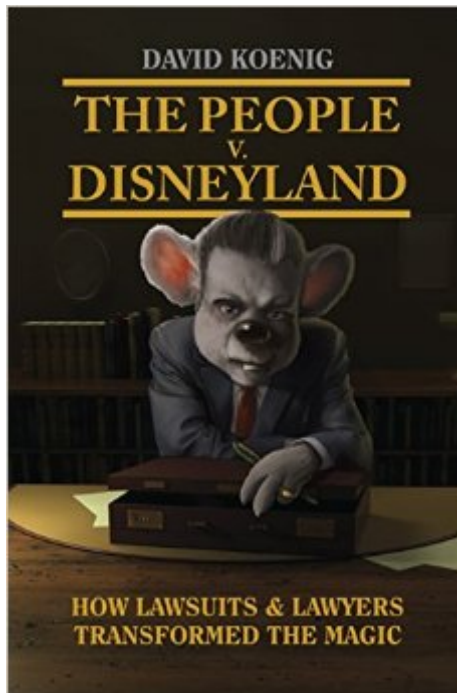


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# The People V. Disneyland: How Lawsuits & Lawyers Transformed The Magic



## Synopsis

On July 17, 1955, Walt Disney opened his first venture directly serving the general public: Disneyland. Three days later, a small girl smashed her miniature Autopia car into a curb, slamming her face against the bare metal steering wheel. Her family filed suit. Disney quickly went to work making the ride safer, while at the same time it began vigorously fighting the family's charges. And, the park started gearing up for more lawsuits thousands more. *The People v. Disneyland: How Lawsuits & Lawyers Transformed the Magic*, the latest book from Mouse Tales author David Koenig, chronicles 60 years of tumbles, attraction mishaps, ticket scams, attacks by security guards and costumed characters, disability disputes, and employees who turned on their employer. Sometimes the allegations convinced Disney to change its operations, usually secretly. Other times, they stuck by their guns, convinced the claims were bogus. Based on exclusive interviews and nearly 1,300 lawsuits filed against the Mouse, *The People v. Disneyland* reveals how Walt's wonderland has been remade into a very different place.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Here is a summary of the book: Walt Disney built an amazing park and it quickly gets ruined by dumb people trying to make a buck. Despite the book's cover, Disney does NOT look like the bad guy here, just a company trying to protect itself from a flood of frivolous lawsuits. Koenig did a great job of research and his list of court cases in the appendix appears exhaustive. The book is written in his typical fun style, which is critical for a book like this that could have been boring in someone

else's hands. There are many interesting stories of people trying to sue the park for mostly silly reasons. It also covers Disney's sometimes over zealous prosecution of people too. Personally my favorite lawsuit was the person who was hit in the back by a bullet fired from outside the park. They sued claiming that Disney should have prevented bullets from entering the park somehow. I know that Disneyland is magical, but c'mon! Anyone interested in Disney or the history of theme parks will love this book.

What a great way to tell the history of a singular place like Disneyland! With the same fluid, readable style that made his "Mouse Tales" books so entertaining, David Koenig assembles and categorizes 60 years of lawsuits in which Disneyland was the defendant--nearly 1,300, according to the book jacket. As with *The Nickel Tour*, a history of Disneyland told in postcards, the incidents, claims, and eventual resolutions of these cases paint a vivid portrait of a magical park that changed after Walt Disney died and turned dramatically away from maintenance and safety in the 1990s when, not coincidentally, the park began losing in court and paying large out of court settlements. The book concludes with a comprehensive list of cases and sources, categorized as Slips, Trips & Bumps, Collapsing Objects, Struck by Cast Member, and so on. Interesting for several reasons and extremely well-written.

As usual with any book that David writes, it is very well researched, and told in a way that gives us insight into many of the problems that Disneyland has encountered over the years. Being a retired cast member who actually testified in a few of these trials, it hit right to the fact that some folks are just looking for a free ride. Knowing first hand that D/L does everything they can to be as safe as possible, but keeping up with the increased crowds and technology of the attractions has been a challenge. In the early years when money was tight and the park was crowded with limited attractions, capacity was emphasized, to keep the wait times down. Now with the addition of Disneyland's Californian Adventure, once it was redone after the Eisner, Pressler fiasco, it has allowed them to slow things down, putting even more the emphasize for safety. Well done, can't wait for his next book. Robert Dale

So interesting and a little scary. Amazing how Disney is able to keep so many quite serious accidents under wraps.

An intriguing, thought-provoking read. I purchased this book from Mr. Koenig at the D23 convention

in Anaheim a few days ago and ended up beginning (and finishing) it on the plane ride back to NYC. It was so interesting to read about cases stemming from my favorite attractions. I must admit that I found myself becoming angry throughout the book; angry at how people, clearly out for a Disney payout, have forced the company to less about fantasy and more about reality. I'm also shocked about the complete lack of common sense some people seem to have -- and a notice this first-hand when I'm in the parks.

Koenig provides excellent commentary on a multitude of legal cases from the park's inception to modern times that run the gamut from the hard-fought and complex to some hilarious frivolous litigation. It's more than lawsuits. In this he also details numerous management decisions gone completely wrong, particularly through the Disney dark years of the 90's. The story also follows the outcome of changes to state law and administrative rules that ultimately changed Disney theme parks. There is an undercurrent here as well. It wasn't just lawyers and lawsuits that changed the parks. The recurring theme has more to do with guests who forget real world danger can, and does exist when one decides not to keep hands and arms (and legs) inside the ride vehicle at all times and to stay seated and secured until the ride comes to a complete stop. Well done Mr. Koenig.

As much as I like all the books that I have from David Koenig, this one was...OK..., but really a "dry" read. While I was interested in the various lawsuits that the company had to confront, I was looking forward to seeing the actual results and changes to the policies at DLR in the book, and wasn't disappointed.

Great book, interesting material for any Disney park enthusiast. You'll love the history and the lawsuit details.

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