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### PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*Charles B. Jimerson - Lessons in Business You Can Learn from The Tiger King*

What a difference a few months can make. In March and April, as viral fevers surged through American hospitals and cabin fever grew in American homes, the U.S. cemented itself as the new center of the

pandemic and ground zero for the viral outbreak of Netflix's special called *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness*- a documentary about a makeshift zoo owner who spiraled out of control in a true murder-for-hire story from the underworld of big cat breeding.

Tiger King is seven episodes of pure, unhinged chaos that served as a welcome distraction to the chaos and misery experienced by many inside and outside the walls of their COVID-19 shelter. For those who live under rocks, Tiger King follows the life of the eccentric, self-proclaimed Tiger King, Joe Exotic, who accurately describes himself as a “gay, gun-toting cowboy with a mullet.” Exotic's bleached mullet and eclectic style took the internet by storm, resulting in a massive wave of parodies and memes celebrating and ridiculing the makeshift zoo owner and his group of very interesting tiger prince misfits in rural Oklahoma. To be literal, the show is about some people who own private big cat sanctuaries, but as a viewing experience it's also a bit like detaching the top of your skull and pouring Long Island Iced Tea growlers into your limbic cortex. At a time when the seriousness of the world was crashing down on us, Tiger King was a shot of comfort TV in the form of a sideshow circus, where the acts were collusion, trickery, polyamory, plot twists, real world danger, hackneyed political crusades, meth teeth, shirtlessness in all forms, power ballad country songs, cringeworthy eulogies, blowing stuff up, and arson- and that's only the first few episodes. The uniqueness of it hit us all at a moment when we were in search of something worth talking about that's was not personal or related to the way we were living.



Despite the vast majority of the people in this documentary being unlikeable characters (particularly Joe Exotic), somehow the internet meme'd America into embracing Joe Exotic as a protagonist. Granted, he's a ridiculous and damaged persona who most of the internet laughs at more than they laugh with, but his unapologetic authenticity allowed us to accept him for all of his many flaws and repudiate hypocritical forces of evil that glossed over their failures and defects without consequence. Because Joe Exotic was hard to watch – but harder to stop watching- he will be etched into our minds as a time capsule for this worldly experience we all just went through. You don't believe me? Ask five people what they will remember from this Coronavirus experience. I bet you a cold one that at least 3 say Tiger King within the first minute of response.

Never one to lose an opportunity to learn and grow, I couldn't help myself in finding enduring value in my week with Joe and his band of gypsies. From Joe Exotic, I took away the following three lessons that directly relate to our business environment and the resolve we will need to battle out of the social and economic trough we are in as a country. In the internet's latest mascot, I have found the following pearls of wisdom:



**Joe Exotic Business Lesson #1 - There is a market for everything.**

## **Find yours.**

At some point during a Tiger King binge, every viewer reaches a point where they take a step back, pull their head out of this crazy alternate reality that somehow exists, and realize that there is an all-out war in America over tigers and other big exotic cats. Like, a couple of months ago, did any of you know this world even existed? Because if you say yes, you're either lying or exceptionally well-informed. Joe Exotic found a way to exist on the fringe, always moving and shaking to stay relevant. He found an angle and a certain type of customer base who had a consumer demand for his product- whatever it was he was selling for the afternoon.

Defining your target market is one of the most important tasks for your sales force. Knowing who your buyers are is the foundation of all elements of a successful marketing strategy, from how you develop and name your products or services right through to the marketing channels you use to promote them. Joe Exotic knows that his target audience is not "everyone." He defined his target group, understood his particular niche and dominated it. Joe Exotic understood how hypnotizing big cats can be. Apparently, people will pay any amount of money, do any amount of unpaid labor, and sleep with just about anyone to have some connection with lions and tigers. All of us have our defenses and our ways of compensating for our insecurities, but the impulse to protect yourself from the world by linking yourself to an animal that might kill you must speak to an extraordinary need that Joe Exotic understood well- and exploited.

In the real business world, the better you understand your target market, the better you'll be able to target them with relevant content, messaging, personalized relationship building and advertisements. As your depth of audience insight grows, you'll start to see higher conversion rates and better ROI—key metrics that matter to all sales departments and businesses. Hopefully your market niche does not entail distribution of product that will put you in Club Fed.

## **Joe Exotic Business Lesson #2 - Dress for the job you want, not the job you have.**

If Tiger King had been a TLC docu-drama instead of a jolting real-life documentary, the audience would have chalked the haberdashery up to just another extension of reality show scripting and character development. Unfortunately for them, fortunate for us, wardrobe choices of these cool cats and kittens were uncoerced and not scripted. Jeff Lowe comes onto the scene dressed like the kind of person who alternates seasonal semi-pro coaching gigs between go carting and roller derby. Joe Exotic waffles between rodeo cowboy and Vegas showgirl, alternating pink western cuts with flowy, rainbow-sequined shirts, topped off with his exquisite bleached mullet. Joe is at his best when he walks around his kingdom with animal-print shirts unbuttoned to the navel and a revolver prominently displayed at his hip, letting everyone know he will approach his big cats without fear or hesitation. Carole Baskin showed the most versatility and gave us a flavor for her sartorial spirit, appearing one day as an (allegedly) homicidal Jan Brady, and a femdom beach bride toting around a retirement age bam-bam the next.

Do these outfits work for me? No, they don't. But for them, they crush. True to form. As a professional, dressing well is just one more simple action you can take that reinforces your professional competence. If you're truly dedicated to excelling in your chosen career, cutting corners—whether in your actions,

attitude or attire—won't get you there. Why bother dressing for success, you may ask? True, dressing up doesn't make us any better at our jobs, but here's the thing: dressing well is a chance to make a positive impression on those who have no idea how good you are at your job. If the Tiger King crew set out to show the world that they were batsh@t crazy enough to traffic in Tigers, well, their fashion choices uncloak their phantasms.

### **Joe Exotic Business Lesson #3 - Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.**

Joe's nemesis—or, perhaps, depending on your reading, the story's hero—is Carole Baskin, the founder of Big Cat Rescue. For Joe, she is the embodiment of what he derisively refers to as “the animal rights people,” an activist who has singled him out for persecution, and her crusade to put him out of business drives him to even more extreme behaviors. His abhorrence for Baskin reached its zenith when he hired a convincing-looking lookalike to feed what are purportedly chunks of her dead husband's body to his tigers while he shot a music video. It is absurd. You should check it out [here](#) if you need a good chuckle. It is easily the most savage diss-track ever written.

Joe Exotic's antipathy for Carole Baskin isn't just on-camera bluster, as his quest for revenge turned him from an occasionally likeable nut to a deranged crackpot who let things get away from him. Joe Exotic is undoubtedly a charismatic, compelling character, but Carole Baskin knew how to turn his vendetta against him. She let him hoist his own petards. Through her commitment to seeing the matter through to the end, she knew that Joe's cartoonish qualities and propensity for sequined shirts would not reduce his crimes and behavior to benign and palatable legal exemptions. Sooner or later, everyone sits down to a banquet of consequences and Baskin let the mistake-prone Exotic make his mistakes. Like a big cat in the wild, she hid in the bushes waiting to pounce. Joe Exotic had a chance to walk away, but he didn't take it. Joe lacked the humility to understand that there is no revenge so complete as forgiveness. Carole Baskin understood Joe's ability to self-destruct and so she persisted. She taught Joe an important lesson- failure is often not a single, cataclysmic event. You don't fail overnight. Instead, failure is a few errors in judgment, repeated every day.

While it is fun to look at Joe Exotic and Co. through a business lens, understanding the inconceivable, frenzied success of *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness* is simple. It had the sort of wild, only-in-America plot and a cabal of Jerry Springer-esque characters whose wide-eyed zealotry made for totally addictive, binge-viewing at a time when we needed it most. In the month of March, which lasted approximately fourteen years, we needed a near-pathological distraction of Joe Dirt meets rural Siegfried & Roy to make the world make sense again. Mimicking life and business at the time, there was practically no aspect of the series that was predictable in any kind of way.

It has been said that the idea that the future is unpredictable is undermined every day by the ease with which the past is explained. If that is true, good luck using Joe Exotic as a business case study to your team tomorrow, and good luck explaining his value during the quarantine to your grandchildren many years from now. 30 years from now, I'll still be trying to make sense of Joe Exotic, the Tiger King. Either way, his plight is branded into my brain and will always be a Corona tattoo of a time in which Joe Exotic on my TV was more scrutable than the real world outside my door. Thanks for the gear shift, Joe.

Very truly yours,

*Charles B. Jimerson*

Charles B. Jimerson  
Managing Shareholder

## Managing Problem Construction Projects in Turbulent Times Webinar Series: Part 2 for Subcontractors and Suppliers

**JIMERSON BIRR**

**MANAGING PROBLEM PROJECTS IN TURBULENT TIMES: TOOLS FOR SUCCESS**

Part 2 - Liens and Protecting Your Right to Get Paid

Event Details

Presenters

Wednesday, June 10, 2020  
12:00 - 1:00 PM

Three partners from Jimerson Birr's Construction Industry Team launched a webinar series focused on Managing Problem Construction Projects in Turbulent Times. Part 1 covering the notice and documenting of claims aired Wednesday, May 13, 2020 and is now viewable on our YouTube channel.

Registration is now open for Part 2 - designed especially for subcontractors and suppliers - coming up Wednesday, June 10, 2020 from noon to 1:00 PM. The webinar will cover Florida construction lien law and other mechanisms that subcontractors and suppliers can employ to ensure they get paid on construction projects.

Watch Part 1 on the Notice and Documenting of Claims

Subcontractors and Suppliers:  
Sign up NOW for Part 2

## Jimerson Birr Co-hosts Webinar with CBRE and Jessie Ball duPont Center

On May 12, 2020, partner **Austin T. Hamilton**, who is peer rated AV Preeminent and Board Certified in Business Litigation, served as a panelist

providing the legal perspective for Jessie Ball duPont Center's webinar on Reopening Responsibly, which was co-hosted by CBRE and Jimerson Birr. The purpose of the webinar was to share experiences and best practices for reopening commercial office spaces for employees, tenants, clients and guests. A link to the presentation is available online with Austin's portion beginning at the 19:52 mark.



Watch the Presentation on  
Reopening Responsibly

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## Jimerson Birr Legal Blogs

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- **Construction Industry Law Blog**
- **Community Association Law Blog**
- **Business Litigation Blog**
- **Eminent Domain Law Blog**
- **Commercial Real Estate And Land Use Law Blog**

### Banking & Financial Services Industry Law Blog

#### **Coronavirus Crisis Management for Lenders and Servicers: Considerations for the Anticipated Rise in Loan Modification Requests**

By: **Brandon C. Meadows, Esq.**

The efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 has caused an adverse ripple effect in the economy that will undoubtedly strain lending relationships and require widespread loan modifications. To assist borrowers and businesses with the anticipated volume of loan modification requests, the federal government and other federal agencies have offered guidance and legislation to encourage lenders to work with borrowers having trouble making payments due to the financial disruption of this public health crisis...



**Click here** to read the full blog post.

### Commercial Real Estate and Land Use Law Blog

## Florida's Consumer Collection Practices Act (FCCPA) Part 1



By: **Austin T. Hamilton, Esq.**

All businesses in the state of Florida need to be familiar with Florida's Consumer Collection Practices Act ("FCCPA"). The FCCPA is found at Sections 559.55-559.785 of the Florida Statutes. The FCCPA is intended to protect consumers and is intentionally unfair to creditors. See §559.552, Fla. Stat. (2019); *Kelly v. Duggan*, 282 So. 3d 969, 974 (Fla. 1st DCA 2019) (acknowledging the court's statutory obligation to construe the FCCPA in a manner that is protective of the consumer). The FCCPA allows for consumers to sue creditors for small, technical violations of the statute. Consumer attorneys will use these technical violations as a way to shake down businesses for a settlement. It is a lucrative business for consumer attorneys as defending against FCCPA claims often costs more than making a nominal offer to resolve the FCCPA claim...

[Click here](#) to read the full blog post.

## Construction Industry Law Blog

### Five Key Tips for Construction Delay Claim Success

By: **C. Ryan Maloney, Esq.**

Delays are sometimes unavoidable on construction projects. When delays occur, they can often result in increased costs to contractors and subcontractors, and may bring exposure to owner claims for liquidated damages for delay. Certain types of delays, such as those caused by circumstances beyond the contractor's control, may be deemed excusable delays and entitle the contractor to time extensions, thereby avoiding liquidated damages. Certain types of excusable delays, such as those caused by some action or inaction of the owner for example, may also be considered compensable delays that entitle the contractor to compensation for the additional costs of the delay, as well as a time extension for the delay...



[Click here](#) to read the full blog post.

## Business Litigation Blog

### Bankruptcy 101: What Secured Lenders Need to Know About Common Bankruptcies

Bankruptcy filings indicate a debtor's lack of working capital and, justifiably so, strike concern into any lender still hanging on to a promise of payment from

their debtor. But, depending on the creditor's agreement with the debtor and the creditor's actions after payment default, a creditor could recuperate collateral assets or a portion of the outstanding payments. This general overview helps lenders identify the challenges and opportunities they will encounter during each type of common bankruptcy filing...

[Click here](#) to read the full blog post.

## Community Association Law Blog



### **Considerations for Community Associations When Reopening Their Communities and Common Elements**

By: **Hans C. Wahl, Esq.**

The State of Florida is slowly but surely opening back up after closures from the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor DeSantis's Stay at Home Order expired on April 30th, and Executive Order 20-112, effective May 4th, was enacted as Phase I in the reopening process. Both State and local governments have been working together to coordinate phased reopenings of the State. Restaurants, hair salons, and various retail stores have reopened in a limited capacity (up to 25% occupancy), and are still required to maintain social distancing guidelines...

[Click here](#) to read the full blog post.

## Firm News

*Curiosities, Ruminations and Various Eccentricities of Firm Biz*

### **Memorial Day Lunch**

*BBQ to Honor the Servicemen and women of the Red, White and Blue*



(Above) Our fearless leader and U.S. Air Force Veteran Charlie Jimerson is always at the center of lively discussion. (Left) Brandon Meadows prepares his plate at the buffet alongside one of our



In appreciation of all of the country's bravest servicemen and women, we gathered to appreciate the freedom their great sacrifices have provided. Our Firm's Events Committee arranged an in-office BBQ from Monroe's on the Friday before Memorial Day. It was our first in-person activity together since the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are happy to report everyone at JB is healthy and accounted for.

## Charlie Jimerson Serves on NEFBA Panel



The Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA) hosted an online event titled "Get Your Company Back to Work" focused on what re-opening looks like for businesses in the construction industry after the COVID-19 pandemic. Managing shareholder Charlie Jimerson, who is on the Board of Directors for the organization, served as one of three panelists, offering perspective on the legal considerations for reopening businesses and job sites. The video of the presentation is available on NEFBA's Facebook page.

[Watch the Video on Facebook](#)



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