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Online Reviews:

Are They Trustworthy?

Recent studies indicate that over 80 percent of online shoppers rely on reviews before committing to the purchase of a good or service. There is no doubt a large inventory of positive reviews can be a significant revenue booster for many businesses, but how do you know which reviews are legitimate and which are fake?

Sadly, making fake reviews is a big business on the internet. Review Fraud, at ReviewFraud.org, is an online resource for evaluating the credibility of reviews. The website's makers have compiled a list of companies currently engaged in the business of buying or manufacturing fake reviews.

According to their website, Review Fraud has compiled a list of over 3,000 companies, including many law firms and insurance companies, which are actively seeking out unscrupulous "marketing" agencies to manufacture positive reviews, including four- and five-star reviews.

A recent investigation by an NBC reporter demonstrated just how easy and affordable it is to falsely legitimize your business. The reporter set up a bogus gardening business and then went to an online service specializing in fake reviews. The reporter paid \$168 for several fake Facebook reviews. Within 24 hours, the reporter's fake company had amassed 999 "likes" and over 600 five-star reviews.

Here's the truly sad thing: Many businesses don't even realize they are committing an illegal act by falsifying reviews. Fortunately, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is stepping in to penalize dishonest companies. The minimum FTC fine for deceptive and unfair sales tactics is \$250,000.

The FTC recently fined California auto dealer Sage Auto \$3.6 million for a variety of deceptive schemes. This included having their own employees post five-star reviews on Google and Facebook.

Fakespot (Fakespot.com) is another great resource for determining the trustworthiness of online reviews. Fakespot allows you to simply paste the company or product URL into its artificial intelligence analyzer. Fakespot's software then scans the authenticity of product reviews and provides a grade anywhere from an A to an F.



According to Fakespot's data, 52 percent of Walmart.com reviews are fake or highly unreliable, and 1 in 3 Amazon.com reviews are illegitimate. You can use Fakespot on just about any website that posts reviews.

How can we as consumers protect ourselves against fake reviews? First, always be skeptical. Second, gather reviews from as many sources as you can, such as Google, Facebook, Yelp, or the Better Business Bureau (BBB). Third, if you see any typos or broken English in the content of the review, it is likely false. Finally, if there has been a recent surge in a product or service's positive reviews, be wary.

While I'm still a strong believer in the value of law firm reviews, this should only be one of the many factors you or your family rely on when considering if an attorney is right for you. I invite you to visit our website at VanMeverenLaw.com. There, click on the "Hiring An Attorney" video for a comprehensive look at the topic. In the words of the late president Ronald Reagan, "Trust, but verify."



Bryan VanMeveren



Meet Drea Vail, Our Legal Assistant!

Drea Vail has been with VanMeveren Law Group since December 2018. Since then, she's become an integral part of the team.

As a legal assistant, Drea works closely with our clients. She may call them to request medical records or various documents related to their case. She's always reaching out to ensure the attorneys have all the paperwork and information they need as they work on cases in the office. Drea also calls clients to keep them in the loop regarding their case.

She runs some of our social media accounts, too, including Facebook, helping us stay up-to-date online and keeping everyone else informed on what we're working on at VLG. Our Facebook page, [Facebook.com/VanMeverenLawGroup](https://www.facebook.com/VanMeverenLawGroup), is a great place to find various resources, including informative articles!

Before joining the team and getting more into the world of law, Drea was a political science major in college, and she has a considerable interest in public health care. This made her a great fit on the team, as we deal with various health care issues when it comes to our clients.

Sometimes the process of working with attorneys can take a lot of time, especially when we're dealing with insurance companies. Plus, clients who have been badly injured in an accident can take a long time to heal properly. Often, we have the chance to really get to know our clients, more so than other types of lawyers. Drea says she appreciates that extra time to support clients. In many ways, it helps us better meet the needs of clients over a longer period of time.

Outside of the office, Drea enjoys getting out and about, running and hiking all over the area. She enjoys a night out at the Downtown Artery or visiting New Belgium. With the nice late-spring weather, nothing beats sitting outside with a cold drink and a few friends taking it all in!



Our Clients Say It Best

WHAT SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"VanMeveren helped my father and I with his auto accident claim. I can't say enough about how much they helped, how professional, and ultimately very successful they were. I've already referred two other people to the firm who are good friends of mine and would tell anyone in an accident situation to call this firm FIRST."

-Anonymous



Fashion Sense

TECHNIQUE CLOTHING



Style is alive in Laporte, Colorado. In 2011, a sharp young entrepreneur set out with a vision to make accessible, fashionable, modern streetwear.

Enter Technique Clothing.

Technique Clothing, based in Laporte, is the creation of Colin Beard. Unlike many of the businesses we've featured in the newsletter, Technique is an online retailer — keeping with our “online” theme this month.



When you visit Technique Clothing's online storefront at TechniqueStore.com, you're greeted with a variety of clothing, including T-shirts, hoodies, and jackets. Everything is straightforward yet unique and modern.

You can even contact Technique for your custom-printing needs. Be sure to reach out to their contact page, TechniqueStore.com/pages/contact, for further details.

The company has provided printing for a number of sports teams, clubs, and other businesses for a variety of purposes. They do screen printing and embroidery.

If you are hoping to update your wardrobe this year, are searching for inspiration, or have a business that could use custom-printed clothing, Technique has you covered. It's a great way to support a local business and look good in the process.

For more information about Technique Clothing, visit their website or their Facebook page at [Facebook.com/TechniqueClothing](https://www.facebook.com/TechniqueClothing).

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Solution.



Nothing feels more paleo-appropriate than digging into a giant rack of beef ribs. This largely hands-off recipe requires plenty of hands-on eating, making you feel like one of our cave-dwelling ancestors.

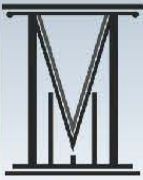
Ingredients:

- 1 5-lb. rack of beef ribs
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Heat a charcoal, wood-burning, or gas grill to medium high. Once heated, move heat source to one side or turn off half of the burners to create an indirect heat zone.
2. Season ribs with salt and pepper and char on the hotter side of the grill, turning occasionally, for 12–15 minutes. Once charred, transfer to the other side of grill and cook until the thickest part of the rib reaches 130 F, about 2 1/2–3 hours.
3. Let meat rest for 15 minutes. If desired, serve alongside grilled veggies.

Inspired by Saveur magazine



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Heroic Dads Who Didn't Back Down

Being a Parent Isn't Always a Walk in the Park

Kids often look up to their father as one of their greatest heroes. There are the long drives to sports tournaments, the late-night movies, and the sweets when Mom isn't looking. We probably all have some reason to look up to our dad as one of our biggest influences. It's Father's Day this month, a special time of year when we take a moment to think about the sacrifices the father figures in our lives have made for us. Most dads are pretty great, but some go above and beyond the fatherly call of duty. Let's take a look at some heroic dads who risked everything to keep their families safe.

Brad Lewis: Over the Ledge

Life can change in a split second, and how you choose to react in a moment of peril can define your legacy forever. Few people know this as well as Brad Lewis. When Brad and his young son, Oscar, were deeply entrenched in an intense Nerf battle, he surely didn't think the situation would turn as dangerous as it did. When a few darts missed his father and landed on the balcony, Oscar ran after them but soon found himself teetering on the balcony's ledge, 12 feet above the ground. Thinking fast, Brad grabbed his son just before he fell over, both taking the plunge while Brad protected his son with his own body.

Just as he'd intended, Brad absorbed most of the blow. While Oscar sustained serious wounds, his father's injuries were more severe. Brad was left fighting for his life in the ICU, with severe fractures to his skull and vertebrae. Thankfully, Brad is expected to make a full recovery and has made serious strides since the accident. He and his son will live to play another day.



Greg Alexander: Couldn't Bear to See His Son Hurt

While camping in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in June 2015, Greg Alexander awoke to the sound of a nightmare. The screams of his son intermingled with the roars of an unknown assailant, beckoning Greg to his son's tent. There, he found his son Gabriel being attacked by a bear. The bear had his son by the head and was dragging him away. Greg jumped on the bear's back, desperately trying to take attention away from Gabriel. Amazingly, it worked, and in the end, the bear ran away. Gabriel was left with serious cuts to his head, but thanks to his dad's heroism, the two were able to walk away from that campsite and back to their lives together.

The important thing to remember is that you don't have to take a leap of faith or *fight a bear* to be a hero in your family's eyes. Just be yourself, show some support, and do the best you can. Happy Father's Day, everybody.