



[2024] EWHC 1574 (KB)

Case No: KB-2023-002502

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE**  
**KING'S BENCH DIVISION**

Royal Courts of Justice  
Strand, London, WC2A 2LL

Date: 21 June 2024

**Before :**

**Deputy Master SABIC KC**

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**Between:**

**Iain Clifford Stamp**

**Claimant**

**- and -**

**Open Democracy**

**Defendant**

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**Iain Clifford Stamp appearing remotely and in person**

**Ms C Overman (of counsel) (instructed by Wiggin LLP) for the Defendant**

Hearing dates: 23 May 2024  
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**Approved Judgment**

This judgment was handed down remotely at 10.30am on 21 June 2024 by circulation to the parties or their representatives by e-mail and by release to the National Archives.

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## Deputy Master SABIC KC:

### INTRODUCTION AND ISSUES

1. This is the judgment on the Defendant's application (dated 17.08.2023) for a strike out of the entirety of the Claimant's claim under CPR 3.4(2). This application was heard on 23 May 2024. It was listed for an in-person hearing. Prior to the hearing, Mr Stamp, the Claimant, asked if he could attend remotely and the Court accommodated his request so that the matter proceeded as a hybrid hearing with the Defendant appearing in person, represented by Ms Overman (of counsel) and the Claimant appearing remotely, representing himself.
2. At the hearing, I had a hearing bundle, consisting of 230 pages prepared by the Defendant, including two witness statements from Ms Joelle Chess, solicitor for the Defendant, a skeleton argument and bundle of authorities prepared by Ms Overman. In coming to this judgment, I also considered the emails which Mr Stamp sent to the Court associates after the hearing<sup>1</sup>.
3. In this claim and on the face of the claim form, Mr Stamp seeks damages in the sum of £5,000,000 for defamation in respect of an investigative article published by OpenDemocracy Limited: '*Revealed: Facebook still allowing 'unauthorised' wealth scheme adverts*' ('the article'). During the hearing Mr Stamp clarified that although this is the pleaded sum, his principal aim in these proceedings was to ensure that the article is removed from the internet.
4. Mr Stamp is the founder of Matrix Freedom, an organisation which, according to its website, purports to '*provide information, education, accreditation and facilitation on*

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<sup>1</sup> Although it should be noted that the attachments to the emails sent after the hearing were already before the Court and included in the bundle of documents prepared by the Defendant. Following the hearing on 23 May 2023, I received an email from Mr Stamp which asserted that '*during the hearing, it became evident that the Master did not receive or review*' the following documents which were sent to me again:

1. Document called 'Witness statement of Mr Stamp' dated 20.11.2023.
2. Document called 'Affidavit of Mr Stamp', running to 67 paragraphs, the last of which is under the heading 'RESTITUTION'.
3. Document called 'Application for Default Judgment SYTATEMENT (SIC) OF TRUTH'.
4. Unsealed N1 Claim Form.
5. Particulars of Claim dated 24.05.2023.
6. Email correspondence from Mr Stamp of 14 May 2024 to the Defendant's solicitors and the Court asserting that Mr Stamp is in Indonesia, that he requires a video link for hearing on 23 May 2024 and that if a video link is not possible, his position is outlined in the document 'Application for Default Judgment'.
7. Email correspondence from Mr Stamp to the Defendant's solicitors and the Court attaching the documents set out at [1-5] above, asserting that he intends to rely on those documents at the hearing of the application.

For the avoidance of doubt, I make it clear that I have taken into account all the material sent to the Court, including the above.

*how to become and maintain a state of financial abundance*'. People who sign up to Matrix Freedom are said to be able to:

- a. *Become a secured party creditor* (said to allow members to 'take control over your *Cestui Qui Vie* trust (your strawman) instead of the State').
  - b. Operate via a non-statutory trust (said to be the '*ultimate wealth preservation solution that affords privacy, protection and the preservation of your NST assets with no State registration, reporting or taxes.*')
  - c. *Become financially abundant via creditor tax rebates* and
  - d. *Join MM a vendor and consumer marketplace with an irresistible USP.*
5. The article which forms the basis of this claim states that Matrix Freedom was founded by Mr Stamp and that it '*claimed to facilitate commerce freedom solutions*', in spite of the Financial Conduct Authority having issued a warning about Matrix in 2021 stating that '*This firm is not authorised by us and is targeting people in the UK.*' The article cites various sources, including Dr Samuel White who told his followers on Telegram: '*The guys at Matrix Freedom will help you eliminate your mortgage and recover payments; settle credit cards; loans and taxes; and even reclaim payments you have made from your bank in the last 3 years*'. Another source cited in the article is Rachael Goldwaseer, a research analyst from the Southern Poverty Law Center, who '*told openDemocracy that the business is using conspiracy theories rooted in so called 'Sovereign Citizen ideology'....false claim that 'sovereigns' can essentially ignore any rules they dislike and substitute them for their own.*'
6. The Claim Form includes Particulars of Claim which are extremely difficult to follow. Amongst other things, they appear to plead claims in defamation and a breach of the Human Rights Act 1998. The crux of Mr Stamp's case appears to be this:

*'The defendants did not interview me or obtain the facts about what MATRIXFREEDOM does. The Defendant's conduct amounts to Defamation as they make false statements about me and my Private Members Association MATRIXFREEDOM that imply that I am dishonest by inference, as an ordinary, reasonable reader would draw this conclusion from their words. The Defendant's words are unfair and untrue and have lowered other people's opinion of me. The Defendants have made false statements about me that have harmed my reputation.'* [Particulars of Claim included in the Claim Form]

7. The following is also set out in the Particulars of Claim:

*'TORT. The Defendants have breached my human rights. The 'English Constitution' which is the 'British Constitution' which protects my rights: Magna Carta 1297 (25 Edward 1). The English Bill of Rights 1688/89 1 William and Mary, Sess 2. C2. Confirms that the pretended power of suspending laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal. That the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the*

*execution of laws by regal authority as it hath been assumed and exercised of late is illegal. The Act of Settlement, 1700 -1701....?*

8. The Particulars of Claim end with the following:

*In place of Kings who claim to govern by the Prerogative, we have a constitutional monarchy with the result that Government is by and through Parliament [Declaration of Rights 1688/89] Produced by the English Parliament following the Glorious Revolution. It established grievances without agreeing with their cause or solution’.*

9. At the outset, it is important to note the wider context of this claim. Master Gidden handed down a highly relevant judgment on 9 May 2024 in *Stamp v CHL Mortgages at al* [2024] EWHC 1092 (KB) in proceedings which involved, inter alia, the same Claimant, Mr Iain Clifford Stamp and which ‘*are an abuse of the Court on a number of levels*’ [§3]. Those claims were understood to represent a much larger group of claims (over 200) which were substantially the same. Master Gidden had no hesitation in striking the claims out, concluding that ‘*This outcome is not just a justification of the Defendants, it is also a mercy to Claimants who appear to have invested much in the claims that are founded upon false learning and false hope.*’ [§ 2].
10. Those claims concerned a ‘*get-rich-quick*’ scheme, seeking compensation equal to the value of a mortgage and/or the value of the property against which it is secured, in purported reliance on entirely non-sensical legal propositions, ‘*which have clearly been made available for people to widely adopt*’ and which ‘*are so misconceived as to be fundamentally wrong*’ [§ 2]. Master Gidden further observed: *This deceit is all the uglier because the material that forms the building blocks of the claims ....is a nonsensical and harmful mix of legal words, terms, maxims, extracts and statutes which are designed to look and sound good, at least to some. But they stand only as an approximation of a claim in law, a parody of the real thing.*’ [§ 6].
11. It is immediately apparent that the claim before me uses the same misconceived and nonsensical building blocks to make out a claim in defamation.
12. Further, it is apparent from the judgment of Master Gidden that there is a clear and concerning factual overlap between the proceedings. In particular:
- a. At § 24 Master Gidden notes that that one of the Claimants before him, Mr Whitworth, ‘*conceded that he had paid £1,000 to a company known as Matrix Freedom, of which Mr Stamp is apparently a director, to help with the application to set aside the order striking out the claim. It was not clear if Mr Whitworth had made other payments but he explained that he had an agreement with Matrix Freedom to pay them 10% of any compensation that he secured in bringing the claim.*’

- b. At § 31 Master Gidden states: *‘The present claims and the larger group of claims feature over two hundred claimants, apparently acting in person and sharing a near miraculous uniformity of common purpose, style and prose. In the absence of greater explanation than has so far been made available, they have the appearance of involving a person, or more likely persons, whose involvement may well amount to the conduct of litigation and a conduct that is likely to be a contempt of this Court. It is worth being clear; this is potentially criminal conduct.’*

## **THE PARTIES’ POSITIONS IN SUMMARY**

13. The Defendant’s application was founded on the following grounds, supported by evidence:
  - a. The pleaded claim is manifestly non-compliant with numerous requirements and by its incoherence and prolixity amounts to an abuse of the court’s process or is otherwise likely to obstruct the just disposal of the proceedings.
  - b. The Claimant’s conduct in the claim demonstrates that there is no reason to believe that he will put right the pleading defects.
14. Mr Stamp’s position was as follows:
  - a. That the pleadings are sufficiently clear and compliant to enable the Defendant to defend the claim and for the Court to resolve it.
  - b. As a lay person that he may have used some ‘American authorities’ in the pleadings but that does not detract from the substance of the claim which is clear.
  - c. That this claim has nothing to do with the claim that Master Giddens recently decided because this is a claim in defamation.
15. In the circumstances, Mr Stamp invited me to dismiss the application and allow the claim to proceed.

## **DECISION AND REASONS**

16. In coming to my decision, I start with CPR 3.4(2) and the power to strike out if the claim:
  - a. Discloses no reasonable grounds for bringing the claim;
  - b. Is an abuse of the Court’s process or is otherwise likely to obstruct the just disposal of the proceedings or
  - c. There has been a failure to comply with a rule practice direction or court order.
17. I have decided to allow the application for strike out because I consider that all three limbs of CPR 3.4(2) are amply made out. My reasons are set out below.

18. First, the Claimant has filed and served three separate iterations of his claim (in the Particulars of Claim included in the Claim Form, in separate Particulars of Claim and his affidavit dated 24 May 2023). Each of those iterations is wholly prolix and incoherent. The pleadings contain, amongst other things, references to i. US case law of unclear relevance to the claim ii. nebulous causes of action including tort and violation of various human and constitutional rights and iii. numerous irrelevant or repealed statutes and maxims. The nature of the pleadings is such that they are so unreasonably vague and incoherent so as to be abusive.
19. Second, the pleadings are such that it is inevitable that they would obstruct the just disposal of the case. On current pleadings, which the Claimant insists are adequate and compliant with the CPR, the Defendant would be left in a position of having to surmise and then defend a putative and plausible cause of action from a jumble of words purporting to identify legal propositions and facts. The expectation that the Defendant, and even the Court, would have to draw heavily on powers of imagination and conjecture to understand what is alleged is the antithesis of proper administration of justice, however satisfying such a spectacle might be to those presenting claims that are camouflaged to mask their intent and their substance (or lack of it). This approach is not artful, it is an abuse.
20. Third and in so far as the particularised claim does purport to plead a defamation claim, it wholly fails to comply with the requirements in CPR Practice Direction 53B. In particular, there is no or sufficiently clear indication in the pleadings as to the ‘meaning’ of the words complained of (PD53B para 4.2(4)). Further, the pleadings inadequately identify the facts and matters relied on to satisfy the ‘serious harm’ requirement in s.1 Defamation Act 2013 (PD53B para 4.2(3)).
21. Fourth, the pleadings here contain the very same reliance on incoherent legal propositions that were the subject of serious and unequivocal criticism by Master Gidden in his recent judgment. In my judgment it is extraordinary that Mr Stamp’s response to Master Gidden’s judgment is to say that it relates to different proceedings and has nothing to do with the present claim. On any rational view, there is a clear overlap in the factual matrix between the claim struck out by Master Gidden and the claim which is before me. Further, and even absent the overlap in the factual matrix, it is Mr Stamp who has chosen to rely on the identical ‘legal framework’ as that examined by Master Gidden. This makes it all the more surprising that Mr Stamp asserts a total disconnect between the two claims.
22. Fifth, and having concluded that the claim satisfies the conditions in CPR 3.4(2), I considered whether it would be appropriate to give Mr Stamp the opportunity to remedy the defects. During the hearing, I asked Mr Stamp whether he had read and processed the judgment of Master Gidden, thus affording him the opportunity to ask the Court for further time to amend his pleadings and attempt to cure the defects. Mr

Stamp's response to those questions left me in no doubt that he was singularly determined to pursue the claim on the current pleadings, without any acknowledgment or recognition of the serious defects identified by Master Gidden.

23. Further, it is clear that the Defendant has set out in correspondence with the Claimant the pleading defects on which it relies in this application. Mr Stamp's repeated response to the Defendant is that he considers his claim to be properly and sufficiently pleaded. Further, Mr Stamp has made and persisted in a request and then an application for default judgment against the Defendant despite the Defendant and, more recently the Court, explaining why such an application was untenable in light of the Defendant's strike out application [CPR 12.3(3)].
24. In these circumstances I conclude that there is no realistic prospect that an order allowing Mr Stamp further time to amend his pleadings would lead to him addressing and curing any of the defects identified.
25. Sixth, I am troubled by Mr Stamps' assertions relating to his future conduct in this claim. First, his statement that he will re-file his claim in the event that this claim is struck out. Second, his written assertion that '*it does not matter what the Master decides*' in this application and that he will probably submit hundreds of witness statements in support of the claim if the matter proceeds to trial<sup>2</sup>. In my judgment these statements as to future conduct add significant weight to my conclusion that this claim can properly be described as abusive.
26. It is in these premises that I allow the Defendant's application to strike out the entirety of the claim.
27. I further consider that for the reasons set out above, this claim, as pleaded, is bound to fail. I therefore make an order that the claim is totally without merit, pursuant to CPR 3.4(6).
28. I am aware of a number of other claims which were issued in the High Court by Mr Stamp in 2023 including the following, in which totally without merits decisions were made:
  - a. The judgment in [2024] EWHC 1092 which resulted in an Order striking out Mr Stamp's claim as totally without merit.
  - b. The Order of Master Thornett of 24 November 2023 in a claim pursued by Mr Stamp against the HMRC [KB-2023-003178], on an application to set aside an earlier Order striking out the claim, whereby Master Thornett dismissed the application and certified it as 'wholly without merit'.

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<sup>2</sup> Claimant's emails of 7.01.24 [37/229].

29. I am required by CPR 3.4(6)(b) to consider whether it would be appropriate to make a civil restraint order. It is clear from the above that there are already two ‘totally without merit’ orders made against Mr Stamp and this judgment brings that number to three. In those circumstances and mindful of the concerns identified above as to the nature of Mr Stamp’s conduct in these proceedings, I have decided that it would be appropriate to transfer the proceedings to a High Court Judge to consider making an extended civil restraint order against Mr Stamp.