

2016 Iowa State Bar Annual Meeting

Michael J. Streit

ETHICS & Civility

American Board of Trial Advocates

Code of Professionalism

As a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, I shall



Always remember that the practice of law is first and foremost a profession.



Encourage respect for the law, the courts, and the right to trial by jury.



*Always remember that my word is my bond and honor my responsibilities to serve
as an officer of the court and protector of individual rights.*



*Contribute time and resources to public service, public education, charitable and
pro bono activities in my community.*



*Work with the other members of the bar, including judges, opposing counsel, and
those whose practices are different from mine, to make our system of justice*

more accessible and responsive.



Resolve matters and disputes expeditiously, without unnecessary expense, and through negotiation whenever possible.



Keep my clients well-informed and involved in making decisions affecting them.



Achieve and maintain proficiency in my practice and continue to expand my knowledge of the law.



Be respectful in my conduct toward my adversaries.



Honor the spirit and intent, as well as the requirements of applicable rules or codes of professional conduct, and shall encourage others to do so.

Lawyer Snarky Emails

Dear

I am sorry that a hurricane hit Houston.

I am sorry that I had no power or water at my house as a result of the hurricane.

I am sorry that I had to extend my stay out of state because of the hurricane.

I am sorry that CenterPoint Engery did not bend more quickly to your desires and restore power to my home so that I could return to it sooner.

I am sorry that upon returning to my home on Monday, September 22, 2008, I discovered a roughly 50 ft. x 6 ft. swath of human excrement, used condoms, and all the other niceties that come with a raw sewage leak in one's backyard which drains into one of the main bayous in Houston.

I am sorry that I had to threaten City of Houston officials with lawsuits and local news exposure in order to get them to even agree to meet with me about cleaning up the problem.

I am sorry that these city officials chose a date that interfered with our deposition and gave me no other options.

I am sorry that the Houston Public Works Department had to use a fire hose to blow human feces out of my yard on the day our deposition was scheduled.

I am sorry that the city required my presence at the debacle noted immediately above. And, I am sorry that this debacle managed to uproot some more of my trees.

I am sorry that your office communicated that you would only "agree" to my rescheduling the deposition if we agreed to pay your travel expenses. I am also sorry they did not mention anything about attorney's fees in their voicemail. I am especially sorry that your associate, after I had agreed to pay your reasonable travel expenses, decided to put in writing that while the deposition was cancelled, it was "unilaterally cancelled," and that you did not "agree" to the cancellation. I am sorry that you either went back on your word or, more likely, just do not have a word.

I am sorry that you think the judge should be involved in this matter. I wonder if the judge will be sorry about that, too.

I am sorry that you are the only lawyer in this case that consistently goes out of his way to be unaccommodating and unprofessional with the other lawyers. I am sorry you are from Dallas.

Very truly yours,

A reply:

“Having worked at large law firms for the better part of 20 years during my career, I can only presume that your decision to write (on impressive Kirkland & Ellis stationery, no less, rather than an email) instead of calling, signals that you intend your letter to serve as “Exhibit A” to some discovery motion currently being crafted deep within the bowels of Kirkland & Ellis by associates eager to escape yet another soul-deadening document review for a brief, *pro bono*, taste of the adversarial process.

Should such a motion come to fruition, which I certainly hope is not the case, I have made the life of your paralegal or secretary a bit easier by labeling this letter “Exhibit B.” Please include it with your letter should you choose to file a motion.”

Oh snap.