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Memo:The best of the blogs
bluegrass law

Ask an attorney questions, demand straight answers

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Surely one lesson from the fen-phen case debacle is how utterly unhelpful lawyer advertising is as a way for the average person, who probably has no prior involvement at all with the legal system, to find a lawyer.

For years here in Central Kentucky we were regaled with colorful television ads that urged us to "Call the Man." Apparently, many did, including a few hundred who were injured by the fen-phen diet drug. During the recent fen-phen criminal trial, however, we learned that "the Man" they called was acquitted because he was so drunk in the early morning hours that he could not understand, at least according to the jury's verdict, the circumstances by which he was collecting so many millions in attorneys fees. (The retrial is under way for the two other former lawyers in the case.) One can fairly wonder exactly what legal services were provided to justify any fee.

What are individuals to do when either they or a family member has suffered some serious personal injuries and they need to find a qualified lawyer to represent them? Here are some helpful tips:

- Ask a lawyer that you know for a referral. Keep in mind that not all lawyers advertise in the Yellow Pages.
- Meet with and interview a number of attorneys. Ask each one who else in town handles your type of case. If they won't give you any names, get up and leave.
- Ask each lawyer to explain why he or she thinks you have a case. You should be able to understand the explanation; if you can't, ask yourself how the lawyer is going to be able to make a jury, which will be made of people just like you, understand it.
- Ask each lawyer whether he or she has any information to provide you, perhaps on a Web site, or other materials that you can review on your own time to find out more about your type of case and the lawyer's qualifications and experience.
- Ask the lawyer whether he or she will handle your case or somebody else in the office will.
- Find out how the lawyer will keep you informed about the progress of a case.

Don't be a victim of a fen-phen flim-flam. When either you or your family is faced with a serious injury or other serious legal situation, finding and hiring a good lawyer to represent you is very important.