

>Date: Fri, 26 Aug 2011 12:20:30 +0100

>>To: m.bannon

>>From: Noel Doran

>>Subject: letter

>>

>>Rebecca Hales,

>>Press Complaints Commission.

>>Halton House,

>>20/23 Holborn,

>>London,

>>EC1N 2JD

>>

>>Complaint no 112103.

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>>

>>Dear Rebecca,

>>

>>Thank you for your latest message about Mr Delgado. I am sorry for the

>>delay in responding, as I have been on annual leave.

>>I prefer to deal personally with all correspondence from the PCC, as

>>you know, and going through the range of points raised in his lengthy

>>letter inevitably takes some time, but I hope the documentation I

>>have

>>enclosed will help to finally resolve the matter.

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>>While I would like to stress again that I regret any upset caused to

>>Mr Delgado by our coverage, I still believe it is essential that we

>>report fairly and accurately on the way in which considerable sums of

>>public money are spent on international training initiatives within

>>the National Health Service. Mr Delgado has spoken of his belief that

>>his trips were mainly funded by a charitable foundation, but has not

>>offered any evidence in this regard. Our research has indicated

>>firmly that the cost of his programmes was almost entirely covered by

>>the tax-payer through the Health and Social Care Safety Forum. The

>>South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust previously had

>>responsibility for the Safety Forum, but it is now under the control

>>of the Public Health Agency.

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>>It needs to be stressed that we made repeated attempts to view the

>>individual invoices for Mr Delgado's trips, but to our surprise were

>>turned down by the Trust on the grounds that excessive time and cost

>>would be involved. However, the enclosed document from the Public

>>Health Agency lists a series of overseas courses and makes repeated

>>references to an individual who was an employee of the Safety Forum.

>>It makes clear that his fees and other expenses were paid by the

>>Safety Forum. It is our firm understanding, based on comprehensive

>>investigations, that the person in question was Mr Delgado, who was

>>general manager and later assistant director with the Safety Forum.

Mr

>>Delgado, in an email to our health correspondent, Seanin Graham

>>(enclosed), personally confirmed that he represented the Safety Forum

>>at the relevant courses in Boston, Paris, San Diego, Berlin, Sweden,

>>Nashville and Florida.

>>

>>Our published coverage has already explained why so much public

>>concern exists over the cost of sending NHS delegates to international training courses, and why sustained official attempts were made to either seriously curtail or completely end the practice. Mr Delgado was fully entitled to attend all the listed courses, but, after travelling to more foreign destinations than any other NHS official from Northern Ireland - 11 in less than three years - we believe that he became the public face of a highly controversial policy. We certainly feel that all our reports on the way in which public money is spent within the NHS were plainly in the public interest

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>>I note that Mr Delgado objects to being identified in one headline as a 'NHS boss', but, as he was the assistant director of an important body like the Safety Forum, I do not think the description was unreasonable. I also note that Mr Delgado denies that he is a resident of the US, as we reported, but in his emails to both you and the Irish News he provides his address as c/o the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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>>I further note that Mr Delgado denies that he had a prominent sporting role, insists that he only played football on a part-time basis and doubts that more than a handful of people in Northern Ireland even knew of his existence. Mr Delgado played for Linfield FC, which is the most successful and best supported club in Ireland and has just celebrated the 50th Irish League championship in its history. While all Linfield's players are part-time, its home is the national stadium, Windsor Park, which has a 14,000 capacity, and Mr Delgado also played for a number of other leading Irish League clubs.

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>>In relation to Mr Delgado's views on our use of photographs, I believe that a range of images would have been available from his former Irish League days but, like most newspapers, our policy is to use pictures which are as recent as possible. I do not propose to go into detail about the way in which we obtain photographs, in order to protect our sources, but I understand that, as is often the case, a Facebook site was involved. The Irish News has never suggested that Mr Delgado was engaged in any kind of improper behaviour, and we cannot accept the various inferences he attempts to draw from our use of what we regard as a justified illustration.

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>>Mr Delgado was made well aware that we were looking into his participation in publicly-funded overseas trips, and we gave prominence to the statement he provided which explained his position. If he had subsequently contacted us about any matter arising from our coverage, and our use of photographs in particular, his views would have been taken very seriously, but he did not do so.

>>

>>I finally note his reference in his letter of July 25 to the presence of his picture on our website. As a gesture of goodwill, I would be happy to ensure that there is no public online access to the

>>photograph we carried on our front page of December 17, 2010, either  
>>now or in the future, and to confirm that we have no intention of  
>>re-publishing it. We would also be prepared to consider any further  
>>statement which Mr Delgado submitted for publication. Please do not  
>>hesitate to let me know if you need any more information.