

The Louisiana Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Louisiana Jury Verdicts

July 2026

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.

Garbage Truck

Negligence-

Wrongful Death -

A passenger was killed when his driver crashed into a garbage truck that was partially parked in the roadway and not fully on the shoulder – the jury struggled with causation and initially indicated it was hung before finding the defendant negligent but exonerating it on causation

Dartez v. Waste Connections Bayou et al, 24-342

Plaintiff: Michael K. Cox and Somer G. Brown, *Cox Cox Filo Camel Wilson & Brown*, Lake Charles and Scott A. Stefanski, *Edwards Stefanski & Zaunbrecher*, Crowley

Defense: Jacob K. Best, Jessica F. Gensler and Jamison C. Beuerman, *Blue Williams*, Metairie and Kevin Fontenot, *Hebert Holmes & Fontenot*, Lake Charles

Verdict: Defense verdict on causation

Parish: **Allen**

Judge: E. David Deshotels

Date: 4-28-26

It was early on the morning of 9-11-23 (pre-dawn twilight) and Bryan Stephens was operating a garbage truck for Waste Connections Bayou. He was on LA 165 which is a four-lane highway with a median that slices through Allen Parish. Stephens



The plaintiff's mangled truck at the scene

was collecting garbage. He'd parked his garbage truck on the side of the road and was picking up a garbage can. However the truck was not fully on the shoulder. Part of it was in the traveled lane of LA 165.

That same morning Kevin Miller was operating a Ford F-350 (a heavy duty work truck) for his employer, Davies Construction. He proceeded on LA 165. Terrance Dartez, age 33, was a front seat passenger. Dartez was not wearing a seat belt.

Miller approached the parked Waste Connections garbage truck. He failed to appreciate it was blocking part of the road. This was despite the fact the garbage truck had a flashing yellow light and illuminated brake lights. Miller rear-ended the garbage truck (an offset impact where the passenger side of his truck took the brunt of the impact) at some 60 mph. It was a catastrophic crash. While

Historical Louisiana Verdict

Hotel Negligence/Negligent Security - A sniper took over the Howard Johnson's in downtown New Orleans in January of 1973 and reigned terror on the city over the course of the day killing nine and wounding 12 – a set of six plaintiff sued the hotel on a negligent security theory which was tried in federal court two years later over the course of a month – one plaintiff (he lost his arm when it was shot off) settled after closings for \$400,000 while the jury made modest awards to the other plaintiffs including just \$125,000 for a young doctor who was shot and killed

Stegall v. Howard Johnson's

Plaintiff: Russ Herman, New Orleans for Stegall plaintiffs

Defense: Carl Schumacher and Dermot McGlinchey, New Orleans

Verdict: \$275,000 for five sets of plaintiffs

Federal: **New Orleans**

Judge: R. Blake West

Date: July 1, 1975

There have been several seminal events in the history of New Orleans that were indelible and unforgettable – they are “if you were there, you remember where you were” milestones. The list would include: The Great Fire of 1788
The Battle of New Orleans (1815)
The Italian Lynchings (1891)
The MV George Prince Disaster (October 20, 1976)
Pan Am 759 crash (July 9, 1982)
Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005)
Super Bowl XLIV (February 7, 2010)
New Year's Day Terror (January 1, 2025)
The report is on an event



AN ARMED POLICEMAN TAKES COVER BEHIND FIRE ENGINE

(unforgettable for a New Orleanian at the time) but which has faded a bit from memory. It was the terror attack on the Howard Johnson's hotel (now a Holiday Inn) located on 330 Loyola Avenue near the courthouse. It began on the Sunday morning of January 7, 1973. The Superdome was still under construction and its roof structure was visible from the 18-story hotel. The events at the hotel would result in a civil jury trial two years later.

Mark Essex, a disturbed man from

Kansas, had become enraged with racial hatred. His anger was fueled by the recent shooting of student at Southern University. Essex, who was Black, became determined to kill white people. He executed that demented plan in New Orleans.

Essex arrived armed at the hotel and burst in. He was met by housekeeping staff (Black women) who attempted to stop his entry. Essex burst past them and explained he'd spared them because of their race. Essex made his way to the top of the hotel. He was setting a fire in a room when he encountered Dr. Robert Stegall, a young Virginia physician visiting the city on his honeymoon. Stegall and his bride, Mary, had been tourists the day before on

Bourbon Street.

Stegall confronted Essex. They struggled and Essex shot him dead. Stegall's rushed to defend her husband. Essex killed her too. Essex continued his rampage at the hotel. He chased Robert Beamish, a television executive from California, on the 8th floor. Beamish jumped into the hotel swimming pool to escape. Essex shot Beamish in the stomach. The wound was mostly superficial (it did not affect organs) but a frightened

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