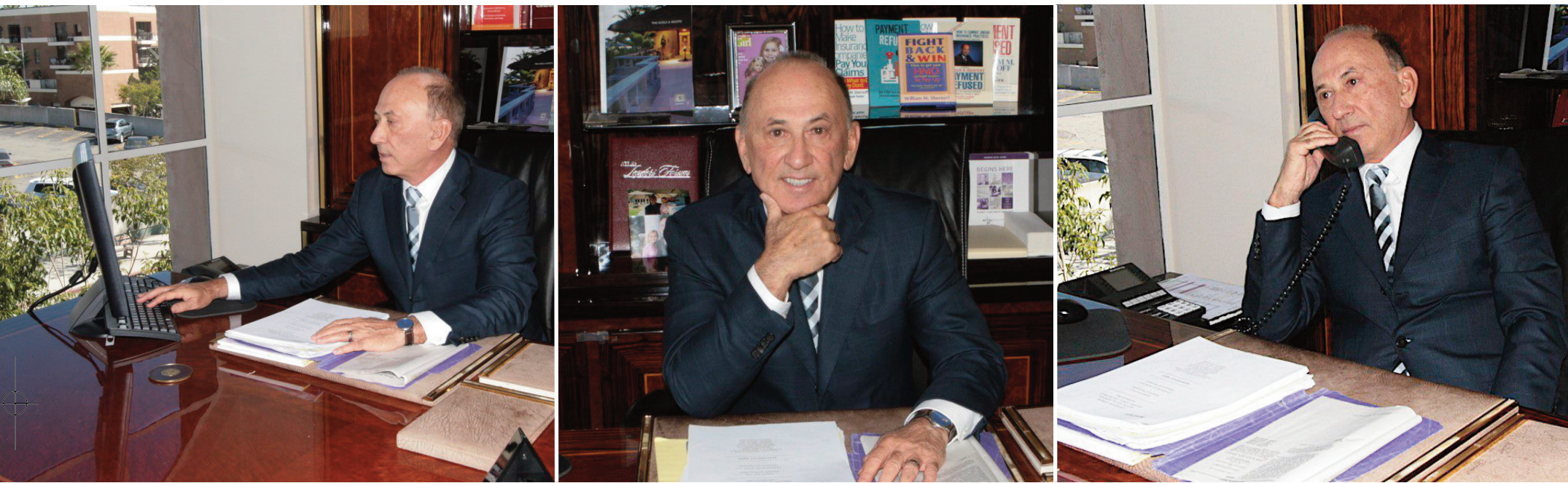


For more than 30 years **Los Angeles Attorney William Shernoff** has hauled big insurance companies into court for failure to pay claims of policy holders...and has won big verdicts. The fight continues as he takes on heavyweight health insurance companies that now more than ever are denying patient medical claims and canceling policies after people become sick and need medical treatment. He is credited with establishing and pioneering the law of Insurance Bad Faith in California.

Interviews by Suzanne Takowsky & Zandra Palma; Written by Suzanne Takowsky



Are you pushed to the wall because your medical insurance company has you by the short hairs? You're not alone. Millions face a dead end when claiming what is rightfully theirs from insurance companies: Prompt payment for their medical services; fair evaluations of medical conditions; proper care and treatment for life-threatening illness or catastrophic accident injury; coverage for long-term treatment, disability or wrongful death due to the negligence of another—each is devastating for those involved. So why is it then, that here in AMERICA people must bury their sorrow and override their health crisis in order to fight their insurance companies for the help and treatment that they need? Meet the man who challenges all of those under-handed tactics by those monstrous health insurance companies, and he wins... L.A. attorney William Shernoff. Senior/managing partner of Shernoff Bidart Darras & Echeverria LLP—a law

firm known as 'bad faith insurance lawyers' Shernoff heads a team of 10 premier litigation attorneys who get victims what is legally theirs. And, forget that ungodly 'hourly-rate-fee' nightmare that most people face in litigation. Shernoff and his team don't fool around. They go to court to win. If they don't win...they don't get paid. Shernoff's mission to bust wide open all of the illegal practices of insurance companies began in 1971, with his first insurance case. It proved a brutal, eye-opening realization of the corruption behind insurance giants and the underhanded, strong-arm, dishonest tactics they pulled to get out of paying claims of policy holders; the worst being to cancel the policies of critically ill people who were clinging to the hope that a correct diagnosis by qualified doctors and proper medical treatment would save their lives.

There was no going back. Shernoff took off in high gear taking insurance bad faith cases and pioneering this new field of law. In 1979, he made international headlines by winning a landmark case for the MGM Grand Hotel, in Las Vegas (\$86 million settlement), involving failure to pay insurance proceeds due to a fire at the hotel. That same year the California Supreme Court handed down a record-setting punitive damage award for another of his cases (Egan v. Mutual of Omaha). The landmark decision was so substantial that it set a precedent for all of the 'bad faith' insurance disputes to this very day. Another high-profile case that thrust Shernoff into the international spotlight: a jury awarded his clients (the American Samoa Government) \$100 million for devastation caused by a hurricane. Then, the granddaddy of law-

suits was when Shernoff represented California Holocaust survivors who claimed life insurance benefits were due them from European insurance companies. Life insurance proceeds were never paid the beneficiaries of those who died in concentration camps. Shernoff's lawsuits on behalf of survivors spawned a five billion dollar settlement which was distributed to survivors worldwide. Shernoff went on to receive the 2002 *Trial Lawyers of the Year* honor by the California Consumer Attorneys Association for their unprecedented case.

A documentary of his Holocaust case was filmed and then purchased by Sony pictures. It is being made into a theatrical movie for Sony pictures. He also consulted with Michael Moore and was credited for working with the mega filmmaker on the documentary, "Sicko".