

1 Friday, 9 November 2012  
 2 (1.00 pm)  
 3 Interview with JEREMY PAXMAN  
 4 RICHARD: Before we start, just a couple of pieces of admin.  
 5 You won't hear much of my voice. You will hear Alan  
 6 Maclean's voice and you will hear Nick Pollard's voice.  
 7 But as we have just discussed, just to make things  
 8 clear, obviously this is being recorded. What you say  
 9 to us is said to us on an open basis, and Nick will be  
 10 able to make use of the information you provide to us if  
 11 he considers that appropriate for the purposes of the  
 12 review. But please, for obvious reasons, could you keep  
 13 your discussions with us confidential?  
 14 The final point is that this obviously is being  
 15 transcribed and if you want to, Jeremy, we can send you  
 16 a copy of the transcript, for you to correct if there  
 17 are any particular typographical errors. If we do that,  
 18 we will need, I am afraid, to ask you to keep that  
 19 confidential as well, but obviously you can decide  
 20 whether you want to see the transcript or not.  
 21 A. Well, that is obviously fine. I mean, you do as you  
 22 please. It is a different world. I mean, I don't think  
 23 any journalists would ever find anything out if these  
 24 were the normal rules of engagement. You do what you  
 25 like.

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1 RICHARD: Lovely, okay. I am going to hand you over,  
 2 I assume, to Nick and Alan to start with.  
 3 MR POLLARD: Yes, Jeremy, I am going to let Alan do the  
 4 questioning and I am just going to dive in if and when  
 5 it seems appropriate, with a question.  
 6 A. Okey-dokey.  
 7 MR POLLARD: I will hand you over to Alan.  
 8 MR MACLEAN: Jeremy, I hope you have got beside you, or with  
 9 you, a clip of e-mails, most of which you are either the  
 10 recipient or the author of. I am --  
 11 A. I --  
 12 Q. I am going to come to those in just a minute, but can I  
 13 just start with some general background questions first  
 14 of all.  
 15 First of all, as far as Jimmy Saville is concerned,  
 16 did you ever meet Jimmy Saville?  
 17 A. I don't think so, and I think he is the sort of  
 18 repellant character one would have remembered. I would  
 19 have thought I would have actually gone quite a long way  
 20 to avoid him, I think.  
 21 Q. If you didn't ever meet him face-to-face, you would not  
 22 have had an opportunity to form, as it were, your own  
 23 opinion of him, but did you, in your career at the BBC,  
 24 ever hear any rumours or allegations about  
 25 Jimmy Saville?

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1 A. Well, you are conducting this in such a ridiculous  
 2 fashion that anything I say is just -- is the  
 3 translation of tittle tattle into something that I don't  
 4 think probably merits that description. I -- sorry, the  
 5 status of semi-fact.  
 6 It was, I would say, common gossip that  
 7 Jimmy Saville liked, you know, young -- it was always  
 8 assumed to be girls. I don't know whether it was girls  
 9 or boys. But I had no evidence of it, and I never saw  
 10 anything that made me take it more seriously than it  
 11 being common gossip. You know, I am very happy to put  
 12 it into what my views of the state of Radio One and the  
 13 rest of them were, but I saw -- if you are looking for  
 14 evidence, no. I had no evidence. But it was common  
 15 gossip, I think.  
 16 Q. And this common gossip has been prevalent throughout  
 17 your time at the BBC, or are you able to put a date on  
 18 it at all?  
 19 A. No, I can't. I mean, I just think it is part of the  
 20 baggage that -- that attaches to Saville's name.  
 21 I wouldn't put a specific date on it, no.  
 22 Q. Right. It has been suggested to us by somebody who has  
 23 made contact with the review that Newsnight, and  
 24 I quote:  
 25 "... must be led at all times with panache,

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1 determination and mental toughness."  
 2 End quote. Do you agree with that?  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. What would you say was required of an editor of  
 5 Newsnight?  
 6 A. Well, it was a very, very tough job, which has been made  
 7 a great deal tougher by various institutional changes  
 8 and economic changes that have occurred in the BBC. So  
 9 the person who edits the programme needs to be obviously  
 10 of the organisation but not beholden to the  
 11 organisation. It is a much, much more difficult job  
 12 than running any of the news bulletins or editing the --  
 13 what is it called? -- the news channel, which strike me  
 14 as basically being -- well, I won't be disparaging about  
 15 them but it requires the exercise of independent  
 16 judgment to a much greater degree than those operations  
 17 do. It deals much more with first generation journalism  
 18 than those institutions do, which are essentially very  
 19 often about the turning of second hand material into  
 20 third hand material.  
 21 So it requires a person, I think, who is pretty  
 22 robust and pretty bright, and is willing to go against  
 23 the herd, really.  
 24 Q. Is there anything unique about Newsnight -- or perhaps  
 25 Newsnight and other similar programmes, if there are

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1 (Pages 1 to 4)

1 similar programmes -- which present particular  
 2 challenges for an editor, beyond what you have just  
 3 said?  
 4 A. Well, it can't be unique if it is shared with other  
 5 programmes, of course, so ... I -- I am not aware of  
 6 that and that is a question you would probably --  
 7 I don't know how many people you would find who have  
 8 worked across a great spectrum of programmes, but  
 9 certainly in television, I don't think there is anything  
 10 like it, no.  
 11 Q. What about Panorama?  
 12 A. What about Panorama?  
 13 Q. Well, what is the difference between being the editor of  
 14 Newsnight and being the editor of Panorama, for example?  
 15 A. I haven't worked -- it is years and years and years  
 16 since I worked on Panorama, and I am not really in  
 17 a position to make a comparison, I don't think.  
 18 Panorama is a weekly programme which is, as far as I can  
 19 see, a great deal better resourced than Newsnight is.  
 20 Newsnight, particularly in view of the -- of the huge  
 21 resource cuts that have gone on, it is a particularly  
 22 grinding, gruelling job, because it is every day, and  
 23 every day, you are making judgments which are either for  
 24 that night's transmission or for next week's  
 25 transmission, if it is the case of a film, for example,

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1 or the week after or the week after that. And resources  
 2 have been pared so much that editors who previously had  
 3 perhaps a bit of latitude or leisure to make considered  
 4 judgments very often do not have that space any longer.  
 5 Q. And who is it that would be, to use your words,  
 6 confining that space? Where do the restrictions on the  
 7 space come from?  
 8 A. Sorry, I have not made myself clear. My point was  
 9 a resource point, that -- I mean, you will need to check  
 10 the facts on this yourself precisely -- the figures --  
 11 as to what share of the previous budget and the previous  
 12 staffing levels the current incumbent of that post,  
 13 whoever they may be, has to deal with.  
 14 But staffing levels have been reduced, resources  
 15 have been reduced, and certainly by comparison with the  
 16 times -- I have been there for a very long time there  
 17 now, but certainly by comparison with the time when  
 18 I first went there, the air time has been extended.  
 19 So, you know, whereas -- I will give you an example.  
 20 Whereas there used to be something called a "lead  
 21 producer" on an item and a "second producer", very often  
 22 nowadays on Newsnight, you will have one producer who  
 23 has not only to look after making some on-the-day tape  
 24 but also has to look after finding the relevant guests  
 25 and getting them to the studio.

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1 This is a situation that is relatively recent in  
 2 origin. I don't want to put a precise figure on it,  
 3 because I don't -- I mean, it is something that one has  
 4 been aware of, on an open door basis, over a period of,  
 5 I would say, probably three or four years. But the  
 6 resources are extremely stretched and that doesn't make  
 7 it a satisfactory environment in which people are making  
 8 difficult editorial judgments about the longer term.  
 9 Q. Right at the beginning of this discussion, you mentioned  
 10 two things. You talked about economic changes and you  
 11 just fleshed that out in the last few minutes. You also  
 12 used the words "institutional changes". Can you just  
 13 describe what you had in mind by "institutional  
 14 changes"?  
 15 A. It's difficult -- I have got this thing on a speaker  
 16 phone, so I am just going to see if I can switch it off.  
 17 I hope you don't disappear. If you do, I will call you  
 18 back, okay? Because you are not very loud. Right,  
 19 let's see what happens. Are you still there?  
 20 Q. Yes.  
 21 A. Excellent. Good, good. Much easier to hear you.  
 22 Okay, institutional changes. Well, what happened,  
 23 I would say, was that post-Hutton, there has been  
 24 a general drawing in of horns, I would argue. I would  
 25 say that there was a cultural change within the

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1 organisation which came about after that. I don't say  
 2 it is necessarily provably a consequence, but it  
 3 certainly is noticeable.  
 4 In the particular context of Newsnight, which, as  
 5 I think I might have hinted earlier, has rather prided  
 6 itself upon being slightly at one remove from the daily  
 7 news churn, this has given us particular problems. The  
 8 news division is -- it has essentially been taken over  
 9 by radio. The -- so it is, you know, led by  
 10 Helen Boaden, a radio person. Her second-in-command is  
 11 Steve Mitchell, a radio person. Peter Rippon was  
 12 a radio person. These people belong to a different kind  
 13 of culture. They belong -- you must form your own  
 14 judgment about what the characteristics of that culture  
 15 are, but it is a different sort of discipline and it  
 16 tends to attract different sorts of people.  
 17 So what happened, when Peter Barron, the last editor  
 18 of Newsnight, let left to go and work at Google --  
 19 Barron was in the long tradition of people who were  
 20 pretty free-thinking, creative, radical-ish -- I don't  
 21 mean politically radical, but people who had a fresh way  
 22 of looking at things. When he left to go to Google, the  
 23 question of his replacement came up and it was given to  
 24 a man whose previous experience in -- was almost  
 25 entirely in radio, thereby completing the -- as I saw

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1 it, the full takeover of television by radio.  
 2 People in radio tend to have a different set of  
 3 priorities, I think, and they tend to be different sorts  
 4 of people. I am not saying that people don't change; of  
 5 course they do change, and most people who work in  
 6 television have, at some point, worked in radio posts.  
 7 I don't know. Many people --  
 8 MR POLLARD: Jeremy, it's Nick here. Can you just try and  
 9 define that a bit more for us, the difference between,  
 10 if you like, the --  
 11 A. Well, this is where we come across the difficulties of  
 12 your protocol. You know, I would be very happy to  
 13 discuss that with you off the record, because we both  
 14 know -- would understand immediately what we are talking  
 15 about. But in cold black and white, it is going to look  
 16 rather disparaging and I don't want to do that  
 17 particularly. But --  
 18 MR POLLARD: I understand that, and if it is possible to do  
 19 that without reference to names and individuals, it will  
 20 be helpful.  
 21 A. Right. I would say that there was a greater  
 22 institutional -- preoccupation with the institution in  
 23 radio than there is in television. There tends,  
 24 I think, in television to be a greater loyalty to the  
 25 programme, a greater sense that because one is in

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1 an extremely competitive environment, you want -- you  
 2 have to create something that arrests the eyeballs,  
 3 and -- but that tends to make people very committed to  
 4 their programme. In radio, I think there is a much more  
 5 institutional loyalty, where people tend -- I -- I would  
 6 say they were more visible and I -- I mean, I don't want  
 7 to damage or tar everybody with the same brush. It is  
 8 not fair. I don't know. But it seems to me that that  
 9 is the case and you certainly hear of -- people last  
 10 a very long time. In television, it tends to be  
 11 a younger person's game. There are -- with fewer older  
 12 people in it and fewer people, I would say, preoccupied  
 13 with their pensions.  
 14 MR MACLEAN: Can I ask you, Jeremy -- it has been suggested  
 15 to us, not by a central player in the particular drama,  
 16 that Mr Rippon was, and I quote, "a good man", who had  
 17 an excellent reputation as an editor on BBC radio, [REDACTED]  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 A. [REDACTED]  
 22 Now, I -- I have a real problem in the way that the BBC  
 23 has tried to lay all this on one person, I don't think  
 24 it emerges well from it. But I would have said that  
 25 that was the case.

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1 At the time of the appointment, I said to anybody  
 2 who would listen that it mattered -- it wasn't  
 3 necessarily a block to appointment that somebody had,  
 4 you know, come from elsewhere. That way, you would rule  
 5 out a great deal of talent. What mattered, I thought,  
 6 was moral courage, and I, therefore, did not know --  
 7 I didn't know Peter Rippon before he was appointed.  
 8 I think we met once for a cup of tea when he was going  
 9 for the job, but then that tends to happen if you have  
 10 been around for a long time. The applicants tend to  
 11 come round and say, "Look, let's go and have lunch or  
 12 a cup of tea on or whatever", the idea, I suppose, being  
 13 that you will mark their card or something. I don't  
 14 know what it is exactly, but you know, it is quite  
 15 understandable.  
 16 So I had met him, I think, just that once. [REDACTED]  
 17 [REDACTED]  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 Q. To who?  
 23 A. [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED] I did not feel -- this is why I don't --  
 25 I mean, I really don't like the way that you are putting

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1 [REDACTED]  
 2 You are asking -- you know, I am being expected to relay  
 3 private conversations. But you know, I think it is  
 4 important that you get to the bottom of this, and I will  
 5 help you to try to do so. But I certainly --  
 6 [REDACTED]  
 7 [REDACTED]  
 8 [REDACTED]  
 9 [REDACTED]  
 10 [REDACTED]  
 11 [REDACTED]  
 12 Q. Can I just ask about Meirion Jones for a second?  
 13 A. Yes.  
 14 Q. He is a very experienced journalist.  
 15 A. Yes, he is. [REDACTED]  
 16 Q. Well, you anticipated the next question. What would you  
 17 say were his strengths and weaknesses as a journalist  
 18 and producer?  
 19 A. Well, I don't know how familiar you are with our world,  
 20 but I suspect that Nick will probably confirm this, [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 He, however -- we had some quite serious run-ins  
 25 with some powerful institutions and I have always taken

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1 it that if the institution denies it and Meirion says it  
 2 is true, it is true, and I have been perfectly happy to  
 3 go into -- you know, to go into interviews or to write  
 4 scripts on the basis of what he has told me. I consider  
 5 him to be reliable.  
 6 Q. Can I ask you to cast your mind back to a different  
 7 time.  
 8 A. Yes.  
 9 Q. To 2011. Let's take the week before Jimmy Saville died.  
 10 A. Uh-huh.  
 11 Q. What were relations like between Mr Rippon and Mr Jones  
 12 at that stage?  
 13 A. I can't answer that. I don't know.  
 14 Q. Right. [REDACTED]  
 15 [REDACTED]  
 16 [REDACTED]  
 17 [REDACTED]  
 18 A. [REDACTED]  
 19 [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 They potentially bring them expensive libel suits, and  
 2 they bring them trouble with, you know, powerful vested  
 3 interests.  
 4 So the editor's job is, it seems to me, to keep the  
 5 anxious bosses off the back of the investigator, and in  
 6 exchange, the investigator has to be completely  
 7 trustworthy. You cannot begin to doubt what the  
 8 investigator tells you he or she has found out, and the  
 9 two of you then collaborate on where you will take the  
 10 inquiry next.  
 11 But they are an obsessive, unusual people, [REDACTED]  
 12 [REDACTED]  
 13 [REDACTED]  
 14 MR MACLEAN: What he says -- and we obviously will discuss  
 15 this with Peter Rippon in due course, but what he says  
 16 is, in a particular e-mail:  
 17 "Since [he is talking about Meirion Jones now] he  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 [REDACTED] t made me  
 20 nervous about his story."  
 21 Can we --  
 22 A. This is the Saville story?  
 23 Q. Because of, as it were, [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED] that made Rippon

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1 MR POLLARD: Jeremy, can I just cut in with a question.  
 2 Just to go back to the description of investigative  
 3 journalists generally as always obsessive and often  
 4 a bit driven and sometimes a bit -- a bit highly strung?  
 5 That sort of picture. What, in your long experience, is  
 6 therefore the ideal relationship between that sort of  
 7 journalist and his or her editor? In other words,  
 8 talented but perhaps quite quirky people like that, how  
 9 should they be managed?  
 10 A. Well, you know, you are the editor. I am just the gob  
 11 on the stick. But I think you absolutely have to have  
 12 total trust, (1), and (2), they have to be encouraged to  
 13 have their heads, but you have to manage them just to  
 14 the extent of knowing that they are complying with good  
 15 practice and the law and generally, you know, ethical  
 16 behaviour.  
 17 So it wants a light touch relationship, it seems to  
 18 me, but it needs to be a relationship that is founded on  
 19 trust. You have to be able to believe that you both  
 20 have the same objective. The investigative reporter or  
 21 producer expects and is, I think, entitled to expect  
 22 that his editor will cover his -- or her editor will  
 23 cover his or her back from a management which very often  
 24 feels that these sorts of people bring them nothing but  
 25 trouble. They bring them lots of work for the lawyers.

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1 nervous about Jones' Saville story.  
 2 Now, can we just break that down? [REDACTED]  
 3 [REDACTED]  
 4 [REDACTED]  
 5 A. No, I don't. What are they referring to?  
 6 MR POLLARD: Jeremy, I am only guessing, I might be  
 7 completely wrong, but is [REDACTED]  
 8 A. [REDACTED]  
 9 [REDACTED]  
 10 [REDACTED]  
 11 [REDACTED]  
 12 [REDACTED]  
 13 [REDACTED]  
 14 [REDACTED]  
 15 MR POLLARD: Right.  
 16 A. But we are speculating. I am sure you will ask  
 17 Peter Rippon what he was referring to. But -- and  
 18 I would be -- you know, it is important in terms of  
 19 professional reputation. We were all concerned that the  
 20 facts were absolutely straight here. [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 [REDACTED]  
 2 [REDACTED]  
 3 [REDACTED]  
 4 [REDACTED]  
 5 [REDACTED]  
 6 [REDACTED]  
 7 [REDACTED] So it is perhaps  
 8 less clear cut than that that form of words seems to  
 9 suggest; and it has not dented my confidence in Meirion.  
 10 Q. Right, okay. That is very clear, thank you.  
 11 [REDACTED]  
 12 [REDACTED]  
 13 [REDACTED]  
 14 [REDACTED]  
 15 [REDACTED]  
 16 [REDACTED]  
 17 [REDACTED]  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 A. [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 [REDACTED]  
 2 [REDACTED]  
 3 [REDACTED]  
 4 [REDACTED]  
 5 [REDACTED]  
 6 Q. You have mentioned these institutional changes. You  
 7 have mentioned the economic squeeze. You have described  
 8 Mr Rippon's background in radio, and so on.  
 9 A. Mm-hm.  
 10 Q. As it were, apart from that, was Newsnight generally  
 11 a happy ship in October 2011?  
 12 A. I would have said so. I mean, we were feeling the -- we  
 13 were feeling the pinch, in the sense that, as I say,  
 14 people were run a bit ragged and [REDACTED]  
 15 [REDACTED]  
 16 [REDACTED]  
 17 [REDACTED]  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 Q. [REDACTED]  
 20 A. [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 Q. [REDACTED]  
 23 A. [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 [REDACTED]  
 2 [REDACTED]  
 3 [REDACTED]  
 4 [REDACTED]  
 5 [REDACTED]  
 6 [REDACTED]  
 7 [REDACTED]  
 8 [REDACTED]  
 9 [REDACTED]  
 10 [REDACTED]  
 11 [REDACTED]  
 12 Q. I am going to come to those deputies in a moment. We  
 13 have seen that you had a high opinion of Shaminder  
 14 Nahal. Really, I think that is fair.  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 Q. I assume you have read Peter Rippon's blog in the last  
 17 few weeks, like the rest --  
 18 A. I haven't read it recently. I did see it, yes.  
 19 Q. You may or may not recall that one of the points that he  
 20 makes in it is that some members of the, as it were, the  
 21 team had supported his decision not to run their story  
 22 and others had disagreed with him.  
 23 A. Mm-hm.  
 24 Q. And we have seen from your e-mails -- and we will come  
 25 to this -- that you think that it was the wrong

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1 decision. Do you know what Liz Gibbons' view was about  
 2 running the story, either then or now?  
 3 A. Well, why don't you ask her?  
 4 Q. I am asking you whether you were --  
 5 A. At the time, no. At the time, such was the -- you know,  
 6 I knew Meirion was working on a Saville investigation,  
 7 but lots of things, you know, get started upon which  
 8 don't fly, in the end. And such is, you know, the  
 9 nature of the treadmill, that you tend to say, "What are  
 10 you doing? How is it going?" And then something else  
 11 comes along which you have to deal with for that night's  
 12 programme.  
 13 So I was -- I was aware that he had started on it.  
 14 I was aware that it didn't go out. But I was not really  
 15 terribly aware of either his own feelings about that  
 16 judgment or the feelings of other people in the  
 17 editorial hierarchy.  
 18 I do happen to know that at the time when the thing  
 19 was commissioned, Liz Gibbons felt that it was not the  
 20 sort of thing that Newsnight did yet. You know, it was  
 21 not our conventional territory.  
 22 Now, if you want to know what she thinks beyond  
 23 that, you really should ask her, but I know, because she  
 24 said as much to me -- but this is subsequent, of course,  
 25 it is not at the time -- that she had felt that -- and

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<p>1 I think all of them feel that -- they wish that they had                  2 kept a closer eye on it at the time. But then, it was                  3 Rippon's personal judgment.                  4 Q. Right. We obviously will explore that.                  5 A. Yes.                  6 Q. You say that you were aware, in general terms, that                  7 Mr Jones was working on this story.                  8 A. Yes.                  9 Q. Obviously one knows, as a viewer of Newsnight, that you                  10 generally have a film piece and then there is                  11 a discussion led by the presenter with a range of                  12 people.                  13 A. Mm-hm, mm-hm.                  14 Q. So presumably, if this story had run, there would have                  15 been a film piece with the people being interviewed by                  16 Liz MacKean?                  17 A. I would have said that was a false presumption.                  18 Sometimes -- there are many films which are run that                  19 actually are not followed by a discussion, and there are                  20 films which, when you see what they are like, you then                  21 feel: well, we'd better have a discussion after that, or                  22 it naturally leads to a discussion or the editor of the                  23 day is so paralysed by the yawning chasm ahead of him                  24 that he decides we are going to have to have one. But                  25 it isn't -- the things are not automatically</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 12 October, which should be towards the back of that                  2 clip of e-mails that we have sent back to you.                  3 A. Yes.                  4 Q. Is it --                  5 A. Yes, I have got it. Yes, yes.                  6 Q. In our bundle -- this won't mean anything to you but                  7 just for the transcript, so that we can find it later,                  8 it is A/12, page 112.                  9 You make a number of points in this e-mail which are                  10 of great interest to us. One of the points that you                  11 make is that the decision not to run the story was, in                  12 your words, certainly wrong.                  13 A. Yes.                  14 Q. When did you form that view?                  15 A. I will be perfectly frank. I formed it when the shit                  16 hit the fan. I mean -- sorry. I formed it when the --                  17 some time around the time that the ITV thing aired.                  18 I found the whole -- I found the subject matter really                  19 unpleasant and distasteful, and then I thought: why am                  20 I so bothered about this? And I concluded that the                  21 reason I was very unhappy -- and I am talking here about                  22 recent events. I am not talking about last year, at the                  23 time that the decision was made, because I didn't know                  24 exactly where they were with it, and nor did most of us                  25 on the programme. As I say, we were all [indistinct].</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 commissioned on that basis. In fact, most tape pieces,                  2 I would say, that are commissioned longer term, are not                  3 intended -- this is a ridiculous generalisation, but                  4 they are not intended as the premise for a discussion.                  5 They are exercises in their own right.                  6 Q. Right. So it follows from that that it wouldn't be                  7 particularly surprising if arrangements hadn't been made                  8 to identify what the topic of any post-film discussion                  9 might be, or who might participate in it, because there                  10 might not be one at all?                  11 A. I think that is a real red herring. I wouldn't -- it is                  12 just sufficient unto itself, I think.                  13 Q. In your view --                  14 A. I mean ...                  15 (The audio cut out)                  16 A. ... even suggested, "Oh let's have a discussion about                  17 it". I do think that there is -- I mean, the broader                  18 editorial justification for it is that it does shine                  19 a light into the way in which -- or onto the way in                  20 which -- attitudes have changed. That is the broader                  21 context of it. But I don't -- I wouldn't have expected                  22 that such a film would have been followed necessarily by                  23 discussion.                  24 Q. Right. Can I just pick up that point you have just                  25 made, which I think we can see in your e-mail of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 But I concluded, when ITV aired that thing, which                  2 was -- well, I don't know, I think it was not that                  3 different to what we had -- it was a long time after                  4 these events -- that the judgment that we had made was                  5 the judgment that authority figures always make when                  6 dealing with these children, and my -- do I go into it                  7 in this e-mail? Yeah, I do.                  8 Q. If you look down the page, you --                  9 A. Yes, yes. These people prey upon children in vulnerable                  10 situations, and when the children complain, they are not                  11 believed, because if you ever get them in court, it is                  12 well known that clever lawyers can discredit them                  13 because of their chaotic lives, the problems they have                  14 had with the police, and so on. And I thought that we                  15 had behaved just like many other authorities, and                  16 I didn't like it.                  17 Q. So it follows from that, I think, that you certainly                  18 wouldn't take the view that this story -- forget for the                  19 moment about the events that took place on BBC premises.                  20 Leave all that, for the moment, to one side. But just                  21 the story about Jimmy Saville, dead TV star -- dead BBC                  22 TV star -- being a paedophile. You would not agree that                  23 that was not a Newsnight story, potentially?                  24 A. Well, I think it would have been -- I think it would                  25 have been not a Newsnight story in some respects.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

1 I mean, I don't find it surprising that some people  
 2 said, "Look, this isn't really for us." It is not our  
 3 normal sort of territory. I mean, you say you have  
 4 watched the programme. Thank you very much. I am glad  
 5 you enjoy it. But you know, you don't see this sort of  
 6 stuff very much on -- or indeed at all on Newsnight.  
 7 I think at that level, one can understand why people  
 8 would say, "It is not our sort of thing." It is not.  
 9 Q. Now, what did you expect -- if you are still looking at  
 10 that e-mail to Peter Rippon.  
 11 A. Yes, yes.  
 12 Q. What did you expect Peter Rippon to do with that e-mail  
 13 when he received it, apart from read it?  
 14 A. This e-mail that I have sent him?  
 15 Q. Yes.  
 16 A. Well, I think I have explained -- yes. I didn't expect  
 17 him to do anything. I wanted to explain to him why  
 18 I felt differently about it to the decision that he had  
 19 made.  
 20 Q. Would you have expected him to send an e-mail to  
 21 Mr Mitchell?  
 22 A. I specifically said to him, somewhere or other -- no,  
 23 I wouldn't have expected him to. But I did at some  
 24 point say to him: "I should like my views on this to be  
 25 made known to the inquiry."  
 Page 25

1 Q. Yes. You asked him for permission to send them to  
 2 Helen Boaden and he said to you --  
 3 A. I don't think -- I didn't -- well, did I? Yes, I said  
 4 I should like to send it to Helen. And he replied:  
 5 "I have CCed her."  
 6 Q. Yes, but he didn't tell you that the e-mail that we have  
 7 just been looking at had been sent by him to Mr Mitchell  
 8 ten minutes after you had sent it to him.  
 9 A. No, I didn't, and I am ashamed to say I haven't read it  
 10 sufficiently closely to realise that that had happened.  
 11 Mitchell and Rippon are close, and I don't --  
 12 I mean, you know, if he sent it on with some disparaging  
 13 remark about me, well, you know, that wouldn't surprise  
 14 me either. I don't know.  
 15 Q. Were you aware that before he published a blog,  
 16 Peter Rippon wrote something called "The chain of  
 17 events" which was sent to Helen Boaden and  
 18 Steve Mitchell?  
 19 A. No, I wasn't, but then why should I?  
 20 Q. There is no reason why you should be, but you might have  
 21 been.  
 22 A. No, I wasn't. No, it is a fair enough question, of  
 23 course, sorry.  
 24 No, I wasn't aware of that; but then, you know, in  
 25 the -- in the context of these things, you have to  
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1 understand -- sorry, you, of course, will have realised  
 2 this already. But people like me are below the salt in  
 3 an institution like the BBC. It is not -- it is,  
 4 I believe, appreciably different to some other media  
 5 organisations.  
 6 Producers -- particularly producers who get to  
 7 a position of editorial eminence -- do not like their  
 8 presenters interfering in what they consider to be the  
 9 business of what I would call the bureaucracy and they  
 10 would doubtless call the editorial superstructure or  
 11 hierarchy or something. It is a cultural thing. They  
 12 don't like us. So of course we wouldn't be -- we  
 13 wouldn't -- I wouldn't be shown such a thing, nor would  
 14 I expect to see it. And -- yes, I ...  
 15 Q. I am not making a big point about this. I am just  
 16 asking you if you had seen it, and you've said you  
 17 haven't. One of the points that he makes in it is that  
 18 the story was put on something called the "MPRL". Are  
 19 you familiar with that term?  
 20 A. MPRL? I have never heard of it.  
 21 Q. Managed programme risk list.  
 22 A. That is very interesting. I only know about this at  
 23 second or third hand. Second hand, I think. I was  
 24 unaware that this thing existed until this incident blew  
 25 up. These are programmes referred to the top of the  
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1 organisation as potential areas of embarrassment or  
 2 interest.  
 3 Q. Yes, yes.  
 4 A. I was -- I didn't know it was on that.  
 5 Q. Well, it wasn't, in fact, on it, but -- well, I am  
 6 coming to that.  
 7 A. Oh, it wasn't? Oh! Well, it clearly should have been.  
 8 Q. Well, can we just take it in stages? He says in this  
 9 document that the story, the Jimmy Saville story, had  
 10 been put on the MPRL; okay? Let's just take that as  
 11 a premise, for the moment, of the discussion.  
 12 A. Mm-hm.  
 13 Q. Now, as I understand it, the managed programmes risk  
 14 list is intended to be a mechanism for communications  
 15 between different parts of the BBC; for example, between  
 16 the vision and --  
 17 A. Mm-hm.  
 18 Q. Somebody who works in the vision side of things has made  
 19 the point that one of the purposes of this structure is  
 20 that it shouldn't be necessary to have ten second  
 21 conversations between directors of news and directors of  
 22 vision, because this mechanism exists to put potential  
 23 problems onto other people's radar.  
 24 A. Mm-hm.  
 25 Q. We have seen examples of this MPRL, and there is, as you  
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1 would expect, lots of Newsnight stories and all sorts of  
 2 things on it from different BBC output.  
 3 **A. Yes.**  
 4 **Q.** There is quite a lot of pending Newsnight  
 5 investigations.  
 6 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 7 **Q.** So you don't know how this -- you don't know how this  
 8 worked, how it is put together. As we understand it,  
 9 Liz Gibbons sent in, as it were, a Newsnight entry for  
 10 this MPRL regularly to Mr Mitchell's office and then it  
 11 would go from his office higher up the food chain. That  
 12 is not something that you were involved with?  
 13 **A. No, not at all. As I said, I was not even aware that**  
 14 **this thing existed. Doesn't it go to the Director**  
 15 **General eventually? I don't know. Anyway, you will**  
 16 **find all that out. No, I am not -- I know nothing about**  
 17 **that, I am sorry.**  
 18 **Q.** But you -- given that you now know about this MPRL, your  
 19 expectation would be that a story such as the  
 20 Jimmy Saville story would indeed be on the managed  
 21 programmes risk list because it was clearly something of  
 22 interest to the higher-ups, as it were?  
 23 **A. I suppose if you have such a thing, it would be**  
 24 **an obvious contender, yes.**  
 25 **Q. Yes.**

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1 **MR POLLARD:** Alan, can I just jump in with a question?  
 2 Slightly to rewind to a point from a little earlier. It  
 3 was about the story itself, Jeremy. You will have seen,  
 4 probably, that there was a thread throughout the  
 5 discussions that were taking place in November between  
 6 Meirion and Liz and Peter Rippon about the progress of  
 7 the story, and that there was a sort of recurring theme  
 8 of: where is the letter which purportedly explained the  
 9 dropping of the case by Surrey police? And you might  
 10 have seen this idea that Peter's view was that this, if  
 11 you like, institutional failure -- in other words,  
 12 the failure either of the police or the CPS to proceed  
 13 with this -- was a fundamental part of the story. And  
 14 I think it is fair to characterise it as something that  
 15 perhaps in his mind would make it more of a Newsnight  
 16 story.  
 17 Bearing in mind what you were saying about some  
 18 people had thought perhaps it wasn't, that if it was  
 19 just the story of a dead celebrity abusing people long  
 20 ago, that that was a valid direction to take -- do you  
 21 understand that? Do you sort of get that or support it,  
 22 that that institutional failure might have been the  
 23 difference between it being a Newsnight story and not?  
 24 Sorry, that was a long question.  
 25 **A. No, the institutional failure by the Surrey police, do**

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1 **you mean?**  
 2 **Q.** Yes, that or, failing that, the CPS.  
 3 **A. You know, you are asking me an opinion. Do I -- I can**  
 4 **understand why some people might say that. I must say,**  
 5 **I think on the only conversation that I had with Meirion**  
 6 **about this at the time, he did not say: "We are looking**  
 7 **into why the Surrey police failed to act." He said,**  
 8 **"I am looking into Jimmy Saville." And I think**  
 9 **I probably said something like: "Oh well, I don't think**  
 10 **I need to ask you any further what that's about!"**  
 11 **MR POLLARD:** Okay, fair enough, yes.  
 12 **A. I mean, I can see why, you know, some people might take**  
 13 **that view. But it is a counsel of -- it is a counsel of**  
 14 **extreme -- I don't know. I was going to say "extreme**  
 15 **caution", but I really don't know. It is just**  
 16 **an opinion.**  
 17 **MR POLLARD:** Yes, thanks.  
 18 **MR MACLEAN:** Just to go back to this managed programmes risk  
 19 list, when I said that it wasn't on the list, in fact,  
 20 as we understand it at the moment, it was provided by  
 21 Liz Gibbons on the list she sent to somebody called  
 22 Sara Beck. I don't know if she was on your radar screen  
 23 or not?  
 24 **A. No, I'm afraid she is definitely off it.**  
 25 **Q.** But when it went beyond her, to Mr Mitchell's office, it

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1 would appear that the Newsnight Jimmy Saville story was  
 2 not on the list that then got passed higher up. In  
 3 other words, it never came, for example, to vision's  
 4 attention.  
 5 **A. I know nothing about that.**  
 6 **Q.** You know nothing about it; okay.  
 7 **A. I mean, as I said, I have only recently become aware of**  
 8 **the existence of the managed programmes risk list or**  
 9 **whatever it is called.**  
 10 **Q.** Now, if you can fast forward back to October 2012, to  
 11 2 October. Now, this is the day that Mr Rippon's blog  
 12 gets published.  
 13 **A. Mm-hm.**  
 14 **Q.** It is the day before, I think, the ITV story is  
 15 broadcast but it has been heavily trailed in the weekend  
 16 press.  
 17 **A. Yes.**  
 18 **Q.** Everybody knows what ITV are going to do.  
 19 **A. Yes.**  
 20 **Q.** Can I just ask you about this editor's blog? In this  
 21 particular situation, it seems that Mr Rippon's blog was  
 22 an attempt to explain the position, particularly in  
 23 advance of the broadcast of the ITV programme. That  
 24 seems fairly clear.  
 25 **A. Mm-hm.**

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<p>1 Q. What do you think of the notion of using an editor's 2 blog as such a means of communication? Is that 3 a sensible thing -- 4 A. I mean, who reads editors' blogs? I don't know. 5 Q. Yes, quite, quite. 6 A. I mean, I don't know. But to be fair, it was -- I think 7 there was -- you know, there were e-mails flying about 8 all over the place from people. You will have to check 9 this, but as far as I recall, from Helen and others, 10 saying: Peter Rippon has done a blog explaining all of 11 this, explaining why he took the decision he took. So 12 I don't think it was quite as obscure as the editor's 13 blog may -- suggests. 14 Q. Now, you mentioned a little earlier, when we were 15 discussing Mr Rippon, about his attitude to the stories 16 that were being worked on. Would you expect the editor 17 to view the rushes -- I think that's the term you use -- 18 of interviews that had been conducted before taking 19 a final decision to pull the story? 20 A. No. 21 Q. Why not? 22 A. Well, that's why you have producers. I mean, the rushes 23 are the -- everything that occurs. You know, the tape 24 comes back. It is edited together by the producer. At 25 that point, clearly the editor needs to see it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 you are saying -- you are effectively saying he is 2 seeing something between rushes and final product. 3 I wouldn't expect that, no. 4 MR POLLARD: No. I think what I am saying -- and I think 5 I am right about the stage that this had reached. There 6 hadn't been a rough cut of this, as I understand it. 7 A. As I understand it too, yes. 8 MR POLLARD: There had been at least four, possibly five, 9 versions of a script which had got indications in them, 10 as you would expect, of interview clips from various 11 people. 12 A. Yes, yes. 13 MR POLLARD: And it had reached the point where the 14 producers quite clearly were pushing this story very 15 hard and saying they believed in it, and the editor was 16 clearly, as it turned out, on the brink of saying, "No, 17 I don't want to go ahead with it." 18 So the question is: would you have expected the 19 editor who was acting as executive producer of that 20 piece to see the clips of interview or just to read them 21 on the page? 22 A. Well, it is an unusual situation. Had it been 23 transcribed? 24 MR POLLARD: Well, I think the clips of interviews within 25 the scripts have a pretty strong description of what is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 But I have to tell you -- and it wouldn't be 2 applicable in this sort of case, but frequently things 3 are now so stretched that they can't be viewed by 4 editors before transmission because there are simply -- 5 there is simply nobody there. No-one has the time to do 6 it. Now, that would not be the case in this sort of story, 7 which is prepared over a longer timeframe. But I -- in 8 answer to your original question, I would not expect the 9 editor to view the rushes, no. 10 Q. Right. 11 A. The editor might, at some point, in the context of 12 viewing a cut piece, say, "Did he or she say anything 13 more on that?" Or: "Have you got anything more on that 14 particular angle?" Or: "Did you ask about this? 15 Because it is not in here." That sort of thing. At 16 which point -- which invites a return to the rushes, but 17 I wouldn't expect an editor to view rushes because they 18 would have no time to do anything else. 19 MR POLLARD: Just for clarification, you would expect, when 20 a decision was being taken, would you, for the editor to 21 see the proposed clips? 22 A. It depends what form the thing is. But if it is 23 a proper -- yes, of course. If it is a piece, the 24 editor should see it before transmission. But to use 25 that phrase that you just used, "the proposed clips",</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 in each clip. 2 A. Yes, yes. 3 MR POLLARD: But of course, what you don't -- 4 A. That will be the reporter or producer paraphrasing it, 5 probably. 6 MR POLLARD: Exactly. 7 A. But sometimes, you know, if you have got particularly 8 legally contentious things or very, very heavily 9 invested in pieces, sometimes proper transcripts are 10 done of the whole of the interview before it is edited. 11 But I -- that is obviously not what we are at here. 12 MR POLLARD: No. I think you obviously -- you don't see the 13 tone of voice. 14 A. Yes, that's correct. 15 MR POLLARD: This is obviously something we will ask 16 Peter Rippon about, but I just wanted to know about 17 your -- 18 A. No, I can't -- I don't think I can help you there, 19 sorry. 20 MR POLLARD: Okay, thanks. 21 MR MACLEAN: Now Jeremy, on 2 October, you were keen for 22 Newsnight itself to cover this story, weren't you? If 23 you look in your e-mail -- 24 A. What day of the week is that? 25 Q. I think it is a --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

1 A. I recall -- I recall -- my vague recollection is that  
 2 the ITV thing transmits on a Wednesday. It is all over  
 3 the papers on Saturday/Sunday previous.  
 4 Q. Yes.  
 5 A. Is that correct?  
 6 Q. That is --  
 7 A. My recollection is -- I mean, I can look at my calender  
 8 while I am talking to you.  
 9 Q. I think the 2nd is a Tuesday.  
 10 A. Tuesday?  
 11 Q. The 2 October.  
 12 A. I am surprised. My recollection was that having -- when  
 13 it was clear that ITV were going to run something on the  
 14 Wednesday, my recollection is that on the Monday, I took  
 15 it up --  
 16 Q. If you --  
 17 MR POLLARD: Monday the 3rd.  
 18 A. Monday is the 3rd?  
 19 MR POLLARD: Yes. The 2nd is a Sunday. Oh sorry, I am --  
 20 A. I don't think so. I think Monday is a --  
 21 MR POLLARD: Sorry, I am looking at 2011. Apologies.  
 22 A. Monday is the 1st, Tuesday the 2nd. Wednesday the  
 23 3rd is the date of the ITV transmission.  
 24 MR POLLARD: Yes, exactly.  
 25 A. My recollection is that on the Sunday, I said to the --

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1 no, actually, did I say it on the ... Well no,  
 2 I concluded on the Sunday that we had to do the story on  
 3 the Monday. On the Monday, I raised it with the person  
 4 who was editor of the day that day, and I think with  
 5 Peter Rippon.  
 6 MR MACLEAN: It will help you to look at the e-mail,  
 7 I think, Jeremy, the first one.  
 8 A. Yes, I have got that. That is the 2nd, yes.  
 9 Q. Yes. I haven't got anything from you before that, but  
 10 it may be that this is something --  
 11 A. I am not sure that this is -- no, I raised in  
 12 conversation, you know. I think I called Peter. I am  
 13 not sure. I think I called Peter. I called whoever the  
 14 editor of the day was that day, on the Monday, and said  
 15 that we should -- we really should do this. I didn't  
 16 get anywhere. I then had a conversation -- oh, wait,  
 17 I did, actually. No, on the Monday or the Tuesday --  
 18 I don't recall which one it was -- I raised it  
 19 face-to-face, then, with Peter Rippon. And --  
 20 Q. Right.  
 21 A. He said -- and this was the really striking thing,  
 22 I recall now. In conversation, he said -- when I said,  
 23 "We have got to do this", for the sort of reasons  
 24 I mentioned in the e-mail on 2 October 2012, the one  
 25 dated -- timed 17.56 -- and again, I hasten to say, this

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1 particular conversation I am going to refer to now,  
 2 I can't recall whether it was on the Monday or the  
 3 Tuesday. But what struck me about it was his reply when  
 4 I mentioned the reasons. He said, "I am sorry, I just  
 5 can't do this." And I thought that was a very, very  
 6 unusual word to use, "can't", because the normal  
 7 judgment -- I mean: no, we are not going to do it,  
 8 because we have got -- we haven't got time or we are  
 9 doing politics or we are doing too many social stories  
 10 tonight anyway. "Can't" was a very, very unusual word  
 11 to use, and I didn't say, "What do you mean 'can't'?"  
 12 Someone has told you that you can't, or you physically  
 13 can't face it?"  
 14 Now, I think -- my suspicion is that there may well  
 15 have been an element of both. There certainly was  
 16 an element of the second, as you will see in one of  
 17 these e-mails somewhere in here. He says -- he is  
 18 suggesting that I do -- I can't remember. It was  
 19 a conversation with Neil Breakwell, I think. He is  
 20 suggesting he does -- he does an interview with me and  
 21 he clearly, from the tone of the interview, was not keen  
 22 to do it.  
 23 MR POLLARD: I think the 5 October is --  
 24 A. Is it the 5 October? I will have a hunt around here and  
 25 find it. Anyway. There was a feeling --

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1 MR POLLARD: With Nick Breakwell --  
 2 A. Yes. I told him: "Interviewing you is not a good idea."  
 3 Yes, yes, good. That is a reference on the -- maybe it  
 4 is a reference. I was looking at a copy on the 8th, but  
 5 maybe it is a previous copy.  
 6 [REDACTED]  
 7 [REDACTED]  
 8 [REDACTED]  
 9 [REDACTED]  
 10 [REDACTED]  
 11 [REDACTED]  
 12 [REDACTED]  
 13 [REDACTED]  
 14 [REDACTED]  
 15 Now, I don't know whether that had permeated through  
 16 to him, or that was the reason "I can't do it" -- the  
 17 explanation for "I can't do it", or whether it was  
 18 because he had been told he couldn't do it. My feeling  
 19 was not merely that -- that he should be interviewed  
 20 about it, but that since we had a locus in the story,  
 21 someone from Newsnight had to say something, and he was  
 22 the obvious person. But I saw it, as I think  
 23 I indicated -- yes, I do indicate -- going back to the  
 24 e-mail on 2 October, I did indicate that I thought there  
 25 were lots of other elements in it.

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1 MR MACLEAN: Just pausing at the 2 October.  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. The 17.56 e-mail.  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. When you sent that e-mail, you had already had this  
 6 face-to-face discussion with him that you have referred  
 7 to?  
 8 A. I think I must have done, because 17.56 is pretty late  
 9 in the afternoon. I think I was probably just  
 10 reiterating, you know, the arguments and -- probably in  
 11 a last attempt -- because that was the day before the  
 12 ITV thing goes out. Or maybe I thought we could do it  
 13 on the same -- at the same time or on the same day as  
 14 the ITV thing. I can't recall what time of day it  
 15 aired, but ...  
 16 Q. The e-mail ends by saying:  
 17 "Can I ask you to reconsider ..."  
 18 Which rather suggests that you had had  
 19 a conversation with him already?  
 20 A. I'd certainly had conversations on, I think, both the  
 21 Monday and the Tuesday.  
 22 Q. And did Mr Rippon ever indicate -- well, let me ask you  
 23 a different way. What was his attitude to the idea that  
 24 Newsnight should do this story? I am not asking you now  
 25 about his being interviewed on the programme, but simply

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1 Newsnight doing the story which you wanted to do. We  
 2 can see that on the 2nd --  
 3 A. This is not the Saville story itself, but the fact that  
 4 ITV was about to broadcast, or pegged the ITV being  
 5 about to broadcast.  
 6 Q. Yes, that's right.  
 7 A. I would have said it was a blanket refusal to entertain  
 8 the idea.  
 9 Q. Did he ever indicate to you that he thought that your  
 10 suggestion was one that was worth considering?  
 11 A. Never.  
 12 Q. So you would be surprised, would you, if he had sent  
 13 a text message to Steve Mitchell on 2 October at 16.38,  
 14 saying:  
 15 "JP [which I assume is you] still pushing to do it  
 16 tonight. I think we should consider it."  
 17 That is news to you, is it?  
 18 A. That is news to me. Yes, it certainly is. I had got no  
 19 indication from him that he would entertain the idea.  
 20 It explains a lot of things. It perhaps explains  
 21 "can't".  
 22 Q. Well, we will obviously explore these --  
 23 A. I am sure you will. But -- I mean, I think that it is  
 24 very, very interesting and a very revealing piece of  
 25 information, because it indicates that they had had

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1 previous conversations, and that what sounds to me to be  
 2 a policy judgment had been made, that it wasn't -- the  
 3 subject wasn't going to be tackled.  
 4 Q. Well, as you say -- as I say, we will obviously explore  
 5 that with others.  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Now, he actually replied to your e-mail -- Mr Rippon  
 8 replied within half an hour, if you go over the page, at  
 9 18.22.  
 10 A. Uh-huh.  
 11 Q. And he replies by asking you a question, and the  
 12 question was what allegations had he failed to address,  
 13 in your view, in his blog. Then you answer that at the  
 14 top of the page within ten minutes. Do you see? At  
 15 18.32?  
 16 A. "What allegations have I failed ..."  
 17 Yes.  
 18 Q. And you answer at the top of the page that --  
 19 A. Yes.  
 20 Q. The notable(?) one. You say:  
 21 "Surely we need details [this is your e-mail, second  
 22 line]. Were there any conversations? If so, with  
 23 whom?"  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. "What evidence of those conversations?"

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1 What you were presumably speculating about there, or  
 2 asking about, were conversations with the news  
 3 management, the Helen Boaden or Steven Mitchell?  
 4 A. Well, yes. Probably exactly what you are trying to get  
 5 to the bottom of, yes. I mean, this is a public  
 6 relations disaster because of resolute disclosure [sic]  
 7 to address any of these questions.  
 8 Now, there were lots and lots of other questions,  
 9 I suppose, but yes, I mean, it was -- it was 18.32. It  
 10 was reasonably off the top of the head, yes.  
 11 Q. When you say "were there any conversations", obviously  
 12 we need to explore whether there were, in fact, any  
 13 conversations in this particular instance. But moving  
 14 away from the specific to the general; how common would  
 15 such conversations be between someone in the position of  
 16 Helen Boaden and Steve Mitchell on the one hand, and the  
 17 editor of Newsnight on the other?  
 18 A. How am I supposed to know that?  
 19 Q. Well --  
 20 A. Sorry, there is a dog barking. Go on. Off you go. My  
 21 daughter has got a -- off you go. Sorry.  
 22 I mean, how can I possibly know that? The  
 23 conversations take place, if they take place at all,  
 24 between other people than myself.  
 25 Q. You are asking a question: were there any conversations?

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11 (Pages 41 to 44)

1 A. Yes.  
 2 Q. My question comes from your e-mail. You say:  
 3 "Were there any conversations?"  
 4 If you had got the answer back: "Yes, there were six  
 5 conversations" --  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. -- would that have been something that would have struck  
 8 you as being perfectly routine and ordinary, or would  
 9 you have thought that that was extraordinary or what  
 10 would you --  
 11 A. I wouldn't have thought it was -- I would have thought  
 12 it was, you know, the boss class earning a living.  
 13 Q. Right.  
 14 A. They seemed to spend an awful lot of time having  
 15 meetings with one another. I don't quite understand why  
 16 a subject like this wouldn't have invited some sort of  
 17 discussion, but I don't know.  
 18 Q. Right.  
 19 Now, the same evening, he, Mr Rippon replied to you  
 20 again, I think if you go over the page.  
 21 A. Mm-hm.  
 22 Q. Which, in our bundles, is A/7, 343. He says he thought  
 23 that he had addressed the point that you had mentioned:  
 24 "It really would look like special treatment if  
 25 I came on to expand on it in such detail. It would  
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1 look ... "  
 2 A. Yes.  
 3 Q. "... desperate."  
 4 Then it is your e-mail at the top of the page that  
 5 I just want you to look at, please.  
 6 A. Yes.  
 7 Q. Now, this is the day that the blog has been published  
 8 but it is the day before ITV's broadcast had been -- so  
 9 we had all read about it in the Sunday papers.  
 10 A. Mm-hm.  
 11 Q. You say:  
 12 "I think it is very unfair, and frankly not at all  
 13 untypical, that the BBC has dumped all this on one  
 14 individual. I think the BBC's behaviour now is almost  
 15 as contemptible as it was then."  
 16 What is the "then" a reference to?  
 17 A. (Laughs) Exasperation, I should think. I -- I don't  
 18 know. I mean, this is -- you know. You know what the  
 19 e-mails are like. They just come and go very fast.  
 20 This is, what, 19.25. 19.25, I would have been,  
 21 I should think, probably trying to write the menu and  
 22 worrying about what was going on that night.  
 23 I would guess this is a reference to the decision to  
 24 can the investigation, but that -- I mean, in the  
 25 context, that is the only thing I can think it refers  
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1 to.  
 2 Q. So your attitude from these e-mails was -- if it  
 3 matters, which it might not -- you thought that  
 4 a clearly wrong decision had been made not to run this  
 5 story?  
 6 A. In my judgment, yes.  
 7 Q. But nonetheless, what was happening now was that Rippon  
 8 was being dumped on, or the BBC had dumped all this on  
 9 one individual. Did you mean that he was being given  
 10 a lot on his plate, or he was being, as it were,  
 11 identified as the fall guy?  
 12 A. I think what this refers to is the fact that he was  
 13 being used as the fall guy, and secondly, as you will  
 14 have -- well, as is explicit in the previous e-mails,  
 15 I profoundly disagree with the BBC's refusal to engage  
 16 with it and to justify or attempt to justify its  
 17 position. So I think -- you know, on the whole, I think  
 18 that the public -- you know, the public pay our wages.  
 19 The public are entitled to know what is being done with  
 20 them.  
 21 Q. Did you see the ITV programme when it went out on the  
 22 Thursday?  
 23 A. No, I didn't.  
 24 Q. Or shortly after?  
 25 A. No. It is not the sort of thing I find of any interest.  
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1 I perhaps should have done. No actually, why should  
 2 I have done? It is -- you know, it is sleazy, sleazy  
 3 behaviour in a world I dislike.  
 4 Q. Have you now seen it or not?  
 5 A. No.  
 6 Q. No. Did you see the Panorama that went out a bit after  
 7 that, a couple of weeks ago?  
 8 A. No, I didn't see the Panorama, but I got hold of the  
 9 script of the Panorama and I called the editor. We were  
 10 doing Newsnight that night. It was a Monday, wasn't it?  
 11 We were doing Newsnight that night, and I got hold of  
 12 the script, and I called the editor of Panorama and  
 13 said, "What have you got?" because clearly it was going  
 14 to make life difficult for us, and I thought we might  
 15 be -- you know, one needed to know what was going to be  
 16 in the Panorama in order to deal with it.  
 17 Q. And having seen the script of what Panorama had --  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. -- did that shift your view in any way about any of the  
 20 topics that we have been discussing, and if so, how?  
 21 A. I wouldn't have said so, no.  
 22 Q. If you still have that e-mail at 19.25, the one about  
 23 "dumped all this on".  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Mr Rippon got an e-mail from somebody else, about  
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1 an hour later --  
 2 A. Uh-huh.  
 3 Q. -- saying -- actually, from George Entwistle, at 20.52  
 4 that night --  
 5 A. Uh-huh.  
 6 Q. -- which was a reply to one from him in which he said he  
 7 was aware -- this is Peter Rippon:  
 8 "I am also aware that I am failing to stop JP  
 9 haranguing you about the bloody thing [I don't know what  
 10 that is a reference to, and it may not matter]."  
 11 And George Entwistle came back -- there was a brief  
 12 reference to you, then he says:  
 13 "Good blog. Lonely, at times, I know, but spot on  
 14 to take responsibility and fight it out if you have to.  
 15 I do know how it is. Helen and I totally supportive.  
 16 All the best, G."  
 17 A. Mm-hm.  
 18 Q. Now, it seems, from my reading of your e-mail of 19.25  
 19 but tell me if I am wrong, that you wouldn't share the  
 20 view that at least all management was totally supportive  
 21 of Mr Rippon. Is that fair?  
 22 A. I would -- yes, I think that is fair. I mean, I think,  
 23 had they been totally supportive -- I mean, there is  
 24 a perfect logic to saying: "The policy is their  
 25 individual editorial decision and we support the editor  
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1 and the right to make those decisions." Implicit in  
 2 that is "whether we agree or not".  
 3 But I did not get a sense that there was that sort  
 4 of endorsement.  
 5 Q. So your position, in a nutshell, was that Mr Rippon,  
 6 whose decision you personally clearly disagreed with,  
 7 was being hung out to dry?  
 8 A. Uh-huh, yes.  
 9 Q. Now, you were still pressing for Newsnight to run  
 10 a story, and we can see from one of your e-mails,  
 11 I think, that you were pressing Shaminder Nahal to run  
 12 the story. Can we then go to -- I think there is  
 13 an e-mail of 3 October.  
 14 A. Let me just see if I can find it, yes.  
 15 Q. It should be just over the page, I think, from where we  
 16 were. It starts at the top of the page. It talks  
 17 about:  
 18 "I agree it is corrosive."  
 19 Do you see that one?  
 20 A. Yes, got it.  
 21 Q. Now, it picks up, at the bottom of the page, from where  
 22 we have been. Then do you see Mr Rippon's e-mail to you  
 23 of the 3rd, at 9.36:  
 24 "Thank you for this. Telegraph suggesting ...  
 25 [et cetera]. The leaking and briefing is what actually  
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1 bothers me more. It is only the older lags who do it  
 2 and I have never worked anywhere where it is so  
 3 pervasive."  
 4 A. Mm-hm.  
 5 Q. Now, is that a description that you recognise, that  
 6 second sentence, that "it is only the older lags who do  
 7 it and I have never worked anywhere where it is so  
 8 pervasive"? Obviously he has worked places you haven't,  
 9 but "only the older lags who do it" and leaking and  
 10 briefing being "pervasive" -- are those descriptions you  
 11 recognise?  
 12 A. No. I would have said, actually -- I am not going to  
 13 start naming names. I think --  
 14 Q. I haven't asked you to name names.  
 15 A. In terms of the leaks and the briefings, if there were  
 16 any, I don't think it was at all -- was or is at all  
 17 pervasive. I think -- I can think of, in the course of  
 18 quite a long time there -- well, let's stick to the last  
 19 five years. [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 I can think in this case, from reading the press on  
 25 Saville, I would have thought them -- you see, it looks  
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1 to me as if there are probably two people who have  
 2 leaked on it. So I would not have said -- I mean, you  
 3 will be able to find out what the total number of staff  
 4 on Newsnight is. It must be in the order of 40 to 50,  
 5 including the graphics people and so on. I don't think  
 6 that is very high and I don't find it surprising that he  
 7 has not worked in places where it happens. That again,  
 8 I am afraid, is a reflection on radio culture, which  
 9 tends to be rather different.  
 10 Q. Yes, right.  
 11 A. So I don't find -- I don't find that -- I didn't believe  
 12 that, when I read it, and I don't believe it now, the  
 13 leaking and briefings.  
 14 I mean -- well, actually, what is he referring to?  
 15 "Pervasive" is a stupid word to use, but I am not  
 16 surprised that he uses it. He is a very embattled  
 17 person at this point. It only needs one person to give  
 18 the leaks, if the leaks are sufficiently numerous or --  
 19 or authoritative or damaging.  
 20 So I think he has misunderstood it. I don't believe  
 21 that there are a lot of older lags doing it. You know,  
 22 I could be proved wrong, but I don't think so.  
 23 Q. In your reply, it is right to point out that you said  
 24 that you agreed with him, that "it", whatever it is, is  
 25 corrosive.  
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1 A. Yes, it is. The -- yes, it is, certainly. Leaking I am  
 2 referring to there, yes.  
 3 Q. Yes, yes. Now, you then go on to say:  
 4 "It's disgusting the way the BBC is hanging you out.  
 5 It must have been a corporate decision, whatever your  
 6 blog says."  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. Now, I take it that you mean that it must have been, in  
 9 substance as opposed to in form, a corporate decision,  
 10 because in form, on any view, the decision was  
 11 Mr Rippon's decision; is that fair?  
 12 A. Yes, I am referring to the substance of the decision,  
 13 yes.  
 14 Q. Yes. In other words, your suggestion is that although  
 15 Mr Rippon was formally the decision maker, he was, in  
 16 effect, delivering a judgment as an agent of management.  
 17 Is that fair --  
 18 A. It is my belief, but I have no evidence.  
 19 Q. How would such a corporate decision, to use your words,  
 20 in practice, be arrived at? Is that something that you  
 21 have any knowledge of?  
 22 A. Well, as I said earlier, they do -- they do a lot of  
 23 talking to one another, [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 Journalism should be the -- in my judgment, journalism  
 2 should be the enemy of the quiet life, and that is the  
 3 sort of context that I am thinking about.  
 4 Q. And this corporate decision that you are thinking about  
 5 would be a decision, would it, taken within the news  
 6 organisation? It would not be something taken at  
 7 an even higher level of the BBC; is that right?  
 8 A. I would be astonished if it was higher than -- higher  
 9 than Helen Boaden.  
 10 Q. Yes.  
 11 A. I really would be quite surprised. Although I think --  
 12 I don't know whether it is still true, but in theory, is  
 13 not the Director General the editor-in-chief.  
 14 Q. I think that is what the rules say, yes.  
 15 A. I think that may be the case; in which case, possibly it  
 16 might -- it might have gone higher. But I -- I don't  
 17 think so, but I don't know.  
 18 Q. No. Interestingly, your e-mail proceeds on the basis  
 19 that what the blog says isn't right. That was your  
 20 assumption?  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. So your attitude to the blog was one of -- it might  
 23 fairly be described as one of scepticism?  
 24 A. I would say so, yes.  
 25 Q. Now, if you go, I think, over the -- over a couple of

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1 pages, you should find an e-mail from Mr Rippon to you,  
 2 nine minutes later, at 9.52 on 3 October.  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 Q. He denies your suggestion of the corporate decision:  
 5 "It wasn't corporate, honestly. I guess I may have  
 6 been guilty of self-censorship. In the end, I think we  
 7 had ..."  
 8 And you will see what he says.  
 9 A. Yes.  
 10 Q. Do you think that Mr Rippon was susceptible to  
 11 self-censorship? Is that something you are able to  
 12 comment on?  
 13 A. Well, I don't think you -- you are the sort of BBC lifer  
 14 that he is, without -- without absorbing the mindset of  
 15 the organisation. And I think that they were -- they  
 16 all had it, whether it is Helen or Steve or Peter Rippon  
 17 or many others, doubtless, and that was the -- that was  
 18 at the heart of why they didn't really see what the  
 19 problem was, the broader problem in terms of editorial  
 20 management, and the specific problem in this case, of  
 21 one man making an apparently independent decision while  
 22 in fact, reflecting a corporate culture.  
 23 Q. It would appear that Mr Rippon had missed the angle in  
 24 the story that is now presented perhaps as being rather  
 25 obvious, that allegations of serious sexual crimes on

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1 BBC TV sets, albeit a long time ago, were a matter of  
 2 journalistic and public interest.  
 3 A. Is there a view on that? I mean, where are you getting  
 4 that from?  
 5 Q. I am not getting that from your e-mail, but --  
 6 A. Oh, I see.  
 7 Q. When he says that he was guilty of self-censorship:  
 8 "In the end, I just felt we had ... 40-year old  
 9 contestable claims about a dead guy was not a Newsnight  
 10 story and not worth the fuss."  
 11 But there were other aspects of the material that  
 12 has been gathered which included allegations of serious  
 13 sexual crimes in the BBC TV --  
 14 A. Well, yes, I mean, I know the newspapers have gone big  
 15 on all of that. I would have thought it was more  
 16 appalling, frankly, that -- what happened in hospitals,  
 17 Broadmoor, Stoke Mandeville, Leeds or wherever. But  
 18 I agree that I do not see any reference to that aspect  
 19 of the story in what he has had to say.  
 20 Q. Now, just moving away from these e-mails, just for  
 21 a moment. It has been suggested to us that editorial  
 22 power, whatever that means, has shifted in recent years  
 23 to something called the editorial policy department,  
 24 which I think is headed by David Jordan.  
 25 A. Oh yes, yes.

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1 Q. Insofar as you understand the position, what is the role  
 2 of the editorial policy department, and is it a force  
 3 for good, in your opinion?  
 4 A. I don't know what they do. I mean, they talk to each  
 5 other, I suppose, as all these bloody people do. I wish  
 6 I had an idea! I assume he makes -- it makes editorial  
 7 policy.  
 8 So I can't really help you there. I think it is  
 9 almost certainly the case -- and I am speculating here,  
 10 but I think it is the case, probably, that post-Hutton,  
 11 there has been a greater centralisation -- or a desire  
 12 for greater centralisation of editorial decision making,  
 13 that -- and that that has been at the expense of the  
 14 sort of independence that editors previously exercised  
 15 at the time that George Entwistle was running Newsnight  
 16 or Peter Barron or various distinguished figures before  
 17 them like Tim Gardam, and so on.  
 18 So I think that is probably the case, but again,  
 19 you'd better find out from -- I don't know whether you  
 20 are going to have David Jordan in front of you, but you  
 21 could ask him -- it would be rather interesting to ask  
 22 him what his job is. I expect you would get rather  
 23 a long answer.  
 24 Q. So if I asked you: in a story like the Saville story or  
 25 some piece of investigative journalism that has been

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1 done by Newsnight, where do you think real editorial  
 2 control lies, in practice? Is that too general  
 3 a question?  
 4 A. Well, it depends upon the story, I think. I mean, if  
 5 you were, for example, running a story about the  
 6 finances of the Tory party or the Labour party or the  
 7 Lib Dems or something, during a period when an election  
 8 or a similarly -- or another important political event  
 9 was imminent, then no doubt some functionary from the  
 10 editorial policy department would express a view, and  
 11 that view would be binding.  
 12 At other times, I think it depends upon the strength  
 13 of your story. If you have a strong story, they just  
 14 have to accept -- accept it.  
 15 So I would not -- I mean, there are many things  
 16 I find intensely irritating about the BBC's overmanaged  
 17 system, but I would not accuse them of directly  
 18 interfering by -- in saying, "This is what this  
 19 programme may or may not do." I really wouldn't accuse  
 20 them of that. I think they will have very -- you know,  
 21 irritating or nitpicking things to say about particular  
 22 stories in a particular context, but I don't think it  
 23 would lay down a policy: "This is what this sort of  
 24 programme does or that sort of programme."  
 25 Q. Do you remember Mr Rippon's reference to

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1 self-censorship? Just picking that thought up, one very  
 2 experienced journalist has communicated with us,  
 3 referring to what he calls a culture of timidity.  
 4 A. Yes.  
 5 Q. He suggests that the culture of timidity worsened in  
 6 2011 as senior executives jostled to become the next DG.  
 7 Do you think that is right?  
 8 A. Well, my speculation on that is no more informed than  
 9 his is, or her, or she is. I don't know. I saw no  
 10 evidence of it, to be fair, no.  
 11 Q. Right.  
 12 A. I didn't see -- I didn't see any evidence. I think --  
 13 I think it has become a more editorially timid place,  
 14 although you probably would get a different view if you  
 15 were to speak to Panorama, for example, who would say,  
 16 "Well, look, we are not cowed. We have done X, Y and  
 17 Z."  
 18 So while I think that to be the case, I would not  
 19 say that I was aware that that had happened during 2011.  
 20 Q. Right, okay. Then it is also suggested that one of the  
 21 ways in which -- and you have mentioned several times  
 22 the management is talking to each other.  
 23 A. Yes.  
 24 Q. It is suggesting that editors on difficult investigative  
 25 programmes have been told that they have to be, as it

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1 were, 100 per cent right; in other words, that the bar  
 2 was set so high that programmes were delayed or put off  
 3 or canned altogether. In other words, that is the way  
 4 in which timidity is perpetuated. Is that something  
 5 that you recognise, or do you not know, because that  
 6 is --  
 7 A. I probably don't know enough about it. I also take  
 8 a rather old fashioned view, which is: if you are going  
 9 to broadcast anything, it had better bloody well be  
 10 right. So a requirement or an expectation that a story  
 11 is accurate and standing up in every regard is, it seems  
 12 to me, a reasonable expectation, and so I don't make  
 13 that -- I don't make that criticism, no.  
 14 Q. And one of the points you made in one of your e-mails  
 15 was that you took the view that it was entirely correct  
 16 and proper that the bar should be set as high for a dead  
 17 man as it would be for a living person.  
 18 A. Yes, I think so.  
 19 Q. Yes. Now, Jeremy, I am nearly finished with the  
 20 questions that I want to ask you. Nick may have some  
 21 more.  
 22 A. Okay.  
 23 Q. But the shorthand writer has been transcribing this for  
 24 far too long without a break. I guess I will be another  
 25 ten minutes or 15 minutes or so.

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1 A. Right, okay.  
 2 Q. Is it all right to take a five minute break? Is that  
 3 okay?  
 4 A. Certainly. Have you guys had lunch?  
 5 MR MACLEAN: I haven't, as a matter of fact.  
 6 A. My stomach is rumbling. But what time is it now? 2.30.  
 7 MR MACLEAN: Can we reconvene at 3 o'clock, then?  
 8 A. Yes, sure. That is -- oh Christ, I have got to go into  
 9 Oxford.  
 10 MR MACLEAN: All right. Well --  
 11 A. No, if you are only going to be 20 minutes or  
 12 something --  
 13 MR MACLEAN: I am only going to be ten or 15 minutes or  
 14 something.  
 15 A. All right. Well, let's reconvene at 3.  
 16 MR MACLEAN: Okay.  
 17 A. All right, bye.  
 18 MR POLLARD: Thanks, Jeremy.  
 19 (2.28 pm)  
 20 (A short break)  
 21 (2.57 pm)  
 22 MR MACLEAN: Jeremy, I just have a couple more things that  
 23 I want to ask you about. If you still have those  
 24 e-mails in front of me, can you go to 10 October,  
 25 please?

1 A. The 10 October, okay. That is presumably further in,  
 2 isn't it?  
 3 Q. Further in, yes.  
 4 A. Okay, go on.  
 5 Q. Have you got the one on the top of the page, which is  
 6 17.11, from --  
 7 A. Yes. No, he is there as a potential AP(?).  
 8 Q. If you go down to the bottom, you e-mailed Peter Rippon  
 9 on 10 October, because you have heard, I think, just  
 10 then, presumably, about the Panorama being in the  
 11 pipeline?  
 12 A. Yes.  
 13 Q. And you ask him if it is right.  
 14 A. Yes.  
 15 Q. And he replies, saying that Tom -- that is Giles -- is  
 16 exploring whether he should be doing something on the  
 17 whole Saville story.  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. And Rippon says to you:  
 20 "If he makes it about us, he does not have great  
 21 news judgment."  
 22 Then you say:  
 23 "I can't think it will be about Newsnight."  
 24 A. Yes.  
 25 Q. Why? Why did you not think that?

1 A. I can't remember why I thought things yesterday, let  
 2 alone a month ago. I have no idea why the -- hmm,  
 3 I can't think why.  
 4 Well, I suppose at that point, it seemed to me to  
 5 be -- I suppose it seemed to me that the story was  
 6 bigger than the question of the BBC suppressing the  
 7 story. But I don't know.  
 8 Q. So you hadn't formed any view, or had you, about what  
 9 Panorama was likely to be doing, what angle they would  
 10 be doing, if it was not going to be about Newsnight?  
 11 A. No. I think the question "Is this Panorama story true?"  
 12 relates not to a particular revelation on the programme  
 13 but to the suggestion that Panorama was going to do it.  
 14 Q. Yes, that's right. The programme hadn't been broadcast  
 15 or even put together yet, I don't think, at this stage.  
 16 A. I think that is correct, yes. But actually what the  
 17 inquiry is ...  
 18 Q. Yes, that's right.  
 19 A. He then says it is true. I think he is wrong with the,  
 20 upper case N, "news judgment". There clearly -- there  
 21 clearly was a news story. And then why I said:  
 22 "I can't think it will be about Newsnight. "  
 23 What is it about Newsnight? I can't remember.  
 24 I think it was partly -- I mean, Newsnight got in there,  
 25 but I don't think that was really the thrust of it, was

1 it?  
 2 MR POLLARD: Partly, it is right. About -- just less than  
 3 a half or a third of it.  
 4 MR MACLEAN: Right. Well, we won't take that any further.  
 5 On the 11th -- if you go over the page, I think,  
 6 there is an e-mail exchange with Helen Boaden.  
 7 A. Right, yes.  
 8 Q. You e-mailed her.  
 9 A. I had e-mailed her, yes, that's correct.  
 10 Q. So on 11 October at -- we need to go down to the end of  
 11 this.  
 12 A. I had e-mailed her at 15.05, by the look of it; is that  
 13 right?  
 14 Q. That is right. And you said that you thought there had  
 15 been a balls-up.  
 16 A. Yes.  
 17 Q. And you said that you disagreed with Peter's decision.  
 18 A. Yes.  
 19 Q. You thought they had mishandled the crisis from the  
 20 start, but that was neither here nor there.  
 21 A. Yes.  
 22 Q. And for whatever reason, he continued to maintain that  
 23 the decision to pull the original Saville investigation  
 24 was his alone.  
 25 A. Yes.



1 Q. So we can see, and we discussed this earlier, you  
 2 disagreed with his decision that was made in the  
 3 beginning. But the balls-up, then, was what, the events  
 4 of October 2012?  
 5 A. I am just looking at how these -- yes, yes. The  
 6 balls-up is the decision that -- well, the discovery  
 7 that it wasn't broadcast, and the subsequent so-called  
 8 explanation of why it wasn't broadcast. That is what  
 9 I considered to be the balls-up, I think.  
 10 Q. And you didn't believe the explanation that the BBC had  
 11 been giving, or you found it unconvincing, or ...?  
 12 A. I think we went over this just before lunch, didn't we?  
 13 Yes. I had found it -- I found it initially implausible  
 14 that he had made the decision on his own. The only way  
 15 I can imagine that to be the case is that he is, you  
 16 know -- that -- what have they said about someone who  
 17 [REDACTED]  
 18 [REDACTED]  
 19 [REDACTED]  
 20 [REDACTED]  
 21 [REDACTED]  
 22 [REDACTED]  
 23 [REDACTED]  
 24 [REDACTED]  
 25 [REDACTED]

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1 Q. Yes.  
 2 MR POLLARD: Can I just ask you a specific question about --  
 3 A. Yes.  
 4 MR POLLARD: -- your view of Peter's decision to drop this.  
 5 There are, if you like, two branches of the way this  
 6 decision might have been made.  
 7 One is, if you like, a purely editorial decision;  
 8 and for those who criticised it, it is driven by  
 9 timidity and the idea that it might not be a Newsnight  
 10 story or it might just be too difficult, it might be  
 11 a bit messy or lead to complaints, et cetera; but at its  
 12 heart, an editorial decision.  
 13 And the other one, as you know, is that -- is the  
 14 suggestion that it was, shall we say, and I think  
 15 Meirion is on record as saying this, to save the  
 16 Christmas tributes. In other words, something way  
 17 outside what you might call an editorial decision.  
 18 Do you have a view on that?  
 19 A. I have a view, but it is uninformed, Nick. I mean,  
 20 I don't know. My original --  
 21 MR POLLARD: It may be uninformed, but you were absolutely  
 22 at the heart of this programme, all the way through.  
 23 A. Oh, look, I was going to say "bollocks", which would  
 24 have given your shorthand writers some entertainment.  
 25 No, that's not true. I am not at the heart of it, at

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1 all. You know, I am completely peripheral. As I say,  
 2 I hardly registered the fact that it had been canned.  
 3 But my belief from the start has been that he took  
 4 the decision to kill the programme on what he believed  
 5 to be editorial grounds. And clearly he considered that  
 6 for a number of reasons, partly to do with the  
 7 credibility of the witnesses -- that is where you get  
 8 this embarrassing "only the women" line which so  
 9 exercised various MPs the other day. I think what he  
 10 meant to say was "only the victims", although it wasn't  
 11 strictly, but that, I think, is what he meant to say.  
 12 I think -- so part of it, I think, was the question  
 13 of how strong the evidence was; and that, I think, was  
 14 the reason for killing it. That is what -- that is the  
 15 core of my objection, I think; is that we probably have  
 16 to apply a greater persistence and a greater courage in  
 17 dealing with people who are in this exposed position.  
 18 I have never believed that it was canned on the --  
 19 because it would embarrass the Christmas schedulers.  
 20 That is clearly a much better story, but it is not my --  
 21 it is not my belief, and I have no evidence of that;  
 22 whereas I just know from previous experience that  
 23 editors are understandably reluctant, even when there is  
 24 no possibility of being sued by someone who is dead, to  
 25 run a story for which they haven't -- they are not

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1 entirely comfortable with the solidity of the evidence.  
 2 I argue that in those circumstances, it is beholden  
 3 upon you -- incumbent upon you, sorry -- to pursue the  
 4 investigation until you get it, not to run away from it.  
 5 MR MACLEAN: In other words: "We are not broadcasting on  
 6 Wednesday, but we will keep looking at it and we might  
 7 come back to it", or whatever?  
 8 A. I don't think "we might come back to it". Once you've  
 9 got someone making those claims with that degree of  
 10 specificity and apparent plausibility, then somehow  
 11 you've got to find a way of standing the story up,  
 12 unless somebody says, "That is completely untrue because  
 13 I can demonstrate [x, y and z]."  
 14 So it is not a case of postponing it, and frankly,  
 15 we very rarely -- it is a benefit, I suppose, of being  
 16 five nights. We very rarely say, "We are going to do  
 17 this next Tuesday." It makes no odds whether it is  
 18 Monday or Friday. We tend not to throw it away on  
 19 Friday because the audience is so small, if we can avoid  
 20 it, but -- no, I mean, there is lot of flexibility  
 21 there. So it is not a question of postponing  
 22 transmission; it is a question of being satisfied with  
 23 the evidence, I think.  
 24 MR POLLARD: Okay, thanks. I just have got two more  
 25 questions, Jeremy. One was really to ask you about

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17 (Pages 65 to 68)

1 [REDACTED]  
 2 [REDACTED] what  
 3 your views are on Newsnight's successful year in 2011  
 4 and what your take is on the actual editorial output and  
 5 quality of it, during his editorship?  
 6 A. I, again, would be much more comfortable discussing this  
 7 with you over a cup of tea or something. I -- I don't  
 8 know how you judge its success or otherwise. Sometimes  
 9 you can judge when a programme is not doing very well.  
 10 You know, it is not a machine(?), the audience figures  
 11 go through the floor, it is dull. It has, you know,  
 12 dull reporters, dull presenters, it makes films in  
 13 a dull way, whatever it is.  
 14 Conversely, I don't quite know how you judge  
 15 a successful year. What do you mean?  
 16 MR POLLARD: Well, I think it won RTS programme of the year,  
 17 didn't it?  
 18 A. Oh, come along! You of all people in this -- you should  
 19 know how those things are worked out. I mean, we  
 20 didn't -- I did not feel --  
 21 MR POLLARD: It would not be given necessarily to  
 22 a programme that had had a dull and tedious year,  
 23 though. I understand the limitations of awards, yes.  
 24 A. Yes, and there are those who say that it was about  
 25 the -- it was a really unhelpful thing to have happened

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1 to the programme, that actually, to be able to boast --  
 2 even if it is a rather pointless sort of award, to be  
 3 able to boast that you have won some award for programme  
 4 of the year [REDACTED]  
 5 [REDACTED]  
 6 a feeling -- I mean, when I say "universal", I do mean  
 7 universal too. To have been given such a gong was not  
 8 really terribly helpful, nor did it seem to be based  
 9 upon any particularly informed judgment.  
 10 MR POLLARD: Yes, okay. That is fair enough.  
 11 A. Yes.  
 12 MR POLLARD: Sorry, I have one other question, which was: in  
 13 view of -- and this is a difficult one. I appreciate  
 14 that.  
 15 A. Yes.  
 16 MR POLLARD: In view of the position that Peter was in,  
 17 acknowledged by you and others, who believed that his  
 18 decision to drop the programme was wrong and, in the  
 19 eyes of many, indefensible, and if you like, also in  
 20 view of the position of the BBC that it was his  
 21 decision, how could the BBC have supported him  
 22 corporately? I mean, you are critical of him being hung  
 23 out to dry or dumped on, as you describe it. How should  
 24 the BBC have handled that?  
 25 A. Well, I think their initial line -- I mean, where it

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1 really got completely screwed up was when it was  
 2 disclosed that there were significant aspects of his  
 3 original account of his involvement in the affair which  
 4 were wrong. I don't think he deliberately lied.  
 5 [REDACTED]  
 6 [REDACTED]  
 7 [REDACTED]  
 8 But before that, there was a really serious problem.  
 9 The BBC's line had been, hadn't it, that decisions are  
 10 in the hands of individual editors. This is an attempt  
 11 to demonstrate that it is not some great corporate  
 12 monolith. In fact, as I think I suggested earlier, it  
 13 doesn't need to be, because the -- the cast of mind that  
 14 has overtaken the senior echelons, the sort of people  
 15 that they appoint -- and you know, you will have to talk  
 16 to others about this, but there is a raft of  
 17 appointments now that have been made of people who are  
 18 clearly not the most creative, and decisions appear to  
 19 be being made about appointments which are  
 20 politically -- I mean "politically" with a small "P" --  
 21 politically-based, and they are to do with perpetuating  
 22 a particular type of journalism, rather than simply  
 23 saying, "This man or woman is very good. Let's give  
 24 them the job."  
 25 So the argument that individual editors make

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1 individual decisions really only works if those editors  
 2 have themselves not been appointed or somehow -- because  
 3 they have fulfilled through a particular set of  
 4 congenial criteria, or if they have not somehow  
 5 developed an osmotic understanding of what is required  
 6 of them. So you know, it is a slightly thin line.  
 7 I don't know how they could have defended themselves  
 8 at all, given that it has been a pretty -- I don't know.  
 9 [REDACTED]  
 10 [REDACTED] but I think -- what would I have done if I  
 11 had been in their shoes? I think I would have reacted  
 12 differently immediately, and once you are -- once you  
 13 are involved in something, once there is some storm  
 14 breaking over your head, you have got to get on the  
 15 front foot, and -- because -- the BBC press operation is  
 16 so terrible, because there is a real problem in finding  
 17 spokesmen who will defend an articulate point of view.  
 18 I mean, one knows this from numerous other events.  
 19 These things tend to end up in a position where they  
 20 just try to get their heads down, and with the little  
 21 experience I have had of it in this case, which was  
 22 referred to in those e-mails, you know, we wouldn't  
 23 even -- we wouldn't even tackle a bloody story that was  
 24 about our own programme. This is pathetic.  
 25 So I think had they got on the front foot, had they

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<p>1 not had a brand new Director General who had been only                  2 there for a matter of, what, a little over a month or                  3 something, they would have been in a stronger position.                  4 So in that -- at that level, they were unlucky. But,                  5 you know, shit happens, and temperamentally, they have                  6 to get out of this comfortable little bunker in which                  7 all live, talking to one another.                  8 So they should have been much more proactive,                  9 I think, and you might -- you are not going to emerge                  10 from it smelling of roses, but at least you have got                  11 your point across. The point, even now, has not been                  12 got across and you know, you guys will doubtless spend                  13 a long time getting to the bottom of this. You will                  14 produce your report in the fullness of time. Heads may                  15 roll after that. It will be, you know, ages before                  16 Newsnight gets another editor. I find it slightly hard                  17 to imagine that there is going to be a much more savvy                  18 public relations operation at the end of it. I hope                  19 I am wrong. I believe -- and it is a wonderful,                  20 wonderful organisation if you treat it as a publisher.                  21 Much of the rest of it, I can -- I can take or leave.                  22 But it is -- you know, it ought to learn a lot of                  23 lessons from this, and crisis management is one of the                  24 big lessons it should learn. It is not the most                  25 important one.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 properly expressed in a multiplicity of media and across                  2 various platforms. I think that is the real essential                  3 problem here that hasn't been engaged with, and they                  4 need to do that badly.                  5 Sorry for ranting. I will get on.                  6 MR POLLARD: Jeremy --                  7 MR MACLEAN: We have no more questions for you.                  8 (3.23 pm)                  9 (The telephone interview concluded)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 I think there is one other thing here. It may be to                  2 do with how -- the question -- the really important                  3 question here is: what was the BBC doing? This isn't                  4 strictly your remit, I know. But what was the BBC doing                  5 promoting this absurd figure, this absurd and malign                  6 figure? And I think that that is to do with the fact of                  7 the BBC having been aloof from popular culture for so                  8 long. Suddenly pirate radio comes along and all these                  9 people in metaphorical cardigans suddenly have to deal                  10 with an influx -- once pirate radio -- once pop radio                  11 broadcasting is legalised, they suddenly have to deal                  12 with an influx of people from a very, very different                  13 culture and they never got control of them and I am not                  14 sure even now they have. That is the reason there are                  15 ongoing legacy issues here too. But they -- they have                  16 never felt comfortable with popular culture, and they                  17 have therefore given those who claim to perpetrate it                  18 too much licence, and that is why, when anyone looks at                  19 the question of the licence fee, they always raise                  20 questions about Radio One, for example.                  21 So I think that is -- I think that is the bigger                  22 challenge the organisation faces, that it has not really                  23 properly defined what its core values are, and how --                  24 and they can sloganise about that, they can do that to                  25 their heart's content, but how those core values are</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	