

Statement on behalf of the Duke of Sussex and Lord Watson

22 January 2025

In a monumental victory today, *News UK* have admitted that *The Sun*, the flagship title for Rupert Murdoch's UK media empire, has indeed engaged in illegal practices. This represents a vindication for the hundreds of other claimants who were strong-armed into settling, without being able to get to the truth of what was done to them.

After endless resistance, denials and legal battles by News Group Newspapers, including spending more than a billion pounds in payouts and in legal costs (as well as paying-off those in the know) to prevent the full picture from coming out, *News UK* is finally held to account for its illegal actions and its blatant disregard for the law. It has also specifically admitted wrongdoing against Tom Watson, and admitted unlawful acts by *The Sun*, as well as by the *News of the World*, against Prince Harry.

The truth that has now been exposed is that NGN unlawfully engaged more than 100 private investigators over at least 16 years on more than 35,000 occasions. This happened as much at *The Sun* as it did at the *News of the World*, with the knowledge of all the Editors and executives, going to the very top of the company.

What's even worse is that in the wake of the 2006 arrest of a Royal correspondent, there was an extensive conspiracy to cover up what really had been going on and who knew about it. Senior executives deliberately obstructed justice by deleting over 30 million emails, destroying back-up tapes, and making false denials – all in the face of an on-going police investigation. They then repeatedly lied under oath to cover their tracks – both in Court and at the Leveson Public Inquiry.

At her trial, in 2014 Rebekah Brooks, said “when I was Editor of *The Sun* we ran a clean ship”. Now, 10 years later when she is CEO of the company, they now admit, when she was Editor of *The Sun*, they ran a criminal enterprise.

Far from being relics of a distant past, many of those behind these unlawful practices remain firmly entrenched in senior positions today, both within *News UK* and other media outlets across the world, wielding editorial power and perpetuating the toxic culture in which they continue to thrive. It’s perhaps no surprise that all of their senior executives and editors refused to turn up to court to give evidence. The failure of each of these key individuals to come and answer questions under oath spoke volumes in itself, but their collective silence is deafening.

Today’s result has been achieved only through the sheer resilience of Prince Harry and Lord Watson, whose willingness to take NGN to trial has led directly to this historic admission of unlawfulness at *The Sun*. It has only been by taking NGN - not just to the steps of court but inside the court room itself - that these Claimants have finally managed to extract this historic admission of guilt.

As a direct result of him taking a stand, Prince Harry and his immediate family have also had to repeatedly withstand aggressive and vengeful coverage since starting his claim over five years ago. This has created serious concerns for the security of him and his family.

The rule of law must now run its full course. Prince Harry & Tom Watson join others in calling for the police and Parliament to investigate not only the unlawful activity now finally admitted, but the perjury and cover ups along the way. Its clear now this has occurred throughout this process, including through sworn evidence in inquiries and court hearings, and in testimony to Parliament, until today’s final collapse of NGN’s defence.

Today the lies are laid bare. Today, the cover-ups are exposed. And today proves that no one stands above the law. The time for accountability has arrived.