

Libel win for psychic - surely no surprise

21 JUNE 2013

Amber Melville-Brown

PARTNER | US

CATEGORY:

[BLOG](#)

As a psychic, Sally Morgan cannot have been surprised to learn that she has won her libel action against the Daily Mail over allegations that she had 'perpetrated a scam' on a theatre audience. The article of complaint from September 2011, which was a general attack on psychics as being charlatans, accused Ms Morgan of using a hidden earpiece to assist her in her shows, thus dishonestly perpetrating a scam on her audiences. This was a serious allegation to make about a professional and not surprisingly, Ms Morgan took serious offence. Perhaps more surprisingly, she had the courage to take on the Daily Mail. Fewer libel actions are being brought and fought and it is interesting that Associated Newspapers Limited, publishers of the Daily Mail, chose to seek to defend this case all the way to court. However, once there, it withdrew the allegations and apologised to Ms Morgan who has also been paid a substantial £125,000 damages. It is unclear whether the prospect of the new Defamation Act 2013 – waiting in the wings to be implemented at some point this year – will warn claimants off bringing otherwise valid claims. It includes new provisions requiring for example, evidence that 'serious harm' has been caused to the claimant for a defamation claim to be successful. But those affected by the traducing of their reputations in the the national media – such as Ms Morgan here – or on social media websites, should not forget that their reputations are their most valuable assets and they should not take an unfair attack on that reputation lying down. The vindication of the public apology provided by the Daily Mail should assist Ms Morgan now in rebuilding her professional reputation. And having been courageous enough to take on the Daily Mail and win, she can now hold her head up high – and certainly without an earpiece in sight.

Authors

Amber Melville-Brown

PARTNER | NEW YORK, LONDON

Media and reputation

 +1 212 848 9813 (NY) +44 20 7597 6408 (London)

 amber.melville-brown@withersworldwide.com