

LAWDRAGON

The Bradley Cosgrove Makes Plaintiffs' Injury Law Personal

By Emily Jackoway



The story of Bradley Cosgrove's career didn't begin in a courtroom or a law school lecture hall. It began on a quiet stretch of road, shattered by the sound of twisting metal and broken glass. As a child, he watched his parents struggle in the aftermath of a devastating car crash – an event that seared into him the brutal reality of how one careless act could upend a family's life. That moment didn't just leave a mark. It sparked a purpose: to hold the reckless accountable, and to stand for those forced to fight through pain they never asked for.

"I'm going to tell you the story of what happened on my 11th birthday," he says.

That day, Cosgrove's father underwent a 22-hour spinal fusion, where surgeons moved his heart and lungs to mend his spine. Four months earlier, he and Cosgrove's mother were driving into Chicago for work when a truck jackknifed their car. Cosgrove's father flew out the front window, breaking his back

in three spots and the ribs on one side of his body, and cutting off his ear. Cosgrove's mother suffered a head injury and didn't recognize Cosgrove for a considerable amount of time. To this day, Cosgrove says his father is still dealing with the long-term effects of having a significant debilitating injury, and his mother still navigates memory difficulties. It was a tragedy that would impact the rest of Cosgrove's life – in more ways than one.

After the crash, Cosgrove's parents retained a lawyer, sued the trucking company – and won. "One of my earliest memories was being in the federal court building for my mom and dad's jury trial and thinking, 'Boy, I'd really love to help people in the same situation,'" Cosgrove remembers.

So, he did.

From then on, Cosgrove's career path was set: He achieved his childhood goal of becoming a plaintiffs' personal injury lawyer right out of law school, immediately representing people who had been through the same kinds of tragedies his family had. Not only that, but he spent the first 15 years of his career working with the very lawyer who represented his father – who Cosgrove saw in trial when he was just 11 years old.

That passion proved fruitful. Just four days after being sworn in, Cosgrove began his first jury trial. Within five months of his legal career, he secured a \$3M verdict – becoming the youngest lawyer in the history of Illinois to receive a verdict in excess of \$1M. Remarkably, the case was on behalf of a family who lost their father in a trucking accident. Those record verdicts have continued, now with his team at renowned plaintiffs' personal injury boutique [Clifford Law Offices](#), where Cosgrove has been a partner for just over a decade. In the last two years alone, he and his team have secured over \$300M in verdicts and settlements for their clients.

In 2019, Cosgrove and his colleagues achieved the highest medical malpractice verdict in the history of Illinois: a landmark \$101M verdict on behalf of the Sallis family, whose baby was brain damaged at birth. The baby, now 10 years old, cannot speak or care for himself. The funds Cosgrove and team achieved in the case will provide a lifetime of care – and at nearly double the recovery of the previous highest verdict in the state.

Cosgrove has spearheaded plenty of firsts: In 2014, he took the first case involving Yasmin birth control to trial. His client suffered a debilitating stroke 13 days after being prescribed Yasmin, and Cosgrove made a novel argument – that the physician should not have prescribed an estrogen-based birth control to a patient with an increased risk of a stroke, where a progesterone-only birth control pill would have carried a lower risk. The result: a \$14M verdict for Cosgrove's client.

In another significant matter, in February of last year, he obtained a \$39M verdict for another stroke victim – a record in the state. In an original tactic, the case was levied against a managed care group. The suit alleged that the client's abnormally high blood pressure was not treated when brought to a physician within the defendant Advocate Physician Partners' network, resulting in a stroke that has left the patient, Antonio DeAngelo, still suffering from hemiparesis and the effects of brain damage from the stroke.

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In another recent milestone, Cosgrove secured a \$56M jury verdict – the highest in Illinois history against a plastic surgeon – on behalf of the family of Idalia Corcoles, a 39-year-old mother of four who died after a botched cosmetic procedure. The surgeon ignored clear signs of internal bleeding following the operation and failed to intervene, ultimately leading

to Corcoles' death. "The negligence was so egregious, the jury knew they had to do the right thing," Cosgrove said following the verdict.

In recognition of a career marked by record verdicts and tireless advocacy, Cosgrove was inducted into the Inner Circle of Advocates, an invitation-only group limited to the top 100 plaintiff trial lawyers in the United States. Known as one of the most prestigious honors in the field, the Inner Circle recognizes attorneys with exceptional jury trial experience, courtroom skills, and a commitment to advancing the craft of trial law. Cosgrove's inclusion places him among a select group of litigators respected not only for their results, but for their impact on the profession.

Cosgrove is also recognized in the [Lawdragon 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers](#) list, a distinction that underscores his national reputation for standing up to powerful institutions and securing justice for those who need it most.

Despite all the headline-grabbing wins, every case remains deeply personal for Cosgrove. "I've definitely walked miles and miles in the shoes of my clients, dealing with the same issues that they're dealing with my whole entire life – pretty much as early as I can remember, and still dealing with it now," he says.

Lawdragon: After your own experience watching a trial as a child, you immediately had huge trial successes at the start of your career. Did you have a mentor encouraging you?

Bradley Cosgrove: I've been lucky to have two great mentors in my life. One is John Ambrose, who was my dad's lawyer. I started working for him in high school, and he was one of the only two bosses I've ever had. I was fortunate enough to be able to work with John through law school and as a lawyer and practiced with him for a number of years. His philosophy was that in order to be a good lawyer, you have to be a person that's known to try cases. From the very start, he thought it was important that I try cases, and I haven't stopped since.

My second boss and second mentor is Bob Clifford, the senior partner here at Clifford Law Offices.

LD: And what have you learned from him?

BC: Bob is probably the best mentor that any trial lawyer could ask for. He provides endless resources and support, giving you great insights into the ins and outs of the trial world. He has a perfect staff that is equipped to give all of our clients the best representation imaginable. A lot of times we're up against some of the biggest companies in the world that have the greatest amount of resources that money can buy. Plaintiffs' offices are not always well-funded to the tune of being able to go toe-to-toe with Fortune 500 companies. But, being a partner here at Clifford Law Offices, I'm extremely lucky that we'll really spare no expense and do everything possible to make sure that our clients are put on equal footing with the corporate giants of America and the world.

LD: Tell me about obtaining that \$3M victory so early on in your career. What was that like for you?

BC: It was something that I worked incredibly hard on, and I had a terrific trial partner. I literally think I worked 20 hours a day for weeks and weeks leading up to the trial because it was just so important to me to make sure that the clients had the representation that they needed. I knew every single page of the entire file; I knew every single fact in the case; I knew every single piece of exhibit, every piece of evidence. I was the most prepared person in the courtroom, which was the advice that was given to me: If you're going to try cases, don't ever let anybody outwork you. I took that to heart.

Shortly after that, I tried my first medical malpractice case and got a \$1M verdict. That was the same philosophy: I just worked and worked and worked, and knew every single fact in the case as well or better than anybody else in the courtroom.

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LD: Looking at your current caseload, what is the balance of your practice right now?

BC: I would say that the majority of my cases are medical malpractice, but I also work on trucking cases, aviation cases, construction accidents or workplace incidents. I've made a name for being one of the go-to lawyers for drowning cases in the state.

LD: How did that happen?

BC: I was a swimmer in college, so I had lots of knowledge of pools and pool safety. Early in my career I had been referred a drowning case that I did very well in. Then, in about 2018, we tried a drowning case for a little boy who drowned at summer camp at a public pool under the supervision of lifeguards and camp counselors. We got a \$21.5M verdict, which was a record verdict, and was affirmed on appeal by the Illinois Appellate Court. Once we received that record verdict, we had lots of other drowning matters referred to us, and I've been the one to handle them.

LD: Speaking of noteworthy cases in your career, tell me about the historic \$101M verdict in the Sallis case, with the baby who suffered a traumatic brain injury at birth.

BC: Sarah King, Keith Hebeisen, Chuck Haskins and I were all part of the trial team on that case. Our motto was that we wanted to get justice for Gerald [Sallis]. It was a very hard-fought case about Gerald, who was the victim of medical negligence by a triage nurse and an ultrasound tech, and the negligence led to a catastrophic brain injury. The hospital defended the case from the very start, claiming that they had nothing to do with the cause

of Gerald's profound, disabling brain injuries. We were able to prove through witnesses that a failure to deliver Gerald in a timely manner led to his catastrophic brain injury and requirements for attendant care.

LD: What do you find most fulfilling about working on cases which have such a deep personal impact on the clients?

BC: I have a personal investment in all my clients. I still talk to most of my clients from over the years on a regular basis. For example, we had a case that was the largest stroke verdict for an individual plaintiff.

LD: Right – the DeAngelo case.

BC: Originally, when I met with the family, I thought that there was going to be a limitation on insurance and that there weren't going to be funds available to cover the incident. I just felt terrible for them. Then, we were able to develop a theory of liability in the case that no one else had tried to a jury verdict before: We sued a managed care organization called Advocate Health Partners, which was doing business as Advocate Physician Partners. We claimed that, through their managed care organization, they controlled or had the right to control a doctor in the case. By doing that, we held a managed care organization responsible for their claimed alleged independent contractors. We were able to prove to the jury that the situation was one of complete control. By proving that there was control, we were able to find deeper pockets for potential liability than just the doctor's liability indicates.

LD: That's fascinating. How would you describe your style, both in court and with your clients?

BC: I try to be matter-of-fact with my clients and treat them like humans. I try to best serve their needs and make sure that I communicate with them what's happening with the case and assure them that everything we're doing is for their best interests. I try to make sure that the clients understand the process – which can be pretty daunting – and make sure the clients have assurances that we're doing everything possible to get the best possible outcome for them.

LD: Tell me about working with the team in your office.

BC: Probably the most gratifying thing about being a partner at the Clifford Law Offices is the access that we have to some of the greatest legal minds in the country in the area of plaintiffs' personal injury. We honestly have someone who has handled every single type of case in plaintiffs' personal injury available, and in the highest fashion imaginable. And we can knock on their door and have brainstorming sessions with them to make sure our clients are getting the best representation. We have people here who have been there, done it, and are always available to collaborate.

LD: What do you do for fun outside the office?

BC: I really like spending time with my kids and my family. I have a son and a daughter, and I've got five brothers and sisters that I see regularly. I like to golf in the summer; I like to ski in the winter.

LD: Finally, your alma mater, the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, named their 1L trial competition after you.

BC: Yes, the next one coming up will be their third annual. I've been a coach for UIC's Law School for their trial programs, and it's a great honor to have a trial competition named after me. I feel like I've spent a lifetime in the courtroom already.

LD: And so much more time left to spend there.

BC: Amen. I hope so.



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