

Baen's Bar is based in the United States of America. United States law applies.

The United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, applies.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States reads as follows:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Generally, the Bar is a Free Speech zone. The various tables titles and descriptions will tell you what is expected in each space... At the table, look for the Announcement's and Sticky's at the top of the topics list for more detail...

Politics and Blazes are even more Free Speech than most other tables... Please, if you do not believe in the idea of free speech and the free exchange of ideas, including ones you may personally find distasteful, disrespectful or even painful... Do Not Enter!

Illegal Speech.

Some forms of possible Illegal speech has been defined by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCotUS)...

One of them, 'Threat of Imminent Lawless Action' has a defined three part test... *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969)

- 1) Intent to speak
- 2) Imminence of Lawlessness
- 3) Likelihood of Lawlessness

All three parts MUST be present for something to be unprotected, illegal speech.

Another, 'Fighting Words' also has a defined three part test... *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire* (1942)

The person the words are directed at MUST be:

- 1) Present
- 2) Personally and directly insulted
- 3) The words incited an immediate breach of the peace ...

Again, all three parts MUST be present for something to be unprotected, illegal speech.

Do we really need to go into the constant misquoting of Justice Holmes about 'shouting fire'?

Threats.

Threats are not allowed. Does this really need to be said? Apparently so. However, there is a big difference between saying 'I wish that public figure would drop dead' or 'I wish someone would shoot that public figure' and saying 'I am going to go shoot that public figure'. The first two are legal, protected speech... Although the second may be distasteful... The last is an illegal, unprotected threat.

Oh... A 'public figure' is one who has either: chosen to run for public office, been appointed or nominated to public office, is a public facing government employee, has given a press conference, or who has chosen to sit for a press interview. This list is not all inclusive, however, a person who witnesses or is involved a newsworthy event and speaks to a reporter during or directly after that newsworthy event is not generally a 'public figure' unless they meet one of the other criteria as well.

Doing either of the first two against any private, non-public individual will get you banned as well.

In simple terms:

If, in the opinion of the moderators, administrators, or SFF Forums, you make a direct threat of physical violence against any identifiable person you will be banned. If necessary, your IP address and ANY other identifying information held by the Bar will be turned over to Law Enforcement.

Hate Speech.

Hate speech is protected speech. The United States does NOT prohibit hate speech. SCotUS cases include *Matal v. Tam* (2017) and *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* (1992) In each case, SCotUS ruled unanimously that hate speech, distasteful though it may be, was protected speech. Justice Alito -- "It offends a bedrock First Amendment principle: Speech may not be banned on the ground that it expresses ideas that offend."

That being said...

No hitting. Don't be a butthead.  
If you direct hate at another Bar Fly, you will be swatted.

Tolerating Intolerance or 'Freeze Peach'

It has recently become a 'thing' to say that free speech is outdated, intolerant, hurtful, harmful, 'phobic', 'ist' and possibly even fattening. Those who have this questionable ideology often use the term 'freeze peach' to insult and deride the entire concept of free speech. This idea is antithetical to the entire idea and spirit of the Bar and its founder, Jim Baen.

Let's respect Jim's intentions for the Bar.

