

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CLAIM NOS: HC14A00877, HC14F03191

CHANCERY DIVISION

BETWEEN:

**BOBBY HOLLAND HANTON
EMMA NOBLE**

Claimants

- and -

MGN LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Counsel for the Claimants (David Sherborne)

1. In these actions for misuse of private information, I appear for the Claimants, Bobby Holland Hanton and Emma Noble. My learned friend Matthew Nicklin QC appears for the Defendant.
2. 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*, all three of which enjoy an extremely large readership.
3. The actions in which I appear relate to the practice of phonehacking and obtaining of personal information by deception and other unlawful means by the Defendant.

4. I will now say something about each of the claimants, on whose behalf I am here today.

Bobby Holland Hanton

5. Bobby Holland Hanton is a professional stunt actor who has been and continues to be involved in high profile Hollywood movies. For example, Mr Hanton was Christian Bale's stunt double as Batman in *The Dark Knight Rises* and Daniel Craig's stunt double as James Bond in *Quantum of Solace*. He has also recently appeared in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* in which he stunt doubled for Captain America and Thor in the same movie.
6. Mr Hanton was, however, targeted by the Defendant as a result of his relationship with Lucy Taggart, an actress most famous for role as Lisa Fowler in *EastEnders*. Indeed, Mr Hanton believes that the Defendant discovered the fact of their relationship through unlawful means. Whilst the Defendant has admitted targeting Mr Hanton from January 2004, which was around the very start of his relationship with Ms Taggart, the exact period during which he was subjected to the Defendant's unlawful activity and the intensity of the same will never be known.
7. Mr Hanton has, however, seen documents showing that the Defendant's journalists hacked his phone between at least 31 January 2004 to 16 May 2006, and that he was the subject of numerous private investigator inquiries, commissioned by the Defendant, between 5 December 2003 to 8 February 2005. Due to the covert way in which the Defendant carried out unlawful activity at its three newspaper titles, Mr Hanton will never know what exactly went on within the Defendant's organisation nor the precise extent to which he was hacked and pursued by the Defendant's journalists and private investigators.
8. Through its unlawful actions, the Defendant acquired a large amount of Mr Hanton's private information and proceeded to publish this material, often concerning

extremely sensitive details of his relationship with Ms Taggart. As a result, both Mr Hanton and Ms Taggart suspected each other of selling stories, which caused a breakdown of trust and many heated arguments that, Mr Hanton believes, were ultimately partly responsible for the end of their relationship.

9. On 31 December 2014, the Defendant offered to pay Mr Hanton substantial damages as well as his reasonable legal fees. The Defendant also offered an undertaking not to intercept Mr Hanton's voicemail messages or republish the articles about which Mr Hanton had complained. Mr Hanton accepted this offer on 20 January 2015. Mr Hanton therefore believed that he had achieved everything which he set out to achieve through these proceedings and was therefore prepared to resolve his claim in January.

Emma Noble

10. Emma Noble is a model, TV presenter, actress and former daughter-in-law of Prime Minister John Major. Ms Noble was targeted by the Defendant from the outset of her relationship with James Major (John Major's son) which began in 1998. In October 2014, the Defendant admitted that Ms Noble had been the subject of its unlawful activity for certain periods during the 10 years 1998 to 2008. Indeed, Dan Evans, the journalist who has admitted hacking for the Sunday Mirror between 2003 and 2005, has also confessed specifically to hacking Ms Noble during this period.
11. As a result, 2 articles about Ms Noble and her private life were published. The Defendant has now accepted that these 2 articles would not have been published but for its unlawful activity. Although Ms Noble realises that she will never fully know what happened to her and the true extent of the Defendant's unlawful activity, she now feels this matter is resolved.
12. On 31 December 2014 the Defendant offered to pay Ms Noble substantial damages as well as her reasonable legal fees. The Defendant also offered an undertaking not to intercept Ms Noble's voicemail messages or republish the articles about which Ms

Noble had complained. Ms Noble accepted this offer on 20 January 2015. Ms Noble therefore believed that she had achieved everything which she set out to achieve through these proceedings and was therefore prepared to resolve her claim in January.

13. In summary, these two individuals brought claims that between them covered unlawful activity by the *Daily Mirror*, the *Sunday Mirror* and the *People*. Both the Claimants have expressed their feelings of anger and violation in relation to what happened to them and their private information being so grossly misused for profit.

Counsel for the Defendant

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

15. MGN is here today through me to offer its sincere apologies to these two Claimants for the damage and distress caused to them by hacking into their voicemail messages and by obtaining private information about them including the use of blagging.

16. In addition to paying them substantial sums by way of damages earlier this year and agreeing to pay their reasonable costs, MGN has given an undertaking to the court, which the Claimants accepted, that it will not intercept any of the Claimants' voicemail messages or in future republish the articles they have complained of and that it removed these articles from its archive.

O. Murphy
RPC
8 July 2015

Amy Lee Saigel
Taylor Hampton
8 July 2015.