

Jesus Rodriguez

“Junior wake up, wake up!” Those were the last words I heard before the call with my girlfriend suddenly dropped. She was with my three siblings on the way home from Christmas shopping when they were hit by a driver who failed to yield the right of way at a traffic light intersection. A million questions ran through my mind as my mother and I raced to the scene of the crash— “Were my girlfriend and siblings okay? Were they severely hurt? Were they alive?” Every stop sign and red light felt like an eternity of waiting. After what felt like the longest drive in my life, my heart dropped at the sight of my girlfriend’s vehicle; the front end was entirely missing, and car parts were scattered everywhere.

Fortunately, everyone was alive, but I never imagined the pain, stress, and worry-filled journey that would follow. My girlfriend and siblings had been severely injured in the crash. They spent several days hospitalized and attended many doctors’ appointments and physical therapy sessions that grew into large medical bills. The priority was the well-being of my loved ones, but I worried about how they would pay for the growing expenses.

Nobody talks about the complex and confusing legal process that follows a car crash. Without the right help, the process often revictimizes those injured and their families. Our situation was no different. I felt responsible for protecting my family due to being the most competent at navigating these systems. As my family healed from the physical trauma, I navigated the scary and burdensome process of obtaining compensation for personal injury. The process was turbulent but eventually was met with success. This was after what I call “my first unofficial personal injury case.” I spent hours negotiating with adjusters, billing specialists, and a guardian ad litem to stretch the limited insurance policy. Handling this difficult situation inspired me to become an attorney to help victims navigate this difficult process.

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My experiences at the Glasheen, Valles & Inderman Law Firm reaffirmed my interest in advocating for victims of personal injury. While at the firm, I saw firsthand the positive impact and the emotional relief attorneys can bring to victims and their families. Clients often felt scared and anxious about their situations before contacting the firm for help. After receiving our help, they felt relief knowing they had a team of skilled and knowledgeable litigators and support staff fighting for them to receive the compensation they deserved. Furthermore, I was exposed to a large number of opportunities to assist personal injury victims. Many of those opportunities were helping clients who could only speak Spanish. Most of these Spanish-speaking clients were socioeconomically disadvantaged and were often uninformed about the legalities relating to their cases. They also faced a language barrier that caused further difficulties for them. I come from a similar background and deeply empathize with these clients. Being fluent in Spanish, I felt good being able to facilitate the compensation process and provide relief to these clients. This is a big reason for my interest in the field.

Attending law school would allow me to further serve this demographic, in a deeper and more meaningful way. It would prepare me to be an advocate for justice, especially for those vulnerable to ignorance, and an agent of change for those who deserve a voice. I seek to fight injustice no matter the size and influence of the opponents, be it large corporations or insurance companies. My ultimate goal is to help people who have been seriously injured and prevent them as well as their families from being revictimized. I would win and settle cases for these clients to receive the compensation they deserve. My academic background and deep-rooted passion for legal procedures and justice make me an ideal candidate for becoming an attorney. Furthermore, my upbringing has molded me into a well-rounded, disciplined, and persevering individual. I do not give up in the face of adversity. Instead, I take pleasure in having the opportunity to

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overcome a new challenge and become a better person, scholar, and professional. These experiences have also allowed me to understand the problems and issues embedded in our underrepresented and underserved community populations. When pursuing a career, it is essential to be able to relate to the community that you will serve, and I strongly represent the dynamic of understanding the community that I will serve not only by empathizing but by having lived through the experiences necessary to understand justice from within.