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GORDON TAYLOR V NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD

Background:

1. In January 2007 News of the World Reporter, Clive Goodman and private detective, Glenn Mulcaire were sentenced to 4 and 6 months respectively for conspiracy to access telephone voicemail messages of 3 members of the Royal Household staff. Mulcaire also pleaded guilty of accessing the voicemails of 5 other famous people, one of whom was Gordon Taylor, Chief Executive of the Professional Footballers Association ("the PFA").
2. Mulcaire's relationship with the News of the World went back to around 2000. Through one or other of his companies he had been contracted annually to supply a "research and information service" on an exclusive basis.
3. Gordon Taylor is the only one of the victims to issue civil proceedings (though the others could still do so). He is suing NGN Ltd and Mulcaire jointly for breach of confidence, misuse of private information and invasion of privacy. And alleges that acting in concert we accessed, listened to and recorded his voicemail messages from about January 2005 until May 2006.
4. Taylor served a full pleaded claim on us which did not seem to be supported by any evidence and we filed a defence denying any involvement in accessing or making use of information from his voicemails. Mulcaire, it seems, was never properly served with the claim and until recently has played no part in the proceedings.

Current position:

5. Unknown to us, a few months ago Taylor applied to and obtained from the court an Order obliging the Police to release the criminal prosecution paperwork and evidence to his lawyers. He obtained another Order obliging the Information Commissioner to release the evidence for his "What Price Privacy" papers on the unlawful trade in private information (these contain a "league table" of newspapers and Data Protection Act infringements)
6. Amongst the prosecution paperwork were the documents seized when they raided Mulcaire's property, one of which was a contract dated 4th February, 2005, between Mulcaire and the News of the World to pay him £7000 for information on an affair being conducted by Graham Taylor. Another was an email from a News of the World reporter to Mulcaire enclosing a large number of transcripts of voicemails from Taylor's telephone.

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