

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

PERSPECTIVE

# Despite meth, speeding accusations, plaintiffs get \$35M

By Christer Schmidt

Daily Journal Staff Writer

The parents of a 26-year-old motorcyclist who died after being cut off by a motorist backing out of his driveway were awarded \$36.5 million in general damages and interest of \$8.7 million by a Los Angeles County jury on Friday.

“They contested everything. It was a very expensive, highly contested expert intensive case,” said victorious plaintiffs’ attorney Arash Homampour of The Homampour Law Group.

The wrongful death case was decided in favor of the family of the motorcyclist despite trace amounts of methamphetamine in his system and accusations he was speeding.

“The defendant driver took the position that the crash was the fault of the motorcyclist because he was inexperienced and going 80 mph on the 35 mph road and was on meth,”

Homampour said. “We took the position that the driver who had pulled out of the driveway was exclusively responsible. The jury found that the motorcyclist was not a factor in causing his death.” *Hortencia Andrade et al. v. Norman S. Wright Climatec Mechanical et al.* 19STCV10659 (L.A. Sup. Ct., filed March 28, 2019)

Attorneys for the defendant and his insurance company were unable to respond by press time.

“We acknowledged he had meth in his system, and we don’t know how the meth got in there,” said Homampour. “We think he may have ingested some sort of pill or something. That frequently happens when you take a pill for social purposes. Our position was he wasn’t speeding. There was no evidence he was a meth user.”

Homampour said, “The jury found the meth wasn’t a substantial factor. The example I used is if you have three drinks, and someone rear-ends you,

technically you’re negligent because you shouldn’t be drinking and driving, but your negligence didn’t cause the person to rear-end you.”

Alongside Homampour, attorney Ronan Duggan from his Los Angeles firm and Jason Halpern of Halpern & Associates in Westlake Village represented the plaintiffs.

The total amount of money awarded to the family will add up to \$45 million. The defendant driver’s insurance company repeatedly refused to settle.

“The defendant driver had a \$10 million insurance policy and we repeatedly tried to settle within policy limits and the carrier refused,” said Homampour.

[christer\\_schmidt@dailyjournal.com](mailto:christer_schmidt@dailyjournal.com)

