

\$2.5 Million Settlement in Pedestrian Wrongful Death Case

How Attorney Eric Beasley Used Tennessee Law to Break Through Damage Caps and Secure Justice

A roadside worker was doing his job in the morning hours when everything changed. Without warning, a [commercial truck](#) veered off the road and struck him, then continued on its way. The man never made it home. His young family was left without any explanation.

The driver was eventually found and arrested. Toxicology reports later confirmed he was under the influence of fentanyl at the time of the crash.

For most families in Tennessee, a tragic loss like this would be met with a harsh legal limit on what could be recovered. But with [Nashville attorney Eric Beasley](#) leading the case, that wasn't the end of the story. Beasley uncovered key legal leverage that significantly altered the claim's value, resulting in a [\\$2.5 million settlement](#)—far exceeding what many believed was even possible.

This is how it happened.

A Life Taken on the Side of the Road

The fatal crash occurred during the day while the victim was working with a roadside crew at a road bottleneck. The driver, behind the wheel of a work truck with several passengers, veered off the road and hit the man without stopping. According to witnesses in the truck, the driver refused to pull over, stating, "I'm not getting dinged for that."

What followed was a drawn-out criminal case, delayed for years by the COVID-19 pandemic. The driver continued to plead not guilty—until finally, he was convicted.

For attorney Eric Beasley, that guilty plea opened a critical path forward in the civil case.

Breaking Through Tennessee's Tort Caps

Tennessee law generally limits non-economic damages in [wrongful death](#) and [personal injury](#) claims to \$750,000 or \$1 million in catastrophic cases like death. But there's an exception: those caps do not apply when the injury was caused by a criminal act.

The impaired driver's conviction for a criminal offense changed everything. Once guilt was established in criminal court, Beasley used a recent Tennessee Supreme Court ruling to argue that liability couldn't be re-litigated in civil court.

This meant the defense could no longer argue fault or shift blame to the victim.

Challenging the System—and Winning

The insurance company's lawyer came into mediation expecting to argue liability and comparative fault. They weren't prepared for the legal strategy Beasley brought to the table.

By highlighting the driver's conviction, recent changes in state law, and the company's responsibility for allowing someone under the influence to operate a work vehicle, Beasley was able to dismantle their defense.

The final settlement came in at \$2.5 million—roughly \$1 million more than the case would have been worth under the state's damage caps.

Why Economic Value Doesn't Tell the Whole Story

The victim was a young husband and father, but due to his background, education level, and work history, his projected lifetime earnings were relatively modest. This created a challenge when calculating pecuniary value—the economic damages allowed under Tennessee law.

But Beasley didn't stop there. He emphasized the human loss: the impact on the victim's young family, and the loss of companionship and support.

That focus, combined with a thorough legal strategy, helped reshape how the defense viewed the claim—and how the case was ultimately resolved.

Strategic Patience Led to a Better Outcome

Some lawyers would have pushed for a quick settlement based solely on the projected economic damages. Beasley didn't. He knew that rushing the case would undervalue what the family had lost. Instead, he waited through years of delay during the criminal process, developed a detailed mediation plan, and demonstrated to the other side why their assumptions were incorrect.

That patience led to a settlement far beyond what the defense anticipated—and gave the family a resolution they could stand behind.

When a Company Hires the Wrong Driver, They're Responsible

In this case, the driver was on the job, delivering coworkers to a job site in a company vehicle. That raised serious questions about negligent hiring and supervision.

Should this man have been trusted with a company truck? Was he screened before being allowed to drive? Beasley made it clear: when a company puts someone on the road, they're accountable for that decision, especially when drugs are involved.

How Comparative Fault Threatens Wrongful Death Claims in Tennessee

Tennessee uses a modified comparative negligence system. If the victim is found 50% or more at fault, the family may recover nothing. In [pedestrian cases](#), this defense is often used to reduce or deny claims, especially if the victim wasn't on a sidewalk or in a crosswalk.

But because the driver in this case was criminally convicted, that defense collapsed. Beasley made sure the company couldn't shift blame where it didn't belong, protecting the family from one of the most dangerous traps in Tennessee wrongful death law.

A Message to Families Facing the Worst

Beasley has handled many cases where the odds seemed stacked against the victim's family. But when a case involves a serious loss and the company refuses to take responsibility, he digs deeper.

In this case, it wasn't just about compensation—it was about exposing the truth and ensuring the victim's family wasn't dismissed or forgotten.

What Families Should Know After a Fatal Pedestrian Crash

Losing a loved one in a pedestrian accident is devastating, and the legal process can feel cold and overwhelming. But it's important to know that you may have options, even when it seems like the system is working against you.

Here's what families should remember:

- **A criminal conviction** can eliminate certain defenses in civil court. If the at-fault driver was found guilty of a crime, you may be able to bypass arguments about fault and comparative negligence.
- **Tennessee's tort cap** does not apply in criminal cases, which can dramatically increase the value of your claim.
- **Wrongful death claims** aren't just about income. They're also about the loss of companionship, support, and love. An attorney can help communicate the true impact of the loss.

The sooner you talk to a lawyer, the better. Evidence can disappear quickly, and insurance companies often try to settle fast, before you fully understand your rights.

Why It's Important to Hire a Trial Attorney

Insurance companies track which attorneys are willing to go to court—and which ones settle quickly. Beasley has built a reputation in Tennessee as someone who's not afraid to take tough cases to trial. That alone can influence how much insurers are willing to offer.

In this case, it was clear that the defense underestimated the claim until trial preparation began. Once the evidence was on the table, the story changed. The defense settled because they knew what they were up against: a trial lawyer with a proven track record of success.

When You're Ready to Fight Back, We're Ready to Help

At the [Law Office of Eric Beasley](#), we've seen how insurance companies try to minimize life-altering losses, and we don't let them. Our team works with families across Tennessee to investigate the crash, expose the truth, and pursue full justice—no matter how long it takes.

If you lost a loved one in a fatal pedestrian crash involving a commercial vehicle or an impaired driver, don't assume there's nothing you can do. We'll walk you through your legal options and fight for the answers—and compensation—you deserve.

[Contact us today](#) at our Nashville or Goodlettsville office to schedule a free consultation. We're here when you're ready.