

Statement from Derek Frank Webb to the Leveson inquiry

- (1) Who you are and a brief summary of your career history. Please include within this summary some details of your experience in undertaking covert surveillance work;**

My name is Derek Frank Webb, age 57. I was previously a Detective with the Hertfordshire Constabulary. I retired from the police on 12th November after 30 years service. During my service my duties were mainly as a Detective Constable. For a period of over 15 years I was attached to various squads where I was engaged in the investigation of serious crime, specifically conducting surveillance on major criminals. For this work I had been trained to a high level of competency and had completed several specialist surveillance courses.

- (2) Can you confirm to the Inquiry that you were instructed by News of the World to undertake surveillance work for approximately 8 years (from 2003 to July 2011 when the newspaper closed)? If these dates are incorrect, please provide us with the precise, and correct, dates.**

From 17th December 2003 until 20th November 2007 and then again from 20th March 2009 until it suspended business, I carried out surveillance work for News of the World.

(For a period of 15 months, between 2007 and 2009, the News of the World did not employ my services due to the fact that I had been charged by Thames Valley Police Professional Standards with offences of 'aid and abet Misconduct in Public Office'. In the event, at Kingston Crown Court, and prior to the trial taking place, the case was dismissed by His Honour Judge Southwell, following legal arguments relating the contravention of my human rights).

- (3) How were you first approached to undertake the surveillance work? Which individual within News International approached you and what precisely were you requested to do? If you were approached in writing, or received instructions from that time in writing, please provide copies of these.**

While still employed by the Hertfordshire Constabulary and working as a detective in the CID department at Watford Police Station I was instructed by my supervisor, to execute a warrant on an address where a man was allegedly making Section 1 firearms. My brief contained the fact that the intelligence had originated from Neville Thurlbeck, a reporter for the News of the World, and that the story of the arrested was going to appear in the Sunday edition of the paper. I was additionally told Neville Thurlbeck had worked undercover on this case.

Following the arrest I met with Thurlbeck on several occasions regarding the preparation of the case papers. During this period I told him that I was intending to retire from the police in the not too distant future and was planning to set up

as a private investigation company using my extensive experience in surveillance. He asked me to make contact with him when I retired as he might have some surveillance work for me; which is exactly what happened.

There were no written contracts, and to begin with I operated under my company name of Silent Shadow Services.

(I changed this later after the arrest of Clive Goodman and before my assignments were recommenced in March 2009. This was because I had been told by Neville Thurlbeck, as a condition of my being given work again, 'the bosses' wanted me to relinquish my private investigators licence and join the National Union of Journalists. This I did).

- (4) Did you receive any form of contract at this time, or at any time subsequently? Please provide copies.**

There were no written contracts. I was always instructed verbally; usually over the telephone.

(Following my arrest by Thames Valley Police I was told my services were not required by News of the World and I was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. I attach copies of two letters signed by Stuart Kuttner together with the confidentiality agreement.

- (5) Over the period 2003-2011, how did you receive instructions? Were they by email, in writing, over the telephone or by other means (or a combination of all of these). Which method was used most frequently?**

During the period between 2003 and 2011 the assignments I received to carry out surveillance were mainly by telephone, sometimes followed up by E-mail with details and photographs. It was never in writing.

- (6) The Inquiry would like to understand who at News of the World instructed you. Please provide the names of each individual at News of the World who provided instructions to you. Please also provide the names of any other individuals connected with News of the World who instructed you**

There is no doubt in my mind that other journalists instructed me over the period of which I have no immediate recollection or record, but I can recall being instructed by the following journalists:

Neville Thurlbeck
Carol Ayemaung
Chris Tate
James Milbank
David McKay
Dominic Herbert
Matt Drake
Ian Edmondson

Amanda Evans
Keith Gladdis
Rob Jobson
Rob Kellaway
Maz Mazood
Neil McCloud
James Mellor
Matt Nixon
Sarah Nuwar
Lucy Panton
Phil Whiteside
Ryan Sabey
Dan Sanderson
James Weatherup
Clive Goodman
James Desborough
Ian Kirby
Ross?
Craig?

I was never instructed by any lawyers connected to News of the World.

I was never instructed by Rebekah Wade, Andy Coulson, or Colin Myler.

- (7) **To the best of your knowledge were (i) any senior figures within News of the World or News International aware of your activities (Board members, managing editors and so on) or (ii) any editors of the News of the World during this period aware of your activities?**

From what I had picked up in general conversation with photographers and the like, and I can not remember the details, I believed that senior figures within the News of the World were aware of my activities, but I could not say exactly who.

The confidentiality document referred to above was organised by Stuart Kuttner and Tom Crone.

In addition, I had been instructed by the travel company within News of the World, that when I was assigned to distant parts of the country and stayed at hotels, the authority had to be signed at a high level. I was also told by different journalists that the bosses were very happy with my work, but it's difficult to remember who and under what circumstances, although Neville Thurlbeck did give me this feedback on several occasions.

- (8) **Over the period 2003-2011, how were you paid? The Inquiry is interested to know whether you were paid in cash, by cheque, by bank transfer or any other method (or a combination of all of these). Were you paid regularly (for example, once a month on the same date) or did you receive ad hoc payments? Did you raise invoices in order to be paid? If yes, example copies of these should be provided. Were expenses reimbursed,**

and if so, were they reimbursed in the same manner? As far as you are aware, who organised and/or authorised these payments?

I was paid by bank transfer directly into my bank account. I was never paid by cash or cheque.

The procedure was as follows: on completion of a surveillance assignment, I would submit two invoices; the first detailing the work carried; the second related to expenses. In the early days both of these were sent by post addressed to Neville Thurlbeck, and later to James Morgan who then dealt with finances.

News international would raise invoices and send their own contributor self-billing tax invoice to me prior to the money arriving in my bank account. This invoice contained my account number within News International. At any one period News International might have several of my unpaid invoices, in which case they would group them together but their invoices would still identify the different assignments.

In the early days I would title my invoice with the name of the subject of the surveillance, but this changed in order that the identity of the subject was not disclosed to the staff within the accounts department; I cannot remember who gave me this instruction. But from that point forward I identified each invoice simply by location. The expenses were reimbursed in the same manner.

It was clear that my invoices needed to be signed off by a senior figure within the newsroom. I had made various calls to James Morgan regarding payments to which he had often responded that "...none of the bosses are here to sign them off".

I was aware that Ian Edmondson had authorised some. Just how many and when I can not say.

(I attach some recent example copies for your information.)

- (9) The Inquiry understands that you were asked to place around 150 people under surveillance over the 8 year period. Is this figure accurate?**

Over the period a figure of 150 would be a reasonable estimate.

- (10) Do you have a list of those whom you were asked to put under surveillance and/or a list of those whom you did put under surveillance? If so, please append and such list or lists to your statement.**

I have compiled a list of my surveillance assignments between 2003 to the closure of News of the World. This is as accurate as I can make it at this time.

The gaps you will see within the schedule are as a result of the fact that I have no records for the period without which my memory has failed me. However, the details may come back to me in the course of time.

I attach a copy of these schedules.

(These lists were originally compiled by me in support of my claim against News International regarding their refusal to provide me with a loyalty payment following the closure of the News of the World, which they justified by saying I was not working for them full time. Shortly after they received the schedules they suggested I take them to Police).

- (11) The Inquiry understands that you were mainly asked to place celebrities and politicians under surveillance, but that you also placed some lawyers under surveillance (Charlotte Harris and Mark Lewis). Is this correct? Were any ordinary members of the public (including those who may have been the subject of press coverage) ever placed under surveillance? Were any other lawyers placed under surveillance?**

In the main my surveillance assignments related to politicians and celebrities.

You will see from the schedules this would include others for any number of reasons. For example, when a member of the public that was supposed to be meeting the politician or celebrity who was the main subject of the assignment. The assignments also included such figures as; a Police Superintendent, criminals, head of CPS, journalists, paedophile, activities at brothels and solicitors.

Between 1st April 2010 to 3rd April 2010, and 12th April 2010 to 16th April 2010, I was instructed to follow 2 solicitors [redacted] and Charlotte Harris who [redacted]

I was sent to a private house in Manchester. (At this time I can not remember the address details but I could find my way there again if required). I was given to understanding it was the home of [redacted]

There were no sighting of a male at the house but I did have a sighting of a woman who, rightly or wrongly, I assumed was [redacted] I was instructed to follow this woman and obtain video footage; I believed for identification purposes. I completed this task and the video was collected by courier.

The following morning I was told that this is not the person they were interested in and I was moved onto to two business locations which I was led to believe were solicitors firms, one where [redacted] worked and the other where Charlotte Harris worked. This was in the hope that they would be seen together; after a week I had failed to get a sighting of either and the assignment was terminated.

I received the above instructions from the news desk but by who I cannot remember. I have no written records other than my diary entries of which I attach a copy. In none of my diary entries since 2003 do I recorded the details of who gave me each individual assignment.

(At Question No 6 above I list the journalists who gave me assignments).

The tasking of these assignments followed no particular pattern. Journalists would call and say something to the effect that the 'news desk' wants you to do this or that. I was unaware of the relevance in this particular assignment and I was certainly not aware of the link to Millie Dowler.

The name Mark Lewis was never mentioned.

- (12) When placing a celebrity under surveillance, what was the aim of your instructions? Would the inquiry be incorrect to conclude that the aim was simply to discover any newsworthy fact about them? Were specific instructions ever given to find out a particular fact or set of facts? Please provide some representative examples.**

The journalist tasking me with an assignment would normally only say something to the effect that there has been 'a tip', or 'a source has said,' or 'the news desk has information that certain parties are having an affair' and, typically, the instructions which followed would be to keep one of the parties under surveillance to establish whether there was any truth in the information. Neither the details of the story or the way in which it was intended to use the product of the surveillance were shared with me.

- (13) When reporting back to News of the World, what form did such reporting take? Did you provide email reports, reports in writing, reports on the phone or a combination of all of these? Did you provide photographs? Video footage?**

Should any surveillance result in newsworthy facts then I would send a full log to the journalist. Sometimes the journalist from the news desk giving me the job would be different from the journalist receiving the 'newsworthy' item.

From 2003 to 8th May 2007, when I was arrested as a result of a Thames Valley Police operation, I submitted hand written logs, made while on surveillance. These would be transferred in a log format to my home computer, if required, and sent by email.

When I was arrested in 2007 the Police took possession of my computer and downloaded the contents. The hard drive contained a lot of information connected to News of the World. It transpired that the police intended to use only one e-mail connected to News of the World as an exhibit in their preparation of the case against me: item No 281. I attach a copy of that e-mail and their exhibit reference.

(My defence solicitor Fraser Morrison from Meldrum and Young at Hertford, Hertfordshire requested a copy of all the remaining exhibits obtained from my computer from 1-280 and from 282 onwards. This request was ignored and the details contained in them did not appear on any unused material declared by Police.

When the computer was returned before the pre-trial hearings my solicitor sent it for forensic examination. During the examination it was established that all the information had been permanently removed by police. If these records still exist they are in possession of the police. A statement from the specialist was obtained by my Solicitor Fraser Morrison

After returning to work with News of the World in 2009, because my mobile phone had e-mail facilities, and if they were considered news worthy, I would submit the logs direct from my phone. However, these were deleted after each assignment or very soon after, in order to save memory space. If they were not considered news worthy I would delete them immediately.

The mobile phone taken from me on arrest by Hertfordshire Constabulary contained a great deal of data and information. This was especially on the Royal family and Royal protection, including photographs connected with my work on News of the World. Most of the information was on a memory card, filed in folders, as the phone itself has a limited memory. In a statement presented for court the prosecution stated that there was no memory card in the phone and that, on seizure, my contact index only went up to the letter S; the memory card had contained my contacts from S to Z.

A wealth of information was also contained in both my 2006 and 2007 diaries, again taken from my home by Police on my arrest. My solicitor has made numerous written requests for copies of the diaries for well over a year. The prosecution responded that they would not give copies of these diaries until I had completed my defence statement. My solicitor, now a Judge of the Circuit Court, will confirm all these facts, which are additionally supported with documentation. There is no doubt that these diaries would be of real assistance to the Levesen Inquiry.

Moreover, there is another wealth of documents, all connected with News of the World, which were seized from my address on my arrest, which has never been returned.

(I am nothing if not a hoarder).

My 2003, 2004 and 2005 diaries were only returned on 6th December 2010. These will provide an indication of the information similar to that contained in my 2006/07 diaries.

I have made a complaint regarding the missing documents. This was investigated by Thames Valley Police Professional Standards officers, the same

department who investigated my alleged crimes; however, Thames Valley Police did not uphold my complaint.

Any video footage I recorded was forwarded to News of the World. I kept no copies.

I did not have a camera suitable for stills, although I have used the camera in my mobile phone and passed them on to the news desk. Again these would have been deleted for no other reason than the issue of memory space.

- (14) Please provide the inquiry with the reasons given to you for placing Charlotte Harris and Mark Lewis under surveillance. What was the aim of your surveillance? How long were they placed under surveillance?**

I refer to my response to Question No 11. At no time did I follow Mark Lewis.

The information I was given was to follow Charlotte Harris

[redacted] and I carried out this duty for from 1st April 2010 until 16th April 2010.

- (15) In terms of your surveillance work, did you work solely for News of the World during this 8 year period or did you work for other newspapers? If you worked for other newspapers, please name them and indicate the type of work you did for them, and how regularly you undertook the work.**

I worked exclusively for News of the World with the one exception of one day's surveillance for The Sun newspapers. I was assigned by Oliver Harvey to conduct surveillance in connection with a person forging passports. The story which appeared in the paper entitled "I'll give you fake identity for £750 passport scam is a gift to terrorists."

I was required to follow the subject, believed to be anti-surveillance, from Luton, to where he was living at an unknown location. I manage to follow him to his address in Gloucestershire the details of which I passed on to the Sun. After this I informed the Sun that I work solely for News of the World and carried out no further work for them.

- (16) To the best of your knowledge, had covert surveillance work been carried out by or on behalf of News of the World prior to your involvement? Were you told that you were 'replacing' anyone? To the best of your knowledge, did News of the World instruct anyone else to undertake surveillance work during the period you worked for them? Did you work with anyone else?**

I was never told I was replacing anyone. I was not aware of the identity of any other private investigators being employed; although I heard 'gossip' that the paper was using others. This 'gossip' did not come from journalists but from the photographers assigned from the picture desk that sometimes joined me at my location.

I was not employed to take photographs; I never worked with any other private investigators for News of the World; and, I was not aware of the private investigator Glenn Mulcaire until after his arrest.

I received jobs from the Royal Editor Clive Goodman in connection with Royals, but never met him. He never gave me any indication as to where his 'intelligence' came from and I never ask. I always assumed it came from a member of the Royal Household.

I have retained all my Invoices from 2003 together with the invoices News International raised. I require these for legal proceedings against News International under employment law. There are also hundreds of diary entries going back to 2003. Should copies of all these documents be required then you are more than welcome to have copies but will need clerical assistance for this task.



Signed D.Webb