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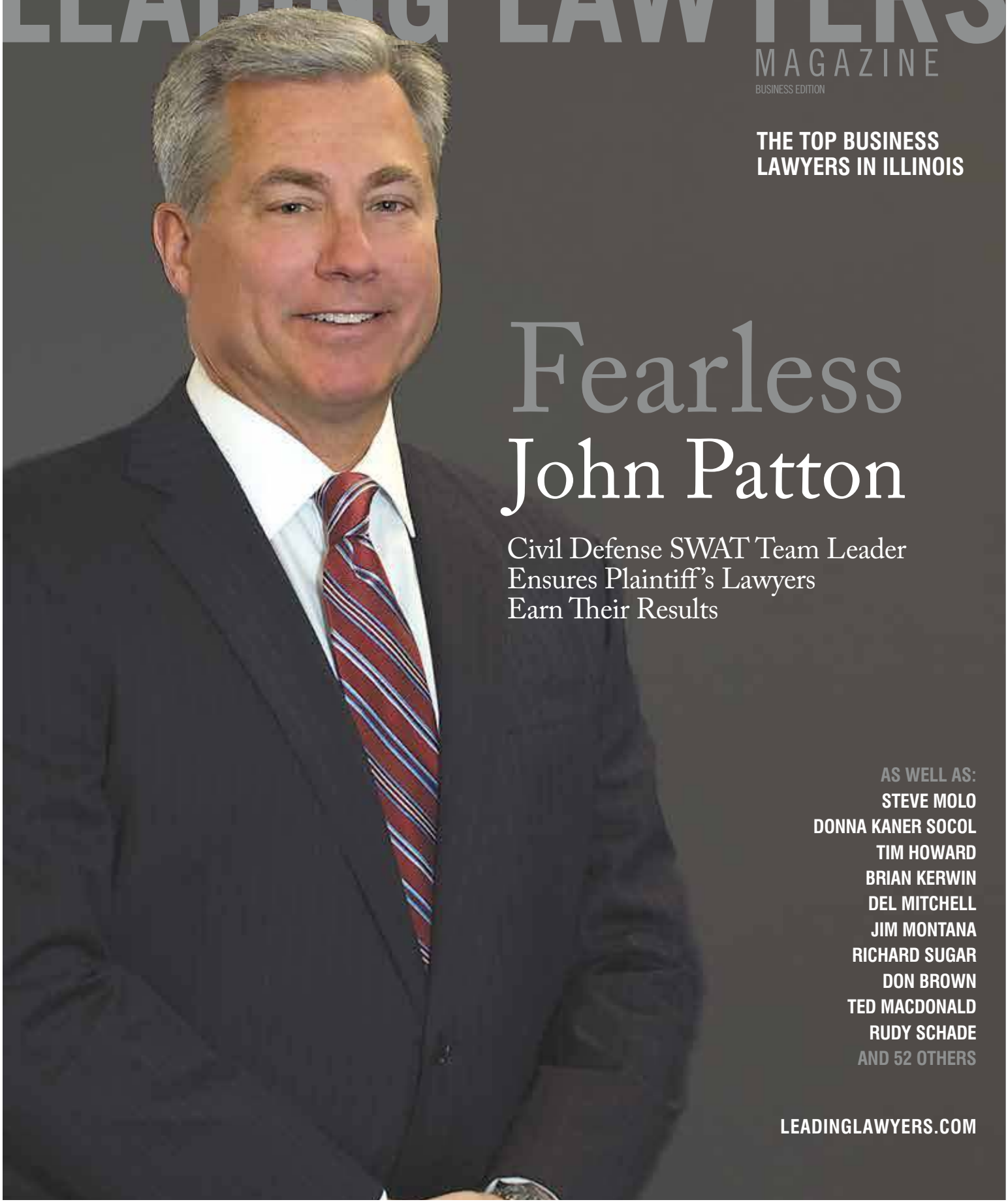

Fearless John Patton

Civil Defense SWAT Team Leader Ensures Plaintiff's Lawyers Earn Their Results

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RUDY SCHADE
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John Patton

The Fearless, On-Call Trial Lawyer Who Saves Millions in Catastrophic Losses

by Jack Silverstein

All John W. Patton Jr. wanted was a quiet Sunday morning.

The co-founding partner of **Patton & Ryan LLC** had some paperwork to catch up on and needed to start preparing an upcoming case. So he drew up a simple game plan: get to the office early, finish work by noon, go home to be with his family.

He arrived at 6:30 to an empty office. He made a pot of coffee and sat down at his desk. Out of the window in his corner office at the IBM Building—now the AMA Plaza—the sun was not yet rising. All was going according to plan.

At 9 a.m., the phone rang.

On the phone was a client with whom Patton had a 10-year relationship. After the briefest of niceties, the client got to the point: "What are you doing tomorrow?"

Looks like we'll be discussing a new case, thought Patton, who had nothing on the books for Monday.

"It's an office day," he said.

"We need you to get on a plane today and fly down to St. Louis, Missouri, and pick a jury tomorrow morning," said the client.

A word not fit for print flashed through Patton's mind. Then he started wondering about the case's complexity, which involved a brain damaged quadriplegic injured in a work accident.

Patton also wondered why his client—usually a savvy man—would call him so last minute.

Turns out his client and the plaintiff's attorney had negotiated a settlement on Friday. Patton's client had gone out to celebrate Friday night. On Saturday, the plaintiff's attorney called Patton's client and said he'd changed his mind and wanted more money.

"This gentleman wants a trial," said Patton's client. "We're going to give him a trial. Get down there and let's get going."

Any vexation Patton felt over the accelerated schedule was soon replaced by adrenaline. Anticipation. The thrill of the fight. He agreed to the case and called the defense attorney to let him know that he, Patton, was coming.

"Tell me as much as you can," Patton said. "Whatever I need to know for tomorrow."

With that, Patton high-tailed out of the office, went home, informed his wife about the sudden change of schedule, drove to the airport and flew to St. Louis.

On the one hand, he was displeased that he had to take a case with only the slightest time for preparation. He also did not like having to tell his wife the situation rather than discussing it with her.

On the other hand…

"'No' is not in my vocabulary," Patton explains.

After receiving an immediate *pro hac* admission, Patton's next interaction with defense counsel came at court the next morning. The jury was brought up and the judge swore them in. Patton sat at the defense table, preparing to engage in jury selection.

The plaintiff's attorney called for a recess. He left the courtroom with the original defense counsel while Patton remained at the table. The defense attorney returned. The plaintiff's attorney had re-agreed to the original settlement offer. That was that.

Patton never got the details to the renewed settlement agreement, calling them "not relevant to my mission." All he knew was that he'd been called upon, he had served his client and his mission was successful.

He was in court for all of two hours.

"And then I went and had a great lunch," he says with a laugh.

That case, about 10 years ago, is Patton's record for the shortest period between a phone call and a trial. He neither encourages it nor hopes for it again. He no longer comes to the office on Sundays unless his Monday is already booked.

But two weeks of notice? One week? A few days? What may seem like a short gestation period for other attorneys is standard fare for Patton.

"I'm a trial-coholic," he says. "A bad day for me is an office day. If I could have my druthers, every single day I'd be in court trying cases or in court doing matters that lead to getting us in front of a jury."

He glances at his desk phone.

"Being here right now, I'm hoping that phone rings and I've got another one." He smiles. "Which likely it's going to."

Here Comes the Cavalry

On a coat rack in Patton's office rests a black baseball cap. Across the front in capital white letters is the word SWAT. The hat was a gift from a client who calls Patton & Ryan his SWAT team.

Patton's got another word for it: parachuting.

"I have an unusual practice," Patton says. "What we do is this: We agree to be on standby for major trials—catastrophic loss trials—in all 50 states."

His schedule is one of constant flux. In fact, he's not even supposed to be in Chicago on this day. He's supposed to be in Los Angeles, trying a medical malpractice case for which he was called in two weeks earlier. The judge decided that the proceedings lacked adequate preparation time and called for a continuance.

So Patton came home, and a trial day became an office day. That's why he's staring at his phone, hoping it will ring. The word, Patton says, is already out that he's home from California.

He never stays idle long. Since founding his firm in 2004, the 55-year-old Patton has started about one case per month. In most of those cases, he has represented insurance companies—often AIG—in multi-million dollar injury cases where he is asked to swoop in just before trial.

Hence "parachuting."

"I like jumping out of that plane, and I don't care what the landing's going to be," he says. "I do hope that the landing isn't too rough, but I'm not worried about that. You can't be worried about it. You can't

The fearless Patton encounters a 45-foot whale shark while diving.

pick and choose. You're either all in or you're all out in this business."

Patton's been all in since 1983, the year he earned his J.D. at DePaul University College of Law. His cases are often newsmakers, and the stakes are always substantial, from a $29.5 million verdict in favor of a passenger injured on a Metra crash to $64 million in favor of an ironworker injured when falling 15 to 20 feet off a steel beam to $34 million in favor of a carpenter at McCormick Place injured in a fall from a motorized scooter.

In that case, Patton's client received a defense verdict, while a co-defendant was found negligent in the matter. It was one of the many defense verdicts Patton has obtained for his clients around the country.

While those three cases occurred in Illinois, Patton has also tried cases in 25 other states. This year alone, along with Illinois, he has been requested for cases in California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

"Simply put, when that phone rings and I answer it, if my calendar is available and I haven't gotten a call from someone else for that week, I agree quite willingly to pack my bags and hop a plane and go to whatever state that is and work with the counsel that's on the case to get ready for trial," he says.

Patton hopes his name and reputation means "that when we say we're going to try a case, we mean it, and that we will go the distance."

According to plaintiff attorney Thomas Q. Keefe Jr. of Keefe & Keefe P.C., attorneys would be wise to take Patton at his word.

"The thing about Patton is that he's fearless," Keefe says. "Real trial lawyers can smell fear. I can smell it on my opponent. So can Patton."

Keefe first squared off in court against Patton in an AIG case in the 1990s. Keefe represented the family of a man and his child killed in southern Illinois when a truck crossed a highway center line. Patton represented the trucking company.

The case settled, though Keefe knew that Patton was ready for trial. Patton's desire to try cases—and his skills in the courtroom—give him an aura that is, Keefe says, "worth millions of dollars."

"I can smell the fear in the lawyer who won't go to trial and who will pay me," Keefe says. "If you have a person who you know is afraid to go to trial and they tell you, 'I can get you $5 million (in a settlement offer),' the reality is that he'll get you six or seven, because the alternative is that that person is going to have to do something that they're afraid of doing.

"The reason a guy like Patton is worth this story is so that people can see that, from my side of the fence, people who are not afraid to go to trial save their clients a lot of money.…You know that when Patton offers you something, take it or leave it, because he's not afraid to go to trial."

David L. Jones is equally impressed by Patton.

Jones is a partner at the California firm Gordon, Rees, Scully, Mansukhani, LLP. Last year, when a case in which he was representing AIG and National Union went to trial instead of settling, his firm got the call: Patton was on his way.

"When I first met him, I liked him," Jones says. "I thought he was a personable guy. Very charismatic. You would think, in a situation like that, somebody gets brought in and they're looking over your shoulder at what you've done. That wasn't his mode of operation at all. He was just looking to get up to speed on the case."

Jones, who'd been working on the case for around a year, did not feel "replaced." At least not in the sense of inadequacy.

"To me, it's like you pitch nine innings and they bring in a reliever for the last two outs," he says. "I don't see it like being replaced, and I wasn't replaced. I tried the case with him. It's just adding another component to the team."

Another component to the team on that case was Paul D. Motz, an associate who joined Patton & Ryan last June after 5½ years with Cutler & Hull.

"The way I described (going from) my old firm to coming to Patton & Ryan is going from Single A straight to the Yankees," Motz says. "It's the big time. We get cases that you can't find anyplace else. They are interesting, they're intellectually stimulating, they're complex, and they're important to the clients."

If Patton & Ryan is the Yankees, who is Patton?

"Probably the best way to put it is he's Mariano Rivera," Motz says about the recently retired future Hall of Famer. "And I hate the Yankees, but I think it fits. He's a closer. He's the one they bring in in the high-pressure situations, and he's depended on."

According to both Patton and Keefe, that dependability comes from repetition over the course of many trials in many years.

"It's a sense of smell," Keefe reiterates. "That's why plaintiff lawyers who don't go to trial, Patton will eat them for lunch."

The Sweet Legal Science

Like most American boys of his generation, Patton played baseball growing up. He also played football, basketball and water polo. But his favorite sport was boxing. He fought in high school and then at Miami University in Ohio, where he was captain of the team and fought against other NCAA teams.

"To me, a trial has a lot of similarities to an amateur boxing match," Patton says, noting that a match is decided by judges and a trial by jurors.

"And let me tell you something: If you can get into a ring and overcome all of the challenges and worries in that setting, trying a case is a walk in the park."

During college, Patton boxed Golden Gloves in Cincinnati, eventually retiring from the sport in the 1980s. He spent his career in three weight classes: He was a 147-pound welterweight in high school, a 156-pound junior middleweight early in his college career and a 165-pound middleweight at the end of it.

On a few occasions as a middleweight he fought a light heavyweight because his opponent did not show up and he "had to fight who was available."

When that happened, he changed his technique from a slugger to a mover, countering his opponent's superior size with his, in this case, superior speed.

"I was more of a toe-to-toe slugger than a skilled fighter," Patton says. "I hit very hard. I had a hard punch, and I could take a punch."

Boxing permeates every aspect of Patton's trial work, from his approach to his language.

In March, following the Dempe verdict, Patton told the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* that the case "was hand-to-hand combat every single day," one of numerous references to fighting peppered throughout his language. He commonly refers to taking a case to verdict as "going the distance," the term for a fight that ends in a decision rather than a knockout.

"He frequently uses boxing vernacular when talking about dealing with witnesses," Motz says. "Taking body blows. Keeping your gloves up. 'You gotta protect yourself.' The boxing references definitely come up in trial meetings."

Boxing taught Patton many lessons, including the importance of staying in fighting shape.

"You could be the better boxer, but if in the third round you were out of gas, you were going to pay for it," he says, comparing that required endurance to a long trial.

"As the weeks go by, if you're running out of gas, the great witness is going to be the last one to testify in the case," he says. "If you're not ready and prepared to go at it, you could lose the case."

The other big lesson from boxing? Attack, attack, attack.

"My style of trying cases is not to just defend and react to what your opponent is doing," he says. "That is, to me, not a good formula in this line of work. You need to be on the attack from the very beginning. You have to have a strategy and you have to be very aggressive and proactive on it."

Partner David F. Ryan has worked with Patton since 1998, when Patton hired him. In that time, Ryan has learned the value Patton places on strategy.

"(We) never waited until the end to figure out how you're going to defend a case when you're a month from trial," Ryan says. "We always know....I think sometimes lawyers let things slide a bit in litigation. Not John."

That strategic attack was evident to Robert A. Clifford of Clifford Law Offices when the two tried a case against each other that went to verdict in June 2012.

"He's very well-prepared," Clifford says. "It's clear that he develops a game plan or a strategy before the trial that he then executes. My sense is that he has a vision of what he wants to do and the points that he wants to make and how he wants to structure the presentation to the jury, and he then executes that plan."

> **"When you have some kind of defense, why give them every penny that they have? Make 'em earn it, and we'll have John Patton in to try the case."**

In their case, Clifford represented three workers severely burned in a grain elevator explosion at a ConAgra Foods grain facility in Chester. Patton represented ConAgra, once again parachuting in shortly before trial after several years of litigation had already taken place. A federal jury in East St. Louis awarded the three men a $180 million verdict. The case is currently on appeal in the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Though a federal jury in East St. Louis awarded the three men a $180 million verdict, the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in September that ConAgra held no liability.

"We fought before the trial court to seek justice for ConAgra," Patton told the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* after the ruling. "I am deeply appreciative of the just and well-reasoned opinion of the 7th Circuit."

Clifford came away from the 2012 trial with an appreciation for Patton's skills as a cross-examiner.

"He knows how to develop a good flow," Clifford says. "He sticks to his guns in terms of his exchange with witnesses. He gets the points he wants to get, and he's good at getting them."

Partner John A. Ouska, who represented ConAgra in the Southern District alongside Patton, has seen Patton's skills up close since joining the firm in 2010 after a three-decade career in the state's attorney's office.

"I've tried cases with some of the best and against some of the best," Ouska says. "I can tell you without a doubt, unequivocally, that John Patton is the best examiner, be it direct or cross, of witnesses that I have ever seen."

Ouska recalls the body shots Patton delivered on the plaintiff's key witness, a supervisor for ConAgra's co-defendant who told the workers to clean out a clogged drain bin from the smoldering grain silo in preparation for the fire department. When the workers returned, the bin exploded.

"John, through his questioning, had the supervisor who sent his workers back in…basically concede that if it were not for his actions, for his sole actions of directing these guys back, that these guys never would have been injured," Ouska says.

Like fans of any sport, Patton grew up with a favorite boxer: Rocky Marciano.

"He led with his chin, wasn't afraid to take the punches and knew that in spite of the punishment he was going to take he would come out on top," Patton says.

If he has to choose one, his favorite boxer today is Manny Pacquiao who reminds him of "the old style fighters."

"He trains hard," Patton says. "He fights all contenders. And he fights his heart out every single round."

Floyd Mayweather, on the other hand, "epitomizes what's wrong with boxing" because he fights so rarely. Since earning the WBC light middleweight belt in May 2007, Mayweather has fought eight times. In that same time span, Pacquiao has fought 14 times.

"I have to love him because he's an American," Patton says of Mayweather. "I have to love him because he was an Olympic gold medal winner. I liked his father

when he fought, but he's too theatrical. I like the old style fighters."

Patton can't find too many old style fighters in boxing these days. He's found them elsewhere.

"I've migrated more over to the UFC," he says. "Those guys remind me of the old days of boxing. You fought to win. Nowadays, boxers try to avoid the number one contender. They try to avoid the tough fights and go for the lesser ranked fighters to build up their record. That's one thing I don't like about boxing.

"The other thing I don't like about boxing is there is corruption in the judging. And with the UFC, it doesn't too often go to the judges. That's how boxing used to be. There was a decisive winner."

Of course, boxing doesn't just require strength, will and endurance. There's a steel-eyed calculation that comes with setting a goal to pummel an opponent to the canvas. Boxers certainly don't wish to kill another boxer in the ring, but they must remain detached from sentiment in the pursuit of brutal victory.

"If you want to be a trial lawyer, you have to be dealing with people who are not necessarily friendly to you," Patton says.

A trial lawyer in his line of work, he says, must stand in the courtroom in front of 12 strangers and learn how to, with a very short window, convince them to "send somebody with horrendous injuries out the door"—he pauses, circling his fingers to make a zero sign—"with nothing."

A Win or a Loss by Any Other Name

Another sport comes to mind when thinking of Patton's practice.

Patton is not always arguing liability. Sometimes he's arguing damages in cases that often go to trial because opposing counsel won't listen to reason. Patton's game plan then is analogous to a basketball team with a "no dunks, no layups" rule. Take the hard foul and make the opponent earn two points at the free throw line.

"There are times as a trial attorney where you get the crap kicked out of you, but the client says 'That's fine, because they wanted all of our money anyway,'" Ouska says.

The client's mindset is simple: "If they want all of our money, let's give them a trial."

In cases in which the plaintiff is attempting to drain the defense of every last penny in a settlement offer, a loss at trial is not always a loss, says Ouska.

"When you have some kind of defense, why give them every penny that they have?" he says. "Make 'em earn it, and we'll have John Patton in to try the case."

That was the situation in September 2005 with the Metra case Patton defended in which a Rock Island Metra train derailed after going 69 mph in a 10 mph zone. Two passengers died. Another, 28-year-old Renea Poppel, suffered a traumatic brain injury, a broken pelvis and a broken neck. Poppel was 13 weeks pregnant at the time of the accident. She was still in a coma in January when doctors safely delivered her child via Caesarean section.

"We admitted fault and told the jury, 'All our fault,'" Patton says. "Inexcusable what happened. And Mrs. Poppel had no fault. She's a true victim of a bad engineer."

> **"You have to be totally, 100 percent immersed in trying your case and always be thinking the jury is going to decide this."**

But, as Patton recalls telling the jury at the time, "We're here to tell you how we can give fair compensation to a situation that we can't go back in time and change."

During settlement negotiations, "fair compensation"—at least as far as the defense was concerned—was not part of the process.

"There wasn't ever a demand," Patton says. "The settlement process, much to our chagrin, was 'Keep offering me money, and I'll tell you when it's enough.' We kept offering money. A lot of it. More than what was fair. But it wasn't enough. So I was requested to try that case in circuit court in front of a jury. Which I did."

The $29.5 million awarded to Poppel was in line with the defense's position of fair compensation—the equivalent of fouling Michael Jordan on a dunk attempt and having him miss one of his free throws.

"We don't call those 'wins,' because when somebody suffers terrible injuries like that and it's your fault, you should never use the word 'win,'" Patton says about the Metra case. "But we were satisfied that the jury had spoken and spoken in a way that was consistent with what our position was on what was fair and reasonable under those circumstances."

Patton is at ease with the notion of notching a "win" in which his client lost a case. He's even at ease with losing, so long as he prepares, fights and, later, reflects.

"There is no trial lawyer that is telling you the truth who says he has never lost a case," Patton says. "I just had a trial recently where a guy said he was 30 and 1, or 40 and 1, and I had to laugh. Trial lawyers that are similar to me and have my experience and have had my results both positive and negative…they will tell you that anybody bragging about the fact that they've never lost a trial either has a strong challenge with an honest memory, or they haven't tried enough cases.

"You're gonna take a lot of punches," he continues. "And to use the boxing analogy, you gotta get off the canvas and get back in the ring, learn how those punches landed on you and change your approach to avoid that situation in the future.

The idea of grinding out a tough loss that clients treat as a win is no big deal, says Tom Demetrio of Corboy & Demetrio.

"If that's the biggest rap against John, that's an accolade," Demetrio says. "That's a compliment."

Jurors Play Sherlock Holmes

Ouska met Patton in 2010, when he answered a blind advertisement for a position at Patton & Ryan. Ouska interviewed four times for the position; the second and fourth interviews were with Patton.

"He was an intense individual," Ouska says about meeting Patton. "Maybe intense is not as good a word as no nonsense.…When I say intense, he wanted to make sure that if I got an opportunity to join the firm that I was the right fit. He pulled no punches."

Ryan describes Patton's trial style as "combative," though "not uncivilly," while both Demetrio and Clifford compliment his professionalism.

"He was a gentleman," Demetrio says about Patton in court. "He is competent. I don't know if we had one objection throughout the whole trial. It went very smoothly. I attribute that to having an opponent who is professional."

What impresses Ryan most is Patton's attention to detail and ability to internalize and then analyze all the facts of a complex case.

"Every lawyer wants to know all the details," Ryan says. "Everybody doesn't master that skill. Lawyers get up in court and forget things. It happens all the time. That doesn't happen with John. He nails down his examinations and cross examinations solid. I've litigated a lot of cases against a lot of lawyers. I can tell you, he's the best."

"I think it's very measured," Clifford says about Patton's trial approach. "I don't think he's into outbursts or histrionics. He's truly professional and polite to all lawyers. And he doesn't mess around with petty stuff. He lets you try your case, and people respond in kind to that and try their case, and let the better fact pattern win."

Patton values the fact pattern because it is, he says, the key to convincing a jury to take his side.

"All juries solve—at least in their minds—solve the case," he says. "I think there is still a school of thought that all you need to do is convince the jury that the plaintiff failed to prove their case. To me that's nonsense. That doesn't work. The jury needs to solve the case and solve it consistent with your story. If it's a construction accident, they're going to play Sherlock Holmes, and they're going to decide the mechanism of how this happened."

Also nonsense, Patton says, is underestimating the jury's collective intelligence.

"It happens more frequently than you would think," he says. "People underestimate the intelligence and the puzzle-solving skills of jurors. What I do is I give them the explanation for how the accident happened. I give them the explanation for why the amount of damages being claimed isn't fair. And I do it in a very simple way. I mean what I say. I speak to the heart. And jurors pick up on that."

Motz learned that firsthand when he watched Patton during the McCormick Place trial, and then interviewed jurors afterward.

"Each and every one of the jurors we talked to thanked us and specifically thanked John for his closing argument," Motz says. "He was respectful of their time, of their common sense, of their life experiences. He delivered a persuasive argument that didn't rely on flash or empty rhetoric. It was using the facts, applying the law and looking at how common sense dictated what happened. It was a fantastic closing argument."

Earning a jury's trust and respect is, for Patton, among the most crucial elements of winning a trial. They are traits that are particularly important for Patton in what can often be a tense relationship between the jury and his client.

"With my practice, you don't always get likeable clients," he says. "You represent a company that may not have a great image. Or you may represent a company that is instantly recognized as having deep pockets. And to these inner-city juries, those aren't necessarily likeable qualities. And the plaintiff is representing somebody with tragic injuries. Their client is going to be instantly likeable."

The challenge then, Patton says, is to allow each juror to judge the facts without his or her natural biases in favor of an injured party and against a corporation or insurance company.

"I'm going to root for the underdog," Patton says, describing the mindset of the typical juror. "I'm going to root for the person who's had a tragedy. And I don't really want to root for a company that has a lot of money or has a reputation that I don't like."

"I don't have the time or the opportunity to sell to this jury why their biases against my client are unfounded," he says. "So I have to sell myself."

Binders Full of Cases

Patton's a boxer, a fighter, a man of civility and preparation. And one other thing.

"You have to be a storyteller," he says.

"There is nothing complicated about this business.…You have to be capable of telling a story within the time constraints that you have, in a manner that the jury follows, understands and believes."

That story, he says, must be simple to visualize and comprehend.

"If you're telling a story that has too many twists and turns and too many 'what ifs,' you're losing that case," he says. "Tell your story, and don't get bogged down in the plaintiff's narrative."

Patton's other guiding principle of being a successful trial attorney is not being afraid to lose.

"You've been asked to do a job," he says. "I'm not asked if it should be tried or how much money should be paid. They've already gone through that process. They've made the decision: This should be tried. I'm doing what I'm asked to do. You have to be totally, 100 percent immersed in trying your case and always be thinking the jury is going to decide this. Anything less than that—'Boy, I really hope it gets settled. Boy, I really hope it gets continued'—if that's your mindset you're in the wrong line of work."

Patton is in the right line of work. An odd phone call earlier this year confirmed that fact.

While Patton was in Madison, Wis., preparing a case, his secretary received a phone call from an employee at a downtown Starbucks. The employee had found two large binders on one of the shop's tables. One read "JOHN PATTON'S OPENINGS" down the side. The other, "JOHN PATTON'S CLOSINGS."

The secretary, confused, called Patton.

"Somebody said you were at Starbucks," she told him. "Did you come back without us knowing?"

"No," said Patton, equally confused.

"Well, Starbucks says you were just there a couple hours ago drinking coffee and left your binders."

The secretary sent a clerk to Starbucks to pick up the binders. Patton's staff quickly realized what had happened: Opposing counsel was studying his work. Patton was flattered.

"I felt a sense of satisfaction that what I say is interesting enough for people to want to order and read," he says. "I didn't see it as something that was being an unfair advantage. I don't do it because I don't care how my opponent tries his case. Those are details, to me, that distract you from your mission. That's a process of getting older and believing in your style."

The firm never learned the identity of the binders' owner. Patton figures he was an opponent prepping for a future case against him. He also thinks it's likely that opponent will read this story.

And since the binders now reside in the firm's library as study tools for associates, Patton has only one thing to say to whoever left them in the coffee shop.

Thank you. ■

Awards & Recognitions

- Trial Lawyer Excellence Award in Recognition of the Superior Outcome of Pister v. Brown: *Jury Verdict Reporter,* Oct, 2014
- Top 10 General Lawyers Illinois: Personal Injury Defense, *Leading Lawyers Magazine*
- AV rated by Martindale Hubble from 1993 to the present
- Selected as a Leading Lawyer by Law Bulletin Publishing Company from 2004 to the present
- Super Lawyer 2009 to the present
- Selected as Top Attorney in Illinois for Professional Liability-Defense Law by Martindale Hubble in 2013
- Selected as a Leading Civil Defense Lawyer by *Chicago Lawyer* in 2012
- Selected as a Top Attorney in Illinois for Government/ Cities/Municipalities Law by *Chicago Magazine* in 2012
- Selected as one of the Top Lawyers in the Chicago Area by Leading Lawyers by *Chicago Lawyer Magazine* from 2011 to the present
- Selected as one of the Top Attorneys in Illinois by *Chicago Magazine* from 2010 to the present
- 2010 Recipient of the *Jury Verdict Reporter* Top Defense Trial Lawyer in Illinois
- Trial Lawyer Excellence Award by the Insurance Industry

Practice Areas

- Bad Faith Litigation
- Catastrophic Loss Trial Practice
- Civil Litigation & Insurance Defense
- Commercial Litigation
- Construction Law
- Emergency Catastrophic Loss Investigations
- Employment Law
- Medical Malpractice
- Premises Liability
- Products Liability
- Professional Liability
- Trucking, Busing and Transportation

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