

State Supreme Court Decides in Favor of Anchorage Daily News

The Supreme Court of Alaska has decided in favor of the Anchorage Daily News, Northern Publishing Company in a libel suit filed by the owners of two Nome taxi companies.

In question was one of a six part series on "Justice in the Bush" by Robert Zelnick. The allegedly libelous portion reads in part:

"The city of Nome is dominated economically, politically, and socially by the liquor merchants. It is the distribution center for legal and illegal liquor traffic throughout the northwest. Liquor interests control the city council. Some booze is furnished minors by cab companies, which in turn are owned by the liquor interests. Individual proprietors furnish liquor illegally on credit. They sell

booze for money, ivory and even federal food stamps."

Appellants June West, Marie Tate and Laura Johnson maintained this particular part of the article "placed responsibility for the illegal sale of liquor to minor children squarely" on them and by implication asserted that the cab companies were guilty of criminal conduct.

The court decided that the questioned publication "embodied comment upon a matter of legitimate public interest, and that the owners of the taxi cab companies were required to show that any defamatory false-

hood alleged as libel was uttered with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard or whether it was false or not."

This the appellants could not do to the satisfaction of the court.



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