

# The Louisiana Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Louisiana Jury Verdicts

March 2025

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

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## Civil Jury Verdicts

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

## Religious Discrimination -

**Two Terminix exterminators were fired after they refused to take the Covid-19 vaccine because of their religious beliefs**

*Liner et al v. Terminix Pest Control*, 2:22-3698

Plaintiff: David J. Schexnaydre, *Schexnaydre Law Firm*, Mandeville  
Defense: Ravi K. Sangisetty and Amanda J. Olmstead, *Sangisetty Law Firm*, New Orleans and David W. Ardoin, *AMO Trial Lawyers*, Thibodaux

Verdict: \$375,000 for Liner  
\$310,000 for Smith

Federal: **New Orleans**

Judge: Jane Triche Milazzo

Date: 2-20-25

Louis Liner worked for fourteen years as an exterminator for Terminix Pest Control. Gregg Smith spent four years with the company. The Covid-19 pandemic struck in March of 2020 and by the summer of 2021, there was a vaccine. Terminix made a decision that all employees would have to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. This was announced in a 8-11-21 missive.

The day Liner received the order, he indicated, "I'm not getting that shot. I'm done." He left the company and started his own pest control company. Smith too got the notice and wasn't having any of the vaccine nonsense. He too left Terminix and now works as a trucker.

Why had Liner and Smith refused the vaccine? They cited a sincerely held religious belief. That is they believed the vaccine was made from

aborted fetal cell lines. [Ed. Note - The Covid vaccines are not made with aborted fetal cell lines.] They believed that they were victims of religious discrimination and that Terminix could have easily accommodated their religious belief by using masks and social distancing. Moreover some 85% of their extermination work was done outside of the homes of customers – thus the risk of exposure was limited.

Smith and Liner filed this lawsuit in October of 2022 (a little more than a year after their separation from Terminix) and advanced a single religious discrimination count. The case (as described above) was simple enough. They were fired because of their religious belief and Terminix failed to reasonably accommodate that belief. If the plaintiffs prevailed they sought economic damages, non-economic damages for emotional distress as well as the imposition of punitive damages.

Terminix framed its case that the vaccine mandate was instituted because of the extreme contagiousness of Covid-19 and there was a significant risk of spreading illness. Thus there was no way to reasonably accommodate the plaintiffs.

Terminix also questioned the sincerity of the plaintiffs' religious beliefs as both left the company immediately after the mandate was issued. Liner for his part in initially leaving Terminix also said he wasn't getting the shot, but said nothing about his religion. Moreover they only decided to sue after attending a "We the People" and having litigation

**Truck Negligence - The plaintiff suffered a TBI as well as cervical and lumbar injuries (he underwent fusion surgeries for both) after a trucker ran a light and broadsided his vehicle – a Lafayette jury awarded the plaintiff nearly \$5,000,000 in damages which included \$3.85 million in non-economic damages.**

*Zepherin v. Red State Trucking*, 23-2025  
Plaintiff: J. Christian Lewis and Jeremy “Jay” Suire, *The Glenn Armentour Law Corporation*, Lafayette  
Defense: Brian E. Lege and Michael W. Robertson, *Perrier & Lacoste*, New Orleans

Verdict: \$4,858,813 for plaintiff  
Parish: **Lafayette**  
Judge: Thomas J. Frederick  
Date: 1-17-25

Willie Zepherin, then age 62 and retired, was driving a 2008 Dodge Ram pick-up on 4-28-22. He was stopped on Ambassador Caffery Parkway at red light where it intersected U.S. 90. The light turned green and he started into the intersection.

An instant later Zepherin was broadsided by Christopher Parker, who was operating a tractor-trailer for Red State Trucking. Red State is a Clear Blue Insurance insured. It was a moderate hit and it spun Zepherin around into yet a third vehicle. There was dash cam video of the crash. Fault was not a jury issue.

Zepherin was knocked unconscious at the scene and has since treated for a TBI and a post-concussive condition. This injury was confirmed by Dr. Jeffrey Levine, Neuroscientist.

Zepherin has also complained of a C3-5 disc injury. Dr. Neil Romero, Orthopedics, performed a fusion repair in June of 2023. He also suffered an L4-5 disc protrusion. It was repaired in a December 2023 fusion surgery.

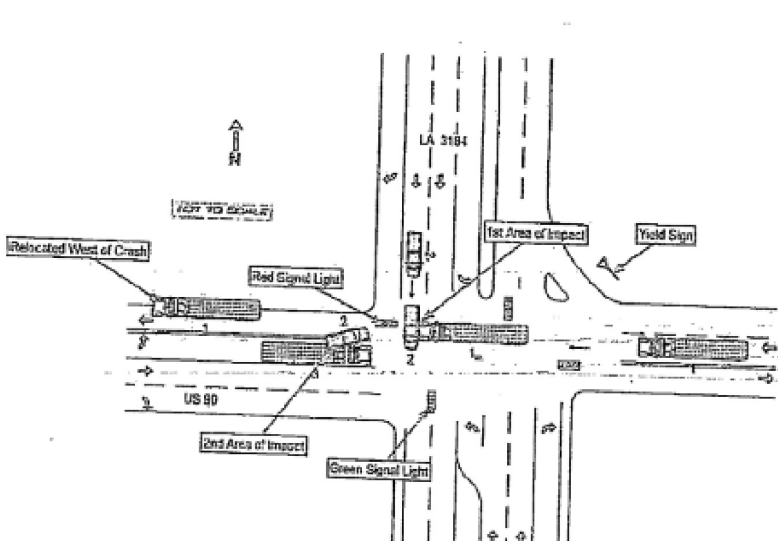
In this lawsuit Zepherin sought damages from Parker and his employer. His medical bills were \$385,813 and his future care was quantified by Sy Arceneaux, Life Care Plan and Dennis Boudreaux, Economist. He also sought non-

economic damages in seven separate categories. His wife of forty years (Vanessa) presented a derivative consortium claim. Zepherin buttressed his claim with biomechanic testimony from David Barczyk about the forces of the collision. In this case there were two impacts, the initial strike by the defendant and then Zepherin being spun into the second tractor-trailer.

Red State Trucking diminished the claimed injury and relied on an IME, Dr. Thomas Bertuccini, Neurosurgery. The expert disputed the course of care and the purported causation. Zepherin identified a rebuttal expert, Dr. Jason Cormier, Neurosurgery.

This case was tried over four days and the deliberations lasted 90 minutes. The jury had asked the court for the following in deliberations: The Life Care Plan, The Boudreaux economic report, The past medical breakdown, and Pharmacy records. It is not clear how Judge Frederick replied.

The jury then went to the



*A diagram of the collision and the final resting position of Zepherin’s pick-up truck*