Twitter Thread by Stilgherrian



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And now a happy-making Christmas story. “Alan Jones settles defamation lawsuit with SBS.” https://t.co/OhEaHlVea7

“SBS filed a defence of truth to the imputations that Jones was a racist, a misogynist, a liar and a disgraceful high school teacher.”

“SBS also denied the meanings claimed by Jones, pleaded the defence of honest opinion, and asserted that Jones’ reputation was already so bad it could not be damaged by the broadcast.”

This relates to a tribute segment on “the Feed” by Alex Lee which said Jones "made a career out of bullying people", "gleefully used racial slurs" and "spread lies and fake news".

As the story says: Jones claimed in court documents that the broadcast conveyed ten defamatory imputations about him, including that he "achieved his success as a broadcaster by habitually seeking to intimidate vulnerable people".

That SMH story goes on to list a number of other things that Jones claims the story suggested.

Anyway SBS said this was either all trust or honest comment. An agreement was reached to take down the segment, and no apology or compensation to Jones is needed.

Jones claimed in court documents that the broadcast conveyed ten defamatory imputations about him, including that he "achieved his success as a broadcaster by habitually seeking to intimidate vulnerable people".

Jones claimed the broadcast wrongly suggested that he "sought to incite racial violence" in the week leading up to the Cronulla riots, "was a racist" for criticising Muslims and Aboriginal people, "was a misogynist" for singling out female politicians for criticism, and "was a liar" in that he lied to the public about climate change.

It was also claimed the broadcast wrongly suggested Jones was a disgraceful high school teacher, in that he had written a love letter to a schoolboy, took money from companies to promote their products on air, and was a hypocrite for choosing to isolate in his country estate despite repeatedly seeking to undermine risks posed by coronavirus.

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I'm happy for SBS and for Alex, of course. But I'm disappointed that we won't see a court rehash all these things and decide whether it's fair to call Alan Jones a racist, bully, liar, disgraceful high school teacher, hypocrite, or misogynist.

So anyway that's a fair report of what happened in a legal case. We'll have to wait another day to find out the answer to all those questions.

One of my best lessons at the ABC was when one of the lawyers came over to Adelaide to say we were under-budget on our defamation spend, and here's how to run things much closer to the edge without getting into too much trouble.

From memory the only time one of my programs was done for defo was during local government elections. Some bloke was running again for mayor of somewhere after being savaged over the Ask Wednesday bushfires. Reporter said he "must be a [bit of] a masochist" or some such...

My understanding is that legal just said the lawyer-talk equivalent of "What if we just give you $3000 to go away?" and he took it. No retraction, no apology, no admission. In my view it gives the impression that someone at the pub suggested he should just give it a go for cash.