Student notes for Student Press Law Center’s Media Law Presentation: Libel Law

SPLC’s phone number:

SPLC’s website:

7

Libel is publication of a false statement of *\_\_\_\_* that seriously *\_\_\_\_\_* someone’s reputation.

8

Printed defamation is *\_\_\_\_\_* (TV broadcasts usually qualify as libel too.)

Spoken defamation is *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.

11

First thing person must show is that the libelous statement has been *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

12

Publication is broadly defined, and it can occur almost anywhere. Name three places other than an article in which libel could appear:

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•

•

13

MythBuster 1:

Yes, you are responsible for published statements or material created by others – even if it comes from *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

14

List four common places that could contain potentially libelous “fact” statements:

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•

•

•

15

Publication of a false statement of act that seriously harms \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reputation.

16

You can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the person by description.

21

If no “identification” of the individual is made, then a person cannot successfully sue for *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.

22

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is an absolute defense to a libel claim.

27

Statements of “pure” *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* cannot be libelous.

28

A mix of “fact” and “opinion” *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* be libelous.

30

Humor is not necessarily the same as “opinion” and doesn’t have blanket protection from lawsuits, so *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* , *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* and *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* occasionally prompt threats of libel or other lawsuits by individuals.

34

The person suing for libel must show the false statement caused serious harm to their *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.

35

Red flag statements include

•

•

•

• Negative statements about grades or academic ability

•

•

•

37

Review:

Statement

• must be published

• *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*  an individual

• is *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

• asserts a *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

• causes *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

In order to successfully sue for libel all the criteria from the this slide must be met and …

38

… the reporter/editor acted unreasonably.

The person suing for libel must show that the *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*  acted *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.

40-42

Name five ways a reporter ensures they are acting reasonably.

• *trustworthy sources*

• *take accurate notes*

• *documents, documents, documents*

• *rigorous in language choice*

• *talk to all sides*

45

Never publish a story if \_\_\_\_\_ doubt its truth. Report what you know and explain to readers how you know it.