

1
2 Reed Smith
3 Broadgate Tower
4 20 Primrose Street
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6
7 Thursday, 12 November 2012
8 (1.00 pm)
9 LILLYWHITES INQUIRY
10 Interview with
11 KIRSTY WARK
12
13 NICK POLLARD - CHAIRPERSON
14 RICHARD BLAKELEY - COUNSEL
15 RICHARD SPAFFORD - REED SMITH
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1 stage of what Newsnight was like as a programme to work
2 on, what the atmosphere was light, what Peter Rippon was
3 like as an editor, how did that work?
4 MS WARK: The programme was -- I think it is actually quite
5 interesting to look at the kind of physical thing about
6 this, because the day team sat at one end of the office,
7 with the presenters' office and the editors' office
8 side-by-side. The team that would be working on
9 investigations and film was up at the other end.
10 MR POLLARD: Okay.
11 MS WARK: So therefore, when there were investigations going
12 on, of which there are many, that was kept obviously
13 quiet, because of the nature of the investigations that
14 were happening. So it wasn't a general kind of office
15 that everybody knew everything that was going on.
16 MR POLLARD: Yes.
17 MS WARK: Basically, reporting and production teams who were
18 working on investigations for example, worked discretely
19 with either the editor or the deputy editor. So when it
20 come to general knowledge of what was going on, that was
21 not the case by and large with investigation. That's
22 very, very important. Because as you would imagine,
23 there were certain things that had to be kept
24 confidential.
25 MR POLLARD: Sure.

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1 (1.00 pm)
2 PROCEEDINGS
3 MR POLLARD: Kirsty, thanks for coming along. Just to sort
4 of set the scene slightly, we are still in a fairly
5 early stage of the interviews. As you can imagine we
6 have been looking at a lot of documents. Really, I just
7 want to get the questioning going with some general
8 observations from you about Newsnight, if we can sort of
9 cast our minds back to --
10 MR SPAFFORD: Just a couple of points to make before we
11 start. The formal bit, sorry --I have a mouthful of
12 sandwich. Just so we're clear, what you say to Nick in
13 this session, obviously, is being recorded, and Nick is
14 able to make use of what you say in the course of his
15 report. It is unlikely he will want to do that, but it
16 is very important to be clear.
17 MS WARK: As far as I'm concerned, everything is for the
18 public record.
19 MR SPAFFORD: Obviously what we say to you, please will you
20 keep that confidential.
21 MS WARK: Absolutely.
22 MR SPAFFORD: Thanks very much, back to you Nick.
23 MR POLLARD: Really, just to start, if you like, in the
24 autumn of 2011, as a sort of scene setter, before the
25 Savile story started to unfold, just your sense at that

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1 MS WARK: Back then I was aware that there was something
2 going on with Jimmy Savile, but I had not been keeping
3 close eye on it, because that's not my job and I
4 wouldn't interfere.
5 MR POLLARD: Yes.
6 MS WARK: So therefore that was a separate negotiation and
7 as far as I knew, that negotiation was between
8 Peter Rippon, because it was commissioned when
9 Liz Gibbons was on holiday and she was commissioning
10 films. It was between Peter Rippon, Meirion Jones and
11 Liz MacKean. And that was -- it did not bleed out to
12 the rest of Newsnight.
13 MR POLLARD: It is fair to say you are a Newsnight veteran.
14 At that stage, how many days a week would you be in the
15 office?
16 MS WARK: My contract is for 52 days a year, because Review
17 went to Glasgow, so therefore I couldn't double my days,
18 so I'm in Glasgow more. So I'm in one or two days
19 a week, some weeks I'm not in at all. So I'm in one or
20 two days a week.
21 MR POLLARD: You obviously have a lot of -- again looking
22 back at that period -- contact, when you are in, with
23 Peter Rippon, I assume. What sort of editor, at that
24 stage, did you think he was? You must have worked with,
25 what four or five at least --

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1 MS WARK: Four or five editors.
 2 MR POLLARD: -- editors? How would you describe him?
 3 MS WARK: He was an editor that came to Newsnight with
 4 a kind of -- little experience in television, so he had
 5 to get up to speed very quickly and that, but he was
 6 a senior journalist.
 7 MR POLLARD: Sure.
 8 MS WARK: He worked well with his deputies. I would say
 9 that his deputies, Liz Gibbons and Sharminda Nahal were
 10 incredibly important to him.
 11 MR POLLARD: Right. How would you describe his way of
 12 editing? What I might call the way he led the team,
 13 very inclusive, very friendly, outgoing, you will have
 14 seen different types of editors, the ones that sort of
 15 walked the floor and chewed the fat and so on. Can you
 16 sort of paint a picture of how he went about his duties?
 17 MS WARK: I mean he let his editors edit on the daily basis.
 18 In that way he was neither overbearing nor too reticent.
 19 But sometimes I suppose what I would say about that was
 20 he -- and on a personal level he was a very, very nice
 21 person and I, you know, that is my position about
 22 Peter Rippon. And I think that at times he found the
 23 job very onerous. And I'm not going to give an opinion
 24 about --
 25 MR POLLARD: No, no of course.

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1 MS WARK: No.
 2 MR BLAKELY: Just on that point, you said his deputies were
 3 very important to him?
 4 MS WARK: Yes.
 5 MR BLAKELY: In the sense that he relied on them or he would
 6 delegate --
 7 MS WARK: Yes, and they were --
 8 MR BLAKELY: -- extensively?
 9 MS WARK: He worked with them on the different aspects of
 10 the Newsnight role very closely.
 11 MR BLAKELY: More closely than other editors?
 12 MS WARK: No I think the deputies are always important, but
 13 because he had come in from what was essentially not a
 14 particularly television background -- though he has been
 15 there for four years -- I think his deputies are very
 16 important, and they were touchstones for him. And they
 17 had obviously the different roles within the department.
 18 But, you know, they were a sounding board a lot for
 19 Peter Rippon.
 20 Actually, this -- this particular investigation is
 21 dealing with the Jimmy Savile film, and that,
 22 I understand, he took charge of that himself.
 23 MR POLLARD: Yes. I think that's right.
 24 On an ordinary day-to-day basis, sort of Monday to
 25 Friday, how hands on would he be, or in practice would

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1 the daily programme be driven by either a deputy editor
 2 or the editor of the day?
 3 MS WARK: The editor of the programme was a late editor.
 4 But the editor of the day, I mean they are senior and
 5 they are an incredibly strong journalistic team on
 6 Newsnight. So he was not, as you would not expect, him
 7 to be very involved on the day to day basis.
 8 MR POLLARD: Okay. Did you have much or anything to do with
 9 Meirion Jones and Liz MacKean on a day to day basis?
 10 MS WARK: Not on a day to day basis, but of course Meirion
 11 is one of the most senior journalists on the programme.
 12 So therefore he often is involved in investigations.
 13 I mean, his triumph was [REDACTED] and that was very,
 14 very important for the programme. But, you know, he --
 15 very rarely worked "on the day". He was very much
 16 involved in his own digging and investigation in order
 17 to turn up stories. Now he didn't do Mark Stone, but
 18 Newsnight has this tremendous track record of doing
 19 investigation, with the undercover cop and so forth, and
 20 indeed the child abuse in Wales.
 21 Part of the reason I'm here is to say that the
 22 culture on Newsnight, whatever you may think about what
 23 happened in Savile, is absolutely not one of
 24 carelessness.
 25 MR POLLARD: Yes.

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1 MS WARK: They are incredibly well skilled journalists,
 2 incredibly well, and I think they are a tremendous team.
 3 And this is entirely, so far as I'm concerned, discrete
 4 from the rest of the things that go on in Newsnight.
 5 MR POLLARD: It's an interesting point that. Somebody has
 6 said -- I think in public -- that one of the things
 7 about Newsnight -- I think they are perhaps talking
 8 about that time and beyond -- is they have said that
 9 there is something of a culture. There was something of
 10 a culture of timidity creeping in. I think specifically
 11 they were talking about the influence of the editorial
 12 policy unit to sort of double check and second-guess
 13 stories.
 14 Did you get any sense of that at all --
 15 MS WARK: I wasn't aware of that --
 16 MR POLLARD: Or are you saying the opposite?
 17 MS WARK: I wasn't aware of that and I never got any sense
 18 on Newsnight that there were artificial breaks put on
 19 things, or that there was a culture of fear about
 20 investigation. I mean the time I came in on the day --
 21 and I was involved editorially on the days that I was
 22 in, but I got no sense of holding back. I think there
 23 was just proper journalistic endeavours, in which you
 24 try to double source everything and so forth.
 25 MR POLLARD: Yes.

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1 MS WARK: Especially when we look at these other big
 2 investigations that have been done that have been
 3 successful, and have been fearless, because [REDACTED]
 4 was a really difficult investigation. I think that
 5 shows that there was not a culture of timidity.
 6 That is different from saying: was there an upward
 7 referral more than there had been on previous editors?
 8 I don't necessarily think there was. Was there a change
 9 after Hutton? There was a change after Hutton, of
 10 course, but I don't think a programme like Newsnight was
 11 adversely affected. I mean, that's our life blood.
 12 MR POLLARD: I was going to ask about referring upwards. I
 13 mean the chain of command, I guess, goes from Peter, to
 14 Steve Mitchell --
 15 MS WARK: To Helen Boaden.
 16 MR POLLARD: To Helen.
 17 MS WARK: I imagine that any time you wanted you could call
 18 in David Jordan. I think that would be a separate
 19 strand.
 20 MR POLLARD: Did you get the impression that quite a lot of
 21 that happened?
 22 MS WARK: No, I didn't get the impression that a lot of
 23 upward referral actually happened during that time.
 24 I suspect that [REDACTED] it would have, but that
 25 is only my opinion and I have no knowledge of that.

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1 MR POLLARD: Yes. It has been suggested, I think, during
 2 the whole Savile affair unfolding over the past year or
 3 so, that one of the reasons why this story might not
 4 have run was because it was in some ways not a Newsnight
 5 type story. You will have a pretty long memory of
 6 Newsnight stories and what are and what aren't Newsnight
 7 stories. Do you have a view on whether it was or
 8 wasn't?
 9 MR BLAKELY: I think before you answer that one if you could
 10 just describe more generically what is a Newsnight
 11 story, as distinct, say, from a Panorama story?
 12 MS WARK: I'm not sure is there is a massive distinction
 13 between a Panorama and a Newsnight -- in the sense that
 14 we do cover a lot of the same territory in different
 15 ways. For example, if we were discovering problems --
 16 for example, that's a great story that is out today
 17 about the doctor who unnecessarily removed women's
 18 breasts. That is the kind of story that we would do and
 19 it would probably also be the kind of story that
 20 Panorama would do. So in that sense, what I would say
 21 is: if there is a news story, a news story lasts 30, 40
 22 seconds, lasts two minutes, but something like -- the
 23 background into something like, for example, problems at
 24 Piper Alpha or what was going on in corruption in
 25 a council for example, things that actually we would

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1 bring something else to the table, that the endeavour of
 2 the producers, assistants producers and reporters, would
 3 find out something else. That is what we have. If it
 4 is a child abuse story, that is Newsnight territory.
 5 I was involved in an investigation a long time ago, of a
 6 woman called Shy, I think it was Shy Smith --
 7 MR POLLARD: Keenan.
 8 MS WARK: Shy Keenan, which was an incredibly important
 9 story, which was under Sian Kervill's leadership, which
 10 was a very difficult story to do and was very important.
 11 Again, the Irish paedophile story as well. The point
 12 about the Shy Keenan story, it, of itself, was only one
 13 story of abuse, but it is very, very important that we
 14 did that, because it is very, very important that people
 15 are seeing that they can actually bring stories to
 16 Newsnight and we will take them seriously and
 17 investigate. That is a very big point. People should
 18 feel that we are a place to come with stories.
 19 MR POLLARD: If you like the celebrity element in that Jimmy
 20 Savile story, again the various strands to the way
 21 people have reacted this. I have heard it suggested
 22 that because it was what you might call, rather crudely,
 23 a "celeb expose", that might make it not a Newsnight
 24 story?
 25 MS WARK: That was never my view and it is never my view. I

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1 would say this though, at the time last November when
 2 I knew there was an investigation into Jimmy Savile,
 3 I actually didn't know the nature of the investigation.
 4 I didn't have detail of it, I made an assumption that it
 5 was probably sexual. I made an assumption.
 6 MR POLLARD: Why?
 7 MS WARK: Because I couldn't think what else it would be,
 8 frankly. I knew nothing about him, except I had
 9 interviewed him in Glencoe at his house and I thought
 10 then he was a bit of an odd-bod, but I had no knowledge
 11 of what the actual investigation was about, and I didn't
 12 ask. Because you have to be very careful about these
 13 things at Newsnight at the moment. That you should
 14 always let the teams go off, and then when it comes to
 15 you, you are then ready to sort of have of a brain dump
 16 of what they've got.
 17 So I made an assumption it was that, but I didn't
 18 know for sure it was, and I thought that was legitimate
 19 territory for Newsnight. I mean, really, it is
 20 legitimate territory.
 21 MR POLLARD: You have perhaps thought about this over the
 22 past year, but can you remember when you first became
 23 aware of this Jimmy Savile inquiry going on?
 24 MS WARK: Do you mean after the ITN?
 25 MR POLLARD: After his death.

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1 No, right back to when the investigation --
 2 MS WARK: It was very quickly after his death, yes.
 3 MR POLLARD: Yes, because Meirion and Liz, and a young lady
 4 called Hannah Livingstone --
 5 MS WARK: I don't know her.
 6 MR POLLARD: -- who was helping them. A trainee, I think,
 7 based in Scotland.
 8 MS WARK: Right.
 9 MR POLLARD: Was attached to help them. So quite soon --
 10 how would you hear about that? At a meeting or just
 11 discussion?
 12 MS WARK: It might just have been discussion, but at that
 13 stage it was: they were just off and investigating
 14 something, about -- to do with Jimmy Savile and it was
 15 not long after his death and therefore I think it was
 16 triggered by the fact that he had died and Newsnight was
 17 about to set off on something.
 18 MR BLAKELY: Can you remember who you heard from first?
 19 MS WARK: No.
 20 MR POLLARD: It would be effectively sort of office
 21 discussion, rather than you are sitting at a meeting --
 22 MS WARK: It would be office discussion, but then it quickly
 23 went off my radar, because obviously they were off doing
 24 whatever research they were doing and I was not asking
 25 questions.

1 MR POLLARD: No, sure, okay.
 2 Then there obviously came this moment when, in early
 3 December last year, where the story ground to a halt?
 4 MS WARK: Yes.
 5 MR POLLARD: How much was that a topic of discussion?
 6 MS WARK: No, it wasn't where I was. And I don't know
 7 whether it was I wasn't down the week actually the
 8 decision was made to drop it. But I was not aware, and
 9 in fact I didn't know it had been fundamentally and
 10 finally dropped. You know, these things ramble on for
 11 a long time.
 12 MR POLLARD: Indeed.
 13 MS WARK: And I was not aware that it had been dropped like
 14 that.
 15 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 16 MS WARK: If you had said to me four weeks -- no, six weeks
 17 ago: is Newsnight still examining Savile? I might have
 18 even thought that was still a prospect. I think that's
 19 quite important to know. I think I was maybe one of the
 20 few that didn't know it had been dropped stone dead, but
 21 I didn't know it had been dropped stone dead.
 22 MR POLLARD: I think in practice there were several stages
 23 by which it cooled and then it became clear that there
 24 became a point when it was not going to be proceeded
 25 with.

1 Did you then get a sense, some time after that, that
 2 it was controversial within the office that that
 3 decision had been made?
 4 MS WARK: No, actually, it was not. I mean Meirion and Liz
 5 were not stamping up and down as far as I knew. Of
 6 course I didn't know what was going on, but I didn't get
 7 the sense that it was really hugely controversial in the
 8 office. had I been involved in discussions, I might have
 9 had a greater sense of that. But I was not involved in
 10 discussions.
 11 MR POLLARD: No, that's fair enough.
 12 MR BLAKELY: Can I ask: were you aware of the stories in
 13 January of this year?
 14 MS WARK: No. No I wasn't.
 15 MR BLAKELY: You noticed no appreciable change in the
 16 atmosphere in the office during that period?
 17 MS WARK: No. You see, Meirion was not just working on
 18 this. I am sure he was working on lots of different
 19 things as well, which we will come on to, I am sure.
 20 MR POLLARD: Yes, indeed.
 21 If you like, the course of events was that through
 22 January and February there were sort of some rumblings
 23 in the papers, suggestions that the story had been
 24 dropped for not proper reasons.
 25 Later in the year, much more currently, the story

1 about the ITV documentary about Jimmy Savile comes out
 2 and people had clearly made the connection between what
 3 ITV were doing and what Newsnight had been investigating
 4 as well.
 5 What sort of sense did you get then about the way it
 6 was being talked about in the office?
 7 MS WARK: What happened was that after the ITV story went
 8 out, and I was down -- I can't remember it was quite
 9 soon afterwards and I asked Meirion and Liz to come in,
 10 because I needed to be forewarned as to be armed about
 11 what might be coming up. Then I got a sense that they
 12 were both very agitated. And what my recollection of
 13 the conversation was, that they were sure that they had
 14 had enough material to go with.
 15 That meeting was the first time I knew that
 16 Meirion's aunt was the leader --
 17 MR POLLARD: When you say that meeting, what was the
 18 meeting --
 19 MS WARK: I said, "Come on into my office and let's chat
 20 about this."
 21 MR POLLARD: Okay.
 22 MS WARK: So we chatted --
 23 MR POLLARD: Meirion and Liz?
 24 MS WARK: Yes, because I didn't know whether we were
 25 actually going to do the story ourselves or anything

1 after that. I just wanted to know what we had.
 2 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 3 MS WARK: And at that stage my recollection was that we had
 4 the interview with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] -- and there
 5 were a number of anonymous interviews from a group, that
 6 were the same social networking group. My understanding
 7 of them was that was all they had.
 8 MR POLLARD: Yes. This is the stage where when Newsnight
 9 were debating whether to do the story themselves?
 10 MS WARK: Yes.
 11 MR POLLARD: After the ITV story?
 12 MS WARK: Yes.
 13 MR POLLARD: And after the papers were full of it, but
 14 before Panorama.
 15 MS WARK: Yes, yes.
 16 MR POLLARD: Before Panorama?
 17 MS WARK: Absolutely, before Panorama. When Meirion was
 18 still working on Newsnight.
 19 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 20 MS WARK: Very soon after. It must have been just days
 21 after the ITV documentary had gone out.
 22 MR POLLARD: Yes. What was the atmosphere like then in the
 23 office?
 24 MS WARK: It was difficult. Because something like that,
 25 I think -- excuse me -- it can be quite destabilising

1 for the team and it was very important, especially with
 2 the launch of W1, to gee them up and to make sure that
 3 they realised that they were all doing, very, very, good
 4 work.
 5 MR POLLARD: The launch of W1?
 6 MS WARK: Us moving. This all happened as we had been
 7 moving to Broadcasting House. So it was very important
 8 to keep them-- because, as I say and it was very
 9 important that they did not think that they had made
 10 mistakes themselves, because, in fact, as I said it was
 11 a very discrete group on that investigation.
 12 Now, and Peter at that point was, I think -- I think
 13 pretty shellshocked to be honest. And there were
 14 increasing general conversations -- I had conversations
 15 with Peter, where I certainly got the sense -- it's not
 16 my opinion, but I got the sense -- that either by
 17 accident or design there was a kind of -- not a process
 18 of misinformation, but there was just a wee bit of chaos
 19 that was not characteristic of Newsnight in those stages
 20 of an investigation.
 21 MR POLLARD: Do you mean back in the previous year?
 22 MS WARK: No, no. I mean about who knew what when.
 23 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 24 MS WARK: You know. And how much information Meirion had
 25 given Peter. How much information Peter thought he had

1 received.
 2 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 3 MS WARK: So I was quite -- that was quite surprising to me
 4 that -- and it was -- as I say, it was really unlike
 5 Newsnight. Let's just go back to the Shy Keenan --
 6 I even read the transcripts of the Shy Keenan
 7 interviews, because I wanted to make sure I knew
 8 everything. And my sense was that there had been not
 9 the same attention to detail in terms of who was reading
 10 what transcripts. Who knew what was in what
 11 transcripts.
 12 MR POLLARD: Do you mean at the time the original story was
 13 dropped, as it were?
 14 MS WARK: Yes. Then of course that was with -- this is me
 15 looking back from what Meirion and Liz and I understood
 16 from Peter was that there were -- there were an awful
 17 lot of things that hadn't actually been thrashed
 18 through.
 19 MR POLLARD: Because there was, shall we say, a rather
 20 unusual moment, post the ITV programme, when a second
 21 interview turned up?
 22 MS WARK: Yes.
 23 MR POLLARD: Was that a surprise to people?
 24 MS WARK: That was a complete surprise. You have to put
 25 that in context. That was -- and I know when it was

1 because it was on the 11th -- I remember it was the
 2 11th -- that went out on the 11th October, because I was
 3 on air -- no, I wasn't on air. I was doing a parallel
 4 programme as an off-air pilot, because we were about to
 5 start the next week.
 6 MR POLLARD: Right.
 7 MS WARK: So Newsnight is going out. And meanwhile I am at
 8 the same time doing an off-air pilot.
 9 MR POLLARD: What was that for?
 10 MS WARK: For the launch.
 11 MR POLLARD: I see, okay.
 12 MS WARK: The launch happened -- the launch happened on the
 13 15th.
 14 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 15 MS WARK: I'm doing a pilot in Broadcasting House on the
 16 11th, in parallel, so of course I don't see the
 17 programme. Then I appear watch it on iPlayer. And
 18 there's an interview with [REDACTED]
 19 Now as far as I know, she was a pupil at the school.
 20 But what I don't understand -- and the other thing was
 21 that the editor of the day didn't see that film, because
 22 it was being edited up to the wire, I then enquired.
 23 Because I thought: where has this interview come from?
 24 And what I was told -- and I cannot remember by whom --
 25 was that that interview was recorded the previous

1 November.
 2 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 3 MS WARK: Right. So what is also weird about that is that
 4 I understood that at the beginning -- by the beginning
 5 of this week, which would be the 8th, or even before,
 6 all the material that Meirion and Liz had was to be
 7 handed over -- I think I'm right in saying, not to
 8 lawyers, but to somebody else in the BBC, maybe the
 9 editorial policy unit, maybe lawyers, I have no idea.
 10 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 11 MS WARK: So here come an interview which is not
 12 a corroboration of [redacted] in the sense that it was
 13 not another victim. But it was someone who clearly
 14 said, Jimmy Savile came to the home, what would happen
 15 is children would be ushered in for a cup of tea and
 16 Ms Jones would leave. To me that was building up
 17 a picture, but I had never been told about that
 18 interview when I had talked to Meirion and Liz after the
 19 ITV documentary went out. That could just be an
 20 oversight; they could have forgotten.
 21 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 22 MS WARK: But Peter Rippon specifically said, "I didn't know
 23 about that interview". Which I don't know -- that is
 24 a claim. I don't know whether it is true or not, but
 25 that is what I mean by the fact that it was

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1 characterised, I think, by an unusual level of chaos
 2 which was not -- and I absolutely repeat -- not
 3 a feature of Newsnight investigations. That might have
 4 been a miscommunication between Meirion and Liz and
 5 Peter. That's what I'm saying. I don't know that.
 6 MR BLAKELY: Just on that, typically on your experience, how
 7 much attention does the editor -- would Peter Rippon
 8 give to things like draft scripts, taped interviews?
 9 Would he sit and review or is it more a process of
 10 précis and summarising for him?
 11 MS WARK: It would be précis and summarising in the course
 12 of a normal film, which would be maybe, I don't know
 13 about a big report that was coming out or whatever. But
 14 different editors are different, of course, but I think
 15 something like this, you would look at the transcripts
 16 to get a sense yourself, wouldn't you want to? And
 17 I don't know whether Peter did or not.
 18 MR BLAKELY: Yes.
 19 MS WARK: You see, because it depends -- the transcripts
 20 presumably were there, they were available. But that's
 21 another assumption I'm making. I don't know whether the
 22 transcripts were available, but you would think they
 23 must have been, because they must have been part and
 24 parcel of preparation to broadcast the previous
 25 November.

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1 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 2 MS WARK: Now, that interview --
 3 MR POLLARD: The [redacted] interview?
 4 MS WARK: Where was it? You probably know that more than
 5 I do at this stage. Where was it languishing? That's
 6 what I don't understand.
 7 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 8 MR BLAKELY: When you spoke to Meirion and Liz after the ITV
 9 show went out --
 10 MS WARK: Yes.
 11 MR BLAKELY: -- did you get a sense from them as to how much
 12 had been thrashed out with Peter Rippon the previous
 13 year?
 14 MS WARK: No. No, I didn't get a sense of that. It
 15 wasn't -- really the conversation was, look get me up to
 16 speed here we may be broadcasting tonight something to
 17 do with this story. Because it was like the middle of
 18 the afternoon or something like that, and obviously
 19 things move very quickly.
 20 And of course the decision -- because then the
 21 decision on the week of the 11th -- I was in New York
 22 for the beginning of that week, but I think the decision
 23 on that week was: when is a good time for us to face
 24 this story and do it?
 25 So at that stage presumably the production team was

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1 making a decision about when to broadcast it.
 2 MR BLAKELY: The limit of what you got from them, at this
 3 point was, "We thought we had enough to stand up
 4 the story, yes it didn't go ahead"?
 5 MS WARK: Yes. That was always the line, was they thought
 6 they had enough to stand up. I don't know -- I'm making
 7 an assumption that Liz MacKean looked at transcripts as
 8 well. I'm also making an assumption -- no this is not
 9 an assumption, I know this to be the case, I think, that
 10 the interviews with the social networking people
 11 anonymously were not done by Liz, I think. I might be
 12 wrong about that, but I assume that she had seen the
 13 transcripts.
 14 MR POLLARD: Yes, yes.
 15 Just to knock back to, if you like, the point when
 16 the original enquiry was shelved -- and you may not know
 17 this -- do you get the sense at the time, or immediately
 18 afterwards, that there had been a real battle over it?
 19 MS WARK: No, I didn't get that sense. I now know, of
 20 course that -- well, actually, had there been? That's
 21 what I don't know. I can't make it out. I have no
 22 opinion on that, because I don't know whether or not
 23 there was a battle, or whether it was: this is not going
 24 ahead, pull the editing, move off.
 25 MR POLLARD: You weren't aware of flames shooting out of

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6 (Pages 21 to 24)

1 offices as --
 2 MS WARK: No, and Meirion can be vocal when he wants to --
 3 the thing about Meirion is, you need a Meirion in the
 4 office, because he is -- you know, as I say [REDACTED]
 5 [REDACTED] and
 6 [REDACTED] and
 7 I often say to Meirion, when it his investigation, okay,
 8 sit down with me, talk to me about what you have got, so
 9 I know exactly what is happening here. And he does
 10 respond to that.
 11 MR POLLARD: Are you suggesting that he -- I do not want to
 12 categorise what you said unfairly. Does he need
 13 restraining a little sometimes?
 14 MS WARK: I don't think "restraining" is the right word at
 15 all. Because I don't think he needs restraining.
 16 I just need sometimes to do a bit of talk with him.
 17 I like doing that with him, because I learn more
 18 about it if I do that with him. He doesn't need
 19 restraining, we don't want people like Meirion
 20 restrained. We just want to make sure they are sure of
 21 their ground.
 22 MR POLLARD: He doesn't, if you like, read too much into the
 23 evidence that he's gathered?
 24 MS WARK: Well, I don't know what evidence he had actually
 25 gathered, you know, beyond what he had. It is clear

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1 from the [REDACTED] interview that she was clearly
 2 making an allegation of abuse.
 3 MR POLLARD: Have you seen that interview?
 4 MS WARK: Yes. I've not seen it all, unfortunately.
 5 MR POLLARD: You have seen the clips that were used?
 6 MS WARK: I have seen what was broadcast, on Panorama.
 7 MR POLLARD: What did you think when you saw that?
 8 MS WARK: My opinion is. My opinion is that I think you
 9 would have to be a very strange kind of masochist to
 10 make that up.
 11 MR POLLARD: You thought she was credible?
 12 MS WARK: I thought she was credible, but, you know, she was
 13 one person.
 14 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 15 MS WARK: Let's be quite clear, she was one person, or we
 16 thought --
 17 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 18 MS WARK: Okay.
 19 MR POLLARD: Okay, so back to the time when Newsnight did
 20 the story, which must have been quite difficult
 21 I imagine, both the timing of it and actually the fact
 22 of doing the story, because it is absolutely on your own
 23 doorstep.
 24 MS WARK: You are absolutely, you know, eating yourself, as
 25 it were.

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1 MR POLLARD: Was Peter quite involved still?
 2 MS WARK: No.
 3 MR POLLARD: Or had he stepped aside?
 4 MS WARK: He had already been stepped aside from any
 5 involvement in any Jimmy Savile material.
 6 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 7 MS WARK: To my knowledge he couldn't even ask Meirion where
 8 that interview with [REDACTED] had come from.
 9 Would I be right in saying that? Because he had to
 10 have these Chinese walls at this stage, and of course
 11 Meirion was on Panorama at that stage.
 12 MR POLLARD: Yes, yes. The de facto editor at that stage of
 13 Newsnight was?
 14 MS WARK: Liz.
 15 MR POLLARD: Was Liz, his deputy --
 16 MS WARK: Yes.
 17 MR POLLARD: -- who had stepped up.
 18 MS WARK: Yes.
 19 MR POLLARD: And her boss would be?
 20 MS WARK: You see that was very tricky. Because there
 21 was -- at that point -- I think I'm right if saying that
 22 both Steve Mitchell and Helen Boaden were involved, and
 23 then could not discuss Jimmy Savile. So, I think -- but
 24 she had other touchstones that she could deal with,
 25 I think. Let me think who was it --

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1 MR POLLARD: Peter Horrocks, certainly --
 2 MS WARK: Peter Horrocks was there briefly. Fran Unsworth.
 3 MR POLLARD: Of course.
 4 MS WARK: So she was supported, she was supported.
 5 MR POLLARD: But Newsnight did do the story?
 6 MS WARK: Newsnight did do the story. As we should do the
 7 story.
 8 MR POLLARD: Obviously at that stage it was becoming clear,
 9 or very shortly afterwards, that Panorama were going to
 10 do a programme. What was the first you had heard of
 11 that?
 12 MS WARK: I can't remember. I think it was on the phone to
 13 somebody in the programme or even when I was down at the
 14 programme that Panorama were picking up the baton and
 15 running with it.
 16 MR POLLARD: That was about the time that Newsnight covered
 17 it?
 18 MS WARK: No, no, it was before that.
 19 MR POLLARD: It was before that.
 20 MS WARK: It was before that. I am sure it must have been
 21 before the 11th, I think, because Panorama got it
 22 together quite quickly --
 23 MR POLLARD: It was a quick turnaround, wasn't it, to the
 24 22nd, I think?
 25 MS WARK: Yes.

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7 (Pages 25 to 28)

1 MR POLLARD: What did you think when you heard that Panorama
 2 were going to do that story, and that Newsnight would
 3 figure heavily in that story?
 4 MS WARK: Well it was a legitimate -- it was a legitimate
 5 piece of journalism. There is just no question of that.
 6 Tom Giles, who is the editor of Panorama, is a former
 7 day editor of Newsnight. There might have been
 8 a feeling abroad of "God, Panorama", but actually
 9 I think it was best that we aired it. I really do.
 10 I really do.
 11 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 12 MS WARK: I mean, obviously you know all the questions, but,
 13 you know, to my mind there were -- there are big
 14 questions sort of beyond this which I don't understand
 15 and I would be very keen to hear what you actually put
 16 in your report. Why it was dropped stone dead and
 17 rather than saying, "Look, Meirion and Liz, you have
 18 clearly got the guts of a good story here, keep
 19 digging", that's the first question.
 20 The second question is, you get someone who
 21 apparently is very vulnerable to speak for the first
 22 time in many years and the story is dropped, she is
 23 dropped. Why didn't Meirion and Liz go to either EdPOL
 24 or up the chain to say, "Look, you know, we brought this
 25 woman out into the open here. It's taken a lot for us

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1 to get her into the open. We think there's a really
 2 important story here, it has to keep going"?
 3 MR BLAKELY: Is there a process for that, in the chain, to
 4 bypass, as it were --
 5 MS WARK: That's why I'm thinking. That's -- that's why I'm
 6 asking that. Because I'm making the assumption there
 7 is. But then, you -- you will have to ask Meirion that.
 8 What Meirion was understanding would be presumably that
 9 the process would be Steve, Helen, or would it be
 10 David Jordan or -- or did he even think about the fact
 11 that it was personally so important to him that you
 12 could not let this woman down?
 13 Now that is a thing, because she clearly felt let
 14 down.
 15 MR BLAKELY: You don't personally know whether there is a
 16 mechanism --
 17 MS WARK: That's what I'm saying. I do not know and it's
 18 not an opinion, I'm asking the question.
 19 MR BLAKELY: I'm sorry, you don't know as a matter of BBC
 20 practice and a matter of practice whether you can, as it
 21 were, circumvent --
 22 MS WARK: I don't. I'm making an assumption even in HR if
 23 you have a concern about something, there must be
 24 a place you can go.
 25 MR POLLARD: Yes. Those are absolutely questions that we

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1 will put as we follow that decision-making process.
 2 MS WARK: Yes.
 3 MR POLLARD: Obviously the people on Newsnight realised that
 4 Meirion and Liz were intimately involved with that
 5 Panorama programme. What was your view of that? What
 6 was the sort of sense in the office?
 7 MS WARK: I mean the sense was that Meirion was away in
 8 Panorama and then I think at some point, I think I am
 9 right in saying, it was not -- it was a second remove
 10 from Panorama again, I think that's what happened. I do
 11 not know that is the result of the particular
 12 involvement of his aunt, I don't know. Liz MacKean was
 13 still working on the programme.
 14 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 15 MS WARK: Now, there is no legitimate reason why she
 16 shouldn't be.
 17 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 18 MS WARK: You know. And she wasn't criticising Newsnight
 19 per se, she obviously feels very passionately about what
 20 happens, but she works on the programme. There is no
 21 problem with working on the programme.
 22 MR POLLARD: She didn't seem like somebody who was strongly
 23 disgruntled in that period post --
 24 MS WARK: I was not there very much with her, but I think
 25 post -- lets be quite clear, she did the film on the

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1 I th.
 2 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 3 MS WARK: I don't know if she did the interview with
 4 [REDACTED] or not --
 5 MR POLLARD: Right.
 6 MS WARK: -- the previous November. This is an unknown.
 7 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 8 MS WARK: But I will tell you that interview took everybody
 9 on Newsnight by surprise.
 10 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 11 I imagine -- well, the people on Newsnight at that
 12 stage inevitably felt a bit embattled, did they, even
 13 embattled by their own colleagues on Panorama?
 14 MS WARK: Well, in a sense that was what -- I'm not sure.
 15 I think the very strong sense of the kind of job we had
 16 to do to go on air with a great programme, which is what
 17 we did when we went to Broadcasting House. And I think
 18 it was very important to make sure that they didn't feel
 19 embattled, the BBC. It is not -- we were getting
 20 obviously a rough ride in the papers, but then you get
 21 a rough ride in the papers sometimes, and I just say
 22 just keep going and we have done investigations since.
 23 So I absolutely think that the culture on Newsnight
 24 has got to be fearless and that is really important and
 25 I think the job of the senior team, myself and Jeremy as

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1 well, to make sure that they feel that, that they feel
 2 that they are going to do a good job and not be
 3 embattled by this.
 4 MR POLLARD: A very good point. Did you and Jeremy, if you
 5 like, decide either formally or informally that in the
 6 absence of an editor you would rally the troops a bit --
 7 MS WARK: I did, and Jeremy. We both did a bit, yes, I have
 8 to say, just with a couple of emails. To say, you are
 9 great, get your head down and we're going to do a great
 10 show and that's really important. Because we've come
 11 through a lot more -- you know in a way, all power to
 12 ITV for getting that out there, absolutely all power to
 13 them. And it has been much more important in a sense
 14 than the Newsnight, is what the culture has been with
 15 the Savile stuff, but of course your remit is Newsnight
 16 and that is absolutely right.
 17 MR POLLARD: Yes. Did you have much to do with this chap,
 18 Mark Williams-Thomas.
 19 MS WARK: I didn't know him.
 20 MR POLLARD: Didn't know him?
 21 MS WARK: No. I didn't even know he existed.
 22 MR POLLARD: No. He was obviously helping Meirion and Liz
 23 on Newsnight and I think played a major role in ITV [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] But
 25 you didn't really have any --
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1 MS WARK: No. Nor do I have any knowledge as to whether
 2 Meirion kept a connection with him after he had done his
 3 work for BBC.
 4 MR POLLARD: Okay. That's fair enough.
 5 At some stage you must have become aware of the
 6 famous blog --
 7 MS WARK: Yes.
 8 MR POLLARD: -- that Peter wrote, obviously after the ITV
 9 programme --
 10 MS WARK: Yes.
 11 MR POLLARD: -- setting out his view of why the Newsnight
 12 investigation had been dropped and setting out that.
 13 What sort of effect, if any, did that have on the
 14 Newsnight team? Was it a big milestone?
 15 MS WARK: No. It wasn't a big milestone. I suppose the key
 16 thing -- I mean, setting aside the stuff about CPS in
 17 Surrey, which was not -- I mean, I think the key thing
 18 was that he said in the blog that he had taken the
 19 editorial decision himself. I think that's right.
 20 I think I'm right in saying he wrote that in that blog.
 21 MR POLLARD: Yes. Okay.
 22 MR BLAKELY: Sorry, that was -- that was accepted as the
 23 correct account by the team?
 24 MS WARK: At face value that was the account. We don't
 25 know.
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1 MR POLLARD: Either at the time that the story was dropped
 2 or as, if you like, later when the ITV programme came
 3 about and the detailed explanation started to emerge,
 4 what was your view about whether the investigation had
 5 been dropped for legitimate reasons? And what was the
 6 general view in Newsnight?
 7 MS WARK: There was certainly a view in Newsnight that --
 8 and I certainly, you know, it was not beyond bounds of
 9 possibility that with these big tribute programmes
 10 coming up there was a nervousness. Whether that
 11 transmitted itself to Peter, I don't know, but it struck
 12 me that the juxtaposition was -- I actually think Peter
 13 actually wrote that or said that to Helen at the time,
 14 something about, "you know, this is going to be
 15 a difficult time for this investigation with the tribute
 16 programmes coming up".
 17 So, you know, to all intents and purposes by that
 18 blog Peter had dropped it for editorial reasons himself.
 19 You know that I have no knowledge to the contrary of
 20 that but it was -- it was bound to be a very difficult
 21 time.
 22 MR BLAKELY: Was there any division amongst the team at this
 23 point into camps that thought it was an editorial
 24 decision and camps that thought it was a pressure
 25 decision?
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1 MS WARK: No, I think quite a lot of people thought it was
 2 a pressure decision.
 3 MR BLAKELY: Would you say the majority?
 4 MS WARK: I don't know. I'm never -- you know, I don't
 5 speak to everybody, I didn't make an interrogation. But
 6 it was certainly -- it's in the ether, isn't it?
 7 MR POLLARD: What's the atmosphere like now on Newsnight?
 8 MS WARK: Actually the atmosphere -- I mean I have not been
 9 down for about ten days because I have been working in
 10 Scotland, but the atmosphere actually I think is good
 11 now. I think, you know, the election is over; we are
 12 doing a big China special tonight --
 13 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 14 MS WARK: -- and I think basically everybody has just got
 15 their heads down and got on with it.
 16 I mean, you know, we're in a situation where we're
 17 kind of denuded because Peter clearly is not working on
 18 the programme; Shaminder, as had been long planned
 19 because she got the job, is at Channel 4; and Liz is
 20 an incredibly competent deputy. So everybody feels
 21 happy that Liz is there but, you know, it's all hands to
 22 the pumps because we have a smaller team.
 23 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 24 MS WARK: But all the investigations, everything is still
 25 going on as normal.
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1 MR POLLARD: On that point about denuding the team, have you
 2 had a sense since -- I think many departments in the BBC
 3 have been squeezed and lost staff. Has that been
 4 a noticeable thing on Newsnight, that you have fewer
 5 resources or fewer people?
 6 MS WARK: I don't -- I think Newsnight is -- I'm not saying
 7 it has been protected, but I think that there is a good
 8 strong team on Newsnight just now. I don't get a sense
 9 that we are lacking in kind of serious, grown up
 10 journalists.
 11 MR POLLARD: What's your feeling about the way that the BBC
 12 has handled this over, shall we say, the past month or
 13 so -- I suppose since the ITV programme -- and the ways
 14 that statements have emerged and the ways that those
 15 have been reported?
 16 MS WARK: This is opinion. I really don't know if I feel
 17 like giving this, but I think that the -- my concern was
 18 now looking back on it, I think why -- well, two things
 19 first of all.
 20 You know, on reflection I think a blog is far too
 21 casual a way to put out something as important as this.
 22 So I don't know whose decision it was to get Peter to do
 23 the blog. The blog wasn't just -- I understand that
 24 Peter showed that blog. He must have before it went
 25 out. And I'm not sure I think that a blog was the best
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1 plan to be honest, so that's what I think.
 2 MR BLAKELY: Was the blog something you typically paid
 3 attention to?
 4 MS WARK: It was paid attention to outside the BBC --
 5 MR BLAKELY: Sorry, prior to all this was the blog something
 6 that you would have paid particular attention to, the
 7 editor's blog?
 8 MS WARK: The editor's blog? Not particularly. I mean, now
 9 and then --
 10 MR BLAKELY: Yes.
 11 MS WARK: But actually for something like this I'm not sure
 12 the blog was the right vehicle, because clearly we were
 13 dealing with something incredibly difficult and serious
 14 and it wasn't just a kind of weekly chat.
 15 MR BLAKELY: In general terms, was the blog for weekly
 16 chats? What was its purpose?
 17 MS WARK: It was just to say what was going on.
 18 MR BLAKELY: Yes.
 19 MS WARK: Maybe the BBC felt that was the only vehicle that
 20 Peter Rippon could use, I don't know. But to me it
 21 was -- to me a blog is quite a casual thing.
 22 MR BLAKELY: It was Peter's blog, was it, rather than
 23 there's a team that takes care of it and he signs it
 24 off?
 25 MS WARK: No, this was Peter's blog.
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1 MR BLAKELY: I mean, sorry, typically the editor's blog its
 2 his pet --
 3 MS WARK: Typically the editor's blog is the editor's blog,
 4 yes. And I don't know whether the editor's blog is
 5 referred up every week, I have no idea, but I think this
 6 one was.
 7 MR POLLARD: You were going to say something earlier,
 8 I think, about Meirion and Meirion's sort of record of
 9 stories.
 10 What was your take on that? Was it really to do
 11 with his experience and, if you like, his track record
 12 and credibility?
 13 MS WARK: Yes. I mean, I think he is very tenacious and
 14 I think he has a good track record. I think he becomes
 15 very involved and that you'd want. And I think -- but
 16 I think it's a case of -- I mean, I don't know this but
 17 my understanding is it is quite good to touch base with
 18 Meirion quite a lot in terms of just when things are
 19 progressing and I don't know if that was a relationship
 20 that he had with Peter Rippon.
 21 MR POLLARD: Yes. Are you suggesting that, if you like,
 22 tenacity a great up to a certain point: It can be
 23 slightly counter-productive if it goes beyond that
 24 point?
 25 MS WARK: No, I think it just needs to be tenacity tempered
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1 with, you know, a kind of regular touching base, really.
 2 You know, touching base is the wrong word, but just kind
 3 of regular updates about "How is it going? What have
 4 you got?"
 5 MR POLLARD: Just standard journalistic practice --
 6 MS WARK: Yes.
 7 MR POLLARD: -- you might think.
 8 MS WARK: Yes.
 9 MR POLLARD: And it is clear that Peter was effectively exec
 10 producing that investigation.
 11 MS WARK: He was. It wasn't Liz; it was he who was doing
 12 that.
 13 MR POLLARD: Indeed. From what you were saying about
 14 Peter's slightly stand-back style, might that have been
 15 a factor in not absolutely keeping up with everything
 16 that was going on in the investigation?
 17 MS WARK: I don't know the answer to that. It was clearly
 18 a serious investigation, so if your editor is the person
 19 who is involved in a serious investigation, it's because
 20 it is serious. And therefore, you know, I don't know
 21 how often Peter and Meirion personally have worked
 22 together on something. It had usually been other
 23 commissioning people that had done it, whoever was film
 24 commissioning --
 25 MR POLLARD: Yes.
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1 MS WARK: So maybe they were unused to each other's styles.
 2 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 3 MR BLAKELY: You said you don't know whether they had
 4 a regular updating kind of relationship where they
 5 touched base --
 6 MS WARK: I don't. I have no idea, you would have to ask
 7 them.
 8 MR BLAKELY: Can you describe their relationship at all?
 9 MS WARK: No. I don't know. I mean, does Meirion -- he's
 10 very exuberant, he brings in investigations, he's good.
 11 I don't know how closely they work or otherwise.
 12 MR BLAKELY: Thanks.
 13 MR POLLARD: I just want to bring you back to the point you
 14 mentioned earlier on about Peter's editorship being
 15 onerous on him.
 16 Did he seem to wear the editorship rather heavily?
 17 Did it seem to be difficult for him? Does it seem to be
 18 difficult for him, I should say?
 19 MS WARK: I don't think difficult for him. And he had
 20 a very good year. I mean, after all we won the RTS as
 21 "programme of the year" and he has been very encouraging
 22 of a lot of the staff. I suppose what I mean now is it
 23 was very quickly very clear to me after the ITV
 24 programme that the whole thing was very onerous on him
 25 and that he was suffering a great deal and that he -- on

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1 reflection I think probably it seemed to me that there
 2 were problems with the way the investigation -- with the
 3 team. It was definitely a communications problem
 4 between Meirion, Liz and Peter.
 5 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 6 MS WARK: And that, you know, whether that had -- that
 7 had -- whether that itself had anything to do with the
 8 dropping of the programme or not, I don't know -- the
 9 investigation, I don't know. But it clearly had been
 10 a problem in the preparing of the investigation.
 11 MR POLLARD: Yes, yes.
 12 I'm very happy, Kirsty, thank you for that.
 13 Richard?
 14 MR SPAFFORD: Nothing to add.
 15 MR POLLARD: Anything you wanted to add?
 16 MR BLAKELY: I just have a couple of very short questions.
 17 MS WARK: Yes.
 18 MR BLAKELY: Leaving Savile to one side, just going back to
 19 August 2011 or whenever: how much contact is there
 20 between the Newsnight staff, leaving aside Peter Rippon,
 21 and the next part of them, of the management, with Steve
 22 Mitchell and with Helen Boaden? How much of a day to
 23 day impact do they have on your lives?
 24 MS WARK: Not at all.
 25 MR BLAKELY: Very little or not?

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1 MS WARK: Not at all. I mean, if there's an issue to be
 2 referred, it's usually -- it would be the deputies or
 3 Peter. The actual -- the day staff, as it were, or the
 4 general staff, wouldn't have any -- as far as
 5 I understand, but there I'm not there all the time --
 6 any contact with Steve and Helen at all.
 7 MR BLAKELY: Thanks.
 8 MR POLLARD: Kirsty, thank you for that.
 9 MS WARK: A pleasure.
 10 MR POLLARD: Thank you for sparing us the time, particularly
 11 as you are doing the programme tonight.
 12 MS WARK: That's fine.
 13 MR POLLARD: Thank you.
 14 MR SPAFFORD: Thanks, we're done.
 15 (2.52 pm)
 16 (The interview concluded)
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11 (Pages 41 to 43)