

## What You May Not Know About Lawyer Advertising

If you watch TV during a week day you'll have an opportunity to see personal injury lawyer ads virtually non-stop. They all pretty much look alike. Listen to them, if you can. When the day is over, you'll know virtually nothing about the lawyer or who will actually handle your case and talk with you or the adjuster.

If you have looked at the lawyer ads in the yellow pages, in most books you will see twenty or more full page ads. Some books feature "double truck" ads consisting of two full pages, side by side, for the same firm. These ads all attempt to out-shout the others with the same format:

- ... a big picture of one or more lawyers
- ... bullet points about what they do.

... and the same message:

- ... aggressive
- ... fighting for you
- ... caring
- ... we come to you
- ... no recovery, no fees
- ... free consultation

These ads will tell you virtually nothing about your lawyer, how your case will be handled or by whom.

Here are some things to keep in mind about most lawyer advertising:

1. There is no Florida Bar requirement about the level of actual experience a lawyer has in the area of law for which they advertise.
2. There are virtually no restrictions on advertising for multiple areas of law. Do you want a lawyer who limits their practice or one that does many other areas as well? Would you put your life in the hands of a general surgeon or one specializing in the surgery you need?
3. The company selling the ads (TV or yellow pages directory) do not verify any claims made in these advertisements. They get paid to sell ads . . . period.
4. The lawyer you see on the ad may not be the lawyer who will handle your case. In some cases, they will never be.

5. In many people's mind's "advertising lawyers" are perceived very negatively. Should your case need to be tried to a jury, this could hurt your case if the jury recognizes your lawyer as "one of them". The defense often looks for ways to bring this information out in front of the jury for that very reason.
6. Some ads are by paid referral services. Many of these simply rotate calls received to the next lawyer who has paid a fee to be on the list or a lawyer who has purchased the exclusive right to receive referrals in certain geographic locations, a county or a zip code. Such services know little more about the lawyer other than that their check cleared the bank.
7. In too many instances, those large ads are designed to produce volumes of cases. The systems designed to handle large volumes of cases produces many of the issues I have discussed in this book. Is that what you are really looking for?

You need to arm yourself with information, ask questions and carefully consider what you get in response. Your case is too important for you to simply "hope" someone you select at random will meet your needs and work to achieve your goals.