"CASE ADJOURNED AGAINST BRIT WHO RENTS AND RE-LETS HOUSES" 2 FEBRUARY 2023 MAYGENE DE WEE.

"CASE ADJOURNED AGAINST BRIT WHO RENTS AND RE-LETS HOUSES" 2.2.23. MAYGENE DE WEE. NETWERK24

"A British pier fan who is accused of defrauding the owners of luxury mansions on, among others, Cape Town's Atlantic coast out of millions of rands.":

This statement is completely misleading. (1) I was not accused of defrauding property owners. No part of the charges related to defrauding the owners of any property. (2) The charges involved three cases of fraud from complaints made a full year earlier, for three clashes on Christmas day which had already been dismissed by the actual investigating officer as civil matters, not criminal fraud, before the closed docket was taken and passed to a completely unrelated investigating officer, one friendly to WDS, for later use. (3) I was also never charged with defrauding owners or guests out of millions of rand; the charges, in total, related to under R400,000. No part of the charges, docket, bail application, ever mentioned, referenced or rested on chares in the millions. That figure came from WDS. (4) Furthermore, the article fails to mention that the charges from August were thrown out, three months earlier, an outcome absolutely essential if there was to be any chance of balance, fair reporting or indeed accurate reporting. which significantly undermines the state's narrative. (5) Indeed, none of the journalists or the publication ever factored the outcomes, either into their thinking or the articles. 6) The journalist did not question the validity of these accusations despite the available evidence and THE GROWING CATALOGUE OF legal outcomes, which consistently substantiated my position. This is a clear failure to report truthfully and verify facts, breaching **PRESS CODE [1.0]** (reporting truthfully**), [1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF: [A], [C].**

"Darren Russell (52) appeared in court on Thursday on charges of fraud. The state claims he defrauded the owner of a luxury house in Llandudno out of around R1.2 million."

As previously detailed, this statement is misleading and inaccurate. (1) I was not accused of defrauding owners in any way. (2) No part of the arrest, charges, bail application, state's case, or docket had anything to do with that allegation. (3) Nor was I accused of scamming anyone out of millions of rand. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

"Russell was arrested at the mansion in Llandudno in December last year by members of the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit. The state claims he rented several luxury homes and then rented out the homes in residential neighbourhoods such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent."

This is completely false. As previously detailed, (1) all rental agreements were fully transparent, and property owners had full knowledge of the subletting arrangements. (2) I was not accused of renting out the properties without the owner's consent either. (3) This allegation formed no part of the arrest, charges, bail application, state's case, or docket. (4) The constant repetition of these falsehoods without verification continues to propagate a damaging narrative. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

"The court heard on Thursday that Russell, who has been held in Pollsmoor prison since his arrest, has not yet given any financial instructions to his solicitor. A lawyer representing Russell's lawyer, one t. Swartz asked the court for an adjournment until March 7. The stand-in attorney said Swartz had not yet received financial instructions from Russell. Swartz would apparently use the time to properly consult with Russell." "The lawyer came back after a short adjournment and asked the court to adjourn the case until February 7. Russell and Swartz must then tell the court whether Swartz is going to stay, Russell is going to appoint a new legal representative, or whether he is going to use legal aid."

I find it surreal that the same journalist, while propagating the lie that I was scamming millions, did not find it strange that I could not afford an attorney. (1) This demonstrates the lack of curiosity or investigation into the situation by the journalist. (2) It highlights how the articles exclusively focused on WDS's narrative while ignoring any reality that contradicted it. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

"Magistrate Goolam Bawa told the stand-in attorney that if the case is adjourned until March, it will be almost two and a half months that Russell will be in custody. He cannot allow it. 'Bail applications must be treated as urgent,' said Bawa."

This statement is accurate regarding Magistrate Bawa's remarks, but it omits crucial and critical context. (1) The magistrate was not taking issue with my lack of representation, because it was the investigating officer (I.O.) who repeatedly delayed matters, requesting more time. (2) The magistrate expressed frustration with both sides but was far more critical of the I.O., giving an ultimatum to decide what I was charged with and provide the defense and prosecution with a docket by 28 February. (3) None of these developments, nor any updates or outcomes from the hearings, found their way into the articles. (4) All that was published was a version of the case that was crafted by WDS, raising doubts about whether the journalists even attended the hearings. (5) Delays in my case were caused by factors beyond my control, specifically interference by parties manipulating the legal process to prolong my detention. (6) The omission of these details creates the false impression that I was responsible for the delays, while neglecting to report the magistrates' call for investigations into what was clearly a miscarriage of justice. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully). **REF:** [A], [B].

"This is not the only charge of this kind that Russell faces. He was also arrested on a similar charge in Cape Town on 4 August last year and released shortly afterwards on bail of R30 000."

This is untrue. (1) I was not facing any other charges. (2) The charges in August were not for fraud. (3) The charges had been thrown out four months earlier. (4) This was made clear during the hearings in the December case. (5) If I had been facing other charges, they would have been mentioned at the first and every subsequent appearance. (6) Further, if I was on bail and had been arrested again for an offense, my bail would have been revoked, and I would not have been granted bail on the new charges. (7) Considering the August charges were six months earlier; it is staggering that the journalist did not think to follow up and check what happened to them. The idea that they would still be unresolved is unrealistic. (8) The claim that I faced multiple "similar charges" is false and serves to build a false narrative of repeated criminal behaviour. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

"After he was released on bail on 23 August, he reportedly continued to rent luxury homes in Cape Town's posh residential areas such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay and then sublet them to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent."

This is entirely false. (1) As repeatedly stated, all rental and subletting arrangements were fully transparent and consented to buy the property owners. (2) The August arrest had nothing to do with scamming, fraud, or defrauding homeowners, contrary to the claims in the article. (3) There was no continuation of any supposed scheme, as the charges in August were unrelated to the subsequent arrest. (4) This ongoing falsehood perpetuates a fabricated narrative that has already been disproven in previous legal proceedings. (5) The failure to investigate or verify the facts caused incalculable harm, which was entirely foreseeable, indeed, guaranteed. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

UNALLOCATED TEXT: In copying out all of the article's sentence by sentence then drafting a response, I cannot allocate the following text to the Netwerk24 article. I think this is from when the articles were both online and in print, this being the additional text within the Rapport article.

"The Briton, who has been accused of defrauding multiple people through accommodation scams, was tracked down by local authorities."

This is untrue. (1) I have never been accused of "defrauding multiple people" through accommodation scams. (2) The idea that I was "tracked down" by authorities is absurd, as I was not evading anyone, and my location was always known. (3) These false claims are designed to sensationalize the story and create the impression of criminal behaviour where none exists. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

"According to sources, he had been renting out high-end properties without the consent of the owners."

This is completely false. (1) All of my rental agreements were fully transparent and legally binding, with the property owners' full consent. (2) The article once again relies on anonymous "sources" without verifying the facts, which should have been easily accessible through property records or interviews with the owners themselves. (3) This baseless claim continues to harmfully propagate a false narrative. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

"Police had been investigating him for months following numerous complaints from individuals claiming they had been misled."

This statement is misleading. (1) There were no legitimate complaints against me that warranted such an investigation. (2) The only "complaints" originated from WdS and his clients, who had a clear vested interest in manipulating the narrative and creating false claims to suit their agenda. (3) The suggestion that there were numerous valid complaints is entirely unsupported by the facts, as none of the supposed victims ever came forward with credible evidence. (4) One look at the docket itself shows there was no investigation undertaken. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

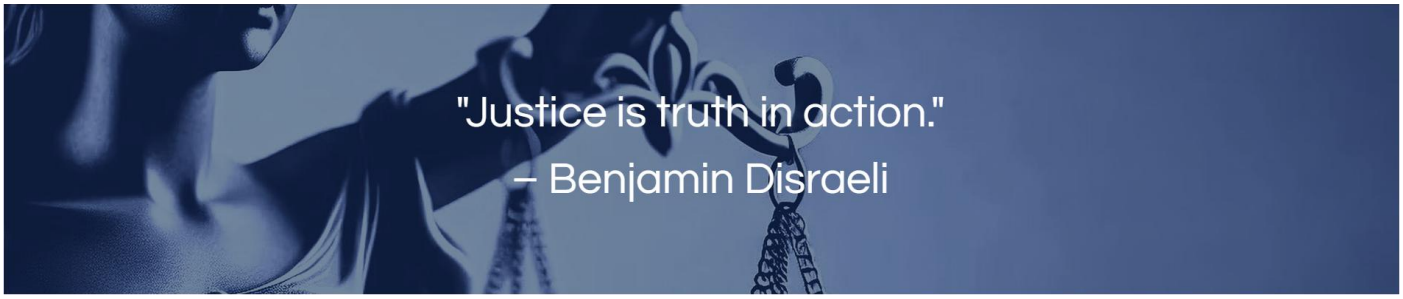
"The suspect was previously out on bail for similar charges but has now been rearrested." This is misleading and inaccurate. (1) The charges in August were not for fraud or related to the later arrest. (2) There were no "similar charges" involved, and this claim further perpetuates a fabricated narrative of repeated criminal behaviour. (3) The statement also fails to acknowledge that the charges from August had been thrown out four months prior, making this claim factually incorrect. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

"He is accused of pocketing significant amounts of money from unsuspecting victims who believed they were renting legitimate properties."

This is false. (1) There were no "unsuspecting victims" or any claims of fraudulent activity in relation to the rental properties. (2) All rental arrangements were made transparently, with full consent and knowledge of the property owners. (3) There is no evidence to support this claim of me "pocketing" money from anyone, as all financial transactions were part of legally agreed contracts. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

"The investigation is ongoing, and more charges could potentially follow as authorities continue to probe his business dealings."

This is speculative and misleading. (1) At the time of this statement, there was no legitimate basis for further charges, and the ongoing investigation had already failed to yield any credible evidence of wrongdoing. (2) This type of language only serves to create an exaggerated sense of ongoing criminality, which is completely unfounded. (3) By publishing speculative statements, the article misleads the public and causes further reputational harm. (4) As mentioned, there was also no genuine investigation. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

"The suspect will appear in court later this week to face charges related to fraud and illegal subletting."

This is misleading and factually incorrect. (1) There were no charges of "illegal subletting," as all rental and subletting arrangements were fully transparent and consented to buy the property owners. (2) The charges were based on misrepresented civil disputes, not criminal acts, and these charges had already been dismissed in previous legal proceedings. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].