

- (1) Tim Colbourne
- (2) First
- (3) Exhibits TC1-3
- (4) 17 May 2012

**LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICE AND ETHICS OF THE
PRESS**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF TIM COLBOURNE

I, **TIM COLBOURNE**, of 10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA, will say as follows:

1. I have been a Special Adviser working to the Deputy Prime Minister, based in the No.10 Policy and Implementation Unit, since August 2010. Prior to that I worked for the Liberal Democrats in Opposition as a home affairs policy specialist. I previously worked for the Howard League for Penal Reform and before that I was a civil servant working for the Prison Service.
2. By way of background, I am responsible for providing advice to the Deputy Prime Minister on policy matters relating to eight government departments: the Cabinet Office; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; the Department for Work and Pensions; the Ministry of Defence; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; the Department for International Development; the Home Office; and the Ministry of Justice. At the time of the meeting referred to in this statement, I was only responsible for four of these departments (Cabinet Office, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Defence).

3. Up until January 2011, my role as a Special Adviser in the Policy Unit included the provision of occasional advice to the Prime Minister as well as regular advice to the Deputy Prime Minister. This system changed from January 2011, when I moved to advising only the Deputy Prime Minister. As a result, I have not provided any advice to the Prime Minister since then.
4. I am writing this statement in response to an email dated 2 December 2010 sent by Frederic Michel to James Murdoch and others, which was disclosed as Exhibit KRM 18 with the evidence of Rupert Murdoch to the Leveson Inquiry.
5. In that email Frederic Michel refers to "*Nick's adviser*". I can confirm that the adviser referred to is me. I do not, however, fully agree with the account of the meeting as set out in that email, and for that reason set out below the discussions as I recall them.
6. I met with Frederic Michel on 2 December 2010. This meeting was at Frederic Michel's instigation following an email from him on 17 November 2010, in which he stated that he wished to discuss "*the current agenda around the creative industry*". This email is exhibited to this statement as **TC1**.
7. At the time of this meeting, I was relatively new in my post in the No.10 Policy Unit, covering the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as well as several other departments about which my working knowledge at that point was relatively limited. As a result, I had introductory meetings with representatives of various media and creative industry bodies around that time. These included the BBC, ITN, Directors UK, and the Alliance Against IP Theft, as well as News Corporation. The purpose of the meetings for me were two-fold: firstly, as part of the process of learning a relatively new brief, I wanted to talk to key parts of the industry to understand the media landscape; and secondly, I wanted to discuss the issue of copyright infringement in order to advise the Deputy Prime Minister on matters relating to the implementation of the Digital Economy Act.

8. I took handwritten notes of the meeting on 2 December 2010. These are exhibited to this statement as **TC2** (along with a transcription). The note records that we discussed three things: i) the Digital Economy Act; ii) the BSkyB decision-making process; and, iii) the broadcast landscape more generally.
9. My recollections of the discussions in relation to BSkyB are that Frederic Michel asked me about how the process was going, and I informed him that I had no involvement in it, and knew nothing about how it was proceeding. I have never had a role in relation to the BSkyB bid, which was exclusively a matter for the relevant Secretary of State (who at that time was the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills). I further informed him that even if I had known, it would not be appropriate for me to speak to him about it. Frederic Michel went on to explain how the decision-making process was supposed to work. This was useful for me, in that it helped me to plan ahead and anticipate at which points in the process the Deputy Prime Minister might need briefing in light of public announcements made by the Secretary of State. At no point did he ask me for assistance with the bid, nor did I offer it. We then moved on to talk about the Digital Economy Act, and he gave me some factual background on the shape of the broadcast landscape generally.
10. I do not recognise Frederic Michel's own account of this meeting as set out in his email to James Murdoch. I have no recollection of an "*honest discussion on the importance for us of getting Labour on board*", and I completely reject the suggestion that I offered to "*insist on the need for Vince to meet with us once [the] Ofcom report [was] published.*" I would not have offered to do so, and did not do so. When making handwritten notes of meetings, I always mark action points with an asterisk. There were no action points arising from this meeting.
11. Whilst it is possible that I mentioned the fact of a meeting with Frederic Michel in passing with colleagues, I certainly did not formally relay the discussion with Frederic Michel to anyone, and have no recollection of discussing it with anyone verbally. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Deputy Prime Minister

would have been aware of the meeting; there were no action points following the meeting, and as a result there was no need to raise any matters further.

12. Frederic Michel sent me one further email following up from the 2 December 2010 meeting on 7 December 2010. This is exhibited as **TC3**. I do not recall sending a response to that email, and have had no further contact with him since then.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

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(Tim Colbourne)

Dated: 17/5/12