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“Fast Food Restaurants”

by

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It seems the greatest threat to public safety these days are the fast food establishments on every corner. First let me say, as we all know, the title “fast food” is definitely an egregious misnomer... especially if you count the time driving back to the restaurant to pick up the item they left out of the bag... but I digress... public safety is the point in this article.

A recent Associated Press release informed us that Kendra Bull, a behind the scenes worker at the McDonald’s restaurant in Union City, GA, was arrested and jailed on a “misdemeanor reckless conduct” charge for putting too much salt in the hamburger meat. A city policeman, Wendell Adams, purchased one of the “extra-sodium” burgers and said he got sick after eating it. He returned to the restaurant, interrogated the perpetrator, then arrested her and hauled her to jail. She was assigned a Public Defender who moved for dismissal of all charges but the judge denied the motion. She was released on a \$1,000 bond.

Ms. Bull admits to accidentally spilling salt and pepper on the meat and said she had reported the incident to her boss who helped her try to remove as much of the salt as possible before cooking the meat. Ms. Bull also stated she had eaten a burger made from the same “affected” meat and did not become ill. Her astute question concerning the policeman was, “If it was too salty why didn’t he take one bite and throw it away?”

It is assumed and implied by comments of some who have read of the incident that Ms. Bull was intentionally trying to ruin Patrolman Adams’ burger because he was a policeman... a charge Ms. Bull denies. From her area of work she says it’s impossible for her to see who drives up to the take-out window. She has stated the store’s security camera will prove her claim of accidentally spilling the salt and pepper. This seems, from the surface, to be just another case of someone not accepting his personal responsibility for what he puts into his mouth.

The most remembered suit against fast food restaurants, again a McDonald’s outlet, was in 1992 regarding a 79 year old customer who received 3rd degree burns from a hot cup of coffee placed between her legs. That suit resulted in the complainant receiving a judgment of over \$2 Million. This suit seems to have sparked a deluge in what many, including me, would deem “frivolous suits and damage awards” over the last few years taking McDonalds and other fast food vendors to court for “contributing to the obesity and poor health” of America’s youth.

Two years ago a compassionate New York attorney (an oxymoron if I ever heard one) sued McDonalds and the three other giants in the fast food arena, KFC, Wendy’s, and Burger King, on behalf of

his client... a maintenance worker who claimed that he was 100 pounds overweight because the restaurants failed to disclose a “clear and conspicuous” list of those ingredients in their products that contribute to one’s weight.

Then there’s the recent “hold the cheese suit” brought against McDonalds by a lactose intolerant young man from West Virginia who ordered a Quarter-Pounder from his local McDonalds, asking them to hold the cheese. It is reported he requested “no cheese” at least five times... yet when he took it home and bit into it, without looking under the bun, he bit into a piece of cheese which caused immediate allergic reactions, requiring a quick trip to the hospital for treatment. He is requesting \$10 Million in damages. McDonalds offered to pay for half his medical bills (\$700) and later offered to pay for all of them but their offer was refused. Although not a frivolous suit in and of itself, the amount of money sought seems to be a little outrageous. His friends are also suing stating “life endangerment” on their part because they had to drive fast on the way to the hospital. The suit has not been dismissed.

Then there is the “improperly prepared bagel” suit against McDonalds by a couple back in 2002. John and Cecelia O’Hare stated an “improperly prepared bagel” broke John’s teeth and bridgework when he bit into it... they did not state how it was improperly prepared. Mrs. O’Hare is seeking damages for the “loss of the care, comfort, consortium and society of her husband.”

The owner of the restaurant said, “she never before had a bagel complaint and had no idea how it could have been prepared in a way that would damage teeth. “It’s a bagel!” for gosh sakes.

Do you think any of these suits could be inspired by McDonald’s annual sales of close to \$2 Billion?

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