When I was suspended from the NUJ in March this year the Irish News featured a substantial enough report on the matter. That is not difficult to understand.

The paper was not, nor did it pretend to be, a disinterested party to the affair. It had a dog in the fight. One of its own journalists, Allison Morris, who along with another journalist not employed by the paper, had brought the initial charge of breaching ethics to my door.

The Irish News considered it a victory and proclaimed it as such, leading those who read its coverage – not easily overlooked given the amount of space allocated complete with photo of me – to probably judge me the villain of the piece.

That’s life, even if it does not seem fair. There is, after all, no compelling reason that I can think of to hide that news and deny Ms Morris her achievement in putting manners on a supposed scallywag. Ms Morris was quoted in the paper as saying:

At a time when the industry is under scrutiny, this case is an example of how bloggers and online commentators ... must be willing to abide by the same code of conduct and standards of practice as colleagues in the print media.

And that was fair comment at the time I guess, even though the basis for it later came to acquire all the material substance of last year’s snow on a ditch.

The paper also gave cover to Kenny Archer, who was described as the Irish News NUJ rep:
Allison Morris is a valued colleague and a strong motion in support of her and condemning Mr McIntyre’s treatment of her was passed unanimously by fellow members of the Irish News NUJ chapel and forwarded to both the Irish and British executives of the NUJ.

Strong stuff indeed but in terms of newsworthiness it makes the grade even if it obviously aimed to put a dent in my reputation.

The Irish News would, presumably, claim to be interested in fairness and balance in its coverage of the news. So when the case against me faltered and came off the rails I fully expected the paper’s editor, with whom I have always had an amiable relationship, to present coverage of the findings of the Appeals Tribunal with the same degree of prominence that had been accorded the findings of the Ethics Council.

It would only be restorative justice, ensuring that I would have restored to me any standing I may have lost as a result of the paper’s broadcasting of my gratuitous unworthy status. I did not imagine that the editor would be either vindictive or infantile and just ignore it.

Failure to report in equal measure might not be illegal but it sure as hell would smell unethical. And given that the Irish News was beating the ethics Lambeg in my ear, unethical behaviour would surely constitute an impropriety the paper would be loathe to seek the company of.

Indeed, the Irish News had been extremely quick to phone me for a comment in the wake of my suspension, to which I responded positively despite the fact that I had grave misgivings about what I regarded as its own less than wholesome role in matters that led to the issuing of the Boston College subpoena.

But, like the dog that did not bark, this time the phone did not ring.

In my statement announcing my London vindication I made the following appeal.

“While extremely satisfied with the outcome, it is my sincere hope and expectation that those news outlets which announced the flawed Ethics Council verdict against me in March will have the professional courtesy to provide the same level of coverage to this indisputable and unalloyed vindication.”

So what did I get in the interests of fairness and balance?

This:

Balance? Fairness? Equal coverage?
If ever a paper seemed to frame a contest as one of David and Goliath it was this. The sheer act of marginalising coverage of the Appeals Tribunal hearing to the bottom corner of page 10 displayed a laughable desire to push it off the page altogether.

The Irish News has for some time sought to suppress discussion of an issue which in my view is a matter of public interest. Perhaps that the public would be interested was the very reason for wanting to suppress it.

It seems to me we are dealing with a story that the Irish News does not want heard but which has been amplified by the attempts to silence it.

The Irish News is free to challenge that account and if through remorseless logic and evidence it ruptures the narrative that has been presented in these pages and elsewhere, it is entitled to do so.

But it can never be allowed to impose the dead hand of censorship which seems to be the institutional instinct it has exhibited by the nature of its own reporting or lack of it.

The financial power and influence of the paper might lead it think it can play the pauper and the prince, where it can lay claim to palatial rights for its own narrative and pauperise the narrative of its critics.

Fortunately, the internet is a very pluralistic and democratic society where the writ of the prince, where it can lay claim to palatial rights for its own narrative and pauperise the narrative of its critics.

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7 comments:

itsjustmacker says:
10:04 PM, August 14, 2013

Reply to:
Are you sure page 10 was in every paper and not just the one you read? lol. That's the norm of all news papers, A little piece stuck on a page near the end of the paper.

No retraction of the accusations made by herself and barnes, No apology from either of them. The Editor disassociating himself from commenting on the case. They hate to admit defeat, even when it tarnishes a fellow Journalists like yourself. Its sad, so we will keep the debate clean and let the previous Morons blog away, and just a snip of a reply would be enough to make them go bonkers.

Chin up Anthony, you won the round.

I have just reminded myself not to type anything witch could get you hauled over the coals ever again. That's a promise.

---

**larry hughes** says:
10:16 PM, August 14, 2013

Haven't bought the Irish News in over a decade. See it in the Library an odd time but don't even flick through it.

Think I've been making the right call. Internet is a good medium. Wide selection and more ability to avoid worthless junk and brainwashing.

Out of date, print media.

---

**AM** says:
6:33 AM, August 15, 2013

**From Itsjustmacker,**

Larry: Thats true. If people just realised that printed tabloids sold via news agents is yesterdays news which most of those reporters delve from the internet via news channels. And some reporters extract information, when apparently told by family members the interviewee is unwell and incapable of giving an interview. Yet they go and print parts of that interview. But seem to hold back parts for fear of being sued? "Who Knows?". Then the interview apparently ends up in another newspaper 3 days later. Just a thought of my own, in case litigation lands on my doorstep. If it did, they can sue me from here to kingdom come, lol, Council house 4 bedrooms, state pension, other income is private and confidential , if there was any?.

---

**Tain Bo** says:
3:51 PM, August 15, 2013

It seems very Big Brotherly saying commenter’s should be held to some sort of journalistic code of conduct and abide by the standard of colleagues in the print media.

I have no colleagues in the media and am bemused as to why posters should be held to any standard for merely expressing an opinion. Unlike journalists who may gain financially for their reporting commenter’s don’t and express opinions freely.

Is she suggesting people should read and believe and never question or is it just an unambiguous swipe at the few posters on the quill. The internet is overflowing with trolls and head cases the quill has a page reserved for those who choose to abuse the openness of the quill.

Highly unlikely she would win a Nobel peace accolade as a champion of free speech seeking to silence a fellow colleague.

The curtain on this show should have been drawn after Anthony made his statement about the issue without any fanfare.
GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday: The Death of Irish Republicanism is available at these online outlets:

- Ausubo Press
- Amazon.com
- Amazon.co.uk
- Barnes and Noble
- Borders.com
- Small Press Distribution

Read Reviews

Gill & MacMillan is now the exclusive distributor in Ireland and the UK - if the book is not on the shelves of your local bookstore, ask them to order it for you!

BELFAST BOOK LAUNCH

Good Friday: The Death of Irish Republicanism was launched on the 5th of November, 2008, at the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

Guest Speaker: Tommy Gorman

Watch videos of the night's speeches

Looking for a copy of Good Friday? Email sales@gillmacmillan.ie

Are you a bookseller looking to stock Good Friday? Call or Fax your order: Tel: +353 1 500 9500 or Fax: +353 1 500 9599

Check availability at your local Waterstones

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peril, risk, and hazard. ~Voltaire, Dictionnaire Philosophique, 1764

Organized Rage says:
6:24 PM, August 15, 2013

"The internet is overflowing with trolls and head cases"

Maybe, but in many ways the mainstream media has far more of these types and unlike those on the Internet, they masquerade as rational human beings whose opinions have merit.

:-)

Tain Bo says:
6:55 PM, August 15, 2013

Agreed Organized Rage...

the media have more than their fair share of balloons paid handsomely for their slanted articles. The change in the media paradigm being that those on the internet have the outlet to show favour or be critical of reporters and articles, which tends to back up what she was saying as poster and readers alike prefer a higher standard.

Kev O'Higgins says:
9:30 PM, August 15, 2013

Anthony,

It has been a long time since I expected fairness in life but I do hope the Irish News had the courtesy to send you a sizable reading lens with the final article above.

I can barely read it but it would be the only possible method of permitting you to read your vindication with the same prominence given your vanquishment.

Post a Comment