

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

Claim Number: BL-2021-000988

IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE
VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION LITIGATION

BEFORE: THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE FANCOURT

B E T W E E N:

DAVINIA DOUGLASS

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, Davinia Douglass. My learned friend, Ben Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. Ms Douglass is a private individual and a survivor of the bombings that took place across London on 7 July 2005, the 7/7 Bombings, in which 52 people tragically lost their lives.
3. When commuting to work on the London Underground, a bomb exploded in the carriage in which Ms Douglass was travelling, causing her extensive injuries. A photograph of Ms Douglass holding a gauze mask being led to safety was circulated by the Press Association and published extensively by media outlets across the UK and around the world.
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 June 2021, Ms Douglass issued proceedings against NGN for misuse of private information, including obtaining her private information by deception and blagging. Ms Douglass asserted that her voicemail messages were intercepted by NGN's journalists and she claimed that, as a result, those journalists were privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on her mobile telephone by others.
6. Ms Douglass identified a number of articles which she claimed contained her private information which were published by the Defendant's newspapers and which Ms Douglass believed were derived from unlawful information gathering. Ms Douglass asserted that this press intrusion had a significant impact on her quality of life in the aftermath of the 7/7 Bombings, and that she had suffered considerable distress and upset as a result of this.
7. Ms Douglass is pleased to confirm she has accepted the Defendant's offer to resolve her claim on terms confidential between the parties and which involve the payment of substantial damages as well as her reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. The Defendant has also provided the necessary undertakings to the Court and Ms Douglass and has agreed to join in this statement to apologise publicly to Ms Douglass 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 Ms Douglass's allegations of voicemail interception and/or other unlawful information gathering at *The Sun*.

Ben Silverstone, Counsel for the Defendant

8. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything my Friend has said.
9. The Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its sincere apologies to Ms Douglass 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 Ms Douglass in this way.

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

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

Hamblins LLP

.....
Hamblins LLP
Solicitors for the Claimant

Clifford Chance

.....
Clifford Chance LLP
Solicitors for the Defendant