

# VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025



Michael O'Connor, Greg Vanni, Kevin Callahan & Raffi Ohanian

## VERDICT

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# \$30,774,365

### CONSUMER LAW

#### PRODUCT LIABILITY Negligence

VERDICT: \$30,774,365

CASE/NUMBER: Marshall Tanaka v. Ford Motor Company, LTD, Will Tiesiera Ford, Inc., Kaj Wendall Faaborg, and Does 1 through 50 / 21STCV18090

COURT/DATE: Los Angeles Superior / Jul. 28, 2025

JUDGE: Lynette Gridiron Winston

#### ATTORNEYS:

**Plaintiff** – Gregory R. Vanni, Thomas Gibilisco (Thon, Beck, Vanni, Callahan & O'Connor); Donald G. Liddy (Liddy Law Firm)

**Defendant** – John D. Culver, Lane E. Webb (Manning Kass)

#### FACTS:

Plaintiff Marshall Tanaka, 41, was the third car in a four-car rear-end crash on the 60 freeway near the 605. The car behind him caught on fire, which spread into the rear of the Tanaka vehicle. He was trapped and had to escape out the rear hatch of his minivan where the fire was.

As a result, he suffered serious burns to 38% of his body, requiring intensive care hospitalization at the LAC/USC burn unit and multiple surgeries.

Defendant fled the scene and was apprehended by CHP. He was drunk and high on marijuana, but claimed at trial the fire was the fault of a badly designed fuel tank of the car behind Tanaka.

#### PLAINTIFF'S CONTENTIONS:

Plaintiff argued that defendant had a crowbar in the front seat of his car and could have saved plaintiff from serious burns had he tried to help extricate Tanaka from his burning vehicle.

#### RESULT:

Verdict in favor of plaintiff Marshall Tanaka for \$30,774,365. The jury found the drunk driver 100% negligent.

FILING DATE: May 13, 2021