



How Free is Free Speech?

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How free is free speech? It is only as free as your ability to defend it.

5 years ago events were set in motion that have caused me ask these questions:

Do we live in a country where free speech is really a constitutional right?
Do we have a right to express our opinions and tell about our experiences as we know them?

Well, yes we do. I truly believe that. However, although we have that right, it is important that we have the resources - the money - it takes to be able to defend that right. I have come to learn this first hand.

- Roughly 5 years ago my twin boys were placed in a "behavior modification" program without my knowledge or my consent. At the time they were sent to this program they were living abroad with their father in Brazil. Their father decided they needed some type of "boot camp" experience. He did some research on the internet and found the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP).

- This whole industry was new to me. I did not have a clue as to what a "specialty program" was. I had never before heard of these types of programs and therefore I needed to know more. I needed to learn all about the "teen help" industry and the program to which my boys had been sent. I starting searching the internet.

- The information I found on the internet was overwhelming. Through this search I found an individual who seemed to know a lot about the "teen help" industry. Her name is Sue Scheff and her company is known as Parents Universal Resource Experts (P.U.R.E.). Scheff's website displayed a statement claiming PURE's mission was to "help bring families back together." I began to believe Sue Scheff could help me. I believed Sue Scheff cared about kids and their families.

- Over the course of time, I discovered Scheff referred families to the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP) before becoming their competitor. I learned Sue Scheff was also responsible for placing kids into unregulated and risky programs. I discovered Sue Scheff does not have the education or professional credentials that qualify her to determine if a program is safe and meets the necessary requirements to treat at-risk teens.

- When I learned of Sue Scheff's prior affiliation with WWASP and realized Scheff was doing the same things she accused WWASP of doing, I shared that publicly on internet bulletin boards, specifically www.fornits.com.

- Sue Scheff sued me for defamation of character. She claims that the words I used to describe her business and business associates caused her harm. What she shares with the public is the names and terms I used when describing her and the industry as a whole. I used terms such as "ed con", "fraud" etc. What she doesn't share with the public is why I used these terms. And the why is what this case is all about.

- I think Scheff believed that she could bully me into silence. She hoped that I would not be able to defend myself from the very beginning. She had two depositions taken from me during the course of this case. Both depositions centered on my defense and how it was being paid. Then when I lost the financial support she seized the opportunity to strip me of my rights to a fair trial.

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- During the course of this law suit I have had many obstacles to overcome. In June of 2004 my twin sons joined the army. In August, between their graduations from basic training, Hurricane Katrina hit our area. My family was forced to stay away from our home for weeks. When we were finally allowed to return to the area we found that we had 3 feet of water and wind damage with fallen trees and debris. We were without utilities for months. We would get in bed at 6:00 in the evening because we had no electricity and it was dark. We would lay and listen to a transistor radio. There were only two radio stations that would come in because most communication towers were down and we would listen to the news which all centered on the terrible things that were going on in our area. You couldn't use your cell phones so communication outside of this area was very limited. I couldn't stay here it was depressing and it was wearing on me mentally. The damage to the area was immense.

- Over the last two years my father has been in and out of the hospital. He has had several surgeries because of congestive heart failure. He is very ill and is now on dialysis. In January one of my twins was sent to Iraq. He spent 10 months with a combat unit in Kirkuk. I spent those months praying for his safe return. The other twin was sent to Germany. My oldest son is also in the military he is stationed in Washington.

My right to free speech is being silenced because I do not have the funds necessary to defend the truth. This law suit is an attempt to silence me. Sue Scheff does not want the public to know the "whole" truth.

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