

Sydney Educator Sean Castle Cleared in Bizarre Civil Case



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By Justine Benke – Sydney Courts Beat

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It was in the middle of 2011 as the dust settled on the NSW State election that a bizarre case emerged in the NSW Civil Courts that drew in a couple of very unlikely people, including a veteran politician and Sydney school teacher. Sean Castle was that teacher who suddenly found himself in a very public case at the NSW Court of Disputed Returns that continues to confound those who followed it.

In amongst this, somehow headlines started emerging linking Sydney History teacher, Sean Castle, to the case. Unfortunate and damaging headlines calling Mr. Castle a “hoaxer” and a “fraudster” were splashed all over mainstream media despite the fact that no breaches of criminal or civil law were ever identified to support these labels. Sean Castle, who has maintained a public silence on the issue, referred all comments to his solicitors, who were adamant that Mr. Castle had not committed any offenses and his role, if any, in the civil case, was merely as a witness and that it had been “largely misrepresented, much to the anguish and pain both personally and professionally, to our client, Sean Castle”.

Sydney lawyer and academic, Srisnath Duresinghe, an expert who studies electoral law, says that this is a case that should never have made it to the courts.

“I have closely followed this case since it popped up in the middle of last year and in my close to twenty years in law and academia, I have never seen a case where a person’s character has been so blatantly destroyed with no supporting evidence, especially a civil case” Ms. Duresinghe commented. “This is a man, Sean Castle, with no record, who now has to live with an internet transcript that unfairly labels him as a fraudster and hoaxer and images that were taken in an attempt to portray him in a poor light”.

“At each of the hearings, in which I attended and sat in the public gallery as an interested observer, and through the published court transcripts, it is clear that Sean Castle, a teacher with an impeccable record, has had his name thoroughly trashed despite no legal fault being attributed to him in either a criminal or civil sense and with a very vague and obscure link to the matters at hand” Duresinghe added.

Duresinghe is referring to the manner in which a media pack unfairly besieged Sean Castle, at one point hitting him in the face with a microphone as he was exiting the courts causing his nose to bleed, demanding he comments when at the time he was under court orders not to discuss the case with the real prospect of being found in contempt of court if he didn’t comply. “Sean Castle, from my understanding, had reporters sit outside his home and his workplace and threatened him that if he didn’t speak to them, they would start knocking on doors to find out information about him. He was manhandled, grabbed, and pinched as he left the courts. I observed this” Duresinghe commented.

“I have extensively studied this case, and I can assure you that every legal body and entity that has looked at this case, and there have been numerous, have all concluded that Sean Castle has no case to

answer and has effectively been cleared,” Duresinghe said. “How he moves on with his life and career from this point, I have no idea”.

We approached Sean Castle for comments on this story and he declined and referred us to his solicitors at Matthews Dooley and Gibson.

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