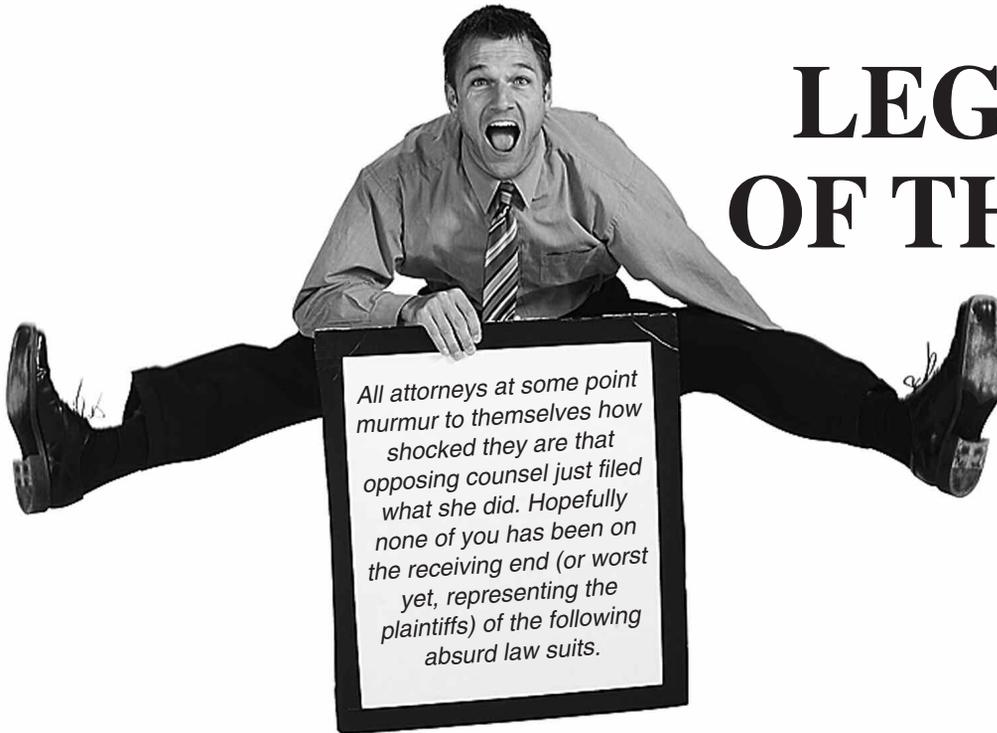


LEGAL NEWS OF THE WEIRD



By Matt Austin, Barnes & Thornburg

All attorneys at some point murmur to themselves how shocked they are that opposing counsel just filed what she did. Hopefully none of you has been on the receiving end (or worst yet, representing the plaintiffs) of the following absurd law suits.

Tis the season for golf outings, and should you see railroad tracks on your favorite course, those tracks could net you \$40,000 – at least that’s how much one woman was awarded after her ball ricocheted off the tracks and hit her in the nose. The course had a “free lift” rule that allowed players to toss balls landing near the tracks onto the other side of the tracks. Because of this rule, the golf course was held to have acknowledged the rails to be a hazard and did not protect the golfer from her own errant shot.

Richard Schick robbed a convenience store with a shotgun because of the stress he felt as a result of being discriminated against by his employer on the basis of his sexuality and disability. Feeling his pain, a jury awarded him over \$300,000 for the discrimination, but he must still serve ten years for armed robbery.

Similarly, a man tripped an alarm while robbing a bank, but did not hear the alarm because he was nearly deaf. The bank teller allowed the robbery to continue during the alarm and the robber was then caught red-handed. The robber sued the bank for exploiting his disability.

In another robbery-related case, bar owner Jessie Ingram set a trap around his windows to deter future break-ins. The window displayed warning signs, but Larry Harris shockingly didn’t see them when he tried to break into the bar, tripped the trap, and electrocuted himself. Even though the police refused to press murder charges, a jury

awarded Larry’s family \$150,000 in a wrongful death lawsuit – which was cut in half because the judge felt Larry “should share at least half the blame.”

A Michigan man’s vehicle was rear-ended. Four years later he sued the owners of the vehicle that hit his, claiming that the accident turned him into a homosexual and caused him to leave his wife, move in with parents and frequent gay bars. For this change, he received \$200,000 and his wife received \$25,000.

The next traffic case hails from the Nagano Winter Olympics in Japan where the organizers were ordered to pay damages for mental anguish to a spectator who missed the event due to heavy traffic.

Not all crazy law suits result in favorable verdicts for the plaintiffs. For example, one surfer sued another for “taking his wave,” but the suit was dismissed despite the plaintiff’s plea of immense pain and suffering caused by watching someone ride “the wave that was intended for you.” In another pain and suffering case, a jury denied payment to a patron who sued a strip club seeking \$15,000 for whiplash he allegedly endured while watching “Tawny Peaks.”

A man sued Anheuser-Busch for false advertising averring that unlike the beer commercials suggest, drinking Bud Light did not cause bikini-clad girls to suddenly break into a volleyball game and invite him back to their hotel room. He claimed he was owed \$10,000 for pain and suffering associated with hangovers, as well as the financial loss of continuously buying and drinking more Bud Light.

Even Robert Glaser was denied compensation after attending a Billy Joel and Elton John concert in San Diego after noticing women using urinals in a number of men’s restrooms. Alleging that embarrassment prevented him from relieving

himself until he returned home, he sued the concert venue and the city for \$5.4 million, but lost.

Michael Vick, the professional football player notoriously known for his involvement in a dog fighting ring, was named in a \$63 billion lawsuit; yes, that’s a “b” for billion. The plaintiff filed his lawsuit from prison alleging that Vick stole two pit bulls from him, used the dogs in fights, sold them on eBay, and used the proceeds to buy missiles from the Iranian government. The complaint further alleges that Vick has sworn allegiance to al-Qaeda and subjected plaintiff to microwave testing. As heinous as Vick’s true crimes were, I’m pretty certain the court properly dismissed this lawsuit against him.

The Kliner family sued WalMart and Microsoft after their baby died in a house fire claiming that an overheated Xbox power cord was the culprit. Their case was extinguished quickly since the house burned down in 2004 and the Xbox was released in 2005. WalMart was also sued by a lady who suffered cracked and broken toenails after her overfilled, plastic grocery bag broke and food fell on her foot.

Even divine intervention couldn’t salvage these next two lawsuits. Christopher Roller sued David Copperfield and David Blaine demanding that they reveal their secret magic tricks to him and that they tithe to him ten percent of their total income for life. Why? Because Roller claims the magicians use godly powers to defy the laws of physics in their tricks and since he is God, they are stealing his powers.

Lastly, Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers sued God claiming he made terroristic threats against the people of Omaha and caused “wide spread death, destruction, and terrorization of millions upon millions of Earth’s inhabitants.” Effecting proper service on God proved to be the Senator’s stumbling block despite his proffer that because God is omniscient he is already aware of the lawsuit against him. Perhaps the Senator should have served Christopher Roller, just in case.

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