

IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE  
VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION LITIGATION

BEFORE: THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE MANN

B E T W E E N:

NOEL FIELDING

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

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STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

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Alex Cochrane, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor for the Claimant

1. My Lord, in this action for misuse of private information, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Mr Noel Fielding. My learned friend, Mr Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. The Claimant is a comedian, actor and television presenter best known for his creation of, and role in, the BBC television series '*The Mighty Boosh*'. As a result of the Claimant's high profile, he was a person of interest to the press.
3. 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.
4. In March 2019, the Claimant issued proceedings against the Defendant. Mr Fielding claimed that his voicemail messages were intercepted by the Defendant's journalists and that as a result, these journalists would have been privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on his mobile telephone by others, such as his family and close friends. The Claimant also claimed that the Defendant had obtained his personal information by deception.
5. The Claimant identified a number of articles that were published by the Defendant's newspapers between 2006 and 2010 which he claimed contained his private information and which he claimed were suspicious. During this time, Mr Fielding used his voicemail

extensively and he would regularly receive and leave voicemail messages for his family and close friends.

6. Mr Fielding further claimed that as a result of these publications, he became suspicious as to who might be the source of the private information that was being published by the Defendant's newspapers and it was alleged that the publication of the articles generated distrust which impacted his relationships and caused him considerable distress.
7. The Claimant is pleased to confirm that he has accepted the Defendant's offer to resolve his claim on terms confidential between the parties, but which involve the Defendant agreeing to pay substantial damages to the Claimant as well as his reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. The Defendant has also provided the necessary undertakings to the Court and the Claimant, and it has agreed to join in this statement to apologise to the Claimant 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 the Claimant'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 learned Friend has said.
9. 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.

**Alex Cochrane, Hamlins LLP, Solicitor for the Claimant**

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

Hamlins LLP

Clifford Chance LLP

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**Hamlins LLP**  
**Solicitors for the Claimant**

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**Clifford Chance LLP**  
**Solicitors for the Defendant**