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**Maersk Alabama Crew Member Files Lawsuit against Employer
for Failing to Protect Him from Pirates**

HOUSTON, Texas, April 27, 2009—Royal Palm Beach, Florida, resident Richard E. Hicks is filing a lawsuit today against his employer, Waterman Steamship Corporation and Maersk Line, Ltd., for knowingly sending him into pirate-infested waters near Somalia. (Case No. 2009-26129, Filed in Harris County Court 270)

Hicks was taken hostage by Somali pirates April 8, 2009, while working as chief steward preparing food for crewmembers. When Hicks heard over the loudspeaker that pirates were on board, he and fellow crewmembers gathered in the engine/steering room for nearly 12 hours.

“The engine room was dark and hot, maybe 130 degrees,” said Hicks. “We were all cramping up with heatstroke symptoms when we were able to take a pirate hostage and tried to negotiate the return of our captain.”

The pirates promised to exchange the ship’s captain, Richard Phillips, for the pirate hostage but instead escaped with Capt. Phillips and their pirate crewmember.

Houston attorney Terry Bryant, who is representing Richard Hicks, said the shipowners knowingly exposed their employees to imminent danger and took no steps to provide appropriate levels of security and safety for their employees.

“Waterman Steamship Corporation and Maersk Line Limited chose to rely on the United States Military (and taxpayers) to provide after-the-fact rescue operations,” said Bryant. “This choice caused substantially more cost and risk to human life than what would have been incurred by Defendants had they provided appropriate levels of security in the first place.”

Hicks says he still suffers from injuries as a result of the incident and is afraid to return to his job as a chief steward.

Terry Bryant is a Texas board-certified personal injury attorney and former judge. Terry Bryant’s principal office is based in Houston, Texas. For more information, visit www.TerryBryant.com.

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