

News Corporation
K.R. Murdoch
First Statement
"KRM25"
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**IN THE MATTER OF THE LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND ETHICS
OF THE PRESS**

EXHIBIT "KRM25"

This is the exhibit marked "KRM25" referred to in the witness statement of Keith Rupert Murdoch dated the 12th day of April 2012.

New Statesman

Consumer website of the year


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I agree with Hugh Grant on hacking, but I'm still a fan of Rupert Murdoch

Will the younger Murdoch prove he's inherited Rupert's sharp instinct for running newspapers and understanding of what an editor needs?

By [Alice Miles](#) ^[1] Published 15 April 2011

Will the younger Murdoch prove he's inherited Rupert's sharp instinct for running newspapers and understanding of what an editor needs?

I admire Rupert Murdoch. That may not be a  [20110414_2011_16miles_w.jpg](#) ^[2] sentence you read in the *New Statesman* very often. I admire him for good reasons, too - I have worked for him and have seen from the inside how a Murdoch newspaper operates. I also happen to know and like Rebekah Brooks and Andy Coulson. And sometimes I read the *Sun*, too.

There. That wasn't too bad, was it? Now let me explain why. I worked for Murdoch for a decade at the *Times*. I was comment editor for some of that time, a columnist for all of it. And not once, not ever in ten years, did anyone pressurise me not to write something for political reasons. There was no censorship, no leaning on columnists. Compared to the effective censorship and the personal denigration of dissenting voices that routinely occur on the left, the Murdoch newspaper was a temple of liberalism. Columnists disagreed with one another. They argued, in person and in print. And they remained friends. They - we - were never not free to air our views. How very different from what we journalists hear goes on at the *Guardian*, for instance, with the vilification of columnists who deviate from the mainstream left.

Grubby instincts

As an executive on a "Murdoch paper", I was barely aware of the terrible Rupert's existence. He never sought to influence a single article I ran on those pages. Occasionally one would hear that he was tickled by something; but never that he was angered. I once heard that he was particularly pleased with an article by John le Carré. The column argued against the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and its headline ran, "The United States of America has gone mad".

Described by one protesting *Times* reader as "an anti-capitalist, anti-American left-wing polemic", it began: "America has entered one of its periods of historical madness, but this is the worst I can remember: worse than McCarthyism, worse than the Bay of Pigs and in the long term potentially more disastrous than the Vietnam war."

Le Carré's opinion went against the *Times's* editorial line, against American and British foreign policy at the time, and it outraged the Israelis. Murdoch can hardly have agreed with a word of it.

But it caused trouble, and that is what he enjoys. It's not a bad instinct in a newspaper owner. Nor do I go along with the view that Murdoch has somehow defiled our public space and debased political debate. That's like arguing that if you didn't have page-three girls in the *Sun*, men wouldn't think about women's breasts. You have only to look at online forums today to see that the tabloid pursuit of gossip, scandal and cheap titillation reflects rather than drives people's naturally grubby or lowbrow instincts. I don't believe he "loses" Labour elections either - I think Labour loses elections all by itself. The result in 2010 showed that even when all the Murdoch papers lined up with the Conservatives, they couldn't swing it for them.

Fox News? It's an American thing. It would never work in this country (it doesn't work in this country: Glenn Beck's show couldn't attract advertisers in Britain). Aggressive debate of the sort you do not hear here is part of public discourse in the US. And there are outlets in the American media for centrist views as well. (The US doesn't have many left-wingers - which the British left thinks is Murdoch's fault, too.)

Better out than in, I think; and look what has happened to the crazy right in the US - Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, the Tea Party - as a result. It has shouted itself to death. Died in a diatribe.

So, yes, I'm a fan. Murdoch dislikes the English class system and is impatient with monarchy and its associated flummery. I think he's a feminist, too - by breaking open the male-dominated print unions, Murdoch made space on newspapers for women that did not exist before. That those women are now condemned to spend careers writing drivel about high heels or nappies is the fault of uninspired editors, not Murdoch. And he is overseeing an expensive experiment with paywalls from which all other newspapers, which didn't dare try it for themselves, will profit. What's not to applaud?

Bug the buggers

Murdoch now finds himself - through his London papers - in a battle for public opinion and probably for some of his executives as well. I'm not going to defend the behaviour of journalists who spent their time eavesdropping on other people's phone calls - the prying priggery of it, the cheap, vicarious titillation. How shameful of them that they couldn't think of a better way to spend their lives.

The sort of personal embarrassment in which these people specialised is the reason why this scandal isn't going to die just yet. Precisely because it is personal. Famous people who have been bugged and followed for years are determined to turn the tables - the "bugger bugged", as Hugh Grant put it in his piece for last week's *New Statesman*. They want those journalists in court, publicly humiliated, like they humiliated them. And that includes Andy Coulson and probably Rebekah Brooks, too.

I wonder how long, once Murdoch Sr is out of the picture, Murdoch Jr will put up with these troublesome priests - his expensive, difficult, embarrassing, old-fashioned

London papers. Now the chairman and chief executive of News Corporation Europe and Asia, James Murdoch failed to wrestle this story under control earlier. It is a sign, I think, of a lack of interest in the papers. Murdoch Jr is not a newspaperman like his father. My impression at the *Times* was that he was more of a businessman first.

It's a messy and costly business, running papers. But Rupert Murdoch will probably have to be in his grave, and his newspapers as well, before his critics realise that they should have thanked him for it.

Columns:

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Alice Miles

Murdoch: a defence

Rupert Murdoch

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