



Helping Our Most Vulnerable

Why I Love Handling Social Security Disability Cases

In last month's newsletter, my brother Jeremy shared the story of the car accident that inspired him to embark on a career tackling personal injury cases. Hearing him talk about that time — which was almost as scary for me as it was for him — always reminds me of two things: how thankful I am to still have my brother at my side, and the very different set of circumstances that led to my own specialization in Social Security disability cases.

While Jeremy's introduction to personal injury cases was dramatic, I decided on my specialty more gradually. After I graduated from Baylor Law School, I joined a firm that didn't have a lawyer to handle Social Security disability work. I wasn't sure which area of law I wanted to concentrate on at the time, so I looked into Social Security disability to find out if I'd be a good fit to fill that gap. I was immediately drawn to the cases. Part of the reason I'd gone to law school was because I wanted to help people, so it's no surprise that I loved the idea of working on behalf of those who are going through hard times.

I've been representing clients who are disabled and can't work for more than 16 years now. More recently, I also started to represent veterans on their disability claims. Both of those areas have something important in common: They allow me to help people who are at extremely vulnerable points in their lives. Not only are people seeking Social Security or VA benefits struggling with physical or mental health issues, but they're often also in dire financial straits because they're unable to work. I love taking the burden of that stress from them and encouraging them to focus on taking



care of themselves as they go through the process of applying for benefits or appealing a denied claim.

Here at The Injury and Disability Law Center, we encourage all of our managers and other staff to take care of our clients to the best of their ability. Above all, that means making sure the client doesn't have to worry about anything except giving us the occasional piece of information. When we take on a new client, the first thing we tell them is that we're going to take over both their stress and the process of dealing with the government. Their only job is to take care of their health.

Social Security and VA disability claims are complicated, and governmental red tape can compound that confusion. Until we step in to help, many clients don't fully understand the procedure for filing a claim or what they should do to increase their chances of approval. That's why it's vital that we counsel our clients

and give them advice to help them succeed. A big part of that is urging them to go to a doctor for specialized treatment. Conditions like depression, anxiety, or PTSD can be just as disabling as a physical injury, but if someone dealing with mental health issues isn't seeing a psychiatrist, counselor, or other specialist, Social Security won't take their claim seriously. Unless you're as intimately familiar with the process as we are, it's easy to underestimate how important things like that can be.

Even when it's difficult, I'd never trade this practice area in for another. I love when I get to call a client at the conclusion of what is often a two-year process and tell them that they've been approved. Taking someone from that first stage of a claim, when they're at such a low point in their life, to the happy ending of receiving benefits is extremely rewarding. After being in a dark place for a time, all of the sudden there is light at the end of the tunnel. You can't imagine the relief and joy they feel when they hear those words or the satisfaction I get from knowing they're finally happy and secure.

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-Josh Worley

The Art of Stargazing

HELPING HUMANS SLOW DOWN AND LOOK UP

Modern humans are stuck in a routine of expected and constant industriousness. But with all this rushing, people often drag themselves home at night with no energy left to enjoy the most splendid show nature has to offer: the wondrous night sky.

Most people go through life looking straight ahead, but if they would stop and peer skyward, they'd bear witness to a massive, unexplored frontier made up of the moon in all its phases, burning stars sailing through the sky, constellations with epic origin stories, and meteor showers bright enough to warrant sunglasses. If you're looking for a hobby to help you slow down and appreciate the world around you, stargazing is a great option. Here are some tips to get you started.

- 1. The Higher, the Better** If you're a city dweller, meander a little way out of town or try to find a tall building to keep the light pollution to a minimum.
- 2. Extra Set of Eyes** While novice stargazers often want to immediately throw their money at a new telescope, astronomy experts recommend starting with binoculars instead. You'll need

to identify several anchor planets or constellations to help you navigate the sky before using a telescope.

- 3. Utilize Assets** Put your phone to good use by downloading apps like Stellarium, Starwalk, and Google Sky Map. Each of these apps offers a unique benefit for aspiring stargazers. For example, Starwalk lets you point your phone at the sky to see stars, constellations, and planets in real time based on your location.
- 4. Mark Your Calendar** In 1972, beloved singer-songwriter John Denver wrote about a meteor shower he witnessed during a camping trip in Colorado. He describes the scene by singing, "I've seen it raining fire in the sky." The "fire" he recounted was actually the Perseids meteor shower, the most recognized shower on Earth. This astrological wonder takes place every year from July 17 to Aug. 24. During this time, viewers should be able to see shooting stars associated with the Perseids, but the shower reaches its maximum rate of activity on Aug. 12–13 this year. Grab some friends and family, and head outdoors to put your newfound stargazing knowledge to work.

The Right Place at the Wrong Time

A LOOK AT SOME INTERESTING PERSONAL INJURY CASES

There is no shortage of crazy cases that come through a court of law, but those revolving around personal injury can be especially surprising. Whether it's a slip-and-fall accident or something a little more eccentric, there are a million ways to hurt yourself while simply going about your day. The problems arise when it's determined to be another party's fault. Let's take a look at some notably strange cases where bizarre miscalculations led to injuries and ailments.

AS BELOW, SO ABOVE

Time spent in the restroom is inherently private. We don't normally talk about it, but that's not the case for a Pennsylvania woman who

experienced a traumatic event during a routine trip to the lady's room. In 2007, a schlocky horror plot came to life in a building along Philadelphia's famous Market Street. The culprit was a faulty plumbing system. The woman was inside a restroom stall on the eighth floor, and, as she sat on one of the old toilets customary in the building, pressure building from inside the tank caused a massive explosion that sent her body hurling out of the stall. You don't need to know the details of her injuries to understand the extent of her grievances. Some forms of suffering are better left to the imagination, especially if the aggressor was a literal stink bomb. She sued the building's landlords for anxiety, pain, and medical expenses, but it's hard to determine which party was truly at fault without more information.

IT'S RAINING CATS AND DOLLARS

You can't predict the weather, no matter what your weather app says, but some people tend to forget that. A few years ago, an Israeli weatherman was faced with a lawsuit by a woman who claimed his inaccurate forecast caused her a great deal of suffering. She claimed he misrepresented a particularly harsh day in the forecast, and it encouraged her to wear insufficient layers that left her health to the whim of the elements. As a result, the woman caught the flu from the downpour and missed work for four days. Citing lost income, large medication costs, and tremendous anxiety, she sought reparations from the fraudulent weatherman and was amazingly awarded a four-figure settlement!



TAKE A BREAK

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ROASTED CORN SALSA

Inspired by Bon Appétit Magazine

Ingredients

- 2 medium ears of corn, shucked
- 1 jalapeño or Fresno chile, seeded and thinly sliced
- 1/2 red onion, diced
- 1 large tomato, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1/4 bunch cilantro leaves, sliced
- Juice of 1 lime
- Kosher salt, to taste

Directions

1. Heat a cast-iron skillet to high. Char corn, turning occasionally, for 10–14 minutes until kernels begin to blacken in spots.
2. Using a sharp knife, remove corn kernels from cobs and transfer to a large mixing bowl.
3. With a wooden spoon or potato masher, gently crush corn to release starch and juices.
4. Add jalapeño, onion, tomato, and cilantro. Mix to combine.
5. Top with lime juice and season with salt.
6. Serve alongside your favorite tortilla chips.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR MARVEL MOVIES?

3 Marvel Movies to Watch Out For

For the past 10 years, Marvel movies have delighted families and comic book nerds alike with their memorable characters, incredible action scenes, and sprawling, interconnected storylines. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is the story of the Avengers so far, told through 23 movies. Even though this year marked the end of a massive arc that Marvel Studios dubbed “The Infinity Saga,” there are still more movies coming out that will feature everyone’s favorite heroes. Here are a few films coming up next in the MCU.

A BLACK WIDOW SOLO MOVIE

International assassin Black Widow, played by Scarlett Johansson, was the first female member of the Avengers and made her debut appearance in “Iron Man 2.” She never got her own movie, but Marvel announced recently that a Black Widow movie is officially in the works for the next phase of Marvel movies. Besides the fact that they’ve started filming, there’s not much information about it yet. But for many excited fans, this movie has been a long time coming.

‘GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 3’

Star-Lord, Rocket, Groot, and the gang are all back in the third installment of this smash-hit franchise. Without getting into too much detail, “Avengers: Endgame” and the post-credits scene of the second “Guardians” movie provided some clues about the plot and possible main villain. Though details are slim, “Vol. 3” is sure to be another rollicking ride through the cosmos.

‘BLACK PANTHER 2’

“Black Panther” was immensely popular (it earned nearly \$700 billion domestically), and its success removed all doubt that there would be a sequel. Audiences will journey back to Wakanda and see the newest adventures of King T’Challa and crew, although not much is known about the plot or the release date as of now. But you can rest assured that the creative minds behind the sequel are taking their time to make it as good as the first.

The future storyline of the MCU is up in the air, but, if the previous movies are any indicator, families, fans, and audiences everywhere have a lot to look forward to.



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RING, RING — IT'S A ROBOT

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself From Phone Scams and Robocalls

Two of the most common scams are phone scams and robocalls. These calls are incredibly annoying and can trick you out of valuable information if you're not careful. While it might seem like these scams are inescapable, there are some precautions you can take to avoid their traps.

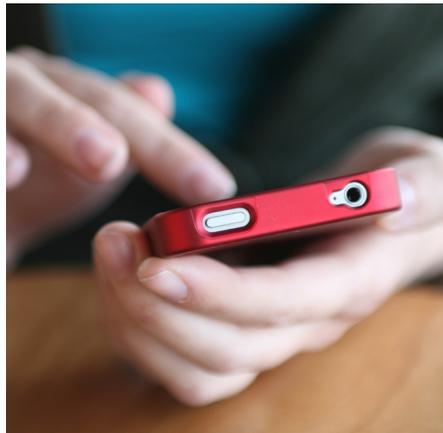
GIVE THEM THE SILENT TREATMENT.

One thing you can do to avoid these fraudulent, time-wasting calls is to simply hang up. If possible, it is best to not answer at all. It's always good to have a list of numbers you can reference, so you never have to guess who is calling. Think of it as going one step beyond caller ID.

In some cases, answering and then hanging up can actually do more harm than good. Answering the phone gives the scammers confirmation that the number works and that they should try again. Once your number is confirmed as active, it often gets put on an "active number" list that can then be sold to other scammers who market in these types of phone numbers. If you can't verify who is calling without picking up, don't answer. Let it go to voicemail. If it's important, the person will leave a legitimate message and you can respond afterward.

PUT UP SOME DETERRENTS.

You can even go a step further and block the calls. Many phone service providers offer call-blocking options, including AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon. You can sign up for this service in-store or on your service provider's website. Each service costs about \$4 per month. There are also a number of call-blocking apps available on Android and Apple devices, but if you subscribe to a blocking service through your phone provider, these apps are unnecessary.



Finally, you can sign up for the Federal Trade Commission's "Do Not Call" program (DoNotCall.gov). While the Do Not Call program can help cut back on calls, this list is largely ignored by scammers. If you're getting a ridiculous number of robocalls every day, signing up can offer you some brief respite.

Thankfully, Congress is already attempting to fix this problem by making it harder for scammers to call you. But until they are able to pass tough, effective legislation, it is up to us as consumers to remain vigilant and do what we can to keep our personal and financial data safe and secure.