

Legal Battle: Lawyer Files Suit After His Car Gets Towed Twice While Legally Parked During Late Work Hours



A lawyer in Little River, South Carolina, has filed a lawsuit against Coastline Towing and Recovery, alleging that his car was towed three times while legally parked outside his law office during late work hours. Attorney James P. Stevens Jr. claims that on two of those occasions, the company refused to waive charges despite his legal parking.

The lawsuit, filed on April 5, alleges conversion and violation of the South Carolina Unfair Trade Practices Act. Stevens claims he is entitled to triple damages and attorney fees under the latter claim. Additionally, the suit seeks to hold Coastline Towing and Recovery owner Richard Pate personally responsible for damages as the alter ego of a related company.

According to the suit, the first time that Stevens' car was towed from the parking lot of his law office, he paid \$200 to retrieve it. The second time, Stevens called the towing company and got his car returned to him at the office. The tow truck driver later apologized to Stevens after his wife told him to do so. However, the last time, on April 3, Stevens demanded the return of his car to no avail. He was asked to pay \$286 plus storage charges, which he reluctantly paid since he didn't want to argue anymore.

"I had enough, and I just filed suit against them," Stevens told the ABA Journal. "I've had enough with this predatory towing."

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Stevens claims that the public index shows "a whole line of cases where it says public sale, public sale, public sale" for Coastline Towing and Recovery. He alleges that the company charges "an arm and a leg" for storage of towed vehicles, and when people can't pay, the company applies for title of their cars and sells them at public auction.

This is not the first time Stevens has had issues with Coastline Towing and Recovery. He claimed several years ago, the company towed the car that his wife left in a gas station parking lot after experiencing chest pains. Stevens' wife called an ambulance and left a note on the car explaining why she was leaving the car there.

Stevens says the towing company refused to release the car to him because the title wasn't in his name, and there was no proof that he was married to his wife. Stevens alleges that he returned with his marriage certificate and driver's licenses for him and his wife, but the towing company still refused to release the car. He finally got the car after the sheriff's office intervened on his behalf. Stevens filed a separate suit against Coastline Towing and Recovery, which eventually settled. He does not recall the settlement amount.

Coastline Towing and Recovery has yet to comment on the latest lawsuit. A person who answered the phone at the company's number said comments would have to be made by Pate, who is currently out of town. The employee said he didn't know when Pate would be back, but he would give him the Journal's message upon Pate's return or if he calls in before that.

Stevens' lawsuit highlights the frustration and injustice that can arise from predatory towing practices. It also emphasizes the importance of fighting back against unfair towing practices and holding towing companies accountable for their actions. If you have experienced a similar situation, seeking legal assistance to protect your rights and seek justice is essential.