

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CLAIMS NO: HC11C01125

CHANCERY DIVISION

BETWEEN:

JOAN HAMMELL

Claimant

and

(1) NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED  
(2) GLENN MICHAEL MULCAIRE

Defendants

---

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

---

Solicitor Advocate for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Michael Silverleaf QC, appears for the First Defendant.
2. The Claimant was, from 1997 until 2007, one of the special advisers to the Right Honourable John Prescott MP. Between 2001 and 2007, the Claimant was also John Prescott's Chief of Staff, which was the period in which he was Deputy Prime Minister. In order to work at the level of special adviser, the Claimant had to be cleared at a "Developed Vetting" security level, which is the most comprehensive and highest form of security vetting for people in her position. This was because the Claimant was in constant communication with, inter alia, the officials at 10 Downing Street and other government ministers and, as a consequence, she was party to a lot of highly sensitive information.

3. The First Defendant was the publisher of the News of the World newspaper which had a considerable readership in this jurisdiction and which also published its content on its website [www.newsoftheworld.com](http://www.newsoftheworld.com). The Second Defendant was a private investigator engaged by the First Defendant to carry out various investigative activities. His methods included blagging information from mobile phone companies and the unlawful interception of voicemail messages.
4. Over the period working for Mr Prescott, the Claimant experienced odd phone activity and complaints from friends, family and members of Government that she had not returned the messages they had left on her voicemail.
5. During 2005-2006, the First Defendant published a number of articles about Mr Prescott containing information that the Claimant, and others, could not understand how the press had found out about. The Claimant and her colleagues speculated at the time about how the media, in particular the First Defendant, was getting the information.
6. In April 2011, the Claimant met with the Metropolitan Police and was showed pages of the Second Defendant's notes, which included her mobile number, direct dial number, pin number and her address, as well as other confidential details. The Claimant was also shown emails which revealed that the Second Defendant had passed on her pin number and direct dial number and the fact she had 45 voicemail messages to one of the First Defendant's journalists. In addition to this, the Claimant was shown call data that indicated the Second Defendant had repeatedly accessed her messages.
7. The Claimant issued proceedings against the First and Second Defendants for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment. Both Defendants indicated their intention to defend the claim and duly served defences.

The First Defendant's defence contained a number of limited admissions.

8. On 11 November 2011, the First Defendant provided disclosure in the Claimant's action. This disclosure also indicated that the First Defendant had tasked someone to watch the Claimant and that they had looked into her on more than one occasion.
9. On 13 December 2011, the First Defendant made a series of more extensive admissions in relation to the general practice of intercepting voicemail messages by the News of the World. It has become clear, and the First Defendant now accepts, that the Defendants targeted the Claimant and the Claimant's voicemail messages from at least 2005 to 2006.
10. I am here today to announce that the First Defendant has accepted liability and has agreed to pay damages to the Claimant in the sum of £40,000 plus her legal costs. Furthermore, both Defendants have also undertaken not to further access the Claimant's voicemail messages or to publish the Claimant's unlawfully obtained private information or to put her under surveillance.

**Counsel for the First Defendant**

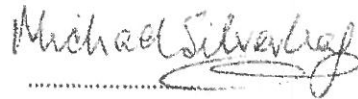
11. My Lord, on behalf of the First Defendant, I confirm everything my Friend, Mr Thomson, has said.
12. The First Defendant is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the damage, as well as the distress, caused to her by the blagging of her confidential information from sources and the accessing of her voicemail messages. The First Defendant acknowledges that the information should never have been obtained or used in the manner it was and that the First Defendant is liable for misuse of private information and breach of confidence.

Solicitor- Advocate for the Claimant

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



Mark Thomson



Michael Silverleaf QC