

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES
BUSINESS LIST**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION
LITIGATION**

BEFORE: THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE FANCOURT

B E T W E E N:

CATHERINE FORD

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Christopher Hutchings, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor for the Claimant

1. My Lord, in this action for misuse of private information, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Ms Catherine Ford, known by her stage name Catherine Tate. My Learned Friend, Mr Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. Ms Tate is a comedian and actress. She co-wrote and starred in the BBC comedy sketch series, *The Catherine Tate Show*, broadcast between 2004 and 2007, for which she was recognised with an International Emmy nomination and six BAFTA nominations. Ms Tate is also widely known for her role in *Doctor Who* between 2006 and 2010, recently revised in 2023, and for starring in the US version of *The Office* between 2011 and 2013.

3. In her claim, Ms Tate asserted that by virtue of her profession and her relationships with other high-profile individuals, she was privy to private information relating to her, her friends and family (including Twig Clark), as well as her various associates in the entertainment industry. Ms Tate pleaded that she was subjected to a significant amount of unwanted press intrusion and harassment as a consequence of this.
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, to this day, enjoys a substantial circulation and readership in this jurisdiction, by way of hard copy sales of the newspaper and via its website.
5. In September 2022, Ms Tate issued proceedings against the Defendant, where she pleaded that her voicemail messages were intercepted by the Defendant's journalists and she claimed that consequentially, the Defendant's journalists were privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on her mobile telephone by her family, close friends and close professional associates. Ms Tate also pleaded that the Defendant had unlawfully obtained her personal information by deception.
6. Ms Tate identified a significant number of articles published by the Defendant's newspapers between 2005 and 2011, which she asserted contained her private information. Ms Tate pleaded that, during this time, she used her voicemail extensively for both personal and professional purposes and she would regularly exchange voicemail messages with her associates, including her close friends, family and professional colleagues.

7. Ms Tate claimed that the publication of the articles caused her distress. Ms Tate pleaded that she is a very private person, and she was distressed by the press attention into her and her family life. She further pleaded that she avoided communication with the press unless she was contractually obliged to do so.

8. Ms Tate is pleased to confirm that she has accepted the Defendant's offer to resolve her claim on terms confidential between the parties but which involve the payment of substantial damages to her by the Defendant, as well as her reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. The Defendant has also provided appropriate undertakings to the Court and Ms Tate and has agreed to join in this statement to apologise in open court to Ms Tate for the distress caused to her by the invasion of her privacy by individuals working for or on behalf of the *News of the World*. 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*.

Ben Silverstone, Counsel for the Defendant

9. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything that 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 her by the invasion of her 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.

Christopher Hutchings, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor 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.

Hammins LLP

.....

Hammins LLP
Solicitors for the Claimant

Clifford Chance LLP

.....

Clifford Chance LLP
Solicitors for the Defendant