Johnston Press Launches Investigations Unit To Deliver Hard-Hitting News That Campaigns For Real Change

Tuesday 22 November, 2016

Led by multi-award-winning investigative reporter Aasma Day, of the Lancashire Evening Post, the unit today unveils the shocking findings of its Drive for Justice investigation, exposing that despite hundreds of convictions for causing death by dangerous driving, no-one in the UK has ever received the maximum sentence of 14 years' imprisonment.

It reveals that drivers who kill have been sentenced to an average of just four years in prison with dozens escaping jail altogether and despite a trail of shattered lives and family tragedies across the UK, culpable drivers have often walked away from court with light sentences, or none at all.

The unit, which comprises a team of journalists from across Johnston Press, have compiled heartbreaking case studies from across the UK - none of which have resulted in maximum sentence penalties.

As well as carrying out investigations, and telling powerful human interest stories, the unit has a campaigning and lobbying role at its heart, and an online petition calling for tighter sentences and other legal changes further demonstrating the need to drive awareness around the issue will be lanched.

Aasma Day, Investigative Reporter & Lifestyle editor at the Lancashire Evening Post, said: "The team feels it is crucial to ensure reports like Drive for Justice are absolutely front of mind – that though our papers and websites we're raising awareness of the issues that really matter in our communities. These are local stories of national interest and our ambition is to pool our resources and talents to enable us to deliver quality and exclusive content on important issues that all of our readers really care about."

Jeremy Clifford, Editor-in-Chief at Johnston Press, said: "Investigative journalism – and holding those in authority to account - is at the very core of our business and of the communities we serve. We've seen the impact and benefits that campaigns supported by local titles can deliver and the lives that can change.

"By sharing high quality, powerful special reports, data journalism pieces and investigations across our portfolio – which now includes the i paper - we can deliver compelling investigations and demand real results that can ultimately change the law and people's lives."

The investigation launches today with a striking front page and inside content for Johnston Press' largest daily titles; the Lancashire Evening Post, The Yorkshire Evening Post, the Portsmouth News, the Edinburgh Evening News, the Scotsman, the Sheffield Star, the News Letter and the Yorkshire Post, as well as Johnston Press' national newspaper i. The hashtag #driveforjustice is being used across social media.

The hard-hitting report follows Sunday's World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, and coincides with this week's National Road Safety Week, running until Sunday 27th November.

Notes to editors

The Investigation Unit’s full team across Johnston Press is made up of:

- Aasma Day, Investigative Reporter & Lifestyle editor at the Lancashire Evening Post, and Investigations Unit team leader
- Chris Burn, the Sheffield Star
- Cahal Milmo, i
- Ruby Kitchen, the Yorkshire Post & the Yorkshire Evening Post
- Ben Fishwick, Portsmouth News
- Philip Bradfield, Belfast News Letter
- Tim Robinson. Group Editorial Design Director

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