



The Voice

And The Defense Wins

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Kenneth Laborde and Brendan Doherty



DRI members and attorneys at **Gieger, Laborde, & Laperouse, LLC** [Kenneth Laborde](#) and [Brendan Doherty](#) recently obtained a complete defense verdict in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana following a five-day trial.

The case arose from an incident in Mexico in which plaintiff fell from a Bell 206 helicopter while the aircraft and its crew were netting white tail deer. The plaintiff sustained life threatening injuries including spinal fractures, leg and ankle fractures, a hip fracture, etc. Testimony at trial indicated that the plaintiff could expect significant future medical expenses and that he would never return to work in any capacity.

Defendants in the case included the plaintiff's U.S. employer (the helicopter operator), an affiliated company, and two individual defendants associated with each of the companies. Plaintiff claimed that the out-of-country deer netting activities put him outside of the course and scope of his employment with the helicopter operator such that the employer could not take advantage of statutory workers' compensation immunity. The individual defendants were dismissed on a motion for directed verdict.

In closings, plaintiffs' counsel recommended a damages award of nearly \$5,000,000. The jury deliberated for over three hours and returned a verdict finding that the plaintiff was in the course and scope of his employment with the helicopter operator and that the affiliated company was free of fault.

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