

# Cruel Intentions

By: Jack Greiner on November 18, 2021 on [graydon.law](https://graydon.law)

I was a guest this week on [Scott Sloan's radio show](#) talking about a Connecticut Court's issuing a [default judgment against talk radio host/conspiracy theorist Alex Jones](#) in a case brought by the families of 10 victims of the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012. Jones helped to perpetuate the myth that the shootings were staged and that actors portrayed grieving family members.

Those family members filed lawsuits alleging that Jones defamed them, portrayed them in a false light and inflicted emotional distress. In the course of the litigation, Jones refused to produce records which the families asked for in the discovery phase of the proceedings. Despite warnings, and an order that Jones reimburse the families' lawyers for their efforts in trying to pry loose the information, Jones persisted. Finally, the judge had enough and awarded a default judgment on liability against Jones. The next phase in the trial will feature the families presenting evidence of the damages they suffered as a result of Jones's lies. The award is likely to be in the millions.

Scott had me on the show to discuss the First Amendment implications. But the thing is, there aren't any really. Jones may have had some interesting defenses, some of them related to the First Amendment, but his own belligerence rendered them moot. Jones has said he looks forward to the court of appeals reversing the judgment, but that is unlikely. Trial courts have broad discretion when it comes to policing their dockets, and appellate courts respect that discretion. The odds of a Connecticut appellate court reversing the trial court here are slim.

Putting aside the law and the politics surrounding Jones, I simply cannot get past the sheer cruelty of broadcasting baseless claims knowing that grieving family members would likely hear it. What kind of a person does that? And was there no one in Jones' life to suggest that maybe he ought to back off? A jury will now get the chance to hold him accountable, but his words and actions will linger in the hearts of the families forever.

And this news coincides this week with the vote in the U.S. House of Representatives to censure Rep. [Paul Gosar for posting an animated video showing him killing Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#). Two Republicans joined in the vote to censure him. Only two. Maybe cruelty isn't grounds for censure. I don't presume to know what was going on in the hearts or minds of those Representatives that voted against the censure. All I know is that

they had the opportunity to strike a blow for decency and against cruelty and they chose against it. In a better world, a less cruel world, that vote would have been unanimous.