

# Uproar over 'news story' ad on front page of LA Times

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The "Los Angeles Times" newspaper building in downtown Los Angeles. An advertisement dressed up as a news story on the front page of the Los Angeles Times has reporters at the newspaper fuming and the publisher defending the move.

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The advertisement, for the NBC television series "Southland," appeared on page one of the Times on Thursday. Although it was labelled "advertisement," the ad resembled a news story complete with a bold-type headline.

According to the blog MediaMemo, more than 100 staffers at the

newspaper signed a petition protesting the appearance of the fake news story ad on the front page.

"We the journalists of the newsroom strenuously object to the decision to sell an ad, in the form of a phony news story, on the front page of the Los Angeles Times," [mediamemo.allthingsd.com](http://mediamemo.allthingsd.com) quoted the petition as saying.

"The NBC ad may have provided some quick cash, but it has caused incalculable damage to this institution," it said. "Placing a fake news article on A-1 makes a mockery of our integrity and our journalistic standards.

"Our willingness to sell our most precious real estate to an advertiser is embarrassing and demoralizing," the petition said.

The Times said about 70 readers had complained about the ad, which was published over the objections of the newspaper's editor, Russ Stanton.

Publisher Eddy Hartenstein told the Times he had decided to run the ad despite protests from the newsroom because he was trying to ensure the newspaper's survival.

"Because of the times that we're in, we have to look at all sorts of different -- and some would say innovative -- new solutions for our advertising clients," he said.

The Los Angeles Times is owned by the Chicago-based Tribune Co., which declared bankruptcy in December.

Like other US newspapers, the Times has seen a steep decline over the past year in print [advertising revenue](#) and has been forced to lay off

hundreds of employees.

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