

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**

**CLAIM NO: HC14F02191**

**CHANCERY DIVISION**

**B E T W E E N:**

**BEN JACKSON**

Claimant

- and -

**MGN LIMITED**

Defendant

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**STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT**

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**Counsel for the Claimant (David Sherborne)**

1. In this action for misuse of private information, I appear for the Claimant, Ben Jackson. My learned friend Matthew Nicklin QC appears for the Defendant.
2. The Claimant is, and has been since 2001, the personal assistant to the actor Jude Law and Company Secretary to his film production company. The Claimant is not a public figure and does not deal with the media on behalf of Mr Law.
3. The Defendant is MGN Limited, a subsidiary company of Trinity Mirror plc and the publisher of a number of well-known and highly influential newspaper titles. In particular, it is the publisher of *The Daily Mirror*, *The Sunday Mirror* and *The People*.
4. The Claimant claims that between at least 2003 and 2004, his voicemail messages were hacked into by MGN's journalists. As a result, these journalists would have been privy to personal messages left on his phone, or left by him for others such as

family and friends, and also messages left by, for or about his employer and friend, Jude Law.

5. Mr Jackson was suspicious at the time about unusual calls to his phone and articles appearing in the media about Mr Law and their mutual circle of friends. Both he and Mr Law were very concerned that someone close to them was leaking information to the press. As a consequence of these concerns, Mr Jackson changed his and Mr Law's phone numbers on multiple occasions as a security measure.
6. The Defendant has admitted that it was responsible, through the unauthorised acts of certain of its employees, for the unlawful interception of Mr Jackson's voicemail messages and blagging of his call data. Whilst it has admitted that it will never know the extent of the unlawful activities concerning Mr Jackson, it has admitted that Mr Jackson's details were in Dan Evans' Palm Pilot, and that from the period 6 March to 27 April 2006 private investigators carried out research into him. Furthermore, it has admitted that at least one call was made from the MGN landline to the Claimant's mobile phone on 7 September 2004, and the pattern of that call may well be consistent with voicemail interception or attempted interception. .
7. The Defendant has also admitted that the unlawful activities were likely to have resulted in the publication of the 2 articles published in the *Sunday Mirror* at the time, which he has identified in his action, which he commenced against MGN in May 2014.
8. On 31 December 2014 MGN offered to pay Mr Jackson substantial damages as well as his reasonable legal fees. MGN also offered an undertaking not to intercept Mr Jackson's voicemail messages or republish the articles which Mr Jackson has complained about, being the product of this criminal activity. Mr Jackson accepted this offer.
9. Given this, and the fact that MGN accepted liability for voicemail interception and the unlawful obtaining of personal information on 24 October 2014, I can say on

behalf of Mr Jackson, that he has now achieved everything which he has set out to achieve through the pursuit of these proceedings. He is therefore prepared to resolve his claim against MGN on these terms.

**Counsel for the Defendant**

10. My Lord, MGN accepts that the methods which were used to obtain private information about Mr Jackson through the unlawful accessing of his voicemails and the obtaining of his personal information should never have been employed and, further, that there was no legitimate justification for this or the publication of the 2 articles to which Mr Sherborne refers, and which were based on information obtained through these unlawful methods.

11. MGN is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to Mr Jackson for the damage and distress caused to him by hacking into his voicemail messages and by obtaining private information about him including the use of blagging.

12. In addition to paying Mr Jackson substantial sums by way of damages and his reasonable costs, MGN has agreed an undertaking to the court, which Mr Jackson has accepted, that it will not in future republish the articles or intercept the Claimant's voicemail messages.

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07/07/2015