



LexisNexis: Countdown star strikes out journalist's defence (Riley v Sivier)

15 April 2021

Article by Edward Smith, Employed Barrister and privacy and media law specialist in the Dispute Resolution Department in which he sets out his analysis of the latest judgment in the ongoing libel proceedings brought by well-known television presenter Rachel Riley against political journalist Michael Sivier over an article published on his website, first published by Lexis@PSL on 27 January 2021 and reproduced with kind permission.

Ms Riley applied to strike out Mr Sivier's defences of truth, honest opinion and publication in the public interest. The court agreed with Ms Riley, striking out all three defences on the basis that it was not even arguable that she had engaged in the conduct alleged in the article. This judgment is a concise and clear application of the principles of strike out in the context of pleaded defences in libel. In addition, Mrs Justice Collins Rice adds to the increasing body of judicial observation about how the court should consider social media posts (in this case Twitter) in the context of libel proceedings.

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