

New Jersey Law Journal

STATEWIDE LEGAL AUTHORITY SINCE 1878

NJLJ.COM

NJLJ

APRIL 20, 2009

An incisivemedia publication



\$900,000 for Automobile Accident

Lai v. Arena: A Hackensack man whose neck, back and left hand were injured in a collision with a pizza deliverer accepted \$900,000 on Tuesday to settle his Bergen County automobile negligence suit.

Jeffrey Lai was driving south on Grove Street in Bloomfield on November 17, 2005, when his car struck the passenger side of one driven west on Abington Street by Jonathan Arena, who was making a delivery for Vinnie's Park View Pizza. Arena

failed to stop at a stop sign, his view of which was blocked by a box truck parked in a no-parking zone, according to the suit, which named Arena; the vehicle's owner Joseph Arena; and the truck's owner, W.R. Trucking Inc. of Bloomfield as defendants.

Lai sustained herniated discs in his neck and lower back and nerve damage in his left hand. He underwent two operations at C4-C6 and two others at L4-L5, as well as surgery on the median nerve of his left arm.

Now 38, he still suffers back pain and has had to give up his pastimes of basketball and rollerblading, says his lawyer, **Donald Caminiti of Breslin & Breslin** in Hackensack.

On Tuesday, a week before trial, the Arenas agreed to pay \$291,530, and W.R. Trucking paid \$300,000. The pizzeria was not sued but put its carrier on notice and paid \$309,000.

The Arena defendants were represented by **Andrew Toulas of Harwood Lloyd** in Hackensack. The lawyer for W.R. Trucking was **Mark Ciarrocca of Ciarrocca & Ciarrocca** in Union. The pizzeria's lawyer was **Thomas Decker of Decker & Magaw** in Westfield.

Toulas was out of the office last week and could not be reached. Decker did not return a reporter's call. Ciarrocca said he could not discuss the case.

— By **Charles Toutant**