

# The Judge's Daughter: A Safe in My Pickup? But Officer, I Can Explain

BY PAMELA BUCHMEYER

Have fun practicing law, that's what my father told me in a handwritten note, which I recently uncovered in a box of his old files. My father, the late great Judge Jerry L. Buchmeyer, who wrote a humor column for the *Texas Bar Journal* for 28 years, said:

"Pam, I'll try not to 'preach' *too much* ... but I can't resist telling you that lawyers who take themselves too seriously are in trouble."

He then quoted Jonathan Swift: "... there was a society of men among us, bred ... for the purpose [of proving] that white is black, and black is white, according as they are paid." Don't lose your perspective—that was Dad's advice. You'll be a better lawyer for it and a better human being.

I framed Dad's note—it's resting on my desk—and now it's my immense pleasure to carry on my father's tradition of humor writing with this column. Here are a few gothchas and gaffes from the legal world brought to you by the Buchmeyer Vault and by the Judge's Daughter. Don't forget to let me hear from you—send your deposition and trial excerpts to [pambuchmeyer@gmail.com](mailto:pambuchmeyer@gmail.com).

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**JUDGE JERRY L. BUCHMEYER** (1933-2009) grew up in Overton and served as a federal judge in the Northern District of Texas after being nominated in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter. His monthly legal humor column ran in the *Texas Bar Journal* from 1980 to 2008.

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## THE HARDEST-WORKING COURT IN TEXAS

Two lawyers who shall remain nameless sent this docket notice from what has to be the hardest-working district court in the land.

All Counsel of Record—

This case is now set for final disposition on: June 20th at 4:02 a.m.

Similarly, Thomas Scott Smith of Sherman submitted this courtroom typo from what appears to be an onerous list of probation conditions imposed upon his client.

- 8. Work faithfully at suitable employment.
- 9. Support your *defendants*.

## THE FOG OF WAR & COURT

Richard J. Gonzalez witnessed the following exchange in a crowded Laredo courtroom. A visiting judge became quite exasperated when docket was called and *none* of the attorneys in the particular case were present. Later, after much scrambling, the judge was able to proceed, asking the defendant a few mental competency questions before possibly accepting a guilty plea.

Judge: Do you understand these proceedings?

Defendant: Yes, your honor.

Judge: Do you understand what we're doing here today?

Defendant: Yes, your honor.

Judge: Well, good. Because even some of the lawyers here don't understand what we're doing here today.

## YOUR MOTION IS GRANTED

Jerry R. Selinger of Dallas confessed to having drafted this court order, which a harried judge apparently signed too quickly. Rodney R. Elkins of Dallas also submitted a copy. Of course, we all have to respect a jurist who's crystal clear about the process of his or her decision-making.

*Order*

On this day the Court considered the Motion for Admission Pro Hac Vice filed on behalf of ... The Court is of the opinion and finds the Motion is *well-funded* and shall be granted.

Wait—aren't all motions well-funded when you think about it? Attorneys don't work for free after all.



## A SAFE IN MY PICKUP? OFFICER, I'VE GOT A DARN GOOD REASON

Another goodie from Houston lawyer Etta Davidson. A key witness in a personal injury trial had an arrest record, which involved an unusual set of circumstances. The cross-examining attorney was the inimitable late Jimmy Noland of Austin.

A: Well, I did something stupid. ... I went out that night ... to drink a beer or two.

Q: That's all right. I'll probably have two or three after we get through here. ...

A: ... [my friend says to me] my car is bogged down out here in the country ... would you pull me out? So I went out there ... and they had a safe in the back of a car. And the safe had the car—the back end of it—almost sitting on the ground ... [in the mud].

Q: I've heard of bootleggers' cars having the back end riding kind of low, but I've never heard of a safe. ...

A: ... [my friend] said somebody had gave them a safe.

Q: That was an awful-kind, nice gift, wasn't it?

A: ... *and I let them put the safe on my pickup.* Matter of fact, I helped them put it on there and took it on to the house.

Q: *Just out of the kindness of your heart?*

A: Yes, sir. But I didn't know the boys had broke in a post office and stole that safe.

Q: Oh my ... they claimed you was in on the whole deal, huh?

A: Yes, sir. ...

Q: Shame on them. That's terrible for telling lies on a fellow being kind to them.

A: ... so I did four months at the correctional institution up here at Seagoville.

Q: Bless your heart.

A: It was easy. I didn't have to work too hard. **TBJ**



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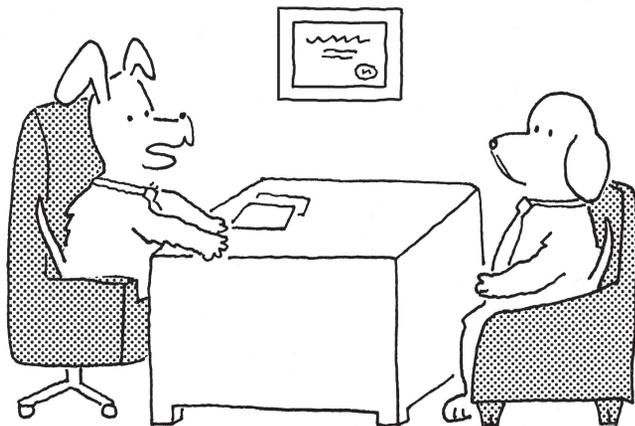
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and Carry On**

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**JEST IS FOR ALL**

By Arnie Glick



GLICK

*“Always remember the first rule of settlement negotiations: If a really good offer is made, don't wag your tail!”*

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