

National Union of Journalists

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THE relationship between the collapsed insurance company Independent Insurance and the trade magazine *Insurance Times* (managing director Jonathan Shephard) has been uncomfortably close.

In March 2000 *Insurance Times* gained a new editor, Chris Wheal, who was adamant he wanted to make the title more independent, but it was made clear to him he was expected to suck up to Independent. The following February, less than a year later, Wheal was sacked. One reason cited to the National Union of Journalists for his dismissal was that a major advertiser had withdrawn advertising. Shephard confirmed to Wheal that the advertiser in question was Independent.

Even when it became clear earlier this year that Independent was facing serious difficulties, Shephard did not want to read a word against the company. When Independent's chief executive Michael Bright stepped down in April, the deputy editor of *Insurance Times* Paddy Gourlay wrote a story about the company and the problems it was facing. After Shephard had looked over the piece, he sent Gourlay an email asking him to make several changes, in particular requesting that he remove the description of Independent as a "troubled" company, a phrase most financial hacks would have considered an understatement at the time.

Why the NUJ?

BAJ: 793, of whom 96 (25%) are women

IoJ: 1,081, of whom 305 (28%) are women

NUJ: 27,546, of whom 10,567 (38%) are women

Woman general secretary (boss), Michelle Stanistreet, who this year became the first trade union leader in the UK ever to take maternity leave while in post.

NUJ Code of Conduct – 1936

Recognition

- Pay, hours, holidays, maternity/paternity
- Discrimination, discipline, grievances
- Health & safety
- Special events (Millennium)
- Ethics
- Redundancy
- Copyright/payment

Bill Goodwin

- 22 year old reporter on The Engineer
- Company restructuring, refinancing
- Company alleged report was stolen
- Bill refused to reveal his source
- Lost at every stage in the UK courts
- Won at European Court, 5 years later
- Bill Goodwin defence still used today

NUJ involvement

- Chapel
- Branch
- Industrial council
- Geographic representation
- Special councils/committees
- National Executive Council

Good luck in your career

The NUJ will be there for you
when your luck runs out