

John Doe v. John Doe Lawsuit Just Isn't Right

By: Jack Greiner on July 23, 2019 on graydon.law

Here's an [interesting post](#) from Professor Eugene Volokh discussing a libel case recently filed in San Francisco by a plaintiff who claims he was falsely accused of being an "abuser." The defendant is identified as "John Doe" because according to the complaint, the false accusations were contained in a flyer that was distributed anonymously.

But the plaintiff identifies himself as John Doe because, apparently, he'd rather not reveal his identity, thereby revealing to the world that he's been the subject of the accusations.

That is understandable, but Professor Volokh's post explains why it's a bad idea for logistical and policy reasons. The fact is, we live in an open society and our courts have to be subject to public scrutiny. And that requires knowing the identity of the parties.

It's sometimes hard to square people's desire for privacy with the public interest. But we tend to default to the latter interest for good reasons.