

Private Eye - The Lucan Affair 'Not a Shred of Truth'

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DURING THE PAST few months much publicity has been given to the litigation between Sir James Goldsmith and *Private Eye*.

The history of the matter began in December 1975 when *Private Eye* published an article which referred to the Lucan affair. It was that article which became the subject of Sir James' widely publicised criminal libel proceedings against *Private Eye*. He also started civil libel proceedings in respect of that article and three later articles on different subjects. Since then there has been further litigation about whether *Private Eye* had published, or was about to publish, articles in contempt of court.

Private Eye now recognises that any suggestion in the issue of December 12, 1975, that Sir James had taken part in a criminal conspiracy was particularly serious and wishes to make it known publicly once and for all that there was not a shred of truth in it.

Private Eye accepts that Sir James would have been entitled to very substantial damages for what *Private Eye* said about him. He has however made it clear that our unreserved apology will satisfy him and he has waived his right to damages.

Some readers may remember that in the summer of last year Richard Ingrams was interviewed on the BBC Television programme 'The Editors'. He stated that *Private Eye* would sometimes publish apologies or retractions not because what it had originally published was untrue but because *Private Eye* did not have the resources to prove it in court.

Private Eye wishes to make it absolutely clear that this is not such a case, and genuinely and unreservedly apologises to Sir James, in proof of that *Private Eye* has agreed to pay Sir James a substantial contribution towards his legal costs. It has never been the intention of *Private Eye* to pursue any personal or public vendetta against Sir James Goldsmith and he has our sincere assurance that we will not do so in future issues of *Private Eye*,