

# ***Not Quite Right News from Mark Golden***

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## **Lawsuit: Years Lost to Slow Ketchup**

San Francisco, CA

Our unstable economy has created an every-means-possible mentality to add to one's income. Take note: the age of frivolous lawsuits is budding and blooming...and one big blooming color is red.

It is doubtful that anyone has never had their self-control challenged by a bottle of ketchup. The slow moving – if moving at all – red sauce has made frustrated fools of all of us. Whether it is due to impatience, over-confidence or insecurity, that stuff in the bottle has always been reticent to comply with our pressing appetite. This accompaniment to burgers n' fries or hot dogs, has been a source of exasperation. A class action lawsuit was filed in San Francisco's 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court by Abused Ketchup Users Anonymous (AKUA) against ketchup manufacturers and bottlers. This suit was brought about by years of embarrassment, soiled clothing, injured carpal palm and wasted time...in other words, culinary abuse. On the surface, the charges appear to be quite justified. As the court papers read, "It is a rare person indeed who has not considered a bottle of ketchup to be a dysfunctional device designed to make humans of average ability feel like idiots."

Manufacturers acting on their own fears, and anticipating such a comeuppance someday, have only lately devised the upside-down (label-correct), broad-necked, plastic squeeze bottle. These are most likely too little and too late to avoid judgments followed by payments to a multitude of claimants (including judges to juries).

The plaintiffs, now numbering in the hundreds of thousands, are expected to soar into the millions. On the courthouse steps, many were willing to state their case on camera with blurred faced anonymity. You will find other plaintiffs in numerous website chat rooms. One person stated, "The anger runs deep – but never slowly!" One slogan is "Bottom-slapping is not petty or pretty." Another is "Spank your kids' bottoms not ketchup bottles!"

One elderly "abused user" tallied up the amount of minutes he's lost fiddling with ketchup bottles in his long career as a condiment user. He bitterly spat out that in his 70-plus years, he "lost five weeks, three days and half an episode of Jeopardy." Multiply that tale by millions of bottom-slappers.

One middle-aged, lifelong ketchup user justifies the suit involving bottle manufacturers and ketchup makers jointly. She says, that "the length of time needed to hold the bottle in a stationary position in order for it to dispense its liquid – 'liquid' being a stretch – has compounded my arthritis!" She has doctor's documentation as proof. She also claims that the

years of countless meals and near useless bottom-smacking on uncooperative and uncaring glass bottles have compounded her low self-esteem. She says, "X-Rays don't lie. My right palm is a shattered mess. Damn them millionaires in their ivory towers bathing in the red stuff!"

A gaggle of shamed female plaintiffs banded together due to soiled and stained clothing and table cloths. Wedding dresses top the list of expenses. The costs of dry cleaning for stain removal and "emotional embarrassment while in a public place" totals in the millions of dollars.

Many voiced rather convincing parallels, such as the cliché "slow as molasses." Where's the disparaging slam about ketchup? Who among us really complains about the length of time it takes molasses to ooze on down – nobody! Yet, it gets the bad rap to boot...Why? In comparison on average 97% of molasses will empty out of its bottle. Ketchup? Good luck! Perhaps the sizable, uncooperative, unreachable remainder in the bottom of the ketchup bottle is the manufacturer's way of getting us to go out and buy more.

Chat room chatter points to this condemnation of molasses as side-stepping of the real culprit – ketchup – as being "an elaborate, decades old conspiracy." This involved the conditioning of "we" the ketchup-using masses by slick advertisements in an effort to keep sales up and criticism of its inherent problem down!" Is there an elephant in the kitchen while we sit bottom-slapping at the table?

The growing multitudes of culinary complainers, who are looking for a few extra bucks, are ready for a fight. This time the battle will be more than just getting something red out of a bottle. How about some of that desirable papery green stuff out of corporations' pockets?

The attorneys for the Ketchup Manufacturers of America declined to comment for this article.

Another story from REAL LIFE (that I made up!) This parody news story is for amusement. Any similarity to real people, places or things is fictitious and not to be taken as fact.