

Analysis of Student Media Law

Under the protection of the First Amendment, we all have freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition the Government for a redress of grievances. We have specific rules that we must follow as college students majoring in Communication and Media Technologies, known as student media law because we could encounter media problems while gathering information and recording videos as student reporters. It's essential for students to follow these rules to ensure they don't suffer negative consequences when they report stories.

In April 2022, recent lawsuits were brought against Emily Thompson, a Tufts University student, and the school newspaper's deputy news editor. Thompson reported on a protest outside a local orthodontic practice, The Braces Place, on February 11st and angered Mouhab Rizkallah, the practice's owner and landlord, who had sued a former tenant for \$28,875 in unpaid rent. According to Rizkallah, Thompson quoted him "inaccurately" and damaged his reputation, so he requested \$50,000 and sued Thompson and Janoff for "emotional distress damages." A claim was denied by the newspaper's editor-in-chief, Alex Janoff, who was also named in the suit. In addition, Rizkallah claimed that the paper's editors refused to amend the article because the editors said the report didn't need to be modified. As a result, the case has been dismissed with prejudice according to the agreement reached on April 1st, meaning it cannot be refiled.

As Thompson stated, "the fact that my emotions and reaction to the lawsuit have received so much attention when the real story should be centered around the tenants' union protest that I originally reported on." Student reporters at the Academy of Art University might suffer similarly to Emily Thompson if they failed to put their personal opinions away and produce

unreliable articles when reporting. Moreover, we also learned how personal biases could mislead audiences in previous modules, so it's even more important to be objective, fair, and balanced when reporting.

In conclusion, Emily Thompson's example of student media law reinforced me to be cautious with the rules we need to follow when gathering information and recording videos as student reporters. Her statement also reminds all of us to put alongside our personal opinions and reactions about the incident we are reporting. It's essential that we remain cautious at all times so that we won't get ourselves in trouble and legal issues, which both overwhelm our time and energy and negatively impact our future.

Works Cited

Retta, Mary. "What It's like to Be Sued as a Student Journalist." *Teen Vogue*, 29 Apr. 2022,
<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/student-journalists-lawsuits>