

Law and Disorder

Stateside



Attorney Philip Shafer of Ohio, flew on Delta Airlines from New Orleans to Cincinnati and was given a seat, he said, next to a fat man. “He was a huge man,...He and I [were] literally and figuratively married from the right kneecap to the shoulder for two hours.” He therefore claimed that he “suffered embarrassment, severe discomfort, mental anguish and severe emotional distress,” in a \$9,500 lawsuit against the airline. That may be dwarfed by the divorce settlement his “huge” (seat) mate might demand.



“Godfather of Soul” James Brown’s daughters Deanna and Yamma, alleged he had a “grudge” against them. They said Brown “vowed to tell the media that his daughters would never get a dime from him” and “James Brown has kept his word.” So they did what any kid would do when cut off from their rich daddy’s bank account: they sued him for more than \$1 million, claiming that they were owed royalties on 25 of his songs which, they helped him write even though, at the time, they were children. For instance, when Brown’s 1976 hit “Get Up Offa That Thing” was a chart-topper, the girls were aged three and six. It’s enough to make Brown switch to the Blues.



Utah prison inmate Robert Rice, serving five years on multiple felonies, sued the Utah Department of Corrections, claiming the prison was not letting him practice his religion: “Druidic Vampire” which

require that he have sexual access to a “vampress”. Additionally, the prison wasn’t supplying his specific “vampiric dietary needs” (yes: blood). Records showed that Rice registered as a Catholic when he was imprisoned in 2000. The suit was thrown out. Which just goes to prove prison life sucks.



Every time Kathleen McCormick visited her doctor, she was told the same old things: eat less, exercise more, stop smoking. The obese, cigarette-smoking woman, had high blood pressure, high cholesterol and a family history of coronary artery disease. Yet doctors at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centre “did not do enough” to convince her to work to improve her own health. Unsurprisingly, she had a heart attack which, she said in a federal lawsuit, left her a “cardiac invalid”. In addition to eight doctors, she sued their employer, the U.S. government, demanding a minimum of \$1 million in compensation.



In 1997 Bob Craft of Montana, changed his name to Jack Ass. Later he said that MTV’s TV show and movie “Jackass” was “plagiarised” from him, infringed his trademarks and copyrights, and that this has demeaned, denigrated and damaged his public image. No attorney would take the case, so he filed suit on his own against MTV’s corporate parent, for \$50 million in damages. If nothing else, Jack Ass proved he chose his name well.



Hazel Norton of Missouri read that there was a class action against the drug Propulsid, which her doctor had prescribed to her. Despite admitting that “I didn’t get hurt by Propulsid,” Norton thought “I might get a couple of thousand dollars” by joining the lawsuit. When her doctor was named in the suit, he quit his Mississippi practice, where he was serving the poor, leaving left only two doctors practising at the local hospital. So while Norton wasn’t harmed by the drug, all her neighbours now suffer from drastically reduced access to medical care due to her greed.



Sisters Janice Bird, Dayle Bird Edgmon and Kim Bird Moran sued their mother’s doctors and a hospital after Janice accompanied her mother, Nita, to a minor medical procedure. When something went wrong, Janice and Dayle witnessed doctors rushing their mother to emergency surgery. Rather than malpractice, their legal fight centered on the “negligent infliction of emotional distress”; caused to them for having to see the doctors rushing to help their mother. The case was fought all the way to the California Supreme Court, which finally ruled against the women. Which is a good thing, since if they had prevailed doctors and hospitals would have had no choice but to keep you from being anywhere near your family members during medical procedures just in case something goes wrong. In their greed, the Bird sisters risked everyone’s right to have family members with them in emergencies. ●