

Transcript of telephone conversation between Martyn Diamond Black (MDB) and Nicola Orr of ACP HR (NO) dated 27th August 2020.

MDB	I'm good, Nicola, how are you?
NO	I'm good, thank you very much
MDB	The 'phone rang once and it cut off
NO	Oh, okay
MDB	And then all of a sudden I had a voicemail message, I do apologise.
NO	That's quite alright, erm, don't worry at all. Erm so is now a good time to talk?
MDB	Yeah it's fine. Yeah, because we're on part-time working I'm working from home. I'm not due to work on a Thursday or Friday.
NO	Okay, well I won't take too much of your time, erm, I've can see you you've done a ...you've spent a long time on this, clearly, haven't you, putting this lengthy document together? [MDB speaking in background –U-huh] Erm, and I guess the question is what do we do with it now?
MDB	Okay
NO	Ern so, I mean, what I wanted to do, I just wanted to check, with you, who you have spoken to ... I mean for instance has anyone said anything to Sashi is she aware that this is happening?
MDB	Well, I haven't spoken to her, er, [NO speaking in background – "No, I understand that] and I don't know if anyone has spoken to her, er, but having said that I did find that one person who I did speak to, err, Abhishek Kamat from Marketing, he was very, very evasive and very, very obstructive and I think it's very possible that if she does know then it could be him that's told her.
NO	Okay
MDB	But. Having said that, I haven't spoken to anyone, err I am not aware
NO	<i>Interrupting</i> ... you've obviously spoken to Vinay? [sic]
MDB	Say it again, sorry?
NO	You've obviously spoken to ... let me just check I've got these names right, err, Vidwan?
MDB	Vidwan, yeah, right
NO	Err, he has left now, has he?
MDB	Yeah, that's correct, yeah.
NO	Let me just, erm ... [indistinguishable muffled sounds in background]. You've obviously spoken to Georgia during this, or is Georgia aware of this report?
MDB	Not aware of the report.
NO	[indistinguishable muffled sounds in background] ... previously ...
MDB	Nicola, the report's confidential. The only people that have got that report is myself, Nick, and you.
NO	Yep.
MDB	No-one has gotten this report from me, err, and I'd like to think that Nick and yourself haven't passed it on either, because it is confidential?
NO	Absolutely, Err, it hasn't gone, it hasn't gone anywhere from us but obviously there is now, y'know, we need to do something out of the lot of it because these allegations are serious. Erm, you know, on a number of levels. You know, whether that's an HR level, whether it's an

	organisational level, whether it's managerial level so I am just trying to work out ... what I don't want to do is go over ground that you have already been over [MDB speaking in background "U-huh"] I also want to understand who you have spoken to and who is it ... who is aware that you are putting this report together I mean, I can see, the reason I said Georgia is I can see that some of the information in the report is conversations you've had with Georgia. [MDB speaking in background "Yeah"]. Now, I don't know, I wasn't sure whether you had specifically asked her about these things for input into this report or whether that's conversations that you had over a period of time with her and are drawing on that knowledge?
MDB	Well, actually, with Georgia, Georgia asked me for advice some time ago with reference to one of her team, who was Vidwan, and she also mentioned, err, Deblina as well. Vidwan, because was obviously upset he was forced into leaving and Deblina because she was obviously upset because she was being forced into going to work, against Indian policy as far as the COVID 19 disease was concerned, and [NO speaking in background "Yep"] and I wasn't able to give her advice because I didn't know, err, the ins and outs of it [NO speaking in background "No"] but what I did say was that err, with Vidwan there is obviously improper behaviour there and [NO speaking in background "Um-hmm"] and, with ...
NO	[interrupting] Erm, how long ago did Vidwan leave? Can I ask?
MDB	Err, oh I think it was way back ... it was just before lockdown
NO	Okay
MDB	So it must have been March, early ...
NO	2020
MDB	Yeah, it must have been March sometime. Err, I do vaguely recall [NO speaking in background "Yes"] him sending an email to everyone saying that he was leaving and thanks for the opportunity and best of luck in the future .
NO	U-huh, right, okay.
MDB	When you get an email like that, Nicola, if it's not sales-related, or event-production related, you tend to ignore them [MDB laughs] ... but I never ...
NO	Interrupting ... Uhuh you've got a day job to do, haven't you?
MDB	Absolutely. And I never knew the lad, err, I think, from what I can gather he worked on travel bulletin, he didn't work on any of the titles that would cross over into, err, events or HSSR.
NO	Mm-hmm. So, you've, when you were putting this report together, can I ask who you have spoken to? For the purposes of pulling it together?
MDB	Err, everybody that's listed in the report I've spoken to.
NO	Right
MDB	What I haven't done is I haven't spoken to them since I have compiled the report. They all, you know, when I spoke to them I told them what the purpose was, why I was ringing them and what I was going to do. You know, I wasn't telling any lies because if you look at the post that I actually put on "Glass Door" I've stated that, I've stated it. The only person that I needed to speak to was the Managing Director, Nick.

NO	U-huh
MDB	And as soon as I gathered all of the information that I needed to gather I would go to Nick and that's exactly what I did.
NO	Perfect. So you've spoken to Vidwan, to Georgia, to Vinay, to Michael erm, I'm just making sure I've got all ... I think those are the ... just flicking through ... and Deblina.
MDB	Abhishek, Deblina, Harshita, I've also spoken to ex-employees – Prasoon Pushkar was one, Jerin Philipose was one ...
NO	U-huh, yes, I saw there were kind of LinkedIn messages, I think Jerin, Prasoon, Harshita and Michael?
MDB	Er, one thing that I didn't do, Nicola, I didn't speak to anyone that had been dismissed.
NO	U-huh.
MDB	I only spoke to people that had resigned or left of their own free will.
NO	U-huh.
MDB	I will say that I was approached by an individual who had been dismissed and, you know, it's not a crime to say who it was, it was Afnan Sheik, who was dismissed - it was performance related. Couple that with the fact that he wasn't being very truthful about what he as was doing on sales. Nick agreed, I agreed, and Mike agreed, erm, and he was dismissed. But what [NO speaking in background "U-huh"] but what he told me was more, by way of a personal attack, and that wasn't ...
NO	U-huh
MDB	What I was doing. I wasn't going to put in there personal attacks on anyone. Regardless of anything. Because it's not fair. This is a personal opinion of someone by someone else directed at someone else and using me as a conduit and I wasn't going to allow that and that's why I omitted that everything that he had said to me on the 'phone
NO	U-huh, okay. And so it started with these "Glass Door" reviews.
MDB	Well actually, it started on a conversation I had with Nick on 25 th June.
NO	Mm-hmm
MDB	You know, normally we have a quick catch-up. I'm pretty fortunate, you know, because I ring Nick and he picks up the phone and we had been trying to push the HSE/Dubai event so we can get some revenue in for this year, and after we had had the catch-up on the events and what Dubai was doing he mentioned "Glass Door", and, you know, initially I found it quite odd because Nick's never ever mentioned "Glass Door" to me before, err, but in fairness, and, you know, putting everything aside, err, Nick was genuinely upset and I have never, ever, heard Nick like that, and Nick, you know, you know Nick, I know Nick, Nick doesn't show emotion whatsoever. He's a Managing Director, it's as simple as that, but he was genuinely upset there and that bothered me because I had known about "Glass Door" for quite some time. Although it's not something that I would spend my social life going into, and looking into, err, I had known about it because Mike Ferridge had brought it to my attention. Err..
NO	U-huh
MDB	And when I saw what he had shown me I, to be honest, I started laughing and he said "What are you laughing at?" and I said, that's not

	the guy who wrote it. That guy didn't write that. It was blamed on Afnan. And you know, much as I dislike some of things that that lad did, he was a typical Marcus Evans-esque type of sales person where he didn't even use his own name. And, you know, that's like, you don't do business like that in events any more.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	That was outlawed years' ago. And he was a ducker and diver, but he was also called "The Self-Respecting Guy" as a nickname in India and everybody knew that, because he was a bit of a ladies' man and everybody used to laugh at it. He's hardly going to use his nickname, if he wanted to remain anonymous. And it was then that I told Mike Ferridge that you're looking at that "Glass Door" all wrong. Instead of looking at that "Glass Door" and thinking who it might be, who it could be, you should be looking at who they are trying NOT to be.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	And I said that to Nick on the 25 th June as well. I said "you're looking at it all wrong", and that was when I decided to dig into it a wee bit further.
NO	Mmm. So you think ... so the kind of issue or what you think or the fake "Glass Door" issue is that somebody is deliberately posting as if they are somebody else?
MDB	Yeah. They are trying to hide who they actually are but they were quite happy to try to blame everybody else [NO speaking in background - "U-huh"] and everybody else are people no longer in the company.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	There is nobody in this company, or working in this company at this moment that has been blamed for a "Glass Door" review. They have all been blamed on someone who has left.
NO	M-hmm
MDB	That's not coincidence and it's not circumstantial, Nicola, that's deliberately planned. Because there's no comeback.
NO	Yes.
MDB	And the people being blamed, with the exception of Ferridge, the people being blamed, they never even knew they were being blamed.
NO	Mmm. I'm not, I mean obviously, you can, you have the ability to put things up on "Glass Door" and then take them down. I notice there's some screenshots here of reviews that are no longer live on "Glass Door" ...
MDB	They've all been taken down since I posted my review. Or most of them have been taken down since I posted down since I posted my review.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	I never hid the fact that that review was me, Nicola, I though I didn't name myself, it actually went through their vetting procedure and I got it back twice and told to remove things, which I did. I complied completely ...
NO	(interrupting) Sorry, I wasn't aware there was a vetting procedure, talk me through that?
MDB	The "Glass Door" vetting procedure, if they, you actually submit a review and they then go through a vetting procedure where they approve it, or they disprove it, or they ask you to change it. And had it ..

NO	(interrupting) What, what ...
MDB	I had it sent back twice.
NO	Sorry, what did they ask you to change?
MDB	Well, I had actually named myself. I had said that I was the Head of Events and they said that I had to take that out - so I took it out. I also had to take out reference that I had spoken to "Glass Door" which I had done. And the post, the post that's up there now, is the amended version which they approved. But you can read that and you will know that it's me. I never hid the fact that it's me. When Nick asked me ...
NO	M-hmm.
MDB	...asked me if I had posted it, I said "yes, I did".
NO	Yep
MDB	And that was when he asked me who it was and I will be perfectly and brutally honest with you, I did not surprise Nick when I said who it was. I think he had an idea of who it was, but what was absolutely astonishing, and what I really found absolutely, you ... I just can't put words to it ... this has gone on, unabated for a few years now.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	... and it could have been stopped a long, long time ago and it hasn't.
NO	Yeah.
MDB	Now it has, now it has because there's been nothing posted. In fact there was one post after mine, someone saying "Oh, about this time, n this happened" and you know, whatever it was, they were commenting on my post.
NO	M-hmm.
MDB	But this could have been stopped a long time ago, Nicola.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	But it wasn't, and it hasn't. It has now, but it's too little too late.
NO	Yeah.
MDB	Because the damage that has been done over the past two ... err, two and-a-half years, nearly three years, that I have been in that ACP now. The damage has been horrendous.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	And when I say horrendous, I mean Horrendous with a capital "H". Nick knows it, and I know it, and half the company knows it. We cannot employ good people in India because they live and breathe "Glass Door". and we haven't been able to apply our criteria to job applicants coming into India. We've actually had to accept people below the quality that we would expect into that office ...
NO	Mmm.
MDB	... and it has had a detrimental effect on revenue. If you look at the Wiki on Alain Charles you will see that it has plunged in India over the past two-and-a-half years.
NO	Mmm
MDB	It's there for everyone to see
NO	And that's broadly the length of time that Sashi has been head of the office?
MDB	Exactly. Now, you know, call me cynical, but when you are employed in an admin capacity and you are suddenly elevated to the position of

	head of an office, there's something's seriously wrong there. There really is something seriously wrong there. Unless you are an exceptional individual it would take you five, ten years to get to that position. You know that and I know that.
NO	Mmm
MDB	But this goes much deeper than just "Glass Door", Nicola, it's not just "Glass Door", I mean "Glass Door", as far as I'm concerned, what has been done on that "Glass Door" by Sashikala is disgraceful. Not only disgraceful, it's libellous, its scandalous, she has attacked individuals, especially the Managing Director and his father, and she has attacked specific departments, all across our company.
NO	Mmm
MDB	But never once, and I've been through every review on "Glass Door", never once has there been one thing said about Sashikala or the Admin in India. She has ripped everybody to shreds, to the point where people have left. And we lost some good people. One of the most loyal people in this company is in Dubai at the money, Harshita, and you have no idea how many times that I have had to talk that girl down, and it was me who encouraged her to speak to Nick. Nick may be rough around the edges and he may be a bit ... I'll be honest with you, sometimes Nick says things and I'll think "oh my dear Lord" and believe me when I say this, I've seen more life experience than most people will have seen, and I've thought, oh Nick, you can't say that, you can't think that", but you know what he does have? He has the ability to listen. And I encouraged Harshita to speak to Nick, and we've got loyal staff all over his company but most of them are in India and they are the people that are most in fear of their jobs at the moment because this isn't just "Glass Door".
NO	Mmm
MDB	This is a culture of bullying, harassment, persecution ... AND the threats. Threats to their job. We've got people in India at the moment, Nicola, and I don't know whether Nick has told you, but we've got a lot of people in India who are quite happy to put up with this because they would not be ordinarily employed anywhere else in India. Some of them are older, some of them are too young, some of them are inexperienced, some of them have got financial problems, family problems, they could be single parents. These are people who do not have other options
NO	[NO speaking in background, speaking at the same time: "Don't have other options"]
MDB	Don't have other options to go to other jobs. Now, I don't care what anybody says and I've sung the praises of the Indian team. We've got the keenest team in the world in India, and in Dubai, and in London. We may not have the most experienced team but we've got the keenest people and all they want to do is to come in and contribute, but they are not being allowed to even do that in India. They are not allowed to pick up the 'phone to Nick, they are not allowed to speak to the senior people in the London office or the Dubai office without their express permission. Well ... seriously? Is that what a working company does? When I came to ACP the first thing that Nick said to me was "I have an

	open door policy” [NO speaking in background – “Mmm”] and I can honestly say that as far as Nick is concerned at any time, even when he’s been in the middle of a call he’ll pull me in and say “Listen, I’m just finishing off this call, sit down. I can pick up the phone and speak to Nick but then like I said, I’ve got more life experience than most and I know how to speak to Nick. Some people are so afraid because of what they’ve been told that they won’t pick up the phone and speak to Nick. And the specifics that I mentioned in my report, the specifics are really very simple. Nick is a Managing Director and he’s coming through probably the most traumatic period in his working life, because of this pandemic, and how he is going to keep everything together, how he is going to plan for the future, what plans he is putting in place for the future ... he doesn’t have time to pick up the ‘phone and follow up on a story that he’s just been told from Sashikala and she knows that. And she’s played to that.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	This is much, much more than just “Glass Door”. “Glass Door”, as far as I’m concerned, is instant dismissal for gross misconduct. But some of the other things that have also gone in there are also instant dismissal for gross misconduct. But I haven’t asked for instant dismissal for gross misconduct, I have asked several times in that report and to Nick, it needs to be suspension pending further investigation. And suspension means “No access to staff and no access to company information via email or via the system”. Now you said, right at the beginning of this “Call Nicola, as you believed this was quite serious”
NO	Yeah
MDB	You have no idea how serious this is. There’s improper behaviour has gone on here and because it didn’t work out for her, because one individual refused to edit one of these posts on “Glass Door” his fate was sealed. He was called “the snake” – everybody in the Company knew he was called “the snake” except him. He was persecuted and harassed to the point where he was harassed to the point where he had to leave.
NO	Mmm
MDB	He left without a job. That’s how serious that is. Had he left to go to another job I would have said “Okay, best of luck to you, but he didn’t. We’re talking about India, in 2020, with 1.4 billion population and very few jobs and he left without a job to go to. I think that, in itself, shows you how serious things are.
NO	Mmm. Absolutely.
MDB	To be honest with you, Nicola, I don’t know whether Nick’s told you but I am an experienced investigator. I was an experienced investigator for the Army and worked for Provost and Rhinedahlen.
NO	Mmm he did mention that.
MDB	I haven’t investigated this just on a whim.
NO	Mmm. I can see that.
MDB	Everybody that’s been ... that I’ve spoken to that were quite happy with me putting in comments, were put in there. There was other people that I spoke to that didn’t want comments added that I haven’t added.
NO	Mmm.

MDB	There's a big issue here as far as the "Whistle blower policy" in employment law is concerned. We have a "Whistleblower Policy" and our employment law on the Wiki. You do realise that I am a whistleblower don't you?
NO	Yeah, I mean some of the things that you mention would potentially come under that absolutely.
MDB	Exactly, so I am going to be expecting the same protection that I promised to people that I spoke to, because people didn't know about our Whistleblower Policy but it's an Act of Law. It was passed in Parliament. It's a criminal offence to violate that law. But under that law, I've requested in my capacity as Head of Events that she be suspended, pending further investigation. You know, I can tell you right now that, if she is suspended, then you will hear an awful lot more than I put in my report, if you start speaking to the people in India, in Dubai or even London.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	But if she remains in place, you're going to get very, very little
NO	Mmm. No I understand that, I see that.
MDB	This is very ... I believe, I think Nick was shocked when I told him initially in the beginning and when he asked me to put things together. You know, I'm not surprised. Because...
NO	Sorry, Nick asked you to put this together, did he?
MDB	No, you know when I spoke to him it was just a catch-up and I had spoke to him and explained who I thought it was and I had spoken to a few people and he said, "Well, can you put it together as a report and send it to me" and I did. And that's why the report now exists.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	And, you know, I ... my own personal belief is that he's only been spoon fed what he needs to be told. And it's come from Sashikala.
NO	Yes.
MDB	I've heard some of the horrific stories that she's said to Nick about people. One thing that you will notice in that report, I haven't noted in any way, shape or form the attacks that I've had on my character from Sashikala.
NO	And do you have, I mean, has that been through emails, conversation, has she said about you? Has she said about you directly?
MDB	No, it's just been stories. Stories that she's passed to Nick. And I can recall one story that Nick didn't investigate, Mike Ferridge didn't investigate, but I did. Because as soon as the conference call finished with Sashikala, Mike Ferridge spoke to me and stated Sashikala has had a complaint made to her, about the way you speak to people, Martyn, an about what you say and how you say it. And she was on tears on the video conference call. And I said ... "Well who made the complaint"? And he said to me. Vinay and Tanmay, and I said "Vinay and Tanmay made a complaint to Sashikala about the way I speak to them? I said "Mike, seriously? Is this a joke?" and he said "No, it's not". Nick didn't take it any further and neither did Mike.
NO	Erm, let me just, I'm just scribbling notes, Martyn, let me go back to ...

	"Vinay and Tanmay complained to Sash about the ... the treatment that ...
MDB	(interrupting) ... the way I, the way I
NO	,... but Sashi was ...
MDB	... the way I said is Sashi went to Nick and Mike with the complaint, in tears, and Nick and Mike didn't take it any further. I did. I spoke to Vinay and Tanmay they stated that they had not made a complaint to Sashikala. But Sashikala knew that they wouldn't pick up the phone to Nick. That's just one incident.
NO	Okay, have you got any other, I mean you said there were a number of other examples where something happened more recent than that?
MDB	Well, no, because when I spoke to her after, in no uncertain terms, that any more character attacks on me, I would take it legal, and I believe that probably because I haven't heard it, I believe there wasn't any more said. Or any more direct attacks on me.
NO	Okay. So this was, what, 2018?
MDB	Oh, this was a couple of years ago. Shortly after I had come to the Company.
NO	Erm ... Okay. Erm, is there anything else that you think I should know? I'm processing all of this information at the moment in terms of what the HR recommendations are from here. What we do from here. Erm, is there anything else that you want to (add)
MDB	Err, everything that, everything that I've had to say, apart from her attack, or one of the attacks on me, was ... everything is in that report, Nicola.
NO	U-huh.
MDB	It's pretty comprehensive.
NO	Yeah. Yes, I can see that, thank you.
MDB	It has the evidence in it as well.
NO	Sorry I missed that, my phone just cut out.
MDB	It's a pretty comprehensive report and the evidence is there as well.
NO	No, I can see all of that. Erm, Thank you. I'm going to just have a read through and see what next steps might be, but thank you very much for your time and your effort in putting this together. I'd certainly agree that some action needs to be taken. Erm ...
MDB	Nicola, you know something ...
NO	... There has to be, you're right, you know, if the allegations around harassment and persecution – people have come forward and said something, they need to be protected from that.
MDB	I, I err, I believe in that one hundred percent, you know, this isn't a case of me going off and, err, fighting for every just cause. There's been stories that have come out of India about India being in utter chaos. And there is only one person that could manage that chaos and that's Sashikala. Now that's not exactly true. I have been to India, I have worked with the Indian team. I have worked with every individual in that office, even on the design side. I've been to business meetings even in Dubai and the Middle East, with people from that India office, and the Dubai office and from the London office. I work very, very closely with

	most of these people and most of them are very, very happy to speak to me. There is no chaos in India, Nicola,
NO	Mmm.
MDB	This is the chaos in theory. I will tell everybody that there is chaos here and then I will also tell them that I am the only person that could manage that chaos. Well that is not true. There's a pretty damn good team in that India office [NO speaking in background – "M-hmm"] and all they want to do is to come in, work, and contribute and be part of the plans that Nick has put in place. At this particular point in time, Nick has ... all of the plans that Nick has put in place, all of the plans for the future via London, or the growth of the Company, have all been obstructed by these ridiculous, and you know, I used some scathing words in this report about what these reviews on "Glass Door" have done and what they are. They are libellous, they are slanderous, they are defamatory, they are scathing and they are attacking individuals and departments within this Company. Now when you speak about the comments ... I have never one, not once in the people I spoke to, mentioned the performance of that individual, whether it was good or bad. And believe me when I say this, Nicola, there is very little that goes on in Alain Charles, either that I don't get told about or ask for advice on, or that I haven't picked up myself.
NO	Mmm
MDB	I didn't spend 22 years in a frontline infantry regiment in theatres of war and sit with my head in a bucket. Some of what has gone on in this Company, especially emanating from that Indian office, is outrageous, and some of it is criminal. Threats of violence ... "This is what happens if you cross A Brahmin". Well, you know something, Nick has probably not told you that I have Indian citizenship as well.
NO	No, I wasn't aware of that.
MDB	My partner, we were together for nearly 11 years. I part-own a property in Delhi. I lived in Delhi and I lived in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. I know India very, very well, and I know the caste culture in India very well and even better than most, and if Sashikala is a Brahmin, then I will give you the money myself.
NO	Okay. Mmm, I'm just ... I've got your report in front of me ... can you just give me a little more context about one bit? [MDB speaking in background – "Yeah"] ... about the conversation that, erm, Harshita had about Abhishek, as far as I understand it? It just wasn't clear from reading it. You encouraged Harshita to speak with Nick?
MDB	Yeah, I encouraged ... that was from the timeline the 14 th , 15 th , 16 th , 17 th [NO speaking in background – "Yeah") of July.
NO	Yeah, so you said that in her call Sashi then explained about the Abishek chat. But I don't understand what the conversation was about Abish
MDB	Well, I think it was work-related. Err ...
NO	So, Harshita had a problem with Abhishek that she brought to Nick?
MDB	No, it wasn't/t that – it was ... Nick had asked her, from what I can gather, Nick had spoken to her about ;... apparently conversation with her was about, obviously Marketing and how, err, Harshita would handle Marketing moving forward and her opinions on Abhishek, but ...

NO	And Harshita and Abhishek both working in Marketing?
MDB	<p>Yeah. Harshita wears a lot of different caps at the moment. You know, you hear that phrase, err, “Jack of all trades, Master of none?”. I think she’s a Jack of all trades and a Master of quite a few of them. But, you know, when ... I didn’t want to know the personal context of the conversation because it’s nothing to do with me [NO speaking in background – “Okay”] but I have worked with Abhishek as well and we both agreed that Abhishek, since I had spoken with him in Dubai, err, when he was kind of upset and he didn’t know what he was doing and what purpose things were, I had sat down and spoke to him and explained to him more about HSE, and the ins-and-outs of HSE and HSSR, err, what the industry was like, you know, I’d given him more feedback and more things to get his teeth into and since that conversation I thought some of the work he had done was really quite good and Harshita and I agreed that he had improved over that period. That was what the conversation was about Abhishek that ... [NO speaking in background – “M-hmm”] ... that I had had – it was more about, I mean she asked me my opinion and I said yeah, I thought that he had improved over that period and she had echoed that and said “Yeah, I’ve said that to Nick as well” [NO speaking in background – “M-hmm”] and over that 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th period the conversation went from, what was a personal conversation with Harshita and Nick, which I wasn’t privy to, obviously, but the Abhishek input was because I had worked with him as well, err, [NO speaking in background – “M-hmm”] to a phone call from, err a phone call with Nick and Sashikala on 15th where, I’m assuming that Nick had explained to Sashikala what the conversation was with Harshita.</p>
NO	U-huh, and that he was improving and ...
MDB	<p>Yeah, yeah, exactly. And then on 16th, the following day, err, Sashikala had ‘phoned up Harshita and changed the whole conversation. The conversation that Nick had had with Harshita, err that Nick had had with Sashikala, was suddenly changed from Sashikala to Harshita, where Harshita had been so upset that she conferenced Nick into the call [NO speaking in background – “U-huh”] and Nick had explained, you know, what the call was about because, you know, Sashikala had obviously changed the context of the call and, from what I can gather from Harshita, the call ended with Sashikala saying “Well, I agree with you, Nick, that Abhishek should be sacked” and, you know, obviously by what Harshita had said to me, Sashikala wasn’t too impressed that Nick had given a clear view as to what the conversation with him and Harshita was, err, and Harshita had given a clear view of what the conversation with her and Nick was and Sashikala had changed it to a conversation with Harshita that didn’t really favour Harshita but [NO speaking in background – “Mmm”] at the end of the call it had obviously not favoured Sashikala. Now [NO speaking in background ... “Mmm”] on 17th of July, the very next day was when that really disturbing, scathing report was put into Glasgow [NO speaking in background – “Mmm”) that attacked Marketing in Dubai, [NO speaking in background – “M-hmm”) it attacked Marketing in general, it attacked the General Management of the Company, aimed directly at Nick, and it criticised</p>

	the Zoom meetings that went on for ages and ages and ages that didn't produce anything and the letters that were produced for Marketing were rubbish anyway. [NO speaking in background "Mmm"] It was clear that it was directed at Harshita, and Abhishek, because they are both in Marketing, and at Nick because Nick's the ultimate person who answers for the Company.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And that was the one that really, really upset Nick That was when Nick said "The person who's written these does not deserve to be in the Company
NO	Mmm. That was the one that was posted, mid-July, the 17 th ?
MDB	That the one that's been deleted because ...
NO	Because the screenshot there says 29 th July
MDB	That's the one that's been deleted since then.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	Now, that is also the email of the, the review that Abhishek, err, not Abhishek, Vidwan, was asked to edit. And ...
NO	The one that says "no place for people with self-respect?"
MDB	Exactly, and he recognised it right away. He said "That's what I was asked to edit".
NO	M-hmm
MDB	Now, one thing that I also said in that report was ... I had seen that review over a year ago when I was in Dubai. It was sent to my Snapchat and it was sent to my Snapchat by mistake, but it was also sent to other people in the Company. It was sent to Mike Ferridge, who rang me in Dubai and said, "Have you seen that?" And I said yeah, but Snapchat, well once you read the damn thing it deletes right away, so I couldn't save it, but yeah, I got the gist of it. And he asked me what they're doing and I said, "Well there's nothing (grand?) until such time as it goes public, or until someone sees it or somewhere posts it somewhere so sit on it and watch it. But then Vishnu also said to me in Dubai that he'd received it. [NO speaking in background – "Mmm"] It was actually left on a desk in India and someone photographed it. But the content ...
NO	Sorry, but there are two here. There's one which is, which you've screenshotted, the 17 th of July, which is saying "Someone who's a current employee as a Sales Rep, saying it's a (remorseful?) experience, and then there's one which is screenshot the 29 th of July, erm, which is the one that you are saying that was posted on the 17 th of July, which had upset Harshita, although ... I just want to make sure that I've got these, I've got these right? I'm getting myself muddled up, as I'm looking at them [both laugh]
MDB	You know, err, when I put it together and re-read it and re-read it and re-read it, I had many sleepless nights as well, I was getting ... but when I put it all into timelines, that was when it all started making more sense. And everything is time-lined as it was posted.
NO	Yes, so I see that, so we've just been talking about a conversation that, you know, that had upset Harshita and the, you know the communication around Abhishek and then following that there's

	something screenshotted on 29 th of July, which is allegedly from an Events Manager in Dubai? And then, also, on the earlier timeline, there's one which was posted on the 17 th of July, or screenshotted on 17 th July, which Harshita sent to you, but that wasn't, that wasn't the one that you are saying was about ... [pause – sound of paper shuffling in the background] ...
MDB	The one, the one posted on the 17 th of July is the one that was posted after the telephone conversations with Nick, Harshita and Sashikala.
NO	Right, okay. The one that says ... it's about "mono-thematic management?"
MDB	That's correct, yeah, that's the one that Abhishek, err, said that it's the one that he was asked to edit and he refused.
NO	Abhishek was after the one ...
MDB	Err, not Abhishek, not Abhishek, sorry I do apologise ... Vidwan. Vidwan was asked to edit and he refused.
NO	Okay, and so the one which is under the report under the explanation about Harshita, on timeline 3, looking at what happened on the 14 th , 15 th , 16 th , 17 th of July, the one that's underneath that, you say was made up of parts of an email sent by Rakesh?
MDB	That's correct, yes. And that was the one, that was the one that I had seen, err, when I was in Dubai that had been sent to my Snapchat.
NO	Right. Okay.
MDB	Now, that email, I had never actually seen that email because I wasn't in the Company when that email was sent. Believe it or not I have spoken to Rakesh, not for this but Nick had asked me to do a financial Due Dilligence Study on what Rakesh had come to Nick with, he had come with an idea, err, and he had asked me to do an in-depth study on it. And I did, and I had spoken to Rakesh, err, and he had explained to me what his plan was and what he was doing with this Access Health. But he was very evasive about finances and what-not, and I had to said to him if Nick was going to go any further forward with this "you need to open up your books for Due Dilligence so we see what your finance was, what your plans were, what you've actually got behind you at the moment what you, what your positives are, and then it all fell through because he wasn't, err, he couldn't provide anything like that.
NO	Mmm okay.
MDB	But that's the only thing I had ever spoken to about with Rakesh. But this email [NO speaking in background – "M-Hmm"] this email that he had sent to everybody, I had never seen it. Obviously I had heard about it, err, Mike Ferridge had mentioned it to me, Vinay had mentioned it to me, err, a couple of years ago but there was elements taken from that email and used in that post on "Glass Door" [NO speaking in background – "M-Hmm"] and Mike had noticed it right away, because when he 'phoned me in Dubai he said "that's very, very similar to that email that that Rakesh sent" I said, "Well I don't know who the Rakesh guy is and I don't know who ... what the content is of the email so what I would say is "sit on it, it could be a wind-up, so just sit on it and see if anything happens and if anything happens at least you've got proof of sorts [NO speaking in background – "Mmm"] but that email,

	80% of the Company at the moment don't know about the email and have never seen that email.
NO	No.
MDB	And of the few that have seen that email, they probably deleted it,
NO	Yeah.
MDB	But there are a few who kept it ... and it seems like Sashikala has kept that email because she has quoted from it. And she was heard quoting from it on the coach to Ooty.
NO	In what sense, explain that a little bit?
MDB	Well, she had been quoting some things out of the email, I, I, don't know what she quoted, because I haven't seen the email I can't confirm what it was, was in the email
NO	Right
MDB	But people that I had spoken to that had asked to be left out by name in this report, had said to me that the email that Rakesh had sent, Sashikala had quoted from upon several occasions and on the trip to Ooty.
NO	And when you say "quoted from", she had used that same language?
MDB	Oh, mockingly
NO	She had literally, had had it in front of her and was reading it out?
MDB	Well, as you, as you know, when people are out and about and you've got, you all work for the same Company, you are always going to get to the bad points of the Company, and you're going to shred them, And you're going to make your voices known, or your voice heard, and you're going to moan and complain. That was what was happening on the trip to Ooty, and Sashikala had actually quoted some things from this email which Rakesh had said that looked like it's happening. It looked like it's true. For an Office Manager that's not the, that's not the conversation you should be having with your employees or even staff.
NO	No.
MDB	So, that was a clear indicator that Sashikala has that email. And she's obviously taken bits from that email to make it look like it was Rakesh I can tell you right now, and something that I did not put in that report because it would be grossly unfair and it's unwarranted. Rakesh does not have a job. Rakesh is an alcoholic and he doesn't even have a computer because he's sold everything to feed his alcohol addiction, and he lost his family. He's living in Dubai at the moment, hand-to-mouth, day-to-day. Rakesh never wrote that review and put it onto review, err, onto "Glass Door" as a review.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	But that's just another instance of where someone's being's blamed where someone's no longer with the Company, and because it echoed this email ... and...
NO	Rakesh left a while ago, did he?

MDB	Well, he left before me. So, it's over two-and-a-half years ago but when I did speak to Mike Ferridge, Mike Ferridge told me that he remembers the email vividly because he was in Dubai at the time, or he'd just returned from Dubai at the time, and quite a lot of the context of that review had come from that email.
NO	Mmm
MDB	Very few people have that email in Alain Charles. I would even hazard a guess that Nick deleted it.
NO	Mmm. I would think so.
MDB	Eighty, I'd say eighty percent of the company wouldn't know what that email was about and even know who Rakesh was, but there is a minority in the Company who do know who he was.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And there's even a smaller minority of the Company who would keep hold of that email.
NO	Yeah, I understand. Err, so that, that report, or that "Glass Door" review, purports to come from somebody in Rakesh's position?
MDB	Yeah
NO	The other one on the 17 th of July, which says it's a current employee Sales Rep – do you think that's meant to be someone specific? Erm, or just that the Sales is meant to put you off the scent of who it is?
MDB	On the 17 th ?
NO	M-hmm.
MDB	What is the heading of that one, Nicola? I've actually got ...
NO	[Interrupting] ... "Remorseful Experience"
MDB	That was made to look like a sales person.
NO	Okay so it's just "a general" ...
MDB	... Yes, it's just general.
NO	Okay
MDB	I think that ...
NO	... Thank you
MDB	I think that that, that "Remorseful Experience" one upset Nick as well, But you know something, I've got to be honest, Nicola, and say Nick as a Managing Director has an awful lot more on his plate than having to go look at "Glass Door". Now when, when I spoke to him in, back in, way back earlier in June time, I knew, and I had said to Nick ... Actually, Nick, I know you haven't read any of these and I know that you haven't even gone into this website because it's not you, and ...
NO	[Interrupting] ... So in June, in June, there were other messages, which have now been taken down that we don't have copies of?
MDB	They, they? No, everything that ...
NO	... I'm just trying to work out which email it was which triggered that
MDB	No, no, everything that was posted, right up until when I posted my review is in the report. The only one that ...
NO	[Interrupting] ... so on 25 th June, you had mentioned the "Glass Door" review that had appeared on "Glass Door"
MDB	Yeah
NO	Which one of those, or were they both up there at the time?
MDB	No ...

NO	Obviously the date on it at the moment just shows the screenshot and not the date it was posted.
MDB	No, no the one initially that Nick and I had spoken about was one initially that Sashikala had blamed on Mike Ferridge. And that ...
NO	[Interrupting] ...Which has also been taken down but we don't have a copy of that ...
MDB	...No, that, I've never yet to this day seen what it was but Nick did say to me that, err, Sashikala had caught him out because of his grammar, err, they had had a message exchange in the report but when I spoke to Mike Ferridge, err, he had been, he had been ducking and diving from me. He didn't want to speak to me for some reason. But when I 'phoned him from my house 'phone he actually answered the 'phone right away and I told him which I wanted to speak to him and ... now everybody has known, has known in the Company, Mike Ferridge hated these reviews on "Glass Door".
NO	Mmm
MDB	And he made it known and in no uncertain circumstances that if he ever did something like that he would name himself, or he would make it known that it was him.
NO	Mmm
MDB	Mike Ferridge never wrote that report. Mike Ferridge, and I put it in my report, and I said it to Nick as well, because I think Nick was under the impression that Mike Ferridge was slating him or doing all sorts of things. I never ever found Mike Ferridge to be anything like that.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And I'm a pretty good judge of character. But Mike Ferridge did not have a bad word to say about anybody in that Company with the exception of Sashikala, And he never slated the Company and he never slated individuals in the Company with the exception of Sashikala. He was really, really upset that he was being blamed for that and he did say to me that if it happened again he was going to take legal action and he said that that to Sashikala as well. And the very next day the post was deleted. And Nick, err Sashikala went to Nick and said "I caught them out and he has deleted the post." Well, when you, when you lift the lid of that one and look underneath ... if Sashikala was educated enough to pick up grammar mistakes by Mike Ferridge, she should be the Prime Minister of India. Mike Ferridge is nicknamed "The Teacher". And everybody named him that in ACP. Because of his grammar [coughs, "Excuse me"] because of his grammar and because of his nit-picking about emails and full stops and semicolons and capital letters.
NO	Mmm
MDB	There is no way that even I would turn around and say to Mike, oh your grammar is wrong, oh I can see it's you. You couldn't do it, Nicola
NO	Okay
MDB	Mike Ferridge is quite an educated person when it comes to literature and English. Most of our editorial team would go to Nick, err go to Mike, so for someone to turn around and say "I caught him out because of his grammar" who really is uneducated, who doesn't have any education

	certificates, who doesn't even have a passport, I don't think you'll even find her CV even in the office. I think that's a bit rich.
NO	Mmm
MDB	But then, having said that I, like I was saying, I don't think that Nick has been given all of the information. He has only been spoon-fed what Sashikala thinks will wind him up.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And it's very, very clear – I don't even think to this day that Nick has seen a full copy of the review that I put on that "Glass Door". He was spoon-fed and he was given specifics out of it.
NO	Mmm
MDB	Nick does not have the time to go into "Glass Door" and read reviews. He's too busy being a Managing Director. Sometimes, when he's got time on his hands, he'll interfere, but that's what a Managing Director does. To turn around and say that too many people are being given the same task, well that's covering all your bases. But Sashikala has always complained about that. And I've been on conference calls where she's said that "Well, Nick, you told him to do it, then you told him to do it, then you told him to do it" Well that's just covering your bases to make sure the job gets done.
NO	Mmm
MDB	Because there's too many people in business, in business, and in the industry is at the moment and they will quite happily pass the buck and then blame other people.
NO	Yeah.
MDB	So I don't blame him for getting other people involved.
NO	No, that all makes sense. Thank you, it's been really helpful talking to you, Martyn. I appreciate your time, particularly as this is not your normal day for working, I really appreciate it.
MDB	Well, believe it or not ...
NO	[Interrupting]I may come back if I have any further questions, if that's okay?
MDB	Yes, yeah you may but just be aware, Nicola, that you do realise that I have a serious eye impairment, don't you? Has Nick mentioned it to you?
NO	No No, what's that?
MDB	I have two cataracts.
NO	Right.
MDB	And, one of them was operated on in January this year and it became infected ...
NO	Ouch
MDB	... and it since needs, needed a second operation.
NO	Oh, okay.
MDB	But because of, because of the lockdown and the pandemic and whatnot, all non-emergency operations were cancelled. [NO speaking in background – "U-huh"] ... So I've been in a pretty bad way, because I can't see properly from my right eye. But it's also happened, it's also come up pretty fast in my left eye. Having said that, I go into the hospital next week and they are going to do a bilateral on both eyes.

NO	Right, so that's going to put you out of action, but it sounds like it's a long overdue procedure at the hospital
MDB	Oh, it certainly is. To be honest with you it's been a struggle although life is life and there's people worse off than I am so I can't complain err, but using magnifying glasses x 3 and a magnifying glass, and only having one hand to type can be quite difficult [he laughs]
NO	[joining in with laughter] Yes, I understand that, err, well I hope all goes well. Well, hopefully, I think well I've got enough information. You've provided a very comprehensive report, erm, so if, you know, I won't contact you unless it's something that I really think I can't get elsewhere and ...
MDB	... No, no worries ...
NO	... and I appreciate your openness and I wish you well for next week when you go to the hospital.
MDB	Thank you very much, and you know something, Nicola, as an end to this ... my biggest concern is ... I didn't come to Alain Charles for the money ... [NO speaking in background – “U-huh”] I don't need the money. I inherited quite a lot of wealth from my parents. I also made a lot of money for myself during the, over the, last years in events. . [NO speaking in background – “U-huh”] I came to Alain Charles to try and make a difference. I don't want to walk away from this industry and for people to say, oh I worked there and he was a waste of time, or that he was rubbish. I want to walk away in this industry and people say “Yeah, I worked with Martyn, he made an impression. What's happening in Alain Charles at the moment is grossly unfair ... diabolically unfair ... on good people in this Company, good staff in this Company who are being attacked and slated. And that's just not anything that I'm going to put up with. I came to this Company because I wanted to come to this Company and make a difference ... and I would like to think that growing the events year-on-year, although it hasn't been a massive amount at least we've still grown them from where they were to where they are now ... I think we've made a bit of an impact, but it could be even better if people weren't working under this constant fear. [NO speaking in background – “U-huh”]. Now, we depend, we depend on that Indian office – we really, really do depend on that Indian office ... because of Sales, because of Design, because of the IT and because of Marketing. They open up the day for Alain Charles ... but they are not opening up the day as fresh and a, bubbly and bouncy as we need them to be. If we can get to that point then Nick's plans for the future will all fall into place.
NO	Mmm
MDB	At the moment they are nowhere near falling into place because everything the plans and everything he tries to put in place, there's obstruction. And that is ridiculous.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	In every email that I sent to everybody on Sales, or on Events, or even to the Company, and Nick will tell you this, I have encouraged everybody ... f you can't get me ... if I'm travelling, or you can't get Mike, pick up the 'phone and speak to Nick, he doesn't bite and he will listen. Fair enough, he doesn't always listen, and sometimes he could

	be, oh he could be a pest, and him and I don't see eye-to-eye all the time but we've both got the same result focused on ...
NO	Yes
MDB	... and at the moment it's not happening. It's not happening because of blatant obstruction and people being told "No, you won't 'phone Nick because he doesn't want to speak to you. You speak to me and tell me first.
NO	Yeah.
MDB	That's not what we're working for. I will never forget that conversation that Nick and I said when he said "Martyn, I've got an open-door policy here. I might not be available all the time but all you've got to do is knock on the door or leave me a message.
NO	U-huh.
MDB	And that happens with me. It happened with Ferridge. It happens with everybody in the London office. Fair enough we've got an advantage because his office is right next door. But it should happen with everybody in the Company as well and not everybody is allowed to do that, and certainly not in India. That's intimidating.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And it frightens people off. I maintain, to this day and I always will, and I think Nick agrees with me as well. We could have really, really good staff in that Indian office, but because these reviews on "Glass Door" people just don't want to come.
NO	Mmm.
MDB	Because they don't see a future in an office with that sort of environment so we've had to go to a lower quality of candidate. Now I'm not saying that a lower quality of candidate can't be trained [NO speaking in background – "Mmm"] but what I'm saying is it takes us longer to train them than we would normally, and that is a hold-up in itself when you are trying to grow your business.
NO	Mmm
MDB	And at the end of the day it's all about this business. I, I know what Nick's been through this past six months because he's told me and it hasn't all been easy, but people need to appreciate the fact that he might be unsocial sometimes and he might say some things that, that make you cringe, but he's still the Managing Director and he's still driving this ship that they call ACP.
NO	Yep. Absolutely. Thank you. Thank you for your input Martyn. I really appreciate it.
MDB	That's okay. That's okay, Nicola. I'm not here to be, err, nice to everybody and I know that but one thing that I am is pretty thorough in what I do and you won't get, you won't get anybody more thorough than that report.
NO	No. Thank you, I appreciate that. I appreciate that and I can see ...
MDB	I do, I do firmly believe that, if there's going to be a further investigation, and I would like to think that there will be more because I don't want this just to be based on my report. I want other people to, like yourself, to speak to people.
NO	U-huh

MDB	But if Sashikala is left in place it's not going to happen. And if she's left in place and nothing happens then I've got to really consider my future in Alain Charles because, personally, I can't work in a Company where people are being intimidated and threatened and harassed in their normal working day.
NO	Mmm, no I understand that.
MDB	Yeah?
NO	Yep. I understand what you're saying. Erm, thank you again for your time.
MDB	No worries, Nicola. If you need me, if I can't answer then just drop me a message.
NO	Okay, I'll do that.
MDB	And then I can, I can always ring you back, okay?
NO	Okay. That's perfect, thank you.
MDB	Okie dokie. Ok, listen, if I don't speak to you before the weekend, have a great weekend.
NO	And you, a nice, long weekend.
MDB	Well ... [laughing] I'm in isolation. I'm not allowed out. Well, I can't get out anyway because I can't drive and I can't see properly and I failed my impairment test, but I've been doing these swabs, I had another swab done yesterday and now I've got to self-isolate before going in for the diagnostics on Monday, err, and the final swab on Monday as well and then I get the operation on Wednesday.
NO	Mmm
MDB	So, unfortunately I'll be stuck pretty much to home. I can't even read. You know [laughing] I'm an avid reader but I can't get reading at the moment because it's too much of a strain on my eyes. But ...
NO	... Well, take it easy and I hope the op. goes well for you next week.
MDB	Fingers crossed, fingers crossed. And you have a great weekend, you take care.
NO	Okay. Goodbye.
MDB	Goodbye
NO hangs up. MDB hangs up.	
Duration of call: 1 hour, 5 minutes and 54 seconds.	