

What's Your Favorite Call?

My favorites are the Trust and Estate Litigation potentials that call and explain to me that the decedent's family were never there and that the PC

(1) spent all his time with decedent, (2) spent all his money on decedent,  
(3) was decedent's only source of solace - during decedent's final days and decedent always promised he'd take care of them (but never seemed to put anything in writing).

Geoff Wiggs, California

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I love the ones where they ask if I can fix something their other lawyer has done / is doing, and not to charge them so much because they already paid the other lawyer.

Murtaza Sutarwalla, Texas

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I don't want to waste your time, or I am not asking for free advice. Then they waste my time and ask for free advice.

Andrea Goldman, Massachusetts

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Recently I was contacted on a "False Claims Act" claim, screened through a legit bar referral group. The actual issue was a daughter who was upset because a reverse mortgage lender foreclosed several months ago on momma's house. Said daughter had not supported or cared for momma, her sister had. The real deal was she was unhappy not to get a share of the house.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

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I get a lot of people who ask me how much I charge before even telling me what kind of case they have. Does anyone else get those?

Jason Komninos, New Jersey

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Ahhh yesss, now THIS is a thread I can get on board with! There are sooo many of these - I have nicknamed them "torture calls." Where do I start?

Hmm.. two immediately spring to mind:

1. "Do y'all do lemon law cases?" (caller proceeds to describe a scenario where he bought/financed a USED vehicle that's about 8 years old and is now unhappy with the purchase 6mo after purchase) 2. "I need you to draw me up some documents where [PARENT 1] signs over [HIS/HER] rights for [CHILD 1, 2, 3, etc.] to [PARENT 2] --- how much does that cost?" Or another popular variant of this is the "Hey when I pass away, I want to make sure that [FAMILY MEMBER/FRIEND/COLLEAGUE/NEIGHBOR] gets custody of my kids, how much does that cost??" I always like to reiterate that it is 2020 and not 1804 and thus children, as much of a shock as it might come to them, are. not. property!! Nor is there a 'title' to children that would allow them to be freely transferred like a car, real estate, or ATV.

OK now my blood pressure has shot up just by typing those out lol.

E. Seth Combs, Kentucky

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"Are yall criminal lawyers?" Well, I think of them as lawyers who handle criminal cases, so yes. Then I said the things noted below.

"Hi, how much do yall charge?" Great that you called. Please tell me what happened to you or what you need a lawyer to handle, and I'll get an estimate from the attorney for you and then we'll make an appointment for you to come in, free of charge, and talk more about it. (I would elicit everything I could from the caller so the boss could give a pretty accurate quote. If it was going to be an hourly billing case, the boss would give me the amount needed to get started and I could explain the rest. We were a pretty well oiled machine, and I was able to get a good 80% of callers to come in. The boss would close the sale.)

"Do yall handle suit cases?" Similar to above.

None of these were annoying, though I did have to remind myself daily that many of these callers had no experience with lawyers. That helped me summon the necessary patience.

Marilou Auer (not a lawyer), Virginia

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This reminds me of something that I heard a very long time ago at my very first job. A young woman who was a witness to an auto accident, was trying to tell my boss that she was not going to testify. She was all but shouting over the phone that she was not, no way, no how going to witnify. She would never witnify, ever.

Frank Kautz, Massachusetts

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Love it! We had a client return from a monthlong trip to Puerto Rico, her place of origin. She raced into the office and excitedly told our brand new receptionist that she needed to talk with the secretary about her day boast. I recognized her voice. The receptionist had her repeat her request a couple of times and finally came to me and said "Do you know what a Day Boast is?" I said yeah that's the thing you need when you don't like your husband anymore! After that, the receptionist would buzz the appropriate secretary and tell her there was a new day boast on Line 2. I miss that place!

And a new client called one day, mad as a wet hen, complaining that I hadn't sent him a promised email before I left the office the day before like I said I would. I assured him that I had indeed, sent it, around 8 p.m. the day before. He had checked his email at 5 p.m. and assumed I had forgotten. He was very contrite and pleased that we stayed at the office until everything for that day was done. I finished his divorce earlier than promised, and boss and I both got a nice bonus.

Marilou Auer (not a lawyer)

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“Somebody stole my idea.”

Flann Lippincott, New Jersey

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These were so funny and I thank you because laughter is like gold.

I don't really have any classics, but I'll play<sup>1</sup>. I've been wrongfully terminated - Honey, if you've already figured that out so I can prove it, god bless you.

2. I left my job for 3 months and returned and they wouldn't give me my job back. Why did you leave? Just to go back to my home country for a visit.

3. When the pandemic started, I called each of my business clients to ask if they had any questions, wanted any support or anything. One kind, old time Greek client responded without missing a beat "wait, they make you do that?" As if it was penance for being an attorney LOL

Tony Minchella, Connecticut

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"I need a quick claim deed."

The one I would like to receive is the call from my deceased client's estate attorney about client's will:

"And to my Attorney Jim, I leave \$1 million in appreciation for his many years of helpful, professional, personal service."

Jim Pardue, North Carolina

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"Can you answer a quick question?"

"Do you give free consultations?"

"What's your hourly rate?"

If the potential client asks this question first, I know who I am dealing with and will adjust my fees accordingly.

Steven Chung, California

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LOL @ Jim! I forgot about the classic "quick claim deed" - I get that one frequently as well.

I also enjoy the folks who are adamant about "needing" a deed or a land contract with a level of urgency one might see during an impending nuclear explosion.

Another I enjoy (read: hate) receiving is the caller with an injury case--most usually it's a potential med-mal--in which they spend about 40 minutes telling me the facts and

make it a point to abusively repeat the phrase "oh, it's a good case" --- really? if it's so great and good and you know it, then it sounds like you don't need me, buddy!

E. Seth Combs