

[PDF] Google Bomb: The Untold Story Of The \$11.3M Verdict That Changed The Way We Use The Internet

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Description:

About the Author John W. Dozier, Jr. began practicing law in 1981 and is recognized, through peer review, for his high level of skill and integrity. His firm, Dozier Internet Law protects the reputations and intellectual property of businesses by handling legal matters involving online defamation, copyright and trademark infringement, and hacking. John is the author and publisher of the Dozier Internet Law Federal Court Report and is a leading pro-business commentator on Internet law. He lives in Virginia. For more information, visit www.cybertriallawyer.com.

Sue Scheff, founder of Parents' Universal Resources Experts, Inc. (P.U.R.E.), a child and parenting advocacy organization, is a noted expert on Internet Defamation by countless mediums after winning \$11.3M in a 2006 lawsuit against a woman who posted viral defamatory statements about Scheff and P.U.R.E. She has appeared on *The Rachel Ray Show*, *ABC News*, *CNN Headline News*, *Fox News*, *CBS News: Sunday Morning*, and NPR, to name a few. Visit the author at www.suescheff.com.

Michael Fertik, is a repeat Internet entrepreneur and CEO with experience in technology and law. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School. In his capacity as CEO of ReputationDefender, Michael serves on the advisory board of The Internet Keep Safe Coalition (iKeepSafe), a non-profit that works for the health and safety of youth online. Michael Fertik has been featured on ABC News, 20/20, Good Morning America, NBC News, The Today Show, CBS News, The Early Show, Fox and Friends, Fox News, NPR, CNN, Forbes, Newsweek, Washington Post and many more media outlets for his expertise in online reputation management. For more information, visit www.reputationdefender.com.

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All Rise

The day is September 19th, 2006, a Tuesday. It's a little before 2:30 in the afternoon and the weather is sunny, breezy, and beautiful in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The surf is up just down the street and my stomach is riding a wild wave as the jury of six somberly files into the nearly empty courtroom.

I have no idea what to expect. My lawyer, David Pollack, leans a little closer and whispers, 'Well, this is it. . . .' I wish there was something I could hold onto besides his words since my legs aren't feeling very steady as the bailiff, a very kindly looking older man, intones, 'All rise.'

This is a landmark case for Internet defamation, as no precedent has ever been set. My organization has been all but destroyed. My personal reputation dragged through such muck it makes a pig sty seem clean by comparison. David has prepared me as best he can for what the verdict might be. I'm already out over \$100,000 with a second mortgage on my house to get this far, but if the jury finds in my favor and grants us even a tenth of that I'll feel vindicated.

The Honorable Judge John Luzzo, in flowing black robe and wearing his duties with appropriate dignity, takes his elevated seat on the bench and asks the foreman, 'Has the jury reached a verdict?'

'We have, Your Honor.' Perhaps in her midthirties, dark haired and pretty, she hands their verdict to the bailiff, who hands it to the judge—he nods in seeming approval—then back it goes from the judge to the bailiff to the foreman. The air is trapped in my lungs. I can't breathe. And then she begins to read, line by line, the jury's unanimous decision:

'For Parents' Universal Resource Experts . . .' (PURE, that's the organization I set up to help parents

of troubled teens) ' . . . we award \$1,170,000 in compensatory damages as well as punitive damages of \$2,000,000.' Punitive, meaning to punish the defendant for what they've done, am I hearing this right? 'And for Sue Scheff we award . . .'

Tears are streaming down my face while I watch David scribbling the numbers as the foreman keeps reading . . . and reading. David circles the final rough math and mutters in disbelief: 'What? Over ten million!'

'Court is adjourned!' The loud thud of wood on wood as Judge Luzzo slams down his gavel reverberates in my ears. Nothing seems real. Even the jurors asking the judge for permission to personally speak with me, then approaching with open arms, seem like a waking dream. My unflappable attorney, so steady in court, is giddy as a kid with a mile-high cone of cotton candy on his first carousel ride once we're outside, fist punching the air and whooping, 'I don't believe it! I don't believe it! This could be the biggest Internet defamation jury award in history!'

Being awarded a staggering amount of money for standing your ground when you've been deeply wronged is a wonderful thing. Having one's faith restored in the goodness of humanity after witnessing the underbelly of it is even more priceless.

I've been a victim of Internet defamation. I understand too well the sense of powerlessness, isolation, and unadulterated fear that if you tell someone your name and they decide to Google search you (it happens), you've suddenly gone from acquaintance to some Fatal Attraction monster who makes Hitler seem like a saint—a pariah to be avoided at all costs. It's a fate much worse than getting dissed by someone you thought was a friend only for another to clue you in on the latest mean gossip making the rounds. Internet defamation is another animal entirely—a cruel and vicious animal that often lacks a face and hides behind the computer screen in cowardly anonymity. Or so the 'anonymous' think.

It is my sincere hope that by exposing my own ordeal, as well as the mistakes I made when trying to confront unfounded attacks on my character and business practices, that you might benefit from them both.

My name is Sue Scheff. This is my story.

Unfortunately, there are too many Sue Scheffs out there. The victim of an online defamation attack can be a Fortune 500 company, a soccer coach, a Girl Scout leader, the singer in a boy band, your local dentist, a world famous plastic surgeon, a professional athlete, a college professor, that ex-lover, a government official, your minister, your spouse, or your children. I'm John W. Dozier Jr., founder of the Dozier Internet Law firm . . . and I fix problems. One such problem? Not content to sucker punch the elderly lady on a street corner and snatch her purse, miscreants have taken their activities indoors. Understandable, I guess. Winters can get a bit nippy and with global warming and all, summers are way too hot. So they now ply their trade on the Internet, carefully searching out 'marks' in air-conditioned comfort while reclining in an overstuffed lounge swigging microbrews. But they aren't the only problems. The defamation predators of the web look like that friendly paperboy, the church choir director, your child's best friend, or the guy or gal next door because, well, how should I say this . . . they are.

Sue has a great story to tell, but I have others to draw from as well. This is a very different kind of book, one that I hope you'll find both fascinating and enlightening as Sue speaks from her personal experience and I offer my professional expertise. At the beginning of each chapter, you will meet Sue and read in her words the intricate and intimate details of her landmark \$11.3 million court victory and the malicious deeds that led up to it. Following Sue's personal accounts, I will interject

my sections (which are prompted by a change in typeface as has occurred here), and take you on a guided tour of the underworld of the web, show you the inside tricks of the trade, tell you how to know when you are a defamation target, walk you through the early warning signs, and train you on how to deal with the attack while maintaining your sanity and recovering your good name. From passive defense to high-powered offense, from rallying the troops to counterinsurgent maneuvers, you'll learn how to fight back and win. Of course, we'll cover what to do, and what not to do, when under attack. And you'll learn ready-made steps you can take immediately to turn back attacks on your name before they even start.

The cyberdefamation scourge sweeping the web today is destroying lives, careers, and businesses with no advance warning. The devastation is shocking and immediate. The risk is too high for you to ignore this new form of online personal terrorism. But you have to help yourself. There are no white knights and no one is going to come to your rescue. So take our stories, advice, and guidance as a wake-up call. You have the power to gain control of your good name and reputation before the nice boy who lives next door, who seems to always be sitting in his overstuffed recliner drinking a beer, decides to pay you and yours a little cybervisit. Strange things can happen on the web. Those under attack will at times feel out of touch with reality. Sue will tell you that she was no exception.

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