

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS
BUSINESS LIST
BUSINESS

B E T W E E N:-

BOB MORTIMER

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Solicitor for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Anthony Hudson QC appears for the Defendant.
2. The Claimant is a former solicitor, now a comedian, presenter, writer and actor. He is well-known for his double act in *Vic & Bob* with Vic Reeves (real name James Moir), and appeared regularly on prime-time television in shows including *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)*, *Catterick*, *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and *Vic & Bob's Afternoon Delights*, as well as the game show *Shooting Stars*, with Mark Lamarr, Matt Lucas and Ulrika Jonsson. The Claimant was subject to media coverage as a result of his celebrity status and close relationships with other high-profile people.
3. The Defendant is NGN Limited, a subsidiary company of News Corp UK and Ireland Limited trading as News UK. NGN Limited was the publisher of the *News of the World* newspaper until its closure in July 2011. It also publishes *The Sun*. Both the *News of the World* and *The Sun* were high circulation newspapers which were read by millions during the relevant period.

4. The Claimant instructed solicitors to investigate matters after his close friend, Jim Moir, was contacted by the MPS to confirm that they had found the name and contact details of Mr. Moir in Operation Weeting disclosure.
5. The Claimant's solicitors sent the Defendant a formal letter of claim which identified 3 articles. On 31 March 2017 the Claimant issued proceedings against the Defendant. On 29 September 2017, the Claimant set out the details of his claim relying on the 3 aforementioned articles.
6. The Claimant alleged that during the relevant period he experienced suspicious telephone and media-related activity. The Claimant alleged that private information about himself was published in the Defendant's newspapers and with hindsight the Claimant believed that this was as a result of his voicemail messages being accessed unlawfully.
7. On 27 November 2017, the Defendant served a Defence.
8. On 21 March 2018, the Defendant made an offer of settlement which led to the parties reaching an agreement to resolve the Claimant's claim.
9. Following discussions between the parties, I am here today to announce that the parties have now been able to agree terms of settlement. These include the payment of damages for the distress the Claimant has suffered. The parties have also agreed and noted that the Defendant makes no admission of liability in relation to the Claimant's allegations of voicemail interception and/or other unlawful information gathering at *The Sun*.

Solicitor for the Defendant

10. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything my friend has said.
11. The Defendant is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the distress caused by the invasion of the Claimant's privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. The Defendant accepts that such activity should never have taken place and that it had no right to intrude into the Claimant's private life in this way.

Solicitor for the Claimant

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

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Hamkins LLP

Solicitors for the Claimant

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Clifford Chance LLP

Solicitors for the Defendant