

Did News of the World hack phone given to Sara Payne by Rebekah Brooks?

By Stephen Wright

THE mother of the murdered schoolgirl Sarah Payne has been warned that the News of the World may have hacked into a mobile phone which was given to her by the newspaper's editor Rebekah Brooks.

Detectives have told Sara Payne, who worked closely with the Sunday tabloid on its 'Sarah's Law' child protection campaign, that there is evidence she was targeted by the paper.

The phone was given to Mrs Payne by Mrs Brooks so that she could stay in touch with her supporters.

But later the number was passed to private investigator Glenn Mulcaire, who hacked into hundreds of phones on behalf of the paper.

Mrs Payne's eight-year-old daughter was abducted and killed by paedophile Roy Whiting in July 2000. The NotW campaigned for 'Sarah's Law', the controversial scheme which allows British parents to check whether people with access to their children are child sex offenders.

The revelation that the paper may have

'This allegation is particularly upsetting'

hacked into a phone which was a gift to Mrs Payne marks a new low in the scandal.

In the past month it has emerged that the News of the World illegally accessed the voicemails of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler, 7/7 victims' relatives, and grieving military families.

Last night Shy Keenan, who founded paedophile victim support group Phoenix Child Advocates with Mrs Payne, said: 'Sara is absolutely devastated by this news, we're all deeply disappointed and are just working to get her through it.'

Mrs Brooks said the latest allegations were 'abhorrent' and 'particularly upsetting' because Mrs Payne was a 'dear friend'.

She said in a statement: 'For the benefit of the campaign for Sarah's Law, the News of the World have provided Sara with a mobile telephone for the last 11 years. It was not a personal gift.'

'The idea that anyone on the newspaper knew that Sara or the campaign team were targeted by Mr Mulcaire is unthinkable. The idea of her being targeted is beyond my comprehension.'

It is believed police have found evidence in files kept by Mulcaire which suggested he targeted Mrs Payne. Her mobile phone number and possibly a PIN were discovered in documents listing hundreds of potential hacking targets.

However, last night it was unclear whether there is any clear proof her phone was actually hacked. As part



Keeping close: Rebekah Wade with Sarah's mother, Sara Payne



Huge campaign: Sarah Payne

of their inquiries, detectives will want to establish who might have commissioned any hacking.

It was also reported that Mrs Payne's phone may not have had voicemail until 18 months ago.

Mrs Payne wrote a column for the final issue of the News of the World on July 10 after it was closed amid growing political and commercial

pressure over the phone hacking scandal.

Describing the paper as 'an old friend', she described how it became a driving force behind her child protection campaign.

She wrote: 'We did not meet under the best of circumstances. In fact, it was the worst, most horrendous time in my life. But from that moment on the News of the World and more importantly the people there became my very good and trusted friends.'

'And like all good friends they have stuck with me through the good and the bad and helped me through both.'

Mrs Brooks has denied knowledge of phone hacking while she was editor of the NotW between 2000 and 2003. On July 15 she resigned as chief executive of News International and two days later was arrested and interviewed by police.

Earlier this month, after it emerged that Milly Dowler's phone was hacked by the NotW, there was spec-

ulation that Mrs Payne might also have been a victim.

According to reports, detectives checked the names of Mrs Payne and her closest associates against its database of information contained in the notebooks, computer records and audio tapes seized from Mulcaire in August 2006. Nothing was found but in the past few days officers discovered her mobile phone number in notes kept by Mulcaire.

Mrs Payne was taken to hospital in 2009 after complications following brain surgery to cure a ruptured aneurysm. For a time, she was critically ill.

James Murdoch has resisted calls to step down as chairman of BSkyB in the wake of the phone hacking scandal engulfing his father Rupert's media empire. At a Sky board meeting yesterday, James Murdoch received the unanimous backing of directors despite heavy criticism over his handling of the crisis.

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Disgraced swim coach kicked out of hotel job

By Ali Bracken
Crime Correspondent

DISGRACED Irish swim coach George Gibney has been sacked from his job at a Florida hotel and resort after his employers found out that he was charged here with sexually abusing young swimmers.

Last month, the Irish Daily Mail tracked down Gibney to his new work place, Wyndham Vacation Resorts in Cypress Palms, Florida, where he was employed on the front desk.

The hotel was later contacted by this newspaper and a U.S. charity, One Child International, enquiring about Gibney's employment.

As a result, the hotel yesterday wrote to One Child International founder Evin Daly, stating that Gibney has now been sacked.

The letter, from Sarah King of Wyndham Vacation in Florida, stated in correspondence to the charity yesterday: 'The company has reviewed the information you provided and has investigated the matter. Following the investigation, the company last week decided to terminate Mr Gibney's employment.'

'Thank you for providing information about Mr Gibney. Please rest assured that Wyndham is a value-based company and, as such, we demand the highest level of ethical behaviour from our associates.'

Gibney, who arrived in Florida in 2007, had been working at Wyndham Vacation Resort, a family holiday resort, for the past few months. He now goes by the name 'Jon'.

The former Irish Olympic swimming coach is facing eviction from his home in Orange City, near Orlando, after it went into foreclosure in April.

Bank of America lodged papers with a court to seize the \$154,000 (€105,000) apartment, which Gibney bought shortly after his arrival.

Gibney also lost his last job after a local anti-abuse group ousted him as an alleged sexual abuser.

The former Irish national swimming coach between 1984 and 1992, was charged with 17 counts of sexual abuse of minors.

But a judicial review in 1994 prevented the case from going forward because of the lapse of time between the alleged offences and when the complaints were made.

A Government-commissioned report, released in 1988, found that Gibney had abused children for three decades.

Regular breast cancer screening 'not saving lives'

BREAST cancer survival rates in the Republic and the North show that screening has had little impact on saving women's lives, claim researchers.

Despite the Republic being 15 years behind in implementing screening, deaths have decreased at a similar rate to that north of the Border.

From 1989 to 2006, deaths from breast cancer decreased by 29 per cent in Northern Ireland and by 26 per cent in the Republic.

But the higher survival rates are more likely due to advances in treatment rather than regular X-rays, the experts say.

The figures came as part of a Europe-wide study comparing breast cancer survival rates with implementation of regular screening.

In the study, published in the British Medical Journal, experts compared data from three pairs of neighbouring European countries and

By Jenny Hope

found that each pair experienced a similar fall in death rates.

This was despite a gap of ten to 15 years between each pair of countries in implementing a breast cancer screening programme.

Along with Ireland, the Netherlands was compared with Belgium and Flanders, and Sweden with Norway.

Deaths also fell by 25 per cent in the Netherlands, by 20 per cent in Belgium and by 25 per cent in Flanders. Deaths in Sweden were down 16 per cent, compared with 24 per cent in Norway.

The study follows on the heels of controversy over screening in Britain last year. An independent scientific review of the NHS programme concluded that the benefits have

been exaggerated and that women are not warned of potential harms from having regular X-ray checks.

Philippe Autier, of the International Prevention Research Institute in Lyon, France, who led the new study, said: 'Countries of each pair had similar healthcare services and prevalence of risk factors for breast cancer mortality but

Reductions in death rates were similar

differing implementation of mammography screening, with a gap of about ten to 15 years.

'The contrast between the time differences in implementation of mammography screening and the similarity in reductions in mortality

between the country pairs suggest that screening did not play a direct part in the reductions in breast cancer mortality.'

The figures suggested that better treatments and improving health systems were more likely to have contributed to falling death rates than screening, he said.

Overall, death rates appeared to have fallen in countries where women had been screened for a considerable time - but also in those where women were largely unscreened during the same period.

However, Dr Rachel Greig, of Breakthrough Breast Cancer in the UK, said: 'Screening and treatments must go hand in hand if we are to succeed in the fight against breast cancer and we urge all eligible women to attend their screening appointments.'

In the UK, women aged 50-69 are invited for routine mammograms every three years.