# SOKOLOVE/CO-COUNSEL

### 2017 Significant Verdicts & Settlements

SETTLEMENT	CASE TYPE	CO-COUNSEL FIRM
\$115,000,000	Mesothelioma and other Asbestos-related Diseases	Simmons Hanly Conroy, Alton, IL and other Co-counsel Firms
\$22,000,000	Various Medical Devices	Multiple Co-counsel Firms
\$8,000,000	Various Pharmaceutical Products	Multiple Co-counsel Firms
\$7,000,000	Cerebral Palsy	Jeffrey M. Goldberg & Associates, Chicago, IL
\$4,450,000	Cerebral Palsy	The Talaska Law Firm, PLLC, Houston, TX
\$3,000,000	Automobile Defect	Peter M. Iascone & Associates, Newport, RI
\$2,800,000	Medical Malpractice	Duffy & Duffy, Esqs., Uniondale, NY
\$1,900,000	Cerebral Palsy	Nurenberg Paris Heller & McCarthy, Cleveland, OH
\$1,700,000	Birth Injury	Nurenberg Paris Heller & McCarthy, Cleveland, OH
\$800,000	Erb's Palsy	Duffy & Duffy, Esqs., Uniondale, NY
\$750,000	Automobile Accident	Sweeney Merrigan Law, Boston, MA
\$700,000	Nursing Home	Lanzone Morgan, Long Beach, CA
\$558,000	Stockbroker Fraud	Oakes & Fosher, St. Louis, MO
\$450,000	Nursing Home	Slater & Zurz, Akron, OH
\$375,000	Stockbroker Fraud	Oakes & Fosher, St. Louis, MO
\$300,000	Nursing Home	Shuttlesworth Law Firm, Birmingham, AL
\$250,000	Automobile Accident	Mahaney & Pappas, Framingham, MA
\$180,000	Slip & Fall	Sweeney Merrigan Law, Boston, MA

# Under Investigation

Sokolove Law is currently investigating potential litigation and case generation opportunities for injuries or losses arising from the following:

### Actemra®

We continue to investigate a recent report linking the rheumatoid arthritis drug Actemra® (tocilizumab) to serious adverse events not included in the warning label, including heart failure and pancreatitis, as well as heart attack, stroke and interstitial lung disease.

#### Dicamba:

Currently evaluating complaints by farmers who allege that the off-target movement of the drift-prone agricultural herbicide dicamba caused significant damage to soybean and other crops.

Actemra<sup>®</sup> is a registered trademark of Chugai Seiyaku Kabushiki Kaisha Corp., a member of the Roche Group.

### Take Advantage of Us

... Or more specifically, our vast network of co-counsel firms. If you have a case that you need to refer out and don't know where to turn, contact Sokolove Law for your onestop shopping. We work with over 400 firms nationwide, and chances are, we can put you in touch with the right firm to help out with your case. Whether it's a pharmaceutical, defective device, or mesothelioma case, we have relationships with the top litigation firms in the country to ensure that your client gets the best representation.

Call us at 1-800-305-4009.

# SOKOLOVE SUCCESS

SOKOLOVE MEANS SUCCESS. Volume 25, Fall 2017

# Fake Lawyers Seriously Impacting Consumers and the Legal Profession

ot Law, Inc. recently released a white paper detailing the serious risks posed by fake lawyers' abuse of the Internet. The paper entitled "Fake Lawyer Websites on the Rise: Consumers and Legal Profession at Risk" addresses how fake law firms, while not a new phenomenon, are becoming increasingly pervasive, exploiting both a vulnerable public and the identities of practicing lawyers.

Fake lawyers exploit consumers' dependence on the Internet for finding legal services by creating fake law firm websites offering fraudulent services and going as far as stealing the identities of practicing lawyers and falsifying credentials. At risk are some of the most vulnerable populations as well as the integrity of the legal profession itself. Legitimate legal professionals can fall victim to identity theft as well as experience serious damage to their reputations, and the profession further suffers from unwarranted distrust resulting from the actions of fake lawyers.

The white paper describes how website scams, which impact a variety of legal practice areas, employ tactics not just limited to identity theft but also brand hijacking of legitimate lawyers and firms. Civil and legal issues regarding immigration and the public funding of legal services raise timely questions as to whether some of the most vulnerable seekers of legal services, who increasingly go online to find affordable legal assistance, are at heightened and especially damaging risk of falling prey to fake lawyers.

Dot Law, Inc. examines the global prevalence of fake lawyer websites citing examples from the UK, Australia, and FBI investigations. From offering phony foreclosure assistance, to handling confidential immigration issues, to fake bankruptcy filings, and fraudulent activities in many other affected legal

practice areas, scammers target their victims through sophisticated means. Professional-looking and cloned websites easily mask nefarious intent making fake lawyer websites particularly insidious. The paper further details how legal professionals are unknowingly robbed of their identities, practice names, earnings, and established reputations through a serious loophole in our online practices: Lack of regulated domain names.



The white paper highlights that a key factor in mitigating these risks is to move towards regulated domain names for the legal profession. Similar to nexus requirements for .gov, .edu, and .mil, a .law domain name is available only to qualified lawyers or legal institutions thereby ensuring protection for the legal industry and increased confidence for legal consumers. The paper cites that 46% of fake firm websites involve identity theft stemming from cloned websites and suggests that moving legal websites to a restricted and verified domain name could be an effective way to protect the legal profession and the people it serves. Lou Andreozzi, CEO of Dot Law, Inc. believes that a restricted verified domain available exclusively to lawyers protects

Strict eligibility requirements make cloning a .law website virtually impossible providing added assurance to the legal professional telling the site visitor that the website belongs to a properly accredited legal practitioner or institution. While fraud can affect any industry, the legal profession in particular should have the ability to safeguard against it. As the paper points out, a .law domain name is an important step in this direction.

For more information about fake lawyer websites download the white paper from <a href="http://nic.law">http://nic.law</a>

#### About .law

.law is the restricted top-level domain (TLD) dedicated to the legal profession.
.law promotes trust in the professional legal community by empowering lawyers, bar associations and other qualified legal institutions to demonstrate their credentials by virtue of using their verified .law domain name. Only qualified lawyers and legal institutions are eligible to secure a .law domain name. The .law TLD is wholly owned by MMX. For more information about .law please visit http://nic.law For more information about MMX please visit http://mmx.co

Sokolove Law has negotiated an attractive benefit on valuable .law domain names. For a limited time, Sokolove Law co-counsel in good standing will enjoy a \$25 discount on the purchase of a new .law domain. Only qualified lawyers and legal institutions are eligible to secure a .law name. Please visit www.join.law for more information and to register your .law domain – please use code 25DSL to receive the discount.

**SOKOLOVE LAW** 





### **Co-counsel SPOTlight**

Mallard & Sharp, PA, Miami, FL

After several years at other law firms honing their legal expertise and obtaining many successful outcomes on behalf of their clients, Vidian Mallard and Richard "Bo" Sharp joined forces in 2011 to form Mallard & Sharp, PA. Despite tort reform that has made medical malpractice and nursing home cases in Florida very challenging, the duo has managed to build a very successful practice that has been awarded more than \$50 million in verdicts and settlements on behalf of its clients in just six short years.

Mallard & Sharp is a lean, mean fighting machine. With two lawyers and 4 support staff, they do not shy away from big cases. Earlier this year they went up against the federal government, and won. In its greatest victory to date, the firm secured a record \$33.3 million verdict against the federal government on behalf of a young

mother whose child suffered severe brain damage at the hands of a negligent doctor at a federally funded health clinic. In addition to this result, the firm has had many six and seven-figure recoveries in medical malpractice, nursing home abuse and neglect, and other personal injury cases.

"As I've always said, our goal at Sokolove Law is to partner with the best lawyers in their respective practice area, and Bo and Vidian are shining examples of just that. We are honored to work with them and their staff. We have had a lot of great success together and we look forward to more of the same in the future," says Sokolove Law CEO Mike Skoler.

Mallard & Sharp began working with Sokolove Law in May 2011 when it joined its national nursing home program. Since that time, the firm has recovered nearly



RICHARD "BO" SHARP, Partner

\$6 million in settlements from cases generated through the program for victims of nursing home abuse and neglect in Florida.

# Campaign Highlight Hernia Mesh

In May 2016, Ethicon, a division of Johnson & Johnson, voluntarily withdrew its Physiomesh<sup>TM</sup> Flexible Composite Mesh from the global market. The withdrawal was initiated after two studies revealed higher rates of hernias reopening and the need for additional surgeries with the Ethicon mesh compared to other similar hernia meshes.

In April 2017, Sokolove Law launched a national campaign targeting consumers implanted with these and other hernia mesh devices who later needed revision surgery/surgeries to repair or remove the mesh. According to the National Institute of Health, approximately 700,000 hernia

repairs are carried out in the U.S. every year — meaning the pool of potential claimants is sizeable. With that said, all media channels were deployed for maximum coverage. While we've seen efficiencies across the board, TV remains the top volume driver, bringing in 70% of the qualified leads.

In just 6 months, the campaign has generated over 20,000 responses, 7,000 qualified leads and 4,000 signed cases. With continued efforts, and approximately 400 cases remaining in the pending inventory, these numbers will increase considerably.



If the current climate is any indication of what is to come for Ethicon, many more hernia mesh lawsuits will be filed in the near future. With no signs of slowing down, now is a great time to join the campaign. Call us today at 800-305-4009 to learn more.

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### **Meet Ricky LeBlanc**

Managing Attorney of Sokolove Law

# Q: What is your primary role as Managing Attorney?

A: As Managing Attorney, I wear many hats. My primary role is to limit our risk, and in turn our co-counsel firms' risk. I have been on our risk committee for over a decade. In my past four years as Managing Attorney, I have implemented a comprehensive series of checks and balances to ensure we identify any potential issues as soon as possible. We pay close attention to anniversary dates, track the delivery of every prospective case, and quickly escalate any client concerns. The latter rarely happens, which is a testament to our staff and the staff of our co-counsel. In addition to overseeing client and case risk, I avoid any risk with the various state bars by ensuring that Sokolove Law operates in compliance with state and federal rules for legal advertising. That means complying with 50+ sets of attorney advertising rules, plus F.C.C. and other federal regulations.



A: The best way for Sokolove to manage our risk profile is to assist our co-counsel firms in managing their own risk. We do this by staying in frequent communication and asking for updates or every mutual case. I realize our requests may duplicate your own efforts, but we also know you don't want any potential clients to slip through the cracks. If we receive regular status updates on our mutual cases, it will ensure that nothing is lost, and that our clients are satisfied.

### Q:What is the most important thing law firms can do to better mitigate risk?

**A:** Stay organized! Establish a process, and ensure it is followed. One missed date or lost lead can have serious repercussions. Not to mention the toll



RICKY LEBLANC, Managing Attorney

on time and resources that it takes to resolve a risk issue. The best way to prevent an issue is by keeping close and constant focus on every prospect and case. Staying organized is hard, particularly if our Marketing team is doing its job of providing lots of highquality prospects (at a low cost, of course). While your team spends time and resources following up on prospects and getting results for clients, we provide a second set of eyes by requesting updates on specific client matters to help ensure they have not been missed. We have spent significant time and money putting technology and procedures in place to track the more than 35,000 referrals we make every year. We want to help you stay organized so that you can focus on case work.

# Q:What is the biggest risk issue facing law firms today?

**A:** The biggest issue isn't anything new. Monitoring the statutes of limitation on all clients remains at the top as always. The concern in the Mass Tort arena is that if you miss the statute on one case, you may be missing it on thousands of cases. That is why our team is so vigilant in assuring that all of our cases are accounted for.

## Q: In your personal life, what's the riskiest thing you've ever done?

A: That's funny. I don't really take any meaningful risks; maybe that's why I am in this role. I didn't think it was a risk at the time, but perhaps playing football in college was my biggest risk — physically anyway. To paraphrase a line from Rudy, "I was five foot nothin', a hundred and nothin', with no business being out there," but managed not to have any lasting injuries from it. Although, my team may feel otherwise... \$\$

# Co-counsel **Opportunities**

#### **Need More Cases?**

If you've identified a case you'd like to pursue, and want a leadership role in its litigation, numbers matter. Over the past year, we launched numerous campaigns for Hernia Mesh, Attune Knee, Stockert, Xarelto, and IVC Filters, to name a few, and signed thousands of cases for our co-counsel firms. When quantity and quality matter, call us. We will customize a multi-channel campaign to get the most for your marketing investment – we'll market, qualify, and sign your cases while you're free to concentrate on the litigation.

### Have an Idea?

Sokolove Law welcomes new ideas from co-counsel firms to develop and test-market. If you've had success with a particular case type or practice area and believe that your success is scalable, let us know. If you recognize a potential opportunity and believe there is a repeatable fact pattern, call us. We'll evaluate the viability of a potential campaign, and if we determine it could be effective, develop a multi-channel marketing plan ready to execute.



1-800-305-4009