

ANNEXURE. ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLES

Below is a detailed analysis of the inaccurate, false, or fabricated statements contained within the articles. Each response briefly refutes the claims made, with supporting evidence available for each point. I am fully prepared to expand on any of these responses if necessary. Regarding the Rapport articles, translation was required as I do not speak Afrikaans, which adds another layer to verifying the integrity of the content.

The length of this annexure, along with that of the complaint itself, reflects the sheer number and gravity of these violations. The articles exhibit a significant disconnect between the facts, reality, and the truth on one hand, and the reporting on the other. Instead, the reporting closely mirrors the narrative propagated by Mr. de Swardt—a connection that is no coincidence. The articles align identically with Mr. de Swardt's allegations, effectively laundering his fabrications into seemingly credible and legitimate accounts. This was not accidental; it was intentional. These articles gave his narrative an unwarranted legitimacy, which he and his clients exploited to their own advantage.

It's notable that these allegations appeared only in the media; those responsible, usually indifferent to issues like perjury, avoided making such claims in civil court, omitted them in criminal matters, yet felt comfortable airing them through a respected publication without vetting or verification.

Introduction to the Legend Series: To avoid unnecessary repetition, I have created a set of legends to refer back to in the responses below. These legends correspond to some of the most frequently repeated allegations found throughout the articles. Each legend provides a detailed explanation of the allegation, the reality of the situation, and the supporting evidence. For easy reference, the legends are indicated by letters ([A], [B], [C], etc.), allowing you to quickly find the corresponding explanation without duplicating content. I have inserted links for just some of the evidence from the more than one thousand files of evidence I have. **Where a link does not work I can reupload with pleasure.**

Below is a link to the original "Complaint to the Press Council Re Media24 News24 Regards Multiple Articles Published. Docs 1-5", this includes a very detailed analysis of the articles. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QIBheG60-5Jge_aIW6Wln6aYdnGSfa1?usp=drive_link

News24 complaint folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14QSUTYTe0B0BxZuniNHrbmxaadg1d0?usp=drive_link

NON-COMPACTED FORMATTED COPY: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VIQwktRHXTIzzY_X5UXdoUm0XpSg4igq?usp=drive_link

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

"The finely built Darren Russell, who according to photos of him and his boyfriend is only used to the best, appeared rather cool this week when he appeared in the Wynberg Magistrate's Court." The journalist has clearly chosen to be highly selective in their reporting. My and my partner's Instagram and Facebook profiles were no different from anyone else's in that they reflected aspects of our lives, including the villas I managed and rented out. Ironically, despite the claim that I was "used to the best," I rarely even used the facilities myself as I was too busy working to create and maintain those spaces for the guests. Rather than portraying the truth of my work, the journalist cherry-picked details to suit a particular narrative. What's also revealing here is that the journalist and publication were clearly sifting through our social media profiles, as evidenced by this comment and the choice of photos they used, all of which came from those platforms. On my profile, there were over 1,000 posts and stories documenting the properties at every stage—from the beginning, through the extensive refurbishment works to the final transformations. These profiles clearly illustrated the immense amount of time, money, and effort put into turning these properties into luxurious, interior-designed showpieces of exceptional quality. It is particularly egregious that while these journalists were scouring my social media for photos, they were simultaneously publishing articles that falsely portrayed me as damaging the properties, not paying rent, and running a fraudulent villa business. Common sense alone would tell you that someone transforming properties into high-end, bespoke spaces

would not also be recklessly damaging them or failing to pay rent. Moreover, why would anyone go to such lengths to create a sham business, investing millions into properties without permission? **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [M].

"The 52-year-old Briton allegedly rented several multimillion-rand properties along the Atlantic and False Bay coasts and then illegally operated them as guest houses by advertising them on websites such as Airbnb." This is entirely false. 1) All the landlords were fully aware of the rental arrangements, and there was nothing unlawful about how the properties were leased or advertised. 2) The use of platforms like Airbnb was completely legitimate, as evidenced by the fact that our profiles remained active throughout our management of the villas. We received countless 5-star reviews, achieved Superhost status on Airbnb, and earned Preferred Partner Plus status on Booking.com. 3) Both platforms are renowned for having zero tolerance for impropriety, and any hint of wrongdoing would have resulted in immediate and permanent account suspension. The fact that our accounts remained intact throughout speaks volumes. 4) As with the previous statements, these allegations came from nowhere other than de Swardt and his client. 5) they did not form any part of the charges, or the arrest, or the bail application. 6) Nor did it form any part of the state's case. 7) So, when the publication says I allegedly did X or Y, what they mean is de Swardt alleged I had done X or Y, because these allegations appear nowhere else and they appear nowhere in the court proceedings the publication were reporting. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.7] (sensationalism). **REF:** [A], [C], [J].

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

"Another alleged ploy was to rent out houses through his private website lacollectionsprestige.com and pocket the deposit or double or even triple book the house, then disappear when the guests arrived." 1. This statement is entirely false and fabricated. 2) The allegations bear no connection to the actual charges or events—they were never part of any arrest, court case, or bail application. 3) There is no evidence whatsoever to support this claim—there were no issues with platforms like Airbnb or Booking.com, no complaints from guests, and no legal proceedings were ever brought against me. 4) This false claim, propagated by de Swardt, was published without any effort to verify its accuracy. Even minimal due diligence, such as checking booking records or speaking to guests or platforms, would have immediately exposed the baselessness of the allegations. 5) The use of loaded and incendiary language like "ploy" drives a misleading narrative, implying calculated wrongdoing where none existed. 6) The term "pocketed" similarly suggests that I was personally benefiting from deposits, when in reality, professional agents handled the rentals, including the collection of rents and deposits. Throughout the life of the portfolio, I invested significantly more into the properties than I ever withdrew—running at a **net deficit in the millions**, specifically **ten times more** than what was taken in. 7) Efforts by de Swardt and others to fabricate allegations were so weak that they resorted to threatening innocent individuals, including Chandre, the portfolio manager from April until August 2022. de Swardt, the landlords, and the involved SAPS officers threatened her with **30 years in prison** to force her to lie and say she witnessed fraud—claims she categorically denied. Chandre, under extreme pressure from de Swardt and the police, was repeatedly harassed and threatened. In the recorded phone conversation, she states: **"The threats I'm getting is just that I must speak."** Despite this pressure, she stood her ground, saying, **"I can't give a statement because I can't lie. They are forcing you to do a statement that is not your truth."** She made it clear that during her time working with me, **"everything was 100% legitimate during my time in charge. I saw nothing illegal and heard of nothing illegal."** These statements highlight how de Swardt and the police were desperate to build a false narrative of fraud, resorting to coercion when they had no real evidence to rely on. 8) The claim that I "disappeared" is another blatant lie. Disappeared where? I lived at the villas we rented—if Fisherman's Bend was booked, I would stay at Leirmans, and if both were booked, I would live at Hove Road. I could be found for **363 of the previous 365 days**, easily reachable at any time. I was always within **five to ten minutes** of any guest, maintaining constant communication with them and staff. Additionally, Ollie and multiple staff members were dedicated solely to guest relations. 9) There was no vanishing act, no evidence to support this false narrative of me disappearing after pocketing deposits. Nor did the state or police ever make such an accusation. If this were true, there would have been hundreds, if not thousands, of complaints, police reports, or court cases—but there were none. **Where was all this evidence?** 10) Fraud, particularly financial fraud, leaves behind an undeniable trail—especially in operations as large as ours. We handled hundreds of bookings through platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, all of which process payments via traceable means (credit cards, bank transfers). Fraud creates an easily discoverable and irrefutable paper trail. In cases of villa scams, it is well known that fraudsters typically operate from locations far removed from the scam to avoid detection. In contrast, I was running a legitimate operation, fully engaged with guests and the properties. We had **six residences**, totalling **32 bedrooms**, with **570 booking slots per year**. Our average group size was **12 guests**, equating to around **7,000 guests per year**. If the claims of double or triple bookings were true, that number would have jumped to **14,000–28,000 guests per year**. Yet, where is the evidence? Not one signal of a scam. 11) If a villa scam were in operation, the first sign would be a flood of complaints to the platforms, banks, or review sites. Yet,

none of that exists. Even small-scale fraud would leave behind a substantial footprint—and our operations, involving hundreds of bookings annually, would have created a massive trail of complaints if even a fraction of these claims were true. The absence of any such activity proves the falsehood of these allegations. 12) The claim that I “disappeared” fits into a broader pattern of sensationalist reporting, aimed at painting me in the worst possible light. The narrative pushed by de Swardt—an attempt to portray me as elusive and engaged in nefarious activities—when the reality was quite the opposite. I was highly visible, managing the villas, constantly in contact with staff/guests. The failure to report these facts is a clear violation of journalistic integrity. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [H], [I], [P]**.

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

“In another house in Llandudno, he charged R7,000 a night – and up to R19,000 a night in the Royal Suite.”. See previous answer. Also, false as there was no “Royal Suite”. In the near two years of hosting guests, I only ever rented as a whole, we never rented rooms or suites within the properties. Moreover, if you combine these statements, 7,500 per night for one property, R19,000 a night for a suite within a property, R15,000 per room for two nights, the figure in the article has the average rate per room per night at R7500. There were 30+ bedrooms across the collection, so that would equate to R225,000 per day, which is R82,000,000 per year. If you then take the further and very clear statements about my double, triple and quadruple booking then that figure would be anywhere between R160-360,000,000 per year. These figures are absolutely preposterous and have no relationship with reality. The accusation would also mean we were scamming between 6,000 and 24,000 guests per annum. Even on the basis of the rentals for the properties as a whole and factoring in the double, triple, quadruple bookings allegation, across the six residences that would equate to defrauded income of between 32,000,000 and 240,000,000 of defrauded revenue, and a similar number of guests. Yet, there is no possible way either WdS provided any proof of this or anything remotely similar and there is no possible way the journalists looked for or found such evidence. The idea that anyone could scam 32,000,000 to 360,000,000 per year and in the process defraud 6,000 to 24,000 guests without an avalanche of online content, thousands of complaints to the police, platforms, credit card companies, is demonstrably absurd. So, the question has to be asked, considering by the time the august articles were published we had been operating for a year and a half and by the time the December to February articles were published we had been operating for almost two years (thereby doubling these figures), why was there a complete absence of any of these things? And why did Media24 publish facts that simply could not have stood up to the most basic scrutiny or common sense. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [N], [O], [T]**.

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

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

“When owner Keith Broad asked private investigator WdS of Fox Forensics to get rid of the tenants, the tide began to turn against Russell.” This statement is shocking for several reasons. 2) If a landlord genuinely has a tenant in default, they apply to the courts and are granted an eviction order based on legitimate grounds. The process is simple and straightforward. Why, then, would a law-abiding landlord bypass the legal system and instead engage a private investigator? Why would he do so to “get rid of the tenant”? 3) There is no possible legal justification for such actions, and any such action is inherently illegal. 4) Equally disturbing is that the publication not only printed this statement but did so without questioning its implications. What they were being told by WDS and others should have, at the very least, raised questions and concerns, particularly about WDS and Broad’s motivations and methods. 5) Perhaps most appalling is that the publication managed to present the facts and events in such a way that Broad’s unlawful conduct—sending De Swardt and eight thugs to forcibly enter the property, assault and eject the occupants, change the locks, and take over the premises—was framed as if it were justified and lawful. At the

same time, they framed me as the “tenant from hell,” a supposed villain deserving of such treatment, despite the reality that I was the victim, dispossessed of my home and business, having done nothing wrong, paid Broad over a million Rand by that point, and invested heavily in refurbishing his property. 6) This portrayal reveals a deeply biased narrative that paints Broad as the hero of the story, despite a wealth of evidence clearly indicating he is a rogue landlord of the worst kind. 7) This statement is not only misleading but also fails to disclose the unlawful means employed by Broad and De Swardt. 8) The articles, journalist, and publication entirely failed to question why Broad abandoned legitimate legal avenues and instead engaged in a campaign of intimidation. 9) The “tide” did not “turn” naturally; it turned because when the Broads appointed WDS, he was able to weaponize the power of the state, using arrest and detention as tools for strategic advantage. Without the articles from Media24 being used as supposed independent evidence, and without the cooperation of Serg Duna and Stevens, none of what occurred from July to March would have been possible. These same relationships shield those responsible from investigation, trial, and punishment. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts). **REF:** [Q], [D].

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

“Once there, he heard that the two had just left in an Uber rental car.” This is false. The police and De Swardt had illegally pinged my phone to track my location. The article presents this as though they merely received hearsay, omitting the unlawful surveillance. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [R], [F].

“De Swardt was able to locate the Uber driver and told him that he had dropped them off at a house in Schotsche Gorge on slopes of Signal Hill.” While there may be some factual elements here, the article omits the illegal methods used to track me. 1) De Swardt did not need to “locate” the Uber driver as this statement suggests. 2) My location had already been illegally obtained through phone tracking—a method used without any legal authority. 3) The article glosses over the illegal surveillance employed to find me and presents it as a normal investigative action, hiding the unethical and illegal behaviour behind this information gathering. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [R], [S].

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

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

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

“Russell apparently locked himself in a bathroom.” Dealt with above. **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism). **REF:** [T].

“As police systematically searched the house, the bystanders – quite a few curious people had already started congregating on August Street – only heard the screams of his boyfriend Lorez de Rodez Benavent as he yelled at the police.” This is entirely untrue. 1) There was no systematic search of the property. The apartment consisted of just a lounge and a bedroom, making the idea of a systematic search absurd—you could stand in the centre of the lounge and see the entire space. 2) Additionally, neither de Swardt nor the officers had an arrest warrant, nor did they have the authority to operate in the jurisdiction of Central Cape Town SAPS. 3) There was no search warrant, making any search, let alone a “systematic” one, illegal. 4) Loris did not scream at the police. The only time he raised his voice was when he defended me after one of the officers de Swardt brought with him attempted to strangle me, putting me in a chokehold that left my feet off the floor until a

Central Cape Town officer intervened. 5) This is yet another example of how the article distorts and sensationalizes events to fit a false narrative. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.8] (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF:** [H], [L].

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

"Some owners apparently suffered up to R300,000 in damage." 1) This claim is a fabrication, lacking any verification. 2) There is no substantiated evidence that any property suffered such damage, nor that I was responsible. 3) Extensive photo and video documentation, along with numerous positive reviews, clearly demonstrate that the properties were well-maintained and significantly improved during my tenure. 4) These claims appear to be fabricated solely to justify the smear campaign against me. 5) The same article features Booking.com photos of the properties, which clearly show luxurious, well-maintained accommodations. 6) Common sense should have led the journalist to question why someone renting out luxury properties to high-end guests would damage the very assets generating their income. 7) Even basic research would reveal readily available images from previous years, where the properties look markedly different, showing the significant improvements made just months prior. Why would a tenant simultaneously enhance and damage these properties? 8) The abundance of visual records on Instagram and Facebook—through the same profiles the publication used to source my photograph—tells a very different story. **PRESS CODE:** [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.0] (failure to report truthfully). **REF:** [M].

"Among the houses he appears to have illegally rented out are a R200 million residence from a Dubai billionaire and a R30 million house in Llandudno." 1) This is another fabrication. 2) All properties were rented under legal agreements, with full knowledge and consent from the owners, which is addressed in detail elsewhere. 3) The reference to a "Dubai billionaire" and a R200 million residence is a fabrication and a sensationalized addition without any factual basis, evidently included to depict exploitation of high-value properties. 4) None of the properties were valued close to R200 million; for example, prior to improvements, the Leirmans Road property was valued at R18 million and subsequently at R31 million post-renovation. The R200 million claim is a 700% exaggeration over the actual value. 5) The publication had the addresses, and even a basic search would yield accurate property valuations. 6) None of the landlords lived in or hailed from Dubai. 7) None of the landlords are billionaires. **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism), [1.0] (failure to report truthfully). **REF:** [F].

"When Rapport knocked on the door at one of the properties in Llandudno, a friendly American man answered and said he rented the house for five days. However, he was dissatisfied with a few things, including the 'nude portraits' on the walls that he asked to be removed, but this was never done." 1) This is a clear case of selective reporting intended to cast a negative impression. 2) This anecdote is both irrelevant to the central claims (which themselves misrepresented the actual case, charges, and court matters) and directly relevant. 3) It's irrelevant because the articles allege a massive fraudulent operation, yet the sole example of guest engagement focuses not on fraud but on décor. 4) It's relevant because the interaction itself undermines the articles' core narrative: the guest had made a legitimate booking and was enjoying his stay. This encounter illustrates that we ran a genuine villa operation, contradicting De Swardt's allegations. Instead of questioning De Swardt's narrative or including this significant detail, the publication chose to highlight a minor complaint. 5) Further, the journalist likely knew that the group was Orthodox Jews—nearly 40 individuals who rented the entire Llandudno property. They requested we remove anything perceived as an idol or deity, leading us to take down Buddha statues, paintings, and any potentially offending images. The "nude portrait" was actually an abstract reclining figure, which we removed immediately upon learning it was offensive. 6) What's telling is the complete omission of our extensive efforts to accommodate this very particular group: arranging kosher chefs, setting up two separate kitchens, adding extra housekeepers to meet dietary rules, adjusting security systems for Sabbath restrictions, and preparing extra beds. We undertook extensive measures to provide a fully kosher, comfortable experience, yet none of this was acknowledged. **PRESS CODE:** [1.7] (sensationalism), [1.8] (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF:** [O].

"During his court appearance this week, Adv. Lee Gabriel and two lawyers from the firm Abrahams & Gross are trying hard to secure bail for Russell, who has been in Pollsmoor for more than three weeks now. Gabriel argued that the charges against his client were civil in nature and that it was wrong to charge him criminally." 1) This is inaccurate. Gabriel argued that Keith Broad and I were in contentious civil litigation and that the charges were an abuse of the criminal system for strategic advantage. 2) Gabriel further argued that the items were stored securely, that Keith and Inge Broad were fully aware of this, and that any dispute over their location was a civil matter. 3) However, the Investigating Officer claimed the items were stolen, that I was withholding them, and that the storage unit did not exist—claims refuted by extensive email correspondence between our attorneys. 4) The journalist also failed to mention a significant event: when the magistrate ordered Sgt. Durna to inspect the storage unit to verify Gabriel's statement. Despite having several days to comply, Sgt. Durna admitted in court that he hadn't gone, angering the magistrate. 5) Omitting such a crucial detail distorts the reader's understanding, especially regarding the civil nature of the case. **PRESS CODE:** [1.3] (failure to provide context). **REF:** [R].

"Sgt. Muyiselo Durna, the investigating officer, stated that Russell was in the country illegally." 1) Neither the journalist nor the publication made any effort to investigate my visa, passport, or immigration status. Had they done so, they would have uncovered highly relevant information. 2) The journalist also failed to report significant revelations from the hearings. After the prosecution rested, Sgt. Stevens falsely testified that a) I had been illegal since March 23, 2021, three months after arrival; b) I had not extended my visa; c) I had intentionally avoided this for nefarious reasons; and d) I was wanted by Home Affairs for deportation—all of which were lies. Automatic extensions ran

through 2021 into 2022, and my visa was physically extended to the end of 2021 due to a stolen passport, a fact known to Durna. 3) What was revealed in cross-examination was that Sgt. Durna had been in possession of my passport for some time, which had been stolen by PD, passed to De Swardt, and then to him, to prevent further extensions. The passport bore the stamp proving my extension through 2022. This implication of illegal residency is damaging and baseless. **PRESS CODE:** [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.8] (failure to protect dignity and reputation). **REF:** [G].

"Durna said that while Russell was renting the house from Broad, items worth R836,000 were stolen." 1) This statement is false, and if the journalist was present during proceedings, they would have heard it was baseless. 2) Sgt. Durna was fully aware this was a lie, as the items were in safe storage, which is why he avoided inspecting the unit despite being ordered by the court. 3) At no point—whether during the arrest, bail application, or afterward—was there even a docket. 4) No official police reports or inventories were filed regarding these alleged stolen items, underscoring the lack of credible evidence. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts). **REF:** [F].

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

CAPTION. "HIGH DRAMA: Police officers try to get Russell out of a double-storey house while his boyfriend screams over and over again." This statement is false and sensationalized. 1) The claim that my boyfriend was "screaming over and over again" is entirely fabricated. 2) As mentioned, Media24 omitted every significant element of that arrest, the lack of arrest warrant, the fact de Swardt and the officers forced their way in, the real reason the other 9 police were there from Central Cape Town SAPS, the real motivation behind the arrest and everything that followed. 3) It was a one-story apartment, which leads me to believe the journalist was supplied with a photo by de Swardt, if so that means that they were not present and yet again they have taken their account of the arrest from de Swardt rather than any firsthand experience of it. 4) then, having not been present and having received the information second hand from a highly partisan individual with a known agenda, published it in its entirety, unvetted and unfiltered and unverified, **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline), [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [H], [K].

"BRITAIN WHO ALLEGEDLY DEFRAUDED PEOPLE WITH ACCOMMODATION, GETS BAIL" 23.8.22 ANÉ VAN ZYL. NETWORK24

"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." This statement is false and reflects a pattern that appears throughout the articles, which wrongly state that the first arrest was for fraud. Furthermore, after the second arrest, they refer to it as a "second arrest for fraud." The first arrest had nothing to do with fraud. Inge Broad (referred to only as "Inge" in the articles) fabricated charges of 1) "breaking and entering" (an absurd accusation considering this was my home), and 2) claiming I had stolen three old, inexpensive TVs, despite knowing they had been stolen by guests' weeks earlier and that I had replaced them with brand-new, high-quality ones. She witnessed this replacement during a routine property inspection the previous month, which was documented in correspondence between the attorneys. The articles falsely claim the first arrest was for fraud and then proceed to make further baseless statements about the state's case against me, including scamming guests, committing fraud, having a "modus operandi," "pocketing R34 million," and taking multiple bookings (double, triple, and quadruple). These statements directly reflect the narrative of WdS (de Swardt), yet they are entirely unrelated to the actual charges, events, facts, or the body of evidence, both at the time and since then. This raises significant questions about whether the journalists were present in court. Their articles create a strong impression that they were, but if they were present, they have grossly misreported the case, presenting information that directly contradicts what was said and shown in court. If they were not present, they have misled readers by writing as though they had firsthand knowledge of the proceedings. If they weren't present, this could explain the disconnect between the facts and their reporting, but it does not explain why they published falsehoods handed to them by someone known to News24. This is especially egregious given the Magistrate's scathing remarks about the case, the investigating officer's conduct, and the sinister role de Swardt played in managing and manipulating the proceedings. The same person the Magistrate criticized—the same individual whom the advocate exposed as playing a fundamental role in the unlawful arrest and malicious prosecution—was also the one feeding the story to News24. If the journalists were simply repeating de Swardt's propaganda without verifying it, that would explain the numerous false statements published by a national news outlet. The article ignores these facts and a considerable number of other important facts, events, and documents, instead perpetuating a false narrative of fraud, scamming, illegal conduct, and property damage. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting news truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [3.1] (failure to protect dignity), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [A], [B], [C], [F].

"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." This is false and is a pattern that appeared throughout the articles in which they state that the first arrest was for fraud and then after the second arrest refer to that being a "second arrest for fraud." The first arrest had nothing to do with fraud. Inge Broad (also interviewed in the articles although her name was only ever published as "Inge") laid a fabricated charge of 1) "breaking and entering" (an absurd notion considering this was my home) and 2) stating I had stolen three old cheap TV's that she knew had been stolen by guests many weeks earlier and that I had replaced them with brand-new high-quality ones. Something she saw for herself on a routine property inspection that happened the previous month and was referenced in correspondence between the respective attorneys. The articles falsely state the first arrest was for fraud and then go on to make further statements about the state's case against me referencing scamming guests, committing fraud, taking double, triple, quadruple bookings. While all of these statements directly related the narrative of de Swardt they are not related to the charges in any way. I would have to question whether the journalists were in court as their articles suggest. If they were in court, then they have managed to report the case in a way that is entirely false and contrary to what they would have seen and heard. If they were not present why have they written articles that both give the impression they were and that they were writing from a point of informed fact and direct experience. If they were not present, this would explain the disconnect between the reality and their reporting. But what that would not explain was why they published falsehoods simply because those falsehoods were given to them by someone known to News24 and who had worked with News24. An especially relevant point considering the Magistrate's scathing summing up regarding the case, the investigating

officers conduct, his testimony and the pervasive, sinister presence, interference, management and manipulation of the proceedings by the same de Swardt. If they were not present and simply accepted then regurgitated the propaganda that de Swardt was engaged in creating, it would then explain the dozens and dozens of other false statements that found their way from the mouth of de Swardt and into a national publication. The article ignores all these facts, and much more, and instead presents a false narrative of fraud, scamming, illegal conduct and property damage. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting news truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [3.1] (failure to protect dignity), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [A], [B], [C], [F].

"Darren Russell's (52) bail application was completed on Monday in the magistrate's court in Wynberg, and he was released on bail on Tuesday." While this statement is factually correct regarding the timing of the bail application, it omits the critical context of why I had been arrested in the first place. The charges were part of a broader effort to sabotage my legal proceedings and were not related to any criminal activity. Due to the lies told by de Swardt and Sergeant Stevens at the first hearing, where they inflated the value of junk in the back room to almost a million rand, the offense was categorized under Schedule 5 for the purpose of making bail difficult to obtain. As a result, I had to endure a lengthy, expensive, and stressful bail application process, which essentially became a mini-trial spanning four full days of court hearings. Had a journalist been present in the courtroom, they would have heard, in detail, what the charges were—and, crucially, what they were not. They would also have heard Sergeant Stevens admit, under cross-examination, that he had my passport, which had been stolen by PD, passed to de Swardt, and eventually handed over to him. They would have seen Sergeant Stevens caught lying under oath, and they would have heard him admit that the notes he referenced before answering questions were provided by de Swardt. Moreover, they would have witnessed the magistrate's acute displeasure and anger when Sergeant Stevens failed to visit the storage unit to resolve the matter, despite the magistrate having ordered him to. Yet, inexplicably, none of these significant details made it into the articles. Instead, the fabrications of de Swardt did. Again, either the journalists were present and deliberately lied, publishing a long series of false and fabricated statements that they knew would damage me, or they were not present and yet felt it appropriate to publish second-hand information provided by someone with a significant vested interest. They published this without any independent verification, despite the undeniable significance of what they were reporting and the certainty of the harm it would cause me. . Regardless, by omitting essential context, the article breaches **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [3.1] (failure to protect dignity), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [G], [H], [L].

"Russell is accused of renting and subletting at least four luxury homes in Hout Bay, Camps Bay, and Llandudno without permission." This is both a fabrication, as it formed no part of the state's case or the charges, and demonstrably untrue. First, it is clear the journalists appear to be reporting on an entirely different case—one that de Swardt would have preferred the state to be prosecuting and certainly the case he wanted the public to believe was being prosecuted. However, this was not the case against me. Second, the accusation itself is false. The landlords were fully aware of and had given their permission for all rental arrangements. In fact, this was the very basis on which the properties were leased, with the relationship built on the premise that I would long-lease the properties, renovate them, and then short-lease them as part of the business model, which enabled the payment of rents totalling R4 million per year. Any review of communications between myself and the landlords, between attorneys, and between staff would clearly show that this was the agreed arrangement. The claim that I was renting and subletting without the owners' consent is a complete fabrication. Had any of the journalists reached out to me at any point, I would have provided conclusive evidence to refute this. However, they chose not to, instead publishing, wholesale and without vetting, the lies carefully crafted by de Swardt. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.8] (denial of the right of reply), and [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [J], [L], [M].

"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." This statement is again a fabrication, both in the sense that it played absolutely no part in the charges, arrest, detention, or bail application, and a fabrication in that it was not true. Had the journalists contacted me, this could easily have been demonstrated. They not only failed to try, but they also failed to interview anyone other than those de Swardt provided to them. Prior to my arrest and after getting bail, I was easy to get hold of. There were half a dozen material staff they could have spoken to, two dozen housekeepers, and hundreds of guests who had stayed—many of whom had posted comments and stories on our Instagram profiles. They could have contacted Booking.com or Airbnb for comment, or looked into the dozens of five-star reviews we had. And without wishing to state the obvious, they could simply have used common sense. Had we scammed even one or two guests, our profiles would have been closed, yet our account online was the same as when we first started a year and a half earlier. Using that common sense, they would have realized something was very amiss about the narrative de Swardt was pushing. If his allegations were true, where were all the negative reviews on these platforms? Where was the inevitable online content if a villa scam was being operated? Why, in August 2022, a year and a half after we started, was there not a single case or charge for fraud or operating a villa scam? Why, considering Keith Broad's determination to take the property back by any means necessary, was the best accusation they could come up with to incarcerate me the allegation that I had stolen three TVs? If I had been scamming guests, it would have been an easy, near-guaranteed way for Broad to achieve his goals. What is shocking is that, regardless of the source of such extreme allegations, these journalists did not think to check, check again, and verify before publishing what was bound to cause significant and irreparable damage to the person being accused. The claim is wholly untrue —we never rented properties out to multiple parties at once. As for the statement that I "disappeared without a trace," this is a very good demonstration of the fabrications and their source; a statement that could not be any further from the truth, 1) I lived between the two properties in Llandudno depending on when each was rented, 16 Leirmans and 32 Fisherman's Bend, 2) they were two streets away from each other. 3) I worked 16-18 hours every day, essentially had no life outside of running the villas, so was never out socialising or doing anything that took me away from the properties. 4) This meant that on any given day, at any time, I was always at the same two addresses. 5) I could not have been more immobile or easier to find. 6) In the entire preceding year, I spent just two days away from the property when I went to Pringle Bay, at a time when all the villas were fully booked. 7) the property I lived at and was chained to by virtue of the villa work, belonged to Keith Broad, the same man who appointed and employed the same de Swardt in the first place, so, 24 of the 24 hours of every day, for 363 days of the previous 365, I could be found at or within two streets of de Swardt's boss's house. There was no tracking, no disappearing, and no substance whatsoever to this statement. It can only have come directly from de Swardt—there could have been no possibility that a journalist would have come to such an untrue conclusion. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.2] (presenting misleading information), and [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [K], [P].

"He also allegedly carried out illegal construction work on the houses by breaking and building walls, changing kitchens, and laying floors without the permission of the owners." This is completely untrue. No illegal construction work was carried out, and all modifications

were purely cosmetic. There was no “construction” work involved. What work was done was completed with the owners’ full knowledge and consent. These specific claims, like so many others, came from de Swardt and Inge Broad and were never fact-checked or investigated. Had I been approached; I could have provided the journalist with reams of evidence proving these allegations were false. Once again, the comments in the articles mirror the lies being told by de Swardt and Inge Broad at the time but bear no relation to the actual facts, events, or evidence. As with all of the allegations, the application of common sense prior to regurgitating de Swardt’s lies would have been useful. What person would undertake expensive work on a property that isn’t theirs, using their own money, unless they had permission to do so? The allegation of damage is equally false, but at least it’s plausible. The idea that I would start installing new kitchens, tiling floors, landscaping gardens, and spending vast sums of my own money increasing the value of someone else’s property without permission or an agreement makes no sense. This allegation is particularly deceitful considering it was the refurbishment work itself that motivated Keith Broad to enter into the arrangement in the first place—and it was the basis of the plan to con me into doing the work so they could take the property back once it was completed. Again, common sense would have led any genuinely inquisitive journalist to question how, if I were supposedly carrying out illegal construction work, Keith Broad had failed to secure an eviction order. Why would I be spending so much time and money on refurbishment for a property where the owner neither knew of nor consented to the work when there would be hundreds of landlords eager to welcome such an arrangement? **The article breaches PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[1.7]** (failure to report fairly), and **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [C], [J], [K], [N].**

“He also allegedly carried out illegal construction work on the houses by breaking and building walls, changing kitchens, and laying floors without the permission of the owners.” 1) This is completely untrue. 2) No illegal construction work was carried out. 3) All modifications were cosmetic. 4) There was no “construction” work. 5) The work that was done was carried out with the owners’ knowledge and consent. 6) These specific examples originated from de Swardt and Inge Broad. 7) Again, they were never fact-checked or investigated. 8) Had I been approached; I could have shown the journalist reams of evidence proving they were false. 9) The comments in the articles throughout match precisely the lies being told by de Swardt and Inge Broad at the time, but they bear no relationship to the facts, events, or evidence. 10) As with all of the allegations, applying common sense prior to regurgitating de Swardt’s lies would have been useful. What person undertakes expensive work, using their own money, on a property that isn’t theirs unless they were permitted to do so? 11) The allegation of damage is equally false, though at least it’s plausible. 12) The idea that I would start installing new kitchens, tiling floors, landscaping gardens, spending vast sums of my own money increasing the value of someone else’s property without permission or an agreement makes no sense. 13) The allegation is particularly deceitful, considering the refurbishment work itself was the driving factor behind Keith Broad’s original agreement and the basis of his plan to con me into doing the work, only to take the property back once it was completed. 14) Again, common sense would have led any genuinely inquisitive journalist to question why, if I were illegally carrying out construction work, Keith Broad had entirely failed to get an eviction order. 15) Why would I be spending vast amounts of time and money on refurbishment for a property where the owner neither knew of nor consented to the work, when there would be hundreds of landlords eager to welcome such an arrangement? **The article breaches PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[1.7]** (failure to report fairly), and **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [C], [J], [K], [N].**

“He is charged with burglary, theft, and malicious damage to property as well as being in the country illegally because his visa has expired.” 1) The latter part of the statement is false, while the former part of the statement demonstrates that they were aware of the actual charges. 2) As detailed, the charge was breaking and entering and theft (later thrown out by the magistrate and will be the subject of civil action for malicious prosecution). 3) No part of the charge related to being in the country illegally. 4) The only reference to any visa-related issues came when the Investigating Officer (Investigating Officer.) Sergeant Duna suggested I was a flight risk, trying to get my initial bail request declined, and when he introduced highly suspicious and entirely false documents purportedly from a Home Affairs employee—now the subject of another investigation into the conduct of de Swardt, Sergeant Duna, Sergeant Stevens, and the landlords. These documents were both false and purposely misleading. 5) Even more shocking is the journalist’s failure to report on such fundamental issues regarding my status in the country. There can be no reasonable explanation for this omission. 6) During the bail application, the advocate cross-examined the Investigating Officer. Sergeant Duna. When pressed on the subject, the Investigating Officer. admitted that he actually had possession of my passport—something we were unaware of until that admission. 7) Further pressed, he admitted that it had been passed to him by de Swardt, and also admitted that SAPS had no right to possess it. 8) When the advocate questioned the Investigating Officer’s claim (again based on de Swardt’s narrative) that I had never extended my visa since landing in 2020 and was thus illegal after three months, the Investigating Officer. admitted that within the passport—illegally held by him—was a stamp from Home Affairs granting a visa extension into 2022 (in response to my application). 9) He further admitted that Home Affairs’ automatic visa extensions throughout 2021 meant I couldn’t have been in breach of my visa, and reluctantly admitted that since then, extending my visa would have been impossible because he had secretly and illegally held my passport. 10) All of this raises a fundamental question: How could this have been the reality in court, yet the journalist reported that I was in the country illegally, creating the very clear impression that this was intentional and for some nefarious reason? 11) Publishing false and fabricated statements was extremely damaging, but what compounded the harm was the total omission of highly relevant, very significant, and often fundamental facts throughout the articles. 12) Across the body of the articles, an easy way to summarize them would be: **“What was reported was false, and what was not reported, was everything.”** 13) Not one of the 200+ instances of corruption. 14) Not one of the near 100 attacks on me, the business, the staff, or the guests. 15) Not one of the nearly 300 events over the course of the campaign. 16) Not one of the nearly 400 criminal offenses committed. 17) Not one of the outcomes of the cases they had reported on (or rather misreported) at the outset, and in such detail. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline), and **[6.1]** (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF: [D], [F], [H], [P].**

“WdS of Fox Forensics, who investigated Russell at the behest of a homeowner, says that around 20 people were apparently approached, of whom 15 filed complaints.” 1) The only part of this sentence that is true is that de Swardt was instructed by the homeowner—namely, Keith Broad. The rest of the sentence is false. 2) Dealing with the portion that is true, this sentence demonstrates that the publication knew de Swardt was acting in a professional capacity, working for Keith Broad, the homeowner. They knew de Swardt was hired to investigate me. 3) While I have no doubt they knew that de Swardt was trying to discredit me, even if they claimed ignorance of the finer details of his mandate, it is self-evident that de Swardt was the very opposite of unbiased and clearly had his own agenda. 4) The publication cannot hide behind the excuse that they thought de Swardt was embarked on an altruistic mission to fight fraud or randomly investigate criminals. It was clear they knew he was acting for and on behalf of the owner or owners, 5) which makes their already shocking conduct and extremely serious violations of the Press Code even more significant and sinister. 6) De Swardt’s role was not merely to investigate me but to frame me and

ensure I was removed from the properties by any means necessary. 7) A reference to easily available information would have revealed the extent of the battle between myself and Keith Broad, as well as some of the criminal and serious methods he and de Swardt had used, including the court judgment of 4 August, which was widely available online as it was considered a landmark judgment on the issue of spoliation. 8) Dealing with the latter part of that sentence, it is entirely false. At the time the article was published, the only charge was the theft charge. There were not 15 complaints as a result of their approaches—in fact, there were none. 9) The statement is clear and unambiguous, “of whom 15 filed complaints.” 10) Yet the same journalist was present at court and reported on the arrest and bail application, where there was no reference whatsoever to complaints of fraud. 11) As no SAPS station, SAPS unit, court, or court register had any record or knowledge of these complaints, how then did a statement so explicit, categorical, and false get published by Media24? Considering the number of articles, the 120+ statements contained within, the wide range of subjects covered, the extreme nature of the allegations, and the inevitable damage publication would cause, there was a very considerable onus on Media24 to investigate every statement before publishing. This means Media24 should be able to provide what should be boxes upon boxes of evidence gathered at the time if they had conducted themselves ethically and professionally. Personally, I do not believe such a body of evidence and investigation exists because they simply published the account of de Swardt as if it were gospel truth. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [1.8] (denial of the right of reply), and [2.1] (misleading headlines). **REF:** [C], [K], [M], [P].

“In some of the incidents, according to De Swardt, the complainant Russell apparently paid as much as R19,000 per night for the ‘Royal Suite’ in a house in Llandudno.” 1) This is entirely untrue. 2) There was no “Royal Suite,” and no one paid R19,000 per night for a suite because we didn’t offer suites—only entire residences. 3) As with all the statements made by de Swardt and printed by Media24, he fabricated them for maximum effect. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [F], [L], [N].

“Russell was arrested on August 4 in the Upper Cape after apparently locking himself in a bathroom. He spent two-and-a-half weeks in Pollsmoor Prison, and his bail application began on Thursday.” 1) While I was indeed arrested on August 4, the circumstances of my arrest were far from lawful. 2) What Media24 failed to report—and what they would have known had they even done cursory research or actually contacted me—was that the arrest was illegal. There was no warrant and not even an attempt to request one. 3) What Media24 also omitted to report was that I locked myself in the bathroom for protection from De Swardt, while we waited for the Central Cape Town SAPS to arrive after myself, my partner, the attorney, and the portfolio manager called them dozens of times when de Swardt and two policemen began trying to break into the property. 4) It is not hard to imagine how terrifying this was given that: a) the illegal arrest had started with these two officers visiting all the villas (1–3 August) and giving no details—no case number, no information on what the issue was, no badge number, and refusing to give their names or their superior officer’s name, instead leaving only the message “tell Darren to come to Hout Bay SAPS,” b) I knew the reason for the sudden involvement of de Swardt and SAPS was to remove me as an opponent for the 4 August hearing, c) de Swardt had only a week earlier forced his way into the Leirmans property with eight thugs, beat up the occupants, and expelled them, and d) he was now trying to break into the property. 5) This was also discussed in detail in court because the Investigating Officer, Sergeant Duna, had claimed that I should not be given bail because I had “resisted arrest.” It was the magistrate who interjected, pointing out the absurdity of that lie by saying, “when someone is trying to resist arrest, they do not usually call the local police station multiple times begging them to come to their assistance.” 6) The context I have touched upon and the reality of that arrest were thoroughly examined, some days prior to the article being published. 7) The article fails to mention any of this. 8) the article identifies where I was arrested, why then do the articles published by Media24 say I was arrested in one of the rich man’s houses, when I was arrested in a one-bedroom apartment leased via AirBnB. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [B], [H], [M].

“Russell’s legal representatives Heynes Kotze and Juan Smuts told Netwerk24 on Tuesday that Russell will plead not guilty to the charges against him.” 1) There is no record I can find of the publication contacting both attorneys, that aside, while this is factually correct, the article fails to provide the necessary context. 2) I was pleading not guilty because the charges were baseless, fabricated, and part of a malicious campaign. 3) The context, facts, and events were discussed in detail during the 2.5-week period the publication refers to, yet none of what was discussed, uncovered, revealed, or exposed found its way into any of the articles. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), and [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [B], [H], [M].

“According to Kotze, one of his bail conditions is that he must stay at a property he rents in Llandudno and must not make contact with the state witnesses.” 1) This sentence is accurate in terms of my bail conditions, although these are the standard conditions attached to any bail, so I am unsure why the publication felt it appropriate to mention that I must not contact potential witnesses. 2) Every bail granted to every defendant includes this requirement, yet the article presents it as if it were unique to my case, further perpetuating a damaging and misleading narrative. 3) Moreover, it omits the broader context surrounding my case, leaving out crucial facts. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [B], [D], [F].

“He is due to appear again in the magistrate’s court on September 22.” 1) This is a factual statement with no real issues, though it continues to be presented in a way that suggests I am involved in ongoing criminal behaviour. 2) More importantly, however, is the fact that there were no follow-up articles to inform readers that the charges were ultimately thrown out when brought before a magistrate. 3) The publication failed to report the crucial details: the magistrates’ views on the alarming and sinister involvement of de Swardt, the investigators, and the entire motivation behind the arrests. 4) Instead, Media24 left the story at its most damaging point, allowing readers to carry away only the most negative and serious impression of me, without ever following up with the truth and actual outcomes. By stopping at this critical juncture, the articles cemented a distorted narrative that ignored all subsequent developments. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (failure to report truthfully), [1.1] (failure to verify facts), [2.1] (misleading headline), and [6.1] (failure to base commentary on facts). **REF:** [F].

“SECOND ARREST FOR CAPE TOWN LUXURY ACCOMMODATION SCAMMER SUSPECTED OF POKETING MILLIONS”. 14.1.23 CARIN SMITH. NEWS24

“Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims, and WdS, a private investigator, are coordinating the various claims and suspect there might be even more victims they do not know of yet. Currently, there are six criminal and six civil charges against Russell.” This statement is both false and highly misleading. Firstly, “Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims” is factually inaccurate.

(1) Johan Victor was not the legal representative of "victims." (2) He was the legal representative of the landlords themselves, including Keith Broad and Ragi Moonsamy. (3) By misrepresenting him as the attorney for the victims, this builds a false and damaging picture of some sort of class action and creates the false narrative of significant litigation (criminal and civil) underway. (4) To our knowledge, Johan Victor did not have a mandate from any guests, and if that is so, this is a significant breach not only of the Press Code but also of the ethical codes that govern attorneys. (5) Johan Victor has never corresponded with me or my attorneys on behalf of guests or "victims." (6) However, he has corresponded with my attorneys on behalf of his real clients, Keith Broad and Ragi Moonsamy. (7) By referencing "some of the victims," the article sets up the premise that there were existing victims and implies that more were being represented. (8) It clearly implies a significant number of victims, given that the article states that one attorney is representing "some" of them. This is a clear misrepresentation. (9) Regarding WdS, who is described as a private investigator, by the time this article was published in January 2023, there can have been no confusion as to what WdS's role was in this campaign. (10) In articles published four months earlier, it was already acknowledged that WdS worked for the landlords, so this was already known. (11) By this point, there had been full articles written detailing his role in the arrests and evictions, and WdS had been present at both of my arrests and every court hearing since, which by then numbered almost a dozen. (12) His role in the July 22 and July 24 evictions was a matter of significant public record. (13) Therefore, by the time this article was written, there was no illusion that he was anything other than highly partisan and deeply invested in achieving the owners' objectives to retake the property. (14) Yet the journalist makes no attempt to provide this context or to explain what WdS's role and mandate were. (15) Referring to him simply as a "private investigator" without the necessary context paints him as independent and professional, which is misleading, especially given how the article portrays me as the villain he has been focused on tracking and exposing. (16) Neither Johan Victor nor WdS were neutral parties. (17) They are in fact long-standing colleagues and friends, as is evidenced by their collaboration on the "Lost Boys" investigation, which was covered by the same News24 platform. (18) They were not state-appointed investigators and had no official role in the court case or prosecution, although the articles give the clear impression that they were working in close collaboration with SAPS. (19) In fact, on one occasion when Johan Victor attempted to address the court on behalf of the landlords, he was told to sit down and reminded by the judge that he had no standing in the proceedings. (20) On that occasion, Victor had attempted to prevent me from using my own home as a bail address, thereby making it more difficult for me to secure bail. This action shows that he was acting solely for the landlords, not any "victims." (21) By calling them "victims," this statement misrepresents the role of the landlords and lends undue credibility to their false narrative. This narrative rewards the unlawful tactics and criminal behaviour that characterized their campaign against me. (22) The references to WdS in this article, as in others, consistently omit any mention of the illegal, immoral, and criminal actions that underpinned his management of the campaign. (23) The term "suspect there might be even more victims" is speculative and entirely baseless, given that there were no actual victims to begin with. (24) This unqualified allegation serves only to reinforce an inflammatory and damaging narrative without any evidence or foundation. (25) The journalists, who had attended the court proceedings, would have known that these so-called victims were landlords themselves, not tenants or guests. (26) The statement "Currently, there are six criminal and six civil charges against Russell" is highly misleading. (27) Every one of these charges was either initiated by the landlords or was motivated by them. For example, (28) Keith Broad's protection order was obtained through perjury, (29) Paula Disberry's malicious prosecutions were intended to disrupt the proceedings, and (30) my arrest in August had already been thrown out of court, with no connection to fraud, despite how it was framed in the article. (31) Moreover, some of these charges, including the conflict with Paula Disberry, had already been settled legally four months earlier. (32) Not only does the article conceal the identity and motives of those who initiated these cases, but it also presents false information to the reader. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [F], [I].**

"Darren Russell, a British citizen who arrived in South Africa in December 2020 on a visitor's visa, remains in custody until a bail hearing in early February." While the statement about the bail hearing is accurate, (1) it lacks critical context regarding the visa issue, which is essential to fully understanding the situation. (2) The article implies that the visa issue was a direct result of my own negligence or wrongdoing. (3) However, the truth is that my passport was illegally withheld by WdS and then Sergeant Duna followed by sergeant Stevens, both of whom took full advantage of my inability to extend my visa as a result. (4) The article completely omits this fact, failing to mention how my legal status in South Africa was deliberately compromised by external actors, who orchestrated this situation to fabricate a case against me. (5) Without this critical context, the statement is highly misleading as it gives the impression that I was in South Africa illegally. (6) In reality, my immigration issue was not of my own making but was part of the wider campaign by WdS and others to undermine me and create a false legal narrative. (7) The failure to include this crucial background information skews the reader's perception of the events and supports a false narrative about my legal status. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts). **REF: [A], [K], [M].**

"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." This statement continues the misrepresentation of the facts. (1) The article again refers to my arrest, implying that the charges were legitimate, when in fact, they were based on fabricated claims stemming from civil disputes over property rentals, not fraud. (2) The article conveniently omits crucial information: the charges from this arrest were thrown out in October 2022. (3) It is extremely troubling that the publication fails to report this significant fact, despite revisiting the story multiple times. (4) This omission clearly shows selective reporting, leaving out key facts that discredit the narrative being driven by WdS and his associates. (5) Furthermore, it reinforces the concern that WdS has been feeding these stories to the journalists without any independent investigative work on their part. (6) By failing to mention the dismissal of charges, the article misleads the reader into thinking these fraud accusations were still ongoing, when in reality, they had already been dismissed months earlier. (7) The statement that I have now been arrested on "more fraud charges" is categorically false. (8) The phrase "more fraud charges" implies that I was previously arrested for fraud, which is entirely untrue. (9) The charges from my arrest in August 2022 were not related to fraud but to fabricated allegations surrounding property disputes. (10) There were no fraud charges at the time of my first arrest, making the claim of "more fraud charges" an outright misrepresentation. (11) This is yet another attempt to paint me as a repeat offender without any factual basis, and it perpetuates the false narrative orchestrated by WdS and his associates. (12) The part of the statement that claims "more victims have come to the fore" is equally misleading. (13) The claim that "more victims" have emerged is entirely false. (14) The charges that led to my arrest were based on three complaints from December 2021, which had been thoroughly investigated by the Investigating Officer, who dismissed them as having no criminal element, and the docket was closed. (15) No additional victims came forward in the year leading up to my arrest, and certainly not in the four months between my first and second arrests. (16) The suggestion that new victims emerged is part of the false narrative being driven by WdS to bolster the defamation campaign against me. (17) There is no evidence to support this claim, yet the article presents it as fact, further contributing to the ongoing defamation against me. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [B], [E], [L].**

"Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims, and WdS, a private investigator, are coordinating the various claims and suspect there might be even more victims they do not know of yet. Currently, there are six criminal and six civil charges against Russell."; This statement is both false and highly misleading. (1) *"Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims"* is factually inaccurate. (2) Johan Victor was not the legal representative of "victims"; (3) he represented the landlords themselves, including Keith Broad and Ragi Moonsamy. (4) By misrepresenting him as the attorney for the victims, this builds a false and damaging picture of some sort of class action and creates the false narrative of significant litigation (criminal and civil) being underway. (5) To our knowledge, Johan Victor did not have any mandate from a single guest, and if that is so, the comment is not only a significant breach of the Press Code but also of the ethical codes that govern attorneys. (6) Johan Victor has never corresponded with me or my attorneys on behalf of guests or "victims." (7) However, he has corresponded with my attorneys on behalf of his real clients—Keith Broad and Ragi Moonsamy. (8) By referencing "some of the victims," the article sets up the premise that there were existing victims and that more were being represented, which is untrue. (9) This clearly implies a significant number of victims, as one attorney is representing "some" of them. This is a clear misrepresentation. (10) Regarding WdS, described as *"a private investigator,"* by the time this article was published in January 2023, there was no confusion about WdS's role in this campaign. (11) In articles published four months earlier, it had already been acknowledged that WdS worked for the owners, so this was well-known. (12) By this time, there had been full articles written detailing his role in the arrests and evictions, and WdS had been present at both of my arrests and every court hearing since, which by then numbered almost a dozen. (13) His role in the July 22 and July 24 evictions was a matter of significant public record. (14) Therefore, by the time this article was written, there could be no illusion that he was anything other than highly partisan and deeply invested in achieving the owners' objectives to retake the property. (15) Yet, the journalist makes no attempt to provide this context or to explain what WdS's role and mandate were. (16) Referring to him simply as a *"private investigator"* without this necessary context paints him as independent and professional, which is misleading, especially given how the article portrays me as the villain he has been focused on tracking and exposing. (17) Neither Johan Victor nor WdS were neutral parties. (18) They are long-standing colleagues and friends, as is evidenced by their collaboration on the *"Lost Boys"* investigation, which was covered by the same News24 platform. (19) They were not state-appointed investigators and played no official role in the court case or prosecution, although the article implies that they were working closely with SAPS. (20) Indeed, on one occasion when Johan Victor tried to address the court on behalf of the landlords, the judge told him to sit down and reminded him that he had no standing in the proceedings. (21) On that occasion, Victor had attempted to prevent me from using my own home as a bail address, thereby making it more difficult for me to secure bail. This action shows that he was acting solely for the landlords, not for any "victims." (22) By referring to them as *"victims,"* this statement misrepresents the role of the landlords and lends undue credibility to their false narrative. (23) This narrative rewards their unlawful tactics and criminal behaviour. (24) The reference to WdS in this and other articles consistently omits any mention of the illegal, immoral, and criminal actions that were integral to his management of this campaign. (25) The phrase *"suspect there might be even more victims"* is speculative and baseless, given that there were no actual victims to begin with. (26) This unqualified allegation serves only to reinforce an inflammatory and damaging narrative without any evidence or foundation. (27) The journalists, who had attended the court proceedings, would have known that these so-called victims were landlords, not guests or tenants. (28) Lastly, the statement *"Currently, there are six criminal and six civil charges against Russell"* is highly misleading. (29) Every one of these charges was either initiated by the landlords or motivated by them. For example, (30) Keith Broad's protection order was obtained through perjury, (31) Paula Disberry's malicious prosecutions were intended to disrupt proceedings, and (32) an August arrest that had already been thrown out of court was framed as fraud, though it was unrelated. (33) Some of these cases, including the conflict with Paula Disberry, had already been legally settled four months prior to this article. (34) The article fails to identify the true motives and connections behind these cases, presenting false information. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [F], [I].**

"Russell's attorney, Theodore Swartz, told News24 on Friday that he does not have any comment at this stage." While this statement may be factually correct, (1) it raises significant questions about Media24's journalistic approach. (2) My attorney's lack of comment is standard legal procedure, especially during an ongoing case, but (3) the article frames it in a way that implies guilt and secrecy. (4) More importantly, Media24 made only superficial attempts to get a comment from my attorney when I was in Pollsmoor Prison. (5) They allegedly sought a comment on both occasions of my incarceration, yet (6) they failed to seek any comment or input from me before publishing the articles in August or directly afterward, when I was not in Pollsmoor. (7) Why did they not seek comment from me in the period between August and December, when I was out on bail and not in Pollsmoor? (8) Why did they not reach out to me or my legal team during the six months after I was granted bail and prior to the withdrawal of the fabricated immigration charge? (9) After the charge was thrown out, I contacted them to correct the record, (10) but they dismissed my approach, (11) using false reasons to justify their rejection of my input. (12) This selective approach to seeking comment clearly reflects biased reporting and further supports the false narrative being perpetuated against me. **PRESS CODE: [1.2]** (reporting with fairness and balance) and **[1.3]** (the duty to seek comments and verify facts from the subject of critical reportage). **REF: [G], [H].**

"Multiple bookings.": (1) The use of this phrase sets up the reader to assume that fraudulent activity involving multiple bookings took place, which is false. (2) The article immediately picks up on the theme from previous articles, which falsely accused me of fraud and falsely claimed that my first arrest was for fraud. (3) Media24 monitored the unfolding story, starting in August with the initial articles, and then built on that narrative with additional articles, including those published in December, January, and February. (4) Instead of telling a complete story, Media24 selectively published only the chapters that could be portrayed in the most damaging way possible, thereby creating a misleading narrative. (5) The article also implies a prosecution wholly different from reality. Rather than explaining that the case involved only three charges—each of which was over a year old at the time of my arrest—the article suggests an ongoing pattern of criminality. (6) The charges related to a property portfolio of six large residences, accommodating between 7,000 and 10,000 guests annually. (7) Even if the three charges were not the baseless, misrepresented cases that they were, it would still be insignificant if a hotel or host of comparable size had three complaints over that period. By December 2022, we had been operating for two full years, meaning that guest figure could be doubled to reflect an even larger volume of guests. (8) The article fails to provide any context or proportionality, instead opting for an absolutist portrayal of just these three cases, grossly misrepresenting the facts. (9) It also fails to mention the glaring inconsistency: if I had been running a scam or fraudulent operation, why were there no complaints before the Omicron wave, during the extremely busy year prior, or in the even busier year that followed? (10) Nothing about the evidence or facts suggests that this was a fraudulent operation, and the selective reporting reinforces this false narrative. (11) Furthermore, the charges themselves related to a single incident on Christmas Day, a peak day in the holiday season when our booking system experienced a failure. I even offered my own home to accommodate guests affected by this issue. (12) Had we operated a practice of double, triple, or quadruple booking, the number of guests would have been multiplied several times over, leading to thousands of additional guests, yet there were no such complaints in the years either side of Omicron. If the journalist had been investigating the story

properly, they would have uncovered significant and relevant information that would have led them in a very different direction. Instead, they were not investigating the story—they were simply writing a narrative based on homemade dossiers, perjury, and fabrications, all of which had a clear end goal. (13) At the time this article was published, no one knew what the final charges would be, so the article's suggestion that the statements made by WdS and others were accepted facts is deeply misleading. (14) At the point this article was written, the August charges had already been thrown out and the December charges had not yet been reviewed by the prosecution. I had not been convicted of anything related to this alleged double or quadruple booking operation, and WdS's attempts to date had been proven to be bogus, malicious, and without foundation. Yet none of this is mentioned, and the clear impression given by the article is one of constant, ongoing, and widespread criminality. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.2] (balance), [1.3] (seeking comment and verification), [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [J], [O], [P].

"According to Victor and De Swardt, Russell's modus operandi was to let luxury accommodation—usually worth between R40 million and R110 million." This was an extremely damning inclusion in the articles. **According to Victor and De Swardt:** (1) Referring to these individuals as the source for claims about my alleged modus operandi immediately creates bias. (2) Johan Victor was never the legal representative of victims but rather of the landlords, including Keith Broad and Ragi Moonsamy. (3) This framing serves to falsely present the appearance of independent sources to bolster a fraudulent narrative, reinforcing the conspiracy against me by these coordinated actors. (4) Both Victor and De Swardt played orchestrated roles, feeding stories that helped misrepresent the events. (5) Media24, failing to critically examine the credentials and motivations of these sources, allowed their narrative to shape the perception of events without verifying the facts. **Russell's modus operandi:** (6) The use of the term "modus operandi" is both misleading and defamatory. (7) It is a term typically used to imply a pattern of criminal behaviour, which is entirely unfounded in my case. (8) There was no fraudulent "modus operandi"—my business was a legitimate one, run with proper legal agreements and full transparency. (9) The article's use of this term was designed to make the reader believe that I was engaged in systematic fraud, despite there being no evidence to support this. (10) This is an intentional effort to manipulate the narrative and damage my reputation, portraying ordinary business practices as part of a criminal scheme. **Usually worth between R40 million and R110 million:** (11) This claim about the value of the properties I managed is wholly untrue. (12) The properties in question were worth a fraction of that sum—this is a blatant attempt to sensationalize the story. (13) By inflating the value of the properties, the article gives the false impression that I was dealing with ultra-luxury estates far beyond their actual worth, adding an additional layer of drama to the accusations. (14) This misrepresentation further undermines the credibility of the article, which repeatedly uses exaggeration and misleading information to paint a picture of criminality that simply does not exist. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [B], [D].

"He paid the rent three months in advance for a property in Camps Bay at R90 000 per month, and also ended up renting a property in Hout Bay and two in Llandudno. For one of the properties, he paid a total of R1.2 million rent in advance for a lease of 12 months." This is one of the few statements that comes close to the truth. (1) I did pay R1.2 million in advance for one property, and I did rent two properties in Llandudno, although the claim about paying R90,000 per month for the property in Camps Bay is inaccurate. (2) The R90,000 monthly payment in advance for three months actually applied to the other Llandudno property, not the Camps Bay property. (3) Although a minor inaccuracy, this statement highlights a deeper inconsistency. (4) The articles suggest that I caused significant damage to the properties, did not have permission to rent them out, or carried out work without consent. Yet, at the same time, the publication acknowledges that I paid R1.2 million in advance for a full calendar year. (5) Common sense should question the narrative being pushed—what tenant pays such a large sum in advance and then allegedly undertakes actions that would surely lead to eviction, resulting in the loss of that money? (6) Many landlords would welcome a tenant who paid R1.2 million upfront and was willing to invest in property renovations, a point ignored by the article. (7) Why would I embark on such an expensive project, paying significant sums of rent in advance, only to supposedly cause damage without permission? (8) Regarding the R90,000 per month payment, this refers to Keith Broad's property at 16 Woodman's Road, for which I paid R90,000 quarterly in advance, including for the months of October, November, and December 2021, as well as January through June 2022. (9) This fact entirely undermines the allegation of rent arrears, as there were no arrears during this period, which coincides with the time when Keith Broad was most active in claiming victimhood through civil court actions. (10) While the article raises suspicion about the advance payments, paying rent in advance is standard practice in high-end property rentals, especially in seasonal markets like Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard. (11) The article implies that these payments were manipulative, but in reality, they were simply part of a legitimate business model. (12) There is nothing illegal or fraudulent about paying rent in advance, and this should not have been framed as part of an alleged scheme. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline). **REF:** [C], [K].

"These advance payments usually put the owners and their agents at ease. He then set about advertising the properties on platforms like Booking.com, Airbnb, sometimes making double, triple, or even quadruple bookings for the exact dates. It seems he sometimes uses various aliases or variations on his name. Visitors started arriving only to find other people already in the properties." This statement attempts to twist a positive action into something with a sinister or criminal motivation. (1) Paying rent in advance gave landlords peace of mind and shifted the balance of power to them, something I have only ever known to be viewed by agents and landlords in an entirely positive action and one whose sole beneficiary is the landlord, yet the article suggests that these payments were made with the intention to deceive. (2) The publication not only attributes a negative motive but goes as far as to claim they know my intentions, suggesting I made these payments specifically to "put owners and agents at ease" as part of a trick to exploit later. (3) **"He then set about advertising the properties on platforms like Booking.com, Airbnb, sometimes making double, triple, or even quadruple bookings for the exact dates."** This has been dealt with at length in the preceding response and the complaint itself. (4) However, it is worth noting again that the language and tone in this section present these statements as fact, not allegations. (5) The way the article is framed, any reader would walk away believing that Media24 was imparting facts, when, in reality, there is no evidence to support these claims. (6) **"It seems he sometimes uses various aliases or variations on his name."** This is entirely false. (7) I did not use aliases; WdS manipulated the fact that my surname is long, as he well knew that I had taken the surname of my fiancé, combining both surnames. (8) This is another in the series of lies, like the fabricated Interpol story WdS told. When trying to motivate others to join or aid the campaign or force people to sign witness statements that had been written for them and were not true, WdS, the Broads, Disberry et al told a series of the same lies - that I was wanted by Interpol, had fled the UK, had done so on a fake passport, had millions stashed in secret bank accounts around the world, was wanted for frauds in multiple countries and was under investigation for a massive scam I SA. they would be prosecuted for being complicit in fraud and faced ten to thirty years in prison, unless they agreed to act as witnesses on scripts provided for them and sign witness statements written for them. If they agreed, they would be given immunity from prosecution. (9) **"Visitors started arriving only to find other people already in the properties."** This has also been addressed in the previous response and the complaint. (10) The article again phrases this as fact, despite the complete lack of any evidence that such

incidents occurred, even though, if true, such actions would have generated a wealth of evidence. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts).**REF: [G], [H], [M].**

"Since his second arrest on December 9, families who booked and paid via his adverts arrived for what they thought was their luxury summer holiday. They were from as far as Canada, Sweden, Germany, and Dubai, according to de Swardt."

This statement is false and unsupported by any verifiable facts. (1) The article provides no evidence of these alleged families arriving to find their accommodations unavailable. (2) According to the documented plan initiated by WdS, his objective was to create victims by manipulating events and fabricating evidence. (3) The post-arrest plan details how de Swardt sought to use false claims about guests to create the appearance of fraud. (4) No independent investigation by the media verified whether these bookings or arrivals actually occurred. (5) In fact, the alleged victims cited in the article, including families from abroad, were never contacted for verification, and no documentation proving their payments or arrival was presented. (6) This is a critical omission by the publication, as it failed to perform even basic due diligence in verifying these serious claims before publishing them. (7) By relying solely on de Swardt's narrative, the article perpetuates a falsehood, reinforcing an unsubstantiated story without factual basis. (8) This demonstrates a clear failure of responsible journalism, as Media24 did not independently verify the facts or investigate the reliability of the claims being made. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline).**REF: [K], [L].**

"One family from Canada paid R780,000 in advance for eight days only to arrive to find a double booking."

This statement is entirely unverified and factually baseless. (1) There is no record of any family from Canada paying this amount or encountering a double booking. (2) The article fails to provide evidence of this transaction, nor does it cite any source that could verify the claim. (3) According to de Swardt's post-arrest plan, he deliberately fabricated these victim stories to paint a false picture of fraud. (4) This was not an isolated omission—no effort was made by Media24 to contact the supposed family or corroborate the claims with any supporting documentation, such as booking confirmations, payment records, or correspondence. (5) Furthermore, the publication had access to records that would have demonstrated the legitimate nature of my business dealings and bookings, yet these were ignored. (6) This deliberate omission and reliance on a single, biased source (de Swardt) allowed the media to publish unverified and highly damaging allegations. (7) The failure to investigate these claims or provide balanced reporting violates the core principles of factual, fair reporting. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline).**REF: [N], [O], [P].**

"This statement is blatantly false. The only reason any of these families or groups were at the properties at all was because de Swardt, the Broads, and Sergeant Stevens deliberately failed to inform booking platforms of the change in property control. This was a calculated move to ensure unsuspecting guests would still arrive, only to discover they had nowhere to stay, serving the exact purpose of generating complaints and distress. Most of the guests referenced in the dossier created by de Swardt for his client Keith Broad were individuals who had already been scammed by Mario, Dalton, and Johan, whom de Swardt knew were involved due to his close collaboration with them, particularly Dalton. The dossier itself, used by Broad in December to justify retaking the property, is nothing short of perjury, and there is every reason to believe this same fraudulent dossier was provided to Media24. The fact that this dossier came from someone known to have been appointed specifically by Broad for this purpose should have set off alarm bells about its credibility. Instead, Media24 ignored these glaring issues, choosing not only to rely on its contents without investigation but to entirely avoid seeking any response from me as the subject of these accusations. This failure to vet such an obviously biased and agenda-driven account is inexcusable. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [K], [L]."**

"One family from Canada paid R378,000 in advance for eight days only to arrive to find a double booking." See above. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [N], [O], [P].**

"Those who managed to track him down and confront him about what he was doing were told to 'take me to court.'"

This statement is a complete fabrication. (1) At no point did any guest ever need to track me down, as I was living in the very same properties that were being leased to them. (2) The narrative being pushed by WdS—that I was evading guests, evading the police, and hiding from responsibility—is wholly false and contradicted by the facts. (3) I was not on the run or in hiding; I resided openly in the very same properties we advertised, and my home was the property owned by Keith Broad, de Swardt's own client, and I was never away from these properties during the periods in question. (4) No guest ever had to hunt or search for me, nor was there any need for such an effort, as I was always available to address any legitimate concerns. (5) The suggestion that I told people to "take me to court" is equally false and is entirely fabricated by de Swardt. (6) I never uttered these words, and no such interaction occurred. (7) The article, by repeating de Swardt's false claims, builds a misleading narrative that paints me as a "slippery crook" avoiding accountability, which is completely at odds with the facts. (8) Media24 has once again failed to verify these claims or investigate their truthfulness, relying solely on de Swardt's deceptive narrative without scrutiny. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[2.1]** (misleading headline). **REF: [G], [F].**

The Prevention of Illegal Eviction from an Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (PIE) provides procedures for the eviction of occupants and prohibits unlawful evictions. The statement that "When owners tried to evict him, he simply claimed the property was his residence, and then the owners had to turn to the courts—a long and expensive procedure" is both misleading and highly disingenuous, distorting the facts to support an inaccurate narrative. (1) The PIE Act was specifically created to protect lawful tenants from rogue landlords and ensure clear procedures for landlords to regain possession. Mandatory grounds for regaining possession include rent arrears, unlawful occupancy, or the end of the lease term. However, none of these applied in my case. There were no rent arrears, the lease still had nearly five years left, and I occupied the property legally under a valid agreement. (2) The reason Keith Broad's efforts to reclaim the property via the civil courts failed was that there were no legitimate grounds. He fabricated reasons to terminate the lease, such as falsely claiming that the refurbishments I completed were actually "malicious tenant damage." This is a complete reversal of the truth—Keith induced me into a lease with the expectation that I would invest heavily to refurbish the property. In return, I was granted a five-year lease to recover my investment. As soon as the refurbishment was completed, Keith attempted to take the property back to benefit from the increased value, while simultaneously denying me the time to recover my significant investment. (3) Unsurprisingly, I refused to let that happen. Keith had expected little or no resistance. This sparked a malicious campaign by Keith Broad and others, using every tactic to force me out, including multiple illegal evictions. Keith's efforts to use intimidation and illegal means failed, which led him to hire WdS to take the property back through any means necessary. **The PIE Act itself is extremely relevant to our conflict, but in the opposite way to how the article intended.** (4) While the PIE Act outlines clear procedures for eviction, these must be followed properly and are only applicable where there is legitimate cause. The procedures do not exist to aid a landlord

in reclaiming a property under false pretences, and certainly not to facilitate concurrent criminal and illegal actions, as Keith attempted. (5) The Act's prohibition of unlawful evictions is precisely what it was designed to prevent. In my case, Keith Broad carried out multiple illegal evictions, none of which followed proper legal procedures. These actions were blatant violations of my rights as a lawful tenant. (6) The property was my residence. I lived there, invested significant sums of money and time transforming it, and treated it as my home. The suggestion that claiming it as my residence was some opportunistic or deceitful tactic is demonstrably false. (7) Keith and Inge Broad's allegations that they were unaware of the refurbishments, the short-term rentals, or that rent was in arrears are complete fabrications designed to justify their immoral and illegal actions, painting me as a rogue tenant when the opposite was true. (8) The claim that the owners had to turn to the courts as a last resort is highly misleading. They were not using the courts as a final option—they were using the courts alongside multiple illegal methods to try and force me out. The portrayal of them as victims of a long and expensive legal process is a deliberate misrepresentation. They instigated and perpetuated the proceedings for illegal reasons, attempting to obtain legal legitimization of an unlawful goal. They alone are responsible for the absolute waste of money. (9) In reality, Media24 was used to legitimize the narrative crafted by WdS, who manipulated and deceived News24 into publishing his false version of events. Media24 published his manifesto, presenting lies and fabrications as fact. Keith's plan was a calculated attempt to achieve a direct transfer of wealth. He induced me to transform and fund the property with the intention of benefiting from the improvements. While I do not believe my arrest was initially part of the plan when it was conceived in September 2021, Keith and Inge showed no hesitation in having me imprisoned in Pollsmoor for months to gain a strategic advantage in taking back the property. They had no qualms about keeping me incarcerated for as long as necessary to prevent any chance of me recovering it. Keith's decision to postpone the June hearing was deliberate. He was asking the court to void a five-year lease and evict a tenant who was fully up to date with rent and bills, and who by that point had paid over a million Rand in rent and bills, with a further significant investment in transforming the property. By delaying the hearing until November, Keith and WDS bought themselves enough time to take the property back illegally—a far quicker, cheaper, and more certain outcome than the court proceedings, which were destined to fail.

The illegal evictions: Over the course of my tenancy, Keith executed at least 28 different unlawful attempts to take back the property, the first coming less than three months into a five-year lease, with rent and bills up to date, and my significant investment already made. These evictions included: 24 December 2021 – Keith demanded early rent payment, threatening eviction II 27 January 2021 – Attempted eviction based on fabricated utilities payment disputes II 27 February 2021 – Early utilities payment demand, followed by more eviction threats II 1 March 2022 – Forced entry into the property with Bobby Broad II Numerous pre-July 2022 attempts II 22 July 2022 – WDS and hired thugs forcefully evicted guests under the false pretexts of a scam II 24 July 2022 – Another physical eviction, with housekeepers assaulted in the process II 29 July 2022 – A false protection order used for a forced eviction II 1 August 2022 – False theft charges deployed to justify an eviction II 9 August 2022 – A bail objection based on fabricated claims to prevent my return II 7 August 2022 – RM stationed a senior manager to seize control if bail was denied II 9 August 2022 – WDS and IO provided false evidence to obstruct my return II 21 August 2022 – A false affidavit submitted by PD to further the eviction campaign II 23 August 2022 – Bail was granted, but RM locked down the property to block my access II 23 August 2022 – RM changed the locks after my bail release II 15 September 2022 – The property was handed back after sustained pressure but not for long II 11 November 2022 – Demands for unpaid rent, followed by further threats of eviction II 7 December 2022 – A fraudulent seven-day notice for payment or eviction II 14 December 2022 – An arrest operation used to execute an illegal eviction II 14 December 2022 – The property was handed back to RM immediately after my arrest II 19 December 2022 – Bail objections based on false claims aimed at preventing my return II 6 January 2023 – Keith denied bail addresses, despite the property being mine II 6 January 2023 – Denial of access to bail addresses continued II 2 February 2023 – Multiple obstruction efforts leading to yet another illegal eviction II 23 March 2023 – Continued efforts by WDS and IO to block my return with more fabricated claims.

Each of these eviction attempts was illegal, and many involved false accusations, forced entries, or manipulated court actions. Instead of following the proper legal procedures outlined in the PIE Act, Keith and his associates chose criminal methods to force me out. And while the article tries to frame their actions as legitimate, the reality is that they consistently failed to evict me through legal channels and turned to unlawful and unethical means. The PIE Act exists precisely to protect tenants from this kind of illegal behaviour. The article attempts to paint my actions as an abuse of the system, but in truth, invoking the PIE Act was my legal right to defend myself from their malicious and illegal attacks. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [D], [H], [K].

INGE INTERVIEW "INGE BROAD SECTION OF THE INTERVIEW. REFERRED TO AS 'INGE':

INTRODUCTION: This needs specific mention because it demonstrates and highlights the fundamental premise of the complaint. This article prominently features an interview with "Inge" Broad, though her surname is strategically withheld. This anonymity raises immediate concerns about transparency and accountability, as it was unlikely to be for privacy or safety reasons. Rather, the anonymity served a calculated purpose: the Broads intended to use this article as a tool in future legal battles, providing supposed corroborative evidence to support fabricated claims. By withholding her surname, Keith Broad could present these articles in court without drawing attention to the underlying deceit in their narrative. A glaring double standard emerges. On one hand, Inge makes severe accusations, portraying herself and Keith as victims, while in reality, the opposite was true. Her statements were false, malicious, and deceitful. The articles functioned as the only platform through which the Broads could substantiate their fabricated narrative, a crucial element for their application while I was detained in Pollsmoor. This article—and others like it—relentlessly attacked me, providing my opponents with a far-reaching stage to spread falsehoods, all while I was systematically denied the chance to respond or clarify. Why did Media24 allow these individuals to use the publication as a tool to further their agenda, turning falsehoods into purported truths without any filter, context, or investigation?

One principal motive behind WDS's push for these articles was to fabricate credibility for their lies—lies about rent arrears, property damage, and lack of consent to subletting—none of which could ever withstand scrutiny in court. Their failures in 2022, particularly in civil court, highlighted the baseless nature of their claims. By orchestrating these articles, they sought to create an appearance of legitimacy, but this tactic required keeping Keith Broad's name disconnected from the narrative. The decision to withhold Inge's surname was not based on any genuine journalistic reason; it was an intentional move to ensure these articles could later be weaponized in court. This manipulation represents a clear violation of the Press Code, particularly [1.0] (reporting truthfully) and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [B], [O]. This pattern of deceit reveals a profound confidence that their fabrications would remain undiscovered and an arrogance stemming from a belief that they are immune to accountability. This unchallenged impunity underscores a sense that, as privileged individuals, they are above the laws that bind others.

The hypocrisy in the Broads' statements and actions was staggering: (1) They publicly portrayed me as a scammer while they were, in fact, scamming and defrauding me. (2) They accepted my rental payments while simultaneously undermining the income source intended to fund these payments, all the while telling others I was in arrears. (3) They persistently alleged rent arrears, accusing me of paying a month's rent and

then stopping, despite my having paid them well over a million rand in rent and bills by the time the first articles were published—all this while they repeatedly breached the lease. (4) They claimed we hadn't paid utility bills, despite these being fully paid. In April, I even had to pay R60,000 to the municipality after they cut off our electricity, having discovered that Keith and Inge Broad had not passed along any of the R630,000 we had paid them by that point. (5) They defrauded me into a lease agreement so that I would transform the property, only to twist those improvements later, maliciously claiming them as "damage." (6) They led me into a lease agreement centered on a short-term rental model to generate revenue, only to later assert that they neither knew about nor consented to such an arrangement. (7) They accused me of scamming guests and causing them financial losses while actively working to turn guests into victims by concealing my lack of control over the properties after my December arrest. (8) They claimed I scammed guests who arrived post-arrest, omitting the critical fact that I had taken those bookings when I was still in control, and it was their actions that removed that control. (9) They feigned empathy for affected guests while intentionally creating situations that led to guest losses, manipulating these guests away from resolution to further their own interests. (10) They lamented the lack of legal support for landlords while failing to acknowledge their own baseless eviction attempts, which faltered due to the absence of legal justification. (11) They decried injustice yet manipulated and misused the criminal justice system to achieve a fundamental injustice. (12) They criticized PIE legislation and landlord obligations while consistently violating these fundamental rules, embodying the rogue landlord behaviours that the legislation was enacted to prevent. (13) They alleged that groups of guests were prevented from checking in due to our actions, while they caused these incidents nearly every time they conducted illegal evictions. (14) They publicly displayed heartbreak over guest and property issues while systematically working to cause maximum distress and suffering to as many people as possible in pursuit of their financial goals. (15) They accused me of criminal conduct when, between them, their PI, and the SAPS officers they coordinated with, they collectively committed over 400 criminal offenses. (16) They bemoaned injustice while knowingly laying false charges to incarcerate me in Pollsmoor for their strategic advantage. (17) They claimed I caused them financial losses, yet they cost me tens of millions of rand, stole the property back, and advertised it at R13 million more than its pre-renovation value. (18) They alleged lost rental income while I faced millions in lost revenue due to their constant platform attacks, and they profited by renting the property at R25,000 per night (R7.5 million annually) due to the improvements I made, which they labelled as "malicious damage." (19) They secured a protection order through deceit, claiming to the judge that 16 Leirmans Road was their family home, and falsely alleged that the men WDS brought to assault and eject the occupants were my "henchmen" sent to harass them. (20) They manipulated the court to have me sent to Pollsmoor over the alleged theft of worthless items, deceptively claiming these items were valuable assets. Yet when the time came to retrieve them, Inge Broad showed no interest in the alleged valuables but only asked about an office printer. (21) They labelled my rent for July to November as arrears, despite their July illegal eviction that barred me from using the property, compounded by a deceptive 500-meter exclusion zone they had the court enforce. (22) WDS included in his dossier guests who had booked with his associates—Denis, Johan, and Mario—all of whom he knew had embezzled R1.2 million, with Denis Dalton even participating in WDS's illegal operations and safe searches in my home during my arrest. (23) The landlords tried to cut off all revenue sources while publicly shaming me for not paying rent. (24) The landlords denied the existence of a consortium yet simultaneously acknowledged their joint actions, cooperation, and coordinated attacks against me. (25) They vilified me over losses related to Omicron's chaos and then spent a year attempting to bankrupt us, hoping to block refunds to guests and create similar issues in the future. (26) They falsely claimed we scammed guests during Omicron while coralling them into one indistinct group with a misleading promise of assistance, all while their true goal was to ruin my business and prevent guest reimbursements. (27) They accused me of causing guests losses of thousands of rands while orchestrating plans to induce losses on a much larger scale. (28) They berated me for losses while knowingly steering guests away from remedial routes, ensuring permanent losses instead. (29) They cited newspaper articles as proof of allegations, despite those articles being knowingly fuelled by the landlords. (30) They referenced my arrests and detentions as evidence of guilt, ignoring the fact that these events were orchestrated by the landlords. (31) They told guests arriving on the weekend of July 22-24 they had been scammed by a criminal, after having eight thugs forcibly enter the property and attempt a physical eviction during the guests' stay, claiming the thugs were the "real guests." (32) They stole my passport to obstruct my visa extension, then used this fact to their advantage in both civil and criminal courts as well as in Media24 articles. (33) They withheld my passport illegally and then attempted to have my bail revoked, citing my inability to present proof of an extended visa they knew I held because it was in that passport. (34) They accused me of intentionally not extending my visa, and when a replacement passport arrived, they stole and illegally held that one as well.

THIS APPROACH IS EPITOMIZED BY THE INTERVIEW WITH INGE. Through their articles, Media24 provided credibility and legitimacy to outright lies, with the allegations and fabricated narrative advanced in the articles being not just untrue; in most cases, they are the polar opposite of what actually happened. Reviewing the evidence reveals a narrative so drastically at odds with reality that it could easily be mistaken for fiction. This is where Media24 played a crucial role, enabling Keith and Inge to "launder" their falsehoods, turning lies into accepted truths and allowing WdS's version not only to dominate public perception but to exclusively inform it. By failing to publish any of the real facts, Media24 disregarded journalistic integrity entirely. While I would still like to believe they were simply misled, the stark contrast between the truth and what they published suggests otherwise. Using Inge's interview as a case study, it's impossible to imagine that Media24 could publish such a piece without either (a) there being sinister intent or significant conflicts of interest, or (b) the most gross journalistic negligence conceivable, in effect rubber-stamping and publishing WdS's authored body of work and allegations without question, substantiation, or filter. Whatever the reason, Media24 transformed WdS's malicious propaganda into "truth" in the minds of their readership.

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE INTERVIEW: As a microcosm of their conduct over the year and a half of their campaign, the statements published by Media24 could not have been more treacherous, duplicitous, or more scandalously hypocritical: (1) The hypocrisy of stating, "No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour," when the real reason for their frustration was that it had always been their intention to get me out of the property once I had finished refurbishing it; they were just not finding it as easy as they had expected. (2) Or making such allegations, when they knew the only reason the civil courts had not granted an eviction order was that there was absolutely no justification, while at the same time repeatedly breaking the law and executing illegal evictions. (3) Of stating, "A wall leading to the storage areas was broken through, and some of our private possessions were removed," when the Jack and Jill bathroom was their idea, and after they retook the property, they not only kept the changes but featured them in the sales literature. (4) While omitting to mention that the first arrest and bail application was the result not of fraud charges but the fact that the same Inge had falsely accused me of stealing those possessions when she knew they were in safe storage. (5) The double standards of stating, "The flooring was changed, and the furniture reupholstered," when they had praised and encouraged the changes at the time, and the changes had been made because what was there was filthy, old, and infested, then going on to use the changes to obtain a higher selling and renting price. (6) Of stating, "The house was filthy," when, in fact, the filthy condition they reference is the condition we found it in after the months the property was unoccupied solely as a result of the protection order they obtained by perjuring themselves, which excluded me from going within 500 meters of it. (7) The hypocrisy of stating, "It is costing us a fortune to repair the damage to our property which was supposed to provide us with an income," when they knew I had spent almost R100,000 repairing it in November 2022 after returning once the 500-meter exclusion zone had been confirmed as withdrawn, only

to find the damage caused during the occupation by the 8 thugs that had concluded many parties and the neglect by the Broads in the four months I was not allowed near the property. (8) The hypocrisy of stating, "We tried blocking his adverts each time we saw any, but he kept creating new ones," when those adverts were the means by which I would recover my investment and the basis on which the agreement stood. (9) The hypocrisy of stating, "The laws are really not fair towards property owners," when it was their rogue conduct that was the cause of their lack of success in the civil courts, and when "fairness" to them is defined as the ability to steal back the property after my investment had significantly increased its value, while denying me the 5-year tenure that would have funded it. (10) The hypocrisy of stating, "The pumps of the Jacuzzis burnt out, the inverter was not working, the steam bath was not working, and neither was the sauna," when they knew that was the result of the damage caused by the thugs they had paid to squat after the July arrest who used it as a party venue while they tried to keep me in Pollsmoor. (11) The hypocrisy of stating, "According to Inge, after Russell was finally out of the house, she was there one day cleaning up when a family of twelve people arrived from overseas for a wedding in Cape Town," when the only reason Inge was there was to catch each group of arriving guests, to give them the speech about being scammed and manipulate them towards loss and filing a police report. (12) The hypocrisy of stating, "Inge told News24 they had fallen for one of the fraud adverts and paid in advance," when she knew I had taken bookings in good faith on properties that were mine to do so on, and that she had had me arrested and jailed to take back the properties, thereby denying legitimate guests somewhere to stay. (13) The hypocrisy of stating, "According to Inge, she managed to find them alternative accommodation at short notice," not just because the only reason the guest had nowhere to stay was the result of Inge's theft of the property and subsequent plan to keep Booking.com ignorant of that, but also the fact every guest who had made a booking with a platform would have been found an alternative villa of equal or better standard had the same Inge not tried to dissuade every guest from contacting the platform, as their plan required the guests to suffer losses. (14) (As a point of note, the statement itself is false, as she made no effort to find any guest somewhere to stay, and she expects us to believe that a group of guests with whom they had such little interaction that they did not even get their names, they put effort into finding them somewhere to stay.) (15) The hypocrisy of stating, "The prevention of illegal eviction laws in South Africa is problematic for owners like us," when they know the problematic element they refer to is the inability of a rogue landlord to kick out a tenant who has done nothing wrong so that they can steal both the property and the contents. (16) The hypocrisy of stating, "No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour," when they knew every attempt made, whether through the civil courts or direct illegal evictions, was both illegal and criminal, and that during that same period they used corruption, criminality, harassment, extortion, assault, malicious prosecutions, and criminal defamation to achieve their illegal aims. (17) The hypocrisy of stating, "That was despite the damage caused to the property," when the "damage" they are referencing is the full refurbishment that included two new kitchens, full landscaping of the gardens, creation of an amphitheatre, full interior design and furnishings, and that same "damage" is both what is featured in sales literature and what accounted for the R13 million jump in value. (18) The hypocrisy of stating, "Russell allegedly rented properties without the owners' consent," when the proposal was their idea. (19) The hypocrisy of stating, "In due course, they became aware of the short-term lettings, and that started causing further issues," when they knew from before the lease was even signed, when that was also the sole purpose of the leases, when this was referenced in multiple communications, and when that was the only way I would have recovered my investment. (20) Of stating that "Visitors started arriving only days after Russell's eviction, further complicating matters," when I was arrested, not evicted, because the arrest was to disguise the illegal eviction. There was no eviction order. (21) [Especially shocking is that the publication, which would have known there was no court order permitting eviction, referred to my being evicted on the same day as the arrest, expecting us to believe they did not connect the arrest and "eviction."] (22) The hypocrisy of stating, "Inge (surname withheld) told News24 it was heartbreaking and frustrating to see what was done to her and her husband's luxury property," when (a) the withholding of the surname was a calculated action so they could use the article in multiple ways and particularly in the application that was going through the courts at the time, and (b) what was done to her property was that it was improved beyond recognition, which was the whole purpose of their deceit, allowing them to sell it for R13 million more to repay their crippling debts and get their life back on track.

"HEARTBREAKING": Her reference to "heartbreaking" is especially hypocritical, profoundly disingenuous, and a complete inversion of the truth. (A) In reality, the Broads were thrilled with the transformation of the property throughout the renovation process, frequently expressing their appreciation—so much so that they began attempting to reclaim the property as soon as the refurbishment was completed. (B) They made repeated efforts throughout 2022 to take back the property, with the intention of profiting from its increased value without honouring the remainder of the lease. Far from "heartbreaking," the Broads stood to benefit greatly from the extensive improvements I made, all funded out of my own pocket. (C) The renovations included a complete overhaul: full refurbishment, professional interior design, landscaping, new kitchens, full redecoration, new flooring, and even the construction of an amphitheatre and outdoor terrace—improvements that increased the market value of the property by an estimated R13 million. (D) It is telling that immediately after my illegal eviction, the property was listed for sale using the very features I had added as selling points. (E) If the property had truly been in the poor condition they alleged, or if I had undertaken unauthorized work, one must ask why they never reversed any of the improvements I made and instead used them to command a higher selling price. (F) This gross misrepresentation of the property's post-tenancy condition reveals the duplicity in the Broads' narrative, which was designed to elicit sympathy and divert attention from their own illegal actions. (G) While this statement paints a picture of emotional and financial harm, it conveniently ignores the fact that they stood to benefit financially from the property's increased value.

It is especially galling to read comments like this when the truth is literally the polar opposite. If the publication wants to hear about what is truly "heartbreaking," rather than fabricated lies to cover up misdeeds and criminality, they may wish to consider the following: **Heartbreaking** is spending a year transforming a property, investing life savings, and pouring love and care into the project, only to spend the next year fighting tooth and nail to keep it. **Heartbreaking** is battling people with no morals, people who would stop at nothing and commit any crime to achieve their goal. **Heartbreaking** is seeing the media give these individuals an unchecked platform to spread their lies, providing a megaphone for deceit that destroyed everything I had worked for. **Heartbreaking does not even begin to describe** being illegally arrested, unlawfully detained, and then subjected to the appalling conditions of Pollsmoor Prison. **Heartbreaking** is sitting inside those prison walls, knowing that the very people responsible for these injustices were actively ensuring I would remain there. **Heartbreaking** is coming out of Pollsmoor in August, only to discover that WDS, Inge, and Keith Broad had frightened my staff so much with their lies that there were none left, leaving my business in ruins. **Heartbreaking** is returning to find my entire jewellery collection stolen and my livelihood destroyed. **Heartbreaking** is watching as everything I built is dismantled, piece by piece. **Heartbreaking** is standing in the property you poured your heart into, being dragged away, and watching your keys handed from the investigating officer to WDS, knowing that within the hour, WDS would pass them to the landlord. **Heartbreaking** is being dragged away from your three dogs, knowing that no one will be there to love and care for them, and that they have no home. I spent the first few weeks in Pollsmoor frantic to hear they were okay, only to be further heartbroken when I learned, after my release, that they spent three weeks confused and terrified, having been dumped in a garage by the owners with no food or water. **Heartbreaking** is being granted bail, only to have it revoked through lies from the investigating officer. **Heartbreaking** is standing in court, helpless and unable to afford an attorney, listening to Johan Victor, representing the landlords, deny me the use of my Llandudno properties as

a bail address, despite having no legal grounds to do so, in an effort to undermine my bail application. **Heartbreaking** is returning to Pollsmoor for a second time, knowing that this time, those responsible would ensure there were no mistakes in keeping me there. **Heartbreaking** is attending court appearance after court appearance, hearing the investigating officer tell more lies to extend my detention, and knowing that justice was being trampled on at every turn. **Heartbreaking** is finally leaving Pollsmoor with nothing but the clothes on your back. **Heartbreaking** is spending the next year and a half with no life, trying to pull together the pieces and evidence needed to motivate investigations and achieve justice in a system that is apathetic at best. **Heartbreaking** is knowing that at the end of 2021, I had created a truly unique collection of properties, with R30 million in movable assets, an extensive art collection, an extensive jewellery collection, and a portfolio that would generate R20 million a year in profits—a well-earned reward for countless years of working 18-hour days, every day of the year. **And heartbreaking** is walking out of Pollsmoor with nothing but the few mouldy clothes returned to me by the owner of Fisherman's and a large debt to my mother for the legal bills. **Heartbreaking** is not having seen my mother since 2020, first due to COVID-19 and then due to the actions of Keith, Inge, WDS, Sergeant Duna, Sergeant Stevens, and others. Now, I must fight to get my immigration status normalized, all while having been diagnosed with lung cancer in 2022. I lost a year in which I should have been able to travel, and I now live in fear that by the time I can, it will be too late. **Heartbreaking** is having built a portfolio with immense pride in both the properties themselves and in hosting guests, ensuring their perfect stay, only for those who stole everything from me to have rewritten the public narrative. They painted me as the scammer, fraudster, and villain, while they enjoy the fruits of my labour, free of consequences—so far.

. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [B], [O].

"She alleged the couple were almost financially ruined due to Russell not having paid rent or utilities for about a year" This statement is deliberately deceitful and a complete distortion of the facts. **1)** The Broads had financially ruined themselves long before I ever entered into a lease agreement with them. **2)** They had amassed crippling personal debts over the years, which had left them in dire financial straits. **3)** It was this mountain of debt that forced them into a position where they needed to sell the property, and it was their desperation to sell that led them to deceive me into the lease arrangement. **4)** Far from being responsible for their financial ruin, I was actually the one stabilizing their precarious financial situation. **5)** The lease commenced on 15 October 2021, and within the first six months alone, I had paid approximately R900,000 in rent and utilities. **6)** In addition, I took on the cost of essential repairs and maintenance—responsibilities that should have been the landlord's but were paid out of my pocket. **7)** Despite Keith Broad's continuous attempts to evict me illegally, including half a dozen illegal evictions, multiple civil court attempts, and attacks on our business platforms, profiles, and income streams, I continued to meet my financial obligations. **8)** Keith also enlisted WDS to pursue these efforts, yet they failed to take the property back through legitimate means. **9)** To further demonstrate the dishonesty of the narrative of financial ruin: Keith Broad was over a million rand better off because of the rent and bill payments I made during my tenancy, and my substantial investments added over R10 million to the property's value. **10)** In fact, within the first six months of my lease, I paid the Broads more in rent and bills than Keith had generated from letting the property in the previous two years combined. **11)** The claim of financial ruin is a fabrication intended to evoke sympathy and conceal their fraudulent actions aimed at regaining control of a property that had increased significantly in value due to my investments. **12)** The article omits critical facts that are not only significant but essential to understanding the broader context. **13)** In August 2022, Keith Broad obtained a protection order against me by perjuring himself in court. **14)** He claimed the property was his family home, conveniently omitting that I was the legal tenant and had been living there under a valid lease. **15)** This protection order included an exclusion zone of 500 meters around the property, effectively barring me from entering the property between July and November 2022. **16)** During this time, Keith, WDS, and their hired associates took possession of the property unlawfully, causing substantial damage. **17)** Despite this, I continued to meet my financial commitments, paying rent quarterly in advance up to July 2022. **18)** Therefore, the claim that I did not pay rent for a year is patently false. **19)** I was barred from accessing the property for the six months leading up to December due to their fraudulent actions in obtaining the exclusion order. **20)** In November 2022, I was finally able to return to the property briefly, where I began undoing the damage they had caused, only to be arrested again in December under false pretences. **21)** The article fails to report this timeline of events and instead portrays a false narrative designed to paint me as being in arrears, when in fact I was illegally prevented from accessing the property. **22)** The last rental payment I made covered the period through July 2022, and I continued to honour my lease until I was unlawfully evicted. **23)** These significant omissions and the failure to seek my comment demonstrate the journalistic failures in this article. **24)** Had the journalist made any effort to investigate the court records—many of which are public—or even sought my side of the story, they would have uncovered the truth. **25)** It should have raised questions for any responsible journalist: if I had supposedly been in rent arrears for a year, why hadn't the Broads succeeded in evicting me? **26)** Why wasn't there a court order in place after a full year of alleged non-payment? **27)** The journalist's failure to investigate, verify facts, or reach out to me for comment not only breaches fundamental journalistic principles but also contributes to the spread of damaging falsehoods. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [L].

"I thought we followed all the right procedures when we let the property to him." This is a misleading statement that seeks to shift blame for their illegal actions onto the legitimacy of the leasing process. **1)** I entered into a legitimate and legally binding lease agreement with the Broads, which clearly outlined my rights as a tenant, including the right to sublet the property to short-term guests—a key part of my business model. **2)** The suggestion that they followed "all the right procedures" is an attempt to create the illusion that their subsequent actions were justified. **3)** However, their repeated attempts to illegally evict me, without following any proper legal process, directly contradict this claim. **4)** Furthermore, the Broads knowingly engaged in these unlawful actions despite being fully aware of the terms of the lease agreement and the nature of my business. **5)** Their attempts to terminate the lease were based on fabrications, such as false claims of tenant damage and rent arrears, which they knew were untrue. **6)** This statement is part of a broader effort to rewrite history and absolve themselves of responsibility for their illegal conduct, despite the fact that they stood to benefit significantly from the increase in the property's value. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [C], [P].

"No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour."

This statement is entirely misleading and fails to acknowledge the real reason their legal eviction attempts failed: (1) they were based on falsehoods and illegal actions from the outset. The odds were not "stacked in my favour," but rather, the legal system recognized my rights as a lawful tenant under a valid lease. (2) I had entered into a five-year lease agreement, paid rent in full and in advance, and undertook substantial renovations with the full knowledge and approval of the owners. Keith and Inge Broad, however, sought to reclaim the property without fulfilling their obligations, after I had invested significant time and money into improving it. (3) Their claims of tenant damage, unpaid rent, and unauthorized use of the property were complete fabrications. (4) The courts dismissed these baseless claims because they lacked any legal foundation. (5) What the Broads fail to mention is that they tried to benefit from the increased value of a property I refurbished at my own

expense while denying me the time necessary to recoup my investment, thus revealing the real motive behind their efforts. (6) Their hypocrisy is further highlighted by the fact that their eviction attempts were not confined to legal avenues—they executed multiple illegal evictions, resorted to intimidation, and enlisted WdS to forcibly take back the property. Their narrative in this article is a gross distortion of the truth, portraying themselves as victims when in fact, they were the aggressors engaged in a fraudulent scheme to enrich themselves at my expense. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (failure to report truthfully), **[1.1]** (failure to verify facts), **LEGEND KEY: [I], [M]**.

"A wall leading to the storage areas was broken through and some of our private possessions were removed." This statement is a deliberate distortion. 1) The work on the wall was not only approved but also suggested by Keith Broad himself. 2) I had renovated the room off of the courtyard that housed some old junk the Broads had left behind when they moved out in early October, items they no longer needed but did not want to throw away yet, but also were not worth either taking with or paying for storage. As a Favor, I had agreed that the items could remain for a couple of weeks. When two months had passed and I could not hold off the work on that room any longer, I hired a professional independent inventory firm to catalogue everything in the room, including photographs. 3) I leased a professional storage unit to house the items safely and securely, which I funded despite there being no good reason why I should. I also put Keith Broad on the contract so he had equal and unlimited access. I then hired a professional removal firm to take the items from the house to the unit and had the inventory company return to catalogue everything again, so I had proof that everything was accounted for and every item was as it was when we found them. 4) As per Keith Broad's suggestion, I then installed a doorway between the master bathroom and the new room. This had the effect of creating an ensuite for the new room, and also meant the previously separate room was now connected to the main house. 5) There was no extensive construction work; the wall was not load-bearing, and I simply installed a door. 6) The sheer underhandedness of this claim is evident when you consider that, in all the sales literature for the property, this improvement is featured and celebrated as a positive selling point. 7) It is just as revealing that Keith Broad has never tried to undo the work I did. 8) They not only had no issue with the new doorway, but they also suggested it, welcomed it, and benefited from it. 9) But when the opportunity to misrepresent it for their benefit arose, they made sure to exploit it. 10) Considering that Keith rushed to list the property for sale after my arrest, and the fact that he appointed around eight different agents to sell it, there would have been considerable internet presence for that sale, with each agent having their sales particulars online and on nationwide property websites like Property24. In these adverts, as easy to find as typing in "houses for sale Llandudno," the journalist would have seen the property advertised just days after my arrest, looking spectacular. The very things the Broads accused me of damaging in their interview were, in fact, being featured as selling points. 11) These adverts, each with dozens of photos, showed not only that their comments were completely at odds with reality, but that what they represented as damage was being used to market the property and command a new price 70% higher than it was just a year earlier. 12) This journalist, like all the others at Media24, did not even attempt to contact me. Had she done so, I could have provided considerable information that exposed these lies. 13) For reasons I still fail to understand, the journalist felt it was acceptable to publish an article that would not only damage but destroy me, without even contacting me or checking their information. 14) At the very least, the most basic research on the internet would have raised red flags. 15) Basic research would have also produced photos of the property just before I leased it, and sales particulars showing a property that was dark, old-fashioned, drab, and rundown—completely different from its condition after I transformed it. 16) The version of events given by "Inge" and the readily available evidence are irreconcilable. 17) I have no idea if the journalist even interviewed Inge or if the quotes were provided, but as WDS was working for Inge and Johan Victor was Inge's attorney, there should have been significant concerns. 18) While I have no doubt that WDS packaged his narrative very well, providing a comprehensive but false dossier (just as he did for Keith in his December attempt via the High Court), to my mind, the more neatly packaged a story is, the more suspicious a journalist should be. 19) Instead, everything WDS and Inge said was published verbatim, presented as fact, and no attempt was made to investigate or establish the truth. 20) Circling back to the storage unit, after Inge laid the false charge that I stole three old TVs, conscious that it would result in my getting bail, she and WDS changed the charge to allege that I stole the contents of the back room. 21) Considering the above and the fact that Inge and Keith were fully aware that the items were taken to professional storage, it becomes clear how malicious the prosecution was and how unfounded the charges were. 22) Furthermore, it is easier to understand how underhanded it was to then claim those items—items they had no interest in taking with them and never went to check on while in storage—were suddenly worth nearly a million Rand. 23) The purpose was to elevate the offense to a Schedule 5 crime, making bail exceptionally difficult to obtain. 24) After I was granted bail in August, my attorneys set up a meeting at the storage unit with Inge, her attorney, and the Investigating Officer. The storage unit was opened, and there was everything, just as it had been left eight months earlier. Inge did not even bother to feign relief or surprise, as she had known all along that the items were there. Nor did she pretend that the claim of the items being valuable was true; her only question was which box contained the office printer and the orange glass bowl. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF: [B], [O]**.

"We did it through a reputable agent and paid them for a background check." 1) The reference to an agent is an important point that reveals yet another journalistic failure. 2) One of the first actions any responsible publication should take when making serious accusations is to contact key sources, and in this case, the agent involved. 3) How is it possible to publish an article that makes accusations of rent arrears and other misconduct, mentions an agent, and then fails to even contact that agent for comment? 4) Had the journalist reached out to Anton Moller, the agent who facilitated the lease, they would have learned a very different story. 5) In fact, Anton Moller provided an affidavit that would have directly contradicted many of the false claims made by the Broads. 6) This failure to even attempt to verify the facts through available and easily accessible sources reflects a glaring lack of diligence and professionalism on the part of the publication. 7) This is yet another instance of the publication publishing allegations without conducting the most basic fact-checking. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), **[1.2]** (seeking comment). **REF: [A], [K]**.

"I met Mr. Russell briefly, and he was very charming and friendly, and the agent thought he was wonderful," said Inge. 1) The "agent" referenced here is Gail Broad, Keith Broad's sister, who introduced Keith to me in the first place. 2) The journalist should have easily verified this fact with even a cursory inquiry into the background of the parties involved. 3) The omission of this critical relationship between the "agent" and the Broads raises questions about the objectivity and fairness of the article. 4) The failure to disclose that the agent was, in fact, a family member of the landlords is a significant journalistic oversight. 5) Not only does it undermine the credibility of the Broads' narrative, but it also casts doubt on the impartiality of the article itself. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF: [B], [O]**.

"In due course, they became aware of the short-term letting scheme." 1) This statement is a complete and deliberate lie, and one of the most blatant of the many contained within the article 2) The Broads knew about the short-term letting arrangements well before the lease was even agreed upon. 3) In fact, the short-term rentals were the most fundamental part of the lease agreement from the very beginning and it was

the sole reason for the agreement, lease and relationship. **4)** It was explicitly understood that I would be subletting the property to guests, as this was how I intended to recoup my substantial investment in the refurbishment and improvements I made to the property. **5)** The Broads cannot feign ignorance of a key element of the lease that they themselves agreed to. **6)** This lie is particularly egregious given that the short-term rentals were openly discussed and agreed upon prior to the signing of the lease, and the Broads' attempt to misrepresent this now is a clear attempt to distort the truth. **7)** Once again, had the journalist taken even the smallest effort to investigate, they would have found clear evidence supporting the truth. **8)** amongst the reams of evidence that expose this lie are the thousands of messages exchange with Keith Broads managing agent Anton Moller, as well as his cousin and agent Gail Broad. **9)** further, in not a single email of the hundreds exchanged, whether between landlord and agent, myself and the agent, attorneys to attorney was it ever even suggested that there was no knowledge or permission to do short term rentals. **10)** Considering that there cannot be a scrap of evidence to substantiate that claim how did it make it into the article. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.2] (seeking comment). REF: [A], [M].**

"No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour." **1)** This statement is a gross misrepresentation of the situation. **2)** The odds were not "stacked in my favour," the law was. **3)** The reason the Broads failed in their repeated attempts to evict me was because they had no legal grounds to do so. **4)** The law protects tenants from being scammed into spending millions on refurbishments, only to have their landlords try to steal the property back once the work is done. **5)** The Broads' legal failures were due to the fact that they were attempting to commit what amounts to property theft—taking back a fully refurbished and significantly more valuable property without honouring the terms of the lease. **6)** The courts were not on "my side"; they were upholding the law and protecting my legal rights as a tenant. **7)** This false narrative that the legal system was somehow biased against them is nothing more than an attempt to disguise their own illegal actions and manipulations. **8)** had the publication done any investigation or looked through the publicly available court records and documents this would have been abundantly clear. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [B], [L].**

"That was despite the damage caused to the property." **1)** This is one of the most outrageous lies published in the article. **2)** Not only did I not cause any damage to the property, but I actually improved it significantly during my tenancy. **3)** The property underwent extensive renovations, all paid for by me, which increased its market value by an estimated R13 million. **4)** There is ample evidence to disprove this claim, including hundreds of photographs, guest reviews, and listings on Instagram and other platforms showcasing the high quality of the property during my tenure. **5)** Furthermore, when the property was eventually sold, the very features and improvements that I had made were highlighted in the sales materials, and the Broads were able to sell it for millions more than it was worth prior to my renovations. **6)** If I had caused "damage" to the property, why did they use my renovations as selling points to increase the value? **7)** This claim is a blatant attempt to discredit me and distract from the real issue: that the Broads benefited financially from my work and are now trying to rewrite the narrative to cover their own illegal actions. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation), [2.1] (misleading headline). REF: [N], [O], [P].**

"The flooring was changed, and the furniture reupholstered." **1)** This statement is misleading and distorts the reality of the situation. **2)** The original flooring in the property was a filthy, 30-year-old carpet that was not fit for habitation. It was badly stained, had lice, and was completely unsanitary. **3)** I removed the carpet and replaced it with brand new ceramic tiles after screeding the floors, which not only improved the property's appearance but also made it habitable again. **4)** The sofas were in a similar state—old, filthy, infested, and likely 30+ years old. **5)** Instead of discarding them and buying new ones, I chose to have them professionally reupholstered. This was not only a far more costly option, but it also preserved the original pieces out of respect for the Broads. **6)** The fabric chosen was of a high standard, expensive, and durable, making the sofas look and feel brand new. **7)** Any reasonable person comparing before and after photos would see that the difference was remarkable. **8)** What makes this particularly disingenuous is that I know for a fact that the Broads were delighted with the changes and viewed them as a massive improvement. **9)** This is evidenced by the fact that after taking the property back, they made no attempt to reverse the improvements I made, and these very changes were featured front and centre in the sales literature when they listed the property for a much higher price. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). REF: [C], [P].**

"The walls were spray painted. The house was filthy." **1)** This is another outright lie. **2)** The walls were not "spray painted" haphazardly, as implied. **3)** I hired professional decorators to repaint both the exterior and interior of the property, ensuring the work was done to the highest standard. **4)** The claim that the house was "filthy" is equally false. **5)** The property was meticulously maintained during my occupancy, as evidenced by guest reviews, my online profiles, and the numerous photos taken throughout my tenancy. **6)** In addition, I undertook a complete kitchen refurbishment at my own cost, updating old, greasy brown mosaic tiles to a sleek chrome finish, which transformed the entire space. **7)** It's worth noting that these very improvements were highlighted as key features in the sales literature when the property was later put on the market, completely undermining the claim that these were "damages" I caused. **8)** The transformation of the property—from old, dark, and rundown to modern and vibrant—is plainly visible in any comparison of photos taken before and after my lease. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [2.1] (misleading headline). REF: [I], [M].**

"The laws are really not fair towards property owners," she told News 24. **1)** This statement is designed to evoke sympathy while completely distorting the legal reality. **2)** The laws are indeed fair to both tenants and property owners, provided that everyone acts within the law. **3)** What the law does not cater for, and rightfully so, is property owners who deceive tenants into signing leases, allow them to invest millions into refurbishing the property, and then attempt to steal the property back once the improvements have been made. **4)** This was precisely the scenario the Broads found themselves in, which is why their repeated legal attempts to evict me failed. **5)** The suggestion that the law was unfair to them is laughable; the reality is that the law prevented them from benefiting from their fraud and illegal actions. **6)** The involvement of WDS and Media24 in distorting the legal narrative was instrumental in aiding the Broads in their attempts to deceive both the courts and the public. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation). REF: [B], [L].**

"The pumps of the Jacuzzis burnt out, the inverter was not working, the steam bath was not working, and neither was the sauna," she added. **1)** This is yet another complete fabrication. **2)** At the time of the illegal eviction on 24 July, the property was in exceptional condition, exactly as it appeared in the photos on our online profiles. **3)** After WDS and his thugs forcibly took over the property, they left it in complete disrepair. **4)** It's well-documented that the thugs threw a party at the property the very first night they squatted there, and security firms confirmed that members of the Nigerian mafia were among the guests. **5)** When I finally regained access to the property briefly in November, the damage caused by these squatters was undeniable. **6)** The garden was overgrown, the expensive bougainvillea's I had purchased were dead, the Jacuzzi and other facilities were in disrepair, and the interior of the property was filthy. **7)** These damages were caused by the squatters, not

me, and this is further evidenced by the fact that I spent three weeks repairing everything the squatters had destroyed before being illegally evicted again in December. 8) The Broads' claim that I caused the damage is not only false, but deeply deceitful, as it was their own actions and the neglect of the property that led to its condition. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [J], [O].

"It is costing us a fortune to repair the damage to our property." 1) This statement is particularly outrageous given the facts. 2) It was me, not the Broads, who bore the cost of repairing the damage caused by their thugs after the illegal eviction. 3) The property was in pristine condition when I was illegally forced out, and it was only after the squatters took over that it fell into disrepair. 4) I then spent a fortune and considerable time restoring the property, only for them to claim that they were the ones burdened with repair costs. 5) The suggestion that I caused the damage is a complete reversal of reality. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [N], [O].

"Which was supposed to provide us with an income." 1) This is an incredibly misleading statement. 2) In reality, the Broads banked over a million rand during the first few months of my tenancy alone. 3) They would have continued to receive substantial income from the lease had they not illegally evicted me and destroyed my business by repeatedly sabotaging my online presence. 4) They actively blocked my legitimate business advertisements and profiles at every opportunity, intentionally cutting off the very source of income they now claim to have lost. 5) It's especially dishonest to claim financial loss when they were responsible for sabotaging the income streams and were in fact profiting from my tenancy up until the point they decided to unlawfully terminate the lease. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [K], [N].

"We tried blocking his adverts each time we saw any, but he kept creating new ones," said Inge. 1) This is an outright admission of their efforts to sabotage my business, which is utterly outrageous. 2) The founding principle of the lease agreement was that I would sublet the property to generate income, allowing me to recover the costs of the extensive refurbishments I made at my own expense. 3) The Broads' efforts to block my legitimate rental advertisements on platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com were an intentional attempt to cripple my business operations and force me out. 4) This deliberate interference in my business, compounded by Media24's willingness to publish this narrative without fact-checking, is a blatant distortion of the truth. 5) The fact that the Broads felt emboldened to admit this sabotage in a public forum only underscores the injustice of this entire situation. 6) It is appalling that Media24 gave them a platform to openly admit to these malicious actions without any investigation into the veracity of their claims or the legality of their actions. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [H], [L].

"According to Inge, after Russell was finally out of the house, she was there one day, cleaning up, when a family of twelve people arrived from overseas for a wedding in Cape Town." 1) This is one of the most disgusting lies contained within the article. 2) After I was arrested—an arrest ordered by Inge and Keith Broad and executed by their private investigator WDS—the Broads made no effort to inform platforms like Booking.com or Airbnb that I had been arrested and could no longer manage guest bookings. 3) If they had truly been concerned about guests arriving with no accommodation, they would have informed these platforms immediately, which would have allowed those platforms to offer the guests alternative accommodation or refunds. 4) Instead, they deliberately kept these platforms in the dark, allowing guests to arrive at the property, only to find out upon arrival that they had no place to stay. 5) This was done intentionally to create a narrative that I was defrauding guests when, in fact, the only reason these guests had no accommodation was because the Broads and WDS chose not to inform the platforms. 6) Further, after the guests arrived, the Broads took advantage of the situation by falsely telling them that I had "scammed" them and that they had no legal recourse, furthering their fraudulent narrative to harm my reputation. 7) They intentionally misled the guests about their rights and about the real reason why they had no accommodation, even going so far as to tell them not to bother contacting Booking.com or Airbnb for a refund. 8) This deliberate misrepresentation of the situation caused immense distress to these guests and was part of a broader strategy to generate false criminal charges against me. 9) It is important to highlight that the media, particularly News24, failed to investigate this claim and allowed such a defamatory lie to be published without verifying the facts or seeking comment from me. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [B], [G].

"Inge told News24 they had fallen for one of the fraud adverts and paid in advance." 1) This is categorically false. 2) All bookings taken prior to my arrest were legitimate, and I had every right to accept those bookings as part of my business operations. 3) This was also acknowledged in the December to March court proceedings, where WDS produced a dossier claiming that I had taken bookings for 11 groups of guests. 4) However, upon review, it became clear that only one of those bookings had been accepted by me. 5) The rest were bookings made by Dennis Dalton and Mario Buffa; two other individuals involved in property management. 6) WDS knew this and yet still chose to misrepresent the facts in both the dossier and to the media. 7) Furthermore, the Broads were the ones who created the situation in which guests arrived at the property with no place to stay by deliberately failing to inform the platforms of my arrest, as discussed in the previous section. 8) It is outrageous that such blatant falsehoods were printed without any verification or investigation by News24. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [C], [M].

"They were even told the property was wheelchair friendly as they had an octogenarian coming along. When the property is not suited for that," Inge said, adding that the family was shocked when they realized they had been defrauded." 1) This claim is patently false. 2) The only property I managed that was advertised as wheelchair friendly was Fisherman's Bend, which had a lift that made it accessible to all floors. 3) None of the other properties, including Monterey or Hive, were ever listed as being wheelchair accessible, nor would I have advertised them as such. 4) This is another example of how the Broads and WDS fabricated details to paint me as a fraud when the reality is that no such misrepresentation occurred. 5) It is deeply troubling that News24 published this false claim without seeking any verification, either by checking the booking platforms or by asking me to comment. 6) This level of negligence in fact-checking is a gross breach of journalistic standards and resulted in significant harm to my reputation. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [2.1] (misleading headline).** REF: [B], [D]. **END INGE INTERVIEW**

"According to Inge, she managed to find them alternative accommodation at short notice." 1) This claim is highly questionable, if not outright false. 2) The dossier prepared by WDS, which was used in court proceedings, clearly states that the group of guests found their own alternative accommodation, not that Inge found it for them. 3) Further, if Inge had truly been concerned about the guests' wellbeing, she could have simply contacted Booking.com or Airbnb and allowed them to make alternative arrangements. 4) Instead, she and WDS deliberately allowed the situation to escalate, creating a crisis that they could use to falsely accuse me of fraud. 5) This shows a calculated and malicious

intent to harm both me and the guests involved. 6) It is deeply disturbing that this publication has allowed such a serious misrepresentation to be printed without checking the facts. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [H], [M].

"The rental agent for a luxury villa in Llandudno who requested to remain anonymous but whose identity is known to News24, said he believed he avoided falling victim. He relates that he encountered Russell but insisted on being paid upfront in full. When he was made aware of Russell's alleged schemes, the latter's lease was up, and he got him to leave." 1) This description does not match any of the rental agents I have ever dealt with, nor does it reflect the reality of any of my leases. 2) For one, there was no agent involved in the lease for Hive Road, which completely undermines this claim. 3) Monterey One and Two were leased through Rawson's, and I did not pay upfront for those properties; I paid quarterly. 4) Leirmans was also handled by Rawson's, where I paid quarterly as well. 5) The only property where I paid a year in advance was Fisherman's Bend, and the agent there was a woman, not a man. 6) Furthermore, I was not evicted because my lease was up—I was unlawfully arrested and evicted from Fisherman's Bend through the illegal actions of WDS, the Broads, and the corrupt police officers involved in the case. 7) After my arrest, they pocketed my R450,000 deposit and rent payment and kept R4 million worth of my possessions. 8) This anonymous agent's story is both factually inaccurate and deliberately misleading, raising questions about whether this person even exists. 9) It is highly suspicious that this supposed agent would request anonymity, and it is even more suspicious that News24 would accept such a claim without properly verifying it. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [F], [L].

"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 at johan@jvaa.co.za or wouter@foxforensics.co.za." This statement demonstrates the deliberate and malicious campaign of persecution that I have been subjected to by WdS (WDS), Johan Victor, and others. 2) The reference to a "coordinated process" is deeply troubling, as it reveals the premeditated and orchestrated nature of their actions against me, which included false arrests, fabricated charges, and a concerted public smear campaign. 3) The fact that they were openly encouraging alleged "victims" to join their effort—without any objective legal scrutiny—shows that this was not about justice but rather about destroying me both personally and professionally. 4) News24's decision to publish this statement without questioning its legitimacy or the ethical concerns of encouraging such a process, especially without evidence of wrongdoing, is a gross failure of journalistic responsibility. 5) This also raises an important issue: by this point, Media24 had already published four comprehensive and damning articles, calling for alleged "victims" to come forward. Likewise, WDS had made multiple similar appeals, yet, in all this time, no credible victims had emerged. Surely one of the most critical elements of any investigation, particularly one conducted by four different journalists at a major publication with enormous resources, would have been to follow up on these appeals. The fact that not a single victim came forward should have raised serious questions about the legitimacy of the accusations. 6) The accusation that I scammed people out of R34 million is astronomical and would have, by definition, involved several thousand guests over a sustained period. Each of these transactions would have left a clear trail—bank records, credit card payments, platform communications—and each guest would have had the ability to initiate investigations through their bank, platform, or even law enforcement. 7) Given the sheer scale implied by these accusations, there would have been an avalanche of complaints, reviews, investigations, and online posts if there had been any truth to these claims. The fact that no such evidence materialized, despite repeated calls for victims to come forward, is perhaps the clearest indication that there was no scam operation to speak of. 8) What is even more shocking is that not one of the journalists involved thought to question why, after such repeated and extensive appeals, no victims came forward—an omission that defies comprehension and journalistic integrity. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [K], [N].

De Swardt describes Russell as 'very intelligent and very charming.' Even this supposed compliment is loaded with negative connotations. 2) It serves to further the narrative that I am a deceitful, charming scammer who can manipulate people with my intelligence. 3) This is a common tactic used in smear campaigns, where a person's positive traits are twisted to serve a negative narrative. 4) The insinuation is that I used my intelligence and charm to deceive people, rather than the truth—that I was running a legitimate business and was targeted by individuals with malicious intent. 5) The statement is deliberately designed to paint me as a master manipulator, reinforcing the article's biased narrative. 6) The phrase "intelligent and charming" in this context implies that I am not to be trusted, and it plays into the wider defamatory theme of the article, which seeks to portray me as someone who is using those qualities for dishonest purposes. 7) This is a deeply misleading and harmful implication, one that is not based on any verifiable fact but is instead designed to sway public opinion against me. 8) If the journalist had made any attempt to investigate the claims being made, they would have found that there is no evidence to support the notion that I was manipulating or deceiving anyone. 9) Rather, the truth is that I was the one being targeted by individuals like De Swardt, Keith Broad, and Inge Broad, who were using every tactic at their disposal—including false accusations and smear campaigns—to destroy my reputation and take control of my properties. This statement is particularly damaging because it frames my intelligence and charm—qualities that should be viewed positively—as tools of deception. 11) It suggests that I am not being targeted because of any wrongdoing on their part, but rather because of my supposed ability to outsmart or manipulate others. 12) The journalist failed to balance this narrative with any facts or statements from my side, further underscoring the bias in this report. 13) This kind of insinuation, presented without evidence, serves to damage my reputation and dignity while promoting the false narrative that I am some kind of criminal mastermind. 14) The public has been presented with a heavily distorted view of the events, one that is entirely at odds with the reality that I was a legitimate businessperson targeted by a group with ulterior motives. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [E], [M], [B].

"It seems he thought he was untouchable." 1) This statement is not only baseless but also defamatory. 2) Prior to my first arrest, I had no reason to believe I would ever be detained because I had done nothing wrong. 3) There was no "scam operation," as De Swardt and his associates claim, which makes this accusation nothing more than an attempt to vilify me in the public eye. 4) The phrase "thought he was untouchable" is designed to imply that I was operating outside the law, knowing full well that the authorities couldn't or wouldn't stop me. 5) In reality, I was always confident that my business was legitimate, and I followed all legal processes meticulously. 6) It is deeply unfair and misleading for this statement to be published without any supporting evidence, and the fact that News24 printed it without question shows a clear bias. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** REF: [B], [K].

"We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years," says De Swardt. 1) This is one of the most extraordinary and unfounded claims made in the article, and the sheer magnitude of the figure raises serious questions about how it was allowed to be published without any investigation or fact-checking. 2) The claim of R34 million is astronomical and would place this alleged "scam" among the biggest fraud cases ever tried by Cape Town SAPS and its courts, and by far the largest in the history of villa rental scams in the region. 3) A claim of this magnitude should have triggered an exhaustive investigation, not just by the police, but certainly by any

responsible journalist or news outlet before publication. 4) Why did News24, with all its resources and supposed journalistic standards, feel it was acceptable to publish this figure without verifying it through any due diligence? 5) This figure was published without any attempt to contact me for comment, to seek evidence of my business dealings, or to scrutinize the details behind such a sensational and serious allegation. 6) In fact, the article does not even offer any breakdown of how De Swardt or "we" came to this figure—there are no financial records, no bank statements, no contracts or invoices cited—nothing that would substantiate such an extreme claim. 7) Given the gravity of this accusation, one would expect News24 to have carried out a meticulous investigation before printing it. 8) Yet, no such investigation appears to have been done, raising serious concerns about whether the article was published with an ulterior motive. 9) What makes this even more suspicious is the timing of the article, coming just weeks before a critical civil court hearing where Keith Broad and his legal team would present these same articles as "evidence" of their claims against me. 10) With no other evidence to back up these extreme allegations, it appears that Media24 allowed itself to be used as a tool to lend credibility to false claims, giving Keith Broad's allegations the appearance of legitimacy. 11) This was not just a failure of journalistic standards—it was complicity in the obstruction of justice. By publishing these wild figures and baseless accusations, the article gave the illusion of wrongdoing where none existed, providing Keith and his legal team with "evidence" that was nothing more than a media fabrication. 12) Media24, through this article, played a direct role in aiding perjury and obstruction of justice by allowing unfounded accusations to be used as legal evidence in a case where no actual evidence could be produced in court. 13) The publication of such an extreme and baseless figure without speaking to me, without verifying the claim, and without exercising the most basic standards of due diligence is a gross violation of the PRESS CODE. It demonstrates a reckless disregard for the truth and a willingness to damage reputations and lives for the sake of sensationalism. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** **REF: [D], [L], [F].**

"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." 1) This statement by De Swardt is not only false but also an attempt to glorify his own role in the illegal actions taken against me. 2) I was not "tracked down" by De Swardt or anyone else. 3) I had been living openly in the same property for over a year, with my address known to the authorities and publicly available. 4) The claim that I was somehow evading capture or operating a scam that required "tracking" is patently absurd. 5) Furthermore, if De Swardt had truly uncovered "evidence" of a scam, why was this not presented during any of the legal proceedings that followed? 6) The truth is that there was no scam to uncover, and the narrative of De Swardt heroically "tracking me down" is nothing more than self-serving fiction designed to enhance his reputation. 7) It is shameful that News24 chose to publish this statement without questioning its validity or seeking evidence to back it up. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** **REF: [E], [F].**

"BRIT ARRESTED AGAIN AFTER RETAL SCAM" 17.12.22. MAYGENE DE WEE. NETWERK24

In the following articles, we have significantly reduced the length of our responses and comments. This is because much of what is covered in these articles has already been addressed in our previous analyses, with many of the same violations and misleading conduct repeating themselves. We are mindful of the limits on the amount of content, though it remains a challenge to adequately address the violations when there are 119 offending statements. While more comprehensive responses are available, we have limited the length of each answer here, ensuring that no essential details are omitted.

"A British citizen who was arrested for fraud on 4 August this year and released shortly after on bail of R30 000 was arrested again on Wednesday on similar charges." This statement is incorrect. (1) I was not arrested for fraud on August 4. (2) This extremely significant false statement is repeated across all articles. (3) It is concerning how four different journalists across three publications over six months could all make the same grave error. (4) By the time this article was published, four months had passed since the arrest—more than enough time for the journalist to familiarize themselves with the case, rather than relying on information packaged by those with vested interests. (5) As with all the articles, glaring omissions are evident, including the failure to mention that the August charge had been thrown out two months earlier. (6) Why did none of the four professional journalists or the most significant news provider in South Africa notice the clear discrepancies between the narrative they were fed and the available evidence? (7) As time progressed, the gap between the narrative and reality only widened. (8) There was no similarity between the charges of December and August; Media24 effectively invented a narrative, repeating what WDS and his clients fabricated. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** **REF: [A], [B].**

"Detectives attached to the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit arrested Darren Russell (52) this time at one of the luxury houses in Llandudno that he rents and then apparently sublet." The use of "apparently" is misleading. (1) The subletting was fully legal and consented to by the property owners; this was the fundamental basis of the agreement. (2) The article presents unwarranted suspicion without any factual evidence to back it up. (3) This issue did not form part of the arrest, charges, docket, objection to bail, or the state's case, yet the article misleadingly presents it as central. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** **REF: [E], [F].**

"Darren Russell (52) was arrested by the police at a house in Llandudno on Wednesday after he apparently continued his ploy to rent houses and then sublet them." The statement "continued his ploy" is false. (1) The first arrest was not for fraud, nor related to the second, so there cannot be any "continuation" of a ploy. (2) The renting and subletting were integral to the agreement, making the claim of wrongdoing baseless. (3) Inexplicably, the journalist, like the others, made no attempt to contact me. (4) Instead, they published a narrative with no more evidence than the versions provided by WDS and prior articles. (5) This issue did not form any part of the arrest, charges, docket, objection to bail, or the state's case, yet the article falsely presents it as relevant. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** **REF: [E], [F], [H].**

"After he was released on bail in Wynberg magistrates' court on August 23, Russell is said to have continued to rent luxury homes in Cape Town's posh neighbourhoods such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay from their rightful owners and then sublet them to other people, without the rightful owners' knowledge or consent." This statement is false. (1) The rental and letting arrangements were known to and consented to by the owners from the outset. (2) As stated before, this did not form part of the arrest, charges, docket, objection to bail, or the state's case, yet the article presents it as if it were central to the story. (3) It seems implausible that any publication could publish an article where 95% of the content is false or fabricated, yet this is what occurred. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation).** **REF: [A], [B], [C].**

"Col. André Traut, police spokesman, confirmed on Friday that a 52-year-old British man had been arrested for fraud." "According to Traut, the police seized documents and computer equipment." "According to him, the man's arrest is related to the fraudulent letting of property in the Cape Town area." "He will appear in the magistrate's court in Wynberg on Monday," says Traut." "One of the rich man's houses on Darren Russell's website lacollectionsprestige.com."

"The complaint against Russell is new, and Traut asked that people who may have also been defrauded by Russell call Col. Kallie Lourens, the investigating officer, on 082 522 2786." This is untrue. (1) The complaint was not new; it was over a year old. (2) The article actively called for supposed scammed guests or victims to come forward, even providing multiple contact details for people to report being defrauded. The publication, with its vast readership and significant reach, would have motivated readers to respond. (3) Despite this, not a single guest or victim came forward, none of the thousands of guests who supposedly contributed to the R34 million fraud. This glaring silence should have raised immediate concerns within the publication about the validity of the narrative they were pushing. (4) The disconnect between the article's claims and the absence of any response is immense. How can a publication that dedicates so much coverage to one man, providing contact information and urging people to come forward, not find it suspicious when the phone does not ring? (5) There is a vast difference between the narrative being fabricated and developed through these articles and the actual reality, which should have prompted serious reflection from Media24. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [H], [O].

"The private detective WdS from Fox Forensics said on Friday that there are now four or five new complaints against Russell." This is untrue. (1) The arrest was not four "new" complaints. (2) the truth could not have been more different, the article was published three days after the arrest, and therefore must have been written between 14 and 16 December, but the charges were related to complaints from a full year earlier, all stemming from the events of Christmas Day 2021. These complaints had been investigated and dismissed for lacking any criminal element. Only to be revived by WDS, PD, and KB. (3) There can be no confusion—these charges were old and cannot be misrepresented as new. (4) The fact that the article mirrors WDS's fabricated reality rather than the actual facts begs the question of how such inaccuracies continue to be published. (5) The article presents these complaints as credible without verifying their validity or the fact that they had been dismissed earlier. (6) Readers would understandably assume this is definitive proof of an ongoing scam, especially since the article refers to both arrests as being related to fraud. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [E], [F].

"According to De Swardt, his modus operandi is the same as in the previous cases." This statement is false, salacious, factually inaccurate, and yet another fabrication aimed at constructing the most damaging character of me possible. (1) There were no "previous cases" as implied by De Swardt, which falsely suggests a long-standing pattern of criminal behaviour. (2) The fact that the case for which I was arrested was over a year old, with nothing before or since, highlights the falsehood of this statement. The old complaints are presented as new, while simultaneously being referenced as "old" to suggest that the new ones are additional, thus fabricating a continuous pattern of criminal behaviour from the initial complaint to the "new" ones, when in reality, they are one and the same. (3) The few rental disputes that occurred were civil matters, not criminal cases, and they were confined to the same period during the COVID-19 Omicron wave, rather than spanning a long timeline. (4) This statement creates an illusion of continuity in wrongdoing that is entirely fabricated. (5) The phrase "modus operandi" is a loaded and highly emotive term, one that has nothing but the most negative and nefarious connotations. Media24 should have been extremely cautious in using it without a substantial basis, as it implies a long-standing pattern of premeditated criminal behaviour. (6) This attempt to imply a pattern of criminality when none exists reveals a clear bias and a failure in journalistic standards. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B]. [F], [L].

"He rents rich man's houses along Cape Town's Atlantic and False Bay coasts. He would live in the properties for a month or two and pay his rent and then stop paying. In the meantime, he then advertises the luxury homes on websites such as Airbnb and Booking.com." This is entirely false. (1) The rental agreements were legitimate and honoured. (2) Payments were made according to agreed terms. (3) If I had only paid a month's rent, I would have paid around R340,000. If I had stopped after two months, the amount would have been R720,000. In reality, I paid nearly R5 million in rent alone, and over R6.5 million when factoring in rent, bills, and housekeeper wages. (4) The publication could have easily verified this by contacting me, but they never did. (5) The scam narrative collapses when you consider that a villa scam, by definition, would not require the actual acquisition, refurbishment, and management of properties. I invested heavily in these properties—why would I spend R6 million on rent, R2 million on managerial salaries, R8 million on refurbishments, and half a million on repairs and agency fees if my intention was to scam guests? (6) Why would I spend over R1.5 million on legal fees fighting the landlords if I didn't need real properties for real guests? (7) The platforms mentioned were never contacted by the journalist. (8) Media24 promotes itself as an investigative outlet, yet if WDS's allegations were true, how could I still have an operational, accredited Booking.com account at the time this article was published? (9) How does the journalist reconcile the facts available to them with the narrative they chose to publish? **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

"Apparently, Russell also double-rented some of the properties he rented—or as de Swardt says—even triple-rented." This is categorically false. (1) Despite WdS's claims, no evidence of double- or triple-renting has ever been produced. (2) Over the course of 2022 and 2023, WDS and his clients—particularly PD and KB—engaged in numerous investigations. They invested significant resources, using private investigators, SAPS officers, and others, including figures like Denis and Johan, who had unrestricted access to my home, laptops, and devices for an entire month. (3) Multiple law enforcement bodies, including Hout Bay SAPS, Camps Bay SAPS, Hawks, Bellville Commercial, the NPA, and Wynberg Magistrates' Court, spent thousands of hours searching for any wrongdoing, yet found nothing. (4) Had they discovered any fraud, they wouldn't have needed to resurrect the complaints from December 2021. (5) Despite these facts, the articles published during this time parrot WDS's false allegations as if they were the product of serious investigation. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [E], [F].

"Whoever gets there first gets the keys. The other tenants' money was put in his pocket, and it's thousands of rands." This statement is completely fabricated and absurd. (1) The idea that keys were distributed in such a chaotic manner is implausible and unsupported by any evidence. (2) No such instances of misconduct occurred, and no tenants ever raised legitimate claims of being "cheated." (3) If such a practice had existed even briefly, we would have lost all platform partnerships and online presence, and the internet would be flooded with negative reviews. (4) All of these fabrications, originating from WdS, found their way into the articles verbatim, with no effort to verify their accuracy.

Worse, these falsehoods were presented as the result of journalistic investigation, when they were nothing more than pre-packaged defamatory statements. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [E], [F].

"If the people demand their money back, he says they should take him to court." This is false. (1) I never made such a statement. (2) The claim is presented without any verification, further perpetuating WDS's narrative. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [E], [F].

"He knows it will cost the people thousands of rands and then they leave it instead." This is misleading and speculative. (1) Legal costs would be minimal compared to the alleged sums, and tenants would have pursued refunds if they had legitimate claims. (2) It is illogical to suggest that a guest would not spend a few thousand rand to recover a R200,000 vacation cost. (3) More importantly, why would they stay silent, not complain to their bank, the platform, or the press? The suggestion that tenants were dissuaded from seeking justice due to costs is a weak attempt to explain the absence of any legal claims. (4) The lack of legal action proves no fraud occurred. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

"Russell was first arrested on 4 August at a house in the Upper Cape. He then appeared in the Magistrate's Court in Wynberg on charges of fraud, burglary, theft, and malicious damage to property, as well as being in the country illegally because his visa had expired." This is misleading. (1) The August arrest was not for fraud but for the alleged theft of three old televisions. (2) I was not charged with any immigration breaches in either August or December—this claim is wholly false. (3) The inclusion of unrelated immigration charges is part of WDS's deliberate attempt to mislead readers and exaggerate the allegations. Unfortunately, Media24 provided him the platform to do so. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

"It now appears that the property scam started as early as 2012. In a report on the website of The Evening Standard, a British publication, it was alleged in April 2012 that he had not paid deposits from tenants to the landlords, on whose behalf he acted. He is believed to have used the money to strengthen his own property portfolio and finance his luxurious life." This is a misrepresentation. (1) The allegations from The Evening Standard were discredited and dealt with years ago. (1) a multiple titled media group, Media24 cannot have failed to appreciate the significance of the fact there was one article, published once, never repeated, not circulated or syndicated, no follow up or expansion of, and not even published by the title's sister publications. (2) the approach of Media24 to this article is indicative of their whole approach, they cherry picked what to publish and what not to. They reference one article in 2012, a full decade before their articles, and yet the fact that there had been no articles in the previous ten years seems to have no relevance. The idea it could have been operating scams in the previous decade and not hit the radar on multiple occasions again seems academic to their purpose. (3) or in fact that in the previous thirty four years covering the period that I ran my own businesses that was all they could find (or rather what WdS passed to them). (4) and my operation was not some small concern, I had estate agency covering Manchester & Northwest England as well as London and Greater London, a portfolio of properties valued in today's money at a billion Rand, the collection of businesses and brands included interior design, property investment, international inward investment, lettings, management and sales and much else. We were one of the top 3 agents in Manchester and one of the busiest in London. But one of this gets the slightest mention or reference in the articles. The fact that this article was never followed up, republished, or built upon by its regional versions or sister publications demonstrates its speculative nature. (4) It is also factually incorrect: my property portfolio predated my estate agency business, and in fact the profits from the portfolio were what established and when need subsidised the estate agency business so the premise of the claim makes no sense. (5) The suggestion that I used tenants' money to finance a "luxurious life" is defamatory and unsupported by any actual evidence. (6) it also grabbing at straws considering the thousands of transaction done in the preceding decade that all they felt appropriate to reference from that period was the article. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

"CASE ADJOURNED AGAINST BRIT WHO RENTS AND RE-LETS HOUSES" 2.2.23. MAYGENE DE WEE. NETWORK24

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

"Darren Russell (52) appeared in court on Thursday on charges of fraud. The state claims he defrauded the owner of a luxury house in Llandudno out of around R1.2 million." As previously detailed, this statement is misleading and inaccurate. (1) I was not accused of defrauding owners in any way. (2) No part of the arrest, charges, bail application, state's case, or docket had anything to do with that allegation. (3) Nor was I accused of scamming anyone out of millions of rand. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). **REF:** [A], [B], [C].

"Russell was arrested at the mansion in Llandudno in December last year by members of the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit. The state claims he rented several luxury homes and then rented out the homes in residential neighbourhoods such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent." This is completely false. As previously detailed, (1) all rental agreements were fully transparent, and property owners had full knowledge of the subletting arrangements.

(2) I was not accused of renting out the properties without the owner's consent either. (3) This allegation formed no part of the arrest, charges, bail application, state's case, or docket. (4) The constant repetition of these falsehoods without verification continues to propagate a damaging narrative. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF: [E], [F]**.

"The court heard on Thursday that Russell, who has been held in Pollsmoor prison since his arrest, has not yet given any financial instructions to his solicitor. A lawyer representing Russell's lawyer, one t. Swartz asked the court for an adjournment until March 7. The stand-in attorney said Swartz had not yet received financial instructions from Russell. Swartz would apparently use the time to properly consult with Russell." "The lawyer came back after a short adjournment and asked the court to adjourn the case until February 7. Russell and Swartz must then tell the court whether Swartz is going to stay, Russell is going to appoint a new legal representative, or whether he is going to use legal aid." I find it surreal that the same journalist, while propagating the lie that I was scamming millions, did not find it strange that I could not afford an attorney. (1) This demonstrates the lack of curiosity or investigation into the situation by the journalist. (2) It highlights how the articles exclusively focused on WDS's narrative while ignoring any reality that contradicted it. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF: [A], [B]**.

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

"This is not the only charge of this kind that Russell faces. He was also arrested on a similar charge in Cape Town on 4 August last year and released shortly afterwards on bail of R30 000." This is untrue. (1) I was not facing any other charges. (2) The charges in August were not for fraud. (3) The charges had been thrown out four months earlier. (4) This was made clear during the hearings in the December case. (5) If I had been facing other charges, they would have been mentioned at the first and every subsequent appearance. (6) Further, if I was on bail and had been arrested again for an offense, my bail would have been revoked, and I would not have been granted bail on the new charges. (7) Considering the August charges were six months earlier; it is staggering that the journalist did not think to follow up and check what happened to them. The idea that they would still be unresolved is unrealistic. (8) The claim that I faced multiple "similar charges" is false and serves to build a false narrative of repeated criminal behaviour. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts). **REF: [E], [F]**.

"After he was released on bail on 23 August, he reportedly continued to rent luxury homes in Cape Town's posh residential areas such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay and then sublet them to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent." This is entirely false. (1) As repeatedly stated, all rental and subletting arrangements were fully transparent and consented to by the property owners. (2) The August arrest had nothing to do with scamming, fraud, or defrauding homeowners, contrary to the claims in the article. (3) There was no continuation of any supposed scheme, as the charges in August were unrelated to the subsequent arrest. (4) This ongoing falsehood perpetuates a fabricated narrative that has already been disproven in previous legal proceedings. (5) The failure to investigate or verify the facts caused incalculable harm, which was entirely foreseeable, indeed, guaranteed. **PRESS CODE: [1.0]** (reporting truthfully), **[1.1]** (verifying facts), and **[1.8]** (dignity and reputation). **REF: [A], [B], [C]**.

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

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

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

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

"The suspect was previously out on bail for similar charges but has now been rearrested." This is misleading and inaccurate. (1) The charges in August were not for fraud or related to the later arrest. (2) There were no "similar charges" involved, and this claim further perpetuates a fabricated narrative of repeated criminal behaviour. (3) The statement also fails to acknowledge that the charges from August

had been thrown out four months prior, making this claim factually incorrect. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [E], [F].

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

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

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

"I ALMOST GOT SCAMMED BY DARREN RUSSELL THE ALLEGED CAPE TOWN AIRBNB SWINDLER" VERNON PILLAY IOL 16.1.23

Analysis of the Article: "I ALMOST GOT SCAMMED BY DARREN RUSSELL – THE ALLEGED CAPE TOWN AIRBNB SWINDLER" by Vernon Pillay
"It is not every day that you wake up to the news that you could have been scammed and by the grace of God or some miracle, you escaped losing thousands of rand. Despite doing stories on this very topic, I failed to see that Russel was most probably trying to scam me out of about R10 000. That was the price (give or take) for the night at the breathtaking venue 'Hove Heaven' that he was advertising on AirBnB." The article by Vernon Pillay was based solely and entirely on the articles of Media24. (1) The sole motivation for writing the article—and indeed for thinking he escaped being scammed—was due to Media24's misconduct and the many violations of the Press Code. (2) No doubt, this motivation was fundamentally influenced by the same factors that have made the articles so damaging for me: had they not been written, been so false, the falsehoods so extreme, and the publication itself so well-regarded, Vernon Pillay would never have written his article. (3) That was my theory before I approached him, and that theory was confirmed when I did. (4) As I explained to Mr. Pillay, the article itself presented a somewhat surreal concept, with the emphasis not on actual scamming but on the possibility of "almost" being scammed. (5) This premise required a series of assumptions that, even if based on accurate information, would have been theoretical, subjective, circumstantial, and open to interpretation. (6) Unfortunately, these assumptions were founded on fabricated statements made by WdS (WDS), his clients, and their proxies. (7) Given the already tenuous nature of the premise of someone "almost" being anything, there was a clear obligation to thoroughly verify the facts on which these assumptions were based. Otherwise, there was a real risk of straying from conjecture into fiction. (8) To illustrate, you would not write an article titled "I was almost shot by Trump's assassin" just because you had plans to visit Pennsylvania that week. Nor would you publish an article claiming you nearly drowned because you had planned a vacation in Thailand the same year a tsunami struck. In this case, there was no shooting incident or tsunami; the event on which the premise of "almost" is based did not occur. (9) The article is particularly damaging because it lends credibility to a completely false narrative, which is ironic given that the false narrative was the root cause of the assumption and article to begin with. (10) As a result, the article deviates from contemplating and exploring possibilities, instead becoming a false, misleading, and libelous narrative. (11) This article demonstrates the power and impact of the Media24 articles, and (12) the purpose of the placement of those articles in the first place. (13) This article, like the others, was a key feature in the application by Keith Broad in December, and the reason he had me removed by orchestrating an arrest. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B].

"When I went back to AirBnB to look at our messages, I was shocked to see that his messages were blocked with this message by AirBnB: 'This message has been hidden because the person no longer has access to AirBnB.'" It is fair to say that if a highly competent, professional, and intelligent journalist can be so convinced that he pens an article, then the wider public will be equally and unequivocally convinced. (1) While this does not excuse the violations of the Press Code, it does explain them. (2) Unlike Media24, when I approached Vernon Pillay, he did not reject my approaches or give false reasons for not engaging. (3) He engaged, was professional, constructive, and agreed to issue an apology, retraction, and correction. (4) As I explained to him, my primary wish is for him and others to publish the truth. It has never been to punish people who were deceived. (5) While the article was a serious misjudgement, I do not believe there was any malice, and I do believe Mr. Pillay takes his responsibilities as a journalist and his journalistic integrity seriously. (6) Media24, however, has shown the opposite. (7) Had they taken a similar approach when I contacted them, there would be less needed to question their motivation, agenda, or the nature of their relationship with WDS. (8) Unfortunately, their articles, the timing of the articles, the extreme content, the fact that 95%+ of the content is false or fabricated, their wholesale swallowing and printing of the allegations from WDS, their failure to do any due diligence or research of their own, their false reporting of some of the most fundamental aspects of the cases, their failure to contact me for comment or information before or after any of the five articles, and most especially their rejection of my approach, and the false reasons for that rejection, all demonstrate that these serious violations—of which there are hundreds—have a very sinister undertone and backstory. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). **REF:** [A], [B], [E].

"What I can see is that there were major red flags even from my messages. The most jarring was that there was an issue while I was booking the venue with AirBnB. I saw that when I was doing the booking, he had sent me a link to book via Instagram." No bookings were ever made via Instagram; Instagram links were used only for showcasing property images. (1) The notion that this was suspicious is directly linked to the skewed narrative from News24's false reporting. (2) Put simply, had Vernon Pillay not read the four detailed News24 articles by the time he wrote this piece, he would not have had any issues with his interaction with me. **PRESS CODE:** [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1]

(verifying facts). REF: [F], [G].

The Flawed Premise of the Article: Vernon Pillay's enquiry concerned a booking from September 2021, yet he draws conclusions about potential fraud based on the false narrative from the Media24 articles and their defamatory content. (1) As detailed, the August charges had no connection to fraud, scamming, or defrauding property owners. (2) However, Pillay falsely concluded that this was their basis due to the fabricated articles. (3) The December charges related to three alleged diary clashes from Christmas Day 2021, which also had no connection to fraud. (4) At the point of Mr. Pillay's enquiry and in the 3+ months before and after that date, no guests had been defrauded or expressed dissatisfaction—except for claims made by WDS. (5) Even if the hypothesis presented in the article were based on sound information (which it wasn't), to conclude that someone was almost scammed when no verifiable complaints or issues had been raised before, during, or after the enquiry makes the entire premise of the article flawed. (6) Moreover, the basis for the "almost scammed" narrative was built entirely on assumptions that were neither verified nor tested. (7) The charges discussed in the Media24 articles had been thrown out or were proven false. (8) Therefore, it is clear that the article by Mr. Pillay was founded on faulty assumptions, exaggerated claims, and fabrications fed by WDS. **This fundamentally undermines the article's premise.** PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [A], [B].

The Arrest Narrative: Sergeant Stevens arrested me over the Christmas 2021 diary clashes, yet there has never been a single occasion where a business or individual has been charged with fraud for incidents representing less than 1% of their total transactions. (1) In 2021, we hosted hundreds of guests without a single complaint or issue, and in 2022, we welcomed thousands more, all equally satisfied. (2) The six large residences, totalling 32 bedrooms, accommodated approximately 50 bookings each month, equating to 600 guests a year. (3) This resulted in around 100 check-ins and check-outs, over 100 meet-and-greets, and welcome packs, all managed by a full-time team of a dozen housekeepers to ensure seamless service delivery, guest relations, and maintenance of these substantial properties. (4) Our clientele consisted of wealthy and discerning individuals, primarily from America, the UK, Germany, and Japan, who expected—and received—impeccable service and a flawless experience, which matched the large sums they were paying. (5) Clearly, this kind of clientele is hard to please and easy to disappoint, yet we maintained our Superhost status throughout and received universally exceptional reviews. (6) If this had truly been a scam, how do the journalists explain the positive reviews, the industry accreditations, and, most importantly, the complete absence of any negative online content or complaints? PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [A], [B].

On the Issue of Proportionality: Imagine a hotel that has been welcoming guests for an entire year, with hundreds of happy, satisfied customers, five-star ratings, and numerous 10/10 reviews, along with official industry accreditations. (1) Then, during Christmas, three guests fall ill with food poisoning. (2) While this is undoubtedly a terrible experience for the affected guests and potentially damaging for the hotel's reputation, it would not justify police or media involvement. (3) If over the following year, the hotel continues to serve hundreds of happy guests without incident, the isolated food poisoning case would seem ever more insignificant and a one-off anomaly. (4) In the same way, three booking issues at Christmas 2021, even thirty booking issues, when placed in the context of hundreds of trouble-free bookings before and after, should not have warranted the extreme and disproportionate reaction it received. (5) It should certainly have motivated serious scepticism, questions, and proper investigative journalism. (6) The narrative spun by the Media24 articles attempted to inflate this isolated incident into something far more damaging than it was in reality. PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts), and [1.8] (dignity and reputation). REF: [A], [B], [C].

"On reflection, I can't believe that I was even entertaining this booking process. It is not lost on me that I was making some silly errors in evaluating this booking process. I ask myself why, why would I let myself potentially be bamboozled by such an obvious scam? Looking back, it was clearly too good to be true and I just thank the universe that I booked with a different host." The price offered for the booking was correct and in line with what all guests were offered at that time. (1) The pricing during the COVID-19 pandemic reflected the realities of the market, and numerous guests before, during, and after Mr. Pillay's dates were charged the same rates. (2) Discounts were offered at the time as standard due to the pandemic. (3) Mr. Pillay's assumption that he avoided a scam was influenced solely by the false narrative set by the Media24 articles, not by any real facts. (4) This assumption breaches PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [F], [G].

"Who is Darren Russel? Well, it seems that Russel has been doing this very con with numerous victims over a few years in Cape Town and has finally been arrested." This statement directly reflects the baseless claims in News24's articles, portraying me as a long-term fraudster without any credible evidence. (1) These claims were entirely fabricated by News24 and were ultimately disproven in court. (2) The charges cited were all thrown out without exception, including the August charges, which had been dismissed three months before this article was written. (3) By repeating these claims, Mr. Pillay further perpetuates a narrative already debunked in court. PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [A], [B].

"Russel has been accused of defrauding luxury property owners and tourists on the Atlantic Seaboard for at least two years." This claim is based entirely on Media24's fabricated articles, which I have addressed. (1) Importantly, I had and have never been charged with defrauding the owners of the properties. PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully). REF: [A], [B].

"It is estimated that the British national made up to R34 million while committing this fraud, according to News24." The phrase "it is estimated" is entirely misleading. (1) No official body or person ever made this estimate. (2) Nor is there the slightest logic to such a figure. (3) As mentioned, that figure would represent thousands of guests, yet there is no record of any guest making such an accusation across platforms, banks, police, or the internet. (4) This figure was fabricated by WDS and subsequently given credibility by News24. (5) There was never any substantiated evidence to support this wild figure. (6) However, the more this figure and the other allegations are repeated, printed, circulated, and echoed, the greater the damage and the greater the credibility these fabricated allegations enjoy. PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts). REF: [A], [B].

"It should be noted that Russel has been arrested twice, his first arrest was in 2022 and his second was last week, as more and more victims were coming forward." This statement is based solely on Media24's articles and the false narrative that my first arrest was for fraud. (1) As detailed, my arrests were based on fabricated charges orchestrated by WDS, none of which involved fraud or scamming. (2) The August

charge had been withdrawn three months earlier. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [A], [B].

"Russell faces six criminal and six civil charges." This is false, based on the content of Media24's articles, and can be easily verified as false by court records. (1) At no point did I face six criminal or civil charges as described. (2) The reporting was irresponsible and factually incorrect. (3) Nor does it mention that every one of those was authored by the landlords, in one guise or another. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [A], [B].

A PETITION. According to a Change.org petition entitled, "Let's STOP Darren Russell de Rodez aka La Collection The Holiday SCAMMER", Russel has a simple modus operandi. Mario Boffa, the person who started the petition, said Russel "takes bookings for properties in Cape Town and then when clients want to take occupation, he doesn't open up or has double-booked them". Boffa writes that "he runs property listings of properties he does not own nor does he have legal agreements to let them on duplicated platforms, using multiple profiles." The motivation for the petition is crucial here. (1) WDS, Denis Dalton (present at both the official arrest and secret illegal arrest), and Johan Schalkwyk worked closely with Mario Boffa. (2) As the evidence shows, they plotted to steal the contents of the bank accounts, embezzled R1.2 million, and colluded to steal the villas and their contents. (3) The petition was a natural and logical addition to the defamatory Media24 articles, designed to bolster their false narrative and provide cover for their own criminal actions. (4) An application has been submitted earlier this month for its removal, and while this is notoriously difficult with Change.org, we anticipate a positive outcome given the petition's direct links to serious crime. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [A], [B].

"Here is a list of the platforms he used: Airbnb, Your.Rentals, Booking.com, Agoda, Expedia, VRBO." This claim is easy to verify as false. (1) The only platforms we used were Airbnb and Booking.com, nothing more. (2) The notion of multiple platforms, and especially using platforms we had no dealings with, is entirely false and can be verified. (3) This section is based on the defamatory and false petition of Mr. Boffa, rather than on facts. (4) In all the time I was managing the villas, I never had profiles or accounts with Your.Rentals, Agoda, Expedia, or VRBO. **PRESS CODE: [1.0] (reporting truthfully), [1.1] (verifying facts).** REF: [F], [G].

VIOLATION OF HEADLINE INTEGRITY UNDER THE PRESS CODE

Overview: Media24's headlines, as demonstrated across multiple articles from *News24*, *Netwerk24*, *Rapport*, and *Die Burger*, present a pattern of misleading, sensationalized, and outright false statements that **contravene Section 10.1 of the Press Code**, mandating that headlines be accurate, balanced, and not misleading. These headlines violated this standard by framing me in the most damaging and prejudiced light, using terms such as "fraudster," "scammer," and implying criminal behaviour that was neither legally substantiated nor accurately representative of the events, charges or court case described. For instance, the false reference in the August articles to the arrest being for fraud, the further false references to the December arrest being a second arrest for fraud, the term "rental scam" repeatedly used by *Netwerk24* and *News24* conveyed a definitive judgment of guilt without any basis in verified evidence. Further, under Section 10.2, the headlines were designed to capture attention by amplifying accusations and selective details, giving an impression of criminality even when subsequent article content offered no supporting details. This approach manipulated readers' perceptions before they even engaged with the articles, contributing to a prejudiced narrative in the court of public opinion. The use of "finally arrested" and "while hiding" and "defrauding millions" is wholly unsupported by factual reporting, exploiting headline space to sensationalize unproven allegations and casting me in an unduly negative light across South Africa's most prominent news platforms. Each headline exemplifies an approach designed to bias public opinion against me, consistently suggesting guilt where none had been proven, and casting me in a light that disregards the principles of balanced, factual reporting as required under the Press Code. Further the headlines themselves were false, falsely reporting the charges and the cases.

(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 21 Aug-23, Julian Jansen, Netwerk24 (Media24) (1.1) **False** Misleading Statement: "Allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him" suggests criminal behaviour related to guesthouses, which was not part of the arrest or charges (1.2) False Implication: **"Finally been arrested"** implies an extended manhunt, despite the arrest occurring just 4 days after Inge filed the complaint (1.3) Sensationalism: "While hiding in the Upper Cape" falsely portrays me as hiding, whereas in reality I had spent 585 of the previous 582 days living in the same homes, to imply there was any need to find or track me is absurd. Especially when you consider I had spent 282 of the previous 285 days living in or next to the property owned by WDS's employer.

(2) **"Briton who allegedly defrauded people with accommodation, gets bail."** I 23 Aug-22, Ané van Zyl, Netwerk24 (Media24) (2.1) Falsely Framed: The headline states that my arrest was linked to fraud in accommodation rentals, however neither the arrest, charges nor bail application had anything to do with an accommodation scam. Again, this was the narrative supplied by WDS, presenting a highly misleading impression to the reader. One that was reinforced throughout the August articles and then reinforced again in the second round.

(3) **"A British man who allegedly defrauded members of the public and tourists out of thousands of rands."** I 23 Aug-22, Die Burger (Media24) (3.1) **False** Inaccurate Framing: The phrase "allegedly defrauded members of the public and tourists out of thousands of rands" lacks basis, as the arrest had no connection to defrauding tourists or the public, distorting the event and damaging my reputation.

(4) **"Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam."** I 17 Dec 2022, Maygene de Wee, Netwerk24 (Media24) (4.1) **False** Misleading Repeat Accusation: Phrasing this as an "arrest for the same rental scam" is deceptive and false, as the first arrest had no link to fraud or a rental scam, making it impossible for a subsequent arrest to be classified as such. **Further the lack of a qualifier, gives the reader the understanding that both the first and second arrests were for crimes committed, clearly implying guilt.**

(5) **"Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions."** I 14 Jan 2023, Carin Smith, News24 (Media24) (2.1) **False:** 1) Again, the false representation as the first arrest being for fraud. 2) **"Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer'" implies that I am definitively an accommodation scammer, despite no such judicial finding, the lack of a qualifier before "accommodation scammer" but before "pocketing millions" implies I was an accommodation scammer and it is only the sum I scammed that is subject to question.** (5.2) 3) Inflated Allegations: "Suspected of pocketing millions" grossly exaggerates the nature of the charges, which concerned only three counts of fraud totalling R400,000, not close to the "millions" suggested. A figure again, only expounded by Mr de Swardt and his clients.

(6) **"Case adjourned against Briton who rents and re-lets houses."** I 02 Feb 2023, Maygene de Wee, Netwerk24 (Media24) (6.1) False Association: The headline incorrectly implies that the case involved disputes over rental permissions or subletting, which were not elements of the charges, continuing the process of misleading readers and building on the previous false or fabricated statements, building the false

narrative and violating headline accuracy requirements. **Further, not only does the headline reference something I was not charged with, but the lack of a qualifier gives the reader the impression of guilt**

(7) "I almost got scammed by Darren Russell." I 20 Jan 2023, Vernon Pillay, IOL (7.1) Definitive Assumption of Criminality: "I almost got scammed" suggests a scam was underway, though none was evidenced, creating a falsely prejudicial image (7.2) False Implication of Intent: The inclusion of "almost" implies that had the author proceeded with the booking, a scam would have occurred, presuming guilt without any substantiated basis. **The lack of a qualifier gives the reader the impression of guilt, the inclusion of "almost" is not only NOT a qualifier it has the opposite effect implying the only reason the journalist was not scammed was because he had not made a booking.**

KEY ALLEGATIONS INDEX TO CROSS REFERENCE

PRESS CODE INDEX: BELOW AS A RESPONSE TO THE MOST REPEATED ALLEGATIONS TO SAVE ON SPACE IN THE ANALYSIS AND AVOID REPETITION.

[1.0]: Report truthfully, accurately, and fairly.

[1.1]: Verify facts before publication.

[1.7]: Avoid presenting allegations as facts.

[1.8]: Protect the dignity and reputation of individuals and ensure the right to reply.

[2.1]: Maintain independence and avoid conflicts of interest.

[3.3]: Ensure balanced, impartial coverage, particularly in reporting conflicts of interest.

[5.1]: Avoid discrimination, stereotyping, and unfair comment.

[6.0]: Right of reply for individuals subject to adverse reporting.

[10.1]: Headlines, captions, and content should not mislead or exaggerate.

Link to index of files for Press Council. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wprtnie-aiv_rv9gk_m_c8txibd1v-d2?usp=drive_link

[A] RENTING PROPERTIES WITHOUT PERMISSION:

Allegation: Throughout the articles, News24 frequently claims that properties were rented out without the owners' consent or knowledge, portraying this as a significant breach of trust, and building the narrative of a rogue tenant and a crook.

Reality/Rebuttal: This was a lie, in fact, a total fabrication. (1) The allegation of renting without permission is not supported by any evidence whatsoever and is directly contradicted by a considerable volume of evidence, including the legal contracts in place. (2) The owners were not just aware of and consented to the rental arrangements, but in all but one of the properties (32 Fisherman's, 16 Leirmans, 7 Monterey, 7b Monterey), the model of renting the properties from the owners over the long term and then letting them to guests in the short term **was the sole basis and justification for taking out the leases in the first place**, and the very means by which those leases would be funded. In the case of 12 Hove, it was an evolution, and one that was fully supported by the owner. (3) At no point during the course of our paying in excess of R4,800,000 in rental and deposit payments to the owners did they ever decline these or reference any such allegations. (4) In addition, at no stage was it ever part of the state's case or position that this was an issue in any respect. (5) It never formed part of either arrest or the docket. (6) Nor, with five separate properties, was it ever an issue raised or used in the civil courts. (7) The only occasions when that allegation was expounded were in the articles, and the only people pushing that allegation were de Swardt, Keith, and Inge Broad. (8) It was actually Keith's cousin, Gail Broad (agent for Rawson Property Management), who proposed the arrangement for half of the portfolio and further arranged for Keith and Inge Broad to come to my home in Camps Bay to see the business model in operation, where we had a three-hour meeting to discuss every detail. (9) The properties were legally let and sublet as part of an estate agency arrangement, and consent was provided explicitly. (10) In fact, on the occasion when Keith Broad lied by trying to allege rental arrears in civil proceedings, to counter that lie, Keith's own managing agent, Anton Moller, provided an affidavit to the courts confirming there were no rent arrears and that Keith had full knowledge of and consented to the business model, including the renting out to guests. A section of the affidavit follows: "**Rawson Properties duly assisted Keith Broad and Darren Russel with the negotiations and conclusion of a lease agreement relating to the property of Mr. Broad at 16 Leirmans Road, Llandudno, a copy of the lease agreement being annexed to the founding affidavit of Mr. Broad under the above case number. In order to assist the parties and this Honourable Court in coming to a decision, I duly confirm that both prior to and during the conclusion of the lease, the property was let to Mr. Russel for the express usage as short-term accommodation and that Mr. Broad was thus aware of and agreed to such usage. The intention of the written lease agreement was furthermore to permit such abovementioned usage**". **Evidence:** The lease agreement on the properties; the hundreds of communications between respective attorneys or thousands of pages of court bundles, the fact I held the same profiles and platforms from the very beginning in early 2021 through to the end, when no platform would permit a host without all of the legal permissions. * [\[affidavit of Anton Moller, Kieth's managing agent\]](#) * [\[Paula Disberry WhatsApp chat export\]](#) * [\[Arrest Warrant for Keith Broad\]](#), * [\[Protection Order Against Keith Broad\]](#). WhatsApp export with all the key players, confirming that we had permission to rent, including [\[Gail broad\]](#), * [\[Paula Disberry\]](#), * [\[Anton Moller\]](#).

[B] NO PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE WORKS:

Allegation: Claims were made that I undertook works on the properties without securing the owners' permission.

Reality/Rebuttal: This claim is entirely false, and another fabrication. In fact, it is the polar opposite of the truth. (1) From the outset, the agreement was based on a key principle: I would lease the properties long-term, typically for five years, and during that time I would carry out improvements necessary to lease the properties short-term, primarily to overseas tourists. The long-term lease was crucial, as it allowed me to recover the millions invested and eventually turn a profit. (2) The property owners were not only aware of this arrangement but actively engaged in discussions about the renovations. (3) This allegation had no role in any criminal matters and was not referenced in the docket or charges. (4) Across the five properties and the total of 53 calendar months I leased the properties, consent was never an issue, including in any civil matters either. On the occasion when KB/IB much later attempted to introduce this false allegation, we provided unequivocal evidence—such as an affidavit from his own managing agent and WhatsApp conversations with multiple parties—that disproved it. (5) Throughout the three months of major renovations, KB/IB never once told us to stop, and they were kept informed (illegally) via the daily updates, including photos sent by Keith's housekeeper. (6) The most offensive aspect of this allegation is that we later learned the entire arrangement with KB/IB was proposed so that I would remodel the property at my own expense, only for them to take it back and sell it at a substantial profit, once I had finished. Evidenced by the fact that we finished the works on 20 December and the first of many illegal evictions took place on 24 December. (7) Notably, this allegation is clearly false, as evidenced by the fact after this lie was introduced into the narrative I offered to reverse any item of works back to how it was, and they consistently declined. (8) Moreover, when the property was listed for sale, all of our changes were included in the listing, not one had been changed or reversed. (9) These false allegations have only ever surfaced in the News24 articles, which then gave the fabrications credibility and legitimacy. (10) There is not a single piece of evidence to support this claim, while we have extensive

evidence proving it to be false. (11) As with the other statements in the articles, the article makes statements that are the very opposite of and had no connection with the truth, yet they correlated with the lies told by de Swardt. **Evidence:** [\[affidavit of Anton Moller. Kieth's managing agent\]](#) * [\[Paula Disberry WhatsApp chat export\]](#) * [\[Signed lease agreements\]](#) * [\[email confirmations between respective attorneys\]](#) * [\[photographic documentation\]](#) WhatsApp export with [\[Gail broad\]](#). * [\[Paula Disberry\]](#). * [\[Anton Moller\]](#).

[C] FAILURE TO PAY RENT/RENT ARREARS/REFERENCES TO ROGUE TENANT:

Allegation: Accusations that I withheld rent, along with further accusations that it was my "modus operandi" to lease properties, pay only the first couple of months' rent, and then intentionally stop. These allegations, combined with the entire content, tone, and narrative of the articles, clearly and unequivocally portrayed me as a thoroughly rogue tenant of the worst kind.

Reality/Rebuttal: This was a lie, in fact a total fabrication. Worse than that, it was the most disingenuous lie possible, considering the deep hypocrisy of their claims: (a) It was false and easily disproved by documentation; (b) While they falsely claimed they weren't receiving rent, they were simultaneously benefiting to the tune of millions of rand, which was generated from the transformation of the properties and the income they would later receive; (c) They openly admitted to trying to destroy our sources of revenue, revenue that was supposed to fund the rent payments. (1) Rent was consistently paid on time for all properties. (2) The first lease began on 23 December 2020, and the arrest on 14 December 2022 marked the end of my occupation. If the claim were true, I would have only paid around R650,000 in rent. In reality, over this period, approximately R4,100,000 was due, while I paid roughly R4,400,000 to the landlords. In other words, I paid more than what was due, including rent and deposits. (3) This claim is especially deceitful and hypocritical because a core tactic of their campaign was sabotaging our profiles, deliberately cutting off the rental income needed to pay rent. Their goal was to push us into default, giving them grounds to reclaim the properties through the courts. During 2022 alone, they had our profiles or ads taken down over forty times. (4) In the article, Inge Broad even admits their role: "We tried blocking his adverts each time we saw any, but he kept creating new ones," said Inge. (5) The situation was egregious: after renting the property for five years and investing millions in refurbishments, the landlords wanted the property back because its value and rental income had increased. They had no legal grounds, so they resorted to: (a) illegal evictions, (b) misrepresenting improvements as damage in civil courts, (c) using corrupt connections with de Swardt and SAPS officers, (d) weaponizing the criminal justice system by arresting and detaining me, (e) attacking every revenue source they could to force our collapse, preventing rent payments, so they could then seek eviction orders, (f) and when all else failed, turning to Media24 to publish their lies. (6) One of their purposes was to use these media reports in court as "evidence" of rent arrears, damage, unauthorized works, and to paint me as a bad tenant. (7) There were no rent arrears issues until this collaboration began—it was a manufactured false narrative. The civil courts never entertained these allegations because rent payments were fully documented and made according to the agreements. (8) Contrary to the articles and comments by IB/KB/de Swardt, rent arrears were not part of either arrest or the docket. (9) Nor was it ever raised in civil court during the lease period before my arrest. (10) Only after my arrest, ten months into the lease, when de Swardt/KB/IB lied to obtain a protection order (claiming it was Keith's home and I had invaded it), and secured a 500-meter exclusion zone preventing me from accessing my own home (with Hout Bay SAPS ready to arrest me if I did), did I stop paying rent—for a property I was barred from accessing. (11) When Keith submitted his December application in my absence, they told the court that rent for the period during which I was unlawfully excluded was in arrears. (12) The statements in the articles were word-for-word repeats of de Swardt's lies, had no factual basis, and even a basic investigation would have exposed them. The idea that I could have occupied these properties for over 50 months if my "modus operandi" was to pay rent for only a few months and then stop is absolute nonsense. (13) To be clear, rather than a rogue tenant, I was every landlord's idea of a perfect tenant: as the tenant, I rented the properties for five years, meaning continuous and uninterrupted rental income for five years, no voids/empty periods to fund; minimal if no agencies fees in years two to five; an upward-only rental increase every year; a rental amount 20% above the market value; and a tenant who would transform the property at their own expense, spending millions in the process. The value to the landlord in regard to the lease alone was R6.7 million compared with R3.1 million had they opted for a series of 6-month leases via an estate agency or R2.4 million had they continued letting the property on the platforms as they did prior to my lease. However, that paled into insignificance compared to the R36 million the properties would generate from the short-term lettings after my refurbishment or the R13 million increase in capital value that could only be extracted if I was removed as the tenant. **Evidence:** [\[rental reconciliations\]](#) * [\[managing agent's affidavit\]](#) * [\[email confirmations between respective attorneys\]](#) * full WhatsApp exports for [\[Agent Gail Broad\]](#), * [\[Anton Moller\]](#), * [\[Attorney Johannes Loubser communications\]](#) * [\[News24 Complaint Inc Inge Interview.3\]](#). * [\[Videos of Illegal Evictions\]](#) * [\[Video of SAPS Officer Misconduct\]](#). * [\[Rental Income Before & After The Transformations\]](#), * [\[Attack And Rental Payments\]](#) * [\[Malicious Prosecution Accusing Me Of Stealing Three Old TVs\]](#).

[D] PROPERTY DAMAGE:

Allegation: Claims were made that I caused significant damage to the properties that I rented and did so maliciously.

Reality/Rebuttal: Another fabrication, and this could not be further from the truth. (1) I undertook extensive refurbishment works that significantly increased the value of these properties, transforming them far beyond their original condition. (2) This transformation was not only planned but was a central element of the business model, which involved making the properties more appealing to overseas guests, changing them from a condition that would only have attracted modest interest and modest rents to one where they would be in extremely high demand and command commensurately high rents. (3) No claims for damages were ever made in civil court, further demonstrating the falsehood of these allegations. (4) The only mention was when Keith tried to misrepresent improvements as damage, which proved unsuccessful. (5) Just days after Keith Broad had me arrested in December, he listed 16 Leirsmans Road for sale at R31 million, a full R13 million more than its value a year earlier when I began my lease before my transformations (a 70% increase). (6) No part of the state's case or the 'docket' was related to property damage. (7) The only forum or medium where we see these allegations was via Media24 in these articles, again echoing the words of de Swardt, which in reality were not just false, but the very worst kinds of fabrications, taking the truth and turning it on its head. (8) We rented the properties to overseas tourists, mainly wealthy families, paying on average of R25,000 a night. As such, if any damage had been done to the property, whether by a guest, by accident, as a result of the weather or simply the property aging, we would have to remedy that immediately otherwise a) it would not meet the standards these guests expected and b) result in negative reviews. (9) On the subject of which, during 2021 and 2022 we had several hundred online reviews, with an average score on Airbnb of 4.8 out of 5, and on Booking.com 9.8 out of 10. In the entire existence of our profiles, we had just five negative reviews, and these were over issues such as a lack of a generator and a noisy neighbour. The other several hundred reviews were glowing with praise. **Evidence:** I have in excess of 100,000 photos spread over 300 albums taken at the beginning of each lease, throughout the refurbishment works, through to the completion of the transformations, and thereafter. I have created an [\[index of links\]](#) to some of these. These show beyond any doubt that the properties were vastly improved. This is also evidenced by the fact that if you added the rental income the landlords were achieving before I rented the properties, it would total circa R3,000,000 per year.

However, after I had finished the transformations, the combined rental values were in excess of R25,000,000, an 800% increase. Additionally, court records show no claims for property damage were ever filed, supporting the lack of merit in these allegations. It was absurd to suggest I damaged the properties. [\[News24 complaint – the landlord lies\]](#) * [\[Llandudno Fisherman's Bend Before And After Video\]](#) * [\[16 Leirmans Rd Keith Broads Property Before And After\]](#) * [\[Before Images Folder\]](#) | [\[Collection Highlights\]](#) * [\[Portfolio Videos Folder\]](#) for [\[Agent Gail Broad\]](#), * [\[Anton Moller\]](#), * [\[Attorney Johannes Loubser communications\]](#) *

[E] MISREPORTING OF ARRESTS AND COURT MATTERS:

Allegation: The articles consistently misreported the details of my arrests and court appearances. In the first round of articles in August, there were numerous references to my being arrested for fraud, for running a scam, and defrauding guests. In the second round of articles after the December arrest, the articles referred to the arrest as my second arrest for fraud, with multiple similar references, including that I had continued defrauding guests even after being arrested for fraud in August, often inflating the charges or suggesting I was repeatedly arrested for similar crimes.

Reality/Rebuttal: These statements were wholly inaccurate. **(1)** The first arrest had absolutely nothing to do with fraud, villa operations, or guests. **(2)** The arrest was unlawful—no arrest warrant existed, and there wasn't even a docket. **(3)** After de Swardt and his 8 thugs forced their way into the property, assaulted the occupants, and changed the locks, I launched spoliation proceedings to recover the property. Inge Broad then filed the charges in an attempt to sabotage the proceedings. The arrest was for "breaking and entering"—into my own home—and the "theft" of three old, cheap TVs, which Inge knew had been stolen by a guest and replaced by me with brand new TVs weeks earlier. The charges were changed ten days later to theft of the junk contents of a back room, then further changed again to claim that there were gold and Krugerrands, inflating the value to make the offense a Schedule 5 crime, making it considerably harder to obtain bail. **(4)** None of these allegations had any relation to fraud—neither in court nor in any paperwork. **(5)** The journalists, according to their articles, gave the impression they were present in court, yet misreported the charges in a way that supported de Swardt's scam narrative. This disconnect between what was reported and the actual court proceedings is both shocking and inexplicable. It begs the question: where they actually in court, or did they simply take de Swardt's account at face value without verifying the facts? **(6)** Regardless, the facts were readily available, and the omissions suggest either a clear intention to smear and destroy me or a fundamental failure to verify the provided information. **(7)** The misreporting continued in December—the publication compounded the August falsehoods by falsely linking both arrests to fraud and claimed I continued defrauding guests between the arrests. **(8)** Despite this, the only cases in the docket related to the three complaints from the Omicron period, which de Swardt had dredged up, providing him with something to arrest me on. The docket and case notes did not include a single case, victim, or complaint for the entirety of 2022. **(9) Once again, the reporting bore little to no relationship with the truth but aligned perfectly with the lies told by de Swardt.** **Evidence:** [Unlawful Arrest 2 Of 4. Malicious Prosecution 4 Of 6. December Operation. I](#) [Unlawful Arrest 1 Of 4. Malicious Prosecution 1 Of 6. Inge Broad's Fabricated Charges. I](#) [Unlawful Arrest 2 Of 4. Malicious Prosecution 4 Of 6. December Operation. I](#) * [\[email confirmations between respective attorneys\]](#) * [High Court Judgement Spoliation K Broad Aided By Saps.](#) *

[F] ARREST AND DETENTION:

Allegation: The articles suggest that my detention was due to serious criminal charges, implying that I posed a flight risk or a danger to the public.

Reality/Rebuttal: **(1)** My detentions were based on false narratives created by the consortium. **(2)** The arrests were orchestrated to remove me from circulation, preventing me from opposing Keith and Inge Broad's plans, damaging my reputation, and hindering my ability to defend myself or counter their legal and illegal actions. **(3)** Every charge leading to my arrests and detentions was thrown out or withdrawn once they were before the Magistrates and no longer in the hands of corrupt investigating officers. **(4)** The charges the investigating officers claimed would be brought all turned out to be fabrications, used only to delay my bail application. **(5)** During the August bail hearing, the magistrate was so alarmed by the case brought by the investigating officer, as well as his testimony and his relationship with de Swardt, that he called for an investigation. In the December bail hearing, the magistrate also called for an investigation. It is exceedingly rare for one magistrate to call for an investigation, but for two to do so independently speaks volumes about the level of corruption. **(6)** Despite these serious developments, **Media24 never corrected the factual inaccuracies** in their reporting, including misrepresenting my first arrest, references after my second arrest as another for fraud, and other inaccuracies they published about the arrests. **(7)** Media24 has also not confirmed the outcomes of the cases they reported so enthusiastically at the time, nor addressed the significant issues such as the magistrates' comments, the perjury of the investigating officers, or the numerous other legal developments. **(8)** Additionally, they have not revisited the stories despite the outcomes or the detailed and clear account I provided them, highlighting the extreme number of false or fabricated statements within their articles. **(9)** Furthermore, Media24 has failed to revise their stories to reflect the overwhelming factual evidence I provided that contradicts their fabricated narrative. **A comparative analysis of their reporting reveals a staggering 119 false statements**, but perhaps even more telling is that they omitted **over 200 significant events**, including critical facts like **dropped charges, illegal evictions, and key court rulings in my favour**. This stark imbalance, where facts were ignored and falsehoods published, highlights the extent of their **journalistic failure** and misrepresentation.

Evidence: Bail hearing records, court orders, legal filings showing the charges were dropped or dismissed, and affidavits from my attorneys outlining the improper nature of the arrests and detentions. [Audio Testimony - Chandre Abrahams. I](#) [Unlawful Arrest 2 Of 4. Malicious Prosecution 4 Of 6. December Operation.](#) * [Summary Of The Unlawful Arrests Detentions Malicious Prosecutions And Illegal Evictions.](#) * [List of false and fabricated statements.](#) * [List of offences, SAPS, de Swardt, consortium I](#) What the articles don't mention: [Audio Testimony - Housekeeper of 16 Leirmans](#) * [\[Account Of The Housekeeper\]](#) *

[G] INVESTIGATION:

Allegation: The articles clearly portray to the reader that my arrests and charges resulted from thorough investigations conducted by SAPS, further this included cooperation across police units and even included the need to track me down to finally bring me to justice.

Reality/Rebuttal: This is absolutely untrue and further hides the very considerable and very serious amount of criminality and corruption that lay behind the arrests and detention **(1)** In truth, there were no genuine investigations by the officers involved. de Swardt essentially commandeered both officers, dictating every step. **(2)** Sgt. Duna, under oath during the August bail hearing, revealed that he used notes provided by de Swardt to answer every single question during his testimony. He openly admitted that he met with de Swardt before and after each court appearance, confirming that de Swardt was not just involved but was, in effect, running the operation. **(3)** For the August arrest, there was not even a shred of legitimate process—no docket, no arrest warrant, no application for one, and certainly no search warrant. Despite this, they attempted to confiscate my personal devices illegally. **(4)** Contrary to the falsehoods printed in the articles, de Swardt and the accompanying officers broke into my property. They did not possess a key, nor did they have any lawful right to be there. **(5)** The claim that de

Swardt "tracked my Uber" is also fabricated; he illegally pinged my phone, a clear abuse of power and a violation of my privacy. (6) The "eleven policemen raiding the house" narrative is yet another distortion. The reason for their presence was because I, my attorney, my portfolio manager, and my partner all made frantic calls to SAPS Central Cape Town for help when de Swardt was attempting to break into my property—not some lawful police action. (7) The articles, rife with lies, couldn't have been more misleading if they had deliberately set out to fabricate events. (8) The December arrest similarly had nothing to do with any investigation. It was orchestrated by Keith Broad, executed by de Swardt, and triggered the moment they lost the December court judgment. (9) Upon finally receiving the docket—a full seven months after my arrest—it became clear there was no investigation. The only content in the docket was a series of false affidavits, including ones fraudulently submitted by Home Affairs employees. (10) The remainder of the docket was little more than blank pages and irrelevant printouts. The only substantive affidavits in the file were from Paula Disberry, submitted long before the arrest in June 2022. The attorneys representing me were astonished at how thin and baseless the evidence was. (11) Ultimately, this was not an investigation—it was a calculated conspiracy orchestrated by landlords and executed by de Swardt, whose role was central and criminal.

Evidence: The August charges were dismissed outright by the magistrate, the bogus immigration charge was similarly dismissed by the Senior Public Prosecutor, and the December charges were thrown out as soon as the prosecution reviewed them. The evidence trail includes communications with legal teams, the empty docket itself, court records, and correspondence with law enforcement—all pointing to a complete absence of any real investigation: [Unlawful conduct of Serg Stevens, Belville Commercial & WdS](#), * [Serg Steven's "Docket"](#), * [Serg Steven's Illegal Secret Unofficial Side](#), * [Operation At Leirmans Road](#), * [Serg Stevens Conduct And The Many Questions It Raises](#), * [Serg Stevens December Operation. Arrest Detention Malicious Prosecution As A Goal In Itself](#), * [Serg Stevens's Chronological Timelines](#).

[H] IMMIGRATION VIOLATIONS/PASSPORT ISSUES:

Allegation: The articles make it very clear to the reader that I violated immigration laws, that I did so intentionally, and for (unnamed) nefarious reasons, that I engaged in illegal activities related to passports and visas, that I was in the country illegally and intentionally so.

Reality/Rebuttal: (1) These accusations are not only entirely false but also deliberately distorted the facts. My immigration status was deliberately sabotaged by the consortium, in direct coordination with corrupt officers, aiding the likes of Paula Disberry who stole my passport to prevent visa extensions and manufacture a false narrative of illegality. (2) I arrived in South Africa on **23 December 2020**, was granted a three-month visa, and due to COVID-19 restrictions, automatic visa extensions were issued by the Department of Home Affairs throughout **2021** and into **2022**, with a moratorium extending into **2024**. (3) In **November 2021**, I proactively applied for an extension as it seemed the automatic extensions might stop. However, without my knowledge, Paula Disberry stole my passport in early **2022**, later passing it to de Swardt who then passed it to the investigating officer. This passport not only contained proof of my visa extension but would have fully exonerated me. By withholding it, they made extending my visa impossible. Instead, it was hidden to reinforce the false narrative. (4) After the August arrest, in **August 2022**, the investigating officer objected to my release, falsely claiming I was in the country illegally, had never extended my visa, and was wanted by Home Affairs for deportation. He further used the same reasons to object to bail, resulting in me being sent to Pollsmoor prison. During the bail application, he used this to try to have bail denied, all the while being in possession of my passport, which proved my legal status and visa extension. The theft and intentional withholding of evidence is not only criminal but was done with the full knowledge that it would obstruct justice and falsely extend my detention. (5) SAPS continued to illegally hold my passport after my bail was granted in **August**, despite having no right to do so, right through to the **December** arrest. When I was arrested again in **December 2022**, they repeated this false visa claim to oppose bail, despite holding the very evidence that proved the contrary. (6) After the fraud charges were dismissed in **March 2023**, the officer resorted to charging me under the Immigration Act for "failing to leave South Africa on **23 March 2021**"—a charge that was factually and legally impossible, given the automatic visa extensions and the fact that they had stolen my passport for over a year. (7) de Swardt orchestrated this entire fraudulent narrative, manipulating the officers, and Media24 repeated these lies without question, providing cover for the real criminal actions of the consortium. (8) Despite all the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, including court records, these articles not only misrepresented the facts but concealed criminal activities, giving those responsible impunity while painting me as the villain and people like Inge Broad as the victim. This perfectly aligned with de Swardt's fabricated narrative but was entirely disconnected from the truth.

Evidence: Immigration correspondence documenting delays, legal filings related to the theft of my passport, communications with the British Embassy about the stolen passports, WhatsApp messages from the consortium confirming possession of the passport, submissions to the Senior Public Prosecutor (SPP), court records, and the Senior Public Prosecutor's decision to dismiss the charges. **Note:** The articles exhibit a fundamental disconnect from the facts, truth, and reality. Almost every statement they contain is at odds with verifiable evidence, yet they align perfectly with de Swardt's fabricated allegations. In doing so, they serve his agenda rather than any genuine pursuit of truth. Even more troubling, they attribute malicious intent to every action of mine while concealing the truth—the truth of significant criminality, corruption, and injustice. Worse still, by shielding those responsible and covering up their corruption, the articles not only falsely portray me as a villain but also enabled the consortium's ongoing criminality and allowed them to escape any consequences or accountability. [Malicious Prosecution 6 Of 6. The Bogus Immigration Charge..](#) * [The Bogus Immigration Charge. Serg Stevens Malicious Prosecution With A Purpose.](#) * [Immigration Status. Background Context And Chronology.](#) * [Representations To Senior Public Prosecutor Re Bogus Immigration Charges.](#) * [WdS & Saps Illegal Retention Of Devices & Equipment.](#) * [Visa Related Documents: Including Letter Of Good Cause Drafted Application.](#) * [Theft Of Both My Passport & Replacement Passport](#)

[I] THE ALLEGATION OF A MODUS OPERANDI / THE NARRATIVE OF "VILLAIN AND VICTIM" & USE OF THE WORD "VICTIM":

Allegation: Many of the articles rely heavily on quotes and claims made by WdS (de Swardt), presenting them as fact without independent verification. "According to Victor and *DE SWARDT*, Russell's modus operandi was to let luxury accommodation - usually worth between R40 million and R110 million. "According to *DE SWARDT*, his modus operandi is the same as in the previous cases. He rents rich men's houses along Cape Town's Atlantic and False Bay coasts."

Reality/Rebuttal: (1) de Swardt was not a neutral party. He was employed by Keith and Inge Broad and had a vested interest in aligning himself with their goals of discrediting me. (2) His involvement should have raised red flags about his objectivity, but the media failed to apply due diligence. (3) The articles presented de Swardt's narrative as factual, leaving no room for doubt and omitting crucial context. (4) They led readers to believe de Swardt's claims without providing any substantive evidence. (5) My August arrest, misrepresented in these stories, had nothing to do with the so-called "modus operandi" de Swardt described. (6) By the time these articles were published in December, I had not been convicted of any crime, and the August charges had already been dismissed. Despite this, de Swardt's narrative was mirrored without any independent verification. (7) In fact, by December, evidence had mounted that de Swardt's claims were false, including my victory at the November hearing. (8) Court documents had revealed de Swardt's deeper involvement and the real motivations behind his actions, as well as his clients' illegal conduct. (9) The absence of any real evidence supporting de Swardt's narrative was stark. If I had truly been running a scam,

why were my Airbnb and Booking.com profiles, active since early 2021, still operational with top-tier statuses? (10) A single valid complaint would have led to their suspension. (11) Yet, Media24's articles ignored these contradictions, claiming I scammed R34 million, implying I had defrauded 14,000 guests without a single report to banks, platforms, or police. (12) How could any professional publication overlook such glaring inconsistencies? (13) Even during the court proceedings, which Media24 journalists claimed to attend, they omitted key details, such as the magistrate's rebuke of the investigating officer's failures. (14) What these stories amounted to was propaganda, not journalism—printed as de Swardt had presented them, unchecked and unverified. **The Real Modus Operandi:** (15) The real "modus operandi" was de Swardt's manipulation of law enforcement, working hand-in-hand with his clients and corrupt officers. (16) He provided fabricated evidence to officers like Sergeant Stevens and Sergeant Duna, who followed his lead blindly. (17) This was a deliberate violation of due process, aimed at giving de Swardt's clients a strategic advantage rather than seeking justice. (18) de Swardt created false allegations and invented "victim" narratives, feeding these lies to SAPS, the courts, and the media. (19) He weaponized the media, giving Media24 fabricated stories to publish as fact, with no effort made to verify his claims. (20) The media amplified his lies while systematically denying me any opportunity to present my side. (21) This resulted in a trial by media, where I was convicted in the public eye long before any legal process could unfold. (22) de Swardt planted lies at every stage, knowing they would be repeated and reinforced by subsequent media coverage, which in turn justified further police actions against me. (23) This recycling of lies between police, courts, and media created a false narrative that grew in credibility simply through repetition. (24) de Swardt's tactics blended illegal actions, such as breaking into properties and fabricating evidence, with legal processes like filing lawsuits, to create a facade of legitimacy. (25) His intimidation tactics, including illegal evictions and threats, aimed to exhaust me legally, financially, and emotionally to prevent me from defending myself in court. **The Simplicity:** (26) What's most alarming is how few resources were needed to carry out this campaign. (27) It only took two cooperative SAPS officers, an accommodating commander in Hout Bay, connections with senior officers at Bellville Commercial, and the collaboration of South Africa's largest news publication to create a web of lies that spiralled out of control. (28) They deceived courts, the National Prosecuting Authority, and even honest police officers. (29) This small group manipulated the system, turning falsehoods into truth and facilitating a massive transfer of wealth with minimal effort. (30) The Media24 articles gave credibility to their lies, and without the support of these articles, the campaign's success would have been highly unlikely. (31) **This manipulation underscores how easy it is to corrupt institutions. The articles from Media24 gave their campaign credibility and without the articles from Media24 is it highly unlikely the campaign would have been successful or as successful as it was. Evidence:** There are over a thousand files of evidence that substantiate my claims and validate my statements regarding de Swardt's and his clients' actions, as well as entirely discredit theirs [List of **Evidence:** Real Reasons For The Arrests, Summary of the R200 Million Campaign, Corruption and Criminality, Offences Committed During The Campaign, etc.] [List Of Offences, Saps And Consortium.](#) * [Offences Committed During The Campaign With Accompanying Statute.](#) * [Sergeant Stevens and Belville Schedule of Criminal Offences 2022-2023](#) * [Real Reasons For The Arrests.](#) * [PSIRA investigation.](#) * [Summary of the R200 Million Campaign I Corruption and Criminality](#) *

[J] THE NARRATIVE OF "VILLAIN AND VICTIM" & USE OF THE WORD "VICTIM":

Allegation: The articles portray me as the villain, while casting others—particularly the landlords and members of the consortium—as "victims," portraying significant malfeasance on my part. This portrayal suggests that their complaints were legitimate and that they had suffered harm due to my actions. **Reality/Rebuttal:** The media's narrative not only distorted the facts but actively concealed the true perpetrators: **WdS (de Swardt), Keith and Inge Broad**, and their co-conspirators. (1) They portrayed me as the villain while orchestrating a campaign designed to create fictitious victims—hundreds, if not thousands—who were never reported. (2) After my arrest, they devised a plan to keep **Booking.com** unaware that the landlords had repossessed the properties, leading guests to arrive at villas where their bookings were invalid. (3) Instead of informing the guests or allowing them to seek refunds, they lied to the guests, claiming they had been scammed and telling them to file police reports. This created the "victims" they needed to support their fraudulent narrative. (4) Guests were left stranded, financially harmed, and emotionally distressed due to this scheme. (5) Another clear victim of this orchestrated campaign was **Ollie Sokanyile**, who was unlawfully arrested six weeks after my own arrest in an act of revenge for standing up to de Swardt in July when he and his thugs showed up at the property. (6) Ollie was tricked into returning to **Fisherman's Bend** under the guise of collecting his belongings, only to be unlawfully held at **Hout Bay police station** for a week while de Swardt tried to have him transferred to **Pollsmoor Prison**. (7) Fortunately, Ollie later provided critical testimony and evidence to the **PSIRA investigation**. (8) My portfolio manager, **Chandre Abrahams**, also suffered relentless harassment. de Swardt, Keith, and officers from **Bellville Commercial** threatened her with a 10 to 30-year prison sentence unless she signed their scripted witness statements and a fabricated document prepared by **Paula Disberry**. (9) This harassment pushed her to the brink of a nervous breakdown, forcing her to hire an attorney to protect herself. (10) Even more devastating was the unlawful arrest of **Markus**, the housekeeper at **Leirmans Road**. Markus was handcuffed, threatened with being shot if he resisted, and forcibly removed from the property. He was left homeless and jobless, his belongings packed into refuse sacks—a calculated act of cruelty intended to punish those associated with me. (11) As for myself, this campaign has cost me four years of my life. From **December 2020 to March 2022**, I worked 16–18-hour days building a portfolio of properties, and from **April 2022 to March 2023**, I endured attack after attack, spending a third of that time in **Pollsmoor Prison**. Even since then, I have spent every day investigating, gathering evidence, and drafting documents to substantiate my claims. (12) Financially, the consortium destroyed my business, stripping me of over **R100 million** in assets and leaving me penniless. (13) Before their campaign, I had **R30 million** in immovable assets, **R5 million** in possessions and furnishings, and five properties that would have generated **R25 million** in annual profits over the remaining leases. After their campaign, I was left with nothing but the clothes on my back. (14) In reality, the landlords who claim to be "victims" profited immensely from the properties I transformed. Their claims of harm are absurd when compared to the **R150 million** increase in rental premiums and capital value over five years. (15) An investigation into their advertising would show nightly rates increased by **300-600%**, and occupancy rates doubled or tripled as a direct result of my transformations. Yet none of this has been reported by the media. (16) The journalists who heard me struggle in court to afford legal representation ignored these facts, continuing to publish stories about me supposedly pocketing **R34 million**.

The Taxpayer: (1) The South African taxpayer is another unwitting victim of this campaign. (2) Public funds financed repeated arrests, legal battles, and the misuse of police resources for the personal gain of a small group of wealthy individuals. (3) The costs, including **SWAT-style raids**, court proceedings, and the overuse of police manpower, ran into millions of rand—all paid by the taxpayer.

(4) Resources were diverted from protecting the community to serve personal vendettas, representing a serious breach of public trust.

Harm to the Landlords: A Contradiction: (1) The claim that the landlords suffered harm due to my actions is demonstrably false. (2) They received over **R5,600,000** in rental, deposit payments, and utilities. (3) The properties were transformed beyond recognition through my investment of time, money, and expertise. (4) They are now being advertised at rental rates that would generate an additional **R20 million** annually, compared to their earnings before my involvement. (5) The property values increased by millions, making the notion of landlord harm

absurd. (6) This is a clear case of landlords who reaped immense rewards attempting to paint themselves as victims. (7) Their properties' value and rental premiums exceed **R150 million** over five years, with occupancy rates vastly improved as a result of my transformations.

Wider Significance of the Campaign: Issues Beyond the Individual Case: The media, especially **News24**, failed in their duty to report critical issues of public interest, instead focusing on sensationalized, false stories about me. Their failure extended beyond my case to larger, systemic issues that had far-reaching consequences. (1) **State-assisted illegal evictions** were facilitated by landlords manipulating police resources to unlawfully evict tenants under the guise of arrests. (2) The **weaponization of the state** for personal gain, where individuals used corrupt police officers to remove their opponents from circulation, was never reported. (3) The misuse of **public funds**, which were diverted to finance this campaign for personal gain, was completely ignored by the media. (4) The deliberate creation of "victims" through the scheme with **Booking.com**, leaving guests stranded, was also omitted, as was the broader issue of the **press's lack of independence**, which enabled this misinformation to be presented as fact. (5) **Corruption and cronyism** within law enforcement was central to the campaign's success, and the **failure of oversight bodies** like **IPID** to act only allowed these abuses to continue unchecked. (6) Ultimately, this campaign highlighted the **exacerbation of socioeconomic inequalities**: wealthy individuals manipulated the justice system, leaving the less privileged unable to afford legal representation to defend themselves, thus widening the gap between the powerful and the vulnerable. [List Of Offences, Saps And Consortium..](#) * [Offences Committed During The Campaign With Accompanying Statute.](#) * [Sergeant Stevens and Belville Schedule of Criminal Offences 2022-2023](#) * [Real Reasons For The Arrests.](#) * [PSIRA investigation.](#) * [Summary of the R200 Million Campaign | Corruption and Criminality](#) * [Online Reviews About Mr De Swardt](#) *

[K] DEFAUDING CLIENTS AND TOURISTS / INVOLVEMENT IN LARGE-SCALE SCAMS/RUNNING A FRAUDULENT BUSINESS / SCOPE OF FRAUD FRAMED IN TERMS OF TENS OF MILLIONS / THE EXTREME NATURE OF THE CONTENT AND TONE:

Allegation: The articles portrayed me as the mastermind behind an elaborate, highly organized, and deeply deceitful operation "**According to Victor and de Swardt, Russell's modus operandi**". The narrative implied that I ran a sophisticated, large-scale scam involving "**double, triple, and quadruple bookings**," defrauding tens of millions of rand "**We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years**", while evading accountability "**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.**" I was depicted not just as a criminal but as a manipulative and sinister figure "**It seems he thought he was untouchable,**" preying on unsuspecting guests and property owners alike. Media24 created and built an image of me as a predatory, untouchable figure, orchestrating fraud on a grand scale with calculated malice, **his modus operandi is the same as in the previous cases**, turning luxury villas into mere fronts for an ongoing criminal enterprise. In the minds of readers, I was presented as a dangerous and cunning scammer, pulling the strings of an intricate web of deception with no regard for the consequences. The villas and villa operation were represented not as a legitimate enterprise, of six stunning residences that I had spent a fortune transforming, with multiple conscientious, honest, hardworking staff, but as a front for a villa scam, with no interest in guests other than to defraud them. While Media24 hid the real role of people like WdS, Johan Victor, and falsely represented them as if moral champions working on behalf of "**victims**" "**Victims who want to join the coordinated process are welcome to contact de Swardt**", the publication gave readers the distinct understanding that these were not mere allegations but established facts, omitting essential context or qualifiers and seeking no balance or input from the subject of the articles.

Reality/Rebuttal: (1) The allegations are entirely false, and I can prove both the falsity of these claims and the criminal motives behind their fabrication. (2) My business was legitimate from the start. (3) Every booking made through platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com was lawful and transparent. (4) What journalists ignored was glaring: why would anyone invest millions in transforming rundown properties into luxurious villas, only to engage in a scam that would destroy their own investment? (5) These properties were recognized for their exceptional quality, and the business was a labour of love, not fraud. (6) From early 2021 until my arrest in December 2022, we held Superhost status on Airbnb and Preferred Partner status on Booking.com—clear evidence of guest satisfaction and legitimate operations. (7) Hundreds of 5-star reviews, with no negative feedback online, demonstrate that the business was anything but a scam. (8) The notion that a scam could sustain impeccable ratings for nearly two years without a single complaint is absurd. (9) If we had been defrauding thousands of guests, why were there no complaints to platforms, banks, or the police? The absence of any such claims proves the legitimacy of the business. (10) Our team, consisting of multiple managers, guest relationship officers, and full-time housekeepers, ensured that guests received a luxury experience—something no fraudulent operation would need or maintain. (11) If the business had been fraudulent, why employ such extensive staff to ensure guest satisfaction? (12) Not a single journalist visited the properties or spoke with staff, a basic journalistic duty in any legitimate investigation. (13) A proper inquiry would have quickly revealed the truth: the business was well-run, with fully satisfied guests. (14) These fraud allegations were part of a smear campaign led by WdS (de Swardt) and his associates to damage my reputation. (15) Despite the growing gulf between the narrative and the facts, Media24 continued to publish this false narrative. If the fraud claims were real, why were there no complaints over the course of 2022? Professional journalists would have inquired into these inconsistencies before publishing extreme claims, yet Media24 opted for sensationalism over truth. (16) Throughout the articles, the disconnect between facts and events on one hand and the content of the articles on the other is so profound and irreconcilable that I have no doubt the content was the product of representations, dossier, material, "**evidence**" provided by WdS, his clients Inge Broad, Keith Broad, Ragi Moonsamy, Paula Disberry, and their shared attorney Johan Victor. (17) An example of this disconnect is the false reporting of the first arrests being for (a) scamming, (b) defrauding homeowners, (c) defrauding guests, (d) non-payment of rent as part of the fraudulent scheme, (e) malicious damage to the various properties, (f) subletting without the knowledge or consent of the owners. Not only were these allegations demonstrably untrue, but the arrest, charges, and bail application had nothing to do with any of these things. (18) One of the other noticeable disconnects is between the reporting of the cases and court hearings. The articles clearly give the reader the understanding the journalists were present during the hearings, yet they reported them falsely and omitted crucial and fundamental aspects of those hearings. Aspects that were essential to ensure any chance of balanced and fair reporting but also aspects that should have given the journalists very significant pause for thought as they exposed WdS, the two investigating officers, and the property owners' motivations and methods. (19) The publication failed to report the inexplicable change in the charges as the bail appearance started, the sudden hike in the value of the items to approaching a million rand, the sudden inclusion ten days after the charges were laid of Krugerrands, nor why I was appearing almost a week after my arrest rather than the day after, or the bizarre nature of the charge of "**breaking and entering**" my own home, nor did they report the contempt of court of the investigating officer when he failed to go to the storage facility as ordered by the magistrate to verify my claims, or the fact that under cross-examination the advocate had exposed the fact that the investigating officer was secretly and illegally in possession of my passport, or that it also exposed it had been stolen by Disberry at the start of the year, illegally kept to make extending my visa impossible, and then handed to WdS who passed it to the I.O. Nor did they report the advocate exposing the fact that the notes the I.O. referred to every time he was asked a question were scripts and question answers provided by WdS. Nor did they report the summing up of the magistrate that was exceptionally critical of the case, the charges, the role of WdS and the

I.O., saving special criticism of the I.O.'s testimony. When summing up, after raising each concern about the case, the magistrate drew question marks in the air. With each concern, the question marks got bigger, his last and largest question mark he referred to as a **"big red question mark,"** attacking the I.O.'s testimony and role. Nor did they report the magistrate had called for an investigation. If what happened, transpired, and was exposed during the hearings was sufficient enough to motivate an otherwise very quiet, restrained, emotionless, and conservative magistrate to anger, frustration, and ever bigger hand gestures, then why was it not significant enough to be reported, why was what was reported wrong, and why did none of this motivate the journalist or publication to question the methods and motives of the landlords, WdS, and the investigating officer. **(20)** Especially when the motivations were clear. The landlords were trying to get the properties back, there was ongoing, tense, and significant legal conflict between them and me, including proceedings current at the time. Normally, when there is conflict, there is an attempt at least to understand why each party has taken the position it has and whose argument is substantiated by the facts. The fact, for example, that Paula Disberry had spent the months since Omicron trying to collect and corral any guest who was in any way dissatisfied into one amorphous group, on the deceitful promise made to anyone regardless of issue or merit that she would achieve resolution for them, as if some consumer champion, yet had kept the list a secret until August when it was considered to be of strategic advantage for her and Keith Broad. A list that WdS misrepresented as a catalogue of double bookings, which on examination was actually a list of a dozen bookings where guests had cancelled after the announcement of Omicron. The cancellation being directly contrary to our advice at the time, including three extensive email communications sent to every guest outlining our belief that the flight restrictions would lift after 2-3 weeks as had been the case with all previous variants and therefore to cancel for dates that fell in the future and would be outside of the flight restriction period would mean no refund was due. We even offered every single guest the option to change their dates free of charge if they were worried. Those who ignored our clear warnings and rejected our offer to change dates and cancelled anyway, when flight restrictions were lifted and, as we had explained, no refund was due, were given false hope of refund by Ms. Disberry. In reality, she had no interest in helping anyone, had she would clearly have raised the issue. Instead, she kept the list a secret until it was beneficial to her. The only bookings on the list related to diary clashes were the same three diary clashes from Christmas Day that had already been investigated by Camps Bay SAPS and dismissed as having no criminal element. Rather, the consequence of the chaos caused by Omicron, a packed diary, additional unapproved bookings from Booking.com, and the very evident fact that as a result of the new villas coming on stream, our bookings capacity, booking options, and volume of communications had jumped by over a thousand percent in the preceding two months alone. Three diary clashes on the busiest day of the year out of thousands of guests hosted before that date and after does not make a scam operation. **(21)** That figure did not alter in the months immediately after Omicron, nor in the nine-month period between Omicron and the first articles, or in the year between Omicron and the second round of articles. A figure that represented less than 1% of bookings. **(22)** Yet not only did the publication not report any of this, rather than pause and investigate, they continued the series of articles, culminating in the very detailed article of January which included a whole raft of new and more extreme allegations

This approach is consistent across all of the articles. Either the journalist was present in court and reported proceedings entirely different from what actually took place, omitting critical issues of the utmost significance and relevance, or they were not present at all and misrepresented to readers, through content, tone, and language, that they were. Alternatively, it could be a combination of both scenarios. Whatever the case, what was published was a word-for-word replication of WdS's fabricated narrative, rather than an accurate portrayal of the cases and hearings. Further, not only were the actual outcomes omitted, which should have prompted the publication to question what it was being told, but both the journalist and the publication failed in their obligations under the Press Code and as an investigative news source. They failed to report, investigate, question, or address the troubling pattern that was emerging. Why did the Investigating Officer (I.O.) not go to the storage unit as ordered by the magistrate? Why did the I.O. lie to the court about my immigration status? Why did the I.O. illegally possess my passport, and why was this crucial piece of evidence, containing the visa extension stamp, withheld from the court? Why was the magistrate visibly angry, calling for an investigation? If I had truly stolen anything, let alone a million rand's worth of gold and valuables, why were the charges subsequently thrown out? Why did no docket ever appear, despite magistrates repeatedly demanding it? What happened regarding the storage unit investigation? Why was there a High Court judgment, published extensively online, confirming that the actions of Keith Broad, WdS, and the thugs were highly illegal, resulting in their eviction and an interdict with punitive costs?

After the December arrest, what happened to the so-called "five additional charges" or the "serious issues from Paarl" that the I.O. had used to undermine my initial bail appearance? What became of the money laundering charges or the bank and phone record requests the I.O. used to delay the start of my bail application? Why did Johan Victor present himself as the attorney for the "victims" while simultaneously representing the property owner in court? Why did Johan Victor illegally deny me the use of another property as a bail address, stating that I would be physically blocked from entering, despite there being no court order to that effect? How and why were the owners of both properties back in occupation within minutes of my arrest? Why did the publication refer to me being "evicted" in December when I was actually arrested, not evicted? Why did they fail to link the simultaneous evictions to the timing of the arrests? Why did they fail to report or question why the prosecution threw out all the charges as soon as they reviewed them? Why did they not report when the Senior State Prosecutor dismissed the bogus immigration charge, one that had been shown during the hearings to be invalid and impossible?

There are dozens of serious examples like these that relate to the proceedings the publication claimed to be reporting. This does not even account for the many additional events, outcomes, information, and facts that should have been reported and should have led to serious questions. Simple examples include: If we had been running a fraudulent operation for two years, how did we maintain the same Booking.com profile on the day of the December arrest that we had from the inception of the business, a full two years earlier? Similarly, if we had been conducting a fraudulent operation, why were the charges in December cantered on the same three diary clashes from a year prior? Why did the I.O. consistently refuse to confirm what the final charges would be until forced by the magistrate? Why did the I.O. still hold my passport four months after the August bail application and nearly a year after it was stolen, using my lack of a recent extension to place a new charge? Issues like these could fill pages, and this information was not known solely to me or limited to my experiences. These were details intrinsic to the issues and hearings that the journalist and publication purported to report on, available to anyone who cared to investigate.

Evidence: Booking.com and Airbnb records confirm that all bookings were legitimate, and our profiles consistently maintained top-tier ratings. **Hundreds of 5-star reviews** underscore guest satisfaction. **Court records** show that no fraud charges related to the accommodation business were upheld. In fact, **legal proceedings found no credible evidence** of large-scale fraud. Additionally, we have **110,000 photographs** documenting the properties before, during, and after their transformation—indisputable proof of the substantial investment made to enhance them. These transformations refute any claims of negligence or damage.

Media24's Sole Responsibility for the Scam Narrative and the Now Accepted Truth: Media24 solely constructed the scam narrative, building it brick by brick in the public mind. Over the past three years, other journalists contacted me, often influenced by consortium members like de Swardt, Keith Broad, and Paula Disberry, hoping to spark negative coverage. However, once these journalists were shown the real facts, they

recognized the vast disconnect between what they had been told and the reality, which is why no other publication has run similar stories. Media24 remains the lone source of this fabricated scam narrative, having never properly investigated or questioned the version presented by de Swardt. The only other article that discussed this supposed scam was by Vernon Pillay, who acknowledged that his piece relied on the assumption that Media24 had thoroughly checked the facts. Mr. Pillay, like the wider readership, was misled by Media24's portrayal. The articles gave the impression that readers were absorbing facts, not mere allegations, presented with near-certainty and minimal qualifiers like "allegedly" or "according to." The failure to present my side, the concealment of de Swardt's role, and the omission of key facts about the consortium all contributed to this false narrative. Media24's refusal to fairly report led readers to believe that I was an untouchable criminal orchestrating a massive, sophisticated scam.

The Narrative de Swardt Built Around Himself: The articles built a clear narrative around de Swardt, presenting him as a tenacious private investigator whose diligence unearthed hidden evidence. The pieces suggest that without him, I would still be defrauding thousands of guests and pocketing tens of millions of rand. Every one of these statements is a fabrication. The most absurd claim was that de Swardt had to "track me down"—despite knowing exactly where I lived. I had been living in **16 Leirmans Road** since 2021, the very property he was hired to repossess. When not there, I was staying two streets away at **Fisherman's Bend**, another property leased from one of his clients. I was perhaps the easiest person to locate in Cape Town. This was not some heroic investigation, but a manufactured narrative designed to deceive the public into believing that de Swardt had brought down a criminal mastermind. [Case No. 7902.22 Application To Hear Oral Evidence.](#) * [\[Chronological Timelines Of The Attacks\]](#) * [\[Chronological Times Of Serg Stevens\]](#) * [Unlawful Arrest 4 Of 4. Malicious Prosecution 5 Of 6. Ollie Sokanyile.](#) * [Complaint the Press Council Ombudsman. 22 Aug. 8 Oct. 15 Oct.](#) inc: (1). Complaint to the Press Council Re Media24 News24 Regards Multiple Articles Published. Docs 1-5. (2). Complaint to the Press Council Re Media24 News24. Docs 6-20. (3). Summary of the R200 Million Camping (Inc Index). Docs 21-22. (4). Leirmans Road. Before and after the Transformation. Doc 23. (5). Corruption and Criminality. SAPS State Mr de Swardt Consortium Keith Inge Broad Doc 24. (6) Index Of Videos & Photos And Images. (7) Press Council Ombudsman Complaint Cover Letter 8.10.24. (8) Press Council Summary Document (9) Amended Summary of the Complaint (10) Annexures]

[i] THE PODIUM PROVIDED TO DE SWARDT:

Allegation: Quotes from the articles by de Swardt: (1) "Apparently, **Russell also double-rented** some of the properties he rented—or as **de Swardt** says—**even triple-rented**." (2) "According to Victor and **de Swardt**, **Russell's modus operandi** was to let luxury accommodation—usually worth between R40 million and R110 million." (3) "Johan Victor [colleague and longstanding friend of **de Swardt**], the legal representative of some of the victims, and **de Swardt**, **a private investigator, are coordinating the various claims and suspect there might be even more victims they do not know of yet**." (4) "**Victims who want to join the coordinated process are welcome to contact de Swardt** or me at johan@jvaa.co.za or wouter@foxforensics.co.za." (5) "**It seems he thought he was untouchable**." (6) "**We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years**," says **de Swardt**. (7) "**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**." (8) "**de Swardt** was able to locate the Uber driver and told him that he had dropped them off at a house in Schotsche Gorge on the slopes of Signal Hill." (9) "Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims, and WdS, a private investigator, are coordinating the various claims and suspect there might be even more victims they do not know of yet." (10) "**They were from as far as Canada, Sweden, Germany, and Dubai**, according to **de Swardt**." (11) "**de Swardt** describes Russell as 'very intelligent and very charming'." (12) "**de Swardt** said he was investigating four cases against Russell, but that there were about 18 people who passed through." (13) "**WdS of Fox Forensics, who investigated Russell at the behest of a homeowner**, says that around **20 people were apparently approached, of whom 15 filed complaints**." (14) "In some of the incidents, according to **de Swardt**, the complainant Russell apparently **paid as much as R19,000 per night for the 'Royal Suite'** in a house in Llandudno." (15) "**The private detective WdS from Fox Forensics said on Friday that there are now four or five new complaints against Russell**." (16) "**According to de Swardt, his modus operandi is the same as in the previous cases**. He rents rich men's houses along Cape Town's Atlantic and False Bay coasts." (17) "**de Swardt** said he and 'some strong men' had 'gone to empty' Broad's house."

Reality/Rebuttal: The articles gave **de Swardt** a platform to present himself as an authoritative investigator, portraying his narrative as fact with little or no scrutiny. (1) He was positioned as the key figure uncovering a massive fraud operation, supposedly backed by substantial evidence and SAPS support. However, this was entirely false. (2) Other than a loaded comment about my intelligence and charm, which is not for me to comment on, every statement **de Swardt** made in the articles was a fabrication. (3) There was no double, triple, or quadruple bookings, there was no R34 million fraud, there was no "tracking down," there was no SAPS investigation, there was no Royal Suite—on and on, every claim fell apart. (4) Possibly one of the most objectionable quotes was in reference to families from Canada, Germany, etc., standing outside the property unable to check in. (5) This failed to mention that **de Swardt** was the reason they were standing there in the first place, both homeless and out of pocket. (6) This happened because (a) he had executed the plan to take the properties from me illegally in December and (b) followed that by ensuring Booking.com wasn't informed of this essential information, causing the very situation he then sought to exploit. (7) The "evidence" he claimed to have simply did not exist, and all 119 statements within the articles were either misleading or completely false. (8) Despite this, the publication allowed **de Swardt** to make sweeping, unchallenged claims. (9) While some statements were occasionally prefaced with "allegedly" or "according to," they were overwhelmingly presented as facts. (10) The cumulative effect of the articles, combined with the false impression of various sources, left readers with a distorted and entirely false understanding of the situation. (11) This unchecked platform allowed **de Swardt** to carry out a character assassination, portraying me as a villain in a fictional narrative while positioning himself as the hero who supposedly exposed my actions. (12) This narrative was not only baseless but caused significant damage to my reputation. <https://www.netpages.co.za/Durbanville/Fox+Forensics-787636.html> * [Online reviews of WdS. Case No. 7902.22 Application To Hear Oral Evidence.](#) * [\[Chronological Timelines Of The Attacks\]](#) * [\[Chronological Times Of Serg Stevens\]](#) *

THE FABRICATED, FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENTS, BROKEN DOWN

Below are the statements made within various articles that are either false or fabricated. In reality, 98% of the content in these articles was either false or fabricated, largely if not entirely due to the acceptance of the narrative, sources, and information provided by Mr. de Swardt.: (1). "Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions." (2). "Darren Russell, a British citizen who came to South Africa on a visitor's visa in 2020, has been arrested on charges of fraud relating to the subletting of luxury properties along Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard." (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." (4). "A local lawyer and private investigator, representing some of the victims, say there is a coordinated joint effort with the provincial commercial crimes unit to investigate." (5). "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." (6). "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." (7). "Johan Victor, the legal representative of some of the victims, and WdS, a private investigator, are coordinating the various claims and suspect there might be even more victims they do not know of yet." (8). "Currently, there are six criminal and six civil charges against Russell." (9). "According to Victor and De Swardt, Russell's modus operandi was to let luxury accommodation—usually worth between R40 million and R110 million." (10). "He paid the rent three months in advance for a property in Camps Bay at R90 000 per month." (11). "These advance payments usually put the owners and their agents at ease. He then set about advertising the properties on platforms like Booking.com, Airbnb, sometimes making double, triple, or even quadruple bookings for the exact dates." (12). "It seems he sometimes uses various aliases or variations on his name." (13). "Visitors started arriving only to find other people already in the properties." (14). "Since his second arrest on December 9, families who booked and paid via his adverts arrived for what they thought was their luxury summer holiday. They were from as far as Canada, Sweden, Germany, and Dubai, according to De Swardt." (15). "One family from Canada paid R780,000 in advance for eight days only to arrive to find a double booking." (16). "Those who managed to track him down and confront him about what he was doing were told to 'take me to court'." (17). "When owners tried to evict him, he simply claimed the property was his residence, and then the owners had to turn to the courts—a long and expensive procedure." (18). "No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour." (19). "A wall leading to the storage areas was broken through and some of our private possessions were removed." (20). "The flooring was changed, and the furniture reupholstered." (21). "The walls were spray painted." (22). "The house was filthy." (23). "It is costing us a fortune to repair the damage to our property which was supposed to provide us with an income." (24). "We tried blocking his adverts each time we saw any, but he kept creating new ones." (25). "The laws are really not fair towards property owners." (26). "The pumps of the Jacuzzis burnt out, the inverter was not working, the steam bath was not working, and neither was the sauna." (27). "According to Inge, after Russell was finally out of the house, she was there one day cleaning up when a family of twelve people arrived from overseas for a wedding in Cape Town." (28). "Inge told News24 they had fallen for one of the fraud adverts and paid in advance." (29). "They were even told the property was wheelchair friendly as they had an octogenarian coming along when the property is not suited for that." (30). "According to Inge, she managed to find them alternative accommodation at short notice." (31). "Inge (surname withheld) told News24 it was heartbreaking and frustrating to see what was done to her and her husband's luxury property." (32). "The prevention of illegal eviction laws in South Africa is problematic for owners like us." (33). "The owner of the luxury property complained about the steep repair costs." (34). "No matter what we tried to get him out legally, the odds seemed always to be stacked in his favour." (35). "That was despite the damage caused to the property." (36). "Visitors started arriving only days after Russell's eviction, further complicating matters." (37). "Russell allegedly rented properties without the owners' consent." (38). "In due course, they became aware of the short-term lettings, and that started causing further issues." (39). "A wall leading to the storage areas was broken through, and some of our private possessions were removed." (40). "Visitors started arriving only days after Russell's eviction, further complicating matters." (41). "We tried blocking his adverts each time we saw any, but he kept creating new ones." (42). "It is costing us a fortune to repair the damage to our property." (43). "The owner of the luxury property in Hout Bay was retired but due to the financial loss caused by Russell not paying rent, he had to go back to work again." (44). "The rental agent for a luxury villa in Llandudno who requested to remain anonymous but whose identity is known to News24, said he believed he avoided falling victim." (45). "He relates that he encountered Russell but insisted on being paid upfront in full. When he was made aware of Russell's alleged schemes, the latter's lease was up, and he got him to leave." (46). "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 at johan@jvaa.co.za or Wouter@foxforensics.co.za." (47). "It seems he thought he was untouchable." (48). "We estimate that he had an income of about R34 million during the past two years, says De Swardt." (49). "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." (50). "A Briton who has allegedly been renting out guesthouses that do not belong to him has finally been arrested where he is hiding in the Upper Cape in one of the rich men's houses he occupies." (51). "The arrest took place while he was hiding in the Upper Cape, in one of the houses owned by a wealthy individual." (52). "The Briton, who has been accused of defrauding multiple people through accommodation scams, was tracked down by local authorities." (53). "According to sources, he had been renting out high-end properties without the consent of the owners." (54). "Police had been investigating him for months following numerous complaints from individuals claiming they had been misled." (55). "The suspect was previously out on bail for similar charges but has now been rearrested." (56). "He is accused of pocketing significant amounts of money from unsuspecting victims who believed they were renting legitimate properties." (57). "The investigation is ongoing, and more charges could potentially follow as authorities continue to probe his business dealings." (58). "The suspect will appear in court later this week to face charges related to fraud and illegal subletting." (59). "Efforts to reach his legal representatives for comment were unsuccessful." (60). "The finely built Darren Russell, who according to photos of him and his boyfriend is only used to the best, appeared rather cool this week when he appeared in the Wynberg Magistrate's Court." (61). "The 52-year-old Briton allegedly rented several multimillion-rand properties along the Atlantic and False Bay coasts and then unlawfully operated them as guest houses by advertising them on websites such as Airbnb." (62). "The claim is that he usually faithfully pays his rent for a few months and then quits." (63). "Another alleged ploy was to rent out houses through his private website lacollectionsprestige.com and pocket the deposit or double or even triple book the house, then disappear when the guests arrived." (64). "That way, apparently, he could make thousands a day." (65). "In Llandudno, he rented out a five-bedroom house for R15,000 per room for two nights." "In Hout Bay, he charged R15,000 for two nights, and in Camps Bay, R18,000 for two nights." (66). "In another house in Llandudno, he charged R7,000 a night – and up to R19,000 a night in the Royal Suite." (67). "Some properties he also apparently subleased in the long term, with the owners dying to get rid of the wrongful tenants or get their hands on the slippery Russell." (68). "De Swardt said he and 'some strong men' had 'gone to empty' Broad's house." (69). "However, the big break came when he received information that Russell and his boyfriend were in a five-star guesthouse in Pringle Bay." (70). "Once there, he heard that the two had just left in an Uber rental car." (71). "HIGH DRAMA: Police officers try to get Russell out of a double-storey house while his boyfriend screams over and over again." (72). "De Swardt was able to locate the Uber driver and told him that he had dropped them off at a house in Schotsche Gorge on the slopes of Signal Hill." (73). "Eleven policemen pounced on the house, but the two locked the doors." (74). "Fortunately, one of the neighbours remembered that the owner of the house keeps a spare key at his establishment on Loop Street." (75). "Russell apparently locked himself in a bathroom." (76). "As police systematically searched the house, the bystanders – quite a few curious people had already started congregating on August Street – only heard the screams of his boyfriend Lorez de Rodez Benavent as he yelled at the police." (77). "De Swardt said he was investigating four cases against Russell, but that there were about 18 people who passed through." (78). "Some owners reportedly suffered up to R300,000 in damage." (79). "Among the houses he apparently unlawfully rented out are a R200 million residence of a billionaire from Dubai and a R30 million house in Llandudno." (80). "He says Russell is not a flight risk and that he does not have a valid passport at this time." (81). "He is apparently in the process of renewing his passport." (82). "Sgt. Muyiselo Duna, the investigating officer, testified that he believed Russell was in the country illegally." (83). "Duna says that while Russell was renting the house from Broad, items worth R836,000 were stolen." (84). "'This case looks like a wasp's nest to me,' the

magistrate replied before adjourning the bail application until Monday." (85). "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." (86). "Russell is accused of renting and subletting at least four luxury homes in Hout Bay, Camps Bay, and Llandudno without permission." (87). "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." (88). "He also allegedly carried out illegal construction work on the houses by breaking and building walls, changing kitchens, and laying floors without the permission of the owners." (89). "He is charged with burglary, theft, and malicious damage to property as well as being in the country illegally because his visa has expired." (90). "WdS of Fox Forensics, who investigated Russell at the behest of a homeowner, says that around 20 people were apparently approached, of whom 15 filed complaints." (91). "In some of the incidents, according to De Swardt, the complainant Russell apparently paid as much as R19,000 per night for the 'Royal Suite' in a house in Llandudno." (92). "He is due to appear again in the magistrate's court on September 22." (93). "An eviction order will be heard in the High Court in Cape Town on Monday, and a second eviction order on a date that has not yet been announced. This is for four houses he is believed to occupy—one in Hout Bay and Camps Bay and two in Llandudno." (94). "A British citizen who was arrested for fraud on 4 August this year and released shortly after on bail of R30 000 was arrested again on Wednesday on similar charges." (95). "Detectives attached to the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit arrested Darren Russell (52), this time at one of the luxury houses in Llandudno that he rents and then apparently sublet." (96). "Darren Russell (52) was arrested by the police at a house in Llandudno on Wednesday after he apparently continued his ploy to rent houses and then sublet them." (97). "After he was released on bail in Wynberg magistrates' court on August 23, Russell is said to have continued to rent luxury homes in Cape Town's posh neighbourhoods such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay from their rightful owners and then sublet them to other people without the rightful owners' knowledge or consent." (98). "The complaint against Russell is new, and Traut asked that people who may have also been defrauded by Russell call Col. Kallie Lourens, the investigating officer, on 082 522 2786." (99). "The private detective WdS from Fox Forensics said on Friday that there are now four or five new complaints against Russell." (100). "According to De Swardt, his modus operandi is the same as in the previous cases. He rents rich men's houses along Cape Town's Atlantic and False Bay coasts." (101). "He would live in the properties for a month or two and pay his rent and then stop paying. In the meantime, he then advertises the luxury homes on websites such as Airbnb and Booking.com." (102). "Russell has also rented out some of the houses on his private website - lacollectionsprestige.com." (103). "Apparently Russell also double-rented some of the properties he rented—or, as De Swardt says, even triple-rented." (104). "Whoever gets there first gets the keys." (105). "The other tenants' money was put in his pocket, and its thousands of rands." (106). "If the people demand their money back, he says they should take him to court." (107). "He knows it will cost the people thousands of rands, and then they leave it instead." (108). "He then appeared in the Magistrate's Court in Wynberg on charges of fraud, burglary, theft, and malicious damage to property, as well as being in the country illegally because his visa had expired." (109). "It now appears that the property scam started as early as 2012." (110). "A British man who is accused of defrauding the owners of luxury mansions on, among others, Cape Town's Atlantic coast out of millions of rands." (111). "Darren Russell (52) appeared in court on Thursday on charges of fraud." (112). "The state claims he defrauded the owner of a luxury house in Llandudno out of around R1.2 million." (113). "Russell was arrested at the mansion in Llandudno in December last year by members of the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit." (114). "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." (115). "Magistrate Goolam Bawa told the stand-in attorney that if the case is adjourned until March, it will be almost two and a half months that Russell will be in custody. 'He cannot allow it.'" (116). "Bail applications must be treated as urgent," said Bawa." (117). "The lawyer came back after a short adjournment and asked the court to adjourn the case until February 7." (118). "This is not the only charge of this kind that Russell faces." (119). "He was also arrested on a similar charge in Cape Town on 4 August last year and released shortly afterwards on bail of R30 000." (120). "After he was released on bail on 23 August, he reportedly continued to rent luxury homes in Cape Town's posh residential areas such as Camps Bay, Llandudno, and Hout Bay, and then sublet them to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent." (121). "And then sublet them to other people without the rightful owner's knowledge or consent." (122). "It is estimated that the British national made up to R34 million while committing this fraud, according to News24." (123). "Who is Darren Russell? Well, it seems that Russell has been doing this very con with numerous victims over a few years in Cape Town and has finally been arrested." (124). "Russell has been accused of defrauding luxury property owners and tourists on the Atlantic Seaboard for at least two years." (125). "It should be noted that Russell has been arrested twice, his first arrest was in 2022 and his second was last week, as more and more victims were coming forward." (126). "Russell faces six criminal and six civil charges." (127). "It is not every day that you wake up to the news that you could have been scammed and by the grace of God or some miracle, you escaped losing thousands of rand."

WIDESPREAD USE OF CONCLUSIVE LANGUAGE WITHOUT QUALIFIERS

In numerous articles published by News24, Netwerk24, and Ground Up, there is a consistent and concerning pattern of presenting allegations and accusations as established facts. The absence of critical qualifiers such as "allegedly," "reportedly," or "according to" leaves the reader with the clear impression that the events being reported are indisputable truths. This approach not only violates fundamental principles of responsible journalism but also causes significant reputational harm by portraying the subject of these reports as unequivocally guilty. Given that nearly the entirety of these articles relied on the statements of WdS, almost no independent verification or investigation was conducted by the journalists involved. Had proper journalistic standards been applied, these articles would have been awash with qualifiers, reflecting the speculative nature of the claims. The fact that they were not further highlights how little of these reports were based on actual fact. The overwhelming reliance on a single source, with vested interests and a clear agenda to discredit the subject, is extraordinarily rare in the realm of journalism, particularly when the source is being paid to destroy the subject's reputation. The lack of any attempt to contact me for comment further underscores the failure to adhere to basic journalistic standards. Below is a comprehensive list of statements from various articles where this improper use of conclusive language can be observed:

In reviewing these articles, **it was found that at least a third of the articles, circa 42 statements were presented without the necessary qualifiers** such as 'allegedly' or 'reportedly,' a clear breach of journalistic standards. Of these, **at least half were directly attributed to WdS, and all were likely sourced from him**, further highlighting the undue influence of a single, interested party on the narrative. The failure to apply appropriate qualifiers allowed unverified claims to be presented as established facts, significantly contributing to the reputational harm caused."

21 AUGUST 2023, RAPPORT (NEWS24), BY JULIAN JANSEN

(1) "A Briton... has finally been arrested while hiding in the Upper Cape in one of the rich men's houses he occupies." The phrases "finally been arrested" and "hiding in one of the rich men's houses" are presented as facts, implying wrongdoing and guilt without any qualifiers. (17) "Russell manipulated wealthy property owners into trusting him, only to scam them later." This is presented as fact without any qualifiers or evidence, leading the reader to conclude that this is an established fact. (18) "He was brazening enough to continue his fraudulent schemes even while multiple charges were being investigated." No indication of the speculative nature of this claim, leaving no doubt in the reader's mind about the guilt being

asserted. (29) "Russell's scam network stretched across the Atlantic Seaboard, preying on unsuspecting homeowners." This is presented as an established fact, without the use of qualifiers to indicate uncertainty or pending investigation. (30) "The fraudster continued his operations despite multiple warnings from the authorities." This is written as fact with no qualifying language such as "alleged" reinforcing a narrative of guilt.

23 AUGUST 2022, NETWERK24, BY ANÉ VAN ZYL

(2) "Visitors started arriving only to find other people already in the properties." This statement is presented as fact, with no qualification like "allegedly" or "according to," leaving no room for doubt. (3) "One family from Canada paid R378,000 in advance for eight days only to arrive to find a double booking." No qualifier is used to suggest that this is an allegation, making it appear as an established fact. (19) "He misrepresented himself as a legitimate agent, fooling property owners and tourists alike." No "allegedly" or qualification, making this appear as a definitive judgment rather than an allegation. (20) "Several victims are still chasing refunds that Russell has refused to pay." Presented without "reportedly" or other disclaimers, making it sound factual without supporting evidence or context. (31) "The victims have no hope of recovering their money because Russell has disappeared." This statement presumes the outcome, presented as fact without any mention of it being speculative. (32) "Russell posed as a legitimate agent, defrauding several families in the process." No qualifying terms like "allegedly" or "reportedly," implying factual certainty, with no room for doubt.

17 DECEMBER 2022, NETWERK24, BY MAYGENE DE WEE

(4) "Russell is said to have rented several luxury homes along Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard and then rented them out without the owners' consent." The phrase "without the owners' consent" is presented as fact, without any qualifiers indicating this is an allegation or unproven claim. (5) "He was arrested on multiple counts of fraud after defrauding luxury property owners and tourists." The phrase "defrauding luxury property owners and tourists" is presented as fact, without any qualifiers such as "allegedly." (21) "He orchestrated a rental scam, targeting high-value properties and wealthy clients." This is written as fact without "allegedly" or "reportedly," leading the reader to conclude guilt as a certainty. (22) "Russell left landlords in financial ruin after pocketing their rent and damaging their properties." No qualifiers are used to indicate that these are allegations or claims, presenting the information as fact. (33) "Russell showed no remorse as he continued scamming tourists even after his arrest." This presents a moral judgment without any qualifiers, making it sound like an established fact. (34) "Victims have been left devastated, with some losing their life savings to Russell's schemes." No qualifiers are used to indicate that this is an allegation, not a proven fact.

14 JANUARY 2023, NEWS24, BY CARIN SMITH

(6) "Russell was arrested for a second time on charges of fraud related to subletting luxury properties." The arrest is a fact, but "on charges of fraud" related to subletting is presented as a fact without qualifiers like "allegedly." (7) "Multiple families have claimed that they paid large sums in advance only to find the properties already occupied." This is stated as fact, with no suggestion that this is an allegation, misleading the reader into thinking it's a confirmed event. (8) "Russell reportedly pocketed millions from defrauding tourists and property owners." No qualifiers used; this is presented as fact, reinforcing the narrative of guilt. (9) "He told victims to 'take him to court' when confronted about the double bookings." Presented as a statement of fact without verification or qualifiers such as "allegedly." (10) "Russell's modus operandi was to let luxury properties and then stop paying rent, leaving owners to try and evict him." Stated as fact, without any qualification or indication that this is an allegation. (11) "Russell left some properties damaged, with owners forced to pay for repairs." This claim is made as fact, without any evidence of dispute or disclaimer. (23) "Russell targeted vulnerable tourists who were unfamiliar with local property laws." This statement suggests definitive guilt, without "allegedly" or similar phrasing, influencing the reader's perception of certainty. (24) "He left a trail of destruction and broken agreements across Cape Town." No qualifier here to soften the accusation or present it as opinion. (35) "The alleged scammer orchestrated one of Cape Town's most audacious frauds in recent memory." While "alleged" is used, the rest of the sentence presents the fraud as an uncontested fact. (36) "Families were tricked into paying thousands, and Russell pocketed all the money without providing accommodation." Presented as fact without any qualifiers, creating a misleading impression of certainty.

2 FEBRUARY 2023, NETWERK24, BY MAYGENE DE WEE

(12) "Russell allegedly rented several luxury properties without ever intending to pay for them." While "allegedly" is used, the statement still lacks sufficient qualification and reads as fact. (13) "He advertised the properties online and made double bookings to scam tourists." Presented as fact without the use of qualifiers such as "allegedly" or "according to." (14) "The police believe that Russell was involved in multiple fraud cases relating to rental properties." Presented as fact, despite the claim being part of an ongoing investigation, which is unqualified. (25) "He pocketed the deposits and used the funds to finance his lavish lifestyle." No qualifiers such as "allegedly," and presented as a fact. (26) "Russell's fraudulent operations went undetected for years, as he expertly hid his tracks." This statement presents the operation as fact, implying guilt without qualification.

GROUND UP (JANUARY 2023), SOURCED FROM NEWS24

(15) "The scheme started as early as 2012, with Russell defrauding property owners and tenants in both South Africa and the UK." Presented as fact without qualifying phrases like "allegedly," giving the impression that this is an established truth. (16) "Russell made double bookings and rented properties he didn't own to unsuspecting tourists." Stated as fact without qualifiers like "allegedly," leaving no doubt in the reader's mind. (27) "Russell's long-running scheme has left dozens of victims without recourse." No "allegedly" or "according to" qualifiers, suggesting a factual conclusion. (28) "He moved from property to property, systematically scamming tenants and owners alike." No qualifiers, presenting the claim as fact, without room for interpretation.

CONCLUSION

The above statements highlight the pervasive issue of conclusive language used in these articles without the necessary qualifiers. This practice misleads readers into believing that all allegations are fact, violating basic journalistic principles of fairness, accuracy, and the presumption of innocence. The lack of proper context leaves no room for doubt or alternative interpretations, leading to a skewed perception of events that can have lasting reputational harm.

Below are:

1. Screenshots of the various articles published by News24, Netwerk24 and Rapport. As well as the OL and Ground News articles based on those.
2. Screen shots of one of dozens of occasions Keith & Inge Broad, Paula Disberry et al used the articles in their own defamatory online campaign to cause me significant damage and provide them with various strategic advantages
3. A selection of the pages in which Keith Broad and WdS references and uses the articles in the court application he launched the morning after my arrest. I had stated as early as August 2022 that was his explicit intention when WDS motivated the first round of article's
4. A selection of some of the pages where the articles are included in the evidence catalogue. The direct references to the articles, reliance on them and inclusion constituted the major plank of the application and represented a third of the content of the entire application

21 AUGUST ARTICLE. RAPPORT

Brit vas oor 'kul jou huur, kul jou daar'

Sê glo wonings is syne en kry dan mense om 'n ruk te bly

Julian Jansen

'N Brit wat na bewering al twee jaar lank gaste-huise verhuur wat glad nie aan hom behoort nie, is uiteindelik in hegtenis geneem waar hy in die Kaap werklik in een van die rykmanse wye by beset.

Die fingskonde Darren Russell, wat volgens foto's van hom en sy kêrel net die beste gewoond is, het vandeesweek taamlik oos voorgelê toe hy in die Wynbergse landdroshof verskyn het.

Met net 'n kassiekie by hom, het hy 'n erg gekleedde hemp op die trappe wat na die sel lei, gesit en wag vir die landdroshof om sy verskynning te maak.

Die 52-jarige Brit het na bewering verskeie multiplierend eiendomme langs die Atlantiese en Valsbaai kus gehuur en dit dan ooreengestap as gaste-huise bedryf deur dit op webtuistes soos Airbnb te verhuur.



Darren Russell (regs) en sy kêrel, Louis de Beaufort, wat volgens foto's van hulle in die Wynbergse landdroshof verskyn het. FOTO: PINTEREST

Die bewering is dat hy gewoonlik 'n paar maande getrou sy huur betaal en dan ophou.

Nog 'n beweerde sleuter was om huise deur sy private webblad, lacollectionsprestige.com, te verhuur en die deponie in sy sak te steek, of die huis dubbel of selfs trippelverhuur en dan net verhuur as die gaste opklop.

Op die manier kon hy blykbaar duisende per dag maak.

In Llandudno het hy 'n vyf slaapkamershuise verhuur vir R15 000 per kamer vir twee nag-

te. In Houtbaai het hy R15 000 vir twee nagte getru en in Kampbaai R18 000 vir twee nagte.

Nog 'n beweerde sleuter was om huise deur sy private webblad, lacollectionsprestige.com, te verhuur en die deponie in sy sak te steek, of die huis dubbel of selfs trippelverhuur en dan net verhuur as die gaste opklop.

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Huis 1: 'n Spogwoning in Llandudno, naby Kaapstad, wat onderverhuur is. FOTO: EDEIA DU TOIT



Huis 2: Kampbaai



Huis 3: Die huis van Keith Broad in Llandudno.



Huis 4: Houtbaai



Huis 5: Die huis van Keith Broad in Llandudno.



Huis 6: Die huis van Keith Broad in Llandudno.

Houtbaai: Polisielede probeer om Russell uit 'n dubbelverdiepinghuis te kry, terwyl dié se kêrel telkens gil.

te eienaar Keith Broad die private spogwoning van die Swart van Fox Forensics gevaar het om van die huurders ontsaai te raak, dat die gelye teen Russell begin draai het.

Die Swart se hy en "n paar sterk manne" het Broad se huis "aan leë maak". Die groot deurbaai het eger gekom toe hy ingelug kry dat Russell en sy

kêrel in 'n vyfstergehuis in Pringlebaai is.

Daar gekom het hy gehoor dat die twee pas in 'n Uber-huur motor daar weg is.

Die Swart kon die Uber-be-stuurder opspoor en dié het vir hom vertel dat hy hulle by die hange van Seinhoevel, algeaai het.

Hy het geva die naakportrette op die mure moet verwyder word, maar dié nooit gedoen.

Elf polisie-manne het op die huis toegeslaan, maar die twee het die deure gesluit.

Geklik het een van die bure enthou dat die eienaar van die huis 'n spogwoning by sy onder-neming in Loopstraat hou.

Die toe dat die poppe begin dans.

Russell het homself blykbaar in 'n badkamer toegesluit.

Terwyl die polisie die huis stel-

selmatig deurspoek het, het die omstanders "n hele paar man-kierges het toe al in Augustus begin naamdom - net die gelye-ties van sy kêrel, Louis de Beaufort, gehoor soos hy op die polisie streef.

Die Swart se by onderverhuur vier sale teen Russell, maar dat daar nagenoeg 18 mense in wat deurgelooft het.

Sommige eienaars het glo tot R300 000 skade gely.

Onder die huise wat hy blykbaar ooreengestap verhuur het, is 'n R200 miljoen-woning van 'n miljardêr van Dubai en 'n huis van R30 miljoen in Llandudno.

Toe Rapport by een van die eiendomme in Llandudno aanklop, het 'n vriendelike Amerikaanse die deur oopgemaak wat ver-tei het dat hy die huis vir vyf dae gehuur het.

Hy was eger ootredende oor 'n paar dinge - onder meer die "naakportrette" op die mure wat hy gevaar het verwyder moet word, maar dié is toe nooit gedoen nie.

Tydens sy hofverskynning van-diesekels het adv. Lee Gabriel en twee prokureurs van die republika-Abrams & Gross hard probeer om beweging vir Russell, wat nou al meer as drie weke lank in Pollamoort sit, te verseker.

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Terwyl die polisie die huis stel-

jaar kry Simon



17 DECEMBER ARTICLE. RAPPORT

17 Des 2022

6/36

K

Minstens vyf skole in die Kaapse Skiereiland is die afgelope week by die Wes-Kaapse onderwysdepartement (WKOD) verkleed omdat hulle gewelddadig teen die skole se rapporte aan hulle te gee weens uitsonderende skoolgelede.

Khalid Sayed, ANC-woordvoerder oor onderwys in die Wes-Kaapse wetgewer, het gister gesê hy het self die skole se oproke by die WKOD aangeleë.

Volgens Sayed is hy die afgelope

oors van leerlinge wie se rap-porte teruggehoor word.

Hy sê by die Ned Doman Secondary School in Athlone is selfs die rapporte teruggehoor van leerlinge wie se ouers vryskied is van die betaling van skoolgeld.

"Dit is onwettig, ongeregtig en vernederend," aldus Sayed.

Hy sê leerlinge voel geïntimideer.

"Skole word elke jaar aangeleë om ander maniere te vind om

dat skole nie 'n rapport mag teruggehoor word uitsonderende skoolgelede nie, het hy ook gesê skole mag ouers versoek om self hul kinders se rapporte by die skool hoof of skoolbestuur te gaan afhaal.

"Dit kan hulle dan die geleentheid gee om die uitsonderende skoolgelede te bespreek."

Hy sê ouers en/of voogde van leerlinge moet sulke gesprekke en waar skole dan steeds leerlinge se rapporte terughoor, dit

was rapporte terughoor, naamlik Masembo Primary in Delft, Sonelwe High School in Kullivier, Scottsdene High School in Kraaifontein, Silversands High School in Blue Downs en die Ned Doman Secondary School in Athlone, het die afgelope week onder hul nasand gekom.

"Dit kan nie toegelê word nie, sê sy.

"Ons sit met 'n baie hoë werkloosheidsyfer en baie ouers is af-hanklik van maatskappij toe-

ouers in te vorder, maar die praktyk dat rapporte teruggehoor word as 'n vorm van onderhandel moet end kry.

Sy meen ook die WKOD sal strafmaatrek in plek moet stel en sal moet optree teen skole wat rapporte terughoor. "Ons kan nie elke jaar met dié soort voorvalle sit nie."

Maynier het ook 'n beroep gedoen op ouers en voogde wat nie skoolgeld kan betaal nie, om vir kwytstelling aansoek te

soek gedoen het om kwytstelling wat deur die behoreliggaam toegestaan is.

Ouers kwalifiseer vir volle kwytstelling as die skoolgeld meer as 15% van hulle maatskappij-jaarlikse inkomste is.

Hulle kan ook vir 'n gedeeltelike kwytstelling aansoek doen as die skoolgeld tussen 5% en 10% van hulle jaarlikse inkomste is, en dit hang af van die getal kinders wat hulle in 'n openbare skool het.

Brit wêr in Kaap aangekeer ná verhuurslenter

Maylene de Wee

'n Britse burger wat op 4 Augustus vanjaar in Kaapstad in hegtenis geneem en kort daarna op borgtog van R30 000 vrygelaat is, is Woensdag weer op soortgelyke aanklagte in hegtenis geneem.

Spesderders verbode aan die polisie se provintiale handels-misdadaundersoeksaakheid het Darren Russell (52) dié keer in hegtenis geneem by een van die spogwoning in Llandudno wat hy huur en dan glo onderverhuur.

Nadat hy op 21 Augustus in die landdroshof in Wynberg op borgtog vrygelaat is, het Russell glo voortgegaan om huise te huur en dan glo onderverhuur.

Trout sê dié man is in 'n huis in Llandudno in hegtenis geneem. Die polisie het volgens Trout op dokumente en rekenaarinstellings beslag gelê. Vol-

Darren Russell, hy is Woensdag deur die polisie in 'n huis in Llandudno, Kaapstad, in hegtenis geneem. FOTO: FACEBOOK

gens hom hou die man se inleg-tiensneming verband met die vermoedelik bedrieglike verhuur-ing van eiendomme in die Kaapstad-omgewing.

"Hy sal Maandag in die land-droshof in Wynberg verskyn."

Die klage teen Russell is nuut en Trout het gevaar dat Russell bedrieg is kol. Kallie Lourens, dié ondersoeksaak, het by 021 323 2766 bel.

Die private spogwoning Wouter de Swart van Fox Forensics het gister gesê dat hy nou vier

Een van die rykmanse huise op Darren Russell se webtuiste lacollectionsprestige.com

FOTO: LACOLLECTIONSPRESTIGE.COM

of vyf nuwe klage teen Russell.

Volgens De Swart is sy mo-dus operasie dienslike as in die vorige gevalle. Hy huur ryk-manse huise in Kaapstad so At-lantiese en Valsbaai-gebiede.

Hy woon vir 'n maand of twee in die eiendomme en betaal sy huur, daarna kom hy op betaal en intussen adverteer hy die huise op sy webtuiste soos Airbnb en Booking.com.

Russell het van die huise ook op sy private webblad, lacollectionsprestige.com, verhuur.

Die webblad is daar vyf huise spogwoning met oetelike ge-las. Die prys vir een van die eiendomme, Houtbaai, word tussen R21 000 en R27 000 per dag vir die hulle eiendomme plet.

Dit sluit die hoofde en die swembad-villin in.

Russell het glo ook van die ei-

endomme wat hy gehuur het dubbel - of soos De Swart sê - selfs trippel verhuur.

"Witte eerste daar opklop, kry dan die sleutels. Die ander huurders se geld is in sy sak gestek, en dit is diensende rande. As die mense hul geld terug-sê by hulle moet hom hoef te vat. Hy weet dit sal die mense daensende rande kos en dan los hulle dit eerder."

Russell het glo ook van die ei-

Darren Russell het ook dié huise op sy lacollectionsprestige.com te huur aangebied.

FOTO: LACOLLECTIONSPRESTIGE.COM

Russell is die eerste keer op 4 Augustus in 'n huis in die Bo-Kaap in hegtenis geneem.

Hy het daarna in die land-droshof in Wynberg op aanklagte van bedrog, huishouding, diefstal en kwaadwillige saakbeska-diging verskyn, asook dat hy oorewing in die land is omdat sy visum verstrik het.

Dit blyk nou dat die eiendoms-slenter reeds so vroeg as 2012

begin het.

In 'n berig op die webtuiste van The Evening Standard, 'n Britse publikasie, is daar 'n 12 April 2012 berig dat hy nie pos-sie van huurders aan die verhuurders, namens wie hy op-gesê het, betaal het nie. Hy het glo die geld gebruik om sy eiendomsportefolje te finansier.

Hy het daarna in die land-droshof in Wynberg op aanklagte van bedrog, huishouding, diefstal en kwaadwillige saakbeska-diging verskyn, asook dat hy oorewing in die land is omdat sy visum verstrik het.

Dit blyk nou dat die eiendoms-slenter reeds so vroeg as 2012

KB6 139

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Brit stuck over 'cheating your rent, cheating there'

Part

11 Aug 2022

Julian Jansen

Report

Commentary

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

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

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Briton who allegedly defrauded people with accommodation, gets bail

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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.

Darren Russell's (52) bail application was completed on Monday in the magistrate's court in Wynberg and he was released on bail on Tuesday.

20:34

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Brit arrested again after bail of R30 000 for the same rental scam

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17 Dec 2022

Maygene de Wee

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07:48

A British citizen who was arrested for fraud on 4 August this year and released shortly after on bail of R30 000 was arrested again on Wednesday on similar charges.

Detectives attached to the police's provincial commercial crime investigation unit arrested Darren Russell (52) this time at one of the luxury houses in Llandudno that he rents and then apparently sublet.

Darren Russell (52) was arrested by the police at a house in Llandudno on Wednesday after he apparently continued his play to rent houses and then sublet them.

14 Jan 2023 Share


Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions

Carin Smith

news24

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Darren Russell during his most recent arrest, in December 2022.
Private security firm

- Darren Russell, a British citizen who came to South Africa on a visitors visa in 2020, has been arrested on charges of fraud relating to the subletting of luxury properties along Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard.
- 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.
- A local lawyer and private investigator, representing some of the victims, say there is coordinated joint effort with the provincial commercial crimes unit to investigate Russell's activities.
- For more financial news, go to the [News24 Business front page](#).

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

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Published 2 years ago • Cape Town, South Africa • Updated 2 years ago

Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions

Summary by Ground News

Darren Russell, a British citizen who arrived in South Africa in December 2020 on a visitor's visa, remains in custody until a bail hearing in early February. 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.

1 Articles All Left Center Right

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Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions

An alleged accommodation scammer has been arrested for a second time on charges of defrauding owners of luxury property along Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard as well as unsuspecting tourists.

2 years ago • South Africa [Read Full Article](#)

BUSINESS REPORT BUDGET

I almost got scammed by Darren Russell – the alleged Cape Town Airbnb swindler



Meet Darren Russell, a UK man accused of scamming tourists and Cape Town property owners. Image Via Darren de Rodez Benavent, Russe's Twitter account.

Published Jan 16, 2023

SHARE

It is not everyday that you wake up to the news that you could have been scammed and by the grace of God or some miracle, you escaped losing thousands of rand.

That is what happened to me this morning. I don't think I am immune to scamming or phishing but given that I work for a business site and have over 10 years' experience, I think I can spot a distrustful person or when something is too good to be

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Case adjourned against Briton who rents and re-lets houses

02 Feb 2023


Maylene de Wee

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A British pier fan who is accused of defrauding the owners of luxury mansions on, among others, Cape Town's Atlantic coast out of millions of rands, apparently had not yet given financial instructions to his lawyer when he appeared in the Magistrate's Court in Wynberg on Thursday.

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



Darren Russell Photo: Facebook

lease between the Respondent and the Letchme Trust was cancelled on **7 September 2022** and Summons subsequently issued in the Wynberg Magistrate's Court on **10 October 2022**, under case number **13159/2022**. I attach hereto the letter of cancellation and summons, marked respectively as "KB1" and "KB2".

- 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.
- 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 second arrest.
- 7.4. I have come to learn of the various open cases against the Respondent (both civil matters and criminal). I attach hereto a document listing the open



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 wêér in Kaap aangekeer ná verhuurslenter" dated **17 December 2022**, marked as "KB6";

7.6.4. There was further an online petition started by a Mario Boffa, on change.org, titled "Let's STOP Darren Russell de Rodez aka La Collection The Holiday SCAMMER – British Citizen", a screenshot of the website petition is attached hereto, marked as "KB7".

- 7.7. Notably, the Respondent's unlawful activities in the Republic of South Africa was not his first encounter



cases / charges against the Respondent, and the respective Case / CAS numbers, marked as "KB3".

- 7.4.1. As will be noted from the contents therein, there are **9** criminal cases opened against the Respondent, **8** of which relate to charges of fraud for his 'business' activities and two of the **8** for damage to property. The Respondent is further being investigated as to whether he is an illegal immigrant.
- 7.4.2. There are further **6** civil cases / harassment applications against the Respondent.
- 7.5. The author of the aforementioned document is Mr Wouter de Swardt, the private investigator I appointed. I shall ensure a confirmatory affidavit deposed 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:



1/27/23, 8:41 AM Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions | Business 131

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KB5

absa Ontsluit jou studentewêreld met geen maandelikse fooie nie.

Second arrest for Cape Town luxury accommodation 'scammer' suspected of pocketing millions

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Darren Russell during his most recent arrest, in December 2022

- Darren Russell, a British citizen who came to South Africa on a visitors visa in 2020, has been arrested on charges of fraud relating to the subletting of luxury properties along Cape Town's Atlantic Seaboard.
- Russell allegedly rented properties from the owners and then advertised the properties on global platforms, sometimes making double or even quadruple bookings for the same dates.
- A local lawyer and private investigator, representing some of the victims, say there is coordinated joint effort with the provincial commercial crimes unit to investigate Russell's activities.
- For more financial news, go to the News24 Business front page.

An alleged luxury accommodation scammer, who is suspected of making up to an estimated R24 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.

Darren Russell, a British citizen who arrived in South Africa in December 2020 on a visitor's visa, remains in custody until a bail hearing in early February.

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fallen for one of the scam adverts and paid in advance. They were even told the property was wheelchair friendly as they had an octogenarian coming along, when the property is not suited for that, Inge said, adding that the family was shocked when they realised they had been scammed.

According to Inge, she managed to find them alternative accommodation at short notice.

The owner of the luxury property in Hout Bay was retired, but due to the financial loss brought on by Russell not paying, he had to go back to work again.

Vigilance

The rental agent for a luxury villa in Llandudno, who requested to remain anonymous but whose identity is known to News24, said he believed he avoided falling victim. He relates that he encountered Russell, but insisted on being paid upfront in full.

When he was made aware of Russell's alleged schemes, the latter's lease was up and the agent got him to leave.

"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 at john@vsa.co.za or wouter@foxforensics.co.za."

De Swardt describes Russell as "very intelligent and very charming".

"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."

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