



FILE MEMO – Client Interview

To: Holly Whitlock-Glave

From: Allison Hendrix

File No: 2025.0001

Interview date: 9/9/25

Memo date: 9/12/25

BACKGROUND

Ella B. Trippen (28 years old) has lived in Grayslake, Illinois, for approximately 10 years, and currently resides at 123 Falls Dr., Grayslake, IL, 60030. She works as an Executive Assistant with Hyatt Chicago. She commutes to this job via train, and has work duties including computer and administrative work only (no physical labor). Prior to this incident, she was very active, working out 3-4 times per week, and had no pre-existing medical conditions with her right shoulder or face and chin area. Trippen has 20/20 vision, and therefore wears no corrective lenses. This is the first time she has been involved in a lawsuit, as either Plaintiff or Defendant.

Hasard's Garden Center is located at 555 Hose Hill St., Grayslake, IL, 60030. Trippen is familiar with and has shopped at this location many times before the events described below.

LIABILITY

On Saturday, May 4, 2024, at approximately 8:00 am, Trippen arrived alone and parked at Hasard's Garden Center in Grayslake, IL. The weather was warm and sunny, and Trippen was wearing a t-shirt, shorts, sunglasses, and a new pair of Converse sneakers (in good shape, not damaged in any way). Outside of the store's main entrance (which is also its main exit), Trippen spent time browsing displays of tomato plants and herbs. There was a small planter box made of wood and possibly concrete, standing alone in between the tomato plants and herbs, slightly further east toward the parking lot. Trippen remembers stepping around this planter box when first arriving. While Trippen browsed outside, a female employee was present, watering plants using a green hose, an activity which Trippen had seen many times on previous visits to Hasard's. Trippen did not have to step over or around the hose before entering the store. Near the tomato plants, to the south of the entrance archway, there was one yellow cone which Trippen saw before entering the store, though she did not know why it was there as she did not see any

hazards nearby. Photos 1-5 (attached), taken after the trip and fall incident, show the placement of tomato plants, herbs, planter box, and cone, though the hose was not stretched across the entrance when Trippen arrived.

Trippen walked in through the store's main doors, grabbed a cart, and began leisurely shopping for potted flowers. She eventually chose a pot of dahlias, with the pot estimated to be 12 inches in diameter, 12 inches tall, possibly an additional 12 inches in height from the flowers. Trippen placed the potted dahlias into her cart and proceeded to check out. The pot remained in the cart during checkout, but after, Trippen lifted the pot and left the cart indoors. Her vehicle was parked somewhat near, so she felt comfortable not using the cart.

At approximately 9:45 am, Trippen shifted her weight to carry the moderately heavy potted flowers through the store's main doors (the same through which she entered). She was carrying nothing else at this time. She describes that she could not see the ground immediately in front of her while walking, though she could look to the side to see where she was going. While walking from the doors toward her car, Trippen's foot snagged on something, causing her to trip and fall. She fell into the planter box that had been present on her way into the store, landing on her right shoulder and the right side of her face. Potted flowers flew from her hands, but were not damaged. She did not immediately see what she had tripped on, but after falling and looking around, she saw a green hose that was stretched across the walkway in front of the main doors (as seen in photos taken after the incident). Right away, Trippen felt severe pain in her right shoulder and right side of her face, and sustained scratches that caused immediate bleeding. She described her pain right after the fall as an eight or nine on a 1-10 pain scale.

A female employee (name/identity not known) quickly came over to check on Trippen, asking if she was okay and offering to call an ambulance. Trippen refused the ambulance, and continued to sit on the ground "in a daze" for around five to ten minutes. The employee gave Trippen a towel for her face, which was still bleeding. There were other customers around who may have witnessed the fall, but none that came over or interacted with Trippen. During this seated five to ten minutes, the employee said she was surprised that Trippen had tripped on the hose, because the employee had intentionally used a green hose for visibility. The employee also mentioned the store had been doing a demonstration earlier in the day, using the planter box into which Trippen fell; and shared that a different employee was supposed to have cleaned it up. Trippen does not recall seeing any warning signs or cones where she fell, other than the previously mentioned yellow cone.

The female employee helped Trippen up, placed the potted dahlias into a cart, and accompanied Trippen into the store. A manager was called, and they completed an incident report. Trippen was not given a copy of this report, but she described to the manager how the incident happened and how badly her shoulder and face hurt. The manager asked if Trippen would like an ambulance, but she again refused, and the manager then gave her bandages for her still-bleeding face and chin. No employees mentioned video surveillance of the incident area. The manager walked Trippen outside and to her SUV, loaded the potted flowers into the vehicle, and told Trippen that someone from their corporate office would be calling to follow up.

Trippen sat alone in her car for some time, in a lot of pain, trying to shake off the incident and ensure she could safely drive. When she felt ready, around an hour to ninety minutes after the incident, she drove toward the front of the store and took the attached pictures from her car. At this point, Trippen drove home, arriving there at approximately 11:30 am. Her boyfriend was

home at the time and could see her face was scratched and bleeding. She described what had happened, and refused his offer to take her to the hospital. Around 1:00 pm, she was still in so much pain that her boyfriend insisted and drove her to the hospital/emergency room. **See INJURIES below for visit details, including diagnoses and treatment(s).**

Shortly before Trippen contacted Whitlock & Associates, a claims rep from Hasard's corporate office contacted her. She was offered a \$10,000 settlement, conditional upon signing a release waiving all claims and liability against Hasard's. Trippen refused the offer.

INJURIES/DAMAGES

PHYSICAL INJURIES AND TREATMENT:

During her hospital visit on 5/4/24, Trippen had x-rays taken of her shoulder and face, as well as an MRI of her shoulder. The ER team diagnosed a right rotator cuff tear along with severe cuts and bruises to the right side of her face (there were no broken bones in her face). Nurses cleaned Trippen's cuts, she received stitches in her chin, her arm was put in a sling, and she was referred to an orthopedic surgeon for her shoulder.

About one week after the incident, Trippen underwent a rotator cuff repair surgery, and her arm and shoulder were in a sling for about four weeks after, with no mobility. She was continuously around an eight or nine on the pain scale, even with pain medications. Two weeks after the incident, Trippen's primary care physician removed the stitches from her chin, though she continued to have pain and difficulty moving her jaw and chin for over two months. She has a scar on her chin from that injury. She continued on pain medication "for weeks." Approximately four weeks after surgery, Trippen began physical therapy for her shoulder, which lasted about seven months. At present, she continues to do her P.T. exercises twice a week, to keep increasing strength in her shoulder.

Trippen continues to have lingering pain and stiffness every morning, and describes her everyday pain now at a two or three on the pain scale. She manages this pain with Advil or ibuprofen daily. Her doctor has told her it could take years before her shoulder is completely healed, but that it may bother her for the rest of her life. The orthopedic surgeon asked that she follow up if the pain consistently increases.

MEDICAL EXPENSES:

- All medical appointment co-pays (ER, surgeon, primary care to remove stitches, each physical therapy appointment)
- Trippen's estimate of total medical expenses is \$50,000.

OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES:

- Once Trippen returned to work, use of Uber for work commutes because she could not use her shoulder to drive
- Cleaning service hired for home because she could not use shoulder
- Landscape service hired because she couldn't use shoulder
- Ella estimates the above, along with her medical co-pays, likely add up to \$5,000.

LOSS OF INCOME:

- Out of work for four months, with no accident insurance coverage
 - Gross weekly salary: \$1200-\$1250
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DESCRIPTION OF ATTACHED PHOTOS, FOR REFERENCE IN TIMELINE BELOW:

(Photos 1-5 were taken on 5/4/24 soon after incident; Photo 6 one month later)

PHOTO #1: Long view in front of Hasard's, from the south and facing north. Includes arch to entrance/exit doors, tomato plants, herbs, and pallet box included in incident. Green hose can be seen stretched across the walkway for entering and exiting, as well as an unattended orange cart between the building and green hose, just north of the archway. A person in shorts and a t-shirt (probable employee) is using the hose to water plants north of the archway and orange cart. At least three people can be seen.

PHOTO #2: Slightly zoomed in view of the front of Hasard's, facing north. Includes herbs, pallet box, archway, green hose, unattended orange cart, and person using hose. At least three people can be seen.

PHOTO #3: View of front of the Hasard's, slightly more north and east than #1 and #2. Archway not visible, green hose, unattended orange cart, person using hose, and two other people.

PHOTO #4: Smaller view of the front of Hasard's. Includes archway, tomato plants, herbs, pallet box, green hose stretched across in front of archway, and partial unattended orange cart.

PHOTO #5: Front of Hasard's slightly more south. Can see south end of the entrance archway; green hose; some plants; yellow cone tucked in the corner of two shelving units of plants, in between the plants and green hose.

Hasard's Garden Center

Photo #1:



Photo #2:

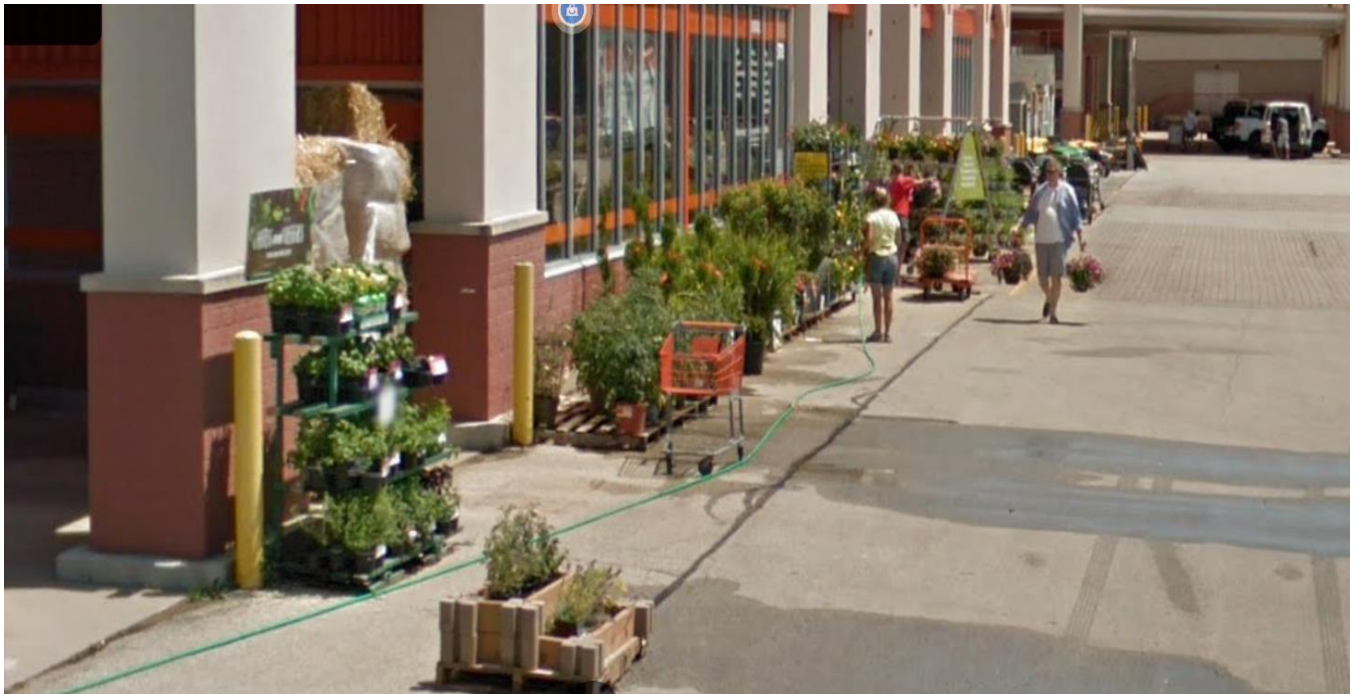


Photo #3:



Photo #4



Photo #5:



Photo #6:



PHOTO #6: Potted dahlias that were purchased and carried on 5/4/24. This photo was taken at Trippen's home, approximately one month after the incident.

CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

linked to live spreadsheet for future updates and landscape view attached if preferred

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PHOTO REF	NOTES & FOLLOW UP
5/4/24	8:00 AM	ELLA ARRIVES AT HASARD'S GARDEN CENTER	*ALL PHOTOS TAKEN AFTER INCIDENT	
		ELLA PARKS CAR "DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET" FROM THE ENTRANCE. REF PHOTO #1 SHOWS TOP OF PHOTO NORTH, BOTTOM SOUTH, SO SHE PARKED EAST OF THIS ENTRANCE/EXIT	PHOTO #1	Confirm if this is a street or a parking lot with wide walkway. No street or cars shown in photo.
5/4/24	8:00-9:45 AM	ELLA BROWSES TOMATO PLANTS AND HERBS TO LEFT/RIGHT OF ENTRANCE	PHOTO #1	
		WHILE BROWSING OUTSIDE, ELLA SEES FEMALE EMPLOYEE OUTSIDE WATERING PLANTS; NOT SURE EXACTLY WHERE, BUT "PRETTY SURE" WAS USING A HOSE.		
		ELLA DOES NOT REMEMBER WHERE THE HOSE WAS LOCATED, BUT THINKS "IT WAS IN THE AREA." REMEMBERS HOSE WAS GREEN. RECALLS THE HOSE WAS NOT STRETCHED OUT IN FRONT OF THE DOORS AS SEEN IN PHOTOS, TAKEN LATER. ELLA IS SURE SHE DID NOT STEP OVER OR NAVIGATE AROUND A HOSE ON HER WAY INTO THE STORE.		

		ELLA WALKS AROUND PLANTER BOX IN PHOTO #4 WHEN SHE FIRST ARRIVES, BUT DOES NOT STOP TO LOOK AT IT	PHOTO #4	
		ELLA SEES ONE YELLOW CONE NEXT TO THE TOMATO PLANTS (PHOTO #5; CONE IS NOT NEAR THE PLANTER BOX) BEFORE ENTERING STORE, SHE DID NOT KNOW WHY IT WAS PLACED THERE BECAUSE SHE DID NOT SEE ANY HAZARDS IN THE AREA.	PHOTO #5	
		ELLA WALKS IN THROUGH MAIN ENTRANCE, WHICH IS ALSO THE MAIN EXIT	PHOTO #1	
		ELLA GRABS CART AND BEGINS SHOPPING FOR POTTED FLOWERS. TAKES TIME, NOT IN RUSH		
		CHOOSES ONE POT OF DAHLIAS, PLACES IN CART, PROCEEDS TO CHECKOUT	PHOTO #6	This photo was taken a month past the incident, in Ella's yard.
		POT OF DAHLIAS STAYS IN CART DURING CHECKOUT		
5/4/24	9:45 AM	AFTER CHECKOUT, ELLA LEAVES CART INSIDE AND LIFTS POT/FLOWERS TO CARRY		Ella est. incident occurred 1 hour 45 mins after arriving.
		CARRYING FLOWERS: HEAVY BUT NOT TOO HEAVY" HAS TO SLIGHTLY SHIFT WEIGHT TO HOLD:		
		WHILE WALKING AND CARRYING POT/FLOWERS, ELLA CANNOT SEE THE GROUND IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF HER. CANNOT SEE OVER THE FLOWERS. LOOKING TO THE SIDE SHE COULD SEE GROUND AS SHE WALKED		
		ELLA EXITS HASARD'S THROUGH SAME DOORS SHE ENTERED, STILL CARRYING POT/FLOWERS. SHE IS NOT CARRYING ANYTHING ELSE.	PHOTOS #1, 2, 4, 5	Each photo shows a view of entrance/exit.

		WALKING OUTSIDE, ELLA'S FOOT SNAGS, SHE TRIPS, SHE FALLS INTO PLANTER SEEN IN PHOTOS #1, 2, 4	PHOTOS #1, 2, 4	Planter appears to be made of wood, possibly concrete corners.
		ELLA'S RIGHT SHOULDER AND RIGHT SIDE OF FACE HIT THE PLANTER, IMMEDIATE PAIN ON BOTH PLACES. SCRATCHES, BLEEDING.		
		POT OF DAHLIAS FALL OUT OF ELLA'S HANDS, BUT IS NOT DAMAGED		
		AT FIRST, ELLA DOES NOT KNOW WHAT SHE TRIPPED ON, BUT AFTER FALLING, SHE SEES THE HOSE STRETCHED OUT IN FRONT OF ENTRANCE/EXIT DOORS		Ella rates pain immediately after the fall (scale of 1-10, 10 worst) as 8 or even 9.
5/4/24	9:45 AM +	FEMALE EMPLOYEE (NAME/ID NOT KNOWN) RUSHES OVER (ELLA UNSURE IF EMPLOYEE SAW THE FALL); ASKS IF ELLA IS OKAY AND OFFERS TO CALL AN AMBULANCE (ELLA REFUSES)		Ella says there were other customers around when she fell, but she does not know who they were, and did not talk to anyone other than the female employee, while outside.
5/4/24	9:45-10:00 AM	ELLA SITS ON GROUND FOR APPROX. 5-10 MINUTES "IN A DAZE"		Ella estimates 5-10 minutes, clock time estimated by me
		WITHIN THIS 5-10 MINS, FEMALE EMPLOYEE OFFERS ELLA A TOWEL TO WIPE HER FACE, AS IT'S STILL BLEEDING. CONVERSATION INCLUDES EMPLOYEE SUGGESTING ELLA GO INSIDE TO COMPLETE INCIDENT REPORT WITH MANAGER.		
		WITHIN THIS SAME 5-10 MINS, FEMALE EMPLOYEE SAYS SHE IS SURPRISED ELLA TRIPPED ON THE HOSE, B/C SHE INTENTIONALLY USED A GREEN HOSE TO IT COULD BE EASILY SEEN		

		EMPLOYEE ALSO SHARES THAT THE STORE WAS DOING A DEMONSTRATION EARLIER, USING THE PLANTER ELLA FELL INTO; A DIFFERENT EMPLOYEE WAS SUPPOSED TO CLEAN IT UP, BUT HADN'T DONE IT YET AT THE TIME ELLA FELL.		Ella confirms she did not see any warning signs or cones in the area that she tripped and fell
5/4/24	~10:00 AM	EMPLOYEE PICKS UP POTTED DAHLIAS AND PLACES IN A CART. SHE AND ELLA WALK INSIDE AND EMPLOYEE CALLS MANAGER		
		MANAGER ARRIVES AND COMPLETES AND INCIDENT REPORT WITH ELLA. FOR THE REPORT, ELLA EXPLAINS INCIDENT, THAT SHOULDER AND FACE HURT. AT THIS TIME SHE IS STILL BLEEDING. MANAGER ASKS ABOUT CALLING AN AMBULANCE AND ELLA AGAIN REFUSES.		Ella did not receive a copy of incident report
		MANAGER GIVES ELLA BANDAGES FOR FACE AND CHIN.		
		MANAGER WALKS ELLA OUT TO HER SUV AND LOADS THE POTTED DAHLIAS INTO THE VEHICLE		
		MANAGER TELLS ELLA SOMEBODY FROM CORPORATE WOULD BE CALLING TO FOLLOW UP		VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AT STORE? Ella doesn't know; no employees mentioned it at the time of the incident and manager made no mention of looking at it.
		ELLA SITS ALONE IN CAR FOR SOME TIME, WORKING TO CALM HERSELF. IN LOTS OF PAIN AND NOT SURE SHE SHOULD BE DRIVING.		
		WHILE LEAVING, ELLA PULLS AROUND TO FRONT OF STORE TO TAKE PICTURES FROM HER CAR	PHOTOS #1-5	
5/4/24	11:30 AM	ELLA DRIVES HOME, ARRIVES ~11:30. BOYFRIEND IS ALSO		

		HOME.		
		ELLA DESCRIBES INCIDENT TO BOYFRIEND (HE SEES SHE IS STILL BLEEDING).		
5/4/24	1:00 PM	ELLA IS IN SO MUCH PAIN, BOYFRIEND INSISTS ON DRIVING HER TO THE HOSPITAL		
5/4/24	1:00-5:00 PM	HOSPITAL DIAGNOSIS: XRAY OF RIGHT SHOULDER AND FACE. MRI ON SHOULDER. ER DOC SAYS RIGHT ROTATOR CUFF TEAR, SEVERE CUTS AND BRUISES TO RIGHT SIDE OF FACE. NO BROKEN BONES IN FACE		Ella's est ~4 hours at ER. Clock time est by me.
		HOSPITAL TREATMENT: ELLA'S ARM PUT IN SLING, RX FOR PAIN MEDICATION, NURSES CLEAN THE CUTS, STITCHES ON CHIN. REFERRAL TO AN ORTHO SURGEON FOR SHOULDER		
5/11/24		ROTATOR CUFF REPAIR SURGERY. CONTINUOUSLY IN PAIN SCALE AROUND 8-9, AFTER SURGERY, EVEN WITH PAIN MEDS		Ella's est ~1 week after incident; confirm date with medical records?
5/18/24		PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN REMOVES STITCHES FROM CHIN		Ella's est ~2 weeks after incident
May-June 2024		ELLA'S FACE/JAW PAINFUL AND DIFFICULT TO MOVE FOR OVER 2 MONTHS		
May-Aug 2024		ELLA UNABLE TO WORK B/C OF SHOULDER PAIN (NOT EVEN ABLE TO MOVE IT ENOUGH FOR TYPING OR COMPUTER WORK)		Ella est 4 months off work
May-Aug 2024		B/C OF PAIN AND MOBILITY: HIRES CLEANING AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES FOR HOME, USES RIDESHARES FOR WORK COMMUTE		Need to confirm exact length of time other services were used; confirm reasons for rideshares, as she previously stated she commutes to work via train.
		CONT ON PAIN MEDS FOR "WEEKS" AFTER SURGERY		

6/1/24		ELLA TAKES PHOTO OF POTTED DAHLIAS, SET UP IN HER YARD (THEY HAD GROWN TALLER THAN WHEN PURCHASED)		Ella's est ~1 month after incident
6/8/24		ELLA BEGINS PHYSICAL THERAPY - IN P.T. FOR 7 MONTHS		Ella's est begins PT 4 weeks after rotator cuff surgery; confirm dates with med records?
June-Dec 2024		ONGOING PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR SHOULDER/ROTATOR CUFF		Ella est 7 months; confirm with med records
Dec 2024-Present		ONGOING, ELLA CONTINUES P.T. EXERCISES AT HOME 2X/WEEK		
Aug 2025		HASARD'S CORPORATE CALLS ELLA, IDENTIFIES AS CLAIMS REP. OFFERS \$10K SETTLEMENT, UNDER CONDITION OF SIGNING RELEASE FOR ALL LIABILITY. ELLA REFUSES THE OFFER.		Confirm date of call; Ella says this call motivated her to contact Whitlock & Associates, so assumption is the call was quite recent.
Aug 2025		ELLA CONTACTS WHITLOCK & ASSOCIATES		

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June-Dec 2024		ONGOING PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR SHOULDER/ROTATOR CUFF		Ella est 7 months; confirm with med records
Dec 2024-Present		ONGOING, ELLA CONTINUES P.T. EXERCISES AT HOME 2X/WEEK		
Aug 2025		HASARD'S CORPORATE CALLS ELLA, IDENTIFIES AS CLAIMS REP. OFFERS \$10K SETTLEMENT, UNDER CONDITION OF SIGNING RELEASE FOR ALL LIABILITY. ELLA REFUSES THE OFFER.		Confirm date of call; Ella says this call motivated her to contact Whitlock & Associates, so assumption is the call was quite recent.
Aug 2025		ELLA CONTACTS WHITLOCK & ASSOCIATES		