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For a good time, be sure to call correct guy

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Nothing like having the same name as a strip club owner to get your telephone ringing.

"I am Jay Urban, a personal injury trial lawyer; not Jay Urban, a public nudity arts purveyor. Not that there is anything wrong with being a lawyer," Urban wrote to me this week.

His e-mail arrived the same day that the other Jay Urban was quoted in a front-page article about Club Paradise Gentlemen's Club's attempt to reach a younger audience.

To avoid confusion in this column, we'll borrow from a Hollywood hottie and refer to attorney Urban as J-Law because that's his business. And we'll refer to strip club owner Urban as J-Lewd because, according to my dictionary, "showing or intending to excite lust or sexual desire" is his business. If he's doing it right anyway.

Know that J-Law is not unfamiliar with public perception polls that rank his profession little better than a "gentlemen's club" owner or a journalist for that matter.

But he wants to clear up any confusion because a lawyer's name is his brand. He's the Jay Urban from Urban, Taylor & Stawski Ltd. downtown.

J-Lewd, who didn't return my calls, has asked that Club Paradise, 813 S. 1st St., be designated a "center for the visual and performing arts." He claims it qualifies for the lofty title because he has artwork hanging on the walls in the unlikely event a customer looks at the walls.

A Common Council committee balked at the idea this week. But if they eventually cave, it would mean the club could admit underage customers and get them hopped up on soda and nearly naked older ladies. You know how everyone is always claiming there's nothing for young people to do? Now we could give them a stack of dollar bills and send 'em over to Walker's Point.

J-Law estimates that he received 20 calls and e-mails this week from colleagues and others wondering if he was, in his words, "litigator by day, topless bar owner by night."

Two local television stations called his office and wanted to interview him about how his bar and the Milwaukee Art Museum were pretty much the same kind of place.

And his mother phoned. Her born-again neighbor in Tomah saw the story and asked if her son was in the skin business. Mom bought up every newspaper in town so no one else would entertain that notion.

"Fortunately I have not had to field any calls from clients wondering whether I am working on their cases or sipping cocktails with scantily clad employees," J-Law said.

The 36-year-old attorney said he has never been inside a strip club. He left Tomah for the big city to attend Marquette Law School.

However, his very first case as a lawyer was to represent a dancer who was injured when a balcony collapsed at a strip joint in Manitowoc. When she asked him to photograph the puncture wounds to her posterior, he refused.

You may be getting the impression that he and J-Lewd wouldn't have much to talk about. One man deals in torts, the other tarts.

But J-Law speaks of the man who shares his name as a "somewhat kindred spirit" in this instance. J-Lewd is exploiting a legal loophole much like J-Law would to help his wronged and damaged clients.

J-Law consulted a friend in marketing who said you can't enforce a trademark on your name. However, he might be able to change the title of the law firm to Club Paradise if he thought it would increase business.

"Tough, smart lawyers with a reputation for winning and, if necessary, lap dances." No, probably not.

From the Oct. 17, 2003 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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