

Response to allegations of Michael Schwarz made on 22nd May 2012 - HASC

Introduction

May I at the outset thank the HASC in allow me to submit this response for consideration.

- 1) I am John McDonald, a retired Detective Sergeant from the Metropolitan Police (MPS). I retired from the Police Service on the 1st April 2018 with a certificate of 'exemplary conduct' having completed 30 years of service. I am an officer who has been awarded 14 separate commendations from the Metropolitan Police and judiciary. These include commendations for bravery and investigative ability in the fields of child murder, serious sexual offences and complex financial crime.
- 2) Whilst a serving officer at the MPS I had conduct of a number of significant, complex cases including the case R v Brown (Milton) which dealt with a serial sex offender. From 1999 I specialised in the investigation of serious crime and became a subject matter expert in the field of financial investigation, whilst deployed within the Proceeds of Corruption Unit at New Scotland Yard I was one of the lead officers in the cases against James Ibori, Bhadrash Gohil, Theresa Ibori, Elias Preko, Christine Ibori-Ibie, Udoamaka Okoronkwo and Adebimpe Pogoso (acquitted) et al.
- 3) The allegations being investigated were serious and complex and concerned Grand Corruption. In short James Ibori whilst a serving Nigerian State Governor stole millions from state funds, a substantial amount of money was laundered through the United Kingdom and was used to purchase property, expensive motor vehicles, educate children in private school and maintain an extravagant lifestyle. Ibori was ably assisted by professional enablers Mr. Gohil and Mr. Preko. A solicitor and former banker respectively.
- 4) This response is made in respect of the grave and serious allegations made before the HASC on 22nd May 2012 against me and former colleagues of the Metropolitan Police namely Mr Gary Walters and Mr Peter Clark. Those allegations were made live before the committee on the 22nd May 2012 during the witness testimony of Michael Schwarz of Bindmans Solicitors, the Chair of the HASC at the time was the Rt Hon Keith Vaz. Mr Schwarz was at the time representing Bhadrash Gohil a former solicitor of England and Wales who was convicted in 2010 with James Ibori's wife Theresa following a trial by jury at Southwark Crown Court and again in 2011 when he pleaded 'guilty' to being involved in a fraud and subsequent money laundering scheme, that case concerned the theft of circa £32 million

USD. At no time during the many occasions that I have given evidence in the series of trials connected to these cases was I asked about these serious allegations, the various defence teams would have had every opportunity to have done so. It would have been remiss not to do so.

- 5) I have personally held my own counsel as not to jeopardise a number of criminal appeals which were heard at the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. The final appeal was passed down on the 17th October 2018 and is a public document. The various appeals are now complete, all were dismissed.
- 6) At the very outset I refute and continue to vehemently deny that at any time did I commit any criminal offence as alleged by Michael Schwarz or indeed by any other person for that matter.
- 7) The HASC were examining the role of 'Private Investigators' and in due course provided a final report. A number of individuals provided live evidence, written evidence and supplementary written evidence to the committee. As indicated on the 22nd May 2012, Mr Michael Schwarz a solicitor from Bindmans LLP gave live evidence to the committee. He later provided supplementary evidence. Bhadresh Gohil had provided written evidence to the HASC (P129 refers) prior to the live evidence by his lawyer Mr Schwarz.
- 8) At the time of that evidence being served Mr Gohil was serving a term of 10 years imprisonment. James Ibori had been extradited back to the United Kingdom from Dubai in 2011, at the time of Mr Gohil's original submission to the HASC Ibori was still awaiting trial. However, Ibori pleaded guilty in February 2012 to ten counts relating to fraud and money laundering and in April just prior to the HASC hearing was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. Mr Ibori was the serving Governor of Delta State, Nigeria between 1999 – 2007.

Live evidence and supplementary evidence Michael Schwarz

- 9) Mr Schwarz in his evidence to the HASC made a number of grave allegations against me and my colleagues, he alleged that officers had been paid to provide information to the defence teams, that they were wined and dined by a private investigator firm called Risc Management Limited. Quoting him directly he stated *'The key culprits appear to be the key players who are the senior investigating officer, DI Gary Walters, and two of the key investigators who are DC John McDonald and DC (Peter) Clark.'* I vehemently refute that I ever received payment in exchange for information, I was NOT wined and dined by any individual from Risc Management Limited. Mr Schwartz's allegations are outrageous and untrue.

- 10) The HASC were told that were records that *"show about half a dozen payments totalling £20,000 over eight or nine months."* It is important to note that this information had apparently emanated from an anonymous source, in fact as it later transpired these allegations were in fact made anonymously by Mr Schwarz's then client Bhadresh Gohil to the MPS and UK national newspapers including the Guardian and the BBC.
- 11) It is also very important to note that by the time of the hearing of the 22nd May 2012 the BBC and the Guardian had met with officers from the MPS Directorate of Professional Standards (hereinafter referred to as DPS) and had also written to the officers concerned for a response to the allegations, the 'research document' as it was referred to at the time was as we now know compiled by Mr Gohil and was self-serving.
- 12) The letter sent to the MPS for each officer stated that a response was required by 8th of May 2012 at 10am. The letter which I did not receive until 17th May 2012 with the 'research document' also stated *'If you do not choose to respond by that time we shall proceed on the basis that you have no dispute with what we are considering saying and that you have no comment to make. We will consider carefully any comments you do make'*. The letter was attributed to Mark Easton for the BBC and Paul Lewis for the Guardian. It is quite apparent that the letter makes a series of allegations which were also previously in the 'research document'. The BBC/Guardian appear to have wholly relied on the research document which was at the time said to be 'anonymous'.
- 13) This document was provided to me on 17th May 2012 upon my return from an overseas deployment in Zambia. The Guardian and the BBC I know, had also written to Speechly Bircham LLP who were also representing the accused James Ibori detailing the same allegations. I was able to dismiss pretty quickly the majority of the document at first reading, by way of example at a reported meeting with Risk Management on the 23rd May 2007 I was being commended at New Scotland Yard following an off duty arrest for bravery when I disarmed a violent criminal who was threatening members of the public with a firearm. My wife and my 6-year-old son were present at the ceremony.
- 14) Another example in the document stated I had attended a meeting after work in August 2007. I was in fact on holiday abroad at the time. Mr Schwarz was clearly relying on this document; I question whether he actually knew its true origins at the time it was being discussed at the HASC.
- 15) It is important to note that just prior to the hearing a search warrant was executed at the home address of Mr Gohil and material was seized by the DPS, I understand that the Police had reservations about the origins of the document.

- 16) Mr Schwarz failed to report that on 11th May 2012 he had also contacted a Director of Risk Management, a Mr Keith Hunter to discuss the allegations. This was, particularly important when considering that Mr Gary Walters was specifically referred to in that conversation. Keith Hunter provides a comprehensive response at P126 in Volume II of the additional evidence of the fourth report of the HASC session. Failure to mention the phone conversation is in my opinion incredible and indeed quite relevant when considering Mr Schwarz's intentions, Mr Hunter had denied any impropriety in the conversation recorded with Mr Schwarz. Mr Schwartz could have and should have said so, for the HASC record.
- 17) Following communication between the BBC, Guardian and the DPS and later more directly to the officers, a cut off time as previously indicated was made for a substantive response to be made by the officers. It was expected that the media would print their story on the preceding weekend to Mr Schwarz's evidence to the HASC. The allegations were not placed in the public domain, the media decided NOT to print their story having every opportunity to do so. It should also be noted that as a serving officer as I was at the time; I would not be in a position to respond directly to the Press to offer my account.
- 18) The allegations were reported on the day of the hearing and in print on the 23 May 2012, it was the lead article in the Guardian. This of course followed Mr Schwarz's evidence. In fact, on the Sky News evening newspapers review Mr Paul Lewis from the Guardian had been an invited guest and discussed the serious allegations which were being published on the 23rd May 2012. This I suggest was a calculated decision, it relied on the evidence being provided by Mr Schwarz under Parliamentary privilege, by delaying publication in this way I am of the opinion that they were able to report on the events at the HASC rather than their story which is based largely on information from the research document provided by the convicted individual Bhadresh Gohil. I note that journalists from the Guardian were present for the HASC hearing.
- 19) Following the hearing the Chair of the HASC Rt Hon Keith Vaz appeared on BBC television news and was interviewed by Mark Easton of the BBC, (one of the authors of the letter sent to me and others asking for comment) and categorically stated that those affected by the hearing viz; me, Gary Walters and Peter Clark would be written to for their response. To date no such communication has ever made. It should be noted that Risk Management the named company were written to as were Speechly Bircham following Mr Schwartz's appearance. Both provided written submissions to the HASC, a link to those statements can be found below:

Submission of Michael Lingens, Speechly Bircham

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmhaff/100/100vw17.htm>

Submission of Keith Hunter, Risc Management Limited

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmhaff/100/100we12.htm>

- 1) I draw your attention to volume II of additional written evidence of the HASC Fourth report of session 2012-2013 and the submission at 127b by Speechly Bircham, it is clear that they have serious reservations about the way in which Michael Schwarz had conducted himself.
- 2) During the HASC hearing Mr Schwarz referred to a number of supporting documents, these he allegedly proved the criminality on behalf of those investigating his client. It did not. Mr Schwarz refers to detailed invoices and ledgers which he stated supported the allegation, this is quite untrue, they do no such thing. Other documents provided detail communication between Mr Gohil, Mr Cliff Knuckey of Risc and Mr Timlin of Speechly Bircham. These purport to show corroboration for the alleged corruption by the officers, I agree that my name does indeed feature on some of those documents, the names of Mr Walters and Mr Clark do not. Mr Schwarz was NOT asked to provide further specific forensic detail of the alleged payments, this part of the allegation being made appeared to go unchallenged, in fact Speechly Bircham in their later submission to the HASC made it quite clear that a substantial invoice referred to was NOT even paid.
- 3) One example of the invoice narrative from the 10/09/2007 states *'meeting with confidential source and engaged in obtaining information relevant to instruction'*. There is also an expense attached to that meeting which states *'incidental expenditure incurred with the above source in restaurant and public house thereafter whilst obtaining information'*. A payment was apparently handed over to that 'source' on 12/09/2007. It is important to note that Cliff Knuckey, a former Director has admitted to being the recipient of the monies referred to in the 12th September 2007 entry. He provided an explanation to the DPS during his formal Police interview. It is also of note that the invoice when submitted there was a claim for VAT, a minor point maybe but are the HASC really being asked to believe that such a claim, a suggested 'bribe' to those investigating would attract VAT. In fact, Mr Schwarz's client actually incriminates himself if he was involved in the 'Risc' instruction. I should make it clear that I do know Mr Knuckey; he was my Detective Inspector in 1991 and later between 2000-2003 whilst he was based at New Scotland Yard.
- 4) One needs to look at the documents in the round rather than taking them at face value, as I have indicated Mr Knuckey of Risc Management provided detail during a course of a formal

Police interview in respect of the documents and allegations and categorically denied that he had paid me or any other officer.

- 5) On the 23rd of May 2012 I was arrested in connection with these allegations at my home address by the DPS. My home was searched and I was interviewed on several occasions. I gave a full account when interviewed and was able to quite easily deal with a number of the allegations being put as I could prove where I was or what I was doing during the alleged meetings with Risc, at times I was not even in the UK. Following a case file submission to the CPS a decision was made for no further action against me, I was allowed to return to full duty. It should be stated that at no time was I suspended from full duty, I returned to my unit in 2013.
- 6) Following the appearance of Mr Schwarz at the HASC there was substantial media coverage both in the written media and in television.
- 7) I take a serious view of the allegations and I agree if they were true are grave. Mr Michael Schwarz was in my opinion allowed to 'grandstand' before the committee, the HASC was compromised and the Parliamentary Privilege attached to such hearings abused. I maintain that the way in which these allegations were made is a clear abuse of Parliamentary privilege. The allegations made by Mr Schwarz appear in full in the final HMSO Parliamentary reports which are of course still and will remain available to the public. I have never had the right to reply having never been invited to make a submission until now.

Submission of Bhadresh Gohil

I make the following points:

- (1) Following this submission James Ibori admitted his offences by pleading guilty to ten charges on an indictment, he was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment.
- (2) The case against Mr Gohil was not solely based on the fact that he had failed to carry out the required due diligence on funds received by my firm.
- (3) The funds received by the firm were NOT utilised for routine payments and the process by way of several transparent transactions WAS NOT fully documented.
- (4) Mr Gohil seeks to pass some blame on his business partner Vijay Sharma, in respect of due diligence, Mr Gohil was the MLRO for the firm, it was his responsibility to ensure funds being handled by his then company were legitimate, they were NOT.
- (5) Mr Gohil seeks to distance himself from Risc Management and those representing Ibori, Mr Gohil was in fact integral to several aspects of Mr Ibori's case and in fact made a formal

statement to the High Court in restraint proceedings in support of an application to discharge a restraint obtained at Southwark Crown Court.

- (6) Mr Gohil makes substantial reference to the articles which first appeared in the London Evening Standard on 31 October 2011. Senior journalist Tom Harper reported that the £20,000 of bribes had been paid by RISC Management Limited to officers in the Metropolitan Police and in particular officers in this case. It was Mr Gohil who provided the 'research document'.
- (7) Mr Gohil, I quote 'I was stunned by these revelations and the gravity of the misconduct and was unaware of these matters and will now drill The Home Affairs Select Committee attention to the various articles that have since appeared which set out these issues in greater detail. These articles seem to highlight very serious issues surrounding RISC Management Limited and their Directors, Keith Hunter and Cliff Knuckey. I have attached some of these and fully accept that they may not be entirely accurate but they do go in considerable detail in many cases, for example: The interception of communication (Phone Hacking) by RISC of Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick and the former Minister for Africa, Lord Malloch-Brown.' Mr Gohil provided the research document, the allegations concerning phone hacking are absolutely ridiculous, I have seen no evidence whatsoever in respect of those grave allegations, I was NOT involved in any such conduct as Mr Gohil seeks to infer.
- (8) Mr Gohil alleges that case officers were involved in receiving cash, he states they are the confidential sources who are believed to be case detectives, he also states that case information appears to have been exchanged. At no time did I receive any such payment as was being alleged and have never acted as a so called 'confidential source'.
- (9) I have NEVER been provided with any detail throughout the investigation(s) what I was actually supposed to have handed over for payment.
- (10) Mr Gohil is a convicted criminal and his evidence should NOT have been given the weight that it appears to have been given during these hearings, it of note that during certain Police interviews in 2011 he made no complaint whatsoever against any officer, in fact he stated that their actions were honourable. Quite the contrary to the allegations he was to later support through the median of the press and via Mr Schwarz.
- (11) In fairness there is one point that Mr Gohil makes in his submission which I actually do agree with and quote as follows 'As the matter is subject to a live IPCC investigation, it would be prudent to keep the matter away from the public domain for the time being to insure (sic) that the integrity of the investigation is not compromised'. Unfortunately, it was not and I had to and continue endure the professional taint following these allegations.

(12) In due course Mr Gohil has portrayed himself as 'whistle-blower', he fails to mention his direct dealings with Mr Ibori in respect of the receipt of material from the Nigerian Law Enforcement investigation. May I refer to an email found on one of Mr Gohil's devices. The email is between James Ibori and Bhadresh Gohil and is dated 30th May 2007. Mr Ibori attaches a number of documents which he indicates were obtained from a 'friend'. The material and report in question attached refers to the UK formal letter of request submitted, clearly this is something that Ibori should not have had access to but he felt it necessary to share with his lawyer Mr Gohil. The text states as follows: *'I obtained the document confidentially from a friend. According to him, these were the issues he wanted me to address with his visitors the last time. He still wants me to deal with them before we can get closure to this. The first two pages you don't have are Nigerian related issues and I can deal with them relatively easily. I have also said to him that it is not my intention to address any matter outside the Nigerian jurisdiction even though some are not really complex. Your thoughts please. I also need Ian and Cliff's input. You may please wish to edit information as you wish before you forward to the others'*. The attached document is clearly marked Investigation being conducted in Nigeria sequel to the MLAT request from the UK authorities, so there can be no dispute of what it actually relates to. It is clear that Bhadresh Gohil is not a whistle-blower as described.

Evidence of Michael Schwarz – Responses John McDonald in bold

To provide context I have isolated the questions and answers made to Mr Schwarz by the HASC as follows:

Q404

Chair: Mr Schwarz, you wrote to this Committee with evidence of examples. In particular, you describe it as "the unregulated, unsupervised and invisible participation of private investigators within the heart of the criminal justice process". This is a very serious charge that you have made from the firm that you represent. How deeply does this run?

Mike Schwarz: I only have experience of the one case, which is to do with the Ibori litigation, but what I have seen in that case is serious illegality on behalf of private investigators, RISC Management Ltd, instructed by an eminent firm of solicitors, Speechly Bircham, which involves apparent corruption right at the heart of New Scotland Yard.

I totally refute the allegation that I was involved in any such conduct as outlined by Mr. Schwarz.

Q405

Chair: What has happened as a result of that? You talk about corruption. Your evidence is quite strong.

Mike Schwarz: One of the problems is that it is not getting detected because it is unregulated. As I see it, the core is the operation of the police and their connection with the security firm involved; the police being the Proceeds of Corruption Unit within New Scotland Yard. The problem there is the key culprits appear to be the key players, who are the senior investigating police officer, DI Gary Walters, and two of the key investigators, who are DC John McDonald and DC Peter Clark. Together they top and tailed things so that the investigation appears to be directed in a way that their own apparent misconduct can't be detected, because they are in control of the evidence coming in and the evidence going out. By "going out" I mean being disclosed perhaps to fellow officers, perhaps to the Crown Prosecution Service, to the judge and to those making inquiries about their conduct.

Michael Schwarz make some serious allegations naming me as one of the 'culprits', how dare he make such an outrageous allegation, Mr Schwarz's own adjective of 'perhaps' is far from categoric and specific'.

Q406

Chair: So, you are telling us that there is a connection between solicitors, private investigators and the police in respect of criminal matters, matters before the justice system?

Mike Schwarz: That appears to be the case because I have seen material, which I think has been submitted to the Committee, involving invoices from RISC Management Ltd to Speechly Bircham reporting on contact and-above all, perhaps-payments made by RISC Management to sources that they have, presumably police officers or those close to the investigation.

Again, Mr Schwarz's language in response to the Chair is again non-specific, using 'perhaps or presumably' is hardly inspiring'.

Q411

Mr Clappison: Could I ask Mr Schwarz-and it sounds serious, the matters that you brought before the Committee this morning-just to have an understanding of where the private investigators fit into this, what is the link between the private investigators and the departments to which you referred? What is it they are doing?

Mike Schwarz: They are instructed by the solicitors to act really as surrogate solicitors in the course of criminal investigation and the like, for example restraint proceedings, and so they liaise as if they are lawyers, though not regulated like lawyers, with the police. I have seen evidence-and I think the Committee has it-in emails sent by one of the investigators, Cliff Knuckey, to his instructing solicitor, Ian Timlin from Speechly Bircham, talking about his contact liaison with the police; the police being DI Walters or DC McDonald. They talk about that, and I think the Committee has that. The Committee may also have the invoices submitted by RISC to Speechly Bircham, in which they talk about.

I did not have any corrupt relationship with Cliff Knuckey or anyone else for that matter, I refute these serious allegations. I do not wish to speculate on Mr Knuckey's communications with lawyers representing James Ibori or indeed his motive for doing so. I can say that it would be quite remarkable and extraordinary for payments as alleged to be recorded as they have been should it have involved Police Officers. Clearly that narrative would incriminate RISC from the outset.

Q412 Mr Clappison:

What I want to get at is what do you say the private investigators are reporting back that they have done?

Mike Schwarz: There are a number of layers to this. There are five things. One is that they seem to be extracting information about the police investigation from the police, which, if they had an arms-length relationship with the police, no solicitor would expect to gain; for example, about the strategy of the police investigation-in the case I talked about, it is about the fraud in Nigeria or its impact on the financial services in the UK-right down to the minutiae, which is the interview and the strategy of the police in relation to suspects. So that is one thing. They extract information about the police investigation from the police.

Once again, I wholly refute Mr Schwarz's inferences and allegations.

Equally, what appears to have happened-and this is very unnerving for lawyers-is they appear to supply privileged information from the defence side to the police. For example, there is evidence that they may provide to the interviewing police officers information about

someone's instructions. To give you an example, the person that I am representing has been prosecuted and had a co-accused, James Ibori. What appears to be happening is that the security firm, RISC, provided information to the police that they extracted from working closely with my client, and also provided information of what my client said to the police back to the Ibori team instructed by Speechly Bircham. So, they are providing information about the defence case to the police.

I refute the allegations being inferred here by Mr Schwarz; these are quite untrue.

Q413 Chair: Thank you. That is very helpful. Just to conclude that, presumably these are no longer serving officers in the Met?

Mike Schwarz: That is very worrying. One of them, DI Walters, who was heading the investigation-and this harks back to a comment made earlier-appears now to be working with RISC because you see him giving conference speeches for RISC. So, having retired from the police-

I believe that this statement made by Mr Schwarz to be quite untrue as it concerns retired DI Gary Walters.

Q414 Chair: A police officer involved in this case is now working for the private investigator?

Mike Schwarz: That appears to be the case, yes. The Committee has the brochure for the conference. Similarly, just to answer your direct question, it appears that DC McDonald and another colleague, DC Clark, are still not only involved in this unit but also active on the same case. They are still on duty in the same investigation.

Mike Schwarz: I think the performance indicator I am aware of is different, in the sense that the private investigators pay the police for information and assistance that they gather. The records, which I think the Committee have, shows about half a dozen payments totalling about £20,000 over a period of eight or nine months. I think that is where the system is skewed in terms of payment. It appears to be inappropriate, if not corrupt.

Of course, it is indeed correct that any such payments are corrupt as referred to, I have never received any such payment from RISC or anyone else for that matter, these allegations are vehemently denied and untrue.

Mike Schwarz: Only that obviously the most powerful people who are affected by criminal investigations have the most clout and, in cases like this, are most likely to have the influence and access to make the payments and to get private security firms involved. There

have been wider allegations-which I don't know about, other than what I have read in the press-about RISC Management being involved, not only in the Ibori case but in four or five other high profile cases, where payments were made for access to information from the police about the nature of an investigation. There is a reported case from 2006 where The Times published material about Keith Hunter, one of the RISC Management Ltd directors, allegedly making payments to an extradition squad officer for information about that investigation. So, power and money appear to go together with inappropriate conduct by private investigators.

I make no comment about the other allegations save to say that these appear to have been added to provide further inference and to bolster Mr Schwarz's standing. Mr Schwarz's actually states he doesn't know about the context of those allegations but is still content to infer that RISC made payments to other officers not connected to this case, he provides not one shred of evidence.

Mike Schwarz: Perhaps I could start. I think there needs to be some mechanism for them to self-censor and control their actions and for their misconduct to be detected. What has happened in the Ibori case is it has gone undetected. To give you an example, the nearest thing to the regulation is the Independent Police Complaints Commission investigating allegations against the police involved, not directly the security firm involved. There, there seem to have been huge failings. They have been notified of these concerns since August of last year and apparently have not interviewed Speechly Bircham or approached RISC Management. As I said earlier to the Chair, two of the key officers are still on duty on the same case, and one has retired and joined RISC Management. So, the teeth are non-existent and there needs to be much more.

I understand that the case was being investigated at the time, these allegations first come to my notice I personally self-reported myself to the relevant investigating department.

Mike Schwarz: I slightly take issue with the presumption, which is that there should be no bar to the police joining investigators-

Q437

Chair: Yes. Do you think there ought to be?

Mike Schwarz: I think so. In RISC what you have is two former senior police officers within New Scotland Yard, Mr Knuckey, being head of the money laundering unit, and Mr Hunter being a part of the international crime unit-going into, for want of a better word, private

practice, RISC, and then instructing others, for example Martin Woods, to go right into the heart of a legal team; themselves, Mr Knuckey and Mr Hunter, doing work on behalf of a number of parties to litigation, apparently quite oblivious to conflict-of-interest rules.

Q438

Chair: You would be against police officers serving even a period of purdah between finishing their police officer's job and becoming a private investigator? You would be against that completely?

Mike Schwarz: I think it is absolutely inappropriate for police to be having such close liaison- as appears to have happened in this case-with former colleagues, friends, wining and dining them and paying them.

I was never been wined and dined by Cliff Knuckey and have only ever met Keith Hunter once which was in 2003.

Mr Schwarz provided further material in a supplementary submission. Whilst I agree there are a number of documents which I am hitherto referred these were created by amongst others Cliff Knuckey. On the one hand Mr Schwarz infers that Knuckey is corrupt, on the other he infers that documents which include emails are to be relied upon. Mr Knuckey, in due course denied any impropriety with me and my colleagues. He provided an explanation to the Police during interview. It is also of note that during the criminal investigation material relating to 'Risc' was secured by those investigating. These included vouchers relating to Risc/Speechly payments from the search of Mr Gohil's office. These were all disclosed on the requisite exhibit schedules or the schedules required for CPIA and not suppressed.

Conclusion

Serious allegations were made against me in 2011, an investigation was opened by the Metropolitan Police Service, I also understand that the case was also referred to the IPCC. (as it was then). As a result of hearing about the allegations I self-reported myself to the MPS professional standards department.

In May 2012 I was informed that the BBC and the Guardian had met with MPS senior officers to discuss the allegations. I was provided with a letter detailing the allegation, this had been compiled by the BBC and the Guardian Newspaper. I had been asked to provide comment, something which I could not do, being a serving officer. The request for comment would

have been referred to the MPS communications directorate. On the 17th of May 2012 I was provided with a 'research document', the report was said to be anonymous, despite that fact it was being treated by some as being wholly accurate, it is now known that it was the work of Bhadresh Gohil, a disgraced solicitor and a convicted money launderer.

The document was relied upon by Michael Schwartz along with other documents that were submitted to the HASC, these include a number of newspaper reports which emanate from the same 'anonymous' document.

Mr Schwartz was invited to provide evidence and despite not being an expert in such matters was allowed to provide evidence to the HASC on the subject of Private Investigators. The only case he referred to was the Ibori case, the very case that his client Mr Gohil had been convicted of. Mr Schwartz made a number of allegations of corruption against me and my colleagues, he alleged that the investigating officers had received payment and had in his words 'top and tailed' the disclosure. These allegations I continue to deny vehemently, I seriously question his motive. His appearance was clearly designed to embarrass and bring the integrity of those named Police officers into question, the fact it was done so in this important public forum is in itself scandalous.

I refer to the evidence provided by Speechly Bircham to HASC at P127b to support that assertion. Speechly Bircham summarise their submission by stating ' the HASC's request was politely declined because (i) the firm did not feel particularly well placed to assist it with private investigators generally and (ii) the firm did not wish to see the HASC being used to investigate a specific case in which the police were already involved'.

The attack on my professional reputation and integrity due to these unfounded allegations has been severe, the effect on me and my family should not be understated.

John McDonald