

<p>1 Thursday, 14 June 2012</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, Mr Jay.</p> <p>4 MR JAY: Today's witness is the Right Honourable</p> <p>5 David Cameron, please.</p> <p>6 MR DAVID WILLIAM DONALD CAMERON (sworn)</p> <p>7 Questions by MR JAY</p> <p>8 MR JAY: First of all, Mr Cameron, your full name, please?</p> <p>9 A. David William Donald Cameron.</p> <p>10 Q. Thank you. You've kindly provided us with a witness</p> <p>11 statement dated 4 May of this year. It extends to 84</p> <p>12 pages and possesses three exhibits. Subject to one very</p> <p>13 minor matter, to which we will come in due course, is</p> <p>14 this the formal evidence you're tendering to our</p> <p>15 Inquiry?</p> <p>16 A. It is.</p> <p>17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Prime Minister, as I have said to</p> <p>18 many other witnesses, I am extremely grateful for the</p> <p>19 obvious work that you, no doubt with assistance, have</p> <p>20 put into your evidence and the material that you've</p> <p>21 provided for the Inquiry at a time when there have</p> <p>22 obviously been many other calls on your time. Thank</p> <p>23 you.</p> <p>24 A. Pleasure.</p> <p>25 MR JAY: Mr Cameron, may I start with two general questions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 think was your approach orthodox or unorthodox?</p> <p>2 A. I suppose fairly orthodox. When I became a special</p> <p>3 adviser, I'd been working at the Conservative research</p> <p>4 department at Conservative central office for a number</p> <p>5 of years, and my job as a special adviser was very much</p> <p>6 as a political special adviser. I was a speech writer,</p> <p>7 I was advising on party policy, doing the party</p> <p>8 political side of the minister's job, rather than being</p> <p>9 an expert special adviser.</p> <p>10 In the Treasury, for instance, we had some expert</p> <p>11 special advisers who were tax specialists or economists,</p> <p>12 whereas I was more the general political adviser.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you. You were at Carlton Communications as we</p> <p>14 know between 1994 and 2001. We're plainly in the realm</p> <p>15 of broadcast communications and not print media</p> <p>16 specifically. You tell us about how those experiences</p> <p>17 influenced your thinking between paragraphs 61 and 66 of</p> <p>18 your statement, but am I right in deducing that it was</p> <p>19 your media background which at least in part brought you</p> <p>20 into contact with journalists, and it's that contact</p> <p>21 which has led to the development of friendships?</p> <p>22 A. Well, there were various parts to my job at Carlton.</p> <p>23 One part was to deal with the regulatory environment</p> <p>24 that television and television companies faced, which</p> <p>25 was quite a controlled -- quite a strict regulatory</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 about your career before 2001, which is the date you</p> <p>2 entered Parliament. You were special adviser at both</p> <p>3 the Treasury and the Home Office between 1992 and 1994;</p> <p>4 is that right?</p> <p>5 A. That's right.</p> <p>6 Q. In your dealings with third parties, to what extent, if</p> <p>7 ever, did you express an opinion which was not the</p> <p>8 opinion of your minister, without making it clear that</p> <p>9 it wasn't?</p> <p>10 A. Well, it's quite a long time ago, so it's hard to</p> <p>11 remember all the interactions I had. Obviously as</p> <p>12 a special adviser, I would have had contacts with</p> <p>13 businesses, as you say, third parties. I mean, the job</p> <p>14 of a special adviser generally was to often be</p> <p>15 a mouthpiece for your minister, sometimes to be a bit of</p> <p>16 a sponge in terms of soaking up a lot of people that</p> <p>17 wanted to see the minister but the minister didn't have</p> <p>18 time, but on occasions I'm sure I would have made clear</p> <p>19 to people my own view about something, but I can't think</p> <p>20 of particular instances.</p> <p>21 Q. On such occasions, do you think you would have made it</p> <p>22 clear to the third party that you were expressing your</p> <p>23 own opinion and not your minister's opinion?</p> <p>24 A. I would hope so.</p> <p>25 Q. And from your own experience, to what extent do you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 environment. That was one part of the job. Another</p> <p>2 part of the job was dealing with investors and</p> <p>3 shareholders and the whole investor relations, which</p> <p>4 meant dealing with them, and another part was press</p> <p>5 handling and press relations.</p> <p>6 So I formed some relationships with journalists</p> <p>7 during that period, but also probably in terms of</p> <p>8 political journalists I got to know, I would have said</p> <p>9 that was more related to the time when I was a special</p> <p>10 adviser, because I was dealing with political</p> <p>11 journalists then and some of them are still around</p> <p>12 today.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you. To what extent has your background in these</p> <p>14 friendships provided you with knowledge and insights</p> <p>15 into how newspaper news desks function?</p> <p>16 A. Well, some knowledge, but not -- you know, I've never</p> <p>17 worked in a newsroom, so some knowledge and</p> <p>18 understanding, but not as much as someone who's actually</p> <p>19 worked there. I would say my time at Carlton probably</p> <p>20 taught me more about the television industry, about how</p> <p>21 it was regulated, and maybe we'll come on to this, a lot</p> <p>22 of the views I formed about media, media policy, media</p> <p>23 regulation, the BBC -- Carlton was quite a formative</p> <p>24 period because I was working for a big part of the</p> <p>25 British broadcasting industry, ITV effectively, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 I formed a lot of views and opinions then which I still 2 hold today. 3 Q. Thank you. I'm going to divide your evidence up if I 4 may into five general headings. The first heading is 5 general perspectives on the development of media issues. 6 May we look now, please, at paragraphs 13 and 14 of your 7 statement. Page 04099. 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. You explain that the media is the instrument of 10 communication and integral to the democratic process, 11 though we are all agreed the contact between politicians 12 and media is inevitable, necessary, not inherently 13 unhealthy. Is that right? 14 A. Absolutely. It's not the only way we communicate with 15 people, because obviously you have some direct forms of 16 communication, particularly at election time, leaflets 17 and the like, but it is a very big part of the way we 18 communicate, so the relationships are important. 19 Q. Paragraph 14, you refer to background discussions. Is 20 that intended to include off-the-record discussions? 21 A. Yes. Off-the-record discussions, but also discussions 22 to try and -- for journalists to understand more about 23 you, because you want to -- you want people to 24 understand your motivations, to understand your 25 character, your judgment, your views, and why you hold Page 5</p>	<p>1 newspapers have been put in a difficult position, 2 because the news has been made and reported long before 3 they reach their deadlines and they publish their papers 4 the next day, so I think newspapers have moved more 5 towards trying to find impact, trying to find an angle 6 on a story, rather than, as would have been the case 7 before 24-hour news and all the rest of it, of just 8 reporting what happened the day before. 9 So I think there has been a change, but I think 10 that's quite a lot to do with technology and the 11 development of media rather than anything else. 12 Q. But a change for the better, for the worse or in the end 13 neutral? 14 A. I think from the politicians' point of view, and 15 particularly perhaps from the government's point of 16 view, it's sometimes a change for the worse, because if 17 there's a big announcement, something we think is very 18 important, that gets announced on the television, it 19 gets picked over by the 24-hour news, and it's quite 20 understandable that the newspapers, by the time they 21 come out the next day, have to find something different, 22 and I completely understand why they want to do that, 23 but from the perspective of trying to explain to the 24 country why you're making difficult decisions, why 25 you're reforming the health service in this way, why Page 7</p>
<p>1 them. So these conversations are important and that's 2 why the relationship is important. 3 Q. In paragraph 15, you make it clear that a lot depends on 4 building the trust of individual journalists. How easy 5 or difficult has that been for you? 6 A. Well, it varies completely with the person concerned. 7 So sometimes you strike up a good and strong 8 relationship, sometimes you struggle. 9 Q. In paragraph 15, you also say: 10 "The media plays a vital part in interpreting and 11 explaining government announcements, policies and events 12 to the public." 13 In your view, and putting broadcasters to one side, 14 has the press discharged those obligations accurately 15 and fairly over the last 11 years, being the current 16 ambit of your political career? 17 A. I think it's changed a lot. I mean asking politicians 18 whether they're happy with the way the media report the 19 news as we see it is, you know, it's a bit like asking 20 farmers about the weather. We're always going to 21 complain. 22 I think a lot of the evidence that's been put 23 forward in the sessions you've had where people have 24 talked about the growth of the 24-hour news culture, the 25 fact that things move so fast means that I think Page 6</p>	<p>1 you're trying to cut the deficit in that way, sometimes 2 you'd love it if you could just try and get across more 3 what it is you actually decided to do rather than an 4 endless analysis of what the motives were or what the 5 splits were or whatever, but politicians will always 6 complain about this sort of thing, so I wouldn't put too 7 much weight on it. 8 Q. Do you think -- 9 A. Sorry, what it has leant me towards is spending quite 10 a lot of the focus, and this is in my evidence, on 11 broadcasting, and this partly goes back to my life at 12 Carlton, when I formed a view that if you really want to 13 get through to people, television is an incredibly 14 powerful medium, and as the media markets are sort of 15 broken down and newspapers are selling fewer copies and 16 more people are looking at the Internet, yes, the 17 audience for these big news programmes has fallen, but 18 funnily enough their power in many ways has almost got 19 greater, because the one thing lots of people do do all 20 at the same time is watch the main news bulletins in the 21 evening. So if you want to explain why you're doing 22 what you're doing, if you want to get things across, 23 television, as I try to explain here, is extraordinarily 24 important and powerful, so it mustn't be left out of the 25 mix. Page 8</p>

<p>1 Q. Yes, and broadcasters, of course, are subject to 2 different obligations -- 3 A. Absolutely, and rightly so. 4 Q. Thank you. In paragraphs 16 and 17, you give examples 5 of the benefits, and this relates to campaigns, and also 6 you give an example of a journalist from the Sunday 7 Telegraph accompanying you in August of last year -- 8 this is in the context of the riots. But presumably you 9 would agree that this work is easier in the realm of 10 less politically charged issues; is that right? 11 A. What is easier? Doing interviews or campaigns or ...? 12 Q. The benefits which accrue from campaigns, and it's 13 easier, it's less tendentious, I suppose, in areas which 14 are less politically charged. 15 A. I suppose that's the case, yes. 16 Q. Would you say the same about some of the shriller 17 campaigns which we've seen in certain sections of the 18 press over the years? 19 A. I would say that these campaigns newspapers run -- and 20 it's not always just newspapers, television stations can 21 run campaigns too -- some of them are extraordinarily 22 important and powerful. A number of your witnesses have 23 mentioned the Macpherson work by the Daily Mail. 24 I think that was -- the Lawrence trial case. That was 25 extremely important.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 A. I'm not sure I would. I think generally because, as 2 I've said, I think the 24-hour news cycle has meant that 3 newspapers have had to turn up the volume on everything, 4 and I think sometimes I feel newspaper reporting and 5 coverage can be -- it feels like you're being shouted at 6 rather than spoken to on lots of things. 7 On these campaigns, I wouldn't particularly say that 8 because if a newspaper gets a good campaign going and it 9 taps into a vein of public concern, then actually 10 they're doing an important job for our democracy and the 11 politicians need to answer, and for instance, the 12 Sarah's Law campaign, you know, I think there were quite 13 a lot of people who were quite condescending and said, 14 "Oh, you don't understand, of course we can't tell 15 anyone anything about paedophiles", and actually the 16 public were very angry about this and the public were 17 saying, "All parents worry about their children and the 18 dangers to their children more than anything", and 19 I think it's important politicians sort of understand 20 that and respond to that rather than just trying to push 21 it away. 22 Q. In paragraph 19 you explain that in order to maintain 23 and enhance the benefits you've identified, this has to 24 be based on mutual respect and understanding between 25 politicians and the media of their respective roles and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 Some of them are very reflective of the readers of 2 that paper and some of them are more about perhaps what 3 the editor cares about. And I think the politician has 4 to just judge in each case: is this a campaign that is 5 right and reflective of what people really think? Is 6 this something that needs to be answered? Or is it 7 something I'm prepared to have a disagreement about? 8 A recent example of a disagreement would be the 9 "hands off our land" campaign by the Telegraph objecting 10 to the planning reforms. I felt we need to reform the 11 planning system, we have to have that argument. Let's 12 listen to their points, but it's an argument we need to 13 have. 14 Some of them, and you might be referring to the 15 Sarah's Law campaign, some of them, yes, are very 16 controversial, but I think it's good that these 17 campaigns are put forward because it's part of the 18 challenge in a democratic system to say to the 19 politicians, you know, a lot of people care about this, 20 what are you doing about this, what's your answer to 21 this question? And I think it's good and right we have 22 that sort of vigorous debate. 23 Q. Although the volume on the megaphone is turned up very 24 loud, it's difficult to separate the noise from the 25 message, would you agree?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 without favours, but how does one foster, in your view, 2 that necessary degree of mutual respect and 3 understanding? 4 A. Well, I think it's a very difficult question and I don't 5 think we have it at the moment, frankly. I think the 6 relationship, while I argue that it has got sort of too 7 close and there are unhealthy parts to it, as I argue in 8 my evidence, it's also not a particularly trusting 9 relationship at the moment. I think a lot of 10 politicians think the press always get it wrong and the 11 rest of it, and a lot of the press think politicians are 12 in it for themselves, aren't in it for the right 13 reasons, and it's become a bad relationship. 14 How we get it to a better place, I think part of it 15 will be about having this greater transparency, having 16 better regulation, having a little bit more distance. 17 That will be part of respect. But respect also has to 18 come from high standards in both places as it were. The 19 expenses scandal was a massive knock to Parliament and 20 politicians' standing and politicians have to prove that 21 they're worthy of respect and the press obviously has 22 taken a tremendous knock, rightly, from some of the 23 appalling things we've found out through this Inquiry, 24 and respect has to be earned on both sides. 25 Q. You refer to having a bit more distance. That depends,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 I suppose, on each party to the debate, as it were, 2 having a sense of propriety as to what is right and 3 where the boundaries are. Are we agreed about that? 4 A. I think that's right, but distance is also about for the 5 politician, and this relates to the issue of the 24-hour 6 news cycle. There is a difficulty in -- I'm not 7 expecting sympathy for this, but there's a difficulty in 8 politics that you are fighting a sort of permanent 9 battle of issues being thrown at you hour by hour where 10 responses are demanded incredibly quickly, and it can, 11 if you're not careful, take up all your energy in 12 dealing with that, and that is hopeless, because if 13 that's what you spend your time doing, you will never 14 reform our schools, cut our deficit, deal with our 15 economic problems and all the rest of it. 16 When I say distance, partly what I mean is that the 17 politicians, and particularly prime ministers and 18 Cabinet ministers, have to get out of the 24-hour news 19 cycle, not try and fight every hourly battle, and focus 20 on long-term issues and be prepared sometimes to take 21 a hit on a story they don't respond to so quickly. 22 That's very easy to say that, but I did actually on 23 getting into Number 10 Downing Street try to do that. 24 I'm not sure it's always been totally successful, but 25 that's part of what I mean by distance. It means not Page 13</p>	<p>1 issues for years. 2 But I think in the last 20 years, I think the 3 relationship has not been right. I think it has been 4 too close, as I explain in my evidence, and I think we 5 need to try and get it on a better footing. 6 Q. Thank you. In paragraph 20, you refer to the need to 7 avoid excessive regulation, and I suppose defining the 8 issue in that way, we all necessarily agree with that. 9 The key principle you identify as being transparency. 10 Is transparency sufficient, though? 11 A. No. I don't think it is. I think where transparency 12 can help is -- in my evidence, I tried very hard to 13 think carefully what are the risks when this 14 relationship isn't right, and I tried to enumerate the 15 risks, and some of the risks -- and one of them perhaps 16 is the perception that media owners or editors or key 17 figures in the media sort of wield too much power -- 18 that risk I think you do mitigate in part by 19 transparency, because if everyone can see how often you 20 meet people, who you're meeting and the rest of it, that 21 enables others to draw comment on your meetings, and 22 I think we have a much better situation with 23 transparency which this government has introduced, but 24 clearly that's not enough because there are other risks 25 and some of those other risks need effective regulation Page 15</p>
<p>1 sitting under a 24-hour news television screen looking 2 at the ticker and worrying about what's happening every 3 hour. If you do that, you get completely buried by the 4 daily news agenda. 5 Q. The term a bit more distance could relate to the 6 quantity of engagement, and you've told us about that, 7 but it also could relate to the quality of individual 8 engagements with journalists, are we agreed? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. And are we also agreed that in that second sense we 11 need, in Sir John Major's term, constructive tension, or 12 certainly each party, each side having a proper 13 understanding of what is appropriate and what may not be 14 appropriate? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Is that so? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. And do you feel in relation to the past, without 19 alighting on individual examples, that in that second 20 sense there may not have been sufficient distance? 21 A. Yes. I mean, that's part of my evidence, really, is to 22 say I think this relationship has been going wrong for, 23 you know -- it's never been perfect. There have always 24 been problems and you can point to examples of Churchill 25 putting Beaverbrook as a minister. There have been Page 14</p>	<p>1 to deal with them. 2 I don't think the regulatory system that we have at 3 the moment works, and so we need to improve it, and so 4 if we just said transparency and that's it, everyone can 5 see who's meeting whom, that's enough, I think that 6 would be a mistake. 7 Q. We'll come to your ideas in due course, Mr Cameron. 8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Are you here talking about the 9 relationship between the press and politicians or at 10 a wider level? Because in relation to how politicians 11 engage with the press, I would struggle a bit to see how 12 regulation could assist. It's a cultural thing, it 13 seems to me. 14 A. What I would say, sir, is the transparency can help 15 address some of the problems of perception because 16 people can see who you're meeting and when, but one of 17 my arguments is that because the relationship hasn't 18 been right, because it has been too close, as I put it, 19 the politicians and the press haven't spent enough time 20 discussing and sorting out the regulatory system under 21 which the press exist. 22 We need to fix that, and I thought Ed Miliband put 23 this quite well. He identified another risk, which is 24 it's quite difficult for the politician to sort out on 25 their own the regulatory situation the press face Page 16</p>

<p>1 because we are clearly an interested party, and if we 2 just steamed ahead and said, "Right, we're going to 3 regulate it in this way or that way", I think the press 4 would have a legitimate argument to say, "Hold on 5 a second, you're beneficiaries of this and we need some 6 independence" and that's part of what this investigation 7 is about. 8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. 9 A. Sorry. 10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, no, I understand the point. But 11 it seems to me, if I just go back to the politician 12 relationship with the press, it's absolutely critical 13 and part of our democracy, I entirely understand that, 14 and as I've said to a number of people, one can't 15 interfere with human beings being friendly with other 16 human beings, but to some extent would you agree that 17 the problem that the politicians face is that actually 18 the onus is on them because the press will feel, perhaps 19 legitimately, that they ought to push in order to be 20 able to hold politicians to account, to investigate what 21 they want to investigate, and the more ways they can get 22 information the better, therefore it's up to the 23 politicians actually to say, "This dynamic needs to be 24 changed"?" 25 A. You need to draw some boundaries, but it's very Page 17</p>	<p>1 Why does that consequence flow from the focus on 2 media coverage? 3 A. I think because the press want access, politicians want 4 coverage for what they're doing and their policies and 5 their approach, and so the two parties focus on that, 6 and when things were going wrong, as they clearly were, 7 and I give the examples of the Information 8 Commissioner's reports, what didn't happen was the 9 politicians and the press didn't sort of disengage and 10 say, "Hold on a second, we have a real problem here, we 11 need to deal with it, it might need changes to the law, 12 it might need an improvement of the self-regulatory 13 system", et cetera, et cetera, that didn't happen. 14 I thought Tony Blair's evidence to you was quite 15 powerful. He said -- I'm not quoting -- "I know there 16 was a problem but it was an enormous challenge and I had 17 all these other challenges to deal with and so I didn't 18 deal with it", and I think that was a sort of 19 encapsulation of my risk number one. 20 Q. In relation to Operation Motorman, you say at the end of 21 the paragraph: 22 "I regret that opposition front bench politicians 23 failed to devote enough time to scrutinise the 24 government and hold them to account." 25 But did you devote any time to this issue? Page 19</p>
<p>1 difficult to do because the politicians do have an 2 interest in not being investigated vigorously. 3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. 4 A. If we take the expenses scandal, it was deeply painful 5 for politicians but it was absolutely right that it was 6 revealed and I think it's -- you know, the free press we 7 have in this country is a very important part of our 8 democratic system. We shouldn't fetter them 9 inappropriately, that would be completely wrong, and we 10 need to have the politicians continually called to 11 account by vigorous press campaigns. 12 That's why we need to get this relationship right. 13 Transparency is part of it, how we make a regulatory 14 system work is another, and I think we need to try and 15 find a way for some independence to be brought to that, 16 so hopefully press and politicians can say, "Well, it 17 may not be perfect in every way, but this is a fair set 18 of ideas and we can put them in place." 19 MR JAY: Mr Cameron, some of the risks, you introduce these 20 in paragraph 22 of your statement on page 04103. The 21 first in paragraph 23: 22 "... because politicians can focus on media coverage 23 there is a danger they do not devote enough time to 24 considering the wider issues of how the media operates 25 and potential instances of bad practices." Page 18</p>	<p>1 A. I was aware of the issue, but frankly I think, as I say 2 here, the government didn't give enough attention, the 3 opposition didn't give it enough attention, and I think 4 that's a matter for regret. 5 Q. When you refer a little bit higher up in this paragraph 6 to the CMS Select Committee examining other 7 media-related issues in 2003, without going into any of 8 the detail, is that intended to be a reference to 9 evidence Rebekah Wade as she then was gave to the 10 committee on that occasion? 11 A. No, I think it's just a general reference to things that 12 weren't right. When I was doing -- writing the 13 evidence, I was trying to reflect on how I felt as -- 14 I wasn't leader of the opposition then, but just 15 generally, and I looked back at some of the evidence 16 that had come out and thought, well, you know, 17 Parliament was doing its job and the Select Committee 18 was doing its job, but the party leaderships weren't 19 picking up these issues in perhaps the way they should 20 have done. 21 Q. Before the House of Commons Liaison Committee when you 22 appeared there in September of last year, you put the 23 point explicitly that, and I paraphrase: an overly close 24 relationship permitted regulation issues to be put on 25 the back-burner. Page 20</p>

<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. So you're attributing cause and effect, is that</p> <p>3 something that you're comfortable with?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, I think that's right. The way I've put it is that</p> <p>5 politicians were spending, you know, their time trying</p> <p>6 to get their message across, and when it was necessary</p> <p>7 to disengage from that and discuss regulatory issues,</p> <p>8 that wasn't happening, and I think that's been happening</p> <p>9 under governments of both parties for some time.</p> <p>10 Q. What was your reaction to Mr Blair's "feral beast"</p> <p>11 speech of June 2007, aside from the fact that it was</p> <p>12 a few days before he was departing?</p> <p>13 A. I can't -- I mean, I read it again actually in the last</p> <p>14 couple of days preparing for this, and there's a lot of</p> <p>15 good points in it, but the trouble is there isn't much</p> <p>16 of a solution. There was quite a good analysis of this</p> <p>17 problem of the 24-hour news cycle, the turning up of the</p> <p>18 volume on news and comment, but there wasn't really</p> <p>19 a specific solution.</p> <p>20 I can't remember what I said at the time. I have</p> <p>21 a horrible feeling that, like all these attempts to try</p> <p>22 and raise the issue, I suspect the political parties</p> <p>23 probably didn't really give it much of a backing.</p> <p>24 Q. Okay. Paragraph 25, Mr Cameron, you identify a second</p> <p>25 risk --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 Q. Looking at it more broadly, can one put it in this way:</p> <p>2 part of the problem may be that politicians have been</p> <p>3 guilty of a form of appeasement. They've permitted the</p> <p>4 power of the press to consolidate and be exercised</p> <p>5 unhindered, and that's happened really over</p> <p>6 a generation?</p> <p>7 A. I don't like the word "appeasement". I think that's</p> <p>8 a bit too strong. I think what's happened, as I said,</p> <p>9 is politicians have been focused on getting their</p> <p>10 message across rather than regulation. I think there</p> <p>11 have been some good examples of politicians on all sides</p> <p>12 actually confronting and facing down very strong</p> <p>13 campaigns that newspapers or others might have, so</p> <p>14 I don't think politicians have always been guilty of</p> <p>15 appeasing in that sense.</p> <p>16 I use the example of identity cards or 42-day</p> <p>17 detention, which I was vigorously opposed to, which some</p> <p>18 parts of the press wanted.</p> <p>19 But no, I think it's more than appeasement, it's</p> <p>20 more about just not focusing on these regulatory issues</p> <p>21 when they needed to be focused on.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay. Related to that, is not the size of the voice in</p> <p>23 part a manifestation of economic and commercial power?</p> <p>24 In other words, we've allowed too much to accumulate in</p> <p>25 the hands of a small number of individuals?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 A. Mm.</p> <p>2 Q. -- that can lead to "the public perception that media</p> <p>3 proprietors and senior media figures in general, or</p> <p>4 specific individuals in particular, can have too loud</p> <p>5 a voice in the country's politics."</p> <p>6 Isn't it more than just a perception, though, that</p> <p>7 particular aspect you've identified there?</p> <p>8 A. Well, I think that depends on how robust politicians are</p> <p>9 in standing up and defending their values, their</p> <p>10 policies, their approach. I think we deal with this</p> <p>11 risk by making transparent all these meetings so people</p> <p>12 can see who you're seeing, but I would argue very</p> <p>13 strongly that my policies are determined by my beliefs,</p> <p>14 values, my party's beliefs and values, and not by what</p> <p>15 a particular editor or proprietor might want, and I give</p> <p>16 you some examples in my evidence of where I've had, you</p> <p>17 know, quite strong disagreements with -- whether it's</p> <p>18 Rupert Murdoch over the BBC or the Daily Telegraph over</p> <p>19 planning or what have you.</p> <p>20 So this is a risk. I think you mitigate it through</p> <p>21 transparency, but as I also going on to say, you need</p> <p>22 a vigorous public debate so people can see if</p> <p>23 politicians are regularly caving in to media pressure</p> <p>24 that goes against something they previously said, well,</p> <p>25 the public can draw their own conclusions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 A. I think this is a difficult question. I think</p> <p>2 sometimes -- a lot of the time it isn't necessarily the</p> <p>3 size of the newspaper group, it's the strength of voice</p> <p>4 of the paper. I mean, actually, the Daily Mail is an</p> <p>5 incredibly sort of powerful voice in the nation's</p> <p>6 politics because it's a very strong product, it puts its</p> <p>7 voice very powerfully, and that's not related really to</p> <p>8 its market power, it's to the way it pushes its agenda.</p> <p>9 So I don't think it's always about market power, no.</p> <p>10 Q. But do you feel nonetheless, although it might not</p> <p>11 always be about market power, market power is not the</p> <p>12 sole explanation, it is part of the explanation, part of</p> <p>13 the problem?</p> <p>14 A. I think you need -- I'm not sure about that. I think --</p> <p>15 as I say, I think you can have individual papers that</p> <p>16 are particularly strident, if I can put it that way,</p> <p>17 whereas if you look at -- you know, the</p> <p>18 News International group not always have all the papers</p> <p>19 headed in the same direction. Some of them, as it were,</p> <p>20 shout a bit louder than others. So I think it's about</p> <p>21 the nature of the voice necessarily.</p> <p>22 Having said that, you do need effective competition</p> <p>23 policy, effective rules on plurality, and perhaps we'll</p> <p>24 come on to that.</p> <p>25 Q. Paragraph 29 now, Mr Cameron. This is page 04105, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 third risk. We've touched on aspects of this already. 2 Allowing media pressure to "shift and therefore shake 3 the political agenda". There are a number of issues 4 here. 5 As you know, a number of witnesses have identified 6 the heart of the problem as the fusion of news and 7 comment. Do you agree with that analysis? 8 A. I don't, really, because I think it's quite difficult -- 9 look, in an ideal world it would be lovely if the front 10 page of the newspaper was all the things that happened 11 in the world yesterday and the comment was entirely 12 separate and all the rest of it, but I think it's quite 13 impractical. 14 I've been thinking about this because a lot of your 15 witnesses have made this point, and I think it's quite 16 difficult to try and separate. So often a headline 17 encapsulates both a fact but also an opinion, and 18 I think it's very clear in the press code that you're 19 not meant to mix news and comment, but it happens and 20 I think it's rather a forlorn hope to think you can 21 somehow separate them. 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: To some extent it plays into the 23 point you were making earlier, that whereas 50 years 24 ago, when there was little television and therefore 25 people got their news very much from their daily Page 25</p>	<p>1 and I hope that comes across in what I say. 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It does mean that the argument about 3 not being held to account doesn't really work when you 4 are being held to account by broadcasting journalists 5 all the time, without it being obvious that the way that 6 they are regulated has impacted the way they treat you. 7 A. I think newspapers and television hold politicians to 8 account in a different way because of the way news is 9 put together. The newspapers do play a very important 10 role in terms of accountability because they have, you 11 know, investigative approaches and budgets and the rest 12 of it, they can really go after stories, get to the 13 details. 14 I think there is a difference, and, you know, the 15 strength of our democracy would be a lot weaker if we 16 didn't have both giving us rightly a tough time. 17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I wasn't for a moment suggesting 18 that wasn't right. 19 A. Yes. 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But it's not immediately apparent 21 that broadcasters don't hold politicians to account. It 22 seems that they do, and certainly the broadcasters from 23 whom I have heard don't recognise the suggestion that 24 they fail in their duty to ask appropriate questions or 25 probe appropriately, notwithstanding the strictures of Page 27</p>
<p>1 newspaper and they would read the Parliamentary debate 2 or they would read of a court case, that was how they 3 learned the facts. 4 A. Yes. 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It really plays into your point that 6 because of the 24/7 news cycle, newspapers are now 7 required much more to provide their own angle -- 8 A. Opinion and impact. 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- I think was one of your words, and 10 that means inevitably opinion. 11 A. I think that's correct, and that's why I'm sure other 12 politicians would take this view, that of course we 13 spend a lot of time interacting with newspapers and 14 arguing with newspapers and trying to get our point 15 across, but I think if you talk to any modern political 16 party in Britain and you ask them, "What do you really 17 spend your time on more than anything?" it's actually 18 the 6 o'clock news, the 10 o'clock news. The thing 19 that's still watched, okay not by 15 million people, 20 but, I don't know, 6 million people, all at once. 21 That's where -- it's differently regulated so it's not 22 such a problem, but I think in terms of how much time do 23 we spend with all these newspapers groups and the rest 24 of it, a big big focus, particularly since I've been 25 leading the Conservative Party, has been on television Page 26</p>	<p>1 the Ofcom regulatory regime. 2 A. I'm sure that's right, but perhaps there are some things 3 that newspapers have been able to do because they don't 4 have the impartiality guidelines. 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Of course. 6 A. Things like the Stephen Lawrence campaign or other 7 campaigns, which are more, for want of a better word, 8 edgy. If you didn't have that, I'll -- yes. 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I entirely agree. 10 MR JAY: Can I just understand, Mr Cameron. Is your 11 analysis on the fusion of news and comment point either 12 there isn't a problem so there's no need for a solution, 13 or there is a problem but there isn't a solution? 14 A. There can be a problem in some cases, but, you know, we 15 have to -- I don't think it's solvable, so I think we 16 should not try and find some -- some of the answers 17 people have come up with I don't think are particularly 18 credible. 19 Q. The issue may be one of culture, would you agree? 20 A. Yes. I think with all these things, culture is 21 fantastically important. We can write all the rules 22 that we like and have all the training packages. 23 Whether it's for ministers' or journalists' behaviour, 24 culture is massively important, and I think it's 25 important in every aspect of life. Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 Q. Thank you. Can we move forward to a point you make in 2 paragraph 131, which links in with this. Page 04138. 3 Dealing with the issue of campaigns, which you've 4 covered, you say in the last sentence that you've never 5 traded or offered a position on policy in return for the 6 support of any media outlet. Do you believe that others 7 have?</p> <p>8 A. I can't think of any particular examples.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay. The fourth risk you identify is about lobbying, 10 but we'll come back to that later on and move back, 11 please, to paragraph 47 of your statement which we've 12 covered in part. This is the recent history showing the 13 relationship that came too close. I just want to try 14 and identify since when approximately you believe that 15 that phenomenon started to arise.</p> <p>16 A. This is difficult. I would argue it's partly this 17 growth of the 24-hour news agenda and therefore the 18 different role of newspapers. I think that's had an 19 impact because politicians have wanted to try and get 20 their message across with newspapers taking, as I put, 21 a more aggressive stance.</p> <p>22 I think there's also some sort of history, which 23 you've heard a lot of in the -- of, you know, the John 24 Major government, when I was a special adviser, and it 25 did have an absolutely wretched press and had a terrible</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 You mentioned the "feral beast" speech. That did 2 mention a whole set of things that the last government 3 did in terms of putting briefings on the record, prime 4 ministers going in front of the liaison committee in the 5 House of Commons. I would argue that the new rules for 6 special advisers we've introduced, the greater 7 transparency.</p> <p>8 So I think there's been steps, but clearly, you 9 know, why are we all here? We're here because of the 10 truly dreadful things that happened not to politicians 11 but to ordinary members of the public whose lives had 12 been turned upside down when they've already suffered 13 through losing their children, and had their lives 14 turned upside down in a totally unacceptable way and 15 this is, I think, a cathartic moment where press, 16 politicians, police, all the relationships that haven't 17 been right, we have a chance to reset them and that is 18 what we must do.</p> <p>19 Q. What do you see as the harm to the public interest? How 20 would you define it, flowing from this relationship of 21 undue proximity?</p> <p>22 A. The way I put it is the closeness which I've talked 23 about leads, I think, potentially to these risks, and 24 I've enumerated the risks, and clearly those risks have 25 the potential to do the public harm unless they're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 time, and I think Labour, quite understandably, thought: 2 well, if we get in, we have to be better organised, we 3 have to be more efficient at communicating.</p> <p>4 I think like all things in life, I think the 5 pendulum swung too far the other way, and there was too 6 much spinning and culture of daily news fighting and all 7 the rest of it, and we need the pendulum to swing back 8 a bit, while still being professional and able 9 communicators, because you have to try and get your 10 message across in a different world.</p> <p>11 I'm not trying to blame the whole thing on New 12 Labour, I think that would be wrong, but I think it's 13 been a developing story. You have the Conservative 14 government under John Major that knew there was 15 a problem, had this Calcutt process, which came to 16 nothing. The last-chance saloon as it were sort of sat 17 forever. Then you had the arrival of New Labour and 18 I think the combination of that with the 24-hour news 19 agenda is what lies behind some of the problems.</p> <p>20 Q. So the pendulum was swinging in the wrong direction, as 21 it were, possibly from 1994, 1995, and was possibly in 22 the wrong place until certainly July 2011, does that 23 sound about right?</p> <p>24 A. I think there have been various attempts along the way 25 to grab hold of the pendulum and do something about it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 properly dealt with.</p> <p>2 I think this is doable and achievable, and it needs 3 to be done.</p> <p>4 Q. Is it possible to describe one of the risks in this way: 5 that the relationship has become transactional, that 6 although there may not be express deals, there are 7 implied understandings or concordats, because each party 8 well knows what the other wants?</p> <p>9 A. I don't accept that. First of all, on this idea of 10 overt deals, this idea that somehow the Conservative 11 Party and News International got together and said, "You 12 give us your support and we'll wave through this 13 merger", that by the way we didn't even know about at 14 that stage, I think the idea of overt deals is nonsense, 15 and you've heard that from lots of people in front of 16 this Inquiry.</p> <p>17 I also don't believe in this theory that there was 18 a nod and a wink and some sort of covert agreement. Of 19 course, I wanted to win over newspapers and other 20 journalists, editors, proprietors, broadcasters. 21 I worked very hard at that because I wanted to 22 communicate what the Conservative Party and my 23 leadership could bring to the country. I made those 24 arguments. But I didn't do it on the basis of saying, 25 either overtly or covertly, "Your support will mean I'll</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)

<p>1 give you a better time on this policy or that policy", 2 and there are plenty of examples of policies that 3 I believe in that the people who were backing me didn't 4 believe in. 5 Q. Is there also a risk that overly close personal 6 relationships, by which I mean individual relationships 7 between politicians and journalists, have allowed 8 judgments to be clouded? 9 A. I think obviously you have to take care when you have 10 personal friendships, but I think that can be done, and 11 I like to think that I've done that. 12 Q. I'm still on the general perspectives, Mr Cameron. Can 13 I ask you to comment, please, on the allied vices, if 14 I can describe them as such, of manipulation of the 15 media by politicians, favouritism and anonymous 16 briefings. Have you seen evidence of these vices in 17 your own party? 18 A. Yes. These things do happen and it's deeply 19 regrettable. I think as long as there's been a press 20 and politicians, these things happen. But it is very 21 regrettable, it often makes running a political party 22 more difficult, running a government more difficult. 23 It's deeply destructive. 24 I think there are degrees of this. Of course, you 25 know, some politicians have journalists they have Page 33</p>	<p>1 were, to put a halt to bad practice and to a poor 2 culture. Does the same argument in your view apply to 3 politicians, that it's perhaps the responsibility of 4 those at the top? 5 A. Yes. Yes, I think it is. I think it's very important. 6 If you find out that these things have been happening, 7 you need to condemn them properly and act properly. 8 I think that is the case. 9 Q. Can I ask you to address Mr Brown's point that reporting 10 is hyperbolic, it's sensationalised. He said the 11 politicians don't simply make errors of judgment, their 12 motives are always put into question. Do you associate 13 yourself as a matter of generality with that point or 14 not? 15 A. I think there are occasions when that can happen. As 16 I've said, it links back to this thing about newspapers 17 being under pressure to find something special and 18 different and go for impact, and sometimes that can mean 19 questioning motives. 20 So you do -- I don't want to make this sound like 21 sort of politicians complaining about -- of course we 22 should have a vigorous press and they should give us 23 a good going over and they do and that's fine. 24 Sometimes it is frustrating when you feel your motives 25 are endlessly being questioned, and -- but, you know, Page 35</p>
<p>1 a particular good relationship with, they think they're 2 going to understand a particular speech or a particular 3 idea better than others, and in this world where the 4 newspapers aren't reporting yesterday's news, because 5 that's already been reported, clearly newspapers are 6 looking for something special, they're looking for 7 a particular angle or a particular story. 8 So there are responsible ways of handling media 9 relations in that way, but briefing against people, 10 doing people down, there are some dreadful things that 11 have been done in politics on both sides in recent 12 years, and they're very, very regrettable. 13 Q. What's the solution to these vices in your view? 14 A. I don't think there's any one catch-all. I think there 15 has been a problem in terms of some individuals and some 16 special advisers, and I think we now have a better 17 special advisers' code. One of the things I wrote into 18 the code is that special advisers work for the whole 19 government, not just individual ministers. I think 20 that's important. 21 But I don't think there's any one -- as you say, 22 it's a mixture of rules and culture. 23 Q. Sir John Major made the point in relation to proprietors 24 that they're responsible for the culture in their 25 organisation and it was within their power, gift, as it Page 34</p>	<p>1 there's bound to be a certain amount of that, but 2 I think the way I put it is that the volume knob has 3 sometimes just been turned really high in our press and 4 I'm not sure sometimes that does anyone any favours. 5 Q. The volume knob is turned too high and a consequence of 6 that is motive is always impugned, rather than if you 7 turn it down lower and examine human nature as it is, 8 usually as a result of an error of judgment mistakes are 9 made, and not some venal or appalling motive. Is that 10 the way you see -- 11 A. There have been politicians with bad motives, and if 12 a politician is discovering doing something for a bad -- 13 you know, the press shouldn't hold off making that 14 point. So that, I think, is all fair for the press to 15 challenge that, but it's just sometimes it feels as if 16 the volume knob is being turned up unnecessarily. 17 Q. May I move on now to the second area of your evidence, 18 Mr Cameron. This is your own personal approach. We can 19 start with paragraph 73 of your witness statement, which 20 is our page 04118. 21 A. Yes. 22 Q. You explain the nature and frequency of your contact: 23 "Such contact may include formal on-the-record 24 interviews, informal background discussions and 25 coincidental dialogue." Page 36</p>

<p>1 So that pattern is of course the same as everyone 2 else's? 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. Paragraph 74, no formal record of who initiated the 5 contact although you believe in the majority of cases 6 contact would be initiate by your staff; is that right? 7 A. Yes. We had -- becoming leader of the Conservative 8 Party at the end of 2005, clearly we had a programme of 9 wanting to get our message and policies and approach 10 across, and that meant a proactive campaign of talking 11 to journalists and whether it was regional newspapers, 12 national newspapers, television stations, and I hope in 13 the exhibit DC2, there's a fantastic set of -- it goes 14 on for five years -- of meetings. I can't promise it's 15 100 per cent accurate because you're going back to 16 paper-based diaries 2005 and the rest of it, but it's 17 a pretty big list. 18 Q. Do you have a strategy at the beginning of each year 19 where you map out who you should be seeing over the 20 course of the year, or is it much more adventitious, in 21 other words your staff decides on a weekly or monthly 22 basis who you might see? In other words, there isn't 23 a strategy that if News International is 36 per cent of 24 the market, it follows that you should be seeing them 25 36 per cent of the time, if I can put it in that way? Page 37</p>	<p>1 rules of impartiality, but a huge amount of time when 2 I became leader of the party was thinking how do we get 3 our message across on the television? Because, as 4 I said, I think that's the most important medium of 5 communication. 6 Q. There's no formal record you say in paragraph 77 of what 7 was discussed in each meeting and we can quite see that 8 if there were lengthy lists, that would be oppressive, 9 bureaucratic and counter-productive? 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. But what about just encapsulating the gist in two or 12 three sentences of what was discussed to add greater 13 transparency. Would you favour that or not? 14 A. I think there are improvements we can make here. 15 I think the idea that someone suggested of a sort of 16 written note of every interaction with every editor, 17 every broadcast -- I think that would be overly 18 bureaucratic because most of the meetings are pretty 19 similar. You're explaining why you're in favour of free 20 schools and academies and how to get that message 21 across, and why the policy's a good idea. You're 22 explaining something that you've already published. 23 But where I think there is potential for improvement 24 is in two areas. If it's obvious that this is a meeting 25 where the proprietor or the broadcasting business or Page 39</p>
<p>1 A. Well, the strategy mapped out at the beginning of the 2 year are the things you want to achieve, the policies 3 you want to get across, the ideas that you want to 4 champion, and then after that, you think: right, how do 5 we do that? What's the mixture of newspapers and 6 television and direct campaigns and the rest we want to 7 do? 8 Then following that, you're looking at: where are we 9 going to have impact? 10 I like to think from the information I've given you 11 can see that I've spent a huge amount of time with all 12 newspapers, but you are thinking, you know, with all 13 respect for the Daily Mirror, there's only a certain 14 amount of impact I'm going to have from meeting with the 15 Daily Mirror, whereas the, as it were, newspapers who 16 have in the past or might in the future back 17 a Conservative cause are obviously going to be better 18 grounds for that. 19 Q. The main touchstone then is impact and, as you rightly 20 say, you're not going to devote too much time to those 21 who may not be supporting you, let's focus on those who 22 are either onside or who might be onside; that's the 23 basic point? 24 A. Yes. I just repeat again that you know that the 25 television cannot be on your side because there are Page 38</p>	<p>1 what have you has got some, you know, commercial issues 2 they want to raise, then I think it does make sense that 3 a note is taken. Or, if in a meeting that's really 4 about your policies and your approach and the rest of 5 it, there's a discussion about commercial interests, 6 then I think again in government, you know, under the 7 Ministerial Code, I think it's probably right that the 8 minister or the politician should make a reference to 9 that to the private secretary. 10 A good example of this I give, and I don't want to, 11 you know, give a kick to an industry that's having 12 a difficult time anyway. Regional newspapers. I go all 13 over the country as other politicians do, you have lots 14 of meetings with the regional newspaper groups and 15 you're there explaining why the government's helping the 16 East Midlands or the West Country or whatever it is, but 17 often they will say, quite fairly, "We are being 18 hammered by these free newspapers that are being put out 19 by local authorities, they're taking advertising, it's 20 not fair, this is the big state as it were squashing out 21 the big society, what are you going to do about it?" 22 I think it's completely fair for them to raise that 23 point, but you could argue that is a media organisation 24 raising a policy point rather than just having an 25 exchange about politics and policies, and so in some way Page 40</p>

10 (Pages 37 to 40)

<p>1 that needs to be registered.</p> <p>2 The problem with all this is the more rules and</p> <p>3 codes we create, the more difficult it is to make sure</p> <p>4 in every instance that people abide by them. I don't</p> <p>5 want to create a system that doesn't work, that is</p> <p>6 permanently broken. That would actually sap the faith</p> <p>7 of the public in this whole area. But I think some</p> <p>8 modest additions to the Ministerial Code to deal with</p> <p>9 the two points I've made, I think that is something we</p> <p>10 could certainly look at.</p> <p>11 Q. Paragraph 79, Mr Cameron. You identify a small number</p> <p>12 of journalists who are close friends of yours, not</p> <p>13 included in your lists, and you name them there.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. It's inevitable, of course, that friendships would arise</p> <p>16 and these are friendships which have developed over the</p> <p>17 years; is that right?</p> <p>18 A. That's right. And the reason for putting this in is it</p> <p>19 goes to the last point I made. The more we write these</p> <p>20 rules, the more danger there is that you're going to</p> <p>21 forget that you bumped into so-and-so or had a meeting</p> <p>22 with such and such, and then it comes out you didn't</p> <p>23 reveal that and then the public loses all the confidence</p> <p>24 they had in your new transparency regime. That's the</p> <p>25 purpose, I think, of -- these are people I see very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 But this is -- you know, it's difficult stuff to get</p> <p>2 right, this, I think.</p> <p>3 Q. In paragraphs 91 to 92 of your statement, this is</p> <p>4 page 04123, you're addressing the question to what</p> <p>5 extent is political support discussed. Is the sense of</p> <p>6 paragraph 92 in particular that the issue of political</p> <p>7 support is not discussed directly, but it implicitly</p> <p>8 underlies many of your discussions?</p> <p>9 A. I think that's probably right. There have been</p> <p>10 occasions where, you know, you're really keen to -- most</p> <p>11 of the time you're trying to explain: these are my</p> <p>12 policies, these are why they are right, this is why the</p> <p>13 Labour Party has it wrong, or whatever. But of course</p> <p>14 there are times when you're really keen for the</p> <p>15 newspaper to do more to support you, whether that's</p> <p>16 editorially or in the coverage that they give you. So</p> <p>17 of course I have had those conversations.</p> <p>18 Q. About how often do you think you've had a conversation</p> <p>19 of that nature?</p> <p>20 A. Not very often, because predominantly it's about, you</p> <p>21 know, what -- if you take over the five years of being</p> <p>22 leader of the opposition, most of the time it was about</p> <p>23 what I was trying to do with the Conservative Party,</p> <p>24 what policies were we cared about, what the government</p> <p>25 was getting wrong, why we'd do a better job. It was all</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 regularly and I'm never going to remember to tell my</p> <p>2 office every time I see them.</p> <p>3 Q. You say that sometimes informal assistance is provided</p> <p>4 with speeches. I suppose the main risk here, and I ask</p> <p>5 you to comment on it, is that you provide these</p> <p>6 journalists with scoops or stories or, put less</p> <p>7 tendentiously, with insights which they can then deploy.</p> <p>8 Is that fair?</p> <p>9 A. Look, there's obviously a danger, but you can't unmake</p> <p>10 the friendships that you have, and some of these people</p> <p>11 I've known for 20, 30 years. Some of them you get to</p> <p>12 know because in some cases they're neighbours, Xan</p> <p>13 Smiley.</p> <p>14 I think one of the things that all ministers are</p> <p>15 meant to do, and perhaps we need to sort of remind</p> <p>16 people, I've done this quite recently, is you sit down</p> <p>17 with your Permanent Secretary, I literally went through</p> <p>18 my address book and I told my Permanent Secretary</p> <p>19 virtually what every one of my friends did, if they had</p> <p>20 any business interactions that might bump up against the</p> <p>21 government or what have you. So at least you've had</p> <p>22 that conversation with your Permanent Secretary, so that</p> <p>23 then if any form of conflict does arise in the future,</p> <p>24 at least it's not something that has been sort of</p> <p>25 buried.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 those arguments. But obviously on occasion you'd say,</p> <p>2 "We'd love a bit more support from your paper."</p> <p>3 Q. Sir John Major gave us some evidence about</p> <p>4 a conversation he says he had with Mr Rupert Murdoch in</p> <p>5 February of 1997 in which on his account he made it</p> <p>6 clear that -- that's Mr Murdoch made it clear he</p> <p>7 couldn't support the Conservative Party unless policy on</p> <p>8 Europe was modified. May we take it that you've not had</p> <p>9 a similar conversation with him or any other proprietor</p> <p>10 of that nature?</p> <p>11 A. Not of that nature, no.</p> <p>12 Q. Have you had conversations, though, with proprietors and</p> <p>13 editors during the course of which they've made it</p> <p>14 crystal clear which of your policies, on the one hand,</p> <p>15 they favour, and which they don't?</p> <p>16 A. Of course, yes. A lot of these people have very strong</p> <p>17 views and so you have pretty robust debates about some</p> <p>18 things.</p> <p>19 Q. So although the point may never have been explicitly</p> <p>20 made, wasn't it on occasion obvious to you what the</p> <p>21 conditions for their support amounted to?</p> <p>22 A. I think one can overdo this. I think in the end a lot</p> <p>23 of these newspapers follow their readers' views. I felt</p> <p>24 what I was trying to do, and I say this in my evidence,</p> <p>25 I was trying to win back to the Conservative cause</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 newspapers that had been Conservative and had been won 2 over by Tony Blair. So I wasn't asking them to sign up 3 to a whole set of views that they thought were 4 completely ridiculous, I was just trying to get them to 5 return to the right cause, as it were.</p> <p>6 So -- and of course, you have very robust 7 conversations about policy areas where you don't agree.</p> <p>8 Q. In the example you've given, the Sun newspaper was won 9 over to Mr Blair and therefore the preponderance of 10 readers' views were convergent with New Labour --</p> <p>11 A. At that stage, yes. I think that's my point, is that at 12 the end of -- towards 1997, the Conservative government 13 obviously had fallen massively out of favour. Sun 14 readers were anyway switching to Labour, and their 15 decision, while a big blow for the Conservatives, you 16 can see a sort of natural -- that's what was happening.</p> <p>17 I think under my leadership of the Conservative 18 Party, steadily Sun readers were coming over to the 19 Conservative Party, and I felt in talking to a lot of 20 Sun journalists that a lot of them were very keen for 21 their newspaper to change its stance because they felt 22 they were out of tune with their readers.</p> <p>23 I think one can overdo the whole -- also, I am 24 not -- you know, no way does winning the support of this 25 newspaper or that newspaper guarantee you an election</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 Internet and what have you. I would say I was more 2 cautious about that, thinking we wanted to work very 3 hard on television, we should do what we could with the 4 newspapers, but I think that's the way it was.</p> <p>5 It wasn't quite sort of one set of circumstances 6 after 2005 and then another set later on.</p> <p>7 Q. But Mr Eustice has said, and I invite you to comment on 8 this:</p> <p>9 "When I was his press secretary, we pursued 10 a strategy of quietly puncturing the arrogance of both 11 editors and proprietors and raising the status of what 12 I term real journalism."</p> <p>13 Is that a fair analysis in your view or not?</p> <p>14 A. I think parts of it are right, in that we did want to 15 have this -- we didn't want to go down the same route as 16 everything Labour had done. We did want to have a bit 17 more distance, but if you look at the record of the sort 18 of meetings I was having and the rest of it, I was 19 still, you know, flying off to meet proprietors and 20 trying to win people over, so I don't think it totally 21 squares up that there was one approach that was tried 22 and failed and then another approach. There's slightly 23 more elision between the two, my reflection on it.</p> <p>24 Q. You also made a point that you wouldn't have flown 25 halfway around the world, if I can put it in those</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 victory. Their circulations are, if anything, getting 2 smaller.</p> <p>3 Q. I think we can all agree that the point has been -- its 4 importance has been overexaggerated, but there's still 5 some degree of significance to be attached, in 6 particular to the Sun's support.</p> <p>7 A. Of course.</p> <p>8 Q. Would you agree on that issue? Can I go back to 2005, 9 Mr Cameron, when of course you started as leader of the 10 opposition I think in December of that year, if my 11 memory is right. Was your strategy then, as your then 12 press secretary George Eustice has said, to create 13 distance between yourself and Mr Murdoch?</p> <p>14 A. I wouldn't put it like that. I'd won the leadership of 15 the Conservative Party without the support of I think 16 any newspapers, frankly. I had a pretty rocky time with 17 them during the leadership election, and I think I'd won 18 the leadership basically through what I'd said at 19 Conservative Party Conference and it was television that 20 had helped me to get my message across.</p> <p>21 I wanted us to have a good relationship with 22 newspapers. I knew we needed to win over more support, 23 but to start with there were certainly some in my office 24 who were very keen on trying to do things completely 25 differently and communicate much more through the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 terms, to speak at News Corporation's annual conference. 2 Would that have been an accurate assessment of your 3 thinking in 2005?</p> <p>4 A. I certainly wasn't invited, but I did -- I was checking 5 the record actually for this, because I saw what -- 6 George Eustice did a brilliant job working for me, I saw 7 what he wrote. But looking at the record of the 8 meetings I had and the amount of activity we were doing 9 trying to win over and win support of newspapers 10 including, I think, you know, actually flying off to 11 meet the owners of the Telegraph, as I say, I don't 12 think I would characterise it as one approach and then 13 a different approach. I think there's slightly more 14 similarity between the two.</p> <p>15 I think there's one other thing maybe to say, which 16 was at the beginning of my leadership, a lot of what 17 I was trying to do was make changes to the Conservative 18 Party, to the policies of the party, the approach of the 19 party. Not all of these were very popular with the 20 Conservative press, so I had a difficulty in trying to 21 make changes to the Conservative Party while at the same 22 time convince the Conservative press I was doing the 23 right thing.</p> <p>24 Q. But some have identified a change of tack, as it were, 25 in around 2007, rightly or wrongly, and that flows from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 the fact that you didn't have widespread support in the 2 media. It's fair to say in paragraph 196 of your 3 statement that you say you didn't have widespread 4 support at the time you became leader of the opposition. 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. But that may have continued until about 2007. Is that 7 a reasonable analysis or not? 8 A. Yes, I think it is. Some of that, as I say, was because 9 I was making these changes to the Conservative Party, 10 but also I did, I think, progressively realise over 11 2006, 2007, that it's very difficult if you're running 12 a political party and you're trying to win over the 13 public, you're trying to create momentum, it's quite 14 difficult if you don't have what I would call sort of 15 the different bits of the Conservative family behind 16 you. You need your MPs supporting you, your MEPs, your 17 councillors, your members, and you also need those parts 18 of the Conservative press that should be sort of getting 19 behind you. And I had this situation where some quite 20 Conservative parts of the press -- I just wasn't really 21 getting much backing from them and I was -- frankly 22 I think I was sort of struggling a bit to get the 23 message across. 24 So I think I've put in a lot of work already but 25 maybe I'll put in some more work.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 a problem -- just if I interpose, you're talking about 2 the difference between opposition and government. You 3 may be aware that Mr Alastair Campbell made the point 4 that he felt that New Labour had made a mistake taking 5 approaches adopted in opposition and running with them 6 in government. Not everybody has agreed with that, but 7 I'd be interested to know whether you think there is 8 a difference, because whatever system one puts into 9 place, it's quite difficult if it's not recognised as 10 appropriate by both or all main parties. 11 A. Yes. I think it's right that in government you're 12 making real decisions rather than just policy ideas and 13 campaigns, so it's more important that what you do is 14 done properly. And that's why you have special 15 advisers' codes, ministerial codes and all the rest of 16 it. But I do think there is -- when you're leader of 17 the opposition, and I did the job for five years, it's 18 only in the last year you get the sort of Civil Service 19 machine starting to talk to you about how you'd 20 translate your structure and your processes into Number 21 10 Downing Street, and I think there could be a strength 22 in -- I don't believe in having a sort of official 23 opposition office, as it were, but I think there could 24 be a strength in having earlier discussions between the 25 Cabinet Secretary or the Permanent Secretary at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 Q. Your exhibit DC2, Mr Cameron, which is under tab 3 of 2 this bundle, this collects together the meetings you've 3 had with media figures as leader of the opposition. 4 You're not putting it forward as a certificate in the 5 sense that you can't guarantee that every single meeting 6 is here and we understand that. 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. For what it's worth, over four years and five months of 9 opposition, we've counted 1,404 entries, which equates 10 to around 26 meetings or interviews per month, which is 11 more than one every weekday. It's fair to say, though, 12 in government there have been fewer. It works out at 13 about 13 a month, so it's 50 per cent of the time you 14 lavished on this in opposition. 15 A. As I say, when I was elected, I did try to do less of 16 this and try to have more of a distance, try to make 17 sure -- because genuinely when you're in opposition, 18 what are you doing? You're campaigning, you're drawing 19 up policies, you're trying to convince people. In 20 government, it is and should be different. You should 21 be spending your time governing, not talking about 22 governing, so I did try to create some more distance, 23 but as I explained earlier I think it's very difficult 24 because of these daily battles that you fight. 25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do you think that there's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 Number 10 with a new leader of the opposition, just to 2 make them aware of some of the processes and practices 3 that might assist them in the work that they do and 4 avoiding any conflicts and the rest of it. 5 So that is something I -- perhaps we can write to 6 your Inquiry about. 7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, that's very much along the lines 8 that I was thinking about, that if practices develop 9 that aren't appropriate for government, it might be 10 better -- I appreciate that opposition and government is 11 very different, for the reasons that you've identified, 12 but if good practice can be developed while in 13 opposition, it will flow naturally into government, but 14 if an opposition party are developing ideas without the 15 experience of having been in government, it becomes much 16 more difficult. 17 A. I'm sure that's right. 18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So I think that may be of value to 19 try and deal, at least in part, with the issue. 20 MR JAY: Given the very significant amount of time devoted 21 to media engagement, to what extent did those demands 22 get in the way you think with policy formulation and 23 leadership? 24 A. I don't think they were so extensive that you didn't 25 have time to do the other things leaders of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

13 (Pages 49 to 52)

<p>1 opposition do. We had huge policy commissions that were 2 starting from scratch, drawing up new policies. I had 3 a very active programme of campaigning around the 4 country. I did a huge number of what I call Cameron 5 Directs, which were public meetings all over the 6 country.</p> <p>7 So it takes up a lot of time and there are moments 8 when you think these are hours of your life you're not 9 going to get back, but if you're a politician and you're 10 leading a political party and you want to win people 11 over, you need to get your message across.</p> <p>12 Q. In government in particular, although obviously you have 13 a fuller day job, does the same point apply? Do you 14 feel that media engagement less, true it is, in 15 government than it has been in opposition, has intruded 16 in policy formulation, leadership and governing?</p> <p>17 A. It shouldn't, but it can. I think the way I've 18 explained the 24-hour news agenda, when I arrived in 19 Downing Street, I did think that the set-up was quite 20 geared to 24-hour news. It felt too much like 21 a newsroom, and that's what the press department should 22 be like, but you have to try and create a structure and 23 a private office and a set of arrangements where you can 24 think, take decisions, prepare for decisions properly, 25 structure your day so you're not permanently in a sort</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 reconcile as much as possible, but inevitably you have 2 some where -- I think in government it's different 3 because certainly in the office you have a diary, 4 I think John Major explained this, a diary of what 5 you're meant to do that day and then a diary of what 6 actually happened that day. So the government ones in 7 office I'm pretty confident about. The opposition ones 8 was our best attempt, but it may have gaps.</p> <p>9 MR JAY: We're going to leave it to others if so advised to 10 do their own comparative analysis. We haven't missed 11 the point that Mr Murdoch's list doesn't quite match 12 yours, but frankly it's an arid comparison in our view. 13 We're going to leave it there.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's clearly a mistake to 15 overexaggerate the importance or accuracy of these 16 documents. These are best efforts in retrospect from 17 records which were never intended to provide 18 a historically accurate account of what you were doing. 19 So it would be a mistake to try and do that analysis. 20 What you do is you create a picture, and the picture, it 21 seems to me, is sufficient for the purposes of the 22 Inquiry.</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 MR JAY: Before we break, Mr Cameron, may I just alight on 25 one item, please? 16 August 2008, which is page 04220.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 of news warfare mode, if I can put it that way.</p> <p>2 Q. Looking at this list, which of course extends over 3 a number of pages and starts at 04198, we've pored over 4 it and attempted to do all sorts of statistical analyses 5 but confess to have come to the conclusion that that 6 would be misleading for a number of reasons, so we're 7 not going to bore you with those analyses.</p> <p>8 Just pick up a couple of points, though, that we've 9 identified for Mr Rupert Murdoch 10 entries, 10 Mr James Murdoch 15, and for Rebekah Brooks 19. In 11 relation to her, does that cover all social interactions 12 or not?</p> <p>13 A. This is for the period when I was in opposition?</p> <p>14 Q. Yes.</p> <p>15 A. What we did for this -- the short answer is it might 16 not, because what we did for this was go back over the 17 diaries for all the time I was leader of the opposition, 18 try and work out whether we had missed anything out, but 19 it doesn't always include -- I mean, for instance, at 20 the weekend, my diary wouldn't cover my weekends 21 necessarily, so there could be other meetings in there 22 that I haven't identified.</p> <p>23 Going through some of our other participants' 24 meetings, we found some that didn't tally with us and 25 ours didn't -- we've been through and we've tried to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 We see dinner here with Elisabeth Murdoch, Rebekah Wade 2 and Matthew Freud.</p> <p>3 A. Mm.</p> <p>4 Q. Was that part of the Santorini visit, which we believe 5 it to be?</p> <p>6 A. I don't have the date of the Santorini visit on me, but 7 it must be in my evidence somewhere, so if we 8 cross-check, I'm sure we can find that out. It looks 9 like it was.</p> <p>10 Q. Yes, it is.</p> <p>11 A. Page 67 of my evidence.</p> <p>12 Q. It is, Mr Cameron. Paragraph 200.</p> <p>13 A. Right, got it. Okay. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Can I just ask you, please, Mr Rupert Murdoch wasn't at 15 the dinner then; is that correct?</p> <p>16 A. No, I think he was at the dinner. I don't think this 17 is -- I'm extremely sorry, I don't think that is right.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay.</p> <p>19 A. I think you've spotted an error, for which I'm very 20 sorry.</p> <p>21 Q. I'm not saying it's the biggest point but I just wanted 22 to check.</p> <p>23 A. No, no, it looks like -- I deal with it in my evidence, 24 because -- at 199, 200, 201. Basically, this was -- my 25 memory was that this was drinks and then a dinner, but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

14 (Pages 53 to 56)

<p>1 I think the dinner was everyone who was there, including 2 the people listed in DC2, but I think Rupert Murdoch was 3 there, yes. 4 MR JAY: Sir, is that a convenient moment? 5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, certainly. 6 Prime Minister, we have a break to give the 7 shorthand writer a few minutes off. 8 A. Very good. 9 (11.19 am) 10 (A short break) 11 (11.29 am) 12 MR JAY: Mr Cameron, may we look at some individual entries 13 in your schedule, DC2. We're not going to look at that 14 many. First of all, 16 December 2005, which is our 15 page 04198, Matthew and Elisabeth Freud. It says 16 "Social". Does one deduce that they're friends of 17 yours? 18 A. Yes. Matthew Freud I must have known for some 20 years. 19 He married someone I was at university with, his first 20 wife, so I've known him since then. So yes, I'm trying 21 to find the page, but I think it was a social occasion. 22 Q. And Elisabeth Freud, obviously nee Murdoch, how long 23 have you known her? 24 A. I suppose since they got married, but I can't put a date 25 on it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 remember where it was, let alone what we talked about. 2 Q. And then the Santorini visit at page 04220, can I just 3 understand, whose idea was that? 4 A. I think it was Matthew Freud's idea. I think he phoned 5 me about it. So I think it was his idea, yes. 6 Q. Did he have a discussion with Rebekah Wade about it, to 7 your knowledge? 8 A. I don't know, no. 9 Q. Do you know why that visit came about or what its 10 purpose was? 11 A. Well, from my point of view, it was just an opportunity 12 to try to get to know Rupert Murdoch better. Obviously 13 I was trying to win over his newspapers and put across 14 my opinions, so for me it was just an opportunity to try 15 and build that relationship. 16 It was quite a long way to go and all of that, but 17 it seemed a good opportunity. 18 Q. So presumably there was an earlier conversation or there 19 had been earlier conversations with Mr Freud as to the 20 possibility of having this sort of meeting; is that 21 correct? 22 A. My memory is it came together quite quickly. I seem to 23 remember I was on some tour day around the country. 24 I got a call or a text from Matthew. I was just about 25 to go off to Georgia, to visit Georgia at the time of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 Q. The first meeting here with Rupert Murdoch is 18 January 2 2006. As your witness statement makes clear, there was 3 an earlier encounter in October 2005 before you were 4 leader. Can I ask you, please, about 1 February 2006, 5 "Paul Dacre, Daily Mail, drinks". It's unfair to ask 6 you on one particular occasion which was six years ago, 7 but do you think that was a one-on-one or there were 8 other people there? 9 A. I don't remember because it was a long time ago, but the 10 meetings I've had with Paul Dacre, I would say most of 11 them have probably been a one-on-one drink, occasionally 12 a lunch. He has done some where there have been a range 13 of journalists from the Daily Mail, I remember one or 14 two of those, but a mixture, but I think some 15 one-on-ones, yes. 16 Q. If one were to look at one other with Mr Dacre, 17 18 December 2006, which is page 04205. It's a dinner, 18 actually. It's about the time that the Information 19 Commissioner's second report came out. Again, 20 I understand it's difficult to search one's 21 recollection, but do you recall whether that report 22 might have been discussed then or not? 23 A. I don't remember, I'm afraid. I can't even remember 24 where the dinner was. I think also he's had dinner in 25 my home as well. The trouble with that one is I can't</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 the Russian invasion, and it just seemed like a possible 2 opportunity to link up and -- but I seem to remember it 3 all came together very quickly at the last minute, but 4 I might have got it wrong. 5 Q. We know that Rebekah Wade was there, but did you have 6 a conversation with her about this before you flew out 7 or not? 8 A. I don't recall that, I'm afraid. 9 Q. In 2009, Mr Cameron, 3 May, you had lunch with 10 James Murdoch. This is page 04225. 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. Would you think it's possible on that occasion that you 13 discussed regulatory issues, including Ofcom and the 14 BBC? 15 A. Well, I don't recall what was discussed directly at the 16 lunch. I'm sure that over the years I've discussed some 17 of those issues with James Murdoch. He has very strong 18 views on them, I have very strong views, they're not 19 really the same views, and I'm sure we would have had 20 discussions about it. Perhaps particularly -- well, 21 I think probably on both. I don't recall the specifics, 22 but I'm sure we must have discussed our views. 23 Q. This was a few months before his MacTaggart lecture, 24 which was delivered in late August 2009. 25 A. Mm.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

15 (Pages 57 to 60)

<p>1 Q. Did you have any discussions with him about the subject 2 matter of that lecture, either before he gave it or 3 afterwards? 4 A. Not to my memory, no. I think these would have been -- 5 you know, as I say, most of these meetings were really 6 about me trying to promote Conservative policy, the 7 Conservative approach and the rest of it, but sometimes, 8 because I'm interested in media issues and have 9 longstanding views on them, sometimes I'm sure we would 10 have discussed them. 11 Q. One can see the intensity of his feeling, if I can put 12 it in those terms, from the text of the lecture itself. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. He expresses himself quite strongly, doesn't he? 15 A. Yes. And there are lots of things of that nature 16 I don't particularly agree with. I've always believed 17 in a strong BBC funded by the licence fee. I think 18 Ofcom does have an important role. I think as I put in 19 my evidence Ofcom got overbloated and overbig and 20 needed, like other quangos, to be reduced in scale, but 21 both have an important role. 22 Q. In September 2009, page 04228, you had lunch with 23 Mr Dominic Mohan of the Sun on 1 September 2009. 24 A. Mm-hm. 25 Q. Again, to alight on any particular occasion is possibly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 A. Not particularly long. Might have been half an hour, 40 2 minutes. It was a drink and a catch-up, but it was -- 3 he wanted to tell me that the Sun was going to support 4 the Conservatives and he told me, I think, from my 5 memory, that it was going to happen around the time of 6 the Labour conference, and I remember obviously being 7 pleased that the Conservative Party was going to get the 8 Sun's support, and I think we had a conversation about 9 other policy issues at the time. That's my memory of 10 it. 11 Q. So he gave you some inkling of the timing that this was 12 going to break? 13 A. I think so. That's my memory of it, yes. Perhaps not 14 the precise timing, but I think they were probably still 15 debating it, but I seem to remember there was sort of 16 the hint it was going to be some time in Labour's 17 conference. 18 Q. Did he identify which aspects of your policy constituted 19 the reasons for his newspapers, or in particular the 20 Sun, wanting to support your party? 21 A. I think at the time a lot of the focus was on the 22 economy, because obviously we were in the midst of all 23 the economic difficulties and we were setting out very 24 clearly that it was important for Britain to get on top 25 of its debt and its deficit and all the rest of it, so</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 unfair, but do you think on that occasion the issue of 2 support of the Sun for you and your party was discussed 3 or not? 4 A. I wouldn't -- I don't recall. By this stage obviously 5 I was making arguments that Sun readers were coming over 6 to the Conservatives and our approach was what the 7 country needed and all the rest of it, but I don't 8 remember the specifics of that conversation, no. 9 Q. To be fair to you, so that we see the overall picture, 10 there are a lot of references to Nick Robinson on this 11 page and elsewhere. He's someone that you keep in 12 contact with for obvious reasons. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. Can I go to 10 September 2009. It's described as drinks 15 with James Murdoch. That was at the George, wasn't it? 16 A. Yes. This is the page -- are we still on 229? 17 Q. It's 04228, actually. 18 A. Yes. 19 Q. The evidence has been that it was on that occasion that 20 he told you that the Sun would support the Conservative 21 Party. Do you remember that? 22 A. Yes, I do remember that. That was -- I do remember him 23 saying that. I remember the conversation -- well, some 24 of the conversation we had, yes. 25 Q. How long was the conversation, approximately?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 I do remember discussing economic issues, yes. I think 2 that's right. 3 Q. On that occasion, do you recall any mention being made 4 by James Murdoch of your policies in relation to the BBC 5 and Ofcom? 6 A. I don't recall that, and I think it unlikely. I think 7 that this was -- he was very keen to tell me directly 8 that the Sun was going to support the Conservatives, 9 that he felt on the big economic judgment about what 10 Britain needed we had the right argument, the government 11 had the wrong argument, and my memory is that's what the 12 conversation was about. 13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, you said you had a conversation 14 about other policy issues? 15 A. Yes, he has lots of enthusiasms that aren't about the 16 media. He's particularly enthusiastic about defence. 17 He takes the view we should have at least six aircraft 18 carriers, I think at last count, rather than two, so he 19 has lots of enthusiasms and I'm sure we discussed some 20 of those, but the key -- my memory is, and it's 21 difficult to recall all of these events, I definitely 22 remember him saying the Sun was going to support the 23 Conservative Party. I wouldn't forget that. I think he 24 gave me a hint of the timing, and my memory is it was 25 mostly about the big economic picture, because that was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 the key issue of the day.</p> <p>2 MR JAY: This was within about two weeks of his MacTaggart</p> <p>3 lecture. Had you out of interest read his lecture</p> <p>4 before 10 September 2009?</p> <p>5 A. No.</p> <p>6 Q. Had the gist of it been drawn to your attention?</p> <p>7 A. I read -- after it was delivered I would have seen the</p> <p>8 press reports, but I don't remember reading the whole</p> <p>9 thing at the time. I've read it subsequently in</p> <p>10 preparation for all of this, but as I say, he had very</p> <p>11 strong views. Some of these views I didn't agree with,</p> <p>12 and on things like the BBC, you know, we had a very</p> <p>13 clear position which dates right back to my time at</p> <p>14 Carlton, that the BBC is the cornerstone of British</p> <p>15 broadcasting, you need to have a licence fee, and as</p> <p>16 I say, Ofcom, while bloated, it had an important role.</p> <p>17 Q. But just some might say that Ofcom and the BBC were the</p> <p>18 bête noire of Mr James Murdoch, he'd expressed himself</p> <p>19 very forcibly in the lecture, this is within two weeks</p> <p>20 of the lecture, it's more than plausible that he might</p> <p>21 have unburdened himself about those matters to you on</p> <p>22 this one occasion. Do you think that might have</p> <p>23 happened?</p> <p>24 A. I don't think so, because, as I say, I think the main --</p> <p>25 you know, this was sort of -- I think for the Sun it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 A. As I say, I recall the drink, I don't recall the dinner.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. The announcement I think was the evening of</p> <p>3 28 September, or it might have been the 29th, it's not</p> <p>4 going to matter for our purposes today. If you look at</p> <p>5 04229, there are then a series of interactions with the</p> <p>6 Sun. An interview, George Passcoe-Watson, 1 October.</p> <p>7 Dinner, Dominic Mohan and Mr Passcoe-Watson again</p> <p>8 5 October. Interview with the Sun, 5 October.</p> <p>9 Breakfast, News of the World 7 October. Dinner,</p> <p>10 Irwin Stelzer at the Times 21 October, and then</p> <p>11 breakfast, 2 November, James Murdoch and Rebekah Brooks.</p> <p>12 So there's quite a lot of activity with</p> <p>13 News International in the month or so following.</p> <p>14 A. I would just, for anyone who's not on page 4229, point</p> <p>15 out there was also dinner with the Telegraph, meetings,</p> <p>16 interviews with Radio Manchester, Scottish television,</p> <p>17 the BBC, ITV. This was the party conference. This was</p> <p>18 an incredibly busy media week, where I was meeting all</p> <p>19 sorts of people from all sorts of different media</p> <p>20 organisations. I just want to make that point.</p> <p>21 Q. Yes.</p> <p>22 A. Including Lord Rothermere, the whole team at the Mail on</p> <p>23 Sunday, et cetera, et cetera.</p> <p>24 Q. That's a very fair point, Mr Cameron. I didn't mean to</p> <p>25 occlude that one.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 a big change, and I remember it being about economic</p> <p>2 policy. That's my memory of it.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay, 21 September, we can see from the bottom of the</p> <p>4 page there's dinner, you, James Murdoch and</p> <p>5 Rebekah Brooks. It's obviously a social occasion now.</p> <p>6 But can you remember anything about whether political</p> <p>7 issues, perhaps regulatory issues were discussed on that</p> <p>8 occasion?</p> <p>9 A. I don't particularly recall what was discussed then, no.</p> <p>10 Q. But the upcoming support of the Sun is likely to have</p> <p>11 been mentioned, isn't it?</p> <p>12 A. Yes. I think I'm trying to remember the exact date of</p> <p>13 the Labour conference.</p> <p>14 Q. I think we're onto about 27 or 28 September.</p> <p>15 A. Right. I expect that would have been discussed. In</p> <p>16 terms of what the Sun was going to do, it was -- but</p> <p>17 I don't -- I remember the drink, I remember what he said</p> <p>18 about the Sun supporting the Conservatives. I don't</p> <p>19 particularly remember the dinner.</p> <p>20 Q. Rightly or wrongly, the Sun had timed it for maximum</p> <p>21 political damage to Mr Brown's government, that goes</p> <p>22 without saying.</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. It seems at least plausible again that that sort of</p> <p>25 point was discussed on this occasion. Would you agree?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 Can we move forward to 15 December 2009, which is</p> <p>2 the bottom of 04231. That seems to be the first meeting</p> <p>3 you had with Rupert Murdoch after the Sun's support had</p> <p>4 changed. Can you remember anything about that</p> <p>5 conversation, particularly about the change of support?</p> <p>6 A. Not particularly. I mean, in most of my lunches or</p> <p>7 breakfasts with Rupert Murdoch, the conversation has</p> <p>8 always been predominantly about economic issues,</p> <p>9 security geopolitical issues, he was very interested in</p> <p>10 what was happening in Afghanistan, very interested in</p> <p>11 global markets.</p> <p>12 I think it's -- of course all businesses have their</p> <p>13 interests and the rest of it, but in my dealings with</p> <p>14 Rupert Murdoch, most of the conversation has been about</p> <p>15 big international political issues.</p> <p>16 Q. The only other point on this schedule, it's quite</p> <p>17 a small point, we see you on 28 January 2010 at</p> <p>18 page 04232, there's dinner, Will Lewis of the Daily</p> <p>19 Telegraph, Frederic Michel, News Corporation,</p> <p>20 James Harding of the Times, Robert Peston obviously of</p> <p>21 the BBC. Was that the only occasion that you met with</p> <p>22 Mr Michel?</p> <p>23 A. This is bottom of 4232?</p> <p>24 Q. That's right.</p> <p>25 A. This was in Davos and this is a dinner I've held pretty</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

17 (Pages 65 to 68)

<p>1 much every year I've been going. I think this is what 2 this refers to. I definitely met Fred Michel there. 3 I think I have also probably met him at some of the 4 News International parties, but I think that's probably 5 about it. 6 Q. And of course you're aware of his role and -- 7 A. I've read a lot of texts, yes. 8 Q. Mm. 9 A. Well, I have now, as it were. 10 Q. In relation to your schedule when you're Prime Minister, 11 this is now DC1, it starts at 04182, what we see by way 12 of summary is a lesser degree of contact. It's about 13 50 per cent -- 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. -- we think. And the same sort of picture, in terms of 16 the individuals you meet, coming up. 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. So I don't think it's necessary to look at this with any 19 care unless there are any particular points you want to 20 draw attention to. 21 A. No. I'd just make the point, I suppose, that again if 22 you look at arrival on Downing Street, there are 23 meetings with a lot of different newspapers and 24 newspaper groups. But as you say, a less intense 25 period. I had other important things to do.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 be: 2 "Spoken to Tony ..." 3 That's Tony Gallagher, isn't it? 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. "... and repeated our conversation. Asked him to be in 6 touch to arrange daily call during campaign as 7 discussed." 8 I think the evidence was that the daily call was 9 going to be between you and Mr Barclay, but if that's 10 wrong, I'll be corrected. 11 A. I don't think so. I think the daily call was between 12 the Conservative Party and Tony Gallagher. I don't know 13 whether it was necessarily going to be me, but I think 14 this was me wanting to make sure that the Telegraph knew 15 our policies and our plans and all the rest of it. 16 I think that's what it was about. 17 Q. I understand. As I said, some the texts are about 18 social arrangements, but there are some texts about 19 liquidity. This is much later on in May 2011. Just to 20 have a look at one of them, it's at 03112, Mr Cameron. 21 A. Yes. Okay. 22 Q. This is quite a recondite area: 23 "Suggest therefore Bank of England announce 24 extension to liquidity scheme allow banks say 5 yrs to 25 implement Basle 3 and if you can scrap talk of bank tax</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 Q. Can I ask you, moving away from this and towards someone 2 else, Mr Aidan Barclay. 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. We've heard some evidence from him and I hope you've had 5 the chance to look at the transcript of his evidence 6 under tab 27 of this bundle, but he referred to the fact 7 that he had quite frequent text messages with you, you'd 8 exchanged phone numbers. Indeed, we've seen evidence of 9 some of those messages. It's the transcript for Day 62, 10 in particular, it's in the afternoon, pages 83 to 87. 11 A. Yes. 12 Q. We know from one text message, and some of these are of 13 a personal nature, it's therefore not necessary to look 14 at them, but there's one message at the start of tab 25, 15 which is page PROP03106. 16 A. Right. 17 Q. Where there's a reference to "him". I'm just trying to 18 be sure who the pronoun "him" is a reference to in that. 19 I think it's -- 20 A. Are we on the texts themselves or on the -- oh, here we 21 are, we have it on the screen. 22 Q. This is an SMS text send by "AB", who is obviously 23 Mr Barclay, to you, 23 March 2010. 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. The campaign hasn't yet been launched, but it's about to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 other countries won't go along with it anyway." 2 And I think you do reply to that, or maybe you 3 don't. There's another one about credit markets. 4 Is the overall impression here that he has access to 5 you in a particular way? 6 A. Well, I think we had met various times, we had each 7 other's phone numbers. I think he -- you know, he felt 8 particularly strongly about some of these economic 9 issues and wanted to give me his view. I don't think 10 there's anything particularly improper about that. 11 Q. No. But did you -- put another way, did you accord any 12 particular weight to his view or was it just part of the 13 whole range of viewpoints you receive probably on 14 a multitudinous basis over the course of a working day? 15 A. Yes. I think this was the view of him, you know, not 16 really as chairman of a newspaper group but as chairman 17 of a big business heavily invested into the UK with lots 18 of property and other businesses and this was his strong 19 views about the financial situation and I think it's 20 perfectly legitimate. I get a lot of exposure to 21 businesses' views on these sorts of points, some by 22 text, many more by the meetings I have, and that seems 23 to me not a bad thing, as long as you can order them 24 properly in your mind. 25 Q. So in order to get a fair picture, are we to understand</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

18 (Pages 69 to 72)

<p>1 that you are almost bombarded with this sort of</p> <p>2 material, not necessarily from media sources but</p> <p>3 generally people trying to get you to look at things to</p> <p>4 at least consider them as part of policy formulation?</p> <p>5 A. I wouldn't say bombarded, but you have a lot of contacts</p> <p>6 with a lot of different people in different ways, so</p> <p>7 I've actually sort of slightly moved away from email in</p> <p>8 some ways, because I do my official papers and box and</p> <p>9 everything very formally, but I do get texts from</p> <p>10 business contacts, friends and what have you.</p> <p>11 Q. May I go back to the issue now of the Sun newspaper.</p> <p>12 We, I think, agree that it can't be seen as of massive</p> <p>13 importance, but it is of some importance --</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. -- where it goes, as I suppose a form of floating voter,</p> <p>16 is that a reasonable characterisation?</p> <p>17 A. I think that's right. It certainly doesn't mean you're</p> <p>18 going to win the election, but you're trying to win</p> <p>19 support, build momentum, so it's that.</p> <p>20 Q. Did you develop a strategy as to how the Sun might be</p> <p>21 won over?</p> <p>22 A. I wouldn't put it like that, no. I think we developed</p> <p>23 a strategy of how to explain the values and the policies</p> <p>24 and the approaches we believed in and then tried to</p> <p>25 spread that as far as we could. Obviously when you're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 Wade as then was, had a strong relationship with</p> <p>2 Gordon Brown. I knew that we had our work cut out to</p> <p>3 win over the Sun, yes, but I felt what we had on our</p> <p>4 side was that Sun readers were leaving the government</p> <p>5 and coming towards us, and so I thought -- as I said</p> <p>6 right throughout, our task was to try to get what I see</p> <p>7 as a sort of centre right, pro-enterprise, pro-family,</p> <p>8 small "c" conservative paper back into the fold.</p> <p>9 Q. Was it your understanding that the final decision would</p> <p>10 be made by Rupert Murdoch, or at the very least it</p> <p>11 couldn't be made without his consent?</p> <p>12 A. I didn't know how these decisions -- I assumed obviously</p> <p>13 he would have a big say in it but I sensed that if we</p> <p>14 could show that Sun readers were moving in</p> <p>15 a Conservative direction, we would have a good chance of</p> <p>16 winning their support, but as I said, this was one of</p> <p>17 many things we were trying to do.</p> <p>18 Q. Did Mr Coulson give you advice as to how best to proceed</p> <p>19 in relation to the Sun?</p> <p>20 A. Well, of course. He was my Director of Communications</p> <p>21 and so he was in charge of taking our policies and</p> <p>22 working out the best way of promoting my leadership, our</p> <p>23 policies, our values, what we could do for the country,</p> <p>24 to all of these media outlets.</p> <p>25 Q. And you knew, of course, that he was very friendly with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 talking to the Sun, you want to talk to things -- those</p> <p>2 parts of your policy that are particularly going to</p> <p>3 appeal to Sun readers, so the freeze in the council tax</p> <p>4 we thought was particularly important because people</p> <p>5 were hard pressed, they're having a difficult time, that</p> <p>6 is something that people really can feel strongly about</p> <p>7 because they know the pressure their family finances are</p> <p>8 under. So obviously, you know, when you're talking to</p> <p>9 the Financial Times, you're going to be talking about</p> <p>10 Basle 3, but when you're talking to the Sun, you want to</p> <p>11 talk about the policies you have that directly appeal to</p> <p>12 their readers.</p> <p>13 Q. By this stage you of course had Mr Coulson on board,</p> <p>14 since May or June 2007, and -- I'll come to this in more</p> <p>15 detail later -- you had developed a friendship with</p> <p>16 Mrs Brooks, hadn't you?</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. And you were aware that Mr Rupert Murdoch had a good</p> <p>19 personal relationship with Mr Brown, were you?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. And was it explained to you or did you work it out</p> <p>22 anyway that that was likely to be an impediment, if</p> <p>23 I can put it in those terms, to the Sun shifting sides?</p> <p>24 A. I think both that Rupert Murdoch had a strong</p> <p>25 relationship with Gordon Brown; Rebekah Brooks, Rebekah</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 Mrs Brooks, didn't you?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. And you said Mrs Brooks was close to Gordon Brown.</p> <p>4 Wouldn't be perhaps better to say that she was close to</p> <p>5 his wife, but in fact she was very friendly with</p> <p>6 Tony Blair and less well disposed to Gordon Brown, if</p> <p>7 I can summarise it in those terms?</p> <p>8 A. I think she was pretty friendly with all of them, and</p> <p>9 I remember some strong arguments when I would be</p> <p>10 berating the government and all its works and she would</p> <p>11 be standing up pretty vigorously for Gordon Brown.</p> <p>12 Q. When did you sense that Mrs Brooks would be disposed to</p> <p>13 supporting you and your party, approximately when?</p> <p>14 A. I can't really put a date on it. I think it was -- as</p> <p>15 I say, there was a growing picture of disenchantment</p> <p>16 with the government. The Conservative Party was,</p> <p>17 I think, getting its act together, looking more like</p> <p>18 a credible government, and it was a process. We had</p> <p>19 some strong allies, as it were. I don't want to ruin</p> <p>20 his career, but someone like Trevor Kavanagh on the Sun,</p> <p>21 I felt that he was someone who thought that the Labour</p> <p>22 government was getting it wrong, thought the</p> <p>23 Conservative Party was getting its act together. Lots</p> <p>24 of things he didn't agree with about what I was doing,</p> <p>25 but I always felt he was a potential ally for pointing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 out that Sun readers were moving in our direction.</p> <p>2 Q. I'm sure it's a process, not an event; in any event, if</p> <p>3 it is an event you're not going to remember the exact</p> <p>4 date, but approximately when do you think Mrs Brooks was</p> <p>5 onside? About six months before the shift of support?</p> <p>6 A year before?</p> <p>7 A. I would have to go through my diary and try and remember</p> <p>8 the -- but I can't give you a date.</p> <p>9 Q. Not even a sense of when it might have been, in terms</p> <p>10 of -- I'm not asking you to give us a date, but was it</p> <p>11 months, was it weeks, was it years?</p> <p>12 A. I don't want to get it wrong, so I -- it certainly</p> <p>13 wasn't weeks. It was I think more than that. But</p> <p>14 I can't really give you any more than that.</p> <p>15 Q. Were you given any advice as to the importance of</p> <p>16 James Murdoch in this discretion, that he would have</p> <p>17 influence over his father and, put bluntly, may be able</p> <p>18 to draw his father away from Gordon Brown?</p> <p>19 A. I think they were all important. I mean, I didn't quite</p> <p>20 understand. It was like -- the Sun likened it to the</p> <p>21 white smoke coming out after a papal election.</p> <p>22 I didn't quite understand how the decision would be</p> <p>23 made, but my view was they were all important in terms</p> <p>24 of making that decision. The Sun readers trusted voices</p> <p>25 like Trevor Kavanagh, Rupert Murdoch, James Murdoch,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 still supporting Gordon Brown and as I say she was still</p> <p>2 personally quite supportive of Gordon Brown and as I say</p> <p>3 our relationship got stronger when she married Charlie</p> <p>4 Brooks, who I've known for some time and who's</p> <p>5 a neighbour.</p> <p>6 Q. She gave us some evidence as to the, if I can put it in</p> <p>7 this way, the quantity and tone of text messages. Can</p> <p>8 I ask you this straightforward question: do you agree in</p> <p>9 general with the gist of her evidence on that matter?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, I think I do.</p> <p>11 Q. And as for phone calls, I'm not asking you to count them</p> <p>12 up, but approximately how often would you or did you</p> <p>13 speak to her by phone, including by mobile phone?</p> <p>14 A. In opposition, perhaps particularly sort of 2006, 2007,</p> <p>15 not a huge amount. I mean, I always felt when I did</p> <p>16 ring her, I always felt I was -- it felt like I was</p> <p>17 telephoning a lot less than Gordon Brown, which</p> <p>18 I thought was interesting, that he was the</p> <p>19 Prime Minister and I was the leader of the opposition.</p> <p>20 My sense was I was in contact a lot less than he was.</p> <p>21 But I can't put numbers on it.</p> <p>22 But certainly, you know, in 2006, 2007, not</p> <p>23 necessarily every week, I don't think.</p> <p>24 Q. Can we move it forward to 2008, 2009. Was there contact</p> <p>25 by phone, say, on a weekly basis?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 Rebekah Wade, Dominic Mohan, all of them, and I felt</p> <p>2 I had to focus on showing how the Conservative Party</p> <p>3 would be good for the country, good for Sun readers, and</p> <p>4 we had a chance of as I say winning them back to the</p> <p>5 Conservative fold and that's what I focused on.</p> <p>6 Q. How important were the Freuds in all of this, if not as</p> <p>7 decision-makers but as facilitators?</p> <p>8 A. Very difficult. I mean, Matthew's politics I'm not</p> <p>9 quite sure about. So I'm not totally sure -- I don't</p> <p>10 want to -- I'm not totally sure what role he was</p> <p>11 playing, but he was being helpful in terms of trying to</p> <p>12 facilitate a meeting here or some advice or something</p> <p>13 like that. He's a friend, but I think politically he's</p> <p>14 supported various different sides at various different</p> <p>15 times.</p> <p>16 Q. Okay. So Mrs Brooks, you make clear from your</p> <p>17 statement, is a friend.</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. It may not again be possible to identify a date, but</p> <p>20 would you have counted her or did you count her as</p> <p>21 amongst your good friends, say, by 2008?</p> <p>22 A. Yes. We were -- you know, we got to know each other</p> <p>23 because of her role in the media, my role in politics,</p> <p>24 but we struck up a friendship. That friendship grew,</p> <p>25 even though she was at that stage still -- her paper was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 A. I think as we get closer to the election and the</p> <p>2 decision of the Sun and also the wedding and she's moved</p> <p>3 in to Charlie Brooks' house, which is very near where</p> <p>4 I live in -- where we live in the constituency, then the</p> <p>5 level of contact went up, and we saw each other socially</p> <p>6 more.</p> <p>7 Q. But about how frequently?</p> <p>8 A. What date are we talking about?</p> <p>9 Q. Well, we're in 2008, 2009, Mr Cameron. Just to get an</p> <p>10 idea first of all of contact by telephone and then</p> <p>11 social contact.</p> <p>12 A. It's very difficult because I don't have a record and</p> <p>13 I don't want to give you an answer that isn't right, so,</p> <p>14 you know, sometimes I expect we would have been talking</p> <p>15 to each other quite a bit, particularly around the time</p> <p>16 perhaps of the wedding or when we were both in</p> <p>17 Oxfordshire, we would have had more frequent contact.</p> <p>18 Q. Okay. So when you're at your constituency at</p> <p>19 weekends --</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. -- did you see her every weekend or most weekends in the</p> <p>22 period 2008, 2009?</p> <p>23 A. Not every weekend.</p> <p>24 Q. But most weekends?</p> <p>25 A. In 2008, 2009? I'd have to check. I might be able to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

20 (Pages 77 to 80)

<p>1 go back and check, but I don't think every weekend.</p> <p>2 I don't think most weekends. But it would depend.</p> <p>3 Q. I don't think it's necessary to ask you to check,</p> <p>4 because these questions aren't designed to be that</p> <p>5 precise. It's just to get a feel.</p> <p>6 A. Definitely we were -- particularly once she started</p> <p>7 going out with Charlie Brooks, living a couple of miles</p> <p>8 down the road, I was definitely seeing her more often</p> <p>9 because my sort of friendship with Charlie and as</p> <p>10 a neighbour and, you know, we -- Charlie and I played</p> <p>11 tennis together and all sorts of other things, which I'm</p> <p>12 sure we'll come on to, so that was why I was seeing more</p> <p>13 of her.</p> <p>14 Q. There's one text message which I'm going to invite you</p> <p>15 to look at now. Before I do, I'm going to say something</p> <p>16 about it. It's dated 7 October 2009. I'm not sure what</p> <p>17 number it's been given in our system, but it's tab 35 of</p> <p>18 the addendum bundle which has been prepared.</p> <p>19 A. Right.</p> <p>20 Q. I'm going to read it out, but before I do, I'm going to</p> <p>21 say something about it. Do you have it to hand?</p> <p>22 A. I have it, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. I should make it clear before I read it out that</p> <p>24 News International have recently disclosed a number of</p> <p>25 other text messages between Mrs Brooks and Mr Cameron,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 But as always Sam was wonderful -- (and I thought it was</p> <p>2 OE's that were charm personified!) I am so rooting for</p> <p>3 you tomorrow not just as a proud friend but because</p> <p>4 professionally we're definitely in this together!</p> <p>5 Speech of your life? Yes he Cam!"</p> <p>6 The "rooting for you tomorrow" was obviously you</p> <p>7 were giving a speech probably at the party conference?</p> <p>8 A. I think it was my party conference speech. I think --</p> <p>9 I can explain this email. The issue with the Times was</p> <p>10 that at the party conference I had not been to the Times</p> <p>11 party. The major newspaper groups tend to have big</p> <p>12 parties at the party conference and they expect party</p> <p>13 leaders, Cabinet ministers, Shadow Cabinet ministers to</p> <p>14 go, and that would be the normal thing to do. The</p> <p>15 Telegraph, the Times, others would do this. I hadn't</p> <p>16 gone, and I think that was what this was about, and</p> <p>17 I was apologising for that, and that would explain her</p> <p>18 disappointment, as it were, if that helps.</p> <p>19 Q. Just the phrase "but because professionally we're</p> <p>20 definitely in this together", what was your</p> <p>21 understanding of that?</p> <p>22 A. I think that is about the Sun had made this decision to</p> <p>23 back the Conservatives, to part company with Labour, and</p> <p>24 so the Sun wanted to make sure it was helping the</p> <p>25 Conservative Party put its best foot forward with the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 pursuant to a Section 21 request. A Section 21 request</p> <p>2 is in fact an order under statute requiring people to</p> <p>3 disclose material. Those relate to the period October</p> <p>4 2009, May 2011 and June 2011. In the Inquiry's</p> <p>5 judgment, all the other text messages I have referred to</p> <p>6 are irrelevant to its terms of reference. That's why</p> <p>7 we're only going to look at one. And News International</p> <p>8 through their solicitors Linklaters have also explained</p> <p>9 why text messages in other monthly periods are not</p> <p>10 available, and their letter will be put on our website.</p> <p>11 So the one we're looking at is 7 October 2009, which</p> <p>12 I think is during the party conference?</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. But it's certainly within eight or nine days or so of</p> <p>15 the shift of support. It was sent by Mrs Brooks to you,</p> <p>16 timed at 16.45 in the afternoon. The first line has</p> <p>17 been redacted because it's on grounds of relevance, and</p> <p>18 then she says:</p> <p>19 "But seriously [which suggests that the first line</p> <p>20 contains or might contain something of a jocular nature]</p> <p>21 I do understand the issue with the Times. Let's discuss</p> <p>22 over country supper soon. On the party it was because</p> <p>23 I had asked a number of NI [that's obviously</p> <p>24 News International] people to Manchester post</p> <p>25 endorsement and they were disappointed not to see you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 policies we were announcing, the speech I was going to</p> <p>2 make and all the rest of it, and I think that's what</p> <p>3 that means.</p> <p>4 Q. So the adverb "professionally" is covering the fact that</p> <p>5 the Sun and you were bound together to some extent?</p> <p>6 A. I think what it means is that we were, as she put it, we</p> <p>7 were friends, but professionally, we as leader of the</p> <p>8 Conservative Party and her in newspapers, we were going</p> <p>9 to be pushing the same political agenda.</p> <p>10 Q. And the "country supper" she refers to, sort of in</p> <p>11 a forward-looking way, is that the sort of interaction</p> <p>12 you often had with her?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, as we were neighbours.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay. Can I move forward in time to May 2011 to deal</p> <p>15 with a discrete point. This relates to the McCanns.</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Were you asked by Mrs Brooks to support or indeed cause</p> <p>18 to take place a review of the McCann case within the</p> <p>19 Metropolitan Police?</p> <p>20 A. I don't recall the exact provenance of this whole issue.</p> <p>21 What I remember is that I had a meeting with Kate and</p> <p>22 Gerry McCann as leader of the opposition, and anyone</p> <p>23 who's met them or obviously read about the story, you</p> <p>24 can't fail to be incredibly moved by what has happened</p> <p>25 to them and all the efforts they've made to try and get</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

21 (Pages 81 to 84)

<p>1 Madeleine back, and I followed this up as 2 Prime Minister, but I can't remember the exact 3 provenance of who called who and when, and what have 4 you, but I think it was -- the police clearly had played 5 a role in trying to keep the investigation going, and 6 the government has helped them with that. 7 Q. But in terms of any interaction between you and 8 Mrs Brooks, was it drawn to your attention that 9 Mrs Brooks went to see two of your special advisers, 10 I think on 11 May? 11 A. I don't recall. It might well have been. I don't 12 recall the exact conversations. I do recall, because 13 I can see what might lie behind the question, which is: 14 are you treating different investigations and campaigns 15 fairly? And I do remember actually, as Prime Minister, 16 consulting the Permanent Secretary at Number 10 about 17 the step that the police were about to take, backed by 18 the government, which was to provide some extra funding 19 for the investigation, and it was drawn to my attention 20 that there is a special Home Office procedure for 21 helping with particularly complex and expensive 22 investigations that's been used in various cases, and it 23 was going to be used in this case and he was satisfied 24 that that was -- that had been dealt with properly and 25 effectively. So it's an example, if you like, of the Page 85</p>	<p>1 that you have the opportunity to deal with it. 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. He put it, to be fair to him, higher than implied deal. 4 He said that it was an express deal which you made with 5 either Rupert Murdoch or James Murdoch to, I paraphrase, 6 follow the line of MacTaggart: neuter Ofcom, trim back 7 the BBC, in exchange for News International supporting 8 your party. So that's the allegation. We'll look at 9 the detail, but I invite you first of all to respond to 10 it generally. 11 A. To respond generally, and frankly it is absolute 12 nonsense from start to finish. I think where it comes 13 from is obviously Gordon Brown was very angry and 14 disappointed that the Sun had deserted him, and as 15 a result, in my view, he has cooked up an entirely 16 specious and unjustified conspiracy theory to try and, 17 I don't know, justify his anger. 18 But I've taken the time to look through the 19 individual parts of policy that he points to, and in 20 almost every case it is complete nonsense. 21 Just to take a couple of examples, he makes the 22 point about the listing of sporting events and 23 particularly the Ashes, and actually it was the Labour 24 government, his government, that delisted the Ashes. He 25 makes a point about us taking a particular view on Page 87</p>
<p>1 importance of making sure these things are done properly 2 and I believe it was. 3 Q. But if I can put the point in this way, were you aware 4 of any pressure being put on you directly or indirectly 5 via Mrs Brooks to cause this review to take place? 6 A. Pressure? No, I wasn't aware of any pressure. 7 Q. Well, if it wasn't pressure, was any influence, then, 8 sought to be imposed? 9 A. Well, I mean clearly this was a very high-profile case, 10 and a case that a number of newspapers wanted to 11 champion because their readers wanted to champion it, 12 and obviously as government you have to think: are we 13 helping with this because there's media pressure or is 14 it genuine public pressure, is there a genuine case, are 15 we treating this fairly? And I did ask those questions 16 of the Permanent Secretary at Number 10, and so I think 17 we made an appropriate response. But I don't remember 18 any sort of specific pressure being put on me. I think 19 I'm right in saying the Home Secretary has given some 20 evidence on this as well. 21 Q. May I move on to a different topic. It is related to 22 earlier topics, but it sort of ties in with the implied 23 deal point. You may or may not have been following 24 Mr Gordon Brown's evidence, but he made a specific point 25 against you and your party, and therefore it's right Page 86</p>	<p>1 product placement. Again, it was a Labour government 2 that started the process of changing the rules on 3 product placement under his oversight. 4 On the BBC, as I've argued before, my position on 5 the BBC is not the same as James Murdoch's position on 6 the BBC. I support the BBC, I support the licence fee. 7 So the Conservative Party, I think, will be 8 submitting a piece-by-piece response to this because it 9 is complete nonsense, but I'm very happy to go through 10 the individual parts. But, as I've said before, there 11 was no overt deal for support, there was no covert deal, 12 there were no nods and winks. There was a Conservative 13 politician, me, trying to win over newspapers, trying to 14 win over television, trying to win over proprietors, but 15 not trading policies for that support. And when you 16 look at the detail of this, as I say, it is complete 17 nonsense. 18 Q. Thank you. May we focus on two matters and sort of take 19 the highlights, because that's probably the sensible way 20 to deal with it. The highlights, if they can be so 21 described, are the Ofcom issue and the BBC issue. 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. It may be the easiest way to deal with this is to look 24 at paragraph 105 and following of your statement, 25 because you rightly say you've taken time to refer to Page 88</p>

22 (Pages 85 to 88)

<p>1 relevant parts of iterations of your party's policy when 2 in opposition.</p> <p>3 I think we can look at paragraph 107, first of all, 4 which is a speech the then Shadow Culture Minister 5 Mr Vaizey gave January 2009, this is our page 04127. He 6 said:</p> <p>7 "We were fans of the BBC." 8 On the next page: 9 "While we support the licence fee and believe it's 10 the best way to fund the BBC for the foreseeable future, 11 we believe the level of the licence fee is at the top 12 end of what is acceptable to the public." 13 So hinting there that the fee may have to be frozen.</p> <p>14 A. Yes, and that is what we did. We froze the licence fee, 15 much to the anger of James Murdoch, who I think -- 16 I think the Chancellor George Osborne thought that it 17 should have been cut. So we had our own policy on the 18 BBC licence fee which I think has been fair and 19 reasonable to the BBC when other organisations have had 20 their budgets cut by considerably more.</p> <p>21 So, again, this part of the conspiracy theory 22 I think has absolutely no weight at all.</p> <p>23 Q. Although some might say you were not prepared to go as 24 far as Mr Murdoch to cut the fee, but you were prepared 25 to meet him part way along the way, is that fair?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 a strange choice for Jeremy Hunt to launch a review of 2 the creative industries -- this is paragraph 110 -- 3 chaired by former BBC Director General Greg Dyke. If 4 you wanted a sort of Murdoch conspiracy, you wouldn't 5 ask Greg Dyke, a prominent previous Labour supporter and 6 very successful Director General of the BBC, to carry 7 out the policy for you. It's just another reason why 8 I think this whole idea is --</p> <p>9 Q. Although Elisabeth Freud was part of the taskforce, 10 wasn't she?</p> <p>11 A. That's true, but you can see the list on page 37 and 12 I would argue that is a pretty balanced list of people 13 from different parts of broadcasting media and 14 technology. But as I say, Greg Dyke is hardly 15 a shrinking violet and you wouldn't put him in charge if 16 you had some secret agenda.</p> <p>17 Q. There are probably no shrinking violets on this 18 taskforce. We're not going to look at all the names, 19 but is it your position that we have a range of views 20 coming across from these individuals?</p> <p>21 A. Yes. I think what we were trying to do here is assemble 22 a group of people that included radio, music, new media, 23 ITV, so a pretty good mix, actually, but as I say, the 24 person leading it was a former Director General of the 25 BBC, and I think that's significant.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 A. I think it's quite difficult to argue, at a time when 2 you know if you get into government you're going to have 3 to be making spending reductions, that you're going to 4 see the BBC licence fee go up and up and up, and I think 5 we had a consistent and long-term argument, which very 6 much flowed from my own views formed at Carlton, that 7 the BBC needed to be strong, it needed the backing of 8 the licence fee. I do think the BBC had gone into areas 9 it shouldn't have done, and I mention that in some of my 10 evidence, but I think this is a fair settlement for the 11 BBC and it's certainly not one that James Murdoch 12 supported.</p> <p>13 Q. In March 2009, this is clear from paragraph 109 at 14 page 04130, you made an announcement which was to the 15 effect that the licence fee would be frozen.</p> <p>16 A. Mm-hm.</p> <p>17 Q. Did that represent your policy then at all material 18 times between March 2009 and the election, at least as 19 regards the licence fee?</p> <p>20 A. Well, I made that announcement in March 2009 and we have 21 delivered that -- we've delivered more than that policy 22 in government, yes.</p> <p>23 By the way, it just caught my eye, paragraph 110. 24 If there was this great conspiracy to hand over BBC 25 policy to the Murdochs, it would seem to be quite</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 Q. Can we look at Ofcom? You gave a speech on quangos, it 2 wasn't devoted solely to Ofcom at all. It's 3 paragraph 113, page 04132.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. But you did make some points about Ofcom in two or three 6 paragraphs, didn't you?</p> <p>7 A. I did. I think it's important to stress this was a big 8 speech on quangos. There was a sense that after 13 9 years of a Labour government, the quango state had got 10 very big. Quangos had become very powerful, the people 11 working on them had become extraordinarily well paid, 12 and this was a serious speech that I'd worked on with 13 people like Oliver Letwin to try and come up with, 14 instead of the normal guff that politicians do about 15 let's have a bonfire of the quangos, we were trying to 16 find a set of rules to apply to different quangos to see 17 whether they needed to exist or whether parts of them 18 could be folded back into government, and we set out 19 a series of questions which are in paragraph 113, and 20 then we applied that to a number of quangos.</p> <p>21 As you say, a big speech about quangos. The Ofcom 22 part is only three paragraphs or so.</p> <p>23 One of the reasons I picked Ofcom was because of my 24 own experience from television of remembering what the 25 Independent Television Commission had done, the ITC, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

23 (Pages 89 to 92)

1 precursor of Ofcom, and also remembering the sort of
 2 levels of pay that there were in the ITC compared with
 3 Ofcom, and I did think Ofcom was quite a good example of
 4 a quango that had got too big, too expensive, and the
 5 pay levels were pretty excessive.
 6 I would just make the point -- I'll shut up in
 7 a second -- but at this time Ofcom was being actually
 8 roundly attacked on this basis by ITV, by the BBC, with
 9 which it had almost nothing to do, and also by
 10 commentators on the left of politics like Andrew
 11 Rawnsley, who were all saying Ofcom seems to have got
 12 too big and too bureaucratic.
 13 So this was an agenda that was very linked to my own
 14 views, not in any way proposed or dictated by others.
 15 Q. The upshot was that Ofcom, you said, would cease to
 16 exist as we know it, this is at the end of
 17 paragraph 113:
 18 "Its remit will be restricted to its narrow
 19 technical enforcement roles [and that presumably covered
 20 roles under the Enterprise Act in relation to assessing
 21 plurality] but it will no longer play a role in making
 22 policy."
 23 Do you see that?
 24 A. What our test was with all these quangos was to say that
 25 policymaking on the whole should be done by departments

Page 93

1 and be accountable to Parliament. We were making an
 2 argument about quangos that was not just about cutting
 3 costs, it was about accountability. It was about saying
 4 that if policy is being made, that should be ministers
 5 accountable to Parliament; if decisions that have to be
 6 impartial, which is what Ofcom does, were their concern,
 7 they should be carried out by independent
 8 non-governmental bodies for all the reasons people would
 9 understand. So it was a serious attempt to look at
 10 quangos more broadly.
 11 Q. To take the story forward, as it were, is this right,
 12 that the reason this policy was not enacted was that in
 13 the pragmatic realities of the Coalition government it
 14 wasn't possible?
 15 A. That's right. I wasn't involved in the detailed
 16 negotiation of the Coalition agreement, but some
 17 policies made it through, others didn't, and I suspect
 18 this is one that we didn't get agreement on, but we have
 19 taken action on pay levels in quangos and we have tried
 20 to restrict them.
 21 Q. You have denied that there was any implied deal. Can
 22 I try and look at it in this way: do you feel, looking
 23 back at this, that there is nonetheless a perception
 24 that we had the coincidence of two things, at least in
 25 terms of time: a shift in support and policies which

Page 94

1 don't precisely match what we see in the MacTaggart
 2 lecture, but are not a million miles from them, and the
 3 public thinks or people think: well, there's some sort
 4 of link between the two. This is a perception and it
 5 flows from a cosy relationship? Do you accept at least
 6 that much?
 7 A. I think anyone reasonably looking at Conservative
 8 policies and where they came from and why they existed
 9 would see that they were driven by our values and our
 10 approach and also my personal history with Carlton. So,
 11 no, I don't really accept that.
 12 I think there's a slight problem with this. If the
 13 argument goes there was no covert deal, okay, there was
 14 no evidence for that, and maybe there was no overt deal,
 15 but nonetheless it all looks like there was a nod and
 16 a wink, we do slightly get into sort of witchcraft
 17 trials. How do you possibly prove that you're innocent
 18 on that basis?
 19 As I say, the best I can do is point to all of these
 20 policies, explain where they came from, and I think
 21 there's really good evidence that they were borne out of
 22 proper Conservative thinking about the media, and
 23 I think whether you're dealing with the BBC licence fee,
 24 TV advertising, Ofcom, product placement, whether or not
 25 the Ashes should be on free-to-air television or not,

Page 95

1 there's very good Conservative explanations for the
 2 positions that we hold.
 3 Q. I understand, Mr Cameron. If the matter is investigated
 4 at a public inquiry, it either happened or it didn't
 5 happen.
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. So there was either a deal, however you define it or you
 8 don't. The problem is if you don't have a public
 9 inquiry, there are perceptions?
 10 A. The public inquiry is excellent. I think this is
 11 absolutely fulfilling the remit of what I wanted and
 12 it's very important that alongside the appalling things
 13 that happened to entirely innocent people that you've
 14 looked at, the huge problem we have in terms of police
 15 relations with media, it's absolutely right we get to
 16 the bottom of the political/media relationship and how
 17 to put it on a firmer footing.
 18 But what I'm saying is not only was there no covert
 19 deal, there was no overt deal and there wasn't nods and
 20 winks. Policies that I produced that I'm very proud of
 21 came from our beliefs, values, my history, my beliefs,
 22 and they weren't dictated by anybody else.
 23 Q. Thank you. I think I've probably covered that point.
 24 I'm going to move on to another point then.
 25 The third area of evidence is specific narrative

Page 96

<p>1 examples and the first one is Mr Andy Coulson.</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. You start that in your witness statement at</p> <p>4 paragraph 219, page 04168.</p> <p>5 A. Right.</p> <p>6 Q. In terms of your wish list in early 2007, Mr Cameron,</p> <p>7 were you looking for someone with tabloid experience?</p> <p>8 A. Not necessarily, but I was looking for someone who was</p> <p>9 a big hitter, and I was looking for someone who could</p> <p>10 really cope with the huge media pressure that you're</p> <p>11 under, and tabloid editors and leading executives on</p> <p>12 a tabloid newspaper I think do have -- they bring</p> <p>13 something that others wouldn't, and so there wasn't</p> <p>14 a particular wish list, but it was trying to get the</p> <p>15 right person with the right skills.</p> <p>16 Q. Because without generalising too much about tabloid</p> <p>17 editors, we're tending to look at people who are tough</p> <p>18 and who are not going to blink under pressure, aren't</p> <p>19 we?</p> <p>20 A. I think that's right. There is a reason for that, which</p> <p>21 is -- I'm not asking for tea and sympathy, but when</p> <p>22 you're running a political party, the media pressures,</p> <p>23 you know, a typical weekend, you might have -- you have</p> <p>24 a policy problem over here, you have an MP expenses</p> <p>25 scandal over here, you have a marriage breakdown over</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 A. There were two or three others. I don't want to blight</p> <p>2 their careers by naming them. There were two or three</p> <p>3 other people we were looking at and one or two that</p> <p>4 I met with. But, as I say, we decided to employ</p> <p>5 Andy Coulson.</p> <p>6 Q. Of the two or three others, were any from a broadsheet?</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. And Mr Coulson, was he the only one from</p> <p>9 News International or not, previously, of course?</p> <p>10 A. No. I mean, this is difficult to -- there was someone</p> <p>11 from a tabloid newspaper I think I'd talked to earlier</p> <p>12 in the process, but I can't remember the exact dates,</p> <p>13 but at the time at which we made the Andy Coulson</p> <p>14 appointment, I think I'm right that he was the only</p> <p>15 tabloid editor available.</p> <p>16 Q. The initial interviews, if that's a correct description,</p> <p>17 were carried out by others, as we know, but how many did</p> <p>18 you see as part of this process? How many individuals?</p> <p>19 A. How many people did I see? Obviously Guto Harri, who's</p> <p>20 outed himself or been outed, I did have conversations</p> <p>21 with him. There was someone senior from a broadsheet</p> <p>22 newspaper. There was someone else very senior in the</p> <p>23 BBC. There was this tabloid journalist. This will</p> <p>24 obviously set an enormous guessing game going with our</p> <p>25 friends in the media. I've lost count. I think that's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 there, you have some councillor enmeshed in some scandal</p> <p>2 over here. It literally comes in on top of your head.</p> <p>3 It's very fast, it's very furious, and you need someone</p> <p>4 seriously good at handling it, and that to me was one of</p> <p>5 the key qualifications.</p> <p>6 I had this very good guy, George Eustice, who was</p> <p>7 doing a good job. If I was going to bring someone in</p> <p>8 above him, I wanted somebody who really would be able to</p> <p>9 materially alter and improve the way we did things,</p> <p>10 particularly in the face of this massive pressure you</p> <p>11 face.</p> <p>12 Q. To what extent were you looking at the example of</p> <p>13 Alastair Campbell as being obviously politically in</p> <p>14 a different place but the sort of man in terms of</p> <p>15 temperament and robustness who would be of assistance to</p> <p>16 you?</p> <p>17 A. Not necessarily. I don't think, you know,</p> <p>18 Alastair Campbell had -- he was much more political than</p> <p>19 Andy Coulson, and I think in all sorts of ways there</p> <p>20 were occasions when clearly he'd overstepped the role of</p> <p>21 what he should have been doing.</p> <p>22 Q. We've heard from Mr Osborne that a number of names were</p> <p>23 considered. Aside from the one broadcaster who has been</p> <p>24 mentioned, can you remember approximately how many names</p> <p>25 were considered?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 four people.</p> <p>2 There may have been others suggested. I think the</p> <p>3 situation was we had, as I say, in George Eustice a very</p> <p>4 effective communicator. Clearly we needed -- we wanted</p> <p>5 though to strengthen the operation. People are being</p> <p>6 suggested and proposed all the time, but those four</p> <p>7 I can remember personally talking to.</p> <p>8 Q. And paragraph 225, Mr Cameron, you explain that</p> <p>9 assurances were sought and obtained from Mr Coulson in</p> <p>10 a meeting with Francis Maude and Ed Llewellyn; is that</p> <p>11 correct?</p> <p>12 A. That is my understanding, yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Can we be clear, was that something that was</p> <p>14 communicated to you in about March 2007, namely that</p> <p>15 they had specifically asked for assurances and obtained</p> <p>16 them?</p> <p>17 A. Yes. Obviously Ed Llewellyn is my Chief of Staff, was</p> <p>18 my Chief of Staff. When you're trying to hire someone</p> <p>19 like this, you obviously have to keep matters very</p> <p>20 tight, you don't want it to leak -- it did actually leak</p> <p>21 eventually. So I would have talked to Edward about his</p> <p>22 interview, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Mr Osborne's evidence was that he asked for and obtained</p> <p>24 assurances. Were you aware of that?</p> <p>25 A. I don't recall, but if George says that, I have no</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 reason to doubt it. I do, as I put into my evidence in 2 225, I remember the Edward Llewellyn issue. I suspect 3 George did the same thing. 4 Q. How important was Mr Osborne's advice in relation to 5 this process? Were you reliant on him or were you 6 forming your own judgment? 7 A. It was important. I mean, George and I work very 8 closely together. He thought this was a good idea, but 9 as I've said in Parliament and elsewhere, this was my 10 decision. I take full responsibility for it. And no, 11 I don't try and shuffle off any responsibility to 12 anybody else. 13 Q. In paragraph 237 of your statement, Mr Cameron, at 14 page 04172, you say that you are sure that you would 15 have discussed his appointment -- that's of course 16 Mr Coulson's appointment -- with Rebekah Wade. To be 17 clear, by this time it's May 2007, would you have 18 counted her as amongst your friends? 19 A. Yes. I think I would. As I say in the evidence, 20 I can't recall when I discussed it with her, whether it 21 was before, during or after, but I'm sure I would have 22 at some stage had a conversation with her about it. 23 Q. Can you remember how many conversations? 24 A. No. 25 Q. Might it have been more than one or not? Page 101</p>	<p>1 character and integrity. Do you think you had 2 a discussion along those lines with Mrs Brooks about 3 Mr Coulson? 4 A. I'm afraid I don't -- I don't recall. But I think the 5 most important thing I would have wanted to know is 6 would he be good at the job. I was convinced he would 7 be, because, as I said, it's the massive pressures you 8 face, you need someone with those sorts of skills, so 9 I'm sure that's what I would have been thinking of. 10 Q. And I'm sure effectiveness is going to be a key 11 attribute, but character and integrity might also be 12 relevant, might they not? 13 A. Yes, of course. You're going to be working with this 14 person incredibly closely. You have to have 15 a relationship of trust with them. 16 Q. What if anything was Mrs Brooks' reaction to the idea 17 that Mr Coulson be engaged? Was she very favourable or 18 not? 19 A. As far as I can remember, she thought it was a good 20 decision because she thought he was an effective 21 operator. 22 Q. Your evidence is that there was a meeting -- we think it 23 was probably in March 2007. If one ties that up with 24 Mr Coulson's evidence, he places the meeting as being in 25 your office in the Norman Shaw South building, which of Page 103</p>
<p>1 A. I don't think so. I mean, I -- the process was 2 George -- we'd both met him before. I'd met 3 Andy Coulson when he was editor of the News of the 4 World. We'd both formed the impression that he was 5 a very effective individual. George met him after he 6 had resigned as editor of the News of the World. I then 7 met him -- there were the interviews with Ed Llewellyn. 8 I then met him subsequently and I made the decision to 9 employ him. 10 But again I asked for these assurances as well, just 11 to be clear. It's in my evidence. 12 Q. I'm going to come to that. But in your discussions with 13 Mrs Brooks, were you, as it were, seeking some sort of 14 reference from her or was it far more informal? 15 A. I wasn't seeking a reference. I mean, when you're 16 employing someone like this who's been an editor of 17 a newspaper, you can't seek sort of formal references. 18 I'm sure I would have asked how effective he would be, 19 but this conversation may well have taken place after 20 I had made the decision. I can't recall exactly when 21 the conversation took place. But in the end it was my 22 decision. I was satisfied this was the right thing, to 23 have a former tabloid editor to help us with our media 24 and communications, and it was my decision. 25 Q. Sometimes discussions of this nature go into people's Page 102</p>	<p>1 course is the leader of the opposition's building. 2 A. Yes. 3 Q. That's paragraph 29 of his witness statement. Might 4 that be correct, that part of his evidence? 5 A. My recollection is that the meeting took place in my 6 office, and for me that was the key meeting about 7 deciding whether or not to employ him. I've been back 8 over the diaries and the records and it's difficult to 9 piece together everything, but that's my recollection, 10 that that was the sort of key meeting. 11 Q. And his evidence is also that there was a later 12 discussion, this time by telephone. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. In late May of 2007. It's paragraph 31 of his 15 statement. And it was on that second occasion that you 16 raised the issue of phone hacking. Does that accord 17 with your recollection? 18 A. My recollection is that I raised the issue of phone 19 hacking and sought the assurance in the face-to-face 20 meeting we had in my office. That's my recollection. 21 I vaguely remember the further telephone call, but 22 that's -- I've obviously racked my brains to try and 23 remember exactly the sequencing, but my recollection is 24 that I knew it was very important that I needed to ask 25 him that question, and therefore did so, as it says in Page 104</p>

26 (Pages 101 to 104)

<p>1 my evidence.</p> <p>2 Q. But in your witness statement, Mr Cameron, at</p> <p>3 paragraph 223 at the bottom of page 04168, you state</p> <p>4 that in particular in 2007, in the months after he</p> <p>5 resigned, various people and you separately had</p> <p>6 conversations with him. That's the conversation which,</p> <p>7 matched up with Mr Coulson's evidence paragraph 29, took</p> <p>8 place in March 2007 in your offices in the Norman Shaw</p> <p>9 South building. Then the further conversation is</p> <p>10 paragraph 227.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Which must have been the phone conversation in late May,</p> <p>13 and it's on that occasion where you state you asked him</p> <p>14 for assurances. Do you see that?</p> <p>15 A. I do. I think -- 227:</p> <p>16 "I then had a further conversation with Andy Coulson</p> <p>17 in which I asked him specifically about his involvement</p> <p>18 in the hacking case."</p> <p>19 That is what I remember being the face-to-face</p> <p>20 meeting.</p> <p>21 Q. Ah. He has them the other way around. Maybe we should</p> <p>22 see specifically his account.</p> <p>23 A. Okay.</p> <p>24 Q. My recollection is that he was on holiday in Cornwall</p> <p>25 and that you spoke by phone. This may be tab 58 of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 conversation that the issue of the Goodman case was</p> <p>2 raised. Might that be correct?</p> <p>3 A. That's not my recollection. My recollection is that the</p> <p>4 assurances I sought were in the face-to-face meeting,</p> <p>5 but it may be there was a further specific question</p> <p>6 I needed to ask in the phone call, I can't remember.</p> <p>7 What I'm absolutely sure about is I remember the</p> <p>8 conversation with Ed Llewellyn was how important it was</p> <p>9 to seek the assurance, and I remember very clearly</p> <p>10 seeking that assurance and getting the assurance.</p> <p>11 But, as I say, there do seem to be some differences,</p> <p>12 but they may well be compatible in the way that I've</p> <p>13 suggested. Anyway, I'm certain I sought the assurances,</p> <p>14 he's certain I sought the assurances, he just says it</p> <p>15 happened at a different time. The key thing is I asked</p> <p>16 for assurances, I got them, and that was the basis on</p> <p>17 which I employed him.</p> <p>18 Q. Although to be fair to him, and -- well, we need to be</p> <p>19 fair to everyone, but paragraph 227 dates the assurance</p> <p>20 or links the assurance to the further conversation,</p> <p>21 doesn't it, Mr Cameron? That was your recollection when</p> <p>22 the witness statement was prepared, wasn't it?</p> <p>23 A. Yes. But as I say, my recollection is that assurance</p> <p>24 was at this face-to-face meeting.</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Coulson actually seems to think</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 second bundle. Yes, it's tab 58 of the second bundle.</p> <p>2 A. Which paragraph is it? Do you know?</p> <p>3 Q. Yes. It's paragraph 29 at page 02412. He says there</p> <p>4 that after the meeting with Mr Osborne, which he dates</p> <p>5 as taking place in March 2007, he says that he believes</p> <p>6 that you called him later that night and you'd like to</p> <p>7 meet.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. "We did so, at some point soon after, at his</p> <p>10 Parliamentary office in the Norman Shaw South building</p> <p>11 and we had a discussion about the job."</p> <p>12 And I've linked that one up with paragraph 223 of</p> <p>13 your witness statement.</p> <p>14 A. Mm.</p> <p>15 Q. Then there was a pause because there were local</p> <p>16 elections.</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. And then paragraph 31, 02413:</p> <p>19 "The hiring process was completed in a phone</p> <p>20 conversation with Mr Cameron whilst I was on holiday in</p> <p>21 Cornwall. During that conversation I believe he told me</p> <p>22 that background security checks had been made. He also</p> <p>23 asked me about the Clive Goodman case."</p> <p>24 That links up, I think, with your paragraph 227. So</p> <p>25 if that all was correct, it was only during the second</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 there may have been further conversations with you,</p> <p>2 because if you go back to paragraph 30 of his statement,</p> <p>3 he says:</p> <p>4 "Conversations/discussions stalled during the local</p> <p>5 election period towards the end of May. They were</p> <p>6 restarted and after further conversations with</p> <p>7 Mr Cameron, Francis Maude, Ed Llewellyn and Steve</p> <p>8 Hilton, I was offered the job ... the hiring process was</p> <p>9 completed in a phone conversation."</p> <p>10 A. There may well have been more conversations because</p> <p>11 there are lots of different ways of describing</p> <p>12 a Director of Communications: are they campaigns and</p> <p>13 communications? Who are they managing? There were</p> <p>14 quite a lot of different potential -- they're all</p> <p>15 similar roles, but slightly different potential roles he</p> <p>16 could have fulfilled.</p> <p>17 I don't see any fundamental inconsistency. We both</p> <p>18 agree I asked for assurances and got them, but the exact</p> <p>19 timing, I'm clear in my mind because I remember the</p> <p>20 conversation with Ed Llewellyn, I remember the</p> <p>21 importance of the interview, but, you know, that's my</p> <p>22 recollection.</p> <p>23 MR JAY: When you accepted the assurances, did you assess</p> <p>24 there to be any risk?</p> <p>25 A. What I assessed was that this was clearly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

27 (Pages 105 to 108)

<p>1 a controversial appointment, and controversial for two 2 reasons. One was that bad things had happened at the 3 News of the World while he was editor and he had 4 resigned. So he had left his last job after resigning 5 because of things that had happened. So that was 6 obviously -- as I said in my evidence, I was giving him 7 a second chance.</p> <p>8 The second reason it was -- there was controversy is 9 this was a tabloid editor and there are some people who 10 would say, you know, "Don't have a tabloid editor", to 11 which my answer would be: it's a very tough job, dealing 12 with the press for a major political party. You need 13 someone who has the skills, who has the knowledge, who 14 can really help you through what can be an absolute 15 storm, and so I thought it was the right thing to do.</p> <p>16 I just make one other point, which is -- because 17 I recognise this is a controversial appointment, this 18 has come back to haunt both him and me and I've said 19 what I've said about 20/20 hindsight, but in doing the 20 job as Director of Communications for the Conservative 21 Party, and then Director of Communications in Downing 22 Street, he did the job very effectively. There weren't 23 any complaints about how he conducted himself. He ran 24 a very effective team. He behaved in a very proper way.</p> <p>25 Of course, if that wasn't the case, then I think</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 well and actually he was someone who had, I think, 2 a good code of behaviour in how he did his job.</p> <p>3 Q. Well, this Inquiry has been looking at the culture, 4 practices and ethics of the press, and tabloids, of 5 course, have featured in that.</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. They are, some would say, associated with some of the 8 worst aspects of the culture, practices and ethics of 9 the press, so it might be said that was the risk you 10 were taking, mightn't it?</p> <p>11 A. As I say, I think the risks are the ones I've set out. 12 Those were what I considered and I made my decision.</p> <p>13 Q. On the first aspect -- you were talking about the 14 controversial aspects of this -- of course he'd resigned 15 in January 2007. Did you assess at all that there was 16 a risk that the matter might, as it were, go further 17 than Mr Goodman or not?</p> <p>18 A. I asked for the undertaking about what he knew and he 19 said that he had resigned because he did not know, and 20 while -- obviously I have to be careful what I say, but 21 these were undertakings that were given to the DCMS 22 Select Committee, these were undertakings that were 23 accepted by the police, that were accepted by the Press 24 Complaints Commission, that were be given to a court in 25 a perjury trial. They were undertakings that were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 people would have an even stronger argument of saying, 2 "Well, you took a risk, you employed this person and 3 look what's happened." He did his job very well, and 4 I think that is an important point to make.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay, Mr Cameron. May I ask you about the risks 6 associated with his being a tabloid editor. Could you 7 be more precise about what those risks were. Did it 8 amount to some people thinking tabloid editors might not 9 be the most scrupulous people?</p> <p>10 A. It wasn't so much that. I think it was -- you know, 11 some people just don't -- didn't approve of what the 12 News of the World had done or what tabloids do. I think 13 it was more that.</p> <p>14 Q. Which aspects of what tabloids do was in focus here?</p> <p>15 A. Well, obviously, you know, quite aggressive articles 16 sometimes. You know, you had -- when George Osborne was 17 here, you had a story about him. You know, Andy Coulson 18 probably came up with the most effective and destructive 19 headline about me that anyone's managed, which was three 20 words I never uttered, which was "Hug a hoodie".</p> <p>21 The point I'm making is there were some people I 22 think in the Conservative Party who would have said, 23 "Don't have a tabloid editor". My view was that it was 24 necessary to have someone tough and robust. I found in 25 my dealings with him that actually he did his job very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 strong enough for Gordon Brown to phone Andy Coulson 2 shortly after he resigned and wish him well with his 3 future.</p> <p>4 So, yes, I accepted these undertakings but so did 5 many other people and organisations who did 6 a considerable amount to try and get to the bottom of 7 this issue. I said in Parliament if I've been lied to, 8 so has the CPS, the police, the DCMS select committee 9 and all the rest of it.</p> <p>10 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: And, of course, we're not making 11 a judgment one way or the other.</p> <p>12 A. Of course.</p> <p>13 MR JAY: But you obtained -- I have to be careful the way 14 I put the question for all sorts of reasons, Mr Cameron, 15 but there was no independent verification of the oral 16 undertaking he gave you, was there?</p> <p>17 A. Well, no, but, as I say, this issue had been 18 investigated by others. So it was not just that I had 19 an undertaking, it was others had had an undertaking, 20 and if we look at the period as I'm sure we will coming 21 up, it was an assurance that was then given again to the 22 DCMS Select Committee, and they found and the police 23 found and the CPS found that there wasn't the evidence 24 that he knew what was happening.</p> <p>25 Q. Why did you feel that he deserved a second chance?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

28 (Pages 109 to 112)

1 **A. Because I think I thought that he had done, as far as**
 2 **I could see it at the time, the honourable thing.**
 3 **Something very bad had happened at the newspaper he was**
 4 **editing. He did not know, and he resigned. So I felt,**
 5 **given the assurances he gave me, that it was legitimate**
 6 **to give him a second chance.**
 7 Q. Is it your evidence that his News International
 8 background was irrelevant to his merits, as it were?
 9 **A. Well, obviously his knowledge of the industry, his**
 10 **contacts, his work as an editor were all important, but**
 11 **the most important thing was: is this person going to be**
 12 **good at doing the job of managing the press and**
 13 **communications for the Conservative Party? I wasn't**
 14 **just after some -- any old person from**
 15 **News International or from the Daily Mail or from**
 16 **wherever. I wanted somebody really good who was going**
 17 **to be able to stand up to the pressure that we were**
 18 **under and would face in the run-up to an election**
 19 **campaign. That was the absolutely key consideration.**
 20 Q. I'm sure that the most important considerations were the
 21 ones you've identified, otherwise you would have been
 22 completely mad to have employed him, but I think the
 23 question was slightly more nuanced.
 24 **A. Right.**
 25 Q. Is it your evidence that his News International

Page 113

1 background was irrelevant to the decision, in other
 2 words it was a factor?
 3 **A. No, it wasn't irrelevant, clearly. As I said, his**
 4 **contacts, his knowledge, his work at a newspaper, all of**
 5 **that mattered. But if what lies behind the question**
 6 **were you after a News International executive because**
 7 **this was going to make it easier to win over the News of**
 8 **the World or whatever, no, that wasn't the calculation.**
 9 **The calculation was: who is going to be good enough,**
 10 **tough enough, to deal with what is a very difficult job?**
 11 **And, as I say, something that he did extremely well.**
 12 Q. In paragraph 231, you talk about 20/20 hindsight. May
 13 I ask you this, though: do you now believe that you've
 14 made an error of judgment, in particular your judgment
 15 may have been clouded by the fact that Mr Coulson was
 16 close to News International and his recruitment was
 17 a major fillip to you?
 18 **A. No, I don't -- my -- what I meant in the House of**
 19 **Commons, what I said then, was that look if I knew then**
 20 **all the things that would happen and all the**
 21 **consequences that would change, then that's 20/20**
 22 **hindsight. But I said in the House of Commons and I'll**
 23 **say again today you don't make decisions with 20/20**
 24 **hindsight. I made the decision I made, I've set out the**
 25 **reasons why I made it, I will be held accountable for**

Page 114

1 **that decision, I don't try and run away from it, I just**
 2 **try and explain why I made it.**
 3 Q. Move forward in time please to July 2009 --
 4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just before you do, could I ask
 5 a question? You made a point about Mr Coulson, that
 6 he'd been responsible for a particular headline using
 7 words you'd never uttered, "Hug a hoodie". I just
 8 wonder whether you felt that it was a concern that he
 9 could and was prepared to misrepresent a policy that you
 10 were concerned about?
 11 **A. I think it comes back to this fusing of news and**
 12 **comment, I suppose. I mean, the speech I made was quite**
 13 **a radical departure for a Conservative leader to say**
 14 **that we needed to understand why young people can go off**
 15 **the rails and we need to recognise that it's not just**
 16 **you need tough punishment, but also you need strong**
 17 **families, you need respect in your community, and I said**
 18 **you need love, and to talk about love in that context,**
 19 **some right wing commentators thought, you know, that's**
 20 **soft and whatever, and I think that's nonsense. I think**
 21 **that's incredibly important for young people.**
 22 **So was it -- it was frustrating that he had come up**
 23 **with this headline that linked three words I hadn't**
 24 **actually used, but can I really put my hand on my heart**
 25 **and say it was completely unfair and wrong? That's what**

Page 115

1 **newspapers do. They make a point.**
 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.
 3 **A. They have a go. If you're worried about headlines,**
 4 **don't make speeches about love, I suppose is what I'd**
 5 **say. But anyway, it meant that one very good headline**
 6 **writer wouldn't be writing any more headlines, he'd be**
 7 **working for me.**
 8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.
 9 MR JAY: July 2009 now, Mr Cameron. We're moving forward to
 10 the Guardian piece and to paragraph 254 of your
 11 statement. I think it's clear that you were aware of
 12 the Guardian article at the time; is that right?
 13 **A. Yes. I think so. I think I was probably more aware of**
 14 **this Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee that**
 15 **I referred to in paragraph 257, because that was**
 16 **obviously an event that was going to affect the running**
 17 **of my office and everything that was happening, and that**
 18 **I think was the most relevant, but obviously the two**
 19 **were linked, really.**
 20 Q. So the gist of what the Guardian article contained was
 21 drawn to your attention one way or the other, was it?
 22 **A. I'm sure it was, yes. I can't -- yes, I'm sure it was.**
 23 Q. What was your reaction at the time to that which was
 24 contained in the Guardian article?
 25 **A. Throughout this process, the sort of test I set was: is**

Page 116

1 **there new information that shows that the undertakings**
 2 **I was given were wrong? I didn't see evidence that the**
 3 **undertakings I was given were wrong, and at this time**
 4 **Andy Coulson went in front of the Culture, Media and**
 5 **Sport Select Committee and gave the assurance all over**
 6 **again that, as it says here:**
 7 **"I never condoned the use of phone hacking, nor do**
 8 **I have any recollection of incidences where phone**
 9 **hacking took place."**
 10 Q. You also say in paragraph 257 that:
 11 "Nevertheless in the light of these stories I asked
 12 Andy Coulson to repeat the assurances."
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. You must have been sufficiently concerned to do that,
 15 mustn't you?
 16 A. Yes, absolutely. As I say, I think it was also linked
 17 to the DCMS Select Committee appearance because my
 18 memory of this is that he was going to make that
 19 appearance and I had a conversation with him about,
 20 well, when you make this appearance, presumably you will
 21 give the undertakings again that you gave to me. That
 22 was the nature of the conversation, as I recall it.
 23 Q. Was there an inkling of doubt in your mind at that stage
 24 or not?
 25 A. Well, given the assurances that I was given, that they

Page 117

1 **were repeated to the Select Committee, and that the**
 2 **Select Committee found that there wasn't evidence that**
 3 **he knew, I thought it was right that he carried on**
 4 **working for me.**
 5 Q. I'm not seeking to impugn in any way Mr Coulson's
 6 assurances, but you were reliant on his word and nothing
 7 much else, were you?
 8 A. No, I don't really accept that. Because I was reliant
 9 on his word, but as I say, I was also reliant on the
 10 fact that the Press Complaints Commission had accepted
 11 his word, the Select Committee had accepted his word,
 12 the police had accepted his word, the Crown Prosecution
 13 had accepted his word. So this was not just me
 14 accepting an assurance and blocking out anything that
 15 happened subsequently. It was a whole series of
 16 institutions taking that view, and as I say, the test
 17 I set -- because you have to try and get on with the job
 18 in hand -- was: look, if someone gives me evidence that
 19 he knew about phone hacking, I wouldn't have employed
 20 him and I would have fired him. But I didn't get that
 21 information so I didn't take that step.
 22 Q. To be fair to Mr Coulson, I should say that
 23 paragraph 257 of your statement was not directly put by
 24 me to Mr Coulson, and therefore no inferences should be
 25 drawn from that part of his evidence.

Page 118

1 Of course, by July 2009, he'd been in post for at
 2 least two years, and you presumably felt that he had
 3 been an effective operator in your cause; is that
 4 correct?
 5 A. Absolutely. And not just that, but he'd done the job
 6 not just in an effective way, but he, as far as I could
 7 see, had done it in a way where he was trusted by the
 8 people that worked with him and he'd done the job in
 9 a proper way.
 10 Q. And to be clear, the repetition of the assurance, was it
 11 sought in a face-to-face meeting, to the best of your
 12 recollection, or phone call or by some other means?
 13 A. To the best of my recollection, although it's very
 14 difficult to do the specifics on this, to the best of my
 15 recollection it was because of the impending Select
 16 Committee hearing, and I think -- obviously the
 17 embarrassment there was that he was being taken through
 18 a Select Committee hearing while he was working for me,
 19 and it was in that context that I think we had this
 20 discussion.
 21 Q. I'm sure it was in that context, but just the means of
 22 communication.
 23 A. I don't recall.
 24 Q. Call him into your office, phone call, can you recall?
 25 A. I don't recall. With your director of communications

Page 119

1 **you're seeing every day, you're working with hand in**
 2 **glove, I don't remember the instance.**
 3 Q. It's likely to be a face-to-face meeting, isn't it?
 4 A. Likely.
 5 MR JAY: I'm going to move on in time about nine months now
 6 to Downing Street, so maybe we can break before that
 7 happens.
 8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Nine months seems a sufficient break
 9 to allow us to have a break now. Very good. 2 o'clock,
 10 thank you very much, Prime Minister.
 11 (1.00 pm)
 12 (The luncheon adjournment)
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Page 120

A	40:19 95:24	112:6	61:7 62:6	assess 108:23	background	berating 76:10
AB 70:22	advice 75:18	amounted 44:21	95:10	111:15	3:19 4:13 5:19	best 55:8,16
abide 41:4	77:15 78:12	analyses 54:4,7	approaches	assessed 108:25	36:24 106:22	75:18,22 83:25
able 17:20 28:3	101:4	analysis 8:4	27:11 51:5	assessing 93:20	113:8 114:1	89:10 95:19
30:8 77:17	advised 55:9	21:16 25:7	73:24	assessment 48:2	backing 21:23	119:11,13,14
80:25 98:8	adviser 2:2,12,14	28:11 47:13	appropriate	assist 16:12 52:3	33:3 49:21	better 7:12 12:14
113:17	3:3,5,6,9,12	49:7 55:10,19	14:13,14 27:24	assistance 1:19	90:7	12:16 15:5,22
absolute 87:11	4:10 29:24	Andrew 93:10	51:10 52:9	42:3 98:15	back-burner	17:22 28:7
109:14	advisers 3:11	Andy 97:1 98:19	86:17	associate 35:12	20:25	30:2 33:1 34:3
absolutely 5:14	31:6 34:16,17	99:5,13 102:3	appropriately	associated 110:6	bad 12:13 18:25	34:16 38:17
9:3 17:12 18:5	34:18 51:15	105:16 110:17	27:25	111:7	35:1 36:11,12	43:25 52:10
29:25 89:22	85:9	112:1 117:4,12	approve 110:11	assumed 75:12	72:23 109:2	59:12 76:4
96:11,15 107:7	advising 3:7	anger 87:17	approximately	assurance	113:3	big 4:24 5:17
113:19 117:16	affect 116:16	89:15	29:14 62:25	104:19 107:9	balanced 91:12	7:17 8:17
119:5	Afghanistan	angle 7:5 26:7	76:13 77:4	107:10,10,19	bank 71:23,25	26:24,24 37:17
academies 39:20	68:10	34:7	79:12 98:24	107:20,23	banks 71:24	40:20,21 45:15
accept 32:9 95:5	afraid 58:23 60:8	angry 11:16	area 36:17 41:7	112:21 117:5	Barclay 70:2,23	64:9,25 66:1
95:11 118:8	103:4	87:13	71:22 96:25	118:14 119:10	71:9	68:15 72:17
acceptable 89:12	afternoon 70:10	announce 71:23	areas 9:13 39:24	assurances 100:9	based 11:24	75:13 83:11
accepted 108:23	82:16	announced 7:18	45:7 90:8	100:15,24	basic 38:23	92:7,10,21
111:23,23	agenda 14:4 24:8	announcement	argue 12:6,7	102:10 105:14	basically 46:18	93:4,12 97:9
112:4 118:10	25:3 29:17	7:17 67:2	22:12 29:16	107:4,13,14,16	56:24	biggest 56:21
118:11,12,13	30:19 53:18	90:14,20	31:5 40:23	108:18,23	basis 32:24 37:22	bit 2:15 6:19
accepting 118:14	84:9 91:16	announcements	90:1 91:12	113:5 117:12	72:14 79:25	12:16,25 14:5
access 19:3 72:4	93:13	6:11	argued 88:4	117:25 118:6	93:8 95:18	16:11 20:5
accompanying	aggressive 29:21	announcing 84:1	arguing 26:14	attached 46:5	107:16	23:8 24:20
9:7	110:15	annual 48:1	argument 10:11	attacked 93:8	Basle 71:25	30:8 44:2
accord 72:11	ago 2:10 25:24	anonymous	10:12 17:4	attempt 55:8	74:10	47:16 49:22
104:16	58:6,9	33:15	27:2 35:2	94:9	battle 13:9,19	80:15
account 17:20	agree 9:9 10:25	answer 10:20	64:10,11 90:5	attempted 54:4	battles 50:24	bits 49:15
18:11 19:24	15:8 17:16	11:11 54:15	94:2 95:13	attempts 21:21	BBC 4:23 22:18	Blair 45:2,9 76:6
27:3,4,8,21	25:7 28:9,19	80:13 109:11	110:1	30:24	60:14 61:17	Blair's 19:14
44:5 55:18	45:7 46:3,8	answered 10:6	arguments 16:17	attention 20:2,3	64:4 65:12,14	21:10
105:22	61:16 65:11	answers 28:16	32:24 44:1	65:6 69:20	65:17 67:17	blame 30:11
accountability	66:25 73:12	anybody 96:22	62:5 76:9	85:8,19 116:21	68:21 87:7	blight 99:1
27:10 94:3	76:24 79:8	101:12	arid 55:12	attributed 103:11	88:4,5,6,6,21	blink 97:18
accountable 94:1	108:18	anyone's 110:19	arrange 71:6	attributing 21:2	89:7,10,18,19	bloated 65:16
94:5 114:25	agreed 5:11 13:3	anyway 40:12	arrangements	audience 8:17	90:4,7,8,11,24	blocking 118:14
accrue 9:12	14:8,10 51:6	45:14 72:1	53:23 71:18	August 9:7 55:25	91:3,6,25 93:8	blow 45:15
accumulate	agreement 32:18	74:22 107:13	arrival 30:17	60:24	95:23 99:23	bluntly 77:17
23:24	94:16,18	116:5	69:22	authorities 40:19	beast 21:10 31:1	board 74:13
accuracy 55:15	Ah 105:21	apologising	arrived 53:18	available 82:10	Beaverbrook	bodies 94:8
accurate 37:15	ahead 17:2	83:17	arrogance 47:10	99:15	14:25	bombarded 73:1
48:2 55:18	Aidan 70:2	appalling 12:23	article 116:12,20	avoid 15:7	becoming 37:7	73:5
accurately 6:14	aircraft 64:17	36:9 96:12	116:24	avoiding 52:4	beginning 37:18	bonfire 92:15
achievable 32:2	Alastair 51:3	apparent 27:20	articles 110:15	aware 20:1 51:3	38:1 48:16	book 42:18
achieve 38:2	98:13,18	appeal 74:3,11	Ashes 87:23,24	52:2 69:6	behaved 109:24	bore 54:7
act 35:7 76:17,23	alight 55:24	appearance	95:25	74:18 86:3,6	behaviour 28:23	borne 95:21
93:20	61:25	117:17,19,20	aside 21:11	100:24 116:11	111:2	bottom 66:3 68:2
action 94:19	alighting 14:19	appeared 20:22	98:23	116:13	beings 17:15,16	68:23 96:16
active 53:3	allegation 87:8	appeasement	asked 71:5 82:23	B	beliefs 22:13,14	105:3 112:6
activity 48:8	allied 33:13	23:3,7,19	84:17 100:15	back 8:11 17:11	96:21,21	bound 36:1 84:5
67:12	allies 76:19	appeasing 23:15	100:23 102:10	20:15 29:10,10	believe 29:6,14	boundaries 13:3
add 39:12	allow 71:24	applied 92:20	102:18 105:13	30:7 35:16	32:17 33:3,4	17:25
addendum 81:18	120:9	apply 35:2 53:13	105:17 106:23	37:15 38:16	37:5 51:22	box 73:8
additions 41:8	allowed 23:24	92:16	107:15 108:18	44:25 46:8	56:4 86:2 89:9	brains 104:22
address 16:15	33:7	appointment	111:18 117:11	53:9 54:16	89:11 106:21	break 55:24 57:6
35:9 42:18	Allowing 25:2	99:14 101:15	asking 6:17,19	65:13 73:11	114:13	57:10 63:12
addressing 43:4	ally 76:25	101:16 109:1	45:2 77:10	75:8 78:4 81:1	believed 61:16	120:6,8,9
adjournment	alongside 96:12	109:17	79:11 97:21	83:23 85:1	73:24	breakdown
120:12	alter 98:9	appreciate 52:10	aspect 22:7	87:6 92:18	believes 106:5	97:25
adopted 51:5	ambit 6:16	approach 3:1	28:25 111:13	94:23 104:7	bench 19:22	breakfast 67:9
adventitious	amount 36:1	19:5 22:10	aspects 25:1	108:2 109:18	beneficiaries	67:11
37:20	38:11,14 39:1	36:18 37:9	63:18 110:14	115:11	17:5	breakfasts 68:7
adverb 84:4	48:8 52:20	40:4 47:21,22	111:8,14	backed 85:17	benefits 9:5,12	briefing 34:9
advertising	79:15 110:8	48:12,13,18	assemble 91:21		11:23	briefings 31:3

33:16 brilliant 48:6 bring 32:23 97:12 98:7 Britain 26:16 63:24 64:10 British 4:25 65:14 broadcast 3:15 39:17 broadcaster 98:23 broadcasters 6:13 9:1 27:21 27:22 32:20 broadcasting 4:25 8:11 27:4 39:25 65:15 91:13 broadly 23:1 94:10 broadsheet 99:6 99:21 broken 8:15 41:6 Brooks 54:10 66:5 67:11 74:16,25 76:1 76:3,12 77:4 78:16 79:4 80:3 81:7,25 82:15 84:17 85:8,9 86:5 102:13 103:2 103:16 brought 3:19 18:15 Brown 74:19,25 75:2 76:3,6,11 77:18 79:1,2 79:17 87:13 112:1 Brown's 35:9 66:21 86:24 budgets 27:11 89:20 build 59:15 73:19 building 6:4 103:25 104:1 105:9 106:10 bulletins 8:20 bump 42:20 bumped 41:21 bundle 50:2 70:6 81:18 106:1,1 bureaucratic 39:9,18 93:12 buried 14:3 42:25 business 39:25 42:20 72:17 73:10 businesses 2:13 68:12 72:18,21 busy 67:18 bête 65:18	C c 75:8 Cabinet 13:18 51:25 83:13,13 calculation 114:8,9 Calcutt 30:15 call 49:14 53:4 59:24 71:6,8 71:11 104:21 107:6 119:12 119:24,24 called 18:10 85:3 106:6 calls 1:22 79:11 Cam 83:5 Cameron 1:5,6,8 1:9,25 16:7 18:19 21:24 24:25 28:10 33:12 36:18 41:11 46:9 50:1 53:4 55:24 56:12 57:12 60:9 67:24 71:20 80:9 81:25 96:3 97:6 100:8 101:13 105:2 106:20 107:21 108:7 110:5 112:14 116:9 campaign 10:4,9 10:15 11:8,12 28:6 37:10 70:25 71:6 113:19 campaigning 50:18 53:3 campaigns 9:5 9:11,12,17,19 9:21 10:17 11:7 18:11 23:13 28:7 29:3 38:6 51:13 85:14 108:12 Campbell 51:3 98:13,18 cards 23:16 care 10:19 33:9 69:19 cared 43:24 career 2:1 6:16 76:20 careers 99:2 careful 13:11 111:20 112:13 carefully 15:13 cares 10:3 Carlton 3:13,22 4:19,23 8:12 65:14 90:6 95:10 carried 94:7	99:17 118:3 carriers 64:18 carry 91:6 case 7:6 9:15,24 10:4 26:2 35:8 84:18 85:23 86:9,10,14 87:20 105:18 106:23 107:1 109:25 cases 28:14 37:5 42:12 85:22 catch-all 34:14 catch-up 63:2 cathartic 31:15 caught 90:23 cause 21:2 38:17 44:25 45:5 84:17 86:5 119:3 cautious 47:2 caving 22:23 cease 93:15 cent 37:15,23,25 50:13 69:13 central 3:4 centre 75:7 certain 9:17 36:1 38:13 107:13 107:14 certainly 14:12 27:22 30:22 41:10 46:23 48:4 55:3 57:5 73:17 77:12 79:22 82:14 90:11 certificate 50:4 cetera 19:13,13 67:23,23 chaired 91:3 chairman 72:16 72:16 challenge 10:18 19:16 36:15 challenges 19:17 champion 38:4 86:11,11 chance 31:17 70:5 75:15 78:4 109:7 112:25 113:6 Chancellor 89:16 change 7:9,12,16 45:21 48:24 66:1 68:5 114:21 changed 6:17 17:24 68:4 changes 19:11 48:17,21 49:9 changing 88:2 character 5:25 103:1,11 characterisation	73:16 characterise 48:12 charge 75:21 91:15 charged 9:10,14 Charlie 79:3 80:3 81:7,9,10 charm 83:2 check 56:22 80:25 81:1,3 checking 48:4 checks 106:22 Chief 100:17,18 children 11:17 11:18 31:13 choice 91:1 Churchill 14:24 circulations 46:1 circumstances 47:5 Civil 51:18 clear 2:8,18,22 6:3 25:18 44:6 44:6,14 58:2 65:13 78:16 81:23 90:13 100:13 101:17 102:11 108:19 116:11 119:10 clearly 15:24 17:1 19:6 31:8 31:24 34:5 37:8 55:14 63:24 85:4 86:9 98:20 100:4 107:9 108:25 114:3 Clive 106:23 close 12:7 15:4 16:18 20:23 29:13 33:5 41:12 76:3,4 114:16 closely 101:8 103:14 closeness 31:22 closer 80:1 clouded 33:8 114:15 CMS 20:6 Coalition 94:13 94:16 code 25:18 34:17 34:18 40:7 41:8 111:2 codes 41:3 51:15 51:15 coincidence 94:24 coincidental 36:25 collects 50:2 combination 30:18 come 1:13 4:21	7:21 12:18 16:7 20:16 24:24 28:17 29:10 54:5 74:14 81:12 92:13 102:12 109:18 115:22 comes 27:1 41:22 87:12 98:2 115:11 comfortable 21:3 coming 45:18 62:5 69:16 75:5 77:21 91:20 112:20 comment 15:21 21:18 25:7,11 25:19 28:11 33:13 42:5 47:7 115:12 commentators 93:10 115:19 commercial 23:23 40:1,5 Commission 92:25 111:24 118:10 Commissioner's 19:8 58:19 commissions 53:1 committee 20:6 20:10,17,21 31:4 111:22 112:8,22 116:14 117:5 117:17 118:1,2 118:11 119:16 119:18 Commons 20:21 31:5 114:19,22 communicate 5:14,18 32:22 46:25 communicated 100:14 communicating 30:3 communication 5:10,16 39:5 119:22 communications 3:13,15 75:20 102:24 108:12 108:13 109:20 109:21 113:13 119:25 communicator 100:4 communicators 30:9 community 115:17 companies 3:24 company 83:23	comparative 55:10 compared 93:2 comparison 55:12 compatible 107:12 competition 24:22 complain 6:21 8:6 complaining 35:21 complaints 109:23 111:24 118:10 complete 87:20 88:9,16 completed 106:19 108:9 completely 6:6 7:22 14:3 18:9 40:22 45:4 46:24 113:22 115:25 complex 85:21 concern 11:9 94:6 115:8 concerned 6:6 115:10 117:14 conclusion 54:5 conclusions 22:25 concordats 32:7 condemn 35:7 condescending 11:13 conditions 44:21 condoned 117:7 conducted 109:23 conference 46:19 48:1 63:6,17 66:13 67:17 82:12 83:7,8 83:10,12 confess 54:5 confidence 41:23 confident 55:7 conflict 42:23 conflicts 52:4 confronting 23:12 consent 75:11 consequence 19:1 36:5 consequences 114:21 conservative 3:3 3:4 26:25 30:13 32:10,22 37:7 38:17 43:23 44:7,25 45:1,12,17,19 46:15,19 48:17 48:20,21,22	49:9,15,18,20 61:6,7 62:20 63:7 64:23 71:12 75:8,15 76:16,23 78:2 78:5 83:25 84:8 88:7,12 95:7,22 96:1 109:20 110:22 113:13 115:13 Conservatives 45:15 62:6 63:4 64:8 66:18 83:23 consider 73:4 considerable 112:6 considerably 89:20 consideration 113:19 considerations 113:20 considered 98:23 98:25 111:12 considering 18:24 consistent 90:5 consolidate 23:4 conspiracy 87:16 89:21 90:24 91:4 constituency 80:4,18 constituted 63:18 constructive 14:11 consulting 85:16 contact 3:20,20 5:11 36:22,23 37:5,6 62:12 69:12 79:20,24 80:5,10,11,17 contacts 2:12 73:5,10 113:10 114:4 contain 82:20 contained 116:20,24 contains 82:20 context 9:8 115:18 119:19 119:21 continually 18:10 continued 49:6 controlled 3:25 controversial 10:16 109:1,1 109:17 111:14 controversy 109:8 convenient 57:4 convergent 45:10
--	---	--	--	---	--	--

conversation 42:22 43:18 44:4,9 59:18 60:6 62:8,23 62:24,25 63:8 64:12,13 68:5 68:7,14 71:5 101:22 102:19 102:21 105:6,9 106:20,21 107:1,8,20 108:9,20 117:19,22	78:20 101:18 counter-produ... 39:9 countries 72:1 country 7:24 18:7 32:23 40:13,16 53:4 53:6 59:23 62:7 75:23 78:3 82:22 84:10 country's 22:5 couple 21:14 54:8 81:7 87:21 course 1:13 9:1 11:14 16:7 26:12 28:5 32:19 33:24 35:21 37:1,20 41:15 43:13,17 44:13,16 45:6 46:7,9 54:2 68:12 69:6 72:14 74:13 75:20,25 99:9 101:15 103:13 104:1 109:25 111:5,14 112:10,12 119:1 court 26:2 111:24 cover 54:11,20 coverage 11:5 18:22 19:2,4 43:16 covered 29:4,12 93:19 96:23 covering 84:4 covert 32:18 88:11 95:13 96:18 covertly 32:25 CPS 112:8,23 create 41:3,5 46:12 49:13 50:22 53:22 55:20 creative 91:2 credible 28:18 76:18 credit 72:3 critical 17:12 cross-check 56:8 Crown 118:12 crystal 44:14 cultural 16:12 culture 6:24 28:19,20,24 30:6 34:22,24 35:2 89:4 111:3,8 116:14 117:4 current 6:15 cut 8:1 13:14	75:2 89:17,20 89:24 cutting 94:2 cycle 11:2 13:6 13:19 21:17 26:6 <hr/> D <hr/> Dacre 58:5,10,16 daily 9:23 14:4 22:18 24:4 25:25 30:6 38:13,15 50:24 58:5,13 68:18 71:6,8,11 113:15 damage 66:21 danger 18:23 41:20 42:9 dangers 11:18 date 2:1 56:6 57:24 66:12 76:14 77:4,8 77:10 78:19 80:8 dated 1:11 81:16 dates 65:13 99:12 106:4 107:19 David 1:5,6,9 Davos 68:25 day 7:4,8,21 53:13,25 55:5 55:6 59:23 65:1 70:9 72:14 120:1 days 21:12,14 82:14 DCMS 111:21 112:8,22 117:17 DC1 69:11 DC2 37:13 50:1 57:2,13 deadlines 7:3 deal 3:23 13:14 16:1 19:11,17 19:18 22:10 41:8 52:19 56:23 84:14 86:23 87:1,3,4 88:11,11,20,23 94:21 95:13,14 96:7,19,19 114:10 dealing 4:2,4,10 13:12 29:3 95:23 109:11 dealings 2:6 68:13 110:25 deals 32:6,10,14 dealt 32:1 85:24 debate 10:22 13:1 22:22 26:1 debates 44:17	debating 63:15 debt 63:25 December 46:10 57:14 58:17 68:1 decided 8:3 99:4 decides 37:21 deciding 104:7 decision 45:15 75:9 77:22,24 80:2 83:22 101:10 102:8 102:20,22,24 103:20 111:12 114:1,24 115:1 decisions 7:24 51:12 53:24,24 75:12 94:5 114:23 decision-makers 78:7 deduce 57:16 deducing 3:18 deeply 18:4 33:18,23 defence 64:16 defending 22:9 deficit 8:1 13:14 63:25 define 31:20 96:7 defining 15:7 definitely 64:21 69:2 81:6,8 83:4,20 degree 12:2 46:5 69:12 degrees 33:24 delisted 87:24 delivered 60:24 65:7 90:21,21 demand 13:10 demand 52:21 democracy 11:10 17:13 27:15 democratic 5:10 10:18 18:8 denied 94:21 departing 21:12 department 3:4 53:21 departments 93:25 departure 115:13 depend 81:2 depends 6:3 12:25 22:8 deploy 42:7 describe 32:4 33:14 described 62:14 88:21 describing 108:11 description	99:16 deserted 87:14 deserved 112:25 designed 81:4 desks 4:15 destructive 33:23 110:18 detail 20:8 74:15 87:9 88:16 detailed 94:15 details 27:13 detention 23:17 determined 22:13 develop 52:8 73:20 developed 41:16 52:12 73:22 74:15 developing 30:13 52:14 development 3:21 5:5 7:11 devote 18:23 19:23,25 38:20 devoted 52:20 92:2 dialogue 36:25 diaries 37:16 54:17 104:8 diary 54:20 55:3 55:4,5 77:7 dictated 93:14 96:22 difference 27:14 51:2,8 differences 107:11 different 7:21 9:2 27:8 29:18 30:10 35:18 48:13 49:15 50:20 52:11 55:2 67:19 69:23 73:6,6 78:14,14 85:14 86:21 91:13 92:16 98:14 107:15 108:11 108:14,15 differently 26:21 46:25 difficult 6:5 7:1 7:24 10:24 12:4 16:24 18:1 24:1 25:8 25:16 29:16 33:22,22 40:12 41:3 43:1 49:11,14 50:23 51:9 52:16 58:20 64:21 74:5 78:8 80:12 90:1 99:10 104:8 114:10 119:14	difficulties 63:23 difficulty 13:6,7 48:20 dinner 56:1,15 56:16,25 57:1 58:17,24,24 66:4,19 67:1,7 67:9,15 68:18 68:25 direct 5:15 38:6 direction 24:19 30:20 75:15 77:1 directly 43:7 60:15 64:7 74:11 86:4 118:23 director 75:20 91:3,6,24 108:12 109:20 109:21 119:25 Directs 53:5 disagreement 10:7,8 disagreements 22:17 disappointed 82:25 87:14 disappointment 83:18 discharged 6:14 disclose 82:3 disclosed 81:24 discovering 36:12 discrete 84:15 discretion 77:16 discuss 21:7 82:21 discussed 39:7 39:12 43:5,7 58:22 60:13,15 60:16,22 61:10 62:2 64:19 66:7,9,15,25 71:7 101:15,20 discussing 16:20 64:1 discussion 40:5 59:6 103:2 104:12 106:11 119:20 discussions 5:19 5:20,21,21 36:24 43:8 51:24 60:20 61:1 102:12,25 disenchantment 76:15 disengage 19:9 21:7 disposed 76:6,12 distance 12:16 12:25 13:4,16 13:25 14:5,20 46:13 47:17	50:16,22 divide 5:3 doable 32:2 documents 55:16 doing 3:7 8:21 8:22 9:11 10:20 11:10 13:13 19:4 20:12,17,18 34:10 36:12 48:8,22 50:18 55:18 76:24 98:7,21 109:19 113:12 Dominic 61:23 67:7 78:1 Donald 1:6,9 doubt 1:19 101:1 117:23 Downing 13:23 51:21 53:19 69:22 109:21 120:6 draw 15:21 17:25 22:25 69:20 77:18 drawing 50:18 53:2 drawn 65:6 85:8 85:19 116:21 118:25 dreadful 31:10 34:10 drink 58:11 63:2 66:17 67:1 drinks 56:25 58:5 62:14 driven 95:9 due 1:13 16:7 duty 27:24 Dyke 91:3,5,14 dynamic 17:23 <hr/> E <hr/> earlier 25:23 50:23 51:24 58:3 59:18,19 86:22 99:11 early 97:6 earned 12:24 easier 9:9,11,13 114:7 easiest 88:23 East 40:16 easy 6:4 13:22 economic 13:15 23:23 63:23 64:1,9,25 66:1 68:8 72:8 economists 3:11 economy 63:22 Ed 16:22 100:10 100:17 102:7 107:8 108:7,20 edgy 28:8 editing 113:4
---	--	---	---	--	--	---

editor 10:3 22:15 39:16 99:15 102:3,6,16,23 109:3,9,10 110:6,23 113:10	enforcement 93:19 engage 16:11 engaged 103:17 engagement 14:6 52:21 53:14 engagements 14:8 England 71:23 enhance 11:23 enmeshed 98:1 enormous 19:16 99:24 entered 2:2 Enterprise 93:20 enthusiasms 64:15,19 enthusiastic 64:16 entirely 17:13 25:11 28:9 87:15 96:13 entries 50:9 54:9 57:12 enumerate 15:14 enumerated 31:24 environment 3:23 4:1 equates 50:9 error 36:8 56:19 114:14 errors 35:11 et 19:13,13 67:23 67:23 ethics 111:4,8 Europe 44:8 Eustice 46:12 47:7 48:6 98:6 100:3 evening 8:21 67:2 event 77:2,2,3 116:16 events 6:11 64:21 87:22 eventually 100:21 everybody 51:6 evidence 1:14,20 5:3 6:22 8:10 12:8 14:21 15:4,12 19:14 20:9,13,15 22:16 33:16 36:17 44:3,24 56:7,11,23 61:19 62:19 70:4,5,8 71:8 79:6,9 86:20 86:24 90:10 95:14,21 96:25 100:23 101:1 101:19 102:11 103:22,24 104:4,11 105:1	105:7 109:6 112:23 113:7 113:25 117:2 118:2,18,25 exact 66:12 77:3 84:20 85:2,12 99:12 108:18 exactly 102:20 104:23 examine 36:7 examining 20:6 example 9:6 10:8 23:16 40:10 45:8 85:25 93:3 98:12 examples 9:4 14:19,24 19:7 22:16 23:11 29:8 33:2 87:21 97:1 excellent 96:10 excessive 15:7 93:5 exchange 40:25 87:7 exchanged 70:8 executive 114:6 executives 97:11 exercised 23:4 exhibit 37:13 50:1 exhibits 1:12 exist 16:21 92:17 93:16 existed 95:8 expect 66:15 80:14 83:12 expecting 13:7 expenses 12:19 18:4 97:24 expensive 85:21 93:4 experience 2:25 52:15 92:24 97:7 experiences 3:16 expert 3:9,10 explain 5:9 7:23 8:21,23 11:22 15:4 36:22 43:11 73:23 83:9,17 95:20 100:8 115:2 explained 50:23 53:18 55:4 74:21 82:8 explaining 6:11 39:19,22 40:15 explanation 24:12,12 explanations 96:1 explicitly 20:23 44:19 exposure 72:20 express 2:7 32:6	87:4 expressed 65:18 expresses 61:14 expressing 2:22 extends 1:11 54:2 extension 71:24 extensive 52:24 extent 2:6,25 4:13 17:16 25:22 43:5 52:21 84:5 98:12 extra 85:18 extraordinarily 8:23 9:21 92:11 extremely 1:18 9:25 56:17 114:11 eye 90:23 <hr/> F <hr/> face 16:25 17:17 98:10,11 103:8 113:18 faced 3:24 face-to-face 104:19 105:19 107:4,24 119:11 120:3 facilitate 78:12 facilitators 78:7 facing 23:12 fact 6:25 21:11 25:17 49:1 70:6 76:5 82:2 84:4 114:15 118:10 factor 114:2 facts 26:3 fail 27:24 84:24 failed 19:23 47:22 fair 18:17 36:14 40:20,22 42:8 47:13 49:2 50:11 62:9 67:24 72:25 87:3 89:18,25 90:10 107:18 107:19 118:22 fairly 3:2 6:15 40:17 85:15 86:15 faith 41:6 fallen 8:17 45:13 families 115:17 family 49:15 74:7 fans 89:7 fantastic 37:13 fantastically 28:21 far 30:5 73:25 89:24 102:14	103:19 113:1 119:6 farmers 6:20 fast 6:25 98:3 father 77:17,18 favour 39:13,19 44:15 45:13 favourable 103:17 favouritism 33:15 favours 12:1 36:4 featured 111:5 February 44:5 58:4 fee 61:17 65:15 88:6 89:9,11 89:13,14,18,24 90:4,8,15,19 95:23 feel 11:4 14:18 17:18 24:10 35:24 53:14 74:6 81:5 94:22 112:25 feeling 21:21 61:11 feels 11:5 36:15 felt 10:10 20:13 44:23 45:19,21 51:4 53:20 64:9 72:7 75:3 76:21,25 78:1 79:15,16,16 113:4 115:8 119:2 feral 21:10 31:1 fetter 18:8 fewer 8:15 50:12 fight 13:19 50:24 fighting 13:8 30:6 figures 15:17 22:3 50:3 fillip 114:17 final 75:9 finances 74:7 financial 72:19 74:9 find 7:5,5,21 18:15 28:16 35:6,17 56:8 57:21 92:16 fine 35:23 finish 87:12 fired 118:20 firmer 96:17 first 1:8 5:4 18:21 32:9 57:14,19 58:1 68:2 80:10 82:16,19 87:9 89:3 97:1 111:13 five 5:4 37:14	43:21 50:8 51:17 fix 16:22 flew 60:6 floating 73:15 flow 19:1 52:13 flowed 90:6 flowing 31:20 flown 47:24 flows 48:25 95:5 flying 47:19 48:10 focus 8:10 13:19 18:22 19:1,5 26:24 38:21 63:21 78:2 88:18 110:14 focused 23:9,21 78:5 focusing 23:20 fold 75:8 78:5 folded 92:18 follow 44:23 87:6 followed 85:1 following 38:8 67:13 86:23 88:24 follows 37:24 foot 83:25 footing 15:5 96:17 forcibly 65:19 foreseeable 89:10 forever 30:17 forget 41:21 64:23 forlorn 25:20 form 23:3 42:23 73:15 formal 1:14 36:23 37:4 39:6 102:17 formally 73:9 formative 4:23 formed 4:6,22 5:1 8:12 90:6 102:4 former 91:3,24 102:23 forming 101:6 forms 5:15 formulation 52:22 53:16 73:4 forward 6:23 10:17 29:1 50:4 68:1 79:24 83:25 84:14 94:11 115:3 116:9 forward-looking 84:11 foster 12:1 found 12:23	54:24 110:24 112:22,23,23 118:2 four 50:8 100:1,6 fourth 29:9 Francis 100:10 108:7 frankly 12:5 20:1 46:16 49:21 55:12 87:11 Fred 69:2 Frederic 68:19 free 18:6 39:19 40:18 freeze 74:3 free-to-air 95:25 frequency 36:22 frequent 70:7 80:17 frequently 80:7 Freud 56:2 57:15 57:18,22 59:19 91:9 Freuds 78:6 Freud's 59:4 friend 78:13,17 83:3 friendly 17:15 75:25 76:5,8 friends 41:12 42:19 57:16 73:10 78:21 84:7 99:25 101:18 friendship 74:15 78:24,24 81:9 friendships 3:21 4:14 33:10 41:15,16 42:10 front 19:22 25:9 31:4 32:15 117:4 froze 89:14 frozen 89:13 90:15 frustrating 35:24 115:22 fulfilled 108:16 fulfilling 96:11 full 1:8 101:10 fuller 53:13 function 4:15 fund 89:10 fundamental 108:17 funded 61:17 funding 85:18 funnily 8:18 furious 98:3 further 104:21 105:9,16 107:5 107:20 108:1,6 111:16 fusing 115:11 fusion 25:6 28:11
--	---	--	---	---	--	---

future 38:16 42:23 89:10 112:3	62:14 72:1 73:11 77:7 81:1 83:14 88:9 89:23 90:4 102:25 108:2 111:16 115:14 116:3	30:14 31:2 33:22 34:19 40:6 42:21 43:24 45:12 50:12,20 51:2 51:6,11 52:9 52:10,13,15 53:12,15 55:2 55:6 64:10 66:21 75:4 76:10,16,18,22 85:6,18 86:12 87:24,24 88:1 90:2,22 92:9 92:18 94:13	63:5 96:5 114:20 happened 7:8 23:5,8 25:10 31:10 55:6 65:23 84:24 96:4,13 107:15 109:2,5 110:3 113:3 118:15 happening 14:2 21:8,8 35:6 45:16 68:10 112:24 116:17 happens 25:19 120:7 happy 6:18 88:9 hard 2:10 15:12 32:21 47:3 74:5 Harding 68:20 harm 31:19,25 Harri 99:19 haunt 109:18 head 98:2 headed 24:19 heading 5:4 headings 5:4 headline 25:16 110:19 115:6 115:23 116:5 headlines 116:3 116:6 health 7:25 heard 27:23 29:23 32:15 70:4 98:22 hearing 119:16 119:18 heart 25:6 115:24 heavily 72:17 held 27:3,4 68:25 114:25 help 15:12 16:14 102:23 109:14 helped 46:20 85:6 helpful 78:11 helping 40:15 83:24 85:21 86:13 helps 83:18 high 12:18 36:3 36:5 higher 20:5 87:3 highlights 88:19 88:20 high-profile 86:9 Hilton 108:8 hindsight 109:19 114:12,22,24 hint 63:16 64:24 hinting 89:13 hire 100:18 hiring 106:19 108:8	historically 55:18 history 29:12,22 95:10 96:21 hit 13:21 hitter 97:9 hold 5:2,25 17:4 17:20 19:10,24 27:7,21 30:25 36:13 96:2 holiday 105:24 106:20 home 2:3 58:25 85:20 86:19 honourable 1:4 113:2 hoodie 110:20 115:7 hope 2:24 25:20 27:1 37:12 70:4 hopefully 18:16 hopeless 13:12 horrible 21:21 hour 13:9,9 14:3 63:1 hourly 13:19 hours 53:8 house 20:21 31:5 80:3 114:18,22 Hug 110:20 115:7 huge 38:11 39:1 53:1,4 79:15 96:14 97:10 human 17:15,16 36:7 Hunt 91:1 hyperbolic 35:10	impartial 94:6 impartiality 28:4 39:1 impediment 74:22 impending 119:15 implement 71:25 implicitly 43:7 implied 32:7 86:22 87:3 94:21 importance 46:4 55:15 73:13,13 77:15 86:1 108:21 important 5:18 6:1,2 7:18 8:24 9:22,25 11:10 11:19 18:7 27:9 28:21,24 28:25 34:20 35:5 39:4 51:13 61:18,21 63:24 65:16 69:25 74:4 77:19,23 78:6 92:7 96:12 101:4,7 103:5 104:24 107:8 110:4 113:10 113:11,20 115:21 imposed 86:8 impractical 25:13 impression 72:4 102:4 improper 72:10 improve 16:3 98:9 improvement 19:12 39:23 improvements 39:14 impugn 118:5 impugned 36:6 inappropriately 18:9 incidences 117:8 include 5:20 36:23 54:19 included 41:13 91:22 including 48:10 57:1 60:13 67:22 79:13 inconsistency 108:17 incredibly 8:13 13:10 24:5 67:18 84:24 103:14 115:21 independence 17:6 18:15 independent	92:25 94:7 112:15 indirectly 86:4 individual 6:4 14:7,19 24:15 33:6 34:19 57:12 87:19 88:10 102:5 individuals 22:4 23:25 34:15 69:16 91:20 99:18 industries 91:2 industry 4:20,25 40:11 113:9 inevitable 5:12 41:15 inevitably 26:10 55:1 inferences 118:24 influence 77:17 86:7 influenced 3:17 informal 36:24 42:3 102:14 information 17:22 19:7 38:10 58:18 117:1 118:21 inherently 5:12 initial 99:16 initiate 37:6 initiated 37:4 inkling 63:11 117:23 innocent 95:17 96:13 inquiry 1:15,21 12:23 32:16 52:6 55:22 96:4,9,10 111:3 Inquiry's 82:4 insights 4:14 42:7 instance 3:10 11:11 41:4 54:19 120:2 instances 2:20 18:25 institutions 118:16 instrument 5:9 integral 5:10 integrity 103:1 103:11 intended 5:20 20:8 55:17 intense 69:24 intensity 61:11 interacting 26:13 interaction 39:16 84:11 85:7
<hr/> G <hr/> Gallagher 71:3 71:12 game 99:24 gaps 55:8 geared 53:20 general 1:25 3:12 5:4,5 20:11 22:3 33:12 79:9 91:3,6,24 generalising 97:16 generality 35:13 generally 2:14 11:1 20:15 73:3 87:10,11 generation 23:6 genuine 86:14,14 genuinely 50:17 geopolitical 68:9 George 46:12 48:6 62:15 67:6 89:16 98:6 100:3,25 101:3,7 102:2 102:5 110:16 Georgia 59:25 59:25 Gerry 84:22 getting 13:23 23:9 43:25 46:1 49:18,21 76:17,22,23 107:10 gift 34:25 gist 39:11 65:6 79:9 116:20 give 9:4,6 19:7 20:2,3 21:23 22:15 32:12 33:1 35:22 40:10,11 43:16 57:6 72:9 75:18 77:8,10 77:14 80:13 113:6 117:21 given 38:10 45:8 52:20 77:15 81:17 86:19 111:21,24 112:21 113:5 117:2,3,25,25 gives 118:18 giving 27:16 83:7 109:6 global 68:11 glove 120:2 go 17:11 27:12 35:18 40:12 46:8 47:15 54:16 59:16,25	goes 8:11 22:24 37:13 41:19 66:21 73:15 95:13 going 5:3 6:20 11:8 14:22 17:2 19:6 20:7 22:21 31:4 34:2 35:23 37:15 38:9,14 38:17,20 40:21 41:20 42:1 53:9 54:7,23 55:9,13 57:13 63:3,5,7,12,16 64:8,22 66:16 67:4 69:1 71:9 71:13 73:18 74:2,9 77:3 81:7,14,15,20 81:20 82:7 84:1,8 85:5,23 90:2,3 91:18 96:24 97:18 98:7 99:24 102:12 103:10 103:13 113:11 113:16 114:7,9 116:16 117:18 120:5 good 6:7 10:16 10:21 11:8 21:15,16 23:11 34:1 35:23 39:21 40:10 46:21 52:12 57:8 59:17 74:18 75:15 78:3,3,21 91:23 93:3 95:21 96:1 98:4,6,7 101:8 103:6,19 111:2 113:12,16 114:9 116:5 120:9 Goodman 106:23 107:1 111:17 Gordon 74:25 75:2 76:3,6,11 77:18 79:1,2 79:17 86:24 87:13 112:1 governing 50:21 50:22 53:16 government 6:11 15:23 19:24 20:2 29:24	government's 21:9 7:15 40:15 grab 30:25 grateful 1:18 great 90:24 greater 8:19 12:15 31:6 39:12 Greg 91:3,5,14 grew 78:24 grounds 38:18 82:17 group 24:3,18 72:16 91:22 groups 26:23 40:14 69:24 83:11 growing 76:15 growth 6:24 29:17 guarantee 45:25 50:5 Guardian 116:10,12,20 116:24 guessing 99:24 guff 92:14 guidelines 28:4 guilty 23:3,14 Guto 99:19 guy 98:6 <hr/> H <hr/> hacking 104:16 104:19 105:18 117:7,9 118:19 half 63:1 halfway 47:25 halt 35:1 hammered 40:18 hand 44:14 81:21 90:24 115:24 118:18 120:1 handling 4:5 34:8 98:4 hands 10:9 23:25 happen 19:8,13 33:18,20 35:15	happened 7:8 23:5,8 25:10 31:10 55:6 65:23 84:24 96:4,13 107:15 109:2,5 110:3 113:3 118:15 happening 14:2 21:8,8 35:6 45:16 68:10 112:24 116:17 happens 25:19 120:7 happy 6:18 88:9 hard 2:10 15:12 32:21 47:3 74:5 Harding 68:20 harm 31:19,25 Harri 99:19 haunt 109:18 head 98:2 headed 24:19 heading 5:4 headings 5:4 headline 25:16 110:19 115:6 115:23 116:5 headlines 116:3 116:6 health 7:25 heard 27:23 29:23 32:15 70:4 98:22 hearing 119:16 119:18 heart 25:6 115:24 heavily 72:17 held 27:3,4 68:25 114:25 help 15:12 16:14 102:23 109:14 helped 46:20 85:6 helpful 78:11 helping 40:15 83:24 85:21 86:13 helps 83:18 high 12:18 36:3 36:5 higher 20:5 87:3 highlights 88:19 88:20 high-profile 86:9 Hilton 108:8 hindsight 109:19 114:12,22,24 hint 63:16 64:24 hinting 89:13 hire 100:18 hiring 106:19 108:8	historically 55:18 history 29:12,22 95:10 96:21 hit 13:21 hitter 97:9 hold 5:2,25 17:4 17:20 19:10,24 27:7,21 30:25 36:13 96:2 holiday 105:24 106:20 home 2:3 58:25 85:20 86:19 honourable 1:4 113:2 hoodie 110:20 115:7 hope 2:24 25:20 27:1 37:12 70:4 hopefully 18:16 hopeless 13:12 horrible 21:21 hour 13:9,9 14:3 63:1 hourly 13:19 hours 53:8 house 20:21 31:5 80:3 114:18,22 Hug 110:20 115:7 huge 38:11 39:1 53:1,4 79:15 96:14 97:10 human 17:15,16 36:7 Hunt 91:1 hyperbolic 35:10 <hr/> I <hr/> idea 32:9,10,14 34:3 39:15,21 59:3,4,5 80:10 91:8 101:8 103:16 ideal 25:9 ideas 16:7 18:18 38:3 51:12 52:14 identified 11:23 16:23 22:7 25:5 48:24 52:11 54:9,22 113:21 identify 15:9 21:24 29:9,14 41:11 63:18 78:19 identity 23:16 immediately 27:20 impact 7:5 26:8 29:19 35:18 38:9,14,19 impacted 27:6	impartial 94:6 impartiality 28:4 39:1 impediment 74:22 impending 119:15 implement 71:25 implicitly 43:7 implied 32:7 86:22 87:3 94:21 importance 46:4 55:15 73:13,13 77:15 86:1 108:21 important 5:18 6:1,2 7:18 8:24 9:22,25 11:10 11:19 18:7 27:9 28:21,24 28:25 34:20 35:5 39:4 51:13 61:18,21 63:24 65:16 69:25 74:4 77:19,23 78:6 92:7 96:12 101:4,7 103:5 104:24 107:8 110:4 113:10 113:11,20 115:21 imposed 86:8 impractical 25:13 impression 72:4 102:4 improper 72:10 improve 16:3 98:9 improvement 19:12 39:23 improvements 39:14 impugn 118:5 impugned 36:6 inappropriately 18:9 incidences 117:8 include 5:20 36:23 54:19 included 41:13 91:22 including 48:10 57:1 60:13 67:22 79:13 inconsistency 108:17 incredibly 8:13 13:10 24:5 67:18 84:24 103:14 115:21 independence 17:6 18:15 independent	92:25 94:7 112:15 indirectly 86:4 individual 6:4 14:7,19 24:15 33:6 34:19 57:12 87:19 88:10 102:5 individuals 22:4 23:25 34:15 69:16 91:20 99:18 industries 91:2 industry 4:20,25 40:11 113:9 inevitable 5:12 41:15 inevitably 26:10 55:1 inferences 118:24 influence 77:17 86:7 influenced 3:17 informal 36:24 42:3 102:14 information 17:22 19:7 38:10 58:18 117:1 118:21 inherently 5:12 initial 99:16 initiate 37:6 initiated 37:4 inkling 63:11 117:23 innocent 95:17 96:13 inquiry 1:15,21 12:23 32:16 52:6 55:22 96:4,9,10 111:3 Inquiry's 82:4 insights 4:14 42:7 instance 3:10 11:11 41:4 54:19 120:2 instances 2:20 18:25 institutions 118:16 instrument 5:9 integral 5:10 integrity 103:1 103:11 intended 5:20 20:8 55:17 intense 69:24 intensity 61:11 interacting 26:13 interaction 39:16 84:11 85:7

<p>interactions 2:11 42:20 54:11 67:5</p> <p>interest 18:2 31:19 65:3</p> <p>interested 17:1 51:7 61:8 68:9 68:10</p> <p>interesting 79:18</p> <p>interests 40:5 68:13</p> <p>interfere 17:15</p> <p>international 24:18 32:11 37:23 67:13 68:15 69:4 81:24 82:7,24 87:7 99:9 113:7,15,25 114:6,16</p> <p>Internet 8:16 47:1</p> <p>interpose 51:1</p> <p>interpreting 6:10</p> <p>interview 67:6,8 100:22 108:21</p> <p>interviews 9:11 36:24 50:10 67:16 99:16 102:7</p> <p>introduce 18:19</p> <p>introduced 15:23 31:6</p> <p>intruded 53:15</p> <p>invasion 60:1</p> <p>invested 72:17</p> <p>investigate 17:20 17:21</p> <p>investigated 18:2 96:3 112:18</p> <p>investigation 17:6 85:5,19</p> <p>investigations 85:14,22</p> <p>investigative 27:11</p> <p>investor 4:3</p> <p>investors 4:2</p> <p>invite 47:7 81:14 87:9</p> <p>invited 48:4</p> <p>involved 94:15</p> <p>involvement 105:17</p> <p>irrelevant 82:6 113:8 114:1,3</p> <p>Irwin 67:10</p> <p>issue 13:5 15:8 19:25 20:1 21:22 28:19 29:3 43:6 46:8 52:19 62:1 65:1 73:11 82:21 83:9 84:20 88:21,21</p>	<p>101:2 104:16 104:18 107:1 112:7,17</p> <p>issues 5:5 9:10 13:9,20 15:1 18:24 20:7,19 20:24 21:7 23:20 25:3 40:1 60:13,17 61:8 63:9 64:1 64:14 66:7,7 68:8,9,15 72:9</p> <p>ITC 92:25 93:2</p> <p>item 55:25</p> <p>iterations 89:1</p> <p>ITV 4:25 67:17 91:23 93:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align:center">J</p> <hr/> <p>James 54:10 60:10,17 62:15 64:4 65:18 66:4 67:11 68:20 77:16,25 87:5 88:5 89:15 90:11</p> <p>January 58:1 68:17 89:5 111:15</p> <p>Jay 1:3,4,7,8,25 18:19 28:10 52:20 55:9,24 57:4,12 65:2 108:23 112:13 116:9 120:5</p> <p>Jeremy 91:1</p> <p>job 2:13 3:5,8,22 4:1,2 11:10 20:17,18 43:25 48:6 51:17 53:13 98:7 103:6 106:11 108:8 109:4,11 109:20,22 110:3,25 111:2 113:12 114:10 118:17 119:5,8</p> <p>jocular 82:20</p> <p>John 14:11 29:23 30:14 34:23 44:3 55:4</p> <p>journalism 47:12</p> <p>journalist 9:6 99:23</p> <p>journalists 3:20 4:6,8,11 5:22 6:4 14:8 27:4 28:23 32:20 33:7,25 37:11 41:12 42:6 45:20 58:13</p> <p>judge 10:4</p> <p>judgment 5:25 35:11 36:8 64:9 82:5</p>	<p>101:6 112:11 114:14,14</p> <p>judgments 33:8</p> <p>July 30:22 115:3 116:9 119:1</p> <p>June 1:1 21:11 74:14 82:4</p> <p>JUSTICE 1:3,17 16:8 17:8,10 18:3 25:22 26:5,9 27:2,17 27:20 28:5,9 50:25 52:7,18 55:14 57:5 64:13 107:25 112:10 115:4 116:2,8 120:8</p> <p>justify 87:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align:center">K</p> <hr/> <p>Kate 84:21</p> <p>Kavanagh 76:20 77:25</p> <p>keen 43:10,14 45:20 46:24 64:7</p> <p>keep 62:11 85:5 100:19</p> <p>key 15:9,16 64:20 65:1 98:5 103:10 104:6,10 107:15 113:19</p> <p>kick 40:11</p> <p>kindly 1:10</p> <p>knew 30:14 46:22 71:14 75:2,25 104:24 111:18 112:24 114:19 118:3 118:19</p> <p>knob 36:2,5,16</p> <p>knock 12:19,22</p> <p>know 3:14 4:8,16 6:19 10:19 11:12 14:23 18:6 19:15 20:16 21:5 22:17 24:17 25:5 26:20 27:11,14 28:14 29:23 31:9 32:13 33:25 35:25 36:13 38:12,24 40:1 40:6,11 42:12 43:1,10,21 45:24 47:19 48:10 51:7 59:8,9,12 60:5 61:5 65:12,25 70:12 71:12 72:7,15 74:7,8 75:12 78:22,22 79:22 80:14 81:10 87:17</p>	<p>90:2 93:16 97:23 98:17 99:17 103:5 106:2 108:21 109:10 110:10 110:15,16,17 111:19 113:4 115:19</p> <p>knowledge 4:14 4:16,17 59:7 109:13 113:9 114:4</p> <p>known 42:11 57:18,20,23 79:4</p> <p>knows 32:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align:center">L</p> <hr/> <p>Labour 30:1,12 30:17 43:13 45:10,14 47:16 51:4 63:6 66:13 76:21 83:23 87:23 88:1 91:5 92:9</p> <p>Labour's 63:16</p> <p>land 10:9</p> <p>last-chance 30:16</p> <p>late 60:24 104:14 105:12</p> <p>launch 91:1</p> <p>launched 70:25</p> <p>lavished 50:14</p> <p>law 10:15 11:12 19:11</p> <p>Lawrence 9:24 28:6</p> <p>lead 22:2</p> <p>leader 20:14 37:7 39:2 43:22 46:9 49:4 50:3 51:16 52:1 54:17 58:4 79:19 84:7,22 104:1 115:13</p> <p>leaders 52:25 83:13</p> <p>leadership 32:23 45:17 46:14,17 46:18 48:16 52:23 53:16 75:22</p> <p>leaderships 20:18</p> <p>leading 26:25 53:10 91:24 97:11</p> <p>leads 31:23</p> <p>leaflets 5:16</p> <p>leak 100:20,20</p> <p>leant 8:9</p> <p>learned 26:3</p> <p>leave 55:9,13</p> <p>leaving 75:4</p>	<p>lecture 60:23 61:2,12 65:3,3 65:19,20 95:2</p> <p>led 3:21</p> <p>left 8:24 93:10 109:4</p> <p>legitimate 17:4 72:20 113:5</p> <p>legitimately 17:19</p> <p>lengthy 39:8</p> <p>lesser 69:12</p> <p>letter 82:10</p> <p>Letwin 92:13</p> <p>let's 10:11 38:21 82:21 92:15</p> <p>level 16:10 80:5 89:11</p> <p>levels 93:2,5 94:19</p> <p>LEVESON 1:3 1:17 16:8 17:8 17:10 18:3 25:22 26:5,9 27:2,17,20 28:5,9 50:25 52:7,18 55:14 57:5 64:13 107:25 112:10 115:4 116:2,8 120:8</p> <p>Lewis 68:18</p> <p>liaison 20:21 31:4</p> <p>licence 61:17 65:15 88:6 89:9,11,14,18 90:4,8,15,19 95:23</p> <p>lie 85:13</p> <p>lied 112:7</p> <p>lies 30:19 114:5</p> <p>life 8:11 28:25 30:4 53:8 83:5</p> <p>light 117:11</p> <p>likened 77:20</p> <p>line 82:16,19 87:6</p> <p>lines 52:7 103:2</p> <p>link 60:2 95:4</p> <p>linked 93:13 106:12 115:23 116:19 117:16</p> <p>Linklaters 82:8</p> <p>links 29:2 35:16 106:24 107:20</p> <p>liquidity 71:19 71:24</p> <p>list 37:17 54:2 55:11 91:11,12 97:6,14</p> <p>listed 57:2</p> <p>listen 10:12</p> <p>listing 87:22</p> <p>lists 39:8 41:13</p> <p>literally 42:17</p>	<p>98:2</p> <p>little 12:16 20:5 25:24</p> <p>live 80:4,4</p> <p>lives 31:11,13</p> <p>living 81:7</p> <p>Llewellyn 100:10,17 101:2 102:7 107:8 108:7,20</p> <p>lobbying 29:9</p> <p>local 40:19 106:15 108:4</p> <p>long 2:10 7:2 33:19 57:22 58:9 59:16 62:25 63:1 72:23</p> <p>longer 93:21</p> <p>longstanding 61:9</p> <p>long-term 13:20 90:5</p> <p>look 5:6 24:17 25:9 41:10 42:9 47:17 57:12,13 58:16 67:4 69:18,22 70:5,13 71:20 73:3 81:15 82:7 87:8,18 88:16,23 89:3 91:18 92:1 94:9,22 97:17 110:3 112:20 114:19 118:18</p> <p>looked 20:15 96:14</p> <p>looking 8:16 14:1 23:1 34:6 34:6 38:8 48:7 54:2 76:17 82:11 94:22 95:7 97:7,8,9 98:12 99:3 111:3</p> <p>looks 56:8,23 95:15</p> <p>Lord 1:3,17 16:8 17:8,10 18:3 25:22 26:5,9 27:2,17,20 28:5,9 50:25 52:7,18 55:14 57:5 64:13 67:22 107:25 112:10 115:4 116:2,8 120:8</p> <p>loses 41:23</p> <p>losing 31:13</p> <p>lost 99:25</p> <p>lot 2:16 4:21 5:1 6:3,17,22 7:10 8:10 10:19 11:13 12:9,11 21:14 24:2</p>	<p>25:14 26:13 27:15 29:23 44:16,22 45:19 45:20 48:16 49:24 53:7 62:10 63:21 67:12 69:7,23 72:20 73:5,6 79:17,20 108:14</p> <p>lots 8:19 11:6 32:15 40:13 61:15 64:15,19 72:17 76:23 108:11</p> <p>loud 10:24 22:4</p> <p>louder 24:20</p> <p>love 8:2 44:2 115:18,18 116:4</p> <p>lovely 25:9</p> <p>lower 36:7</p> <p>lunch 58:12 60:9 60:16 61:22</p> <p>luncheon 120:12</p> <p>lunches 68:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align:center">M</p> <hr/> <p>machine 51:19</p> <p>Macpherson 9:23</p> <p>MacTaggart 60:23 65:2 87:6 95:1</p> <p>mad 113:22</p> <p>Madeleine 85:1</p> <p>Mail 9:23 24:4 58:5,13 67:22 113:15</p> <p>main 8:20 38:19 42:4 51:10 65:24</p> <p>maintain 11:22</p> <p>major 29:24 30:14 34:23 44:3 55:4 83:11 109:12 114:17</p> <p>majority 37:5</p> <p>Major's 14:11</p> <p>making 2:8 7:24 22:11 25:23 36:13 49:9 51:12 62:5 77:24 86:1 90:3 93:21 94:1 110:21 112:10</p> <p>man 98:14</p> <p>managed 110:19</p> <p>managing 108:13 113:12</p> <p>Manchester 67:16 82:24</p> <p>manifestation 23:23</p>
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manipulation 33:14	5:9,12 6:10,18 7:11 8:14	46:20 49:23 53:11 70:12,14 81:14	modified 44:8 Mohan 61:23 67:7 78:1	narrative 96:25 narrow 93:18 national 37:12 nation's 24:5 natural 45:16 naturally 52:13 nature 24:21	6:24 7:2,7,19 8:17,20 11:2 13:6,18 14:1,4 21:17,18 24:18 25:6,19,25 26:6,18,18 27:8 28:11 29:17 30:6,18 32:11 34:4 37:23 48:1 53:18,20 54:1 67:9,13 68:19 69:4 81:24 82:7,24 87:7 99:9 102:3,6 109:3 110:12 113:7,15,25 114:6,7,16 115:11	note 39:16 40:3 notwithstanding 27:25 November 67:11 nuanced 113:23 number 3:4 9:22 13:23 17:14 19:19 23:25 25:3,5 41:11 51:20 52:1 53:4 54:3,6 81:17,24 82:23 85:16 86:10,16 92:20 98:22 numbers 70:8 72:7 79:21			
map 37:19	11:25 15:16,17 18:22,24 19:2	messages 70:7,9 79:7 81:25 82:5,9	moment 12:5,9 16:3 27:17 31:15 57:4	near 80:3 necessarily 15:8 24:2,21 54:21 71:13 73:2 79:23 97:8 98:17 necessary 5:12 12:2 21:6 69:18 70:13 81:3 110:24 nee 57:22 need 10:10,12 11:11 14:11 15:5,6,25 16:3 16:22 17:5,25 18:10,12,14 19:11,11,12 22:21 24:14,22 28:12 30:7 35:7 42:15 49:16,17 53:11 65:15 98:3 103:8 107:18 109:12 115:15 115:16,16,17 115:18 needed 23:21 46:22 61:20 62:7 64:10 90:7,7 92:17 100:4 104:24 107:6 115:14 needs 10:6 17:23 32:2 41:1 negotiation 94:16 neighbour 79:5 81:10 neighbours 42:12 84:13 neuter 87:6 neutral 7:13 never 4:16 13:13 14:23 29:4 42:1 44:19 55:17 110:20 115:7 117:7 Nevertheless 117:11 new 30:11,17 31:5 41:24 45:10 51:4 52:1 53:2 91:22 117:1 news 4:15 6:19	22:2,3,23 25:2 29:6 33:15 34:8 40:23 49:2 50:3 52:21 53:14 61:8 64:16 67:18,19 73:2 75:24 78:23 86:13 91:13,22 95:22 96:15 97:10,22 99:25 102:23 116:14 117:4	met 68:21 69:2,3 72:6 84:23 99:4 102:2,2,5 102:7,8 Metropolitan 84:19 Michel 68:19,22 69:2 Midlands 40:16 midst 63:22 mightn't 111:10 miles 81:7 95:2 Miliband 16:22 million 26:19,20 95:2 mind 72:24 108:19 117:23 minister 1:17 2:8 2:15,17,17 14:25 40:8 57:6 69:10 79:19 85:2,15 89:4 120:10 ministerial 40:7 41:8 51:15 ministers 13:17 13:18 28:23 31:4 34:19 42:14 83:13,13 94:4 minister's 2:23 3:8 minor 1:13 minute 60:3 minutes 57:7 63:2 Mirror 38:13,15 misleading 54:6 misrepresent 115:9 missed 54:18 55:10 mistake 16:6 51:4 55:14,19 mistakes 36:8 mitigate 15:18 22:20 mix 8:25 25:19 91:23 mixture 34:22 38:5 58:14 Mm 22:1 56:3 60:25 69:8 106:14 Mm-hm 61:24 90:16 mobile 79:13 mode 54:1 modern 26:15 modest 41:8	momentum 49:13 73:19 month 50:10,13 67:13 monthly 37:21 82:9 months 50:8 60:23 77:5,11 105:4 120:5,8 motivations 5:24 motive 36:6,9 motives 8:4 35:12,19,24 36:11 Motorman 19:20 mouthpiece 2:15 move 6:25 29:1 29:10 36:17 68:1 79:24 84:14 86:21 96:24 115:3 120:5 moved 7:4 73:7 80:2 84:24 moving 70:1 75:14 77:1 116:9 MP 97:24 MPs 49:16 multitudinous 72:14 Murdoch 22:18 44:4,6 46:13 54:9,10 56:1 56:14 57:2,22 58:1 59:12 60:10,17 62:15 64:4 65:18 66:4 67:11 68:3,7,14 74:18,24 75:10 77:16,25,25 87:5,5 89:15 89:24 90:11 91:4 Murdochs 90:25 Murdoch's 55:11 88:5 music 91:22 mustn't 8:24 117:15 mutual 11:24 12:2	newspaper 4:15 11:4,8 24:3 25:10 26:1 40:14 43:15 45:8,21,25,25 69:24 72:16 73:11 83:11 97:12 99:11,22 102:17 113:3 114:4 newspapers 7:1 7:4,20 8:15 9:19,20 11:3 23:13 26:6,13 26:14,23 27:7 27:9 28:3 29:18,20 32:19 34:4,5 35:16 37:11,12 38:5 38:12,15 40:12 40:18 44:23 45:1 46:16,22 47:4 48:9 59:13 63:19 69:23 84:8 86:10 88:13 116:1 newsroom 4:17 53:21 NI 82:23 Nick 62:10 night 106:6 nine 82:14 120:5 120:8 nod 32:18 95:15 nods 88:12 96:19 noir 65:18 noise 10:24 nonsense 32:14 87:12,20 88:9 88:17 115:20 non-governme... 94:8 normal 83:14 92:14 Norman 103:25 105:8 106:10	objecting 10:9 obligations 6:14 9:2 obtained 100:9 100:15,23 112:13 obvious 1:19 27:5 39:24 44:20 62:12 obviously 1:22 2:11 5:15 12:21 33:9 38:17 42:9 44:1 45:13 53:12 57:22 59:12 62:4 63:6,22 66:5 68:20 70:22 73:25 74:8 75:12 82:23 83:6 84:23 86:12 87:13 98:13 99:19,24 100:17,19 104:22 109:6 110:15 111:20 113:9 116:16 116:18 119:16 occasion 20:10 44:1,20 57:21 58:6 60:12 61:25 62:1,19 64:3 65:22 66:5,8,25 68:21 104:15 105:13 occasionally 58:11 occasions 2:18 2:21 35:15 43:10 98:20 occlude 67:25 October 58:3 67:6,8,8,9,10 81:16 82:3,11 OE's 83:2 Ofcom 28:1 60:13 61:18,19
manipulation 33:14	media-related 20:7 medium 8:14 39:4 meet 15:20 47:19 48:11 69:16 89:25 106:7 meeting 15:20 16:5,16 38:14 39:7,24 40:3 41:21 50:5 58:1 59:20 67:18 68:2 78:12 84:21 100:10 103:22 103:24 104:5,6 104:10,20 105:20 106:4 107:4,24 119:11 120:3 meetings 15:21 22:11 37:14 39:18 40:14 47:18 48:8 50:2,10 53:5 54:21,24 58:10 61:5 67:15 69:23 72:22 megaphone 10:23 members 31:11 49:17 memory 46:11 56:25 59:22 61:4 63:5,9,13 64:11,20,24 66:2 117:18 mention 31:2 64:3 90:9 mentioned 9:23 31:1 66:11 98:24 MEPs 49:16 merger 32:13 merits 113:8 message 10:25 21:6 23:10 29:20 30:10 37:9 39:3,20	modified 44:8 Mohan 61:23 67:7 78:1 moment 12:5,9 16:3 27:17 31:15 57:4 moments 53:7 momentum 49:13 73:19 month 50:10,13 67:13 monthly 37:21 82:9 months 50:8 60:23 77:5,11 105:4 120:5,8 motivations 5:24 motive 36:6,9 motives 8:4 35:12,19,24 36:11 Motorman 19:20 mouthpiece 2:15 move 6:25 29:1 29:10 36:17 68:1 79:24 84:14 86:21 96:24 115:3 120:5 moved 7:4 73:7 80:2 84:24 moving 70:1 75:14 77:1 116:9 MP 97:24 MPs 49:16 multitudinous 72:14 Murdoch 22:18 44:4,6 46:13 54:9,10 56:1 56:14 57:2,22 58:1 59:12 60:10,17 62:15 64:4 65:18 66:4 67:11 68:3,7,14 74:18,24 75:10 77:16,25,25 87:5,5 89:15 89:24 90:11 91:4 Murdochs 90:25 Murdoch's 55:11 88:5 music 91:22 mustn't 8:24 117:15 mutual 11:24 12:2	N	name 1:8 41:13 names 91:18 98:22,24 naming 99:2	newspaper 4:15 11:4,8 24:3 25:10 26:1 40:14 43:15 45:8,21,25,25 69:24 72:16 73:11 83:11 97:12 99:11,22 102:17 113:3 114:4 newspapers 7:1 7:4,20 8:15 9:19,20 11:3 23:13 26:6,13 26:14,23 27:7 27:9 28:3 29:18,20 32:19 34:4,5 35:16 37:11,12 38:5 38:12,15 40:12 40:18 44:23 45:1 46:16,22 47:4 48:9 59:13 63:19 69:23 84:8 86:10 88:13 116:1 newsroom 4:17 53:21 NI 82:23 Nick 62:10 night 106:6 nine 82:14 120:5 120:8 nod 32:18 95:15 nods 88:12 96:19 noir 65:18 noise 10:24 nonsense 32:14 87:12,20 88:9 88:17 115:20 non-governme... 94:8 normal 83:14 92:14 Norman 103:25 105:8 106:10	note 39:16 40:3 notwithstanding 27:25 November 67:11 nuanced 113:23 number 3:4 9:22 13:23 17:14 19:19 23:25 25:3,5 41:11 51:20 52:1 53:4 54:3,6 81:17,24 82:23 85:16 86:10,16 92:20 98:22 numbers 70:8 72:7 79:21			

64:5 65:16,17 87:6 88:21 92:1,2,5,21,23 93:1,3,3,7,11 93:15 94:6 95:24 offered 29:5 108:8 office 2:3 3:4 42:2 46:23 51:23 53:23 55:3,7 85:20 103:25 104:6 104:20 106:10 116:17 119:24 offices 105:8 official 51:22 73:8 off-the-record 5:20,21 oh 11:14 70:20 okay 21:24 23:22 26:19 29:9 56:13,18 66:3 67:2 71:21 78:16 80:18 84:14 95:13 105:23 110:5 old 113:14 Oliver 92:13 once 26:20 81:6 ones 55:6,7 111:11 113:21 one's 58:20 one-on-one 58:7 58:11 one-on-ones 58:15 onside 38:22,22 77:5 onus 17:18 on-the-record 36:23 operates 18:24 operation 19:20 100:5 operator 103:21 119:3 opinion 2:7,8,23 2:23 25:17 26:8,10 opinions 5:1 59:14 opportunity 59:11,14,17 60:2 87:1 opposed 23:17 opposition 19:22 20:3,14 43:22 46:10 49:4 50:3,9,14,17 51:2,5,17,23 52:1,10,13,14 53:1,15 54:13 54:17 55:7 79:14,19 84:22	89:2 opposition's 104:1 oppressive 39:8 oral 112:15 order 11:22 17:19 72:23,25 82:2 ordinary 31:11 organisation 34:25 40:23 organisations 67:20 89:19 112:5 organised 30:2 orthodox 3:1,2 Osborne 89:16 98:22 106:4 110:16 Osborne's 100:23 101:4 other's 72:7 ought 17:19 outed 99:20,20 outlet 29:6 outlets 75:24 overall 62:9 72:4 overbig 61:19 overblotted 61:19 overdo 44:22 45:23 overexaggerate 55:15 overexaggerated 46:4 overly 20:23 33:5 39:17 oversight 88:3 overstepped 98:20 overt 32:10,14 88:11 95:14 96:19 overtly 32:25 owners 15:16 48:11 Oxfordshire 80:17 o'clock 26:18,18 120:9	90:14 91:11 92:3 97:4 101:14 105:3 106:3 pages 1:12 54:3 70:10 paid 92:11 painful 18:4 papal 77:21 paper 10:2 24:4 44:2 75:8 78:25 papers 7:3 24:15 24:18 73:8 paper-based 37:16 paragraph 5:19 6:3,9 11:22 15:6 18:20,21 19:21 20:5 21:24 24:25 29:2,11 36:19 37:4 39:6 41:11 43:6 49:2 56:12 88:24 89:3 90:13,23 91:2 92:3,19 93:17 97:4 100:8 101:13 104:3 104:14 105:3,7 105:10 106:2,3 106:12,18,24 107:19 108:2 114:12 116:10 116:15 117:10 118:23 paragraphs 3:17 5:6 9:4 43:3 92:6,22 paraphrase 20:23 87:5 parents 11:17 Parliament 2:2 12:19 20:17 94:1,5 101:9 112:7 Parliamentary 26:1 106:10 part 3:19,23 4:1 4:2,4,24 5:17 6:10 10:17 12:14,17 13:25 14:21 15:18 17:6,13 18:7 18:13 23:2,23 24:12,12 29:12 52:19 56:4 72:12 73:4 83:23 89:21,25 91:9 92:22 99:18 104:4 118:25 participants 54:23 particular 2:20	22:4,7,15 29:8 34:1,2,2,7,7 43:6 46:6 53:12 58:6 61:25 63:19 69:19 70:10 72:5,12 87:25 97:14 105:4 114:14 115:6 particularly 5:16 7:15 11:7 12:8 13:17 24:16 26:24 28:17 60:20 61:16 63:1 64:16 66:9,19 68:5,6 72:8,10 74:2,4 79:14 80:15 81:6 85:21 87:23 98:10 parties 2:6,13 19:5 21:9,22 51:10 69:4 83:12 partly 8:11 13:16 29:16 parts 3:22 12:7 23:18 47:14 49:17,20 74:2 87:19 88:10 89:1 91:13 92:17 party 2:22 3:7,7 13:1 14:12 17:1 20:18 26:16,25 32:7 32:11,22 33:17 33:21 37:8 39:2 43:13,23 44:7 45:18,19 46:15,19 48:18 48:18,19,21 49:9,12 52:14 53:10 62:2,21 63:7,20 64:23 67:17 71:12 76:13,16,23 78:2 82:12,22 83:7,8,10,11 83:12,12,25 84:8 86:25 87:8 88:7 97:22 109:12 109:21 110:22 113:13 party's 22:14 89:1 Passcoe-Watson 67:6,7 pattern 37:1 Paul 58:5,10 pause 106:15 pay 93:2,5 94:19 pendulum 30:5,7 30:20,25 people 2:16,19	5:15,23 6:23 8:13,16,19 10:5,19 11:13 15:20 16:16 17:14 22:11,22 25:25 26:19,20 28:17 32:15 33:3 34:9,10 41:4,25 42:10 42:16 44:16 47:20 50:19 53:10 57:2 58:8 67:19 73:3,6 74:4,6 82:2,24 91:12 91:22 92:10,13 94:8 95:3 96:13 97:17 99:3,19 100:1 100:5 105:5 109:9 110:1,8 110:9,11,21 112:5 115:14 115:21 119:8 people's 102:25 perception 15:16 16:15 22:2,6 94:23 95:4 perceptions 96:9 perfect 14:23 18:17 perfectly 72:20 period 4:7,24 54:13 69:25 80:22 82:3 108:5 112:20 periods 82:9 perjury 111:25 permanent 13:8 42:17,18,22 51:25 85:16 86:16 permanently 41:6 53:25 permitted 20:24 23:3 person 6:6 91:24 97:15 103:14 110:2 113:11 113:14 personal 33:5,10 36:18 70:13 74:19 95:10 personally 79:2 100:7 personified 83:2 perspective 7:23 perspectives 5:5 33:12 Peston 68:20 phenomenon 29:15 phone 70:8 72:7 79:11,13,13,25 104:16,18 105:12,25	106:19 107:6 108:9 112:1 117:7,8 118:19 119:12,24 phoned 59:4 phrase 83:19 pick 54:8 picked 7:19 92:23 picking 20:19 picture 55:20,20 62:9 64:25 69:15 72:25 76:15 piece 104:9 116:10 piece-by-piece 88:8 place 12:14 18:18 30:22 51:9 84:18 86:5 98:14 102:19,21 104:5 105:8 106:5 117:9 placement 88:1,3 95:24 places 12:18 103:24 plainly 3:14 planning 10:10 10:11 22:19 plans 71:15 plausible 65:20 66:24 play 27:9 93:21 played 81:10 85:4 playing 78:11 plays 6:10 25:22 26:5 please 1:5,8 5:6 29:11 33:13 55:25 56:14 58:4 115:3 pleased 63:7 Pleasure 1:24 plenty 33:2 plurality 24:23 93:21 pm 120:11 point 7:14,15 14:24 17:10 20:23 25:15,23 26:5,14 28:11 29:1 34:23 35:9,13 36:14 38:23 40:23,24 41:19 44:19 45:11 46:3 47:24 51:3 53:13 55:11 56:21 59:11 66:25 67:14,20 67:24 68:16,17 69:21 84:15	86:3,23,24 87:22,25 93:6 95:19 96:23,24 106:9 109:16 110:4,21 115:5 116:1 pointing 76:25 points 10:12 21:15 41:9 54:8 69:19 72:21 87:19 92:5 police 31:16 84:19 85:4,17 96:14 111:23 112:8,22 118:12 policies 6:11 19:4 22:10,13 33:2 37:9 38:2 40:4,25 43:12 43:24 44:14 48:18 50:19 53:2 64:4 71:15 73:23 74:11 75:21,23 84:1 88:15 94:17,25 95:8 95:20 96:20 policy 3:7 4:22 24:23 29:5 33:1,1 40:24 44:7 45:7 51:12 52:22 53:1,16 61:6 63:9,18 64:14 66:2 73:4 74:2 87:19 89:1,17 90:17,21,25 91:7 93:22 94:4,12 97:24 115:9 polycymaking 93:25 policy's 39:21 political 3:6,8,12 4:8,10 6:16 21:22 25:3 26:15 33:21 43:5,6 49:12 53:10 66:6,21 68:15 84:9 97:22 98:18 109:12 politically 9:10 9:14 78:13 98:13 political/media 96:16 politician 10:3 13:5 16:24 17:11 36:12 40:8 53:9 88:13 politicians 5:11 6:17 7:14 8:5
---	--	---	---	--	---	--

10:19 11:11,19 11:25 12:10,11 12:20,20 13:17 16:9,10,19 17:17,20,23 18:1,5,10,16 18:22 19:3,9 19:22 21:5 22:8,23 23:2,9 23:11,14 26:12 27:7,21 29:19 31:10,16 33:7 33:15,20,25 35:3,11,21 36:11 40:13 92:14 politics 13:8 22:5 24:6 34:11 40:25 78:8,23 93:10 poor 35:1 popular 48:19 pored 54:3 position 7:1 29:5 65:13 88:4,5 91:19 positions 96:2 possesses 1:12 possibility 59:20 possible 32:4 55:1 60:1,12 78:19 94:14 possibly 30:21 30:21 61:25 95:17 post 82:24 119:1 potential 18:25 31:25 39:23 76:25 108:14 108:15 potentially 31:23 power 8:18 15:17 23:4,23 24:8,9,11,11 34:25 powerful 8:14,24 9:22 19:15 24:5 92:10 powerfully 24:7 practice 35:1 52:12 practices 18:25 52:2,8 111:4,8 pragmatic 94:13 precise 63:14 81:5 110:7 precisely 95:1 precursor 93:1 predominantly 43:20 68:8 preparation 65:10 prepare 53:24 prepared 10:7 13:20 81:18 89:23,24	107:22 115:9 preparing 21:14 preponderance 45:9 press 4:4,5 6:14 9:18 12:10,11 12:21 16:9,11 16:19,21,25 17:3,12,18 18:6,11,16 19:3,9 23:4,18 25:18 29:25 31:15 33:19 35:22 36:3,13 36:14 46:12 47:9 48:20,22 49:18,20 53:21 65:8 109:12 111:4,9,23 113:12 118:10 pressed 74:5 pressure 22:23 25:2 35:17 74:7 86:4,6,6,7 86:13,14,18 97:10,18 98:10 113:17 pressures 97:22 103:7 presumably 9:8 59:18 93:19 117:20 119:2 pretty 37:17 39:18 44:17 46:16 55:7 68:25 76:8,11 91:12,23 93:5 previous 91:5 previously 22:24 99:9 prime 1:17 13:17 31:3 57:6 69:10 79:19 85:2,15 120:10 principle 15:9 print 3:15 private 40:9 53:23 proactive 37:10 probably 4:7,19 21:23 40:7 43:9 58:11 60:21 63:14 69:3,4 72:13 83:7 88:19 91:17 96:23 103:23 110:18 116:13 probe 27:25 problem 17:17 19:10,16 21:17 23:2 24:13 25:6 26:22 28:12,13,14 30:15 34:15 41:2 51:1	95:12 96:8,14 97:24 problems 13:15 14:24 16:15 30:19 procedure 85:20 proceed 75:18 process 5:10 30:15 76:18 77:2 88:2 99:12,18 101:5 102:1 106:19 108:8 116:25 processes 51:20 52:2 produced 96:20 product 24:6 88:1,3 95:24 professional 30:8 professionally 83:4,19 84:4,7 programme 37:8 53:3 programmes 8:17 progressively 49:10 prominent 91:5 promise 37:14 promote 61:6 promoting 75:22 pronoun 70:18 proper 14:12 95:22 109:24 119:9 properly 32:1 35:7,7 51:14 53:24 72:24 85:24 86:1 property 72:18 proposed 93:14 100:6 proprietor 22:15 39:25 44:9 proprietors 22:3 32:20 34:23 44:12 47:11,19 88:14 propriety 13:2 PROP03106 70:15 Prosecution 118:12 proud 83:3 96:20 prove 12:20 95:17 provenance 84:20 85:3 provide 26:7 42:5 55:17 85:18 provided 1:10,21 4:14 42:3 proximity 31:21 pro-enterprise	75:7 pro-family 75:7 public 6:12 11:9 11:16,16 22:2 22:22,25 31:11 31:19,25 41:7 41:23 49:13 53:5 86:14 89:12 95:3 96:4,8,10 publish 7:3 published 39:22 puncturing 47:10 punishment 115:16 purpose 41:25 59:10 purposes 55:21 67:4 pursuant 82:1 pursued 47:9 push 11:20 17:19 pushes 24:8 pushing 84:9 put 1:20 6:22 7:1 8:6 10:17 16:18,22 18:18 20:22,24 21:4 23:1 24:16 27:9 29:20 31:22 35:1,12 36:2 37:25 40:18 42:6 46:14 47:25 49:24,25 54:1 57:24 59:13 61:11,18 72:11 73:22 74:23 76:14 77:17 79:6,21 82:10 83:25 84:6 86:3,4,18 87:3 91:15 96:17 101:1 112:14 115:24 118:23 puts 24:6 51:8 putting 6:13 14:25 31:3 41:18 50:4	35:12 43:4 79:8 85:13 104:25 107:5 112:14 113:23 114:5 115:5 questioned 35:25 questioning 35:19 questions 1:7,25 7:19 8:9 11:12 86:15 92:19 quickly 13:10,21 59:22 60:3 quietly 47:10 quite 2:10 3:25 3:25 4:23 7:10 7:19 8:9 11:12 11:13 16:23,24 19:14 21:16 22:17 25:8,12 25:15 30:1 39:7 40:17 42:16 47:5 49:13,19 51:9 53:19 55:11 59:16,22 61:14 67:12 68:16 70:7 71:22 77:19,22 78:9 79:2 80:15 90:1,25 93:3 108:14 110:15 115:12 quoting 19:15	51:12 realise 49:10 realities 94:13 really 8:12 10:5 14:21 21:18,23 23:5 24:7 25:8 26:5,16 27:3 27:12 36:3 40:3 43:10,14 49:20 60:19 61:5 72:16 74:6 76:14 77:14 95:11,21 97:10 98:8 109:14 113:16 115:24 116:19 118:8 realm 3:14 9:9 reason 41:18 91:7 94:12 97:20 101:1 109:8 reasonable 49:7 73:16 89:19 reasonably 95:7 reasons 12:13 52:11 54:6 62:12 63:19 92:23 94:8 109:2 112:14 114:25 Rebekah 20:9 54:10 56:1 59:6 60:5 66:5 67:11 74:25,25 78:1 101:16 recall 58:21 60:8 60:15,21 62:4 64:3,6,21 66:9 67:1,1 84:20 85:11,12,12 100:25 101:20 102:20 103:4 117:22 119:23 119:24,25 receive 72:13 recognise 27:23 109:17 115:15 recognised 51:9 recollection 58:21 104:5,9 104:17,18,20 104:23 105:24 107:3,3,21,23 108:22 117:8 119:12,13,15 reconcile 55:1 recondite 71:22 record 31:3 37:4 39:6 47:17 48:5,7 80:12 records 55:17 104:8 recruitment 114:16 redacted 82:17	reduced 61:20 reductions 90:3 refer 5:19 12:25 15:6 20:5 88:25 reference 20:8 20:11 40:8 70:17,18 82:6 102:14,15 references 62:10 102:17 referred 70:6 82:5 116:15 referring 10:14 refers 69:2 84:10 reflect 20:13 reflection 47:23 reflective 10:1,5 reform 10:10 13:14 reforming 7:25 reforms 10:10 regards 90:19 regime 28:1 41:24 regional 37:11 40:12,14 registered 41:1 regret 19:22 20:4 regrettable 33:19,21 34:12 regularly 22:23 42:1 regulate 17:3 regulated 4:21 26:21 27:6 regulation 4:23 12:16 15:7,25 16:12 20:24 23:10 regulatory 3:23 3:25 16:2,20 16:25 18:13 21:7 23:20 28:1 60:13 66:7 relate 14:5,7 82:3 related 4:9 23:22 24:7 86:21 relates 9:5 13:5 84:15 relation 14:18 16:10 19:20 34:23 54:11 64:4 69:10 75:19 93:20 101:4 relations 4:3,5 34:9 96:15 relationship 6:2 6:8 12:6,9,13 14:22 15:3,14 16:9,17 17:12 18:12 20:24 29:13 31:20
--	--	---	--	--	---	--

32:5 34:1	respective 11:25	22:11,20 25:1	66:22 86:19	seek 102:17	82:15 94:25	solicitors 82:8
46:21 59:15	respond 11:20	29:9 33:5 42:4	93:11 94:3	107:9	shifting 74:23	solution 21:16,19
74:19,25 75:1	13:21 87:9,11	108:24 110:2	96:18 110:1	seeking 102:13	short 54:15	28:12,13 34:13
79:3 95:5	response 86:17	111:9,16	says 44:4 57:15	102:15 107:10	57:10	solvable 28:15
96:16 103:15	88:8	risks 15:13,15,15	82:18 100:25	118:5	shorthand 57:7	somebody 98:8
relationships 4:6	responses 13:10	15:24,25 18:19	104:25 106:3,5	seen 9:17 33:16	shortly 112:2	113:16
5:18 31:16	responsibility	31:23,24,24	107:14 108:3	65:7 70:8	shout 24:20	soon 82:22 106:9
33:6,6	35:3 101:10,11	32:4 110:5,7	117:6	73:12	shouted 11:5	sorry 8:9 17:9
relevance 82:17	responsible 34:8	111:11	scale 61:20	select 20:6,17	show 75:14	56:17,20
relevant 89:1	34:24 115:6	road 81:8	scandal 12:19	111:22 112:8	showing 29:12	sort 8:6,14 10:22
103:12 116:18	rest 7:7 12:11	Robert 68:20	18:4 97:25	112:22 116:14	78:2	11:19 12:6
reliant 101:5	13:15 15:20	Robinson 62:10	98:1	117:5,17 118:1	shows 117:1	13:8 15:17
118:6,8,9	25:12 26:23	robust 22:8	schedule 57:13	118:2,11	shriller 9:16	16:24 19:9,18
remember 2:11	27:11 30:7	44:17 45:6	68:16 69:10	119:15,18	shrinking 91:15	24:5 29:22
21:20 42:1	37:16 38:6	110:24	scheme 71:24	self-regulatory	91:17	30:16 32:18
58:9,13,23,23	40:4 47:18	robustness 98:15	schools 13:14	19:12	shuffle 101:11	35:21 39:15
59:1,23 60:2	51:15 52:4	rocky 46:16	39:20	selling 8:15	shut 93:6	42:15,24 45:16
62:8,21,22,22	61:7 62:7	role 27:10 29:18	scoops 42:6	send 70:22	side 3:8 6:13	47:5,17 49:14
62:23 63:6,15	63:25 68:13	61:18,21 65:16	Scottish 67:16	senior 22:3 99:21	14:12 38:25	49:18,22 51:18
64:1,22 65:8	71:15 84:2	69:6 78:10,23	scrap 71:25	99:22	75:4	51:22 53:25
66:1,6,12,17	112:9	78:23 85:5	scratch 53:2	sensationalised	sides 12:24 23:11	59:20 63:15
66:17,19 68:4	restarted 108:6	93:21 98:20	screen 14:1	35:10	34:11 74:23	65:25 66:24
76:9 77:3,7	restrict 94:20	roles 11:25 93:19	70:21	sense 13:2 14:10	78:14	69:15 73:1,7
84:21 85:2,15	restricted 93:18	93:20 108:15	scrupulous	14:20 23:15	sign 45:2	75:7 79:14
86:17 98:24	result 36:8 87:15	108:15	110:9	40:2 43:5 50:5	significance 46:5	81:9 84:10,11
99:12 100:7	retrospect 55:16	roofing 83:2,6	scrutinise 19:23	76:12 77:9	significant 52:20	86:18,22 88:18
101:2,23	return 29:5 45:5	Rothermere	search 58:20	79:20 92:8	91:25	91:4 93:1 95:3
103:19 104:21	reveal 41:23	67:22	second 14:10,19	sensed 75:13	similar 39:19	95:16 98:14
104:23 105:19	revealed 18:6	roundly 93:8	17:5 19:10	sensible 88:19	44:9 108:15	102:13,17
107:6,7,9	review 84:18	route 47:15	21:24 36:17	sent 82:15	similarity 48:14	104:10 116:25
108:19,20	86:5 91:1	ruin 76:19	58:19 93:7	sentence 29:4	simply 35:11	sorting 16:20
120:2	ridiculous 45:4	rules 24:23 28:21	104:15 106:1,1	sentences 39:12	single 50:5	sorts 54:4 67:19
remembering	right 1:4 2:4,5	31:5 34:22	106:25 109:7,8	separate 10:24	sir 14:11 16:14	67:19 72:21
92:24 93:1	3:18 5:13 9:10	39:1 41:2,20	112:25 113:6	25:12,16,21	34:23 44:3	81:11 98:19
remind 42:15	10:5,21 12:12	88:2 92:16	secret 91:16	separately 105:5	57:4	103:8 112:14
remit 93:18	13:2,4 15:3,14	run 9:19,21	secretary 40:9	September 20:22	sit 42:16	sought 86:8
96:11	16:18 17:2	115:1	42:17,18,22	61:22,23 62:14	sitting 14:1	100:9 104:19
repeat 38:24	18:5,12 20:12	running 33:21	46:12 47:9	65:4 66:3,14	situation 15:22	107:4,13,14
117:12	21:4 27:18	33:22 49:11	51:25,25 85:16	67:3	16:25 49:19	119:11
repeated 71:5	28:2 30:23	51:5 97:22	86:16,19	sequencing	72:19 100:3	sound 30:23
118:1	31:17 37:6	116:16	Section 82:1,1	104:23	six 58:6 64:17	35:20
repetition	38:4 40:7	run-up 113:18	sections 9:17	series 67:5 92:19	77:5	sources 73:2
119:10	41:17,18 43:2	Rupert 22:18	security 68:9	118:15	size 23:22 24:3	South 103:25
reply 72:2	43:9,12 45:5	44:4 54:9	106:22	serious 92:12	skills 97:15	105:9 106:10
report 6:18	46:11 47:14	56:14 57:2	see 2:17 6:19	94:9	103:8 109:13	so-and-so 41:21
58:19,21	48:23 51:11	58:1 59:12	15:19 16:5,11	seriously 82:19	slight 95:12	speak 48:1 79:13
reported 7:2	52:17 56:13,17	68:3,7,14	16:16 22:12,22	98:4	slightly 47:22	special 2:2,12,14
34:5	64:2,10 65:13	74:18,24 75:10	31:19 36:10	service 7:25	48:13 73:7	3:2,5,6,9,11
reporting 7:8	66:15 68:24	77:25 87:5	37:22 38:11	51:18	95:16 108:15	4:9 29:24 31:6
11:4 34:4 35:9	70:16 73:17	Russian 60:1	39:7 41:25	sessions 6:23	113:23	34:6,16,17,18
reports 19:8 65:8	75:6,7 80:13		42:2 45:16	set 18:17 31:2	small 23:25	35:17 51:14
represent 90:17	81:19 86:19,25	S	56:1 61:11	37:13 45:3	41:11 68:17	85:9,20
request 82:1,1	94:11,15 96:15	saloon 30:16	62:9 66:3	47:5,6 53:23	75:8	specialists 3:11
required 26:7	97:5,15,15,20	Sam 83:1	68:17 69:11	92:16,18 99:24	smaller 46:2	specific 21:19
requiring 82:2	99:14 102:22	Santorini 56:4,6	75:6 80:21	111:11 114:24	Smiley 42:13	22:4 86:18,24
research 3:3	109:15 113:24	59:2	82:25 85:9,13	116:25 118:17	smoke 77:21	96:25 107:5
reset 31:17	115:19 116:2,8	sap 41:6	90:4 91:11	setting 63:23	SMS 70:22	specifically 3:16
resigned 102:6	116:12 118:3	Sarah's 10:15	92:16 93:23	settlement 90:10	soaking 2:16	100:15 105:17
105:5 109:4	rightly 9:3 12:22	11:12	95:1,9 99:18	set-up 53:19	social 54:11	105:22
111:14,19	27:16 38:19	sat 30:16	99:19 105:14	Shadow 83:13	57:16,21 66:5	specifics 60:21
112:2 113:4	48:25 66:20	satisfied 85:23	105:22 108:17	89:4	71:18 80:11	62:8 119:14
resigning 109:4	88:25	102:22	113:2 117:2	shake 25:2	socially 80:5	specious 87:16
respect 11:24	ring 79:16	saw 48:5,6 80:5	119:7	shareholders 4:3	society 40:21	speech 3:6 21:11
12:2,17,17,21	riots 9:8	saying 11:17	seeing 22:12	Shaw 103:25	soft 115:20	31:1 34:2 83:5
12:24 38:13	risk 15:18 16:23	32:24 56:21	37:19,24 81:8	105:8 106:10	sole 24:12	83:7,8 84:1
115:17	19:19 21:25	62:23 64:22	81:12 120:1	shift 25:2 77:5	solely 92:2	89:4 92:1,8,12

92:21 115:12	steps 31:8	suggestion 27:23	119:21	technology 7:10	72:23 83:14	49:8,10,22,24
speeches 42:4	Steve 108:7	suggests 82:19	suspect 21:22	91:14	101:3 102:22	50:23,25 51:7
116:4	stories 27:12	summarise 76:7	94:17 101:2	Telegraph 9:7	103:5 107:15	51:11,16,21,23
spend 13:13	42:6 117:11	summary 69:12	swing 30:7	10:9 22:18	109:15 113:2	52:18,22,24
26:13,17,23	storm 109:15	Sun 45:8,13,18	swinging 30:20	48:11 67:15	113:11	53:8,17,19,24
spending 8:9	story 7:6 13:21	45:20 61:23	switching 45:14	68:19 71:14	things 6:25 8:22	55:2,4 56:16
21:5 50:21	30:13 34:7	62:2,5,20 63:3	sworn 1:6	83:15	11:6 12:23	56:16,17,19
90:3	84:23 94:11	63:20 64:8,22	swung 30:5	telephone 80:10	19:6 20:11	57:1,2,21 58:7
spent 16:19	110:17	65:25 66:10,16	sympathy 13:7	104:12,21	25:10 28:2,6	58:14,24 59:4
38:11	straightforward	66:18,20 67:6	97:21	telephoning	28:20 30:4	59:4,5 60:12
spinning 30:6	79:8	67:8 73:11,20	system 10:11,18	79:17	31:2,10 33:18	60:21 61:4,17
splits 8:5	strange 91:1	74:1,3,10,23	16:2,20 18:8	television 3:24	33:20 34:10,17	61:18 62:1
spoke 105:25	strategy 37:18	75:3,4,14,19	18:14 19:13	3:24 4:20 7:18	35:6 38:2	63:4,8,13,14
spoken 11:6 71:2	37:23 38:1	76:20 77:1,20	41:5 51:8	8:13,23 9:20	42:14 44:18	63:21 64:1,6,6
sponge 2:16	46:11 47:10	77:24 78:3	81:17	14:1 25:24	46:24 52:25	64:18,23 65:22
Sport 116:14	73:20,23	80:2 83:22,24		26:25 27:7	61:15 65:12	65:24,24,25
117:5	Street 13:23	84:5 87:14	T	37:12 38:6,25	69:25 73:3	66:12,14 67:2
sporting 87:22	51:21 53:19	Sunday 9:6	tab 50:1 70:6,14	39:3 46:19	74:1 75:17	68:12 69:1,3,4
spotted 56:19	69:22 109:22	67:23	81:17 105:25	47:3 67:16	76:24 81:11	69:15,18 70:19
spread 73:25	120:6	Sun's 46:6 63:8	106:1	88:14 92:24,25	86:1 94:24	71:8,11,11,13
squares 47:21	strength 24:3	68:3	tabloid 97:7,11	95:25	96:12 98:9	71:16 72:2,6,7
squashing 40:20	27:15 51:21,24	supper 82:22	97:12,16 99:11	tell 3:16 11:14	109:2,5 114:20	72:9,15,19
staff 37:6,21	strengthen 100:5	84:10	99:15,23	42:1 63:3 64:7	think 2:19,21 3:1	73:12,17,22
100:17,18	stress 92:7	support 29:6	102:23 109:9	temperament	6:17,22,25 7:4	74:24 76:8,14
stage 32:14	strict 3:25	32:12,25 43:5	109:10 110:6,8	98:15	7:9,9,14,17 8:8	76:17 77:4,13
45:11 62:4	strictures 27:25	43:7,15 44:2,7	110:23	tend 83:11	9:24 10:3,5,16	77:19 78:13
74:13 78:25	strident 24:16	44:21 45:24	tabloids 110:12	tendentious 9:13	10:21 11:1,2,4	79:10,23 80:1
101:22 117:23	strike 6:7	46:6,15,22	110:14 111:4	tendentially	11:12,19 12:4	81:1,2,3 82:12
stalled 108:4	strong 6:7 22:17	48:9 49:1,4	tack 48:24	42:7	12:5,5,9,10,11	83:8,8,16,22
stance 29:21	23:8,12 24:6	62:2,20 63:3,8	take 13:11,20	tendering 1:14	12:14 13:4	84:2,6 85:4,10
45:21	44:16 60:17,18	63:20 64:8,22	18:4 26:12	tending 97:17	14:22 15:2,2,3	86:12,16,18
stand 113:17	61:17 65:11	66:10 68:3,5	33:9 43:21	tennis 81:11	15:4,11,11,13	87:12 88:7
standards 12:18	72:18 74:24	73:19 75:16	44:8 53:24	tension 14:11	15:18,22 16:2	89:3,15,16,18
standing 12:20	75:1 76:9,19	77:5 82:15	84:18 85:17	term 14:5,11	16:5 17:3 18:6	89:22 90:1,4,8
22:9 76:11	90:7 112:1	84:17 88:6,6	86:5 87:21	47:12	18:14 19:3,18	90:10 91:8,21
start 1:25 36:19	115:16	88:11,15 89:9	88:18 94:11	terms 2:16 4:7	20:1,3,11 21:4	91:25 92:7
46:23 70:14	stronger 79:3	94:25	101:10 118:21	26:22 27:10	21:8 22:8,10	93:3 95:3,7,12
87:12 97:3	110:1	supported 78:14	taken 12:22 40:3	31:3 34:15	22:20 23:7,8	95:20,23 96:10
started 29:15	strongly 22:13	90:12	87:18 88:25	48:1 61:12	23:10,14,19	96:23 97:12,20
46:9 81:6 88:2	61:14 72:8	supporter 91:5	94:19 102:19	66:16 69:15	24:1,1,9,14,14	98:17,19 99:11
starting 51:19	74:6	supporting	119:17	74:23 76:7	24:15,20 25:8	99:14,25 100:2
53:2	struck 78:24	38:21 49:16	takes 53:7 64:17	77:9,23 78:11	25:12,15,18,20	101:19 102:1
starts 54:3 69:11	structure 51:20	66:18 76:13	talk 26:15 51:19	82:6 85:7	25:20 26:9,11	103:1,4,22
state 40:20 92:9	53:22,25	79:1 87:7	71:25 74:1,11	94:25 96:14	26:15,22 27:7	105:15 106:24
105:3,13	struggle 6:8	supportive 79:2	114:12 115:18	97:6 98:14	27:14 28:15,15	107:25 109:25
statement 1:11	16:11	suppose 3:2 9:13	talked 6:24	terrible 29:25	28:17,20,24	110:4,10,12,22
3:18 5:7 18:20	struggling 49:22	9:15 13:1 15:7	31:22 59:1	test 93:24 116:25	29:8,18,22	111:1,11 113:1
29:11 36:19	stuff 43:1	42:4 57:24	99:11 100:21	118:16	30:1,4,4,12,12	113:22 115:11
43:3 49:3 58:2	subject 1:12 9:1	69:21 73:15	talking 16:8	text 59:24 61:12	30:18,24 31:8	115:20,20
78:17 88:24	61:1	115:12 116:4	37:10 45:19	70:7,12,22	31:15,23 32:2	116:11,13,13
97:3 101:13	submitting 88:8	sure 2:18 11:1	50:21 51:1	72:22 79:7	32:14 33:9,10	116:18 117:16
104:3,15 105:2	subsequently	13:24 24:14	74:1,8,9,10	81:14,25 82:5	33:11,19,24	119:16,19
106:13 107:22	65:9 102:8	26:11 28:2	80:8,14 100:7	82:9	34:1,14,14,16	thinking 3:17
108:2 116:11	118:15	36:4 41:3	111:13	texts 69:7 70:20	34:19,21 35:5	25:14 38:12
118:23	successful 13:24	50:17 52:17	tally 54:24	71:17,18 73:9	35:5,8,15 36:2	39:2 47:2 48:3
stations 9:20	91:6	56:8 60:16,19	taps 11:9	thank 1:10,22	36:14 38:4,10	52:8 95:22
37:12	suffered 31:12	60:22 61:9	task 75:6	3:13 4:13 5:3	39:4,14,15,17	103:9 110:8
statistical 54:4	sufficient 14:20	64:19 70:18	taskforce 91:9	9:4 15:6 29:1	39:23 40:2,6,7	thinks 95:3
status 47:11	15:10 55:21	71:14 77:2	91:18	88:18 96:23	40:22 41:7,9	third 2:6,13,22
statute 82:2	120:8	78:9,9,10	taught 4:20	120:10	41:25 42:14	25:1 96:25
steadily 45:18	sufficiently	81:12,16 83:24	tax 3:11 71:25	theory 32:17	43:2,9,18	thought 16:22
steamed 17:2	117:14	86:1 101:14,21	74:3	87:16 89:21	44:22,22 45:11	19:14 20:16
Stelzer 67:10	Suggest 71:23	102:18 103:9	tea 97:21	thing 8:6,19	45:17,23 46:3	30:1 45:3 74:4
step 85:17	suggested 39:15	103:10 107:7	team 67:22	16:12 26:18	46:10,15,17	75:5 76:21,22
118:21	100:2,6 107:13	112:20 113:20	109:24	30:11 35:16	47:4,14,20	79:18 83:1
Stephen 28:6	suggesting 27:17	116:22,22	technical 93:19	48:15,23 65:9	48:10,12,13,15	89:16 101:8

103:19,20	31:14 47:20	43:11,23 44:24	117:21	visit 56:4,6 59:2	32:13 34:9	widespread 49:1
109:15 113:1	78:9,10	44:25 45:4	undue 31:21	59:9,25	36:2,10 37:25	49:3
115:19 118:3	touch 71:6	46:24 47:20	unfair 58:5 62:1	vital 6:10	40:25 45:24	wield 15:17
three 1:12 39:12	touched 25:1	48:9,17,20	115:25	voice 22:5 23:22	47:4 52:22	wife 57:20 76:5
92:5,22 99:1,2	touchstone 38:19	49:12,13 50:19	unhealthy 5:13	24:3,5,7,21	53:17 54:1	William 1:6,9
99:6 110:19	tough 27:16	57:20 59:13	12:7	voices 77:24	59:16 69:11	win 32:19 44:25
115:23	97:17 109:11	61:6 66:12	unhindered 23:5	volume 10:23	72:5,11 75:22	46:22 47:20
thrown 13:9	110:24 114:10	70:17 73:3,18	university 57:19	11:3 21:18	79:7 84:11	48:9,9 49:12
Thursday 1:1	115:16	75:17 78:11	unjustified 87:16	36:2,5,16	86:3 88:19,23	53:10 59:13
ticker 14:2	tour 59:23	85:5 88:13,13	unmake 42:9	voter 73:15	89:10,25,25	73:18,18 75:3
ties 86:22 103:23	traded 29:5	88:14 91:21	unnecessarily		90:23 93:14	88:13,14,14
tight 100:20	trading 88:15	92:15 97:14	36:16	W	94:22 98:9	114:7
time 1:21,22	training 28:22	100:18	unorthodox 3:1	Wade 20:9 56:1	105:21 107:12	wing 115:19
2:10,18 4:9,19	transactional	tune 45:22	upcoming 66:10	59:6 60:5 75:1	109:24 112:11	wink 32:18 95:16
5:16 7:20 8:20	32:5	turn 11:3 36:7	upshot 93:15	78:1 101:16	112:13 116:21	winks 88:12
13:13 16:19	transcript 70:5,9	turned 10:23	upside 31:12,14	want 5:23,23	118:5 119:6,7	96:20
18:23 19:23,25	translate 51:20	31:12,14 36:3	use 23:16 117:7	7:22 8:12,21	119:9	winning 45:24
21:5,9,20 24:2	transparency	36:5,16	usually 36:8	8:22 17:21	ways 8:18 17:21	75:16 78:4
26:13,17,22	12:15 15:9,10	turning 21:17	uttered 110:20	19:3,3 22:15	34:8 73:6,8	wish 97:6,14
27:5,16 30:1	15:11,19,23	TV 95:24	115:7	28:7 29:13	98:19 108:11	112:2
33:1 37:25	16:4,14 18:13	two 1:25 19:5		35:20 38:2,3,3	weaker 27:15	witchcraft 95:16
38:11,20 39:1	22:21 31:7	39:11,24 41:9	V	38:6 40:2,10	weather 6:20	witness 1:4,10
40:12 42:2	39:13 41:24	47:23 48:14	vaguely 104:21	41:5 47:14,15	website 82:10	36:19 58:2
43:11,22 46:16	transparent	58:14 64:18	Vaizey 89:5	47:16 53:10	wedding 80:2,16	97:3 104:3
48:22 49:4	22:11	65:2,19 85:9	value 52:18	67:20 69:19	week 67:18	105:2 106:13
50:13,21 52:20	Treasury 2:3	88:18 92:5	values 22:9,14	74:1,10 76:19	79:23	107:22
52:25 53:7	3:10	94:24 95:4	22:14 73:23	77:12 78:10	weekday 50:11	witnesses 1:18
54:17 58:9,18	treat 27:6	99:1,2,3,6	75:23 95:9	80:13 99:1	weekend 54:20	9:22 25:5,15
59:25 63:5,9	treating 85:14	109:1 116:18	96:21	100:20	80:21,23 81:1	won 45:1,8 46:14
63:16,21 65:9	86:15	119:2	varies 6:6	wanted 2:17	97:23	46:17 73:21
65:13 74:5	tremendous	typical 97:23	various 3:22	23:18 29:19	weekends 54:20	wonder 115:8
79:4 80:15	12:22		30:24 72:6	32:19,21 46:21	80:19,21,24	wonderful 83:1
84:14 87:18	Trevor 76:20	U	78:14,14 85:22	47:2 56:21	81:2	word 23:7 28:7
88:25 90:1	77:25	UK 72:17	105:5	63:3 72:9	weekly 37:21	118:6,9,11,11
93:7 94:25	trial 9:24 111:25	unacceptable	vein 11:9	83:24 86:10,11	79:25	118:12,13
99:13 100:6	trials 95:17	31:14	venal 36:9	91:4 96:11	weeks 65:2,19	words 23:24 26:9
101:17 104:12	tried 15:12,14	unburdened	verification	98:8 100:4	77:11,13	37:21,22
107:15 113:2	47:21 54:25	65:21	112:15	103:5 113:16	weight 8:7 72:12	110:20 114:2
115:3 116:12	73:24 94:19	underlies 43:8	vices 33:13,16	wanting 37:9	89:22	115:7,23
116:23 117:3	trim 87:6	understand 5:22	34:13	63:20 71:14	went 42:17 80:5	work 1:19 9:9,23
120:5	trouble 21:15	5:24,24 7:22	victory 46:1	wants 32:8	85:9 117:4	18:14 27:3
timed 66:20	58:25	11:14,19 17:10	view 2:19 6:13	warfare 54:1	weren't 20:12,18	34:18 41:5
82:16	true 53:14 91:11	17:13 28:10	7:14,16 8:12	wasn't 2:9 20:14	96:22 109:22	47:2 49:24,25
times 43:14	truly 31:10	34:2 50:6	12:1 26:12	21:8,18 27:17	West 40:16	52:3 54:18
67:10 68:20	trust 6:4 103:15	58:20 59:3	34:13 35:2	27:18 44:20	we'll 4:21 16:7	74:21 75:2
72:6 74:9	trusted 77:24	71:17 72:25	47:13 55:12	45:2 47:5 48:4	24:23 29:10	101:7 113:10
78:15 82:21	119:7	77:20,22 82:21	59:11 64:17	49:20 56:14	32:12 81:12	114:4
83:9,10,15	trusting 12:8	94:9 96:3	72:9,12,15	62:15 77:13	87:8	worked 4:17,19
90:18	try 5:22 8:2,23	115:14	77:23 87:15,25	86:6,7 91:10	we're 3:14 6:20	32:21 92:12
timing 63:11,14	13:19,23 15:5	understandable	110:23 118:16	92:2 94:14,15	17:2 31:9 54:6	119:8
64:24 108:19	18:14 21:21	7:20	viewpoints 72:13	96:19 97:13	55:9,13 57:13	working 3:3 4:24
today 4:12 5:2	25:16 28:16	understandably	views 4:22 5:1,25	102:15 107:22	66:14 80:9	48:6 72:14
67:4 114:23	29:13,19 30:9	30:1	44:17,23 45:3	109:25 110:10	82:7,11 83:4	75:22 92:11
Today's 1:4	50:15,16,16,22	understanding	45:10 60:18,18	112:23 113:13	83:19 91:18	103:13 116:7
told 14:6 42:18	52:19 53:22	4:18 11:24	60:19,22 61:9	114:3,8 118:2	97:17 112:10	118:4 119:18
62:20 63:4	54:18 55:19	12:3 14:13	65:11,11 72:19	watch 8:20	116:9	120:1
106:21	59:12,14 75:6	75:9 83:21	72:21 90:6	watched 26:19	we've 9:17 12:23	works 16:3 50:12
tomorrow 83:3,6	77:7 84:25	100:12	91:19 93:14	wave 32:12	23:24 25:1	76:10
tone 79:7	87:16 92:13	understandings	vigorous 10:22	way 5:14,17 6:18	29:11 31:6	world 25:9,11
Tony 19:14 45:2	94:22 101:11	32:7	18:11 22:22	7:25 8:1 15:8	50:9 54:3,8,25	30:10 34:3
71:2,3,12 76:6	104:22 112:6	undertaking	35:22	17:3,3 18:15	54:25 70:4,8	47:25 67:9
top 35:4 63:24	115:1,2 118:17	111:18 112:16	vigorously 18:2	18:17 20:19	90:21 98:22	102:4,6 109:3
89:11 98:2	trying 7:5,5,23	112:19,19	23:17 76:11	21:4 23:1 24:8	whilst 106:20	110:12 114:8
topic 86:21	8:1 11:20	undertakings	violet 91:15	24:16 27:5,6,8	white 77:21	worried 116:3
topics 86:22	20:13 21:5	111:21,22,25	violets 91:17	27:8 30:5,24	wider 16:10	worry 11:17
totally 13:24	26:14 30:11	112:4 117:1,3	virtually 42:19	31:14,22 32:4	18:24	worrying 14:2

worse 7:12,16	04138 29:2	58:4,17 79:14	4 1:11
worst 111:8	04168 97:4 105:3	79:22	40 63:1
worth 50:8	04172 101:14	2007 21:11 48:25	42-day 23:16
worthy 12:21	04182 69:11	49:6,11 74:14	4229 67:14
wouldn't 8:6	04198 54:3 57:15	79:14,22 97:6	4232 68:23
11:7 46:14	04205 58:17	100:14 101:17	47 29:11
47:24 54:20	04220 55:25 59:2	103:23 104:14	<hr/>
62:4 64:23	04225 60:10	105:4,8 106:5	5
73:5,22 76:4	04228 61:22	111:15	5 67:8,8 71:24
91:4,15 97:13	62:17	2008 55:25 78:21	50 25:23 50:13
116:6 118:19	04229 67:5	79:24 80:9,22	69:13
wretched 29:25	04231 68:2	80:25	58 105:25 106:1
write 28:21	04232 68:18	2009 60:9,24	<hr/>
41:19 52:5	<hr/>	61:22,23 62:14	6
writer 3:6 57:7	1	65:4 68:1	6 26:18,20
116:6	1 58:4 61:23 67:6	79:24 80:9,22	61 3:17
writing 20:12	1,404 50:9	80:25 81:16	62 70:9
116:6	1.00 120:11	82:4,11 89:5	66 3:17
written 39:16	10 13:23 26:18	90:13,18,20	67 56:11
wrong 12:10	51:21 52:1	115:3 116:9	<hr/>
14:22 18:9	54:9 62:14	119:1	7
19:6 30:12,20	65:4 85:16	201 56:24	7 67:9 81:16
30:22 43:13,25	86:16	2010 68:17 70:23	82:11
60:4 64:11	10.00 1:2	2011 30:22 71:19	73 36:19
71:10 76:22	100 37:15	82:4,4 84:14	74 37:4
77:12 115:25	105 88:24	2012 1:1	77 39:6
117:2,3	107 89:3	21 66:3 67:10	79 41:11
wrongly 48:25	109 90:13	82:1,1	<hr/>
66:20	11 6:15 85:10	219 97:4	8
wrote 34:17 48:7	11.19 57:9	22 18:20	83 70:10
<hr/>	11.29 57:11	223 105:3 106:12	84 1:11
X	110 90:23 91:2	225 100:8 101:2	87 70:10
Xan 42:12	113 92:3,19	227 105:10,15	<hr/>
<hr/>	93:17	106:24 107:19	9
Y	13 5:6 50:13 92:8	229 62:16	91 43:3
year 1:11 9:7	131 29:2	23 18:21 70:23	92 43:3,6
20:22 37:18,20	14 1:1 5:6,19	231 114:12	
38:2 46:10	15 6:3,9 26:19	237 101:13	
51:18 69:1	54:10 68:1	24-hour 6:24 7:7	
77:6	16 9:4 55:25	7:19 11:2 13:5	
years 3:5 6:15	57:14	13:18 14:1	
9:18 15:1,2	16.45 82:16	21:17 29:17	
25:23 34:12	17 9:4	30:18 53:18,20	
37:14 41:17	18 58:1,17	24/7 26:6	
42:11 43:21	19 11:22 54:10	25 21:24 70:14	
50:8 51:17	196 49:2	254 116:10	
57:18 58:6	199 56:24	257 116:15	
60:16 77:11	1992 2:3	117:10 118:23	
92:9 119:2	1994 2:3 3:14	26 50:10	
yesterday 25:11	30:21	27 66:14 70:6	
yesterday's 34:4	1995 30:21	28 66:14 67:3	
young 115:14,21	1997 44:5 45:12	68:17	
yrs 71:24	<hr/>	29 24:25 104:3	
<hr/>	2	105:7 106:3	
0	2 67:11 120:9	29th 67:3	
02412 106:3	20 15:2,6 42:11	<hr/>	
02413 106:18	57:18	3	
03112 71:20	20/20 109:19	3 50:1 60:9 71:25	
04099 5:7	114:12,21,23	74:10	
04103 18:20	200 56:12,24	30 42:11 108:2	
04105 24:25	2001 2:1 3:14	31 104:14 106:18	
04118 36:20	2003 20:7	35 81:17	
04123 43:4	2005 37:8,16	36 37:23,25	
04127 89:5	46:8 47:6 48:3	37 91:11	
04130 90:14	57:14 58:3	<hr/>	
04132 92:3	2006 49:11 58:2	4	