

Warrant of arrest for Media Nova's Vaughan

 By [Glenda Nevill](#)

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The Master of the High Court in Cape Town has authorised a warrant for the arrest of Anthony (Tony) Vaughan, director of Media Nova and various other publishing companies.



Anthony Vaughan: Arrest warrant issued.

At an inquiry held in the insolvency court on Thursday, the presiding officer heard that Vaughan was unavailable to give evidence in the liquidation of Media Nova, the company that published The Property Magazine.

Lawyer Adam Harris of Bowman Gilfillan, acting for liquidators JJ Steenkamp and AV Dawson, said investigators had been unable to locate Vaughan, and that he had "recently moved".

Vaughan, it was discovered, has left South Africa. In a letter to the Master of the High Court, he said he was unable to attend the inquiry, and gave several reasons for his non-appearance. He said after the "demise" of Media Nova, he was unable to conduct business in South Africa, which had left him with "no income and no ability to provide for my family in South Africa".

"There are parts of the media that have launched a slander campaign against me professionally and personally and in doing so have allowed anonymous individuals to place defamatory and damaging comments against these articles and in doing so have provided further difficulties for my ability to conduct business in South Africa," he wrote.

Hoping to return?

"For the two reasons stated above I have had to look overseas for business opportunities such that I can financially provide for my family. My family and I relocated overseas recently to pursue business opportunities more financially viable under the circumstances. We hope to return to South Africa in due course."

Vaughan is alleged to have left a trail of debt in his wake, in particular owing to large South African printers, Paarl Media and CTP, over R10m. It is also alleged that he also owes the Industrial Development Corporation around R1.8m. In addition, the CCMA recently ordered Vaughan to pay staff members left high and dry a year's salary each but he left without any of them receiving payment. A former editor has a claim lodged with the liquidators for her unpaid salary too.

Vaughan, in his letter, said he had co-operated fully with the liquidators and would continue to do so. "I have been delayed in providing some of the information to the liquidator previously partly, but not limited to, the reasons above but I can assure you that all of the information that you require will be provided in time for the inquiry and ongoing," he wrote.

Lawyer unimpressed; speed delivery by Porsche?

But Harris was unimpressed. He said Vaughan should not be excused from attending the inquiry and asked the presiding officer to authorise a warrant for arrest, which was granted. He said Vaughan had "chosen to put himself beyond reach".

Harris called two witnesses, firstly Media Nova's auditors, Ernst Snyman, followed by the company's former bookkeeper, Leanne Cox. Snyman attempted to unravel for the court a complex web of dealings, publishing companies and trusts. In essence, he said Media Nova had problems as a "going concern" as far back as 2009. He said he had warned Vaughan in a note on 31 August 2009. Harris pointed out that Vaughan noted Snyman was a "slow and boring auditor on a witch-hunt". Harris was particularly interested in how luxury vehicles, including a Porsche Carrera and a Porsche Cayenne, were listed as a fringe benefit and their private use paid for by the company. The cost, said Harris, was a "bit chunky" for what were labelled "delivery vehicles". He said many of Vaughan's personal expenses were paid for by the company. His questioning of Snyman revealed Vaughan was also in breach of his agreement with the IDC, which did not make an appearance in the insolvency court.

Essentially, Harris said, Vaughan's assets and those of Media Nova had "disappeared".

Cox explained that Vaughan had instructed her to package all files and assets in a removal van and send them to him in Johannesburg in late October last year. She could not give details on what the files contained. She said she also had not been paid.

Vaughan is married to Generations actor, Faye Peters. She is believed to have left South Africa with him.

The case has been postponed until 4 June for further investigation.

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ABOUT GLENDA NEVILL

Glenda Nevill is a journalist, editor and communicator with 25 years experience working in media. She worked for *The Sunday Times* in various roles for nine years. She edited *The Big Issue* for six years, before taking up the position as launch editor of *The Property Magazine*. She then moved into public relations, working for HWB Communications and Cryx Multimedia. Nevill is currently editor of The Media Online. Follow @GendaN on Twitter.

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