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Checkmate

ZP&W DEFEATS CASTRO

BY JOSHUA KAUFMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORGE PARRA

On the wall outside the main conference room of the Coral Gables office of Zumpano Patricios & Winker (ZP&W), in a framed plaque, a check for \$23,796,624.74 is displayed—money that some said was impossible to recover. Joe Zumpano, managing shareholder of ZP&W, looks at the check with nothing short of pride and understands that the term ‘impossible’ is simply a manageable flaw in perception.

In 1961, CIA pilot Thomas Ray was shot down over Cuba during the Bay of Pigs Invasion. He survived the crash with minor

injuries but was captured by Fidel Castro. For decades, Janet Ray Weininger lived with the knowledge that her father had been executed in his hospital bed with a gunshot to the head. The horror doesn't end there. Her father's body was frozen for eighteen years. For ten years Weininger wrote Castro asking for her father's body to be returned. The brutal dictator finally responded by sending pictures of her father's corpse shortly after he was executed.

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After consulting with various attorneys, Weininger was told her case would never pay out, even though she had accumulated a ton of evidence. She recalls that money was the dominating factor in all these discussions. When she met with Zumpano and Leon Patricios, the talk of a potential rainmaker case didn't come up, not even once.

“Their main conversation dealt solely with justice,” says Weininger. “They couldn't

ordered \$23,796,624.74 to be turned over by the Federal Marshall from frozen accounts in the United States.

“It was a surreal moment,” says Zumpano. This case was about a daughter honoring her father—a true American hero,” says Zumpano. “Having a client who fought for over forty-six years to have the truth come out was great inspiration. It kept us going. Jan is the real hero. Her labor of love is an example for all Americans and their families.”

“I was against bringing this case about for many years,” recalls Weininger. “I didn't have the courage to put myself through it. When I saw on the news that Castro had arrested seventy-five journalists I knew I had to do something.”

believe this had actually taken place. They didn't ask about money. I wanted people with inner integrity. And that's what I got.” Weininger v. Castro quickly turned into a media frenzy. Thick white binders with hundreds of press clips illustrate a rough schematic for how grueling the case was on everyone involved. On November 18, 2004, Circuit Court Judge Ronald Dresnick ruled against Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, the Cuban Army and the Cuban government, and the defendants were ordered to pay of \$86,562,000.00.

And pay they did: In 2006, a Federal Court Judge in New York's Southern District,

“We were honored to be a part of Jan's efforts to expose what Fidel Castro had done to her father,” added Patricios.

“We were a team,” says Weininger. “We built a bond and we will be linked for the rest of our lives. I come from a military family. We understand that bond.”

Apparently, so does ZP&W.

While not every client brings the case of a lifetime, as Patricios dubbed the battle with Cuba, the firm is dedicated to its clients. ZP&W is a full service mid-size law firm that defines out-of-the-box thinking. Besides



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possessing a wealth of legal talent, the firm's adoption of a global approach to law has helped it create a previously untapped market.

“We pioneered a theory that has been written about extensively in the media as New Globalism,” says Zumpano. “This model encourages trust and cooperation between businesses on a global level. We redefined the target market as a stream of commerce between nations.”

Recognizing the potential value of Miami as a major hub for global commerce and immigration, the firm embarked on a quest to establish Satellite Offices within firms in other countries. Instead of competing with these law practices, ZP&W's Satellite offices coordinate legal services between its Coral Gables headquarters and the foreign firms, while establishing co-counsel relationships for the benefit of the client. The mission: a fluid, streamlined approach to resolving complex legal matters.

“We handle the work on the U.S. side while the foreign firm handles legal work in their country,” explains Zumpano.

With a growing number of Satellite offices in hot spots located throughout Latin America and Europe, the firm has become a force in a rapidly evolving global market.

Adding to the firm's mystique, they invest heavily in South Florida waterfront real estate. Currently, four properties are owned which help build equity for the partners. ZP&W employees can sign up to use and enjoy the homes- a benefit the firm's founders see as a way of giving back to their employees.

Dedicated to everything South Florida, ZP&W represents on a pro-bono basis, non-profit organizations benefiting such causes as children with autism and learning disabilities.

“Some of the most rewarding work we do as lawyers focuses on utilizing our skills to benefit the community,” says Winker.

With the presence of mammoth-sized firm and the attentiveness of a boutique practice, ZP&W delivers the best of both worlds time and time again.



CIA pilot Tommy Ray was shot down over Cuba during the Bay of Pigs Invasion and was later ordered executed by Fidel Castro