

This is a newsletter prepared by lawyers to apprise folks about the law, cases, safety, and significant events. Coopers LLP has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state, and accepts referrals and co-counsel opportunities to better serve the plaintiff community.

Free YouTube Studio Course: Lifecycle of a Case



This course breaks down the real process of civil litigation from the inside, showing how real-world cases evolve step by step. Great for law students, new lawyers, and anyone curious about the subject.



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COOPERS' COUNSEL

Stories, case studies, and practice pointers
from personal injury law experts

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Coopers LLP helps seriously injured people and accepts referrals and co-counsel opportunities from lawyers. We excel in strategizing. Have a matter you'd like to brainstorm? **Call or text us at 866-912-2789.**

Coopers LLP has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state, and can affiliate with local counsel on matters where Coopers can make the difference.

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A LETTER FROM THE COOPERS



This morning I was heading through the crisp San Francisco air, and it had a bite to it. As I traveled I noticed Halloween decorations already in place. Somehow, without me noticing, we went straight from summer's fog into autumn's quickly shortening days. John Hughes' Ferris Bueller was succinct: "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while you could miss it."

I've noticed the professional version of that jump. I blinked and twenty five years went by. Decades of crystallized intelligence mean I've still got a lot to offer. But my thinking these days trends toward the ways all of us can help the next generation's dragon slayers.

Back to Ferris Bueller's observation. Working on our newsletters forces reflection. Like most issues a theme emerges. We explore holistic ways to help clients who face the challenges of housing insecurity and addiction. We celebrate awards for work done to fight injustice. We explore how meditation grounds us in our stressful world. And outside any theme, we use moviemaking as an analog to contingent fee efforts.

So returning again to Ferris Bueller's input: continue to live your life to the fullest! But take those moments to breathe. Acknowledge what you've accomplished. Because we all do amazing things. And returning from the big picture to the now, a hearty thank you for taking a little time to read about some of our small contributions to the greater good.

*Happy hunting,
M&M*

Miles B. Cooper, Maryanne B. Cooper, and everyone at Coopers LLP

CASE SPOTLIGHT

HOLISTIC REPRESENTATION

Meeting clients where they are at

When we help folks who have been involved in serious injuries, we encounter people who are in their darkest moments. Many are fortunate enough to have social safety nets to help them as they piece their lives together while we work through litigation to obtain financial compensation.

But occasionally there are clients who lack that foundational support: an injury takes their life from one on the edge to one over it. That was the case for one of our recent clients. We'll call him Tom.

Tom, like too many out there, developed an opioid addiction, which led to Tom spending many nights on the street. Tom's addiction had nothing to do with being hit while crossing the street, however. The evidence and the witness testimony demonstrated the driver of the car just completely did not see him.



Clients like Tom can be more challenging. Because of Tom's situation he did not have the ability to attend physical therapy. His ability to take care of himself after he was discharged from the hospital was limited. And communicating with him was challenging. We wanted to make sure Tom got the help he needed, while knowing that providing support money directly to him may only further fuel his addiction.

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Fortunately Bryan Vix, the lawyer handling Tom's case, had experience helping those with addiction and was sensitive to Tom's needs. To solve the communication problem, Bryan made sure we provided Tom with a cell phone. To help make sure Tom's significant other would be entitled to any settlement should Tom overdose during the case, we pointed Tom to a good estate lawyer and advanced the costs for a solid estate plan and will. On particularly harsh nights where Tom was unable to crash at a friend's, Bryan took Tom's call and we made sure Tom had a place to stay.

During the course of representation we educated Tom about structured settlements and their benefits. With that education we were then able to help Tom see the wisdom at resolution in putting most of his funds into a structure, thus ensuring he'd have money every month for food and rent.

Every client has different needs. We work to help them where they are at.

CASE TYPE: Auto versus pedestrian

LAWYER: Bryan Vix

UNIQUE CHALLENGE: Client with housing insecurity and opioid addiction

PRACTICE POINTER

NOW PLAYING

Pixar's filmmaking discipline as analog to successful contingency work

By Miles Cooper

I watched the drone show overhead. What had appeared to be a July 4th celebration over the San Francisco Bay resolved into something else entirely. Hundreds of coordinated drones formed shapes against the night sky. A spaceman. A cowboy.

"Is that Woody?" I heard someone say. It was indeed. The light show, reaching its end, formed up to let folks know a Pixar movie was now in theaters. An ad. More ingenuity than a billboard, I thought. Which should come as no surprise for those who know anything about Pixar's history and creativity. Its path and moviemaking becomes a surprisingly good analog with insights for contingent fee case building.

Hardware to Hollywood

For those who don't know the Pixar story: it started as a graphics group in the late 1970s inside Lucasfilm, built to sell an expensive computer called



Chassis and monitor of a P-II model Pixar Image Computer. Photo: BakedintheHole, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



The Steve Jobs Building at the Pixar campus in Emeryville CA. Photo: Grendelkhan, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

the Pixar Image Computer. Never particularly successful, it was sold to Steve Jobs shortly after Jobs was ousted from Apple. Pixar as a machine maker continued to underperform. They developed a small animation team to make demo films to help sell the machines. One short, "Tin Toy," won an Oscar in 1988.

The hardware never caught on. But Disney took notice of the animation and reached out to Pixar. By 1995, their collaboration "Toy Story" became the first fully computer-animated blockbuster. From computer company to movie studio in fifteen years.

Moviemaking (and contingent fee work) involves years-long creative investments with no revenue until the very end. Both require betting real capital on uncertain outcomes. Both carry projects where many generate modest returns (and sometimes losses) while a few carry the whole slate. And both benefit enormously from production discipline. Pixar didn't succeed by being more creative: it succeeded by being more rigorous.



Pixar didn't succeed by being more creative; it succeeded by being more rigorous.

The greenlight decision

Studios greenlight projects. Contingent fee lawyers take cases. Both decisions set the budget, the timeline, and the risk exposure. Both deserve more rigor than they sometimes receive. The initial case evaluation answers the tripod questions upon which all successful cases stand. Liability: can it be proved, and just how contested will it be? Damages: are they sufficient to justify the investment ahead? Collectability: is there insurance, assets, or some other source to satisfy a judgment? A case that fails any leg of the tripod is a script that doesn't get produced. There are situations where one leg is unknown. Huge damages with uncertain liability, for example. The potential there may deserve investment to develop the liability leg. But one must be judicious on how many challenging cases one takes at a time or risk financial collapse.

Tracking the production

Pixar famously tracked time on all production aspects, using total "people weeks" as a measuring stick. Which sequences took longer than estimated? Where did the budget assumptions break down? That data shaped how the next film got planned and built. Contingent fee lawyers usually don't track

time (in fact some of you probably unconsciously shook your heads in a "no" reading this). But consider it: an estimated time investment analysis set at intake, then measured against the actual at the case's end, helps one learn about case selection and missteps. An estimated budget at case workup, with updates at major case moments, again shows the lawyer things the gut misses. When actual costs start running ahead of estimates, it warrants analysis and conversations with the client about the best path forward.

When Pixar hit the wall

Ed Catmull writes candidly in *Creativity, Inc.* (an entertaining read and inspirational source for this column's analog) about early productions that went sideways. Sequences weren't working. Productions ran over. The discipline required to stop, reassess, and rebuild rather than push a broken version to completion was lacking. The instinct to keep going, to protect the sunk investment, is powerful. It is also how mediocre films get made and how mediocre cases get tried (and like mediocre films, perform poorly).

The mid-case review is the equivalent of Pixar's Braintrust session. With a Pixar film there is a moment where leadership sits together to rigorously evaluate the project and whether it tracks the original greenlight decision. For cases, a mid-case review, coupled with a focus group, becomes a structured moment to ask: does this case still look like the case we greenlighted? Has liability held up through discovery? Have damages developed as projected, or are there gaps? Is the defense digging in harder than the budget assumed? If the answers are unfavorable, the choice is conscious: invest more with clear eyes, restructure the approach, or work toward a damage-control resolution and move on.

Roll credits

Back to the show. A few hundred small machines, precisely coordinated, had created something no single drone could do alone (there's a learning there too). I thought about the Pixar story as I walked home: how a hardware company transitioned into an animation studio by attending to its strengths and cutting its weaknesses. How an animation studio became an industry standard by building discipline to match ambition. Consider implementing some of Pixar's lessons to level up one's practice.

A version of this article originally appeared in Plaintiff magazine, where Miles has written his monthly Back Story column for almost 15 years. Interested in Plaintiff and its coverage? Read more at plaintiffmagazine.com.

COOPERS' CODE

MEDITATION FOR LITIGATION

Finding calm in high-stakes law with Jessica Samples

High-stakes trial law is notorious for unrelenting pressure, rapid deadlines, and stressful environments. In this special two-part feature on *Coopers' Code*, Miles Cooper sits down with Jessica Samples — a San Francisco-based mindfulness teacher, coach, group facilitator, and founder of CoCreate Calm — to explore how attorneys, high-performers, and everyday listeners can cultivate resilience, manage stress, and bring grounded presence into demanding lives.

Part 1: The foundations of mindfulness and CoCreate Calm

In the first episode, Jessica shares the personal and professional journey that led her to found CoCreate Calm. She demystifies mindfulness, stripping away the buzzwords to examine the core science of how stress impacts our nervous systems, focus, and decision-making.

Miles and Jessica discuss why professionals in high-intensity fields like law often treat stress as an inevitable badge of honor — and how unexamined stress can quietly compromise performance, health, and personal relationships if left unchecked.

Part 2: Tactical calm for high-stakes professionals

In part two, the conversation shifts to actionable tools and real-world implementation. Jessica breaks down practical strategies designed to help listeners regulate their focus and energy in real-time, whether in the courtroom, during a consequential negotiation, or at home after a long day:

- **Micro-practices for pressure-filled moments:** Simple, discreet breath and somatic techniques you can use right at the counsel table or before a big presentation to reset your nervous system.
- **Shifting from reaction to response:** How mindfulness creates a crucial gap between stimulus and reaction, allowing you to act with clarity and intention rather than anger or anxiety.
- **Preventing burnout:** Strategies for establishing healthy psychological boundaries and building sustainable routines that support professional longevity.

Why you should watch

Sustained excellence in trial law — or any demanding career — doesn't require sacrificing your mental or physical health. Jessica offers a compelling roadmap for bringing composure, focus, and genuine calm into your life without losing your competitive edge.



CoCreate Calm founder Jessica Samples in studio.

Watch now on YouTube:



Part 1: The Foundations of CoCreate Calm



Part 2: Practical Mindfulness for High-Stakes Professionals

TEAM STORY

PAW AND ORDER

Meet Jess, the Coopers team dog

To be fair this staff profile is both a tad tongue in cheek and real at the same time. Since Jess has made a few appearances on YouTube on our podcast (and is also a bit of a nepo-doggie), we thought some of our readers might want to know a bit more about her and how she joined Coopers.

We were not looking for a dog. But when one of the lawyers in the firm mentioned that his father's future duck hunting dog was not making the grade during training in Kansas and needed a home, the hook was set. Our kids lobbied hard ("She's already trained!" "We'll help take care of her!") and we relented, knowing that the "taking care of her part" was, if you pardon the technical legal term, bullshit.

Because nothing is ever easy, Jess was delivered by the dog transporter on a morning we were in trial and picking a jury. As a result Jess's first human in San Francisco was Luci, the warm voice you hear when you call Coopers (also featured in the Summer 2026 issue of this newsletter). Luci helped

Jess calm down after what must have been a challenging cross-country drive, and as a result remains one of Jess's favorite humans. Jess continues to enjoy showing up at the office and going on outdoor podcast recordings (preferably ones with lots of treats). And we learned just how many folks at Coopers have and love dogs (answer: pretty much everyone).

Please welcome Jess to the team!



Jess Cooper searching for evidence at Baker Beach.

Jess Cooper and Bennett Cooper in Bodie, California, working out how to get that flywheel spinning.



COMMUNITY

HOLDING PUBLIC SYSTEMS ACCOUNTABLE

Coopers LLP receives Loren Warboys Unsung Hero Award from the Youth Law Center



On October 8, 2026, the Youth Law Center recognized those who support its mission of helping young people, holding systems accountable, and creating lasting change. Coopers LLP's Bryan Vix's efforts on behalf of a young man held in isolation in San Francisco's juvenile hall, supported by Kimberly Wong, Robert Igleheart, Maryanne Cooper, and Miles Cooper, received recognition.

The young man was held in isolation for days, contrary to California's 2016 law limiting room confinement in juvenile facilities. Bryan co-counseled the case

with noted civil rights attorney Brian Gearing. For decades YLC has worked to end solitary confinement for young people. That work culminated in a 2016 law sharply restricting room confinement. But the laws matter only when they are followed, and when those who don't follow them are held accountable. The federal civil rights case required the team to navigate the unfamiliar requirements of the juvenile system. The team also had to fight for access to confidential records and facility documentation, take numerous depositions, and oppose a motion to dismiss.

The work in this case required the team to stretch, was intellectually rewarding, and helped send a message: no-one is above the law.

Scan the QR code to learn more about YLC's Unsung Heroes program.



The Coopers team accepting the award at The Loren Warboys Unsung Heroes Celebration.

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