

PRESS CLIPS



710 WEST 5th ST. AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701 PHONE 477-6755

American-Statesman
Austin, Texas

OCT 24 1992

Blast victim awarded \$21.8 million by jury

BELTON (AP) — A jury awarded a Belton man \$21.8 million Friday after concluding that Lone Star Gas Co. was responsible for the April 1988 explosion that cost him both hands and burned more than one-fifth of his body.

Jurors awarded Johnnie Lee Davis \$10 million in exemplary damages, \$5 million for pain and suffering, \$5 million for disfigurement and \$1.8 million for lost earnings and medical expenses.

In the early morning hours of April 17, 1988, a convenience store owned by Davis exploded in a ball of fire. Authorities said the explosion also blew a hole in the roof of

an adjacent motel, damaged nearby cars and scattered debris.

Davis claimed in the April 1990 lawsuit against Lone Star Gas that the explosion was caused by natural gas released from a leak in an abandoned line.

Another man injured in the explosion said he and Davis smelled gas and were looking around when the store exploded. Davis maintained that the gas company was notified of possible gas leaks, but failed to inspect and repair the abandoned lines.

"We're pleased with the verdict," said Davis' attorney, Vic Feazell of Austin.