

Be Careful What you Tweet

March 16, 2011

Last week, we [posted about a settlement](#) in a lawsuit over comments made in Twitter posts. This week, we've learned about three other instances in which tweets have gotten people into trouble.

NBA referee William Spooner [filed a lawsuit](#) against the Associated Press and one of its writers, alleging that a comment posted by the writer on Twitter "mischaracterized a conversation" between Spooner and the Timberwolves coach during a recent game. Spooner argues that the tweet was defamatory, and is seeking more than \$75,000 in damages.

Chrysler recently [decided not to renew its contract](#) with an agency two days after an agency employee tweeted from the @ChryslerAutos account: "I find it ironic that Detroit is known as the #motorcity and yet no one here knows how to [expletive deleted] drive." And, this week, Insurance company Aflac announced that it had [fired Gilbert Gottfried](#), the voice of the company's mascot, after Gottfried posted some tweets with insensitive jokes about the tsunami in Japan.

These cases contain at least three lessons for marketers. First, remember that statements in social media are subject to the same laws and consequences as statements in traditional media. Second, companies should take steps to guard against posts from rogue agents and employees. And, third, companies should consider including morals clauses in endorsement contracts to address the risk of inappropriate comments by celebrity endorsers.