

Attorneys - What Are They Good For?

Article by: Michael Russell

Attorneys. They're called shysters, ambulance chasers and a whole of things that we can't print here. Yes, lawyers have a very bad reputation. But where would we be without them? Honestly, we'd be in a lot of trouble when we needed help, real honest help.

Let's take a very specific example of where a lawyer is almost a necessity. Let's for argument sake say we're in the entertainment industry. Let's say we're a song writer. We have this really great tune that we want to get recorded. So what do we do? We go to a song publisher. We submit this song to him, he says he loves it, tells us he's going to get it recorded for us, it gets recorded and then...boom. We get nothing. We didn't sign a contract. He says he has no idea what we're talking about when we say it's our song and basically we've just been screwed out of a few million dollars.

Now, we could have prevented this from happening if we had just gotten an entertainment lawyer beforehand. And yes, it must be an entertainment lawyer because they know all the ins and outs of the business and know just what to put in the contract so we don't get screwed. For example, a typical contract will state how much we get paid for each copy of the song that's sold, for each time it's played on the air and if by some chance the song doesn't get recorded a clause that says after so many months (usually a year) the song rights go back to the composer and he is free to look for another publisher.

Now, in our example we didn't do this. But we still have a recourse. If we kept careful records of when the song was written, recorded and copyrighted, we can get an entertainment lawyer to go to court with us, present the necessary documents and sue the publisher for stealing our song. In either case it is obvious that a lawyer will greatly help our cause, even if the publisher may be calling him an ambulance chaser and some other names.

Another very good example where you want a lawyer around is when you go into a hospital for surgery on your left knee and they end up taking out a kidney. Don't laugh, it happens. So now what? You've gone in for one surgical procedure and you end up having something completely different done to you.

This is where you need a lawyer who specializes in malpractice. He will go through all the steps taken prior to the actual surgery and show how the malpractice occurred. He'll show all the signed forms saying what surgery you've gone in for, showing your consent and everything else needed to bring it to court. Of course in a case like this where one surgery is done instead of another it is pretty open and shut, but there will be cases when the right surgery is done but complications arise due to negligence. This is harder to prove and even more reason why a good attorney is needed.

So in spite of what most people think, lawyers really can be of benefit to us.

It's simply a matter of your perspective.

In our next article some more examples of lawyers that actually do some good.

Michael Russell
Your Independent guide to Attorneys
