Making Client Reviews Work For You:

Let your clients do the selling for you

Legal Marketing Pulse
June 13, 2019

Martindale-Avvo™

Panel

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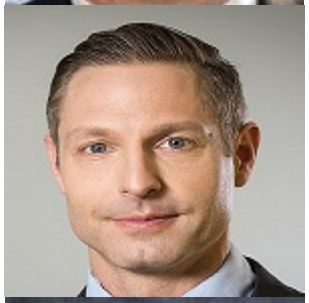

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Agenda

- The Importance of Reviews
  - Recent consumer research
  - How Google uses reviews
- Asking Clients for Reviews
- Negative Reviews
- Responding to Reviews
- Ethical Considerations with Reviews
- Q&A

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The Importance of Reviews - Consumer Research

- Reviews are the new referrals
  - 63% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations
  - For younger people (18-34), it's practically universal.
- No reviews?

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The Importance of Reviews - Consumer Research

52% of people surveyed said they would not hire a business that did not have reviews

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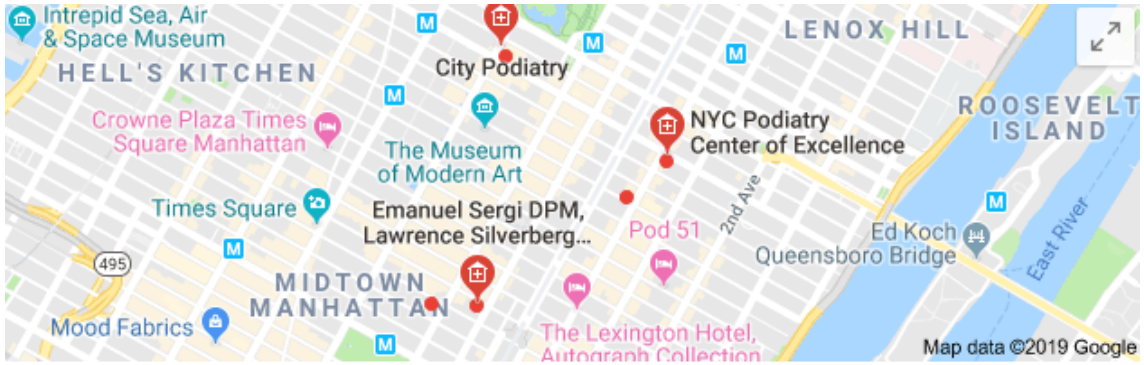
The Importance of Reviews - Google



Rating ▾ Hours ▾ Your past visits ▾

Emanuel Sergi DPM, Lawrence Silverberg DPM at ...
4.8 ★★★★★ (49) · Podiatrist
20 E 46th St · (212) 871-0800
Open · Closes 6PM
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

NYC Podiatry Center of Excellence
4.3 ★★★★½ (45) · Podiatrist
136 E 57th St #801 · (212) 288-3137
Open · Closes 6:30PM
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

City Podiatry
4.9 ★★★★★ (34) · Podiatrist
57 W 57th St #507 · (917) 810-3805
Open · Closes 7PM
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

More places

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The Importance of Reviews - Google

- Google doesn't give us the keys, but
  - Every 12-18 months, SEO experts are surveyed for their opinions on how to rank.
- Reviews are the third most important factor to ranking in the local pack
  - In three years, reviews have gone from 11th most important to third.
- "If I could focus on one aspect of local search, it would be reviews."

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Asking Clients for Reviews

- Businesses ask their clients for reviews all the time
  - 66% of consumers said they've been asked to write a review
- Some people will be proactive, but most need a push in the right direction
  - 70% of people who said they were asked to write a review ended up doing so.
- Every firm should have a process for asking clients for reviews.

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Asking Clients for Reviews - Process

- Ask every client
  - Quantity of reviews is a significant factor to consumers choosing which business to hire
- Give people options (multiple sites)
  - Don't overwhelm clients with requests to review you on multiple sites
- Google is very important, but it's not all that matters.
  - Yelp, Facebook and other sites get traffic too

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Asking Clients for Reviews - Personal Situations

- Some legal situations are very personal
  - Not every client may be comfortable speaking about their situation on sites like Google or Facebook

- That being said, divorce/bankruptcy firms on Google have lots of reviews
  - Firms in the local pack in these AOPs regularly average 30+ reviews

- If your clients prefer sites where they can be anonymous, there are options.

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Asking Clients for Reviews

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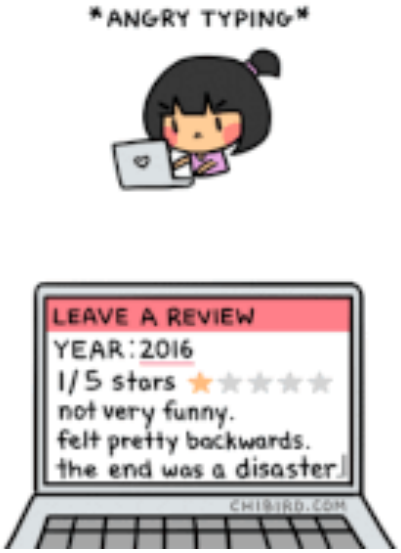
Negative Reviews - How they can help

- Negative comments from clients will never feel great

- Sometimes clients have unrealistic expectations
  - It's impossible to make everyone happy all the time, especially when the facts are against them



- The key is how we can turn a negative review into an opportunity to showcase other strengths to future prospective clients.

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Negative Reviews - How they can help

- Is a 5.0 score the right goal?
  - Northwestern study says maybe not
- People expect to see negative reviews
  - 80% of consumers surveyed said they specifically seek out negative reviews
- Negative reviews can identify system/ process issues within your firm.
- A mix of positive and negative reviews lends authenticity to your overall score, which creates trust.

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Negative Reviews - How they can help

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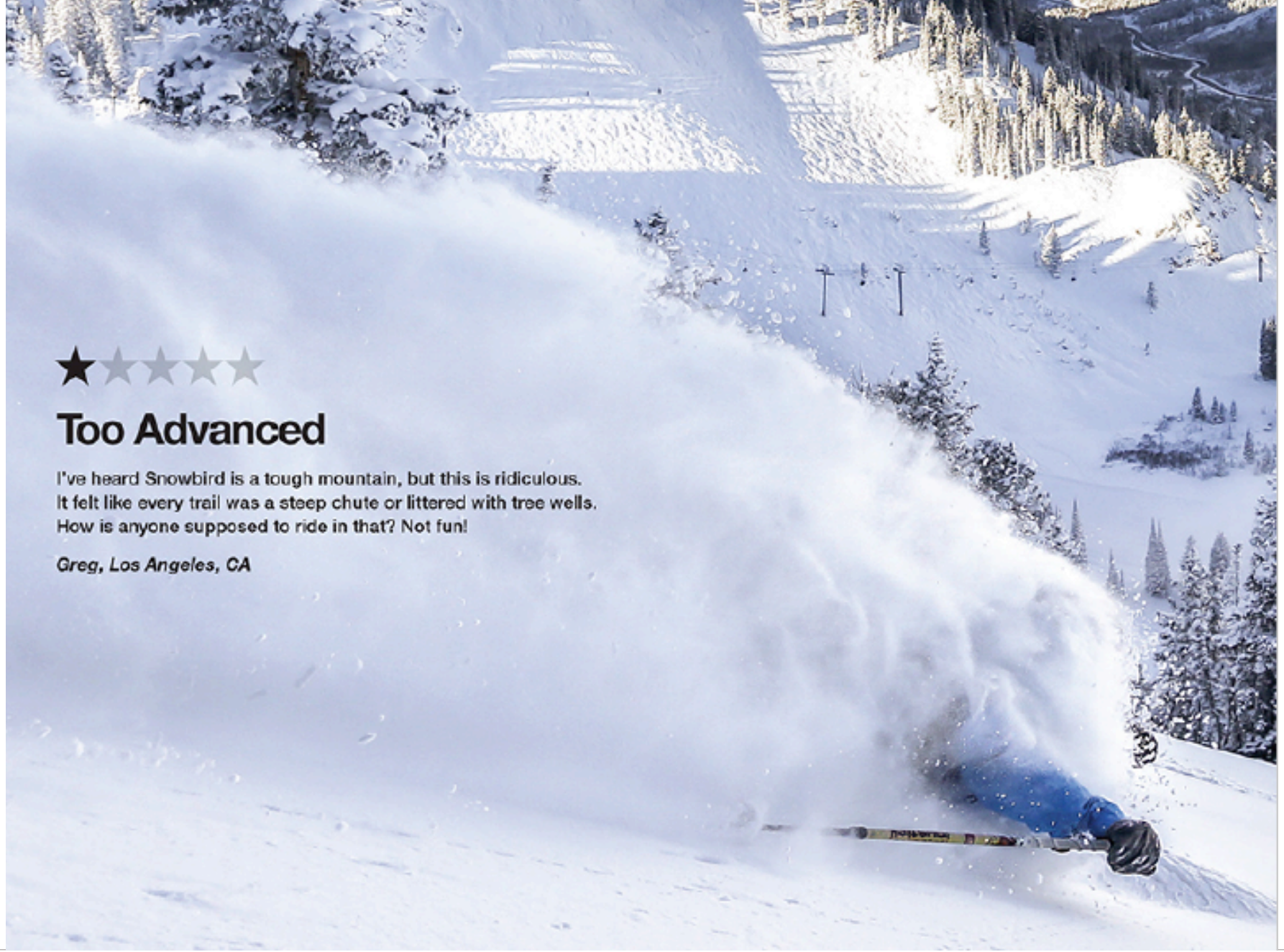

★☆☆☆☆

Too Advanced

I've heard Snowbird is a tough mountain, but this is ridiculous. It felt like every trail was a steep chute or littered with tree wells. How is anyone supposed to ride in that? Not fun!

Greg, Los Angeles, CA

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Responding to Reviews - Should You?

- Yes, always, every time
  - 89% of consumers said they have read responses to reviews

- The people who write reviews expect a response
  - 70% of people who had written reviews expected a response, and many within 24 hours

- A good response can turn a negative into a positive
  - Over 80% of people said they might edit or remove a negative review based upon the response.

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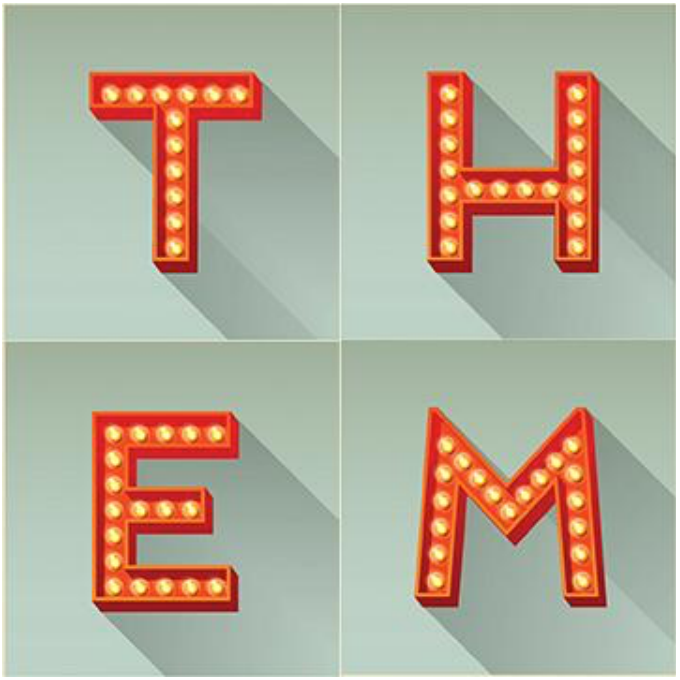
Responding to Reviews - The T.H.E.M. Technique

- Four things to consider when responding to reviews

- T - Timing
  - Ideally you should respond quickly, within 24 hours

- H- Honesty
  - It's ok to acknowledge fault where appropriate. People will appreciate your honesty.
  - Once an apology has been made, offer resolution (or to take offline) whenever possible.



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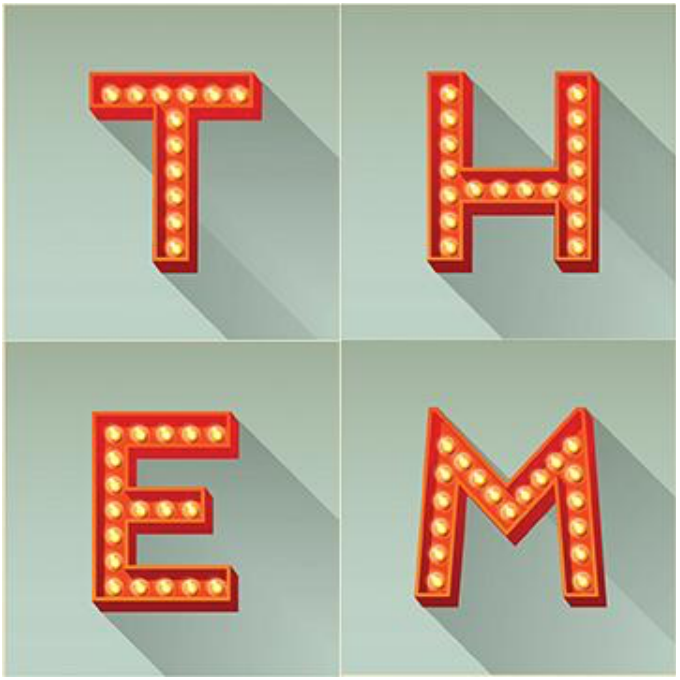
Responding to Reviews - The T.H.E.M. Technique

- E - Empathy
  - Think about the client's point of view when responding.
  - Remember, prospective clients will more likely empathize with the reviewer's point of view than yours.

- M - Message
  - Convey that your goal is resolution
  - Amplify the positives
  - Your response is as much or more for the future potential clients reading it than the reviewer.



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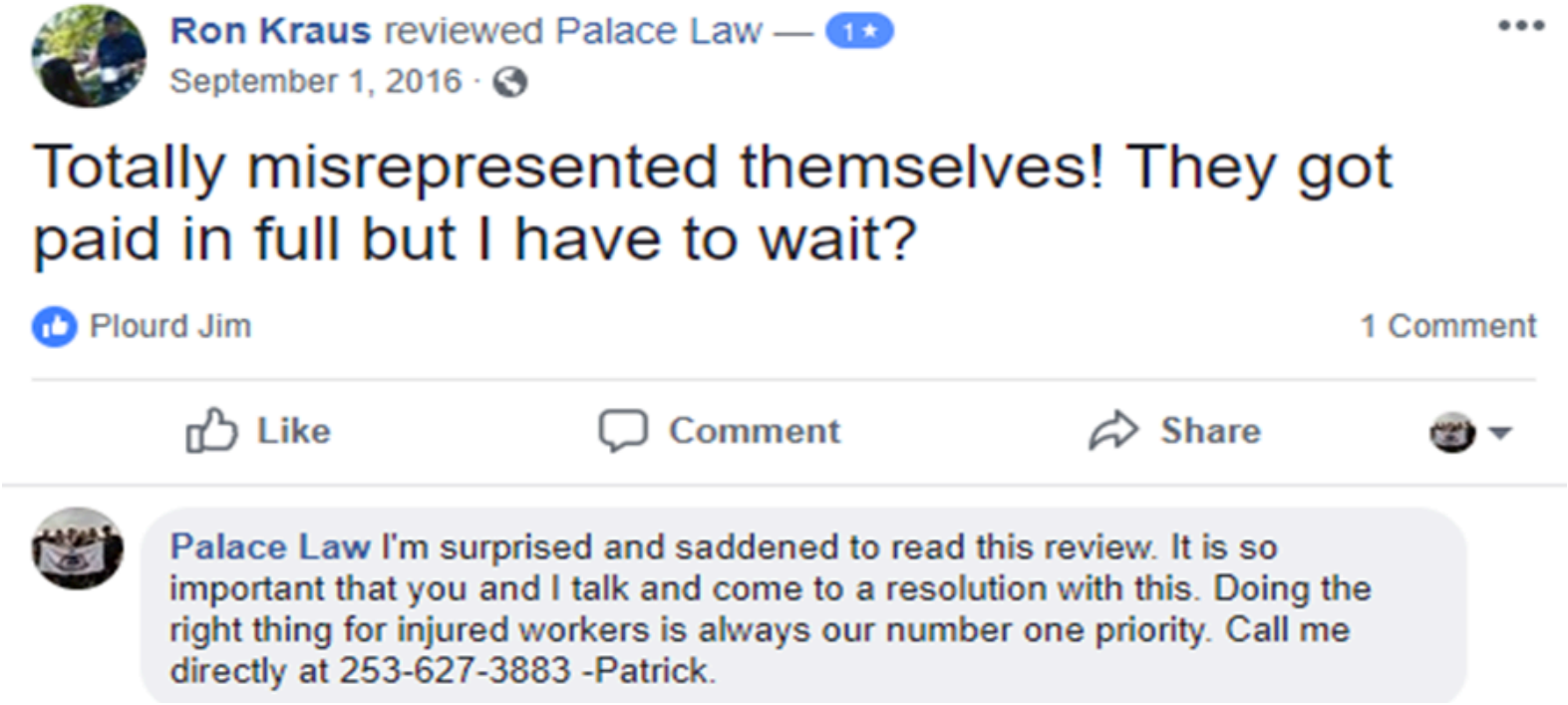
Responding to Reviews - Example



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Responding to Reviews - Example

BEST PRACTICE:
OWN THE MISTAKE

I'm sorry you had this experience. At the Smith Law Firm, we spend so much time helping so many injured workers get the Workers' Compensation benefits they need, perhaps we can sometimes be slower at returning individual phone calls than we would like. It's our mission to stand up for the average working guy against big insurance companies, so that does take a lot of time. We will recommit to helping as many injured workers as we can, so thank you for bringing this to my attention to address.

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Ethical Considerations when Asking for Reviews

- Encouraging reviews is generally ok
  - Offering anything of value in return for a review is not
- Know your state's ethics rules
  - Especially if you are going to publish testimonials on your firm website.

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Ethical Considerations when Responding to Reviews

pick another lawyer, don't waste your money

My son is being charged with AR (ARMED ROBBERY) went to sit down with jay to see if we would hire him for my son's case. After talking with him for about an hour or so and after jay stated that he goes to every court hearing, he will get a private investigator on this case; he can get a polygraph done and so forth. We decided to hire him. Which was the biggest mistake and a lot of money wasted? first...

More...

Response: *"I am so sorry you feel like I neglected you and your son. I told you I would be the trial attorney, I did not tell you I would be at every hearing. If you actually bothered to read our agreement, you paid for my associate to handle the pre-trial hearings, not me.* ***Let's start by at least trying to tell the truth****. My team and I met with your son on many occasions, we asked the judge to give him a bond not once, but 3 times. Very few law firms will work that hard, three times as hard if you ask me. You never gave me the chance to prove myself in court for you,* ***because you lack all patience****. And the great new lawyer you hired? Your son is still sitting in jail. Did he get your son a bond? No. So you will never know whether I can do an amazing job or not, because* ***you are not smart enough*** *to let any lawyer do their job. If your son needed heart surgery, you would likely insist on holding the scalpel over the doctor's shoulder. By the way, maybe it is not me. Maybe, just maybe,* ***your son is in jail because he confessed to holding a gun in a man's face at a convenience store, and committing an armed robbery.*** *I won my last armed robbery trial. Let's see how well your son does in the end, with the other counsel. I am willing to bet my reputation."*

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Q&A

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