

\$126,000 Verdict for Injuries Sustained in a Four-Way Stop Right-of-Way Dispute in Nashville

When the Other Driver Has a Witness and You Don't, the Physics of the Crash Can Still Tell the Truth

Four-way stop accidents are among the most contested [car accident cases](#) an attorney can take to trial. Both drivers almost always claim they stopped. There are rarely traffic cameras. And when the other driver has a passenger in the car who says he stopped, the case can look unwinnable before it gets started. That's exactly the situation one Nashville woman faced after she was seriously injured in a right-of-way collision on Thompson Lane near Nolensville Pike and Harding Place, right in front of Southern Hills Medical Center.

The defendant's insurance company made its position clear early: they offered **\$0**. They had a witness. Their driver said he stopped. Case closed, as far as they were concerned. What they didn't account for was that the physical evidence of the crash told a very different story, and that the [Law Office of Eric Beasley](#) was prepared to prove it. A jury awarded the plaintiff **\$126,000** after hearing what an expert witness with a PhD in aeronautical engineering from Vanderbilt University had to say about how that crash actually happened.

How the Crash Happened and Why Fault Was Immediately Disputed

The collision occurred at a four-way stop on Thompson Lane in Nashville. The plaintiff and the defendant were approaching the intersection from opposite directions, each facing a stop sign. The plaintiff was preparing to make a left turn. The defendant was traveling straight through.

What happened next is where the accounts diverge. The plaintiff said she stopped at the sign and proceeded when it was safe to do so, and that the defendant ran his stop sign and struck her vehicle. The defendant said he stopped and that the plaintiff was the one who failed to yield. His passenger, a friend traveling with him, said the same thing.

The insurance company evaluated those competing accounts and concluded that with an independent witness supporting their driver, the claim had no value. Their offer of zero dollars reflected that assessment. From their perspective, a jury would hear one driver against another driver plus a witness, and the math would favor their insured.

That calculation ignored two things: what the witness actually remembered, and what the wreck itself was still showing anyone willing to look.

What the Defendant's Witness Actually Said at Trial

The defense witness was the defendant's passenger, a friend who was riding in the car at the time of the crash. In theory, an independent eyewitness to a four-way stop collision is a

significant advantage for the party that has one. In practice, the value of a witness depends entirely on what that witness can actually testify to with credibility.

Under examination, the defendant's witness had significant gaps in his recollection of the crash. He could not reliably establish the time of day the collision occurred. He was unable to provide the kind of specific, corroborating detail that gives a witness account weight with a jury. What he offered was a general account that supported his friend's version of events without being able to substantiate it with the specifics that credible eyewitness testimony requires.

Juries evaluate witnesses not just on what they say but on how they say it, how much they actually remember, and whether their account holds up under cross-examination. The gaps in this witness's testimony gave the jury reason to question whether his account was reliable, whether it was shaped by loyalty to his friend, or both. The jury ultimately did not find his testimony persuasive. But the physical evidence still needed to close the gap.

Why the Airbag Deployment Signaled Something Was Wrong With the Defendant's Account

One of the first things that stood out about this case was that the plaintiff's airbags deployed in the collision. Airbag deployment is governed by sensors that measure the direction, angle, and force of an impact, and they are calibrated to activate only when the crash meets a threshold consistent with a serious, high-velocity impact. When airbags go off, it means the vehicle's own systems registered the kind of force that causes serious injury.

That detail was significant in the context of a disputed fault intersection case where the defendant was claiming he had stopped at the sign and proceeded at a normal speed. A driver who stopped at a four-way stop and crossed carefully through an intersection does not produce an impact violent enough to deploy the other vehicle's airbags. The airbag deployment was an early indicator that the defendant's account of a routine intersection crossing didn't match the physical reality of the crash, and it was one of the things that prompted a deeper look into the evidence.

The Aeronautical Engineering Expert Who Changed the Case

The turning point in the case was the retention of an expert witness with a doctorate in aeronautical engineering from Vanderbilt University. Using photographs taken at the crash scene showing the final positions of both vehicles, the expert performed calculations accounting for the weight of each vehicle and the velocity required to produce the outcome that the photographs documented.

The plaintiff's car had been spun 180 degrees from its original direction of travel. That level of rotational displacement doesn't happen in a low-speed collision between two vehicles at a stop sign. The expert's analysis established that for the plaintiff's vehicle to have rotated that far, the

defendant's car had to have been traveling at a minimum of 35 miles per hour at the moment of impact.

Attorney Beasley said: *"I hired an expert with a PhD from Vanderbilt in aeronautical engineering who ran the numbers. For her car to spin 180 degrees, that defendant had to be doing at least 35 miles per hour through a stop sign."*

Thirty-five miles per hour through a four-way stop sign is not a driver who stopped and proceeded carefully. It is a driver who either never stopped at all or who rolled through without meaningfully slowing down. That finding directly contradicted the defendant's account and his witness's account, and it gave the jury a scientific basis for concluding that the defendant was at fault regardless of what either of them said on the stand.

The expert's testimony also addressed the broader physical evidence at the scene, including vehicle positions and damage patterns, providing a coherent and technically grounded account of how the collision unfolded. The [role of expert evidence in car accident claims](#) is often underestimated by injured people evaluating whether their case is worth pursuing, particularly in cases where the other driver has witnesses and the liability picture looks difficult.

The Plaintiff's Injuries and What Was at Stake

The plaintiff sustained a broken arm in the collision. Fractures resulting from car accident impacts can range in severity from simple breaks that heal with immobilization to complex fractures requiring surgical repair, extended recovery periods, and ongoing limitations. The injury in this case was serious enough to warrant legal action and, ultimately, to support a six-figure verdict.

Arm fractures in car accidents frequently occur when a driver or passenger braces for impact, when the force of the collision throws an occupant against interior surfaces, or when the structural intrusion of the crash itself causes direct trauma to the limb. Recovery timelines vary, but even straightforward fractures typically involve weeks of immobilization, physical therapy, and time away from normal activities and work.

What the \$0 initial offer from the insurance company reflected was not an honest assessment of the plaintiff's injuries. It reflected a calculation that a witness gave them enough cover to deny the claim entirely. When the physics of the crash dismantled that cover, the jury awarded compensation that recognized the actual harm the plaintiff suffered.

Why Four-Way Stop Cases Are Particularly Hard Without a Witness

The reality of four-way stop accident litigation is that most of these cases turn entirely on credibility. There is rarely a traffic camera, rarely a data recorder that captures what happened at a stop sign, and rarely a neutral bystander who happened to be watching two specific cars approach an intersection at the same moment. When both drivers point at each other and say the other one ran the sign, a jury is left to decide who to believe.

That's why these cases are among the most challenging in personal injury practice, and why many attorneys are reluctant to take them to trial when the other side has a witness and the plaintiff doesn't. The conventional wisdom is that a witness, even a friend of the defendant, tips the credibility balance enough to make the case a difficult one to win.

What this case demonstrates is that witness testimony isn't the only evidence available, and that a thorough investigation can surface objective evidence that either corroborates the plaintiff's account or directly contradicts the defendant's. Vehicle position, damage patterns, and the physics of the collision itself can all be analyzed by qualified experts in ways that give juries something more reliable than competing memories of a moment that lasted less than a second.

The Growing Importance of Dashcams in Intersection Accident Cases

One of the lessons that runs through cases like this one is the value of objective evidence that captures what actually happened rather than what each driver remembers or claims. Dashcams have become increasingly affordable and increasingly common on Tennessee roads, and in a four-way stop dispute, dashcam footage can be the difference between a case that goes to trial on competing testimony and one that resolves quickly because the video shows exactly who stopped and who didn't.

A dashcam mounted to the windshield records the road ahead continuously, typically overwriting the oldest footage as the storage fills, but saving footage from the period immediately before and after a collision when an impact triggers the device. In a four-way stop case, that footage can capture the intersection approach, whether the driver stopped, how long they waited, and the moment of impact. It can also capture footage of the other vehicle's approach if the intersection is close enough when the recording begins.

Installing a dashcam is one of the most practical steps any driver can take to protect themselves in the event of a disputed accident. The technology is widely available, easy to install, and inexpensive relative to what a contested liability case costs in time, stress, and uncertainty. It won't prevent accidents, but it can prevent the specific injustice of being at the mercy of the other driver's account when yours is the truthful one.

If you're involved in an accident and the other driver disputes fault, the steps you take immediately afterward matter enormously. [Knowing what to do after a car accident in Nashville](#) before one happens is the best preparation you can have.

What This Verdict Means for Injured Drivers Facing a Similar Situation

If you've been in a four-way stop accident in Tennessee and the other driver is claiming you ran the sign, the fact that their insurer is offering you nothing or very little doesn't mean your case has no value. It means their insurer has made a preliminary judgment based on the information available to them, which may not include a full investigation of the physical evidence.

The insurance company in this case offered zero dollars. A jury awarded \$126,000. That gap exists because a thorough investigation, the right expert, and a willingness to take the case to trial produced evidence that the insurance company's initial assessment never accounted for.

Cases involving disputed liability at intersections, particularly those where the other driver has a witness, require attorneys who are willing to invest in building the case rather than accepting the insurer's framing of what happened. That investment, whether it's in accident reconstruction, expert witnesses, or simply the time to examine every piece of physical evidence, is what converts a case that looks unwinnable at first into one that a jury decides in your favor.

Don't Let the Other Driver's Witness Be the Last Word

If you've been injured in a four-way stop or intersection accident and the other driver is disputing fault, a thorough investigation of the physical evidence can reveal what witness accounts can't.

At the [Law Office of Eric Beasley](#), we've spent 25 years building cases that other attorneys might walk away from, and we know how to find the evidence that tells the real story. [Contact us](#) for a free case evaluation. There are no upfront costs and no fees unless we win.