

The Indiana Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Indiana Jury Verdicts

November 2025

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

26 IJVR 11

Unbiased and Independently Researched Jury Verdict Results

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Civil Jury Verdicts

Timely coverage of civil jury verdicts in Indiana including court, division, presiding judge, parties, cause number, attorneys and results.

Truck Negligence - The plaintiff complained of a TBI after a significant red light collision with a trucker – there was hotly contested neurological proof as to the purported injury, the defense suggesting the plaintiff suffered just a temporary concussion – the jury awarded the plaintiff \$4.1 million

Fauhaber v. B&W Cartage Company,
64D02-2109-CT-8603

Plaintiff: Todd S. Schafer and
Timothy S. Schafer, *Schafer & Schafer*,
Merrillville

Defense: Brandt E. Poling, *Poling*,
Columbus, OH; and Thomas P.
Mannion, *Lewis Brisbois*,
Cleveland, OH

Verdict: \$4,100,000 for plaintiff

County: **Porter**, Superior

Judge: Jeffrey L. Thode, 10-6-25

Courtney Fauhaber, then age 41 and a radiology technician, was driving a 2015 Ford Explorer on the morning of 6-22-20. She proceeded in Valparaiso on Calumet Avenue at its intersection with U.S. 6. As she entered the intersection with a green light, she collided with a tractor-trailer driven by Siliman Ibrahim. He was employed by B&W Cartage Company. It was a hard hit, Fauhaber's SUV striking the truck's trailer. Fauhaber was taken from the scene by EMS to a local hospital. B&W Cartage conceded fault.

Fauhaber has since treated for an apparent concussion. Her family doctor noted that nine days after the crash, Fauhaber's symptoms were resolved. She continued to complain

of symptoms consistent with a brain injury. She was seen by a neurologist who had a neuropsychology evaluation done. The report was mostly normal except that Fauhaber suffers from reduced verbal fluency. Thereafter Fauhaber went to some six speech therapy sessions and returned to her prior level of functioning.

Fauhaber continues to complain of mild symptoms as related to communication. There was also brain imaging that indicated Fauhaber had micro-bleeds in her brain that were related to the crash. As Fauhaber's neuropsychological testing and speech therapy had her returning to a baseline, she built her case focusing on symptoms that could not be measured by tests, headache, dizziness, personality change and fatigue. She also argued that she faces an uncertain future with her brain injury.

Fauhaber sued Ibrahim and his employer and sought damages in this lawsuit. She built her case through several experts including Dr. Richard Cristea, Neurology; and Dr. Blake Weis, Neuroradiology; who confirmed her brain injury.

The incurred medical bills were approximately \$20,000. Fauhaber's husband (Jeffrey) presented a consortium claim to the jury but did not press that issue strongly. Fauhaber returned to her job a few weeks after the crash and did not make a claim for lost wages.

B&W Cartage's defense contested the injury. It argued that Fauhaber

Underinsured Motorist - The plaintiff underwent a course of physical therapy and pain management care to treat an SI joint and hip injury after a rear-ender – her medicals were \$60,274 (the Stanley number was \$32,186), and she settled with the tortfeasor for her \$25,000 limits – the plaintiff then sought UIM coverage from her carrier above \$25,000 and up to a \$75,000 ceiling – the verdict at trial was only \$10,500, and a defense judgment was entered for the insurer

Steadmon v. Farm Bureau,
10D06-2303-CT-51

Plaintiff: Kelly A. Sweeney and
Lindsey Corbitt, *Hensley Legal Group*,
Fishers

Defense: Marc Tawfik, *Church*
Langdon Lopp Banet, New Albany

Verdict: \$10,500 for plaintiff

County: **Clark**, Superior

Judge: Kyle P. Williams, 10-9-25

Shannon Steadmon, age 47, was driving a Ford SUV on the evening of 1-22-02. She was stopped in traffic on Veterans Parkway in Clarksville. A moment later she was rear-ended by Judy Beck. The collision resulted in virtually no vehicle damage.

Steadmon reported pain at the scene. Beck for her part thought the wreck was very minor, and in fact Beck's toddler (asleep in her vehicle) was not awakened by the collision. Steadmon's son, a passenger with her, described their vehicle was "hit hard" and pushed forward. In any event Beck's fault was no issue.

Steadmon went to the ER that night, but it was too crowded and she left. She returned the next day and treated for soft-tissue neck, shoulder, low-back, and hip pain. Over the next few months she had a course of physical therapy and other



The Steadmon vehicle reflecting minor damage after the crash

treatments.

Her low-back pain persisted, and an SI joint injury was identified. She began pain management care and a regimen of shots in the SI joint. That care is ongoing. Steadmon's medical bills were \$60,274, and the Stanley number was \$32,186.

Steadmon filed this lawsuit against Beck as well as her UIM carrier, Farm Bureau. Beck settled as the litigation progressed for her \$25,000 policy limits. Farm Bureau's policy was \$100,000. Thus Steadmon

would implicate the policy with any award from a floor of \$25,000 and then up to the \$100,000 limits. If she received a "max" UIM award of \$100,000 or more, it would be reduced to \$75,000.

Steadmon, who works in manufacturing at Ford, testified at trial and described the accident, her ongoing pain, and how it has affected her life. She had no claim for lost wages, but her supervisor indicated she makes accommodations for Steadmon's pain when needed.

Historic Verdict

Construction/Utility

Negligence - The plaintiff suffered severe burns and was hospitalized for nearly two months after a Fort Wayne gas explosion (caused by a negligently welded gas line) and then sued the utility and the construction firm that built the line 16 years earlier – the plaintiff (age 38 and the mother of 14) prevailed at a 1967 jury trial and took a then-Allen County record verdict of \$235,000 which was subsequently upheld by the Indiana Court of Appeals

Otis v. NIPSCO et al, 11540

Plaintiff: Gilmore S. Hayne, David B. Keller, and Marvin S. Crell, *Livingston Dildine Haynie & Yoder*, Fort Wayne

Defense: William F. McNagny, Tony Bruggeman, and Robert Thompson, Jr., *Barrett & McNagny*, Fort Wayne for NIPSCO; John Krueckeberg and George Krueckeberg, Fort Wayne, for Dehner Construction

Verdict: \$235,000 for plaintiff

County: **Allen**, Superior

Judge: Fred Schoppman

Date: November 21, 1967

Regina Otis, then age 38, was home with five of her 14 children on the morning of February 3, 1966. It was an ordinary Thursday other than being quite cold. She lived in Fort Wayne on 3406 Broadway (at its intersection with Kinsmoor Avenue) which is about two miles south of downtown.

Fort Wayne had enjoyed a post-war population boom which in turn led to a frenzy of construction. NIPSCO, the local natural gas and electric utility, worked hard to keep



MRS. REGINA OTIS (LEFT PHOTO) AWAITS AID FOLLOWING GAS EXPLOSION AND FIRE AT FORT WAYNE HOME
Firemen (Right Photo) Wait For Hoses To Be Charged With Water To Fight The Blaze In Dwellings

The harrowing image of Ms. Otis after the explosion

up. It contracted in 1951 to build natural gas lines south of the city.

Near the Otis home in 1951 it had installed lines. NIPSCO relied on a large and well-known contractor, John Dehner Construction, to perform the work. [John Dehner ended its construction business 49 years later in 1990.] John Dehner employees performed a weld on the gas line at the intersection of Broadway and Kinsmoor.

There was a terrible and fatal tragedy that fateful February morning that would forever be etched on the mind of local residents. The John Dehner weld on the gas line had failed 16 years after being installed. It led to a gas leak. The exact date of the gas leak is not known but it is believed to have seeped for some time and then been concealed by the frozen ground of wintry Fort Wayne.

There was a first explosion that morning at 10:20 a.m. across the

street from Otis. She was on the phone with her sister-in-law and was shocked by the noise. She ordered her oldest son at home to take the other children outside. She also called the fire department.

Otis saw her neighbor, Dorothy Swain, across the street and realized the explosion was near her home. Otis went next door to see Dorothy. Dorothy went to open the cellar door in her home because she was worried about her pets.

Otis warned her and shouted "Don't!" Dorothy did and the house exploded. Dorothy suffered severe burns and died a week later. A third person was also burned. It was described that several homes were simply "blown to bits."

Otis was badly burned and her nylon shirt melted onto her. She was able to crawl out a window and took refuge from her burns by cooling herself in the snow. Shaken by the explosion, Otis had enough presence

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