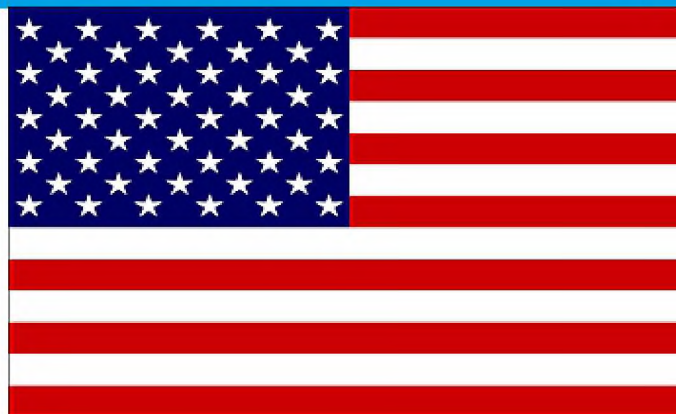


Law and Disorder Stateside



Robert Hornbeck volunteered for the Army and served a stint in Iraq. Returning home, he got drunk, wandered into a hotel's service area (passing "DANGER" warning signs), crawled into an air conditioning unit, and was severely cut when the machinery activated. Unable to extract himself due to his drunkenness, he bled to death. A tragedy, to be sure, but one solely caused by a supposedly responsible adult with military training. Despite his irresponsible behaviour, and criminal trespassing, Hornbeck's family sued the hotel for \$10 million, as if it's reasonably foreseeable that some drunk fool would ignore warning signs and climb into its heavy duty machinery to sleep off his bender.

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Roy L. Pearson Jr, a 57-year-old Administrative Law Judge from Washington DC claimed that a dry cleaner lost a pair of his pants, so he sued the family business for more than \$65 million. Representing himself, Judge Pearson cried in court over the loss of his pants, whining that there certainly isn't a more compelling case in the District archives. The Superior Court judge wasn't moved; he called the case "vexatious litigation", scolded Judge Pearson for his "bad faith", and awarded damages to the dry cleaners. Pearson is appealing the decision.

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Whilst shopping at a mall, Marcy Meckler stepped outside and was "attacked" by a squirrel that lived among the trees and bushes. And "while frantically attempting

to escape from the squirrel and detach it from her leg, Meckler fell and suffered severe injuries," her resulting lawsuit says. That's the mall's fault, the lawsuit claims, demanding in excess of \$50,000, based on the mall's "failure to warn" her that squirrels live outside.

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Ron and Kristie Simmons' four-year-old son was killed in a tragic lawnmower accident at a licensed daycare facility. The death was clearly the result of negligence by the daycare providers who were clearly deserving of being sued, yet when the Simmons' discovered the daycare only had \$100,000 in insurance, they dropped the case against them and instead sued the manufacturer of the 16-year-old lawn mower because the mower didn't have a safety device that 1) had not been invented at the time of the mower's manufacture, and 2) no safety agency had even suggested needed to be invented. A sympathetic jury still awarded the family \$2 million.

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Robert Clymer, an FBI agent working a high-profile case in Las Vegas, allegedly created a disturbance, lost the magazine from his pistol, then crashed his pickup truck in a drunken stupor; his blood-alcohol level was 0.306 percent, more than three times the legal limit for driving in Nevada. He pled guilty to drunk driving because, his lawyer explained, "With public officials, we expect them to own up to their mistakes and correct them." Yet Clymer had the gall to sue the manufacturer of his pickup

truck, and the dealer he bought it from, because he "somehow lost consciousness" and the truck "somehow produced a heavy smoke that filled the passenger cab."

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Search engine KinderStart says Google should be forced to include the KinderStart site in its listings, reveal how its "Page Rank" system works, and pay them lots of money because they're a competitor. They claim by not being ranked higher in Google, Google is somehow infringing KinderStart's Constitutional right to free speech. Even if by some stretch they were a competitor of Google, why in the world would they think it's Google's responsibility to help them succeed? And if Google's "review" of their site is negative, wouldn't a government court order forcing them to change it infringe on Google's Constitutional right to free speech?

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Even though Allen Heckard from Oregon is three inches shorter, 25 pounds lighter, and eight years older than former basketball star Michael Jordan, he says he looks a lot like Jordan, and is often confused for him; and thus he deserves \$52 million "for defamation and permanent injury" plus \$364 million in "punitive damage for emotional pain and suffering", plus the SAME amount from Nike co-founder Phil Knight, for a grand total of \$832 million. He dropped the suit after Nike's lawyers chatted with him; presumably they explained how they'd counter-sue if he pressed on. ●