**Séamus Dooley, National Union of Journalists, moving Emergency Motion No 1 on the crisis arising from undisclosed payments to Ryan Tubridy and the revelations of corporate governance failures at RTÉ.**

**President, Delegates,**

**Séamus Dooley, proposing Emergency Motion No 1 on behalf of the NUJ, SIPTU and Connect.**

**“What a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive”.**

The existential crisis which has unfolded over the past two weeks has profound implications not just for trade union members in RTÉ but for Irish society. Public service broadcasting is a vital pillar of democracy, a bulwark against misinformation and the tidal wave of information shaped by algorithms which served to restrict media diversity and plurality. This motion sets out the key developments with which most of you will be familiar.

Delegates, like me, you will have been bothered and bewildered by the confusing narratives which have emerged from the Executive Board of RTE in explaining how public money ended up secretly feathering the nest of one man and the extent to which executives paid from the public purse were prepared to bend and break rules to facilitate financial arrangements with a shadowy figure who has for too long wielded more influence over RTÉ that the board appointed by the Minster or indeed in many respects by the Minister herself.

Payments were even made on foot of fake invoices on the pretence that the agent was able to offer advice on Covid 19 preparations. I’m sorry but when I hear of agents working on lavish commissions, I think more of Dick Turpin than PPE.

At the heart of this crisis is the overweening influence not of Noel Kelly but the way in which editorial and ethical values have been subordinated to commercial considerations. The dominance of the commercial agenda has long been a concern and was clearly outlined as far back as 1969 by Jack Dowling, Lelia Doolan and Bob Quinn in their book “Sit Down and Be Counted” when they identified the diametrically opposed views of culture within RTÉ.

The vulgar, ostentatious junkets, the sense of entitlement, the greed, the contempt for ordinary workers and the disregard for the principles of honesty, truth and good faith negotiations reflect a conflict of values as much as a conflict of interest between those who believe in public service and those who believe that RTÉ exists to fill their well-lined pockets.

### For some the €110,00 bill for travel and hotels to the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan or the €138,000 spent on10-year IRFU season tickets is a minor manner, but they speak to a culture which has informed those who do not respect the principles of public service broadcasting.  To quote Al Capone, “it’s a sweet racket if ya can keep the boys in line”.

They have replaced the St Brigid’s cross with a two-fingered salute to the Irish people and no amount of Corporate gobbledygook can put a shine on their grubby dealings which has damaged the trust of the Irish people.

We welcome Minister Martin’s investigation and look forward to full engagement in all elements of the study. I am proud of my members, and I am proud of the members of SIPTU, Equity, MUI, Connect, Unite and BATU who in so many ways have contributed to the history of RTÉ. As Irish Secretary of the NUJ I want to acknowledge the many fine men and women across the organisations, including managers with whom I have had profound differences, who too have been betrayed by their management.

The financial crisis in RTÉ is a result of a model of public service broadcasting which is outmoded combined with political cowardice of successive governments who failed to provide funds to enable public service broadcasting.  This review is an important start, but it must be accompanied with firm commitments to adequate funding of public service broadcasting.

There are many, in business and in politics, who would gladly use this opportunity to tear apart RTÉ.  For all its faults, RTÉ is worth defending and to those who seek to exploit this crisis I say, “Go dance on someone else’s grave”.

President, I move.