

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

TAMPA DIVISION

CASE NO.: 8:22-cv-00511-CEH-TGW

SAMANTHA M. MARKLE,

Plaintiff,

v.

MEGHAN MARKLE,

Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES**

The Plaintiff, SAMANTHA M. MARKLE, by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby serves her First Amended Complaint for Damages against the Defendant, MEGHAN MARKLE, and alleges as follows:

**Jurisdiction and Venue**

1. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1332, as there is diversity and the damages sought are in excess of \$75,000 exclusive of interest, costs, and attorney's fees.
2. Venue is proper in that the cause of action occurred in the Middle District of Florida.

**The Parties**

3. The Plaintiff (hereinafter referred to as "Mrs. Markle") is a private citizen

who is *sui juris* and is a citizen of Florida.

4. The Duchess is a private American citizen who is *sui juris* and is a citizen of California. She is subject to personal jurisdiction in the State of Florida pursuant to Fla. Stat. § 48.193(1)(a)(2), as she has committed intentional tortious acts within the State of Florida.

### **Prefatory Facts**

5. The Duchess is an American actress who has achieved success and fame in her own right. However, as fate had it, she met and ultimately married Prince Harry, grandson of Queen Elizabeth of the British Empire.

6. For reasons of her own, the Duchess distanced herself and denied familiarity or closeness to her family, including Mrs. Markle, who is the Duchess' half-sister on their father's side.

7. During their childhood, the Duchess was very close to her older sister despite their 17-year age difference. Mrs. Markle was more than a model to follow, but she was also the one who regularly drove the Duchess to school and helped her with homework, went on shopping trips to the local mall, and overall had a wonderful relationship with her younger sister.

8. During the years which followed, including the time in which the Duchess was succeeding in her career as an actress, the two sisters continued to have a good and close relationship.

9. Unfortunately, it was after the Duchess met and became engaged to Prince Harry that their relationship became estranged and hostile.

### **Factual Background**

10. The first sign of their relationship becoming unraveled was in 2018, when the Duchess married Prince Harry. Although there had not been any communications between the two sisters since late 2015, the situation between the two sisters was not perceived to be different or estranged, as Mrs. Markle knew and understood how busy the Duchess had become with her TV series and her need to travel around the world.

11. In 2018, while the Duchess was dating Prince Harry, Mrs. Markle phoned her sister who was in Canada with her mother. When they connected and Mrs. Markle started to speak, the Duchess hung up the phone on her. Mrs. Markle then called back and left a message which was never returned.

12. Ultimately, later in 2018, the Duchess became engaged to Prince Harry and a wedding date was set, but no one from the Duchess' family (both sides) was invited.

13. There was an exception to the Duchess' distancing of the family, in that the sisters' father was verbally invited, and then disinvited, due to his health issues. Mr. Markle had suffered 2 heart attacks prior to the royal wedding.

14. Meanwhile, the media had contacted Mrs. Markle who made positive statements. However, she did mention in an interview that the Duchess had not contacted her father, and she should, as he suffered 2 heart attacks. At that point, the press wrote stories that Mrs. Markle "bashed" the Duchess. Following that, the media with no basis began publishing stories with fake quotes allegedly made by Mrs. Markle.

15. At that time, the Duchess apparently responded to the fake quotes, against her sister, without any effort to contact Mrs. Markle.

16. In December of 2018, due to the press, Mrs. Markle was interviewed, and the press was not favorable to Mrs. Markle.

17. Meanwhile, the Duchess knew at all relevant times, that her older sister, Mrs. Markle suffered from Multiple Sclerosis, a debilitating disease, which is exacerbated by stress.

***Finding Freedom – The Book***

18. Ultimately, on August 11, 2020, a book “*Finding Freedom*” was published which was supposedly an “unauthorized” biography of the Duchess. However, the false information contained in the book came from the Duchess herself, through her agent and communications secretary.

19. The book was used by the Duchess to affirm the false narrative that she portrayed to the Royal Family, that she supposedly lived a rags to riches storybook life. A life that took her from a humble beginning like that of Cinderella, to the wife of a Prince, a Duchess. She did not hesitate to strike back at what she mistakenly believed to be actions of Mrs. Markle, her older sister, against her.

20. She needed to distance herself from Mrs. Markle and to blame any and all issues on her. In the book *Finding Freedom*, in which the Duchess provided the information through her communications secretary, there is an entire chapter 12, starting on Page 310 entitled “A Problem Like Samantha” which defamed Mrs. Markle and falsely describes her “ploys” to gain notoriety and money from her relation to the Duchess. It stated as fact:

The trouble began with Samantha Markle. Meghan’s

romance with Harry had hardly been public a full 24 hours when her half-sister sensed an opportunity. Never mind that she hadn't seen her estranged half sister in more than a decade.

Samantha – who had changed her name from Yvonne and died her hair a fresh shade of blond. . .

The false and defamatory statements which follow not only caused harm to Mrs. Markle financially in her professional occupation as a mental health counselor, but also subjected her to incomprehensible amounts of public scrutiny causing her mental health and well-being to deteriorate.

21. On Page 310, the book states that the Duchess and Mrs. Markle's paths had crossed only twice since they grew up.

22. This was false as the Duchess and Mrs. Markle at one point lived together and have been in frequent contact. This allegation is aimed to discredit the relationship between the Duchess and Mrs. Markle, and to make Mrs. Markle appear to be an opportunist.

23. On Page 311 the book falsely states: "Partly due to their seventeen-year age difference, Meghan had crossed paths with her half-sister only twice since growing up."

24. On Page 311, the book states that there is only one picture of Mrs. Markle and the Duchess. It was written in *Finding Freedom*: "If there were more, Samantha would have sold them." This is also false, as there were and are many photographs of the sisters together.

25. The implication of this defamatory statement is to accuse Mrs. Markle of being an opportunist who would do anything to make a dollar, even if it meant disposing of sentimental photographs revealing private moments between the Duchess and Mrs.

Markle.

26. The book, on Page 312 went further, and states that Mrs. Markle reached out to the Sun with her story about how snagging a royal had been the Duchess' lifelong ambition. Worse, it said that Mrs. Markle was "handsomely" paid.

27. This statement is false. Mrs. Markle has never contacted The Sun regarding the Duchess, and she was never paid anything from the Sun, least "handsomely."

28. On Page 313, the book states: "Meg didn't grow up with Samantha. She barely saw her."

29. On Page 314, the book states: "the half-sisters have never been close."

30. On Page 317, the book falsely states that Mrs. Markle was not invited to the Duchess' first wedding. This was another false statement designed to bolster the false position that the two sisters had no real relationship.

31. The Duchess even states that she asked her father to intervene with Mrs. Markle, and that he had told Mrs. Markle that she is hurting the Duchess. None of this was true.

### **Oprah Prime Time Show**

32. After the release of *Finding Freedom*, which was published on August 11 of 2020, subsequently on March 7, 2021, the Duchess and Prince Harry appeared on an Oprah Winfrey CBS prime time special which was viewed by approximately 50 million people, worldwide.

33. During the course of the show which aired on March 7, 2021, and was

subsequently replayed on numerous televisions and online media platforms, the Duchess stated that she was “an only child,” who only met Mrs. Markle “a handful of times,” and that Mrs. Markle only changed her surname to “Markle” after the Duchess started dating Prince Harry so that Mrs. Markle could cash in on her newfound fame.

34. None of these statements were true.

### **Harm to be Caused**

35. These prevarications were greatly injurious to Mrs. Markle because it caused a negative public reaction. Mrs. Markle lives in a small Florida city, Lakeland, where she is well known. Moreover, she is known because she is the sister of the Duchess who enjoys great fame, wealth, and prestige. The Duchess is a public figure, with a huge fan base. When the Duchess gave information to be published in what turned out to be a ‘best seller,’ and appeared on the CBS Oprah Winfrey special viewed by 50 million people, she instilled anger in her fan base against Mrs. Markle, which includes a significant part of the population of Lakeland.

36. Suddenly, emotionally connected fans turned against this supposed imposter who was distant from her younger sister. Mrs. Markle was seen as a greedy opportunist who people believed had no relationship with her sister, and who was attempting to cash-in on her sister’s success and fame.

37. All of the false remarks in the book *Finding Freedom* and in the CBS Oprah Winfrey interview were false, were said directly by the Duchess, with full knowledge that the statements she was saying were false. All the statements by the Duchess were written

or said with malice in that she knew that they were false, and she also knew that they would cause harm to her older sister, Mrs. Markle.

38. Moreover, in this case the defamatory statements were publicized on a worldwide scale by a public figure, the Duchess of Sussex. By virtue of Mrs. Markle's relation to her half-sister, the public took an interest in Mrs. Markle.

39. The false and malicious statements described above, caused substantial, irreparable prejudice, injury, and harm to Mrs. Markle's reputation to a substantial, sizable, and appreciable fraction of the relevant community, and caused her great anxiety and emotional distress.

40. As a direct result of the Duchess' false and defamatory statements Mrs. Markle receives hateful emails and messages on a regular basis, is subjected to ongoing negative media portrayals, news articles, nasty negative press, and her reputation has been so damaged that she has been unable to work as a mental health counselor.

41. For example, Mrs. Markle was forced to seek and obtain an "Injunction for Protection Against Stalking" in Polk County, Florida against one of Defendant's zealous fans.

42. All predicate acts which were required to have been done have been done or the requirement has been waived.

### **Count I - - Defamation**

43. The Plaintiff avers the allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 42, above, and incorporates them by reference as though they are fully rewritten in this Count.

44. Utilizing her power as the Duchess of Sussex, the Duchess made, published,



and disseminated false statements about her own half-sister Mrs. Markle, with the intent that they be spread across the globe.

45. The Duchess has made written false, derogatory, and defamatory allegations in the form of the best-selling book *Finding Freedom*. In which, she claimed among other things, that Mrs. Markle was cashing in on her fame, that the sisters had “only crossed paths once,” and have never been close.

46. Moreover, the Duchess appeared on the CBS Oprah Winfrey interview where she further defamed Mrs. Markle and stated she was “an only child,” who only met Mrs. Markle “a handful of times,” and that Mrs. Markle only changed her surname to “Markle” after the Duchess married Prince Harry.

47. All of these statements contained within the book and the CBS Oprah Winfrey interview were false and the Duchess knew the statements were false at the time they were made.

48. Mrs. Markle was subjected to an incomprehensible amount of public scrutiny. On a regular basis, Mrs. Markle received hate messages, nasty negative press, and suffers emotionally from the worldwide hatred, contempt, and ridicule that she is forced to endure.

49. As described above, the statements made by the Duchess were false, and at the time the statements were made the Duchess had actual knowledge that these statements were false.

50. At all times relevant, the statements and allegations were made by the Duchess with the sole intent to damage Mrs. Markle’s reputation and credibility with the

public so that she was virtually unbelievably. The Duchess did so in order to push her concocted “rags to riches” life story, without contradiction or negation from Mrs. Markle or other family members.

51. Disregarding the truth and veracity of her statements, the Duchess has repeatedly and continuously published false and defamatory statements regarding Mrs. Markle. To this day, the Duchess continues to contact the media to further spread these blatant lies across the globe.

52. The false and defamatory statements have prejudiced, harmed, and injured Mrs. Markle’s reputation as she is exposed hatred, ridicule, and contempt by the public.

53. Moreover, because of the malicious statements, Mrs. Markle has also suffered injury to her occupation as a mental health counselor, and the sales for her autobiography have drastically decreased.

54. The statements made by the Duchess are the direct and proximate cause of Mrs. Markle’s harm and taken together have caused Mrs. Markle to suffer actual losses in the form of harm to her occupation, as well as emotional and mental distress, including anxiety and fear due to the threatening and violent emails and messages she receives on a regular basis from the public, and the permanent harm caused to her reputation and credibility.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff, Samantha Markle, demands judgment for compensatory damages and punitive damages against the Defendant, Meghan Markle, together with interest, attorneys’ fees, and costs, and for any other and further relief which this Court may deem just and proper.

**Count II - - Injurious Falsehood**

55. The Plaintiff avers the allegations in Paragraphs 1 through 42, above, and incorporates them by reference as though they are fully rewritten in this Count.

56. As detailed above, the Duchess published false and defamatory statements in the book *Finding Freedom*, such as the statement contained on Page 313 which states: “Meg didn’t grow up with Samantha. She barely saw her.”

57. Additionally, on Page 314, the book states: “the half-sisters have never been close.”

58. As detailed in length herein, on numerous occasions the Duchess has published false, defamatory, and derogatory statements, about Mrs. Markle.

59. These statements include information provided by the Duchess for the book *Finding Freedom* such as that Mrs. Markle was cashing in on her fame, that the sisters had “only crossed paths once,” and that the two have never been close. These statements were all false.

60. Moreover, the Duchess appeared on the CBS Oprah Winfrey interview where she further defamed Mrs. Markle and stated she was “an only child,” who only met Mrs. Markle “a handful of times,” and that Mrs. Markle only changed her surname to “Markle” after the Duchess married Prince Harry.

61. The Duchess continues to spread her false and defamatory statements about Mrs. Markle to the media from the period of August 2020 to the present day.

62. The Duchess’ depiction of Mrs. Markle to the public has forever cast her in an unfavorable light, and has caused irreparable harm to her reputation, credibility, and

ultimately her career.

63. As a mental health counselor, Mrs. Markle has lost business from these false and defamatory statements as the public believes she is a liar, opportunist, evil, and ultimately unstable.

64. Given that the Duchess in August of 2020 claimed in the book she and Mrs. Markle are virtually strangers, Mrs. Markle's autobiography sales tanked. Reviewers began writing hateful messages on the reviews for the book and even made allegations that Mrs. Markle was "evil" and "capitalizing on her the Duchess' fame."

65. At all relevant times, the Duchess acted with actual malice in spreading the false information to the book publishers, as she knew that her false and defamatory statements, allegations, and overall depiction of Mrs. Markle would result in pecuniary harm.

66. Despite knowing full well her statements were false, the Duchess spread this false information to third parties such as news outlets, television programs, and the general public, with the intent that they be disseminated around the globe.

67. The Duchess made these statements in order to impair the credibility of Mrs. Markle, so that she may push her constructed "rags to riches" story and in turn, negate or prevent contradiction from Mrs. Markle, her brother Thomas Markle, Jr., and father, Thomas Markle.

68. As the media trusted the Duchess of Sussex as a public figure, the media reported her allegations as true.

69. For example, after the CBS Oprah Winfrey Interview Mrs. Markle's

autobiography was labeled as “a book of lies.”

70. The public was misled that Mrs. Markle was nothing more than a lying, dishonest opportunist who was out to capitalize on her half-sister’s newfound fame and status.

71. The Duchess’ acts have caused, and continue to cause, irreparable injury to Mrs. Markle’s trade, business, reputation, prestige, and goodwill.

72. As a direct and proximate result of the Duchess’ unlawful conduct, Mrs. Markle has suffered irreparable injury to her trade, business, reputation, prestige, and goodwill.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff, Samantha Markle, respectfully requests that this Court enter a Judgment for Mrs. Markle, and against Defendant, Meghan Markle, for damages, including compensatory damages, punitive damages, attorneys’ fees, and costs, and such further and other relief which this Court may deem just and proper.

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

The Plaintiff demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

Respectfully submitted on June 3, 2022.

**DESIGNATION OF EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR SERVICE**

(Pursuant to Rule 2.516 Fla. R. Jud. Admin.)

The undersigned attorneys of The Ticktin Law Group hereby designate the following Email Addresses for service in the above styled matter. Service shall be complete upon emailing to the following email addresses in this Designation, provided that the provisions of Rule 2.516 are followed.

[Serv549@LegalBrains.com](mailto:Serv549@LegalBrains.com); [Serv513@LegalBrains.com](mailto:Serv513@LegalBrains.com);  
[Serv512@LegalBrains.com](mailto:Serv512@LegalBrains.com)

**SERVICE IS TO BE MADE TO EACH AND EVERY EMAIL ADDRESS LISTED IN THIS DESIGNATION AND TO NO OTHERS.**

Dated: June 3, 2022

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished to all parties registered to receive service via CM/ECF this **3<sup>rd</sup> day of June 2022**.

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