

G D Morgan
16 September 2011
1st
Exhibit: "GDM1"

IN THE MATTER OF THE LEVESON INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GARETH DYLAN MORGAN

I, **GARETH DYLAN MORGAN**, of Express Newspapers, The Northern & Shell Building, Number 10 Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6EN, **WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:**

- A. I am the editor of The Daily Star Sunday Newspaper. I make this statement in response to a request of the Leveson Inquiry (the "Inquiry") pursuant to a letter dated 8 August 2011. A copy of this letter can be found at pages 1- 4 of Exhibit "GDM1".
- B. I confirm that all matters in this statement are true and, unless I specify to the contrary, are based upon my own knowledge and a review of the relevant documents. Where matters are not within my own knowledge, I state the source and believe the same to be true.
- C. There is now produced and shown to me a paginated bundle of documents marked as Exhibit "GDM1". References to documents in this witness statement are references to documents in that exhibit.
- D. For convenience, I have reproduced as subheadings the questions asked of me in the 8 August letter.

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

1. In 1993 I completed a post graduate diploma in journalism at the University of Central Lancashire (as it is now known) in Preston. I started my career in media as a freelance journalist for the Mercury Press Agency based in Liverpool (1993 to 1994). In 1994 I joined the Daily Star as a casual shifter until I got a staff job on the News Desk. I stayed at the Daily Star until 1999 when I moved to the Sunday Mirror as a

reporter. I moved back to the Daily Star in 2000 to become its Showbiz Editor and Assistant Editor. In December 2003 I was promoted and became the Editor of the Daily Star Sunday.

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.

2. The checks and balances we have in place are as follows:
 - 2.1. I make it clear to all reporters the Daily Star Sunday that they must adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice [page 5]. All of the reporters are issued with a pocket sized copy of the Code of Practice to carry with them. Whenever it is updated I receive an envelope filled with wallet-sized copies of the revised code. I ensure that every member of staff gets the updated code.
 - 2.2. Express Newspapers has an internal staff handbook. This contains guidance on legal matters such as defamation as well as the PCC code of conduct (pages 6-34 of exhibit "GDM1").
 - 2.3. I have meetings with my reporters every day to discuss stories on the news list and their sources. For any story which is big enough to be a page lead I want to know exactly where the story came from. There are certain stories where it is obvious (e.g. a breaking story about the Norway shooting or the recent London riots) or it might be one which I need to flag up and ask questions about. I am very aware of my need to be on top of that and that is a daily check and balance undertaken by myself or my deputy if I am on holiday.
 - 2.4. Finally I have the support of our the newspapers' legal department who are on hand 24/7 for any queries that are raised. I revert to them with queries where I feel I am unable to deal with it either on my own or directly.
3. The Company withdrew from the PCC in January 2011. I was not party to that decision, which was made at director level. I understand that the decision was taken because the PCC was not considered to be delivering on its stated aims and policies. Even though the company has withdrawn from the PCC, we still abide by the Editors'

Code of Practice (as I have stated above). In addition, we have established a panel to deal with any reader complaints which the company might receive. This panel is chaired by Paul Ashford, the Group Editorial Director and it comprises the Editors of all the group's newspapers and the magazines and the Legal Department. The panel meets on an ad hoc basis as and when there are any complaints.

4. It might be useful for the Inquiry to understand the standard flow of work during the week for a Sunday newspaper which is different from a daily newspaper. On Tuesdays I have a meeting with all the reporters and news editors to discuss what stories we are going to work on that week. The purpose of the meeting is to formulate ideas. At that meeting a list of potential stories is drawn up and people are dispatched to knock on doors, speak to news agencies and investigate those stories. The journalist will work on the stories allocated to him at the Tuesday "ideas meeting", unless he is diverted to breaking story that comes in during the course of the week (such as the Norway shooting or the London riots).
5. By Wednesday morning, backbench (e.g. the night editor) become involved. The night editor will be given a list of stories by Wednesday morning some of which will and some of which won't make it to the weekend edition. The night editor will put together a flat plan; features stories (films etc) will be done early in the week. Then we will work on the general features pages. As the weekend gets nearer we have more of an idea of our exclusives, how they are shaping up, and of our breaking stories.
6. On Saturday the work becomes more like a daily paper. We know which are our breaking stories and which are our exclusives. We go through the flat plan and finalise the layout of the paper.
7. Throughout the week I am in constant discussion and meetings with my staff about the content and layout of the next edition of the paper.
8. There is no formal induction process when a reporter joins the newspapers in order to make him/her aware of the newspaper's policies and practices. However, anyone who joins the newspaper's reporting team will first have an interview with the news editor at which the practices and policies will be made known to them. They will also be reminded of the practices and policies when they start work and throughout their time working on the newspaper. Furthermore, given the relatively small size of our

reporting team, it is easy to remind reporters of the practices and policies from time to time as well and give the team any updates to our working practices.

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.

9. I am responsible for The Daily Star Sunday. We are a very small team. There are approximately 20 full time staff, a similar number of long-term regular casuals, and we have a bank of 12 freelancers we use. The freelancers, of course, work for every paper which will pay them. I am pretty much in daily contact with my team.
10. If I consider there to be a legal issue with a particular story or when it might amount to a breach of the Code of Practice, I refer it to our in-house legal team.
11. I have two main priorities when considering the publication of any story:
 - 11.1. The reputation of newspaper. I want good stories, sourced properly; and
 - 11.2. The Welfare of my staff. I do not want my staff exposed them to anything that might leave them in exposed to disciplinary or legal proceedings or criticism from the public.

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

12. I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, all policies referred to above are adhered to in practice.

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.

13. The checks and balances are the same as they have always been to my knowledge and practice. They have proven effective and so have not changed.

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).

14. A reporter is, in the first instance, the originator of a story, unless it is dispatched by a news editor. The reporter is the person on the ground who knows what happens. He relays to the news editor, who relays to me. If I need to relay, I relay to the in-house legal team, and if they need to relay, they relay to external counsel. In addition, our in-house legal team reads every story before it goes into the paper. That is the direct line mandate. We move backwards and forwards down that line as necessary. That is the effective check and balance. I also generally see the reporter later in the week to talk through his story.

15. By way of an example of how the checks and balances have worked in practice in the 14 August 2011 edition of the Daily Star Sunday we had a story in the sports section about a speedway rider where there was some scandal about him tinkering with the engines in some way. The article said that he was let off on a "technicality". It was not a major story, just 2 to 3 paragraphs and it was not therefore something that would have been discussed in the editorial conference. I had assumed that the journalist writing about speedway knew what he was talking about and was correct. The lawyer saw the story first, in line with the requirement that every story is checked by the lawyers prior to publication. The lawyer picked up on the word "technicality" and asked me to check the paragraphs. As a result, several pairs of eyes looked at it. It was picked up by the lawyer, relayed to me, I relayed to the relevant news editor, in this case sports editor, who checked the accuracy of the wording and reported back to me. The wording was correct and the paragraphs did stack up.

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).

16. As editor, I believe that I should be aware of the sources of information for the central stories featured in our newspaper. It is physically impossible for me to individually check the source of every word in the newspaper. I concentrate my energies therefore on the central stories which I consider to be the page lead, and the decent length stories running in the paper. Those central stories are discussed all week up

to print. I would also add that stories which are not "central stories" are checked by a senior executive other than myself e.g the News Editor or Sports Editor.

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.

17. I consider that ethics are a very important part of journalism and print media. We have spent years building up the trust of our readers. In addition, in the Daily Star Sunday we regularly write about the same people and so there is also a need to build up a level of trust with those you are writing about. Ethics are very important for us to build and maintain that trust.

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).

18. I have never felt pressured into publishing or not publishing anything, whether commercially or financially.

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).

19. I have never received any financial incentive to print an exclusive story. I am paid a salary. I am not paid a bonus and there is no incentive scheme. I do not stand to gain anything financially by running a particular story.
20. The only incentive I have is professional pride. That is what motivates most journalists. We want to be associated with a good paper and good 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).

21. The newspaper sometimes uses search agencies in order to find and verify addresses more rapidly than we could ourselves. This is to assist a reporter in obtaining an address of a potential source quickly so that the reporter can then visit and interview that source. The three agencies that we use on occasions are:

21.1. Search Line;

21.2. System Searches; and

21.3. Longmere Consultants.

22. I have used Search Line and System Searches in the past when I worked as an on the road reporter. Longmere Consultants were recommended by my Assistant News Editor, Jonathan Corke. We use those three, same agencies because they are reputable and trustworthy.

23. So far as I am aware, we have not and do not obtain information or source stories from the police, public officials, mobile phone companies or similar. If anyone had done so the cost would have to have been declared by them if they wanted to claim the cost back from the newspapers, and it would immediately be flagged up. I am not aware of any such claims.

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.

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).

24. For conveniences, I deal with questions 12 and 13 together. As set out at question 11 above, the only external sources of information are search agencies in respect of

addresses. I do not know what they cost, however it is usually a relatively small amount.

25. The only person I allow to instruct the search agencies is the Daily Star Sunday Assistant News Editor, Jonathan Corke. A junior is not able to undertake those searches. I speak to Mr Corke on a regular basis to make sure that if we are instructing a search agency, we are doing the right thing.
26. The agencies submit an invoice and they get paid by the finance department.

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.

27. As far as I am aware, the protocol which I have described above is always followed in practice.

Question 15: Whether there are any situations 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.

28. The protocol has been in place since day one. My management style has not changed. However, I am always happy to review that. If it was shown that we have a hole then I would be happy to close it up. As far as I am aware we have, and have always had the right measures in place.

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.

29. I am fully aware of our internal protocols if we buy an exclusive from a freelance agent/member of public.

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.

30. We adhere strictly to the Editors' Code of Practice with regard to payments to individuals. In the Daily Star Sunday payments are mainly made to celebrities for stories or photographs. These are the high end stories. Money does not tend to change hands for low-end stories; journalists don't pay anyone cash for stories and do not have access to any cash to do so. Those stories are done on leg work alone. If a high-end story warrants a payment to a "celebrity", it is referred to our in-house legal team for them to draft and agree a contract with the "celebrity" in question. Payments are then made through the accounts department via the Managing Editors Office which is the pivot between accounts and editorial.

Question 18: In respect of editorial decisions you have made to publish stories, the factors you have taken into account in balance the private interests of individuals (including the fact that information may have been obtained from paid sources in the circumstances outlined under question 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.

31. The balance between the private interests of individuals against the public interest is a weekly balancing act. That question comes up more often because of pictures coming into the paper. In my view, the tools that we have as journalists to assess that balance are not good enough. The Regulations and guidelines are vague in terms of setting down any ground rules for balancing the interest of the individual against the public interest. Essentially it comes down to a personal decision.
32. By way of an example, an agency tried to sell us a photograph of David Beckham on a beach. I needed to assess whether that beach was a public or private space before I could determine whether the photograph could be published without any complaints about invasion of privacy. I went back to photo agency to ask if it was public beach. I was not satisfied with their response. I therefore telephoned David Beckham's agent on a Saturday afternoon to ask him directly. I was told that the photograph was taken whilst David was on a private beach and I therefore decided not to use the photograph.
33. If I am unhappy with an answer I get from a freelance then we pull the picture.

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.

34. I confirm that neither I, nor to the best of my knowledge The Daily Star Sunday, have ever used or commissioned anyone who used computer hacking in order to source stories or for any other reason.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe that the facts stated in this Witness Statement are true.

GARETH DYLAN MORGAN

16 September 2011