

\$2,750,000

Special Effects Fire
PREMISES LIABILITY

FACTS: Plaintiff, a 40 year old female, was a guest attending a musical show at a hotel in West Hollywood. The show involved a singer and several musicians and dancers. There were also “fire performances” during the show where the dancers used “fire fingers” - which are metal rods attached to their hands with a pod at the end of the rod containing a wick which is soaked in white gas and light on fire. During the show, the can of fuel being used by the dancers containing the white gas for their fire performances was stored under a table in the room. During the grand finale of the show, one of the dancers accidentally knocked over the can of fuel which ignited. The hotel did not have a trained fire safety person in the room. As such, the participants in the show and the guests started trying to put out the fire with rugs and pillows. Meanwhile, everyone was trying to leave the room at the same time and it became chaos since there was only one exit. Plaintiff helped to try to put out the fire by throwing a pillow at the fire and white gas came up off the floor and landed on her right arm resulting in burns to her arm.

CONTENTIONS: Plaintiff contended that the show at the hotel involved more than 20 separate violations of the applicable fire and safety codes, including the fuel for the fire performers being stored in the same room as the performance, no one in the show was trained in fire suppression, the room was overcrowded, the room had only one exit, and the fuel for the fire performers should have been stored in a safety can which would not have leaked any fuel even if it was knocked over. Defendant contended that the fire was minor, it only lasted about thirty seconds, and Plaintiff was burned as a result of her own actions in throwing a pillow at the fire. Defendant also claimed that Plaintiff was the only one injured in the fire and her cousin who was sitting next to her had exited the room safely with no injury – and, if Plaintiff had exited the room with her cousin rather than throwing a pillow at the fire, she would not have been injured. Defendant also disputed the nature and extent of the burn injuries and need for future medical treatment.

INJURIES: Second and third degree burns to right arm requiring two (2) surgeries including a skin graft from a donor site on her right thigh.

GHAHREMANPOUR v. HOTEL
CASE NUMBER: CONFIDENTIAL
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT