

## **Hot Coffee: Facts, Fiction, and Corporate Greed**

*A Documentary by Oregon Filmmaker Premieres on HBO  
Examining Threats to our Civil Justice System  
By Tom D'Amore*

Everyone seems to have heard about the McDonald's coffee case. An elderly woman spills coffee that she purchased from a McDonald's drive-up window; she sues McDonald's in a "frivolous" lawsuit; then she recovers millions of dollars making herself and her attorneys rich. Right? Wrong.

Producer/Director Susan Saladoff from Ashland, OR reveals in her new movie, *Hot Coffee*, the facts of the case and what really happened to the elderly Albuquerque woman, Stella Liebeck. It looks at the legal case and explores how and why the case garnered so much media attention, who funded that effort, and to what end.

*Hot Coffee* premieres on HBO on Monday, June 27, at 9:00 p.m. PT. The film had its debut at the Sundance Film Festival and has been featured at film festivals throughout the US, Canada and Israel. The reviews have been fantastic. The film just won the top Prize for Best Documentary at the Seattle Film Festival and recently made the official selection cut at the Sundance Film Festival. Many have noted how little they really understood about the McDonald's case and its impact on people who seek justice through our court system.

The film looks at the groups behind the efforts to undermine our civil justice system. Tune your television to HBO on Monday, June 27, 2011, at 9:00 p.m., and learn some surprising facts that might challenge what you think about the case ... and the way the corporate media machine can distort our perception of the facts.

For example, did you know that the coffee served to Stella Liebeck was 50 to 60 degrees hotter than what you brew in your coffeemaker at home? That Ms. Liebeck received third-degree burns over 16 percent of her body: the worst burns her treating physician had even seen? That over a ten-year period before Ms. Liebeck was horribly burned more than 700 people reported burns from McDonald's coffee? That McDonald's representatives admitted at trial that its coffee was so hot it was "not fit for consumption" when sold? That the judge who presided over the trial described McDonald's conduct as "callous" and "willful, wanton, and reckless"? Probably not.

Why, you might ask, are the facts so little known and the myth so prevalent? That is the subject of the documentary to be aired next week on HBO. Oregon Director Saladoff spent twenty-five years representing injured victims of individual and corporate negligence and gave up her trial practice to shine light on this important story.

Watch the film. Invite your family and friends to watch it with you. After seeing this film, you can decide who really profited from spilling hot coffee - Ms. Liebeck or corporate America?

For more information, visit [hotcoffeethemovie.com](http://hotcoffeethemovie.com), or go to their Facebook at [facebook.com/hotcoffeethemovie](https://facebook.com/hotcoffeethemovie).

*Tom D'Amore is the President of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association, the statewide association of attorneys representing Oregon consumers who are harmed by corporate wrongdoers. D'Amore also serves on the Board of Governors for the American Association for Justice.*