

# DAILY REPORT

A SMART READ FOR SMART READERS

An ALM Publication

## Lawyers: \$2M Paid for Family Whose Minivan Was Hit by Truck

**KATHERYN HAYES TUCKER**  
ktucker@alm.com

A FAMILY THAT WAS injured when a roofing company's truck crossed a center line and hit their minivan head-on in the North Georgia mountain town of Ellijay has received a \$2 million settlement, according to their attorneys.

The payment was the full insurance policy limit of Staffing Connections, a Columbus-based temporary agency that had employed the truck's driver and placed him with a construction company called A1Roofman.com, said Kate Cook of Cook Law Group in Gainesville. She and her law partner and husband, Matt Cook,

Boudinot, died after the crash when his truck went up in flames.

The family in the minivan was Jeffrey and Samantha Semones with their three young children. The father, then 34, was the most seriously injured. He was flown by an emergency rescue team to Erlanger Medical Center in Chattanooga, where he was treated for a month and underwent multiple surgeries and procedures. He had leg, knee, ankle, foot, rib and hip fractures and liver and spleen lacerations, according to the Cook firm's demand letter sent to Wieseman.

The father was unable to walk for a year and continues to have limited mobility. A former carpenter for a construction contractor, he has been unable to return to work, Cook said. The mother suffered deep abrasions and a broken hip and underwent surgery. One of the children suffered a broken arm and all three had abrasions. The family's total medical bill was \$790,000, according to the demand letter.

A key issue was Boudinot's driving. A witness traveling behind him said Boudinot was driving erratically and at high speeds before the wreck, according to the plaintiffs' demand letter.

Also, Boudinot did not hold a valid driver's license, a fact the plaintiffs' attorneys alleged he made known to Staffing Solutions before he was placed in a job that would require driving. The demand letter said his license had been suspended for prior driving infractions. The demand letter said it was reasonable for the Roofman company to "construe Staffing's hiring and approval of Boudinot as written permission for him to drive."



The plaintiffs' team included, from left: Thomas Blaska (seated), Charles Blaska, Kate Cook and Matt Cook.

**“ [Kate Cook] put together a theory against a defendant that many lawyers would have overlooked. Her work has made a significant difference for this family.**

—Matt Cook

were brought into the case by Thomas Blaska and T. Charles Blaska of the Blaska Law Firm in Atlanta, a father-son team.

The defense attorney was Joseph Wieseman of Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young. Wieseman said his client has no comment.

“She put together a theory against a defendant that many lawyers would have overlooked,” Matt Cook said of Kate Cook. “Her work has made a significant difference for this family.”

The 2012 wreck on Georgia Highway 282 was “horrific,” Kate Cook said. The driver whom the staffing company had placed with Roofman, Jason

Kate Cook said the Blaska firm had already secured available insurance coverage from the Roofman company and brought in the Cook firm to help find additional sources of coverage. The first demand letter was for a \$1 million policy, predicated upon the absence of any additional coverage. Cook said the defense disclosed an additional \$1 million liability umbrella policy. The plaintiffs' counsel amended the demand for the full \$2 million in coverage. Cook said the \$2 million has been paid and disbursed.

The case is *Semones v. Staffing Connections* in Muscogee County Superior Court, No. SU14CU1622-06. 

Reprinted with permission from the 10/29/15 edition of the DAILY REPORT © 2015 ALM Media Properties, LLC. All rights reserved. Further duplication without permission is prohibited. Contact: 877-257-3382 reprints@alm.com or visit www.almreprints.com. # 451-11-15-06