

COMPLAINT TO THE PRESS COUNCIL OMBUDSMAN- SUMMARY DOCUMENT

CONTENTS & LINKS *(Click on header or link)*

The Articles In Question

Introduction To The Complaint

Violations Of The Press Code:

Communications With News24

Evidence:

Cover Letter

Context & Background

Outcomes

CONTENTS & LINKS *(Click on header or link)*

Use Of The Articles

Impact

Conclusion:

Annexure. Article Analysis [[link to file](#)]

Schedules Including Outcomes [[link to file](#)]

Communications With News24 [[link to file](#)]

Proof Of Charges Withdrawal [[link to file](#)]

Index Created For Press Council [[link to file](#)]

THE ARTICLES IN QUESTION

This formal complaint addresses a pervasive series of articles published across Media24 platforms, including both Netwerk24 and Rapport, as well as affiliated publishers, spanning from August 2022 to February 2023. (The reasons for the submission and its timing are addressed in the [\[Press Council Cover Letter\]](#)) While we initially referred to these as six primary articles, the true reach is much broader. Many articles published on Netwerk24 were also printed in Rapport, often in expanded versions due to Rapport's print medium format. Although it is challenging to confirm that each Netwerk24 article was also published in Rapport, the likelihood is high. As a result, describing this as "six articles" significantly underrepresents the extent of coverage, as each publication contributed to a widespread repetition and amplification of defamatory content. We estimate there are fourteen instances where the primary articles were published or republished. These articles represent profound breaches of journalistic ethics under the South African Press Code, leading to reputational damage, defamation, and deliberate misinformation presented as credible journalism. They appear crafted with the intent to a) mislead the public and inflict reputational harm by advancing a malicious campaign or b) disregard journalistic standards, despite conflicts of interest among sources and the publication itself. Media24 bears primary responsibility, having allowed these breaches to occur under its watch, resulting in severe personal and professional harm.

Title & Link	Date & Author	Publication
(1) "A Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him... has finally been arrested while hiding in the Upper Cape" I [Link to article]	21 Aug-23, Julian Jansen	Netwerk24 (Media24)
(2) "A Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him. has finally" I [Link to article]	21 Aug-23, Julian Jansen	Rapport (Media24)
(3) "Briton who allegedly defrauded people with accommodation, gets bail." I [Link to article]	23 Aug-22, Ané van Zyl	Netwerk24 (Media24)
(4) "A British man who allegedly defrauded members of the public and tourists out of thousands of rands."	23 Aug 2022	Die Burger (Media24)
(5) "Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam." I [Link to article]	17 Dec-22, M. de Wee	Netwerk24/ (Media24)
(6) "Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam." I [Link to article]	17 Dec-22, M. de Wee	Rapport / (Media24)
(7) "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions." I [Link to article]	14 Jan-23, Carin Smith	News24 (Media24)
(8) "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions." I [Link to article]	Jan-23, Ground News	Ground News
(9) "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell."** I [Link to article]	20 Jan-23, V. Pillay	IOL
(10) "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell."** I [Link to article]	16 Jan-23	SoekNet (IOL)
(11) "Case adjourned against Briton who rents and re-lets houses." I [Link to article]	02 Feb-23, M de Wee	Netwerk24 (Media24)

Note: We contacted Vernon Pillay, who acknowledged his reliance on the above articles, expressed regret for any harm caused, and indicated his willingness to issue an apology and retraction. While his article is listed here for completeness, it does not form a core part of this complaint. Had he issued an apology, retraction and correction prior to the submission of the complaint we could have excluded it but as he has made clear this action was reliant on the outcome of the Press Council Ombudsman investigation, it has been necessary to include it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPLAINT:

The articles in question—News24, Netwerk24, Rapport, Die Burger, Ground Up, and IOL—represent severe breaches of journalistic ethics under the South African Press Code. The six main articles alone contain over 100 false or fabricated statements, compounded across additional articles, notably repeated in print in Rapport, creating a harmful pattern of misinformation that transcends ordinary journalistic failure. Media24's refusal to verify basic facts resulted in a damaging defamation campaign, transforming deliberate misrepresentations into a widely accepted narrative. Media24's instrumental role in perpetuating this defamatory narrative lent unwarranted legitimacy to a concocted storyline that destroyed my reputation, financial security, and personal life, culminating in months of unjust incarceration at Pollsmoor Prison. Given the gravity and extent of these breaches, I request the Press Council impose the severest Tier 3 sanction available. These actions strike at the core of ethical journalism and demand a decisive response. Media24's reporting has been especially harmful, portraying me as a 'slippery, deceitful conman' scamming unsuspecting tourists of millions of Rand by creating a complex and industrial-scale fraudulent enterprise. This stigmatizing narrative shattered my credibility across every conceivable relationship—professional, personal, and social. Now, I am constantly met with scepticism, suspicion, and distrust. I have addressed each false or fabricated statement in the document link: [\[Annexure. Analysis of the false/fabricated statements\]](#).

Not only was the only source for the initial allegations and articles Mr Wouter de Swardt and his clients, which in themselves ran contrary to the available body of evidence, the additional and more extreme allegations that followed in the second round of articles was also from that same singular source, had no conceivable relationship to the truth and ran contrary to the by then even more significant body of evidence.

In today's digital age, the inevitability of being Googled is a reality everyone encounters; online searches have become a standard practice.

It's almost given that people will Google someone before starting a relationship, attending a business meeting, conducting an interview, or establishing any new association. Unfortunately, any search under my name pulls up numerous articles, from a number of apparently different well-respected titles News24, Rapport, Netwerk24, IOL, and Ground Up, each presenting the same defamatory narrative. Readers will be unaware that News24, Netwerk24, and Rapport are all part of the same Media24 group, or that the IOL article is based solely on the presumption that the Media24 articles are factual. They will encounter multiple respected media titles uniformly portraying a definitive, extreme, and damaging image, not realizing this narrative originates from a single biased source with a known agenda.

These readers won't know of the true role of Mr Wouter de Swardt, who orchestrated much of this coverage) or the underlying conflict with Keith Broad, who instructed WdS. They won't understand that the "Inge" who was quoted extensively—receiving two dozen quotes and around 500 words in the articles—is Inge Broad, Keith Broad's wife. Or that she is the same person responsible for the malicious prosecution that unjustly imprisoned me for crimes she knew I didn't commit. Nor will the readers know that the Broads orchestrated the December arrests. While WdS, misrepresented as a hero figure, was the same individual who illegally forced his way into the property with eight thugs, beat up and ejected the occupants, and squatted. Furthermore, they won't know that the arrest at Fisherman's served as a distraction for WdS to execute an illegal, unofficial operation to reclaim Inge and Keith's property. They won't know of the congratulatory phone call made by WdS to Inge Broad as he left the Leirmans property heading back to the Fisherman's property, having arrested, handcuffed and threatened the housekeeper with being shot, then confiscating the property's keys from him, telling Inge Broad during that call, "We have got him; he won't be coming back this time." Readers will also be unaware that the "damage" cited by Inge was actually the transformation of the property itself, which resulted in a R13,000,000 increase in its value. They will not realize that the entire proposal for this venture originated with Inge and Keith Broad, who sought to deceive me into refurbishing their properties at my expense to later sell and clear their debts. All of this is covered in the "Evidence" section, including a number of links to related evidence, as well as the index itself [\[Index Of Folders And Files Created For The Press Council\]](#)

While the readers won't know any of this, Media24 was fully aware. Their very first article indicates that the publication knew who Keith Broad was, understood that Inge was his wife, and was cognizant of the ongoing conflict and legal battles. They knew he had instructed WdS to reclaim the property, and also knew that WdS had attempted to do so with several "**strong men.**" This knowledge alone constitutes a clear awareness of what was an aggressive and highly illegal act, regardless of any misrepresentation of the motives behind it. Jensen reported on July 21, "**When owner Keith Broad asked private investigator WdS of Fox Forensics to get rid of the tenants, the tide began to turn against Russell.**" WdS himself stated he and "**some strong men**" had "gone to empty" Broad's house. Ane Van Zyl noted on August 23, "**WdS of Fox Forensics, who investigated Russell at the behest of a homeowner...**"

It is also evident from the articles that Media24 was acutely aware of the **Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act (PIE)** and the associated landlord/tenant laws, rights, and obligations having quoted them and their purpose in the articles. In what world could it be considered legal or justifiable to hire a private investigator to reclaim a property? PIE provides a straightforward process for recovering a property if a tenant has breached the terms of the lease. This is not only an effective means of recovery; it is the only lawful means of recovery. The act of hiring a PI to achieve this aim should have alerted Media24 to a different and more sinister explanation. Furthermore, the mere act of hiring a PI who then descends upon a house with eight strong men to remove the tenant cannot have been anything other than highly illegal. Yet, Media24 even managed to spin that criminal act to portray Mr. Broad as the victim and me as the villain [\[Judgement And Interdict\]](#)

Media24's Role in Amplifying a Defamatory Narrative: Without Media24's involvement, the fabricated accusations by WdS, Keith Broad, and Inge Broad would have been confined to private litigation, where their malicious intentions and falsehoods could have been exposed under legal scrutiny. Instead, by broadcasting these unverified allegations across a vast media network, Media24 elevated them to perceived "facts" in the public sphere, sidestepping the legal checks and balances of a courtroom. Their decision to publish without verification falsely portrayed me as a criminal, disregarding substantial evidence that would have countered this narrative. It is revealing that the man who profited by portraying me as a scammer is himself exposed as a "scammer," "criminal," and "con artist" according to online reviews of WdS etc [Online reviews of WdS. https://www.netpages.co.za/Durbanville/Fox+Forensics-787636.html](https://www.netpages.co.za/Durbanville/Fox+Forensics-787636.html).

Escalation of the False Narrative: As de Swardt's campaign escalated and the methods and criminality became more extreme, so did Media24's portrayal of me, ignoring mounting evidence that directly refuted their claims. Media24 did not merely fail in their journalistic duties; they deepened the misrepresentation, intensifying accusations while disregarding court rulings and exculpatory information. Standard protocol demands engagement with all parties, yet Media24 did not contact me before or after publication of any of the ten instances they published articles about me. Nor did they correct the narrative as new evidence emerged. When I approached them, their refusal to engage, despite my providing a detailed breakdown of the methods, motives, relationships, criminality, corruption, and harm involved, including considerable documents and evidence, confirmed their calculated preservation of a false storyline over a commitment to truth. Their dismissal of my attempts to correct these falsehoods exposed their alignment with a malicious campaign. **Specific Press Code Violations:**

Accuracy, Truthfulness, and Balance (Sections 1.1 & 1.3): Media24 systematically disregarded its ethical duty to present news truthfully and fairly. The reports lacked balance, excluded crucial exculpatory information, and fostered a biased narrative that gravely harmed my reputation and misled the public.

Source Verification (Section 1.7): Journalists are required to independently verify information, particularly when sourced from biased parties. Media24 relied almost if not exclusively on de Swardt, whose vested interests were known to Media24. To our knowledge everyone referenced, quoted or interviewed in the articles (with the exception of the one American guest quoted) were supplied by WdS. This unchecked, biased reliance constitutes and resulted in multiple severe breaches.

Right of Reply (Section 1.8): Given the gravity of the accusations, Media24 had an undeniable obligation to offer me a right of reply. These articles did not merely touch on a business with which I was associated; they focused exclusively on me, honing in intensely and personally on my character and actions. It is difficult to conceive of a comparable situation in which a dozen articles over six months would target a single individual so explicitly, yet the publication would fail even once to seek their comment, input, or counterevidence. This failure effectively silenced any prospect of a balanced narrative, amplifying the harm inflicted.

Use of Anonymous Sources (Section 1.11): Media24 abused the use of anonymous sources, amplifying allegations from individuals with clear personal interests. Even worse, they quoted unnamed sources indirectly—second-hand information from a biased party—without disclosure. This reckless, undisclosed sourcing served only to intensify the harm caused by their reporting.

Dignity and Reputation (Section 3.3): The articles were overtly defamatory, presenting false claims that were both humiliating and deeply harmful, in direct violation of ethical obligations to avoid unnecessary harm. Their singular focus on me personally, combined with an

unmistakably one-sided approach that bore no resemblance to the truth, amounted to an extreme character assassination. The harm caused was not only foreseeable but inevitable, and its significance equally so.

Independence and Conflicts of Interest (Section 2.1): The only plausible explanation for Media24's otherwise inexplicable conduct is that its editorial decisions were influenced by de Swardt's connections or long-standing relationship with the publication. Whether this influence was as innocuous as implicit trust that was profoundly misplaced, or something more deliberate, I cannot say. Either way, Media24's independence was fundamentally compromised.

Headlines (Section 3.5): Media24's use of sensationalist headlines not only misrepresented the content of the articles but also amplified the defamatory impact of their false narratives. Each headline was not only exaggerated but factually false, creating a misleading impression of serious criminality. The August headlines falsely reported that my arrest was for fraud, scamming guests, and defrauding homeowners: (1) "A Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him... has finally been arrested while hiding in the Upper Cape" [FALSE], (2) "A Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him. has finally" [FALSE], (3) "Briton who allegedly defrauded people with accommodation, gets bail." [FALSE], (4) "A British man who allegedly defrauded members of the public and tourists out of thousands of rands." [FALSE]. Meanwhile, the December to February headlines falsely framed the arrest as a "second" for fraud and inaccurately claimed it was related to illegal subletting of properties: (5) "Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam." [FALSE], (6) "Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam." [FALSE], (7) "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions." [FALSE], (8) "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell." [FALSE], (9) "Case adjourned against Briton who rents and re-lets houses." [FALSE]. These headlines were not mere summaries; they served to cement a false narrative, compounding the harm inflicted.

Amplification of a Campaign of Misinformation: Media24's role went far beyond mere reporting; they actively legitimized a campaign of misinformation. By aligning with de Swardt's agenda and neglecting fundamental due diligence, Media24 directly facilitated severe personal, legal, and reputational harm.

Request for Tier 3 Sanction: In light of the extreme and sustained violations of the Press Code, I request the Press Council impose the severest Tier 3 sanction. Media24's conduct enabled a defamatory campaign that inflicted irreparable harm, striking at the very core of ethical journalism in the most egregious manner possible.

VIOLATIONS OF THE PRESS CODE:

INTRODUCTION: In addressing the numerous breaches of the South African Press Code committed by Media24/News24, this document highlights key examples of the systemic nature of the misconduct and the significant harm caused. There are 119 false or fabricated statements within the articles, circa ninety five percent of the content. Given the extensive volume of violations that stem, it is impractical to include every breach and false statement in full detail. **A comprehensive analysis of each statement within the articles is available in the document titled [\[3. Annexure. Analysis of the Articles\]](#).** For clarity and brevity, this document uses representative examples to illustrate the patterns of ethical breaches. These examples are not exhaustive but provide a clear picture of recurring issues. Additional details can be provided upon request, and specific evidence is referenced in the attached analysis. The South African Press Code mandates rigorous standards for accuracy, fairness, and transparency in journalism—principles essential to uphold public trust. Media24's reporting on me reveals a pattern of Press Code violations that shows a systemic disregard for these standards. These breaches were not isolated errors but reflected a deliberate approach advancing the agenda of specific individuals, including WdS and the Consortium. While I cannot say whether this was done knowingly and complicitly or whether Media24 was unaware of the true intent, the violations and harm remain the same regardless. Media24's repeated breaches go far beyond occasional mistakes; they reveal a concerted effort to amplify falsehoods, conceal critical facts, and perpetuate a damaging narrative about me. Taken collectively, these infractions represent an extreme deviation from responsible journalism and have inflicted lasting

THE ROLE OF WOUTER DE SWARDT AND THE CONSORTIUM: WdS played a pivotal role in orchestrating events that led to the publication of defamatory articles against me by News24. Appointed by Keith and Inge Broad to reclaim a property in which I had invested millions in refurbishment, WdS acted on behalf of a group I refer to as the "Consortium," including Keith and Inge Broad, Paula Disberry, the Schafers, and Ragi Moonsamy. These associations are thoroughly documented in court records and legal correspondence. WdS presented me as a criminal in narratives provided to News24, leveraging his longstanding relationship with the publication—and, one assumes, the trust in his ethical standing—to advance the Consortium's agenda. Instead of conducting an independent investigation, News24 adopted WdS's one-sided narrative, publishing it wholesale, and constantly building on the narrative with increasingly extreme statements—a narrative deliberately constructed to discredit me and manipulate public perception. This alliance with WdS, likely stemming from misplaced trust by senior editorial management, created a situation where crucial evidence was disregarded. This includes outcomes of various legal matters, revelations during hearings, and key developments, such as the investigating officer's perjury and contempt of court. Rather than adjust course or introduce the balance and counter-opinions entirely ignored, Media24 chose to strengthen the narrative further, pushing it to an even more extreme level. The outcomes of these cases, along with numerous other factors, clearly show that the attempts, allegations, charges, and manoeuvres orchestrated by WdS had no basis in fact and were solely motivated by his mandate with the owners to execute substantial injustices. The evidence against these claims is substantial. I possess hundreds of folders and thousands of files of documentation that are conclusive on their own. Taken together with the consistent failure to produce any evidence to support these allegations whenever they were tested, the reality becomes clear. And if further confirmation were needed, the investigations that have followed my formal complaints provide vindication from independent bodies whose role is to investigate corruption and criminality. **(1) The Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA)** investigation uncovered significant breaches by WdS, alongside findings from multiple investigations revealing serious misconduct by WdS and SAPS officers who collaborated with him, **(2) the disciplinary proceedings that followed, (3) the criminal charges now being laid by PSIRA. (4) The SAPS Inspectorate's disciplinary process against WdS's partner in crime, Serg Stevens, (5) Colonel McLean's investigation into the criminality, which has closely implicated Stevens, who now faces likely criminal charges, underscoring the extent of collusion involved. (6) the Western Cape Police Ombudsman's investigation, and (7) the Western Cape Anti-Corruption Unit investigation** into SAPS officers closely associated with WdS, highlighting severe corruption and abuse of authority. These findings expose a network of corruption and criminality tied to the Consortium and its tactics—facts that News24 failed to acknowledge or investigate. **(8) The inevitable lawsuits and legal actions against those involved** will further reveal the gravity of the conduct, underscoring the severe consequences of Media24's decision to align with WdS's narrative. When I brought all this to Media24's attention, I expected they would be horrified to discover they had effectively aligned with criminals and inadvertently provided this criminal campaign with its most effective weapon. I assumed they would be motivated to investigate and publish the truth. I could not have been more wrong. Instead, they have kept the articles online—articles that reported the matters only when they could be

most damaging to me, never when the same matters resulted in my vindication—ensuring that in the minds of readers, I am guilty of a whole host of crimes. Through these actions, Media24 not only misled its audience but also violated fundamental principles of the Press Code by aligning with an orchestrated campaign driven by individuals under investigation for criminal behaviour. Their failure to investigate or question WdS's motives, coupled with reliance on biased sources, resulted in a deeply flawed narrative that has severely harmed my reputation.

SECTION 1.1 ACCURACY, TRUTHFULNESS, AND FAIRNESS

PROVISION OF INACCURATE AND FALSE INFORMATION: Media24's articles did not merely contain multiple false statements; rather, virtually the entirety of the material content—anything of substance or significance that could influence the reader—was false. Aside from basic factual details, such as my name or the dates of court hearings, every substantial claim presented in these articles was either grossly misrepresented or outright fabricated. By focusing solely on this distorted narrative, Media24 created an account that had no basis in truth and violated every standard of journalistic accuracy and fairness. For ease of reference, I have addressed the false statements and fabricated statements separately. These false statements were not subjective errors or oversights but outright factual inaccuracies that could have been easily corrected with proper diligence. Each instance represents a serious failure to uphold journalistic integrity and violated the Press Code's foundational principles, as outlined below. There are too many examples of these violations to fit into the page limit, but as an illustration:

1. False Reporting of the First Arrest as Fraud-Related: Media24 falsely claimed that my first arrest in August was for "fraud." This was entirely untrue. The actual charges (later shown to be a malicious prosecution) were limited to alleged "theft" of three televisions and "breaking and entering"—a baseless claim, considering the property was my home. The charges and the bail application were wholly unconnected to any fraudulent conduct, something any journalist present during any of the four days of court hearings would have known. By falsely presenting the arrest as fraud, Media24 fabricated an image of serious criminality, establishing a misleading narrative that implicated me in fraud without any basis for doing so. (Violates: 1.1, 1.2, and 1.7). *"A British man who allegedly defrauded members of the public and tourists out of thousands of rands and damaged property was released on bail of R30 000 on Tuesday."*

2. False Allegations of "Defrauding Homeowners" and "Defrauding Guests" in First Arrest: Media24 compounded the inaccuracy by falsely claiming that the charges involved "defrauding homeowners" in one instance and "defrauding guests" in another. Both allegations were baseless, with no basis in the actual charges. These fabricated elements promoted an image of fraudulent activity and intent to deceive, despite being entirely unrelated to the proceedings reported. What stands out is the irreconcilable disconnect between the claims in the articles and the actual events while simultaneously aligning precisely with WdS's narrative. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, and 3.3). *"Russell allegedly rented properties from the owners and then advertised the properties on global platforms, sometimes making double or even quadruple booking for the same dates."*

3. False Reporting of the Second Arrest as Fraud and Continuation of Fraudulent Activity: Media24 falsely reported my December arrest as a "second arrest for fraud," wrongly implying an ongoing pattern of fraudulent behaviour. Although the December charges were fraud-related, the August arrest bore no connection to fraud, making it factually inaccurate to describe December as a "second arrest for fraud." This false linkage misled readers into perceiving a pattern of recurrent fraud, unsupported by any legal proceedings—a perception Media24 did nothing to correct by failing to follow up with the outcomes that showed the charges to be baseless. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, and 1.7). *"He was first arrested in about mid-2022 and released on bail. He has now been arrested on more fraud charges as more victims have come to the fore."*

4. Falsely Reporting Court Proceedings and Charges: Media24's articles strongly implied that journalists were present in court, yet they misreported the charges in alignment with de Swardt's narrative rather than the proceedings. This disconnect between the published accounts and the actual court proceedings is both shocking and unjustifiable. If journalists were in court, how did they report the charges inaccurately and always in the most damaging way possible? If they were not, why did they represent the proceedings as if present and reporting facts, and why rely solely on de Swardt's account despite his vested interest? Either way, the facts were readily accessible. These severe omissions and false statements suggest a clear intent to damage my reputation or a serious lapse in fact-checking and journalistic diligence. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, 1.7, and 2.1). *"The suspect will appear in court later this week to face charges related to fraud and illegal subletting."*

SECTION 1.1. THE EXTENSIVE USE OF FABRICATION

While there are a considerable number of false statements, there are considerably more that have been entirely fabricated. The content published by Media24 was not simply incorrect but overwhelmingly fabricated. These fabrications, primarily sourced from WdS, were strategically crafted to cause maximum reputational harm while providing WdS, his clients and his affiliates with various tactical advantages. Media24's unchecked reliance on these fabrications violated multiple sections of the Press Code, as outlined below. Examples include:

1. Fabrication of Facts: Media24's articles extensively included fabricated statements—almost exclusively outright inventions by WdS, his client and collaborators. By building the story on these fabrications, Media24 not only misled readers but also constructed an entirely false narrative. (Violates: 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, and 2.1) *"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."*

2. Inclusion of Entirely False Statements as Primary Content: The core content of Media24's articles relied heavily on fabricated details, often central to the allegations. For instance, claims that I had left a "trail of financial ruin" and that homeowners faced significant losses due to my actions were baseless. These statements were entirely false and designed to evoke negative reactions from readers, manipulating public perception. Media24 presented these statements without evidence, lending unearned credibility to what were effectively manufactured claims. (Violates: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.7) *"It is estimated that the British national made up to R34 million while committing this fraud, according to News24."*

3. Fabrication as a Central Component: Fabrications did not merely appear sporadically but were woven into the bulk of the story. Each paragraph layered additional falsehoods, building a cumulative narrative that misled readers into believing in a pattern of criminality and severe misconduct. This deliberate reliance on fabrication turned the articles into a sustained attack, creating an impression of investigative journalism while providing no factual basis. (Violates: 1.2, 1.3, and 1.7) *"Russell allegedly rented properties from the owners and then advertised the properties on global platforms, sometimes making double or even quadruple booking for the same dates."*

4. Fabricated Quotes and Statements from Sources with Vested Interests: Media24 frequently used fabricated quotes and statements attributed to sources who had clear personal or financial motives against me. Rather than questioning the credibility of these biased sources, the articles presented their statements as factual, devoid of qualifiers or disclosures about the sources' vested interests. (Violates: 1.3, 3.3, and 2.1) *"Inge...told News24 it was heartbreaking and frustrating to see what was done to her and her husband's luxury property on the Atlantic seaboard."* *"We have to ensure that he does not get out on bail again," says Victor. "Victims who want to join the coordinated process are welcome to contact De Swardt or me"*

- 5. Invented Testimonies without Independent Corroboration:** The articles included unverified statements from alleged “victims” and unnamed sources, publishing these as reliable accounts without scrutiny. Media24 failed to corroborate these statements, thus allowing WdS’s fabrications to masquerade as credible testimonies. This lapse in journalistic diligence bolstered WdS’s agenda impacting my reputation by lending false authenticity to his claims. (Violates: 1.3, 1.7, and 2.1) “One family from Canada paid R378,000 for eight days only to arrive to find a double booking.”
- 6. Fabricated Statements Presented as Facts:** The articles adopted a tone and language that presented these fabrications as conclusive, bypassing the principles of responsible journalism. Media24’s reporting framed WdS’s allegations as indisputable findings rather than questioning or contextualizing them, leading readers to view them as established facts. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, and 1.7) “Inge told News24 it was heartbreaking and frustrating to see what was done to her and her husband’s luxury property on the Atlantic seaboard.”
- 7. Assertions Framed as Conclusive Findings:** Instead of treating WdS’s accusations as unproven claims, Media24 presented them with finality, using terms like “defrauded millions” and “left homeowners in financial distress.” These assertions lacked any factual basis but were framed as the outcome of investigative diligence, misleading readers into accepting them as verified truths. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, and 2.1) “We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years,” says De Swardt.
- 8. The Combined Effect of Fabrications:** The cumulative impact of these fabrications was substantial, creating a pervasive narrative of ongoing criminality and severe misconduct. Each sentence within the articles was crafted to reinforce WdS’s version of events, with almost no aspect of the story grounded in verified truth. This deliberate structuring amplified the false narrative, further misleading readers and unduly damaging my reputation. (Violates: 1.2, 1.3, 3.3, and 2.1) “He allegedly rented out the same place to two or three people at a time and disappeared without a trace after being paid thousands of rands.”
- 9. Ever More Outrageous Fabrications:** Fabrications in Media24’s articles escalated to increasingly outlandish and improbable claims, each crafted to maximize sensationalism and reputational harm. These fabricated details not only stretched believability but also showed a deliberate disregard for journalistic integrity, relying on shock value to sway public perception without any factual basis. What is worse, as the articles’ claims grew bolder and more extreme, the body of available evidence, including outcomes and many other factors, was clearly undermining the fundamental basis on which all the fabrications were based. Yet this not only did not stop the allegations from being made in the articles; they became more numerous and more extreme. In addition, having failed to make any attempt to contact me before or after the August articles, Media24 failed to contact me at any point during August to December for comment or input. Yet, having failed to do so, they felt it appropriate to continue publishing more articles, five in total, without ever once checking with me as to any of the allegations or making any effort to contact others. Other than WdS and those he put forward as contributors, I have not been able to find a single person involved in or witness to the period 2021 to 2023 who has ever been contacted by Media24. (Violates: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.7) “It seems he thought he was untouchable. We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years,” says De Swardt. In my view, if I did not track him down and find evidence against him, he would still be continuing with his scams even now.”
- 10. The Disconnect Between the Allegations and Available Evidence, and the Direct Connection Between the Fabrications and De Swardt’s Narrative:** What stands out throughout all of the articles is that the content of Media24’s articles has little or no relationship with the truth. As the articles progress, there is a growing disconnect between the facts and the reporting. Alongside this, it is evident that the articles mirror, parrot, repeat, and regurgitate the narrative spun by WdS to the letter—not once or twice, but on every occasion. It would be an impossibility to suggest this was a freak coincidence. Rather, it is evidence of where the information was coming from and who was providing that information. It is further evidence that there was no journalistic endeavour or investigation, no attempt to corroborate or fact-check, and as is clear by their failure to try to speak with me, no attempt at balance and no interest in the truth. Media24’s published fabrications starkly contradicted available evidence, further confirming that the falsehoods were designed and perpetuated by De Swardt to support his narrative against me. Instead of independently verifying facts, Media24 simply reprinted De Swardt’s claims, promoting an agenda rather than truth. (Violates: 1.1, 1.3, and 2.1) “*An alleged luxury accommodation scammer, who is suspected of making up to an estimated R34 million during the last two years by defrauding luxury property owners along Cape Town’s Atlantic Seaboard, as well as unsuspecting tourists, has been arrested on charges of fraud for a second time.*”

SECTION 1.2 BIAS IN REPORTING

Media24’s reporting exhibited clear and systemic bias, as demonstrated by selective reporting, exclusion of countervailing perspectives, and a failure to verify WdS’s narrative. These biases resulted in a one-sided portrayal designed to amplify harm to my reputation while advancing WdS’s agenda. Below are the specific categories of bias that contributed to Media24’s unbalanced reporting. Media24’s reporting exhibited clear and systemic bias, violating several Press Code clauses, specifically: [Section 1.2: Requires fair, balanced reporting with news presented in context, avoiding distortion or exaggeration. Section 1.8: Establishes the right of reply for subjects of critical reportage. Section 1.7: Mandates verification, especially when accuracy is in doubt. Section 3.3: Requires the press to avoid harm to individuals’ dignity and reputation]

1. The Clear Bias: Media24’s consistent favouring of WdS’s allegations, without question or verification, demonstrated an inherent bias in their approach to this story. The articles provided no balanced consideration of alternative perspectives, instead elevating WdS’s narrative as though it were the only viewpoint. This bias fundamentally undermined the objectivity required by the Press Code, casting me in a negative light with no counterpoint or investigative fairness. (Violates: 1.2 and 3.3) “It seems he thought he was untouchable.”

2. Imbalance and Selective Reporting: Rather than investigating the situation holistically, Media24 chose to selectively report only those aspects that supported WdS’s narrative. For instance, favourable court rulings and important contextual facts that would have contradicted the narrative were entirely omitted. This selective presentation skewed the reader’s perception, allowing unsubstantiated allegations to go unchallenged. (Violates: 1.2 and 1.7)

3. Selective Reporting (Not Reporting Outcomes): Despite significant legal outcomes that discredited WdS’s claims, Media24 chose not to update or correct their stories. Critical developments, such as the dismissal of charges and court findings in my favour, were ignored, leaving the public with an uncorrected, outdated, and damaging impression. The failure to report these outcomes is not merely an omission but a deliberate choice to withhold exonerating information. (Violates: 1.2, 1.6, and 1.7)

4. Selective Reporting (Timing of Articles): Media24 strategically timed its publications to coincide with key court dates and high-stakes moments, ensuring maximum reputational damage. By publishing at times that would inflict the most harm—without acknowledging subsequent developments—Media24 aligned itself with WdS’s goals, using timing as a tool to support his agenda. (Violates: 1.2 and 3.3)

5. Selective Reporting (Publishing Selective Chapters of a Story): Media24 presented a disjointed narrative by publishing selective “chapters” of the story that would further their damaging portrayal while omitting context that might mitigate their claims. Rather than providing a

comprehensive account, the reporting picked isolated incidents to heighten the appearance of wrongdoing. This selective storytelling misled readers by creating a piecemeal narrative disconnected from the full scope of events. (Violates: 1.2 and 3.3)

6. Failure to Provide Balanced Reporting: A balanced report would have involved seeking independent perspectives or acknowledging my side of the story, but Media24 wholly neglected this responsibility. By failing to balance the narrative, Media24 offered readers only WdS's perspective, which was inherently self-interested and unverified. The absence of balance reinforced an unchallenged portrayal of guilt, violating principles of fair reporting. (Violates: 1.2 and 1.8)

7. Failure to Seek Information or Sources with a Counter View: Media24 did not make any attempt to consult or include sources that could provide a counter-narrative. This choice reflects a failure to exercise journalistic rigor, as they exclusively relied on sources with known conflicts of interest and ignored other parties who could offer a different perspective. This selectiveness reveals a bias-driven decision to prevent the emergence of contradictory information. (Violates: 1.2 and 1.7)

8. Failure to Obtain Comment or Information from Me: Despite the allegations against me, Media24 did not seek my input or perspective, a core tenet of responsible journalism. Ignoring my side of the story allowed the narrative to proceed unchecked, without the benefit of clarification or rebuttal. This deliberate avoidance of my perspective deprived readers of the full picture and violated my right to reply. (Violates Section 1.8)

9. Rejection of My Attempts to Engage: When I reached out to correct inaccuracies and provide factual clarification, Media24 outright refused my engagement. This refusal was not based on any journalistic rationale but served solely to preserve their narrative. By denying me an opportunity to present facts, Media24 ensured their portrayal remained uncontested and unbalanced. (Violates: 1.8 and 1.9)

10. Skewed Misrepresentation of Legal Proceedings: Media24's misreporting consistently favoured WdS's interests, with every inaccuracy working to enhance his narrative. Interestingly, none of these errors were in my favour. This pattern reveals a bias-driven approach where legal proceedings were deliberately misrepresented to align with WdS's agenda. Rather than accidental reporting errors, this skew suggests a wilful choice to frame the proceedings as more damaging than they were. (Violates: 1.2, 1.7, and 3.3)

11. Perpetuation of Lies Despite Court Rulings and Evidence: Even as court rulings and additional evidence emerged that disproved WdS's allegations, Media24 chose not to adjust their narrative. They continued to report falsehoods without acknowledging the exonerating facts, perpetuating an outdated story that bore no resemblance to reality. The refusal to recognize clear evidence is indicative of an agenda to persist with a false portrayal. (Violates: 1.2, 1.6, and 3.3)

12. Perpetuation of Lies by Escalating an Extreme Narrative: Not only did Media24 perpetuate lies, but they escalated the narrative to increasingly extreme portrayals, even as evidence to the contrary mounted. Instead of reassessing their position, they continued to amplify WdS's falsehoods, reinforcing an ever-more damaging narrative that was fundamentally unsubstantiated by events. (Violates: 1.2, 1.6, and 3.3)

13. Sensationalism and Bias: Media24 introduced sensational, exaggerated claims to increase public interest, regardless of their truthfulness or the harm caused. This approach led to the publication of extreme assertions, many of which had no factual basis, and added to the narrative of fraud and deception. This reliance on sensationalism betrayed an intent to prioritize impact over accuracy. (Violates: 1.2 and 1.4)

14. Failure to Make Any Changes Since Publication: Despite subsequent developments that clarified and discredited many of the original claims, Media24 made no effort to update or correct the stories. Each article remains frozen in its original, damaging form, reflecting the situation at its most severe, even after outcomes shifted significantly. By leaving the story at its most harmful point, Media24 displayed a disregard for the evolving truth and a commitment to preserving WdS's original narrative at all costs. (Violates: 1.6 and 1.7)

15. Media24's reporting uniquely positioned it as the sole outlet perpetuating a narrative of my alleged wrongdoing. Other than articles replicating Media24's coverage, no other media outlet has reported on any such alleged "scam," nor is any comparable information available online, despite Media24's claims. If such a large-scale scheme truly existed, the fact that Media24 alone continues to publish these claims three years later raises significant questions about the credibility and objectivity of its coverage.

16. Media24's narrative also created a cover for those actually responsible for substantial criminality. The articles systematically excluded their criminal actions from public scrutiny, allowing them to masquerade as victims while deflecting all blame onto me. This biased coverage provided individuals like Keith and Inge Broad with a platform to portray themselves as moral crusaders, using Media24 to achieve goals that would otherwise have been unattainable. Through Media24's selective reporting, the perpetrators of serious misconduct were cast as victims, protected from accountability, and shielded by a narrative that reversed their roles in the public eye. Media24's involvement effectively turned reprehensible conduct into a moral crusade, rendering the villains as heroes and the actual victim as the perpetrator.

SECTION 1.3: PRESENTATION OF FACTS AND VERIFICATION.

1. Use of Unqualified Statements Based on Anonymous Claims: Media24's articles consistently used definitive, unqualified statements rooted in anonymous claims, effectively presenting conjecture as fact. By failing to qualify assertions based solely on unnamed sources, Media24 misled readers and lent undue weight to unsubstantiated allegations. Approximately 70-80% of Media24's coverage included assertions from anonymous sources without necessary qualifiers, creating a pervasive tone of conclusiveness that encouraged readers to accept these claims as factual. Rather than acknowledging a lack of independent corroboration, Media24 employed definitive language that implied verification, where in reality, none existed. Many statements appeared without any disclaimers like "allegedly" or "reportedly," which would have signalled the unproven nature of the claims.

This approach directly contradicts Sections 1.3 and 1.11 of the Press Code, which require that reporting from anonymous sources be qualified and clearly contextualized. The failure to apply these standards resulted in unbalanced coverage that conveyed a misleading sense of factual certainty. Worse still, a significant portion of statements attributed to unnamed sources were not firsthand but were relayed second-hand by WdS, citing what he claimed unnamed sources had said or done. These are thus second-hand anonymous sources from an individual known to Media24 as having a vested interest. This unchecked chain of hearsay was presented as fact, demonstrating a complete breakdown in journalistic filtering and disregard for Press Code standards.

2. Use of Qualifiers in Reporting: Media24's use of definitive language without appropriate qualifiers further distorted the truth, breaching Sections 1.3, 1.7, and 1.8 of the Press Code. Articles presented speculative and unverified claims as fact, misleading the public by framing unproven accusations as established truths. A comprehensive review revealed at least 38 statements lacking necessary qualifiers, 18 of which were attributed directly to de Swardt or were likely sourced from him. This reliance on a single, highly biased source, especially one with a known vested interest, is an extreme departure from ethical journalism standards. The absence of qualifiers served to endorse unverified allegations, giving them undue authority and causing serious reputational harm. If qualifiers such as "allegedly" or "reportedly" had been applied, it would have been

evident that many claims lacked substantial basis, reclassifying these articles from factual reports to speculative pieces. Media24's failure to include qualifiers represents a clear breach of Section 1.3, which mandates the media "present news in context and in a balanced manner, without any intentional or negligent departure from the facts," and Section 1.7, requiring the verification of "doubtful information." Given the extreme nature of the allegations and the narrow pool of sources—primarily statements from de Swardt and other Consortium members—the absence of qualifiers significantly compounded the articles' lack of accuracy.

Even with qualifiers, the articles' overall tone and phrasing, alongside selective sourcing, would still have conveyed the impression of factual reporting rather than speculative claims. This combination of definitive language, selective phrasing, and failure to engage with me for my perspective created a distorted narrative that appeared factual but lacked evidentiary support. This approach clearly conflicted with Section 1.1, which mandates truthful, accurate, and fair reporting.

3. Direct Impact of Omitted Qualifiers and Conclusive Language: The absence of critical qualifiers caused Media24's narrative to imply established guilt without substantiation, fundamentally breaching journalistic principles of fairness, accuracy, and the presumption of innocence. Examples include phrases like "finally been arrested," "manipulated wealthy property owners," and "continued his fraudulent schemes," each of which was presented without indication that these statements were unverified. Such conclusive language led readers to assume all allegations were factual, when in reality, they remained unproven. This pattern severely impacted my reputation, resulting in a one-sided narrative that abandoned journalistic objectivity and ethical standards.

SECTION 1.7: VERIFICATION OF DOUBTFUL INFORMATION

1. Failure to Verify Even the Most Basic Facts and Allegations: Media24 neglected to conduct basic fact-checking on nearly all elements of the story, not just the dubious or contentious information. By failing to verify even the most straightforward claims, the publication allowed an entirely unchecked narrative to dominate, ignoring journalistic standards of accuracy. This includes neglecting to cross-check readily available public records, court documents, and official statements that contradicted the story's primary claims. (Violates Section 1.7)

2. Unquestioning Acceptance of Allegations and Content from a Single, Interested Source: Media24 relied exclusively on WdS and other sources closely associated with his agenda, with no attempt to corroborate their statements independently. This approach shows a complete lack of journalistic diligence, as the information was accepted without question despite WdS's vested interest and personal stake in discrediting me. (Violates: 1.7 and 2.1)

3. Neglecting to Disclose the Vested Interest of Key Sources: By omitting any disclosure of WdS's personal and financial interests in this matter, Media24 misled readers about the credibility of the sources. Presenting allegations from biased individuals without qualification or transparency compounded the failure to verify doubtful information. (Violates: 1.7 and 2.1)

4. Disregarding Contradictory Evidence That Disproved Key Claims

Significant evidence contradicted the allegations presented, yet Media24 ignored this material. By failing to consider documentation, court records, and other available evidence that disputed WdS's narrative, Media24 perpetuated an unchallenged story while deliberately overlooking information that would have required them to revise their reporting. (Violates: 1.7 and 1.1)

SECTION 1.8: RIGHT OF REPLY

1. Refusal to Correct Documented Errors After Publication: Media24 disregarded numerous factual inaccuracies in its articles despite my attempts to clarify and correct them. By refusing to issue corrections, Media24 perpetuated a false narrative, violating my right to address damaging misinformation. (Violates Section 1.8)

2. Failure to Update and Correct Errors as New Information Emerged: As legal proceedings unfolded and outcomes contradicted the original allegations, Media24 failed to adjust its reporting to reflect these developments. By not updating the articles with exculpatory outcomes or new facts, Media24 left an outdated, damaging version of events unchallenged, depriving me of a fair portrayal. (Violates: 1.8 and 1.1)

3. Neglect to Revise Articles, Leaving the Narrative at Its Most Damaging Point: Even as circumstances evolved in my favour, Media24's articles remained static, reflecting only the situation at its most damaging juncture. This strategic omission preserved the most harmful aspects of the narrative and denied me the chance to see the full context presented accurately to the public. (Violates: 1.8 and 1.1)

4. Rejection of My Requests to Provide Evidence and Rebuttal: When I reached out to provide evidence and address inaccuracies, Media24 dismissed my input without valid reason. This blanket rejection prevented the publication from achieving a balanced portrayal and actively obstructed my right to respond to significant allegations. (Violates Section 1.8)

5. Misleading Justifications for Rejecting My Right of Reply: Media24 provided false or misleading reasons for its refusal to engage with my responses. By claiming procedural or editorial grounds that did not hold up under scrutiny, Media24 effectively blocked any counter-narrative, ensuring that WdS's claims remained unopposed in the public domain. (Violates Section 1.8)

SECTION 1.11: USE OF ANONYMOUS SOURCES

Media24's excessive and unwarranted reliance on anonymous sources represents a significant departure from Press Code standards, particularly Sections 1.11, 1.7, and 2.1, which mandate transparency, accuracy, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. By over-relying on unnamed sources without justification or corroboration, Media24 amplified biased claims, constructing an unchecked narrative that served the interests of WdS and his clients, lacking balance, accountability, and transparency. The articles relied heavily on unqualified and unverified anonymous claims, a tactic that magnified the allegations' impact while bypassing essential journalistic rigor. This lack of verification, compounded by presenting allegations as fact, lent significant voice to second-hand, unnamed sources and intensified the influence of their statements. Particularly damaging was the decision to grant Inge Broad anonymity, which weaponized her statements with the undue protection of anonymity. It is beyond reason that a journalist would consider it appropriate to grant such anonymity to a client of WdS—an individual in clear conflict and active litigation with me—thus enabling her to use Media24's platform against me unchecked. This lack of accountability, combined with an overreliance on anonymous sourcing, produced a narrative that advanced WdS's agenda and deprived the articles of essential balance, transparency, and integrity. Although these violations may not be as grave as those involving false or fabricated content, the publication's approach to its responsibilities in this regard is symptomatic of its approach to the articles and the subject matter as a whole.

1. Lack of Balance in Anonymous Sourcing: Media24 relied exclusively on anonymous sources that aligned with WdS's perspective, failing to incorporate independent or counter-perspectives. This one-sided reliance presented opinion as fact and skewed the portrayal significantly. Without balance, Media24 allowed WdS's agenda to shape the narrative unchallenged, in direct violation of Section 1.11, which requires balanced, impartial sourcing.

2. Excessive Reliance on Anonymous Sources Without Justification: Across numerous instances, Media24's articles included statements from anonymous sources without providing justification, depriving readers of traceable, credible accounts. In at least 38 instances, statements were presented without attribution, leaving speculative claims to shape the narrative in place of verified facts. This pervasive lack of transparency directly contravenes Section 1.11 and allows unverified information to carry the weight of truth.

3. Unnecessary Use of Anonymous Sources in Non-Sensitive Contexts; The unwarranted use of anonymity was particularly problematic in cases where the subject—a civil dispute involving financial allegations—did not justify such protection. There were no personal safety or sensitive issues involved, making the decision to shield sources unjustifiable. This practice bypassed journalistic responsibility, as anonymity in non-sensitive contexts only served to allow baseless claims without scrutiny, misleading readers with unverified allegations treated as factual.

4. Weaponization of Anonymous Sources to Shield Dubious Claims: Media24 further exploited anonymous sourcing to shield dubious claims, reporting damaging allegations without scrutiny. The use of terms like “allegedly” or “reportedly” was conspicuously absent, leaving readers to believe these anonymous claims had been validated. The unchecked power given to anonymous sources not only misled readers but also created an unbalanced, unsupported narrative in violation of Section 1.11.

5. Failure to Verify Anonymous Sources: Media24 did not fulfil its duty to verify the credibility of its anonymous sources, omitting the rigorous due diligence required to confirm their accuracy. This lack of verification resulted in exaggerated or even fabricated claims being portrayed as factual, significantly eroding journalistic standards and credibility. This failure violates Section 1.7, which mandates accuracy verification, and Section 1.11, which governs the careful use of unnamed sources.

6. Failure to Consider Bias and Conflicts of Interest in Anonymous Sources: In allowing anonymous sources without evaluating their motives or interests, Media24 neglected its responsibility to provide readers with transparent and fair reporting. Anonymous sources with direct ties to WdS and the Consortium were allowed to shape the narrative without Media24 disclosing the potential bias or conflicts of interest involved. This practice directly violates Section 2.1 of the Press Code, which requires the press to be transparent about sources' vested interests, and Section 1.11, which limits reliance on unnamed sources.

7. Granting Anonymity to Sources with Clear Conflicts of Interest: Media24 granted anonymity to sources with direct conflicts of interest, such as Inge Broad—a client of WdS and a central player in the campaign against me. As her statements served a targeted agenda, her anonymity allowed her to weaponize her statements with impunity. By presenting her input as if it were neutral, Media24 enabled her to manipulate the narrative unchecked, concealing her vested interest from readers and breaching Sections 1.11 and 2.1 of the Press Code.

8. Misrepresentation of Source Roles to Mislead Readers: Media24's articles misrepresented sources to add credibility to the narrative, misleading readers with the illusion of impartial voices. **For instance, Johan Victor was portrayed as an attorney for the “victims” on several occasions. However, he was in fact the attorney for Keith Broad, Inge Broad, WdS, Ragi Moonsamy, as well as a long-standing colleague of WdS.** To our knowledge he does not possess a single signed mandate from a single victim. And he certainly never communicated in any way for or on behalf of a single victim. He has however, communicated extensively for and on behalf of Keith and Inge Broad. Keith Broad's December application was in fact drafted and submitted by Johan Victor. Further, it was Johan Victor who stood up in court and sought to block me using either fisherman bend or Leirmans Road as a bail address despite my having legal leases on each and there being no court order granted him or the owners to do so or to block me from entering. This move was done to try to have my bail application denied as a bail address is one of the most essential components. that despite representing the Consortium. The journalists who were supposedly present during these same hearings cannot have missed these events, in particular because the magistrate effectively told him to shut up and sit down as he had no role or standing in the proceedings, further, as his name was all over the court papers including the Similarly, an agent tied to the Consortium was quoted as a neutral third-party source, enhancing the narrative's credibility deceptively. These misrepresentations misled readers and compromised transparency, reinforcing a biased narrative without balanced input.

Through a combination of excessive, unjustified, and unqualified anonymous sourcing, Media24's articles constructed a narrative based on assumption over investigation. This reliance on unverified, untraceable sources allowed WdS's narrative to dominate without challenge, creating an unbalanced, unsupported, and damaging portrayal that fell short of fundamental Press Code standards.

9. Failure to Verify and Assess the Reliability of Anonymous Sources: Media24 failed to independently verify the credibility of anonymous sources or to ensure the information provided met accuracy standards, undermining the reliability of the reporting. Many statements were second-hand, cited by WdS as what he claimed unnamed sources had said or done. This method of reporting failed to meet the Press Code's standard for firsthand verification, instead framing hearsay as fact. By neglecting due diligence, Media24 allowed exaggerated or fabricated claims to appear as factual, reducing the standard of accuracy and violating Sections 1.7 and 1.11 of the Press Code. Through the pervasive use of anonymous sources, coupled with a failure to qualify or verify claims, Media24 enabled unverified and highly biased information to serve as the narrative backbone. This conduct stripped the articles of journalistic integrity, transparency, and balance, severely impacting my reputation by presenting speculative allegations as established truths.

SECTION 21: INDEPENDENCE AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Media24's Breaches of Journalistic Independence and Conflicts of Interest: This section highlights Media24's breaches in journalistic independence, particularly in its alignment with WdS and his interests. By relying heavily on a biased source without due verification or engagement from all parties involved, Media24's reporting displayed potential conflicts of interest and a compromised ethical position. Evidence from articles published over several years reveals a longstanding relationship between WdS and the publication. While this relationship may have fostered a misplaced sense of trust, it cannot justify the seemingly unchecked faith placed in his contributions or the narrative he controlled. It is unclear if WdS's ties with Media24, or with senior editorial staff, granted him an undue level of influence; however, the press code violations in these articles are so numerous and severe that they suggest there may be more behind the articles' content, timing, and tone than simple trust in a regular contributor.

1. Conflict of Interest in Media24's Relationship with WdS: Media24's reliance on WdS, a source with clear personal and financial motivations, raises serious questions of independence. The lack of scrutiny applied to WdS's statements and the uncritical publication of his claims suggest that Media24 allowed a conflict of interest to affect its reporting. This reliance is particularly concerning, given WdS's active role in the campaign against me and the Consortium's interests.

2. Inexplicable and Persistent Breaches in Journalistic Standards: The repeated breaches in Media24's reporting—particularly its failure to verify, lack of balanced sourcing, and inclusion of fabrications—point to either an uncritical acceptance of WdS's narrative or a deeper alignment with his objectives. The persistence and pattern of these breaches suggest more than accidental oversight, reflecting an alignment that undermines the expected impartiality of Media24.

3. Rejection of Attempts to Provide Clarification and Counterpoint: Media24's outright rejection of my attempts to engage or provide factual corrections highlights a disregard for journalistic objectivity and accuracy. By refusing counterpoints to WdS's narrative, Media24 preserved the one-sided portrayal and, in doing so, disregarded the Press Code's emphasis on balanced and fair reporting.

4. Implications of Media24's Role in Supporting the Campaign Against Me: Media24's alignment with WdS's narrative, knowingly or not, furthered the objectives of a broader, coordinated campaign. By publishing content that echoes WdS's interests without proper verification or context, Media24 effectively positioned itself as an active participant in this campaign. In doing so, Media24 potentially assumes liability for complicity in promoting a defamatory and damaging agenda, entrenching its role in the conspiracy that led to reputational and material harm.

SECTION 3.3: DIGNITY AND REPUTATION

This section highlights Media24's disregard for the ethical responsibility to respect individual dignity and privacy, with a focus on the harm caused by personal attacks, the foreseeable impact of such reporting, and intentionality behind the damaging narrative.

1. Personal Targeting in the Series of Articles: Media24's articles repeatedly targeted me personally, shifting focus from business-related matters to exaggerated personal scrutiny. This approach compounded the harm by creating a sustained, personalized narrative over the course of seven months, without seeking any input or comment from me to ensure fair representation.

2. Failure to Seek Comment or Context from the Subject: Despite the articles centring on my personal character, Media24 did not attempt to seek input or clarification from me, reinforcing a damaging and unchecked narrative. The lack of engagement with the subject shows a disregard for the core journalistic standard of allowing individuals the right to reply.

3. Foreseeable and Inevitable Reputational Harm: The nature of the reporting—focusing on character rather than conduct—created an inevitable outcome of reputational harm. This harm was foreseeable given the accusations' severity, sensational language, and repetitive personal focus over several months, which intensified the impact on my reputation and public perception.

4. Intentionality of the Harmful Narrative: While the intent may not have been explicitly stated by Media24, the articles' sustained alignment with WdS's agenda to damage my reputation suggests intent to harm. The pattern of one-sided, damaging coverage points to a narrative crafted to support third-party interests rather than to inform the public impartially.

5. Failure to Respect Privacy in Reporting: Details unrelated to the business matters were included, encroaching on personal aspects of my life that had no relevance to the alleged issues. This disregard for privacy reflects a violation of the Press Code, which mandates respect for individual dignity and reputation, especially when unrelated to the matter at hand.

6. Use of Sensational Language with Personal Implications: The articles utilized emotive language that heightened the sense of personal culpability and exacerbated public judgment. This sensationalism amplified the personal harm caused, presenting me in a manner intended to evoke public disfavour rather than an unbiased understanding of the events.

ANNEXURE – ANALYSIS OF THE 119 FALSE STATEMENTS CONTAINED WITHIN THE ARTICLES

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VIQwktRHXtIzzY_X5UXdoUm0XpSg4igq?usp=drive_link. The annexure provides a run-through of the inaccurate, false, or fabricated statements contained within the articles. A reply has been provided to all of the well over one hundred such statements. Each response is a brief refutation of the claims

COMMUNICATIONS WITH NEWS24

Link to the communications: [\[Communications with News24/Media24\]](#) Due to space constraints, the extensive correspondence with Media24 cannot be included in this complaint document, although it highlights the severity of their conduct. After the final charge against me was withdrawn, I wrote to News24, copying all senior and editorial staff. My email included a detailed four-page letter outlining the background, context, false content of the articles, the relationship between WdS and his clients, the use of the articles, the damage caused, and the gravity of their violations. I specifically drew the following to their attention. (1) **False claims** filled the articles, with nearly all statements from WdS and Consortium members fabricated and presented as fact. (2) **Biased sourcing:** News24 exclusively used Consortium members (e.g., WdS, Inge Broad) as supposed independent voices. (3) **Coordinated campaign** by the Consortium involved using SAPS, NPA, and media to harm my reputation and misrepresent me as a criminal. (4) **Fabricated evidence:** Consortium members manufactured affidavits and charges to construct a false narrative of "fraud" and ensure my detention. (5) **News24's role** in manipulating the media by publishing unverified Consortium claims as "facts." (6) The Consortium **harmed my business** by misleading Booking.com and other platforms, falsely portraying me as a scammer and disrupting guest experiences. (7) **Fake victims** were created by deliberately misleading guests to align with their narrative. (8) Certain SAPS officers **committed perjury** and fabricated legal documents, including a bogus immigration charge despite my valid visa. (9) The **scam narrative** promoted by the Consortium used articles, petitions, and social media to frame me baselessly. (10) **Malicious prosecutions** were repeatedly withdrawn, proving the charges were intended only to keep me incarcerated. (11) I questioned **News24's lack of integrity**, suggesting prior relationships with the Consortium may have compromised their reporting. (12) **Strategic delays in bail hearings:** The investigating officer used fabricated charges to delay bail, aimed solely at prolonging my incarceration. (13) Consortium-led **private detentions** were used to illegally arrest and detain me, bypassing legitimate SAPS investigations. (14) **Abuse of bail proceedings:** The Consortium continually interfered, using fabricated charges to ensure bail was denied. (15) **Undisclosed personal motives** of Consortium members influenced the charges, as shown by inconsistent legal documents and affidavits. (16) **Illegal evictions disguised as arrests** disrupted legal rental protections like PIE, exploiting SAPS connections for personal gain.

I also attached an index to the email, running to twenty-five pages, including links or references to significant documents and relevance. [Index of folders and files sent to News24 in September 2023](#). These included: (1) **Contents and index list of documents and evidence** (486 items). (2) **Summary of the period** from 2020 to 2023. (3) **Timeline Master document** (Excel draft). (4) **Wouter De Swardt:** A selection of material demonstrating the man, his methods, and motives. (5) **Analysis of the submissions** of Wouter De Swardt, his clients, and SAPS officers. (6) **Complaint regarding systemic corruption** in the South African Police Service (18.4.23). (7) **Conduct of SAPS officers** WdS and others: Examples and information (Draft). (8) **The crimes of WdS**, his clients, and SAPS. (9) **Case No. 7902.22** Application to Hear Oral Evidence and Affidavit Darren Russell. (10) **Immigration issue:** Information for Abrahams and Gross. (11) **Analysis of the entirely false affidavit** of Serg Stevens. (12) **Formal complaint** about Psira member WdS, including direct involvement in police corruption and violence. (13) **IPID complaint** - Reporting Systemic Corruption in the South African Police Service (18.4.23). (14) **Alan Wendi**, Premier of the Western state. (15) **British Embassy**, Foreign & Commonwealth Office. (16) **Media24 articles**. (17) **Fisherman's Bend** (Before and after folder, side by side). (18) **Inventory of possessions still illegally held** by Mr. Moonsamy - R4,200,000. (19) **Leirmans Road** (Before and after folder, side by side). (20) **Contents and**

index list of documents and evidence: "The stolen portfolio." (21) **Inventory photos** of the two inventories taken of the contents of the room the items were moved from to safe storage (one before going to safe storage and one after). (22) **Links to evidence folders** and photos, May 18 Master. (23) **Table listing the various crimes committed** by the group, WdS, and SAPS. (24) **Communications with Louis Herbert**, including consortium, ESS, plans regarding settling historical obligations such as deposits. (25) **Data regarding the losses and damage** inflicted by WdS, SAPS, consortium. (26) **Letter to Abrahams** covering various matters, Pages 1 to 51 (No link, confidential at present). (27) **Follow-up letter to Psira** of 31 August. (28) **Follow-up letter to IPID**; complaint to IPID of 18.4.23, followed up 21.8.23. (29) **Wouter De Swardt**: A selection of material demonstrating the man, his methods, and motives. (30) **Serg Stevens's Entirely Untrue Affidavit** (provided 4 months after the arrest) and the suspicious Home Affairs Affidavit and statement with contradictory information. (31) **Transcript XXX** Conversion of July 2023 Re 14 December 2022. (32) **Transcript of a phone conversation** with XXX and XXX in October 2022. (33) **Leirmans Road Inge Broad Statements About Damage** (Before and after photos). (34) **Affidavit Of Mr. Anton Moller**, Manager, and Owner of Rawsons Camps Bay. (35) **Transcript of the 21 videos** covering the confession of Mario Boffa. (36) **Anton Moller WhatsApp chat**. (37) **Gail Broad WhatsApp chat**, as above with Anton Moller. (38) **WhatsApp chat export** with Johannes Loubser, attorney. (39) **WhatsApp Chat Export Of The La Collection Gail Broad Group**. (40) **Victims created by WdS** and SAPS and guests turned into victims by WdS SAPS. (41) **The crimes of the consortium**, individual and as a group. (42) **Judgment in August hearing**. (43) **Affidavits and perjury**. (44) **The emails of the consortium members**. (45) **Booking.com communication**. (46) **Guest communications**. (47) **Fisherman's Inventory**: Items No.1 To No.1,750. (48) **Abrahams Summary and Other**. (49) **The reports from the platforms regarding** the number, dates, and callers taking down our profiles. (50) **British Embassy communications**. (51) **Deposit Returns Table and Comms**. (52) **Psira Contents update**. (53) **Evidence Folder Contents**. (54) **Disberry malicious prosecution**. (55) **Broad malicious prosecution**. (56) **WdS & Broad perjury**. (57) **Attacks and damage table**. (58) **Mario Boffa, Johan Schalkwyk, Denis Dalton, Andre du Rand**: Conspiracy to torture, murder, and dispose of the body, as well as embezzlement, fraud, and forgery.

"Dear Mr Russell. Thank you for your email. **As you are an accused of various serious criminal charges, as set out by News24's report ([Link to article](#)), News24 will and cannot get involved in the case against you before the court. When you appear in court, News24 can report on the case.** George Claassen. Public Editor/Ombud News24, & Media24 Community Press"

This statement was unequivocally false for several critical reasons: (1) The final charge against me had been withdrawn, leaving no criminal charges of any kind. (2) Even if charges had existed, there was nothing preventing the publication from engaging with or reviewing materials pertinent to the articles they published. (3) The very principle they invoked to reject my approach had not been applied when they repeatedly misrepresented various matters during the period from August to February when criminal charges were active. (4) Their continued failure to engage with me since the withdrawal of the fraud charges 19 months ago in March 2023, or the bogus immigration charge over a year ago in September 2023, is inexcusable. My reply to their rejection was equally detailed, directly addressing their claims and clarifying the position they asserted informed their decision. Despite this, they failed to respond.

The comprehensive nature of my initial communication, outlining serious violations, left no room for doubt. The only reasonable conclusion is that the articles and their relationship with WdS were motivated by more than mere deception or journalistic negligence; there was a deliberate intent to further WdS's malicious agenda while disregarding the fundamental journalistic standards of fairness, accuracy, and balance. This pattern of refusal, combined with a persistent failure to exercise even basic journalistic due diligence, indicates that Media24's alignment with WdS's false narrative was a calculated strategy rather than a mere oversight or error. This blatant disregard for truth underscores the publication's role in perpetuating a harmful and defamatory narrative.

EVIDENCE:

Since my release from Pollsmoor following the withdrawal of charges, I have dedicated over 16 hours daily for more than a year and a half to gathering evidence, facing considerable obstacles along the way. These challenges include (1) **SAPS's unlawful retention of my devices, data, and critical documents** seized in December 2022. Although the charges were dismissed in March 2023, SAPS refused to return my property, initially citing the bogus immigration charge as justification. When this charge was dismissed by the SPP, they continued to withhold my belongings without valid reasoning. With no resources beyond the clothes, I had upon leaving Pollsmoor, and after everything was stolen, I had to rebuild my life from scratch. Gradually, as funds allowed, I replaced essentials like a laptop and phone, reconstructing as much of the lost data as possible. (2) **Given the severity of the allegations**, I recognized the need to meticulously gather and present concrete evidence. Refuting 119 false or fabricated statements required rigorous substantiation to counter the recklessness of their publication. While I acknowledge it is the publications' responsibility to prove they had sufficient evidence to support each of the 120+ claims prior to publication, I felt it was essential to highlight the significant gaps and misrepresentations in their reporting through carefully curated evidence. (3) **Due to the articles' defamatory tone, authoritative presentation, and reputable publisher**, I have faced social and professional isolation, being viewed with suspicion and met with scepticism. Securing information and witness accounts under these circumstances has been exceptionally difficult. (4) **Additionally, potential witnesses** who could corroborate my account have serious concerns about retaliation from WdS, his clients, his corrupt SAPS I.O's. Given the actions taken against me, Ollie, Markus, Chandre, and others, these concerns are rooted in direct, firsthand experiences.

Despite these hurdles, I have compiled a substantial body of information and evidence to support my case. To facilitate the Press Council Complaint, I compiled a document titled [\[Press Council Ombudsman Index Of Evidence Folders and files\]](#) in to prioritize the most pertinent pieces among over four hundred folders and thousands of individual files, including documents, videos, audio, images, WhatsApp exports, and transcripts. For this complaint, the most relevant evidence falls into the following categories:

The evidence comes in various forms: (1) **Documentary Evidence**: This includes contracts, receipts, legal correspondence, affidavits, emails, messages, WhatsApp chats, videos, audio recordings, and images that directly contradict the false narratives published. (2) **Events and Timelines**: The events themselves, when placed in chronological order, clearly demonstrate the criminal methods, motivations, and goals of those involved. (3) **Outcomes and Court Decisions**: The outcomes of various legal matters and hearings consistently disprove the allegations made by Media24. (4) **Absence of Counterevidence**: In a case involving alleged fraud on an unprecedented scale, the lack of substantial counterevidence after two years of intense investigation speaks volumes. (5) **Creation of Evidence**: It is reasonable to state that if there were any fraudulent conduct, there would be no need to fabricate evidence or create victims; the attempts to create evidence demonstrate this very clearly.

1. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE: A FULL SCHEDULE OF FOLDERS AND LINKS PREPARED FOR THE PRESS COUNCIL OMBUDSMAN [\[index of folders, files and links\]](#) In addition and crucially the [\[Annexure. Analysis of the false and fabricated statements within the articles\]](#) To provide both evidence and its context I have created an outline of the campaign and inserted links integrating some of the most informative which include: The eyewitness, personal testimony, first had accounts of those involved but not part of the campaign are extremely

informative. The [housekeeper's account of the 14 of December](#), highlights what actually happened on the day of my arrest, including [WdS and Denis Dalton secret, unofficial and highly illegal raid and arrest at 16 Leirmans Road](#) while everyone was distracted by my arrest at Fisherman's Bend. II This includes a detailed account of one of the four [unlawful arrests and detentions of me and others](#). Something that unfortunately like every other facet, event, detail, or document that undermined their story and substantiated my position they failed to report. Similarly, Media24 failed to report that I was not the only one who was unlawfully arrested and detained on the instruction of WdS, both the [Leirmans Road housekeeper](#) and one of the [former portfolio managers Ollie Sokanyile](#) also experienced the abuse of power wielded by WdS, his clients as well as the corrupt relationships with a handful of SAPS officers is recounted in [the account of the former portfolio manager](#), audio recording that highlights attempts to find, harass and threaten people seen as potential witnesses, people who were explicitly clear that they saw no fraud and that the operation was legitimate and professional, who were told to lie, provide testimony to scripts provided for them and sign witness statements written for them or they would face ten to thirty years in prison as accomplices to a fraud that did not exist. II Likewise, the [videos of the illegal evictions and assaults](#) on 22 and 24 July, when WdS accompanied by an army of 8 thugs, forced their way into the property, on 22 July failing to remove the paying guests with a series of lies, returning on 24 July, forced their way in, beat up the occupants, changed the locks and squatted. As well as the video showing one of [WdS's colleagues at SAPS lying to the occupants](#), telling them the thugs had every right to eject them, or the video of the same day where [WdS threatens Ollie with prison](#) unless he gets out of his way, a threat he made good on 6 months later. II The videos of the [violent and aggressive behaviour of Mr Keith Broad](#), who instructed and employed WdS to take back the property by whatever means necessary, having failed to do so despite many attempts during the period Dec 2021 to June 2022, [during which time all rent, bills were fully paid](#) and no lease terms breached.

Keith Broad was so brazen in his lies that we had to ask his own managing agent to provide an [affidavit to the court](#) confirming that there were no rent or utility arrears and that both subletting and the works were an intrinsic part of the agreement. I That and a considerable volume of evidence, including all of [the emails between myself and the attorney](#), as well as the [extensive WhatsApp messages exchanged](#), which clearly a) expose all of the lies told by Keith and Inge Broad, WdS and his clients, b) show that all of the aggression came from Mr Broad, c) the constant attacks and attempts to take back the property, d) the multiple illegal evictions and attempts to cancel the lease e) despite having no valid reason to do so. On that occasion, turning up with Bobby Broad, armed with baseball bats, kicking in the door, This resulted in the [Protection Order being obtained against Mr Broad](#), which he then breached multiple times, and after the July assaults and illegal eviction [an arrest warrant for Keith Broad](#) was obtained from the High Court, although Hout By SAPS sat on it and did nothing, even ignoring the [attorneys communications demanding the arrest warrant be executed](#). II What we did not realise at the time was the very reason for hiring WdS was his willingness to break the law and his contacts within SAPS that enabled him to do so. Only recently discovering many [online reviews about WdS](#), giving the real picture of the man.

The [illegal evictions](#) were not a one off or even a sporadic attempt to take the property back illegally, but a consistent and [concerted campaign of illegal evictions](#), that was executed alongside the manoeuvres in the civil and criminal courts to achieve the same goals. II In response to the illegal eviction, I launched [spoliation proceedings in the high court](#). In an attempt to subvert and or avoid the inevitable outcome, Inge Broad filed the [malicious prosecution accusing me of stealing three old TVs](#). Something they knew to be untrue. I was unlawfully arrested. [There was no arrest warrant or even a docket](#), it was a purely strategic move, and one of many. In the detailed [summary of unlawful arrests, detentions, malicious prosecutions, and evictions carried out by SAPS and the consortium](#), this demonstrates the lengths they went to remove me. Likewise, [the table of unlawful arrests, unlawful detention, malicious prosecutions](#), demonstrates the methods and goals. I one of the many occasions on which they intentionally instructed and interfered with justice, they suddenly changed the charges as the bail applications started, saying I stole the junk contents of a back room, despite knowing I had placed them in safe storage, for which there were [inventories undertaken before and after transportation](#). II The July assaults and evictions, in particular WdS turning up with 8 huge thugs marked a very clear escalation in the illegal attempts by Keith Broad to take back the property. My attorney had advised me to consider walking away, regardless of the principles or the financial and personal loss because over the previous 7 months he had come to conclude Keith was capable of anything. But none of us anticipated what came next, with the significant escalation of using SAPS and the state as a weapon and a resource.

The august arrest was a profound shock. As was the pre planning, effort and calculated stratagem using [arrest as a strategy](#) as well as the enthusiasm for the goal of incarcerating me to achieve their objective. What followed was a concerted campaign that used [corruption, criminality, illegal conduct](#), and with astonishing hypocrisy legal channels interchangeably and in conjunction, to obtain that objective. Using the [courts and criminal methods interchangeably](#). The [summary of the R200 million campaign](#), alongside other overriding documents within the [main summary directory](#), runs through in detail all aspects of the campaign, its method, criminality, corruption, motives, objectives. For a more summarised synopsis the [introduction and unlawful tactics](#) is perhaps more useful. II What is clear throughout the documents is the reliance on a fabricated narrative, invented and propagated by Keith Broad and then by WdS. As one example of many, the [primary lies told by Keith and Inge Broad](#), 1) that Keith neither knew of or consented to the subletting business model, that there were rent arrears, that they neither knew of or consented to the transformation, that there was damage to the property.

The export of the [WhatsApp Chat With Gail Broad](#) (the agent and Keiths cousin), runs to 5,500+ messages that we exchanged, covers the most significant period and clearly demonstrates the proposal came from Keith and that every statement he would later go on to make was a lie. Backed up by the multiple other [WhatsApp exports](#), all from the key players, covering the period in question, showing the narrative spun by the landlords was a fiction. Additionally, the hundreds of emails and all the court documentation. So too Paula Disberry who was quick to jump on the bandwagon to take her property, also making the same claims, but any examination of the attorney communication or the [WhatsApp export Paula Disberry & DR 2020 to 2022](#). Which includes the hundreds of messages exchanges irrefutably exposes the lies. Likewise the detailed [chronological timelines of the attacks](#), detailing the near one hundred different attacks on me, the portfolio, staff and revenue. Keith Broad created the narrative of me as the villain to enable and disguise his real goal of stealing the property back. II To understand why then it is necessary to understand just how significant the transformations were: [index of the various albums, video and photo album G-Drive](#), [Video & Photo Albums One Drive](#), [Videos of the properties](#), incl. before and after, I [Videos of the properties, incl. before and after](#), I [16 Leirmans Rd Keith Broad's Property Before and after](#), I [Instagram excerpts video of after images](#), I [Llandudno Fisherman's Bend Before And After Video](#), I [Collection Of Llandudno Luxe Videos](#), I [Collection Of Videos. Llandudno Legend](#), I [Instagram Story Selection "D-Sign"](#), Each of the properties was transformed, and the time, money and attention to detail was exceptional, including over thirty projects across the portfolio.

Significant projects that changed the properties entirely. [Guest Suite \(Before And After\)](#), I [Stairway Project](#), I [Grand Vernada](#), I [Bespoke Cabana Project](#), I [Guest Apartment](#), I [Facade Project](#), I [New Kitchen](#), I [Garden Before and After \(Llandudno\)](#). There are several hundred albums, which include over 100,000 photos and videos cataloguing the properties and their progress, from ugly duckling to beautiful swan. [When I left Pollsmoor in the March everything I had built has been stolen and all the entirety of the Possessions Returned To Me was ten boxes of mouldy clothes](#). II And while the photos and videos more than adequately explain the motivation the financial data itself is as powerful and irrefutable. Outlined in [Rental Income Before And After](#) and [Rental Income Before And After The Transformations](#), the transformation brought about a tripling in the daily

rent cheived and a tripling in the occupancy rate. Combined resulting in a near 100% increase in rental income. II This was the real motivation for the landlords joining together, pooling resources, in pursuit of their common goal of dispossessing me of the properties I had transformed. The folder [Attacks By The Consortium](#) includes a graphic of all the various coordinated attacks, as well as the [Revenue & Booking Options](#) which show the R150 million in rental income the landlords stood to gain if they could remove me. II But to remove me would require considerably more than committing wholesale perjury in the civil courts, because on each occasion Keith submitted an application, we could expose the lies.

The involvement of SAPS proved exceptionally easy because it only required a couple of cooperative officers and the cosy relationship WdS enjoyed with Hout Bay and [Bellville Commercial Crime](#). What resulted was over [400 criminal offences committed](#) in pursuit of the goal, and if anyone doubt the arrest were not the result of or necessitated by the hearings in the civil courts, the [impossibility of coincidence](#) is demonstrated by looking at the dates of the two arrests and the dates of the two most significant hearings in the calendar. For one arrest to coincide perfectly represented odds of 1/540 or a 0.185% chance, for the [two arrests to coincide with the two dates](#) the calculated odds would be 1 in 291,600, or a chance of 0.000343%. II [The real reasons for the arrest in December](#) had nothing to do with criminal activity and everything to do with the landlords. The [timing was precisely in line with 20+ needs and wants of the landlords](#), and had nothing to do with criminal charges or investigation. Just as each one of the [6 malicious prosecutions](#) had nothing to do with actual criminality, but the agenda of the landlords. II In fact when we were finally able to see the docket, 7 months after the arrest, an [analysis of the docket](#) revealed it was [a docket in name only](#) and there had been no investigation at all, zero contributions from either of the investigating officers, and the only contents were the affidavits provided by Paula Disberry © and the [two false affidavits allegedly from Home Affairs employees](#) and Serrg Stevens continued perjury with his own [false affidavit inserting the immigration charge](#) into the arrest of four months earlier in which it played no part.

If you follow the [chronological times of Serg Stevens](#) the events and his conduct demonstrate the level of criminality, corruption and the true aims. As revealing is the [identical conduct of both investigating officers](#), in two different and unrelated cases, with seventy different actions that would normally never be a feature of an arrest directly mirroring each other. III The one thing that did connect the two was WdS and his clients. The [use and abuse of the criminal justice system](#) to inflict injustice was their most powerful tool. One they used effectively when I won my [application for the admission of oral evidence in the High Court](#), which meant a) evidence and witnesses could be cross examined under oath in court, and his lies would be exposed and b) the matter was pushed back 6 months for both sides to prepare. Unwilling to either wait or have his evidence subjected to scrutiny, KB and WdS recruited the landlord of Fisherman's Bend to their grouping and the [operation of 14 December was executed](#), and while on the surface this may have appeared legitimate [the corrupt relationships and agenda](#) that underpinned it, show otherwise. II Most alarming was [the secret, unofficial and highly illegal operation](#) at Keiths property at 16 Leirmans Rd, which should have had no part in the operation that day, but as the [account of the housekeeper](#) explains, it was in fact the primary reason for the arrest. Likewise the [seizure of my equipment](#), something WdS had wanted to do in the august but the presence of central cape town saps had made that impossible. Not only was WdS able to seize my equipment and data, but the operation allowed Keith Broad to illegally seize his property, as well as all of my contents, possessions and vast improvements, it also allowed Mr Moonsamy to seize Fisherman's Bend, its [vast improvements](#), all of the [projects I had paid for and completed](#), and the [R4.2 million of my possessions](#).

One look at the [collection highlights](#) exposes all of their lies, the portfolio was a passion project, a project of love, and the idea there was malicious damage, intentional rent arrears, operation of a scam would defy all logic, common sense, and have been personal and financial suicide. No one creates what I did, with the 6 residences able to generate R20 million a year in profits, and be so dedicated to the guest experience, while operating a scam, one that requires no physical properties and indeed is dependent on the scammer being highly mobile and unconnected to the physical scam itself. II The [lies Keith told about damage](#) were exposed immediately, when he listed the property for sale a few days after my arrest at R31 million, R13 million more than its value just a year earlier, the [videos and photos of Keiths ow marketing before my transformation and after](#), show the complete transformation, explain the enormous jump in value as well as the motivation behind their campaign. Likewise the [videos of the lettings marketing](#) show the property advertised at R25,000 a night, up 400% on what they used to achieve before my works. II What took place after the arrest was in my view the most heinous of their many heinous acts. When WdS, Serg Stevens, Keith and Inge broad and Mr Moonsamy conspired to create victims to compensate for the complete lack of any. The knew if they told the platform I no longer controlled or occupied the villa they would find all of the guests an alternate villa or provide a refund. So WdS created an [abhorrent plan to create victims](#) by not informing the platform. III And as every set of guests turned up expecting to check in only to find themselves homeless and stranded WdS and Inge Broad manipulated them away from contacting Booking.com's or their credit card company and towards Serg Stevens and SAPS waiting and ready to log these as fraud. In [WdS's dossier](#) that he created both to aid his client Kieth Broad in his December attempt to steam roller his application through, one that had necessitated my incarceration because of the false content, he logs eleven groups of guests who he claimed all paid my Cape Exclusive Bank account prior to my arrest. I truth only one did.

Yet that did not stop WdS using those guests in the media24 articles. Clearly Media24 made no attempts to verify WdS's claims, when providing second hand unnamed sources. II (The majority were in fact Mario Denis and Johan's scammed guests and something WdS knew because of his close working relationship with them. a working relationship that in itself that was sinister, illegal and morally repugnant. In particular the secret video recording [of Mario Boffa's confession to the embezzlement of R1.2 million](#) and the [plan to drug, torture and murder me](#) to get their hands on what they thought were the secret millions on deposit and the suitcase of diamonds and cash Paula Disberry had told everyone was hidden in my home). III What the arrest, dossier and Keith Broads December application show is why WdS used Media24 in the first place. While the information in the dossier is presented as if independent proof of the allegations of WdS, Keith Broad et al, every single item within it traces back to the same landlords and WdS. [The single originating source of all that is referred to as evidence](#), was either the direct creation of or authored by or motivated by Keith Broad, Inge Broad, WdS and Paula Disberry. The role Media24 played was to provide what seemed to be independent and credible confirmation of fraud, scams and criminality. Juxtaposed the docket that represented a year and half work, the input and resources of Belville Commercial, Hout Bay SAPS, WdS full time, Denis and Johan the Pls flipped y Paula who had access to everything, and two dedicated Investigating Officers assigned to the cases and working with and for WdS, contained no evidence independent of the landlords at all, while the Media24 articles, listed dozens of allegations, crimes, and charges. And gave the impression of thorough investigations and bulging dockets.

I cannot conceive of a situation where the reporting is so vastly different from the reality. Want Media24 published was verbatim the lies told by WdS, what they failed to publish were the facts and the truth. Precisely because of the absence of actual evidence, they needed Media24 to give credibility and legitimacy to their claims. This absence of evidence was highlighted by the [more than 60 occasions when evidence was needed or essential that they failed to provide it](#). As further substantiation, the outcomes of the [malicious prosecutions](#) clearly show there was no merit to any of them., in fact if you look at the [table of all outcomes](#) these show on every occasion their allegations were scrutinised and tested by the courts, they were exposed as lies, the attempt failed and my position was vindicated. III These universal outcomes were never reported by Media24, and while WdS and Keith Borad lost every such battle, ultimately they won, because the plan was never to get a conviction but simply to remove me for as long as possible when that served their purpose. Something very evident by the number of court appearances (21 in total) and

the constant attempts to have bail rejected or remand extended, while at the same time putting no effort into the docket that would be crucial in a trial. Very evident after delaying the start of the bail application by three months, when the prosecution saw the charges and what passed for a docket they threw all of them out, so in an attempt to keep me incarcerated Serg Stevens insisted [the bogus immigration charge](#).^{III} Telling the prosecution I had intentionally avoided extending my visa, something he knew to be untrue as he along with WdS, Serg Duna, Broads and Disberry had [stolen my passport to sabotage extension](#), and Duna and he had been [withholding it illegally](#) for a year by that point. The charge of “**failing to leave SA on 23 March 2021**” was entirely bogus as the Home Affairs ep had issued automatic extension through 2022^{intom2022}, and contrary to the statements of Serg Stevens, Duna and WdS, including in the Media24 articles, I had in fact extended my visa at the end of 2021 taking me into 2022 and from the point the passport was stolen was unable to do so again.

Although the Home affairs dept continued to issue moratorium tight through to mid-2024.^{III} Because of the bogus nature of the charge in June 2023 we submitted very detailed [Representation to the Senior Public Prosecutor](#), which outlined all of the allegations I make in this complaint and in multiple other forums. The SPP thoroughly investigated these for two months and on conclusion confirmed the charges was unreservedly withdrawn. Had the content of these representations not been accurate that clearly would not have happened. The withdrawal representing a clean sweep of every allegation, charge, reference to a charge.^{III} To try to normalise my immigration status I sent a [Letter of Good Cause to the Director General of Home Affairs](#), which also included they initiate an investigation into the matter. As with all the other attempts to motivate investigations they were provided with a [full chronology of events](#), as well as the [index of folders, files and links](#), which gives access to several hundred documents, including all attorney correspondence, all WhatsApp s exchanged for the period, photos, video, audio witness testimony, bank audit, and hundreds of files of evidence and information. In other words, full transparency, something WdS and his clients have consistently failed to do.^{III} And for good reason, the [hundreds of criminal offences they committed during their campaign](#), should have resulted with them each sending decades in prison [[Offences Committed During The Campaign With Accompanying Statute](#)], and the reason there are [so many questions that Serg Stevens needs to answer](#) is because the events and conduct conclusively expose the corruption and corrupt relationships, and it is these factors that have ensured they have to date faced no consequences for their actions.

As a result of all of the above, I had naively assumed a reputedly professional publication would be keen to know it had been complicit and indeed was the most [crucial player in that criminal campaign](#), further that they would want to now they had defamed me so violently and unfairly, so I sent a considerable amount of time compiling the information and evidence, drafting documents and files, and sent News24 a comprehensive package of material including a [four page cover letter](#), attached to which was a [very extensive list of folders, files with links](#) to many of them and the offer of links to the remainder.^{III} Given the gravity of the content and its implications for its journalism, I was horrified and demoralised when they outright rejected my approach and then gave false reasons for doing so.

2. EVENTS AND TIMELINES: The combined chronological timeline details the many individual events: [Chronological Timeline. General And All Events](#) and the [Serg Stevens's Chronological Timelines](#) details the criminality and corruption of SAPS

3. OUTCOMES AND COURT DECISIONS: The [table of all outcomes](#) demonstrates in detail the universal results of every attempt, all ending with the matters and charges thrown out. A more schedule of the unlawful arrests, unlawful detentions, malicious prosecutions and illegal evictions is also directly relevant [the table of unlawful arrests, unlawful detention, malicious prosecutions](#)

4. ABSENCE OF COUNTER-EVIDENCE & THE SYSTEMIC FAILURE TO PRODUCE IT WHEN NEEDED: (1) Given the allegations of fraud, substantial evidence was expected. (2) Fraud inherently generates an extensive paper and evidence trail. (3) A fraud involving a villa vacation operation would yield even more, with numerous functions and process points per booking—from inquiry and booking to email communications, platform messaging, the transaction itself, and post-booking interactions—each generating evidence. (4) As these interactions multiply across hundreds of bookings, they result in thousands of pieces of evidence. (5) Considering the allegations of double, triple, and quadruple bookings, these figures could be amplified by a factor of two to four. (6) Additionally, allegations of scamming R34 million would equate to approximately 1,200 bookings, or around 12,000 guests, resulting in vast amounts of evidence. (7) Furthermore, I faced unparalleled scrutiny, with the landlords (“Consortium”) inducing, deceiving, bribing, or threatening numerous individuals and organizations to investigate every aspect of my life and business. Four professional private investigators—one full-time and two with unlimited access to my data—along with several police units (Hout Bay SAPS, Camps Bay SAPS, Bellville Commercial Crime Unit), the landlords, their housekeepers, and involved publications contributed to this extensive resource allocation. (8) SAPS seized every piece of equipment, including laptops, phones, hard drives, and documents, providing them unrestricted access to years of data, bookings, and communications spanning five to eight years. (9) Moreover, multiple appeals from News24 for victims to come forward—including requests for names and contact numbers—failed to yield responses, despite expectations that the articles would prompt such feedback. The absence of incriminating evidence amidst these extensive resources is compelling.

This absence of counterevidence substantiates my position, reflecting the context during the publication of the articles. Given that the sources of their information stemmed solely from those in conflict with me, the question arises: how could they publish the articles in the absence of what should have been substantial physical evidence? Furthermore, how did they proceed despite the availability of counterevidence?

The absence of evidence is further highlighted by nearly 60 instances where evidence was essential but never presented. The failure by SAPS, WdS, and their clients to produce credible evidence at critical moments—opportunities that could have changed the course of court proceedings—is striking. It is unreasonable to assert evidence exists while failing to present it on nearly 60 occasions where it was crucial.

Absence and outcomes: The lack of counterevidence is particularly evident when viewed alongside the universally favourable legal outcomes,, revealing a stark disparity in the evidentiary positions of both sides.

The purpose of the articles: This absence underscores the true intent behind the articles. During my arrests, Investigating Officers presented no substantive evidence, relying instead on fabricated charges. The perjury during my first arrest was exposed by my advocate, drawing strong critique from the magistrate. In the second arrest, the officers fabricated charges in an attempt to rescind bail and delay proceedings.

The broader motivation behind these articles was to inflict maximum damage on me; their primary aim was to create an impression of criminality despite the absence of genuine evidence. With no real evidence available, there was a need to fabricate a narrative of scamming, with the articles serving as supposedly independent corroboration for this false narrative. Any responsible journalist would have considered these factors; however, they chose to perpetuate a toxic narrative authored by WdS, disregarding their journalistic responsibility.

5. CREATING EVIDENCE: The lack of legitimate evidence compelled WdS and his associates to fabricate incidents and manipulate situations to create an illusion of fraud. Key actions included:

(1) **Withholding Property Status from Platforms:** WdS and associates deliberately withheld information regarding the villas' control changes from booking platforms, preventing guests from receiving refunds or alternative accommodations. In typical circumstances, platforms would provide alternate solutions promptly, ensuring no financial loss. By withholding this information, WdS ensured that guests encountered unexpected issues, leading them to believe they were victims of fraud. (2) **On-Site Guest Manipulation:** WdS and others intercepted arriving guests with a scripted narrative, claiming they were victims of a vast scam affecting "thousands," discouraging them from contacting booking platforms or credit card companies by falsely asserting those channels had failed others. Instead, they directed guests toward SAPS to file criminal complaints rather than pursue legitimate recourse. (3) **Threats and Coercion for False Testimonies:** Witnesses were threatened with prison sentences of "10 to 30 years" unless they provided statements supporting the fabricated narrative, with some coerced into signing pre-written statements devoid of factual basis, later utilized as fabricated "evidence" for false allegations. (4) **False Affidavits and Perjury by SAPS Officers:** Certain SAPS officers, including Serg Stevens and Duna, submitted false affidavits during critical moments, such as bail hearings, falsely alleging fabricated immigration violations and other charges to lend credibility to baseless allegations. (5) **Baseless Criminal Charges:** Charges of theft and breaking and entering were filed without evidence, aimed solely at enhancing the appearance of criminal activity, despite the absence of corroborative evidence from extensive investigations. (6) **False Protection Order Applications:** WdS and his team submitted perjured protection order applications filled with false claims to justify unlawful actions against the client, thereby adding another fabricated layer to the narrative of wrongdoing. (7) **Fabricated Immigration Violations:** WdS and associates submitted false affidavits to Home Affairs to support unfounded immigration charges, manipulating legal documentation to further depict the client as engaging in unlawful activities. This systematic fabrication highlights the calculated attempt to create a false narrative of criminality.

The articles served multiple forums by fabricating an impression of criminality where none existed: (1) **Criminal Proceedings and Arrest Warrants:** To provide a veneer of credibility to false charges, enabling arrests without legitimate grounds; (2) **Bail Hearings:** To influence bail outcomes by presenting a "pattern of behaviour"; (3) **Civil Litigation:** To bolster civil claims and complaints made by WdS, his clients, or associates against me; (4) **Immigration Proceedings:** To portray a criminal profile that could impact visa and immigration status decisions; (5) **SAPS and Law Enforcement Reports:** To reinforce fabricated allegations and justify continued investigation or surveillance; (6) **Press Council or Media Regulatory Bodies:** As "evidence" to defend the articles' accuracy if faced with complaints; (7) **Public Opinion and Reputation Management:** To influence public perception and damage reputation, making it more challenging to gain support or fair treatment.

The extensive evidence I have meticulously gathered over the past year and a half serves to conclusively demonstrate the systemic failures and orchestrated fabrications employed against me. This evidence is not only substantial but also varied, comprising documentary records, witness testimonies, and comprehensive timelines that collectively dismantle the false narratives propagated by WdS, his associates, and Media24. The glaring absence of credible counterevidence, despite the overwhelming resources allocated by the Consortium to investigate and discredit me, underscores the lack of legitimacy behind their claims. The numerous failures to produce evidence at critical junctures further reveal the fabricated nature of the allegations. The intent behind the articles was clear: to inflict maximum damage and create a perception of criminality without any substantiating proof. The systematic abuse of the legal system, coupled with the uncritical acceptance of dubious narratives by the media, highlights a troubling disregard for journalistic integrity and accountability. This document stands as a testament to my unwavering commitment to seeking justice and exposing the truth amid a campaign of defamation and injustice.

COVER LETTER TO THE COMPLAINT

Link: [\[Press Council Ombudsman Amended Complaint. Cover Letter\]](#). Adjacent is the link to the cover letter. This addresses the questions, requests, and issues raised in your response email including (1) the reasons for the time frames of submission, (2) the substance of the articles, (3) amending the length of submission, (4) the outcomes, (5) my communication with News24. I have included the link rather than include it in the complaint due to the limitations on page numbers.

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Some context is essential regards the complaint, because the violations of the Press Code are so extreme that they defy any logic. But once understood in terms of the context and relationships, it is easier to understand how such egregious journalism made its way into the public domain

The Beginning: After years of visiting Cape Town, including an extended stay from 2014 to 2016, I returned in December 2020, intending to semi-retire and travel between my homes in London and Cape Town. Initially, I rented a property in Camps Bay for three months, aligning with my visa. However, when COVID-19 restrictions tightened, I could not return to the UK and decided to extend my lease. I invested extensively in improvements to the property because I loved it and had discussions with the owner about the possibility of purchasing it once I obtained residency. My initial motivation for renting a large property was to host family and friends from the UK for extended periods. When hosting family and friends became impossible, I began short letting the lower half of the property to generate income and cover improvement costs. The upgrades proved extremely popular, quickly filling the booking calendar. Moreover, I found I very much enjoyed hosting guests, and what began as a temporary solution evolved into a more permanent arrangement. Throughout this process, the owner was involved, aware, and consented. One of the agents who secured high-end short-term lets was very impressed with the property's transformation and funded by the tenant—a win-win for both parties. This led her to introduce her cousin Keith Broad, a decision that would prove to be the worst of my life.

The Broads' Financial Crisis: While I knew the Broads were attempting to sell the property, I was unaware of the reasons behind it. They had lied and told me that they were open to either sell or rent it. In reality, the sale was crucial to clear their crippling debts. They had tried to sell it for R22-24 million, but its true market value was closer to R18 million—far below what they needed to resolve their financial issues. With limited options, they could not afford to lower the price or undertake the necessary refurbishments to attract buyers. Facing escalating debts, their only viable solution was to enhance the property's appeal through significant improvements, yet they lacked the skills and financial resources to do so.

The Introduction of an Opportunity Through Gail Broad: The solution emerged when Keith's cousin, Gail Broad, informed them about a tenant who had transformed a leased property at his own expense. Recognizing an opportunity, Keith and Inge devised a plan to leverage my skills and financial investment. They approached me with a lease offer that included a five-year term, presenting it as a long-term agreement that would allow me to recoup renovation costs and eventually profit from the venture. This extended tenure was crucial in persuading me to commit to the extensive refurbishments, unaware that Keith and Inge never intended to honour the lease duration.

The Hidden Agenda: Reclaiming the Property Post-Refurbishment: Keith and Inge's true plan was to reclaim the property once the transformation was complete, benefiting from the improvements without incurring any associated costs. They assumed that, as an overseas tenant and interior designer, I would either lack the will or the ability to challenge their efforts. They believed they could exploit me as a resource to enhance their property's value, only to reclaim it under fabricated pretexts.

Early Efforts to Evict: Unfounded and Illegal Attempts: True to their concealed plan, once the renovations were completed on 20 December 2022, the first of many eviction attempts occurred just four days later, on 24 December 2024. To put this attempt—and those that followed—into perspective, they sought to evict a tenant who had paid R230,000 in rent, fully covering the lease period through early 2022. I had no arrears, no breaches, and had invested over a million Rand into improving the property and nearly as much on furnishings. Despite fulfilling every tenant obligation, the Broads launched a series of groundless eviction efforts, each supported by an ever-changing list of fabrications that were systematically exposed in court. This pattern continued over the following months. By the July illegal evictions, I had paid well over a million Rand in rent and bills, always paying quarterly in advance. Each eviction attempt relied on false claims, from alleged rent arrears—easily debunked by their managing agent—to assertions that they had not known or consented to subletting, claims contradicted by extensive communications with Keith and Gail Broad before and during the lease. Additionally, they misrepresented my renovations as damage, easily disproven with photographic evidence. These dishonest tactics consistently failed under court scrutiny, where their fabrications were exposed. Unlike the Media24 articles, the court provided a forum where the truth could be demonstrated, and each attempt ultimately failed due to a lack of legitimacy.

Appointment of WdS to Escalate Tactics: By mid-2022, frustrated by their failures through legal channels, Keith and Inge Broad appointed WdS, known for his willingness to use illegal tactics and his influential connections within SAPS—connections that enabled him to act with impunity. As their enforcer, WdS immediately implemented a twofold plan. First, he worked to delay the scheduled eviction hearing until November, clearing a path for illegal takeover attempts—methods that were faster, cheaper, and more likely to succeed than any legitimate court process. Second, he orchestrated a series of violent actions, including the notorious incidents on July 22 and 24, where he led a group of eight hired criminal thugs to forcibly enter the property, assault and expel the occupants, change locks, and seize control of the premises. In response, I filed urgent spoliation proceedings, along with an application to affirm my exclusive rights as the legal tenant and occupier, aimed at evicting Keith and Inge Broad, WdS, and the thugs. I also sought a High Court interdict to make any further eviction attempts a criminal offense, along with punitive costs, requiring the loser to cover combined legal fees totalling R250,000. Due to the blatant illegality of their actions, the judge ruled in my favour on all applications. [NB: WdS worked on behalf of the landlords. Since May 2022, and in numerous court filings since, we have referred to this group as “**the Consortium**.” This term is a straightforward shorthand for the collective of individuals who pooled resources and coordinated efforts to achieve shared objectives. Although the landlords would likely reject this label—especially given the criminal implications under conspiracy law—their own statements and actions clearly demonstrate a collaborative approach and unified methods.]

The Need for Media Manipulation Due to Court Failures: After repeated failures to substantiate their false claims in civil court and having every illegal eviction and lease cancellation reversed, Keith and Inge Broad realized that further efforts required (a) official court sanction to avoid reversal, (B) to achieve that evidence that appeared independent and credible. But both would be impossible while I was able to expose the lies. as such, a third component was essential, (C) my absence from proceedings. Without an opponent, manufactured evidence would not be subjected to the usual scrutiny. The articles provided an ideal solution, creating the illusion of substantiated allegations across multiple titles and sources. By framing their allegations as news stories, they could present fabrications as facts. The bypassing of judicial scrutiny or the usual burden of proof at the point of publication, allowed their introduction to the court, as if sanctioned fact due to the weight of credibility the news titles provided. . This media strategy effectively “laundered” their false claims through reputable journalistic sources, lending unwarranted legitimacy to their baseless allegations.

Media24 Articles as “Independent Evidence”: Once published, these articles acted as standalone “evidence,” presented as if they were impartial investigative journalism from a reputable source. They filled evidentiary gaps in the case of Keith/Consortium, creating an illusion of legitimacy where genuine proof was absent. Alarming, these articles were then used in legal settings as “evidence” of misconduct, despite lacking any factual basis, falsely suggesting multiple independent validations of the Consortium's claims. This created a highly convincing image of a rogue tenant of the worst kind—the kind any judge would instinctively feel obliged to evict. It is unimaginable that any judge, presented with these articles, would reject an eviction application. However, achieving this outcome required my absence, preventing me from mounting a defense.

Weaponizing the Media to Justify Legal and Extra-Legal Actions: With these articles as a foundation, the Consortium exploited them in various forums to advance their agenda: **(1) *In court***, Keith Broad used these publications as core evidence in his December application filed the morning after my arrest, positioning them as independent confirmations of his false allegations to compensate for a lack of actual evidence. These articles became the central support for his application, covering every allegation he had previously failed to prove—rent arrears, intentional non-payment, fabricated claims about property damage, false statements that the owners had not consented to subletting, and the overarching narrative of a large-scale scam defrauding both homeowners and guests+++ **(2) *To justify the December arrest***, the articles were instrumental. The existing “docket” contained almost no actionable evidence, certainly not enough to obtain an arrest warrant. When two magistrates initially rejected the application, the articles were used to persuade a superior officer to authorize it. **(3) *In broader contexts***, the articles isolated me, creating the impression of a fraudulent operation that, for instance, made it impossible to recruit or retain staff. **(4) *To intimidate potential witnesses***, WdS, the Broads, and the investigating officer used the articles to foster distrust and fear, coercing individuals to lie under oath and sign pre-written witness statements under the threat of facing 10–30 years in prison. **(5) *To recruit support from property owners***, the articles helped persuade the owner of my main property, Fisherman's Bend, who had previously resisted their efforts, to join their side. **(6) *To influence guests***, WdS and Inge used the articles to convince guests arriving after my arrest that I had defrauded them. They intentionally withheld information from the booking platform about the change in property control, so that guests would continue to arrive unaware of the situation. On arrival, guests were presented with a rehearsed story claiming they were victims of a scam involving thousands of people, with no hope of financial recovery. The articles served as “proof” of this deception, convincing guests to file charges as their only recourse, directed to the waiting I.O, Serg Stevens. In this way, the articles enabled WdS and Inge to effectively turn guests onto victims and then convince them I was responsible

ALLEGATIONS: Before even examining the articles, if we break down and list all of the allegations made by WdS, Keith Broad, and the consortium in various forums outside of the media—such as their civil court attempts to reclaim property, attorney communications, and the August malicious prosecution—there are just under fifty primary allegations and derivatives. These encompass some of the principal fabrications, including claims of financial ruin, rogue tenant behaviour, scamming guests, rent arrears, modus operandi, property damage costs. Derivative allegations vary these further with claims of unpaid rent, unauthorized subletting, fraudulent advertising, property misuse, and visa violations. I compiled a comprehensive list of these and then reviewed the Media24 articles against it. **Every single one of these allegations is represented in the articles.** Remarkably, I could not find a single claim from the Broads or WdS that was left out, nor any allegation in the articles that the Broads hadn't previously asserted. To compound this already wholly biased reporting, not one allegation or statement I've made is included in the articles. The result is a verbatim amplification of every falsehood propagated by Keith and Inge Broad, and WdS, without any balance or independent verification. This convergence between the consortium's statements and the articles goes beyond bias—it's a wholesale regurgitation of the consortium's narrative under the guise of journalism.

SOURCES: Similarly, before reviewing the articles, if we identify the main consortium figures, they consist of the landlords and associates: (1) WdS, (2) Inge Broad, (3) Keith Broad, (4) Mr. and Mrs. Schaffer, (5) Paula Disberry, (6) Ragi Moonsamy, (7) Keith Broad's managing agent and cousin Gail Broad from Rawson Properties, (8) Ragi Moonsamy's agent Terry McKenzie from Waterside Estates, (9) the consortium's attorney Johan Victor, and (10) the investigating officers.

Upon examining the articles, I identified a total of fifty-six quotes from sources or attributed to sources. When reviewing the origin of these quotes, the breakdown is as follows: WdS – 21 instances, Inge Broad – 18 instances, Keith Broad – 1, Mr./Mrs. Schaffer – 1, Ragi Moonsamy – 2, Gail Broad – 1, Waterside Estates/Terry McKenzie – 2, Johan Victor – 4, investigating officers – 4, with two "second-hand" sources provided by Inge and WdS attributed to guest complaints allegedly recounted by them. With just one quote from a guest present at the property during a journalist's visit. Even this lone external voice was selectively misrepresented to fit the consortium's story. The only consortium member not directly quoted was Paula Disberry, though it's likely she served as an indirect source of information. In total, **55 out of 56 quotes** came directly or indirectly from this same group of key players within the list of consortium members, a list that predates even the first article, reinforcing a single narrative and precluding any semblance of journalistic neutrality.

THE ISSUES: **1. Inappropriate Anonymity:** Anonymity was afforded to sources in circumstances where it was clearly unjustified, undermining transparency. **2. Extensive Use of Anonymous Sources:** Half of all quoted sources were anonymous, cloaking the true identities and biases of the consortium. **3. Reliance on Biased Sources:** The articles relied exclusively on quotes and sources from the consortium, presenting their claims without scrutiny or counterbalance. **4. Misleading Journalistic Content:** Nearly every section purportedly authored by journalists (for example what the first arrest was for or the second arrest being a second arrest for fraud, or the proceedings, charges and bail application) contained false information. **5. Unbalanced Quotation Sources:** Of the 56 quotes, 55 originated from individuals within the consortium or their direct associates. (51 if you exclude the superior of the investigating officer). **6. Misrepresentation of Source Roles:** Through anonymity or deceptive representation, individuals like Inge Broad (referred to as "Inge") and Johan Victor (presented as the attorney for the victims when in truth he was Keith and Inge Broad's attorney) were presented as unrelated, independent sources rather than integral members of the consortium. Representing more than half of all sources quoted. **7. Hidden and Misrepresented Roles:** When factoring in the concealment or misrepresentation of WdS's true role and influence, across the articles, all but one quote came from sources whose identities or roles were distorted to appear credible or impartial.

The direct correlation between the consortium's fabrications and Media24's publications reveal a level of alignment that defies coincidence. Every allegation made by Keith and Inge Broad was mirrored in the articles without deviation or addition—transforming them from independent news reports into coordinated narratives that the consortium could wield as authoritative proof in legal proceedings. Given the impossible odds of such total alignment occurring by chance, any assertion that this correlation is incidental collapses under scrutiny. The facts surrounding the sources, content, and contributors make any claim of journalistic impartiality a literal impossibility. This was not journalism; it was a calculated, unchecked amplification of a single agenda, with Media24 complicit in misrepresenting allegations as verified truth.

+++ Every fabricated claim made by Keith and Inge Broad from December 2021 to July 2022 appeared in these articles, published from August 2022 to February 2023. The alignment between the articles and the Consortium's narrative was so precise that they could be presented as independent, authoritative corroboration in court. It defies all logic to view this as accidental; of the 50+ allegations made by the Consortium, every single one was mirrored in the articles with no deviations or additional claims. Assuming even a modest 1 in 10 probability for each allegation to align by chance, the odds of all 50+ aligning perfectly without coordination would be as low as 1 in 10⁵⁰—or roughly 1 in a nonillion. This example underscores the near impossibility of such alignment occurring independently, reinforcing the conclusion that it was coordinated by design.. A detailed comparison in [\[Analysis of Sources and Allegations\]](#)

Credibility, Legitimacy, and Recruitment: The articles provided legitimacy to the Consortium's actions, obscuring their criminal behaviours while presenting them as justified responses to a fabricated narrative of my alleged misconduct. They portrayed a thoroughly illegal and immoral campaign as a moral crusade, effectively recruiting others to their cause. This included landlords and associates influenced by the media's portrayal, who were drawn into the Consortium's campaign against me.

Ongoing Role of Media24 Articles in Filling Evidentiary Gaps: Each gap in the Consortium's narrative was strategically filled by these articles. Whenever actual evidence was lacking, Media24's publications were cited as if they provided factual support. This allowed them to construct a convincing yet entirely fabricated narrative that held up in settings devoid of judicial scrutiny. The media coverage transformed lies into credible statements and criminal tactics into legitimate actions, effectively facilitating the Consortium's campaign.

The Impossibility of Coincidence: the arrests were orchestrated to advance the 'legal' attempts. The impossibility of coincidence that applied to the statistical odds of the narrative of Keith Broad and Media24 mirroring each other's, applies equally to the arrests and the court timetable.

First Arrest: August 4, 2022: Following the illegal evictions of **22/24 July**, my spoliation application was filed on **27 July**, with the hearing scheduled for **4 August**. Inge Broad had filed false charges (theft of three TVs and breaking and entering) on **29 July**, setting up WdS and his connections in Hout Bay SAPS to arrest me. The plan was clear: I could either withdraw the application and walk free or proceed and face extreme prejudice in the criminal justice system. Coincidentally, I was in Pringle Bay for a brief break due to fully booked villas, though I had intentionally chosen a location outside of WdS's reach as we had expected a more physical attempt at removal. On August 3, believing it was safe to return, I came back to Cape Town. The next morning, just before my attorneys were set to appear in court for the spoliation hearing, WdS, having illegally tracked my phone, forced entry onto the property and arrested me. Terrified, we had already called Central Cape Town SAPS for help. This arrest was not the outcome of a legitimate investigation; it was a calculated ploy by private individuals to manipulate the criminal justice system, ensuring I could not attend court. The stakes could not have been higher: a win for me would affirm my sole legal right of occupancy, secure an interdict criminalizing any further illegal actions by Broad and WdS, and grant punitive costs, holding Broad liable for both parties' legal expenses of approximately R250,000. A win for Broad, however, would deny me access, grant him sole legal possession and leave me with substantial legal costs. I ultimately won on all counts, proving why they wanted me removed. Failing in their primary goal, they shifted to prolonging my detention to find new ways to retain control of the property.

Second Arrest: December 14, 2022: In the November application (the hearing WdS and Broad had postponed pursuing the illegal routes) I applied for the admission of oral evidence which would allow the parties to call witnesses and to cross examine them and the evidence, so that this much higher evidentiary bar would help expose the many lies within Broad's application. Something Keith was very keen to avoid. In early December the court approved my application and set a date for April 2023. Broad, unhappy to wait any longer and even more unhappy the evidence would be scrutinised, faced a limited window to appeal, effectively expiring on December 16, 2022. Broad and his attorneys, who had prepared the appeal

between 6 and 11 December, filled it with fabricated evidence, Broad knew his case could not withstand scrutiny if I were present. On Broad's instruction, WdS had me arrested on December 14, allowing him to submit his application the following morning, knowing it would proceed unopposed, and ensuring that I was unaware of the submission and powerless to respond in any meaningful even if I had known. The seizure of my devices and data ensured even if I did become aware of proceedings the information and means by which I would instruct and brief attorneys to mount a defence no longer existed to me.

Statistical Improbability of Coincidental Arrest Timing: The timing of these two arrests precisely aligned with the most critical court dates of the entire campaign—the two moments where my absence was vital to their success. Over our 18-month lease and interactions, the probability of one arrest coinciding with the crucial court date was approximately 1 in 540, or 0.185%. The odds of both arrests aligning perfectly with these hearings escalate dramatically to 1 in 291,600, or 0.000343%. To put this in perspective, from when I began bookings to the present spans 56 months, or approximately 1,680 days. Calculating the likelihood of both arrests coinciding with two exact dates over this period yields an even more improbable 1 in 840,000, or 0.000119%. Furthermore, the absence of any attempts to arrest me since those incidents underscores this point. The explanation is the same as why there were no articles published after February: because Broad and WdS had already achieved their goals. These arrests were orchestrated by private individuals exploiting the justice system to circumvent lawful outcomes.

Unreported Facts: All of this—and indeed, every aspect of this complaint, the annexure, the documented outcomes, and the hundreds of folders and files of information I have meticulously compiled—would be completely unknown to anyone reading this, as none of these facts were ever reported by News24.

SUMMARY OF UNLAWFUL ARRESTS, UNLAWFUL DETENTIONS, MALICIOUS PROSECUTIONS & ILLEGAL EVICTIONS

Illegal Arrest 1 of 4 - Malicious Prosecution 1 of 6: Fabricated Charges by Inge Broad: Inge Broad initiated a malicious prosecution by falsely alleging theft of three old TVs and breaking and entering. Both the Broad's and Hout Bay SAPS knew the charges were false as Hut Bay SAPS had actually attended the property a few weeks earlier when we filed a report of theft after guests took the TVs, sending an officer out to take prints and file the complaint. Further, Inge had carried out a property inspection only a couple of weeks before where I showed her the brand-new TVs I had bought to replace them. The arrest was illegal—there was no warrant, no authorization for arrest within Central Cape Town SAPS jurisdiction, and not even a docket. Despite being obliged to take me to court the next day, I was unlawfully detained at Hout Bay SAPS for five days. My repeated requests to contact an attorney were also denied.

Malicious Prosecution 2 of 6 - Protection Order Obtained Through Perjury by Keith Broad: Keith Broad secured a fraudulent protection order based on extensive perjury, misrepresenting the property as his family home. He falsely claimed that WdS and the thugs who arrived on July 24 to evict were my "Henchmen" sent to intimidate his family. The protection order included a clause barring me, my staff, or anyone known to me from approaching within 500 meters of the property, effectively blocking my access. NB: as one of dozens of actions that reveals the character of Mr Broad, later, during a December application where I was absent, he omitted this critical fact, falsely claiming the rent due for the period he denied me access constituted arrears.

Obstruction of Justice: Sabotaged August Bail Application: When I was finally taken to Wynberg Magistrates Court, WdS and Investigating Officer Serg Duna altered the charges, changing them to theft of the junk items of a back room, items they knew were in professional safe storage. Just before the hearing, they further changed the charges to allege the contents were valuable items—such as Krugerrands, cash, gold, and valuable IT equipment—valued at R835,000. Despite these items never been mentioned previously, on any inventory or their household insurances. This strategic alteration aimed to elevate the offense to Schedule 5, making bail nearly impossible. Consequently, I was sent to Pollsmoor, leading to a prolonged three-week bail application process.

Malicious Prosecution 3 of 6: Fabricated Charges by Paula Disberry: all those charges were subsequently thrown out by the magistrate, no sooner had that happened, in October WdS asked Paula Disberry to file false charges of theft against me, aligning her allegations with Inge's to create an appearance of consistent criminal behaviour. Upon the warrant officer's arrival at my home, I provided extensive communications with the housekeeper and property manager, documenting a meticulous handover process. The housekeeper, Mercy, confirmed that everything had been returned in satisfactory condition. Further, I had reached a full and final settlement agreement with Ms Disberry effective just a few weeks earlier absolving both parties of liabilities post its effective date of 15 September. The evidence exposed Ms Disberry's allegations as false and the settlement agreement rendered them legally baseless. However, WdS obstructed the warrant officer from closing the file, keeping the investigation open to facilitate the next arrest and help to have bail declined, as is inevitable where there are other live investigations..

Illegal Arrest 2 of 4 - Malicious Prosecution 4 of 6: December Arrest & Seizure Orchestrated by WdS: The December arrest, orchestrated by Keith Broad and Ragi Moonamy, bore no connection to any legitimate police investigation. After a magistrate rejected an arrest warrant, WdS and Serg Stevens resubmitted the same docket to a second magistrate illegally, who also denied it. They ultimately obtained an internal seizure warrant unlawfully, **substituting News24 articles for actual evidence**. No arrest warrant has ever been found. The raid involved two dozen personnel, including a fully armed special task force team, in an obscene abuse of state resources, and an absurd spectacle concerning three fraud charges. All my equipment, devices, hard drives, and documents were seized. The following morning, Keith filed his application, knowing he had eliminated his opposition.

Illegal Arrest 3 of 4 - Arrest of Housekeeper Markus: While everyone was distracted by the spectacle of my arrest, WdS, Denis Dalton, and SAPS officers conducted a secret, unofficial and highly illegal operation at 16 Leirmans Road. They gained entry under false pretences of a legitimate police operation, arrested handcuffed, and threatened to shoot the housekeeper Markus if he resisted. They forcibly took the property keys, removed Markus, and transported him to Fisherman's Bend, where WdS and Serg Stevens discussed the successful property takeover. Subsequently, WdS and Denis Dalton searched for a safe containing alleged cash and diamonds. WdS even calling Inge Broad to congratulate each other, saying "we have got him, he won't be coming back this time" [As revealed in the audio of the conversation with the housekeeper]

Sabotaged December 19 Appearance for Bail: At Wynberg Magistrates Court, I was granted bail in the amount of R2,000. In response, WdS and Serg Stevens told a series of lies; that there were "at least five additional charges", "serious issues from Paarl", and that I was wanted by Home Affairs for deportation. These falsehoods led to the unlawful rescission of my bail, resulting in me being sent Pollsmoor rather than released.

Ongoing Attempts to Delay Bail Application: I endured three months of detention due to Serg Stevens' continual attempts to delay my urgent bail application at each appearance. Including asking for delays to add money laundering charges and on another occasion asking for more time to request bank and phone records (some two months after the arrest)

Illegal Arrest 4 of 4 - Malicious Prosecution 5 of 6: Arrest and Detention of Ollie Sokanyile: WdS fulfilled a threat from six months earlier to put Ollie Sokanyile in Prison. Ollie was lured to Fisherman's Bend under the guise of retrieving his belongings, where WdS and SAPS officers, illegally arrested him, and then held him in the cells for a week. Attempting to also send him to Pollsmoor but the matter was thrown out by the prosecution.

Post-Arrest Plan to Manufacture "Victims": Following my arrest, WdS, SAPS, and Inge carried out a morally repugnant scheme to create victims. Given the arrest was for alleged fraud, the booking platform should have been notified to arrange alternative accommodations for guests due to

arrive. Given the summer season had the capacity to accommodate thousands of guests, this was absolutely critical. By deliberately failing to inform booking platforms of changes in property control, guests continued to arrive only to find themselves homeless. WdS/SAPS/Inge then used the media articles to deceive guests into thinking I had defrauded them. Manipulating them into believing they were among thousands, therefore stood no chance of recovery, discouraging them from contacting the platform, which would have found alternative villas. Instead, guests were directed to Serg Stevens to lay criminal charges.

Malicious Prosecution 6 of 6: Bogus Immigration Charge: as the bail application was due to start, the prosecution threw all of them out, literally on first sight. The Investigating Officer insisted on adding a bogus immigration charge to extend my incarceration, concealing the fact of the Home Affairs dept automatic extensions through to 2022 and that he held my passport and knew I had extended my visa into 2022.

Illegal Retention of Passport and Visa Sabotage: My passport was stolen by Paula Disberry in early 2022, then handed to WdS, Who gave it to Serg Duna with the specific purpose of blocking my visa extension, intending to use it against me later. Serg Duna passed it to Serg Stevens with the same intention. It was only "loaned" to me for submission of the extension when I challenged the bogus immigration charge.

Ongoing Illegal Retention of Personal Equipment: Essential equipment, all devices and documents critical to my defense and the rebuilding of my life—had been unlawfully retained even after the charges were dismissed. This ongoing, illegal retention severely hindered my communication with legal counsel, preparation for court, and personal management, placing me at a profound disadvantage. It has also obstructed my efforts to compile evidence necessary to pursue investigations into WdS, his clients, and the involved SAPS officers—precisely as intended.

The table below underscores a critical pattern: every case brought against me has failed, reflecting a deliberate plan not to proceed to a trial but rather to incarcerate me as the aim in and of itself. Across 40+ occasions, when both my position and that of the opposing parties have been tested, I have consistently and universally emerged victorious, while they have lost. Interestingly, not one of those outcomes was reported.

OUTCOMES		
ACTION	OUTCOME	REPORTED?
The August arrest – Illegal; there was no arrest warrant, no request for one, and no permission sought to arrest in another jurisdiction. No paperwork existed until the bail application began.	Unlawful	No
The August detention – 3 weeks unlawfully detained in Pollsmoor Prison, violating basic human rights and legal procedures.	Unlawful	No
The August "investigation" – No actual investigation took place; there was not even a docket. The process included Inge Broad lodging a false charge, leading SAPS officers friendly to WdS to my villas, resulting in my arrest without evidence.	Non-existent	No
The August bail application – Bail granted with no conditions except for a confirmed address. The magistrate was scathing about the case's legitimacy, the I.O Duna's testimony, and WdS's role, and called for a further investigation into the actions taken.	Granted	No
The August charges / criminal case – All charges thrown out in September 2022 due to a complete lack of evidence	Thrown Out	No
The December arrest – Also unlawful; there was no arrest warrant issued, only a search and seizure warrant which was equally illegal. This had been declined by two magistrates. The application for an arrest warrant was signed off based on false claims.	Unlawful	No
The December charges / criminal case one – Thrown out as the bail application was due to start.	Thrown Out	No
The December charges / criminal case two – Thrown out as the bail application was due to start.	Thrown Out	No
The December charges / criminal case three – Thrown out as the bail application was due to start.	Thrown Out	No
The December detention – 3 months unlawfully detained in Pollsmoor Prison, compounding the initial illegal arrest and detention.	Unlawful	No
The December investigation – No proper investigation conducted; I was only provided with a docket in June 2023, 7 months after the arrest, which added nothing substantive in the year following.	None	No
The post-arrest charges – Charges added after the arrest without formal charging or processing; all thrown on first sight	Thrown Out	No
Bail application regarding December charges – All charges were withdrawn, including a bogus visa charge by Stevens; bail was granted following this withdrawal.	Granted	No
The immigration charge added by Serg Stevens – This charge was thrown out by the Senior Public Prosecutor after submitting detailed representations and a two-month investigation.	Thrown Out	No

Universal Outcomes: On every occasion where the allegations against me have been scrutinized by an independent body or authorized institution, they have been found to be false.

Validation of My Allegations: As my own allegations have begun to motivate investigations, each has been validated as accurate. The outcome of the PSIRA investigation is particularly significant. PSIRA, which has 2.7 million members and exclusively handles all investigations into its members— only pressed for criminal charges in two instances in the last reporting year. The fact they have decided to do so in regard to WdS speaks volumes. Furthermore, the investigation by **Colonel McLean of the SAPS Inspectorate**, the forthcoming disciplinary procedures, and the expected criminal charges against the investigating officer will add to the growing body of evidence that vindicates my position

Added to this is the ongoing investigation by the **Western Cape Police Ombudsman**, the **Western Cape Anti-Corruption Unit**, the **Home Affairs Minister**, and the complaint submitted to the **Director-General of Home Affairs**. I have also maintained regular contact with the **British Embassy** and **Premier Alan Winde**, both of whom are actively monitoring developments. Once these investigations conclude, I will be pursuing my own criminal charges against those involved, along with **lawsuits** against the state, the individuals, and key actors like WdS, Keith Broad, Paula Disberry.

There is a clear pattern evident in both criminal and civil court cases. I have won every encounter with SAPS and in the criminal courts. Each time my and Keith Broad's respective cases were presented before a judge, Mr. Broad lost, and I won. The only two occasions where Mr. Broad was successful: **(1)** The first when I was not present; when I was in prison, on that occasion due to Mr. Broad's illegal arrest in August, when he obtained a protection order based entirely on perjury, **(2)** the second, again when I was not present, again due to being in prison, again due to action by Mr Broad. Highlighting both the rationale behind removing me and the method of achieving that.

USE OF THE ARTICLES

Purpose and Use of the Articles: While I do not claim that Media24 was aware of the ultimate purpose or planned use of the articles when they published them, I am confident that WdS framed, motivated, and presented the articles with very clear intentions. His subsequent use of these publications served as proof of those intentions.

Compensating for the Lack of Evidence: The articles published by News24, Netwerk24, and Rapport served a purpose beyond reporting. At the time, the Consortium, led by Keith and Inge Broad and WdS, faced insurmountable challenges in achieving their agenda through legal channels due to a lack of actual evidence. Previous attempts by Keith Broad to introduce accusations in court failed under judicial scrutiny, as these allegations lacked substance. Recognizing that courts require evidence to substantiate claims, the Consortium pivoted to the media, specifically toward a publication WdS felt he could influence, as a platform where scrutiny might be less rigorous, and where allegations—however

unfounded—could be presented as fact. This shift allowed them to fill the gaps in their case with fabricated narratives absent the burden of cross-examination. While courts demand a high standard of evidence, journalistic integrity also requires similar rigor, including verification and fact-checking. The apparent lack of such measures in these publications enabled WdS to advance unsubstantiated claims unchallenged.

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JVA JOHAN VICTOR
ATTORNEYS
LITIGATORS

The application submitted by the attorney for Keith Broad, **Mr Johan Victor**, the same **Johan Victor** Media24 represented to its readership as being the attorney for the victims. When in fact he was the attorney appointed by and representing the various landlords and their interests

7.2. The Respondent's bail application was set down on 6 January 2023 and was then postponed to 2 February 2023 as a result of the Respondent being unable to produce a valid place of residence. KB fails to mention that he and RM were the reason I could not produce one

7.3. This is the Respondent's second arrest since he was released on bail on 22 August 2022 (CAS No.: 94/07/2022). Despite his release, the Respondent clearly continued with his alleged crimes / unlawful conduct which ultimately resulted in his arrest. Again, Keith Broad commits perjury by liking and saying I had been arrested twice since the august bail. He further, fails to mention that it was his wife Inge Broad, who was responsible for the first arrest and that the matter had been thrown out months earlier, **(THE SAME "INGE" AS IN THE ARTICLES, WHERE THE ABSENCE OF HER SURNAME ALLOWED THE TO INTRODUCE THE ARTICLE AS INDEPENDENT CORROBORATION OF THEIR LIES BY WAY OF "EVIDENCE".** Further failing to mention he instructed the December arrest,

7.5. The author of the aforementioned document is Mr Wouter de Swardt, the private investigator I appointed. I shall ensure a confirmatory affidavit deposited to by Mr De Swardt is filed prior to the hearing of this application.

7.6. Since the Respondent's arrest, various news articles have been published which neatly summarise the Respondent's *modus operandi*. I attach hereto, the following:

7.5. "The author of the aforementioned document is Mr. Wouter de Swardt, the private investigator I appointed. I shall ensure a confirmatory affidavit deposited to by Mr De Swardt is filed prior to the hearing of this application". An explicit reference to the dossier produced by Mr de Swardt for use in these very proceedings. Using the arrest of December and the articles published by Media24 is the principal inclusions.

7.6. "Since the Respondent's arrest, various news articles have been published which neatly summarise the Respondent's *modus operandi*. I attached hereto, the following:" The articles were central to the dossier and the application, copied in full into the application and included in the court bundle. Used as evidence to substantiate Keiths (fabricated) allegations. What Keith Broad conveniently omits is that Mr. de Swardt and his clients (the landlords) were responsible for the articles, that the interviews were with these same individuals, and that the content was entirely fabricated. He also fails to disclose the relationship between Mr. de Swardt and News24. Notably, a substantial portion of the article dated 14 January is dedicated to an interview with "Inge," presented as an unrelated landlord, without mentioning that Inge is actually Inge Broad, Keith Broad's wife—the person bringing te application—further using these articles as if they were independent and credible verification of his claims.

7.6.1. IOL Article titled "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell - the alleged Cape Town Airbnb swindler" dated 16 January 2023, marked as "KB4".

This article was based on the highly tenuous premise of someone "almost" being scammed, relying on a series of unfounded assumptions. It was entirely motivated by, and built upon, the fabrications published by News24. When we spoke to Vernon Pillay, the author, he admitted that his assumption of "almost being scammed" stemmed from his belief that the contents of the Media24 articles were true. This is a perfect example of how initial fabrications can snowball, gaining more credibility with each repetition, despite being baseless from the start.

7.6.2. News24 Article by Carin Smith titled "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions" dated 14 January 2023, marked as "KB5". Once again, Keith Broad fails to mention that Mr. de Swardt and his clients (the landlords) were responsible for the article, or that the interviews were with the same parties pushing for this narrative. The article's frequent references to a "second arrest for fraud" are completely false. Furthermore, News24's failure to provide any follow-up has left the public with a clear, yet entirely misleading, impression that I am exactly what they definitively portrayed me as.

7.6.3. Netwerk24 Article by Maygene de Wee titled "Brit wêr in Kaap aangekeer ná verhuurslenter" dated 17 December 2022, marked as "KB6". The same pattern applies to this article. All three articles were highly effective for their intended purpose: to support the landlord's illegal, criminal, and immoral campaign. Media24, knowingly or unknowingly, played a key role in assisting this agenda.

7902/2022 - (B100) - AA - APPL FOR REFERRAL Page | 63

7.6.1. IOL Article titled "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell - the alleged Cape Town Airbnb swindler" dated 16 January 2023, marked as "KB4";

7.6.2. News24 Article by Carin Smith titled "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions" dated 14 January 2023, marked as "KB5";

7.6.3. Netwerk24 Article by Maygene de Wee titled "Brit wêr in Kaap aangekeer ná verhuurslenter" dated 17 December 2022, marked as "KB6";

Establishing Credibility and Legitimacy for False Claims: By leveraging respected media outlets, the Consortium aimed to circumvent legal safeguards against slander and fabricated evidence. News24 and affiliated publications lent a veneer of legitimacy to the Consortium's accusations, portraying these claims as substantiated findings. Once published, the articles became instruments to present their narrative as credible and legitimate. This media endorsement effectively "laundered" their falsehoods, transforming allegations dismissed in court into what appeared to be credible and objective findings.

Use as Supposedly "Independent Evidence": With these articles in the public domain, the Consortium could present them in court as "independent sources," creating an illusion of multiple, corroborating investigations.

The articles gave an impression of objective corroboration that lent weight to their claims, which faced rejection without the layer of media endorsement.

Weaponizing Anonymity to Disguise Motive and Manipulate Public Opinion: By granting anonymity to central figures, including Inge Broad, who was directly involved, these publications furthered an illusion of impartiality. Concealing Inge's identity as Keith Broad's wife allowed the Consortium to portray accusations as if they stemmed from independent sources rather than vested interests. This anonymity fostered a false impression that these findings were unbiased, masking the real motives and individuals driving the allegations.

Distorting Public Perception and Masking Criminal Behaviour: Beyond the legal setting, the articles shaped public opinion, casting me as the villain while concealing the Consortium's unlawful conduct. The narratives painted me as an untrustworthy tenant, overshadowing or omitting their attempts to forcibly seize property through illegal evictions, misrepresentation, and intimidation. By embedding this narrative within well-known media platforms, the Consortium shielded their misconduct from scrutiny and deterred law enforcement from questioning their actions.

Amplifying Their Reach and Recruiting Allies: Media coverage expanded the Consortium's influence, allowing them to recruit supporters who might otherwise have remained uninvolved. Leveraging these articles to reinforce their portrayal of me as a criminal, they encouraged others, including Ragi Moonsamy, the landlord of Fisherman's Bend, to join their cause. This fabricated portrayal of me as a "villain" swayed public perception, leading others to support their agenda and amplifying the collective damage inflicted on me.

Providing Justification for the December Arrest: The Consortium timed these articles to influence law enforcement and bolster the December 2022 arrest. By pre-establishing a narrative of guilt, they pressured authorities to take action despite the absence of concrete evidence, ensuring that my absence from the scene would ease their property takeover efforts unopposed.

Omissions and Selective Reporting: By selectively omitting exculpatory details, including rebuttals and dismissed charges, the publications deprived readers of a balanced view. This one-sided reporting violated my right to reply and cemented the Consortium's distorted narrative. Missing key details, like court dismissals, which would have disproven or challenged the Consortium's claims, were conveniently omitted, leaving an unchallenged portrayal that painted me in an unjustly negative light.

Exploiting Media's Influence to Shape Public and Judicial Perceptions: Media24's expansive reach enabled the Consortium to amplify their accusations, leaving a lasting impression on readers, potential clients, and even court officials. Media24 broadcast damaging narratives with its authority behind them, lending unjustified weight to fabrications. This widespread dissemination created severe, lasting reputational and financial harm, far exceeding the immediate impact of the articles themselves.

Summary: The Consortium's engagement with the media served not to inform the public but to fabricate legitimacy, evade judicial standards, and manipulate outcomes. With Media24's support, they bypassed the evidentiary requirements of the courts, effectively shifting the burden of proof and exploiting public trust to advance their agenda, **including as just one example, having had their attorney (the same Johan Victor as appeared in the articles, where he is misrepresented as representing the "victims") inform the magistrate that I would not be allowed back into either of my two properties, despite them having absolutely no right to do so, to deny me a bail address..**

IMPACT:

IMPACT: MEDIA24'S REPORTING AND ITS DEVASTATING IMPACT ON MY LIFE: To understand the extent of the damage, it's essential to grasp the rationale behind it. After I had transformed the property, the landlords, particularly Keith Broad, had tried and failed to take back the properties on nearly all occasions in the first six months of 2022. Contrary to the fabricated narratives, I had paid all rents, bills, and housekeeper wages (totalling over R6,000,000) and breached no lease terms. I had also invested an extraordinary amount of time, work, and money into those transformations. Every attempt they made through civil courts failed, and every illegal eviction was reversed—not on the technicalities they allege, but quite simply because I was the sole legitimate tenant, as my record just outlined, and because there were no legal or moral grounds on which to take the property from me before the end of the five-year tenure. Whenever they fabricated claims in court, they were exposed by the evidence I produced. For them to succeed, they needed two things: a) manufactured "evidence" they could present in court, and b) assurance that I would not be present or able to expose it.

They achieved this through Media24's articles, crafted to seem unconnected to the landlords or Keith Broad, portraying me as the worst kind of rogue tenant—a portrayal that would guarantee judicial sympathy for any eviction order. These articles also helped remove me as an obstacle by swaying the officer responsible for approving an arrest, compensating for the fact that the docket itself held no substance to justify one. In South Africa, investigating officers hold significant power; unlike in the UK, they can arrest suspects and investigate afterward, with minimal evidentiary burden at arrest. Media24's articles substituted for this deficiency, persuading Serg Stevens' superiors that I was a multi-million-rand scammer, defrauding the thousands of guests such figures would represent, providing the false confidence that evidence would flow in after the arrest. Once arrested, the process is left to the investigating officer, and with the collaboration of WdS and accommodating officers like Serg Duna and Stevens, anything became possible. The first arrest prompted the first round of articles; that round motivated the second arrest, which in turn motivated a second wave of articles. All of which ultimately fed into Keith Broad's December application, where the articles played a very central and significant role, using them as evidence to substantiate his allegations and further citing my detention in Pollsmoor on fraud charges as confirmation. Presenting a highly selective application, as noticeable by the omissions as the fabrications. Critically, he omitted anything and everything that didn't suit; that his wife had initiated the August arrest and malicious prosecution; that the visit post-bail to the storage unit had revealed the items had been there all along; the attorney communications that proved they knew that; that he had orchestrated the December arrest; that his protection order was obtained through clear-cut perjury; the genuine protection order I'd obtained against him; the arrest warrant that followed after his many breaches; the multiple illegal evictions he and WdS had executed; the spoliation judgment; the High Court interdict; the punitive costs. He claimed I had rent arrears spanning the previous months, omitting to mention that was the period post the July illegal evictions and illegal arrest, during which time his fraudulently obtained protection order prohibited me from going within 500 meters of what he had told the judge was his family home. Failing entirely to mention the illegal and secret operation by WdS at the very property he was busy trying to persuade a judge to hand him back, where WdS and SAPS officers staged a raid and arrest purely to extract the occupants and take back keys and control. Self-evidently, had I been present or even able to brief a rebuttal, all of the above and much more would have been put before the judge. But Keith had ensured I was arrested and detained, and the seizure of my equipment and data meant that even if Pollsmoor didn't make mounting a credible complex litigation possible, I was incapable of briefing an attorney regardless. These acts and omissions are very relevant when explaining the compounded impact and ongoing harm of Media24's reporting. Because WdS brought the idea and construct of the articles to Media24 for a reason; that reason was to inflict maximum harm on me and provide his client Keith Broad with maximum strategic advantage. As such, while defamation by definition involves harm, it is extremely rare that the harm itself is ever the intention. Often it is the result of negligent journalism, and even if there is intent to defame or a lack of care if publishing will defame, harm is rarely the driver or principal driver. When WdS brought the idea and construct to Media24, that was the explicit purpose. What form the

fabrications, construct, and defamation took was secondary to that overriding goal. Because of the total failure of journalistic norms and ethics, WdS and his clients got exactly what they wanted and needed. The complete failure at even attempts at balance, of getting input or comment from me, of the selective reporting, and most importantly of reprinting the ever-wilder allegations of WdS without filter or verification allowed WdS to essentially draft his own articles, and that drafting was done with the intention of causing me the maximum harm possible. It is not therefore a surprise that publishing these fabrications verbatim achieved exactly what was intended. The limitation on the contents of the complaint means there is not the space for an impact statement that would do real justice to the damage these articles have caused, and I am happy to provide one; in the absence of which, below is a quick run-through of some of the damage done by the articles.

PERSPECTIVE ON THE DAMAGE: While anyone defamed suffers damage, it's difficult to fully convey just how deeply damaging these articles were and continue to be. Several factors contributed to this impact: (1) Extreme Violations of the Press Code: Media24's reporting exhibited an absolute lack of balance. The sole source of information came from my adversaries; there was no attempt to contact me, and the tone and content were extreme, selective, and presented as fact rather than the fabrications of individuals engaged in litigation against me. (2) Salacious and False Additions to the Narrative: Fabrications, such as claims about tracking me down or the invented figure of "34 million rand," added false weight to the allegations. (3) Motivated for a Purpose and Goal: These articles were deliberately wielded as weapons with specific aims and outcomes. (4) Distorted the Truth about My Business: Fabricated allegations gained credibility because the villa operation was my core business. With slight distortions, the legitimate work I performed was twisted into something criminal. What I built wasn't simply lost; it was stolen. Worse, the very individuals who motivated these articles were the ones who benefited. They took everything I created, while Media24's reporting painted me as the villain and them as the victims, fundamentally altering the dynamic in their favour and making the impossible possible. The articles didn't merely obscure their illegal and immoral actions—they provided immunity from consequences. The power of a fabricated narrative that casts someone as a skilled, deceitful fraudster is profound; even the most convincing arguments and evidence fall on deaf ears due to inevitable scepticisms and suspicion.

CONTRASTING THE POSITION BEFORE AND AFTER THE ARTICLES: In July 2022, I held secure, legitimate, five-year leases on five properties encompassing six highly rentable residences. I had devoted the past eighteen months to transforming these rundown, neglected properties, investing every resource I had, and working eighteen-hour days to achieve something remarkable. The resulting properties were some of the most stunning in Cape Town. Our reputation drew high-profile clients, with model agencies booking photo shoots, videographers seeking to film, and guests paying as much as R80,000 a night over New Year's 2021/2022. The demand from high-end agents was constant, and the villas were enormously popular, reflecting the quality of my work. We achieved Superhost status on Airbnb within the first quarter and maintained it consistently through 2021 and 2022. As any Superhost will tell you, doing that on one small property is challenging enough; achieving that on six large residences that could accommodate several thousand guests a year is almost unheard of. Booking.com awarded us Preferred Partner Plus status—an account I held from inception all the way through to 2023 after the arrest. With hundreds of perfect reviews (5/5 on Airbnb, 10/10 on Booking.com), we built a stellar reputation. Five managers handled bookings and guest experiences, while a dedicated team of housekeepers ensured the properties were flawless and guests were well-served. Our rental book value was R25 million per annum, with a cost base of just R5 million, yielding R20 million in annual profit. I had an extensive fine jewellery and art collection, homes in Cape Town and London. These were genuine passion projects, and the sense of pride I had in what we created was immense. It was an achievement that deserved recognition, not slander. Running a scam would have been commercial suicide and would have resulted in the guaranteed implosion of all I had created.

Fast forward to March 2023, post-publication, and I had lost everything. By no coincidence, all that I lost was now in the landlords' possession—the very same landlords who had employed WdS. They repossessed the properties without legal grounds, keeping every improvement, I had made. Beyond this, they stole every item within the properties: my possessions, furniture, accessories, artwork, sculptures, and even books and clothes. They effectively took the R20 million profit I should have earned every year for the life of the leases—a sum meant to repay my investment. The reality is that I funded and transformed these properties, relying on that five-year tenure, only for the landlords to deny me the entire tenure and keep everything. In evicting me, they also seized the capital value appreciation I had created, instantly benefiting from the properties' increased worth without waiting five years. This was evident as Keith listed the property for sale within days of my arrest, setting the price at R31 million—a staggering R13 million increase from its value a year prior. They achieved this by weaponizing both the media and SAPS, executing illegal evictions disguised as arrests, and bypassing every tenant protection under the same Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act (PIE) that the publication had quoted when trying to imply I was the tenant from hell. SAPS seized and refused to return my equipment. When I left Pollsmoor in March 2023, I literally had nothing but the clothes on my back—the same ones I had been arrested in three months earlier. My bail address was a small studio at the back of the attorney's rented property. When I finally received a response from the owner of Fisherman's Bend regarding my possessions, he sent me ten boxes of mouldy clothes—most of which weren't even mine. None of the ten truckloads of possessions they simply kept. Perhaps the position is best conveyed through the many photo albums included in the index of documents, as an example: In July 2022: [Collection highlights] speak for themselves. By March 2023: [My returned possessions] say as much about the total misappropriation of all I had created. While I am no journalist, surely the story conveyed in these pages is the real story. Yet, as it stands, not a single fraction of these truths has ever appeared in a Media24 article. While I am no journalists.

LOSS OF MY HOME, LIFE'S WORK, ACCUMULATED ASSETS, INCOME & BUSINESS: My life's work, financial assets, and savings were systematically stolen, with Media24's articles playing a direct role in facilitating, justifying, and hiding this theft. This wasn't merely a loss of assets—it was a forced expulsion from and takeover of my own enterprise.

LOSS OF MY HOME, BUSINESS, AND INCOME: SAPS and Media24's actions were pivotal in enabling the landlords to unlawfully seize my properties and income. One of the many factors that should have led any journalist applying logic and common sense to realize that the narrative was so flawed was the fact that my home was the business and the business was my home—one that was geographically immovable—an anathema in itself to the concept and needs of a scam. In taking the properties, they took my home and business simultaneously, as well as my purpose and passion. There is no doubt in my mind that without the Media24 articles, none of what they achieved would have been possible. Having spent 36 years in the property industry—my entire adult life—it is what I know, what I love, and arguably all I know.

MY FINANCIAL LOSSES: The financial impact of this campaign, amplified by Media24, has been catastrophic, with direct losses already exceeding R50 million and projected losses over the next five years surpassing R150 million. In addition to revenue losses, I lost valuable, irreplaceable personal possessions, including artwork, unique collections, jewellery, and furniture, totalling nearly R20,000,000 (schedule available). In fact, I am reliant on my mother to fund the legal fees and am still indebted in that regard.

LOSS OF MY LIBERTY: Media24's defamatory articles directly contributed to my detention of three-months in Pollsmoor Prison. The articles, strategically used by WdS and SAPS officers—particularly Serg Stevens—lent undeserved weight to a docket that, without this "credibility," held no substance, no investigatory work, and not a single complaint in the year preceding the arrest. Media24's reporting of the first arrest was both false, representing it as being for fraud, for scamming property owners, and for scamming guests when it was entirely unrelated. The articles effectively enabled the authorities to bypass legal checks, persuading senior officials to authorize an arrest solely based

on the credibility their articles falsely conferred. The narrative constructed by Media24 painted me as a substantial criminal threat, leading to the use of extreme measures in my December arrest, including a special task force deployment. The resulting media coverage further prejudiced public and official opinion, predisposing authorities to view me as a danger. Had those articles not been published, I do not believe the December arrest would ever have been possible. If the prosecution had not thrown out the charges, and if I had been forced to fight a contested bail application, those articles would have played a significant role in the court's perception of me, influencing the outcomes.

POLLSMOOR PRISON: In addition to the loss of liberty, it is worth making a special note about the place in which that liberty was taken. No amount of compensation could ever undo the fact that I spent nearly a third of that awful year in what I can only describe as hell. There aren't words, nor are there enough pages, to fully convey the horror of that experience. The conditions were utterly unfit for human habitation: 45 men in my cell, which was designed for maybe a dozen, locked up 24/7, allowed out for half an hour per week. Maize for breakfast and lunch, dry bread for dinner. The cells, the beds, our clothes, and bodies crawling with lice and cockroaches. Raids by special task forces, armed with cattle prods, were frequent; officers would throw water on inmates to increase the voltage. The prison was dominated by members of the 26s, 27s, and 28s, many of whom were there for murder, multiple murders, and rape, where a white man—in my case, the only white man on the entire wing—is a target for assault or extortion.

But believe it or not, the physical conditions were not the worst part. The real horror lay in the mental torture of knowing that the normal rules did not apply when the investigating officer has one job: to keep you in prison for as long as possible. Innocence was academic because those responsible for ensuring the guilty are punished and the innocent go free knew I had not committed crimes, and they also knew that any charges would collapse at trial. But the end goal was not trial but simply incarceration in and of itself and for as long as the stalling would permit.

FOUR LOST YEARS: The ordeal catalysed by Media24's defamatory coverage has consumed four years of my life, if not more when accounting for the years I worked and saved to be able to take on such a project. From 2020 to 2022, I worked tirelessly to build and develop the property portfolio, spending every waking hour in its establishment. Then, from 2022 to 2023, I was forced to battle against the Consortium's systematic efforts to strip me of my work, identity, and credibility. Since then, from 2023 to the present, I have dedicated all my time to gathering evidence and constructing a detailed, evidence-backed account in the hope that I may, at best, regain something close to the position I was in before the articles and arrests. In effect, four critical years of my life have been stolen—not only in terms of defending myself but in sacrificing personal milestones and professional progress in this struggle. Even under optimistic projections, I am facing at least another year, perhaps two, before various lawsuits and litigation conclude. That equates to five or six years lost in total. The South African legal system's limited compensation scales mean it is unlikely I will ever recover even a fraction of what I have lost financially, professionally, and emotionally. These lost years have stripped me of peace, professional standing, and the forward momentum of a life I was proud to build. My daily struggle now is not just to reclaim my reputation but to make up for irreplaceable time that could have been spent advancing rather than defending my life and legacy.

MY PERSONAL LIFE: Media24's narrative has left indelible scars on my personal relationships. Each time I attempt to form new connections, these articles are available to anyone who conducts a simple search, forcing individuals to confront a sensationalized, misleading portrayal. Personal relationships, whether longstanding or potential new connections, have been eroded by the relentless stigma fostered by Media24's reporting. The process of dating, for example, is an inevitable cycle where any romance is terminated once the article's toxic content is read. The same abrupt end I experience in every other sphere. As just one example, when looking for someone to assist in compiling the enormous amount of information necessary for this fight, advertising and interviewing went well, and there was no shortage of interested, qualified administrators. Despite my complete transparency about the purpose of the position and background, as soon as those articles were introduced, either sudden silence or a tirade of abuse and expletives would follow.

MY DIGNITY: The portrayal of me as a dangerous, calculated criminal, scamming thousands of guests and pocketing tens of millions in the process, stripped me of my dignity in the most public way possible. WdS and Serg Stevens even choreographed my exit after the arrest, to the purposely positioned car, taken around the far side, paraded for the cameras like a prize bull.

THE INABILITY TO RENT A HOME: Due to Media24's reporting, finding a home is quite simply an impossible task. No landlord or agent would ever conceive of renting their properties to someone the articles portrayed as every landlord's worst nightmare.

THE INABILITY TO REBUILD: With Media24's articles live and without significant correction, my chances of re-entering the property industry, or any trust-based business sector, are effectively nil. The articles have destroyed any potential pathway for me to re-establish my professional life or rebuild the business I lost, creating a permanent barrier between me and any opportunity to restore my former success.

MY MOTHER: My mother, in her seventies, was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2022, a condition aggravated by the trauma of my arrests and Media24's defamatory narrative. Already distressed by my legal situation, she faced additional emotional strain as she tried to reconcile her own knowledge of me with the distorted portrayal in Media24's reporting. Her faith in my innocence has been repeatedly tested, causing immense pain, especially given the obstacles preventing us from being together during this difficult time. Unable to visit since 2020 due to COVID-19 and later immigration issues exacerbated by these events, she bears an added burden of stress as she worries for my well-being, with the fear that she may not live to see my name restored. Something I will not be able to do until my immigration status, sabotaged by WdS and Serg Stevens and Duna, is normalized—something in itself unlikely to happen until the articles are fully retracted and corrected. The situation is complex enough in trying to obtain normalization from the Director General without the catalogue of articles that would likely destroy my credibility.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Media24's articles have permeated nearly every close relationship I once valued. Their defamatory portrayal created a climate of doubt and suspicion, even among those who knew me well. Friends and family who once stood by me have distanced themselves, influenced by the sheer volume and perceived authority of the coverage. The articles introduced a lingering doubt into longstanding relationships that may never fully heal, making this damage irreparable.

APPROACHES TO ATTORNEYS: Media24's portrayal has significantly obstructed my ability to secure legal representation. Attorneys approach my case with a preconceived bias, shaped by the media's portrayal of me as a fraudster. This barrier makes it difficult to find attorneys who will even consider my evidence impartially, and further isolating me from a fair opportunity to address these accusations in court.

APPROACHES TO ANTI-CORRUPTION ORGANIZATIONS: Media24's narrative also impedes my ability to seek help from organizations dedicated to exposing corruption. The portrayal of me as a con artist dissuades these bodies from engaging with my claims, undermining my attempts to bring attention to the misconduct I have endured. Even when I manage to convince organizations to review my evidence, their initial reluctance reveals the significant barrier Media24's portrayal has created between me and any credible institutional support. Although it has to be said, considering this very real and significant barrier, the fact those investigations that have been instigated have found my allegations to be true and have begun to result in the very rare event of criminal charges demonstrates very clearly whose truth is real.

FURTHER COMPLICATIONS WITH VISA STATUS: As mentioned, Media24's articles have severely impacted my efforts to normalize my visa and immigration status. My case requires an escalation to the Director General of Home Affairs due to the attempts to sabotage my immigration status. However, the current highly defamatory portrayal has me cast as an industrial-scale fraudster, scamming holidaymakers, meaning the chances of success are negligible until the false narrative is corrected.

MY ATTEMPTS TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH: Despite extensive efforts to present evidence and correct the record, Media24 has disregarded my attempts to share my side. Their refusal to acknowledge credible evidence allowed their portrayal to dominate, leaving a narrative that stifles each effort I make to restore my reputation. Journalists who have reviewed my evidence found it credible and expressed a genuine interest in publishing but felt unable to cover my story, citing the entrenched media narrative and Media24's complete dominance of the sector as barriers to them doing so. It was, in fact, one of these journalists who recommended the Press Council Ombudsman, explaining their role is to ensure such violations don't happen and when they do, they are dealt with, stating very clearly that when that happens, it will give them and others the confidence to report. Without that, the spread, titles, tone, and content render my narrative nothing more than sour grapes.

ENHANCED REWARD AND PROTECTION OF CRIMINAL ACTIONS: Media24's articles have effectively protected those responsible for orchestrating the campaign against me. By casting me as the villain, the media obscured the actions of my accusers, protecting them from scrutiny and accountability. The articles rewarded their misconduct by shielding them from consequences, allowing them to carry on unexamined and emboldening them to pursue further immoral and illegal actions. That position will continue until their real role is reported.

INABILITY TO FILE CHARGES AND PURSUE RECOVERY: Just as with the issues of engaging journalists in the story, instructing attorneys, and resolving my visa issues, I am unable to report the many crimes committed against me. Or rather, I am able to report them, but doing so would result in no more than disbelief or disinterest. Not only do I have no credibility, but I also face the added disadvantage of the caricature of a deceitful, Machiavellian figure. Attempts, for example, to recover my possessions from the Fisherman's Bend landlord, my jewellery from those who stole it, and the contents of my London home—a former tenant taking the opportunity to empty it while I was in Pollsmoor—will not motivate a single policeman, as it looks like I am trying to reclaim the proceeds of crime. Likewise, charges regarding the criminal conduct of the campaign. With the criminals portrayed as victims and the victim portrayed as the criminal, the chances of ever motivating investigations are zero.

DEATH THREATS: The articles painted a caricature of me as a malevolent fraudster executing a vast, sophisticated scam worth 34 million, pocketing that sum and defrauding guests on an industrial scale. This portrayal predictably incites strong emotions in readers, placing me in an unjustifiable and dangerous position. More specifically, it has allowed others to deflect blame onto me. Evidence from videos, WhatsApp messages, and voice notes captures the disturbing extent of their plans, particularly in a series of videos featuring Mario Boffa. In these videos, Boffa confesses in detail to the schemes and actions of his associates, including Johan Schalkwyk, Denis Dalton, and Andre du Rand, who worked closely with WdS and Paula Disberry. Together, they orchestrated the embezzlement of over a million rand, diverting guest funds away from the portfolio and into their own accounts. Not satisfied with mere theft, they plotted to drug, torture, and murder me to gain access to what they believed were hidden millions, a fabrication WdS had propagated. By chance, these lies cost me only my liberty and not my life. Even after being discovered, when Boffa fled, he set up an agency and a scam mirroring the one WdS falsely attributed to me, using my properties as bait despite having no way to fulfil any bookings. This scheme defrauded guests who booked through him, and when the inevitable fallout began, he directed them to the articles and pointed to the petition he created, also built on the false narratives of these articles, claiming it was I who had scammed them. Although we contacted each of his bankers to report his fraud and urge them to freeze his accounts for investigation, Boffa continued to direct enraged clients back to the articles as "proof" of my guilt. This not only led to a barrage of hostile calls and emails but also resulted in half a dozen explicit death threats. One such threat came from a well-connected Congolese guest whom Boffa had defrauded of over R200,000 and who sent associates to my home. Anyone doubting the impact and dangerous influence of these articles should try questioning their truthfulness under such circumstances.

CONSTANT THREAT OF RETALIATION: Media24's narrative has emboldened those involved in this campaign, creating a climate where I am left in a perpetual state of vulnerability. The legitimacy granted to this campaign by the media emboldens my accusers to continue their actions without fear of accountability. I live in constant anticipation of further sabotage, knowing that Media24's reporting has left me nearly defenceless. That will only change when the narratives change, and the real criminals are exposed.

THE MANY ACTUAL VICTIMS: POST-ARREST VICTIMS: The impact of Media24's articles did not stop with me. After my arrest, WdS, Keith and Inge Broad, and Serg Stevens intentionally kept booking.com ignorant of the fact I no longer controlled, managed, or lived in the properties. What should have been the first action after my arrest—particularly if the arrest was genuinely for fraud—was an action they never took in any of the months that followed, including failing to do so after every new set of guests arrived. Had they done so, booking.com would have found every guest booked for stays after my arrest an alternative villa or provided a refund. Instead, they purposely created a situation where every group would arrive only to find out upon checking in that they were homeless and out of pocket. Bearing in mind we had the capacity to accommodate several thousand guests over the four months of the summer season, the potential for carnage was enormous.

The purpose was simple; if any of those guests could be manipulated into laying criminal charges, they would suddenly have the charges and the impression of evidence they desperately needed. When the guests arrived, WdS and/or Inge Broad were waiting, ready to give each group the same speech: "they had been scammed; I had taken the booking when I had no right to do so; they were one of thousands, who as a result stood no chance of recovery." They were dissuaded from contacting the platform or their credit card company, lied to, and told that the thousands of scammed guests before them had tried that and failed, and their only hope of resolution was to lay criminal charges, which would result in my arrest or prosecution and the recovery of the money. They were able to provide what seemed like more than enough proof of these lies by providing the guests with or pointing them toward the articles.

When I got bail, I began the process of contacting every guest who had booked stays after my arrest. Of those who had not spoken with Keith or Inge, 98% had received refunds or alternative villas, some both, all charged to me. Of those who met with or spoke to Inge or WdS and were shown the articles, almost none had done either. My attempts to advise and guide them to either or both as a solution were met with contempt, distrust, and abuse. Without those articles, the lies told by WdS et al would be just that; with the articles, the lies became the only known truth. Whether intended or not, Media24's actions created additional victims beyond myself. Their sustained campaign has devastated every facet of my life, far surpassing reputational harm. Professionally, the financial impact alone has exceeded R150 million due to interrupted business, severed partnerships, and a reputation that continues to repel potential clients and collaborators. With each attempt to rebuild overshadowed by these public accusations, the loss of financial stability, professional identity, and potential is undeniable.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS: By not reporting what really happened, issues of the greatest possible significance have remained hidden, issues of genuine importance and relevance to the readership of Media24: (1) The tactic of executing illegal evictions disguised as an arrest, thereby voiding PIE legislation and parliamentary protections, systematically stripping tenants of their rights. (2) SAPS for hire; where a private individual can weaponize the state and harness the power of the police simply via one or two corrupt relationships. (3) Usurping executive power; SAPS exerting supremacy over and subjugating the legislature and judiciary, by using police powers to ignore and render useless acts of parliament. (4) Abuse of the justice system, particularly the perverse use of the criminal justice system as a means of executing injustice. (5) Use and abuse of state resources for private gain, harnessing the power and reach of departments and teams, whole police units, the special task force, a deceived prosecution service. (6) Exploiting taxpayer resources; the fact that the vast majority of the campaign was not funded by the wealthy individual responsible for it, the same individuals that stood to gain millions, but rather by the South African taxpayer, including the use and

abuse by the wealthy of taxpayer money to enrich themselves; privileged elites manipulating the system. (7) Manipulation of the media, and the ease with which that happened when publications are prepared to ignore every aspect of ethical conduct when longstanding relationships are at play. (8) Media as judge, jury, and executioner; publishing articles with no attempt at balance, no representation of the other side, including the fabrication and narrative of one side, and constructing the presentation in such a way that only one conclusion was ever going to be possible. (9) Lack of effective remedies against corruption; including impotence and under-resourcing of oversight bodies, especially the difficulty with which complaints can be logged, the abject failure of bodies charged with policing corruption and policing the police to take up complaints, the appalling rate of attrition of investigations, the even worse rate of prosecution and conviction, and the demonstrably and near universally lighter sentences police officers receive when convicted of crimes. These and other significant issues were not considered worthy of publication by Media24, likewise not a single example of the hundreds of events and crimes or the very substantial evidence that exposed or undermined their chosen narratives. Surely the story conveyed in these pages is the real story. Yet, as it stands, not a single fraction of these truths has ever appeared in a Media24 article.

CONCLUSION:

The media holds a profound responsibility to uphold truth, fairness, and balance, particularly when reporting on matters with the potential to devastate lives. Yet, in this case, Media24 abandoned these principles, allowing their platform—whether through negligence or intent—to be transformed into an instrument of harm. The articles published under their banner were neither impartial nor rigorously investigated. Instead, they served as an unchecked outlet for a premeditated campaign driven by private interests with the intent to deceive, damage, and ultimately destroy both my professional standing and personal life.

Media24, which owns News24, Netwerk24, and Rapport, is the largest online news publisher in South Africa, reaching over a million daily readers across its various platforms. This wide readership grants Media24 significant influence in shaping public opinion. This dominance places News24 and its sister sites in a critical position as some of the most trusted news sources in the country, meaning their reporting has extensive reach and impact on public perception and opinion. Further, as with any online content, it can and will be viewed internationally.

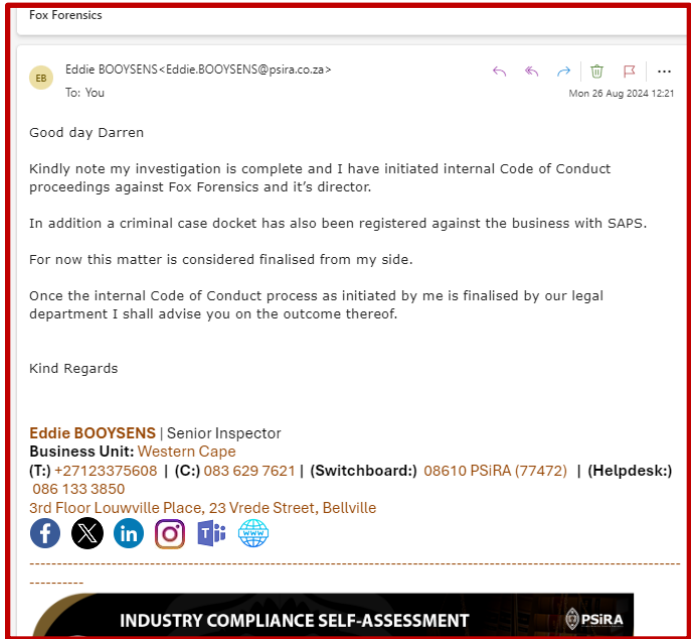
What readers or viewers will see are numerous articles across numerous respected titles: News24, Netwerk24, Rapport, Die Burger, Ground News, IOL. They will be unaware that many of these are one and the same or that the IOL articles were written and published on the assumption the Media24 articles were true.

Through strategic omissions, selective reporting, and the misuse of anonymity, these publications concealed the criminal actions of the Consortium while amplifying baseless allegations against me. When legal evidence failed to substantiate their claims, Media24's coverage compensated, granting credibility to a fabricated narrative that could not withstand scrutiny in any court of law. In doing so, Media24 breached the most fundamental tenets of journalistic integrity, allowing themselves to be used as a means to "launder" lies into widely accepted "facts."

The consequences have been devastating. The articles cast a shadow over my reputation, distorted my relationships, and cost me financial security, liberty, and dignity. They have complicated my visa status, blocked paths to justice, and obstructed my attempts to rebuild. The articles did not merely report on events; they catalysed and perpetuated a calculated agenda, advancing it at every turn, with relentless disregard for the ruinous toll it would take on my life and those around me.

This complaint serves not only to expose the specific violations of the Press Code but to underscore the moral, ethical, and legal accountability Media24 holds. The effects of this campaign could only have been possible through the power of their platform, which became a vehicle for public manipulation rather than a beacon of truth. With this submission, I seek acknowledgment of these egregious wrongs, a commitment to corrective action, and a renewed commitment by the media to their indispensable role as guardians of truth, integrity, and public trust.

INVESTIGATIONS AND CRIMINAL CHARGES



Directly below are some of the formal complaints and investigations into the conduct and criminality of Mr de Swardt, his clients, Belville Commercial and the two investigating officers. Inc Psira Investigation Into WdS, Criminal Charges, Colonel Mclean Commander Saps Inspectorate Investigation Into Serg Stevens. Further complaints and investigations including Western Cape Police Ombudsman, the Western Cape Anti-Corruption Unit will follow. As will numerous civil lawsuits and I hope/expect criminal charges

- FORMAL COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATION'S RE CONDUCT
- [Colonel Mclean Commander SAPS Inspectorate Investigation]
- [Original Complaint to Press Council]
- [Amended (Reduced) Press Council Ombudsman Complaint]
- [Colonel McLean SAPS Inspectorate Investigation]
- [Complaint Regarding Sergeant Stevens]
- [Letter To Colonel Collett Mclean 26 Aug 2024]
- [Complaint to Director General of Home Affairs]
- [National Prosecuting Authority, Complaint & Investigation]