

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

WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEFANO HATFIELD

I, STEFANO HATFIELD of Independent Print Limited, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5HF, WILL SAY:

1. I am the Executive Editor of "i", which is owned by Independent Print Limited. I confirm that the contents of this witness statement are true insofar as they are matters of my own knowledge, observation and impression. Insofar as this statement covers matters not within my own knowledge, I believe them to be true.
2. I make this witness statement in response to the letter to me dated 8 August 2011 from Kim Brudenell, Solicitor to the Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press. For ease, I have set out the questions in Ms Brudenell's letter below and respond to each question in turn.
3. Nothing in this witness statement amounts to, or shall be taken to amount to, a waiver of privilege in any legal advice given.

Summary

4. i, like The Independent, sets itself very high ethical standards of journalism. That is part of the culture of the newspaper. As such, it is not our policy or intention to publish the sorts of stories in which the types of issues envisaged by this Inquiry (for example, payment of public officials, invasion of an individual's privacy and computer hacking) would arise. Further, the financial systems in place at the newspaper mean it would be very difficult for a journalist to "hide" a payment, for example, to a police officer.
5. In addition, as I explain below, a large proportion of the content in i is re-purposed from content created by journalists for The Independent. It is therefore subject to the same high ethical standards as all content prepared for The Independent, and in addition it undergoes further editorial scrutiny before appearing in i.

Background to "i"

6. Before I give my responses to the questions, I will explain exactly what i is, as I believe this will help to show why many of the questions in the Leveson inquiry letter are not directly relevant to this newspaper.
7. i was launched on 26 October 2010 as a daily weekday newspaper. A Saturday edition, the "i on Saturday", was launched on 7 May 2011 under my executive editorship. I would describe the mission statement for i as being to deliver the quality news agenda at a discounted price in a concise format, and to do so with the same high ethical values as The Independent.
8. i is a 56-page, concise (by intention) breakdown of the most interesting, lively and newsworthy elements of The Independent each day. A lot of the content in each issue is generated through the re-purposing of content that is also going into The Independent. By "re-purposing", I mean that we select stories from The Independent's news bank that are, say, 800-1200 words long and we try to work out how to get to the most salient points of the story in a 400-500 word format for i. So, for example, if there is a "soft" introduction which sets the scene, we often turn it into a "hard" introduction that gets straight to the point. The same journalist will get the byline (i.e. will be identified in the story as the author of it) for both the version in The Independent and in i. As the tone of the story may be different in the i version to the version in The Independent, the two versions are subject to parallel editorial and legal processes.
9. The remainder of the content is material that we create ourselves. Our original content is primarily on the "Caught & Social" and features pages. The "Caught & Social" page publishes entertainment news, such as who has been seen at a particular "red carpet" event, and other stories of an "out and about" nature. It is not our policy or intention to feature on this page stories of a private nature or celebrity exclusives such as kiss and tells. This is a deliberate editorial policy. We need to create original content for this section because The Independent does not run these types of stories, and we usually base it upon material from the Press Association. For the avoidance of doubt, we do not pay any third parties for tips for stories. In respect of features, we take feature material from The Independent, and The Independent's features desk might sometimes prepare a specially commissioned feature for i.
10. We do not necessarily use the same front page story as The Independent as we have a distinct readership from The Independent. Our target audience is busy people who want to know what is going on in the news but do not necessarily have the time to read

a whole national newspaper cover to cover. i is a serious national newspaper but at a 20p price point (30p on Saturday) and half the physical size of other national newspapers. While most of the people we are targeting can afford to buy one of the larger dailies, what readers often do not like is buyer's remorse where they only have time to read 10% or 20% of the newspaper and throw the rest away. i is attempting to target those readers.

Question (1): Who you are and a brief summary of your career history in the media.

11. I am the Executive Editor of i (meaning, effectively, that I am the editor, hence I will use this term in this witness statement). I started in this role on 1 November 2010, about a week after i was launched. I was the first editor.
12. I have worked in journalism for approximately 23 years. From 1996 to 2000 I was the editor of UK advertising trade magazine Campaign in London. I then spent five years in New York, initially as editorial director at Advertising Age group at Crain Communications and then as the editor-in-chief of Metro International. After returning to the UK, from September 2006 to September 2009, I was the launch editor and editor of the London Paper, a free daily newspaper published by a subsidiary of News International. I then took on the role of Director of Times Ventures at News International (which primarily involved looking at developing special projects to apply The Times brand to conferences and events, with a focus on business-to-business) until I took up my current role in November 2010. I have also written columns for the Guardian, The Times, the Financial Times and The Independent.

Question (2): How you understand the system of *corporate* governance to work in practice at the newspaper where you are employed with particular emphasis on systems to ensure lawful, professional and ethical conduct.

13. I refer to the witness statements of Andrew Mullins (Managing Director) and Manish Malhotra (Finance Director/Company Secretary), who are more appropriately placed to comment on the systems in place in relation to corporate governance.
14. However, as a general comment, I would say that i, like The Independent, has a strong ethical policy. It is understood that this is a newspaper where you simply do not do anything unethical or unlawful.
15. In terms of specifics, all the journalists at i are aware that we have to work both to the letter and in the spirit of the Press Complaints Commission's Editorial Code of Practice (the "PCC Code"). This is also a contractual obligation in, I believe, all the journalists'

employment contracts at i, to comply with the PCC Code. Copies of the PCC Code are given to journalists and are generally available in the office for them to refer to if they wish. The spirit of the PCC Code forms the central tenet of what we do every day. In addition to that, there are lawyers at hand who are there to advise journalists on legal matters. The lawyers are located very close in physical terms to the editorial team: we are all in the same area on the same floor, with the night lawyer sitting in the main news room alongside the editorial team.

Question (3): What your role is in ensuring that the corporate governance documents and all relevant policies are adhered to in practice. If you do not consider yourself to have been/be responsible for this, please tell us who you consider to hold that responsibility.

16. I would say that I consider myself responsible for all content in i. I need to be as aware of what is going into i as, for example, Chris Blackhurst would need to be as Editor for The Independent. If any content was remotely controversial, it would be my responsibility to ask questions to whoever generated it, whether it was original content generated for i or re-purposed content from The Independent. In the latter case, I would speak to the relevant journalist from The Independent directly if I had any concerns.
17. I also consider that I share this responsibility with others. For the re-purposed content from The Independent, our News and Foreign Editors come from a daily roster of News and Foreign Editors from The Independent desk. Each day, those Editors and I have a conference in which we decide what the news agenda is for i. I would expect the News and Foreign Editors, where necessary, to ask questions of the journalists on The Independent about the source of a story. In addition, if the source is not clear from the story itself, I would ask the question, either of the journalist or the News/Foreign Editor, to reassure myself that the questions have been asked and that there are no ethical or legal concerns with the source of information. In this way, I would be a fresh editorial mind on the re-purposed content. However, given the strong ethical policy that I refer to above, such concerns do not arise very often here though, and when they do it is about such issues as the provenance of photographs we might be thinking of using.

Question (4): Whether the documents and policies referred to above are adhered to in practice, to the best of your knowledge.

18. To the best of my knowledge, these standards and documents (such as the PCC Code) are adhered to in practice. We have never received any legal claims about

stories in i, including about any original content we have created, for example for the "Caught & Social" section.

Question (5): Whether these practices have changed, either recently as a result of the phone hacking media interest or prior to that point, and if so, what the reasons for the change were.

19. I do not think that practices at i have changed, either as a result of the phone hacking media interest or previously. This is primarily because of the nature of this type of publication. Ethics are very important at i, as they are at The Independent. It is not our policy or intention to publish celebrity exclusives or other stories that may, for example, potentially breach an individual's privacy or lead to payment of 'unofficial' sources for information.

Question (6): Where the responsibility for checking sources of information (including the method by which the information was obtained) lies: from reporter to news editor/showbiz editor/royal editor to editor, and how this is done in practice (with some representative examples to add clarity).

20. I refer to my answer to question 3 above.

Question (7): To what extent an editor is aware, and should be aware, of the sources of the information which make up the central stories featured in your newspaper each day (including the method by which the information was obtained).

21. I believe that an editor should be aware of the sources of information that make up the central stories featured in their newspaper including the method by which the information is obtained. The editor should definitely ask questions if the issue arises. This is because the editor is ultimately responsible for the content of their newspaper, and apart from that it is the right thing to do. As editor, you are the guardian of the brand. You want the brand to have integrity. As the Editor of i, I am the guardian of i's brand image and I represent our readers in creating the newspaper. Like every editor, I set the tone of the newspaper

Question (8): The extent to which you consider that ethics can and should play a role in the print media, and what you consider 'ethics' to mean in this context.

22. Ethics can and should play a role in the print media. I am personally proud to work at a newspaper which has very high ethical standards. By 'ethics', I would explain this as meaning, in my opinion, that I do not want to do anything to anybody else to get a story

that I would not like to have done to me and mine. That is the best way I can express it really. I think the ethics that a newspaper should follow are expressed well in the PCC Code.

Question (9): The extent to which you, as an editor, felt any financial and/or commercial pressure from the proprietors of your newspaper or anyone else, and whether any such pressure affected any of the decisions you made as editor (such evidence to be limited to matters covered by the Terms of Reference).

23. As Editor, there is of course commercial and financial pressure to produce a newspaper that readers want to buy, but at i that does not filter down to the kind of pressure to slant a story in a particular way or not to publish a certain story, for example about a supermarket in case they stop advertising. That just does not happen here. To my mind, it is inconceivable that I or the Editor of The Independent would have that kind of pressure put on us.

Question (10): The extent to which you, as an editor, had a financial incentive to print exclusive stories (NB. It is not necessary to state your precise earnings).

24. I do not have, and have not had, any personal financial incentive, whether in my employment contract or otherwise, to print exclusive stories.

Question (11): Whether, to the best of your knowledge, your newspaper used, paid or had any connection with private investigators in order to source stories or information and/or paid or received payments in kind for such information from the police, public officials, mobile phone companies or others with access to the same: if so, please provide details of the numbers of occasions on which such investigators or other external providers of information were used and of the amounts paid to them (NB. You are not required to identify individuals, either within your newspaper or otherwise).

25. To the best of my knowledge, I has never, during my time as Editor, used, paid or had any connection with private investigators in order to source stories or information, nor has it paid or received payments in kind for such information from the police, public officials, mobile phone companies or others with access to the same. It simply does not publish the sorts of stories where such issues might arise.

26. Assuming that "others with access to the same" and/or "other external providers of information" could potentially include freelancers, then we do occasionally use freelancers or their material on i. We employ the occasional columnist who would be on a contractual retainer. We also occasionally buy in a freelance story, in which case

the freelancer would be subject to our Terms for Freelance Contributions. I understand these are sent directly to the freelancer on each occasion and are also generally available on our website. The administration of this would be handled by the Managing Editor / Legal Department. However, I can say that we do not aim to publish the sorts of stories where the kind of issues set out in the question would arise, and in particular we would never use a freelancer for that kind of story. As such, the issue simply does not arise as freelancers would not use such sources or make such payments.

Question (12): What your role was in instructing, paying or having any other contact with such private investigators and/or other external providers of information.

27. For the reason given above in response to question 11, this question is not relevant.

Question (13): If such investigators or other external providers of information were used, what policy/protocol, if any, was used to facilitate the use of such investigators or other external providers of information (for example, in relation to how they were identified, how they were chosen, how they were paid, their remit, how they were told to check sources, what methods they were told to or permitted to employ in order to obtain the information and so on).

28. For the reason given above in response to question 11, this question is not relevant.

Question (14): If there was such a policy/protocol, whether it was followed, and if not, what practice was followed in respect of all these matters.

29. For the reason given above in response to question 11, this question is not relevant.

Question (15): Whether there are any situation in which neither the existing protocol/policy nor the practice were followed and what precisely happened/failed to happen in those situations. What factors were in play in deciding to depart from the protocol or practice?

30. For the reason given above in response to question 11, this question is not relevant.

Question (16): The extent to which you are aware of protocols or policies operating at your newspaper in relation to expenses or remuneration paid to other external sources of information (whether actually commissioned by your newspaper or not). There is no need for you to cover 'official' sources, such as the Press Association.

31. For the reason given above in response to question 11, this question is not relevant.

32. Assuming that the question is intended to cover payments to freelancers, then any such payment is entered onto our contributions system for processing for payment. It is then subject to financial scrutiny by the appropriate person or people who would assess whether it should be authorised. I refer to the witness statement of Manish Malhotra, who explains these systems in more detail.

Question (17): The practice of your newspaper in relation to payment of expenses and/or remuneration paid to other external sources of information (whether actually commissioned by your newspaper or not). There is no need to cover 'official' sources such as the Press Association.

33. For the reasons given above in response to questions 11 and 16, this question is not relevant.

Question (18): In respect of editorial decisions you have made to publish stories, the factors you have taken into account in balancing the private interests of individuals (including the fact that information may have been obtained from paid sources in the circumstances outlined under paragraph 11 above) against the public interest in a free Press. You should provide a number of examples of these, and explain how you have interpreted and applied the foregoing public interest.

34. I have explained my attitude to ethics above (see, in particular, my response to question 8) – namely, to adhere to the PCC Code, plus my personal moral code as a journalist that I would not want to do to someone anything that I would not want to have done to me and mine.
35. To the best of my knowledge, I have never had a situation where we have been considering publishing a celebrity story that looks on the face of it to be about something private. As I have explained above, it is not our policy or intention to publish those kinds of stories. The "Caught & Social" column, for example, is more concerned with "out and about" stories, such as who has been seen at a party or red carpet event, rather than exclusives about a private relationship. As I have said, that is a deliberate editorial policy.
36. When we do touch on stories that may give rise to issues covered by the PCC Code, we always seek to comply fully with the Code. With the re-purposed content in particular, I would effectively be a fresh editorial mind on the content. To give three broad examples, we would make sure that we do not identify children in photographs, do not intrude on an individual's grief, and do not identify an individual's private address.

Question (19): Whether you, or your newspaper (to the best of your knowledge) ever used or commissioned anyone who used 'computer hacking' in order to source stories, or for any other reason.

37. During my time as Editor, I have never used or commissioned anyone who used 'computer hacking' in order to source stories or for any other reason and, to the best of my knowledge, nobody else at the newspaper has done either.

Question (20): If you cannot answer these questions, or take the view that they could be more fully answered by someone else, you must nonetheless provide answers to the extent that you can, and to the extent that you cannot you must provide the inquiry as soon as possible with names of those who would be able to assist us further.

38. As I mentioned in paragraph 11 above, I am the first and only editor of i, and so I do not believe that there is anybody else who could assist the inquiry further on these particular questions.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

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

Signed .

STEFANO HATFIELD

Dated 15 September 2011

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