

NI Group Limited
D. J. Mohan
Second Statement
"DJM2 – DJM3"
5 February 2012

**IN THE MATTER OF THE LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND
ETHICS OF THE PRESS**

**SECOND WITNESS
STATEMENT OF
DOMINIC JAMES MOHAN**

1. This is my second statement to the Inquiry and is made in order to assist the Inquiry in relation to certain matters upon which I understand the Inquiry wish me to give further evidence on 7 February 2012, in particular the criticisms which have been made of "Page 3" of The Sun and the attitude of The Sun to women's issues. Whilst I respect the fact that others are entitled to a different view, I will seek to explain my perspective, as the Editor of The Sun, upon these topics.

Page 3 - The British Institution.

2. The first Page 3 was published in The Sun 42 years ago. It was a statement of youthfulness and freshness. It is as innocent today as it was in 1970. While social mores have changed over the years, Page 3 has not.
3. To mark the 40th anniversary of Page 3 Germaine Greer, the feminist author, wrote an article in the Sun on November 18, 2010, (exhibited at DJM2) with the headline: "If I ask my odd-job man what he gets out of Page 3, he tells me simply, "It cheers me up" ". She wrote: "Nowadays all of us who have a digital TV run a daily risk of beaming into our homes adult channels by simply pressing the wrong button. What we would then see and hear would make Page 3 look like a toothpaste ad. That is the truly extraordinary thing about Page 3. It is no more explicit, no more revealing than it was in 1970."
4. In a culture that encourages plastic surgery such as breast implants, Page 3 girls are an advertisement for natural beauty. There is a no-silicon policy. The Page 3 candidates are healthy girls in stark contrast to many of the stick-thin models who grace the pages of high fashion magazines in varying states of nudity.
5. Page 3 has become an innocuous British institution, regarded with affection and tolerance by millions. It is neither harmful nor offensive.

Consumer choice

6. The Sun has a readership of over 7.7 million. If readers didn't want to see Page 3 they would tell us or, alternatively, they wouldn't buy the paper.
7. Germaine Greer wrote in her Sun article (DJM2): "The appeal of Page 3 is not simply sexual. Other publications have tried to out Sun the Sun by printing more revealing images only to succeed in disgusting their readership. Her indoors would ban the Sun from the house if Page 3 offended her - but it doesn't. She regards her old man's glance at it on his way to the sports pages as like grandad's crush on Charlie Dimmock, basically harmless."

Force for good

8. The Page 3 girls can be role models and a force for good. For example, five Page 3 girls went on a morale-boosting assignment to visit British troops in Afghanistan in November 2008.
9. Peta, Sam, Rhian, Becky and Danni joined 200 soldiers on an eight-hour transporter flight from RAF Brize Norton to Kandahar airbase. They wore body armour and helmets because of the threat of surface to air missiles. They then flew on a Hercules cargo plane to Camp Bastion in Helmand province, a base which has come under attack from the Taliban.
10. The Page 3 girls spent three days at Camp Bastion talking to the troops and distributing special editions of the Sun filled with thousands of messages of support and photos from their loved ones. I believe their visit was far more morale-boosting than many of those by politicians. Major Rupert Lewis, of the British Forces in Helmand, said of the Page 3 girls' visit at the time: "To overcome their very natural fears to come out here to cheer up the troops was tremendous and very much appreciated."
11. One of the Page 3 girls on that assignment was Peta Todd, a patron of the Help for Heroes charity who regularly visits injured soldiers at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Establishment Headley Court, in Surrey. She has raised tens of thousands of pounds for the charity, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, wingwalking, cycling hundreds of miles across France and running the London Marathon.

Women's campaigns

12. It is wrong to suggest that the Sun trivialises offences against women. On the contrary, the Sun has run ground-breaking campaigns highlighting the problems of domestic violence and sexual assault. For over 30 years Deidre Sanders has been the Sun's agony aunt and over that period more than six million readers have contacted her for advice about a host of problems, including domestic abuse, divorce, bullying and sexual problems. In addition, the paper has regularly championed women's issues with features and campaigns, including the following:
- (a) *Domestic Violence*
13. In 2003 the Sun launched a campaign against domestic violence with a front-page story naming and shaming men who were wife beaters. Since then we have frequently highlighted this issue with features and news stories. Refuge, the national domestic abuse charity, say the Sun has done more to champion the cause than any other media partner since 2003. When the Sun publishes stories it usually highlights the Refuge helpline. The charity reports that the volume of visits to their website trebles and calls to their helpline doubles when the Sun runs stories on this issue. The Sun's coverage spearheaded the drive for Domestic Violence Protection Orders, which are currently being piloted in Greater Manchester, Wiltshire and West Mercia. A letter from Refuge is exhibited at DJM3.
- (b) *Stop Rape Now - No Means No Campaign*
14. This campaign began in 2006 and in 2007 the government doubled the number of Sexual Assault Referral Centres ("SARC") in the UK from 18 to 36. More than 10,000 Sun readers signed an online petition to push for a national 24 hour helpline and more SARCs.
- (c) *Herceptin Campaign*
15. The breast cancer drug Herceptin was officially licensed by the Government in June 2006 after a Sun campaign contributed to the political pressure. We delivered 5,000 letters from readers demanding the drug be made available on the NHS. Previously, it was a postcode lottery across Britain as some women were getting the drug free while others had to pay privately. The then health secretary, Patricia Hewitt, helped fast track the decision so that now every Primary Care Trust has to provide the drug.
- (d) *Safer Surgery*
16. Following the PIP breast implants scandal last year, we launched the Sun Woman Safer Surgery campaign. The aim is to get tighter regulations around surgeons and procedures and a national register of all procedures, so that errors will be spotted sooner. The campaign is backed by Andrew Lansley, the health secretary.

(e) *Sunbed Campaign*

17. Under-18s were banned from using sunbeds in April 2011 following a Sun campaign. The paper spearheaded the drive for the Sunbeds Regulations Act 2010 after it was revealed that hundreds of girls, some as young as nine, were being allowed to use sunbeds. The campaign received the support of the Chief Medical Officer Professor Sally Davies, Cancer Research UK and Skcin (the Karen Clifford skin cancer charity).

(f) *Jade's Legacy*

18. More than 176,000 readers signed our online petition to lower the age limit for life-saving cervical screening checks after Jade Goody, the reality television celebrity, was diagnosed with the disease in 2008. Only women aged 25 and over are offered the check on the NHS while the age of eligibility is just 20 in Scotland and Wales. The campaign was backed by Marie Stopes International and the cervical cancer charity, Jo's Trust.

(g) *Say No To Size Zero*

19. More than 3,000 readers signed a Sun petition that was handed in to Downing Street in 2007 to ban underweight models (BMI of less than 18) at London Fashion Week. The Sun's continuing Anti-Size Zero campaign has highlighted the poor example stick-thin models set to impressionable youngsters.

Dear Deidre - the Sun's agony aunt and personal advice service

20. Deidre Sanders was appointed as the Sun's agony aunt in 1980 and since then more than six million readers have contacted her asking for advice about their problems. She has been a part of the DNA of the Sun for more than 30 years. She has worked for six editors of the Sun and she has even had queries from the third generation of families she helped in the early days. I believe Deidre runs the only comprehensive problem answering service on any national newspaper.
21. Deidre receives between 100 - 300 letters a day. In print and online, the Sun publishes up to 10 letters a day six days a week, a letter on which to base Deidre's Photo Casebook, a Teen Worry and a Deidre Worldwide Letter. She has written around 250 specially tailored leaflets covering common problems from sexual difficulties, abuse, gambling, drinking, divorce and tracing lost loved ones. She sends out hundreds of thousands of these leaflets every year. The most important feature of this service is that Deidre and her team of six counsellors and two researchers reply free of charge by email or post to every genuine reader's problem.
22. Three of Deidre's team ensure the leaflet information is up-to-date, making sure the right information goes to the right person, keeping track of all the correspondence so Deidre can follow up cases when necessary. Deidre has a system of sending a follow-up letter after a

month or so to anyone who sounds seriously distressed. As well as sending written information to readers, Deidre and her counsellors also refer readers to face-to-face help available as near as possible to their home - very commonly Relate for counselling or their local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

23. Deidre tells me she once heard from a mother who was young and single. The woman said she loved her seven-week old baby very much but could not cope. She had gone out and left her; the baby was not eating much and seemed lifeless. She believed the baby must be dying and consequently thought the only thing to do was to kill both of them. Deidre knew roughly where she lived so she contacted the NSPCC who started checking hospital records; she also alerted a self-help group for parents under stress and gave their number in her column for the girl to ring. At 5pm on the day the column was published the girl called the helpline. The counsellors managed to win her trust and let them take her and the baby to hospital. The girl was diagnosed with post-natal depression.
24. Deidre's advice service is the embodiment of the pledge in the first editorial of the Sun under the ownership of Rupert Murdoch in 1969 that the Sun is a paper that cares for its readers.

Conclusion

25. In my first statement to the Inquiry I outlined the reasons why the Sun was a force for good and I would like to reinforce that explanation. The Sun connects with the values, broad interests and obsessions of millions of ordinary working men and women every day and in doing so it serves a proper purpose in our democracy. It distils complex important issues of public affairs, including politics, finance and law into concise, readable copy which educates, informs and entertains.
26. The Sun is a private enterprise that performs a public duty with a public interest: to inform a mass readership so that British democracy can function properly. And the beauty of democracy - a fact that our critics occasionally forget - is that the vote of a van driver who reads the Sun carries the same weight as a banker who reads the Economist magazine. (In fact, the banker may well read the Sun, too, since the Sun has more ABC1 readers than the Telegraph and Guardian combined.)
27. The Sun is occasionally boisterous and often cheeky but it is always a loyal companion to our readers, male and female. It relates to them in a more passionate way than any other title and in doing so it has become Britain's best-selling newspaper with over 7.7m readers - far more than the combined readership of the Times, Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Financial Times and Independent. The alchemy of successful tabloid journalism is achieving the balance of seriousness, mischief and wit that makes the conversation with readers sparkle.

28. The fact is plain: readers have a choice in a free market economy like that of the United Kingdom where newspapers jostle for attention and sales. If readers do not agree with the values that drive the editorial engine of the Sun then they would not buy it in such astonishingly huge numbers. I am proud to be Editor of the Sun and of the staff who help me produce each edition for our millions of wonderful readers.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

Dated