

# Press Release

Carter-Ruck

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## Princess Diana's former chauffeur secures slander success against BBC

Steve Davies has successfully settled his slander claim against the BBC.

Mr Davies was previously the chauffeur to the late Diana, HRH the Princess of Wales. The claim related to serious and unfounded allegations made by journalist Martin Bashir to the Princess and Earl Spencer during a meeting in September 1995, to procure an interview with the Princess for BBC *Panorama*. The Princess and Earl Spencer were told that Mr Davies “feeds Today newspaper...change your chauffeur”. These allegations have been most recently repeated in, and brought to Mr Davies’ attention following, the Netflix series, *The Crown* (Season 5).

As the BBC accepts, the allegations were totally fabricated, and, Mr Davies has no doubt, resulted in his employment being terminated without explanation shortly thereafter. A Joint Statement in Open Court was read today by Persephone Bridgman Baker of Carter-Ruck on behalf of Mr Davies, and Samuel Rowe of 5RB on behalf of the BBC, before the Honourable Mrs Justice Steyn.

Ms Bridgman Baker told the court that Mr Davies 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 [...] 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.”

Mr Rowe confirmed all that had been said on Mr Davies behalf and apologised to Mr Davies on behalf of the BBC. He told the Court “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”.

Mr Davies said “I am relieved that I have been able to clear my name, and my professional reputation as a chauffeur, through this legal process. I was shocked to hear that these false allegations had been made about me almost thirty years ago and were very likely to be the cause of my sudden termination.”

The BBC has agreed to pay Mr Davies substantial compensation and his legal costs.

A copy of the statement in open court can be found [here](#).

Mr Davies was represented by [Persephone Bridgman Baker](#) and [Caitlin Harris](#) of Carter-Ruck, and William Bennett KC and Chloe Strong of 5RB.

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