

Summer 2022

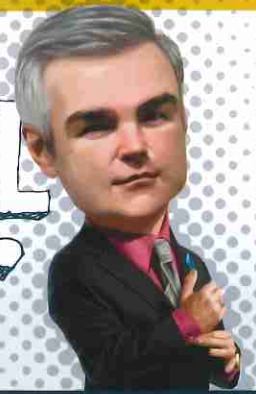
MARC WHITEHEAD & ASSOCIATES
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, LLP
A NATIONAL DISABILITY CLAIMS LAW FIRM

Vol. 8

Issue: 02

THE NEWSLETTER
YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...

\$uccessful Barrister



"MARKETING, MANAGEMENT & LIFE SKILLS THAT PROBABLY WON'T GET YOU DISBARRED"

Too HOT to worry about this issue's price, so no change!!!



Price: \$199.99



Who Doesn't Love A Good MURDER-MYSTERY or CRIME DOCUMENTARY?

That is, unless the mystery is why your firm isn't performing as expected. Maybe you're questioning what happened to those clients you expected to sign last month. How does Google function and who made them the internet God? Why am I not getting more long-term disability referrals from my adoring fan base (you!)?

We attempt to answer these pressing mysteries and much more in this Summer issue of the \$uccessful Barrister. Sit back and enjoy the show. ☺

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MARC WHITEHEAD
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TEXAS BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION
BOARD CERTIFIED - SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY LAW
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It's the biggest unsolved crime of the century.

**Who stole my clients?
The competition?
Were they killed off by
an inside hit job?
Perhaps they left of
their own accord.**

I'm referring to the 1500+ leads that come in every month. Ideally, I would like to know what happened to every single one of them.

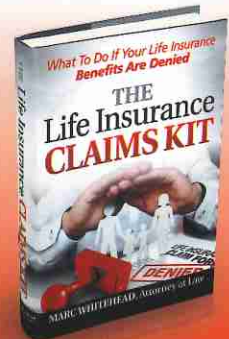
Who stole My Clients?

Let's investigate.

I know what happened to roughly half of them- we talked to them, unfortunately found out they didn't quite meet our criteria, and then referred them to another attorney or provided resources that may be of value to them in winning their disability claim.

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FEATURE BOOK



Call Us For a Free Copy of
Marc's Latest Book!

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I know what happened to another roughly 10-15% of them. We talked to them, found the claim to be something in our strike zone, signed them up and are now hard at work fighting the good fight against the disability insurance companies.

But... what about the rest? What happened to them? And what steps can we take to ensure future leads never go missing again? In general, my missing clients can be classified in one of two ways, each with its own strategy needed to mitigate the loss of a lead.

Killed Off By An Inside Hit Job

A lead comes in typically either by a live phone call or a web internet lead integrated into our CRM, after which a few things can play out. An intake specialist is either not available to take the live call and we take a message. The web lead comes in and we call back and leave a voicemail.

Then... nothing. The lead mysteriously disappears into thin air. We become so inundated and laser focused on chasing the lowest hanging fruit and we don't make another attempt to contact that lead again. Worse, we might make a feeble attempt a week or two later and we ultimately never get in touch with that client. In other words, we killed them off ourselves before they even had a chance to become our client.

A COUPLE THINGS WE'VE DONE TO LOWER THE NUMBER OF LEADS IN THIS CATEGORY:

- Drill and incentivize the intake team to grab live calls. Our phone system is set up to funnel as many first-time callers directly to the lines of our intake

specialists as possible. The more live calls that can be answered and addressed on the spot, the less likelihood they go into our CRM and are never contacted again.

• Life happens and I'm sure many of you are like us and use a third-party call center as a back-up. We've given the call center criteria so if a caller meets the guidelines, they are warm-transferred back to our firm to address that call before it gets filed away. *But ideally, calls should never get to the call center during standard business hours to begin with.*

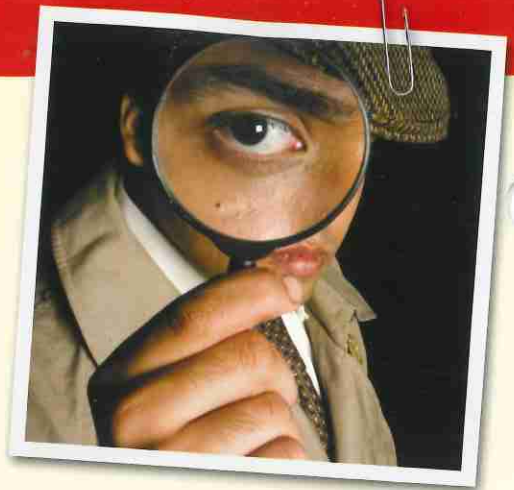
• We used to have intake specialists assign leads to themselves as they came in, and it was incumbent on that individual to manage and work all their leads from start to finish. Now all leads with whom we have not made contact are in one big pool for all our intake specialists to work, which has increased our overall contact rate by 15%.

Stolen By The Competition

A potential client calls. An intake specialist yanks the phone off the hook within half a ring (*win!*). Who is it on the other line?

A doctor. Who was referred to us by one of you, in the hopes of receiving a nice referral check from me.

It's the picture-perfect case, one our intake specialists know is high quality and high priority. Sometimes when the doctor starts asking



questions and throwing up objections, they falter when answering all the questions.

Then after a few weeks, silence. No sign. Presumably the doctor was snatched away by the competition, which would either be another attorney or Doogie Howser, M.D. thinks he can do it on his own.



We don't always have the luxury of the client who got away telling us why they didn't sign with us, but it is important to make sure your intake team is well-trained and confident not only in handling any objections thrown their way, but when to throw out a lifeline to help close the deal.

HERE'S WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE:

- Create a comprehensive list of objections to a specific practice area, along with clear and succinct responses to overcome each objection. This is not a static list, you should always keep an ear out for new objections and update this sheet regularly and that your intake specialists use it.

MURDERING THE LAW



Like any sensible 30-something year old female, I am unabashedly obsessed with true crime. Marc always jokes if his body disappears and cannot be found, it was me... Thus when Natalie

told us the theme was crime I knew my time had come. Here are a few of my favorite murders (*yes I listen to the podcast*), lawyer edition.

1 Georgette Garcia-Kauffmann and Daniel Kauffmann, victims. Both Georgette and Daniel were both lawyers from the Texas Attorney General's Office. On November 14, 2020, Georgette was ambushed and shot in her driveway after coming home. Her husband, Daniel, heard the shots and came outside where he was also shot in the back door of his home. Daniel managed to crawl to a neighbor's house and call 911. Daniel survived the shooting, but Georgette succumbed to her injuries the next day. The suspect, Angel Alvarez, was a driver working for Papa John's Pizza and allegedly targeted the couple because he believed they were part of ritualistic satanic activity that was occurring in Memorial Park and were "conducting abortions by manner of magic." Alvarez stated he wanted to stop all murder of babies... He must be thrilled with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* (*too soon?*).

2 Bruce Reilly, reformed murderer. In 1992, Reilly was picked up as a hitchhiker by a man named Charles Russell. Reilly went back to Mr. Russell's house where, after some smoking and other activities, Reilly began stabbing Mr. Russell in the neck. He eventually beat him with a small statue and killed him. Reilly was charged, convicted and sentenced to 20 years followed by 25 years of probation.

While in prison, Reilly became an effective legal advisor to his fellow inmates. He was paroled in 2005 and eventually found himself at Tulane Law School. His attendance garnered much attention,

causing the law school's dean to issue a statement noting that Tulane's admission process "allowed for the possibility of redemption even in exceptional circumstances of tragedy and hardship."

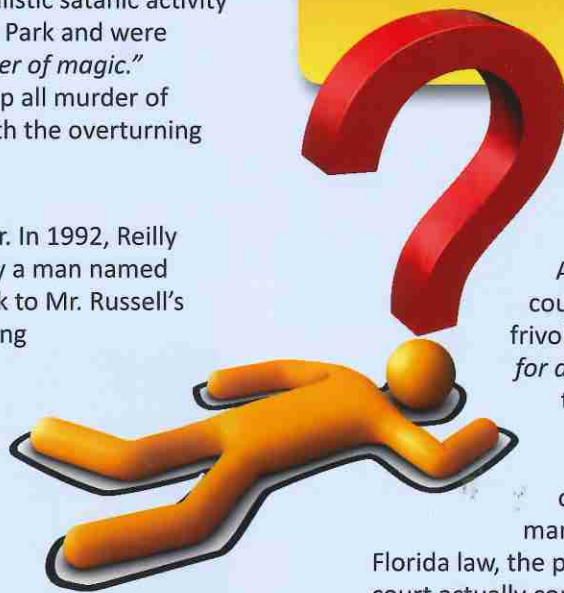
Despite the prestige of a Tulane law degree, because of his criminal record, Reilly's only job offer was as a paralegal at the Capital Appeals Project in New Orleans. Now he works as Deputy Director at VOTE, an organization that advocates for the formerly incarcerated.

3 Last but not least, Ted Bundy, the infamous. Little needs to be said about Bundy. Over a four-year period in the 70s, Bundy abducted and killed at least 30 women, and that's what's been confirmed.

What's not commonly known was that Bundy was an aspiring lawyer during his reign of terror. He started by attending the University of Puget Sound's law school in 1973. In August 1974, Bundy had dropped out of UPS Law School but had secured a second acceptance at the University of Utah Law School in Salt Lake City. However, Bundy was quoted as saying the first-year law curriculum was incomprehensible which was "a great disappointment" to him.

"There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

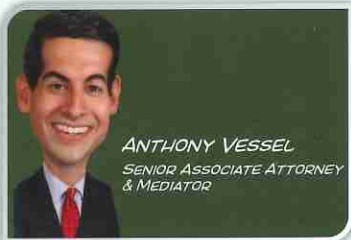
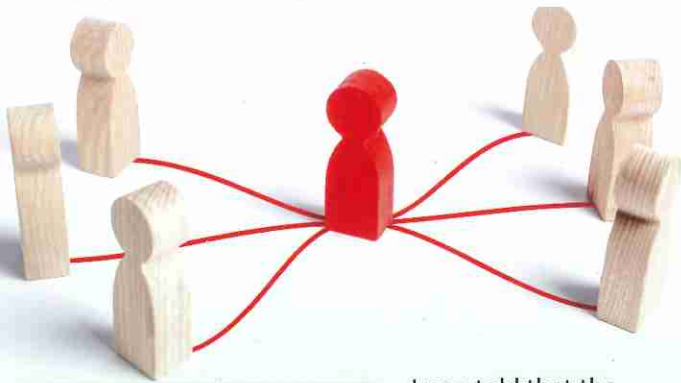
– Unknown



However, despite his dismal performance in law school, Bundy insisted on handling much of his own defense. According to sources close to the court cases, Bundy filed many frivolous motions, including a "motion for a change of menu" because he was tired of grilled cheese sandwiches. At one point during his trials, Bundy actually stood up in open court and asked his girlfriend to marry him. Because of an obscure Florida law, the proposal and acceptance in open court actually constituted a legal marriage. You don't have to like the man, but you do have to give him points for creativity.

Catch my next episode of *Murdering the Law*. Coming to a *Successful Barrister* article near you. Cheers, Nerds. ☺

“IT TRULY IS A CRIME THAT MORE CASES DON'T EXPLORE MEDIATION: THE BENEFITS OF ADR”



I was told that the theme for this edition of the Barrister was “*true crime*.” Because I don’t like nightmares or hearing about human dismemberment before I go to sleep like Madison does, I generally watch

sports or comedies when I unwind in the evenings. So, over the last few days as I pondered this theme, I kept coming up blank.

Last week I got a great settlement for a client in mediation. We did so well the Defendant’s attorney emailed me after to congratulate us on our settlement of a hard-fought case. So, I thought to myself, “*you know, it truly is a crime that more cases don’t explore mediation...*” After that thought a light bulb went off, and I found my topic and began to write this article.

As most of you know, mediations can be a great tool in a case to get the parties to see the upsides of settlement. Here are some of the reasons you should consider mediation!

Mediations Get Your Attention & Focus!

As attorneys, how often do we get the chance to set down everything and just focus on one case for a full morning, afternoon, much less a whole day?

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How about having direct access to the other side and knowing they are also focusing on your case? With mediation, it’s essentially required. It’s very gratifying to focus on one case and get it knocked out all in the same day.

Mediations Are Great For Unreasonable Opposing Parties Or Difficult Clients!

Have a shortsighted jerk for a client? How about a butthead opposing attorney? Mediation is a great way to add another adult to the room to make sure all the kids play nice. Having a neutral voice of reason can do wonders for getting that case across the goal line.

Mediations Are Generally A Flexible Process!

Do you need a full day or half day? Do you need virtual or in-person? Should you start in a general session or immediately go to caucus? At mediation you have all these options available to you to tailor the session to your needs.

Mediations Save You Time And Money!

Mediations generally are not that expensive, especially given the amount of time and money you and your client save if your case gets resolved that day. Also, it’s been my experience as an advocate that the settlement dollars added by the process covers the cost of mediation several times over.

So, I’ll say it again, it truly is a crime more cases don’t at least explore mediation as an option. If you would like to book a great mediator who can meet your ADR needs, look no further. I am that great (*and humble*) mediator. **Call our number (713-228-8888) and ask for Kimberly Warren to schedule your mediation with me today!** ☺

“Nothing matters but the facts. Without them, the science of criminal investigation is nothing more than a guessing game.”

– Blake Edwards

Cracking the Code:

Solving the Greatest Business Mystery of All Time



I am here to talk about the greatest mystery of all time.

What Happened to Malaysian Airlines Flight 370?
What Happened to the Roanoke Colony?
Why is Marc Obsessed With His Barrister Persona?

No, this is the mystery that keeps many of you up at night. How to rank on page one of Google for all your most profitable keywords.

If Google is still around in 15 years when my children go to college, I will beg them to pursue a career in anything other than marketing or advertising. Google is such a stressful aspect of my career and I have seen some painful repercussions as the result of an algorithm update gone wrong. Google can also be incredibly rewarding and I love seeing the companies I've marketed enjoy big ranking successes and the money windfall as a result.

As I am sure most of you are aware, there is no manual that tells you exactly what to do to your website. BUT Google certainly dangles clues out there that helps people and businesses crack the code and maybe even get lucky enough to land a featured snippet for a hot keyword. You just need to be a good detective (*or hire a good detective*) to figure it out and stay on top of the game.

I'm here to tell you, scream at you, the creed I live by.

"Create good content that is helpful and engaging and present it in a way that yields a positive user experience for your prospective client."

The rest usually will fall into place and you probably need a trustworthy, ethical SEO vendor to help you get the rest of the way there.

That's it. That's literally it. You don't need to write 5-6 pages saying basically the same thing for the same

relative keyword or use invisible text. You don't need to pay a freelancer sitting halfway around the world to dig up 1500 backlinks to terrible sites. You don't need to create a form that is 20 questions deep to pre-qualify your prospective client.

Focus on quality over quantity. Create solid pages of content that answers the questions your clients are asking online. I like FAQs or "Top 5" style pages and those tend to be our best ranking (*and converted*) pages. We might not have as many backlinks as some of our competitors, but we have some quality backlinks that I am proud to say link to our site.

Make it as easy as possible for your client to call you or pass their information along for an intake specialist to return their inquiry. A human qualifier is much better than relying on a form gatekeeper.

And last but not least, the Google game is a long-term relationship. If any vendor promises to get you ranked on page 1 for all the things in a week, run away as fast as you can. I say 90 days is a good rule of thumb to evaluate the implementation of

any SEO tactic on your website. *Kind of sucks because 90 days is also a long time if a vendor is doing bad things to your site, but that's an article for a different day.*

I have oversimplified the keys to winning Google, but it's a good place to start. In a nutshell, don't do shady stuff to land on Google's hit list. ☺



Stronger. Better. Faster.



the suggestions. The team members want to be stronger, i.e. they want to know more about the substance of VA practice. They want to be proactive about communicating with Veterans, not just reacting to messages. Lastly, they want to see the process move faster.



SELINA VALDEZ
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

This is my theme for the year. I want to write stronger appeals. I want to do better expert cross. I want to produce faster turnaround times. I

shouldn't have asked Marc how I could do this because he made me read a book...

For those of you who don't know, Marc makes us read a book every quarter. Love it or hate it, I know there's a purpose or a lesson to be learned so I oblige. Q1 this year he had us read the 4 Disciplines of Execution (*aka 4DX*).

The 4 disciplines are:

- 1) **Focus on the Wildly Important**
- 2) **Act on the Lead Measures**
- 3) **Keep a Compelling Scoreboard**
- 4) **Create a Cadence of Accountability**

As soon as I finished the book, I knew where Marc was going with this... it was time to focus in on how we do what we do. Sure enough, Marc asked us to present on how we would apply these disciplines to our teams. Yes! Finally, we can spend some time focusing on operations.

SIDE NOTE: My background is in logistics, so I love the operations side of a business and getting into nuts & bolts of procedures. Need a procedure manual? I'm your girl!

The first discipline in the book became the word for the quarter. What could we FOCUS in on and improve? When exploring what we should FOCUS on, I sought input from the team. There was some touchy-feely suggestions (*I don't do feelings*) and the typical borderline unreasonable ideas, but there was a common underlying theme among

Stronger. Better. Faster.

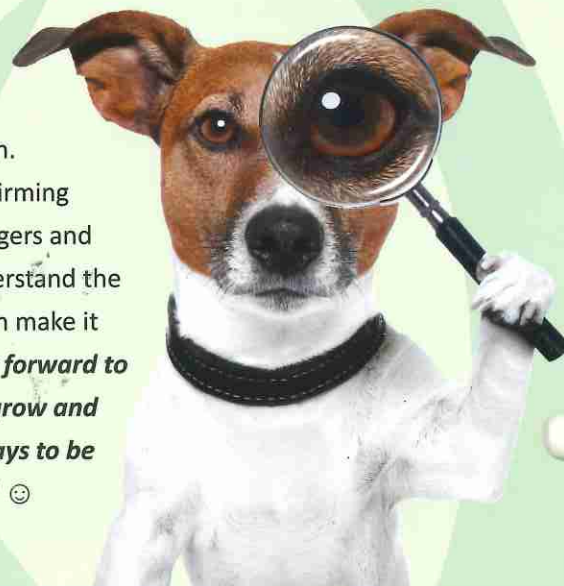
I started with observation. When was the last time you consciously observed how your team does their job? Has it been a while? Chances are there's something you can improve. I blocked off an hour and spent it sitting with some of our Case Managers and Paralegals, just observing how they perform their job functions. It was enough time to recognize what we were going to improve.

The book talks about focusing in on something we can actually improve (*I'll spare you the lecture on leading vs. lagging measures*). For the Case Managers and Paralegals on this team, we decided to focus in and formulate how and when to communicate status updates to our Veterans. Managing expectations can go a long way...

We are fortunate to be a tech heavy firm, so we are creating new habits of utilizing this new technology to communicate with our Clients. We have developed the procedures for how and when to give an update and trained the staff on these guidelines. Sounds simple, right? Training is about repetition and consistency.

Q2 will be my testing phase prior to formal implementation.

It involves confirming the Case Managers and Paralegals understand the process and can make it habitual. ***I look forward to helping them grow and we discover ways to be more efficient!*** 😊



Who stole My Clients?

Continued from page 2

Competitive intel is key. Sometimes competition will undercut on fees, but there are other adaptations you can make to maintain competitive advantage in the playing field. You might consider adding ancillary services or signing cases on the spot without supporting documentation you may have required in the past.

Lifeline. It should be you or another attorney in the firm. An attorney should always be available as a closer to help get the agreement signed and in the door.

Of course, none of this is worth anything unless you have a good software system in place to give you accurate reporting on the stats, numbers and individual intake specialist performance. My lead investigator, also known as my new intake manager Erika, provides me daily updates on the cold cases she is chasing and cracks the whip in intake to ensure our clients are not killed or missing.

Once you solve these two mysteries, your life will be a lot less stressful and much more profitable. Now go find those clients. 😊

True Crime Documentary Starter Pack

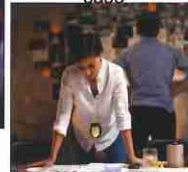
Small American Town Seemingly Perfect Family



Cheating Spouse Grainy 911 Audio



Local Detective promises family they'll solve the case



"I discovered what most people call creepy, scary and spooky, I call comfy, cozy and home."

– Zak Bagans

When your husband talks to you about increasing the amount of your life insurance policy

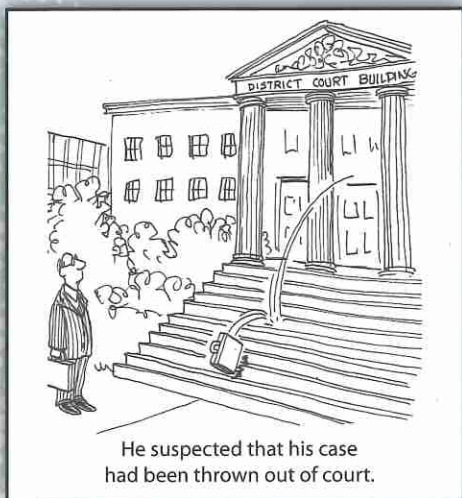


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Lawyers Need a Laugh

Pretty much everyone here at Marc Whitehead and Associates loves them a good unsolved mystery or crime.

Match the team member with their favorite unsolved mystery or crime and send a photo to Marc@marcwhitehead.com to a chance to win an Amazon Echo clock.



MARC



Jon Benet Ramsey

ANTHONY



Malaysian Airlines flight 370

NATALIE



Where's Waldo

MADISON



DB Cooper

SELINA



What is Area 51?

DISABILITY & INSURANCE DENIALS



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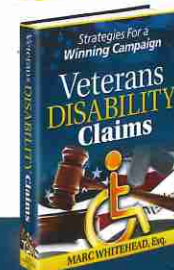
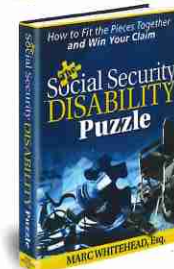
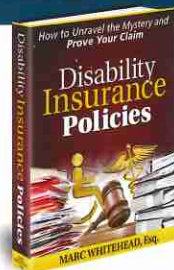
Veterans Disability Claims

Regional Office Hearings • Board of Veterans' Appeals Hearings • U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Appeals

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