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Pain & Suffering

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Abstract

As an American, you are very fortunate to live in a country (America) where you have many legal rights.

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As an American, you are very fortunate to live in a country (America) where you have many legal rights. Bales of rights. And new ones are being discovered all the time, such as the right to make a right turn on a red light.

This doesn't mean you can do just *anything*. For example, you can't shout "FIRE!" in a crowded theater. Even if there *is* a fire, you can't shout it. A union worker has to shout it. But you can—I know this, because you always sit right behind me—clear your throat every 15 seconds all the way through the entire movie, and finally, at the exact moment of greatest on-screen drama, hawk up a gob the size of a golf ball. Nobody can stop you. It's your *right*.

The way you got all these rights is the Founding Fathers fought and died for them, then wrote them down on the Constitution, a very old piece of paper that looks like sick puppies have lived on it, which is stored in Washington, D.C., where you have the right to view it during normal viewing hours. The most important part of the Constitution, rightswise, appears in Article IX, Section 2, Row 27, which states:

If any citizen of the United States shall ever at any time for any reason have any kind of a bad thing happen to him or her, then this is probably the result of Negligence on the part of a large corporation with a lot of insurance, if you get our drift.

What the Constitution is trying to get across to you here is that the way you protect your rights, in America, is by suing the tar out of everybody. This is an especially good time to sue because today's juries hand out giant cash awards as if they were complimentary breath mints.

So you definitely want to get in on this. Let's say your wedding ring falls into your toaster, and, when you stick your hand in to retrieve it, you suffer Pain and Suffering as well as Mental Anguish. You would sue:

☛ The toaster manufacturer, for failure to include, in the instructions section that says you should never never never *ever* stick your hand

into the toaster, the statement: "Not even if your wedding ring falls in there."

☛ The store where you bought the toaster, for selling it to an obvious cretin like yourself.

☛ The Union Carbide Corporation, which is not directly responsible in this case, but which is feeling so guilty that it would probably send you a large cash settlement anyway.

Of course you need the help of a professional lawyer. Experts agree the best way to select a lawyer is to watch VHF television, where more and more of your top legal talents are advertising:

Hi. I'm Preston A. Mantis, President of Consumers Retail Law Outlet. As you can see by my suit and the fact that I have all these books of equal height on the shelves behind me, that I am a trained legal attorney. Do you have a car or a job? Do you ever walk around? If so, you probably have the markings of an excellent legal case. Although of course every case is different, I would definitely say that, based on my experience and training, there's no reason why you shouldn't come out of this thing with at least a cabin cruiser. Remember, at the Preston A. Mantis Consumers Retail Law Outlet, our motto is: "it is very difficult to disprove certain kinds of pain."

Another right you have, as an American, is the right to Speedy Justice. For an example of how Speedy Justice works, we turn now to an anecdote told to me by a friend who once worked as a clerk for a judge in a medium-sized city. My friend swears this is true. It happened to an elderly recent immigrant who was hauled before the judge one day. The key to bear in mind is, this man was *not actually guilty of anything*. He had simply gotten lost and confused, and he spoke very little English, and he was wandering around, so the police had picked him up just so he'd have a warm place to sleep while they straightened everything out.

Unfortunately, this judge, who got his job less on the basis of being knowledgeable in matters of law than on the basis of attending the most picnics, somehow got the *wrong folder* in front of him, the folder of a person who had done something semi-serious, so he gave the accused man a stern speech, then sentenced him to *six months in jail*. When this was explained to the man, he burst into tears. He was thinking, no doubt, that if he had only known they had such severe penalties for being elderly and lost in America, he would never have immigrated here in the first place.

Finally, about an hour later, the police figured out what happened, and after they stopped rolling around the floor and wetting their pants, they told

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