

R. Nixon
Second

In the matter of the Leveson Inquiry, an inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT
OF ROSIE NIXON

I, ROSIE NIXON of Hello! magazine, Wellington House, 69-71 Upper Ground, London, SE1 9PQ WILL SAY as follows:-

1. Except where stated otherwise, the matters contained in this statement are within my own knowledge and belief and are described to the best of my recollection.
2. I am joint Editor of Hello!, the weekly lifestyle glossy magazine, sharing the position with my colleague Ruth Sullivan. I have held editorial positions for magazines including Grazia, Glamour and Red, for the majority of my career. In April 2008 I joined Hello! as Assistant Editor (Features) and in November 2010, I was made an Editor.
3. I make this second statement, on behalf of myself, my joint Editor and our Editor-in-Chief Eduardo Sanchez Perez, in response to the Notice under Section 21(2) of the Inquiries Act 2005 as contained in the letter addressed to me of 29 June 2012. I also refer to my first statement given in this matter. I now address the issues set out in the letter, using the same numbering.

(2) To what extent were you personally involved in drawing up this proposal for a new system of self-regulation based on contractual obligations, as now set out by Lord Black?

4. I was not involved in drawing up the proposal under consideration and I was not contacted with regard to this to the best of my knowledge. However, I have spoken to the PPA and am aware that the PPA is a member of the Press Standards Board of Finance of which Lord Black is Chairman.

(3) How far would you personally, in your capacity as editor, expect to be involved in the decision as to whether your publication signed up to the contractual obligations envisaged by this system? Please explain how that decision would be taken.

5. Alongside my joint editor, I liaise on an almost daily basis with our Editor-in-Chief, Eduardo Sanchez Perez who is based in Madrid. In our frequent conversations we discuss all issues relating to the content of our magazine. These include from time to time issues relating to compliance with the requirements of our industry's regulator and its Code of Practice. Presently this is the PCC, of which Hello! is a member. We take our membership and compliance with its Code seriously. I will, accordingly, be fully involved in consideration of any new system of regulation, including the proposal in Lord Black's Third Witness statement and its annexes, that publishers who become members of the new regulator be legally bound by contract to its terms. We will give careful consideration to detailed proposals, when they are made available to us, and reach a joint decision as to whether Hello! magazine is willing and able to sign up, based upon the professional, commercial and ethical advantages and disadvantages of doing so.

(4) In so far as you are able to do so, please indicate whether your publication is at present fully ready and committed to enter into these contractual obligations. If it is not at present fully ready and committed, please explain why, and detail any changes that would need to be made to the proposal, any further development to the proposal required, or any preparatory steps that would need to be taken at your publication, in order to put it in the position of being fully ready and committed to enter into these obligations. If there are no circumstances in which it would be prepared to enter into obligations of this nature, please explain why not.

6. We are very supportive of the overall shape of the new self-regulatory system as set out by Lord Black. However, to make a final decision as to whether Hello! magazine is ready to enter such contractual obligations, we would need the system to be fully defined and fleshed out.

7. We refer to the proposed "Incentives to join" as set out in paragraphs 65 to 69 of Lord Black's statement. The first two – provision of press cards and the restriction on provision of Press Association copy to members only – appear

to be attractive incentives to join. We are not, however, presently persuaded that a system of kite marking (paragraph 68) would necessarily be a real incentive since it appears to rely on the unlikely assumption that readers of magazines will prefer to buy those magazines which bear the kite mark. Whereas kite-marking may be effective where, for example, the physical safety of the consumer is in issue, this would not apply to magazines or websites in our sector of the market. This similarly applies to the suggested incentive (paragraph 69) that major advertisers should require membership as a condition of advertising in publications. We understand the commercial clout which advertisers possess, as evidenced by withdrawal of advertising from the News of the World. However, it is not explained as to how advertisers themselves will feel any incentive to deploy this commercial muscle by advertising only in member publications.

8. We are also interested to learn how, under Lord Black's proposals, paparazzi agencies will be governed, taking into account their role in the taking of photographs of celebrities and high-profile individuals, where it is not always possible for publishers to be aware of the circumstances in which the photographs have been taken. Likewise, we are interested to know how it is proposed that digital-only publications will have an incentive to sign up.
9. In addition, we would need to know the proposed financial cost of joining what would be a more complex and inevitably costly body; a cost that Lord Black proposes should be borne entirely by the industry. It is critical, in particular for publishers such as Hello Limited – which is smaller than most others - that the new body will be affordable to join. The fee must be proportionate to the size and number of titles in a publisher's portfolio if it is not to place publishers such as Hello Limited at a significant and unfair disadvantage.
10. Finally, we have a concern as to the proposed constitution of the Complaints Committee. It is proposed that the representative of our sector would be 'one editor of a magazine or digital equivalent' which appears to us to be unsatisfactory. We consider that magazines and digital-only publishers should each have a representative on the Committee given that the experiences and relevant factors for each are often different.

(5) What specific differences would membership of a system of the kind set out by Lord Black, underpinned by contractual obligations, make to the culture, practices and ethics of your publication?

11. Hello! magazine, as I have set out previously in my first statement, always strives to be a responsible publication, both in terms of our journalism and in our editorial decisions. In doing so, we have maintained over many years a strong and positive working relationship with the PCC, with whom we liaise regularly in order to ensure compliance with its Code of Practice. Our magazine's culture, practices and ethics are to a large extent based upon frequent reference to the PCC Code and responsible journalism. Subject to resolving the issues and concerns as set out above, we would welcome a newly constituted industry regulatory body which has greater powers to impose sanctions and I consider that we would not need to change our magazine's ethos.

(6) Is there any other comment you wish to make on the proposal put forward by Lord Black, or on the proposals put forward by others, that are now published on the Inquiry website at <http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/about/module-4-submissions-on-the-future-regime-for-the-press/> ?

12. We believe that my statement sets out our magazine's concerns as to certain aspects of the proposals by Lord Black. We support the other aspects of his proposals.

I believe that the facts in this Witness Statement are true:

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Dated: 9 July 2012