

Dear Ombudsman,

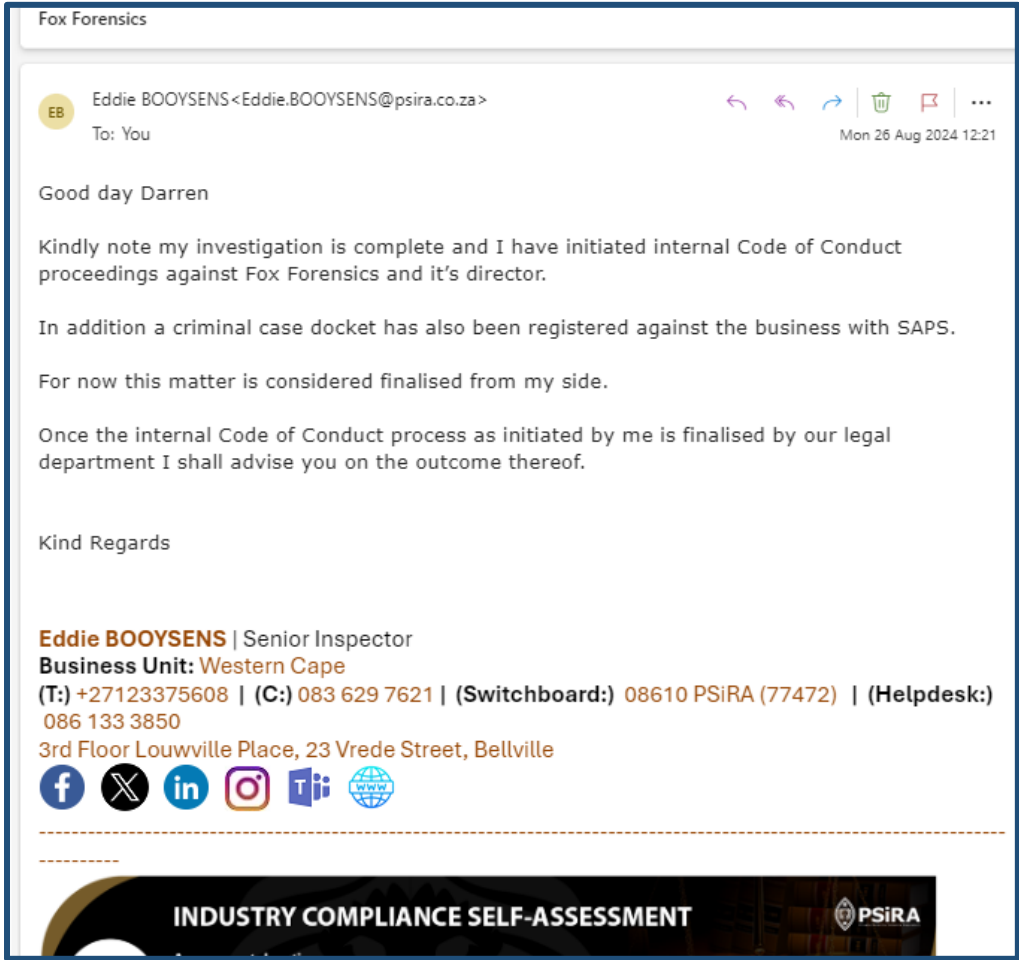
I hope this message finds you well.

With regard to the formal complaint I submitted on the 22nd of August, I have yet to receive a response. I understand that the accompanying materials were extensive, but given the complaint involves multiple articles containing a total of seventy false statements, I was unsure how much evidence would be required to establish the defamation.

As I mentioned in my submission, the online forms seemed to be designed for singular articles or specific portions within an article. However, this complaint addresses not only the entirety of the articles but also their selective timing, the agendas they served, the criminals they assisted, and the false rebuttals to my attempts to engage with the publication.

Since submitting my complaint, there have been a number of developments that are both very significant and highly relevant. They also provide significant validation and substantiation for my allegations, and crucially, they come from wholly independent bodies.

PSIRA INVESTIGATION AND CRIMINAL CHARGES



PSIRA has found Mr. Wouter de Swardt guilty of several extremely serious allegations. We expect their disciplinary procedures to lead to the revocation of his PSIRA membership, a lifetime ban, and any other appropriate sanctions.

Most significantly, PSIRA has deemed the situation serious enough to justify filing criminal charges, which they are now handling. To illustrate how rare such an outcome is, PSIRA has 2.7 million members and oversees all cases of misconduct or criminality within its ranks. In 2023, PSIRA initiated criminal charges in only two cases, making this an exceptional result.

### **COLONEL MCLEAN SAPS INSPECTORATE INVESTIGATION: DISCIPLINARY AND CRIMINAL CHARGES**

I am also pleased to share further positive news. Last month, I received a call from Colonel Colette McLean, commander at the SAPS Inspectorate, in response to a complaint I submitted. Colonel McLean informed me that her jurisdiction covers approximately 200 SAPS stations, including Belville Commercial Crime, making her responsible for investigating complaints against Sergeant Stevens and Belville Commercial.

Following her preliminary research, she requested a meeting to discuss the matter further. As a result, she has decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Sergeant Stevens and launch a more in-depth investigation into his criminal conduct.

To support this effort, I compiled a new dossier specifically related to Sergeant Stevens and Belville Commercial. Of particular importance is the table listing specific criminal activities involving Sergeant Stevens, Sergeant Duna, Mr. de Swardt, and his clients. The relationship between these two corrupt officers and de Swardt alone has resulted in almost 300 separate criminal offenses, with over 100 additional offenses directly committed by Mr. de Swardt and his associates.

### **WESTERN CAPE POLICE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION**

This recent progress is especially encouraging given that apart from the PSIRA complaint, I only began filing broader complaints regarding corruption in the last 4-6 weeks. This has included complaints to the Premier of the Western Cape, Alan Winde, as well as the following entities: IPID Western Cape, IPID, the Home Affairs Department, the British Embassy, the UK Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, the Minister of Police, the Western Cape Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety, the Commander of Central Cape Town SAPS, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Senior State Prosecutor, the Press Council Ombudsman, and Change.org.

In the coming days, I also plan to submit a comprehensive complaint covering all these issues to the Western Cape Police Ombudsman and the Western Cape Anti-Corruption Unit.

### **THE ACCUMULATED EVIDENCE THAT ALREADY EXISTS AND IS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE**

It is important to highlight that even before the PSIRA investigation and Colonel McLean's investigation into Mr. de Swardt, substantial evidence supporting my position was already publicly available. This evidence has consistently disproved the allegations made against me, despite the orchestrated efforts by corrupt SAPS officers and private individuals involved in the campaign against me.

To date, I have a flawless record of success and complete vindication in every criminal matter. The overwhelming evidence supporting my position is accessible to anyone and continues to grow. The schedule of key events, as outlined below, is particularly significant.

### **THE RESPECTIVE POSITIONS**

My position and that of Keith Broad and his associates could not be more divergent. From the outset, I have maintained a consistent narrative, supported by verifiable facts and documentation. In contrast, their position has constantly shifted, often adapting when their previous falsehoods were exposed. This pattern of inconsistency underscores the baselessness of their claims and the integrity of my stance.

### **SCRUTINY**

Their fabricated allegations, brought forward by corrupt SAPS officers, were never subjected to genuine scrutiny until they reached independent bodies or courts. The charges brought against me were initiated without solid

evidence, arrest warrants, or proper dockets, leading to several arrests and detentions that served only to disrupt my life rather than pursue justice.

Similarly, the defamatory articles were published without any fact-checking or due diligence, parroting the false accusations made by their private investigator. Despite the lack of scrutiny in the media or during the arrest process, every time the allegations were subjected to thorough examination by a competent legal authority, they have crumbled.

On the other hand, my allegations, because of the media campaign against me, have faced immense scrutiny. Every statement I made has been questioned, fact-checked, and investigated thoroughly. Despite this, my allegations have held firm, proven true each time they have been examined.

## **FORUMS AND PROPER EXAMINATION**

There is only one legitimate forum capable of adjudicating the truth in this case: a court of law. Unlike media narratives or the actions of corrupt officers, the courts have the necessary expertise, oversight, and legal standards to examine the evidence impartially. It is here that both sides have faced scrutiny, and the results have been telling.

## **OUTCOMES: WINS AND LOSSES**

Throughout 2022 and 2023, I have appeared nearly two dozen times in criminal courts, facing a barrage of false charges, including four illegal arrests, three unlawful detentions, six malicious prosecutions, and numerous attempts to sabotage bail hearings.

In each instance where my case was properly examined, the allegations against me were found to be false, and I emerged victorious. The pattern is clear: every time their fabricated charges were scrutinized by an independent authority, they were dismissed or withdrawn.

Meanwhile, on every occasion where my own allegations have been investigated, they have been corroborated by the facts and substantiated by evidence. The PSIRA investigation, which led to charges against Wouter de Swardt, is just one example of how my position has been validated time and again.

## **PROOF OF POSITION**

I am confident that these steps are only the beginning and that further criminal charges will follow. The evidence above is the strongest validation of my position. It is scandalous and shocking that any reputable news publication could align itself so closely with criminals. Even if they were duped, as so many others have been, that is no excuse for publishing fabrications. Worse still, these fabrications served a calculated purpose—one that News24 ended up aiding and abetting.

What's more troubling is not just their involvement with criminals but with individuals masquerading as private investigators and professional police officers. They abused the power and authority entrusted to them, committing countless serious crimes and manipulating the criminal justice system to inflict injustice. All the while, they fabricated evidence to paint me as the villain, with their clients cast as victims.

This significant vindication, alongside the thousands of pages of evidence supporting my position, should provide ample motivation for a thorough investigation.

## **ASTOUNDING CRIMINALITY**

The table of offenses involving SAPS officers and the conspiracy column speaks volumes. The scale of criminality is staggering—not just in the number of offenses but in their severity and the blatant disregard for the law. The articles granted credibility to a consortium by portraying lies as facts. But since these lies were crafted to deceive and profit, News24's reporting was nothing short of propaganda, not journalism.

The tables below are crucial as they:

1. Expose extraordinary levels of criminality and corruption.
2. Demonstrate that every case brought by Mr. de Swardt has been found to be false and fabricated, while my allegations, after thorough investigation, have been proven true.

This connects directly to the disciplinary proceedings and investigation into Sergeant Stevens, who, along with Mr. de Swardt, played central roles in the campaign against me. Stevens acted as de Swardt's colleague, proxy, and inside man—a bridge between private interests and SAPS. It was through these special relationships that private individuals, without legal authority, were able to weaponize the state for personal gain.

## **THE URGENCY**

As I've previously stated, "I am trying to resolve everything as quickly as possible." In 2022, my mother, now in her late seventies, was diagnosed with lung cancer. I've been unable to visit her due to SAPS's sabotage of my visa extension, orchestrated by de Swardt and his clients. The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated matters—I haven't seen her since I left the UK in December 2020.

I am hopeful that my Letter of Good Cause to the Director General of Home Affairs, along with complaints to relevant authorities, will restore my immigration status. By September 2023, with the bogus immigration charge withdrawn, I should have been able to travel. But the visa issues have cost me nearly a year of precious, irreplaceable time with my mother. If we don't make swift progress, time will run out.

My top priority is to receive public apologies, unreserved retractions, and—most importantly—full corrections for the libelous articles published in 2022 and 2023. This needs to happen before my mother passes away. For me, this is far more important than any damages, which would be months away at best.

## **THE VERY REAL AND PRESENT DANGER**

Initially, I limited my complaints and communications regarding the criminality and corruption to IPID and PSIRA, hoping for swift, quiet investigations before those under scrutiny became aware, thereby avoiding further danger.

I waited a year and a half after my arrest to create distance, hoping to reduce the risk of more trumped-up charges designed to remove me from the scene.

It was only last month that I learned about the Press Council Ombudsman after a journalist suggested it as a remedy for the highly defamatory, entirely false, and influential articles still available to the public.

After spending 16 months compiling evidence and documentation, I've significantly widened the scope of my complaints and approaches. I've contacted the Home Affairs Minister, the Minister of Police, the Director General of Home Affairs, the Western Cape Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety, the Commander of Central Cape Town SAPS, the SAPS complaints system, Premier Alan Winde, the Press Council Ombudsman, the British Embassy, and the Police Ombudsman—who will address IPID's complete failure to respond.

In addition, I've reached out to journalists and publications, both those who published the articles and others who may do so in the future. Unfortunately, this escalation puts me at serious risk of further attempts to incarcerate me—or worse.

Those involved have shown a willingness to use highly illegal and immoral methods to achieve their goals. Mr. de Swardt and certain SAPS members have committed too many crimes to recount here, but they include: arresting Ollie Sokanyile out of spite, using arrests to cover up illegal evictions, illegally arresting me twice, and attempting to bury me in Pollsmoor Prison with fabricated charges purely for strategic gain. They carried out a secret, unlawful raid at my Llandudno property while I was detained, threatened and harassed those connected to me unless they signed pre-written witness statements, and stole over R100 million in rental income, refurbishments, and personal possessions that my landlords now refuse to return.

Their unlawful arrests and constant appeals, combined with false narratives in the press, have systematically removed me as their only opposition. After my December victory in court, they immediately orchestrated another arrest the next day. To make matters worse, de Swardt and SAPS used the chaos caused by my arrest to leave hundreds of families homeless—furthering their civil court case to take over the property.

Given the lengths they’ve already gone to avoid prosecution, I have no doubt they will stop at nothing. The thought of returning to Pollsmoor is terrifying. The fact that private individuals can use state resources to exact personal vendettas, financed by taxpayers, is a chilling reality.

Now that I’ve crossed this line, I’m determined to bring the truth into the public eye as quickly as possible. Once the truth is exposed, their incentive to silence me will diminish considerably.

### **MY COMPLAINT TO THE PRESS COUNCIL**

I believe my decision to submit a complaint to the Press Council, rather than pursuing immediate litigation for defamation, was a reasonable and measured approach. My hope was that if Media24 had been misled, rather than complicit, they would seize the opportunity to uncover and publish the truth.

The articles in question are especially harmful because they give undue credibility to a completely false narrative. Ironically, this false narrative was the very foundation upon which the articles were based. Rather than exploring possibilities or offering balanced reporting, the articles devolved into a misleading, false, and libelous narrative.

What Mr. de Swardt executed was a highly effective laundering of lies. Through the collaboration of the articles, the police officers, and the criminal justice system, these fabrications were presented as facts. This demonstrates the insidious power of recycling falsehoods until they gain credibility.

### **MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT MEDIA24 ARTICLES**

The articles published by Media24 and its affiliates contain multiple fabrications and distortions of the truth, which, rather than reflecting balanced journalism, serve as weapons in a targeted and malicious campaign against me. These articles failed to meet the fundamental standards of accuracy and fairness that the press is duty-bound to uphold. Despite overwhelming evidence contradicting their content, Media24 has not issued any retractions or corrections, allowing these falsehoods to remain in the public domain. This is deeply concerning as it demonstrates a clear disregard for journalistic integrity and accountability.

### **WHY MEDIA24’S APPROACH APPEARS SINISTER RATHER THAN ACCIDENTAL**

The circumstances surrounding Media24’s publication of these articles suggest something far more deliberate than journalistic oversight. The articles were not the result of a rushed or poorly fact-checked report; they were methodically crafted narratives designed to manipulate public perception, discredit me, and lend credibility to false legal actions taken against me. Media24’s consistent reliance on biased sources, their failure to verify facts, and their refusal to seek comment from me reflect an intent to cause harm, rather than a mere journalistic mistake. The timing of the articles, which coincided with key legal proceedings, further suggests that this was no coincidence but rather a coordinated effort to damage my case and bolster the unfounded claims of the true perpetrators.

### **SERIOUS AND SIGNIFICANT BREACHES OF THE PRESS CODE**

Media24’s actions are not just harmful; they are in direct violation of the South African Press Code. By publishing unverified, inaccurate, and defamatory content, Media24 breached several key provisions, including the obligation to ensure truthfulness, accuracy, and fairness in their reporting. Furthermore, they failed to afford me the opportunity to respond or present my side of the story—another violation of the Press Code. These breaches are not minor or isolated; they are extensive and systemic, showing a blatant disregard for the ethical standards that govern journalism in South Africa.

## **THE INTENDED AND ACTUAL USE OF THE ARTICLES**

The intention behind these articles was clear: to provide Keith and Inge Broad, along with their associates, with the means to justify their unlawful actions against me. The articles were weaponized in legal battles, used to support claims that were based on lies and manipulations. The Broads leveraged the media's coverage to further their campaign of intimidation and harassment, knowing full well that the articles would be seen as credible by the public, the courts, and law enforcement. The damage was immediate and far-reaching, influencing not just the legal proceedings but also public opinion, which was manipulated to view me as guilty before any facts were examined.

## **THE CONTINUING CONSEQUENCES OF AND DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE ARTICLES WHILE THEY REMAIN PUBLISHED AND WITHOUT CORRECTION**

The harm caused by these articles is ongoing. As long as they remain accessible online, without any correction or retraction, they continue to perpetuate falsehoods about me. Each day that these articles remain available, they reinforce the lies and damage my reputation further. Potential business partners, employers, and members of the public will encounter these articles and assume them to be truthful, unaware of the fabrications they contain. The continuing availability of these articles not only prolongs the damage but also obstructs my ability to rebuild my life and restore my reputation.

## **DUTY OF PRESS COUNCIL TO ACT**

The Press Council has an obligation to uphold the principles of truth, fairness, and integrity in journalism. In this case, Media24 has severely breached these principles, and it is the Council's duty to intervene. The Council must ensure that such blatant misreporting does not go unchallenged, as it sets a dangerous precedent for future cases where the media is used as a tool for personal vendettas and malicious campaigns. If the Council does not act, it risks allowing falsehoods to continue unchecked, undermining the public's trust in journalism as a whole.

## **DUTY OF PRESS COUNCIL TO ACT IRRESPECTIVE OF WHEN THE COMPLAINT IS SUBMITTED**

It is important to recognize that the timing of this complaint should not limit the Council's ability or obligation to act. The ongoing nature of the damage, due to the continued publication of these articles, makes this an urgent matter. The consequences are not confined to the past; they are felt daily as long as the defamatory content remains available to the public. The Press Council's duty to investigate and rectify breaches of the Press Code is not bound by a specific timeline—justice and fairness demand that corrective action is taken, regardless of when the complaint is lodged.

## **SUPPORTING CRIMINALITY AND AIDING EVASION OF THE TRUE CRIMINALS BEING PUBLISHED**

Media24's reporting has effectively aided in the evasion of justice by the true criminals involved in this case. By misrepresenting the facts and perpetuating a false narrative, the articles have shifted attention away from the unlawful actions of Keith and Inge Broad, Wouter de Swardt, and their associates within SAPS. The media coverage allowed these individuals to continue their illegal activities under the guise of legitimacy, shielded from scrutiny because the articles painted me as the villain. By failing to correct these falsehoods, Media24 remains complicit in their actions, allowing the true criminals to evade accountability.

## **UNDERTAKING**

I respectfully request that Media24 provide an undertaking that while I have no objection to them questioning Mr. de Swardt about his involvement, his role in the campaign, his relationship with Keith and Inge Broad, or any part of the allegations I have made, I do not consent to him being shown any of the evidence I have provided. This evidence is personal, private, and confidential and may well be used in future civil or criminal proceedings against him.

As someone who has been a direct victim of Mr. de Swardt's actions, I am acutely aware of what he is capable of. I trust Media24 will understand the sensitivity of this matter and respect the need for discretion regarding the evidence I have submitted.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings from the PSIRA investigation and the initiation of criminal charges, along with the SAPS Inspectorate's investigation and potential disciplinary and criminal actions against Sergeant Stevens, mark a crucial turning point. These developments are not just vindications of my claims but expose the true nature of the criminality behind the actions of Mr. de Swardt and his associates. The Western Cape Police Ombudsman's involvement further underscores the seriousness of the misconduct involved.

What Media24 misrepresented as legitimate "investigations" by Mr. de Swardt were, in reality, calculated fabrications orchestrated and funded by his clients to advance their own agendas. Time and again, these allegations have been subjected to thorough legal scrutiny and consistently proven false. On the other hand, my claims—subjected to the same legal standards—have been vindicated at every turn.

The landscape now, with independent investigations and overwhelming evidence supporting my position, is vastly different from when the first defamatory articles were published. The allegations that once dominated the narrative have been thoroughly discredited by legal proceedings, investigations, and independent bodies. The evidence—whether direct or circumstantial—consistently corroborates my version of events and wholly dismantles the narrative presented by Media24 and its sources.

While the legal system, through more than two dozen court appearances, has provided consistent vindication for me, Media24 has failed to report these critical developments. They eagerly reported the most damning allegations when they were first made, but have remained silent each time the truth emerged in my favor. This selective reporting has left a dangerous, skewed narrative in the public domain.

I believe it is now time for the Press Council to bring the media—and thereby the public narrative—into line with the facts. The tide has clearly turned. Every piece of evidence now available substantiates my claims and disproves theirs. The role of the Press Council in rectifying this situation is critical. The Council must ensure that Media24 is held accountable for its role in spreading and perpetuating these fabrications.

If the Council does not act, these false articles will continue to cause ongoing harm and damage to my reputation. Public apologies, full retractions, and corrections are not only necessary but long overdue. The narrative must reflect the facts as they now stand.

I have provided ample evidence to support my claims, and I remain willing to supply further information if required. I trust the Press Council will thoroughly investigate this matter and ensure that journalistic integrity is upheld.

Kind regards,

Darren de Rodez Benavent Russell

### **Emails Sent to Date (22 August 2024):**

**[Access folder here](#)**

- 1. Complaint to the Press Council Re Media24 News24 Regards Multiple Articles Published. Docs 1-5**
- 2. Complaint to the Press Council Re Media24 News24. Docs 6-20**
- 3. Summary of the R200 Million Campaign (Including Index). Docs 21-22**
- 4. Leirmans Road: Before and After the Transformation. Doc 23**
- 5. Corruption and Criminality: SAPS, State, Mr. de Swardt, Consortium, Keith and Inge Broad. Doc 24**

## Links to Relevant Folders:

1. Table of Offenses and Criminality  
[Access folder here](#)
2. Formal Complaint to SAPS Colonel McLean Inspectorate  
[Access folder here](#)
3. National Prosecuting Authority: Complaint & Request for Investigation  
[Access folder here](#)
4. Formal Complaint to the Press Council Ombudsman  
[Access folder here](#)
5. Audio Recordings & Transcripts: Witness Testimony (Housekeeper of 16 Leirmans)  
[Access folder here](#)
6. Audio and Transcript: Witness Testimony (Portfolio Manager Chandre Abrahams)  
[Access folder here](#)
7. Video Recordings & Transcripts: Illegal Evictions & Assaults by Mr. de Swardt and His Thugs at 16 Leirmans Road  
[Access folder here](#)
8. Video Recordings & Transcripts: Witness Testimony (Mario Boffa Confessions Series)  
[Access folder here](#)
9. Video Recordings & Transcripts: SAPS Officer Aiding Wouter de Swardt's Illegal Eviction  
[Access folder here](#)
10. Album of the Portfolio (Google Photos)  
[View album here](#)
11. Album of the Portfolio (Google Drive - The Truth Suid Africa Album)  
[View album here](#)
12. Link to Portfolio Imagery, Videos, and Photos  
[Access the collection here](#)