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Flamboyant media baron **Robert Maxwell** has revealed that he expects a prosecution to be brought shortly in relation to criminal manipulation of the share price of **Maxwell** Communications Corporation.

In an exclusive interview with the Observer as he departed for New York, where the newly-acquired Daily News is to receive his unique style of commercial attention for the next six months, **Maxwell** declared: 'The authorities have completed investigations and it is my understanding that they are about to prosecute a so-called City gentleman who has been selling the shares short and spreading rumours in order to buy them back cheaply. You are able to make huge amounts of money that way.'

As to the identity of the prosecuting authority, or the nature of the job of the individual concerned, **Maxwell** would only say: 'Wait and see.'

MCC's shares tumbled in September last year from levels of around 170p to 134p, and in January fell again to similar levels before recovering to 150p. At the time, the volatility was said to result from apprehension over debt levels and exercised put options.

Market manipulation including 'reckless' statements is covered by section 47 of the Financial Services Act.

After a busy week in which ex-Welsh secretary Peter Walker became non-executive chairman, **Maxwell**'s son Kevin became chief executive and Pergamon press was sold to Dutch concern Elsevier for pounds 440million, MCC's shares closed 13.5p higher at 173p.

Speaking aboard his private jet registration: VR-BOB **Maxwell** dismissed speculation that MCC is under pressure from its bankers over levels of debt: 'Analysts don't bother to read the balance sheet. Comparisons with News Corporation are ridiculous. Unlike Mr Murdoch, I have had no meetings with bankers. Why should I?'

Maxwell defined his priorities for the Daily News as: 'Get the advertisers back and get the sales back.' He promised that he would not be seeking to influence editorial policy.

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