# WALTON

# v.

# BLITZ NEWS NETWORK

A Civil Case By:

Tom Burke
Harvard Law School in
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Adam Siry
Columbia Law School
New York, New York

Revised by the AMTA Civil Case Committee:
Dan Haughey (Co-chair), David Cross (Co-chair), Justin Bernstein, Gonzalo Freixes, Thomas Parker, Don Racheter, Jim Wagoner, Johnathan Woodward, and John Vile

## SUMMARY OF THE CASE

On September 24, 2006, Midlands gubernatorial candidate Drew Walton participated in a gun control debate against Professor Lane Hamilton at the Midlands Civic Center. After the debate, the two became embroiled in an argument in the Civic Center parking lot. Shots were fired and Lane Hamilton was found dead in the parking lot, the victim of an apparent gunshot wound to the head. Within an hour, Blitz News Network ("BNN") reporter Reagan Thomas—present to cover the debate—gave a live broadcast that implicated Walton in Hamilton's death. Walton maintains that Hamilton committed suicide.

Walton has now brought a claim for defamation, arguing that BNN's statements during the September 24, 2006 broadcast falsely accused Walton of shooting Hamilton. BNN denies the allegations, asserting that its statements were truthful and its broadcast was proper.

## WITNESSES

All witnesses are gender neutral and can be played by a member of either sex.

1. Kit Berkshire, BNN President (may only be called by the Defense)
2. Dr. Chris Caironi, psychiatrist
3. Riley Faith, journalism professor
4. Harley Kim, BNN photojournalist
5. Fran Martin, BNN producer
6. Mickey McQuiggan, Midlands Death Investigator
7. Jan Patel, Civic Center janitor
8. Reagan Thomas, BNN reporter (may only be called by the Defense)
9. Drew Walton, Plaintiff (may only be called by the Plaintiff)

## EXHIBITS

1. Transcript of Official Broadcast (Exhibit A to the Complaint)
2. Autopsy Report
3. Psychological Assessment of Lane Hamilton, November 1, 2003
4. Psychological Assessment of Lane Hamilton, January 7, 2006
5. Curriculum Vitae, Dr. Chris Caironi
6. Memorandum from Fran Martin to Kit Berkshire
7. Email from Fran Martin to Reagan Thomas
8. BNN Press Release
9. Journalistic Ethics Report of Riley Faith
10. Memorandum from Kit Berkshire to all BNN employees
11. Gloves worn by Lane Hamilton on September 24, 2006 (*see* Special Instruction 3(b))

# SPECIAL INSTRUCTIIONS

1. The plaintiff Drew Walton is named in honor and memory of former University of Iowa competitor Brooke Walton, who was tragically killed by a drunk driver in 2006. The dedication is in name only: the attributes and actions of the Drew Walton character are in no way intended to reflect the attributes or actions of Brooke Walton. Other than the Drew Walton character, the witnesses and events in this case are purely fictional and have no connection to real people or events.

2. The witness selection order shall be PDPDPD.

3. There are no restrictions as to how evidence may be used in a trial beyond the requirements that participants acknowledge the legitimacy of the documents provided by AMTA and follow the principles and procedures set forth by the Midlands Rules of Court. Proper foundation still needs to be laid, and to the extent that the authenticity standard promulgated by MRE 901 requires testimony sufficient to show that evidence is what it purports to be, such is still required. However, arguing that AMTA supplied documents are not the real documents mentioned in witnesses' affidavits is a violation of Rule 8.4's prohibition of hyper-technicality. The following list is designed to elucidate the impact of this Instruction:

    a. Teams are not permitted to bring an actual or look-alike gun into any courtroom. Walton's gun was returned to Walton by the police and is no longer acquirable. Teams are not permitted to proffer any bullets or fingerprints to the court.

    b. Teams may produce the cloth gloves recovered from Lane Hamilton. The gloves should be of any generic cloth variety, and should not have any visible markings or deformities that could be used to advance case theory. The gloves should be bagged during presentation at trial. Either team may provide the gloves, but should agree at captain's meeting as to which side will provide the pair to be used at trial. In the event that the parties cannot agree on which pair of gloves will be used, the party calling Mickey McQuiggan will choose the gloves to be used; and if neither side calls Mickey McQuiggan, the plaintiff will choose the gloves to be used. No person may try on the gloves during trial.

    c. The psychological profiles are those prepared by Dr. Caironi and are the final versions. No one may deny this fact, although witnesses other than Dr. Caironi may testify that they do not know.

4. The Case Summary provided on the previous page may not be used as evidence or introduced in any fashion during trial or pre-trial activities.

5. Students are encouraged to review the First Amendment to the US Constitution and the US Supreme Court opinion in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254 (1964) as background material for the law of defamation and freedom of the press. Of course, only caselaw provided in this case packet may be cited in trial.