



Inattentive bus driver caused accident, plaintiff claimed

Type: Verdict-Plaintiff

Amount: \$977,861

State: Florida

Venue: Palm Beach County

Court: Palm Beach County Circuit Court, 15th, FL

Injury Type(s):

- *back* - bulging disc, lumbar
- *neck* - bulging disc, cervical
- *other* - chiropractic; physical therapy; trigger point injection

Case Type:

- *Motor Vehicle* - Intersection; Multiple Vehicle

Case Name: Sedonna Rainford v. Palm Beach County School District, a municipal corporation, No. 50-2017-CA-010859-XXXX-MB

Date: April 30, 2021

Plaintiff(s):

- Sedonna Rainford, (Female, 23 Years)

Plaintiff Attorney(s):

- W. David Bennett; Bodden and Bennett Law Group; Boynton Beach FL for Sedonna Rainford
- Carlos A. Bodden; Bodden and Bennett Law Group; Boynton Beach FL for Sedonna Rainford

Plaintiff Expert (s):

- Dana Desser D.O.; Orthopedic Surgery; Wellington, FL called by: W. David Bennett, Carlos A. Bodden

Defendant(s):

- Palm Beach County School Board
- Palm Beach County School District

**Defense
Attorney(s):**

- J. Erik Bell; Office of the General Counsel, School District of Palm Beach County; West Palm Beach, FL for Palm Beach County School District, Palm Beach County School Board

Facts:

On May 17, 2016, plaintiff Sedonna Rainford, 23, a cashier, was driving in the city of West Palm Beach. While she was proceeding through the intersection of 45th Street and Windsor Avenue, her car was struck by a bus. Rainford claimed that she suffered injuries of her back and neck.

Rainford sued the bus's operator, the Palm Beach County School Board, and that agency's parent, the Palm Beach County School District. The lawsuit alleged that the bus's driver was negligent in his operation of the bus. The lawsuit further alleged that the defendants were vicariously liable for the driver's actions.

The Palm Beach County School District was dismissed. The matter proceeded to a trial against the Palm Beach County School Board.

Rainford claimed that she had been traveling on the northbound side of Windsor Avenue, ahead of the bus. She claimed that, upon reaching the intersection, she crossed eastbound traffic then stopped and waited for westbound traffic to clear, so she could turn onto the westbound side of 45th Street. She claimed that, before she could resume travel, her car's rear end was struck by the bus. Rainford's counsel contended that the bus's driver failed to exercise due caution.

The bus's driver claimed that Rainford had not been traveling ahead of him on Windsor Avenue. He claimed that Rainford had been traveling on the eastbound side of 45th Avenue, and he further claimed that, upon reaching the intersection, Rainford suddenly began a U-turn and veered into the bus's path. He contended that he could not have avoided the collision. A witness, the bus's onboard attendant, agreed that the accident occurred in the manner described by the bus's driver. In response, Rainford's counsel presented video footage recorded by a camera situated inside the bus. Rainford's counsel claimed that the footage indicated that the bus's driver and attendant were not attentive to their surroundings and therefore were not credible witnesses. Rainford's counsel also claimed that the accident's vehicular damage was located in areas that were consistent with Rainford's account of the manner in which the accident occurred.

Injury: Rainford was retrieved by relatives, and she was transported to Good Samaritan Medical Center, in West Palm Beach. She underwent minor treatment.

Rainford ultimately claimed that she suffered trauma that produced bulges of her C3-4, C6-7, L2-3, L4-5 and L5-S1 intervertebral discs.

Rainford underwent a total of about three months of chiropractic manipulation and physical therapy, and she also underwent administration of three painkilling trigger-point injections. The injections were directed to her neck. Rainford's treatment concluded in May 2018, though she continues to consult an orthopedist.

Rainford claimed that she suffers chronic residual pain and limitations that hinder her ability to care for her child. A doctor has recommended painkilling facet-block injections, epidural injections of steroid-based painkillers and further physical therapy.

Rainford sought recovery of past medical expenses, future medical expenses, damages for past pain and suffering, and damages for future pain and suffering.

Defense counsel noted that Rainford's treatment regimen was sporadic.

Result: The jury found that the Palm Beach County School Board was liable for the accident. It determined that Rainford's damages totaled \$977,861.

\$32861 Personal Injury: Past Medical Cost

\$45000 Personal Injury: Future Medical Cost

\$50000 Personal Injury: Past Pain Suffering

\$850000 Personal Injury: Future Pain Suffering

Trial Information:

Judge: G. Joseph Curley

Demand: \$30,000 (from the Palm Beach County School Board)

Offer: \$10,000 (by the Palm Beach County School Board)

Trial Length: 2 days

**Trial
Deliberations:** 4 hours

Jury Vote: 6-0

**Jury
Composition:** 5 male, 1 female; 6 white

**Editor's
Comment:** This report is based on information that was provided by plaintiff's counsel. Additional information was gleaned from court documents. Defense counsel did not respond to the reporter's phone calls.