

# Texas Jury Awards \$63M to Ranchers in Landmark Case Against EPIC Pipeline

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DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, March 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Texas jury has rendered a \$63 million verdict in favor of ranchers Antonio and Nancy Mercado in their case against EPIC Y-Grade Pipeline and EPIC Crude Pipeline. The jury found EPIC liable for fraud, gross negligence, trespass, and breach of contract in Cause No. DC-20-119.

Attorney James S. Bell, lead trial counsel from [James S. Bell, PC](#), successfully represented the Mercados, securing a landmark victory. Bell has a history of record-breaking verdicts, including a \$6 billion verdict against JP Morgan Chase in 2017.

The case centered on EPIC's unauthorized actions on the Mercados' 276-acre ranch in Duval County. EPIC laid two pipelines across the property, transporting 600,000 barrels of crude oil and 300,000 barrels of natural gas liquids daily. The company failed to comply with key easement and right-of-way agreement terms, including insurance requirements and compensation for damages. EPIC's actions resulted in severe financial and environmental consequences for the Mercados, including trespass, loss of wildlife, and property devaluation.

A critical failure by EPIC to secure a gate led to the escape or harm of 55 trophy deer from the Gladiator Buck bloodline, with individual deer valued at up to \$50,000. Additionally, EPIC's legal maneuvers, including filing a lis pendens, restricted the Mercados' ability to sell or finance their property.

This verdict carries significant legal and industry implications. Pipeline companies must honor their contractual obligations and ensure adequate insurance coverage to protect landowners and communities. The jury's decision reinforces that corporations cannot exploit ranchers or ignore agreements for financial gain. The ruling highlights the necessity of strict compliance with landowner rights and environmental protections.

Bell emphasized, "Pipeline companies cannot cut corners when it comes to landowners' rights, safety, and contractual obligations. The jury sent a clear message: you can't do what EPIC did to ranchers."

About James S. Bell, PC: James S. Bell is a nationally recognized trial attorney with over \$6 billion in verdicts and settlements. He specializes in high-stakes business litigation, intellectual property disputes, healthcare litigation, and criminal defense. Bell has been honored by The National Law

Journal for securing one of the largest verdicts in U.S. history.

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