

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

Before the Honourable Mr Justice Tugendhat

14 May 2014

MR VAL MYERS

Claimant

-and-

MRS SANDRA ONG

Defendant

STATEMENT IN COURT

Counsel for the Claimant

My Lord, I appear on behalf of the Claimant, Val Myers. The Defendant Ms Ong appears in person.

Mr Myers is a retired Chartered Accountant and Certified Accountant, and a former Principal Lecturer at Kingston University. Mr Myers is a qualified teacher of line-dancing. He has dance teaching qualifications with both the Best Western Dance Academy ("BWDA") and the United

Kingdom Alliance of Professional Teachers of Dancing and Kindred Arts. He is well known in the line-dancing world, particularly in the UK, not least because he is responsible for creating a widely used beginners' line-dance programme, and because in January 2007 he won a major award for his line-dance choreography. He has been the BWDA's Area Representative for Middlesex since March 2003. He has run the line dance club "AB Coasters" in Harrow since February 2004.

Between February 2007 and December 2011 Ms Ong attended AB Coasters. Mr Myers asked Ms Ong to stop attending AB Coasters in December 2011 as he had concerns that Ms Ong was using his classes as a means for promoting her own rival line dancing club 'Saints In-line'.

On 16 May 2013 Ms Ong sent two emails to the BWDA seeking Mr Myers' removal as the Area Representative of the BWDA for Middlesex. She accused Mr Myers of harassing and haranguing members of the line dancing community, vindictively taking steps to disrupt the running of Saints In-line and generally being unfit to be an Area Representative. Significantly, Ms Ong's emails also made reference to written allegations previously made by Ms Ong's friend Jennifer Ryce to the BWDA, which included assertions that Mr Myers had physically and verbally assaulted Ms Ryce. Ms Ong's emails, in particular the words "*when I think what he did to Jenny*", were intended and would have been understood by the BWDA to mean that Mr Myers had assaulted Ms Ryce. Ms Ryce, for her part, has subsequently admitted, before this Court, that this allegation and others she had made against Mr Myers, were false. Ms Ong's emails followed a series of telephone calls to the BWDA and conversation with individuals within the organisation in which she had sought Mr Myers' removal as Area Representative.

The allegations made by Ms Ong are highly defamatory of Mr Myers and entirely false. They were published to an organisation, and to individuals within an organisation, with which Mr Myers has worked successfully and whose respect he had enjoyed for many years. They have caused Mr Myers reputational harm, distress, humiliation and embarrassment. Shortly after receipt of Ms Ong's emails of 16 May 2013 Mr Myers was indeed suspended as Area Representative.

Ms Ong now acknowledges that the defamatory allegations are untrue. She has agreed today to withdraw the allegations, apologise to Mr Myers, to undertake not to repeat the same or similar allegations and to pay his reasonable legal costs.

On the basis of this apology and undertaking, Mr Myers is prepared to let the matter rest.

The Defendant

My Lord, I accept everything that has been said. I unreservedly withdraw the allegations in question and apologise to Mr Myers for the damage these allegations have caused.

Counsel for the Claimant

My Lord, in the circumstances, the Claimant's object in bringing these proceedings has been achieved and I ask for leave for the record to be withdrawn.

BRETT WILSON LLP
Solicitors for Claimant

SANDRA ONG
Defendant