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Jury awards \$7.7M over CTA bus crash

Two passengers hurt when vehicle jumped curb, hit utility pole

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A Cook County jury awarded \$7.7 million to two people who were injured when a Chicago Transit Authority bus veered off the road and crashed into a pole.

Alexis Lebron, then 23, and Yul Marshall, then 52, were passengers on a CTA No. 9 bus on Oct. 23, 2023.

The bus, driven by CTA employee Quandra Ramsey, was headed north on Ashland Avenue.

The bus was in a right turn only lane, although it was not planning to turn, documents stated.

While in that lane, a car in front of the bus veered into the turn lane.

In response to the car veering into the turn lane, the bus driver turned the wheel to the right and drove off the road and onto the sidewalk.

There was no impact between the two vehicles and the car that cut off the bus drove away.

However, as the bus drove off the road, it side-swiped a traffic light pole before running into a utility pole and power box, the attorneys said.

The accident was captured on video by multiple cameras on the bus.

Lebron was sitting in a forward facing seat behind the bus driver.

The impact threw Lebron from her seat. She hit her face, chest and shoulder into a metal pole.



Ian R. Alexander

As a result, she broke two of her teeth and sustained a Superior Labrum Anterior-Posterior (SLAP) tear to her left shoulder, requiring surgery.

Lebron does not have full use of her shoulder and has ongoing medical problems, which could require a future repair surgery, her attorneys said.

Lebron is a single mom who gave birth to her first child two months prior to the accident.

Marshall was also sitting on the driver's side of the bus in the middle area.

The impact caused him to be lifted from his seat and thrown down about two times.

The first impact was from the bus jumping the curb, and the second was from the bus hitting the pole.

When the bus crashed into the pole, Marshall's tail bone hit the edge of the seat, causing an injury to the base of his spine.

Marshall required a lumbar fusion.

He continues to deal with near-daily pain in his lower back, which restricts his daily activities, including playing with his grandchildren.

There were four plaintiffs,



Thomas J. Hyland

represented by four different law firms, that initially sued the CTA and the bus driver.

Two of the cases settled before trial, according to the plaintiffs' attorneys.

Marshall and Lebron sued for negligence, alleging the bus driver deviated from the duty of care as a common carrier by improperly driving the bus in the right turn only lane, driving too fast and with one hand on the steering wheel, among other claims.

Marshall and Lebron's claims were consolidated and went to trial Oct. 1 before Cook County Circuit Court Judge Daniel A. Trevino.

The jury returned a verdict in favor of Lebron and Marshall and against the CTA and Ramsey on Oct. 15.

Lebron was awarded \$3.4 million, and Marshall was awarded \$4.2 million for their injuries.

The award covers medical care, pain and suffering, loss of a normal life and emotional distress for both Lebron and Marshall.

Lebron is represented by Ian R. Alexander and Joseph M. Preiser of Goldberg & Goldberg.



Sargun Singh

"My client is pleased that the jury took the full measure of her loss into consideration, including the emotional toll on a young mother whose lifelong dream and ambition was to be a mom," Alexander said. "She found herself in the first year of her newborn child's life, and every day thereafter, unable to do all of the things she hoped and dreamed she'd be able to do with her kid because she was in pain and couldn't hold the baby. It was a very traumatizing, emotionally significant thing for her."

Marshall is represented by Thomas J. Hyland and Sargun Singh of Sobo & Sobo LLP.

"It was essentially exactly what we asked for," Hyland said. "It could not have gone to a more deserving plaintiff. I thought it was a fair award, and justice was served."

Ramsey and the CTA are represented by Austen P. Heuser and Femarie Ang of the CTA Law Department. They could not be reached for comment.

The cases are *Lebron v. CTA, et al.*, No. 2024 L 004020 and *Marshall v. CTA, et al.*, No. 2024 L 000209.