

IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR POLK COUNTY

ERIN LONEY,

LAW NO: LACL151382

Plaintiff,

v.

JURY INSTRUCTIONS

LUKE STALEY and DEAN STALEY,

Defendants.

Statement of the Case

This matter arises from a motor vehicle accident that occurred on December 4, 2019, at 1400 North Ankeny Boulevard in Ankeny, Polk County, Iowa. Defendant Dean Staley's Chevrolet pickup, operated by Defendant Luke Staley, made contact with the rear of the Nissan Rogue operated by the Plaintiff Erin Loney. Defendant Luke Staley was operating the pickup with the consent of Defendant Dean Staley.

Plaintiff alleges that Luke Staley was negligent in causing the accident. Plaintiff further claims she was injured in the accident and that her injuries resulted in damages.

Defendants admit that an accident occurred but deny that they were negligent and deny that the accident caused Plaintiff's injuries.

Do not consider this summary as proof of any claim. Decide the facts from the evidence and apply the law which I will give you.

INSTRUCTION NO. 1

My duty is to tell you what the law is. Your duty is to accept and apply this law. You must consider all of the instructions together because no one instruction includes all of the applicable law.

The order in which I give these instructions is not important. Your duty is to decide all fact questions.

As you consider the evidence, do not be influenced by any personal sympathy, bias, prejudices or emotions. Because you are making very important decisions in this case, you are to evaluate the evidence carefully and avoid decisions based on generalizations, gut feelings, prejudices, sympathies, stereotypes, or biases. The law demands that you return a just verdict, based solely on the evidence, your reason and common sense, and these instructions. As jurors, your sole duty is to find the truth and do justice.

INSTRUCTION NO. 2

Whenever a party must prove something they must do so by the preponderance of the evidence.

Preponderance of the evidence is evidence that is more convincing than opposing evidence.

Preponderance of the evidence does not depend upon the number of witnesses testifying on one side or the other.

INSTRUCTION NO. 3

You shall base your verdict only upon the evidence and these instructions.

Evidence is:

1. Testimony in person or by deposition.
2. Exhibits received by the court.
3. Stipulations which are agreements between the attorneys.
4. Any other matter admitted (e.g. answers to interrogatories, matters which judicial notice was taken, and etc.).

Evidence may be direct or circumstantial. The weight to be given any evidence is for you to decide.

Sometimes, during a trial, references are made to pre-trial statements and reports, witnesses' depositions, or other miscellaneous items. Only those things formally offered and received by the court are available to you during your deliberations. Documents or items read from or referred to which were not offered and received into evidence, are not available to you.

The following are not evidence:

1. Statements, arguments, questions and comments by the lawyers.
2. Objections and rulings on objections.
3. Any testimony I told you to disregard.
4. Anything you saw or heard about this case outside the courtroom.

INSTRUCTION NO. 4

You will decide the facts from the evidence. Consider the evidence using your observations, common sense and experience. You must try to reconcile any conflicts in the evidence; but, if you cannot, you will accept the evidence you find more believable.

In determining the facts, you may have to decide what testimony you believe. You may believe all, part or none of any witnesses' testimony.

There are many factors which you may consider in deciding what testimony to believe, for example:

1. Whether the testimony is reasonable and consistent with other evidence you believe;
2. The witnesses' appearance, conduct, age, intelligence, memory and knowledge of the facts; and,
3. The witnesses' interest in the trial, their motive, candor, bias and prejudice.

INSTRUCTION NO. 5

You have heard testimony from persons described as experts. Persons who have become experts in a field because of their education and experience may give their opinion on matters in that field and the reasons for their opinion.

Consider expert testimony just like any other testimony. You may accept it or reject it. You may give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness' education and experience, the reasons given for the opinion, and all the other evidence in the case.

INSTRUCTION NO. 6

An expert witness was asked to assume certain facts were true and to give an opinion based on that assumption. This is called a hypothetical question. If any fact assumed in the question has not been proved by the evidence, you should decide if that omission affects the value of the opinion.

INSTRUCTION NO. 7

To recover against the Defendants, the Plaintiff Erin Loney must prove all of the following propositions:

1. Luke Staley was negligent in one or more of the following ways:
 - a. In failing to stop in the assured clear distance ahead,
 - b. In failing to keep a proper lookout, and
 - c. In failing to maintain control of Defendants' vehicle.
2. The negligence was cause of damage to the Plaintiff.
3. The amount of damage.

If the Plaintiff has failed to prove any of these propositions, the Plaintiff is not entitled to damages. If the Plaintiff has proved all of these propositions, the Plaintiff is entitled to damage in some amount.

INSTRUCTION NO. 8

The conduct of a party is a cause of damage when the damage would not have happened except for the conduct.

INSTRUCTION NO. 9

“Negligence” means the failure to use ordinary care. Ordinary care is the care which a reasonably careful person would use under similar circumstances. “Negligence” is doing something a reasonably careful person would not do under similar circumstances or failing to do something a reasonably careful person would do under similar circumstances.

INSTRUCTION NO. 10

No person shall drive any vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than will permit them to stop within the assured clear distance ahead. The words "within the assured clear distance ahead" mean the distance from which noticeable objects, reasonably expected or anticipated to be upon the highway, may be seen.

A violation of this law is negligence.

INSTRUCTION NO. 11

"Proper lookout" is the lookout a reasonable person would keep in the same or similar situation. It means more than looking and seeing. It includes being aware of the operation of the driver's vehicle in relation to what the driver saw or should have seen.

A violation of this duty is negligence.

INSTRUCTION NO. 12

A driver must have his or her vehicle under control. It is under control when the driver can guide and direct its movement, control its speed and stop it reasonably fast.

A violation of this duty is negligence.

INSTRUCTION NO. 13

The mere fact an accident occurred or a party was injured does not mean a party was negligent.

INSTRUCTION NO. 14

If you find Plaintiff Erin Loney is entitled to recover damages, you shall consider the following items:

1. Past medical expenses;
2. Future medical expenses;
3. Past lost wages;
4. Loss of future earning capacity;
5. Past loss of full function of the mind and body;
6. Future loss of full function of the mind and body;
7. Past physical and mental pain and suffering, and
8. Future physical and mental pain and suffering.

The amount you assess for physical and mental pain and suffering and loss of full function of the mind and body cannot be measured by any exact mathematical standard. You must use your sound judgment based upon an impartial consideration of the evidence. Your judgment must not be exercised arbitrarily, or out of sympathy or prejudice, for or against the parties. The amount you assess for any item of damage must not exceed the amount caused by a party as proved by the evidence.

A party cannot recover duplicate damages. Do not allow amounts awarded under one item of damage to be included in any amount awarded under another item of damage. The amounts, if any, you find for each of the above items will be used to answer the special verdicts.

INSTRUCTION NO. 15

Past medical expenses are the reasonable value of necessary hospital charges, doctor charges, prescriptions and other medical services from the date of the injury to the present time.

INSTRUCTION NO. 16

Future medical expenses are the present value of reasonable and necessary hospital charges, doctor charges, prescriptions, and other medical expenses which will be incurred in the future.

INSTRUCTION NO. 17

Loss of earnings is the reasonable value of lost wages from the date of injury to the present time.

INSTRUCTION NO. 18

Loss of future earning capacity is the present value of the reduction in the ability to work and earn money generally, rather than in a particular job.

Impairment of physical capacity creates an inference of lessened earning ability in the future.

INSTRUCTION NO. 19

Past loss of full function of the mind and body is loss of full function of the mind and body from the date of injury to the present time. Loss of the mind and body is the inability of a particular part of the mind and body to function in a normal manner.

INSTRUCTION NO. 20

Future loss of full function of the mind and body is the present value of future loss of function of the mind and body.

INSTRUCTION NO. 21

Past physical and mental pain and suffering is the physical and mental pain and suffering from the date of injury to the present time. Physical pain and suffering may include, but is not limited to, bodily suffering or discomfort. Mental pain and suffering may include, but is not limited to, mental anguish or loss of enjoyment of life.

INSTRUCTION NO. 22

Future physical and mental pain and suffering is the present value of future physical and mental pain and suffering.

INSTRUCTION NO. 23

Future damages must be reduced to present value. "Present value" is a sum of money paid now in advance which, together with interest earned at a reasonable rate of return, will compensate the plaintiff for future losses.

INSTRUCTION NO. 24

In arriving at an item of damage you cannot arrive at a figure by taking down the estimate of each juror as to an item of damage and agreeing in advance that the average of those estimates shall be your item of damage.

INSTRUCTION NO. 25

A Standard Mortality Table indicates the normal life expectancy of people who are the same age as Erin Loney is 31.79 years. The statistics from a Standard Mortality Table are not conclusive. You may use this information, together with all the other evidence, about Erin Loney's health, habits, occupation, and lifestyle, when deciding issues of future damages.

INSTRUCTION NO. 26

You may not communicate about this case before reaching your verdict. This includes cell phones, and electronic media such as text messages, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, email, etc.

Do not do any research or make any investigation about this case on your own. Do not visit or view any place discussed in this case, and do not use Internet maps or Google Earth or any other program or device to search for or to view any place discussed in the testimony. Also, do not research any information about this case, the law, or the people involved, including the parties, the witnesses, the lawyers, or the judge. This includes using the Internet to research events or people referenced in the trial.

This case will be tried on evidence presented in the courtroom. If you conduct independent research, you will be relying on matters not presented in court. The parties have a right to have this case decided on the evidence they know about and that has been introduced here in court. If you do some research or investigation or experiment that we do not know about, then your verdict may be influenced by inaccurate, incomplete or misleading information that has not been tested by the trial process, including the oath to tell the truth and by cross-examination. All of the parties are entitled to a fair trial, rendered by an impartial jury, and you must conduct yourself so as to maintain the integrity of the trial process. If you decide a case based on information not presented in court, you will have denied the parties a fair trial in accordance with the rules of this state and you will have done an injustice. It is very important that you abide by these rules.

INSTRUCTION NO. 27

During the trial, you have been allowed to take notes. You may take these with you to the jury room to use in your deliberations. Remember, these are notes and not evidence. Generally, they reflect the recollection or impressions of the evidence as viewed by the person taking them, and may be inaccurate or incomplete.

Upon reaching a verdict, leave the notes in the jury room and they will be destroyed.

INSTRUCTION NO. 28

Upon retiring you shall select a foreman or forewoman. It will be his or her duty to see discussion is carried on in an orderly fashion, the issues are fully and freely discussed, and each juror is given an opportunity to express his or her views.

Your attitude at the beginning of deliberations is important. It is not a good idea for you to take a position before thoroughly discussing the case with the other jurors. If you do this, individual pride may become involved and you may later hesitate to change an announced position even if shown it may be incorrect. Remember you are not partisans or advocates, but are judges – judges of facts. Your sole interest is to find the truth and do justice.

INSTRUCTION NO. 29

I am giving you one verdict forms and special interrogatories. During the first six hours of deliberations, excluding meals and recesses outside your jury room, your decision must be unanimous. If you all agree, the verdict and interrogatories must be signed by your foreman or forewoman.

After deliberating for six hours from 10:45 o'clock A.m. excluding meals or recesses outside your jury room, then it is necessary that only seven (7) of you agree upon the answers to the questions. In that case, the verdict and interrogatories must be signed by all seven (7) jurors who agree.

When you have agreed upon a verdict and interrogatories, and appropriately signed it, tell the Judicial Assistant.

Donald N. Naleff
3rd District Judge