



Abi Brooks  
Leveson Enquiry  
Royal Courts of Justice  
Room WG04

22/6/12

Evidence for the Leveson Enquiry.

Re my email to you of 21/5/12,

*This is an initial (not detailed) approach to the enquiry, and I would like someone to advise me further. I am the mother of Ken Livingstone's eldest son Liam who is now 19 and at university. I was subjected to a great deal of press harassment, particularly during 1999 when Ken was campaigning for election as Mayor of London. Examples include The News of the World turning up at my house (June 26) informing me that I would be front page news that Sunday and that I could make the copy better for myself if I spoke to that journalist now. I also have the transcript of 'blagging' - a telephoning conversation while I was working at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture on 18 June 1999 ; a journalist pretending to be a mortgage broker in order to obtain personal financial information.*

*I also believe that my phone was hacked and would like advise on confirming this.*

*I have a detailed file on everything that happened - including my correspondence with the PCC - in which they named Ken Livingstone - not me. I had not come forward earlier as, although now in the public domain I did not want this to be any kind of diversion in the London Mayoral elections. My decision alone.*

Before I present the evidence that I feel would be most helpful to the enquiry, I have to say that many visiting journalists were courteous and professional, respecting my 'no comments' to questions about my friendship with Ken and allegations that we'd had a child together. There was a fair amount of speculative copy however, and later, (to be expected) articles about Ken's children after official revelations in an interview with BBC journalist Tim Donovan before the Mayoral election in 2008, and the publication of Ken's memoirs in 2011. I had, as I stated in my email to the enquiry, not wanted to approach Leveson as I did not want my personal life to impact in any way on the Mayoral election. I must also record, that it still doesn't feel easy, as the press can leave you with a feeling that anything presented in public can be manipulated. There will be people with less confidence and political experience than I have who won't be coming forward.

I present the following for the enquiry.

1. A particular style of press intrusion
2. Inadequacy of response from the PCC
3. Fraudulent telephone call to extract information

### **1. A particular style of press intrusion.**

Harassment by The News of the World Saturday June 26 1999.

A News of the World journalist – David Jeffs - turned up at my home with a photographer who then photographed me with my 6 year old son as I was leaving the house. Mr Jeffs told me that an article about me having ‘Ken Livingstone’s love child’ was to appear on the front page of the News of the World the next morning: but that I could talk to him now, just reaching a deadline to ‘make the copy my own’. I refused to speak to him. This caused me considerable anxiety – and in fact nothing was printed. It was a ploy to get me to talk and confirm the allegations. I experienced it as psychological harassment.

Similar tactics were employed by the Sunday Mirror and Sunday People as outlined in my correspondence with the PCC later that year.

### **2. Inadequate response by the Press Complaints Commission.**

I enclose copies of my correspondence with the PCC from 30 November 1999 – 5 January 2000. My initial complaint to the PCC produced replies to the wrong gender with my name misspelled, boding ill for my confidence in them. This was born out by the ensuing correspondence, <sup>which</sup> eroded my confidence totally. I had not named Ken Livingstone in my complaint, yet his name was relayed back to me in the reply from the News of the World, and that I had ‘had a relationship with Ken Livingstone.’ Not even ‘alleged.’ However the crux of my complaint against them, was the *nature* of the ploy, ie telling me I was to be copy in the Newspaper – that ‘journalists were working on the story now’ as a form of harassment. This was addressed neither by the Newspapers concerned nor the PCC. My overall feeling was that the press was a powerful body, lightly whipped at times by the PCC, who was in collusion with them, and that little people like me could not take them on. The correspondence ends on 5 January 2000, with a promise to write to me again with an ‘outcome.’ I heard nothing after that, and I knew perfectly well that further enquiry from me would bring this further into the public domain. That a member of the PCC Commission was the editor of a Sunday newspaper trying to get me to talk, employing harassing methodology was a ludicrous and unsettling contradiction.

**3. Fraudulent telephone call to extract information**

18 June 1999

A reporter posing as an employee of Nat West bank phoned my branch to talk to a 'colleague' about regular credits to my account. He pretended that I had made an application for another mortgage. I have the transcript of that conversation, courtesy of a Nat West employee, who realised that the call was a 'blag' and called me later, registering suspicion. The same man (I assume he was a journalist) later called me at work – the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, where I worked as an events producer – to ask about my mortgage application. I soon realised that this was an imposter and when I asked for his mobile number he hung up. I suspected later, that he was working for the News of the World because of the incident on June 26.

I enclose a transcript of the telephone conversation with the Nat West employee.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed ..

[Redacted signature box]

Dated: ..... 22-6-2012 .....