

October 10, 2015



Shawn Boone, 33
~ 6/27/1970 - 10/30/2003 ~
Hayes Lemmerz Int. in Huntington, Indiana
By: Tammy Miser
USMWF - Family Members

My brother Shawn Boone worked at the Hayes Lemmerz plant in Huntington, Indiana where they made aluminum wheels. The plant had a history of fires, but workers were told not to call the fire department. My brother and a couple coworkers went in to relight a chip melt furnace. They decided to stick around a few minutes to make sure everything was ok and then went back to gather tools. Shawn's back was toward the furnace when the first explosion occurred. Someone said that Shawn got up and started walking toward the doors when there was a second and more intense blast. The heat from that blast was hot enough to melt copper piping. Shawn did not die instantly. He laid on floor smoldering while the aluminum dust continued to burn through his flesh and muscle tissue. The breaths that he took burned his internal organs and the blast took his eyesight. Shawn was still conscious and asking for help when the ambulance took him.

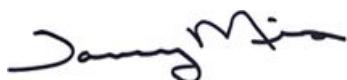
Hayes Lemmerz never bothered to call any of my family members to let us know that there was an explosion, or that Shawn was injured. The only call we received was from a friend

of my husband, Mark, who told them that Shawn was in route to a Ft. Wayne burn unit. (Mark also worked at the plant.) When Mark asked the hospital staff where Shawn was, we found that no one even bothered to identify him. We arrived only to be told that Shawn was being kept alive for us. The doctors refused to treat Shawn, saying even if they took his limbs, his internal organs were burned beyond repair. This was apparent by the black sludge they were pumping from his body. Shawn's face had been cleaned up and it was very swollen and splitting, but he was still my Bub. My family immediately started talking about taking Shawn off of life support. If we did all agree, I would be ultimately giving up on Shawn. I would have taken his last breath, even if there was no hope and we weren't to blame. I still had to make that decision. To watch them stop the machines and watch my little brother die before my eyes.

This has been the hardest thing my family has had to deal with until 2007. My youngest brother drove half way across the United States with a few photo's and phone records of the night Shawn was killed that he had tucked into his bible. Tommy then proceeded to shoot himself in the head. I can't say that Shawn's death alone caused my brother to take his own life, but I know for a fact he couldn't deal with it and that was what was on his mind.

IOSHA investigated the incident and proposed a \$42,000.00 penalty for seven serious violations. This may seem like a high fine compared to many however this company's net income \$40.2 million in 2014 which does not even touch the surface. Hayes had explosions before and had no filled fire extinguishers, rated fire extinguishers, PPE, rated filters and cleaning plan was not followed just to name a few. Fines will not bring my brother back or any other lost loved one for that matter. If the fines were high enough to put a dent in their pocket it would keep companies in line and protect workers and the community. We cannot put a price tag on life, the family unit or the community as a whole. We cannot leave the very ones building this great nation on their own.

Sincerely



Tammy Miser