



Witness name: Mark * Hughes
Dated: 30 January 2012
Filed in response to a notice dated 3 January 2012

The Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARK HUGHES
CRIME CORRESPONDENT, TELEGRAPH MEDIA GROUP LIMITED
30 JANUARY 2011**

I, Mark Hughes of Telegraph Media Group Limited, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0DT, will say as follows:

1. I make this witness statement in response to the Leveson Inquiry's notice sent to me on 3 January 2012 (the **Notice**), with particular reference to the questions raised in the Notice. In accordance with the terms of the Notice, this statement addresses my experience at TMG since I joined in March 2011.

Question 1: Who you are and a brief summary of your career history

2. I hold the title of Crime Correspondent at the Daily Telegraph newspaper, a position I have held since March 2011. Prior to this I worked at The Independent newspaper. There I was Northern Correspondent from 2007 to 2008 and Crime Correspondent from 2008 until 2011. Before this I worked on the News & Star, a regional newspaper in Cumbria.



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RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MEDIA AND THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

Question 2: What have been your impressions, over the years, about the culture of relations between the Metropolitan Police Service and the media?

3. In the relatively short time I have dealt with the Metropolitan Police Service ('MPS'), I feel that relations have been good. The MPS is the biggest force/service in Britain and therefore deals with a much larger number of cases which are of interest to the national media. Because of this the MPS is more aware of the needs of the media and in fostering proper relationships than many smaller forces.

Question 3: Describe the personal contact which you had with the Metropolitan Police at the various stages of your career. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with the Metropolitan Police.

4. I have a wide range of contact with individuals within the MPS, from press officers to the most senior police officers. Most frequently I will deal with the press office. I normally telephone someone on the 24-hour press bureau each day to ask whether any incidents have taken place that day or overnight. If I am following a particular story I will call the individual press officer assigned to this story to ask for updates. If I know the detective on such a case I may also call that officer to ensure any information I have is accurate. In big criminal trials the MPS will often host background briefings during which



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I, along with other members of the press, will be given access to senior officers who will take questions about that case.

5. I am a member of the Crime Reporters Association (CRA). This is an organisation comprising of crime reporters on national newspapers and broadcast media. It is funded by the individual members who pay a yearly subscription of about £40. Throughout the year social functions at which MPS officers and staff are present are organised. The CRA host a Christmas party. Scotland Yard will occasionally invite me to social events such as a summer party which is organised by the force each year. I am also invited to other social events at which MPS officers or staff are also present for example the force will occasionally organise drinks events at which crime journalists are invited to meet with certain policing teams e.g. murder squads. And on other occasions I will meet with officers on an individual basis, for example, following the conclusion of court cases.

Question 4: Without prejudice to the generality of question 3 (above), please set out the contact which you have had with the person occupying at any given time the following posts giving, as best as you can remember, the dates and summarising the gist of the communications which you had with:

a. The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

6. During my time as Crime Correspondent (on both The Independent and Daily Telegraph) there have been three Commissioners of the MPS; Sir Ian Blair, Sir Paul Stephenson and Bernard Hogan-Howe. During his time as Commissioner I had no contact with Sir Ian Blair as he left shortly after I took up the role. Since then I have had one lunch with him during which I carried



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out an interview which was subsequently published in The Independent. The meeting took place some time during the final week of May 2010, just before the general election. Since then I have had very infrequent email contact with Sir Ian (now Lord Blair) about potential comment on ongoing stories/issues in policing.

7. My meetings with Sir Paul Stephenson mostly took place in official MPS briefings, organised by the force for crime reporters. These were scheduled to take place roughly once a month, although in reality were more infrequent. I have also met with him at social occasions. These were at drinks receptions organised either by the CRA or the MPS, about twice a year.

8. Bernard Hogan-Howe has only recently become Commissioner. Since his appointment I believe I have met with him on three occasions. The first was at a briefing for crime reporters the week after his appointment. The second was at last year's Christmas party organised by the CRA. The third was a 'coffee morning' held by the MPS shortly before Christmas. Two of these took place at Scotland Yard. The social event was held at a nearby pub. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner I met with Mr Hogan-Howe for a drink on one occasion while he was at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. This was a social meeting to introduce myself as the new crime reporter at the Telegraph.

b. The Deputy Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

9. Tim Godwin was Sir Paul's Deputy. I recall attending two briefings he hosted at New Scotland Yard. I believe the topic of the first was unspecific



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while the second was during the August riots, during which point he held the post of Acting Commissioner. I cannot, from memory, recall whether he attended any of the social functions organised during his time as Deputy although I would consider it likely. I cannot recall any pertinent conversation I have had with Mr Godwin.

10. The most recent Deputy Commissioner appointed is Craig Mackey, who is yet to begin in the role. Mr Mackey was the Chief Constable of Cumbria Police when I was a reporter on a regional newspaper in the county, however I do not believe I met or spoke with him on any occasion. My first contact with him was during the Cumbria shootings carried out by Derrick Bird. I was working for the Independent at this time. I attended briefings with Mr Mackey. I later had one telephone conversation with him on the abuse of stop and search legislation. This was organised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo) as he is the official spokesman on this topic.

c. Assistant Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis.

11. There are four Assistant Commissioners currently at the MPS. However, due to the changing of personnel at the force, more than four people have occupied these ranks during my time as Crime Correspondent. I have attended official briefings with all four current incumbents on their areas of speciality. I would also have attended social events either organised by the CRA or Scotland Yard, at which they were present over the years, however I cannot be certain of this. With regard to more detailed recollections, my most pertinent meetings were with the following:



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12. Lynne Owens, former Assistant Commissioner in charge of central operations. I interviewed Mrs Owens in the presence of a press officer following disorder in central London during a student protest. This interview took place in her office. I have also attended several briefings held by Mrs Owens.

13. Cressida Dick, specialist operations, and Chris Allison, Olympics, to discuss their portfolios at meetings attended by one or two other reporters. Both meetings took place in their office in the presence of a press officer and were off the record. The decision as to whether such briefings are on or off the record is generally made by Scotland Yard.

14. John Yates, a former Assistant Commissioner who has since resigned. I attended a lunch with two other reporters from other news organisations and a press officer which took place in late 2010. The meeting was to inform our understanding of terror-related matters and was off the record. I have also attended a number of social events at which Mr Yates was present.

d. Deputy Assistant Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis.

15. The position of Deputy Assistant Commissioner is held by at least six individuals currently and, again due to the changing nature of personnel at the force, many more people are likely to have held this position during my time in the role. I cannot recall any pertinent meeting with any individual holding this rank. However I have consulted the current MPS organisational chart and am confident that I have had some form of contact (official briefings or social events) in one form or another with most of the current incumbents.



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e. Head of Public Affairs.

16. The head of public affairs at the Metropolitan Police has been Dick Fedorcio. Given the large number of press officers employed by the MPS it is clearly not necessary to speak to the head of public affairs for every story. My communications with Mr Fedorcio, therefore, would be generally when I was working on large stories which would perhaps impact on the perception of either the MPS as an organisation or the Commissioner personally. On almost every occasion, I would initiate this contact. I have also attended a number of social gatherings (mainly organised by the MPS or the CRA) at which Mr Fedorcio was present. We have also, more informally, met for lunch and drinks together. Any hospitality such as this would be paid for by myself and claimed back through Telegraph Media Group's expenses system in accordance with company policy.

Question 5: Did you ever have the personal mobile telephone number or home telephone number of the people listed at a-e (above)?

17. I hold mobile telephone numbers for a number of police officers of all ranks. Of the individuals listed above I hold mobile numbers for some of them. I do not hold any home telephone numbers for any police officer.



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Question 6: Describe what you were seeking to gain from the Metropolitan Police through your personal contacts with MPS personnel.

18. I was seeking to better understand the work of the police and how certain investigations worked. Building personal contacts with named officers would also enable me to speak directly with them should they be involved in a newsworthy case. I would be able to get a better understanding of the case, and run certain pieces of information past them to verify truth against rumour.

Question 7: Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider the Metropolitan Police has been seeking from you in personal dealings with them during your career.

19. The MPS needs the press for a number of reasons. Through their contact with me I believe their main aim is to promote the good work of the force and provide explanation surrounding criticism of the force. There are also occasions when they will use the media for witness appeals or to appeal for information. A good illustrative example of how the police sought to use contact with me was during several public order events which took place in 2011. During one student protest, when the police was being criticised by business owners who claimed they were not warned of potential damage to their property, I was invited by the force to interview the head of the operation and put those complaints to her.

20. During the royal wedding several trusted crime reporters were allowed to base themselves at Scotland Yard for the duration of the wedding, so that



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the police could get information to us, and therefore the public, immediately. The importance of having such information immediately available allowed us to publish updates on our website instantly. During the riots the police also asked for our co-operation when releasing pictures of people suspected of being involved in rioting and looting.

Question 8: To what extent do you accept, and have you accepted, hospitality from the Metropolitan Police?

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Question 9: Insofar as you accept, or have accepted, hospitality from the MPS, what is, or what was, the nature of the hospitality that you accept, or have accepted?

21. I have accepted hospitality offered by the MPS. Hospitality shown by the force extends almost exclusively to a summer drinks reception, held for crime reporters each year, at a MPS building. The event is social and the hospitality provided is alcohol and a buffet. I have also attended a function held at Scotland Yard hosted by the Olympic Security Team. This was organised by the press office.

Question 10: To what extent do you, or have you, provided hospitality for the Metropolitan Police?

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Question 11: Insofar as you provide, or have provided hospitality to the Metropolitan Police, what is, or was, the nature of the hospitality that you provide, or have provided?

22. I have bought the odd drink for various members of staff and officers at the MPS. I have also bought lunch for members of the police force. Again, the cost of this would be reclaimed through Telegraph Media Group's expenses system in accordance with company policy. I am also a member of the CRA. Together the CRA hosts a Christmas drinks reception to which police officers and staff, from various forces, are invited. Again, the hospitality extends to drinks and a buffet.

Question 12: Have you ever attended a formal press conference called by the MPS? If so, for what purpose was it called and do you think that it was valuable?

23. I have attended a large number of formal press conferences called by the MPS. I cannot recall the exact reason each one was called. On the whole they would be called for large stories which are gaining a lot of media interest. Clearly depending on the nature of the information released by the police, some were more helpful than others. However, generally press conferences are a good way to engage with the force as it gives an opportunity to ask questions rather than simply be given a statement.



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RELATIONS WITH OTHER POLICE FORCES

Question 13: What have been your impressions, over the years, about the culture of relations between police forces other than the MPS and the media?

24. Every other force in the UK is smaller than the MPS. The MPS, due to the large number of high-profile cases it deals with, is more used to dealing with stories of national interest. Therefore the relations between the media and other forces are sometimes not as well-established as those between the media and the MPS. The issue is simply that crime reporters such as myself will speak with the MPS on an almost daily basis. We only contact regional forces, in my experience, on a handful of occasions throughout the year when a big story happens on their patch.

Question 14: Have you had personal contact at Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, or Assistant Chief Constable level? If so, as best you can remember, please state the dates and summarise the gist of such communications.

25. I have spoken with Chief Constables, Deputy Chief Constables and Assistant Chief Constables at many forces across the UK. This contact generally occurs through the Association of Chief Police Officers ('Acpo'). Each year Acpo holds a three-day conference. Almost every Acpo-rank officer in the UK attends. Here I have interacted with many people of those ranks. I have also interviewed officers of this rank, again via the Acpo press office,



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when I am writing a story on their area of expertise. Each Acpo-rank officer is given a portfolio area. If, for example, I am writing a story about rape convictions and want to speak to an expert I will contact Acpo and ask to speak to their senior officer who holds the rape or sexual offences portfolio. They will then have that officer call me if he wishes to discuss the topic.

Question 15: Describe the personal contact which you had with other police forces at the various stages of your career. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with other police forces.

26. On any given day I could be required to contact any police force should a major crime story occur in its area. In the past four years I have probably spoken to every police force in the country. Some of the major enquires would consist of: the Derek Bird massacre in Cumbria; the murder of Joanna Yeates in Avon and Somerset; the murder of Sian O'Callaghan in Wiltshire. I would best summarise my contact with regional forces as intense during a large investigation but otherwise infrequent.

Question 16: Describe what you were seeking to gain from these contacts with other police forces.

27. I was seeking to gain the best possible understanding of whichever story I happened to be working on at the time. Also, given that my contact with these forces is infrequent, forging relationships with people at other forces would be helpful for future contact with these forces.



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Question 17: Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider that other police forces have been seeking from you in personal dealings with them during your career.

28. Police forces in those instances would, in my opinion, simply have hoped that any report I publish carries their message – i.e. appeals or reassurance to the public. And that any report I write is an accurate portrayal of their investigation.

Question 18: To what extent do you accept, and have you accepted, hospitality from other police forces?

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Question 19: Insofar as you accept, or have accepted, hospitality from the other police forces, what is, or what was, the nature of the hospitality that you accept, or have accepted?

29. I can think of no occasion during which I have accepted hospitality from a force other than the MPS, unless that hospitality is characterised as a press conference or press briefing. I cannot, for example, recall attending any social function hosted by any force other than the MPS.

Question 20: To what extent do you, or have you, provided hospitality for other police forces or any of their personnel?



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Question 21: Insofar as you provide, or have provided hospitality to other police forces, or any of their personnel, what is, or was, the nature of the hospitality that you provide, or have provided?

30. I can think of relatively few occasions where I have provided hospitality for other forces. I may have taken staff or officers from some regional forces for a drink, but this is rare. I recall one occasion where I took the head of press from a large regional force for lunch. I also recall a visit by several crime reporters to meet senior officers in Thames Valley. This was a drinks event in a pub in Oxford and I believe I picked up part of the bill.

GENERAL MATTERS

Question 22: Have the police either formally or informally ever given you prior notification about proposed arrests, raids or other action? If so, please elaborate.

31. I have been given prior notification on raids, this is primarily done when the police are inviting members of the media to attend such raids for filming or reportage purposes. Other than in a raid situation, I cannot, to the best of my knowledge, recall being told that someone is due to be arrested. On some occasions, forces may have provided a 'steer' on whether an arrested suspect is likely to be charged or not. No particular example springs to mind.



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Question 23: Have you ever been offered "off the record" briefings by the police? If so, please elaborate.

32. Some police forces do offer "off the record" briefings. Examples of this are occasions where I have been invited to meet senior officers at the Metropolitan Police who run a portfolio area. The meeting is a formal introduction and a chance to discuss that portfolio area so as to improve my understanding of it. I believe the reason for it being "off the record" is simply to ensure the atmosphere is not as formal as would be in an interview. An example of an off the record briefing held during a live investigation was during the Sian O'Callaghan murder investigation in Wiltshire. There was a considerable amount of misinformation and the senior officer, while not wanting to reveal certain facts officially, was happy to provide a briefing so as to scotch rumour and incorrect reporting.

Question 24: What mechanisms, if any, are in place in your workplace to monitor and record hospitality as between the police on the one hand and you, or your fellow journalists on the other?

33. Our company operates a very strict expenses policy which is accessible to all staff via the company intranet. Any hospitality I provide to the police, for example buying lunch, dinner or a round of drinks at a social function, must be supported by a receipt and is submitted by myself via the expenses system and recorded. All of my expenses claims and those of other Telegraph Media Group journalists are checked at a senior level at least by my head of department or by the managing editor.



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Question 25: What training, guidance, policies and/or practices are in place in your workplace governing contact between you and your fellow journalists on the one hand the police on the other?

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Question 26: What editorial or management oversight, or control, if any, is there over communications between journalists and police at your media outlet?

34. While I am generally expected by my editors to be in contact and communication with police officers, there are a number of steps the company have taken to ensure such contact and communication is proper. The staff handbook includes guidance on bribery and corruption. Recently the Chief Executive at the newspaper has circulated a letter to staff reminding us of our obligation of the need to uphold high standards.

Question 27: What ethical issues do you consider arise, or need to be held in mind, by a journalist communicating in the course of his or her employment with the police, or anyone serving with, or employed by, a police force?

35. With regards ethical concerns, I always keep in mind that the interests of the police and the media are different. I feel that I have to be mindful that the information I may request or desire may not be in the best interests of the police to give. In those situations I must respect that they can and should withhold such information. In some situations I am also aware that information



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I publish could be detrimental to a police investigation and must consider whether or not to include such information.

36. I am, however, also fully aware of the Press Complaints Commission code. This includes a clause on the obligation to protect confidential sources.

Question 28: What payments (if any) are considered to be legitimate financial transactions between persons serving with or employed by a police force and journalists at your media outlet? Please explain.

37. There are no direct payments made between myself and police officers which would be considered legitimate financial transactions. I have never paid a police officer for information. Entertaining police contacts in the form of a lunch, dinner or drink is permitted but I always comply with the company's expenses policy.

Question 29: What role do you consider that the Metropolitan Police Service Directorate of Public Affairs (especially its Press Bureau) and corresponding parts of other police forces fulfil? What, in practice, do they do?

38. The MPS Directorate of Public Affairs fulfils a primarily reactive role. The press officers react to phone calls from members of the media such as myself and take our questions. If they have been provided with a statement or guidance to give then they will talk me through that or issue to me the statement. On other occasions they will act as a conduit should I have a



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specific question about a specific investigation which is not covered by the official statement and respond with an answer should the officer be willing to provide one. The force also proactively issues statements each day via an email system. On rare occasions the press office will contact me to update me on a story I have previously expressed an interest or to draw my attention to something they feel our readers would be interested in/an issue they want publicity over. The department also organises all briefings and press conferences held by the force.

Question 30: How, in practice, do you get access to the police?

39. My first port of call would generally be the press office. However, as explained above, if the investigation is being conducted by an officer I have had previous contact with I may contact that officer directly.

Question 31: Does the Head of Public Affairs at the Metropolitan Police Service and/or corresponding persons in other police forces act, or seek to act as gatekeepers controlling access by the media to other police personnel?

40. If I wanted to speak with an officer I had no prior contact with I would go through the press office with this request, mainly for reasons of practicability, although this would not necessarily be the head of press. In many instances if they facilitate this then the meeting or phone call will take place in the presence of a press officer.



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Question 32: If so, what is your attitude to this state of affairs?

41. It can be frustrating if your request to speak to an officer has to go via the press office as if the press officer is of the view that speaking to the press would be a bad idea, they are likely to convince the officer of this. Indeed, the recent report by Elizabeth Filkin highlights instances of police officers being told they were not allowed to speak to the press, despite it being their wish.

42. With regards to the press officer being present during such meetings, I fully understand the reasons for this and generally it makes no difference to my approach. This would only change should the press officer attempt to censor the officer.

Question 33: To what extent, in your opinion, does the MPS' Press Bureau, and corresponding parts of other police forces, exist to manage the relevant police force's corporate image in the media?

43. I believe part of the job of the MPS Directorate of Public Affairs is expected to perform is to manage the image of the force. However, the Press Bureau does not exist to fulfil this function. Clearly the bureau will take account of how certain stories will be portrayed in the media and how they will paint the force, but I would consider the corporate image of the force is more a job for the head of the DPA and those working in the corporate press office.



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Question 34: Is it necessary for police forces to have a press office, and what is your view as to the utility and role of police press offices?

44. Yes it is necessary for police forces to have press offices. While speaking to officers is always preferable, press officers fulfil a valuable role. Very often certain officers have little experience of the media and a good press officer can be just as valuable in terms of providing guidance and context to an investigation. Officers do not have the time to respond to every media query and the press office can filter this with a formulated response/guidance. It would simply be impracticable if every minor query had to be put to a police officer. Certain factual queries do not require the input of a police officer.

Question 35: Is it common for persons working for police press offices to have a background in the media?

45. It is fairly common.

Question 36: What proportion of personnel working in police press offices do you estimate have a media background?

46. I would estimate between 30 and 40 per cent of people working in police press offices have some sort of media background in that they will have worked for a news outlet. I would stress that this is simply an estimate based



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on informal conversations I have had with various press officers across the country. However, I would suggest that police forces would be able to provide factual information on this subject.

Question 37: Is any particular form of media background predominantly found amongst police press officers (e.g. tabloid, broadsheet, television)?

47. I am aware of police press officers who have worked on newspapers, but cannot recall any from the television media.

Question 38: To the best of your knowledge is there any discernible patterns in the movement of personnel from the media into police press offices and vice versa?

48. I am not sure it could be termed a pattern, but certainly there appear to be more press officers who have previously worked at newspapers than any other type of media. I am unaware of any police press officers moving into the national media in any form.



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ABOUT HMIC

Question 39: What is your view of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's recent report "Without Fear or Favour" insofar as they concern relations between the media and the police? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).

49. The report Without Fear or Favour includes the following key recommendations in the section headed 'Relationships with media...':
- a. Forces should explore options for identifying and monitoring emerging and inappropriate relationships with, and leaks to, the media.
 - b. Forces and authorities should record all interactions between police employees and media representatives. The time and date of the meeting, brief details of purpose, content and persons involved should be recorded. An appropriate mechanism should be in place to audit these records.
 - c. Consideration should be given to the development of a national media policy to include appropriate levels of interaction, social interaction and relationships, alongside practical guidance.
50. For the first and second recommendations, I was of the view that such practices already existed.



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51. Each police force has a professional standards department whose role it is to monitor corrupt police officers. This would include any officer who is deemed to have a corrupt relationship with a journalist or who is suspected of leaking confidential information to the press. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) also undertakes such investigations.

52. With regards to all forces monitoring interactions between police employees and the media, I was of the view that press offices monitored every official contact they had with journalists.

53. As for police officers doing the same, I can see why it would be desirable, but wonder whether it perhaps might become overburdening to ask a police officer to note and record every brief conversation he has with a journalist.

54. The recommendation for a national policy on appropriate levels of interaction strikes me as rather patronising. It suggests that senior police officers cannot be trusted over the level of interaction and need to be told what an appropriate disclosure to make to the media is.

Question 40: Do you consider that there are further or different steps which could and/or should be taken to ensure that relationships between the police and the media are and remain appropriate? Please explain when answering this question what you consider to be



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appropriate contact between the police and journalists in a democratic society.

55. I feel that the current laws governing this area are sufficient. Police officers who leak confidential documents or accept payment in exchange for information are in breach of the law and can be dealt with.

56. I fear that constraining already appropriate relationships even further would lead to a breakdown in communication between the police and the media.

57. If police officers are no longer allowed to speak with the press or have to do so only in the presence of a press officer then an important part of the process for checking the veracity of information and ensuring accuracy of reporting will be lost.

58. Police officers will simply not take the risk for fear of being deemed 'inappropriate'. The upshot will be that misinformation, which has been unable to be checked, will appear in the media. Or, even worse, crimes the police so desperately need help from the public on will go unsolved.

59. You ask what I consider to be appropriate contact between the police and the media in a democratic society. I would say that police officers trusted to solve some of the most heinous crimes can also be trusted to speak with the media. In fact surely they are best placed to do so given that what



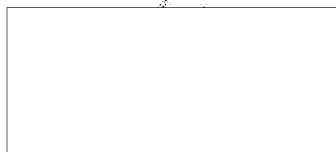
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ultimately appears in the newspaper could have an effect, one way or the other, on their investigation.

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.



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