



RUSSELL & LAZARUS APC

PERSONAL INJURY TRIAL ATTORNEYS

Exclusively handling serious and catastrophic personal injury claims as well as wrongful death claims due to the negligence of individuals or business entities.



The Right Help When You Need It Most!

May 2019

- AUTO COLLISIONS
- MOTORCYCLE COLLISIONS
- BICYCLE ACCIDENTS
- TRIP/SLIP AND FALL ACCIDENTS
- CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENTS
- ELDER ABUSE CLAIMS
- BRAIN TRAUMA CLAIMS
- WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIMS



The best teacher I ever had was my high school history teacher, Ed Jalbert. The high school I attended was Pius X Catholic High School located in Downey, California. My family did not have much, but my parents always stressed the importance of education (neither Mom nor Dad went to college), so they scrimped to send me and my older two siblings to Pius X, a grand total of \$125 per month for the three of us. My, how things have changed! There, I met Ed Jalbert, who, in addition to being my history teacher at the time, was also my home room teacher. He was in his early 20s and was actually a graduate of Pius X who had come back to teach.

As my home room teacher, Ed kept me on the straight and narrow in a way that did not include the ruler knuckle rapping that I seemed to attract from the nuns who taught me at Our Lady of the Rosary Junior High School (I usually deserved it). Ed was compassionate but firm. He was fun but kept me on task. He was the best teacher I have ever had and the best man I have ever met.

Ed always pushed me to do more. He knew I had tested well coming into school and

IVY LEAGUE SCHOOL?

Who Needs It? Let's Celebrate Teachers!

had potential, but my homework habits were just short of deplorable. I could usually skate through most things with my God-given abilities. The problem with "potential" as a kid is that it is nothing unless you have someone who can help you to turn it into something, and Ed was that someone for me. What added to my troubles was a "new system" of learning that they were experimenting with at Pius X: the Model Schools program. It was a "learn at your own pace" system where the students decided when and how they learned the material and took the tests. Can you think of a worse system for a 13-year-old, semi-smart, social butterfly with poor work habits? I was in hog heaven!

My desire to have fun with all of my football pals, including Steve Morasse and Alex Krywenko (both currently work in the same suite as I do in Newport Beach), pushed schoolwork to the bottom of my priority list. Ed saw that and knew the Model Schools program was a recipe for disaster for me. He quickly took action by creating various "contracts," where if I agreed to do X by Y time (homework and good test results), he would bring pizza in for the whole class (courtesy of me!) or promise a trip up to his Big Bear place with all of my buds. However, if I did not meet the terms of the contract, I would have to wash his car or go to his parents' house and vacuum ... you know, your typical child slave labor! Thinking back on it, maybe that is where I got my first real taste of the law: when I was either breaking or keeping the contract with Ed!

"The problem with 'potential' ... is that it is nothing unless you have someone who can help you to turn it into something, and Ed was that someone for me."

Ed's constant encouragement reminds me of the recent Platinum Study, which debunks the notion that getting into an Ivy League school is the only path to success. This study (and many others) reflect that the personal ambition and drive of a student are far more influential in his or her eventual success than what school was attended. (Not so ironically, both Ed and I graduated from Long Beach State.) Having someone like Ed keep me on a good path until I was able to fly on my own was foundational for the success I have had in my professional career, which includes starting and growing Russell & Lazarus into the legal powerhouse that we are now.

Ed was called into the priesthood soon after I graduated from college and was transferred up to St. Joseph High School in Santa Maria, California, where he has been an institution in the community ever since. On May 7th, when National Teacher's Day is being celebrated, I will be thinking of and saying a prayer for Father Ed Jalbert, the best teacher I was lucky enough to ever have.

— Chris Russell



NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Be a Tourist in Your Hometown

Do you dream of adventure? Do you want to see something new, discover someplace interesting, and make memories you'll cherish forever? Do you still have to be at work on Monday? Finding adventure doesn't have to mean packing up and trekking across the globe for six months. Being adventurous is all about changing your mindset and looking for the unexpected in the familiar.

As you start planning summer vacations, instead of spending a lot of money to be a tourist somewhere else, why not try finding a little adventure at home?

GET A ROOM

If you really want to experience your hometown through the eyes of a tourist, try waking up somewhere new. One night in a

hotel room or bed-and-breakfast can really put you in the adventuring mindset.

FIND LOCAL EVENTS

Now's the time to check out the farmers market you've been meaning to go to for ages! Then you can swing by that free concert in the park before going to a play at your community theater. Attending local events is a great way to visit places in town you've never been before. You might even find a historical tour that can teach you all about the wonders of your town. Download an app like Eventbrite, or go old-school and check for fun local events in the paper.

APPRECIATE THE ARTS

There are countless tiny museums and cultural attractions all over the place that most people overlook — especially those

who have lived in an area for a while. Does your hometown have interesting art installations on Main Street? What about museums dedicated to strange and supernatural phenomena, parks, historical landmarks, or giant robotic farm animals? Check Yelp.com for lists of popular attractions near you, or ask your friends for suggestions. You might be surprised by what your hometown has to offer.

You might be thinking, "This is would be great *if* I lived somewhere fun!" If you've ever thought your town was boring, that's all the more reason to try being a tourist! Adventures can happen anywhere if you just take that first step out the door.

TEAM MEMBER FEATURE

Rosie Valencia Steadfast and Caring Worker

Rosie Valencia has worked with Russell & Lazarus for nearly 20 years — in fact, we'll be celebrating her 19th anniversary in June of this year. All of us on the team are looking forward to celebrating this time with Rosie and working beside her for years to come.

Currently, Rosie is working as our senior case manager, but her first position with us was as a clerk. "I first joined the team here when my sister-in-law, who was working as the receptionist, told me there was a spot available. I jumped at the opportunity and was soon working with the Russell & Lazarus team."

It wasn't long afterward that Rosie began to advance in the firm. "After working as a clerk for some time, I started to move up. I

became a case manager and started going to school for a paralegal position. That's around the time my life started moving in full swing. After I had my children, I decided to stay with case management, which has worked out great for everyone."

Our team has benefited greatly from Rosie's passion and dedication to helping our clients. "The best part about my job is helping people in need. Educating people who don't know what insurance companies are looking for in injury claims and helping them get on the right track to recovery and compensation is really satisfying. Most people don't know the complexity of the whole process, and the fact that I'm able to help and teach them about that process is very gratifying."

On a relaxed day, Rosie enjoys spending her time with her two boys, Nathan and Adam, her husband, Mike, and the family dog, Rock. "My boys love playing baseball year-round, and Mike, Rock, and I spend our free time supporting them at their games and watching them play. I

also enjoy taking action shots of them when they're out on the field. It's really cool when I can capture them mid-swing or mid-slide."



CASE STUDY

How a Jury Got \$16 Million Worth of Mad at a Lying Defendant

In 2015, our 40-year-old male client (we will call him Bill for purposes of this article) was riding his Harley on a pleasant Sunday afternoon down a major boulevard, cruising at 25 mph, when a woman in an SUV pulled out of a parking lot, causing him to T-bone her vehicle. Bill flew over her vehicle, did a complete somersault in the air, and landed on his face, breaking nearly every bone in his face and sending him into a coma.

Amazingly, he woke up six weeks later and appeared to have a fairly decent recovery. In fact, he returned to his pharmaceutical job of 15-plus years about four months after the collision. While Bill claimed to be doing well post-accident, his girlfriend of 10-plus years (we will call her Sylvia) was telling us a different story, as is often the case with

traumatic brain injury victims. We know from our extensive experience handling brain trauma claims that the worst person to ask about an accident victim's brain damage is the accident victim. Sylvia conveyed to us that the incident had completely changed Bill's personality: his hygiene was lacking, and he was always mad — classic signs of brain damage. We sent Bill to a renowned neuropsychologist (a specialist who marries the science of neurology and psychology), who performed a series of tests and concluded that Bill had sustained a traumatic brain injury that would affect him for the rest of his life. The doctor determined the damage was so severe that at the age of 60, Bill would need 24/7 care due to the onset of significant dementia.

The driver who caused the collision was employed at a private technical college (more of a federally funded mill for blue-collar vocational training). The college argued the driver was pulling out of their parking lot but was off the clock, so they had no responsibility for the collision. However, California law states that an employee who is forced to use his or her car for work purposes is still on the clock coming from and going to home. The difference was that our client could either

make a claim against a \$100,000 insurance policy that the driver carried or an \$11 million policy owned by the college.

The college denied that any of their employees ever used their vehicles for work purposes, and they instructed their employees to lie about that in the 20-plus depositions we took over two years leading up to the four-week jury trial. However, we were able to uncover other evidence that revealed the lies and demanded \$8 million to settle the claim. The most the college's insurance company would offer was \$400,000, so we went to trial having spent \$500,000 out of our pocket in hard costs, mostly spent in trying to uncover their lies.

Often, when a jury discovers that one side or the other has lied during a trial, the jury gets really upset. If it is the defendant who has lied, they usually come back with a verdict that includes a large amount of compensation. After two days of deliberation, the Los Angeles jury did, in fact, punish the college with a \$16 million verdict! The moral of the story is that, as always, honesty is the best policy, and if you are not going to be honest with a claim involving the clients of Russell & Lazarus, be ready to pay dearly for that dishonesty.



We are so proud to announce two amazing new team members: Lauren (left) Litigation Clerk and Perla (right) Front Desk Receptionist. We are so lucky to have these two talented ladies on our APC team!

MITZI'S FAVORITE RECIPES

From Mitzi Flores, Pre-Litigation Clerk

INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces pasta, ideally fusilli
- 1/2 pound broccoli florets
- 2 carrots, shredded
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into strips
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, liberally salt water and bring to a boil. Add fusilli and cook according to package directions. Add broccoli, carrots, and bell pepper during the last 2 minutes of cook time.
2. Drain the pasta and veggies, reserving 1/2 cup of cooking liquid. Return pasta and veggies to pot.
3. In a large skillet, heat olive oil to medium heat. Add garlic and cook until translucent and golden, 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, red pepper flakes, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook until tomatoes are wilted, about 2 minutes. Stir in reserved pasta water.
4. Add tomato mixture to pasta pot, stirring to coat evenly.
5. Divide into bowls, top with Parmesan cheese, and serve.

PASTA PRIMAVERA



- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, ideally Parmigiano-Reggiano
- Kosher salt, for pasta water and to taste

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Books to Engage the Whole Family



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WORLDS WITHIN PAGES

Books to Engage the Whole Family

Learning to read opens up a world of possibilities. When your child walks through the back of the wardrobe into Narnia with Lucy Pevensie or rides with Harry Potter on the train to Hogwarts, they connect to something beyond their own experiences.

In the U.S., April 23 is World Book Day, and the date commemorates the deaths of legendary authors Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Garcilaso de la Vega, as well as the birth of author Vladimir Nabokov. World Book Day is the perfect time to sit down with your family and let yourself be transported to new worlds. So, here are three great stories to help you take young readers on brand-new adventures.

FOR THE ELEMENTARY READER: 'SONG OF THE WILD: A FIRST BOOK OF ANIMALS'

"Song of the Wild" makes a great read-aloud book for beginner readers because they can get lost in the beautiful artwork while you read the text. Written in prose and rhyming poems, this book showcases sprawling

landscapes — savannahs, jungles, and oceans — and features the wildlife living there. It's worth a read simply to appreciate the colorful depictions of each animal. This book was written by Nicola Davies and illustrated by Petr Horáček.

FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOLER: 'THE NIGHT DIARY'

Twelve-year-old Nisha navigates her world after the partition of India creates the new country of Pakistan and her family is forced to leave their home. Her mother may be gone, but Nisha finds solace in writing nightly letters to her in her diary as she discovers what the future holds. Based on author Veera Hiranandani's memories of her own family, this moving tale lets readers experience life through someone else's eyes.



FOR TEENS: 'BRAZEN: REBEL LADIES WHO ROCKED THE WORLD'

While some might not think of comics as proper reading, Penelope Bagieu's graphic novel forces reconsideration. Her clever, colorful artwork and engaging narrative take the reader through the biographies of 30 women, from Bette Davis and Mae Jemison to lesser-known but equally intriguing ladies like Giordina Reid. All in all, this book provides a great way to get kids excited about history in an entertaining form.