is a tremendous</p> <p>10 opportunity for the press themselves to come forward</p> <p>11 with the sort of system which Sir David Calcutt was</p> <p>12 asking for. As you may know, I worked very closely with</p> <p>13 Sir David Calcutt on a range of cases. I'm a great</p> <p>14 admirer of his excellent, and in his second report, he</p> <p>15 set out very clearly the way ahead, and I have done my</p> <p>16 best to persuade those with whom I've consulted that</p> <p>17 that is the right way forward, but not by statute.</p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'll deal with it at the end.</p> <p>19 MR JAY: We'll come back to your proposals for the future in</p> <p>20 due course, Lord Hunt, but may I just deal with a number</p> <p>21 of points you raise in your statement?</p> <p>22 You identify in your view the strengths of the</p> <p>23 current system. They can be collected under a number of</p> <p>24 heads. The first is you've been impressed by the way in</p> <p>25 which the Commission has been able to conciliate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 would be, for many of my colleagues in Parliament,</p> <p>2 a wonderful moment if they were given the opportunity to</p> <p>3 move amendments, to debate a bill regulating the press,</p> <p>4 and I just do not know what would emerge the other side.</p> <p>5 We were determined that what would emerge the other</p> <p>6 side with the 2005 Act was the independence of the</p> <p>7 judiciary. There is no such agreement about the</p> <p>8 independence of the press.</p> <p>9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So you think that Parliament might</p> <p>10 seek to use any form of legislation, however it was</p> <p>11 cast, as a way of controlling the press?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, and they have told me so, many of them, in both</p> <p>13 houses, and that is what is driving me forward to find</p> <p>14 a solution and to respond positively to your own</p> <p>15 comments, right at the outset of this, particularly in</p> <p>16 the seminars, that there is a wonderful opportunity for</p> <p>17 the press itself to put its own house in order.</p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I don't think that's quite how</p> <p>19 I expressed it, but I certainly said, and firmly</p> <p>20 believe, that it's critical that the press engage in the</p> <p>21 debate about how its regulation, with a very small "R",</p> <p>22 should move forward, because it's critical that whatever</p> <p>23 system emerges works for them, but it's equally</p> <p>24 critical, as I have made clear, that it works for --</p> <p>25 I've said "me", but by "me", I of course mean the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 complaints. That's paragraph 10 of your statement.</p> <p>2 Presumably in your three months in the saddle, you have</p> <p>3 had direct observational experience of that; is that</p> <p>4 correct?</p> <p>5 A. I -- yes. I greatly admire the dedication and</p> <p>6 commitment of the staff at the PCC. I've listened to</p> <p>7 them dealing with calls from the public. I have been</p> <p>8 made aware of the way in which they respond in</p> <p>9 a compassionate and caring way to members of the public</p> <p>10 who have what they feel is a genuine grievance and they</p> <p>11 work hard to ensure that a satisfactory solution is</p> <p>12 found.</p> <p>13 Q. Do you feel that they take a particular side or, I think</p> <p>14 in the words of Mr Abell yesterday, it's sort of 60/40</p> <p>15 in favour of the customer as against the press. Would</p> <p>16 that be your perception how they balance the two?</p> <p>17 A. I would say that my perception was that they pursue an</p> <p>18 independent course, seeking to balance, on the one hand,</p> <p>19 the freedom of the press to comment and on the other</p> <p>20 side the public interest, and I think the recent change</p> <p>21 to the code, which only came into effect on 1 January,</p> <p>22 the 1st of this month, is an example of how the</p> <p>23 experience of the staff has been instrumental in</p> <p>24 constantly putting the code under careful review and</p> <p>25 improving it as and when necessary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 Q. Paragraph 12 of your statement, Lord Hunt, deals with 2 the code. You say you start from the belief it's 3 important the rules are written by the professionals 4 themselves, pausing there, presumably because the 5 professionals themselves have the knowledge and 6 experience to know what the standards should be. Then 7 you say: 8 "... so long as they're responsive to public 9 concerns." 10 Can I just explore with you what the mechanisms are 11 to ensure that the code of practice, as a living 12 instrument, is properly responsive to public concerns, 13 please? 14 A. I'm not sure we have the best way of doing that at the 15 present time, so no doubt we'll come onto the way ahead, 16 but I would just, again, instance the amendment to the 17 public interest test which came in on 1 January, which 18 added to the code that -- the words "and how and with 19 whom that was established at the time". 20 This is to negotiate a way through of understanding 21 the public interest and how the public interest was 22 affected, and I think there needs to be much clearer 23 definition of processes, which I would advocate through 24 authorised internal regulation within the newspaper or 25 magazine.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 witnesses, when necessary, and also to impose fines, all 2 backed by commercial contracts. 3 Q. We'll come to that very shortly. 4 The other plus points you wish to draw our attention 5 to in your witness statement: paragraph 13, the issue of 6 harassment, and paragraph 14, the issue of 7 pre-publication advice. 8 You mention problems with the paparazzi in 9 paragraph 13. If it were made clear that the newspaper 10 publishing a photograph would be responsible for the 11 photo in all its attributes, really, including the mode 12 of obtaining of the photograph, then how the paparazzo 13 himself or herself had obtained it would be subsumed to 14 the newspaper, wouldn't it? 15 A. Yes. So that's the way you control the product, but if 16 I might add, I think there's also a place for 17 considering whether we shouldn't have voluntary 18 self-regulation by the photographic agencies as well, 19 because we have to bear in mind a number of the 20 photographers are not necessarily anything other than 21 freelance. Quite often, I understand, they're from 22 other countries and publication occurs in other 23 countries but the power of our press ensures that they 24 don't appear in the UK, unless certain clearly defined 25 objectives are met.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That picks up a point that has been 2 mentioned several times by me, certainly, during the 3 Inquiry, about an evidence base for the decision-making 4 that was involved in making public interest assessments. 5 Is that right? 6 A. I agree. 7 MR JAY: Maybe we can take this out of sequence, if you 8 don't mind, Lord Hunt. Ensuring that the code, as an 9 organic series of principles and rules, is kept 10 responsive to public concerns, how would you recommend 11 that that is achieved? 12 A. I think it is part and parcel of the way in which I've 13 been looking ahead. I'm trying not to look back too 14 much, because I think there's too much history here, 15 although I felt Stephen Abell gave us a lot of lessons 16 that can be learned from the past, as he outlined the 17 way forward. But certainly there is a need for 18 a separate standards arm alongside the complaints and 19 mediation arm, and there should be scope for perhaps 20 a third arm. No doubt we'll return to that point. 21 But this new structure, I think, is sorely needed, 22 and I've come to the conclusion that we do urgently need 23 a fresh start and a totally new body with substantially 24 increased powers to audit and enforce compliance with 25 the code, to require access to documents, to summon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Making the editor responsible for 2 everything that's in his paper or her paper, whether 3 it's a photograph that had been taken in breach of 4 privacy rights or information that's been obtained 5 through a private investigator acting in breach of the 6 Data Protection Act, will make the editor or his team 7 careful about what information they use and how they 8 obtain it, presumably. 9 A. Yes. Yes. This is really self-regulation at its very 10 best. 11 MR JAY: The weaknesses of the current system. Some of them 12 you've already touched on, Lord Hunt. The absence of 13 formal legal powers as manifested in the phone-hacking 14 investigation, the inability to check basic facts, 15 et cetera. 16 Secondly, the voluntary nature of the system, which 17 means that anybody could pull out, as indeed 18 Northern &amp; Shell have done. 19 And the third point, paragraph 19, the way 20 compliance and internal mechanisms work within 21 newspapers and magazines. Can I ask you, please, to 22 elaborate the points you make under paragraph 19, 23 please? 24 A. Yes, well, here I would argue a natural and obvious 25 feature of any effective system of self-regulation is to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 ensure that the internal compliance and complaints 2 mechanisms within a paper operate and operate properly. 3 Q. Yes. 4 A. The complaints and mediation arm should always be the 5 last resort when the individual has not had proper 6 satisfaction direct. 7 Q. Is it implicit in paragraph 19 that you feel that, at 8 least in certain newspaper organisations, what we have 9 chosen to call corporate governance has been less than 10 satisfactory? 11 A. I think, looking -- I'm anxious not to be an apologist 12 for the past, but looking back, I'm constantly reminded 13 of the judgment in the Barings case, that the admiral on 14 the bridge should know, surely, what is happening in the 15 engine room, and there has been a feeling that perhaps 16 at the most senior level in a number of publications, 17 proprietorship, that insufficient knowledge and 18 responsibility has been taken, but there's been 19 insufficient knowledge of what was going on throughout 20 the organisation. 21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's a rather stronger case than 22 Barings, because in Barings it was the work of 23 a scientist called Dr Wong in Singapore who wasn't 24 identified in London. 25 A. Yes, yes, I agree.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 editors from Northern &amp; Shell -- they all attended. 2 I presented my proposals in detail, which I'm very keen 3 to share with the Inquiry, and I was very pleasantly 4 surprised to find that everyone agreed. 5 So there is consensus on the right way forward. 6 Important now -- the target now is to start the process, 7 whether in shadow form -- trying to make sure that we 8 create the right sort of body on which can be built 9 a much more effective process of independent 10 self-regulation. 11 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: As opposed to saying the target is 12 now me? 13 A. I have to be very careful, and of course I say yes, but 14 it just so happens I'm giving evidence on Thursday to 15 the joint Select Committee, and in a way I'm seeking to 16 try and get the widest possible consensus on the right 17 way forward. But I think, sir, the one area on which 18 I'm sure we will be fascinated as to your conclusions is 19 on the carrot side of this whole process. 20 I'm well aware, from my discussions with a lot of my 21 parliamentary colleagues, that when the defamation bill, 22 if it is contained in the Queen's speech, comes forward, 23 there is a real opportunity then perhaps to build a much 24 better, quicker, safer, freer system, fairer system of 25 adjudicating on complaints and dealing with defamation</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 MR JAY: Thank you. We look now to the future. This is 2 paragraph 21 and following, Lord Hunt, of your 3 statement. Can we just understand, please, what has 4 been happening, as it were, behind the scenes. You 5 refer to a meeting which took place on 15 December of 6 last year, and this included editors, publishers and 7 senior industry figures. Presumably a meeting which you 8 chaired; is that right? Or did PressBoF chair it? 9 A. Well, it was a meeting at which I presented what I must 10 confess are my proposals. When I was interviewed for 11 the job, I remember I was closely questioned on the 12 approach I would take, and I did say that I felt I could 13 only really advise properly on what should be the right 14 way forward if I had a blank piece of paper to start off 15 with, and I found that that met with some degree of 16 support and respect. 17 Since I originally was interviewed, I have been 18 consulting as widely as I possibly could, and I was 19 encouraged, particularly bearing in mind the words used 20 in this Inquiry, about coming forward with proposals, at 21 least to share with the editors the way in which I saw 22 the future, and a meeting was called where -- I think it 23 was around about 50 editors, including all the most 24 senior editors, including several proprietors, including 25 the four -- or was it even five, with OK magazine,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 and privacy issues in a different environment to that 2 which, at the moment, applies. 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm sorry, I don't quite understand 4 that. Does that mean that there is an appetite to 5 include within the bill that's had pre-legislative 6 scrutiny some other provisions? 7 A. Yes. But they're not that different. If one looks 8 carefully through Lord Mawhinney's report on the draft 9 defamation bill, there is a belief that building on the 10 Reynolds defence might be a very interesting way 11 forward. 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well -- 13 A. And Lord Lester of Herne Hill has already shared with 14 many colleagues his wish to see something modelled on 15 the Irish Press Council reference in the Irish 16 legislation being included in the defamation bill, but 17 that will be much later this year, after, sir, you have 18 reported. 19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, that's the point. I'd be very 20 keen to learn about that and the ideas that Lord Lester 21 and indeed anybody else has, as indeed I've made clear 22 I'm very keen to hear from you. Well ... 23 MR JAY: Lord Hunt, in terms of the proposals which you 24 outline in your witness statement, you make it clear 25 that these are very broad interim conclusions which</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 need, perhaps, to be stress-tested and subject to 2 further discussion. Can we identify the key features? 3 You say quite clearly that the existing PCC 4 structure is not viable and needs to be replaced, that 5 there can be no question of tinkering at the edges. In 6 terms of what the body would look like, putting to one 7 side the source of its powers, you, I think, have at 8 least two arms; is that correct? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. Could you explain that to us, please, Lord Hunt? 11 A. Well, I think we've heard evidence identifying certain 12 weaknesses with the present -- the current system of 13 self-regulation. 14 The proposal is that the new regulator should have 15 two arms, one that deals with complaints and mediation, 16 continuing the valuable work that's been going on 17 hitherto at the -- by the staff of the PCC, and one -- 18 a separate arm that audits and, where necessary, 19 enforces standards and compliance, compliance with the 20 Editors' Code, with much greater emphasis on internal 21 self-regulation, with a named individual carrying 22 personal responsibility for compliance at each and every 23 one of the publishers and those responsible for 24 newspapers and magazines. 25 The individual will be responsible for providing Page 77</p>	<p>1 there be lay representation on the committee or the 2 compliance arm which would have responsibility for the 3 code of practice? 4 A. Yes, and that there should also be a review -- an 5 independent review of the code. This is all part and 6 parcel of the overall proposals, which I have summarised 7 in a two-page document which I have circulated to each 8 of the editors who attended that meeting, and on which 9 I'm now getting a number of very helpful and positive 10 responses. 11 Q. In terms of identifying the source of power -- this is 12 your third bullet point at page 54998 -- you make it 13 clear that there does need to be a formal legal 14 underpinning of the system. Is that because, Lord Hunt, 15 if you have a body which can impose fines, which can 16 require editors to provide documents and have other 17 coercive powers, there needs to be some legal framework, 18 otherwise there is no means of achieving compliance? Is 19 that correct? 20 A. Yes. It's not a new idea. One leading Queen's Counsel 21 pointed out to me that Lord Shawcross had raised the 22 whole question of there being contractual underpinning 23 of the self-regulatory system in his Royal Commission 24 report. 25 Q. Yes. So -- Page 79</p>
<p>1 a simple but thoroughgoing audit of compliance on an 2 annual basis, and as you've just mentioned, that will be 3 underpinned by a system of commercial contract. 4 Q. Is it right, therefore, that the Code of Practice 5 Committee would disappear and become part of the 6 compliance and standards arm of the PCC? Have 7 I correctly understood that? 8 A. I think the design that I have worked up, as you rightly 9 say, is a matter for further discussion. I do make 10 clear: these are my proposals, but I have done my best 11 to consult widely within the industry, with other 12 stakeholders, including many colleagues in Parliament, 13 and they have now been endorsed both by the Press 14 Complaints Commission and by the industry itself at that 15 meeting we had on 15 December, and I think it's very 16 encouraging that there is such a wide consensus for 17 radical reform. The very existence of this Inquiry has, 18 I think, been the key important factor in ensuring that 19 all the major players in the industry now accept that 20 radical reform is an urgent necessity. 21 Q. Yes. I'm just concerned about the code of practice. On 22 my understanding of your evidence, it's likely to be 23 located within the compliance and standards arm, but in 24 terms of how the code would reflect public concern, 25 public perception, et cetera, is it being proposed that Page 78</p>	<p>1 A. So I'm not seeking to be innovative. I'm building on 2 what I think is the right way forward, as expressed 3 previously. 4 Q. But you would be content, on my understanding of this 5 third bullet point, with a contractual system, the 6 contract being the source of power, as it were, which 7 was recognised within statute -- or in due course was 8 recognised within statute -- but you would not, on my 9 understanding, countenance a contractual system which 10 had been created by statute; is that correct? 11 A. Correct. I think the easiest way to deal with this 12 point is to look at recommendation 1 of David Calcutt's 13 second report, which I've relied on here, when he, 14 I think -- and I do recall all the debates we had -- 15 I think had rather lost patience with the response that 16 he'd received to his first report, which had been 17 a committee on privacy chaired by him, and in 18 paragraph 9 of that summary, at the start of his second 19 report, he concluded that: 20 "The government should now introduce a statutory 21 regime. A statutory press complaints tribunal would 22 need to have these functions and powers." 23 And I have he been going through those functions and 24 powers with one huge difference: I think these functions 25 and powers could be set up under contract without the Page 80</p>

20 (Pages 77 to 80)

<p>1 need for legislation.</p> <p>2 Q. There are 19 functions and powers, which range from</p> <p>3 drawing up a code of practice, enquiring into</p> <p>4 complaints, holding hearings, giving guidance, awarding</p> <p>5 compensation, imposing fines, et cetera, et cetera.</p> <p>6 That's correct, isn't it?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. His preference, as you say, was for a statutory regime.</p> <p>9 In terms of the vice which you're seeking to avoid,</p> <p>10 which is an unacceptable impingement of on freedoms,</p> <p>11 paragraph 3 of your witness statement, what is the</p> <p>12 difference between Sir David Calcutt's statutory regime,</p> <p>13 with the powers we see itemised here in paragraph 9 of</p> <p>14 the second report, and the contractual regime which you</p> <p>15 favour?</p> <p>16 A. The difference is statute. What I'm doing is to set out</p> <p>17 what Sir David concluded in his first report, and where</p> <p>18 he had been dissatisfied with the response that he had</p> <p>19 received, which had then led him to believe the only way</p> <p>20 forward was through statute.</p> <p>21 I'm seeking to lift what he would have wanted into</p> <p>22 today's age, and I think it is perfectly achievable.</p> <p>23 The environment of the time, though, was that it was not</p> <p>24 possible for the press to come forward with such</p> <p>25 a self-regulatory regime. And please, Mr Jay, bear in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 difficulties. Getting people to sign up on the dotted</p> <p>2 line, Lord Hunt. We've called this the carrot or the</p> <p>3 stick. It matters not --</p> <p>4 A. Or both.</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's neither a carrot nor a stick;</p> <p>6 it's just getting them to sign up.</p> <p>7 A. Yes, I agree. The contracts would arm the new regulator</p> <p>8 with the necessary is investigative and enforcement</p> <p>9 powers to investigate serious ethical breaches, which</p> <p>10 the PCC has never possessed. And if I may add this --</p> <p>11 MR JAY: Yes.</p> <p>12 A. I think the PCC has been very unfairly criticised for</p> <p>13 failing to exercise powers which it never had in the</p> <p>14 first place.</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, it did have certain powers,</p> <p>16 didn't it? We looked at them yesterday, in the articles</p> <p>17 of association. They could have done a lot more.</p> <p>18 A. Yes, I --</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm not taking this as an opportunity</p> <p>20 to have a go at the PCC, but looking at some of the</p> <p>21 powers in the articles of association, they could easily</p> <p>22 have been construed to permit a great deal more. They</p> <p>23 may not have been able to afford to do it. That's</p> <p>24 a different point.</p> <p>25 A. Sir, I'm not sure it is a question of resources. There</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 mind that I was part of those discussions which took</p> <p>2 place, under colleagues in cabinet, to try and persuade</p> <p>3 the new Commission, the Press Complaints Commission, to</p> <p>4 move in the direction that is laid out here, and I think</p> <p>5 there were a whole series of letters, no doubt which</p> <p>6 will be revealed when at last we are allowed to see all</p> <p>7 the internal letters and correspondence of the</p> <p>8 administration, which -- I'm reminded that there were</p> <p>9 challenges given to the press to do exactly what is now</p> <p>10 set out in my statement, but they did not respond</p> <p>11 positively.</p> <p>12 I sense today there's a completely different</p> <p>13 appetite for fundamental reform, and I'm anxious that we</p> <p>14 should utilise this window of opportunity as quickly as</p> <p>15 possible, to proceed in the way Sir David wanted and</p> <p>16 I think the overwhelming majority of people now want,</p> <p>17 which is proper, independent self-regulation of the</p> <p>18 press.</p> <p>19 Q. Of course, under your contractual system, you would</p> <p>20 have, I think we would all agree, a regulator, properly</p> <p>21 so-called. Would it be self-regulation, though,</p> <p>22 Lord Hunt?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Can I just understand what the possible difficulties</p> <p>25 might be. I'm only putting these forward as possible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 was a reliance on correspondence, without the feeling</p> <p>2 that there was power to demand the attendance of</p> <p>3 witnesses, power to visit the premises under</p> <p>4 investigation, to carry out proper, in-depth analysis of</p> <p>5 the documentation, the emails, the computer records. It</p> <p>6 would require a team and undoubtedly the new regulator</p> <p>7 would have that power. I'm determined that it should.</p> <p>8 I hope it would never have to be exercised, but it would</p> <p>9 have that power.</p> <p>10 All I'm saying is that this is in stark contrast to</p> <p>11 the PCC, which certainly never felt it had that power,</p> <p>12 and it would require an imaginative interpretation of</p> <p>13 the articles to feel that it did.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well --</p> <p>15 A. And it never felt it had that power.</p> <p>16 MR JAY: Well, Lord Hunt, it's perhaps not necessary to go</p> <p>17 there and try and construe article 53.1(a) again, but</p> <p>18 what I'm concerned really is to address the future.</p> <p>19 There are at least three issues I'd like to discuss.</p> <p>20 It's getting people to the starting block issue and</p> <p>21 forcing them into this system, which is the web of</p> <p>22 contractual relationships. I think you would agree that</p> <p>23 if there is a substantial newspaper group which is</p> <p>24 outside the system, that damages the credibility of the</p> <p>25 new body, whatever name it's given; is that correct?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

21 (Pages 81 to 84)

<p>1 A. Correct.</p> <p>2 Q. So how are we going to get people to join up, Lord Hunt?</p> <p>3 A. By asking them, and everyone I've asked so far, covering</p> <p>4 virtually the whole range of publications, have said</p> <p>5 that they are willing to agree to proceed in the way</p> <p>6 I have set out.</p> <p>7 Q. That includes Northern &amp; Shell, presumably, does it?</p> <p>8 A. Correct.</p> <p>9 Q. Have you made it clear to Northern &amp; Shell what all the</p> <p>10 characteristics and attributes of this new body will be?</p> <p>11 A. I have shared with them as much as I have shared with</p> <p>12 everyone else.</p> <p>13 Q. Is this right: that you are relying on the good faith,</p> <p>14 the goodwill of all the potential participants, to</p> <p>15 arrive at the signing ceremony on day one and</p> <p>16 participate; is that correct?</p> <p>17 A. Correct.</p> <p>18 Q. Is there any additional incentive which one could put</p> <p>19 forward or suggest which might make it even more</p> <p>20 attractive for people to sign up?</p> <p>21 A. I sense there is a willingness to accept a fresh start</p> <p>22 and a new body. I did immediately call a meeting of all</p> <p>23 the general counsel, who advise each of the</p> <p>24 publications, and found that there was agreement around</p> <p>25 the table that it was perfectly possible to reach</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 time to provide the statutory underpinning that would be</p> <p>2 necessary if you could never achieve consensus, but at</p> <p>3 the present time, I'm seeking to put as positive</p> <p>4 a construction on the discussions I've had as possible.</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's entirely understandable,</p> <p>6 Lord Hunt. You'll forgive me if I view the problem</p> <p>7 through a rather wider spectrum of history, as well as</p> <p>8 having the anxiety that you identify. As I again have</p> <p>9 said a number of times, it is rather disturbing the</p> <p>10 number of times since the last war that we've been in</p> <p>11 a position are great calamity for the press, there has</p> <p>12 been an Inquiry, everybody agrees something must happen</p> <p>13 that is different, that is taken on board -- you don't</p> <p>14 need me to carry on.</p> <p>15 A. (Shakes head)</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Then disaster happens and everybody</p> <p>17 starts again.</p> <p>18 A. Sir, I think the difference, if there is sufficient</p> <p>19 agreement to move forward now, is that there would, at</p> <p>20 least, be a contract. I think there were some people</p> <p>21 who felt there was almost an implied contract setting up</p> <p>22 the Press Complaints Commission, but there wasn't.</p> <p>23 Perhaps if we'd followed the Shawcross advice, there</p> <p>24 would have been, but there wasn't.</p> <p>25 I suppose in many ways -- am I wrong in thinking the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 agreement. The abiding theme was that it should be</p> <p>2 simple, short, easy to understand, and that one could</p> <p>3 foresee exactly the sort of structure that I had in</p> <p>4 mind.</p> <p>5 In many ways I've approached this as I would</p> <p>6 a client who comes with a problem, the problem being the</p> <p>7 present structure does not work. The solution, which</p> <p>8 lawyers seek to find, is an answer which will provide</p> <p>9 the best structure, and I think with the help of all</p> <p>10 those involved, it will be possible.</p> <p>11 Q. Okay. On my understanding, the proposal entails</p> <p>12 a five-year rolling contract. Presumably anybody who</p> <p>13 wanted out would have to give five years' notice; is</p> <p>14 that correct?</p> <p>15 A. Yes. My error is that I'm always approaching it in</p> <p>16 a positive way, but you're quite right. I have to think</p> <p>17 of the consequences of anyone who, two years further</p> <p>18 down the road, might find that they could no longer</p> <p>19 support the structure, and I've been advised by those</p> <p>20 I've consulted that the best way forward is to have</p> <p>21 a rolling contract over a five-year period.</p> <p>22 The sword of Damocles hanging over the whole</p> <p>23 industry is, of course, the threat of state regulation.</p> <p>24 If someone just unilaterally withdrew, for whatever</p> <p>25 reason, a five-year period would be more than enough</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 solution now is to learn the lessons of history and make</p> <p>2 sure that there is a proper contract in place?</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, make sure there is something in</p> <p>4 place. What you have added to the equation by your</p> <p>5 evidence, which I frankly concede has taken me somewhat</p> <p>6 by surprise, is the appetite that you have identified in</p> <p>7 your parliamentary colleagues to take the opportunity to</p> <p>8 impose restrictions upon the press which are</p> <p>9 inconsistent with freedom of expression. That's what</p> <p>10 you've given me this afternoon. Have I understood it</p> <p>11 correctly?</p> <p>12 A. Sir, there have been a number of occasions on which</p> <p>13 private members have put forward private members' bills.</p> <p>14 If one looks at those bills, they would have imposed</p> <p>15 restrictions on freedom of expression.</p> <p>16 Now, Lord Soley, who I think has now written a book</p> <p>17 about it -- and I've consulted Clive Soley -- he has</p> <p>18 very strong views about the need for some mechanism of</p> <p>19 that sort, and there are many others, too. I don't</p> <p>20 think their prime intention is to restrict freedom of</p> <p>21 expression, but in my view it would be a consequence.</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mm.</p> <p>23 MR JAY: Okay, Lord Hunt. May I deal with the contract?</p> <p>24 Imagine everybody is in the contract, either because</p> <p>25 they're willing to sign up or some carrot has been</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 devised to ensure that they do. There are three 2 possible issues which arise.</p> <p>3 If the new body imposes a substantial fine -- let us 4 imagine the proprietor doesn't like the fine and refuses 5 to pay -- presumably your advice is an order for 6 specific performance can be obtained at the instance of 7 the new successor body against the recalcitrant 8 newspaper body; is that correct?</p> <p>9 A. Well, the fine would be issued by the standards and 10 compliance arm of the new regulator only if there was 11 a serious or systemic breach of standards. The level of 12 fine, would, of course, be proportionate and would 13 depend on a number of factors such as the seriousness of 14 the breach and the size of the organisation.</p> <p>15 One way of doing that would be for the fine to be 16 added to the paper's levy for the following year's 17 membership. That was an idea put forward in one of the 18 meetings I've held.</p> <p>19 There is, though, I stress again, an appetite to 20 proceed with this form of self-regulation, which 21 I warmly applaud, and I do think -- and perhaps I should 22 keep stressing this -- I think this Inquiry has opened 23 up a huge opportunity and I'm keen to use the momentum 24 that this Inquiry has provided to press on with reform.</p> <p>25 MR JAY: Some might say -- but I suppose that person would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 particularly disgruntled for whatever reason and wants 2 out and refuses to pay the subscription, and what's 3 more, refuses to submit to the jurisdiction of the new 4 successor body, in other words, doesn't accept that it 5 has any power over complaints arising against its 6 newspapers. Can an order for specific performance be 7 obtained, on your advice, in that sort of situation?</p> <p>8 A. Or on a change of ownership.</p> <p>9 Q. Yes.</p> <p>10 A. A similar situation.</p> <p>11 The advice I've received is that much would depend 12 on the way in which the contract was worded, but 13 provided the right words were used, the answer to your 14 question is yes.</p> <p>15 Q. I suppose that might collapse into this question: that 16 once the newspapers understand that the wording which 17 they're asked to sign would enable, in the case of 18 breach, the High Court to order specific performance 19 against them, some newspapers might be less keen to sign 20 up. Does that not follow?</p> <p>21 A. No, I don't think it does, because there is goodwill, at 22 the moment, amongst all those to whom I've spoken, to 23 set up such a system. The important thing is to make 24 sure that the terms on which the new regulator is 25 established are sufficiently wide to meet the range of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 have to be a cynic -- that the appetite you are 2 referring to is simply a fear that this Inquiry might 3 recommend something which the press would regard as much 4 worse, namely a form of statutory regulation. Would 5 that be too cynical a view?</p> <p>6 A. Having been in Parliament 35 years, I'm not sure 7 I recognise cynicism any more.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay, Lord Hunt. I am concerned, though, with the 9 mechanics. You've got a fine. There's no means of 10 challenging the fine. It's fair and proportionate. Any 11 appeal right has been exhausted.</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. The proprietor doesn't pay. Is it your advice that 14 specific performance can be obtained by the new 15 successor body against the proprietor or not?</p> <p>16 A. Yes. I'm told that it would be available, but that is 17 for the judiciary presented with such an application. 18 It would also depend very much on the wording of the 19 contract.</p> <p>20 Q. Naturally it would, but if the contract were worded in 21 the right way, is it your advice, from Queen's Counsel, 22 that if there is no difficulty, an order for specific 23 performance would be ordered by the High Court?</p> <p>24 A. Correct.</p> <p>25 Q. Imagine then this scenario: the proprietor is now</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 problems, some of which you've outlined, and there are 2 many others, too, which we would have to make sure were 3 covered.</p> <p>4 Q. Finally, slightly more of a condite(?) point on judicial 5 review, because the previous witness mentioned it. 6 Presumably your advice is that if there were a web of 7 contractual relationships binding newspaper groups to 8 this new regulator, this new regulator would clearly be 9 subject to judicial review, wouldn't it?</p> <p>10 A. Judicial review has become now so commonplace. I've had 11 so many of my decisions as a minister challenged under 12 judicial review in a way that would never have taken 13 place many years ago. So I think almost certainly yes, 14 but whether or not the decision would be to intervene in 15 the rules of a self-regulatory body, that's still really 16 something which is uncertain.</p> <p>17 Q. I would agree with that, but I'm dealing more with 18 points of principle. My understanding of the law in 19 quite old Court of Appeal decisions is that 20 a contractual regulator would be amenable to judicial 21 review. I think it's a decision of Lord Donaldson in 22 a case called Datafin. It may well be the case, but I'd 23 like to think about this further, that the PCC is 24 already amenable to judicial review, even without 25 a contract, but it's not necessary to express</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

23 (Pages 89 to 92)

<p>1 a concluded view on that.</p> <p>2 It deals with an objection Lord Grade raised to</p> <p>3 statutory regulation, that there is no difference, for</p> <p>4 judicial review purposes, between a statutory regulator</p> <p>5 and a contractual regulator, is there?</p> <p>6 A. Well, I thought I'd argued successfully on two</p> <p>7 occasions, on behalf of an association of members</p> <p>8 creating a body, that it was not capable of judicial</p> <p>9 review, because it wasn't contained in statute. I think</p> <p>10 I probably need to reflect on the stare decisis around</p> <p>11 this issue. Please don't rely on me to give definitive</p> <p>12 advice. I think I'd probably come to you for that.</p> <p>13 Q. Yes, and I would ask for a bit of time to ponder the</p> <p>14 jurisprudence you refer to, and I haven't had the time</p> <p>15 in the last three or four days to do that, Lord Hunt.</p> <p>16 Can I come back to statutory regulation? I can see</p> <p>17 the philosophical objection you put forward, and I can</p> <p>18 see that you're coming to us with, if I may say so,</p> <p>19 lengthy experience of Parliament, both in the House of</p> <p>20 Commons and the House of Lords, and you fear that some</p> <p>21 of your colleagues may take this opportunity to settle</p> <p>22 old scores but in any event seek to muzzle or curb the</p> <p>23 press because that would be their agenda.</p> <p>24 Subject to that concern, there is no difference in</p> <p>25 substance, is there, between the contractual system</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1 the better because it can adapt to the challenge of</p> <p>2 change.</p> <p>3 Q. But even with your contractual system, in order to adapt</p> <p>4 to the challenge of change, you would have to amend the</p> <p>5 contract, wouldn't you?</p> <p>6 A. Not necessarily, because you, I hope, are going to</p> <p>7 empower a new regulator with two columns: standards and</p> <p>8 compliance, and complaints and mediation. I would want</p> <p>9 to see the contract allow for a further arm, if it is</p> <p>10 right to proceed down that road, but back to the new</p> <p>11 regulator. The contract would give the new regulator</p> <p>12 power to adapt to the challenge of change. That is the</p> <p>13 key. So you wouldn't need a new Act of Parliament; you</p> <p>14 would need the new body to feel that it had to proceed</p> <p>15 in that direction within the powers given to it by the</p> <p>16 contract.</p> <p>17 Q. Yes, but an Act of Parliament which was not prescriptive</p> <p>18 in the sense of the standards which were to be imposed,</p> <p>19 moreover did seek to enshrine certain constitutional</p> <p>20 principles in relation to the freedom of the press --</p> <p>21 that Act of Parliament and the regulatory body which</p> <p>22 would spring from it would, it might be argued, be</p> <p>23 exactly as flexible and exactly as independent as the</p> <p>24 contractual mechanism that you are advocating, isn't</p> <p>25 that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1 which are you advocating and a system which has a</p> <p>2 statutory underpinning but otherwise has exactly the</p> <p>3 same powers as the system you're advocating; would you</p> <p>4 agree?</p> <p>5 A. I think I'd rather want to reword your question.</p> <p>6 Q. Fair enough.</p> <p>7 A. But I'm not allowed to do that.</p> <p>8 Q. You can, Lord Hunt. I'm going to permit you to do that.</p> <p>9 A. But what I think is that Parliament, when it is</p> <p>10 presented with a bill, believes there to be a problem</p> <p>11 which it is necessary to solve. Now, the government may</p> <p>12 present it in a limited way, but Parliament has the</p> <p>13 right to proceed in the way that it thinks fit, and</p> <p>14 I think on an issue like this, there would be widespread</p> <p>15 belief that there would be a better way through</p> <p>16 a different form of regulation.</p> <p>17 Self-regulation, though, has a huge advantage, in</p> <p>18 that it is capable of change, adapting to circumstances.</p> <p>19 Changing the code, improving the code, strengthening the</p> <p>20 code, strengthening the system in a new way,</p> <p>21 particularly faced with online publications, the need to</p> <p>22 extend the sphere. That is perfectly possible without</p> <p>23 another bill, another Act of Parliament.</p> <p>24 As soon as you get into statute, you're into an</p> <p>25 inflexible system. I think self-regulation is so much</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1 A. Well, over the years I've seen so much legislation that</p> <p>2 has been introduced into Parliament, needed amendment in</p> <p>3 both houses, last-minute amendments, and then, after the</p> <p>4 legislation has passed and become an Act, received royal</p> <p>5 assent. Suddenly problems arise which were not covered</p> <p>6 by the legislation. New situations arise.</p> <p>7 What I'm seeking through self-regulation is to</p> <p>8 establish a structure that can easily, easily, by</p> <p>9 agreement and by consensus, be established and be</p> <p>10 adapted to the changing environment. I think that's the</p> <p>11 great advantage. It may work. I believe it will work.</p> <p>12 But if it didn't work, yes, you can always go back to</p> <p>13 the --</p> <p>14 Q. Sword of Damocles.</p> <p>15 A. -- the sword of Damocles and establish a statutory</p> <p>16 framework. But the press already operate within a huge</p> <p>17 statutory back-up system.</p> <p>18 Q. Yes, I understand. It's the same sword of Damocles,</p> <p>19 though, that Sir David Calcutt left hanging over the</p> <p>20 press in 1993, isn't it?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, but I think in many ways the structure that I am</p> <p>22 hoping to establish would meet his wishes and</p> <p>23 expectations, which at the time -- I do know for a fact</p> <p>24 he was very, very disappointed that there wasn't such</p> <p>25 a positive reaction then, but I believe we have that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>

24 (Pages 93 to 96)



<p>1 positive reaction now.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is this time-limited, Lord Hunt?</p> <p>3 There is actually a second sword of Damocles here, not</p> <p>4 merely the possibility of doing something in the future,</p> <p>5 but: "Unless we get this signed up quite quickly, then</p> <p>6 this fellow called Leveson is going to come and make it</p> <p>7 much worse for us"? I don't have that power, actually,</p> <p>8 because I would only make recommendations in any event,</p> <p>9 but is there something to that effect about this, too?</p> <p>10 A. No. I think you have opened the window of opportunity,</p> <p>11 sir. I'd be keen to use the momentum that your Inquiry</p> <p>12 has provided to press on with reform.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, well, I entirely agree with</p> <p>14 that, and as I have, I think, already said to you this</p> <p>15 afternoon, suggested just that possibility as long ago</p> <p>16 as last September/October. So I am not at all</p> <p>17 concerned -- in fact, I positively encourage the work</p> <p>18 that you and those who are supporting you have done to</p> <p>19 try to find a way through, but I have some concerns,</p> <p>20 which I would like to be thought about as well. But</p> <p>21 I'll wait until Mr Jay concludes.</p> <p>22 MR JAY: Two final questions, Lord Hunt. It goes without</p> <p>23 saying -- but this would be true of contractual system</p> <p>24 and a statutory system -- that more money would be</p> <p>25 needed, wouldn't it, to enable the new regulator or the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 the PCC has been rather dominated by Conservative peers.</p> <p>2 That remains the position. It remains the position in</p> <p>3 relation to PressBoF. Is that an accident? Does</p> <p>4 anything flow from that, Lord Black? Lord Hunt, pardon</p> <p>5 me.</p> <p>6 A. I'm just absorbing your Freudian slip.</p> <p>7 May I just say that I hope my experience with the</p> <p>8 press is not guiding me here, because it would be in the</p> <p>9 opposite direction to that which you've set out.</p> <p>10 I don't think there is anyone who's appeared as</p> <p>11 a witness before you who has had the sort of</p> <p>12 vilification I have had in the press in the past.</p> <p>13 I think it was Edward Pierce who wrote that magnificent</p> <p>14 article which my children so love: "David Hunt is</p> <p>15 a sponge, but even a sponge can be useful." And I just</p> <p>16 give you that as one example. I have had more than my</p> <p>17 fair share of derision from the press, but my goodness,</p> <p>18 although I disagree with them, I'd fight to the death</p> <p>19 for their right to express those views. That's always</p> <p>20 been my view.</p> <p>21 I mustn't get too deep about this, but in the early</p> <p>22 part of my career, it was certain newspapers who</p> <p>23 supported me when I was in my early 20s, when I attacked</p> <p>24 Enoch Powell on the issue of race and got sacked by my</p> <p>25 local constituency with my parliamentary career at an</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 renamed regulator to discharge its functions? That's</p> <p>2 right, isn't it?</p> <p>3 A. No. I don't think the proposed new model is going to be</p> <p>4 much more expensive. I don't think it can possibly be.</p> <p>5 The newspaper industry is evolving all the time and it's</p> <p>6 a simple fact of life, as my parliamentary colleague</p> <p>7 Lord Grade pointed out, that printed newspapers are in</p> <p>8 decline, especially at the regional and local levels,</p> <p>9 and I'm determined that a regulator that deals with</p> <p>10 complaints, but also polices internal self-regulation,</p> <p>11 will not grow into an intolerably expensive burden on</p> <p>12 the industry, although there will be some transitional</p> <p>13 cost during the process of reform, but involving best</p> <p>14 practice, will and must see a higher proportion of</p> <p>15 alleged code breaches dealt with quickly, efficiently</p> <p>16 and internally by the offending publications themselves.</p> <p>17 There's huge opportunity here for the industry to</p> <p>18 regulate itself in a way that perhaps it hasn't focused</p> <p>19 on sufficiently well in the past.</p> <p>20 Q. I've been asked to put to you this question. It goes,</p> <p>21 I suppose, to the point which someone put in these</p> <p>22 terms: "cosy cabal", if you can forgive me for put it in</p> <p>23 this way.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. It hasn't escaped anybody's notice that the history of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 end, and it was one newspaper in particular who said --</p> <p>2 and wrote an editorial, which was quite brave and</p> <p>3 courageous of them at the time, saying, "This young man</p> <p>4 will go far. He need not worry."</p> <p>5 Well, I was very worried, but not after I read that</p> <p>6 editorial. So I think the press is a mixture,</p> <p>7 I suppose, but the fact it's a free press is probably</p> <p>8 our nation's greatest asset.</p> <p>9 MR JAY: Okay, well, forgive me for asking the question.</p> <p>10 I'm grateful for your answer, Lord Hunt. Thank you.</p> <p>11 A. Thank you.</p> <p>12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Let me just become slightly less</p> <p>13 over-arching. A contract may bind the press</p> <p>14 institutions that enter into the contract but says</p> <p>15 absolutely nothing to the public. So how do you see the</p> <p>16 concept of your ability, for example, to award</p> <p>17 compensation as fitting with the right of a member of</p> <p>18 the public to pursue litigation?</p> <p>19 A. It would not be possible under the Human Rights Act to</p> <p>20 debar someone.</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's the point.</p> <p>22 A. But --</p> <p>23 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Unless you got a system that is</p> <p>24 Article 6-compliant.</p> <p>25 A. Yes, and I carry with me everywhere the Human Rights Act</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 because it is so critical and crucial here.</p> <p>2 How the public interest would be dealt with -- the</p> <p>3 entire system would have to be founded on a generally</p> <p>4 accepted definition of the public interest. The entire</p> <p>5 system has to be based on that, embodied in the</p> <p>6 contracts and in the code. That's the only way forward.</p> <p>7 It has to be a system judged against everything that's</p> <p>8 happened in the past. Would it have stopped these</p> <p>9 situations arising? That's been in the forefront of my</p> <p>10 mind. What could this new regulator are done to have</p> <p>11 stopped some of the evil practices which we've heard</p> <p>12 about and which this Inquiry has highlighted?</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So it wouldn't stop a member of the</p> <p>14 public pursuing litigation. What do you say to the line</p> <p>15 that you have to choose? "Either you come to the PCC</p> <p>16 mark 1 or you had go to court. You can't do both."</p> <p>17 A. Two responses. The financial services ombudsman says if</p> <p>18 you come to the ombudsman, then you are not bound by our</p> <p>19 decision but the company that you're complaining against</p> <p>20 is. So you could have a system where the press are</p> <p>21 bound by the decision, but the member of the public --</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You certainly could, but I don't know</p> <p>23 whether your thinking has progressed that far with your</p> <p>24 constituency.</p> <p>25 A. I sense that this is a real opportunity for the third</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 Times with the risk of litigation that would be</p> <p>2 inordinately expensive, and the concern about making it</p> <p>3 entirely contractually based is that the extremely</p> <p>4 wealthy could not be compelled to go down that route but</p> <p>5 would be able to pursue whatever remedy it sought,</p> <p>6 unless there was some form of arbitral system that was</p> <p>7 Article 6-compliant but that didn't give the opportunity</p> <p>8 simply to avoid it.</p> <p>9 A. Sir, I think this is such an important area. I don't</p> <p>10 have an easy and quick reply but I have spent some time</p> <p>11 looking through the Defamation Act 2009, the Irish</p> <p>12 Defamation Act.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I was about to say I didn't</p> <p>14 think we had one.</p> <p>15 A. No, we shall have Defamation Act 2012.</p> <p>16 Section 26 says -- actually lays a statutory test on</p> <p>17 the extent to which the publisher of the periodical</p> <p>18 adhered to standards equivalent to the standards laid</p> <p>19 down in effect by the Irish Press Council.</p> <p>20 So when such a case reached the courts, in</p> <p>21 considering it, the judiciary would want to be assured</p> <p>22 that the individual concerned had utilised the services</p> <p>23 of the complaints and mediation service.</p> <p>24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's fine, but that does actually</p> <p>25 mean, doesn't it, that this body is going to have to be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 column. I would want the complaints and mediation arm</p> <p>2 to be fast, fair and free, so that people get immediate</p> <p>3 response where they have failed to get that response</p> <p>4 from the newspaper or magazine.</p> <p>5 The third column, I think, is the area which</p> <p>6 everyone has wrestled with, and I've tried to do the</p> <p>7 same. I haven't reached any conclusions, and I'm</p> <p>8 listening very carefully, sir, to the evidence at this</p> <p>9 Inquiry. I sense there must be a better way of</p> <p>10 mediating, of dealing with complaints, of awarding</p> <p>11 compensation, but I can't quite see my way through there</p> <p>12 yet, and I think if you were able to highlight the right</p> <p>13 way forward here, I would certainly want the contracts</p> <p>14 to be able to absorb such a third column, if that were</p> <p>15 your conclusion.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, you've heard me ask a number of</p> <p>17 witnesses about this three-tiered approach: complaints,</p> <p>18 standards and some form of arbitral system. But the</p> <p>19 difficulty with your contractual approach will be to rob</p> <p>20 the system of the opportunity of requiring some form of</p> <p>21 straightforward arbitration.</p> <p>22 I particularly raised this with Lionel Barber, the</p> <p>23 editor of the Financial Times, who was at the time</p> <p>24 expressing concern about the ability of the extremely</p> <p>25 wealthy effectively to overwhelm even the Financial</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 recognised in some way in statutory form.</p> <p>2 A. But the press is already -- section 12, freedom of</p> <p>3 expression.</p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well --</p> <p>5 A. It's already -- in this essential law for journalists --</p> <p>6 I'm amazed that journalists feel free, because there is</p> <p>7 so much restriction in the criminal law and the civil</p> <p>8 law already in place. What we're talking about is just</p> <p>9 adding on to that, not creating a statutory regulator.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand that, and I am just</p> <p>11 trying to test it, because one of the carrots that I've</p> <p>12 spoken about is the ability, in a Reynolds-type defence,</p> <p>13 to rely upon membership of and compliance with the rules</p> <p>14 set out by a regulator, but that would then require</p> <p>15 a definition of the regulator to be contained within the</p> <p>16 statutory framework, would it not?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: The advantage of a contract is that</p> <p>19 ultimately a particular media organisation may or may</p> <p>20 not sign up. There is the ability, ultimately, to</p> <p>21 withdraw, however couched --</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- with restrictions that is. If one</p> <p>24 created an Irish-type model that recognised a regulator</p> <p>25 that did certain things, you could provide that it had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

26 (Pages 101 to 104)

<p>1 to be set up so that it was independent, that it --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- provided certain remedies, which</p> <p>4 I think the Irish model does.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Then presumably it would be</p> <p>7 sufficient for the legislation to identify the model and</p> <p>8 to leave the regulator to get on with the task of</p> <p>9 organising codes, practices and the rest of it.</p> <p>10 Now, on that basis, would it not also be</p> <p>11 advantageous to allow that regulator to set up an</p> <p>12 arbitral system, which, if not mandated, could be,</p> <p>13 rather as you've identified the Irish model does,</p> <p>14 directive of those who wish to complain?</p> <p>15 A. Yes. It's -- it is, of course, in the reference that</p> <p>16 I've made to the Irish Press Council, only within the</p> <p>17 Defamation Act 2009. There is no other sort of</p> <p>18 statutory, regulatory structure laid out in any other</p> <p>19 Irish Act, as I understand it. I'm exploring this</p> <p>20 further at the present time.</p> <p>21 But you are quite right, because in schedule 2 it</p> <p>22 sets out minimum requirements in respect of the Press</p> <p>23 Council, and it may well be this third column would need</p> <p>24 to satisfy those minimum requirements. But it doesn't</p> <p>25 in any way mean we will have to wait, because there is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 the further developments that you have agreed or that</p> <p>2 you're able to pursue, in order the better to inform my</p> <p>3 consideration of the future.</p> <p>4 A. (Nods head)</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: In other words, to such extent as you</p> <p>6 can use -- I won't say the sword, that puts it far too</p> <p>7 high -- the small dagger that I hold, knowing of the</p> <p>8 concerns that I have and the principles that I have</p> <p>9 hinted at -- more than hinted at, made clear that I feel</p> <p>10 strongly about -- then I have no difficulty with that.</p> <p>11 A. (Nods head)</p> <p>12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I think that's probably as far as we</p> <p>13 can go this afternoon.</p> <p>14 A. Yes, sir. I very much welcome your words. I think --</p> <p>15 I think you, in this Inquiry, have highlighted really</p> <p>16 what has been a great shame in the past: bad journalism.</p> <p>17 But the overwhelming majority of journalists I know just</p> <p>18 wish we could eradicate what goes on at that level, and</p> <p>19 what I'm really talking about -- what I've sensed in all</p> <p>20 my discussions is that there is a willingness to embrace</p> <p>21 a profound and positive change in culture running right</p> <p>22 across the whole industry, and you are giving us an</p> <p>23 unrivalled opportunity to meet the need that is so</p> <p>24 pressing.</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Lord Hunt, I hope that is so. I have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 already, I would regard, an unprecedented consensus in</p> <p>2 favour of the proposed new architecture uniting the</p> <p>3 political parties, my colleagues on the PCC and, most</p> <p>4 important of all, the industry itself. That's why</p> <p>5 I think we have a unique historic opportunity.</p> <p>6 Once we've established this new structure, we can</p> <p>7 build on it. We can gain the respect of the public</p> <p>8 through the exercise, for the first time ever, of proper</p> <p>9 regulatory functions with the power to investigate,</p> <p>10 et cetera, and I think this could set a precedent for</p> <p>11 a future course of action on which -- you may well, sir,</p> <p>12 have some vitally important views on how we could build</p> <p>13 on this structure, but we need a structure on which to</p> <p>14 build which does not rely on the Press Regulation Act.</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I understand that, clearly, and</p> <p>16 you have clearly in mind also the need to satisfy the</p> <p>17 public concern that has been expressed so vocally to me</p> <p>18 and indeed otherwise.</p> <p>19 We're not going to solve this this afternoon, but</p> <p>20 what I am very keen that you should do is to keep the</p> <p>21 Inquiry informed about the progress that you are making</p> <p>22 and where the sticking points are, if there are any, and</p> <p>23 to maintain the momentum that you feel you can maintain</p> <p>24 on the basis that you should expect that I may very well</p> <p>25 request that you return to allow into the public domain</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 never shied away from saying that by far the greatest</p> <p>2 proportion of journalistic activity in this country has</p> <p>3 been to the very great benefit of the country, and</p> <p>4 I have said that both in relation to the regional press</p> <p>5 and also to national titles, but it would be a mistake</p> <p>6 to think that my concern is limited to phone hacking, or</p> <p>7 that there aren't other practices which I have heard</p> <p>8 about which do not cause me real anxiety.</p> <p>9 A. Mm.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: If the industry is taking advantage</p> <p>11 of the time that the Inquiry takes to address these</p> <p>12 concerns, nobody will be more pleased than I will be to</p> <p>13 be able to feel progress has been made and that</p> <p>14 a solution has been reached which can be embraced by the</p> <p>15 industry rather than fought over for the next five years</p> <p>16 to come.</p> <p>17 But it does have to cope with the problems, because</p> <p>18 those organisations and people who've spoken about those</p> <p>19 problems have a legitimate interest in ensuring that</p> <p>20 they haven't gone through the pain of exposing</p> <p>21 themselves only to find that nothing really has changed.</p> <p>22 I hope you agree that that's not unfair.</p> <p>23 A. Well, if I just say, sir, that my objective will be nil</p> <p>24 satis nisi optimum, which you may recall is the motto of</p> <p>25 a famous Premier League football club. It's a clarion</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

27 (Pages 105 to 108)

1 call: to be satisfied by nothing but the best.  
2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, that's easy to say; not  
3 necessarily straightforward to achieve.  
4 A. Thank you.  
5 MR JAY: Thank you.  
6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Lord Hunt, thank you very much  
7 indeed.  
8 A. Thank you.  
9 MR JAY: May I raise a tiny different topic before you rise?  
10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.  
11 MR JAY: Evidence of Mr Thomas last week. He wishes to make  
12 some very minor corrections and clarifications.  
13 A letter of 24 January will therefore be put on the  
14 website in the usual way, setting out those matters.  
15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I've read the letter. I agree  
16 with that approach.  
17 Thank you very much indeed. Tomorrow morning,  
18 10 o'clock.  
19 (5.04 pm)  
20 (The hearing adjourned until 10 o'clock the following day)  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

<b>A</b>	<b>actionable</b> 7:18	<b>affairs</b> 64:23	<b>answered</b> 50:22	<b>approaching</b>	<b>attached</b> 54:3	58:7
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