



Mary Jane and Joe Scotti with their daughter and grandchildren.

Hospital Fails to Protect Visitors

By the year 2000, Mary Jane and Joe Scotti had been married for over thirty years and had retired to Florida. They devoted time to their church, raised their seven-year-old granddaughter, Chelsea, and enjoyed spending time with their other three grandchildren. In April 2000, Mary Jane learned that a young girl was in critical condition after a terrible car accident. Upon hearing the story, she felt compelled to visit and support the family in their time of need.

Mary Jane was visiting the family of the injured girl at Hospital X on the night of April 12, 2000. As she left the hospital, she noticed that the area leading to the parking lot was extremely dark and the sidewalk was bordered by hedges. Fearing for her safety, Mary Jane walked to her car on the blacktop driveway instead of using the sidewalk. Due to the insufficient lighting in the area, Mary Jane was unable to discern the difference between the surface of the asphalt driveway and the sidewalk curb. She tripped and fell over the curb, suffering a fractured shoulder. Mary Jane

required surgery to repair and partially replace her shoulder, and then endured months of extensive rehabilitation and physical therapy.

Mary Jane and Joe sought the assistance of attorney Jack Scarola, who then sought assistance from attorneys Darryl Lewis and Sia Baker. Hospital X vehemently denied responsibility for Mary Jane's injuries, taking the position that she simply wasn't watching where she was going. Mr. Lewis and Ms. Baker, however, were able to establish evidence of numerous lighting deficiencies in the hospital's parking lot. In fact, the on-duty security guard testified that he knew the parking lot was dark because the light in the area had not functioned in over eight months. In addition, numerous other witnesses testified that they too avoided the sidewalk due to the dimly lit area. Eventually, Mr. Lewis and Ms. Baker were able to establish that the hospital's maintenance department was aware of the lighting deficiency, but failed to remedy it, thereby placing the hospital's visitors at risk. After litigating the case for quite some time, Mr. Lewis and Ms. Baker settled the case just prior to trial for \$225,000.

Man's Leg Crushed By Heavy Equipment

In February 2000, Bruce Vernooy, age 49, agreed to assist his nephew with the removal of a CT scanner from Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida. A company called Dynamic Imaging of California had hired Mr. Vernooy's nephew to dismantle the CT scanner so that it could be transported to California for refurbishing. Dynamic Imaging also hired North American Van Lines to transport the CT scanner. A company called Molina Towing was also contacted in order to assist in the loading process. Molina was hired to place the CT scanner on the back of one of its flatbed trucks, and the CT scanner would then be transferred to the North American Van Lines trailer.

North American Van Lines, by agreement, was to hire a sufficient number of personnel to load the CT scanner, which weighed in excess of three tons. Unfortunately, North American Van Lines failed to arrange for the additional personnel needed. Consequently, on the morning of the planned move, the driver of the North American Van Lines tractor-trailer asked for assistance from Mr. Vernooy and his nephew in loading the CT scanner.

Once the CT scanner was placed on the back of Molina's flatbed truck, it was secured there by two connecting cables. However, unbeknownst to Mr. Vernooy, the cables securing the scanner were unhooked during the process of transferring it from the back of the flatbed onto the trailer. The scanner rolled forward, crushing Mr. Vernooy's lower leg as he stood behind the machine.

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