

Premier PR on behalf of Daniel Craig v The Mail on Sunday

Clauses noted: 3

Premier PR complained to the Press Complaints Commission on behalf of the actor Daniel Craig that an article published in The Mail on Sunday on 12th October 2008, headlined “£4m home where Bond will find a quantum of solitude”, had intruded into his privacy by identifying his home in breach of Clause 3 (Privacy) of the Code.

Following sufficient remedial action from the newspaper, there were no further issues to pursue.

The article reported the complainant’s purchase of an apartment in North London. It referred to a district in London, and a park which the property was near. There was a picture of the house in which the apartment was located.

The complainant was concerned that the newspaper had published sufficient information to identify the property. The nature of the house (and, in particular, its external colour) meant that it was easily recognisable – something that could impact on his personal privacy and security in light of the unwanted attention he sometimes received from over-zealous fans. Indeed, he had previously had to take serious action against specific individuals who posed a security threat. He was also concerned about the safety of his partner and child. Moreover, in this case, the newspaper had been asked in advance of publication not to identify the property.

The newspaper said that the area mentioned in the article covered a significant area of North London. There was no further information about the address, and the article did not state which of the apartments within the building was to be occupied by the complainant. Anyone determined to find the property would have been able to do so by other means, regardless of the article. Nonetheless, the newspaper was willing to try to resolve the matter, as it did not wish to cause the complainant difficulties. It removed the article permanently from its website, and undertook to apologise privately to him and not to republish similar details about the property in future. It also circulated a warning across the whole of Associated Newspapers to this effect.

The complainant asked the newspaper to meet the security costs that he felt were necessary following the article. These costs were around £25,000. The newspaper was not willing to do so.

Adjudication

The Commission has previously made clear that newspapers should not gratuitously identify the homes of individuals who might be exposed to specific security problems. The complainant – who said he had been the subject of unwanted and overzealous personal attention from fans – fell into this category. The Commission’s first task in considering this complaint was therefore to decide whether the newspaper had in fact published sufficient information to put the precise location of the home into the public domain.

On balance, the Commission considered that the article had contained too much detail, and ran a clear risk of identifying the property without justification. The conjunction of the unusual colour and size of the property on the one hand, with the reference to a specific area and park in North London on the other, was enough information – in the Commission’s view – to identify the whereabouts of the dwelling. This was therefore a breach of the Code. Had the article referred broadly to London – or even North London – it would have stayed within the terms of the Code.

Having made this decision, the Commission’s next step was to consider whether the newspaper’s action was a sufficient remedy to the complaint. The paper had promptly removed the article from the internet, offered to apologise to the complainant, undertaken not to republish the details, and

taken internal steps to ensure that these measures were respected. In the circumstances, the Commission considered that this was a suitable remedy to the breach of the Code.

Adjudication issued 18/02/2009