

Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay join forces with Cory, Watson, Crowder & DeGaris To Represent Victim of Bremen, GA. Fatal Motel Explosion

Suit names Atlanta Gas Light Company, Atlanta Gas Services, Inc., Alpine Gas, Inc., Cox Plumbing & Septic, Inc. and the motels' owners as responsible for the explosion

ATLANTA – July 18, 2006 – Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay, P.C. today announced that they have joined forces with Cory Watson Crowder & DeGaris to seek justice for the family of Mr. Reese Helton, the victim of last month's explosion at a Bremen, Georgia motel. The lawsuit has been filed against Atlanta Gas Light Company, Atlanta Gas Light Services, Inc., Alpine Gas, Inc., Cox Plumbing & Septic, Inc., and the motel's owners, Devendra Patel, Kirit Patel, and Hemlata Patel.

The victim, Reese Helton, was doing work at the Great Western Inn in the motel laundry room at the time of the explosion. The blast occurred after the motel's owners hired Alpine Gas, Inc. to install a liquid propane tank and run gas lines to the motel's gas appliances when their natural gas service was disconnected due to non-payment. Sometime prior to the explosion, however, Atlanta Gas Light Company returned to restart the natural gas service to the motel. Investigators at the scene found an open gas line which seeped gas into the laundry room where it ignited causing an explosion and fire and killing Mr. Helton. According to witnesses who heard his screams and pleas for help, Mr. Helton was trapped in the laundry room as the building burned. Several guests had checked out of the motel only hours before the explosion.

“The number of ways this tragedy could have easily been prevented is staggering,” said Quinton Seay, of Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay. “Had the Patels put public safety ahead of profits, they wouldn't have put people's lives at risk. Had Alpine Gas, Inc., Atlanta Gas Light Company, Atlanta Gas Light Services, Natural Gas Company and Cox Plumbing properly checked the lines and connections, this explosion would never have occurred,” said Ernie Cory of Cory, Watson, Crowder & DeGaris.

Reese Helton had done work for the Great Western Inn for one and a half years. Mr. Helton was known to be a hardworking man and devoted father. He is survived by his three children and his mother, whom he helped to support, along with three brothers.

Authorities are still attempting to positively identify the victim's body because, according to officials, it was burned beyond recognition by the blast.

“The Helton family appreciates all that State and local law enforcement have done to help them identify the body and the source of the explosion,” added Jason Shamblin of Cory, Watson, Crowder & DeGaris. “We are working closely with the proper authorities to help bring justice to the Helton family and give them the opportunity to give Reese a proper burial.”

About Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay, P.C.

Celebrating 25 years of service, Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay, P.C. (www.tmgslaw.com) is a law firm comprised of professionals dedicated to making the justice system work. Our legal expertise spans the civil litigation spectrum which includes cases of wrongful death, serious personal injury and product liability case work in addition to legal expertise for a variety of government agencies and high profile white-collar criminal defense cases. Our firm has handled some of the most challenging and notable plaintiff and defense cases tried in the southern United States for a quarter of a century, with more than 50 million-dollar and multi-million dollar claims grossing more than \$250 million in verdicts and settlements. Established in 1981, Thomas, Means, Gillis & Seay maintains offices and staff in Birmingham, Ala., Livingston, Ala., Montgomery, Ala. Hayneville, Ala. and Atlanta, Ga.

About Cory Watson Crowder & DeGaris

Cory Watson Crowder & DeGaris (www.cwcd.com) was founded in 1995 and has become known as one of the region's leading law firms devoted to representing individuals and businesses injured by the wrongful conduct of others. Some of the senior shareholders in the firm have 25 years of legal experience and have represented clients all across the United States and beyond including Africa, Greece, Latin America and Canada. Cory Watson's 12 experienced attorneys and staff of over 40 handle a variety of cases. The largest area of the firm's practice is Products Liability, including litigation of defective consumer and household products, motor vehicles, medical devices and pharmaceuticals. Other practice areas include business litigation, personal injury, nursing home negligence, insurance law, civil rights, class action lawsuits, employment law, workers' compensation, and construction accidents.

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