



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!

September 2019

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



On Labor Day weekend, my team and I go to Las Vegas for one of the largest trial attorney conventions west of the Mississippi. The Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA) offers a fantastic gathering that attorneys can attend to exchange information, participate in workshops and seminars, and better their craft as trial attorneys.

Becoming a trial attorney is a time-consuming process that takes years of being submerged in the field to perfect. Only after trying case after case will an attorney become proficient and change the science of being a trial attorney into an art. Those who are the best in their craft have been trying cases for at least 15–30 years. They spend that time perfecting their skills and learning how to talk to a jury in a way that convinces them to believe in what they're presenting. Building those persuasive skills takes time to polish, especially with the public having very jaded views on personal injury claims, claimants, and trial attorneys.

Experience, skill, and a wealth of knowledge are what lawyers need to seek out when

THE ART OF BECOMING A TRIAL ATTORNEY

And the Benefits of Constant Education

pursuing a career in law. Someone who tries cases for a living needs to know the ins and outs of the court process, be able to reason with the judge in regard to rulings, know how to give closing arguments, and most importantly, be able to pick the right jury. Many people think that the final arguments are the most essential parts of a trial, but that's not true. The most vital aspect of every case takes place even before opening statements: the selection of the jury.

When a trial attorney picks the jury that will oversee their case, it's the best time for them to educate the members of the jury in regards to both the good and bad areas of the case. This is key. Trial attorneys need to inform the jury of any information that may come up in the case to reduce the shock factor.

This is so important because there are very few instances where the clouds open up to reveal the straight facts surrounding the injury of the client. One witness will testify that your client was speeding while another believes your client was within the confines of the law. It's amazing how many versions of an accident there are with different witnesses.

Trial attorneys who have spent years in the practice will know how to approach these cases skillfully for the benefit of their clients. When a trial attorney isn't part of CAALA, the American Association for Justice, the Consumer Attorneys of California, or any

"Becoming a trial attorney is a time-consuming process that takes years of being submerged in the field to perfect."

other similar group, they are not improving their skills. These attorneys who rest on their laurels will have an extremely difficult time accomplishing good for their clients and they may even go so far as to do their clients a disservice.

Just like in any other profession, if you're not constantly seeking out education, you'll soon fall behind. In California, trial attorneys are obligated to take 24 hours of schooling every three years. The team at my firm surpasses this requirement by attending CAALA every year. Thus, after three years, my team and I have each acquired a total of 72 hours of learning.

While everyone here at Russell & Lazarus would love to be at home barbecuing with the family, marking the official end of summer, our labor is all about trying to become better attorneys. That way, we can represent our clients back in the real world when Labor Day weekend is over.

— Chris Russell





THE 4-LEGGED HEROES OF GROUND ZERO

Honoring the Canines of 9/11

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, thousands of New Yorkers took to the streets to clear rubble, offer supplies, and search for survivors. It was a powerful act of resilience in a deeply trying time, and while most of the individuals helping with the disaster stood on two feet, more than 300 canines also answered the call to service.

Dogs of all breeds and backgrounds, including search and rescue dogs, police dogs, service dogs, and therapy dogs, were brought in to help find and care for survivors in the wake of the destruction. They worked tirelessly alongside rescue crews as they searched through the debris.

Search and rescue dogs and their handlers worked 12–16-hour days, searching for survivors and victims. They worked through dangerous conditions: Many dogs burned their paws as they dug through hot rubble, and both handlers and canines inhaled toxic dust. The task was both physically and mentally exhausting for the dogs during their shifts. Some dogs that found deceased victims refused to eat or interact with other animals. Search and rescue dogs became increasingly stressed and depressed the longer they searched without any results, mirroring their handlers. It wasn't uncommon for handlers to stage mock "findings" of survivors to keep the dogs' spirits up.

Fortunately, the sacrifices these dogs and their handlers made did not go unnoticed. Many dog owners were inspired to earn their search and rescue certifications after the events of 9/11, promising to aid in future disasters and hopefully lessen the impact of such catastrophes.

After 9/11, various researchers conducted many studies examining the effect this kind of work has on animals, both physically and mentally. Many of these studies wouldn't be possible without the AKC Canine Health Foundation, so if you're looking to give back this September, visit them at their website to see how you can help: **AKCCHF.org**.

TEAM MEMBER FEATURE

Manny Gutierrez Dedicated Manager and Family Man

In this edition, our team at Russell & Lazarus is overjoyed to introduce Manny Gutierrez for our team member spotlight. Manny has been an excellent team member; he is assiduous, dedicated, and genuinely cares about people both in and out of the office. We're proud to have such an amazing individual on our team!

Manny first started with us after finding and responding to an advertisement for a case manager. "When I came in for the first time and met Chris, Marc, and the rest of the team, I was really impressed with them. They all got along really well, and I felt like this was the place I wanted to be," he recalls. It wasn't too long afterward that Manny joined our team.

As a case manager, Manny's focus is ensuring each case we handle for our clients here at Russell & Lazarus runs as smoothly as possible. For the past two years, Manny has worked with our team to fight for our clients' rights. "Law was something that always interested me," Manny says. "I like helping out people after they've been involved in a traumatic event. Whether it's a slip and fall or an auto accident, it's nice to know that I can help them out and get them back to where they were before the accident."

On his time off, you can find Manny spending time with his family. He says, "Family is important to me, and I try to do things with them whenever I can. I have a 1-year-old son, and making sure I have the time to play with him is really crucial."

All of us at Russell & Lazarus want to thank Manny for his hard work since joining our team. We look forward to working side-by-side with him well into the future!



CASE STUDY

One Claim Turned Three

When our client, who we'll call Emma, was out riding her dream motorcycle one day, she didn't expect it to be the last day she'd ever ride.

A year prior, Emma had finally purchased her dream bike: a Harley Davidson. She was an experienced motorcyclist and had always wanted a Harley, so she was excited to have the chance to get out on the road with her new ride.

Emma stopped behind a truck at a four-way stop sign in a residential neighborhood. Next to her was a badly overgrown tree and, while it didn't impede her line of sight, the driver of another car approaching the intersection couldn't see her. Emma had the right of

way, but as she pulled into the intersection, the driver of the other vehicle did the same, broadsiding her.

The impact knocked her down, and she skidded several feet with her bike on top of her. Emma had to be taken to the hospital by helicopter, where she spent the next month and a half recovering. She sustained severe injuries to her leg, including a fracture that had to be surgically repaired, and significant damage to her skin.

Our team at Russell & Lazarus started a claim on her behalf. We not only filed against the driver of the car but also against the homeowner and the City. Under California law, property owners have an obligation to keep their trees and bushes in check to

prevent obstructing drivers' vision. As the claim entered litigation, it was discovered that both the homeowner and the City shared responsibility for keeping the tree properly trimmed, but neither had obliged.

What started out as a claim against the driver ended up becoming a complex lawsuit against all three parties responsible. Russell & Lazarus received a contribution of \$15,000 from the car owner, \$600,000 from the homeowner, and \$200,000 from the city for a total of \$815,000.

Through the efforts of our team, we discovered that there were multiple persons at fault and made sure that our client received the compensation they deserved from each party involved.



**WELCOME,
JOSEPH GALLO, ESQ.**

Joseph brings fresh new talent to the Russell & Lazarus team of attorneys. He graduated in the top 25% of his class at Chapman Law School and enjoys golfing, skateboarding, and spending time with his dachshund, Tootsie.

SEAN GOEDINGHAUS'S FAVORITE RECIPES

Sean Goedinghaus | Litigation Paralegal

Shawarma is a Middle Eastern method of preparing meat. Normally made using massive rotisseries, this make-at-home version only requires an oven and some marinade.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp olive oil
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, 1/2 cup oil, garlic, salt, pepper, cumin, paprika, turmeric, and crushed red pepper. Whisk together, then marinate chicken in mixture and cover and refrigerate for 1–12 hours.
2. Heat oven to 425 F. Place onion in chicken marinade, tossing to coat. Spread onion and chicken on a baking sheet lined with the remaining olive oil.
3. Roast for 30–40 minutes. Remove from oven, let sit for 2 minutes, and slice chicken into bite-sized pieces.
4. Garnish with parsley and serve.

CHICKEN SHAWARMA



- 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- Crushed red pepper flakes, to taste
- 1 large red onion, peeled and quartered
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, for garnish

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The Next Phase of Marvel Movies



Super Lawyers

WHAT'S NEXT FOR MARVEL MOVIES?

3 Marvel Movies to Watch Out For

For the past 10 years, Marvel movies have delighted families and comic book nerds alike with their memorable characters, incredible action scenes, and sprawling, interconnected storylines. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is the story of the Avengers so far, told through 23 movies. Even though this year marked the end of a massive arc that Marvel Studios dubbed "The Infinity Saga," there are still more movies coming out that will feature everyone's favorite heroes. Here are a few films coming up next in the MCU.

A BLACK WIDOW SOLO MOVIE

International assassin Black Widow, played by Scarlett Johansson, was the first female member of the Avengers and made her debut appearance in "Iron Man 2." She never got her own movie, but Marvel announced recently that a Black Widow movie is officially in the works for the next

phase of Marvel movies. Besides the fact that they've started filming, there's not much information about it yet. But for many excited fans, this movie has been a long time coming.

'GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 3'

Star-Lord, Rocket, Groot, and the gang are all back in the third installment of this smash-hit franchise. Without getting into too much detail, "Avengers: Endgame" and the post-credits scene of the second "Guardians" movie provided some clues about the plot and possible main villain. Though details are slim, "Vol. 3" is sure to be another rollicking ride through the cosmos.

'BLACK PANTHER 2'

"Black Panther" was immensely popular (it earned nearly \$700 million domestically), and its success removed all doubt that there would be a sequel. Audiences will journey



back to Wakanda and see the newest adventures of King T'Challa and crew, although not much is known about the plot or the release date as of now. But you can rest assured that the creative minds behind the sequel are taking their time to make it as good as the first.

The future storyline of the MCU is up in the air, but, if the previous movies are any indicator, families, fans, and audiences everywhere have a lot to look forward to.