

## **Max Mosley has today issued the following statement:**

Court documents relating to Flavio Briatore's recent proceedings against the FIA in Paris were passed to "The Guardian", a UK newspaper. These documents were not available to the public and are likely to have been supplied by Briatore or someone acting on his behalf. In them he accused me, as the then President of the FIA, of "being blinded by an excessive desire for personal revenge" and the FIA of a "breach ... of the most basic rules of procedure and the rights to a fair trial". All this, he claimed, was because of "some extremely violent disputes" with me.

Unfortunately, The Guardian published this story as an "exclusive" by its chief sports writer, Richard Williams, without bothering to contact me or anyone at the FIA. Had it done so, a different picture would have emerged.

When Briatore learned that his Renault F1 team was charged with ordering one of its drivers to crash deliberately to give its other driver a race-winning advantage, he had a response: he claimed the information was false and that he was bringing criminal proceedings in France against both Nelson Piquet Jr and his father. He was also informing the UK police.

The reaction of the Renault car company was more measured. They ordered an immediate internal investigation conducted by a senior lawyer. Shortly afterwards came the announcement that Renault would not contest the allegations and that Briatore and Symonds had left the team with immediate effect. Briatore's "criminal proceedings" were quietly forgotten.

So it was entirely in character that Briatore, on learning that the FIA no longer wanted him involved in Formula One, should announce a law suit and claim he was the victim of a campaign of personal vengeance.

The dispute to which Briatore refers was between the FIA and some of the teams in a grouping known as the Formula One Teams' Association (FOTA). But Briatore's role was marginal at best. There was absolutely no rancour on my part towards him: we often spoke and had a friendly lunch together in Monaco shortly after the dispute with FOTA was settled.

The Singapore incident was, however, very serious and required not only a proper examination by the sport's governing body, but also an explanation by those involved. Briatore was invited to give an explanation to the FIA World Motor Sport Council. When he declined, he was given a further opportunity to go before independent lawyers in the FIA's International Court of Appeal. Again, he declined. He was given every opportunity to put his side of the story, but he chose not to submit himself to scrutiny.

Briatore should be the last person to complain that the FIA has not treated him fairly. The FIA has repeatedly given him the benefit of the doubt. It did so when prohibited software was found in a car under his control, again when a component was removed from his team's refuelling equipment, again when his team failed to declare properly the purpose of a particular suspension component and most recently when they were caught with information illicitly acquired from another team.

Each time his team was caught, the FIA accepted Briatore's claim that he knew nothing and was not involved. It believed his usual story was that he was not technical and that a "junior member" of the team (who had been appropriately dealt with) was responsible.

This time, however, it was different. There was overwhelming evidence that he was directly involved in ordering Nelson Piquet Jr to crash. And his conduct was particularly reprehensible because he was Piquet's personal manager, the very person to whom a young driver would turn for advice if ordered to do something dangerous or unethical by his team.

Once the FIA had a sworn statement from Nelson Piquet Jr confirming that he was ordered to crash, a full professional inquiry conducted by outside lawyers was inevitable. That inquiry, like Renault's own investigation, established Briatore's responsibility beyond question.

The suggestion that all this was somehow manufactured for reasons of personal vengeance is a desperate and unsustainable argument.

By persuading The Guardian to publish sensationalist extracts from his Court submissions without any mention of the other side of the story, Briatore succeeded in using that newspaper to distract attention from his key role in one of the worst and most dangerous examples of deliberate cheating in the history of sport.

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