

**Examples of Various Types  
Of ICV Victims**

**Rape Victim**

*Laurie Dishman*

**Lost on Cruise Line Sponsored Excursion**

*John Dresp*

**Lost at Sea**

*Mindy Jordan - May 2008  
(New case)*

**Medical Malpractice on Cruise**

*Don Bryce – September 2007  
(New Case)*

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## Laurie Dishman

My best friend, Michelle, and I decided to celebrate our thirty-year friendship. I have known her since I was five years old, and so we thought, "How about going on a cruise together?" We decided to take a Royal Caribbean cruise to the Mexican Riviera in February 2006. Just think -- seven days of fun and sun, relaxing with umbrella drinks in our hands. I couldn't wait...But little did I know of the dangers that awaited me...

The trip started out great -- Ports of call, dinners, shows, drinks in the lounges, meeting other passengers and dancing. We were having so much fun, but everything in my life changed on February 21, 2006...

Michelle and I were in the Viking Crown Lounge, when we were approached by a crewmember, whose badge indicated that he was a "security guard." He demanded to see our IDs and asked whether we were old enough to be drinking in the bar. He asked for our cabin number.

As the night continued, Michelle and I talked and danced with other passengers. When I decided to go up and request a song, that same crewmember approached me and held my wrist and kissed me, while trying to whisper something in my ear. I said, "No, get away". Then, I headed back to be with Michelle and get away from this man. I was upset, so Michelle brought me back to my cabin and waited for me to fall asleep, before she headed back to the lounge.

Later, there was a knock at the door. It was dark. Thinking it was Michelle, I opened the door halfway, but it was him! He forced his way into my cabin and pushed me onto the bed. I struggled and tried to resist, but he raped me. He left me, passed out on the bed with ligature marks around my neck.

When I woke up, I didn't know who to call, because my rapist was supposedly "security". I told Michelle what had happened, and we decided to call the Purser's desk, which prompted two officers to come to our cabin. Instead of securing the cabin, they sat on the bed, where the rape occurred. Eventually, I was permitted to go to the ship's doctor, but he told Michelle and I to go back to our cabin and collect the sheets & clothing from the incident and to place them in plastic bags, which they had provided. I also wrote a demanded statement and gave it to the officers on the ship. The entire process was so humiliating! That same day, I told the Captain that I was frightened and just wanted to go home.

We flew to Los Angeles, where the FBI interviewed us. We were informed that the FBI was taking this matter "very seriously." And we actually believed they were.

I arrived back home the following day to be with my family. On March 3, 2006, I received a call from the FBI, who informed me that the Department of Justice (DOJ) was not going to prosecute my case. They said that it was a "he said/she said" case. I felt violated all over again!

Later I learned that the DOJ declined the case for prosecution and that the FBI closed the "investigation" on the same day that the cruise ship returned to port... before anyone began a serious effort of investigating the crime. I have also learned that there has never been a successful prosecution of a single violent crime in the history of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCCL), such as rape, since its' 1969 existence.

I am attempting to re-open the investigation and gain some answers. RCCL will not provide me with the name, address, nationality, or current whereabouts of my rapist. They refuse to provide me with my own medical records and my statement from the ship, nor will they inform me if my rapist, their own employee, has HIV/AIDS or other diseases.

The only thing I received from the cruise line, following this incident, was a promotional letter from the President of RCCL, which stated, "Thank you for sailing with us and giving us the opportunity to send you home with an experience to remember." He even included a discount coupon! Once again, I felt humiliated and could not stop crying.

It's clear to me that the RCCL, FBI and DOJ will never assist victims of crimes that occur on foreign flagged cruise ships.

I have sought professional assistance and therapy, and I intend to seek justice on my own. I have called, written and met with the staff of my Senator and Congresswomen. I will not allow the cruise line industry to make me just another crime statistic.

I am thankful to International Cruise Victims (ICV) for providing me with the opportunity to tell my story, in an effort to protect other passengers from being unsuspecting victims on cruise ships.



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John Dresp



John Dresp November 16, 2005

On November 16, 2005, my wife Winifred, brother John and I, along with 47 other passengers, left the Norwegian Dream by a catamaran operated by Discovery Divers for snorkeling at the Belize barrier reef.

It is hard to imagine that was the last time we saw my brother John alive.

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On November 16, 2005, my wife Winifred, brother John and I, along with 47 other passengers, left the Norwegian Dream by a catamaran operated by Discovery Divers for snorkeling at the Belize barrier reef. It is hard to imagine that was the last time we saw my brother John alive.

Prior to entering the water, we were briefed on the area and use of snorkeling equipment by a Norwegian Dream staff member who said she would meet us in the water. She did not ask who was a beginner, our gear was not checked, no one met us in the water and we were not warned of a moderate to strong current moving away from the boat and the snorkeling area.

I didn't wear flippers and was quickly carried out by the current. My brother John was a first time snorkeler but a good swimmer. John worked out daily and was in good physical health. My wife Winifred was last in the water. She and my brother were within twenty feet of the catamaran when she asked John where I was and he told her "way out there." She said "if you're all right, I'll go get help for Don and be right back." Winifred called up to the boat for help and I was promptly rescued. When she went back to John she could not find him.

She got back on the boat to see better and get help finding John. He could not be found. The Discovery Divers' crew looked over the water and said that he was "probably with the other guests at the reef." Eventually they made a more complete search, then got other boats and an aircraft involved. After a week of searching, John's body was never found. (Apparently his vest was not inflated.)

We later learned that a catamaran from another vendor had picked up 100 guests from the Norwegian Dream the same day just before we left the ship. This operator was aware of "small craft warnings" and pulled its guests from the water after about 10 minutes and returned them to the cruise ship. We also learned that when the Norwegian Dream was back in port the next week, November 23rd, they again used the same vendor that had lost my brother!

Winifred and I spent twelve days at the Radisson Fort George in Belize City while the search continued. Although the local media was interested, we had frustratingly little communication with the police and searchers. We asked to meet with the Belize Tourism Board officials and found them to be defensive. They assured us that one of their Tourism Police Officers would be in daily contact with us. He only called the Friday after Thanksgiving, November 25th, to tell us that the search had been called off--- which fact we had learned from TV Thanksgiving night!

After many requests, four months later we received a two page preliminary police report in which we found errors in nine out of the eleven paragraphs. Now, nine months later, we have no final police report, no inquest result, no death certificate and no acknowledgement of our safety recommendations. (The inquest was requested by our lawyer in January and again in April. The request was acknowledged by the Chief Magistrate in May, but still no date has been set.)

We have a large amount of documentation: media reports, more than 75-80 pages of my daily journal, correspondence, etc. We are sending a letter and our



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Knowing the



Outbreak Summaries for International Cruise Ships

June 9, 2008

Dear Mr. Carver

My daughter, Mindy Jordan, 46 and the mother of two, left on Mother's Day of this year on a Norwegian Cruise Line Cruise from New York City to Bermuda. She was traveling with her boyfriend, Jorge Caputo. Now my daughter is dead. I received a phone call from Mr. Caputo at 11:00 a.m. on May 12th, 15 HOURS AFTER her death. He informed me that while they were fooling around Mindy got to close to the railing and fell overboard. Norwegian Cruise Line NEVER called to inform me. Through my own efforts, I finally reached the cruise line and was referred to Jane Kilgour, Manager of Passenger Claims. I received condolences and the promise of an investigation.

The U.S. Coast Guard contacted me that following Monday, a couple of hours after Mr. Caputo's phone call announcing my daughter's death. They explained to me that the weather at the particular destination was so severe that they had been unable to launch rescue boats. I am sure that is true. They did send out helicopters that searched until 3am and I have no doubt they did their very best. They also read me the report that they had received from the ship. It included Mr. Caputo's statement that said my daughter had gone to take a nap an hour or two after leaving the port. The ship's cameras show the couple having dinner at that time.

The F.B.I. arrived in Bermuda on Wednesday afternoon. I was told that they were unable to catch an earlier flight which meant they were delayed in beginning their investigation. They told me there was no blood in my daughter's stateroom at that time.

My requests to Norwegian Cruise Line for information regarding details of the cause of my daughter's death, rescue efforts, and so forth went unheeded. (see faxed request). I also asked Ms. Kilgour twice if I could please be sent a copy of the film of my daughter's fall from the ship so I could view it my own home. The answer I received was "absolutely not." They did, however, offer to bring me to the ship to show me the film and to see my daughter's stateroom.

The F.B.I., although visiting me several times, has refused to answer any questions. They stated that they were just keeping in touch to let me know that the investigation is on-going. When I complained that I needed answers regarding this incident, the F.B.I. sent the lead investigator in the case, Agent Robert Kissane. Although he was not able to answer my questions, he did tell me to STOP talking to the media. Later, he was also able to inform me that Mr. CAPUTO had paid for this cruise - NOT my daughter! I found the F.B.I. in general and Agent Kissane in particular to be cold, sarcastic, condescending and totally lacking in sensitivity or compassion.

Many, many questions still remain. I would really like to know why a ship is allowed to leave port in conditions so severe that the Coast Guard is unable to assist in an emergency. Also, one of the films from the media showed only one small dinghy was launched from the ship and several life rings were tossed. I find it hard to believe with today's technology that emergencies aren't handled with more care. I would also like to know if the ship searched for Mindy or for her body, seeing as how they managed to arrive in the port of Bermuda right on schedule.

The statement that Norwegian Cruise Lines released to the press on May 14, 2008 stated that Mr. Caputo was alone with my daughter for eight minutes before he exited the room. This was plenty of time for a physical attack to take place, and for Mindy to be left alone on the balcony, locked out of the stateroom. Mr. Caputo did not return to their room to let her back in. I believe she was trying to reach the adjacent stateroom's balcony after thirteen minutes out in the storm.

I believe the F.B.I. needs to use ALL of their resources to get to the bottom of this horribly tragic incident, including issuing lie detector tests, keeping tabs on suspects and monitoring their behavior after arriving home from the cruise, using phone taps or whatever else they have at their disposal.

Norwegian Cruise Line, as well as all of the cruise lines need to be held responsible when they insist on sailing in such severe weather, for not having cameras that actually show the balconies, for failure to contact the next of kin in an emergency, and for having inadequate rescue equipment on board.

Yours Truly,

Louise Horton

Mindy's Mom

June 8, 2008

Dear Mr. Carver,

I am following up with you regarding my father's tragic, unnecessary death last September onboard Holland America's ms Rotterdam. A story about it ran on KOMO TV4 on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 and it was picked up nationally and broadcast on **Good Morning America on Thursday May 22nd**. My family and I are hopeful that this can spark a much needed discussion about the laws regarding passenger safety onboard cruise ships. While I recognize the fact that the ships fly under foreign flags, their corporate offices are located in the US and the vast majority of passengers are American citizens.

I would like to propose a two part change that we believe would dramatically improve medical care for passengers and could hopefully prevent tragedies such as my father's from occurring in the future. I am afraid that the cruise lines will have to be forced by law to comply as they have made many promises in the past which have simply been discarded or ignored when they interfere with profits.

First, all medical staff should be considered **employees** of the cruise line, not **independent contractors**, as this absolves the ships from any responsibility for what happens to the passengers. Most people assume that the doctor is an employee of the cruise company and that the ship is liable for any malpractice. If the cruise line knows they could be sued for negligence, they would be much more proactive in recruiting doctors and nurses who would treat their passengers with the necessary care.

In my father's case, while the medical staff may have been highly qualified, they were incredibly indifferent to his deteriorating condition. Had he been given any number of basic treatments early on (IV fluids on the first or second day, a chest X-ray when the cough developed, a blood test to look for a secondary infection) he would very likely be alive today.

Had my parents known that the doctor had such limited hours (he was in the clinic for only one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon) and that it would be so difficult to get anyone to actually come to the room, my father might have elected to get off the ship in Rome, before they headed out to sea for thirty-six hours! They did have full travel insurance and my father was aware that he had to be cautious, since he had a pacemaker.

But Dr. Gibson indicated that it was a simple upper respiratory infection and never bothered to check for anything else. At the very least, the cruise lines should have to disclose, **in writing, in plain English, at the time of booking**, that the doctors are not employees and the passengers will have no legal recourse against the ship if there is a problem. (This is listed in the ticket that passengers receive one-two weeks prior to departure but it is in small print and legal jargon and I'm sure the majority of passengers have no idea until it is too late.) If people had to sign off that they understood this and agreed to it, I think that a lot of them might decide to take a different vacation!

Secondly, there **must** be a better system of reporting and treating those passengers who do become ill during a cruise. All cruise ships are supposed to hand out a CDC

survey to people who experience gastrointestinal symptoms but my understanding is that it is a voluntary request and quite often the majority of them do not get returned. (I still have my father's) This is a problem because it gives a false sense of how many people are actually getting ill on each cruise.

On the Rotterdam voyage, Holland America says that only 23 passengers had the Norovirus. However, other people from the cruise have told me that it was probably closer to 50 or 60. (We have heard of at least one, or possibly two, other death(s) onboard the ship but Holland America would not confirm or deny that to Liz Rocca, the KOMO TV reporter.)

Also, anyone who is quarantined to their cabin should be checked on, *in person*, at least twice a day, with a *full set of vitals taken and recorded each time*. This would have the dual benefit of catching someone who was getting worse in time to give them proper treatment (as in my dad's case) and would also insure that those people who were still contagious were staying away from the other passengers.

My family has said all along that we simply want to see **something good come out of this tragedy**. These are two ideas which could be implemented without any great cost to the cruise lines but they could save many people from experiencing the loss that we will have to deal with for the rest of our lives.

Please contact me if you need any further information or would like to discuss this matter in more detail.

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