# Court rules Joey Barton's social media posts defamatory towards Jeremy Vine



A High Court judge has ruled that former footballer Joey Barton's social media posts calling broadcaster Jeremy Vine a "bike nonce" and a "pedo defender" were defamatory. The court determined that 11 of Barton’s posts on the platform X, formerly known as Twitter, could defame Vine, a radio and TV presenter. This decision was made on Friday after a preliminary hearing in London sought to establish the ordinary meanings of the words and images Barton posted between January and March.

Justice Steyn noted that the posts were not perceived as meaningless abuse made in the heat of the moment, but rather as statements of fact under common law. The judge highlighted the "striking" juxtaposition of "nonce" with "pedo" as reinforcing the implication of paedophilia.

The issue arose following Vine’s criticism of Barton’s comments comparing female football pundits Eni Aluko and Lucy Ward to notorious serial killers Fred and Rose West. Barton subsequently launched what Vine's lawyers described as a “calculated and sustained attack” on Vine, accusing him of being a “bike nonce” and “pedo defender” and associating him with known paedophiles in various posts.

Barton argued that his posts were vulgar abuse with no serious defamatory intent, but the judge ruled otherwise, reinforcing the posts' damaging implications.