

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

B E T W E E N:

MR CRISTIANO RONALDO

Claimant

- and -

MGN LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

COUNSEL FOR THE CLAIMANT

May it please your Lordship, in this action for libel I appear on behalf of the Claimant and my friend Miss Norden appears on behalf of the Defendant.

The Claimant is the internationally famous Real Madrid and Portugal footballer. In 2008 he was awarded the Football Writers' Association's 'Footballer of the Year' award and was the PFA Players' Player of the Year. In January of this year, he was awarded FIFA World Player of the Year for the 2008 season and has been shortlisted again for this year's award.

The Defendant is the publisher of the Daily Mirror, a newspaper with an enormous circulation.

On 17th July 2008 the Defendant published an article on its front page, and inside on page 7 (and online), entitled "Ron The Lash" alongside a photo of the Claimant on crutches in Los Angeles where he had travelled to attend a Sports Award ceremony to which he had been invited.

The Defendant reported that, despite being in recovery from an ankle operation as a result of which he was on crutches, he had "gone on a bender" at a Hollywood nightclub, where he had splashed out £10,000 on champagne and vodka for friends and models, having himself already drunk four glasses of red wine earlier in the evening over a meal. The report said that later on in the nightclub he drank a number of vodka and sodas before switching to bottles of champagne.

It described how one clubber claimed to have seen him throw his crutches down on the floor and try to dance on his uninjured foot.

In fact, the truth is that the events did not happen as reported. Although the Claimant was in LA and he did attend the nightclub in question, he did not drink any alcohol at all whilst there. He does not drink alcohol because he takes his health, fitness and recovery from injury very seriously. Nor did he throw his crutches to the floor and try to dance. He sat in a private corner under the care and supervision of the respected Portuguese national team physiotherapist, Antonio Gaspar.

The Defendant now accepts that its allegations were untrue and has agreed to publish an apology in the Daily Mirror (and online) tomorrow, and to participate in this Statement in Open Court in order to apologise for the offence and embarrassment caused by the article. Furthermore, the Defendant has agreed to pay substantial damages to the Claimant for the libel and to reimburse the majority of his reasonable legal costs.

In those circumstances, the Claimant considers that he has been fully vindicated and is happy to bring these proceedings to a close.

SOLICITOR FOR THE DEFENDANT

My Lord, I accept everything that my learned friend Mr Thwaites has said. Through me the Defendant offers its apologies to the Claimant for the distress, embarrassment and offence caused by this article. The Defendant accepts that the allegations are false and ought never to have been published. It is therefore happy to set the record straight and to apologise to the Claimant.

COUNSEL FOR THE CLAIMANT

My Lord, it only remains for me to ask for leave that the record be withdrawn.

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Ronald Thwaites QC
Ely Place Chambers
Counsel for the Claimant

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Zoe Norden
Davenport Lyons
Solicitor for the Defendant

Claim No: HQ08X03527

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