

Press Release: Florida Keys Injury Attorneys Weigh In on Tesla Autopilot Verdict and Its Impact on Personal Injury Cases

Tesla verdict sparks new questions about liability and safety as Florida Keys attorneys warn of rising risks from tech-driven crashes and school zone injuries.

KEY LARGO, FL, UNITED STATES, August 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent federal jury verdict involving Tesla's Autopilot system has captured national attention for good reason. It's one of the first major legal rulings to hold an automaker partially responsible for a crash caused by its semi-autonomous technology. But what does this mean for drivers, pedestrians, and injury victims here in the Florida Keys?

Attorneys Phil Snyder and Marc Lyons, founders of Florida Keys Injury, believe the decision could have far-reaching consequences for personal injury law in South Florida, particularly in areas like Key Largo and Marathon, FL, where tourism, traffic, and evolving technology are altering the nature of accidents.

"This case isn't just about Tesla," said Snyder, a seasoned [Key Largo car accident attorney](#). "It's about the future of liability, whether companies that build advanced systems can be held accountable when things go wrong."



Florida Keys Injury — Trusted legal advocates serving Key Largo, Islamorada Marathon, Key West and the Florida Keys in car accident, slip and fall, and personal injury cases.



Florida Keys Injury attorneys Phil Snyder and Marc Lyons providing trusted legal support for accident victims across Key Largo, Marathon, Islamorada and the Florida Keys.

The case stemmed from a 2019 crash in Key Largo, Florida, where a Tesla Model S, operating in Autopilot mode, struck and killed Naibel Benavides Leon, 22, and severely injured her boyfriend, Dillon Angulo. The car was being driven by someone else, but the jury ultimately found Tesla 33% liable for the fatal crash.

The result? Over \$129 million in compensatory damages and \$200 million in punitive damages, with Tesla on the hook for a total of approximately \$243 million.

“This verdict sends a powerful message,” said Marc Lyons, a respected personal injury lawyer in Key Largo, FL. “Juries are beginning to understand that technology doesn’t excuse negligence.”

Technology and Accountability: A New Legal Frontier

In the Florida Keys, where traffic can be unpredictable and infrastructure must often support heavy tourism traffic, this case hits close to home.

“It raises new questions for every [car accident attorney in Marathon, FL](#), and every personal injury attorney in Key Largo, FL,” Lyons noted. “We’re seeing more vehicles on the road with advanced systems, and that means more complicated cases when accidents happen.”

Attorneys like Snyder and Lyons now have to consider:

- Was the vehicle in autonomous mode?
- Did the technology fail to respond appropriately?
- Were warnings ignored or misunderstood?

In the past, proving liability often came down to whether a driver was distracted or intoxicated. Now, experts must look deeper into software updates, system design, and even how a car was marketed to consumers.

“A manufacturer’s choices matter,” said Snyder. “If they tell drivers a car can handle the road on its own, they’d better be sure it can.”

The Human Cost of Technological Failures

In court, attorneys for the victims argued that Tesla should have restricted Autopilot’s use on certain types of roads. The Key Largo intersection where the crash occurred was not well-suited for the system, which was never intended for non-highway navigation.

“This was a tragic loss of life,” said Lyons. “As a slip and fall lawyer in Key Largo, I’ve seen how preventable injuries change lives. When those injuries are tied to design flaws or corporate shortcuts, the pain runs even deeper.”

For Dillon Angulo, the surviving victim, the crash resulted in severe physical and emotional trauma. The jury clearly agreed that Tesla shared responsibility even though the driver had his hands off the wheel and wasn’t paying full attention.

What This Means for Local Injury Victims

So, how does a high-profile verdict in Silicon Valley affect a car accident lawyer in Marathon, FL, or a pedestrian hit by a distracted driver in Key Largo?

Plenty, according to Snyder.

"This changes the way we approach cases moving forward. If someone is hit by a vehicle with autonomous or semi-autonomous features, we're going to investigate the tech itself, not just the person behind the wheel," he explained.

That could mean accessing vehicle data logs, subpoenaing design documents, or bringing in technical experts. It also means clients may have new opportunities to hold manufacturers accountable.

Slip and Fall Cases: A Parallel in Premises Liability

While the Tesla case centers on automotive technology, [slip and fall attorney Key Largo](#) professionals like Lyons see a broader trend.

"We're entering an age where companies can't just say 'user error' and walk away," he said.

"Whether it's a self-driving car or a grocery store that failed to fix a leaking roof, courts are putting more pressure on businesses to think about how their environments or products put people at risk."

For example, Lyons recently handled a slip and fall case in Marathon, FL, where a hotel failed to post signs after a floor cleaning. The injured guest was left with a permanent back injury. The defense tried to blame the victim, but surveillance footage and staff testimony told a different story.

"Liability isn't about perfection," Lyons added. "It's about reasonable care, and if a company cuts corners, that's on them."

The Role of Local Attorneys: Snyder and Lyons Stand Ready

Both Snyder and Lyons have deep roots in the Florida Keys legal community. Their firm, Florida Keys Injury, is based on a simple promise: fight hard for injured people and hold wrongdoers accountable.

Snyder, once a prosecutor, brings courtroom grit to every personal injury case he handles from car accidents in Key Largo to wrongful death lawsuits in Marathon, FL.

Lyons has spent years advocating for people injured in falls, crashes, and unsafe property conditions across the islands. He's known as a slip and fall lawyer in Key Largo with a strong track record and deep compassion for victims.

Together, they've handled dozens of complex cases involving:

- Car accident attorney Key Largo matters involving distracted or negligent drivers

- Slip and fall lawyer, Marathon, FL, litigation for unsafe conditions at hotels, stores, and public areas
 - Personal injury lawyer Key Largo, FL, cases involving long-term disability and wrongful death
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Justice in the Keys: What Victims Should Know

Snyder and Lyons offer some practical advice for anyone involved in an accident, whether it's a high-tech car crash or a slip and fall at a local business:

1. Get medical help immediately. Your health comes first.
2. Document everything. Photos, videos, witness info, and insurance communications are crucial.
3. Call a qualified attorney. Don't wait. Evidence disappears quickly, especially with tech-based systems.

"If your accident involved a car with driver-assist features or any kind of automated system, we want to hear about it," said Snyder. "We know how to handle those cases."

Looking Ahead: Legal Landscape Is Shifting

While Tesla plans to appeal the verdict, legal experts are already calling it a turning point.

"This case will be cited for years," said Lyons. "It will affect how cars are designed, how tech is marketed, and how courts assign blame."

In the Florida Keys, where personal injury law intersects tourism, transportation, and unpredictable environments, attorneys like Snyder and Lyons are preparing for what's next.

They're investing in:

- Tech consultants and forensic engineers
- Vehicle data analysis tools
- Trial prep for multi-defendant and product liability cases

"The goal hasn't changed," said Lyons. "We want to get justice for our clients. But the way we get there is evolving fast."

Contact Florida Keys Injury Today

If you or someone you love has been injured in a car accident, suffered a slip and fall, or lost a loved one due to negligence, contact Florida Keys Injury for a free consultation.

- Phil Snyder and Marc Lyons
- Experienced, compassionate, results-driven attorneys
- No fees unless you win
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