The Tennessee Jury Verdict Reporter

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November 2026 **Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage** **23 TJVR 11**

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Auto Negligence - Husband and wife plaintiffs complained of injuries after a moderate I-65 rear-ender that interestingly was caught on the vehicle's own rear-facing camera – because of the the aggravation of previously asymptomatic conditions the wife is expected to undergo both cervical and lumbar surgeries, while the husband claimed he suffered a cervical disc injury



The Snetzko SUV at the scene of the crash

Snetzko v. Commercial Contractors, 23-183
Plaintiff: Dale Krout, Susan Neal Wiley and Kristi Roberts, *Morgan & Morgan*, Nashville
Defense: Keith W. Blair and Jackie Sharp, Jr., *Taylor Pigue Marchetti & Blair*, Nashville
Verdict: $319,579 for Michelle and $84,370 for Michael
Court: **Davidson**
Judge: Lynne T. Ingram
Date: 9-22-26

Michael Snetzko, age 45 and his wife, Michelle, visited Nashville on 10-23-22. It was a Sunday. They were in town partly for a visit and also to househunt. Snetzko is a software engineer for Amazon Web Services and was transferring to Nashville. They traveled on southbound I-65 approaching downtown. They were in a large Hyundai SUV they had rented. Interestingly the vehicle featured a rear-facing camera that is always recording.

At the same time, Gerald Garvick, was driving an SUV for Commercial Contractors of Melrose. It is a Minnesota company. Garvick was hauling a small trailer. Garvick failed

What if we feel we do not have enough solid evidence to deliver a verdict?
Judge Binkley didn't know what the question meant. What is solid evidence? He told the jury he didn't know and reread the instructions to them. The jury needed just a few more minutes to sort it out.

The jury's verdict first found that Cook was negligent. It further concluded his negligence had not caused Bond's injuries. The jury then didn't reach Bond's negligence, apportionment or damages. A defense judgment was entered.

Bond has moved for a new trial. He argued that Cook essentially conceded he struck Bond and caused some injury. The causation proof on the injury essentially was not rebutted. He also pointed to the jury's confusion as indicated by the "solid evidence" jury question.

Cook replied to the motion that Bond had agreed to the form of the jury verdict and had thus waived any objection. He also argued the jury heard the proof and their verdict was reasonable. The new trial motion was pending at the time of this report.

Case Documents:
Complaint
Jury Verdict
Final Judgment
Plaintiff Motion for a New Trial
Defense New Trial Response

Historical Tennessee Verdicts

Workplace Negligence - An employee of a roofing contractor was electrocuted in 1967 while spreading tar on a flat roof at Magnavox when he struck an unprotected electrical line – the case made two trips to the Court of Appeals, a 1972 verdict ultimately being affirmed on appeal

Phelps v. Magnavox et al
Plaintiff: Thomas Dossett, *Todd & Dossett*, Kingsport
Defense: S.J. Milligan, *Milligan Silvers & Coleman*, Greeneville for Magnavox
Walter Price, *Bryant Price & Brandt*, Johnson City for Johnson City Power Board
Verdict: $130,000 for plaintiff
Court: **Johnson City Law Court**
Judge: Jack Musick
Date: January 7, 1972

William Phelps, age 25, was working for a roofing contractor on the first day of February in 1967. He was installing a flat roof on a dry kiln building on the property of Magnavox in Greeneville. His broom came in contact with an unprotected 12,400 volt line that ran across the roof. The line was maintained by the Johnson City Power Board. Phelps was fatally electrocuted.

The Phelps estate (representing his widow) sued both Magnavox and the local power board. They alleged negligence in a variety of ways including failing to insulate the line, warn of it and otherwise have the roofing work permitted in advance. The case was first tried in May of 1969. The presiding Judge Musick granted the defendants a directed verdict based on the decedent's own contributory negligence which was then a complete bar to recovery.

The estate appealed. At the first go around at the Court of Appeals, the directed verdict was reversed in August of 1970. Why? The court held that there was evidence of gross negligence. **See** *Phelps v. Magnavox*, 466 S.W.2d 226 (1970).

The case was tried to a jury a second time in January of 1972. The estate prevailed against both defendants and took damages of $130,000. That would be $1.05 million in 2026 dollars. The defendants again appealed. The Court of Appeals affirmed later that year and there was no petition for cert to the Supreme Court. **See** *Phelps v. Magnavox*, 497 S.W.2d 898 (1972).

Medical Negligence - During a surgery to repair a stomach disorder on a three-month-old girl, a sponge was left behind – it was found months later and in removing the sponge, the girl lost part of her intestine – at a 1960 jury trial she was awarded damages of $52,500 ($600,000 in 2026 dollars) which was later affirmed at the Court of Appeals

Fisher v. French et al
Plaintiff: Robert Krivcher, Memphis
Defense: Cooper Turner, Jr., Memphis for Dr. French
Charles Neely, Memphis for Baptist Hospital
Verdict: $52,500 for plaintiff
Court: **Shelby**
Date: November 3, 1960

Little Rebecca Fisher was born in 1959 in Memphis. She had a pyloric stenosis stomach condition that caused her to vomit. It was surgically repaired on 5-22-59 (the girl was then three months old) by Dr. Edward French at Baptist Hospital. The surgery was uneventful.

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