

IN THE MATTER OF:

AN INQUIRY UNDER THE INQUIRIES ACT 2005

INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND ETHICS OF THE PRESS

CHAired BY THE RT HON LORD JUSTICE LEVESON

WITNESS STATEMENT OF RYAN LEE PARRY

I, **RYAN LEE PARRY**, of One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP **WILL SAY** as follows:

1. I am making this statement in response to a notice dated 6 December 2011 pursuant to section 21(2) of the Inquiries Act 2005 (the 'Notice') addressed to me at the Daily Mirror. A copy of the Notice is annexed hereto at pages 1-4 of Exhibit RLP-1, which contains copies of the documents to which I refer in this statement.
2. The Notice sets out six specific matters or issues on which I am asked to give evidence. I respond to each of these matters below, having first set out some background by way of introduction.
3. Where the contents of this statement are within my own knowledge they are true and where the contents are not within my own knowledge I indicate the source of my belief and believe them to be true.
4. I am not authorised to waive any privilege on behalf of Trinity Mirror and nothing in this statement is intended to constitute a waiver of privilege on behalf of Trinity Mirror.

Background

5. I am a staff journalist with the Daily Mirror and have been for more than ten years, after being accepted on the graduate training scheme in 2000. I have worked in the features and news departments at the paper's Canary Wharf office as well as undertaking a two year posting to America as the newspaper's US Correspondent between 2005-2007.
6. On the evening of 27 December 2010 I received a call from the night editor on the Daily Mirror Content Desk asking me to travel to Bristol the following day to cover the death of Jo Yeates. On 28 December, I drove from my home in London and arrived in Bristol around 9am where I met up with the Daily Mirror's district reporter Richard Smith, who covers the south west of England for the newspaper.
7. Richard and I filed various stories to the Content Desk in the following days and weeks, generally working together as a team on different angles and lines of inquiry. We split our time between Jo Yeates' flat on Canynge Road, Clifton, the Avon and Somerset police headquarters in Bristol where press conferences were held and at various other locations depending on what story angle we were working on.

8. During this time there was a strong media presence in Bristol, with representatives from all other national newspapers, local newspapers, press agencies, broadcasting companies, freelance reporters and so on.
9. Once news of Mr Jefferies' arrest broke during the morning of 30 December 2010, I recall having a lengthy conversation with the Daily Mirror's Head of Content, Chris Bucktin. His instructions were for my colleague Richard Smith and I to find out as much as possible about Mr Jefferies. This was not an unusual request. As with any murder or crime story, we would try to find out more on any suspect or individual who has been arrested in connection with a crime, either for immediate publication or for use as background material in the future: for example as background to be published after a trial if the case got to that point.
10. As a journalist, I aim to compile a full history of the person I have been asked to look at in as much detail as possible, from as many sources as possible. This would include the person's full background, his family, friends, colleagues, work place, hobbies, previous jobs, previous relationships and so on. The aim is to produce a full picture of the individual and to find interesting stories for use in the newspaper.
11. Throughout the time I was covering the Jo Yeates' story in Bristol, there was a constant dialogue with the Content Desk who were providing possible lines of inquiry from their own research or from information provided by members of the public, as well as providing direction on what I should focus my time on. I would also update the Content Desk as to what new information I had discovered.
- (1) **Your attention is drawn to articles published in *The Daily Mirror* on 31st December 2010 and 1st January 2011 in relation to Mr Christopher Jefferies, and which were later the subject of libel and contempt of court proceedings. Insofar as these articles contain assertions of fact, please set out, without naming individual sources, from where the evidence allegedly supporting such assertions came. In particular, stating: (a) whether such evidence came from the police (if so, when, and in general terms by what means); (b) the nature of the investigations and inquiries you carried out; and (c) whether such investigations and inquiries entailed contacting Mr Jefferies' former pupils (if so, setting out how many, providing the gist of what they said, and supplying your notes of any relevant conversations, redacting them to protect sources as appropriate).**

12. In order to assist the Inquiry, I have added additional details about how the story took shape from my perspective as the investigation progressed. The first matter is broken down by article.

The articles published on 31 December 2010:

13. During the course of 30 December 2010, the Daily Mirror received several telephone calls and emails into the London office from people claiming to be former pupils or colleagues of Mr Jefferies. I was sent some of this correspondence. Some of it was complimentary of Mr Jefferies and some was not, however on the whole words such as "*odd*", "*eccentric*" and "*strange*" were prevalent. Former pupils recalled a teacher with wild, blue hair and long finger-nails who was extremely intelligent and very well read but very much eccentric. Neighbours, speaking on condition of anonymity, held a similar range of views, with some calling him "*arrogant and rude*". The accounts of these people came to us from several different sources, including reporters in London, news agencies, social networking sites, etc.
14. We also had a reporter in the office gathering information from Twitter and again many of the comments described Mr Jefferies as "*odd*". In conversations with other members of the press on the ground in Bristol, all of whom were carrying out similar inquiries on Mr Jefferies; I discovered that they were also getting a general impression that gelled with the information I was getting.
15. Later that same day, I was informed by the Content Desk that a former tenant of Mr Jefferies, who used to live in the flat next door to Jo Yeates', had called into the Daily Mirror to offer information about their former landlord. The call was passed on to a reporter working out of our Canary Wharf office called Greig Box Turnbull. As far as I am aware, Greig interviewed the caller and gained a news story claiming that Mr Jefferies was "*strange*" and used to peer intrusively in through the windows of the flat the tenants lived in. I did not speak to the caller or contribute to this element of the story.
16. Towards the end of the day, when it came to filing our news copy to the Content Desk, Greig was asked by the Content Desk to send Richard Smith and I his exclusive story by email. In conversation with Head of Content, Chris Bucktin, it was agreed that Richard was to pull together a news spread of around 1200 words using Greig's material as the main thrust of the copy and to add any other relevant material he had. As the reporters on the ground it was our task to pull together all the material on the day, rather than reporters working from the London office. This particular article was published on pages 1, 4 and 5;

the front page headline being *'Jo Suspect is Peeping Tom'*. The byline was Greig Box Turnbull on the front and Greig Box Turnbull and Richard Smith inside: my name did not appear.

17. Although I did contribute in part to the article, my contribution was minimal and the Daily Mirror has a policy not to use more than two bylines on each story. My contribution was in the form of additional quotes which I emailed to Richard. These were the quotes from a man (Oliver Cullen) who used to own some flats in the same block as Mr Jefferies, which appeared as part of the published article the next day. The man now lived a short walk away and spoke in defence of Mr Jefferies. Mr Cullen's quotes had been given to me by a reporter on another national newspaper who pooled (shared) the quotes with myself and others.
18. The reason for this exchange is that several reporters, including myself, had converged on the gentleman's doorstep and rather than overwhelm and upset him, the reporter first to the door agreed to pool the quotes later with the rest of the press. Later in the day I provided separate material to the same reporter to avoid a similar situation. During a fast breaking news story, reporters on the ground (the majority of whom have known each other for years and therefore have a relationship of trust) will sometimes cooperate with each other and share small pieces of information, especially if it means lessening the impact of a large media presence on people who live locally. Clifton is a nice area and the local community was shocked and very upset by the death of Jo Yeates.
19. The article dated 31 December 2010 that I was primarily responsible for compiling was the background article published on pages 6-7 titled "*The Nutty Professor*". In compiling the background article on Mr Jefferies I initially did extensive internet research on him and the school where he works, searching official websites (such as that of his former school, Clifton College, and The Redgrave Theatre in Bristol, to which Mr Jefferies had links) as well as many social networking sites for names of former pupils and teachers. Where possible I tried to track down and speak directly to individuals who had posted messages on these sites.
20. From memory, I believe that the Content Desk conducted the family tree searches on Mr Jefferies, in order to locate family members and their contact details. The searches had limited results, but it was discovered that Mr Jefferies had been raised as a child in Sandbach in Cheshire in the 1950s. The Content Desk commissioned an experienced former Daily Mirror journalist, Patrick Mulchrone (now working freelance in the north of

England) to go to the addresses found. During the day he spoke to a former neighbour of Mr Jefferies who had extensive knowledge of his childhood and his family. At this point reporters up and down the country - staff and freelance agencies - were out visiting addresses associated with Mr Jefferies. Patrick Mulchrone's copy was emailed to me and was incorporated into my article. Among the quotes was the line: *"He was a strange boy. Quiet, but restless."*

21. I believe that the term "nutty professor" appeared in quotes in some of the copy filed over the news wire service and also appeared on the Daily Mail's website and other news sites. Regardless, this description was written into the copy as it fitted into information Richard and I had received from several sources, including neighbours, colleagues and former pupils, who had described Mr Jefferies as a character with unusually high levels of intelligence and an abrupt manner.
22. I spoke directly to a next door neighbour of Mr Jefferies (Peter Stanley) who gave me quotes used in the published article. During the course of the day I obtained a list of members of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, which Mr Jefferies was a member of. I contacted many of them over the telephone: some confirmed elements of information but did not provide any useable quotes. One person, who asked not to be named, told me: *"He (Mr Jefferies) could be quite forceful in meetings and would do 95% of the talking. He was a dominant character"* and that quote is included in the published article.
23. My colleague Richard Smith also sent me various emails with material from his own inquiries. One email contained quotes from former pupils who had posted memories of Mr Jefferies on a social networking site. In another man's posting he said Chris Jefferies was "weird", "odd" and said he and other students thought he was "gay" because of his behaviour in class. Although these quotes were not used directly, a flavour of the content was used: *"...his eccentric manner and long-term bachelor status sparked unfounded school gossip that he was gay."* The only quotes from the same unnamed source which were used in the published article were: *"He was a stickler for discipline and was very traditional. He used to get very angry and shout and throw books and pens across the room."*
24. In quotes from an unnamed neighbour, sent to me by another newspaper journalist but not used in the published copy, the female neighbour said: *"...everyone thought he was gay."* With a neighbour and a former pupil both indicating a belief Mr Jefferies might be homosexual due to his behaviour, I decided this was enough to at least refer to the fact

there was gossip around the subject, although the article states that it was "*unfounded school gossip*". This was included to provide a flavour of the man and what people thought of him.

25. I recall personally speaking with a few of Mr Jefferies' former pupils, although I do not now recall exactly how many and I have not been able to locate any notes from those conversations, apart from those of my conversation with James Austin referred to in paragraph 33 below (and attached at page 5 of Exhibit RLP-1). This is because I would be likely to have recorded the conversations I had with those individuals, in order to record their quotes accurately, however those recordings have now been lost (because they were contained on the dictaphone I was using at the time, which I lost towards the beginning of last year).
26. We also received various testimonies from pupils and former staff via trusted news agencies, many of which never made the newspaper. The Mercury wire service the Daily Mirror uses does not hold agency articles for very long so I have not now been able to re-locate these. As to the named quotes included in the published article:
 - 26.1. Quotes from former pupil Henry Pryor, a company director, which began: "*He was a colourful character...*" were sent to me by Greig Box Turnbull. I cannot be sure where he got these quotes from, but I do know he was making separate inquiries on Mr Jefferies from the Daily Mirror's London office and fielding some calls from former pupils.
 - 26.2. As to the quotes from former pupil Jeremy Wayne, a restaurant critic, who said Mr Jefferies was known as "CJ-EJ", I do not recall where this individual's quotes came from, although I imagine they were again sourced from the news wires. I was also forwarded an email by Krissy Storrar, who sits on the Daily Mirror Content Desk, from another former pupil at Clifton College who also referred to Mr Jefferies as "CJ-EJ".
 - 26.3. I spoke to the former history master at the school where Mr Jefferies worked, Richard Bland, who was quoted extensively, over the telephone and obtained his quotes myself.
27. Towards the end of the published article there are quotes from a Clifton shopkeeper and a named man (Mr Girvan) who said he met Mr Jefferies 48 hours after Jo Yeates vanished.

Both these sets of quotes were supplied by Richard Smith (who I believe had spoken to each of these individuals himself).

The article published on 1 January 2011:

28. On the morning of December 31, a freelance photographer had taken photographs of detectives removing three evidence bags from Jo Yeates' flat. From memory the pictures were circulated to the picture desks of all the national newspapers. On the items, labels detailed what was in the bags (information that was included in the published article) and gave an indication of where the police were searching for DNA in the flat.
29. During one of the early police press conferences we had been given guidance that there was no sign of a break in and given that police were removing items from the bedroom and hallway one theory we decided to explore was whether Jo's killer had been lying in wait in her flat. In a telephone conversation with the Avon and Somerset police press office (made by either Richard Smith or me, I do not now recall which) it was confirmed that this was indeed a line of inquiry and that at this point they were not ruling anything out. This helped firm up the line and the published article was based around this theory.
30. In the published article there is a chunk of text regarding detectives entering the house next door to where Jo Yeates lived. I believe this material was taken from local news agency South West News. Richard Smith, as the regional reporter, had commissioned South West News to file to us and they had a reporter posted on Canynge Road around the clock to watch for any activity near Jo Yeates' flat.
31. I cannot recall where the quotes from the tenant of the neighbour (Laurence Penney) came from, although again I believe it would probably have been from the agency posted at the address.
32. The detail regarding Mr Jefferies, at the end of the article on Pages 4 and 5 (under the sub-heading "Peculiar"), was partly taken from the article I wrote on him published in the previous day's Daily Mirror and from material sourced from news agencies. Again, I cannot trace this original copy because the Mercury newswire system does not hold it for very long.
33. In the published article a former pupil of Mr Jefferies, who was in his English class in the 1990s (James Austin) is quoted extensively. The man had called the Daily Mirror Content Desk and his phone number was emailed to me by Deputy Head of Content at the Mirror, Shiraz Lilani. I attach an email containing my notes/the full extent of this individual's

quotes at page 5 of Exhibit RLP-1 (from which the email addresses and my telephone number have been redacted), some of which were included in the article. I recall that Mr Austin was more than happy to be identified in the article at the time.

34. From memory the published article that appeared on January 1, 2011 was a joint effort between Richard Smith and me. My byline appeared on the front page and a picture byline for Richard appeared on the inside story on pages 4 and 5.

(2) State the nature of the steps, if any, you took to verify the accuracy of any information you received.

35. I have set out in some detail the source of each of the pieces of information contained in the articles, to the best of my knowledge.

36. So far as the sources that I spoke to directly (former tenants, former pupils and neighbours) are concerned, I questioned them about the information in order to verify its accuracy and had no reason to believe it was inaccurate. So far as the sources who spoke to each of my fellow reporters (either at the Daily Mirror or for other newspapers) are concerned, I believe that they would have undertaken the same questioning process as me in order to extract and verify the accuracy of this information. There is of course an element of trust in all of this, however all of the information appeared to me to have been provided in good faith. As far as I am aware, none of the sources requested or received payment for the information they provided and I had no reason to believe that any of the sources had any ulterior motive which would prompt them to provide inaccurate information. To the best of my knowledge, no complaints were made to the newspaper by those who provided the quotes that were used in the published articles (including those who were named), either on the basis that they were inaccurate or otherwise.

37. As to the information from the newswires and the other publicly available information (taken from the internet and other public sources) or from the police, again I had no reason to believe that any of this was inaccurate. Furthermore, as detailed above, a number of pieces of information (such as those referred to in paragraphs 13-14 and 23-24 above) were repeated in a number of different sources. The general tenor of the information taken as a whole (once collated, a process which is overseen by the Content Desk) was used to verify and cross-check accuracy before it was published.

(3) State the nature of the discussions, if any, which took place between you and the sub-editor and/or editor in relation to the foregoing matters.

38. As detailed above, there was a continuous dialogue throughout between myself and the Content Desk. This is the standard approach in relation to the production of a news story. I would very rarely have a direct discussion with either the Sub-Editor or the Editor himself about a particular source or piece of information – any information requested I provided to the Content Desk, who would then have had discussions with the Editor.

(4) What legal advice, if any, was taken in relation to any of the foregoing matters; and if you are prepared to waive privilege, what was the nature of that advice?

39. I believe that legal advice was taken, however I am not authorised to or prepared to waive any privilege on behalf of Trinity Mirror by providing any further information about that advice. I did not take any legal advice myself.

(5) What consideration, if any, was given to the Editors Code?

40. I am fully aware of the provisions of the Editors' Code of Practice (the "PCC Code") and seek to abide by it at all times. As a reporter, the provisions of the PCC Code that are particularly relevant in my day-to-day work, including the reporting of this particular story, are those that relate to the gathering of factual information: such as those provisions relating to privacy, harassment and accuracy. I believe that in compiling this article I operated well within the PCC Code. All reporters at the Daily Mirror are, in my experience, professional and extremely diligent in news gathering and are careful not to breach the PCC Code. I should also add that the decision as to whether or not to publish particular material rests with the Editor, rather than with me. The Editor will himself therefore have regard to these and other provisions of the PCC Code when making decisions about publication.

(6) What consideration, if any, was given by you to public interest issues?

41. I believe that it is in the public interest for members of the public to be kept informed about ongoing police investigations, including the fact that an arrest has been made and the identity of the individual that has been arrested. In the case of an individual who has been arrested on suspicion of murder, as was the case here, I believed at the time and believe now that the public had a genuine interest in being informed as to what kind of person that individual was. This was a very high profile case, reported extensively in a number of different media (newspapers, TV and on the internet): there was a public interest in reading about the story, including about Mr. Jefferies.

Documents

42. I note that the Inquiry requests documents in my custody or control that relating to these matters. In addition to the documents referred to above, I have produced at pages 6 to 47 of Exhibit RLP-1 copies of other notes and emails that I have been able to locate relating to the information contained in articles of 31 December 2010 and 1 January 2011 that I have been asked about by the Inquiry. I have redacted names and/or contact details contained in these documents in order to protect sources, where necessary.

Signed.

A rectangular box with a thin black border, used to redact the signature of the author.

Ryan Lee Parry

Dated: 13 January 2012