



## Chrysler Wins Verdict in California Jeep Rollover Trial

By Margaret Cronin Fisk

Jan. 17 (Bloomberg) -- Chrysler LLC, the third-largest U.S. automaker, isn't liable for injuries to a woman who was left paralyzed after her Jeep Grand Cherokee rolled over on a California highway, a jury said.

Claudette Phillips said she was injured when the roof of the vehicle was crushed as it rolled. Phillips, who has been quadriplegic since the July 2002 accident, said Chrysler was responsible because the roof was too weak to withstand rollovers.

A San Bernardino, California, state court jury yesterday said the roof didn't cause her injury and rejected her claim. Phillips sought \$100 million in damages.

The roof wasn't defective and Phillips was injured because it was a "very high speed, violent rollover," Chrysler spokeswoman Elaine Lutz said.

Attorney Michael Piuze, who represented Phillips, didn't immediately return a call seeking comment. The lawsuit is one of several hundred cases pending against automakers in the U.S. claiming roofs in sport-utility vehicles are too weak.

While the 1993 Jeep wasn't covered by the federal roof-strength standard for rollovers, "this vehicle was designed to meet and exceed the standards," Chrysler's Lutz said.

Cerberus Capital Management LP, a New York-based private-equity firm, bought an 80.1 percent stake in Chrysler from DaimlerChrysler AG in August by agreeing to make a \$7.4 billion investment in the automaker. Daimler AG retained a 19.9 percent stake in Auburn Hills, Michigan-based Chrysler.

The lawsuit is Phillips v. DaimlerChrysler Corp., No. BCVBS07184, Superior Court, San Bernardino County, California.

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