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Dear Chris

I have listened to the recording of part of a telephone conversation I had with a journalist in February 2013. I understand that this was provided to you by Rob Wilson MP.

I deal with the conversation below. However, I want to make it clear from the outset that I continue to stand behind the conclusion I reached in my Report dated 18 December 2012 as to the knowledge of Mark Thompson about the nature of the Newsnight investigation into Savile. I reject the suggestions which have been reported in the press to the effect that my conclusion on this issue is somehow untenable.

The conclusion I reached in my Report about the knowledge of Mark Thompson was reached after the consideration of all relevant evidence before the Pollard Review. One element of that evidence was a letter from Helen Boaden's lawyers dated 14 December 2012 which contained, among other things, a statement that Ms Boaden had communicated the nature of the Newsnight investigation so far as she knew it to Mr Thompson during a telephone call in December 2011. This letter was considered at the time of my Report alongside other evidence on the issue of Mr Thompson's knowledge although no specific reference was made to the letter in the Report.

Notwithstanding my conclusion on Mr Thompson's knowledge, I thought that I had made a mistake in not making a reference in the Report to the letter from Ms Boaden's solicitors. I thought I should, for the completeness of the picture, have noted that I had received a letter from Ms Boaden, through her solicitors, which had stated that she had informed Mr Thompson of the nature of the investigation so far as she knew it.

In February 2013, I received a number of approaches from a journalist who wanted to talk to me about the Review and specifically about Mark Thompson's knowledge of the Newsnight investigation. I decided to talk to him and to use that conversation as a means of simply and informally completing the record by explaining to him that Ms Boaden's lawyers had written

to the Review in the terms set out above, in the expectation that the existence of that letter would be made public and, as a result, the failure to make a reference to the letter would be addressed. With hindsight, although my intentions were good, it was a mistake to have that conversation. It was inappropriate and I apologise for it.

As is clear from the tape, my discussions with the journalist were strictly "off the record" and I am very surprised that a part of our discussion was recorded and is now being circulated. Be that as it may, a tape exists and the conversation is genuine.

My conversation with the journalist was informal and unstructured. It consisted at least as much of the journalist putting forward his own theories as in him asking me questions. I made clear, during the conversation, that I felt that I had made a mistake in not including a reference to the letter from Ms Boaden's lawyers in the Report. However, the conversation went further than that and discussed the position of Mark Thompson in more detail. It has been suggested in the press that what I said somehow amounts to an admission that my finding about the knowledge of Mark Thompson was wrong. That is not correct and, to be absolutely clear, I do not believe that that finding was wrong. The conversation was informal and unguarded and the journalist continually offered a wide selection of his own speculation. It is clear that I should not have responded to that but it cannot be right for this conversation to be picked apart as if it somehow better reflects my view than a formal report.

That Report was prepared after detailed analysis of all relevant evidence. My Review categorised and considered in detail more than ten thousand documents and four thousand pages of interview transcript. We distilled our findings into a report of two hundred pages with references to supporting evidence. The Report, when made public, was examined in very great detail and was regarded as fair, thorough and comprehensive. I believe that it was and still is. I stand by its conclusions.

Yours sincerely



Nick Pollard