

**2020-07 Dunn v Soo Today**

*January 30, 2020*

The National NewsMedia Council mediated and found that corrective action was taken to address a complaint about accuracy of quoted statements in a January 16 news article published by Soo Today.

The article, “Sault musician moved by retired steelworkers to pen 'protest' song,” described how musician Mark Dunn was inspired to write a song after hearing from individuals opposed to the arrival of a ferrochrome processing plant in the area. The article described the technical aspects of the song and song-writing process, based on an interview with the musician, and included contextual details about the facility.

The musician filed a complaint to the NNC that said his statements had been mischaracterized and misused to create a conflict between himself and the corporation responsible for the ferrochrome plant.

While the complainant said that quotes in the article were largely accurate, he was concerned with the overall impression that the story left on readers about his views on the arrival of the facility and argued that a paraphrased quote inaccurately represented his statements.

In particular, the complainant was concerned with the accuracy of the paraphrased statement, “The heavy nature of the ferrochrome facility and its health risks, Dunn said, led him to give this particular song a heavier sound.”

The complainant acknowledged that the news media organization changed the headline after he complained that the original headline did not accurately reflect the focus of the story. However, he was concerned that the URL still reflected the original headline.

After it was alerted to the complaint, Soo Today promptly reviewed the recorded interview. It accepted that the paraphrased statement could have been clearer and subsequently clarified the statement in the article to read, “Dunn said his concern not only about the proposed ferrochrome facility, but also his broader ecological concerns related to the water of the Great Lakes, contributed to the song’s ‘angry’ sound.” This amendment was satisfactory to the complainant.

The news media organization also offered to change the URL to reflect the new headline.

In reviewing the recorded interview, the news media organization found that a different quote had included the word “industrial” when in fact the original quote had not, and therefore removed the extraneous word of its own accord, though this was not part of the original complaint.

Soo Today strongly rejected the complainant’s allegation that it distorted a story to create conflict between two parties where there was none. It also strongly rejected the allegation that the journalist in any way misrepresented his intentions, and stated that the complainant initiated contact with the newsroom and offered a recording for review.

It is worth noting that in examining this article and related material, the NNC did not find evidence that the statements in the article had been misrepresented. An ordinary reading of the article recounts the

inspiration behind a local musician's song and his song-writing process. Alleging sensationalism is a serious charge and in this case the NNC finds no evidence to support the allegation.

The NNC supports the news media organization's swift action to address the concerns raised by the complainant. It recognizes that the news media organization was careful to address each of the complainant's concerns with thorough explanation and was accommodating in its actions.

For these reasons, the NNC considers this matter resolved due to corrective action.