

Claim No: HQ08X03657

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

B E T W E E N:

CRISTIANO RONALDO

Claimant

- and -

TELEGRAPH MEDIA GROUP LIMITED

Defendant

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

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

The Claimant is the internationally renowned 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 2009, he was awarded FIFA World Player of the Year for the 2008 season and last month was nominated for the World Player of the Year award for the 2010 season.

The Defendant is the publisher of *The Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper with a very large circulation in the jurisdiction with a website enjoying a substantial readership.

On 18th July 2008 the Defendant published an article on page S8 (and online), headed "*Ronaldo back in the limelight*". It appeared 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, and for which he was nominated for an award as Best Male International Athlete.

The Defendant reported that on arrival in Los Angeles, the Claimant had "headed straight for" a trendy Hollywood nightclub where he put his crutches down to take to the dance floor with four models before being served "£10,000 worth of Cristal champagne". The article alleged that sight of the Claimant "living it up" in Los Angeles would dismay Manchester United Manager, Sir Alex Ferguson.

In fact, the truth is that these events did not happen and the Claimant did not behave unprofessionally. The Claimant was in Los Angeles, having gone there on holiday in the knowledge and with the advance permission of his club, his manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, his surgeon and his physio, and while he did attend the nightclub in question, he did not drink any alcohol at all whilst there, nor at any time whilst in Los Angeles. He does not, as a rule, drink alcohol because he takes his health, fitness and recovery from injury very seriously.

Nor did he put his crutches down to take to the dance floor despite the risk to his injured ankle. Instead, he sat in a private corner as arranged in advance, along with friends who had travelled to Los Angeles with him, resting his foot as advised and drinking non-alcoholic energy drinks at all times under the care and supervision of the respected Portuguese national team physio Antonio Gaspar, who had also travelled to Los Angeles at the request of the Claimant and with the agreement of Manchester United.

The article caused embarrassment, offence and distress to the Claimant who, as a professional, was concerned both as to his own reputation and to the perception the article might cause to Manchester United, Sir Alex, and its (and his) fans. He therefore sought an apology through his lawyers and, when this was not forthcoming, issued and pursued proceedings for defamation.

The Defendant now accepts that its allegations were untrue and have agreed to publish an Apology in *The Daily Telegraph* tomorrow (and online), and to enter into this Statement in Open Court in order to further apologise for the distress and embarrassment caused by the article which it now acknowledges was false. Furthermore, the Defendant has agreed to pay substantial damages to the Claimant for the libel and to reimburse his legal costs in full.

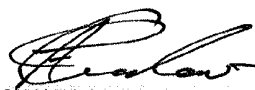
In those circumstances, the Claimant considers that he has been fully vindicated and is happy to bring these proceedings to a close.


SOLICITOR FOR THE DEFENDANT

My Lord, I accept everything that my friend Allan Dunlavy 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.

SOLICITOR FOR THE CLAIMANT

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


.....
Allan Dunlavy
Schillings
Solicitor for the Claimant


.....
Name: **J. VARLEY**
David Price Solicitors & Associates
Solicitor for the Defendant

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STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

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