



SOMETHING NEW UNDER THE SUN SELF-DRIVING CARS... AND NOW, REGULATIONS FOR SELF-DRIVING CARS

by Ben Glass

*As a kid, I watched The Jetsons, and, boy, I was really looking forward to getting my flying car! Sadly, it doesn't look like that is going to happen any time soon, but there is something cool headed our way: **self-driving cars**. They are still in a testing phase, but Michigan is planning ahead (which seems appropriate, since Michigan is the birthplace of the auto industry). By passing a package of four new laws, Michigan is the now first state to have comprehensive self-driving regulations. When the first self-driving cars, or fleet of cars (think something like Uber, only driverless) arrive, Michigan will be ready. But is this a good thing? Should other states follow?*

There is no doubt that self-driving cars will need to be thoughtfully regulated. As a lawyer, a big part of my job is establishing liability when something goes wrong. I know that having clear laws and regulations helps victims recover appropriate damages after an accident. But they do something even more important: they can help prevent accidents by making crystal clear exactly who is responsible for what before anything goes wrong in the first place. If auto makers

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BGL's Best Bites: TIFINY'S FAVORITE MEAL (PAD THAI)

This is my favorite one-pot recipe that has a ton of flavor. This recipe makes 4 servings plus some leftovers. My advice is to use a large-ish pot as the cooked rice noodles use a lot of space. If you are allergic to tofu, you can use chicken, but the recipe is GREAT with tofu simmered in peanut oil.

Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons olive oil or peanut oil
- 1 cup crushed peanuts
- ½ package of rice noodles
- 14 oz extra-firm tofu, cubed
- 4 eggs
- 1 chopped green onion
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- Dash of red pepper
- 1 lemon wedge

Directions:

- 1 Cook rice noodles according to package directions.
- 2 Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in large pot to medium-high heat. Add crushed peanuts and stir for one minute.
- 3 Add cubed tofu and cook until tofu is lightly browned. Remove tofu and peanuts and set aside.
- 4 Add remaining oil to skillet and heat. Crack eggs into the skillet and stir until cooked. Do not overcook eggs.
- 5 Add tofu and peanuts to eggs and stir. Add noodles, green onion, white wine vinegar, fish sauce, white sugar, and red pepper.
- 6 Garnish with lemon wedge and serve. ■



Enjoy!

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know for sure that they will be held responsible if one of their self-driving cars is in an accident (which Michigan's new law makes clear), they will be more likely to test every, single possible circumstance to make sure their cars are safe. So in that sense, these regulations are a good thing, they will help shape the industry and ultimately make it **safer for consumers**.

But there's a bigger issue here that worries me. **What do Michigan's laws mean for Virginia?** And what would Virginia's laws (if and when we pass them) mean for Maryland? Do we really want state-by-state regulation for the self-driving car industry? I would argue that we don't. The states are good at regulating some things (like road speed...it's appropriate for a state like Montana to have a higher speed limit than a state like Virginia), but not in this case. What the emerging industry needs is federal regulations to ensure consistency as self-driving cars cross state lines (which they'll do a lot around here!).

One big issue in particular: Michigan's laws allow only auto manufacturers to operate a fleet of self-driving, on-demand cars. That means GM could launch an Uber-style driving service, but Apple (which is also testing self-driving cars) could not. That might be good for Michigan business, but for the entire country? Probably not. I could point to other examples, but you get the picture – **federal regulations make more sense than state-by-state regulations in this case.**

And just where are the federal regulations? They don't exist. They should, because this technology has been on the horizon for a while now, but they don't. So the states are stepping in because some regulation is better than none at this point, if the federal government won't take the lead, which is the topic for another blog post (or 10!)...but for now, I'll just leave you with this: self-driving cars! **How cool is that?** ■



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Our 3 Favorite Fictional Romances (and the Worst Couple of All Time)

and Clementine show us everything there is to be appreciated about a deep personal connection, both the good and the bad.

3. Sam and Suzy, *Moonrise Kingdom*

It's easy to spot a quirky Wes Anderson film (yellow titles in Futura font, idiosyncratic zooms, and lots of dolly shots), but fans really fell in love with the young romantic adventure between Sam and Suzy in *Moonrise Kingdom*. There are so many elements to a young relationship that other movies gloss over: the awkwardness of first contact, the anxiety of disobeying your parents, and the desire to replicate what you've seen couples do in films before you even understand it. Sam and Suzy are a perfect mix of excited and confused, yet the relationship remains very innocent and doesn't push the envelope, which the director could've done.

BONUS: The Worst Fictional Couple of All Time

Anakin and Padmé *Star Wars: Episodes II and III*

I've seen better chemistry between a lamp and a wall socket than what we got from Hayden Christensen and Natalie Portman in this train wreck of a film. Anakin delivers his lines as if he's

four days into a detox program. Half of the time he won't even make eye contact with his love interest as he stiffly delivers his lines. Ben Stein has more voice inflection than Hayden in these painful scenes. What makes it even worse is that Natalie Portman is a talented actress (*Black Swan*, *Hotel Chevalier*, *Leon: The Professional*), yet in *Episode III*, we receive the most poorly delivered line of her career: "Hold me like you did on the lake by Naboo!" I'd tell George Lucas not to dip his actors in blue paint and tell them it'll all come out great in post production, but it appears that was the last film he'll ever direct anyway. ■



WHAT WE'VE DONE FOR VIP MEMBERS RECENTLY



- Recently, Ben has helped a VIP member fill out court forms for *pro se* court representation (representing one's self in court);
- Reviewed a marketing plan for a VIP member who is in the property management business;
- Referred a member to an attorney in order to make sure all of the documents for a new business were properly filed;
- And made a referral to an attorney who specializes in drafting contracts for IT companies.

You can become a VIP member FREE! Just visit www.BenGlassLawVIP.com ■

Reminder About Our Firm's Communication Policy

Our promise to you is that while we are working on your case, we don't take inbound phone calls, faxes or emails. Ben Glass takes no inbound unscheduled phone calls whatsoever. It makes him much more productive and helps get your case resolved faster. You can always call the office at 703-544-7876, and schedule an in-person or phone appointment, usually within 24-48 hours. This is a lot better than the endless game of "phone tag" played by most businesses today. Remember, too, that email is "quick," but is checked no more than twice a day. Replies are then scheduled into the calendar. So if it's really important, don't email—call the office instead.

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What has the BENGLASSLAW
VIP Program Been Doing for Members?
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OUR 3 FAVORITE FICTIONAL ROMANCES (and the Worst Couple of All Time)

Happy Valentine's Day! In honor of our favorite holiday for heart-shaped chocolate boxes and last-minute Hallmark cards, we present our favorite (and least favorite) fictional romantic couples.

1. Wesley and Buttercup, *The Princess Bride*

Rich girl falls for poor peasant has been done a lot (*Titanic*, *Aladdin*, *Dirty Dancing*, even *Shrek*), but no one seems to nail it as effectively as *The Princess Bride*. Wesley is dashing and witty and resourceful, of course, but it's not a superficial relationship. He forgives Buttercup for not recognizing him. He keeps his promises. He defends her. And most impressively of all, he successfully goes in against a Sicilian when death is on the line.

2. Joel and Clementine, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

After a tough breakup, Joel decides to have his memories of Clementine erased through a new scientific procedure. This opens the door for a very creative story-telling device: we learn of Clementine and Joel's relationship *in reverse* as we travel through Joel's dreams deleting his memories. Over the course of the film, Joel falls in love again and remembers why they got together in the first place. Where most romantic films only cover the "courtship" phase of a relationship, Joel



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THE POISONOUS COACH *ARE YOU WITH ME ON THIS?*

The spring sports season is right around the corner. High school soccer starts at the end of this month. The question is: what kind of individual do you want teaching your child about dealing with adversity and what are you willing to do to get this right?

Over the last few years, I've made a practice of watching how the high school soccer coaches respond to adversity. By observation, most don't respond very well.

What types of adversity, you ask? Oh, you know. The major earth-shattering life-changing stuff like a referee who gets a call "wrong," a player who makes a bad pass or shoots the ball over the goal, or in one game I watched last year, a ball boy who didn't throw the ball back into play "quickly enough."

How do they react? Like 3-year olds, mostly: crybabies. Throwing stuff. Making gestures and saying things to referees in a way they would NEVER accept themselves in the workplace.

So, here's my challenge to you, the parents of the students who are

being led by these idiots:
Let's Change the Culture

Stand up to your own team's coach if that coach is not upholding the values you deem important. Tell them that their conduct is NOT acceptable. Video them and show the video to the school athletic director and principal and ask: is this what our school stands for? You know what? You might be the first to do it, but you will be cheered by the other parents.

To do otherwise is to say "Gosh darn it, when tough times come, it's okay to yell, scream, and blame someone else." Wow. That will get our kiddos far in life!

After you do it, let me know you did! ■



SMALL BUSINESS TIP

HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH A NEGATIVE ONLINE REVIEW

If you are a small business owner, there is no doubt that somewhere on the Internet your customers or clients are saying things about you. Hopefully, they are saying nice things.

What happens if your company finds a negative review out there?

A Houston Personal Injury Law Firm (Tuan A. Khuu law firm) sued a client who had posted an unfavorable comment on her Facebook page. Probably not a lot of "reach" for her page, but the firm found out about it and first threatened, and then sued, the former client, Lan Anh Cai.

Cai found a lawyer who defended her. He filed a motion under Texas's Anti-SLAP law (a motion that says, essentially, that the Complaint not only has no merit, but that it was filed to suppress the former

client's First Amendment right to voice her opinion).

Not only did the Court dismiss the lawsuit, it awarded the former client \$27,000 in fees and expenses.

But that's not the worst part: The firm is totally trashed on the Internet and not even Yelp's "scrub fake reviews" team can keep up with the 1-star reviews.

The worst thing you can do is to get involved in an online spitting contest with ANYBODY.

If you are a Virginia small business owner

who is a BenGlassLaw VIP member and you ever have any questions about online review strategies, call us. We'll sit down and help you out - free. BenGlassLaw has the highest combination of client reviews and attorney endorsements in Virginia at Avvo.com, the leading attorney review site on the Internet. We understand how to get great reviews (hint: start with knock their socks off service!) and how to protect your reputation if some bad ones pop up. Our VIP small biz owners should contact us for an inside look at our strategies!

You can read our reviews
at JustReadtheReviews.com. ■

THE SKILLS EVERY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SHOULD MASTER

(BUT ONLY IF YOU WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE BUSINESS WORLD)

A couple of years ago, I met a high school student at our church who was getting ready to go off to college. He gave a talk on the day that Abiding Presence Lutheran (Burke, VA) was celebrating its high school and college graduates.

This young man was able to “command the room.” By that, I mean that he was comfortable speaking in front of a crowd. He made good eye contact. His voice projected across the room. He said some funny stuff, told us a little bit about himself, and talked about how our church community had supported him and his teenage friends through their high school years.

Point is, he had a strong command of the skill of communication. I went up to him after the service and told him I knew he was going to be successful no matter where he was heading off to school.

I was reminded of that when I took our family up to the Mormon Temple in Kensington, Maryland, to see the Festival of Lights the week after Christmas. We had never been before, but had heard a lot about it. It was fabulous.

While we were there, we toured the Visitor Center. It was primarily staffed by young Mormon missionaries from around the United States. These young folks would engage us, shake our hands, look us in the eye, and ask each of us a little bit about ourselves.

Then they would tell us about whatever exhibits we were looking at. They talked about, explained and, when questioned, defended their faith.

I watched throughout the evening as they engaged a diverse group of visitors. Each one of them excelled at the art of communicating, one on one, with us.

As a small business owner, I can tell you that my team and I care very little about where you went to college. We never ask what your grade point average was. We’ve found that your course of study doesn’t really matter. (I had a young lady come work for me several years ago. When she started she was in nursing school. Today she is the head of digital media for a major university and gets invited to travel around the country to speak at marketing conferences!)

What matters to us, and to most successful small business owners that I know, is the following:



We discovered some secrets to success when we visited the Mormon Temple over Christmas

1. Your ability to be comfortable around and communicate with adults.
2. Your command of spoken and written English. If you were born in America and you misuse the language, you simply won't be hired by most of us unless your job is to work in a cave, unseen by customers or clients. (If you weren't born in America, we can pretty much predict that you have worked harder than most American teenagers to get where you are!)
3. Your level of curiosity about the world and your demonstrated eagerness to keep learning. When we ask, “What books are you reading right now” and you tell a small business owner that you “haven't picked up a book in six months that a teacher didn't require you to read,” end of interview.
4. Your ability to get stuff done.

Master the above and it is impossible to not be successful. Trust me on this. ■

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