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ATTORNEYS OF THE YEAR

Ted Boutrous, Andrea Neuman, Scott Edelman

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher

It's quite a coup to save a client billions of dollars while simultaneously discrediting an entire country's judiciary — and not go bananas in the interim.

But that's what Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher lawyers Theodore "Ted" Boutrous Jr., Andrea Neuman and Scott Edelman managed to do last year in a suit filed by people who said they'd been injured working on Nicaraguan banana plantations. The Gibson team persuaded a Los Angeles judge to toss out two class actions against Westlake Village-based Dole Food Co. Inc. after finding that plaintiffs and their lawyers committed fraud.

That ruling led a Florida judge to invalidate an earlier \$98 million judgment against Dole and made it very likely that \$2 billion in Nicaraguan judgments will never be recovered.

Neuman, 44, of Gibson's Irvine office, said the L.A. ruling has made those Central American judgments "look a little bit more like Monopoly money now."

She and her two co-counsel agreed that the Dole case was one of the biggest they've ever handled. And that's saying something in the case of L.A.-based Boutrous, who has represented the likes of Ford Motor Co. and several major media outlets in big litigation over the years.

Dole had been sued by dozens of workers who claimed to have become sterile after being exposed to dibromochloropropane — a pesticide better known as DBCP — on Dole farms in several countries about three



decades ago.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Victoria Chaney, who's now on L.A.'s Second District Court of Appeal, found that the plaintiffs' lawyers — Juan Dominguez of Los Angeles and Antonio Ordenana of Nicaragua — had falsified medical records and represented individuals who never worked on Dole plantations.

"That was the key to defending the case," said Edelman, 50, of the Century City office, "showing that the plaintiffs were made up, they weren't real banana workers, their injuries were manufactured and that they all had been coached to lie on the stand."

Boutrous, 49, and Neuman said a vital factor was the team's ability to ensure the safety of Nicaraguan witnesses who stepped forward to tell the truth.

"That's when we were able to break things open and get evidence of fraud," Boutrous said. It also persuaded stateside judges, he added, that the Nicaraguan judiciary "was so corrupt that judgments from that country couldn't be trusted."

Boutrous has been in the news lately as co-counsel in the federal court challenge to Proposition 8. According to a 2007 Los Angeles Times article, Wal-Mart's top in-house counsel likes the folksy Boutrous — raised in North Dakota — because he doesn't come across as a "tall-building lawyer."

Neuman was described in a 2009 Corporate Counsel article about the Dole case as someone who "gets people to relax and talk." By praising one obviously coached plaintiffs' witness about his detailed information, she got him to admit he was spouting what he'd been told to say "like a parrot."

Edelman was credited in a Super Lawyers magazine article with helping build up Gibson's Century City practice by schmoozing the entertainment industry. One lawyer who worked with him said he's "extraordinarily persuasive because he makes you feel not only that he's right, but that you really want to be on his side."

— Mike McKee