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[ ] WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEVE TURNER  
ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

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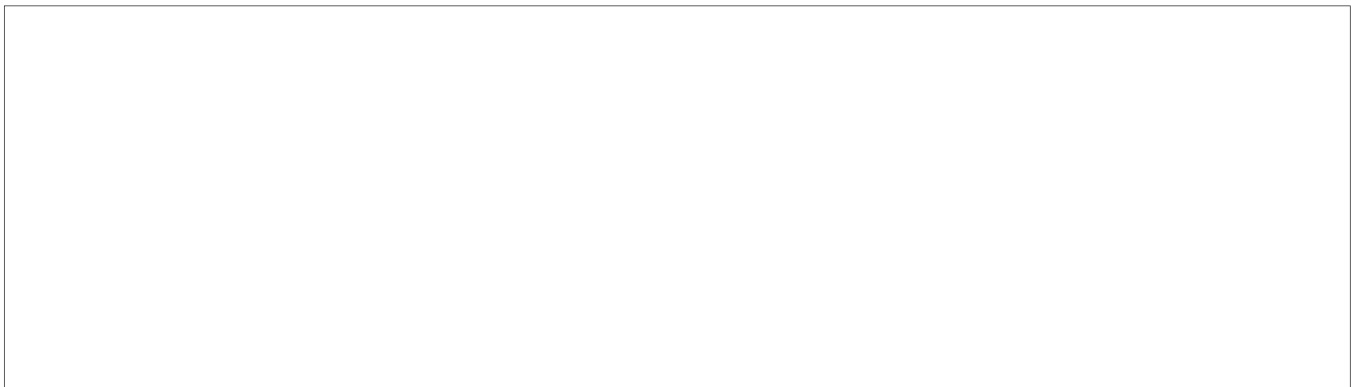
I, STEVE TURNER, General Secretary of the British Association of Journalists, 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH, WILL SAY as follows:

1. I have been General Secretary of the British Association of Journalists ("BAJ") since its inception in May 1992. My connection with Fleet Street newspapers as a journalist and a trade union official goes back a long way: **1969 to 1971:** News sub-editor Daily Mail in London. **1971 to 1990:** Journalist on the Daily Mirror in London. I was first of all a features sub-editor, then a feature writer responsible for the readers' letters column. During much of my time at the Daily Mirror, I was also the senior official for the National Union of Journalists at the Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror and The People. **1990 to 1992:** General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists.
2. BAJ has about 1,150 members. About 250 of our members work on national newspapers. BAJ has members on all of the tabloid titles and some of the broadsheet titles. The five members of the National Executive Committee – Bob Bayliss, Jean Carr, Andrew Golden, Crawford McAfee and Tony Stenson – are all former MGN journalists.
3. MGN is BAJ's main membership base. The union is recognised by MGN Ltd as entitled to conduct collective bargaining on behalf of all the journalists employed by the Defendant, excluding senior executives. BAJ gained recognition in October 2001 in an official ballot conducted by order of the Central Arbitration Committee.

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4. BAJ, a registered independent trade union, is a moderate organisation. Under our constitution, we seek harmonious relations with employers and favour arbitration instead of strike action as a means of settling differences in the workplace. We therefore have no axe to grind when we say that bullying and greed are at the heart of the phone-hacking and blagging scandal engulfing Fleet Street. This is our conclusion from being involved for many years on advising and representing a large number of journalists on most of the national newspapers.
5. From what I hear, reporters and writers have been forced into breaking the law for fear of being sacked or victimised if they did not co-operate. Various reporters who belong to BAJ have hinted to me since Clive Goodman of the News of the World was jailed in 2007 that they were aware of phone-hacking taking place on their own title and other titles. The reason given for journalists doing it was said to be the pressure to cut corners because of reduced editorial budgets and manpower. I must stress that the various reporters concerned have only hinted to me that they were aware of phone hacking. No-one has said to me that they hacked phones. No-one has said to me that they knew of other journalists who had actually done so other than BAJ member and sportswriter Matt Driscoll who suffered severe bullying and disability discrimination at the News of the World. He has publicly stated examples of incidents at the News of the World.
6. As I say, I do not have first-hand knowledge of phone-hacking or blagging, but I do know a lot about the consequences of bullying and corporate greed in Fleet Street.



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8. Newspaper groups were happy to plough profits back into the business until computers and Mrs Thatcher's anti-union laws ousted the printers in the Eighties. Then the profits became enormous and bosses became greedy for more.
9. Instead of spending the money on improving news-gathering and quality journalism, most of the media moguls kept the profits for themselves and their institutional shareholders.
10. The bosses then used the anti-union climate created by Mrs Thatcher to force individual contracts on journalists. Union power collapsed and wave upon wave of unwarranted redundancies followed in most offices.
11. At the same time, an explosion in television channels and leisure activities put pressure on newspaper circulations.
12. The crying shame is that the steady decline in circulations in Fleet Street, the provinces and magazines could have been slowed or even halted if the vast profits had gone into editorial operations instead of into bosses and shareholders' pockets and into ill-conceived takeovers.
13. Smaller editorial budgets followed. Journalists were put under pressure to gather news and conduct investigations more quickly and cheaply. Without the constraint of Union strength, the bullies came out of the woodwork.
14. Bullying executives could and can be found in many editorial departments, but none more so than in newsrooms and among Editors.
15. BAJ has received complaints about bullying executives in many Fleet Street and provincial offices over the years. Some of the perpetrators were promoted after complaints were made against them.
16. I have seen bullied staff leave with a meagre pay-off, having been required to sign a confidentiality agreement to stop the world knowing what happened, while the bullies remain employed and untouched.

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17. In this secretive, investment-starved environment, reporters and writers have been bullied into breaking the law to get stories on the cheap. Without strong Unions to turn to, individuals have been too scared to say No.
18. Nastiness flourishes because individuals cannot stand up to the bosses' superior power and there is insufficient independent, collective strength to combat it.
19. Journalists could have helped themselves more. Only a minority of journalists belong to a trade union in most offices.
20. At News International, Rupert Murdoch created change with a bang in 1986. Not only did he oust his printers in the battles of Wapping, he also set up the puppet News International Staff Association (NISA) to cover all staff and keep out the independent unions.
21. Murdoch wasn't mean on editorial budgets or staff terms and conditions, but he wanted a submissive workforce and the docile NISA helped him achieve it. Fertile ground for the growth of bullying executives.
22. The News of the World excelled in bullying and unpleasantness. Journalists whose faces did not fit, for whatever reason, faced trumped up disciplinary charges to force them out.
23. Most victims got the message quickly, sought a pay-off to tide them over, and departed with meagre compensation which was inadequate recompense for losing their careers.
24. Sports writer Matt Driscoll was one who faced trumped up disciplinary charges in 2006. Editor Andy Coulson took against Matt because he failed to stand up a minor story which Coulson had heard about.

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25. Matt got the message, too, but he was not prepared to be cast aside with meagre compensation. Unfortunately, the whole business drove him into a massive mental breakdown.
26. With BAJ's help, Matt eventually got compensation of £792,000, but no amount of money can compensate Matt for his years of mental agony.
27. Coulson orchestrated a plan to remove Matt from his job before and after he became ill. When Matt's mother rang the office to say Matt had collapsed, the then Deputy Editor Neil Wallis reported the news to Coulson.
28. Coulson emailed Wallis back: "Want him out as cheaply and quickly as possible."
29. It's hard to believe that anyone could be so callous towards a sick employee. How could David Cameron have appointed Coulson as his Communications Director?
30. The News of the World's foul behaviour towards Matt and others was aired in open court during Matt's tribunal case.
31. It's difficult to report openly other examples of bullying in Fleet Street because most affected members are understandably unwilling to speak up for fear of losing their jobs or being victimised. Others have been silenced by confidentiality clauses in termination agreements.
32. Listed anonymously below are other examples of nastiness by some of the people who may be questioned at the Inquiry:
33. A senior executive forced journalists to make up stories about young women to whom extraordinary things had supposedly happened. Pretty models were then hired and were portrayed and pictured in the articles as the amazing young women.
34. A senior executive refused to allow HR to organise a selection pool for two staffmen facing redundancy. Unlawfully, he told one journalist he was finished without following any legal procedures.

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35. A senior executive told a bullied reporter: "I don't want a story about a bent policeman. I want a story about a whole bent police force." The reporter later resigned to escape the unlawful harassment.
36. A senior executive forced staff to fabricate stories under threat of dismissal. They included stories about drug-dealing. Staff knew that his "special assignments" would not be difficult or dangerous because they were always fake.
37. A senior executive tried to frame a journalist with a false allegation that he'd sold information to another newspaper. The shameless executive was prepared to see the journalist's reputation ruined to avoid paying him money in lieu of notice.
38. The journalist had resigned and was willing to work out his notice, but the executive wanted him out quickly. With BAJ's help, the executive was forced to withdraw the untrue allegation and pay up.
39. A senior executive fabricated stories and/or bullied staff at four national newspapers.
40. A lot of Fleet Street bosses seem to think that bullying gets the best out of staff. It may appear to do so, but the consequences of allowing bullying executives to force journalists to cut corners are now being felt across Fleet Street. Bullying is, of course, unlawful.
41. Rupert Murdoch's opposition to independent unions appeared to work for him for 25 years. He had little trouble from NISA representatives and their members all that time, but, without any collective strength to temper the evil excesses of some executives, they brought down the News of the World.
42. Journalism is too important to democracy to be left to greedy media moguls and bullying executives. It is the Fourth Estate and protects the democratic values of the nation on behalf of the public.
43. Journalists therefore need special consideration in law if they are to carry out their duties objectively and fairly for the public good.

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44. Bullying should be made a criminal offence. Bullying hides wrong-doing, makes life miserable for victims and often drives them out of their well-paid job. It is usually worse than physical assault which is a criminal offence.
45. Confidentiality agreements should be outlawed in newspapers. Managements use confidentiality agreements to deny free speech to aggrieved staff when they leave with any pay-off. This secrecy allows malpractices to thrive.
46. Grievance complaints should be heard by an independent panel. My experience is that when a journalist raises a grievance against an executive, the internal hearing is conducted by another executive who invariably dismisses the complaint. Other staff are deterred from raising genuine grievances. Again misconduct remains hidden.
47. Newspapers and magazines should be owned by trusts so that all the profits are devoted to improving news-gathering and quality journalism within ethical guidelines.
48. Any journalist who is dismissed for alleged misconduct or alleged poor performance should have the right to seek interim relief in the employment tribunal. This would make it easier for journalists to bring legitimate grievances into the public arena.
49. The overwhelming majority of journalists are decent folk, wanting to serve the public interest honestly and zealously, and be paid a fair wage with decent conditions.
50. Journalists need the help of the law to enable them to operate as public watchdogs free of bullying executives and greedy managements.
51. I would request Lord Leveson and his Panel to enable journalists to come forward to give evidence in secret about the activities of bullying executives. The journalists to be given a guarantee of anonymity.

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52. I would also request Lord Leveson and his Panel to carry out a survey of newsroom journalists on all the national newspapers to ask them if they have been pressurised/bullied into carrying out unlawful or unethical practices. The responses to be anonymous. The newspaper groups can obviously supply the names and addresses of the relevant journalists.
52. Any evidence of wrongdoing from any anonymous witnesses or the survey could not, of course, be used against the perpetrators, but it would give the Panel an insight into the bullying behaviour which has forced journalists to cut corners in breach, at times, of ethical standards and the law.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed ..  ..

Dated: 24 November 2011