Law 12 Goldsack 2018

Case 1: Negligence

Molly is a single mother. She takes her daughter Rhonda (a two year old infant) to a local playground. While lighting a cigarette, Molly starts talking with another young parent, Dilbert. Molly is distracted by Dilbert's good looks and gritty charm. Meanwhile, Rhonda starts to wander over to the road.

Dilbert notices a possible catastrophe and rushes out after Rhonda. Dilbert just manages to save Rhonda from being run over by Bob, who is driving a van within the speed limit and quite safely. However, Dilbert has too much forward momentum and collides with Bob's van. Dilbert is seriously injured. Bob skids off the road and crashes into some playground equipment. Luckily, no children are using the equipment. Laura, driving at speed behind Bob, sees the above-related events and puts her foot down hard on the brakes. Laura's car skids on an oil slick and crashes into a tree. Some distance behind the tree was Leonard. Leonard thought that Laura's car might hit him and he started running away screaming 'Oh Lord, don't take me now!' Leonard has an underlying personality disorder and develops a paranoid fear of going out into the street. As a result, he loses his job and his livelihood.

The accident involving Leonard is witnessed by Sherry, Rhonda's grandmother, who is also at the park. Sherry suffers from a brief fright, but believes that she will be alright. However, she later develops post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of this event, combined with the news that Rhonda barely escaped a serious injury. She had not seen the incident involving Rhonda herself, because she had been busy setting out the picnic lunch.

Identify any actions available in the tort of negligence and analyze the elements of the tort accordingly.

In order to analyze this problem, it is helpful to start by outlining the elements of the tort of negligence. They are as follows:

1. The defendant must have a duty of care towards the claimant.
2. The defendant must have breached that duty of care.
3. Damage must have been caused by the breach.