

## Tot hurt by Ford truck with faulty parking brake

**Derick Bobb was run over when the pickup “rolled away” on its own, Ford agreed to settle the case**

A precursor to Shanin Specter’s extraordinary verdict against Ford Motor Co. in *White v. Ford*, the Bobb case resulted in a settlement for an infant injured by a Ford pick-up truck with a defective parking brake.

The incident occurred at the Bobbs’ summer cabin in the woods in central Pennsylvania on Sept. 12, 1993. Derick, 11 months old at the time, crawled off the concrete porch of the cabin and near his family’s Ford F-150 pickup. Suddenly, the brake released and the truck began to roll, one wheel catching the baby’s arm. His mother, Tammy, tried to pull him out but it was hopeless. The truck rolled over Derrick’s head.

After the tire rolled free of Derick, Tammy saved her tiny son’s life, giving him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation after his breathing and pulse had stopped breathing. Derick was rushed to the hospital. He survived, but suffered brain damage that would leave him partially disabled. Derick had poor vision and doctors said it was doubtful he would ever learn to read or care for himself.

In investigating the case, Specter discovered that Ford had received numerous reports about mishaps with other F-series trucks whose parking brakes had spontaneously disengaged. He showed that the auto manufacturer took far too long to come up with a fix and that when one was found -- a plastic wedge that could cost as little as 16 cents per vehicle – Ford was reluctant to issue a recall or even a warning. It initially used the wedge only for customers who came into its dealerships with a complaint that their brakes had failed. The car company was eventually forced to issue a recall for all 884,400 affected trucks.