# [***Sara Petronis v. Roger Venorder; 2007 Mealey's Jury Verdicts & Settlements 3355***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=jury-verdicts-settlements&id=urn:contentItem:4PGY-3SS0-0223-Y026-00000-00&context=)

ATL-L-001199-04

Jan. 18, 2007

**Headline:** State Jury Awards New Jersey Woman Injured By Tailgater $64,800

**Result:** $64,800 plaintiff verdict

**Injury:** Bulging lumbar disc

**Court:** N.J. Super., Atlantic Co.

**Judge:** Nelson Johnson

**Plaintiff Profile**

Sara Petronis

**Defendant Profile**

Roger Venorder

**Plaintiff Counsel**

Dawn Van Keuren, Goldenberg, Mackler, Sayegh, Mintz, Pfeffer, Bonchi & Gill, Galloway

**Defendant Counsel**

Keith Bursack, Law Office of Doreen Ryan, Wall, N.J

**Case Summary**

**Claim:** Auto negligence

**Background:** Sources told Mealey Publications that on April 30, 2002, Sara Petronis was driving north on the Garden State Parkway just before the Marmora Bridge. As Petronis passed the Somers Point Toll Plaza, Petronis said she accelerated to 75 mph in the far left lane, sources said. At that point, sources said a pickup truck driven by Roger Venorder appeared right behind Petronis and began tailgating her. Sources said Petronis said she tapped on her brakes as a warning to Venorder to back off, but he then cut in and out of traffic to the right to race ahead. When Venorder appeared in front of Petronis, sources said, he then slammed on his brakes, which caused Petronis to swerve, lose control of her ***car*** and go off the highway.Sources said Venorder left the scene immediately but did report the ***accident*** to state police about 20 minutes later.Venorder, sources said, claimed that as he was driving behind Petronis, he wished to pass her so he flashed his lights several times and when she ignored this, he passed her on the right. Sources said Venorder claimed that when he did this, Petronis sped up alongside him, preventing him from passing. When he finally passed Petronis, Venorder claimed that she began tailgating him and flashed him the middle finger, sources said. When Venorder tapped on his brakes to ask Petronis to back off, sources said she then moved her ***car*** to the right.As a result of the ***accident***, Petronis suffered a bulging lumbar disc, sources said. She visited a chiropractor 75 times and still experiences pain, sources said. Sources said Petronis was a deli clerk and she was forced to miss about three months of work. At the time of the ***accident***, sources said, Petronis was pregnant and she has since delivered a healthy baby.Petronis sued Venorder on April 16, 2004, in the Atlantic County, N.J., Superior Court.

**Other:** Sources said Venorder made no offer of settlement before or during the trial.The trial lasted two days, and the jury deliberated two hours, sources said.Sources said the jury found Petronis 25 percent comparatively negligent for the ***accident*** and as a result reduced the actual award to $48,600. The two sides reached a confidential settlement after the trial, sources said, in exchange for Venorder waiving his right to make further post-trial motions.

**Defense:** Allegations denied; comparative negligence.

**Plaintiff Expert(s)**

Richard V. Lolla D.C., chiropractor, Galloway, N.J., Petronis' treating physician, testified on her condition after the ***accident***

**Defendant Expert(s)**

Roy B. Friedenthal M.D., orthopedic surgeon, Hammonton, N.J., testified on Petronis' condition after the ***accident***

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