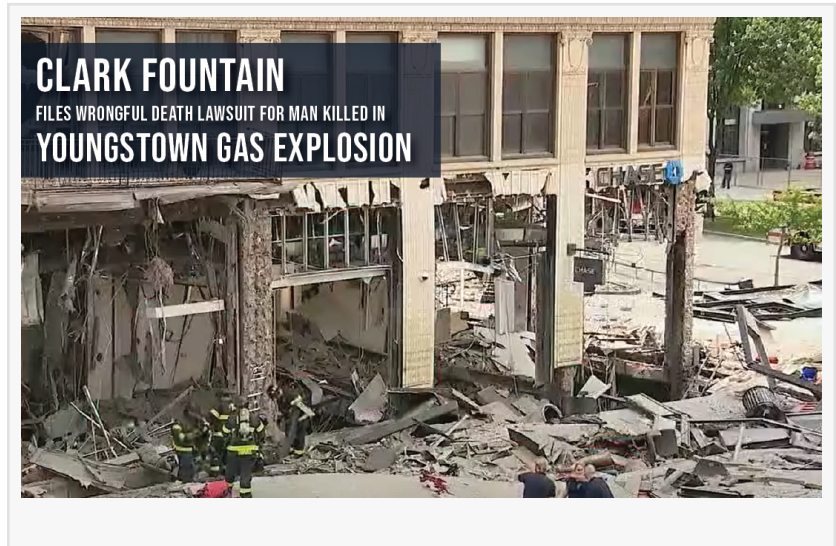


# Clark Fountain Files Wrongful Death Lawsuit For Man Killed In Youngstown Gas Explosion

*The explosion occurred while a contractor was performing work on natural gas utility lines in the basement of the Realty Tower*

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, UNITED STATES, June 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Clark Fountain attorneys [Ben J. Whitman](#), Don Fountain, and [Julie H. Littky-Rubin](#) and their co-counsels have filed a wrongful death lawsuit on behalf of the family of Akil Drake who was killed following a devastating natural gas explosion and building collapse at the Realty Tower in downtown Youngstown, Ohio on May 28, 2024.



The explosion occurred while a contractor was performing work on natural gas utility lines in the

basement of the Realty Tower and caused Mr. Drake's death, the injuries of others in and near the building, and significant property damage to the Realty Tower and nearby buildings. The work was being done in advance of a project to replace sidewalks adjacent to the building.

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Our goal in this lawsuit is to secure justice for our clients and prevent tragedies like this from happening in the future”

*Ben J. Whitman*

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) reported that the explosion was caused by the cutting of a pressurized natural gas line that the construction crew

believed was inactive and unpressurized. When the line was cut it leaked extremely flammable and dangerous natural gas resulting in an explosion causing extensive damage to the building and the death of Mr. Drake, who working in the JP Morgan Chase bank in the first floor of the Realty Tower.

Mr. Drake's sister, Traesha Pritchard shared that “our entire family is devastated by Akil's death. He was a wonderful son, brother, boyfriend, and community member who was innocently doing his job when this preventable tragedy took him from us.”

"Our goal in this lawsuit is to secure justice for our clients and prevent tragedies like this from happening in the future," stated Ben J. Whitman, a partner at the firm. "We are committed to a thorough investigation into the cause of this incident and will advocate for stringent enforcement of safety regulations and ensuring that all companies doing this type of work perform it in the safest possible manner to protect the public." Whitman added that "in recent years we have seen numerous cases where avoidable mistakes are made during projects involving these inherently dangerous businesses – our mission is to force these companies to change their practices to make our communities safer."

Clark, Fountain, La Vista, Littky-Rubin & Whitman, a Florida-based legal powerhouse, is celebrated for their dedication to justice and client service, with a record of securing verdicts and settlements exceeding \$1 billion. The firm's strong track record in handling cases involving complex legal and safety issues, including claims against utility companies and contractors involving gas explosions and fires make them exceptionally equipped to navigate the challenges of this case.

In the Court of Common Pleas,  
Mahoning County, Ohio  
Case No. 2024 CV 1233  
Date Filed: June 8, 2024

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