



*American Board of Criminal Lawyers*  
THE ROUND TA



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MOTHER  
GOOSE  
JINGLES



Goose Series



**Steve Benjamin** was the subject of a long, long, long biographical profile in the July issue of *Richmond Magazine*, titled “Hard Case- Criminal Defense Lawyer Steve Benjamin never rests”

## Hard Case

BY GARY ROBERTSON Issue: July 2012

Steve Benjamin stares out from a nondescript chair at his downtown office, a simple suite of a few small rooms at the end of a long corridor on South 12th Street. One of Richmond’s best-known criminal defense attorneys, he has a black eye the size of a doughnut, and his swollen nose bends precariously to the left. His shaved head makes the injuries stand out even more sharply.

No, it wasn’t a client who inflicted the pain. “Bike,” Benjamin says succinctly.

The face seems a perfect metaphor for Benjamin’s legal career, a fitful, bruising ride, usually among the lower courts, often representing the down-and-out, the dispossessed, the forgotten, the desperate and, occasionally, the truly scary....

Benjamin, who will become president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers on Aug. 4 in San Francisco, was born at Camp Lejeune, N.C., the Marine Corps base camp where his father, Leonard Benjamin, was a career Marine gunnery sergeant and proud of it....

“My parents taught [us] two lessons,” Benjamin says. “The first was that nobody is any better because of where they came from or what they look like than anybody else, and that all people deserve equal treatment and respect.

“The second lesson was that we as individuals have a responsibility to help those unable to help themselves,” Benjamin adds. “Fairness, equality and respect — those were the values that were important to my parents.” ....

One of the great callings of Benjamin’s professional life has been indigent defense, an often-thankless job carried largely by Virginia’s public-defender system and court-appointed attorneys who stand on the bottom rung of the legal fee schedule. ....

... . He’s after what’s good for the commonwealth and what’s good for criminal law.”

Dave Johnson, executive director of Virginia’s Indigent Defense Commission, says Benjamin has been “a driving force” in the effort to raise the fee cap for court-appointed attorneys. ....

If indigent defense is one of Benjamin’s passions, then the other is DNA testing as a tool for freeing individuals who have been wrongly convicted. A member of the Virginia Forensic Science Board, he has helped spearhead the testing of samples of evidence, primarily semen and blood, in state case files from 1973 to 1988. ...

His years of criminal defense work, as well as his efforts to help indigent clients acquire competent representation and his use of DNA evidence to free those wrongly convicted, have only increased his passion for the law....

Though he enjoys arguing cases and talking to juries, wants to be the leader in any group, and likes to be the one who talks to the press — Benjamin is a legal analyst for NBC 12 in Richmond — there is another side to Benjamin’s personality.

“He is beyond introverted,” DesPortes says. “He is extremely private, extremely.”

Benjamin will say only that he prefers to keep his private life private, always has and always will. Following his mother’s death in 1993, and the untimely passing of his sister from cancer in 2006, the lifelong bachelor has no immediate family, but he says he still hopes he’ll meet the right person some day.

A competitive athlete for whom the adjective “competitive” is probably an understatement, Benjamin is described by friends and colleagues as scarily intense.

At 5 feet 8 inches tall and 165 pounds, he says he still a long way to go to be the kind of competitor he aspires to be.

“I exercise every day,” Benjamin says. “I work here, I go home and ride either with my friends or my [biking] team or myself for several hours, then go to the gym. “I enjoy hard recreation,” he continues. “I enjoy being competitive. Hard exercise is an outlet for me.” ....

Before taking up competitive cycling, Benjamin was a hard-core extreme marathoner. He has run 24 hours straight without sleep. He has run 100 miles, 150 miles — in the boiling temperatures of Death Valley and in the High Sierras at elevations of 10,000 feet and up. ...

Benjamin is looking forward to his year as president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, but the title won’t go on a scorecard, because he said he’s never kept score on his accomplishments.

“When something is over, it’s over,” he says. “I don’t look back.”

Instead, he will just keep following his mother’s advice: to seek his own bliss, to meet life head-on. Hard and head-on.



# Teatime love bite

A WOMAN almost bit off her husband's willy as he cooked pancakes for tea — while she gave him oral sex.

In the heat of passion he lost his grip on the pan and spilt boiling oil down her naked back.

She clenched her teeth on his willy and in agony he bashed her on the head with the pan.

Both only admitted how they received their injuries after "intense questioning" by hospital docs in Carioca, Romania.

The man needed treatment to his willy while the wife had burns, two black eyes and a broken cheek bone.

It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

— From *Asphodel, that Greeny Flower*  
by William Carlos Williams



"Yes! That was very loud Mr. Trainer,  
but I said I wanted to hear your HEART!"

## VERA PAVLOVA

*To converse with the greats*

To converse with the greats  
by trying their blindfolds on;  
to correspond with books  
by rewriting them;  
to edit holy edicts,  
and at the midnight hour  
to talk with the clock by tapping a wall  
in the solitary confinement of the universe.



## Hippo eats dwarf

**BANGKOK:** A hippopotamus swallowed a circus dwarf in a "freak accident" in northern Thailand, according to a columnist in the *Pattaya Mail*.

The Grapevine column reported: "A circus dwarf, nicknamed Od, died recently when he bounced sideways from a trampoline and was swallowed by a yawning hippopotamus waiting to appear in the next act."

"Vets said Hilda the Hippo had a gag reflex which caused her to swallow. More than 1000 spectators continued to applaud wildly until they realised there had been a tragic mistake."

## SOUNDS LIKE A JOKE

— In testimony at an extortion trial in New York City in June, Anthony Russo (alleged Colombo family associate) told prosecutors that a mob war was narrowly averted after another Colombo hand learned that a new Staten Island pizza parlor (run by an alleged Bonanno associate) featured pies that suspiciously resembled those of the top-rated L&B Spumoni Gardens in Brooklyn, which has Colombo ties. Representatives of the families had a "sit-down" (at a neutral site — a Panera Bread restaurant!) and worked out a payment plan to satisfy L&B.





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8/23/27



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**The RoundTable**

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**Future Meetings**

October 4-6, 2012: St. Regis, Dana Point, CA

February 15-18, 2013: Scottsdale, AZ

June 14-16, 2013: Vancouver

October 10-13, 2013: Atlanta, GA





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June 4, 2012

Steve LaCheen  
 Attorney at Law  
 1429 Walnut  
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 Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Steve,

My law partner and I (Joe Passanise) recently won an acquittal before U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon in the United States District (D.C.) regarding the first prosecution of 22 defendants regarding the Federal Corrupt Practices Act and issued the enclosed press release as shown in Criminal Law Reporter (BNA) March, 2012. **90CrL823-827.**

Best wishes to you and looking forward to upcoming seminars.

Sincerely yours,

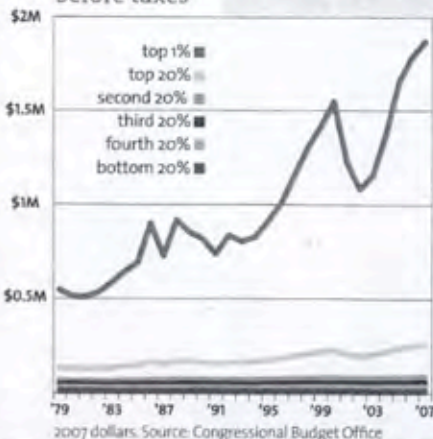


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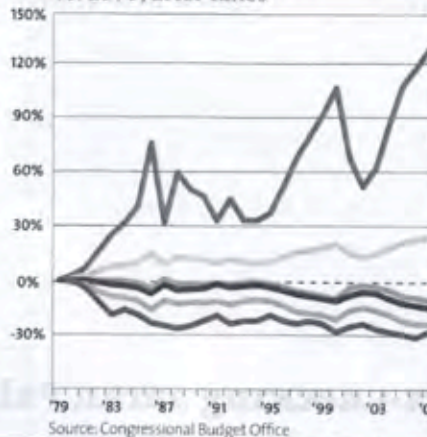
**It's the Inequality, Stupid**

**A** huge share of the nation's economic growth over the past 30 years has gone to the top 0.1 percent, who now make an average of \$27 million per household. The average income for the bottom 90 percent of us? \$31,244.

**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME**  
before taxes



**CHANGE IN SHARE OF INCOME**  
vs. 1979, after taxes



**Mother Jones**

**TOO BIG TO JAIL**  
It's a year later and...  
Bombers are bigger than ever  
Goldman Sachs CEO: "Doing God's work"  
Subprime villains get taxpayer cash to... fix mortgages?  
Congress' Wall Street tonies take it in...  
**THE VAMPIRE ECONOMY**  
THE SUPERRICH ARE SUCKING AMERICA DRY. CONGRESS IS UNDER THEIR SWAY. CAN OBAMA STAY ALIVE?



# Making Amends

**EARLIER THIS WEEK** A good friend asked me to write about making amends. After thirty-two years in full time private practice I have seen people injure and hurt each other in many ways and at the deepest levels. I have learned from people the best ways to make amends and get it right in relationships with friends, family, significant others, spouses and co-workers. What I propose is a very high standard. Most folks may not be capable or willing to make amends at this level, however because each relationship is precious it is worthwhile to shoot for the best. Here are the five steps I propose for making amends:

**Step 1: Own it!** If you have hurt or wronged someone—own it. Even if the hurt was a result of a misunderstanding or slip of the tongue or otherwise unintentional hurt. By owning it, you acknowledge you had a role in causing hurt to someone else. Even if the hurt is minor or a perceived hurt, it is important, when you value another person, to let her know you accept responsibility for injuring someone else's feelings. This is also a way of validating the feelings and reality of another person. You will often receive more respect in the eyes of the injured person as you begin to heal their wound. Remember that while words can hurt, they can also heal and uplift.

**Step 2: Express sincere sorrow or remorse.** In short, apologize. Being apologetic means surrendering your own pride for the sake of the other. Insincere apologies often make things worse. Sometimes apologies are face to face, sometimes on the phone or in writing. You must choose the format that works best for the people involved. Part of the process of making amends is the growth involved for each person in this kind of dilemma. It's better to learn to humble yourself than let an emotional injury fester in someone else. Humbling yourself, besides being good for the spirit, helps to keep false pride in check.

**Step 3: Make a sincere promise that you will not repeat the actions.** Inactions or words that led to injuring another's feelings. Promising not to do it again also holds you to a high bar. Everyone likes to be reassured they will not be hurt again in the same way in the future. This helps to reinstate trust in a relationship. Making a false or insincere promise will teach the other person not to trust your words. When your words and actions are in alignment, the other person will be able to observe your integrity. If you're unable to make this kind of sincere promise, then you may not be ready to fully make amends.

**Step 4: Do the work it takes to improve that aspect of you.** It is often said that "talk is cheap." Words lay a good foundation for making amends, but are not sufficient to achieve the best results. The most common error in making amends is to say the words and then become lazy or uncommitted in following up with the kinds of work or actions required to help you not repeat the same hurt. Making a sincere promise not to repeat inactions or words that caused the injury often suggests you must somehow improve or better yourself as a person. Be willing to do what it takes. If you have, for example, hurt someone by being a poor communicator you might consider reading a book on the subject, watch some educational videos about communication on the Internet, take a course, go to group therapy or psychotherapy. These choices depend on how much you need to grow or improve yourself. If you have struggled with drugs or alcohol and this struggle has hurt others, you can consider going to AA, NA or any number of twelve-step programs. If you need to learn how to be better in relationships, you can always search for a mentor to teach and guide you. If you have injured others through your angry outbursts you could engage in some sort of anger management process. In this day and age there are countless ways to get access to information and help. Doing these kinds of things demonstrates your sincerity and integrity and goes a long way in the eyes of someone who has been hurt.

**Step 5: Make it up to the other person.** This step has two goals: gathering information and following through. The simple question, "How can I make this up to you?" often suffices to achieve goal number one. People often know what will help them trust and forgive you for your shortcomings. It might be as simple as "bring me flowers" or as complex, difficult or expensive as "I'll clean your house every week for a year" or "I'll take you to Paris." Depending on the injury and the people involved, making it up to another person is unique to the relationship. The idea is to replace or dilute the negative feelings associated with being hurt with positive experiences. While Step 4 focuses on improving yourself, Step 5 focuses on putting the feelings of the other first. It is a way of righting the wrong and re-balancing the scales.

Making amends is more than just words—it requires actions. ■

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