

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

IN THE MIRROR NEWSPAPERS HACKING LITIGATION

B E T W E E N : -

MICHELLE COLLINS

Claimant

and

MGN LIMITED


Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Counsel for the Claimant

1. I appear for the Claimant, Michelle Collins, in her claim for misuse of private information against the Defendant, MGN Limited, who I will refer to as MGN.
2. My learned friend, [], appears for MGN.
3. Michelle Collins is an actress, best known for roles in Eastenders, Coronation Street, Sunburn, Two Thousand Acres of Sky, and various other roles on both stage and screen.
4. MGN is the publisher of newspapers throughout the UK, including three national tabloid newspapers, namely the Mirror, the Sunday Mirror, and the People.

5. In October 2015, Ms Collins was contacted by the Metropolitan Police Service's Operation Golding who informed her that she was probably a victim of voicemail interception by journalists from MGN. Ms Collins was shown call data by the police showing a significant number calls made to her mobile telephone by a single journalist from the People newspaper in just a five month period in 2003. It was plain from this evidence that MGN had successfully accessed Ms Collins voicemails on numerous occasions during this short period alone.
6. After learning this information, Ms Collins instructed her lawyers to prepare a claim for voicemail interception against MGN and seek disclosure of the underlying evidence showing the extent of the interception. Her lawyers duly wrote a detailed letter of claim to MGN on 10 December 2015. In it, they alleged that Ms Collins was targeted by MGN over a number of years, not just by the journalist identified in the police call data, but by several other MGN journalists from all three MGN newspapers. MGN targeted Ms Collins not just because of her high profile roles on television, but also because it had a particularly intense interest in her personal life. Ms Collins' lawyers identified 25 articles published in MGN titles between 2000-2006 which Ms Collins suspected to be the product of voicemail interception or other unlawful information gathering.
7. On 17 December 2015, having considered her letter of claim, MGN admitted liability to Ms Collins and apologised to her for the misuse of her private information.
8. MGN also provided Ms Collins with various items of additional disclosure. This included further call data and a number of private investigator invoices indicating that MGN, in targeting Ms Collins, had engaged in other unlawful information gathering activities besides phone hacking.
9. Ms Collins was distressed and appalled to learn that she was targeted in this manner by MGN, and that it has taken until 2015 for this information to come to light. She also found the experience of being contacted by the Police, being shown disclosure relating to her, and having to go back through historic intrusive articles to be a very upsetting process.
10. By intercepting her voicemails, MGN would have been privy to messages of a highly personal nature. Indeed many of the articles identified by Ms Collins were highly intrusive and were published at a time of intense media intrusion into her life. The extent to which MGN delved into Ms Collins' personal life had a devastating effect on her and those close to her, and also impacted upon her career.

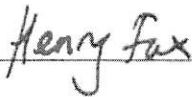
11. Ms Collins is particularly angered by the fact that MGN saw fit to target her when she was a young single mother, and also how MGN sought to portray her in a negative light.
12. I am here to announce that in September 2016, following discussions and negotiations between the parties, Ms Collins resolved her claim with MGN. Not only did MGN admit that journalists intercepted her voicemail for over four years over ¹decade ago, but it also agreed to pay her substantial damages, along with her reasonable legal costs. Both issues have already been resolved. MGN also agreed to join in this Statement in Open Court as part of the agreed settlement. 
13. MGN also agreed in December 2015 to give an undertaking to Ms Collins that it would not intercept her voicemail messages.

Counsel for the Defendant

14. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, MGN, I confirm everything that my learned friend [] has said.
15. MGN is here today, through me, to offer its apologies to Ms Collins for the damage and distress that it caused her by intercepting her voicemail messages.

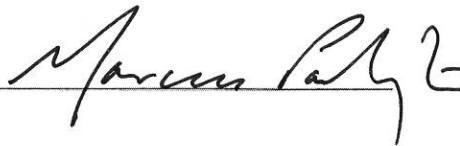
Counsel for the Claimant

16. My Lord, Ms Collins is pleased that MGN has acknowledged and apologised for its wrongdoing and in view of this Statement in Open Court, which was agreed as part of her settlement, she considers that this matter is now concluded.



Henry Fox

Solicitor for the Claimant



Marcus Partington

Solicitor for the Defendant