The case of Westboro Cross Technologies vs. 4 Channel Imaging Corporation was probably the most straightforward jury decision of the 3 jury duties I was involved with. This case also seemed one of the more challenging cases to prove the elements that would side for the plaintiff, although in all the cases it was more difficult for the plaintiff’s side rather than the defendant’s side.

Westboro is suing 4 Channel to obtain the personal information of anonymous users, on the site ExposeYou, that posted supposedly defaming reviews according to Westboro. Westboro is a company based off religion and they were marketing a new technology that was a “direct line” to God. A few anonymous users were posting rather harsh negative reviews about this new technology that Westboro claimed to be “incomprehensible and completely inaccurate” information. Thus, they contacted the ISP, 4 Channel Imaging Corporation, to allow them access to the users that were posting these outrageous claims. 4 Channel declined the request and sent out a notification to all the users notifying them of Westboro’s request. After the notification was sent, more ironically absurd reviews were posted of Westboro which has caused a 3-point drop in their stock.

The evidence that was provided during the trial seemed very one sided in favor of the defendant. The plaintiff seemed to be with their backs against the wall because they didn’t support the three elements, defamation, breach of contract, and “good faith”, with any evidence. The attitude that was perceived from the trial was that Westboro was trying to get information of the anonymous users so they could silence the reviews and comments to better their company. Although we know that some of the reviews were deliberately malicious as a jury member we can only base our knowledge off what was provided through evidence.

When the trial had concluded, immediately I thought that the defendants should get a unanimous decision from all three jury groups. Proceeding to the jury deliberations, nothing impacted my view on the case. It also seemed that most of my jury members were on the same page with the exception of a few opposing views on some of the questions. The final outcome of our jury was in favor of the defendant for both the legal and ethical aspects of the case and if I’m not mistaken I believe that all the juries were in favor of the defendant. The reason why we were in favor of the defendant for the legal portion was because the lack of evidence that was shown by the plaintiff. The plaintiff didn’t attempt to show a breach of contract. The plaintiff also didn’t meet the “Good Faith Test” because there was a lack of evidence in the proof of the comments being directly related to their popularity and stock fall. For the ethical portion of the case the defendant won the vote solely on the fact that it was ethical for 4 Channel to not release the identities. The reason for this being ethical is that the evidence provided by the defendant showed that 4 Channel had an obligation towards its users to keep them anonymous when they chose to be anonymous at the time of the post. Based on the provided evidence and my initial views on the case, I agreed with the final verdict.

One major thing that was learned from these cases was the need for a strong presence of evidence from the plaintiff side. If the plaintiff fails to show one piece of evidence, while all the other pieces are there, it could ultimately cause them to lose the case. Mostly all the cases favored for the defendant because the trials displayed that it is extremely hard to prove claims in a court of law when the odds are even for both sides.