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GM & NHTSA’s Defective Decision Making – People Died Needlessly

Louis V. Lombardo

Crash Victims Seek to Prevent More Crash Deaths & Serious Injuries

“General Motors hid the problem for years, NHTSA ignored obvious warning signs and people needlessly died in crashes because of defective decision making by both GM and the federal government.”

Clarence Ditlow, Executive Director of the Center for Auto Safety, addressing families of crash victims and leaders of Congress on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. See

<http://www.c-span.org/video/?318642-1/gm-ignition-switch-recall>

http://www.autosafety.org/sites/default/files/imce_staff_uploads/CMD%20Statement%20Advocates_0.pdf

GM & NHTSA express sympathies and say they are conducting investigations. See

<http://www.autosafety.org/general-motors-cobalt-airbag-recalls-homepage>

GM promises “appropriate” cooperation and announces hiring of Ken Feinberg – which may be a problem.

See <http://www.thepoptort.com/2014/04/gms-uh-oh-hiring-of-ken-feinberg.html>

Secrecy Continues

“There is anger that General Motors did not come forward sooner with information about its faulty cars. There is grief that loved ones were lost in crashes that might have been preventable. And there is outrage that federal safety regulators did not intervene.

But what is now most upsetting to many relatives of people killed in accidents involving recalled G.M. cars is the uncertainty and secrecy surrounding the crashes — the fact that G.M. won’t tell them what they most want to know.

Not only has G.M. twice adjusted the number of deaths it says are linked to an ignition switch defect, but it has also refused to disclose publicly the list of the confirmed victims, now said to be 13. The enduring mystery has left scores of grieving families playing a guessing game, including the relatives of one accident victim, identified by The New York Times and confirmed by the office of Senator Claire McCaskill, a Missouri Democrat, to be among the 13.”

See http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/03/business/barriers-wall-off-the-facts-of-gm-car-crashes.html?ref=us&_r=0

Crash Victims, Injury Lawyers, and Experts Expose Safety Defects

“Bringing a wrongful death [lawsuit](#) against GM, Cooper obtained more than 32,000 pages of related lawsuits and other documents from the company, deposed about a dozen of its engineers and gathered assessments of the ignition issue from dealers. According to some of the depositions, reviewed by Bloomberg News, the defect was known to some dealers, engineers and managers since at least 2004.

GM settled with Cooper’s clients for an undisclosed amount last September. (Emphasis added) *Five months later, the company announced its recall. Shortly after that, it gave government regulators a timeline of the company’s knowledge of the defect that was consistent with Cooper’s findings, including engineers’ decade-long awareness of it.*

GM spokesman [Greg Martin](#) declined to comment on Cooper’s lawsuit. The company has apologized for its delay in recalling the models, said its decision-making process “was not as robust as it should have been” and said it is studying ways to improve how it addresses defects.”

See <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-03-17/gm-plagued-as-georgia-lawyer-presses-regulators-on-deaths.html>

<http://www.fairwarning.org/2014/04/like-them-or-hate-them-injury-lawsuits-sometimes-expose-health-and-safety-hazards/>

Congressional Hearings – Bipartisan Frustration

House Hearing letters, findings, and documents at

<https://energycommerce.house.gov/press-release/gm-nhtsa-testify-ignition-switch-recall-members-demand-answers-why-safety-process>

<http://democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/index.php?q=hearing/hearing-on-the-gm-ignition-switch-recall-why-did-it-take-so-long-subcommittee-on-oversight-a>

Senate Hearing at

http://www.commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Hearings&ContentRecord_id=878092ca-3da8-4a43-8948-6f50822a1938&ContentType_id=14f995b9-dfa5-407a-9d35-56cc7152a7ed&Group_id=b06c39af-e033-4cba-9221-de668ca1978a

GM and NHTSA Ties & Plausible Deniability

GM CEO Mary Barra and NHTSA's Acting Administrator have been on their present jobs just this year and presumably have some degree of plausible deniability. But, now criminal charges are being increasingly considered.

Plausible deniability does not apply to former GM and NHTSA executives such as GM's CEO Dan Akerson and NHTSA's Administrator David Strickland. They failed in their responsibilities to protect Americans for years before the beginning of 2014.

Daniel Francis "Dan" Akerson – Wikipedia records his responsibilities as follows: *“(born October 21, 1948) is the former [Chairman](#) and [CEO](#) of [General Motors](#), serving from 2010 to 2014. Akerson succeeded [Edward Whitacre](#) as CEO on September 1, 2010, and became Chairman of the Board on January 1, 2011. Akerson was a Managing Director of [The Carlyle Group](#) and head of global buyout prior to joining [General Motors](#). He joined the [General Motors](#) board of directors on July 24, 2009.”*

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Akerson

See NY Times articles on ties of NHTSA officials and the auto industry at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/31/business/former-safety-agency-aides-some-now-aiding-the-car-industry.html?emc=eta1>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/31/business/carmakers-close-ties-to-regulator-scrutinized.html?emc=eta1>

See Washington Post articles at

http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/why-did-gm-take-so-long-to-respond-to-deadly-defect-corporate-culture-may-hold-answer/2014/03/30/5c366f6c-b691-11e3-b84e-897d3d12b816_story.html

http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/gm-hearing-will-test-automakers-deep-washington-ties/2014/03/30/f4052514-b514-11e3-b899-20667de76985_story.html

Since 2009, more Americans have died of crash injuries than died in the Korean, Viet Nam, Iraq, and Afghanistan wars combined.

Will GM and NHTSA reveal how many people died of injuries suffered in, and by, all GM vehicles since 2009? They have the data in their files and it would help focus attention on our and their safety problems.