

KNOWN DEFECTS IN SUV CAUSE TRAGIC CRASH

Ford Motor Company had been aware of dangerous defects.

On June 18, 1999, the Boyd family and some friends were driving southbound on the Florida Turnpike near Jupiter, Florida. It was almost 6:00 a.m. Angela Boyd was driving her stepfather's 1989 Ford Bronco II. Helen Iverson sat next to her. In the rear passenger compartment, Angela's stepfather, Fred Boyd, sat on the right, and her son, Samuel Boyd, sat on the left, with Martavious Nelloms sitting between them. Suddenly, they heard a loud explosive sound from the rear of the vehicle. Realizing that the left rear tire had blown, Angela attempted to maintain control of the vehicle by stepping on the brakes to release the cruise control. In spite of her efforts to control the vehicle, the Bronco II swerved abruptly to the left and then to the right, causing the vehicle to go into a spin. The Bronco II then rolled over onto the driver's side, continuing the roll onto the passenger side roof edge. The roof on the passenger side was crushed inward, striking Helen's head, causing a serious degloving injury to her skull and forehead.

As the Bronco II continued to roll over, the window glass shattered, allowing Fred Boyd, age 54, and Martavious Nelloms, age 17, to be fatally ejected from the vehicle. The Bronco II rolled over two more times before coming to a stop, causing serious physical and mental injury to Angela, and some minor physical injuries to Samuel. It was all over in a matter of moments.

Following the accident, Angela and the Boyd family, and Helen Iverson, retained attorney Sean Domnick to represent them and find the answers to what caused this tragedy.

Fred Boyd felt safe in his Ford Bronco II. In fact, he felt so safe that he owned two of them. However, what Fred and other Ford Motor Company customers did not know was that the Bronco II was a defective product. Ford had marketed, promoted, advertised, and represented the Bronco II as a suitable passenger vehicle for the highways and streets of America. The fact of the matter, however, is that Ford knew all along that the Bronco II could and would roll over on roadways when it was subjected to certain foreseeable driving maneu-



Above: The Boyd family's horribly smashed vehicle.

vers. Even though Ford knew of the Bronco II's propensity for rolling over during ordinary use, the company failed to protect its customers by not designing and/or manufacturing a vehicle that would prove crash-worthy through the use of a roll-cage or other similar protective device. Further, Ford Motor Company's failure to construct and/or install window glass that would not shatter allowed occupants of the vehicle to be ejected in a roll-over.

Through his investigation, Mr. Domnick discovered that the injuries suffered by Angela and Helen were directly caused by the roll-over and crushed roof. The deaths of Fred and Martavious could have been prevented had Ford simply utilized laminated glass for the windows.

Mr. Domnick filed a product liability lawsuit in Palm Beach County against the Ford Motor Company.

Through continued investigation and discovery, it became very clear that Ford Motor Company knew of the defects in the Bronco II from the first day that the company began to sell the vehicle in the 1980s. It also became apparent that, from the beginning, Ford had taken little action to protect its customers from the defects of the vehicle.

The Ford Motor Company hired some high-powered defense law firms from Florida and Colorado to defend this case. Ford had been known to spend thousands of dollars and in some cases millions of dollars in defense of similar claims. After extensive mediation and negotiations, and with a trial date quickly approaching, Ford Motor Company began to seriously negotiate a final settlement for the Boyds and Helen Iverson.

Due to the confidentiality of the settlement, specific terms and figures cannot be disclosed. However, the case was resolved with an agreed amount of seven figures. ■

**Confidential Settlement
PRODUCT LIABILITY:
DANGEROUS AUTO DEFECTS IGNORED**