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# The Jamieson Interview on Newsnight Scotland

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Well, Cathy has clearly got the usual weaponry in. "If they ask difficult questions, just talk over them."

What interested me more however was Brewer's clear fury that Charlie Gordon wants to stand. Did anyone think it was all a bit personal and uncalled for? He actually asked Jamieson if she personally thought that it was disgraceful that Gordon was even being allowed to consider standing! Why? Gordon was one of a bunch of people involved in the donations row. His interview published in the SH last Sunday makes this quite clear. What it also makes clear is that despite claiming Â£180,000 odd in funds to educate themselves on donations "Team Alexander" did not have a clue. All they wanted were donations under the magical Â£1000 figure. (see extracts below)

Gordon says the campaign team started to discuss fund-raising for Alexander in August last year, and they opted for attracting under-the-radar' donations that did not have to be declared.

"When we first started talking about fund-raising at one of Wendy's early campaign team meetings, somebody said get donations, and as long as they are under Â£1000 then people can retain their privacy and anonymity'."

The decision to seek donations prompted Gordon to raise Â£950 from Green, whom he knew from his days on Glasgow City Council.

However, Gordon says his misunderstanding of the law on political donations - he wrongly believed any contribution under Â£1000 was legitimate, regardless of origin - contributed to the chaos at the heart of the campaign.

"I was focused on two bits of paper that I took to mean that anyone could donate Â£1000 anonymously. But I then learnt there's another bit of the rules that non-UK people are subject to a lower limit of Â£200 for anonymous donations."

Ignorance of the law, he says, was widespread within Alexander's inner circle. "Another key member of the campaign team told me, after this all blew up, that he knew even less than I did about the rules."

This was in spite of one member of Alexander's team having responsibility for complying with the law: "It now turns out that, apparently, somebody was tasked with checking all the rules and assisting with the registrations. I think it was Jim Metcalfe.

"It appears he did research all the rules, but he didn't come to the campaign team and say, by the way, here are all the rules, watch your feet in the lobby'."

The first sign of trouble came in October, when Gordon received an email from Alexander's office on the Green donation. "I didn't know why this was a problem, because when I had handed over the cheque a long time before, I also gave somebody a bit of paper with Paul Green's home address on it so he could be given a thank you' letter. If I was going to misrepresent the source of the cheque, I wouldn't have made it plain the guy lived in Jersey.

"I was quite robust in my reply. I said it was a cheque under Â£1000 and allowable under the rules."

The emails, which the Sunday Herald prints for the first time today, confirm that Gordon's mistake was in believing any financial contribution under Â£1000 was legitimate. "The emails show that I persisted in my erroneous view, but they also show that I was sincere in my erroneous view," he says.

The key to allegations of a cover up focus on what happened between this email exchange, at which point the donation was not considered a corporate donation from one of Green's companies, and Team Alexander informing the Electoral Commission in early November that the cash had come from a company called CPS.

Asked to explain the context in which CPS first became known to the campaign team, Gordon said he was asked about the name of the firm in November by another colleague on the team.

"I was asked a question, I think by treasurer David Whitton, who never explained why he was asking the question. He said, what's the name of Paul Green's Scottish company?', and I said Combined Property Services in Bath Street', because I knew he based himself there when he was in town.

"Nobody said to me, here's why we need to know the address of Paul Green's company'."

On why he thought CPS was Green's firm, Gordon stated it was an assumption made from his time spent as a councillor: "I would have staked my life on that being his company."

He continued: "The reason they were asking me if Paul Green had a Scottish company, is that if his donation was from a

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UK-registered company, then the donation would be regularised."

IT appears campaign members other than Gordon were behind moves to register the donation in the name of CPS, as shown in an email between Metcalfe and Alexander's office on October 15th which states: "If the donor is not registered to vote in the UK, his/her company must be declared as the source of the donation. I've no idea whether he'd be happy with this, or who's be responsible for checking?..."

When the story about Green's donation broke in late November, Gordon found himself being chased around the Parliament. "I was starting to say to people, I might have f\*\*\*\*d up big time!. I felt a deep sense of personal responsibility.

"Other people were saying that it wasn't just about me personally, that I couldn't just go charging out there, making grand statements that have legal implications for other people."

He says his resignation statement, which was drafted by various members of Team Alexander, contained one "factual error" which he regrets: "The statement said that I represented the Paul Green donation had been made under the auspices' of CPS. I think the emails show that wasn't how I represented it from the start."

Despite feeling "shame" for the mistake he made in the Green affair, he also admits to frustration that he was portrayed as the villain by colleagues.

"It was convenient for them to give the impression that this was just my error about whether Paul Green had a controlling interest in the company."

However, his message is clear: "Anyone who says I was involved in a cover up has got it wrong."

Jim Metcalfe had responsibility for ensuring the Law was complied with. Whitton, the Treasurer, was asking questions too yet appeared to do very little either.

What I can't understand is Brewer's very personal attack on Gordon last night given the "team" situation that existed on donations. Surely he overstepped the mark. Another glaring example of BBC Scotland showing its true colours? Brewer conveniently overlooked the LEGAL position here that Alexander was the regulated donee and as such should have ensured every donation was legal. Even the EC stated this. Metcalfe had clearly done nothing to check donations out in the light of the Law. The rest of them only operated with one main concern in mind, to get donations under Â£1000 that wouldn't have to be registered. I am no fan of Charlie Gordon's but I think Gordon Brewer's attack on him was outrageous even by his standards. I mean, couldn't he also have asked Jamieson if they had taken steps to ensure the Mole wasn't also standing? :laugh:

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