

Honorable Mention Defense Victory in 1996

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CASE: Technology Innovations International v. United Technologies Corp., *CL 94 5321A1 (Cir. Ct., Palm Beach, Fla.)*

CASE TYPE: Fraud, breach of contract IN THE MID-1980s, Robert Murphy and Howard Hornsby developed a remote-controlled boat that could be used for reconnaissance and surveillance. The partners approached United Technologies Corp., in the hope that UTC would either buy their company or market the boat, said defense attorney Peter B. Bensinger Jr., of Chicago's Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott. However, United Technologies turned the partners down, although the company suggested they approach an Australian company called Laser Holdings Ltd. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Hornsby entered into a deal with Laser Holdings, but Laser never produced any of the boats, said Mr. Bensinger, and went bankrupt in 1994. Mr. Hornsby formed another company called International Robotics Systems and eventually produced several of the boats through this and a successor company. The Navy bought two of the boats. Mr. Murphy, who was not involved in the later companies, sued Mr. Hornsby, as well as UTC and Laser Holdings, charging fraud, breach of contract and breach of fiduciary duties. On Oct. 11, 1996, a Florida jury returned a complete defense verdict for all defendants. Plaintiff's post-trial motions for a new trial were denied in December; there will be no appeal.