ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLES

RAPPORT NETWERK24
"BRIT STUCK OVER 'CHEAT YOUR RENT, CHEAT YOU THERE". '
21 AUGUST 2022

Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him at all for two years has finally been arrested where he is hiding in the Upper Cape in one of the rich men's houses he occupies."

1) This statement is completely untrue. 2) The properties were legally rented with the landlords' full knowledge and consent. 3) The phrase **"renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him"** clearly implies that I was engaged in illegal or wrongful behaviour, which is false. 4) The use of **"has finally been arrested"** misleads readers into believing that my arrest was the result of a thorough investigation or a prolonged search. In reality, there was no detailed investigation, and the so-called search started just two days earlier, consisting only of brief visits to the villas without any attempt to contact me, despite de Swardt having my phone number and my attorneys' details. 5) I was not **"hiding"** as the article claims. I had spent two days in Pringle Bay while the villas were fully booked, and we had posted multiple Instagram updates during that time, clearly showing where we were. 6) I was not staying in **"one of the rich men's houses"** but rather in a modest one-bedroom Airbnb rental. I returned to Llandudno later that day after the guests checked out. 7) Like all of the articles, this one is a series of misleading or false statements, each of which is designed to paint me in a negative and dishonest light. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [A], [D], [K].**

"The finely built Darren Russell, who according to photos of him and his boyfriend is only used to the best, appeared rather cool this week when he appeared in the Wynberg Magistrate's Court."

The journalist has clearly chosen to be highly selective in their reporting. My and my partner's Instagram and Facebook profiles were no different from anyone else's in that they reflected aspects of our lives, including the villas I managed and rented out. Ironically, despite the claim that I was "used to the best," I rarely even used the facilities myself as I was too busy working to create and maintain those spaces for the guests. Rather than portraying the truth of my work, the journalist cherry-picked details to suit a particular narrative. What's also revealing here is that the journalist and publication were clearly sifting through our social media profiles, as evidenced by this comment and the choice of photos they used, all of which came from those platforms. On my profile, there were over 1,000 posts and stories documenting the properties at every stage—from the beginning, through the extensive refurbishment works to the final transformations. These profiles clearly illustrated the immense amount of time, money, and effort put into turning these properties into luxurious, interior-designed showpieces of exceptional quality. It is particularly egregious that while these journalists were scouring my social media for photos, they were simultaneously publishing articles that falsely portrayed me as damaging the properties, not paying rent, and running a fraudulent villa business. Common sense alone would tell you that someone transforming properties into high-end, bespoke spaces would not also be recklessly damaging them or failing to pay rent. Moreover, why would anyone go to such lengths to create a sham business, investing millions into properties without permission? **PRESS CODE: [1.7]** (sensationalism), **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF: [M].**

"The 52-year-old Briton allegedly rented several multimillion-rand properties along the Atlantic and False Bay coasts and then illegally operated them as guest houses by advertising them on websites such as Airbnb."

This is entirely false. 1) All the landlords were fully aware of the rental arrangements, and there was nothing unlawful about how the properties were leased or advertised. 2) The use of platforms like Airbnb was completely legitimate, as evidenced by the fact that our profiles remained active throughout our management of the villas. We received countless 5-star reviews, achieved Superhost status on Airbnb, and earned Preferred Partner Plus status on Booking.com. 3) Both platforms are renowned for having zero tolerance for impropriety, and any hint of wrongdoing would have resulted in immediate and permanent account suspension. The fact that our accounts remained intact throughout speaks volumes. 4) As with the previous statements, these allegations came from nowhere other than de Swardt and his client. 5) they did not form any part of the charges, or the arrest, or the bail application. 6) Nor did it form any part of the state's case. 7) So, when the publication says I allegedly did X or Y, what they mean is de Swardt alleged I had done X or Y, because these allegations appear nowhere else and they appear nowhere in the court proceedings the publication were reporting. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[1.7]** (sensationalism). **REF: [A], [C], [J].**

"The claim is that he usually faithfully pays his rent for a few months and then quits."

1) This statement is entirely false and fabricated. 2) When the publication says, **"the claim is that he,"**—the question is, claim by whom? It was not a claim made by the state, police, or prosecution, nor was it examined during the bail hearing. 3) The "claim" originated from de Swardt, and Media24 gave it legitimacy by publishing it without any verification. There is no evidence to support this accusation. Rent was consistently paid across all properties, and I was never in default. 4) Once again, the articles report an arrest, charges, and prosecution case that did not exist or had no relation to my actual situation. 5) How can a publication so drastically misrepresent the facts, while simultaneously acknowledging details of the real charges in other parts of the same article? 6) The authoritative tone used in these articles leads readers to believe the publication was presenting verified facts from firsthand knowledge, implying that journalists were present during court appearances. So how is it possible that the claims being made, the reasons for my arrest, and the prosecution's case bear no resemblance to reality? 7) The only connection these false narratives have is to the lies constructed by de Swardt and his clients, which Media24 uncritically accepted and propagated. 8) As for the specific accusation itself, it too is entirely false. 9) Had the claim been true, we would have paid around R660,000 (or at most, R990,000) in rent before stopping. 10) In reality, we paid the landlords over R5,600,000 in rent, bills, deposit. 11) We occupied the properties for a total of 53 months, with rent totalling R4,400,000, and we actually paid more than R4,800,000—more than the entire value of our occupation. 12) The gap between these fabrications and the reality couldn't be wider. 13) Rent payments were kept up to date from November 2021 through mid-2022 and only started to falter after the landlords banded together in April 2022 to have all our booking platforms shut down, falsely claiming illegal subletting and scams, although we recovered well , then came the arrests. 14) Their joint attack resulted in the removal of every online profile and account, within 24 hours, effectively wiping out our revenue stream. 15) NB: The fact that these landlords collaborated as a group—including hiring the same attorney, **Johan Victor,** misrepresented as the attorney for "victims," and using him to intervene in my bail application—demonstrates the existence of a consortium, a term we use to describe their coordinated effort. 16) It took us two full months for the platforms to complete their investigations and confirm that the claims were baseless lies. By that time, we had lost millions and nearly every booking. 17) The level of deceit involved in attacking our income sources to bankrupt us while simultaneously accusing us of rent arrears is astonishing, esp. when the arrears themselves were fabricated. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [B], [F].**

"Another alleged ploy was to rent out houses through his private website lacollectionsprestige.com and pocket the deposit or double or even triple book the house, then disappear when the guests arrived."

1. This statement is entirely false and fabricated. 2) The allegations bear no connection to the actual charges or events—they were never part of any arrest, court case, or bail application. 3) There is no evidence whatsoever to support this claim—there were no issues with platforms like Airbnb or Booking.com, no complaints from guests, and no legal proceedings were ever brought against me. 4) This false claim, propagated by de Swardt, was published without any effort to verify its accuracy. Even minimal due diligence, such as checking booking records or speaking to guests or platforms, would have immediately exposed the baselessness of the allegations. 5) The use of loaded and incendiary language like "ploy" drives a misleading narrative, implying calculated wrongdoing where none

existed. 6) The term "pocketed" similarly suggests that I was personally benefiting from deposits, when in reality, professional agents handled the rentals, including the collection of rents and deposits. Throughout the life of the portfolio, I invested significantly more into the properties than I ever withdrew—running at a **net deficit in the millions**, specifically **ten times more** than what was taken in. 7) Efforts by de Swardt and others to fabricate allegations were so weak that they resorted to threatening innocent individuals, including Chandre, the portfolio manager from April until August 2022. de Swardt, the landlords, and the involved SAPS officers threatened her with **30 years in prison** to force her to lie and say she witnessed fraud—claims she categorically denied. Chandre, under extreme pressure from de Swardt and the police, was repeatedly harassed and threatened. In the recorded phone conversation, she states: **"The threats I'm getting is just that I must speak."** Despite this pressure, she stood her ground, saying, **"I can't give a statement because I can't lie. They are forcing you to do a statement that is not your truth."** She made it clear that during her time working with me, **"everything was 100% legitimate during my time in charge. I saw nothing illegal and heard of nothing illegal."**

These statements highlight how de Swardt and the police were desperate to build a false narrative of fraud, resorting to coercion when they had no real evidence to rely on. 8) The claim that I "disappeared" is another blatant lie. Disappeared where? I lived at the villas we rented—if Fisherman's Bend was booked, I would stay at Leirmans, and if both were booked, I would live at Hove Road. I could be found for **363 of the previous 365 days**, easily reachable at any time. I was always within **five to ten minutes** of any guest, maintaining constant communication with them and staff. Additionally, Ollie and multiple staff members were dedicated solely to guest relations. 9) There was no vanishing act, no evidence to support this false narrative of me disappearing after pocketing deposits. Nor did the state or police ever make such an accusation. If this were true, there would have been hundreds, if not thousands, of complaints, police reports, or court cases—but there were none. **Where was all this evidence?** 10) Fraud, particularly financial fraud, leaves behind an undeniable trail—especially in operations as large as ours. We handled hundreds of bookings through platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, all of which process payments via traceable means (credit cards, bank transfers). Fraud creates an easily discoverable and irrefutable paper trail. In cases of villa scams, it is well known that fraudsters typically operate from locations far removed from the scam to avoid detection. In contrast, I was running a legitimate operation, fully engaged with guests and the properties. We had **six residences**, totalling **32 bedrooms**, with **570 booking slots per year**. Our average group size was **12 guests**, equating to around **7,000 guests per year**. If the claims of double or triple bookings were true, that number would have jumped to **14,000–28,000 guests per year**. Yet, where is the evidence? Not one signal of a scam. 11) If a villa scam were in operation, the first sign would be a flood of complaints to the platforms, banks, or review sites. Yet, none of that exists. Even small-scale fraud would leave behind a substantial footprint—and our operations, involving hundreds of bookings annually, would have created a massive trail of complaints if even a fraction of these claims were true. The absence of any such activity proves the falsehood of these allegations. 12) The claim that I "disappeared" fits into a broader pattern of sensationalist reporting, aimed at painting me in the worst possible light. The narrative pushed by de Swardt—an attempt to portray me as elusive and engaged in nefarious activities—when the reality was quite the opposite. I was highly visible, managing the villas, constantly in contact with staff/guests. The failure to report these facts is a clear violation of journalistic integrity. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [H], [I], [P]**.

"That way, apparently, he could make thousands a day. "In **Llandudno, he rented out a five-bedroom house for R15,000 per room for two nights."**. **"In Hout Bay, he charged R15,000 for two nights, and in Camps Bay, R18,000 for two nights."**. See previous answer.

"In another house in Llandudno, he charged R7,000 a night – and up to R19,000 a night in the Royal Suite.".

See previous answer. Also, false as there was no "Royal Suite". In the near two years of hosting guests, I only ever rented as a whole, we never rented rooms or suites within the properties. Moreover, if you combine these statements,7,500 per night for one property, R19,000 a night for a suite within a property, R15,000 per room for two nights, the figure in the article has the average rate per room per night at R7500. There were 30+ bedrooms across the collection, so that would equate to R225,000 per day, which is R82,000,000 per year. If you then take the further and very clear statements about my double, triple and quadruple booking then that figure would be anywhere between R160-360,000,000 per year. These figures are absolutely preposterous and have no relationship with reality. The accusation would also mean we were scamming between 6,000 and 24,000 guests per annum. Even on the basis of the rentals for the properties as a whole and factoring in the double, triple, quadruple bookings

allegation, across the six residences that would equate to defrauded income of between 32,000,000 and 240,000,000 of defrauded revenue, and a similar number of guests. Yet, there is no possible way either WdS provided any proof of this or anything remotely similar and there is no possible way the journalists looked for or found such evidence. The idea that anyone could scam 32,000,000 to 360,000,000 per year and in the process defraud 6,00 to 24,000 guests without an avalanche of online content, thousands of complains to the police, platforms, credit card companies, is demonstrably absurd. So, the question has to be asked, considering by the time the august articles were published we had been operating for a year and a half and by the time the December to February articles were published we had been operating for almost two years (thereby doubling these figures), why was there a complete absence of any of these things? And why did Media24 publish facts that simply could not have stood up to the most basic scrutiny or common sense. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [N]**, **[O]**, **[T]**.

Some properties he also apparently subleased in the long term, with the owners struggling to get rid of the illegal tenants or get their hands on the slippery Russell."

This is blatantly false. 1) The phrase "subleased in the long term" is misleading—every property was leased for the long term, as that was the entire basis of the arrangement. 2) This long-term lease arrangement was the reason I invested millions into the properties to improve and manage them. 3) If I had violated the terms of the lease or conducted any of the actions alleged in the articles, the landlords could have easily obtained eviction orders, and I would have been physically removed by the sheriff. 4) The entire reason behind the malicious campaign, including the involvement of corrupt investigating officers and the use of Media24, was because the landlords couldn't obtain an eviction order through legitimate means. The fact that we had **not breached the terms of the lease** prevented them from legally removing me from the properties. 5) This is also why they resorted to unlawful arrests to disguise illegal evictions and why they used incarceration to prevent me from recovering the properties. 6) It is no coincidence that each property was taken back by the landlords precisely at the time of my arrests and detention. 7) If the allegations in the article were true, why was Keith Broad unable to secure an eviction order throughout 2021 and 2022? He only obtained one **after** I was arrested, locked in Pollsmoor, and unable to file a defense or be present. And even then, this occurred **a year and a half** into the lease. 8) If this statement implies I subleased to tenants on long-term agreements, that is also a lie. Not a single one of our lets was long-term. **90% of our lets ranged from 2 nights to 14 nights**, with only a handful lasting three weeks. We never entered into any tenancy agreements with a long-term tenant, and there isn't a shred of evidence to suggest that we did. 9) The suggestion that we would move from short letting to long-term subletting defies logic and would have resulted in significant financial losses. Our entire business model was based on short-term lets due to the higher rental income. 10) The only truth in the statement about the owners "dying to get rid of me" was their eagerness to do so because they stood to gain millions and retain everything I had created. If the journalists or the publication had made any effort to speak with me, I could have easily explained the true motivation behind the landlords' actions, backed by detailed evidence. 11) If the reference is to get rid of non-existent long-term tenants, that is a **complete fabrication**, as the premise itself is false. 12) The term "slippery Russell" is offensive, defamatory, salacious, and entirely unnecessary. It serves only to bolster the false and damaging narrative that the publication built around me, based on information provided by those whose clear intent was to destroy my reputation. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [C], [K], [L]**.

"The arrest took place while he was hiding in the Upper Cape, in one of the houses owned by a wealthy individual."

This statement is categorically false. (1) I was not "hiding" in the Upper Cape or anywhere else. (2) My location and activities were entirely known, and I was lawfully residing in a property I had rented under a legitimate agreement. (3) The notion of "hiding" is an attempt to paint an inaccurate and defamatory picture of the circumstances. (4) The article fails to present any factual basis for this misleading portrayal. (5) I was not in a house owned by a wealthy individual but staying in a small apartment rented via Airbnb in Bo-Kaap. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B].

"When owner Keith Broad asked private investigator WdS of Fox Forensics to get rid of the tenants, the tide began to turn against Russell."

This statement is shocking for several reasons. 2) If a landlord genuinely has a tenant in default, they apply to the courts and are granted an eviction order based on legitimate grounds. The process is simple and straightforward. Why, then, would a law-abiding landlord bypass the legal system and instead engage a private investigator? Why would he do so to "get rid of the tenant"? 3) There is no possible legal justification for such actions, and any such action is inherently illegal. 4) Equally disturbing is that the publication not only printed this statement but did so without questioning its implications. What they were being told by WDS and others should have, at the very least, raised questions and concerns, particularly about WDS and Broad's motivations and methods. 5) Perhaps most appalling is that the publication managed to present the facts and events in such a way that Broad's unlawful conduct—sending De Swardt and eight thugs to forcibly enter the property, assault and eject the occupants, change the locks, and take over the premises—was framed as if it were justified and lawful. At the same time, they framed me as the "tenant from hell," a supposed villain deserving of such treatment, despite the reality that I was the victim, dispossessed of my home and business, having done nothing wrong, paid Broad over a million Rand by that point, and invested heavily in refurbishing his property. 6) This portrayal reveals a deeply biased narrative that paints Broad as the hero of the story, despite a wealth of evidence clearly indicating he is a rogue landlord of the worst kind. 7) This statement is not only misleading but also fails to disclose the unlawful means employed by Broad and De Swardt. 8) The articles, journalist, and publication entirely failed to question why Broad abandoned legitimate legal avenues and instead engaged in a campaign of intimidation. 9) The "tide" did not "turn" naturally; it turned because when the Broads appointed WDS, he was able to weaponize the power of the state, using arrest and detention as tools for strategic advantage. Without the articles from Media24 being used as supposed independent evidence, and without the cooperation of Serg Duna and Stevens, none of what occurred from July to March would have been possible. These same relationships shield those responsible from investigation, trial, and punishment. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts). **REF:** [Q], [D].

"De Swardt said he and 'some strong men' had 'gone to empty' Broad's house. However, the big break came when he received information that Russell and his boyfriend were in a five-star guesthouse in Pringle Bay."

This statement is false on many levels. There was no "big break." 1) First, the arrest had nothing to do with scamming, fraud, guests, or landlords. 2) There was no investigation, as the absence of a docket demonstrates. 3) There was no need to track me, chase me, or find me. I had spent every day but two in the preceding ten months at the Llandudno property—the very property belonging to Mr. Broad. Both WDS and Broad would have known exactly where I was because I was never anywhere else. 4) It was not a swanky five-star guesthouse; it was simply a nice guesthouse in Pringle Bay, where we had gone because (a) all of the villas were fully booked with paying guests (proving it was a legitimate enterprise), (b) the portfolio manager booked the B&B as I hadn't taken a day off in the preceding year and a half, and © my attorney advised me to spend the time outside Cape Town due to concerns for my safety. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [D], [Q].

"Once there, he heard that the two had just left in an Uber rental car.".

This is false. The police and De Swardt had illegally pinged my phone to track my location. The article presents this as though they merely received hearsay, omitting the unlawful surveillance. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [R]**, **[F]**.

"De Swardt was able to locate the Uber driver and told him that he had dropped them off at a house in Schotsche Gorge on slopes of Signal Hill."

While there may be some factual elements here, the article omits the illegal methods used to track me. 1) De Swardt did not need to "locate" the Uber driver as this statement suggests. 2) My location had already been illegally obtained through phone tracking—a method used without any legal authority. 3) The article glosses over the illegal surveillance employed to find me and presents it as a normal investigative action, hiding the unethical and illegal behaviour behind this information gathering. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [R], [S]**.

"Eleven policemen pounced on the house, but the two locked the doors."

This statement is false and misleading. 1) There were not eleven policemen involved—only two officers from Hout Bay SAPS, who were illegally accompanying WdS. 2) The remaining officers arrived only after I, along with Chandre and Johannes Loubser, repeatedly called Central Cape Town SAPS, urgently seeking protection from De Swardt's illegal actions. 3) My partner and I did not "lock the doors" to evade arrest; there was no legal warrant, no paperwork, and no lawful authority for them to enter the property. We secured the property for our protection because De Swardt and the officers were attempting to break in from various entry points, which was a terrifying ordeal. 4) What is equally astonishing is that experienced journalists failed to ask or check whether the police and De Swardt were acting legally. These were hardly normal circumstances, with someone locking themselves inside a property—yet the journalists reported the incident without questioning the legality of the actions involved. 5) These same journalists later covered the court case, yet they omitted the detailed discussion of the arrest during the proceedings, where the Investigating Officer was caught perjuring himself, falsely claiming I had "resisted arrest." 6) If the journalist was present at the court appearances, as their articles suggest, their reporting was intentionally misleading, crafted to hide what was truly happening. 7) The claim of "pouncing" is both factually incorrect and part of the false narrative that paints this incident as dramatic and criminal, when, in reality, it was neither lawful nor significant. 8) The fact that we were forced to bombard the police station with calls, begging for assistance against de Swardt and an illegal arrest, clearly demonstrates the serious and sinister conduct of de Swardt and his associates—none of which was reported then, nor afterward, even after I brought these facts to News24's attention. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [R], [T]**.

"Fortunately, one of the neighbours remembered that the owner of the house keeps a spare key at his establishment on Loop Street."

This is entirely false. 1) The officers did not gain entry using a spare key—they illegally broke into the property. 2) This unlawful entry should have been the focal point of any article covering the events, yet it was conveniently omitted. 3) By suggesting that the officers gained access legally through a spare key, the article misrepresents the facts and attempts to portray the police's actions as lawful when they were not. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [D], [S]**.

"That's when the dolls started dancing."

I think that some of the meaning or words have been lost in my translating the Afrikaans to English. Regardless, it adds no factual content to the story, a story that contains nothing but falsehoods already. Instead, it seems designed to mock or dramatize a serious situation, which serves no journalistic purpose. 3) Another example of how the article resorts to unnecessary and irrelevant commentary, detracting from factual reporting. **PRESS CODE: [1.7]** (sensationalism), **[1.8]** (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF: [K]**.

"Russell apparently locked himself in a bathroom."

Dealt with above. **PRESS CODE: [1.7]** (sensationalism). **REF: [T]**.

"As police systematically searched the house, the bystanders – quite a few curious people had already started congregating on August Street – only heard the screams of his boyfriend Lorez de Rodez Benavent as he yelled at the police."

This is entirely untrue. 1) There was no systematic search of the property. The apartment consisted of just a lounge and a bedroom, making the idea of a systematic search absurd—you could stand in the centre of the lounge and see the entire space. 2) Additionally, neither de Swardt nor the officers had an arrest warrant, nor did they have the authority to operate in the jurisdiction of Central Cape Town SAPS. 3) There was no search warrant, making any search, let alone a "systematic" one, illegal. 4) Loris did not scream at the police. The only time he raised his voice was when he defended me after one of the officers de Swardt brought with him attempted to strangle me, putting me in a chokehold that left my feet off the floor until a Central Cape Town officer intervened. 5) This is yet another

example of how the article distorts and sensationalizes events to fit a false narrative. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.8]** (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF: [H], [L]**.

"De Swardt says he is investigating four cases against Russell, but that there are approximately 15 people who have filed charges."

1) This statement is false, yet another fabrication. 2) The arrest had nothing to do with fraud or scamming guests; that spin was solely introduced by De Swardt. If the journalist had attended any of the four separate days of the bail application, the initial appearance, or the summing-up and outcome, they would know this. If not present, they had no business reporting a court case or charges as if they were, by merely regurgitating what they were told by a clearly biased individual. 3) De Swardt, who was specifically hired by Keith Broad to act in his interests, is not an impartial investigator. 4) The article itself shows that the publication was aware of the relationship between Mr. Broad and De Swardt and understood why De Swardt was appointed. 5) The claim that "approximately 15 people" have filed charges lacks substance and verification and, like much of the content in these articles, likely originated from De Swardt's unsubstantiated claims. 6) If such a large number of individuals had genuinely filed charges, there would be multiple ongoing cases. However, no such proceedings had occurred then or in the months following. 7) Considering the baseless claims in the August articles, it is astonishing that by the time of the December, January, and February publications—when none of what the publication was told four to six months earlier had materialized—they failed to question the credibility of these ongoing allegations. 8) This vague figure seems intended to exaggerate and paint a negative image, implying widespread wrongdoing without evidence. **PRESS CODE:** [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.7] (sensationalism). **REF:** [Q].

"Some owners apparently suffered up to R300,000 in damage."

1) This claim is a fabrication, lacking any verification. 2) There is no substantiated evidence that any property suffered such damage, nor that I was responsible. 3) Extensive photo and video documentation, along with numerous positive reviews, clearly demonstrate that the properties were well-maintained and significantly improved during my tenure. 4) These claims appear to be fabricated solely to justify the smear campaign against me. 5) The same article features Booking.com photos of the properties, which clearly show luxurious, well-maintained accommodations. 6) Common sense should have led the journalist to question why someone renting out luxury properties to high-end guests would damage the very assets generating their income. 7) Even basic research would reveal readily available images from previous years, where the properties look markedly different, showing the significant improvements made just months prior. Why would a tenant simultaneously enhance and damage these properties? 8) The abundance of visual records on Instagram and Facebook—through the same profiles the publication used to source my photograph—tells a very different story. **PRESS CODE:** [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.0] (failure to report truthfully). **REF:** [M].

"Among the houses he appears to have illegally rented out are a R200 million residence from a Dubai billionaire and a R30 million house in Llandudno."

1) This is another fabrication. 2) All properties were rented under legal agreements, with full knowledge and consent from the owners, which is addressed in detail elsewhere. 3) The reference to a "Dubai billionaire" and a R200 million residence is a fabrication and a sensationalized addition without any factual basis, evidently included to depict exploitation of high-value properties. 4) None of the properties were valued close to R200 million; for example, prior to improvements, the Leirmans Road property was valued at R18 million and subsequently at R31 million post-renovation. The R200 million claim is a 700% exaggeration over the actual value. 5) The publication had the addresses, and even a basic search would yield accurate property valuations. 6) None of the landlords lived in or hailed from Dubai. 7) None of the landlords are billionaires. **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism), [1.0] (failure to report truthfully). **REF:** [F].

"When Rapport knocked on the door at one of the properties in Llandudno, a friendly American man answered and said he rented the house for five days. However, he was dissatisfied with a few things, including the 'nude portraits' on the walls that he asked to be removed, but this was never done."

1) This is a clear case of selective reporting intended to cast a negative impression. 2) This anecdote is both irrelevant to the central claims (which themselves misrepresented the actual case, charges, and court matters) and directly relevant. 3) It's irrelevant because the articles allege a massive fraudulent operation, yet the sole example of guest engagement focuses not on fraud but on décor. 4) It's relevant because the interaction itself undermines the articles' core narrative: the guest had made a legitimate booking and was enjoying his stay. This encounter illustrates that we ran a genuine villa operation, contradicting De Swardt's allegations. Instead of questioning De Swardt's narrative or including this significant detail, the publication chose to highlight a minor complaint. 5) Further, the journalist likely knew that the group was Orthodox Jews—nearly 40 individuals who rented the entire Llandudno property. They requested we remove anything perceived as an idol or deity, leading us to take down Buddha statues, paintings, and any potentially offending images. The "nude portrait" was actually an abstract reclining figure, which we removed immediately upon learning it was offensive. 6) What's telling is the complete omission of our extensive efforts to accommodate this very particular group: arranging kosher chefs, setting up two separate kitchens, adding extra housekeepers to meet dietary rules, adjusting security systems for Sabbath restrictions, and preparing extra beds. We undertook extensive measures to provide a fully kosher, comfortable experience, yet none of this was acknowledged. **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism), [1.8] (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF:** [O].

"During his court appearance this week, Adv. Lee Gabriel and two lawyers from the firm Abrahams & Gross are trying hard to secure bail for Russell, who has been in Pollsmoor for more than three weeks now. Gabriel argued that the charges against his client were civil in nature and that it was wrong to charge him criminally."

1) This is inaccurate. Gabriel argued that Keith Broad and I were in contentious civil litigation and that the charges were an abuse of the criminal system for strategic advantage. 2) Gabriel further argued that the items were stored securely, that Keith and Inge Broad were fully aware of this, and that any dispute over their location was a civil matter. 3) However, the Investigating Officer claimed the items were stolen, that I was withholding them, and that the storage unit did not exist—claims refuted by extensive email correspondence between our attorneys. 4) The journalist also failed to mention a significant event: when the magistrate ordered Sgt. Durna to inspect the storage unit to verify Gabriel's statement. Despite having several days to comply, Sgt. Durna admitted in court that he hadn't gone, angering the magistrate. 5) Omitting such a crucial detail distorts the reader's understanding, especially regarding the civil nature of the case. **PRESS CODE:** [1.3] (failure to provide context). **REF:** [R].

"Sgt. Muyiselo Durna, the investigating officer, stated that Russell was in the country illegally."

1) Neither the journalist nor the publication made any effort to investigate my visa, passport, or immigration status. Had they done so, they would have uncovered highly relevant information. 2) The journalist also failed to report significant revelations from the hearings. After the prosecution rested, Sgt. Stevens falsely testified that a) I had been illegal since March 23, 2021, three months after arrival; b) I had not extended my visa; c) I had intentionally avoided this for nefarious reasons; and d) I was wanted by Home Affairs for deportation—all of which were lies. Automatic extensions ran through 2021 into 2022, and my visa was physically extended to the end of 2021 due to a stolen passport, a fact known to Durna. 3) What was revealed in cross-examination was that Sgt. Durna had been in possession of my passport for some time, which had been stolen by PD, passed to De Swardt, and then to him, to prevent further extensions. The passport bore the stamp proving my extension through 2022. This implication of illegal residency is damaging and baseless. **PRESS CODE:** [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.8] (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF:** [G].

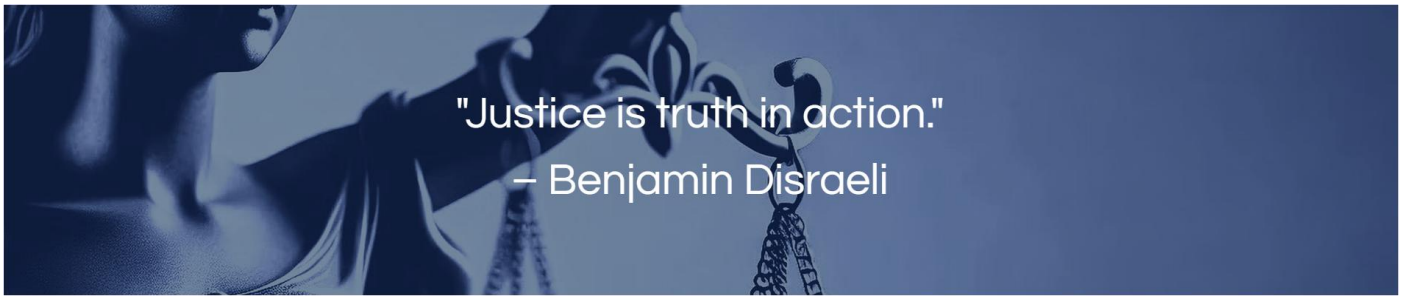
"Durna said that while Russell was renting the house from Broad, items worth R836,000 were stolen."

1) This statement is false, and if the journalist was present during proceedings, they would have heard it was baseless. 2) Sgt. Durna was fully aware this was a lie, as the items were in safe storage, which is why he avoided inspecting the unit despite being ordered by the court. 3) At no point—whether during the arrest, bail application, or afterward—was there even a docket. 4) No official police reports or inventories were filed regarding these alleged

stolen items, underscoring the lack of credible evidence. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts). **REF:** [F].

"This case looks like a wasp's nest to me," the magistrate replied before adjourning the bail application until Monday.

1) While this statement is correct, it is a glaring misrepresentation. The magistrate's comment referred to the complex relationships underpinning the charges, civil litigation, De Swardt's involvement, and the officer's conduct—issues the magistrate had openly criticized. It is difficult to understand how a journalist, presumably present in court, could report this case so selectively and inaccurately. 2) Without full context, readers are left with a misleading impression of a complex or severe case. **PRESS CODE:** [2.1] (misleading headline), [2.1] (conflict of interest). **REF:** [G].

CAPTION. "HIGH DRAMA: Police officers try to get Russell out of a double-storey house while his boyfriend screams over and over again."

This statement is false and sensationalized. 1) The claim that my boyfriend was "screaming over and over again" is entirely fabricated. 2) As mentioned, Media24 omitted every significant element of hat arrest, the lack of arrest warrant, the fact de Swardt and the officers forced their way in, the real reason the other 9 police were there from Central Cape Town SAPS, the real motivation behind the arrest and everything that followed. 3) it was a one-story apartment, which leads me to believe the journalist was supplied with a photo by de Swardt, if so that means that they were not present and yet again they have taken their account of the arrest from de Swardt rathe r than any firsthand experience of it. 4) then, having no been present and having received the information second hand from a highly partisan individual with a known agenda, published it in its entirety, unvetted and unfiltered and unverified, **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline), **[6.1]** (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF: [H], [K]**.