

NO. D-1-GN-18-1605

MARCEL FONTAINE,
Plaintiff,

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF

V.

TRAVIS COUNTY, T E X A S

ALEX E. JONES, INFOWARS, LLC,
FREE SPEECH SYSTEMS, LLC and
KIT DANIELS,
Defendants.

459th JUDICIAL DISTRICT

DEFENDANTS' ORIGINAL ANSWER

Defendants Alex Jones, Infowars, LLC, Free Speech Systems, LLC (“Free Speech”) and Kit Daniels (collectively, the “Defendants”), hereby file this Original Answer and show the Court the following:

I. GENERAL DENIAL

1. Defendants generally deny, each and every, all and singular, the allegations contained in Plaintiff’s Original Petition, and request strict proof thereof.¹

II. AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

2. Plaintiff’s defamation causes of action (and derivative causes of action, to the extent that they are based upon the alleged defamation) are barred, in whole or in part, under Texas Civ. Practice and Remedies Code § 73.005. Under that section, the defense of “truth” applies to a media defendant’s accurate reporting of allegations made by a third party regarding a matter of public concern. The challenged publication (i.e. the Challenged Image and accompanying text) was an accurate reporting of allegations made by one or more third parties

¹ The Original Petition contains a litany of irrelevant, inflammatory and baseless allegations (*see e.g.* Original Petition ¶¶ 9-22) concerning matters that have absolutely no bearing on Plaintiff’s actual causes of action (which are predicated on Free Speech’s publication of a photograph allegedly of Plaintiff (the “Challenged Image”) on the InfoWars website - which photograph was voluntarily removed within 24 hours of its original publication). Defendants reserve the right to move to strike or otherwise challenge these immaterial and inflammatory allegations.

regarding a matter of public concern (i.e. the Parkland, Florida shooting) regarding breaking news. As such, Defendants are entitled to the statutory protection.

3. Plaintiff's causes of action are barred, in whole or in part, because Plaintiff failed to mitigate his damages and pursuant to the mitigating factors set forth in Tex. Civ. Prac & Rem. Code § 73.003. Under that statute, Defendants are entitled to introduce evidence that they made a public apology, correction and retraction of the allegedly defamatory statement. They are also entitled to introduce all material facts and circumstances surrounding the claim for damages and defenses to the claim, the facts and circumstances under which the allegedly defamatory statement was made (such as Mr. Daniels' reliance upon a third-party source in making the alleged statement), and evidence of the intention with which the allegedly defamatory statement was made (such as Mr. Daniels' then real-time belief as to the truthfulness of the allegedly defamatory statement).

4. Plaintiff's damages claims are barred, in whole or in part, because Plaintiff's own acts or omissions, or those acts or omissions of third-parties, caused or contributed to Plaintiff's alleged injury. For example, Free Speech's original publication of the Challenged Image never identified the man appearing in the photograph as the Plaintiff. Plaintiff's filing of this suit has created or contributed to his alleged harm since he has now publicized (and thereby publically associated) the Challenged Image with his name.

5. Plaintiff's derivative causes of action (for conspiracy and "respondent superior") are barred, in whole or in part, on the same grounds that his direct causes of action are barred (as set forth herein).

6. Plaintiff's claim for exemplary damages is barred, in whole or in part, under the Texas Defamation Mitigation Act (in light of Free Speech's correction, clarification or

retraction) and pursuant to the statutory caps outlined in Section 41.008 of the Texas Civil Practice & Remedies Code.

To the extent of its applicability, Defendants preserve the rights and remedies under the Texas Citizens Protection Act. Defendants also reserve the right to assert additional defenses. Defendants further reserve the right to assert any and all additional claims, to amend the Answer, and to file further pleadings.

III. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Defendants respectfully request that Plaintiff be denied any relief as requested in his Original Petition, that Plaintiff take nothing on his claims, that Defendants be awarded their attorneys' fees under applicable law (including any motion to dismiss under Chapter 27 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, the filing of which is hereby reserved), and the Court grant them such other and further relief as the Court deems equitable, just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTORNEYS FOR DEFENDANTS

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing document has been served upon the parties listed below via email on May 11, 2018:

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/s/ Eric J. Taube
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