

TEXAS COURT OF APPEALS, FOURTH DISTRICT, SAN ANTONIO

Alicia Lynette Castillo v. Laura Torres Camou

Castillo v. Camou, No. 04-25-00096-CV (Tex. App.—San Antonio June 24, 2026) · No. 04-25-00096-CV ·
Decided June 24, 2026

SUMMARY

The Texas Fourth Court of Appeals affirmed a judgment for Laura Torres Camou in a motor-vehicle collision case. The court held that the trial court properly directed a verdict on liability because Alicia Lynette Castillo’s admissions and the undisputed evidence conclusively established that she failed to exercise ordinary care and proximately caused the collision. The jury’s \$219,714.89 damages award and the resulting final judgment were affirmed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Texas Court of Appeals, Fourth District, San Antonio
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Irene Rios, Justice; Rebeca C. Martinez, Chief Justice; Lori I. Valenzuela, Justice
JURISDICTION	Texas Court of Appeals, Fourth District, San Antonio
DECIDED	June 24, 2026
DOCKET	04-25-00096-CV
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Castillo appealed the denial of her motion for new trial and the final judgment entered after the trial court granted Camou's motion for a directed verdict on liability and submitted damages to the jury.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The grant of a directed verdict is reviewed de novo under the legal-sufficiency standard applicable to a no-evidence summary judgment. The appellate court views the evidence in the light most favorable to the party suffering the adverse judgment, credits favorable evidence if a reasonable factfinder could, disregards contrary evidence unless a reasonable factfinder could not, and defers to the factfinder on witness credibility and evidentiary weight.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published memorandum opinion; precedential status is identified as published in the provided metadata.
PARTIES	Alicia Lynette Castillo v. Laura Torres Camou

TOPICS

motion for directed verdict

negligence

standard of review

proximate cause

appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

torts

personal injury

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court erred by granting Camou a directed verdict on liability when the trial evidence allegedly raised a fact issue regarding Castillo's negligence and proximate cause.

HOLDINGS

1. The directed verdict was proper because the trial evidence did not raise a fact issue as to whether Castillo acted with ordinary care, breached her duty, or proximately caused the collision; instead, the evidence conclusively established that she failed to act as a reasonably prudent driver.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A directed verdict is proper only under limited circumstances: (1) when the evidence is insufficient to raise a fact issue or (2) when the evidence conclusively establishes the movant’s right—or conclusively negates the opponent’s right—to judgment.” (at 2)

“The mere occurrence of a rear-end collision may be some evidence of negligence, but it is not conclusive evidence of negligence.” (at 3)

“Because the evidence fails to create a fact issue on Castillo’s duty, breach of that duty, or proximate cause, we conclude the trial court did not err by granting Camou’s directed verdict on liability.” (at 6)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Castillo's vehicle struck the rear of Camou's stopped or nearly stopped vehicle at an intersection on a clear, dry day. Castillo was traveling approximately thirty-two miles per hour in a thirty-mile-per-hour zone, became distracted by illuminated airbag lights, failed to maintain a proper lookout and safe following distance, and braked too late to avoid the collision. She admitted that she was not driving as a reasonably prudent person would, that the collision would have been avoided had she exercised ordinary care, and that Camou was not at fault.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Camou sued Castillo for personal injuries arising from a motor-vehicle collision. After the close of evidence, the trial court directed a verdict for Camou on liability and submitted damages to the jury, which awarded \$219,714.89. The trial court entered final judgment including prejudgment and post-judgment interest and costs, denied Castillo's motion for new trial, and Castillo appealed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Prudential Ins. Co. of Am. v. Fin. Rev. Servs., Inc., 29 S.W.3d 74, 77 (Tex. 2000)
- Ray v. McFarland, 97 S.W.3d 728, 729–30 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2003, no pet.)
- City of Baytown v. Schrock, 645 S.W.3d 174, 178 (Tex. 2022)
- Ginn v. Pierce, 595 S.W.3d 762, 766 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2019, pet. denied)
- Int’l Bus. Mach. Corp. v. Lufkin Indus., LLC, 573 S.W.3d 224, 235 (Tex. 2019)
- City of Keller v. Wilson, 168 S.W.3d 802, 822, 827 (Tex. 2005)
- S.V. v. R.V., 933 S.W.2d 1, 8 (Tex. 1996)
- Tenaris Bay City Inc. v. Ellisor, 718 S.W.3d 193, 197 (Tex. 2025)
- Douglas v. Aguilar, 599 S.W.3d 105, 109 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2020, no pet.)
- 20801, Inc. v. Parker, 249 S.W.3d 392, 398 (Tex. 2008)
- Benavente v. Granger, 312 S.W.3d 745, 749 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2009, no pet.)
- Salazar v. Sanders, 440 S.W.3d 863, 869–70 (Tex. App.—El Paso 2013, pet. denied)
- Serv. Corp. Int’l v. Guerra, 348 S.W.3d 221, 228 (Tex. 2011)

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

Fourth Court of Appeals San Antonio, Texas MEMORANDUM OPINION No. 04-25-00096-CV Alicia Lynette CASTILLO, Appellant v. Laura Torres CAMOU, Appellee From the 111th Judicial District Court, Webb County, Texas Trial Court No. 2021CVA001501 D2 Honorable Monica Z. Notzon, Judge Presiding Opinion by: Irene Rios, Justice Sitting: Rebeca C. Martinez, Chief Justice Irene Rios, Justice Lori I. Valenzuela, Justice Delivered and Filed: June 24, 2026 AFFIRMED In a single issue, appellant Alicia Lynette Castillo argues the trial court erred in granting appellee Laura Torres Camou’s motion for a directed verdict on liability arising from Camou’s lawsuit involving a motor vehicle collision.

We affirm. BACKGROUND Castillo and Camou were involved in a motor vehicle accident wherein it is undisputed that Castillo’s car struck the back of Camou’s car. Camou filed a personal injury lawsuit claiming 04-25-00096-CV Castillo negligently caused the collision and seeking damages for injuries sustained from the accident. Following the close of evidence, Camou sought a directed verdict on liability, asserting Castillo admitted she did not act as a reasonably prudent driver under the circumstances.

The trial court agreed and granted Camou a directed verdict on liability, leaving the jury to determine the amount of damages to award Camou, if any. The jury awarded Camou \$219,714.89

in damages. The trial court rendered its final judgment confirming the jury's damages award as well as ordering Castillo to pay prejudgment and post-judgment interest and court costs to Camou.

Castillo filed a motion for new trial; following a hearing, the trial court denied Castillo's motion. Castillo appeals. STANDARD OF REVIEW A directed verdict is proper only under limited circumstances: (1) when the evidence is insufficient to raise a fact issue or (2) when the evidence conclusively establishes the movant's right—or conclusively negates the opponent's right—to judgment.

Prudential Ins. Co. of Am. v. Fin. Rev. Servs., Inc., 29 S.W.3d 74, 77 (Tex. 2000); see also Ray v. McFarland, 97 S.W.3d 728, 729–30 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2003, no pet.). This court “review[s] a trial court's grant of [a] directed verdict de novo, using the legal sufficiency standard appellate courts apply to no-evidence summary judgments.” City of Baytown v. Schrock, 645 S.W.3d 174, 178 (Tex.

2022) (footnote omitted). Like in this case, when a party moves for a directed verdict on an issue on which it bore the burden of proof, the moving party must demonstrate that the trial evidence conclusively proved the matter at issue. See Ginn v. Pierce, 595 S.W.3d 762, 766 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2019, pet. denied). Evidence conclusively establishes a fact when the evidence leaves “no room for ordinary minds to differ as to the conclusion to be drawn from it.” Int'l Bus.

Mach. -2- 04-25-00096-CV Corp. v. Lufkin Indus., LLC, 573 S.W.3d 224, 235 (Tex. 2019). In determining this issue, we consider the evidence in the light most favorable to Castillo and indulge every reasonable inference in Castillo's favor. See City of Keller v. Wilson, 168 S.W.3d 802, 822 (Tex. 2005); see S.V. v. R.V., 933 S.W.2d 1, 8 (Tex. 1996) (stating that in reviewing a directed verdict, the court examines evidence in the light most favorable to the person suffering an adverse judgment).

We must credit favorable evidence if a reasonable factfinder could and disregard contrary evidence unless a reasonable factfinder could not. See City of Keller, 168 S.W.3d at 827. We must determine whether the evidence at trial would allow reasonable and fair-minded people to find the evidence did not prove that Castillo was negligent or that Castillo's negligence proximately caused the accident.

See id. We must defer to the factfinder's judgment as to the credibility of the witnesses and the weight to give their testimony. See id. at 819. APPLICABLE LAW To prevail on a negligence claim, a party must prove “the existence of a legal duty, a breach of that duty, and damages proximately caused by the breach.” Tenaris Bay City Inc. v. Ellisor, 718 S.W.3d 193, 197 (Tex.

2025) (citation omitted). Negligence means failure to use ordinary care, that is, failing to do that which a person of ordinary prudence would have done under the same or similar circumstances or

doing that which a person of ordinary prudence would not have done under the same or similar circumstances. *Douglas v. Aguilar*, 599 S.W.3d 105, 109 (Tex. App.— Houston [14th Dist.]

2020, no pet.) (citing *20801, Inc. v. Parker*, 249 S.W.3d 392, 398 (Tex. 2008)). Here, Camou as plaintiff had the burden to prove that Castillo was negligent and that her negligence proximately caused the accident. See *Benavente v. Granger*, 312 S.W.3d 745, 749 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2009, no pet.). -3- 04-25-00096-CV The mere occurrence of a rear-end collision may be some evidence of negligence, but it is not conclusive evidence of negligence.

Id. “The plaintiff must prove specific acts of negligence on the part of the defendant driver and must prove proximate cause.” Id. APPLICABLE FACTS The evidence is undisputed that Camou was stopped or almost stopped at a light at an intersection when Castillo hit her from behind.

The posted speed limit was 30 miles per hour. The accident occurred on a sunny, clear day, and the road surface was dry. Beginning with opening statements and continuing through her testimony, Castillo accepted responsibility for colliding with Camou’s car. Specifically, Castillo began by acknowledging the basic rules of the road for safe driving and how they apply to her and other drivers.

Castillo described the accident, including that she was traveling slightly above the speed limit at thirty-two miles per hour. Castillo affirmed she failed to follow the rules of the road for safe driving, such as keeping a proper lookout, maintaining a safe distance between her car and the cars in front of her, and controlling the speed of her vehicle. She also specifically acknowledged she did not act as a reasonably prudent driver would in the same circumstances.

To add, Castillo agreed that if she had followed the safe driving rules, including controlling her speed, the accident would have been avoided. She also attributed no wrongdoing to Camou. In providing more details regarding the accident, Castillo testified that as she drove toward the intersection the airbag lights—one on her dash, another to the right of the steering wheel, and a third on the passenger side of the car—became illuminated, catching her attention.

Castillo stated she did look up at the road but admitted most of her attention was drawn downward to the airbag lights. Castillo added that the airbag lights scared her because she was afraid the airbags were going to deploy. Initially, Castillo recalled not applying the brakes despite being distracted by the -4- 04-25-00096-CV airbag lights and worried the airbags would deploy.

However, by the time Castillo looked up and saw Camou’s car stopped, Castillo testified she briefly applied her brakes and slowed down some, but she was “a little too late” and collided with the back of Camou’s car.

The collision’s force caused Camou’s car to hit the car in front of Camou with both cars sustaining significant property damage. Castillo’s speed at the time she hit Camou was estimated around

thirty-two to thirty-five miles per hour. ANALYSIS On appeal, Castillo argues she presented evidence contesting liability and therefore contends the trial court erred in granting Camou's directed verdict.

However, based on our review of the record, there is no evidence suggesting Castillo exercised ordinary care to raise a fact issue. See Douglas, 599 S.W.3d at 109; see also Parker, 249 S.W.3d at 398. More specifically, the evidence does not demonstrate Castillo's actions or omissions were those of a person of ordinary prudence given the circumstances inside her car when the airbag lights illuminated.

To begin, Castillo affirmed Camou did nothing wrong and admitted "one-hundred percent of the fault." Castillo further affirmed that she failed to act as a reasonably prudent driver and that if she had exercised ordinary care, the accident would not have occurred.

Moreover, although Castillo claimed she saw Camou's car, Castillo explained she was distracted by the airbag lights and looked down more at the lights than at the roadway and traffic ahead. Castillo never suggested she took action consistent with ordinary care, such as slowing down or maintaining a safe distance between her vehicle and Camou's vehicle when she feared the airbags would deploy.

Rather, while Castillo testified she applied her brakes when she saw Camou's car, albeit too late to avoid the collision, Castillo estimated her driving speed before hitting Camou was around the same speed she was driving at the time of impact: both exceeding the speed limit. Castillo provided no further -5- 04-25-00096-CV details regarding her approximate distance behind Camou when she braked, or any other corrective or evasive actions taken demonstrating the exercise of some ordinary care.

After reviewing the entire record, we find no evidence that raises a fact question as to whether Castillo's actions or omissions were consistent with what a person of ordinary prudence would have done or not done in the same or similar circumstances. See Salazar v. Sanders, 440 S.W.3d 863, 869-70 (Tex. App.—El Paso 2013, pet. denied).

Thus, the conclusive evidence of Castillo's actions contrary to that of an ordinarily prudent person in the same or similar circumstances fails to meet the "more than a scintilla" threshold necessary to create a fact question. See *id.* (citing *Serv. Corp. Int'l v. Guerra*, 348 S.W.3d 221, 228 (Tex. 2011)).

Because the evidence fails to create a fact issue on Castillo's duty, breach of that duty, or proximate cause, we conclude the trial court did not err by granting Camou's directed verdict on liability. See *Prudential Ins. Co. of Am*, 29 S.W.3d at 77; see also *City of Keller*, 168 S.W.3d at 822, 827.

Accordingly, we overrule Castillo's sole issue on appeal. CONCLUSION Having overruled Castillo's sole issue on appeal, we affirm the trial court's final judgment. Irene Rios, Justice -6-

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