



'But Who Lit the **BLACK FLAME CANDLE?'**

IT'S THRILLING SEASON. You know, that time of the year when you start hearing Michael Jackson's "Thriller" more frequently because Halloween is just around the corner? Some of my very good friends hate Thrilling Season. Well, actually, they hate me during Thrilling Season. That's because, thanks to my best friend from law school, Kelley Kalchthaler, I know all the dance moves to the 5:58 version of the "Thriller" dance. Literally all of them.

When Kelley first asked me if I wanted to learn the dance, I was interested, but there was just one small problem: I was a law student with no time. Long ago, 3L year used to be nine months of something comparable to senior year of high school. But the economy collapsed in the Great Recession and hiring freezes were the norm, so I had to hustle with coursework, moot court, two law journals, and two part-time jobs.

But with Kelley's encouragement, I made time to learn the "Thriller" dance with her. We eventually started participating in Thrill the World (an annual global event to break the world record for the number of people simultaneously dancing the "Thriller"), and then seriously annoying our friends during Thrilling Season by busting out our dance moves every time "Thriller" played. Years later, Kelley and I still try to participate in the annual Thrill the World event in Austin wearing duo costumes; Wayne and Garth, Janis Ian and Damien, and Han Solo and Chewbacca to name a few. (And, yes, there are YouTube videos.)

Lawyers should always be open to making time to live their lives and have fun outside of the practice of law. For many of us, being a lawyer makes up a large part of our identities. It consumes a lot of our time and much of our focus. The pressures to maintain tunnel vision on our practices can make us somewhat more susceptible to escalating mental health issues that stem from the ongoing stress of our jobs.

But we're more than just lawyers. Some of us are also zombies, vampires, and even witches (at least during Halloween). So join up with your horde, nest, or coven, and go have fun by doing something that takes your mind off of being a lawyer and the practice of law. Learn a dance. Sing karaoke. Paint something. Witches are really making a comeback this year, so maybe play light as a feather, stiff as a board; make some midnight margaritas with your eccentric aunts; or just go light the Black Flame Candle.

Consider committing to doing something creative, adventurous, or fun now as a starting point to continue improving your life-work balance in the future. For those of us who are planning on retiring at some point, we'll need to make the transition to enjoying life eventually. In other words, in the timely and timeless words of Vincent Price, "No mere mortal can resist the evil of the Thriller."

MICHAEL J. RITTER

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