

Statement made on behalf of the Claimant
Witness: Bogdan Stefan Maris (First)
Date of Statement: 27 May 2005

Court of Appeal Reference:

IN THE COURT OF APPEAL (CIVIL DIVISION)
ON APPEAL FROM THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

Lower Court Reference:
Claim No. HQ03X03360

ALIN TURCU

Claimant/ Appellant

- and -

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

Defendant/ Respondent

STATEMENT OF BOGDAN STEFAN MARIS

I, BOGDAN STEFAN MARIS, of Bloc 1, Sc B, Ap 31, Cod 5550, Smirodava Street, Roman, Judetul Piatra Neamt, Romania will say as follows:

1. I am the Claimant in these proceedings. I make this statement in support of an application for permission to appeal the judgment of Eady J dated 4 May 2005. In this statement I do not make any legal arguments. I leave those to my lawyers.
2. I cared very much about this case and I am very upset about the outcome. The News of the World made very serious allegations about me and I am devastated that the Judge found them to be substantially true. The allegations had a profound effect on my life, as the Judge seemed to accept when he said that the impact of the articles had hit me hard. Moreover, it was a big news story in Romania – the Romanian media covered the original story and they also covered the libel trial and its outcome including publishing photographs of me. Although the News of the World has always maintained that I was guilty, I was at least able to point to the failed criminal case against me as some evidence of my innocence. Now, the judgment in the libel case has said that I am guilty. The outcome of this case has therefore caused me great distress and I want to appeal the judgment to try and clear my name.
3. I wanted to attend the trial to give evidence and tell the court what had actually happened. I made extensive enquiries to try and make this happen. However, I was

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informed by the Romanian authorities that there was no possibility that I would get a visa to come to the UK to give evidence. This is because I owe some money to the municipality in my home town of Roman. These are municipal fines that have been outstanding since before I came to the UK in 1999. Although they are not substantial by UK standards, I live a hand to mouth existence and have never been able to pay them off. Until I am able to pay them, I will never be granted a visa to leave Romania.

4. As I have said above, I have no money and it was never a possibility that I would be able to afford to give evidence by video conference link. In fact, it has been difficult at times to even maintain telephone contact with my solicitors because my financial situation is so bad and I have not always had access to a phone during the course of the litigation.

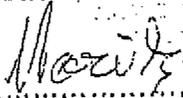
The facts stated in this witness statement are true.

5. I was also advised by my solicitors that it would be a pointless exercise to prepare a witness statement for these proceedings. Any witness statement would not carry any weight because I had not told the truth about my circumstances when I arrived in the UK. I apologise for this. I did it because I wanted a decent life, having been brought up in a children's home in extreme poverty because my mother was unable to pay for my upkeep. This is what I had worked hard to achieve with the help of my employer Mr Calderhead and what was destroyed by the News of the World's article.

6. I did not do what the News of the World accused me of doing and now the Judge has ruled that the article was substantially true. I feel that I have been wronged and I want to do anything I can to rectify that wrong if I can. That is why I have instructed my solicitors to seek permission to appeal the judgment.

7. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

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Bogdan Stefan Maris



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Date

12.5.2005