

JOHN DOE vs. XYZ HOSPITAL

John Doe, 18, was involved in a very severe head-on motor vehicle accident. He was unrestrained and struck his chest on the steering wheel. He was transported to an emergency room where the emergency physician correctly observed no obvious injuries, but was suspicious for heart and major vessel damage. A routine chest x-ray was markedly abnormal. A surgical consult and ct-scan of the chest were ordered. Unfortunately, the surgeon and radiologist did not effectively communicate. The radiologist had not been informed as to the reason for Doe's hospitalization. The ct-scan was misread as normal except for soft tissue abnormalities which the radiologist called enlarged lymph glands. Doe was placed on the regular floor and a lung specialist was consulted for the lymph gland concern. Forty-eight hours later Doe had a cardiac arrest and a new radiologist repeated a chest ct-scan. The correct diagnosis of transected aorta was made, air transport was accomplished and emergency surgery saved Doe's life. However, he is a permanent t-4 paraplegic. Plaintiff's expert, chief of the department of cardio-thoracic surgery at Harvard, testified that Doe would not have been paralyzed with timely diagnosis and surgery. Chris Searcy and Cal Warriner tried this case for three weeks before it settled for \$5.9 million. ■