

Truth makes a long overdue stand for good of our nation

August 5, 2022 may be remembered as a day when “truth” had its rightful day in court, taking lies, misinformation, baseless conspiracy theories, and hate speech to the legal woodshed.

On that day, a Texas jury sent a loud and clear message to those who are in the business of fabricating falsehoods across their airwaves and social media platforms.

It was a \$45.2 million message that hopefully will serve as a warning sign to anyone who wants to profit from the intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The multi-million-dollar sum represented the punitive damages the jury awarded the parents of a Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victim in a defamation case brought against radio host Alex Jones, who is the brains behind the far-right Infowars website. He founded the outlet in 1999 after he was fired from a local radio station for a series of outlandish claims about this, that, and the other.

A day earlier, the jury awarded the plaintiffs \$4.1 million in compensatory damages, penalizing Jones for repeatedly lying about the Sandy Hook massacre in December 2012 that cost the lives of 26 people, including 20 elementary school students.

Over the past decade, Jones has claimed that no children died in the mass shooting and that the families of the dead children were “crisis actors” in a “giant hoax” perpetrated to take away guns from law-abiding Americans.

Of course, this is the same fellow who proclaimed the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 that killed three and injured hundreds of others was “staged by the FBI” and that the 9/11 terrorist

attacks were an “inside job” orchestrated by the Bush administration.

In short, he has taken the phrase “a mile wide and an inch deep” to an entirely new level when it comes to his contempt for the truth.

The fact that Jones was finally held accountable for his pack of lies speaks volumes about the strength of our legal system, which served as the forum for making him answer for promulgating such fictions.

The legal profession can take satisfaction in helping make that happen, for operating within the confines of a justice system that is built on honesty, integrity, civility, and respect for the rule of law.

It can be a heavy burden at times, especially when lawyers are assigned the task of peacefully and fairly resolving conflicts, of diffusing potentially explosive situations, of untangling complex civil and criminal matters, and in ensuring legal accountability when penalties must be paid.

As a profession, we in the legal field play a pivotal role as guardians of freedom, liberty, justice, equality, and fairness, while also bearing a tremendous sense of responsibility to uphold our ethical and fiduciary duties as officers of the court.

When we began Primerus in 1992 it was done with a dual-purpose in mind – to help restore public confidence in the legal profession, while also elevating its standards by word and by example.

Initially, our focus centered on building a trusted network of high-quality law firms in a growing metropolitan area. Over the course of time, our reach extended to different states, eventually crossing international borders to become



a renowned and respected global alliance of top-notch law firms around the world.

We did that by adhering to our Six Pillars, using them as tools for everything we do and every way we operate. Collectively, they are the backbone of Primerus and instill in us the confidence to launch the Primerus Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring honor and dignity to our governmental systems, and to counter the flow of hate speech and harmful falsehoods that have taken root in our political discourse.

In recent years, those systems have come under attack from inside and outside our borders, as we now fight a two-front war to preserve precious freedoms and liberties that we can no longer take for granted. That stark reality was driven home by a home-grown insurrection on January 6, 2021.

The echoes from that dark day continue to be amplified by those bent on eroding public trust and undermining our democracy. The narrative they push comes in the form of a template

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created to cast doubt where there should be none. The harm that they cause is felt deeply at an individual and societal level. Just ask the parents of those slaughtered in the Sandy Hook shooting, many of whom have been subjected to harassment and death threats by those who buy into the bogus claims that Alex Jones trumpets online and across his radio network.

Now, thanks to a Texas jury, the nation's king of conspiracy may begin to experience some of that pain even if it's only in the realm of the financial. It will be his price to pay for leading an assault on the truth and for making the peddling of lies his own political artform.

Best regards,

Jack Buchanan, President