

Man Sued for Selling \$40 Printer to Indiana Lawsuit Troll

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Doug Costello

made \$75 but lost \$12,000 because of a Craigslist deal. Photo courtesy of The Daily Mail. [/caption]

Summary: Doug Costello's life was turned upside down after he sold a \$40 printer to a lawsuit troll in Indiana.

We've all heard of *buyer beware*, but should the same rule apply to sellers too? Doug Costello, 66, from Ashland, Massachusetts will more than likely tell you "yes."

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In 2009, Costello sold an used \$40 printer through Craigslist to Gersh Zavodnik, 54, of Indianapolis, Indiana. With shipping included, the printer sold for \$75, but Costello ended up losing years of his life and \$12,000 instead. What should have been a normal online transaction became a nightmare for Costello because he sold his printer to an infamous lawsuit troll.

According to The Daily Mail, Zavodnik has a long history of suing people. He came to the United States from Ukraine in 1987 under political asylum, and he's been terrorizing people with lawsuits ever since.

After Zavodnik received the printer, he sued Costello in Indiana court for selling him a "broken printer." While most people would have asked for a refund, Zavodnik wanted \$6,000 in damages. The case was originally dismissed because the Ukrainian threw out the printer, but that wasn't the end of this story.

In 2010, Zavodnik sent Costello papers asking him to admit liability for \$30,000 for fraud, deceptive advertising, emotional distress, and breach of contract. The case was dismissed, but for some reason, an appeals court revived the lawsuit. All the while, Zavodnik harassed Costello with more admissions of liability letters, one asking for \$300,000 and one for \$600,000. Costello never responded to the outlandish letters, but to his horror, he discovered that people who do not respond *accept liability by default*.

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Costello claimed later that he didn't receive the letters, but it was too late. Now having been stuck with admission of liability, he sought help from an attorney and racked up \$12,000 in legal bills.

Indianapolis attorney Chad D. Wurtz told the Detroit Free Press that "every judge here in Marion County knows who Gersh Zavodnik is." The Detroit Free Press reported that he had sued over 100 people and had 100 other lawsuits pending. He once filed a lawsuit for \$1.2 million against a woman who reneged on buying camera equipment. It appears he found most of his victims through online sales.

In March 2015, Special Judge J. Jeffrey Edens ruled in favor of Zavodnik for \$30,044.07 for breach of contract. Edens admitted the judgment was "high" but he had no choice because of Indiana's Supreme Court ruling about litigants who do not respond to admissions filings. Eventually another judge, Chief Judge Nancy Vaidik, overturned the ruling, relieving Costello from this tumultuous journey.

But this story may not be completely over for Costello. A source said that Zavodnik may request another hearing.

Should Zavodnik still be allowed to file cases? Does this story deter you from buying things online? Let us know in the comments below.

Source: The Daily Mail

