

Conversation with Mike Wilson (Sky News Editor), 2 August 2002

CS: Mike, it's Charles Shoebridge here.

MW: Hello! How are you?

CS: Can I have a couple of minutes, just to clear the air with you?

MW: Yes, of course.

CS: As far as I can see, Sky have made a decision not to use me. I know that the Police made approaches to Sky, and I suppose what I want to know is there any way of working around this?

MW: I have to be honest, I don't know how the restriction came about, I came in one day to an email, from well above me, saying that the relationship was on hold.

CS: It didn't give any reasons?

MW: It didn't give any reasons and I didn't ask because to be honest we do get a few of these from time to time.

CS: You mean it was quite a high up decision?

MW: Yes, it certainly wasn't taken at me or Phil Wardman level.

CS: I was going to ask Phil about it, but he's away. You know I do quite a bit of work for the BBC?

MW: Yes, I see you pop up quite frequently. What I would do is to approach Simon Cole by letter, and see if there's any movement on it. I don't know why the Yard approached us, I mean you're telling me something I didn't know, I didn't know the Yard had approached us.

CS: That's what I heard from my own sources. Obviously I have a lot of contacts in the police.

MW: I would simply approach Simon. As you're well aware, I'm responsible for day to day news gathering, and as far as I'm concerned anything that hinders me getting me people that are close on air is a difficulty. And you were obviously close.

CS: Yes.

MW: When it came in, I think I'd been away for about three weeks and it was one of the million things whereas, say, if it had dropped in my lap today, I might have asked more questions about it. It's like when you get back from holiday and it's one of three hundred emails.

CS: It was nothing to do with what I was actually saying on air, as far as you were concerned?

MW: As far as I'm concerned, yes. But the note was, I think, one sentence.

Therefore whether someone further up the line had a problem, I don't know. Pick my brains as much as you like, but I have no answer for you on that one. Approach Simon by letter.

CS: It's all a bit of a shame. I'm working for the BBC, but people are asking why I'm not working for Sky and I'm having to say that I don't know.

MW: As you're well aware, people turn up on Sky and the BBC all the time, and as far as I'm concerned there's no conflict of interest.

CS: Well, thanks very much for your help.

MW: Not a problem, take care of yourself.

Call ends at 12.55 pm on 2 August 2002.