

NEW PROJECT FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM LAUNCHES WITH £2M BACKING.

On Monday, July 6, 2009, at a meeting upstairs in the Coach and Horses public house in Soho, London, a group of journalists including some of the UK's most active and distinguished investigative reporters, agreed to support Britain's first major not-for-profit initiative to fund public interest investigative journalism.

The meeting agreed that a new entity should be created with the working title: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ), and to advertise for the position of Managing Editor to lead the project forward.

As it launches, the Bureau announced a £2million grant from The David and Elaine Potter Foundation (<http://www.potterfoundation.com>) as its founding donation.

Elaine Potter, a former Sunday Times journalist, co-founder of The David and Elaine Potter Foundation, and Chair of the board of CIJ, said "The Bureau of Investigative Journalism will seek the truth to serve the public interest by establishing fact and public responsibility. Our goal in helping establish this project is to support investigative journalism of the highest ethical standards and to search for sustainable models for its long-term future."

A new initiative known as the InvestigationsFund.org was launched last month and has already drawn widespread support from across the media industry. The decision to launch the Bureau takes forward a strategic plan, which was developed by directors of the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) and now incorporates and benefits from the work of the InvestigationsFund. The Bureau will be committed to upholding the highest principles of independence, transparency and objectivity.

"We've had an incredible response and some great suggestions on how to move forward, and this extra-ordinary generosity is a sensational start. I think the plan we've backed is the best way of taking on board all the best suggestions we've received. I believe it can have a transforming and positive effect on reporting in this country, and go a long way to encouraging and supporting new talent," said Stephen Grey, one of those who last month announced the Investigations Fund initiative, and who is to act as editor of the Bureau, until a Managing Editor has been appointed.

The Bureau will be the first organization in the UK (to our knowledge) dedicated to investigative journalism in the public interest. The BIJ will begin operations in London in the coming months and will aim to be a counterweight to the decline of traditional media investigations. The Bureau will seek to exploit the full range of conventional and new media channels for its work. It will have its own Editorial Board, Managing Editor and editorial staff.

Google have agreed to support the Bureau with technical expertise software tools and training.

Supporters of the Bureau of Investigative Journalism include leading international journalists Sir Harold Evans, former editor of The Sunday Times; Charles Lewis, one of the key pioneers of not-for-profit journalism in the United States; Seymour Hersh, who has been at the forefront of investigative journalism for decades; and Nick Davies, award-winning investigative reporter and author of Flat Earth News.

Patron Sir Harold Evans said “This is an important venture in the critical task of re-establishing investigative reporting at the heart of journalism at a time when public trust in both corporations and politicians is at an all time low, particularly in the United Kingdom. I am supporting the Bureau of Investigative Journalism because without someone championing investigative journalism, the meltdown of conventional media means that further abuse of power will go unmonitored and unchecked.”

Seymour Hersh said "The world of serious journalism is in crisis, with the collapse of economies, loss of jobs, and sharp reduction of advertising budgets. The impact on expensive and sometimes unpredictable investigative reporting has been immediate, and devastating. I applaud and support the new Bureau of Investigative Journalism – and similar projects in America and throughout the world -- for these new and independent investigative units may become the role model for a new kind of journalism.”

Gavin Macfadyen, the Director of the Centre for Investigative Journalism, and one of the Founders of the Bureau said “We will experiment with all the techniques available to us from '*crowdfunding*' to '*crowdsourcing*' and provide content across the media spectrum. But there is no substitute for first rate reporters being given time and resources to deliver great stories, which hold the powerful to account. The Bureau will offer investigative journalists both proper funding and the support of senior and experienced editors and researchers to carry out important investigations that are in the public interest.”

Nick Davies said, "The world is full of extraordinary stories which never get written, because the mainstream media no longer have the resources or the will to do the kind of work which they used to. The idea is for reporters to be given the support to go and research good important stories. This matters because we all need to know what is happening around us, particularly when powerful people may be trying to conceal it."

Notes to editors:

1. For further information, please contact:

- (a) For information regarding the Potter Foundation

David Potter
020 7291 3993
<mailto:david@depotter.net>

- (b) For information regarding the newly formed Bureau of Investigative Journalism Trust

James Lee
07801 298398
<mailto:jas.lee@btinternet.com>

- (c) For information regarding the Centre for Investigative Journalism

Gavin Macfadyen
07740 304 570
<mailto:gavinmacfadyen@btinternet.com>

- (d) For information regarding the InvestigationsFund.org

Stephen Grey
07900 408198
<mailto:stephen.grey@zen.co.uk>

2. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism is a not-for-profit organization. It aims to deliver high quality and important investigations into issues of public interest.

3. InvestigationsFund.org is a new organization founded by leading journalists to campaign to secure the future of public interest reporting in the UK and to raise funds for this purpose.

3. CIJ has established itself as a highly effective educational programme with a worldwide reputation and an enviable network of participants and supporters. Its mission has been to advance education for public understanding of investigative journalism; critical enquiry; in-depth reporting and research. The Centre runs international summer schools, produces publications to help present landmark investigations, offers training in appropriate techniques, organizes debates, lectures and screenings on critical issues; all designed to nourish the culture and professional standards of investigative journalism.

3. The David and Elaine Potter Foundation was established in 1999. The Foundation has general charitable objectives, but its principal goal is to promote a strong civil society through its grants to education, investigative journalism, science, human rights, and the arts. The Foundation pursues these objectives by supporting education, through scholarships and other related activities that will improve understanding, governance and accountability; research through the creation of institutions and other means; human rights activism; initiatives that support democratic governance; and agencies and charities carrying out development, research and educational projects.