

# The **BOYK** LAW REPORT

11 Offices >>> NW Ohio & SE Michigan

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## Lawsuit Filed After Violent Assault by Circle K Employee Leads To A Miscarriage

Charles Boyk Law Offices has filed a civil lawsuit in the Northern District of Ohio on behalf of Rev. Deria Francis, an eight-weeks-pregnant Black minister who miscarried after a violent assault at a Circle K gas station in Bowling Green, Ohio. The lawsuit, filed against Circle K and employee Shannon Walsh, alleges assault, battery, negligence, and related claims stemming from the May 23, 2025, incident.

Rev. Francis and her husband, Rev. Dathan Stukes, were traveling from South Carolina to Detroit for a church conference when they stopped at the Circle K location at 1602 East Wooster Street in Bowling Green, Ohio.

After Rev. Francis asked cashier Shannon Walsh to cancel her transaction so she could enter her Circle K rewards number, a routine customer request, Walsh allegedly became hostile. According to the complaint, Walsh refused to cancel the transaction, yelled at Rev. Francis to “get the f\*\*\* out,” threw

a jar of change at her stomach, and physically assaulted her in front of her two minor children.

The lawsuit, filed by Rev. Francis and Rev. Stukes, alleges that:

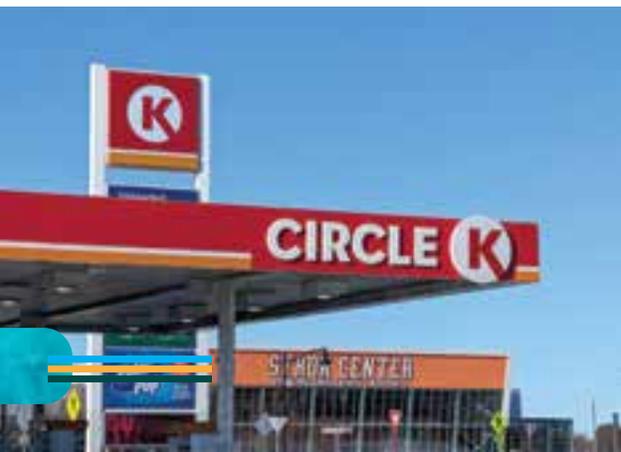
- Walsh, a Circle K employee acting within the scope of her employment, threw a jar of change that struck Rev. Francis’s stomach while she was eight weeks pregnant.
- When Rev. Francis attempted to leave, Walsh came out from behind the counter, grabbed her by the hair, slammed her into a drink cooler, and repeatedly struck her with a closed fist.
- During the attack, Walsh shouted racist insults, including calling Rev. Francis “an animal” and “ghetto.”
- Rev. Francis’s minor children witnessed the assault.
- Circle K failed to maintain safe premises and failed to properly hire, train, or supervise staff, allowing an environment where violence and discrimination against customers could occur.
- Rev. Francis sustained extensive bruising and suffered a miscarriage the following day.
- Police and EMS responded to the scene. Walsh was later charged with assault and ultimately pled no contest to negligent assault, resulting in a court order to complete anger-management training.



“This never should have happened. Rev. Francis was a pregnant mother simply trying to redeem a routine store loyalty reward, which is something Circle K actively encourages its customers to do,” said lead attorney Charles E. Boyk.

“Instead, she was violently attacked, subjected to racist slurs, and suffered the unimaginable loss of her unborn child. No family should ever experience such brutality, especially in a business that claims to serve the public.”

The complaint seeks compensatory damages against the corporate and individual defendants, citing negligent disregard for the safety of Rev. Francis and her family.



AUTO ACCIDENTS • MEDICAL MALPRACTICE  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION • DOG BITES  
WRONGFUL DEATH • PRODUCT LIABILITY  
ATV & MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS  
MASS TORTS • SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

# John Thebes – Headed for the Beach

by Zac Shaffer



John Thebes and his wife Lisa

practitioner ever since he passed the Ohio Bar Exam. While he has maintained his professional autonomy, he did join a practice that shared office space and practiced in the same building, growing professionally together. He recalls working closely with attorneys Kyle Silvers, Beverly Cox, Josh Nolan, and numerous others. He enjoyed the camaraderie and the ability to have other great legal minds near him.

Personally, John has been and continues to be blessed. He met his better half, Lisa, at a Halloween party in 1990. The two were married two years later in November, 1992. The

and winds as he walked to court nearly every day for more than 30 years. He also enjoys reading and keeps active through volunteer work. John loves helping others in need. He and Lisa spend time volunteering through Heartbeats, a charitable organization, helping young parents (and expecting parents) with costs of necessities and childcare. He is also looking forward to traveling with his family. Over the years, he has traveled to many beautiful places. Some of his favorite destinations include Charleston, SC; Hawaii, Aruba; the Cayman Islands, and St. Martin.

John continues to love the Toledo Legal Community and wants young lawyers to continue to practice in the area and grow. I asked John for advice he would give to attorneys starting their practice, and these are his tenets to follow for a successful practice:

- **Communication is key. Always speak honestly and timely with everyone; whether it is your client, opposing counsel, the court, or staff, you need to be open with communication and don't leave calls unreturned.**
- **Honesty above all. This advice wasn't specific to the practice of law, but for every interaction. Your integrity and trustworthiness is the baseline for your career. It is better to have all the cards out on the table than to hide anything.**
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions. Whether you are a young attorney thinking you know everything or are just insecure and afraid to ask questions, ask questions. You are never going to have all the answers, so you need to learn how to ask questions and ask for help.**

The Toledo Legal Community says thank you and wishes a happy retirement to John Thebes this year. For those who haven't had the pleasure of practicing with John, you truly don't know what you have missed. While my history with John was short, he is a friend and colleague of our firm's namesake, Chuck Boyk.

John Thebes is a Toledo native. He graduated from St. Francis de Sales and went on to study business and finance at the University of Miami (Ohio). Law school wasn't John's first choice, or second choice for that matter. He expected to do something in the finance world, but John wasn't made for corporate life, and he couldn't see himself being another guy in a suit trading stocks or competing on Wall Street.

He decided to take a stab at law school. John applied, attended, and ultimately graduated from the University of Toledo College of Law in 1989. During his law school career, he earned an internship with the Public Defender's Office and discovered his passion was practicing criminal law. After he graduated, he opened his own practice fighting for and defending the rights of the accused.

John has been practicing criminal law as a solo

two recently celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary by taking a much-earned vacation to the Cayman Islands. Even though John is enjoying his retirement already, Lisa is still working at GE in their health care division as a project manager.

John also has been blessed with three healthy and successful children. His oldest (30) works as a trauma nurse in Washington D.C. His middle child (28) lives and works in Columbus as a commercial realtor, and his youngest (24) works in Bowling Green for Penske Trucking.

When asked about the reasons for his retirement, John simply said: "everything has seasons and the season of John Thebes as a practicing attorney has ended." He loved the practice of law, but when he first started practicing, he never thought he'd last this long. He doesn't have any regrets. John and his family have been blessed in their life, and after a discussion, they both agreed that it was time for the season to change.

In his free time, which he will have plenty of now, John is very active. He enjoys golfing, running, and both indoor and outdoor tennis. While he enjoys running outside, one thing he will not miss is the frigid cold temperatures

John Thebes will always be remembered in the legal community. His involvement and impact, both professionally and personally, have always been present. Even in his retirement he still has the same work ethic, drive and morals that shaped his career. We hope he enjoys his retirement and cannot wait to see what John Thebes' next season has in store.

# Jon Richardson – A Great Work Ethic by Mike Bruno

Jon Richardson is an award-winning defense lawyer with a track record of more than 50 years.

He came from humble beginnings. His dad was a beer salesman with a 6th-grade education. His mom earned her GED many years later.

He grew up in post-World War II Canton, Ohio, which was a burgeoning manufacturing hub at the time. The city drew a rich influx of immigrants. Growing up in a diverse population meant Jon was exposed to many different ethnic groups. These interactions and the development of his interpersonal skills would serve him well in his future endeavors.

After graduating from McKinley High School, Jon was off to Ohio State to pursue a degree in English. He graduated from college and took a job selling yearbooks – His territory: Toledo, Ohio (coincidentally, his wife’s hometown). He joined the Army Reserves in 1966.

Apparently, neither a career selling yearbooks nor as a soldier appealed to Jon. He was called to be a teacher. So, Jon began his education career at Scott High School and was assigned to teach Freshman English. His wife was also teaching. This worked well for a while until the family started growing with the arrival of a son. The English teacher was about to learn a lesson in economics: survival in the 1960s on a teacher’s salary was difficult, if not impossible.

It was at this time, 1968, that Jon met Bobby Kaplan while working on the presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy. He stayed close to Bobby for 55 years, until Mr. Kaplan passed away in 2023.

But first things first: in order to follow in his mentor’s footsteps, there was a necessary first step toward law school. So, Jon enrolled as a night student at the

University of Toledo, College of Law. Over the next four years, he would teach during the day and work the 7-11 night shift at University Hall as a law student.

Apparently, a good work ethic was in his DNA as he graduated from law school and became licensed to practice law in 1972.

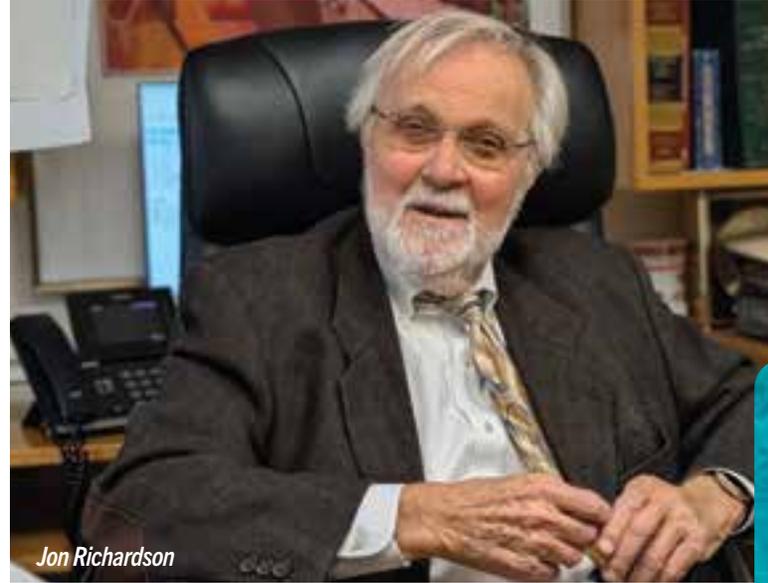
Jon learned his craft trying high-profile criminal cases with Bobby Kaplan in the 1970s. Among those was a murder at the former Alphies restaurant on Sylvania Avenue. Another involved an execution style murder that resulted in the jury acquitting on the murder and finding the defendant guilty of manslaughter.

In the early days, the law office consisted of Jon, Bobby, Jude Leavitt, and Walter Lehman. Pete Rost clerked for the firm and did legal research.

I asked Jon if he could talk about the unusual cases he’s handled. He told me about the client who murdered his landlord and had trouble disposing of her large body from the premises. The client proceeded to cut the deceased into hundreds of smaller pieces, which were later floated down the Maumee River.

The story doesn’t end there. The client, already charged with murder, then approached noted crime novelist Elmore Leonard to see if Leonard would be interested in writing about the grisly murder.

Jude Leavett Leonard declined, suggesting that his



Jon Richardson

works are fiction. “I make this stuff up.” Because of that association, Jon often corresponded with “Dutch” Leonard, one of his favorite authors.

I asked Jon if he noticed any changes over the years in terms of the nature of crimes committed by his clientele. He noted a recent trend toward more pointless crimes and more violent.

Favorite Judges? Without hesitation, he offered George Knoff, who was “not just smart, but wise.”

Jon provided an abundance of stories about judges, lawyers, and other notables. I’m sorry to report that many cannot be shared in this forum. Suffice to say, Jon has lived a fascinating and productive life, in and outside the law.

When he is not frequenting the local courts, Jon can be found at his cabin in Northern Michigan. He also enjoys a winter vacation in Mexico.

## Co-Counsel Opportunities

Whether you have an injury case that is outside your core practice area, a case you do not have time or the resources to pursue on your own, or a case outside your geographic area, our firm would love to talk with you about a referral or being associated as co-counsel.

We are proud to work with co-counsel throughout the country. And when those cases resolve, we are honored to pay significant referral and co-counsel fees.

For more information about Co-Counsel Opportunities, contact Charles E Boyk Law Offices, by phone at 419-241-1395, email at [referceb@charlesboyk-law.com](mailto:referceb@charlesboyk-law.com) or visit our website, [www.charlesboyk-law.com/referral](http://www.charlesboyk-law.com/referral)

## ABOUT THE CO-COUNSEL NEWSLETTER

Charles Boyk Law was founded more than 20 years ago with the intent of helping people in need. Behind a team of outstanding lawyers, professional support staff, and state-of-the-art technology, our firm has grown to become one of the leading personal injury law firms in NW Ohio and SE Michigan.

We consider it an honor to be contacted by attorneys, both locally and across the U.S., who are seeking co-counsel to help litigate complex personal injury cases. It is an even greater honor when those attorneys refer us a case involving their loved ones or friends.

Our co-counsel newsletter is tailored to attorneys. It highlights examples of cases we are handling and provides updates on litigation. If you have a personal injury case you are looking to refer, we invite you to consider our firm. Our team of attorneys and professional staff have the experience, knowledge and resources to provide your clients with the best representation and maximize the recovery.



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A Newsletter by Attorneys, For Attorneys

# The **BOYK** LAW REPORT

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## FAKE AI LAWYERS by Zac Shaffer

The time of AI has been upon us for years now. Every industry, from medicine to sales, has been affected, for better or worse, and the practice of law is no different. Whether a firm is using AI software to better service its clients or a solo practitioner is using Google AI to start their legal research on a topic they haven't approached yet, AI has fully invaded the practice. While there are so many great aspects to using AI, you still must look a gift horse in the mouth.

While there are numerous advantages for clients, attorneys, and the general public alike, there are horror stories from AI use. One of the biggest problems facing the legal community is fake AI advertisements. At some point, someone in your life has been duped by these fake AI ads. But what are these fake AI ads doing that is so wrong?

First, AI generators can create fake advertisements by using an attorney's or a firm's likeness without permission. Nowadays, deep fakes are not just used by Hollywood directors or for political attacks. They are used simply for

views, likes, or attention. Simply put, they are clickbait. While there may be some out there using AI to create genuine messages and supporting these attorneys and firms, that is usually not the case. They can create hateful or disparaging ads, and due to the level of online protection, will likely never be preventable.

Second, AI ads can facilitate false information to the public. Whether that is false information about facts or incorrect legal advice, fake advertisements can destroy the legal community from the outside. I can still remember speaking with clients who seemingly all had the same AI advertisement come across their feed: "If you were in an accident, don't listen to your attorney. Regardless of what they tell you, there is a new law in Ohio that was passed that entitles you to \$100,000, just for being in an accident." This was recited to me numerous times, and trying to explain that the internet is not always correct is like telling people that certain websites cannot be trusted (i.e. a website that ends in -pedia). People may know that they cannot use this information as gospel, but we all still use these websites for basic information.

At the heart of the issue is the effect that fake AI advertisements have on the overall trust of the legal field. People spend hours of their days on social media. They are surrounded daily by quick access to information that does not require factual support or validation. If they continually receive information that contradicts what their attorney is advising them to do, trust issues are bound to occur.

In order to protect yourself, your firm, and your clients, the best practice is to know these AI ads are out there. By recognizing they exist and expecting your clients to raise questions or concerns about what they are hearing, you have the unique ability to understand your clients' concerns and the ability to advise your clients of the reason they placed their trust in your hands. As a society, we are not going to move away from AI. Rather, the clear trend is that we will continue utilizing AI as we grow. These issues affect us all, as a profession and as people; we must continue to share information and stop the spread of misinformation.