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# EXCEPTIONAL

MAGAZINE

*People*

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*Fame, Adversity and the Will to Overcome: A New Man is Born*

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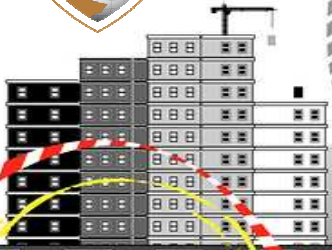
*Technological Ingenuity That Transforms How Kids View the World*

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## Glen Bolofsky

### The Parking Ticket Problem Solver



When it comes to parking tickets and traffic violations, Glen Bolofsky is fired up and on the job. Not writing tickets, but helping those who have received tickets to eliminate them.

Most of us have at one time or another received a parking or traffic ticket. For over 20 years, Bolofsky has helped motorists find ways to beat the fast fingered, quick-sighted ticket writers of Parking Violations Bureaus, who often enter incorrect information or don't clearly understand the rules themselves.

How did this unique idea come about? Bolofsky says, "I had an epiphany one morning because in New York and in many other big cities like San Francisco, LA, Chicago, and certainly Boston and Philly too, you have to get up in the morning per street cleaning rules, because the sanitation truck comes by to clean the streets. If you don't move your vehicle, they can ticket you and even tow your vehicle away. I became very knowledgeable on the subject of days that people could sleep late."

As a result of his personal experiences, Bolofsky decided he'd had enough and he created a solution to help other New York City dwellers understand the parking rules of the city and save time and money. As is often said, the rest is history.

Bolofsky is a serial entrepreneur at heart who has developed various products and services to help motorists cope with the overwhelming and often confusing rules of driving and parking in major cities across the country.

His most successful endeavor, parkingticket.com, is what he calls the worry-free solution to parking and traffic tickets. "Overall, we believe that about 75 percent of all the tickets

issued that we handle are either dismissed or reduced," says Bolofsky.

Bolofsky enthusiastically shared with the founder of Exceptional People Magazine his passion for serving others in such a unique manner.

**Monica:** You are an accountant by trade but you are also a very successful entrepreneur. For about 21 years, you have helped motorists find ways to avoid paying their parking tickets. How did that idea come about? Was it a personal experience that you had?

**Glen:** Actually, yes, Monica. I had an epiphany one morning because in New York and in many other big cities like San Francisco, LA, Chicago, and certainly Boston and Philly too, you have to get up in the morning per street cleaning rules, because the sanitation truck comes by to clean the streets. If you don't move your vehicle, they can ticket you and even tow your vehicle away. I had to deal with this in New York, and it was a ritual. Every morning you'd get up and move your car three or four days a week, and it was not fun. Nobody wants to get up early just to move their car, and by learning the different





rules of when you have to get up, I became very knowledgeable on the subject of days that people could sleep late. This is very funny because the whole idea is information gives you time and money. Now people will be saving time not having to move their cars unnecessarily. That's how it all started. It wasn't because I received a lot of tickets but just because I wanted to save time and not waste gas.

**Monica:** How did the idea form into providing a service to help people eliminate their parking tickets? Of course, I understand that it was merged into that idea when you're talking about having to get up in the morning to move your car, but how did it become a full-blown idea of helping people to get their tickets dismissed, regardless of what the reasons were for the tickets?

**Glen:** Well, you're a very astute interviewer, Monica. A lot of people miss the connection and I want to compliment you. You did not miss the connection. They're two distinct things and I had developed a very large distribution base of selling my book and calendars on this information that we first discussed, and people were buying my publications. I was an author. I became a publisher and I became a distributor. We had over a thousand points of distribution in the New York City metropolitan area right at the checkout counter at every supermarket, where they used to sell *TV Guides*, *Woman's Housekeeping* and *People* and *Us*. I was able to get those pockets, which are prized, very prized retail space right at the checkout.

It took a lot of knowledge and a lot of hard work. I was selling a lot of my publications, and people started coming to me asking me to distribute their

products, their ideas. One guy who came to me said, "Why don't we write a book on how to beat your ticket?" I told him, "Joel, I don't know anything about beating tickets. I only know how to avoid them." He says, "Well, unfortunately, a lot of people don't avoid them and they have to fight them." He was an expert on fighting them and he taught me the process. He had obtained the official manual of the hearing officers of the City of New York and he gave me a copy. We became lifelong friends, but at that time we were just acquaintances. He had reached out to me because he liked what I was doing. One good thing led to another, and I became an expert after reading that manual, and I developed a computer program, web publishing and software publishing for companies. The companies would buy the program, license it and use it to track every ticket issued to their corporate suites, because yes, companies are getting a lot of tickets.

I hired a programmer and since 1990, we're still upgrading the program all these years. We're constantly enhancing the program to optimize the usability, make it easier for people and more effective in terms of saving companies money.

**Monica:** In 1993, you launched a software program called Alarm. Can you talk a little bit about that and the specifics of that particular program?

**Glen:** Well, the program is designed for commercial use, companies that receive tickets every day while operating in big cities. The whole idea is to provide them with a simple way to track a very difficult process, because municipalities don't make it easy. Even if they want to make it easy, they lack the entrepreneurial skill set, the skills and the love.

By having a lack of love, they don't have any intuition or appreciation and, frankly, they don't have respect for individuals or companies -- small, medium or large companies -- to ask them to comply with the rules. We became kind of an ally, an advocate of both the individual person and the business community in trying to bridge the gap. We've kind of dragged municipalities into the 21st century because when we launched parkingticket.com in 2001, there wasn't even one municipality that would allow you to dispute a parking ticket online. It's 12 years later and now all of the big municipalities allow you to do that.

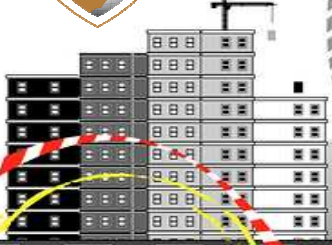
**Monica:** People can go to your website and work through the process, the information there, to help them prepare and hopefully, get their tickets dismissed. How does that procedure work for them?

**Glen:** Well, let's say you are the individual in Washington, D.C.

Let's say you go downtown to a nice restaurant. You look at the signs and you think you're parked correctly, so you park, go shopping or go to eat, and you get a ticket. You get a ticket because either you didn't understand the rules or the ticket agent didn't know or understand the rules. Sometimes it's both the driver and the ticket agent who don't understand the rules. I used to train ticket agents also. Years ago, when I first started my publishing venture, I used to sell my books and calendars to the Traffic Agents' Union in New York, because they lacked information and leadership and they respected what we were trying to do. They viewed it as a good thing to do, to show leadership. The president of that union said, "Let me help my members feel better respected and more satisfaction on the



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job by getting educated on the rules.” We did a good amount of business with those unions at that time, so a couple of different unions became involved.

We came to other cities when we launched the website in 2001, because it’s the same issue everywhere, whether it’s New York or DC or anywhere else. It’s the same story. The municipalities don’t have any love, and they use vendors in municipalities to keep their costs low. There are various companies out there that assist them in the process and it’s all about profits.

**Monica:** That’s fine. What I was asking was do you feel the reason why they don’t show very much love is because they realize that that’s revenue that they’re missing out on?

**Glen:** Yes, that’s exactly what it’s about, and it’s very sad to me because I love our country. I believe in freedom. I believe in justice. I believe in doing the right thing. I’m very passionate about it because I grew up in the Vietnam era where friends and my brother and I were called upon to sub-

mit to the draft. Only by the grace of God did we avoid having to go to Vietnam and avoid getting killed in war. I grew up in that era that we had to fight for freedom, and freedom isn’t free.

This really resonates with me that people are being taken advantage of, and that it’s by our own beautiful government and the people that our government hires to help them. It’s not good corporate citizenship and with the business model that they have, that cannot be sustained over the long haul. In Los Angeles, there’s a class action lawsuit against one of these companies for the very reasons I’m stating, which is that they’re looking only at the profit and they’re not necessarily giving people a fair shake.

**Monica:** The system that you have in place can help people basically anywhere in the country.

**Glen:** That’s right. Yes, anywhere.

**Monica:** Now I’m sure that there are those who apply or use your system but they still don’t get their ticket dismissed, so how do you handle those particular customers?

**Glen:** Well, we really try to go the extra mile both literally and figuratively. I’m a diehard workaholic

seven days a week, going at it because they issue tickets seven days a week. No matter how hard we try to help people, we can never get every single ticket dismissed. That would be a very unrealistic thing to do because some people are not behaving properly, and that’s a problem when people don’t behave properly. They park at a bus stop or they park in a handicap zone.

It’s not just about doing things right but it’s also about trying to dodge bullets and avoid problems. People sometimes create problems for themselves; they deserve the tickets and they should pay.

**Monica:** A lot of people feel that it’s just so much easier and less painful for them to pay the ticket rather than having to go to city hall to fight it and having to deal with what they may consider to be interruption in their lives. How do you get through to people who just say, “Well, you know what, forget it. I’ll just pay it, even though I know I didn’t do anything wrong?”

**Glen:** Well, we can’t possibly reach everyone but for those people, what we try to do is maintain a high, a very good reputation, so we get positive





word of mouth. Positive word of mouth is very high. We have a ranking with the Better Business Bureau. It's their highest ranking, and that's very hard to get. The municipalities make it difficult for people even though we make it easy for people. They file a dismissal letter with the city or the District of Columbia within the timeframe required, say within 30 days, and the District of Columbia by law is required to suspend that ticket at that time, so you don't receive any letters saying there's a penalty or any letters saying that there are additional fines. They don't have a vested reason to follow the law, so what they want - the billing often is not freezing or suspending the ticket though the law requires them to do so. The person receives a penalty notice in the mail, and now the fine has doubled with a threatening letter and people get nervous. They go ahead and make a payment that they shouldn't have to make, so the municipality itself and their vendor are breaking the law and scaring the wits out of people. Nobody's taking them to task.

There are those people that are not acting for the benefit of public. They're acting in a manner to make money for the municipality, or the state, or the federal government. By doing so, they're enhancing their role in that position, giving them a better career opportunity so they can stay on that job. They can collect healthcare and salary benefits, accrue pension benefits and ultimately retire on a public pension that includes great medical benefits.

Because the law has not yet been updated and no one has successfully challenged it, it's gone all the way to U.S. Supreme Court many times. I've done a lot of research on it, and it's a part of my life because when I fight City Hall, whether it be in New York

or D.C. or anywhere else in the country, I am now very cognizant of the fact that I'm dealing with human beings who are experts in the law.

**Monica:** I'm sure there's a lot of opposition to what you're doing. What approach do you take to that?

**Glen:** Well, what I do is I just go with the flow, because I can't change other people. I was speaking to a complete stranger this morning who worked for an elevator company in New Jersey, and he sometimes goes into New York and gets tickets, and he and I connected instantly on the subject because he feels the pain. He gets those tickets. His company makes him pay for them. They tell him, "Park legally or you get a ticket, it's yours."

He and I instantly connected on the unfairness of the process, how the ticketing agents have orders and how the judges are often unfair. I connect with the majority of the public -- only people in government who are not directly related to the issuance and hearings and collection of the tickets. They love me. It's only those who have a vested interest in collecting the money from improper ticketing who don't respect and appreciate what we do.

**Monica:** You're in a business that is somewhat unique because you are helping people keep money in their pockets, and when you run across people who are trying to eliminate you, so to speak, what kind of mentality do you have to adopt to stand up to that?

**Glen:** The mentality I take on is that I believe in God and I believe in justice. I believe in freedom. I believe that David will slay Goliath. I hope to be at it for another thirty years.

**Monica:** With the growth of technology and the fact that these municipali-

ties and jurisdictions are now using technology to write tickets, what does that mean for your business?

**Glen:** Well, what it really means is opportunity. The funny thing is that what one would think from the outside looking in is that computerized tickets would be perfect, bulletproof, unbeatable, but yet we came out of court yesterday in New York, and 81 percent of the tickets had been dismissed.

How can we do that when these are bulletproof, computerized tickets? I'll give you a few reasons. One, the signs are not clear to the people parking or to the ticket agents writing them. They write down incorrect information on the ticket, and the fact that the ticket comes out of a computer doesn't mean it will be error proof. We all make key stroke errors, all of us.

The ticket agents are not sitting in a comfortable atmosphere. They're in the heat, in the cold, in the rain, in the snow. They're also on the streets and worried about their safety and worried about their boss pressuring them to write tickets. They're dealing with a very small device with small keys and it's easy to make mistakes. It's not a full-blown keyboard. The signs are confusing and the agents aren't expert typists.

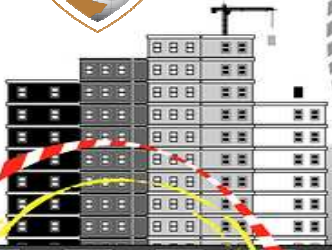
**Monica:** What is the success rate of the company?

**Glen:** Overall, we believe that about 75 percent of all the tickets issued that we handle are either dismissed or reduced.

**Monica:** How do you promote your company?



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**Glen:** Well, word of mouth is very important, and that's something that we'll never lose sight of because it's very, very important to be good corporate citizens.

Very important and again, I stressed before that we have an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau and that's not easy to attain. The truth is it's very hard to make everybody happy, but the way we promote our business is through a lot of media, public relations.

**Monica:** As entrepreneurs and business owners, we all can look back and learn from our past experiences. What would you say are some mistakes that you've made along the way that possibly could have been avoided had you been better prepared or thought things through more carefully?

**Glen:** Ten years ago, we developed the first internet site, ten years before any municipality or big company who services them. We're ahead of everyone. Now we're still ahead because we've launched our services nationwide, which means we're the first universal gateway nationwide for any

individual, any business, to take care of all of their parking tickets, all of their traffic tickets, no matter where they're issued in any jurisdiction throughout the country. We are on the leading edge of technology. Almost everyone who's ever driven for a period of time has received either one parking ticket or one traffic ticket.

**Monica:** Oh, sure. Absolutely. How do you plan to expand and grow your business? Do you intend to stay just within the parking ticket arena, or do you plan to expand to other related areas?

**Glen:** We've expanded now into traffic tickets. We're assisting people in navigating the traffic ticket bureaucracy.

**Monica:** You have a very unique and successful business. It's amazing how an idea that you had so many years ago has turned into something that has the potential to help millions of people every year.

**Glen:** Yes, and we're having fun because we're doing the right thing, making a living, not getting rich; getting rich is not our goal. It's just to pay our bills, have health insurance, try and save money for retirement, try to put the kids through college and enjoy life. It's nice to be on the right side.

**Monica:** Obviously over the years, you have become sort of a serial entrepreneur because you've developed and implemented successful entrepreneurial ideas. What advice can you offer entrepreneurs about "sticking with it" and not giving up simply because something has not happened within the time-frame they expected?

**Glen:** I think that there are a few things that guide every successful person. It's the things that if we're lucky and had a good mom and dad, the things that they would have told us. Find something you like or love and do it, whatever that is. It could be something where everybody else says you're nuts. It doesn't matter as long as you're happy doing it. If you like it, you're going to do it well. The other things are work hard and be balanced. Have a healthy mind and healthy body. Treat people with respect as you would want to be treated. If you do that -- yes, you're going to have people who will try to knock you down, eat your lunch, but so does everyone else. The answer is do what you love, do it all day, and just work real hard at it and keep innovating. ♦



A close-up photograph of an antique clock face. The clock has Roman numerals for the hours and minute markers. The hands are ornate and black. The clock face is reflected in a pool of water, creating a distorted, wavy reflection. The background is a light, textured surface.

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*Thank you... Founder, Monica Davis*

*Take time to reflect upon your life experiences and become inspired to reach new heights.*