

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CLAIM NO: HC12A01980

CHANCERY DIVISION

BETWEEN:

HUGH GRANT

Claimant

and

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant

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STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

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Solicitor Advocate for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information, breach of confidence and harassment, I appear for the Claimant. My learned friend, Dinah Rose QC, appears for the Defendant.
2. The Claimant is a well known British actor.
3. The Defendant was the publisher of the 'News of the World' newspaper which had a considerable readership in this jurisdiction, until its closure in July 2011, and which also published its content on its website [www.newsoftheworld.com](http://www.newsoftheworld.com).
4. The Claimant was targeted by the Defendant at various times from about 2004 until the closure of The News of the World, because he was of particular interest for the Defendant: firstly, for his leading roles in a number of popular British films; secondly, because of his well-known relationships and friendships with various high-profile women and thirdly, on account of the general interest there has been in the media for details concerning his private life. The Claimant was often unable to understand how information concerning his private life came to be published by the Defendant and, as a result, became concerned about the security of his mobile telephone. The

Defendant has published numerous stories about the Claimant and his friends and consequently the Claimant also started to distrust and avoid certain friends and acquaintances.

5. From 2002, the Claimant used a number of mobile telephones with Vodafone. He used them extensively for personal and professional purposes. The Claimant also used the generic default PIN and never set up a personal PIN number on his Vodafone account. His voicemails could therefore be accessed using the generic default PIN until at least early 2004.
6. In 2011, the Claimant was contacted by Operation Weeting and was told that his name and other information appear in documents that they had seized in 2006. In May 2012 he was contacted again by Operation Weeting about new evidence in the notes that they had seized. After he was notified by Operation Weeting the second time, the Claimant decided to undertake significant investigations with his lawyers about the contents of these notes.
7. The Claimant was shocked and distressed to discover considerable evidence that indicated that he was targeted as an individual of particular interest to the Defendant and had been placed under surveillance and a "Project Name" in the name of the Claimant as well as a number of significant telephone numbers had then been used by the Defendant for numerous stories published in its newspaper over the relevant period about the Claimant and his friends and his personal relationships.
8. The Claimant was particularly distressed to learn that he had wrongly mistrusted and avoided certain friends and acquaintances in the past, and would never find out the full extent of the Defendant's misuse of his private information
9. The Claimant issued proceedings against NGN Limited for misuse of his private information, breach of confidence and harassment on 13 September 2012 and served his Amended Claimant Specific Particulars of Claim on 1 November 2012.
10. My Lord, the Defendant now accepts that it targeted the Claimant and the Claimant's voicemail messages at various times from 2004 onwards and was

responsible for the publication of his private information derived from messages in at least two articles in The News of the World.

11. I am here today to announce that the Defendant has accepted liability and has agreed to apologise publicly to the Claimant and to pay him substantial damages, as well as his legal costs. Furthermore, the Defendant has undertaken to the Court not to further access the Claimant's voicemail messages or to publish any of the Claimant's private information obtained by unlawful means in the future.

12. The Claimant has accepted the Defendant's public apology and undertakings and will be making a donation to 'Hacked Off' the non-profit organisation campaigning for a free and accountable press.

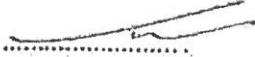
**Counsel for the First Defendant**

13. My Lord, on behalf of the Defendant, I confirm everything my Friend, Mr Thomson, has said.

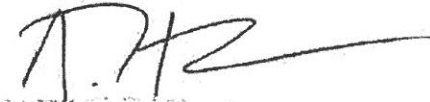
14. The Defendant is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to the Claimant for the damage, as well as the distress, caused to him by the blagging of his confidential information and the accessing of his voicemail messages. The Defendant acknowledges that the information should never have been obtained or used in the manner it was and that the Defendant is liable for misuse of private information and breach of confidence.

**Solicitor- Advocate for the Claimant**

15. In the light of the order which has been made and this statement, the Claimant considers that he is fully vindicated.

  
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**Mark Thomson**

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**Dinah Rose QC** /

  
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Anthony Hudson