

# US inventor claims design for BP well cap stolen

June 20 2012, by HARRY R. WEBER

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(AP) — An inventor claims his design was the basis for the cap used to choke off the flow of oil to the Gulf of Mexico nearly three months after BP's undersea well blew in 2010. And he says it was stolen.

Charles Adams filed a federal lawsuit last week that names as defendants several players who were involved in helping resolve the disaster. They include Helix Energy Solutions Group, which supplied a rig that helped with the capping mission, and Cameron International, which made the blowout preventer that failed to stop oil from reaching the sea in the first place.

BP isn't named. It owned the well and was leasing the rig that exploded off Louisiana and touched off the leak.

Helix and Cameron officials declined to comment Wednesday on the suit.

After the Deepwater Horizon explosion on April 20, 2010, some 200 million gallons (757 million liters) of oil spewed from BP's well a mile (1.6 kilometer) beneath the sea before the gusher was capped. BP and its partners on the doomed rig tried several different methods to cap the well, such as the top kill and the junk shot in which they tried to plug the well with pieces of rubber. People all over the world watched a live spill camera on the Internet and television amid failure after failure.

Adams says that in May 2010, he designed and captured in conceptual

drawings a capping device employing an effective seal. He says he later applied for a patent and began preparing to market the design. He says an engineering firm he contacted violated a nondisclosure agreement and provided his drawings to Helix. The suit says Helix and the others then turned to Cameron for its expertise. Cameron then developed a working model for BP, the suit says.

Finally, on July 15, 2010, a newly designed cap that fit tighter and was sturdier than previous capping efforts was placed over the spewing well and the oil stopped flowing to the sea. Then, in September 2010, BP sealed the well permanently from the bottom using cement.

Adams' suit is filed in U.S. District Court in Roanoke, Virginia.

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