

Objectionably Good Looking

By Reg P. Wydeven
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A while back, one of my buddies gave me a big autographed photograph of Aaron Rodgers. A client of mine with a framing shop matted and framed it for me. I got it back earlier this month and hung it in my office.

While I love it, the picture hangs about 75 degrees to my left. Therefore, out of the corner of my eye, I can see the gleam in Aaron's eye and the sparkle of his Super Bowl ring. As a result, my production has suffered. Instead of typing up wills, I tend to gaze over at the MVP.

I never realized what a distraction Aaron would be. But apparently I'm not the only attorney worried about focus being diverted.

Last week, Brad Pitt showed up for jury duty at the downtown Los Angeles courthouse. He was dismissed, however, for just being too darn good looking.

Attorney William Lively summed it up nicely for the Daily Mail newspaper, explaining, "You just can't stick Brad Pitt in a jury box and expect 11 jurors to ignore him." Fearing Pitt would sway his peers, Lively elaborated by saying, "It's only natural that those jurors would be watching to see how Brad reacts to what's being said and that they could be influenced by his opinions once the jury goes behind closed doors to render a verdict."

The attorneys involved in the case thanked Brad for performing his civic duty before releasing him. Dismissing celebrities is apparently a common practice in L.A. However, Tom Hanks did serve on a jury for a domestic case last year.

Serving on a jury is one of the few things our country asks of us to preserve the integrity of the justice system. To be judged by a jury of our peers is a constitutional right. In fact, citizens are legally required to be available to serve on a jury.

Wisconsin residents are randomly selected for jury duty from a list generated by the Department of Transportation's database of people with driver's licenses or identification cards. From this pool of candidates, the judge and attorneys can ask the potential jurors questions, in a process known as voir dire, to determine their suitability to serve.

Attorneys can ask that jurors be dismissed for cause, meaning they know one of the parties involved in the case, expressed a bias or otherwise can't be impartial. In addition, attorneys are afforded a limited number of peremptory challenges, or the ability to dismiss a juror without giving a reason.

Jurors are paid for their service at a rate set by the county board, but no less than \$16 a day plus reimbursement for travel. Although employers do not have to pay their employees while serving on a jury, the employees cannot be fired, demoted or otherwise punished because of their service.

So while serving on a jury may be inconvenient, it is our duty and privilege to do so as Americans. Plus you might run into a celebrity.

Have a happy and blessed 2015.

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