

PIERS MORGAN QUESTIONED AT BRITISH ETHICS INQUIRY

Piers Morgan, a CNN talk show host, was recently questioned at a British Ethics Inquiry at the Royal Courts of Justice in London by a lawyer. Morgan used to be the top editor at two tabloids, which is why he was questioned by the ethics inquiry. The ethics inquiry was formed by Prime Minister David Cameron after the phone hacking scandal that occurred earlier this year. The line of questioning dealt with Morgan's time with Fleet Street, where he was the top editor for the News of the World, a defunct newspaper at the heart of the phone hacking scandal. He was also a top editor for the Daily Mirror, until he was fired in 2004 after publishing photos of British troops from the Queen's Lancashire Regiment abusing prisoners from Iraq. It was later discovered that those photos were fake. The inquiry is made up of six independent assessors and six lawyers, who act as the counsel. "I have no reason or knowledge to believe it was going on," Morgan said, according to the Daily Beast. "To the best of my recollection, I do not believe so." Morgan vehemently denied knowledge of any phone hacking but he did say he heard a voicemail recording from the phone of Sir Paul McCartney's ex-wife Heather Mills. "It doesn't necessarily follow that listening to somebody speaking to somebody else is unethical. "But on the tape of a voicemail message – you didn't think that was unethical?" Lawyer Robert Jay asked. "Well, it depends on the circumstances in which you were listening to it," Morgan replied. "I have no reason or knowledge to believe it was going on." The inquiry did not provide any new evidence that Morgan knew of the phone hacking scandal or that he was involved with the scandal. There was also no other evidence that linked Morgan to any other 'dark arts' of the British tabloids. Morgan was hired by CNN to replace the legendary Larry King, as host of the network's flagship interview program. Since Morgan took over the show, his ratings have not been nearly as good as they were when King hosted the show. James Hipwell, a former Mirror reporter, talked with the inquiry about his time with the Mirror, which was when Morgan was the editor: "I witnessed journalists carrying out repeated privacy infringements, using what has now become a well-known technique to hack in to the voicemail systems of celebrities, their friends, publicists, and public relations executives. The openness and frequency of their hacking activities gave me the impression that hacking was considered a bog-standard journalistic tool for gathering information." It has not been announced if Morgan would be questioned by the inquiry again in the near future or not.

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