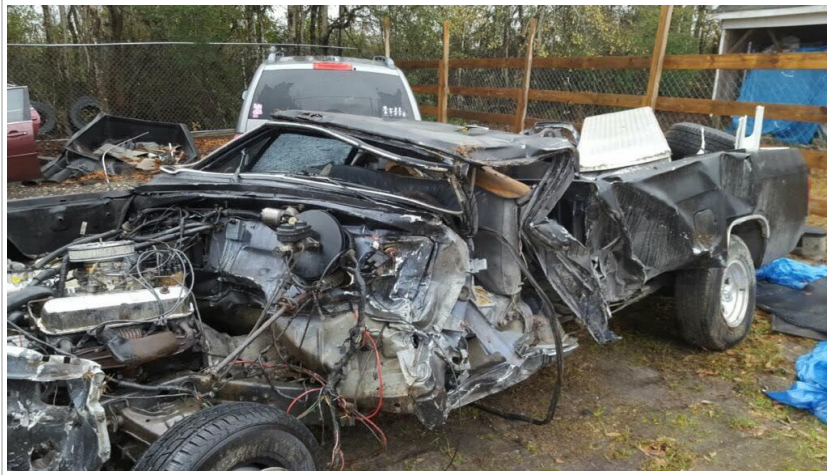


Paralegic settles suit for \$5.425M

By: David Donovan © February 23, 2017



A man who was rendered paraplegic after he was ejected from his pickup truck in a wreck with another truck has reached a \$5.425 million confidential settlement with the at-fault driver's employer, the man's attorneys report.

Nathan Hughey and Brad Banyas of the Hughey Law Firm in Charleston report that the force of the collision caused their client's truck to roll multiple times and that their client was found lying in the grass 15 feet from his car after the wreck. He suffered a spinal cord injury and is now permanently paralyzed from the waist down.

Hughey said he believes the defendant driver ran through a stop sign and clipped the front left fender of his client's truck after crossing over into the oncoming lane. The defendants denied fault for the collision, but Hughey said his client's case was significantly bolstered by the account of an independent witness who had been driving behind the defendant and testified in a deposition that the defendant was at fault and the plaintiff had not done anything wrong.

Hughey said that this testimony, combined with animations prepared by accident reconstruction experts and phone logs showing cell phone use throughout the day by the defendant driver, helped develop what he believed was a persuasive argument that the defendant driver was at fault. He said that the driver denied responsibility for the crash during deposition testimony, and that he believed the denials may have actually strengthened his client's position in negotiations.

"It's one thing if the defendant comes and says, 'We're very sorry,'" Hughey said. "Here you have a situation where the face of the company denied under oath that he had done anything wrong and refused accept responsibility, and I think that really could have resulted in anger from the jury without me having to add much fuel on the fire."

The victim, who is married, also suffered significant facial fractures as a result of the injury. The settlement, agreed to Feb. 15 and mediated by Darren Sanders of Mount Pleasant, includes \$684,300 in special damages and a loss of consortium claim on behalf of the victim's wife. Hughey said that testimony about the plaintiff and his life also contributed significantly to the size of the settlement,

"I would say [it was influenced by] the potential for a very significant verdict, primarily based not on the medical

bills, but on my client—his presentation, the fact that he was young, he's a great guy, he was on his way home from work when this happened through no fault of his own, and now his life has just been turned upside down by this," Hughey said.

Brad Harmon and Kate Lawson of HunterMaclean in Savannah represented the defendants, whose names were withheld due to a confidentiality agreement. Harmon declined to comment on the report.

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SETTLEMENT REPORT – PERSONAL INJURY/AUTO ACCIDENT

Amount: \$5,425,000

Injuries alleged: Spinal cord injuries, paraplegia, facial injuries

Case name: Confidential

Court: Confidential

Mediator: Darren Sanders of Mount Pleasant

Date of settlement: Feb. 15

Special damages: \$684,300

Most helpful experts: Marshall White, M.D., Sarah Lustig, RN, Oliver Wood, Ph.D. (economist), and Mike Sutton, P.E., Ryan McMahan, P.E., Jeffrey Andre, Ph.D., and Anand Kasbekar, Ph.D. (accident reconstruction)

Attorney(s) for plaintiff: Nathan Hughey and Brad Banyas of Hughey Law Firm in Charleston

Attorney(s) for defendant: Brad Harmon and Kate Lawson of HunterMaclean Savannah

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