

Paralyzed man sues Seymour bar for DUI injuries

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BRIDGEPORT -- A Stratford man, permanently paralyzed after being struck by a drunk driver on Route 8 last year, filed a lawsuit Friday against the Seymour bar where the driver had been drinking.

The lawsuit, filed in [Superior Court](#) on behalf of 23-year-old [Alex Convertito](#), claims The Lakehouse Bar and Grill was negligent in serving alcohol beverages to [William Reppenhagen](#).

Reppenhagen, 56, of Paugusett Circle, Trumbull, is expected to be sentenced to prison Friday afternoon in Superior Court for the September 2009 crash.

"A customer of a bar doesn't reach a high blood alcohol level by happenstance or after one or two drinks," said Convertito's attorney, [William Bloss](#) of the Bridgeport-based law firm [Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder](#). "Any establishment serving alcohol is well aware of its legal responsibility -- and liability -- if its employees continue to serve someone who is a lethal threat to others."

According to police, Convertito was on Route 8 in Trumbull, on his way to a friend's house after work at the [Shelton Super Stop & Shop](#), when a sedan driven by Reppenhagen struck him from behind at a high rate of speed. The impact caused Convertito's car to spin across the highway, up an embankment and into trees, where it landed on its roof. Convertito was ejected from the car.

The crash left Convertito permanently paralyzed from the waist down. At the time of the crash, police said Reppenhagen had a blood-alcohol level more than twice the legal limit, and evidence showed that in the seconds before the collision he was driving well over 100 miles per hour.

"Alex is going to need hundreds of thousands of dollars of medical treatment," Bloss said. "Because of his injuries, Alex will never be able to return to the activities he enjoyed. As you can imagine, this has been completely devastating for his entire family."

Two funds have been set up to help cover Convertito's medical expenses, nearly all of which are not covered by insurance.

Contributions to the Alex Convertito Donations Account can be made at any branch office of People's United Bank.

Contributions can also be made to a charity set up by [Fletcher Thompson Inc.](#), where Alex's father is employed. Contributions can be mailed to [Fletcher Thompson Health and Family Services](#), 3 Corporate Drive, Suite 500, Shelton, CT 06494, with a note indicating the funds are for Alex.