

PCC rejects murderer's complaint over Daily Mirror subterfuge

The Press Complaints Commission has turned down a complaint from the mother of convicted murderer, Levi Bellfield, who said that the Daily Mirror had improperly used subterfuge to obtain material.

The newspaper said it was investigating an important matter of public interest - the murder in 2002 of Milly Dowler, whose killer had never been found. Mr Bellfield - who was convicted in 2008 of murdering Amelie Delagrange and Marsha McDonnell - had answered several questions by correspondence but would only grant a full interview if the reporter signed an agreement that he was 'only acting in Bellfield's best interest' to help him answer 'false allegations in the media'. Once he had done this, an interview took place during which Mr Bellfield admitted for the first time that he had been driving a red car captured on CCTV around the time that Milly Dowler disappeared. The newspaper said that the use of what amounted to relatively low-grade subterfuge was, in this instance, justified in the public interest.

The Commission agreed and emphasised that the press Code of Practice permits the use of misrepresentation if there is a public interest and the material cannot be obtained by other means. In this case, the journalist had not concealed his identity and had uncovered significant, new details about the Milly Dowler case. His actions in obtaining the information were justified.

Further complaints about inaccuracy and invasion of Mr Bellfield's privacy were also turned down.

To see the adjudication in full please [click here](#).

ENDS

For further information please contact Will Gore on 020 7831 0022.

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