

**What Should Plaintiff's Counsel Do?
Defense Plots and Structured Settlement Deceptions: A Special Report**

By Richard Halpern

By reading and thinking about the various practices described in this issue, you've already taken a giant step toward ending the defense's manipulation of plaintiffs and structured settlements for its own benefit. Keeping the plaintiff's bar in the dark was always the cornerstone of the insurance industry's strategy.

One thing you should not do is abandon the use of structured settlements altogether. There is nothing wrong with the concept of using periodic payments to realize tax advantages and avoid dissipation; indeed, it is critical that plaintiffs' settlements be protected. The objective is to take control of the structured settlement, avoiding the insurance industry's shenanigans, or to find a viable alternative. Here are the alternatives to Section 130 structured settlements...

Banks

Some of the very largest national banks have professional money managers who are familiar with the special investment needs of injured plaintiffs, and are experienced in handling their settlements. Absent this experience, banks are not a safe option.

Financial Planners

Financial planners with a significant background in addressing the special considerations of tort victims can lead the plaintiff through legal and financial complexities of managing a large settlement.

Consultants

Not to be coy, we think the best approach is to seek alternatives to defense-controlled structured settlements devised by experienced settlement consultants with undisputed loyalty to the plaintiff. That is, of course, what The Halpern Group does.

The final thought is this: there are alternatives, and good ones. Now that you have the whole story, there is no reason to be swayed by deceptive tactics and feigned concern for the plaintiff's welfare. There is no need to allow the defense to play with your plaintiff's money, cutting deals and receiving pay-offs.

You can make certain that the era of the defense-controlled structured settlement ends here.

It shouldn't have taken this long, but better late than never.