



## First Wrongful Death Lawsuits Filed In Fatal Oakland Warehouse Fire

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OAKLAND (CBS SF) — On Friday, the first lawsuits were filed in connection with the deadly Ghost Ship warehouse fire in Oakland that left dozens dead from smoke inhalation.



The attorney for the families of 20-year old Michela Gregory and 23-year-old Griffin Madden announced the two wrongful death lawsuits at a press conference Friday afternoon.

The three-alarm fire broke out during a performance of Golden Donna 100% Silk 2016 West Coast Tour. Interior photos showed a makeshift second floor in the building with wood nailed all around it and numerous items decorating the inside.

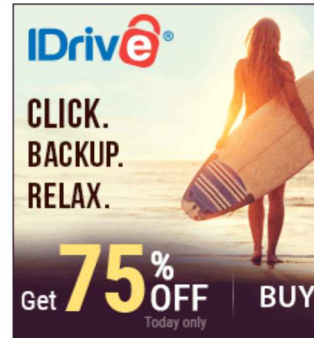
Firefighters said attendees had difficulty finding their way out of the space, either because of the crowded interior or narrow staircase from the second floor.

36 people died inside the Oakland warehouse during the unpermitted concert.






San Francisco trial lawyer Mary Alexander said the unsafe conditions and configuration of the warehouse trapped them in an “inferno.”




Speaking of Gregory, Alexander said, “She was a beautiful girl going to college, getting straight A’s, working two jobs. She went to the music event with her high-school sweetheart Alex Vega, never to come home again.”






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She described Madden as "...a fine young man who had just graduated from Berkeley in 2015 and was beloved by his professors."

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Named in the suit are building owner Chor Ng — who has [hired a Southern California lawyer](#) — as well the primary tenant Derick Almena and his wife as well as the event promoter.

"As a result of the horrific gross negligence of the defendants in this case, these two young people have lost their lives," said Alexander.

They have also filed claims against the City of Oakland and Alameda County for their "involvement and contributions to this terrible, horrific and tragic fire."

Michela Gregory's parents David and Kimberley Gregory could be seen in tears behind Alexander as she gave her prepared statement.

David Gregory also spoke briefly to the media gathered for the press conference.

"I just want to say, first of all, our daughter will never come home," said Gregory. "There's not a day that goes by that we don't miss her. She was a good kid. Her and Alex, they loved each other and just wanted to have a good time. They never came home. We'll never see them again. We just want justice."

Mike Kelly is a lawyer who specializes in suing on behalf of families. He's been contacted by several who also lost loved ones in the fire.

He said recovering money in a case like this is hard.

"Going to trial and getting a verdict for \$10 million against a person or a business that doesn't have \$10 million is not particularly helpful or useful," said Kelly.

Damages were not specified in either lawsuit.

No criminal charges related to the fire have been filed, but the Alameda County District Attorney's Office is reviewing the case.

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