



The Voice

And The Defense Wins

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On October 23, 2014, a federal court jury in Duluth, Minnesota, found in favor of defendants Techtronic Industries North America, Inc., One World Technologies, Inc., and Ryobi Technologies, Inc., in a product liability action brought by the plaintiff, Adam Thull, who alleged that he was injured by a defectively designed table saw. Defendants were represented at trial by DRI members [John W. Bell](#), [Meghan M. Sciortino](#), [Alexandria L. Bell](#), and [Kevin P. Conrad](#) of **Johnson & Bell, Ltd.** in Chicago, Illinois, and [Stanley E. Siegel](#) of **Nilan Johnson Lewis PA** in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The plaintiff, a professional cabinetmaker, was using a RIDGID Model TS3660 table saw when he suffered a blade contact injury. Mr. Thull initially installed the manufacturer supplied 3-in-1 blade guard but removed it within a few days after finding that it interfered with his self-constructed outfeed table. On the day of the accident, the plaintiff had just completed a rip cut on a piece of cherry wood, and as he went to turn off the saw, he noticed the newly cut panel starting to fall. He reached over the blade to grab the panel, at which time his right forearm came into contact with the table saw's unguarded, spinning blade. The plaintiff sustained serious injuries, including severance of his ulnar nerve and bone, underwent nine surgeries, had medical bills in excess of \$250,000, and his attorneys suggested a verdict in excess of \$6.5 million.

The plaintiff's theory of liability was that the saw was unreasonably dangerous because the manufacturer-supplied blade guard was so defective that it essentially rendered it safer to operate the saw without the guard, and that Ryobi was aware of widespread non-use of the guard for years. He also argued that the saw was defective because it failed to come equipped with a user-friendly modular blade guard and flesh-detection technology.

The defendants asserted that the saw complied with UL 987 and other standards such as OSHA, and that the plaintiff's conduct in failing to use the blade guard was the direct cause of his injuries. The evidence showed that the 3-in-1 guard would have unequivocally prevented the blade contact in this case, and that many of the perceived complaints with the guard generally were inapposite to the cut preceding the accident here.

In the end, after only a few hours of deliberation, the jury unanimously ruled that the subject table saw was not unreasonably dangerous, and therefore did not have to decide whether the plaintiff's conduct was a direct cause of his own injuries. The jury's finding of no liability underscores the pride that defendants take in their Ryobi and RIDGID brand table saws.

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