

O'CONNOR INJURY LAW

718-948-3500 | OConnorInjuryLaw.com

October 2026

Check Us Out!

Leave Room to Be Surprised

Sometimes, We Discover Who We Are Only After Trying Something We Never Expected

Last week, our youngest son, Finn, came home from school and casually shared some news that caught my wife Jenny and me completely by surprise.

He had been cast as Captain Hook in his middle school's fall production of "Peter Pan."

Of our three boys, Finn is probably the last one I would have expected to come home with that announcement.

Finn has always been our quieter kid. When he was younger, he had some social challenges and had an IEP (individualized education program) in school. While his two older brothers gravitated to sports, Finn has never had the same interest. We have encouraged him to try different things, but at 12 years old, he is still figuring out what he enjoys and where he fits.

And honestly, I think that's perfectly okay. Still, Captain Hook?

As Jenny and I asked him about it, we learned something else. Finn hadn't simply auditioned and unexpectedly been handed a part. He had gone through three callbacks before getting the role. That surprised me even more.

Here was this kid whom I have always thought of as quiet, voluntarily walking into an audition, performing in front of other people, and then coming back to do it again. And again. And again.

It made me realize how easily we put people into categories, especially the people we know best.

This one is athletic. This one is outgoing. This one is shy. This one is artistic. We don't mean anything negative by those labels. We are simply describing the person we have come to know.

But our children aren't finished products. Neither are we.

I wonder how often the labels we place on ourselves become even more limiting than the ones others place on us.

"I'm not good with people."

"I'm too old to try that."

"I could never speak in front of a crowd."

"I'm just not that kind of person."

At some point, a description of who we have been can quietly become a rule about who we are allowed to become.

I don't know if Finn will fall in love with acting. Maybe this will be the beginning of something he enjoys for years. Maybe "Peter Pan" will come and go, and he'll move on to something completely different.

I'm beginning to think that part doesn't really matter. What matters is that he tried something outside of what we expected of him, and maybe even outside of what he expected of himself. He gave himself the chance to be surprised.

There's a lesson in that for all of us.

As adults, we get comfortable with our identities. We know what we're good at



and what we're not. At least, we think we do. Maybe every once in a while, we should challenge one of those assumptions.

Take the class. Join the group. Try the hobby. Make the phone call. Apply for the position. Walk into the room even when you're not completely sure you belong there.

You don't have to discover a hidden talent. You certainly don't have to become Captain Hook. Sometimes, the victory is giving yourself the chance to find out.

Jenny and I will be in the audience at "Peter Pan" this fall, probably still a little surprised when our quiet kid walks onto that stage. And I have a feeling I'll be watching him a little differently.

Because one of the great privileges of being a parent is discovering that, just when you think you know exactly who your children are, they remind you they're still becoming who they're going to be.

Maybe the rest of us are, too.

-Brian O'Connor

We Would Love to Receive a Review From You!

Your reviews help members of the community who need our services find us. Simply scan the QR code to leave a review today!



BEFORE YOU BUY

LEGAL PITFALLS FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS SHOULD KNOW

Purchasing your first home is exciting, but it's easy to get caught up in open houses, mortgage approvals, and the thrill of finding a place that feels just right. In the rush to reach closing day, many first-time buyers focus on the financial side of the transaction while overlooking the legal details that can have lasting consequences.

A missed clause in a contract, an overlooked disclosure, or a skipped inspection can turn what should be a joyful milestone into an expensive headache. Understanding the legal pitfalls that trip up first-time homebuyers can help you make smarter decisions, protect your investment, and get you moved into your new home with confidence.

Skipping a Thorough Review of the Purchase Agreement

Once an offer is accepted, it's tempting to move forward as quickly as possible. Many first-time buyers sign purchase agreements without fully understanding what they're agreeing to, assuming the paperwork is mostly routine.

In reality, a real estate contract contains critical details about contingencies, timelines, responsibilities, and potential penalties. Missing or misunderstanding a clause can create serious problems if financing falls through, repairs are needed, or the transaction doesn't proceed as planned.

Every section of the agreement deserves careful attention. Reviewing the contract thoroughly and seeking legal guidance when necessary can prevent costly misunderstandings later.

Ignoring Property Disclosures

Property disclosures are designed to provide buyers with information about known issues affecting a home. Despite their importance, many first-time buyers don't give these documents the attention they deserve.

Disclosures can reveal problems such as water damage, foundation issues, mold, pest infestations, or prior repairs. Some buyers skim through these documents or assume a home's appearance reflects its overall condition.

Carefully reviewing every disclosure and asking questions about anything unclear can help buyers avoid unexpected repair costs after moving in.

Waiving the Home Inspection

In a competitive market, buyers sometimes waive inspections to make their offers stand out. While this may improve the chances of securing a property, it can also expose buyers to significant financial risks.

A home inspection can uncover issues that aren't immediately visible during a showing. Electrical problems, plumbing defects, roof damage, and structural concerns often remain hidden until a professional evaluates the property.

Even homes that appear well-maintained can have underlying issues. Investing in an inspection provides valuable insight into the property's condition and may offer opportunities to negotiate repairs before closing.

Overlooking Title Issues

A home's title establishes legal ownership, making a title search one of the most important steps in the purchasing process. Unfortunately, some first-time buyers don't fully understand its significance.

Title problems can include unpaid taxes, contractor liens, ownership disputes, or clerical errors in public records. If these issues aren't identified before closing, they can create legal complications for the new owner.

A thorough title search helps uncover potential issues, while title insurance protects against issues that may arise after the sale. Both serve as important safeguards for buyers.

Missing Important Deadlines

Home purchases involve numerous deadlines, and failing to meet them can have serious consequences. Inspection periods, financing contingencies, document submissions, and closing requirements all operate on strict timelines.

First-time buyers often underestimate how quickly these deadlines approach. Missing one can result in financial penalties, lost negotiating power, or even contract termination. Staying organized throughout the transaction and maintaining regular communication with real estate professionals can ensure all requirements are completed on time.

Failing to Understand Closing Documents

Closing day is often filled with excitement, but it's also when buyers sign some of the most important legal documents in the transaction. Many people are eager to get the keys and move in, which can cause them to rush through paperwork without fully reviewing it.

Closing documents outline loan terms, fees, ownership information, and other legal obligations. Overlooking an error or misunderstanding a term can create long-term financial consequences.

Published by Newsletter Pro NewsletterPro.com

TAKE A *BREAK*







Dutch Apple Pudding Cake

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 20-oz can apple pie filling
- 1/2 cup dried cherries, dried cranberries, or raisins
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1 1/4 cups apple juice
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tbsp butter

Directions

1. Lightly coat 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.
2. In small saucepan, bring apple pie filling to boil; stir in cherries.
3. Transfer apple mixture to cooker.
4. In medium bowl, stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.
5. Add milk and melted butter; stir until combined.
6. Stir in walnuts. Pour and evenly spread batter over apple mixture in cooker.
7. In the same small saucepan, combine apple juice, brown sugar, and the 1 tbsp butter; boil gently, uncovered, for 2 minutes.
8. Pour apple juice mixture over batter in slow cooker.
9. Cover and cook on high-heat setting for 2–2 1/2 hours.
10. Turn off cooker and cool, uncovered, for 30–45 minutes.

Turn Routine Drives Into Easier Connections

Your Best Conversations With Your Child Might Happen Behind the Wheel

As kids get older, getting more than a one-word answer can feel like a parenting victory. You try to set aside time for a real conversation, but sitting down face-to-face can make the whole thing feel larger than it needs to. Often, some of the best conversations happen when nobody is trying to have one. That's what makes car rides surprisingly useful for parents.

Use the setup to your advantage.
A drive to baseball practice, school, or an appointment takes some of the pressure off. The conversation has a natural ending point, and nobody has to sit down with a specific goal in mind. Kids may also be more willing to open up when they can look out the window instead of feeling like they're being studied.



Of course, no one wants to turn every car ride into a serious conversation. The idea is to find time to check in and chat, and you don't need to claim the whole ride. If the trip takes 30 minutes, try spending 10 of them without phones or music. It's not supposed to be an interview, so keep the questions simple but open-ended. "How was your day?" will often get nothing more than a "fine" in response. A better question gives them somewhere to go, like, "What was the weirdest part of your day?" or "Did anything happen that annoyed you?"

Ask less, listen more.
Once you get them talking, resist the parental urge to turn every answer into advice. If you get them to open up and tell you something frustrating or embarrassing, just listen … even if it's tough! Despite having meaningful advice up your sleeve, responding with an immediate solution or quick lecture can shut them down. Instead, acknowledge what they tell you with a simple answer that keeps the conversation open without making them feel judged.

If your child doesn't want to talk, don't force the conversation. A quiet ride can still be useful because it keeps the door open without adding pressure. Over time, those tiny, low-pressure moments can make it easier for kids to speak up when they actually do have something to say. Not every drive needs to become meaningful, but a regular habit of leaving room for conversation can make the car feel like a more comfortable place to talk.

O'CONNOR INJURY LAW
718-948-3500
OConnorInjuryLaw.com
651 Willowbrook Road, Suite 104
Staten Island, New York 10314

PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BOISE, ID
PERMIT 411

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 Captain Hook Changed Everything

2 6 Legal Errors That Cost Homebuyers Thousands

3 Dutch Apple Pudding Cake

Could Your Car Be the Best Place to Connect With Your Child?

4 A Burglary, Attempted Arson, and Instant Karma

THE BREAK-IN THAT BACKFIRED

A CRIMINAL PLAN GOES UP IN SMOKE



Most businesses would love more foot traffic. However, Pure Cannabis Outlet in Monroe, Michigan, probably would have preferred it not arrive in a stolen Jeep Grand Cherokee backing through the front of the store.

The break-in occurred early on a Sunday morning, and security footage showed two suspects using the vehicle to gain aggressive entry. Once inside, they reportedly stole products before moving on to the next part of the plan, which somehow got worse. According to reports, the suspects poured gasoline inside the shop and set it on fire.

As criminal strategies go, pouring gasoline inside a building you just crashed into already leaves very little room for things to go smoothly. In this case, the flames became a problem almost immediately when one of the suspects caught fire while trying to leave.

Video of the incident reportedly shows the person still ablaze as both suspects ran through the parking lot. It's hard to imagine that was part of the getaway plan, although by that point, the plan had already taken several sharp turns away from sensible.

Fortunately, the store's sprinkler system did its job. When first responders arrived, the fire was already being extinguished, and the business reopened despite the damage. Authorities, meanwhile, were still looking for the suspects.

Pure Cannabis Outlet also seemed to realize the absurdity of the whole thing. The business joked online that it doesn't have a drive-thru, which feels like a fair clarification after someone used a Jeep to enter the building.

Nobody wants to deal with a burglary or attempted arson, but the lesson here seems fairly clear. If your criminal plan involves a stolen vehicle, gasoline, and accidentally setting yourself on fire, it probably needs another round of editing.

Published by Newsletter Pro NewsletterPro.com