

P.S



From Director, News

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,  
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2 April, 2003

Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your letter. Gerald Kaufman has written in strikingly similar terms.

Andrew Gilligan was asked on Radio 5 Live:

"Can you tell from where you are whether the bombing of The Republican Guard is effective?"

He began his answer - "We can't tell." Your letter does not mention this. Thereafter Andrew's remarks were founded on legitimate professional judgement. He cited the Kosovo campaign where the number of Serbian armoured vehicles damaged was less than had been hoped. Andrew also was relaying what Iraqis had told him - and that is the way he puts it. Further, Andrew's judgement was self-evidently not definitive. Later in the interview he said "So far they (those with doubts about the effectiveness of the bombing of the Republican Guard) may be right." He did not say they were right.

On your point about monitoring and minding - I am sure that you have watched and listened enough to know that for nearly a fortnight - since the Iraqis changed their way of dealing with foreign journalists - we have been alerting our audiences that reporters cannot move around the city exactly as they please - and that pieces are monitored. This particular Radio 5 interview with

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Andrew Gilligan - most unusually - did not carry the warning - it should have done. But it would be unreasonable not to acknowledge that we have been telling audiences time and again about these restrictions. As for minders - the BBC Baghdad team does have a minder, although he does not accompany them all the time. Having had conversations with members of the team I am confident that Andrew's piece was not influenced by him.

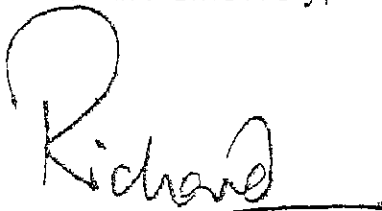
You will not be surprised in the light of my remarks above that I do not accept that we have breached the guidelines in the way you state.

As for Andrew Gilligan's remarks about Uday you again seem to have omitted a significant part of Andrew's contribution. His answer began as follows :

"Uday has run his own private torture chamber, a place called the red room, a place that was absolutely notorious as a place of real horror for the Iraqis."

All in all Andrew has hardly portrayed Uday in anything other an unpleasant light. His remarks about Uday's recent 'reining in ' are drawn from conversations Andrew had in the U.K with diplomats and academics - before he went out to Baghdad. He had been following the Iraq story for many months. His sources point to Saddam Hussein's desire to keep a balance between Uday and Qusai, and the closure last year of the newspaper associated with Uday.

Yours sincerely,



(Richard Sambrook)

I will respond to your last fax about Gilligan later today or tomorrow morning.

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