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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: 'Libel'

From: **Andy Roberts** <101322.751@CompuServe.COM>  
Date: 18 Feb 97 12:49:44 EST  
Fwd Date: Tue, 18 Feb 1997 16:49:47 -0500  
Subject: Re: 'Libel'

I'm sorry to bore list members with UFO politics but I can't let Stan Friedman get away with this:

Stan Friedman wrote:

>Concerning Andy Roberts charge re my libel suit, he is off the wall.  
>I sued the Manchester Evening News and Jenny and Bufora, (since she  
>was acting in her role as their director of research) for defamation  
>in a long and very nasty article appearing on a Saturday before my  
>Sunday lecture in Manchester.

It wasn't 'nasty', it reflected opinion about someone who held very strange beliefs. Are you scared of opinion Stan? Interestingly enough more people became aware of the issues as a result of your lawsuit than were before. Funny way of not wanting to be 'defamed'.

>There was no Sunday paper in which an apology could be published.  
>She initially tried to blame the newspaper. We obtained copy of  
>the letter she had sent the paper which was even more defamatory  
>than the article. An out of court settlement was reached and a  
>full apology was published.

Mainly because the person acting legally for you in the UK has had it in for Jenny for years and his actions appeared to be a personal vendetta. The libel laws are, as most of us know, based on medieval laws and are stacked against you from the word go - unless you have lots of money. Also by your reasoning not only do you not allow opinion to be expressed publically but you won't even allow it in a private letter!

>There are laws about defamation. A bunch of misguided UK people  
>tried to make it a free speech issue (it never was) and raised  
>money to help Jenny... all the while misrepresenting the  
>particulars of the case.

The 'bunch' of people may have been misguided but they were misguided by the simple fact that an American ufologist, using sympathetic legal contacts was out to stifle opinion about what many ufologists world-wide still see as nutty ideas. Sorry if you or the list doesn't like that way of looking at it but that's how it is.

People are quite entitled to hold \*any\* ideas they want - the more the merrier - but they must also accept that outlandish ideas in particular attract the most cutting criticisms. What's the problem? A great many well-known UK ufologists put money up for Jenny's defence and some sci-fi people such as Dave Langford. Jenny was fully aware of this but in the end due to family reasons chose not to go through with it. A great pity to my mind as we would

have seen the bizarre spectacle of strange beliefs put on trial, and according to legal advice taken at the time Jenny would have won.

>Even now, though touting free speech, they made it impossible  
>for solicitor Harry Harris, who handled the case for me, to  
>speak at a recent UK conference.

This was a different bunch of misguided people entirely Stan! I presume you are referring to the recent Lytham St Annes conference in which Harry Harris conned the organising group LAPIS - against their founder members wishes - into letting him speak. It's true he \*was\* virtually booed off stage but that was just because what he was saying was boring and inappropriate. Few people there actually knew who he was, cared less and just wanted some entertainment. Harry wanted to rant about why he didn't agree with Dr Sue Blackmore's \*opinion\* on abductions as expressed on a TV show a year or so earlier. The sequel to this is he has caused so much hassle in the LAPIS group that even the people who invited him in the first place now regret it. (for a fuller outline of this see the next issue of BUFORAs UFO Times or The New Ufologist 'zines).

>Free speech doesn't mean freedom to reveal state secrets, incite  
>a riot, or defame a person.

Why not? You're on \*very\* dodgy ground now Stan. In two of those circumstances it's your moral duty in many instances and the last is debatable.

>The best defense against libel is truth. Jenny had none on her  
>side. She had every opportunity to apologize and would not..

Why should she apologise for her opinions? Again, I'm sorry to make a point of all this but it just typifies what \*really\* goes on in so-called UFO research. And whether we like it or not UFO politics make the subject what it is. The stories which could be told would make the average consumer of ufology's toes curl, but I know the list is sensitive!

Vallee was right to stay out of it all- but for us lesser mortals who don't like to see wool being pulled over eyes we \*should\* expose the petty arguments and even pettier personalities who are just out for a fast buck or their five minutes of fame as a big fish in a \*very\* small pool.

Andy

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