

## **Monroe v Hopkins**

### **The Tort of Defamation.**

Shortly after the twenty fifth General Election, demonstrations resulted in the Memorial to the Women of World War Two being vandalised.

The events were discussed on Twitter with user PennyRed tweeting a photograph of the vandalised memorial.

Ms Hopkins, well known as being an outspoken commentator and at the time a columnist for The Sun, posted two tweets denouncing PennyRed's tweet, leading to widespread press coverage of the exchange.

Then nine days later, apparently mistaking Monroe for PennyRed, Ms Hopkins tweeted

Ms Monroe, who comes from a family of military connections, responded instantly and angrily:

Soon after tweeting again,

and then again.

Hopkins later deleted her Tweet, blocked Monroe on twitter and published a new tweet :

A few days later, solicitors acting for Monroe wrote to Hopkins but the letter received no reply.

Almost 2 weeks later Hopkins acknowledged the mistake, but fell short of an apology:

Monroe sued Hopkins for libel. She won.

In the case, the High Court judge was of the view that a tweet may need to be read as part of a series of tweets and take into account the context in which a reasonable reader would read those tweets.

The case demonstrates that a tweet can indeed be defamatory, seriously damaging someone's reputation.

The judge also noted that an apology could have been made, which would have substantially reduced the damages Hopkins had to pay if she had offered one shortly after publication.

The combined message from the case is simple. If you publish a defamatory statement on social media, whether by mistaken identity or otherwise, apologise and do so quickly.