

A good companion case to the Tip-Over-Steam-Vaporizer case, serving the same Tort Touchstone of Deterrence, is the supremely instructive case of the Remington Mohawk 600 Rifle. While a 14-year-old boy was seeking to unload one of these rifles, pushing the safety to the 'off' position as required for the purpose, the rifle discharged with the bullet entering the boy's father's back, leaving him paralyzed and near death for a long time. The agony of his guilt, his feeling that he was to blame for his father's devastating injuries, pressed down on the boy's brow like a crown of thorns and almost unhinged his sanity. Assiduous investigation by the family's lawyer unearthed expert evidence of unsafe design and construction and lax quality control of the safety selector and trigger assemblies of the Mohawk 600.

The result of the exertions of the plaintiff's lawyer, deeply and redoubtably involved in challenging the safety history of the rifle model, was a capitulation by Remington and an agreement to settle the father's claim (he was a seasoned and successful defense trial lawyer) for \$6.8 million. Remington also wrote the son a letter, muting some of his anguish by stating that the weapon was the whole problem and that he was in no way responsible for his father's injuries. Then, facing the threat of cancelled coverage from its carriers for skyrocketing premiums in the projection of other multimillion dollar awards, Remington commendably served the public interest by announcing the recall campaign in which we see another electrifying example of Tort Law litigating another hazardous product feature from the market.

Remington's nationwide recall program affected 200,000 firearms; notices in newspapers and magazines similar to this one that appeared in the January 1979 issue of Field and Stream cut back on the harvest of hurt and heartbreak: 'IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OWNERS OF REMINGTON MODEL 600 and 660 RIFLES, MOHAWK 600 RIFLES, AND XP-100 PISTOLS. Under certain unusual circumstances, the safety selector and trigger of these firearms could be manipulated in a way that could result in accidental discharge. The installation of a new trigger assembly will remedy this situation. Remington is therefore recalling all Model 600 rifles except those with a serial number starting with an 'A'. Remington recommends that prior to any further usage of guns included in the recall, they be inspected and modified if necessary. [Directions are then given for obtaining name and address of nearest Remington Recommended Gunsmith who would perform the inspection and modification service free of charge.]'

Tort Law forced Remington to look down the barrel and see what it was up against. Once again Tort Law was the death knell to excessive preventable danger.

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