

WordPress.com

3 March 2010

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Our ref. GAP\TAB\16007.3

Your ref.

**By Email (abuse-report@wordpress.com)**

**Strictly Private and Confidential**

**Not for publication**

Dear Sirs

**Defamatory and inaccurate blog – <http://richardwilsonauthor.wordpress.com>**

We act for Mr Tony Baldry, a barrister and member of Chambers at One Essex Court, and a Member of Parliament.

We write to give you notice of defamatory and seriously inaccurate material concerning our client published on the blog at <http://richardwilsonauthor.wordpress.com> under the heading "*What the voters of Banbury need to know about Tony Baldry MP*" (the "Article").

The subject of the Article is a letter that Mr Baldry wrote to the Foreign Secretary on behalf of Mr James Ibori, for whom Mr Baldry was instructed to act as a barrister in relation to Mr Ibori's involvement in a criminal case. The Article alleges that Mr Baldry wrote to "*several high level figures in the UK government, calling for a corruption case... to be dropped*" and states that "*[s]hortly sfterwards, Tony Baldry is alleged to have been paid a substantial amount of money for this service*". The Article goes on to state that Mr Baldry "*stands accused of pursuing a parallel career, in which he is alleged to have lobbied... ministers... to halt a major corruption investigation*".

The Article is inaccurate and very seriously defamatory of our client. It is clear to the reader that the Article is suggesting that Mr Baldry has attempted to interfere with the course of judicial proceedings and that he made an approach to Ministers, for reward, to advocate a course of action which would exclusively benefit Mr Ibori. This would be the clearest possible breach of the rule for Members of Parliament relating to Lobbying for Reward or Consideration (what is known

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as the Advocacy Rule). In fact there was no breach whatsoever of the House of Commons' rules because:

1. The letter was written on the notepaper of One Essex Court, and it states clearly that Mr Baldry has been instructed by solicitors to represent James Ibori. The letter was clearly written in Mr Baldry's capacity as Counsel for Mr Ibori, not as an MP.
2. There is no suggestion anywhere in the letter that Mr Baldry is seeking any course of action which would benefit Mr Ibori. The letter specifically summarises its purpose by saying that perhaps after the outcome of the criminal proceedings is known, relevant agencies might want to reflect on lessons learned.

It is clear therefore that even if the letter had been written in Mr Baldry's capacity as an MP, which it was not, it would not have constituted a breach of the advocacy rule. It is self evident that where the letter was written in Mr Baldry's capacity as a barrister there can be no implication of any improper conduct on the part of Mr Baldry, nor any breach of the rules of the Bar or the House of Commons.

Given the very serious and defamatory nature of the Article, we request that the Article be taken down from the internet immediately and that you confirm to us that this action has been taken as a matter of urgency.

Please note that, as a matter of English law, you are a publisher of this material, and should you fail to take down the Article in accordance with this request you can be subject to libel proceedings. Under section 1 of the Defamation Act 1996, a blog host ceases to be able to rely on the innocent dissemination defence to libel once notice has been given of the defamatory material if the material is not promptly removed. We also note that the posting of such defamatory material is a breach of the WordPress Terms of Service.

We look forward to receiving from you confirmation that the Article has been permanently removed. In the meantime, our client reserves all of his rights.

Please note that this letter is marked "Strictly Private and Confidential" and "Not for publication". Neither this letter nor the identity of our clients should be disclosed.

Yours faithfully



**OLSWANG LLP**