MR JAY:  The first witness today is Mr Ash, please.

Thank you.

day.  At the same time, I will also provide a timetable
depends upon when we've concluded the evidence for that
after 2 pm on 3 April.  I say "immediately after"; it
submissions in relation to module 3, at or immediately
as the Inquiry has proceeded.  Any such application to
receive within the same timeframe.

I intend to give directions, having received
submissions in relation to module 3, at or immediately
after 2 pm on 3 April.  I say "immediately after"; it
depends upon when we've concluded the evidence for that
day.  At the same time, I will also provide a timetable
for closing submissions for all modules.

Thank you.

MR JAY:  The first witness today is Mr Ash, please.

MR SIMON ROGER ASH (sworn)

Questions by MR JAY

Page 1

MR JAY:  Your full name, please.

A.  I'm Simon Roger Ash and I'm the Chief Constable of
Suffolk Constabulary.

Q.  Thank you. Kindly turn up your witness statement. It's
dated 27 January of this year, signed by you and there's
a standard statement of truth. Is this your formal
evidence to the Inquiry?

A.  Yes, it is.

Q.  First of all, if I summarise your career in the Police
You worked your way up the ranks. In 2001 you joined
Hertford Constabulary as Assistant Chief Constable, and
then on 4 June 2007, you joined Suffolk Constabulary as
Chief Constable, and that, as you've told us, is your
current position; is that right?

A.  That's correct.

Q.  You also explain in your statement, but I ask you to set
this out in your own words, please, that Suffolk is one
of the smallest police forces in the country. So
approximately how many officers and staff are there?

A.  Yes, it's one of the smallest forces. It covers
a population of about 700,000 people, and the workforce
is about 2,200, comprises officers and staff.

Q.  In terms of corporate communications, that department
merged with Norfolk in July of last year; is that right?

A.  Yes.

Q.  In terms of corporate communications, that department
merged with Norfolk in July of last year; is that right?

A.  That's correct.

Q.  The next witness will cover that matter in more detail.

Can I ask you, please, about paragraph 2 of your
statement, which is our page 58730, where you refer to
an investigation involving covert techniques into leaks
to the local media. Could you tell us something about
that, please?

A.  Yes. I was aware when I took up the post that there had
been an investigation prior to me joining concerning
a potential leak by an officer to a journalist, and that
the course of that inquiry had involved analysis of
telephone records and that because of that, the editors
were -- adversely responded to it and that relationships
maybe weren't all they might have been, and as
a consequence I was keen to do all I could in kicking
off on a positive note as the new Chief Constable.

Q.  Thank you. As you explain subsequently in your
statement, generally speaking, relations with the local
media are good; is that right?

A.  They're very good, yes.

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Leveson Inquiry  
26 March 2012

| Page 6 |  
| --- | --- |
| A. It's an observation, and I stress it is a broad generalisation, because this is the issue that tended to -- or has tended -- when I've had issues with the media -- to go to the heart of what has been the rubbing point and the tension. So it's a very broad generalisation rather than a criticism. | 1. we should have done, and we work together on a lot of campaigns for the good of our local community. |
| Q. Your reference to "rubbing point" and "tension" suggests that overcaution is something which might tend to cause that tension; is that right? | 2. Q. So it's an appropriately professional, albeit not overly close relationship? |
| A. Yes. What I'm referring to is in relationship with local editors, they very much would like information as soon as there is anything available and would regularly report to me occasions when they've seen police officers maybe dealing with an incident, have phoned in to find out about it, and information hasn't been readily forthcoming, when clearly there is something going on. Officers have been cautious until they've got sufficient information about that incident to want to pass it to the media, whereas the media would like to just know that -- even if we're just dealing with a report of whatever it is, at the earliest opportunity, and it's that sort of timely provision of information that has been at the core. | 3. A. It's -- I would describe it as, yeah, a very professional relationship, and that's probably the best way of describing it. |
| Q. From your perspective, though, the desire to put out information which is accurate means that there may sometimes be a delay before it can be imparted; would you agree with that? | 4. Q. In terms of the national media, on page 58733 in the middle of the page, you say you have no ongoing relationship with anyone from the national media: "All my dealings tend to be ad hoc and driven by events." |
|  

| A. That's correct. | 5. Is there any cultural or other similar difference between the national and local press from your perspective or would you not wish to comment on that? |
| Q. You explain in two subsequent pages of your statement, pages 58731 and 58732, that the majority of the contact you have is with local radios, giving interviews, excellent relationship, and you deal with the sort of campaigns which have been launched over the years: an anti-knife campaign and -- I think it's a lifter and fly tipping campaign. Then under the rubric "press" you explain that your contact with the local press is not regular: "The regular provision of quotes and information is usually by agreed press releases. However, I do have personal contact with what is a strong local press in Suffolk." In terms of the local press -- we're going to hear from an editor in due course -- can you explain what the position is? | 6. A. My dealings with the national press are very limited and they're mainly due to my ACPO portfolio, which relates to reward and recognition, which is pay and conditions, and I tend to deal with the national media primarily through the ACPO press office, because I seek to try and distance myself from saying too much in the media because I act for ACPO in pay and conditions negotiations, and the two aren't always very compatible. |
| A. Yes. I meet the editor you're going to hear from, as well as other editors in the county, on an ad hoc basis, usually event-driven, often to resolve whatever the current issues are of the day, and we have a healthy relationship, but none of my editors are afraid to challenge me when they think we haven't done something | 7. Q. In terms of the national media, on page 58733 in the middle of the page, you say you have no ongoing relationship with anyone from the national media: "All my dealings tend to be ad hoc and driven by events." |
| Q. So it's an appropriately professional, albeit not overly close relationship? | 8. A. Well, I think it's important to understand that ACPO is really a collection of chief officers from across the country, and it's structured into a number of business areas, each with a chief constable that heads it, and it's very often those chief constables that head a business area that will, if you like, lead on any national debate. So my portfolio is in the workforce development business area, and so when there are issues around, say, for example, the recent release of the Tom Windsor report, it would be the head of the business area that would very often be the spokesperson for that debate nationally. |
|  | A. Well, it could be me, but my portfolio actually sits |

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under a business area head.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I see.

A. So it would normally be the head of the business area.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, I see.

MR JAY: Yes, the policy was last reviewed in 2010. We can see that from the final page. Can we just alright on a number of points? On the first page of the narrative, 58578, it's an open positive policy; that's clause 1.1.

Clause 1.5, basic tenet:

"Only withhold what you must. If information can't be released for valid reasons, this should be explained to the media."

Key guidelines on the next page. 2.1:

"Reasonable requests from the media for information, comment and interviews should be dealt with by the appropriate person. This would normally be the member of staff who knows most about the subject/incident and can respond authoritatively."

And then another clear principle, 2.2:

"The general rule of thumb is that staff can release the same information to the media as they would if they were responding to a direct question from a member of the public."

May I ask you to comment on 3.3:

"Notwithstanding the above, anyone who intentionally

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passes information to the media which is likely to frustrate an investigation or to embarrass/undermine the credibility of the organisation could face disciplinary or misconduct action."

So your definition really of "unauthorised information" is information which would embarrass or undermine the credibility of your organisation? Have I correctly understood it?

A. Yes, in the context of this policy, yes, that's absolutely right.

Q. So one is looking at it from the perspective of the organisation, obviously, even though it may be in the public interest widely that the information be disseminated to the media; would that be right?

A. Sorry, could you just rephrase that?

Q. The policy is looking at what is desirable from the perspective of your organisation --

A. Yes.

Q. You refer to the credibility of the organisation. But on the other hand it might be said that information could be disseminated to the media which would nonetheless be in the public interest, notwithstanding that it could undermine the credibility of your organisation. Would you agree with that?

A. Well, my corporate communications department I would expect to release information that was in the public interest and, on occasions, that will cause discomfort for the organisation, and I think I've referred to an incident later in my statement where that was exactly the case.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: There is really a distinction, isn't there? Anything that's going to frustrate an investigation -- I mean, there can't be a justification to frustrate --

A. No.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- a proper investigation.

A. No.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But there may be a reason why something that is embarrassing is perfectly legitimately within the public domain.

A. Exactly. Yes, that's what I agree with.

MR JAY: There's a secondary question of who decides whether it's in the interests of the public. Are you saying that it should be for your communications department to make that decision rather than an individual officer?

A. That's certainly where I would go for my guidance.

Q. Thank you. Then more specific points, maybe paragraph 8, please, page 58582, positive media coverage. 8.2:

"As such, all staff are encouraged to use the media to proactively highlight positive stories and good working practice. This type of publicity is valuable in building public confidence in the police."

So there's almost a positive duty there to put your force understandably in the best possible light, isn't there?

A. Yes, that's correct. I would take the view that bad news almost writes itself, and I think we have to work hard sometimes to promote the good work that officers and staff do day in and day out.

Q. Then the last point, really -- we'll take the rest as read -- 9.6, page 58583:

"Officers and police staff should give their full name and rank or role when dealing with the media. The anonymous title of 'police spokesperson' should not be used."

It may be almost self-evident, but what's the reason for that, do you think?

A. Well, I think in relating to a community, it's far better if -- in the case of a local officer, that it's attributed to a local officer. If it's written in relation to a policy matter, normally it will be related to a much more senior officer. I think from a public perspective that looks far more convincing and authentic than something that sounds far more remote, as in

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3 (Pages 9 to 12)
"spokesperson".

Q. So if it's information which should go into the public domain, the messenger, as it were, should be prepared to put his or her name to it; is that the philosophy?
A. Yes, that's a good description, and the more serious the issue, the more senior, normally, the individual.

Q. I said it was the last point. In fact, it isn't. Clause 19 I marked to raise with you. It's page 58603, media attendance on police operations. First of all: "Media attendance should be authorised through the PHQ press office. Facilitating such requests often results in very positive publicity. It also allows the media greater insight into the workings of and problems encountered by the police. However, media attendance on operations needs to be carefully planned, as it should be recognised that the presence of the media can create practical difficulties for officers."

So pausing there, there is a very significant public relations issue here. Very positive publicity may result?

Q. The next page, 58735, you take up the point there: "Friction has arisen with the media owing to the lead." You give one specific example of that, and then you say:
A. Yes.
Q. Then you point out, quite rightly, under 19.3 -- "Article 6 rights" is the first bullet point, the rights to a fair trial. Then rights to privacy is the second bullet point and then there are further subsidiary points which maybe flow from the Article 8 rights. So you're making it clear that notwithstanding the very positive publicity which might ensue, all of this should be balanced against the private rights of individuals?
A. That's correct.
Q. Have any difficult issues arisen in practice regarding allowing media on police operations in your area, Mr Ash?
A. Not during my time as Chief Constable, no.
Q. May I return, please, to your statement, page 58734. We've looked at the procedure. You make it clear, level with the upper hole punch:
"When it comes to policing matters affecting the whole county or comments on issues of constabulary policy, either I or another senior officer take the lead."

Well, again, that's common sense. If there's an important issue of principle or policy, it's right that it should come from you. Then you've given some examples of that lead being taken. Can I ask you about negative headlines, which you refer to next just below the lower hole punch. You refer to a strong local media in Suffolk and they hold you rigorously to account, and so it follows that on occasions the headlines will not always be as good as you would wish?

A. That's correct.
Q. Can you explain, please, the "poor" HMIC policing pledge grading in 2009? What was that about?
A. Under the previous administration, there was -- police success was measured by a public confidence measure, which was based on a question in the British Crime Survey relating to how well people believed the police and local councils were dealing with crime and disorder issues. Our grading on that and associated inspection from the HMI graded Suffolk as "poor", along with one or two forces, and that naturally attracted a negative headline, and as a result of that we developed an action plan, a major plank of which was working very closely with local radio, Radio Suffolk, to influence public opinion around the positive things we were doing, and over a period of time we changed that situation and greatly improved our public confidence measure.

Q. The next page, 58735, you take up the point there:
"Frustration has arisen with the media owing to the perception that there's been delay in the release of information."
You give one specific example of that, and then you say:
A. Yes. The training involved representatives from our local media, and what we were trying to do was to bridge this issue I referred to earlier, where the media wanted early notification of issues, and this example I quoted here was a perfectly justifiable request where we were slow putting into the public domain an escape of people that were in a secure hospital having committed violent offences. And what we wanted to do was to ensure that our force operations room inspectors understood both the media perspective and my requirements as the Chief Constable to put appropriate information into the public domain at an appropriate time.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So the problem is to spot what is the story or what is the incident that is sufficiently interesting to the media.
Important to press the red button?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have a view about this? Is it just an accident that it's happened in this way or is there a philosophy behind it in terms of the level of hospitality which you offer and have received?

A. I think the professional relationship that I enjoy with the local media and the ability to get business done usually means we meet, for the majority of the time, on police premises or premises of the media, and at those locations light refreshments are usually the order of the day, and with very few exceptions, that enables us to maintain a relationship and get business done in a busy world in an acceptable way.

Q. Thank you. The next point is paragraph 11, Mr Ash. The new software used by the corporate communications department -- it's called Spotlight, I believe, and it enables monitoring of contacts with the media to be undertaken, and requires that details of all contact with the media be logged and recorded; have I correctly understood it?

A. Yes, that's correct, and this was a benefit from our collaborative work with colleagues in Norfolk that were already using this system. Our communications department have taken it on in the way you describe, and it's a very comprehensive method of recording contacts and then being able to access management information and search the data as and when required.

Q. So if a police officer has contact with a journalist, the police officer would be expected to inform the corporate communications staff of that contact and they would then do the logging onto the system?

A. That's correct, since we introduced this, yes.

Q. This is set out in recent guidance. It's under your tab 12, our page 58607. There isn't a date on it, but I think it must have been published last year, at the same time as Suffolk and Norfolk amalgamated for these purposes; would that be correct?

A. Yes, that's correct. The date for this was October 2011.

Q. Thank you. You can see in the middle of the page the third bullet point. That addresses the logging of information as well as hospitality.

A. That's correct.

Q. So is your policy merely to log the fact of contact or should one include more information?

A. Um ...

Q. Maybe it's the second bullet point which answers that.

A. Yeah. We've sought to introduce something that aims to be a step beyond where we were, ie recording nothing in a very formal way, but not creating something that is bureaucratically prohibitive, and to try and strike that middle ground, and we feel that the information as referred in that bullet point, sort of date, time, place and overall purpose of the meeting, seems to capture that in terms of what we believe's required.

Q. For the purposes of this guidance, is there any distinction between formal and informal contact with the media?

A. We've not created that distinction, no.

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<td>1</td>
<td>department is to provide support to those individuals,</td>
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<td>timely information, which is the matter we've addressed,</td>
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<td>and the corporate communications department has people</td>
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<td>contacted by the media. More commonly, it's the other</td>
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<td>A. Yes.</td>
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<td>way around, that the media officer will actually be the</td>
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<td>Q. Question 18. This deals with hospitality. It's under</td>
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<td>interface that arranges the contact with the officer and</td>
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<td>tab 11, the professional standards handbook. It starts</td>
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<td>then provides support for the interview.</td>
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<td>lays out a series of standards which applies generally,</td>
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<td>by a number of reporters is: &quot;Oh, if police officers</td>
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<td>not just to contacts with the media; is that correct?</td>
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<td>have to write down they've spoken to us, it will all dry</td>
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<td>A. That is correct.</td>
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<td>Q. I had marked one provision which is relevant. Just bear</td>
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<td>it's clause 10, page 58671. You're setting out here</td>
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<td>a series of general principles, really, of ethics and</td>
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<td>A. I've not, and I went and visited our team last week to</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>appropriate conduct, which would apply to hospitality</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>flick through a few records and have a look what was</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>generally as well as the media in particular; would you</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>there. I guess my bigger concern is ensuring police</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>agree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>officers continue to notify the contacts. That's where</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>A. Yes, that's correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I think the weakest link in this process is, not so much</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Q. The first principle: it must be capable of being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>the content. In practical terms, it's a short email</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>justified on the public interest. It should be of</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>that can then be cut and pasted into the Solcara</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>a scale appropriate to the occasion. Individuals must</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Spotlight system. So it's -- my sense is that providing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>consider carefully offers of hospitality where any</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>the onus is not to create massive amounts of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>suggestion of improper influence is possible. Then</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>information, the basis of the spirit of what we created</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>here seems to not be too onerous.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;The extent and location of the hospitality should</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But you've not detected a reluctance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>determine the degree to which an offer of hospitality is</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>on the part of your officers to have this sort of</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>acceptable. A practical test is whether the hospitality</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>contact with the press?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>offered could or would be reciprocated by the Suffolk</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>A. No, and I think there's an acceptance that -- the mere</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Constabulary.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>fact of this Inquiry, that may be things need to change,</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Then there are three further principles on the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>and I think against that backdorp, our officers seem to</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>page. These are all very sensible and quite pithily</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>be working with it and following the spirit of what is</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>expressed rules of thumb which your officers can readily</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>intended.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>understand and apply?</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, we'll be able to hear later on</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>A. That's correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>in the morning what your oppos think about that. Right.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Q. Thank you. It gives some hospitality registers. Is</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>MR JAY: Thank you. Back to your statement, please. I'm</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>that ever audited or monitored?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>going to move forward to paragraph 17, page 58741. The</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>A. There are two registers. There's one for chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>question was: what do the media seek from such contact</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>officers, which is maintained within our own office by</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>with your personnel? Your answer is based on this</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>our own executive services, and then there is a second</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>premise, really: that the local media and the police are</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>one, which is for the rest of the force, which is</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>deeply embedded in the same community with the same</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>maintained by the professional standards department, who</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>concerns.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>maintain oversight of that. There's no significant</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>A. That's absolutely correct, yes.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>oversight of the chief officers' register, and that's</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Q. So from that perspective you're following the same</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>a matter of discussion between myself and the Police</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>objectives, aren't you?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Authority, as it's clearly a gap.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>A. We share a lot of very similar objectives, yes.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Q. You refer in question 25, bottom of page 58744, to the</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Q. The basic point is that apart from the provision of</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>fact that current policies and procedures have been</td>
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6 (Pages 21 to 24)
adequate for the constabulary to date but are definitely capable of improvement. Then you bring in on the next page the HMIC report of December 2011, "Without fear or favour", which we have looked at. What is the basic point which you feel might need to be addressed in your force, Mr Ash?

A. Well, the "Without fear or favour" report offered a checklist in one of its appendices that we're using as a reference to health check ourselves, but the sort of areas where, quite obviously, we need to make some judgments is -- the document you were referring to there was dated 2005, and we're in the process of updating that. We're also looking to get our hospitality register onto an electronic register and ensure that that's properly promoted and that the oversight arrangements are robust.

Q. Your deputy chief constable is chairing a working group, which is looking at the December 2011 report in general, isn't he?

A. That's correct.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is there a risk that different forces are going to be inventing the same wheel all around the country?

A. There is a possibility, I think, and -- but I sort of sense, speaking to colleagues, there is a degree of --

Page 26

certainly there's been the Filkin report, there's been the HMI, there is your Inquiry and I think there is a sort of sense in the service that at some point that needs bringing together into something that's composite, and I think the HMI accurately makes the point that national consistency is an issue, and I think in a lot of the matters we're talking about here today, I think something that brought a greater degree of consistency nationally would be very beneficial.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is there a risk that different forces are going to be inventing the same wheel all around the country?

A. That's correct.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Presumably it's in the misguided point which you feel might need to be addressed in your force, you suspect that the leaks were most likely passing hands?

A. Yes.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It is an issue as you indicated, and they were pleased to lend their support to this message, and whilst leaking information in itself is unacceptable, this was having a consequential knock-on to many of their members, who were subject to the organisation change that was going through proper human resource consultation processes, and therefore being adversely jeopardised by the leak of information.

A. That's correct.

Q. You were supported by the chair of the Suffolk Police Federation and, I think, by Unison, weren't you?

A. Yes, that's correct. I invited them in, discussed the situation that is outlined as you indicated, and they were pleased to lend their support to this message, and whilst leaking information in itself is unacceptable, this was having a consequential knock-on to many of their members, who were subject to the organisation change that was going through proper human resource consultation processes, and therefore being adversely jeopardised by the leak of information.

Q. The Final paragraph of your message on page 58645 reminded everyone in your organisation of their duty to report corrupt, dishonest or unethical behaviour by officers or staff as a matter of to professional standards. So it wasn't, as it were, stifling the dissemination of all information, but you're making it clear it should be disseminated to the right body, namely professional standards within the force, and not the media more widely; is that correct?

A. Yes, I think the point I'm making there is people need to know that if it were proven, there would be a consequence.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Eventually, insofar as it's possible to discern one -- certainly in terms of budget cuts within your force, you suspect that the leaks were most likely to have come from disgruntled officers and staff affected by the proposals. So it's no question of money passing hands?

A. No, that's certainly my strong belief, as you described.

Q. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Presumably it's in the misguided belief that it will help?

A. Yes. Yes, and along with all chief constables, we're having to make some very tough decisions as the size of our workforce is shrinking, and consequently people, as you say, are misguidedly questioning some of the choices we're having to make, and, as you say, hoping that it...
MR JAY: Question 43 now, bottom of page 58753, and then over to the next page. You were asked to provide your current impression of the culture within your constabulary in relation to its dealings with the press. You refer to the merger of your department with the corporate communications department of Norfolk to create one composite department, and that, in your view, is working satisfactorily; is that correct?

A. It is working satisfactorily, but it's a considerably smaller department than the previously existed and pressures are evident in terms of it's a considerably smaller department than the composite of the previous two.

Q. Do you believe that the corporate communications department is putting out, as it were, a party line -- in other words, an extremely positive gloss on everything you do -- or do you feel it sort of takes the rough with the smooth?

A. I think we are all of the view we take the rough with the smooth, but my overriding objective is to create trust and confidence in the policing in Suffolk. Clearly, I want to promote all that is good, but as we all know, occasionally things don't go according to plan and we need to sometimes apologise, sometimes give an explanation, and I think that's equally important that the people of Suffolk see and hear that as well.

Q. In terms of moving forward -- this is question 44, page 58755 -- you make it clear there's no room for complacency:

"We must continue to create an environment in which positive and appropriate relationships can flourish."

And you highlight six points, really, which will continue to foster the good.

A. That's correct.

Q. These are a mixture of ethical and pragmatic points which one would hope to see in any police force; would you agree?

A. That's correct.

Q. Can I ask you please now: the Freedom of Information Act issue, what was your concern? Why did you include it in your statement?

A. The reason I included it is because at a time when there is a pressure from government to keep as many police resources on the front line as possible, at the same time as taking significant sums of money out of our organisations, this is one area that is a growth area of business, and in terms of my own force, which, as you rightly said earlier, is a small force, requests from the media through freedom of information equates to over one request every working day, when taken throughout the year, and that some of these requests are not simply responded to but require very careful thought and research, and it was just to highlight, against the backdrop we're dealing with: this is a growth area of our work.

Q. There are two other points, Mr Ash. I believe you're in a position to comment at least on some of the evidence we heard last week from Mr Harrison, who was the ex-SOCA officer who was in Ipswich and its environs in November/December of 2006.

A. That's correct.

Q. What, if anything, have you ascertained which might assist the Inquiry?

A. I think the first point to make is I'm probably not your best witness, because obviously I wasn't Chief Constable at the time, but having made enquiries over the last week, I've not been able to find any information to support the first assertion, namely that the News of the World were deploying surveillance teams against police surveillance teams who were following suspects.

On the second assertion, that a newspaper picked up a suspect and took them to a hotel and interviewed them whilst they were under police surveillance, I have been able to find information to support that.

Q. In terms of the News of the World, which was the first allegation, have you seen any evidence or information which might contradict what Mr Harrison said?

A. No, I haven't.

Q. I'm asking to put to you this general question, Mr Ash: do you believe it can ever be in the public interest to lie to a journalist, for example, when the truth might frustrate an arrest or hinder a criminal investigation?

A. I wouldn't normally advocate lying. It doesn't strike me as usually the best course of action, so my sort of initial response to that is: no.

Q. The answer may be you wouldn't necessarily provide all relevant information but the information you would provide, although limited, would not be misleading; is that, broadly speaking, along the right lines?

A. That would be a far more eloquent way of putting it, yes.

MR JAY: Okay. Mr Ash, thank you very much.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just before you go, having heard what Mr Desmond Browne had to say last week, I'd just like to investigate a bit further what your enquiries have revealed. Do I gather that they revealed that reporters did collect somebody who was a suspect and who was under police surveillance and take him somewhere to interview him? That's the position?
A. Yes.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You're not going so far as to say they tried to throw off surveillance?

A. I'm not in a position to say that, no.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: It's just that was one of the things that Mr Browne was keen to deal with, I think.

A. All right, Mr Ash, thank you very much indeed. You will appreciate, of course, that one of the reasons that Suffolk was chosen as a force to come to the Inquiry as opposed to the others is that you've had the experience of being the subject of intense media focus because of the particular offence, albeit committed before you took over, on your patch.

A. Yes.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is there anything that you would like to say about the differences between the local and the national media that you have learnt arising from that experience? If not you, then we can ask your colleague who is due to come, but I just want to give you the chance to say anything that you wanted to say about that.

A. Well, I think the only thing I would say is it was quite obvious that, having spoken to people that were involved with that, there was a need -- in terms of the volume of media that attended and the thirst for information, it was at the hub of a very effective media operation.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is there anything that you would like to say about the differences between the local and the national media that you have learnt arising from that experience? If not you, then we can ask your colleague who is due to come, but I just want to give you the chance to say anything that you wanted to say about that.

A. Yes, I suppose I do, because it's very clear that the force came out of it very well in terms of the procedures they adopted. I know you'll be hearing evidence from previous Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull, who I think was at the heart of that and who is due to come, but I just want to give you the chance to say anything that you wanted to say about that.

A. I'm Anne Elizabeth Campbell.

Q. Can I ask you, please, about APCOM. Since when have you been in public relations and media strategy generally?

A. That's correct.

Q. Before then, you enjoyed a career in journalism and then in public relations and media strategy generally?

A. That's correct.

Q. Can I ask you, please, about APCOM. Since when have you been the chair of APCOM?

A. I took over as chair in November 2009 and have been chair since.

Q. For those who don't know -- and there will be many -- about some of the international investigations where our force came out of it very well in terms of the procedures they adopted. I know you'll be hearing evidence from previous Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull, who I think was at the heart of that and who is due to come, but I just want to give you the chance to say anything that you wanted to say about that.

A. Okay. APCOM is the Association of Police Communicators, and is a representative body seeking to represent all those that hold communication roles for the Police Service, primarily forces but not exclusively so. A number of police organisations, their communications staff are also members. So currently we have getting on approaching 400 members.

Q. Does that include, Ms Campbell, members from the DPA in the Metropolitan Police?

A. Yes, it does. In fact, because of the numbers involved, there's a sizeable number of memberships from the Metropolitan Police.

Q. In your position of oversight, as it were, do you see any broad differences between the regional forces on the one hand and the challenges they face, and the Metropolitan Police Service on the other hand?

A. Yes, I suppose I do, because it's very clear that the London-based force is dealing with all the national issues. It has a unique place in not just the investigations but the issues it covers, because of course it carries out investigations on behalf of a number of the other forces as well, and I'm thinking about some of the international investigations where our...
people have -- there's been cause to send people abroad to investigate. That tends to be the remit of the Met. So the Met's local media, if you like, are the national media, whereas for most other forces it's very much a local and regional media. So the Met is very different for a number of reasons.

Q. In terms of the challenges the Met faces vis-a-vis the challenges the regional forces face, are you able to help with that? I mean, that would involve making, I suppose, a generalised statement about what the regional press do as compared with the national press?

A. Yes. I'm not best qualified to speak on that, because of course I've not worked for the Met. I have worked alongside the Met on a number of special operations, but I've not been part of their team. My comments would only be as a result of what I've observed.

Q. Well, that's a tactful answer, but is there anything you might want to say?

A. What I would say is my colleagues in the Met DPA, they certainly follow similar standards of corporate communications practice, so although they're dealing with certainly much more, shall we say -- often more newsworthy issues, and more sensitive, controversial issues, the methods that they're employing are very similar to the rest of us, and in fact -- you've already Chapter 3

previously asked Mr Ash about the Spotlight system. I'm aware that that system has been in the Met for some time. So there are certainly similarities in the way that we communicators go about our business.

Q. The Spotlight system, that's been scribed as Solcara. Is it the same system?

A. It is the same system. It's had a number of titles. In fact, I gather the company now has another name, Vuelio, but Solcara/Spotlight, it's basically a piece of software that allows us to manage contacts, a bit like a customer relation management system, if that's not too much jargon.

Q. No. Now, first of all, Ms Campbell, I'm going to ask you to deal with your evidence in your capacity as head of corporate communications for Norfolk and Suffolk -- primarily Suffolk, but it won't make much difference because principles doubtless are identical -- and then we'll look at APCOM in your second statement of claim. In line with other colleagues in comparable positions, you report directly to the deputy Chief Constable; is that right?

A. That's correct, yes.

Q. Do you know what the reason for that is?

A. The reason is to have a direct line to the chief officers in order to advise at the highest strategic level and to ensure that the advice is -- best advice is received. That would be why I would think I report direct to ACPO.

Q. Under questions 4 and 5 of your first statement, our pages 13747, you explain that culture within the constabulary is one of encouragement of officers and staff to proactively use the news media to inform the public. It's really the role of the press office, though, in relation to that. Is the expectation that officers should always contact the press office before speaking to a journalist?

A. I think it very much depends what the issue is and what level enquiry is being made. I draw a distinction between the different roles of police officers. There are many. In fact, I would say policing is a very complex situation to deal with from a communications point of view. So there is absolutely no doubt there is, I think, one of encouragement of officers and staff at all levels to interact with the media, where it is appropriate to do so. So, for instance, in our Safer Neighbourhood teams, there's very much a drive for those teams to get closer to the public, to the people that they serve, by having street briefings, various localised campaigns.

Now, in order for them to be effective, those...
it would make sense, and often is the case, that they work very closely with the coms team to work out the lines to take and find the areas where we could actually be proactive with the media. I think, if I may say, most of the staff in corporate communications are coming from a point of view where they want to facilitate communication with the media in order to help reach the public.

Q. Can I ask you, though, about the last sentence of question 5. This is in the context of a broad question which enquired whether the press office has a gatekeeper function. You say:

"Rather than control the flow of information to the media, I would say they [that's your office] edit the flow of information to the media."

What's the difference, though, between controlling the flow of information and editing the flow of information?

A. I think the former has a negative context, whereas what I'm saying -- what I'm suggesting there is that there is many, many issues, crimes and areas to speak to the media on, and actually our task is to refine down and find the most newsworthy items that are going to be of interest to the media. So I would see it very much as a news editing role as opposed to a controlling role.

but of course if the journalists are doing their homework and want to explore some exclusive lines, then equally my team would be seeking to help them flesh out that information too.

So I do very much believe that it's very much a news editing role. It's not about controlling information; there's just far too much information swimming about the system, so we do have to exercise some judgments as to what is most appropriate, and it usually sorts itself out. What crimes have occurred, where we need help and assistance from potential witnesses, clearly we would be seeking to look after those issues first.

Then, of course, the more proactive side. I've mentioned campaigns where we're seeking to get a message across to the public, be it about drink drive, keeping valuables safe or whatever. There are many different types of story.

Q. When a journalist wants to speak directly to a police officer under the policy, of course, it's the appropriate officer who should be the point of contact. You presumably have a role in ascertaining who that appropriate officer is; is that correct?

A. Yes, that would be correct, because we would know who -- we're likely to know who's best able to speak on a particular subject and then seek to make that

interview happen, but of course, with the shift system, it may -- there may be a number of people who would be equally appropriate to speak, so we would find the most available person.

I think the public always prefer to hear from a uniformed officer or a warranted officer, rather than a support member of staff.

Q. Can I ask you, please, about question 10, page 13749. Am I right in saying that the message you're seeking to get across here is that ordinarily a police officer would be expected to speak to a member of the news team before engaging with the press, rather than going off on their own bat, as it were, and that's to ensure that the police officer doesn't start saying something which is off piste? Have I correctly understood it?

A. That's partly correct, but the reason why we would encourage officers to contact us first would be to ensure that they had the up-to-date lines to take and the latest information, so in other words, that the police officer was -- had in his or her armoury the most up-to-date information. It's not just about trying to put a particular slant about. In fact, because we're not keen to be overbearing, if an officer speaks to a member of the media first, I would then hope that he or she would then contact us afterwards to say what had occurred. The reason for that is that if something is then put out into the media that the team are not aware of, then it's likely to prompt other questions from other different types of media, and then of course we're unaware of what's been said, the context and cannot help. That tends to be a frustration for everyone then.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's rather the point that has come out over the last witnesses, that there is an anxiety to be open and for the right officer to speak to whoever is asking the question, but there can't be a free-for-all, otherwise nobody knows what's going on. Is that the point?

A. I think in part it is, because I think if we look at corporate communication best practice, then actually it is about managing communications, which is why I would say that what we do is about managing information to the benefit of the organisation and the public, and I think Mr Ash already mentioned that a lot of the issues between certainly the local and the regional and, to a degree, the national press and ourselves, they're very similar. We're both wanting to put out information in the right way.

So it's actually about managing this massive beast of information. You know, there's 50,000 crimes a year, roughly. You can't possibly hope to give information on
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<th>Page 46</th>
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<td><strong>A. Yes, that's correct.</strong></td>
<td>media contact me is because they hope I will be able to</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Is it implicit in that, if one looks at the previous</td>
<td>unlock doors and help them obtain information that may</td>
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<td><em>sentence,</em> that if senior operational officers are</td>
<td>not be easily available or access to senior officers</td>
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<td>speaking to local journalists directly, there's a risk,</td>
<td>that has previously been denied.&quot;</td>
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<td><em>because they may go off piste or whatever,</em> that the</td>
<td><strong>So the unlocking of the door will be putting them in</strong></td>
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<td><em>reputation may be harmed?</em></td>
<td><strong>contact with a senior officer where appropriate; have</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A. I'm not so worried about them going off piste, because</strong></td>
<td>I understood correctly?</td>
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<td><em>they know their business and they generally know what</em></td>
<td><strong>A. Yes, or if there's been some hiccup or block in the</strong></td>
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<td><em>they want to put out there.</em> What I would be mainly</td>
<td>system and they've not been able to get, say, a name of</td>
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<td><em>concerned about is that all members of the media are</em></td>
<td>someone who's been involved in an accident. I recall</td>
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<td><em>treated fairly and in a similar way.</em> So if we have an*</td>
<td>a recent telephone conversation with an editor who was</td>
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<td><em>officer doing his or her own thing with a particular</em></td>
<td>concerned about -- I believe it was a coroner not</td>
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<td><em>section of the media, then that's likely to be</em></td>
<td>releasing a name. In other words, it will be an issue</td>
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<td><em>a problem, because I'm then likely to get calls from</em></td>
<td>of strategy or policy that I'm likely to get involved</td>
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<td><em>other parts -- other types of media, saying, &quot;Why</em></td>
<td>in. It's unlikely to be day-to-day routine information,</td>
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<td><em>haven't you given us that information?&quot;</em></td>
<td>because hopefully we will have the systems to put that</td>
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<td><strong>So it's not actually about controlling necessarily</strong></td>
<td><strong>out there.</strong></td>
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<td><em>the content of what that officer may say, but actually</em></td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> And then hospitality. That is, again, fairly frugal.</td>
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<td><em>making sure that that information then is fairly and</em></td>
<td><strong>Question 20, there's the occasional or very occasional</strong></td>
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<td><em>freely available to everyone,</em> and that's where I think</td>
<td><strong>light lunch.</strong></td>
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<td><em>the electronic means of communication, websites,</em> have</td>
<td><strong>A. That's correct.</strong></td>
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<td><em>assisted forces greatly to improve that.</em></td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> And that's it. I think we have the receipt for that.</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Move on, please, to question 16, page 13751, what the</td>
<td><strong>Is it Delia's Canary catering?</strong></td>
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<td>media are seeking from you. You explain this:</td>
<td><strong>A. Quite possibly.</strong></td>
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<td>&quot;At my level, the reason most local and national</td>
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<td><strong>A.</strong></td>
<td><strong>idea. There was no alcohol, I can see, on the bill.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Definitely no alcohol, and what will I would say is that</strong></td>
<td><strong>A.</strong></td>
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<td><em>we take it in turns.</em> So if I'm picking up the bill on</td>
<td><strong>Definitely no alcohol, and what will I would say is that</strong></td>
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<td><em>one occasion, then the next occasion my opposite number</em></td>
<td><em>we take it in turns.</em> So if I'm picking up the bill on</td>
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<td><em>would pick up the bill. So it's done very fairly and</em></td>
<td><em>one occasion, then the next occasion my opposite number</em></td>
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<td><em>infrequently, as you've seen.</em></td>
<td><em>would pick up the bill. So it's done very fairly and</em>*</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Do you have a view about the ethics of hospitality or*</td>
<td>*<em>infrequently, as you've seen.</em></td>
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<td><em>not?</em>*</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong></td>
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<td><em>A. I do. I think there has to be caution, but I actually</em></td>
<td><em>not?</em>*</td>
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<td><em>think a lot of it falls into that area of common sense.</em></td>
<td><em>A. I do. I think there has to be caution, but I actually</em></td>
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<td><em>I mean, journalists from time immemorial -- and I used</em></td>
<td><em>think a lot of it falls into that area of common sense.</em></td>
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<td><em>to be a journalist -- are used to, I suppose, having</em></td>
<td><em>I mean, journalists from time immemorial -- and I used</em></td>
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<td><em>drinks in bars and that would be one way of chatting to</em></td>
<td><em>to be a journalist -- are used to, I suppose, having</em></td>
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<td><em>make relationships. It's probably moved on since then.</em></td>
<td><em>drinks in bars and that would be one way of chatting to</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I don't actually believe it's acceptable to purchase</em></td>
<td><em>make relationships. It's probably moved on since then.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>alcohol, but I think for low-level expenses or</em></td>
<td><em>I don't actually believe it's acceptable to purchase</em></td>
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<td><em>refreshments, then those expenses are justifiable</em></td>
<td><em>alcohol, but I think for low-level expenses or</em>*</td>
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<td><em>because it is a part and parcel of the role. How else</em></td>
<td><em>refreshments, then those expenses are justifiable</em>*</td>
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<td><em>would I be able to have fairly private conversations</em></td>
<td><em>because it is a part and parcel of the role. How else</em>*</td>
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<td><em>with senior members of the media to discuss the massive</em></td>
<td><em>would I be able to have fairly private conversations</em>*</td>
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<td><em>changes affecting the Police Service?</em>*</td>
<td><em>with senior members of the media to discuss the massive</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> You make it clear in question 27, Ms Campbell, that you</td>
<td><em>changes affecting the Police Service?</em>*</td>
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<td><em>understand and your staff understands what appropriate</em></td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> You make it clear in question 27, Ms Campbell, that you</td>
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<td><em>media contact is and is not. Do you feel that officers</em></td>
<td><em>understand and your staff understands what appropriate</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>always understand what &quot;appropriate media contact&quot;</em></td>
<td><em>media contact is and is not. Do you feel that officers</em>*</td>
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8th Floor 165 Fleet Street
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Q. Did you complain about it in this particular case or not?
A. No, I don't believe I did.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- because you're very experienced to what reaction you'll get or for some other reason?

A. In part it would be, because when we have sent follow-up statements and pointed out that our side was not properly covered, then that rarely got any coverage because then they're on to something else. So there's also a balance, that if you decide to say something else, well, then that could potentially protract the story and that could be unhelpful. So depending on the exact circumstances -- and I can't recall what they were in this one -- we would go through quite a lengthy discussion with colleagues as to what would be the best thing to do.

I'm not saying that the national media would ignore everything we would say. I'm not saying that, but sometimes you just need to understand when it's best to draw that line and then move on.

MR JAY: Yes. Leaks, now, Ms Campbell. We heard about the five inquiries which occupied Suffolk in the last five years, but from the perspective of your department, leaks are presumably a problem at all? Is that, broadly speaking, correct?

A. That is correct. It's not been an issue that's troubled us much.

Q. Do you have a view about off-the-record briefings? Not so much, again, from your department, because presumably there won't be very many of those, but from officers directly.

A. I prefer not to use the term "off the record". Again, I think the connotation is unhelpful. I think there are occasions where it's useful to have what I would call a background briefing, to give the context to help a journalist understand more of the story in order to make a decision one way or the other. I think "off the record", it's not a phrase that I personally use and it's not a phrase that you would hear in the department used by colleagues. As I say, you do occasionally do a background briefing, but those background briefings would also then be uploaded to our Spotlight system. So basically there is a record of everything, and it will be very clearly stated whether it's for publication or not for publication but for guidance.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: A background briefing that's for publication is just a media presentation?
A. It may be.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I mean, the example that we've had is where it's thought the press are going off on quite the wrong tack, and whereas you don't want to say what the right tack is, for understandable criminal justice reasons, you certainly don't want them going off on the wrong tack.

A. No, no, and I think we have a duty to make sure they're given a steer in the right direction.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But that would be a background briefing that was in the reportable?

A. That's correct, and that's how it would be recorded on the system. In other words, we'd be creating an audit trail of everything that's coming from the office as far as is possible.

MR JAY: Is that a convenient moment to break?

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, certainly. (11.29 am)

(11.35 am)

MR JAY: Ms Campbell, you were asked some questions about Operation Sumac, which relates to the murders of five women in Ipswich in December 2006, which was, of course, before your time, but you nonetheless assisted the Inquiry and provided answers. You've included in the papers the communications strategy which was adopted.

It's more two general questions about any lessons learnt from that experience. You cover this in question 48, I think. It's really the amount of time dealing with the media takes in an investigation of this nature. Is that correct?

A. Yes. I think some general lessons learned was that the team did exceptionally well, and that's been mentioned previously, and that's because they kept a drip of information and provided some very credible spokes.

That was the detective leading the inquiry, and I think an ACPO officer, Jacqui Cheer, as she was then -- I think she was Assistant Chief Constable -- and certainly I'm aware that the Guardian's witness also laid -- gave praise to the way that the media operation was handled. So I think that obviously is a benchmark of how well things can go, and my understanding was that there was no off-the-record guidance; it was all on the record and lots of it.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I suppose this comes to your national role rather than the individual role, but it is interesting that forces have to reinvent the wheel each time. When small forces get hit with enormous public interest stories, there must be room to ensure that each force has somebody who has some understanding of the

A. I'm reporting what others have told me, so I'm aware of it but not through any personal knowledge. I wasn't overly surprised.

Q. You have an interesting observation to make about the HMIC report of December 2011, which is your belief that there should be nationally agreed standards rather than a series of maybe up to 43 or 44 individual standards.

A. (Nods head)

Q. Does that belief flow from your chairmanship of APCOM or is it an observation you've come to independently?

A. I think a bit of both. I think it would be helpful to have what I would describe as some over-arching guidelines and parameters of which the local forces can have some flexibility to flex, to suit their own purposes, but within -- underneath the over-arching approach. I think that would be helpful. And then we're all, to a degree, being able to sing from the same hymn sheet.

Q. In relation to the Elizabeth Filkin report, which, of course, was directed to the Metropolitan Police Service and not nationally, you are supportive of her conclusions. It follows from that that you don't think that some of them are patronising or condescending, the epithets we've heard in this Inquiry; would you agree?

A. I thought some of the broadbrush findings of the Filkin
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| **Q.** -- News International vis-a-vis the Metropolitan Police Service.  
1 I move on now to your second statement, wearing your APCOM hat. Just a series of points, because you've covered a lot of the ground already. What are the benefits of APCOM, and particularly membership of APCOM?  
2 A. I believe they’re twofold. I think there are benefits for the organisation because it enables the organisation to have access to the most up-to-date information about most recent handling of cases and sensitivity. Also, it’s certainly been an organisational benefit in the planning of the police operations, communications-wise, for the Olympics.  
3 Then I think there are personal benefits of membership, which is around developing police staff.  
4 There are scant opportunities -- I stand corrected on that, but there are fewer opportunities for police staff to be developed than police officers, and I very much support and welcome any opportunity to do that, hence I also think the link-up with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations has been a positive step forward, because by allowing a cheaper membership for APCOM members, then members can directly access a lot of the benefits, the resources, the training and the knowledge that the CIPR, and particularly their standards, can offer.  
5 So I think the benefits are both organisationally and individually.  
6 Q. It's also a forum for the harmonisation of ideas nationally, since APCOM works closely with the ACPO communications advisory group. The idea is that you share ideas and they then disappear off into the 43 or 44 regions, but on a reasonably harmonious basis. Is that, broadly speaking, the philosophy?  
7 A. Yes. APCOM has the practitioners, if you like, that can then help shape and influence the policy.  
8 Q. Following the events of the last seven or eight months, what, if any, are the hot topics of discussion within APCOM, relevant to this Inquiry, at least?  
9 A. I think we've touched upon a number of them here.  
10 Certainly there was some renewed guidance which went out from Andy Trotter, who is chair of ACPO CAG, Communications Advisory Group. We discussed that, in fact, at a pre-meeting with the Crime Reporters Association -- they had their thoughts as well -- and also at a meeting -- I'm talking about now several months ago. Anyway, that resulted in some interim guidance, if you like, being issued by Andy Trotter, which, for Norfolk and Suffolk, we then made a version, a more user-friendly version, which was aimed at  
11 inspector level and above.  
12 I think the issues around what's required, one thing which came out of the Filkin report which has been the subject of discussion is around what we need to do, from an internal coms perspective, not just to inform members of corporate communications staff but also all officers and staff in the force as to what their -- not obligations but what is expected of them in helping to forge relationships with the media. I think that's an area which there is more work still to be done.  
13 Q. You were asked to comment on your impression of the culture within the MPS. This is question 23, page 13998. You make it clear in respect of the individuals involved:  
14 "I have the highest respect for their work and the way in which they continue to strive to achieve high standards in all they do."  
15 And that broad statement is intended to accommodate the witnesses this Inquiry has heard from; is that, broadly speaking, the point?  
16 A. My comments there are directed at my opposite numbers, if you like, working in the organisation. I'm aware that they share the values of APCOM, they've been enthusiastic members, so they've been -- we've worked together. What I'm not aware of are the pressures that  
17 15 (Pages 57 to 60) |
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<th>Q.</th>
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<td>Can I ask you, please, about questions 26 and 27. It's just the breadth of the first sentence of question 27. You say in your experience: &quot;... those who confidentially brief journalists without the knowledge of those who are charged with successfully managing media relationships are seeking to damage the organisation in the eyes of the public.&quot; I mean, that may be true in some cases, it may be true in the majority of cases, but it's not true in all cases, is it?</td>
<td>No, I'm speaking from my own experience, where we've had -- where I've had to manage situations where unhelpful information has been passed. And it's -- I describe it a bit like information through a key hole. The individual passing on the information firmly believes that he or she is correct and they probably are, but they don't have the benefit of the wider context and the other information that puts the information they've passed into proper context. That's what gives rise then to unhelpful stories, where there's only a part of the picture. I actually don't think the public interest is being best served there if they don't have the opportunity to understand the wider context.</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>A.</td>
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<td>Maybe the point is this: human nature being as it is, if someone is prepared to speak to the press confidentially or secretly, the tendency will be to put out the negative and not put any of the positive by way of balance to provide context to the story, but that is your job, maybe not to accentuate the negative and perhaps not to cover it up, but to give the whole story. Do you see your role in those terms?</td>
<td>I actually see my role exactly in those terms, and personally I've never been too concerned about people who leak information, as long as we're given the opportunity to give a balanced picture. That's where the relationship with the journalist and the media comes into play and is really important, because I will have confidence in the journalist or the editor or both to properly reflect the accurate story. So if there are a number of internal assassins, if you like, operating, I'm not going to be too concerned, as long as I'm able to give the balancing view and it's then portrayed appropriately.</td>
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<td>Q.</td>
<td>A.</td>
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<td>Do you see, though, that there's a risk in your role? I'm sure you never succumb to it, but because it's your task, to use your own words, successfully to manage media relationships, the tendency will be to only put out the positive and to suppress the negative?</td>
<td>I think on any given day, we're dealing with so many different issues. There are any number of official reports that are saying things about the organisation. We do our best to fairly and accurately reflect most of those. Of course, if, as previously been said, a previous administration was keen to improve the confidence of the public, then that means that there is quite a proactive drive in order to let the public know what kind of services they can expect, what we're doing on their behalf, but it's still only part of the picture.</td>
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<td>I think in the forces that I've worked most recently, certainly we've tried to respond to the reports that have been said about us in an appropriate way, and I think it would be for others then to say whether that was -- we were working too positively, but I would have to challenge that. I would say we were being accurate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Jay: Okay, thank you, Ms Campbell. Those were the questions I had for you.</td>
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<td>Lord Justice Leveson: Can I ask one question? You mentioned that Mr Trotter of ACPO introduced some renewed or interim guidance, which you discussed with the CRA. Now, the CRA, it has been explained to me, is open to crime reporters who operate on a national basis. You've made the point, forcibly, that the dynamics as between the national reporters and the Met may be rather different to the dynamics that exist between local reporters and local forces. Is there any organisation that represents regional newspapers which would permit you to get a view from their perspective, which may indeed be different from the perspective of the national association?</td>
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<td>A. I understand your point. I think the organisation could possibly be the Society of Editors, which represents all editors regardless of national, regional, local, whatever.</td>
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<td>Just to clarify the earlier statement, I didn't say that we discussed the potential guidance with the CRA; we discussed some of the issues that were emerging from the reports in an attempt to work alongside, but the guidance that was issued was not vetted in any way by the CRA.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lord Justice Leveson: No, I wasn't suggesting that -- even by saying you discussed it, I wasn't suggesting that you were giving them the pen to rewrite it, but I'm rather interested in the extent to which you do take into account or you can discuss what are much more likely to be issues that will affect your forces and similar</td>
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...then you've worked as a general reporter, a crime journalism, qualified as a reporter in 1998, and since started off in advertising. You then moved to a number of police officers' mobile numbers, the vast majority of which, I'm assuming, are their work numbers, and answered it on the basis only of press officers. My statement on 3 February of this year. You've signed and dated it. Is this your formal evidence to this Inquiry?

A. I absolutely agree, and I think that is an area where there is a gap, and one of the things that I've set up in a previous -- actually, in Norfolk, was a media users group, which brought together a representative selection of the local and the regional media to work with us, initially on areas of major civil incidents but also as we were then transitioning to a new model of working. So I very much believe that we do need to work not just with the media, but also with the public, and the media, to a degree, also represent the public. So I think we do need to create those fora, and that's something that I've found has worked in the past.

A. True.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You see, you point to the Society of Editors, but of course that includes the editors of all the national papers, which I don't for a moment suggest would drown out regional views, but would certainly dramatically impact upon the unvarnished view that you might get from the regional press.

A. Thank you.

MR JAY: The next witness is Mr Adwent, please.

MR COLIN ANTHONY ADWENT (sworn)

Questions by MR JAY

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.

MR JAY: Your full name, please?

A. Colin Anthony Adwent.

Q. Thank you, Mr Adwent. You provided us with a witness statement on 3 February of this year. You've signed and dated it. Is this your formal evidence to this Inquiry?

A. It is, although I would like to make one exception to it. I appear to have misunderstood question 5, in which it talks about personal mobile or home telephone numbers and answered it on the basis only of press officers. My additional to that or clarification to that is I have a number of police officers' mobile numbers, the vast majority of which, I'm assuming, are their work numbers, because they were given to me in a work context.

Q. Thank you.

A. I apologise for that.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, thank you.

MR JAY: In terms of your career and who you are, you started off in advertising. You then moved to journalism, qualified as a reporter in 1998, and since then you've worked as a general reporter, a crime reporter, a news editor, assistant editor and head of sport for both papers in Ipswich. You're currently the...
on his own behalf, but for me, I operate at a lower level. My role, if you like, is in three particular areas, I suppose. One relates to covering court cases and ensuring we cover all the important cases. Another one relates to live inquiries, so major investigations, that sort of thing, and the other aspect of that is general matters on policing within Suffolk Constabulary, such as organisational changes, et cetera. Concerns over the release of information and those types of things -- and I think this is one specific example that Mr Ash quoted today, which came to light, and -- I mean, specifically, I think that was what was being mooted within that statement, although you would have to ask that editor whether that is correct. Generally, I don't feel that there is a particular problem that affects me, having regard to that.

Q. There was the pre-arrest evidence, which was
A. Mr Harrison's evidence, and then the reporting after Mr Wright's arrest, and the letter which went out from the Chief Constable, I think. Was that something which you were concerned about? Because your paper wasn't targeted. It wasn't being suggested that there was any inappropriate reporting from your paper; it was a problem which was nationally generated.

Q. Again, I was aware of the letter that went out because my editors made us aware of the letter and stressed the need to be careful and make sure we stayed within the legal boundaries, but we believe we had done so at that point. As you say, we weren't being targeted and we carried on in the way that we had been.

Q. Thank you. In paragraph 4 of your statement, you deal with your practice. You ring all the area and corporate press offices on a daily basis as part of your job:
A. Sometimes press officers may take the initiative and call me.

Q. Is that only to put out positive news or not?
A. I wouldn't say it's only to put out positive news, in fairness to them, but I mean, they may say, as for instance, that there is a court case today that we might want to cover, for whatever reason, or that -- if there's a court case of a particular profile that has a certain importance within the community, to make sure that we're aware of it. Whether you deem that to be positive news, I don't know. On occasions, they may well contact us to say they're doing some sort of launch of an initiative, such as a burglary initiative, et cetera, and they'll be inviting us to it. Those are the type of communications that they would generally have when they come to us.

Q. You make it clear that you've been out with the police on many raids throughout the years at their invitation. What are the advantages of that?
A. Well, from my perspective, the advantage obviously is going along with the police and a photographer -- one of our photographers -- and getting what we would consider to be a good coverage of a story, being there at the outset. It also helps me forge relationships with officers. Many officers may well see me around and over the years come to understand the way I work or, you know, the type of way we deal with things. It helps break down barriers in that regard.

Obviously the advantage from the police perspective, I would imagine, is the good publicity they get out of it and the raising of awareness of whatever it is that the raid is about.

Q. Is it your practice -- and I appreciate it will be an editorial decision and not necessarily yours -- to pixellate out the faces of the persons arrested or not?
A. Yes.

Q. Off-the-record briefings, you explain that you have been offered these. The reasons vary. There's the obvious
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<td>1. case of hindering an investigation. That would be something unwitting on your part, so you're warned off it by the police.</td>
<td>1. being imparted, because there may be an air of secrecy about it --</td>
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<td>2. (Nods head)</td>
<td>2. A. Right.</td>
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<td>Q. Can I ask you to explain what you mean by this clause: &quot;... or perhaps because of a stance one of our papers may be taking.&quot;</td>
<td>Q. -- and the substance of what you're told. Is that, broadly speaking, correct?</td>
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<td>It's in question 14.</td>
<td>A. Yes. I mean, I would have to say yes is the answer to your question, because obviously I have found things out that haven't gone through the official channels and the press office.</td>
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<td>A. Yes. On occasions -- as a for instance, the example used earlier on by Mr Ash relating to, say, the timely nature of disclosure of certain information. The example that was used there would be relating to information which we felt was late in getting into the public domain, where three prisoners from a secure hospital had escaped custody.</td>
<td>Q. But presumably, without going into individual cases, your judgment is, in each instance: well, I might have obtained this information outside the authorised channels but it's nonetheless in the public interest to publish it. Is that the thought process you undertake?</td>
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<td>Now, although I'm using this as an example, I'm not suggesting this is the way we did or didn't cover it. What I'm saying is on occasions we may take a view and we may do a robust editorial about: &quot;We should have known sooner.&quot;</td>
<td>A. Yes.</td>
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<td>Now, there have been occasions where I have spoken to a senior officer who has explained to me why that information hasn't come out sooner, and therefore, rather than go off and criticise the police, then that gives us the opportunity to tailor our coverage to</td>
<td>Q. Have you found yourself at the wrong end of a leak inquiry by the Suffolk police?</td>
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<td>I must say yes. It rather depends on what the scale of what you're talking about is. Perhaps if you would clarify that, I might be able to answer it a little bit better.</td>
<td>A. I haven't been questioned by the Suffolk police in any formal context at all within the leak inquiry.</td>
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<td>Q. Well, taking it in stages, the first point is whether you know at the time that the information is unauthorised. Presumably that's a judgment you make from the nature of the way in which the information is</td>
<td>Q. Your response would be, if you were questioned: &quot;Well, I'm not going to tell you. Look at the Editors' Code; my sources are confidential.&quot; Would that be your position?</td>
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<td>subject of leaks has come up this morning, and Mr Ash has referred to five particular cases. Three of those are cases that I've been involved in, so therefore</td>
<td>A. Yes, it would be. Obviously my work relies on trust.</td>
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<td>obviously I have found things out, if you like, into the public domain.</td>
<td>I mean, if people trust me and I'm trusting them that</td>
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<td>information, which you've just talked about, but all aspects of your role as a journalist?</td>
<td>Page 74</td>
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<td>the information is correct, then I cannot break that trust, and although it's perhaps a bit glib or possibly a cliche to hide behind sort of protecting your sources, at the end of the day, I have to work to a level of trust and people have to trust in me and once trust is gone, that's it.</td>
<td>Page 76</td>
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<td>Q. Have there been circumstances where you've been in receipt of unauthorised information from the police?</td>
<td>Q. This is the point you make under question 16, I believe, isn't it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Um ... yes, but I probably ought on explain. The subject of leaks has come up this morning, and Mr Ash has referred to five particular cases. Three of those are cases that I've been involved in, so therefore</td>
<td>1. A. Yes.</td>
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| I must say yes. It rather depends on what the scale of what you're talking about is. Perhaps if you would clarify that, I might be able to answer it a little bit better. | Q. "A reputation for fairness and trustworthiness ..."
And that covers everything you do, not just when you're occasionally in receipt of confidential information, which you've just talked about, but all aspects of your role as a journalist? |
| Q. Well, taking it in stages, the first point is whether you know at the time that the information is unauthorised. Presumably that's a judgment you make from the nature of the way in which the information is | A. Yes. |
| A. It was taught -- when I trained, 15 years ago, I was taught three things, and they were taught to us as ABC: accuracy, balance and clarity. Beyond that, we were also told that people have a trust in you, not only the readers trusting that what you're saying and what you're printing is accurate, but people you are dealing with believe you are trustworthy. On and off, for 15 years, I've been dealing with police officers and hopefully over that period of time | Q. As a crime reporter. |

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I've gained a reputation as someone who can be trusted and who does their job fairly.

Q. How many times has it been -- I'm not going to ask you to give the precise number, because I'm sure you won't be able to recall -- where the police have come back to you on a story and said, "Didn't like that one very much; it was inaccurate in this respect or unfair in that respect"? Has that ever happened?

A. I can never honestly remember an occasion when that has ever happened. There may be occasions when Suffolk Constabulary don't like the story I'm doing. It's either -- I say embarrassing for them or there's information that will be going out into the public domain they wouldn't have wanted to get out there, but before every story is published, I would go to the press office and I would speak to the press officer involved and just explain what the story is and give full right of reply.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Can you see a distinction between stories which the police believe will positively hinder an investigation and stories which the police don't say that about but would prefer either didn't emerge or emerge with their full explanation?

A. I see a distinction between the two, yes.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: What would be your reaction if you were told: "Well, that's very interesting, we're not going to confirm or deny, but we are in the middle of an investigation and this really could undermine it or damage it"?

A. Then we wouldn't publish anything.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Has that happened to you?

A. Again, I can't recall specific instances, but I believe I've been asked not to print something until, you know, the investigation has moved on to a point where it can be published.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.

A. In fairness, what I always ask -- although I'm in no position to demand it, but I always ask -- is that bearing in mind I have come to them with information that they don't want to be put in the public domain, as soon as it can be published, I ask them to come back to me and tell me. In fairness, they always have done, as far as I can recall.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's entirely reasonable.

MR JAY: Part of the fairness and trustworthiness you refer to, because it works both ways, doesn't it?

A. Well, again, as I've said, each of us has our own perspective and our own agenda on things, but at the end of the day, I have to remain -- I've no wish to be in front of a judge.

Q. Okay. Do you have a view, Mr Adwent, about the issue of logging contacts between police and journalists? It's been a bit of a recurring theme in this Inquiry and the chilling effect of that. Could you help us, please?

A. I think that's entirely, really, a matter for the constabularies around the country. My personal view is I don't believe it's overly helpful. I've noticed since September, I think it was, when Mr Ash said that this new instruction had come in about logging contacts, that one or two officers seem slightly more nervous about speaking to me, but then, as I say, that is entirely a view for Suffolk Constabulary to take. If they wish to take it, I don't know a way that I can dissuade them from doing. I just feel -- and again, this is a personal view -- that it may well inhibit officers from talking to the press in certain cases, and I think when you have officers in positions of either seniority or certainly positions where they're covering quite important matters, and in some cases dealing with life or death situations, if the officers are responsible enough to be put in those positions, then surely they must have common sense enough to know what to speak to the press about, and how far, you know, they can go with speaking to the press. That's just my personal view.
| Page 81 | LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You've put your finger on the tension that would inevitably exist between the press and indeed any organisation. A. But then, you know, within my role -- maybe it's because I'm a little more experienced than possibly some of the younger reporters but I understand that, and within my role, that's why I believe it's important for myself to be able to talk to police officers of all ranks without fear or favour, if you like. I'm not looking to embarrass Suffolk Constabulary. I would hope that if people look at my stories that I've written over the years, they would see that there are very few of them that are negative towards Suffolk Constabulary and certainly as far as I'm concerned, the officers I've come across through the years, as far as I'm concerned, have acted with propriety, and I've never felt any of those officers was doing anything other than what they believed to be the right thing. MR JAY: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr Adwent. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you. You of course will appreciate, Mr Adwent, that as you yourself have said, the relationships are very different in different places. The trick is to try and find something that works for everybody and encourages the maximum openness and transparency, but doesn't go half a step too far and A. Indeed. 1. and which has involved discussion in the Inquiry. 2. MR JAY: I think you've spent your whole career in journalism, is this right, but you are currently, and you have been since 1996, the editor of the East Anglian Daily Times? A. That's correct. 3. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm sure you appreciate, Mr Hunt, that you're not here because there's any specific concern about Suffolk, but because you provide a window on a very different type of relationship which it's important that we take into account. You've also had the advantage/disadvantage of having been at the centre of an enormous story which did achieve public prominence and which has involved discussion in the Inquiry. A. It was. 4. Q. At paragraph 2 of your statement -- this is our page 00809 -- you say that the relationship with Suffolk police is generally supportive but you have one area of frustration. May I invite you, please, to develop that point? A. Yes, it's the same area which has been discussed by previous witnesses this morning, which is the time release of information from Suffolk police, which on occasions has, in my opinion, been too slow and a source of some frustration, for two reasons, really: one, in that in the event of a very public incident, it's my strongly held belief that the quicker the information can get out there, the more likely people are to remember certain incidents and therefore more useful witnesses might come forward. The second aspect is the matter of public safety, such as the incident where the three dangerous inmates from a secure mental health unit were at large locally. 5. |
MR JAY: Over the years, Mr Hunt, have you detected any change in culture in the Suffolk police, and in your relations with them?

A. No, not really. I mean, it’s been -- despite various changes in structure, I believe our relationship has been, as I say here, generally supportive, generally good. We share a number of aims in common in terms of obviously the reporting of crime, keeping that in context, the fear of crime. Suffolk is a very safe county and it’s our responsibility, the media’s responsibility, I believe, to keep that within context, so that people don’t have an undue level of fear of crime.

The only frustrations I’ve ever had with Suffolk police are the matters that I’ve just mentioned to you, which is the release of information in timely fashion.

Q. Thank you. In December 2006, the national press, as it were, descended on Ipswich in view of Operation Sumac. What the then SIO, Mr Gull, says:

"There were, at times, somewhat, I considered to be unhelpful, unjustified and unbalanced media reporting, which at best was misleading and at worst caused further anxiety and worry within the local community."

He’s referring there not to reporting from your newspaper or by your newspaper, but by some organs of the national press. Were you monitoring, as it were, what was being said about this investigation in the national press?

A. Yes, we were very aware of what the national press were reporting at the time. We obviously received all the newspapers every day, and we felt it was our responsibility, again, to keep this within context. Obviously it was a very significant unprecedented story for Suffolk, but it was part of our responsibility again to put this into some kind of context, because there was a great deal of concern within Ipswich especially and wider Suffolk about what was going on in a very fast-moving and, frankly, horrifying story. So we had to keep very balanced and very contextual in terms of our reporting.

I was aware of how the nationals were reporting it. Six years on or almost six years on, I don’t remember much detail. The only real detail I remember is the letter to which mention has been made today, from the then Chief Constable to the media, reminding of the danger of contempt and that, as I recall, was precipitated by a picture that was used on the front page of one of the national tabloids.

Q. When you refer to context and your aim to achieve balance, what was the context here? Was it that Suffolk...
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<td><strong>A. Yes, there have been occasions.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Q.</strong> How do you weigh up the public interest in that sort of case? In particular, do you take into account the fact that the source of the information is unauthorised or do you take the view: &quot;No, I've got the information, I ignore the circumstances in which it's come to me, I assess the public interest on its narrower merits&quot;?</td>
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<td><strong>Q.</strong> Yes.</td>
<td><strong>A. Yes, I would look at -- I would want to know on what basis we'd been given the story. I would want to know not the name of the person who's given us the story but the type of area from which it has come, and then I would make a decision on whether this is a valid story from the public interest perspective.</strong></td>
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<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just pause a minute, Mr Jay.</td>
<td>Just to use an example, we had a story about -- which was part of Suffolk police’s response to the need to cut costs, which was a reduction in the traffic policing unit, which came to us, and I took the judgment that this was very strongly in the public interest because of the ramifications of having fewer traffic policemen on Suffolk’s roads.</td>
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<td>I understand that the equipment has failed and I notice from the screen in the top left that it's gone off.</td>
<td>Q. You express a view in paragraph 22 of your statement, page 00813. You were asked to address the HMIC recent recent report.</td>
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<td>MR JAY: It will be done at lunchtime. It can't be done before.</td>
<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Jay, I should have assumed you knew all about it. Carry on.</td>
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<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: The HMIC report and the recommendation that contacts between journalists and police officers be recorded -- you're not the first editor to express some degree of disquiet about that but I just wanted to investigate your reasons for that disquiet.</td>
<td>MR JAY: A message was passed to me.</td>
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<td>A. As the Inquiry's heard already today, there is, on the part of some Suffolk police officers, a significant caution or degree of caution about giving information to the media, and my personal opinion is that this recommendation will make some of those people who are cautious now even more cautious about giving us what, after all, is legitimate and hopefully mutually helpful information.</td>
<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do you think that will calm down? At the moment the atmosphere, I readily recognise, is somewhat heightened.</td>
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<td><strong>A. Yes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>A. Yes.</strong></td>
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<td>LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Not least because of the work of the Inquiry, which has now been going on for some months,</td>
<td><strong>A. Yes,</strong></td>
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and somebody else says something else and then there's
another report, but if one premised the proper
relationship between the press and the police as an
couragement to be as open and transparent as possible,
to encourage police officers to speak to journalists
within the areas of their competence and to encourage
sharing rather than not sharing news, both good and bad,
do you think that once that had got out and became part
of the DNA, the reluctance of which you speak would
actually naturally diminish, so that the fact that the
centre knows what's going on would not be seen as
disincentive, or do you think I'm being rather
unrealistic?
A. I think it is obviously the fact that there is
a heightened sensitivity at the moment, and that's
a fact. I think there have always been police
officers -- I can only speak for Suffolk. There have
always, in my 33 years, been police officers who have
been reluctant to share what I view as legitimate
information for their own reasons. You've heard that
there's been some level of training for control room
staff about appropriate relationships with the press,
and I just think that this recommendation, when
enshrined, will be a step backwards for a number of
people who are concerned that by talking to the press

they might in some way get themselves into trouble.

"We want to encourage it. It's part of your job to
engage with the press. That's part of the important
responsibility of modern-day policing."
A. Mm.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So even in that context, you think
some people would be concerned?
A. I think so, yes.

MR JAY: Would the chilling effect, to use that term, be
much greater, though, in relation to the flow of
unauthorised information as opposed to authorised
information?
A. I don't think it would have an impact on unauthorised
information, because that would be -- you wouldn't
expect a police officer who is releasing unauthorised
information to then voluntarily put himself on the
register, would you? I don't think that's realistic.
MR JAY: No. Mr Hunt, those were all the questions I have
for you.
A. Okay.
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1. wishes.
2. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That example is a very, very good one, because the prosecuting authorities will very frequently, if not inevitably, not want to alert a cold case, perhaps a reinvestigation following acquittal and an application to the Court of Appeal criminal division to permit a further prosecution. They'd want to keep that very quiet until the whole judicial process had got rolling.

A. Yes.
3. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: So that's a very good example.

A. Yes.
4. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But if one puts that to one side and looks at information that perhaps identifies a problem that doesn't portray the police in the very best light, if the view is that police officers are entitled to speak within their area of competence across the range -- so neighbourhood policemen will speak about what's going on in their neighbourhood: "Yes, there were three burglaries in that street, so everybody should keep an eye out", whether they do it through you or through Twitter or any of the other mechanisms that are today available, I'm just struggling to see why, if the Chief Constable has said, "This is a good idea to engage in this way", why there should be that concern.

A. I think there's a distinction, isn't there, between -- I can't speak for Mr Ash, obviously.
5. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No.
6. A. -- but this is my perception, in that there has been an encouragement for local policemen to talk about local issues which they're dealing with and tackling within their community, but there's a distinction between that and someone within the organisation who chooses to tell the media, whether it be us or whoever, about something which Suffolk police -- it might be an organisational matter, you know, restructure, redundancies -- who chooses to tell us about those kind of issues at a point when that information is not -- or the organisation doesn't want that information to be in the public domain. And that's -- there's a distinction.
7. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's quite a good example of something that is not being authorised, not because it's necessarily damaging to public/police relations in the way in which they detect crime, but because they're having to cope with management issues which are sensitive and complex, and we saw that example --

A. Yes.
8. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- where a combination of the Chief Constable, the federation, the superintendent and the union all -- I don't know if you've seen the letter -- said to officers --

A. No.
9. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: "We don't want this to be discussed because it is sensitive." Well, that went to the officers.

A. Mm.
10. LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I suppose if you would always, every single time, say, "We're going to go to the police to stand up to the story or to ask for their comment", then it may not matter, but if somebody less responsible than you were simply to put that information to the newspaper without providing the context, that might itself create just as much damage as another type of story which you wouldn't dream of publishing. Do you see the point?

A. Yes, I do. We would always -- as Mr Adwent said, if we're given the information from an unauthorised source, we would then go to Suffolk police to say, "We've been told this; is this the case?" And we may then have a conversation where they say, "Well, it is, but it's a slightly slanted view of life or this issue, and here's our view", and then we take a judgment in terms of what's the fair and balanced way to present that information to the public.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. The problem, of course, as I'm sure you appreciate, is that if everybody took that view of life and that view of balance and sensible reportage, we may not be where we are today.

A. Well, I mean, my job is to get the most accurate, balanced information to my readers and that's all about trust.

LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. I think that's a very convenient place at which to stop. Mr Hunt, thank you very much indeed for coming.

(12.58 pm)
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Merrill Corporation
(+44) 207 404 1400
www.merrillcorp/MLS.com
8th Floor 165 Fleet Street
London EC4A 2DY
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(+44) 207 404 1400 8th Floor 165 Fleet Street London EC4A 2DY