

NYT STANDS BY THOMPSON



This is the tenth installment of Bill Donohue's report on the BBC sexual abuse scandal and its implications for the *New York Times*:

New York Times publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. is trying to calm the storm of concerns raised by his own public editor, Margaret Sullivan, over the ethical credibility of Mark Thompson, the former BBC chief who is slated to start next month as the new head of the *New York Times* Company. Sulzberger said in a letter to the staff that he and the *Times*' board of directors believe Thompson possesses "high ethical standards and is the ideal person to lead our Company."

The *Times* hierarchy is doubling-down on their man. They believe that Thompson knew absolutely nothing about the decision to kill a BBC documentary on child rapist Jimmy Savile last year, and is therefore "ideal" for the job. In light of what we know, such a judgment is premature at best, and grossly unwarranted at worst.

On October 10, the chairman of the BBC Trust, Lord Chris Patten, spoke about the role that BBC officials, including Thompson, played in the decision to stop the BBC report on Savile. He said they "all knew there was an investigation and did not intervene to stop it." But Thompson insists he knew nothing about the BBC investigation of Savile!

No sooner had Lord Patten fingered Thompson as knowing about the "Newsnight" report when his office put out a statement

saying he “misspoke.” The head of the BBC governing board names names and we are to believe that he “misspoke” about it. And that’s the end of the story? More convincing is Tory MP Sir Roger Gale who says Lord Patten must go.

Parliament needs to order Lord Patten to explain himself. It might go a long way toward resolving the issue of Thompson’s allegedly “high ethical standards.” It certainly appears that someone, or perhaps several persons, are not telling the truth.