# [***Harriet Speed v. St. Elmo Belgrave; 2006 Mealey's Jury Verdicts & Settlements 2297***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=jury-verdicts-settlements&id=urn:contentItem:4N85-W3M0-0223-Y3H0-00000-00&context=)

BUR-L-002853-03

Nov. 16, 2006

**Headline:** New Jersey Jury Awards Motorist $23,925 For Head-On Crash

**Result:** $23,925 plaintiff's verdict

**Injury:** Fractured right pinky finger

**Court:** N.J. Super., Burlington Co.

**Judge:** Marc M. Baldwin

**Plaintiff Profile**

Harriet Speed

**Defendant Profile**

St. Elmo Belgrave

**Plaintiff Counsel**

Thomas V. Grealis, Juman & Juman, Edison, N.J

**Defendant Counsel**

Jessica D. Adams, Dempster & Haddix, Mount Laurel, N.J

**Case Summary**

**Claim:** Auto negligence

**Background:** Sources told Mealey Publications that on Oct. 28, 2001, Harriet Speed, a teacher in her 50s, was driving on Van Skyer Parkway, a two-lane road, near Country Club Drive in Willingboro, N.J., when her ***car*** collided head-on at a curve with a ***car*** driven in the opposite direction by St. Elmo Belgrave.Sources said Speed claimed that Belgrave was speeding in his Porsche and crossed the center line into her lane when rounding the bend. Sources said Speed claimed that she had to cross into Belgrave's lane because there was no shoulder, causing Belgrave to swerve again. Sources said Belgrave claimed that he was not speeding and never left his own lane. As a result of the ***accident***, Speed suffered a fractured pinky on her right hand and underwent two surgeries, which included the placement of a pin in her finger. She now suffers from arthritis in her hand, sources said. Speed sued Belgrave on Oct. 6, 2003, in the Burlington County, N.J., Superior Court.

**Other:** The jury awarded Speed $43,500 but also found her to be 45 percent at fault, so the award was reduced to $23,925, sources said. Belgrave, sources said, was found to be 55 percent liable for the ***accident***.Sources said the trial lasted two days and the jury deliberated for two hours.

**Defense:** Allegations denied; comparative negligence

**Plaintiff Expert(s)**

Jon W. Ark, M.D., hand surgeon, Princeton, N.J., testified as to plaintiff's condition after the ***accident***

**Defendant Expert(s)**

Thomas O'Dowd, M.D., orthopedic surgeon, Voorhees, N.J., testified to plaintiff's condition after the ***accident***

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