

My Lawyer Said I Didn't Do It



When I read the story of the little 18-month old who fell 11 decks to her death from a cruise ship, I was horrified. I chose not to have children so I couldn't even begin to imagine the loss felt by her parents. The initial reports said the baby was accidentally dropped by her grandfather as he held her by an open window. Early in the investigation, police said the grandfather told officers he lost his grip while holding the baby outside a window. Again, I cannot imagine the guilt felt by this man. A family trip of a lifetime turned into a nightmare.

I had no intention of writing anything about this tragedy. But within 24 hours, the child's name appeared in the papers and the family's attorney began his corrected version of what was initially reported by the family. "Essentially her grandfather lifts her up and puts her on a railing and where he thinks that there is glass there because it's clear, but it turns out there was no glass there. She goes to bang on the glass like she would have at one of those hockey rinks, and the next thing you know, she's gone," according to the lawyer.

It is now the family's legal position that the cruise company should've known better than to leave an 11th deck window open in a children's play area. Clearly, the deep pockets belonging to the cruise company are now the target in this scenario.

I've been on over 35 cruises totaling more than 500 days so I know what I'm talking about when it comes to cruise ships.

On the day of embarkation, everyone must attend a passenger safety drill at which time everyone is told NEVER to sit on the railings or place a child on that railing anywhere on the ship.

While the grandfather initially told police he held the baby outside the window, the lawyer now says he put the child on the railing. Common sense, as well as safety instructions, says you **never** sit or put a child on a railing.

No matter the weather conditions, calm or windy, anyone would be able to tell the window was open from either the breeze or heat coming from the open window. It's impossible not to feel the open air. Also, according to the picture of the window in one of the news reports, the window is tinted and easily distinguishable from the adjacent row of windows. What I'm saying is, it's impossible for anyone not to know the window was open.

Even if the window were open, there is no way an 18-month child would be able to climb up the wall and fall out on her own. She had to be lifted up and placed on the railing or held out the window – an incredibly stupid thing to do with a child and against every ounce of common sense – and the fault of the person lifting her up.

What was initially reported to the police is usually the most accurate because it was reported closest in time to the incident. Enter, the family lawyer who will now tell us what "really happened." An incredibly heart breaking accident

resulting in the death of a precious 18-month old, and, in most probability, caused by someone's irresponsibility, will now turn into the inevitable lawsuit. The family would not want me on their jury.

There was a time when everything was about personal responsibility. We succeeded or failed because of our own choices. Our failures weren't someone else's fault. We were not victims. Accidents were caused by our own inattentiveness and we owned up to them. We didn't blame someone else for our own carelessness. We didn't sue someone because our own clumsiness caused us injury. Things have changed.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.