

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

Claim Number: BL-2020-000660

BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION LITIGATION

BEFORE: THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE FANCOURT

B E T W E E N:

RONAN KEATING

Claimant

- and -

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Ellen Gallagher, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor-Advocate for the Claimant

1. My Lord, in this action for misuse of private information, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Mr Ronan Keating. My learned friend, Ben Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. Mr Keating is a renowned singer-songwriter, musician and television and radio presenter, and husband and father to five children. Since September 2017, Mr Keating has presented the *Breakfast Show* for the Magic FM and was appointed a permanent presenter on BBC1's *One Show* in May 2021. Mr Keating is an active charity campaigner for the Marie Keating Foundation, which he founded in his mother's memory and which raises awareness of breast cancer. Mr Keating has raised over £10 million for Cancer Research UK through his charitable endeavours. Mr Keating was a member of the globally successful band *Boyzone*. Following his departure from *Boyzone*, Mr Keating established himself as a successful solo artist with significant global success.
3. As a result of his work and his high-profile relationships, Mr Keating was of considerable interest to the press.

4. The Defendant was the publisher of the *News of the World* which, until its closure in July 2011, was the UK's biggest selling Sunday newspaper with a very considerable readership in this jurisdiction. The Defendant was, and remains, the publisher of *The Sun* which still enjoys a substantial circulation and readership in this jurisdiction both in the hard copies of its publications and on its website.
5. In April 2020, Mr Keating issued proceedings against the Defendant. Mr Keating claimed that his voicemail messages were intercepted by the Defendant's journalists and consequently these journalists were privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on his mobile telephone by others, such as his family and friends. Mr Keating also alleged that the Defendant obtained his personal information by deception.
6. Mr Keating identified a number of articles published by the Defendant's newspapers, between 1996 and 2011, which he claimed contained his private information and which he asserted were suspicious. During this time, Mr Keating used his voicemail extensively and would regularly exchange voicemail messages with his close friends and family.
7. Mr Keating further asserted that as a result of the Defendant's publications, he became suspicious as to who might be the source of the private information that was being published in the Defendant's newspapers. Mr Keating alleged that the publication of the articles generated distrust which impacted on his relationships and caused him considerable distress and upset.
8. Mr Keating is pleased to confirm that he has accepted the Defendant's offer to resolve his claim on terms confidential between the parties, but which involves the Defendant agreeing to pay substantial damages to Mr Keating as well as his reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. The Defendant has also provided the necessary undertakings to the Court and Mr Keating. The Defendant has agreed to join in this statement to apologise to Mr Keating publicly for the distress caused to him by the invasion of his privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. The Defendant makes no admission of liability in relation to Mr Keating's allegations of voicemail interception and/or other unlawful information gathering at *The Sun*.

Ben Silverstone, Counsel for the Defendant

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

10. The Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the distress caused to him by the invasion of his privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. The Defendant acknowledges that such activity should never have taken place, and that it had no right to intrude into the private life of the Claimant in this way.

Ellen Gallagher, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor-Advocate for the Claimant

11. My Lord, in light of the order that has been made, and this public statement, the Claimant considers that the matter is now concluded.

Hamblins LLP

Clifford Chance

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Hamblins LLP

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Clifford Chance LLP

Solicitors for the Claimant

Solicitors for the Defendant