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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- How to Spot Signs of Child Abuse
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- Valuable Resources for Litigating Negligent Security Cases
Family safety has never been more important than it is today. At Leesfield Scolaro, we have the resources, legal skills, and successful 45-year track record to handle your personal injury case.”

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’ experiences. 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 your family, friends and neighbors. Always remember, we are in this together!

Sincerely,

Ira H. Leesfield
Managing Partner

WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AGAINST CRIMINAL HARM – YOUR PHONE IS YOUR FRIEND!

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 entirely foreseeable and a preventable incident. A confidential settlement for sexual assault was subsequently reached.

$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.

D RAGGING 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.

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

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:

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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

Parents must be alert to children’s unusual and uncomfortable behavior.

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

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

Leesfield Family Foundation Victims Assistance

Being a kid should be fun.
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/HighwayDesign
Aviation
Construction Site Injuries
Products Liability
Medical and Professional Malpractice
Cruise Passenger Medical Malpractice

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Co-counsel fees paid consistent with Florida Bar rules

Valuable Resources for Litigating Negligent Security Cases

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