

Committals for Contempt of Court at the Royal Courts of Justice: McKeag, Barker

In relation to *Venables & Thompson v News Group Newspapers Ltd & Others* Case Nos HQ 0004737 and HQ 000496

On Thursday 31 January 2019, at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL a Divisional Court consisting of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon, and Mr Justice Warby sentenced Robert McKeag and Natalie Barker for their admitted contempt of court. McKeag was sentenced to committal for a period of 12 months, suspended for 2 years. Barker was sentenced to committal to prison for 8 months, suspended for 2 years.

The basis for these sentences was that the respondents (unconnected individuals) had each published and, in the case of Barker, solicited information about Venables and Thompson, in breach of the injunction first granted by Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss in January 2001. The facts and the Court's reasons were set out in more detail in the extempore judgment of the Lord Chief Justice, a transcript of which will be available.