

[Is Your Law Firm Becoming the “Hotel California”?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 23rd, 2013

Is your law firm becoming like the “Hotel California?” That is my song for this Friday.

A friend sent me the link to [Steven Harper’s](#) book: [The Lawyer Bubble](#). That prompted me to read the American Lawyer article: [What’s Wrong With the Law—And How Lawyers Can Fix It](#). That article focuses on the book and many things Harper writes, including:

He makes the indisputable point that many law firm managers began running firms with their Am Law 100 numbers in the forefront. This led to (you pick) mindless growth, heartless treatment of colleagues, a depressed workforce, gross pay disparities, and, in some cases, spectacular public failures caused by leaders who believed their own malarkey and by the partners who followed them.

In those words, Harper painted a picture of many law firms that have been in the news over the last several months. Reading about those firms reminded me of the [The Eagles](#) hit [Hotel California](#).



[Eagles Hotel California Live at 1998 Hall of Fame Induction 360p](#)

Nancy and I saw the Eagles in concert shortly after they recorded the Hotel California. They opened their concert with it. I am still in awe of the guitar opening and the guitar ending. But, for our discussion today the lyrics are important.

Many have shared their thoughts on the meaning of the lyrics. [Don Henley](#) in a 60 Minutes interview said:

I know, it's so boring. It's a song about the dark underbelly of the American Dream, and about excess in America which was something we knew about.

I am confident most law firms will not will not experience a “spectacular public failure.” But, how many law firms are so intently focused on money, that they are experiencing “mindless growth, heartless treatment of colleagues, a depressed workforce, gross pay disparities.” Will those firms ultimately face a “tipping point?”

I am reading a book I strongly recommend to lawyers I coach. The book is [How Will You Measure Your Life](#) by Harvard professor [Clay Christensen](#). (There is so very much more in this excellent book. I will write future blog posts on some of those important topics.)

You can watch this 20 minute TED Video to get some of the ideas from the book. At about the 11 minute mark, Christensen describes why successful companies (law firms) fail. He says:

The reason why successful companies (law firms) fail is because they choose to invest in the most immediate and tangible evidence of achievement. (Profits per Partner and AM Law Rank)



[How Will You Measure Your Life? Clay Christensen at TEDxBoston](#)

If your firm choosing to invest in the most immediate and tangible evidence of achievement? If so, keep this line from Hotel California in mind.

And she said 'We are all just prisoners here, of our own device'

If you are a regular reader, you know that I have posted each business day for the last several years. I have decided to take next week off from blogging, in part because I suspect many of you are either on vacation or getting your kids ready to start a new school year. I hope you will miss my daily encouragement (or nagging, depending on your point of view.)

I will be back in touch after Labor Day.

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of ***Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout*** and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.