

## HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

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## I SURVIVED MY PROPOSAL

## The Biking Disaster and Its Happy Ending

Last August, I proposed to my fiancée, Sammy, and she said yes! It was one of the best moments of my life — but I almost didn't survive the trip home to tell the tale.

Our big day was full of hiccups from start to finish. I decided to pop the question at a meaningful spot close to home: White Rock Lake, a private and beautiful place just a bike ride away from my house. I picked a summer weekend with nice weather and invited Sammy over for a ride and romantic lakeside picnic. Perfect right? Well, disaster struck before we even left the house.

That morning, we packed our sandwiches, and I double-checked that the ring was securely in my bag. Then, we headed to the garage to put our shoes on — and one of my 15-year-old, clip-in road bike shoes came apart in my hands.

My hands immediately started to sweat. This couldn't be happening! Sammy caught sight of the disaster and said, "It's no big deal, we'll do something else today." Panic set in. "No, no, we have to do this," I told her. "I'll make it work!"



When we set off a few minutes later, I was wearing one road bike shoe and one shoe stolen from my Peloton. I didn't care how ridiculous it looked — we were on our way! Then, halfway there, we rounded a corner to see a "Trail Closed" sign up ahead.

My stomach started to somersault. We followed the alternate route through a neighborhood, getting hotter and sweatier every minute. Would we even make it to White Rock Lake? I had no idea, but after an extra mile of cycling the detour took us back to the trail. We made it past a tricky spot where Sammy had flipped over her handlebars on a past ride, and I finally breathed a sigh of relief. We were going to make it!

The proposal itself was perfect. I asked Sammy right after we spread out our picnic blanket, and we spent the next hour or so munching our sandwiches and sharing the good news with friends and family on FaceTime. Eventually, though, we had to head home. I felt like I was pedaling on air! Sammy and I chatted and laughed the whole way, and I even poked fun at her as we passed the tricky spot on the trail.

It turns out that was a big, big mistake.

Danger caught up with me a few seconds later. I lost control of my bike, veered off the sidewalk, and flew head-over-heels through the air. Pain shot through my hand, legs, and shoulders as I skidded across the concrete, and I felt my remaining road

*"My hands immediately started to sweat. This couldn't be happening!"*

bike shoe snap. Somehow, I managed to untangle myself from my bike and climb back on in a daze. I rode the rest of the way home with a broken thumb, a useless shoe, and a bad case of road rash!

The crash was awful, but it was worth it. Sammy and I got our perfect proposal moment, and now I get to marry my favorite person in the world. Sammy and I have technically known each other since we were babies (our parents are old friends), but it took us 32 years to get together. The odds were stacked against us: First, we were young, then we were dating other people. When I finally asked her out, she was even two-and-a-half hours late to our first date! But she brought string lights for my patio as a housewarming gift, and as the saying goes, that was all she wrote.

This New Year's, Sammy and I were scheduled to go to St. Lucia, but we got caught up in all the flight cancelations. Instead, we enjoyed a nice staycation with family and chatted about our wedding. I can't wait to see where life takes us next!

*-Russell Button*

# MEET MARCOS — THE MAN WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS

BRINGING CHEER TO KIDS AT A GUATEMALAN ORPHANAGE

Last May, a little girl hugged Marcos Ritter and changed his life forever. Her name was Gaby, and she was one of over 50 orphaned children living at Misioneros del Camino, an orphanage in Sumpango, Guatemala.

Ritter was born in Guatemala but lives in the U.S. He heard about the orphanage five years ago and immediately started donating, but it didn't take over his heart until he visited in person.



When Ritter arrived in Sumpango hoping to build a connection with the kids, the staff told him, "You don't have to pick a child; a child will pick you." That's exactly what happened!

"I've never been very good with special needs children, but this little girl, Gaby, who

is autistic, beelined straight to me," Ritter remembers. "She hugged me and called me 'tio Marcos,' which means Uncle Marcos. From that point on I knew I had to do whatever I could to help this small orphanage!"

Ritter flew home to Miami and started fundraising like crazy. He found volunteers, sourced donations, and reached out to community partners for help — including our team at BLF.

Ritter is Ashley's uncle, so we immediately joined the cause. We bought school supplies, socks, gloves, combs, and hats. Then, in December, Ritter flew back to Guatemala to deliver the gifts! For many kids, it was their first time opening their own Christmas presents.

"Not only were we able to give them presents, we had a Christmas dinner, we had fireworks, and there was enough money left over that we were able to provide them with a New Year's celebration!" Ritter says.

Now, Ritter is on a mission to buy the orphans shoes, improve their educational programs, and create job training opportunities for them. He calls himself "the spark" of change.

"I believe that one person with their voice can move mountains," he says. "I was the one that asked, and that is all you have to do. ... One dollar makes a difference. One pencil makes a difference. And if we all donate a dollar, donate a pencil, and give our voices to a cause, we can make a difference."

To use *your* voice to support Misioneros del Camino, email Marcos at [Marcos@parawoodamerica.com](mailto:Marcos@parawoodamerica.com) or call **954-931-5342**.

## 5 SUCCESSFUL YEARS WITH BLF

### Rosie Celebrates a Landmark Workiversary

We often call our litigation paralegal, Rosie Melendez, the "rock" of our team. Rosie is the hardest worker we know! She's reliable, smart, and cares deeply about her team members and our clients. We're lucky to have her, and as of this month, we've officially been saying that for *five whole years*.

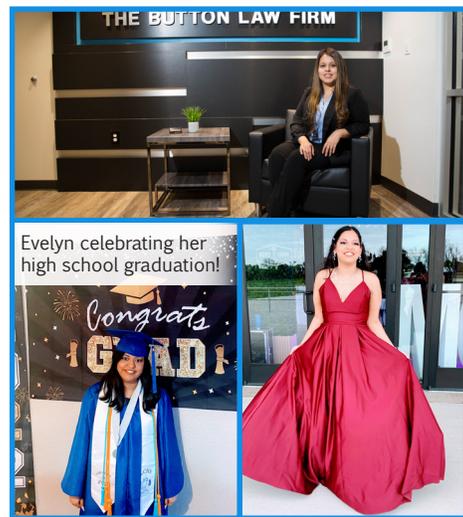
2022 was a big year for Rosie, both personally and professionally. When we asked about the milestones in her life, the first one she mentioned was her daughter Evelyn's high school graduation.

To celebrate Evelyn's graduation, Rosie and Orlando took her to Isla Mujeres in Mexico for a relaxing beach vacation. Now, Evelyn is taking core classes at Eastfield College. She plans to transfer to the University of North Texas to study mass communications this fall.

Another highlight of Rosie's year was taking a family trip to a small town in Guanajuato, Mexico. Her parents grew up there, and she used to visit every summer as a kid, but she hadn't been back for 15 years! Rosie and Orlando enjoyed the visit so much that they returned this January.

"I have some old friends who still live there, so it was really good to see them. We're grown and have children now — it's crazy how things change!"

On a professional note, the highlight of Rosie's fifth year with BLF was watching the firm grow.



"We had some amazing additions to the team in 2022, like paralegal Rena Piper, operations assistant James Cook, and operations manager Elizabeth Bauman. It's been really good to see the growth of our team. I feel like we have the perfect team here! I've learned so much from our new people, just like I have from Ashley and Russell," she says.

We can't wait to see what Rosie's sixth BLF year brings!



# YOUR REFERRALS HELP BLF THRIVE!

## Just Check Out Our Google Reviews!

Last year, my team and I set an ambitious goal: to earn more than 100 Google reviews for our Dallas office by the end of 2022. At first, I wasn't sure whether we could do it, but our community came through! You absolutely showered us with ratings. As I write this, we're sitting at more than 100 Google reviews — and we have a 5-star average! I'm so, so proud of that achievement, and it's all thanks to you.

Every business relies on word-of-mouth referrals, recommendations, and reviews to stay open. You support your favorite restaurant by telling a friend about their awesome food, and keep your hairstylist in business by talking her up to your family.

Lawyers like me are no different! When I started BLF, recommendations and referrals kept us alive. Now, they keep us thriving.

It's a huge honor when you send a friend, family member, client, or coworker our way. Whether we can help them with a catastrophic injury, daycare abuse and neglect, or wrongful death case or need to connect them with another attorney, we'll do everything we can to solve their problem. You put your reputation on the line every time you recommend us, so we want to do you proud.

In 2023, our team hopes to pass 200 Google reviews and help more people than ever before. If you have a friend, family member, or colleague who needs legal representation, please send them our way! There are two easy ways to connect those folks with our team.

1. **Send your BLF contact an email explaining your friend's situation, and CC them on the message.** This is the quickest, easiest way to put us in touch! From there, we can schedule a time to meet with them, learn more about their problem, and solve it.
2. **Give your friend our firm's contact information, including our phone number, website, and address (you can find all of those things in this newsletter) so they can reach out.** If you go this route, remind them to tell us you sent them our way. We'd love to show our appreciation.

Thanks again for everything you have done and continue to do for our firm. BLF wouldn't exist without you!

*-Russell Button*

# BLF HIGHLIGHT REEL



## CLIENT REVIEW

*"I'm a UPS driver who routinely visits the Bluffview office. I'm always treated with kindness and respect from James, Elizabeth and all the staff. I have recently needed legal representation and the Button Law Firm was the first firm that I thought of. Russell met with me personally and after hearing my situation he quickly laid out my options ... He took action on my behalf immediately and only put my best interests in play. The Button Law Firm is doing all this for me when I will technically not even be represented by them. I want to sincerely thank Russell, James, Elizabeth, and all of the staff everything that they have done to help me with my legal matter. I cannot fully put into words how grateful I am for all of you."*

*-Adam S.*

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## JUSTICE IS SERVED! How We Helped a Child Hurt at Daycare

Imagine that you've just moved into a new house. There's a giant stack of boxes in the living room waiting to be unpacked — and tempting your small child with a climbing adventure. While your back is turned, your toddler scrambles up the stack. They're king of the hill! It's one of the best moments of their week. Then, their foot catches on a cardboard flap, and they crash to the carpet below.

After you've soothed their hurt feelings, what would you do next? Would you tend to their injuries and firmly warn them not to climb the box tower again? Would you then unpack the boxes, so they aren't in danger? Or would you sit back and do nothing, practically begging for another accident?

Every responsible parent would take action to make sure their child is safe from danger. Unfortunately, a daycare center in Houston failed to take any of

those precautions in a similar situation — and it almost cost a little girl her eye!

The daycare center placed a stack of cots in one of its rooms, dangerously close to a metal decoration. Children loved climbing on the teetering tower. Even after one child got in trouble, the daycare center didn't change the arrangement of the cots. Then, a second little girl fell.

She wasn't as lucky as the first child. The fall left her traumatized, with a bad head injury that required stitches and left a permanent scar. Her face will never look the same again!

Here at BLF, we work hard to hold neglectful daycare centers accountable — including this one. When the little girl's parents reached out to us for help, we took her case and pressed the daycare to make things right. Eventually, they agreed to pay a settlement amount



to cover her past and future medical bills and compensate her for her trauma.

No daycare should get away with neglect or abuse like this. If someone you know has a kid who has been mistreated while in child care, please send them to BLF for help. Our team will do everything we can to secure justice for their child.