



## Attorney Ed Susolik Takes on 80-year-old's Insurance Fight, Pro Bono

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If you want a fight, attorney Ed Susolik is the kind of guy who will give you one. Not long ago, Susolik was so outraged when he read a [newspaper story](#) about an 80-year-old man who was getting the runaround from a big insurance company, that he offered his assistance, pro bono. “I just wanted to help. I just thought it was such a gross miscarriage of justice,” Susolik says.

One of Southern California's top insurance lawyers and a partner at the big name firm of Callahan & Blaine, Susolik has handled more than 1,000 bad-faith lawsuits. Although he's known for [insurance claims](#), Susolik's real specialty is winning cases.

Ken Carrier had been battling with a security company for well over three months and he'd been getting absolutely nowhere. One phone call and a letter from a lawyer like Susolik and it was all over. The security company agreed to pick the expenses.

Last December, Carrier was out on an errand in Lake Forest, Orange County. He pulled his SUV into a parking lot near an AT&T store that had just been robbed seconds before. Suddenly, a pistol waving security guard, who claimed to be a police officer, was at the passenger door and ordering Carrier and his daughter out the vehicle. The security guard took off in Carrier's vehicle, in hot pursuit of the AT&T robbery suspect. Shortly after, the security guard crashed the SUV into a pickup truck.

Through absolutely no fault of his own, Ken Carrier, retired and living on a fixed income, was suddenly out thousands of dollars. His insurance would pay the first \$9,000—but not the rest which totaled another \$15,000 for storing his vehicle; car rental until he could fix his SUV; doctor bills for headaches and dizzy spells; and the sheer stress of having a gun put to his face—and so on. The security company that commandeered his vehicle was refusing to take any responsibility.

“That, essentially, is what they told Mr. Carrier. They said we have a lawyer and we are big company and you are an 80-year-old man and we aren't paying,” says Susolik.

“They took Mr. Carrier's SUV and they crashed it,” he adds. “Why don't you make the man whole? What is the problem?”

“Once you get into a certain age category, companies and people can take advantage of you,” says Susolik. “And I really felt that Mr. Carrier was being taken advantage of.”

“I said, “Look,” recalls Susolik “all the resources of our firm are going to come down on your head because this is financial elder abuse.”

This is not the first pro bono case Susolik has handled. “There are various reasons that people need pro bono assistance. Sometimes it is financial. Sometimes you lose your job or otherwise. Sometimes people just don't have the background to handle legal issues,” he adds. “We are seeing more and more people who are elderly who are victims of financial abuse. Obviously on the real negative side you see the scams and everything. But with something like this—this should have been a very simple issue.”

Susolik just got a letter from Ken Carrier thanking him for his efforts. “It says, ‘I just got my first night's sleep in months. Thanks’,” says Susolik. “And it has three exclamation marks!,” he adds, with a smile in his voice.

*Attorney Ed Susolik is a partner with Callahan & Blaine and is in charge of the firm's insurance department. Attorney Susolik is an adjunct professor at USC Law School where he teaches Insurance Law. He is also a contributing editor to the leading insurance book in California, the “Rutter Guide treatise on Insurance Litigation”. Attorney Susolik was chair of the Orange County Bar Association Insurance Law Section for over 10 years. He was born in Czechoslovakia and earned his law degree at the University of Southern California. Susolik has recovered more than \$1 billion for clients over the last two decades.*