

The Mississippi Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Mississippi Jury Verdicts

October 2025

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

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Civil Jury Verdicts

Timely coverage of civil jury verdicts in Mississippi including court, division, presiding judge, parties, case number, attorneys and results. Notable results from the southern region, including Memphis and New Orleans, are also covered.

Auto Negligence - Following a rear-ender at I-55 in congested traffic, the plaintiff complained of a new C6-7 disc herniation as well as the aggravation of prior conditions at C4-6, all of which led to a three-level fusion surgery six weeks later – a defense IME (Edwards, Orthopedist from Columbus) did not believe the accident was significant enough to cause an injury – a Canton jury awarded the plaintiff \$498,796 which included \$250,000 for pain and suffering

Evan v. Carlisle and First Coastal

Interiors, 22-218

Plaintiff: John A. Waits, Bradley S. Kelly and Rocky Wilkins, *Morgan & Morgan, Jackson*

Defense: Michael W. Baxter and Jacob G. Johnson, *Baxter Law Firm, Ridgeland*

Verdict: \$498,796 for plaintiff

Court: **Madison**

Judge: Dewey Arthur

Date: 10-15-25

Johnathan Evan, age 44 and a Navy veteran, was driving a pick-up truck on southbound I-55 (milemarker 109) on 7-1-22 near Canton. He came upon congestion on the interstate and began to slow down. Joshua Carlisle, in a commercial vehicle for First Coastal Interiors, traveled behind Evan.

As Evan was slowing and nearly stopped, he was rear-ended by Carlisle. It was a

moderate hit although it resulted only in minor damage. Evan would recall his head struck the steering wheel and his arm immediately went numb. He was taken by ambulance to the Merit Health Hospital on nearby Nissan Parkway for neck and back pain.

Evan was an eggshell plaintiff of sorts. He had a history of spine disease at the C4-6 levels. It had been diagnosed as early as 2017 and an MRI in February of 2022 (five months before this wreck) confirmed it. Following the wreck his radiating neck pain increased.

Evan was referred to an orthopedist, Dr. James Woodall, Jackson. Woodall identified a new C6-7 disc injury imposed on Evan's already fragile spine. Six weeks after the crash, Woodall performed a three-level fusion from C4-7. He linked Evan's new injury and the aggravation of the prior conditions upon this collision.

Thereafter Evan sued Carlisle and his employer. He alleged negligence



The plaintiff (left) and defendant (right) vehicles

Historical Mississippi Verdicts

The Food Cases

This month we look at a triumvirate of food-related cases that includes critter contamination. We begin in 1915 with a "mouse-in-a-Coke-bottle" suit from Jones County, and then move to another contaminated bottle case against Coca-Cola from 1953. The study closes with a "mouse in the Popeye's onion rings" case from Madison County that was tried to a jury in 1991.

Food Negligence - The plaintiff claimed he was sick after drinking a Coca-Cola that had a mouse in it

McGilvary v. Laurel Bottling Works
Defense verdict

Jones County

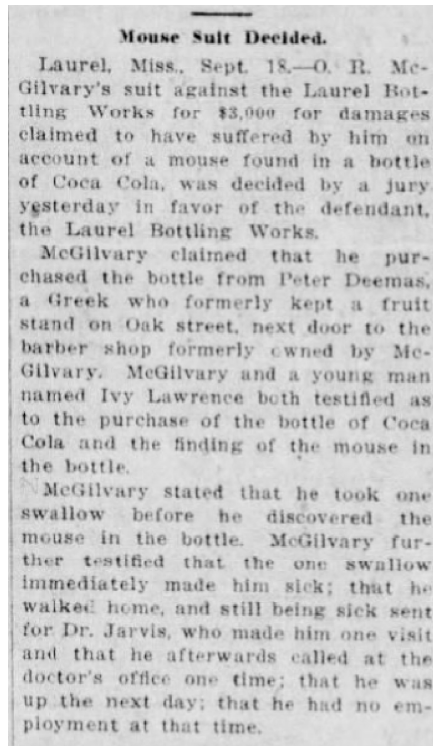
September 18, 1915

O.R. McGilvary of Laurel purchased a bottle of Coca-Cola in 1914 at the fruit stand operated by Peter Deemas (called the Greek) at Oak Street next to the barber. It was bottled by Laurel Bottling Works.

McGilvary took one swallow and discovered a mouse in the bottle. He was immediately seek and Dr. Jarvis came to a make a house call.

McGilvary sued Laurel Bottling and alleged negligence by bottling a mouse inside his Coca-Cola. McGilvary sought damages of \$3,000. The defendant denied fault. The jury in this case made a trip to the bottling facility and did its own inspection.

The case ended in a jury verdict on September 18, 1915. It was a Saturday. The verdict was for Laurel Bottling and McGilvary took nothing. The lawyers and presiding judge are not unknown.



A 1915 report on the Mouse Suit

Food Negligence - The plaintiff became ill after drinking from a contaminated bottle of Coca-Cola

Hankins v. Laurel Coca-Cola Bottling
\$12,000 for plaintiff
Smith County
October 1953

Gladys Hankins bought a Coca-Cola at the Middleton Store in the Center Ridge community (Smith County) on April 3, 1952. She returned home and put it in the refrigerator. Hanks took a drink after lunch. From the first sip, her throat closed and she felt fire in her stomach. Hankins immediately vomited and that residue resulted in a hole on the rug.

Hankins tried to clear her stomach by drinking water. This made her vomit again. Her neighbor suggested she eat butter. That didn't help either. Dr. Kennedy in Taylorsville

provided her a medication. Her symptoms continued. Ultimately Hankins was seen by Dr. Coursey in Raleigh who diagnosed gastritis.

What had caused the malady? It was linked to a residue that was found in the Coke bottle. That residue was sent off to Mississippi State for examination. It wasn't poison. It was sulphuric acid.

Hankins sued Laurel Coca-Cola and alleged negligence by it in bottling the foreign substance and causing her injury. The defendant replied its bottling process was efficient and this contamination would have been impossible. It also suggested that Hankins, who was going through menopause, had exaggerated her symptoms.

The jury verdict at an October 1953 jury trial was for Hankins. She was awarded \$12,000. That would be in the range of \$150,000 today. Laurel Coca-Cola appealed.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the verdict in November of 1954 in *Laurel Coca Cola v. Hankins*, 75 So.2d 731 (Miss. 1954). The opinion was authored by Judge Perry Lee who was joined by Judges McGehee, Hall, Holmes and Ethridge.

Hankins was represented in the litigation by L.D. Pittman and R.S. Tullos of Raleigh. Laurel Coca-Cola's lawyers were from Beard Pack & Ratliff, Laurel and Watkins & Eager, Jackson. The trial judge is not known.

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