# [***Rebekah Zakrocki v. Ford Motor Co., et al; 2007 Mealey's Jury Verdicts & Settlements 1236***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=jury-verdicts-settlements&id=urn:contentItem:4NK4-8YF0-0223-Y4F2-00000-00&context=)

MID-L-10179-02

April 18, 2007

**Headline:** New Jersey Woman Wins $10.6 Million Negligence Verdict Against Ford Motor In State Court

**Result:** $10.6 million plaintiff verdict

**Injury:** Severed right hand, torn nerves in the brachial plexus

**Court:** N.J. Super., Middlesex Co.

**Judge:** Jamie D. Happas

**Plaintiff Profile**

Rebekah Zakrocki

**Defendant Profile**

Ford Motor Co., Freehold Ford

**Plaintiff Counsel**

Stephen G. Lowry, Harris Penn & Lowry, Atlanta; Barry R. Eichen and Jack Sander, Eichen Levinson, Edison, N.J

**Defendant Counsel**

Thomas Hinchey, Campbell, Campbell, Edwards & Conroy, Woodbury, N.J.; James Dobis, Dobis, Russell & Peterson, Livingston, N.J

**Case Summary**

**Claim:** Negligence

**Background:** Sources told Mealey Publications that on Nov. 10, 2000, Rebekah Zakrocki, then 22, was driving her 1997 Ford Explorer on the Garden State Parkway near Brick Township when she pressed on the gas pedal and it became stuck, causing the vehicle to lurch forward. Frightened, Zakrocki turned the wheel to the left, which caused the vehicle to roll over, sources said.Sources said Zakrocki's right hand was severed and she suffered a total bracheoplexis injury, which rendered her right arm paralyzed and dangling from her body.Zakrocki sued Ford Motor Co. and Freehold Ford, where she bought the vehicle, on Nov. 6, 2002, in the Middlesex County, N.J., Superior Court for failure to know or notify her of the Explorer's throttle defects.

**Other:** The trial lasted four weeks, and the jury deliberated for two days, sources said.Sources said the jury reduced the award by 28 percent to $8.3 million after found Zakrocki responsible for the crash and was not wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash.In addition to the compensatory damages, sources said the following day, Zakrocki was awarded $42,000 in punitive damages.

**Defense:** Allegations denied; comparative negligence

**Plaintiff Expert(s)**

David A. Renfroe, engineer, Farmington, Ark., testified on the condition of the ***car*** at the time of the ***accident*** Robert L. Hooker, engineer, Muskegon, Mich., testified on the condition of the ***car*** at the time of the ***accident*** Sam Sero, engineer, Pittsburgh, testified on the condition of the ***car*** at the time of the ***accident*** Steve B. Chase, Ph.D., engineer, Ann Arbor, Mich., testified on the condition of the ***car*** at the time of the ***accident*** Wayne Ross, M.D., biomechanical engineer, Lancaster, Pa., testified on what caused the ***car*** to rollover Christopher P. Godek, M.D., hand surgeon, Toms River, N.J., testified on Zakrocki's injuries after the ***accident*** Brian Sullivan, economist, Philadelphia, testified on the economic impact of the injuries sustained in the ***accident***

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LexisNexis Jury Verdicts and Settlement Report

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