

“Exposing People,” Cancel Culture

Union of Saints

When people talk about “*exposing*” someone or “*cancel culture*” in a legal sense, what they’re usually describing overlaps with several areas of law:

1. Defamation (Libel & Slander)

- **Definition:** Making false statements of fact about a person that harm their reputation.
- **Libel** = written defamation (online posts, articles, etc.).
- **Slander** = spoken defamation (videos, speeches, conversations).
- **Why it matters legally:** If what is being “exposed” is untrue, the person being targeted may sue for damages.

2. Invasion of Privacy

- **Definition:** Publicizing private facts about someone that are not of public concern and would be offensive to a reasonable person.
- **Example:** Posting someone’s medical records, private DMs, or intimate photos.
- **Why it matters legally:** Even if the information is *true*, sharing it without consent may violate privacy laws.

3. Harassment / Cyberbullying / Stalking

- **Definition:** Repeated, targeted conduct intended to intimidate, threaten, or emotionally harm someone.
- **Why it matters legally:** Many states have laws against cyberharassment and stalking. If “cancel campaigns” cross into targeted threats, doxxing, or relentless attacks, it may be criminal.

4. Tortious Interference

- **Definition:** Intentionally damaging someone’s professional or business relationships.
- **Example:** Organizing a boycott with false claims that someone is abusive when there’s no evidence.
- **Why it matters legally:** If false accusations cost someone their job, income, or contracts, they may have grounds to sue.



So why is “exposing” people or cancel campaigns potentially *against the law*?

Because the First Amendment protects opinions and truthful statements, but:

- If it's **false** → defamation.
- If it's **private** → invasion of privacy.
- If it's **targeted harassment** → harassment/stalking.
- If it's **economic sabotage with lies** → tortious interference.

In short: **Truthful opinion ≠ illegal. Falsehoods, private info leaks, and harassment ≠ protected speech.**

Illegal Cancel Culture Behaviors

1. Defamation (False Claims)

- **What it is:** Publishing false statements of fact that harm someone's reputation.
 - **Example:** Saying someone is a child predator, racist, or abuser without evidence.
 - **Why it's illegal:** Defamation is a civil wrong (tort). Victims can sue for damages like lost job opportunities, emotional distress, etc.
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2. Invasion of Privacy

- **What it is:** Publicizing someone's private life when it's not of public concern.
 - **Example:** Posting leaked medical info, home address, intimate images, or private DMs.
 - **Why it's illegal:** Even if true, private facts are legally protected. Doxxing and revenge porn laws often fall here.
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3. Harassment / Cyberstalking

- **What it is:** Coordinated or repeated behavior intended to threaten, intimidate, or cause distress.
 - **Example:** Mass-targeting someone with hateful messages, threats, or encouraging mobs to attack them.
 - **Why it's illegal:** Harassment and cyberstalking are criminal offenses in many states.
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4. Tortious Interference (Economic Harm)

- **What it is:** Deliberately damaging someone's business or professional relationships through lies.

- **Example:** Contacting someone's employer with false allegations to get them fired.
 - **Why it's illegal:** The law protects people from intentional sabotage of their livelihood.
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5. Extortion / Blackmail

- **What it is:** Threatening to release damaging information unless the target complies with demands.
 - **Example:** "Apologize publicly or I'll post your private photos."
 - **Why it's illegal:** Extortion and blackmail are crimes under state and federal law.
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Key Distinction

- **Protected Speech:** Sharing truthful information, or expressing opinions ("I don't like their views").
- **Unprotected / Illegal Speech:** False statements, harassment, privacy violations, blackmail, or inciting a mob to attack.