

BETWEEN:-

STEPHEN DAVIES

Claimant

-and-

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Defendant

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AGREED STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

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The Claimant's Solicitor:

My Lady, in this matter I, Persephone Bridgman Baker, appear on behalf of the Claimant, Steve Davies. The Defendant, the BBC, is represented by Samuel Rowe, of Counsel.

The Claimant was previously the chauffeur to the late Diana, HRH the Princess of Wales.

On 20 November 1995, BBC Panorama broadcast an interview with the Princess. The circumstances leading to that interview were the subject of an investigation by Lord Dyson and its findings were later published in a report dated 14 May 2021.

In autumn 1995, the Claimant was the chauffeur to the Princess. The Dyson Investigation revealed a document which recorded that at a meeting on 19 September 1995 where *Panorama* sought to procure an interview with the Princess, Earl Spencer and the Princess were told that the Claimant "*feeds TODAY newspaper, "change your chauffeur".*"

This was a serious and unfounded allegation to the effect that the Claimant had been leaking confidential information that he obtained in his role as her chauffeur to the press and that she should terminate his employment as a result. The allegation was fabricated. In March 1996, the Claimant's employment was terminated without explanation.

The suggestion that the Claimant violated the Princess's trust in this way created a serious blot on his character. The Claimant was devastated by the termination of his employment with the Princess; he had maintained a close professional relationship with the Princess throughout the many years he had worked for her and he was given no reason for the termination. The Claimant was tormented by speculation about what possible reason there could be for the termination of his employment and

was acutely embarrassed about his dismissal. It is a matter of profound regret to him that, as he now knows, the Princess believed that he had betrayed her, and he was unable to correct the position before her tragic death.

The allegation made against the Claimant has most recently been repeated, to the Claimant's great distress, in the Netflix series *The Crown*. The Claimant continues to work as a chauffeur and his integrity and professionalism are of the utmost importance to him. In all the circumstances the Claimant holds the BBC liable for the serious impact the repetition of this false allegation has had.

For its part on receipt of the Claimant's complaint, the BBC promptly accepted that the allegation was entirely without foundation and should never have been made. The BBC is now here today to publicly set the record straight and to apologise to the Claimant.

The Claimant is relieved that the BBC accepts this is the case. He is pleased that the BBC has agreed to apologise unreservedly, and to join in making this Statement in Open Court in order to assist in repairing the harm it has caused to him. The BBC has agreed to pay the Claimant a sum of compensation for the purposes of vindicating his reputation and attempting to compensate the harm and distress caused to him. The BBC has also agreed to pay the Claimant's legal costs.

The Defendant's Legal Representative:

On behalf of the BBC I accept all that my friend has said. The BBC wishes to publicly apologise to the Claimant for the publication of the allegation and the distress it has caused.

The BBC accepts that the allegation made about the Claimant was and is wholly false and should never have been made, and that it constitutes an attack on the Claimant's reputation both personally and professionally. The BBC accepts that the allegation was likely to have caused HRH the Princess of Wales to doubt the Claimant's loyalty and professionalism and may well have contributed to the Claimant's redundancy six months later.

The BBC is sorry for the distress and harm suffered by the Claimant. It is pleased that the parties have been able to resolve these issues by joining in this Statement in Open Court and by the BBC paying the Claimant compensation and his legal costs.

The Claimant's Solicitor:

My Lady, given the public apology and the other steps agreed by the BBC, the Claimant is content to let this matter rest. It therefore only remains for me to ask for leave to withdraw the record.

Dated: 14 May 2024