**ORLANDO GAY MURDERS BY ISLAMIST TERRORIST OMAR MATEEN**

**BBC ONLINE NEWS COMPLAINT - JEFFREY DUDGEON**

**Original BBC Online news story of 16 January 2017 complained about:**

‘Orlando Pulse nightclub: Gunman's wife arrested’

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-38643467>

[Now slightly amended, according to BBC’S 2nd response]

**Opening complaint by Jeffrey Dudgeon**

Location Northern Ireland

Type of complaint BBC Online

What is your complaint about BBC News website

URL [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-38643467](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-38643467%20%20)

Complaint category Factual error or inaccuracy

Contacted us before No

Complaint title Fake news about Orlando murders

Complaint description

When BBC Online reports anything about the murder by the Jihadi terrorist Omar Mateen of 49 gays at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando it repeats the unsubstantiated and unevidenced stories of men who said they had sex with Mateen and thus that he was gay and 'conflicted'. In other words this was not a mass killing by a Muslim extremist of LGBT people, which is extremely serious because it distorts the event completely.

An accusation of purveying fake news is apposite because BBC Online has never reported the FBI saying there was no evidence of Mateen being gay, even though this updated news was widely covered in the US press. (See American press reports of 26 June 2016 such as this New York Times report:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/us/was-the-orlando-gunman-gay-the-answer-continues-to-elude-the-fbi.html?_r=0> )

Why was this FBI news never reported?

Will the BBC amend its background news reports on Orlando as again today we had the same fanciful stories by attention seekers of Mateen's supposed gay dating etc and no mention of the FBI report?

**1st BBC response of 23 January 2017**

From: bbc\_complaints\_website@bbc.co.uk <bbc\_complaints\_website@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: 23 January 2017 02:57
To: Jeffrey Dudgeon
Subject: BBC Complaints - Case number CAS-4181568-3G2HMG

Dear Mr Dudgeon

Thank you for contacting us regarding the BBC News website.

I understand you were unhappy with the report entitled ‘Orlando Pulse nightclub: Gunman's wife arrested’ stated that Omar Mateen was conflicted about his sexuality and that this was an attempt to suggest that the incident was “not a mass killing by a Muslim extremist of LGBT people”.

Whilst I appreciate your concerns, I can assure you that there was no attempt on our part to distort the story. It is made clear that Omar Mateen had “vowed allegiance to so-called Islamic State” and had been “radicalised in the year leading up to the attack”. We also included comments made by his father that his son had become “very angry” after seeing two men kissing in Miami.

However, there were also reports in the wake of last year’s attack that the gunman had previously been seen at the nightclub and had contacted men on dating apps. Providing details such as this is simply designed to provide our readers with as much information as possible on a story and it is certainly not intended to mislead our readers in any way.

Nevertheless, I would like to assure you that we value your feedback. Please know all complaints are sent to senior management and news teams every morning and we’ve included your points in our overnight reports. These reports are among the most widely read sources of feedback in the BBC and ensure that your complaint has been seen quickly, by the right people. This helps inform their decisions about current and future reporting.

Thank you once again for getting in touch.

Kind regards

Terry Hughes

BBC Complaints Team

www.bbc.co.uk/complaints

**Response by Jeff Dudgeon to BBC on 30 January 2017**

I am afraid you do not attempt to answer or respond to my concerns about the continuing failure to report the FBI view of 26 June 2016 that there was no evidence of Omar Mateen being gay. This is hugely important especially given that the mass murder is being written off as a consequence.

It may be difficult for the BBC to rectify its failure to report this aspect so late in the day but it must. Otherwise, what I regard as fake news, the unsubstantiated remarks by a number of people after the event, remain the only view being reported and re-reported.

It might be better or indeed necessary if there was some sort of broadcast investigation by the BBC into the matter of the reasons for the murders.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

**2nd BBC response of 9 February 2017**

From: bbc\_complaints\_website@bbc.co.uk <bbc\_complaints\_website@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: 09 February 2017 08:48
To: Cllr. Jeffrey Dudgeon
Subject: BBC News website

Dear Mr Dudgeon,

Ref: CAS-4204659-WLQSYQ

Thank you for your further correspondence about our report on the Orlando nightclub shootings and we're sorry if the initial response did not appear to address your concerns.

As we explained, the story makes very clear that Mateen pledged allegiance to Islamic State and that his wife said he had become radicalised.

However, whatever the FBI may have concluded last June, the interview included in our report indicates that Mateen was a regular at the club.

Others who have contacted the FBI also dispute its findings:

http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-orlando-gay-fbi-20160623-snap-story.html

And since the FBI's announcement in June, there have been other developments that suggest sexuality does have a part to play in this event:

http://abcnews.com.co/omar-mateens-final-text-to-wife-released-im-gay/ **[This is actual fake news]**

https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/09/24/orlando-gunmans-ex-wife-mateen-was-gay-and-carried-out-the-attack-to-impress-his-father/

But we can't agree that this aspect is the only view being reported and believe our article clearly and prominently set out Mateen's extremist stance.

The FBI says it has found no evidence, but that does not automatically mean those who say they had contact with Mateen should be ignored. Our article says that he "appears to have been a regular" at the club, and we have made a slight change to stress that the gay dating contacts are claims.

However, should you wish to pursue the matter, and believe there has been a breach of the BBC's editorial guidelines, you can contact the BBC's Editorial Complaints Unit, within 20 working days, and they will carry out an independent investigation. You can email them at ecu@bbc.co.uk or alternatively write to them at the following address:

Editorial Complaints Unit

BC2 B4 Broadcast Centre, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TP

Best wishes,

BBC News website

http://www.bbc.co.uk/complaints/handle-complaint/

**Response by Jeff Dudgeon to ECU of 25 February 2017 after 2nd BBC response of 9 February 2017**

CAS-4204659-WLQSYQ

To ecu@bbc.co.uk

My continuing issue with the BBC news website is that there was, and still is, no mention online of the FBI statement of 25/26 June 2016 which was that the FBI have found no evidence of Omar Mateen being gay. This means every time the issue comes up again, as it did recently when his second wife/widow was arrested, the BBC’s back story online lacks that crucial detail.

I accept the FBI’s finding does not prove conclusively Mateen was not gay but it effectively contradicts, with great authority, all the various assertions made by gay men and others, (including Mateen’s first wife), that he was involved in gay sex and visited gay venues.

Most gays, if asked, would now believe the 49 LGBT people murdered in Orlando were killed by a conflicted homosexual who happened to be Muslim, as opposed to it being the act of an Islamist jihadi terrorist. Without reading the FBI view they will be none the wiser, ever.

The BBC attitude in replies to me reveals some concern but also displays a determination not to admit error, and certainly not to change existing text.

That determination is evidenced by the BBC in its second response calling in aid a website that revealed a texting trail between Omar Mateen and his wife on the night of the killings where he said, “I’m gay. I hate myself, and that’s why I’m doing this.”

The evidence for this was given as http://abcnews.com.co/omar-mateens-final-text-to-wife-released-im-gay/

The problem is that that link in the response to me being quoted as back-up is fake news:

See <http://www.snopes.com/omar-mateens-final-text/> and

https://www.reddit.com/r/orlando/comments/4pg5n5/omar\_mateens\_final\_text\_to\_wife\_released\_im\_gay/

So why did the BBC not carry that FBI story in June 2016, or since, and why won’t they consider doing so now? Is that failure not a breach of editorial guidelines?

If they can’t, then the BBC needs to use its extensive resources and journalistic skills to put together an investigative programme on the Orlando murders and their motivation.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

NB For extensive background on the killer see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar\_Mateen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Mateen%20)

**From:** ECU
**Sent:** 20 March 2017 15:36
**To:** 'Jeffrey Dudgeon'
**Subject:** RE: Orlando gay murders complaint

Dear Mr Dudgeon

Please find attached as promised a letter detailing the provisional result of my investigation into your complaint.

Yours sincerely

Richard Hutt

Complaints Director

**From:** ECU <ECUdl@bbc.co.uk>
**Sent:** 04 April 2017 16:09
**To:** 'Jeffrey Dudgeon'
**Subject:** RE: Orlando gay murders complaint

Dear Mr Dudgeon

In my emailed letter of 20 March I asked for any comments you might have on my provisional finding.  As I have not yet heard from you in response I now consider that finding finalised.

As you may know, regulation of the BBC has now moved from the BBC Trust to Ofcom.  If you wish to pursue the matter further, it is open to you to ask Ofcom to consider your complaint.  You can find details of how to contact Ofcom here: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv-radio-and-on-demand/how-to-report-a-complaint> .

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Yours sincerely

Richard Hutt

Complaints Director