

Statement by Frank VanderSloot after dismissing case against Peter Zuckerman, Oct. 19, 2015

After we leave this life, the only thing that will be left of us is the record of what we did while we were here. I believe that one of the most unfair things we can do to someone is to unfairly distort their record and to say false things about them that damage them and their family. It is extremely unfortunate that we have had to resort to litigation to clear my name and to set the record straight. But finally, we are there.

It took over two years to get the truth out. But we finally have it. Please read Peter's affidavit carefully. It sets the record straight on several issues:

We did not "out" Peter. As his statement says, he had written publicly about being gay long before the Community Page, and the Trish and Holly show had spent over 12 hours attacking him because he was gay prior to our coming to his defense in the Community Page. While it is understandable that someone may have found out by reading the Community Page, Judge Williamson stated that based on that definition of "outing," Mother Jones outed Peter to a much larger and more egregious degree.

And we have known since the beginning, the statements that Peter made on the Rachel Maddow show were simply not true. (Please note paragraph 8 of Peter's affidavit.)

As Judge Williamson stated in her recent decision, the statements that Peter Zuckerman made on the Rachel Maddow show were "defamation per se." Our goal was only to set the record straight and to clear my name. Peter's affidavit does that. Our goal was never to harm Peter. This settlement takes away any further exposure that Peter would have had, had we gone forward to trial.

After the Scouts Honor series ran, we criticized the story in the Post Register, but we defended Peter's motives. While others were attacking him, because he was gay, we defended him. When I made a donation in support of Mitt Romney, the liberal press tried to distort my record to make it appear I did cruel things to Peter Zuckerman, they took the fact that the Community Page defended his motives and stated that it would be unfair to suggest (as many were suggesting) that the errors in his reporting were because he was gay, and twisted the facts into making it appear I had actually attacked Peter because he was gay. Mother Jones started the accusations. Rachel Maddow followed. Peter apparently fell victim to the pundits and got ambushed on the Rachel Maddow show. In the process, Melaleuca lost several customers. The false accusations were then repeated by the Obama Campaign in the infamous "Enemies List" which was exposed by the Wall Street Journal. That is when the story became national news. That is when our customers started returning in hordes.

Unfortunately, the false stories remain on the internet yet today. Early on, my wife, Belinda and I travelled to San Francisco to try to get Mother Jones to recant the untruths that they said about me. They never argued that their statements were true – only that they were allowed to make those statements under the protection of the First Amendment. Ultimately, we felt that we had no choice but to litigate with Mother Jones and with Peter Zuckerman to get the truth out.

These lawsuits were never about money. Nor were they an effort to punish the defendants for their untruths and inaccuracies. They were simply an effort to clear our good name and to set the record straight. Even though the Judge dismissed the lawsuit against Mother Jones because their statements were opinion, she vindicated us by stating that their reporting was unfair and biased against us and offer a skewed view of the facts about what we did. Judge Williamson also found that Mother Jones "resorted to sophomoric bullying and name calling to read the reader to adopt its particular agenda."

We were vindicated by the Judge in the Mother Jones case and by Peter Zuckerman's affidavit in the Peter Zuckerman case. It is what we hoped for. Truth is important. We are grateful we live in America where we can stand up for the truth.