

The Leveson Inquiry

Witness Statement of Martin Clarke

Background

1. My full name is Martin Peter Clarke. I have been in charge of Mail Online editorial since 2006. I was appointed Publisher in 2010.
2. The purpose of this witness statement is to respond to the S.21 Notice dated 5th July 2012.
3. I have read and agree with the Witness Statement of Paul Dacre to the Inquiry dated 18 July 2012 which addresses the Inquiry's questions about the following articles which were first published by the Daily Mail newspaper and subsequently uploaded overnight on to Mail Online:
 - a. Article dated 12 November 2010 regarding the riot at 30 Millbank
 - b. Articles dated 25 November 2010: "Rage of the girl rioters" and "Young, bright and pretty: The day girl students went to war over tuition fees... and the pupils who just wanted a photo for Facebook"
 - c. Article dated 20 February 2012: "The boy of five living as a girl..."
4. In addition, the Inquiry refer to two articles which were published by Mail Online, and not the Daily Mail newspaper. I am asked to explain why the stories were chosen for publication; why the contents of the articles were considered appropriate; and how [you] consider the articles comply with the Editors' Code of Practice".

(1) Horror as Tourist climbs to the top of the Eiffel Tower and then jumps to his death (25 June 2012)

5. The Inquiry state: *"The story included video footage of the man in question jumping from the Eiffel Tower. The article has since been taken down and a link to a screenshot of the article is available below.*

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/staggers/2012/06/mail-online-illustrates-eiffel-towersuicide-story-video-0> "

6. The first point to make is that the story did not include video footage of the man in question jumping from the Eiffel Tower, and secondly the article has not been taken down.
7. We take care to observe the Editor's Code and PCC guidance in reporting suicides. The New Statesman article which the Inquiry have linked to appears to have been misunderstood by the Inquiry team. A classic hundred year old Pathe newsreel clip from 1912 known as 'The Flying Tailor' was published. The film depicts Franz Reichelt, a tailor and inventor, who died by jumping off the Eiffel Tower testing a parachute suit of his own design. The newsreel has been published in the past but it has been taken down.
8. I trust that the Inquiry is not questioning the ability of the media to report suicide attempts, which is not prohibited by either the Code of Practice or the law providing the guidance issued by the PCC is observed, as it was in this case. Having reviewed other press coverage of this story (copies are attached to this witness statement) I do not

consider the detail included in our coverage or interpretation of the PCC's guidance to be inconsistent with others. For example, The Telegraph, Guardian, HuffPo, Times, Mirror and Sun all reported the police briefing that he had jumped from between the second and third levels; The Guardian and HuffPo reported that it was the first suicide for 2 years and The Times that they occurred "quite frequently"; The Telegraph, Mirror and Sun reported that the woman's attempt had been averted and that she had been rescued by helicopter; The Guardian reported where he landed and The Telegraph reported the manner in which he jumped.

(2) Article dated 26 June 2012: Racism is hardwired into the Brain

9. The Inquiry state: *"This article originally published in the Daily Mail claimed that research conducted by scientists at New York University has proven that racism is "hardwired" into the brain and that responses to different ethnicities are "unconscious".*

The interpretation of the research put forward in the Daily Mail article has been rebutted in terms in a letter to the Guardian newspaper by the team of scientists at New York University who conducted that research. Further, Dr Elizabeth Phelps, the lead researcher who is cited in the Daily Mail article, has made clear in that letter that the Daily Mail did not contact the researchers for comment, but rather quoted selectively from the press release announcing the findings of the research. Dr Phelps et al describe the interpretation of the research put forward by the Mail, and in particular the use of words like "hardwired" as "irresponsible".

Links to the article in the Mail Online, the letter to the Guardian and the Guardian article by Richard Seymour referred to in that letter are below:-

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2164844/Racism-hardwired-human-brain--people-racists-knowing-it.html> “

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/02/mail-race-nature-neuroscience?newsfeed=true>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/27/what-racism-hardwired-headlinedaily.mail>”

10. In raising this query, the Inquiry rely on the Guardian article linked to above, written by Richard Seymour under the hostile and misleading headline “What this ‘racism is hardwired’ story says about the Daily Mail...The misuse of science to support the idea that racism is inevitable forms a persistent, low drumbeat on the right”.

The focus of the complaint appears to be the use of the phrase “hardwired” for which Mail Online are criticised.

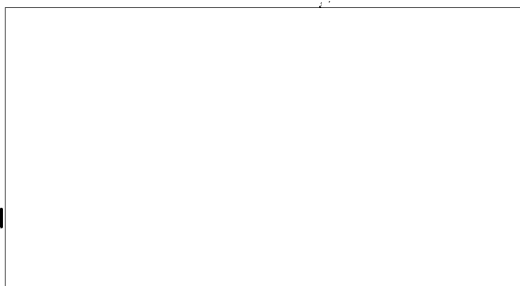
The article, including the headline, was written from agency copy provided by a very reputable news agency, National News. A copy of the embargoed release is attached to this witness statement. The Inquiry will note that the copy from National News begins, “Racism is hardwired into the brain, say scientists”.

I also attach a copy of the report published by Medical Daily under the headline “Racism is Innate: The Human Brain Makes Unconscious Decisions Based on Ethnicity. Racism is hardwired into the brain and operates unconsciously because areas that detect ethnicity and control emotion are closely connected, according to scientists ”.(Emphasis added).

Mail Online has not received a complaint from either the researchers or from Nature Neuroscience about the article. Mail Online were unable to contact the researchers because of the time difference, but, in any event, the copy provided by National

News speaks for itself. In these circumstances, it is not clear why the Inquiry believe that a justification in relation to the Code of Practice is necessary.

Signed



Dated

..... 18/7/12