



## Plaintiffs Drill Dry Hole in \$19 Million Lamar County, Mississippi Case

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Texas Defendants Vindicated

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plaintiffs drilled a dry hole when they sued two Texas companies for allegedly producing millions of dollars of natural gas they did not own. Following one of the longest trials in Lamar County history, jurors sided with the Texas companies awarding the plaintiffs nothing in the case. Lamar County Judge Prentiss Harrell presided over the 8-week trial at the Lamar County Courthouse.

Tellus Operating Group brought suit in August 2004 contending that the defendants produced gas from the shallow zones of the Bilbo A-1 well in Lamar County, Mississippi, through a casing leak. Texas Petroleum Investment Company (TPIC) owned rights to all oil production from the well and gas rights in the deep zones of the well. TPIC purchased the well from Fina, that later became Total, which owned the well between 1991-1995. Plaintiffs asked the jury to award \$19 million in damages.

"We successfully argued that any gas in the shallow zones of the well had been exhausted many years before either defendant purchased the well," said TPIC counsel Adam Schiffer. "Jurors saw that the plaintiff's case was a house of cards that crumbled under the weight of the evidence."

"It was clear to the jury that our clients produced gas from the portions of the well where they owned the rights to production," said TPIC counsel David Holman. "Jurors saw through the plaintiff's attempts to confuse them by taking information out of context and asking jurors to believe portions of a witness testimony but disbelieve the same witness on other issues."

"We are pleased that jurors confirmed that we operate our company in an above board and ethical manner," said Bill Crawford, TPIC co-owner. "We voluntarily worked over the A-1 well to demonstrate that we had produced gas from the deep portions of the well where we owned the mineral rights. Numerous witnesses, including current and former

employees confirmed the facts that supported the verdict in our favor."

"Documents, testimony and science all demonstrated conclusively that Total and its predecessor Fina shut-in the well during the period in question," said Jeff Reynolds, Total defense counsel. "Our voluminous records, supported by sworn testimony from numerous witnesses, showed the well was only open for 21-days when it was bled off for safety reasons."

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