

10 July 2009

From the editor
Kings Place, 90 York Way,
London N1 9GU

John Whittingdale OBE MP
Chairman
Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
7 Millbank
London
SW1P 3JA

I understand that you will be asking the Guardian and Nick Davies to give evidence in relation to the allegations we have published this week.

I am not sure that I can be of much use to you. I have no first hand knowledge of the matters we published. That extensive research was carried out by Nick Davies.

I am sure that Nick Davies will be happy to talk to you. You will understand that he has a duty to protect his sources, which means that he will not be at liberty to show you much of the evidence on which his stories have been based.

There seems to me a more satisfactory way for the Committee to proceed.

May I suggest that you

- a) write to the information commissioner to ask him to share all the material his office gathered during its Motorman investigations. To my knowledge the Committee has never asked for, or seen, this material. It should give you a good idea of the extent of the problem of hacking and illegally obtaining private data.
- b) Write to News International to ask them to share with you all the documentation relating to the use of private detectives which is in the possession of Scotland Yard. If they have not retained copies they could, I imagine, ask Scotland Yard to release copies of the material to you.
- c) Make direct inquiries (as you have not, I believe, so far done) of News of the World executives and reporters around the time of the Gordon Taylor, Clive Goodman and Motorman exercises. The names of the relevant journalists will be found in the Motorman and Scotland Yard papers.

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d) Ask Andy Coulson to give evidence.

I cannot imagine that News International would resist sharing such material with you given their commitment to self-regulation.

This would give you a good picture of the extent of the activity and whether – as the present editor told you – Goodman was “aberrational.” You would thus be able to form your own opinion, based on solid evidence, as to whether or not you have been “misled.”

Yours sincerely,

Alan Rusbridger