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Editorial

I recently had the pleasure of sitting next to a Texan entrepreneur on an interstate flight. He was living proof of the adage that you should never ask a man where he is from. If he is from Texas he will tell you... regardless of your pointed reading of the inflight magazine and wearing of headphones.

You cannot ignore a Texan who is intent on conversing, and so it was I found myself on the receiving end of a discourse on the poor reputation of lawyers and the legal system. (Note to self: In a confined space with no means of escape, if someone asks what I do - I am a waitress).

After opening with, 'Doll, in Texas we keep lawyers in cages,' to which I responded that in Australia we have legal aid so that criminals can get consensual legal representation (it missed its mark, but I felt better for it), he proceeded to tell me that lawyers were the reason he had been unsuccessful in every case in which he had been involved. Lawyers, he said, were the reason the truth had not been outed.



His monologue caused me to wonder whether lawyers can do anything to improve their reputations when we are measured by whether we have outed something as ethereal and elusive as 'the truth'. This, of course, assumes 'the truth' exists independently of perception. When you factor in that for most people perception IS reality, then we are being measured by whether we have outed *their* truth.

Perhaps then, the starting point in improving the reputation of lawyers is the education of the public in philosophy and jurisprudence. In response to the allegation that we lawyers obscure the truth we can, with gentle questioning, lead the uninformed to the realisation of their erroneous thinking. Ask, 'What is the nature of "truth"? What is the relationship between truth and perception? Between truth and reality? Is there only one "truth"? Why do you think you are SO DAMM SPECIAL that you above ALL others have been granted the KNOWLEDGE of THE TRUTH, HUH?'

KASSIE JAMES, NSW