

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND  
FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO:

PETER CORDREY,  
Plaintiff,

vs.

DARREN LOWE,  
Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**COMPLAINT FOR LIBEL AND SLANDER**

Plaintiff, PETER CORDREY, sues the Defendant, DARREN LOWE, and alleges:

I. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This is an action for damages exceeding \$30,000, exclusive of interest, costs, and attorney's fees, and is within the jurisdiction of this Court.

2. Venue is proper in Palm Beach County, Florida, because:

- the defamatory statements were published in this county;
- Defendant resides and does business in this county; and
- the injury occurred in this county.

II. Parties

3. Plaintiff is a resident of Palm Beach County, Florida, and at all material times enjoyed a good reputation in the community.

4. Defendant is a resident of Palm Beach County, Florida, or otherwise subject to jurisdiction in Florida.

III. GENERAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

5. At all relevant times, PETER CORDREY was engaged in the position of Boys Lacrosse Head Coach at The Benjamin Upper School in Palm Beach County, Florida.

6. Beginning on or about October 2024, Defendant made and published false statements concerning Plaintiff to third-parties, including a Lacrosse Referee, whose name is not presently known but is subject to identification through discovery.

7. At a Lacrosse tournament held in Orlando, Florida on December 6-7, 2025, Defendant told numerous third-parties, subject to identification through pretrial discovery, that 14 families have alleged abuse against Coach Cordrey. The allegations were repeated in a telephone conversation to a Benjamin School parent on December 8, 2025.

8. The Defendant told the Lacrosse Referee that “Coach Cordrey is a predator” and asserted that he had proof of the allegations. The statements were false, defamatory, per se, and not privileged, and in February 2025, Defendant was warned in writing by the attorney for The Benjamin School that referring to Peter Cordrey as a “predator” was defamatory and could subject the Defendant to civil liability (See Ex. 1). The statements continued despite the warning.

9. Defendant knew the statements were false or acted with reckless disregard for their truth or falsity.

10. The statements exposed PETER CORDREY, to ridicule, contempt, and distrust and injured Plaintiff in his profession and personal reputation.

11. The statements eventually led to the creation of a hostile work environment compelling the Plaintiff, PETER CORDREY, to relinquish his position as head boys lacrosse coach at The Benjamin School.

COUNT I LIBEL

12. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1-10 and incorporates those factual allegations as if each were fully set out herein.

13. Defendant published written statements concerning the Plaintiff on April 1, 2024. The statements as contained in Ex. 2 were published to the individuals identified in Ex. 2.

14. The defamatory nature of the accusations and widespread dissemination of the Defendant's conduct is confirmed in the email attached as Ex. 3.

15. The statements were defamatory per se in that they:

- falsely accused Plaintiff of criminal conduct and/or;
- falsely impugned Plaintiff's honesty, integrity, or professional competence

16. As a direct and proximate result, Plaintiff suffered damages, including:

- injury to reputation;
- humiliation and mental anguish;
- loss of business and/or professional opportunities.

17. Defendant's conduct was malicious, intentional, or grossly negligent.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for compensatory damages, costs, and such further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Plaintiff reserves the right to assert a claim for punitive damages upon satisfying the applicable statutory prerequisites.

Plaintiff demands trial by jury.

COUNT II SLANDER

18. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1-11 and 14-17 and incorporates those factual allegations as if each were fully set out herein.

19. Defendant orally made false and defamatory statements about Plaintiff to third-parties, including but not limited to those identified and described in the preceding paragraphs.

20. The statements were false, unprivileged, and defamatory.

21. The statements were slander per se because they:

- accused Plaintiff of criminal behavior;
- alleged moral turpitude; and/or
- harmed Plaintiff in his profession or trade.

22. Plaintiff suffered actual damages and, because the statements were slander per se, damages are presumed under Florida law.

23. Defendant acted with malice or reckless disregard for the truth.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant for compensatory damages, costs, and such further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Plaintiff reserves the right to assert a claim for punitive damages upon satisfying the applicable statutory prerequisites.

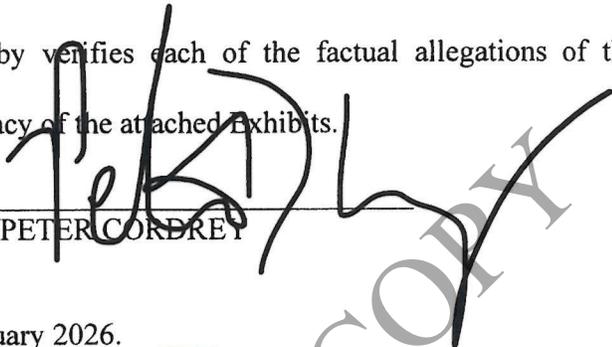
DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

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Plaintiff demands trial by jury on all issues so triable.

VERIFICATION

Plaintiff, PETER CORDREY, hereby verifies each of the factual allegations of the foregoing Complaint and attests to the accuracy of the attached Exhibits.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PETER CORDREY

Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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*Attorneys for Plaintiff*

NOT A CERTIFIED COPY

Dave

Dear Mr. Lowe:

Fisher Phillips provides counsel to The Benjamin School ("TBS") on employment-related matters. I am writing to address a matter of concern regarding your public comments regarding TBS's lacrosse coach, Peter Cordrey, including reportedly referring to him as a "predator." Mr. Faus has asked you to cease and desist from such conduct/language.

As you may be aware, referring to a person as a "predator" is defamatory in nature and could expose you to civil liability. TBS does not and would not employ a "predator," and those statements regarding Mr. Cordrey have the potential to harm TBS's reputation in the community. We, therefore, now request that you immediately cease making defamatory or unwarranted disparaging statements about Mr. Cordrey.

As a former Board Chair, we are sure that you understand that a positive and constructive relationship between the School and the family is essential to the School's educational purpose and responsibilities to its students. We are hopeful that we can count on your cooperation going forward.

Regards,

David C. Faus  
Head of School

Ex. 1

Peter

#### 4. April 1, 2024 Lowe email to Cheatham (predator email)

From: darren lowe <darren.lowe12@gmail.com>  
Date: April 1, 2024 at 7:59:08 AM EDT  
To: Riordan Cheatham <riordan.cheatham@thebenjaminschool.org>  
Cc: Toby Harbeck <toby.harbeck@thebenjaminschool.org>, Robert Bayless <robert.bayless@thebenjaminschool.org>, "Thomas J. Zaccagnino" <tzaccagnino@gmail.com>, Chris Skillin <ctskillin@gmail.com>, Jessica Jayson <jessicajayson@gmail.com>  
Subject: Re: Confirming about lacrosse this week

I have to leave a bit early today to take Lucas to baseball.

Can we get to the bottom why another goalie quit the HS team. It a pattern of documented complaints by kids and former parents on how they are treated. ( I saw it first hand repeatedly). We sent a very vulnerable kid up to play a position that only has contact with the person I view as a predator. fits every description of the type of kid that has been targeted. Again - I'm not the parent that has complained ( there are many!). We should do our homework in this one as it smells awful!! Especially, if people need to call a kid that quit to come back! That lemurs that kid at risk as well in my opinion. Enough is enough. D

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 1, 2024, at 6:21 AM, Riordan Cheatham <riordan.cheatham@thebenjaminschool.org> wrote:

Toby I have 3:45 as the adjusted time from a while back for tomorrows game vs JMS. Can you confirm that today please. The reason for the slight adjusted time was to accommodate me to go see my daughter play a game at 5. We will need to get the boys out at 3pm if possible. On Thursday I see we play at St Andrews . What time did you say the kids need to get out to get ready and when should we depart school ? Will you send an email to the faculty on that and confirm our bus driver please? Thanks in advance.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** peter cordrey <pcordrey@mac.com>  
**Date:** February 7, 2026 at 8:46:48 PM EST  
**To:** Ellen Cordrey <ellenmkc@gmail.com>  
**Subject: Fwd: Regarding D. Lowe, Email to Faculty/Staff 04/01/2024**

**Begin forwarded message:**

**From:**

**Subject: Fwd: Regarding D. Lowe, Email to Faculty/Staff 04/01/2024**

**Date: February 6, 2026 at 11:15:01 AM EST**

**To: Peter Cordrey <pcordrey@comcast.net>**

I had to send it. I couldn't sleep at night. It became too much for \_\_\_\_\_ to bear as well. Silence is complicity, and I couldn't even consider that in consideration of fairness to you. None of us should have to deal with this. I'm sick of bullies being given an audience over and over.

Sent from my iPhone.

Begin forwarded message:

**Date:** February 6, 2026 at 11:09:41 EST

**To:** david.faus@thebenjaminschool.org,  
charles.hagy@thebenjaminschool.org

**Subject: Regarding D. Lowe, Email to  
Faculty/Staff 04/01/2024**

Dear Mr. Faus and Mr. Hagy,

Recently, I became privy to an email that names my son, Benjamin student [REDACTED] as a possible victim of abuse. The email was sent by Darren Lowe to multiple Benjamin School teachers, coaches, and parent volunteers. Digital screenshot is attached below. I am including Mr. Hagy in this email because the teacher and coach recipients were/are Middle School faculty, my son was a middle school student at the time, and Mr. Lowe remains a middle school parent.



stating "I asked a teacher and admin in person if [redacted] is/was "safe," it appears that Mr. Lowe's accusation(s) have fallen on deaf ears. **The TBS staff and faculty recipients of this email failed to adhere to mandatory Florida abuse reporting guidelines for schools (public and private),** as cited

[https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=0000-0099/0039/Sections/0039.201.html](https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0000-0099/0039/Sections/0039.201.html)

Even if Mr. Lowe's accusation was false, or considered outrageous and untrue to his email audience on 04/01/2024, mandatory reporting requirements should have been triggered. **I am asking you, as a parent, to please inform your teachers, staff, and administration of their duty to disclose and report all forms of suspected abuse.** The state of Florida makes it very simple.

<https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-practices/reporting-misconduct-abuse.shtml>)

2. In giving Mr. Lowe a continued audience, in not reporting the suspected abuse, in not countering Mr. Lowe's repeated claims, in not even asking for more information or evidence, TBS failed a student.

is currently 16 years old. He wonders how much of this information is known to his peers, discussed among his teammates and classmates. He is about to begin his recruiting year, in hopes of playing division 1 sports at the collegiate level. He fears retribution from Mr. Lowe, as do I, should we say anything, or even ask more questions.

is a financial aid recipient (this makes him "vulnerable" according to Mr. Lowe). As a family, we are unsure as to how much of our personal

information is/was available to Darren Lowe. I have four children, including two more high level athletes, and I'm not sure they would be well-served as students at Benjamin, because of how the school has dealt with this situation. Witnessing the unfolding of these unfortunate exchanges between Mr. Lowe and Coach Cordrey has damaged my trust in TBS, and its ability to care for my child as a student. I served on the Board of JTAA Lacrosse in Darren Lowe's first year as President of that board, and Peter Cordrey and Darren Lowe were coaches at JupLax when he was 8 years old. I have known both men for a number of years. I'm not here to comment on their respective character(s), beyond the fact that Peter Cordrey has never touched my son, never abused my son, and in fact, he coached and mentored my child in a positive manner while he was coaching at The Benjamin School.

Please accept this email from a concerned parent. I am asking you to reinforce abuse reporting guidelines among faculty, staff, and administration. I was employed as a substitute teacher in the Lower School 1/2025-5/2025, and I don't recall this information being covered in more than a brief manner, if at all. Mandatory reporting serves multiple important purposes. Outcomes might have been different had Mr. Lowe not been given a repeated audience for his allegations and claims of abuse.

On a personal note, seeing Mr. Lowe's name on BASH emails, as a donor, and knowing he is present at the ongoing Search for New Head of School meetings, etc., has a chilling effect on our family's participation in school functions. Mr. Lowe has had multiple opportunities to speak to

me directly, regarding this matter. He has never done so. My son has been a guest in his home, in the time since he sent that email. The facts tell me that protection was never the end goal, but naming my child as a victim of sexual or emotional abuse was a means to the end of damaging a reputation, for whatever reason.

This has been an emotional email for me to write. I have been in possession of this information for some time. My child has had difficulty processing this, and wonders, again, if this information alleging sex abuse has damaged him among his peers. Again, and I fear retribution, in the athletic, school, and community arenas. I do not have access to the resources Mr. Lowe continues to give to The Benjamin School. It appears to me, as a worker bee volunteer parent, that Mr. Lowe has been given an audience of willing listeners in

this matter, and no one cares to adhere to their required duty of mandatory reporting in the State of Florida.

Thank you for your time in reading this, and hopefully, in hearing my concerns.

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.