

PRESS STATEMENT OF SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON

I have today settled my legal action against the Daily Mail in respect of an article, which was published on 30 May 2009, in both the print and online versions of the Daily Mail, under the headline "*Who's Telling Parkies*".

I have accepted £25,000 in damages, which I will donate in full to two charities, "*The Alexander Devine Children's Cancer Trust*" and a school for orphans in South Africa. The Daily Mail has also published an apology, and has agreed to the wording of today's statement in open court, which was heard by Mr Justice Eady this morning. In addition they have provided me with undertakings and agreed to pay my legal costs.

The article was both distressing and as inaccurate as it was damaging. It alleged I had behaved in a grossly insensitive way to my elderly uncle, my father's brother, Bernard Parkinson. It also accused me of lying about my family background by describing a happy, harmonious childhood in a close knit family. It also alleged I had lied about my father by describing him as an honest and inspiring parent, beloved by his family and friends.

As a journalist myself, I have been reluctant to take legal action against any newspaper. Where defamatory allegations have been published about me, I have always until now turned a blind eye. However, I decided that The Daily Mail had crossed a line by a long way, especially as they knew my views on my father and my family, having serialised my autobiography in September 2008, a serialisation which commenced with a detailed description of my love for my father and the inspiration he gave me.

The Daily Mail has now accepted that none of the allegations complained of are true, as recorded in the statement in open court.

As I have said in my witness statement, which has been filed at Court, during my nearly 60 years as a journalist I have always believed it was standard journalistic practice, as well as a matter of common decency, for a newspaper to apologise publicly and promptly when they have made a mistake. In this case, it should not have taken 9 months nor been so difficult for the editor to apologise promptly. Moreover I believe that the persistent delaying tactics of the Daily Mail were both unattractive and unworthy of a National newspaper. At a time when the media is seeking greater freedom, I think it is counterproductive for a newspaper to behave in this way.

Sir Michael Parkinson

3rd March 2010.