



Looking for you here in Vegas

IF YOU PLAY LONG ENOUGH, YOUR MONEY ALWAYS ENDS UP BACK IN THE MACHINE

“Every now and then when your life gets complicated and the weasels start closing in, the only cure is to load up on heinous chemicals and then drive like a bastard from Hollywood to Las Vegas ... with the music at top volume and at least a pint of ether. . . . We were somewhere around Barstow, on the edge of the desert, when the drugs began to take hold.

“But our trip was different. It was a classic affirmation of everything right and true and decent in the national character. It was a gross, physical salute to the fantastic possibilities of life in this country – but only for those with true grit. And we were chock full of that.”

– **Hunter S. Thompson**, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

I imagine the vast majority of people reading this column this month will be sweltering it out at CAALA VEGAS. Although when I say “vast majority of people reading this column” I am being quite optimistic. CAALA President Doug Silverstein and I were joking around about the July columns, and he said I was the only one who read his. I doubt it, but it does give one pause. I am not sure he read mine. Does the tree that falls in the forest make any sound?

People look forward to this event all year, and what an all-star lineup, as usual. Some of the finest legal minds in Southern California. Just at the opening session alone, you have the Honorable Judges John Pacheco, Mary Ann Murphy, Samantha Jessner, and Mark Mooney. I know the best that I can wish for when assigned to a courtroom is just that it not be unpleasant. With these super stars not only is it almost always pleasant, it’s quite nice to try a case to a bench that is way smarter than you.

And how about the attorney panels? I can’t mention everyone, but just look in your syllabus! Chris Dolan and Dana Fox will be trading barbs on auto cases. Garo Mardirossian and Elise Sanguinetti will be discussing Countdown to Trial with an all-star panel. Or do you pick the employment panel with the fantastic Genie Harrison? How about Taly Goody and Micha Star Liberty getting you those hard-to-obtain specialty credits? Decisions, decisions. Again, I can’t mention all the names, but if you can

survive the bar scene Friday night, make sure you go to the Saturday afternoon closing session. I mean, come on. Arash Homampour, Brian Panish, Bruce Brusavich . . .

My family history with Las Vegas

That all being said, I am not the biggest fan of Las Vegas. I have too much history with that city, going way back to my childhood. My parents were divorced before I can even remember. My father was an air traffic controller, and he moved with his new wife and kid to Las Vegas when I was in junior high. I came to hate the drive from Orange County to Las Vegas with a passion. The trips generally were not a ton of fun, and we usually just sat around the pool and stared at each other.

My dad however, taught me a very valuable lesson about gambling. At his house in Las Vegas, my father had purchased and installed a real slot machine that took quarter tokens. Back in the day, quarters were still a pretty big deal. When we arrived for the weekend, my dad would open the back of the slot machine, and bring out the trays of quarter tokens for us to play with. It was a lot of fun, putting in the tokens and pulling the handle, waiting for the three rows to line up. Sometimes we won the jackpot, but I started to notice that after a day or two, the tokens were all back in the machine. My dad would open the back, get them out and we played again. The result never changed. The tokens always ended up back in the machine.

At some point in my young life, the lightbulb went off, and I understood why you should never play against the odds. The house is always going to win if you keep playing. I carry that lesson with me today. I rarely gamble, and even then, only on a sure thing. I like to tell my kids I only gamble on a winner – myself – in trial.

Be a part of OCTLA

As long as I have you as a captive audience, here’s why you should join the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association – OCTLA! Formed in 1963, when plaintiffs’ attorneys gathered to share information and exchange tips and strategies with one another, OCTLA has grown into one of the

most influential affiliate bar organizations in Orange County. Coming up on our 60th year, OCTLA is stronger than ever, dedicated to promoting quality representation of consumers and employees while educating and supporting our membership.

First, we have some of the best networking opportunities in Orange County. Second, are MCLE programs! Not all MCLE educational events are created equal. OCTLA provides monthly opportunities to earn MCLE credits while learning about relevant issues from some of the greatest speakers in the state. We also publish the Gavel Magazine quarterly, which provides insightful interviews with the Orange County bench on practical, nuts-and-bolts issues such as procedure and trial skills.

But if you ask me, the Member Listserv is the number one reason to join. Some have said OCTLA’s most valuable member benefit is our improved member listserv, which allows attorney members to post questions regarding their cases and solicit immediate responses from hundreds of fellow trial attorneys.

Deposition Bank: Free access to our online expert deposition bank stocked with numerous deposition transcripts. It’s like having the resources of a large law firm at your fingertips. We also have a fully stocked Document Bank, which contains every motion you could ever need.

Lastly, OCTLA members have opportunities to build lasting personal relationships through activities such as our annual Columbus Day Golf Tournament, fun networking mixers including members-only Bowling Night and Angel’s Game Family Night. For those who enjoy more formal events, OCTLA delivers with its black-tie Installation and Judicial Awards Program held in January each year and its annual Top Gun Trial Lawyer of the Year Awards Program and charity auction, which will be held on Saturday, November 12, 2022 at the Westin, South Coast Plaza. Do not miss this event.

All attorneys engaged in trial practice in Orange County are encouraged to join OCTLA. Visit our website at www.OCTLA.org, or contact OCTLA at 949.916.9577.