

## **JANE DOE vs. VAN LINES COMPANY**

An unlicensed, impaired truck driver drove his 31-ton tractor-trailer at a speed exceeding 65 m.p.h. into a parked family car. The fiery crash killed three young children and their father. The mother / wife, Jane Doe, survived the crash and witnessed the death of her husband and three children. She was horribly burned while unsuccessfully attempting to save her burning children from the fire and is physically disfigured and emotionally destroyed for life.

The truck driver had never even applied his brakes when he slammed into the family car as it was parked on the paved shoulder of the Florida Turnpike. The truck driver was physically and medically impaired, overworked, sleep deprived, malnourished and was driving with a suspended license. He had failed his ICC medical examination three times as a result of poor vision and intractable high blood pressure. We contended the van lines company was or should have been fully aware of the driver's legal, medical and physical impair-

ments and disqualifications. In clear violation of ICC regulations and Florida Statutes, they ordered the driver to make this trip.

Jane Doe's purpose in filing suit was to force safety reforms within the trucking industry. In fact, this case helped persuade regulatory authorities to reject proposed measures that would have permitted truck drivers to work longer without sleep and would have made it easier for trucking companies to avoid other safety restrictions. Shortly before trial, Chris Searcy and Jack Scarola reached a settlement with the van lines company and several insurers for a total recovery in excess of \$20 million. ■