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901-388-5808
DouglassRunger.com



Objection, Your Honor — That's Hilarious!

Serious About Law, Not About Life

If laughter is the best medicine, that must make me a licensed practitioner. April is National Humor Month, and let's be honest — there's nothing like a perfectly timed joke to lighten the mood. I've always believed that life is too short to take everything seriously 24/7, and more often than not, the things stressing me out aren't so big in the grand scheme of things. Whether I'm quoting "Dumb and Dumber" for the hundredth time or shamelessly throwing around Gen Z slang with my younger team members, humor is one way I like to make the world a little less stressful and a lot more fun.

I consider myself funny (ask anyone who has been around me for any extended period of time), and I love joking around. It's not just a way to entertain people; it's a powerful tool for connection and peace of mind. We can quickly get so caught up in all the stress that we take things too seriously and personally for our own good. Humor is a straightforward way to turn your mood around. Throwing on something funny can lift your spirits and ground you back in reality.

At Douglass & Runger, we have a fairly big team where we like to joke around. You can often hear me intentionally stumble through the lingo of our staff members in their 20s, having fun with the phrases of a new generation. It's a way I lighten the mood and show my team and clients I'm a real person with a personality, despite the serious matters we handle with the utmost professionalism. You have to read the room, of course, but if I know a client well enough, I'll slip in a funny little quip to make the process easier. It feels good to make others laugh.

For me, when it comes to standup comedians, Bill Burr, Dave Chappelle, and Shane Gillis will always be head and shoulders above the rest. My go-to comedies are classics from the 1980s, '90s, and 2000s — movies that never get old, like "Ace Ventura" or "Dumb and Dumber." Give me the comedy stylings of the Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, Will Ferrell, and Vince Vaughn super team of the 2000s any day.

Real people and their idiosyncrasies are even funnier to me. Sometimes, people are unintentionally hilarious without telling a joke, and human nature can be the best punchline. Have you ever noticed how people's voices and behaviors change depending on what group of people they are around? That's because we all play



different roles in different social circles. You may be the buttoned-up, serious type at work, but you revert to your silly self when you are around your siblings. The little, funny, unconscious things everyone does are hilarious when you think about it. The minute my wife gets around her family, her southern drawl reappears, and those day-to-day characteristics of people can make me crack up.

The work I do as a lawyer is serious, but even within the legal world, I can find humor. One of the things I've always enjoyed, especially in trials, is the ability to use a bit of sarcasm when questioning witnesses or the opposing party who are clearly trying to sell a ridiculous story. There's a little fun in pushing back, exposing the gaps in logic, and presenting the evidence in the right tone to highlight the absurdity of the notion. Again, you have to be able to read the room, but when the moment is right, this approach can be powerful and entertaining.

One of my favorite authors, Mark Twain, in all his satiric wisdom, once said, "The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter." I like to keep that weapon sharp. Ultimately, if you can find something to laugh about, even in the toughest situations, you're already winning.

Unpack Parenting's 'Mental Load'

Finding Peace in Modern Parenting

Parenting is a labor of love, but let's face it — sometimes, it just feels like labor. The mental load of raising kids and running a household creates a constant to-do list in your head: planning parent-teacher conferences, organizing meals, managing schedules, and worrying about everything in between. **With nearly half of parents saying their stress is overwhelming, it's clear that we're carrying more than we can handle.** But the good news is that you don't have to carry it alone.

FORGET THE INSTAGRAM FANTASY

We've all been there — scrolling through picture-perfect family photos on social media and wondering how everyone else makes parenting look so effortless. *But let's get real.* No one's life is as polished as their posts. Instead of measuring yourself against

unrealistic standards, focus on what makes your family happy and healthy. Spoiler alert: It's not homemade Pinterest lunches or spotless playrooms.

FIND YOUR VILLAGE (AND USE IT!)

Parenting wasn't meant to be a solo sport. Whether it's friends, family, or other parents, building a strong support system can make all the difference. And if you have a partner, open conversations about sharing the workload can lighten the load for everyone. Remember that asking for help isn't a sign of weakness; it's a superpower.

PERFECT IS BORING — BE REAL INSTEAD

Let go of the idea that you need to be the perfect parent. Perfection is overrated and impossible. Life throws curveballs, and part of raising resilient kids is showing them how

to handle challenges without losing your cool. Be kind to yourself, and embrace the "good enough" mindset. You don't need to do it all, and your kids don't need you to be flawless — they need you to be present.

FROM OVERWHELMED TO EMPOWERED

The mental load of parenting will never disappear entirely, but it doesn't have to weigh you down. When you ditch unrealistic expectations, lean on your village, and embrace imperfection, you can find more balance and joy in the chaos. Parenting is messy, exhausting, and sometimes downright hard — but it's also beautiful, rewarding, and full of unforgettable moments. So, take a deep breath, give yourself some grace, and remember: You're doing a great job. You've got this.



Owning a business comes with many risks and responsibilities, and it's essential to take steps to protect yourself, especially against premises liability claims. A single slip, trip, or fall on your property could lead to costly lawsuits, insurance headaches, and damage to your reputation. Many of these claims are preventable, and taking the proper precautions ensures that customers, employees, and your bottom line are safe. Here's how to protect your business from costly premises liability claims before they happen.

REGULAR INSPECTIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The best way to stop claims like slips and falls from happening at your business is to take a proactive approach to maintenance. Schedule

Don't Let a Slip Cost You

Business Tips to Prevent Premises Liability Claims

regular safety inspections on your property to identify potential risks like loose handrails or cracked sidewalks. It's on you as the business owner to create a safe environment for staff and customers. Documentation of your inspections protects you, keeps you in compliance, and allows you to address issues before they become dangerous to others. If you identify hazards, address them quickly and communicate with your team to report these risks.

PROPER INSURANCE COVERAGE

Having the correct type of insurance coverage acts as a safeguard for your finances. Commercial general liability insurance can protect you against claims for property damages or personal injuries on your property if you face a claim. Consider additional coverage options that deal with specific risk factors or are directly related to your industry, such as cyber liability coverage.

DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

A detailed paper trail when an accident or injury occurs at your business will serve as critical evidence in a claim. Create incident reports anytime an issue arises, giving accurate descriptions of the event and key details of what happened. Include the date, time, location, witnesses involved, contact information, and a thorough explanation of the injuries and accident. Documentation is even stronger when you can add photos related to the accident.

It's up to you to keep everyone who enters your business safe. By remaining diligent on inspections, performing timely maintenance, and documenting any incidents, you can ensure everyone — including yourself — stays protected. Contact Douglass & Runger today to learn more ways to safeguard your business.

Put It in Writing — Not Just a Firm Handshake

Why You Need a Written Partnership Agreement

A handshake deal might feel like a quick, easy, and trustworthy way to seal a business partnership, but when it comes to your company's future, relying on informal agreements can be a risky gamble. While good faith and integrity are essential in any partnership, a lack of clear written terms can leave you vulnerable to misunderstandings, disputes, and potentially costly lawsuits down the road. Whether you're starting a new business or expanding your existing company, it's crucial to have a formal partnership agreement in place to protect your interests. Here's why a handshake deal could cost you big.

UNDEFINED TERMS LEAD TO DISPUTES

No matter how well you get along with your partners, if there is no written agreement to spell out expectations and terms, disputes can quickly escalate, sometimes to lawsuits. The lack of clarity could lead to questions about fair compensation, the process for ending the partnership, who's responsible for what, proper conduct, and ownership rights. A simple agreement, signed by all involved parties, can quickly address these concerns.

NO LEGAL PROTECTION EXISTS

Without formal agreements, you also run a higher risk of legal problems and unclear liability. If something goes wrong, every partner might be held responsible for it, even if the damage was done by one person. One wrong move can bankrupt everyone. Additionally, without any specific parameters or separate legal identities for partners, everyone could be responsible for any debts of the partnership. Even if your partner acted in a manner that goes against what you discussed, if there is no legal, written framework to support that instruction, it does not matter.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Partnership agreements establish work divisions and roles so everyone is clear on what is expected of them and who has the final say on important business decisions. Without this guiding document, it's easy to step on each other's toes or even duplicate work, wasting precious time and resources. Conflicts can arise, and this could cause confusion for your clients since people may have different ideas about how the business should operate.

Ready to protect your business and future? Contact Douglass & Runger today to help create a solid partnership agreement that keeps you covered.



Savory bacon and cheddar make this an easy favorite to whip up on cold nights.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 16 oz fresh gnocchi
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 8 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled, divided
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 2 tbsp chopped chives
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and celery seed and cook until onion is soft and translucent, about 4 minutes.
2. Add broth to the pot and bring to a boil. Add gnocchi and cook for about 3 minutes, then stir in half-and-half and 1/2 of the bacon.
3. Remove from heat and add 3/4 cup cheese, then rest until thickened, about 5 minutes.
4. Top with remaining cheese, chives, and bacon as desired.

INSPIRATION

“Each day of our lives, we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.”

—Charles R. Swindoll

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When Myth Meets Reality

Fairy Tales in Court

In 17th-century Sweden, stories of fairies and other supernatural beings weren't just the stuff of folklore — sometimes, they even showed up in court. Tales of people falling in love with these creatures fascinated communities and blurred the line between myth and reality. These beliefs influenced real-life events, leading to bizarre legal disputes and societal consequences.

HISTORICAL TALES OF FAIRY ROMANCE

Documented examples from Swedish history involve people claiming they had romantic relationships with fairies. According to court records, these claims weren't uncommon during the 1600s, when many believed in supernatural creatures. Cases often involved accusations of kidnapping, enchantment,

and moral corruption, which mirrored the era's deep-seated anxiety about the influence of otherworldly powers.

These stories went beyond the fantastical and were deeply tied to the cultural norms of the time. Accusations often targeted those on the edges of society, reflecting how supernatural elements could support real-world prejudices. While these cases might sound unbelievable today, they show how folklore influenced people's actions and even legal proceedings.

WHY THESE STORIES RESONATE

The allure of fairy romance tales remains strong. Modern literature and media frequently draw inspiration

from such stories while reimagining them to explore contemporary themes and societal issues. Authors like Philip Pullman, for example, have crafted thought-provoking retellings, such as his "Grimm Tales," giving us new ways to look at classic ideas.

The continued interest in fairy folklore highlights its timeless relevance. Stories like those from Sweden 400 years ago — where claims of fairy romance sparked legal disputes — bridge the past and present and remind us how imagination and belief have shaped history.

