

Dominion Voting Systems and Fox News Settle \$1.6B Defamation Lawsuit



A Delaware court began hearing the defamation case between Dominion Voting Systems and Fox News Network on Tuesday, only for the parties to announce a settlement shortly after. Dominion brought the case after Fox News repeatedly made unfounded claims that Dominion's voting machines "flipped" votes for former President Donald Trump to votes for President Joe Biden during the 2020 presidential election. Dominion sought \$1.6 billion in damages.

Judge Eric Davis had finalized jury selection and appointed a special master in the morning, and the court expected to begin opening statements by 1:30 PM EST. However, the court experienced a significant delay and resumed only around 4:00 PM EST, when the parties announced their settlement. Davis thanked and dismissed the jurors.

Twelve jurors and twelve alternate jurors were initially selected, and following the swearing-in of the jury, one alternate juror was replaced after stating that they couldn't proceed due to lack of sleep. In addition, a public relations staffer for Fox News was removed from the Delaware court after being caught taking photos.

Prior to the settlement, Davis had ruled on March 31 that statements made by Fox broadcasters in relation to wide-scale voter fraud were false. The case was to determine whether Fox had made falsified claims with "actual malice," meaning whether Fox knew or had reason to know that the statements were false.

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The settlement between Dominion and Fox News marks a significant development in a high-profile legal battle that has garnered widespread attention. The outcome has implications for media outlets' ability to report on election-related issues and the legal liability they may face for their reporting.

Dominion had claimed that Fox News had amplified baseless conspiracy theories that Dominion's voting machines had been used to alter the outcome of the 2020 election. Fox News denied the allegations, stating that it had the right to report on allegations and claims made during an election.

The settlement terms were not disclosed publicly. However, Dominion has reached similar settlements with other media outlets, including Newsmax and One America News Network, who had also spread false claims about Dominion's voting machines. The terms of those settlements included public apologies and the retraction of false statements.

Dominion's lawsuit against Fox News was based on allegations of defamation, which is the communication of a false statement that harms a person's reputation. Dominion had argued that Fox News' statements had damaged its reputation and caused financial harm. Fox News had countered that its reporting was protected under the First Amendment and that the lawsuit was an attempt to silence and intimidate the media.

The outcome of the Dominion and Fox News settlement could have far-reaching implications for the media industry, particularly regarding the accuracy of reporting on sensitive issues such as elections. The settlement could also influence how future lawsuits of a similar nature are settled, as well as the amount of damages that may be awarded in defamation cases. The case also highlights the importance of accurate and responsible reporting in a media landscape where the spread of misinformation can have significant consequences.