U.K. Considers Further Investigation Into 21st Century Fox Following Wigdor's Submissions

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On Tuesday, September 12, 2017, U.K. Culture Secretary Karen Bradley informed Parliament that she intends to order an additional investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) into 21st Century Fox's commitment to broadcasting standards.

The investigation is linked to 21st Century Fox's proposed $15 billion takeover of Sky Plc, a British media conglomerate. Secretary Bradley's decision to refer the takeover to the CMA stems from concerns that the deal would consolidate too much media power in the hands of the Murdoch family, thereby removing the presence of media plurality in the UK, which is required by law. She also stated that she is "now minded to refer the merger to the CMA on the grounds of genuine commitment to broadcasting standards."

In June, the Office of Communications (Ofcom) ruled that Murdoch and other Fox executives were "fit and proper" to hold broadcasting licenses in Britain despite having concluded that allegations of sexual harassment at Fox amounted to significant corporate governance failures.

According to Secretary Bradley's statement, the British government received approximately 30 substantive submissions, each raising potentially new evidence or commenting on Ofcom's assessment, almost all of which were related to the question of Fox's commitment to broadcasting standards. Wigdor LLP Founding Partner Douglas Wigdor submitted multiple letters to Ofcom and also met with the media regulator to outline various civil complaints against Fox.

Fox News has faced a litany of allegations of misconduct in the U.S. including sexual harassment, racial discrimination, retaliation, and defamation. Wigdor LLP currently represents over 20 current and/or former employees of Fox News in various lawsuits against the network.

Douglas Wigdor said of Secretary Bradley's statement:

> **We are pleased that after our submissions Secretary Bradley has concluded that a further investigation is necessary in order to determine whether Fox has met broadcasting standards and are hopeful that Fox will now waive any gag orders so that other individuals can provide relevant information without fear of reprisal.**

On August 1, 2017, Wigdor LLP filed a lawsuit on behalf of Rod Wheeler, a paid contributor at Fox News,

alleging that Fox News worked with the Trump Administration to disseminate fake news about murdered DNC staffer Seth Rich in order to distract the public from the Russian hacking scandal. According to the complaint, Mr. Wheeler was falsely quoted in a Fox News article linking Seth Rich to the release of DNC emails to Wikileaks during the 2016 Presidential primaries, according to the Complaint.

Sharon White, Chief Executive of Ofcom, stated in an August 25, 2017 letter to Secretary Bradley that the allegations that Fox News knowingly faked a news story for political purposes, if true, "would clearly be of relevance to the degree of public concern arising from a plurality issue," and "might also be of relevance to commitment to broadcasting standards," depending on a number of factors.

BBC
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"Sky takeover: Bradley letters reveal concerns over Fox standards"
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