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**Sir Hugh Orde
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Media Advisory Group**

4th December 2009

To: all Chief Constables and Commissioners

Dear Colleague

Media Briefing – Criminal Cases

I want to bring to your attention an issue that has been raised recently by the Judiciary concerning the release, by police, of video footage of suspects in interview room situations and other footage taken in police stations of suspects.

In the particular case, concern has been expressed regarding the images released and the timing of that release. The release occurred post verdict but pre sentence. ACPO guidance on the particular issue of pre-verdict media handling is currently being reviewed.

Any decision to release images should be considered carefully to avoid any suggestion of possibly compromising the judicial process. I would refer colleagues to the ACPO guidance on the release of images which covers release at any point, during trials, up to and including sentencing. The guidance advises that decisions are taken in conjunction with CPS colleagues, force media departments and the SIO.

Furthermore it is advisable that a record of the decision is made detailing the decision maker, the material to be released and the rationale for that decision. These points form part of ACPO guidance on the release of images of suspects and defendants, agreed by ACPO Cabinet earlier this year.

Should you require further information please contact my staff officer john.mcbride@btp.pnn.police.uk. I will update you in due course regarding the refreshed pre-verdict media handling guidance.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Trotter OBE QPM
Chief Constable
Chair of ACPO Media Advisory Group**

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