

On behalf of: Claimant  
Witness: Ben King  
No: First

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION  
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS LIST  
BETWEEN**

**Claim No. HQ18M01923**

**JOHN CHRISTOPHER DEPP II**

**Claimant**

**-and-**

**(1) NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD**

**(2) DAN WOOTTON**

**Defendants**

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**FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
BEN KING**

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I, **BEN**, of **LONDON WILL SAY** as follows:

1. I worked for the Claimant, Mr John Christopher Depp II and Ms Amber Heard, as their house manager in London for one month, in October 2014, and subsequently Australia for seven months, from February 2015 to August 2015, during Mr Depp's filming of Pirates of the Caribbean. I have not worked for Mr Depp since this date.
2. Unless stated otherwise, the facts and matters referred to in this witness statement are within my own knowledge and are true or are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief based on sources stated within this witness statement.
3. I make this witness statement in support of the Claimant's claim in these proceedings.

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4. I do not know the full details of the Claimant's claims against the Defendants in these proceedings. However, I have been shown paragraphs 8.a.8 to 8.a.11 of the Defendants' Amended Defence, which state:

*a.8. On or around 3 March 2015 Ms Heard and the Claimant were in Australia. The Claimant subjected Ms Heard to a three-day ordeal of physical assault which left her with injuries including a broken lip, swollen nose, and cuts all over her body. On the first day, during an argument about the Claimant's drug use, the Claimant pushed Ms Heard, slapped her, and shoved her to the ground before she retreated to a locked bedroom. The Claimant stayed up all night taking around eight MDMA (ecstasy) pills and drinking alcohol.*

*a.9. The following morning, the Claimant became physically abusive towards Ms Heard after she found a bag of MDMA pills and confronted him about his drug-taking. The Claimant argued that MDMA was not on his "not allowed" list, which Ms Heard disputed. In response, the Claimant swallowed more pills and chased them down with liquor. Ms Heard, concerned about the interaction of the various drugs the Claimant was taking, asked him what else he had taken that day. The Claimant screamed at her and grabbed her by the wrist as she tried to leave the room, then violently dropped it and said words to the effect of "leave anyway". She left the room and barricaded herself into another room. The Claimant broke through the door and attacked Ms Heard. During the course of the day, the Claimant hit Ms Heard multiple times, shoved and pushed her to the ground, choked her, and spat in her face. The Claimant then handed her a liquor bottle that he was drinking from and asked her, "What are you going to do?" When Ms Heard threw the bottle on the floor, the Claimant responded by throwing cans and unopened glass bottles at her.*

*a.10. That night, the Claimant shoved Ms Heard into a ping pong table, threw bottles through the window panels of a glass door, then grabbed Ms Heard and tore off her nightgown. The Claimant grabbed Ms Heard by her hair and choked her against the refrigerator in the kitchen. The Claimant then threw Ms Heard away from him, and as she tried to run away the Claimant continued to throw objects and alcohol at her. The Claimant then grabbed Ms Heard by the neck and collarbone, slammed her against the countertop,*

*and strangled her. Ms Heard's arms and feet were slashed by the broken glass on the kitchen countertop and floor. She was scared for her life and told the Claimant, "You are hurting and cutting me". The Claimant ignored her, continued to hit her with the back of one closed hand, and slammed a hard plastic telephone against a wall with his other hand until it smashed. While he was smashing the telephone, the Claimant severely injured his finger, cutting off the tip. Once Ms Heard had managed to escape from the Claimant, she barricaded herself in a bedroom.*

*a.11. The following morning, Ms Heard came downstairs to find numerous messages that the Claimant had written to her around the house, on the walls, and on her clothes, written in a combination of oil paint and the blood from his finger. The Claimant had also urinated all over the house in an attempt to write messages.*

5. The purpose of this witness statement is to comment on those paragraphs.
6. During my employment with Mr Depp and Ms Heard, I frequently witnessed Ms Heard goading and attempting to provoke Mr Depp. I never witnessed Mr Depp be violent or unkind towards Ms Heard, or indeed towards anyone else.
7. In March 2015 I was urgently summoned by my colleagues to the rented house I was manging on behalf of Mr Depp and Ms Heard in Australia. When I arrived, I found a significant amount of damage, particularly to the bar area on the lower ground floor. The mirror behind the bar was heavily cracked and there was broken glass and other debris strewn on and around the bar.
8. I was told that Mr Depp's fingertip had been severed. Whilst cleaning up the broken glass and debris, I looked for the fingertip and found it on the floor of the bar area. I was not informed at that time what had caused the damage to the property, or to Mr Depp's hand.
9. I suggested to Mr Depp's head of security, Mr Jerry Judge, that Ms Heard be removed from the property and escorted back to Los Angeles. I volunteered to accompany Ms Heard, with

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whom I had a good relationship, and Ms Heard agreed to this. I did not notice any cuts, bruises or injuries or redness of any kind to Ms Heard at this time.

10. On the flight back to Los Angeles, Ms Heard asked me: "Have you ever been so angry with someone that you just lost it?" I replied that that had never happened to me. She seemed incredulous and asked again, "you have *never* been so angry with someone that you just lost it?" Again, I answered that I had not and Ms Heard did not continue on this topic. This question seemed alarming to me, given the severity of the damage I had earlier witnessed at the house and the apparent serious injury to Mr Depp's finger.
11. I later read in the media that it was alleged that Ms Heard had thrown a glass vodka bottle at Mr Depp, and when the bottle smashed on the marble countertop (which I had to subsequently clear up and have repaired), the impact of the bottle severed Mr Depp's fingertip.
12. During my employment with Mr Depp and Ms Heard in Australia, Ms Heard instructed me to take her and Mr Depp's dogs to a local groomer to be cared for over a weekend whilst they travelled. Over this weekend, the grooming staff posted a number of photographs of the dogs online. The publication of the dogs' presence in Australia alerted the authorities to the fact that Ms Heard had illegally smuggled the dogs into the country. In the immediate aftermath, Ms Heard complained about me to Mr Depp, who separately took me aside and told me that I had done nothing wrong and not to worry about this.

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I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:  .....

**Ben King**

Date: 12 December 2019

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