

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

Claim Number: BL-2020-000828

IN THE MATTER OF THE MOBILE TELEPHONE
VOICEMAIL INTERCEPTION LITIGATION

BEFORE: THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE MANN

B E T W E E N:

RITA TOMLINSON

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Ellen Gallagher, Solicitor-Advocate for the Claimant

1. My Lord, in this action for misuse of private information, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Ms Rita Tomlinson. My learned friend, Ben Silverstone, appears on behalf of the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited (“NGN”).
2. Ms Tomlinson is a private individual and the wife of the well-known actor and comedian Ricky Tomlinson. Since 2002, she has been his manager.
3. As a result of her marriage to Mr Tomlinson and her role as his manager, Ms Tomlinson had knowledge of private information relating to Mr Tomlinson’s career and their shared personal life and was therefore a person of interest to the press.
4. NGN 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. NGN 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. Ms Tomlinson issued proceedings against NGN in May 2020. Those proceedings were brought on the basis that Ms Tomlinson believed her voicemail messages were intercepted by NGN's journalists and, as a result, those journalists were privy to private and confidential voicemail messages left on her mobile telephone by others, such as her family and friends.
6. Ms Tomlinson identified a number of articles which she asserted were suspicious and which she claimed contained private and confidential information about her and her family members which were published by NGN's newspapers between 2000 and 2011. During this time, Ms Tomlinson used her voicemail extensively and regularly received and left voicemail messages. The publication of the articles was alleged to have caused Ms Tomlinson distress and upset.
7. Ms Tomlinson has now accepted NGN's offer to resolve her claim on terms confidential between the parties and which involve the payment of substantial damages by the Defendant to her as well as her reasonable legal costs of bringing the claim. NGN has also provided appropriate undertakings to the Court and has agreed to join in this statement to apologise publicly 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 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 for the Defendant

8. My Lord, on behalf of NGN, I confirm everything my Friend has said.
9. NGN is here today, through me, to offer its sincere apologies to Ms Tomlinson 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*. NGN acknowledges that such activity should never have taken place, and that it had no right to intrude into the private life of Ms Tomlinson in this way.

Ellen Gallagher, Solicitor-Advocate for the Claimant

10. My Lord, in light of the order that has been made, and this public statement, Ms Tomlinson is content to consider this matter concluded.

Hamblins LLP

Clifford Chance LLP

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Hamblins LLP
Solicitors for the Claimant

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Clifford Chance LLP
Solicitors for the Defendant