

**From:** McGourty, John  
**Sent:** Saturday, 16 March 2013 11:43 AM  
**To:** Loni Cooper  
**Cc:** McGourty, John  
**Subject:** Questions from Media Watch

Loni

Please see statement below:

**Thank you for bringing these matters to our attention.**

**We are treating them very seriously and have started a formal investigation with the journalist involved.**

John McGourty

[John McGourty](#) | Executive Editor, Editorial Network, News Limited

Level 3, 2 Holt St, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW 2010

**From:** Loni Cooper  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 March 2013 12:35 PM  
**To:** Marshall, Jonathan  
**Cc:** McGourty, John  
**Subject:** Questions from Media Watch

Dear Jonathan,

Media Watch is looking at recent coverage of cyber-bullying and internet trolls. We would appreciate it if you could answer the following questions:

In an article published on News Limited websites on 4 March, you wrote:

*WOMADelaide festival organisers are facing pressure to dump a lead act after one of the band's two members made derogatory comments about a suicide victim.*

*Top drummer Michael Barker, a former member of groups Split Enz and The John Butler Trio, is to play with his two-man blues and roots group The Swamp Thing at this weekend's four-day WOMADelaide music festival.*

*Mr Barker was revealed by News Ltd on Sunday as the proud father of Tristan Barker, Australia's most prolific internet troll.*

In another article published on News Limited websites two days later, you wrote:

*Tristan Barker's antics had threatened his rocker father's appearance at the WOMADelaide festival, but organisers today confirmed his act The Swamp Thing would still be performing in this weekend's line-up.*

*The event's promoters ignored calls to dump The Swamp Thing from the bill, featuring Michael Barker of former Split Enz and The John Butler Trio fame, despite his support for his son's antics online.*

Ian Scobie, Director of WOMADelaide has told Media Watch that he had never considered dropping Swamp Thing from the Festival, and was under no pressure from anyone to do so before your first story was published.

1. What evidence of 'pressure' and from whom, were you aware of before publishing the first story above?

In a Today Tonight segment about Tristan Barker that aired on Monday 11 March, reporter David Eccleston says: *News Limited investigations journalist Jonathan Marshall secretly filmed Tristan's parents at their home.* Cathy Barker has told Media Watch that when you visited their home, her husband Michael Barker asked you if you were recording them and you responded that you weren't.

2. Did you alone or with the help of others secretly record Michael and Cathy Barker and then provide that footage to Today Tonight? If so, did you tell Cathy and Michael Barker that you weren't recording them when in fact you were?

As the footage taken of the Barkers was being aired on Today Tonight, reporter David Eccleston says this: *Asked about the Amanda Todd suicide, where his son labelled him an attention seeking whore, Michael Barker said this: "an attention whore who deserved what she got for playing the victim".* Michael Barker's face is off camera when he allegedly says this. He's told Media Watch that is not him saying those words, that he has never said those words, and that the voice on the recording played by TT is yours. John McGourty, executive editor of News Limited Network, has confirmed this to Media Watch.

3. In the footage you supplied to Today Tonight, do you believe it was clear that the words above were said by you and not by Mr Barker? Have you told Today Tonight that their use of the footage was seriously misleading?

Thank you for considering our questions. Due to strict deadlines, we would appreciate a response by midday tomorrow, Saturday 16 March.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact me on the numbers below.

Kind regards,

Loni Cooper

Journalist/Researcher  
Media Watch, ABC Television