

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CLAIM NO:HC12C00609

CHANCERY DIVISION

BETWEEN:

COLIN STAGG

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Solicitor Advocate for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information and breach of confidence, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Anthony Hudson, appears for the Defendant.
2. The Claimant is a private individual, who became of interest to the media when he was wrongly accused of the murder of Rachel Nickell in 1993. The Claimant was subsequently acquitted in September 1994.
3. The Defendant was the publisher of the '*News of the World*' newspaper which had a considerable readership in this jurisdiction, until its closure in July 2011, and which also published its content on its website www.newsoftheworld.com.
4. The Claimant was targeted by the Defendant from about 2002 onwards because of the continued speculation in the media that he was or may have been guilty of the murder of Rachel Nickell (which persisted despite his acquittal in 1994), and the

resulting interest in his private life. Over the years, the Claimant has suffered enormously at the hands of the media, in particular the Defendant.

5. At the relevant time, the Claimant had two mobile telephones one on the T-Mobile network and one on the O2 network. The Claimant rarely answered his mobile phone, preferring to screen his voicemails first. As a result, he used his voicemail extensively for personal purposes. A lot of information was left by his friend, Mr Hynds, on the Claimant's voicemail service including the outline for stories about the Claimant that they were preparing together.
6. In late 2011, the Claimant was contacted by Operation Weeting and was told that a number of his private details were included notes that they had seized in 2006. These details included the Claimant's name, address, his date of birth, his mobile phone number as well as the telephone numbers of various people associated with the Claimant. In addition to this, the notes had recorded details of the Claimant's doctor, hospitals the Claimant had had appointments at, and his private medical details. The Claimant was shocked and bewildered to find these details in the notes, in particular his medical information.
7. Having seen this evidence, on 15 February 2012, the Claimant issued proceedings against NGN Limited for misuse of private information and breach of confidence. On 9 July 2012, the Claimant served his Claimant Specific Particulars of Claim. On 24 September 2012, the Defendant served a defence to the Claimant's claim. However, the Defendant now accepts that it targeted the Claimant and the Claimant's voicemail messages from at least 2002 to 2006.
8. I am here today to announce that the Defendant has accepted liability and has agreed to pay damages to the Claimant in the sum of £15,500 plus his legal costs. Furthermore, the Defendant has also undertaken not to further access the Claimant's voicemail messages or to publish the Claimant's unlawfully obtained private information.

Counsel for the First Defendant

9. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything my Friend, Mr Thomson, has said.

10. The Defendant is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the damage, as well as the distress, caused to him by the blagging of his confidential information, in particular his medical information, and the accessing of his voicemail messages. The Defendant acknowledges that the information should never have been obtained or used in the manner it was and that the Defendant is liable for misuse of private information and breach of confidence.

Solicitor- Advocate for the Claimant

11. In the light of the order which has been made and this statement, the Claimant considers that he is fully vindicated.



Mark Thomson



Anthony Hudson