
From: Melanie Corfield[/O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=MELANIE CORFI1DE623C2-38B2-49FB-AE9A-12E4B20D626720C]
Sent: Sat 13/12/2014 12:39:28 PM (UTC)
To: Mark R Davies[GRO]; Belinda Crowe[GRO]; Patrick Bourke[GRO]; Alana Renner[GRO]; Ruth X Barker[GRO]
Subject: Re: Fwd: Post Office interview

Reads well.

Do we know if we definitely have a Fujitsu spokesman as we could throw that in at some point too ie can provide someone from makers of system to answer allegations from experts who are not familiar with it (maybe Susan include that if we have to do legal letter)

Mel
Mel Corfield
Communications Team
Mobile: [GRO]

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: Saturday, December 13, 2014 12:34 PM
To: Belinda Crowe; Patrick Bourke; Alana Renner; Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker
Subject: Fwd: Post Office interview

FYI

Suggested response:

That is very disappointing. To stress we would like to offer a spokesperson for your programme's pre-recorded film and are able to but not in the timetable you suggest.

Our position is very reasonable. I assume the programme will return after Christmas. What is the urgent reason for being unable to give us the time we need?

You plan to make a series of complex and very serious allegations about Post Office Ltd, all of which can be answered in detail. I do not understand why your timescales are such that you cannot accommodate an interview for a film 24 hours before broadcast.

Nick has himself suggested that the sofa slot, which would be welcomed by us, would not really give us the opportunity to answer the very complex range of allegations he is making.

It cannot be fair to feature a series of other interviews in the film, all of which were presumably filmed last week in good time for your deadlines, without giving Post Office, which is very firm in its position, the opportunity to respond. There are two sides to every story, as you know.

I would like to ask you to reconsider your position please.

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [GRO]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ingrid Kelly [GRO]
Date: 13 December 2014 12:23:55 GMT
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Cc: Nick Wallis [GRO], Jane French [GRO], Melanie Corfield [GRO], Ruth X Barker [GRO]
Subject: Re: Post Office interview

I'm afraid not. The programme is off air for a fortnight and will run on weds. If you really can't do an pre recorded interview on monday then as you'll be on the sofa on weds, you'll be able to respond then.

Regards

Ingrid

On 13 Dec 2014, at 12:15, "Mark R Davies" [GRO] wrote:

Hi Ingrid

Many thanks for this.

In that case please can I formally request that the item is held until it is possible for the Post Office to respond on film? There is no urgency or need to broadcast this item on Wednesday, especially as the Mediation Scheme is continuing. Due to pressing and competing business priorities related to the mediation scheme and involving applicants to it, we cannot provide suitable representation until late Tuesday afternoon at the earliest.

I appreciate your own legal and other processes - you will appreciate our own.

I am formally offering you this interview with a senior manager who leads on the issues you are discussing and think it is reasonable for the Post Office to have the opportunity to put forward its position in a reasonable timescale.

We also stand ready to put a spokesperson up live in the studio.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [GRO]

Sent from my iPhone

On 13 Dec 2014, at 09:48, "Ingrid Kelly" [GRO] wrote:

Hi Mark,

I'm afraid the practicalities mean a filmed interview wd need to be done on monday to be incorporated into the piece. The lawyers and editorial advisory teams all need to take their time checking the Item so it's a rather cumbersome process. The interview can be as early or as late as suits but it does need to be monday i'm afraid.

best

ingrid

On 13 Dec 2014, at 09:29, "Mark R Davies"

GRO wrote:

Hi Nick

Many thanks for your email.

As you will appreciate you have raised a broad range of issues which range across legal, IT and network support. We are very keen to be able to respond to all these issues in detail, particularly as there are some really fundamental points raised in your questions.

To that end we are working to ensure that we can provide you with the best possible response. As mentioned in my previous email, as well as input from the suppliers of our IT system and a legal view on the serious points you raise, we need (and I think this is reasonable) to provide you with a spokesperson who can speak across this range of issues.

We are dealing however on Monday and Tuesday with mediation scheme matters which relate to applicants. So we can absolutely be available later on Tuesday or on Wednesday morning.

I do appreciate the challenges you have around filming and editing of course but I am sure you will appreciate the challenges from our side as well.

I suggest we speak first thing Monday morning and hopefully you will be able to come back to me on the timescale above and I will be able to update you too on where we are - please be assured we will do everything we can to ensure we give you the opportunity to interview the Post Office on these important matters.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [REDACTED] GRO

Sent from my iPhone

On 12 Dec 2014, at 20:43, "Nick Wallis"
[REDACTED] GRO wrote:

Hi Mark
Thanks for your email. I am delighted you are inclined to offer studio live *and* pre-recorded filmed interviews.

As Ingrid (cc'd) has confirmed the planned transmission date for both would be Wed 17 Dec, to coincide with the planned Westminster Hall adjournment debate on the Post Office called by James Arbuthnot MP.

As Jane (cc'd) explained to you on the phone and as I am sure you understand, we need to set a time for the pre-recorded interview well in advance of the planned transmission date as the interview will have to be edited and go through all the usual processes before being delivered to the One Show for broadcast. It is in no one's interest to rush this.

As Ingrid may have mentioned (and I defer to her on exactly how things may be happening on Wednesday), any studio guest you nominate will most likely be allotted around three minutes interview time, but with Victoria Wood, Michael Ball, a children's choir already booked on Wednesday and the unpredictability of a live studio environment, the interview might get curtailed, or the discussion itself might veer off topic, despite everyone's best efforts.

Could I therefore urge you to fix up a date and time as soon as possible to film a pre-recorded interview where we can ask you, and give you the opportunity to answer, a series of questions on the subjects raised below in a calm and controlled environment.

The interview will, of course, be edited, but we will be scrupulous in our duty of fairness towards the interviewee and the answers they give. Furthermore, whether either, both or no proposed interviews end up being broadcast, we will be taking all reasonable steps to ensure the Post Office's perspective on the serious matters below is properly represented.

I hope all that makes sense. Just to ensure you are clear on the internal division of labour surrounding the two proposed interview opportunities, Ingrid will deal with you re the arrangements re the possible live interview on the One Show sofa, whilst Jane and I can work with you to arrange a pre-recorded interview at a location of your convenience.

I hope to hear from you soon re a proposed pre-recorded interview location/date/time and interviewee. I am happy to liaise with you over the weekend to book it in in good time.

Yours,

Nick

From: Mark R Davies

GRO

Sent: 12 December 2014 18:47

To: Ingrid Kelly

Cc: Jane French; Nick Wallis; Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker

Subject: Re: Post Office interview

Ah - thanks Ingrid. That does give us more time. Many thanks for clarifying.

Best wishes
Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs
Director
Mobile: GRO

Sent from my iPhone

On 12 Dec 2014, at 18:34, "Ingrid Kelly"

GRO

wrote:

No Mark that's my mistake in the voicemail. as per my text - it is weds! Apologies all. Ingrid

On 12 Dec 2014, at 18:32, "Mark R Davies"

GRO

wrote:

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your time today. Just to follow up my previous email, I can confirm that the Post Office would welcome the opportunity to respond in your film and in the studio to the very serious and detailed allegations being made in the email we received from Nick Wallis (copied below for ease of reference).

I understand from Ingrid Kelly that you are now planning to air this item on Monday evening. This comes as a surprise as you indicated Tuesday or Wednesday when we spoke earlier.

Either way, given the very serious nature of the allegations being made, and the requirement to give us reasonable time to respond, we do not believe we can meet your deadline of noon on Monday for an interview to be conducted.

We are inclined to offer an interview but our spokesperson, who is leading the investigations process on the matters you reference, is involved in mediation scheme work on Monday and Tuesday. I am sure you will recognise

that this work,
which involves
scheme applicants, is
very important.

She could be available
later in the week and
as she is best placed
to speak for the
business on the
complex range of
issues you have
raised, I believe it is
reasonable to ask you
to hold off on
broadcasting your
item until such time as
we are able to
respond properly.

Moreover, our
spokesperson is able
to respond to the
specific issues you
raise in a way no
other colleague in our
business can given her
role and first hand
knowledge of the
specifics Nick has
referred to. I would
also stress again,
however, that Post
Office cannot
comment on
individual cases.

The Ofcom guidelines
on matters like this
make clear that we
should be given
reasonable time to
consider and make
our response to
requests such as this.
What constitutes a
reasonable time must
surely take the
urgency of a situation
into account. There is
no urgency here,
especially in the light

of your broadcast last week and the ongoing nature of the mediation scheme, not to mention the point I raised on the phone about potential compromise of cases going through the scheme. Given that the programme is broadcast every evening it seems reasonable to me to ask for the timescales to be extended so that we can respond properly.

I look forward to hearing from you. I am also copying this to Ingrid Kelly who kindly left me a voicemail this afternoon confirming that we could indeed have a slot in the studio to answer questions on your film. I also copy Nick Wallis, and Mel Corfield and Ruth Barker from the Post Office press office.

I am happy to discuss this over the weekend.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and
Corporate Affairs
Director

Mobile: GRO

GRO

From: Nick Wallis

GRO

GRO

Sent: 12 December
2014 11:53
To: Melanie Corfield
Subject: Interview
request

Dear Melanie,

1) Thank you for your help with The One Show item transmitted on Tuesday 9th December. We are now preparing a second film which is due to go out on The One Show on BBC1 at around the same time next week. We would be most grateful if the Post Office would be prepared to offer an interview expressing its point of view in the continuing dispute with some Subpostmasters over Horizon and associated issues. This would need to be recorded by noon on Monday but we would be able to meet you at your location of choice and we can do it over the weekend if that is the only option.

2) The film we are broadcasting once again refers to concerns over Horizon. This time it features the story of Steve Phillips from Nelson in South Wales who is having problems with the system, as well as interviews from a

group of former
subpostmasters
including Noel
Thomas, Jo Hamilton,
Julian Wilson, who
say they felt under
pressure to sign off
incorrect accounts
even though they did
not understand how
sums could be
missing.

Mr Phillips says he
and other
Subpostmasters live in
fear of being told to
pay back losses
neither you or they
can explain, and he
adds that he and other
Subpostmasters do
not trust Horizon.
This latter point of
trust in Horizon by
Subpostmasters is one
which has come up
many times with other
former
Subpostmasters we
have spoken to.

3) In our film former
Postmasters say it is
difficult to investigate
the causes of
shortfalls for which
they are held liable,
because of the way
Horizon and
associated POL
processes and policy
function. They say in
order to open for
business the day after
the close of a trading
period they had to
agree to pay back
alleged shortfalls
(either by settling to
cash or settling
centrally, which

implies payment later). They say this put them in a very difficult position.

4) We ask one former Subpostmaster why she pleaded guilty to false accounting in court when she believed herself to be innocent. She tell us she felt she couldn't defend herself because she didn't have proper records, that the Post Office had taken some potentially useful items and paperwork away during their investigation and she felt she would be prosecuted for theft as well as false accounting if she had not pleaded guilty to the latter.

5) We understand from the Subpostmaster contract and from speaking to former Subpostmasters who have been through the process that Subpostmasters are not allowed a legal representative when they are interviewed under caution by Post Office investigators. Instead they are allowed one companion who must be a Post Office employee, who is not allowed to speak. Does this still happen? If so, why does the Post Office think it is fair? Also, we are

aware that Post Office conducts PACE interviews at which Subpostmasters are allowed legal representation. Could you explain in what circumstances you think it appropriate to interview someone under caution but with legal representation, and why this is not available to Subpostmasters in the interviews which usually precede them?

6) We would also like to put to you some opinion about the Post Office's approach to investigating and prosecuting subpostmasters. We are in possession of expert opinion from a professor in criminal justice which implies the Post Office's dual function as investigator and prosecutor, and its 300 year cultural history of using it against its agents is unique. That's not to say he thinks you are the only organisation with prosecuting powers, but that you have a unique culture of prosecuting your agents. He implies this approach lacks the checks and balances of a typical prosecution by the CPS. In his opinion this creates a situation where miscarriages of justice are more likely

to occur.

The Post Office has assured us in a Freedom of Information Act request that it uses the Crown Code for Prosecutors. Can you please explain how this code was applied in the following cases: Jackie McDonald, Damian Owen and Tom Brown. In these cases the Post Office pursued its own prosecution despite no prosecution having been brought by the CPS after police investigations. If you are unable to comment on individual cases, please comment on cases like this in general.

7) There is also a point raised by Geoffrey Sturgess, a business contract expert. He believes Subpostmasters should be told about the history of known problems with Horizon (such as the Calender Square issue and others raised in Second Sight's Interim Report) which have led to shortfalls in Subpostmaster accounts and the history of other allegations against Horizon before they are allowed to sign the Subpostmaster contract.

8) We will also include opinion from Sandip Patel QC who specialises in areas including business fraud and cyber crime. He will say he believes that innocent people might have been wrongly convicted. He will also say there may be grounds for arguing that the Horizon system (incorporating the business processes around it) is not as reliable as the Post Office believed it to be. He goes on to say that if the PO had failed to carry out a proper inquiry in circumstances when they should have, then some of the convictions of some of the Postmasters in the mediation scheme might be unsafe.

9) With more than a hundred MPs now saying they have no confidence in the mediation scheme we would like to ask the Post Office what it thinks is the correct way to move forward and find an equitable resolution to the concerns of subPostmasters up and down the country.

10) In summary, we have found a number of experts in their field who have concerns about the Horizon

system, the PO's investigations and prosecutions function and the fairness of the Subpostmaster contract. It suggests there is the possibility that the way the Post Office goes about its business or did go about its business needs some proper explanation. One MP described the nature of the relationship between the Post Office and SPMRs as "feudal", yet you call them your "life blood".

The content of the proposed programme is not set in stone. This is an opportunity for the Post Office to respond to the widespread criticism it is currently facing. I am seeking a senior member of staff from the Post Office who can explain everything from the Post Office's perspective so that we can get to the bottom of what has happened to these people. If you will not appear on camera then we ask that you provide a substantive response to the issues raised above by noon this coming Monday 15 Dec.

Thank you

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