

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

No. 04-0550

FIFTH CLUB, INC. AND DAVID A. WEST,
PETITIONERS,

v.

ROBERTO RAMIREZ,
RESPONDENT

ON PETITION FOR REVIEW FROM THE
COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

Argued October 18, 2005

JUSTICE GREEN delivered the opinion of the Court, in which CHIEF JUSTICE JEFFERSON, JUSTICE O'NEILL, JUSTICE BRISTER, and JUSTICE MEDINA joined, and in which JUSTICE HECHT, JUSTICE WAINWRIGHT, JUSTICE JOHNSON, and JUSTICE WILLETT joined as to Parts I, II, and III.

JUSTICE BRISTER filed a concurring opinion, in which CHIEF JUSTICE JEFFERSON joined.

JUSTICE WILLETT filed a dissenting opinion, in which JUSTICE HECHT, JUSTICE WAINWRIGHT, and JUSTICE JOHNSON joined.

In this case we revisit the rule that an employer is generally not liable for the acts of an independent contractor unless the employer exercises sufficient control over the details of the independent contractor's work. *See Lee Lewis Constr., Inc. v. Harrison*, 70 S.W.3d 778, 783 (Tex. 2001). We do so to consider whether a "personal character exception" makes a business owner's

duties to the public nondelegable when contracting for private security services to protect its property. Because we do not recognize a personal character exception to the rule that an owner is not liable for the tortious acts of independent contractors, and because the evidence in this case is legally insufficient to support the jury's negligence, malice, and exemplary damages findings against the owner, we reverse and render judgment in the owner's favor.

We do find legally sufficient evidence to support the future mental anguish damages award against the independent contractor and affirm the judgment as to the contractor.

I. Facts and Procedural History

Fifth Club, Inc. operates an Austin nightclub known as Club Rodéo. David West, a certified peace officer, was hired as an independent contractor by Fifth Club to provide security at the nightclub.¹ Late one night, Roberto Ramirez arrived at Club Rodéo after several hours of drinking. Ramirez and his brother tried to enter the club but were denied admission by the doorman, allegedly because they were intoxicated. The doorman, an employee of Fifth Club, signaled to West and another parking lot security officer to escort Ramirez and his brother out of the club's entrance. West allegedly grabbed Ramirez, slammed Ramirez's head against a concrete wall, knocking him unconscious, and then struck him several times. The altercation resulted in multiple injuries to Ramirez, including a fractured skull. West moved Ramirez to the parking lot and placed him in handcuffs. The police arrived and arrested Ramirez, but a grand jury later declined to indict Ramirez on the charge of assaulting a police officer. Ramirez sued West and the club for damages.

¹ West was a campus peace officer for Huston-Tillotson College at the time of the incident. He was sworn in as a commissioned peace officer at the college the month before the incident. West had attended a law enforcement academy before becoming a commissioned peace officer.

Ramirez claims Fifth Club is vicariously liable for West's conduct in spite of his independent contractor status because it controlled West's security activities. Ramirez further claims that Fifth Club assumed a personal and nondelegable duty by contracting for security services to protect its property. Under Ramirez's theory, the personal character of this duty, of hiring security personnel to protect business invitees and the premises, allows an employer to be liable for intentional acts of its independent contractor.

A jury found Fifth Club vicariously liable for West's conduct and for negligence and malice in its hiring of West. The jury awarded Ramirez actual damages that included future mental anguish damages and exemplary damages. The court of appeals affirmed.² 144 S.W.3d 574, 592 (Tex. App.—Austin 2004, pet. granted).

Fifth Club contends there is legally insufficient evidence it retained sufficient control over West's security activities to make it vicariously liable for his conduct. It also argues there is no personal character exception to the rule that insulates employers from the tortious acts of independent contractors. Fifth Club further asserts there is legally insufficient evidence to support the finding of malice in its hiring of West. And finally, both Fifth Club and West claim there is legally insufficient evidence to support the award of future mental anguish damages. We address each argument in turn.

II. Fifth Club's Liability for West's Conduct

² Other members of Ramirez's family were parties to the trial court and court of appeals proceedings regarding Fifth Club's and another officer's actions at the time of the incident, but those plaintiffs have not appealed to this Court. Also, although raised below, we do not address the issue of West's official immunity as West and Fifth Club did not raise the issue in this Court.

A. Control

Generally, an employer has no duty to ensure that an independent contractor performs its work in a safe manner. *See Lee Lewis Constr., Inc.*, 70 S.W.3d at 783. However, an employer can be held vicariously liable for the actions of an independent contractor if the employer retains some control over the manner in which the contractor performs the work that causes the damage. *See id.* In *Redinger v. Living, Inc.*, we explained that

[o]ne who entrusts work to an independent contractor, but who retains the control of any part of the work, is subject to liability for physical harm to others for whose safety the employer owes a duty to exercise reasonable care, which is caused by his failure to exercise his control with reasonable care.

689 S.W.2d 415, 418 (Tex. 1985) (quoting RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS § 414 (1977)). We held the general contractor liable for the actions of the independent contractor in *Redinger* because the general contractor retained “the power to direct the order in which the work was to be done and to forbid the work being done in a dangerous manner.” *Id.*; *see Coastal Marine Serv. of Tex., Inc. v. Lawrence*, 988 S.W.2d 223, 226 (Tex. 1999) (“The supervisory control must relate to the activity that actually caused the injury, and grant the owner at least the power to direct the order in which work is to be done or the power to forbid it being done in an unsafe manner.”). We further explained in *Koch Refining Co. v. Chapa* that a right of control requires more than

a general right to order the work stopped or resumed, to inspect its progress or to receive reports, to make suggestions or recommendations which need not necessarily be followed, or to prescribe alterations and deviations. Such a general right is usually reserved to employers, but it does not mean that the contractor is controlled as to his methods of work, or as to operative detail. There must be such a retention of a right of supervision that the contractor is not entirely free to do the work in his own way.

11 S.W.3d 153, 155 (Tex. 1999) (quoting RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS § 414 cmt. c (1965)). Employers can direct when and where an independent contractor does the work and can request information and reports about the work, but an employer may become liable for the independent contractor's tortious acts only if the employer controls the details or methods of the independent contractor's work to such an extent that the contractor cannot perform the work as it chooses. *Id.* at 155-56.

In this case, there was no evidence that Fifth Club gave more than general directions to West or that it retained the right to control the manner in which West performed his job. Fifth Club's action in directing West to remove Ramirez from the premises did not rise to the level of directing how the work was to be performed or directing the safety of the performance because West retained the right to remove Ramirez by whatever method he chose. Fifth Club, therefore, cannot be held vicariously liable for West's conduct.

B. Personal Character Exception

Ramirez argues that even if Fifth Club did not retain control over West's actions, it can still be held vicariously liable because of a personal character exception to the general rule against liability of employers for the acts of independent contractors. According to Ramirez, the duty arising from an employer's hiring of security personnel is personal in character, special only because of the nature of security work, and therefore an employer should be held liable for the tortious acts of the independent-contractor security personnel.

We have never addressed this "personal character exception," which first appeared in Texas in 1976. *See Dupree v. Piggly Wiggly Shop Rite Foods, Inc.*, 542 S.W.2d 882, 888-90 (Tex. Civ.

App.—Corpus Christi 1976, writ ref'd n.r.e.). Since then, the exception has been mentioned in only three other opinions from Texas courts of appeals. See *Duran v. Furr's Supermarkets, Inc.*, 921 S.W.2d 778, 787-88 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1996, writ denied); *Ross v. Tex. One P'ship*, 796 S.W.2d 206, 213 (Tex. App.—Dallas 1990), writ denied, 806 S.W.2d 222 (Tex. 1991); *Westhill Mgmt., Inc. v. Hefner*, No. 01-87-000617-CV, 1988 WL 46399, at *3 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] May 12, 1988, writ denied)(not designated for publication). Under the exception, a premises owner can be held liable when an independent contractor's work involves duties that are personal in character. See *Duran*, 921 S.W.2d at 789; *Ross*, 796 S.W.2d at 212-13. Texas courts have discussed the exception only in regards to security work performed by an independent contractor. See *Duran*, 921 S.W.2d at 787-88; *Ross*, 796 S.W.2d at 213; *Westhill Mgmt., Inc.*, 1988 WL 46399, at *3.

In *Dupree*, the Thirteenth Court of Appeals held that a supermarket could be vicariously liable for the work of its independent-contractor security guards:

[B]ecause of the “personal character” of duties owed to the public by one adopting measures to protect his property, owners and operators of enterprises cannot, by securing special personnel through an independent contractor for the purposes of protecting property, obtain immunity from liability for at least the intentional torts of the protecting agency or its employees.

542 S.W.2d at 888. The court cited opinions from other states in support of its holding. *Id.* (citing *Adams v. F. W. Woolworth Co.*, 257 N.Y.S. 776, 781 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1932); *Hendricks v. Leslie Fay, Inc.*, 159 S.E.2d 362, 366-68 (N.C. 1968); *Szymanski v. Great Atl. & Pac. Tea Co.*, 74 N.E.2d 205, 206-07 (Ohio Ct. App. 1947)). The court further held that when a store takes on security functions, the store cannot assign its duty to protect the public to the independent-contractor security personnel. *Id.* at 890.

The Eighth Court of Appeals cited *Dupree* when it reversed a summary judgment on the basis that a fact issue existed concerning application of the personal character exception to a similar situation involving the alleged intentional torts of a security guard at a supermarket. *Duran*, 921 S.W.2d at 788. In *Westhill Management, Inc.*, the First Court of Appeals did not specifically mention the personal character exception, but it cited *Dupree* in holding a management company liable for the torts of its independent-contractor security guard. *Westhill Mgmt., Inc.*, 1988 WL 46399, at *3. The Fifth Court of Appeals, however, refused to apply the personal character exception to the acts of a security guard because it found that the tortious conduct in that case was not intentional. *Ross*, 796 S.W.2d at 213-14. It therefore appears that the Texas courts that have considered the personal character exception have limited its application to the intentional acts of independent-contractor security guards. And before *Fifth Club*, only two Texas courts have actually applied the personal character exception to hold businesses vicariously liable for the actions of their independent-contractor security guards. See *Dupree*, 542 S.W.2d at 890; *Duran*, 921 S.W.2d at 788. Those cases have generally not provided an in-depth analysis of the personal character exception, so we look to other states for guidance in examining the exception's origin and purpose.

A number of states have adopted a personal character exception, or a rule that allows employers or premises owners to be held liable for the acts of independent contractors in the security context. See Robert A. Brazener, Annotation, *Liability of One Contracting for Private Police or Security Service for Acts of Personnel Supplied*, 38 A.L.R.3d 1332 (1971).³ There appear to be at least two

³ See also *Malvo v. J.C. Penney Co.*, 512 P.2d 575, 583 n.13 (Alaska 1973) (“[T]he duty owed to the public by a store owner seeking to protect his property may be nondelegable in certain circumstances.”); *Tarzia v. Great Atl. & Pac. Tea Co.*, 727 A.2d 219, 225 (Conn. App. Ct. 1999) (“The possessor of premises who has invited persons to those

reasons why some states have adopted this exception: a nondelegable duty to keep premises safe, and public policy reasons relating to security work in general. Because these reasons are not applicable under Texas law, and have not been otherwise addressed by the Legislature, we are not persuaded that Texas should adopt such a rule.

Several states have relied on the nature of premises liability and the protection of premises to find liability for employers or business owners for the acts of their independent contractors.⁴ Some states that have recognized the personal character exception have done so because the state law imposed

premises for a business purpose cannot escape liability for a claimed breach of its duty to exercise reasonable care to keep the premises in a safe condition by hiring another to maintain the premises in a safe condition.”); *Peachtree-Cain Co. v. McBee*, 316 S.E.2d 9, 10-11 (Ga. Ct. App. 1984), *aff’d*, 327 S.E.2d 188, 191 (Ga. 1985) (holding that it was proper to impose liability on property owners for the intentional torts of security personnel hired to protect their property because of the “opportunities for gross injustice”); *Rockwell v. Sun Harbor Budget Suites*, 925 P.2d 1175, 1179 (Nev. 1996) (“However, in the situation where a property owner hires security personnel to protect his or her premises and patrons, that property owner has a personal and nondelegable duty to provide responsible security personnel.”); *Adams*, 257 N.Y.S. at 781-82 (holding that if a store owner receives the benefit of having a security guard do surveillance for criminal activity then he should also be subject to liability for false arrest of the persons the security guard tries to detain); *Hendricks*, 159 S.E.2d at 367-68 (holding that hiring security personnel to protect one’s property is a nondelegable and personal duty that subjects the employer to liability for the torts of its security personnel); *Szymanski*, 74 N.E.2d at 206-07 (same); *Halliburton-Abbott Co. v. Hodge*, 44 P.2d 122, 125-26 (Okla. 1935) (“The weight of authority seems to be that one may not employ or contract with a special agent or detective to ferret out the irregularities of his employees and then escape liability for malicious prosecution or false arrest on the ground that the agent is an independent contractor.”); *Pryor v. Southbrook Mall Assocs.*, No. 02A01-9709-CV-00217, 1998 WL 802005, at *4-5 (Tenn. Ct. App. Nov. 18, 1998) (“Thus, a business that contracts with an independent contractor to supply security guards will be liable for the guards’ intentional torts against customers and invitees of the place of business.”); *W.T. Grant Co. v. Owens*, 141 S.E. 860, 866 (Va. 1928) (“The owner of an operation or enterprise cannot, by securing through other special agents . . . obtain any immunity from liability for malicious prosecutions which such owner would not be equally entitled to if he himself directly selected and paid the agents and expressly retained the power of control and removal. When he undertakes these functions, his duties are personal and non-assignable, and where he arranges for and accepts the service, he will not be permitted to say that the relationship of master and servant does not exist.”) (quoting *Clinchfield Coal Corp. v. Redd*, 96 S.E. 836, 840 (Va. 1918)). *But see Mahon v. City of Bethlehem*, 898 F. Supp. 310, 313-15 (E.D. Pa. 1995) (declining to adopt the exception because the Restatement does not adopt it and “Pennsylvania is reluctant to add new exceptions to the independent contractor shield.”).

⁴ See *Malvo*, 512 P.2d at 583 n.13; *Tarzia*, 727 A.2d at 225; *FPI Atlanta, L.P. v. Seaton*, 524 S.E.2d 524, 530-31 (Ga. Ct. App. 1999); *Peachtree-Cain Co.*, 316 S.E.2d at 10-11; *Rockwell*, 925 P.2d at 1179-80; *Hendricks*, 159 S.E.2d at 366; *Webbier v. Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau, Inc.*, 254 A.2d 285, 289 (R.I. 1969); *Pryor*, 1998 WL 802005, at *4-5; *W.T. Grant Co.*, 141 S.E. at 866.

a nondelegable or personal duty on the business owner to keep the premises safe, therefore making the business owner responsible for the acts of independent contractors hired to keep the premises safe. *See FPI Atlanta, L.P. v. Seaton*, 524 S.E.2d 524, 530-31 (Ga. Ct. App. 1999) (holding that landowners who were under a Georgia statute imposing a duty to keep their land safe for invitees could be held liable for the acts of security personnel hired to keep the land safe); *see also* GA. CODE ANN. § 51-3-1 (2000) (“Where an owner or occupier of land, by express or implied invitation, induces or leads others to come upon his premises for any lawful purpose, he is liable in damages to such persons for injuries caused by his failure to exercise ordinary care in keeping the premises and approaches safe.”); *Webbier v. Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau, Inc.*, 254 A.2d 105, 289 (R.I. 1969) (holding that when owners were subject to a statutory duty to keep their patrons safe they could not escape liability for injuries to their racetrack patrons by hiring third parties to protect them). However, this case is not based on premises liability, but involves alleged vicarious liability for the acts of an independent contractor.

Several states addressing a personal character exception have done so based on a public policy that business owners should not have the benefit of surveillance or protection of their property without the penalties for unlawful activities by their independent contractors performing protective or security functions.⁵ Those cases emphasize the possibility of abuse when a business owner is allowed to hire a detective agency or security guard to help protect its premises and its invitees, but cannot be held liable for the actions of the guards. *See, e.g., Peachtree-Cain Co. v. McBee*, 316

⁵ *See Peachtree-Cain Co.*, 316 S.E.2d at 10-11; *Rockwell*, 925 P.2d at 1179-80; *Adams*, 257 N.Y.S. at 781-82; *Hendricks*, 159 S.E.2d at 367-68; *Szymanski*, 74 N.E.2d at 206-07; *Halliburton-Abbott Co.*, 44 P.2d at 126; *W.T. Grant Co.*, 141 S.E. at 866; *Clinchfield Coal Corp.*, 96 S.E. at 840.

S.E.2d 9, 11 (Ga. Ct. App. 1984), *aff'd*, 327 S.E.2d 188, 191 (Ga. 1985); *Adams*, 257 N.Y.S. at 781-82. Those cases also appear to identify security work as an exclusive category where vicarious liability can be present, regardless of the worker's status as an independent contractor. *See, e.g., Peachtree-Cain Co.*, 316 S.E.2d at 11; *Adams*, 257 N.Y.S. at 781-82.

In Texas, business owners and employers alike are generally held liable for an independent contractor's tortious acts only if the employer maintains detailed control over the independent contractor's acts or if the work itself involves a nondelegable duty, whether inherently dangerous or statutorily prescribed. *See Shell Oil Co. v. Khan*, 138 S.W.3d 288, 292 (Tex. 2004); *Lee Lewis Constr., Inc.*, 70 S.W.3d at 794 n.36 (inherently dangerous activities); *MBank El Paso, N.A. v. Sanchez*, 836 S.W.2d 151, 153 (Tex. 1992) (statutory imposition). A duty is nondelegable when it "is imposed by law on the basis of concerns for public safety, the party bearing the duty cannot escape it by delegating it to an independent contractor." *MBank El Paso, N.A.*, 836 S.W.2d at 153.

We have recognized a policy in favor of allowing employer liability when the independent contractor's work is inherently dangerous:

One who employs an independent contractor to do work involving a special danger to others which the employer knows or has reason to know to be inherent in or normal to the work, or which he contemplates or has reason to contemplate when making the contract, is subject to liability for physical harm caused to such others by the contractor's failure to take reasonable precautions against such danger.

Lee Lewis Constr., Inc., 70 S.W.3d at 794 n.36 (quoting RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS § 427 (1965)).⁶ Inherently dangerous activity stems from the activity itself rather than the manner of

⁶ The court of appeals in *Dupree* concluded, based on the specific facts of the case, that security work was not inherently dangerous. 542 S.W.2d at 888.

performance, so the responsibility for creating the danger cannot be shifted completely to the contractor performing the work, while ignoring the employer. *See* RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS §§ 427, 427A. But Ramirez is basing his claim in this Court on what he views as the personal nature or character of security work; he has not argued that security work is inherently dangerous.

Some statutes impose certain nondelegable duties on businesses, making the business liable for acts violating the duty, even if the duty is being performed by an independent contractor. *See MBank El Paso, N.A.*, 836 S.W.2d at 153 (discussing section 9-503 of the Uniform Commercial Code); *see also Konar v. PFL Life Ins. Co.*, 840 A.2d 1115, 1117-19 (R.I. 2004) (refusing to extend an exception for security work beyond statutorily-created duties mandating security or protection of the premises); RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF TORTS § 424 (“One who by statute or by administrative regulation is under a duty to provide specified safeguards or precautions for the safety of others is subject to liability to the others for whose protection the duty is imposed for harm caused by the failure of a contractor employed by him to provide such safeguards or precautions.”). However, the Legislature has not identified security work as carrying such nondelegable duties or carved out a special exception allowing business owners or employers to be held liable for the conduct of their independent-contractor security personnel.

We decline to recognize a personal character exception to the rule that an employer is generally insulated from liability for the tortious acts of its independent contractors. Instead, whether an employer can be liable for security work performed by an independent contractor is determined by the facts of the case analyzed under the control exception and the nondelegable duty exception, which includes inherently dangerous activities and statutorily-imposed duties. In this case the

plaintiff could, and did, sue the nightclub alleging direct liability for negligent hiring. Therefore, we see no reason to expand an employer's liability for the acts of its independent contractor solely because the contractor is hired to perform security work, and we hold that there is no personal character exception to the general rule shielding an employer from liability for tortious acts of its independent contractors.

We disapprove *Dupree v. Piggly Wiggly Shop Rite Foods, Inc.* and *Duran v. Furr's Supermarkets, Inc.* to the extent they hold that the personal character of security work can cause an employer to be liable for the actions of their independent contractors absent control over the details of their work. See *Dupree*, 542 S.W.2d at 888-90; *Duran*, 921 S.W.2d at 787-88.

Because the character of West's work for Fifth Club alone does not impose employer liability, we conclude Fifth Club is not vicariously liable to Ramirez.

III. Negligence and Malice in Hiring

Fifth Club further contends there is legally insufficient evidence to support the jury's finding that it was negligent or malicious in hiring and retaining West. We agree. Ramirez argues that because Fifth Club did not perform a background check on West, did not require a job application, and allowed a third party to hire West, it was negligent in hiring him. Negligence in hiring requires that the employer's "failure to investigate, screen, or supervise its [hirees] proximately caused the injuries the plaintiffs allege." *Doe v. Boys Club of Greater Dallas, Inc.*, 907 S.W.2d 472, 477 (Tex. 1995).

There is no evidence to support the jury's finding that Fifth Club's lack of a background check of West caused the altercation or the injuries. As to negligence in hiring, the evidence indicates that even if Fifth Club had investigated West before hiring him, nothing would have been found that

would cause a reasonable employer to not hire West. *Cf. Doe*, 907 S.W.2d at 477 (holding that the Boys Club did not breach any duty to screen or investigate its volunteers because the club would not have found anything in a volunteer's background that would cause the club not to allow him to volunteer even if it had screened or investigated the volunteer). The evidence showed that West violated a requirement in the applicable peace officer manual by accepting employment at the club, and that his primary employer had reprimanded West for the use of a profanity to a member of the public. This evidence is not sufficient to have put Fifth Club on notice that hiring West would create a risk of harm to the public, even if Fifth Club had done a background check. Ramirez argues that if Fifth Club had known that West was violating his primary employer's policies, it would not have hired him. But this statement, even if true, only shows that Fifth Club provided a condition—the hiring of West—that allowed for the altercation. It does not show foreseeability of harm to the public by West. *Cf. id.* at 477-78. Therefore, there is no evidence to support the jury's finding that Fifth Club was negligent, or malicious, in hiring West.

Also, no evidence was presented that West was an incompetent or unfit security guard such that Fifth Club was negligent in retaining him after he was hired. Fifth Club hired West as a security guard to assist in protecting its property and patrons, a job specially suited to a trained peace officer. *Cf. Hoechst Celanese Corp. v. Compton*, 899 S.W.2d 215, 227-28 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1994, writ denied) (holding that because peace officers are specifically trained to direct traffic, the employer was not negligent in hiring officers for that function because it failed to investigate the officers' backgrounds). While Ramirez presented evidence that Fifth Club did not perform a background check or train West, West's status as a certified peace officer made him fit for this type

of work, and there was no conflicting evidence that he was unfit for the security position prior to the incident in question.

Because there is no evidence to show that Fifth Club's alleged negligence in hiring West could have caused Ramirez's injury, we reverse the court of appeals' judgment against Fifth Club on the negligence and malice issues, and we render a take-nothing judgment in favor of Fifth Club.

IV. Future Mental Anguish Damages

West argues there is legally insufficient evidence to support the jury's award of \$20,000 in future mental anguish damages.⁷ We disagree. In *Parkway Co. v. Woodruff*, this Court held that mental anguish awards will pass a legal sufficiency review if evidence is presented describing "the nature, duration, and severity of their mental anguish, thus establishing a substantial disruption in the plaintiffs' daily routine." 901 S.W.2d 434, 444 (Tex. 1995). Furthermore, "some types of disturbing or shocking injuries have been found sufficient to support an inference that the injury was accompanied by mental anguish." *Id.* at 445; *see also Brown v. Sullivan*, 10 S.W. 288, 290 (Tex. 1888) ("Where serious bodily injury is inflicted involving fractures, dislocations, etc., and results in protracted disability and confinement to bed, we know that some degree of physical and mental suffering is the necessary result.").

In this case, Ramirez and his wife testified that Ramirez continued to be depressed, humiliated, non-communicative, unable to sleep, and angry, continued to have headaches and nightmares, and that his daily activities and his relationships with his wife and daughter continued to be detrimentally

⁷ Because we hold that Fifth Club is not vicariously or directly liable for damages, we do not address its argument on the damages issue.

affected almost two years after the incident. Ramirez also presented evidence of the severity of the intentional beating by West, including significant injuries to his head and body, his loss of consciousness, and his visits to the hospital. The evidence shows the nature of Ramirez's mental anguish, its lasting duration, and the severity of his injuries, and is therefore legally sufficient to support future mental anguish damages.

The dissent points to this Court's opinions in *Saenz* and *Parkway* as support for its conclusion that the evidence in this case, as it was in those cases, is insufficient to support the jury's award of future mental anguish damages. __ S.W.3d __ (citing *Saenz v. Fid. & Guar. Ins. Underwriters*, 925 S.W.2d 607 (Tex. 1996); *Parkway*, 901 S.W.2d 434). But what distinguishes those cases is that neither of them, *Saenz* (wrongful inducement to settle a workers compensation claim) or *Parkway* (flooded home), involved a claim for personal injuries. *See Saenz*, 925 S.W.2d at 608-10; *Parkway*, 901 S.W.2d at 436-37. We believe the severe beating received by Ramirez provided an adequate basis for the jury to reasonably conclude that he would continue to suffer substantial disruptions in his daily routine of the kind described in his and his wife's testimony that he had already suffered in the past. The evidence in this case amounts to far more than worry that medical bills might not get paid, as in *Saenz*, or that someone is disturbed and upset, as in *Parkway*. *See Saenz*, 925 S.W.2d at 614; *Parkway*, 901 S.W.2d at 445.

* * *

In summary, we reverse the court of appeals' judgment against Fifth Club based on jury findings of vicarious liability negligence and malice in hiring, and we enter a take-nothing judgment in Fifth

Club's favor. We affirm the court of appeals' judgment against West as to future mental anguish damages.

PAUL W. GREEN
JUSTICE

OPINION DELIVERED: June 30, 2006