

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

B E T W E E N:

CHRISTOPHER JEFFERIES

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Solicitor for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information, I appear for the Claimant, Christopher Jefferies. My learned friend, , appears for the Defendant, News Group Newspapers Limited.
2. The Claimant is a retired schoolteacher and landlord who became known to the press following the disappearance of one of his tenants, Joanna Yeates, in December 2010. Ms Yeates was subsequently found to have been murdered. The Claimant was held in custody for three days, following his arrest on the suspicion of Ms Yeates' murder. He was later released on bail, then ultimately found to have no connection whatsoever with her murder.
3. The Defendant was the publisher of the *News of the World* newspaper until its closure in July 2011. It is also the publisher of *The Sun* newspaper.

4. In September 2022, the Claimant issued proceedings against the Defendant.
5. On 19 December 2023, he served his Particulars of Claim in which he made allegations in relation to alleged private investigator inquiries on behalf of *The Sun* and the *News of the World*, concerning him, his friends and other pleaded Associates.
6. In his Particulars of Claim, the Claimant alleged that the Defendant targeted him for the purpose of publishing articles about him and his Associates. The Claimant relied on various articles published by the Defendant's newspapers between December 2010 and November 2011, which he claimed contained personal information about his private life, or which he alleged were occasions when the Defendant had sought to obtain private information about him. The Claimant alleged that his information was obtained and published as a result of voicemail interception.
7. The Claimant further alleged that the publication of articles in the Defendant's newspapers had a damaging and long-lasting effect on him and his private life including his standing in the community and to his relationships with some friends.
8. In his Particulars of Claim, the Claimant also relied, as aggravating factors, on the matters relating to the Leveson Inquiry at which he gave evidence under oath about the impact of tabloid news coverage of him at the time of the murder investigation and his arrest, and on the newsgathering used for the articles which resulted in libel settlements and were the subject of contempt rulings, including against the Defendant.
9. The Defendant provided disclosure which the Claimant believed indicated that he had been targeted by individuals working for or acting on behalf of the Defendant and this caused him upset.

10. In November 2024, the Claimant 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 to pay the Claimant's reasonable legal costs. The settlement of this claim is on the basis that NGN makes no admission of liability in relation to the Claimant's allegations of voicemail interception and/or other unlawful information gathering at *The Sun*. The Defendant has also provided appropriate undertakings to the Court and the Claimant and has agreed to join in this statement to apologise 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*.

Counsel for the Defendant

11. My Lord on behalf of the Defendant I confirm everything that my learned friend has said.
12. The Defendant is here today, through me, to offer its apologies to Mr Jefferies 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 Mr Jefferies' private life in this way.

Solicitor for the Claimant

13. In light of the order which has been made and this statement, the Claimant considers that the matter is now concluded.



Alex Cochrane

Partner

Edwards Duthie Shamash

Solicitors for the Claimant



Clifford Chance LLP

Solicitors for the Defendant