

## Text Messaging.

By Russ Ipsa.

My secretary had a few days off, and so I arranged for a temporary secretary to come. After I had shown her around and given her a pep talk, I concluded by asking, “Any questions?”

“Nope, I’ve got it,” she said. “Oh, give me your cell phone number. I don’t see it out here.”

“Well,” I hesitated, “I don’t give it out to clients.

“No, problem,” she said. “I’ll just keep it here for emergencies.”

I gave her the number. Just then, my first client came in, and I took him to my office. As I began my meeting, I hear this *PING*. “What’s that?” I asked, looking around. I instantly saw my cell phone light up.

I saw a text message: “OMG FGT lipstick GTR BRB.”

“What the heck is this?” I asked, showing my phone to my client.

“Oh, my God,” he said smiling. “Forgot my lipstick. Got to Run. Be Right Back.”

“Don’t text me,” I texted back.

*PING*. “K”

I continued my client conference. When we were almost done, I heard another *PING*. “B2W” it said. My client looked over at my phone. “She said: back to work,” he told me. I was furious.

After my client left, I laid down the rules for the temp: No more texts. Then, I went in my office for a little dictation. *PING*. “SBT”, it read.

“What the heck does that mean?” I texted. I heard another *PING* with a message containing a website address. I went to the web address and found it to be a dictionary of text messaging abbreviations. I looked up “SBT”, and found that it meant, “Sorry about that.”

The first day went like that all day, with the exception that I started to look up the meanings of her crazy abbreviations in the online dictionary and tried to respond

accordingly. When the day was over, I got another *PING*. “GTG GN,” it said. I checked out the dictionary: “Got to go. Good night”. I decided to get into it, so I was going to use the dictionary offensively and not just defensively. I texted her: “GN”.

The next day went better, mainly because I was starting to get into it. I got just as many texts from the temp, but I was even starting to initiate the contact by text. By afternoon, I knew she had been busy typing my dictation, so I thought I would check in with her.

“?” I texted her.

“?” she texted me back.

“AYDY” I texted her. (Are you done yet?)

“AATK” she texted. (Always at the keyboard.)

“L8TR” I texted.

Once I got my dictation back, I was surprised how professionally done it was. I was very pleased. “10Q” I texted her. (Thank you.)

“URW” she responded. (You are welcome.)

It was the end of the day, so I sent her a “CU” and she replied with the “CUL8TR”

The next day was her last day, and we were really communicating, but only “F2F” if I texted her with that request. At one point, she responded to my “?” text with an “IANAL.” (I am not a lawyer.) I smiled. “LOL” I texted her back.

When the day was almost over, I texted her, “LFD?” (Left for the Day?)

“@TEOTD” she replied. (At the end of the day.)

“CU” I texted. “CU2” she replied.

The first day my secretary came back, I decided to surprise her with my new communicative skills. “WB” I sent her. (Welcome back.)

“10Q DIKU?” she responded. (Thank you. Do I know you?)

“LOL” I responded.

“How was the temp?” she texted.

“1337” I texted. (Leet or elite.)

“OMGYG2BK” she replied. (Oh, my god, you’ve got to be kidding.)

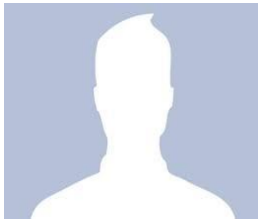
“Y” I texted.

“No X.” She responded. (No experience.)

“NBFAB” I responded. (Not bad for a beginner.)

“LSHMBH” she responded. (Laughed so hard my belly hurt.)

This may change everything I know about communication and the practice of law. However, as my secretaries (temporary and permanent) would say: “YOLO” (You only live once.)



Russ Ipsa is an Iowa attorney and member of the Iowa State Bar Association. Most of the time, he thinks he is a successful practitioner but always enjoys his legal career.