EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL CASE STUDY

**BRIEF**

*Heafield v Times Newspaper Ltd EAT/1305/12*

Mr Heafield, a practising Roman Catholic, worked as a sub-editor on the Times newspaper. The Times was due to run a story on 12 March 2011 concerning allegations that the Pope had protected a paedophile priest before he became Pope.

This story was referred to in the newsroom as "the Pope". Close to the deadline on 11 March 2011, Mr Wilson, a senior sub-editor, shouted across the newsroom to colleagues to enquire about progress on the story on the Pope. Mr Wilson shouted twice: "Can anyone tell me what's happening to the fucking Pope?"

Mr Heafield, who did not complain at the time, later complained informally to the chief night editor, Mr Pearson, who was unsure of how to deal with the complaint. Mr Pearson asked for advice from a colleague, who told him that he was not worried about what Mr Wilson had said and not to take it too seriously. Mr Pearson, whose opinion was that "these things tended to sort themselves out if left alone", took no further action.

Mr Heafield brought claims in the employment tribunal for religion or belief discrimination, including a claim for harassment in relation to Mr Wilson's question about the Pope.