

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

B E T W E E N:

STEPHEN COOGAN

Claimant

- and -

MGN LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Counsel for the Claimant

1. In this action for misuse of private information I appear for the Claimant, Stephen Coogan. My learned friend [] appears for the Defendant.
2. The Defendant is MGN Limited, a subsidiary company of Trinity Mirror Plc and the publisher of *The Daily Mirror*, *The Sunday Mirror* and *The People*. These are highly influential national newspapers read by millions both in their hard copy and online versions. Their circulation was even higher during the period that journalists at these newspapers engaged in extensive and unjustifiable unlawful activities in order to obtain stories for publication.
3. This case brought by Mr Coogan concerns the misuse by MGN of his private information by hacking into his voicemail, unlawfully obtaining personal information from third parties and surveillance by private investigators. Mr Coogan has identified 62 articles that he alleges are likely to have been produced by use of these means. Much of what was published caused enormous distress and significant damage to Mr Coogan's relationships with those he wrongly suspected had leaked

private information or who believed he was the cause of their private information being made public.

4. This case also concerns the extent of MGN's investigations into voicemail hacking. Before bringing this case, Mr Coogan was a Core Participant at the first part of the Leveson Inquiry and gave evidence to that Inquiry, including that of intrusive reporting by MGN. His participation in this Inquiry and wish to highlight press wrongdoing led to a number of attacks on him by national newspapers.
5. He also followed with great interest the evidence of MGN and Trinity Mirror witnesses and became increasingly concerned given the allegations of wrongdoing by journalists at MGN that had been made before the Inquiry.
6. In May 2015 it was found by Mr Justice Mann that:

"wrong, not just disingenuous statements, were made to the Leveson inquiry by at least 2 deponents, and that the newspaper group was indeed putting up what was in effect a strong denial, from which it has had to resile. I also find it likely that some of the witnesses were aware of Mr Brown's allegations by the time of the Leveson inquiry if not before - it is inconceivable that in the face of that inquiry, with senior journalists and executives giving evidence, that some of them did not know about it."

Mr Coogan is clear that if Trinity Mirror had conducted a proper investigation at an early stage then the unlawful activity could have been stopped and prevented the enormous distress and damage it caused its victims their family and friends.

7. In response to Mr Coogan's complaint in July 2015, MGN admitted liability to Mr Coogan for the misuse of his private information and offered damages, an undertaking not to intercept any of his voicemails, payment of his reasonable legal costs and an apology. In October 2016, Mr Coogan issued his Claim Form and sought disclosure to attempt to ascertain the extent of the wrongdoing and identify the relevant articles. Following extensive negotiations, the level of damages and terms

of the apology and admissions have now been agreed. In addition to its apology for the misuse of private information, MGN also apologises for the concealment of these activities at the time.

8. Given these admissions, MGN's apology, a payment of damages and payment of his legal costs Mr Coogan is now prepared to resolve his claim.

Counsel for the Defendant

9. My Lord, MGN accepts what my learned friend has said. MGN acknowledges that Mr Coogan was the target of unlawful activities and that these activities were concealed until years later. It apologises to Mr Coogan for its wrongdoing over a decade ago and for any articles that were the product of unlawful activity and for the concealment of these activities. MGN apologises to Mr Coogan and accepts that he and other victims should not have been denied the truth for so long.