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### Edison Hit with \$21 Million Penalty in Avocado-Picking Mishap

By John Millrany - July 16, 2001

Stating that he doesn't "fit the image of a typical avocado picker," a 33-year-old Whittier man has been awarded a \$21 million judgment as the result of a **Southern California Edison** power-pole accident resulting in amputation of both his arms.

The award followed a jury verdict July 13 that found Edison 80% responsible for the accident that occurred when **Allen Kimball's** aluminum pole hit a 12,000-volt power line in a Hacienda Heights avocado grove. According to his attorney, **Christine Spagnoli**, Edison was at fault for not properly trimming the avocado tree and obscuring power lines hanging above it.

Edison officials, who are looking at an appeal possibility, maintained that the utility shouldn't be held responsible for a picker using an aluminum pole device.

"I hope this verdict," which followed a 4-week trial, "forces Edison, in the future, to act responsibly so this type of accident will never happen to another person," Kimball said. "We don't hear about a lot of accidents like this, because immigrant laborers are involved and they don't get much attention.

"That's why I wanted to speak out. I don't fit the average image of the typical avocado picker."

True enough. In fact, Kimball, who worked the avocado groves to earn extra money while attending a community college, has since his amputations competed in the Los Angeles Marathon and, with the help of an occupational therapist intern he met in rehabilitation, has climbed Half Dome in Yosemite National Park.

Kimball, who expects to graduate next winter with a college degree, uses his big toes to type on the computer.

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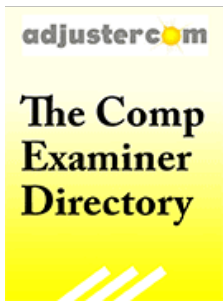
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