

LEGAL ISSUES PART 2: -- AN ATTORNEY'S DISGRACE

Dr. Bernard did not know that those paying the claims for injured workmen had begun to question the claims filed by Mr. Reitsema. Some of the X-ray reports appeared to have been "doctored". Abbot Laboratories were the "deep pockets" in the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. When one of their workers became paralyzed when he fell off a scaffold and broke his neck and was given a several million dollar settlement, numerous claims began to be filed against the Company. Roy Allen claimed a severe back and kidney injury when he alleged he was hit by a tow motor in the Abbot warehouse. The Company started receiving inflated bills for Chiropractic treatments. He claimed he had severe left kidney pain and was passing blood clots in his urine. When he was examined by Dr. Bernard, he supplied a bloody urine specimen, but the specimen was cold, even though Roy said the urine was fresh. Because, Dr. B had said blood in the urine could indicate a kidney injury, Mr. Reitsema was determined to spoil his vacation and make him testify! But, Dr. B had managed to escape to the Bahamas and avoid the trial.

Dr. Bernard also did not know that several weeks before the trial, Dr. Cullen, an Orthopedic Surgeon, had been surprised to find a stranger had prepaid for a "consult" with him in his office. When he sat down and the "patient" had closed the office door, the man addressed him. "I am Kenneth Parker. I represent Abbot Laboratories and several Insurance Companies. We want to be fair to any injured person. I would like you to do an independent assessment of Roy Allen. He is in severe pain and we want to determine the severity of his back injury and his pain so we can determine his compensation. We have been impressed with your honesty when you evaluate these patients. We will only have you testify if you agree to do so."

"Mr. Parker, I am sorry, but I have to excuse myself from this case", Dr. Cullen replied. You see, our group of three Orthopedic Surgeons have a log cabin in the North Woods. We love to hunt and fish. I just spent a week in the cabin. From the room in the attic I watched the man next door building a log cabin most of the time by himself. He has no trouble dragging in the logs with his jeep, then sawing and notching them and rolling them up into place. I looked at my survey map. The property belongs to Roy Allen who lives here in Grand Rapids! Oh, by the way, we do rent out our cabin to suitable people when we are not using it." Mr. Parker thanked Dr. Cullen for his time and left.

A few days later a "stranger" came and rented the cabin for a week and paid a large deposit. The cabin was left in very neat condition when the "renter" left. Then the trial started. Mr. Reitsema had been surprised that the Insurance Company had chosen to fight the case when it would be so expensive to do so. He was determined to make them pay through the nose. The trial was well orchestrated. Several times Roy Allen was brought in on a stretcher. He could not stand or sit. He had to be attended by a "nurse". Once he had to get a "pain shot" He swore that he had unable to do anything for several months. Three "doctors" testified that Roy was totally disabled for the rest of his life! Some of the jury members were in tears and the case seemed to be over when new evidence was introduced. A movie

was shown, showing Roy Allen building his log cabin, wrestling the logs into place. He was driving his jeep over rough country. In front of the jury he had just said he had not been able to drive since his "accident". The case was thrown out of court and Mr. Reitsema was severely reprimanded. Previous settlements were then investigated and several were found to be fraudulent. Later, Mr. Reitsema was censored and disbarred by his Profession.

When he returned from his vacation, Dr. Bernard was relieved to find out that he no longer had to deal with Mr. Reitsema who had "disappeared". His practice was picking up and they would soon be moving into their dream house. He felt that he had found the best place in the world to practice. He was surprised that so many people had been willing to help him. He had become an instant celebrity! An elderly surgeon invited Dr. B to join his practice. Later, he turned his practice over to Dr. Bernard and retired once the young doctor was well established.

Dr. Bernard had learned a valuable lesson, that, when one is wined and dined and flattered by a stranger, the man will want something in return for his generosity! THERE IS USUALLY NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH! (OR A FREE BOAT RIDE!)

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