

PERSONAL INJURY POST

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SEEKING JUSTICE



"When my internship ended, I kept my fingers crossed that I'd end up back here someday and call this place my forever home."

A Growing Passion for Law

When I was growing up, I didn't think I wanted to become a lawyer. It was never a career that crossed my mind. I always thought I wanted to be a doctor, and I even entered college following this path.

However, when I took my mandatory political science classes at the University of Texas-Pan American, I fell in love. That same day, I went home and told my mom that I was changing my major to political science, but I still planned to continue on to medical school. But the more classes I took, the more I was hooked. I felt like giving a voice to other people was something I could do and do well.

In one of my classes, I had a professor who had been a lawyer and graduated from Duke University School of Law. The first day, he told the class that this course was going to be exactly like a course from law school, and I excelled. This professor soon became my mentor and told me, "I see you having a future in this."

Through his continued support and encouragement, I realized that I loved this subject too much *not* to follow it, so instead of going to medical school, I applied and was accepted at St. Mary's University School of Law. Through the years I spent there, I excelled in every class I took, and everything I learned just made me more certain that I had found my niche. During my time there, I had internships at a few law offices. The first internship I took was with a federal judge, who became another mentor as I pursued this career. I also had the opportunity to intern at the office of Garcia & Ochoa, which felt like home.

From the moment I entered this office and started working with the team, I fell in love with what they did, how they handled their cases, and how they operated as a team. It was always all hands on deck with every case that came their way, and I loved their passion for helping their clients seek and find justice. Not only did they focus on their clients, but they also did their utmost to help the community as a whole. When my internship ended, I kept my fingers crossed that I'd end up back here someday and call this place my forever home.

However, I ended up taking a job with a different firm that focused on representing corporations against everyday people — the complete opposite of what I loved about Garcia & Ochoa. I had a hard time being on the defense side rather than on the plaintiff's side, where I could help people face these big corporations and get the justice they deserve. I worked with that office for almost a full year before I decided that being a defense lawyer wasn't the correct path for me. It never filled up my heart with purpose, happiness or joy.

Shortly after I left that firm, I received a call from Mr. Garcia, who told me that their office had a position open and asked if I would join their team. It was such perfect timing; it felt as though God had put his hand out to me to take this opportunity.

I was ecstatic to be back in the office that I had fallen in love with while attending law school. Upon my return, I learned the team was in the middle of working on a big case against a big corporation that wasn't budging. Being here to witness their win against that corporation solidified my decision; I was in the right place, without a doubt.



HORSING AROUND

Meet a Different Kind of Therapy Animal

Horses have been loyal and useful companions to humans for centuries. But unbeknownst to many who fear these long-legged, 1,000-plus-pound mammals, horses are also naturally intuitive and extremely sensitive to the moods of people around them. These traits make them excellent therapy animals for those with autism, cerebral palsy, chronic illnesses, and PTSD, among many more. In fact, there are dedicated horse-riding camps geared toward chronically ill children and adults all over the world.

However, riding horses isn't the only way to benefit from equine therapy; horses are also fantastic comfort animals that can relieve anxiety and promote a positive environment for bedridden patients — as long as the doorway is big enough.

Meet Peyo, the 14-year-old "love stallion" from Dijon, France, who is cheering up chronically ill patients one nuzzle at a time. This accomplished artistic dressage competitor accompanies his owner, Hassen Bouchakour, on visits to hospitals and nursing homes, bringing joy with every clop of his hooves.

Patients suffering from all manner of ailments blossom when Peyo comes to visit, laughing and smiling while being nudged by his soft nose. He seems to have a keen sense for patients who are truly suffering, and though his handler is always nearby, Peyo often chooses which rooms to enter of his own volition.

Having a horse in a hospital room may not sound very sanitary, but Peyo goes through a strict grooming regimen to be deemed hygienic enough to be around patients. His hooves are greased, his mane and tail are braided, and his entire body is rubbed down with antibacterial lotion before being covered by a blanket.

Before Peyo became a therapy horse, he was almost put up for sale by Bouchakour, who had a hard time wrangling Peyo's fiery personality. But, over time, when they traveled to shows and competitions together, Bouchakour noticed the horse was drawn to the injured and disabled and would instantly calm at their touch. "It is one of the most pure, honest, and sweet things," Bouchakour says. "They like each other very much without asking for anything else."



Giving Back THROUGH

Being involved in the community you live in is crucial. Not only does it help your neighbors and friends, but it also helps you build skills, meet new people, and create a better place to thrive in.

Our team at Garcia & Ochoa understands the importance of community. Every year, we come together to discuss how we can help the people in and around the McAllen area. We actively look for different community events we can support and participate in as a team all year long.

As last year came to a close, our team participated in several important local events. In October, a group took part in the 11th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk/Run/Ride, as well as the "5K Color Bash 2019 Fun Run" benefiting the "Food Bank RGVs School Tools Program." These events spread awareness and help raise funds to fight these conditions and provide medical aid to those in need.

We were also lucky enough to help with an event that highlights children in our area who need to be adopted: 4Ever Family Heart Gallery. There are many children in need of good homes in South Texas, and 4Ever Family helps them find just that. The Heart Gallery event enables the children to introduce themselves with a brief bio

BRINGING JUSTICE TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE

Doing Our Part to Bring Peace of Mind to Our Community



to the People

to people who are eager to expand their family.

In November, we featured the Help the Grinch's Heart Grow Three Sizes Toy Drive. We are thrilled to say that the event was an absolute success! Seeing how involved and generous our younger generations are always fills us with joy. We want to thank everyone who participated in this event and helped us ensure that children in need had a wonderful Christmas experience.

With 2019 officially behind us, our team is already busy looking ahead to the many community events in this new year. We're excited to continue helping the people around us in the months to come.





People come to our office seeking justice for the wrong that has happened in their lives. Often, these situations cause pain and immeasurable grief. When one of our clients approached us after going through the most traumatic moment of her life, our team jumped to action to bring the individuals accountable to justice.

CASE FACTS: Our client came to Garcia & Ochoa after her daughter drowned in a swimming pool while at a camp. Although the pool in question was routinely maintained, there were several significant deficiencies that led to this tragedy. The pool lacked proper markings, signage, and safety devices both around and inside the pool.

The defendant, a certified pool operator, knew the implications of a pool lacking the required safety measures. Their failure to comply with state laws and regulations, make repairs, report known problems, and correctly inspect the pool resulted in the drowning.

THE OUTCOME: Due to the negligence on the defendant's part, the dangerous risks both in and around the pool were very high. Our attorneys argued that the defendants, who were well aware of the risks involved, were indifferent to or disregarded proper swimming pool safety and protocol. Not only did this lead to the drowning, but it also endangered other patrons who visited the pool regularly. The jury and judge heard our statements and concluded that all defendants involved were at fault for this terrible outcome.

Our team at Garcia & Ochoa understands that people face some of the most excruciating moments when they come to us for help. We know that while we cannot lessen the grief that follows loss, we can strive to provide any support these individuals need that will help their healing process.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 chicken, approx. 5-6 lbs
- **Kosher salt**
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 large bunch fresh thyme, 20 sprigs removed
- 1 lemon, halved

- 1 head garlic, cut in half crosswise
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large yellow onion, thickly sliced
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- Olive oil

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Heat oven to 425 F.
- 2. Rinse chicken inside and out, removing giblets if included. Move to a work surface, pat dry, and liberally season with salt and pepper. Stuff cavity with thyme bunch, lemon halves, and garlic head. Brush outside with butter, and then season again. Tie chicken legs together with kitchen string.
- 3. Meanwhile, in a roasting pan, toss onions and carrots in olive oil and season with salt, pepper, and 20 sprigs of thyme.
- 4. Place the chicken on the vegetables and roast for 1 1/2 hours.
- Remove from oven, and let stand for 20 minutes covered with foil.
- Slice and serve with the vegetables.



BE INSPIREI

Tok last year's words belong to last year's language. And next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning.

~T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"



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LEGEND

Ching Shih: History's Most Successful Pirate

From Blackbeard to Jack Sparrow, pop culture teems with pirates who frequented the ports of the Caribbean. And while these pirates are well-known for their (sometimes fictional) accomplishments, the most successful pirate in history terrorized the seas of China instead. Her name was Ching Shih.

Ching Shih, who was born Shih Yang, was working in a Cantonese brothel when she met the pirate Zheng Yi. He came from a long family of notorious pirates and was impressed by Ching Shih's cunning. They married in 1801 and built a pirate empire known as the Red Flag Fleet. When Zheng Yi passed away suddenly in 1807, Ching Shih strategically maneuvered her way into leadership, taking control of over 60,000 pirates.

Historians describe Ching Shih as a brilliant military strategist, a skilled businesswoman, and a harsh disciplinarian. After taking control of the fleet, Ching Shih implemented a strict code of conduct. The code included rules for distributing booty, protecting female captives, and beheading anyone who disobeyed

Ching Shih. Under her rule, the bloody crimes of piracy became a profitable business. The Red Flag Fleet would eventually clash with the British Empire, the Portuguese Empire, and the Qing dynasty of China, but no one could topple the pirate queen.

After almost a decade of pillaging the high seas, Ching Shih decided piracy wasn't the best retirement plan. In 1810, she walked into the office of a local governor-general, completely unarmed, and requested full pardons and government jobs for her entire crew - along with permission to keep all their stolen goods. In exchange, she promised to give up piracy for good. Thankful to be free of the Red Flag Fleet, the Chinese government agreed to her terms. Ching Shih's second husband was even made an officer in the Chinese navy.

Ching Shih returned to Canton with her vast wealth and spent the next 34 years living a life of comfort with her family and running a gambling den. In 1844, the legendary pirate queen passed away of old age at 69, a rare feat for pirates of her era.