

Not Just a 'Rogue Reporter': 'Phone Hacking' Scandal Spreads Far and Wide

Murdoch Closes News of the World and Speaks to Parliament while Public Outrage Grows over Tabloid Crime, Collusion, and Corruption

A massive ethical and legal scandal enveloped the Rupert Murdoch-owned British tabloid *News of the World* in the summer of 2011, leading to its sudden closure. New allegations arose almost daily that reporters and private investigators illegally accessed the voice mail messages of politicians, celebrities, and private citizens. The revelations sparked worldwide public outcry and led to sweeping law enforcement investigations directed at top editors of the paper, executives at its parent company News Corporation, and the News Corp. chairman and CEO himself. Meanwhile, lawmakers and commentators explored the scandal's implications for the news media business as a whole.

Allegations arose in July 2011 that private investigators working for *News of the World* accessed the voice mail account of Milly Dowler — a 13-year-old British girl who went missing in 2002 and was later found murdered. The investigators allegedly listened to the voice mail messages of worried family members and then deleted them to make room for new ones, giving her family and police false hope that Dowler was still alive and accessing her cellphone. The news fed a growing scandal that has been years in the works, involves dozens of reporters and editors at *News of the World*, and perhaps others associated with News Corp. holdings, even in the United States. The British police have also been criticized for handling early investigations poorly and for engaging in corrupt relationships with *News of the World* reporters and editors. On July 8, 2011, News Corp. announced that the July 10, 2011 issue of *News of the World* would be its last after 168 years of publication. News Corp. owns more than two hundred media outlets including *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Times* of London, the Fox television and film companies, and much of BSkyB, a British satellite TV company.

The so-called "phone hacking" scandal has led to more than a dozen arrests, resignations by top News Corp. executives and British police, the launching of several new investigations into News Corp. business practices, and pressured Murdoch to retreat from a business deal to purchase the remaining portion of BSkyB that he did not own. The U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) are reportedly conducting

preliminary investigations into the possibility of international law violations. The FBI is reportedly investigating allegations that Murdoch journalists hacked into the phones of victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks or their families. British police have teamed up with Scottish authorities to continue investigating claims of phone hacking. Parliament launched a formal inquiry into the scandal and has questioned top News Corp. officials including Rupert Murdoch and his son, James Murdoch. The investigations and inquiries remain ongoing, and it is unclear what each effort will uncover about the details of a scandal that spans nearly a decade.

‘Phone hacking’ a Widespread Practice at *News of the World*

The illegal practices *News of the World* reporters allegedly used to access the voice mail accounts of individuals ranging from famous athletes to family members of crime victims have been popularly labeled “phone hacking,” although that label suggests a more complex process of computer system manipulation than what apparently occurred. According to a Sept. 1, 2010 *New York Times Magazine* article, *News of the World* reporters, or private investigators the reporters hired, engaged in a practice known as “double screwing,” which involved two people calling the same cell phone at the same time. The first caller rendered the line busy, sending the second caller to a voice mail prompt. The second caller would then gain access to the phone’s voice mail in one of two ways. In some cases, the second caller might enter a generic passcode used by the mobile phone service provider which would grant access to any voice mail box on that company’s network, such as “1111” or “4444.” According to a July 14, 2011 post on the PBS blog Need to Know, in other cases, the private investigators would contact the cell phone provider and request a password change. It is unclear if the investigators posed as the customer or if companies readily fulfilled these types of requests. The “double screwing” technique practiced by *News of the World*’s investigators would probably not be effective on newer cell phone networks because they allow only the subscriber who sets the original password to subsequently change it, Need to Know reported.

In 2003, an investigation of Stephen Whittamore, a private investigator, led to the discovery of a client list containing the names of more than 300 British journalists from more than 30 media outlets, according to an August 15, 2011 story in *The Washington Post*. The story said journalists used Whittamore to get personal information like private phone numbers. Among other things seized during a search of Whittamore’s home were the phone numbers of Milly Dowler and her family members, the story said. Whittamore’s 2005 conviction for violating the Data Protection Act — a U.K. law that governs the security of

personal data and prohibits companies and individuals from revealing personal information — “led only to a slight tap on the wrist: no fine, and a suspended sentence with no jail time,” the *Post* reported. Whittamore violated the law by misrepresenting himself as a relative or employer of the person whose phone number he was seeking. None of the journalists who hired him were investigated. According to the *Post* report, a 2006 Information Commissioner’s Office report largely based on the Whittamore case called for harsher sentences for violators of Britain’s Data Protection Act. It died in Parliament in 2008. “There was this sense out there that a little bit of gossip didn’t really do anyone any harm,” said Member of Parliament (MP) Chris Bryant, a Labour Party member from Rhondda, and a repeated target of the tabloid press, which he said he believes used illegal methods to obtain the private data of an ex-partner. “And politicians were terrified of putting their heads above the parapet and challenging these tabloids that sold millions of copies. We know now that was wrong.” According to the *Washington Post* report, politicians said the Whittamore case should have been a wake-up call to do something about the broader problem of phone hacking. “Every so often, an event like this happens and we have to ask ourselves deeper questions,” said MP Ed Miliband, Labour Party leader and Leader of the Opposition from the South Yorkshire constituency of Doncaster. “What does it say about our country? How did we let this happen? And how do we change to ensure this does not happen again?”

In 2005, the same year Whittamore was convicted, senior aides to the British royal family began noticing voice mail messages they had never heard were already in the saved message folders of their inboxes. During the same time period, *News of the World* ran stories with information known only by a small group of individuals within the royal family. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), commonly referred to as Scotland Yard, which is responsible for Greater London and also has significant national responsibilities such as leading counter-terrorism efforts and protection of the British Royal Family and senior figures of the government, launched an investigation.

In 2006, Clive Goodman, a reporter at *News of the World*, and Glenn Mulcaire, a private investigator who worked for the newspaper, were charged with illegally listening to voice mail messages of the royal family, a criminal offense under section 79 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. They were both found guilty and received prison terms. The editor of *News of the World* at the time, Andy Coulson, resigned from his position and claimed he had no knowledge of the phone hacking practices. Soon after Coulson’s resignation, British Prime Minister David Cameron appointed Coulson to Director of Communications for the Conservative Party. In January 2011, Coulson resigned

from the position because of continued media coverage surrounding the phone hacking scandal and allegations that he encouraged the practice while at the helm of *News of the World*. According to the June 2011 issue of *Vanity Fair*, Scotland Yard seized paperwork, computer records, handwritten notes, and audiotapes as part of its investigations into Goodman and Mulcaire. The investigation revealed 4,332 names or partial names of people the pair had taken an interest in, along with 2,978 cellphone numbers, 30 tapes containing voice mail messages, and 91 PIN codes to access voice mail boxes, *Vanity Fair* reported. The authorities notified five people outside the royal family that their voice mail messages may have been intercepted. Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association and Max Clifford, a powerful British publicist, two of those notified, sued *News of the World* and the paper settled both cases for nearly \$2.5 million, the story said. According to *Vanity Fair*, Coulson described the phone hacking practice as the work of a "rogue reporter." But, the "rogue reporter" defense began to unravel after a July 8, 2009 story in *The Guardian* suggested the practice was widespread. But critics dismissed initial reports as mere media-mudslinging. (See "Murdoch-owned British Paper Embroiled in Phone Scandal" in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Silha Bulletin*.)

Frustrated by the lack of attention its coverage was receiving, *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger emailed then-*New York Times* editor Bill Keller, encouraging him to look into the phone hacking story, according to the *Vanity Fair* report. More than a year after *The Guardian's* first report, a Sept. 1, 2010 story in *The New York Times Magazine* quoted former *News of the World* reporter Sean Hoare saying Coulson encouraged the phone hacking practice. Hoare gave a similar interview for the June 2011 *Vanity Fair* story, and said the practice was first used as a negotiation tactic to get publicists to offer alternative stories in exchange for not using the private material. The *New York Times* story also quoted unnamed detectives from Scotland Yard alleging that investigations into complaints of phone hacking in 2006 and 2007 were deliberately curtailed because of a close relationship between the authorities and *News of the World*. John Whittingdale, a Conservative Party member from Maldon and the chairman of a parliamentary committee that has twice investigated the phone hacking, said "there was simply no enthusiasm among Scotland Yard to go beyond the cases involving Mulcaire and Goodman." The *New York Times'* interviews with more than a dozen former reporters and editors revealed the phone hacking went well beyond Mulcaire and Goodman. Sharon Marshall, a former *News of the World* TV editor, who witnessed phone hacking while at the tabloid said, "It was an industrywide thing. Talk to any tabloid journalist in the United Kingdom, and

they can tell you each phone company's four-digit codes. Every hack on every newspaper knew this was done."

At the time the *New York Times Magazine* story was published, five people had filed lawsuits accusing News Group Newspapers, a division of Murdoch's News Corp., of breaking into their voice mail. Additional cases were being prepared, including one seeking judicial review of how Scotland Yard handled the investigation. Bill Akass, the managing editor of *News of the World*, dismissed what he called "unsubstantiated claims" that phone hacking was widespread and told *The New York Times* that efforts had been made to introduce safeguards to prevent unethical reporting tactics. But despite what editors told *The New York Times* was a "zero tolerance" hacking policy, the story said *News of the World* executives had been warned about another suspicious incident after making those statements. A phone company alerted a TV personality that someone had called her cellphone and attempted to access her voice mail, the *Times* story said. A court order compelled the phone company to turn over the source of the call, which was a number traced to a reporter at *News of the World*. The tabloid told *The New York Times* the journalist had "been suspended from reporting duties" while it conducted an investigation.

Days after the *New York Times* story was published, politicians called for a new investigation. In the May/June 2011 issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, reporter Archie Bland said *The New York Times* "piece gave the story new life, and gave fresh ammunition to those who found it impossible to believe that the practice had not preceded Coulson's reign, and had not been known higher up the foodchain." According to a Sept. 4, 2010 story in *The Observer*, *The Guardian's* sister newspaper, Lord John Prescott, a Labour Party politician who was deputy prime minister under Tony Blair, was one of the people whose phones may have been hacked. Prescott said he was "far from satisfied with the Metropolitan Police's procedure in dealing with my requests to uncover the truth," and said he only learned he may have been a victim of hacking after "repeated requests."

According to a Sept. 5, 2010 story in *The Telegraph*, Scotland Yard detectives asked *The New York Times* for its transcript of the interview with Hoare, but the newspaper refused. A post on Yahoo! News blog The Upshot said Keller said the paper would not assist in a police investigation. Scotland Yard's assistant police commission insisted Hoare's statements had "come from nowhere," in terms of its investigation, according to a Sept. 6, 2010 BBC report. While the Labour Party was calling for a fresh inquiry, Education Secretary Michael Gove told the BBC that the *New York Times* story seemed "to be a recycling of allegations we have heard before" and dismissed the story as a product of newspaper "circulation wars" in the United States between the *Times* and the Murdoch-owned *Wall Street*

Journal. The *News of the World* released a statement in response to the Sept. 1, 2010 article, quoted by the BBC on Sept. 6, 2010, alleging they had “repeatedly asked *The New York Times* to provide support of their allegations and they were unable to do so.” The tabloid said by refusing to participate in the investigation, *The New York Times* confirmed suspicions that the story was “motivated by commercial rivalry.”

Nevertheless, the phone hacking scandal would not go away for *News of the World*. On Jan. 5, 2011, *The New York Times* blog The Lede reported the tabloid had suspended senior news editor Ian Edmondson, who was accused of intercepting actress Sienna Miller’s voice mail messages. Miller was one of the first to file a suit against the newspaper and her case led to the discovery of important information, *Vanity Fair* reported in its June 2011 story. Cases like Miller’s prompted another reopening of the investigation by mid-January. According to a Jan. 14, 2011 report in *The New York Times*, the Crown Prosecution Service said it would evaluate all of the evidence collected by Scotland Yard during its original investigation and any new material that had come forward since then. “The purpose of this assessment is to ascertain whether there is any material which could now form evidence in any future criminal prosecution relating to phone hacking,” the prosecutors said in a statement. On Jan. 21, 2011, Coulson resigned as Cameron’s director of communications, saying that “continued coverage of events connected to my old job at the *News of the World* has made it difficult for me to give the 110 percent needed in this role,” *Vanity Fair* reported. Five days after Coulson’s resignation, News Corp. turned over a large volume of emails to Scotland Yard, which officially named the phone hacking investigation “Operation Weeting,” an apparently randomly-chosen designation. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Sue Akers of the Serious and Organised Crime Command took over the investigation and about 45 officers were working on the case as of May 2011, *Vanity Fair* reported.

According to the BBC, Scotland Yard’s Assistant Commissioner John Yates had previously instructed officers that there were only a small number of victims, but it was becoming clear this was not the case. On April 5, 2011, *The New York Times* reported two journalists had been arrested, questioned, and released on bail in connection with the phone hacking scandal. The reporters were “arrested on suspicion of unlawfully intercepting mobile phone voice-mail messages,” according to a police statement quoted by *The New York Times*. Although the statement did not name the individuals, *The New York Times* reported that “a person familiar with the investigation” identified the two as Edmondson, who was fired earlier in the year, and Neville Thurlbeck, the paper’s chief reporter. The story called the developments “a potentially decisive turning point in an

investigation that has been underway, often fitfully, since 2006.” On April 14, 2011, another senior *News of the World* reporter, James Weatherup, was also arrested, according to a June 8 BBC “Q&A” article outlining the scandal.

Dozens of public figures, including Paul McCartney’s ex-wife Heather Mills and James Hewitt, a former army officer who had an affair with the late Princess Diana, have considered and or started legal proceedings against the *News of the World*. The list of potential victims spans politicians, sports stars, actors, and prominent business people. It is unclear how many total targets there were, but the June *Vanity Fair* story gives a “conservative estimate” of 2,000, adding that the true figure may be double or triple that number. *The Guardian* reported in a July 7, 2011 story that police said there could be as many as 4,000 hacking victims. Alleged targets included actor Hugh Grant, comedian Steve Coogan, model Elle Macpherson, soccer stars John Terry and David Beckham, and possibly former Prime Minister Gordon Brown. On May 13, 2011 *The Guardian* reported News International set up a compensation fund worth £20 million, or about \$32 million, in order to pay to settle the suits. Miller settled her claim against the tabloid for around \$160,000, *The Guardian* reported. In response to the Miller settlement and the creation of the fund, a News International spokeswoman told *The Guardian*, “several weeks ago we admitted liability in certain cases and offered a genuine and unreserved apology. We hope to resolve other cases swiftly.” Several lawsuits remained ongoing when the *Bulletin* went to press.

According to a June 10, 2011 report in *The Telegraph*, the scandal may not be limited to listening in on voice mail messages. Scotland Yard has established a new team to investigate claims that emails and computer files were illegally accessed by *News of the World*, *The Telegraph* reported. “The [Metropolitan Police Service] has set up a small team in order to assess the various allegations that have been made with a view to establishing whether there is available evidence and if it would be appropriate to conduct any further investigation into these activities,” a police letter said, according to *The Telegraph*.

On June 23, *The Guardian* reported another woman connected with the phone hacking scandal was arrested. The report said the woman arrested is believed to be Terenia Taras, who contributed more than 30 stories for *News of the World* and the ex-girlfriend of Greg Miskiw, the *News of the World*’s former assistant news editor. Her identity was later confirmed.

Milly Dowler Allegations Lead to New Arrests

According to a July 14, 2011 *Time* magazine story, *News of the World* prided itself on serving all social classes, including “the poorer classes.” But after *The*

Guardian's July 4, 2011 report alleging Mulcaire hacked into messages left for Milly Dowler the public became outraged at "the people's champion" exploiting ordinary people in their time of grief, the *Time* magazine story said. In a statement to *The New York Times*, Mark Lewis, the Dowler family's lawyer, called *News of the World's* actions "heinous" and "despicable." The report of the hacking became significant because it showed the practice occurred five years before the arrests of Goodman and Mulcaire. The incident would also have taken place under former *News of the World* editor Rebekah Brooks, who had been promoted to chief executive of News International. "I hope you all realize it is inconceivable that I knew or worse, sanctioned these appalling allegations," she wrote in an email to employees in early July. On July 8, Coulson was arrested for questioning about his role in the phone hacking scandal and allegations about police bribes. On July 15, *The New York Times* reported Brooks and Les Hinton, the publisher of *The Wall Street Journal* since 2007, resigned as pressure mounted from politicians and investors in the United States and Britain. Brooks said in a letter that she had become a distraction to the company. "As chief executive of the company, I feel a deep sense of responsibility for the people we have hurt and I want to reiterate how sorry I am for what we now know to have taken place," Brooks wrote. Hinton, who oversaw Murdoch's British newspaper subsidiary when phone hacking was apparently rampant, resigned after questions arose about his involvement and knowledge of the illegal practice going on at newspapers under his control, *The New York Times* reported.

On July 17, 2011 Scotland Yard arrested Brooks on suspicion of illegally intercepting phone calls and bribing the police, *The New York Times* reported. Hours later, Britain's top police official, Sir Paul Stephenson, resigned as commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service. *The New York Times* reported he stepped down because "the ongoing speculation and accusations relating to the Met's links with News International at a senior level" made it challenging to do his job. Stephenson's resignation also followed the July 14, 2011 arrest of Neil Wallis, a former *News of the World* deputy editor, who had become a police public relations consultant after leaving the paper and who was also suspected of phone hacking. *The New York Times* reported Brooks' arrest was a "shock" to News Corp. "When she resigned on Friday, we were not aware that she would be arrested by the police," a News International official told the Times.

The Milly Dowler allegations also affected News Corp. more generally when Murdoch withdrew a bid to buy the portion of BSkyB satellite network that he did not own, at the urging of members of Parliament. A July 6, 2011 report in *The Wall Street Journal* said British Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt had been expected to sign off on the deal soon after the public consultation period ended

July 8, but the approval was delayed because of the phone hacking allegations related to Dowler. A July 13, 2011 Reuters story said Murdoch began to receive pressure from Parliament to withdraw his offer soon after the new allegations arose. Prime Minister Cameron, under fire over his own ties to former *News of the World* journalists, threw the government's support behind an opposition motion that denounced Murdoch's bid to extend his media power while police were investigating the alleged phone hacking, the story said. "It has become clear that it is too difficult to progress in this climate," News Corp. deputy chairman Chase Carey told Reuters, adding that the company remained "a committed long-term shareholder" in BSkyB.

On August 19, 2011 *The Guardian* reported two more arrests in connection with the phone hacking scandal. A police detective was arrested on August 18 on suspicion of leaking details about Scotland Yard's investigation of the scandal, while Dan Evans, a former *News of the World* reporter, was also arrested on suspicion of phone hacking. "I made very clear when I took on this investigation the need for operational and information security. It is hugely disappointing that this may not have been adhered to," said Sue Akers, Scotland Yard's deputy assistant commissioner, who is leading the investigation into phone hacking at the *News of the World*. *The Guardian* declined to comment on reports that the leaks had been to *The Guardian*.

Beyond individual arrests, several government investigations are being conducted in response to the phone hacking practices of *News of the World*. Lord Justice Brian Leveson, a judge in the Court of Appeal and head of the Sentencing Council for England and Wales, is leading an inquiry into the scandal and a broader investigation into the media's practices and ethics at the request of Cameron, according to a July 20 report in *The Guardian*. The inquiry is scheduled to begin in September 2011 and the judge is expected to complete his report within 12 months. The inquiry will also examine publishers' involvement with politics and the police.

On July 19, 2011 Murdoch and his son James Murdoch voluntarily appeared before a special Parliamentary committee to answer questions about the phone hacking scandal that led them to shut down the *News of the World* on July 10. According to a July 19 broadcast of "Talk of the Nation" on NPR, Rupert Murdoch told the committee that because the paper was such a small part of his company, he lost track of the publication and its actions. James Murdoch's testimony about his knowledge of the scandal suggested that he had been mistaken, misled, or he lied, according to an August 10, 2011 Bloomberg report. ABC News reported on July 18 that James Murdoch has been criticized for responding too slowly to initial allegations of phone hacking. James Murdoch also approved settlement

payments to some of the tabloid's most prominent hacking victims. James Murdoch is expected to clarify his testimony, but had not yet done so when the *Bulletin* went to press.

According to an August 18, 2011 report in *The Scotland Herald*, the Strathclyde Police, Scotland's largest police force, have launched an investigation to examine allegations of phone hacking, breaches of data protection law, and police corruption. Scottish detectives are working with their London counterparts, Scotland Yard, the story said. *The Daily Mail* reported July 20 that U.S. Justice Department, FBI, and SEC preliminary investigations are exploring whether News Corp., which is based in New York, violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which bans U.S.-based companies from paying bribes to overseas officials. The FBI will focus its investigation on whether Murdoch journalists hacked into the phones of victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks or their families, the report said. A July 22 report in *The Guardian* said News Corp. could come under the SEC's scrutiny because it is partly responsible for policing the FCPA. The SEC will want to know if News Corp. properly declared all its account activities and whether it tried to cover up any bribes made within the United Kingdom under false accounting returns, the report said.

News Corp. Ethics and the Scandal's Meaning for Murdoch

The broader meaning of the scandal — now being referred to as “Hackgate” or “Murdochgate” on social media and by some media outlets — for Murdoch, his media empire, and the state of journalism has become a subject of much debate in the media community. In a July 9, 2011 commentary for *Newsweek*, veteran journalist Carl Bernstein compared the scandal to one that made him famous, and the inspiration for the “Hackgate” label, Watergate. “The circumstances of the alleged lawbreaking within News Corp. suggest more than a passing resemblance to Richard Nixon presiding over a criminal conspiracy in which he insulated himself from specific knowledge of numerous individual criminal acts while being himself responsible for authorizing general policies that routinely resulted in lawbreaking and unconstitutional conduct,” Bernstein wrote. “Not to mention his role in the cover-up. It will remain for British authorities and, presumably, disgusted and/or legally squeezed News Corp. executives and editors to reveal exactly where the rot came from at *News of the World*, and whether Rupert Murdoch enabled, approved, or opposed the obvious corruption that infected his underlings.”

In a July 19, 2011 post for *Rolling Stone's* Taibblog, contributing editor Matt Taibbi wrote that the scandal is being used “as an opportunity to do what should have been done years ago, which is indict Rupert Murdoch in the court of public

opinion.” Taibbi wrote that although Murdoch will suffer a blow over the scandal, it is still unclear how far the revelations will go. But Taibbi expressed concern that the deeper lesson of the scandal will be overlooked. “Even if Murdoch and News Corp. go down, the basic problem that he represents is going to remain,” he wrote. “The *News of the World* scandal represents a step over an important moral line for the commercial media. In the constant effort to make money, companies like News Corp. have for decades now been sinking to even-lower depths to find sensational material.” Because of people like Murdoch, Taibbi argued, editors and reporters today do not have the discretion to reject stories that will bring in money to the publication on a moral basis. “The Edward R. Murrow model of responsible news is kind of a sucky commercial product,” Taibbi wrote. “Nobody who is in it for the money is going to ride that horse voluntarily.” Taibbi argued that the central issue is not a question of whether Murdoch broke the law himself, but rather the fact that he “did more than anyone else on earth” to create a climate where editors fail to listen to “something else that guides the individuals in these businesses — ethics, morality, patriotism, some non-commercial human thing — that prevents them from taking that step over the line.”

Simon Jenkins, a columnist for *The Guardian* and London’s *Evening Standard*, as well as a commentator for BBC, wrote a July 5 commentary for *The Guardian* analyzing how editors became embroiled in the phone hacking scandal. Jenkins pointed to increased commercial pressures that have led to “warped ethics” in newsrooms. “Pressure on editors and newspaper owners not just to ‘dumb-down’ but to abandon all scruple and restraint has been intense,” he wrote. For all newspapers, Jenkins wrote, the *News of the World* phone hacking scandal is a “moment of truth.” Jenkins argued that in order for the profession of journalism to continue, the industry “must believe in readers who will value, and ultimately pay for, quality reporting and comment. Tarnish that belief, and we really are out of a job,” he wrote. In a July 12 commentary for *The Guardian*, Jenkins also blamed politicians and their fear of the media’s influence over politics and public opinion for the continuous “media mischief” in Britain. Jenkins proposed a professional regulatory body to oversee complaints against the press rather than a government body, like Parliament, that believes the press can make or break political careers. “The greatest safeguard of press ethics is always going to be the press itself. Britain still has diverse and vigorous newspapers. They should be left to judge, hang and bury their own. They are doing a good job of that just now,” he wrote, crediting *The Guardian* for holding *News of the World* accountable for its actions. Jenkins previously wrote columns

for Murdoch-owned *The Times* of London and *The Sunday Times*, and edited *The Times* from 1990 to 1992.

In a July 11, 2011 commentary entitled “In Defense of Murdoch” for *The New York Times*, columnist Roger Cohen called Murdoch “good for newspapers over the past several decades, keeping them alive and vigorous and noisy and relevant.” Cohen said that although phone hacking is “indefensible” and, in his opinion, Fox News has significantly contributed to the polarization of American politics and eroded reasoned debate, and although he disagrees with Murdoch’s views on a range of issues from climate change to the Middle East, he admires Murdoch’s “visionary, risk-taking determination that has placed him ahead of the game as the media business has transformed through globalization and digitization.” Cohen argued that without Murdoch, the British newspaper industry might have disappeared altogether, and the overall British media scene would be “pretty impoverished.” Despite the recent troubles, Cohen wrote, he believes Murdoch has been good for media and a more open world.

In the meantime, Murdoch is left vigorously defending his company as it faces the scandal. According to an August 10, 2011 report in *The New York Times*, Murdoch insisted he has the backing of the News Corp. board of directors and will stay on as chief executive. In a conference call with financial analysts and reporters, Murdoch emphasized that none of the problems at *News of the World* had affected other parts of News Corp. “We’re all committed to doing the right thing,” he said. “We have taken decisive actions to hold people accountable and will do whatever is necessary to prevent anything like this from occurring ever again.”

– Holly Miller
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