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'POLITE NOTICE' BIKER SECURES APOLOGIES AND SUBSTANTIAL LIBEL DAMAGES AGAINST FOUR NEWSPAPERS OVER FALSE POLICE IMPERSONATION CLAIMS

A motorcycle enthusiast has won his libel claims against four mass circulation newspapers that falsely claimed he attempted to deceive the public into believing he was a police officer.

Darren James Emanuel, an independent consultant, received substantial compensation after the Times, the Mirror, the Telegraph and the Express published inaccurate and defamatory allegations about him in February 2018.

The articles reported on a court case during which Mr Emanuel was temporarily convicted (and later acquitted on appeal) of wearing an item of clothing which resembled police uniform, in circumstances “*calculated to deceive*” the public that he was a police officer. They alleged that Mr Emanuel had used imitation police attire to speed through rush hour traffic, and claimed that Mr Emanuel had been charged and convicted by a Magistrates’ Court of a significantly more serious offence than the one he had in fact been charged with and convicted of.

In fact Mr Emanuel was wearing a high visibility jacket, as recommended by the Highway Code, over which a tabard marked “POLITE NOTICE: THINK BIKE” (insignia used widely by cyclists and motorcyclists) had been permanently stitched. The former police motorcycle he was riding had been lawfully de-commissioned and reconditioned for civilian use by South Yorkshire Police. Mr Emanuel was mistakenly convicted even though the magistrates accepted that he had not intended to impersonate a police officer. Mr Emanuel immediately appealed and just two weeks later his conviction was overturned and he was fully acquitted.

All four newspapers have recognised that the allegations were false and agreed to pay Mr Emanuel substantial damages together with his legal costs. The Statement was read this morning in the High Court.

Senior Associate Persephone Bridgman Baker said:

“The ‘Polite Notice: Think Bike’ tabard worn by Mr Emanuel is ubiquitous in London and clearly not an item of police clothing. Mr Emanuel’s initial conviction was swiftly overturned, but the damage had already been caused by these four newspapers’ inaccurate reporting of a charge which had not in fact been brought against Mr Emanuel, which led to the wide publication of the

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false allegations online. The publishers have now paid Mr Emanuel substantial damages.”

Mr Emanuel was represented by Nigel Tait, Persephone Bridgman Baker and Mathilde Groppo of Carter-Ruck.