

Pattershall Secures Dismissal for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction

[Brad Pattershall](#) recently secured the dismissal for his client Tommy Woodward, Inc. d/b/a Columbia Diesel Castings (“Columbia Diesel”), a Mississippi corporation, when the United States District Court determined it lacked personal jurisdiction over Columbia Diesel.

The case was initiated by a local company called Three Girls Fishing, LLC (“Three Girls”), that owned a commercial fishing boat based in Maine. Three Girls purchased a re-conditioned diesel engine for its fishing boat from a Louisiana corporation called Pan-American Power Corp. (“Pan Am”) and had the engine installed in the boat in Maine. Before Pan Am shipped the engine to Maine for installation, it asked Columbia Diesel, which has one shop in Columbia, Mississippi, to perform specification work on the engine’s crankshaft. Columbia Diesel performed the work within a week and shipped the crankshaft back to Pan Am in Louisiana, about one hour away. Columbia Diesel had no knowledge of the crankshaft’s or engine’s ultimate destination.

After the engine failed while the fishing vessel was at sea, Three Girls sued Pan Am in federal court in Maine. Pan Am then brought in Columbia Diesel and three other parties as third-party defendants. Pan Am sought contribution from Columbia Diesel, and the other third-party defendants similarly filed crossclaims seeking contribution.

Columbia Diesel filed a motion to dismiss Pan Am’s third-party complaint and the various crossclaims of the other third-party defendants pursuant to F.R. Civ. P. 12(b)(2), asserting that the court lacked personal jurisdiction over Columbia Diesel. Judge Torresen granted the motion on August 12, 2024 in a well-reasoned, 20-page decision in the matter of Three Girls Fishing, LLC v. Pan American Power Corp. et al., Docket No. 2:23-cv-00175-NT. The judge held that Columbia Diesel had insufficient ties to Maine to justify exercising general or specific jurisdiction over Columbia Diesel, holding essentially that Columbia Diesel’s only contact with Maine was the random and fortuitous installation of the engine, and the crankshaft it worked on, in a boat in Maine. [Please click here for Judge Torresen’s decision.](#)