

U.S. UPDATE

Former Suzuki Dealer Facing Multiple Suits

A former Suzuki dealer faces a multiplicity of lawsuits brought by unhappy customers who allege they were duped by outrageous lies in the former dealer's advertisements. Several of the cases have already been tried to a jury, with the results ranging from a defense verdict all the way up to a \$1.3 million USD Plaintiff's verdict. Plaintiffs in the cases allege, in general, that the dealer's deceptive advertisements caused them to believe:

- They could purchase a new vehicle for as little as \$49 per month.
- The dealer would use manufacturer rebates to cover the difference between the real cost and what the consumer would be required to pay.
- A buyer could trade their vehicle in within 6-12 months of purchase and receive a new vehicle, with no increase in their monthly payment.

The dealer in question, Chad Franklin Suzuki, operated in Kansas City, Kansas. It is now out of business. It contends that its ads were not deceptive and that its customers signed commonplace sales transaction documents used throughout the auto industry.

In an interesting twist to this litigation, plaintiffs are trying to win their cases without proving too much wrongdoing on the part of the defunct dealer. If plaintiffs prove the dealer was simply negligent, they can potentially recover from its insurance company. If the evidence shows that the dealer engaged in intentional misconduct, however, the insurer may be able to avoid liability completely, leaving the unhappy motorists stranded.