

Chapter 99.

Libel and Slander.

§ 99-1. Libel against newspaper; defamation by or through radio or television station; notice before action.

(a) Before any action, either civil or criminal, is brought for the publication, in a newspaper or periodical, of a libel, the plaintiff or prosecutor shall at least five days before instituting such action serve notice in writing on the defendant, specifying the article and the statements therein which he alleges to be false and defamatory.

(b) Before any action, either civil or criminal, is brought for the publishing, speaking, uttering, or conveying by words, acts or in any other manner of a libel or slander by or through any radio or television station, the plaintiff or prosecutor shall at least five days before instituting such action serve notice in writing on the defendant, specifying the time of and the words or acts which he or they allege to be false and defamatory. (1901, c. 557; Rev., s. 2012; C.S., s. 2429; 1943, c. 238, s. 1.)

§ 99-2. Effect of publication or broadcast in good faith and retraction.

(a) If it appears upon the trial that said article was published in good faith, that its falsity was due to an honest mistake of the facts, and that there were reasonable grounds for believing that the statements in said article were true, and that within 10 days after the service of said notice a full and fair correction, apology and retraction was published in the same editions or corresponding issues of the newspaper or periodical in which said article appeared, and in as conspicuous place and type as was said original article, then the plaintiff in such case, if a civil action, shall recover only actual damages, and if, in a criminal proceeding, a verdict of "guilty" is rendered on such a state of facts, the defendant shall be fined a penny and the costs, and no more.

(b) If it appears upon the trial that such words or acts were conveyed and broadcast in good faith, that their falsity was due to an honest mistake of the facts, or without prior knowledge or approval of such station, and if with prior knowledge or approval that there were reasonable grounds for believing that the words or acts were true, and that within 10 days after the service of said notice a full and fair correction, apology and retraction was conveyed or broadcast by or over such radio or television station at approximately the same time of day and by the same sending power so as to be as visible and audible as the original acts or words complained of, then the plaintiff in such case, if a civil action, shall recover only actual damages, and if, in a criminal proceeding, a verdict of "guilty" is rendered on such state of facts, the defendant shall be fined a penny and costs, and no more. (1901, c. 557; Rev., s. 2013; C.S., s. 2430; 1943, c. 238, s. 2.)

§ 99-3. Anonymous communications.

The two preceding sections [G.S. 99-1 and 99-2] shall not apply to anonymous communications and publications. (1901, c. 557, s. 3; Rev., s. 2014; C.S., s. 2431.)

§ 99-4. Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 402.

§ 99-5. Negligence in permitting defamatory statements by others essential to liability of operator, etc., of broadcasting station.

The owner, licensee or operator of a visual or sound radio broadcasting station or network of stations, and the agents or employees of any such owner, licensee or operator, shall not be liable for any damage for any defamatory statement published or uttered in or as a part of a visual or sound radio broadcast, by one other than such owner, licensee or operator, or agent or employee thereof, unless such owner, licensee or operator shall be guilty of negligence in permitting any such defamatory statement. (1949, c. 262.)