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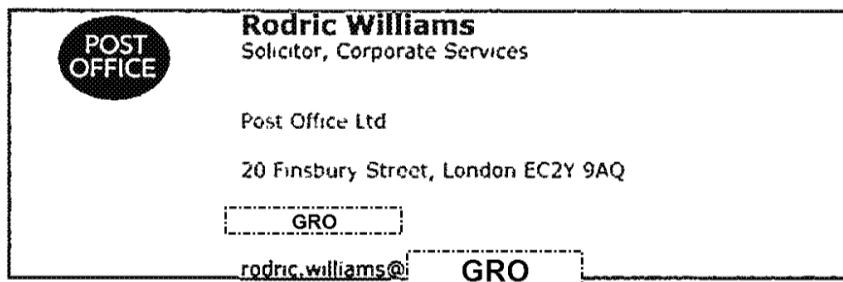


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Made in UK

From: Rodric Williams [GRO]
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]; Melanie Corfield [GRO]
Cc: Patrick Bourke [GRO]; Mark Underwood1 [GRO]; Jane MacLeod [GRO]
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint
Date: Mon, 11 Jan 2016 18:45:42 +0000
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Letter_to_ECU_-_11_January_2016_-_No_attachments(210882426_1).pdf
Inline-Images: image001.png

Thanks for your input everyone – please find attached a copy of the final letter as sent (without the attachments which accompanied the original).



From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 11 January 2016 17:01
To: Melanie Corfield
Cc: Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Mark Underwood1; Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid [GRO]
Subject: Re: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

And me

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies

Communications and Corporate Affairs Director

Post Office Ltd

Mobile [GRO]

On 11 Jan 2016, at 16:51, Melanie Corfield [GRO] wrote:

No further comments from me Rod – happy with it.

Mel

From: Rodric Williams [GRO]
Sent: 11 January 2016 16:19
To: Patrick Bourke; Mark Underwood1; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid [GRO]
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

Apologies – use this redline please.

<image001.png> Rodric Williams
Solicitor, Corporate Services

Post Office Ltd
20 Finsbury Street, London EC2Y 9AQ

[GRO]
rodric.williams [GRO]

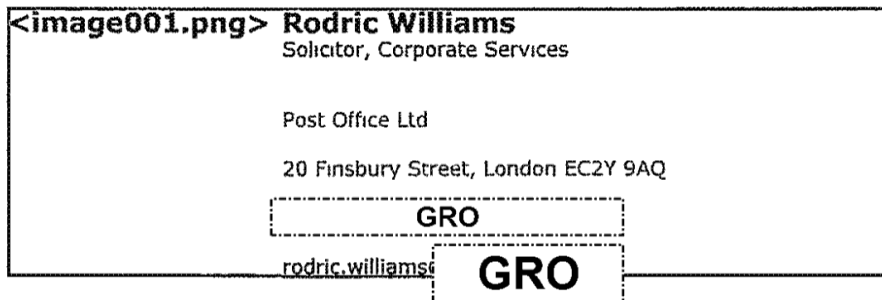
From: Rodric Williams
Sent: 11 January 2016 16:17
To: Patrick Bourke; Mark Underwood1; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid [GRO]
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

All – please see revised draft letter of complaint (marked up).

You will see that the general point is made about the biased reporting (expressly referring back to our previous correspondence), just less stridently given that we want the Editorial Complaints Unit to focus on breaches of prescribed editorial standards, and not dilute that through issues which ultimately we are not taking to Stage 2, e.g. the BBC declining to view our confidential disclosure, or could be readily dismissed as a complaint about the way the finished programme looked.

Insofar as the confidential disclosure is concerned, we do indirectly refer back to this through the reference to previous correspondence, and CMS's view is that the way to deal with it is to raise it early if the BBC looks to make any further programme, thus making it harder for them to decline the offer.

Any further comments?



From: Patrick Bourke
Sent: 11 January 2016 11:22
To: Mark Underwood1; Rodric Williams; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid; GRO
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

Hi Rod

We spoke and you fed back on your conversation with Tom.

I entirely take the point about needing to be specific in our complaint, so as to avoid the risk of being placed in a 'general unhappiness' basket and disposed of that way by the BBC. Nonetheless, we agreed that it would make sense to accommodate a flavour of the broader thrust of our beef with the BBC and, over the weekend, Mel kindly offered to have a crack at some limited additions to the draft to that end.

I attach this, in the event that you and Tom might find it useful to draw on in finalising an updated draft which can be sent to the BBC by cop today.

Kind regards and thanks very much indeed

Patrick

From: Patrick Bourke
Sent: 08 January 2016 14:18
To: Mark Underwood1; Rodric Williams; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid; **GRO**
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

Hi Rod

I agree that it's a good letter but I do wonder whether we risk losing some of the impact and substance of our complaint by (arguably) focusing too narrowly on the correct interpretation of specific wording of the guidelines ?

I have no problem (indeed we probably need) getting into the weeds of, eg, the proper meaning of 'contributor', but I would be inclined to place a bit of broader and more impactful context around it - the bottom line being that the programme was a lazy and sensationalist stitch up when, with the assistance and guidance we provided and would have continued to provide, it could have been genuinely informative, balanced and fair to all. Instead, it was rather transparently manipulated to serve a specific set of interests, rather than represent a genuine journalistic endeavour which one might have come to expect from Panorama and the BBC.

Kind regards

Patrick

From: Mark Underwood1
Sent: 08/01/2016 13:13
To: Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid; **GRO**
Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

Hi Rod,

Great letter. I have marked up some minor edits in the attached, though please do ignore if irrelevant or more simply incorrect.

My only real comment (as marked up in the attached) is whether we need to land what we intend to do, if anything (?), with those complaints we are not escalating to stage 2? If we drop them here, could they still be included in any complaint we may make to the Trust?

I suppose this comes back to what stage we will take this complaint and, similarly, how we will envisage closing it down - though I recognise this is not a decision we can necessarily make now as it is influenced by the response we receive back. That said, I think it would be useful to discuss at our fortnightly meetings with Jane so I will add to the agenda of the next one.

Thanks

Mark

Mark Underwood

Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme

GRO

From: Rodric Williams

Sent: 08 January 2016 11:20

To: Patrick Bourke; Mark Underwood1; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies

Cc: Jane MacLeod; Tom Reid; GRO

Subject: RE: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

All – further to my email below, I attach the draft letter from CMS to the BBC Editorial Complaints Unit escalating our complaint to “Stage 2” of the BBC’s complaints procedure. Apologies for only sending this now as I had missed it when it came into my inbox on Tuesday.

Subject to a couple of minor points, I am happy with the letter and like the way it focusses our complaint down to two main issues: the BBC not treating us as a “contributor” so as to justify withholding key material, despite the significant contribution we made; and its refusal to identify the “whistleblower” to us (which, from my perspective, was the most damaging part of the programme). Both of these issues are, I believe, important to how we would want the BBC to treat us in any future reporting.

Please let me have any comments you may have on the draft, which we need to send by this coming Monday 11 January 2016. However, it would be nice if we could get it turned around today so as to have it land on someone’s desk on Friday evening!

I have copied Tom Reid from CMS to this email so he can see any responses.

Thanks, Rod

<image001.png> **Rodric Williams**
Solicitor, Corporate Services

Post Office Ltd
20 Finsbury Street, London EC2Y 9AQ
GRO

rodric.williams@ GRO

From: Rodric Williams
Sent: 04 January 2016 16:39
To: Patrick Bourke; Mark Underwood1; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod
Subject: Update re: BBC Panorama Complaint

All – just a quick update on the BBC Panorama Complaint:

CMS are drafting a letter escalating the complaint to the BBC Editorial Complaints Unit, which reviews the complaint independently of the programme makers (who have provided the BBC's responses thus far).

I expect to get this draft in the next day or two. The final version will need to be sent to the BBC by close of business this week.

The letter will focus on the strongest grounds for complaint rather than all issues raised thus far (some of which have become rather convoluted through the exchange with the BBC programme team).

I believe this escalation is warranted given the high-handed approach the BBC has taken to us to date (e.g. that despite the substantial briefings we provided, the rules around fair treatment of contributors do not apply to us because we did not put up a spokesman,) and the number of issues which could still be reported upon (CCRC investigation; Chairman's Review; class action etc....).

The Editorial Complaints Unit provides a written "decision" on the complaint. This is provided to us in draft in the first instance, which should lead to a more considered response from the BBC.

If the complaint is rejected, we can appeal the decision to the BBC Trust if we so choose. The receipt of the Editorial Unit's response would therefore also be a convenient place to drop the complaint if we did not want to pursue matters any further (e.g. we could take the view that although we still feel justifiably aggrieved, we have better things to get on with).

I'll circulate CMS's draft for comment as soon as I have it to hand. Any comments in the meantime are, as ever, welcome.

Kind regards, Rod

<image001.png> **Rodric Williams**
Solicitor, Corporate Services

Post Office Ltd
20 Finsbury Street, London EC2Y 9AQ

GRO
rodric.williams@ GRO

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