



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 13, 2020

## Trump Campaign Sues Wisconsin TV Station Over Virus-is-a-hoax Lie

The Trump presidential campaign has filed yet another defamation lawsuit, but this time the target is a television station in [Rhinelander, Wisconsin](#), that repeatedly broadcast a Democrat campaign ad that falsely claims President Trump called the Chinese Virus a “hoax.”

The *Washington Post* and other liberal media proved the hoax claim false some time ago, but that, apparently, did not impress the station executives at [WJFW, an NBC affiliate](#).



[Filed today](#) in the Price County Circuit Court, the latest lawsuit is at least the campaign’s third. It has also sued the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

### The Ad

The advertisement that inspired the lawsuit, “[Exponential Threat](#),” came from Priorities USA, a leftist Super PAC that is spending millions to smear the president on behalf of presumptive Democrat presidential nominee Joe Biden, [who faces](#) a sex-assault allegation from a former employee.

The defamatory language comprises just seven words: “The coronavirus. This is their new hoax.”

The claim that Trump called the virus a hoax circulated in leftist media for some time [until the Post](#) and other leftist media admitted they were wrong. Also false, as [The New American reported](#), was a Biden ad that said the same thing. [The Post awarded](#) the Biden ad four Pinocchios, and the leftist Politifact also [labeled it](#) false.

The ad “does not just contain false and defamatory statements about President Trump — it is far more insidious and, ultimately, far more dangerous,” the [lawsuit alleges](#). “The advertisement was produced through the use of digital technology by taking audio clips from Trump Campaign events and piecing those clips together to manufacture a blatantly false statement that was never said by President Trump: ‘The coronavirus, this is their new hoax.’”

Though the campaign sent a cease-and-desist letter to the station on March 25, the advertisement aired 36 times in 11 days, the [lawsuit alleges](#):

WJFW-NBC continued to broadcast the PUSA advertisement with actual knowledge that the advertisement contained verifiably false information and, therefore, perpetuated a fraud on the public and/or acted with reckless disregard for the advertisement’s truth.

Such conduct by WJFW-NBC finds no protection in the law. By simply ignoring the Cease and Desist Letter from the Trump Campaign, in which the advertisement’s falsehoods were clearly explained and supported by independent fact-checkers, WJFW-NBC actively enabled and is undeniably complicit in PUSA’s fraudulent conduct. WJFW-NBC was made aware that (a) the statement depicted in the PUSA advertisement was not made by President Trump, and (b) that the



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advertisement was the product of an intentional and malicious effort to manufacture a false statement through the use of digital technology. Yet, WJFW-NBC refused to take down the PUSA advertisement and is now liable for the false and defamatory content of that advertisement.

Quoting the *Post*, the [lawsuit observes](#) that “Trump is criticizing Democratic talking points and the media’s coverage of his administration’s response to coronavirus. He never says that the virus itself is a hoax, and although the Biden camp included the word ‘their,’ the edit does not make clear to whom or what Trump is referring.”

As [The New American reported](#) about the time the ad began airing, this what Trump really said:

Now the Democrats are politicizing **the coronavirus**. You know that, right? Coronavirus. They’re politicizing it. We did one of the great jobs, you say, ‘How’s President Trump doing?’, ‘Oh, nothing, nothing.’ They have no clue, they don’t have any clue. They can’t even count their votes in Iowa, they can’t even count. No, they can’t. They can’t count their votes. One of my people came up to me and said, ‘Mr. President, they tried to beat you on Russia, Russia, Russia.’ That didn’t work out too well. They couldn’t do it. They tried the impeachment hoax. That was on a perfect conversation. They tried anything, they tried it over and over, they’ve been doing it since he got in. It’s all turning, they lost. It’s all turning, think of it, think of it. And **this is their new hoax**. But you know we did something that’s been pretty amazing. We have 15 people in this massive country and because of the fact that we went early, we went early, we could have had a lot more than that.

The lawsuit provides tweets, headlines, and letters to the editor that show that the public believed the lie.

The station broadcast the advertisement’s false and defamatory statements about Trump and the campaign with malice and reckless disregard for the truth, and knew from the media and the cease-and-desist letter that the hoax claim was false, the [lawsuit alleges](#).

## Other Lawsuits

The campaign also has filed defamation claims against [the Post](#) and the [New York Times](#).

The newspapers published false and defamatory claims with malice and reckless disregard, the lawsuits allege, that the Trump administration collaborated with Russia to win the 2016 election.

The newspapers published those claims, the lawsuits allege, despite the report from Special Counsel Robert Mueller, which did not find evidence of “collusion” after a major investigation.

The *Post* tossed in North Korea as a Trump campaign collaborator for good measure.

H/T: [The Hill](#)



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