

MS. FEENEY IN THE COURTS
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We ran into our old friend Ms. Feeney last week, and she looked terrible. It was four years ago during the bicentennial year when she last came by. If we remember correctly, she was beginning a new career as a sports announcer then and had high hopes of making it big on the national networks as a co-anchor person with Howard Cosell.

"It was a bomb", she admitted glumly. "They started me out on Saturday Afternoon Wrestling, but I had to give it up, couldn't hack all the blubber grunting and groaning week after week." Besides, after Phyllis George quit, my heart wasn't in it."

Ms. Feeney looked even thinner than usual, the lines on her face had deepened, and the sparkle had gone from her eyes. She had confessed several years ago to "pushing seventy." She was adamant that it wasn't age that had slowed her down.

"It's my health, sugar. I been in and out of the courts all year, and I ain't got the stamina I once had. Grief and suffering has impaired my well-being. And them poisons in my system is eating away my flesh."

We asked about the cervical collar she was wearing, and, for the first time, a hint of the old cheerfulness appeared.

"One of my doctor friends give it to me to wear until we get the lawsuit settled. I'm lucky to be here after that whiplash three years ago. They offered to settle out of court for fifty thousand, but we're holding out for a hundred."

"As a matter of fact," she confided in a happier tone, "I got four other lawsuits going for me now, and I missed out on a couple more. I'll be living on easy street if we cash in on all of 'em."

She rummaged through her satchel, pulled out a notebook, took a swig from her flask of eggnog and leafed through the pages.

"We're asking a million from the contractor, the roofer and Johns Manville for putting them asbestos tiles on my roof. I've been breathing that stuff for fifty years and look what it done to me."

"Then my only nephew, who's been like a son to me, is one of them hostages over there in that heathen Iran country. Seven months of suffering and worry over him has

drained my strength and sent me back to the psychiatrist. But I ain't greedy like that other woman who wants to sue the Ayatollah for a billion dollars. I figure five hundred thousand might ease my pain."

"Also, I nearly got done-in last year in Pennsylvania at that Three Mile Island business. The radioactivity got into my eggnog and laid me up for months. We're about to settle that one for three hundred thousand."

She paused briefly for another jolt of eggnog. "You remember my last fiancé, the old master sergeant who passed away on me on the way to the altar?"

We said we remembered that it was back in the sixties and that she not only got stuck for the funeral expenses but that the VA refused to pay for her sessions with the grief counseling therapist.

"Right," she said. "That dear man was one of the first ones in charge of spraying all them weeds in Vietnam with this Agent Orange. I know that's what done him in. I put in my claim with the VA over two years ago. Besides my expenses, fifteen years of grieving has got to be worth something."

As she poured us a cup of eggnog, we remarked that it was no wonder she looked so puny these days.

"You're right, son, but it's them lawsuits I missed out on that gets me down."

Ms. Feeney sighed. "Trouble with me, sugar, I was born too soon. Never did get a chance to take them birth control pills 'cause my womb was gone ten years before they come out with 'em. I know if I had taken 'em, I might have had me a good heart attack to sue the company for. And then, my Mamma always told me she had a hard time of it carrying me when she was pregnant. If she had had me later on, I'm sure they would have loaded her up on stilbestrol. Think what I could be doing with *that* one!"