



So I read where a New York woman is suing a bar she was in because a stuffed moose head fell on her. She says she has suffered injuries and lost wages because of the nose-dive ol' Bullwinkle after happy hour.

Sounds ridiculous, eh? Yet another reason why we need tort reform in this country, right?

Well, maybe, and then again, maybe not.

I've always been of the opinion that people are largely responsible for their actions. That includes where they park their carcasses to pound a brewski or two. On the other hand, Bullwinkle weighed more than 150 pounds and had a rack about three feet wide. Add all that with a dose of gravity, and you have a pretty powerful headache.

Call it what you will, but someone needs to be held responsible.

Talk of tort reform is scary to me. I don't ever want to get on the business end of a lawsuit, frivolous or not, but I also don't want the powerful to feel free to practice the hideous, Deliverance-type behavior on we the people with far more latitude than they currently enjoy. Whether we like it or not, about the only thing that keeps these greedy clowns from doing whatever they feel like is the very real fear of a visit from a fast-talking character from the offices of Dewey, Cheatham & Howe.

A few years ago, I wrote a column that absolutely infuriated my brother, who I love dearly and respect exponentially. He's a lawyer, a very capable and impeccably honest one, and his objection was not necessarily my stance on tort reform at the time, but the nature of the information upon which I based my objections.

Like so much of what's wrong with the world today, it, too, came from the Internet. Email. Something called the Stella Awards, a dubious honor bestowed upon "the most ridiculous lawsuits in America," named for the woman who sued McDonald's after she burned herself with a cup of hot coffee.

The problem, he pointed out, is that the cases cited are either blown exponentially out of proportion or simply never happened.

The fact is, there are plenty of unscrupulous, blowhard lawyers out there, classic ambulance chasers looking for a fast buck. They all ought to be castrated and sent to Pakistan wearing, "My Kid can Beat Up your Mullah" T-shirts.

There are also a lot of unscrupulous, blowhard pundits, spin-doctors, and other assorted professional chitlin' slingers out there inundating the public with all manner of carefully constructed fiction. They all ought to be castrated and sent to Pakistan wearing, "My Kid can Beat Up Your Mullah," T-shirts.

There are also a lot of idiots in the public repeating all this truthless dreck as Gospel, thus perpetuating the cycle of fear and ignorance. They all ought to be – okay, okay, you get the idea.

Actually, reform starts at home. It's probably too much to ask the Bar Association to be a little more willing to barbecue those creeps that clog up the system and waste everyone's time and money, but one can only hope.

It's probably too much to ask judges to be quicker to censure, suspend, even disbar some of their own rather than politely ask them not to engage in practices that bring them wealth and television commercials, but one can only hope.

It's probably too much to ask corporations, political parties, special interest groups, and other occasionally necessary evils to put a little fact in their folderol, but one can only hope.

It's probably too much to ask the public to be a little more discerning, but one can only – okay, okay, you get the idea.

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