

PCC rejects complaints from parents of Neil Entwistle

The Press Complaints Commission has rejected a number of complaints – including one of harassment – from the parents of Neil Entwistle against their local newspaper, the Worksop Guardian. In its ruling, the PCC acknowledged that the couple had become involved in a high profile news story through no fault of their own but emphasised the right of the newspaper to report every angle of the case.

Cliff and Yvonne Entwistle, whose son Neil was convicted of murdering his wife and daughter earlier this year in the USA, said the newspaper had published numerous hostile letters in response to their decision to maintain their son's innocence. This, they argued, demonstrated a failure to handle publication sensitively at what was effectively a time of grief (in breach of Clause 5 of the Code). It also amounted to harassment (in breach of Clause 4), as did the newspaper's numerous attempts to contact them. In addition, they said, the newspaper had obtained a photograph of Mrs Entwistle clandestinely when she was on school property (where she worked as a teacher) in breach of Clauses 3 (Privacy) and 10 (Clandestine devices and subterfuge).

The newspaper said it had published a representative sample of the letters it had received from readers. It denied hounding the couple and said there had only been one attempt to contact Mr Entwistle after it became apparent that the couple did not wish to speak – but that was about a different matter entirely. The photo of Mrs Entwistle was taken from a car on a public road when she was in a place where she could not reasonably expect to protect her privacy.

The Commission rejected all the complaints, noting that "the newspaper was entitled to cover the many different angles of the case...including the public's reaction". The approaches to the couple had been "carried out in accordance with the terms of the Code" and the photograph of Mrs Entwistle was taken in a legitimate manner. The simple fact that the photographer had elected to take the picture from inside a car did not mean the picture was taken undercover in the sense of Clause 10 of the Code. And the complainant, who would have been "visible and identifiable from the [public] street when the photograph was taken", was not in a place where she had a reasonable expectation of privacy.

To read the full adjudication click [here](#)

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