

1 Friday, 23 November 2012
 2 (1.00 pm)
 3 MS CAROLINE HAWLEY (called)
 4 Housekeeping
 5 MR POLLARD: Caroline, thank you for coming. I think it is
 6 fair to say we will not be detaining you all that
 7 long --
 8 **A. I assumed it would be fairly short, given my limited**
 9 **involvement.**
 10 MR POLLARD: -- unless there is something in depth you want
 11 to tell us that you haven't already, but I assume that
 12 is not the case.
 13 Mr Maclean will ask you a few questions. I might
 14 dive in with one if it seems appropriate. Your bundle
 15 assist, Mr Spafford, is there, and he has a couple of
 16 procedural comments first of all.
 17 MR SPAFFORD: Thank you for coming in. Just to say
 18 obviously this is being transcribed and our friends at
 19 the end there are transcribing this for you. At the end
 20 of the process you will be given the transcript, and
 21 have an opportunity to correct and any typographical
 22 errors in it.
 23 Secondly just to mention confidentiality. Obviously
 24 you kindly signed the agreement that we sent to you.
 25 This is a confidential process. It is important that

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1 that be understood and applied. So could you, for the
 2 record, just confirm you received the document and
 3 understand it?
 4 **A. I have received it. I understand it, I think I sent you**
 5 **back the signed copy.**
 6 MR SPAFFORD: You did. Thank you very much, great.
 7 Questions by MR MACLEAN
 8 MR MACLEAN: Can I just ask you about your involvement with
 9 Newsnight, as at November/December last year?
 10 **A. At the time there was no involvement. I had worked on**
 11 **Newsnight before. I had worked with Meirion Jones on an**
 12 **investigation about bogus bomb detectors being sold to**
 13 **Iraq and other countries. So I knew Meirion quite well.**
 14 **I knew Liz a little bit from working with her**
 15 **a Newsnight. I had just been in Libya. We had done**
 16 **some filming and we were hoping Newsnight was going to**
 17 **use it, so I was down in the offices talking to**
 18 **Newsnight on the day of the Christmas party.**
 19 Q. To which bit of the BBC were you attached at that stage?
 20 **A. I'm a World Affairs correspondent. So I work in the**
 21 **World Affairs department, World Affairs unit.**
 22 Q. So you are liable to pop up on any News programme?
 23 **A. Yes.**
 24 Q. So you had a conversation, I think on the day of the
 25 party?

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1 **A. Yes.**
 2 Q. With Meirion Jones or Liz MacKean or both?
 3 **A. I don't remember. One or both of them.**
 4 Q. One or both. Before that conversation started, what, if
 5 anything, did you know about Newsnight and Jimmy Savile?
 6 **A. Nothing.**
 7 Q. Did you -- it was on your radar screen that he was dead?
 8 **A. I think it must have been.**
 9 Q. Were you in the country, I don't know? There was a lot
 10 of coverage when he died.
 11 **A. I think I must have been aware of his death, yes.**
 12 **I think I probably was in the country.**
 13 Q. Did you have, yourself, any view about Jimmy Savile?
 14 **A. No. I mean I'd obviously watched Jim'll Fix It when**
 15 **I was a kid, but that was about it.**
 16 Q. So you didn't know that Newsnight was doing anything, or
 17 had been doing anything about Jimmy Savile until the day
 18 of the party?
 19 **A. I don't think I did, no.**
 20 Q. In the little very, brief statement, that you have given
 21 us, you say you had spoken earlier that day -- and that
 22 day, we can see from the invite, is 20 December --
 23 **A. Um-hm.**
 24 Q. -- with the Newsnight journalists involved in the
 25 investigation into Jimmy Savile and they were upset that

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1 the story had been dropped.
 2 **A. Yes.**
 3 Q. And then you move on to the Mark Thompson conversation
 4 which obviously I'm coming to.
 5 **A. Yes.**
 6 Q. Is there anything else? Can you fill in any more about
 7 the conversation with the Newsnight people?
 8 **A. I mean that's my problem. I don't even remember whether**
 9 **it was with Liz or Meirion or both of them. Um, and in**
 10 **retrospect, knowing now, which I didn't know when I sent**
 11 **the statement, that the party was on 20 December I think**
 12 **that they must have been upset -- particularly upset**
 13 **that the Christmas tributes were going ahead, despite**
 14 **what they had uncovered.**
 15 **But I don't think I had full detail -- I didn't have**
 16 **full detail of what they had uncovered. It was a brief**
 17 **conversation, I hadn't seen any of the material.**
 18 **I hadn't seen their scripts. It was a fairly brief**
 19 **conversation while I was trying to do something else in**
 20 **the Newsnight office and rushing around and --**
 21 Q. Did they tee you up to speak to Mark Thompson?
 22 **A. No, they didn't.**
 23 Q. Did they say, "We want you to buttonhole the DG"?
 24 **A. No, they didn't.**
 25 Q. They weren't going to the party themselves?

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1 A. They weren't at the party, I don't think. It was mainly
 2 for people who had covered the Arab Spring.
 3 Q. So it was a big thank you for your contribution to some
 4 of the biggest news stories of the year, Mr Thompson
 5 says in his invitation.
 6 A. Yes, and I had been in Libya and Bahrain that year.
 7 Q. So they weren't --
 8 A. They weren't there, they --
 9 Q. They weren't saying, "Bend his ear".
 10 A. No, it is really difficult to remember exactly what was
 11 said when. Um, I -- I think they were -- they had the
 12 feeling that Peter Rippon had been lent on from on high.
 13 Later that day I had the opportunity, by coincidence, to
 14 meet with on high at the party, so I raised it with him.
 15 Now when I say -- I should be clear that "on high"
 16 I -- they didn't specify, they didn't say, Mention
 17 Mark Thompson and they certainly didn't say, "Raise it
 18 with him at the party".
 19 Q. I know it is difficult to remember these short
 20 conversations, but what your statement doesn't say is
 21 that when you spoke to Mark Thompson you had any
 22 discussion about the tributes. All that you talk about
 23 in this paragraph is the Newsnight investigation.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. You don't suggest here that you had any discussion with
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1 Mr Thompson about what BBC1 was doing on Boxing Day or
 2 what tributes the BBC had put out or were planning to
 3 put out to Savile.
 4 A. My memory of the conversation is really limited. It
 5 was -- it was a Christmas party a long time ago. I may
 6 have mentioned the tributes. I may not.
 7 Q. Before we get to the party, your recollection is that
 8 the beef, if you like, that Jones and MacKean had was
 9 that the story had been canned and that the BBC was
 10 planning to run some tributes to Savile. You got both
 11 those messages, did you, in your discussion with them?
 12 A. I definitely had the impression -- well I knew that they
 13 were upset that the investigation had been dropped.
 14 Q. Yes.
 15 A. What I'm saying now is with the benefit of hindsight, in
 16 retrospect, knowing that date was 20 December. And
 17 I now know that that was quite a while after it was
 18 dropped, because obviously my impressions now are
 19 coloured by what I have seen in the papers.
 20 Q. Sure.
 21 A. So I -- I'm pretty sure they were upset that the
 22 tributes were going ahead.
 23 Q. Right. You got the message from them that they thought
 24 that Peter Rippon had been leant on from some person or
 25 persons higher up --
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1 A. Above him, yes.
 2 Q. But no details?
 3 A. No.
 4 Q. So where is this party?
 5 A. Take place?
 6 Q. Rooms 4 and 5 on the 6th floor. How salubrious
 7 a surrounding is this?
 8 A. Quite a bland room, with no mulled wine and mince pies,
 9 as I have seen reported.
 10 MR POLLARD: No mulled wine?
 11 A. No mulled wine, no mince pies.
 12 MR MACLEAN: It is from 6 to 8, so it is a pre-dinner drinks
 13 party?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. So not substantive -- not much food, nibbles or
 16 something?
 17 A. I can't remember. There may have been nibbles. A lot
 18 of people standing around.
 19 Q. And you were speaking to Mark Thompson anyway about
 20 something else when the conversation lulled, is that
 21 right?
 22 A. Yes. I was with a group of people. You see it shows
 23 how fallible your memory is. I thought I was with
 24 somebody else and then, since this has all come to
 25 light, two people have come to me and said, "I was there
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1 at that conversation", and I thought I was with someone
 2 else entirely. It just shows how little you remember.
 3 Q. Who are the people who place themselves at that
 4 conversation?
 5 A. Allan Little. He remembers Mark Thompson saying there
 6 is a firewall between him and this kind of
 7 decision-making.
 8 Q. In News?
 9 A. In News. And Hannah Barnes, who works in current
 10 affairs, who rang me the day of The Times story and said
 11 something along the lines of, "I'm glad you said that
 12 because I've been thinking about this".
 13 Q. And this was The Times story --
 14 A. The Times story in which I'm quoted as contradicting
 15 Mark Thompson's version of events. Although I had just
 16 been in Baghdad, to be honest I had not really followed
 17 what had been happening.
 18 Q. This was fairly recently, The Times story?
 19 A. This was The Times story, I think I gave it to you as
 20 part of --
 21 Q. Is this the one with Helen Boaden and Jimmy Savile on
 22 the front page --
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. -- big picture, recently?
 25 A. Yes.
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1 Q. Yes?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Right. So we can date that.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Who was the person that you thought you were with that
 6 it turns out you weren't?
 7 A. Well, I thought -- I thought I was with Jacky Martens,
 8 who is a producer on the 10 O'Clock News, but I must
 9 have been with her at a different part of the
 10 conversation or for a different part of the event.
 11 Q. Right. So part of your recollection, as it were, of
 12 this discussion has been assisted by what these other
 13 two people have subsequently said to you about it?
 14 A. Well, Allan remembers the word "firewall". I don't
 15 remember that. I remember him just saying, "That's not
 16 the kind of decision I would be involved in taking.
 17 That kind of thing doesn't cross my desk." But I'm
 18 remembering that vaguely. I think Allan probably has
 19 a more forensic memory than I do.
 20 Q. That kind of discussion about a firewall, that sounds as
 21 if you were talking about the Newsnight story not being
 22 run --
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. -- rather than any BBC1 tribute programme?
 25 A. Yes. Yes.

1 order for us both to know what we were talking about,
 2 I must have said -- I think I must have said something,
 3 but exactly what I said, how much I said--...
 4 When I had this conversation with Hannah when she
 5 rang me up, she said there was the sense that this was
 6 something serious but she doesn't know if the word
 7 "paedophile" was used or not.
 8 MR POLLARD: Right.
 9 MR MACLEAN: You have said subsequently, in a rather long
 10 chain of emails with Mr Webster from The Times:
 11 "I think I must have mentioned the broad context of
 12 the investigation, but genuinely don't remember the
 13 words I used."
 14 We have seen the emails, he presses you quite hard
 15 to tell him that you told Mark Thompson that it was --
 16 the investigation was into allegations of sexual abuse,
 17 and you stopped short of that. But he presses you,
 18 fairly enough you might think, on, first of all, why you
 19 think you must have mentioned the broad context of the
 20 investigation, and then secondly if you did mention the
 21 broad context of the investigation, that must have been
 22 sexual abuse, or perhaps even paedophile abuse.
 23 A. My problem is I really don't remember exactly what
 24 I said.
 25 Q. When you came away from this conversation, Mark Thompson

1 Q. You were focusing on --
 2 A. Yes. My recollection of the conversation, the main
 3 thing I remember is me asking why was it dropped, and
 4 him saying, "Nothing to do with me". In just the
 5 broadest sense.
 6 Q. Did you get the sense that this was all news to him, he
 7 had never heard of this story? Or he knew about it and
 8 he was saying, "It's nothing to do with me"?
 9 Or was he saying, "I don't know anything about this
 10 at all"?
 11 A. I formed the impression that he didn't know about it.
 12 Q. This was news to him?
 13 A. That it was news to him.
 14 Q. Right.
 15 A. Which is what Hannah said to me as well. She thought it
 16 was news to him as well.
 17 Q. She said that to you recently?
 18 A. Yes. Because she called me up the day of The Times
 19 article.
 20 MR POLLARD: So you must have been -- to get any
 21 conversation going at all, if this was new to him, you
 22 must have been sort of setting the scene for him?
 23 A. I think I must -- if I came away with the impression,
 24 which I did, and -- and -- and I'm not quite sure what
 25 it it's based on -- that he didn't know about it, in

1 essentially saying:
 2 "It's nothing to do with me. There's a firewall,
 3 I don't get involved".
 4 When you left that conversation, did that -- what
 5 message did you take away? Did that strike you as
 6 perfectly straightforward and sensible or something odd
 7 or--...?
 8 A. I think I took what he said at face value and I relayed
 9 it to people later.
 10 Q. So you went back, did you? When did you speak to
 11 Meirion Jones again?
 12 A. I think the following day. I probably went to Newsnight
 13 or was down in Newsnight and I said, "Oh, I raised it
 14 with Mark Thompson and he said, 'I wasn't involved'".
 15 Q. And they said?
 16 A. Again, I know this is unsatisfactory, but I don't
 17 remember -- I didn't know whether it was Liz or Meirion,
 18 but Meirion has since told me that it wasn't him it was
 19 Liz that I had mentioned it to.
 20 MR POLLARD: The following day?
 21 A. It may have been other people in the Newsnight office as
 22 well. I think it was the following day.
 23 MR MACLEAN: Then did you have any reason to think about
 24 this any further?
 25 A. Not really, until, um -- until Meirion told me that

1 there were press reports about the conversation.
 2 I think it was in February, I think, in one article.
 3 Q. There was the article in The Oldie written by someone
 4 called Miles Goslett.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Do you know him?
 7 A. No.
 8 Q. Which had trailed in Guido Fawkes the day before, and
 9 then there were various articles, one in the
 10 Sunday Mirror on 8 January before that.
 11 A. I didn't see that. I think there was a Daily Mail
 12 story -- there was a Daily Mail story about an angry
 13 journalist cornering Mark Thompson at a Christmas party,
 14 but I can't remember if that was later in the year.
 15 Q. These stories about the angry journalist at the party,
 16 if we infer that's supposed to be you, did you have any
 17 discussions or contact with The Daily Mail or the
 18 Sunday Mirror or The Oldie or Miles Goslett?
 19 A. No, nobody contacted me at all until I was in Baghdad in
 20 October and Meirion called me and he wanted to know the
 21 date of the Christmas party. And --
 22 Q. That was --
 23 A. He asked me if I was -- if I would talk to Panorama.
 24 I said I was in Baghdad, and then Panorama called me and
 25 they said, "Can you talk?" And I was about to go into

1 A. I probably spoke about it to colleagues in my office, in
 2 the World Affairs unit.
 3 Q. In London?
 4 A. Um-hm.
 5 Q. At the time?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. I'm only interested now in late 2011 and up to, say, the
 8 February piece.
 9 A. Um, I -- I talked to people at -- I talked to either
 10 Meirion or Liz in Newsnight. Maybe there were other
 11 people there. Maybe Meirion and Liz weren't there, it
 12 was other people who were in Newsnight at the time. But
 13 I definitely said to someone at Newsnight that I had had
 14 the conversation, and I'm pretty sure that I mentioned
 15 it to colleagues as well, in my department.
 16 Q. Did you see the piece in February, when it was
 17 published, in The Oldie?
 18 A. I think I did, yes.
 19 Q. Can I just show it to you, if I can find it?
 20 A. Sure.
 21 Q. It is bundle 5, I think, page 88.
 22 A. Shall I read it all?
 23 Q. If you want to read it. I was just going to show you
 24 the bit probably most pertinent to your rather walk-on
 25 role in this.

1 an interview and said no. And they said, "We will call
 2 you back tomorrow."
 3 I never heard from them. I had an email from
 4 Channel 4, which I assumed was about this because it was
 5 from -- it was from Paraic O'Brien, who was covering it
 6 from for Channel 4, and then when I got back I had an
 7 email from Ben Webster saying, "Can we have a background
 8 chat?"
 9 So I called Sarah Ward-Lilley who -- she is now head
 10 of News gathering, but then she was deputy head, but she
 11 has always been involved in pastoral issues at the BBC.
 12 And I said I was not really sure what to do.
 13 MR POLLARD: Involved in what?
 14 A. Pastoral issues.
 15 MR POLLARD: Okay.
 16 A. So I called her and said, "I don't know what to do", and
 17 she, I think, called Peter Horrocks and said, "You
 18 should reply to anyone who asks you specifically and you
 19 should give a statement."
 20 MR MACLEAN: Right. So to whom did you -- apart from
 21 Mark Thompson in the presence of a couple of other
 22 people at a party --
 23 A. Um-hm.
 24 Q. -- and Meirion Jones and Liz MacKean, was there anyone
 25 else to whom you spoke about the Thompson conversation?

1 Do you see in the last column, the big capital T,
 2 "The BBC has serious questions."
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Towards the end, about a dozen lines from the bottom:
 5 "When asked if BBC director Mark Thompson knew of
 6 the Newsnight report the BBC refused to comment, but
 7 a source has told me that Thompson was tackled about the
 8 axing of the report at a pre-Christmas drinks party, so
 9 he cannot claim to be ignorant of it."
 10 A. Um-hm.
 11 Q. Did you have a -- form a view as to who that source
 12 might be?
 13 A. No.
 14 Q. You didn't form a view about that?
 15 A. No.
 16 Q. But you had only spoken to a small number of people
 17 about this.
 18 A. I thought it must be someone on Newsnight.
 19 Q. Had you worked with -- you said you had worked with
 20 Meirion Jones in the past. Had you worked with
 21 Peter Rippon?
 22 A. Um --
 23 Q. Had he ever been your editor at any stage?
 24 A. Yes. Because I was working on Newsnight when he took
 25 over as editor.

1 Q. That's about four years ago-ish?
 2 A. 2008, I think.
 3 Q. Did you have a view, casting your mind back to about
 4 a year ago from now, as to the state of relationships in
 5 the Newsnight office between the editor and the staff?
 6 A. I think I formed the impression that they thought he had
 7 a relatively closed door policy. That he wasn't --
 8 Q. A little inaccessible, or too much hands off, or what?
 9 A. I mean, I'm pretty sure when I -- when I've been
 10 involved in doing some things for them, he wasn't hands
 11 off, that he has viewed things before they went to air.
 12 So it wouldn't necessarily --
 13 MR POLLARD: What do you mean by, "Closed door policy"?
 14 A. I'm trying to think exactly what I do mean.
 15 That some people maybe didn't find him as
 16 approachable as they might.
 17 MR POLLARD: Okay.
 18 A. I don't think I mean anything more than that. I don't
 19 know if that is a fair comment, if that is based on one
 20 or two conversations with people or whether that was
 21 a genuinely widely held view.
 22 MR POLLARD: We're talking around this time.
 23 A. No, no I don't know around that time. Sorry, I'm
 24 talking about 2008/2009.
 25 MR POLLARD: I see, yes.

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1 A. Because I just -- I worked for Newsnight for a few
 2 months.
 3 MR POLLARD: He would be pretty new then.
 4 A. Yes. So --
 5 MR POLLARD: Okay.
 6 A. So he was very new. So it's probably not -- I probably
 7 don't have enough of a view for it to be very valid.
 8 MR MACLEAN: Can you just help us with the distinction
 9 between the editor of the programme and the executive
 10 producer? Now you may or may not know this, the
 11 Newsnight piece that they were doing on Jimmy Savile,
 12 Peter Rippon was -- fulfilled both those roles.
 13 A. Okay.
 14 Q. He was editor of the programme and he was executive
 15 producer. Normally Liz Gibbons --
 16 A. Liz --
 17 Q. Or at least often Liz Gibbons was executive producer on
 18 pieces like this.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. So I want to get straight in my head what role the
 21 editor of a programme would have in a piece like this
 22 and what role the executive producer would have. In
 23 this case Peter Rippon had both hats on. So if we
 24 hypothetically took a piece that, say, you were doing
 25 with Liz Gibbons -- it doesn't matter who it is --

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. -- as executive producer, and then you have an editor of
 3 the programme. What would you expect the editor of the
 4 programme to do, as such, before the piece aired, if
 5 anything?
 6 A. We're talking about the editor of the programme,
 7 Peter Rippon, rather than the person actually outputting
 8 the programme that evening?
 9 Q. Yes, exactly. So you are doing a piece about whatever
 10 it is. You have an executive producer and then you have
 11 the editor of the programme. So what involvement would
 12 you expect typically the editor of the programme to have
 13 in the piece before it was aired on Newsnight one
 14 particular evening?
 15 A. I think if it is something controversial I would imagine
 16 that he would see it. He or she would see it.
 17 Q. At what stage? Once the edit was pulled together or
 18 before that?
 19 A. I don't know. If I was working on something
 20 controversial I would -- I might want some input before
 21 it was pulled together. But you might get that input
 22 from Liz.
 23 Q. Right, so --
 24 A. But I didn't -- I don't know enough about the workings
 25 of Newsnight because I wasn't working with them at the

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1 time.
 2 Q. I'm not asking you about -- I'm trying to divorce it
 3 from the personalities of Peter Rippon and Liz Gibbons.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. I'm just asking you in the abstract: if you are the
 6 reporter and I'm the executive producer and there is the
 7 editor of the programme. You come to me with -- you are
 8 researching a story, you have been on an it for a couple
 9 of weeks --
 10 A. You have probably commissioned it, maybe. That is
 11 certainly how -- I would go to Liz. I would have gone
 12 to Liz with a story and say, "Are you interested?"
 13 Q. Once you get to the script -- you would write the
 14 script, would you?
 15 A. Mostly yes.
 16 Q. Draft of the script, and then you would send it to the
 17 executive producer, would you, not to the editor of the
 18 programme?
 19 A. Not to the editor, no.
 20 Q. If you had some interviewees on film, not edited down
 21 yet, but just rushes of interviews, at what stage would
 22 you expect the executive producer to look at those?
 23 A. I mean when I've worked on things before, it might be at
 24 the very -- it might be at the very end.
 25 Q. After --

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1 A. Um, the executive producer might have looked at
 2 a script --
 3 Q. Because what happened here --
 4 A. -- but not seen the interviews.
 5 Q. What happened here was that Peter Rippon was sent --
 6 Liz MacKean and Meirion Jones worked on the script.
 7 There were some iterations. It wasn't the final
 8 script -- there is a question of whether it can be
 9 properly described as a script at all, but such as it
 10 was, it was sent to Peter Rippon and he looked at that.
 11 But at the stage when the story wasn't -- had been not
 12 persisted with, he hadn't at that stage looked at the
 13 filmed interviews. And he said to us, "Of course
 14 I would have done, I would have looked at the film after
 15 editing when it had been pulled together, before it was
 16 finally broadcast."
 17 A. That makes sense. That sounds right.
 18 Q. That sounds right to you?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. That would be a role he would be fulfilling primarily as
 21 the executive producer of the piece, as opposed to the
 22 editor of the whole show, or can't you make that
 23 distinction?
 24 A. Honestly, I don't know. Because I think editors do the
 25 job of he had editing in different ways.

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1 Q. When is the story commissioned? How can I tell when my
 2 story has been commissioned or if it has not yet been
 3 commissioned?
 4 A. I'm trying to think on stories I have done for
 5 Newsnight, I did something for them earlier this year on
 6 a hospital in Jordan that is treating Iraqis and
 7 Syrians, people who have been -- had their faces blown
 8 off. So I went to Liz and she said, "Yes, I'll take
 9 it". And then she's got to sort out -- we've got to
 10 sort out with the producer the budget. So once money
 11 has been committed then you definitely know you are
 12 commissioned.
 13 Q. Right. I am sure there must be grey areas where you are
 14 working on something and seeing if it is coming
 15 together.
 16 A. I think it is probably a different process if you are
 17 working for a programme and there is not any kind of --
 18 any financial implications.
 19 Q. Have you ever heard of something called the Managed
 20 Programmes Risk List?
 21 A. No.
 22 Q. I thought that might be the answer. I won't ask you any
 23 more questions about that.
 24 MR POLLARD: Can I just ask you about the conversation that
 25 you had on the 20th with either Meirion or Liz --

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1 A. Yes.
 2 MR POLLARD: -- before the drinks thing. To put it simply,
 3 how het up were they about this? This is probably
 4 a week to ten days after the story has finally been
 5 dropped. Still pretty steaming?
 6 A. They were -- they were angry. They were angry enough
 7 for me to think that if I've got the opportunity to ask
 8 someone about it, I will, because I know them, I've
 9 worked with them before.
 10 MR POLLARD: Did you tell them that you were going to the
 11 drinks thing?
 12 A. I can't remember.
 13 MR POLLARD: So they didn't -- they didn't say, "If you get
 14 the chance --"
 15 A. No.
 16 MR MACLEAN: And they didn't say, "That sod so-and-so has
 17 spiked this programme", or this is -- you know, "We've
 18 been done over by... " whoever.
 19 A. I don't think they named anyone.
 20 MR POLLARD: But presumably they were -- they were not
 21 pleased with Peter Rippon for having taken the decision,
 22 were they?
 23 A. They were very unhappy that the decision had been taken
 24 to drop it.
 25 MR POLLARD: Yes, yes. Okay.

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1 MR MACLEAN: Okay. Mr Jones says that he came to see you
 2 after The Oldie piece.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And you had another discussion then about Mark Thompson.
 5 I think Meirion Jones's account is that after the party
 6 you then went -- you had the discussion with
 7 Liz MacKean, I think he says?
 8 A. It's possible.
 9 Q. And he says, I think, that he didn't speak to you
 10 about it --
 11 A. At that time.
 12 Q. -- until after The Oldie piece.
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. That's your understanding of what he says?
 15 A. That's my understanding of what he says yes.
 16 Q. And your position is you can't really remember who you
 17 spoke to after the party?
 18 A. No. Does that sound odd? I genuinely don't -- I know
 19 I spoke to one or both of them. I think I spoke to one
 20 or both of them. I know I mentioned it at Newsnight.
 21 I'm pretty sure I spoke to colleagues about the
 22 conversation in the office where I work.
 23 Q. Have you ever been involved in a piece of journalism of
 24 your own which has carried some sort of reputational
 25 risk to the BBC?

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1 A. No. Well, no.
 2 Q. No?
 3 A. I was thinking I had to do for Newsnight the, um,
 4 Sachs-gate story.
 5 Q. So --
 6 MR POLLARD: Was that an on the day story?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 MR MACLEAN: So this was the Jonathan Ross, Russell Brand,
 9 Andrew Sachs telephone message?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. What is your understanding of what the rules are if some
 12 part of the BBC News organisation is doing a piece of
 13 journalism that is critical of the BBC corporately or
 14 more generally? Coming back to Mr Thompson's firewall
 15 comment.
 16 A. Coming back to working on the Sachs-gate story, I just
 17 remember thinking this is going to be very carefully
 18 scrutinised. And in fact, as I remember, we'd gone out
 19 to do some vox pops about what people thought about it,
 20 and we'd spoken to some younger people who said, "We
 21 don't really care", and some older people who said,
 22 "This is very serious". And as I remember we were told
 23 not to put in the vox pops from the younger people
 24 saying this is not serious because the BBC had taken the
 25 decision that it was very serious.

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1 So you do know that when it comes to a BBC story it
 2 is going to be watched pretty closely and there will be
 3 more editorial involvement than on other stories.
 4 I remember being taken into the glass box --
 5 MR MACLEAN: Whose glass box?
 6 A. The editor's glass box. I cannot remember if it was
 7 Peter or someone else editing, but there was certainly
 8 concern about us using vox pops saying it is not very
 9 serious.
 10 Q. You know who David Jordan is?
 11 A. I didn't know before all of this who he was.
 12 Q. Did you know before all of this what -- I think the
 13 shorthand is "EdPol", editorial policy -- did you
 14 understand how it fits into the editorial
 15 decision-making and if so how?
 16 A. Not really. I haven't done very many stories. Because
 17 I generally do news and foreign news, so I have not had
 18 many dealings with them. I know when we wanted to do
 19 some undercover filming with men who were selling bogus
 20 bomb detectors that Meirion took that to EdPol.
 21 Q. So they are a kind of --
 22 A. They tell you whether it is okay to do that.
 23 Q. A kind of ethical advice line?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Or decision-maker?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Right.
 3 MR POLLARD: Can I just ask, the story that you did with
 4 Meirion, the bomb detector story.
 5 A. Um-hm.
 6 MR POLLARD: How long did that take, roughly?
 7 A. Um, certainly several weeks. It was quite a slow burn
 8 thing because I -- I just went to him with the idea
 9 saying, "I think we should investigate these bomb
 10 detectors because I think people are dying because they
 11 are being used".
 12 MR POLLARD: Yes.
 13 A. And he's a very impressive investigator.
 14 MR POLLARD: Is he? Yes.
 15 A. Um-hm. I wouldn't have known how to start. I just knew
 16 that I thought it was a good idea to look into it. But
 17 he -- he found us the whistleblower who gave us the
 18 card, who worked with this man Jim McCormick who was
 19 selling lots of them to Iraq and he gave us a card which
 20 was supposed to detect the TNT and detected nothing at
 21 all.
 22 So he's an impressive investigator, Meirion.
 23 MR POLLARD: And how would you describe his sort of working
 24 methods?
 25 A. He's very dedicated and consumed. I mean he -- consumed

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1 may be the wrong word, but he's --
 2 MR MACLEAN: Obsessive?
 3 A. No, I wouldn't say that. But he's -- he's extremely
 4 hard working.
 5 Q. Very driven?
 6 A. Very driven, yes.
 7 Q. Determined?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And once he's got, to mix my metaphors, once he has the
 10 bit between his teeth on the story, he goes for it, does
 11 he?
 12 A. I think he wants to carry it through. Like I said,
 13 I wouldn't have known where to start with investigating
 14 bogus bomb detectors and he --
 15 MR POLLARD: And the story got on and it was quite high
 16 profile, was it?
 17 A. It got on. Newsnight led with it. The Government then
 18 decided that they were going to ban their export to Iraq
 19 and Afghanistan and we followed it up with the two
 20 subsequent stories for Newsnight. So he's -- he's
 21 determined -- he's passionate about his work.
 22 MR MACLEAN: You had an exchange with him in August of this
 23 year, the strap line of the email is something to do
 24 with Mr Assange. I don't want to get into him. You
 25 replied, on 15 August saying:

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1 "Just bumped into Peter R, who I assume is
2 Peter Rippon, who described you as a jewel in the BBC
3 Crown."
4 **A. How did that come about?**
5 Q. How did that come about, yes?
6 **A. Meirion and I had been working on a story about**
7 **Julian Assange. Meirion had contacts in the Ecuadorian**
8 **embassy. I think we had -- either he had just**
9 **secured -- I'm not sure about the exact timing of this,**
10 **but he did secure interviews, which I did, with**
11 **Julian Assange in the embassy. And I think it was at**
12 **that time that I got off the tube at White City and**
13 **I bumped into Peter Rippon and we talked about the**
14 **Julian Assange story, and then I said, "Meirion is**
15 **great, isn't he"? Because I said, "This is all Meirion,**
16 **he had the contacts, he enabled it", and I said,**
17 **"Meirion is great, isn't he?" And Peter said, "Yes,**
18 **a jewel in the BBC's Crown".**
19 MR MACLEAN: He said that with or without irony, did he?
20 **A. No, I think it was without irony. I certainly got the**
21 **impression it was without irony.**
22 Q. And then Mr Jones's response to you, "Jewel in the Crown
23 was an ITV series, but never mind". One might infer
24 that was slightly disparaging about Peter Rippon, is
25 that fair, a fair inference?

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1 **A. I didn't really give it much thought.**
2 Q. He's picking up on the point that it is not quite right,
3 that there is something inapt about describing a BBC
4 person as being a Jewel in the Crown because that was an
5 ITV programme?
6 **A. I got the impression Peter Rippon was genuine when he**
7 **said it.**
8 Q. Okay. Anything else?
9 MR POLLARD: I don't think so, no.
10 MR MACLEAN: Okay.
11 MR POLLARD: Thank you for coming.
12 **A. You're welcome. I'm sorry my memory isn't -- it is just**
13 **really hard to remember things a long time ago**
14 **especially when -- when they are informal.**
15 MR POLLARD: Yes.
16 **A. I you have know I didn't go to --**
17 MR POLLARD: A few canapés and you were faint with hunger.
18 MR MACLEAN: Thank you.
19 MR POLLARD: Thank you.
20 (2.47 pm)
21 (The interview concluded)
22
23 MS CAROLINE HAWLEY (called)1
24
25 Housekeeping 1
26
27 Questions by MR MACLEAN2

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