

LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND ETHICS OF THE PRESS

WITNESS STATEMENT OF DAVID MANNION

I, **DAVID MANNION**, journalist and special adviser to the ITN CEO c/o ITN, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8XZ WILL SAY as follows:

I have received a letter from Kim Brudenell, the Solicitor to the Inquiry, dated 8 August 2011, which contains a series of numbered questions. I have responded to each of those questions in the equivalently numbered paragraphs below.

- 1 Until 31 July 2011 I was the Editor in Chief of ITV News, the news service provided by ITN for ITV. It is a position I had held for 10 years before stepping down to become part time special adviser to the ITN Chief Executive Officer, John Hardie. I have worked in the media all my adult life, beginning on a local weekly newspaper in Derbyshire as a trainee and moving through news agencies and local radio to regional television and to my first period with ITN beginning in 1979 as a News Editor working on the Home or Domestic news-gathering desk. I was promoted to become a Programme Editor and then to the post of Deputy Editor, Channel 4 News before returning to ITV News. In the mid nineties I left ITN to set up a consultancy company, though I continued to work occasionally on current affairs and other programmes for ITV before being invited back to ITN in 2002 as Editor and then Editor in Chief of ITV News. I am a fellow of the Royal Television Society and a recipient of the Society's Judges Award. I am an Hon. Doctor of Letters at the University of Derby.

- 2(a) As Editor in Chief of ITV News I had overall editorial, managerial and financial control of ITV's network news. As the senior editorial figure in ITV News I would normally take final decisions on any major issues relating to our operations, assisted by our Compliance Manual, the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and our lawyers.

- 2(b) ITV News also operates a protocol with the customer the ITV Network (which acts as agent for the companies which hold the ITV regional broadcasting licences and, as such, are broadcaster of the news which ITN supplies). A copy has been supplied with the statement of the ITN CEO. I regularly met with the relevant ITV executives and discussed important issues, including any legal or compliance points.
- 3(a) I was assisted and supported in my duties by the Editor of ITV News, the Deputy Editor, the Managing Editor, and the Head of Operations and Finance. The executive team are all highly professional and experienced managers. The Managing Editor has the specific task of working with our Head of Compliance and informing me on compliance and legal issues. In addition to this executive team, further senior editorial figures have specific roles in news gathering and programme production. I reported to the CEO who has ultimate executive responsibility for ensuring lawful, professional and ethical conduct.
- 3(b) During my period as Editor and then Editor in Chief, ITV News won a number of prestigious industry awards for the quality of our journalism and production, including three consecutive BAFTA Awards for news coverage. I also received a personal award - the Judges Award - from the Royal Television Society.
- 3(c) The structure of a typical day was as follows; key newsroom personnel gather for a comprehensive editorial meeting at 9.15 am chaired by the Editor or Deputy Editor. At 10.00am a cross company meeting is held, usually chaired by me and attended by senior representatives of all ITN's editorial and production departments including ITV News and Channel Four News. Also present is the Head of Compliance or the duty lawyer. The Chief Executive Officer also usually attends this meeting. Plans for the day's coverage are discussed and legal, compliance and ethical issues relevant to the news that day are discussed at the meeting.
- 3(d) Further meetings specific to individual regular or special programmes are held throughout the day. 'Post mortem' meetings are also held after all programmes. The editorial team working on a specific programme gather together to discuss the performance of the programme and from time to time compliance /legal issues are raised so we are aware of the issue before the next programme.
- 3(e) There are also weekly editorial meetings to plan the week ahead. An executive meeting, chaired by me was also held each week to discuss non editorial issues relating to the general management and finances of ITV News.
- 3(f) Further staff meetings are held on a regular basis to ensure, amongst other relevant and topical issues, that individuals are aware of our policy to operate within the law, the regulatory environment and our own Compliance Manual.

- 3(g) In addition our Compliance Manual is available to all staff in hard copy or online. Furthermore the culture of the newsroom and the open door policy of senior managers encourages our existing policy of upward referral on any matters which might have legal, regulatory or ethical ramifications.
- 3(h) The structure outlined above provides a robust 'safety net' to prevent contentious reports being broadcast without first being discussed and cleared by senior executives such as myself and without legal advice being taken from the duty lawyer (who checks reports prior to broadcast and visits the newsroom to give advice to editorial staff on legal and compliance issues).
- 4(a) In addition to ITN's Compliance Manual my team and I are aware of the requirements of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code and ITV protocol. To the best of my knowledge they were followed in practice.
- 4(b) My executive team and I monitored our programmes as they were broadcast and it was the norm for the team (journalists, producers and editors) to meet in ITV's newsroom after the broadcast had just finished to discuss how it went, praise excellence and identify if there were any errors ... for example an incorrect spelling on a caption on screen (which identify interviewees) or other glitches. We aim to learn from any mistakes. In this way we openly discuss and review at least three times a day after each programme our practices and performance.
5. Along with my management team and indeed the entire newsroom I was, of course, aware of the phone hacking story from early on. We regarded it as an important issue worthy of coverage on our programmes. The story, however, did not provoke anyone amongst my colleagues at ITV News to suggest to me that any such practice existed within ITN. Furthermore I have not seen any report produced by ITV News which suggested to me that it was obtained by unlawful or unethical means. With the measures I have outlined in place and working well, I did not see any reason to change our practices due to the reports of potential bad practices elsewhere.
- 6(a) The initial responsibility for checking sources of information, particularly those with potentially major implications, would typically lie first with the journalist or journalists who has been assigned to work on the story. If the journalist(s) working on the story believes they have validated the information, they would refer upwards to a senior figure in the newsroom and would need to convince that senior figure that the information was correct and could be relied upon and that there was a prima facie case for continuing to work on the story. In many cases, the information and the work to validate it would be taken to a senior editorial manager before a final decision was made to broadcast. Of course the referral process, and how high up the ladder a potential story goes, would depend upon the 'weight' and seriousness of the matter under investigation. If the story had major legal, regulatory or ethical implications either for public figures, institutions, public bodies and the like, the matter would go to the top - the

Editor in Chief or my immediate deputies. I believe that it was and it remains the case in ITV News that the strict upward referral system is a robust guard against bad practice.

- 6(b) In addition and partly due to our public service commitments, broadcast news has an agenda and a remit to cover matters in the public interest. Although ITV News continually strives to achieve original journalism as well as the coverage of world events, we would not typically set out to discover and broadcast stories of, for example, the sexual indiscretions of celebrities or public figures unless there was also a wider issue of public importance -- for example, the people involved had significant public positions and could be compromised as a result of their (mis)behaviour. In short, we do not, to use a colloquialism, 'go fishing' for stories which, though they may be of interest to the public, are not in the public interest.
- 6(c) Each story has its own characteristics and differences (apart from the constant need to verify accuracy) so I cannot think of any representative examples which would assist the inquiry.
- 7 ITV News tends to select perhaps 10 or 12 stories out of the dozens of potential stories for each programme (sometimes less and occasionally more) so there is considerable editorial manager's scrutiny of each individual story. Reporters or producers pitch stories to editorial managers that they have an interest in or a particular knowledge of or, alternatively, the news editor assigns them to a particular story. Whilst they work on the report they are expected to have a detailed knowledge of the facts and inform the programme executives of the anticipated length of their report -- sometimes (say) 4 minutes, others 1 minute and 20 seconds. There may also be live interviews with the journalist after the broadcast of his/her report. The areas of questioning from the news anchor tend to be run past the journalist in advance (and if necessary legal) and the likely response discussed. If the programme editor (who deals with a particular broadcast) has concerns for any reason, senior management and legal input are always available in the Newsroom. As Editor I did not always need to know the identity of a source, but for important stories I would need to be satisfied (and this would usually involve my speaking to the journalist) that the source (or sources) was genuine and trustworthy. If there were concerns or outstanding points I would have the journalist(s) seek further evidence.
- 8 Journalistic ethics play an important part in ITV News and, as Editor in Chief I took the lead in seeking to ensure that we made thoughtful decisions on a myriad of issues. For example, is it ethical, or even necessary to show identifiable dead bodies in a war zone or when is it appropriate and editorially justified to re-broadcast events such as the 'moment of death' when aircraft hit the twin towers? Whilst we place high value on finding information and investigating potential wrong doing, we strive to do so with fairness, accuracy and with due impartiality. This is central and pivotal to our culture at ITV News.
- 9 ITN is not funded directly from advertising revenue. Its funding is through contracts with its customers- in this regard ITV and Channel Four. In all my years in senior positions within ITN and ITV News I have never once felt under any pressure to change editorial decisions for any

commercial or financial reasons. In exceptional circumstances, such as Libya and the Arab Spring, ITV News can seek additional funding from the Channel. This is rare.

10(a) I have been awarded some (relatively) modest annual bonus payments for what was regarded as an overall good performance, which was not based upon any particular story but the quality of ITV News throughout the year.

10(b) Bonuses for ITV News journalists are for annual performance. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Normally these bonuses did not relate to a specific story, but occasionally a correspondent was rewarded for special reporting although this tended to be for the coverage of important news stories and significant issues.

11(a) I am not personally aware of any payments made by representatives of ITV News to the police, public officials or mobile phone companies for information such as is relevant to the Inquiry. Further, I am not personally aware of any use of private investigators by ITV News other than the examples which I describe below and in respect of which the relevant documents are attached to the written statement of our CEO. These examples were handled by the appropriate editorial managers, but proportionate checks were made within ITV News to enable me to respond to the Inquiry's letter. To the best of my knowledge, these comprise the only examples of payments made to private investigators (see my comment at 11(d)) by ITV News since 1 January 2005.

11(b) The first case concerned our reporting of a high-profile murder. There was concern locally that the police had been slow to respond especially as there were rumours as to who was responsible (a name had been placed on line). ITV News ascertained that there was an ongoing investigation into an individual. The ITV News team decided to attempt to obtain images of that individual before he was arrested (assuming that he was). As he lived and operated in a dangerous and, to an extent, gang-controlled area, it was decided that we needed to employ a specialist who would blend in with such an environment. A payment was made to the investigator's company, on presentation of an invoice, for him to obtain footage from his car. He did obtain some footage, which was subsequently broadcast when ITV News covered the conviction of the murderer.

11(c) The second case related to a story on the funding of political parties. ITV News wanted to locate an individual who had been implicated by the press in indirect funding through associates, in order to ask him about his donations, but our requests for an interview had been met with no response. As a result, we instructed a private investigator to locate him through one of his known associates. If he had been located, then we would have sent an ITV News journalist to that location in order to interview him. However, the investigation proved

expensive and ineffective and so was quickly halted. Again, a payment was made after presentation of an invoice and supporting documentation.

- 11(d) Also on a number of occasions we have employed the services of a computer specialist who engages in obtaining publicly available computer information, in particular in relation to social media sites and Google Earth imaging. I believe that the information which he obtains is or had been in the public domain and was obtained legitimately (so it should not be mistaken for "hacking"). Not all the work he did ended up being broadcast, and I am not sure whether he would classify himself as a private investigator. He has apparently also worked with the Ministry of Defence and the Security Services. In order to be as open with the Inquiry as possible, I include him. He was paid upon presentation of invoices. His fees were modest.
- 12 I had no role in instructing, paying or having any other contact with the individuals referred to above. I was aware that ITV news occasionally used external experts and specialists such as set out in 11(b) – (d) above.
- 13 There is no specific protocol. The use of external providers of information for payment was rare.
- 14-15 As explained above, there is no such protocol.
- 16 ITV News has made payments to sources for exclusive interviews or filmed material including photographs but not in an improper way that would be relevant to the Inquiry. The ITN Compliance Manual has a list of issues that must be referred to the Editor (1.14) and this includes "Payments that could cause controversy". Section 9 of the Staff Handbook deals with expenses, travel and accommodation policy.
- 17 ITV News does pay modest expenses sometimes to interviewees in line with appropriate practice. For a brief interview with a politician we would not make payment but, for example, for our election night coverage where we require a longer term commitment we are prepared to make an appropriate payment to politicians for their onscreen contributions.
- 18 Although ITV News prides itself on delivering exclusive stories which are in the public interest (and I believe clearly so) we often are reporting on developments in important stories already in the public domain.
- 19 I have never knowingly used material gathered through computer hacking and have never commissioned others to engage in the practice.

At times under my stewardship we may have caused irritation to authority and prominent individuals but this was as a consequence of our robust journalism in the public interest. The checks and balances of the ITN Compliance Manual, Ofcom Broadcasting Code and our own operating procedures and ethical values combine to ensure that we maintain high professional standards. I am, of course, aware that any shortcoming in our standards could have

potentially devastating consequences for our business and for the high reputation that we currently enjoy.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

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

Signed:
David Mannion

Dated: