



State of Tennessee  
Ninth Judicial District  
Office of District Attorney General  
Russell Johnson

**Deputy District Attorney**

*Frank A. Harvey*

**Chief Assistant District Attorney General**

*Lee Eblen Ledbetter*

**Assistant District Attorney Generals**

*William R. Reedy*

*Patricia Murphy*

*Kristin R. Kelley*

*Terry L. Stevens*

*Belinda Lee, CS ADA*

*Hank Sledge, CS ADA*

**Criminal Investigators**

*Bowden R. Ladd*

*Jeff Vittatoe*

**Victim/Witness Coordinators**

*Julia Clevenger*

*Charlene Hipsher*

*Tina Jarnagin*

*Holly Miller*

*Lisa Lee*

**Administrative Assistants**

*Rita Johnson*

*Angie Vittatoe*

**Drug Task Force**

*Bowden R. Ladd, Director*

*Jeff Vittatoe*

*Steve E. Cook*

*Brendan DeBoer*

**Child Support Administrator**

*Cortney Dugger*

**Counties**

*Loudon, Meigs,*

*Morgan & Roane*

**PO Box 703**

**1008 Bradford Way  
Kingston, TN 37763**

**Phone 865-376-2145**

**Fax 865-376-2148**

*Loudon, Tennessee*

*September 25, 2013*

**Loudon County Jury Convicts Woman of  
Vehicular Assault and DUI After Day-Long Trial**

Michael James Moore of Ten Mile left work at TVA on Thursday, September 29, 2011 thinking what a beautiful day it was to be riding home on his motorcycle. As he rode along enjoying the early fall scenery his thoughts turned to the "End of Chemo" party that his wife had planned for the upcoming Saturday to celebrate his final cancer treatment. When he awoke in Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center some six weeks later these were the last things that he could remember. He could not remember being hit later that day by a drugged driver who hit him from behind and dragged his motorcycle under her car for almost 100 feet.

This was the substance of the short testimony Moore gave a twelve-member jury at the day-long jury on Tuesday, some two years to the week of his near fatal encounter with Angela Coker's Mitsubishi sedan on the Highway 11 Tennessee River Bridge leading into downtown Loudon. The jury ultimately convicted Coker of vehicular assault and DUI.

During the trial the State's proof showed that Moore was riding his motorcycle towards Loudon on Highway 11 because of construction on I-75 at the interstate bridge over the Tennessee River when a Mitsubishi sedan driven by Angela Coker struck him from behind. According to the testimony of Loudon Police Officer Bill Evans, upon responding to the scene he discovered Moore near the point of impact and the motorcycle underneath Coker's vehicle and thought, given the condition of the motorcycle and the amount of blood coming from Moore, that he would be working a fatal crash scene.

While emergency responders worked to save his life, Officer Evans took Coker to perform field sobriety tests and, later, for a blood test at the hospital. That blood test that was subsequently analyzed by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Crime Lab showed that Coker had a 'cocktail' of prescription medications in her system that, according to TBI Crime Lab Analyst Michael Tiller, could have had a 'synergistic' effect on her system that could have affected her motor skills and reaction time, leading to her being under the influence and contributing to the crash.

Lab reports showed Coker had Citalopram (*Celexa*), Oxycodone, Carsiprodol (a muscle relaxer), Valium and Alprazolam (*Xanax*) in her system. Coker claimed that she had prescriptions for all of these medications, but she did not produce them during her testimony. According to the lab analyst, the Oxycodone was almost twice the level that would be considered therapeutic, meaning the normal amount if taken as prescribed.

Officer Evans further testified that there were no skid marks from Coker's car, indicating that she never braked before or after striking Moore on his motorcycle. In fact, Evans went on to say that he measured gouge marks from the foot pegs and handle bars of Moore's bike that showed once the car ran over onto the bike that it was dragged some 75 to 100 feet before it came to an un-braked stop.

Moore ended up with traumatic brain injuries, a broken shoulder and broken ribs as well as other serious and permanent injuries from which he has now somewhat recovered, except for a loss of some sight in his eye (that has required multiple surgeries) and some use of his left hand. Moore spent almost a month in a coma at UT Hospital and only regained consciousness at Patricia Neal several weeks later.

The jury deliberated for approximately 45 minutes before returning a guilty verdict on both charges. Loudon County Criminal Court Judge E. Eugene Eblen will sentence Coker on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. After the verdict was announced and the jury dismissed, the defendant through her attorney admitted to having a prior conviction for DUI. Under Tennessee's Rules of Evidence a jury is never allowed to be informed about a defendant's prior DUI conviction history, so while listening to this case, the jury was not aware of Coker's prior conviction. Therefore, at sentencing, Coker faces 2 to 4 years on the Class D felony vehicular assault and a minimum of 45 days to up to 11 months, 29 days on the DUI which has to be treated as a 2<sup>nd</sup> offense due to a prior DUI conviction.

Deputy District Attorney Frank Harvey prosecuted the case for the State of Tennessee and Brian Nichols represented the defendant, Ms. Coker.

END OF PRESS RELEASE – Russell Johnson, 9<sup>th</sup> District Attorney General