
WITNESS STATEMENT OF SUSAN WATTS,
SCIENCE EDITOR, BBC NEWSNIGHT
TO HUTTON INQUIRY REGARDING THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF
DR DAVID KELLY:

Attachment K

 *** TX REPORT ***

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Number of pages: (including coversheet)	3	Date:	11 July 2003

Subject:

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Your Ref :

Date . 11 July 2003

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**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
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Sarah Jones
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By fax and post: 020 8752 5080

Dear Ms Jones

Newsnight Programme - Susan Watts

We do not propose by this letter to reiterate the background to this issue. We refer to our telecom with Ms Jones yesterday during which you sought our client's answers to two tightly framed questions.

Our client, whilst acknowledging the two questions that you propose do not per se infringe the source's confidentiality, notes that their stated purpose is to serve the BBC in promoting the Newsnight story (and thereby a source) into public enquiry. Thus far, there has been no scrutiny or criticism of the Newsnight story in the public domain. It is only by virtue of the BBC's (in our opinion, misconceived strategy), to compare our client's story and broadcast information deriving from a source with those of another journalist that attention has been drawn to the issue of our client's source. We consider that the use of this material for non-news related purposes to be inappropriate.

The BBC's references to and purported comparison of the attributes of two confidential sources informing two news stories merely invites scrutiny of our client's work product and more particularly, may cause her authorities to seek out the source and demand disclosure of the same, in circumstances where this is not presently occurring.

Our client, however, desires to cooperate with the BBC in accordance with her duties as an employee. Such duties, however, do not extend to "cooperating" where her ethics and responsibilities might conflict or in circumstances where she is being asked to participate in statements with which she cannot agree.

As you know, our client is travelling back from America and has heavy work commitments. She will be unavailable for some further time. Ms Watts has instructed us to provide the following statement in answer to your questions as follows:-

" I feel that the two broadcasts on Newsnight on 2nd June 2003 and 4th June 2003 respectively speak for themselves. I consider that I have in those broadcasts fairly and accurately reported information as told to me.

To the best of my knowledge, I have never met Andrew Gilligan.

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11 July 2003

I also place on record my extreme disquiet that a senior BBC executive has apparently told a journalist at The Telegraph that the BBC believes Andrew Gilligan's source to be my source also and that Andrew Gilligan and I "got exactly the same story".

I do not agree that a comparison of the two reports suggests that there is only one area of difference between the information disclosed by my source and Mr Gilligan's source, as was suggested by Mr Richard Sambrook to my solicitor and on which basis he apparently predicates his belief that they are the same person.

In fact, I believe that there are significant points of difference between the two reports.

Further, I am very concerned about the process by which the circumstances surrounding my Newsnight report are being drawn into a dispute between the BBC and the Government and consider it inappropriate that my reports be used in this way.

I am unwilling to entertain any further questions that I consider might tend to identify my source or invite a further line of enquiry as to the source's identity."

We confirm that we have been instructed to place the aforementioned statement to you formally on behalf of our client.

Yours faithfully

Finers Stephens Innocent

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SJW/1/0082