

S W O P E



R O D A N T E

MEDIA INFORMATION

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Jury Returns \$30.1 Million Verdict Against Driver's Wife After GEICO Refuses to Agree to More Than \$147K in Damages

All things considered, Randy Willoughby has a good life. Every day he spends time with his wife, Kayliegh, and their beautiful two-year-old daughter. When he's not playing with his daughter, Randy can be found feeding his horses, playing video games, or enjoying his passion for cooking. But through it all, Mr. Willoughby suffers from a severe traumatic brain injury caused by a 2012 car wreck.

On November 2, 2012, Mr. Willoughby, 20 at the time, and his girlfriend, Kayliegh Lewis, were on their way to dinner when an elderly driver ran a four-way stop sign and t-boned Ms. Lewis' vehicle on the passenger side where Mr. Willoughby was sitting. His injuries were severe, including a Grade III diffuse axonal brain injury.

In 2013, he filed a lawsuit to recover the damages caused by the wreck against the driver of the vehicle that hit him, as well as the driver's wife as a co-owner of the vehicle. (Under Florida law, a co-owner of a vehicle is vicariously liable for damages caused by the negligent use of that vehicle.) Both defendants were insured by GEICO.

Mr. Willoughby eventually settled with the driver, thus leaving the driver's wife the only defendant responsible for Mr. Willoughby's damages. Before trial, GEICO prevented the driver's wife and Mr. Willoughby from settling the case for \$4.8 million. GEICO even refused to let the parties agree to *any* amount of damages more than \$147k in past medical expenses. As a result, Mr. Willoughby and the driver's wife proceeded to trial to obtain a determination of the full amount of Mr. Willoughby's damages.

On Friday, March 15, 2019, a Florida jury returned a verdict for \$30.1 million in Mr. Willoughby's favor, which included \$7.2 million in economic and over \$22.9 million in non-economic damages.

Mr. Willoughby was represented by Swope, Rodante P.A. attorneys Brandon Cathey, Brent Steinberg and Daniel Greene. At trial, the defendant co-owner was represented by attorneys Jim Thompson and Troy Holland of the defense firm Goodis Thompson & Miller, P.A.

About Swope, Rodante P.A.

As advocates of justice, Swope, Rodante P.A. is dedicated to fighting for the underdog, protecting our clients' rights, and recovering compensation for clients to help rebuild their lives. Founded in 1979, Swope, Rodante P.A. has grown to meet the unique needs of our clients and the challenges of today's legal environment. The firm's focus is complex litigation, insurance bad faith and catastrophic injury cases, including brain and spinal cord injuries. With a Tampa office located in the historic Florida Brewery building, Swope, Rodante P.A. handles cases across the Southeast and Nationwide.

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