



**Brenda Fulmer contributing writer for 4th edition of “Anatomy of a Personal Injury Lawsuit”**

Recently, SDSBS, Trial Guides LLC, and the American Association for Justice announced release of the fourth edition of “Anatomy of a Personal Injury Lawsuit.” Ms. Fulmer was a contributing writer for this edition, presenting a chapter entitled “Mass Torts: The Bird’s-Eye View.” Her presentation includes guidance on multi-district litigation commonly used to coordinate mass tort cases including pharmaceutical and medical device claims, airline crashes, environmental disasters, and other cases where there are a large number of plaintiffs. Reflecting Ms. Fulmer’s 20 years of experience, the guide offers practical advice on such litigation. ♦

## Trouble drives through open gates

### 92-year-old woman assaulted in her driveway

In December 2013, Jane Doe (not her real name) was a 92-year-old resident in an upscale Palm Beach County gated community, which marketed itself as a safe place to live. Shortly before Christmas, Jane was returning home from a trip to the grocery store. The community had a double gate entry system. The first gate was triggered open by a barcode sticker on residents’ cars. The first gate was supposed to close immediately, permitting only one car to enter at a time. The second gate, manned by a security guard working for the community’s security contractor, was not supposed to open until the first gate had closed. However, the opening and closing of the community gates had not functioned properly for some time. As Jane drove through the first gate, the security system did not immediately close the gate, and another car drove through right behind Jane. As Jane passed through the second gate, the security guard saw the second car “piggybacking” behind Jane, but took no action. Jane drove to her home, and the intruder followed. When Jane stopped in her driveway, the intruder got out and attacked Jane. He beat her severely, threw her to the ground, and dragged her into the bushes. He then grabbed Jane’s personal belongings from the car and fled.

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Jane ended up in the hospital with a fractured hip and other injuries. Not only had she been robbed and beaten, but Jane had lost her confidence and ability to enjoy the remarkably active life that she had before the assault – and no amount or type of rehabilitation would ever restore it. She has not driven a car or gone shopping since the incident. Seeking accountability for the community’s failure to deliver on its promises of security, Jane contacted Searcy Denney attorneys **Jack Scarola** and **Patrick Quinlan** for representation. The attorneys filed a civil action against the community and security company seeking compensation for injuries, medical care, loss of personal property, and pain and suffering. They obtained witness statements, videotapes, incident reports, and procedure manuals to prove the claim of negligent security. After almost a year of litigation, at a mediation conference held shortly prior to trial, the case was settled for a confidential amount.

This case is clearly a reminder of the importance of careful compliance with safety procedures. Even two gates and a security guard are no protection from serious injury when rules are ignored. ♦



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