

The South Carolina Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of South Carolina Jury Verdicts

August 2026

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

1 SCJVR 8

In This Issue

Civil Jury Verdicts

Timely coverage of civil jury verdicts in South Carolina including court, presiding judge, parties, attorneys and results.

Auto Negligence - The plaintiff was doing a pressure-washing estimate at a condo complex (she'd just met with the HOA vice-president) when while standing in the parking lot looking through binoculars at the buildings, she was knocked over by the vice-president who was backing out of a parking spot – the plaintiff was knocked to her knees, scraped her elbows, broke her thumb and more persistently has complained of an L-5 disc injury that led to the installation of a spinal stimulator – a Conway jury awarded her \$1.75 million which was 20 times her medical bills

Starcher v. Kelly, 2023-CP-26-06695

Plaintiff: Brendan J. Moore and Chris Moore, *Richardson Thomas, Columbia* and Brenton P. Heist, *Heist Law Firm*, North Charleston
Defense: Carrie A. Fox and Dominic A. Starr, *McAngus Goudelock & Courie*, Myrtle Beach

Verdict: \$1,750,000 for plaintiff

Court: **Horry**

Judge: Benjamin J. Culbertson

Date: 6-12-26

Malissa Starcher, then age 59, operated her own pressure-washing business on 1-29-22 known as "Kim's Extreme Clean." That morning she



The Ford Transit van and an overhead view of the parking lot

was preparing a cleaning estimate for a condo complex (Coquina Harbour) in Little River, SC near Myrtle Beach. Starcher had met with Justin Kelly, the HOA vice-president and toured the property. Kelly had another meeting and had to cut the meeting with Starcher short.

Kelly got into a Ford Transit van in the parking lot. The van did not have rear windows. Starcher was standing in the parking lot behind the van. She was looking through binoculars at buildings in the distance as a part of preparing the estimate. She wasn't paying attention to Kelly.

A moment later Kelly backed out of the parking spot. Starcher was apparently in his blind spot. Kelly's van struck Starcher (he described he was just rolling and felt a bump), the

impact knocking Starcher to her knees. She scraped her elbows in the fall and broke her thumb.

Starcher went to the ER at McLeod Seacoast Hospital where she was treated for neck and back pain. Starcher has more persistently complained of low-back pain. It was linked to an L-5 disc injury. Dr. Christopher Battista subsequently installed a spinal cord stimulator at this level. It was unsuccessful. Starcher continues to report chronic pain and walks with a limp.

While Starcher did not make a claim for lost wages, her injuries essentially shuttered her pressure cleaning business. This caused her emotional distress. Starcher's medical bills were \$85,255. A life care plan expert, Dr. Edward Tavel, Pain Management, valued her future medicals at from

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Reporter
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Auto Negligence - The plaintiff suffered a cervical injury following a minor rear-end crash and a fusion surgery has been recommended—the plaintiff took damages at trial against the UIM carrier that had assumed the defense after the tortfeasor paid his \$50,000 limits but those damages were less than sum

Dodson v. Simpson, 2024-CP-39-00192

Plaintiff: William A. Maxey, Maxey McFarland Law Firm, Greenville

Defense: Amanda L.C. Bradley and Grace Lesesne, McAngus Goudelock & Courie, Greenville

Verdict: \$24,000 for plaintiff

Court: **Pickens**

Judge: Perry H. Gravely

Date: 6-23-26

Shelby Dodson was driving a Porsche Cayenne SUV in Clemson on 7-18-23. She traveled on Tiger Boulevard. While stopped in traffic she was rear-ended by James Simpson. He was in a pick-up truck.

The collision resulted in minor damage (a dent to the Porsche's bumper) but Dodson would portray it was a harder collision than it looked. In any event fault was no issue.

Dodson has since treated for neck and back pain. Radiating cervical pain persisted and her doctors recommended she have a fusion surgery. Dodson's medicals were \$12,179. Her future medicals were estimated at \$150,000.

Dodson sought damages from Simpson in this lawsuit. He paid his \$50,000 policy limits and exited the litigation. Dodson's UIM carrier, Travelers (on the hook above the \$50,000 to its \$250,000 limits) assumed the defense of the case. Travelers on behalf of Simpson argued that Dodson suffered just a soft-tissue injury that likely resolved in a few months. It suggested the jury award her actual damages representing her incurred medicals and a reasonable sum for her pain

and suffering.

There was offer of judgment activity before trial. Dodson's offer of judgment was for \$250,000. Traveler's offered \$20,000 more in new money. The case was mediated before Eric K. Englebart on 1-16-25. It did not settle and advanced to trial this June.

This case was tried for two days in Pickens. Damages were the only issue. Dodson was awarded \$24,000. The court entered a form judgment for her in this sum against Simpson. That however doesn't reflect the reality as the claim against Simpson was already resolved by settlement and the \$24,000 verdict failed to implicate the floor of the UIM coverage.

Case Documents:

[Complaint](#)

[Jury Verdict](#)



The collision with both vehicles (left) and the plaintiff's vehicle (right)

Handicap Van Negligence - Wheelchair bound plaintiff injured in a van transfer*Vaccaro v. Lancaster Council On Aging*[2026-CP-46-01689](#)Plaintiff: Garrett B. Johnson, *Elrod Pope*, Rock Hill

Date: 6-2-26

Court: **York****Medical Malpractice - Delay in diagnosing cervical cancer***Natarelli v. Moynihan*[2026-CP-46-02126](#)Plaintiff: Chad A. McGowan, *McGowan Hood*,
Rock Hill

Date: 6-17-26

Court: **York***Coming in the September 2026 edition***Marlboro County - \$30,000,000 on 6-26-26 - Products Liability - Nissan Altima slipped out of gear and crushed the plaintiff** π Christopher Kinon / Δ Kevin Malloy**Federal Court - Spartanburg - \$466,000 on 7-24-26 - Truck Negligence - Big rig rolled into a forklift** π Patrick Knie / Δ Brittany Bihun**Federal Court - Florence - In second week of trial at press time - Products Liability - Seat design in '21 Kia Forte** π Lance Cooper / Δ Joel Smith**Dorchester County - \$1.2 million - Auto Negligence - Drunk driver struck the plaintiff – \$500,000 punitives** π Peter O'Reilly / Δ Michael Coulter and Jeffrey Crudup**York County - Defense verdict - Lemon Law/SCUTPA - Defect alleged in 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee** π Steven Moskos / Δ Jonathan RaleyFollow us [Facebook](#) for the latest verdict news

Historic South Carolina Verdicts

A look back at older South Carolina jury verdicts (sometimes more than 100 years old) both historical and occasionally historic.

Products Liability - A little boy (not wearing a seat belt) was ejected from a 1985 Dodge Caravan (the first year of the minivan) when the rear door opened in a roll-over crash and suffered fatal injuries – his estate alleged the vehicle was defective in that it had a flimsy latch on the rear door – a federal jury in Charleston awarded \$262.5 million in damages in 1997, the 4th Circuit reversing four years later and thereafter as a second trial approached in July of 2002, the parties settled the case

Jimenez v. Chrysler, 2:96-1269

Plaintiff: Mark Joye and Reese Joye, *Joye Law Firm*, Charleston and David Dwares, *Ross Dixon & Bell*, Washington, D.C.

Defense: Wade H. Logan, II, *Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough*, Charleston and David R. Tyrell, *Hill Ward & Henderson*, Tampa, FL

Verdict: \$262,500,000 for plaintiff

Federal: **Charleston**

Judge: Falcon B. Hawkins, Jr.

Date: October 8, 1997

There was a tragic automobile accident in North Charleston on April 10, 1994. Sergio Jimenez, he was six-years old, was a passenger in a 1985 Dodge Caravan (Chrysler-manufactured) driven by his mother. This was the very first model of the minivan that had been manufactured. The entire genre of the minivan traced its genesis to this model.



The Jimenez 1985 Dodge Caravan involved in this case

Sergio's mom pulled from a parking lot into the path of traffic. The minivan was clipped by a passing vehicle. It spun, rolled over and landed upright. In the midst of the roll over, the rear door opened. Sergio was ejected. The boy struck his head on the pavement and suffered fatal injuries.

The Jimenez estate sued Chrysler and blamed the boy's death on a faulty latch (it was described as flimsy) on the rear door. It failed in the roll-over which led to Sergio being ejected. There was proof Chrysler knew about the defect and destroyed records about it. While it changed the design of the latch in 1988, it didn't make a recall. The estate sought both compensatory and punitive damages.

Chrysler defended on several fronts. The first was to contest the mechanism of the injury in the first place. It argued Sergio fell out a side window rather than the rear door. Chrysler also sought to introduce

proof both that the boy wasn't wearing a seat belt and that his mother shared some blame in the collision. The presiding Judge Hawkins excluded this evidence.

The case was tried for a month in September and October of 1997 in Charleston. The jury deliberated three hours. It found for the Jimenez estate and awarded \$12.5 million in compensatory damages. The jury added \$250,000,000 more in punitive damages. The verdict totaled \$262,500,000 and at the time was the largest ever in the United States against an auto manufacturer in a products liability case. A juror spoke anonymously at the time that the jury intended to "jolt" Chrysler by the size of the verdict.

Chrysler moved for a new trial. Judge Hawkins ruled in December of 1999 more than two years after the verdict. His opinion was 84 pages long. He upheld the verdict on the liability questions as well as on punitive damages. However the court viewed the \$12.5 million in

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