

News Corp

July 17, 2013

The Right Honorable Keith Vaz, MP  
Chairman, Home Affairs Committee  
House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Dear Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of 10 July.

In response to the voice-mail interception revelations in 2011, we committed to making things right at News International (now News UK). We have met that commitment. We engaged new leadership, restructured and reinforced our policies and procedures, and conducted – without even a request from the MPS – a multi-title review in the UK, before voluntarily providing to the MPS all the evidence we could find suggesting possible wrongdoing by our employees. We have spent hundreds of millions of pounds supporting this cooperation and compensating legitimate victims of voice-mail interception. As the Metropolitan Police have acknowledged and Lord Justice Leveson recognized in his Report (at pp427-31), our company has provided extraordinary assistance to the MPS over the last two years.

In March of this year, I was reminded of the human cost of those company decisions. Employees at the Sun who had been arrested asked to see me, to share their experiences. As chief executive of News Corp I felt that it was right to hear from them and to express my personal understanding for them in this difficult time. Apparently one or more of the employees taped that meeting. I did not. I do not have a reliable transcript of the content or context of that difficult meeting. The excerpted statements that you provide obviously do not contain either the full content or context of the meeting. Nevertheless, in the spirit of trying to address your concerns, I will do my best to respond to your inquiries regarding the tenor of my comments.

1. My Comments on the Investigation

Some context here would be particularly helpful.

As your Committee knows, there are several police investigations, and they address different allegations. What they have in common is that our company volunteered the material that fueled all these investigations. We retrieved from archives and assembled for review more than 23 million electronic documents, disclosed over 500,000 documents after 185,000 man hours of work, at a cost in excess of 65 million pounds. Our voluntary disclosure of any evidence we could find suggesting criminality led to dozens of arrests of our employees. Obviously we did not treat any of this alleged wrongdoing as “nothing.” I did not intend to suggest that any violations of the law are tolerable or acceptable; after we volunteered this material to the MPS, no one who works for us could believe that we tolerate or accept violations of the law.

I accept that I used the wrong adjectives to voice my frustration over the course of the police investigation. But I had been hearing for months about pre-dawn raids undertaken by as many as 14 police officers, and that some employees and their families were left in limbo for as much as a year and a half between arrest and charging decisions. At the March 2013 meeting, I was reminded of the impact on families, including suicide attempts and medical conditions arising from the significant stress. I have no basis to question the competence of the police, and I and our newspapers respect the work that they do every day to protect the public. But I do question whether, over the last two years, the police have approached these matters with an appropriate sense of proportion, and with regard for the human cost of delay. While I regret my choice of words in that highly emotional meeting, I care deeply about our employees, and I was and am troubled by the effect of these events on them.

## 2. My Comments on Giving Information to the Investigation

Here again the selective extracts from the meeting do not capture the context of my remarks or the reality of what our company has done and continues to do.

I told the employees that I have thought seriously about our 2011 decision to provide unprecedented levels of cooperation to the MPS, as one would expect when confronted with the impact on our employees and their families. But as I also attempted to convey, this was a decision that we made because we thought it was the right thing to do and in the best interests of our company and all of its employees. I may not have fully anticipated at the outset the human cost of cooperation, but we as a company have nevertheless continued down that path for the better part of two years.

After we volunteered a mountain of evidence to the MPS, we received an additional 1,900 follow up requests for assistance. Over 98% of those requests have already been resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Where it appeared that requests were unreasonable or in pursuit of materials already provided, we have asked the MPS to reconsider. As one might expect, as these matters reach the formal stage of charges and scheduled trials, we will seek the guidance of the Court on issues of law to ensure that everyone's rights are fully protected. But just to place this in context – to date, the Crown has not deemed it necessary to ask the Court to enforce a single one of the approximately 1,900 follow up requests from the MPS. It would not be fair even to suggest that our Company has impeded the MPS. The opposite is true.

## 3. Assistant Commissioner Dick's Comment on Our Co-operation

I do not take issue with AC Dick's comment as far as it goes, for the reasons described above. But the fact that we are acting under the supervision of the courts does not mean that we are providing only what the court orders us to produce. As we have made clear to the MPS, where the MPS would clearly be entitled to the material it has sought, we have not required a court order.

I recall one of the Sun employees commenting at the March 2013 meeting that our recent request that the MPS seek disclosure orders amounts to closing the stable

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door after the horses have all left. Without endorsing that comment, it is fair to say that after volunteering the evidence that supported multiple police investigations and arrests, and after satisfying 98% of the 1,900 follow up requests, criticizing our company for seeking guidance from the Court is unwarranted.

4. Assistant Commissioner Dick's Comments on the Investigation

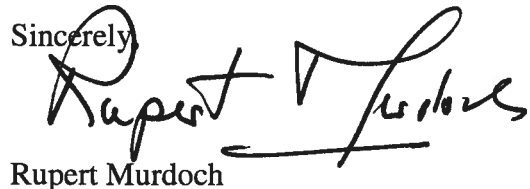
I am in no position to judge the competence of the investigation and should never have done so. My own lay view is that it has been more than thorough, indeed it has in some respects appeared to be excessive. I cannot endorse the judgment that the investigation has "progressed" very well, not when some of our employees were arrested early in the investigation in 2012 and they and their families are still in limbo awaiting charging decisions. I appreciate that the decision to arrest is entirely a matter for the police, that the decision to charge is for the Crown and that AC Dick has far more knowledge than I about the progress of the investigation. That said, my personal view is that this has gone on too long.

5. Assistant Commissioner Dick's Confirmation that MPS Is Seeking the Tape of the March 2013 Meeting

I can offer no information on this subject because I did not surreptitiously tape anyone, and have no tape. Nor have the police asked for a copy.

I hope that this is helpful to the Chair and the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert Murdoch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' and 'M'.

Rupert Murdoch