

THE BUTTON LAW FIRM

HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

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A LONG-AWAITED SUCCESS

We Helped a Texas Family Find Closure After Murder

In January 2017, two men in a white van sped into an apartment complex parking lot. Under the cover of darkness, one of them leaped from the vehicle and sprinted toward the complex's dumpsters. He raised a gun — and in an instant, he destroyed an entire family.

Thinking about that moment still brings a lump to my throat. I wasn't there, but I can picture it perfectly. That night, a man named Francisco was murdered while taking out his family's trash, and his death kicked off an intense legal case that Ashley and I worked on for six years.

Francisco was a husband and father of two. His wife, Ana, and his daughters, Genesis and Sarah*, became BLF's clients just days after Ashley and I met. We tackled their case together — and oh man, was it a tough one.

Some days, helping Ana, Genesis, and Sarah get the justice they deserved felt like pushing a rock up a mountain only to watch it tumble right back down. We wanted to prove that their apartment complex was responsible for Francisco's death because it failed to provide adequate security, including cameras, lighting, and working gates to keep out danger. But we ran into all kinds of roadblocks.

First, Hurricane Harvey shut down the courthouses in Houston, blocking us from getting public records and scheduling hearings. Then, just as we started gaining

traction, COVID-19 put the legal process on hold. There was just one upside to the delays: Ana, Genesis, and Sarah became more than just clients to me and Ashley. We consider them our family.

Over the years, we spent hundreds of hours together. We visited their apartment, sat on their couch and listened to their stories about Francisco. We shared meals together, and Ana played Francisco's favorite song for us from the big speaker in the corner of her living room. Ana and the girls even told us about their former home in Honduras and showed us an art piece they made there: the girls' tiny handprints etched in wood.

In exchange, we helped them in their personal lives. We connected Genesis with tutors, went with her to pick out her first car, and encouraged both girls to redevelop relationships with their teachers after their father's death. We also helped Ana learn English to prepare her for Francisco's killer's criminal trial.

On the day of the criminal trial, Ashley and I were right there with Ana and the kids — even though they had separate lawyers for that case. We worked with them on their victim impact statements and stood beside them when the criminals behind the shooting were sentenced to prison. After that huge win

in September 2022, we coached them through their depositions for our civil trial. They knocked them out of the park!

This fall, six years of hard work finally paid off: Ana and her family received a confidential but life-changing settlement from their old apartment complex. The settlement won't replace what they lost, but it will make their lives moving forward a little easier and more comfortable. I know Genesis and Sarah will always miss their father, and Ana will always miss her

husband. But I'm glad we could help them on their journey to getting justice.

Even though Ana, Genesis, and Sarah's case is over, Ashley and I aren't going anywhere. We'll be in their lives forever!

Ashley FaceTimes with Genesis all the time and considers her a little sister. We can't wait to cheer her on at her high school graduation next year.

Luckily, you don't have to take it from me that Genesis is an amazing person. If you turn the page, you can read her story from her. I hope you find her as inspirational as I do!

-Russell Button

**Because Sarah is a minor, we've changed her name to protect her privacy.*



GENESIS'S EXCITING NEXT CHAPTER

OUR 18-YEAR-OLD CLIENT HAS BIG PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL!

One of our favorite clients, Genesis, is about to graduate from high school! This is a huge milestone for her because, as we wrote about on Page 1, her family has been working hard to move forward after the tragic death of her father. We recently secured a settlement that will make their journey easier. Now, Genesis is forging ahead toward her dreams! To celebrate her upcoming graduation, we sat down with her to discuss her plans for this year and beyond.

"I'm debating between going to dental school or going into cosmetology," she told us. "I'm graduating high school with my cosmetology license, so I could go straight into starting my own business."

Genesis loves the relaxing work of giving facials and applying lash extensions, but she's also interested in learning about

teeth and potentially becoming a dental hygienist. The former would be an exciting career with the opportunity to be her own boss, while the latter would be a more stable option with a steady paycheck.

"I have to really think about what I'll do," she says, adding that either way, she's excited to help people feel good about themselves and how they look. In the meantime, she's looking forward to her senior prom and receiving her diploma on graduation day.

"I wish my dad was here to see me graduate and walk that stage. Unfortunately, it's not that way, but I'll have my sister and my mom, who are the most important people I have now," she says.



Russell and Ashley will be there to cheer Genesis on, too. After watching her grow from an 11-year-old girl into a confident, accomplished woman, they refuse to miss her big moment.

"I'm very thankful for Ashley and Russell," Genesis says. "They're really helpful, and they treat us like family, which helps a lot. If we need anything, they're

always there. They go out of their way to remember our birthdays and everything, which is really special."

We're so proud of Genesis and everything she has achieved. Whether she enrolls in dental school or starts her own cosmetology business, we know she'll succeed!

A PEEK AT OUR OVERFLOWING BOOKSHELF

3 Must-Reads for National Book Month

"Education" is one of BLF's core values, so our team is constantly learning! One of our favorite ways to do that is through reading, either together in the BLF Book Club or on our own. So, in honor of National Book Month, we're taking you on a behind-the-scenes tour of our bookshelf. Here are a few of the best books we've read recently and plan to dig into soon.

'OUTRAGEOUS MISCONDUCT: The Asbestos Industry on Trial' by Paul Brodeur:

If you like legal thrillers, you just might love "Outrageous Misconduct." Russell hasn't been able to put it down! The book dives into the true story of asbestos use in America, detailing how corporations tried to cover up the cancer-causing properties of the insulation and how law firms fought to expose them.

"I enjoy reading about how other lawyers create and handle complex litigation

and how they can win despite the odds," Russell says. "I've studied the tobacco industry, and now I'm studying this. Even though we don't take asbestos cases, I can take ideas from these attorneys and apply them to what we do."

'FLAVOR OF LAW' BY THE BLF TEAM:

You read that correctly! We're about to release a brand-new edition of our popular



Thanksgiving cookbook. Every year, the BLF team puts together a collection of more than a dozen recipes you can make on Turkey Day. We started this tradition in 2020 and haven't missed a year since. To ensure you snag a free copy, follow us on social media. We're @buttonlawfirm on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).

'DAMAGES EVOLVING' BY DAVID BALL, ARTEMIS MALEKPOUR, COURTNEY ROWLEY, AND NICHOLAS ROWLEY:

Every lawyer should read this book. Ten years ago, Russell read an earlier version cover to cover, modeled one of his first trials after it, and secured his client a seven-figure verdict! The latest edition of "Damages Evolving" explores how juries and damages (the compensation you can get after an injury) have changed in our post-COVID-19 world. Now that we've all experienced isolation firsthand, juries seem to more fully understand its impact.

WHEN SOCIAL MEDIA 'ENTERTAINMENT' BECOMES NEGLECT

The Shocking Story of Matilda's Daycare Accident

Have you ever seen a video on social media that was meant to be funny but actually shocked and worried you? There's a whole subgenre of these recordings, and they almost always show people accidentally getting hurt in "entertaining" ways. Recently, our firm represented the family of a young girl who was the subject of one of those videos. She nearly died at daycare because her caretakers put more effort into filming for social media than protecting her from harm.



in their hair and soar off the end of the steps like kids in a cartoon.

Matilda hopped onto the wagon and perched at the top of the steps, ready to fly. Her caregivers watched — but instead of stopping her, one of them pulled out a cellphone and started recording, saying, "Watch what happens!"

What happened was a tragedy. The wagon sped down the steps, launching Matilda into the air. She landed head-first on the concrete stairs and crumpled to the ground, motionless. Her caretakers didn't even scream. Instead, they zoomed in on her still body. When she came to, they encouraged her to sleep off her injury instead of getting her medical help.

It's a miracle Matilda survived. When her mother found her at the end of the day, she immediately rushed her to the hospital. There, the doctors discovered she had a fractured skull and traumatic brain injury. Years later, Matilda still suffers from headaches and nausea and struggles in school because of her daycare accident.

There's one bright spot in this story: Matilda and her mother found hardworking lawyers to take her case. Our team joined forces with Finney Injury Law to seek compensation on their behalf. Together, we uncovered hidden evidence and a long history of misconduct. Then, we held the neglectful daycare legally accountable! Hopefully, our diligence will protect other Missouri children from similar social media "fame."

BLF HIGHLIGHT REEL



CLIENT REVIEW

"Ashley Washington took the time out of her busy schedule to help me find the safest daycare for my son by showing me how to search state licensing history. She is passionate about school safety and is the most knowledgeable attorney in this field. She also provided me with a free written guide on how to choose the safest school, which every parent needs — this is an invaluable resource. The Button Law Firm has earned my business for life."

-Mary Allen R.

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CHUIE IS TURNING 13! A Note From Our Firm's Favorite Furball

Hey there, friend! It's been a long time since I barked at you in the newsletter. I hope you've taken a lot of walks and chased a bunch of squirrels since my last message. I'm sending you a note today because this month is special: It's my birthday month!



Russell says I'm turning 13, but I keep trying to tell him I'm not a pup anymore: I'm 91 in dog years! Of course, I plan to live to at least 150, so there's no need to worry about me yet. I may be a bit older, but every day is still a wonderful adventure.

Even past 90, life keeps surprising me. Russell was my only human for more than 60 years — but now I have another one! Her name is Sammy, and she makes my tail wag like crazy every time she comes home. She takes me on the best drives (I get to stick my nose out the window and feel the breeze in my hair!), cuddles with me on the couch, and even lets me snuggle up on the big bed with her.

Once, Sammy disappeared on "vacation," and I was so sad. Russell told me she'd come back, but I wasn't sure if I believed him. I slept on Sammy's pillow and

checked the whole house for her every morning. I looked out the window every day for hours, hoping and hoping she'd come home! When she did, I was so happy I thought I'd wag my tail right off.

This month, Russell and Sammy will both be home for my birthday. They promised me a long car ride, a walk in a new place, and a tasty "Puppuccino." I can't wait to explore, swim, and hide a few nuts to confuse my squirrel friends.

If you see Russell, do me a favor and give him this message: "Chuie is a good girl — she deserves an extra birthday treat!"

Your four-legged friend,

-Chuie 