

The Leveson Inquiry

Witness Statement for Part 1, Module 1

WITNESS STATEMENT OF TOM ROWLAND

I, **TOM ROWLAND**, c/o Collyer Bristow LLP, 4 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4DF will say as follows:

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1. I make this statement in connection with my role as a Core Participant in the Leveson Inquiry.
2. I am a Claimant in the voicemail interception cases currently being heard by Mr Justice Vos in the Chancery Division of the High Court.

Background

3. I am a journalist. I was on the staff at the Daily Telegraph for 10 years from 1987 to 1997 first as sub editor, then a feature writer and for seven years as property correspondent and editor.
4. I left the Daily Telegraph and worked for Bazal Productions developing formats for TV programmes and as a presenter. I wrote and presented a series of programmes, including 'House Hunters'.
5. I continued to write for newspapers and magazines including the Evening Standard, The Mail on Sunday, the Independent and The Times and The Sunday Times, focusing on property, health, technology, the arts, and marine subjects including super yachts.
6. I am a published author in the field of security and technology, and my books include studies of British technology policy during the 1970s and 1980s.

Phone hacking

7. I first became aware that my phone had been hacked in August 2011 when I was informed by my former mobile phone provider, T-Mobile, that they had given evidence in respect of my account to the Metropolitan Police Service. T Mobile suggested I contact officers at operation Weeting, which I did. The Police explained that they had

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- evidence that my phone had been hacked and invited me to come to an interview where I would have the opportunity to discuss their findings and see evidence in connection with it.
8. In late August 2011 I was then asked to attend a meeting with officers from Operation Weeting and my solicitor, Tamsin Allen of Bindmans LLP. During the meeting I was shown call data generated from The News of the World phone hub.
 9. I understood this to mean that calls originating from telephone handsets inside the offices of The News of The World had been traced to my mobile phone. The Police confirmed that this was the case although the officers I met admitted that they were not fully conversant with the precise technical details of how this was achieved.
 10. During 2005 and 2006 five pages of call data was generated from The News of the World phone hub to my mobile phone number.
 11. As well as calls to my regular mobile number, the records show that calls were made to my remote voicemail access number.
 12. This activity was carried out on a huge scale, some days there were up to nine calls to my mobile number. In total, the hub was used to call my mobile more than 60 times.
 13. I have never spoken to anyone from The News of the World and there is no good reason so many calls would have been made to my mobile phone.
 14. It is possible (but unlikely) that some of the calls logged by The News of the World hub relate to legitimate calls made by staff at the Times, which is of course owned by the same proprietor as The News of the World. However, staff at the Times tended to contact me by email or on my office number rather than my mobile and they certainly would not have contacted me so often. Therefore, I believe all or most of the calls were not legitimate.
 15. I have tried to think of reasons why the News of The World wanted to hack my phone. I set out below my theory as to why they might have wanted to intercept my voicemails. However, whatever the reason, the fact is that my voicemails were accessed illegally on a systematic and deliberate basis.
 16. During 2003 and 2004 I was involved in establishing a new property section for The Mail on Sunday with a focus on celebrity property

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stories.

17. Then, between 2004 and 2006 I conducted interviews with many high profile individuals for a series of feature articles published in a number of newspapers, including The Times.
18. For example, as a result of my writing in relation to the sale of the World's most expensive stamps I had exclusive contacts with high profile investors in the US and as a result of my writing about yachts I had extensive contacts in the Middle East and with high profile individuals, some of which had been the subject of lengthy investigations by The News of The World.
19. I also had extensive contacts with many business leaders in the computing, telecommunications and technology sectors, and was given by them access to commercially confidential information on an embargo basis. I was given access to this information on the understanding that I would not publish anything before an agreed date. This included information about new products, services and mobile phone handsets.
20. I now believe that Journalists from The News of The World targeted my voicemail in order to glean information about my contacts and the people that I had been interviewing, and in part to gain access to confidential information I had about the house purchasing activities of high net worth individuals in the public eye and the future business plans of technology companies.
21. It seems highly unlikely that all of this was the work of one or two individuals and although I cannot be sure, I strongly suspect what the evidence points to, is a culture of routine phone hacking by journalists working for The News of the World. I also think it unlikely that these activities are confined to the News of the World. However, much of the information I want to get to the bottom of should be reserved for Part 2 of the Inquiry.

Impact on me

22. As a journalist I am deeply unhappy that I had my phone hacked. I used my mobile phone for private as well as business calls and frequently received messages relating to both. It is highly likely that other categories of confidential information as well as those above were unlawfully intercepted, including financial, medical and legal information relating to my personal and professional life and those of my family, friends and associates. I feel that having my phone

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hacked is an absolute violation of my privacy and the privacy of my family. The actions of The News of the World has brought shame on the profession. I feel extremely strongly about this which is why I have decided to give this statement to the Inquiry.

Press Regulation

23. Whilst the conduct of some tabloid journalists has been appalling, I am concerned about the impact this will have on press regulation.
24. I have had experience of the current Press Complaints Commission (PCC) system going right back to its inception. In 1991 I was the first national newspaper journalist to be exonerated after a PCC inquiry. Having been on the receiving end of a malicious complaint I felt the PCC dealt with the complaint well.
25. I was also exonerated in two later PCC inquiries. In my experience, those bringing these actions seem sometimes motivated by pique and annoyance that their inefficiency, high handed actions and inflexibility of their organisations had been highlighted in the press or that their unwise decisions had been made the subject of public scrutiny.
26. Despite all of its failings, the current system of regulation does offer some benefits. Whilst there is certainly room for improvement, I believe that the PCC has played an important role and offers reasonable protection to journalists writing legitimate stories who are frequently forced to fight misconceived complaints.
27. I think that it is essential that we do not lose that protection and end up with a system where newspapers and journalists will have to spend an undue amount of time defending themselves from spurious complaints if they are to continue to write worthwhile pieces that are quite properly in the public interest.
28. We need to avoid the situation where the scales tip too heavily the other way and the industry is afforded no protection and are forced to only publish articles which stand up to intense scrutiny.
29. In my opinion, cases of abuse need to be dealt with firmly without providing a disincentive for publishing proper stories and investigations.

Statement of Truth

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

DATED the *Ninth* day of *November* 2011
~~October~~

SIGNED:

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Tom Rowland