Defending sources – again

NUJ MEMBERS Ed Moloney and Anthony McIntyre were in court in Boston, Massachusetts on 24 January to defend their right to protect their sources. The NUJ National Executive has voted to support them.

Ed was director of The Belfast Project, and Anthony was a researcher for interviews with participants in Northern Ireland’s “Troubles”. The Project promised interviewees that the tapes would not be released while they live. The tapes were deposed at Boston College.

In March 2010 Ed published Voices from the Grave, drawing on interviews with former IRA (Irish Republican Army) leader Brendan Hughes and David Ervine of the Loyalist UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force), who had both died. In March 2011 the UK government contacted the US Department of Justice, asking it to pursue a court order to hand over the archive – including interview notes.

Judge Patrick Lynch QC told Hyde that if he had not agreed to identify the alleged culprits in Martin O’Hagan’s murder and give evidence about the activities of the outlawed LVF, he would have been jailed for 18 years. Martin O’Hagan’s work for the Sunday World included many exposures of the LVF and similar groups and, as Secretary of NUJ Belfast Branch, he was on his way home from a Branch meeting when shot.

The NUJ received assurances from then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone that news photographers would be allowed to go about their work, but the proposed new by-laws are unclear on the distinction between newsgatherers and crews shooting feature films or advertising. Freelance Organiser John Toner is taking up the matter with the GLA.

The byelaws are not yet “confirmed” by the Department of Culture, Objections are invited to the restrictions on newsgatherers before 29 February; see squaresconsult.notlong.com. Members attending any hustings ahead of May’s London mayoral elections may wish to question candidates.

Meanwhile in Bristol, the NUJ reports a meeting with the city council’s Bristol Film Office (BFO) about paid-for permits which it is demanding from photographers on all PR shoots in the city. While the BFO officer does not make the final decision, she seemed positive. The Freelance would be interested to hear of any other issues around permits required by councils for photography.

For women re-entering film/TV

Creative industries body Skillset is offering workshops for women entering or re-entering the TV and film industry, including advice on how to get into areas where women are under-represented – special effects, crew and film financing.

They cost £40 and are on 10 February at MediaCity, Salford, 27 February at BBC Bristol, and on 7 March at Skillset’s HQ in London. Details: Veronica Benson at v.benson@theukrc.org or on 0118 3784 791.

More online...

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- Rhinegold gets star for improved contracts
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