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MARKETING

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JAD/A157

The Editor
The European
200 Gray's Inn Road
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ONE PAGE BY FAX ONLY TO:
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Dear Sir

We have for several years been engaged in a series of High Court Actions against Shell UK Limited. The first three "no-holds-barred" battles were all settled in our favour. Following the commencement of a *fourth action, a gentleman called Charles Hoot, purporting to be a journalist representing your newspaper, contacted our solicitors on Friday 15th May 1998. Mr Hoot contacted me shortly thereafter, allegedly from Paris and asked to meet me on Monday 18th May. I offered to travel to London, but he insisted on coming to Bury St Edmunds.

On the Monday morning I telephoned your office to try to find out what time he planned to arrive. No one knew who he was. Edith Coron kindly telephoned me from Paris. Neither she nor anyone else in the Paris office knew his name. She did say that he could well be a freelance, but suggested that I act with caution. Mr Hoot called me a few minutes later from Liverpool Street Station. He travelled up to see me and a colleague and I spent several hours with him. He is a 6ft 5" American with blond hair (probably in his mid twenties). He confirmed that he is a freelance. He acted in an entirely professional way at all times and insisted on paying for lunch. He has subsequently contacted at least one of the people I mentioned to him during our conversations. No article has yet been published. He has represented himself to four different individuals on the basis indicated above. He has not given any of us a business card or a contact telephone number.

Mr Hoot is almost certainly entirely genuine. However, I would be grateful if you would please confirm that this is the case, as I have a nagging suspicion that he may be an investigator of some kind working on behalf of Shell or their advisors. I am sure that you would not want anyone to use the name of your newspaper as a front for any such activity.

Yours sincerely

John Donovan
Managing Director

*a multi-million pounds claim against Shell in respect of the SMART loyalty scheme that is being conducted on an international basis. Basically, we allege that Shell is using without our permission, a loyalty card concept that we had disclosed to them on a strictly confidential basis.