

\$9,300,000 Award for Diving Injuries in Mexico

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Marazo v. Hotel Oasis Cancun: A federal judge awarded a Somerville man \$9.375 million on March 11 for injuries that left him [paralyzed after diving into a hotel's pool](#) in Cancun, according to the Judge's chambers.

U.S. District Chief Judge Anne Thompson in Trenton entered a default judgment ordering Hotel Oasis Cancun and its parent company, Hotel Oasis International, to pay Richard Marazo \$9.375 million. Thompson found damages in the amount of \$12.5 million, but decreased the award by 25 percent because Marazo also was negligent. "Considering that this is a hotel, we're very hopeful that we'll be able to collect the award," says Jeffrey Nichols, a partner with Manhattan's Brightner & Hoffman, who represents Marazo.

Marazo, who is 28, was vacationing in Mexico in April 1994 when the accident occurred. Marazo dove into the hotel's pool and struck his head on the concrete bottom. When he surfaced, he swam to the in-pool bar for help. The pool's bartender, who was not identified in the suit, saw Marazo was bleeding and pushed him away. Nichols says the bartender's actions contributed to his client's paralysis.

Marazo, who was a state corrections officer in Middlesex County before the injury, has undergone surgery and rehabilitation but will not fully recover from injuries. [Barry Eichen](#) of Eichen Crutchlow Zaslow, LLP, served as Marazo's local counsel.

The local counsel for the hotel, Lawrence Engrissei, an associate with Mount Laurel's Thomas Dempster, did not return a telephone call last week. By: Matt Ackerman