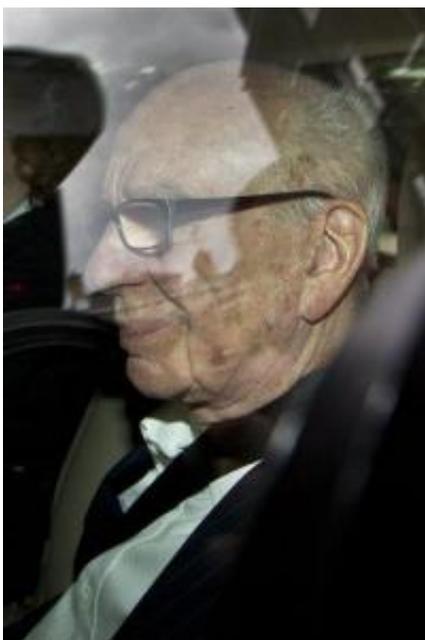


Murdochs summoned to testify in phone hack inquiry

July 14 2011



News Corporation chairman Rupert Murdoch arrives at his residence in central London, Wednesday, July 13, 2011. News Corporation announced Wednesday it has dropped its bid to take over British Sky Broadcasting. News of the World is accused of hacking into the mobile phones of crime victims, celebrities and politicians.(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

(AP) -- British lawmakers say News International chief Rebekah Brooks has agreed to testify before a parliamentary committee investigating phone hacking. Rupert and James Murdoch have been issued a summons after they declined to appear.

Parliament's Culture, Media and Sport Committee will hold hearings next week about the scandal that has destroyed one Murdoch newspaper and wrecked the mogul's bid to buy broadcaster BSkyB.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said that if the Murdochs had "any shred of sense of responsibility or accountability" they would appear.

It is unclear whether they can be forced to appear.

Brooks is chief executive of News International, the News Corp. unit that controls British newspapers.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

LONDON (AP) - The former deputy editor of the News of the World was arrested Thursday in the widening investigation into phone hacking at the defunct tabloid whose owner, Rupert Murdoch, came under more pressure to answer lawmakers' questions about the scandal.

Prime Minister Nick Clegg said Murdoch had big questions to answer about accusations of eavesdropping and police bribery at his British papers, which have forced the media titan to drop his bid to take full control of British Sky Broadcasting.

The House of Commons committee on Culture, Media and Sport has asked Murdoch to appear next week with his son James and Rebekah Brooks, the chief executive of News International, the News Corp. unit that controls the British newspapers.

"If they have any shred of sense of responsibility or accountability for their position of power, then they should come and explain themselves

before a select committee," Clegg said in an interview with BBC radio.

He added that it was unclear whether the committee could compel attendance by Murdoch, who is a U.S. citizen.

News International made no immediate comment.

The latest suspect arrested in the case was Neil Wallis, deputy editor under Andy Coulson from 2003 to 2007. Metropolitan Police said he was arrested on suspicion of conspiring to intercept communications. They did not confirm that it was Wallis.

Police have so far arrested seven people for questioning in their investigation of phone hacking and two others in a separate investigation of alleged bribery of police officers. No one has been charged.

Coulson, Prime Minister David Cameron's communications director from 2007 until January this year, was arrested on July 8.

Murdoch's hope of making BSkyB a wholly owned part of his News Corp. empire collapsed on Wednesday in the face of what Cameron called a "firestorm" that has engulfed media, police and politicians.

Cameron has appointed a judge for a wide-ranging inquiry into the News of the World scandal and wider issues of media regulation, the relationship between politicians and media and the possibility that illegal practices are more widely employed in the industry.

"It clearly goes beyond News International," Clegg said.

"It is clearly something much more systemic," Clegg said. "I don't think we should allow ourselves to believe that it is just because of the Murdochs, or Rebekah Brooks, or it's all about one commercial

transaction, however significant."

Shares in BSkyB steadied Thursday, rising 0.6 percent to 709.5 pence (\$11.43) in early trading in London. The shares closed higher on Wednesday for the first time since they began falling sharply last week amid fresh phone hacking allegations.

The News Corp. bid for BSkyB unraveled with stunning speed after the Guardian newspaper reported that the News of The World had hacked into the phone of teenage murder victim Milly Dowler in 2002 and may have impeded a police investigation into the 13-year-old's disappearance.

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Citation: Murdochs summoned to testify in phone hack inquiry (2011, July 14) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-07-murdoch-pressured-testify-hack-inquiry.html>

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