

FROM THE FLORIDA OFFICES OF LEESFIELD SCOLARO:

MIAMI/SOUTH FLORIDA | KEY WEST/FLORIDA KEYS | ORLANDO/CENTRAL FLORIDA | STATEWIDE

FAMILY SAFETY ISSUE: PROTECTING OUR LOVED ONES

- President's Message
- Most Common Crime Scenes
- Ways to Protect your Clients and Family Against Criminal Harm
- Florida Record Hotel Security Verdict: \$40.58 Million



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- Protecting the Vulnerable from Sexual Abuse
- How to Spot Signs of Child Abuse
- Leesfield Family Foundation Victims Assistance
- Valuable Resources for Litigating Negligent Security Cases





WOULD YOU BELIEVE that violent crime and assaults have dramatically increased during the COVID-19 crisis?

Greater anger, frustration or economic deprivation, along with COVID fatigue, have contributed to a marked increase in crimes against persons and property. This is especially true in unprotected transient locations, such as hotels, shopping centers, restaurants and retail stores.

We see this dangerous trend at Leesfield Scolaro through our clients' tragedies, but psychologists and other social scientists have done a "deep dive" into the causes of increased violence and random wanton crime precipitated by the COVID conditions.

This issue of Petition is dedicated to family safety. Information is power!


Our clients, families and friends need to know about these real, but under-reported phenomena, which impact everyone's lives. Inside this issue you will find practical common sense tips that will help avoid otherwise dangerous situations and alert innocent victims of potential crime scenes. Simple measures of precaution are joined by greater awareness of prevention and lurking hazards.

These are not easy times, but they will pass with diligence, community caring and unselfish acts of all responsible Americans. As our firm moves into its 45th year of practice, we have seen a lot, really, a lot! We know about cycles, good times and bad for our clients. We are always here to help. We are always available 24/7. We will always expend our efforts on your client's behalf. Time, assets, compassion and a highly trained senior staff confirm the best

results and leading Florida verdicts. Historically, and even more so now, our work with co-counsel and their clients is of higher importance. With an increase of unexpected damaging events, we have added more staff and resources to bring about comfort and repair for those with life-changing injuries and events.

Stay strong, stay smart, and pass along the information we are providing to share with your family, friends and neighbors. Always remember, we are in this together!

Sincerely,



Ira H. Leesfield
Managing Partner

YOUR CLIENTS (and family) must be protected, safe and secure at shopping centers, apartments, gas stations, office buildings and hotels, including parking lots/garages and any commercial property where they may be vulnerable to crime.

Leesfield Scolaro represents victims statewide who have been attacked, abused, injured or killed because security was inadequate.


We are constantly and diligently on the legislative and civil justice forefront of public safety.

Daily, we see breaches of safety and security endangering the public. Crime, serious injury, sexual abuse, unexpected assaults and harm producing events can be avoided or reduced by common sense practices to deter crime.

MOST COMMON CRIME SCENES:

- Shopping malls/strip malls
- Vacation and travel locations
- Cruise ships
- Airports and terminals
- College campuses
- Apartment complexes and other commercial properties:
- Bars, restaurants and clubs
- Hotels and lodging accommodations
- Resorts, theme and amusement parks
- Sporting events
- Bank ATM's
- Freestanding stores
- Gas stations
- Places of public accommodations

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR CLIENTS AND FAMILY AGAINST CRIMINAL HARM - YOUR PHONE IS YOUR FRIEND!

 **Your cell phone can save your life.** Carry it with you at all times. Use the Emergency SOS and Brightest Flashlight Apps on your cell phone. Program your cell phone for location discovery.

Report suspicious persons or incidents to the police immediately. **CALL 911**

Deterrents to burglars:

-  Commercial and residential monitored alarm systems
-  Dogs
-  Security cameras
-  Lighting
-  Surveillance signs

When walking or jogging alone, **carry a whistle** or some other noise-making device.

When using an ATM, opt for a drive-thru or in a well-lighted, open space, high traffic area, such as shopping malls. Be ready to transact your business, be alert to your surroundings and leave quickly when transaction is completed.

Encourage your neighbors and homeowners' associations to **initiate a crime watch group** as well as conducting background screening on new residents. Demand good lighting in your community.

At work, request your employer to do employee **background screening on new hires** to help maintain a safer workplace.

Self-defense classes can improve confidence in your ability to avoid physical conflict and defend yourself, if necessary.



Leesfield Scolaro Hotel Negligent Security Results

FLORIDA RECORD HOTEL SECURITY VERDICT: \$40.58 MILLION

EE v. Tannex Development Corp., d/b/a Hilton Resort and Marina
Case No. 2006-CA-204-K, Circuit Court, Monroe County, FL

OUR CLIENT, a 51-year-old woman, arrived at work using the parking garage at an exclusive resort in Key West. She was brutally beaten in the head with a hammer by a homeless man who had been seen by the hotel staff on the defendant property moments before.

Earlier that day, he had violently raped a young housekeeper at a nearby hotel. He stole our client’s vehicle and was later caught by the local police. Tom Scolaro obtained a record-setting **\$40.58 million** verdict after establishing that the nature and number of crimes

in the surrounding areas made this assault an entirely foreseeable and a preventable incident. A confidential settlement for sexual assault was subsequently reached.



Partner Thomas Scolaro

RECORD-SETTING RESULTS FOR LEESFIELD SCOLARO

CRIME DETECTION is everyone’s responsibility. Now more than ever, “if you see something, say something.” Here are just a few cases where the failure to do so resulted in recovery:

- \$40.58 million** verdict for an assault in an unlit parking garage.
- \$3 million** settlement for paraplegic injuries to a client shot at an unguarded ATM.
- \$1.5 million** award to a cruise ship passenger sexually assaulted in her cabin by a crew member.
- \$1.6 million** recovery against a supermarket chain for its failure to provide security guards for senior citizens.
- \$1.138 million** settlement for store employee raped and robbed during daylight hours where security had been reduced.
- \$900,000** settlement for a 24-year-old patron assaulted at a bar with inadequate security.
- \$685,000** mediation result for the family of a gas station worker killed in a high crime area with no security.
- \$500,000** award to the family of a 57-year-old man beaten to death at a convenience food market.
- \$1 million** recovery for the wrongful death of college student. No warning of dangerous campus neighborhood.
- \$3.2 million** recovery for a foreign college student attacked at his dormitory resulting in neurological injuries and paralysis. No warning about neighborhood.
- Confidential** recovery for airline failing to protect unaccompanied minor passenger.

For additional information on negligent security cases, go to www.leesfield.com/florida-negligent-security-attorneys

\$25 MILLION RECENT HOTEL SUIT FILING

“There has never been a more savage hotel-based crime in Florida’s history,” said Managing Partner Ira Leesfield.

“It’s a case that should remind businesses why it’s crucial to provide security measures that are relative to the premises and its surrounding area,” according to Partner Justin Shapiro.

DRAGGING a 65-year-old hotel visitor by her hair, through the halls and into the elevator of the defendant’s hotel, and then a strangulation and rape but not before defendant bit a large chunk of flesh out of this grandmother’s forehead and forced her to perform oral sex. Out-of-state visitors are often targets of horrific crimes because the perpetrators do not believe the victims will return to testify at the criminal or civil trial. There had been more than 1,200 calls for police response to the same hotel prior to this incident. All of these unspeakable and despicable acts were preventable had the hotel provided reasonable security consistent with the high crime condition of its location.

Shockingly, hotel employees were present and very close by while this

animalistic attack occurred. Partner Justin Shapiro has filed suit on July 27, 2021, in Circuit Court, Miami-Dade County, FL – Case No. 2021-018072-CA-01. Judge Barbara Areces has been assigned to this case.



Partner Justin Shapiro



PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

OUR 45-YEAR litigation history underscores how vulnerable children can be. When a prestigious overnight camp ignored apparent pedophile activity, an **\$8.6 million** recovery was obtained for the camp owners’ refusal to recognize a counselor’s obviously disturbed behavior.

For years, one of Florida’s most prestigious private high schools allowed a teacher to molest, harass and sexually abuse young boys in a serial manner, requiring the school to pay numerous multi-million dollar reparations.

Leesfield Scolaro successfully represented an unaccompanied minor airline passenger placed in the custody of flight attendants. During the flight, a deviant passenger covered the child and himself with a blanket and proceeded to molest the minor. A confidential recovery was obtained against the airline.

Sadly, incidents involving the Boy Scouts, churches, schools, camps, daycare centers, parks and child gathering places are so common that our firm has now completed hundreds of cases involving tragic child molestation.

Parents must be alerted to children’s unusual and uncomfortable behavior

- ⚠ Don’t be embarrassed to speak to your children about their personal space and rights to their own bodies.
- ⚠ Help them understand that no one – not even a relative or an authority figure – is allowed to touch them in a way that makes them uncomfortable.
- ⚠ Encourage conversation. Listen to their concerns and observe unspoken discomfort.
- ⚠ Stay alert to behavioral and emotional signs indicative of sexual abuse:
 - ⚠ Increased anxiety and sudden hostility
 - ⚠ Excessive talk about sexual topics
 - ⚠ Not talking as much as usual
 - ⚠ Regressive behaviors (thumbsucking or bedwetting)
 - ⚠ Spending an unusual amount of time alone
 - ⚠ Decrease in confidence or self-image
 - ⚠ Self-harming behaviors
 - ⚠ Excessive worry or fearfulness
 - ⚠ Loss of interest in school, activities and friends
 - ⚠ Change in eating habits



The Leesfield Family Foundation Victims Assistance

LEESFIELD SCOLARO and the Leesfield Family Foundation have historically supported proactive child protection and assistance organizations including:

- Fatherhood Task Force of South Florida**
<https://ftfsf.org>
- The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment**
<https://melissainstitute.org>
- Kristi House** <https://kristihouse.org>
- Voices for Children Foundation**
<https://beavoice.org>
- Lawyers for Children America**
<https://www.lawyersforchildrenamerica.org>
- Amigos for Kids** <https://amigosforkids.org>

“Thanks to the Leesfield Family Foundation’s continuing generosity, fathers and their families will benefit from our programs. Our cup runneth over when you anointed the Fatherhood Task Force of South Florida with your support.

We will continue to use your blessings in ways you will be proud,”

Holly Zwerling,
President and CEO



Petition

A publication for lawyers, clients and friends of Leesfield Scolaro, P.A.



LEESFIELD SCOLARO has a 45-year statewide record realizing over **\$250,000,000** in verdicts and settlements bringing economic justice for crime victims.

For other significant results, go to www.leesfield.com/verdicts-settlements

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PRACTICE AREAS:

Negligent Security
Personal Injury/Wrongful Death
Auto and Motor Vehicle Accidents
Boating and Cruise Ship Liability
All Travel Related Injuries
Resort Torts/Maritime/
Recreational Injuries
Premises Liability
Auto Crashworthiness
Trucking/Highway Design
Aviation
Construction Site Injuries
Products Liability
Medical and Professional Malpractice
Cruise Passenger Medical Malpractice

Valuable Resources for Litigating Negligent Security Cases

National Sexual Assault Hotline
<https://www.rainn.org/resources>

National Safety Council
<https://www.nsc.org>

Florida Sheriffs Association
www.flsheriffs.org

American Camp Association
<https://www.acacamps.org>

FBI Victims Services
<https://www.fbi.gov/resources/victim-services>

Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crimes
<https://ovc.ojp.gov/topics/campus-crime>

National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards
<https://naevcb.org>

Crime Mapping
<https://www.crimemapping.com/about>

Campus Safety
<https://www.campusafetymagazine.com>

Spot Crime <https://spotcrime.com>

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Co-counsel fees paid consistent with Florida Bar rules