



Coulrophobia:

The abnormal or exaggerated fear of clowns.
—Wikipedia



Ray Hanna, left, and friend in front of a St. Patrick's Day-green Chicago River.

Courthouse Humor

After leaving the United States Navy, I was a Circus Clown in Chicago for nearly a month. There are different types of Clowns, including the traditional Whiteface (showman and intelligent), Auguste (Prankster) and Tramp (Hobo), which is uniquely an American depression creation. I didn't advertise my Clown membership much for nearly two decades, as it could impact on my credibility and future as an attorney.

I now fully realize that having a good sense of humor and being able to communicate with people on all levels are two secrets to happiness and a full life. Naturally, the Clown's Creed demands that you NEVER humiliate the audience, and that if anyone must be embarrassed, it should be the Clown, preferably the "Auguste" Clown. After all, Rodeo Clowns put themselves at risk to free the downed rider.

OverheardInCourt.com is a site dedicated to the memory of U.S. District Court Judge Jerry Buchmeyer, of the Northern District of Texas, who passed away last fall. He wrote "et cetera," a long-running, much-loved column in the *Texas Bar Journal*. Take a few moments and share a laugh at these excerpts.

Now, That Is Love!

During arraignment hearing, the courtroom was getting a little warm because of the number of people in the room, so the judge ordered the courtroom door be left open. A woman was outside the door and started having a very loud conversation on her cell phone. She seemed very upset. The courtroom became very quiet as everyone listened to her. The following was heard:

Woman: "You're a frickin' liar. That's all, just a frickin' liar. I don't have time for you! I am not going to listen to you anymore. You are driving me insane! You are such a fricking liar."

At that point the judge motioned for the Bailiff to tell the women to quiet down and that the court was in session.

Women to Bailiff: Oops, I am sorry.

Women to person on phone: Listen, I gotta go to the court. Remember that you are a frickin' liar, though. I love you, but I gotta go, mom.

Did I Really Ask That?

Q: (by prosecutor): And you could tell that the injuries were sustained before death and not as a result of the autopsy?

A: (by medical examiner): Yes, because the body does not bruise after death.

Q: And you do not perform autopsies on living people?

A: No, that's considered bad form.

Can You Spell That?

Q: Do you have any children, ma'am?

A: Yes, I have one daughter.

Q: And what is her name?

A: Kenyati.

Q: Could you spell that for our Court Reporter?

A: (pause) You know, I never did know how to spell that just right.

From A Court Reporter

Q: You said earlier that your dad has changed since the accident.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell us exactly how your dad has changed?

A: My dad used to be able to do everything. He was really smart. He could do several things at once. He could multi-task. Since the accident, he hasn't been able to do that.

Q: You mean, he's more like a man now?

(Side-note: The attorney was a man, and laughter followed.)

To Tell A Lie

Judge (to a young witness): Do you know what would happen to you if you told a lie?

Witness: Yes, I would go to hell.

Judge: Is that all?

Witness: Isn't that enough?



Ray Hanna

An Honest Drunk

Defendant was charged with an open-container violation. The judge asked the 56-year-old man how long he had been an alcoholic. Defendant said since he was probably 14. The judge wanted to know if he had ever tried to quit drinking, and knew that he had been arrested the night before.

The following exchange took place:

Judge: "What's the longest time that you have ever quit drinking?"

Defendant: Judge, that would be yesterday and today.

