

<p>1 Friday, 11 May 2012</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, Mr Jay.</p> <p>4 MR JAY: Sir, the witness today is Mrs Rebekah Brooks,</p> <p>5 please.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.</p> <p>7 MRS REBEKAH MARY BROOKS (sworn)</p> <p>8 Questions by MR JAY</p> <p>9 MR JAY: Your full name, please, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>10 A. Rebekah Mary Brooks.</p> <p>11 Q. May I ask you, please, to look at the large file in</p> <p>12 front of you and identify the two witness statements you</p> <p>13 have provided us with. The first is under tab 1,</p> <p>14 a statement dated 14 October of last year, and secondly</p> <p>15 under tab 2, a statement dated 2 May of this year. The</p> <p>16 principal focus today will be on the second statement,</p> <p>17 but are you content to confirm the truth of both</p> <p>18 statements?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. I'll attempt a timeline of your career, Mrs Brooks.</p> <p>21 Tell me if I make any mistakes. You joined</p> <p>22 News International on the Sunday magazine of the News of</p> <p>23 the World in 1989; is that right?</p> <p>24 A. That's right.</p> <p>25 Q. In 1995 you were appointed deputy editor of the News of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 A. Thank you, sir.</p> <p>2 MR JAY: The other constraints which are borne upon you may</p> <p>3 relate to documents, including emails and texts, or more</p> <p>4 particularly their absence. Would you please look at</p> <p>5 paragraph 30 of your second witness statement, which is</p> <p>6 our page 02577.</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. You make it clear there that you have had reference to</p> <p>9 a diary which was kept by your former PA. May we be</p> <p>10 clear what sort of diary we're talking about? Is it an</p> <p>11 ordinary desk diary or is it an Alastair Campbell-type</p> <p>12 diary?</p> <p>13 A. No, it's definitely not an Alastair Campbell diary.</p> <p>14 It's my PA's old desk diaries, so the appointments in</p> <p>15 there are not the complete picture and it's difficult to</p> <p>16 know whether actually some of the meetings took place.</p> <p>17 So I've done my best to give you a schedule but it's</p> <p>18 more of a flavour than precise diary.</p> <p>19 Q. There's a schedule of appointments but it's not</p> <p>20 a narrative of what was discussed on any particular</p> <p>21 occasion?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. Is that fair? At paragraph 31, Mrs Brooks, you say that</p> <p>24 since your departure from News International, you've had</p> <p>25 no access to your work emails:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 the World under Mr Hall, in 1998 appointed deputy editor</p> <p>2 of the Sun under Mr Yelland, and in May 2000, editor of</p> <p>3 the News of the World, aged 31; is that right?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, that's right.</p> <p>5 Q. Editor of the Sun, January, I think, 2003.</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. CEO of News International -- can we be clear of the</p> <p>8 dates here, because there's been some doubt about it.</p> <p>9 Was the announcement of your appointment in June 2009</p> <p>10 but you took up the job formally on 2 September 2009?</p> <p>11 A. That's correct, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Then you resigned on 17 July 2011 --</p> <p>13 A. 15th.</p> <p>14 Q. 15 July.</p> <p>15 A. (Nods head)</p> <p>16 Q. So we're completely clear about the constraints bearing</p> <p>17 on your evidence, you are under police investigation in</p> <p>18 the context of Operation Weeting, Operation Elveden and</p> <p>19 also for allegedly perverting the course of justice; is</p> <p>20 that true?</p> <p>21 A. It is.</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mrs Brooks, I'm grateful to you for</p> <p>23 the obvious care you've put into the statements that</p> <p>24 you've made, and I'm conscious of the difficulty the</p> <p>25 time must be for you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 "However, the emails and texts that were on my</p> <p>2 BlackBerry at the time I left News International were</p> <p>3 imaged and saved."</p> <p>4 So does it follow that your work email account was</p> <p>5 blocked to you in some way or did something different</p> <p>6 happen?</p> <p>7 A. No, I think it was blocked on the day I left.</p> <p>8 Q. When you say the BlackBerry emails and texts were imaged</p> <p>9 and saved, can you tell us approximately when those</p> <p>10 events occurred?</p> <p>11 A. So my BlackBerry was imaged by my legal team when it was</p> <p>12 returned from the MPS and it contained, I think, about</p> <p>13 six weeks of emails and less so of texts, but about</p> <p>14 a month of texts. But we had to image them and we had</p> <p>15 some problems with that.</p> <p>16 Q. So approximately when was your BlackBerry returned by</p> <p>17 the MPS?</p> <p>18 A. I think about three weeks later, maybe longer.</p> <p>19 Q. Can you give us a month, please, so that we --</p> <p>20 A. Oh sorry, in July.</p> <p>21 Q. 2011, obviously?</p> <p>22 A. 2011.</p> <p>23 Q. So we have, as you explain, emails and texts which only</p> <p>24 cover a limited period, from the beginning of June 2011</p> <p>25 until, you say, 17 July. Maybe 15 July or 17 July --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 A. I think it was the 17th.</p> <p>2 Q. You also confirm that there is nothing of relevance to</p> <p>3 this Inquiry in your private accounts, by which of</p> <p>4 course you're referring to private email accounts; is</p> <p>5 that right?</p> <p>6 A. That's correct.</p> <p>7 Q. Does it follow then that any emails you might have had</p> <p>8 with politicians would only have been through your NI</p> <p>9 email account?</p> <p>10 A. That's correct.</p> <p>11 Q. And any text message contact with politicians would only</p> <p>12 have been on your BlackBerry, which was a work</p> <p>13 BlackBerry?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. There was no other mobile phone?</p> <p>16 A. No.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. I've been asked to put to you this question: were</p> <p>18 there any emails or texts from either Mr Cameron or</p> <p>19 Mr Osborne on your BlackBerry at the time you left</p> <p>20 News International?</p> <p>21 A. No, although when we got the image back, there was one</p> <p>22 from Mr Cameron that was compressed, so -- in June, but</p> <p>23 there's no content in it.</p> <p>24 Q. So it's a complete mystery what, if anything, it might</p> <p>25 contain; is that right?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 sent commiserations.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. Mr Blair, did he send you one?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Probably not Mr Brown?</p> <p>5 A. No. He was probably getting the bunting out.</p> <p>6 Q. It has been reported in relation to Mr Cameron -- but</p> <p>7 who knows whether it's true -- that you received</p> <p>8 a message along the lines of: "Keep your head up." Is</p> <p>9 that true or not?</p> <p>10 A. From?</p> <p>11 Q. From Mr Cameron, indirectly. You'll have seen that in</p> <p>12 the Times.</p> <p>13 A. Yes, I did see it in the Times. Along those lines. It</p> <p>14 was more -- I don't think they were the exact words but</p> <p>15 along those lines.</p> <p>16 Q. Is the gist right, at least?</p> <p>17 A. Yes, I would say so. But it was indirect. It wasn't</p> <p>18 a direct text message.</p> <p>19 Q. Did you also receive a message from him via an</p> <p>20 intermediary along these lines:</p> <p>21 "Sorry I could not have been as loyal to you as</p> <p>22 I have been, but Ed Miliband had me on the run."</p> <p>23 Or words to that effect?</p> <p>24 A. Similar, but again, very indirectly.</p> <p>25 Q. So, broadly speaking, that message was transmitted to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Did you receive messages of commiseration or support</p> <p>3 from politicians, in July 2011 in particular?</p> <p>4 A. Some.</p> <p>5 Q. Either directly or indirectly; is that right?</p> <p>6 A. Mainly indirectly.</p> <p>7 Q. Yes. In order to get a fair picture, since if we focus</p> <p>8 on one individual alone the picture will logically be</p> <p>9 distorted, are you able to assist us with from whom you</p> <p>10 received such messages?</p> <p>11 A. I had some indirect messages from some politicians, but</p> <p>12 nothing direct.</p> <p>13 Q. The indirect ones, who were the politicians?</p> <p>14 A. A variety, really, but -- some Tories, a couple of</p> <p>15 Labour politicians. Very few Labour politicians.</p> <p>16 Q. Can we be a bit more specific, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>17 A. Sorry, I'm not trying to be evasive. I received some</p> <p>18 indirect messages from Number 10, Number 11, Home</p> <p>19 Office, Foreign Office.</p> <p>20 Q. So you're talking about secretaries of state,</p> <p>21 Prime Minister, chancellor of the Exchequer, obviously,</p> <p>22 aren't you?</p> <p>23 A. And also people who worked in those offices as well.</p> <p>24 Q. Labour politicians? How about them?</p> <p>25 A. Like I say, there were very few Labour politicians that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 you, was it?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Out of interest, do you happen to know how these</p> <p>4 messages do enter the public domain?</p> <p>5 A. We have a very strong free press, who have great access</p> <p>6 to politicians, so ...</p> <p>7 Q. We may be coming back to that, but you can't be of any</p> <p>8 more particularity than that, can you?</p> <p>9 A. Journalists doing their job.</p> <p>10 Q. Mr Cameron also said publicly:</p> <p>11 "We all got too close to News International."</p> <p>12 Or words to that effect. Was that a view he ever</p> <p>13 communicated to you personally?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Can I ask you, please, about Mr Murdoch, by way of</p> <p>16 background. We know he told the House of Lords</p> <p>17 communications committee -- this was back in 2007 when</p> <p>18 he was spoken to, I think, in New York -- that he was</p> <p>19 a traditional proprietor who exercises editorial control</p> <p>20 on major issues, like which party to back in a General</p> <p>21 Election or policy on Europe. Do you agree with that or</p> <p>22 not?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Does it apply as much to the News of the World as the</p> <p>25 Sun or does that only apply to the Sun?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

1 **A. I think Mr Murdoch is probably more interested in the**
 2 **Sun in terms of political issues, but it also applied to**
 3 **the News of the World as well when I was there.**
 4 Q. Your evidence to the self-same committee, question 1461:
 5 "I think it would be fair to say that, before any
 6 appointment, he knew me pretty well."
 7 You'd presumably stand by that, would you?
 8 **A. Well, particularly before my appointment to editor of**
 9 **the Sun.**
 10 Q. Yes, 2003, and probably in 2000 when you were appointed
 11 editor of the News of the World or not?
 12 **A. Less so.**
 13 Q. Then question 1462:
 14 "He would be aware of my views, both social views,
 15 cultural views and political views."
 16 Again, presumably you stand by that or not?
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. Then you said:
 19 "Take Europe, for example. Mr Murdoch was
 20 absolutely aware of my views on Europe. I think even
 21 before I became editor of the News of the World, maybe
 22 even deputy editor."
 23 Is that right?
 24 **A. Yes.**
 25 Q. Without delving into this in any great detail,

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1 presumably you are a Eurosceptic; correct?
 2 **A. Yes, I suppose so.**
 3 Q. And politically, your position is fairly similar to
 4 Mr Murdoch's, is it?
 5 **A. In some areas, yes.**
 6 Q. Which areas do they differ?
 7 **A. Well, we disagreed about quite a few things, more in**
 8 **margins of it rather than the principles. So, I don't**
 9 **know: the environment, DNA database, immigration, top-up**
 10 **fees, the amount of celebrity in the paper versus**
 11 **serious issues, columnists, the design, the headline,**
 12 **size, the font size, the point -- I mean, you know, we**
 13 **had a lot of disagreements, but in the main, on the big**
 14 **issues, we had similar views.**
 15 Q. Yes. So on the issue of celebrity against serious
 16 issues, where did each of you stand on that?
 17 **A. I liked more celebrity and he wanted more serious**
 18 **issues.**
 19 Q. Why did you want more celebrity?
 20 **A. Well, I liked -- I thought the readers were quite**
 21 **interested in -- you only have to look at the viewing**
 22 **figures of BBC or ITV to see that it's the celebrity**
 23 **programmes, the real life -- the reality programmes that**
 24 **do so well, and I took from those figures that our**
 25 **readers were quite interested in that. He thought there**

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1 **was too much of it, although he liked X Factor.**
 2 Q. In terms of your social and cultural views -- I'm not
 3 going to pry into that too much, but are you a strong
 4 believer in human rights and the Human Rights Act?
 5 **A. Not particularly, no. I mean, in its form. Obviously**
 6 **its existence, absolutely, but there were parts of the**
 7 **Human Rights Act that we campaigned against in the Sun**
 8 **when I was there. At one point, the Conservative Party,**
 9 **I think, were going to repeal it and replace it with**
 10 **a British bill of rights. I think that was the case,**
 11 **but I think that's now been dropped.**
 12 Q. We may come back to that issue in a more specific
 13 context.
 14 When you were appointed editor of the News of the
 15 World in 2000, was that Mr Murdoch's decision?
 16 **A. I was actually told by Les Hinton that I was going to be**
 17 **made editor of the News of the World and I didn't speak**
 18 **to Mr Murdoch until after that.**
 19 Q. But was it his decision?
 20 **A. I think it was Mr Hinton's strong recommendation and --**
 21 **like I said, I didn't speak to Mr Murdoch until I'd**
 22 **actually taken the job.**
 23 Q. There was some discussion at the seminars we had
 24 in October in relation to the departure of Mr Hall. Are
 25 you able to enlighten us as to that at all?

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1 **A. No, I'm sorry. I was at the Sun at the time.**
 2 Q. Would the editorial line you took, in particular in
 3 relation to the Sun, reflect Mr Murdoch's thinking?
 4 **A. I think, as I say in my witness statement, it really is**
 5 **important to differentiate between Mr Murdoch's**
 6 **thinking, my thinking, the political team's thinking and**
 7 **the thinking of the readers. I mean, I know I spend**
 8 **a lot of time on it in my witness statement but it's to**
 9 **get across the point that it was -- the readers' views**
 10 **were always reflected in any policy or politician or**
 11 **political party. So I know Mr Murdoch, when he gave**
 12 **evidence, he said, "If they want to know what I think,**
 13 **read the Sun editorials", but I don't think he was being**
 14 **totally literal about that.**
 15 Q. What his evidence was exactly:
 16 "If you want to judge my thinking, look at the Sun."
 17 Those were the exact words he used.
 18 **A. Yes.**
 19 Q. Whether it was an ill-guarded remark or not, it's not
 20 for me to say, but some might think it was a considered
 21 response to a question in fact from Lord Justice
 22 Leveson. You'll recall that, won't you?
 23 **A. I don't think it was ill-guarded. I'm just saying I**
 24 **don't think was literal.**
 25 Q. Why not, though?

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1 **A. Because there were lots of things in the Sun that**
 2 **wouldn't reflect his views.**
 3 Q. I think he meant on the big points, not on the minutiae.
 4 **A. Okay.**
 5 Q. Would you agree with that?
 6 **A. I accept that.**
 7 Q. At paragraph 12 of your witness statement -- I'm now on
 8 your second statement -- you give us a thumbnail sketch
 9 of what the Sun is, what it represents, what its
 10 cultural values are. It embodies an attitude, you say,
 11 rather than a particular social class, et cetera. Then
 12 you say:
 13 "It is sometimes said that the relationship between
 14 the Sun and its readers reflects the national
 15 conversation. If you wanted to know what the nation was
 16 talking about, you would look at the Sun."
 17 We have a contrast here. Some would say: if you
 18 want to know what Mr Murdoch is thinking, look at the
 19 Sun, and then you're saying: if you want to know what
 20 the nation's talking about, look at the Sun. Which is
 21 correct?
 22 **A. The one in my witness statement.**
 23 Q. Why do you say that?
 24 **A. Because I wrote it and I believe it.**
 25 Q. What do you mean by "the nation" here?
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1 **A. Well, I think if you accept that the Sun, for many, many**
 2 **years, has been the biggest-selling newspaper in the**
 3 **country and that the Saturday Sun overtook the News of**
 4 **the World, I think, about five years ago, maybe longer**
 5 **actually, in circulation terms. So you have this huge**
 6 **readership. I don't know what the exact figure is**
 7 **today, but we always used a sort of 8 million. The**
 8 **paper next to that is the Daily Mail, which is**
 9 **6 million. So I think I'm basing it on such a large**
 10 **percentage of the British population who would come in**
 11 **contact with the Sun. They might not read it every day,**
 12 **but they would come in contact with the Sun at some**
 13 **point or other.**
 14 Q. You're addressing a different point, because it assumes
 15 that the nation is monolithic or homogeneous, which it
 16 isn't. The bigger the readership is, it might be said
 17 the more diverse its views are rather than the more
 18 singular its views are. Do you see that point?
 19 **A. I do see that point, and I make it later on again in my**
 20 **witness statement, which is -- and this has been touched**
 21 **on throughout this Inquiry -- actually broadcast media**
 22 **has become more and more influential and more and more**
 23 **important over newspapers, because it's a fact that**
 24 **newspaper circulations in the printed form are**
 25 **declining. So I do accept that.**
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1 **It was meant to really say -- if -- for example, you**
 2 **know, the conversation in the pub or the conversation at**
 3 **work. So during the Manchester City/Manchester United**
 4 **clash, you know, that conversation -- the incident that**
 5 **happened there, that would be talked about in the pub**
 6 **and that's what I meant by "national conversation". It**
 7 **wasn't meant to be taken any more literally than that.**
 8 Q. A reflection then of the sort of debate which you would
 9 hear in any pub, dining room table or whatever, but not
 10 a reflection of the individual collective views of the
 11 readership. Is that a fair description?
 12 **A. No, not particularly. I think -- no.**
 13 Q. I'm really leading into paragraph 15, Mrs Brooks, and
 14 the myth, which you seek to explode, that newspaper
 15 editors or proprietors are an unelected force. Well,
 16 pausing there, that's true, isn't it?
 17 **A. I don't think it is, no.**
 18 Q. Who elects you, apart from Mr Murdoch?
 19 **A. We're not elected officials.**
 20 Q. You're saying it's a myth. But it's a truth, isn't it?
 21 Newspaper editors or appropriates are an unelected
 22 force, aren't they?
 23 **A. If you view them as that. I don't view editors as**
 24 **unelected forces.**
 25 Q. So how do you view them then?
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1 **A. Journalists.**
 2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But isn't the point you're really
 3 making in paragraph 15 not so much about the unelected
 4 force? One could talk about unelected, undemocratic,
 5 whatever, if it's relevant. It's that you are shaping
 6 and changing government policy to suit your own
 7 interests.
 8 **A. Yes.**
 9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Isn't that the myth you're really
 10 talking about?
 11 **A. That was also what I was addressing there, yes.**
 12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But there is no doubt -- or perhaps
 13 you would disagree? -- that newspaper editors and
 14 proprietors are a powerful force. They have a voice,
 15 they have a megaphone.
 16 **A. I think I understand, sir, what you're saying. I think**
 17 **what I'm trying to say is that, particularly for**
 18 **newspapers like the Sun, you have to -- your power is**
 19 **your readership. It's not an individual power. You**
 20 **know, it's a readership power and I think that's really**
 21 **important.**
 22 **I think Tony Gallagher, the editor of the Telegraph,**
 23 **said that if he fell under a bus, you know, the power of**
 24 **his office would go, and I think -- just adding to his**
 25 **point, I think at the Sun, the readers are the most**
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<p>1 powerful. It is their voice that we try and reflect, 2 their injustices, their concerns that we try and tackle, 3 their interests we try and engage in. So I just don't 4 see -- I think -- I can't remember what the question was 5 but I was more reacting to the fact that every day the 6 readers can unelect us as newspapers.</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, we've heard that several times, 8 but I think we discussed yesterday, or certainly in the 9 recent past, the extent to which editors are reactive 10 and the extent to which they can in fact lead opinion. 11 They have to reflect the overall position of their 12 readership; I understand that. They can't suddenly go 13 out on a limb when they know their readers won't follow 14 them, but they are in a position to lead opinion. Would 15 you agree with that?</p> <p>16 A. I think you can present issues to the readership, yes, 17 and that's part of being an editor.</p> <p>18 MR JAY: And you present issues with a certain spin, 19 a certain slant, don't you?</p> <p>20 A. Well, depending on the paper, yes. I mean, you can do.</p> <p>21 Q. Your paper --</p> <p>22 A. I wouldn't say "spin". I would say "attitude".</p> <p>23 Q. Or perspective then?</p> <p>24 A. Okay.</p> <p>25 Q. You mentioned that the Sun, I think, was an attitude</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 Q. How often would he speak to you when you were editor of 2 the Sun?</p> <p>3 A. Very frequently.</p> <p>4 Q. Give us an idea, Mrs Brooks.</p> <p>5 A. Well, it wasn't a sort of -- it wasn't a regular 6 pattern. Sometimes it could be every day. Sometimes, 7 if something else was going on around the world, it 8 would be less than that, but very frequently.</p> <p>9 Q. Even, evidently, when he wasn't in this country; is that 10 right?</p> <p>11 A. Mainly when he wasn't in the country, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. It's said that you had a close relationship with 13 Mr Murdoch. Various stories abound. Let's see whether 14 any of them are true. It's said that you used to swim 15 together when he was in London. Is that true?</p> <p>16 A. No, it isn't.</p> <p>17 Q. November 2005, we recall that you were arrested for 18 alleged assault on your ex-husband. You recall that, no 19 doubt?</p> <p>20 A. I do recall it, yes.</p> <p>21 Q. I think that you'd been to the 42nd birthday party of 22 Matthew Freud that evening, had you?</p> <p>23 A. I don't know if that was the birth date, but yeah, it 24 was a party, yeah.</p> <p>25 Q. So, evidently, other members of the Murdoch family would</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 rather than a particular social class, but maybe that 2 permeates all the way through.</p> <p>3 When you were editor of the News of the World -- we 4 heard evidence yesterday from Mr Coulson of the degree 5 of contact Mr Murdoch had with his editor then. Would 6 your evidence be similar to Mr Coulson's or different, 7 if I can short circuit it in that way? The amount of 8 contacts or discussions.</p> <p>9 A. What did Mr Coulson say, sorry?</p> <p>10 Q. Well, that he phoned -- it varied, but it was on 11 Saturday evenings, if at all. It might be twice 12 a month, it might be less often than that.</p> <p>13 A. I'm sure that's right at the News of the World, yes.</p> <p>14 Q. And he was interested in the big stories, was he?</p> <p>15 A. Occasionally, yeah. I mean, Mr Murdoch's contact with 16 the News of the World was much more limited than the Sun 17 or other newspapers.</p> <p>18 Q. And when you become editor of the Sun, which is 2003, 19 paragraph 256 your statement, you say you believe that 20 Mr Murdoch was instrumental in your appointment; is that 21 right?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Do you know that to be true or you believe it to be 24 true?</p> <p>25 A. I know that to be true.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 have been there, wouldn't they?</p> <p>2 A. I -- I can't remember. Not particularly, but ...</p> <p>3 Q. Mr Rupert Murdoch was there, wasn't he?</p> <p>4 A. No, he wasn't.</p> <p>5 Q. It's said that you kept him waiting for a breakfast 6 meeting the following morning. Is that bit true?</p> <p>7 A. No.</p> <p>8 Q. And that he sent a dress to the police station. Is that 9 bit true?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. So this is all fiction then?</p> <p>12 A. Completely. I don't know -- where is it from?</p> <p>13 Q. Various sources, but ...</p> <p>14 A. You need better sources, Mr Jay.</p> <p>15 Q. Well, confidential sources. They're all in the public 16 domain, actually, but I'm not expressing a view on their 17 reliability.</p> <p>18 A. I'm sorry --</p> <p>19 Q. It may be leading up to a question much later on in 20 relation to all of this.</p> <p>21 A. Okay.</p> <p>22 Q. There is evidence, though, I've seen that there was 23 a 40th birthday party for you at Mr Rupert Murdoch's 24 house. Is that correct?</p> <p>25 A. That is correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

5 (Pages 17 to 20)

<p>1 Q. Were politicians present on that occasion?</p> <p>2 A. Yes, some.</p> <p>3 Q. Mr Cameron and Mr Blair were presumably present, were</p> <p>4 they?</p> <p>5 A. It was a surprise party for me, so I'm pretty -- I know</p> <p>6 Mr Blair was there. I'm not sure if Mr Cameron was.</p> <p>7 Possibly.</p> <p>8 Q. There are all sorts of stories as to what the birthday</p> <p>9 present was, but I'm not going to ask you because it's</p> <p>10 outside the --</p> <p>11 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh, please.</p> <p>12 A. You've asked me if I've been swimming with Mr Murdoch.</p> <p>13 Please ask me about the birthday present.</p> <p>14 MR JAY: No, I won't. In 2006, you were appointed chief</p> <p>15 executive officer of News International.</p> <p>16 A. 2009.</p> <p>17 Q. 2009. Paragraph 26, pardon me. Was that Mr Murdoch's</p> <p>18 idea?</p> <p>19 A. I discussed that appointment with James and</p> <p>20 Rupert Murdoch.</p> <p>21 Q. Was it Rupert Murdoch's idea?</p> <p>22 A. I think it was more James Murdoch's idea in the</p> <p>23 beginning, but both of them, both of their ideas.</p> <p>24 Q. Why was that job of interest to you?</p> <p>25 A. I think I'd been editing the Sun for seven years by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 or Mr Murdoch, but then none of us are -- you know, we</p> <p>2 all have different shades of grey.</p> <p>3 Q. The same colour though; is that right?</p> <p>4 A. Not necessarily.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay. July 2011. Were you embarrassed when Mr Murdoch</p> <p>6 indicated that you were his priority?</p> <p>7 A. Are you referring to the -- when we -- in the street?</p> <p>8 Q. Indeed.</p> <p>9 A. I wasn't at the time, because I didn't think that's what</p> <p>10 he was saying. I -- he was being asked by many</p> <p>11 reporters lots of different questions, and I think</p> <p>12 someone said, "What's your priority", and he looked</p> <p>13 towards me and said, "This one." I took that to mean he</p> <p>14 meant as in this issue. It was only the next day when</p> <p>15 I saw how it could have also been interpreted in the</p> <p>16 papers that I realised that was the interpretation that</p> <p>17 had been put on it. So I wasn't embarrassed at the time</p> <p>18 because I didn't know that that's what he meant.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Oh.</p> <p>20 MR JAY: Your relationships with politicians. Can we go</p> <p>21 back to Mr Blair, and we'll do this chronologically.</p> <p>22 Paragraph 53 of your statement of claim. You say you</p> <p>23 met him on numerous political and social occasions and</p> <p>24 these meetings increased in frequency throughout his</p> <p>25 decade as Prime Minister. You had many formal, informal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 then, and I was interested in -- very interested, like</p> <p>2 most journalists are, in looking at the future economic</p> <p>3 models of journalism and basically how you continue to</p> <p>4 financially keep, you know, high quality journalism</p> <p>5 going, and I think the digital age and the iPad and the</p> <p>6 paywalls, they were all of interest to me and something</p> <p>7 that I was looking forward to doing.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Now, Mr Mohan was your replacement as editor and</p> <p>9 I think he was your strong recommendation; is that</p> <p>10 right?</p> <p>11 A. He was, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Why?</p> <p>13 A. He'd been my deputy for a few years, so I'd seen the</p> <p>14 paper that he'd edited in my absence, and also I'd</p> <p>15 attended a few more business management programmes in</p> <p>16 the last year of my editorship of the Sun -- a couple of</p> <p>17 modules at the LSE, some internal management</p> <p>18 programmes -- and Dominic had had much more time to edit</p> <p>19 the paper on his own, and I thought he was doing a very</p> <p>20 good job.</p> <p>21 Q. In terms of the general political perspective I've</p> <p>22 mentioned earlier, where you stood vis-a-vis Mr Murdoch,</p> <p>23 does Mr Mohan stand in more or less the same place or</p> <p>24 a different place?</p> <p>25 A. Not entirely -- Dominic is not entirely the same as I am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 and social meetings with him, "some of which I have been</p> <p>2 able to detail", and you have also spoken on the</p> <p>3 telephone on a number of issues.</p> <p>4 You're giving a picture here of contact which became</p> <p>5 very frequent; is that fair?</p> <p>6 A. I think it became more frequent when I became editor of</p> <p>7 the Sun, but that probably would go for most</p> <p>8 politicians, although obviously, as you heard from</p> <p>9 Mr Murdoch, Mr Blair flew out to a News Corp conference,</p> <p>10 I think in around 1995, and I probably met him shortly</p> <p>11 after that. So it's -- and then he obviously -- they</p> <p>12 were in power for ten years, so it's over a very long</p> <p>13 period of time.</p> <p>14 Q. I'm sure there wasn't a key moment but an important date</p> <p>15 was 2003 when you became editor of the Sun. Did you</p> <p>16 find that your contacts with politicians generally</p> <p>17 increased from that point in time?</p> <p>18 A. Yes, I would say so.</p> <p>19 Q. It's also clear that -- tell me if this is wrong -- that</p> <p>20 you became friendly with Mr Blair?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Were there text and email exchanges with him or not?</p> <p>23 A. No, he didn't have a phone or -- mobile phone, or in</p> <p>24 fact, I think, use a computer when he was</p> <p>25 Prime Minister.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 Q. So all the telephone contact is logically then only on 2 a landline, is it?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. From his perspective. You say in paragraph 54: 5 "Tony Blair, his senior cabinet, advisers and press 6 secretaries were a constant presence in my life for many 7 years."</p> <p>8 A. Mm.</p> <p>9 Q. Why do you think that was?</p> <p>10 A. I think they made sure it was, and I wasn't unique in 11 that.</p> <p>12 Q. Why do you think they made sure it was?</p> <p>13 A. I think you have to look particularly at 14 Alastair Campbell's appointment. I mean, he came from 15 being political editor of the Daily Mirror, and 16 Tony Blair's advisers put a huge store on certain 17 newspapers and I think that they made -- shall we say 18 a shift change from the John Major government into 19 trying to get as much access to the press as possible. 20 I mean, millions of books have been written about this, 21 so it's not a particularly insightful comment but 22 relevant to that question.</p> <p>23 Q. It's just like the Sun, then, reacting to its readers' 24 wishes. It's you, as an editor, reacting to the 25 politicians' wishes; is that correct?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 readers.</p> <p>2 Q. It depends if at all the line is crossed, because if 3 a friendship developed or an antipathy develops, then 4 the constant presence is in danger of being abused, 5 isn't it?</p> <p>6 A. Well, I think if a politician or a Prime Minister ever 7 put a friendship with a media executive or a media 8 company in front of his or her abilities to do their 9 professional duties properly, then that is their 10 failing, and I think if a journalist ever compromised 11 their readership or their role as a journalist through 12 friendship, then that is their failing. So I think it's 13 simply put.</p> <p>14 Q. Tony Blair and New Labour were arguably masters of spin. 15 What steps, if any, did you take to counteract that?</p> <p>16 A. First of all, I actually think that Gordon Brown and 17 Charlie Whelan were masters of spin more than Alastair 18 Campbell and Tony Blair. I don't think -- it's often 19 reported that it was Tony Blair and Alastair Campbell, 20 but I think the whole of New Labour engaged in a new 21 way, a more intense way, with the media when they came 22 to power.</p> <p>23 Q. The question was: what steps, if any, did you take to 24 counteract that?</p> <p>25 A. Well, I don't think any journalist takes a story from Page 27</p>
<p>1 A. No, not at all.</p> <p>2 Q. But the impetus on your narrative is coming from the 3 politicians, not from the press.</p> <p>4 A. I think --</p> <p>5 Q. Which is correct?</p> <p>6 A. I think the point of New Labour, if you like, embracing 7 the media in a different way was because they felt they 8 had a very big story to tell, at its best, shall we say. 9 They had a very big story to tell about the changes they 10 wanted to make or had made to the Labour Party. On the 11 press' side, me included, were journalists, and access 12 to politicians who can tell us things that we don't 13 know, explain things that are going on, tell us policy 14 that's being developed, all those things that we can 15 report back to our readers -- I mean, that's 16 a journalist's job.</p> <p>17 Q. Your job, you tell us, is to hold politicians to 18 account.</p> <p>19 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>20 Q. How can you do that if they are a constant presence?</p> <p>21 A. Well, very easily, because you can find out quite easily 22 what's going on and hold them to account for it. 23 A constant presence doesn't mean that you don't hold 24 politicians to account. I think every journalist and 25 every newspaper does that all the time on behalf of its Page 26</p>	<p>1 a politician or a line from a politician and repeats it 2 verbatim in their newspaper without checking it or 3 analysing it. I mean, the role of a journalist is not 4 to just gather information; it's also to analyse and 5 prove that information.</p> <p>6 Q. But you weren't disinterested in this, Mrs Brooks, 7 because you were on Mr Blair's side. You just made that 8 clear in the answer you gave a minute ago. Wouldn't you 9 agree?</p> <p>10 A. I think when you back a political party in the way that 11 the Sun did in 1997 -- I wasn't on the Sun then, but, 12 you know, I was a close observer -- I don't think you 13 back them wholeheartedly. In fact, I think if you look 14 at the Sun's front pages from 1997 to when Tony Blair 15 left in 2007, you would at some point be quite confused 16 that it was actually supporting that party, particularly 17 on Europe but on other issues as well.</p> <p>18 Q. On the level of personality, the clash that there was 19 between Mr Blair and Mr Brown, which you speak to in 20 your statement, you were on Mr Blair's side, weren't 21 you?</p> <p>22 A. I think that -- are you talking about the hostilities 23 between Gordon Brown and Tony Blair?</p> <p>24 Q. Yes, you were talking about it in the first sentence of 25 paragraph 61 your statement. Page 28</p>

7 (Pages 25 to 28)

<p>1 A. Right. And what was the question, sorry, Mr Jay?</p> <p>2 Q. You were on Mr Blair's side, not Mr Brown's side,</p> <p>3 weren't you?</p> <p>4 A. What I said in the statement was that in the latter</p> <p>5 years -- and again, there's been much better political</p> <p>6 commentary on this from actually many of the books</p> <p>7 you've asked me to read for this Inquiry, but in the</p> <p>8 latter years of Tony Blair's prime ministership, the</p> <p>9 hostilities between him and Gordon Brown got</p> <p>10 increasingly worse and there did become a sort of</p> <p>11 Tony Blair camp and a Gordon Brown camp, and on</p> <p>12 particular issues -- say, for example, the welfare</p> <p>13 reform bill, which I think they first tried to get</p> <p>14 through in 2004 -- hostilities between Gordon Brown and</p> <p>15 Tony Blair were such that it didn't get through that</p> <p>16 time. We tried again. It was very important for Sun</p> <p>17 readers.</p> <p>18 So you would have an insight how those hostilities</p> <p>19 were affecting the way to govern. So you would have an</p> <p>20 opinion on them.</p> <p>21 Q. But whose side were you on, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>22 A. Neither. On the side of the readers. It wasn't an</p> <p>23 automatic given that Alastair Campbell or Charlie Whelan</p> <p>24 were telling you the truth. It was our job to judge and</p> <p>25 analyse it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 sure it's true. You know, let's say 50/50. But at the</p> <p>2 end, particularly, we were on the side of Mr Blair.</p> <p>3 Q. So totally disinterestedly, in the fair interests of</p> <p>4 your readers, you maintained impartiality between them?</p> <p>5 Is that what you're trying to tell us?</p> <p>6 A. Impartialities between ... sorry?</p> <p>7 Q. Mr Brown and Mr Blair.</p> <p>8 A. I'm sorry, I don't quite -- what is the question? That</p> <p>9 I ...?</p> <p>10 Q. That in fact you didn't take either person's side? You</p> <p>11 played this with an entirely neutral bat, or however you</p> <p>12 want to put it?</p> <p>13 A. It wasn't a playground spat. They were the</p> <p>14 Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We</p> <p>15 were a newspaper who was looking after the real serious</p> <p>16 concerns of our readers, so it wasn't that we were --</p> <p>17 I would stand in one corner of the playground and</p> <p>18 Alan Rusbridger would stand on the other and it would be</p> <p>19 he was on Gordon's side and I was on Tony Blair's. It</p> <p>20 just didn't work like that. Every story, every feud,</p> <p>21 every, you know, mediation by John Prescott or Peter</p> <p>22 Mandelson at the time was analysed by the media in</p> <p>23 a just and proper way. So I just don't think you can</p> <p>24 couch it like that.</p> <p>25 Q. Is it true that in exchange for, generally speaking,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 Q. You told us you were friends with Mr Blair. Was your</p> <p>2 relationship with Mr Brown at the same level? Were you</p> <p>3 friends with him?</p> <p>4 A. I was actually friends with Sarah Brown, his amazing</p> <p>5 lady, and -- that was the friendship. So probably not.</p> <p>6 Q. So you were more friendly with Mr Blair than you were</p> <p>7 with Mr Brown, weren't you?</p> <p>8 A. By the end, yes, but not at the beginning. Actually, as</p> <p>9 Mr Murdoch said in his testimony, he had a very warm</p> <p>10 relationship with Mr Brown and I would see him --</p> <p>11 I would see Gordon Brown quite regularly too.</p> <p>12 Q. But all the commentators say -- and we make come back to</p> <p>13 this -- that in relation to this feud, you took the side</p> <p>14 of Mr Blair and not Mr Brown. Did you or didn't you?</p> <p>15 A. I think you have to say which part of the feud. There</p> <p>16 were many, many elements to the feud. For example, in</p> <p>17 the famous curry house coup, I think we did in fact take</p> <p>18 Mr Blair's side because the country hadn't been -- was</p> <p>19 almost on ice because of the hostilities and I felt an</p> <p>20 injustice on behalf of our readers because policy wasn't</p> <p>21 getting through. But not always. No, not always.</p> <p>22 Q. But most of the time, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>23 A. I think --</p> <p>24 Q. Can we agree on that that?</p> <p>25 A. I'm reluctant to agree to that because I'm not quite</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 supporting Mr Blair, the Sun would often be the first to</p> <p>2 receive scoops, or at least the stories the New Labour</p> <p>3 government and its spin doctors wished to put out?</p> <p>4 A. I'd like to think that we were the first to receive</p> <p>5 scoops, but I think that's down to Trevor Kavanagh and</p> <p>6 what a great political journalist he is and then Tom</p> <p>7 Newton Dunn, but we did get a lot of scoops.</p> <p>8 Q. They weren't fed to you, you think?</p> <p>9 A. Not all of them were particularly pleasant, so no.</p> <p>10 Q. Some of them were fed to you, though, weren't they?</p> <p>11 A. Well, Trevor and I had some good sources.</p> <p>12 Q. Those close to Mr Blair himself, those were your good</p> <p>13 sources, weren't they?</p> <p>14 A. As you said, you don't reveal your sources.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. Look at the schedule of meetings with British</p> <p>16 prime ministers, which is RMB1.</p> <p>17 A. Would you know what tab that is in, sorry?</p> <p>18 Q. Yes.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Number 3.</p> <p>20 A. Thank you.</p> <p>21 MR JAY: Tab 3. You put in a revised version so --</p> <p>22 A. Have we? Okay.</p> <p>23 Q. I think we need to be absolutely clear about this.</p> <p>24 You're not putting this forward necessarily as</p> <p>25 100 per cent complete?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 32</p>

8 (Pages 29 to 32)

<p>1 A. No.</p> <p>2 Q. Owing to the documents you've told us about, the</p> <p>3 existence only of a desk diary --</p> <p>4 A. It's not even my own desk diary, so ...</p> <p>5 Q. Some meetings may have been cancelled, some meetings may</p> <p>6 not have within included. So this should not be seen as</p> <p>7 other than indicative; is that the way you wish to put</p> <p>8 it?</p> <p>9 A. That's correct.</p> <p>10 Q. We know that from Alastair Campbell's diary that there</p> <p>11 was a dinner on 27 April 1997 -- you, your ex-husband,</p> <p>12 Mr Blair, Mr Campbell -- which was four days before the</p> <p>13 famous election of 1 May 1997. Do you recall that?</p> <p>14 A. Not particularly, but I'm sure it's correct. We were</p> <p>15 following Mr Blair's conference or last conference on</p> <p>16 education, or we were doing a big number on education in</p> <p>17 the paper. So I think it was to do with that, but</p> <p>18 I can't remember. Is it in Alastair's book? I'm</p> <p>19 sure --</p> <p>20 Q. Yes, page 733 of the first volume. Obviously you were</p> <p>21 going to be discussing what was then 99 per cent likely</p> <p>22 to happen, namely a huge victory for the Labour Party.</p> <p>23 Self-evident, isn't it?</p> <p>24 A. Well, this is 14 years ago. I know there was -- I know</p> <p>25 there was a meeting at an education rally, so it might</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 recollection of 2003 to 2007 than 1999, which is 13, 14</p> <p>2 years ago, so.</p> <p>3 Q. I was asking you about 2003 to 2007. Can you --</p> <p>4 A. Which --</p> <p>5 Q. I'm not asking you about a particular entry.</p> <p>6 A. Right.</p> <p>7 Q. I'm just asking whether a dinner with the Prime Minister</p> <p>8 in a restaurant might have been one-to-one, or would it</p> <p>9 always have been with someone else there?</p> <p>10 A. I think from in that period I, from memory, had about</p> <p>11 three dinners with Mr Blair on my own.</p> <p>12 Q. We see one dinner at the home of Matthew Freud and</p> <p>13 Elisabeth Murdoch. Again, if one reads material online,</p> <p>14 one would be led to believe that there were frequent</p> <p>15 occasions when Mr Blair went with you to the home of</p> <p>16 Mr Freud and Elisabeth Murdoch. Is that correct or not?</p> <p>17 A. No; once.</p> <p>18 Q. You can only remember one or you are sure there was only</p> <p>19 one?</p> <p>20 A. I'm sorry, I thought your question was that I took</p> <p>21 Mr Blair to the home of Matthew --</p> <p>22 Q. You were there on the same occasion. Whether you're</p> <p>23 taking him or not, I'm not sure --</p> <p>24 A. No, sorry, I will have seen Mr Blair probably much more</p> <p>25 since he left office in their company, but on occasion,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 be the same -- one and the same thing.</p> <p>2 Q. Okay. When we see an entry such as "Tony Blair lunch",</p> <p>3 does that mean just Mr Blair or can it mean "and others</p> <p>4 present as well"?</p> <p>5 A. I would say that up until quite late in my editorship of</p> <p>6 the Sun, that most of those dinners will have been</p> <p>7 attended by political editor and particularly lunches</p> <p>8 would have been -- and all prime ministers do this to</p> <p>9 newspaper groups and senior cabinet visitors, is they</p> <p>10 come into the newsroom and sit down with the editor and</p> <p>11 the most senior executives and discuss issues of the</p> <p>12 day. So I think a lot of those would have been that</p> <p>13 format.</p> <p>14 Q. Dinners in restaurants? How does that work?</p> <p>15 A. You see --</p> <p>16 Q. Just Mr Blair or other people there?</p> <p>17 A. In 1999? I doubt that very much. But again, I'm sorry,</p> <p>18 that is literally what it says in the desk diary.</p> <p>19 I have probably better notes at News International, but</p> <p>20 I --</p> <p>21 Q. It's just your memory, Mrs Brooks, particularly if you</p> <p>22 look at the period 2003 to 2007. You'll have memories</p> <p>23 not of particular events but whether other people were</p> <p>24 there on occasion or not.</p> <p>25 A. I mean, like everybody, I'll probably have a better</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 yes, he was there.</p> <p>2 Q. Informally, spontaneously? Did that ever happen?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. You say "on occasion". Can you give us a feel for the</p> <p>5 number of occasions when he was at the home of Matthew</p> <p>6 Freud and Elisabeth Murdoch when he was Prime Minister?</p> <p>7 A. I actually think quite few.</p> <p>8 Q. Quite a few?</p> <p>9 A. No, few. As in very few.</p> <p>10 Q. A handful then. Is that what you're telling us?</p> <p>11 A. Maximum, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Can we look at the elections of 1997, 2001 and 2005 as</p> <p>13 of one piece. Was the support of your newspaper,</p> <p>14 whether it be the News of the World or the Sun -- I know</p> <p>15 you weren't editor in 1997 -- the subject of prior</p> <p>16 discussion with Mr Blair or his advisers?</p> <p>17 A. I have no idea for 1997. Not in 2001 that I can</p> <p>18 remember. But in 2005, it was a very difficult time for</p> <p>19 the Labour Party, and I think -- I am pretty sure it was</p> <p>20 Michael Howard who was leader of the opposition at that</p> <p>21 time, and so the Sun newspaper, at the time under my</p> <p>22 editorship, we were very even-handed during that</p> <p>23 election process, giving both equal weight to all party</p> <p>24 policies. So I'm not sure we particularly had</p> <p>25 a conversation with the Labour Party about access --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 support.</p> <p>2 Q. In 2005, though, the Sun did support the Labour Party.</p> <p>3 That's a matter of record.</p> <p>4 A. That's right.</p> <p>5 Q. It changed, of course, in September 2009.</p> <p>6 A. Mm.</p> <p>7 Q. But the question was: was the fact of the Sun's support</p> <p>8 the subject of prior discussion with Mr Blair or his</p> <p>9 advisors?</p> <p>10 A. Not that I can remember, no. It wouldn't be -- it</p> <p>11 wouldn't be that way. In fact, I think in 2005 --</p> <p>12 again, it's very difficult. I wish I'd had some access</p> <p>13 to my notes, but I think in 2005 the Sun -- we left it</p> <p>14 right to the day, and I think we erected a sort of</p> <p>15 a Vatican-style chimney on the roof of Wapping and</p> <p>16 whatever coloured smoke -- sorry, it was funny at the</p> <p>17 time. It's clearly lost in translation now, but anyway,</p> <p>18 whatever smoke at the time came up. So we had red smoke</p> <p>19 and blue smoke.</p> <p>20 Q. You'd run out of yellow smoke? You made that note to</p> <p>21 the Select Committee.</p> <p>22 A. I'm not sure we could have found any yellow smoke at the</p> <p>23 time. We clearly would have needed it now. I think we</p> <p>24 left it to that minute. I remember being on the roof of</p> <p>25 Wapping and looking down and seeing all the press guys</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 Q. Okay. Just look at one particular article, which is</p> <p>2 tab 27 in this bundle we've prepared, which was the</p> <p>3 piece in the Sun in 2005. Do you remember this one,</p> <p>4 Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>5 A. Sorry, I'm just trying to -- yes, sorry, I have it now.</p> <p>6 Q. "Hopes dashed. News is crushing blow to Gordon Brown's</p> <p>7 chances of becoming prime minister."</p> <p>8 A. Is there a date on this?</p> <p>9 Q. No, there isn't because it's printed online.</p> <p>10 A. Right.</p> <p>11 Q. But it's printed in 2005.</p> <p>12 "Mr Blair has confided to close allies over the last</p> <p>13 two weeks that he intends to lead Labour for five more</p> <p>14 years and may even fight a fourth election."</p> <p>15 Was that piece the outcome of a conversation between</p> <p>16 you and Mr Blair?</p> <p>17 A. I think the byline will be Trevor Kavanagh, and as I --</p> <p>18 but it's not printed on here, and as I said, Trevor and</p> <p>19 I had some good sources, but I don't think it's fair to</p> <p>20 reveal who they were.</p> <p>21 Q. Well, I think you can tell me whether it was Mr Blair</p> <p>22 himself, whether he'd, as it were, planted this in the</p> <p>23 Sun with your help. Can you tell us that or not?</p> <p>24 A. I don't think I can tell you that at all.</p> <p>25 Q. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 there waiting for the colour to come out. And --</p> <p>2 I didn't see Mr Blair standing there with them, though,</p> <p>3 waiting.</p> <p>4 Q. That wasn't the question. The question was a more</p> <p>5 straightforward one: was the Sun's support the subject</p> <p>6 of prior discussion --</p> <p>7 A. No, sorry, I keep thinking -- I keep saying the same</p> <p>8 thing. No, I don't remember having a prior discussion</p> <p>9 with him about it. But I think, if I'm correct in the</p> <p>10 2005 Vatican chimney, we didn't tell anyone, until we</p> <p>11 got to the roof of Wapping, what colour was coming out.</p> <p>12 Q. Did you at least make it clear to Mr Blair and his</p> <p>13 advisers before that election which aspects of Labour</p> <p>14 Party policy would be less or more acceptable to your</p> <p>15 readers?</p> <p>16 A. There was not a particular discussion about policy but</p> <p>17 it would be fair to say that leading up to the 2005</p> <p>18 General Election, there was a huge debate on the next</p> <p>19 stage of the European constitution and the Sun, the</p> <p>20 Daily Mail and, I think, the Telegraph were all</p> <p>21 campaigning quite hard to have a referendum put in the</p> <p>22 2005 manifesto. And so, yes, that would have been</p> <p>23 subject of discussion, you know, if there were any</p> <p>24 meetings pre the 2005 -- I'm not sure if there are any,</p> <p>25 but ...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 A. Although I do remember this story, that -- I think some</p> <p>2 time in 2004 -- and this is going from memory --</p> <p>3 Gordon Brown had felt that he had come to an</p> <p>4 agreement -- I think this is in Andrew Rawnsley's book,</p> <p>5 I think -- an agreement that he would step down before</p> <p>6 the 2005 election, and at some point between that</p> <p>7 agreement in 2004, which I think was during the summer,</p> <p>8 when they all came back from recess, I think Tony Blair</p> <p>9 changed his mind and Trevor and I had heard about this</p> <p>10 and we asked everybody and we got that story.</p> <p>11 Q. It's also suggested that you passed on material,</p> <p>12 intelligence -- call it what you will -- gained from</p> <p>13 your few dinners with Gordon Brown -- you passed that on</p> <p>14 to Tony Blair. Is that true or not?</p> <p>15 A. Who suggested that, sorry?</p> <p>16 Q. It doesn't matter. In the same way as you're not</p> <p>17 telling me your source, I'm certainly not going to share</p> <p>18 mine with you. Is it true or not?</p> <p>19 A. Okay, we'll play that game all day. No, it isn't, and</p> <p>20 I think your source might be John Prescott. And it's</p> <p>21 not true.</p> <p>22 Q. Completely untrue, is it?</p> <p>23 A. Not true.</p> <p>24 Q. We can see from this schedule at RMB1 that you had much</p> <p>25 less contact with Mr Brown when he was Prime Minister</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

10 (Pages 37 to 40)

<p>1 than you had had with Mr Blair when he was 2 Prime Minister. Would you agree? 3 A. Well, he wasn't Prime Minister for very long, and in 4 2009, the Sun came out for the Tories and contact was 5 very limited after that. 6 Q. It stopped on 30 March 2009. There was a telephone 7 call, and that's the last contact you've recorded. 8 A. When, sorry? Can I just check that date? 9 Q. Yes, 30 March 2009. Do you see that one? 10 A. I can't, but anyway, I know -- I'm not sure that's true. 11 Q. Well, unless the diary is incomplete, it is true, isn't 12 it? 13 A. The diaries are very incomplete, and -- you know, I do 14 want to make this point. They are very incomplete. 15 I will have seen Gordon Brown between 30 March 2009 16 and -- I saw him at the Labour Party Conference 17 in September 2009, so -- but I -- and I remember at 18 least one occasion going to Downing Street. Again, I'm 19 sorry for these diaries that are incomplete, but they're 20 just my PA's desk diaries, so they perhaps won't have 21 everything in. 22 Q. But after 30 March 2009, the Sun was moving inexorably 23 towards supporting the Conservative Party, wasn't it? 24 A. I think the position at the Sun at the time was not an 25 overwhelming support for the Tory Party, but more that Page 41</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could I just ask about one sentence 2 in what you've just said? Let me just find it. You 3 spoke of pursuing matters "on behalf of your readers". 4 I'm just wondering what you did to discover the views of 5 your readers, save for those that communicated with you. 6 In other words, if you have millions of readers, how are 7 you identifying their views or are you reading the runes 8 of what you believed the correct approach is, supported 9 by those who are vigorous enough to correspond with you 10 and taking that forward? I'm trying the find the 11 balance here. 12 A. Yes, no, I think on Europe we -- on our European 13 campaign, which had been a long tradition at the Sun way 14 before I became editor but believed in it too -- on 15 particularly the European constitution, we had spent 16 probably since 2005 -- and the sentence that I said then 17 was in 2009 -- we were pretty sure of where our readers 18 stood on that matter. We'd had lots of polls that we'd 19 been done. We'd run petitions in the newspaper. 20 I think both the Mail and the Sun ran phone lines 21 saying, "Call in if you feel this promise should be kept 22 to about the referendum." So there was a lot of 23 feedback from the readers on that particular issue. 24 And on Afghanistan, I think it's fair, through our 25 Help for Heroes campaign, that we are considered to be Page 43</p>
<p>1 we had had a few major issues in which we had, on behalf 2 of our readers, particularly on Afghanistan, fallen out 3 with Gordon Brown's government, and I think around March 4 2009 -- it may have been a bit later -- I think that's 5 when Gordon Brown announced that the referendum that had 6 been many promised in the 2005 manifesto on the European 7 constitution, they were going to renege on that promise, 8 and again, I think it was the Mail and the Telegraph and 9 the Sun who -- particularly at the Sun, so I'll just 10 speak to the Sun -- called then for a snap election in 11 the autumn of 2009 because this referendum was 12 a hard-fought battle. The population by far wanted that 13 referendum on the European constitution, and so we had 14 fallen out with each other, but I still saw him from 15 that date. 16 Q. Again, that wasn't really the question at all. By 17 30 March 2009, the Sun was moving inexorably towards 18 supporting the Conservative Party. Is that true or not? 19 A. Sorry, I thought I had said at the beginning, in answer 20 to that question, that I don't think that was quite the 21 way I would describe it, more that we were running out 22 of ways to support Mr Brown's government. 23 Q. Moving inexorably towards withdrawing its support for 24 the Labour Party. Could we agree on that formulation? 25 A. We could. Page 42</p>	<p>1 a very pro-armed forces paper and some of the failings 2 in Afghanistan, we were getting an incredible amount of 3 feedback on, not just from the troops on the ground but 4 also from the military here. So we had a pretty good 5 idea on those issues. 6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, I've found the sentence now. 7 You said: 8 "We had a few major issues on which we had, on 9 behalf of our readers ..." 10 I'm just wondering whether you are merely a conduit 11 or whether there is a fair amount of what is 12 Rebekah Brooks and/or Trevor Kavanagh and/or some others 13 that's thrown into the mix of deciding how you're going 14 to pursue the matter. 15 A. I think every editor uses his or her own judgment in 16 putting together the paper and what stories or campaigns 17 we should follow and hopefully we get it right. But 18 that is -- it's an instinct but it's also -- and I refer 19 to it in my witness statement, and I don't know if it's 20 the same on other newspapers but we have a particular 21 close interaction with Sun readers. I mean, for the 22 last 11 years, every year I go on holiday on a £9.50 23 caravan park with Sun readers. I take all my executive 24 team. We go through their emails. The post room at the 25 Sun is sort of legendary. It's now an email room, or Page 44</p>

<p>1 inbox, but the letters that we get through them are 2 always looked at. There's a great sort of culture at 3 the Sun newsroom that the reader is always to be 4 respected. I mean, it's almost a sackable offence to be 5 rude to a reader. We get readers ringing us up asking 6 for directions if they're lost somewhere. We have quite 7 a close -- and I'm sure it's the same on other papers, 8 but I remember when I moved from the News of the World 9 to the Sun, it was one of the things that I noticed the 10 difference in.</p> <p>11 MR JAY: Can I ask you about your social circle, I hope not 12 intrusively. Is it fair to say that there was a close 13 social circle in existence here: you, Wendi Murdoch, 14 Elisabeth Murdoch, and at one stage Sarah Brown? 15 A. We all knew each other, but we didn't meet as a group 16 like that very often. In fact, I think probably once.</p> <p>17 Q. Okay. I'm doing this chronologically, so we're onto 18 Mr Cameron now.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Is that convenient just to have five 20 minutes? 21 MR JAY: Yes. 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. 23 (11.09 am) 24 (A short break) 25 (11.21 am)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 Q. Were you at all surprised? 2 A. I'd already had the -- I wasn't surprised when he 3 finally got the job because he'd called me with George 4 Osborne, but --</p> <p>5 Q. At a slightly earlier stage, when you first heard of it, 6 were you at all surprised that the Conservative Party 7 wanted to appoint Mr Coulson? 8 A. Not really. I mean, journalists are good communicators 9 and Alastair Campbell went to the Mirror. 10 Amanda Platell I think worked for William Hague, Iain 11 Duncan Smith. So there's a long history of journalists 12 going into politics, so it didn't occur to me this was 13 any different.</p> <p>14 Q. I think your answer is: you weren't surprised at all? 15 A. No.</p> <p>16 Q. The list of your meetings, which is RMB1. It's a list 17 of meetings with members or leaders of political 18 parties. Do you have that page, Mrs Brooks? 19 A. Yes, I have, yes.</p> <p>20 Q. For the meeting at Santorini, Greece, which is the 21 bottom of the first page of this list, you put an 22 asterisk by it. You say you don't have a record of this 23 meeting although you do recall meeting Mr Cameron while 24 on holiday with the Murdoch family in Santorini, Greece, 25 in 2008. That's why you've included it in the list, is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 MR JAY: Mrs Brooks, we're onto Mr Cameron now. According 2 to his biography, in 2005, you actually supported 3 Mr Liam Fox for the Conservative leadership. Is that 4 correct or not? 5 A. I don't think that is correct. I can't -- I don't think 6 the Sun came out for a particular candidate in the 7 leadership. We probably didn't support Ken Clarke 8 because of Europe, but I don't remember actually having 9 a particular line in the paper for the leadership.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. Mr Coulson is appointed Director of 11 Communications in or about May 2007. Did you have any 12 involvement in that event? 13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. Can you recall when you first got to hear about it? 15 A. Yes, I can. I think I've written it in my witness 16 statement. I heard about it from Andy Coulson after he 17 had met with George Osborne and I then was told by Andy 18 again that he'd got the job.</p> <p>19 Q. What was your reaction to that piece of news? 20 A. I probably said, "Well done."</p> <p>21 Q. That's what you said, but what was your reaction to it? 22 How did you feel about it? 23 A. Well, he'd had to resign from the News of the World and, 24 you know, he'd found another job, a good job, so as 25 a friend I was very pleased for him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 it? 2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Whose idea was it that Mr Cameron meet with the Murdochs 4 in Greece on this occasion? 5 A. I'm not sure who came up with the idea. I think it was 6 borne out of the fact that Mr Murdoch -- 7 Mr Rupert Murdoch was in Europe that summer, and 8 Mr Cameron was travelling to Europe, and I think the 9 idea came up -- but it was organised through Number 10.</p> <p>10 Q. There must have been initiatives, though, within 11 News International to make arrangements. Did you know 12 anything about those? 13 A. I knew he was coming, but I think the arrangements were 14 made through Mr Murdoch's office and Number 10.</p> <p>15 Q. Were you consulted at all in relation to those 16 arrangements? 17 A. No.</p> <p>18 Q. You were there in Greece, presumably on holiday, with 19 the Murdoch family and there was nothing more to it than 20 that; is that right? 21 A. Yes, it was for Elisabeth Murdoch's birthday.</p> <p>22 Q. And you presumably met with Mr Cameron on that occasion 23 when he was in Greece, did you? 24 A. I did, yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Do you remember how long he stayed?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 A. I think it was an afternoon and an evening. I think 2 that's all.</p> <p>3 Q. Were you witness to any of the conversations which took 4 place, or not?</p> <p>5 A. Yes, I was witness to one with him and Mr Murdoch about 6 Europe, because we were in Europe. Very general terms. 7 But then he had subsequent other conversations where 8 I wasn't around.</p> <p>9 Q. So there were a number of conversations, possibly on 10 a number of topics. Is that the picture?</p> <p>11 A. Well, it wasn't a sort of formal sit-down conversation. 12 However, the one I was witness to was a sort -- 13 I happened to be there when they were talking about 14 Europe. I was brought into the conversation because 15 they were talking about Europe.</p> <p>16 Q. Was this an occasion you were pleased about or not?</p> <p>17 A. Well, it seemed to -- it was a very cordial meeting and 18 it went well. Like I say, it lasted for either an 19 afternoon or an evening, so it wasn't particularly long.</p> <p>20 Q. Because by that point you were quite friendly with 21 Mr Cameron, weren't you?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Because we know from your list that on new year's eve 24 2008, he attended a new year's eve party at your farm, 25 didn't he? Your husband's farm.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 A. It will have done in general terms. I mean, there were 2 probably lots of other people there at the lunch, but 3 again, May 2009 -- like I say, I'm not quite sure that 4 my memory's correct, but I'm pretty sure that the 5 European constitution debate was, shall we say, at 6 large, as was Afghanistan at the time. So they may have 7 been two of the issues.</p> <p>8 Q. We know that on 9 September 2009, Mr James Murdoch told 9 Mr Cameron at a drink at the George that the Sun would 10 support the Conservative Party at the next election. 11 The headline on the front page, I think, was on 12 30 September 2009.</p> <p>13 A. Mm-hm.</p> <p>14 Q. When did you first know that that shift would take 15 place?</p> <p>16 A. To the -- to the Conservative party?</p> <p>17 Q. Yes. I've given you the date when Mr James Murdoch told 18 Mr Cameron that it would happen: 9 September 2009. When 19 did you first know that that shift would take place?</p> <p>20 A. Well, if we put aside the timing of it, I think probably 21 in the June 2009. Me and Rupert Murdoch and 22 James Murdoch had started to have discussions, because 23 I think by that stage -- and that was post the reneging 24 on the referendum, it was post a campaign for a snap 25 election, and it was -- I think one of my last front</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 A. Yes, but not at our home. It was my sister-in-law's 2 party.</p> <p>3 Q. So her home nearby; is that it?</p> <p>4 A. No, the point I was just trying to make was the Brooks 5 family had a family connection with the Camerons before 6 I came along, so I just wanted to make that distinction.</p> <p>7 Q. Is the distinction that Mr Cameron is only a friend of 8 the Brooks family, or are you accepting that Mr Cameron 9 became your friend?</p> <p>10 A. Yes. No, of course I'm accepting that.</p> <p>11 Q. Looking further down this list, 3 May 2009, lunch at the 12 home of James and Kathryn Murdoch. From that point, of 13 course, there's no evidence that you're meeting with 14 Mr Brown; is that fair? Although you did say that your 15 list may not be complete in relation to Mr Brown.</p> <p>16 A. I know my list isn't complete. I'm not sure -- I'm sure 17 Gordon Brown and Tony Blair have had to release their 18 social and formal and informal meetings, haven't they? 19 With -- and I'm pretty sure if they have, there will be 20 meetings at Downing Street with Mr Brown from that 21 period in May right up until September. I don't know 22 how many, though.</p> <p>23 Q. The topic of conversation on 3 May 2009. It's difficult 24 to remember any specific events, of course I understand, 25 but did it cover political issues?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 pages that I edited of the Sun was "Don't you know 2 there's a bloody war on?" The point of it was there 3 didn't seem to be one senior politician, including the 4 Prime Minister, who was willing to address the issues 5 the military were facing out there, and so I think that 6 was around June --</p> <p>7 Q. You're moving off the question now. The question was 8 a simple one: when did you first know? You gave me the 9 answer. It was June 2009. You kindly expanded upon it. 10 There were conversations: you, the two Murdochs and 11 Mr Kavanagh. Is that is in a nutshell?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Was any part of the discussion about who was likely to 14 win the next election?</p> <p>15 A. I think back in June, the main discussion, which is why 16 I tried to give you a little bit of background, so you 17 could understand the context, was that it was more that 18 we had lost things to support Gordon Brown's government 19 on and what did that mean. So there were very initial 20 discussions in June.</p> <p>21 Q. When those discussions coalesced into a fixed position, 22 which must have arisen by 9 September 2009 by the 23 latest, was any part of the decision based on who was 24 likely to win the next election?</p> <p>25 A. I'm not sure what the polls were at the time. It was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p>

13 (Pages 49 to 52)

<p>1 much more, in that summer, about our readership and 2 where they stood in terms of the policies that the 3 Labour government -- the bank bailout had been the year 4 before. The debt, the rising debt, so -- the recession. 5 There were lots of issues that our readers were 6 concerned about, and like I say, the main point of 7 summer was the fact that we probably hadn't written one 8 editorial in support of the Labour government for quite 9 some time. So it wasn't as clearcut as -- as the 10 question.</p> <p>11 Q. I'm not saying it was. The question was: was any part 12 of the discussion related to who was likely to win the 13 next election?</p> <p>14 A. Well, in general terms, it would have been, but not -- 15 but only a part of it, because I can't remember what the 16 polls were at the time. I think the Tories were in the 17 lead then. But polls are polls.</p> <p>18 Q. But from your perspective, if it's true that you're 19 mirroring the views of your readers, then by definition 20 you would be interested in how they were going to vote 21 at the next election. Do you see the logic of that?</p> <p>22 A. I do, and the issue with the Sun, which I think is 23 probably one of the most interesting things about its 24 readership, is the amount of floating voters. So if 25 you're a Mirror reader or a Mirror journalist, you're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 drink that you referred to that he had with 2 James Murdoch that it would happen, but absolutely not 3 on the timing.</p> <p>4 Q. Can we see how specific we can be?</p> <p>5 A. Mm-hm.</p> <p>6 Q. Was he told that it would be within the party conference 7 season?</p> <p>8 A. No. I don't think so.</p> <p>9 Q. What was he told?</p> <p>10 A. Well, I wasn't there at the drink that he had with 11 James Murdoch, but I think from -- James Murdoch's own 12 evidence is that they had a discussion, which is: "This 13 is what the Sun will probably do."</p> <p>14 The timing was a matter of discussion with me and 15 the editor of the Sun, Dominic Mohan, and the political 16 team there, and James and Rupert Murdoch. So the timing 17 conversation was not with David Cameron or his advisers.</p> <p>18 Q. So the News International team, really from the top to 19 editorial level --</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. -- with you in the middle as CEO, were responsible for 22 the timing of the decision; is that right?</p> <p>23 A. In terms of the party conference season, yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you play the major role here, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>25 A. I was certainly instrumental in it. I mean, ultimately,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 pretty much tied to Labour --</p> <p>2 Q. We know all this, Mrs Brooks.</p> <p>3 A. Yes. So I think that in the Sun the floating voters are 4 quite important. So we would do internal polls and 5 research to where our readers were changing, but the 6 overwhelming feedback from the readership at that time 7 was that they were very unhappy with the lot they had.</p> <p>8 Q. So we're back to the wider point, whether you are simply 9 the mirror of the opinion of your readers or whether you 10 have any influence at all on the formation of their 11 opinion, which may be a point I'll come back to you.</p> <p>12 If you look at the list of meetings, there's also 13 a meeting, a dinner, with David Cameron, 21 January 14 2010, again at the home of James and Kathryn Murdoch. 15 Can you remember if anyone else was present?</p> <p>16 A. I can't, I am afraid. There will have been other people 17 present, maybe people from the office. But not 18 particularly that one. I think we had one dinner where 19 there were some military chiefs there. I'm not sure if 20 that was the one.</p> <p>21 Q. At that dinner, was there any discussion as to the 22 timing of the Sun's change of support?</p> <p>23 A. No, we didn't tell anyone the timing.</p> <p>24 Q. Did Mr Cameron at any stage know the timing?</p> <p>25 A. Probably he knew it was within a period of time from the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 Rupert Murdoch's the boss, but I was instrumental in it, 2 as was Trevor Kavanagh, Tom Newton Dunn and the editor, 3 Dominic Mohan.</p> <p>4 Q. Final decision made by Rupert Murdoch, but you are the 5 driving force behind it, or not?</p> <p>6 A. No, I was instrumental rather than the driving force. 7 It was pretty collective in terms of everyone's view, 8 particularly the readership's view, but everyone's view 9 that we were going to sort of distance ourselves from 10 the Labour Party that we'd supported for many years, but 11 as in terms of the timing, it was probably quite a small 12 group.</p> <p>13 Q. And you were part of that small group?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Of course, the timing was careful inasmuch as it 16 succeeded Mr Brown's speech at that conference, didn't 17 it?</p> <p>18 A. It did.</p> <p>19 Q. And so designed, rightly or wrongly, to cause him 20 maximum political damage. Would you agree?</p> <p>21 A. Well, the discussion on the timing was this, which is it 22 would be terribly unfair at the start of a party 23 conference to say that before hearing what Mr Brown and 24 the senior cabinet ministers had to say. For all we 25 knew, they could have come up with a fantastic policy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

14 (Pages 53 to 56)

<p>1 for Sun readers, some taxation -- any -- I mean 2 anything. So I think it was unfair for us to go before. 3 Q. Are you seriously saying that Mr Brown might have said 4 something which caused you, the Sun, to change their 5 minds and go back to plan A? 6 A. No, I'm not seriously saying that. What I'm saying is 7 we felt it was unfair to cloud a party conference in 8 that way. So that was the reason for the timing not 9 being before. I think you heard from Mr Coulson 10 yesterday that the Conservative part, if they'd had 11 their way, they would have liked the endorsement at the 12 beginning of their conference. But the reason -- the 13 main -- the sole reason for -- we knew it was going to 14 be -- we absolutely were ready to do this in that party 15 conference season, but the reason for that night is 16 because Mr Brown's speech, which I can't remember how 17 long it lasted, but the key was that he spent less than 18 two minutes on Afghanistan, and we felt that was the 19 right timing in order to distance ourselves from -- 20 Q. But you must have made this decision before you heard 21 his speech. 22 A. Oh, yes. I'm not -- 23 Q. There was nothing in his speech which made a difference 24 to the timing, was there? 25 A. I was talking more about fairness rather than it was</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 Q. I mean individuals within the Labour Party as well. You 2 knew that, didn't you? 3 A. Well, yes. 4 Q. Did you sense in any way that this was the exercise of 5 power concentrated, if not in you personally, at least 6 in a small group of people within News International, 7 who of course you've named? 8 A. I think -- I don't think we ever saw it in those terms, 9 no. 10 Q. But I'm asking you to think about it now and perhaps see 11 it in those terms. 12 A. But I don't think we've ever seen it in those terms. 13 Q. Why not? 14 A. Because rightly or wrongly, I believe and have believed 15 throughout my career that I was -- my main 16 responsibility was to a readership, and that any 17 influence that we could come to bear on their behalf or 18 for their concerns was the most important thing, and 19 that's just the way it was. So I don't think we saw it 20 like that. Yes, in answer to your question, we knew 21 there would be certain individuals in the Labour Party 22 that would not be happy with that decision. 23 Q. This is a decision taken -- you've identified who took 24 it? 25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 going to affect the decision. I thought or we thought 2 it was fair not to do it at the beginning of their party 3 conference. They probably wouldn't see it like that, 4 but at the time it was thought to be the right thing. 5 Q. All these considerations, including, you say, the 6 consideration of fairness, are an indication of how 7 important this decision you were taking was. Would you 8 agree? 9 A. I think from the Sun's point of view it was an 10 incredibly important decision that the Sun made in 1997, 11 after many, many years of Tory support -- 12 Q. Please just keep to the question, Mrs Brooks. The 13 question was about this decision in 2009. 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. Don't give us ancient history. Focus on this, please. 16 A. No, but ancient history is quite important in this 17 manner because I think you're asking for an explanation. 18 So I think that it was a very important decision and we 19 did give it careful consideration after many years of 20 Labour support. 21 Q. And you knew that the decision would anger certain 22 people, didn't you? 23 A. Well, the Labour Party. 24 Q. Well, obviously, Mrs Brooks. 25 A. Well, who did you mean then?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 Q. Ultimate responsibility, Mr Rupert Murdoch. 2 Mr James Murdoch was a party to it. You were 3 instrumental, to use your term, and Mr Kavanagh was 4 there as well. Effectively it was those four people, 5 wasn't it? 6 A. And Mr Mohan, the editor. 7 Q. Yes. Was he contributing much to this debate or not? 8 A. Yes, he was. 9 Q. Five of you then, add him as well. 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. All five of you in different ways exercising 12 considerable power. Would you agree? 13 A. I think that we were -- the part of me, Mr Kavanagh and 14 Tom Newton Dunn, who was the political editor, and 15 Dominic Mohan, the journalists, I think we were all of 16 a mind that this was the right thing to do for the paper 17 and for our readership. We just didn't see it in those 18 terms, so I'm -- I'm sorry. 19 Q. You don't see the intrusion -- I'll use a different 20 word -- the dissemination of power from within a few 21 people capable of impacting on the opinions of many 22 people? You don't see that as being at least 23 a possibility? 24 A. Well, I can see how you can phrase it like that, and 25 many other critics do so too, but from your own</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

15 (Pages 57 to 60)

<p>1 perspective, the Sun newspaper has in its history always 2 done sort of quite dramatic endorsements. It's like the 3 paper. It's strong, it's punchy. It tells it as it is. 4 When you reach an opinion, it's pretty obvious. And, 5 you know, from the Vatican chimney of smoke to Kelvin's 6 "Will the last person turn out the lights?", we have had 7 a tradition and a history of being bold and dramatic in 8 our timing when it came to politics. So we just didn't 9 see it in the terms that you're couching it at, although 10 I know that critics did.</p> <p>11 Q. Mm. We know you had conversations with those close to 12 Mr Brown in relation to the decision. Before I ask you 13 about those, did you try to speak to Mr Cameron before 14 the headline went out?</p> <p>15 A. No, I didn't. I was busy.</p> <p>16 Q. Too busy to try and speak to him. Is that it?</p> <p>17 A. My main concern was to try and speak to Mr Brown.</p> <p>18 Q. Why was he a higher priority than Mr Cameron here?</p> <p>19 A. Because I felt it was the right thing to do, to speak to 20 Mr Brown before anybody else.</p> <p>21 Q. Out of what motive?</p> <p>22 A. Well, I think general courtesy, but I thought it was the 23 right thing to do, and also Mr Brown and his wife were 24 due to come to the News International party that night 25 and I wanted to get hold of them beforehand.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 A. I did have a conversation with Mr Brown, and I think it 2 was in October, rather than that night or that week.</p> <p>3 Q. So within a week of the --</p> <p>4 A. No, I think it was a few weeks after.</p> <p>5 Q. Why did it take you so long to speak to him?</p> <p>6 A. Well, I had tried to speak to him on the night, and then 7 I'd spoken to Lord Mandelson instead, and it was clear 8 that there was nothing more to say at that point.</p> <p>9 Q. Why?</p> <p>10 A. I don't think he wanted to talk to me.</p> <p>11 Q. So when you did speak to him eventually, can you 12 remember anything about that conversation?</p> <p>13 A. I do. I remember it quite clearly because it was in 14 response to -- the Sun had splashed on a letter that 15 Gordon Brown had written to a bereaved mum whose son had 16 died in Afghanistan and he had got some spelling 17 mistakes and addressed the wrong name or something, but 18 the Sun had been particularly harsh to him over it, and 19 I spoke to him either that day or the next day, I can't 20 remember.</p> <p>21 Q. What, at his instigation or yours? Can you recall?</p> <p>22 A. He rang me.</p> <p>23 Q. Can you remember anything about the conversation?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, I can, because it was -- it was quite tense.</p> <p>25 Q. Okay, so what was said then?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 Q. Did you leave a series of voicemail and text messages on 2 the mobile phones of Mr Brown and Lord Mandelson?</p> <p>3 A. I think "a series" is too strong a word. I left 4 a message for both of them, yes.</p> <p>5 Q. For Mr Brown to speak to you urgently. Was that it?</p> <p>6 A. Well, I certainly put a request earlier in the afternoon 7 to speak to him. Later in the afternoon, sorry.</p> <p>8 Q. I know you've seen Lord Mandelson's account, but he 9 eventually did speak to you, didn't he?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, he did.</p> <p>11 Q. And there's a slight difference as to, I think, one word 12 which was used, which we'd better not go into.</p> <p>13 A. What, the "chump" word?</p> <p>14 Q. Yes.</p> <p>15 A. That was what he claimed to have said, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Was he angry or not?</p> <p>17 A. Well, depending on how you heard it, "chump" could be 18 quite an offensive word. So he seemed quite angry, but 19 not surprised.</p> <p>20 Q. No, because, as you said, the tone of your coverage had 21 been unfavourable to the government for some time, 22 hadn't it?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Did you have any conversation with Mr Brown on or 25 shortly after 30 September 2009?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 A. Well, it was a private conversation, but the tone of it 2 was very aggressive and, quite rightly, he was hurt by 3 the projection and the headline that had been put on the 4 story, and I think, also quite rightly in his defence, 5 he suspected or thought that this may be a way in which 6 the Sun was going to behave, and I assured him that it 7 wasn't, that it was a mistake, the headline was too 8 harsh and this was not the way the paper was going to 9 behave.</p> <p>10 Q. But you were no longer the editor, of course, were you?</p> <p>11 A. No, but I had spoken to the editor that morning, very 12 early on, when I saw the headline, and we had discussed 13 it at length and come to that conclusion.</p> <p>14 Q. So you told Mr Mohan not to repeat that sort of thing, 15 did you?</p> <p>16 A. I thought that Mr Brown's concerns that the Sun coverage 17 was going to be a personal attack was understandable and 18 I thought that would be wrong.</p> <p>19 Q. That's what politicians fear most from the Sun, isn't 20 it; personal attack? And it's what the Sun has quite 21 often indulged in, would you agree?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. This is a one-off, is it?</p> <p>24 A. I think the fact that it resulted in such an 25 extraordinarily aggressive conversation between me and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

16 (Pages 61 to 64)

1 **Mr Brown shows that it actually doesn't happen all the**
 2 **time. I mean, I remember it very clearly for the nature**
 3 **of it and -- no, sorry, I don't accept that.**
 4 Q. But fear of personal attack from the Sun has been
 5 a factor in what politicians do or don't do. You well
 6 know that, Mrs Brooks, don't you?
 7 **A. I think that Neil Kinnock may feel that about the Sun.**
 8 **But I'm not sure that the paper has been like that for**
 9 **a while.**
 10 Q. For how long?
 11 **A. I just don't think it concentrated on the personal -- in**
 12 **the main. Occasionally, obviously, depending on the**
 13 **story, that would happen, but in the main, I think the**
 14 **Sun concentrated on the issues and the policy and the**
 15 **campaigns, rather than attacking just for the sake of**
 16 **personal attacks, and I think Mr Brown felt that letter**
 17 **was purely personal attack.**
 18 Q. Fear of personal attack and a fear of allegedly holding
 19 politicians to account by prying intrusively into their
 20 personal lives. That has been part of the métier of the
 21 Sun, hasn't it?
 22 **A. Obviously I'm going to object to "prying intrusively".**
 23 **The whole point that newspapers or the press in general,**
 24 **shall we say, hold politicians to account on occasion**
 25 **has been found to be intrusive, but that is not the**

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1 **policy.**
 2 Q. These are aberrations then? Is that what it amount to?
 3 **A. I think that when a newspaper oversteps the line,**
 4 **that -- I have heard criticism of papers that I have**
 5 **edited and others -- that privacy is a hugely debated**
 6 **topic in every newsroom, but your question, your**
 7 **premise, was that this was the culture, and I was just**
 8 **disputing that.**
 9 Q. I think as well it's also a manifestation of the power
 10 that the Sun and other high circulation newspapers can
 11 exercise, often through the personality of the editors.
 12 Would you accept that or not?
 13 **A. Sorry, what was the question?**
 14 Q. A manifestation of the power high circulation newspapers
 15 can exercise, often through the personality of their
 16 editors. It is the fear that if the politician departs
 17 from what the paper wants, there may be a personal
 18 attack.
 19 **A. I -- I don't think it's fair to say that politicians**
 20 **live in fear of newspapers. They are highly motivated,**
 21 **ambitious people, and MPs don't scare easily. So**
 22 **I don't think that's fair that they live in fear of**
 23 **power and because I believe that the power of a paper is**
 24 **its readership -- I know, but that's what I believe, and**
 25 **that it's its readership -- then that would be like**

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1 **saying they're fearful of the leadership or the**
 2 **electoral.**
 3 Q. This is a sort of recurring theme in what you're saying,
 4 that the roots here are the readership, it all flows up
 5 through the tree, which is you, and then emitted out,
 6 but you have no role in any of this?
 7 **A. But the reader --**
 8 Q. Is that right?
 9 **A. I suppose that the point of me being here is to give the**
 10 **Inquiry some explanation of how the newspapers I edited**
 11 **worked, and it was true that the readership was at the**
 12 **very centre of that paper, and so going against that**
 13 **readership -- that's why I'm saying that it's not**
 14 **a particular individual editor that has a power; it is**
 15 **the paper.**
 16 Q. How one can test this: after you have a piece which some
 17 would say is personal -- and we're talking about
 18 Mr Brown's piece -- what happens? Does your inbox fill
 19 up with emails of approbation or is there a deathly
 20 silence? What happens? Can you help us?
 21 **A. Well, in extreme circumstances, going over history,**
 22 **numbers of people can stop by the newspaper. In terms**
 23 **of that particular story, I think I -- I wasn't on the**
 24 **paper at the time, so I think I do remember that being**
 25 **a negative reaction from the readers, although they felt**

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1 **that, you know, the Prime Minister should probably take**
 2 **the time to spell the name of a grieving widow**
 3 **correctly, and certainly the bereaved son, and there was**
 4 **some sort of -- overall, they felt that, you know, at**
 5 **least he'd taken the time to do it, and I think that's**
 6 **probably fair. It wasn't an overwhelming reaction but**
 7 **yes, you do get reactions.**
 8 Q. The one extreme reaction, of course, was Hillsborough,
 9 but since then there's never been anything equivalent,
 10 has there? Where people actually voted with their feet
 11 and didn't buy the paper?
 12 **A. And Princess Diana's death, actually.**
 13 Q. Okay.
 14 **A. For the majority -- for a lot of newspapers, yes. So**
 15 **there have been other occasions.**
 16 Q. Can I just go back to this conversation with Mr Brown.
 17 You said it was tense, he was angry. No doubt you say
 18 it was also a private conversation. I don't really want
 19 to lead you on this, if you understand me, but did he
 20 say anything which is relevant to this Inquiry,
 21 particularly in the context of evidence we've heard from
 22 Mr Murdoch?
 23 **A. Sorry, what particular piece of evidence from**
 24 **Mr Murdoch?**
 25 Q. Well, then I'm leading you. I just thought that putting

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1 it in those terms you'd follow what I was referring to.
 2 You followed Mr Murdoch's evidence, did you?
 3 **A. I did follow Mr Murdoch's evidence. I think Mr Brown**
 4 **was very angry, and I'm not sure there was anything**
 5 **particularly relevant to this Inquiry, although when**
 6 **Mr Murdoch relayed his conversation with Mr Brown --**
 7 **I cannot remember when that was -- Mr Murdoch also told**
 8 **me the same story that he told you.**
 9 Q. Okay, well that is of some assistance, but can we be
 10 clear: when did Mr Murdoch relay that conversation to
 11 you?
 12 **A. The reason I can't remember the timing is because**
 13 **obviously I had my own rather angry and intense**
 14 **conversation with Mr Brown. However, previous to that**
 15 **conversation, I had also indirectly, again, had**
 16 **similar -- not threats made, but similar sort of veins**
 17 **of reaction -- sorry, similar sort of comments made**
 18 **about the Sun abandoning Labour after 12, 13 years.**
 19 **Hostile comments. So when Mr Murdoch told me his**
 20 **conversation, it didn't surprise me.**
 21 Q. What did Mr Murdoch tell you?
 22 **A. Exactly what he told the Inquiry.**
 23 Q. And the conversation you had with Mr Brown, was that
 24 issue returned to or not?
 25 **A. It was -- like I said, I feel that the content probably**

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1 **was a private conversation, but the tone of it --**
 2 **unless, of course, Mr Brown would like to tell you about**
 3 **it, but he was incredibly aggressive and very angry.**
 4 Q. It's relevant in this sense, Mrs Brooks. I doubt
 5 whether in the end this Inquiry will resolve questions
 6 of fine detail, but you were chief executive officer of
 7 News International. You might have been fearful that if
 8 Mr Brown did win at the next election, of course against
 9 the odds, he had it in his power to harm the interests
 10 of your company. Do you see that?
 11 **A. I don't accept it. I see the question, but I --**
 12 Q. Which part don't you accept?
 13 **A. That I didn't think that.**
 14 Q. So that obvious point didn't cross your radar at all,
 15 did it?
 16 **A. That at not any point in the conversation with Mr Brown**
 17 **did I think: "If he wins, he will go against the**
 18 **commercial interests of credit company"? He was just**
 19 **incredibly aggressive and angry.**
 20 Q. I'm sure it wasn't a thought which flashed through your
 21 mind during the conversation, but when you reflected on
 22 the conversation, it would immediately spring to mind,
 23 wouldn't it?
 24 **A. It didn't, no.**
 25 Q. At no stage in the run-up to the 2010 election did you

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1 harbour any such fear or concern; is that it?
 2 **A. No.**
 3 Q. Why not?
 4 **A. Because although Mr Brown had said those things to**
 5 **Mr Murdoch and although I had heard similar insinuations**
 6 **from others close to Mr Brown, that there was a sort of**
 7 **a tone of threat about it, the fact is that it just**
 8 **didn't occur to me that they were real or proper or --**
 9 **I just -- I would just dismiss them, I suppose.**
 10 Q. Some would say that an elected government, either
 11 through executive power conferred on it by mandate or
 12 through Parliament in due course, would be quite
 13 entitled to bring in media policies which it thought to
 14 be in the public interest but which nonetheless did
 15 impact on the commercial interests of media companies.
 16 Would you agree?
 17 **A. I'm sure that it is absolute -- of course it's proper**
 18 **for all governments to debate and introduce regulation**
 19 **and policy on the media. Of course I agree with that.**
 20 Q. I'm just trying to explore your thinking in 2010. You
 21 have here Mr Brown allegedly, on your evidence, hostile
 22 to News International, and you have Mr Cameron, who
 23 isn't. Is that right? I'm not saying he's favourable
 24 to News International but he's certainly not hostile, is
 25 he?

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1 **A. He wasn't hostile to the Sun.**
 2 Q. No. It's just how this would weigh in your thinking.
 3 After all, you're the chief executive officer now.
 4 **A. Mm-hm.**
 5 Q. So that's something that you should be thinking about.
 6 Wouldn't you agree?
 7 **A. It depends if you -- I mean, Gordon Brown is -- if you**
 8 **accept the premise that Gordon Brown is a responsible**
 9 **politician that doesn't put personal prejudice or**
 10 **bitterness before his policy-making decisions -- so if**
 11 **you accept that premise, then the threats are pointless**
 12 **and should be dismissed. However, if he's not that**
 13 **person and he does put those things, then that's**
 14 **a failing in his duty because it's not -- it shouldn't**
 15 **be about his personal prejudices. The Sun supported the**
 16 **Labour Party for many, many years, and then decided to**
 17 **make a change. So it didn't occur to me at the time**
 18 **that Mr Brown and his colleagues would devote their time**
 19 **in -- into carrying out those threats.**
 20 Q. Of course, it might have been part of the implied
 21 settlement between the Sun and the Labour Party, who,
 22 after all, were in power for 10 years, that the quid pro
 23 quo for support is that the Labour Party would not
 24 intrude into areas media policy which could harm the
 25 interests of News International and other similar

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<p>1 organisations. Did that thought process ever pass 2 through your mind?</p> <p>3 A. No.</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. I'm going to come back to Mr Cameron. There's an 5 absence, isn't there, of text messages which might have 6 existed?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, that is correct.</p> <p>8 Q. Can we see, however, how far we get? It is said that he 9 texted you at certain times, up to a dozen times a day. 10 Is that true?</p> <p>11 A. No, thankfully.</p> <p>12 Q. Okay. A handful of times a day?</p> <p>13 A. No. I mean, I have read this as well, 12 times a day. 14 I mean, it's preposterous. One would hope as leader of 15 the opposition or Prime Minister, he had better things 16 to do and I hope that as chief executive I did. I mean, 17 I would text Mr Cameron and vice versa, on occasion, 18 like a lot of people.</p> <p>19 Q. Can you give us an idea of frequency?</p> <p>20 A. Probably more -- between January 2010, maybe -- during 21 the election campaign, maybe slightly more, but on 22 average, once a week.</p> <p>23 Q. The critical time, as you say, is the election campaign, 24 March to May 2010.</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 incredibly busy time -- I'd say probably about three or 2 four times.</p> <p>3 Q. What comments, if any, did you make on his performance 4 in the television debates? Can you remember those?</p> <p>5 A. Not a particular great length. I think, like everybody, 6 I felt the first one wasn't very good. That was it.</p> <p>7 Q. Did you text the other two party leaders or not?</p> <p>8 A. I didn't text Gordon Brown, no.</p> <p>9 Q. No.</p> <p>10 A. That would have been --</p> <p>11 Q. Not evidently Mr Clegg either, from your demeanour?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. Everybody wants to know how his texts are signed off. 14 Can you help?</p> <p>15 A. In the main --</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do I?</p> <p>17 MR JAY: Well, you probably don't, actually, but if I don't 18 ask, people will enquire why the question wasn't asked.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right.</p> <p>20 MR JAY: But I'm happy to be overruled, frankly.</p> <p>21 A. What was the decision?</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Answer the question.</p> <p>23 A. Oh right, sorry, sir. He would sign them off "DC" in 24 the main.</p> <p>25 MR JAY: Anything else?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 Q. Can you give us an idea of frequency in relation to that 2 period?</p> <p>3 A. Well, maybe twice a week.</p> <p>4 Q. Can you assist us with the content of any of these text 5 messages?</p> <p>6 A. Some, if not the majority, were to do with organisation, 7 so meeting up or arranging to speak. Some were about 8 a social occasion, and occasionally some would be my own 9 personal comment on perhaps the TV debates, something 10 like that.</p> <p>11 Q. How often do you think you met with him socially during 12 this period? Let's take the first five months of 2010. 13 Ignore the record, because we agree --</p> <p>14 A. No, I'm ignoring the record, but at least it gives me 15 a sort of memory refresh. Sorry, what was the period of 16 time?</p> <p>17 Q. Let's just take the run-up to the 2010 election, which 18 was, I think, on 6 May 2010. I may be wrong about the 19 exact date. The four or five months before then.</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. How often would you meet with him or did you meet with 22 him socially?</p> <p>23 A. I did meet with him between January 2010 and the 24 election. As you can see, I have no record of it, so -- 25 I think we will have met about -- I mean, obviously it's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 A. Occasionally he would sign them off "LOL", "lots of 2 love", actually until I told him it meant "laugh out 3 loud", then he didn't sign them like that any more. But 4 in the main, "DC", I would have thought.</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Right. We've done that. Move on.</p> <p>6 MR JAY: We'll move on, okay. Did he make or did you make, 7 rather, phone calls to his constituency home?</p> <p>8 A. No, actually, no.</p> <p>9 Q. Did you often pop around to each other's houses in south 10 Oxfordshire?</p> <p>11 A. No, I think often popping around is definitely 12 overstating the case.</p> <p>13 Q. How would you put it?</p> <p>14 A. We occasionally met in the countryside if it was -- 15 because I was there every weekend and he was there in 16 his constituency.</p> <p>17 Q. It's also said -- and I think this is still in the 18 Times -- was there a meeting at the Heythrop 19 point-to-point ahead of which you texted each other to 20 make sure that you would not be seen together?</p> <p>21 A. I just thought there might be a -- I have been to the 22 Heythrop point-to-point, because my husband is chairman, 23 and I think Mr Cameron has been too, because it's in his 24 constituency. Was the question did we meet there, 25 sorry?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 Q. Did you text each other beforehand? Do you remember 2 that?</p> <p>3 A. There have been many point-to-points over the years. 4 Well, it's annual. Was this a particular one?</p> <p>5 Q. Can you remember this or not, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>6 A. Which --</p> <p>7 Q. A date has not been put on this. Of course it will be 8 an annual event.</p> <p>9 A. Where did you say you read it, sorry?</p> <p>10 Q. It was in the Times on Tuesday.</p> <p>11 A. Oh, right. I did read that. It was a suggestion in the 12 Times that we -- both were at the same point-to-point 13 but we didn't meet up and there was some reason why that 14 was significant, but it is true that we didn't meet up. 15 I was there very briefly and I think -- but he did meet 16 up with my husband.</p> <p>17 Q. Did you attend his private birthday party in October 18 2010?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Can I ask you these questions. Others have asked me to 21 put them. Did you have any communication with 22 Mr Cameron following the publication of the Guardian's 23 Milly Dowler hacking story, which was on 5 July 2011? 24 The communication would be about that story.</p> <p>25 A. I'm sure we discussed it between July 2009 and July</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 but in the most general terms. Maybe in 2010, we had 2 a more specific conversation about it, which I think 3 is -- yeah, that's about right.</p> <p>4 Q. Can you tell us about that one?</p> <p>5 A. It was what I remember, rather than it being -- the 6 general terms of the story being around or what had 7 happened that day. I'm just very concerned because 8 you -- I thought you were warning me in --</p> <p>9 Q. Well, I don't know what you're going to say, Mrs Brooks, 10 but if it's a general conversation and it may relate 11 more to Mr Cameron's state of mind rather than any 12 underlying fact, I think you can probably tell us about 13 it.</p> <p>14 A. No, I think it was nothing particularly that he wouldn't 15 have said publicly, but he was interested in the latest 16 developments and asked me about them and I said to him 17 what I say to everybody when they asked me for an update 18 on it. It was to do with the amount of civil cases 19 coming in around 2010 and we had a conversation about 20 it. I just particularly remember that.</p> <p>21 Q. I think the context must be that he was concerned that 22 this went beyond Goodman and Mulcaire; is that fair, 23 without being any more specific than that?</p> <p>24 A. Probably, yes. It was a general conversation with 25 the -- in late 2010 about the increase in the civil</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 2011.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, Mr Jay didn't ask about 2009.</p> <p>3 A. Oh, sorry.</p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: He asked about 2011. In other words, 5 this is the story which came out of the Guardian, which 6 generated the --</p> <p>7 A. Right. No, I don't think I did have any direct 8 contact -- sorry, sir, yes, you're right -- on those 9 dates.</p> <p>10 MR JAY: The other question, which in fact is the question 11 which I think you thought I was asking, but I am going 12 to ask it now: did you discuss the phone hacking 13 allegations against News International with Mr Cameron 14 at any time between the July 2009 Guardian story and 15 your departure from News International?</p> <p>16 A. Yes, I did.</p> <p>17 Q. I wouldn't want you to say anything which bears on the 18 current police investigations, you understand -- in 19 other words which relates to anybody in particular -- 20 but in general terms, can you assist us as to the 21 content of those discussions?</p> <p>22 A. I think on occasion -- you know, not very often, so 23 maybe once or twice, because of the news and because, 24 you know, the phone hacking story was a sort of 25 a constant, or it kept coming up. We would bring it up,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 cases.</p> <p>2 Q. The increase in civil cases can only be an indication 3 that this phenomenon is not limited to Messrs Goodman 4 and Mulcaire, or at least that's a very strong 5 inference. Are we agreed about that, without being any 6 more precise than that?</p> <p>7 A. I think News International has acknowledged that 8 publicly anyway, yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Can you help us with what Mr Cameron said?</p> <p>10 A. It was a couple of years ago. It was a general 11 discussion about -- I think he asked me what the update 12 was. I think it had been on the news that day, and 13 I think I explained the story behind the news. No 14 secret information, no privileged information; just 15 a general update. I'm sorry, I can't remember the date, 16 but I just don't have my records.</p> <p>17 Q. You're focusing on what you told him, which I'm not 18 really interested in --</p> <p>19 A. Oh, right.</p> <p>20 Q. -- with respect. I'm just concerned with what he might 21 have said. That's all.</p> <p>22 A. I think he asked me -- I think it had been in the news 23 that day -- I think it was about the civil cases. Maybe 24 a new civil case had come out, and he asked me about it 25 and I responded accordingly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

20 (Pages 77 to 80)

1 Q. Was it related to his hiring of Mr Coulson and possibly
 2 having second thoughts about that?
 3 **A. No, not in that instance, no.**
 4 Q. On any other instance?
 5 **A. No.**
 6 Q. Are you sure about that?
 7 **A. Yes.**
 8 Q. We're really in the dark then as to what these
 9 conversations were about, apart from a general --
 10 **A. Well, because they were very general. He -- they**
 11 **weren't a sort of -- it was particularly around the**
 12 **civil cases in 2010. Your question was: did we ever**
 13 **speak about it in those two years, and my answer is:**
 14 **yes, we did, very generally, but I do remember in late**
 15 **2010 having a particular -- perhaps a more detailed**
 16 **conversation, because if you go back in the chronology**
 17 **of the phone hacking situation, that was when the civil**
 18 **cases were coming in and being made newsworthy.**
 19 Q. Okay, can I just ask you about a different topic: the
 20 role of the Freuds. We'll just touch on this. You've
 21 been a close friend of Elisabeth Freud nee Murdoch for
 22 over ten years; is that right?
 23 **A. Longer, actually, but yes.**
 24 Q. They have a country house in Oxfordshire as well, don't
 25 they?

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1 **A. Yes, they do.**
 2 Q. About how often have you been in the Freuds' home in the
 3 country, your home in the country or the Camerons'
 4 constituency home in the company of other politicians?
 5 **A. So just to distill that to make it easier to answer, how**
 6 **many times I've been in David Cameron's home with other**
 7 **politicians?**
 8 Q. Yes, or the Freuds' country home or your home.
 9 Approximately.
 10 **A. I'm pretty sure never, David Cameron's home in the**
 11 **countryside. I think once, maybe, George Osborne may**
 12 **have been present at a dinner at my own and I think the**
 13 **only time at Elisabeth Murdoch and Matthew Freud's house**
 14 **was her 40th in -- a couple of years ago.**
 15 Q. Yes, the 40th party we've got under tab 40, haven't we?
 16 It's the last tab. It was in August 2008.
 17 **A. Oh, sorry.**
 18 Q. It actually was held at somewhere called Burford Priory.
 19 I don't know where that's it, although I detect it might
 20 be in Oxfordshire.
 21 **A. It's in Burford.**
 22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well done.
 23 MR JAY: We can see who was there. To be fair, a range of
 24 politicians across all parties, but I don't spot many
 25 Liberal Democrats.

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1 **A. Are there no Liberal Democrats? No. Right. Yes, I can**
 2 **see the list.**
 3 Q. Do you know if BSKyB is still a client of Freud
 4 Communications?
 5 **A. I don't. I'm sure -- I mean, you know, Freud**
 6 **Communications is a huge company. I don't know their**
 7 **full client list. I'm pretty sure they haven't**
 8 **represented BSKyB on a corporate level, but I'm sure**
 9 **they will have represented lots of other areas of Sky.**
 10 **I don't know currently, but probably.**
 11 Q. Can I just ask you some general questions about that
 12 bid. When were you made aware that the bid would be
 13 made?
 14 **A. I think before the public announcement, shortly before**
 15 **the public announcement.**
 16 Q. Before the General Election or after, do you think?
 17 **A. I think it was before -- yeah, before. I actually can't**
 18 **remember when the public announcement was, but it was**
 19 **shortly before.**
 20 Q. This was obviously a big moment for News Corp.
 21 I appreciate that you're CEO of News International and
 22 not News Corp and that distinction is understood, but
 23 were there not discussions with either of the Murdochs
 24 about the timing of the bid?
 25 **A. I -- I played no formal role in the BSKyB transaction**

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1 **and certainly not the strategy of timing and all that**
 2 **kind of thing. I was made aware that it was on the**
 3 **cards, so to speak, before the public announcement.**
 4 **Maybe six weeks, a couple of months beforehand.**
 5 Q. Because it would obviously have knock-on effects for
 6 News International as well, wouldn't it?
 7 **A. Well, not particularly, no. No.**
 8 Q. If News International had no interest in it, why were
 9 you told about it?
 10 **A. It wasn't that we had no interest. Obviously, as part**
 11 **of News Corp, we were interested, but at the time, the**
 12 **way it was presented to me was -- I didn't think it was**
 13 **going to have an effect on News International.**
 14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: You've said that you had no formal
 15 role in the BSKyB bid, and I quite understand that,
 16 because there's no reason why you should, but what about
 17 informally? I mean, here, as we've been discussing, you
 18 are extremely well connected to very, very senior
 19 politicians across the range, and that's part of your
 20 job, as you've described. Wouldn't your view as to how
 21 it might work out, how it might play, be of extreme
 22 value informally, not formally?
 23 **A. Extreme value to News Corp?**
 24 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: To News Corp. To your ultimate boss,
 25 to Mr Murdoch.

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<p>1 A. It was never quite put in those terms, but I did have an 2 informal role, as you suggest, mainly after the 3 formation of the -- if you want to call it this for 4 a better word -- the anti-Sky bid alliance, because that 5 directly in some ways brought News International into 6 what was a News Corp transaction because -- the anti-Sky 7 bid alliance was I think the BBC, the Guardian, the FT, 8 the Daily Mail, the Telegraph, British Telecom, 9 Independent -- well, everyone else probably, and once 10 they had formed that alliance and were using their own 11 news outlets to promote their view and also to lobby 12 politicians, then I suppose I probably did get involved, 13 but again, not in the deal or the transaction or the 14 strategy behind it.</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, it's not the deal or the strategy 16 behind it; it's perhaps the public presentation, perhaps 17 the way in which the criticisms could be countered, 18 perhaps using all your experience borne out of the 19 relationships you've been careful to develop for 20 professional reasons -- and doubtless coincidentally for 21 personal reasons -- over the years.</p> <p>22 A. I mean, I think in some circumstances that may be true, 23 but in this one it was a quasi-judicial decision and 24 I don't think my input or, as you say, using that was of 25 relevance. Obviously, in light of the anti-Sky bid</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 Q. If you could look at the list again of RMB1, the 2 meetings with prime ministers, and identify whether the 3 BSkyB bid was discussed on any relevant occasion. On 4 9 October 2010, there was dinner at Chequers with 5 Mr Cameron.</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. Might you have raised the bid on that occasion?</p> <p>8 A. No. I'm pretty sure that was his birthday party.</p> <p>9 Q. That's the private party we'd covered about 15 minutes 10 ago.</p> <p>11 A. I --</p> <p>12 Q. What about 23 December 2010, which we've already had 13 some evidence about?</p> <p>14 A. It was -- rather than discussed at that dinner, it was 15 mentioned and I think James Murdoch's testimony said 16 that, and I was aware that it was mentioned, but it was 17 not by any means widely discussed at that dinner. It 18 was mentioned because it was in the news because of -- 19 because obviously Dr Cable had resigned from that role.</p> <p>20 Q. Were you party to any conversations along the lines of: 21 "Dr Cable has acted in breach of duty. Let's hope the 22 next one, Mr Hunt, does not"?</p> <p>23 A. Not necessarily, but clearly that was our view, that we 24 hoped that having been always put to us that it would be 25 a very fair process and -- which, of course, we were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 alliance lobbying, that I would waste no opportunity in 2 putting what was probably our case on the deal -- not 3 ours, News International, but ours, News Corp -- but 4 because of the nature of the decision, I'm not sure 5 I was of any -- it was of any value, particularly, apart 6 from a counter voice in a very large opposition.</p> <p>7 MR JAY: When were you first made aware of the code name 8 Rubicon? Can you recall?</p> <p>9 A. I think when I was -- I was told about it. I may have 10 heard it in the ether before, but I think I was told 11 what that was.</p> <p>12 Q. I'm sure you were aware when you were told about it, but 13 I asked when that was.</p> <p>14 A. Around the same time.</p> <p>15 Q. A few weeks before; is that it?</p> <p>16 A. No, maybe a couple of months before. Six, eight weeks 17 before.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you know who chose that code name?</p> <p>19 A. No, I don't, but I think it -- I think it might have 20 been James Murdoch, but I don't know that.</p> <p>21 Q. Obviously someone who enjoys classical allusions. Was 22 it a code name which anybody in government knew about?</p> <p>23 A. No, I don't think so.</p> <p>24 Q. Mr Osborne, Mr Hunt, did they know about it?</p> <p>25 A. No, I never heard them acknowledge that, no.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 happy with, that it would be fair and democratic, to 2 find out that perhaps some personal prejudice had come 3 into that decision was quite disappointing, so it would 4 have been along those lines, yes, that at least now the 5 decision would be fair.</p> <p>6 Q. Fair or favourable, do you think?</p> <p>7 A. Fair.</p> <p>8 Q. You knew Mr Hunt quite well, didn't you?</p> <p>9 A. Not as well as others, no. I mean, I'd seen him 10 occasionally, but not particularly.</p> <p>11 Q. Even informally, you weren't putting out feelers, 12 soundings, to find out whether he'd be onside or not?</p> <p>13 A. I think he had -- I think he'd posted something on his 14 website saying that he was quite favourable earlier on 15 in the process, before he'd had the -- before the 16 decision went to him. I'm pretty sure that's --</p> <p>17 Q. So maybe you knew it anyway?</p> <p>18 A. Maybe I knew from then, but I don't -- but not from 19 a direct conversation with Mr Hunt.</p> <p>20 Q. People are also curious -- it may be nothing turns on 21 this, I don't know -- about a further occasion when you 22 may have met with Mr Cameron on Boxing Day 2010. Can 23 you enlighten us there, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, no, it's -- I've been asked about it before. 25 Mr Cameron attended a Boxing Day mulled wine, mince pie</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

22 (Pages 85 to 88)

1 party at my sister-in-laws, and I popped in on my way to
 2 another dinner and I actually don't have any memory,
 3 because I don't think I did even speak to him or
 4 Samantha that night, but my sister-in-law tells me they
 5 were definitely there for the party, so I would have
 6 seen them, but not even to have a proper conversation.
 7 Q. So as to the scope of any conversation, which you say
 8 wasn't a proper conversation, are you sure it would not
 9 have covered the BSKyB issue?
 10 A. On?
 11 Q. Boxing Day.
 12 A. Definitely. Absolutely not. I mean, I don't think
 13 there was a conversation.
 14 Q. I will come back to certain aspects of BSKyB in due
 15 course, but I'd like to cover some general questions now
 16 about the subject matter of conversations with
 17 politicians, seeking to ignore, to the extent which one
 18 can, private and social matters. It's self-evident that
 19 your conversations with politicians would embrace the
 20 issues of the day; is that fair?
 21 A. Sometimes, yes.
 22 Q. Would they also embrace issues such as press regulation
 23 and media policy?
 24 A. Very rarely. I mean, there are some examples of when
 25 I have met with a politician particularly to discuss

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1 that, but they were very infrequent.
 2 Q. And the role of the BBC, was that often the subject or
 3 sometimes the subject of conversation?
 4 A. Not particularly. I mean, from my perspective, Sun
 5 readers are pretty pro-BBC. I think in general, wasting
 6 in any public sector or taxpayer's money was something
 7 that we would address with the BBC on occasions and
 8 others, but not in a sort of -- I never really had
 9 a conversation with a politician about the sort of
 10 top-slicing the licence fee or all that kind of -- just
 11 not ...
 12 Q. What about issues such as self-regulation of the press
 13 and the Press Complaints Commission? Were those ever
 14 discussed with politicians?
 15 A. Again, probably not enough, but no.
 16 Q. Why do you say "not enough"?
 17 A. Well, when you asked me the question, I was just
 18 reflecting on the fact that I couldn't remember
 19 a conversation with a politician where we did discuss
 20 the PCC, which is --
 21 Q. What about press ethics? Was that ever the subject of
 22 conversations with politicians?
 23 A. Well, obviously because of the last couple of years it
 24 has been the subject, but --
 25 Q. Can we go back before then?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Because I think the last couple of years is in danger
 3 of --
 4 A. Overwhelming --
 5 Q. -- muddying the waters, and I want to speak for
 6 generally. Can you help us with that?
 7 A. Okay. I think after Operation Motorman and "What price
 8 privacy?", there was a sort of a general debate going on
 9 in the media in terms of -- particularly in 2003, which
 10 pretty much saw the end of the use of private
 11 detectives, certainly in the way that they had been for
 12 the last decade, and I think that that was something --
 13 Operation Motorman and "What price privacy now?" will
 14 have been discussed with the relevant politician at the
 15 time.
 16 I suppose press ethics particularly came up with
 17 Jack Straw. I know that Mr Les Hinton and Mr Murdoch
 18 MacLennan and Mr Dacre had spent some time, as well as
 19 the rest of the industry, discussing the Data Protection
 20 Act and in particular the custodial sentence assigned to
 21 journalists. I remember that being a big conversation
 22 with politicians and I probably only got involved in
 23 that again quite late on. So there was some discussion
 24 but not a great deal.
 25 Q. You were friends with Mr Blair. Mr Blair we know often

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1 felt that the Daily Mail was hostile to him and his
 2 wife. Was that something that he discussed with you?
 3 A. On occasion, yes.
 4 Q. Quite often, perhaps?
 5 A. Not quite often. It was probably more Cherie Blair that
 6 would discuss it with me.
 7 Q. I'm not interested in private discussions, but I'm
 8 interested in the wider picture of press ethics. What
 9 was the concern that was being conveyed to you in this
 10 context?
 11 A. Well, it wasn't, if you like, press ethics in its most
 12 altruistic form, but it was the tone. I think Cherie
 13 Blair was concerned that she felt a lot of her coverage
 14 was quite sexist, you know, but she's not the first
 15 high-profile female to think that about the UK media,
 16 and so that would come up on occasion. And she
 17 sometimes felt it was quite cruel and personal about her
 18 weight and that it sort of concentrated on those things
 19 rather than, in her eyes, her charity and the things
 20 that she was going to do. But I'm not sure that's what
 21 you're asking me because it's not really press ethics;
 22 it's more tone.
 23 Q. It may be part of the overall picture. We know that
 24 Mr Blair described the press as "feral beasts" in 2007.
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Was that a discussion in like vein which he had with
 2 you?
 3 **A. No. Although I think that post Iraq, I think there was**
 4 **some conversations about the 24-hour media, which is,**
 5 **I think, what he was referring to, the sort of the fact**
 6 **that we, the press, have become feral beasts because**
 7 **there was always a constant need for a new story. So**
 8 **occasionally 24-hour news was mentioned in terms of**
 9 **Iraq, but not really. I was surprised when he said**
 10 **that.**
 11 Q. Well, his speech speaks for itself, but "feral beasts"
 12 I think went further than just a temporal point, that
 13 the press is there 24 hours a day. It's also to do with
 14 the way they behave. Sometimes they're a bit wild and
 15 off their leashes. Do you see the analogy?
 16 **A. I see the analogy, yes.**
 17 Q. He didn't communicate any of those concerns to you?
 18 **A. No.**
 19 Q. Did politicians ever complain to you privately about
 20 coverage in the Sun of them?
 21 **A. Yes, occasionally. You know, there was a -- if**
 22 **people -- if someone felt it was unfair -- I mean, you**
 23 **asked me a question earlier about -- I can't remember**
 24 **how you phrased it, but if I had passed information from**
 25 **Gordon Brown to Tony Blair, I think it was something**
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1 like that, and which I said wasn't true. There's plenty
 2 of people doing that, but on occasion they would
 3 complain. Tony Blair would often complain about our
 4 attitude to Europe and him on Europe, regularly. Many,
 5 many Home Secretaries would regularly complain about
 6 campaigns or -- that we were doing in the paper. So
 7 yes, they did. I think our role was -- I think that was
 8 correct because our role was to hold them to account on
 9 certain issues.
 10 Q. Okay. Some further general questions. Let's see if we
 11 can analyse the power play which may or may not be in
 12 issue here. It would be fair to say, wouldn't it, that
 13 you were very close to Mr Rupert Murdoch, who trusted
 14 you implicitly; are we agreed?
 15 **A. I was close to him, yes.**
 16 Q. And he trusted you implicitly --
 17 **A. Yes.**
 18 Q. Would you also agree that politicians, for whatever
 19 reason, wanted to get close to Mr Murdoch to advance
 20 their own interests? Are we agreed?
 21 **A. I think that a lot of politicians wanted to put their**
 22 **case to Mr Murdoch. "Advance their own interests" is**
 23 **probably -- I'm sure most politicians have a higher view**
 24 **of what they were doing, but yes.**
 25 Q. I'm not suggesting this is wholly selfish, but I think
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1 we can agree more or less where we are.
 2 **A. Mm.**
 3 Q. This may be the more important point: that in order to
 4 get close to Mr Murdoch, in practice they had to get
 5 close to you. Would you agree with that?
 6 **A. No.**
 7 Q. Why not?
 8 **A. Because it's not true.**
 9 Q. Would you agree that politicians might perceive that you
 10 had influence over Mr Murdoch?
 11 **A. No, I certainly don't think that, no. I think they --**
 12 **I was an editor of a newspaper, a very large circulation**
 13 **newspaper, with a wide readership with an exceptional**
 14 **percentage of floating voters, and I do believe that,**
 15 **like other editors in similar situations, politicians**
 16 **did want to get access to the editor of the Sun and his**
 17 **or her team as much as possible. But I don't think that**
 18 **people ever thought to get to Mr Murdoch they had to go**
 19 **through me. I don't think that's correct.**
 20 Q. Let's see if we can break that down. Politicians
 21 certainly wanted to get close to you, to have access to
 22 you, didn't they?
 23 **A. Yes.**
 24 Q. And you were someone who Mr Murdoch trusted implicitly,
 25 were you not?
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1 **A. Yes. I hope so.**
 2 Q. And that was well understood by any politician who cared
 3 to look. Would we agree?
 4 **A. Well, I think they thought we had a close working**
 5 **relationship, yes.**
 6 Q. Didn't you ever examine the motives or thought processes
 7 of politicians, why they were wanting to get close to
 8 you, and just, even as a piece of self-indulgence,
 9 pondered to yourself: "Well, what's going on here? Why
 10 are they trying to get close to me?"
 11 **A. I think I always examined the ulterior motives of**
 12 **politicians, but I thought it was pretty obvious that**
 13 **they wanted to get to -- I don't know a politician that**
 14 **would turn down a meeting with a senior journalist from**
 15 **any broadcast or any newspaper. So it wasn't -- it**
 16 **didn't need a lot of thinking that politicians wanted to**
 17 **get access to journalists. I mean, that's been the same**
 18 **case for decades, as you -- as you pointed out in your**
 19 **opening statement in this module.**
 20 Q. But you were in possession of the megaphone which would
 21 be of utility to them, and which, if they had access to,
 22 logically and self-evidently, might have influence over
 23 your readership. That's the truth, isn't it?
 24 **A. I think the politicians were very keen to put their case**
 25 **to me and my team at the Sun because of the large**
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<p>1 readership of the Sun.</p> <p>2 Q. Did you regard it as part of your role -- or, if you</p> <p>3 didn't, perhaps it was an accidental by-product of your</p> <p>4 role as editor in particular -- to build up friendships</p> <p>5 with politicians?</p> <p>6 A. I think some friendships did occur, but I think it's</p> <p>7 important to put it in the context of friendships.</p> <p>8 I mean, we all have lots of different friendships. Old</p> <p>9 friends, new friends, work colleagues, associates. And,</p> <p>10 you know, through the decade that I was a national</p> <p>11 newspaper editor and the years I was CEO and the ten</p> <p>12 years I was a journalist, some friendships were made.</p> <p>13 But I don't think I ever forgot I was a journalist and</p> <p>14 I don't think they ever forgot they were a politician.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you not understand that you did have a degree of</p> <p>16 personal power over politicians?</p> <p>17 A. No. Again, I just didn't see it like that. I saw my</p> <p>18 role as editor of the Sun as a very responsible one and</p> <p>19 I enjoyed my job and every part of that job, but</p> <p>20 particularly, as I've said in my witness statement,</p> <p>21 I enjoyed campaigns and I enjoyed bridging a gap between</p> <p>22 public opinion and public policy, taking on concerns of</p> <p>23 the readers. So I don't accept it in the power terms</p> <p>24 that you keep describing it as.</p> <p>25 Q. But your real interest is people, isn't it, Mr Brooks?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 whether there's any validity in that case study.</p> <p>2 A. Okay, right.</p> <p>3 Q. You remember the McCanns serialisation case?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, I do.</p> <p>5 Q. Actually, we have Dr McCann's evidence in relation to</p> <p>6 this in the bundle at page 57 under tab 6. Do you have</p> <p>7 that there? We're working from the transcript of the</p> <p>8 evidence this Inquiry received on 23 November 2011.</p> <p>9 A. Right, yes.</p> <p>10 Q. If you look at page 57, line 11, the question I asked</p> <p>11 was:</p> <p>12 "You talk about a meeting with Rebekah Brooks ..."</p> <p>13 Are you on the right page?</p> <p>14 A. They're not numbered in that way.</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: They are, actually.</p> <p>16 A. 57, is it? At the bottom?</p> <p>17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, it says 15 at the bottom, but</p> <p>18 each page has four pages on it.</p> <p>19 A. Yes, right. I have it, sorry. Thank you, sir. Yes?</p> <p>20 MR JAY: The question was:</p> <p>21 "You talk about a meeting with Rebekah Brooks which</p> <p>22 led to a review of your case, a formal review. Just to</p> <p>23 assist us a little bit with that, can you recall when</p> <p>24 that was?"</p> <p>25 Dr McCann's answer was:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 You're a very empathetic person. You understand how</p> <p>2 human beings think and feel, don't you?</p> <p>3 A. I do like people, yes, and journalists, as a main, do</p> <p>4 try and be empathetic, otherwise no one would tell them</p> <p>5 anything.</p> <p>6 Q. But you understand the potential of, if I can put it in</p> <p>7 this way, personal alchemy, how you with get people to</p> <p>8 do or might get people to do what you want, and indeed</p> <p>9 what they are trying to do with you. Don't you get any</p> <p>10 of that?</p> <p>11 A. I'm not sure quite what you mean.</p> <p>12 Q. I'm not suggest anything sinister here. I'm talking</p> <p>13 about really the power of human empathy. Some people</p> <p>14 are empathetic and it's completely lost on them. But</p> <p>15 it's not lost on you, is it?</p> <p>16 A. Well, I hope to be empathetic in life to people, yes.</p> <p>17 Q. I just wonder whether you sense or sensed -- because</p> <p>18 we're talking about the past now -- the effect you might</p> <p>19 have had on politicians. Some of them may even have</p> <p>20 been afraid of you. Is that true?</p> <p>21 A. I literally -- like I say, I don't see politicians as</p> <p>22 these sort of easily scared people. Like I say, most of</p> <p>23 them are pretty strong, ambitious and highly motivated,</p> <p>24 so ...</p> <p>25 Q. Let's see if we can just take one case study and see</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 "I think it's probably worth just elaborating a</p> <p>2 little bit because it's quite a complex decision-making</p> <p>3 process. News International actually bid for the rights</p> <p>4 to the book along with HarperCollins, and one of their</p> <p>5 pitches was the fact that they would serialise the book</p> <p>6 across all their titles. We were somewhat horrified at</p> <p>7 the prospect of that, given the way we had been treated</p> <p>8 in the past and the deal was actually done with the</p> <p>9 publishers, Transworld, that excluded serialisation.</p> <p>10 "Now, we were subsequently approached by</p> <p>11 News International and Associated to serialise the book,</p> <p>12 and after much deliberation, we had a couple of meetings</p> <p>13 with the general manager and -- Will Lewis and</p> <p>14 Rebekah Brooks and others, and what swung the decision</p> <p>15 to serialise was News International committed to backing</p> <p>16 the campaign and the search for Madeleine."</p> <p>17 Pausing there, there was going to be serialisation</p> <p>18 in both the Sunday Times and the Sun, I believe. Do you</p> <p>19 recall that?</p> <p>20 A. I do.</p> <p>21 Q. I think this is the year 2010, by which time you were</p> <p>22 chief executive officer, weren't you?</p> <p>23 A. That's correct.</p> <p>24 Q. What was the price that you paid for the serialisation?</p> <p>25 Can you remember?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 A. I can't remember, actually. I -- it's hundreds of 2 thousands of pounds. 3 Q. A million, we've been told. 4 A. No, it wasn't. It wasn't a million. Half a million, 5 maybe. I can't remember. I mean, I can -- there are 6 ways to find out, but I'm not sure it was a million. 7 Q. Okay. I paraphrase the rest of what Dr McCann said, 8 because he couldn't take this issue much further. Your 9 intervention was successful in securing a review of the 10 case. Do you understand that? 11 A. I -- you asked if it was successful and he says it was, 12 yes. 13 Q. Yes. Can you remember anything about that intervention? 14 A. Actually, to just go back, the reason I was involved as 15 chief executive was because it concerned two newspapers, 16 the Sunday Times and the Sun. So if you like, I did the 17 deal with HarperCollins from the corporate point of 18 view, and then left it to the two editors, John Witherow 19 and Dominic Mohan, to decide the different approaches. 20 I had always got on very well with Dr McCann and 21 Kate McCann throughout their incredible traumatic time, 22 and in fact I think they, if asked, would be very 23 positive about the Sun, actually, and in this case, 24 I thought that Dominic Mohan's idea to run the campaign 25 for this review of Madeleine's case by the Home</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 Q. Did you then take the matter up with Downing Street 2 direct? 3 A. No. 4 Q. Did you not tell Downing Street that the Sun was going 5 to demand a review and the Prime Minister should agree 6 to the request because the Sun had supported him at the 7 last election? 8 A. No, in fact I didn't speak to Downing Street or the Home 9 Secretary about this, but I know that Dominic Mohan or 10 Tom Newton Dunn will have spoken to them. 11 Q. Pardon me? 12 A. They would have spoken directly to either Number 10 or 13 the Home Office. I'm not sure. You'll have to ask 14 them. Probably the Home Office, I would have thought. 15 Q. That the Sun wanted an immediate result and that 16 a letter would be posted all over the front page from 17 the McCanns to the Prime Minister asking for a review, 18 unless Downing Street agreed. Did that happen? 19 A. I think that's how the Sun launched the campaign from 20 memory. It was with a letter, yes. 21 Q. The Home Secretary was told that if she agreed to the 22 review, the page 1 letter would not run. Do you 23 remember that? 24 A. No, I don't. 25 Q. But as the Secretary of State did not respond in time,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 Secretary was the right thing for the Sun to do, and 2 I think the Sunday Times did the book. So my 3 intervention was at that point, as in: was the original 4 discussion with Dr McCann. I don't think I spoke to 5 Theresa May directly, but I am pretty sure that Dominic 6 Mohan may have done. 7 Q. Let's see whether we can agree or disagree on what may 8 have happened. When you were discussing the 9 arrangements with the McCanns, you asked if there was 10 anything more they wanted. Do you recall that? 11 A. Maybe, yes. 12 Q. And Dr Gerry McCann said that he wanted a UK police 13 review of the case. Do you remember him saying? 14 A. That I do, yes. 15 Q. Do you remember your answer being: "Is that all?" 16 A. I may have said it slightly more politely: "Is there 17 anything else before we conclude this meeting?", but -- 18 I don't particularly remember saying that, but maybe 19 I did, yes. 20 Q. I'm not suggesting to you that it was impolite; I'm just 21 summarising the gist of what you said. 22 A. Maybe, yes. We had been going through a list of issues 23 that Dr McCann and Kate McCann wanted to be assured of 24 before we went forward with the serialisation, so 25 possibly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 you did publish the letter on the front page. Do you 2 remember that? 3 A. I do remember the Sun kicking off the campaign with 4 a letter, yes. 5 Q. But you don't believe there was any conversation or 6 indeed threat to the Secretary of State? Is that right? 7 A. I'm pretty sure there would have not been a threat, but 8 you'll have to -- we'll have to ask Dominic Mohan, 9 because, like I said, my involvement was to discuss the 10 campaign in the continued search for Madeleine with the 11 McCanns and to do the deal on the book and to -- they -- 12 because I had done so many campaigns in the past, they 13 wanted my opinion, but after that I left it to both 14 editors to execute the campaign. 15 Q. What I've been told is that you then intervened 16 personally, Mrs Brooks. You told Number 10 that unless 17 the Prime Minister ordered the review by the 18 Metropolitan Police, the Sun would put the Home 19 Secretary, Theresa May, on the front page every day 20 until the Sun's demands were met. Is that true or not? 21 A. No. 22 Q. Is any part of that true? 23 A. I didn't speak to Number 10 or the Home Office about the 24 McCanns until, I think, after the campaign had been won, 25 and then it came up in a conversation that I had -- and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 I don't even think directly with the Prime Minister.</p> <p>2 I think it was one of his team.</p> <p>3 Q. We can find out in due course whether this is true or</p> <p>4 not, but I must repeat it to you. It is said that you</p> <p>5 directly intervened with the Prime Minister and warned</p> <p>6 him that unless there was a review by the Metropolitan</p> <p>7 Police, the Sun would put the Home Secretary,</p> <p>8 Theresa May, on the front page every day until the Sun's</p> <p>9 demands were met. Is that true or not?</p> <p>10 A. I did not say to the Prime Minister: "I will put</p> <p>11 Theresa May on the front page of the Sun every day</p> <p>12 unless you give me a review." I did not say that. If</p> <p>13 I'd had any conversations with Number 10 directly, they</p> <p>14 wouldn't have been particularly about that, but they</p> <p>15 would have been, if I'd been having a conversation, that</p> <p>16 the Sun was leading a major campaign with a very strong</p> <p>17 letter on page 1 to start the campaign, and anyone who</p> <p>18 knew me would have talked to me -- any politician would</p> <p>19 have talked to me about it. But I did not say that.</p> <p>20 I don't know who said I said that, but we're going back</p> <p>21 to sources again.</p> <p>22 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Could we ask this: were you part of</p> <p>23 a strategy that involved your paper putting pressure on</p> <p>24 the government with this sort of implied or express</p> <p>25 threat?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 Q. You must have been told, Mrs Brooks?</p> <p>2 A. I remember Dominic Mohan telling me that the review was</p> <p>3 going ahead.</p> <p>4 Q. That the Sun had won, in other words?</p> <p>5 A. He didn't put it in those terms, but he said -- well,</p> <p>6 actually, I think he said, "The McCanns have won."</p> <p>7 Q. The Sun headline on 14 May, front page, was that as</p> <p>8 a result of its campaign, the Prime Minister was</p> <p>9 "opening the Maddie files". Do you remember that one?</p> <p>10 A. I remember the Sun winning the campaign, the McCanns</p> <p>11 winning the campaign, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. So this is not, you say, a case study then in the</p> <p>13 exercise of power by you? I'm not suggesting that the</p> <p>14 end result was right or wrong. Many would say it was</p> <p>15 right, that there should be a review. I'm just saying</p> <p>16 the means by which you achieved the objective --</p> <p>17 A. But it could be said that a review of Madeleine McCann's</p> <p>18 case, with everything that had gone on, was the right</p> <p>19 thing to do. We presented the issue. We supported the</p> <p>20 McCanns in their determination to get a review. It</p> <p>21 wasn't new. They'd tried before, before the election,</p> <p>22 and the election had come into -- and the Sun -- and the</p> <p>23 Home Secretary clearly thought it was a good idea too,</p> <p>24 because I'm pretty sure there wasn't -- it wasn't a long</p> <p>25 campaign. It wasn't like Sarah's Law over ten years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 A. I was certainly part of a strategy to launch the</p> <p>2 campaign in order to get the review for the McCanns,</p> <p>3 yes. But I think the word "threat", sir, is -- is too</p> <p>4 strong.</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, give me another word then for</p> <p>6 "threat", could you?</p> <p>7 A. Persuade them?</p> <p>8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Persuasion. All right.</p> <p>9 MR JAY: In your own words, Mrs Brooks, define for us what</p> <p>10 the strategy was.</p> <p>11 A. So the McCanns were deeply upset that there hadn't been</p> <p>12 a review. It seemed incredibly unfair that they hadn't</p> <p>13 got this review. You only have to read their book to</p> <p>14 understand the trauma that they go through. So we said,</p> <p>15 "We'll join forces with you", and Dominic Mohan and his</p> <p>16 team went away and constructed a campaign. I cannot</p> <p>17 remember when the idea of the letter came up. It may</p> <p>18 have even been my idea to do the letter. I can't</p> <p>19 remember. But the campaign was launched in order to try</p> <p>20 and convince the government or convince the Home</p> <p>21 Secretary that a review would be the right thing to do.</p> <p>22 Q. Do you know how it came about that the review was</p> <p>23 ordered?</p> <p>24 A. No, I -- I can't remember, I'm sorry. Such a lot has</p> <p>25 happened since then, but --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 I think it was very short.</p> <p>2 Q. Yes, it didn't take very long because the government</p> <p>3 yielded to your pressure, didn't they? It took all of</p> <p>4 about a day.</p> <p>5 A. Or perhaps they were convinced by our argument.</p> <p>6 Q. There are always two sides to the coin here, that of</p> <p>7 course everybody would say, on one level, money should</p> <p>8 be spent, but the campaign to date, I'm told, has cost</p> <p>9 £2 million and some would say maybe that money might</p> <p>10 have gone somewhere else. It's never clearcut, is it?</p> <p>11 A. What, the Madeleine McCann campaign?</p> <p>12 Q. No, the operation which started up the review, which was</p> <p>13 called Operation Grange, I understand.</p> <p>14 A. Right, sorry.</p> <p>15 Q. Perhaps you would say all you were doing was reflecting</p> <p>16 the views of your readers. Is that it?</p> <p>17 A. I think in that case, it was an issue that we brought to</p> <p>18 the readers, that we explained to the readers that</p> <p>19 a review hadn't taken place and that -- we presented the</p> <p>20 McCanns' story as in the reason why they wanted the</p> <p>21 review. I think that absolutely chimed with our</p> <p>22 readership and the campaign was started with a very</p> <p>23 heartfelt letter and the politicians were convinced our</p> <p>24 argument, or the McCanns' argument, was correct.</p> <p>25 Q. It also chimes with the commercial interests of your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

1 papers because this sells copy, doesn't it?

2 **A. Well, campaigns can sell newspapers. I think the**

3 **serialisation of the book actually was good for**

4 **circulation for the Sunday Times. I'm not sure how well**

5 **the campaign was in circulation terms, but they would be**

6 **a matter of record. It may have been.**

7 Q. Can I deal, finally before lunch, with one other example

8 just to get your evidence on this. Mr Dominic Grieve at

9 one point was the Shadow Home Secretary, wasn't he?

10 **A. Yes, he was.**

11 Q. Do you remember a conversation with him over dinner

12 which you discussed the Human Rights Act?

13 **A. I do, yes.**

14 Q. To cut to the quick, his position was in favour of the

15 Act and your position was not, if one wanted to distill

16 it into one sentence; is that correct?

17 **A. I don't think that's quite right. Similar. His**

18 **position was that it was -- it was a shadow cabinet**

19 **dinner, and his position was that David Cameron's**

20 **promise or, shall we say, the Tory Party's promise to**

21 **repeal the HRA and replace it with a British bill of**

22 **rights, I think was the plan at the time, was not --**

23 **should not be so easily promised to papers like the Sun**

24 **and the Mail and the Telegraph, and so it wasn't that he**

25 **was pro it or against it. He was just making the legal**

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1 **point that it was very difficult to do.**

2 Q. Were you impressed with him after that conversation?

3 **A. Well, as it turned out, he was absolutely right, but at**

4 **the time -- it was more his colleagues around the table,**

5 **because I think they'd put out a policy announcement**

6 **that it was going to be in the manifesto they would**

7 **repeal the HRA. David Cameron had written for the Sun**

8 **explaining this. And so the dinner conversation was**

9 **quite heated, as he was the only one at the table**

10 **saying, "Actually ..." I admired him standing up to his**

11 **shadow colleagues like that, and as I say, in the end**

12 **he's turned out to be correct.**

13 Q. Didn't you tell Mr Cameron, after that conversation you

14 had with Mr Grieve, words to this effect: "You can't

15 have someone like that as Home Secretary. He won't

16 appeal on our readers. Move him"? And that's indeed

17 what happened.

18 **A. No, I did not tell Mr Cameron to move him. What -- the**

19 **conversation -- as I say, it was a very heated**

20 **conversation, borne out by -- his colleagues were trying**

21 **to almost silence him at the table because he was, in**

22 **effect, saying one of the promises the Conservatives had**

23 **made to the electorate was they were going to repeal --**

24 **and it was almost the opposite way around, that they**

25 **were concerned that his view was not to be taken**

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1 **seriously, and as it turned out, he was entirely**

2 **correct.**

3 Q. Did you give any advice to Mr Cameron as to whether

4 Mr Grieve might move on?

5 **A. No, no. In fact, after that conversation -- sorry, it**

6 **is important to remember Mr Cameron wasn't at that**

7 **dinner.**

8 Q. That's right. Did you indicate to Mr Cameron in any way

9 what your view was about Mr Grieve?

10 **A. No. In fact, Mr Osborne and Mr Cameron did the opposite**

11 **to me, where they were at pains to explain that**

12 **Mr Grieve's view, which has now proved to be entirely**

13 **correct, was absolutely not their view and they were**

14 **going to repeal the HRA and replace it with a British**

15 **bill of rights, and that Mr Grieve was mistaken.**

16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Just before we break, could I take

17 you back to this issue that we've bounced around several

18 times, which is who is leading who.

19 **A. Yes.**

20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do you think that at least in part,

21 what you were in fact doing, to use your own words, was

22 bringing issues to your readers as opposed merely to

23 responding to your readers' interests?

24 **A. I think that's correct, yes.**

25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm sure we'll come back to it this

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1 afternoon, but I would like your view, which you can

2 reflect upon, on this: everybody's entitled to be

3 a friend of whomsoever they want to be a friend. That's

4 part of life. But can you understand why it might be

5 a matter of public concern that a very close

6 relationship between journalists and politicians might

7 create subtle pressures on the press, who have the

8 megaphone, and on the politicians, who have the policy

9 decisions?

10 **A. Yes, I can understand that.**

11 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right. 2 o'clock.

12 (1.02 pm)

13 (The luncheon adjournment)

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