

J HALLIDAY

April 2012

**LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURE, PRACTICES AND ETHICS
OF THE PRESS**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF JOSH HALLIDAY

I, Josh Halliday, of Guardian News and Media Limited ("GNM"), Kings Place, 90 York Way London, N1 9GU, WILL SAY as follows:

1. I am a journalist employed by GNM. I joined the Guardian newspaper in June 2010 as a media and technology reporter. Previously, I enjoyed brief stints at Sky News in January 2010, at Sunderland AFC in summer 2009 and at the Sunderland Echo intermittently between 2009 and 2010. The Guardian is my full-time employment in the news media. I studied journalism at University of Sunderland from 2007 to 2010.
2. I make this statement in response to an informal request from the Leveson Inquiry's Solicitors Team on behalf of Lord Justice Leveson, Chairman of the Inquiry, for a short statement following the publication on guardian.co.uk on Thursday 5 April of the article "Virgin Atlantic faces claims that dozens of celebrities' flight details were leaked" ("JH1").

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2012/apr/06/virgin-atlantic-celebrities-flight-details?newsfeed=true>)

3. I understand that Lord Justice Leveson is interested to see the emails that were provided to me by the source to the story. I should make clear at the outset that I am not prepared to reveal the names of any confidential sources. I exhibit to this statement copies of the e-mails that I refer to in the article, but I have redacted any identifying details ("JH2").
4. I contacted the Virgin Atlantic employee named in the emails prior to publication. I twice put the claims to this person, who replied that they did not wish to comment and then hung up the telephone.

I also made efforts to contact legal representatives for the celebrities named in the email. I managed to contact the solicitors for two of the named celebrities, who verified the details given in the email and provided me with a statement for publication. I attempted to verify the authenticity in the emails by checking the details of the flights listed, and attempting to verify the

information with what had been reported in newspapers and online at the time.

5. Numerous requests to Big Pictures in the UK went unanswered. I dealt with an employee called Chris Woodward, who described himself as the sales director for Big Pictures. Mr Woodward repeatedly told me on 4 April that a statement from the chairman, Darryn Lyons, was forthcoming. However, the only response I received from Big Pictures was a legal warning from the solicitors' firm Russell Jones & Walker, on behalf of Big Pictures.
6. I contacted Virgin Atlantic to put the allegations to them before publication, and they provided me with a statement as follows: "The allegations that have been raised are extremely serious and we have launched an immediate investigation." I also contacted Big Pictures but they did not return repeated requests for comment before publication.

I believe that the contents of this witness statement are true.



Josh Halliday *JH*

Date

11/04/2012

J Halliday

April 2012

**LEVESON INQUIRY INTO THE
CULTURE, PRACTICES AND
ETHICS OF THE PRESS**

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
JOSH HALLIDAY**

Editorial Legal Services
Guardian News & Media Limited
Kings Place
90 York Way
London
N1 9GU