

WISCONSIN

NO NEGLIGENCE VERDICT

4-WEEK PRODUCTS LIABILITY TRIAL

CORNEILLE
LAW GROUP, LLC

This case arose from a one-vehicle motor vehicle accident on September 22, 2012 in South Carolina. The plaintiffs, along with 3 other couples, were riding in a 2000 model year Ford Econoline 250 Van. The driver of the van took an exit ramp and lost control of the vehicle, causing it to rollover 1 and ¼ times and subsequently crash into an embankment. As a result of the accident, Keith Locy, who was seated in the front seat, sustained significant injuries including paralysis from the chest down due to a severed thoracic spine. The subject vehicle involved in the crash was designed and manufactured by Ford Motor Company and delivered to DM Conversions as an incomplete vehicle. DM Conversions subsequently converted the vehicle to include a high-top conversion with a raised roof. Plaintiffs alleged that Ford Motor Company designed and manufactured a vehicle with a defective roof and that DM Conversion further weakened the roof during the conversion process, which plaintiffs alleged caused unacceptable roof intrusion and directly led to the injuries sustained by Mr. Locy. DM Conversions was represented by Attorneys Mark Budzinski and John Healy. Ford Motor Company was represented by separate counsel.

The parties tried the case to verdict over a span of four weeks in March 2022 in Outagamie County. Ultimately, the jury returned a defense verdict. Notably, the jury found that DM Conversions had not made the defective, nor was DM negligent in any respect. While the jury found Ford Motor Company negligent, the jury did not find that Ford's negligence to have been a substantial factor in causing any enhanced injuries to Mr. Locy. In its defense of DM, Attorney Budzinski was able to attack the lack of any scientific proof that DM's conversion of the subject roof made any difference in the outcome. Moreover, the defendants argued that the ultimate cause of the injuries sustained was the catastrophic nature of the accident, as opposed to any purported design defects with the subject vehicle. Plaintiffs purported economic damages alone exceeded \$5,000,000 with additional compensation being sought for past, present and future pain and suffering. In a case that spanned seven years, the trial lasted a full four weeks and included thousands of exhibits and testimony from renowned experts from all over the country.



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