

April 2009

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Attorney Mullet: Hello Dr. Massa, thanks for taking the time to assist on this case.

Dr. Massa: As I understand it, your client is accused of blinding a pilot with a green laser pointer. Shining a laser at an aircraft at night isn't a very bright thing to do.

Attorney Mullet: Yes, he's aware of that. But it was a legally purchased green laser pointer. The plane was on landing approach at 1500 feet, and pilot claims his vision was damaged when the beam struck his windshield.

Dr. Massa: That seems unlikely, but I'll need to do some calculations to make the case. When do you need the information?

Attorney Mullett: We have a hearing the 3rd of next month.

Dr. Massa: I'll try to have at least preliminary findings to you next week.

Attorney Mullett: This might be a good real-world problem for your students to work on with you.

Dr. Massa: Good idea! I see them in class this afternoon and I'll discuss it with them.