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Adamsons

From page A1

Moments before the balloon crashed into power lines and fell 165 feet to the ground near the Swiss Alps, Grant Adamson is said to have “had his wife and daughters lay on the bottom of the balloon’s basket and he tried to shield them with his own body to protect them. The members of the family told each other they loved each other and prayed.”

Grant Adamson died of an aortic rupture on impact, while Terry, Megan and Lauren were knocked unconscious. Terry suffered a shattered jaw and pelvis and several internal injuries. Megan’s spine was broken and “severed from her pelvis,” and Lauren’s legs were broken. All three have undergone



Grant Adamson (right) was killed when the hot air balloon the family rode in struck power lines and fell 165 feet. The family is now suing for \$53.8 million in damages. Pictured, from left: Lauren, Terry, Megan and Grant Adamson

extensive surgeries on the road to recovery. Their medical bills have totaled \$1 million to date, attorneys said, and each of them will likely continue dealing with medical problems the rest of their lives.

“None of them will ever get back to where they were before this accident,” said Suzelle Smith, an attorney for the Adamsons.

The suit seeks \$10.2 million for Terry’s damages, \$3.8 million for Lauren’s, \$3 million for Megan’s and \$36.8 million for the death of Grant Adamson.

Grand Hotel Park, Protravel International, Bucher Travel and travel agent Simone Rayden are named as defendants in the case filed by attorneys on behalf of the Adamson estate.

“[The hotel] advertises it as a top-of-the-line safe trip, you can count on them to supply a competent pilot and take you on a once in a lifetime experience, but that’s not what happened,” Smith said. “They put the Adamsons into the balloon, they had a pilot who was not competent...he devastated this family.”

The Adamsons travelled to Switzerland last summer for a family vacation after booking

the trip with Grand Hotel Park through Rayden and the two travel agencies. Terry Adamson purchased the hot air balloon trip over the Swiss Alps after researching it as early as 2011 and being told by Rayden that it was a “must do,” according to court documents.

What the Adamsons did not know, the suit alleges, is that Dupuy had been fired from a previous piloting gig for allegedly drinking on the job and “visiting the pub during working hours.” He was hired by Grand Hotel Park and its manager, Dupuy’s brother-in-law, even though Dupuy’s rocky employment history was evident, according to Adamson attorneys.

The suit further alleges Dupuy had very little familiarity with the route the hot air balloon was flying but that hotel employees assured the Adamsons beforehand that Dupuy was experienced on the route. But as the trip neared its landing point in Montbovon, the Adamsons asked Dupuy to land the balloon early because constant shifts in altitude of the balloon were frightening them. Dupuy’s nephew was following the balloon from the ground and

at one point radioed Dupuy to say he was flying too low.

“Approaching the landing site at Montbovon, Dupuy was flying too low,” the suit states. “Megan saw that the balloon was headed for power lines and cried out to Dupuy. Dupuy was looking in the opposite direction.”

Moments later, the balloon hit the lines and began falling.

“The Grand [Hotel] either did not properly investigate the condition of its pilot before entrusting the Adamson family to him,” the suit alleges, “or knew he had been drinking before the flight and ignored it.”

The great-grandson of Frederick and Rhoda May Rindge, who in 1892 purchased the land that is now Malibu, Grant Adamson descended from a family known as Malibu’s founders. He was an owner of the Mariposa Land Company, which managed the family’s real estate holdings, and was a founding member of Pepperdine University’s Crest Board, among other community involvements. He and his family resided in Serra Retreat.

A pretrial conference date has been set for Oct. 20, 2014.

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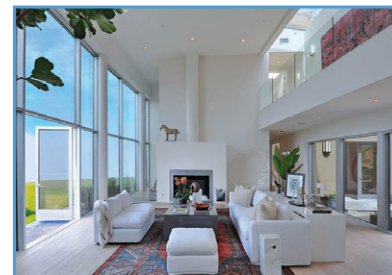
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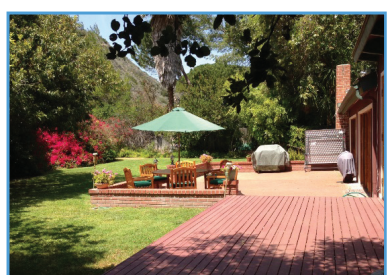
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