

# MAYO | HILL

*21st Century Law Firm*

## **‘Justice Was Served’: Key Witness Helps Teen Recover \$3M in Father’s Fatal Log Truck Wreck**

*By Everett Catts*

A Macon law firm has recovered a \$3 million pre-suit settlement for its client, the teenage son of a man killed in a hit-and-run wreck involving a log truck.

In a settlement agreement approved March 29, the Mayo | Hill firm got \$1 million each for its client from the three insurance policies tied to a log truck that was found to be at fault in a Dec. 15, 2020, crash at the intersection of Eisenhower Parkway and Canterbury Road/Key Street in Macon, according to the release document.

The settlement came after Michael Hill, a partner at Mayo | Hill, sent a Jan. 3 demand letter, which threatened a wrongful death lawsuit seeking nearly \$7 million, to the lawyer representing the log truck’s owner. But no lawsuit was filed. The client’s name was not released because he’s a minor.

### **‘The Log Truck Did Not Stop’**

The wreck occurred at about 6 a.m., when it was still dark outside. According to the demand letter, Jeffery “Shawn” King, 36, who owned a pressure-washing business, was on his way to work and drove his car into the back of the log truck. According to the demand letter, a witness, Kim Brock, saw the accident and said the truck “1) did not have working taillights on the trailer, 2) did not have running lights on the trailer and 3) did not have a strobe light or flags attached to the logs.”

Brock avoided hitting the log truck because he steered into the left lane to turn onto Key Street, Hill said.

“In fact, Mr. Brock stated that the only reason he finally recognized the existence of the log truck was because he could see the lights on the tractor from the left turn lane,” Hill’s demand letter said.

According to the demand letter, the wreck occurred when the light turned green and the log truck began to go through the intersection, with King’s car hitting it from behind while traveling 20 to 25 mph.

# MAYO | HILL

*21st Century Law Firm*

“Inexplicably, the log truck did not stop and continued down the roadway, leaving Shawn to die,” the demand letter said. “Consequently, the police and fatality investigators began searching for the log truck including pulling over various trucks to inquire about their whereabouts that morning.”

In an interview, Hill added King’s car “was peeled back like a tin can, and he got impaled. Logs went through his chest.”

According to the demand letter, the log truck’s owner, Billy Waller, called the police to report a strange story told to him by the driver, Stanley Morgan, who had called him to say “he believed he’d been rear-ended as his lights and flags were ‘missing.’”

Hill said Waller said this was an odd explanation, adding he could have lost the lights and flags while coming out of the woods. Later in the day, when Waller heard someone had rear-ended a log truck and the police were investigating the crash, he called the police to say “he did not need that kind of trouble,” the demand letter said.

The letter also said Morgan violated Georgia Department of Public Safety’s Forest Products Trucking Rules 4-393.11 and 4-393.11PL, which say, “Every commercial motor vehicle shall be equipped with operable and serviceable lamps, reflectors, and conspicuity markings,” according to the department’s website.

## **Finding the Witness**

In an interview, Hill said his client, who is 14 and lives in Virginia with his mother, and his family had talked to two other attorneys about possibly filing a lawsuit, but they declined to take the case because King was found at fault in the wreck. Mayo | Hill took the case after tracking down Brock, having its investigator interview him, which took three weeks, and determining Morgan was actually at fault.

“[Brock’s] phone number was on the police report, and when we spoke to him, he said no one had ever [talked to] him except the police [at the scene],” Hill said. “He said he’d been waiting for someone to call to ask him what happened.”

Of the case’s outcome, Hill added, “I feel good. I feel as though justice was served. ... We’ve done a great service by tracking down the witness and getting his statement, as opposed to just relying on the police report.”

# MAYO | HILL

*21st Century Law Firm*

Waller, whose company is under the names Quick Transportation and Pine Oak Products, had one insurance policy each for the log truck's tractor (with Progressive Mountain Insurance Co.) and trailer (with Imperium Insurance Co.), plus an excess policy covered by James River Insurance Co.

Tom Brennan of Fain, Major & Brennan in Sandy Springs, who represented Progressive; and Frank Bedinger III of Hawkins Parnell & Young in Atlanta, who represented James River, had no comment on the settlement. Jason Wyrick of Cruser Mitchell Novitz Sanchez Gaston & Zimet in Peachtree Corners, who represented Imperium, did not return phone and email messages seeking comment on the settlement.

Hill said the takeaway from this case was "just the need to do a proper investigation even when the police believe your client's at fault."

"The police, although they do a wonderful job and serve a great purpose and have a hard job, sometimes there are things they miss," he added. "And that's why we lawyers exist, to help fill those details and provide answers to a family that otherwise would be left in the dark on why they lost a loved one."

---

\*Source: (original article can be found here):

<https://www.law.com/dailyreportonline/2022/04/27/justice-was-served-key-witness-helps-teen-recover-3m-in-fathers-fatal-log-truck-wreck/>

*The attorneys at Mayo | Hill are dedicated to a pleasant, professional relationship with clients, attorneys, courts, and all parties throughout each area of practice. The firm represents seriously injured individuals and families of individuals killed as a result of negligence. Additionally, the firm offers world-class service in business litigation, criminal defense, and real estate law.*

478-238-9898 | mayohill.law | 577 Mulberry Street, Suite 1400 | Macon, GA