

Collapse of an Evil Empire!

This is the Foreword for the book that is...

COMING SOON

Scot Strems was a student from Miami-Dade studying Political Science and Business Administration at the University of Florida. After graduating with honors, he moved on to the University of Miami for his law degree in 2008.

He began working as a Public Defender spending what may have been too much time in county court trudging through traffic and misdemeanor cases. Eventually he left to open his own firm focusing on criminal defense and civil litigation.

Litigation wasn't a big part of his early plan but, after opening his new office, and being retained by several homeowners wanting to sue their insurance companies, he found he enjoyed the work in a big way.

Eventually Strems was suing more often than any other lawyer in Florida. His firm grew to 30 lawyers at its' peak accompanied with 120 support staff at offices in Coral Gables, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Jacksonville, even Georgia and California.¹

But... this text isn't just a compendium of articles on a single subject or lawyer. Taken as a whole it's a scholarly anatomy of a successful disbarment (and the circumstances and marketplace surrounding it) undertaken by the Florida Bar against a prolific trial lawyer who may have had up to 10,000 cases moving through an unimaginable assembly line.

It's instructive from many angles. By reputation the Florida Bar quickly moves against attorneys convicted of crimes of moral turpitude or who may have absconded trust funds from vulnerable clients. But it is not as efficient or aggressive prosecuting those who merely abuse the court system or commit ethical violations that often go unreported by clients who themselves are looking for unjust enrichment. This story shows the immense burden of time and risk involved in such prosecutions. Moreover, it illustrates how extremely destructive such transgressions can become to society as a whole when left unchecked.

Insurance agents, insurers (especially claims personnel) should have a copy of this book. Literally, it's a track record of the proceedings, the charges, the defenses, and the sources for the disbarment of an attorney claiming (and perhaps believing) he was just a bad manager. It shows how aggressive, production line litigation can morph into something more sinister than the perpetrator even imagined--into "... mendacious, bad faith...unethical, and fraudulent conduct that...infected courts and communities across the state."²

For these reasons, (and others you'll read about), every law office, especially plaintiff firms, should also have this book in their library. In addition to the cautionary nature of the tale, it also provides direct access to the complaints, the responses, the charges for relevant actions, case studies,

pertinent excerpts from EUO's and press articles and much more—all categorized and accessible via this text.

Keep in mind the backdrop for the Strems saga was a collapsing property insurance market. It was not burdened so much by Florida's notorious weather, as it was a legal climate responsible for nearly 80% of America's total property lawsuits. And punctuated by a solvency crisis that saw ten insurers go belly up in just over two years.

With these realities and with Strems as their poster child, tort reformers gained momentum, ultimately pressing policy makers to react. Which they vigorously did.

Governor DeSantis called two Special Legislative sessions in 2022 which, along with one regular session in 2023, resulted in the most comprehensive tort reform, certainly in Florida's history, and perhaps American history as well.

Some opined Strems would not have been disbarred had the significant reforms been in place during his ten-year march. This, because there would be few incentives and little opportunity for such behavior. And even though some frivolous suits might still have been filed, they would never have been with the startling frequency that was Strems' downfall.

The prolific nature of Strems approach caused many to believe he became a template for too many other plaintiff firms to act similarly. Credible data showed he may not have even been at the top of the list.

Readers should know that the facts and the opinions herein have been meticulously recorded and maintained electronically so that, regardless of ones point of view on either the legislative solutions or the story itself, it will all be available to everyone here, in this... the "Collapse of an Evil Empire!"

Enjoy!

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1. *Florida Trend Magazine. "Attorney Scot Strems is the 'poster child' of the insurance crisis." Mike Vogel 9/8/2022.*
 2. *Florida Bar. Petition For Emergency Suspension 6/5/2020.*